

SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANS AND LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND KEY COMPONENTS

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Strategic Priority: SP5 - Attractive and Inclusive City

**Corporate Priorities: CIO1 – Delivering Customer Focused Services, CIO4
– Improving Partnership Working To Deliver ‘One City’**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise of the role of School Travel Plans (STP) and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) Key Components, that assists with the overall approach to sustainable school travel in Sunderland.

2. SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANS

- 2.1 The STP initiative was set up in 2003 by the Government to encourage and help schools to reduce congestion on the school run and to provide routes to school that were as safe as possible for all pupils. It was stated that for submitting an authorised STP, the school could expect to receive funding of between £3750 - £5000 and £5 per pupil head. At those figures it was estimated that grants of £4750 for a primary school and £8000 for a secondary school would be available. The first travel plans were submitted in March 2004 and every March from then until the scheme's final submissions in March 2010. Between years 2004 to 2010 a total of 121 schools were approached to engage with this programme. Only 6 Schools did not want to take part in the project.
- 2.2 Funding was issued annually to Children's Services Finance Sections and distributed to the appropriate schools' capital accounts. There was no involvement from the former Development and Regeneration Department, now City Services, on how the money was spent and there were no guidelines given from the government that required bidding authority to ensure the money was spent on actions set out in the individual school travel plans. Therefore, officers only became involved if the school approached Road Safety Team officers direct to help with installation of cycle racks etc, which was promoted to them.

3. LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND

- 3.1 As the Safer Routes to School/School Travel Plans initiatives were closed, a new programme was introduced linked to reducing congestion caused by the "School Run". The Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority bid for monies and received £4.9M in July of 2011, with a programme end date of 31st March 2015.

The programme is known as the "Local Sustainable Transport Fund" (LSTF) Key Components Bid comprising 11 projects and its aims include:

- To reduce congestion and make journey times more reliable and predictable which will benefit the economy;
- To increase the proportion of journeys made by low-carbon and sustainable forms of travel with reduced carbon emissions;
- To encourage active travel as a form of transport to increase the levels of physical activity amongst young people with significant health benefits; and
- To reduce the volume of motorised traffic at the start and finish of the school day to improve safety around school entrances.

3.2 The 11 LSTF projects are as follows:

- **Walk Once a Week:** This project is being delivered in conjunction with the charity Living Streets. The Walk to School campaign aims to encourage all parents and children to make walking to school part of their daily routine. The aim is to promote active school travel through a number of projects and initiatives. In primary schools, the scheme Walk once a Week (WoW) rewards children who 'walk once a week' with collectable badges. Since November 2011 Living Streets are currently working with 19 schools and will continue with these and a minimum of 20 different schools each year until 2015.
- **Free Your Feet and Campaign-in-a-Box:** In secondary schools the Free Your Feet and Campaign-in-a-Box projects challenge students to walk more, equipping them with the skills to run their own campaigns. Living Streets commenced the project in January 2012 in 4 schools and will continue with these and a minimum of 6 different schools each year until 2015.
- **Bike It:** This project is delivered in conjunction with the transport charity Sustrans. Bike It helps schools create a cycling culture and ensures more children cycle to school. It should triple the daily cycling levels at its target schools. Sustrans will be starting the project in March 2011 initially in 6 schools and a further 6 schools in September and continue with these and up to 12 different schools each year until 2015.
- **Balance Bikes:** Balance Bikes are small pedal-free bicycles aimed at nursery-age children who are not yet ready to move up to a pedal bike. They have been trialled with excellent results in all nursery schools in South Tyneside. The intention of this project is to purchase a supply of balance bikes to all nursery schools in Tyne and Wear. Where training is required, this will be provided to the schools. Details of the project are currently being discussed between the districts with a likely project start in April 2011.
- **FEAT ("Families Enjoying Active Travel") 1st:** Again this is delivered in conjunction with the transport charity Sustrans. FEAT1st gives the whole family the information, skills and confidence they need to make short trips on foot and by bike. It also aims to increase physical activity levels in families through a wide variety of sessions. Sustrans will be starting the project in March 2011 initially in 6 schools and continue with these and 6 different schools each year until 2015.

- **Child Pedestrian Training (including bus induction):** These projects will help school children to become safe and confident pedestrians and public transport users. The child pedestrian training programme will deliver training on the street and in the classroom to school children throughout Tyne and Wear, helping to increase the road safety skills, confidence and awareness. A separate strand of the project will see older primary school children given experience of using the buses and the Metro. The programme is currently being developed by the districts with the intention of over 200 children being trained this year after April 2011, and 600 children trained in following years until 2015.
- **Parking at Schools:** All Tyne and Wear Local Authorities will carry out parking enforcement outside schools in addition to that already provided by the City Council to improve child pedestrian safety. This may include camera car enforcement. Discussions between Authorities are currently progressing to determine the most cost effective method of delivery.
- **Tyne and Wear Schools Links:** School links come in a variety of forms, from new cycle routes to pedestrian crossings, all providing the safe routes that young people need to cycle and walk to school. The programme commenced in July 2011 with the design of 4 small schemes that will benefit school children with their journeys to school. Construction of these schemes will be completed before April 2012. It is the intention to continue with up to 8 schemes each year until 2015.
- **Grants to Schools:** Grants to schools are intended to carry out improvements on the school site, in order to support sustainable travel. For most schools, this will be extra cycle storage but other elements might include parent waiting shelters, new paths on the school site, pool bikes (particularly in more deprived areas), trailers, and tools / spare parts for maintenance once the school has committed to developing and sustaining a cycling culture. No grant allocation has been allocated for this financial year, however it is likely that 2 schools will be engaged each year from 2012/13 until 2015.
- **Promotion of Public Transport:** Teaching pupils the different ways to get to school, as they move from primary to secondary education. Encouraging parents and children to use Tyne and Wear's frequent and convenient public transport links, and to take advantage of discounted travel for children. This project is being delivered in conjunction with Nexus who are currently engaging schools to take part in this project with a view to recruiting a minimum of 4 different schools each year until 2015.
- **Travel Matters:** A website (www.travelmatters.org.uk) which facilitates the promotion of sustainable travel in primary schools. It contains an extensive library of teaching resources that can be easily integrated into the curriculum, as well as a pupil zone for children to access supporting games and activities. The new website went live in January 2011 and it is intended that all schools are using the site by 2015.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To consider the report and support the implementation of LSTF in Sunderland.

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