



# 15. School Travel Supporting Statement

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## 1. Setting the Scene

1.1 The proportion of children travelling to school by car has almost doubled over the past 20 years. Despite greater parental choice of schools, many children live close enough to school to walk or cycle. Many older children would like to cycle to school. Parental concerns about road or personal safety may prevent them from doing so or their school may lack secure cycle storage facilities. Other pupils could travel by bus but services may not be available at the right time or place.

1.2 Some of the consequences are:

- Increased traffic around schools leading to localised congestion, air pollution and conflict between pedestrians and vehicles.
- Less physical activity on the school journey leading to a decline in child health and increased childhood obesity.
- Less independent child travel to school leading to reduced opportunities for social interaction and poorer road safety awareness.

1.3 Over the last five years we have been working with schools to address these issues by developing Safer Routes to Schools (SRTS) and School Travel Plans (STPs). Travel to school by car has been maintained at or below the 1999 levels, and more pupils now walk and cycle to school.

1.4 This strategy supports the DfT/DfES Travelling to School Action Plan and national target which requires all schools to have a Travel Plan by 2010.



## 2. Vision

To influence travel behaviour by developing and promoting school travel opportunities and facilities for pupils, staff and parents/carers which:

- Reduce car dependency and increase the number of pupils walking, cycling and using public transport for school journeys.
- Improve safety for school journeys and help to reduce road casualties; and
- Contribute towards improved health and fitness by increasing physical activity amongst parents, pupils and staff.

## 3. School Travel and the Shared Priorities

### Congestion

Just over one in ten cars on urban roads in the morning peak hour are on the 'school run'. Localised congestion and pollution associated with school travel can be reduced by encouraging more children to walk, cycle or use public transport for school journeys.

### Road Safety

SRTS and STP initiatives can improve child road safety by delivering physical measures such as safer walking and cycle routes, practical skills training and road safety education programmes within schools. By involving the whole school community, STPs can contribute to increased public awareness of road safety issues and complement other initiatives (such as driver improvement and speed enforcement programmes) to reduce the number and severity of child road traffic casualties.

### Accessibility

Providing safer and fully accessible walking and cycling facilities and better public transport provision can enhance

accessibility to educational facilities for those without access to a car.

## Air Quality

Poor air quality around schools can exacerbate child respiratory and associated problems. Increasing the number of pupils walking and cycling to school (and thus reducing the number of car journeys) can have localised air quality benefits whilst contributing to improved air quality in the area.

## Other Quality of Life issues

Research suggests that:

- Pupils who walk or cycle to school are more alert and focus better in the classroom.
- Encouraging pupils to walk, cycle or use public transport for school journeys can help to improve social skills and promote independence.
- Pupils who are exposed to real-life road conditions are more aware of traffic and road safety issues when they become adult; and
- Walking or cycling to school counts towards the recommended one-hour of moderate intensity physical activity per day for a young person and, therefore, contributes towards improved health and fitness.

neighbourhood, this can increase the likelihood of children being driven to school. Once the choice of school has been made, it is more difficult to influence parents' travel behaviour.

- 4.3 Some 180 schools in the JLTP area have adopted STPs but more progress needs to be made to meet the national target that foresees all schools having an STP by 2010. Schools across the JLTP area need assistance to develop STPs and schools with existing STPs also need support to maintain enthusiasm and focus. The DfES capital grants available for schools need to be targeted effectively.
- 4.3 School Travel Advisors are currently funded by DfES and DfT up to March 2008. We see the need to identify funding beyond that date so that the Advisors can continue to perform their vital role in working with schools to reduce car use and encourage more children to walk, cycle or use public transport for school journeys.
- 4.4 The success of STPs is largely dependent on enthusiastic individuals, or 'School Champions', who are often parents with children at the school. As school rolls change over time, continuity may be lost with new pupils and parents replacing those previously involved. The Councils have held regular workshops and networking events for current and potential School Champions to provide guidance and support.

## 4. Issues

### School Travel Plans

- 4.1 Schools in the JLTP area range from large urban secondary schools to small village primary schools and the travel needs of pupils, parents, teachers and others vary widely. Walking to school is an easy option for many but other schools have a heavy focus on car-borne travel. Home-to-school transport in buses and coaches is significant for some.
- 4.2 If parents choose to send their children to schools outside their immediate



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- 4.5 As more STPs are developed, there is increased demand for SRTS schemes and Road Safety Education Training and Publicity services. The relationship between STPs, SRTS and child casualties is important but the wider road safety implications have not always been fully examined.

### 5. Delivery Programme in the Plan Period 2001/02 to 2005/06

- 5.1 Examples of key initiatives delivered during the period of the first LTPs include:

#### Safer Routes to School and School Travel Plans

- 5.2 SRTS engineering schemes and STP support measures have been carefully co-ordinated. Bristol City Council for example have assisted Elmlea Infant and Junior Schools to develop a joint STP. By identifying perceived hazards on routes to these schools, a comprehensive SRTS engineering scheme was developed to make it safer to cross busy roads. These measures helped to support an existing Walking Bus initiative, which resulted in increased levels of walking to school, and will enable a second scheme to be established. (A further example of this joined-up approach is included under 'Good Practice').

#### Bike It

- 5.3 Bristol City and South Gloucestershire Councils were part of the National Pilot 'Bike It' initiative and worked with a 'Bike It' officer based at Sustrans. The project focused on seven schools in the JLTP area and aimed to increase cycling by working closely with pupils, parents and staff, using a variety of initiatives including promotional events and increasing cycle training. The initiative was particularly successful at North Road Primary School in Yate where the percentage of children

walking and cycling increased from 24% in 2004 to 39% today.

#### Park and Walk

- 5.4 North Somerset Council helped Hillside First School to develop an STP that focuses on 'Park & Walk' with the support of local businesses. Located some distance away from the school, these businesses allow parents to park at their premises and walk their children to school to reduce congestion. Prior to scheme implementation, 66% of pupils were driven to the school; the same proportion now walk to school for the whole journey or use the Park & Walk.

#### Child Cycle and Pedestrian Training

- 5.5 We have taken a pro-active approach towards equipping children with essential road safety skills. These skills have enabled thousands of local children to use roads safely and have facilitated other measures designed to encourage more walking and cycling for school trips.
- 5.6 Some 2,500 children have received pedestrian training and approximately 700 have undertaken cycle proficiency training every year in Bath and North East Somerset. These initiatives have helped to reduce the number of children injured on roads in the authority area from 79 to 60 over the last two years.

### 6. Good Practice

There are 42 schools in Bath and North East Somerset that have an approved STP. In 2004/05, the Council continued to co-ordinate SRTS engineering and supporting measures. At High Littleton Primary School, improved footways and crossing points have made it easier and safer for pupils to use a new 'Walking Bus'.

A similar scheme was developed at Camerton Primary School following the introduction of an experimental width restriction along a major HGV route near

the school. These measures have helped to improve road safety and reduce congestion around both rural schools, with more pupils walking to school and fewer car trips.

## 7. Strategy

### Selecting and Working with Schools

- 7.1 Development of STPs will be school-led. Schools will be given priority access to School Travel Advisor support and funding for highway improvements where:
- they can demonstrate an enthusiastic commitment to reducing car use, promoting walking, cycling and public transport use and are developing an STP themselves.
  - they are involved in the Healthy Schools Initiative.
  - there is a clear potential for achieving modal shift.
  - they are located in an area of social deprivation or have a high proportion of children eligible for free school meals.
  - they have submitted a planning application.
- 7.2 The strategy focuses on a combination of appropriate engineering measures in conjunction with initiatives that schools can develop themselves with guidance from School Travel Advisors (e.g. Walking Buses, car share schemes, bus buddies, cycle parking facilities). Schools which can demonstrate the need for highway improvements to address road safety concerns and show a long term commitment to action themselves through STPs will normally be afforded greater priority for JLTP scheme investment.

### Guidance on STP Development and Links to SRTS

- 7.3 School Travel Advisors will assist schools to develop their STPs in accordance with

criteria set out in “Travelling to School – a good practice guide; DfES & DfT, 2004”.

- 7.4 We aim to outline the range of travel choices available to parents and pupils in each Local Education Authority’s “Choosing a School” document.
- 7.5 The traditional engineering focused SRTS projects will continue to be prioritised through the STP process. Only when a school has a recognised STP that successfully demonstrates the need for highway improvements in support of proposed mode shift initiatives will JLTP-funded improvement be considered. This supports statements in the DfES/DfT Travelling to School Action Plan.

### Contribution Towards Casualty Reduction Strategies

- 7.6 Whilst SRTS projects are primarily focused on encouraging more pupils to walk, cycle and use public transport to get to school, they can also support the JLTP Road Safety Strategy in reducing casualties in line with target trajectories. Close links will be maintained in the JLTP period between STPs, SRTS and Child Cycle and Pedestrian Training.
- 7.7 We propose to build on the success of Child Cycle and Pedestrian Training programmes by promoting driver training initiatives for staff at local workplaces, aimed at improving local driving standards by promoting greater awareness of child road safety.

### Promotion and Communication

- 7.8 We will continue to provide support facilities for schools to include:
- information packs for schools which are interested in developing STPs.
  - a resource pack with details of suitable suppliers and installers of infrastructure such as cycle parking facilities.
  - regular newsletters circulated to schools, elected Members, Town and Parish Councils and Council departments to highlight successes in STP and national initiatives (e.g. Walk on Wednesday).

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- regular networking workshops where School Travel Champions and school staff can meet to share experience and enthusiasm and be briefed by Travel Advisors on new STP developments.

### Policy Co-ordination

7.9 We will seek to ensure policy co-ordination between Council departments and stakeholders across a range of service delivery sectors that have an influence on school travel planning. These include the following (in no order of priority).

- School Travel Advisors - ensure Advisors liaise with all other relevant officers when developing STPs.
- Safer Routes to School - implement SRTS schemes including traffic calming and suitable physical measures to improve safety and minor signing/road marking/20 mph schemes.
- Home-to-School Transport - ensure opportunities are taken to provide bus transport to schools for pupils living further than 3 miles away from school or with special transport needs; take account of transport issues that will arise from the October 2005 White Paper Higher Standards, Better Schools for All.
- School Crossing Patrols - ensure needs of crossing patrols are taken into account when carrying out highway improvements, and review suitability of crossing patrol locations.



- Road Safety Initiatives - ensure joined-up delivery of Education, Training & Publicity, including pedestrian and cycling training within schools to support STPs.
- Practical Pedestrian Training - ensure joined-up delivery of pedestrian training in association with STPs, including schools eligible special initiatives (e.g. 'Kerbcraft' or 'Feet First').
- Healthy Schools Initiative - ensure close co-ordination and joined-up delivery of this initiative with STPs.
- Development Control - ensure opportunities are taken to improve off and on-site highway infrastructure through developer contributions. Ensure that a requirement to produce an STP is a condition attached to new school developments; and
- Local Education Authority Property - ensure new school builds and renovations include appropriate SRTS infrastructure, e.g. secure on-site cycle storage and changing/shower facilities.

## 8. Targets

The strategy will make a significant contribution to target LTP4 Mode Share of Journeys to School and support the DfT/DfES national target which requires all schools to have a Travel Plan by 2010.

There are links to the following:

BVPI 99y Children Killed and Seriously Injured

BV102 Number of Bus Journeys

LTP1c Accessibility- Education

LTP2 Area-Wide Traffic Mileage

LTP3 Cycling

LTP7 Congestion

Local 1 Rail

Local 3 Community Transport and Demand Responsive Transport

