
SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL TO SCHOOL STRATEGY

**Responsible Cabinet Members –
Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio
Councillor Chris McEwan, Children and Young People Portfolio**

**Responsible Directors – Richard Alty, Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)
Murray Rose, Director of Children’s Services**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Members approval for the Sustainable Travel to School Strategy.

Summary

2. The Education and Inspections Act (2006) places a duty on all Local Authorities to publish and review annually, by the 31st August each year, a Sustainable Travel to School Strategy.
3. The current strategy document has been produced in consultation with a range of stakeholders who have been involved in shaping and developing the document.
4. When reviewing the strategy each year officers will need to consider any changes to national legislation or policy guidance, and any emerging local priorities. If there are no proposed changes in policy at the time the strategy is reviewed each year, updating the document will just involve refreshing the factual information on education provision and school travel.
5. A copy of the draft Sustainable Travel to School Strategy is **attached as Annex 1**. This pulls together in one document the current policies and practices of the Council. Actions included in the plan are resourced from current budget commitments.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) Members approve the 2009-2010 Sustainable Travel to School Strategy.
 - (b) Members delegate responsibility to the Director of Children’s Services and Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration) in consultation with the Portfolio holders for Children and Young People and Transport to ensure that ‘factual’ elements of the strategy are reviewed and updated annually.

Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
- (a) The Education and Inspections Act 2006 placed a new duty on Local Authorities to produce this strategy annually.
 - (b) The Director of Director of Children's Services and Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration) will take responsibility for ensuring that the strategy is reviewed annually. Should the outcome of the review suggest that changes in policy are necessary then the revised strategy will be presented to Cabinet for consideration.

Richard Alty,
Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)

Murray Rose,
Director of Children's Services

Background Papers

- (i) Draft Sustainable Travel to School Strategy
- (ii) Education and Inspections Act 2006
- (iii) School Travel Plan Strategy (Annex 8 of Local Transport Plan)
- (iv) School Admissions Policy
- (v) Home to School Transport Guidance, (2007) DCSF

Owen Wilson: Extension 2444 / Rachel Jones: Extension 2026

S17 Crime and Disorder	It is considered that the “Sustainable Travel to School Strategy” will contribute to the reduction of crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	Work to improve access to/from education will help contribute to the health and well being of children and young people.
Sustainability	The strategy will help support the Council’s objectives to encourage sustainable travel and to reduce carbon emissions
Diversity	Policies within the Sustainable Travel to School Strategy will improve opportunities for safer travel to education facilities for all members of the community.
Wards Affected	The Sustainable Travel to School Strategy sets out the framework for travel to / from education provision for all 3 – 19 yr olds living in the borough. Therefore all wards are affected.
Groups Affected	Children and young people (aged 3 -19 yrs) in full or part time education.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a key decision as it affects travel to school from all Wards across the Borough.
Urgent Decision	This report does not require an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The “Sustainable Travel to School Strategy” contributes to : Prosperous Darlington, through helping to reduce traffic congestion at peak times. Aspiring Darlington by improving access to education facilities. Greener Darlington by encouraging sustainable travel. Safer Darlington by improving access and providing road safety training for children and young people.
Efficiency	There are no new policies set in the sustainable travel to school strategy – it sets out a focus for action within the established policy framework. In pulling together established policies and actions delivered by Children’s Services, Community Services and Chief Executive’s (Regeneration) the strategy will help to deliver improved levels of service within existing resources.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on Local Authorities to publish and review annually a Sustainable Travel to School Strategy.
9. In developing and implementing the Sustainable Travel to School Strategy the Council and its partners have been tasked with balancing the objectives of national and local strategies.
 - (a) on the delivery of high quality education services accessible to all children and young people,
 - (b) on the provision of a safe transport system,
 - (c) on improving health through increased levels of active travel (walking and cycling)
 - (d) and on reducing the impact of travel to education on the environment.
10. Travel to school has an important role in helping to achieve priorities for One Darlington Perfectly Placed. In summary the Sustainable Travel to School Strategy will support:
 - (a) *Prosperous Darlington*
By seeking to maximise the efficient movement of school children and college students, travelling by all modes, whilst taking into account the economic, health and environmental impacts of their travel behaviour, thus contributing to tackling congestion.
 - (b) *Aspiring Darlington*
By supporting the provision of good levels of access to education.
 - (c) *Healthy Darlington*
By working to encourage greater levels of walking and cycling as part of every day travel to / from schools and colleges.
 - (d) *Greener Darlington*
By working to reduce the environmental impact of travel to / from schools and colleges in particular by reducing the mode share of trips by car.
 - (e) *Safer Darlington*
By putting in place engineering, education and training measures to reduce road traffic accidents and to improve personal safety.
11. There are no new policies in the Sustainable Travel to School Strategy; it provides an overview of the established policy framework for schools admission, home to school transport provision and for the development and implementation of School Travel Plans. There are no additional resource implications arising from the action plan, over and above existing budget commitments.

12. In pulling together established policies and actions delivered by Children's Services, Community Services and Chief Executives (Regeneration) the strategy will help to deliver improved levels of service within existing resources.
13. A copy of the strategy is **attached at Annex 1**

Annual Review of Travel to School Strategy

14. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a range of new duties upon local authorities to put in place policies that aim to ensure that every child in every school in every community gets the education they need to enable them to fulfil their potential. Section 508A of the Act states that:
 - (a) A local education authority in England must:
 - (i) prepare for each academic year a document containing their strategy to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to meet the school travel needs of their area ("a sustainable modes of travel strategy"),
 - (ii) publish the strategy in such manner and by such time as may be prescribed, and
 - (iii) promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to meet the school travel needs of their area.
 - (b) Before preparing a sustainable modes of travel strategy, an authority must in particular:
 - (i) assess the school travel needs of their area, and
 - (ii) assess the facilities and services for sustainable modes of travel to, from and within their area.
15. Current legislation requires that local authorities publish their sustainable travel to school strategy on their website by 31 August each year.
16. Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance published by the DCSF states that 'Local authorities should in large part base their assessment of children and young people's travel and transport needs on the data provided in school or college travel plans'.
17. Through the work of the Council's School Travel Plan Officer, 30 Darlington schools have completed a travel plan, and a further eight schools are expected to have their plans approved by June 2009.
18. In updating the Strategy each year Officers will review progress against achieving the Strategy objectives and update the factual elements of the document, for example the number of schools with a travel plan and the share of pupils travelling to/from school by a sustainable travel mode. Should the annual review suggest that the Council should consider policy changes to the Strategy document, then the proposed changes will need to be considered by Council.

Outcome of Consultation

19. A range of consultation events have taken place regarding the development of the strategy, these include:
 - (a) In the summer term (2008) officers collected the views of school pupils attending a meeting of the Council of School Councils.
 - (b) During the summer of 2008 officers took part in the Every Child Matters - Market Place Event which provided an opportunity to speak directly to members of the public and seek their views on issues regarding travel to school.
 - (c) In September 2008, Head Teachers and Governing Bodies were given an opportunity to review a draft copy of the strategy and provide comments and feedback.

20. In March 2009 Officers took the draft Sustainable Travel to School Strategy to the Disability Equalities Impact Assessment Sub Group. Recommendations from this group have led to the following actions:
 - (a) Greater reference in the Strategy to disabled children rather than just children with an actual statement of Special Educational Need (SEN), (Page 8).
 - (b) The Strategy has been updated to include a reference to the number of coaches or taxis currently used for Home to School transport that support access for disabled children i.e. tail lifts (see Table 1, page9).
 - (c) When designing physical improvements to school sites greater consideration will be given to the impact (positive or negative) on disabled people. (Table 5, Page 18).
 - (d) Individual Schools Disability Action Plans to be referenced when developing Travel Plans for each school.
 - (e) It has been acknowledged that greater importance should be given to improving the confidence and independence of disabled when travelling between Home and School. This will be done through the work of a number of teams whose policies underpin this strategy by creating a greater awareness of individual needs and promoting more inclusive practice when developing and implementing policy.
 - (f) Further discussion will be undertaken with the providers of public transport across the Borough to try to encourage greater opportunities for disabled children to use more sustainable methods of transport and to allow them a wider range of choice when travelling to school.
 - (g) Training provided to coach and taxi operators contracted for Home to School transport will include Social Model Training to ensure a high level of service is provided to all disabled children. This will also be raised with public transport operators.

21. The Disability Equalities Impact Assessment Sub Group also asked that a review of the Home to School Transport Policy be undertaken, including the completion of a Disability Equalities Impact Assessment.