

**16 November 2010**

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**Road Safety & Sustainable Travel in Walsall**

**Ward(s)** Borough-wide

**Portfolios:** Councillor Ansell – Portfolio Holder for Transport

**Summary of report:**

This report sets out the approach to implementing work associated with the programmes delivered by the Road Safety & Sustainable Travel team and the engaging of Children's Services. These projects combine physical schemes along with educational and behavioural initiatives to challenge and promote safer and more sustainable forms of travel targeting children and other vulnerable road users.

**Background papers:**

Report to Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel on the 9 March 2010 - Agenda Item 10 - which referred to possible areas of work for the Panel relating to Road Safety, Traffic Congestion and Pollution Control.

**Reason for scrutiny:**

To allow Members the opportunity to review the integration of the Road Safety & Sustainable Travel team and Children's Services and their common tasks of addressing road safety benefits and healthy themes for children walking to school and benefits that have been gained through the introduction of measures.

**Resource and legal considerations:**

Members should be aware that this area of work covers the responsibility to manage and deliver two statutory duties as part of the Highway Authority and Local Education Authority functions. Any changes to the future delivery of the service will take account of these duties.

Budgetary constraints will have an impact on future ability to deliver whether funding is capital or revenue. However, it is anticipated that the team will maintain the ability to undertake minimum Statutory functions; support continuity to deliver training schemes via partners and within the working smarter programme.

It is important to note that work related to Sustainable Mode of Travel is carried out on behalf of Children's Services. As the funding for this function has been withdrawn discussions are underway with Children's Services to identify how they wish to deliver this work in the future to ensure that the General Duty placed on the Local Authority is met.

**Citizen impact:**

Through educating children and other vulnerable road users and encouraging the take up of sustainable forms of travel, we can improve their personal safety and reduce social exclusion. Furthermore, encouraging children and adults to consider alternative forms of travel can have a wider benefit in terms of their physical health and well being, while supporting a cross departmental approach to delivery. Developing an economical and socially sustainable transport system, can generate wealth and spread prosperity, reinforce community cohesion and open up life-changing opportunities.

**Environmental impact:**

The promotion of sustainable travel supports the Government's approach to delivering a low carbon environment with a focus on both air quality and quality of life. Reducing the number of car journeys through encouraging more sustainable forms of travel contributes towards these targets and underpins Climate Change.

**Performance management:**

Current performance management targets are achieved.

**Equality Implications:**

Road safety programmes are delivered for the benefit of all sections of the community as road accidents are not discriminatory. In addition, positive action is also undertaken to assist specific sections of the community where an identifiable need can be quantified.

The development of sustainable travel initiatives, delivers benefits of all sections of the community through improving the local environment in terms of pollution, congestion and parking issues. Furthermore, the development of improved transport corridors through sustainable travel initiatives supports the integration of all sectors of the community while improving social inclusion and community cohesion.

**Consultation:**

All work programmes are implemented in consultation with Councillors, Officers, Schools, and the public.

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# **ROAD SAFETY & SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL IN WALSALL**

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 This report seeks to explain the integration of Engineering and Transportation and Children's Service with regard to road safety and health themes for children walking to school via Safer Routes to School, deployment of Vehicle Activated Speed Sign (VASS) and Safety Camera Protocol and how our policies, procedures and actions result in improvements.

## **2 Introduction**

- 2.1 The Road Safety & Sustainable Travel team are responsible for the delivery of a number of statutory functions emanating from the The Road Traffic Act 1988, Section 39 and Education and Inspections Act 2006. These Acts place a duty on the Local Authority 'to giving road safety information and training' and further 'to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport.'
- 2.2 The team is sub divided to deliver these requirements; Traffic Engineering, Education, Training & Publicity and Sustainable School Travel.
- 2.3 Traffic Engineering develops the minor work programme in relation to alleviating collisions as part of the LTP and develop policies related to sustainable modes of travel and they manage the implementation of any changes in legislation such as the Speed Limit Review etc.
- 2.4 The Education, Training & Publicity delivers information & training courses including cyclist (Bikeability) and pedestrian training. They also organise campaigns targeting children and other vulnerable road users including providing technical support for the School Crossing Patrol service.
- 2.5 The Sustainable School Travel team is responsible for developing and reviewing the Sustainable Mode of Travel strategy. Additionally, they assist Schools prepare and implement their Travel Plans and other sustainable travel initiatives in partnership with our stakeholders.

## **3 Integration**

- 3.1 Schools have been encouraged to write a School Travel Plan (STP) supported by the School Travel Adviser. To date 98% of schools have STPs with the schools securing in excess of £650,000 in capital funds.
- 3.2 To secure the long term funding for the development of new routes to and from school the 'Safer Routes to School' programme has been included into the LTP Integrated Transport Block allocation.
- 3.3 The Council has included NI198 (Children travelling to school – usual mode of travel), as part of the key 35 indicators for the Local Area Agreement (LAA). To date Walsall has been successful in surpassing the annual targets set although the government has recently announced that LAAs are to be scrapped.

## 4 Associated Programmes

4.1 There are numerous safety related programmes we have initiated;

- **SPACE (Safer Parent and Child Education)** Aimed at deprived areas to teach parents the skills to teach their children road safety
- **ToGo NoGo** pedestrian training in primary schools
- **Bikeability** – Cycling proficiency for the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- **Vehicle Activated Speed Signs (VASS)** signs mounted on existing street furniture to remind drivers of the speed limit in force on the road they are travelling
- **Active Sustainable Travel Project (A\*Stars)** Aimed at Childhood obesity in Year 6 by encouraging more physical activity including travelling to school in partnership with Children's Services.
- **Walk Once a Week (WoW)** designed to increase the number of children walking to school by rewarding them with a series of badges
- **Adult Cycle Training** Aims to encourage adults to cycle by providing one-to-one training, includes cycle maintenance sessions and 'Parent & Child' cycle training
- **Walkit.com** an online journey planning website for local schoolchildren to plan their journey to school or leisure journeys.
- **Schooltravelwise.org.uk** The site helps children plan their school journey by bus, walking or cycling and is linked to Walkit.com of the 10,000 hits per month 2,500 are by Walsall children.

4.2 **Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Block** – delivery of Local Safety Schemes, Promotion of Community Health & Safety, Measures to encourage Walking, Measures to encourage Cycling, Safer Routes to School and Facilities for powered two wheelers.

## 5 Policies & Procedures managing the work

5.1 The team has recently reviewed the policies & procedures associated with the delivery of work undertaken tabled at a previous meeting.

## 6 Partnerships and Reviews

6.1 The team is represented as chair of the Walsall Road Safety Forum, which includes representatives from West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS), Police, Walsall NHS, and Walsall College. Initiatives include:

- **Crash Factor** a multi-partnership event aimed at improving the road safety awareness and responsibility of young drivers;
- **For My Girlfriend** a campaign aimed to target young women to encourage their boyfriends to develop a more responsible attitude towards their driving;
- **In Car Safety** – Joint initiative with WMFS to develop the skills to check and provide advice to the general public regarding the fitting of child car seats;
- **Developing a Service Level Agreement** to enable the WMFS to assist in the delivery of Bikeability training in schools;

- 6.2 The team is represented at the regional Technical Officer Group (TOG) and has been successful in securing funds to deliver young driver and child pedestrian training
- 6.3 The Watchman system was a project designed to provide a real alternative to employing fixed safety cameras as well as being used to manage the potential withdrawal of selected safety camera activity from existing sites.
- 6.4 The team were one of the original instigators of the West Midlands Driver Improvement Group, who provide courses for drivers, referred by the police as an alternative to prosecution for a due care and attention motoring offence.
- 6.5 The team also delivers joint schemes with Sustrans to improve the cycleway infrastructure. Sustrans (the sustainable transport charity) is a key partner involved in many walking and cycling schemes across the country.

## **7 Benefits and Achievements**

- 7.1 The work contributes to a number of National and Local Indicators including:
- NI47 – People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents
  - NI48 – Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents
  - NI198 – Children travelling to school - mode of transport usually used
  - NI55 – Obesity among primary school age children in Reception Year
  - NI56 – Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6
  - LTP3 - Cycling index (recorded regional cycling levels)
- 7.2 The number of annual casualties in Walsall over the past ten years has shown a general downward trend from 1300 to 900 per annum.
- 7.3 Currently we are meeting the national targets set for both NI47 & NI48. As part of West Midlands LTP, stretched targets for these indicators were also set. Walsall is currently on track to meet these stretched targets although the Region is not.
- 7.4 The Team have delivered various Local Safety Schemes achieving an average First Year Rate of Return in excess of 230%. This is in excess of the regional average of 173%.
- 7.5 Through the introduction of the Watchman system along the Broadway there is now an 11% increase in vehicles travelling below 30mph. 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds have reduced by up to 7.3mph.
- 7.6 NI198 was included in the Local Area Agreement and the annual targets have been achieved.
- 7.7 The A\*Stars project has seen car use for school-based journeys reduce by 3.72% during the project.
- 7.8 Delivered Bikeability training to 1000 children, aged over 10, annually for the past three years.

- 7.9 Delivered child pedestrian training to over 3000 Year 2 and 3 children, annually, for the past two years. This programme has recently ceased due to Government funding constraints.
- 7.10 Completed the implementation on the National Cycle Network through Walsall.
- 7.11 The LTP3 indicator measures the cycling index, which is the level of cycling across the West Midlands. The target is to achieve a 1% increase from the 2003/04 baseline by 2010/11.
- 7.12 Over the life of the current Local Transport Plan (2006-2011) we have implemented the following:
- 19 Safer Routes to School
  - 28 Local Safety Schemes
  - 30 new pedestrian crossing facilities
  - 5km of new cycle route on road and 2km off road
  - 6.5km of new shared use footway