

Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel

**Agenda
Item No. 8**

DATE: 25 November 2008

Sustainable Travel to School Strategy

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr A Harris - Transportation
 Cllr Z Ali – Children’s Services

1. Summary of report:

1.1 This report seeks the comments of the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel on Walsall Council’s Sustainable School Travel Strategy before it is sent to Cabinet for approval. The Education and Inspections Act, 2006, introduced a statutory requirement for each Local Authority in England to produce a sustainable school travel strategy.

1.2 Walsall Council’s Sustainable School Travel Strategy details the work the Authority is already involved in and how it intends to meet the four duties as laid down by the Education and Inspections Act.

2. Recommendations:

2.1 That subject to any comments Members may have Walsall Council’s Sustainable School Travel Strategy be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

3. Background papers:

3.1 Draft Sustainable Travel to School Strategy, will be available in political party rooms and on the council website. The final document will be produced through print and design services. Some minor changes may need to be made, mainly alterations to the format or clarity of information.

4. Reason for scrutiny:

4.1 To seek scrutiny’s initial views on the Strategy and any advice offered prior to submission for formal approval in December.

5. Resource and legal considerations:

5.1 Financial: In order to support Local Authorities in meeting the duty to promote sustainable travel, grants have been issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Walsall Council will receive £22,863 between 2007-08 and 2011-12. The grant is paid to Walsall Children's Services – Serco and they have transferred this to the School Travel Team for 2007-08. A commitment to transfer these funds for the next 4 years has been included within the new contract which was put out to tender, and has since been awarded to Serco. The grant will be used to fund a part-time post within Transportation and Forward Planning, and the post-holder will work closely with the School Travel Adviser and Road Safety Team.

5.2 Legal: It is a statutory duty that the council produces a Sustainable Travel to School Strategy. Failure to adopt this document will mean that the council falls short of its statutory duty.

5.3 Staffing: There are currently 2 full-time School Travel Advisor's in post. One is mainstream funded, the other is a fixed term post funded via the LAA until March 2009.

Actions outlined will need to be delivered on a prioritised basis to ensure that they can be delivered with the existing staffing level. Additional staffing will need to be secured to support some of the actions, implementations and initiatives within the strategy and a major review of the document. The full extent of additional resources that will be required will be determined fully following further investigation. If additional staff posts are created, or if there are amendments to existing posts to assist with delivery, it will be necessary to seek a joint delegation.

6. Citizen impact:

6.1 Improvements to schools or highways and increased levels of walking & cycling will have a bearing on the well-being and satisfaction of all residents of the borough. Sustainable travel will assist by

- Improving the health of communities,
- Improving public transport and encouraging walking & cycling
- Providing through School Travel Plan's, provisions of cycle storage for pupils within schools
- Provide Road Safety /Sustainable Travel Education
- Monitoring of bus behaviour to help create a safer journey for all

7. Environmental impact:

7.1 The Sustainable Travel Strategy plays an important role in promoting and encouraging the use of sustainable methods of travel. Improvements to the infrastructure will help to encourage more parents and school staff in the borough to travel by sustainable modes rather than car, having an impact upon the reduction of traffic congestion and associated pollution and road safety problems. Further consideration will be given to each specific action when implemented during

consultation, to ensure a pro-active approach to minimising environmental impacts.

8. Performance management:

8.1 National performance targets state that 90% of schools should have a school travel plan by 2009 and 100% of schools should have school travel plans by 2010. Walsall had achieved 78% as of March 2008 generating an income of £625,000 to schools in the borough.

9. Equality Implications:

9.1 Improvements to infrastructure can provide an invaluable and straightforward means of access to amenities for local residents. Geographically, the highest concentrations of no-car households correspond with wards which fall within the most deprived wards within the borough. Any physical improvements made around schools will therefore benefit not just school children but also local residents residing in the most deprived wards.

Support for walking, cycling and public transport initiatives are offered to all schools in all areas regardless of car-use to help encourage both deprived and affluent areas to support sustainable travel.

10. Consultation:

10.1 Various departments have been consulted when compiling the strategy, mainly the following-

- Education Walsall- Serco
- PCT
- Transportation- Safer Routes to School, ROWIP
- Road Safety Department
- Connexions
- Head Teachers

A working party group was set up to obtain views for the content of the strategy and action plan.

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1. Report

Please note:

In this section of the report, you should take note of the following points:-

- There is no need to reproduce the title of the report at the top of the page
- Avoid the use of title “background”.
- Use relevant headings to explain the issues
- Number paragraphs in each section e.g. 1.1
1.2
1.3
- Keep it short and to the point
- Avoid jargon
- Use diagrams, flow charts, etc, where appropriate, to break up the text
- Use bullet points where you can
- Would a presentation support the report?
- Use Arial font, point size 12