

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|--------------------------|
| Subject: | Safe & Sustainable Travel to Schools | | |
| Date of Meeting: | 1 June 2015 | | |
| Report of: | Executive Director of Children's Services | | |
| Contact Officer: | Name: | Michael Nix | Tel: 01273 290732 |
| | | Martin Heath | 01273 293705 |
| | Email: | michael.nix@brighton-hove.gov.uk | |
| Ward(s) affected: | All | | |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- inform Members of the work with schools to reduce the use of cars to take children to and from school;
- advise Members of the policy for managing school travel adopted by the Council as part of the 'Safer Roads' Strategy 2015-2020; and
- inform Members of the procedural approach being followed by the Road Safety Team to support schools with their efforts to reduce reliance upon private car use for the journey to/from school and the development and maintenance of their School Travel Plans.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Members note the Council's school travel management activities, the adopted policy and the School Travel Planning procedures being followed.

2.2 That Members endorse the proposals described under 'Next Steps' and summarised below:

- To establish robust data sources that enable the School Travel Advisors to guide schools on the ways that they can support and maintain lower car use for the trip to/from school – especially the sharing of post code data between service teams as a priority;
- To target parking/anti-social driving enforcement based on a proven need approach, where enforcement complements other measures in the School Travel Plan;
- Continued collaborative working between Road Safety and Public Health officers to achieve healthy, active lifestyles and meet performance targets for public health;
- The promotion of School Travel Plan development by Children & Young People's Services to all city schools.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Brighton & Hove City Council has key Statutory Duties imposed by virtue of its role as both Education Authority and Highway Authority.

Education and Inspections Act 2006

- 3.2 Section 508A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a general duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport, in respect of school travel. This duty applies to children and young people of compulsory school age who travel to receive education or training in a local authority's area and relates to journeys to and from all institutions where education or training is delivered.

Road Traffic Act 1988

- 3.3 Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 states that each local authority, where it is the highway authority, must carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads or parts of roads within their area; and in the light of those studies, must take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to prevent such accidents.

Education (School Information) (England) Regulations 2002

- 3.4 These Regulations, as amended, require local authorities to publish their Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy on their website by 31 August each year. The Council's Road Safety Team meets this obligation on behalf of the Council through the publication of its 'How Do You Travel To School' booklet.

The Health and Social Care Act 2012

- 3.5 At the local level, the Health & Social Care Act 2012 places responsibility upon local authorities for improving the health of their populations. The Council's new public health responsibilities mean that it can add health and well-being value to some of the services for which the Council is already delivering.

Managing School Travel in Brighton & Hove

- 3.6 The importance of managing school travel effectively will be known to Committee Members. The meeting of duties set out in the Education Act 1996 and the provisions (under Sections 508B and 508C) that enable local authorities to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made to facilitate a child's attendance at school, require difficult decisions about school transport to be made every year.
- 3.7 Many schools in the City frequently raise their concerns over the safety of traffic conditions outside schools at arrival/ dispersal times, especially poor parking behaviour and anti-social driving (speeding, driving on footways). Parents also regularly encounter travel issues created by excessive car use and the impacts of poor parking and driving behaviour on the safety of walking routes to and from schools. These concerns frequently lead to complaints to local elected members, as well as petitions and deputations to various Committees, including full Council.

- 3.8 The importance of promoting sustainable travel to and from school is also recognised nationally and the Department for Education’s “Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities” (July 2014) states that the sustainable school travel duty should have a broad impact, including providing health benefits for children and their families, through active school journey modes, such as walking and cycling.
- 3.9 The Council’s ‘Safer Roads’ Strategy 2014-20 sets out the approach adopted by School Travel Advisors to encourage sustainable travel to school and to develop road infrastructure to support the travel needs of pupils. Further information about this is contained in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 3.10 The School Travel Advisors’ current focus is on travel plan development for primary schools and they are currently engaged with 38 of the city’s schools. Within the past six months 11 schools have prepared and submitted their School Travel Plans. The School Travel Advisors are in communication with all schools through the delivery of the child road safety training services (bike/scoot/walk) and in response to concerns raised by schools or parents. Where significant concerns are identified by schools or parents the team carries out a targeted response through ‘soft-touch’ enforcement and multi-agency enforcement actions days, at least twice a year.

Next Steps

- 3.11 Continued collaboration and support between Council services is the most cost effective way of enabling this programme of safe, sustainable travel to school to continue. The key elements for achieving this include;
- a) Establishing robust data sources that enable the School Travel Advisors to guide schools on the ways that they can support and maintain lower car use for the trip to/from school –the sharing of post code data between service teams is a particular priority;
 - b) Targeting of parking/anti-social driving enforcement based on a proven need approach where enforcement complements other measures in the School Travel Plan;
 - c) Collaborative working between Road Safety and Public Health officers to achieve healthy, active lifestyles and meet performance targets for public health;
 - d) Promotion of School Travel Plan development by Children & Young People’s Services to all city schools.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation with parents and children is encouraged through the development of School Travel Plans. The Council’s School Travel Advisors recommend that schools establish multi-disciplinary teams (teachers, admin

staff, parents, PCSO's, public health advisors) to develop their School Travel Plans with support from the Road Safety Team.

- 5.2 Formal consultation is carried out with schools, residents and parents with regard to any engineering measures or infrastructure improvements to be implemented.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The role of School Travel Plans in promoting active, healthy lifestyles and safe, sustainable travel is well proven and nationally recognised.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications for Children's Services arising from the recommendations. The costs associated to the council's school travel management activities are funded from the Road Safety Education general fund budget within the Transport service.

Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks

Date: 19 May 2015

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report which sets out how the Council is fulfilling its various legislative duties regarding safe and sustainable school transport.

Lawyer Consulted: Serena Kynaston

Date: 15 May 2015

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 There are no equalities implications arising from the recommendations, which support the objectives of the Council's Equalities Policy.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 There are no sustainability implications arising from the recommendations.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.5 None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Legal Context
2. Effective School Travel Planning – Background Notes

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. 'How Do You Travel to School' Booklet 2015 - Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (BHCC)

Appendix 1 Legal Context

Education and Inspections Act 2006

- A1.0 Section 508A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a general duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport, in respect of school travel. This duty applies to children and young people of compulsory school age who travel to receive education or training in a local authority's area and relates to journeys to and from all institutions where education or training is delivered.
- A1.1 There are five main elements to the duty which local authorities must undertake:
1. An assessment of the travel and transport needs of children and young people within the authority's area;
 2. An audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority's area that may be used when travelling to and from, or between schools/institutions;
 3. A strategy to develop the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are best catered for;
 4. The promotion of sustainable travel and transport modes on the journey to, from and between schools and other institutions; and
 5. The publication of a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy.
- A1.3 The Act defines sustainable modes of travel as those that the local authority considers may "improve the physical well-being of those who use them, the environmental well-being of all or part of the local authority's area, or a combination of the two".
- A1.4 Government advises that local authorities should, in large part, base their assessment of children and young people's travel and transport needs on the data provided by schools or colleges, often contained within School Travel Plans. Effective school travel plans, updated as necessary, put forward a package of measures to improve safety and reduce car use, backed by a partnership involving the school, education, health and transport officers from both the local authority and also the police.
- A1.5 School Travel Plans seek to secure benefits for both the school and the children by improving their health through active travel and reducing congestion caused by school runs, which in turn helps improve local air quality and road safety.
- A1.6 In many cases, School Travel Plans are produced as a result of planning conditions placed on new developments by local authority planning departments. In other cases, they are produced voluntarily by schools for travel management, active health and operational reasons.
- A1.7 This highlights the need for all relevant Council departments (e.g. highways departments, planning departments, transport departments, children's

services, environment departments and public health) to be fully engaged when addressing this duty.

Road Traffic Act 1988

A1.8 Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 states that each local authority, where it is the highway authority, must carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads or parts of roads within their area; and in the light of those studies, must take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to prevent such accidents.

A1.9 These measures commonly include;

- a) the dissemination of information and advice relating to the use of roads; (education)
- b) the giving of practical training to road users, or any class or description of road users; (training)
- c) the construction, improvement, maintenance or repair of roads for which they are the highway authority; (engineering) and
- d) other measures taken in the exercise of their powers for controlling, protecting or assessing the movement of traffic on roads (enforcement).

A1.10 These measures are traditionally deployed in combination with each other and through collaboration with other authorities including police and emergency services, as part of a local road safety strategy. In Brighton & Hove, the Council's approach to this duty is set out in the 'Safer Roads Strategy 2015-2020' adopted by the Council in July 2014 and also through its work with the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership, of which the Council is a founding partner.

Education (School Information) (England) Regulations 2002

A1.11 These Regulations, as amended, require local authorities to publish their Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy on their website by 31 August each year. The Council's Road Safety Team meets this obligation on behalf of the Council through the publication of its 'How Do You Travel To School' booklet.

The Health and Social Care Act 2012

A1.12 At the local level, the Health & Social Care Act 2012 places responsibility upon local authorities for improving the health of their populations. The Council's new public health responsibilities mean that it can add health and well-being value to some of the services for which the Council is already delivering.

A1.13 The Government believes that many of the wider determinants of health, including transport and travel, can be more easily impacted by local authorities who are best placed to take a broader view over which services will impact positively on their citizens' health and can combine traditional "public health" activities with other activities locally to maximise benefits.

A1.14 For school travel, placing a greater priority on healthy, active lifestyles through the promotion and enabling of walking and cycling as part of the daily

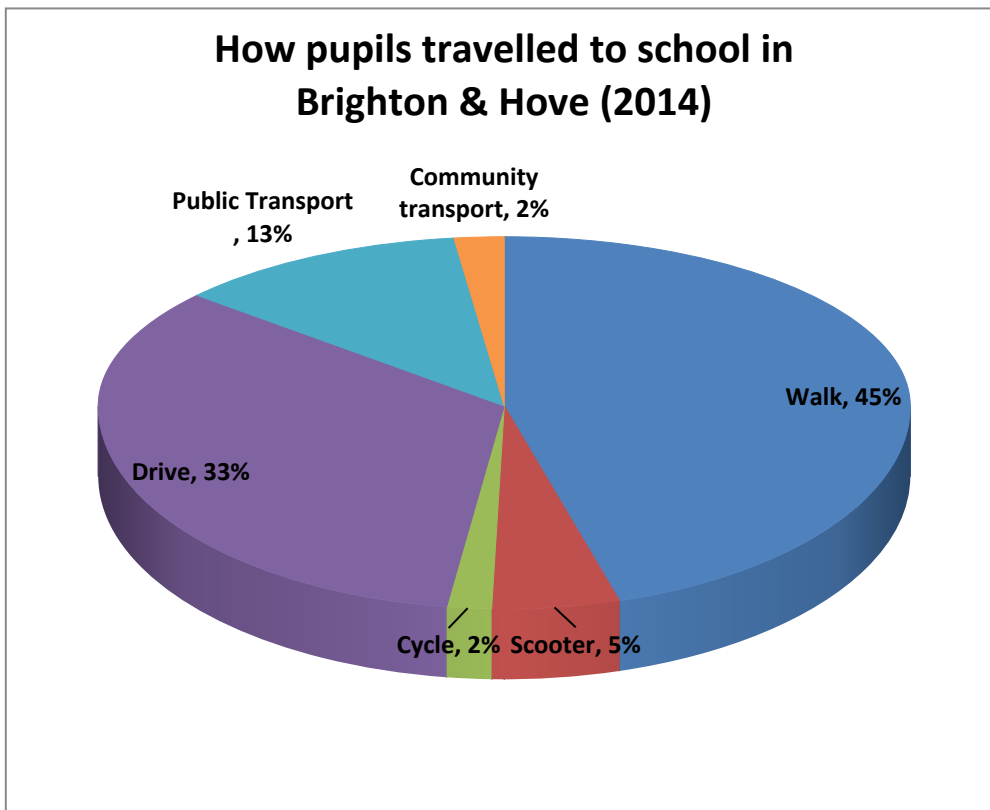
journeys to and from school, provides an ideal opportunity to put this into practice. Every parent wants the best for their children and active school travel is one of the best foundations for ensuring better health and supports transport sustainability.

Appendix 2 – Effective School Travel Planning – Background Notes

- A2.1 Effective sustainable School Travel Plans can have wider benefits for a local area than simply improving access to schools and education. Evidence shows that school travel plans can have benefits ranging from increased road safety, to healthier, more alert and engaged pupils, to increasing independent travel and associated life skills for pupils with Special Educational Needs.
- A2.2 Enabling the increased use of sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling and the use of public transport has environmental benefits in reducing levels of noise, congestion and poor air quality. The promotion of walking and cycling to school can therefore be an effective way to increase physical activity amongst children, which is a key objective for schools and also supported as a public health activity.
- A2.3 The Government’s statutory guidance published in July 2014 (para. 3.17) ***requires*** local authorities to ‘assess pupil needs and complete an audit of the transport infrastructure that supports safe and sustainable travel to school’, as a basis for establishing a strategy for developing its infrastructure so that it better meets the needs of children and young people in their area.
- A2.4 These improvements should address a range of objectives, including environmental improvements, health benefits and enhanced child safety and security. The statutory guidance also states that the strategy should be a statement of the authority’s overall vision, objectives and work programme for improving accessibility to schools and will be an important source of information to parents on the travel options available to them when expressing their preferences for particular schools in the admissions round.
- A2.5 The statutory guidance further advises that the strategy should “be evidence-based, including an assessment of the accessibility needs and problems of the local authority’s area. Local authorities must monitor the implementation of their strategy and revise these as they feel necessary.”

Understanding HOW people Travel to School in Brighton & Hove

- A2.6 Since 2008, the determination of pupil needs has stemmed from the data collected from schools as part of the Road Safety Team’s annual ‘Survey of Mode of Travel to School’ (SMOTS). This replaced the data that used to be collected as part of the annual School Census (Form 7) survey, which ceased in 2008.
- A2.7 The SMOTS data is collected in March/April each year and is currently used to develop the School Travel Plan actions that can support and sustain safe walking, scooting and cycling to school on a site by site basis. The results of modal share analysis from data collated in 2014/15 from 100 local authority and independent city schools is shown below.



A2.8 The general trend since 2010/11 indicates a gradual increase in the proportion of school trips being made by private motor vehicle, from 26% to approximately 33% in 2014/15.

A2.9 Following a service redesign in 2013, the Council's School Travel Advisors now provide sustainable travel consultancy support to schools that wish to create and maintain their School Travel Plans and access the free Council services provided by the Road Safety Team that support sustainable modes of transport.

A2.10 These include child road safety training for walking, scooting and cycling; improved road infrastructure measures (crossing points, safe routes measures) and the nationally recognised Modeshift 'STARS' accreditation awards scheme as well as other incentives.

A2.11 In 2015/16, Government funding secured through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund enables the School Travel Advisors to offer 12 schools in the East Central Brighton area up to £1000 each towards the cost of developing and implementing their School Travel Plans. A strategy review is currently underway for Early Years settings (nurseries) and a further strategy review for Secondary Schools will also follow later this year.

A2.12 Close collaboration between the Road Safety Team and the planners, officers and architects acting for Children & Young People's Services through the schools expansion programme has meant that the timing and extent of infrastructure improvement measures can be optimised to be most effective as schools come into operation. However, one of the most difficult elements to secure is the School Travel Plan from schools.

A2.13 Further collaboration over information sources within the relevant departments, including Children & Young People's Services and Public Health could yield further, substantial improvements to the Council's overall ability to maintain an evidence-based school travel strategy that both meets local accessibility needs, whilst supporting monitoring and revision of that strategy.

A2.14 In particular, the combined use of post-code, demographic and travel data that each department holds will enable an integrated service and also enable the Council to assist parents' decision making about the travel options available to them when seeking the admission of their children to particular schools.

Making Travel to School SAFER in Brighton & Hove

A2.15 The Road Safety Team undertakes an annual review of road safety in the vicinity of schools, as part of its 'Safer Routes to Schools' programme. This is a collision data-led remedial engineering programme that uses reported road traffic injuries within 800m of a school and arising during the school term and times of operation, as catalysts for providing infrastructure improvements, ranging from crossing improvements to speed management measures.

A2.16 Funding for this programme is made from the Local Transport Plan budget and is currently limited to £50,000 per annum, with added value sought from planning contributions arising from land-use development projects and integration with other public transport, urban realm and cycling projects wherever possible.

A2.17 Since 2013, the development of new and expanded schools in the City has also enabled funding contributions to be made for the development of improved infrastructure measures that support sustainable travel and deter anti-social driving behaviour, as part of the Planning Consent process. Wherever new schools have been provided or existing schools have been expanded, the opportunity has been taken to develop School Travel Plans and secure funding contributions towards infrastructure measures.

A2.18 Each year, the Council's Transport Department also receives almost one hundred requests and petitions for formal pedestrian crossing facilities to be provided, many of which come from residents seeking improved facilities on their walking route to schools. Funding for the assessment of sites is met from the Local Transport Plan budget and sites are prioritised for implementation as soon as further funding becomes available.

A2.19 In 2014/15, a pilot programme of targeted enforcement of illegal parking and anti-social driving behaviour was undertaken at four schools across the city. The multi-agency approach involved collaboration between the Council's Transportation and Road Safety teams, Civil Enforcement officers from the Council's contracted parking enforcement provider and local Police Community Service Officers.

A2.20 The multi-agency pilot received cross-party support from the Council's elected members and targeted footway parking, stopping on School Keep Clear road markings and waiting/loading restrictions. The pilot demonstrated conclusively that parents are able to modify their driving and parking

behaviour in the vicinity of schools, when the right combination of incentives is provided.

A2.21 The pilot provided a robust justification for the continued targeting of enforcement at schools where anti-social parking and driving is an issue and where it is identified in the school's School Travel Plan. A further pilot is planned for May 2015 and collaboration between the Road Safety Team and Parking department will enable targeted enforcement activities.