

## TRANSPORTATION SELECT COMMITTEE

2 April 2009

**SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANS AND TRAVEL INITIATIVES****PURPOSE OF REPORT:** Scrutiny of Services and Budgets

This report explains the role of School Travel Plans and how they will be improved now that:

- (i) the government grant scheme is coming to an end;
- (ii) the County has a statutory obligation to promote sustainable travel to schools.

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. A School Travel Plan document (STP) sets out objectives and actions for improving road safety - through education, training, engineering and enforcement - and reducing car dependency on the school journey. It's produced jointly by the school, TfS officers and sometimes other parties (for example the police or local residents).
2. School Travel Plans have generated income for schools. They have also helped to initiate road safety and sustainability activities and very often these activities have continued even if the STP itself has not been updated.

**GOVERNMENT STP SCHEME AND VALUE FOR MONEY**

3. In 2003, the government published a standard template for STPs along with a grant scheme for maintained schools. The one-off grant is paid to the school for producing an STP. TfS submits a list of new STPs for funding to central government in March of each year; schools then receive a grant amount based on a formula. Annex 1 shows the income generated so far and the number of STPs yet to be submitted, by district.
4. The grant is for use on capital items in the school grounds and has to be spent within 'Devolved Formula Capital' rules. Schools have used it for paths, gates, cycle parking, mini-scooter parking, pedestrian shelters, CCTV and other purposes.
5. As at February 2009, there are 97 schools eligible to claim who have yet to do so; TfS have contacted them all and offered support and examples to help them secure the money (around £400,000) by the deadline of March 2010, when the scheme will end. The service will work with local members to help encourage schools to make a claim against these funds.

**EDUCATION AND INSPECTIONS ACT 2006**

6. Under the Act, there is a general duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport. There are four main elements to the duty:

- a. an assessment of the travel and transport needs of children and young people within the authority's area;
  - b. an audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure;
  - c. the promotion of sustainable travel and transport modes;
  - d. a strategy that gives these three elements a direction.
7. The elements can be tackled through the production of School Travel Plans. The participation of students, parents and others comprises a community-based assessment and audit of the school journey. The County supports this by assisting with surveys, education and training to improve skills, engineering schemes and events such as the Golden Boot Challenge.
  8. A first draft strategy for Surrey was submitted to Executive in 2007 to achieve compliance with the Act. It is proposed that the strategy is updated for the academic year 2009/10. The approach described in this report will form the backbone of the strategy along with the findings of the accessibility study and bus review.

#### **NATIONAL INDICATOR 198: CHILDREN TRAVELLING TO SCHOOL – MODE OF TRAVEL**

9. The indicator measures the proportion of school-aged children travelling to school by the mode of travel that they usually use, in two age groups (5-10 years old and 11-16 years old). Good performance is indicated by a lower mode share of children travelling to school by car. The mode information is collected via the school census and FourS follow up schools that have not returned it.
10. NI198 is part of the national indicator set, implying TfS should continue to have a target into the third Local Transport Plan. To this end, TfS are continuing work to identify schools with the most potential to improve modal share, as well as road safety need. It will be important for TfS to help active schools ensure their school census information reflects their achievements.
11. An aspiration to further reduce the mode share of children travelling to school by car by one in every twelve trips in both primary and secondary schools, over the period of the third Local Transport Plan, would be challenging but achievable.

#### **SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANS AND SCHOOL TRAVEL INITIATIVES**

12. Around 20 schools found it useful to update their Travel Plans in the 2008-09 academic year; by comparison, over 300 will have participated in safety and sustainability services offered by TfS. A summary of the travel initiatives is shown in Annex 2. TfS are currently reviewing the services offered with a view to effectively serving the 550 schools in the County.
13. School Travel Plans help to co-ordinate actions and maximise the links between transport, health and citizenship. As the government grant scheme ends, these aspects can be consolidated into improved STPs that also help the County to discharge its statutory obligations.
14. TfS are very lucky in that often the momentum for travel initiatives in a school will be maintained by enthusiastic teachers, parents, students or governors. TfS are currently considering the ways in which a network of partners and volunteers interested in behaviour change could be better supported and utilised.

## IMPROVING SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANS

### Improving Development-Related School Travel Plans

15. The potential advantage of a Travel Plan that is incorporated into a planning consent is that the developer can be obliged to implement certain measures. This advantage has not been systematically secured in the past, mainly because planning conditions only required the production of an STP after the consent had been granted. In conjunction with the Transportation Development Control section, a revised process for developers was produced in February 2009. The main changes are shown in Annex 3.

### Improving Voluntary School Travel Plans

16. **A more student-friendly format:** a prototype STP has been produced and is being tested with some schools over the 2009-10 academic year. It is web-based, has an emphasis on visually representing achievements and issues, can be updated by the students under supervision of staff and can be better integrated into the curriculum.
17. **Linking to other school activities:** the number of schemes in which schools participate is growing, including: sustainable schools, healthy schools, eco-schools, schools sports partnerships, federations and confederations, local school partnerships, surrey safer schools award, and the obesity strategy. The prototype STP described above has a flexible format that allows it to be used across all of these activities.

## CONCLUSIONS

18. As the government scheme ends TfS have the opportunity to improve the way STPs are used. This will provide more effective engagement with the school community and help to fulfil the County's statutory obligations.

### Equalities Implications

19. An equalities and diversity action plan is in place for services offered by the TfS Safer Travel Team, assessing why some schools or individuals do not take up services that the County offers. The service will look to work with local members on how best to encourage schools to participate more in the programme.

### Risk Management Implications

- a. If the County does not demonstrate that it is promoting sustainable travel through a strategy it will not be complying with a statutory duty.
- b. The reduction in staff numbers due to the recruitment freeze means that supporting schools to make grant submissions, promoting sustainable transport and supporting targets on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and obesity reduction becomes more challenging.

### Implications for the Council's Priorities or Community Strategy/Local Area Agreement Targets

20. School travel initiatives are able to support the following Local Area Agreement targets: Healthy choices and inequalities – Obesity; Stronger communities – Engagement and active citizenship; Stronger communities – Capacity building, active citizenship and volunteering; Sustainability – Emissions.
21. School travel initiatives are able to support the following Community Strategy priorities: promote healthy lifestyles, particularly targeting groups and communities at most risk; help people in Surrey to achieve more sustainable lifestyles; create better, more sustainable developments that deliver more social,

environmental, and economic benefit; encourage and facilitate active citizenship to strengthen communities

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Select Committee may wish to:

- a. Support the continued efforts to ensure that all schools submit a Travel Plan for grant funding;
- b. Receive a report on the 'Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy' for academic year 2009/10 as required by the Education and Inspections Act;
- c. Support the programme to improve School Travel Plans as part of that strategy;
- d. Request annual updates on progress against National Indicator 198
- e. Endorse the service's proposal to work more closely with local members to promote the take-up of school travel plans by schools.

**NEXT STEPS**

To continue work on the recommendations in this report and to incorporate them into a 'Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy' for academic year 2009/10.

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**Sources/background papers:**

Education and Inspections Act 2006

Report to Executive, "Changes to Home to School Travel and Transport", 17 July 2007, item 6.

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<b>ANNEX 1 – STP GRANT OBTAINED BY YEAR AND THOSE REMAINING TO BE SUBMITTED</b>
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Year	Number of Surrey schools submitting Travel Plans	Total Amount of Grant to Surrey Schools
2004	98	£575,041
2005	86	£515,271
2006	45	£246,416
2007	42	£234,578
2008	38	£215,740
Grand Total	309	£1,787,046

**STPs remaining to be submitted, by district**

DISTRICT	Total
Elmbridge	3
Epsom and Ewell	3
Guildford	12
Mole Valley	8
Reigate and Banstead	14
Runnymede	4
Spelthorne	11
Surrey Heath	12
Tandridge	5
Waverley	18
Woking	7
Grand Total	97

<b>ANNEX 2 – SUMMARY OF SCHOOL JOURNEY DATA AND TRAVEL INITIATIVES</b>
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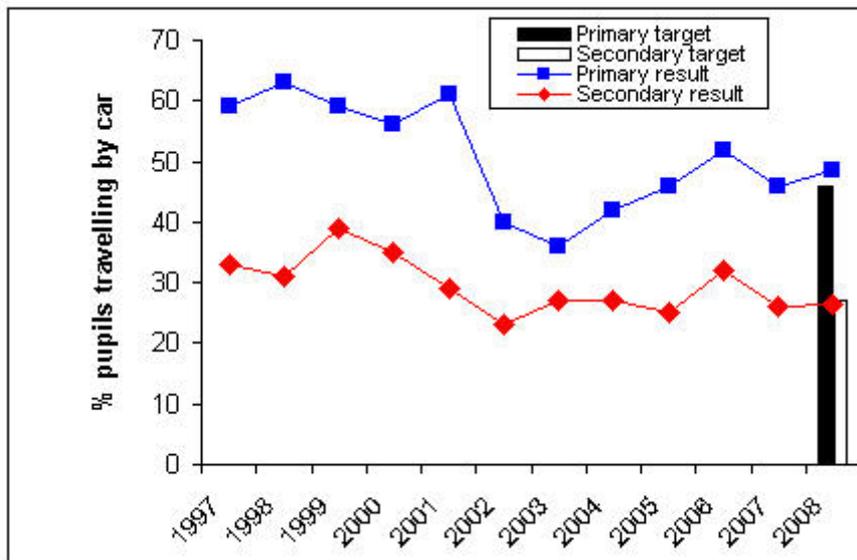
In Surrey, there are 69 million trips per year to and from school. About 26.6 million of these are currently made by car. School travel planning initiatives have helped to reduce the number of car trips over the past decade, mainly through increased walking. At the same time, child casualties have continued on a downward trend. Students tell us how they would choose to travel and if their ambitions were totally realised then a further 1 in 12 car trips would be saved. If this potential was realised, then school travel would make significant contribution towards obesity and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions targets.

**Extract from TfS Performance Report 2008-09 Q3**

NI 198 - Children travelling to school: mode of travel usually used - % of travelling by car (primary and secondary).

Final data from the schools census conducted in January 2008 was released by Government Office for South East in August. Primary school pupils travel by car was 48.7% (slightly above target of 46%) and secondary school pupils travel by car was 26.3% (target 27%). The performance over the longer term is shown by the graph below. In the period since 2004, more of the results are based on the school census,

whereas prior to 2004 the results were based almost entirely on surveys conducted by the County.



**SCHOOL TRAVEL INITIATIVES**

This list does not include school coaches and other coach/bus initiatives. TfS are currently reviewing all education and training and school travel services.

**Programme      Impact**

School Crossing Patrols      97 active sites and 21 vacant sites in Surrey as at February 2009. Patrol officers are line-managed by their schools but trained and monitored by TfS, who also undertake the site risk assessments.

Golden Boot Challenge      In the June 2008 Challenge, the number of pupils travelling as the only car passenger fell by 17%. One third of schools reported the Challenge had a significant impact all year round and a further third reported a minor impact.

Walking Buses      The number of students on walking buses varies through the year and it is quite difficult to evaluate the overall impact. In 2007/08, DCSF offered schools £1,000 to schools to establish walking buses provided they would save 5 car journeys per day. 34 Surrey schools joined the scheme, of which 25 met the criteria and continue to receive the grant in 2008/09. A further 14 schools joined a 'walking initiative' scheme, receiving £500 if they saved 2.5 car journeys per day. All 14 schools continue to receive the grant in 2008/09.

School Cycling Clubs      Pilot scheme in 2007-08 increased cycling at 14 schools from 4% to 8% on average. It is a good result but too early to judge if it can be sustained.

Bikeability cycle training      Estimated 13,000 pupils to be trained academic year 2008/09. Training on busy roads now offered, this service is being developed.

Pedestrian training programme      Until academic year 07/08, practical training was delivered to year 3 pupils (age 7-8) directly by TfS officers. This has been replaced by self-help resources across a wider range age group.

Web-Based      A self-help road safety learning resource for all 4-11 year-olds, allowing for

Personalised Learning Assessment	the different rates at which children develop skills.
Curriculum resources	Made available in 2007/08. FourS are evaluating the use of the resources at schools and updating them.
New format School travel Plans	In development stage as described elsewhere in this report.
Online travel survey	A customisable web-based facility with mapping capabilities available via the Healthy Schools site. Currently being modified after testing.
Park 'n' stride	Tried out at 10 schools to date; general guidance for schools scheduled for publication April 2008.
Construction of cycle sheds	The average proportion of students who cycle to school in Surrey is 3%; at schools who have participated in the cycle parking scheme it has risen to 6% (November 2007 survey).
Safe Drive Stay Alive	Presentation to 12,500 students aged 17-21 in 2008 at Dorking Halls; led by Fire and Rescue and supported by TfS. Financially supported by the services and by some member allocations.
Road Safety Awareness Days	Piloted in 2008 at four secondary schools. Attended by 620 year 11 students (age 16) and teachers, who participated in hands-on events and discussion that aimed to improve attitudes and behaviour in current and future drivers.
Road Safety Theatre in Education	Road Safety Theatre in Education aimed at year group 7 (age 11). In 2008, 50 secondary schools booked performances.

### **ANNEX 3: DEVELOPMENT-RELATED TRAVEL PLANS**

#### **Procedure For Development-Related School Travel Plans**

The developer submits an assessment of the impact of the proposed development separately from the Travel Plan and is encouraged to do so before formally submitting the application.

Based on the assessment, and prior to consent, the developer agrees to a specific set of measures to be implemented after planning consent. These are listed in the Travel Plan and, in this way, become part of the planning obligations.

The developer is obliged to submit regular monitoring reports and implement recovery measures where obligations are not being met.

An assessment and Travel Plan will be required where the development will result in an increase in their pupil admission number. The County's "School Organisation Plan 2008-2017" gives an idea of the scale of the demand for maintained school places and this is summarised below. There will also be applications received for independent schools; the County's Transportation Development Control team (TDC) estimate 0-10 such applications per year.

During the planning application process, TDC will deal directly with the developer and TfS will advise TDC. After consent, TfS will provide support with travel initiatives and also deal with the monitoring. In this way, there is an increased commitment in TfS time compared to previous arrangements.

### Expected Increase In Forms Of Entry Due To Increased Pupils Numbers

Based on Surrey County Council School Organisation Plan 2008-2017. The Plan makes projections on demand for places and so gives an approximate idea of where development pressures can be expected at maintained schools.

	Extra forms of entry expected to be needed 2008-2017; may change due to economic circumstances etc	
<b>District</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
Elmbridge	12	8
Epsom and Ewell	7	4
Guildford	3	0
Mole Valley	0	0
Reigate and Banstead	6	6
Runnymede	0	0 but post-2014 projections to be monitored
Spelthorne	0 may be a reduction	0 may be a reduction
Surrey Heath	1	0
Tandridge	0	0
Waverley	2	0 but extra provision in Farnham may be required
Woking	6	0 but to be kept under review