



Committee and Date

Item

Public



Sustainable Travel Schools Annual Report

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Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Cllr Kirstie Hurst-Knight		

1. Synopsis

This report provides an opportunity to highlight the work of the Sustainable Travel Team over the last academic year. The team was established in February 2024. It also provides an opportunity following a restructure to highlight the key ambitions of the department, seeking approval of KPI's, an annual report of some of the key milestones and council instruction to return annually for progress updates.

2. Executive Summary

Sustainable Travel to School, which includes walking, cycling and scooting, is a key component of Shropshire Council's broader strategy to promote sustainable and healthy lifestyles among its residents. This initiative aligns closely with the Shropshire Plan, which emphasises environmental sustainability, public health and community wellbeing.

- 2.1. Encouraging sustainable travel reduces the number of car journeys, thereby lowering greenhouse gas emissions and contributing to cleaner air.
- 2.2. Walking or cycling to school helps improve children's fitness and overall health, addressing issues such as childhood obesity
- 2.3. Active travel has been shown to enhance mental health by reducing stress and increasing social interactions amongst pupils.
- 2.4. Initiatives like School Streets and Bikeability training made it safer for children to travel actively to school.

- 2.5. The programmes proposed foster a sense of community by involving parents, schools and local organisations in promoting active travel.
- 2.6. Increasing active travel journeys means there are less cars on the road, which in turn will reduce the amount spent on maintenance.

3. Recommendations

We recommend that council endorse the annual report, and agree to incorporate the following KPI's within the Council's Performance Management Framework for annual reporting. The below will allow us to undertake baselining activities to understand our current position in Shropshire, which subsequently will give us targets to work towards in the next academic year (25-26)

- 3.1. 100% of schools to be engaged in the 'Our Journey programme' by July 2030. Our Journey is our brand new digital road safety programme that allows children to engage in road safety education with a focus on travelling sustainably to school.
- 3.2. Number of children actively engaging in the 'Our Journey' programme
- 3.3. Number of school/college pupils engaged in our 16-18 programme- Greenlight.
- 3.4. 80% of year 6 pupils trained in Bikeability Level 2
- 3.5. 50% increase in school journeys being walked, wheeled and cycled by July 2030
- 3.6. Increase in the number of School Streets annually.
- 3.7. Using Moving Traffic Offences Powers to deter parking issues outside schools. Deploy cameras to monitor issue parking on School Keep Clears.
- 3.8. Amount of carbon saved through modal shift: the reduction in car use and increase in walking and cycling.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. Risk narrative We get funded annually from The Bikeability Trust to deliver Bikeability training to school pupils. Over the last few years, we have seen an increase in funding, but at this present time, with a new government, we are unsure of the level of funding for 25-26.
- 4.2. Risk narrative: We rely on funding from Active Travel England to design and deliver infrastructure schemes, as well as funding for behaviour change projects. Again, with the new government in place, we have not yet received any indication of what we can bid for.

4.3. Risk table

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Mitigation</i>
Funding of Bikeability	Open communication with Bikeability to assess our funding levels on a yearly basis.
Funding from Active Travel England	Shropshire receives funding from Active Travel England on a yearly basis. We meet with ATE every 5 weeks to collaborate on schemes, to hear about updates. This will hopefully minimise any disruption in funding.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Shropshire Council is currently managing an unprecedented financial position as budgeted for with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy approved by Council on 29 February 2024 and detailed in our monitoring position presented to Cabinet on a monthly basis. This demonstrates that significant management action is required over the remainder of the financial year to ensure the Council's financial survival. While all Cabinet Reports provide the financial implications of decisions being taken, this may change as officers review the overall financial situation and make decisions aligned to financial survivability. Where non-essential spend is identified within the Council, this will be reduced. This may involve

- scaling down initiatives,
- changing the scope,
- delaying implementation, or
- extending delivery timescales.

5.2 This report is not asking for any additional financial contribution from Shropshire Council. By supporting the service, it will open our ability to apply for external grant funding and our new model has already allowed us to receive more funding.

5.3 Shropshire Council previously spent annually approximately £180,000 on a WSP contract to deliver Road Safety Training and managing the Bikeability grant.

5.4 The service was restructured for the previous academic year (23-24). 4 FTEs appointed at no additional cost to Shropshire Council.

5.5 The Road Safety Education service is now transforming to a self-serve digital programme where we are providing more information and training to schools in a more accessible way, resulting in more pupils trained and better uptake.

5.6 Bikeability is now internally managed.

5.7 Bikeability is grant funded from The Bikeability Trust via Active Travel England. This year we have received £197,549.58. This is an increase from £160,000. This is down to improved service delivery through the redesign.

5.8 Due to the increase in numbers and performance, we are in active conversations with external funders for grants and awards and are seen as a leading Local

Authority for the work we have done on School Streets, Bikeability and Road Safety.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. According to the SD-Commission, 16% of the greenhouse gas footprint of English schools comes from transport, which is estimated to be 9.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. This is roughly the same number of emissions as Birmingham and Manchester combined, and accounts for 15% of the UK's public sector emissions¹
- 6.2. A recent poll carried out by walking and cycling charity *Sustrans* of 1,305 children aged six to 15 showed that nearly half (49%) are worried about climate change. That's up 10% from a similar survey in 2018. What's more, is that just over half (53%) believe adults do not listen to children's concerns on the topic of climate change.
- 6.3. 18 billion kg's of CO₂ are emitted annually in the UK due to the commute, and a quarter of all commutes are due to the school run. Therefore, 4,5 billion kg's of CO₂ are emitted due to the school run.
- 6.4. Any movement from vehicle to sustainable travel could be quantified. This isn't something we are currently measuring; however, it is a recommendation of this report that this is a KPI we supply annually by measuring the modal shift from vehicles to sustainable travel options. We will work with the carbon team to see how we can quantify this. Walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport, car sharing etc are all option within Sustainable Travel.

7. Background

- 7.1. Historically, Road Safety Education has been commissioned to WSP as part of the Service Area 14 contract within Highways. The contract was reviewed to explore how we could deliver a better and more modern service at a reduced cost, whilst achieving more. In July 2023, we ended the contract with WSP and commenced the steps to bring the service back in house. In November 23 we onboarded a long-term agency staff member into the Sustainable Travel Manager Role In February 2024, 3 Sustainable Travel Officers started under the newly formed Sustainable Travel Team, with a focus on modernising our Road Safety Education programme, but crucially their role looks at how we increase the number of children walking, cycling, and wheeling to school and the subsequent wrap around activities.

We're very much at the start of our journey, working and engaging with schools through a variety of behaviour change measures. We're currently working with 45 schools on travel planning through Modeshift Stars to start to make effective change through a more sustainable school journey.

- 7.2. In appendix A you will see our progress to date.

¹ https://www.sd-commission.org.uk/data/files/publications/Publish_Schools_Carbon_Strategy.pdf

- 7.3. We will return to cabinet annually, at the end of every academic year to update on our progress.

8. Additional Information

- 8.1. Press releases.
- 8.2. Newsletter

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. We would like Cabinet to endorse the report and accept the recommendations of the annual KPI's.
- 9.2. Sustainable travel to school is a vital part of the Shropshire Plan, contributing to environmental sustainability, public health and community well-being, by investing in infrastructure, behaviour change, education and community engagement, Shropshire Council is paving the way for a healthier, more sustainable future for its residents.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Local Member: All

Appendices

- Appendix A: Sustainable Travel Team Annual Report
- Appendix B: Example of Newsletter
- Appendix C: Bank Farm Road Student Engagement Report