



Sustainable Travel Team

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

AUGUST 2024



Introduction

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 February 2024, three members of staff started under the newly formed Sustainable Travel Team, with a focus on increasing the number of children walking, cycling, and wheeling to school and the subsequent wrap around activities alongside modernising our road safety education programme.

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

This report sets out some of the highlights of our first school year embedding sustainable travel into schools.

School Streets

In October 2022, Shropshire Council cabinet passed a paper to implement School Streets outside schools across the county. The approval of the paper also led to the council applying for Moving Traffic Offences powers from the Secretary of State to implement School Streets using ANPR cameras. The scheme was funded from Active Travel England's Active Travel Fund 4 grant where Shropshire Council applied for £230,000 to implement the scheme and were successful in obtaining the funding.

School Streets are roads outside schools with a temporary restriction to traffic for up to an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon during drop off and pickup time. The result is a safer and healthier environment for school pupils and the community.

The use of ANPR cameras will allow us to reinvest any income from fines back into the School Streets scheme to implement more and ensure compliance with the scheme.

Five School Streets were part of the pilot that launched in June: Market Drayton Junior School, Woodside Primary School in Oswestry, Gobowen Primary School, Mereside Primary Academy in Shrewsbury, and Whitchurch Junior School. These 5 schools had a history of inconsiderate and dangerous parking and congestion issues. We officially launched the scheme at Market Drayton Junior School where the before and after footage in the launch video shows the difference in implementing a scheme of this type. This launch video can be found here:

[School Streets pilot launch – Market Drayton Junior School, 6 June 2024 \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Shropshire Council's Sustainable Travel Manager was invited to present an Active Travel England Spotlight Webinar on our implementation of School Streets in a rural local authority which was attended by nearly 300 practitioners across England. We also received an invite to present at a CILT webinar on travel demand management in rural settings.



Bikeability Cycle Training

Shropshire Council receive grant funding from The Bikeability Trust on a yearly basis to deliver cycle training in schools. Since April 2022, the national target has been to work towards 80% of Year 6 pupils receiving Level 2 Bikeability training. In 2022/2023 Shropshire Council achieved 55% of Year 6 pupils being trained, which increased to 70% in the 2023/2024 school year. We are on track to hit our 80% target in the next school year, and we will be one of the few Local Authorities to hit this target so soon. Working directly with our Bikeability provider, Learn Cycling has enabled us to increase the numbers trained by 57% from 2022/2023 to 2023/2024.

Bikeability Training Level	22/23	23/24	24/25 (up to 31/7)
Level 1	236	294	297
Level 1 & 2 Combined	1199	1854	757
Level 2	29	255	30
Level 3	93	366	63
Balance	534	750	728
Learn	32	194	215
Total	2123	3713	2090

Bikeability Get Cycling Project

Shropshire Council applied to be part of a pilot project from The Bikeability Trust to train school staff on how to deliver Balance Bike training. This project allows schools the opportunity to embed cycling into the curriculum, giving our youngest learners the skills and confidence to get on a bike from a young age. We had an overwhelming response from our primary schools to take part in the pilot with 115 schools applying. We have currently trained 27 schools (54 teachers) and each school has received six balance bikes. The rollout will continue in the next school year.

Longden Safety Improvement Scheme

Students at Longden Primary School formed a 'Go Slow' campaign in March 2023 with the aim of encouraging road users to slow down when travelling through the village. Initial campaign work included designing colourful and vibrant signs which were placed on wooden posts around the village along with press coverage in local media outlets.

In December 2023 the Sustainable Travel Manager, in partnership with Kier, launched a competition for school children to design posters which would be turned into permanent signs to be added to the highway. Five winning designs were selected and were created by Teddy Frank, Alfie Metliss, Marnie Lowrie-Herz, Bethany Downes, and Lottie and Arrabella Thomas. These were put up in March 2024.

As part of the campaign for safety improvements, students, staff, parents / carers, and school governors went on to highlight concerns around the main pedestrian entrance. The path previously was a grass / dirt track with no safety features at the junction with Longden Road. The Sustainable Travel Team commissioned Kier to construct a hard standing track and add pedestrian safety fencing at the end of the path and this was constructed in May 2024. The school community expressed their gratitude for this safety work and are now planning a planting area next to the new path.



Modeshift STARS

Modeshift STARS is a national awards scheme, established to recognise schools that demonstrate excellence in sustainable travel to school. Every school in England can participate and since February this year the Sustainable Travel Officers have engaged with 45 schools (180 schools within Shropshire) who are interested in taking part in the programme.

The aim of the programme is to improve the health and wellbeing of pupils, staff, and parents / carers by supporting cycling, walking and safe and sustainable travel to school. Schools do this by using the platform to produce a travel plan which sets out aims, objectives and initiatives they have planned or delivered to meet modal shift targets (e.g. 5% more students cycling or walking). Schools will work closely with their assigned Sustainable Travel Officer to identify relevant initiatives and projects that will contribute to them achieving bronze, silver, or gold awards at the end of every term. We will be engaging with additional Shropshire schools as we move forward.

Newsletters

As a new team working with 180 schools across Shropshire, we knew we needed to be able to communicate effectively and consistently with all of them. We decided that an e-newsletter would be the most efficient way to do this and designed it with the aim of promoting not only who we are and what we do, but how we can help schools to improve sustainable travel for their pupils and make their journey to school safer. It is also the easiest and most cost-effective way to share information, initiatives and promotions that might not reach them directly.

Our aim is to get at least one newsletter out each term with additional editions if needed. As well as introducing ourselves and our Portfolio Holder, we have promoted the grants scheme, the road safety superhero character competition, the Our Journey programme, useful toolkits, and a timetable of national events for schools to join. Schools can incorporate our newsletter into their own, promoting our team and projects even further.

Active Travel Small Grants Scheme

In May 2024 the team opened a grant funding scheme for the county's schools after receiving £30000 from Active Travel England's Capability and Ambition Fund. Schools were able to bid for a grant up to £1,000 to schools to increase their Active Travel to and from school. A total of 23 applications were received from schools initially, with a range of proposals from schools including new scooter / bike racks, scooter loan schemes, Dr Bike repair sessions, Scootability training and hi-vis jackets for new walking buses.

The remainder of the funding will be targeted towards schools needing more assistance to increase the number of active travel journeys being made which have been identified by the School Nurses from the Public Health Nursing Service.

Partnership working

The work carried out by the team predominantly aims to encourage more children and young people to travel in a sustainable and safe way. Active journeys can have a positive impact on physical and mental health. After creating our programme we felt that it was important to share this work with other teams and partner agencies that all have similar priorities.

Working collaboratively with colleagues in Public Health, School Nursing, West Mercia Police, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, and Energise Shropshire Telford & Wrekin, we have quarterly meetings to share data, new initiatives, and concerns which allow us to prioritise which schools need our additional help and support.

Toolkits

We have produced three helpful toolkits which can be accessed by schools from our new Sustainable Travel webpage. These are the first point of call for schools and parents to address travel issues and concerns, and cover: encouraging active travel, school parking, and setting up a walking bus. The toolkits offer advice and initiative ideas and solutions. Schools are reminded that each problem they address and initiative they complete, is a step closer to accreditation from Modeshift STARS.

Scotability Training Campaign

Shropshire Council was awarded £174,026 from Active Travel England's Capability Fund in March 2024 to support new schemes to encourage more people to take up active travel such as walking and cycling in the county. Following on from a bid-preparing exercise, £5,500 was awarded to organise a scooter training campaign across the county which took place from 26th to 30th August 2024.

Team Rubicon, a nationwide provider of scootering, cycling and skateboarding training and who have previously delivered similar work in Shropshire, were approached in April 2024 to deliver this campaign. The company supply all equipment in sessions including scooters, helmets, and knee and arm pads.

Venues across the county were selected based on proximity to local communities, on-site accessible facilities, and appropriate space for training. Three sessions per day were organised at Shrewsbury Sports Village, Maurice Chandler Sports and Leisure Centre near Market Drayton, Teme Leisure Centre Ludlow, Idsall Sports Centre in Shifnal and Gobowen Pavilion & Playing Field.

Children had the opportunity to take their Level 1 Scotability training. The Level 1 course starts with the basic skills of balancing, turning, and braking before moving on to narrow pavements, moving obstacles and one-handed signalling. Three sessions per day were available with each lasting 90 minutes. A total of 346 children signed up to receive training during the campaign week. A remaining amount of money unspent from the bid was allocated to provide scooter training to children who attend schools undertaking a School Streets trial in September 2024.



Bank Farm Road

In 2022-2023 Shropshire Council was awarded £382,800 from Active Travel England's Active Travel Fund Round 4. Part of the funding was used to commission a detailed design and feasibility exercise for active travel improvements to Bank Farm Road in Radbrook, Shrewsbury. The proposed scheme included the creation of a segregated walk and cycleway, along with crossing and bus stop safety updates.

The Sustainable Travel Team supported WSP in collecting public feedback through two exercises. The first involved a public engagement event at the Trinity Centre, Shrewsbury on 28th February 2024 and allowed residents to examine the design proposals in detail and leave feedback on this. Colleagues from the Feedback Insights Team worked with us to create a survey which allowed residents to leave more detailed feedback. 238 responses were received through this channel, with 57.92% of respondents saying they would be more likely to travel actively if the improvements were made and 63.64% saying they would feel safer if the walking and cycling paths were separated.



The second exercise involved working with the two schools nearest to Bank Farm Road – The Priory School and Meole Brace School. It was important to gain insights from the students as they were likely to use Bank Farm Road as part of their journey to school and might not have typically been represented in consultation exercises. Officers from the team along with colleagues at WSP were invited to attend both schools at lunchtime on 22nd February 2024 and showed the designs to students, explaining how the changes would impact them. Pupils were asked to complete a short survey on their phones. A total of 377 responses were received over the two schools (219 from The Priory School and 158 from Meole Brace School). 35% of students at The Priory School said they would be more likely to travel on Bank Farm Road if improvements were made and 41% said they would feel safer if the cycling and walking paths were separated. At Meole Brace School 38% said they would be more likely to travel on Bank Farm road if improvements were made and 40% said they would feel safer if the walking and cycling paths were separated.



Our Journey

Following the review into road safety education provision in Shropshire, the decision was taken to retire the Stepping Out programme which had been delivered since 2010. The programme involved an instructor visiting Year 3 or 4 students at county primary schools and carrying out pedestrian training at roads outside of school.

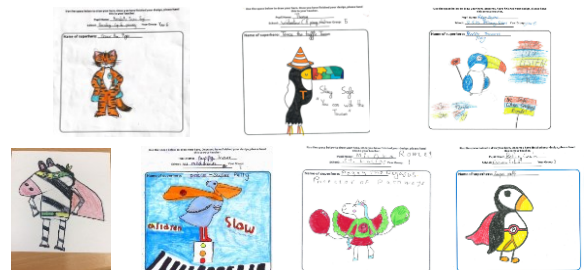
Our Journey is the brand-new active travel and road safety programme aimed at primary aged students aged 4yrs to 11yrs which aims to replace Stepping Out from September 2024. The new road safety education programme will replace the previous in-person delivery offering and instead utilise Shropshire-produced digital video lessons. This will ensure that a high-quality lesson will still be delivered but will not incur ongoing running costs for the council. It will also allow teachers a greater degree of flexibility to deliver the lessons at an appropriate time around existing curricular priorities.

The four films are offered in a graduated programme to build students' knowledge. The first film for Reception and Year One students focuses on the basic road safety code and holding hands with a grown-up message. Students in Year Two and Year Three will be taught how to scoot and pedal safely to school and introduce basic safety advice around this. Year Four and Five students will learn about controlling impulsive behaviour and managing distractions when travelling or playing near the road. Finally, our Year Six film focuses on the transition to secondary school and provides key safety advice to students on the new journeys they may make. Films will feature our road safety superheroes designed by Shropshire school children. All films will utilise behaviour change techniques to enable students to develop essential safety skills they can use every day.



Superhero Competition

In preparation for the launch of the Our Journey road safety education programme, primary school students across Shropshire were invited to design a squad of superheroes in April 2024. Students were encouraged to design a superhero based around the animal names used in crossing types – Pelicans, Toucans, Tigers or even a Pegasus. A total of 112 entries were received from 22 schools.



The seven winning designs were selected from across the county, and these were turned into animated characters by the council's graphic designers. These will be rolled out in the new road safety education films in the 2024-2025 academic year. The winning designs were created by:

'Super Zeb' - Year 6, Woodside Primary School, Oswestry

'Trevor the Tiger' – Annabelle, Year 6, Broseley C of E Primary School, Broseley

'Touca the Traffic Toucan' – Thomas, Year 5, Wistanstow C of E Primary School, Wistanstow

'Terrific Toucan Tony' – Poppy, Year 6, St Giles C of E Primary School, Shrewsbury

'Super Pelly the Pelican' – Poppy, Year 3, The Meadows Primary School, Oswestry

'Pablo the Puffin' – Bobby, Year 3, Coleham Primary School, Shrewsbury

'Peggy the Pegasus' – Mishka, Year 1, St Lucia's C of E Primary School, Upton Magna

Greenlight Shropshire Road Safety Workshop

For over 10 years West Mercia Police's (WMP) Road Safety Team has delivered the successful Greenlight young driver and passenger road safety education workshop to 16–18-year-old sixth form and college students in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The workshop is delivered in-person with a road safety practitioner and focuses on four young people's perspectives on a collision they are all involved in and the potential choices they could have been made to prevent it. Content is based around the 'fatal four' causation factors (speed, drink/drug driving, mobile phones, and seatbelts) as well as other issues such as inexperience, road/weather conditions and passenger responsibility.

Behaviour change techniques are utilised to provide students with essential safety skills to use when starting to drive or ride or when they are travelling as a passenger with friends who have passed their driving test. The programme is supported by Herefordshire Council and Worcestershire County Council.

Efforts were made over the last ten years to make Greenlight available within the Shropshire area, however WSP offered a separate young driver and passenger safety programme which focused on similar themes and local issues at the request of schools and colleges.

Colleagues from the Sustainable Travel Team and the WMP Road Safety Team met in February 2024 to begin planning a Shropshire-version of the Greenlight workshop. It was important that what was developed would be a high-quality educational and informative workshop, but that the delivery of it would not incur ongoing running costs which ruled out an in-person delivery option. A decision was made to create a digital workshop which mirrors current sector trends and work carried out by other local authorities but allows flexibility of delivery by sixth forms and colleges. A new script was created factoring in the safe and appropriate use of new technologies in vehicles, advice on driving safely in adverse weather, and general safety advice appropriate to the rural context of Shropshire. A Roads Policing Officer from West Mercia Police was invited to present the film alongside a member of the Sustainable Travel Team; The officer discussing the legal responsibilities on drivers and riders as well as their own story of policing the roads, attending collision scenes, and acting as Family Liaison Officer.

The digital workshop will be launched in September 2024 and offered to all sixth forms and colleges across the county. In November 2024 the story of creating and bringing the workshop to Shropshire will be featured in a presentation at Road Safety GB's National Road Safety Conference.



Contact the team:

For more information or to discuss a school in your ward, please do not hesitate to email sustainabletravelplanning@shropshire.gov.uk