

SCHOOL TRAVEL INITIATIVES – PROGRESS REPORT

Report By: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Wards Affected

Countywide.

Purpose

1. To provide an update of progress on the school travel initiatives being pursued by the Council to encourage the use of more sustainable forms of transport for journeys to school.

Financial Implications

2. As specified in this report.

School Travel Initiatives

School Travel Plans

3. The Council has received an allocation of £32,000 through the joint DfES/DfT School Travel Initiative which has been combined with Local Transport Plan (LTP) funding to make possible the recruitment of a full-time School Travel Adviser and a term-time only School Travel Support Worker who have just taken up post.
4. Good progress was made in advance of the new School Travel Adviser and Support Worker taking up their posts in August and September respectively. Officers in the Transportation Unit started work in support of the new initiative and all maintained schools were surveyed to ascertain the status of school travel plans across the County. Support was provided to schools in the process of developing travel plans, in the form of guidance on best practice, encouraging broad participation and providing examples of practical measures to encourage positive shifts in travel behaviour. All of the plans received were reviewed with regard to DfES minimum criteria and were graded using a point system. Points were awarded for inclusion of each of the following:
 - Baseline survey of pupils' patterns of travel to school
 - Statement of objectives and annual targets
 - Detailed action plan
 - Commitment to monitor and review progress and actionsAdditional credit was given for inclusion of the following:
 - Description of travel/ transport issues
 - Demonstration of broad community involvement/ partnership working

For further information on the subject of this report is available from
Linda Sinker, School Travel Adviser on (01432) 260967

- Provision of quality support materials
5. The following nineteen county schools met the deadline for the first year of the grant scheme and had signed off School Travel Plans by the end of March:

The Aconbury Centre, Hereford	Orleton CE Primary
Almeley Primary	Shobden Primary
Bosbury Primary	Stoke Prior Primary
Burghill Community Primary,	St. James CE Primary, Hereford,
Colwall CE Primary,	St. Martin's Primary, Hereford,
Cradley CE Primary	St. Thomas Cantilupe, Hereford,
Kings Cople Primary	Walford Primary
Little Dewchurch Primary	Wigmore High School
Lord Scudamore Primary, Hereford,	Wigmore Primary
Lugwardine Primary	

These schools will now be able to apply for the grant to spend on implementing their travel plans.

Safer Routes To School

6. It was reported in November 2003 that the Council's Transportation Unit had embarked on 3 phases of Safer Routes to School Studies including 18 schools. During 2003/4 a number of important schemes have been undertaken with these schools including:
- Ledbury Primary School – new footway cycleway adjacent to school incorporating improved security fencing, new cycle shelter
 - Leominster Junior School – Safety improvements at George Street access, new cycle shelter
 - St Thomas Cantilupe Primary – new cycle parking, crossing improvements on Barrs Court Road
 - Hampton Dene/St Paul's Primary Schools – comprehensive 20mph zone
 - Kingstone and Thruxton Primary School – 20mph zone (B4349)
7. Studies for the phase 3 Safer Routes to School projects have recently been completed and several schemes have been programmed for 2004/5, including:
- Haywood High School (Hereford) – Marlbrook Road/Falstaff Road cycleway, Mayberry Avenue/Ross Road junction improvement
 - St Thomas Cantilupe Primary (Hereford) – new cycle link to Great Western Way via Merton Meadow car park
 - Broadlands Primary School (Hereford) – improvements to Aylestone Hill mini-roundabouts, dropped crossing improvements on Venns Lane
 - John Masefield High School (Ledbury) – pedestrian safety improvements at school entrance (now complete), access improvements including lighting from Mabels Furlong, new footway at Oatley Road, pedestrian crossing on New Street

- John Kyrle High and Ashfield Park Primary (Ross), St Peter's Primary (Bromyard)
– final scheme selection to take place

Next Steps

8. A key priority for the new School Travel Adviser and Support Worker is to work with schools that are high up the Safer Routes to School priority ranking to help them develop school travel plans in advance of LTP funding for infrastructure improvements. School Travel Plan development work will be carried out in 2004/5 enabling the identification of infrastructure schemes to be programmed for the next financial year as part of the Safer Routes to School programme.
9. The School Travel Adviser and Support Worker will continue to support the 19 schools referred to above (at paragraph 5) to implement their School Travel Plans during 2004/5. They will also assist 19 other schools who have indicated an interest in developing a School Travel Plan by March 2005 in order to qualify for Grant in 2005/6. In addition they will approach again all other County schools to reiterate the benefits to the school of a Travel Plan. The School Travel Support Worker is a former Headteacher who will be concentrating on promoting Travel Plans and safer travel to school to pupils through the curriculum.
10. An early task for the School Travel Adviser will be to re-establish the School Travel Officer Working Group to bring together a range of officers with responsibilities impacting on school travel including Road Safety, Education Transport, Healthy Schools Initiative and Property Services. Partnership working through this group will enable key areas to be identified where wider support is available to assist schools to address school travel issues.
11. The DfT and the DfES will require monitoring and evaluation of all the School Travel Plans completed so far in order to determine whether funding for the project will continue after 2006.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee note the report and comment on the initiatives outlined in the report.

Background Papers

- None identified.