

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

Education and Inspections Act 2006 - Sustainable School Travel Strategy for Children and Young People

This strategy for school travel promotes choice for children and young people:

- To use sustainable travel alternatives
- To develop healthy, safe and active lifestyles
- To help protect our future environment.

Introduction

In response to changing legislation in home to school transport, especially in respect of Section 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Bradford Council has a duty to produce a Sustainable School Transport Strategy.

The main focus of this strategy is to enable children to travel safely whether by walking, cycling or public transport. By promoting these sustainable modes of transport we will instil good future practice and in turn this will help relieve congestion and allow development into independent travellers able to make informed decisions regarding sustainable transportation.

The general duty on Local Authorities is to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to children and young people, with an additional emphasis on meeting the needs of vulnerable groups including those not in education, employment and training (NEET), those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those in public care.

The four main elements to the duty are:

- To make an assessment of the travel and transport needs of children, and young people within the Authority's area.
- To audit the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the Authority that may be used when travelling to and from, or between schools/institutions.
- To provide 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 better catered for.
- To promote sustainable travel and transport modes on the journey from home to school and between schools and other educational institutions.

The sustainable school travel strategy is integrated with general arrangements and policies in respect of transport for pupils of compulsory school age and above, to and from schools and institutions within the further education sector. The Sustainable School Travel Strategy and transport policies are published on the 31st August each year and referred to in the Children and Young People's Plan.

Placing Sustainable Travel in the Local Context

Sustainable transport issues in the Bradford District are embedded in the Authority's strategic approach to transport. This is outlined in the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan

2006 to 2011, with accessibility, safety, congestion, air quality and asset management being the major priorities shared with government.

“To develop and maintain an integrated transport system that supports economic growth in a safe and sustainable way and enhances the overall quality of life for the people of West Yorkshire” – West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011

The Bradford District Transport Strategy 2006 to 2021 follows this objective and also promotes sustainable communities that have good transport services and communications linking people to jobs, education, health and other services.

Sustainable communities have transport facilities, including public transport that helps people to travel within and between communities and reduce dependence on cars, they also have facilities to encourage safe walking and cycling.

These issues are further prioritised in 2020 Vision, the Corporate Plan and the Community Strategy, which, under current reviews, are being brought together into the Sustainable Communities Strategy. Transport will be a key theme in the Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Sustainable School Travel Strategy

The Sustainable School Travel Strategy is being developed in response to the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and will build upon the work that has already been carried out in the Bradford District over a number of years. Government initiatives including School Travel Planning and Pedestrian Skills Training have attracted mainstream funding dedicated to the promotion of sustainable travel and safety within local communities based on the needs of schools. This funding has provided traffic measures that include traffic calming, pedestrian and cycling facilities, additional and enhanced lighting and school zone treatments. It has also provided funding to support revenue activities related to road safety education, training and publicity.

The work done, whilst prioritised on the needs of schools, has given benefits to the whole community and consequently there is a sound foundation on which to build the requirements of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Part 1 - Background

There are 7 nursery schools, 158 primary schools, 29 secondary schools and 11 special schools plus other private schools in Bradford and District. In addition there are 3 Further Education Colleges and over a dozen work-based learning providers where children and young people in the Bradford District receive education and training.

There are 48,500 pupils in primary schools, 34,000 in secondary schools and 900 in special schools. 5,000 students aged 16-19 years attend part-time or full-time in Further Education Colleges and 2,000 attend work-based learning provision.

The annual snapshot surveys of schools undertaken in January 2007 to provide a baseline of travel mode indicated that 51% of school children walk to school, 31% travel by car, 17% travel by bus and 0.2% cycle. The preferences from the first 40 school travel plans analysed are 46% would prefer to walk, 26% to go by car, 9% by bus and 18% to cycle. Further analysis and 2008 results are given in the detailed assessment of travel needs given in Parts 4 and 5.

Part 2 - Current practice

School Travel Plans

There are currently 149 approved school Travel Plans in the Bradford District, which are guiding the initial development of the Sustainable School Travel Strategy. All schools are required to have a Travel Plan by 2010. All schools within the District without a Travel Plan are approached each year asking if they require assistance with developing and writing their plan. The School Travel Plan Officer meets formally with each school, explains in detail what is required of the school and offers the school resources to help with writing their plan. Once a plan is officially adopted the travel plan officer is available to launch the plan with a day of sustainability workshops.

Yellow Buses

METRO, with its partners, has introduced Mybus, yellow buses to West Yorkshire Authorities to increase bus patronage to primary and secondary schools. Mybus is based on the American yellow bus and has Closed Circuit TV (CCTV), seatbelts and a dedicated driver to ensure safety on the journey.

Bradford District now has 31 yellow buses, (28 buses 2007) running 51 services (44 services in 2007). The buses now serve 34 schools (27 schools 2007), carrying 2218 registered users (1,800 registered users 2007).

Cycle Links to school

Off-road cycle links are being provided, where possible, to allow pupils and students to cycle to and from schools, and other education and training institutions, away from roads. The Council has been able to fund off-road links to Crossflatts Primary, Riddlesden St. Mary's Primary, Cullingworth Primary and Newby Primary. As progress is made with The Great Northern Trail, Thornton Primary will also gain an off-road link to school. Money has now been secured to provide the Thornton Primary cycle link.

Road Safety

The Road Safety Department distributes resources and has dedicated staff employed to educate pupils of both primary and secondary schools in the skills needed for independent travel. The programme aims to increase road safety awareness and encourage parents to allow their children to walk or cycle to school, and includes playground cycle training, road pedestrian training, classroom workshops and school assemblies.

Part 3 - Partnership Working

Health

The Council and the Primary Care Trust are aiming to increase childhood activity to deal with issues including, health, social networking and educational attainment.

The School Travel Plan Officer, the Teaching Primary Care Trust and the Sports and Leisure Department are working together to produce an "Active Travel to School" pilot to encourage a more sustainable journey to school.

Transport Planning, the Teaching Primary Care Trust and Sports and Leisure Department are working together to provide on-road cycle training to children aged 10 and above.

Children and Young People Travel Group

Council departments, Education Bradford and METRO meet regularly to discuss relevant policies and strategies to improve children and young people's travel arrangements.

METRO

METRO's Education Transport Development Team work with schools in Bradford to assist with the public transport elements of school travel plans and promote sustainable travel.

The support offered includes the following:

- Junior Safemark, a Year 6 transition workshop
- Journey planning advice
- Dedicated school officer
- Safemark for secondary schools. A service that helps to maintain good behaviour on buses and promotes bus use to young people.
- Liaison on behalf of school with transport operators to ensure services are running at appropriate times.

Extended Schools Co-ordinators

Extended Schools Coordinators are helping clusters of schools throughout Bradford to access the Bikeability cycle scheme.

Highways Infrastructure

The Council has promoted safety in schools for a number of years, including safety on the journeys to and from school. These improvements have come generally through the Constituency Area Committees and the priorities they have established to implement traffic measures that include school zones, traffic calming, pedestrian and cycling facilities, new footways and improved street lighting. The Sustainable School Travel Strategy will enable that work to be further prioritised in the future.

Part 4 - Assessing the travel and transport needs of children and young people

The assessment of travel needs at school level is based on data provided in travel plans and the Census data collected in January each year.

In addition, at pupil level, those receiving free transport provided by the authority are assessed for transport via the admissions process.

School Census Data

It was mandatory from January 2007 for all schools who had an existing travel plan (prior to March 2006) to complete the Census data required for travel to school. It was also a requirement that 50% of non travel plan schools submitted the data. In Bradford the schools responded very well and we exceeded this figure.

Total number of schools = 205

Total number of schools with travel plans (March 2008) = 149

All schools responded to the census questionnaire in January 2008

January 2008 Travel to School Survey Results		
Schools that completed census in January 2008		Percentage
Total number of schools	205	
Total number of pupils	87524	
Surveyed number of pupils travelling by:		
Car, inc. van and taxi	23251	26.6%
Car share	3663	4.2%
Public transport	13134	15%
Walking	44825	51.2%
Cycling	153	0.2%
Other	76	0.1%
No response	2422	2.8%

Analysis has been carried out on 144 school travel plans to assess the travel needs of children and young people and to identify gaps in current knowledge.

Part 5 – Infrastructure Audit – status and requirements

Mapping Exercise

A desk top exercise is underway utilising the expert knowledge of traffic engineers and technicians, transport planners and Education Bradford. This exercise will identify features such as traffic calming, bus stops, school crossing patrols, pedestrian crossings and refuges to enable parents and young people to make an informed decision on a safe and sustainable route to school. An audit radius of 500m has been used for primary schools and 1000m for secondary schools. At present 136 school audits have been completed with a corresponding number of sustainability maps plotted.

In addition to the above exercise the Rights of Way Improvement Plan identified a number of routes linking to schools that were in need of improvement and a programme of maintenance is underway, with £20,000 identified for 2008/2009.

A cycling map of the Bradford District was launched in 2000 covering on road and off road routes, advisory cycling routes and bicycle shop locations. There are plans to update this and reprint by March 2009.

Public Transport

Bradford has a comprehensive public transport network which includes buses, and local trains. The majority of bus routes are operated by the First Bus Group with a number of other smaller registered operators including Keighley and District and Arriva.

Metro, the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, is responsible for promoting and developing public transport across the West Yorkshire area. They coordinate local transport information for Bradford and publish bus timetables.

A journey planner is available on line at <http://www.metrojourneyplanner.info/welcome.do>

In addition a dedicated young persons and Schools website, GenerationM, can be found at <http://www.generationm.co.uk/>

Travel Plan Information

Consultation is a necessary part of school travel plans. Pupils are surveyed to find out how they travel, how they would like to travel and any transport problems they face on their journey to school.

Schools also send out parent questionnaires and consult with parents through newsletters and meetings. It is important that parents and pupils are involved with the travel plan's production to foster their ownership of the travel plan. Consultation is carried out with other appropriate groups including governors, teachers and school councils.

The consultation aims to find out why parents and children don't want to walk to school and tries to address these issues. Each school is different and travel plans need to solve the problems the individual school faces.

The information and evidence gathered is included in the production of a School Travel Plan and helps to provide a clear assessment of travel issues and needs.

Table of identified need

Requirement	Action	Responsibility
Need for pedestrian crossing facilities identified by travel plans	Evaluation by area teams	Traffic and highways
Recruitment of school crossing patrol officers to vacant posts	Advertise all posts and liaise with schools	Education Bradford
Increase number of buses and reduce overcrowding	Liaise with METRO and Education transport to increase provision	METRO, Education Bradford, Transport planning
More cycle routes both on road and off	Cycling audit of Aire Valley to increase cycling	Transport planning, Parks, Major highways
Lack of up to date cycle map	Update 2000 map print and make available on council website	Transport planning, Cycle city maps
Provision of on-road cycle training	Accreditation of Bikeability, training of instructors to National Standards 1,2,3	Transport planning, Bradford and Airedale teaching PCT, Sports and Leisure services
Reduce speed limits outside schools to 20mph	Speed limit review to be carried out by Highways Dept.	Traffic and highways
Need to repair footways to maintain safe routes to school	Liaise with highway maintenance when footpaths identified	Travel plan officer, Highways maintenance
Lack of information on sustainable travel to school	Website design to include sustainability maps of all schools and links to other useful sites. Print maps for each pupils and school	Transport planning, Education services.

Part 6 - Infrastructure provision strategy

The provision of new infrastructure will develop from the travel needs of children and young people, the routes that are used and needed by pupils and students, and the highways infrastructure audit.

Part 7 – Promotion

Sustainable travel in schools is promoted through the School Travel Plan Officer and through various initiatives including the supply of road safety material. Further work is being developed to promote safer travel alongside sustainability issues.

A target has been set to have a school sustainable travel website available to all by July 2009.

Part 8 - Target setting

Aim

To reduce the number of children and young people travelling to school by car by providing all children and young people with access to a range of sustainable transport options allowing them access to all educational provision.

Objectives	Actions	Target	Monitoring and reporting	Lead	Date
Increase the use of sustainable travel on the journey to school	Monitor and report school census data on mode of travel to school	Local Area Agreement target of 1% decrease year on year of car travel from 2008 base line data	Annual reporting through LAA	Education Bradford, Transport planning	Every July until 2011
	Inclusion of information in school prospectus and admissions booklet	To update each year the information necessary so parents can make an informed choice of which school to choose for their child		Education Bradford, Learning services	Annually
	Produce literature to promote sustainable travel	Every primary school to have sustainability map plotted and issued to every child		Transport planning	January 2009
Improve access to and provision of sustainable travel and transport	Development of a Sustainable school web site	Website to be operational by July 2009, to include links to West Yorkshire Metro GenerationM site and journey planner		Transport planning, Learning services, Metro	July 2009
	Investigate increasing primary patronage	25% of schools to be canvassed		Metro	July 2009

Reduce actual and perceived danger of children on their route to school	Introduce Bikeability cycle training	250 children to be trained 2008/2009 and doubling to 500 in 2009/2010	Annual to government and LTP2	Transport planning, PCT, Sports & Leisure, Outdoor activities service.	March 2009
	To introduce a walking incentive scheme	Pilot carried out at 2 schools		Transport planning, PCT, Sports and Leisure	September 2009
	Investigate possibility of targeted parking enforcement around school	Determine which schools need intervention by 2010		Travel plan coordinator, parking services	July 2010
	Child pedestrian training to year 3 children		Road safety team	Annually	
	Encourage and assist all Bradford to schools to produce a travel plan	95% of all schools to have a travel plan by 2010	Annually to LAA and government	School travel plan coordinator	March 2010
	To identify highway measures from school travel plans and implement if investigations prove necessary	To identify on a yearly basis and submit to highways rolling programme of capital projects		School travel plan coordinator, area traffic teams	Annually

Part 9 - Monitoring and feedback.

The strategy will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis during the Summer School Term period and an updated Strategy published every August on the council website.

The next review will be undertaken during July/August 2009.

The review of the strategy will also feedback on progress undertaken during the previous year on key targets. This will be reported to the Children and Young Peoples Travel Group. The review and update of the strategy will be the responsibility of Learning Services, with continued support from partners/stakeholders in West Yorkshire Metro, Highways Department and Education Bradford.

The review of the strategy will also incorporate any changes in government policy in relation to Sustainable Travel to School.

The information gathered from the strategy will feed into local targets within the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011 in relation to walking, cycling, safer roads, car use and air quality and mode of travel to school in the Local Area Agreement.

Summary

The Sustainable School Travel Strategy brings an opportunity to evaluate and expand the work that is being done in schools and elsewhere to promote a sustainable future for the Bradford Metropolitan District.

This strategy sets direction to meet the requirements of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and to integrate that within the sustainable transport aims and objectives of the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan and the Bradford Metropolitan District Transport Strategy.

The strategy also brings together schools and other educational institutions with transport and highways infrastructure provision in the Metropolitan District and with Metro, the public transport authority for West Yorkshire.