

School Travel Plans Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee

13 October 2010

School Travel Plans – Interim Report

Background

1. In coming to a decision to review this topic, the Ad-hoc Scrutiny Committee recognised certain key objectives and the following remit was agreed:

Aim

‘To identify an integrated approach to travel plan development that recognises the relationships between active travel and health, sustainability (particularly air quality and climate change issues) and traffic congestion and community cohesion.’

Objectives

- Understanding what works and what doesn’t work in York, and best practice elsewhere
 - Understanding the costs and challenges, in order to identify how the council, schools and their communities can do school travel planning better.
 - Identifying the best way to support schools with travel planning, either through the role of School Travel Plan Co-ordinators (subject to available funding being provided/identified), or providing support to schools through an alternative mechanism.
 - Identifying any key messages for wider travel planning in York.
2. In agreeing the above remit, the Committee identified the following timetable for their review:

Date	Workplan
Wed 8 Sept 2010 6pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of school Action Plans (20-25 newest/most recently updated) • List of York schools without Travel Plans (4%), and reasons why, if known • Review of relevant responses from Traffic survey • Scope visits to schools (draft questionnaire) • Letter to schools to be visited to be drafted for Members consideration
Wed 13 Oct 2010 6pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information on travel initiatives identifying those which have worked well • Identifying best practice (both locally and nationally) – Paul Osborne from Sustrans to be invited to attend.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of information from Car Free Day and Jack Archer award. • Obesity figures to identify any links with those • schools who have poorly performing travel plans • Information on what support from CYC schools can access online
18 - 21 Oct 2010 (exact dates / times to be agreed)	Visits to schools Mon – Thurs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (not Fri 22 Oct - last day of term) • Visit in pairs – 2 schools per pair
Thurs 18 Nov 2010 6pm	Consideration of draft final report.

Information Gathered

3. **Network Management & Parking Enforcement Around Schools**

City Strategy Directorate is responsible for the establishment of relevant parking policies and Network Management draw up and implement the necessary Traffic Management Orders relating to those policies.

4. Communities & Neighbourhoods Parking Services Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) undertake the enforcement of parking restrictions throughout the City. These include loading restrictions, bus stops, cycle lanes and traffic routes, designated parking spaces including Respark, car parks and paid on street parking, and yellow lines. This would include schools where enforceable parking restrictions have been made. Parking restrictions are applicable to 38 schools in the local authority area - 7 of these relate to yellow lines only and 31 relate to restricted parking signs/zigzags.

5. Specific scheduled schools patrols are carried out in relation to the 38 schools. These are scheduled at 2 patrols per week given current resources and duties of CEOs. Additional enforcement patrols and responses to parking hotline calls relating to particular problems are also carried out. In 2009/10 the average number of specific school patrols was between 3 and 4 per week.

6. CEOs - of which there are 22 - cover the City between 7.45 am and 9.30 pm 7 days a week - working in shifts to cover those hours. In effect this means that Monday to Friday, the early shift will be comprised of a maximum of 8-10 CEOs and the late shift a maximum of 6 CEOs at anyone time. Any increase in the number of schools with enforceable parking restrictions could not be accommodated in terms of current enforcement resources and duties.

7. **Planning**

At the last meeting Members raised concerns that some school travel plans had been accepted by planning officers when they had been submitted as part of a planning application, even though those school travel plans did not meet government standards. In response to this, the Head of Development Management has responded that in the case of some new schools e.g. Joseph Rowntree Secondary School, the travel plan requirements are dealt with by conditions,

requiring the travel plan to be submitted for approval. Once received, the planner would normally forward these to the Council's highways officers for comment before accepting them, or require amended details to satisfy the Highway requirements. This would not involve the planner judging the acceptability of the travel plan or checking it against any government criteria, but relying on the highway team to do so. In some cases e.g. English Martyrs, the travel plan was submitted with the application and considered by highways colleagues at that time, with conditions requiring adherence to the plan attached to the permission.

8. It should be noted, that in the case of both schools given as examples above, the school travel plans were developed in conjunction with a School Travel Plan Coordinator. This may not always be the case. In other instances work on a school travel plan has commenced in support of a planning application, but having had planning permission granted (with a condition that the travel plan be completed and implemented) work on the travel plan has ceased and the condition has not been enforced.

9. **School Travel Plans - National Best Practice**

In 2006, the Department for Transport commissioned a paper entitled 'Making School Travel Plans Work: Effects, Benefits and Success Factors at English Schools'. Many of the comments, observations and examples contained therein are still relevant – see Annex A.

10. The Regional School Travel Advisor has also helped in identifying examples of national best practice across England, by using his network of regional contacts to draw together a paper entitled 'School Travel and Evidence data - Case Studies August 2010: A) Examples of LA wide mode shift improvements' – see Annex B.

11. A representative from Sustrans will be present at the meeting to discuss national best practice in more detail. Sustrans are a leading UK charity who work with families, communities, policy-makers and partner organisations to enable people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys they make every day. Their aim is to help people make healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in.

12. **Best Practice In York**

In order to evidence best practice in York, a number of schools were contacted regarding their activities. Of those, the most notable response came from Archbishop of York CE Junior School who documented their efforts and achievements. It should be noted that, as is typical in many schools, their success can be attributed to the enthusiasm of one committed individual who was prepared to work with a school travel adviser where appropriate to achieve results. Feedback from those schools identifying good practice and successful initiatives, is shown at Annex C.

13. **Other Travel Initiatives Undertaken in York**

York schools have participated in a number of other initiatives including 'Car Free Day' and the 'Jack Archer Award'. Information on these and others that have proved successful are shown at Annex D.

14. **School Travel Information Gathered From Recent Traffic Congestion Survey**
At a previous meeting of this committee Members considered relevant information gathered from a city-wide survey carried out as part of a scrutiny review on Traffic Congestion in York. Members requested the data be re-analysed to identify the distanced travelled to work of those responders who indicated that they use a car to drop their children at school on their way to work see Annex E (to follow).
15. **Obesity & Possible Links To Modes of Transport To School**
The Health Improvement Manager at York PCT has provided some data on obesity figures in reception and year 6 – see Annex F.
16. This information was gathered in support of a National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) which is a Department of Health led initiative to tackle the national public service agreement target to reverse the rising tide of obesity and overweight in the population, by ensuring that all individuals are able to maintain a healthy weight. The government's initial focus is on children, and by 2020 they aim to have reduced the proportion of overweight and obese children to 2000 levels. The indicator measures the percentage of children in reception year (ages 4-5) and year 6 (ages 10-11) who are considered to be at risk of being overweight or obese.
17. **North Yorkshire and York Overview**
In the 2008/09 school year the percentage of children at risk of being overweight or obese in reception year and year 6 was significantly lower than the national average. In the previous school year the rate in reception year was significantly higher than the national figure. The rate in year 6 has been significantly lower than the national average for the last three school years.
18. The percentage of boys at risk of being overweight or obese in reception year and year 6 is consistently higher than the percentage of girls at risk. The rate for girls has been reducing since the programme began across the whole PCT 3 years ago. The same cannot be said for boys, although there was a significant fall in the percentage for boys in reception year in the last school year.
19. In both Reception Year and Year 6, the most deprived quintile of children's service localities is significantly higher than the PCT average, although there is no gradient across quintiles. The children's service locality rates have been plotted and show wide variation across the PCT, especially in the reception year children. Maps of the reception and year 6 levels of overweight and obesity at children's service locality level show significant differences compared to the national average. In reception year there are four children's service localities which are significantly higher than the national average and five which are significantly lower. In year 6 there is one children's service locality which is significantly higher than the national average and six which are significantly lower.
20. The information is broken down to area level within the city and school clusters. These cluster are not necessarily the feeder school for the named secondary schools, they are clusters relating to the work of the Schools Sports Partnership. The PCT were not prepared to provide this information broken down to individual primary schools, as it was felt it could lead to the identification of specific children, particularly in small schools. Without this breakdown of the figures it becomes more

difficult to carry out a comparison of obesity levels against figures on travel arrangements to school.

21. **Information Available On Council Website**

A copy of the information made available on the council's website is shown at Annex G. In addition, the Transport Planning Unit are currently developing a School Travel Plan page in 'www.yorkla.org'. This is a portal for schools which is being developed by the Adults, Children & Education Directorate. School travel will be one of many teams with a presence in the portal and the page will contain not only the information that is currently on the council's website, but other information to do with school travel including material from our Road Safety Team. The aim is to provide a full package of information so that should the role of School Travel Plan Coordinators be lost due to lack of funding or re-organisation, then schools will still have a readily accessible source to help them with sustainable and healthy travel to school.

22. **Visits to Schools**

As part of this review the Committee have agreed to carry out a number of site visits to schools between 15 – 21 October. To support Members carrying out those visits, officers have drawn up an extensive list of suggested questions for the visits (see below) and Members are asked to agree which of these they want to ask:

- How is the travel plan monitored - who has responsibility?
- How is the action plan implemented?
- How is the travel plan promoted to parents, pupils and staff?
- What initiatives (if any) is the school focussing on at the moment to encourage walking and cycling to school and reducing car use?
- How do you promote walking and cycling to school?
- To what extent does sustainability in general and sustainable travel to school in particular form part of the school curriculum?
- What issues do you have with parking?
- Do you use implementing the school travel plan as a way of addressing the parking issues outside the school?
- How else do you address parking issues?
- Do you link implementing walking and cycling to school with other initiatives in the school such as Healthy Schools?
- What City wide initiatives have the school taken part in such as Walk with Wilf, Bike It, Walk to School Weeks and the Virtual bike races?
- How effective do you find them at not only encouraging walking and cycling to school for the duration of the event, but in maintaining a reduction in car use *after* the event?
- Does the school monitor car use to school?
- Does it use the census data it collects on mode of travel to school to help monitor the effectiveness of any travel to school initiatives implemented?
- How helpful do you find contact with a school travel adviser in developing your school travel plan?
- How beneficial do you find having contact with a school travel adviser in developing walking and cycling initiatives to school?
- What would make you more likely to want to participate in sustainable travel initiatives to school?

- Has the Council worked with you to implement any Safe Routes to School measures (making walking or cycling routes to school safer, improving crossings and the like) in the last two years?
 - If so, do you think that these measures have encouraged more walking, cycling or scooting to school.
 - If no safety measures have been implemented, are you aware of any that could be made and have you reported them to anyone in the Council - If so to who?
23. The details of the visits and the Members carrying out the visits are shown at Annex H.

Options

24. Having considered the information within this report and its associated annexes, Members may choose to:
- Ask questions of the Planning and Parking Enforcement officers present at the meeting
 - Amend the list of Members to carry out each school visit
 - Draft some alternative questions to ask on the school visits

Recommendation

25. In light of the above options, Members are recommended to agree:
- i. The arrangements for the school visits
 - ii. The questions to be asked on the school visits
 - iii. What further information (if any) is required in support of this review
26. In addition, Members are asked to agree any draft recommendations identified to date.

Reason: To progress this review in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols

Contact Details

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Interim Report Approved **Date** 5 October 2010

Wards Affected: All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: N/A

Annexes

Annex A – DfT Paper - ‘Making School Travel Plans Work: Effects, Benefits and Success Factors at English Schools’

Annex B – ‘School Travel and Evidence data - Case Studies August 2010: A) Examples of LA wide mode shift improvements’

Annex C – Best Practice in York

Annex D – Details on other Initiatives Undertaken in York

Annex E – Additional Data Taken From Recent Traffic Congestion Survey

Annex F – Information on Obesity Levels in York For Children in Reception & Year 6

Annex G – Information Currently Available to Schools Via CYC Website

Annex H – Planned Visits to Schools