

**Matters Arising:-
SCHOOL TRAVEL ADVISER FUNDING**

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1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide information to the Forum about the use of Standards Funds Grant for School Travel Advisers.

2. Background

- 2.1 Funding to support the development of school travel plans in Hertfordshire has been made available through the government's Travelling to School Initiative that aims to have school travel plans in place in all schools by 2010. This is a project run jointly by DfES and DfT. There are two funding streams in place to help achieve these aims:

2.2 School Travel Plan Capital Grants

These are paid to maintained schools as Devolved Formula Capital and amount to £3750 plus £5 per head for primary schools and £5000 plus £5 per head for secondary schools. The grant enables schools to make on site capital improvements that support the aims of the school's travel plan. This funding is typically used for cycle storage, covered waiting areas and improvements to vehicle and pedestrian segregation.

2.3 School Travel Adviser funding

School Travel Advisers (Standards Fund Grant 119) is an LEA grant allocated to the local authority based on the number of schools (independent and maintained) in Hertfordshire. It is earmarked specifically to help 15% of schools put in place an approved travel plan each year. £161K funding was originally allocated for the two year period 2004/5 and 2005/6, which enabled the recruitment of 4 school travel advisers and a team leader together with a small budget to support the development of support resources. Funding has been extended to cover the two year period 2006/7 and 2007/8, however has not been enhanced to cover the full impact of inflation with the result that Environment Department now contributes to the maintenance of the team.

3. Impact of School Travel Advisers

- 3.1 As at 31st March 2006, 307 (51%) of Hertfordshire schools had approved travel plans in place. Plans for 06/07 are currently being quality assured but we anticipate 76 new plans will be approved. This will meet our Local Transport Plan target of 64% of Hertfordshire Schools with a travel plan in place at 31 March 2007. The development of approved school travel plans has to date secured £1.7m in School Travel Plan Capital Grants for Hertfordshire Schools and we are optimistic that the new plans agreed for 2006/07 will enable our schools to access a further £350K.
- 3.2 A recent survey of 313 Hertfordshire schools carried out by a Members Scrutiny Topic group found that there are a broad range of transport and health reasons why schools develop plans. Reducing congestion outside school and healthier pupils are seen as the biggest benefits from travel plans. 84% of the schools felt that their travel plan has fully or partially met their expectations. Less than 20% of the schools reported that they would have developed a travel plan without the support of school travel advisers.
- 3.3 School Travel Advisers support individual schools with the development of travel plans to support Every Child Matters outcomes of staying safe, being healthy and making a positive contribution. The team also promote healthy sustainable travel to school in general through the implementation of Walk to School weeks in May and October, and through promotion of activities including the annual Secondary School Councils Conference and Healthy Journeys Awards.
- 3.4 Information from school travel advisers plays a key role in the selection of Safer Routes to School highway improvement projects. These projects address concerns and opportunities identified in school travel plans. Active school travel plans are crucial to the long term success of Safer Routes to School projects.
- 3.5 School travel advisers promote and, together with road safety officers, support the development of Walking Buses. This has contributed to 102 Hertfordshire Primary Schools receiving up to £86,500 pa government grant funding to set up walking buses and walking incentives over the next 3 yrs. The team is currently developing a Walking Incentive Scheme to help schools make use of this new funding without having to set up their own scheme.
- 3.6 Monitoring data received from schools to date shows that 63% are achieving positive shifts towards sustainable and active travel modes. 24% of schools with travel plans are showing shifts of more than 10%. From January 2007 information about how children travel to school will be collected by the School Census and will provide the primary method of monitoring school travel plan performance.
- 3.7 The potential of school travel plans to help mitigate any adverse effects of school expansion means that applications to expand school sites should be accompanied by school travel plan information. School Travel Advisers work with schools to help them meet such planning requirements.

4. Future plans

4.1 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduces a new duty for Local Authorities to prepare a strategy to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to school. To do this will involve assessing travel needs mainly through information in school travel plans and auditing existing travel and transport provision. Development of new and existing school travel plans will be crucial to the successful implementation of this new duty.

4.2 School Travel Advisers provide essential support to achieving the following targets:

Local Transport Plan:

- 83% of schools with travel plan by 2010/11
- Increase percentage of children travelling to school using sustainable modes by 2.5% by 2010/11

Local Area Agreement:

- 100% schools with travel plan by 2010/11

4.3 School Travel Advisers also contribute to child casualty reduction targets and Hertfordshire targets for all schools to be working towards Healthy School by 2009.

4.4 The government grant for school travel advisers runs to 2007/8. New funding streams will need to be identified if this work is to continue.

5. Conclusion

5.1 School Travel Advisers have been successful in helping schools put travel plans in place and we now have travel plans in over half of our schools. School managers appreciate and draw on the assistance of school travel advisers to develop and support school travel plans. School travel plans have a key role to play in meeting mode share and casualty reduction targets set out in the Local Transport Plan and the Local Area Agreement. The continued development of school travel plans will be essential to ensure that Hertfordshire meets the requirements of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.