

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL TRAVEL STRATEGY

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2007/08 – 2011/12

The County Council's Sustainable School Travel Strategy consists of three elements:

- School Travel Action Group Strategy
- Development Programme 2007/08 – 2011/12
- Web site [www.hertsdirect.org/schooltravel]

Background

The County Council has a new duty from 1 April 2007 to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to school. This applies to “children and young people of 6th form age”, and therefore also covers further education colleges.

Whilst this is a new duty for the County Council, it builds on a substantial body of work that Hertfordshire has undertaken in school travel plans, safer routes to school, accessibility planning and other initiatives.

The four main elements of the duty are:

- An assessment of the travel and transport needs of children and young people;
- An audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure that may be used when travelling to and from, or between schools/institutions;
- A strategy to develop the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure;
- The promotion of sustainable travel and transport modes on the journey to, from, and between schools and other institutions.

Sustainable modes of travel are defined as those that “the local authority considers may improve the physical well-being of those who use them, the environmental well-being of all or part of the local authority's area, or a combination of the two”. For the County Council, this means walking and cycling, travelling by bus or train, and in some cases car-sharing.

The County Council's current progress in developing the strategy and planned developments are set out below.

Assessment of Travel and Transport Needs

(a) Schools

The assessment of travel and transport needs is based primarily on the school travel plans that have already been developed. As of April 2007, 64% of schools in Hertfordshire had an approved travel plan, and there is an ongoing programme to work with the remaining 36% of schools. Work will be undertaken in September 2007 to review that guidance given to schools to ensure that all new plans have the full set of information required, and can be published directly onto the sustainable school travel website [www.hertsdirect.org/schooltravel].

The overall picture on existing patterns of travel to school is published in the School Travel Action Group Strategy and in the school mode share targets in the Local Transport Plan.

(b) Further Education Establishments

A new programme to develop travel plans for the 14 Further Education establishments will be set up to ensure that there is comparable data to that available on schools. However, some data is already available through surveys undertaken by the 16 – 19 Transport Partnership and the accessibility data published in the Accessibility Strategy.

Key Actions

- Complete school travel plan programme
- Review guidance on producing school travel plans
- Establish programme of Further Education college travel plans

Audit of Infrastructure

The County Council has used its School Travel Action Group to undertake a gap analysis against the infrastructure audit components set out in the Department for Education and Skills document "Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance". Whilst much of the information is already collected for school travel or other purposes, a number of areas have been identified for improvement:

- Some gaps in information held;
- Frequency of updating information;
- Ability to combine and share datasets;
- Format of information to make it understandable to the public or non-technical local authority officers.

One of the principal roles of the new Sustainable School Travel Officer that the County Council is appointing will be to work with data holders to produce an overall set of information that will be held on a common Geographical Information System (GIS). This work will be carried out in tandem with a corporate review of GIS information to ensure greater sharing

of data, consistent quality, and defined programmes for updating information. Work will also be undertaken to ensure that all data, including non-GIS information, is available in a format that is appropriate to its audience.

Key Actions

- Integrate existing GIS mapping and databases
- Undertake data audits for information not currently available

Strategy to Develop Infrastructure to Support Travel Needs of Pupils

The County Council has an on-going programme of filling any gaps in the provision of infrastructure and services to provide sustainable travel to school through programmes such as school travel plans, safer routes to school and road safety. The completion of the audit process above will enable a systematic approach to identifying and filling the gaps, either through school-specific works programmes or through the rolling programme of urban transport plans. This will also provide a clear link into the community strategy and local development framework processes.

The overall policy and objectives for the sustainable school travel strategy is set out in the School Travel Action Group Strategy. For this year, the STAG strategy is supported by this document that sets out a programme for developing audits, infrastructure delivery and promotions for the period up to March 2012. Depending on feedback from Government, local authority officers and the school community, these documents may be combined in future years.

Monitoring of the strategy will be undertaken on a regular basis through the School Travel Action Group.

Key Actions

- Review strategy before August 2008
- Ensure infrastructure needs are fed into LTP and other programmes

Promoting Sustainable Travel and Transport to and from School

There is already an extensive programme of promoting sustainable travel to school in Hertfordshire. Existing measures include:

- Safer Routes to School – “Join the Adventure” campaign
- Healthy Schools Awards
- School Travel Action Rangers in primary schools
- Support to school councils in secondary schools
- Walking bus programme
- Lolibus programme
- Park and Stride
- Walk to School Week

There is a need to continue with these programmes, monitor them and build on successes, develop new programmes and continue to learn from best practice elsewhere. The current programme for the period up to 2011/12 is set out in Appendix 1.

New programmes to be delivered include:

- Walk the World
- Digital Film Challenge
- New secondary schools initiative

Key Actions

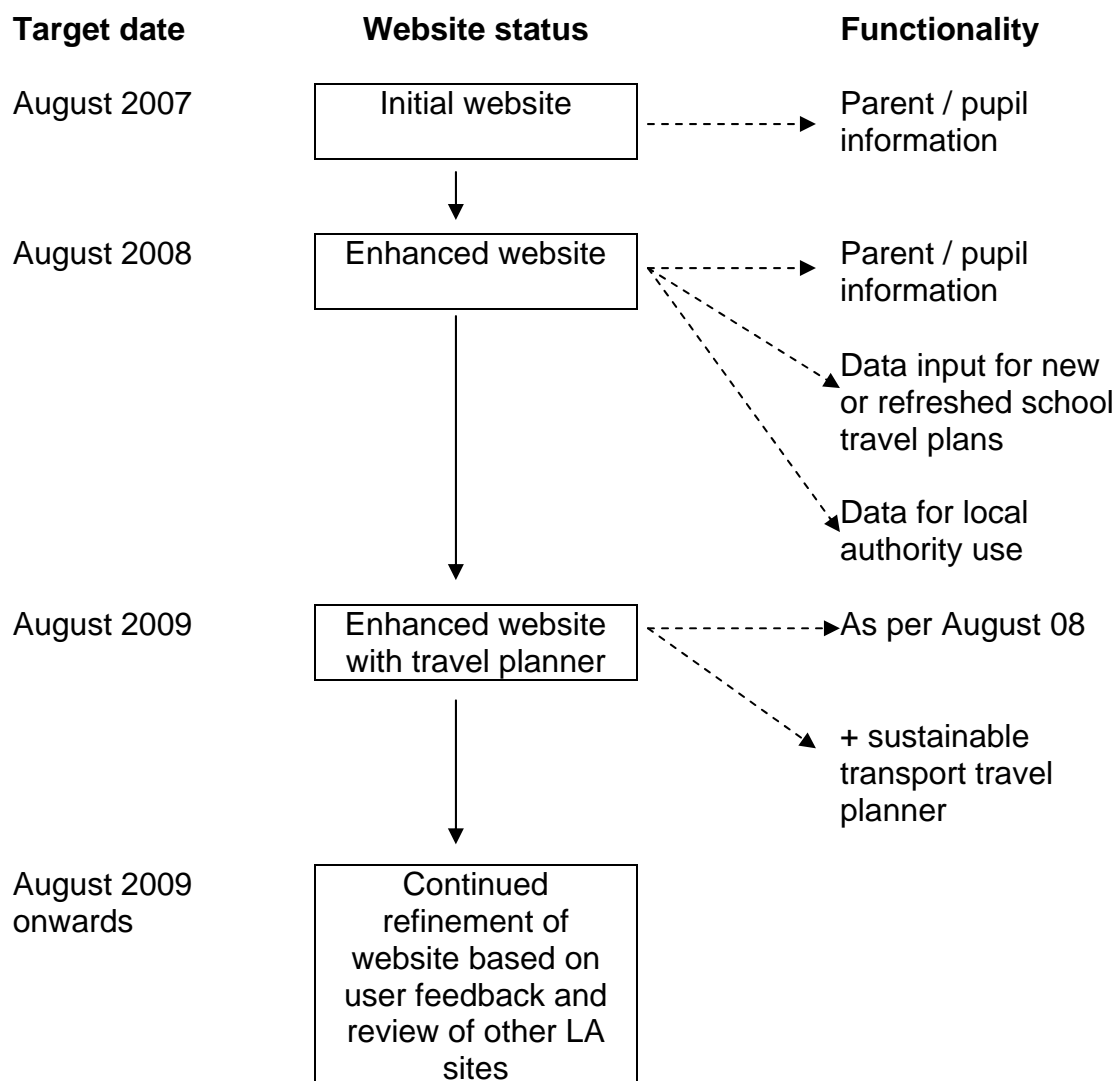
- Develop new programmes for primary and secondary schools and further education establishments
- Share best practice with other local authorities

Publication of Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy

All components of the strategy are published on the County Council's web pages at www.hertsdirect.org/schooltravel. This provides direct links with the information pages for parents and schools, and with other related transport strategies and information.

Web Site Development

The website will be developed into an extensive resource for parents and pupils in making their choice of schools and for encouraging sustainable transport, for schools in developing or refreshing their travel plan. The pages will be developed over the next two years as feedback is obtained from schools and parents, with the aim of creating a comprehensive but simple to use sustainable travel journey planner from a home address to any school or further education establishment.



Staff Resources

In the light of the new sustainable school travel duties, and to make the most effective use of the additional resources provided by Government, the County Council is appointing two new posts linked to the school travel plan team:

- A school travel plan assistant to initially support the 100 schools that will be launching new walking buses in the 2007/08 academic year, and to assist in promoting other countywide school initiatives;
- A sustainable school travel officer to coordinate all actions relating to the new duty, including responsibility for GIS data and developing the website.

In addition, the County Council has recently completed a scrutiny process on the way school travel plans are delivered. This has recommended that the potential for combining all school initiatives (travel plans, safer routes to

school, road safety training, healthy schools etc) within one team should be investigated.

Overall Aim

The overall aim of this development programme is to achieve the following by March 2012:

- An integrated, user-friendly and up-to-date data system that is appropriate to the user (schools, parents/pupils, local authority officers etc);
- A web-based sustainable travel planner providing travel information from home address to any school;
- An on-going programme of travel plans for all schools and further education establishments that are regularly monitored and refreshed;
- An on-going programme of initiatives to promote sustainable travel to all school ages;

with all of the above leading to an increase in the use of sustainable modes of transport to school.

Targets

Targets for increasing the sustainable mode share of journeys to school are set out in the Local Transport Plan. These targets will be reviewed in the light of the increase in resources provided by Government.

Appendix 1 Development of Sustainable School Travel Strategy 2007/08 – 2011/12

The programme will be reviewed annually, and it is expected that further detail will be added to the later years of the programme. However, at this stage the level of resources for the school travel plan team is not known beyond March 2010.

	Information collection, analysis and dissemination	Sustainable travel promotion
2007/08		
31 August 2007	Initial website established at www.hertsdirect.org/school travel, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall school travel strategy document • A-Z by school index providing basic data on transport facilities and links to generic information on walking, cycling and passenger transport • Programme for developing website and overall strategy 	
To March 09		Bike It initiative at St Albans schools as part of joint programme with Sustrans, Luton and Bedfordshire.
August 07 – March 08		Develop PR / marketing strategy
August 07 – March 08	Migration of Designated Route Network to ITN mapping base, and link to wider sustainable school travel GIS information.	
September 07	Establish protocol to ensure that all new and refreshed travel plans are web-friendly and cover all information required by latest audit approach.	

	Information collection, analysis and dissemination	Sustainable travel promotion
September 07		Appointment of School Travel Assistant to support new walking buses funded by Government grant and other countywide initiatives
September 07		Launch of good practice case studies
October 07		Walk to School Week
October 07		Launch of Walk the World initiative
October 07		Primary school digital film challenge
Oct 07 – May 08		Develop new secondary school initiative
October 07		Healthy Journeys Awards
October 07		Primary school digital film challenge
November 07	Appointment of Sustainable School Travel Officer to develop and co-ordinate GIS and databases, and assist in promotion on initiatives.	
November 07		School Travel Plan Governor Conference
November 07	Review coverage of data relating to further education establishments.	
November 07 onwards	Integrate existing GIS mapping and databases on walking, cycling etc and collect data to fill in gaps.	
December 07		Review Walk the World initiative and roll out to other schools
February 08		School Travel awards event
March 08		Good practice conference for local authorities (East of England and South East regions)

	Information collection, analysis and dissemination	Sustainable travel promotion
2008/09		
April 08		Develop programme of further education establishment initiatives.
May 08		Walk to School Week
August 08	Publish revised sustainable school travel strategy	
August 08	Enhanced website, including direct access to all school travel plans	
Sept – Nov 08	User feedback on website	
September 08 onwards	Identify “gaps” in walking and cycling network and feed into development of urban transport plans and Rights of Way Improvement Plan.	
October 08		Walk to School Week
October 08		Schools Councils Conference
October 08		Primary school digital film challenge
November 08		Healthy Journeys Award
December 08	Plan of website improvements based on user feedback	
2009/10		
May 09		Walk to School Week
July 09	Publish progress report on development of School Travel Strategy	
By August 09	Development of travel planner on website, giving all relevant travel information from home address to selected school.	
August 09	Publish annual strategy	
October 09		Walk to School Week
January 2010		Review promotions and initiative programme for 2010/11 onwards.

	Information collection, analysis and dissemination	Sustainable travel promotion
2010/11		
March – May 2011	Review progress to date, and develop strategy for continuing work after March 2012.	
August 2010	Publish annual strategy	
2011/12		
August 2011	Publish annual strategy	