

Decision Maker: Environment PDS on 18th Jan 2012
Children and Young People PDS on 21st Feb 2012

Date: 18 January and 21 February 2012

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: **CHILDREN'S TRAVEL TO SCHOOL**

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Chief Officer: Nigel Davies, Director of Environmental Services

Ward: All

1. Reason for report

This report sets out the purpose, function and efficacy of the School Travel Programme and offers an opportunity for Members of Environment and Children and Young People PDS Committees to scrutinise the Programme.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That the Environment PDS Committee and the Children and Young People PDS Committee notes and comments on the content of the report.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy.
 2. BBB Priority: Quality Environment.
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: N/A
 2. Ongoing costs: N/A.
 3. Budget head/performance centre: TfL LIP funding for School Travel Planning Activities
 4. Total current budget for this head: £295K in 2011/12; £125K in 2012/13 (approved budget)
 5. Source of funding: Transport for London
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 2.6 FTE
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non-statutory - Government guidance.
 2. Call-in: Call-in is not applicable.
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): All peak time motorists
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? N/A.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The core objective of the School Travel Programme is tackling congestion near schools and reducing journey times for all road users. The programme also makes a contribution to improving pupils' health and the environment more generally, and is provided in the context of improving road safety around schools.
- 3.2 Nationally, the DfT travel survey has shown that at 8.40am the 'school run' now accounts for 24% of car driver trips by residents of urban areas during term time. Concern about congestion has been expressed by Bromley residents: in the Council's last residents' survey the level of traffic congestion was, at 48%, the second highest priority for improvement. Bromley is geographically the largest Borough in London and has the third highest car ownership level in London.
- 3.3 The School Travel Programme was introduced in 2003 to address local congestion concerns through the national 'Travelling to School Initiative' (TTSI). This was a joint undertaking by the Department for Transport (DfT) and Department for Education (DfE). This resulted in the DfT awarding local authorities grants to fund School Travel Adviser posts until 2010.
- 3.4 This has been reinforced with additional annual funding from Transport for London awarded through the Local Implementation Plan (LIP). This funding is allocated for transport related projects undertaken in accordance with the priorities outlined in The Mayor of London's Transport Strategy. Through successful bids to Transport for London the Council has secured funds for the development and monitoring of the School Travel Programme.
- 3.5 The School Travel Programme links closely with road safety education, cycle training and safety around schools, taking a holistic approach and working in conjunction with other teams on a number of projects linked to the Environment Portfolio Plan aim of promoting cycling, walking and public transport.
- 3.6 With 46,000 pupils in the Borough, keeping Bromley's traffic flowing freely and reducing journey times is a constant and evolving challenge facing the Council. Although the School Travel Programme is a well-recognised brand across the Borough with excellent support, the travel to school message needs to be reinforced continually to keep up with changing school communities.
- 3.7 Local authorities also have a legal duty to promote sustainable modes of travel, as set out in The Education & Inspections Act 2006 (see Section 6).

The Efficacy of School Travel Plans

- 3.8 Car use reduction in Bromley has continually been above the London average. In July 2005, 37.7% of school journeys were single passenger car journeys. By July 2011, this had reduced significantly: 23.1% of school journeys were single passenger car journeys. Cycling and walking have increased over this period by 3%. The semi-rural nature of parts of the Borough has been taken into account with the Council helping to facilitate journeys that are partially by car, with the remainder by foot or public transport.
- 3.9 The figures quoted above have been derived from data recorded by the School Travel Team since the commencement of the project. This data is recorded via pupil and staff surveys conducted in class. Although 'hands up' surveys were the recommended collection methodology, Bromley had concerns about the accuracy of these surveys. In

December 2008, Transport for London conducted a study of different collection methods at selected sites across London. This included interviews with teachers and pupils, observations made during data collection and multi-modal survey data. The result were compared with PLASC (census) returns. The research concluded that hands up surveys are of acceptable accuracy and remain the most cost effective collection method for the data. Other data collection methods were no more accurate but cost a lot more to administer.

- 3.10 The School Travel Team also consult with parents every three years via an in-depth survey that is sent home with the pupils. This promotional tool allows Bromley to gauge attitudes and address issues in line with the new intake of pupils.
- 3.11 This data is also used on a local level to meet Member objectives outlined in the Environmental Portfolio Plan. In July 2011 Bromley met the Environment Portfolio target, to have no more than 31% of pupils travelling to school by car.
- 3.12 The School Travel Team is highly regarded on a local level, forming a close working relationship with contacts in schools (Appendix one). They often act as a liaison between schools and various Council services to help resolve queries, not just relating to transport but also to areas such as litter, road works, street lighting, waste and recycling.
- 3.13 A measure of the support for School Travel Plans in Bromley schools is the Accreditation scheme. Transport for London, who devised the scheme, recognise the hard work demonstrated by schools and local authority advisors through this optional scheme. Statistics show that schools that are accredited via this scheme achieve a higher level of modal shift away from car use. The Accreditation process consists of three levels: Sustainable, Higher Standards and Outstanding. Approved schools must evidence their project work to achieve accreditation status.
- 3.14 Bromley has had the highest number of accredited schools in London for several years. In October 2011:
- Nine Bromley schools achieved the Outstanding level.
 - Twenty one Bromley schools achieved Higher Standards level; the highest number in London
 - 55 Bromley schools achieved the Sustainable level.
 - Five schools were nominated by Transport for London for the 2011 School of the Region Award; four of the five were Bromley Schools, with the eventual winner being a Bromley school (St Christopher's). A Bromley School (Warren Road Primary) was also a winner in 2010.
- 3.15 The School Travel Team has helped Local Authority schools access over £620,000 of capital grants from the DfE between 2004 and 2009, to spend on projects related to reducing congestion. The School Travel Programme also helped the Borough's independent schools to access over £95,000 from Transport for London funding.
- 3.16 Schools have also been able to receive safe, secure cycle storage installed on site through the Mayor of London's Cycle Storage programme. This scheme has provided over £555,000 worth of infrastructure to Bromley schools. So far 68 schools have had storage installed, provided free of charge to the school or to the Borough. The programme is still ongoing and more schools have applied this year. Only schools that participate in the School Travel programme can apply as they can demonstrate a proactive approach to cycling to school. This service has provided facilities that otherwise may have not been accessible to many schools.

- 3.17 Participating in the School Travel Programme is not compulsory; however, currently over 90% of all schools are actively involved in the programme. Schools realise the importance of congestion reduction for the benefit of parents, neighbours and road users in general. They also realise how the programme helps them to achieve related objectives, and continue to take part.
- 3.18 Since the School Travel Team was introduced in 2003 they have continually exceeded both national and local targets set in line with Member objectives set out in the Environment Portfolio Plan.
- 3.19 They met the DfT's target of 100% of schools completing a travel plan by 2010. To date only eight of the 33 other London Boroughs met this target.
- 3.20 The work of the Bromley School Travel Team has been recognised by various institutions across the UK for the last six years through the winning of numerous awards for innovative projects (Appendix two). These highlight that the congestion reducing projects are consistently featured as a best practice example by other local authorities across the UK.

Synergies at a local and national level

- 3.21 The School Travel Programme has extensive links with a wide range of local and national strategies (Appendix three and Section 4).
- 3.22 In the 2011 Local Implementation Plan (LIP) there are obvious links between transport and the health agenda through walking and cycling. More specifically, Bromley's LIP objectives include:
- To reduce congestion on the road
 - To promote the safe use of walking, cycling and public transport
 - To reduce the number and severity of road casualties
 - To improve the environment and reduce air and noise pollution
- 3.23 This is supported by the Healthy Lives, Healthy People White Paper, updated July 2011, where PCTs link more extensively with Local Authorities as they "...provide a clear base for improving health and wellbeing throughout a whole lifetime." Furthermore, the report goes on to say "There is emphasis on tackling wider issues...to deliver environmental and public health benefits by improving access...through sustainable modes of transport".
- 3.24 On a local level, the Borough was required to develop a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy or SMoTS, which was devised by the School Travel Team. This strategy aims to explain how Bromley is meeting its responsibilities under the Education & Inspections Act. In March 2011 the DfE announced additional funding for extended rights to free travel and the general duty to promote sustainable travel as outlined in the Education & Inspections Act. This previously came under the 'SMoTS' funding. Bromley has been allocated £56,394 for 2011/12 and £69,966 for 2012/13. This funding is not ring-fenced and has not been accessed by the School Travel Team.

Adding Value

- 3.25 The School Travel Team have been diversifying their role and working on wider projects. Recent restructuring has seen the School Travel Team extending their responsibilities to include Workplace Travel, to focus on a Borough-wide approach to reducing congestion.

- 3.26 The School Travel Team have been providing a crucial communication link in the dissemination of information on the closure of the Chislehurst Road Bridge. They have facilitated communications between the engineers, Councillors, contractors, residents and school communities. Issues have been ongoing, especially around the schools on the new diversion route.
- 3.27 In utilising Transport for London congestion data the School Travel Team are able to focus on congestion hotspots and target the schools and businesses in these areas.
- 3.28 Another high profile project the School Travel Team have led on is supporting schools in planning for the withdrawal of funding for the School Crossing Patrol service. They have dealt with all communications from schools, Councillors, parents, residents, private contractors, engineering and the many other parties involved in this project. They have personally met with schools on an individual basis to discuss this withdrawal of funding and overseen progress made by the Council and schools. Where appropriate, capital investment is being made now to offset future revenue costs.

The Future

- 3.29 This year has seen the introduction of a number of schools moving to academy status; keeping schools engaged in reducing congestion and addressing road safety is very important. So far, academy status has not affected schools commitment to the School Travel Programme. Independent schools have always worked closely with the School Travel Team.
- 3.30 Congestion issues remain important to Bromley, so delivering an appropriate Programme within diminishing budgets will be a challenge. The School Travel Programme will operate with a budget next year of less than half that of 2011/12 (see section 5).
- 3.31 Schools have implemented many changes in respect of their travel plans, which will still need Council support for them to follow through with and to adapt with each new intake of pupils. However, much of the investment in infrastructure and the set up costs of school projects has been made, so the Council is still able to deliver a consistent service, but at reduced cost.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Building a Better Bromley 2020 Vision:

“Many residents and local businesses are concerned about congestion, leading to extended journey times and insufficient parking provision. There are opportunities to work in partnership to make a real impact on reducing unnecessary car journeys. We also need to maintain our progress in improving road safety.”

“Issues to be tackled: Promotion of cycling, walking and public transport to achieve less congestion at peak times and reduce fuel use and pollution.”

4.2 Building a Better Bromley 20/12 Priorities for Quality Environment:

- ‘Seek to reduce traffic congestion’
- ‘Continue to take effective action to improve road safety and reduce accidents’
- ‘Improve energy efficiency in the Borough’

4.3 Environment Portfolio Plan 2011/12:

“Local people themselves should be able to play their part, for example by reducing the proportion of home to school journeys by car. All of our schools have travel plans in

place, and we will continue to review and update existing plans. We are working with primary schools to find new ways to ensure primary school children can walk to school unaccompanied.”

“Aim - Promotion of cycling, walking and public transport to: improve access to services, facilities, and employment; reduce peak time congestion; improve journey times; and lower carbon emissions”

“We will ...Continue the reviews of School Travel Plans, working with schools and parents to reduce traffic congestion, improve road safety, and encourage walking and cycling.”

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Expenditure on the School Travel Programme peaked in 2008/9. Since then the Programme has become more established and the costs have reduced in recent years (see table below). The cost has always been covered by grant funding and has been ring-fenced for transport related projects. The approved budget line for 2012/13 is £125,000. The change to formula based LIP funding, introduced in 2009, has allowed Bromley to be more flexible with funding in line with Member objectives.

Year	Spend (£K)	Year	Spend/ *Budget (£K)
2005 / 06	101	2009 / 10	325
2006 / 07	138	2010 / 11	305
2007 / 08	285	2011 / 12	295*
2008 / 09	431	2012 / 13	125*

Note: 2005/6 to 2010/11 includes £31K grant from DCSF(now DfE)/DfT. All other funds are from TfL.

5.2 Despite a reduction in funding, it is important to support existing projects. One saving, for example, is on the Walk on Wednesday Scheme (WoW). From April 2012, the scheme will be streamlined and re-launched with a new focus, meaning the scheme costs less than a quarter of previous years. This has been amended in consultation with the schools, utilising their ideas. Further savings have been identified for 2012/13.

5.3 Staff numbers on the School Travel Programme have also reduced from 3 FTE to 2.6 FTE. This again is attributed to the establishment of the programme over the previous years.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Education & Inspections Act 2006, section 508A states:

LEAs in England: duty to promote sustainable modes of travel etc

“(1) A local education authority in England must—

(a) prepare for each academic year a document containing their strategy to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to meet the school travel needs of their area (“a sustainable modes of travel strategy”),

(b) publish the strategy in such manner and by such time as may be prescribed, and

(c) promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to meet the school travel needs of their area.”

Non-Applicable Sections:	Personnel
Background Documents:	Environment Portfolio Plan

(Access via Contact Officer)	Bromley 2020 Vision Building a Better Bromley priorities 2011/12 Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy Healthy Lives, Healthy People Mayor of London's Transport Strategy Education & Inspections Act National Obesity Strategy
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APPENDIX ONE

"Your whole team are very professional and go above and beyond what is expected of them. I hope that every Borough in London has such a fabulous level of support!"

Assistant Head Teacher – The Ravensbourne School – July 2011

"I can't thank you enough for all your help and I've seen the email you sent with our application. After all your hard work I hope that we are successful but in any event we are up to date with the review."

Teacher, Gray's Farm Primary School – July 2011

Thanks again for all your support wouldn't have done it without you!

Teacher, Mottingham Primary School – September 2011

"Thank you very much for your guidance and your support throughout the application. I'm so pleased to have received the Outstanding status!"

Teacher, Crofton Junior School – July 2011

"Absolutely delighted!! Thanks again for your support - we wouldn't have got it without you!!"

Deputy Head Teacher, Leasons Primary School – July 2011

"Just a quick note to say thank you very much for yesterday's 'STAR Awards'. I did fill in the evaluation sheet but wanted to mention again how impressed I was at the total professionalism and organisation of the day by you and the team. It was great to discover so much useful information."

Teacher, Bromley High School – June 2011

"Thanks so much Sarah and Dan - for the photographs and supporting today's walk. Several of the children mentioned this was their best day ever - doing the walk and seeing the WoW bear! All ended well and had some positive feedback. You both did a grand job and bet you're hugged out Sarah!!"

Teacher, Bromley Road Infant School – June 2011

"Thank you for all your help and support over the last year. The children at Crofton Infants really enjoy all the competitions and badges. Walking the World has yet again been a huge success with our year 2's, they thoroughly enjoyed receiving their medals. I don't know where I would be without Sarah helping me with the travel plans and the Higher Standards award. So thank you, I hope you all have a great summer; at least you won't be getting a phone call from me asking for something!"

Teacher, Crofton Infant School – July 2010

"Just wanted to say an enormous thank you for all your support in helping us achieve our higher level accreditation. It has been an absolute pleasure working with you and we look forward to continuing our great relationship with you. A 'team' is still in the process of being set up to offer more support so please bear with us in the mean time :)"

Teacher, Bromley Road Infant School – October 2010

APPENDIX TWO

Awards achieved by the School Travel Team:

2005 – 2011

- Modeshift Partnership Initiative of the Year award for 2011 – Transportal
- Smarter Travel Awards 2010 – Winner; School Project of the Year – Poetry in Motion
- London Transport Awards 2010 - Winner ;Travel Information and Marketing – School travel Plans
- Modeshift Awards 2009 –Winner; Walking Initiative of the Year – Poetry in Motion project
- Green Awards 2009 – Winner; Best Public Sector campaign – Winner for work on School Travel Plan Programme
- Modeshift Awards 2008 – Winner; Curriculum Initiative of the Year – Winner for Schools Walking the World Project
- Smarter Travel Awards 2008 – Winner; School Travel Advisor of the Year
- Sustainable City Awards 2008 – Winner; Traffic Reduction and Transport Management – Awarded for achievements in reducing car use on the journey to school and progress on the travel plan
- Smarter Travel Awards 2006 – Winner; Borough of the Year
- Smarter Travel Awards 2005 – Winner; School Travel Advisor of the Year

APPENDIX THREE

Healthy Lives, Healthy People - Update and Way Forward – July 2011

In November 2010 the Department of Health published the white paper 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People'. It outlines "...a new approach to public health and a commitment across local authorities and the public health professions", through the creation of local partnerships and engagement. The paper states that Local Authorities provide a clear base for improving health and wellbeing throughout a whole lifetime. Directors of Public Health will be employed by local authorities to embed local health work throughout the authority. The white paper was followed up by 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Update and Way Forward' in July 2011.

Research for the White Paper indicates that: "two out of three adults are overweight or obese; and inequalities in health remain widespread, with people in the poorest areas living on average 7 years fewer than those in the richest areas, and spending up to 17 more years living with poor health".

In particular, the Update and Way Forward paper states that local authorities should take new responsibilities for public health and ..."develop holistic solutions to health and wellbeing embracing the full range of local services (E.g. health, housing, leisure, planning, transport, employment and social care)". This new approach focuses heavily on providing more personalised and preventative services starting from early childhood, partly through encouraging wider social responsibility. There is emphasis on tackling wider issues such as air quality and noise to deliver environmental and public health benefits by "improving access...through sustainable modes of transport".

The new responsibilities of local authorities would include local activity on:

1	Tobacco control
2	Alcohol and drug misuse services
3	Obesity and community nutrition initiatives
4	Increasing levels of physical activity in the local population
5	Assessment and lifestyle interventions as part of the NHS Health Check Programme
6	Public mental health services
7	Dental public health services
8	Accidental Injury Prevention
9	Population level interventions to reduce and prevent birth defects
10	Behavioural and lifestyle campaigns to prevent cancer and long term conditions
11	Local initiatives on workplace health
12	Supporting, reviewing and challenging delivery of key public health funded and NHS delivered services such as immunisation programmes
13	Local initiatives to reduce excess deaths as a result of seasonal mortality
14	Role in dealing with health protection incidents and emergencies
15	Promotion of community safety, violence prevention and response
16	Local initiatives to tackle social exclusion.

Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy

The *Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy* or *SMTS*, aims to explain how the London Borough of Bromley is meeting its responsibilities under the above Education & Inspections Act. This involves assessing the School Travel needs of the area as well as the facilities available in the area for the promotion of school travel. This information is collected via the ongoing monitoring conducted by the School Travel Team.

The Mayor of London's Transport Strategy

The School Travel Team has been allocated funding to deliver projects to support many of the proposals outlined in The Mayor of London's Transport Strategy which directly influences our Local Implementation Plan (LIP).

The School Travel team's activities support the following aspects of the Mayor's strategy:

Proposal 51 - *The Mayor, through TfL, and working with the London Boroughs and other stakeholders, will provide support, including sharing best practice, to enable and empower employers, schools, community groups, other organisations and individuals to deliver the improvements necessary to create a cycling revolution in London.*

Proposal 59 - *The Mayor, through TfL, and working with the London Boroughs, employers, schools, community groups, other organisations and individuals, will bring about a step change in the walking experience in London to make walking count.*

Proposal 62 - *The Mayor, through TfL, working with the London Boroughs, developers and other stakeholders, will promote walking and its benefits through information campaigns, events to raise the profile of walking, and smarter travel initiatives such as school and workplace travel plans.*

Proposal 91 - *The Mayor, through TfL and working with London Boroughs, transport operators and other stakeholders, will encourage behavioural changes to reduce vehicle emissions, by:*

a) Promoting walking and cycling, the use of car clubs, car sharing, the use of fuel efficient vehicles and smarter driving techniques and raising awareness about air quality

Proposal 116 – *The Mayor, through TfL, and working with the London Boroughs and other stakeholders, will use smarter travel initiatives across London to facilitate more efficient use of the transport system, achieve mode shift to cycling, walking and public transport and encourage the take-up of healthier travel options.*

Working towards these proposals will help meet the Mayor of London's target of increasing walking mode share from 24% to 25% by 2031. The work of the travel team helps to support all of these proposals.

Every Child Matters

Every Child Matters is a set of reforms supported by the Children Act 2004. Its aim is for every child, whatever their background or circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being.

The work carried out by the School Travel Team supports this framework, the notions of Being Healthy and Staying Safe are embedded throughout every project the team undertakes. There are strong links between the notion in this initiative of supporting

every single child, and the work done by the School Travel Team which is all-inclusive.

Eco Schools/Sustainable Schools

Central Government wants every school to be a sustainable school by 2020. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) – now the Department for Education (DfE) launched their Sustainable Schools Framework in 2006. The School Travel Team encourages schools in these endeavours and the work produced can provide essential evidence for schools in meeting these targets. The Sustainable Schools framework includes a 'Traffic and Transport' 'doorway' which a school may demonstrate its effectiveness in. A school that is active in the School Travel Programme will easily be able to show how it meets the set criteria in this area.

Similarly to the Sustainable schools framework, Eco Schools encourages schools to think about their impact on the environment. This international award programme asks schools to focus on nine topics, one of which is transport. In order to apply for the award using this topic a school needs to demonstrate that they have created a travel plan. As 90% of schools in Bromley have a current plan, nearly all schools would be eligible to apply for the award under this topic.

National Obesity strategy –Be Active, Be Healthy: a plan for getting the nation moving (Feb2009)

There is a mid term target of getting 2 million more people active by 2012 through building exercise into everyday life. Walking to school every day has been proven to encourage people to get into the habit of regular exercise from the very beginning of their lives.

Healthy Schools

Schools play an important role in supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people. A healthy school promotes physical and emotional health, throughout the school community. Involvement in the School Travel Programme, demonstrates to the Healthy Schools Programme that a school is committed to promoting physical health through walking and cycling to school.