



## **A Sustainable Education Travel Strategy for Torbay**

### **Section One: Introduction**

#### **1.1 What is a Sustainable Education Travel Strategy?**

Sustainable modes of travel are those that improve the physical well being of people who use them, improve the environmental well-being of the local area, or both.

This strategy is a long term plan for change. It describes where we are now, where we want to get to, what steps we will take to make this change, what resources are available and how we will measure our success.

The strategy concerns the travel arrangements for young people aged 0 to 19. This includes journeys to all educational establishments, such as schools, colleges, further education colleges and independent schools and travel to and from positive activities outside school hours.

This is Torbay's first Sustainable Education Travel strategy and so represents our starting point.

#### **1.2 Consultation**

This strategy was produced after consultation both with the general public and with special interest groups. The views of stakeholders are important and the strategy was modified to take into account the views expressed. The main areas of change can be summarised as:

- the Strategy name has been changed to Sustainable Education Travel Strategy to reflect that it needs to encompass all educational establishments
- the action plan includes a commitment to seek the engagement of South Devon College, which is the area's largest education establishment
- to make clear that the Strategy must also seek to influence the travel patterns of staff at educational establishments
- to acknowledge the importance of parking enforcement and traffic management around school sites.

#### **1.3 What do we hope to achieve?**

Like many urban areas, Torbay suffers with its share of "school run" congestion and too many young people are taken to educational establishments by car, when there are more sustainable alternatives. This is bad for young people's health and contributes to childhood obesity problems and environmental issues such as carbon emissions and poor air quality.

The Strategy has five main aims

- to reduce the number of young people and staff who travel to educational establishments by car and encourage them to walk, cycle or use buses.
- for the Council to make best use of existing resources by acting in a more joined up way.
- for the Council to carry out its role as a “place shaper” in such a way that choosing sustainable travel is made easier.
- to make it easier for young people to travel around the bay for positive activities outside school hours.
- to influence the behaviour and attitudes of the next generation of parents so that they make good transport choices for their children.

#### **1.4 Why do we need a strategy?**

For a number of years, the Council and partners have been engaged in a wide range of different activities that impact on travel to educational establishments. These activities have not always been very well joined-up, so the strategy is intended to be the way in which we will bring these together to make a better impact.

We have also developed the strategy in response to new duties on the Council as set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The sort of activities that play a part in this include

**School Travel Plans.** Our School Travel Advisors have helped individual schools and colleges to form plans that describe steps that they can take as a whole school community (pupils, parents, governors and staff) to promote sustainable school travel. All mainstream schools are actively involved in Travel Plans.

**Home to school and college transport service.** We provide a home to school and college journey for some young people to reach schools colleges and further education colleges and we try to do this using the most sustainable forms of transport.

**Highways engineering.** Road improvement schemes can make it easier or more attractive to walk and cycle to educational establishments. They can also discourage the use of cars for the ‘school run’.

**Parking Enforcement.** Effective parking enforcement around school sites will improve child safety and can discourage the use of cars for the ‘school run’.

**Community Partnerships/Police Community Support Officers.** Schools can work with Community Partnerships and Police Support Officers to help improve school travel within the community.

**Healthy Schools initiative.** We encourage and advise schools to achieve the “Healthy Schools” award, so that schools realise the positive benefits of physical exercise.

**Walking Buses.** We encourage and advise schools regarding the set up of walking buses.

**Eco School Status.** We encourage and advise schools to achieve 'Eco School Status' and realise the positive benefits.

**Road Safety Education.** We work with schools to teach good road craft and we have established a Junior Road Safety Officer scheme for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6.

**Training of Vulnerable Pupils** Training vulnerable pupils to switch to public transport from contract transport provides them with greater independence and sustainable travel opportunities.

**School Curriculum.** A number of strands deal with issues such as global warming, pollution, climate change and sustainability which promote awareness among our young people of the need to make good travel choices.

**School place planning.** Effective planning of school places reduces the risk that pupils will need to travel beyond walking distance to access a school place.

**School admission policies.** Good policies can ensure a place at the local school for local pupils so that they do not have to travel beyond walking distance.

**Capital investment in schools.** We invest to improve school sites so that they are safer for pedestrians and so that there is safe cycle storage and secure lockers. We invest to make schools accessible to all.

**Strategic planning.** When we plan the long term growth of Torbay's population, we can ensure that school journeys can be made by sustainable means.

### 1.5 Does this strategy link to other plans?

The promotion of sustainable education travel has important links with the Community Plan beyond its obvious contribution to learning and skills for the future. If we succeed then we will have helped to create stronger communities and put pride in the Bay. Reducing congestion on our roads will help us to achieve economic prosperity.



Sustainable education travel will also contribute to several strands in the Children and Young People's Plan, including the priorities to tackle childhood obesity and increase school attendance.

Torbay Council has joined the Carbon Trust's Local Authority Carbon Management Programme. A plan is being worked up to reduce by 15% the carbon dioxide emitted annually from council activities by 2010 (from the 2004 baseline figure). The scope of the Programme includes education travel.

Torbay's Local Transport Plan was adopted in March 2006 and sets out the transport policy framework until 2011. Central to this is to encourage more sustainable modes of travel to and from educational facilities. The 'school run' is a key contributor to congestion, as can be seen by eased traffic conditions when education establishments are on holiday.

## **1.6 What resources are available?**

There are few targeted resources, but a wide range of existing activity impacts positively on school travel. This section offers an overview of the current position with regard to funding streams which to some extent already contribute to promoting sustainable school travel. As the Strategy develops this funding structure may need to be reviewed so that we can act in a more joined up way.

There is a small resource of £15k per annum until 2010 for the promotion of sustainable school travel via a government grant. This had been used to employ two part-time School Travel Advisors (STAs). Since all the Travel Plans have been completed, the School Travel Advisor role has changed and there is now a dedicated School Travel Awareness Officer, whose main responsibilities will be working with schools that have a high percentage of children being driven to school within a walk to school distance.

The passage of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 has also brought a small amount of additional resource in the shape of a government grant of £7k per annum to help develop and deliver a strategy for Sustainable School Travel.

This funding is part of the pooled Area Based Grant which support the targets in the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the deployment of funds is overseen by the Torbay Strategic Partnership.

The work plan for the School Travel Awareness Officer is agreed between the Children's Services Directorate and the Environment Directorate and the Officer reports on a day to day basis to a Senior Transport Planner.

As has been noted this strategy provides a framework so that resources can be better joined up to promote sustainable travel. There are a number of more general funding streams that can impact on sustainable travel through their deployment.

Road safety	£100k
LTP promotional works	£10k
Schools capital programme	£40m 2007-2010
Home to school and college transport service	£1.4m
Escorts on transport for vulnerable children	£220k
Public transport subsidy	£291k
Post 16 Transport Pathfinder	£80k

Added the above resources are officer time from a range of staff engaged in the delivery of the services described in section 1.3. This represents a body of significant knowledge and experience.

The Council is also able to take advantage of opportunities to bid for funding for relevant opportunities, or to allocate officer resources to assist third parties (e.g. schools) to submit external funding bids.

### 1.7 What is the current picture of school travel and travel for young people?

In autumn 2006, schools across the UK were required to collect mode of travel data for all schools with a travel plan. This meant data was collected from parents rather than children for the first time and the data was fed into the 2007 School Census data set in January 2007. This data is the baseline for LTP4 target in the Local Transport Plan and supersedes previous data sets collected from three years of data collection from hands up surveys. The data produced was different to the hands up survey data and raised questions about which set was most accurate. However, Government expect the 06/07 data to be used as the baseline so there is no room for adjustment. With this in mind, the following baseline and trend data has been set:

Mode	Baseline	Target	Target	Target	Target
%	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
<b>Car on own</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>34</b>
<i>inc Taxi</i>	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Car Share</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Cycle</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Walk</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Public Transport</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>inc Public Bus</i>	2	2	3	3	3
<i>School Bus</i>	4	4	4	4	4
<i>Bus Other</i>	2	2	2	2	2
<i>Train</i>	1	1	1	1	1

*Percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.*

The 2008 dataset has now been produced and analysed by an external company to outline the trends occurring across Torbay.

Due to the demands from Government Target Setting, Torbay has to retain the targets set in 2007, but it is likely these will continue to be exceeded between now and 2011.

Improvements for the future revolve around ensuring schools are collecting the right data using up-to-date collection forms and that they do not simply upgrade information on a pupil from the previous year.

### 1.8 Are there any new challenges in Torbay ?

Generally, the strategy represents a challenge to traditional thinking about school transport which has focussed on the 7% that are entitled to a free school journey. This strategy now needs to address also the needs of the other 93%.

Young people have told us that they find transport around the Bay to be very expensive and this is why some of them are unable to access positive activities outside normal school hours. We need to find a way to offer improved transport arrangements.

Secondary schools and the FE College are entering a partnership to deliver the new 14-19 diploma qualifications and we need to find a way for students to move between establishments in a sustainable way.

The Council has been set challenging targets for reducing carbon emissions and a significant proportion of the current emissions are the result of the 'school run'.

### **1.9 How will we deliver ?**

We are at the start of our strategy for Sustainable Education Travel. We have formed an Action Plan (appendix 2) which lists a set of key activities. Each activity has clear success criteria and we will use this to measure our progress.

We will also invite relevant stakeholders to join a Sustainable Education Travel Forum to advise the Council on the development and delivery of this strategy.

### **1.10 Analysis of current strengths and weaknesses**

#### *Strengths*

- The LA already has resources committed to promoting sustainable travel
- Momentum is building through e.g. activity to reduce carbon emissions
- Promoting sustainable travel is a good strategic fit with other LA priorities

#### *Areas for Improvement*

- The LA should produce a comprehensive assessment of young people's travel needs drawing together information already held in school travel plans
- The LA should undertake an audit of transport infrastructure to identify gaps in provision and barriers to making sustainable journeys by shared car, bus, walking or cycling.
- The LA needs to consider the travel patterns of pre school pupils, where there is relatively little activity at present to promote sustainable travel.
- Torbay has one of the highest percentage of children being driven to school who live within a walk to school distance in the region. This needs addressing
- The Action plan needs to be reviewed, updated and published annually

## **Section Two: Promoting Sustainable School Travel**

### **2.1 What do we do to promote sustainable school travel in Torbay?**

There is already a wide range of activity

#### **2.2 Development of School Travel Plans**

Since 2004, we have been working with schools with the aim that they all develop a School Travel Plan. Through the Government's 'Travelling to School Initiative', capital grants are available to schools who complete plans to a certain standard.

Typically, plans look at existing trends of travel by both pupils and staff and examine aspirational travel modes. The plans then draw up an action plan involving the schools' partners. Many of these actions will include commitment from the schools themselves but also an indication of the physical works needed to be undertaken around the school to improve road safety and accessibility by all modes of transport. All plans have a commitment to review their progress and they are quality assessed by external school travel advisors to ensure they qualify for the grants.

School Travel Plan development in Torbay is progressing well, with all but one school having an active travel plan. It is anticipated the independent schools will have plans developed by March 2009, although there is currently no incentive for these schools to take part and their data is not recorded.

Additionally, the School Travel Awareness Officer role includes promotion of sustainable travel through certain events such as Walk to School Week, which runs twice a year, and the Council's School Travel Passport, which allows children to build up points for the number of days they walk or cycle to school and at certain milestones, they win prizes.

It is still early in terms of analysing the impact of the plans so far, given the changes in data collection noted in 1.7. However, the data does seem to suggest that modal shift is occurring. Certainly, education of children on these issues is important, not least due to the 'pester power' it creates.

Future development may look at producing educational material for the class room so that this topic can potentially be integrated into the curriculum.

### 2.3 School Place Planning

We have a duty to make sure that there are enough school places to meet demand and to enable all children to attend their local school if they want to. We try to avoid situations where pupils have to be transported away from their local school to another school because there are no places locally. We also have to maintain some surplus places to allow for parental preference. This is a difficult issue since this will result in children attending other than the local school and there is a balance to be struck between these conflicting priorities.

At secondary school age in Torbay, there is a very diverse range of schools and many pupils do not attend their nearest school. This presents a particular challenge with regard to sustainable travel in Torbay.

### 2.4 Home to School and College Transport Policy

We work closely with the local public transport bus company to provide a suitable network so when children are entitled to help from the Council as many of them as possible can use public transport. We have negotiated a ticketing arrangement that provides free off-peak travel to show these pupils the benefits of sustainable public transport. Other fare-paying pupils benefit from the establishment of a network that serves our schools.

### 2.5 14-19 Diploma Students

We are piloting a 14-19 travel scheme for the 2008.09 academic year, whereby all diploma students have been provided with a 'Diploma Student Bus Pass' for use on the public transport network to enable them to be mobile for their diploma studies. We negotiated a ticketing arrangement that provides free travel on the day they are required to travel. A 14-19 project team has now been established to develop the pilot into a sustainable 14-19 travel scheme for all future 14-19 pupils.

## 2.6 Bikeability Project

We are always looking at new ways to promote sustainable travel and are currently undertaking a 'Bikeability' project, which provides National Standard Cycle Training overseen by the Cycle Training Standards Board. The project is supported with funding from the Department for Transport, which encourages local authorities to deliver cycle training to an agreed national standard by using qualified instructors trained to a national standard.

Currently 15 schools are engaged with the project and 4 more have made enquiries. There have been 235 children trained since the first course in June 2008. The aim is for every year 6 pupil in Torbay to have the opportunity to participate in a 'Bikeability' course.

### *Strengths*

- All bar 1 school has a STP
- We include the independent schools in our STP work
- Every child is able to get a primary school place within walking distance from home
- A large proportion of children in receipt of assisted transport are provided with bus passes for public transport
- Current 14-19 pupils are provided with bus passes for public transport to enable them to be mobile for their diploma studies
- 15 schools are engaged with the 'Bikeability' project and 235 children have been trained since June 2008.
- The Council has a Transport Team in Children's Services that integrates transport for Education, Children's Social Care and the Adult Care Trust.

### *Areas for Improvement*

- There is one mainstream school that needs to complete their STP as well as the independent schools
- We need to develop smart ticketing on public transport
- We need to continue to develop the project to enable all future 14-19 pupils to be mobile for their diploma studies
- We need to find new ways to promote modal shift to address the trend of children being driven when they could walk
- We need to find a way to offer sustainable travel to help young people access positive activities outside school hours
- We need to build up our data about school travel patterns and measure our progress
- Need to continue the 'Bikeability' project, with the aim of every year 6 pupil in Torbay having the opportunity to participate.
- We need to join up and develop ways for schools to work with Highways, Community Partnerships and Police Community Support Officers to resolve parking and highways issues around the school site

### **Section Three: Ensuring School Access**

Some pupils would be at risk of missing out on education if we did not help them to get to school. Sometimes we provide transport because it is a duty and the law says we must provide assistance, in other cases we are taking a local decision (known as exercising discretion) to provide transport.

Only a relatively small number of children receive direct help with transport from the Council, amounting to about 7% of the school population.

Generally, we provide home to school transport:

- On Distance Grounds: i.e. the school is too far from home for the child to walk to school
- On Route Safety Grounds i.e. where the route between home and school is too dangerous to walk to school safely
- On Pupil Medical Grounds i.e. when the child is unable to walk to school because of a medical problem
- On Parental Medical Grounds i.e. when because of a medical problem a child's parents cannot walk with their child to school.

There are also some other special circumstances when transport is provided.

When we provide transport we always try to use the most sustainable means possible. We will always try to use public buses as the preferred option before we look at solution involving contract vehicles.

In total we spend around £1.4m per year on the cost of transport and around £200k per year on employing escorts for vulnerable children.

#### *Strengths*

- Vulnerable pupils who need help to reach school are provided with transport
- Wherever possible we provide bus passes that enable students to travel free outside school times so that they learn the value of sustainable bus travel.

#### *Areas for Improvement*

- More can be done to provide "training" for some vulnerable pupils to switch to public transport from contract transport

**APPENDIX 2 SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION TRANSPORT STRATEGY: ACTION PLAN 2008-2010**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Success Criteria</b>	<b>Responsible?</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
1	Produce draft Sustainable Education Transport Strategy	Draft Strategy produced	Tony Jordan	Current Staffing Costs	Completed
2	Consult with stakeholders on strategy	Consultation completed	Josie Medforth	Current Staffing Costs	September 2008
3	Adoption of Sustainable Education Transport Strategy by Council	Elected member approval	Tony Jordan	Current Staffing Costs	January 2009
4	Meet with SDC to establish participation in Strategy	SDC participating in Strategy	Josie Medforth	Current Staffing Costs	February 2009
5	Set up a Sustainable Education Travel Forum, inviting key relevant stakeholders to join	To meet 3 x a year & 80% attendance from forum members	Tony Jordan/Josie Medforth	Current Staffing Costs	April 2009
6	Promote and raise awareness of the Strategy	Events held, media coverage achieved	Sustainable Travel Forum	Sustainable Travel Grant	September 2009
7	Ensure remaining schools complete a School Travel Plan	Final plan completed	School Travel Awareness Officer	School Travel Grant	June 2009
8	Produce comprehensive assessment of travel needs drawing together information already held in school travel plans and other sources	Assessment completed	Strategic Transportation	Sustainable Travel Grant	Completed
9	Undertake an audit of transport infrastructure to identify gaps in provision and barriers to making sustainable journeys by shared car, bus, walking or cycling	Audit completed	Strategic Transportation	Sustainable Travel Grant	September 2009
10	Identify "unsafe" routes and explore remedies	Routes and options identified	Strategic Transportation	Sustainable Travel Grant	September 2009
11	Establish data set about school travel patterns to form baseline measure	Data sets agreed, populated and maintained	Strategic Transportation	Sustainable Travel Grant	September 2009
12	Undertake targeted work with schools to promote modal shift.	Modal shift achieved at 5 schools	School Travel Awareness Officer	School Travel Grant	September 2009
13	Encourage independent schools to engage in Travel Planning	Number of Independent Schools engaged	School Travel awareness Officer	School Travel Grant	September 2009
14	Introduce smart card ticketing on public transport	Smart ticketing operational	Strategic Transportation	Post 16 Transport Pathfinder	September 2009
15	Introduce a public transport solution for 14-19 pupils to be mobile for their diploma studies following completion of pilot.	80% of diploma students using public transport	Josie Medforth/Liz Porter	Post 16 Transport Pathfinder	September 2009
16	Develop sustainable travel solutions to help young people access positive activities outside school hours	New travel scheme in place	Tony Jordan/Josie Medforth	Current Staffing Costs	September 2009
17	Devise and deliver "training" so that some vulnerable pupils can switch to public transport from contract transport	Attend Train the Trainer Course Pilot, Training Programme in place, number of pupils switching = 6	Josie Medforth	Post 16 Transport Pathfinder	February 2009 September 2009 December 2009
18	Set up Bikeability Project	Project Operational & 1 course at each primary school every academic year.	Mark Wilson	Department for Transport Funding – project specific.	September 2009
19	Set up a project to join up and develop ways for schools to work with Highways, Community Partnerships and Police Community Support Officers to resolve parking and highways issues around the school site.	Project set up	Sustainable Travel Forum	Current Staffing Costs	December 2009

### Appendix 3 Risks to the Delivery of the Strategy

Ref	Risk	Probability	Impact	Score	Rating	Mitigation
1	The Strategy does not make an impact on the improvement to sustainable modes of travel	2	3	6	M	An action plan has been formed to measure progress and key stakeholders are going to be invited to join a Travel Forum to advise on the development and delivery of the strategy
2	Inability to work in Partnership to join up working and make a better impact	2	3	6	M	The Travel Forum will be tasked to monitor the progress and success in this area
3	Inability to collect reliable data	2	3	6	M	A dedicated School Travel Awareness Officer has been employed to work with schools and an external company has been commissioned to analyse the data. This company is also being employed across the region by other local authorities. This will provide data uniformity and allow cross boundary analysis.
4	Lack of buy in from Schools	2	3	6	M	The action plan includes a task to promote and raise awareness of the Strategy. A dedicated School Travel Awareness Officer has now been employed to work with schools.
5	Action Plan is not delivered	2	3	6	M	Key stakeholders are going to be invited to form a Travel Forum to advise on the development and delivery of the strategy, to include monitoring the delivery of the Action Plan.

