

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
8th MARCH 2007

TROWBRIDGE SECONDARY SCHOOLS
TRAVEL PLANNING

Purpose of Report

1. To update Members on progress made in carrying forward the recommendations agreed at their meeting on 20th September 2006 and to offer an outline of planned future activities, as well as advice on the implications of a number of key issues related to the new Education and Inspection Bill.

Background

2. The meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee held on 20th September 2006 resolved that:
 - (i) *Being encouraged by the potential for the three secondary schools in Trowbridge, supported by the Council's Travel Plan Advisers, to work together in progressing travel planning initiatives on a joint basis, the Committee recommends that the Cabinet Member for Education & Youth Development and the Cabinet Member for the Environment, Transport and Economic Development oversee this joint working in order to ensure that the following is achieved where feasible, regularly liaising with the Trowbridge Ward Members:*
 - (a) *The co-ordination of funding bids and needs for highway infrastructure improvements;*
 - (b) *The establishing of a dedicated car sharing scheme for all car users contributing to the school run, but especially for those most likely to use such a scheme, i.e. staff and 6th form students; and*
 - (c) *The facilitation of a co-ordinated strategic planning and review of travel plans at the highest level involving, i.e. head teachers, chairs of governing bodies, and senior council officers.*
 - (ii) *To request that the Cabinet Members and officers provide an update on the implementation of (i) above to the March 2007 meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee; and*
 - (iii) *To request officers to submit a report to the next appropriate meeting of the Committee providing an update on new measures to be introduced by the Education & Inspections Bill which will impact on school passenger transport.*

3. At the 20th September meeting, further information on Travel Plans, how they work, and what impacts were being achieved and also might be possible were discussed. Members were keen to examine the potential for joint working and/or a joint Travel Plan by the three secondary schools, what might be the outcome and likely impact (relevant to this matter) of the consultation on the Council's proposal to withdraw support for denominational transport, and the likely impact of the new Education Act on passenger transport for schools.
4. That meeting was preceded on 19th July 2006 by a well attended meeting with Officers, Members and school representatives. Discussion took place on a number of subject areas including current Travel Planning progress, rates of car use to school by pupils and staff and the willingness and ability by the schools to actively partake in the development and implementation of Travel Plans.

Response of Officers

5. Taking resolutions 1(a), (b), and (c) in turn and also addressing resolution 2:

The co-ordination of funding bids and needs for highway infrastructure improvements

6. Since September no travel related external funding opportunities for the schools have arisen apart from County Council's own TravelWise Taking Action on School Journeys Challenge. Given that the Clarendon College did not meet the basic criteria for bidding, namely an Approved Travel Plan, a joint bid was not practical. John of Gaunt did apply for a grant for on-site sustainable travel improvements whilst St. Augustines expressed an interest to apply for similar on-site provision in 2008-09. School Travel Advisers will work with the schools to explore any future funding opportunities as part of a combined bid.
7. Two highway infrastructure schemes have been particularly welcomed by the schools, namely the Lambrok Stream Cycle Scheme and an assessment of an improvement scheme along Wingfield Road which are in development and investigation stages respectively.

The establishing of a dedicated car sharing scheme for all car users contributing to the school run, but especially for those most likely to use such a scheme, i.e. staff and 6th form students

8. A new "Private Group" for the three secondary schools plus five neighbouring west Trowbridge primary schools at www.carsharewiltshire.com was set up in January 2007. Feedback from school staff indicated that staff and 6th formers would be unlikely to want to share and could have a negative effect on any take up. Further, those students that drive tend to car share splitting petrol costs. Hence the Private Group has been aimed specifically at teachers and other non-academic staff. The primary schools are Newtown Community Primary School, Studley Green Primary School, St John's Catholic School, Walwayne Court School, and Longmeadow Primary School. Should the schools agree that there is potential to expand the scheme to other members of the school community further promotional efforts will occur.

9. At the time of writing this report promotional information is being produced. TravelWise has offered each school £50 once 40 people have registered journeys.

The facilitation of a co-ordinated strategic planning and review of travel plans at the highest level involving, i.e. head teachers, chairs of governing bodies, and senior council officers

10. Given the schools' different stages in Travel Planning, their individual concerns and the failure of a previous group some four years ago that included all key stakeholders, the opportunity to develop a co-ordinated strategic approach is being taken in two stages. Firstly all three schools are now actively implementing or developing a Travel Plan integrating efforts during this academic year into the curriculum. This should secure significant commitment and longevity to the process within the schools.
11. The second stage will be targeted during Term 1 of 2008-09, where the Travel Plan Co-ordinators will meet to identify common initiatives and joint smart targets for the following two to three academic years. Meetings of appointed Senior Management from each school will be scheduled to assess, approve, and sign off the common statements of interest.

Resolution 3: Update on new measures to be introduced by the Education & Inspections Bill which will impact on school passenger transport

12. This matter will be dealt with by the Passenger Transport Manager at the next item on this agenda.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

13. None.

Proposal

14. That the Committee considers the progress made so far in discussing this issue and makes recommendations to further assist school travel planning matters for secondary schools in Trowbridge.

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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

None