

Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy

2012 – 2013

The journey to school



**Northumberland County Council
County Hall, Morpeth
Northumberland NE61 2EF**

**Sarah Rowell
September 2012**

We want to make our services accessible to all. If you require our information in a different format, please contact us and we will be happy to discuss your needs.

Useful contacts

Travel Plan Co-ordinator	Sarah Rowell	(01670) 624115
School Travel Plan Advisor	Tracy Aitken	(01670) 624117
LTP Co-ordinator	Margaret Robinson	(01670) 624097
Cycling Officer	Aln Elliot	(01670) 622971
Road Safety Officer	Leslie Gilbert	(01670) 624113
Independent Travel Training	Gemma Bray	(01670) 622792
Healthy School Co-ordinator	Angela Mitchison	(01670) 533566
Local Safety Schemes	Jim Long	(01670) 624126
School Transport	Mark Cusack	(01670) 624081

FOREWORD

Each day during the school term, millions of pupils and their parents travel from home to school in the morning, and make the return trip in the afternoon. The school journey affects public transport patterns, causes localised congestion around schools and contributes to the sharp road traffic peak around nine o'clock each morning and three o'clock in the afternoon.

Over the past 20 years the proportion of children travelling to school by car has almost doubled, yet many live close enough to school to walk. This change in travel habits has a negative effect on the environment and the health of young people.

The Government White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone' signalled the introduction of the School Travel Plan – a combined package of practical and educational measures involving the whole community to reduce car use. School travel plans are one way of redressing the balance to encourage children to want to travel to school more sustainably and persuade parents that it is the best option. As part of the Local Transport Plan, we have been working hard to promote and support the changes that are necessary to reduce car dependency and encourage greater use of sustainable modes of transport.

This document outlines our approaches and demonstrates our commitment to encouraging sustainable transport choices for the journey to and from school, exploring ways to improve safety on the route to school, whilst at the same time encouraging walking, cycling and bus use. It aims to draw together elements of other key strategies, namely the Local Transport Plan, that supports the delivery of transport services that have an impact on schools, children and young people.

CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction	5
Chapter 2: Strategic framework	
Section 1: National framework.....	6
Section 2: Local prospective.....	8
Chapter 3: Assessment of need	
Section 1: Issues within Northumberland.....	10
Section 2: Travel trends.....	15
Chapter 4: Infrastructure audit	
Section 1: Walking.....	17
Section 2: Cycling	22
Section 3: School transport	25
Section 4: Public transport	28
Section 5: Community transport.....	29
Section 6: Local Sustainable Transport Fund.....	29
Section 7: Cars	30
Chapter 5: The way forward.....	31
Chapter 6: Objectives, targets & monitoring.....	35

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

What is a sustainable school travel strategy?

Increasingly, school children are being driven to and from school, rather than walking, cycling or taking the bus. Increased use of sustainable transport would increase the amount of exercise young people receive, cut peak hour congestion and help reduce carbon dioxide emissions and long term environmental damage.

This strategy seeks to illustrate the progress made to date relating to the promotion of sustainable travel. The strategy summarises the main initiatives being undertaken to reduce traffic levels, associated with school activities and identifies how the authority intends to develop its infrastructure, processes and promotions to better cater for and support journeys to, from and between schools, in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way.

Why do we need a sustainable school travel strategy?

This strategy has been developed in accordance with Part 6 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006. Section 508A of the Act places a general duty on Local Authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport.

The Act defines sustainable modes of travel as those that the 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.

The duty applies to children and young people of 6th form age (i.e. children of compulsory school age and below, and

young people over compulsory school age but under 18, or older if they started

a course of further education before their 19th birthday and are still participating in that course) and relates to journeys at the start and end of the day and journeys between institutions during the day.

What does this authority need to do?

There are four main elements to the duty to promote sustainable school travel and transport that the authority must satisfy:

- An assessment of the travel and transport needs of children, and young people within the authority's area;
- An audit of the existing 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 within the authority so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are better catered for;
- The promotion of sustainable travel and transport modes on the journey to, from, and between schools and other institutions.

The strategy review

This document has been reviewed during September 2012 as part of the statutory requirement. The review updated all national and regional policies, updated the data contained within the document and provided updated actions and targets.

This document contains all information relating to educational travel and is pulled together to provide a resource for both pupils and parents to ensure schools across the County are accessible and the authority continues to provide adequate infrastructure to support the development of sustainable travel.

CHAPTER TWO

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Where does this strategy sit in relation to national and local objectives?

The strategic framework for developing this sustainable mode of travel strategy is provided by a raft of national and local policy documents. The policies extend from transport into the related areas of health and education. These are set out below.

Section 1: National Framework

Transport

Education & Inspections Act 2006, Part 6 School Travel & School Food

As well as placing a general duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport it also seeks to 'improve and extend the offer of free transport'.

Department for Transport (DfT) Transport White Paper (July 2004), The Future of Transport: a network for 2030.

The White Paper supports travel planning and the promotion of sustainable travel. The white paper charts a course over 30 years and includes proposals to enhance local travel and respect the environment and includes:

- Promoting the use of school travel plans to encourage people to consider alternatives to using the car.
- Creating a culture and improved quality of local environment so that cycling and walking are seen as an alternative to car travel for short journeys, particularly for children.

Department for Transport (DfT) and Department for Education and Skills

(DfES), Travelling to School Initiative (2003)

This initiative aims to develop a strategic and sustainable approach to school travel issues and to reduce car dependency on journeys to and from school. School travel plans are identified as a key strategy to achieving this. The intention to make school transport more inclusive; allow greater independence of travel by school children; promote the use of and make conditions more favourable for the safe take up of walking, cycling and public transport.

Tomorrow's Roads – Safer for Everyone (2000)

The Government's strategy for improving road safety during 2000 – 2010 sets new ten year targets for casualty reductions, compared to the 1994 – 98 average, of a:

- 40% reduction in the numbers of people killed or seriously injured.
- 50% reduction in the numbers of children killed or seriously injured.
- 10% reduction in the slight casualty rate, expressed as the number of people slightly injured per 100 million vehicle kilometres.

Education

The Children Act 2004

This Act provides a legislative foundation for whole system reform to support a long-term and ambitious programme to improve children's services.

Every Child Matters: Change for Children, National Framework 2004

This was produced as a result of the Children Act and is a new approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. The Government's aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve

- Make a positive contribution
The promotion of safe and sustainable modes of travel to school supports the aims of Every Child Matters.

A number of educational reforms have come about due to Every Child Matters, these include Building Schools for the Future, 14 – 19 Diplomas and Extended Schools

14 – 19 Diplomas (2008)

The aim of these diplomas is for all 14-19 year olds to have access to a full range of Diplomas by 2013. Diplomas will provide flexibility and choice to all learners through a mix of academic and applied learning.

Due to the need for specialised facilities to deliver diplomas, young people may be required to travel to different sites during the school day. However, in such a deeply rural County other solutions may need to be considered so that young people do not have unreasonable travel times. These solutions may include the use of peripatetic staff, mobile provision, residential provision and e-learning.

Extended Schools (2005)

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) describes an extended school as one that provides a range of activities and services often beyond the school day, 'to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider communities'. These are seen as a key way of delivering Every Child Matters outcomes. An extended school works with the local authority, local partners and other schools to provide access to a core offer of integrated services:

- A varied range of activities including study support, sport and music clubs, combined with child care in primary schools.
- Parenting and family support.
- Swift and easy access to targeted and specialist services.

- Achieve economic well-being
- Community access to facilities including adult and family learning, ICT and sports grounds.

These will often be provided beyond the school day but not necessarily by teachers or on the school site, thus having travel implications. The number of schools in Northumberland classed as extended schools will rise in future years with currently around 70% of schools offering the full core, the target for all children to have access to extended school facilities by 2010.

Sustainable Schools for Pupils, Communities and the Environment: An Action Plan for the DfES, 2007

This document outlines actions to ensure schools are supported in becoming sustainable models for young people and their communities by 2020. As part of this programme it is stated that 'all schools be models of sustainable travel where vehicles are only used when absolutely necessary and facilities for healthier, less polluting or less dangerous modes of transport are exemplary'.

Health

Public Health White Paper (November 2004), Choosing Health: Making Healthy Choices Easier. Chapter 3, Children and Young People – Starting on the Right Path.

This White Paper sets out actions to support children and young people. School travel plans are seen to play a significant part in encouraging children to be physically active. It was highlighted that the contribution of the school journey to children's physical activity is important.

Section 2: Local Prospective

Transport

The Local Transport Plan (LTP)

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a strategy document that sets out what the local transport authority wants to achieve in terms of highways and transport in its area within a particular timeframe.

The LTP covering a 15 year period is currently under development, but will be based around the following national goals:

- Support economic goals
- Reduce carbon emissions
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Contribute to better safety, security and health
- Improve quality of life and a healthy natural environment.

An integrated transport programme is formed that includes schemes identified through school travel plans.

Northumberland Public Transport Strategy 2011 - 2016

This strategy sets out how the council will ensure the provision of appropriate bus and rail services for both passengers and freight.

The strategy contributes to achieving the objectives in the LTP by promoting a public transport network which:

- Provides an attractive and sustainable travel alternative to the car thereby helping to reduce traffic congestion and pollution levels and improving air quality and the environment; and
- Encourages integration with other modes of transport.

Joint Community Transport Strategy for Northumberland 2008

A new vision to develop a high quality community transport network, which will promote social inclusion throughout the authority. There are two strategic aims for community transport in Northumberland:

- To create a strong and secure community transport sector
- To ensure our customers receive the best service possible.

Environment

Northumberland Sustainable Schools

Supporting Northumberland schools to become Sustainable Schools is important to the authority. We recognise the important role that schools and young people have in influencing their families and believe that by working together we can make a difference to our environment.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families published Sustainable Schools for Pupils, Communities and the Environment in 2006. The National Framework for Sustainable Schools has eight doorways (including travel and traffic) and provides recommendations for each that show how schools can develop work across the curriculum, campus and community by 2020.

Public Health

Public Health is in a period of significant change as responsibility for key aspects of public health is being transferred from Northumberland Care Trust to the local authority.

- Offers accessibility through the public transport system, both in terms of physical access to transport and its availability, to the widest cross section of the population;
- Gives people (including those who do not have access to cars) more travel choices to access work, services and leisure activities;
- Offers affordable fares to passengers;

The local authority will assume statutory responsibilities for key elements from 1st April 2013. The public health service consists of a small number of public health specialists who undertake a range of activities to promote and protect the health of the general population, for example health and healthcare needs assessment, implementation of national, evidence-based policy and guidance.

The local authority will have responsibilities across all three public health domains:

- Health improvement and reduction in health inequalities, e.g. socio-economic factors, lifestyle factors
- Health Protection, e.g. emergency preparedness, environmental hazards, screening, immunisations, infectious disease outbreak management
- Population healthcare, e.g. advice to healthcare commissioners

Education

New Schools

Although the level of funding available for new schools has decreased over recent years, the council continue to look for opportunities to create new school builds and refurbishments.

The authority will continue to ensure that travel plans are developed in the early planning stages so that travel issues are considered throughout the planning and building process. Once the new school opens the school travel plan should be reviewed within three months, this includes pupil surveys to ensure baseline travel data is obtained.

Health

Northumberland's Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014

The Children and Young People's Plan sets out the areas for action for services for children and young people, families and carers in Northumberland. These are inextricably linked to the corporate priorities set out in Northumberland County Council's Sustainable

Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan.

Northumberland Healthy Schools

The National Healthy Schools programme ceased to operate nationally in 2011 however the authority remained committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of all children and continued the programme, as part of a health and well-being team who provide a range of support to schools. The impact of the programme is based on a whole school approach to physical and emotional well-being focused on four core themes:

- Personal, social and health education
- Healthy eating
- Physical activity
- Emotional health & wellbeing

In order for schools to achieve Healthy School criteria they must meet 43 different criteria points, this includes: *'Encourages children, young people, staff and parents/carers to walk or cycle to school under safer conditions, utilising the School Travel Plan'*. The school should be engaged with representatives from the Safer Routes to School Programme and School Travel Plan (STP) scheme and:

- The school has a School Travel Plan in place or is working towards one being in place
- Parents/carers have received information regarding the School Travel Plan via newsletter articles/ letters and so on
- The school has used School Travel Plan surveys to develop the broader Physical Activity agenda
- Throughout the school year there is a planned promotion of walking and cycling to school
- Pedestrian and cycle skills training is available for children, young people and staff.

CHAPTER THREE

ASSESSMENT OF NEED

What does sustainable travel mean in Northumberland?

As demonstrated in the previous chapter a number of opportunities arise from national and local policies. This chapter looks at the particular problems faced in Northumberland, including education provision, the reasons why the promotion of sustainable travel is important, current travel trends and pupil preferences in terms of travel to and from school. This chapter is split into sections dealing with issues within Northumberland and school travel trends.

Section1: Issues within Northumberland

Schools and pupils within Northumberland

Northumberland is the northern most county in England; it is the sixth largest of all counties and covers almost two thousand square miles. It has one of the lowest populations with just over 311,300 people, over 50% live in less than 5% of the land area giving an urban concentration in the south east corner of the county and a very low population density in the rural north and west.

Currently there are 198 schools in Northumberland; this is broken down into 112 first & 13 primary schools, 35 middle schools, 12 high schools, 2 secondary schools and 2 all age academies. There are also 8 SEN schools. Overall there are 44,247 pupils in education across Northumberland at present, this can be broken up into 44,247 children who attend main stream schools, 3752 sixth form students and 476 SEN pupils.

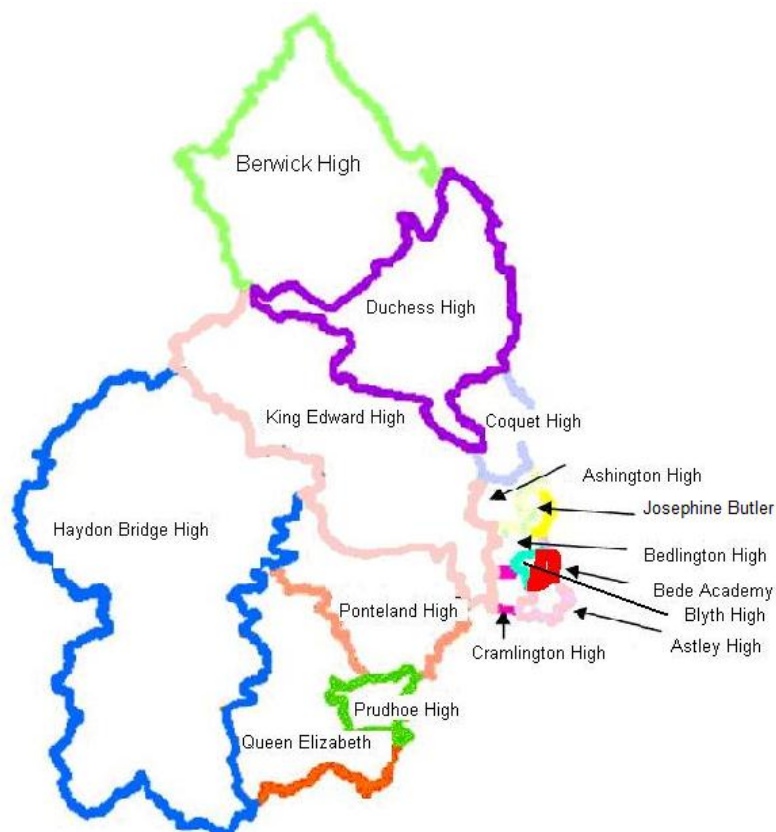


Figure 3.1 High school catchment areas

Accessibility

The size, low population density and the dispersed settlement pattern within the County pose significant problems when providing safe routes to school. In relation to access to education almost half of pupils of compulsory school age must travel further than 15 minutes by public transport to access the local high school and 10% of all pupils have a journey of more than 40 minutes. Less than one-third of all 16 to 19 year olds in the county can access opportunities in further education by public transport within 30 minutes and another third have a journey of over an hour. The travel issues relating to the rural nature of Northumberland were highlighted by respondents of the consultation for this strategy.

Figure 3.2 shows accessibility of residents to their nearest High School by journey time by walking and public transport. The residential data used is the Ordnance Survey Codepoint data. The bluer the area shown the least accessible it is. The map does not take into account parent choice or school catchment area boundaries.

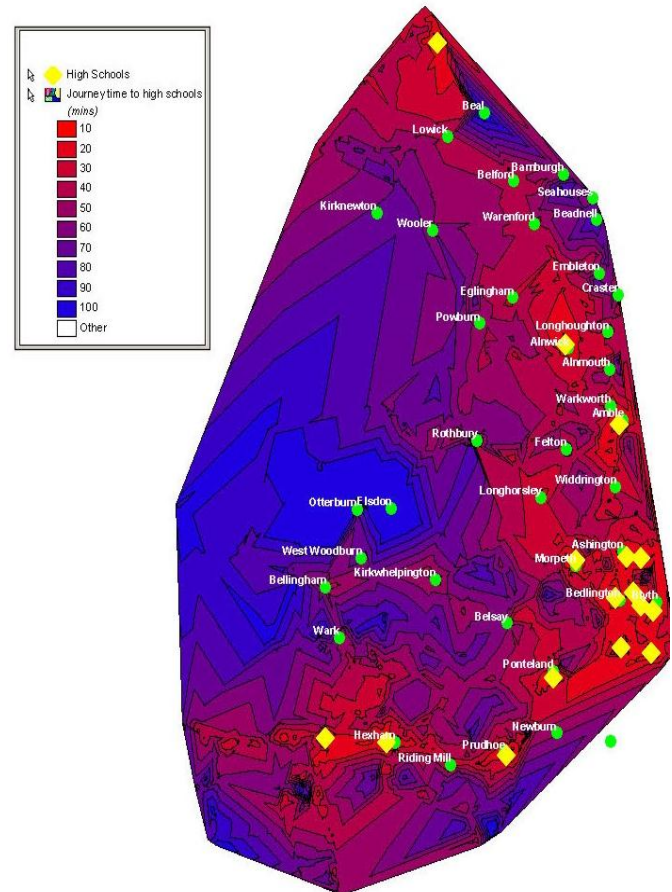


Figure 3.2: Accessibility to High Schools

Congestion

Since the early 1990s Britain has seen a steady rise in the use of cars with a corresponding fall in walking and cycling.

In Northumberland congestion only occurs in a small number of locations at peak times. These locations are highlighted in figure 3.3. As road traffic nationally continues to grow congestion in the County's towns could reach unacceptable levels in the future unless effective action is taken now.

Taking children to and from school by car has a marked effect on traffic and can contribute to localised congestion around schools. In order to avoid unacceptable levels of congestion in the future and influence the travel behaviour of future generations the authority needs to promote sustainable travel.

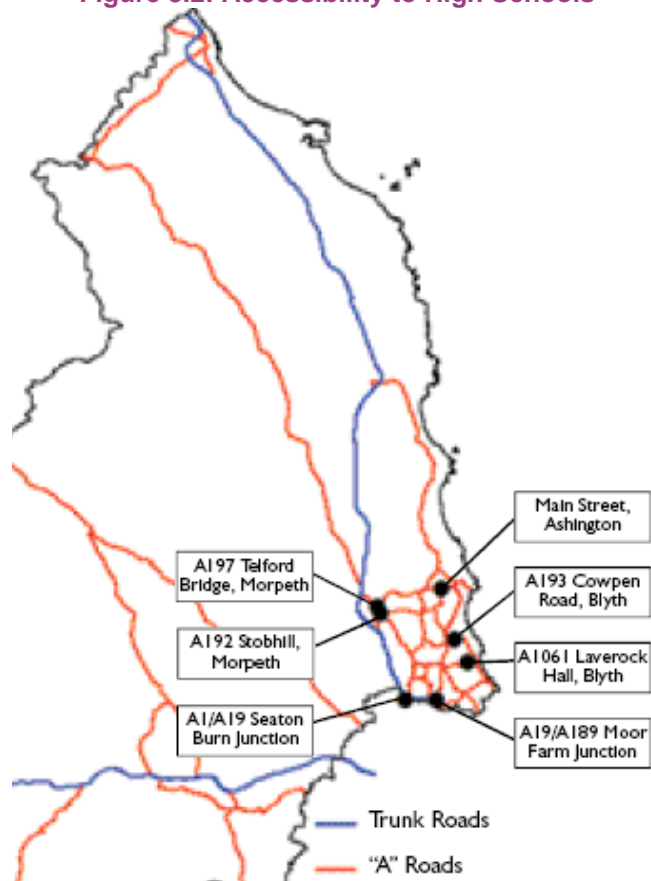


Figure 3.3: Areas of congestion in the County

Air Quality and Climate Change

Vehicular traffic reduces air quality and emissions such as carbon dioxide that contribute towards and accelerate climate change. It is estimated that 8 million kilograms of carbon dioxide is released due to the school journey alone in Northumberland each year.

Poor air quality has adverse effects on people's health and these health threats particularly affect children. Research has shown that motorists and their passengers are often at most risk. Car passengers in slow moving traffic face pollution two to three times higher than those experienced by pedestrians.

Currently the air quality across Northumberland is good, apart from Blyth town centre which is designated an Air Quality Active Zone, the extent of this zone is highlighted in figure 3.4.

Rising levels of traffic across the country is a concern. Within Northumberland the Districts of Wansbeck and Blyth currently have low car ownership levels compared to national averages, if these were to increase this gives more scope for poor air quality in the future.

Figure 3.4: Map showing the extent of the Blyth Air Quality Management Area

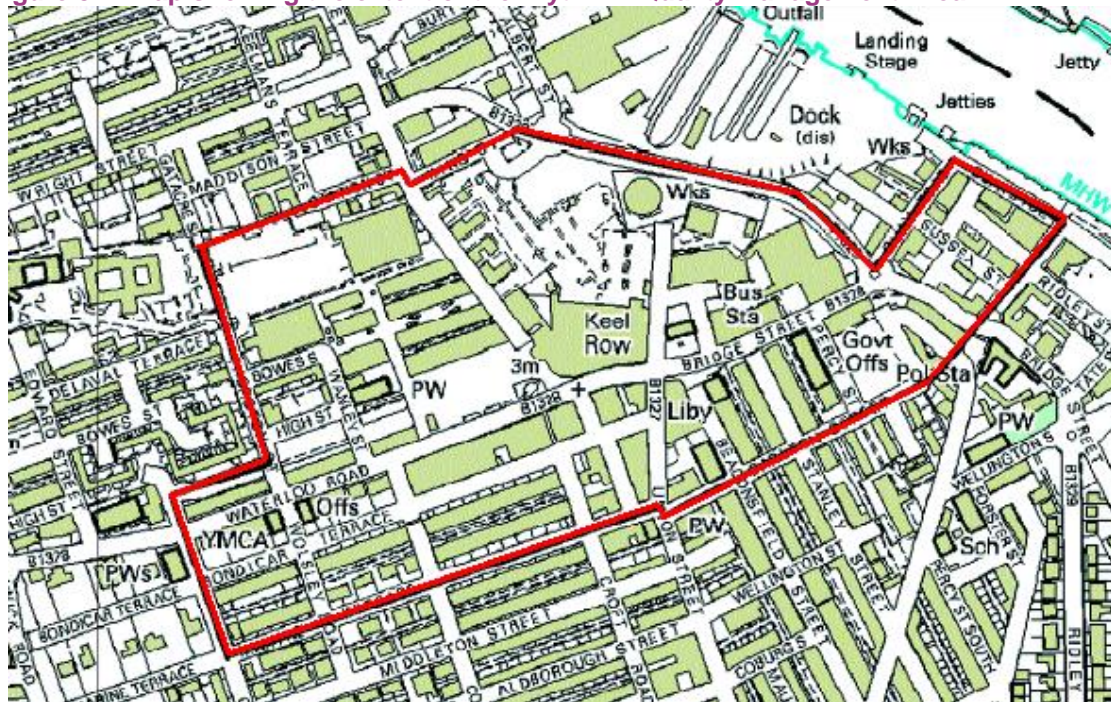


Figure 3.5: Total child casualties to and from school

Severity	1994/98 Average	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Fatal	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Serious	5	1	5	2	2	2	3	2	4	1
Slight	45	14	39	28	27	32	30	16	19	17
Total	50	15	44	30	30	34	33	18	23	18

Figure 3.6: Child casualties to and from school by road user

Road User	1994/98 Average	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Pedestrians	23	9	29	18	24	15	23	9	13	11
Pedal cycle users	1	1	1	1	0	0	5	0	1	2
Motor Cycle Users	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0
Car Passengers	7	5	8	6	3	7	4	9	7	5
Bus Passengers	19	0	6	4	4	12	0	0	0	0

Figure 3.7: Child casualty killed or seriously injured in the 10% most deprived wards

	Baselin e	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
TOTAL	9	8	4	3	4	4	8	0	5	2
TRAJECTORY TARGET			9	8	8	7	7	6	6	5

Road Safety

The safety of children en-route to and from school is a priority for the authority and it is believed that improved safety measures can encourage people to travel more sustainably.

In recent years the authority has been successful in reducing child casualties; recorded child casualty rates are given in figures 3.5 - 3.7. This is clear evidence that the authority's safer routes to school strategy is working because there is an overall decrease in recorded accidents.

As part of a study, a link between the more deprived areas of the authority and road safety was identified, which led to the development to an action plan targeting schools in the 10% most deprived wards by road safety officers. This action plan details types of education, training, publicity and engineering solutions that are required in these areas and has set more challenging casualty reduction targets for these areas, aimed particularly at reducing the severity of casualties and injuries to children and other vulnerable road users.

Health

The amount of daily exercise taken by children has decreased in recent years contributing to the rise in childhood obesity. Walking and cycling to school can help children stay fit and develop active lifestyles and improve their emotional well-being.

Addressing childhood obesity is a public health priority. Prevalence of obesity has trebled since the 1980's and well over half of all adults are either overweight or obese.

In March 2004 the Government set the obesity Public Service Agreement (PSA) 'Halting the year on year rise in obesity among children aged under 11 by 2010 in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the whole population'.

The National Child Measurements Programme (NCMP) weighs and measures children in reception (aged 4 – 5 years) and year 6 (aged 10 – 11 years) to assess overweight and obese levels.

The data summarised in figures 3.9 & 3.10 shows a comparison between the obesity level data from 2007 and 2009.

Figure 3.9: Northumberland % overweight by partnership 2007

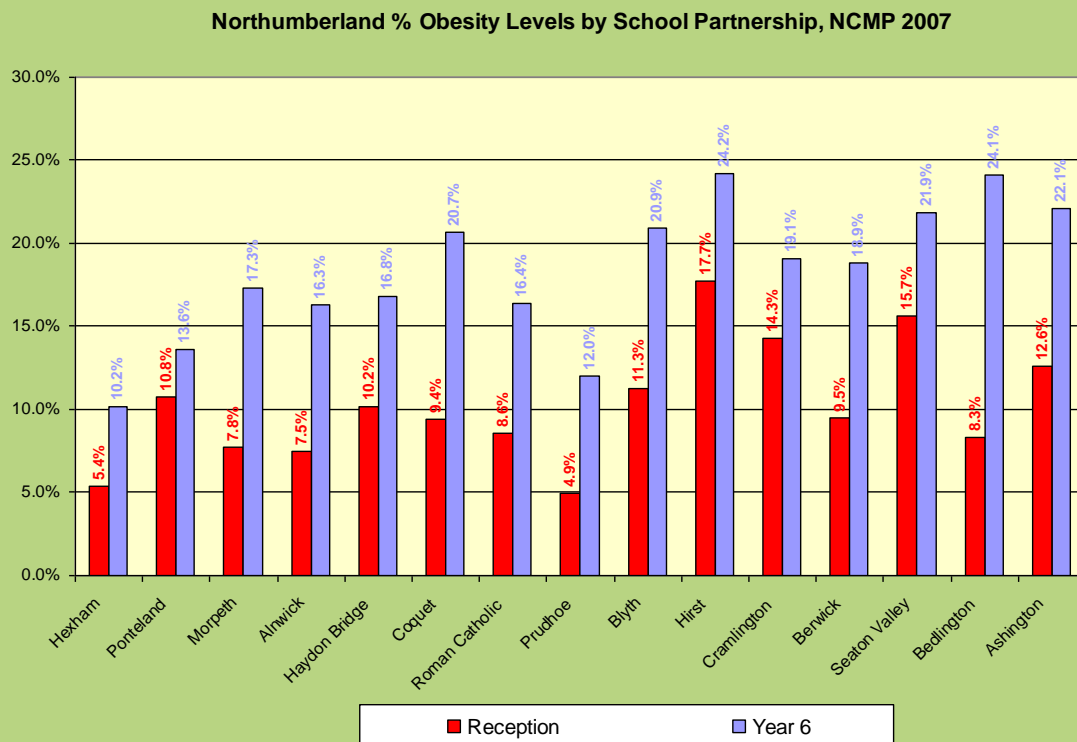
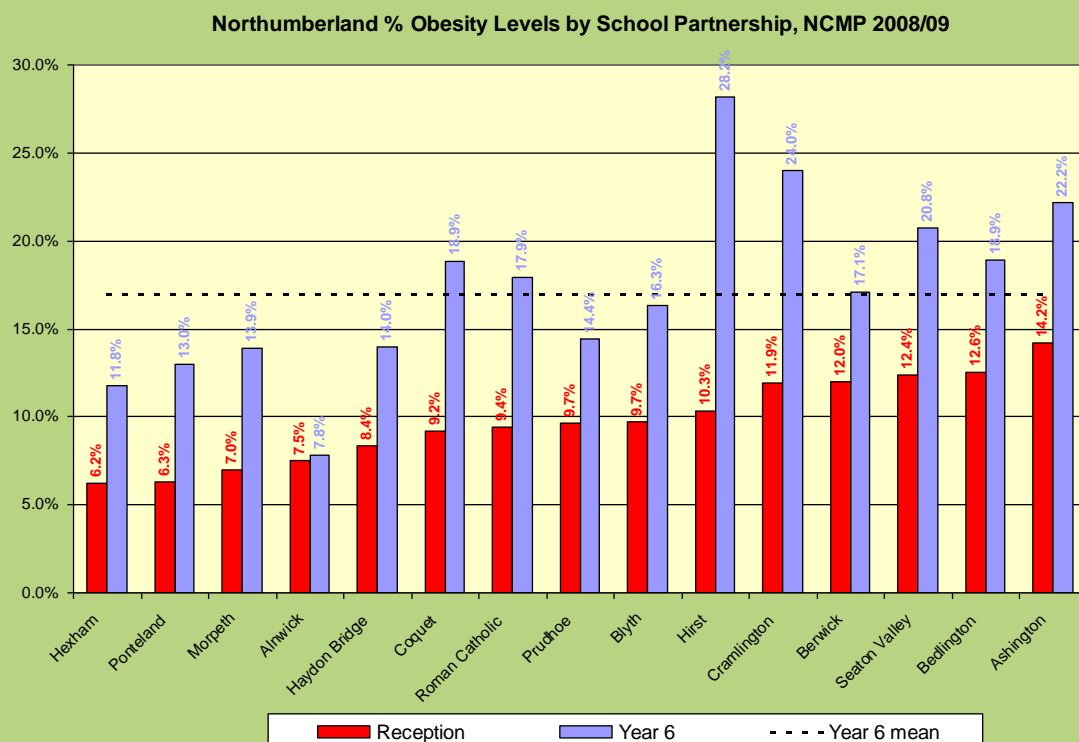


Figure 3.10: Northumberland % obese by partnership 2009



Measurements should be interpreted with caution because it is not a direct measure of adiposity (body fatness). It is recommended that BMI (adjusted for age and gender) should only be used as a practical estimate for overweight in children and young people. BMI in children should be related to the UK 1990 BMI Growth Reference Charts to give age and gender specific information.

Pragmatic indicators for action have been recommended at the 91st centile for overweight and the 98th centile for obesity.

Section 2: Travel trends

How are pupils travelling now compared to how they would prefer to travel?

Data collected from the school census and through the school travel plan process is used within this section to explore how pupils are currently travelling compared to how pupils would prefer to travel to and from school.

School Travel Patterns

Between January 2007 and January 2011 all schools with approved travel plans were required to provide annual information about how each of their pupils usually travel to school as part of the school census. New government guidelines no-longer require the collection of data in this manner but the authority has decided to continue to collecting data through annual hands-up surveys each year.

A summary of the school travel data collected since 2007 is displayed in figure 3.11.

It is important to remember that the data collection method changed during the 2011/2012. However, this data shows that there has been nearly a 4% reduction in the number of pupils being driven to school in a car on their own between the 2007 and 2012; there has also been an increase in the number of pupils cycling and car sharing. Mode of travel data for individual schools is available on request from the school travel plan team.

Regional and national data from 2010 / 2011 is given in figure 3.12, this data indicates that the number of pupils travelling by car to school in Northumberland is lower than the regional and national average.

This data will continue to be collected on an annual basis and will be monitored against targets set out in the Local Transport Plan and NI 198 Children travelling to school: Mode of travel usually used.

	car	car share	public transport	walking	cycling	other
2006/07 data	23.1%	1.8%	21.5%	48.7%	0.9%	3.8%
2007/08 data	23.8%	2.4%	20.5%	50.1%	1.5%	1.7%
2008/09 data	23.0%	2.5%	20.5%	50.3%	1.5%	2.3%
2009/10 data	23.1%	2.6%	20.4%	50.7%	1.6%	1.7%
2010/11 data	22.9%	2.7%	20.2%	51.3%	1.6%	1.4%
2011/12 data	19.1%	5.4%	18.9%	49.6%	5.3%	1.7%

Figure 3.11: Mode of travel data from Northumberland's school census

	car	car share	public transport	walking	cycling	other
North East	23.1%	3.1%	17.9%	53.8%	1.3%	0.9%
North West	29.5%	3.4%	17.5%	47.8%	1.2%	0.6%
Yorkshire	24.6%	2.5%	18.0%	53.0%	1.2%	0.6%
East Midlands	25.6%	2.6%	16.4%	52.4%	2.1%	0.8%
West Midlands	28.9%	3.0%	14.4%	52.0%	1.4%	0.3%
East of England	25.9%	2.7%	15.7%	51.6%	3.6%	0.5%
London	17.6%	2.0%	25.2%	53.1%	1.0%	1.1%
South East	28.8%	4.0%	15.0%	48.3%	3.2%	0.6%
South West	27.3%	3.6%	16.7%	49.1%	2.7%	0.6%
England	25.9%	3.0%	17.6%	50.9%	2.0%	0.7%

Figure 3.12: Regional and national figures for all pupils aged 5 – 15, 2010/11 data

Preferred Mode of Travel to School

As part of the school travel plan process data relating to usual mode of travel and preferred mode of travel to/from school is collected. This data represents the position of the school before an active travel plan is in place.

Data collected for those travel plans developed in 2009/2010 is given in figure

3. 13. This data shows that more children would prefer to walk and cycle to school compared to the current levels. If these changes in travel habits were achieved then this would decrease the number of car trips to school. The reasons why children aren't travelling by their preferred mode must be explored and any necessary improvements implemented.

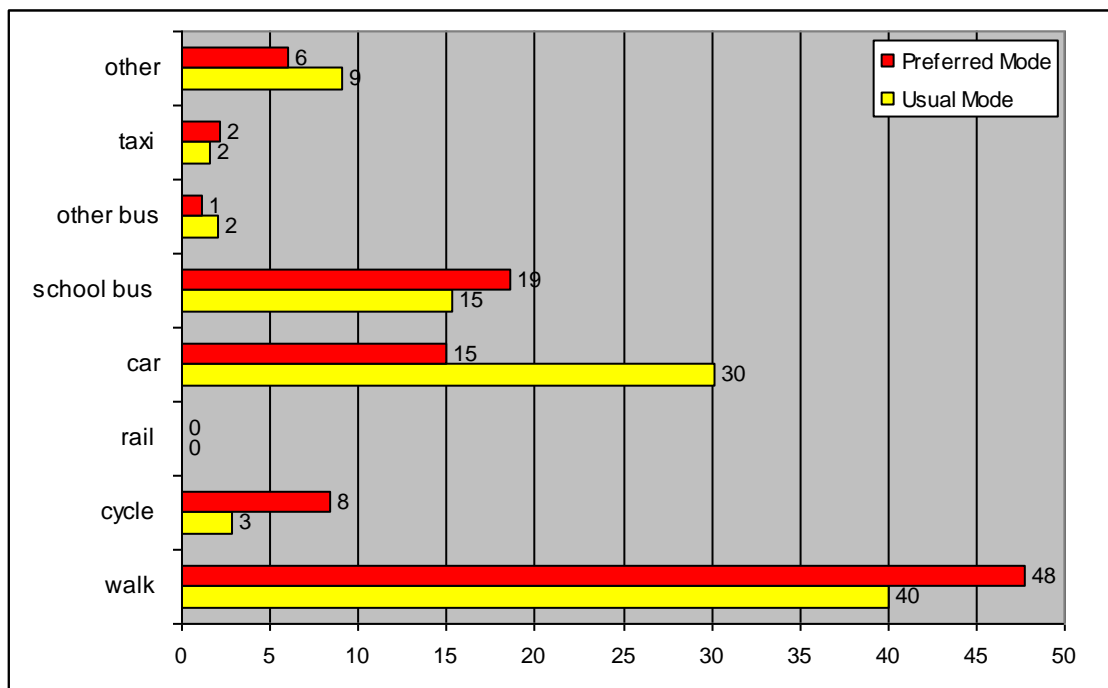


Figure 3.13: Usual mode of travel to school (%)

CHAPTER FOUR

INFRASTRUCTURE
AUDIT

How is sustainable travel to school supported in Northumberland?

This chapter explores the infrastructure and facilities that are already in place to support sustainable travel for the school journey and also looks to identify proposed future developments or areas where actions are required.

Section 1: Walking

Almost everyone is a pedestrian at some time and walking is at the heart of a sustainable, integrated transport system. As well as journeys made entirely by foot, most public transport journeys and some car journeys start and end with a walk.

There are many benefits to walking. It is free, environmentally friendly and improves personal health and fitness. Increased pedestrian use benefits communities by making streets safer and less vulnerable to crime and vandalism. In health terms, the promotion of walking is a cost effective intervention, which improves quality of life and reduces the risk of obesity and heart related problems. Walking can also improve accessibility for those who have fewer travel choices and a transfer in transport

mode away from the car to walking contributes towards reducing congestion and improving air quality as well as improving road safety.

Main facilities and services throughout the authority are accessible by footway. Additionally, especially in rural areas, the extensive Rights of Way network can also provide valuable means of access to schools.

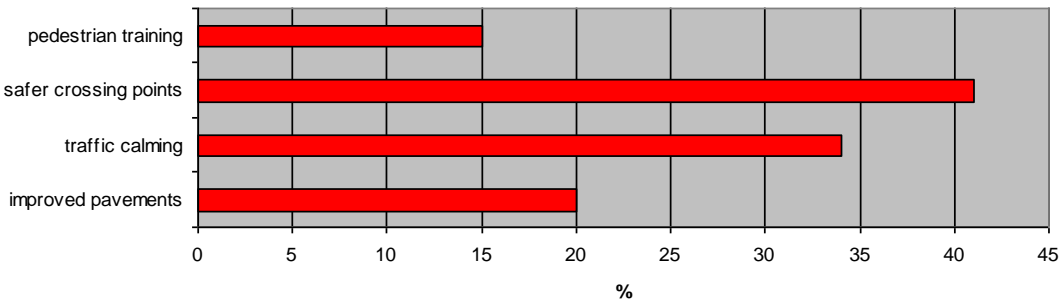
In some of the more deprived areas, fear of crime has been cited as a barrier to walking. By working with the Community Safety Partnership in the County this authority has targeted these areas in an effort to address the problem through its programmes.

The most common reason that people give for not walking is conflict with vehicular traffic. People see a potential for accidents especially where the speed of traffic is a concern. This was highlighted in the consultation for this document, more responses supported the ideas of safer crossing points and traffic calming as factors that would encourage more sustainable forms of travel and is also highlighted through surveys done as part of the school travel plan process. Parents and pupils were consulted about the barriers of walking to school and results of this consultation are shown in figure 4.1 & 4.2. The data used in these figures relate to consultation with parents and pupils from the 20 schools that produced travel plans in 2010.

Figure 4.1: Aspects that would improve / encourage walking to school (%)

	Improved Pavements	Traffic Calming	Safer Crossings Points	Pedestrian Training
Countywide	20%	24%	41%	15%

Figure 4.2: Aspects that would improve / encourage walking to school (%)



School travel plan advisors work with schools to identify and overcome problems with pedestrian routes. As part of an on-going programme, priority is given to measures that improve safety for children going to and from school. Refuges, pedestrian crossings, dropped kerbs, tactile paving, traffic calming and improved signage are all typical examples of the methods that will continue to be used to reduce pedestrian casualties. Priority is also given to providing new or improved street lighting in all areas on routes to schools.

As well as traffic concerns, pavement maintenance has been highlighted as a barrier to walking. Well maintained

footways are an essential element to improving accessibility and providing safer routes. The authority gives priority for the maintenance of footways to those routes used the most and those catering for vulnerable pedestrians, such as school children.

School crossing patrols are also used to protect school children from the danger of road traffic when walking to and from school; there are currently 82 approved sites across the County. Sites are assessed to determine if they meet the national criteria which include a vehicle and pedestrian count.

Crossing Upgrade: Bedlington First School, Ridge Terrace.

Through funding from the LTP we were able to upgrade the crossing outside of Bedlington West End First School from a Zebra to a Pelican as outlined in their school travel plan. This has benefited families, teachers and local residents.



Footway improvements: Drummonds Close, Longhorsley.

As identified in their school travel plan a gravelled footpath has been created to access Longhorsley First School. Before this improvement, winter conditions left the track muddy and of little use to the school, families and residents, while summer conditions saw the area overgrown. Now there is a designated paved area which has encouraged walking at all times of the year.



Pedestrian training

Over recent years, the authority has rolled out a very successful pedestrian training programme for school children. The scheme focuses on deprived wards but will look to target other areas with road safety problems in the future.

Basic road safety training in the form of ‘Safer Places’ is also available to all first schools in the County and has been very well received. Safer Places introduces children of First School age to basic road safety, including safer crossing places such as, Pelican Crossings, Zebra Crossings, School Crossing Patrols and Footbridges and includes information on the new child safety seat laws, which came into place in September 2006. Each of these schemes teaches children the importance of road safety awareness, which they are able to take with them in to later life.

Training	Number of pupils
Road safety scheme	1675

Figure 4.3: Number of children receiving road safety training 2009/2010

Promotion of walking

Over recent years the authority has adopted a number of initiatives to promote sustainable travel to schools. These have included smart travel awards, travel tree schemes and walk to school weeks. All have proved successful in raising the profile of walking and the authority is continually renewing its efforts to ensure these issues are publicised.

Walking to school is promoted and encouraged throughout the year at **Coulson Park First School**. To support this Years 1 & 2 have taken part in the Kerbcraft scheme for the past 4 years delivered by the county co-ordinator Christine Wilson who said that the school is “committed to the scheme and they have had some very positive results.

To encourage cycling to school cycle storage facilities have been provided and all pupils in Year 4 receive Level 1 Bikeability training. Staff at the school are also encourage to travel sustainably and Brenda Wallace, a classroom assistant comments “I cycle to school every day now, it’s easier than bringing the car”.



Five Minute Walking Zone

As demonstrated through the consultation process some parents have no choice but to drive, for example, this could be due to work commitments.

This scheme is aimed at those parents who have no choice other than to drive their children to school for the main part of the journey. The scheme encourages parents to park 5 minutes away and make the rest of the journey on foot, it is believed that this is achievable for the majority of these parents.

- Seahouses Middle
- Berwick Middle
- St Josephs Middle
- Netherton Northside
- Blyth Croftway Primary
- Bede Academy
- Stobhill First
- Longhorsley First
- The Grove SEN
- Mowbray First
- Whytrig Middle
- King Edwards

Figure 4.4: Schools with Five Minute Walking Zones

Berwick Middle School is one of a number of schools who have developed a successful 5 minute walking zone, working with the school council it was decided to try and identify safe places for parents to drop off and pick up pupils to ease the problem with congestion around the school. Berwick Middle is situated in a residential area with on street parking close to one of the towns' holiday parks and the golf course. The area gets very congested and the school was concerned about the safety of pupils due to high volume of traffic and lack of visibility to cross the road.

The children worked in groups and went out to measure the time it took to walk to local car parks and this information was then plotted onto maps. The children also identified any road safety issues or concerns about the routes to the car parks and tried to think of what would encourage pupils to walk to school. They also wrote to parents asking for their support of the 5 minute zone.

The travel plan team then went out with the pupils and attached signs to lampposts informing parents and the local community of the 5 minute zone boundaries.

Since the school developed their travel plan in 2007 car use at the school has steadily fallen from 29% in 2006 (from STP survey), to 16% in 2012. Walking to school has also increased from 24.7 % in 2006 to 33% in 2012.



Walking Buses



Walking is one of the main ways of travelling to and from primary and secondary

schools. As part of the School Travel Plan process a number of schools have completed audits of routes and have set up Walking Buses. Through the Walking Buses Scheme children are escorted to school by trained volunteers along a route which has been risk assessed.

Walk on Wednesdays WOW

The WOW initiative aims to reduce congestion outside the school gates by encouraging children and parents to walk to school. Events such as 'Walk to School Week' have proven to be a success in the past, although trends have shown that once the scheme is over, car dependency soon returns. This is where 'WOW' can make a real difference!

The scheme was launched during January 2007 and the launch proved to be a huge success attracting press coverage from local newspapers, TV and radio stations. The scheme not only promotes walking throughout the entire school year, but it is also flexible enough to change if Wednesday is not a suitable day, to 'Walk once a Week'. In the first year it is estimated that 7500 took part and those who manage to walk every Wednesday (or once a week) during each term were entered into a prize draw to win bikes, gift vouchers and wrist bands.



Since developing their school travel plan **Horton Grange Primary School** has increased the number of children walking to the school from 42% in 2006 to 55% in 2012, car usage has also declined from 54% to 11%. During the warmer weather the school has seen the number of children cycling to school increase from 0% to 23% with a further 5% coming by scooter.

One of the recent changes that has had a huge impact on the mode of travel was the school changing to a primary school in 2009 the school put a lot of thought into how they could reorganise the grounds to make it safer for pupils. This was an important issue due to the school increasing in size and the position of the school, which is situated on a very busy main road. Previously vehicle and pedestrian access to the school was through a single lane narrow gate and the front paved area was used as a car park by parents. Since the opening of the new school it was decided to stop allowing parents vehicle access onto school site. Two further access paths for pedestrians were established and a Park and Stride from the local Asda store which is about 5 minutes walk away was promoted to parents as an alternative to dropping off at the school gate.

As well as their Park and Stride the school takes part in Walk to School Week each year and is going to install cycle storage to cope with the increased number of pupils cycling. They have recently signed up to become a Bike It school which will raise the profile of cycling even further.



Walk to School Week

Every year the authority invites schools to take part in National Walk to School Week. Resources are provided to schools free of charge and include such items as activity diaries, posters, wall charts and promotional ideas. School Travel Plan Advisors are also available to assist in events and promotional assemblies where requested. During May 2010 over 15000 pupils across Northumberland took part in Walk to School Week. The promotion of walk to school week will continue in future years.

Scooting to school

Scooting to school has been a major sustainable travel success story over the last few years, to support safe scooting the authority has developed a scooter training scheme aimed to give primary aged pupils practical safety advice on scooting. Since the schemes launch during the summer 2011 1157 pupils have completed the scheme.

Actions for the future

Action 1	Support schools in the production of schools travel plans
Action 2	Monitor and review school travel plans
Action 3	Improve pedestrian and cycle routes to schools
Action 4	Deliver a road safety education programme to young people
Action 5	Promote sustainable travel for the school journey
Action 6	Ensure schools have adequate facilities
Action 7	Provide safe route to school information to parents

Section 2: Cycling

Cycling provides similar environmental and health benefits to walking and therefore helps to improve quality of life and can help to reduce car use by providing an alternative for shorter journeys, such as the school run.

In recent years much has been done to promote cycling in Northumberland including investment in developing cycle routes.

Census figures indicate that currently only 1.6% of pupils across the County are cycling to school, however surveys undertaken during the school travel plan process show that many more would like to cycle, up to 35% in the more urban areas.

As a result of such significant survey findings it is important to understand why these pupils are not already cycling to school and what action the authority can take to increase numbers cycling. Data obtained through the school travel plan process where pupils and parents are consulted about the barriers of cycling to school is summarised in figure 4.5 & 4.6 (data gained from schools completing travel plans in 2008)

From this data it is clear that the lack of secure cycle storage available at school sites is a barrier to children cycling to school, this issue is being addressed

across the authority through the development of school travel plans. Schools are using grants received from the process to install modern secure cycle storage into the school grounds. Cycle storage should also be provided in a new school builds or refurbishments. See appendix 5 for a list of schools with cycle storage available for pupils.

Conflicts with vehicular traffic is a perceived barrier to cycling to school, the authority is already committed to developing cycle routes and cycle priority measures include, traffic calming, cycle lanes and toucan crossings.

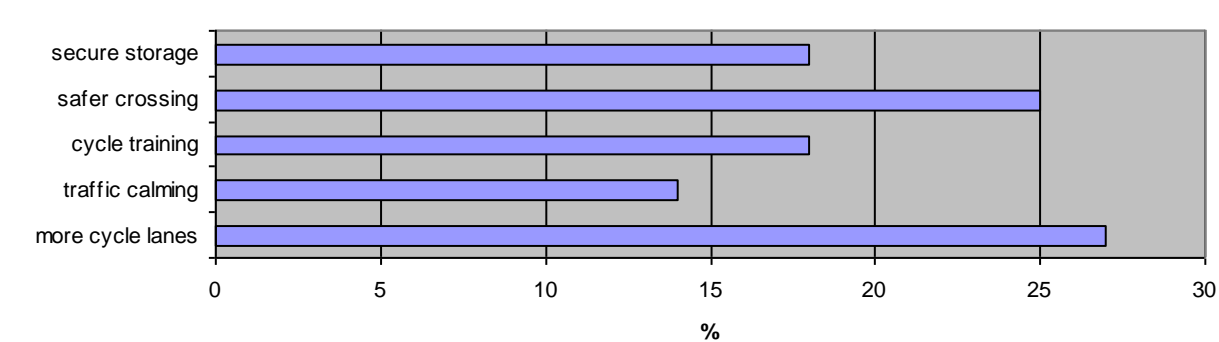
Connect 2

The authority has received funding through the 'Big Lottery Living Landmarks: The People's Millions Initiative' and the LTP to deliver 'CONNECT2'. This initiative will deliver cycling projects that are seen to, specifically, connect people to people, people to places and people to pride in their communities. Whilst the core elements of the scheme will focus on main routes through Bedlington and Blyth, the wider aspects include major work on linking these routes to schools and public places. Much of the decision making will be done through consultation with school children, community groups and local businesses.

Figure 4.5: Aspects that would improve / encourage cycling to school

	More cycle lanes	Traffic Calming	Cycle Training	Safer crossing	Secure storage
Countywide	27%	14%	18%	25%	18%

Figure 4.6: Aspects that would improve / encourage cycling to school





Pupils from Meadowdale Middle School in Bedlington, on the official launch of the first section of the Connect 2 project. During the next academic year, school travel advisors will be working with the school to actively promote walking and cycling to the school

Cycle training

Cycle training is seen as an important element in the promotion of cycling to school. Cycle training, basic and intermediate levels, have been introduced across the County. The authority has developed a Basic Cycling Resource Pack, which has been sent to each First School in the County, to enable a basic level of classroom theory and practical playground training, to be carried out by teachers, within the schools curriculum. In order to deliver level 2 (intermediate) cycle training to middle schools, trained cycling instructors are working with schools countywide to offer training to as many children as possible. Figure 4.7 shows the number of children who have received formal cycle training in the academic year 2009 / 2010.

Cycle training Level 1	997
Cycle training Level 2	1427

Figure 4.7: Number of children receiving cycle training 2006 to 2008

Cycle Experience, a nationwide company, has been contracted to deliver National Standard Cycle Training (Bikeability). The training package will be funded from a grant received of £144,000 for 2010/2011. The aim being to train 3600 children to intermediate level during this period.



Pupils at Chantry Middle completing Bikeability training

Bike It

Working in partnership with Sustrans, a Bike It project will be rolled out to schools in the Blyth area, this project will run until march 2013. The project aims to create a pro cycling culture in school, helping to demonstrate that cycling is a popular choice amongst children and their parents.

Cycling passport.

The travel plan team recommends the use of 'cycling passports' at schools who wish to encourage cycling. This is a contract drawn up between the school, pupil and parent/guardian, which sets conditions for cycling and obtaining consent. It may include instructions such as:

- A bicycle must be road worthy and have passed a maintenance check
- Cyclist has passed an approved cycling course
- Bicycles will be securely locked in an approved area
- Cyclist will follow a good cyclist code

Bike Week

The authority supports 'Bike Week' held during June each year; this is a week long celebration of cycling. Schools are encouraged to take part by running their own events such as cycle rides, bike surgery sessions and educational presentations. The authority also organised a competition across the week and gave prizes to the schools who achieved the greatest number of pupils cycling to and from school through the week, the winning school had 70% of its pupils taking part in Bike Week.

During Bike Week 2010 the authority worked with 3Sixty, a bicycle stunt team who promote cycling and sustainable travel to schools. Five schools invited them to perform their display and take part in their coaching workshop.



Actions for the future

Action 3	Improve pedestrian and cycle routes to schools
Action 4	Deliver a road safety education programme to young people
Action 5	Promote sustainable travel for the school journey
Action 6	Ensure schools have adequate facilities
Action 7	Provide safe route to school information to parents

Pedal power was in full flow at **Morpeth All Saints C of E First School** in a week of cycling events. During the week the school had presentations from Northumbria's St John's Ambulance new Cycle Response Unit and a parent taking part in a charity bike ride from Vienna to Bratislava to Budapest. There was plenty of excitement on Thursday when 3Sixty bicycle stunt team called into the school, putting their own unique spin on cycling and sustainable travel and on the Friday, children took part in cycling proficiency training to gain Level 1 of the national Bikeability standard.

By the end of the week more than 49 % of All Saints pupils were cycling to school, including two siblings who did a three-mile journey each way. Headteacher Pauline Molloy said: "It was a fantastic week. On Friday when we had cycle training we had 59 children cycling to school, which was amazing. The whole week really caught the children's interest. They all enjoyed it and I have a card on my desk from a little boy saying 'thank you for bike week'. I think that shows how fantastic it was."



Section 3: School Transport

Due to the rural nature and the dispersed settlement pattern across the County, distances travelled to school can be significantly higher than national averages. This causes significant problems for the logistics of providing a home to school transport service. Currently approximately 11000 pupils are transported daily to and from school on school transport, this includes SEN and post 16, reflecting approximately 8000 mainstream pupils. There are 700 routes of which 44 are wheel chair accessible.

This authority has one duty and two powers in connection with provision of School Transport; they are:

1. Duty to provide School Transport under section 509 (1) Education Act 1996
2. Power to assist with travelling expenses' under section 509 (3) Education Act 1996
3. Power to provide concessionary travel under section 45 public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981

The authority will provide free home to school transport, or, where appropriate, pay the cost of such transport to those children who do not live within walking distance of the catchment area school. Walking distance is defined as (Section 444(5) of the Education Act 1996) two miles for a child who is under the age of 8 (first school pupils) and three miles for a child older than 8 (middle and high school pupils).

Free school transport can only be within these walking distances in exceptional circumstances. These may include:

- A route deemed unsafe with regard to the age of the child and the nature of the route or alternative route which the child

could reasonably be expected to take.

- Transport is required for a child on medical grounds either on a short or a long term basis.
- Following advice from the director of Social Services it is concluded that there are overriding social needs requiring the provision of transport.

When a parent would like his or her child to be educated on denominational grounds, the County Council will provide free school transport to the nearest school that provides such religious education following receipt of a copy of a Certificate of Baptism or a letter from the appropriate minister or priest. The County Council can only meet the cost of transport to schools outside the catchment area in the most exceptional circumstances. One such exception is where the preferred school is nearer to the home address than the designated catchment area school, but beyond the defined walking distance and there is no other suitable school closer to the home address.

Spare seats on home to school transport can be offered to pupils not entitled to free transport on a concessionary basis. Seats are only offered on the basis that there is no equivalent local bus or rail service available at suitable times for the start and finish of the school day. Parents should be aware that concessionary seats can only be confirmed at the beginning of the school year and need to be paid for in advance, at least termly. A concessionary seat may be withdrawn if it is subsequently needed to transport a pupil who is entitled to free transport, or if a smaller vehicle is contracted to the route. Some children living within the Berwick border area attend schools based in Scotland due to their location. In such circumstances the local Scottish coach service provides the transport.

SEN Transport

Some pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs will qualify for free school transport due to not living within walking distance of their school. Others will qualify when the Statement of Special Educational Needs, makes it explicit that the individual pupil requires the provision of transport. In such circumstances the type of transport will accord with any recommendations made by the professionals involved in placing a child.

Transport is generally provided where possible within the mainstream school transport service, provided via contracted Bus Operators. Special transport needs, including wheel chair facilities, hydraulic lifts etc, are mainly used for transporting pupils to the various Special Schools, within the authority including Barndale Alnwick, the Josephine Butler campus at Northumberland C of E Academy, Priory Hexham and Cramlington Hillcrest are provided by the Educational Special Needs Transport Service. Other specialist transport requirements may be provided by Bus Operators including mini buses or taxis, when passenger assistants are required because of behavioural needs. The service provider will depend entirely upon either availability and suitability of the transport and whether an escort is to be in attendance or not.

Post-16 Students

Whilst there is no statutory responsibility to provide transport support or assistance with transport costs for students in Post 16 education Northumberland County Council currently operates a free student travel scheme to help eligible students access further education opportunities at high school sixth forms and further education and specialist colleges.

Students must be attending the nearest establishment of further education offering their course of

study, or one similar to it, and that course is in line with educational or career progression

Independent Travel Training

The Northumberland Independent Travel Training Programme (ITT) is now well established and has been providing support to young people in Northumberland for nearly a year. It has been targeting those young people who lack the skills, ability or confidence to undertake an unaccompanied journey using public transport. As a result of this first successful year many schools, Northumberland College and Dilston College are including ITT in their curriculum so that students are equipped to travel independently. Developing these skills and confidence can provide access to educational, employment and leisure opportunities which can greatly enhance social integration.

The programme uses the concept of 'train the trainers'. The Independent Travel Training Coordinator has been leading on this initiative, providing training and support to staff within schools and college. Through this training staff are equipped with the skills and resources to deliver independent travel training within the school curriculum.

Independent travel training developments and progress are managed through a steering group. Within this group are senior staff representatives from each of the 14-19 school partnerships.

The next stage of development within this programme is setting up a travel buddy scheme. Through the provision of specific tailored training for students and volunteers, individual travel support can be provided to those learners who require some initial support to make a journey to school, college or training. This scheme will be particularly helpful for Post 16 Learners with Learning Disabilities

and/or Difficulties who have left school and who will be accessing education or training elsewhere.

Northumberland schools and colleges are able to visit and make use of the travel training area and facilities on offer at Beacon Hill Special School in Wallsend.

An 'Information Leaflet for Parents and Carers' has been produced by the County Council in order to raise awareness of the scheme and to overcome any concerns

parents/carers may have in relation to their son/daughter becoming an independent traveller. A DVD has also been produced working with those learners, staff and families that have experienced independent travel training and highlights the benefits of the training.

Independent travel can bring a range of enhancements and benefits to all young people. Our schools and colleges are all using varied methods of delivery.



Section 4: Public Transport

Bus

Public transport provides a sustainable alternative to the private car and therefore contributes to reduced congestion and improved air quality. It is particularly viable as an alternative in south-east Northumberland on the journey to school; there are low levels of car ownership so public transport is often the only option.

The authority has a legal duty under the Transport Act “to secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the County which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose.” The bus network within the authority consists of a primary, secondary and tertiary bus Network depending on population densities, the primary network is given in figure 4.8. All bus information and timetables can be viewed at

www.travelinenortheast.info/

Most journeys operated by buses in Northumberland are provided by private companies on a commercial basis. In rural areas most journeys are not commercially viable due to wide dispersion of population and long travel distances and therefore not contracted, this is where community transport can help.

Train Service

The East Coast mainline and Tyne Valley route both run through the county. Although currently used by only a small number of scholars it can provide a means of transport for children travelling to school, especially for children travelling to school out of their catchment areas or young people travelling to college. Further information and timetables can be viewed at

www.travelinenortheast.info/



Figure 4.8: The primary Northumberland bus Network

Actions for the future

- | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Action 5 | Promote sustainable travel for the school journey |
| Action 7 | Provide safe route to school information to parents |

Section 5: Community Transport

The themes included in the Joint Community Transport Strategy for Northumberland are seen as an important way of encouraging social inclusion in less accessible areas. The strategy is working towards Northumberland having a high quality, integrated, safe and sustainable community transport network that will promote social inclusion by ensuring that everyone can access the key services and facilities that they need.

It is believed that community transport along with public transport can provide key solutions in delivering both the extended school services and 14 -16 diplomas.

Actions for the future

Action 10: School travel planning to play an intrinsic part in educational reforms

Section 6: Local Sustainable Transport Fund

During June 2012 the authority was awarded funded through the Department of Transport's Local Sustainable Transport Fund to deliver the project 'South East Northumberland: Sustainable Transport to Work'. As part of this project there is a commitment for the authority to support school leavers to offer support and advice for travel arrangements to further education and jobs. The School Travel Plan team will therefore be developing a package of measures to offer secondary schools within South East Northumberland to educate pupils about current sustainable transport options and educate pupils about transport options available for journeys to further training establishments and to job opportunities.

Actions for the future

Action 8: Develop measures to support the LSTF project

As part of the project South East Northumberland: Sustainable Transport to Work new smarter choices branding will be introduced to support the sustainable transport project. Go Smarter Northumberland branding will be used to re-brand the School Travel Plan project to ensure continuity across all promotional work; a detailed communication plan will also be developed and implemented to ensure residents across Northumberland are informed of the benefits of sustainable transport.

Actions for the future

Action 9: Introduce Go Smarter branding across School Travel Plan project

Section 7: Cars

The motor car offers a comfortable, flexible and convenient mode of transport. However, the growth in car ownership has resulted in problems with congestion and air pollution across the Country. Although Northumberland is not one of the worst hit areas in this respect, car ownership here is rising faster than the national average and therefore has to be considered with some concern. Increased car use has also led to wider problems such as poor health because less people walk and cycle than ever before and therefore fitness levels deteriorate. Increased car use also affects road safety. The importance of the private car is recognised by the authority, particularly for rural communities where it may be the only means of access to schools. However, where possible the authority encourages the use of more sustainable modes of travel.

On site parking at schools should only be provided to an operational level, with possible overflow parking on hard play areas for community uses. Pupil parking and drop off/ pick up areas should not be provided as this encourages car usage.

Parking Control

Localised congestion and indiscriminate parking around schools is a concern for

both schools and the authority as it often compromises the safety of children. The authority provides road markings to highlight the dangers of parking around schools and schools frequently relay such information to their families.

The authority has taken over parking enforcement, allowing the authority to provide a fully integrated on and off street parking service. A team of Civil Enforcement Officers have been recruited to ensure that everyone parks correctly; if cars are parked illegally the Officers can issue a Penalty Charge Notice.

Actions for the future

Action 11: Minimise indiscriminate parking outside schools

Car Share

Walking and cycling is not always possible with some parents needing to go straight to work and many rural schools having pupils living outside the village. This is why in these cases schools are encouraged to get parents to try and reduce congestion around the school gates with the use of informal voluntary car sharing schemes. Car share hopes that those families who live close to each other, will offer to share the school run by taking each others children in order that only one car does the school run.

It is recommended that car sharing is done on an informal basis with parents regulating lifts between themselves; this authority runs a car share website that can be used to find car sharing partners; this can be found at www.northumberlandcarshare.com.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE WAY FORWARD

What does the authority intend to do to improve upon the current situation?

The authority has already taken many steps to protect children on their school journey and provide infrastructure to support and promote sustainable travel, however, there are improvements that could still be made.

Throughout this document actions and necessary improvements have been identified to take forward into the future. This chapter sets out how the authority intends to tackle these issues and identifies progress up to date.

Action 1: Support schools in the production of school travel plans

During March 2010 the authority met its target of all LA controlled schools to have travel plans in place; one independent school also completed a travel plan.

Individual school travel plans can be viewed at the schools themselves or can be requested through the school travel plan team.

Action 2: Monitor and review school travel plans

Schools must continually monitor and review their travel plan to ensure momentum is maintained.

The school travel plan team will operate a travel plan review programme, helping all schools review and amend their travel plans every two years. A travel plan review involves a travel survey to allow for monitoring of targets, consideration of progress of action plans and revised targets and actions plans to progress the school travel plan further.

Action 3: Improve pedestrian and cycle routes to schools

The school travel plan process will continue to be used as a tool for identifying improvements on the pedestrian and cycling networks. Any necessary improvements will be considered for inclusion within the on-going LTP programme and priority will be given to measures that improve safety of children going to school.

Action 4: Deliver a road safety education programme to young people

Pedestrian training will continue to be targeted to the deprived areas of the authority and rolled out to other areas where road safety is a concern. If a school requests pedestrian training through the travel planning process this can also be delivered.

Bikeability Levels 1, 2 & 3 will be delivered to schools across the authority during the academic year 2012/ 2013.

Action 5: Promote sustainable travel for the school journey

National and local sustainable transport schemes will be promoted to schools across the authority, these include initiatives such as Walk to School Week, Bike Week, Walk on Wednesdays and 5 Minute Walking Zones. Schools that have been highlighted to have congestion and transport issues will receive assistance from a member of the School Travel Plan team; this will include the following:

- Review of STP to understand why the actions are not met
- Working with the local community to devise initiatives to reduce car usage to school
- Working with school groups, to understand barriers to walking and cycling
- Classroom activities and publicity events throughout the year to promote sustainable transport.

Action 6: Ensure schools have adequate facilities

To encourage walking and cycling it is important that schools have facilities to accommodate both pupils and staff. If the school wishes to support cycling, secure cycle storage should be provided along with adequate storage for safety equipment and clothing. First schools looking to promote walking to school would benefit from a covered designated waiting area for parents, to persuade them to leave the car at home.

Entrances, paths and lighting must all be suitable for pedestrians and cyclists.

Since the introduction of the school travel plan project in 2003 over £1.1 million of grant funding has been achieved within Northumberland to support improvements to school facilities, also as a standard requirement all new school builds must include the provision of appropriate cycle storage areas.

Action 7: Provide safe route to school information to parents and pupils

An electronic map of Northumberland (iSchool-Travel) displaying information related to school travel is currently under construction to provide a tool to allow parents and pupils to plan their school journey.

The map currently displays the information related to:

- School locations

- School catchment areas
- Road network
- Footpaths
- Cycle ways
- Pedestrian crossings
- School crossing patrols
- Traffic calming
- Bus services and bus stops
- Schools with cycle storage
- Walking bus routes

In order to access this map go to <http://w2kdev1/Schooltravel/> or if you would like hard copies contact the school travel plan team. An example of these maps is shown in figure 5.1.

Maps of the cycle network in southeast Northumberland can be found by searching cycle maps at www.northumberland.gov.uk. An example of these maps is shown in figure 5.2

It is envisaged that these maps will provide a valuable source of information to enable parents to choose the safest and most sustainable means to get their child to a particular school.

Travel to school leaflets have also been developed by individual schools through the school travel planning process.

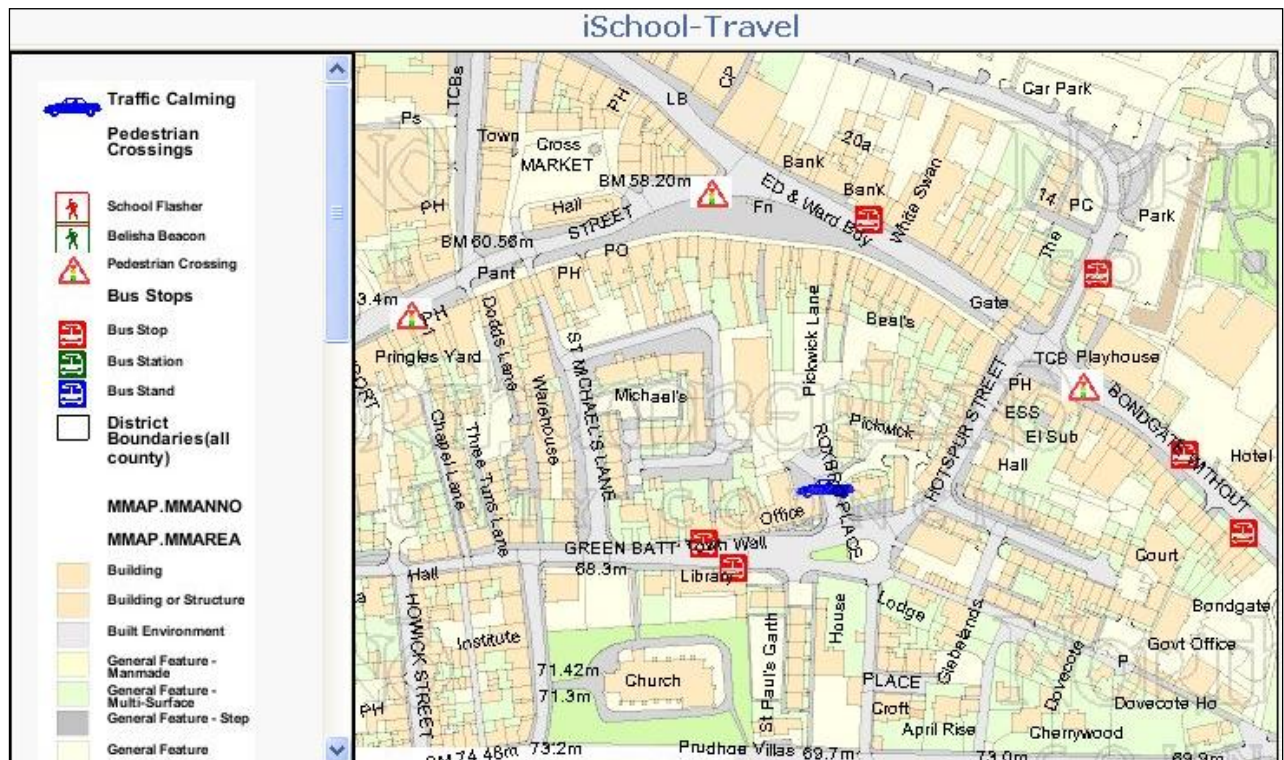


Figure 5.1: An example of maps produced by iSchool-Travel

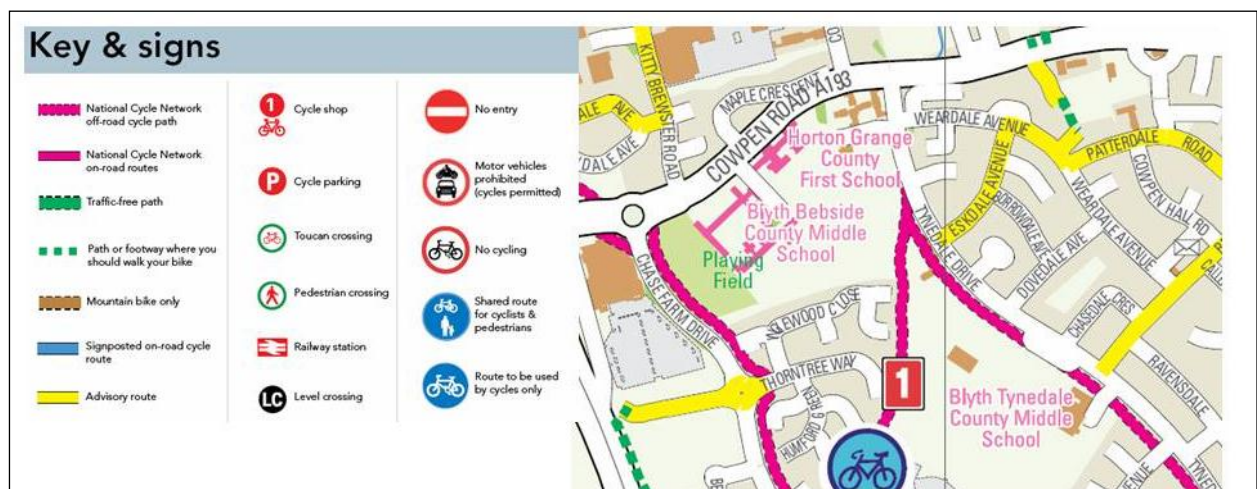


Figure 5.2: An extract from the south east Northumberland cycling map

Action 8: Develop measures to support the LSTF project

Develop and implement a package of measures suitable for secondary schools that educate pupils on the benefits of sustainable transport and offer travel advice that will assist them when they move on to further education or a position of employment. The package of measures is likely to include promotional events, Level 3 cycle training, bicycle mechanic courses and public transport.

Action 9: Introduce Go Smarter branding across School Travel Plan project

Introduce the Go Smarter Northumberland branding across the School Travel Plan project and implement a tactical communication plan to inform pupils and parents of the benefits of school travel.

Action 10: School travel planning to play an intrinsic part in educational reforms

Educational reforms create further challenges for school travel and may have a negative effect on the levels of sustainable travel if positive actions are not taken.

Travel plans requested in the early stages of the design process of new and refurbished schools. Travel plans must include on-site facilities to support sustainable travel, promotional activities and reassurances that the routes to school are safe. Any barriers to safe sustainable travel should be identified and remedial action taken prior to the school opening.

Diplomas are now offered as a learning route within Northumberland. School partnerships are working together to offer specialised subjects. Some young people will need to travel to alternative sites throughout the school day. Coordination of transport is undertaken by the 14-19 Transport Coordinator who works closely with the school/college

partnerships in order to identify the most cost effective transport solutions.

Action 11: Minimise indiscriminate parking outside schools

Indiscriminate parking around schools is seen as a particular road safety concern. Measures to overcome this problem are to ensure parents receive information relating the dangers, make smarter travel choices available to pupils and parents and to pilot the advisory ticketing scheme. Civil Enforcement Officers can also be deployed to ensure that everyone parks correctly; if cars are parked illegally the Officers can issue a Penalty Charge Notice.

CHAPTER SIX

OBJECTIVES, TARGETS & MONITORING

What do we aim to achieve?

This chapter highlights the LTP objectives that are relevant to this strategy and identifies the key local targets that the strategy can be monitored against.

It is also important to remember that the authority has national indicators, monitored by central government, those linking to this strategy are identified. Finally this chapter concludes with an overview of how the authority is supporting sustainable school travel.

Objectives

The key LTP objectives that have been adopted by this strategy are to:

- Create a safer environment in which to travel
- Reduce dependence on the private motor car
- Increase the proportion of travel by sustainable modes

Targets

We are already bound by targets set out in the Local Transport Plan and this strategy will be used to ensure that these targets are met.

National Indicators

A Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement between a local area and central government. The LAA sets out how local priorities will be met by applying local solutions and contributes to national priorities set out by the government. 198 National Indicators (NI) are set by central government to monitor local progress.

The national indicators linked to this strategy are listed below:

NI 47 – People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents

NI 48 - Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents

NI 167 – Congestion – average journey time per mile during the morning peak

NI 175 – Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling

NI 198 – Children travelling to school – mode of transport usually used

Other cross cutting themes include:

NI 50 – Emotional health of children

NI 55 – Obesity in primary age children in reception

NI 56 – Obesity in primary age children in year 6

NI 186 – Per capita reduction in CO₂ emissions in the LA area

NI 194 – Air quality - % reduction in NO_x and primary PM₁₀ emissions through local authority's estate and operations

How will we monitor progress?

The progress of these targets will be monitored annually against the trajectories set out in figure 6.1.

In order to monitor the use of different modes of transport by school children, and therefore assist with the review process of this strategy, annual surveys will be carried out as part of the school census. This data reflect "how pupils usually travel to school". This data will be collected each January and will be used to monitor modal shift targets with the Local Transport Plan.

Schools are encouraged to review their travel plans every second year at a minimum and this can help to identify where demand for travelling by a particular mode is unmet.

As required in the Education and Inspections Act the strategy will be published on an annual basis on the internet and a hard copy or summary document available on request.

Conclusion

This document has shown how the authority is promoting more sustainable travel to school. The authority met its target for all schools in Northumberland to have a School Travel Plans and

The LTP is providing funding for engineering measures associated with safe routes to school, helping to create a safer environment around schools that is more conducive to encouraging walking and cycling.

Further support is provided by the authority through the school transport

service. This provides home to school transport for 11000 pupils, including students with special needs. The authority also provides a school crossing patrol service operating at 82 sites throughout the County and a road safety service that co-ordinates road safety education and training to schools and young people.

These services will continue to be provided in the future and will be further improved and developed in response to changing needs.



