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## Report of the Director of City Development and the Chief Executive, Education Leeds

### Executive Board

Date: 8 October 2008

### Subject: SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION TRAVEL STRATEGY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEGRATED SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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#### Electoral Wards Affected:

ALL

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 intends that all children receive the education they need to achieve their full potential. This report details the Council's response to the introduction of the Act with respect to discharging its statutory duty to promote sustainable travel to schools and extended school services including colleges and other centres of learning for 14-19 year olds.
2. Part 6 of the Act deals with school travel. Most of the new requirements around home to school travel are being addressed by Education Leeds. Education Leeds will develop a new School Transport Policy in partnership with Children and Young Peoples Social Care which will be fully integrated with the Sustainable Education Travel Strategy. In addition, this paper on sustainable education travel fulfils a specific duty on authorities to prepare and publish a sustainable school travel strategy during the Autumn Term and therefore to meet this legislative demand the Sustainable Education Travel Strategy has been prepared in advance of these developments.
3. In order to meet these requirements a Sustainable Education Travel Strategy for Leeds has been prepared. This identifies the planning and actions necessary to ensure the requirements of the Act are met, and that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are better catered for in the future.

4. A draft strategy was published in September 2007 and this has formed the basis for the consultation and preparation of the proposals presented for approval with this report.

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to the proposed Sustainable Education Travel Strategy for Leeds and to inform the Executive Board of the on-going collaborative work which is now taking place between Education Leeds and Children and Young Peoples Social Care to develop and introduce a Children's Services School Transport Policy which encompasses all statutory demands.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 Encouraging and promoting sustainable travel behaviour to schools has been undertaken by the Council since 2001. Following bursary awards from the Department for Children Schools and Families and its predecessors (2002-2008), and the appointment of school travel advisors, schools have been actively encouraged and assisted to develop school travel plans to increase the take up of more sustainable modes of travel on the journey to school.
- 2.2 School travel plans now exist for 202 (73%) of Leeds' 276 schools, and the remaining schools are due to have travel plans in place by April 2010. Travel plans aim to extend the choice of sustainable travel options for the school journey thereby reducing the number of children driven to school and encouraging other health and environmentally beneficial modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. Mode of travel to school is a national indicator which is monitored by the Department for Transport.
- 2.3 Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) has placed a new duty on local authorities to promote sustainable travel to school including the preparation of a sustainable travel strategy. In order to meet these requirements a Sustainable Education Travel Coordinator has been appointed within the Transport Policy Service to co-ordinate the development and delivery of measures to increase the take up of sustainable travel to school.
- 2.4 Initiatives that support sustainable school travel include Safer Routes to School schemes, accessibility planning, the Building Schools for the Future programme, work through the planning and highways services, and road safety training and promotion. Journeys to school undertaken by school special or service bus are coordinated by Education Leeds and West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (Metro). Metro also provide the SAFEMark scheme to encourage responsible use and behaviour on buses. Education Leeds also organise post 16 transport and special educational needs transport. The provision of Independent Travel Training for SEN pupils and students will further promote sustainable school/college travel by enabling students to become less dependent on taxi transport.
- 2.5 Funding from the Local Transport Plan is used to support improvements to road safety, including the development of 20 mph traffic calmed zones in local communities and the provision of pedestrian facilities and other measures to reduce road casualties and ease the movement of vulnerable road users.
- 2.6 The EIA 2006 requires local authorities to put the new transport arrangements into place by September 2008. As such the Sustainable Education Travel Strategy and the newly developing Children's Services School Travel Policy will be fully

integrated to form a single document and policy which in the future will be published alongside the annual guide to school admissions to provide parents with enhanced information on the transport opportunities at each school to assist them in the school selection process.

- 2.7 The many new emerging demands for school transport services (to serve the 14-19 Review, Extended Services, Federated Schools, Early Years and re-defined Special Transport Needs for children with learning difficulties) which are only partially grant funded are being actively considered for inclusion in the proposed Children's Services School Transport Policy. Funding streams to adequately cover the cost of introducing these essential developments are being explored by Education Leeds and Children and Young Peoples Social Care. This exercise will also include an analysis of current policy provisions and spending in terms of the continued effectiveness, value for money and continued appropriateness in relation to Children's Services. In particular those services which are currently provided on a local discretionary basis and delivered at high cost will be reviewed.

### **3.0 MAIN ISSUES**

- 3.1 This section of the report details the main statutory duties on the Authority in respect of promoting sustainable travel to schools. The four main elements to the duty are;
- An assessment of the travel and transport needs of children, and young people within the authority's area
  - An audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority that may be used when travelling to and from, or between the 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 and from and between schools/institutions
- 3.2 The duty applies to all children and young people of compulsory school age under 18 years of age. It considers the implications of extended schools and education and training for the 14 -19 age group.
- 3.3 The Sustainable Education Travel Strategy is the Council's response to the requirements of the EIA 2006. It has been prepared by the City Development Directorate in conjunction with Education Leeds to ensure that policies for education travel are properly integrated with the wider transport policies set out in the Local Transport Plan. The strategy aims to increase the number of children and young people walking, cycling and using public transport to access schools and Further Education (FE) establishments. It will enable pupils, parents and carers to access sustainable travel information for schools and FE establishments, and help to create an environment where choosing a sustainable means of travel becomes the natural choice for the journey to schools and colleges.
- 3.4 The overall objective of the strategy is to achieve a positive change towards reduced car use for the journey to and from school in line with the National Indicator 198 "Mode of travel to school". This indicator is measured by the annual DCFS school census (the PLASC return) supported by local monitoring as part of the Local Transport Plan.

- 3.5 The Strategy has seven supporting objectives which are to:
- i) Develop, implement and monitor travel plans in all schools and FE establishments.
  - ii) Develop innovative projects, initiatives and campaigns to promote and support sustainable travel within schools and FE establishments.
  - iii) Work in partnership with stakeholders both within and external to the Council to maximise the effectiveness of travel plan measures and initiatives as an integrated part of the Local Transport Plan and other health and education strategies.
  - iv) Develop measures and improvements which improve the safety and appeal of sustainable school travel choices.
  - v) Work in partnership with Metro and public transport operators when planning sustainable travel.
  - vi) Influence and inform the design and development of new build and extensions to schools and FE establishments with regard to safe and sustainable travel.
  - vii) Work with regional partners to develop resources, organise training and share best practice.
- 3.6 An action plan has been prepared setting out the initial programme of interventions to support the delivery of these strategy objectives. This identifies the organisations that will be involved in delivering specific actions within a target timescale, and each action will be monitored on an ongoing basis. Overall management of the delivery of the Sustainable Education Travel Strategy will be through a key stakeholder steering group including representatives of Education Leeds, Metro and the Primary Care Trust and key services within the City Council.
- 3.7 The strategy will be developed as the nature and coverage of sustainable travel measures is developed and extended across the city. Progress will be monitored and evaluated on an annual basis to inform the review of the document which will be conducted each year in tandem with the development and publication by Education Leeds of the school admission guides.
- 3.8 Sustainable travel options could be further enhanced especially in the area of travel within the school day, a growth area with the inception of Federated Schools and the introduction of Diploma courses which feature the requirement for students to attend different school or college campuses both within the week and at different times within the school day. Existing School Bus Passes (SchoolCards) do not allow travel other than one journey to school and one journey home. This traditional pattern of school attendance is becoming increasingly less common and can leave those entitled to free home to school travel facing financial hardship when faced with the additional travel demands.
- 3.9 The introduction of Extended Services further place increased school travel costs upon both the LEA and parents because of the restrictions on SchoolCard usage. These difficulties are felt most acutely in instances where pupils with SEN wish to attend Extended Services provisions. Inevitably this requires the provision of additional journeys often in adapted vehicles with accompanying escort provision. Such journeys place additional pressure on the transport budget.

## **Consultation**

- 3.10 The Sustainable Education Travel Strategy has been prepared in conjunction with the key stakeholders in the delivery of sustainable travel for education; Education Leeds and Metro. It has also drawn on the extensive experience gained in working with the school community across Leeds for over seven years, which has included Headteachers, Governors, parents and children in the ongoing development of sustainable travel plans.
- 3.11 The draft strategy was first published on the Council's website on the 31 August 2007, after initial discussions and collaboration with key stakeholders and consultation with Ward Members.
- 3.12 Following publication of the draft strategy a revised version was placed on the Council's 'Talking Point' consultation website on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2008. At the same time copies were sent to the key stakeholders named in the strategy both within and external to the authority. All Members of the Council were invited to comment on the proposed document.
- 3.13 Further consultation is planned by Education Leeds with respect to the development of proposals for the Children's Services School Transport Policy.

## **4.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

### **Compliance with Council Policies**

- 4.1 Vision for Leeds 2004 – 2020: The aims and aspirations of the strategy reflect the vision and support its key themes for children and schools.
- 4.2 People Strategy: The proposed measures will widen the choice and travel options available to all children and young people.
- 4.3 Local Transport Plan: These proposals will contribute to the plan's aspirations for improved accessibility, reduced congestion, better air quality and improve the condition of transport infrastructure through effective asset management.
- 4.4 Environmental Policy: The measures are in line with Aim 6 of the Policy, by introducing measures to encourage alternatives to the private car (such as walking) and improving overall road safety.

## **5.0 LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Leeds City Council has a statutory duty under section 508A, Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to produce and publish a strategy to develop sustainable travel and transport infrastructure supporting school journeys within the authority area.
- 5.2 Implementation of this requirement is being undertaken from within existing staff resources and budgets. Assistance in meeting the costs associated with the implementation of these requirements is provided by grant funding from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) until March 2011. This complements grant funding being provided through the DCSF which supports the delivery of the national target for all schools to have a travel plan by 2010. This funding stream ends in March 2010. Both these resources are managed within the framework of the Local Area Agreement.

- 5.3 The staff currently engaged in the delivery of support for sustainable travel to school are permanent appointments and therefore are not dependent in the long term on any further continuation of Government grants beyond the aforementioned cut-off dates.
- 5.4 Financial support to schools developing travel plans is provided by the DCSF through a one-off capital infrastructure grant to schools who have completed a travel plan in accordance with the Department's requirements. This scheme also finishes in March 2010. So far 202 schools have received this grant.
- 5.5 Resources for the delivery of highway schemes to benefit sustainable travel to school are allocated as part of the overall Integrated Transport Parent Scheme within the Council's capital programme in line with the financial allocation made to the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan by the Department for Transport.
- 5.6 Education Leeds will explore the financial implications arising from the development of proposals for the Children's Services School Transport Policy.

## **6.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The proposed Sustainable Education Travel Strategy will draw together key transport issues and initiatives, define the current position, forecast and assess future transport needs and expectations of all pupils and young people travelling to schools and further education establishments. The strategy will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis with Education Leeds and key stakeholders.
- 6.2 The strategy and the proposals to integrate it with the development of a Children's Services School Transport Policy will set out any intended actions and initiatives that are necessary to ensure the requirements of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 are met.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 Members are requested to approve the adoption and publication of the Leeds Sustainable Education Travel Strategy.
- 7.2 Members are requested to give approval for the development of a Children's Services School Transport Policy and the intention to integrate this with the Leeds Sustainable Education Travel Strategy by September 2010.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 8.1 The following document provides background information for this report

(i) Sustainable Education Travel Strategy, July 2008