



Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy

2008 – 2011

August 2009

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION
2	CONTEXT
2.1	National Context
2.2	The Education (Schools information) Regulations 2002
2.3	Regional Context
2.4	Local Context
3	IDENTIFICATION OF NEED
3.1	Introduction
3.2	Home to School Transport
4	SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT ISSUES
4.1	Overview
4.2	Existing Transport and Travel Planning Arrangements
5	POLICY AREAS
5.1	Travel Planning
5.2	Safety
5.3	Modal Shift
5.4	Sustainability
5.5	Congestion
5.6	Health

1 INTRODUCTION

In response to changing legislation in the field of school transport, especially in respect of Section 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, there is a duty on Local Authorities (LA's) to produce an annual Sustainable Transport Strategy. In the wider context of transport to and from schools, further education establishments and other educational facilities. Travel Planning is becoming an increasingly important method of introducing sustainable transport choices to a wide range of transport users. Through careful integration of the Travel Planning and Road Safety Service, modal shift to more sustainable transport modes should not result in increased levels of killed and seriously injured (KSI) casualties amongst vulnerable user groups.

This Strategy sets out to show how Middlesbrough Council will encourage the development and implementation of travel planning across the Borough and how it assesses, and meets the travel needs of those who need to travel to and from educational establishments. This will apply to movements throughout the school day as well as at the beginning and end of the day.

Taking account of guidance already provided, and with the ability to be adapted through time in the light of guidance issued, this strategy attempts to set out:

- ❑ How the strategy will **benefit the safety and well-being** of the people living in local communities;
- ❑ How it will improve the **environmental well-being** of the local area;
- ❑ The **context** in which the strategy is set, and
- ❑ The **strategic issues** that need to be addressed and outlines an **Action Plan** for its delivery.

Aims and Objectives

The overarching **Aims** of this Strategy are:

1. **To ensure that systems are in place to secure fair access to schools in relation to school transport and those who are on low incomes;**
2. **All schools to have an authorised Travel Plan within the lifetime of this Strategy;**
3. **Continuance and further refinement of a robust monitoring system for school travel planning;**
4. **To provide an assessment of the travel needs of a particular school/college catchments area;**
5. **To provide an assessment of the supporting facilities and services in the area;**
6. **To develop a strategy for the promotion of sustainable transport to and from schools and other establishments, and**
7. **To provide a framework for consultation on matters related to transport to and from schools and other educational establishments.**

In order to meet these aims, the **Objectives** of this Strategy are:

- ❑ To provide a means for all schools to access the School Travel Planning service;
- ❑ To provide a means for schools with travel plans to train and educate students in the use of sustainable transport;
- ❑ To enable the uptake of sustainable transport for students and employees;
- ❑ To develop and implement a suite of 'soft' measures, including promotion and training;
- ❑ To increase the number of more sustainable trips throughout the borough through a campaign of awareness and education:
- ❑ To reduce the actual and perceived dangers to cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users
- ❑ To provide more and better cycle facilities, and to remove theft as a barrier to cycling as a transport mode choice at schools in the borough;
- ❑ To provide for the needs of more sustainable transport users at all stages of the land use planning and development control processes;

- To increase levels of public transport use for travel to school, and other education establishments.
- To reduce levels of car use on the school run;
- To reduce the environmental impact of transport across the Borough; and
- To improve, through the increased uptake of exercise, the general health and fitness of the school population of the borough – linking with the Healthy Schools agenda.
- To ensure suppliers have and operate safe recruitment to ensure the safeguarding of children.

2 CONTEXT

2.1 National Context

The National context, from which this document arises, is the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Under the Act, there is a general duty on Local Authorities (LA's) to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport. This comprises four main elements:

- 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 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;

and must "...prepare for each academic year a document containing their strategy to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to meet the school travel needs of their area"
This is dealt with in more detail in section 4.

2.2 The Education (Schools information)(England) Regulations 2002

The LA is required to publish the general arrangements and policies in respect of transport for pupils of compulsory school age and below to and from schools and school and FE 6th forms and colleges. More detailed information is laid out in Section 4 on Policy areas.

As a key part of the Government's environmental objectives, walking and cycling need to be made a real alternative for local trips. This will reduce car use and congestion and increase social inclusion as well as improving safety and air quality. It will also increase levels of physical fitness.

2.3 Regional Context

2.3.1 Regional School Travel Advisor Service

In order to address the lack of guidance in school travel planning at a regional level, the Travel to School Initiative Board has set in place a regional network of advisers, charged with providing information, training and disseminating best practices regionally in the field.

2.3.2 Regional Transport Groups

Local Authorities within the North East area meet on a regular basis to network on operational issues and how best services can be delivered within the Home to School Transport Services. In addition to this there is an ATCO (Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers) North East area Special Interest Group – Home to School Transport that meets in York, which involves a much wider area to the south including Sheffield and South Yorkshire. This group feeds into the National ATCO Meetings.

2.4 Local Context

2.4.1 Local Area Agreement 2007 to 2010

Within the local area agreement for Middlesbrough, we have set out to meet transport needs more effectively.

The Mayor's "Raising Hope" agenda is built on four pillars. One of which is to provide Middlesbrough with a 'transport network, which can meet the needs of a town on its way up'.

To achieve this, four objectives for transport have been created.

The objectives briefly include:

- Promoting economic growth and regeneration by providing accessibility improvements.
- Making our streets safer by reducing the number of accidents and casualties.
- Reduce the number of journeys by car to lower congestion levels and improve air quality and the environment.
- Encourage investment to deliver public transport improvements.

2.4.2 Vision and Objectives

From these objectives, the Mayor developed five key transport priorities that would form a community transport strategy.

These priorities include:

1. The transport network will help the local community to have access to employment and other services, such as education, health, leisure and shopping.
2. Congestion will not hinder economic development; impair the quality of the local environment or cause severance in our communities.
3. Reduce the number of accidents and casualties on the roads.
4. Reduce the environmental impact of transport on air quality, noise and climate change.
5. Sustainable highways maintenance: encouraging the increased use of cycling and walking through appropriate maintenance and access improvements.

This transport strategy is being progressively implemented across Middlesbrough and is outlined in the Local Transport Plan (LTP).

2.4.2 Middlesbrough Council Local Transport Plan – 2006 to 2011

The second Middlesbrough Local Transport Plan (LTP) covers the five-year period from April 2006 – March 2011, and sets out the Council's strategy for the future development of the Borough's transport network. The LTP draws upon the national, regional, sub-regional and local contexts to develop a series of aims and objectives set against the five themes of the Central Government/Local Government Association's Shared Priority for Transport, namely:

- Congestion;
- Accessibility;
- Road Safety;
- Air Quality; and
- Other Quality of Life

2.4.3 Middlesbrough Climate Change Community Action Plan

The action plan aims to enable the community to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. To make any real progress, it is essential to raise awareness of the climate change issues in all sectors of our community. When people understand the link between emissions and climate change, they are more likely to change their lifestyle".

A number of actions are indicated in the Action Plan arising out of the document, and the relevant issues are:

- All schools to participate in the Eco Schools programme by 2010;
- Improved public transport network coverage;
- Increased reliability of transport systems
- Encourage more cycling and walking trips
- All schools to have a School Travel Plan in place by 2010

2.4.4 Information on eligibility for transport when applying for primary and secondary school places

Under the Middlesbrough Home to School Transport Policy, pupils aged between 4 – 16 years of age are eligible for free transport if they live over two miles for primary aged pupils and three miles for secondary aged pupils by the shortest walking distance from their catchment area school.

National changes to be introduced for pupils transferring to the secondary sector in September 2008 extend the eligibility criteria for free home to school transport to include pupils from low-income families, who reside over two miles from their school, by the shortest walking distance and the school is one of the three nearest schools.

2.4.5 Children, families and learning pupil support - Home to School Transport

The Home to School Transport section co-ordinates the transport, on a daily basis of approximately 1,300 pupils who qualify for free home to school transport. The section co-ordinates fleets of in-house and privately operated vehicles to undertake the transport. Below are points summarising eligibility:

Religion or Belief

- A primary or secondary school age pupil attends a catchment area faith school for reasons of religion or belief (evidence may be required to support this), and that school is over 2 miles from the home address where the distance is determined by the Council and uses the shortest walking distance along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk with reasonable safety.

A secondary aged pupil from a lower income family attends the nearest school preferred by their parents on the grounds of religion or belief and the school is between two and fifteen miles away from their home address. (Lower income families are defined by if the pupil is eligible for free school meals or the parent is in receipt of the maximum working tax credit allowance).

Homeless / Children in care

- This varies on a case by case basis. The Council will provide short-term assistance if they are of primary school age or in Year 7, 8 or 9 in a secondary school. After a couple of weeks it would be expected that they transfer to the catchment area school. For secondary pupils in years 10 and 11 following examinations, subject to the distance criteria, the council would support them.

Disability Issues

- If a child lives under two or three miles (depending on their age) from the catchment area school, and the route used to calculate the distance requires the pupil to be accompanied and the child's parent has a disability that does not allow them to accompany the child, we would not use that route to calculate whether or not they qualified for free transport we would use a route where the child does not need to be accompanied. Temporary mobility issues would also be catered for if the child is attending the catchment area school.

With regard to students aged over 16 years of age attending Colleges of Further Education, the Local Authority participates in a half fare permit scheme which allows students aged between 16 – 19, travel to and from the College of Further Education at a half fare rate. Students aged over 16 years of age with special educational needs attending Colleges of Further Education are provided with free transport if transport was identified as a non-educational provision in their last statement of special educational needs. A student may qualify for free transport if he/she has a medical condition that necessitates transport, and the Council's Medical Officer supports that view.

The Middlesbrough Educational Transport Partnership considers providing support, to students aged over 19 years of age, attending Colleges of Further Education who have learning and/or physical difficulties.

2.4.6 Tees Valley Post 16 Transport Partnership

The partnership consists of representatives from the all 5 Local Authority transport sections, Community Transport Teams, 6th form & FE colleges, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Connexions Service. It is intended to provide supported travel for post-16 students up to 19 years.

The partnership was formed to research current practices from each authority and organisation, with the view to investigating the possible provision of having one travel card that enables young people to travel for half fare. An executive member report was submitted to seek financial approval for the scheme. Discussions are currently ongoing.

2.4.7 Every Child Matters, Extended Schools and Integrated Service Areas

The adoption of an online data collection system has already enabled the Council to better involve children and young people in the delivery of the School Travel Plan service particularly, with tangible benefits in terms of identifying issues, and better targeting of resources to specific problem areas, through the use of more reliable, better quality data and feedback. The new system also provides an opportunity for real hands-on involvement of individual students in the instigation, development, implementation and monitoring of their own School's Travel Plan.

3 IDENTIFICATION OF NEED

3.1 Introduction

In order to equitably allow access to school transport where it is required, there must be a robust and transparent method of needs identification and allocation at work, to which all have equal access.

There are two methodologies employed in the identification of need for transport provision within the Borough. One is the use of School Census data, which will be used to establish an effective baseline in order to monitor modal shift through mandatory indicator LTP4.

The second method involves the use of postcode mapping and is used as part of the Council's discharging of its duties in providing free Home to School Transport. The policy, recently amended in light of new duties and responsibilities arising from the Education and Inspections Act 2006, applies to:

- Children and young people normally resident within the Borough of Middlesbrough
- Children and young people of statutory school age
- Children and young people from vulnerable families living in the Borough

3.2 Home to School Transport

The Local Authority (LA) has a statutory duty to provide free transport using a mileage criteria for primary and secondary pupils. New duties have been imposed through the recent Education & Inspections Bill for the LA to provide free transport to those families on low incomes so that transport as research shows these families can be disadvantaged as they are unable to opt for a school further away due to the cost of transport. These duties apply to primary pupils in September 2007 and secondary pupils in September 2008.

Additional duties also apply to families on low incomes who apply for places in a voluntary aided school because of religion or belief. More details can be found in Middlesbrough's Home to School Transport Policy.

4 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT ISSUES

4.1 Overview

The Council's long term Transport Strategy, as set out in the second LTP, is based on the set of core aims and objectives. Travel planning will play a key role in meeting many of the aims and objectives.

The Council will ensure that all of the eligible schools within the Borough have a Travel Plan in place by 2010, in line with the national target set by the Travel to School Initiative (TTSI) Board and agreed by the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

Travel Planning's contribution to meeting the core aims and objective of the long-term transport strategy is contained in the LTP.

4.2 Existing School and College Travel Arrangements

Middlesbrough Council provide a range of support options for those travelling to and from school and other educational establishments, from support for walking and cycling through safe routes and school travel planning, promotion of sustainable transport, and provision of a dedicated free Home to School Transport Service, which forms a major part of the community transport provision for the Borough. The service covers Primary, Secondary, College, Special Schools, as well as transport to adult users supported through Social Care and a Dial a ride service across the Borough.

As mentioned previously, we are hopeful of securing extra funding that will allow the Post 16 Partnership additional funding to support the Council's half fare permit scheme for students across the Borough enabling them to travel across the Tees Valley area, 24/7.

4.2.1 School Travel Plans

The allocation received as part of the area based grant settlement in respect of school travel plan development has enabled the council to work in partnership with 87% of schools across the borough.

Throughout 2008/09 the school travel advisor continued to work with the remaining schools to ensure Middlesbrough Council achieve the national target, which dictates that all schools have a school travel plan in place by 2010. At March 2009 work had progressed with 95% of schools to develop a School Travel Plan.

We will achieve the national target through the annual monitoring review. In addition, the Local Indicator set, which forms part of our Local Transport Plan 2006-2011, allow for even more regular performance reporting in this area. *(See Local 8 specifically)*

4.2.2 Every Child Matters

The agenda for change arising from Every Child Matters and the Extended Schools Project is already influencing almost every area of operation of the Council's service delivery.

Middlesbrough's Road Safety Team continues to support and accommodate the development of *Extended Schools* through offering a more flexible work programme, which accommodates out of hours school activities.

Promotion of the Extended Schools project is also built into the remit of the school travel advisor who acts to improve access to extended schools services by ensuring that the extended use of a school site is considered as part of the travel planning processes.

Work will continue with our Education department and partners within the Borough, cementing and improving on already existing partnerships.

4.2.3 Corporate Travel Plan

A Council Travel Plan is currently under development and approval of the Plan will be sought in 2008. The initiatives within the Plan over the lifetime of this Strategy, will provide and promote sustainable travel choices for all of Middlesbrough Council employees, including teaching staff based at schools and sixth form colleges.

4.2.4 Safe Routes to School

School Entry Treatments have been introduced at 41 primary schools in Middlesbrough to ensure that the area directly outside of each school remains a safe zone for children to cross when going to and from school.

A programme of safer routes to school schemes is included in the LTP programme for 07/08 and we are hoping to develop this further during 08/09 onwards.

4.2.5 20 mph zones

During 2006/07 a programme of 20 mph speed limits were introduced in fourteen areas across the borough. This programme accommodates fifteen primary schools whose pupils were involved in the design of a number of 20 mph sign plates situated around each school area.

4.3 Danger, and the perception of danger

As part of the Road Safety Strategy, a programme of *Education, Training and Publicity* (ETP) is constantly evolving. The programme aims to support the infrastructure improvements designed to aid vulnerable road users. Some examples of this are shown below:

- Walking Bus Scheme
- Park and Stride Schemes
- School Gate Parking Strategy
- Delivery of Pedestrian Training Scheme aimed at year three pupils
- Delivery of National Standard Cycle Training aimed at year five and six pupils

4.3.1 Motor Cycle Safety

The Cleveland Motorcycle Training Scheme is run in partnership with Middlesbrough, Stockton and Hartlepool, with Stockton taking a lead role under lead authority arrangements. Due to the popularity of motorcycling seen over recent years the scheme has become increasingly more important and has seen a steady increase in trainees from all three boroughs. The scheme delivers CBT, Direct Access, and Pre-Test courses at sites in Billingham, Eaglescliffe and Hartlepool, unfortunately the site at Middlesbrough has recently closed to regeneration works in the area it was originally located.

4.4 Vulnerable Road Users

Development of the ETP programme has now been extended to reach a wider range of community groups to ensure that all schools, students, parents and carers are aware of risks related to vulnerable road users.

In addition, a number of engineering measures including local safety schemes; safer routes to school, 20 mph zones and cycleway improvements have provided benefits for this group of road users.

The success of these measures is reflected in Middlesbrough's 2007 Road Casualty Review, which highlights the continuous downward trend in the number of vulnerable road users. It also highlights that in 2007 the 2010 horizon target has already been reached.

For those students with Special Needs, we are undertaking and will continue to develop a programme of personal mobility training.

4.5 Modal shift

4.5.1 Car Journeys

The area wide traffic flow in Middlesbrough increased by 5% between 2001 and 2004 according to the National Road Traffic Survey. This compared favourably to the North East average of 5.5%.

Our current LTP target is set to restrict traffic growth to 1.7% per annum for the life of the LTP 2006-2011. In line with this target, we will continue to work to reduce the volume of traffic arriving at the school gate to drop off or pick up children, this is currently measured through schools-based surveys and the more recently data recorded as part of the National School Survey.

4.5.2 Car Sharing

Although a degree of informal car sharing already goes on across the Borough, we will seek to formalise and increase levels of car sharing as part of the journey to school across the Borough through greater promotion, initially within the Authority through the use of www.2plustravel.com, the Tees Valley car sharing website, with wider promotion and take-up across the Borough over the lifetime of this Strategy.

In addition, the council recently developed its own corporate car-sharing scheme offering a number of incentives to employees to consider car sharing as their main mode of travel for just one week.

4.5.3 Walking and Cycling Improvements

We will increase levels of safe walking and cycling to schools across the Borough, through a combination of Travel Plan led infrastructure improvements and a programme of education, training and promotion as discussed previously.

5 POLICY AREAS

Middlesbrough Council recognises that there is a major problem caused by the increasing inclination for parents to transport their children to school by car. School travel by car leads to congestion in and around schools, further fuelling peak hour congestion and real and perceived safety problems for motorists and school children alike. The council promoted sustainable school travel throughout the first Local Transport Plan (LTP), and is further continuing this into LTP2.

As discussed in earlier paragraphs, the Council supports safer journeys to school initiatives that seek to make the roads and paths around schools safer. The further development of a safer routes to school programme will enable the council to achieve the combined benefits of improved safety and a greater encouragement to walk or cycle to school.

5.1 Public Transport

We will ensure that up-to-date, accurate information on public transport is provided to schools, local businesses and community facilities through a programme of targeted public transport promotion, and the progressive roll out of real-time bus information.

5.2 Sustainability

5.2.1 National and Local Campaigns

We will campaign to reduce dependence on the car as the exclusive means of transport to and from school through continued support for 'Bike to School Week', 'Walk to School Week', 'In Town Without My Car Day' and other sustainable transport campaigns, including our own cycling promotion 'Try Before You Buy'.

5.3 Health

5.3.1 Increasing Fitness Levels Across the Borough

We will, through a focused programme of education, training and publicity work with partners to support corporate and Health Sector initiatives to increase levels of fitness in the school population of the Borough. The main areas of focus will be walking to school, cycling to school, and increasing levels of use of public transport.

5.3.2 Health Partnerships

We will continue to strengthen partnership links with the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Health Schools, in particular by working to identify common goals – such as increasing levels of cycling and walking – within the Health White Paper.

In November 2008, a partnership led by Middlesbrough Council and the Middlesbrough PCT was successful in gaining a £4 million grant to implement a diverse range of projects. The emphasis will be on achieving healthier and more active lifestyles with supporting environmental enhancements. The total programme budget is likely to be £8 million. Working alongside schools will continue further under the auspices of this partnership, as it is an integral part of increasing health and fitness levels within the borough.

6.0 STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Middlesbrough has been actively involved in many sustainable school travel initiatives/strategies since 2000. This has presented us with new opportunities to develop and promote changes to parents and children's school travel choices, whilst at the same time aiming to achieve the local and national aims of achieving environmentally and safe school travel.

The council's 4 aims within this strategy are:

- To reduce the level of car use for school journeys.
- To develop new, and revise existing School Travel Plans.
- To further encourage schools to take greater responsibility for addressing school travel issues.
- To improve facilities for alternative modes of travel, to encourage their use.

6.1 Reduce the level of car use for school journeys

The primary aim of this strategy is to reduce the level of car use for school journeys in Middlesbrough. This reduction is a mandatory indicator within LTP 2. Unnecessary car use further adds to highway congestion, greater safety concerns and a detrimental effect on the local environment in and around school areas. Greater congestion often further increases parents fears for safety and can lead to a reduction in the physical activity of walking and cycling to school.

Schools are often perceived as a community leader, so it is important that they possess good relationships within their communities and seek to protect the local environment in which they are cited. The Road Safety team are building on existing partnerships, which contribute towards the promotion of the Healthy School Standards Initiative by sitting on the Quality Assurance board.

As part of the Choice Agenda, parents are given the opportunity to choose the school that their children attend. This can subsequently lead to longer journey times for some children. Various Council departments have worked in collaboration to produce a revised set a Local Authority eligibility criteria for home to school travel. These arrangements largely relate to children who are eligible for free school travel because of the distance from home to the nearest suitable school. There are other instances where this is not the normal occurrence (please see section 2).

6.3 Further encourage schools to take greater responsibility for addressing school travel issues.

For STP's to be successful, the changes in decision making require full support of management, as well as teachers, pupils, parents and community stakeholders. The council are aware that schools have many National Curriculum focused targets to achieve, so has aimed to keep the development and implementation process under review to ensure the most efficient delivery of the plan. The long-term sustainability and success of a school travel plan relies heavily on the integration of road safety and sustainable travel into the curriculum, for a variety of subjects, at all schools; this is both encouraged and supported by the Road Safety Team. As stated in section 4, the STP work links in with the outcomes of *Every Child Matters* agenda. In addition, STP's can also contribute towards *Healthy Schools* accreditation.

6.4 Improve facilities for alternative modes of travel, to encourage their use.

When aiming to reduce car use, there subsequently needs to be an improvement in facilities for other modes of travel, and to make them more attractive, encouraging an increase in their use. Council policy ensures that the proposed alternative measures have been identified in STP's and will be supported by the various promotional activities by both the schools and the Council's road safety team.

The highway network has been improved greatly over the past several years through the Local Transport Plan (LTP). DfES has also made capital funding available to allow schools with STP's to implement school grounds improvements.

Within each school there is a designated 'champion' responsible for coordinating the travel plan. They work with all stakeholders to identify, investigate and develop the measures identified in the travel plan. It's vital that all stakeholders understand the reasons behind any proposed measures, and how they will seek to address the objectives of the travel plan and achieve the expected benefits. Best practice throughout the borough is widely encouraged as no one school is unique in terms of congestion and perceived safety risks.