

III. DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL'S STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL TRAVEL 2007- 2010

For parents, schools and providers of school travel choices in Devon

THE VISION

It is the vision of Devon County Council that it will be the 'greenest' county in England and that every child will be able to travel to school as healthily, sustainably and, most of all, as safely as possible. For this to happen, the travel needs of all children and young people between the ages of 4 and 19 in full time education will be assessed through consultation and dialogue.

Having identified and prioritised these needs, Devon County Council will bring together in the most effective ways possible, the key strategic priorities contained within the Local Transport Plan, the Local Area Agreement, Children and Young People's Plan, Every Child Matters and the Education and Inspections Bill 2006.

This document describes how the implementation of Devon County Council's Strategy for Sustainable School Travel will be achieved.

Priorities of the School Travel Strategy

Pupil and parent consultation and involvement are at the heart of planning school travel in Devon. Devon County Council will ensure that the voices of children, young people and their families are heard with regard to their travel needs and preferences. These needs will be assessed through consultation about access to schooling and travel choices. In order to meet the requirements of the **Children Act 2004** and the **Education and Inspection Act 2006**, School Travel Plan (School Travel Plan) Advisers will work with children, young people and parents to help identify needs in schools where an STP is active or developing. Choice Advisers assist families with choices and STP Advisers will liaise with them and the School Admissions team wherever possible. Pupil engagement will also be encouraged through links to the National Curriculum and 'Every Child Matters'.

Training will continue to be given to schools on how to develop a STP to the required national standard. Much emphasis of the STP programme for the next 5 years, however, will now be on how to implement a STP to achieve reduction of car use for the school journey. The new resource 'Moving On' will form the backbone of this work, with its examples of best practice. Best practice will be shared through partnerships with other South-West Local Authorities and use of national examples.

Pupil travel needs and patterns for schools will be assessed and measured through use of the School Census, surveys, consultation and mapping. Schools will be able to view these resources through the latest technological advances in web-based mapping (Geographical Information Systems).

Devon County Council will work to improve infrastructure for the school journey in line with the priorities in the **Local Transport Plan** to provide the greatest possible range of travel options for the school journey. Improvements will be in response to risk assessments of walking and cycling routes arising from **road safety** concerns of

parents and children. Route improvements will take place that improve **accessibility** to schools by walking and cycling for significant numbers of children and young people. Attention will particularly be given to routes where the reduction of **congestion** and improvement of **air quality** are possible gains. Links will be made to existing and developing **Community Travel Plans** where communities may benefit from improved accessibility. Special projects will also continue in areas of deprivation working with vulnerable children.

In this way, Devon County Council will implement elements of their **Sustainable Communities Strategy** through their **Local Area Agreement** by meeting its aims of promoting healthier lifestyles, helping people to feel and be safe, enabling people to enjoy life and achieve their potential and empowering people to make a positive contribution to their community.

Where **new school developments** are planned, architects and planners will adhere to the Devon County Council's *Local Authority Minimum Requirements* and the BREEM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methods) guidance to ensure safety and priorities of access for walkers, cyclists, users of public and school transport and those who have extra needs for accessibility. Development Management, NPS South-West Ltd. who deal with all Devon property, the Strategic Planning Group, schools and the STP team will work together to ensure the best possible designs for safe and sustainable travel to school are achieved.

Devon County Council will meet the requirements of the **Education and Inspections Act 2006** by ensuring that all children with entitlement to free school transport have their needs met. Where children with Special Needs are able and willing to walk, cycle or travel to school by bus, **independent travel training** may be given. This area of work will be a priority for development in the next 5 years.

A new post will be set up using the Sustainable School Travel Strategy Fund to help departments work together effectively to meet the needs of children and young people identified through STPs and other consultation methods. This person will liaise with all school travel providers to find creative solutions to travel needs. If, for example, a school bus route could be replaced by a walking or cycling route in response to school community preferences, this could be facilitated.

Devon County Council will promote the health and environmental benefits of walking and cycling to all children and young people, their parents and school staff. This includes practical measures like setting up a Walking Bus, helping to deliver cycle training and providing resources for promotional events such as Walk to School week. Innovative ideas and schemes will continue to evolve that support walking and cycling initiatives like Park & Stride, rewards and incentives and fun-filled events. Information on the benefits of sustainable and healthy travel will always be up-to-date and available on Devon County Council's web-sites and school travel newsletters. The Park Smart scheme will be extended to help reduce parent parking near school gates.

In addition to helping to provide safer routes to school, Devon County Council will help to ensure there are as few practical barriers to walking, cycling and bus or train travel as possible. It will therefore work creatively with schools to advise on the provision of cycle storage, playground shelters and site design, for example, to develop STPs in line with national best practice and linked to School Development Plans and Healthy Schools.

Devon County Council and **Devon Primary Care Trust** and are working together to plan and develop improved health for all across the county, including the promotion of walking and cycling for the school journey.

Devon County Council will listen to and act upon the views of children and young people in line with the **Children and Young People's Plan** and the **Hear by Right Public Service Agreement**. These views will be sought through the School Travel Plan process, consultation with parents and through surveys, work through the school curriculum and through events such as the Devon Schools TravelWise Conference.

In conclusion: The Aims & Objectives of the Strategy are:

A1. Reduce the numbers of cars used for school journeys by:

Obj.1 - Helping schools develop School Travel Plans (STPs)

Obj.2 - Assessing the needs of children and young people through the School Census, mapping, surveys and conversations with families and schools

Obj.3 - Helping to provide the greatest range of alternative travel choices wherever possible in order to meet our targets

A2. Work with parents & schools to improve safety on the school journey by:

Obj.1 - Assessing danger spots through mapping with children and parents and through surveys and conversations, site visits and risk assessments

Obj.2 - Improving infrastructure for walking and cycling in line with needs identified in STPs

Obj.3 - Providing training and educational materials

A3. Promote healthy lifestyles for children and young people by:

Obj.1 - Encouraging families to walk and cycle to school

Obj.2 - Raising awareness of the benefits of healthy travel choices

A4. Meet the requirements of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 in the provision of home to school transport:

Obj.1 - Ensure all who are entitled to free school transport receive it

Obj.2 - Work with parents and schools to provide a range of alternatives for low income families who have a statutory entitlement to a choice of schooling