

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide information on Travel Plans and the Walking Bus scheme in Slough.

2. BACKGROUND

NB:

Bikeability (Cycle proficiency) – This is happening currently and the current providers in Slough are Spokes and Cycle Experience.

Bike It Officer – This is the provision of an officer who goes into schools at ground level to work with parents, teachers, volunteers and children. Currently Slough has no –one filling this role.

School Travel Plans

In previous years (September 2012 – March 2016) SBC had funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) under the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) where schools were worked with on their School Travel Plans and several schemes e.g. walk / bike to school initiatives and rewards, installation of bike / scooter parking, etc.

Unfortunately SBC were not successful in obtaining further funding for this purpose for this financial year, so have limited resource to assist schools for this purpose. The Integrated Transport team have applied for the Access Fund for Sustainable Transport from 2017/18 onwards and will hopefully be successful in that. This would provide a further 3 years of funding to carry on the work with schools. The decision will be known in December 2016.

In terms of the document itself, it tends to follow a general structure, but each school may have different needs / issues, which means they have different ways of dealing with these (these are then called measures / initiatives). There is a toolkit and guidance for schools on school travel plans at the following link; <http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/how-to-prepare-a-school-travel-plan.aspx>

There is also some guidance on measures / initiatives, and some case studies of schools the Integrated Transport team worked with on the LSTF project: <http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/school-travel-measures-and-initiatives.aspx>

Walking buses

According to Integrated Transport team there is only one school in Slough with a walking bus, this is Lynch Hill School Primary Academy, on Garrard Road, Britwell. The walking bus goes to/from the 'chicken ranch' car park on Kennedy Avenue, and is run by school staff (mainly Teaching Assistants). The reason it works well is that it has reliable staffing via paid staff rather than relying on parent volunteers. This enables the long term sustainability of the scheme and ensures parents can rely on it from day to day.

There is a case study on the walking bus at Lynch Hill at the following link; <https://www.slough.gov.uk/downloads/Lynch-Hill-case-study.pdf>

Planning Obligations

This source of Travel Plans and possibly Walking Buses is separate from the LSTF funding and is where the school manages the Travel Plan. There is scarce resource in the Integrated Transport Team to be able to chase schools if they have an obligation to prepare a Travel Plan much less implement one. Though there is desire to become stricter on making schools adhere to their planning obligations.

Travel Plans average 20 pages so are not too onerous to prepare but have to be completely in tune with the distinct individual characteristics and problems of each school location and cannot be a generic document produced by a consultant as a paper exercise. The plan has to include a travel survey of staff, pupils, parents and measures/initiatives to remedy problems that come out of this research.

Schools in Slough with planning obligations;

Lynch Hill

Khalsa

Ditton Park Academy (temp TVU site) moving to Castlevew

Godolphin Juniors

Claycotts

St Mary's

James Elliman

There is a lack of follow up with schools due to lack of resources at the Council. It takes time simply to contact each school to find out what their current situation is, let alone build a relationship and offer advice. The focus must be on getting actions implemented where Travel Plans exist.

LAF Action: Any further advice to Council and/or recommendations?