

Regeneration and Transport Select Committee

Sustainable School Travel Strategy



March 2008

Regeneration and Transport Select Committee
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
Church Road
Stockton-on-Tees
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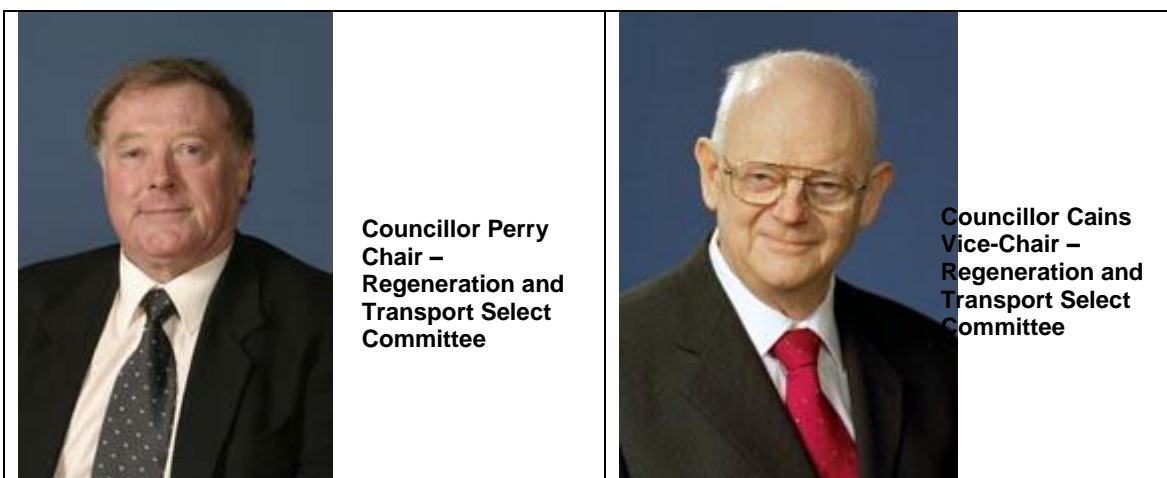
Foreword

This review was undertaken largely in response to the changes made to school travel under the Education and Inspections Act (2006). The Act placed new duties on local authorities concerning the promotion of sustainable school travel. Increased sustainable school travel could be beneficial to the environmental wellbeing of the area and the health of residents, and should therefore be encouraged.

'School travel plans' formed a key consideration of the review as the take up and effectiveness of travel plans amongst Stockton's schools appears important in encouraging more sustainable school travel. The Committee was particularly grateful that three of the borough's schools were able to attend a meeting and provide us with information on their school travel plans and the measures they have implemented. We were also grateful to those schools that provided responses to our questionnaire and further information on school travel plans in Stockton. We were pleased that a great deal of good practice is currently being exhibited by many schools, and we would like to see more schools engaging with the travel planning process.

The Committee also considered a number of other issues as part of the review, including, for example, the Obesity Strategy, the enforcement service in respect of illegal and inconsiderate parking around schools, and the Extended Schools programme. Sustainable school travel 'joins-up' with these issues and the Committee would like to see further action taken in relation to this. The Committee also looked at how many children and young people in Stockton travel to school currently and what factors may impact on how they travel to school in the future. We hope this report will assist officers in respect to all of these matters.

On behalf of the Committee we would like to thank all the officers who attended meetings, provided information and supported the Committee; the residents who participated in a focus group meeting; and all those schools that informed this review, with special thanks to the staff and pupils of Junction Farm Primary School, Tilery Primary School, and Conyers School.



Original Brief

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<p>1. Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address? Council Plan 2007-10:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reduce inequalities in health outcomes for children and young people (Objective 1). – Ensure our residents are safe (Objective 17). – Tackle climate change and improve the quality and security of the environment for current and future generations (Objective 24). 	
<p>2. What are the main issues?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Consideration of home to school travel in Stockton, especially for those on low incomes. ii) The take-up of School Travel Plans in Stockton. iii) How effective School Travel Plans have been in delivering beneficial outcomes in relation to the physical well-being of children and young people and the environmental well-being of the area. iv) An assessment of the travel and transport and facilitating measures necessary to assist in the effective provision of safe and sustainable school travel in Stockton. v) Governance issues surrounding sustainable school travel. vi) Examine links to the Building Schools for the Future programme. 	
<p>3. The Thematic Select Committee’s overall aim/ objectives in doing this work is: Assist the Council in facilitating travel to schools in ways that are safe and sustainable, especially in relation to reduced car use.</p>	
<p>4. The possible outputs/outcomes are: Further development of the Sustainable School Travel Strategy and implementation of School Travel Plans. Improved health of Stockton’s children and young people. Improved safety when travelling to school, including reduced road casualties. Improved environmental well-being of the area, including reduced car use and greater use of more sustainable forms of transport for school travel.</p>	
<p>5. What specific value can scrutiny add to this topic? Contributes to the development of the Sustainable School Travel Strategy, Home to School Travel and Transport Policy, Local Transport Plan and the implementation of School Travel Plans.</p>	
<p>6. Who will the panel be trying to influence as part of their work? Council Departments; Headteachers; Governors; Parents; Children and Young People.</p>	

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This review was primarily based on the changes made in relation to school travel under the Education and Inspections Act (2006). The Act placed a general duty, in relation to all children and young people of sixth form age, on local authorities to assess the school travel needs of their area and promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to school. These are defined as those modes of travel the local authority considers “may improve the physical well-being of those who use them and / or the environmental well-being of whole or part of the area”, and may include walking, cycling, use of public transport and car-sharing (DfES, 2007: 5).

1.2 The new sustainable travel duty requires local authorities to assess the travel and transport needs of children and young people in the local authority’s area. Local authorities should also undertake an audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure for travel to, from, and between schools and other education institutions. Following the assessment and audit, local authorities should prepare and publish a sustainable school travel strategy which should include details of measures to develop the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure of the authority so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are better catered for, as well as other objectives which include environmental improvements, improvements to health and increased road and personal safety and security. Finally, local authorities should promote sustainable school travel and transport.

1.3 ‘School travel plans’ are identified as key in enabling local authorities to meet the new sustainable school travel duty. It is hoped that every school will have a travel plan in place by 2010. The government define a school travel plan as:

...a package of measures to improve safety and reduce car use, backed by a partnership involving the school, education and transport officers from the local authority, the police and the health authority. It is based on consultation with teachers, parents / carers, pupils and governors and the wider community

(DfES, 2007: 6).

1.4 It appears that sustainable school travel is being pursued in recognition that car use generally is increasing, but especially on the ‘school run’. Travel to school by car has increased rapidly from the mid-1980s when it accounted for around 16% of school journeys to 30% in 2006 (Cairns *et al*, 2004: 67; DfT National Travel Survey, 2006). Increased car use for school travel is identified as impacting negatively on traffic congestion; climate change; the health and well-being of children and young people; knowledge of road and personal safety amongst children; and social inclusion.

1.5 The Committee considered a number of issues as part of this review and received evidence and input from Council officers; the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF); headteachers through responses to questionnaires sent to schools in the borough with and without a school travel plan; and from staff and pupils of three of the borough’s schools in a Committee meeting at the Town Hall.

- 1.6 The Committee was provided with an overview of the provision of statutory and non-statutory home to school transport in the borough. They considered as part of this the potential impact of the new statutory walking distances for children from families on low incomes on facilitating choice of schools and on the provision of statutory school transport. The Committee plan to reassess this issue, through regular updates from the Community Transport Manager, once its impact has been established.
- 1.7 As of March 2007 around 48% of Stockton-on-Tees schools had completed school travel plans against a current national average of 56%. This figure does not take into account, however, that five of Stockton's schools who have previously completed school travel plans are now classified as no longer having them as they have received new DCSF numbers, primarily due to amalgamation. The Committee recognised that increasing the numbers of schools in the borough with authorised travel plans is currently a priority.
- 1.8 The Committee considered that more could be done to promote school travel planning and the good work many schools are currently undertaking as part of their travel plans. A letter from the Committee to the governing bodies of all schools without a travel plan was considered appropriate in respect to this, to encourage these schools to complete a travel plan. Secondly, the Committee considered that a celebration event and a school travel plan insignia or logo should be implemented to further assist in recognising the good work currently being done and encourage more schools to enter into the process. Greater numbers of schools undertaking school travel plans may require greater staff resources however, and the Committee request that consideration is given to this issue.
- 1.9 The Committee received evidence from three of the borough's schools, Tilery Primary School, Junction Farm Primary School and Conyers Schools as examples of good practice in school travel planning in the borough. The Committee was pleased to note that many more schools could have attended a Committee meeting for this purpose, evident through the questionnaire responses received from headteachers of schools with established travel plans. Despite this, data collection on modeshare of travel to school is at an early stage and an assessment, using statistical data, of how school travel plans may be impacting on a reduction in car use should currently be treated with a degree of caution. In order to achieve a better understanding of what kinds of measures are being undertaken in schools, and what effect they are having, the Committee recommend that a school travel plan monitoring and accreditation scheme be implemented.
- 1.10 The Committee also considered as part of the review the enforcement of parking regulations around schools, the implementation of more sustainable routes in the borough, and innovative new ways of making public transport a more attractive travel option, which were all identified as having the potential to impact on increasing sustainable school travel in the borough.
- 1.11 Finally, the Committee considered governance issues surrounding sustainable school travel, as it appears to 'join-up' with a number of other current initiatives. The Committee wish to see an increased role for sustainable school travel within the authority's new obesity strategy, and for school travel issues to be included as a key consideration in relation to the Extended Schools and the Building Schools for the Future programmes. The Committee also considered

that the Road Safety Team could utilise existing links with the Healthy Schools and Eco Schools Initiatives to encourage more schools to complete a travel plan.

1.12 The Committee recommends:

1.13 The Regeneration and Transport Select Committee be provided with updates on the impact of the new statutory walking distances on choice of schools and the statutory provision of transport managed by the Community Transport Service.

1.14 The Regeneration and Transport Select Committee write to the governing bodies of those schools without a school travel plan encouraging them to complete a school travel plan.

1.15 That the Road Safety Team consider ways of celebrating those schools with an authorised travel plan in conjunction with, for example, the 'Crucial Crew' Initiative and the Electoral, Civic and Community Engagement Team.

1.16 That the Road Safety Team design a school travel plan logo or insignia which could be used by schools to signify they have an authorised school travel plan.

1.17 That consideration be given to the levels of support to the school travel plan implementation and audit processes to ensure adequate staff resources are in place.

1.18 That the Road Safety Team implement a monitoring and accreditation scheme for all schools with a school travel plan.

1.19 The Sustainable School Travel Strategy Action Plan be amended to more accurately reflect the current number of visits to schools made by the enforcement service, enabling current performance to be further developed.

1.20 That the early implementation of bridges linking Ingleby Barwick to Yarm and Eaglescliffe through the Connect 2 project be pursued to provide the option for safe and sustainable pedestrian and cycling routes to school for students living in Ingleby Barwick.

1.21 That the Select Committee be provided with updates relating to progress on new methods of cashless payments and real-time public transport information.

1.22 That the Road Safety Team adopt new ways of promoting school travel planning in Stockton Borough, utilising other services and initiatives, for example the Healthy Schools and Eco Schools Initiatives.

1.23 That the Road Safety Team be represented on an obesity strategy development group in order to ensure that the role of school travel planning is captured in an obesity strategy.

- 1.24 That the Road Safety Team and the Extended Schools Team work in partnership to ensure sustainable school travel issues are considered as part of the Extended Schools programme.**
- 1.25 That the Road Safety Team, the Building Schools for the Future Team, and Planning Services work in partnership to ensure sustainable school travel issues are considered as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme.**

2.0 Introduction

2.1 This report presents Cabinet with the findings of the review of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Sustainable School Travel Strategy undertaken by the Regeneration and Transport Select Committee between January and March 2008. The topic was identified by Cabinet in August 2007 and this was confirmed by the Executive Scrutiny Committee in September 2007.

2.2 The suggestion from Cabinet that the Select Committee examine the Sustainable School Travel Strategy occurred at the same meeting that the strategy was approved by Cabinet. This referral also came with specific reference to the Committee to examine the take up and effectiveness of school travel plans amongst Stockton's schools.

2.3 During the course of the review, the Committee took into account the views from a variety of sources. These included:

- Oral evidence and discussion with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council officers including Khalid Azam, Joint Strategic Commissioner; Pauline Beall, Business Manager Stockton Local Children Safeguarding Board; Elizabeth Bird, Community Transport Manager; Mike Chicken, Environmental Projects Manager; Neil Ellison, Group Leader (Road Safety); Nigel Gibb, Car Park Manager; Betty Johns, Assistant Education Officer – Pupils and Students; John Kavanagh, Senior Engineer / Public Transport Manager; Jonathan Kibble, Senior Road Safety Officer; Jane Sinclair, School Travel Adviser; Karen Smith, Senior Enforcement Officer; Bill Trewick, Traffic and Road Safety Manager.
- Oral evidence and discussion with staff and students from three of the borough's schools, Conyers School, Tilery Primary School and Junction Farm Primary School, who were invited to attend a meeting of the Committee at the Town Hall;
- Questionnaires sent out to all headteachers of schools both with and without a school travel plan in the Borough;
- Information provided by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.
- The views of parents in a small Viewpoint focus group;
- Comments from members of the public following a press release on the review.

2.4 In addition to this, the review was publicised at meetings of the Primary Headteachers Association and Secondary Headteachers and Principals Group. The Committee considered the Sustainable School Travel Strategy and its corresponding Action Plan; the Council's Home to School Travel and Transport Policy and the School and Workplace Travel Plan Strategy, a daughter strategy of the Local Transport Plan. In addition to this the Committee examined a number of national policy and research documents, including the (then) Department for Education and Skills 'Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance' (2007).

3.0 Background

3.1 This review was primarily based on the changes made to school travel under the Education and Inspections Act (2006). The Act placed a general duty, applying to all children and young people of sixth form age, on local authorities to assess the school travel needs of their area and promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to school, which are defined as any the local authority considers “may improve the physical well-being of those who use them and / or the environmental well-being of whole or part of the area” (DfES, 2007: 5). These may include walking, cycling, bus use (and other forms of public transport), as well as car-sharing where there is no practical alternative to the private car on the journey to school (DfES, 2007: 5-11).

3.2 There appear four main elements of how local authorities are to meet the duty. Firstly, local authorities are required to assess the travel and transport needs of children and young people in the authority’s area. Local authorities should utilise the data collected for the last two years as part of the School Census, ‘Children Travelling to School - Mode of Travel Usually Used’, to make this assessment. This data forms National Indicator 198 of the New Performance Framework for Local Government, and is also included as a mandatory indicator in Local Transport Plans (LTPs) (DfES, 2007: 6-8). This information is currently collected by all schools with a school travel plan.

3.3 School travel plans are to form a key part of the new sustainable school travel duty for local authorities. Indeed, evidence received as part of this review from the Department for Children, Schools and Families stated that “the core of the programme [to encourage greater use of sustainable school travel] is helping schools develop travel plans identifying what can be done in each school, for each pupil, to support sustainable travel”. It is hoped that every school will have a school travel plan in place by 2010.

3.4 The government define a school travel plan as:

...a package of measures to improve safety and reduce car use, backed by a partnership involving the school, education and transport officers from the local authority, the police and the health authority. It is based on consultation with teachers, parents / carers, pupils and governors and the wider community

(DfES, 2007: 6).

3.5 Travel planning appears to be employed as an overarching measure within the government’s current drive to “influence people’s travel behaviour towards more sustainable options” (DfT, 2004: 3). Alongside school travel plans, workplace travel plans, which aim to encourage more staff from the same or a cluster of workplaces to travel to work by public transport, on foot, by bike, or car sharing, and personalised travel plans, which involve targeted marketing, provision of information and advice based on an individual’s travel behaviour, are also available with the assistance of local authorities (DfT, 2004: 8-12; 18-28).

3.6 In terms of the information collated to inform a school travel plan, the following is identified by the government as the “essential components”:

- A brief description of the location, size and type of school;
- a brief description of the travel / transport issues faced by the school;
- pupils travel needs, including: journeys to and from schools at normal start and finish times; journeys to attend pre and after school events; journeys made during the school day to attend activities at other locations.

3.7 Once this information has been analysed, the results should identify:

- How children currently travel to and from school;
- how they would like to travel to and from school;
- clearly defined targets and objectives;
- proposed measures;
- timetable for implementation;
- clearly defined responsibilities and evidence of consultation;
- proposals for monitoring and review

(DfES, 2007: 6).

3.8 Secondly, local authorities should undertake an audit of the infrastructure to support sustainable travel to, from, and between schools and other education institutions. The audit should include a mapping exercise showing how schools are served by public transport routes (including those provided by the local authority); footpaths, cycleways, roads and other features such as crossing patrols; any other arrangements supporting sustainable school travel, e.g. cycle, road safety and independent travel training, walking buses, park and stride and park and ride schemes. It should also include data concerning personal safety and security, poor behaviour on school buses, and the incidence of bullying on the journey to school (DfES, 2007: 8).

3.9 Again, it is advised that local authorities “draw upon the information and data included in [school] travel plans” in order to identify the barriers pupils may face in using sustainable modes of travel. The audit should also assist travel advisers, especially in supporting the new arrangements concerning school travel for children from low income families which will be discussed further below (DfES, 2007: 8).

3.10 Following the assessment and audit, local authorities must “prepare and publish a sustainable modes of travel strategy” setting out the local authorities overall vision for improving sustainable school travel and transport infrastructure and other objectives including environmental improvements, health benefits and increased road and personal safety and security. A Sustainable School Travel Strategy must be published annually alongside other policies in respect of home to school transport and special needs transport so that they are available when parents are applying for secondary school places for their children (DfES, 2007: 9).

3.11 Finally, in promoting sustainable school travel and transport, the benefits highlighted in school travel plans to health and the environment and the potential for increased road safety should all be emphasised as part of the strategy. The strategy should also be informed by the walking, cycling and public transport strategies included as part of local authorities’ Local Transport Plans (DfES, 2007: 9).

3.12 Why is Sustainable Travel Important?

- 3.13 The agenda for encouraging greater use of sustainable travel is in recognition that car use in general is increasing, from 79 % of the total distance travelled in 1980 to 85 % by 2002 (DfT, 2004: 3). Problems associated with increased car use include increased congestion and a negative impact on the environment. Measures to make sustainable transport options more attractive would assist in overcoming these problems as well as potentially fostering greater social inclusion and encouraging people to be more active (DfT, 2004: 4).
- 3.14 The government emphasises a strategy to encourage greater use of sustainable travel that combines 'hard' measures, for example engineering works such as building cycleways and pathways and traffic calming measures, and 'soft' transport policy measures (DfT, 2004: 4; 2004a: 1; DfES/DfT, 2003: 7). These 'soft' measures seek to provide better information and opportunities for sustainable travel, aimed at assisting people in reducing their car use while enhancing the attractiveness of alternatives. They are seen by the government as "mostly relatively uncontroversial, and often popular" and include school travel plans, alongside workplace and personalised travel plans, car clubs and car sharing schemes, teleworking, teleconferencing and home shopping (DfT, 2004a: 1).
- 3.15 Travel to school is a key area of this overarching agenda. The Committee were provided with an overview of sustainable school travel policy by Neil Ellison Group Leader (Road Safety). The (then) Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Department for Transport (DfT) launched the 'Travelling to School Initiative' in 2003 with the aim to develop a strategic approach to school travel issues, promote the use of walking, cycling and public transport and reduce car dependency for journeys to school (Teachernet, 2004: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sd/managers/travel/STAtoolkit/>). School travel was raised as part of the White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone' in 1998 resulting in the establishment of the School Travel Advisory Group (STAG). In 2001, funding was made available to local authorities to employ School Travel Advisers to assist schools in undertaking their school travel plans. It was with the 'Travelling to School Initiative' however that a greater focus was given to sustainable school travel, especially as this was a joined-up initiative between the (then) DfES and DfT. Additional funding was made available for School Travel Advisers as part of the initiative and local authority schools were able to access capital funding (worth £3750 plus £5 for every pupil for primary schools and £5000 plus £5 for every pupil for secondary schools) as a result of completing their school travel plan (Cairns *et al*, 2004: 67-68). Schools will continue to be able to access this funding up until 2010.
- 3.16 The government appears to have pursued this policy agenda in recognition that encouraging greater sustainable school travel may be a contributory factor in tackling a number of joined-up problems. Travel to school by car has increased rapidly from the mid-1980s when it accounted for around 16% of school journeys to 30% in 2006 (Cairns *et al*, 2004: 67; DfT National Travel Survey, 2006). This may reflect the average length of the school journey increasing, for children aged 5 – 10, from 1.1 miles in 1985/85 to 1.4 miles in 2003, and for those aged 11 to 16 from 2.3 to 3.2 miles over the same period (Sustrans, 2005: not numbered). However, the House of Commons Transport Committee reported in 2004 that "it has been estimated that half the increase in the use of the car for school transport is due to the increased length of the school journey.

The other half is due to modal shift to cars. People are now more likely to travel by car where before they would have walked, cycled or used the bus” (House of Commons Transport Committee, 2004: 4).

3.17 More recent national figures on mode of travel for journeys to school are provided below. These show that there are key differences in the mode of travel between primary and secondary school, but in both cases travel by car accounts for a significant number of journeys to school, over a third and a fifth respectively. Looking at the overall figures, it also appears worth noting that travel to school by car/van increased by the greatest amount between 1995/97 and 2006.

3.18 **Fig 1.1**

Trips to school by main mode and age: 1995/1997 and 2006

	5-10 years		11-16 years		All	
	1995/1997	2006	1995/1997	2006	1995/1997	2006
Walk	53	52	42	41	47.5	46.5
Bicycle	-	1	2	3	1	2
Car/van	38	41	20	20	29	30.5
All bus	7	6	33	31	20	18.5
Other	2	1	3	4	2.5	2.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Department for Transport, National Travel Survey 2006 Data Table; www.dft.gov.uk/transtat/personaltravel

3.19 The number of cars taking children to and from school (especially the journey to school) leads to the first problem that greater sustainable school travel may assist in tackling. It is noted that nationally just over 1 in 10 cars on urban roads between 8.00am and 9.00am in term time are on the ‘school run’. This figure doubles around the peak times of 8.45 / 8.50 am, as shown in the table below, and it is considered that this overall figure can conceal further localised problems (DfES/DfT, 2003: 5).

3.20 **Fig 1.2**

Cars taking children to school: 1995/1997 to 2006

	Percentage of Car Trips / Number						
	1995/ 1997	1998/ 2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
0800 to 0859 hours in urban areas during term-time	10	11	13	12	15	13	12
Peak traffic time (0835) in urban areas during term-time	14	16	18	17	22	19	16
Peak percentage (0845 or 0850) in urban areas during term-time	21	18	20	19	22	20	18
Unweighted sample size of trips at:							
0800-0859	13,053	12,605	8,760	9,611	9,957	9,974	9,122
0835	3,934	3,901	2,680	3,156	3,168	3,135	2,787
0845	3,703	3,421	2,496	2,733	2,932	2,932	2,610

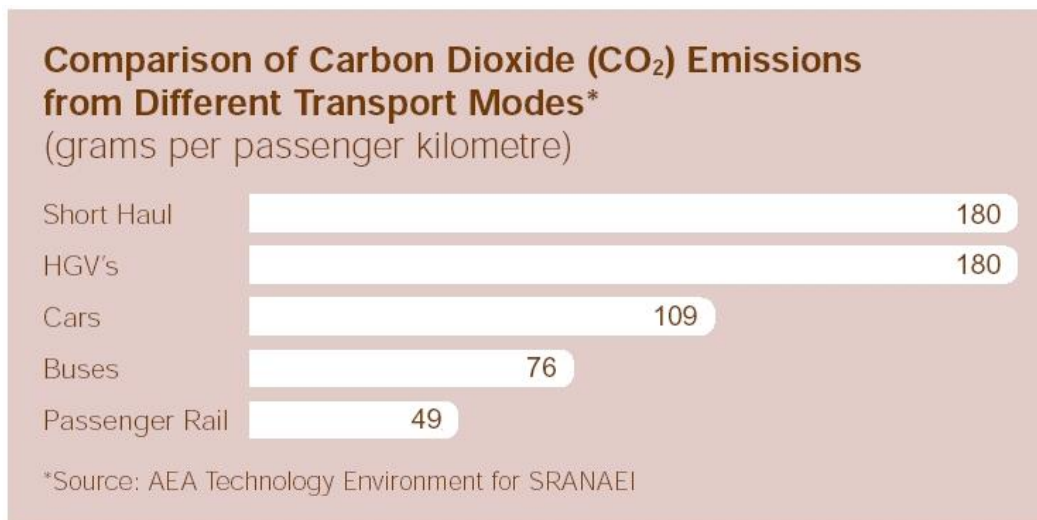
Source: Department for Transport, National Travel Survey 2006 Data Table; www.dft.gov.uk/transtat/personaltravel

3.21 Cairns *et al* (2004) note that although the ‘school run’ accounts for a relatively small proportion of all car traffic on the road in urban areas it is a “significant contributor to peak hour congestion” and greater walking, cycling and use of public transport would assist in relieving congested roads (Cairns *et al*, 2004: 67; DfES/DfT, 2003: 5).

3.22 As is clear, the primary objective of a school travel plan is to achieve modal shift away from cars and to greater walking, cycling and use of public transport. As shown previously, the definition of a sustainable mode of travel is one that is considered beneficial in terms of health or for the environment. Information provided to the Committee by Mike Chicken, Environmental Projects Manager for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, showed how (from a list of five modes of transport including short haul vehicles, heavy goods vehicles, buses and passenger rail) cars are the third biggest emitters of carbon dioxide, based on grams emitted per passenger per kilometre, which is a contributing factor to global warming and the main greenhouse gas responsible for climate change (see Table 1.3 below).

3.23 Alongside carbon dioxide, emissions from cars also include nitrogen oxides, PM10, hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide. Although cars are increasingly becoming more fuel-efficient, and the government has set a target for 10% of new cars sold by 2012 to have emissions of less than 100g of carbon dioxide per kilometre, in 2004 only 481 of the 2.5 million cars sold met this standard. The sustainable transport charity Sustrans state that by 2002 road traffic, mainly cars, was responsible for 22% of total carbon dioxide output, 60% of carbon monoxide, 48% of nitrogen oxide emissions, 26% of particulates, and 28% of Volatile Organic Compounds. In addition to this, the majority of emissions from transport sources are from road transport, with the percentage share increasing from 81% in 1980 to 90% in 2002 (Sustrans, 2005: not numbered). Reducing the number of cars on the road for the school run should be a contributory factor in reducing pollution and harmful emissions therefore.

3.24 **Fig 1.3**



3.25 In terms of the health benefits of sustainable school travel, the primary focus appears to be walking and cycling to schools as a contributory factor in tackling the growth of childhood obesity (Cairns *et al*, 2004: 67). The government acknowledged in 2003 that “the decline in walking to school has coincided with a rise in childhood obesity” with figures from 2001 suggesting that 8.5% of 6 year olds and 15% of 15 year olds are obese (DfES/DfT, 2003: 11; Parliament Office of Science and Technology, 2003: not numbered). The information below is the data collected by the National Child Measurement Centre in 2006/07 for North Tees Primary Care Trust and England, released on the 21st February 2008. It shows that nearly one in three children aged 10-11 in England is overweight or obese, a figure reflected in the area covered by North Tees PCT.

3.26 **Fig 1.4**

Percentage of Children Overweight and Obese – North Tees PCT

	Overweight %	Obese %	Measured %
Reception Class	14.9%	12.6%	95%
England Average	13.0%	9.9%	83%
Year 6	13.6%	19.6%	67%
England Average	14.2%	17.5%	78%

Source: <http://www.ncmp.ic.nhs.uk/>

3.27 The government made clear in ‘Travelling to School: A Good Practice Guide’ that “making moderate exercise an integral part of a child’s day, through a walk to and from school, is an excellent way to guard against excess weight and improve general health” (DfES/DfT, 2003: 11). Obesity in childhood is often carried over into adulthood when it can become a risk factor for a number of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, some cancers and osteoarthritis. Correspondingly, children who walk and cycle regularly are at a reduced risk of developing many of these conditions in later life (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, 2003: not numbered; DfES/DfT, 2003: 11; 2003a: 4).

3.28 In terms of the potential impact of walking and cycling to school as compared to Physical Education (P.E.), research by University College London suggested from their sample survey that on average children use more calories travelling to and from school than they do from two hours of P.E., especially for older children who may walk further distances to school (Mackett *et al*, 2004: 13; DfES, 2007: 11). This seemingly quite surprising finding led the researchers to conclude that “if it is regarded as important for children to do P.E., it is equally important that they take full advantage of the opportunity that the school trip offers them in activity terms” (Mackett *et al*, 2004: 14). Other benefits identified from school travel work and greater walking and cycling include the potential impact on mental health; improved academic achievement, ability to learn and attendance at school; and greater social inclusion and community benefits (Sustrans, 2005: not numbered; Cairns *et al*, 2004: 89-91).

3.29 Importantly for this review, increased walking and cycling and school travel work may also impact on improving road safety and road safety skills. Research conducted by the AA Foundation for Road Safety Research showed that parents / carers have concerns over road and personal safety, specifically ‘traffic danger’ and ‘stranger danger’. These concerns however are often based on *perceived* dangers. For example research by Valentine (1996) found that while “most parents recognise that the risk of child abduction is extremely low, many restrict their child’s play and independent access to public spaces, because the potential consequences of not doing so are viewed as so horrific” (AAFRSR, 2000: 13-15).

3.30 As Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council’s Road Safety Strategy makes clear, it is the authority’s aim to increase levels of sustainable modes of travel used, without a consequent increase in casualties amongst vulnerable user groups (of which children are included). Increased sustainable travel may in fact enable children to develop the skills they need to be safer when walking and cycling. The government emphasise that pedestrian casualty rates are particularly high amongst 11 to 12 year old boys, but that this may be partly

because they do not “walk regularly to primary school and learn ‘street skills’ before going to secondary school independently” (DfES/DfT, 2003: 12). In terms of personal safety and parental fears of ‘stranger danger’, the likelihood of being killed in a traffic accident is about 40 times greater than the risk of being abducted and killed by a stranger, however based on the quote at paragraph 3.29, knowledge of these figures may have little effect on changing behaviour (DfES/DfT, 2003: 14).

3.31 Information provided to the Committee by the Department for Children, Schools and Families covered another key concern for parents, that children may be bullied if they travel to school independently, especially on buses. Although behaviour on buses is primarily the responsibility of pupils themselves and their parents, and the responsibility for the safety of passengers lays with the driver of the vehicle and the bus operators. Both the school and local authority contracting the transport services have a responsibility in ensuring that any transport provided is safe and stress-free taking steps to remedy any problems raised. Schools are expected to promote appropriate standards of behaviour by pupils on their journey to and from school and headteachers can take action to address unacceptable behaviour even when this takes place outside the school premises (when pupils are not under the legal control of the school), but when it is considered reasonable to do so.

3.32 These appear the key factors leading to the introduction of the new general duty on local authorities to promote sustainable school travel, and the focus on school travel plans as a tool for meeting this duty and reducing the number of cars used for school travel.

3.33 **Statutory Walking Distances – Children and Young People from Families on Low Incomes and Parental / Carer Choice of Schools**

3.34 Alongside the changes relating to sustainable travel, the Education and Inspection Act (2006) introduced extended rights to free home to school transport for pupils from low income families. Since September 2007 free school transport has been available for primary school pupils who are aged eight to eleven; are from low income families (meaning they are eligible for free school meals or parents / carers are in receipt of the maximum amount of Working Tax Credit); go to their nearest suitable school and live more than two miles away (DfES, 2007: 20). The same will be the case from September 2008 for secondary school pupils who are from low income families and attend any one of their three nearest suitable schools which are between two and six miles from their home or the nearest suitable school preferred by their parents / carers based on religious belief which is between two and fifteen miles away from their home (DfES, 2007: 21).

3.35 Statutory walking distances for all other children are two miles for under eights and three miles for children aged eight to sixteen, and there is currently debate surrounding how suitable they currently are given that they have remained unchanged since being introduced in 1944 (Direct Gov, 2007: not numbered). Alongside this, there are other criteria based on the suitability and safety of the route if it is within statutory walking distances and consideration under the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) of disabled parents’ / carers’ ability to accompany children along a route to school (DfES, 2007: 19-20).

- 3.36 In terms of defining the 'suitability' of a school, this refers to the "nearest qualifying school" with places available. Qualifying school means those that provide the "education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child, and any special educational needs that child may have" (DfES, 2007: 23-24). Local authorities are also under a duty to have regard to the wish of a parent for their child to be provided with education or training at a particular school or institution based on parent's religion or belief (DfES, 2007: 27).
- 3.37 The right of parents / carers to express a preference for the school they would like their child to attend was introduced in the Education Act (1980), and parental choice of schools currently appears a key theme of the government's education policy. However support with transport arrangements from the local authority does not apply where parents / carers have chosen to send their child to a school other than the nearest suitable school even if it is beyond statutory walking distances.
- 3.38 The government identify problems surrounding "equity and fairness" in relation to the potential influence of transport on parental choice of schools. Those on lower incomes are less likely to exercise choice of schools due to factors such as lower levels of car ownership or concerns about the cost of school transport. The government identify an inequity in how far children are able to travel to school, with a greater proportion of children eligible for free school meals travelling less than two miles to school while a greater proportion of pupils not eligible for free school meals travel three miles or more (DfES, 2005: 44-45).
- 3.39 The cost of home to school travel totalled £600 million in England in 2002-03, compared with, for example, £200 million on social services transport (House of Commons Transport Committee, 2004: 4). In addition to the relatively high cost of home to school travel, the House of Commons Transport Committee found "increasing pressure on the home to school transport budgets" at the local level, and local authorities have "pruned their school transport budgets, and used their discretionary power to provide free transport less often" (House of Commons Transport Committee, 2004: 4).
- 3.40 The cost implications of dedicated transport appear to be of concern therefore. Many of those accessing these services will be children and young people with special educational needs (SEN); others will be those meeting the criteria for statutory walking distances. Equally however, it is acknowledged that dedicated school transport not only has an important role to play in facilitating school choice, especially for children from families on low incomes, but may also assist in reducing the amount of cars used for school travel.

4.0 Evidence/Findings

4.1 Issue 1: Consideration of Home to School Travel in Stockton Borough, Especially For Those On Low Incomes

- 4.2 The Committee was provided with information on home to school transport in Stockton Borough from Betty Johns, Assistant Education Officer (Pupils and Students); Elizabeth Bird, Community Transport Manager; and John Kavanagh, Senior Engineer / Public Transport Manager.
- 4.3 Betty Johns provided the Committee with an overview of the main elements of the new general duty placed on local authorities to promote sustainable travel and transport contained in the Education and Inspections Act (2006) which have been discussed previously. As part of the Act, local authorities were required to produce a Sustainable School Travel Strategy by August 2007 and make this available to parents considering submitting applications for their children to start at primary or secondary schools in 2008 and for subsequent years alongside other policies concerning home to school transport and special needs transport. The Committee was provided with copies of Stockton's Sustainable School Travel Strategy (2008) and corresponding action plan which formed the basis of the issues examined for this review.
- 4.4 The Committee was informed that as part of the new duties placed on local authorities, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council will be looking to implement a software package which will enable parents / carers who access the Council website to map journeys from their home to schools. This should assist parents both in being able to make more informed choices about which school they would like to submit applications for, and also consider the options open to them in terms of sustainable school travel and transport.
- 4.5 The Committee was also provided with an overview of the provision of statutory and non-statutory home to school transport from Elizabeth Bird, Community Transport Manager. The Committee was informed that there are currently 2,722 young people who travel to school daily on services provided by or contract managed by the Community Transport Service (CTS). Of these 2,337 are young people entitled to travel free as they meet the criteria determined in the Home to School Transport Policy. Many of these young people, particularly those of secondary age, travel on contracted services, whilst the majority of the 768 young people who have special educational needs (SEN) travel either on specialist vehicles operated by CTS or on taxi provision with passenger assistants. In addition to this, there are 385 young people who do not qualify for free travel but are provided with a concessionary seat on a vehicle at a cost to parents/carers of £65 per term.
- 4.6 Of particular concern to the Committee was the provision of home to school transport from Ingleby Barwick. The Committee was informed that there are currently 787 young people transported daily from Ingleby Barwick to various mainstream schools primarily in the Yarm area, with a sharp increase in recent years in the numbers attending Conyers School but fewer numbers of parents choosing primary schools in Yarm / Kirklevington. In the current academic year there are 613 pupils travelling to Conyers School (554 from Ingleby Barwick and 59 from Thornaby) and of these 392 are entitled to free travel and 221 pay to travel on the contracted vehicles. However, this was anticipated to be the peak

demand as All Saints School in Ingleby Barwick is now able to accommodate a full five years intake.

- 4.7 Elizabeth Bird informed the Committee that the total projected costs of Home to School Transport for the financial year 2007/2008 are £2,798,571. It is generally expected within the transport sector that contract prices will rise annually between 5-15%. The Committee was provided with financial data showing actual spend from the last four years, showing that increases have been kept at the lower end of this estimated annual increase which was attributed to competition within the sector. As a result of this, the improved quality of vehicles used for dedicated school transport (a point reinforced by John Morgan, Headteacher of Conyers School) and the increased number of pupils on the service to Conyers School have had a lesser impact on budgets than was originally anticipated.
- 4.9 The Committee considered the potential for increased pressure on the Community Transport Service's budgets, and the need to assess the extent and impact of the emissions from the vehicles used for dedicated school transport, in relation to Ingleby Barwick alone, to remain concerns for the future.
- 4.10 The Committee also received information from Elizabeth Bird and John Kavanagh concerning the Joint Public Transport Group (JPTG) in Stockton. The JPTG manages contracts for bus services that are paid for by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. 'Boroughbus' services as they are known are used by considerable numbers of fare paying young people attending school and three 'Boroughbus' services had schools as a destination. John Kavanagh informed the Committee that operators offer a half price travel Pathfinder scheme for Stockton's 16 to 19 year olds using buses throughout the Tees Valley. This is currently paid for by the council under a 5 year agreement with operators.
- 4.11 In addition to this, the Committee was also provided with information on the Stockton-on-Tees Post 16 Transport Partnership, which has a remit to assist in achieving wider participation in post 16 education by Stockton-on-Tees' students through identifying and addressing access and transport issues. The Pathfinder Partnership has enabled Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and the colleges to develop appropriate transport provision in areas where there are identified gaps. Daily transport is now provided from rural villages throughout the area to colleges not only within the borough but also to specialist colleges in Middlesbrough and Darlington.
- 4.12 Due to the success of the Partnership additional government funding was received following a bid for the purchase and operation of two additional vehicles. One of these vehicles is used to offer former pupils of All Saints School in particular the opportunity to attend Bede Sixth Form College which was their preferred option and is otherwise not accessible by public transport. Other measures include a route set up from the outlying villages of Stockton-on-Tees to their local sixth form college with a charging policy applied and the purchase of cycle storage containers with Bede Sixth Form College and Stockton Riverside College.
- 4.13 Contracts were successfully negotiated, with the assistance of the Partnership, for an enhanced half fare permit scheme for students, which they can use 24 hours a day seven days a week. This is available until 2010. There are currently around 950 students per week travelling on transport managed by the

Community Transport Service, which includes those with physical disabilities, as the vehicles are wheelchair accessible. For example, minibuses were purchased to transport students with physical difficulties from Billingham to the new Stockton Riverside College who would otherwise not have been able to continue with their FE courses.

- 4.14 All this underpins greater sustainable travel in Stockton Borough and the work undertaken by Stockton Riverside College and Bede College as part of their College Travel Plans. These are classified as Workplace Travel Plans in Stockton despite the fact that students of sixth form age are covered under the sustainable travel duties laid out in the Education and Inspection Act (2006). The results of the student survey in Stockton Riverside College's Travel Plan showed that 49.6% of students travelled to college by car. When asked 'which of the following would encourage you to use Public Transport to get to the College' 36% said more direct bus routes; 23.3% said more frequent services; and 28.7% said discount prices on tickets which suggests that the Pathfinder is addressing an identified travel need amongst the post-16 student population.
- 4.15 In terms of further sustainability issues, the Committee was provided with information from Elizabeth Bird on the introduction of the 'Eco-Driving' training scheme for the Community Transport Service to reduce fuel consumption, which is currently being piloted; the introduction into the Community Transport Fleet, of vehicles meeting the 'Euro IV' Standard for particulate and other harmful emissions, of which there are currently 17; the introduction of new computer software to route vehicles more efficiently therefore reducing mileage and petrol consumption; and, following investigations into the use of Bio-Diesel in vehicles within the Community Transport Fleet, all are capable of using this potentially more environmentally friendly fuel type.
- 4.16 Some of the key issues examined in relation to the evidence provided by those involved in Community Transport and Public Transport for school travel were safety issues, especially in terms of personal safety. Safety issues were highlighted during a small focus group session undertaken as part of the review attended by parents. In terms of student safety on buses, John Kavanagh also informed the Committee of the extent of the coverage of CCTV cameras in bus shelters and on buses and the work with Community Transport concerning behavioural management. Student safety and security were also issues discussed by Pauline Beall, Business Manager for Stockton Local Children Safeguarding Board, who provided the Committee with information on how the 'stay safe' element of the five key outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda as set out in the Children Act (2004) is considered as part of the Sustainable School Travel Strategy. Particular issues raised through this surrounded safe recruitment, training and support for drivers and other staff to ensure children are kept safe, and information around bullying, particularly, the relatively new issue of 'cyber-bullying'.
- 4.17 As mentioned in the background information, local authorities have a statutory duty to provide free transport based on statutory walking distances for primary and secondary pupils, with new duties relating to those families on low incomes. Stockton's Sustainable School Travel Strategy (2008) states that "research shows [low income] families can be disadvantaged [in exercising choice of school] as they are unable to opt for a school further away due to the cost of transport". The new duties in relation to children from families on low incomes applied to primary pupils from September 2007 and will apply to

secondary pupils from September 2008 (see paragraph 3.34). The Committee identified that there could be a potential conflict between the choice agenda and the sustainable school travel agenda, specifically in respect to the greater distances that pupils may have to travel in order to attend school.

- 4.18 The Committee was keen to be updated on how the new statutory walking distances for children from families on low incomes, a policy specifically designed to facilitate greater choice of schools, may impact on the number and type of services managed by the Community Transport Service. This will be available to all eligible children from September 2008, not just those applying for a place at a particular secondary or primary school. This means, for example, that those already attending a school who meet the new criteria for statutory walking distances and have previously been unable to access free transport will become eligible, and this may result in increased numbers of children accessing provision on existing routes as well as the creation of new routes in order to enable children to attend their nearest suitable school. This in turn may impact on sustainable school travel in the borough.
- 4.19 **It is therefore recommend that the Regeneration and Transport Select Committee be provided with updates on the impact of the new statutory walking distances on choice of schools and the statutory provision of transport managed by the Community Transport Service.**

4.20 **Issue 2: The Take-Up of School Travel Plans in Stockton Borough**

- 4.21 One of the key objectives of the Sustainable School Travel Strategy is for the borough to achieve the national Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) target of all eligible schools to have an authorised school travel plan in place by 2010. Authorised schools include all local authority primary, secondary and special schools. It is also worth noting that three independent schools in Stockton Borough, Teeside High School, Redhouse School and Yarm School, are all recorded as having completed travel plans, although these are classified as 'non-authorised'.
- 4.22 The Committee was provided with a document detailing those schools with a completed school travel plan, those schools making progress towards completing a travel plan (including those which have been submitted for quality assurance, those schools that have submitted a final document, those that have submitted a draft, those currently undertaking data collection, and those that have held preliminary meetings), and those schools that have taken no action. Currently Stockton Borough has 37 schools with an authorised school travel plan, 17 classified as in progress and 25 schools who have taken no action. As well as the independent schools listed above, five schools in Stockton who have amalgamated from infant and junior schools and have previously completed school travel plans are classified as non-authorised as the schools have been issued with a new individual DCSF School Number. This is despite there being no physical relocation or an identified substantive change of travel patterns to the schools.
- 4.23 The Committee was informed that a letter had been received by the Council from Government Office North East in early February. The letter stated that, as of March 2007 (successful school travel plans are submitted to the DCSF in March of each year), 45% of Stockton-on-Tees schools had completed school

travel plans, this figure was later given as 48% in information provided by the DCSF. Stockton's figure compared to a current national average (or 'national milestone') of 56%, and Stockton's momentum for the 12 months leading up to March 2007 was only 12%. Further information from the DCSF stated that Stockton's momentum was against a North East regional average of 16% for 2006 and 13% for 2007, and the DCSF aim for local authorities to achieve a momentum of a 15% increase in school travel plans a year in order to maintain steady progress up to 2010 (with a higher percentage for those authorities currently behind the national average). Of the 12 local authorities in the region responsible for road safety, this currently places Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council twelfth in terms of the percentage of schools with authorised travel plans. The authority is also not in line with the interim annual progress targets, as set out in the Local Transport Plan, of 72% coverage by 2007/08 (see SUP 8, pp.100 and 108, Stockton-on Tees Borough Council Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011).

- 4.24 The Committee was informed that the Council is currently drafting a response to Government Office North East concerning this matter. The Committee was made aware of the difficulties inherent in the current arrangements for ensuring all schools have an authorised school travel plan by 2010. These difficulties, it appears, can be defined in terms of the responsibilities of those involved. For example, it is schools responsible for the production and ownership of the school travel plans with assistance from the authority's school travel adviser, but the 2010 target is to be met by local authorities who cannot compel schools to undertake a school travel plan. The Council therefore have little control over the numbers of schools participating or the pace and development of individual school travel plans.
- 4.25 As it is not a statutory requirement for schools to have a school travel plan in place by 2010, rather this is an 'aspirational target', there will be no sanctions against schools that have not completed a travel plan by this date. Despite the duty to promote sustainable school travel being a statutory requirement of local authorities under the Education and Inspections Act (2006), and DCSF guidance stating that local authorities should look to achieve this duty through school travel planning, the Committee was informed in evidence from the DCSF that there is no enforceable link between the two.
- 4.26 That there is only an aspirational target in place appears understandable given that a school travel plan should be a living document and the process should not end once a travel plan has been authorised. A travel plan requires schools to recognise the benefits of working to increase sustainable school travel and be committed to achieving the targets and objectives set out in their plan. Given the potential beneficial outcomes of school travel plans and the admirable principles on which they are based, the Committee was informed by the DCSF that it is "hoped that all schools will strive to have a plan in place". The Committee was informed by Neil Ellison, Group Leader (Road Safety), that many schools in the borough are currently very motivated about achieving the targets and objectives of their travel plan. The Council must therefore highlight these factors to schools and inform them of the travel planning process and the support that the authority can offer in an attempt to increase engagement.
- 4.27 School travel planning in Stockton is managed by officers of the Road Safety Team (within the Traffic and Road Safety Service, a part of Technical Services). The Committee was provided with a letter from Neil Ellison, Group

Leader (Road Safety), which was sent to headteachers in September 2007. This provided an update to headteachers on school travel plan developments in the borough and listed the ten schools who had achieved authorisation for their school travel plans in 2007 and the capital grant funding they had received from the DCSF and DfT. Importantly, the letter also informed headteachers that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council will provide at least match funding for their DCSF/DfT allocations from the Local Transport Plan grant. These letters are sent to schools twice a year and the Committee was pleased to see that the Road Safety Team regularly update schools on school travel plans and provide full contact details of the Road Safety Team.

- 4.28 The letter from Neil Ellison to headteachers stated that it was understood that schools had “very many competing priorities”. This was a factor cited by many headteachers of schools without school travel plans in their questionnaire responses as to why they had not yet undertaken a plan (See ANNEX A). Encouragingly, many of the headteachers who provided responses to the questionnaire sent to schools without a travel plan stated that they were planning to undertake one, with one newly appointed headteacher requesting information in respect to this.
- 4.29 The target of 100% of schools with an authorised school travel plan in place by 2010 and Stockton’s progress leading up to that date are currently key concerns therefore. Increasing the number of schools with travel plans is an important contributory factor in increasing sustainable school travel in Stockton Borough and it is therefore essential that schools are made aware of this and of the support that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council can offer. Jonathan Kibble, Senior Road Safety Officer, and Neil Ellison, Group Leader (Road Safety), informed the Committee that a letter from the Regeneration and Transport Select Committee to the governing bodies of non-compliant schools informing them of their lack of progress and urging them to engage as soon as possible would be beneficial.
- 4.30 **It is therefore recommended that the Regeneration and Transport Select Committee write to the governing bodies of those schools without a school travel plan encouraging them to complete a school travel plan.**
- 4.31 The Committee considered that more could be done along this theme of highlighting school travel plans in the borough to encourage more schools to engage with the service. The Committee was provided with information from Sheffield City Council, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council and Shropshire County Council concerning their school travel plan accreditation and monitoring schemes. These are discussed further below, but the use of an event to promote school travel planning was something the Committee wished to investigate further.
- 4.32 The Committee was provided with information from Hartlepool Borough Council concerning a ‘celebration event’ they held in September 2007 where Hartlepool’s Mayor presented a plaque to each school with an approved school travel plan. This was designed to recognise the work schools in Hartlepool had undertaken in completing their travel plans. Based on the information received from three of Stockton’s schools, Conyers School, Tilery Primary School and Junction Farm Primary School, concerning good practice in school travel work (it is also worth noting that numerous other schools could have been invited to attend a meeting for this purpose) and the further information received in

responses to questionnaires sent to all schools in the borough with a travel plan, the Committee considered that a similar event would be appropriate in Stockton. Hartlepool Borough Council's event was conceived not only to recognise existing work, but also to boost awareness of school travel plans and urge other schools to undertake a travel plan, and the Committee considered that such an event should be designed and promoted in Stockton with this purpose in mind. The Committee also considered that this could be combined with the 'Crucial Crew' initiative.

- 4.33 It is therefore recommended **that the Road Safety Team consider ways of celebrating those schools with an authorised travel plan in conjunction with, for example, the 'Crucial Crew' Initiative and the Electoral, Civic and Community Engagement Team.**
- 4.34 Further on this theme, the Committee was provided with information on Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's sustainable school travel mascot called 'Big Foot', who is used by the Road Safety Team at promotional events in schools. The Committee considered that as part of moves towards greater recognition of those schools with completed travel plans and further highlighting the service both to other schools and to parents, a logo or insignia perhaps incorporating the Big Foot character could be designed. This could be used by schools on their letter-headed paper, and in school reception areas for example, to signify that they had completed a school travel plan.
- 4.35 **The Committee therefore recommend that the Road Safety Team design a school travel plan logo or insignia which could be used by schools to signify they have an authorised school travel plan.**
- 4.36 Despite regular updates from the Road Safety Team, the responses from the questionnaires sent to headteachers of schools without travel plans showed that some schools were still unaware that they will receive a capital grant from the DCSF / DfT and may be able to access further funding from the Council as a result of completing their school travel plan. It is the Committee's hope that, taken all together, these measures may assist in raising the profile of school travel planning in the borough and increase the number of schools in Stockton-on-Tees with completed travel plans. With only a few more years for schools to complete travel plans up to 2010 however, concerns were raised over Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's capacity in ensuring schools are fully supported when undertaking their school travel plans. Jonathan Kibble and Neil Ellison from the Road Safety Team stated that they encourage schools to complete travel plans as soon as possible, as staff resources to assist in their development may be stretched if a large number of those remaining schools leave the completion of their travel plan until 2010.
- 4.37 The Committee was informed by Betty Johns, Assistant Education Officer – Pupils and Students, that the Council is to receive funding from the DCSF to employ a part-time member of staff to assist with the audit of the infrastructure supporting sustainable school travel in the borough, one of the requirements of the new sustainable school travel duty placed on local authorities under the Education and Inspections Act (2006). As mentioned previously, the audit will include a mapping exercise showing how schools are served by sustainable transport, routes, and other measures supporting sustainable school travel and data relating to personal safety and security in order to highlight any significant barriers to sustainable school travel. Betty Johns further stated that it was

intended that this additional member of staff would be employed as part of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Road Safety Team.

- 4.38 Jonathan Kibble, Senior Road Safety Officer, and Bill Trewick, Traffic and Road Safety Manager, informed the Committee that there was the potential to create a new full-time position in the Road Safety Team by utilising the new funding for the member of staff to undertake the audit and combining it with existing resources of the Road Safety Service. It was proposed that this new member of staff, if employed on a full-time basis, could also assist with school travel plan development alongside Jane Sinclair, School Travel Adviser for the borough. This will inevitably be dependent on the availability of existing resources if it is to be implemented in the short term.
- 4.39 The Committee was subsequently informed by Mike Robinson, Head of Technical Services, that the whole of the Road Safety Service will be reviewed as part of the draft Service Improvement Plan as a priority action for 2008. Based on this evidence **the Committee recommended that consideration be given to the levels of support to the school travel plan implementation and audit processes to ensure adequate staff resources are in place.**
- 4.40 **Issue 3: How Effective School Travel Plans Have Been in Delivering Beneficial Outcomes in Relation to the Physical Well-Being of Children and Young People and the Environmental Well-Being of the Area**
- 4.41 The third key issue of the review was to examine the effectiveness of school travel plans in Stockton-on-Tees in relation to delivering beneficial outcomes to the physical well-being of children and young people in the borough and / or the environmental well-being of the area.
- 4.42 These two criteria have been used by the government in order to define a sustainable mode of travel (i.e. a sustainable mode of travel should assist in improving one or both of these factors). It was perhaps too ambitious to try and directly determine the influence of school travel plans on improving child health and environmental well-being in isolation as these are dependent on so many other factors (as shown in relation to child health by Khalid Azam, Joint Strategic Commissioner, who informed the Committee that increasing sustainable school travel was one of numerous measures used to tackle child obesity for example). In accepting that sustainable school travel should be a contributory factor in improving the physical well-being of children and young people in the borough and the environmental well-being of the area (and at this point I would refer the reader back to paragraphs 3.12 to 3.25) it may be possible to infer that beneficial outcomes have or may be reached by examining the incidence of sustainable school travel in the borough.
- 4.43 The following table provides the baseline data for mode of travel to school from the School Census 2007, which was provided to the Committee. This shows that although Stockton-on-Tees had the third highest percentage of car use in the region, this figure was still below the average for England.

4.44 **Fig 1.5**

Proportions of Mode of Transport by Local Authority - Primary and Secondary (2007)

	Car (inc Vans and Taxis)	Car Share	Cycling	Public Transport	Walking	Other
	%age	%age	%age	%age	%age	%age
Gateshead	24.5	2.0	0.5	13.1	50.3	8.4
Newcastle upon Tyne	23.2	2.7	0.8	21.2	52.0	0.1
North Tyneside	22.6	3.4	1.6	10.4	62.0	0.0
South Tyneside	21.1	0.7	1.1	12.9	41.7	22.4
Sunderland	18.5	5.4	0.4	16.6	58.9	0.1
Hartlepool	29.8	0.8	1.8	13.3	54.0	0.3
Middlesbrough	21.0	1.1	1.7	10.6	64.7	0.9
Redcar and Cleveland	21.6	1.1	1.7	8.7	66.8	0.0
Stockton-on-Tees	25.8	2.6	2.0	11.4	58.0	0.2
Durham	28.8	4.8	0.9	8.8	56.7	0.1
Darlington	22.5	1.8	2.6	24.8	48.2	0.1
Northumberland	20.5	1.7	7.4	24.2	46.1	0.2
ENGLAND	26.4	2.4	2.1	18.6	49.4	1.0

Source: Schools Census January 2007. Mode of travel as reported by school.

4.45 Initial data from the School Census 2008 was provided to the Committee (see ANNEX B), this data is currently being collated by the DCSF and comparisons of Stockton's position against the national average will not be known until the spring. However, in using the 2008 School Census data, overall figures can be determined in order to make preliminary assessments of any improvements made. A total of 25,000 responses were provided indicating a particular mode of school travel or transport used. Percentages of these figures are provided below. It should be noted that figures are only preliminary and should be treated with caution until final figures are released by the DCSF in the spring.

4.46 **Fig 1.6**

Proportions of Mode of Transport – Primary and Secondary (2008) - Stockton-on-Tees

	Car/ Van/ Taxi	Car Share	Cycling	Public Transport (includes dedicated bus provision)	Walking	Other
Stockton-on-Tees	25.3	3.7	1.2	9.2	60.3	0.1

Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council figures, 'Mode of Travel to School' from School Census 2008. NB: Figures are for total actual respondents not total possible respondents (i.e. total does not include those figures classified as 'Blank' / 'No Data').

4.47 As is clear, these figures show slight overall increases in car sharing and walking and decreases in car use cycling, public transport and other forms of transport and travel. As these changes in mode of transport are so small it appears fair to state that they cannot be seen as statistically significant.

4.48 Statistical significance in this case is taken to mean 8-15%. This was the figure provided to the Committee by Neil Ellison, Group Leader (Road Safety), and refers to the figure from research conducted on behalf of the Department for Transport by Cairns *et al* (provided to the Committee) as the implied overall reduction in traffic (car use) that might occur across all schools engaged with school travel work (2004: 87). (This was calculated by Cairns *et al* (2004) based on their research and assuming a) that 40% of schools experience no modal shift, 45% experience a car use reduction of between 0 and 20% (i.e. on average, 10%), and that 15% experience a car use reduction of over 20% (assumed, conservatively, to be an average of 25%); and b) that 10% of schools experience no modal shift, 50% experience a car use reduction of between 0 and 20% (i.e. on average, 10%), and that 40% experience a car use reduction of over 20% (assumed, conservatively, to be an average of 25%).

4.49 Although the figure provided by Cairns *et al* (2004) is intended to be used as an overall figure for implied traffic reduction at all schools in a local authority, it may provide some insight into the performance of individual schools with a travel plan in reducing traffic. The table below shows a sample selection of Stockton-on-Tees' schools with travel plans with figures for walking, cycling, car use and bus use given in their school travel plan and the same figures as provided in the School Census 2008. Using Cairns *et al* (2004) figure of 8-15%, what could perhaps be inferred as statistically significant decreases in car use were evident in the data from St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Primary School, Thornaby (9.3%); St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Primary School (9.3%); Junction Farm Primary School (12.6%); Tilery Primary School (10.1%) and Billingham Campus School (12.8%).

4.50 **Fig 1.7**

Examples of Modal Shift (Provisional) Amongst Stockton-on-Tees' Schools

School (Includes year of issue)	Original Figure from STP (%)					2008 School Census Figure (%)			
	Walk	Cycle	Car	Bus		Walk	Cycle	Car	Bus
PRIMARY									
Yarm (2004)	50	1	40	-		39.7	0	53	-
Hartburn (2004)	64.7	N/A	35.3	-		58.7	0.3	40.4	-
Tilery (2005)	79.5	1.2	14.3	-		93.3	0	4.2	-
St. Mark's Elm Tree (2004)	49	N/A	42	-		49.7	0	48.1	-
Preston (2004)	63.6	N/A	36.4	-		60.7	1.3	36.6	-
St. Patrick's Thornaby (2003)	46	1	52	-		47.7	1.7	42.7	-
Junction Farm (2007)	53	5	39	-		71.8	0	26.4	-
St. John the Evangelist (2004)	44	N/A	50	-		51.7	0	40.7	-
SECONDARY									
Billingham Campus (2006)	55.8	5.64	19.8	15		80.5	4.5	7	7.3
Conyers (2004)	55	6	15	24		39.8	0.7	10.8	43.6
Grangefield (2003)	66.8	1.1	7	8		74.3	3	16.5	5.4
Ian Ramsey (2004)	40.3	3.7	23	32.3		54.8	0.78	16.4	25.3

Source: School Travel Plans; Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council figures, 'Mode of Travel to School' from School Census 2008.

(N.B. Bus includes public, dedicated and services 'not known' where possible).

4.51 These statistics should be treated with some caution however, as there are a number of concerns about their reliability and validity. Firstly, it should be noted that calculations were made for 2008 based on total number of actual respondents, not total number of possible respondents (i.e. the total does not include figures classified as 'Blank' / 'No Data').

4.52 Methods of data collection have also changed, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council no longer use their own travel questionnaires sent out to schools, but

instead currently use an electronic data collection service, schooltravelplan.net, where children can input this data directly. This system has been in place for the last two years, and includes the collection of data such as distance to schools which may be useful in relation to the new requirements surrounding the audit of sustainable school travel and transport.

- 4.53 The School Census data concerning school travel is collected through a letter sent out annually from schools to parents/ carers and covers all information held on a child. Comparisons may therefore be flawed as the method of data collection is inconsistent.
- 4.54 As can be seen in the School Census information contained in APPENDIX B, comparisons from 2007 and 2008 are somewhat compromised as returns were substantially less in 2007. As only those schools with a school travel plan are required to return data on mode of travel to school, it is also very difficult to make any meaningful comparisons of differences in modeshare between schools with and without travel plans.
- 4.55 It should also be noted that there are numerous other factors that need to be taken into account when making judgements based on this data. Firstly, it is acknowledged that sustainable school travel is one of many policy agendas and priorities which schools must take account of. As mentioned previously, this was highlighted in the responses from headteachers to the questionnaires sent out as part of this review. Some of these agendas may therefore appear to be competing with the sustainable school travel agenda.
- 4.56 It is difficult to extrapolate any firm conclusions from this data therefore. However, despite these concerns, the Committee received information showing the range of measures introduced as part of school travel plans in the borough and anecdotal evidence on the effects these are having.
- 4.57 The Committee was informed through the questionnaires sent out to headteachers of schools with a travel plan of the measures their capital grants had been spent on. These included cycle storage; shelters for parental waiting areas; shower facilities; lockers; footpaths & cycle paths into school and segregated entrances from vehicles. Other measures included pedestrian and cyclist training (which are provided free to all schools in the borough irrespective of having a school travel plan); road safety education initiatives; accessing walk-to-school events; 'park and stride'; and newsletters to parents and residents.
- 4.58 In addition to this, the Council also support the 'Safe Routes to Schools' initiative which includes combined practical and educational measures with the aim to improve road safety and reduce child casualties, improve children's health and development, and reduce traffic congestion and pollution (<http://www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk/index.php?f=about.htm>). Funding for 'Safe Routes to School' schemes and infrastructure improvements from the Local Transport Plan (£120, 000 allocated in 2007/8) could include traffic calming measures, signing & lining, parking restrictions; speed limit reviews; dropped kerbs, lay-bys; vehicle activated signs; and dedicated crossing points.
- 4.59 In terms of the effectiveness of measures, some respondents stated that sustainable travel is dependent on the weather and the "mindset of present car users". However, one respondent stated that six cars per day were using park

and stride schemes at one school, and another respondent stated that approximately five car journeys per day to one school had been reduced through the introduction and uptake of a walking bus.

- 4.60 Information was also received at a Committee meeting from staff and students of three of the borough's schools identified as examples of good practice in school travel work. These were Tilery Primary School, Junction Farm Primary School, and Conyers School. As noted previously, the Committee could have received evidence from many other schools for this purpose.
- 4.61 Tilery Primary School is located in one of the most deprived wards in the borough and maintains a high number of pupils walking to school due almost entirely to low levels of car ownership. Tilery Primary School completed a travel plan in recognition that the common factors underlying all travel plans (safety, modal shift, reduced congestion, improved sustainability and health) would still be of benefit to the school. Because Tilery Primary School's modeshare is already heavily weighted towards sustainable travel, the school travel plan has enabled the school to work on children's preferences in relation to moving between sustainable modes of travel (primarily walking to cycling) with a focus on the safety aspects in support of this. Teacher Mrs. Fender and pupils Ethan, Jo and Leon informed the Committee that as a result of new fencing around school, new safer access points, widened pathways, road safety training and bicycle checks there were now more opportunities for children to cycle as well as walk to school.
- 4.62 Headteacher Mr. Jones and pupils Abbie and James from Junction Farm Primary School informed the Committee that they had started a school travel plan largely because of complaints about inconsiderate parking around the school gates. Junction Farm Primary School involved a range of different stakeholders in their consultation including, importantly, residents who lived near the school and were often affected by the inconsiderate parking. Mr. Jones stated that enabling residents to raise their concerns about parking in this way had some effect on the attitudes and behaviour of car users. It should be noted that the impact of congestion near schools was also raised as a concern in the Viewpoint focus group by parents (see ANNEX C).
- 4.63 In terms of actions taken as a result of the travel plan, Junction Farm Primary School had accessed pedestrian and cycle training; sends monthly newsletters to parents which includes information on sustainable travel; park and stride has been promoted for a nearby car park with the cooperation of local shopkeepers and a reward scheme has been implemented for children who used this facility; cycle storage and helmet lockers have been installed and there is further demand for these facilities and scooter storage facilities; a parent waiting area / pupil collection point will soon be constructed; and a walking bus grant has been applied for as Junction Farm Primary School plan to use this method of travel on as many school trips as possible.
- 4.64 Mr. Jones considered that greater sustainable school travel would require greater parental choice of these modes of travel, which was in turn dependent on factors such as work commitments and the perceived lack of safe cycling routes. Parental concerns about road safety in relation to walking and cycling have been discussed previously and were raised as part of the Viewpoint focus group. Bill Trewick, Traffic and Road Safety Manager, provided the Committee with an analysis of accidents on the school journey during a three year period

from December 2004 to November 2007 (see ANNEX D). This showed how parents' perceptions of school gate extreme accident risk are not borne out by evidence. However, it appears fair to state that it is debateable how far knowledge of these figures would influence parental behaviour.

- 4.65 From Conyers School, Headteacher Mr. Morgan, Assistant Headteacher Mr. Dillon and students Harriet Clark, Toby Snowdon, Grace Armatage and Callum Grieve informed the Committee of the measures implemented at the school. These included pedestrian barriers along the school drive; extension of bus-bay barriers with additional lighting fitted; refurbishment and extension of cycle storage facilities; and renewed road markings and road signs. The Committee was also provided with Conyers School's transport information leaflet which goes to the parents of every new child enrolled at Conyers School, explaining transport arrangements and appropriate rules and behaviour on school buses. Students and parents also receive guides on reducing congestion at the school gate, including information on appropriate and considerate parking, bus travel, and increased car sharing and cycling.
- 4.66 Finally, the students from Conyers School highlighted to the Committee their support for the proposed Sustrans 'Connect 2' project which would link Yarm, Ingleby Barwick, Thornaby, Preston Park and Eaglescliffe with new pedestrian and cycle links, including new bridges over the Rivers Leven and Tees which would enable greater sustainable travel to Conyers School for the 500 plus students living in Ingleby Barwick. In addition to this, the students also raised the lack of safe and sustainable routes from Kirklevington to Conyers School, and highlighted cycle paths, new bus routes, and pedestrian crossing points as measures they would like to see implemented. The students were able to highlight these concerns to Jonathan Kibble, Neil Ellison, and Jane Sinclair from the Road Safety Team who were also in attendance at the meeting.
- 4.67 It is clear from this evidence that many schools in the borough are committed to increasing sustainable travel. A variety of measures have been implemented and some schools are reporting that they are seeing a difference in how children and young people are getting to school. Also, despite the concerns over the reliability of the statistical data, this does appear to indicate improvements at many schools. This will need to be confirmed by official DCSF data when it is released in the spring.
- 4.68 The Committee felt that more could be done in order to monitor and assess the effectiveness of school travel work in the borough and recognise those who are committed to achieving change in modeshare of school travel. The Committee was provided with information from Sheffield City Council, Shropshire County Council and Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council of their respective 'monitoring and accreditation' schemes. Currently, Stockton's Road Safety Team does not undertake any monitoring of the effectiveness of school travel plans and how they may be impacting on modeshare, nor does it provide accreditation for schools that have completed a school travel plan and are deemed to be performing well. Information should become more widely available however through the audit of the infrastructure supporting sustainable school travel (see paragraphs 3.8 - 3.9). These schemes are designed to encourage schools without a travel plan to complete one, and encourage schools with existing travel plans to maintain interest and momentum in implementing measures and work to achieve modal shift away from car use.

- 4.69 Sheffield City Council runs 'Sheffield STARS' (School Travel Activity Reward Scheme) in which points are awarded to schools based on six categories: consultation; classroom; curriculum and training; promotion and publicity; measures and initiatives; projects and schemes (linking school travel plans to projects such as Healthy Schools and locally established schemes); and a general category. Schools start every year with zero points and must add to existing work annually in order to be awarded points for these measures. Participating schools are then awarded between one and five stars based on their point score. Schools who received one star or above are then invited to attend a ceremony at Sheffield Town Hall and awarded a certificate from the Mayor.
- 4.70 Shropshire County Council and Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council have similar monitoring and accreditation schemes based on three levels of accreditation and various rewards for achieving one of three levels of travel plan development (including certificates, use of logos, and, in Shropshire, a £250 grant for achieving a Silver or Gold Award).
- 4.71 The Committee considered that a similar monitoring and accreditation scheme in Stockton would enable the Road Safety Team to assess what measures are being implemented in schools (especially in relation to what capital grant funding has been spent on) and the effectiveness of school travel work and its impact on modeshare. The Committee considered that such a scheme would assist in encouraging schools to maintain commitment, continually build on successes, and allow for greater sharing of good practice.
- 4.72 **The Committee therefore recommend that the Road Safety Team implement a monitoring and accreditation scheme for all schools with a school travel plan.**
- 4.73 **Issue 4: An Assessment of the Travel and Transport and Facilitating Measures Necessary to Assist in the Effective Provision of Safe and Sustainable School Travel in Stockton Borough**
- 4.74 The fourth issue the Committee examined concerned the general travel, transport and facilitating measures which underpin safe and sustainable school travel. The new duties on local authorities under the Education and Inspection Act (2006) include a requirement to undertake an audit of sustainable travel and transport in the authority and publish a strategy on sustainable modes of school travel. These are designed to assist parents in applying for places at schools for their children. The Committee reviewed what information on sustainable school travel was made available on Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's website and compared this to the kinds of information made available on other Council's websites. The Committee considered that the availability of information on school travel plans should be increased to enable parents to assess the arrangements for sustainable travel and transport at individual schools. Schools themselves should also be encouraged to make this information available on their websites. It may also be useful for the Sustainable School Travel Strategy to include more information on school travel plans and how they can be accessed.
- 4.75 **The Committee therefore recommend that information relating to school travel plans be made available annually as part of the Sustainable School**

Travel Strategy, on Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's website and on schools websites.

4.76 School gate congestion can affect residents who live near schools as well as parents and children in terms of how they are able to access schools. The evidence received from Junction Farm Primary School showed how residents can be affected by this and how parking inconsiderately may impact on walking and cycling to schools if, for example, parents and children are forced to walk on roads (see pictures below – these were taken when Junction Farm Primary School were formulating their Travel Plan in 2007). This was also identified as a problem around other schools in the Borough. The Committee therefore requested information from Nigel Gibb, Car Park Manager, and Karen Smith, Enforcement Officer, on how illegal or inconsiderate parking outside schools in the borough is tackled.

4.77 Figure 1.8



4.78 Figure 1.9



4.79 Decriminalisation of parking enforcement following the Road Traffic Act (1991) meant that parking on a yellow line, for example, was no longer a criminal offence but a civil contravention. It is up to each local authority to decide whether or not it wants to undertake enforcement powers. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council has enforced on and off street parking since September 2005.

4.80 Nigel Gibb explained to the Committee that in the vicinity of a school entrance there will commonly be a single yellow line and 'plates' specifying the days of the week and hours that any parking controls apply to (parking is prohibited under these controls but drop off and pick up are generally allowed). Directly outside school gates are often 'keep clear' markings comprising text and 'zigzags', and any stationary vehicles on these markings are all contravening this regulation.

4.81 Nigel Gibb also informed the Committee that despite schools having 'zigzags' the police had previously stated that they could not enforce these due to manpower issues. For that reason the necessary large plates were not supplied and in their absence the control is not enforceable. Staffing issues are no longer considered such an issue, but the availability of finance currently is, and two plates at each site cost £500 in total.

4.82 The Committee was further informed of the difficulties of enforcement. For example, drivers at some locations wait on the control lines and only move away if a parking attendant is on site and attempts to issue a Penalty Charge Notice which has to be fixed to the windscreen or handed to the driver. Under the Traffic Management Act (2004) new powers will come into force from the 31st March 2008 allowing the service of these notices by post. Those parking attendants (to be known as Civil Enforcement Officers) who experience the

problem of beginning to collect evidence as the driver moves away will be able to complete this and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council will obtain vehicle keeper details from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and send the notice in the post. The Act also introduces differential charging for contravention penalties, £50 for less serious contraventions and £70 for those deemed more serious. Nigel Gibb stated that this new power is expected to improve enforcement and further discourage school entrance parking to improve safety for the children.

- 4.83 Karen Smith provided the Committee with a copy of the enforcement service's colour coded lists of the schools in the borough which highlight schools considered high, medium and low priorities in terms of parking contraventions with details of which controls are enforceable and which are not. Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) have a rota in place to ensure all enforceable sites around schools are visited, with a school visited and patrolled every day during the schools terms. In addition to this, the prioritising of schools on which the patrol rota is based is determined by the number of complaints received and can be adjusted at very short notice if required. Additional support may also be available as it is proposed that Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers will be able to become acting CEOs.
- 4.84 The Sustainable School Travel Strategy Action Plan currently places the number of parking enforcement service visits to schools at five per term. The enforcement service are clearly currently working to a much greater number of visits to schools per term already and may have the capacity to do even more. Based on this evidence, **the Committee recommend that the Sustainable School Travel Strategy Action Plan be amended to more accurately reflect the current number of visits to schools made by the enforcement service, enabling current performance to be further developed.**
- 4.85 One of the issues of note when this review was initially scoped was the successful bid by Sustrans, the Sustainable Transport Charity, for 'Big Lottery' funding. Sustrans secured £50 million for 'Connect2', a national initiative designed to link communities currently separated by a physical barrier such as a road, river or railway. Over the five years from 2008/09 to 2012/13, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council will receive around £600,000 from the national 'pot' of £50 million towards the cost of the scheme proposed within the borough. This will provide new pedestrian and cycle links between Ingleby Barwick and Eaglescliffe, Preston Park, Thornaby and Yarm which will include new bridges across the Rivers Leven and Tees.
- 4.86 One of the aims of the scheme is to make it easier for residents to walk or cycle school, which was raised as an issue in the presentation by students from Conyers School in relation to students travelling from Ingleby Barwick. The bridges linking Ingleby Barwick to Yarm and Eaglescliffe will offer greater opportunities for sustainable school travel for students living in Ingleby Barwick. The project is currently at an early stage and factors such as the need to carry out detailed design, acquire land, seek planning permission and – crucially – secure further funding are key considerations. For this reason, the current programme envisages that the two bridges will be implemented towards the end of the five year period, by which time new footpaths / cycleways linking Ingleby Barwick with Thornaby and Preston Park will already be in place. The Committee recognises that all sustainable routes are beneficial to the borough,

but the routes from Ingleby Barwick to Yarm and Eaglescliffe will be of particular use in relation to sustainable school travel.

4.87 The Committee therefore recommend that the early implementation of bridges linking Ingleby Barwick to Yarm and Eaglescliffe through the Connect 2 project be pursued to provide the option for safe and sustainable pedestrian and cycling routes to school for students living in Ingleby Barwick.

4.88 The Committee received information concerning use of public transport for school travel, particularly the 'Boroughbus' services to schools commissioned by Stockton Council and managed by the Joint Public Transport Group (JPTG) on its behalf. John Kavanagh, Public Transport Manager, informed the Committee that the Council were currently examining the possible implementation of services providing 'real-time' public transport information and cashless payments for public transport.

4.89 The Committee was informed that these services would be particularly useful to young people. Bus operator market research has shown the importance of access to information via mobile phones as over 80% of bus users have a mobile phone and young people (a key market for operators) are especially high users.

4.90 The 'Traveline Txt Service' was introduced in Stockton-on-Tees last year and provides access to real time information. This service has, however, been identified as having certain limitations. For example, travellers need to know a unique code for the stop they are at in order to access real time information and only information for the stop being accessed can be provided. Costs to the traveller may also be considered prohibitive.

4.91 Stockton is currently looking into the development of a strategy linking in to the Tees Valley Intelligent Transport System Strategy (ITSS), whereby the mobile phone could be used to access a whole range of public transport and other information. The Committee was informed of ongoing work with MXData Ltd., a company developing mobile phone services with a number of councils. Trials of these services will enable the council to transfer data currently available internally (for example stop locations) to be mapped and made publicly available with timetables. Other information could also be added, including information on schools and colleges (for example the provision of secure cycle parking facilities).

4.92 The Committee considered that these developments may make the public transport offer more attractive to young people in terms of convenience and their ability to plan journeys, increasing reliability. Access to such information may also provide some reassurance to parents concerned about safety.

4.93 The Committee was informed of new systems of cashless payments using 'smart cards' and mobile phones. Smart cards for bus travel are already being implemented in Stockton, although there are indications that it may be five years before buses in the Tees Valley are equipped to read these smart cards. Smart cards are beneficial in terms of school travel however as they have implications for safety on school buses, for example ensuring students can only board particular buses to prevent overcrowding, and enabling the use of incentivised behavioural agreement schemes.

- 4.94 The Committee was informed that mobile phone based systems are also being considered for trial in Stockton. This involves the 'M-ticket' system, which uses a secure barcode system displayed on mobile phones that is read by on-vehicle equipment. A trial of the system may take place on particular services in Stockton to assess its attractiveness to the public and its effectiveness in helping to speed up alighting on buses through cutting the amount of cash handling, which inevitably causes delays. The M-ticket system also has the potential to link with the real time public information system and make buses easier to use and a more attractive alternative to the car.
- 4.95 The Committee identified a number of potential benefits of the real time public information and cashless payments services. **It is therefore recommended that the Select Committee be provided with updates relating to progress on new methods of cashless payments and real-time public transport information.**
- 4.96 Issue 5: Governance Issues Surrounding Sustainable School Travel
- 4.97 Issues such as slowing climate change and reducing childhood obesity are complex and require joined-up solutions. Working to increase sustainable school travel should therefore be seen as a key part of a coordinated, holistic response to tackle these kinds of issues. The Committee therefore examined where sustainable school travel can link with other areas within the Council in order to deliver beneficial outcomes to child health and well-being and the environment.
- 4.98 Examples of this were found in the Sustainable School Travel Strategy and Action Plan, which refers to the draft Climate Change Strategy and the aim for all schools to participate in the Eco Schools programme by 2010, and the strengthening of partnership links with Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Healthy Schools.
- 4.99 The Eco Schools programme is an award programme for schools based around nine environmental topics, which includes transport. It assists schools with the DCSF's Sustainable Schools Framework which was launched in 2006 and requires schools to mainstream learning about sustainable development issues and sustainable practices into everyday school life. Children lead the Eco-Committees which are set up to assist with the audit of environmental improvements within the school, ultimately working towards gaining one of three awards including the "prestigious" Green Flag award (<http://www.eco-schools.org.uk/about/>).
- 4.100 The National Healthy Schools programme was established in 1999 by the Department of Health (DH) and the (then) Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The programme has four themes: personal, social and health education (PSHE); healthy eating; physical activity and emotional health and wellbeing. These themes relate to the school curriculum and the emotional and physical learning environment in school and include a number of criteria that schools must fulfil in order to achieve National Healthy School Status. Currently, 96% of schools have joined the National Healthy Schools programme, and 56% have achieved Healthy School Status (<http://www.healthyschools.gov.uk/ProgressReports.aspx>).

4.101 Included as part of the questionnaire sent out to headteachers of schools with school travel plans was a question concerning whether undertaking a school travel plan has led to involvement in these or any other programmes. All respondents indicated that their schools were involved in both of the programmes. Importantly, one respondent stated that:

It was as a result of taking part in the Healthy Schools initiative, Gold now gained, that led to a Travel Plan being written, rather than the Travel Plan leading to the Healthy School involvement.

4.102 That a school completed a travel plan as a result of involvement in the Healthy Schools programme led the Committee to consider that, with so many schools involved in both Healthy Schools and Eco Schools, there may be scope to extend this further and promote school travel planning to those schools involved in these programmes but who do not currently have a school travel plan. The Workplace and School Travel Plan Strategy states that there are already existing partnerships between the Road Safety Team and colleagues involved in Healthy Schools and Eco-Schools so there is opportunity and incentive to promote the take up of travel plans further. The Committee considered that the Road Safety Team could also consider other Council services where similar action may be possible.

4.103 It is therefore recommended that the Road Safety Team adopt new ways of promoting school travel planning in Stockton Borough, utilising other services and initiatives, for example the Healthy Schools and Eco Schools Initiatives.

4.104 As shown in the background information, there are a number of factors behind the introduction of school travel plans and a focus on increasing sustainable school travel. One of these is the current concern around childhood obesity, which greater walking and cycling to school may help to reduce. Khalid Azam, Joint Strategic Commissioner, informed the Committee of the figures from the recent National Child Measurement Programme (see paragraph 3.26) which found that nearly 13% of reception class children and nearly 20% of children in year 6 were obese.

4.105 Khalid Azam stated that following a visit by the Department of Health's Childhood Obesity National Support Team to Stockton in September 2007, an action plan had been formulated based on the National Support Team's recommendations in a bid to halt the year-on-year rise in obesity among children aged under 11 by 2010. The Committee was informed that the Action Plan links together a number of different stakeholders and initiatives in order to provide a comprehensive response to the problem of childhood obesity. The promotion of active and safe travel is included as part of this.

4.106 The Committee was pleased to see that a holistic response has been developed in order to tackle obesity, including childhood obesity, in Stockton. An obesity strategy is to be taken forward by a sub-group of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership chaired by the Director of Public Health, North Tees Primary Care Trust. Increased sustainable school travel is an important part of this holistic agenda, and to reflect this **the Committee recommend that the Road Safety Team be represented on an obesity strategy**

development group in order to ensure that the role of school travel planning is captured in an obesity strategy.

4.107 The Committee was made aware of a number of current education related initiatives which may impact on sustainable school travel and vice versa. One such initiative is the Extended Schools programme, launched in 2005 and seen as key to the delivery of Every Child Matters outcomes. An 'extended school' should work with the local authority, local providers and other schools to provide access to a 'core offer' of integrated services that all children should be able to access through schools by 2010:

- a range of activities including study support, sport and music clubs, combined with childcare in primary schools;
- parenting and family support;
- access to targeted and specialist services;
- community access to facilities including adult and family learning, ICT and sports grounds.

4.108 The Committee was provided with an article written by Neil Ellison which is to appear shortly in The Gleanings, the newsletter sent to school governors in the borough. Extended Schools will require schools be open for extended periods and this may affect the start and finish times of individual children and young people. This in turn may have implications for road safety. The article is intended to raise awareness of safety issues and make schools aware that the Road Safety Team need to be informed of changes to school start and finish times as this will affect the required operational hours of Crossing Patrollers and may affect the active times of any school-time waiting restrictions. In this case, a Traffic Regulation Order has to be passed to effect a change, and changes to waiting plates are necessary which can incur additional cost. In addition to this schools establishing breakfast clubs will affect the numbers and flow rates of pupils across crossing sites and, if numbers drop below the threshold, could affect the required operational times of the crossing site and the availability of the School Crossing Patroller.

4.109 There are therefore a number of sustainable school travel and road safety issues to consider as part of the Extended Schools programme. **The Committee therefore recommend that the Road Safety Team and the Extended Schools Team work in partnership to ensure sustainable school travel issues are considered as part of the Extended Schools programme.**

4.110 **Issue 6: Examine Links to the Building Schools for the Future Programme**

4.111 The Building Schools for the Future Programme was identified as an issue to be considered as part of the review as changes to school organisation and moves towards the 'campus approach' and a variety of different service providers on one site will affect the location of schools and may therefore impact on distances travelled and how children get to school as compared to current travel patterns.

4.112 The Cabinet report on the proposals for Building Schools for the Future was raised at a Committee meeting. This showed that support had been demonstrated, through questionnaire responses and public meetings as part

of the consultation process, for the consideration of the promotion of sustainable modes of travel and a reduced carbon footprint as part of Building Schools for the Future programme. Further comments from respondents included concerns that pupils would be travelling long distances as a result of proposed changes and how transport costs would be met.

- 4.113 Sustainable travel is clearly a consideration of the Building Schools for the Future programme. In order to ensure these concerns are addressed **the Committee recommend that the Road Safety Team, the Building Schools for the Future Team, and Planning Services work in partnership to ensure sustainable school travel issues are considered as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme.**

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Sustainable school travel is increasingly being taken up as an issue by schools in Stockton Borough with the assistance of officers from the Council. This review has highlighted that many of the borough's schools are working to increase the number of pupils using sustainable modes of travel to get to and from school.
- 5.2 The current key concern in Stockton is to ensure more schools access the support the Council can provide and complete a school travel plan. The Committee wish to see greater promotion of school travel planning in Stockton and greater recognition of those schools that have completed travel plans already and are effecting change by enabling more pupils to adopt sustainable modes of travel. This appears especially important at a time when a variety of other factors are impacting on the way children and young people are, and will be, travelling to school.
- 5.3 The Committee also heard how Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council are working to increase sustainable routes throughout the borough, which may be especially useful for many young people travelling to and from school, and are examining innovative new ways of making public transport a more convenient travel option.
- 5.4 The Committee consider that if promotion of the Council's school travel planning service is increased many more schools will want to complete a school travel plan. The Committee therefore identify that consideration will need to be given to staff resources in respect to this. Further to this, parents are concerned about sustainable travel but also road and personal safety in relation to school travel and should have greater opportunity to access school's travel plans and see what actions schools are taking in relation to these issues.
- 5.5 The potential benefits to all of increasing sustainable school travel are clear. More must now be done to build on the current position and enable these benefits to be realised in Stockton.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 The Committee recommends:

6.2 The Regeneration and Transport Select Committee be provided with updates on the impact of the new statutory walking distances on choice of schools and the statutory provision of transport managed by the Community Transport Service.

6.3 The Regeneration and Transport Select Committee write to the governing bodies of those schools without a school travel plan encouraging them to complete a school travel plan.

6.4 That the Road Safety Team consider ways of celebrating those schools with an authorised travel plan in conjunction with, for example, the Crucial Crew Initiative and the Electoral, Civic and Community Engagement Team.

6.5 That the Road Safety Team design a school travel plan logo or insignia which could be used by schools to signify they have an authorised school travel plan.

6.6 That consideration be given to the levels of support to the school travel plan implementation and audit processes to ensure adequate staff resources are in place.

6.7 That the Road Safety Team implement a monitoring and accreditation scheme for all schools with a school travel plan.

6.8 The Sustainable School Travel Strategy Action Plan be amended to more accurately reflect the current number of visits to schools made by the enforcement service, enabling current performance to be further developed.

6.9 That the early implementation of bridges linking Ingleby Barwick to Yarm and Eaglescliffe proposed as part of the Connect 2 project be pursued to provide for safe and sustainable pedestrian and cycling routes to school for students living in Ingleby Barwick.

6.10 That the Select Committee be provided with updates relating to progress on new methods of cashless payments and real-time public transport information.

6.11 That the Road Safety Team adopt new ways of promoting school travel planning in Stockton Borough, utilising other services and initiatives, for example the Healthy Schools and Eco Schools Initiatives.

6.12 That the Road Safety Team be represented on an obesity strategy development group in order to ensure that the role of school travel planning is captured in an obesity strategy.

6.13 That the Road Safety Team and the Extended Schools Team work in partnership to ensure sustainable school travel issues are considered as part of the Extended Schools programme.

6.14 That the Road Safety Team, the Building Schools for the Future Team, and Planning Services work in partnership to ensure sustainable school travel issues are considered as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme.

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ANNEX A

Responses from Headteachers of Schools with School Travel Plans

1) What did you spend the Capital Grant you received from the Department for Children, Schools and Families as a result of completing your School Travel Plan on?

1) Cycle rack and shelters for parents.

2) Shelter for the children/ parents and a bike cover and stands.

3) We spent the capital grant on an outdoor shelter/classroom for parents and children to use in bad weather. This will be erected on Feb 11th 08.

4) A shelter/shade for parents and children whilst waiting for children before/after school collection.

5) Capital funding we think was spent on two cycle storage facilities - incorporated into the spending on the new school building at the present site.

6) This was spent on two major elements, cycle storage and a parents' waiting area. The cycle store is limited in size to just 12 cycles, limited by funding / cost and the available space in a suitable area. Pupil demand is much higher than this, as measured in all surveys (Hands Up! for example.) but parental choice is the overriding influence in mode of transport used. Pupils leave our premises on two paths, one of which has a waiting / meeting area, the other does not. Parents wanted us to extend a path to allow off-pavement waiting / collection. The limit here is more to do with not wishing to encroach too close to classroom windows and the car park.

7) Bike shelters and lockers ~ £8000; £1000 Walking Bus Grant to get this up and running.

8) The school has purchased three pedestrian shelters and bicycle storage for 20 bicycles.

9) The school received a grant of £30,000 in 2003 from the Department for Transport Cycling Project Fund which was match funded out of the school's devolved capital. This money was used for an upgrade to the shower facilities in the sports hall.

10) We received £9500 which was used as part payment (full cost £21000) towards the construction of fencing and pathways leading from our main school gate and around the periphery of our Science Block building.

11) The school spent the Capital Grant on providing bike and scooter sheds for children.

12) The money was spent on the construction of a bike shed for the school.

13) We have accessed funding to provide a Cycle shed and lockers; we also accessed the grant to set up a Walking Bus.

2) What other measures have you implemented as a result of your School Travel Plan (e.g. education and training programmes; incorporation into the curriculum; promotion of sustainable travel)?

1) Pedestrian Training, Cycle Training.

2) Pedestrian training and Bike training for Years 5 and 6.

3) We access road safety and cycling lessons for Y3, Y4 and Y5.

4) Walk to school week, surveys, school council initiatives, posters etc. Cycle safety training, road safety training, visit of Big Foot and theatre company for safety training, school attends LA provided safety days i.e. Crucial Crew. Road safety initiatives - zebra crossing installed, lights for speed, additional pavements and railings.

5) School Travel Planning at the new site has been very important to get 'right' due to the large volumes of pupils and parents who access the building (655 pupils per day). Due to the location of the school, high volumes of cars at the beginning and end of the school day remain a significant problem for us. However, school has accessed from SBC:

- Pedestrian training Y3;
- Cycle training for Y5 and Y6;
- Road Safety Quiz Y6;
- Healthy Schools Award - Gold received last year Always participate in 'Walk 2 School Weeks';
- and...50% of children regularly do not come by car / bus / etc - this is slightly higher during the Walk to School (W2S) Weeks.

6) We already accessed cycle and pedestrian training and travel by walking to local visits whenever we can. We now have more contact with local residents and Councillors as a result of surveys and meetings. Walking Bus grant has funded provision of bibs for cyclists and school groups when walking.

7) Year 5 & 6 Cycle Training

Making 'Walk to School Week' high profile

We have set up a 'Walking Bus' which runs twice a week.

Parents were informed about the congestion outside the school gates. They were encouraged to park in the local pub car park and walk their children the remaining 100 metres.

8) We have involved the residents, the local councillor and the community police in action plans; letters have been sent out to parents to inform them of developments and encourage children walking or cycling to school; we take part in the Walk to School week. On census walk to school day 46% of our children walked to school. We allocate prizes for the classes where most of the children walk to school; we promote safer parking around the school and suggest walking and cycling to school as a safe option; we carry out pedestrian training for the Year 3 children and cycling training level one and two.

- 9) Leaflets were produced professionally to be handed out to all new Year 7 pupils.
- 10) As a result of our pupil questionnaire and Governors' survey, zebra crossings and road markings have been introduced for safety reasons.
- 11) The school has implemented a school safety week as part of the PSHEC curriculum. This covers walking to school, safety whilst crossing the road and cycling. In addition, we have incorporated pedestrian training and cycling proficiency training (levels 1 & 2) into our PSHEC long term plan.

3) Did you access match funding from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council for any measures?

- 1) Yes.
- 2) Didn't know it was available.
- 3) We have applied for match funding for a bicycle rack which is on order.
- 4) Funding for road safety initiative funded by LA and local business.
- 5) Not sure about this due to the nature of our situation but likely not as the STP needs to be updated (we are working on it this year!).
- 6) Yes, but we have not used the total available. To install another concrete slab and a store would have used more than was available in total.
- 7) Yes we received £4000 match funding to help pay for our bike sheds.
- 8) We accessed matched funding for £1000 for the completion of the third pedestrian shelter.
- 9) Funding was received from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, in the region of £10,000 via the Council's School Travel Champion, to supply and site, in the school's grounds, four secure cycle storage units, each capable of safely housing ten cycles. Later, further funding of approximately £12,000 was forthcoming which allowed for new lighting to be installed along the length of the drive, so improving safety for cyclists and old cycle racks were replaced with newer models.
- 10) £11500 devolved capital funding was used in addition to the Department for Children Schools and Families capital grant of £9500.
- 11) No.

4) How effective have your School Travel Plan and subsequent measures been in altering the modeshare of travel to your school (i.e. reducing the number of students being brought to school by car, and increasing walking, cycling and use of public transport)?

- 1) Too early to say since the weather has not been suitable for cycling.
- 2) Difficult to measure ~ when weather is good ~ increased number of bikes/ walking to school ~ weather bad ~ more cars!
- 3) We cannot yet measure the impact as neither resource is in situ yet.
- 4) Increased walking to school.
- 5) See answer to Q2. It is difficult to shift the 50% who still come by car. The measures that would support such a shift are all costly - cycle path widening / extension – safer crossing arrangements - and I'm not at all sure they would affect the mindset of the present car users significantly.
- 6) Highlighting residents concerns about parking has had some effect on responsibility, consideration and concern, and increased the use of a park and stride opportunity (possibly to six car loads per day). Other measures have had variable effect, but are well appreciated – parents and pupils accept that efforts are being made to improve safety and security. However, for cycling to really impact for example, there would need to be a significant impact on establishing cycle routes to the school.
- 7) With the walking bus, we have managed to reduce approximately 5 car journeys. Parents are now parking in the local 'pub' to ease congestion at the front of our school. As our bike sheds are not yet installed, we do not know the impact this will have on reducing the number of students brought to school by car.
- 8) More children walk to school and Year 5 and 6 children cycle in the Spring and Summer.
- 9) Pupils are more aware of the need for healthy lifestyles and annually a greater percentage of pupils walk to school rather than come in cars. Many also cycle. This has had the effect of cutting pollution in the immediate vicinity of the school at peak school travel times.

Obstacles to pupils coming by cycle, pinpointed in the travel plan, were removed in that:

- Pupils were willing to come on expensive cycles as they were offered the facility to house them securely.
- New, and a greater number of cycle racks were provided for the use of the pupils.
- Weather was removed as a prohibitive factor as cyclists arriving wet or hot and sticky had the use of the showers before school on a morning.
- The cycle path, which runs alongside one of the boundaries of the school, was an added incentive to pupils, particularly once it was upgraded by Sustrans as part of a national initiative some years ago. Improved lighting has now also been installed along part of this path.

Approximate percentages for pupils travelling to school on foot or by cycle are:

- Before the School Travel Plan:
 - 2002: 66.8% Walk.

1.1% Cycle.

- After the School Travel Plan:
 - 2006: 62.5% Walk.
9.4% Cycle.
 - 2008: 69.8% Walk.
8.2% Cycle.

Although the numbers of pupils cycling has decreased slightly, numbers of pupils walking either to and/or from school is again increasing.

10) As well as contributing to the Safety and Security of our 'local' school community, this has impacted on the LA, resulting in the plans to introduce safer access routes (cycle and pathways) leading into the school grounds. The number of students using their bike as a mode of transport has doubled since the school travel plan has been promoted.

11) Monitoring shows no significant change at present. We are hoping that this will change with the cycling training and measures for cycle storage that we have implemented.

12) This encouraged children to come to school on their bike (after training) or on a bike or scooter with their parents. Unfortunately, the shed has suffered from vandalism damage.

5) Has your School Travel Plan led your school to take part in other initiatives such as Healthy Schools and / or Eco Schools?

1) We are already involved in these initiatives so there has been no greater involvement.

2) Continuing with Healthy Schools and started elements of Eco schools but not ready for full implementation due to staffing changes.

3) We have the gold healthy school award and the silver eco school status.

4) School has achieved: Gold healthy Schools Award, Green Eco Flag Award, Active Mark for 2006 and 2007.

5) Yes. Healthy Schools Gold Award; Eco- Schools - 2007/ 8 - school is presently working on this process towards certification.

6) STP has helped us gain Healthy Schools Award status to Silver level, but that work was already going on in the other areas of the award. Similarly, some work associated with Eco-schools takes place, but not because of the award. Pupils feel that their voice has been heard within the development and implementation of the plan. School councillors have had a meaningful role in the work.

7) We have recently received Gold Award for Healthy Schools and Healthy Eating is an ongoing agenda for our school.

8) The school has achieved the Silver award for Eco Schools and the Gold Award for Healthy Schools.

9) It was as a result of taking part in the Healthy Schools initiative, Gold now gained, that led to a Travel Plan being written, rather than the Travel Plan leading to the Healthy School involvement. Similarly, the school was already involved in the Eco-Schools initiative, Silver gained to date.

10) We have received the silver award for Healthy School and becoming an Eco School has not been discussed in great detail.

11) Healthy Schools; Safety Week; Walk to School Week.

Additional Comments:

- We have a waiting list for secure cycle storage units and the cycle racks are full to capacity, cycles being double parked at many points along the racks (respondent number 9).
- All of this took long man-hours and has taken time away from teaching. Although I understand why the drive to get more kids to walk/cycle is there, I object to the time that schools have to spend on it (respondent number 13).

Responses from Headteachers of Schools without School Travel Plans

1) For what reasons do you currently not have a School Travel Plan?

1) It has been on my agenda for the past 12 months but keeps being overtaken by other initiatives!

2) Amalgamated onto one site in September 2007 – it is currently being drafted.

3) Other priorities and time constraints have delayed the production of a Travel Plan.

4) We do not have a school travel plan since we are a primary special school. All of our pupils attend school on transport provided through School Transport section. Their entitlement to this is recorded on their statement or on any amendments to that statement. No child attends in any other manner e.g. walking.

5) Ongoing survey (Year 7 and new staff still to complete).

6) Time pressures, extra form filling and also that most children either walk or are brought by car.

7) We have simply not got around to doing one yet.

8) Moving to new school January 09, new plan will need to be drawn up for then.

9) School is in an 'LA' category to raise standards. The whole focus of all we must do is to raise standards.

2) Do you examine school travel issues at your school? If so, how?

1) Yes regularly via news letters – parking in the car park – not enough room? So why don't you walk! Bollards on the school entrance drive to prevent driving as children enter and leave school; discussion with School Council about bikes / training.

2) Have formed part of parental consultation

3) We have mainly dealt with problems caused by the volume of cars generated by parents picking up children at the end of the school day. We send out regular Health and Safety items on newsletters and the council have installed parking bays and a speed restrictor signal.

4) We examine transport issues. Every child has a risk assessment completed by School Transport section. We liaise with them and with parents about pupil transport.

5) Survey of pupils.

6) Take part in survey each year to ascertain how children come to school.

7) Yes – conducted a student questionnaire – 80% students walked; 10% cycled – this was an internal questionnaire.

8) Governors and parents have looked at safe access whilst building work is on going around our site. Complete hands up survey.

9) Only as a 'fire-fighting issue' around complaints of parking.

3) Are you planning on completing a School Travel Plan before 2010?

1) I promise to do it this half term.

2) Plan is being completed at present.

3) Yes.

4) We will complete a travel plan if required but it would contain information similar to that already provided.

5) Yes – as soon as survey is completed.

6) Yes.

7) Yes – would like information.

8) Would like support to draw up a school travel plan in Autumn this year in readiness for move to new school.

9) Yes.

4) Are you aware of the capital funding that schools can receive from the Department for Children, Schools and Families to assist in implementing measures for sustainable school travel (that can equate to £3750 plus £5 for every pupil for Primary Schools, and £5000 plus £5 for every pupil for Secondary Schools)?

1) Very aware and have plans.

2) Unaware.

3) Yes.

4) Yes but we would not qualify for this.

5) Yes.

6) Yes.

7) Yes.

8) Not aware.

9) Yes.

5) Are you aware that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council can provide match funding for School Travel Plan Capital Grant allocations?

1) No. Sounds good.

2) Unaware.

3) Yes.

4) Yes - see above.

5) Yes.

6) Yes.

7) No.

8) Not aware.

9) Yes.

6) What factors would encourage you to complete a School Travel Plan and implement measures to facilitate greater sustainable travel to your school?

- 1) Time and other people getting in the way of me consulting and writing it.
- 2) Already underway.
- 3) I intend to complete a School Travel Plan in the current school year.
- 4) There are no other factors influencing our travel arrangements.
- 5) Sufficient time for key member of staff to work with Student Council.
- 6) Business manager in school.
- 7) Assistance in examining what is required.
- 8) Support to draw up a Plan.
- 9) Better SAT results! We just need time for a Member of staff to move this on with the children.

Additional Comments:

- I took up post in April 2007 and would be very interested in developing a school travel plan. Please could you send me some information?
- We have started completing a travel plan at my school however the co-ordinator responsible is currently on maternity leave. The plan will be completed on her return to work.
- The Local Authority knows that this school closes at the end of this year. The children will attend a new school, not yet named, but as the head of that new school I will be considering a travel plan in September when it opens.
- Having completed my travel plan I was told it was too late for last year. I have not been contacted with regards this year.

Annex B

School Census Data (2007 and 2008) Primary, Secondary and Special Schools

Primary School	Year of Issue	Walk 2007	Walk 2008	Cycle 2007	Cycle 2008	Car / Van 2007	Car / Van 2008	Car Share 2007	Car Share 2008	Public Bus 2007	Public Bus 2008	Dedicated Bus 2007	Dedicated Bus 2008	Bus Not Known 2007	Bus Not Known 2008	Taxi 2007	Taxi 2008	Other 2007	Other 2008	Blank 2007	Blank 2008	
WITH STP																						
St Francis of Assisi	2002	186	206			47	26		6													
St. Therese of Lisieux	2002	178	161	1		65	72	3	4													
St Patrick's Thornaby	2003	166	162	3	6	150	145	11	20					6	6						1	
Fairfield	2004	117	111			303	305	2	3	1											2	
Hartburn	2004	332	321	1	2	200	221							2	2							
Ingleby Mill	2004	161	243	39		257	300	1	74			13						4	2	157		
Preston	2004	97	93	3	2	38	56							3	2						21	
St John The Evangelist RC	2004	90	117	7		80	92				2	16	14								42	2
St Marks Elm Tree	2004	129	118			110	114			3	5											
Whitehouse	2004	190	201			139	133			6	4	37	38								1	1
Yarm	2004	150	170	1		85	227			1		25	31								171	
Norton	2005		308				74				2						1				388	
St Paul's	2005	20	29	6		67	176	2	3			9	8								109	
Tilery	2005	302	265			10	12									8	7					35
Egglescliffe	2006	80	87		1	108	61		64			1		1	1	9	11					
Roseberry Infant	2006	132		2		73		11														
The Glebe	2006	134	155	3	2	4	7	161	140					4	2		1					
The Links	2006	4	105			1	47		43												199	10
William Cassidi	2006	82	77			43	42			2		54	66				1					
Barley Fields	2007	96	122	6		38	88															27
Christ the King	2007		109				132				2										246	2
Crooksbarne	2007	96	114		1	120	152		1	4	3			2	1						64	
Harrow Gate	2007	266	416			15	66				1						2				182	
Junction Farm	2007	2	133			1	49		1		1						1				195	

Primary School	Year of Issue	Walk 2007	Walk 2008	Cycle 2007	Cycle 2008	Car / Van 2007	Car / Van 2008	Car Share 2007	Car Share 2008	Public Bus 2007	Public Bus 2008	Dedicated Bus 2007	Dedicated Bus 2008	Bus Not Known 2007	Bus Not Known 2008	Taxi 2007	Taxi 2008	Other 2007	Other 2008	Blank 2007	Blank 2008
Layfield	2007	105	101	2		56	48	2	3			5	4							1	
Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary	2007	62	50	1		76	67	1	1											31	62
St Bede's	2007	6	122		2	1	61		2		6			1	2					178	
St Cuthbert's	2007	95	126		2	64	74		2		1	5	5	2	2	2	2			7	6
Whinstone	2007	29	365			24	111	2	53											504	
TOTAL		3307	4587	75	18	2175	2958	196	420	17	27	165	166	21	18	19	26	4	2	2499	145
WITHOUT STP																					
Bewley Junior		118	85		3	97	82							3	3	1	1				26
Hardwick		7	31			1	1	1	1	1	1						2			159	116
Harewood																				374	405
High Clarence		99	89			2	3														
Kirklevington		4	13			7	12		5				1							132	99
Mandale Mill		220	209			16	10									5	8				
Mill Lane		4	69		3		13		5						3		8			217	106
Oakdene		46	157			4	29	5	32											182	
Oxbridge Lane		1	223		8	1	68								8		6			370	45
Pentland		167	222		4	32	28	33	27					4	4	2	1			106	57
Prior's Mill		468	236		1	8	214		42				2		1					1	
Redbrook			49				24													129	39
Roseberry Junior		45		3		28														164	
Roseworth		67	216				4					1	1							211	41
St John The Baptist CE																				211	214
St Joseph's Billingham		27	31	2		16	29	17	18											169	141
St Mary's		31	25						63											57	
St Patrick's		21	2			263	289														

Primary School	Year of Issue	Walk 2007	Walk 2008	Cycle 2007	Cycle 2008	Car / Van 2007	Car / Van 2008	Car Share 2007	Car Share 2008	Public Bus 2007	Public Bus 2008	Dedicated Bus 2007	Dedicated Bus 2008	Bus Not Known 2007	Bus Not Known 2008	Taxi 2007	Taxi 2008	Other 2007	Other 2008	Blank 2007	Blank 2008
Stockton																					
Thornaby Village		230	193		6	91	82							7	6	1	1				57
TOTAL		1555	1850	5	25	566	888	56	193	1	1	1	4	14	25	9	27	0	0	2482	1346
IN PROGRESS STP																					
Bader																				337	298
Bewley Infant		124	143			62	57	7	5	2	2										
Billingham South			194				93		1		7		12				5			354	38
Bowesfield		134	140			29	26	5	3											12	9
Durham Lane		69	100			99	97		7							13	11			56	23
Frederick Natrass		147	158	4		56	50									2	1			11	9
Holy Trinity Rosehill		235	230	1		98	102	102	93								1				
Levendale		89	78			85	73	1	1			27	20				1			12	47
Myton Park		178	190	6		70	55		10											1	1
Oak Tree		385	397			55	53	2								3	6			30	7
St Gregory's RC		166	156			54	59											17	15	7	6
St Joseph's Norton		156	159			142	137			12	9							1	1	7	6
Wolviston		4	11			1	8	7	9				14							118	88
TOTAL		1687	1956	11	0	751	810	124	129	14	18	27	46	0	0	18	25	18	16	945	532

Secondary School	Year of Issue	Walk 2007	Walk 2008	Cycle 2007	Cycle 2008	Car / Van 2007	Car / Van 2008	Car Share 2007	Car Share 2008	Public Bus 2007	Public Bus 2008	Dedicated Bus 2007	Dedicated Bus 2008	Bus Not Known 2007	Bus Not Known 2008	Taxi 2007	Taxi 2008	Train 2007	Train 2008	Other 2007	Other 2008	Blank 2007	Blank 2008
WITH																							
Grangefield	2003	905	931	54	38	234	207	2	6	71	61	9	7			5	3						
St Patrick's	2003	410	395	12	14	67	79		2	43	9	19	67				1	1	1		1	1	
Thornaby Community	2004	702	521	8	12	5	55		13	3	39						1						
Conyers	2004	592	542	7	10	162	147	39	65	11	13	545	570	17	11	1	2	1	1			1	
The Norton School	2004	407	393	21	21	37	28		1	17	14					6	4						
Blakeston Community	2004	603	498	7	9	55	58		1	86	90	4	3		4		2	2		5	3		
Ian Ramsey	2004	646	632	15	9	168	189	28	24	171	137	144	149	4	6	5	4		1	1	1		16
Billingham Campus	2006	708	637	22	36	45	56		1	21	12	57	46				3					1	3
TOTAL		4973	4549	146	149	773	819	69	113	423	375	778	842	23	25	17	20	4	3	6	5	3	19
WITHOUT																							
All Saints			534		39	1	24				1						1					600	
Northfield		6	117		16	5	67		2	1	19		96	5	6	1	11					1081	762
Our Lady and St Bede		46	152	10	39	26	66		3	21	63		8			2	15		1			569	313
TOTAL		52	803	10	94	32	157	0	5	22	83	0	104	5	6	3	27	0	1	0	0	2250	1075
IN PROGRESS																							
Bishopsgarth		119	189			2	10	7	9	14	15	23	18	2	10	7	11					341	216
Egglescliffe		288	553	1	10	121	271		20	77	88	64	287	2	2	2	10					866	191
St Michael's		21	68			19	38		19	2	9	1	57	12	11						1	857	679
TOTAL		428	810	1	10	142	319	7	48	93	112	88	362	16	23	9	21	0	0	0	1	2064	1086

Special School	Walk 2007	Walk 2008	Cycle 2007	Cycle 2008	Car / Van 2007	Car / Van 2008	Car Share 2007	Car Share 2008	Public Bus 2007	Public Bus 2008	Dedicated Bus 2007	Dedicated Bus 2008	Bus Not Known 2007	Bus Not Known 2008	Taxi 2007	Taxi 2008	Train 2007	Train 2008	Other 2007	Other 2008	Blank 2007	Blank 2008
WITHOUT																						
Ash Trees		1			2	2					4	23			1	3					113	91
King Edwin		1								1					1	12					55	38
TOTAL	0	2	0	0	2	2	0	0		1	4	23	0	0	2	15	0	0	0	0	168	129
IN PROGRESS																						
Abbey Hill	10	7	1	3	1	3	2		7	11	73	61			139	145					9	20
Westlands		2	1	1	6	8									3	102					101	3
TOTAL	10	9	2	4	7	11	2	0	7	11	73	61	0	0	142	247	0	0	0	0	110	23

Annex C

Viewpoint Focus Group - Sustainable School Travel Strategy Scrutiny Review

1) If you have a child in a primary or secondary school, how do they usually travel to school?

Both participants had children at primary schools.

One participant stated that her daughter walked to school with a parent, but occasionally could walk from school to her granddad's house alone.

One participant stated that he took his granddaughter to school, and that she was dropped off by car to his house and he would drive her to school.

2) How far do your children travel to school?

The journey took around five to ten minutes for the participant who walked and around fifteen minutes for the participant who drove.

3) Why do you favour your usual method of travel?

One participant stated that as she lived so close to the school walking seemed appropriate. It also gave her daughter the chance to socialise and meet up with her friends. The car was only used for travelling to school when it was raining or they were running late.

One participant stated that he used the car as public transport was unreliable. In the morning he was often running to a tight schedule. The journey to school also involved passing a large secondary school, and concerns were raised about the safety of a younger child walking through a large number of older children, cars and buses.

4) If you drive to school, how much do you estimate you spend per week on petrol to take your child(ren) to school?

The participant who drove stated that it took fifteen minutes from home to school. He did not estimate how much he spent on petrol.

5) Was sustainable travel a consideration when choosing a school for your child?

6) How important a consideration was sustainable school travel in determining your choice of school?

One participant stated that her choice of secondary school would be within walking distance.

One participant felt that in choosing a school a parent's decision was 90% based on the type or reputation of the school 10% travel considerations. Ian Ramsey was raised as an example, as it was a Church of England school and attracted students from across the Borough because of this.

7) What are the main concerns you can think of in relation to children travelling to school by:

a. walking: **the distance walked; the number and types of roads on the routes; the number of pedestrian crossings; whether there was a crossing patrol; the amount of traffic; knowledge of road safety; knowledge of personal safety were all identified as issues.**

One respondent stated that in her experience bullying mainly took place in school and not on the way to or from school.

Primary age children walking past secondary schools, with older children and more cars and buses, was also raised as an issue. However, passing other schools may enable children to use their crossings and get to school more safely.

Knowledge of road safety was seen as important, but it was mentioned that some children may act without thinking about road danger and be influenced by their friends to cross the roads without due care and attention.

b. cycling: **One participant stated that she was happy to let her daughter ride her bicycle to her grandfather's house at the weekends, but that she was more concerned about cycling during peak traffic times such as travelling to and from school due to the volume of traffic. Cycling on the road was identified as a problem, but equally younger children cycling on pavements which could be busy during the school run with other children and parents was also identified as a problem.**

c. public transport: **the unreliability of public transport was emphasised again.**

d. car: **road safety concerns for those walking or cycling outside schools; many people were considered to have no choice but to use the car to get to school; that there were not enough indents or drop-off bays near schools was a concern.**

One participant stated that when he picked up his granddaughter in the car he would park in the street behind the school and walk to the gates. 'Park and stride' schemes were discussed and they were felt to be a good idea on the whole, but use could be dependent on the weather. As well as shops, one Church school was identified where the church was close to the school and the car park could be used for a 'park and stride' scheme. The concerns of residents around the schools, being blocked into their driveways, parking on garden areas were also discussed. Poor car parking was highlighted as a particular problem.

8) What are the main benefits you can think of in relation to children travelling to school by:

a. walking: **health benefits to children and the problems of childhood obesity were identified as key benefits. A reduction in pollution, greater road safety, socialising with friends whilst walking to school, and walking being a chance to get to know other members of the local community were seen as other benefits.**

b. cycling: **One participant stated that she would be happy for her daughter to ride her bicycle to school and leave it at school as long as there was safe storage.**

c. public transport: **a potential reduction in the number of cars travelling to school was considered a key benefit.**

d. car: **the car was seen as a mode of transport that was the safest and meant that parents did not have to worry as much about road and personal safety concerns.**

9) Are you aware, or have you been involved in developing, a School Travel Plan with your school?

10) If you have been involved in developing, a School Travel Plan with your school how successful do you think this has been in reducing the number of cars bringing children to school?

One participant was aware of School Travel Plans, one was unaware.

In the opinion of the participant who was aware of School Travel Plans, children were generally enthusiastic about them, but actions such as Walking Buses required parents to become involved and commit their time. There were often not enough volunteers to put in place walking buses on a daily basis from this participant's experience.

One participant felt that the success of School Travel Plans would largely be dependent on parents letting their children walk and cycle to school, irrespective of the fact that measures such as cycle storage has been put in place. In respect of younger children, it was questioned whether parents had the confidence that they could get to school safely by walking or cycling.

11) What measures do you think would be effective in helping more children and young people in Stockton to walk, cycle or use public transport when travelling to school?

One participant felt that the presence of enforcement officers makes people feel more secure about safety.

Any measure to encourage more people to stop using their car was seen as worth pursuing. Reduced fares, cameras on buses to reduce anti-social behaviour, and the influence of older children on younger ones were mentioned specifically.

Annex D – Accident Analysis – The School Journey in Stockton-on-Tees
3 Year period December 2004 – November 2007 (0830 - 0930 & 1430 – 1600)

36 injury accidents involving children aged 4 -15 (1 per month) resulting in 43 casualties; all casualties were slightly injured: -

16 pedestrians; 6 cyclists; 13 car passengers (probably on the school run); 8 coach passengers (all injured in the same accident).

Accident Type

Pedestrian crossing from behind parked car	3
Pedestrian failed to look properly	11
Pedestrian failed to observe red man signal	2
Cyclists on footway crossing road	2
Cyclists on footway struck by vehicle	1
Cyclists struck by left turning car	1
Cyclists failed to give way at junction	2

Accidents occurring outside school frontage

6 pedestrian casualties

- **Dec 2004 Morrison St, Wm Cassidi School 5 yo stepped from behind parked car**
- **April 2005 A1027, Bishopsgarth School 15 yo failed to observe red man signal**
- **Oct 2005 Adelaide Rd, Hartburn Primary 4 yo failed to look properly**
- **Jan 2006 Fairfield Rd, St Patricks RC prim 10 yo failed to look properly**
- **Feb 2006 Thornaby Rd, Bader Primary 11 yo failed to look properly**
- **Sep 2007 Low Grange Ave, Bewley Infants 13 yo failed to look properly**

1 cyclist casualty

- **Feb 2005 A1027, Grangefield School 12 yo (probably) failed to look properly**

1 car passenger

- **Sep 2005 Baysdale Rd, St Patricks RC Sec 9 yo poor turn or manoeuvre**

8 coach passengers

- **Nov 2006 A1027, Grangefield School 8 passengers aged 11-13 shunt accident**

NB. A1027 speed limit was reduced from 40mph to 30mph in June 2004 and this may have helped reduce vehicle speeds and severity of any accidents occurring.

Assuming equal likelihood of accidents outside all 80 schools in the Borough, this equates to a 1 in 27 year risk of an injury accident near any particular school gates. Obviously there will be a greater risk at busy sites, e.g. A1027 Stockton Ring Road, and lower risk (around 1 in 40 years) at those located in lightly trafficked residential streets.

In conclusion, the parental perception of school gate extreme accident risk is not borne out by the evidence.