



meeting **ENVIRONMENT STANDING SELECT COMMITTEE**

date 4th April 2005

agenda item no

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANS PROGRESS REPORT – JANUARY TO MARCH 2005

Purpose of Report

1. To keep Members informed of the latest developments with regard to School Travel Plans in Nottinghamshire.

Background

2. Following the announcement of Government's initiative on "Travelling to School" in November 2003, Environment Select Committee is receiving regular progress reports on the development and implementation of School Travel Plans (STPs) in Nottinghamshire. The process is being overseen by a Joint Officer/Member Steering Group which meets three times a year. This latest report outlines the items considered at the latest Joint Steering Group Meeting on the 11th March 2005.

Progress

3. The Authority's full complement of 4No School Travel Plan Officers have been working full time during the first quarter of 2005 approaching and working with schools in the County on developing new STPs. However having come from a "standing start" in May 2004, it is only anticipated that 20 new STPs will be completed, authorised and eligible for capital grant from DfT/DFES by 31st March 2005. This is some way below the target for the year, but in the light of experience, the STP Completion Targets are to be reviewed in April 2005 to take account of progress in 2004/2005. A full list of schools with which the Authority is working is **attached** at Appendix 1. Following concern at the previous meeting, it is pleasing to report that a further five STPs are in development in the Gedling/Broxtowe Boroughs. The School Travel Plan Team

has now also developed a programme of work for families of schools and those with high car use.

4. In November 2004, the School Travel Plan Team produced the leaflet "Walk to School – Why on Earth Should I"? which was distributed to all children aged 5 – 11 years in the County [Select Committee viewed the leaflet at their previous meeting on 10 January 2005]. With the aim of further promoting Walking to School Events and resources, the Team have designed a competition to name four characters from the leaflet's cartoon images. The closing date was Friday 25 February and the Joint Steering Group chose the four winners at their meeting on the 11th March 2005. This completion caught the imagination of the schools with over 5000 entries.
5. Similarly the Team has supported a competition run by the Sunday Times (in their Children's Section) to support Government's Travelling to School Initiative. The competition encourages children aged 7 to 13 to design an ideal walking to school outfit which is both practical and visible on dark winter evenings. The STP Team has ensured that all schools in the County received details of the competition and it is understood that the Grove School at Balderton are definitely participating.

School Travel Plan Strategy

6. The DfT/DFES has requested that all Authorities revisit and resubmit their School Travel Plan Strategy outlining the Authority's vision on how it will progress from its current position to one in which all schools will have an STP in place by the end of the decade.

A draft strategy for developing and implementing STPs in Nottinghamshire was presented to the Joint Steering Group on the 11th March and following discussion further additions and amendments are to be made to the strategy which will form the basis of the required annual report to DfT/DFES in Summer 2005. It is proposed to present the final strategy to Select Committee at their June 2005 meeting. The strategy contains links to National and Local policies, baseline data, targets for completion of STPs, local partnerships, methodology for working with schools, examples of good practice and details of senior level support in the Authority.

Regional School Travel Plan Advisor

7. The Regional School Travel Plan Advisor for the East Midlands Jennie Maybury was a guest of the Joint Steering Group at their meeting on the 11th March 2005. Jennie, who is based with Nottingham City Council, outlined her work at regional level to support the work of the Travelling to School initiative. It revolves around three areas - reporting, supporting and partnerships and her report is **attached** at Appendix 2 for information. The Joint Steering Group's concern at the lack of national publicity regarding School Travel Planning was passed on to the Regional STP Advisor who has agreed to raise the matter at the DfT/DFES Project Board.

Bridgford Bus

8. Andy Buckland from the Passenger Transport Group updated the Joint Steering Group on the Bridgford Bus project which will inter alia provide two services for non-statutory pupils at West Bridgford Schools including Edmund Campion and Beckett. By placing an emergency contract, it has been possible to bring forward the start of these services, with the pilot "Bridgford Links" service having commenced on the 29 March. Accessible buses with CCTV cameras are now providing orbital services in the West Bridgford area linking residential areas with schools, shops and other major facilities up to 6.30pm in the evening.

It is very much hoped that this becomes a successful pilot scheme and that the principles can be rolled out to other parts of the County.

PETER WEBSTER
Director of Environment

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