

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 6th September 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children & Young People

SUBJECT: Sustainable School Travel Policy 2007

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report fulfils the requirement under the Education & Inspections Act 2006 to determine a Sustainable School Travel Policy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

(1) The Sustainable School Travel Policy 2007/8 be approved.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Section 508A of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 places a general duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport. There are four main elements to the duty:

- 1) an assessment of the travel and transport needs of children and young people within the authority's area;
- 2) an audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority that may be used when travelling to and from schools;
- 3) a strategy to develop the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are better catered for, and
- 4) the promotion of sustainable travel and transport modes on the journey to, from, and between schools and other institutions.

The attached Sustainable School Travel Policy 2007/8 draws together the four required elements above, supports and clearly demonstrates links to the Children & Young People's Plan, and ensures that Halton fulfils its statutory requirement.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Local Authority is required to provide assistance with transport to those pupils defined within the Education Acts 1996 and 2006. The immediate requirement of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 is for the determination of a Sustainable School Travel Policy for the 2007/8 academic year.

- 4.2** This Policy incorporates a number of transport related documents and has allowed for a review of the previous School Transport Policy and associated procedures. The Policy also recognises possible changes in transport demands placed upon the local authority and is aligned to the Council's School Admissions Policy.
- 4.3** There is a requirement within the 2006 Act that from September 2007 children under age 11 from low income families will be eligible for travel assistance where they live more than two miles from their nearest qualifying school. However, in Halton, no amendments to the Policy were required as Halton already provides assistance with transport to all primary aged pupils who live more than two miles from the nearest qualifying school.
- 4.4** The Council is required to update the Policy on an annual basis, and the document should be published on the Council's web site by the end of August 2007. The Department for Children, Schools, & Families (DCSF) has recognised that, due to the short timescales given to produce this document, some LA's may be unable to meet the deadline. The DCSF are aware of Halton's progress.
- 4.5** The LA is due to commence widespread consultation with key partners and stakeholders in September 2007 to support a LA led bid to the DCSF for School Travel Pathfinder status. If successful the funding received would add further enhancements to Halton's transport provision with the possibility of funding transport for Extended Schools services during the school day, before and after school hours, at weekends and during school holidays. These services might include health and social services, childcare, adult and lifelong learning, sports and arts facilities, breakfast and after school clubs. Executive Board will be updated as this bid progresses.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The Sustainable School Travel Policy underpins the priorities within the Children & Young People's Plan in encouraging children to be healthy by using sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling to school. Any travel assistance provided by the Council is in place to ensure children can access school where they can enjoy and achieve, and make a positive contribution.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

As 6.1 above.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

As 6.1 above.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The Sustainable School Travel Policy is in place to meet statutory requirements. There are no major risks associated with the publication of the Policy.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 This Policy reflects the diverse needs of children and young people in Halton in accessing appropriate educational provision and in addition to the statutorily required transport arrangements will seek to make suitable travel arrangements for those children with Special Educational Needs, and/or a disability who may, by reason of their disability, be unable to walk even relatively short distance to school, and those children with a mobility problem caused by a temporary medical condition, may be unable to walk to school. The requirements of the Act will also, over the next 2 years, enhance provision for children from low-income families.

9.0 REASON FOR DECISION

9.1 The decision is required to fulfil the Council's statutory duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

None.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

Academic Year 2007/8 and reviewed annually.

12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Education & Inspections Act 2006	C&YPD	M West
DfES Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance Document	C&YPD	M West