

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

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| <b>TO:</b>              | <b>TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE</b>               |                     |   |
| <b>DATE:</b>            | <b>16 September 2015</b>                              | <b>AGENDA ITEM:</b> | <b>11</b>   |
| <b>TITLE:</b>           | <b>SCHOOL EXPANSION AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT</b>     |                     |   |
| <b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b> | <b>TONY PAGE</b>                                      | <b>PORTFOLIO:</b>   | <b>STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT</b>  |
| <b>SERVICE:</b>         | <b>TRANSPORTATION &amp; STREETCARE</b>                | <b>WARDS:</b>       | <b>BOROUGHWIDE</b>  |
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**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Sub-Committee on the progress made towards encouraging sustainable travel to school through the development of new Travel Plans for the Primary Schools that are expanding this autumn.

**2. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

- 2.1 To note the contents of this report.

**3. POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The proposals are in line with current Transport, Education and Planning Policy.
- 3.2 Specifically, the proposals are in line with the objectives set out in The Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMOTS), March 2010, and the School Expansion and Sustainable Travel in Reading Traffic Management Sub-Committee report, March 2014.

#### 4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Reading's school expansion programme involving 12 Primary Schools is making significant progress in response to population forecasts which will provide provision for 2,520 additional school places by 2021. The schools will each be taking their new admission number from Year R (reception), meaning that the schools' population will incrementally increase as the new classes move up through the school.
- 4.2 The Primary Schools which are increasing their admission numbers are:
- Alfred Sutton Primary
  - Churchend Primary
  - E P Collier Primary
  - Geoffrey Field Infant
  - New Town Primary
  - Ridgeway Primary
  - Southcote Primary
  - St. Martins Primary
  - St. Michaels Primary
- 4.3 The programme also includes the creation of a new, two form entry (2FE) primary school called Civitas Academy in Hodsoll Road. They admit their first reception intake in September 2015.
- 4.4 In future years, this expansion programme will impact on Secondary Schools as the children move up through the year groups. However, the current programme is only looking at primary schools in the first instance.
- 4.5 Schools that are increasing their admission numbers are required as part of the planning application process to show how they intend to address both existing and predicted travel and traffic issues. This is done by producing a new School Travel Plan before they are granted occupation of the new buildings.
- 4.6 Expanding schools by their nature will generate more trips to school as pupil numbers increase. Therefore by producing new Travel Plans, the schools have been encouraged to carry out surveys of pupil and staff journeys; to analyse the data to come up with their own ideas to help reduce traffic problems in their neighbourhood, to break down barriers to walking and cycling to school and to encourage walking and cycling wherever possible.
- 4.7 A workshop was held in May 2015 to introduce a toolkit for the schools with resources and ideas, including talks from Bikeability and Bike It instructors. This workshop enabled the schools to draft and discuss their Travel Plans together and to seek 1:1 advice where

necessary to enable them to meet the required submission date for the planning condition.

- 4.8 Now that the Travel Plans are being submitted, each school is encouraged to establish a School Travel Steering Group comprising of staff, pupils, parents, governors and the local community. Reading Borough Council will continue to monitor and offer guidance to schools. In some cases, relevant proposals in the Travel Plan may be forwarded to other teams such as Parks, Highways and Streetcare, for issues regarding hedge cutting or road and footpath cleaning. Public Health may also be consulted for advice on incorporating physical activity into peoples' everyday lives. Bus operators can be informed of any issues relating to public transport.
- 4.9 The more the schools in Reading are developing and implementing measures in their School Travel Plans, the greater the cumulative effect there will be across the borough. This will reduce the reliance on and impact of cars on the school journey; in turn leading to less traffic and congestion in the town around the 'school run' period.
- 4.10 Educating the younger generation about these advantages and imbedding active travel behaviour will hopefully last a lifetime and lead to more active and healthier lifestyles and a healthier environment with less congestion and pollution.
- 4.11 The Sub-Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1 The delivery of School Travel Plans as outlined in this report help to deliver the following Corporate Plan Service Priorities:
- Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living.
  - Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 6.1 Public planning exhibition events were held at each expanding school for parents, pupils, staff and the neighbouring communities in 2014 to inform the community about the proposed building works and their impact. Comments and concerns related to transport issues, particularly parking and extra road traffic were gathered at these events and informed the planning application submissions and the School Travel Plans.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Any future proposals for waiting and movement restrictions would be advertised under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

## **8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 The Council has carried out an equality impact assessment scoping exercise, and considers that the proposals do not have a direct impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

8.3 School travel plans are by their nature inclusive, since they plan for the needs of children, their parents and carers and the wider community around the school neighbourhood. By encouraging active travel, the needs of all people are included in the Travel Plan regardless of car ownership or access to a car. By including pupils in the monitoring and review process, children have a voice in the decisions made. In this way, the Travel Plans will help promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 The Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMOTS) March 2010.

10.2 School Expansion and Sustainable Travel in Reading, Traffic Management Sub-Committee report, March 2014.