Somerset County Council

Towards a Sustainable School Travel Strategy

September 2012

This document is also available in Braille, large print, on tape and on disc and we can translate it into different languages. We can provide a member of staff to discuss the details.

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Education and Inspections Act 2006

As a result of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, local authorities now have a duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport, and to publish a Sustainable School Travel Strategy.

1.2 The duty

There are five main elements to the duty:

- An assessment of the travel and transport **needs** of children and young people;
- An audit of the sustainable travel and transport **infrastructure** used within the authority when travelling to, from or between schools, colleges or other places of education;
- A **strategy** to develop sustainable travel and transport so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are better catered for;
- The **publication** of the strategy on the authority's website by the 31st August each year, with a summary of the strategy available to parents at least six weeks before they have to make a decision on preferences[1];
- The **promotion** of sustainable travel and transport on journeys to, from or between schools and other places of education.

1.3 The benefits

The Act defines "sustainable modes of travel" as ones which may improve "the physical well-being of those who use them", "the environmental well-being" of all or part of the local authority's area, or a combination of the two[2].

Reducing the proportion of pupils who travel to school by car is an important part of promoting sustainable travel. Nationally, 32.6% of trips to school are still made by car. The Somerset equivalent, at 30.5%, falls somewhat below the national average[3]. Excessive car usage means that many schools face

[1] Ideally, this should be part of the County's *Composite Prospectus*. The "Travel Consideration" wording from the current *Prospectus* is given in Appendix 2 at the end of this document.

[2] *Education and Inspections Act 2006*, Section 76 (3).

[3] Source: *DfT: National Travel Survey nts0613*. These DfT comparisons include cars, vans ,taxis, and car sharing. The DfT calculates figures in a slightly unconventional way, using the categories 5-10 and 11-15, rather than the usual National Curriculum year groups or the primary/secondary division. For Somerset, this way of working gives a total of 52,867 pupils. However, the officially sanctioned figure for **all** Somerset school pupils in maintained schools, from Year N1 to Year 13 and including special schools and PRUs, is a total of 66,871 pupils. **25%** of these pupils travel to school by car or van, **4.9%** car share and **0.6%** travel by taxi (source: *Somerset School Census Data, January 2011*. See also section 2.3 below for a more detailed breakdown of pupils' usual mode of travel to school, and section 3.15 as regards

severe congestion at their gates, and the number of drivers joining the school run contributes significantly to peak traffic. Rising levels of childhood obesity are an urgent local and national concern, and children taken to school by car lose a valuable opportunity for physical activity. In addition, increasing vehicle emissions are a significant factor in air pollution and climate change.

Developing a Sustainable School Travel Strategy can help reverse these trends and improve outcomes for young people in line with the aims of *Every Child Matters*. It can do this by:

- Improving the health and well being of children and young people through an increased emphasis on walking and cycling;
- Promoting the health, alertness and concentration of students by encouraging more active lifestyles;
- Supporting the life skill development of young people, especially those with special educational needs, in terms of road safety and the ability to travel with greater independence;
- Giving students opportunities to make a positive contribution by participating in the school travel planning process;
- Reducing the number of road casualties and making school journeys safer;
- Reducing pollution and traffic congestion by expanding bus use and car sharing, together with other more environmentally friendly modes of travel.

In Somerset, we believe that our Strategy will have impact and implications going beyond statutory school transport provision. In particular, it will make a significant contribution towards fulfilling some of the strategic aims of our *Second Local Transport Plan*. In the *Plan*, we aim to:

- Improve health and safety through increased walking and cycling and a reduction in road casualties;
- Improve accessibility, with more children and young people able to travel independently to school;
- Protect and enhance the environment and reduce the impact of climate change;
- Develop the economy with fewer car journeys helping to reduce the negative impacts of congestion.

1.4 Vision and aims

It is our vision, as a County Council, that every child and young person in Somerset will have a fair choice and access to educational opportunity. We wish to support access by developing a sustainable travel and transport infrastructure which will enable all children and young people to travel to school as healthily, sustainably and, above all, safely as possible.

congestion. Footnotes 9 and 11 below are also concerned with different kinds of national figures and the different groups of pupils involved.

It is important for us that our Sustainable School Travel Strategy makes real differences to:

- Outcomes for children and young people, such as improved health, safety and access to services;
- Outcomes for the wider community, such as reducing the growth of congestion, environmental damage and air pollution;
- Long-term travel habits, in order to ensure the future sustainability of our communities and environment;
- The way that services are delivered.

The objectives, targets and key outcomes of our strategy are set out below in section 4.1 below.

1.5 Purpose of this document

In Somerset, we have been delivering effective strategies for sustainable school travel for a number of years. For example, we pioneered the collection and analysis of postcode data in order to identify location, travel mode and journey distance for all pupils in local authority schools.

We have also:

- Helped schools to develop travel plans based on sustainable modes of travel;
- Provided the option for parents of children not entitled to free transport to purchase seats on school buses rather than drive their children to school;
- Promoted car sharing schemes and practical cycle and pedestrian training;
- Ensured that sustainable travel is always considered as an essential part of planning new school provision.

However, we recognise that we can do more to ensure better integration of activity across all the services that have an impact on school travel. Better integration will help us to respond effectively to our various legal duties, in addition to providing more efficient and effective services.

This document aims to analyse concisely the needs and the infrastructure relating to school travel in Somerset and to compare both of these with the national picture. It reviews the work that we already carry out in relation to sustainable school travel, and outlines our planned approach to developing a new Sustainable School Travel Strategy over the coming years.

2 ASSESSMENT OF TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT NEEDS

2.1 Location of schools

Somerset is home to an estimated 530,190 people[4] – about 10% of the population of the south west region. Settlement is dispersed. Only about a third of the population live in our four largest towns of Taunton (61,800), Yeovil (45,600), Bridgwater (36,600) and Frome (26,500)[5]. The location of schools is similarly dispersed. The scattered nature of settlements makes both school and public transport services costly to provide and presents huge challenges in offering cost-effective sustainable travel solutions.

Somerset has 251 schools in total which include, primary, first, middle, infant, junior, secondary, and upper schools. Many of these, particularly those in remoter rural areas, require pupils to travel distances too far to walk or cycle. In such circumstances, car travel may well be the only option.

2.2 Pupil numbers and travel patterns

There are currently around 64,000 children attending primary and secondary schools in Somerset[6]. In any one year, approximately 22% of them either start school or transfer phases – a factor which can significantly affect travel patterns. 10,000 children are transported on a daily basis. Around 1,200 of these, including children with special educational needs and children within the care of the local authority, qualify for enhanced school services and transport provision.

Current travel patterns are significantly affected by a policy legacy. From 1999 to 2006, Somerset operated an admissions allocation process which prioritised parents' first preference over children's attendance at local schools. This was changed in 2007 to an "Equal Preference" model, encouraging local children to attend their local school. However, the increased number and length of journeys to school which resulted from the previous policy seem likely to affect school travel patterns for some years to come.

Postcode data shows that, currently, 42% of all children do not attend their local school[7], principally as a result of parental choice. Approximately 60% of these children are taken to school by car, as increased journey distance tends to rule out walking and cycling as realistic options. In contrast, only 11% of the children who live within Somerset's practical walk thresholds[8] travel by car.

[4] Source: *Inform Somerset SINe 2010*.

[5] Source: *Inform Somerset SINe 2010*.

[6] This figure excludes Sixth Form pupils in order to make comparison with national figures more straightforward. If Sixth Form pupils are included, the figure rises to just over 67,000. Source: *School Data, January 2012*.

[7] Source: *Somerset School Data, January 2012*.

[8] Somerset's "practical walk thresholds" are 800m (just under half a mile) and 2,000m (about 1.25 miles) for primary and secondary pupils respectively, in contrast to the far higher statutory

2.3 Pupils' usual mode of travel to school

The table below shows a summary at County level of how children currently travel to school[9]. The figures for "Sixth Form" refer only to schools and do not include colleges or other forms of post-16 provision. Post-16 patterns are discussed in more detail in section 2.7.

Table 2.1: Mode of travel to school in Somerset (2011); percentages

	Primary	Secondary	Sixth Form	Special	All Schools
Walk	53.2	48.6	39.8	5.6	50.8
Cycle	1.6	4.4	2.5	0.7	2.7
Car/Van	34.7	12.73	14.9	8.5	25
Car Share	5.7	3.9	3.82	0.0	4.9
Taxi	0.4	0.8	0.5	13.7	0.6
Public Bus	0.2	1.9	10	0.0	1.2
School Bus	4.1	26.8	26.4	71	14.3
Other[10]	0.04	0.9	2.13	0.0	0.4

2.4 Somerset and the national picture

The figures in Table 2.1 are taken from the *Annual School Census* for January 2011, and provide a comprehensive overview of the situation in all maintained Somerset schools. However, they are not directly comparable with the figures available nationally.

The Department for Transport performed its own analysis of the *Census* statistics and provided sets of results at national, regional and Local Education Authority level – but these only referred to a limited age-range and, since the end of the Travelling to School initiative in 2010, the DfT no longer provides this data. The DfT also conducts a *National Transport Survey* every year but that, has its limitations. Table 2.2 below shows the latest versions of the *Survey* statistics[11].

thresholds of 3,200 metres and 4,800 metres. Experience suggests that it is the "practical" threshold which is the more realistic predictor of whether or not pupils will cycle or walk.

[9] Source: *Somerset School Census Data, January 2011*. These figures take account of **all** Somerset school pupils in maintained schools from Year N1 to Year 13, and include special schools and PRUs. "Unknown" responses have been redistributed pro-rata as agreed at a meeting on 16th March, 2010. Compare footnote 3 above and footnote11 below.

[10] This figure includes the 2 pupils who currently travel by train, as well as the 196 who board.

[11] These are the two major sources of national data on modes of travel to school. The one most frequently used in this context is actually the annual *National Transport Survey*. Most of the data in the *Survey* relates to Great Britain as a whole, although there are some analyses at regional and area level. However, this provides only a sample-based snapshot of approximately 5,000 individuals and is, in any case, a year out of date. Moreover, the type of data included under some of the headings is far from clear. A much more detailed and

Table 2.2: National modes of travel to school; percentages

Mode	Primary	Secondary	All
Walk	47	36.1	41.2
Cycle	1.3	1.8	1.6
Car/Van	42.9	23.7	32.6
Public Bus	4.3	25.6	15.7
School Bus	3.6	8.4	6.2
Other[2]	0.8	2.9	1.9

The only means of comparing the position in Somerset with the national situation is to use the *Census* for Somerset against the National Travel Survey. The position here is shown in Table 2.3 below:

Table 2.3: Modes of travel to school: Somerset and England; percentages

	Primary		Secondary		All	
Mode	Somerset	England	Somerset	England	Somerset	England
Walk	53.2	47	48.6	36.1	50.8	41.2
Cycle	1.6	1.3	4.4	1.8	2.7	1.6
Car/Van	40.8	42.9	17.4	23.7	30.5	32.6
Public Bus	0.2	4.3	1.9	25.6	1.2	15.7
School Bus	4.1	3.6	26.8	8.4	14.3	6.2
Other	0.04	0.8	0.9	2.9	0.4	1.9

There are some differences between the Somerset figures and the national scenario, and some of these can be attributed to the difference in sample sizes, however, the overall picture is positive. There are 12. 5% more secondary school pupils and 6.2% more primary pupils walking to school in Somerset than is the case nationally. As a result, the overall figure for Somerset pupils walking to school is 9.6% above the national average. Cycling also presents a more positive picture: Although Somerset has seen a slight decline 1.6% of primary and 4.4% of secondary children cycle to school in Somerset, as opposed to 1.3% and 1.8% nationally. Moreover, in terms of car use, Somerset children are 2.1% less likely to travel to school by car or taxi than other children in England. The figure for pupils sharing cars is included within the Car/Van category, however, in Somerset the car share figure was

comprehensive picture is provided by the "Mode of Travel" returns from the *Annual School Census*, which includes information on over 6 million pupils, relates only to England, and is available for the current year. For the purposes of comparison with other parts of the country, this document uses the *Census* figures, although these relate only to ages 5-15. For information, the latest versions of **both** the *Census* figures and the *Survey* statistics are provided in Table 2.2.

higher than the national one by almost half as much in 2009 and has increased to 4.9% in 2011[12].

By far and away the greatest difference between the Somerset and national pictures lies in the area of bus usage. Not only are Somerset children rather less likely to travel to school by bus than other children (15.5% do, as opposed to 21.9% nationally), but their journeys are more likely to be made on school or contract buses, rather than public ones. This represents a massive distortion of the national situation where14.3% travel on school buses in Somerset compared to 6.2% nationally and 1.2% travelling by public bus service against 15.7% nationally .[13]

2.5 Trends over time

Trends over time at national level are difficult to establish precisely, because the two major national data sources frequently contradict each other. For example, the *Survey* shows a clear decline at national level over the last four years in the percentage of pupils of all ages walking to school (from 46.4% to 41.2%) and a corresponding rise (from 30.5% to 32.6%) in the number travelling by car or van. The *Census*, on the other hand, recorded a **rise** over a similar period in the percentage of pupils walking to school (from 49.1% to 50.2%), and a **fall** (from 28.8% to 26.5%) in the number travelling by car, van or taxi[14].

Trends in Somerset are closer to the picture painted by the *Census*, although there are some small differences. Between 2007 and 2011, the proportion of Somerset children walking to school rose from 47.5% to 53.2%, whilst the proportion travelling by car, van or taxi fell from 29.2% to 25%[15]. Car share rose more sharply in Somerset than was the case nationally – up from 2.5% in 2007 to 4.4% in 2010 and on to 4.9% in 2011[16]. Once again, the major departure from the national trend lies in the area of buses and public transport. Whereas, at national level, bus use rose between 2007 and 2010 from 16.7%

[12] The percentage here has risen every year from 2.5% in 2007 to 4.9% in 2011.

[13] The unusual situation in Somerset reflects the fact that there are many areas in the county with such sparse levels of population that regular public bus services are uneconomical to run. Moreover, there have recently been some sharp reductions in services by the main public bus providers. It is not possible for many children to travel to school by bus because the services either no longer exist or no longer operate at times linked to the start and end of the school day.

[14] The sources here are the *Summary* and *LA Summary* tabs on the DfT spreadsheet *2010 Final School Census Data: LA Level*. Bear in mind that these figures only relate to pupils aged 5-15: but they are the only ones which allow for direct comparisons between the local and national situations. The current figures for **all** Somerset pupils in maintained schools are given in Table 2.1. Compare footnotes 3, 9 and 11.

[15] This parallels the national situation. Nationally, over the same period, the proportion of children of all ages walking to school rose from 49.1% to 50.3% and the proportion travelling by car, van or taxi fell from 28.8% to 26.5%. The changes over time are, however, more marked in Somerset. The data source is as in footnote 14.

[16] Whilst the national figures for car share also began at 2.5% in 2007, they had only reached some 3.0% of journeys by 2010.

to 17.5%, in Somerset, the figure fell from an identical starting point to 16.1%. All these trends apply equally to both primary and secondary pupils[17].

Nationally, the average length of the trip to school for primary age children increased from 1.3 to 1.5 miles between 1995 and 2010[18]. A similar increase, from 2.9 to 3.5 miles occurred at secondary level. The situation in Somerset appears to follow an identical pattern.[19] This is almost certainly a result of the stronger emphasis in national legislation on increased parental choice. Section 4.7 below looks at school admissions and transport in more detail.

2.6 Pupil transport preferences

96% of Somerset schools, including have completed School Travel Plans. The results for these are shown in Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4: Preferred Modes of Travel to School, Somerset, 2012; Percentages

	Primary		Secondary		VI Form	
Mode	Preferred	Actual	Preferred	Actual	Preferred	Actual
Walk	27.5	51.5	27.5	48.41	13.1	42.9
Cycle	36.6	1.4	30.0	3.9	30.2	2.6
Car/Van	14.4	32.4	13.7	11.8	34.1	15.7
Car Share	4.8	5.4	3.6	4.0	7.3	2.0
Taxi	1.4	0.3	2.0	0.72	0	0.4
Public Bus	1.4	0.2	1.0	1.6	0	10.5
School Bus	3.6	3.7	9.9	25.0	3.2	24.5
Train[20]	3.6	0	1.1	0	7.6	0
Other	6.7	0.3	11.2	0.8	4.5	1.4

These results have to be treated with a degree of caution. In particular, the high percentage of preferences shown as "Other" has been exaggerated by schools offering such options as *London Underground*, *Tram* and *Boarder*, despite being asked not to do so

[17] Cycling is the only mode of travel where there is any significant difference between primary and secondary trends in Somerset. The percentage of primary school pupils cycling to school has risen marginally over the last four years from 1.6% to 1.7%. In contrast, the proportion of secondary pupils cycling to school declined noticeably from 5.6% in 2007 to 4.9% in 2010. However, the 3.2% of Somerset pupils of all ages who travel by bike remains well above the national average of 2.0%. It should be noted that national figures show little or no change in cycle use over the last four years.

[18] Source: *DfT: Transport Statistics Bulletin: National Travel Survey, 2010, Table NTS0613*.

[19] The *National Travel Survey, Table NTS9908* gives figures for the South-West, but provides no details at county level. Current distances for the South-West as a whole are 1.6 miles for primary age children and 3.3 miles for secondary.

[20] 3 Somerset secondary pupils currently travel to school by train.

Nevertheless, Table 2.4 has several notable features. Perhaps the most interesting of these is the enormous gap between the number of pupils who would like to cycle to school and those who actually do. The gap is most notable in primary schools, where the number who would prefer to cycle is 26 times greater than the number who cycle on a daily basis. Pupils in compulsory education also would prefer not to travel by car. Students in the Sixth Form provide an exception, but that is almost certainly because they would prefer to drive themselves (cars being an important rite of passage). Interestingly, despite the fact that walking is by far the commonest way for pupils to get to school, this was less popular as a preference. We might summarise the picture by saying that, by and large, pupils would prefer not to be driven to school, but that they would much rather cycle than walk.

2.7 Usual modes of travel post-16

The picture for Sixth Form students in schools is given in Table 2.4 above. However, these students only constitute around 16% of the numbers of 16-18 students involved in further education in Somerset[21]. The remainder study at one of the county's further education colleges.

Unfortunately, FE Colleges are under no compulsion to have Travel Plans unless as part of planning applications. Consequently, up-to-date information on actual and preferred modes of travel is hard to come by. Two colleges have Plans on the "iOnTravel" county website, but both are out of date (by 4 and $5^1/_2$ years, respectively). Hard copies of Travel Plans for two other colleges also exist, but these are even more elderly and use outdated classifications. Table 2.5 below summarises such information as is available.

Table 2.5: Post-16 Actual Modes of Travel; Percentages

Mode	Strode College	Yeovil College	College Average[22]	Sixth Forms
Walk	6.9	14	10.5	39.8
Cycle	1.1	5	3.1	2.5
Car/Van	30.2	48	39.1	14.9
Car Share	16.9	20	18.5	3.8
Public Bus	26.5	5	15.8	9.7
School Bus	13.2	3	8.1	25.6
Motorbike	3.7	2	2.9	Incl in other
Other	1.5	3	2.3	2.59

[21] In 2011, there were 12,252 students aged 16-18 involved in maintained further education in Somerset. Of these, 1,986 were in school Sixth Forms and 10,266 were in Colleges. Source: *DfE School and Local statistics KS5 Exam results 2011*.

[22] This column includes figures from SCAT and Richard Huish, where available.

The difference between travel modes for Sixth Form and College students is quite notable. In particular, because of the much larger College catchment areas, a far smaller proportion of students walk to College than walk to Sixth Forms, and far more drive. College students' bus usage also inverts the usual Somerset pattern, with twice as many travelling on public buses rather than direct or contract ones.

Sixth Form students' travel preferences have been covered in section 2.6 above. As regards preferences in FE Colleges, such evidence as exists in their Travel Plans reveals several common threads. Typically, College students are strongly in favour of measures to encourage walking, cycling, lift sharing and the use of public transport. Car sharing seems a particularly attractive preference, with over 50% of students saying that they would be willing to consider sharing a lift, especially if offered such incentives as reserved parking and assistance in finding a car share partner. The main reasons for students not sharing cars are usually the difficulty in finding a partner with matching courses or timetables who lives sufficiently close, and the lack of flexibility when having to arrange sharing.

Students highlight similar difficulties when it comes to bus usage, which the vast majority dismiss as impractical. Public services in many rural areas are infrequent or non-existent; in addition, bus reliability is poor, costs are high, timetables inflexible and journey times significantly longer than journeys made by car. Distance is the main reason given by students for not walking or cycling, although there is also a prevailing concern about bicycle safety, especially on rural lanes and in busy urban areas.

2.8 Journeys related to extended schools services

The previous Government intended that, by 2010, all children, young people and their families should have access to extended services[23] through or at their local school. The new coalition Government is currently reviewing the situation – in particular, the automatic entitlement for children and young people to be able to access extended school transport.

There is currently no data at all on transport arrangements relating to extended services, since schools are not required to report this to the local authority. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority of educational establishments are making arrangements for some children's journeys to be adjusted to enable them to make an earlier start or later finish. Transport should not present a barrier to children engaging in extended activities and, as a local authority, we actively support schools through funding contributions and the regular review of bus contracts.

[23] "Extended services" include activities before and after school, as well as in the holidays. Typically, the school day is extended to operate between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m..

2.9 14-19 diplomas

The previous Government originally intended that every young person in a school or college should be entitled, by law, to pursue any one of the Diploma courses at an appropriate level for them, wherever they were in the county. This entitlement no longer exists, although some Diploma lines are still being offered by Somerset's four Area Partnerships to deliver a curriculum to students who would benefit from alternative learning styles.

The continued delivery of Diplomas, without the benefit of bespoke funding, has implications for transport, since the Principal Learning element of most Diploma courses is delivered away from students' home schools, either at another school or at a college of further education. The numbers transported are now so small as to have little effect on overall transport strategy decisions.

As regards current practice in Somerset, the County Council provides transport assistance to any students who attend their catchment school or nearest suitable Principal Learning establishment[24] and who live more than three miles from that facility. Where students have learning difficulties or a physical disability, subsidised transport is provided dependent on the distance involved. In such cases, students can also be provided with an adult escort if necessary.

Wherever possible, Diploma students make use of existing public transport or school transport. If no such arrangements are available, they use minibuses owned by the schools and colleges concerned. Where this is impractical, as a last resort, students travel in specifically contracted minibuses and taxis[25].

2.10 Concessionary education travel

As a local authority we have a duty, under the *Education and Inspections Act 2006*, to provide free home to school transport for children who meet certain criteria. Children of statutory school age have to be provided with suitable transport to make sure that they can access an appropriate school and attend regularly.

Last year, approximately 13,000 statutory age children (about a quarter of all under-16s attending school in Somerset) made about 6 million trips per annum on free transport provided by the County Council. In addition, Somerset has over 11,000 students involved in post-16 education. Bus services and subsidised season tickets are made available for this group[26].

We have, to date, implemented a relatively generous approach to the provision of school transport in Somerset. For example, we have gone beyond statutory

[24] This matches the rules for the provision of home to school transport for other 14-16 year olds. See section 2.10 below.

[25] All transport for Diploma courses is currently provided free of charge, funded by the Department for Education through a grant which recognises Somerset as a rural and sparsely-populated county. However, this financial support is not guaranteed for future years.

[26] See section 3.2 below.

entitlement by offering free or low cost access to sustainable modes of travel for every child. Again, qualifying children are legally entitled to receive free transport to the nearest suitable school but, in Somerset, we provide transport to the catchment school, even if this is not the nearest school.

However, the current drive to reduce public spending has meant that the budget for home to school transport is under rigorous review. It is highly likely that there will be significant cuts in discretionary enhancements, and that these cuts will have an unavoidable impact on sustainable travel. In future, Somerset school transport policy will almost certainly reflect statutory duty much more closely, and any enhancement will be limited to exceptional circumstance cases, based on an assessment of ability to pay.

At the moment, however, we offer free transport to:

- Children under the age of 8 who live more than 2 miles from their catchment or nearest school[27];
- Children over the age of 8 who live more than 3 miles from their catchment or nearest school;
- Children from low income families[28];
- Looked After Children;
- Children who have a Statement of Special Education Needs, or who attract School Action Plus funding[29];
- Children with exceptional educational, medical or social needs.

In addition, we provide varying levels of transport support to:

- Eligible children attending denominational schools;
- Selected students over statutory school age attending post-16 education[30];
- Subsidised spare seats on school transport services for children who are not entitled to free transport.

The actual type of transport provided is at the discretion of *Transporting Somerset*[31]. Available options include school bus services, contract buses, minibuses, taxis, "County Tickets" for local bus services, or the payment of petrol allowances to parents. The needs of the child in question are always our most important consideration when providing transport.

[27] The distance is measured along "the shortest available route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk with reasonable safety".

[28] These are children who are either entitled to free school meals, or whose parents are in receipt of maximum working tax credits.

[29] Not all SEN pupils qualify for free school transport – assessment is based on several factors including level of need, family circumstances, and the appropriateness and distance of school.

[30] These include those students with SEN, disability or medical problems, those from low income families, and those for whom access to further education is difficult.

[31] "Transporting Somerset" is the County Council's integrated passenger transport unit. See section 4.5 below.

3 INFRASTRUCTURE AUDIT AND EXISTING APPROACHES

3.1 Public transport routes and provision

As a local authority, we have set out a "tiered" approach to public transport service classification and provision in our *Local Transport Plan*. We have identified the following three tiers:

- **County:** ''Fastlink" Quality Bus Partnerships serving the main town centres of Taunton and Yeovil;
- **Sub-County:** Quality Bus Partnerships serving routes between smaller town centres such as Frome, Wells and Wincanton;
- **Rural:** Slinky/Nippybus[32]/taxi-bus and community/voluntary services linking deep rural areas and villages with the sub-county bus network.

Opportunities for pupils aged 5-16 to travel to school by bus in Somerset reasonable, although only a very small percentage of children (about 1.3%) use **public** buses as a means of travel[33]. Until recently, in some parts of the county, it was quite difficult to access post-16 education by public transport. However, the recently developed "Travel to Learn" strategy has improved the situation, particularly by including links to the Area Prospectus for Post-16 education on the *Moving Forward* website (see section 4.6 below). As a result, there is now a reasonable network of services into 16-plus establishments.

3.2 Bus/Rail Concessions

At present, as a County Council, we administer the National Concessionary Fare Scheme[34] on behalf of all the District Councils in Somerset although, from 1st April 2011, responsibility for funding the scheme in Somerset will pass from the District Councils to the County Council in any case.

We operate the scheme in line with the basic guidelines set out by central government, which means we provide free travel on local bus services for all eligible applicants. In addition to the national scheme, we also provide free travel from 0900 (rather than 0930) on Mondays to Fridays, "companion passes" for certain disabled applicants and half fare travel on community transport[35] up to the full fare value of £12.00 per trip.

[32] See section 3.18 below.

[33] See Table 2.1 above and section 3.18 below.

[34] The scheme offers free off-peak travel on local public transport for older and disabled people. The aim is to make sure that bus travel, in particular, remains within the means of those on limited incomes and those who have mobility difficulties. Students under 18 who have certain disabilities can make use of this facility.

[35] This is transport provided by community transport operators. These operators provide minibuses and local car schemes for people who cannot access the local bus network. This is usually either because such people do not live near a bus stop or because they cannot walk to a bus stop or board a conventional bus.

Students between the ages of 16 and 18 attending College or Sixth Form education can also make use of a discounted system-wide bus pass called the "County Ticket"[36]. Where they have to pay, children aged between 5 and 15 are charged two-thirds of the adult fare on bus services[37].

No concessions are provided for rail travel in Somerset.

3.3 Contracted school bus and taxi routes

Currently, some 9,168 Somerset pupils are transported to school every day on 245 buses, with a further 238 pupils travelling in 68 taxis. Vehicle types and sizes vary widely. Although taxis will typically have between 4-7 seats, buses can have as few as 8 and as many as 70.

The contracts which apply to regular routes are usually agreed on a 4-year term. There are, however, a small number of journeys provided "on demand", for which taxis are the usual form of transport. Better integration of the ways in which vehicles are used across services is gradually leading to better planning and more efficient use of resources.

We review routes every year and on every occasion that a contract is due for renewal. This helps us to consolidate vehicle usage even more and to further drive down the cost of the transport service.

3.4 Pedestrian routes

Somerset is proud of its extensive network of urban footways and rural rights of way. The County Council provides free walking and cycling maps of all the main towns in Somerset to help children and parents to find suitable walking routes to school and other destinations. Just over 50% of children currently walk to school.

Around 83% of children live within **statutory** walking distance of their school[38]. In practice, however, children are far less likely to walk to school if the distance is greater than 800m for primary school pupils and 2,000m for secondary students. Only 49% of primary age children and 55% of secondary age children live within these "practical" walk thresholds. Unfortunately, despite living within realistic walking distance, a significant number of these children are still driven to school[39].

[36] See also section 4.5 below.

[37] See section 2.10 for further information.

[38] "Statutory" walking distance is 3,200m (just under 2 miles) for children under 8, and 4,800m (just under 3 miles) for children over 8.

[39] The overall figure is 12.3% – but this includes Sixth Form pupils and pupils attending Special Schools. If these pupils are removed from the calculations, the combined figure for primary and secondary schools drops to 6.3%. Source: *Somerset Headline DfT Data, January 2010*. See also sections 2.2 and 2.3 above.

This group of pupils has formed a particular focus for the work of the School Travel Adviser team. The team aims to raise the number of children walking to school by supporting the initiatives and points for action in school travel plans. These include looking at the school site infrastructure to see if better physical provision can be made for pedestrians, improving road safety by providing school crossing patrols or walking buses, and promoting activities such as walk to school days.

One barrier to increasing the proportion of children who walk or cycle to school is the fact that there are approximately 600 routes of less than statutory walking distance which have been formally identified as "unsuitable"[40] for road safety reasons. This number has increased significantly in recent years – ironically, in part due to the promotion of sustainable travel. Parents interested in letting their child walk or cycle to school are entitled to apply to the local authority to have the route assessed by road safety officers. If the route turns out to be "unsuitable" for cycling or walking (often for very minor reasons), then parents are entitled to free transport at the authority's expense.

3.5 Cycleways

Somerset has numerous cycle paths and other facilities for cycling. The county is crossed by several regional and national cycle network routes[41]. In addition to these long distance routes, there are a number of urban and rural cycle routes that help to provide safe cycling facilities where roads can be seen as too busy, fast or heavily trafficked for the majority of cyclists.

The County Council publishes free maps of cycle routes and recommended road routes for cyclists in town centre areas. As of October 2010, this information has been available online nationally as part of Transport Direct's[42] Cycle Planner. This system allows cyclists to plan routes between any two points in Somerset based on chosen criteria such as "quietest route", "most

[40] Here, "unsuitable" means unsuitable to be walked or cycled by a child up to the age of twelve when accompanied by a responsible adult.

[41] These include

- NCN3 (Bristol – Lands End) which passes through the Mendips, Glastonbury, Bridgwater, Taunton and Wellington before heading west over Exmoor;
- NCN33, running from Weston-super-Mare to Seaton via Burnham-on-Sea, Bridgwater, Langport, Ilminster and Chard;
- NCN26 (Portishead – Portland Bill), passing through Cheddar, Wells, Glastonbury, Castle Cary and Yeovil. Some parts of this route are still under development;
- Colliers Way in the north east corner of the county, around Frome and Radstock;
- South Somerset Cycle route – a 100km circular route around South Somerset.

[42] Transport Direct is a division of the Department for Transport, originally set up in 2000 as a "means of providing travel and transport information to citizens in order that they can make intelligent travel decisions". The main point of access to the information is via a website, which has been in operation since December 2004. The site offers comprehensive, easy-to-use information to help people travel from door to door around Great Britain using all types of transport.

direct" and "most scenic". Parents can thus plan their own routes to school using the quietest roads and cycle routes available.

To help children and parents cycle safely, the County Council also organises cycle training[43]. In schools, this usually takes place in years 5 or 6, before children move on to secondary school. In 2009–10, over 800 children received National Standards Level 2 cycle training, which is designed to help them cycle safely in their local area, including making the trip from home to school. The Moving Forward team at the County Council also offers family cycle training to help parents and children cycle safely and effectively together.

The Transport Policy team has recently identified gaps in the cycle network in the main urban areas. As a result, the next Future Transport Plan (for 2011–2026) will include proposals to improve provision at these points and to install new pedestrian and cycle signage.

3.6 Road classifications

Trunk roads in Somerset are managed by the Highways Agency. The County Council is responsible for managing all remaining roads. There is a very diverse range of roads in the county – everything from urban dual carriageways through to minor country lanes. The most recent figures available[44] show that Somerset has 4,204 miles of road in all. Of these, 98 miles are made up of trunk road, 409 miles of principal[45] road, 284 miles of "B" road, and 1,371 miles of "C" road. The remaining 2,076 miles are unclassified.

The percentage of Somerset roads classed as either "C" or "U" is broadly similar to that seen nationally and regionally[46]. However, only 1.8% of Somerset's roads are classed as trunk roads, compared with 2.1% in the south-west as a whole and 2.4% nationally. Moreover, Somerset compares poorly with other areas in terms of the proportion of its roads which are dual carriageway. Only 0.8% of Somerset's roads are dualled, in comparison with 1.5% for the south-west as a whole and 2.4% nationally. Clearly, this has an impact on how freely traffic flows and on how easy it is to drive from one part of the county to another.

[43] See also section 3.10 below.

[44] Source: *DfT: Road lengths in Great Britain: 2005-2009 by Regions/LA - Great Britain; Tables GOR 2009 and LA 2009*.

[45] "Principal roads" are the main (i.e. A-class) roads, maintained by the local authority. There are also "principal motorways", which are non-trunk motorways , such as the A6144(M), A57(M), M55, and so on. Somerset has no roads of this type.

[46] 82.0% of Somerset's roads are classified either "C" or "U", compared with 82.9% for the south-west and 81.7% for England as a whole.

3.7 Existing "hard" measures

Somerset follows national legislation[47] on road signage near schools, including marking roads with zig-zag lines and defined no-waiting areas. Flashing amber signs and safety zone markings operate near many schools, together with local speed limits and traffic calming measures.

In 2001, the Council agreed to implement a scheme to introduce 20mph zones outside schools. This, however, is no longer Council policy. Somerset is also one of several local authorities to have switched off many speed cameras in recent months, and is now considering the future of its remaining cameras following the significant cuts to the road safety budget from central Government.

3.8 Controlled crossings and school crossing patrols

A significant number of Somerset schools have controlled crossings close to their sites in order to help pupils walk safely to school. In addition, there are currently in excess of 70 crossing patrol sites outside schools.

All patrols are assessed annually although, if any problems arise, an investigation is carried out immediately. School patrol staff are interviewed and employed directly by the headteacher, who is their line manager. The Road Safety Partnership provides training and uniforms. It also monitors patrols' effectiveness on a regular basis and provides a grant covering half the salary of the first patrol officer. Any additional patrols have to be fully funded by the school.

Some schools are very successful at recruiting staff, whilst others have problems filling the vacancies[48]. This is typically because crossing patrols only operate for half an hour at the beginning and end of the school day. However, the post does not have to be covered by just one person – an employee can work either mornings or afternoons, which naturally frees them up to take additional employment during the rest of the day. Some schools have come up with other solutions. For example, lunchtime supervisors, learning support assistants or caretakers fill the crossing patrol post in addition to their other duties. Two schools' patrols are manned by volunteers working on a rota.

3.9 Existing local measures, including cycle storage

95% of lea controlled schools in Somerset have now completed their travel plans. As part of the process of travel planning, schools are encouraged to develop their own local approaches to making pupil journeys more sustainable.

[47] *The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002*. The Directions came into force on 31st January 2003.

[48] This problem is also mentioned in section 3.17 below.

Most schools have found that a range of "soft" measures is the most effective solution. These include better transport information, awareness-raising, and encouraging parents to participate in walking buses, car-sharing and park and ride schemes. At some schools, however, hard engineering measures have been needed. Examples include road works, cycle parking and storage facilities, safer crossing points, safer routes and traffic calming.

In the local authority, we are currently preparing to carry out a "healthcheck" exercise in order to analyse schools' travel plans and to see how far they have made progress in implementing their points for action. This work will form an essential contribution to the targets and content of the new sustainable school travel strategy.

3.10 Travel training and education

It is vitally important that children develop safe attitudes and behaviour at an early age. As a result, the County Council's School Travel officers provide educational support to make sure that road safety is integrated with curriculum and topic work. They back this up with talks in schools on road safety awareness and accident prevention. In the local authority, we have a wealth of collision and casualty data relating to accidents in the vicinity of schools, and we carry out school safety inspections and accident reduction campaigns as necessary.

We also provide cycling and walking bus training to parents and schools throughout Somerset. Instructors either deliver cycle training directly to pupils[49],or train volunteer groups of parents and teachers to then train their own pupils. The instructors monitor and assess the quality of training provided by these groups to ensure that standards remain high. In addition, the Council is also working towards accreditation with the "Bikeability" cycle scheme. For walking bus training, the Road Safety team audits the proposed route of the bus and carries out a formal risk assessment, as well as providing training to volunteers on how to conduct the bus in a safe and effective manner. The team also provides services for School Crossing Patrols through training, supervision and monitoring operations, as well as supplying equipment.

In addition, we provide Independent Travel Training. This is designed to help people with disabilities to travel better on their own, and to increase opportunities for access and inclusion for people who might otherwise be excluded from education. Clients are usually students who are older than 15. We also have four full-time "Bus Buddies", initially funded by the Pathfinder Project and Rural Bus Challenge, but now employed directly by the Council.

[49] This training is to RoSPA or National Standards levels 1-3. Volunteer groups of parents and teachers train pupils to RoSPA standards. Cycle training has already been mentioned briefly in section 3.5 above.

3.11 Air quality

Air pollution in the UK is estimated to reduce the life expectancy of every person by an average of six months, with estimated equivalent health costs of up to £17 billion each year[50]. Not only is air pollution harmful to health, but it also has a detrimental effect on our ecosystems and vegetation as well as contributing towards and accelerating climate change.

Air quality has been a growing problem in Somerset. We have identified three parts of the County as having air quality levels below Government thresholds – Henlade and East Reach in Taunton, as well as the town of Yeovil in its entirety. Following on from this, we have declared three Air Quality Management Areas, and prepared Air Quality Action Plans which set out measures to reduce concentrations of air pollutants[51].

The major source of polluting emissions is from road traffic, and dealing with the growth of transport is fundamental to air quality improvement in Somerset. As a result, one of the targets in our Second Local Transport Plan has been to reduce the concentration of Nitrogen Dioxide at the three Air Quality Management Areas to the national maximum limit by 2010-11.

The County Council is working closely with the five District Councils[52] to implement a County-wide Air Quality Strategy. This strategy is part of the effort to improve air quality across Somerset in areas where air quality is identified as being poor. However, maintaining the good air quality that exists across most parts of the County is just as important. The strategy places particular emphasis on reducing local car use and encouraging cycling, walking and the use of public transport. New developments, for example in Frome and Wincanton, include the provision of extra local bus services, footpaths, and cycle paths, as well as a Safe Routes to School Strategy designed to encourage walking and cycling to school.

3.12 "Soft" measures promoting sustainable travel

The need for sustainable travel is currently promoted by Somerset's extensive "Smarter Travel Choices" campaign. Further details are given in section 4.6 below and on the campaign website[53], which offers a permanent source of regularly updated information, advice and guidance on all forms of travel within the county.

[50] Source: DEFRA website: "Air Quality" tab in *Environmental quality and pollution* section.

[51] The pollutant specifically targeted in the Action Plans is Nitrogen Dioxide. The national maximum limit for the concentration of Nitrogen Dioxide is 40ug/m3. The combined baseline figure for the three Air Quality Management Areas in 2004-05 was 42.5ug/m3.

[52] District Councils have responsibility for collecting, analysing and monitoring air quality in the County and reporting to DEFRA. They also produce an annual Air Quality Progress Report for their district and collect monthly data on Nitrogen Dioxide emissions. The Somerset Air Quality Steering Group, which meets quarterly, co-ordinates the activities of the districts with those of the County Council.

[53] www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk.

3.13 Road casualties and road safety

Road safety continues to be a major concern nationally. 1,553 people were killed on England's roads in 2010, out of a total 21,255.killed or seriously injured. Equivalent figures for Somerset were 32 and 238[54].

The long-term trend between 1994 and 2010, both nationally and in Somerset, shows a reduction in deaths and serious road casualties. During this period, the number of people killed or seriously injured in England fell by 47%. The corresponding fall in Somerset, the fall was 37%. Other figures also suggest that Somerset is doing less well than other parts of the country. Table 3.1 compares Somerset's current road safety performance with national statistics.

Table 3.1: Comparison of casualty rates, 2009 – Somerset versus England

	Somerset	England	Difference – Somerset is:
Casualties per million[55]	3,857	3,412	2% higher than national
KSI casualties per million	581	448	30% higher
Severity index[56]	0.151	0.118	28% higher
Child casualties per million	296	351	16% lower
Child KSI casualties per million	44	44	Identical to national
Child severity index	0.149	0.125	19% higher

The table shows that our current casualty rates are only slightly higher than the national average, but that severity is significantly higher. This is also true of child casualties. The proportion of child casualties which result in death or serious injury is 19% higher than the proportion nationally – even though the overall number of child casualties of all types in Somerset is relatively low.

However, the 2009 figures may not be typical – especially as deaths and serious injuries on Somerset roads have declined every year since 2004:

Table 3.2: Numbers killed and seriously injured in Somerset, 2004-10

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Number of KSI casualties	345	344	325	301	274	304	238
Change from previous year		-0.1%	-6%	-7%	-9%	+11%	-22%

[54] Source: *DfT: Reported Road Casualties English Local Authority Tables: 2009*

[55] Population figures are taken from *Somerset Economic Digest, October 2009* and the *True Knowledge* website, slightly adjusted to accord with the figures given in *DfT: Reported Road Casualties: English Local Authority Tables, 2009*. Details of Somerset's population have already been noted in section 2.1 above. Statistics on child casualties come from *Road Casualties Online*, an excellent new, web based data analysis tool provided by the DfT – specifically from the *Casualties by age, gender, injury severity and location* report on the *Casualties – Profile, type and severity* tab.

[56] The severity index is the proportion of casualties which result in death or serious injury.

This improving trend has been at least partly due to the work of the *Somerset Road Safety Team*, which as concentrated particularly on "at risk" groups, including children.

We know that main roads in rural areas and the centres of towns in general need to be the focus of attention. In non-built-up areas, the main problem is serious collisions involving cars. In built-up areas, however, far more accidents involve vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. The Partnership is rolling out a programme of District-based rural safety management to tackle the problem, bringing together engineering, education and enforcement in a single programme. Similar work is going on as regards urban safety management. The target for 2010 is to reverse the 2009 rise and to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries on Somerset roads to 247[57].

3.14 Pedestrian, cycling and child casualties

Traffic injuries are the leading cause of death in children under 16. There were 71 child deaths on England's roads in 2009, out of a total 2,278[58] children killed or seriously injured.

In Somerset in 2009, there were 2,019 road traffic casualties. Of these, 23 were casualties involving the death or serious injury of children[59]. Although casualty numbers have fallen from the average of 33 children who were killed or seriously injured between 1994 and 1998, they have risen since last year, and road safety remains a key priority[60].

Casualty rates amongst pedestrians and cyclists in Somerset have fallen continuously in recent years. On average, between 1994 and 1998, there were 46.4 pedestrian casualties for every 100,000 people, and 41.1 cycling casualties. By 2009, these figures had fallen to 30.8 and 25.4, respectively. Children made up 22.4% of the pedestrian casualties and 18.8% of cycling casualties – figures which compare favourably with the national figures of 29.5% and 18.6%[61].

[57] Source: *Somerset Road Safety Partnership Casualty Review, 2007-2009*.

[58] Source: *DfT: Reported Road Casualties English Local Authority Tables: 2009*

[59] *Ibid*.

[60] The number of children killed or seriously injured in 2008 was just 8 – but that figure was unusually low. Figures for 2009 actually show Somerset performing identically to other parts of the country, with 44 children killed or seriously injured per million of population. However, deaths and serious injuries form a higher proportion of child casualties in Somerset than elsewhere. See Table 3.1 above.

[61] The proportion of children involved in pedestrian or cycling accidents has fallen both locally and nationally since 1994-98, although the fall has been steeper in Somerset. National percentages fell by 9.8% for pedestrians and 18.6% for cyclists from 1994-98 to 2009, whilst those in Somerset fell by 10.9% and 19.7% respectively. In fact, more Somerset children are injured while travelling as car passengers – an average of 98 a year over the period 2007-09 – than when using any other form of transport. The total number of children (0-15 years) injured in any way on Somerset roads in 2009 was 155, which represents a fall of 46 casualties (or 23

It is worth noting that our road safety evidence base shows relatively low numbers of children being killed or seriously injured close to school. As a result, our current road safety investment programme does not treat areas near schools as a high priority. We do, however, consider that it is vitally important that children develop safe attitudes and behaviour at an early age. Section 3.10 above has already outlined our current approach to road safety training in schools.

3.15 Traffic growth, road congestion and pinch points

Nationally, over 22% of car journeys are of 2 miles or less[62]. 62% of journeys transporting primary school pupils and 32% of journeys transporting secondary school pupils are of a similarly short distance[63].

Moreover, taking children to and from school by car has a marked effect on "peak hour" traffic. Table 3.3 below shows the national picture in urban areas for selected years between 1995 and 2009[64].

Table 3.3: Percentage of cars taking children to school

Time	1995/97	1998/00	2002	2007	2008	2009
0800 to 0859 hours	10.5	10.8	13.0	12.0	13.7	14.2
Peak traffic time (0835)	14.1	15.6	17.9	17.7	18.8	21.3
Peak percentage[65]	20.7	17.8	20.2	18.2	19.9	21.3

Over the last fifteen years, the number of cars taking children to school as a proportion of all car trips during the morning peak period has risen from 10.5% to 14.2%. In the latest year for which figures are available, this reached its highest level at 8.35 a.m., when over one in five car trips in urban areas related to the school run. Clearly, this helps to significantly increase congestion and air pollution.

More generally, traffic has grown in all parts of the country over the last four years, although the last two years have shown a slight decline. Somerset has followed these trends (as has the wider south-west), although Somerset's peaks and troughs are, once again, more marked than those seen either regionally or nationally.

Total traffic in Somerset grew by 3.35% between 2005 and 2009. This compared with growth across the south west of 1.61% and across England as

per cent) from the previous year and is the lowest for at least 15 years. Somerset figures can be found in *Somerset Road Safety Partnership Casualty Review, 2007-2009*, section 5.5.

[62] Source: *DfT: Transport Statistics Bulletin: National Travel Survey, 2009, Table NTS0308*.

[63] Source: *DfT: Transport Statistics Bulletin: National Travel Survey, 2009, Table NTS0614*.

[64] Source: *DfT: Transport Statistics Bulletin: National Travel Survey, 2009, Table NTS0615*.

[65] This figure captures the time at which the highest percentage of car driver trips were for education escort. The time has grown earlier over the years of the *Survey*. Peak times were 0850 in 1995/97-2003 and 2005, 0845 in 2004 and 2006-2008, and 0835 in 2009.

a whole of 0.57%. A corresponding pattern can be seen over the last two years, when traffic volumes have actually fallen. Nationally, the volume of traffic declined by 0.95%; in the south-west, the decline was steeper, at 1.28%. The fall in Somerset, however, was steeper still, at 1.94%[66].

Most regular congestion in Somerset occurs in urban areas at peak times. The worst pinch points are in Taunton town centre and its approaches, together with the A38 at Bridgwater, and the approaches to Yeovil – particularly on the A30. The A358 between Ilminster and Taunton also suffers from significant periods of obstruction and delay. Extra congestion can also be caused by incidents on the motorway and trunk road network, heavy tourist traffic during summer months, and the popularity of very large-scale events such as the Glastonbury Festival. These, however, have no regular effect on travel to school.

In areas where excess traffic continues to be a major concern, such as Taunton, Bridgwater and Yeovil, the County Council has developed area transport strategies. These aim to bring highway, public transport, cycle, and pedestrian improvements together in a coherent approach towards reducing car use and congestion. We are also working with planners to make sure that development is located in places which minimise the need to travel, as well as helping schools and businesses to develop travel plans aimed at reducing single-occupancy car journeys.

3.16 Poor behaviour on buses

Clearly, pupils will be less inclined to travel on buses if they feel that they will be affected by other pupils' poor behaviour. In fact, reported incidents of poor behaviour on school buses have reduced over the last three years – although it is not yet clear whether this is due to the local authority's recent programme of improvement measures, or to other factors.

We operate a policy of "three strikes and you're out". Where an incident has been serious enough to warrant a pupil being barred from school transport, there must be a formal interview with parents, who have to sign a behaviour contract before the pupil can travel again. In the academic year 2009-10, there were 174 reported incidents of poor behaviour on public buses. During the same period, 48 pupils were barred from travelling – in three cases, because the poor behaviour was racially motivated.

We have recently asked a consultant to monitor those transport routes with the highest number of behavioural incidents in order to identify any patterns and tomake recommendations for improvement. It already seems clear that installing CCTV on buses has a strong impact on improving behaviour by increasing the likelihood of offenders being caught. Training is also important, and all bus driver training includes guidance on incident handling.

[66] Source: *DfT: Road Traffic Statistics for Local Authorities: 1993-2009*.

3.17 Particular infrastructure barriers

Not all parts of Somerset are as well served by controlled crossings and school crossing patrols as others. Partly, this is a result of costs. The public perception is that signal-controlled crossings offer the greatest benefits in terms of road safety, but these crossings are an expensive option[67]. At a time when the funding available to local authorities is facing harsh reductions, the number of signal-controlled crossings is unlikely to increase, except in places where local casualties show signs of an urgent problem.

School crossing patrols are well-regarded by local communities, especially as they let children make their own way to school without being accompanied by an adult. They are also relatively inexpensive in terms of the cost per year[68]. However, low pay and the limited hours worked can mean that it is difficult for schools to recruit crossing patrol officers[69]. Last year, for example, several schools applied to set up school crossing patrols, but could not find suitable staff to fill the posts. At the moment, approximately 10% of the available posts are vacant.

Parents are often reluctant to let their children cycle to school, despite the fact that very many of them would like to do so[70]. This is partly because parents see cycling as inherently unsafe, especially where there are no speed limits on roads that pupils would have to use. It is also, however, a matter of cycle storage: parents are unlikely to allow their children to ride to school if there are no secure, weather-proof places for expensive bicycles to be kept.

3.18 Inaccessible public transport

There are many areas in Somerset with such sparse levels of population that regular public bus services are uneconomical to run. Despite this, opportunities for pupils aged 5-16 to travel to school by bus are generally reasonable because of the provision of school-specific buses, and opportunities for students to access post-16 education by public transport have improved recently[71].

For the more remote rural areas, Somerset County Council has developed "demand-responsive" bus services. There are two slightly different services –

[67] Costs of signal-controlled crossings vary, depending on the location, width of the road and the type of installation needed. However, a cost of at least £50,000 is typical. Zebra crossings are far cheaper, although one with anti-skid carriageway surfacing and associated street lighting can still easily cost £10,000.

[68] The average yearly salary for a school patrol officer is about £1,800.

[69] See section 3.8 above.

[70] In primary schools, for example, the number who would prefer to cycle to school is 23 times greater than the number who actually do. See section 2.6 above.

[71] See section 3.1 above.

Slinky and Nippybus[72] – but both are available to anyone who does not have access to their own vehicle or to public transport. Residents need to register to join the schemes and pre-book the journeys they wish to make, usually 24 hours in advance.

These schemes have proved very popular, because they offer the kind of door to door services at convenient times which conventional bus services are unable to provide. A wide range of community members use the services, including students, parents and toddlers, employees and retired members of the public. A number of voluntary or community organisations also provide transport for the more dispersed rural communities. None of these schemes, however, are particularly suitable for the regular transport of pupils of school age.

3.19 Road and footway condition

According to the latest Department for Transport figures[73], Somerset's "A" roads are generally in good condition. Only 4% of their length was judged to need maintenance to be considered, compared with 5% in England as a whole. This represents an improvement on 2006, when 6% of the network fell into that category.

As regards "B" and "C" roads, however, the picture is less encouraging. The percentage of these roads where maintenance should be considered is higher than in other parts of the south-west, in other county councils, or in England as a whole. Moreover, in these areas, the percentage of the network requiring maintenance has fallen noticeably over the last three years[74]; in Somerset, it has risen from 8% to 10%. In the light of the recently announced cut of 50% in the road repair budget over the next 3 years[75], this situation is likely to deteriorate further.

The County Council maintains footways according to a 4-point hierarchy, based upon how well footways are used. A national Footway Network Survey was launched in April 2010 to provide much-needed reliable standardised data on the condition of footway networks but, at the moment, the Council still relies on detailed visual inspection to measure footway condition.

Nevertheless, the County Council has made good progress in improving footway quality in recent years. It met its 2006 target of achieving less than

[72] Slinky is the County Council's in-house service; Nippybus is a similar service provided by a company of the same name. Both services are funded by the County Council. Coverage is almost complete across Somerset. Mendip, Sedgemoor, West Somerset and Taunton Deane are covered entirely by Slinky. In South Somerset there are three Nippybus Schemes and one Slinky Scheme. We are proposing to increase the coverage of one of the Nippybus schemes in South Somerset from February 2011 which will only leave some small areas still uncovered.

[73] Source: *DfT: Road Conditions in England 2009; Data Tables; Table 2.4*.

[74] For the south-west region, the figure fell from 11% to 8%, for other county councils from 13% to 8%, and for England as a whole from 13% to 9%.

[75] *Somerset County Gazette*, October 28th 2010.

32% of the network requiring investigation for possible maintenance. Even more ambitiously, on the basis of current progress, the Council is aiming to reduce this figure to below 18% by 2011[76]. This would mean that Somerset would be in the top 25% of local authorities, based on current results. However, as with roadway maintenance, the upkeep of footways may well suffer as a result of sharp cuts in funding and other austerity measures.

3.20 Summary of key issues and implications

The table below provides a summary of what we believe to be the main strategic issues and challenges in Somerset, together with their implications for a sustainable school travel strategy.

Table 3.4: Key issues and implications

Key Issues	Implications for the Strategy
Dispersed settlement pattern.	There is a heavy reliance on school transport in rural areas. Provision of cost-effective school transport will be challenging, especially with increased parental choice and increasing flexibility in curriculum provision and school hours.
Over 53% of children walk or cycle to school. Approximately 51% of children live within "practical" walking threshold distance.	The strategy will need to further promote walking with schools in urban areas, and protect these travel patterns as towns grow and new schools are provided. It must also address the 6% of children currently living within the walk threshold who are taken to school by car, and gradually increase the distances over which people will walk or cycle.
Over 41% of children do not attend their nearest school.	Attendance at more distant schools naturally increases the propensity to drive. The strategy should aim to increase the numbers of children attending schools within the walk/cycle threshold by both raising awareness of transport issues to inform parental choices and favouring allocation to nearer schools through admissions procedures.
Increased emphasis on parental choice of school in Government policy.	Increased choice may lead to increased travel distances as children fail to attend their nearest school. This will reduce the likelihood of cutting car use as a means of travelling to school.
New statutory regulations regarding provision of school transport introduced by the Education and Inspections Act 2006.	The strategy must specify how we can effectively meet new demands for transport provision while ensuring a cost-effective, sustainable and quality service.
New admissions code of practice (2007).	The strategy will need to set out how our new "Equal Preference" admissions system can be built on, and contribute to, a complete sustainable transport strategy.

[76] Source: *Somerset Local Transport Plan 2006-2011*, p.277.

Key Issues	Implications for the Strategy
New school development and what remains of the *Building Schools for the Future* programme.	The strategy must be sufficiently robust and far-reaching to ensure that transport considerations inform the location and development of all future schools in Somerset.
Changes in provision of 14-19 education, personalised learning and extended school hours.	The increasing flexibility of learning provision and school hours may generate significant challenges for sustainable school travel. The strategy must be capable of accommodating this new approach and preventing a rise in car use despite the likelihood of a greater variety of journeys.
No significant pattern of crashes or child casualties in the vicinity of schools.	Road safety highway improvements should not be concentrated in the vicinity of schools. However, cycle, pedestrian and road safety awareness training packages should continue to be delivered within schools.
A significant proportion of people travel less than 2 miles by car at the morning peak in main urban areas. Over one in five car trips in urban areas relate to the school run.	Reducing the proportion of people travelling to school by car could have an impact on congestion in towns.
A very small proportion of children use public transport as a means of travel to school (1.3% use public buses). Access to public transport for post-16 students is still limited.	It is unlikely that public transport will provide a major means of travel to school for statutory age children, but significant opportunities exist to further improve access to post-16 education using public transport. Public transport provision should be considered as part of the holistic approach to sustainable transport strategy.
Congestion occurs mainly in the main urban areas of Taunton, Yeovil and Bridgwater.	The strategy needs to explore how sustainable school travel can help tackle congestion in these towns.
Pollution exceeds Government health thresholds in Taunton and Yeovil.	The strategy should consider how sustainable school travel can help tackle pollution in these areas.

4 TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL TRAVEL STRATEGY

4.1 School travel objectives and key outcomes

The overall vision and strategic aims of Somerset's sustainable school travel strategy have been given above in sections 1.3 and 1.4. In order to realise these aims, we have developed four primary objectives along with some key associated outcomes.

1. Accessibility
   - Improve accessibility to schools by means of walking, cycling and public transport;
   - Boost travel choice and choice awareness;
   - Increase the number of institutions with high-quality, regularly updated travel plans;
   - Promote sustainable options.

   Outcomes
   - ✶ Better attendance at school;
   - ✶ Healthier, fitter children;
   - ✶ Increased child independence;
   - ✶ Enhanced social inclusion;
   - ✶ Improved facilities on the school journey and around schools;
   - ✶ Improved access to other services, such as healthcare, counselling and employment.

2. Environment and Health
   - Reduce the environmental impact of travel;
   - Ensure school planning and building design reflects sustainable travel principles;
   - Improve information on sustainable travel to the general public and to parents;
   - Support the promotion of healthy lifestyles by encouraging walking and cycling to school.

   Outcomes
   - ✶ Reduced pollution resulting from home-school journeys;
   - ✶ Reduced carbon footprint resulting from travel choices;
   - ✶ Increasingly integrated approach to sustainable travel;
   - ✶ Improved awareness of sustainable transport;
   - ✶ Healthier, fitter children.

3. Congestion
   - Encourage shifts in mode of travel, especially in urban areas and outside schools;
   - Reduce sole occupancy car use on school journeys;

- Increase the number of children using sustainable modes of travel to school.

  Outcomes
  - ✶ Less car congestion problems on Somerset roads;
  - ✶ Fewer congestion problems outside the school gate;
  - ✶ Healthier, fitter children.

4. Safety
   - Raise awareness of road safety issues;
   - Improve children's road sense.

   Outcomes
   - ✶ Fewer vulnerable road users killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions;
   - ✶ More journeys made by walking, cycling and public transport;
   - ✶ Progressively more independent children.

The new strategy is a means of making sure these objectives are put into practice and the outcomes achieved.

4.2 School travel indicators and targets

Progress in delivering sustainable school travel is currently measured against the following indicators and targets:

Table 4.1: Indicators and targets

Indicators and targets 2009-2011	Current progress
All institutions to have a travel plan by 2011, including independent schools and colleges.	All schools (including independents) have completed travel plans. 2 out of 5 colleges have reasonably up-to-date plans.
Reduce percentage share of school travel journeys by car[77] from 31.4% in 2004-05 to no more than 28% by 2011.	January 2010 figures are 26.2%.[78]
Increase levels of walking and cycling to school by promoting "smarter travel choices" (LTP Performance Indicator 4).	Levels of walking and cycling show, respectively, a 2.3% rise and 0.2% decline since 2006/07.[79]
Reduce children killed or seriously injured by 50%, from 33 (1994-1998 average) to 16 or less by 2011[80].	Numbers fell to 28 in 2007 and to just 8 in 2008. Although they rose to 23 in 2009, this is still below the five-year average of 25.

[77] This includes vans and taxis, but excludes car share. Source: *Somerset Local Transport Plan, 2006-11*, indicator LTP 4.

[78] Source: January 2010 census data for **all** Somerset school pupils, from Year N1 to Year 13, including special schools and PRUs (*Somerset Headline DfT Data*). "Unknown" responses have been redistributed pro-rata. Without this redistribution, the figure is 26.01%. See Table 2.1 on page 8, and compare footnotes 3, 9 and 11.

[79] See section 2.5 above. The latest Annual Progress Report on Somerset's *Local Transport Plan* judges the "challenging" overall cycling target as being at risk of not being met by 2011 (pp.31, 44).

It is encouraging that, despite the rural nature of Somerset, around 50% of children currently walk to school. Our challenge is to increase this– partly by gradually pushing the practical walk thresholds out to greater distances, and partly by persuading those 6% of children who live within the thresholds, but who still travel by car, to use a more sustainable means of travel.

One of the aims of the new strategy, in conjunction with the Local Transport Plan, will be to reduce the numbers of children travelling longer journeys to school by:

- Raising awareness of travel issues to positively influence parental choice of school. To this end, the admissions prospectus now includes a prominent paragraph on the benefits of attending local schools[81];
- Structuring our new admissions policy to favour allocation of children to more local schools. This is explained in more detail in section 4.7 below.

As the sustainable school travel strategy develops, we will almost certainly need to consider a wider range of indicators and targets.

4.3 School travel plans

The new strategy will extend the work already started by schools in developing their School Travel Plans – a set of measures to encourage safer and more sustainable travel to and from school. Schools produce their Travel Plans themselves, with help from the Council's School Travel Adviser. Each plan examines:

- The ways children currently travel to and from school;
- The effect that this has on individuals and the wider environment;
- The kind of safer and more sustainable alternatives available;
- How sustainable alternatives can be improved in order to make them more attractive.

86% of Somerset schools, including those in the independent sector, have completed School Travel Plans[82]. Two of the county's five FE colleges have posted Travel Plans on the County's "iOnTravel" website[83], but both are out of date. Hard copies of Travel Plans for two other colleges also exist, but these are even older and use outdated classifications. Sections 2.6 and 2.7 above

[80] This (indicator BVPI99(b)) is one of the major targets identified in the *Local Transport Plan*. See also *Somerset Road Safety Partnership Casualty Review 2007-2009*, p.3.
[81] The "Travel Consideration" wording from the current *Prospectus* is given in Appendix 2 at the end of this document.
[82] There is a financial incentive. All maintained schools producing a School Travel Plan have received a one off capital grant in the form of Devolved Formula Capital from the DfE worth approximately between £4,000 and £5,000 for a primary school and around £10,000 for a secondary school. Most of the schools with travel plans have now spent their grants on sustainable travel related infrastructure, including cycle parking, parent waiting shelters, new footpaths, lockers, segregated walkways and driveways. See also section 4.4 below.
[83] http://www.iontravel.co.uk/default.asp.

give details of the information in the Plans about current pupil and student preferences as well as students' actual modes of travel.

School Travel Plans can identify and include both physical measures such as road crossings, or modifications to entrances, as well as policy issues such as promoting safe and sustainable travel to new parents and pupils. They are also a means of raising awareness and fostering good travel habits in our children from an early age for the long-term benefit of individuals, communities and the environment.

The promotion of sustainable travel in schools has strong links with the National Curriculum. In addition, connection with the National Healthy Schools programme has also helped schools to see sustainable travel planning as an integral part of developing a safe and healthy school environment, as well as achieving National Healthy School Status[84].

It is important for us, as a local authority, to use the new strategy to work more closely with schools in order to help them convert their plans and initiatives into real changes in the way pupils behave. Obviously, we need to continue to support and encourage schools through specific initiatives and promotions such as the *Wild About Walking* campaign[85]. However, the production of School Travel Plans also provides us with information and data from which to generate a comprehensive picture of real travel habits, patterns and issues. This information can make a real contribution to future initiatives, targets and decision making across the Council as a whole, as well as to its partner authorities and agencies.

4.4 Infrastructure improvements and funding

Funding for implementing work identified by schools in their Travel Plans comes from two sources:

- Somerset County Council's Local Transport Plan (or LTP);
- Directly from the Government's Travel To School Initiative (TTSI) in the form of devolved formula capital funding paid directly to the schools.

Somerset County Council has adopted a set of design guidelines for the development of future schools and the renovation of existing ones. The guidelines are intended to ensure that school sites are suitable and safe for pedestrians and cyclists, and that the design itself favours sustainable modes of travel over car use[86].

[84] Schools achieve National Healthy School Status by showing that they have 41 criteria in place across the programme's four themes: personal, social and health education, emotional health and well-being, healthy eating and physical activity. Ensuring that more pupils walk and cycle to school helps to fulfil several of the criteria.

[85] For details of this and other existing initiatives, see section 4.6 below.

[86] The guidelines include such key principles as priority for pedestrians and cyclists, separation of these groups from vehicles, a presumption against parents driving onto school sites, and an assumption that vehicle access to school sites should be controlled – for example by using automatic barrier systems.

A key area for development of the new strategy will be making the most effective use of the various sources of finance in an integrated programme to deliver sustainable school travel.

4.5 Transporting Somerset

Transporting Somerset is Somerset County Council's integrated passenger transport unit, established in 2003 following a best-value review. The aim was to bring all the strands of transport delivery in Somerset into one place[87] and under one management, in order to cut down overheads and deliver a more responsive service to the citizens of Somerset.

Transporting Somerset introduced a rigorous re-tendering regime for education transport which resulted in much greater competition, as well as numerous new initiatives leading to safety and vehicle improvements (such as CCTV and high capacity yellow buses). Overall, these initiatives have led to savings in the school transport budget. The money saved has been reinvested in other areas of the school transport network, such as small vehicle provision for those who are unable to travel on mainstream school vehicles.

Transporting Somerset has also introduced a "County Ticket" scheme using the ability of the Council to bulk purchase tickets for our local residents. This has allowed all post-16 students to have access to a cost-effective "go anywhere" ticket, subsidised by the County Council to the extent of around £1 per student per journey. It may be appropriate, as part of the new sustainable school travel strategy, to extend the service down to secondary schools.

Transporting Somerset is particularly keen to make sure that the new sustainable school travel strategy is developed as part of a wider sustainable transport programme within Somerset. Both of these should be tightly integrated and should complement each other.

4.6 Promotion of sustainable travel

In the County Council, over the last three or four years, we have introduced an ambitious "Smarter Travel Choices" campaign. The scheme aims to tackle congestion and pollution in Somerset by promoting sustainable modes of travel, such as walking, cycling, public transport, car share and flexible working. We have brought school travel plans and consumer marketing initiatives together under the overall heading of *Moving Forward* in order to build a consistent, recognisable and persuasive identity to the campaign.

[87] Elements were brought into the unit from:

- Education Transport;
- Environment (Community Transport);
- Social Services Transport;
- Atkins (Transport Procurement Contractors).

Many of our promotional activities are aimed at families, children and schools, with the idea of making walking and cycling fun and engaging, and encouraging pupils to take part. Popular existing initiatives include:

- "Walk on Wednesday" events;
- "Wild about Walking" – a scheme which encourages walking to school through a colourful and engaging reward system in which participating pupils receive stickers and certificates;
- The Somerset Cycle Challenge, which encourages children and adults to log their cycling trips each month in order to keep track of the miles they have travelled and calories they have burned – as well as being entered into a monthly prize draw;
- Family cycle training and in-school awareness and activity days;
- A *Repair and Ride* scheme providing free bike maintenance in secondary schools and FE colleges.

Response to these initiatives has been overwhelmingly positive[88].

The *Moving Forward* campaign has a dedicated website[89] which provides detailed, regularly updated information about all forms of transport in and around Somerset, in order to encourage people to explore sustainable transport options. The site contains details of cycling, walking and public transport routes across the county, including those around schools and post-16 sites. There is an entire section devoted to school needs, which includes information on travel plans, walking, cycling, school buses and public transport. The "Travel Choices for Young People" section was developed in collaboration with students at SCAT and contains video clips made by them.

4.7 Home to school travel, planning and admissions

Since June 2009, home to school transport and school admissions have been administered together. This has provided a real opportunity to streamline procedures, and resulted in a single point of contact for parents, as well as a much simpler application and decision making process. The Somerset Direct call centre now provides immediate information to parents about travel options and how to apply for transport. Because staff in the admissions team no longer take routine transport enquiries, they have been able to devote more time to administering applications efficiently and effectively.

There have been four new School Admission Codes issued between 2007 - 2012. The most significant effect of the new Codes has been an increase in the number of parents applying for a preferred school further away than the local school. The number of successful applicants has also grown. This has

[88] One school recently contacted us to let us know that the "Wild About Walking" scheme had increased the numbers of children walking to school from just two to over half the school. More earthily, one student at SCAT recently told the team: "Us students don't have much money, and having a free service like this is amazing. I don't drive now; I cycle, which saves me so much money. This means there's more left for beer!"

[89] www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk.

resulted in a "cross flow" travel pattern across the larger urban districts, which is now being repeated in rural areas. In many cases, these children are not entitled to free bus transport between their home and the school they attend. As a result, in some areas of the county, the number of car journeys is increasing. On the other hand, where there has been less take-up or a reduction in the number of travellers on school buses, it has proved possible to consolidate some vehicle contracts, or to offer pay seats on existing school buses for non-entitled children.

We review the local transport infrastructure annually. Although arrangements have been made a good deal more efficient over the last three years, we feel that it is possible to promote and improve levels of sustainable travel even further through better integration of key transport services. These include health, social care and public transport, as well as transport from home to school. We hope to maximise efficiency, sustainability and cost-effectiveness by reducing long-distance, low-occupancy transport and by promoting the benefits of "local schools for local children"[90].

Since June 2009, all our admissions and transport publications have included reference to the benefits of cycling or walking to school, or choosing other sustainable modes of travel such as school or public bus. We strongly emphasise the benefits of cycling or walking in connection with choosing a school in the first place. In order to further support and encourage walking and cycling, we advertise the wearing of high visibility jackets widely and make the jackets available on demand.

At the moment, we do not have enough evidence to say whether the promotion of sustainable travel is influencing parents' choice of school. It is likely that, for most parents, their choice of school will continue to be based on academic achievement and popularity, rather than whether children can easily walk or cycle to school.

The impact of the current economic down-turn is not easy to predict. On the one hand, the need to realise savings is likely to lead to a sharp reduction in the number of public bus services, especially in rural areas. This would impact directly on the accessibility of sustainable methods of travel, which in turn might raise the level of car use. On the other hand, a tighter economic climate might persuade those parents who currently drive their children to school, even when they live within "practical" walking distance of the site, to save money by encouraging their children to walk or cycle.

It is important to note that it is highly likely that the Coalition Government will make significant changes to admissions policies. At the time of writing, it is

[90] The current admissions protocol

- Emphasises the importance of parents considering distance and sustainable modes of travel when choosing schools. A copy of the actual wording in the Composite Prospectus is given in Appendix 2 below;
- Ensures that priority is given to "local schools for local children" and deliberately links local schools in terms of pupils' progression from one to another, particularly if any siblings already attend the second school.

difficult to predict what these changes might be, and impossible to determine their impact.

4.8 Transport needs 14–19

Our sustainable school travel strategy also has to take account of the transport needs of students aged between 14 and 19. Until recently, it appeared likely that there would be a substantial increase in the movement of these students. However, the 14-19 vocational education reforms are now under review[91], and significant announcements have already been made that have changed the situation.

Firstly, the requirement that all learning pathways[92] should be available to every young person aged 14-19 by 2013, has been dropped. Secondly, there is no longer any obligation on institutions to work collaboratively with each other. As a result, it is increasingly likely that individual institutions will provide courses independently, and collaborate only when it is to the advantage of the schools and colleges involved. This is likely to sharply reduce the need for transport between different sites, schools and colleges.

These Government changes mean, once again, that it is not easy to predict the transport and access requirements for this age group. The situation beyond September 2012 is particularly unclear. Once the policy gap in this area has been filled, our strategy will need to be updated. For the current situation, see 2.9 above.

4.9 Components of the travel strategy

As well as taking account of the key issues and implications noted in Table 3.4 above, the new sustainable school travel strategy will need to be based on

- The overall vision and strategic aims given in sections 1.3 and 1.4;
- The objectives, targets and key outcomes set out in section 4.1;
- The school travel indicators and targets outlined in section 4.2;
- The good practice in travel plans, infrastructure and funding detailed in sections 4.3 and 4.4;
- Current initiatives, such as *Transporting Somerset*, "Smarter Travel Choices" and *Moving Forward*;
- The implications noted in section 4.7 for home to school travel and for school planning and admissions.

We will develop detailed implementation plans for our sustainable school travel strategy once the Government's position becomes clear. Whatever the situation in terms of law and guidance, we intend to develop our strategy as

[91] The independent review of 14- 19 vocational education in England is being carried out by Alison Wolf. An interim report is due by the end of 2010, and a final report by Spring 2011.

[92] These "pathways" include Diplomas, Apprenticeships and Foundation Learning, as well as general qualifications.

part of a wider sustainable transport programme within Somerset. Both of these will be closely integrated in order to create a sustainable travel and transport infrastructure which will enable everyone, especially children and young people, to travel as healthily, sustainably and safely as possible.

5 LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

5.1 National

Policy or Strategy	Link
Every Child Matters: Change for Children (2004) DfES	http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/
Travelling to School (2003) DfT/DfES	http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/5154/action%20plan_word.doc http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/5172/DfT-good%20practice%20guide.pdf
Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners (2004) DfES	http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=Cm%25206272
The Future of Transport (2004) DfT	http://www.thepep.org/ClearingHouse/docfiles/The.Future.of.Transport.pdf
Transport 2010: The Ten Year Plan (2000) DfT	http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http:/www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/whitepapers/previous/transporttenyearplan2000
Smarter Choices: Changing the Way We Travel (2004) DfT	http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/smarterchoices/ctwwt/
National Policy Planning Guidance 13: Transport (2001)	http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/155634.pdf
Tomorrow's Roads – Safer for Everyone (2000)	http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/strategytargetsperformance/tomorrowsroadssaferforeveryone
Healthy Blueprint for Schools (2004) DfES	http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/strategytargetsperformance/tomorrowsroadssaferforeveryone
Aiming High for Young People: a strategy for positive activities (2007)	http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=PU214
National Healthy School Standard	http://home.healthyschools.gov.uk/
National Cycling Strategy	http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http:/www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/cycling/deliveryofthenationalcycling5738
Eco-Schools	http://www.eco-schools.org.uk

5.2 Regional

Policy or Strategy	Link
South West Regional Transport Strategy	http://www.gos.gov.uk/gosw/transporthome/regtransstrat/
Regional Approach to Transport	http://www.gos.gov.uk/497666/docs/164775/532026/RSS

5.3 Local

Policy or Strategy	Link
Local Transport Plan	www.somerset.gov.uk/ete/ltp/2006/index.html
School Planning and Admisisons Policy:	www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/learning/admissions/
Children & Young Peoples Plan	www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/childrenservices/cypp/
Home to school transport:	www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/ete/passengertransport/hstransport
School Organisation Plan	www.six.somerset.gov.uk/sixv3/content_view.asp?did=17286
School travel plans	www.infomapper.viewfinder.com
Sustainable travel promotion	www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk

APPENDIX 1

TRAVEL NEEDS AND INFRASTRUCTURE AUDIT GAP ANALYSIS

Items marked green – information is available, few barriers to implementation;
Items marked amber – information progressing, needs application of additional internal resources;
Items marked red – requires support of TTSI/other external partners to implement;
Data coded "P" denotes a part of the Strategy to be published for parent use.

Purpose	Data/Information	Sources	Proposed presentation format	Published for LA use	Published for parent use	Risks to implementation
Needs Assessment	Pupil usual mode of travel	School Census InfoMapper Viewfinder (Viewfinder) surveys of pupils, parents and staff in support of STP development	Internet based - Viewfinder, Supported with paper based output (School Travel Health Check) to schools.	Accessible to schools and LA via Viewfinder		Complete and ongoing. 2009/10 data waiting to be uploaded. Now staff dependent.
Needs Assessment	Pupil Travel Preference	Viewfinder	Internet based - Viewfinder, Supported with paper based output (School Travel Health Check) to schools.	Accessible to schools and LA via Viewfinder		As above.
Needs Assessment	Pupil Home postcodes	School Census; Geographical Information System (GIS) Curriculum based mapping by pupils in the classroom - Viewfinder	Internet based - Viewfinder, Supported with paper based output (School Travel Health Check) to schools. Web-based, electronic	Accessible to schools and LA via Viewfinder		As above.

Needs Assessment	School Location **P**	SCC Gazetteer (corrected EduBase data)	Planning and Admissions website	Accessible to schools and LA via Viewfinder	School based summary shown via Viewfinder	P & A website due to be updated early November, 2010.
Needs Assessment	Post 16 usual mode of travel	College travel plans and where integrated 6th forms are in secondary schools through Census and Viewfinder.	*iOnTravel* website	Accessible to schools and LA via Viewfinder (Not FE at present)		Contribution of colleges voluntary and variable.
Needs Assessment	Extended Schools journey info	Schools, CYPD, *Transporting Somerset*	GIS layer	Viewfinder and internal GIS		Limited data at present, and only available from individual schools.
Infrastructure Audit	Public transport routes & provision(bus rail and concessions) **P**	*Transporting Somerset*, Accessibility Planning team, Transport providers, Traveline	Interactive GIS layer	Internal GIS	Traveline	Already available on Traveline.
Infrastructure Audit	Contracted school bus/taxis **P**	CYPD, *Transporting Somerset*	GIS layer	Internal GIS	Viewfinder	Data is staff dependent.
Infrastructure Audit	Pedestrian routes **P**	Mastermap Interactive Transport Network layer	GIS layer	Internal GIS	Viewfinder	OS do not produce a map layer that meets the requirements of Ed and Inspections. This requires attention at the national level.
Infrastructure Audit	Cycleways **P**	SCC and Sustrans GIS layers	GIS layer	Internal & external GIS; printed maps; online journey planner.	Viewfinder	Internal cycleways GIS layer complete. Information on cycle routes in and around 20 main towns of Somerset available in print & online. Transport Direct covers all Somerset.

Infrastructure Audit	Road classifications **P**	Mastermap ITN layer plus general mapping layers	GIS layer	Internal GIS - Mastermap ITN. Viewfinder - general mapping layers	Viewfinder - general mapping layers	Road classifications are well covered by OS mapping.
Infrastructure Audit	Existing hard measures – School safety zones 20 zones Zig zags Speed limits Traffic calming **P**	 Requires definition Mastermap ITN SCC Layer Mastermap ITN (+ local data) Mastermap ITN (check criteria for inclusion)	GIS layer	Internal GIS - Mastermap ITN.	Viewfinder - general mapping layers	Mastermap currently contains: Mini roundabouts, width, weight & vehicle restrictions, bridge heights, Traffic calming, one way roads, vehicle type access and time restrictions. 20mph, zig-zags &, speed limits mapped where TROs exist.
Infrastructure Audit	Controlled crossings & SCPs **P**	SCC Layer & Mastermap?	Spreadsheet			Data is staff dependent.
Infrastructure Audit	Existing local measures – Walking buses Car sharing Park & stride Park & ride **P**	 STP team Census Not recorded Not recorded	 Spreadsheet Internal Schools			Car share can be mapped with census data.
Infrastructure Audit	Cycle storage **P**	STP team	GIS layer			Available via School Travel Plans. Quality dependent on up to date plans for individual schools.
Infrastructure Audit	Cycle training **P**	Road Safety Partnership	Spreadsheets; Road Safety Partnership			Data regularly collected and updated.

Infrastructure Audit	Pedestrian training **P**	Road Safety Partnership	website & publications; Moving Somerset Forward website			
Infrastructure Audit	Road safety Education **P**	Road Safety Partnership				
Infrastructure Audit	Independent travel training **P**	Road Safety Partnership				
Infrastructure Audit	Air quality	Scientific Services		Spreadsheet; AQMAs maps		Subject to Autumn 2010 service area reviews.
Infrastructure Audit	Soft measures -	Smarter choices team	Text / Tabular format	LTP docs		As above.
Infrastructure Audit - Current barriers	Accessibility of schools	Viewfinder route plotting tool, STP's	Accession plot	Internal		As above.
Infrastructure Audit - Current barriers	Network hierarchy	This element requires definition.				As above.
Infrastructure Audit - Current barriers	KSIs	Road Safety Partnership	GIS layer	Internal GIS		As above.
Infrastructure Audit - Current barriers	Pedestrian, cycling & child casualties	Road Safety Partnership	GIS layer	Internal GIS		As above.
Infrastructure Audit - Current barriers	Congestion	LTP team	Reports	Reports		As above.
Infrastructure Audit - Current barriers	Poor behaviour on buses & bullying	*Transporting Somerset*	Spreadsheet	Existing systems		As above.

Infrastructure Audit - Current barriers	Infrastructure barriers – speed limits, lack of crossings , cycle storage etc	Viewfinder route plotting tool, STP's	GIS layer	PlanWeb		As above.
Infrastructure Audit - Current barriers	Lack of public transport and inaccessible stops	Viewfinder route plotting tool, STP's; *Transporting Somerset*; Traveline; Accession.	GIS layer	Traveline; Accession; spreadsheet		As above.
Infrastructure Audit - Current barriers	Footway & road condition	Highways Maintenance	GIS layer	PlanWeb		As above.

APPENDIX 2

TRAVEL CONSIDERATION WORDING FROM THE COMPOSITE PROSPECTUS FOR 2011

Consider the following before you make your preference – Travelling to School

Somerset County Council is fully committed to sustainable school travel including promoting walking, cycling and, for longer distances, greater use of buses for the school journey.

When you are thinking about the schools you would like your child to attend, please consider the following:-

• Children who walk to school are fitter, have better developed social skills, are more familiar with their surroundings, have better road sense and arrive at school more relaxed and ready to learn.

• Walking, cycling or using public transport offers children greater independence and flexibility - which is especially important at a time of change in the nature of the school day, with greater numbers of pupils staying for extra study, extra curricular activities and sport.

Where walking, cycling or public transport are not feasible, car sharing may be an option. This can save time and money and helps to cut traffic congestion and air pollution as well as being sociable for children. Car sharing can also reduce the costs for children whose families do not own a car.

IMPORTANT: Choosing a school to which you can walk, cycle or access by bus will not provide any additional priority for a school place. The over subscription criteria will always apply.

For information on bus routes in Somerset, please contact Somerset Direct on 0845 3459155 or email transport@somerset.gov.uk

Entitlement to subsidised home to school transport

Parents are entitled to subsidised home to school transport for their children if the distance between school and the home address is more than 2 miles (for children under the age of 8) or 3 miles (for children over the age of 8). Children must have been allocated a place at or attend either the catchment school or the school nearest to their home address.

Subsidised transport **may** also be provided for children not meeting the above criteria, where they have secured a place at a school between 2 and 6 miles from their home address. However, the children must qualify for Free School Meals, or their parents must be receiving **maximum** Working Tax Credit.

The school place outcome letter will notify parents of whether there is a subsidised transport entitlement to their children's allocated school.

IMPORTANT: If parents wish to accept the offer of subsidised transport, they must inform Customer Contact within 21 days of the date on their outcome letter. They can do this either by telephone on 0845 4564038, by e-mail to childrens@somerset.gov.uk, or by returning the slip provided.

You can find full information on all home to school transport at www.somerset.gov.uk

Walking and cycling to school

Some parents prefer their children to walk or cycle to school, and may have chosen a school based on these options. Somerset Local Authority supports sustainable modes of travel, and actively promotes healthy options such as walking and cycling.

Although the key responsibility for ensuring children's safety while walking or cycling to school rests with parents, we recommend the use of high-visibility jackets – especially for children walking or cycling to school, or waiting at bus pick-up points – and can provide these (on request) for either children or parents. We can also help with pedestrian or cycle training programmes.

If you would like more details about obtaining high-visibility jackets, or about the training on offer, please contact Somerset Direct customer support on 0845 456038 or 0845 3459155.