



Thurrock School Travel Strategy (SMOTS)

September 2015 - 2018

Vision

Thurrock aspires to providing an environment and ethos which supports children and young people to travel on foot, by bike or by public transport. Thurrock wants to embed a culture of sustainable travel for educational journeys, in particularly focusing on walking and cycling, to:

- tackle congestion
- improve air quality
- improve public health
- support community cohesion
- improve road safety

Thurrock seeks to increase the number of children and young people who travel by sustainable modes for educational journeys and ensure educational sites are accessible to promote modal choice.

The drivers for delivering this strategy are:

- Education Act 2006
- The Marmot Review 2010
- Thurrock Council's Corporate Priorities
- Thurrock Transport Strategy
- Healthy Weight Strategy
- Air Quality Strategy (AQMA)
- Health and Air Quality Group
- Healthy Child Strategy
- Healthy Child programme

Background

The average education trip length has increased by nearly 25% to 3 miles since 1995/97, meaning people are travelling further for education than they used to. As a result the average duration of trips for education purposes has increased by over a quarter to 19 minutes. The most common mode of transport for education trips in 2013 was by car (42%). 40% walked with a further 12% of trips made by local bus. Since 1995/97, the proportion of trips where children walked to school has fallen from 47% to 42%. Over the same period, the proportion of trips made by car has increased from 30% to 34%, with the average distance increased by a third to 2.7 miles, suggesting as education trips get longer, more children are travelling to school by car, rather than walking.

In Thurrock, just over 50% of pupils living within the walking threshold of their school currently walk and over 1,500 of those living within the walking threshold are currently driven to school by car.

The 2012/13 data shows Thurrock to have an obesity prevalence in Year 6-aged children of 19.8%, which is more than double the local prevalence at Reception-age

and higher than both the East of England average (17.0%) and the England average (18.9%).

Pupil and Staff Headcount

There are 52 schools in Thurrock; 39 primary, 10 secondary and two special schools. There is one Pupil-Referral Unit school. In total there are 26,484 pupils in schools across Thurrock broken down by:

- 16,934 at primary school (Nursery to Year 6)
- 9,103 at secondary school (Year 7 to Year 13)
- 347 at Special Needs school (all years)
- 100 at PRU (all years)

Data for the 20 maintained schools in Thurrock for 2014 indicate there are 1,212 teaching staff. This doesn't include staff at non-maintained schools.

Current travel patterns

Schools are encouraged to provide information on how their students travel to school through Modeshift Stars. The travel mode share data provided by the ten schools in 2014/15 shows that 48% of students walk to school with further 8% and 6% travelling by bike or on scooter respectively. With the sample of 4,695, a quarter of students are driven to school by private vehicle. In total, 3.3% travel by bus of which 0.7% travel by a dedicated bus, including Home to School transport.

Home to School Transport

Free education transport is only available for children that attend their nearest school and who meet the set criteria. They must:

- live more than 2 miles from their nearest suitable school for children under 8 years old
- live more than 3 miles from their nearest suitable school for children 8 years old or over

Education transport is under review. We currently provide transport for children under 11 years old who live 2 miles or more from their nearest suitable school. Transport is also provided for children aged 11 to 16 who live 3 miles or more from their nearest suitable school.

It is available for:

- children with special education needs, disabilities or mobility problems, subject to assessment
- children whose route to school is unsafe
- children from low income families, in receipt of free school meals or where parents or carers receive working tax credit at the maximum rate.
- distance as mentioned above

A school within a catchment area identified by an academy or a free school may not be considered the nearest school for the purpose of determining eligibility for transport.

Modeshift STARS

Modeshift STARS is the national scheme that recognises schools that demonstrate excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel.

The scheme encourages schools to increase levels of sustainable and active travel and in so doing, improve the health and well-being of children and young people.

All schools in Thurrock are encouraged to participate in the programme and provide information on the initiatives delivered and the progress achieved each year. There are currently eight schools awarded bronze with one school awarded silver.

Modeshift STARS is a tool for Thurrock Council to monitor travel behaviour at individual schools and to obtain information on the measures to be implemented. Funding and support for transport initiatives is prioritised to those schools who actively engage in Modeshift STARS.

Initiatives

There are a range of initiatives available to schools to enable and encourage travel by sustainable modes

- Active Travel Coordinator – provides advice on initiatives to implement
- Modeshift STARS
- Bikeability Officers – provides training
- Scooter Training Officers
- School Crossing Patrol Officer -
- Parent & Child Road Safety Training
- Pedestrian Road Safety Training
- Walk to School Week
- Walking Buses
- Park & Stride

School Support

Technical support and advice is provided to schools by the council's Active Travel Coordinator. This role is funded through Highways & Transportation. The role focuses on providing support to schools to encourage travel by active modes (walking & cycling). The role is the delivery mechanism for implementing this strategy. Support is prioritised based on participation in Modeshift STARS participation.

Aim

This strategy has been developed in response to the Education Act 2006 and builds on the previous Sustainable Modes of Travel strategies. It focusses actions to promote and develop initiatives to deliver sustainable, healthy and safer journeys for education.

The overall aim of the strategy over the next three academic years is to increase the proportion of children and young people who travel by sustainable and active modes, including walking, cycling and public transport for educational purposes, reducing the dependency on private vehicle and embedding a culture of sustainable travel at education sites.

Objectives

The strategy is guided by three key objectives.

- I. Increase the percentage of pupils and students travelling sustainably and actively to schools and colleges
- II. Tackle congestion and improve road safety and air quality on the network surrounding education establishments
- III. Target provision and allocation of home-to-school transport

Delivery Plan & Approach

The objectives will be supported through implementation of a two year delivery plan. The delivery plan is a focussed list of measures to be delivered by working with different council departments, schools and local agencies.

The delivery plan includes implementation of 'borough-wide' initiatives and 'school specific' measures. Borough-wide initiatives include actions which impact all schools and centre around:

- Increasing awareness of sustainable transport at schools
- Removing barriers to sustainable travel at schools
- Providing initiatives to encourage sustainable travel
- Improving Home to School Transport provision

'School-specific' measures help to identify and prioritise those schools which would benefit from transport support and initiatives to help tackle the issues of air quality, health and road safety.

The delivery plan is shown below and identifies actions, responsibilities and key performance indicators, along with delivery timescales. The delivery plan is to be reviewed and reported on an annual basis.

The Council's Active Travel Coordinator will be the primary resource for the delivery of the strategy.

Delivery Plan

Area	Actions	Target	Lead	Key Performance Indicators
Borough Wide				
1	<p>Increase awareness of sustainable transport at schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage all schools to participate in Modeshift STARS Provide overview of school successes at Headteacher Briefings meeting Work with media to promote sustainable travel best practice at schools Provide sustainable travel presentations at key schools 	August 2016	Active Travel Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of school participating in Modeshift STARS Number of Headteacher Briefing meetings attended Number of articles prepared and posted in local media Number of sustainable travel presentations held
2	<p>Remove barriers to sustainable travel at schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaken accessibility mapping at each school to inform travel measures to implement Encourage all schools to update their travel plan and progress through Modeshift STARS Implement measures highlighted in Modeshift STARS Engage with the revisions to key strategies (including Housing Strategy) 	August 2016	Active Travel Coordinator Traffic Engineering Strategy Leads (incl. Housing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Modeshift STAR profiles updated Number and value of school travel measures implemented Accessibility Values for all schools Revisions and inclusions to strategies
3	<p>Provide initiatives to encourage sustainable travel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modeshift STARS Level 1 & 2 Bikeability Training Scooter Training School Crossing Patrol Officers Parent & Child Road Safety Training Pedestrian Road Safety Training Walk to School Week Walking Buses Park & Stride Seek additional funding sources for initiatives 	August 2016	Active Travel Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools with Modeshift STARS accreditation Number of schools and pupils accessing Bikeability Training Number of schools and pupils accessing Scooter Training Number of School Crossing Patrol Officers Number of parents & children access Road Safety Training Number of schools and pupils accessing Pedestrian Training Number of schools participating in Walk to School Week Number of organised Walking Buses Number of Park & Stride schemes delivered
4	<p>Improve Home to School Transport provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with revision of Home to School Transport policy Review Home to School transport allocations and suitable transport initiatives Assess school expansion and new development plans in line with HST allocations Engage with the Pupil Placement Planning group 	August 2016	Passenger Transport Unit Director of Adults, Health & Commissioning Children, Education & Families Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisions to Home to School Transport policy Cost of Home to School Transport provision Number of pupils receiving Home to School transport by type PPP meetings attended

Area	Actions	Target	Lead	Key Performance Indicators
School Specific				
1	Target schools in proximity to Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse schools' proximity to AQMA and determine journeys that travel through AQMA Offer sustainable travel support to schools that impact an AQMA 	August 2017	Active Travel Coordinator Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools engaged Number of schools with Modeshift STARS accreditation Air Quality monitoring (where possible)
2	Target schools in areas of high school-aged obesity prevalence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess schools with the highest obesity prevalence Work with Public Health and offer active travel support to ten schools with the highest obesity prevalence 	August 2017	Active Travel Coordinator Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools engaged Number of schools with Modeshift STARS accreditation Obesity monitoring (where possible)
3	Target schools in areas of high KSI accidents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue monitoring road safety statistics concerning school-aged children or in areas close to a school Focus road safety support at schools of concern 	August 2017	Active Travel Coordinator Traffic Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools engaged Number of schools with Modeshift STARS accreditation RSI statistics (by age)
4	South Essex College to continue implementing their Travel Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the measures contained in the newly adopted Travel Plan Continue providing lectures on sustainable transport Work with Local Authority to increase awareness of sustainable transport Promote successes in local media 	August 2017	South Essex College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual mode-split (staff and students) Sustainable transport measures implemented Number of articles prepared and posted in local media

Funding & Monitoring

The resources to deliver the strategy, including the Active Travel Coordinator role, are primarily funded by Highways & Transportation. Support is also be provided by:

- Public Health
- Education

Initiatives that are available to schools to encourage sustainable travel are funding-dependent and are currently available through Highways & Transportation. Other funding sources will be explored to enable the council to strengthen the offer to schools.

The key performance indicators to assess the effectiveness of this strategy will be monitored on an annual basis, typically during the summer months. The strategy will then be updated depending on outcomes of the monitoring.