



# **SCHOOL TRAVEL STRATEGY**

## Policy Statement

*Final Draft*

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**Milton Keynes Council**

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Government's Road Safety Strategy "Tomorrow's Roads – Safer for Everyone" together with work previously undertaken by the "School Travel Advisory Group" identify many of the problems associated with travel to school.
- 1.2 Milton Keynes Council (MKC) Sustainable Integrated Transport Strategy (SITS.) that was published in January 1999 established the context for the development of the "School Travel Strategy" (STS) within Milton Keynes.
- 1.3 There is a tendency in all sectors of communities to use cars for shorter journeys in preference to walking and cycling. Sometimes this may be for convenience of time, reluctance due to perceptions of danger along a route, or failure to realise the benefits of not using the car.
- 1.4 According to Government figures, at least 1 in 5 cars on the road during the morning rush hour are on the "school run", the results of which are all too common; congestion, pollution, poor health and a greater potential for collisions. Unfortunately, these problems are wider reaching than just parents or pupils – these negative aspects can affect all road users and those who live in a car-filled environment.
- 1.5 The belief of MKC is that the implementation of the STS should not just benefit students travelling to and from school. It should also improve local transport issues for the wider community and assist vulnerable road users, as well as those who are using the schools for other community activities.
- 1.6 The implementation of this strategy relies on co-operation and joint working across many sectors of the Council, Local Councils together with other agencies such as Public Transport Operatives, the Milton Keynes Primary Care Trust (MKPCT) and Thames Valley Police (TVP).
- 1.7 The key to the success of the STS lies with local schools, their staff, pupils, parents and their links with the community around them.
- 1.8 This document sets out the principles, targets and processes by which we aim to introduce this modified STS throughout the Milton Keynes area.

## 2.0 The Aims of the School Travel Strategy

- 2.0 This Strategy aims to improve the safety of all road users travelling to and from the school site. The main emphasis on safety is for vulnerable road users, i.e. children on their school journey, but is also extended to all other members of the community who are affected by the activities and use of the school site. Additionally, priority will be given to those who travel by the most sustainable modes, eg walking, cycling.
- 2.1 What is a school these days? It is not only a place for child education, but increasingly an establishment used by the community for other activities, including social events, sports facilities, adult education etc.
- 2.2 As stated, a school forms a focal point within the community, being a route destination for all its pupils, their parents, school staff and other users within the community. Therefore, there are many journeys that are generated to and from a school site.
- 2.3 Improvements that are made for those travelling to and from the school site are likely to have a beneficial effect on a much wider section of the community, by encouraging more walking and cycling and generally providing safer routes. These improvements will have an impact in reducing local congestion.
- 2.4 The STS aims to provide other benefits:-
- Reduced traffic speeds in the immediate school environment
  - Priority for pedestrians and cyclists
  - An increased use of more sustainable modes of transport
  - A greater awareness of public transport
  - A reduction in traffic flow and congestion
  - Improved health through an increase in exercise
  - Improved air quality leading to a decrease in pollution, eg CO<sub>2</sub> and particulates
  - Improvements to the local environment
  - Consideration to pupils transferring from primary to secondary education

- A reduction in the level of personal injury incidents
- A greater awareness of personal safety, road safety and sustainability issues
- A greater independence through increased confidence
- A reduction in the level of unnecessary vehicle engine usage near schools

2.5 The Strategy will be implemented through a variety of approaches including:-

- Establishing local School Travel Plans (STP's)
- Encouraging pedestrian, cycle and pre-driver training opportunities
- Introducing suitable low cost physical road safety measures, ie Traffic Management Outside Schools (TMOS)
- Introducing larger area safety measures by the means of Safer Routes to School Schemes
- Delivering Road Safety Education in Schools
- Promoting Environmental Transport Education in Schools
- Identifying public awareness campaigns

## 3.0 Targets

3.1 Many of the targets that MKC is seeking to achieve through the STS are included within other Council strategy documents, such as, SITS, the Road Safety Strategy, and the Air Quality Strategy. Additionally, the STS assists in delivering some of the key strategic aims adopted by the Milton Keynes Crime and Community Partnership. These include a reduction in casualties resulting from road traffic collisions, greater community awareness regarding personal safety and a reduction in the level of violent crimes.

3.2 Targets specifically related to the aims of the STS are:

- A 40% reduction in the total number of killed and serious road casualties by 2010 (Currently locally under review in the Road Safety Monitoring Plan 2004/05)
- A 50% reduction in the number of children killed and seriously injured as road casualties by 2010
- A 10% reduction in the level of slight road casualties by 2010
- 20 STPs developed per year
- Up to 10 Schools in the TMOS programme per year
- At least one major “Safer Routes to School” Scheme implemented per year

3.3 Progress with monitoring all the targets will rely heavily upon liaison with other Council departments and other agencies such as TVP, MKPCT, Local Councils, schools and local residents.

## 4.0 The Process

- 4.1 The success of the STS relies on each school developing a STP.
- 4.2 There are 111 schools and 4 planned new schools for completion by September 2005 within Milton Keynes with an approximate number of 36,300 pupils, 50,000 parents / guardians and 4500 educational staff. There are expansion plans for further housing in the Milton Keynes area and new schools will be incorporated into these plans.
- 4.3 By assessing journey patterns and travel modes to and from a school, governors and educational staff can greatly improve the school environment by developing a STP.
- 4.4 A major part of the development of the STP will be consultation with all concerned groups in and around the local community.
- 4.5 Opportunities will exist for schools to include the development of the plan within classroom activities across a wide section of the curriculum, at all Key Stages. Schools already involved with the Healthy Schools programme will have a head start, as there is now a requirement to complete a STP as part of the Healthy Schools Award process.
- 4.6 Implementation of physical traffic management and road safety measures may support a STP, with priority given to those areas which are higher in the Safer Routes to School selection process. Schools that have not produced a STP, will not be considered for Safer Routes to School Schemes, except in very exceptional circumstances.

## 5.0 School Travel Plans

- 5.1 The development of successful STPs rely upon the energy and enthusiasm of dedicated individuals who are willing to progress the project on behalf of a school and forge links within the local community.
- 5.2 Promotion of the strategy and the need to develop a Plan will be targeted at head teachers and school governors. Local Councils, and residents associations will be given information and encouraged to liaise and work with their local schools.
- 5.3 In developing a STP, consideration should be given to the following:-
- Walking and cycling initiatives
  - Road Safety training and education
  - Promoting the use of public transport
  - Highway and traffic engineering measures
  - School curricular activities
  - School management issues
  - Involving parents
  - Involving local businesses
  - Publicity
  - Car use reduction
- 5.4 Materials are available from the Road Safety Team for schools that contain advice, information and resources in the form of a “Toolkit” (Section 8) for use in developing and implementing their own STP.



## 6.0 Traffic Management and Road Safety Measures

- 6.1 An audit of the existing traffic management facilities (e.g. signing, lining, cycle parking) at schools will be undertaken and where low cost measures can be justified, improvements will be made when a STP is in place.
- 6.2 Funds currently exist through the Local Transport Plan process for the implementation of larger scale Safer Routes to School Schemes, which might cover several schools, are limited. It is intended, however, that at least one scheme be implemented per year.
- 6.3 In establishing a Safer Routes to School Scheme, MKC staff will work with the schools in identifying action required, undertaking surveys, developing suitable proposals and consulting locally. Much of the work involved will have been carried out in establishing the STP.
- 6.4 Full guidance on methodology and procedures is to be provided to schools in the “School Travel Toolkit”.
- 6.5 The success of the STS depends largely on ownership of the proposals by the schools and other local groups within the area. The Road Safety Team will work closely with the schools, and other interested parties to ensure its success.

## 7.0 Training Initiatives

- 7.1 The Road Safety Team will promote Road Safety Training initiatives to schools where possible, for Pedestrian, Cycle and Pre-Driver Training.
- 7.2 Priority will be given to schools:
- Who have completed a STP.
  - Schools that have a Safer Routes to School Scheme or TMOS Scheme associated with them, as the result of a STP.
  - Schools that are operating a Walking Bus as the result of a STP.
- 7.3 Currently a problem exists with pedestrian and cycle training initiatives, in terms of a lack of assistance from parents, teachers and other volunteers for conducting the training. As with many other local authorities, MKC has found difficulties in recruiting volunteers, for training and this continues to be an ongoing issue. For training to happen, we must encourage people to help, as MKC does not have the resources within the Road Safety Team to operate these training courses.
- 7.4 Cycle Training is currently undergoing changes nationally and advice on the future direction of these courses is being developed.
- 7.5 Pre-driver training initiatives for Y12 / 13 students to produce safer, more environmentally friendly drivers can be slotted into the Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) or Citizenship curricula. Work is already completed in this area via Theatre in Education and the “For my Girlfriend” campaign.

## 8.0 The Toolkit

- 8.1 The STS depends primarily on the acceptance of STPs, the implementation of a variety of measures, including physical engineering, the availability of training initiatives and a wide range of publicity materials.
- 8.2 For schools to produce a successful STP, a School Travel Toolkit will be produced, which with the guidance of the Road Safety Team will enable schools to produce STPs of a standard acceptable by the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).
- 8.3 This toolkit will include both National and Local guidance documents for producing STPs and information about setting up “Walking Buses” and Car Share initiatives. Also information about physical measures and parking regulations, which will provide guidance about what is feasible at an early stage, so a school does not raise its expectations with the Plan, only to have them dashed at a later date.
- 8.4 The Road Safety Team will be able to assist and advise schools with these resources.

## 9.0 Funding

9.1 Implementation of physical measures or facilities and enhancement to training initiatives identified in the STP will rely on the following resources:

- The Local Transport Plan (to secure capital financing)
- MKC Revenue budgets
- Schools / Education funding
- Sponsorship
- Direct Capital funding from DfES / DfT (if available).
- Contributions from Local Councils / Associations

9.2 Allocation of funds or resources to a school, the immediate vicinity, or a wider area, will largely depend on the MKC Safer Routes to School selection scheme, for those schools, that have completed a STP. Possible revisions to the selection criteria, may take into consideration the likelihood of potential reductions in collisions and car usage if schemes are implemented.

## 10.0 Monitoring

- 10.1 A monitoring programme will be established for each STP adopted or Safer Routes to School Scheme created, enabling comparison of data to show changes and progress towards targets.
- 10.2 Currently monitoring is carried out in the form of a “hands up” classroom school travel survey. DfES are investigating the possibility of integrating this data within Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) collected by schools for the DfES every January commencing 2006.
- 10.3 Some monitoring, such as vehicle speed and collision data has already been carried out for the earliest Safer Routes to School Schemes, but it is necessary for 3 years worth of data to be collected before the information is meaningful.

## Glossary

School Travel Strategy	The Strategy document explaining the way forward, i.e. improvements to road safety, encouraging more walking and cycling schools and tackling school travel problems.
School Travel Toolkit	This will be developed and taken to schools as they express an interest in School Travel Plans, explaining the aims of the strategy and offering advice, guidance, teaching notes and resources to help a school develop a STP.
School Travel Plan	What every school will be encouraged to produce, involving all interested parties, to ease congestion, reduce car use and encourage more walking, cycling and public transport journeys to school.
Safer Routes to School Schemes	These will be implemented in the area around schools that have identified problems in their STP, and have been prioritised by the Council's selection procedures. This could result in new Traffic Management measures and facilities and Road Safety initiatives.
Traffic Management Outside Schools	These are minor schemes such as signing and lining works that will be implemented in the area around schools that have identified problems in their STP, and have been prioritised by the Council's selection



procedures.

Notes: