

Redcar & Cleveland Sustainable Travel to School Strategy

February 2024



Thriving children, fulfilling their dreams.

Contents

1	Background to the Strategy	3
2	National Policy Context	3
2.1	Education and Inspections Act 2006	3
2.2	Decarbonising transport: a better, greener Britain (2021)	4
2.3	Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking (Cycling and Walking Plan for England 2020)	4
3	Regional context	4
3.1	Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA)	4
3.2	Tees Valley Combined Authority – Strategic Transport Plan 2020 - 2030	5
3.3	Redcar and Cleveland Local Implementation Plan for Transport	5
3.2	Tees Valley Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Programme (LCWIP)	5
4	Assessing Local Needs	6
5	Vision and Aims of this Strategy	7
	• Priority 1: Work with schools and other key stakeholders to assess and understand school travel needs across the borough	7
	• Priority 2: Take a facilitatory role to help schools access resources and funding to support sustainable travel	7
	• Priority 3: Maintain and extend partnerships with relevant local and regional stakeholders to promote sustainable travel	7
	• Priority 4: To integrate sustainable travel to school within the planning process	7
6	What are we doing?	7
6.1	Redcar and Eston School Sport Partnership – Bikeability	7
6.2	Tees Valley Walking & Cycling Hubs	7
7	Strategy Action Plan	8

1 Background to the Strategy

The value of sustainable travel has long been recognised and now receives broad political support across the country, underpinned by key national policies. By enabling and encouraging sustainable modes of travel within our borough we can reduce traffic congestion and pollution and increase physical activity, supporting the council's broader priorities of reducing carbon emissions and improving the physical health and mental wellbeing of residents. Journeys to and from school present a key opportunity to make a positive difference to local communities, this strategy sets out how the Council will work with schools to encourage sustainable and 'active' travel.

As a Local Authority Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council has a duty under section 508A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to produce on an annual basis a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy.

This strategy is part of a wider package of duties in relation to home to school travel and transport. The intention of the Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy is to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to children and young people of compulsory school age who travel to receive education or training in the Borough of Redcar & Cleveland.

2 National Policy Context

2.1 Education and Inspections Act 2006

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

- An assessment of the travel and transport needs of children, and young people within the authority's area;
- An audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority's area that may be used when travelling to and from, or between schools/ institutions;
- A strategy to develop the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are best catered for;
- The promotion of sustainable travel and transport modes on the journey to, from, and between schools and other institutions; and
- The publication of a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy.

The Act defines sustainable modes of travel as those that the local authority considers 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.

2.2 Decarbonising transport: a better, greener Britain (2021)

The Department for Transport's Decarbonisation Plan sets out the commitment and actions needed to decarbonise the entire transport system in the UK. Increasing cycling and walking forms a key priority within the Plan with a commitment to deliver a world class cycling and walking network in England by 2040. The plan aims for half of all journeys in towns and cities to be cycled or walked by 2030, to deliver this the government have committed an investment of £2 billion over 5 years. These priorities are then taken forward via the Cycling and Walking Plan for England 2020.

2.3 Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking (Cycling and Walking Plan for England 2020)

This plan describes the vision to make England a great walking and cycling nation with a number of priorities relating to school travel. The plan recognises that nationally around 50% of primary school children and a quarter of secondary school children are driven to school, noting that this has more than trebled in the last 40 years. The plan highlights that the school run creates pollution, congestion and danger both around schools and for the wider road network. To address this the plan seeks to create more 'school streets' whereby local authorities can close streets to through traffic and place parking restrictions at school pick up and drop off times. This will be supported with further investment in cycle training and behaviour change programmes to support cycling and walking to school including Bikeability training and Walk to School Outreach.

The strategy includes a target to increase the number of 5 to 10 year olds who walk to school from 33% in 2014 to 49% by 2025.

The plan advises that £2 billion of funding will be channelled through local authorities to support its aims with the intention for half of all journeys in towns and cities to be walked or cycled by 2030. To deliver the Cycling and Walking Plan, Active Travel, a new funder, commissioning body and inspectorate, has been established. Active Travel will work with highway authorities to grade performance in respect of active travel, this will work in a similar way to Ofsted for schools, aiming to identify failings and raise standards. The outcome of any assessment will influence the funding the authority receives for other forms of transport.

3 Regional context

3.1 Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA)

The Tees Valley Combined Authority was created in April 2016 with the aim to drive economic growth and job creation in the Tees Valley region. TVCA is a partnership of five authorities; Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees, working closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership, wider business community and other partners to make local decisions to support the growth of the Tees Valley economy. Under the devolution deal with Government, TVCA are taking on responsibilities previously held by Westminster and Whitehall; for transport, infrastructure, skills, business investment, housing, culture and tourism.

TVCA have a key role in co-ordinating sustainable transport work throughout the Tees Valley including co-ordinating bids for funding.

3.2 Tees Valley Combined Authority – Strategic Transport Plan 2020 - 2030

The focus of this plan is on improving the transport system for local people and businesses ensuring integration between different transport modes. It seeks to provide genuine alternatives to the car to improve accessibility, but also to facilitate modal shift to more sustainable modes and reduce carbon emissions. Much of the plan focuses on the broader travel infrastructure across the Tees Valley aiming to improve connectivity with other areas of the UK, and internationally via Tees Valley Airport, to develop the area as a major centre for business. It also seeks to improve local transport networks recognising that this requires action on a larger scale. The investment priorities as they relate to school transport are:

- Deliver and maintain a frequent, high quality, reliable and integrated public transport network.
- Deliver and maintain safe walking and cycling routes and local bus services that link housing sites to key destinations and transport interchanges for onward journeys.

The plan seeks to create more reliable and affordable public transport, walking and cycling options available citing that this will support local residents to ‘get to study at a nearby school, college or university’.

3.3 Redcar and Cleveland Local Implementation Plan for Transport

The Local Implementation Plan forms part of the Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan and sets out the Council’s priorities for transport as the borough experiences significant investment in industry, housing, the visitor economy and the development at Freeport Teesport. The plan sets out a number of schemes to help residents get where they need to be making it easier to choose to walk, cycle and use public transport. Improving walking and cycling routes to encourage healthier and environmentally friendly travel.

The Plan sets out actions that will support students choosing a sustainable mode of travel to their school or college. Examples are a cycle route between Brotton and Skelton enabling better walk and cycle access to Freeborough Academy and an already delivered improvement to the Black Path in South Bank better connecting schools in the west of the Borough to homes.

Improvements to the bus network being delivered by TVCA will increase sustainable travel options for children and young people that are travelling across the borough – particularly where young people are travelling to further education in Redcar and Middlesbrough.

3.2 Tees Valley Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Programme (LCWIP)

The Tees Valley Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Programme (LCWIP) takes forward the government’s ambitions to increase cycling and walking. The business case for the programme sets out priorities for investment to be delivered over a number of phases. The ambitious plans aim to fill gaps and improve the network of cycling and walking routes to be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable, and attractive so that cycling and walking become the norm as transport options for shorter trips.

TVCA contract with Sustrans for the provision of services to residents that encourage walking, cycling and wheeling. As part of this work Sustrans are now joining with the local Bikeability

delivery partner to help deliver cycle training for disabled children and will be working with special schools in the Borough.

4 Assessing Local Needs

The last survey of school travel needs was under taken in October 2018 and explored school pupils' views of the local transport network and asked how they got to and from school. This identified walking, followed by car, as the most popular forms of transport. It also identified a reliance on parents to provide transport to towns and leisure activities, identifying concerns about the availability, reliability and cost of transport as well as worries about anti-social behaviour, particularly when travelling in the evening which presented a barrier to using public transport.

As this data is now out of date, and we have a different school pupil cohort entirely, analysis of this survey has not been factored into this strategy. Instead, a key action will be to complete an updated survey to inform a refreshed version of this strategy and provide evidence for Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council's Strategic Transport Team to share with the Tees Valley Combine Authority.

Whilst this strategy focuses predominately on school transport, it should be acknowledged that children and young people, including young adults, have an increased reliance on public transport in comparison to other demographic groups. In contrast to the other Tees Valley local authorities, Redcar & Cleveland is the most geographically spread out of the five local authorities which presents challenges in respect of the public transport network.

Anecdotal feedback from frontline child and family practitioners, obtained during a Focus Group regarding characteristics of vulnerable children held in January 2024, identified the limited youth and leisure offer for children and young people as a challenge. Practitioners specifically highlighted transport to access the available services as a barrier for young people, the requirement to take multiple buses to reach some towns and the cost of transport as a key issue. This also presents barriers to employment as young people reach working age. For example, some of our Redcar & Cleveland Care Leavers have highlighted the financial burden of traveling to work where this involves two bus providers and they have had to purchase two bus passes. We hope to explore and evidence these challenges further through the needs assessment with schools, feedback from other stakeholders and via work with the Tees Valley Combined Authority.

5 Vision and Aims of this Strategy

Our vision is that:

“Wherever possible students will have the opportunity to travel to school using sustainable modes of transport”

We recognise that journeys to and from school present a significant opportunity to support the physical health of children and young people and that reducing the number of frequent and short journeys, by encouraging the use of sustainable transport modes, has a positive impact on reducing carbon emissions.

We do however understand that this isn't feasible for all families and we will work with schools to facilitate more opportunities for sustainable travel taking a facilitatory role.

The aims of this strategy, as set out in the action plan at Appendix A are to:

- **Priority 1:** Work with schools and other key stakeholders to assess and understand school travel needs across the borough.
- **Priority 2:** Take a facilitatory role to help schools access resources and funding to support sustainable travel.
- **Priority 3:** Maintain and extend partnerships with relevant local and regional stakeholders to promote sustainable travel.
- **Priority 4:** To integrate sustainable travel to school within the planning process.

6 What are we doing?

There are a range of initiatives operating in Redcar & Cleveland to support active travel.

6.1 Redcar and Eston School Sport Partnership – Bikeability

Redcar and Eston School Sport Partnership is a Community Interest Company aiming to encourage children and young people to be and stay active. They work across a partnership of primary schools supporting children up to age 11 and offer several Active Travel Services

6.2 Tees Valley Walking & Cycling Hubs

Hubs are located across Tees Valley with a Hub operating from the Palace Hub, Redcar Esplanade. The service is delivered by the national walking, wheeling and cycling charity Sustrans under contract to TVCA. They offer free bike MOTs, bike repairs and maintenance courses, refurbished low cost bikes, cycle training and guided rides and walks, personalised route planning and cycle clinic sessions in schools and workplaces, with actions aimed at getting more residents to walk, cycle or wheel where they can.

6.3 Small match funding grants for infrastructure.

The Council uses some of the funding it receives from the national City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement to help schools invest in cycle shelters and other infrastructure that support active travel to school.

7 Strategy Action Plan

Priority	Action	Who	By When
Priority 1: Work with schools and other key stakeholders to assess and understand school travel needs across the borough.	Work with schools to obtain sign up to undertake a school travel survey of pupils.	Education/ Children's Service Improvement Team	Jul 2024
	Design and run a school travel survey, to be distributed by schools.		Autumn Term 24/25
	Analyse the findings of the school travel survey.		Jan 2025
	Disseminate the findings of the school travel survey including the provision of an overall report.		Feb 2025
Priority 2: Take a facilitatory role to help schools access resources and funding to support sustainable travel.	Develop a toolkit for schools to support them in developing a School Travel Plan.	Education/ Children's Service Improvement Team/ Strategic Transport.	Dec 2024
	Provide school specific data from the school travel survey upon request.	Children's Service Improvement Team	Feb 2025
	Via the Council's Strategic Transport Service provide a communication channel for schools to feedback their requirements in respect of capital investment for school transport, feeding this into local and regional transport plans as appropriate.	Strategic Transport	Continual Action
	Utilise our local education partnership and schools network to communicate any developments, opportunities and services that support sustainable travel.	Strategic Transport	Continual Action
Priority 3: Maintain and extend partnerships with relevant local and regional stakeholders in order to promote sustainable travel.	Continue to work with TVCA on actions to deliver walking, cycling and public transport improvements.	Strategic Transport	Continual Action
	Continue to work with other Council services to deliver regeneration schemes that improve connectivity.	Strategic Transport	Continual Action
	Continue to work with You've Got This (Sport England pilot project to support more active lifestyles)	Strategic Transport	Continual Action

Priority 4: To integrate sustainable travel to school within the planning process.	Continue to apply Local Plan policies to planning applications.	Strategic Transport	Continual Action
	Ensure that the latest guidance and design principles are included in the next version of the Local Plan	Planning	To be agreed