

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Net Zero, Environment and Transport
DATE	10 June 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Active Travel for School Journeys
REPORT NUMBER	CR&E/25/139
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	David Dunne
REPORT AUTHOR	Tony Maric / Laurie Robertson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	8

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. This report provides information to Members on work that is underway and / or planned within Aberdeen to promote and encourage more, and safe, active travel to school and provides an update on work that is underway to launch a School Streets pilot in Aberdeen.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1. Note the range of work that is currently ongoing to support and enable active travel to school in Aberdeen;
- 2.2. Instruct the Chief Officer – Operations, following consultation with the Convenor of the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee and the Convenor of the Education and Children's Services Committee, to determine which school would be most suitable to take forward as a Schools Street pilot project, and for this decision to be informed by the criteria set out in report presented to the [21st January 2025](#) Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee on implementing suitable schemes; and
- 2.3. Instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to bring a Service Update on progress of the Schools Street pilot back to this Committee by the end of 2025.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1. In response to a report on active travel to school presented to the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee on [21st January 2025](#), the Committee:
- Instructed the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning, following consultation with the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning and Chief Officer – Operations, to write to chairs of Parent Councils and Head Teachers across the city offering support with the development of

a School Travel Plan, with priority given to those schools who had recorded road safety incidents and near misses on nearby roads in the last two years;

- Instructed the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to ensure that any travel behaviour change programme for 2025/26 continued to support healthy, active and safe travel amongst children and young people and report back to this Committee within six months on what steps could be taken to increase uptake of under-utilised interventions such as walking buses or bike trains; and,
- Instructed the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning, following consultation with the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning and the Chief Officer - Operations, to write to chairs of Parent Councils and Head Teachers to invite applications from suitable schools including secondary schools for a School Streets pilot, and to report back to this Committee within twelve months with the level of interest received, and any proposed next step.

3.2. This report outlines how Officers have satisfied these instructions.

School Travel Plans and Behaviour Change Initiatives

3.3. In April 2025, Officers compiled a [survey](#) to find out what help and advice schools would like in order to help to implement their School Travel Plans, and what barriers, if any, they have found when trying to implement ideas such as walking buses or bike trains. All primary, secondary and independent schools in Aberdeen were sent a link to the survey on 14th April 2025, with school staff encouraged to liaise with Parent Councils when responding. Schools were asked to complete the survey within 2 weeks.

3.4. Initial analysis of the results shows that 20 schools replied to the survey and, of these, 16 schools had current Travel Plans in place. All schools who responded had participated in a variety of the different activities outlined in the survey. The most commonly-identified intervention (10 schools) that schools would like to have in place but do not were 'School Footprints' demarcating safe walking routes to school (see paragraph 3.5). Officers have since secured funding to deliver additional footprints at schools this year (see paragraph 3.7). A number of schools also stated willingness to take part in campaigns and educational initiatives such as Bike Week, the Big Pedal and the Big Street Survey, therefore officers will re-circulate the existing Travel Plan Guidance to schools, which contains more information on and web links to such interventions. In terms of walking bikes and cycle trains specifically, a number of schools were supportive of these schemes and had trialled them, but the biggest barrier to making them permanent was a lack of volunteers to sustain the trains on a permanent basis, and uncertainty over roles and responsibilities. Given that officers are aware of a successful 'Bike Bus' running in Countesswells School, those schools who have expressed an interest in walking and bike buses will be encouraged to engage with Countesswells School on their approach to successfully setting this up, and attracting and retaining volunteers. Further analysis of the survey outcomes will inform where additional support is needed for schools in the 2025/26 school year.

- 3.5 Officers from the Transport Strategy and Programmes team recently collaborated with students and staff at Brimmond School in Bucksburn to improve routes to school and cycling facilities. Coloured footprints have been painted on traffic-free footpaths connecting the school with parking bays in the surrounding area to support walking journeys to school as well as Park & Stride opportunities. Each footpath has a designated colour, facilitating safe journeys for children and young people who want to travel to school either independently or with friends. A new cycle track was also introduced to the playground, allowing children to develop road safety awareness through play. The cycle track was an instant hit, with students bringing their own bikes from home or using bikes supplied by the school. A [video clip](#) has been included of the work undertaken at Brimmond School and the reaction to it from the head teacher

Funding Sources

- 3.6 External funding for active travel projects in schools during 2025/26 has been secured via the Local Authority Direct Award (LADA) funding stream from Transport Scotland. This amounts to £92,946. Officers also successfully applied to the Nestrans People and Places (P&P) funding stream for an additional £180,040. At the March 2025 meeting of the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee, Members also allocated Bus Lane Enforcement (BLE) surplus for active travel education in schools totalling £350,000 over 3 years.
- 3.7 The table below shows the behaviour change projects aimed specifically at schools and the available funding streams that are proposed for this funding in 2025/26. Other P&P projects being delivered in 2025/26 are also likely to include an element of schools engagement, although the details of this are still to be determined.

Project	Funding Stream	Revenue	Capital	Total Amount
School Travel Planning Assistance	LADA	£8,916	£10,000	£18,916
Travel Tracker	LADA	£42,925	£31,105	£74,030
I Bike (delivered through Sustrans)	BLE	£105,000	£11,667	£116,667
School Cycle Parking Shelters	P&P	£7,000	£60,000	£67,000
School Footprints	P&P	£7,000	£20,000	£27,000
School Streets Pilot	P&P	£7,000	£20,000	£27,000
Learn to Ride, Bikeability and Bike Doctor	P&P	£59,040	£0.00	£59,040
Totals		£236,881	£152,772	£389,653

- 3.8 The outcomes of the school survey mentioned above will help inform the work programme and prioritisation of these funding streams in the current financial year.

School Streets

- 3.9 In April 2025, Officers also issued an Expression of Interest Form to all schools across the City to ask them to signify their interest in a potential future School Streets pilot.
- 3.10 School Streets are areas around schools where motorised traffic is restricted during pupil drop-off and pick-up times. The concept is firmly established in other areas of Scotland, the UK and Europe, with much research and evaluation published. The main benefits of School Streets are identified as:
- A reduction in car traffic around schools;
 - Lower vehicle speeds on School Streets and surrounding streets;
 - Increased feelings of safety on the journey to school;
 - Improved air quality on affected streets; and,
 - Increased physical activity, with more pupils walking, wheeling and cycling to school.
- 3.11 7 schools showed an initial interest in the School Streets pilot, via the Expression of Interest Form. These expressions of interest will now be assessed by officers to determine which school would be most suitable to take forward as a pilot project. The final decision on which school to progress as a pilot project would be agreed in consultation with the Convenor of the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee and the Convenor of the Education and Children's Services Committee.
- 3.12 It is officer's intention that, upon identification of a suitable school, the pilot project will commence this financial year. Progress on the pilot would be closely monitored and an update reported back to Members through a Service Update.
- 3.13 The rollout of 20mph zones will have further benefits for pupils travelling to and from school, and is the subject of a separate report on the Committee's agenda.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The projects described in this report will be funded via a range of external funding streams, as shown in section 3.7.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation of this report

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The projects listed in this report aim to enable and encourage more children, their families and school staff, to travel sustainably to school, thus reducing the impact of the journey to school on carbon emissions and supporting local air quality improvements.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Failing to support healthy and active travel amongst children and young people could put at risk the Council's ability to meet a number of strategic objectives in relation to health and wellbeing, transport and the environment.	Continue to work with schools to deliver travel behaviour change programmes and incentives.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	Failing to support healthy and active travel amongst children and young people could put at risk the Council's ability to meet net zero and air quality obligations.	Continue to work with schools to deliver travel behaviour change programmes and incentives.	L	Yes
Compliance	No significant risks identified	N/A	L	Yes
Operational	No significant risks identified	N/A	L	Yes
Reputational	No significant risks identified	N/A	L	Yes
Financial	No significant risks identified	N/A	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

Council Delivery Plan 2024	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	<p>The proposal within this report supports the delivery of the following aspect of the policy statement:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options to make travel to school safer and more child-friendly and to reduce vehicle congestion at school gates.
Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026	
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposal within this report supports the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 13: <i>Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate</i>, in that encouraging less car travel will contribute to emissions reduction.</p> <p>The proposal also supports the delivery of Stretch Outcome 14: <i>Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking; 5% of people cycling and wheeling as main mode of travel and a 5% reduction in car miles by 2026</i>, in that they seek to support, and create the conditions for, more walking, wheeling and cycling to school.</p>
Regional and City Strategies	<p>The proposal within this report supports the Regional and Local Transport Strategies and the Net Zero Mobility Plan, by supporting and enabling a shift to active and sustainable modes of transport, thus reducing the impact of transport on the environment.</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Previous Integrated Impact Assessment has been reviewed and changes made relating to date of Committee.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[10.1 21st January, Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee Report on Active Travel to School](#)

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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