

5. School travel planning

5.1 General approach in each town

5.1.1 Overview

All three of the towns had established school travel plan programmes ahead of the Sustainable Travel Town initiative: Peterborough from around 2000, Worcester in around 2001 and Darlington, somewhat later, in 2003. The three local authorities all benefited from Government funding for school travel advisers, available to all authorities from April 2004, through the Travelling to School Initiative, a programme jointly established by the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Department for Education and Schools (DfES), subsequently the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)¹. Worcestershire and Peterborough had also benefited from an earlier DfT bursary programme, which funded school travel plan coordinator posts for some local authorities between 2001 and 2004.

In both Darlington and Worcester, the Sustainable Travel Town funding was used to expand the staff time spent on school travel. In Darlington, this made it possible to turn a part-time position into a full-time one, whilst in Worcester it enabled the authority to fund a school travel adviser dedicated to the town, as one of three covering the whole of Worcestershire. In Peterborough, where there was a higher initial allocation of staff time to school travel, there was no comparable step change in staffing following the start of the Sustainable Travel Town initiative in 2004 (see 5.3.1). Peterborough's school travel work was initially located within road safety, and did not become part of the *Travelchoice* programme until 2008.

In all the towns, the provision of Government capital grants for schools with school travel plans, made available from 2004, played a critical role in the strategy for engaging schools. These are grants, awarded to state-funded schools, by the DCSF. They are for measures on the school site to encourage sustainable travel, for example, secure cycle parking, sheltered waiting areas for parents, or site improvements to pedestrian and cycle access. The exact amount paid to each school is dependent on pupil numbers, but is typically around £5,000 for a primary school and £10,000 for a secondary school, with some variation according to school type. For a school to be eligible for the grant, its travel plan must meet national criteria.

Interviewees in the three towns said the DCSF grant scheme had shifted the focus of their earlier school travel work. In both Peterborough and Worcester, the authorities' initial emphasis had been on the provision of safer routes highways infrastructure, such as traffic calming, funded through the Local Transport Plan (LTP), but subsequently moved to the development of school travel plans. In all three towns, schools were still able to secure highways infrastructure improvements to school routes through their school travel work, and both Darlington and Peterborough had developed eligibility criteria in order to prioritise between requests. In Darlington, officers emphasised the

¹ The funding for school travel advisers was originally only awarded for two years (to March 2006) as it was intended to be pump-priming funding. It was subsequently extended to March 2008, to March 2010, and finally to March 2011.

importance of their safer routes work, as part of their current approach, and were using both the LTP and Cycling Demonstration Town funding for this purpose (notably to develop seven town-wide radial cycle routes, some of which would be of benefit for journeys to school). Peterborough also had an ongoing programme of school infrastructure improvements. In Worcester, following their earlier spell of activity in this area, only a small number of new highways infrastructure projects linked to school routes took place after 2004 – comprised of two zebra crossings and a new cycle route. Thus, while investment in safer routes highways infrastructure was recognised as part of the strategy, it was no longer necessarily seen as the main element.

At the time of the interview, the majority of the three towns' local authority schools – and in Worcester, all of them – had adopted travel plans. In Peterborough and Worcester this meant that the emphasis of their programmes was again changing – with a stronger focus on issues such as continued engagement and delivery.

In both Darlington and Worcester, officers reported helpful synergies between school travel work and the Government-led Healthy Schools Programme, which encourages initiatives to support health and well-being in schools, including school travel planning.

Each town had in place a process for engaging schools in the school travel programme and offered a variety of types of support to help them develop their plans and run initiatives to promote sustainable travel. All three developed ways of celebrating and rewarding the progress of participating schools and their children. Darlington ran a sustainable travel incentive promotion called *Medal Motion* across two school terms of each year with vouchers and prizes; Peterborough ran an annual celebration with awards for school travel plan achievements; and Worcester gave schools their own plaque and certificate on travel plan completion. Ongoing school travel plans were reviewed on an annual basis in Darlington and Worcester.

Each programme had distinctive elements. In Darlington, cycle training was delivered to the national standard, *Bikeability*, together with *Bike It* cycling promotion tailored to individual schools, and this became a major focus. Peterborough was successful in securing school travel plans through the development control process, in the context of a significant schools building programme (see 5.2.2). In Worcester, the authority ran a cycle loan scheme for teachers and a tandem loan scheme for parents and children as well as giving schools grants to run 'bikers' breakfasts'.

The school travel work of each town is outlined in more detail below.

5.1.2 Darlington

In Darlington, the first school travel plans were produced around 2003 and the first school travel plan officer employed in 2004, using funding from both the Travelling to School Initiative and the Sustainable Travel Town programme.

Before 2004, schools were invited to put forward champions to work on pilot school travel projects, and selected on the basis of their bids. However, once the school travel plan officer came into post, all schools wishing to participate were accepted into the programme.

By 2008, most local authority schools were engaged in travel planning. The shift towards wider engagement was considered by the interviewee to have been particularly aided by the capital grants scheme, run by DCSF as part of the Travelling to School Initiative; links with the Healthy Schools Programme, run by the council and the primary care trust; and the town's *Local Motion* campaign, which was helpful in achieving wider profile.

While cycle training was available to schools from 2001, additional funding through the Sustainable Travel Town initiative and Darlington's Cycling Demonstration Town status, made it possible to provide this free to schools, and to extend its scope, so that both Years 5 and 6 children were offered Level 1 and 2 training, while children in early secondary school, and some in the final year of primary school, were offered Level 3, one-to-one training.

In addition, from 2007, the school travel plan programme was closely linked to two national cycling initiatives: *Bike It* – a programme to encourage cycling through promotion, incentives and the development of skills, delivered by a *Bike It* officer; and *Bikeability* – a national standard for cycle training.

Darlington's school travel programme was implemented using an integrated approach which combined several elements: support in developing a school travel plan; promotional campaigns and events; supportive infrastructure such as cycle storage, cycle lanes and pedestrian crossings; pedestrian and cycle training; and the *Bike It* project.

Close contact was maintained with schools working on travel plans, which were offered the following forms of support in this process:

- Assistance in writing the plan;
- Assistance with initial surveys;
- Postcode plotting showing where pupils lived;
- Liaison with other bodies;
- Intensive help when putting in place new initiatives such as walking buses.

Promotional work for schools, which took place as part of the *Local Motion* campaign included:

- incentive schemes such as *Medal Motion*, introduced in 2006. Under this initiative, which spanned the school term twice a year, children kept a travel diary logging the number of 'sustainable miles' travelled and competed for prizes (including bronze, silver and gold medals) as individuals, classes and schools. New themes and links with other initiatives, such as the national year of reading, helped to keep the campaign fresh;
- *Walk on Wednesdays* with encouragement to walk (or cycle) at least once a week;
- a *Five million step challenge* run from February-April, 2008;
- cycling promotions at schools participating in *Bike It*, such as *Wheelie Wednesdays*, bikers' breakfasts, virtual bike ride challenges and cycle maintenance classes.

Bike It promotions, which were tailored to the needs of the individual school, focused mainly on awareness-raising, and included assemblies, competitions, lessons, health promotions, cycle maintenance classes and other activities. The initiative was coordinated

to follow on from cycle training, and schools were required to have a travel plan before being eligible to benefit from the programme.

Infrastructure improvements – which in some cases extended to an entire safe route to school, but more typically focussed on provision of high quality cycle parking – were identified through school travel plans and funded using DCSF capital grants, Cycling Demonstration Town funding and through the LTP. This was seen as an important factor in encouraging school engagement. As travel plans were put in place, they generated a long list of school requests for assistance with initiatives or infrastructure. To aid in prioritisation and ensure that schools ‘shouting the loudest’ did not take all their attention, the authority developed a matrix of actions from each plan.

The interviewee said that in the course of the Sustainable Travel Town initiative, school travel plan officers had become more organised and effective. The focus had shifted from promoting walking to encompassing all sustainable modes, with an emphasis on regular cycling rather than cycling every day. The systematic follow-up of travel plans was felt to be central to the success of the programme and an annual school review process had been introduced. An annual review document, sent out to every primary school parent and other stakeholders, reported activities and results for the year, with a view to increasing participation.

5.1.3 Peterborough

School travel work in Peterborough began in around 2000, when LTP funding was used to implement transport safety measures around schools. Up until 2007, this was part-matched by European funding under the Urban II programme, enabling improvements at about six schools a year. At the time of the interview, LTP funding continued to pay for engineering measures at about three schools annually. The primary care trust contributed supplementary funding to the revenue budget for school travel work. School travel staff worked within the road safety department until 2008, when they became part of the *Travelchoice* team.

At its outset, the main emphasis of the programme was on the provision of safe routes: although the school travel adviser focused on awareness raising class activities and assemblies, there was initially no requirement for schools to have a travel plan in order to merit investment in engineering safety measures. Following the introduction of the Government’s school travel grants in 2004, the council’s work in this area shifted to supporting schools in the development of travel plans, so that they could qualify for grants. The LTP capital funding meanwhile became an ‘extra’, which schools could receive once their travel plans were in place. School travel staff also became less directly involved in classroom work and assemblies. The authority’s target was for 90% of schools to have a travel plan by 2010 (slightly less than the DfT/DCSF published objective for 100% of schools to have a school travel plan by March 2010). By 2008, most schools had plans in place and the focus of work was again changing, this time towards maintaining school engagement and achieving modal shift.

In using their European funding, the council was required to work with schools in low-income areas of the city and this shaped their initial programme. Subsequently however, they worked with any school that was interested and, at the time of the interview, were

trying to involve schools that had been less interested in the early days. There was no particularly tendency for certain types of school to be more involved than others.

Eligibility for infrastructure measures around schools was determined using a scoring system, based on casualty data, traffic speeds, road width, whether there were crossings near the school, and whether the school had a travel plan.

The main activities that the authority organised for schools were as follows:

- A one-day workshop to explain the travel planning process to schools that were new to it;
- Campaigns to coincide with *Walk to School Week* in October and May, including a launch event at the beginning of the week and a school resource pack;
- An annual celebratory event with awards for the best school travel plan, the best school travel plan initiative and the best school travel plan champion;
- Postcode plotting to show where pupils lived;
- Free pedestrian road safety training available to all reception classes at primary schools;
- Cycle training for pupils in Years 5 and 6, (delivered by volunteers and not to the national standard);
- A Theatre in Education play highlighting transport issues and performed in secondary schools;
- Specific activities for particular schools – for example, a map showing travel times and calories burnt to walk or cycle to the Kings School for pupils living in the town, and different *Travelchoice* ‘zones’ for pupils travelling from outside the city by bus, train or car sharing. This was featured on the school website and handed out at induction days.

5.1.4 Worcester

Worcestershire County Council became involved in school travel work in around 2001 with a safer routes to school programme developed through the county’s first LTP, so that by 2005, approximately 18 Worcester schools had received safer routes infrastructure. Worcester’s school travel adviser was recruited in 2004, after which there were only a very small number of safer routes schemes and the programme’s main emphasis was on the development of travel plans in conjunction with the use of Government grants.

Partners in the initiative included the county’s road safety team who delivered pedestrian and cycling training and carried out risk assessments for walking buses, and colleagues running Healthy Schools and Eco-Schools initiatives, both of which shared an interest in encouraging sustainable travel.

It was considered that the availability of school travel capital grants from DCSF had particularly encouraged participation. To recruit schools to the programme, the county council wrote to them on an annual basis telling them about work taking place at other schools and the grants available.

To initiate a travel plan, schools carried out a survey, which the county council analysed and reported on. On this basis, the school used the county's travel plan template to draw up a list of development tasks and targets. Where safer routes measures were indicated, this was relayed to the county's highway engineers. All travel plans were reviewed annually and schools encouraged to set new targets and development tasks.

At the time of the interview in 2008, all the city's local authority primary and secondary schools had travel plans in place and the emphasis of the programme was again shifting, this time towards the delivery of travel plan initiatives. The interviewee said that, over time, the initiative had become more 'marketing-led' with an effort to raise the profile of school activities. Constant communication with schools, and fresh ideas, were identified as important success factors. Because of the coverage achieved, the school travel adviser was spending less time on school travel and more on broader cycling initiatives.

Support for school travel work included the following:

- Materials to support walking schemes such as *Walk to School Week* and 'Walk Once a Week' schemes;
- Doctor Bike cycle maintenance sessions;
- Cycle training, run by the majority of Worcester primary schools with Year 5 and 6 children;
- Grants of £500 for running bikers' breakfasts;
- Lesson activities and participation in assemblies run by the school travel adviser;
- A certificate and a plaque on completion of a school travel plan;
- A parent-and-child tandem loan scheme;
- *Teachers on bikes* - a cycle loan scheme for teachers;
- A family activity walking pack;
- Assistance in setting up a walking bus;
- Press releases and communications work to publicise school travel achievements;
- Visiting theatre productions related to school travel issues
- Capital grants made available to two independent schools that were not eligible for the Government's school travel grants.

5.1.5 Ease of implementation

Interviewees identified several factors that had eased the implementation of school travel planning, namely the availability of funding for highways infrastructure (Peterborough); the DCSF capital grants (Worcester); the wider culture related to sustainable travel promotion as a result of the Sustainable Travel Town initiative (Darlington); and partnerships with those running other programmes such as Healthy Schools (Darlington).

Other helpful factors related to geographical and political circumstances: Darlington benefited from being a compact community where travel distances were not too great and the terrain not too hilly; Peterborough, as a unitary authority, had control of the planning process, making it more straightforward to require travel plans for new schools (see 5.2.2). However, being a unitary authority was also seen as a barrier to

Peterborough's school travel work, since it meant that the authority had fewer schools than a large county council would have, and could not justify a large school travel team.

In Darlington, interviewees said a specific obstacle had been the removal by the council of free concessionary fares for some secondary school pupils. The national policy on parental choice was also considered to exacerbate school travel problems by generating longer journeys. Public concerns about traffic danger were seen as a barrier, both in Worcester, where there were high levels of rush hour traffic to contend with, and in Darlington.

5.2 Scale of school travel planning initiative

5.2.1 Number of schools engaged

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 summarise the number of pupils and schools covered by school travel plans or other school travel initiatives in each of the towns, and show how the level of activity had grown since the start of the Sustainable Travel Town programme in 2004.

Table 5.1: Pupils covered by travel planning

	Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
Primary/nursery pupils			
Total number of pupils at primary/nursery schools in the town in May 2008	7,819	14,373	8,612
Number of pupils at primary /nursery schools covered by a travel plan in May 2008	7,594	12,251	8,612
Estimated number of pupils at primary/nursery schools covered by a travel plan in 2004	1,606	2,966	1,000
Proportion of primary/nursery pupils covered by a travel plan in May 2008	97%	85%	100%
Proportion of primary/nursery pupils covered by a travel plan in 2004	21%	21%	12%
Secondary school pupils			
Number of pupils at secondary schools in the town	5,922	12,157	7,168
Number of pupils at secondary schools covered by a travel plan in May 2008	5,922	11,777	7,168
Estimated number of pupils at secondary schools covered by a travel plan in 2004	0	1,739	0
Proportion of secondary age pupils covered by a travel plan in May 2008	100%	97%	100%
Proportion of secondary age pupils covered by a travel plan in 2004	0%	14%	0%

Note: Schools 'covered by a travel plan' include schools in the early stages of starting to develop school travel work, but without a fully-fledged travel plan.

Table 5.2: Schools engaged in travel planning

	Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
Primary/nursery schools			
Number of primary/nursery schools in the town	28	54	26
Number of primary/nursery schools engaged in travel planning in May 2008	26	43	26
Estimated number of primary/nursery schools engaged in travel planning in 2004	5	8	4
Proportion of primary/nursery schools engaged in travel planning in May 2008	93%	80%	100%
Proportion of primary/nursery schools engaged in travel planning in 2004	18%	15%	15%
Secondary schools			
Number of secondary schools in the town	8	11	7
Number of secondary schools engaged in travel planning in May 2008	8	10	7
Estimated number of secondary schools engaged in travel planning in 2004	0	2	0
Proportion of secondary schools engaged in travel planning in May 2008	100%	91%	100%
Proportion of secondary schools engaged in travel planning in 2004	0%	18%	0%

Note: Schools 'covered by a travel plan' include schools in the early stages of starting to develop school travel work, but without a fully-fledged travel plan.

At the start of the programme, slightly under a fifth of primary schools in each of the towns had become engaged in travel planning. Amongst secondary schools, there was very little travel planning activity: none of the secondary schools in Darlington and Worcester had become engaged in school travel planning, and just two of the 11 secondary schools in Peterborough had become engaged.

By May 2008, there had been a significant change, with nearly all primary and secondary schools in all three towns engaged at some level in school travel planning. Between 85% (Peterborough) and 100% (Worcester) of primary and nursery school pupils were at schools that either had a travel plan or were considering or beginning to develop one. In Darlington and Worcester, all secondary school pupils were at schools that either had a travel plan or were considering or beginning to develop one, although some of the schools were only at the initial stage of having been in contact with the local authority. Similarly, very nearly all secondary school pupils in Peterborough (97%) were at schools that either had a travel plan or were beginning to develop one.

Thus, the picture in relation to school travel planning was somewhat different to that in relation to workplace travel planning, with 'coverage' (that is, proportion of school pupils covered by travel plans or school travel initiatives) having built up to close to 100% over the period of the Sustainable Travel Town work, compared to a lower proportion of around a third of employees in the three towns who were covered by workplace travel plans by May 2008. The higher coverage achieved in relation to schools is not unexpected. It is likely to be a consequence of two factors: first, the greater policy emphasis given to school travel planning at a national level over the period concerned

(and in particular the national target that all schools should have a travel plan by 2010, and the grants available to schools to support them in their school travel work); and second, the very much smaller number of schools in each local authority area (between 36 and 65) compared to employers (over 3,000).

Although a high proportion of schools had been engaged in travel planning, it should be kept in mind that not all travel plans were fully developed. Some schools were still at a fairly early stage in developing their travel plan at the time of our interviews in 2008. Also, from our interviews with officers in the towns there was a sense that, in some instances, the existence of a national target for all schools to have a travel plan had led to a focus on 'process' (i.e. agreeing a school travel document) rather than 'outcome' (i.e. reducing car trips to school). Section 5.2.3 reviews the evidence on the proportion of travel plans at different stages of development in each of the towns.

5.2.2 Use of the planning system

In all three towns, there was an expectation that schools undertaking building development would be asked to draw up a travel plan. All the towns had either an informal or a more formal process of review of planning applications to ensure that appropriate conditions or agreements were applied to any application.

However, the towns differed in the extent to which planning conditions or agreements were a significant factor in the school travel planning process. In Peterborough, the Sustainable Travel Town project had coincided with a significant school building programme involving construction of new schools and extensions at existing schools. As a result, just over a third of the schools that were engaged in travel planning had been involved via the planning process. In contrast, only three schools in Darlington, and none in Worcester, had been engaged in travel planning via the planning process (Table 5.3).

Officers in Darlington suggested that formal planning conditions or agreements were insufficient on their own to guarantee a strong school travel plan, and that it was important that there was also a good relationship between the smarter choices team and the whole school community. Where this was the case, there was evidence of substantial behaviour change towards sustainable modes. This view was to some extent reinforced by evidence from Peterborough, where one new school in an area of housing growth to the south of the town had been involved via the planning process but had failed to introduce a travel plan when it opened in 2005, and still had not drawn up a travel plan as of 2008.

Despite concluding that formal planning conditions did not on their own guarantee a strong travel plan, officers in Darlington also cited evidence suggesting that the combination of well chosen planning conditions and a good relationship between the school and the smarter choices team could be highly effective.

None of the towns had taken enforcement action against any school following failure to implement a planning condition or agreement relating to school travel.

Table 5.3: School travel plans required as part of planning applications

	Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
Number of schools engaged in travel planning	34	53	33
Number of schools involved via the planning process	3	16	0
Proportion of schools involved via the planning process	9%	30%	0%

5.2.3 Quality of travel plans

The three councils were asked to rate the quality of the travel plan for all schools engaged in travel planning. Initially, the research team proposed a three-point (A, B, C) scale, but this was felt by officers in some of the towns not to adequately represent the different levels of school travel plan activity, and the scale was therefore expanded as follows:

- A – active school travel plan; many school travel initiatives; a generally safe walking and cycling environment and/or some engineering work to provide safe routes;
- B – school travel plan agreed; some school travel initiatives in place;
- B- – school travel plan agreed but little evidence of activity;
- C – school contacted and starting to develop school travel work;
- C- – school contacted but no work to develop school travel plan yet.

The results are set out in table 5.4. In Darlington and Worcester, around half of the schools which had become engaged in the travel planning process were felt to have developed an active (level ‘A’) school travel plan with many initiatives and a generally safe walking and cycling environment. In Peterborough, the proportion was lower at 17%. The explanation for this difference may lie in part in the greater number of schools in Peterborough compared to the other towns, which could have led to effort and staff time being more thinly spread (since, as we shall see, the school travel officer staff time was similar in all three towns).

Table 5.4: Quality of travel plans (by number of schools)

		Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
Number of schools engaged in travel planning		34	53	33
Number of engaged schools in each category	A	18 (53%)	9 (17%)	16 (48%)
	B	4	29	13
	B-	1	9	0
	C	11	0	4
	C-	0	6	0

- A: active school travel plan; many school travel initiatives; a generally safe walking and cycling environment and/or some engineering work to provide safe routes;
- B: school travel plan agreed; some school travel initiatives in place;
- B-: school travel plan agreed but little evidence of activity;
- C: school contacted and starting to develop school travel work;
- C-: school contacted but no work to develop school travel plan yet.

Table 5.5 and Figure 5.1 illustrate the proportion of pupils at schools in each of the five categories. Between a quarter and a half of pupils in each of the towns were attending schools with level 'A' travel plans at the time of our interviews in 2008.

Table 5.5: Quality of travel plans (by number and % of pupils affected)

		Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
Number of pupils at all schools		13,741	26,530	15,780
Number of pupils at schools in each category	A	7,975	6,460	5,444
	B	1,213	9,504	7,463
	B-	550	4,527	0
	C	3,778	0	2,873
	C-	0	3,537	0
% of pupils at schools in each category	A	58%	24%	34%
	B	9%	36%	47%
	B-	4%	17%	0%
	C	27%	0%	18%
	C-	0%	13%	0%

A: active school travel plan; many school travel initiatives; a generally safe walking and cycling environment and/or some engineering work to provide safe routes;

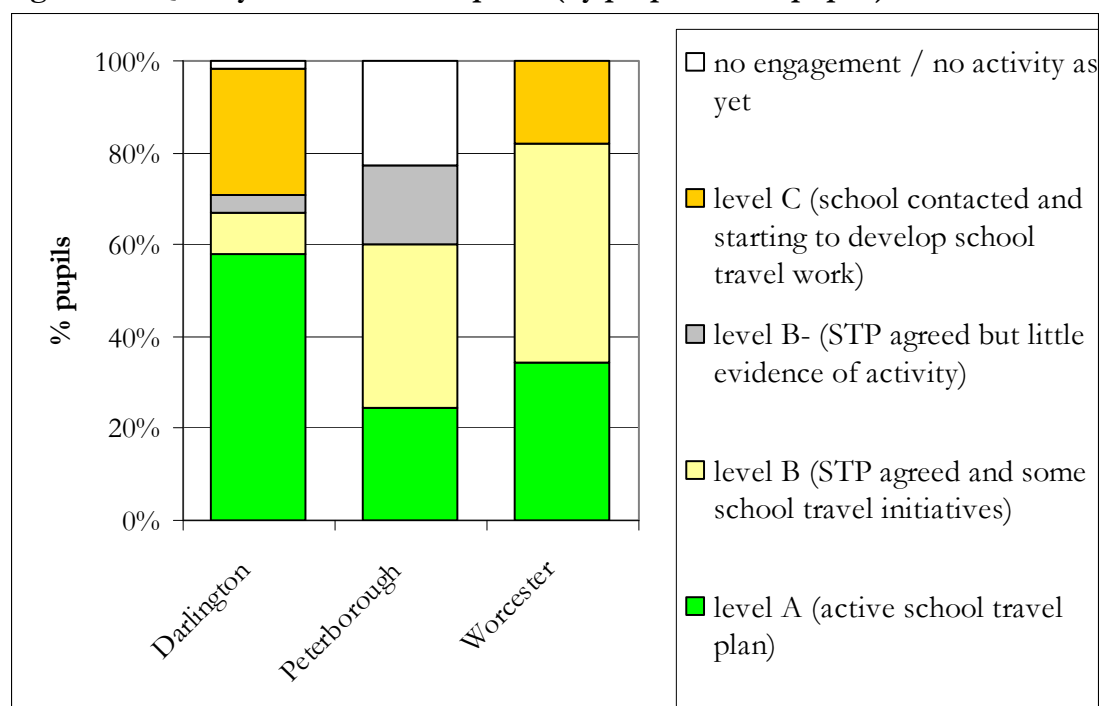
B: school travel plan agreed; some school travel initiatives in place;

B-: school travel plan agreed but little evidence of activity;

C: school contacted and starting to develop school travel work;

C-: school contacted but no work to develop school travel plan yet.

Figure 5.1: Quality of school travel plans (by proportion of pupils)



Note: Proportions are relative to whole school population in each town (including schools which had not become engaged in school travel work). 'No engagement / no activity as yet' category includes 'C-' schools which had been contacted by the school travel adviser but which had not yet started to develop any school travel work.

5.3 Staffing and budgets for school travel planning

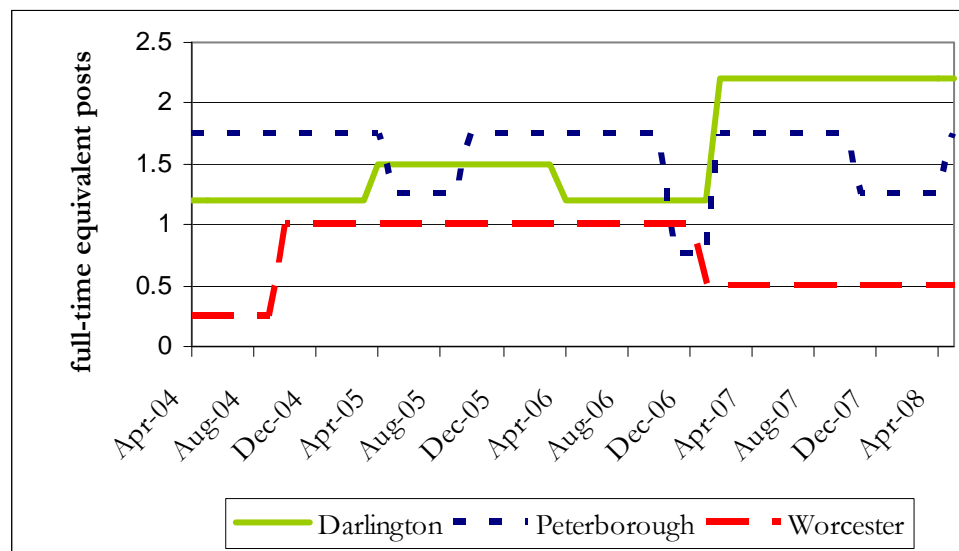
5.3.1 Staffing

Broadly speaking, all three towns had one full-time school travel officer for most of the period of the Sustainable Travel Town project, plus a small amount of additional support from other officers at various times. Figure 5.2 and Table 5.6 summarise how staffing for school travel work had changed over the course of the Sustainable Travel Town programme.²

Table 5.6: Staff time (fte-posts) allocated to school travel planning

	Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
Before April 2004	0.25	1.75	0.25
May 2008	2.2	1.75	0.5

Figure 5.2: Changes in staff time allocated to school travel planning (fte-posts)



In Darlington, a school travel officer was appointed for the first time in 2004, and this post had remained full-time throughout the period of the Sustainable Travel Town work. In addition, a full-time *Bike It* officer was appointed in February 2007.

In Peterborough, the number of staff working on school travel plans had fluctuated due to periods of staff absence and personnel changes. There was an officer providing administrative support in addition to the school travel plan co-ordinator.

In Worcester, there was only one school travel adviser for the whole of Worcestershire before October 2004. From that date, a full time school travel adviser was appointed to work specifically in the city of Worcester. In 2007, a proportion of the school travel

² This represents a fairly low staffing level for the number of schools covered. For comparison, research into school travel work in 23 local authorities carried out in 2004 (Cairns, Newson and Davis, forthcoming) found that the average number of staff engaged in school travel work was three full-time equivalent posts per local authority, with 30-50 schools engaged. The median yearly caseload per full-time equivalent post was intensive work with eight schools and less intensive work with a further six. However, these data relate to a period before school travel grants became available.

adviser's time was reallocated away from school travel work to broader cycling initiatives, since by that stage all state schools in Worcester had produced school travel plans.

5.3.2 Budgets

Tables 5.7 and 5.8 summarise the capital and revenue costs of the school travel planning programme in the three towns, with revenue costs disaggregated in Tables 5.9 and 5.10 into non-staff costs and staff costs.

Table 5.7: Total capital costs

	Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
2004/05	£48,000	£397,000	£31,000
2005/06	£88,000	£253,000	£247,000
2006/07	£48,000	£305,000	£199,000
2007/08	£128,000	£194,000	£35,000
2008/09	£148,000	£150,000	£16,000

Note: some capital cost figures were only available in aggregated form (i.e. spread over several years). Where this was the case, it was assumed that spending was equal in each year.

Table 5.8: Total revenue costs (staff costs and non-staff revenue costs)

	Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
2004/05	£31,000	£42,000	£26,000
2005/06	£43,000	£45,000	£25,000
2006/07	£53,000	£49,000	£25,000
2007/08	£81,000	£51,000	£17,000
2008/09	£82,000	£53,000	£19,000

Note: Figures in this table are the sum of the figures in Tables 5.9 and 5.10, but may not add exactly due to rounding.

Table 5.9: Non-staff revenue costs

	Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
2004/05	£2,000	£7,000	£11,000
2005/06	£5,000	£12,000	£0
2006/07	£20,000	£16,000	£3,000
2007/08	£35,000	£16,000	£4,000
2008/09	£35,000	£15,000	£5,000

Table 5.10: Staff costs

	Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
2004/05	£29,000	£35,000	£15,000
2005/06	£38,000	£33,000	£25,000
2006/07	£33,000	£33,000	£22,000
2007/08	£46,000	£34,000	£13,000
2008/09	£47,000	£38,000	£14,000

Note: Staff costs are estimated on an equivalent basis in all three towns, using rounded average salaries.

Capital costs included LTP capital funds for school-related infrastructure schemes such as cycle paths, cycle parking and pedestrian crossings, and grants made by DCSF directly to schools which were developing school travel plans.

Non-staff revenue costs could be reliably identified by interviewees in the towns. However, staff costs for school travel planning (including on-costs as well as salaries) were not available in a consistent format, and there was some variation (albeit fairly small) in salary levels for school travel work across the towns. Staff costs have therefore been estimated, based on the amount of staff time allocated to school travel planning in ‘full time person-months’ and taking rounded averages for staff costs for school travel officers of £24,000 in 2004/05, rising by annual increments to £27,000 in 2008/9. In Peterborough there were also staff costs for an administrative assistant, and in Darlington for a *Bike It* officer, and these have been included³.

5.3.3 Costs per school pupil targeted

The costs summarised in section 5.3.2 may be used to give an indication of the cost per pupil targeted. We looked at the cost across all pupils in schools with which there had been any engagement, regardless of how far advanced the travel plan was (i.e. including schools which were rated ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘B-’ or ‘C’, and also ‘C-’ schools if they had received some other type of intervention, such as funding for ‘safe routes’ infrastructure).

In deriving these estimates, we took account of capital costs and total revenue costs (staff and non-staff revenue) for the five years from April 2004 to March 2009. The figures are summarised in Table 5.11⁴.

Capital spend per targeted pupil over the five years was somewhat higher in Peterborough than in Darlington or Worcester, and ranged from around £30 to £50. Revenue spend was highest in Darlington, with a range from around £7 to £20.

Table 5.11: Local authority costs per pupil targeted, 2004/05 – 2008/09

	Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
Capital cost per pupil, all engaged schools	£34	£54	£33
Revenue cost per pupil, all engaged schools	£21	£10	£7

Notes: Pupil numbers used are those for all engaged schools as at May 2008: 13,516 in Darlington; 24,028 in Peterborough; 15,780 in Worcester. Figures are for five-year period, and are rounded to nearest pound.

³ The staff costs for school travel planning would have been partially covered by the Travelling to School Initiative grant to each local authority, which was determined by the number of schools in the area.

⁴ The figures in Table 5.11 are not calculated on the same basis as the costs per pupil in Cairns et al. (2004). The latter were costs *in the most recent year for which figures were available* divided by the number of pupils at schools engaged in travel planning in that year. This (approximate) method was used because detailed figures for spend in previous years were not available. Across the three local authorities examined in that study, revenue costs per year, per pupil targeted, were £3.50-£4 (2003 figures). A rough comparison between the levels of spending per year per pupil in Cairns et al. (2004) and those in the three Sustainable Travel Towns may be made by dividing the revenue costs in Table 5.11 by five. This gives a revenue cost per year, per pupil of about £4.30 in Darlington, £2.00 in Peterborough and £1.40 in Worcester (2004 to 2009 figures, without adjustment for inflation).

5.4 Benefits of school travel planning

In addition to modal shift, interviewees identified several benefits from their school travel work, which are outlined below.

Road safety

Although school travel work in all the towns had included highways safety improvements, the towns had monitored their programmes' impact in terms of modal shift rather than road safety. In Worcester, data supplied for 1998-2007 showed that the number of child pedestrian casualties in which a child was killed or seriously injured (KSI) had been highest in 2001, at eight, and had declined from 2003-7, while child cyclists KSI casualties were at their highest in 2004, at three, and at one or zero in the subsequent years. Trends in slight casualties for child pedestrians and cyclists were less clear, but overall there had been fewer from 2003-7 than from 1998-2002. Consequently, while it was not possible to attribute these changes in casualties directly to the town's work on school travel, the data gave no suggestion that increases in walking and cycling were causing a rise in child casualties. In Peterborough, European Urban II funding had been used for infrastructure improvements in low income areas, which generally have a higher risk of child pedestrian road casualties. Officers said that since a higher proportion of children in these areas already walked to school (as compared with more affluent areas) the benefit of this school travel work was primarily one of road safety rather than modal shift. There was also an instance where a pupil survey had shown that moving a school crossing patrol would pick up an extra 40 children, thereby increasing road safety.

Educational benefit

In Darlington, some school travel work such as sustainable travel incentive schemes had the explicit aim of improving attendance. At one infant school, the introduction of a 'walking train' had led to an expansion in the school's breakfast club from a day a week to every day, as attendance improved. In Worcester too, one of the infant schools had reportedly used an informal walking bus to address truancy issues. In Peterborough, a pupil referral unit had purchased bicycles with the aim of teaching pupils about looking after equipment and providing orientation around the city.

Health benefits

Interviewees considered that in encouraging children to travel on foot or by bicycle and so travel more actively, there were self-evident health benefits.

Other positive effects for the school and the wider community

Interviewees identified several benefits for the school and the wider community that they felt arose through school travel work. These included more interaction between parents and better relations between schools and local residents who were concerned about parked cars blocking the streets. In Worcester, the interviewee commented that schools compete with each other on many fronts and participation in the programme generally brought credit to the individual school and gained a mention in OFSTED reports. In Darlington, parents' surveys in 2007 and 2008 demonstrated that about nine out of ten parents supported the council policy that all children should receive cycle and pedestrian training.

5.5 Synergies between school travel planning and other policies and programmes

Interviewees identified several positive synergies between school travel work and wider local transport policies and programmes, in most cases related to the provision of highways safety improvements. Darlington officers considered that the school travel programme had helped in gaining acceptance for street improvements that might otherwise be controversial – such as low speed zones and toucan crossings. Where infrastructure of this kind was introduced following a school travel plan (compared to the situation where it was introduced in isolation), it was more likely to be regarded favourably as a benefit for schools and parents rather than as a top-down imposition from the council.

Officers in both Darlington and Worcester pointed out that general improvements in the town's cycling infrastructure had been of benefit for school journeys. In Darlington, it was anticipated that new cycle routes gained through the Cycling Demonstration Town initiative could facilitate cycling to school, and a cycle counter had been put in place near a new educational site, with a view to recording this. In another instance, a relocated school had benefited from new cycling infrastructure provided through a planning agreement related to residential development, with the result that 17% of its pupils now cycled on a regular basis. Conversely, the introduction of school cycle storage was seen as 'locking in' the benefits of wider cycle promotion work. In Peterborough, a substantial school building programme with Private Finance Initiative funding had helped in securing safer infrastructure such as toucan crossings. However, in at least one case, the relocation of a school meant a move to a more poorly connected site, which already suffered from traffic problems. Peterborough was successful in identifying alternative funding sources for safer routes landscaping and improvements, drawing on budgets for Peterborough in Bloom and for accessibility.

In Darlington, interviewees anticipated that from 2009, they would be able to use the council's new powers in relation to parking decriminalisation to control dangerous and obstructive parking outside schools.

Interviewees in the three towns also considered there were positive synergies between school travel work and other smart initiatives. In Darlington, the use of the *Local Motion* branding had been beneficially applied to the schools' *Medal Motion* campaign. People who had heard of one campaign responded positively to the other when they realised that the two were linked. In Peterborough, the school travel adviser had used resources from the workplace travel programme to engage with teachers. In Worcester, the temporary introduction of free travel for under-19s on the city's park-and-ride express buses in 2005, appeared to have led to a sharp temporary increase in bus use at one of the city's colleges. In addition, some initiatives developed as part of the Sustainable Travel Town programme had been incorporated into school travel work, including Dr Bike sessions and the distribution of a walking pack.

5.6 Potential and plans for the future

Having achieved wide-scale adoption of school travel plans, the three towns were looking ahead to ways of sustaining momentum, so that schools remained engaged in the programme. All three expressed an interest in having more contact with schools, for example, carrying out more frequent travel plan reviews (Darlington); developing more initiatives and promotional work (Peterborough); and putting more time into curriculum work and empowering teaching staff (Worcester). Interviewees considered that efforts of this kind would deliver greater modal shift.

In Darlington, there were plans for an accreditation and award scheme, with schools competing against each other to meet their targets for modal shift. Officers were also aiming to integrate sustainable travel promotion with the authority's responsibilities for providing home to school transport. In addition, there were plans for other activities. They were hoping to run a special promotional event in a central location, aimed at pupils transferring to secondary school. They wanted to produce sustainable travel maps, showing 20-minute walk and cycle zones around each school and made available to all pupils. There was also an interest in placing greater emphasis on work with secondary schools, following the success of earlier infrastructure projects, which had encouraged secondary children to change their travel patterns.

Interviewees in all the towns were asked how they would develop their school travel programmes if resources were unconstrained.

In Darlington, there was an interest in splitting the school travel adviser role into three separate areas, covering the development and support of travel plans; the administration of capital expenditure and infrastructure improvements; and promotional activities. In addition, officers said they would use more resources to enhance competition and create incentives for action.

In Peterborough, officers aspired to increase staff and revenue levels from 1.5 to 2.5 full-time equivalent (fte) posts and from £3,000 to £5,000 annual revenue funding. With these additional resources they wanted to develop walking buses, undertake an annual review of every school's travel plan, have a presence at more school events such as parents' evenings, develop work on the transition from primary to secondary school, involve secondary schools in producing performances on sustainable travel issues for primary schools, and run more special promotional 'weeks' and 'days' such as a 'bus week' and a 'wet weather walking and cycling day'. While officers felt that Peterborough already had good infrastructure for cyclists and walkers, they were interested in upgrading signing and lighting and improving the quality of cycle paths and pavements.

In Worcester, the interviewee said that to expand the initiative substantially, the priority would be to secure major improvements in walking and cycling infrastructure, and that this would provide a platform for ramping up current activities, running more cycle loan schemes and events. It was estimated that such a programme would require 2 fte-posts for the city with an ideal budget of £100,000 - £200,000 for projects and activities annually, alongside the continuation of the Government's current capital grant scheme.

Interviewees were also asked to suggest what they would *actually* be able to do in terms of school travel planning from 2009-14. In Darlington, officers considered there was good

support for the programme and that current funding levels would be maintained. In Peterborough, officers felt that it was unclear whether their aspirations for more staff could be met, but were hopeful that current levels could be maintained. In Worcester, the interviewee anticipated that with the completion of the Sustainable Travel Town initiative, the focus of the programme would shift to ensuring that other schools across the wider county completed travel plans, and that the dedicated resource for Worcester would remain no higher than its already reduced level of 0.5 fte.

5.7 References

Cairns S, Newson C and Davis A (forthcoming, based on research in 2004) *Making school travel plans work: Research report* Report for Department for Transport