

# Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy for Schools in Sandwell

**Update 2019**



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## **1. Introduction and Background**

### **1.1 Why a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy?**

Sandwell Council is committed to encouraging sustainable travel to and from school and college. For many years the authority has provided a range of support and initiatives to enable and encourage safe and sustainable travel to and from school, such as: providing road safety training, safer routes to school, free travel for eligible pupils and supporting concessionary travel for young people on buses.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires every local authority in England to develop a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMOTS) for schools. Strategies should:

- assess the travel needs of pupils and students in their area
- review what provision is already available
- set out how the authority plans to promote sustainable travel to and from school, including clear targets and measures.

The focus on the journey to and from school is important. These are journeys that almost every child makes each day, they are usually relatively short, typically less than two miles and therefore many are suitable for walking or cycling.

School journeys are also made at the busiest times of the day, when traffic congestion is at its worst. Therefore, fewer cars used on the school journey contributes to reducing peak hour congestion and improving air quality. Using sustainable modes of travel to school has major health benefits for children, including helping to reduce obesity. More traffic on the roads at school times also contributes to concerns about road safety for children walking and cycling, and particularly at school entrances causes parking problems.

This strategy also contributes to achieving the vision for Sandwell, through achieving ten ambitions, when in 2030 the borough is expected to be a thriving, optimistic and resilient community. In terms of young people and transport, the following ambitions are relevant:

- Ambition 2 - Sandwell is a place where we live healthy lives and live them for longer, and where those of us who are vulnerable feel respected and cared for
- Ambition 4 - Our children benefit from the best start in life and a high quality education throughout their school careers with outstanding support from their teachers and families.
- Ambition 6 - We have excellent and affordable public transport that connects us to all local centres and to jobs in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, the airport and the wider West Midlands.

### **1.2 Aims and Objectives**

The overriding aim of this strategy is to encourage and enable young people across Sandwell to use more sustainable modes to travel to and from school. School staff could also benefit from travelling by sustainable modes. Sustainable modes include:

- **Walking:** This is the preferred option for young people; it is healthy, flexible, cheap and environmentally friendly.
- **Cycling:** Where there are suitable facilities in place, such as off-road cycle routes and secure cycle storage at the schools, and the young person has received training, cycling may be a good option.
- **Public Transport:** Including local buses, the Metro, trains and school transport.
- **Car Sharing:** Where the journey cannot reasonably be made by other modes, then car sharing can reduce the number of cars being used.
- **Park and Stride:** Where the car is the only option, Sandwell MBC encourages parents to park away from school and then walk in. This reduces congestion at the school entrances, provides the opportunity for both some physical activity and practical road safety practice with their parents.

Specific objectives are:

- **School Travel Plans:** to ensure all schools have School Travel Plans that are regularly monitored, reviewed and kept up to date.
- **Awareness:** to ensure that all young people and parents are aware of the travel options, particularly when they are making decisions about admissions and their choice of school.
- **Travel choice:** to ensure that Sandwell builds on its achievements to date and reduces the number of pupils travelling to and from school by car.

### 1.3 What the Strategy Includes

This strategy was originally based on the guidance issued by the Department for Children Schools and Families made available in 2010. The requirements for such strategies have remained unchanged and therefore include a needs assessment, a summary of the current travel provision and support that is available, an action plan with targets and information about monitoring progress.

The strategy also includes a SWOT analysis, which has reviewed Sandwell's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to achieving sustainable modes of travel in the coming years. This has been used to inform the action plan.

Sandwell MBC is committed to ensuring that its policies and services are accessible to all and to tackling discrimination<sup>1</sup>. Sandwell is an extremely diverse Borough, and almost 1 in 3 young people are from an ethnic minority. In addition, around 1400 children in education have identified special educational needs. This strategy is about achieving more sustainable modes of travel to school for all young people irrespective of background, gender, ethnicity, age or disability and ensuring that sustainable school travel is inclusive.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200233/jobs/384/equality\\_and\\_diversity](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200233/jobs/384/equality_and_diversity)

## 2. Sandwell

### 2.1 Introduction

Sandwell is one of seven metropolitan boroughs in the West Midlands. It covers an urban area at the centre of the motorway network and hence there are heavy traffic volumes on roads crossing the Borough. However, the Borough also has a high proportion of parks and open spaces, including Sandwell Valley (an area of green belt) and the Rowley Hills.

There are six town areas: Wednesbury, Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton and West Bromwich. The Borough has a population of about 325,460. After a fall in population since the late 1960s, this has since started to increase.

Sandwell is one of the most ethnically diverse boroughs, with 34% (and growing) of the population from black and minority ethnic groups, with more than half of these from the Asian communities.

Sandwell is the 13<sup>th</sup> most deprived of the 326 authorities in England, with more than half of its population living in wards described as “very deprived” and more than 80% of households experience at least one element of deprivation: unemployment, poor and limiting health, disability, low educational attainment or poor and overcrowded housing.

### 2.2 Young People in Sandwell

There are 88,600 young people (to age 19) in Sandwell (2017 mid-year estimate), and the young population is more ethnically diverse than the authority overall, with around 30% from an ethnic minority group. There are more than 57,000 young people in Sandwell’s schools.

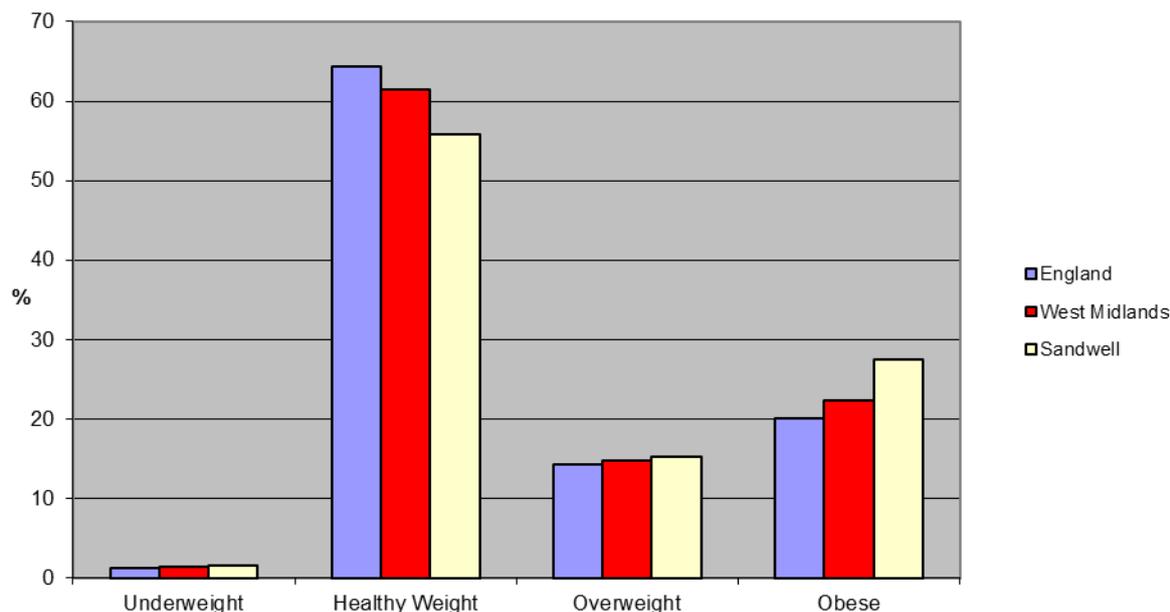
Approximately 25% of the school population is eligible to receive free school meals. This is substantially higher than the national average. However, there are wide variations with small numbers of pupils in some schools to more than half of pupils in other schools qualifying for free school meals. Of the 144,500 economically active people in Sandwell, 7.6% were unemployed between April 2017 and March 2018. This was higher than the West Midlands average (5.0%) and Great Britain average (4.3%), which means that young people in Sandwell are more likely to live in families where out of work benefits are received.

Sandwell has a higher than average rate of overweight and obese children at age 10/11 (42.6%) than the averages for the West Midlands (37.1%) and England (34.2%), as shown in the following chart<sup>2</sup>. Most of these differences are due to the higher proportion of obese 10-11 year olds in Sandwell (27.4%) compared to the West Midlands (22.4%) or the England averages (20.0%). Children from black, Pakistani, mixed and other Asian ethnicities are recording the highest levels of child obesity.

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<sup>2</sup> National Child Measurement Programme Results 2016/17

## Prevalence of Underweight, Healthy Weight, Overweight and Obese Children at 10/11 Years Old, England 2016/17



### 2.3 Education in Sandwell

In Sandwell there are 94 primary schools, 4 special schools and 6 community schools (formerly pupil referral units); there are also two independent schools. The majority of secondary schools are specialist schools, many of which are academies.

There are 17 secondary schools, most with sixth forms, a further education college and a university technical college. Sandwell College offers vocational and academic courses for up to 10,000 full and part time students based in West Bromwich and the Health Futures UTC, also in West Bromwich, provides health related courses for up to 600 students.

There is a significant amount of cross boundary travel, particularly to denominational schools and to sixth form provision.

### 2.4 Context: How this Strategy fits in

The Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy is not a free-standing strategy. It links with all the authority's departments' ongoing work and supports the authority's aspirations for Sandwell to achieve the 2030 Vision when the borough is expected to be a thriving, optimistic and resilient community.

Achieving a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions has traditionally been the main motivation for ensuring that children travel to school by sustainable methods of transport. The Council's transportation policies, such as cycling and walking strategies, aim to make journeys easier for vulnerable road users. Encouraging sustainable school related journeys helps to increase physical activity which therefore helps to reduce the prevalence of overweight and obese children, resulting in better health. Less dependence on car use also contributes to improvements in air quality by reducing nitrogen dioxide and particulate

emissions, particularly near to schools where the concentration of such pollutants has been found to be detrimental to the development of respiratory systems in children.

An indication of the main links that exist with other areas of the authority’s work include is described by the diagram and table below.

### Departments and Strategies Links with the Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy



### Examples of Policy Links with the Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy

<b>More and Better Homes</b>	School travel should be an integral part of residential development and planning. Planning should ensure residential areas are well linked with pedestrian, cycle and bus facilities to enable and encourage sustainable journeys to schools and colleges.
<b>Improving Health</b>	Walking, cycling and using public transport are all ways of encouraging more active and healthy lifestyles, and reducing childhood obesity and associated health problems. However, as child pedestrians and cyclists are vulnerable road users, road safety improvements are needed to support safer school travel.
<b>Supporting Independence</b>	Developing skills that enable all children to walk, cycle and use public transport to develop their independence.
<b>Reducing High Volume Crime</b>	Supporting safer travel partnerships and reducing bullying/theft on school journeys can all contribute to improving personal safety and reducing crime.
<b>Enabling a Good Start in Life/Educational Attainment</b>	School travel is an integral part of the school day. Research has shown that children who walk or cycle to school arrive more alert.
<b>Successful Young People/More People in Employment</b>	Knowledge of what travel and support is available can enable and encourage participation in education, post 16 participation, choice and attainment, and reduce the number of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Many of the national school, health and transport related and initiatives promoted and supported by central government have now ceased, eg Healthy Schools, Travelling to School Initiative, although the emphasis on helping people to address personal health through the “Change 4 Life” campaign ([www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life)) continues.

## **2.5 West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan “Movement for Growth”**

Sandwell MBC is part of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) governance model which is supported by a transformation Devolution Deal with the UK Government. It is mainly a method to support the West Midlands’ collective ambitions for economic growth, at the heart of which lies transport. The WMCA Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) sets out the vision, objectives, strategy and actions to improve the quality of life of everyone who lives and works in the West Midlands.

The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan “Movement for Growth” sets out the vision, priorities, approach and commitment to building a comprehensive and efficient transport system. It also includes policies which aim to ensure best use is made of existing transport assets, improved accessibility, reliable transport integration, improved safety and security and reduced emissions of greenhouse gases, along with embracing both technological and behaviour changes. This therefore includes continued support for environmentally friendly and healthy methods of transport which can therefore influence and be influenced by school travel. “Movement for Growth” will be delivered and monitored on behalf of WMCA by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM).

The performance of “Movement for Growth” in terms of delivering its objectives, to ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to each programme area and to enable comparisons with other metropolitan areas, is monitored against a range of indicators including journey time reliability, public transport patronage, mode share of journeys, air quality, road casualties and carbon dioxide emissions.

The promotion and facilitation of sustainable transport through “Movement for Growth” will be possible through the West Midlands Combined Authority Devolution Agreement. Funding is also likely to be available from the Department for Transport and other sources as a result of successful bids to funds that aim to support walking, cycling and public transport schemes. Sustainable transport in the West Midlands was delivered between 2012 and 2016 through successful bids to the Department for Transport’s (DfT) Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) under the “Smart Network, Smarter Choices” banner. Further funding between 2017 and 2020 has however not been forthcoming from the DfT because a bid to the DfT’s Access Fund was not successful. The specific promotion and facilitation of sustainable travel is therefore yet to be determined, which raises a question about the continued funding by TfWM to enable access to the Modeshift STARS school travel plan accreditation online system on a West Midlands-wide basis.

## **2.6 School Travel Plans**

School Travel Plans were introduced in Sandwell in 2003/4, initially as part of the Safer Routes to School programme. By March 2011 all schools in Sandwell had been supported

by a School Travel Adviser (STA) to develop an approved School Travel Plan (STP). The schools received a one-off capital funding grant from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Department for Transport (DfT) to implement plans. On average each secondary school received £10,000 and each primary school received £5,000.

STPs assess the travel needs of pupils, explore through surveys how pupils currently travel to school and how they would like to travel to school, identify issues affecting journeys to school identify measures that would encourage more sustainable travel and develop an action plan to implement such measures.

STPs are “living documents” that should be regularly monitored and updated. Initially in Sandwell’s case, STP production was supported by Sandwell MBC’s STA. Unfortunately however, due to funding cuts, an STA is no longer employed by the authority and some schools are not continually improving and monitoring their STPs. This could change with widespread adoption of the Modeshift STARS online system, which enables easier administration of STPs and an accreditation/award scheme for schools. The STA role now resides in both the Strategic Policy team (which includes the Transportation Planning function) and Sandwell’s Public Health department. STPs required as part of planning applications for expanding, relocating and merging schools are reviewed by Strategic Policy team and widening the use of Modeshift STARS by schools, along with running school travel related promotional campaigns, is coordinated by Public Health. LSTF related school travel work through TfWM has ended due to the unsuccessful Access Fund bid (see section 2.5). The table below lists the contact details of people who can assist with aspects of school travel work.

### Who to Contact for Assistance with School Travel Plans

Debbie Hyde	Cycle Training Coordinator, SMBC	0845 352 1950 deborah_hyde@sandwell.gov.uk
Karen Hale	Road Safety Education Officer, SMBC	0121 569 4116 karen_hale@sandwell.gov.uk
Andrena Hadley	School Crossing Patrol Supervisor, SMBC	07803 890784 andrena_hadley@sandwell.gov.uk
Angelina Dawson	Independent Travel Training Officer, SMBC, Travel Training and TITAN coordination	0121 569 4144 angelina_dawson@sandwell.gov.uk
Joy Djukic	Benefits Manager, SMBC, Home to school transport policy and eligibility assessment	0121 569 8329 joy_djukic@sandwell.gov.uk
Simon Chadwick	Principal Officer - Development, SMBC, School safety zones, traffic management	0845 352 1879 simon_chadwick@sandwell.gov.uk
Inspector Kristian Starynskyj	Police contact for liaison with various local partners	k.starynskyj@westmidlands.pnn.police.uk
Santokh Singh	Neighbourhood Engagement Manager	0121 569 5377 santokh_singh@sandwell.gov.uk
Education	Smarter Choices Resilience Team, TfWM	0121 214 7411 education@tfwm.org.uk
Talvinder Sandhu	Senior Transportation Planner, SMBC, planning applications	0121 569 4894 talvinder_sandhu@sandwell.gov.uk
Andy Thorpe	Healthy Urban Development Officer, SMBC Public Health, Modeshift STARS, campaigns	0121 569 4261 andy_thorpe@sandwell.gov.uk

### 3. School Travel Needs in Sandwell

#### 3.1 Introduction

The guidance on developing sustainable modes of travel to school suggests that pupils' travel needs be assessed using various sources of data including:

- Travel surveys that provide information on pupils' usual mode of travel to school.
- Travel surveys that reveal how pupils would like to travel to school
- Mapping of school location and pupils' addresses
- Travel surveys of post 16 students
- Feedback from extended schools' coordinators
- Information and ideas from Sandwell MBC's Youth Cabinet.

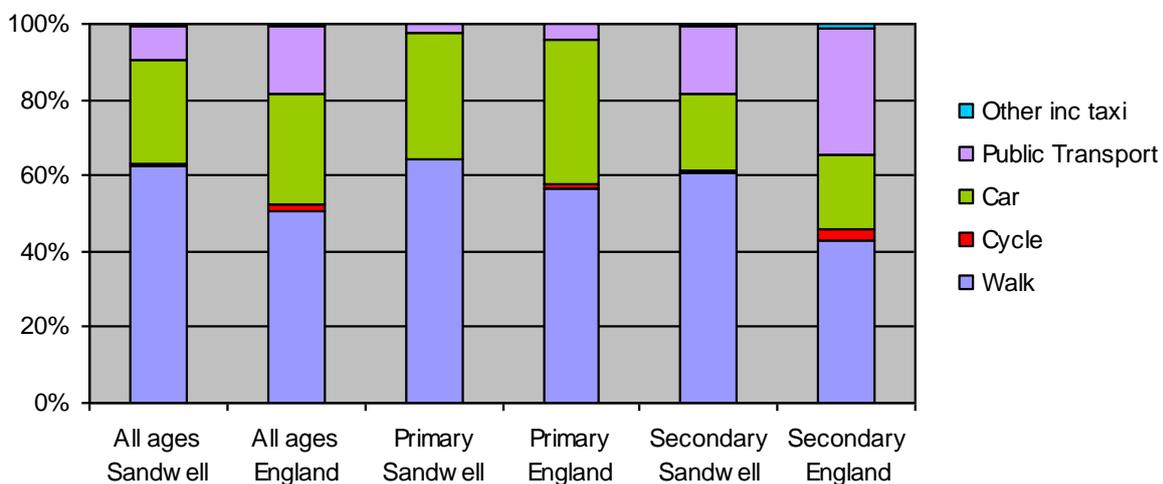
Many of the school travel plans (STPs) set up as part of the Travelling to School Initiative (TTSI) used modal share data collected through the annual School Census to provide baseline data and for subsequent monitoring. There is however no longer a requirement for schools to collect travel data through the School Census and the Government no longer collates and circulates the survey data. Schools could rely on using "hands-up" or other survey techniques, although widespread adoption of the Modeshift STARS online system in Sandwell is the tool most likely to help with the collection of school travel data.

Accessibility, particularly by public transport, can be undertaken using the "TRACC" computer program. It can show public transport catchment areas around schools based on journey times at particular times of the day. Sandwell MBC can assist schools by producing catchment area maps. Schools submitting planning applications for extra pupil accommodation should provide such information as an update to their existing STPs.

#### 3.2 How Children Travel to School

Although it is no longer a requirement for schools to collect data on how children travel to school as part of the annual School Census, the most recent data available from 2009 is unlikely to have changed significantly, although car travel could be increasing.

**Average Mode of Travel to School, Sandwell and England (October 2009)**



Sandwell has traditionally had a high proportion of pupils walking to and from school compared with England overall, and lower levels of bus and car use for both primary and secondary pupils. Almost two thirds of Sandwell pupils walk to school, but almost one in three travel by car and car use is higher at primary schools than at secondary schools.

From when the first TTSI STPs had been produced in 2003/4 up until the final year of School Census data availability in 2010, there had been a trend towards increases in walking and reductions in car use in Sandwell and across England. Tracking this progress further has not been possible recently. STPs therefore need to be updated and modal share data collected in order to monitor the effect of STPs in Sandwell. It is likely that any progress to increase the amount and proportion of children walking to school, and bringing about a corresponding decrease in pupils being driven to school, will have slowed down because of the lack of data collection and therefore schools not monitoring their STPs properly.

### **3.3 Accessibility Planning**

Accessibility planning is an area of work carried out by local authorities that determines how easily, or otherwise, people can reach local services, employment locations and schools, usually by using public transport.

The West Midlands conurbation is well served by schools and a good public transport network, which means that it is reasonably easy for 5-16 year olds to get to school on time on a typical weekday. In practice however, parental choice and school specialisation, particularly in terms of faith, technology colleges etc, mean that many pupils (especially 11-16 year olds) across the West Midlands do not always go to their nearest school. Alongside parental fear of crime or road traffic collisions, this can encourage driving to school, rather than walking, cycling or catching public transport to their closest alternative. This contributes significantly to road congestion, which is itself a barrier to access. It has been estimated that around 100,000 car trips are taking children to school every weekday in the West Midlands out of approximately 250,000 car trips in total between 8-9am.

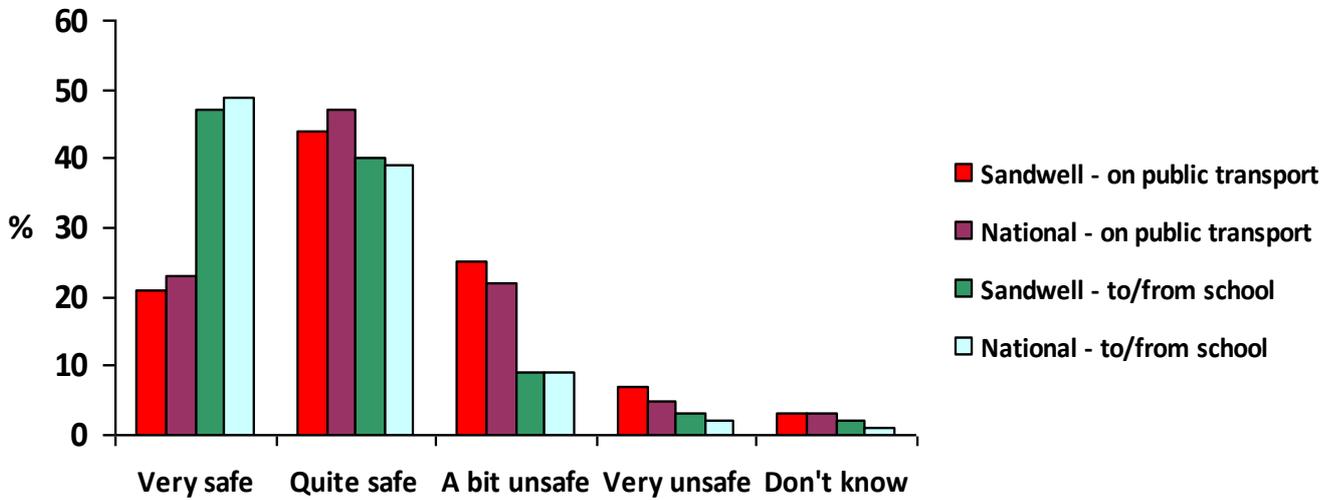
Access to post-16 education is potentially more of an issue because catchment areas are often larger and journeys longer, especially for those getting to specialist A-level and vocational training courses, which may only be held in a limited number of establishments.

### **3.4 Personal Safety whilst Travelling**

The "Tell Us Survey" was a survey of young people across England asking their views about their local area, covering the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, although unfortunately surveying ceased in 2010. The results for Sandwell have in the past highlighted some concerns about perceptions of safety on public transport and on the journey to and from schools, where children in Sandwell are less likely to say they feel very safe than children in England overall. They are also slightly less likely to say that they feel very safe on the journey to and from school. TfWM's Safer Travel Partnership, which is made up of a number of agencies who work together to make the public transport

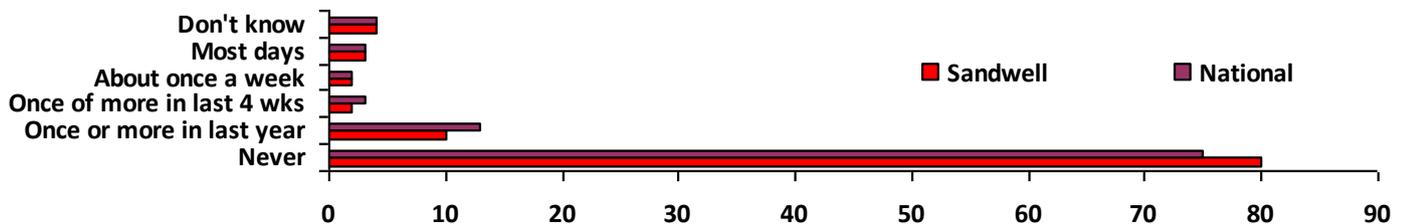
network safer for passengers by deterring crime and anti-social behaviour, is a continuing project that should help to increase feelings of safety.

### How safe from being hurt by other people do you feel?



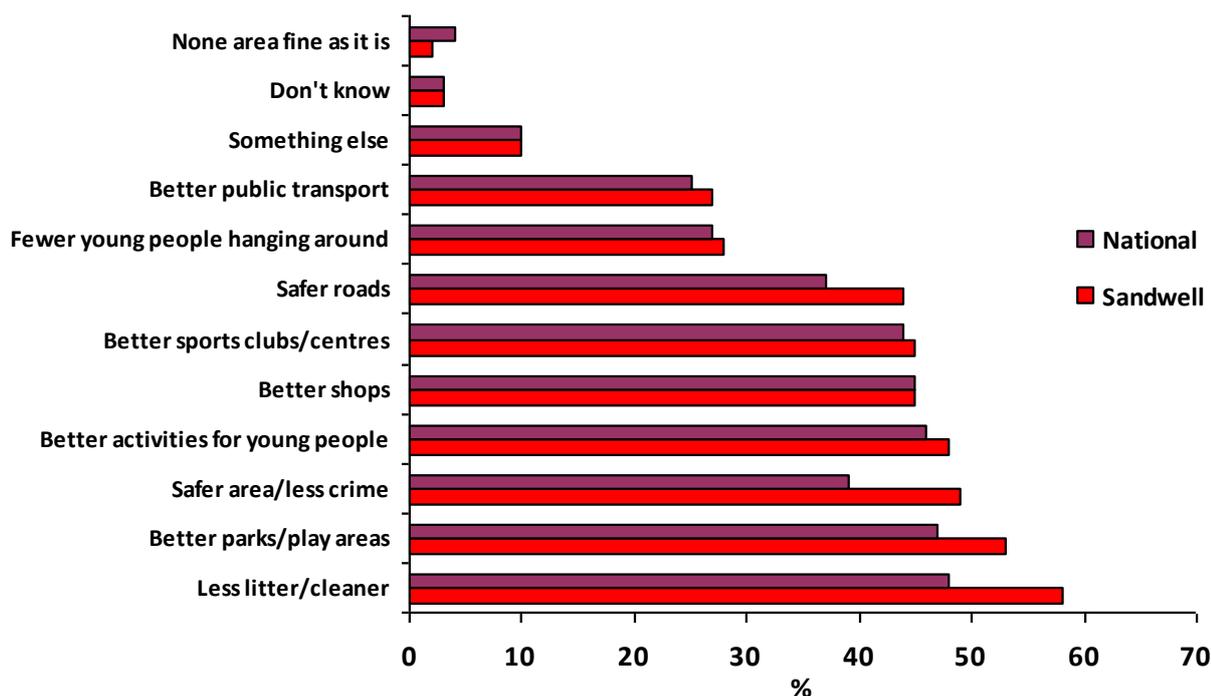
Despite the feelings of safety falling short of national averages, the Tell Us survey found that young people in Sandwell appear less likely to be bullied, including on the journey to and from school.

### How often have you been bullied?



In terms of being a better place to live, children in Sandwell thought less litter and the area being cleaner could be the main improvements, although safety and road safety in particular also featured highly in their responses. Children in Sandwell were more likely to say addressing safety and road safety in particular would improve their area compared with young people in England overall. More than a quarter wanted better public transport.

## Which of these things would make your area a better place to live?



### 3.5 Casualty Analysis

Sandwell's roads are getting safer and fewer children (under 16 years old) are killed or seriously injured (KSI) today than in previous years, as shown below. The latest available data shows that Sandwell has achieved a 16% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured against the 2010-14 baseline, which is a similar fall to that seen in Great Britain as a whole<sup>3</sup> and better than the average for the West Midlands.

Area	Average 2010-14 Baseline KSI	2015 KSI	% Change to 2015	Rolling 5 Year Average KSI (2011-15)	% Change 5 Year Average to Baseline
Great Britain	2250	1964	-13%	2142	-5%
West Midlands	155	145	-6%	150	-3%
Sandwell	19	16	-16%	19	0%

Overall in Sandwell in 2015, 35% of all child pedestrian injuries occurred during school journey times.

Data on how children would like to travel to school in addition to how they actually (usually) travel to school is collected when producing STPs and as part of subsequent monitoring surveys. Therefore, analysis can be carried out to determine what demand there is for children to change to using a different mode of travel. Each school performed this analysis as part of setting up their STPs and have based their STP objectives and targets on it. Ideally, schools would carry out this analysis again when reviewing their STPs, although this is not a compulsory requirement.

<sup>3</sup> Sandwell MBC Strategic Road Safety Plan 2017-2022

## 4. Current Provision and Support for School Travel in Sandwell

### 4.1 Introduction

The authority has for many years provided a range of services relating to travel to school, some of these are statutory requirements and others are discretionary.

School travel covers many different aspects and therefore responsibilities within the authority are shared. Examples of current work areas are listed below:

	<b>Children's Services</b>	<b>Highways and Road Safety</b>	<b>Transportation Planning</b>	<b>Passenger Transport Unit</b>
<b>Area of Responsibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions</li> <li>• Free school transport including special needs transport</li> <li>• Post 16 transport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian training using DRS*</li> <li>• Cycle training</li> <li>• Pre-driver training</li> <li>• Road safety campaigns</li> <li>• Road and footpath maintenance</li> <li>• Street lighting</li> <li>• Safer Routes to School / traffic calming and engineering</li> <li>• Casualty analysis</li> <li>• Road Safety Education assembly sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Travel Plans</li> <li>• Public transport issues and liaison with TfWM</li> <li>• Travel behaviour change promotion</li> <li>• Cycling Strategy</li> <li>• Walking Strategy</li> <li>• Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan</li> <li>• Car Share Sandwell</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement of school bus/taxi contracts (mainstream and special needs)</li> <li>• Independent Travel Training</li> </ul>

\*Digital Road Safety

### 4.2 Walking

School journeys in Sandwell are, on average, short, typically less than half a mile. Walking is environmentally friendly, healthy, cheap and sustainable. Sandwell MBC is keen to enable and encourage as many young people to walk to and from school and college as possible. Sandwell's Walking Strategy, adopted in September 2015, aims to increase walking uptake, target resources and deliver improvements and enhancements to the walking environment.

#### Pedestrian Training

A web-based digital interactive training resource, referred to as "Digital Road Safety", was launched for use by schools in September 2017. It enables wider and more frequent training possibilities for children, by playing a collection of challenges, than is currently available in person from Sandwell MBC.

#### Walking Buses

Walking buses can be a good starting point for encouraging children to walk to school and eventually become more independent pedestrians. Some schools already operate walking

buses and Sandwell MBC can provide assistance to schools who wish to set them up in terms of training for volunteers and providing high-visibility waistcoats for children and adults. Schools should follow the advice provided in the “Walking Bus Manual” which is available from Sandwell MBC’s Road Safety Team. After developing a route(s) schools would be able to ask Sandwell MBC’s Road Safety Education Officer to carry out a risk assessments of the route(s).

### School Crossing Patrols

School Crossing Patrols are provided where the location satisfies the nationally agreed criteria.

The School Crossing Patrol Service was adopted for primary schoolchildren in the UK in the 1950s when they were provided by the police, but are now employed by local councils. Even where a School Crossing Patrol is provided, parents remain responsible for ensuring their children's safety. Since 2001 they have been able to assist not only children walking to and from school, but to help other road users cross the road.

Sandwell MBC currently provides 56 School Crossing Patrols across the Borough.

## **4.3 Cycling**

Cycling to primary schools is not encouraged in Sandwell, except during Bikeability training periods, although it can be a suitable travel alternative for older pupils or students.

### Cycle Training

Bikeability training “cycling proficiency for the 21<sup>st</sup> century” is offered to year six primary school pupils and provides a range of practical and theoretical training to help develop cycling skills. A typical session lasts 120 minutes and to achieve Level 1 and 2 will take about eight sessions. The scheme is accredited by the Department for Transport.

### Cycling Facilities

Sandwell MBC’s programme of implementing the network of cycle routes specified in the “Cycling in Sandwell” strategy is ongoing and funded from the West Midlands Integrated Transport Block for transport schemes and highway maintenance. Other assistance for cycling provided by Sandwell MBC includes:

- a cycle route map, paper copies available from the Strategic Policy Team and viewable online at [www.sandwell.gov.uk/cycling](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/cycling)
- cycle parking in public places
- the Cycling Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) reference document for cycle routes and cycle parking

In addition, officers representing various partner organisations from Sandwell Council, Police, Fire Service, TfWM and Cycling UK meet quarterly to discuss cycling issues, infrastructure improvements and cycling promotion. Much of this is guided by the West Midlands Cycling Charter which forms the regional strategy to achieve greater participation in cycling.

#### **4.4 Bus Travel**

The Borough is well served by local bus services, either operated commercially by bus operators or, where they are not commercially viable but regarded as necessary, they are subsidised by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM, the transport delivery arm of the West Midlands Combined Authority) and operated under contract. Regular reviews of Sandwell's Bus Network Review carried out by TfWM, in partnership with bus operators and local authorities, aim to bring about better connections across the borough and beyond, along with monitoring to continually improve accessibility by bus and driver training. The outcomes from the most recent review were implemented in September 2018.

##### Concessionary Public Transport Travel

As one of the seven Metropolitan local authorities in the West Midlands, Sandwell MBC contributes to the West Midlands concessionary fare scheme. This means that all young people in Sandwell are able to travel on local buses at reduced fares. More information including a travel planner, timetables and information about fares is available from [www.networkwestmidlands.com](http://www.networkwestmidlands.com). (Journey planning options are outlined further below.)

##### Sandwell College and Travel Cards

To assist with accessing the building at Spon Lane in West Bromwich, Sandwell College provides a free travel card for every full-time 16-18 year-old student. Further information is available from the College's website [www.sandwell.ac.uk](http://www.sandwell.ac.uk).

##### Safer Travel

The Safer Travel Police team are a group of West Midlands' Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) who work on the bus network focusing on crime reduction and community safety. They are part funded by and work in partnership with TfWM. The Safer Travel team also give presentations across the West Midlands to both primary and secondary schools. The primary school presentation is an interactive exercise designed to help pupils with the transition to secondary school and focuses on anti-social behaviour and personal safety. The secondary school presentation includes items on anti-social behaviour, general behaviour on buses and personal safety including road safety on and around the vehicle including at bus stops, planning their bus journeys, travelling safely including perceptions and reporting incidents, and consequences of actions.

The Safer Travel Police team has been successful in improving perceived and actual security on the bus network; the initiative was commended for its successful partnership in the Social responsibility section of the 2006 UK Bus Industry Awards.

#### **4.5 Car Travel**

A reduction in car travel in relation to school journeys is desirable but it is recognised that in some circumstances travel by car is necessary. The Council's initiatives below can assist with ensuring that journeys are carried in a safe and sustainable manner.

##### Young Drivers

Young drivers are particularly vulnerable and over represented in road casualty statistics. In Sandwell a programme of pre-driver education is offered by the Council's Road Safety Team in partnership with the Fire Service. The programme is offered to pupils in years 10,

11, 12 and 13 and focuses on attitudes, responsibility and behaviour as a passenger and a driver, looking at the potential consequences of over-estimating their ability, taking substances that inhibit reactions and the issues typically faced by young and inexperienced drivers. Advice is also provided on how to get the best from their driving lessons, the driving test itself and how to be a safer newly qualified driver.

“Drive to Arrive” is an annual pre-driver programme (every October) offered to 400 pupils in year 12 across the Black Country in partnership with Walsall MBC, Wolverhampton CC and Dudley MBC.

“For the One I Love” is an annual young driver training and awareness programme which takes place at Sandwell College and other colleges in the Black Country on Valentine’s Day. It has been developed in partnership with Walsall MBC, Wolverhampton CC and Dudley MBC. With wider promotion of the event, other pupils of sixth form age could also take part.

### Car Sharing

Car Share Sandwell ([www.carsharesandwell.com](http://www.carsharesandwell.com)) has been launched by the Council to encourage residents to register to car share. This is available to all employees including teachers and other school-based staff who may wish to register and reduce single-occupancy car travel to and from schools.

Whilst the authority encourages car sharing for the journey to school, the new safeguarding requirements mean that parents now participating will need be to suitably checked if they are regularly providing transport for other parents’ children. Information is available from the Independent Safeguarding Authority or Sandwell Council. However, school staff are encouraged to register with Car Share Sandwell to reduce the number of staff cars driving to and from schools.

## **4.6 Travel Training**

Sandwell MBC’s Independent Travel Training Unit (ITTU) provides travel training and support to young people with special educational needs (SEN) or other disabilities/difficulties who have the potential to travel independently. It is prioritised for (but not restricted to) students who receive local authority provided transport.

### GO4it

The project entitled “GO4it” offers training to young people who have learning and/or physical disabilities. Training is offered on a one to one basis and follows a bespoke learning programme designed to meet the individual requirements of each trainee, and aims to provide the skills and confidence to enable young people to travel independently.

### TITAN

The Travel Independence Training Across the Nation (TITAN) scheme, which has been used successfully in other authorities, is also being implemented at Sandwell’s schools. It aims to equip pupils with the knowledge and confidence to travel alone and is particularly useful for year 6 pupils for their transition to secondary school.

#### **4.7 Road and Footway Maintenance**

Sandwell MBC is responsible for highway maintenance on local roads (ie, not including trunk roads and motorways) and public rights of way. The Borough's responsibilities include around 550 miles of road, 900 miles of footways and cycleways and more than 300 traffic signal installations, including 170 controlled crossings. The condition of the road and footways will affect road safety and health linked to the number of potential collisions and casualties. The Borough has an annual highway maintenance programme and monitors road conditions on an annual basis. Members of the public are also able to provide feedback via the Council's website on road safety concerns.

#### **4.8 Traffic Calming**

Sandwell MBC is committed to reducing the number of casualties on our roads and works closely with the Police to investigate all aspects of road traffic collisions at sites where there are a high number of incidents. Where analysis indicates it to be appropriate, engineering measures are brought forward with the intention to make the roads safer.

#### **4.9 Safer Routes to School**

A portion of the works Sandwell MBC carries out to improve the safety of roads is delivered as part of the Safer Routes to School programme. The programme looks at a range of criteria including collision and casualty data, area of deprivation index, current modes of travel and existing infrastructure to develop a priority list of schools to be considered for engineering works. Such works can help to progress the objectives of STPs.

#### **4.10 Free School Travel**

Sandwell Council provides free home to school transport to eligible pupils as detailed in the "Home to School Transport Policy – 2018/19" document. This can be downloaded from [www.sandwell.gov.uk/schooltravel](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/schooltravel).

In addition to the criteria outlined in the policy document, the authority will provide free transport in exceptional circumstances where the available walking route is unsafe, even for a child accompanied as necessary taking into account the age of the child and nature of the route. Such applications are considered on an individual basis.

#### **4.11 Travel Information and Awareness**

Information on school travel is provided through a range of media to parents, young people, local residents, drivers and educational establishments. The provision of facilities, including improved pedestrian, cycle and public transport facilities, is part of encouraging sustainable modes of travel to and from school. Young people, their parents and schools need to be aware of the choices available, and the benefits of using more sustainable options. Sandwell MBC provides travel awareness advice and information through its TravelWise initiative and School Travel Plans (delivered using the Modeshift STARS online platform - refer to Appendix A).

### School Information

Local authorities are required to publish information for parents on admission arrangements for schools and this must include information about home to school travel. In Sandwell, such information for parents is included in the “Guidance for Primary Admissions” booklet and the “Guidance for Secondary Admissions” booklet. These are available online or in hard copy.

### Journey Planning Options

A range of options exist for people to determine the available travel choices for all types of journeys. Sandwell MBC’s cycle route map (and online at [www.sandwell.gov.uk/cycling](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/cycling)), canal maps published by the Canal & River Trust and public transport maps and timetables available from Network West Midlands are traditional paper-based sources of information. Journey planning can be done online at [www.networkwestmidlands.com](http://www.networkwestmidlands.com) and purchases of “Class Pass” school trip tickets can be arranged by calling 0345 303 6760.

### Sustainable Transport Workshops

Teachers can visit the [letzgogreen.org](http://letzgogreen.org) website (developed by Transport for West Midlands) to download lesson plans, worksheets and the booking form as well as access the online forum, whilst pupils can learn through the interactive storybooks and comics featuring curriculum-led games and quizzes.

### Online Information

The local authority’s website ([www.sandwell.gov.uk](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk)) includes information on all the Council’s services and contact details. The site includes:

- Information about admissions and individual schools/colleges
- Special needs provision
- School transport policies and application forms ([www.sandwell.gov.uk/schooltravel](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/schooltravel))
- Information about benefits (including free school meals and clothing allowance)
- Road safety initiatives
- Public transport
- Air quality and environmental policies
- Walking and cycling, including copies of the authority’s strategies, maps and advice
- School Travel Plans (STP)
- Travel awareness, including TravelWise, Modeshift STARS, [letzgogreen.org](http://letzgogreen.org) and [carsharesandwell.com](http://carsharesandwell.com).

## 5. Action Plan, Priorities and Measures of Progress

Sandwell Council will continue to develop its sustainable travel to school work. The table below sets out the actions to implement the Strategy and summarise the progress to date and expected progress to 2020.

Action	Who responsible/lead	How progress to be measured	Progress to date	Progress to 2020
<b>EDUCATION AND AWARENESS</b>				
Continue to support main sustainable travel awareness events.	Transportation Planning / Corporate Communications / Public Health	Participation in events. Media coverage of event.	Participation in Walk / Bike to School Week is sporadic. With no School Travel Adviser the schools must organise their own events.	All primary schools to participate in Walk to School Week. Assist by forwarding information from Living Streets in advance of event date.  Promote Bike to School Week at secondary schools.  Promote annual car free day, with secondary school involvement.
Keep information on website up to date providing a 'one stop shop' for sustainable school travel information.	Web Services Team and Children's Services	Google analytics to monitor use of website.	The Council's webpages are available at: <a href="http://www.sandwell.gov/schooltravel">www.sandwell.gov/schooltravel</a> (Includes Sandwell's SMOTS)	Keep information on sustainable travel choices up to date.
Improve SMBC staff / Members awareness of sustainable travel initiatives and support available to improve joint working.	Transportation Planning / Public Health	Regular updates in internal publications and intranet.	More joint working between Transportation Planning, Communications, Education.	Ongoing updates via existing media eg intranet, publications, and liaison with Communications team.
Improve awareness of sustainable travel issues.	Transportation Planning / Public Health	Monitor visits to SMBC's TravelWise web page.	The Council's TravelWise web page <a href="http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/travelwise">www.sandwell.gov.uk/travelwise</a> contains journey planning links.	Continue to raise sustainable travel awareness by various means.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Who responsible/lead</b>	<b>How progress to be measured</b>	<b>Progress to date</b>	<b>Progress to 2020</b>
Improve information for parents regarding travel options.	Children's Services and each school	See school websites and admissions info.	Information on home to school transport policy included in admissions booklets.	Continue to include information about School Travel Plans.
Pedestrian Training	Highways (Safer & Sustainable Travel Team)	Number of children participating.  Child KSI to be reduced.	Pedestrian training is offered to all schools with a STP using DRS.  Child casualties are falling, but surveys suggest perceptions of safety of concern.	Continue to offer child pedestrian training using DRS, with all schools registered and actively using DRS.  Monitor casualty figures in line with national targets.
Bikeability Training	Highways (Safer & Sustainable Travel Team)	Number of schools & children participating.  Child cycle KSI to be reduced.	Bikeability currently offered to all year 6 pupils.	Continue to offer Bikeability training.  Monitor casualty figures in line with national targets.
Travel Training	Independent Travel Training Officer	Students assessed as having potential to benefit to be offered travel training.	Implementation of the TITAN scheme within Sandwell.	Continue to offer independent travel training.
Young Driver Training	Highways (Safer & Sustainable Travel Team)	All Year 12 pupils to be offered "Drive to Arrive" pre-driver training.  All Year 13 pupils to be offered "For the One I Love" young driver training/awareness.  Reduction in 17-19 KSI car driver rate.	Annual event held every October involving 400 pupils across the Black Country.  Currently involves pupils at Sandwell College.	All places on the programme to be filled.  To continue delivering the training and awareness annually.

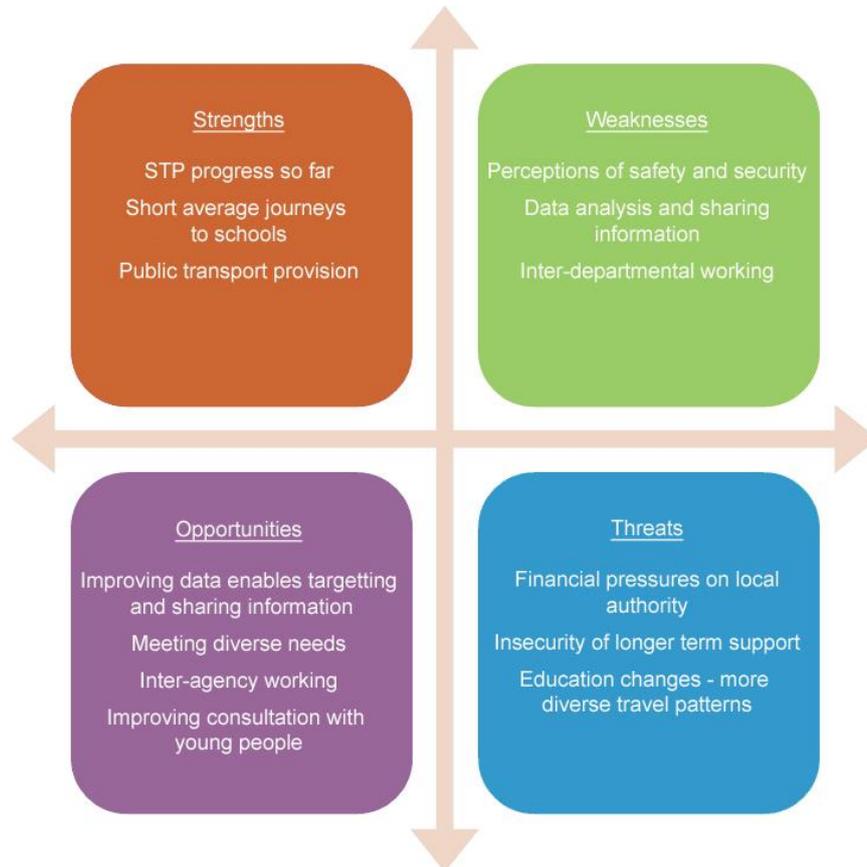
Action	Who responsible/lead	How progress to be measured	Progress to date	Progress to 2020
<b>ENGINEERING</b>				
Safer Routes to Schools / safety schemes	Highways	Child KSI reduction.	Traffic calming measures/safety schemes implemented at schools.	Schools have been identified which will lead to further SRTS projects.
Upgraded pedestrian / cycle crossings	Highways	Number of facilities upgraded.	All crossings are fit for purpose although appropriate upgrades are made when associated highway works are carried out.	Progress will continue as highway works are carried out and as funds allow.
Cycle Routes	Transportation Planning / Highways	Number of children cycling to school.	Routes added each year using the WM Integrated Transport Block "Measures to Encourage Cycling" budget and other local and national funding sources when available.	The development of Sandwell's cycle route network will be ongoing as funds allow.
Improve walking routes to school	Transportation Planning (Public Rights of Way) / Highways	Number/% of children walking to school.	Some school signage introduced as part of Safer Routes to Schools projects. Rights of Way Improvement Plan.	Improve link between feedback from STPs/surveys to contribute to prioritisation of investment in upgrading walking routes.
Ensure appropriate facilities at schools eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• storage for wet weather clothing, bicycles etc</li> <li>• lockers to reduce need to carry books</li> <li>• area for parents to wait</li> <li>• Bus stops/waiting areas</li> <li>• off site parking/parking management at schools</li> </ul>	Schools		Grants (LSTF) have been awarded to schools for setting up STPs and have therefore provided facilities according to what the STP has identified as being needed, eg cycle storage, parents' waiting shelters.	All new and expanding schools address school travel issues through updated STPs as part of the refurbishment/new build.  Future grants may become available which can be offered to other schools to upgrade their facilities.
Routine maintenance/street lighting	Highways		Ongoing maintenance programme.	Improve link between feedback from school travel plans to contribute to identifying priorities.

Action	Who responsible/lead	How progress to be measured	Progress to date	Progress to 2020
<b>ENFORCEMENT</b>				
Ongoing promotion of safer travel partnership to promote safety on bus network and enforcement.	TfWM / Safer Travel	Reduced incidents on bus services. Perception of safety on public transport by surveys.	TfWM and West Midlands Police operate and promote the Safer Travel scheme using cards (See Something Say Something), a website (safertravel.info) and a text phone number (83010).	Secondary schools offered visits each year.
Ongoing monitoring of school transport contracts.	Passenger Transport Unit	Reduced complaints. None compliance with conditions of contract.	Ongoing as necessary.	Service to continue on established basis.
Average Speed Enforcement	Local Authority / West Midlands Police	Road casualty reduction.	A national reduction of 35% in killed and seriously injured (KSI) casualties has been reported at safety camera sites. Safety camera funding for the West Midlands however ceased on March 31 <sup>st</sup> 2013, although mobile camera enforcement by the Police has since taken place along with some average speed cameras on some parts of the West Midlands local road network outside Sandwell.	Average Speed Enforcement will be introduced in June 2019.
Mobile Camera Enforcement	West Midlands Police			New approved 2019 Regional Road Safety Strategy (40% KSI reduction in 10 years).
<b>ECONOMIC MEASURES</b>				
Ongoing support of concessionary fare scheme via TfWM.	TfWM / Network West Midlands	Bus use	Awareness promoted through leaflets.	Increased awareness of concessionary fare scheme for young people.
Support of home to school transport provision.	Children's Services	Take up of free school transport by those eligible. Cost per pupil transported.	Initial take up of additional FSM / WTC entitlement to free school transport is low.	Increased awareness of eligibility to school transport. Efficiency gains to reduce cost per pupil to West Midlands' average.

## 6. Challenges and Opportunities

### 6.1 Introduction

School travel within Sandwell faces some significant challenges, in part due to changes in the provision of education, and in part due to historic levels of deprivation and exclusion. A SWOT analysis has been used here to identify what are Sandwell's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to achieving sustainable modes of travel. These can be summarised in the diagram below.



### 6.2 Strengths

#### School Travel Plans

Although many of the school travel plans delivered by 2010 have been neglected and the STPs element of TfWM's "Smart Network, Smarter Choices" programme has ceased, the use of the Modeshift STARS online system, has enabled a renewed interest in STPs. This is supported by funding from the DfT and awards for nationally accredited STPs. Data collected through Modeshift STARS could provide a clearer view of the level of mode shift.

Sandwell has levels of walking that are usually higher than national averages, which is a position of strength that needs to be built upon.

### Short Average Journeys

Sandwell benefits from its geography and the majority of journeys to and from school are relatively short; less than the national average. However, surveys often show that parents overestimate distances to and from school therefore greater awareness of actual distances may encourage more to walk. Initiatives such as Walk to School Week and encouraging people to try walking for one day events can show that walking is a possible alternative, resulting in a change in travel behaviour.

### Public Transport Provision

Sandwell is fortunate that it is relatively well served by public transport (especially buses) and the area has a young persons' concessionary fare scheme offering discounted travel for young people. Public transport use in Sandwell for school journeys is however lower than the national average.

Some young people have concerns about personal security and safety when travelling by public transport, but public transport use should be encouraged.

Key ways to encourage public transport use will include:

- Working with Network West Midlands to promote awareness of local bus services and available concessionary fares.
- Working with the West Midlands Police Safer Travel Team to improve the perception of and the actual security of young people travelling by bus.
- Continuing to develop independent travel training for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities to provide them, where appropriate, with skills to use public transport to make journeys to and from school and college.

## **6.3 Weaknesses**

Sustainable school travel initiatives in Sandwell face several weaknesses that this strategy will seek to address. These include:

### Perceptions of Safety and Security

The TellUs survey shows there are concerns about safety and security in Sandwell, yet casualty data shows that road safety is improving. Unfortunately there is no recent data to enable changes in the concerns about safety and security to be monitored.

Road safety and personal security are priorities for Sandwell so further work with the police and bus operators will be required to address problems at specific locations.

### Data Analysis and Sharing Information

Until recently STPs in Sandwell have been produced with individual schools and this information has not been collated and shared between schools or corporately. The Modeshift STARS online system should however enable schools to compare their relative performance and future plans.

Despite having achieved considerable successes, Sandwell MBC's sustainable school travel promotion has been relatively low-key to date. There is a need for the Borough to highlight good practice in individual schools and colleges and share this more effectively with others, and also to raise the profile of school travel with residents and drivers in the Borough.

#### Inter-departmental Working

Sustainable school travel is an issue that cuts across many departments within local government and ensuring that there is consistency and coherence is difficult.

The authority needs to continue its joint working and ensure that sustainable school travel initiatives are considered across:

- Highways
- Planning and Transportation
- Children's Services
- Corporate Communications
- Public Health.

#### **6.4 Threats**

Local government is facing a number of budget challenges, and these are likely to have an impact on sustainable travel to schools. Particular challenges that we envisage during the implementation of this strategy include:

#### Accessibility and Choice, Including Extended Schools

The Government is committed to encouraging choice of learning and diversifying education provision. These are likely to result in more diverse travel patterns across the Borough and longer average journeys. In particular the following changes are likely to increase travel demands:

- New secondary academy schools which will draw pupils from a wider area.
- Extended schools, which will mean that travel to and from schools may occur at times other than the usual 8-9am and 3-4pm.
- Changes to post 16 education and learning/training are going to be significant in coming years. The development of apprenticeships, diplomas and work based learning are all likely to increase the need for flexible travel as journeys will be required to different providers at different times.

Sandwell is well placed to deal with these challenges, with journeys generally still relatively short and suitable for walking. The provision of local bus services is generally good although Sandwell MBC will need to work with Network West Midlands, bus operators, schools, colleges and learning providers to ensure that information is available to young learners about available services and concessionary fares, and also to identify where there are gaps in the bus network.

### Deprivation and Exclusion

Sandwell is worse off than the national average on many indicators of social and economic deprivation. This is both an opportunity and a challenge.

Road safety research has shown that children living in deprived areas are more likely to be injured in road traffic collisions than their more affluent peers, due in part due to having fewer off road areas to play and the fact that they are more likely to be walking or cycling.

Levels of car ownership are lower in Sandwell than they are in many areas, therefore offering effective and cheap travel alternatives to car ownership can make a positive impact on many households.

### Meeting Diverse Needs

Sandwell is an ethnically diverse borough and has in place extensive governance mechanisms to ensure that policies and services comply with all relevant equalities legislation. The sustainable modes of travel work can contribute to this:

- Ensuring young people with disabilities have equal access to opportunities. The authority provides transport for pupils with special needs, and will encourage the use of travel with mainstream peers wherever possible. The authority has introduced a travel training initiative to develop independence skills and confidence in travelling independently and using public transport.
- Public transport is becoming increasingly accessible, through information, accessible vehicles and driver training (eg customer care and disability awareness). Regular bus network reviews are helping to monitor these issues.
- There is ongoing work to ensure that the pedestrian environment in Sandwell is suitable for those with mobility and sensory impairments, such as the provision of tactile paving at controlled and uncontrolled pedestrian crossings and either an auditory noise and/or sensory panel at signal controlled crossings. There is no specific programme to upgrade all crossings by a particular date as this usually happens when crossings need to be improved, either because they do not meet modern standards or because they need to be changed in response to road safety and collision studies.
- All STPs detail the specific provisions made by each school to accommodate all young people with a transport requirement in their statement of special needs. All Sandwell's LEA Special Schools have prepared School Travel Plans and have made short and long-term commitments to promoting safe, sustainable and independent travel of their students.
- Recognise that the needs and concerns of young people differ according to age, gender and local circumstances, and aim to work with all young people.

## Financial Challenges and Funding

Currently the support of sustainable modes of travel comes from a range of funding sources including:

- Local authority revenue (Sandwell MBC officer time) support, which covers the ongoing day to day provision of services including school transport, road safety, independent travel training and development of STPs as part of the planning process.
- LTP funding which supports local bus initiatives, capital spending on safety schemes and improvements to walking and cycling networks.
- Some continuation of sustainable travel support from TfWM's Smarter Choices Resilience Team.

The Travelling to School Initiative which funded School Travel Advisors and the grants for producing a STP ceased in 2011, which means that it is difficult to ensure that STPs are monitored and continually improved. Use of the Modeshift STARS online system is helping to reverse this situation.

There will be ongoing pressure on home to school (and local bus) budgets. Sandwell MBC currently provides some discretionary school travel and this is likely to be at risk without either efficiency gains or other spending cuts.

Scope for joint agency working, eg involving public health, and to identify potential sources of new funding will be explored.

The authority has a duty to deliver best value from its school transport contracts and will therefore need to review entitlement and contracts to ensure that, where possible, efficiency gains can be made, through route reviews and retendering.

## **6.5 Opportunities**

A number of opportunities exist for Sandwell, as follows:

### Information Sharing

Good progress was made with STPs until 2010 in terms of take up and mode shift. Since then, without the support of a School Travel Advisor, schools will find it difficult to monitor, review and continually improve their STPs although the use of the Modeshift STARS online system has helped to reverse this situation. The scope to identify good practice and share this more effectively between schools is possible through Modeshift STARS. Registration of schools with Modeshift STARS and a commitment to achieve at least the Bronze accreditation level however needs to be encouraged.

### Interagency Opportunities

Sandwell is within the West Midlands conurbation and therefore benefits from regional resources such as those provided by TfWM, online journey planners, publicity and information and the Safer Travel Partnership.

It has been recognised that walking and cycling to and from school can have an impact on improving childhood obesity/health problems. Sandwell's Public Health department could therefore offer more support to schools to promote sustainable travel to school as a healthy alternative. The continuing Change 4 Life (national) initiative can also assist schools with promoting healthy lifestyles, of which travelling to school is part.

### Improving Consultation and Closing the Feedback Loop

There is a need to include young people in effective consultation about the services the Council provides and what is needed. A repeat of an extensive consultation that took place in 2005 in the Borough would help with gaining more knowledge, although information could be fed back to the Council from schools as part of monitoring and reviewing their STPs. Ofsted reports on schools can also help to highlight good practice with consultation and how involved schools are with their STPs.

There is a need to ensure that feedback from the individual STPs and consultation with young people is fed back effectively into prioritisation of road safety, traffic calming, highways and public transport planning. In addition, there is also a need to provide information to young people as to what their comments have achieved. Young people are often concerned that if they raise issues then they are not acted on. Feedback from schools on travel issues can be expressed through Modeshift STARS STPs and then acted upon by the appropriate agency or council department. Information on progress could then be forwarded to young people, parents and schools.



## APPENDIX A Modeshift STARS Introduction and Registration

### Modeshift STARS

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL TRAVEL AWARDS SCHEME



Modeshift STARS (Education) is the national schools awards scheme that has been established to recognise schools that have demonstrated excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel.

The scheme encourages schools right across the country to join in a major effort to increase levels of sustainable and active travel and in so doing, improve the health and well-being of children and young people.

Every school in England can participate in Modeshift STARS for free. On completion of an application for Modeshift STARS, schools will automatically have a brand new national standard School Travel Plan.

As of September 2017, 64 organisations representing around 13,000 schools in England are signed up to Modeshift STARS.

To take part, register by selecting the 'register' option on the Modeshift STARS (Education) homepage at [www.modeshiftstars.org/education](http://www.modeshiftstars.org/education).

It is recommended that all schools in Sandwell register with Modeshift STARS in order to enable continual development of travel plans to maximise the use of sustainable methods of transport, which in turn assists with addressing the safety, health and traffic management aspects of school journeys.

If you have any difficulties with registration or require more information, contact Sandwell Council either by email [andy\\_thorpe@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:andy_thorpe@sandwell.gov.uk) or 0121 569 4261.

## **APPENDIX B Modeshift STARS Initiatives Guide for Action Plans**

Schools should work towards achieving Travel Plan objectives and targets by completing the sustainable travel initiatives listed in the Action Plan section of their Modeshift STARS current plan. The various initiatives are summarised in the guide below (also available from the Modeshift STARS website) and fall into the following categories:

- Walking and Scooting
- Cycling
- Road Safety and Training
- Smarter Driving
- Public Transport
- Promotion
- Consultation
- Curriculum
- Partnerships

Some of the initiatives relate to national promotional events (eg Walk to School Week) although most initiatives will require planning by schools themselves and identifying people, time and resources to progress them. Some vehicles to assist with this are usually already in existence, eg the curriculum, school council, staff and governors' meetings, newsletters, notice boards, induction meetings, assemblies, existing cycling, pedestrian and independent travel training.

The most important action is to engage the whole school community about sustainable school travel, perhaps initially through a launch event. In particular, all staff should be aware of the Travel Plan and how they can get involved.



## Modeshift STARS Initiatives Guide 2019/20

### Walking & Scooting—Travel

W1	Living Streets WOW Campaign
W2	Living Streets Free Your Feet campaign delivered
W3	Local Walking Reward Scheme
W6	Living Streets Walk to School Week
W7	Walk to school month
W8	5 / 10 Minute walking zone in place
W9	Educational / Curriculum Walks
W10	Walking bus in place
W11	Walking trips
W12	Scooter storage installed
W13	Scooter club
W14	Active travel breakfast
W19	Parent shelter installed
W25	Secure buggy storage installed
W16 - 18	Other walking/scooting initiative

### Cycling—Travel

C1	Dr Bike/cycle maintenance sessions
C2	Cycle parking installed
C3	Bikers Breakfast
C4	Opportunity to practice cycling skills at break time
C5	School takes part in The Big Pedal
C6	Cycle competitions/ schools cycle challenge
C7	Cycle reward scheme
C8	Bike week
C9	Cycle club in place
C10	Pool bike system in place
C11	Cycle purchase scheme for staff
C12	Bicycle Security Marking
C13	Cycle rides/excursions
C14	Cycle Train / Bike Bus in place
C15	Bling Your Bike Day
C20	National Cycle Challenge
C16 -18	Other cycling initiatives

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### Road Safety & Training—Travel

R1	Cycle training for pupils (E.g. Bikeability)
R2	Learn to Ride
R3	Balance Bike Training
R4	Scooter training
R5	Pedestrian skills training
R6	Independent travel training
R7	Young Driver Training
R8	Cycle training for staff and / or parents
R9	Road Safety assembly/ presentation
R10	Be Bright Be Seen Activities
R11	School invites experts/organisations to talk about personal safety
R12	Safety around large vehicles training
R13	Use of transition resources
R14	Pupils monitoring traffic
R15	School has lobbied for installation of traffic calming outside of school
R16	School has lobbied for installation of safer crossings on the route to school
R17	School has lobbied for installation of 20mph zone outside of school
R18	Road Safety Day/Week
R23	In car safety training for young adults
R24	Nursery teaches road safety & active travel messages
R19— 21	Other road safety & training initiatives

### Air Quality—Travel

AQ1	School promotes car sharing
AQ2	Car free days
AQ3	Car free zone in place
AQ4	Park and walk/stride scheme
AQ5	Removal of car parking spaces
AQ6	Highway code is promoted to students, staff and parents
AQ7	Parent parking campaign
AQ8	Parking Pledge Scheme
AQ9	Eco Driver Training
AQ13	Anti Idling Initiative
AQ14	Air Pollution Promotion
AQ15	National Clean Air Day
AQ10 —12	Other smarter driving initiatives

### Public Transport—Travel

PT1	Public transport used for school trips
PT2	School promotes public transport
PT3	School promotes responsible behaviour on public transport / has bus behaviour policy
PT4	Private coaches for school trips pick up and set down in safe / accessible places.
PT5	School promotes young person's travel card scheme
PT9	Catch the bus week
PT10	School has anti-bullying policy for school transport/public buses
PT11	Hop Off - get off two stops early
PT6— 8	Other public transportation initiatives

### Promotion—Supporting

PR1	Newsletter
PR2	Info sent to residents / School communicates with residents
PR3	Local media / Schools gets local media attention
PR4	Presenting to/ sharing ideas with other schools
PR5	Distributing cycling and public transport maps
PR6	School has an active travel policy
PR7	Travel information on notice board
PR8	Competitions run & promoted within school
PR9	Assembly
PR10	Social Media Campaign
PR11	Sponsored events
PR12	Parents' evenings/ Induction evenings
PR13	Information on website
PR14	Councillor/ MP/ Mayor invited to an event
PR15	Within the Prospectus
PR16	Letter from Head Teacher to Parents
PR17	New parent pack
PR18	Transition activities
PR19	School Railing Banners
PR20	JTA/YTA/JRSO in place
PR21	Travel to school information maps created
PR27	Active travel shop/enterprise
PR22 —24	Other promotion method



### Curriculum—Supporting

CU1	School takes part in competitions promoted by others
CU2	School teaches the health benefits of safe / active travel
CU3	School teaches environmental benefits of active travel
CU4	Theatre in Education on sustainable travel or road safety
CU5	Bike maintenance lessons
CU6	Cycling lessons (PE)
CU7	Road safety lessons
CU8	Pupils use school travel survey data from STARS in lessons
CU9	School uses Living Streets WOW Travel Tracker to collect data
CU1 3	School collects postcode data
CU1 0-12	Other curriculum initiatives

### Partnerships—Supporting

P1	School works with Police/ Safer Neighbourhood Team/ PCSO to promote safe & sustainable travel
P2	School works with other schools to promote safe and sustainable travel
P3	School presents their work to other groups
P4	School works towards the Sustainable Schools Framework
P5	School works with Local councillors/ Mayor/ MPs
P6	School has achieved Eco School status
P7	School works with local residents/ resident associations to promote safe and sustainable travel
P8	School works with local charities/ NGOs to promote safe and sustainable travel
P9	School works with local sport/ health partnerships to promote safe and sustainable travel
P10- 12	Other partnership initiatives

Supported by



## APPENDIX C Digital Road Safety

A web-based digital interactive training resource, referred to as “Digital Road Safety”, was launched for use by schools in September 2017. It enables wider and more frequent training possibilities for children, by playing a collection of challenges, than is currently available in person from Sandwell MBC.

# STOP, LOOK, LISTEN, THINK!



Free of charge to Sandwell schools



- Learn how to handle different road traffic situations safely
- Easy web-based access for pupils and teachers
- Includes various games and scenarios
- Counts as an action plan item for Modeshift STARS
- Supports walk to school campaigns and healthy lifestyles
- Freely available for use by Sandwell schools

For more information on how to register your school on the **Digital Road Safety** system, contact:

**Karen Hale, Sandwell Council**  
[karen\\_hale@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:karen_hale@sandwell.gov.uk)  
0121 569 4116



## **APPENDIX D School Travel Plans and Planning Applications**

The following information outlines how School Travel Plans (STP) should be prepared in order to support planning applications for expanding and new schools in Sandwell. School Travel Plans are normally a requirement to support planning applications at new and expanding schools because:

- National statistics state 1 in 10 children travelled to school by car in the 1980s, whereas currently 1 in 3 regularly travel to school by car
- there is increasing concern about national statistics stating rising obesity levels
- road safety concerns are partly generated by school-run traffic
- child independence and road sense can largely be gained from walking to school
- there is commitment to the five outcomes of Every Child Matters (Children's Act)
- School Travel Plans link to the National Healthy Schools ethos.

The aims of the School Travel Plan should be to:

- improve the quality of the journey for people who choose to walk, cycle, use the bus or train to travel to or from school and ensure their needs are met
- reduce the number of journeys made by car.

School Travel Plans should therefore:

- set out a number of practical steps for reducing the number of car trips made to schools and help to improve child safety on the school journey
- look at the needs of the children on the school journey and attempt to address them by finding the right solutions for schools
- demonstrate support from stakeholders through consultation of pupils, parents, staff, governors, police, TfWM smarter choices resilience team, road safety officers, Sandwell Council Public Health, Transportation Planning and Highways officers to ensure the success of the School Travel Plan and its full integration into the ethos of the school
- have clearly stated aims, objectives and targets that are specific, measurable, achievable, reviewed, time-based and supported by the whole school community.

Registration with Modeshift STARS (Appendix A) will enable the production of an Action Plan (Appendix B) to address school travel and wider issues. The School Travel Plan should be printed and submitted with a planning application once it has been set-up; with surveys having been undertaken and an Action Plan produced along with a commitment to achieve at least the bronze level of Modeshift STARS accreditation.

Monitoring and review of the School Travel Plan should also be carried out with Modeshift STARS although the baseline survey data entered into Modeshift STARS must also be entered into the table below (representing 100% of pupils) and be submitted with the planning application. The table provides an improved representation of how mode share targets will progress over the course of a period of time, particularly where pupil numbers may be increasing. The table is also important for making the

distinction between targets that are set as both percentages and absolute numbers. For example, a new or expanding school might not be fully occupied until some years after first opening, in which case percentage targets for car travel would be meaningless because it is more important for the absolute car numbers to be pegged at a particular level and ideally reduced through time.

Mode of Travel & Group	Baseline		Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
			Targets		Actual		Targets		Actual		Targets		Actual	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
<b>Staff</b>														
Car														
Car share														
Walking														
Bus/PT														
Cycling														
Total														
<b>Pupils</b>														
Car														
Walking														
Bus/PT														
Cycling														
Total														
Other (eg cycle trainees)														

Year 4 etc

In order to ensure that the objectives and targets are being achieved, schools would need to carry out annual surveys (columns may be added for further target years) and enter the data into the school’s Modeshift STARS area of the website.

Surveys should be co-ordinated by the head teacher, who would then review the School Travel Plan itself. The review would consider pupil travel needs arising from new developments in education and transport provision and the Travel Plan would be reviewed as necessary to take account of these.

**Special Notes for Expanding Schools**

The existing Modeshift STARS School Travel Plan should be built upon, or initiated if not already set-up, and show how current levels of car use by pupils and staff will remain the same (or even decrease) despite expected increases in the numbers of staff and pupils due to the expansion. To achieve this would normally require more Travel Plan activity.

**Special Notes for New Schools**

The Transport Assessment for the new school should state that the school will register with Modeshift STARS (when a DfES number for the school is available) to achieve at least the bronze level of accreditation and describe how the expected mode share figures could change after the school opens. It should also recommend a number of appropriate Travel Plan actions that the school should carry out in order to address particular issues or take advantage of opportunities that exist, eg park and stride sites.

## APPENDIX E School Travel Plan Resources

The following table outlines resources which are available from Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) and other sources.

Medium	Resource	Contact
Website	Free website pages and online survey for schools registered with Sandwell's Modeshift STARS area.	www.modeshiftstars.org Andy Thorpe, SMBC andy_thorpe@sandwell.gov.uk
	THINK! Provides road safety information for road users. The "THINK! EDUCATION" section (on the "Road safety resources" page of the website) has information for both primary and secondary schools.	think.direct.gov.uk
	Free car share matching service.	www.carsharesandwell.com transport@sandwell.gov.uk
Various	Road safety leaflets and ideas for road safety education activities.	Karen Hale, Road Safety, SMBC karen_hale@sandwell.gov.uk
	Walking Bus information and route audit.	Karen Hale, Road Safety, SMBC karen_hale@sandwell.gov.uk
Training	Cycle Training for Year 6 pupils (Bikeability)	Debbie Hyde, SMBC debbie_hyde@sandwell.gov.uk
	Pedestrian Training using Digital Road Safety (DRS)	Karen Hale, SMBC karen_hale@sandwell.gov.uk
	Independent Travel Training	Angelina Dawson, SMBC angelina_dawson@sandwell.gov.uk
	TITAN programme coordination	Angelina Dawson, SMBC angelina_dawson@sandwell.gov.uk