

COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB-COMMITTEE - 21ST JANUARY 2004

SUBJECT: SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL INITIATIVE

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENT

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The first Safe Routes to Schools pilot study was carried out in Odense (Denmark) in 1978. Sustrans launched its own demonstration project in 1995 in partnership with 4 Local Authorities (Leeds, Hampshire, Colchester and York). A National SRTS Conference was held in London in 1996 which officially endorsed and launched the initiative throughout the UK.
- 1.2 In summary SRTS - Aims and Objectives:
- Increase the number of pupils walking and cycling to school
 - Improve safety of the school journey and reduce number of accidents
 - Improve community access and provide safe and direct routes
 - Raise the profile of health related issues within the community
 - Regenerate the community and improve the environment
- 1.3 The Welsh Assembly Government has set aside funding within Transport Grant to promote the development of the Safe Routes to Schools programme throughout Wales. Each Local Authority is invited to compete and bid for funding to implement Safe Routes to Schools initiatives.
- 1.4 It is worth noting for clarity that other separately funded initiatives/programmes promote and Implement Highway Safety/Accident Reduction, Traffic Calming and Minor Highway Improvement schemes which are unrelated to the Safe Routes to Schools Initiative.
- 1.5 The Council is directing its resources to provide comprehensive schemes for Secondary Schools to improve facilities for safer walking and cycling.
- 1.6 An essential component of the scheme is the involvement of the pupils with the initial survey work and their contribution/input into the preliminary proposals. This provides opportunity for project work as part of the school curriculum and work experience with the design team as the project progresses. There are also opportunities to liaise and work with the feeder primary schools.

2. SCHEMES

Rhymney Comprehensive Safe Routes To School Initiative

- 2.1 Rhymney Comprehensive School was endorsed by Caerphilly County Borough Council as the Authority's first priority Safe Routes to School pilot scheme. The scheme was phased over a three-year period (Starting April 1999). The total scheme cost is £529,000 of which £499,000 was Transport Grant award and £30,000 contribution from other sources.
- 2.2 The scheme involved the successful completion of a Compulsory Purchase Order for land to facilitate a new pedestrian cycle bridge crossing the Rhymney River and providing a direct link from the school to Pontlottyn.

- 2.3 Provision of a pedestrian/cycle link from the school to Abertysswg utilising a disused railway line.
- 2.4 Improved pedestrian and cycling measures at the school; traffic calming measures at the school; secure cycle parking; improved access to the school; and pedestrian cycle links to the surrounding communities.
- 2.5 The completed works have already seen substantial beneficial use. The School has produced a school travel plan, which has been adopted by the School Governing Board, which recently won an award competing against other Welsh schools. The school travel plan has been used with year 7 pupils/parents as part of the new term school induction.
- 2.6 The Authority's School Travel Plan Coordinator and Road Safety Officer has and will continue to work closely with the school and the feeder Primary schools to promote the Safe Routes to School initiative.

Risca Comprehensive/Crosskeys College - Safe Routes To Schools

- 2.7 The scheme has been identified within the Council's Local Transport Plan as the next SRTS initiative to be progressed after Rhymney Comprehensive School Pilot Scheme.
- 2.8 The scheme commenced works in April 2002 and will be phased over three years. £155,000 Transport Grant was awarded in 2002/2003 and £260,000 in 2003/2004 with £165,000 bid for in 2004/2005. The total cost of the scheme will be £580,000.
- 2.9 The scheme will implement a Safe Routes to Schools Initiative for Risca Comprehensive School and Crosskeys College / Coleg Gwent improving links to the surrounding communities of Risca, Crosskeys and Cwmcarn.
- 2.10 The proposal will include the upgrade of the canal towpath between Crosskeys and Cwmcarn, improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists at the College, improvements for pedestrians and cyclist at Ty Sign, improvements to Risca Comprehensive School for pedestrian and cycle access and upgrade traffic calming along Pontymason Lane. Some minor improvement works will also be undertaken to the feeder Primary schools as part of the initiative together with improved pedestrian and cycle links to the National Cycle Network (Route Nr 47) from the College to Waun Fawr Park.

3. FUTURE SCHEMES/BIDS

- 3.1 A review/assessment is currently being undertaken by Caerphilly County Borough Council to determine the next Safe Routes to School Transport Grant bid submission in 2005/2006 to the Assembly. This bid will be subject to Committee/Member Approval and will form part of further reports to Scrutiny Committee.

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