



Coventry City Council

Briefing note

To: Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)

Date: 9 February 2022

Subject: Active Travel to School

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 The Business, Enterprise and Economy Scrutiny Board (3) have requested an update on support to schools to increase active travel.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) are recommended to:

- 1) Note the updates provided
- 2) Support ongoing activity to promote active travel to school as part of the Local Air Quality Action Plan
- 3) Identify any further recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 Active Travel includes walking, cycling and other non-motorised forms of transport and can provide an affordable way for children and adults to build physical activity into their daily routines. This can benefit their own health and wellbeing, but also help to improve local air quality for the benefit of the wider community by reducing short car trips. Parking outside schools has traditionally been discouraged through waiting restrictions and enforcement, but new approaches are being explored such as School Streets, where vehicle access is limited during school drop off and pick up times. This was trialled as part of the Air Quality Early Measures project which is covered later.

- 3.2 The consultation on Coventry's draft Transport Strategy, approved by Cabinet in October and considered at a previous meeting of SB3, includes reference to active travel and schools as part of the vision of a safe, sustainable, equitable and resilient transport system, which enables our residents, visitors and businesses to thrive.

- 3.2 The draft strategy includes four objectives:

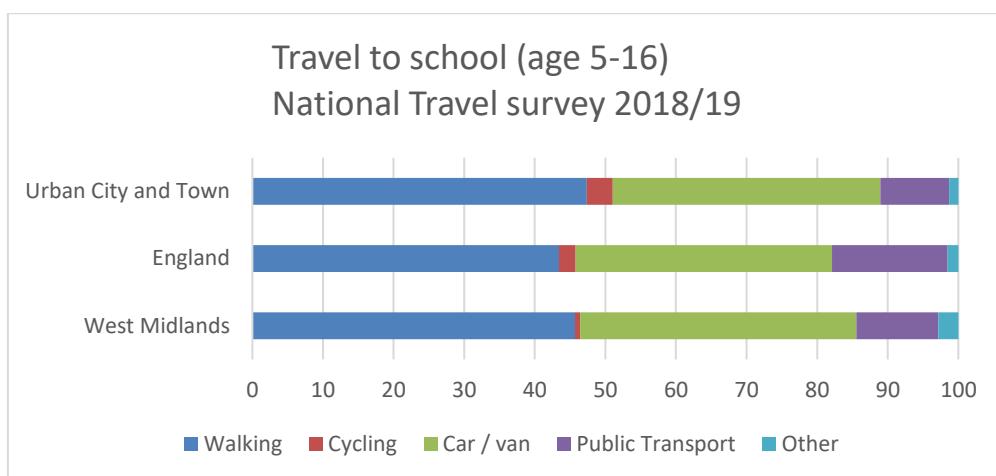
1. Supporting the city's economic recovery and enabling long-term growth
2. Delivering a sustainable, low carbon transport system
3. Ensuring equality of opportunity
4. Maximising health and wellbeing.

- 3.3 One of strategy's themes is encouraging behaviour change and this includes engaging with schools, which will help to meet sustainability and health and wellbeing objectives. Enabling active travel to school could also support economic and equality objectives by reducing travel costs for families and allowing older children to travel independently.

The draft transport strategy recognises that the Council can deliver some aspects, but others will be delivered by, or in partnership with, our various partners in the region. This is already the case for Active Travel as the case studies illustrate.

4 School Travel Trends

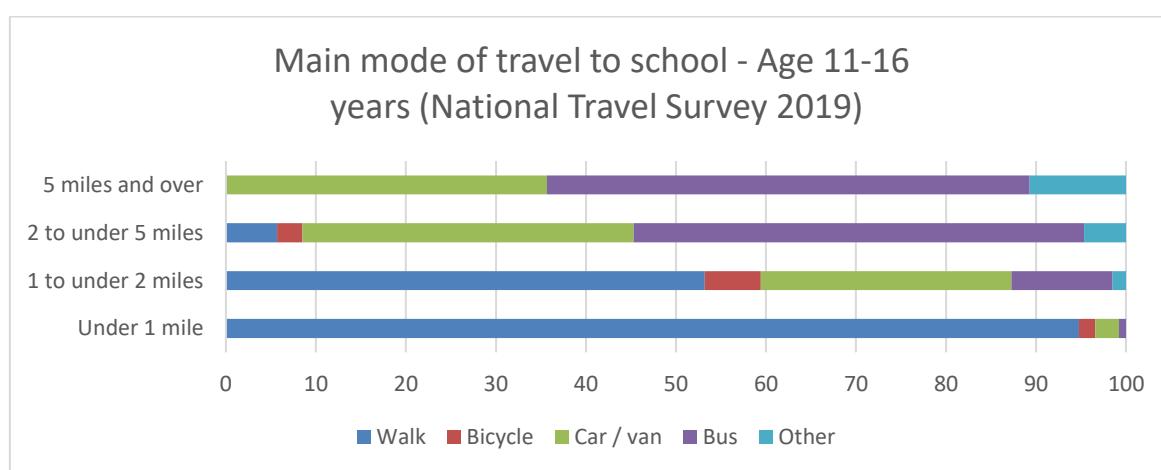
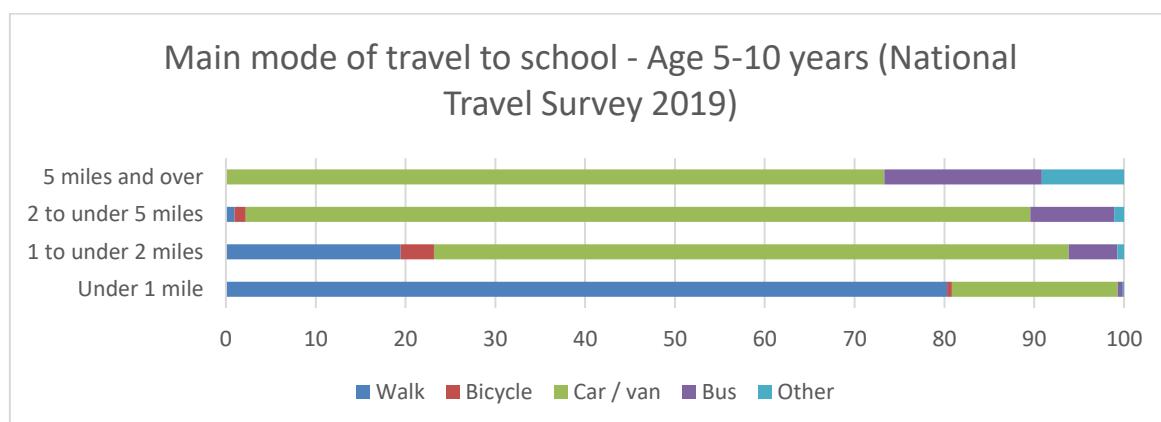
- 4.1 Based on the National Travel Survey 2018/19 walking is the main mode of travel to school for ages 5-16 in England and in the wider West Midlands region. Cycling to school is lower regionally and car use greater, which may be partly explained by the region including more rural counties. The Coventry Household Survey in 2018 also finds that walking is the main mode of transport when escorting children to school (49%) followed by driving (37%). However, it should be noted that the most recent household survey during the pandemic in 2021 suggest that driving is the main mode (49%) and walking has reduced (42%).



- 4.2 Trip lengths to school in the West Midlands are lower than the national average and Coventry might be expected to have even shorter trip lengths as it is a compact city. On average children travel twice as far to secondary school as to primary school. As well as travelling further to secondary school, older children are more likely to travel independently.



- 4.3 The mode of travel to school can vary with distance as the results of the National Travel Survey 2019 show.
- Walking was the main mode up to 1 mile for primary and 2 miles for secondary age children.
 - Cycling was most popular for journeys of 1 to 2 miles to primary & secondary school, but cycling is used for journeys up to 5 miles
 - Car is the main mode to primary school for journeys of 1 mile or more
 - Bus is the main mode of transport to secondary school for journeys of 2 miles or more.



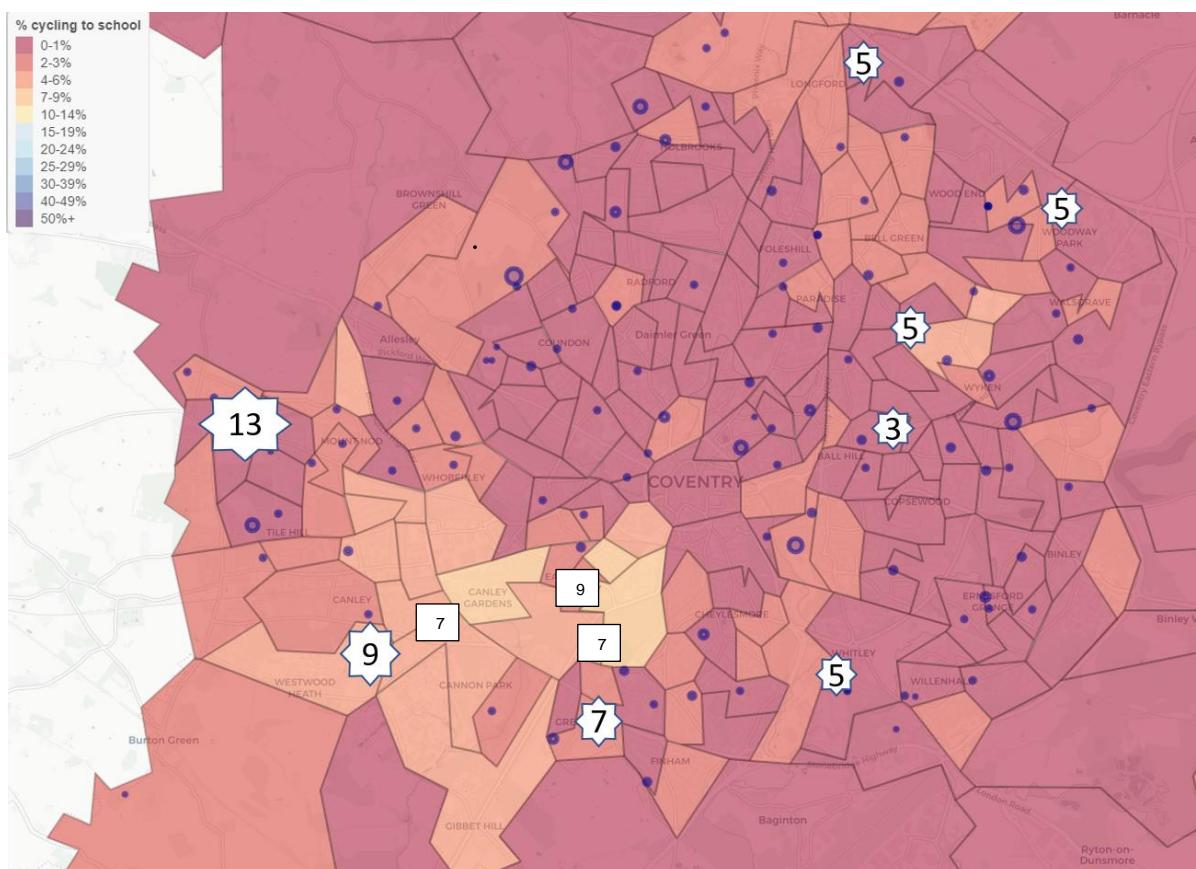
5 Local School Travel Data

- 5.1 Schools requiring planning permission for a significant development may be required to develop a travel plan, which includes a school travel survey. In addition where projects are being undertaken to promote sustainable travel to school, it is common for a travel survey to be carried out before and after the intervention to measure the impact.
- 5.2 Recent surveys of six local primary schools receiving active travel support, via Transport for West Midlands, found that on average more children travel actively to school than the regional average. 66% of children use active travel (walking, cycling and scooting) and 33% travel by car.

5.3 Cycling to secondary school in Coventry

5.4 As a compact city, Coventry has good potential for cycling to school. All secondary schools are located within 30 minutes ride of the city centre. Comprehensive data on travel to school was previously obtained via the national school census until 2011. Schools are circled on the plan below and the colours of the surrounding areas indicate how many children were cycling to school from each area. The highest rates are in the areas shown in yellow, where 7-9% of children cycled to school. Secondary schools with the highest rates of cycling (3-13%) are starred.

Cycling to Secondary School – 2011 School Census



© OpenStreetMap contributors. Source: PCT.Bike Based on National Travel Survey 2011 data.

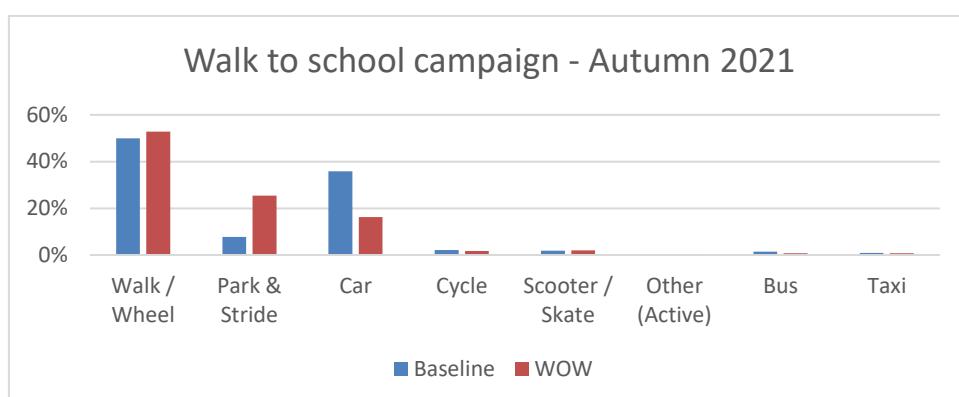
6 Case Studies: Support for Active Travel to Schools

6.1 Bikeability Training

6.2 Bikeability training is recommended by the Highway Code. Bikeability cycle training equips children with vital life skills. Pupils not only learn to cycle, they gain independence, social skills and a sense of wellbeing. After Bikeability, children are better at responding to risk and report increased confidence. As a result, more children cycle to school which in turn improves mental health and wellbeing. This allows children to get more out of the classroom, improving their attention span and engagement. Healthier habits lead to increased attendance and improved academic results. The Department for Transport funds Bikeability cycle training for schools. The Bikeability Trust distributes this funding across England to local authorities. Training is delivered by the council's in-house team in primary schools.

6.3 Walk to School

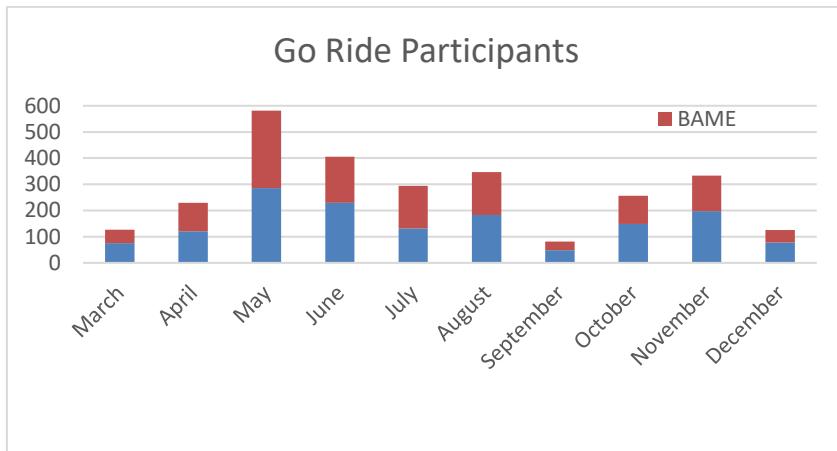
6.4 National charity Living Streets runs a Walk to School Month and also delivers WOW the walk to school challenge, which rewards children for travelling actively. Schools undertake a baseline survey and then regularly monitor participation through an Active Travel Tracker and badges are awarded every month. In the autumn term car journeys to primary school gates in Coventry reduced by more than half, based on 13 active schools.



This appears to have been largely achieved by encouraging people to Park & Stride, by parking 5 to 10 minutes away and walking the last part of the journey. Alternative drop off points are arranged to ensure that they do not cause disruption and there is a safe walking route to the school. Reducing the volume of traffic around the school gates makes it safer and more pleasant for those who are walking or cycling.

6.5 Go Ride Schools

6.6 National Governing Body British Cycling supports cycling as part of the school curriculum by providing Go Ride community coaching activities. These are usually delivered on the school site once a week over a 6 week period. Bikes are provided for participants to use and sessions aim to develop children's cycling skills and confidence. In addition outreach activities are delivered in the community, such as women only learn to ride training at the Mosque as part of Go Foleshill, holiday sessions for Family Hub clients and public learn to ride sessions in parks and leisure centres. 2783 children have participated since March, of which 46% were from BAME groups.



'The cycling sessions are the highlight of the children's week, they are so excited to be doing cycling in school, they absolutely love it', Headteacher.

6.7 Sustrans Smarter Travel Support

- 6.8 National charity Sustrans runs an annual Bike to School Week in the autumn term and the Big Pedal campaign in the spring term to encourage more cycling to school. This year's event has been renamed the Big Walk and Wheel is billed as the UK's largest inter-school walking, wheeling, scooting and cycling challenge and takes place from 21 March to 1 April 2022.
- 6.9 Sustrans was a delivery partner for the Air Quality Early Measures engagement work with schools along the A4600 in 2018-19 to promote behaviour change in favour of active travel. The combined results of 7 schools who undertook before and after surveys observed a reduction in car use of 8.5% points, which meant that more people were then choosing active travel than using a car. The project included in school activities, training and grants for cycle and scooter parking. As a result scooter usage quadrupled and cycling almost doubled.

Sustrans Travel to school hands up survey results

Mode	Change		Baseline %	Post Year 1 %
Walk, Scoot & Cycle	7.7 percentage points		39.8%	47.6%
	1.6 percentage points		2.6%	4.2%
	3.1 percentage points		36.3%	39.4%
	2.9 percentage points		1.0%	3.9%
	8.5 percentage points		51.5%	43.0%
	0.8 percentage points		2.1%	3.0%

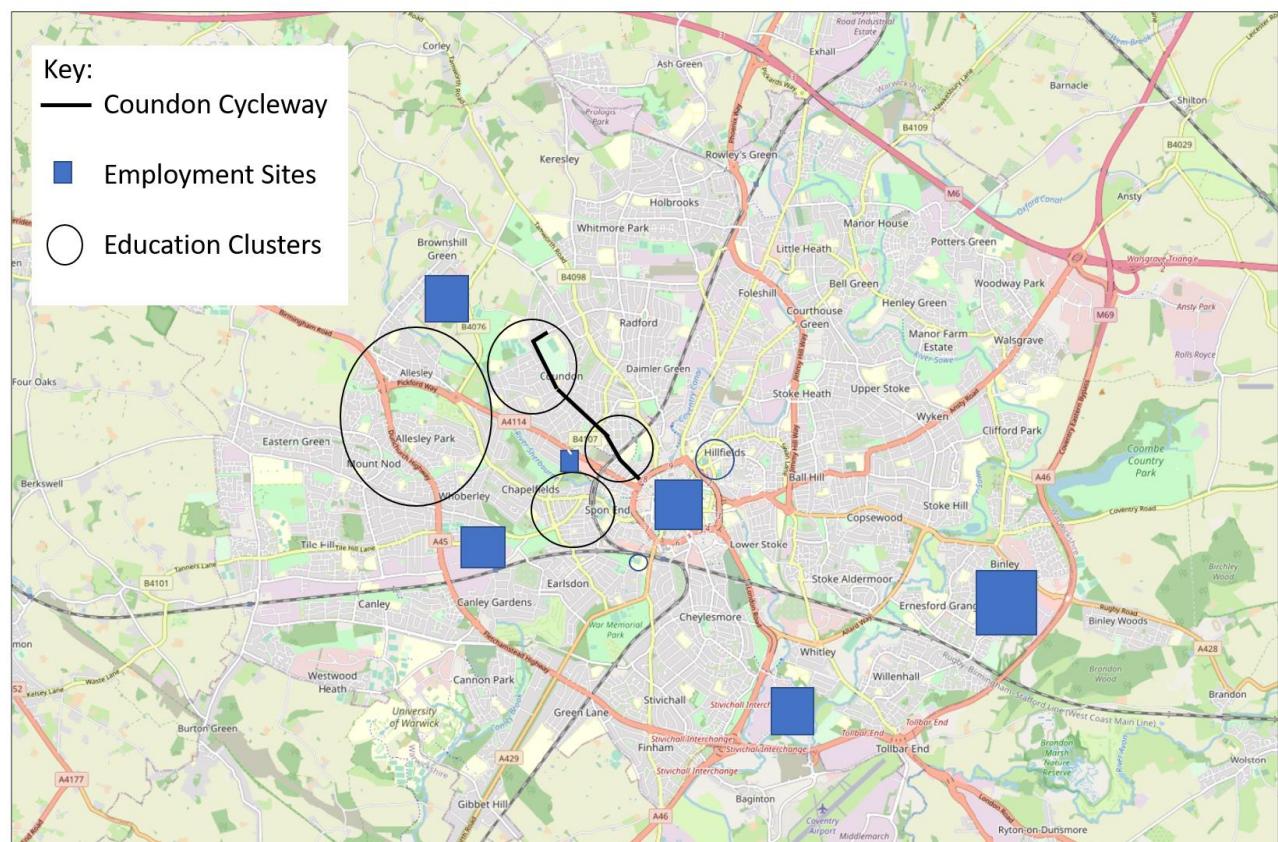
7 Next Steps: Local Air Quality Action Plan

- 7.1 Building on the experience to date, schools are being offered support to promote active travel in connection with the local air quality action plan, which is focussing on the Holyhead Road corridor in particular. Support has already been provided to a number of schools in the target area with a particular focus on schools along the Coundon Cycleway. For example, support is already being provided to Coundon Court at the western end of the route and St Osburg's at the eastern end. Discussions have also been taking place with Bablake School which is located directly on the cycleway route.
- 7.2 Over 100 people have participated in adult cycle training from summer 2021 and beginners sessions have moved inside over the winter. Cycles are available for people to borrow at the training. Outreach activities have also been undertaken via public events including CycleFest, where bikes could be donated for recycling for refugees. This event included supervised cycle parking, Dr Bike maintenance checks with Cycling UK, test rides and inclusive cycling with Parkride/Midland Mencap.
- 7.3 A holistic package of support will be provided to maximise opportunities for walking, scooting and cycling to school, but also for other journeys. If parents are confident cycling, they are more likely to allow their children to cycle to school and may then be able to continue to their destination by bike. The diagram below shows the different elements of the programme which are taking place over the next 2 years.

7.4 Measures to promote active travel to school



- 7.5 The plan below shows how work to support walking and cycling to schools and local communities will be complemented by further engagement programmes targeting businesses across the city.



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