

## School Travel Plan Accreditation Scheme

Essex County Council's Sustainable Travel Planning Team is working with Head teachers from schools of all ages to assist with the development of a School Travel Plan. These have multiple aims, including decreasing traffic levels around schools, improving pupils' road safety, interlinking with Healthy Schools status and Bikeability, and helping everyone get to and from school actively, more alert and ready to learn.

To help develop a School Travel Plan, a new and free national accreditation scheme has recently been launched. Modeshift STARS has been established to recognise schools that have demonstrated excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel. Schools can register on the scheme for free and will be granted access to an online system, guiding them through each element of a Travel Plan with user-friendly instructions.

Once registered on the system, there are three levels of accreditation that a school can achieve, with plaques awarded for each on a yearly basis to display within the school:



For schools that demonstrate a commitment to promoting sustainable transport by conducting an annual survey, identifying travel issues and solutions and delivering a range of travel initiatives.



For schools that achieve a reduction in car use on the journey to school, identifying the sustainable modes which most suit their needs and working towards improving or implementing facilities to support these.



For schools that have excelled with promoting sustainable travel and achieved a noticeable reduction in car use on the journey to school by fully embracing sustainable travel as the norm throughout the entire school community.

Essex County Council can provide support to schools throughout their Travel Plan process. One of our Sustainable Travel Planning Advisors will offer their expertise and assistance, completely free of charge.

From September 2015, schools can apply for a Bronze accreditation, with the sign-off process for approval conducted by ECC. Applications for Silver or Gold accreditations will need to be endorsed by ECC prior to a quality assurance exercise carried out by Modeshift.

Accreditations will be given on a termly basis. Each school, when successful, will receive a plaque for display to show their level of achievement.



Gold level schools will be put forward for the National STARS School Travel Awards. A national awards panel made up of experts in the field will decide upon the Regional and National Schools of the Year with the best schools in each region going forward to a national event with money-can't-buy prizes up for grabs.

A School Travel Plan is a relatively simple project which consists of three core sections;

1. A profile of the school, encompassing its size, location, pupil and staff population, and its existing facilities. This will include simple surveys (which ECC can assist with) on the travel habits and preferences of the pupils.
2. An analysis of the travel and transport issues affecting the school. A lot of this will become apparent from the surveys, but further investigation through consulting staff, parents, governors, other visitors to the school and the school council will add to the body of evidence.
3. Finally, based on the first two stages, an action plan should be devised, aimed at solving any problems that have been outlined and meeting the demands and needs of all those travelling to the school.

Once established, a School Travel Plan is a living document which can be adjusted and tweaked as and when circumstances at your school change. Repeating the surveys at the same time each year and collecting any new evidence enables you to measure progress and reassess how even more opportunities can be provided.

Some of the opportunities provided by a working School Travel Plan includes;

- Healthier and more active, alert pupils
- Decrease in congestion around the school
- Greater awareness of safety issues
- Opportunities for Bikeability cycle training
- Complementing Healthy Schools applications and reviews
- Participation in competitions such as Sustrans' Eco Race
- Cleaner air in and around the school
- Pupils' greater connection with their local environment.

Our Sustainable Travel Planning Advisors can help you every step of the way, and are happy to share ideas that have worked well in other similar schools. We know that, like children, every school is different and so will encourage the school to own the Travel Plan, personalised to their needs.

We can also offer a number of free physical resources to encourage everyone to take part (depending on availability of products).

To get started, you can either register your school on the Modeshift STARS website (<https://modeshiftstars.org>) or contact us at [travelplanteam@essex.gov.uk](mailto:travelplanteam@essex.gov.uk) or 0333 013 9390.

