Schools up and down West Sussex are celebrating their success in a scheme designed to encourage pupils to arrive for lessons on foot or by bike instead of the family car. West Sussex County Council runs the new Travel Mark scheme to help and encourage schools to draw up travel plans. Schools that gain the Mark automatically qualify for Government funding to carry on developing their travel plan ideas – that works out at payments of typically £10,000 for a secondary school and £5,000 for a primary school.

Lieutenant Colonel Tex Pemberton, West Sussex Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, said: “I would like to congratulate all the schools on their success.” The work that we are actively helping schools to take part in has benefits for the whole community. “At peak times a very large percentage of traffic on the roads is due to the ‘school run’. Helping parents and pupils to find other ways of getting to the classroom can play a major role in reducing congestion, pollution and parking problems near school gates. “It is also much healthier and at the same time youngsters develop important road safety skills.”

### CAPITAL FUNDING FOR SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANS

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Schools that have gained Travel Mark status so far are:

- The Imberhorne School, East Grinstead.
- The Oaks First and Middle, Crawley.
- Barnham Primary.
- Camelsdale First.
- Lindfield Community Primary.
- Thakeham First School.
- Rydon Community College, Storrington.
- Bishop Luffa School, Chichester.
- Bishop Tufnell Infants and Bishop Tufnell Junior, Felpham.
- Chatsmore High School, Worthing.
- St Mary’s Primary, Bognor Regis.
- North Mundham Primary near Chichester.
- Hassocks Infants and Windmills Junior.
- Holbrook Primary, Horsham.
- Birdham Primary near Chichester.
- Downsbrook Middle, Worthing.
- The Angmering School.
- Lyndhurst First, Worthing.
- Chesswood Middle, Worthing.
- Loxwood Primary.
- Slinfold Primary.

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### SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN SUCCESS STORIES

**Midhurst CE Primary School** - the new signalised pedestrian crossing has been installed on Petersfield Road in Midhurst. The need for this crossing formed the basis of the school travel plan at the school. Children that live near June Lane now have a safe walking route to school.
NEXT WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

For those schools that missed out this time around, there is a second opportunity to receive the capital funding. Schools that have produced school travel plans, which meet the minimum requirements as defined by the West Sussex Travel Mark scheme, by March 2005 (at the latest) will become eligible.

Therefore, if you are working on a plan, or already have a plan that is not yet accredited, now is the time to get moving.

It is also a good time because now there are 3 new School Travel Advisors to help you through this process. Carolyn, Michele and Nicky will all be contacting schools in their areas to urge them to take this opportunity. We are happy to advise on any stage of the process as well as suggesting improvements to draft documents. We are also holding two School Travel Plan Road Shows this term. Following the success of the events last year we are planning two events this term, one in Worthing and one in Burgess Hill to provide one-to-one guidance on any issue relating to your school travel plan.

It is important to remember that not only will the school travel plan provide access to this funding stream, but it will also provide a framework for tackling congestion outside the school gate and encourage a reduction in car use for the school journey.

School Travel Plan formal submissions need to be made by 17th December 2004, and 18th March 2005. You can submit an application at any time before this date.

For further details on the funding please contact the Safer Routes to School team on 01243 756740 or email srts.team@westsussex.gov.uk.

NEW BUS SERVICE TO HELP REDUCE ‘SCHOOL RUN’

West Sussex County Council has launched a new pilot bus service in Crawley to link the Pound Hill area of the town with the new Oriel High School at Maidenbower. The aim is to reduce the impact of a brand new ‘school run’ on already busy roads in the area. The decision was taken by Lieutenant Colonel Tex Pemberton, West Sussex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport. He said it would also help put the County Council in a strong position when Government funds are made available for new and innovative ways of providing school transport.

Pound Hill forms a major catchment area for the new secondary school. When a draft School Travel Plan for Oriel High was drawn up, this route was highlighted to be of concern to parents and students. Only 51 sets of parents said they would be willing to send their children to school using the current bus network, however, that figure soared to 185 when they were asked whether a direct bus between Pound Hill and Maidenbower would make a difference. Therefore the decision was taken to provide this service, which can also be used by the fare-paying public.

The government is drafting a new School Transport Bill which will allow Local Authorities to change the way in which school transport is provided. From 2005, it will invite transport authorities to put forward bids for national funding to support large scale, innovative school transport schemes. The new pilot scheme in Crawley is part of the County’s preparation to ensure that West Sussex does not miss out when this funding becomes available.

MONITORING SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANS

- come on, you know you want to!

As all of those schools that have developed a plan know, monitoring forms an essential element of the framework. Unfortunately, it is often an element that is neglected. And yet, in order for us to continue to receive funding for school travel plan schemes, we need to justify how we spend our money and highlight particular success stories.

Monitoring also forms an important part of the Travel Mark Scheme, and schools simply cannot get past Level One unless there is evidence of resurveys and comparable data. The best way to do this is online at www.youngtransnet.org.uk/westsussex.

Young Transnet is a very useful resource for pupils and teachers. Survey distribution, collation and analysis can often seem like a very time-consuming activity. With Young Transnet it doesn’t have to be. Either ask your pupils to complete the survey themselves on line or enter a whole class of data from completed paper questionnaires. Either way, the analysis is done on-line and graphs and charts like those below are created for you to use.

The site is an excellent database of information. Schools can evaluate their progress year on year and also compare with other schools, both within West Sussex and further afield.

It’s also important for us. We need to know whether the numbers of children walking, cycling, using the bus or car sharing has changed during the life of your plan... its that simple...

For further information on monitoring, or use of the Young Transnet website, please contact Amy Carman on 01243 756634 or email westsussex@youngtransnet.org.uk
FERRING PRIMARY SCHOOL SUCCESS

Staff, governors, parents and pupils at Ferring Primary School near Worthing have reason for a double celebration. The school has not only been awarded Travel Mark status, which means it will get its nationally funded money, it has also been awarded an extra £5,000 after winning the County Council’s own annual School Travel Plan Challenge competition.

The judging panel said the overall impression of the school’s travel plan was ‘excellent.’ Their report added: “There is evidence that the plan is thoroughly ingrained within the school and the school community. The links with the parish council are excellent. The plan shows innovation and a real understanding of the issues.”

Ferring Headteacher, Sylvia Short said she was delighted at the £5,000 prize from the County Council and paid tribute to parent Cliff Harrison who led the development of the school’s travel plan. The school’s travel plan group, which includes pupil representatives, will now decide how to spend the money, and cycle racks may be on their shopping list.

The school’s innovative ideas have included:

■ Creating zones where parents who live a long distance from the school can park and then walk their youngsters to lessons.

■ The ‘Under Your Own Steam’ cup awarded weekly to the class with the most children who have walked to school.

The school has nine classes and 253 pupils. It conducted surveys before its travel plan was introduced and follow-up ones next year are expected to show a big switch away from the car.

SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOL UPDATE

In Worthing work has been further delayed on Homefield Park cycle route. This is due to the lengthy procedure for adopting a new byelaw to allow cycling through the park. Discussions are continuing with Worthing Borough Council to reach a positive outcome as soon as possible.

In Horsham work is underway at both Leechpool and Holbrook Primary Schools following the submission of high quality school travel plans.

We are also improving the bus layby at Millais School to improve safety for bus users to compliment the improvements provided for cyclists and pedestrians.

Crawley

Due to a request from The Oaks First and Middle School a new voluntary one-way sign has been erected inside the school grounds. This is the first of its type in the county. It follows extensive consultation with local residents by the school and operates only at school drop off and pick up times. As part of the ongoing development of their plan, new cycle storage facilities have also been installed and the number cycling to school has risen to 5 times the original number when the plan was submitted in 2001. It was a sunny day though!

New logo for the project based on a design by James Roberts, a pupil at Langley Green Middle School.
A unique project in eight West Sussex secondary schools could have an impact on national policies designed to reduce road congestion caused by the twice daily ‘school run.’ The County Council was one of only 14 local authorities chosen by the Department for Transport (DfT) to run what are known as ‘Personalised Travel Planning’ projects. Now the results are being written up and will be sent to the DfT which will use them to help shape future policies aimed at encouraging more youngsters to walk, cycle or use public transport to get to lessons.

Schools at Horsham, Worthing and East Grinstead took part in the project, which was also aimed at increasing awareness of transport issues and the impact of their own travel methods. The County Council matched a £25,000 grant towards the project from the DfT which paid for a resource pack containing structured lessons on environmental and transport issues. As part of the special curriculum, students completed travel diaries which they then exchanged with friends, and made recommendations about journeys that could be made without resorting to the car. That was followed by a second diary allowing students to assess how travel habits had actually changed.

Lieutenant Colonel Tex Pemberton, West Sussex Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, said: “The feedback we are getting from the project is that it has already helped to reduce many car journeys to and from the schools that took part by encouraging walking, cycling and public transport. Monitoring has shown that, thanks to exchanging ideas in the diaries, car journeys reduced by approximately 7 per cent overall for all eight schools.” This is an important area of work and the benefits of reducing dependence on the ‘school run’ are enormous for the whole community in terms of cutting congestion, reducing pollution and improving the environment.”

The schools which took part in the project were:
- Horsham: Millais and Forest Schools.
- East Grinstead: Sackville Community College and Imberhorne School.
- Worthing: Chatsmore Catholic High School, Davison High School for Girls, St Andrew’s Boys School and Our Lady of Sion.

All the youngsters who took part went into a draw for a bike and accessories, thanks to sponsorship from Crawley based Evans Cycles Ltd, and the winner was Stephen Mumford, a 14 year-old student from the Sackville Community School.

There were also incentives to youngsters to take part in the project thanks to discounts by local retailers on cycles and accessories and weekly bus passes offered by some operators.