

# Cabinet

10 December 2020

## School Road Safety Education Task and Finish Review - Report of the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Recommendations

The Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee requests that Cabinet:

1. Express its support for for the internal and external bids for two School Travel Plan Officer roles for a two-year period, which will be separately assessed through the appropriate funding processes.

BUT

If either of the bids are not successful, make a decision whether this growth bid should be added to the MTFS pressures in the budget proposals to be recommended to Council in February 2021.

2. Encourages all County Councillors to actively assist the School Safety Team in their work with schools, including promoting the SAFER project and any school champion work.
3. Ask that the School Safety Team provides support to School Champions and County Councillors when needed.

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting of 17 June 2020 the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on school safety zones and routes. This report marked the conclusion of a lengthy project commenced in 2015 with a view to overseeing how resources assigned for school safety should be used. The Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee expressed a desire to build on the work taken to date by undertaking a short task and finish review focusing on the education of road safety amongst school children. It was resolved, "that a Task and Finish Group (TFG) be established to explore education-based ways of encouraging more children to walk / scooter / cycle in safety to their schools and report on costed options to inform the refreshed MTFS (Medium Term Finance Strategy).

- 1.2 Task and finish group members met three times to hear evidence from officers and to share their own experiences. Having developed a series of recommendations a report was placed before the Communities Overview and Scrutiny on 18 November 2020. The committee agreed the recommendations now before Cabinet.
- 1.3 Work was carried out by members of the original School Safety Zones member group with Councillor Jill Simpson-Vince returning as the Chair and Councillor Jenny Fradgley continuing as the Vice-Chair. Councillor Jonathon Chilvers stayed on as the Green Group representative and Councillor Corrinne Davies joined on behalf of the Labour Group.

## **2. Executive Summary**

- 2.1 Early in the life of the TFG it became clear that some County Councillors were not fully familiar with the work of the Road Safety Team. Therefore, the TFG requested briefing sessions for each borough and district to inform members on their work and the upcoming SAFER project (Sustainable and Active Focussing on Environment and Road safety) which aims to promote and support road safety and active travel activities within three strands. Within each strand, the recruitment of local 'Champions' and the introduction of a reward scheme, are fundamental elements of the SAfER programme.
- 2.2 The primary objectives of SAfER are to:
  - Encourage residents to take up more physical activity for travel (walking and cycling)
  - Promote safe walking, cycling and general road safety in Warwickshire
  - Change public attitudes and habits around safe and active travel
  - Encourage schools to sign-up to become SAfER schools and to work through the 4 levels of the awards scheme
  - Encourage Warwickshire businesses and employers to sign-up to become SAfER accredited

The successful implementation of the above primary objectives will hopefully impact on the following objectives.

- A reduction in the number of people killed and seriously injured on Warwickshire's roads
  - Reduction in air pollution and increase overall air-quality
- 2.3 The SAfER programme provides support and resources that schools, and local organisations need to develop safe and active travel plans, and encourages local 'Champions' to successfully run individual activities within organisations.
  - 2.4 The programme is fully supported by Warwickshire County Council elected Members and a small group of Members from TFG has been set up to review

and monitor the progress of the initiative. SAfER is also supported by the Warwickshire Road Safety Partnership - a multi-agency group comprising Warwickshire Police, Fire & Rescue, Public Health, Highways England and Warwickshire County Council. The initiative will be incorporated into the 2021 Local Transport Plan.

- 2.5 SAfER is managed and delivered by staff from the Road Safety Education Team, comprising a Senior Road Safety Officer, Road Safety Support Officer (already in post) and two additional School Travel Plan Officers (to be appointed).
- 2.6 Warwickshire County Council will lead by example and will use the Thrive at Work initiative to focus, encourage and support their own employees in the workplace.
- 2.7 After the briefing sessions, all county council members who attended the briefings praised the work of the Road Safety Team and agreed to provide help to the team if desired.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The funding for the two School Travel Plan Officer posts are being pursued from other sources one internal (which has received initial Gateway Group support) and one external for which a response is still awaited. Should either of these funding sources be approved then there will be no financial implications.
- 3.2 If funding is not obtained from the internal sources currently being pursued, the TFG and Communities OSC supports the bids for the two School Travel Plan Officer posts to be considered by Cabinet to be added to the financial proposals in February 2021. These two positions would be £36,800 each per year which would total £147,200 for 2 two-year contracts.
- 3.3 In the current difficult financial climate, the MTFS mainly considering 'invest to save' rather than 'growth' bids unless the budget pressure has been deemed unavoidable. Equally the current MTFS cycle has already collated all identified pressures and is nearing the final stages of agreeing the MTFS and 2021/22 budget. Consequently, there is a high chance this bid would not be supported within this year's MTFS process.

### **4. Environmental Implications**

- 4.1 As stated above the SAfER project will encourage cycling and walking and aim to change public attitudes to this which will reduce the use of cars on school runs and benefit the air quality in Warwickshire. As part of the task to educate safe cycling to school, bicycle training will be carried out with the 'Bikeability' scheme which will promote safe travel to school which will promote safer green travel.

## 5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.0 If the funding is pre-approved before Cabinet in December, then no steps are needed to follow this financially. If it has not been approved, then the TFG requests that the Communities OSC asks Cabinet to support the funding being included as part of the proposals for the Budget Council report in February 2021.
- 5.1 Cooperation with Members should continue for the foreseeable future.

## Appendices

None

## Background Papers

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): None

Other members: Members of Communities OSC, Jonathon Chilvers, Jill Simpson-Vince, Corrinne Davies, Jerry Roodhouse and Helen Adkins