

Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee

School Road Safety Education TFG Report

18 November 2020

Recommendation(s)

The Road Safety Education Task & Finish Group recommends that Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

1. I) Support the internal bids for two School Travel Plan Officer roles for a two-year period.
AND
II) If the internal bids are not successful, Communities OSC asks Cabinet to consider adding funding for the roles to the budget proposals to be recommended to Council in February 2021.
2. All County Councillors actively aid the School Safety Team with their liaisons with schools in their respective divisions, including promoting the SAFER project and any school champion work.
3. All school champions receive support from the School Safety Team and County Councillors when needed.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Following Communities OSC approval for this TFG, it was clear to members of the group that county council members were unaware of the Road Safety Teams existence. 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.
- 1.2 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

- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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).
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 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.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The funding for the two School Travel Plan Officer posts are being pursued from other sources one internal (which has received initial Gateway Group approval) 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.
- 2.2 If funding is not obtained from the internal sources currently being pursued, the TFG supports the bids for the two School Travel Plan Officer posts to be part of next financial year's bidding process. These two positions would be £36,800 each per year which would total £147,200 for 2 two-year contracts.
- 2.3 In the current difficult financial climate, the MTFs is only considering 'invest to save' rather than 'growth' bids unless the budget pressure is unavoidable. Consequently, there is a high chance this bid would not be supported within the MTFs process.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 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.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The School Road Safety Education TFG was approved by Communities OSC in June 2020 which was established to explore education-based options for encouraging pupils to travel to school by means other than private cars (e.g. walking, cycling and scooters). In order for any cost implications to be submitted before February 2021, so that its findings can inform the refreshing of the MTFP in 2021/22, it was agreed the TFG should be a rapid one and be presented to Communities OSC in November 2020 and Cabinet (if required) in December 2020.
- 4.2 Work was carried on by members of the School Safety Zones 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 Party representative and Councillor Corrinne Davies joined on behalf of the Labour Party.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 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 Communities OSC asks Cabinet to approve the funding and be part of the Budget Council report.
- 5.2 Cooperation with Members should continue indefinitely or until their help is no longer required.

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: Councillors Jenny Fradgley, Jonathon Chilvers, Jill Simpson-Vince, Corrinne Davies, Clare Golby, Dave Shilton, John Holland, Keith Kondakor, Jerry Roodhouse and Helen Adkins