

Thurrock Council

Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMoTS)

Thurrock School Travel Strategy

2024-2027

Contents

Foreword.....	3
Introduction	4
Vision.....	4
Aims	4
Goal.....	4
Objectives.....	4
Policy and legislation	6
National policy and legislation	6
Local policies and strategies	8
Background and context	11
Schools and pupils in Thurrock	11
National Travel Survey School data	12
Travel to School modes in Thurrock.....	16
Thurrock's Active Travel Needs Assessment	19
Summary of the 2021-2024 strategy	20
Exemplar case – Bikeability Young Cyclist of the Year nomination.....	20
The Safer Essex Roads Partnership	20
Section 114	20
Traffic Regulation Orders	21
Home to School Travel and Transport provision	21
Sustainable Travel Measures for 2024-2027	22
School engagement on Travel Plans and Modeshift STARS accreditation	22
Pedestrian training	22
School Crossing Patrol service.....	23
Walking Buses.....	23
Cycle and scooter training	23
Park and Stride.....	24
School Streets	24
Home to school travel and transport.....	25
Thurrock's Travel Training.....	25
Delivery plan	26
Monitoring	28
Appendix A – Hands-up travel survey participation.....	29
Appendix B – Sites with school crossing patrol at end of 2023/24 academic year.....	31

Foreword

Education is one of the most important aspects of children's life and critical for their development. It nourishes children's knowledge of the world, helps them develop important social and mental skills and provides the foundations for adult life.

For Thurrock, it is essential not only to provide high-quality educational facilities, but to ensure that children and parents feel enabled to access them in a safe, secure and sustainable way.

High levels of sustainable travel benefits schools and surrounding communities in a wide variety of ways from improving children's health and wellbeing, reducing carbon emissions associated with school travel; to reducing congestion on local roads. Cycling, walking and scooting has also shown positive impacts in children developing their confidence, independence, self-esteem and road safety skills.

As the effects of climate change become more apparent, changing our travel behaviour in favour of more sustainable habits is more important than ever. It is estimated that currently transport emissions generated by the school run generate half a million tonnes of CO₂ per year and that during morning peak traffic times one in five cars on the road are taking children to school (Living Streets, Walk to School).

Thurrock Council is committed to promoting safe and sustainable school travel and recognises that children can only be expected to travel by walking, cycling, scooting or public transport if the right conditions are in place. This strategy aims to create these conditions, supporting schools, pupils, parents and carers to make more sustainable trips to school.

Introduction

Local authorities have a statutory duty under the Education Act 2006 to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport to and from institutions where education or training is delivered. The duty applies to children and young people of compulsory school age (5 to 16 years-old) who travel to receive education or training in the local authority's area.

This Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMoTS) developed by Thurrock Council fulfils that duty and replaces the previous strategy dated 2021-2024.

The Strategy sets the council's actions to steer Travel to School toward Sustainable Modes of Travel in line with the council's and government's wider policies and objectives; and builds upon existing plans and programmes in place which play a significant role in influencing the school journey in Thurrock to deliver sustainable, healthy and safer journeys for education.

This Strategy seeks to strengthen collaboration with all schools to create the conditions where pupils can travel on foot, by cycle or by public transport and ensure Strategy's success in achieving its vision, aims and goals.

Vision

A place where all children in the borough feel enabled to travel safely and securely to education services, with the right conditions and environment in place for active and sustainable modes to be the preferred options.

Aims

There are four aims of this Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy:

- improve the health and wellbeing of pupils through increased levels of active travel and a more pleasant environment around schools
- improve the air quality and road safety around schools by switching from car-based trips to active and sustainable journeys to school reducing congestion in the process, and
- ensure equal access to education services by enabling affordable travel to school options for pupils
- support community cohesion through improved quality of the local environment

Goal

The goal of this Strategy is to increase the proportion of children and young people who travel by sustainable and active modes, including walking, cycling and public transport for educational purposes and embedding a culture of sustainable travel at education sites.

Objectives

The Strategy aims to achieve the following objectives:

- actively engage with schools to attain, maintain and/or improve School Travel Plan accreditations
- promote the safer use of sustainable transport infrastructure
- deliver road safety campaigns and training
- improve walking and cycle routes to, from, and between educational establishments
- target provision and allocation of home-to-school transport

- inform pupils and parent/carers of the travel options available to them

Policy and legislation

The council has a statutory duty to produce a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy. Further policies and strategies at national and local levels shape this strategy as follows:

National policy and legislation

Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 sets functions and duties of local education authorities and children's services authorities in regard to primary, secondary and further education provision. It includes duties on establishing and maintaining facilities and regulation of the provision of school travel and school food, discipline and inspections amongst others.

Part 6: School Travel and School Food of the 2006 Act reinstates Section 508 of The Education Act 1996, and reads: "Local Authorities have the duty to promote sustainable modes of travel; (a) prepare for each academic year a document containing their strategy to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to meet the school travel needs of their area ("a sustainable modes of travel strategy"), (b) publish the strategy in such manner and by such time as may be prescribed, and (c) promote the use of sustainable modes of travel to meet the school travel needs of their area."

"Before preparing a sustainable modes of travel strategy, an authority must in particular – (a) assess the school travel needs of their area, and (b) assess the facilities and services for sustainable modes of travel to, from and within their area."

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 defines sustainable modes of travel as: "modes of travel which the authority consider may improve either the physical well-being of those who use them or the environmental well-being of the whole or a part of their area."

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 also defines the duty of local authorities in England of travel arrangements provision.

This Strategy fulfils Thurrock Council's duty set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Home to school travel and transport guidance

The Home to school travel and transport guidance sets the duty of local authorities in relation to home to school travel and transport, and sustainable travel. This guidance was issued under duties placed on the Secretary of State by sections 508A and 508D of the Education Act 1996. A main point of the guidance is that local authorities should review travel policies, arrangements and contracts regularly to ensure best value for money is achieved.

It states that in order to comply with their home to school transport duties local authorities must:

- promote the use of sustainable travel and transport (Part 1.1)
- make transport arrangements for all eligible children (Part 1.2)

It defines eligible children based on statutory walking distances, special educational needs, disability or mobility problems, unsafe routes and extended rights.

Home to school travel and transport is an integral part of this Strategy, understanding that active travel is not suitable for every pupil where distance, safety or other conditions cannot be met.

The Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy

The Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2) sets the Government's ambition that walking, wheeling and cycling are the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey; and sets out objectives and financial resources to support these objectives, as well as performance monitoring arrangements and governance.

Among other objectives, one in particular relates to school travel: "Increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 who usually walk to school from 49% in 2014 to 55% in 2025."

Measures and actions on this strategy aim to help deliver the Government objective by increasing the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 who usually walk to school in Thurrock.

Gear Change

Gear Change describes the vision to make England a great walking and cycling nation and sets out the actions required at all levels of government to make this a reality.

In relation to travel to school it has the vision to have: "Safer streets: Nobody is afraid to cycle; every child is confident and safe walking or cycling to school; all road users treat each other with mutual respect."

Gear Change includes the aim to increase the number of "school streets" to protect children recognizing the effect of school run creating pollution, congestion and danger around schools and on the wider road network.

This Strategy aligns with Gear Change recognizing the benefits of school streets increasing safety to walk and cycle to school in Thurrock.

Equality Act 2010

As a local authority, Thurrock Council has the commitment to apply a systematic screening process to both new policy development and changes to services, including those related with Travel to School to determine whether the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on different groups within our community according to the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 sets a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. It states that county councils or district councils when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.

The Equality Act 2010 defines the following as protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Thurrock Council is keen to understand where there may be negative or adverse impact for one or more groups in the local community. In particular, to look at our policies, strategies, functions and services from the point of view of individuals and groups with protected characteristics.

Local policies and strategies

Thurrock's Transport Vision

Thurrock's Transport Vision imagines a future for Thurrock where people find it easier to get about using a transport network that is better connected, more integrated, and less congested. The document sets the long-term vision and direction for the Thurrock Transport Strategy over nearly three decades.

For the Walking and cycling strategic priority, the Vision for Thurrock aims for walking and bicycle riding to be safe and convenient and the top choice for everyday trips to shops, school or college, work, exercise, and recreation. The council aims to reduce dependency on cars in favour of increased walking and cycling – known as 'active travel' – increasing the number of people who choose to walk or ride bicycles for most of their journey and helping to improve physical fitness and health.

The Vision's goal: Safer Roads, states that the council will improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on the road and aim to mitigate safety concerns that currently act as barriers to using these modes. This will support accessibility through modal shift to walking and cycling.

Measures and actions on this strategy will help achieve Thurrock's Vision for walking and cycling and its goal of having safer roads.

Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy aims to tackle the many causes of poor health that are not level across Thurrock. These include individuals' health risk behaviours such as smoking and the quality of clinical care that people receive, but the greatest influences on overall community health are wider determinants of health. They also include high-quality education, access to employment and other opportunities, warm and safe homes, access to green spaces and leisure, strong and resilient communities and effective public protection.

Transport and active travel are recognised as wider health determinants and crucial drivers of population health. Stakeholder and Community Engagement highlighted the importance of providing access to services to residents across the borough through affordable and well-connected public transport, active travel, provision of locally based services and support for better accessibility and access to green and open spaces, public transport and active travel across the borough and the importance of supporting improvements in Air Quality for a better environment.

Measures on this Sustainable Modes of Travel to School strategy help deliver the following Health and Wellbeing Strategy goals:

- Goal 1A. Work with communities to reduce smoking and obesity in Thurrock
- Goal 6A. Enable all children to live safely in their communities

Health in All Policies approach to place-shaping

Thurrock's Health in All Policies approach to place-shaping is a guidance document that represents the council's aspirations for healthy place-shaping for existing and future residents, as set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2022-2026).

Two of its five themes relate to measures of this Sustainable Modes of Travel to School strategy:

- Transportation Networks – recognises the need for healthy and sustainable transportation networks that prioritise and support active transportation modalities
- Neighbourhood Design – recognises that healthy neighbourhood design is facilitated by land use decisions which prioritise complete, compact, connected and sustainable communities

School Streets are specifically mentioned as a measure to support a generational shift towards healthier places and people and its role in local place-shaping contribution to a reduction in health inequality.

Thurrock Air Quality and Health Strategy

Thurrock Air Quality and Health Strategy sets the council's policies to tackle poor air quality in the borough. Poor air quality can have an impact on health and wellbeing. Thurrock Air Quality and Health Strategy aligns with the national agenda and sets the following strategic aim:

- to improve air quality in the borough to reduce the health impacts of air pollution

Some objectives of Thurrock's School Travel Strategy align with the Air Quality and Health Strategy and measures in this plan work in favour of the following policies:

- Policy AQS 1: Tackling Transport Emissions: The council will deliver transport interventions aimed at 1.) Reducing vehicle trips and promoting a modal shift where possible to active modes of travel to future proof Thurrock's transport network for sustainable growth.
- Policy AQS 2: Tackle health inequalities and improve outcomes for those most affected by poor air quality. 1.) The areas of highest need, highest deprivation and poorest health outcomes in relation to air quality will be prioritised for action on initiatives to mitigate the impact of poor quality on health.

Air quality modelling is underway, and a new Air Quality Strategy is currently in development.

Thurrock Whole Systems Obesity Strategy

Thurrock Whole Systems Obesity Strategy sets the council's policies to reduce obesity and the inactive population as an identifiable key objective of the Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy. It uses a whole systems approach where the network of broad and interlinking factors contributes to a solution or problem. The Strategy places focus on the wider determinants of health and the impact that multiple sectors can have on health and lifestyle related to obesity through a whole systems approach.

Thurrock School Travel Strategy aligns with the following goals and objectives from the council's Whole Systems Obesity Strategy:

- Goal A: Enabling settings, schools and services to contribute to children and young people achieving a healthy weight
 - Objectives: reducing overweight and obesity in children in Year 6 (age 11) by at least 0.5% a year to be statistically similar or below than the national average; preventing obesity in pre-school age children as well as adolescents aged 11 plus; increased physical activity in Primary school aged children
- Goal D: Improving the physical activity environment and getting the inactive active

- Objectives: improvements to the physical environment in the borough that promote physical activity and wellbeing; active travel prioritised in transport and planning policies; reduction in the inactive population

Background and context

Schools and pupils in Thurrock

Thurrock's current education offer is constituted of 56 schools made of 39 at primary level, 13 at secondary level, 3 Special Schools and 1 Pupil Referral School (PRU). There has been an increase of three schools since 2019: two additions at secondary level (Orsett Heath Academy and Thames Park Secondary School) and one addition at special school (Treetops Free School).

In the academic year 2023/2024 there were 30,587 pupils in Thurrock: 17,511 in primary school (years 1 to 6 plus reception), 12,503 in secondary schools (years 7 to 13) 521 in special schools (years 1 to 14 plus reception) and 52 in the PRU (years 8 to 11)

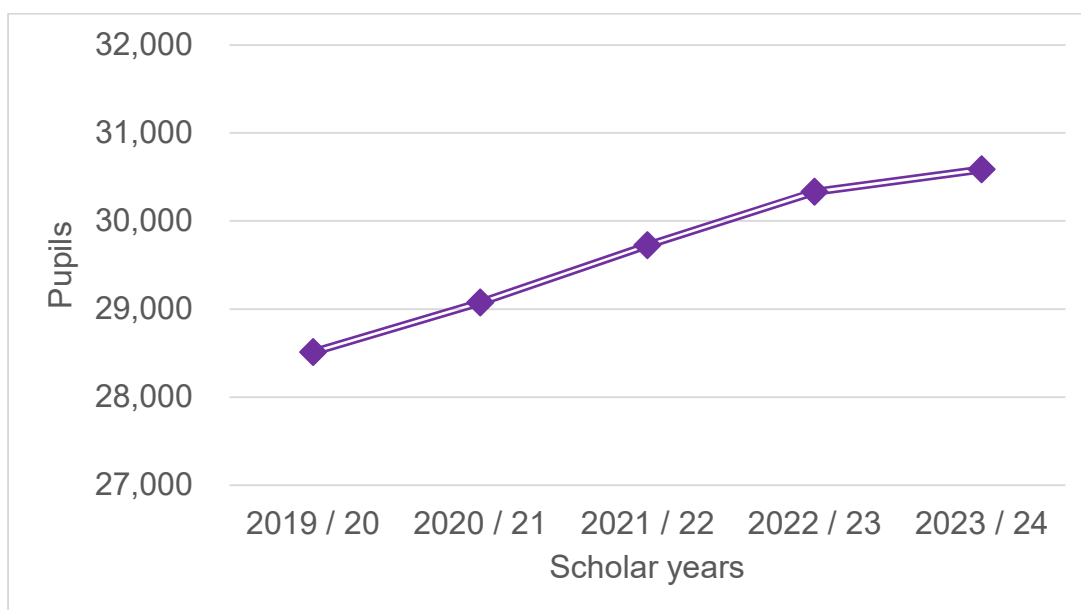
In the last five academic years (2019/20 – 2023/24) there has been an increase in the number of pupils in the borough at primary, secondary and special schools. The growth on secondary pupil numbers is mainly caused by the two additional secondary schools.

This growing trend in the number of pupils in the borough is expected to continue in the coming years as the population grows and new education facilities are being planned or under construction.

Table 1 – Thurrock's pupils by type of school in the last 5 years.

Level	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Change
Primary	17,194	17,289	17,430	17,470	17,511	+317
Secondary	10,873	11,341	11,803	12,314	12,503	+1,630
Special	369	381	435	494	521	+152
Referral	77	63	58	56	52	-25
Total	28,513	29,074	29,726	30,334	30,587	+2,074

Figure 1 – Thurrock's total pupils in the last 5 scholar years.



The education offer in Thurrock is complemented with four colleges: Performers College, South Essex College Thurrock Campus, USP College Palmer's Campus and Thurrock Adult Community College which fall outside the scope of this strategy.

National Travel Survey School data

The National Travel Survey (NTS) is a household survey to monitor trends in personal travel. The data allows an analysis of national trends and patterns only, as results at local authority level are not published. Latest published data comes from 2022.

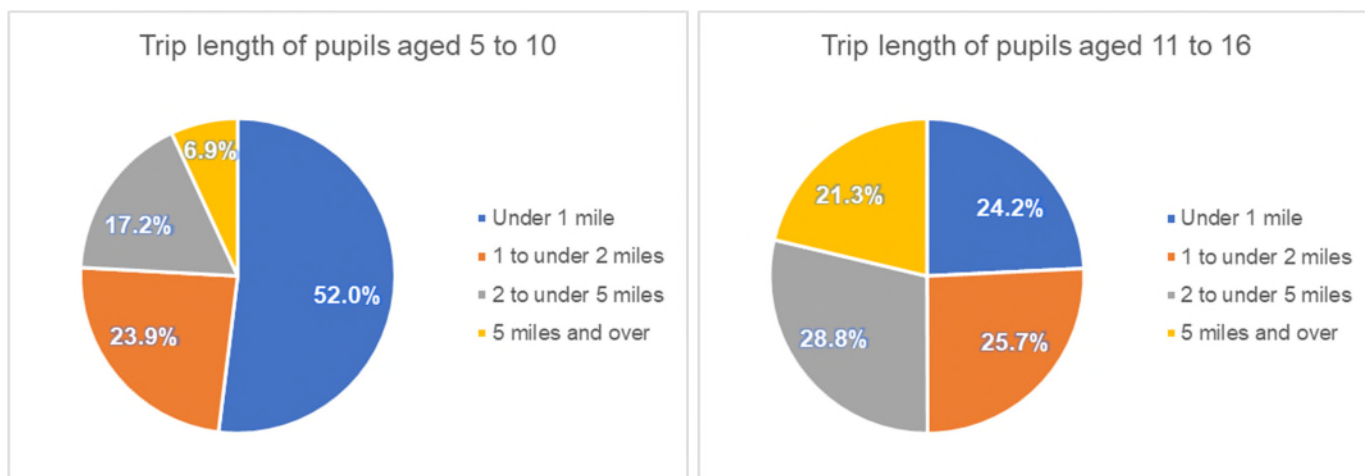
Trip length by age group

The National Travel Survey shows that pupils aged 5 to 10 tend to live closer to school than pupils aged 11 to 16. For the younger group, more than half of pupils live within a mile (52%) and almost a quarter between 1 and 2 miles (23.9%). For the older group, the distance categories have a split of 24.2% less than a mile, 25.7% between 1 and 2 miles, 28.8% between 2 and 5 miles and 21.3% more than 5 miles.

Table 2 – National proportion of distance to school by age group.

Trip Length	Pupils aged 5 to 10	Pupils aged 11 to 16
Under 1 mile	52.0%	24.2%
1 to under 2 miles	23.9%	25.7%
2 to under 5 miles	17.2%	28.8%
5 miles and over	6.9%	21.3%
All distances	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 2 – National proportion of distance to school by age group.



Mode split by trip length and age group

The National Travel Survey shows that in England, more than half of the trips to school by pupils aged 5 to 10 are made by walking (53.2%). When split by the distance travelled, the percentage is particularly high for pupils living under a mile with 86.2%, reducing drastically to 17.5% for those between 1 and 2 miles.

For pupils aged 11 to 16, walking is also the highest mode to school (41.1%) and is more common for pupils living under a mile with 89.8% and between 1 and 2 miles with 61.7%; only 7.4% of pupils travelling between 2 and 5 miles walked to school. This overall reduction on walking to school between the age groups of 5-10 and 11-16 is the result of more pupils living farther from the school at secondary level.

Travel by car is the second most common way for travel to school in England with 40% for pupils aged 5 to 10 and 25.6% for pupils aged 11 to 16. For the younger group (5 to 10) it is also the highest mode on all distances further than a mile: 77.5% between 1 and 2 miles, 77.1% between 2 and 5 miles and 71.9% for more than 5 miles.

For pupils aged 11 to 16 travel by car is the highest method of travelling between 2 and 5 miles with 41.6% and the second most popular mode for all other distances: 36.5% for more than 5 miles, 19.1% between 1 and 2 miles and 4.8% for less than 1 mile.

For pupils aged 5 to 10, bus has a lower use for travel to school in England with an overall 4.9%, the groups with the highest use are pupils living between 2 and 5 miles with 21.7% and more than 5 miles with 14.1%.

For pupils aged 11 to 16, bus is a slightly more popular option for travel to school with an overall 23.7% using this mode, and is the preferred option for pupils living more than 5 miles away with 44.1%, the second most popular option for of pupils living between 2 and 5 miles with 37.7%, and third for pupils living between 1 and 2 miles with 11.8% and those less than 1 mile away at only 4.3%.

Cycling is a relatively uncommon way to travel to school in England, pupils aged 5 to 10 have an overall mode share of 1.1%: Only 1.0% of pupils living under a mile and 2.1% between 1 and 2 miles. For pupils aged 11 to 16, cycling is also uncommon with an overall 5.8% but slightly higher for short and medium distances with 11.3% between 2 and 5 miles, 7.4% between 1 and 2 miles and 1.2% of pupils living less than 1 mile away.

Table 3 – National mode split by distance for pupils aged 5 to 10.

Mode	Under 1 mile	1 to 2 miles	2 to 5 miles	5 miles and over	All lengths
Walk (%)	86.2	17.5	0.0	0.0	53.2
Pedal cycle (%)	1.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	1.1
Bus (%)	0.7	2.8	21.7	14.1	4.9
Car or van (%)	12.1	77.5	77.1	71.9	40.0
Other (%)	0.0	0.1	1.2	14.0	0.8
All modes (%)	100	100	100	100	100

Table 4 – National mode split by distance for pupils aged 11 to 16.

Mode	Under 1 mile	1 to 2 miles	2 to 5 miles	5 miles and over	All lengths
Walk (%)	89.8	61.7	7.4	0.0	41.1
Pedal cycle (%)	1.2	7.4	11.3	0.0	5.8
Bus (%)	4.3	11.8	37.7	44.1	23.7

Mode	Under 1 mile	1 to 2 miles	2 to 5 miles	5 miles and over	All lengths
Car or van (%)	4.8	19.1	41.6	36.5	25.6
Other (%)	0.0	0.0	2.0	19.3	3.9
All modes (%)	100	100	100	100	100

Figure 3 – National mode split by distance for pupils aged 5 to 10.

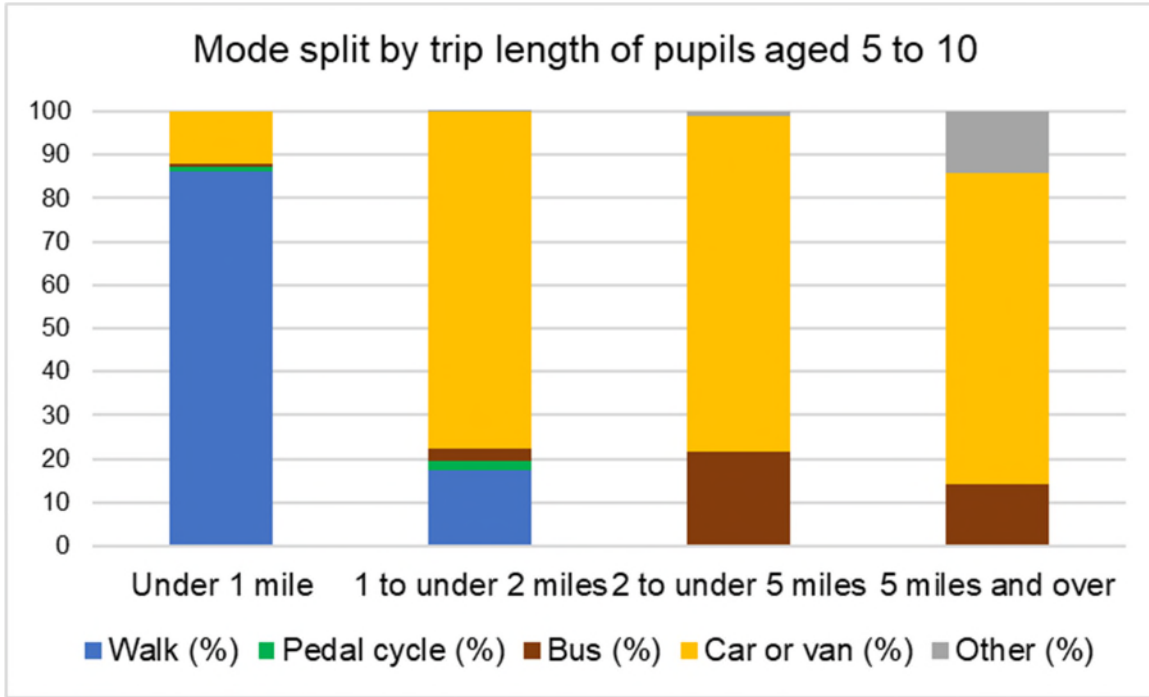
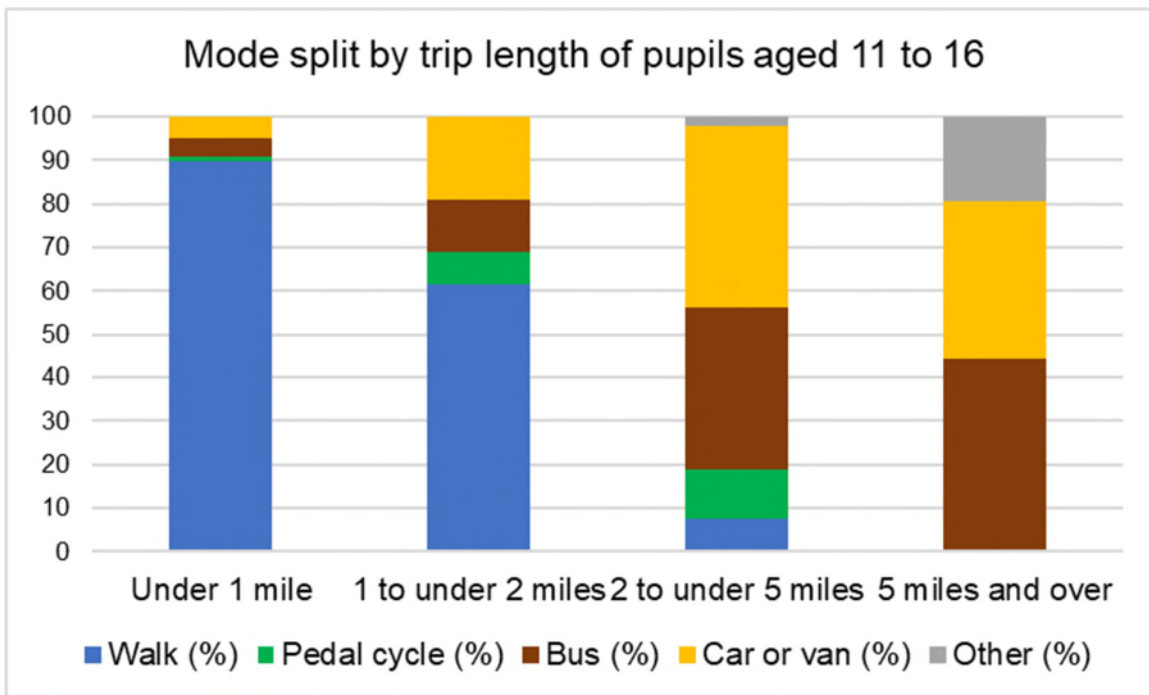


Figure 4 – National mode split by distance for pupils aged 11 to 16.



Trends on mode split by age group

The National Travel Survey also shows mode split trends in England by age group. For pupils aged 5 to 10, walking share decreased between 2016 and 2019 from 51.1% to 46.2% but since 2020 it has risen again to 53.2% in 2022.

Conversely, car or van share increased from 2016 to 2020 from 41.0% to 47.0% but has decreased since to 40.0% in 2022. Changes in these trends may be a reflection of COVID-19 and the emerged restrictions and campaigns put in place as a result of the pandemic.

Table 5 – National mode split by year for pupils aged 5 to 10.

Year	Walk (%)	Pedal cycle (%)	Bus (%)	Car or van (%)	Other (%)
2016	51.1	1.7	4.5	41.0	1.6
2017	48.9	0.9	4.9	44.2	1.2
2018	49.0	1.9	2.8	45.3	1.1
2019	46.2	1.4	4.5	46.8	1.1
2020	49.5	1.3	1.5	47.0	0.6
2021	51.0	0.6	2.8	44.7	0.9
2022	53.2	1.1	4.9	40.0	0.8

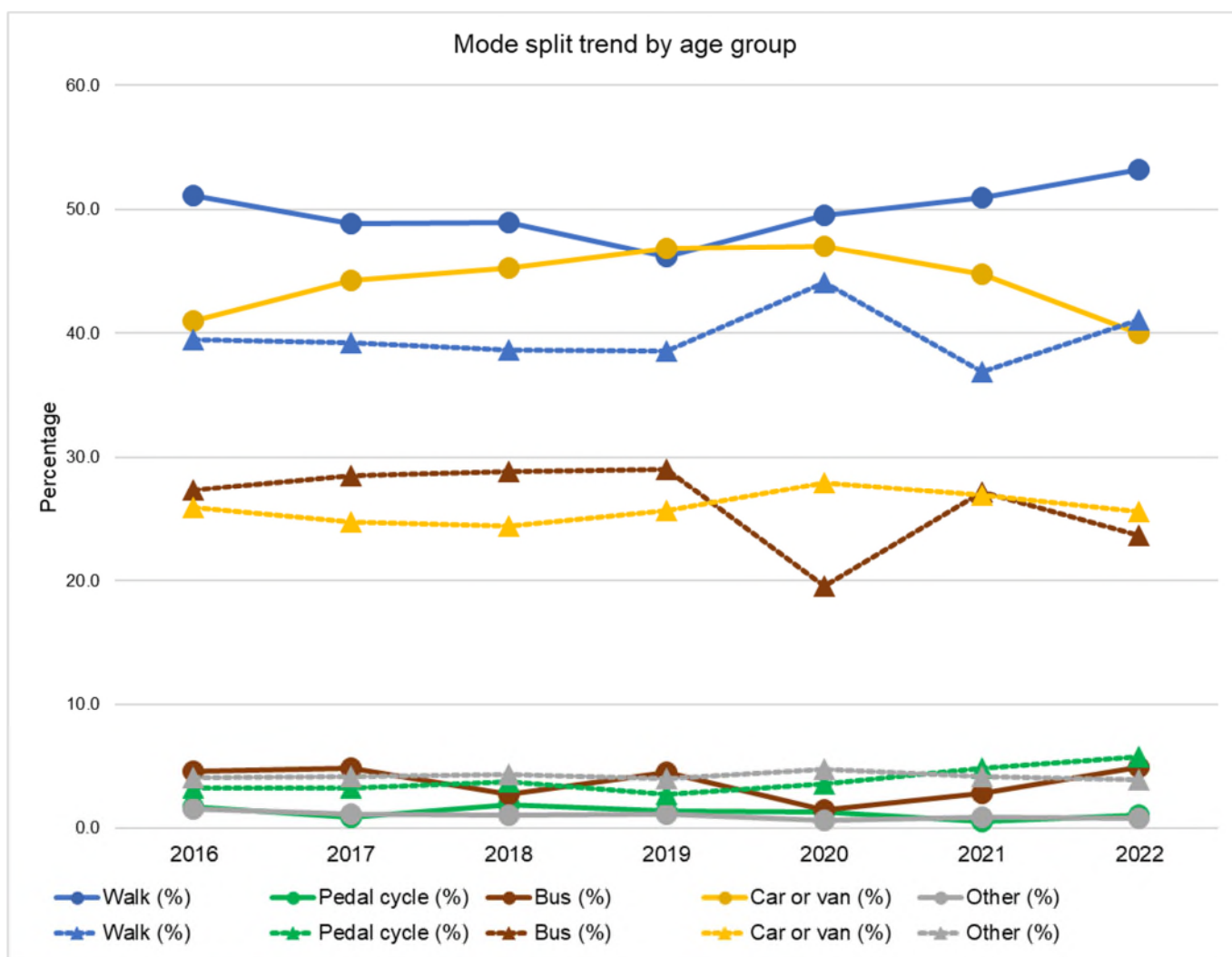
For pupils aged 11 to 16, walking share also decreased between 2016 and 2019 from 39.4% to 38.6%, but with two higher values in 2020 (44.1%) and 2022 (41.1%). For pupils aged 11 to 16 bus use increased between 2016 and 2019 from 27.4% to 29.0%, dropped in 2020 to 19.6% and hasn't recovered since with 27.1% in 2021 and 23.7% in 2022.

For pupils aged 11 to 16 there is not a clear trend on mode split change with values for car travel of 25% +/- 1%, the exception being 2020 and 2021 when it reached 27.9% and 26.9%. COVID-19 is likely to have played a significant part in these changes too.

Table 6 – National mode split by year for pupils aged 11 to 16.

Year	Walk (%)	Pedal cycle (%)	Bus (%)	Car or van (%)	Other (%)
2016	39.4	3.2	27.4	25.9	4.0
2017	39.2	3.3	28.6	24.8	4.2
2018	38.7	3.8	28.8	24.4	4.4
2019	38.6	2.7	29.0	25.6	4.0
2020	44.1	3.6	19.6	27.9	4.8
2021	36.9	4.9	27.1	26.9	4.2
2022	41.1	5.8	23.7	25.6	3.9

Figure 5 – National mode split by year and age group.



Travel to School modes in Thurrock

Schools in Thurrock were asked to participate in a boroughwide Pupils' Travel to School survey between Monday 22 April 2024 and Wednesday 1 May 2024 to understand the current travel to school situation and detect changes from previous years. Teachers were asked to undertake a hands-up survey of their class consisting of two questions regarding their mode of travel to school, and to report this via an online questionnaire.

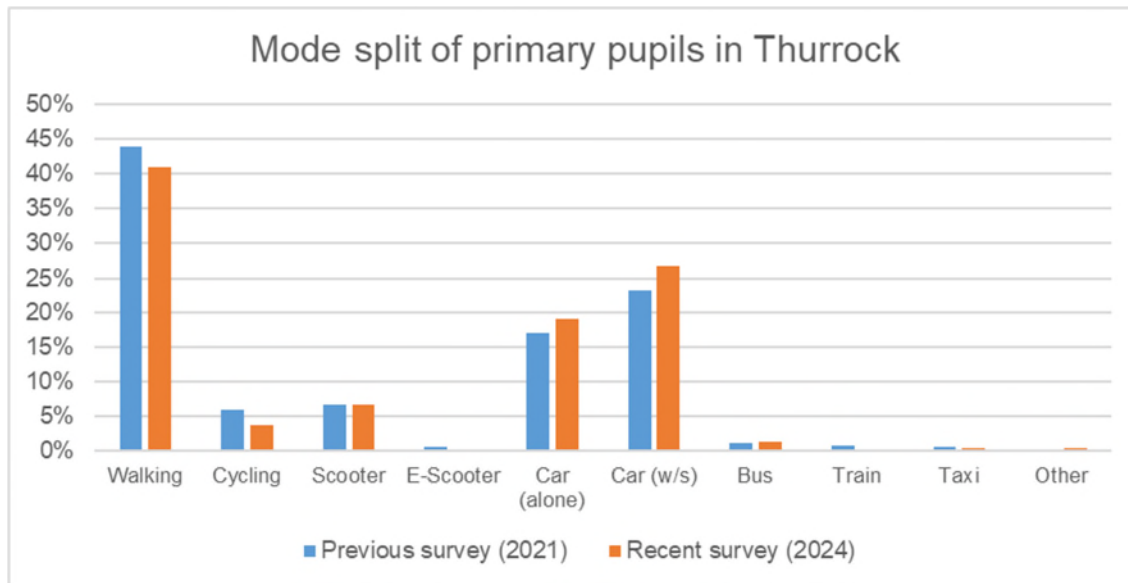
A total of 356 valid responses were received from 36 schools out of a possible 1065 classes across 56 schools in the borough, with a response rate of 33% of all classes and 69% of schools. When comparing current results against 2021 it is important to bear in mind the particular travel patterns could still be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mode split on primary schools

At primary school level (ages 4 – 11), the single highest mode to travel to school is by walking with 41.0%, followed by car (travelling with siblings or friends) at 26.7% and car (just one pupil and a parent/guardian) with 19.0%. These combined answers reflect that around 46% of primary pupils travel by car. The split of car trips is 6% higher than against latest national average at this age group (40.0% in 2022) and higher than the previous Thurrock schools' hands-up survey (40.2% in 2021).

This mode change was accompanied by a reduction in all active modes across the two Thurrock surveys: walking from 44.0% to 41.0%, cycling from 6.0% to 3.8% and scooting from 7.4% to 6.9%.

Figure 6 – Mode split at Thurrock's primary level.

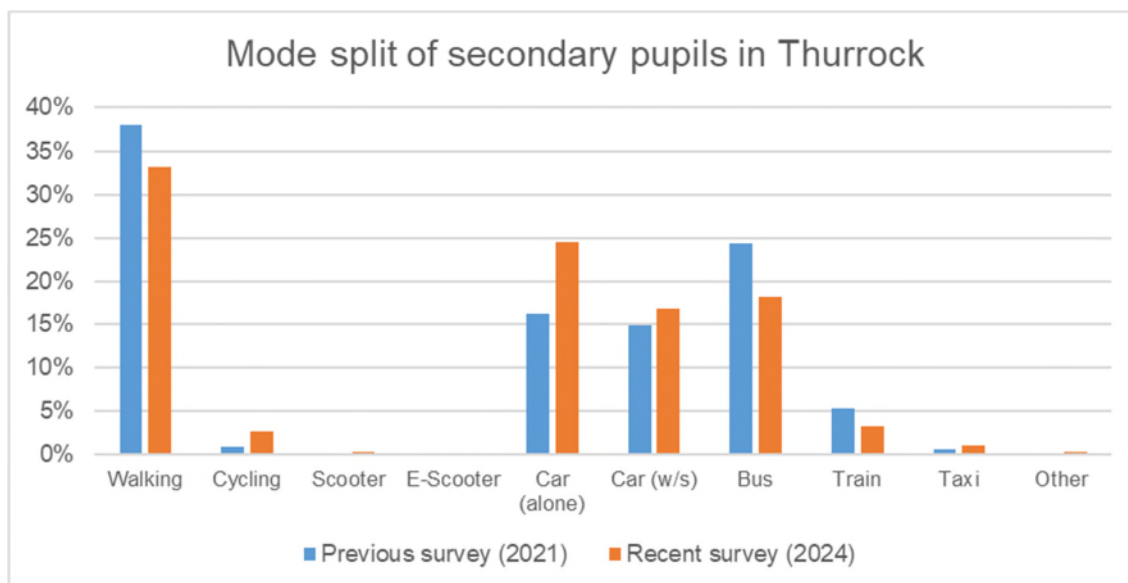


Mode split on secondary schools

At secondary level (ages 11-18), the single highest mode to travel to school is still by walking with 33.2%, followed by car (single pupil with a parent/tutor driving) with 24.5%, by bus with 18.2% and car (travelling with siblings or friends) with 16.7%. The combined car trips result in 41% of secondary pupils travelling by car.

This mode split for car trips is around 15% higher than the latest national average at this age level (25.6% in 2022) and higher than results in the previous Thurrock schools' hands-up survey (31.0% in 2021). There was an increase in cycling and scooting to a combined 3.0% from the previous 0.84% but a reduction in walking from 38.0% to 33.2% and travel by bus from 24.3% to 18.2%.

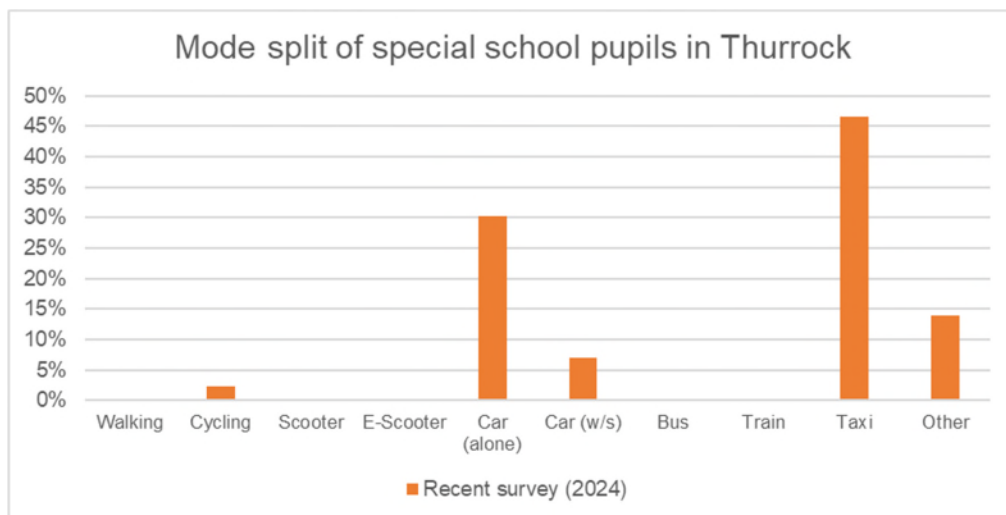
Figure 7 – Mode split at Thurrock's secondary level.



Mode split on special schools

For special schools (regardless of age), the three highest modes to travel to school are by taxi with 46.5%, by car (just the pupil and a parent/guardian) with 30.2% and Other (a minibus) with 14.0% accounting for 90% of the trips. Distance and ability to travel actively or using public transport of most pupils attending a special school limit the possibility to promote and switch trips to active and sustainable modes of travel.

Figure 8 – Mode split at Thurrock's special schools.

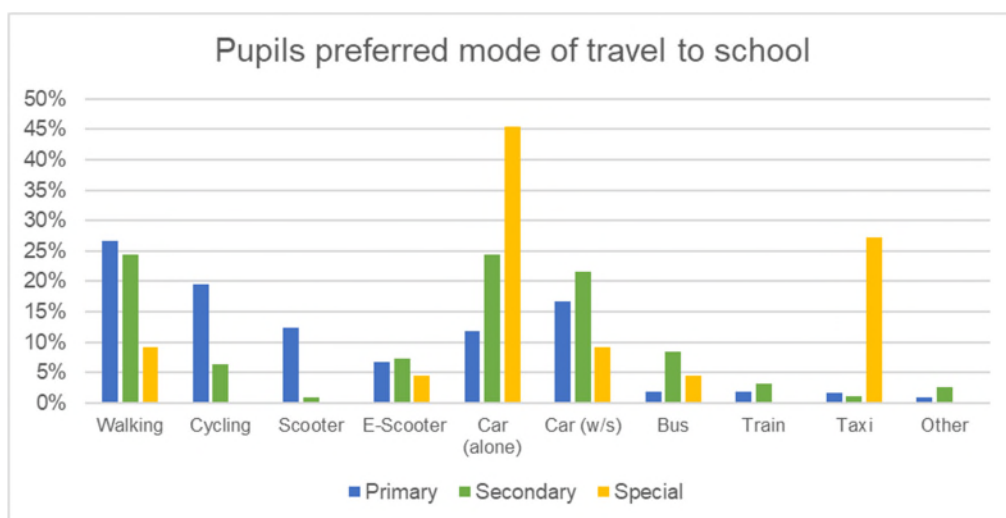


Pupil's preferences

In addition to asking pupils how they travelled to school on the day of the survey, they were also asked how they would like to travel to school if they could choose. At primary level only 28.5% would like to travel by car (either alone or with other pupils) which is 17.2% fewer pupils than currently. Walking also has a reduction of 14.2% while more pupils would choose to cycle or scoot, 15.6% and 12.2% respectively.

At secondary level, more pupils would travel by car if it were up to them, an additional 4.7%. Cycling and scooting would increase by 3.7% and 7.7% respectively while walking and travelling by bus would decrease by 8.8% and 9.7%.

Figure 9 – Preferred mode of travel of Thurrock's pupils.



'Other' modes accounted for less than 1% of all pupils preferred mode. Along with dreamy responses, some pupils expressed they would like to use other viable ways of wheeling such as roller skates, skateboard and electric bicycles (combined 28 responses).

Thurrock's Active Travel Needs Assessment

The Active Travel Needs Assessment of Thurrock from 2021 identifies that distance travelled and parental concerns around safety are the most significant barriers affecting travel modes to school.

Parents' lived experience, traffic volume and speed along routes to school inform parents' risk assessment on their children's travel to school mode. Despite accident data showing a low likelihood of harm, the potential of serious injuries or death from a collision plays a significant role in limiting higher levels of walking and cycling to school.

A further review identified other factors affecting active travel to school including parents' and children's lack of time (e.g. due to existing commitments), lack of cycle lanes and lack of facilities to store bikes, a strong culture of car use, conflicting messages from schools, poor weather and the need to carry heavy bags.

Evidence and reviews largely favour community-wide approaches and system-wide initiatives that involve the school, parents and the local community, often supported by an external coordinator, and that engage the children as the most likely to demonstrate improvement in active travel behaviour. In terms of infrastructure, recreational facilities and good walk/bike routes are associated with higher rates of active travel in children.

Initiatives that widely prove successful in promoting active travel in schools include School travel plans, Walking school buses and Bikeability Training.

Summary of the 2021-2024 strategy

During the 2021-2024 School Travel Strategy period, the council's Road Safety team delivered the following measures to promote sustainable travel to school.

The number of schools with a Travel Plan participating in Modeshift STARS increased from 16 in 2021 to 24 in 2024, 14 of these have received an accreditation award as follows: five with Green/Approved, six with Bronze/Good, two with Silver/Very Good and one with Gold/Excellent. The Road Safety team also distributes regular bulletins to headteachers with information regarding road safety initiatives.

During the 2021-2024 period, 42 school accessed Bikeability training benefiting 6,387 pupils; 33 schools accessed Scooter training benefiting 3,025 pupils; and 45 schools accessed Pedestrian training benefiting 11,790 pupils. There were also 14 School Crossing Patrol Officers safeguarding children's safety at crossings around Thurrock.

Exemplar case – Bikeability Young Cyclist of the Year nomination

In November 2023, following the great work undertaken by our Cycle Instructors resulted in the nomination of a Thurrock pupil for a Bikeability award.

Pippin, who attended Warren Primary School, was born with a number of medical challenges that made it difficult for him to learn how to ride a bike unaided. He and his mum had tried hard but without any luck.

Through the Bikeability programme, he received 1-to-1 lessons on the school's playground from our Lead Cycling Instructor. By the end of this training, Pippin was able to ride his bike unaided and was eager to continue learning and taking part of Bikeability Level 1 training.

Pippin was nominated to the Young Cyclist of the Year category of the Celebration of Cycling Awards, a yearly event held by the Bikeability Trust to recognise inspiring instructors, tenacious trainees and super cyclists taking part in the Bikeability programme.

Pippin was shortlisted to the top three in the country and although he did not win, this shows the great achievement he made with help from Thurrock Council's Cycle Instructors.

The Safer Essex Roads Partnership

Thurrock Council remains a member of the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP), which brings together a wide range of organisations such as Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue Service, local authorities and National Highways amongst others, to lead on the reduction of death and serious injury on Essex roads.

The SERP is working towards a target known as Vision Zero, a challenging aim to have zero fatalities on the roads across Greater Essex by 2040. To meet this, our actions and measures must follow the best practices ensuring pupils' safety on streets and roads. The council's Road Safety Team are actively supporting the delivery of measures of the SERP within Thurrock.

Section 114

On 19 December 2022 the council issued a 'Section 114' notice, meaning it could not find a way to finance its budget for the financial years of 2022/23 and 2023/24. This put strict limits on what the council can spend and has had an effect on the travel to school initiatives delivered by the team, in

particular on pedestrian and cyclist training and participation on safety campaigns. Statutory services such as eligible school transport are still being provided.

Traffic Regulation Orders

Streets around schools are busy environments during pick-up and drop-off times that can lead to safety risk to children and parents. Traffic Regulation Orders allow the council to manage the use of the highway network to improve the safety of roads and access to facilities through on-street parking restrictions and speed limits.

Parking restrictions installed outside schools seek to improve visibility so that children and other road users can see clearly when crossing these roads at busy times. Most school entrances and exits in Thurrock have yellow zigzag road markings with the writing 'School Keep Clear'. Where these restrictions apply at specific times, signs display times when motorists are prohibited to park on the zigzags. Where appropriate school roads are also accompanied by 'No waiting at any time' or 'No waiting Mon-Fri 8am-9am and 3pm-4.30pm' restrictions, though these timings may vary.

Streets around schools may also have 20mph speed limits with traffic calming measures to reduce traffic speeds and increase road user safety. Lower speeds help drivers and pedestrians to be more aware of one another and react in time to unpredictable situations: a vehicle travelling at 20mph would stop in time to avoid a child running out three car-lengths in front, the same vehicle travelling at 25mph would not be able to stop in time and would hit the child at 18mph. This is roughly the same impact as a child falling to the ground from a second storey window.

During the 2021-2024 School Travel Strategy period no new restrictions were installed, as the Safer Routes to School programme was stopped.

Home to School Travel and Transport provision

Thurrock Council continues to fulfil its duty to provide school transport to eligible pupils:

- that live within Thurrock
- are of compulsory school age – usually between 5 and 16 years-old
- attend the nearest suitable school with a place available
- meet the different eligibility criteria – distance, safety, special educational needs and disability (SEND) or mobility issues, and extended rights for families that have low income

Table 7 shows that in 2023/24, 1,647 pupils were eligible for home to school transport, equating to 5% of all pupil places in Thurrock (30,587). The number of home to school placements has increase from 1,419 in 2021/22, an increase of 18% in two years.

Table 7 – Thurrock's pupils with school travel support in the last 3 years.

Category	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Statutory walking distance	159	171	266
Unsafe route	463	498	464
SEND, disability or mobility requirement	617	740	708
Extended rights	52	43	67
Discretionary / Other	128	146	169
Total	1,419	1,598	1,674

Sustainable Travel Measures for 2024-2027

Thurrock Council will continue to support measures to promote safe walking and cycling to school through training, promotional campaigns and its school crossing patrol service in line with the financial restrictions placed on the council; and will continue to provide school transport for eligible pupils and explore interventions to manage car use around schools in collaboration with schools and local communities.

School engagement on Travel Plans and Modeshift STARS accreditation

Thurrock Council will continue working with schools encouraging them to develop their School Travel Plan and enrol onto Modeshift STARS.

School Travel Plans set out the actions that schools agree and commit to run as part of the school's approach in supporting pupil's health, wellbeing and safety, defining good road safety practice for pupils travelling to and from school. School travel plans should not be designed with the intention of forcing every pupil to walk, cycle or scoot every day. Instead, school travel plans should help to reduce the barriers and increase the opportunities to sustainable travel for as many staff, pupils and parents as possible.

Thurrock Council will continue its collaborative work for schools to develop plans that cater for the needs of pupils, teachers, parents, carers, school governors and local residents. School travel plans should demonstrate the school's commitment to environmental and community concerns and to the safety and welfare of pupils that are a fundamental requirement to enrol onto the Modeshift STARS scheme.

Modeshift STARS is the national scheme which recognises schools that demonstrate excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel. The scheme encourages schools to increase levels of sustainable and active travel and in so doing, improve the health and well-being of children and young people.

Modeshift STARS asks schools to provide information on the initiatives delivered and the progress achieved each year and is a tool for Thurrock Council to monitor travel behaviour at individual schools and to obtain information on the measures to be implemented. Modeshift STARS is free for all schools to access and record their travel plan and related activities through funding from the Department for Transport, however the council is required to purchase a license to monitor and accredit schools' participation.

Thurrock Council will continue encouraging schools in the borough to participate in the programme and to maintain and improve their accreditation level. Funding and support for transport initiatives by the council is prioritised to those schools who actively engage in Modeshift STARS.

Pedestrian training

The offer of pedestrian training has been reduced during the current financial constraints. Thurrock Council continues offering pedestrian training for two groups – Twilight Trails (Year 3) and the Junior Road Safety Officer Scheme (JRSO) (Year 5).

Twilight Trails (Year 3) – Be Bright, Be Seen messaging in the winter months

A campaign designed to create awareness of the importance of being visible for drivers, cyclist and other road users when on the roadside during the autumn and winter months when young people are less likely to be visible by other road users.

Junior Road Safety Officer Scheme (Year 5)

The role is undertaken by Year 5 pupils with a focus to promote and educate the rest of the school in all things relating to Road Safety – different activities can include arranging competitions, giving presentations in assembly or writing to local companies to try to raise some money to pay for things at the school relating to Road Safety. Thurrock Council's Road Safety team has run the above scheme for the last 15 years with positive feedback from participating schools and pupils.

School Crossing Patrol service

Thurrock Council is undertaking a full review of the School Crossing Patrol service to ensure it still meets the needs of the borough against the council's financial position.

A review of the sites where school crossing patrol officers are positioned and exploring the criteria the council uses in identifying the need for a School Crossing Patrol Officer will be some of the considerations. Although it is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child's welfare on the journey to and from school, school crossing patrol officers play an important role providing safer places to cross busy roads.

At the end of the 2023/2024 academic year there were 14 crossing points identified, 10 of them manned with a School Crossing Patrol officer. The location of the crossings can be found on Appendix B.

Walking Buses

Thurrock Council will engage with schools to promote Walking Buses. This action will be led by the Road Safety team.

A Walking Bus is a led trail of school children with at least two parent/teacher volunteers. Parents supported by the School Travel Advisors organise themselves to walk a route regularly used by children, collecting children on the way. This can reduce the need for parents to drive their children to school if they live along the route, knowing they are accompanied by responsible adults, thereby helping to improve safety around the school.

The group moves quickly and safely under the guidance of the trained adults. All children and adults on the bus wear bright reflective jackets for safety.

Thurrock Council will collaborate with schools and assist them setting up a walking bus by carrying out route safety checks, adult volunteer training and risk assessments. Thurrock Council will explore further options to support walking buses, resources permitting.

Walking buses will be set up upon school requests since successful implementation depends on school involvement.

Cycle and scooter training

Thurrock Council's Bikeability Trainers will continue offering Bikeability Level 1, 2 and 3 cycle training. This training can enable children to cycle to and from school in a safe manner by teaching and practicing with them the right technical and confidence skills by matching or exceeding the national Bikeability standards.

Thurrock Council will explore funding opportunities from grants prioritizing their use over chargeable course fees to participants, schools or families.

Cycle training provision includes:

- Balance Bike training (Reception) – prepares pupils to have confidence with their balance and awareness of what is going on around them ready to progress to pedals
- Level 1 Bikeability (Year 4) – aims to develop riders cycling skills in a traffic free environment
- Level 2 Bikeability (Year 6) – learn to understand the priorities of sharing a road with other road users and knowing who has right of way on local roads
- Level 3 Bikeability (Year 7+) – aims to develop riders' skills and confidence so they can ride in diverse road environments, including complex, often busy roads and junctions, sometimes with speed limits above 30mph
- Learn to Ride – helps riders ride independently of bicycle aids (stabilisers)
- Cycle training for SEND children and adults – adults are offered learn to ride and road confidence lessons. Talks with SEND teachers enables the programme to include pupils with learning difficulties at whatever level they are capable of. While this may just be sitting on a bike, these small steps can make those children feel part of the class when receiving a certificate in assembly with their peers.

Scooter training provision includes:

- Year 1 Scooter Training – teaching how to stop at the curb and walk their scooters across the road, how to approach pedestrians on the pavement, observing what is going on around them and how to check their scooters are safe to use

Park and Stride

Thurrock Council will liaise with schools to explore viability of setting up Park and Stride sites in the borough. The Park and Stride scheme encourages parents driving to school to park at a designated point – for example, local pub, supermarket or village hall car park – and walk the remainder of the journey to school. There are a number of benefits to the scheme including reduced congestion around the school gate creating a safer environment for pedestrians.

This scheme also allows for those children that live too far from school to walk the whole distance, to walk for part of it and therefore have regular daily exercise, while helping to improve the traffic and associated impacts around the vicinity of the school.

Thurrock Council's Road Safety team will liaise with Civil Enforcement Officers or the relevant parking authority to benefit from a temporary parking fee exemption. Parents participating in this scheme receive a sticker to identify them.

Park and stride schemes will be set up upon school requests since successful implementation depends on school involvement.

School Streets

Thurrock Council will liaise with schools to explore viability of establishing School Streets within the borough. A School Street is a road outside a school with a temporary restriction on motorised traffic at school drop-off and pick-up times. The restriction applies to school traffic and through traffic, resulting in a safer, healthier and more pleasant environment for everyone.

School Street schemes offer a proactive solution for school communities to tackle air pollution, poor health and road danger reduction. A School Street scheme will encourage a healthier lifestyle and active travel to school for families and lead to a better environment for everyone. Southend-on-Sea City Council has implemented a number of School Streets across their area, offering an opportunity to learn from their successes.

School street schemes will be set up upon school requests since successful implementation depends on school involvement.

Home to school travel and transport

In line with its Home to School Travel and Transport policy, Thurrock Council will continue to offer free school transport to eligible pupils that: live in Thurrock, are of compulsory school age – usually between 5 and 16 years-old, attend the nearest suitable school with a place available and meet the appropriate eligibility criteria (distance, safety, special educational needs, disability or mobility issues and extended rights for families that have low income). There are also considerations in place to include other alternatives as reimbursement, walking assistant, etc.

It is advised parents review the Thurrock Council Home to School Travel and Transport Policy to ensure a good understanding of the terms used above and the impact of the policy on their choices around transport to and from school. The policy can be found at:

www.thurrock.gov.uk/home-to-school-or-college-travel-support/policies-and-useful-information

Thurrock's Travel Training

A programme for any young disabled person who wants to become more independent by using public transport. Travel trainers begin the bespoke process with a talk about the challenges faced in using public transport and undertake a risk assessment presented to the trainee and his/her family.

It is followed by a journey to school, college or other destination accompanying with the young person and showing them every step of the journey and giving safety tips. This journey is repeated several times until the trainee understand the steps and gains confidence. The aid is gradually withdrawn with check points along the process until the journey can be completed alone by the trainees themselves.

Contact with the programme is through the email senpfa@thurrock.gov.uk

Delivery plan

The objectives will be supported through implementation of a three-year delivery plan. The delivery plan is a focussed list of measures to be delivered by working with different council departments, schools and local agencies.

Focus	Measure	Responsible	Key performance indicator	Target
School engagement	School Travel Plans	Road Safety team	Number of schools with an approved School Travel Plan at the end of the plan.	No fewer than 32 schools.
	Modeshift STARS		Number of schools participating in Modeshift STARS at the end of the plan.	No fewer than 35 schools participating in Modeshift STARS.
			Number of schools achieving higher Modeshift STARS accreditation during the three-year plan.	No fewer than 2 schools gaining 'Outstanding' accreditation. No fewer than 4 schools gaining 'Excellent' accreditation. No fewer than 6 schools gaining 'Very Good' accreditation. No fewer than 10 schools gaining 'Good' accreditation. No fewer than 10 schools gaining 'Approved' accreditation.
Walk training	Twilight Trails (Year 3)	Road Safety team	Number of sessions delivered during the three-year plan.	No fewer than 30 sessions.
	Junior Road Safety Officer Scheme (Year 5)		Number of schools engaged on the scheme during the three-year plan.	No fewer than 20 school involved.
Walking campaign	School Crossing Patrol	Road Safety team	Number of sites providing schools crossing patrols by the end of the plan.	No fewer than 10 sites (subject to sites meeting criteria).

Focus	Measure	Responsible	Key performance indicator	Target
	Walking Bus		Number of new walking bus established by the end of the plan.	No fewer than 9 walking buses/routes.
Cycle training	Balance Bike training (Reception)	Bikeability team	Number of sessions delivered during the three-year plan.	No fewer than 78 sessions.
	Level 1 Bikeability (Year 4)		Number of sessions delivered during the three-year plan.	No fewer than 180 sessions.
	Level 2 Bikeability (Year 6)		Number of sessions delivered during the three-year plan.	No fewer than 195 sessions.
	Level 3 Bikeability (Year 7+)		Number of sessions delivered during the three-year plan.	No fewer than 25 sessions.
	Cycle training for SEND children and adults		Number of sessions delivered during the three-year plan.	No fewer than 75 sessions.
	Year 1 Scooter Training		Number of sessions delivered during the three-year plan.	No fewer than 240 sessions.
Physical layout interventions	Park and Stride	Road Safety team	Number of feasibility studies for new Park and Stride sites.	No fewer than 10 feasibility studies.
			Number of new Park and Stride schemes by the end of the plan.	No fewer than 6 schemes introduced.
	School Streets	Strategic Transport / Transport Delivery teams	Number of feasibility studies for new School Street	No less than 3 feasibility studies (delivery of schemes subject to result of feasibility study and funding)

Monitoring

Monitoring and review of this strategy will take place annually at the end of the academic year and adjustments will be made where necessary to achieve the targets set out within the delivery plan.

Implementation of further measures to promote sustainable travel to school will be added if additional funding is made available. These measures may include further walking training (Parent and Child walk at reception, Young Driver presentation at years 10 and 11, and so on) and walking campaigns (Walk to School Week and WOW Scheme).

At the end of the three-year plan period, a new hands-up travel survey will be carried out to evaluate the strategy's outcomes of pupils' mode split against targets on the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy and plan the development for the next strategy period.

Appendix A – Hands-up travel survey participation

Level	School	Classes received
Primary	Little Thurrock Primary	21
Primary	Lansdowne Primary Academy	20
Primary	Thameside Primary School	18
Primary	Woodside Primary	15
Primary	Purfleet Primary Academy	14
Primary	Harris Primary Academy Mayflower	12
Primary	Shaw Primary	12
Primary	Abbots Hall Primary Academy	11
Primary	Belmont Castle Academy	11
Primary	Corringham Primary School	11
Primary	Deneholm County Primary	11
Primary	Quarry Hill Academy	11
Primary	Stanford-le-Hope Primary School	11
Primary	Somers Heath Primary School	9
Primary	Aveley Primary	8
Primary	East Tilbury Primary and Nursery	8
Primary	Stifford Clays Primary School	8
Primary	Tudor Court Primary	7
Primary	Herringham Primary Academy	6
Primary	Horndon on the Hill Church of England	6
Primary	West Thurrock Academy	6
Primary	Orsett Church of England Primary School Academy	5
Primary	Arthur Bugler Primary School	4
Primary	Bulphan Church of England Academy	3
Primary	Giffards Primary School	3
Primary	St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School	2
Primary	Holy Cross Catholic Primary School	1
Primary	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	1
Primary	Benyon Primary School	0
Primary	Bonnygate Primary School	0
Primary	Chadwell St Mary Primary School	0
Primary	Dilkes Academy	0
Primary	Graham James Primary Academy	0

Level	School	Classes received
Primary	Harris Primary Academy Chafford Hundred	0
Primary	Kenningtons Primary	0
Primary	St. Mary's Catholic Primary School	0
Primary	The Gateway Primary	0
Primary	Tilbury Pioneer Academy	0
Primary	Warren Primary School	0
Secondary	St. Clere's School	24
Secondary	Gable Hall School	23
Secondary	Grays Convent High School	18
Secondary	Hassenbrook Academy	18
Secondary	Orsett Heath Academy	10
Secondary	The Gateway Academy	4
Secondary	Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	0
Secondary	Harris Academy Ockendon	0
Secondary	Harris Academy Riverside	0
Secondary	Ormiston Park Academy	0
Secondary	Thames Park Secondary School	0
Secondary	The Hathaway Academy	0
Secondary	William Edwards School	0
Special	Treetops Free School	2
Special	Treetops School	2
Special	Beacon Hill Academy	0
Referral	Olive AP Academy	0

Appendix B – Sites with school crossing patrol at end of 2023/24 academic year

