

School Travel Plans

A guide for Swindon schools and developers



Incorporating the use of Modeshift STARS to create School Travel Plans and support planning applications

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Introduction

What this guidance does

This guidance is both for schools working on school travel plans (STPs) to promote safe, active and sustainable travel to school, as well as for schools or developers preparing a STP for submission as part of a planning application.

We are now requesting that Swindon schools submit their STPs via Modeshift STARS. Modeshift STARS is the national awards scheme that recognises schools that have shown excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel. The application process provides an online template that, upon completion, will generate a national standard school travel plan.

These guidance notes should be read in conjunction with the [Modeshift STARS User Guide– Getting Accredited](#). Together, these documents should provide the information necessary to enable you to produce your national standard STP or submit an STP that meets requirements of the planning process.

If you have a previous STP, you will need to consult your original document.

What is a School Travel Plan?

A School Travel Plan (STP) is a document which sets out how a school will promote safer, active and sustainable travel to school, with the main emphasis being on reducing the number of children being driven to and from school. A good STP should be based on consultation with teachers, parents, pupils and governors and other local people. In order to ensure that the plan remains relevant and appropriate to changing circumstances it is essential that the plan is reviewed and updated regularly.

An effective school travel plan contains a package of measures to:

- ✓ reduce the number of vehicles on the journey to school
- ✓ improve safety on the journey to school
- ✓ encourage more active and sustainable travel choices

What are the benefits of having a School Travel Plan?

Encouraging active travel to school has a wide range on benefits, both for the school community, but also for the area around the school, as well as the whole city, in terms of less traffic and congestion.

For the pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Improving health and fitness by walking, scooting and cycling•Improving travel awareness and road user skills•Improving awareness of their surroundings
For the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Improving safety around the school•Reducing congestion around the school•Establishing safer walking and cycling routes around the school

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Contributing to other school policies such as Eco-Schools/Healthy Schools etc •Linking to the National Curriculum
For parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reducing stress and time spent driving to school, especially when it is congested •Increasing quality parent/child contact time •Building better links with the school
For the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Improving the local environment by reducing air and noise pollution •Reducing congestion problems •Improving walking routes •Improving Road Safety

Why STARS?

Modeshift STARS is the national awards scheme that recognises schools that have shown excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel. The application process provides an online template that, upon completion, will generate a national standard school travel plan. STARS is free for all Swindon schools to use.

Modeshift has produced a range of free resources, including guidance documents, campaign toolkits and educational resources that are suitable for both primary and secondary schools. For more information and to view the resources visit <https://modeshiftstars.org/resources.php>

What you'll gain from becoming a STARS school

School Travel Plan –automatic generation of a new School Travel Plan which will deliver significant time and costs savings

National Accreditation –you will receive the Modeshift STARS plaque, certificate and use of the nationally recognised logo

The National STARS School Travel Awards –a chance to be considered for the National STARS School Travel Awards

Behaviour Change –STARS will provide you with the tools to reduce car use and increase the number of children walking, cycling and using public transport on the journey to and from school.

Achieving National Accreditation

There are three levels of accreditation that your school can achieve.



BRONZE

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.



SILVER

For schools that achieve a reduction in car use on the journey to school, deliver a whole-school approach and deliver above and beyond what is normally expected of a school.



GOLD

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.

Creating your School Travel Plan

A dozen schools in Swindon already have an active, approved STARS Travel Plan, with half of these achieving silver and gold. Many more schools carry out a wide range of initiatives to support active and sustainable travel and are working towards developing a travel plan.

As discussed below, a STP is a continual process rather than a static document. It should continually evolve as travel issues are addressed and modal shift occurs.

We understand that there are many demands on people's time and keeping a STP maintained can add to the workload. We believe that there are real benefits to a school having an active STP and hope that you will see the time given to maintaining your STP as a valuable investment in your school.

For your first STARS application there will initially be some work to input the information but once it is established it will be a question of updating sections and STARS will automatically generate your STP. There will be no need to produce a lengthy word processed report each time you update your STP.

If you have an existing STP, you will be able to use information from this to complete your STARS application.

Five steps to getting started with STARS

1. Visit <http://www.modeshiftstars.org> and choose your location from the list of local authorities that appears.
2. Select the 'Register' tab from the top right corner of the page.
3. From the registration page, enter your name, select 'School' and then select the role that is most appropriate to your position in the school (e.g. School Travel Plan Champion).
4. Ensure 'Your LA' is correct and then select your school from the drop down menu
5. Complete the rest of the registration form and then select 'Register'.

What next?

Your application will go to your local authority for approval. As soon as they accept your registration you will receive an automated email confirming that you have access to the system. Then you are ready to begin your Modeshift STARS journey.

The STP Process

Through completion of a STARS application you will have included all the information required to produce a STP. A summary of the process that you will follow is given below.

(Please note there are additional information requirements for STPs submitted through the planning system. See page 8 for details.)

Appoint a School Travel Plan Co-ordinator	The STP Co-ordinator will usually be a member of staff at the school, but could be a School Governor or another appropriate person in a position to undertake these duties
Set up a STP Working Group	To include a range of members e.g. member of senior management team, teachers, governors, parents and pupils. More information on setting up a working group is available in the Modeshift STARS guidance 'Building a Working Group' You can access this document once you have registered for STARS. It can be found in the Resources tab.
Collect key information	Through surveys and consultation collect and analyse key information to identify the main travel issues affecting your school including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Actual and preferred mode of travel for pupils and staff ✓ Identification of travel and transport issues

	✓ Audit of on and off site infrastructure
Set targets for sustainable and active travel	Set future targets to achieve or maintain modes of sustainable travel (for example to increase cycling; to maintain walking)
Write an Action Plan	Plan the package of measures your school will introduce and deliver through the STP.
Deliver travel initiatives	Carry out and record your active and sustainable travel initiatives.
Review	Is your STP achieving the results you want and is it still relevant? Adjust initiatives and targets accordingly.

The Modeshift STARS Cycle

Modeshift STARS is a continuous process of planning, doing and reviewing. Each academic year your school has three opportunities to apply for STARS accreditation which fall at the end of each full term. However, Swindon Borough Council prefers to review STARS accreditation in July, at the end of the school year.

The Modeshift STARS Cycle displayed below sets out the process for getting accredited.



School Travel Plans and the Planning Process

For us to offset concerns about increases in pupils and the associated potential increase in traffic problems we need to be satisfied that the schools are doing what they can to reduce travel by car.

The school run often adds to congestion around the school gates increasing the risk of accidents. Swindon Borough Council and schools should therefore work together to provide adequate information to make a judgment about how potential problems could be reduced.

Using Modeshift STARS to support your planning application

We are now incorporating Modeshift STARS into the planning process to make it easier for schools to implement and maintain their STP once the development has been completed.

The information required to support a planning application should be submitted via an **Interim School Travel Plan form**. Some of the information requested can be input straight into STARS. The Interim School Travel Plan form is designed in such a way as to allow the information to be transferred easily to the School's STARS application once the development is complete. The STARS application will then become the School's live Travel Plan and should continue to be maintained.

The Interim STP forms can be downloaded from <http://www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk/business/travel-plans-guidance/>

Pre-application stage

During the pre-application stage, there will be the opportunity to discuss the STP with the Borough Council and find out about any expectations that they may have regarding its content. For example, officers may advise on specific issues that they would like to see addressed, or measures that they would like to see included in the STP. This will hopefully increase the chance of a STP being approved once it is submitted.

A Transport Statement for the development should highlight the issues that the STP will seek to address. It is good practice to include a trip-generation forecast for the development within the Transport Statement and this will form the basis for setting targets for modal split. Officers will also be able to advise on appropriate STP targets for mode share, taking into account a number of factors including location, existing problems, the type of area and the school's catchment area.

Existing schools (same site expansions)

A current travel plan (via [Modeshift STARS](#)) should be submitted with the planning application. If the school does not currently have an STP, they will be required to have an approved STARS travel plan in place prior to occupation of the new building.

The travel plan should be updated and include recent hands up surveys of current and preferred travel modes. The Action Plan should also include sustainable travel initiatives that will be implemented before and after the development is completed.

In addition to this, an [Interim School Travel Plan - Existing Site](#) form will need to be completed to provide the additional information required to support the planning application.

Further information may also be requested on a case-by-case basis. Once completed, the form should be uploaded to the school's STARS pages under the Planning Tab. When the STP has been approved you should follow the STARS cycle (see above) to monitor and review your plan.

New school sites

For schools being developed on new sites, an [Interim School Travel Plan –New Site](#) form should be completed. This will direct you to the sections of a STARS application that will also need to be filled out at this time.

When the Interim STP is completed, this can be uploaded to the Planning section of your STARS pages and submitted alongside your planning application documents. Once the development is occupied, the information from the Interim STP should be transferred to your STARS application and a STARS application completed in full. When the STP has been approved you should follow the STARS cycle (see above) to monitor and review your plan. In some cases, the council may specify that a more frequent monitoring schedule be followed initially.

Submitting your STP and how it will be assessed

National Standard STPs

For STPs not submitted through the planning system, a complete Modeshift STARS application is required. As you fill in your STARS application the system will show you what else is required to be eligible for each award level.

Each year there are three opportunities to apply for STARS accreditation to Modeshift, at the end of each full term. You can request a review of your STARS travel plans at any time, when you will receive feedback on your plan from Swindon Borough Council or Modeshift.

STPs to support a Planning Application

For STPs required as part of a planning application, you will need to complete a number of sections of a STARS application as advised and also supply the additional information requested via the 'Interim STP' form.

In particular, as a minimum standard we will be looking for

- A designated STP champion/co-ordinator
- Establishment of a working group
- Clear identification of the travel and transport (issues that the plan will seek to mitigate)
- Surveys and consultation exercises undertaken
- A range of initiatives to increase active and sustainable travel to the site that will be implemented before and after occupation
- Monitoring schedule

Contact Details

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Website:

www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk/business/travel-plans-guidance/

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