

29 June 2015

Mr. Hugh Creegan
National Transport Authority
Dún Scéine
Harcourt Lane
Dublin 2

Three year School travel Programme

Dear Hugh,

As per our recent meeting with you and Michael Aherne concerning a new 3 Year Green Schools Programme, I am attaching herein, as agreed, the basis of our understanding on how we proceed with the new Programme.

This letter represents an understanding between the National Transport Authority (NTA) and the Department of Transport Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) for a new three year DTTAS-funded school travel programme, from the start of August 2015 to the end of July 2018 inclusive.

The NTA will provide the programme deliverables and report to the DTTAS as set out below. The DTTAS undertakes to provide funding for the programme.

The principal objective of Smarter Travel Schools is to reduce car use for the school trip.

This objective will be delivered by:

1. facilitating volunteer schools to undertake actions themselves, to support sustainable travel behaviour;
2. encouraging volunteer schools which completed the programme, to maintain and improve on their activities and actions on an on-going basis;
3. Monitoring travel change of pupils in volunteer schools in terms of mode choice, with particular emphasis on walking and cycling; and
4. encouraging volunteer schools to take action, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, to identify, quantify and reduce the daily impact of school-related car traffic (especially on the front-of-school environment, on walking and cycling infrastructure, and on local residents).

The key deliverables of the NTA are as follows:

1. To facilitate reduction in car use as a means of travel to school;

2. To make available a nationwide voluntary programme to schools wishing to participate in a Smarter Travel Awareness and Action programme;
3. To provide oversight management and monitoring of the Smarter Travel Schools programme, delivered by An Taisce through the Green-Schools Travel programme.

Deliverable 1: To facilitate reduction in car use:

The Smarter Travel Schools programme is a voluntary programme based on best practice principles around Community Social Marketing. The NTA programme consists of a series of school-based actions promoting alternatives to the car. The aggregate response to these actions, within the participating schools, is an increase in walking and cycling, and a reduction in overall car use.

The NTA, through An Taisce, will offer this programme to schools, with the expectation (based on prior programme outcomes) of achieving the following:

- A 7.5 % decrease in the number of pupils travelling to school solely by car, based on “usual mode of transport” used and established through an in-class hands-up surveys. This will be measured by surveys at the start and end of the three year programme supplemented by intermediate surveys;
- Similarly there should be different rates for rural and urban schools and taking account of new infrastructural works (before An Taisce goes into a school they should agree a realistic target (with the NTA) for modal shift for that school in advance) and
- An increase in walking and cycling, based on “usual mode of transport used” and established through an in-class hands-up survey (above);¹
- Walking cycling and Scooting to be reported separately
- An independent survey during year 3 of the programme to measure change

Deliverable 2: To make available a nationwide voluntary programme:

the NTA will commission An Taisce to make the Smarter Travel Schools programme available to any volunteer school (whether within Green Schools or not) to be delivered under an SLA agreement between the NTA and An Taisce. This agreement will include but will not be limited to, the minimum number of staff required to deliver the programme and the minimum number of direct contact hours between the travel officer and the volunteer school. The typical activities undertaken and the facilitation provided by An Taisce will not discriminate between schools inside or outside the Green Schools programme. However, the awarding of the Green Flag for Travel remains exclusively the prerogative of An Taisce.

The schools to be included in the programme will comprise both primary and secondary schools, with the programme for each school tailored to suit the differing age profiles of the students and the locations of the schools. Schools that have completed the full programme

¹ Note regarding surveys

- the number of bicycles and scooters in the school will be counted on survey days
- Surveys to be mid-week (Tues, Weds, Thurs) non-event days

will be expected to continue with a “continuous improvement programme”, which is detailed later.

Typical activities, though not prescriptive, will be expected to include:

Presentations to classes on the background and rationale for the Programme

Design Travel plans for and with pupils in the classroom

Get pupils to engage with their parents/guardians about sustainable ways for them to travel to school

Liaise with NTA and or Local Authorities, where necessary, about front of gate improvements to the school’s environment.

Deliverable 3: Provide Oversight, Management and Monitoring

The NTA will continue to provide oversight management of the programme, including

- Monthly meetings with An Taisce;
- Management of Financial Payments and Audit systems associated with the programme, ensuring all claims and payments relate exclusively to the Smarter Travel Schools programme; and
- Co-ordination activities, especially with NTA Investment Programmes in the GDA and the regional Cities.
- Claims should be presented in a timely manner with all claims submitted before the start of the next academic year

Depending on the funding available, the programme will also deliver the following:

- At least 1,000 pupils to complete school-based cycle training across the programme each year;
- On-road cycle training to be piloted and evaluated in volunteer representative secondary schools across the country;
- Cycle parking facilities to be offered to programme schools demonstrably progressing the bicycle mode; and
- Challenges and Awards events, to incentivise and provide recognition for achieve

1. The NTA will provide a summarised listing of key activities undertaken each month as part of its overall monthly report to DTTAS;

2. The NTA will provide an annual report to DTTAS in Quarter 1 of each year, reporting on the work carried out in the previous year in relation to the programme, and providing details of the expenditure incurred during the reporting period.

3. Quarterly meeting with DTTAS to review progress

Continuous Maintenance Programme

Volunteer Schools which have been awarded the Travel flag and which subscribe to the continuous Improvement programme will be supported to continue their achievements through the following:

- Schools visits by the Travel Education Officer (minimum of 2 visits per school), as well as support through other Green Schools liaison;
- Awards and events which include awarded schools e.g. annual Travel competition;
- Annual verification that Travel actions are being continuously maintained;
- Cycle funding will be made available for ‘maintenance’ schools;
- Monitoring as part of Smarter Travel schools research; and
- Access to the small works fund through the Local Authorities will be open to awarded schools which are still active.
- A year on year decrease in the number of pupils travelling by school solely by car.

Green Schools Travel programme delivered by An Taisce

This programme is structured over three years only.

Academic Year 2015/2016:

Entry by schools to the programme will be in Year 1 of the three year programme only
Eligible schools will include:

- any volunteer school participating in the overall Green-Schools Programme, (regardless of whether they have competed the Litter and Waste, Energy or Water themes);
- other schools which express an interest in working in integration with their local authority on traffic or transport interventions; or
- Schools that are located in areas that are currently undergoing infrastructural development under any of the following programmes and who have not as yet taken part in the Travel module of Green Schools: Active Travel Town, National Cycle Networks and Smarter Travel Areas.

In this academic year, the programme will also continue the second year of the Travel module for schools that commenced in academic year 2014/2015.

Volunteer Secondary schools will be invited to participate in a revised Secondary School 2-year programme during academic year 2015/2016.

Eligible volunteer schools (who have completed the Travel module) will be invited to participate in the one-year Continuous Improvement programme commencing 2016/2017.

Academic Year 2016/2017

The programme will continue the second year for those schools which have completed year 1 of the programme.

The revised Secondary School programme will commence in Academic Year 2016/2017 and conclude in academic year 2017/2018.

The One-Year Maintenance Programme will commence in Academic Year 2016/2017.

Academic Year 2017/2018

In this academic year, the second year of the 2-year Secondary Programme will be completed, together with evaluation of the secondary programme and an evaluation of the entire green schools travel programme.

A second group of schools will participate in the continuous improvement programme.

Evaluation Programme

An intensive evaluation will be conducted, involving An Taisce staff. The evaluation will focus on establishing the measures that achieve the most change in travel modes and will include at a minimum:-

- Assessment of each activity in achieving change
- Monitoring the cost per activity
- Attitudinal surveys to measure how well smarter travel is perceived by schools, parents and pupils.

Preparatory work will be completed for any subsequent Smarter Travel Schools programme

Funding

The DTTAS will pay to the NTA a sum not exceeding €1.65 million, for the delivery of the Green-Schools Travel Programme by An Taisce on an annual basis for three years. Capital funds may also be made available by DTTAS to support cycle parking and small works.

This letter will form the basis of the new Green Schools Programme and you should now proceed to negotiate and complete an SLA with An Taisce accordingly. If you wish to discuss anything contained herein further, please feel free to contact me.

I would like to finalise this at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Diskin

Sustainable Transport Division

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