

# Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 5 September 2023

## Learning for Sustainability

Executive/routine  
Wards  
Council Commitments

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
  - 1.1.1 Note response to the seven action points from the motion on Learning for Sustainability.
  - 1.1.2 Note the Standards and Quality Report (Appendix 1) which evaluates the work carried out in Session 2022-2023 and the newly created Action Plan for Session 2023-2024 (Appendix 2).

**Amanda Hatton**

Executive Director of Children, Education & Justice Services

Contact: Lorraine Budge, Quality Improvement Education Officer

E-mail: [Lorraine.budge@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:Lorraine.budge@edinburgh.gov.uk)

## Learning for Sustainability

### 2. Executive Summary

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2.1 This is a report which details the work carried out in schools to develop Learning for Sustainability. It also responds to a Motion by Councillor Burgess requesting a report on how Learning for Sustainability including the climate and nature emergencies can be developed and enhanced. Some actions were noted as part of the motion and addendum that could be taken at Council level:

- *Creating a full-time Quality and Improvement Education Officer for sustainability to enhance support and co-ordination of learning for sustainability in schools and the work of the sustainability board.*
- *Including learning for sustainability and climate & nature emergencies in School Quality Improvement Plans.*
- *Climate and nature emergency training for all Council teachers and staff.*
- *Set up a short-life working group to consider and bring forward proposals to enhance learning for sustainability and net zero.*
- *Develop a 'whole school' approach to learning for sustainability that incorporates teaching, school fabric and emissions, transport, food and drink, and the local environment and community.*
- *Create a sustainability and net zero project officer post to assist the QIEO and support development of learning for sustainability in schools.*
- *Ensure there is a teacher sustainability champion at every school and allow them at least one period of protected time to support learning for sustainability at their school.*

### 3. Background

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3.1 Learning for Sustainability is a key component of Curriculum for Excellence, is an entitlement for learners and is a core part of teachers' professional standards. It supports the development of knowledge, skills, and values at the heart of the curriculum's four capacities and provides a vehicle for promoting and working towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

- 3.2 Learning for Sustainability is a cross-curricular approach which weaves together Global Citizenship, Sustainable Development Education and Outdoor Learning.
- 3.3 Every school is expected to develop a 'whole school' approach to delivering Learning for Sustainability experiences, supported by leadership at all levels.
- 3.4 Every practitioner, school and education leader should demonstrate Learning for Sustainability in their practice.
- 3.5 School buildings, grounds and policies should all support Learning for Sustainability.
- 3.6 A new [Learning for Sustainability Action Plan for 2023-2030](#) was published by the Scottish Government in June 2023. The main aims of the plan are to accelerate Scotland's progress in achieving the Vision 2030 goals and to realise the ambition of Learning for Sustainability being central to Scottish Education.

## 4. Main report

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### 4.1 ***Creating a full-time Quality and Improvement Education Officer for sustainability to enhance support and co-ordination of learning for sustainability in schools and the work of the sustainability board.***

4.1.1 A Quality Improvement Education Officer (QIEO) has responsibility for Learning for Sustainability (LfS) as her strategic remit, which also includes school support. The QIEO leads the work of the Edinburgh Learns Sustainability Board and is also a member of the Council's Sustainability Board. The board meets termly to discuss and make decisions to support all schools in becoming sustainable learning settings by 2030. The revised Action Plan (Appendix 2) will inform the work of the board for session 2023-2024.

### 4.2 ***Including learning for sustainability and climate and nature emergencies in School Quality Improvement Plans.***

4.2.1 Learning for Sustainability has been one of the key priorities within the Council's Education Improvement Plan for three years (2021-2024). Schools are asked to ensure that this is reflected within their own school improvement cycles and plans. Learning for Sustainability champions will undertake the tasks from their dedicated school plan which has been created in conjunction with their school community.

### 4.3 ***Climate and nature emergency training for all Council teachers and staff.***

4.3.1 Opportunities will be provided for staff and pupils to develop an understanding of climate change education through participation in Climate Fresk training and/or training in Climate Ready Classrooms run by Keep Scotland Beautiful. Thirteen lifelong learning colleagues have been trained as Climate Fresk facilitators to support the rollout of climate change training.

**4.4 Set up a short-life working group to consider and bring forward proposals to enhance learning for sustainability and net zero.**

4.4.1 A short-life working group was established, and two meetings were held to take forward the actions from the Motion. This working group will now align with the LfS Board. Meetings will take place every eight weeks and will provide an opportunity to update on the progress being made by schools and with the action plan for session 2023-2024. (Appendix 2)

**4.5 Develop a 'whole school' approach to learning for sustainability that incorporates teaching, school fabric and emissions, transport, food and drink, and the local environment and community.**

4.5.1 In session 2023-2024 a more directive approach has been taken with schools to take forward LfS. This includes setting up a network of LfS champions with ring-fenced time. As part of the network, champions will be supported to consider and evaluate how effective their current practice in Learning for Sustainability is and to identify next steps to support further improvement. This information will provide baselines in confidence levels, strengths, and development needs of schools. They will share best practice and celebrate progress at the end of the session.

**4.6 Create a sustainability and net zero project officer post to assist the QIEO and support development of learning for sustainability in schools.**

4.6.1 It was agreed that there would be much bigger impact by enhancing this budget and sharing among all schools to raise the profile of LfS and to ensure that it is an integral part of the curriculum. As agreed by their Headteachers, two LfS champions have also been given additional time to support the QIEO and the LfS Community of Practice Network.

**4.7 Ensure there is a teacher sustainability champion at every school and allow them at least one period of protected time to support learning for sustainability at their school.**

4.7.1 As stated, every school has an LfS champion who will become members of a Community of Practice (CoP). Communities of Practice are networks of senior leaders with strategic responsibility for a theme. There will be three focus areas for Learning for Sustainability: Exploring Sustainable Practices, Global Citizenship and International Education, and Outdoor Learning.

4.7.2 Being part of a CoP will provide regular opportunities for champions to come together to plan strategic improvement with their peers and to review the progress being made. Work which is developed through the Communities of Practice will be collated and shared with staff to support practice beyond June 2024. A conference will also be held for schools to share practice undertaken and will allow us to measure progress which has been made over the course of the session.

## 5. Next Steps

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- 5.1 Schools will continue to self-evaluate their practice as part of the school improvement planning cycle, identifying strengths and development needs to further develop Learning for Sustainability.
- 5.2 The revised Action Plan for session 2023-2024 will guide further improvement in schools and will support practitioners and learners to develop their knowledge and skills, benefitting from high-quality Career Long Professional Learning and high-quality learner experiences.
- 5.3 Progress in schools will continue to be regularly evaluated at both school and council level with good practice being identified, celebrated, and shared to the benefit of all learners and practitioners.

## 6. Financial impact

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- 6.1 Any cost regarding improvement work in Learning for Sustainability is carried out within schools. Some budget is being provided to schools for session 2023-2024 to allow Sustainability champions to be released for half a day a week.

## 7. Equality and Poverty Impact

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- 7.1 Work undertaken in Learning for Sustainability involves schools in ensuring that Equalities, Poverty and Children's Rights are given a high profile. Some schools are making good progress in reviewing their curriculum to ensure that all of these entitlements are reflected throughout their curriculum, and it is anticipated that the number of schools in this position will increase over the course of session 2023-2024 due to the focused work being carried out and the investment being provided.

## 8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

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- 8.1 Schools are continuing to work towards meeting the targets within the Edinburgh 2030 Climate Strategy, specifically focusing on:
  - 1.2 *Maximise opportunities to focus on climate change across our whole education system, all CEC, and other schools.*
  - 4.1 *Work with young people in schools and in communities, to embed a legacy of change, drawing on COP26 coming to Scotland.*
  - 4.2 *Maximise opportunities to use school buildings and grounds to engage young people on climate change, help reduce schools' emissions and increase their contribution to greenspace and biodiversity.*
  - 4.3 *Strengthen climate change within our curriculum.*
  - 4.4 *Deliver a hydrogen education programme and schools' challenge.*

## **9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact**

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N/A

## **10. Background reading/external references**

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- 10.1 Item 9.1 – Motion by Councillor Burgess – Learning for Sustainability and the Climate Emergency. Education, Children and Families Committee, 31 January 2023. ([Link to Agenda Template](#))
- 10.2 Addendum by the Green Group. Education, Children and Families Committee, 31 January 2023 ([Link to Appendix 6](#))
- 10.3 Scotland’s Learning for Sustainability Action Plan 2023-2030: "[Target 2030](#)" [A movement for people, planet and prosperity: Scotland's Learning for Sustainability Action Plan 2023-2030 \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

## **11. Appendices**

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- Appendix 1 Learning for Sustainability Standards and Quality Report for Session 2022-2023
- Appendix 2 Learning for Sustainability Action Plan for Session 2023-2024

Appendix 1

Learning for Sustainability Standards and Quality Report

Session 2022-2023



Lorraine Budge  
Quality Improvement Education Officer  
July 2023

## What did we do?

- Schools are continuing to work towards meeting the targets within the Edinburgh 2030 Climate Strategy – delivering a net zero, climate ready city plan.
- The Sustainability Board provides regular opportunities for colleagues in a variety of service areas within the council to come together and make decisions which will support all Edinburgh schools in becoming sustainable learning settings by 2030 and where Learning for Sustainability (LfS) is an entitlement for all learners.
- Some schools have begun curriculum mapping work to ensure that LfS is an integral part of their curriculum and that learners are receiving their entitlement in this area. This practice will be used to support schools who are about to embark on this important work next session.
- St Mary's (Edinburgh) RC PS, Carrick Knowe PS and St Peter's RC PS were all nominated for the Sustainable School Award in the Edinburgh Evening News Local Heroes Awards. St Mary's took first place and Carrick Knowe were the runners up. Their strong practice and journey in implementing a whole school approach in LfS was shared with Head Teachers at a conference held in January 2023. The Head Teacher from Boroughmuir High School also shared their work and journey. This provided a valuable opportunity for Head Teachers to consider and evaluate their own practice and to think about next steps required to be taken.
- Significant investment has been provided to support every school in releasing Sustainability champions for half a day a week next session to raise the profile of LfS within their school community and to ensure it is an integral part of their curriculum. Schools have been asked to produce a dedicated plan to detail and support this work taking place and have been supported by having an example plan to help inform and shape their thinking.
- An LfS Twitter page (@EdinburghLfS) was created to showcase and share practice in Edinburgh schools and settings as well as highlighting policy and practice nationally, internationally, and globally.
- There is now a Sustainability Champion in every school.
- A network has been established for Sustainability Champions to promote strategy and to share, promote and celebrate practice on a regular basis.
- Sustainability Champions have benefited from having resources and information shared regularly throughout the session to access Career Long Professional Learning opportunities and to support their work with colleagues and their learners in the classroom.
- A Microsoft TEAM has been created to share identified resources for all three tenets of LfS (Outdoor Learning, Global Citizenship, Sustainable Development) to support LfS Champions.
- An Outdoor Learning toolkit has been launched to support schools with their improvement planning and self-evaluation.
- A council wide subscription for 'Love Outdoor Learning' has been purchased for all schools to support practitioners in providing outdoor learning experiences within their school grounds, local community and beyond.
- An updated process to reintroduce overseas schools' visits was established to ensure that all visits are appropriate, safe, accessible, and relevant to pupils' educational needs as well as aligning to council priorities and minimising financial risks. Schools were also asked to explore different ways to reduce their carbon footprint and a carbon calculator was provided to support this.
- Seven Secondary schools participated in the Edinburgh heat of the Scottish Schools' Hydrogen Challenge. Two schools were unable to participate due to industrial action.
- Thirteen lifelong learning colleagues have been trained as Climate Fresk facilitators to support the rollout of climate change training in schools next session.

## What was the impact?

- Learners in Edinburgh are benefitting from a wide range of Learning for Sustainability experiences including participating in circular economy activities, planting and growing food in school allotments and community gardens, planting trees, rewilding community spaces, learning about biodiversity in wildlife gardens, woodlands, and rivers, and participating in litter picking and clean up campaigns in their local community.
- Schools are working with a range of partners including The Green Team, Earth Calling, Sustrans, Ostrero, Water of Leith Conservation Trust, Positive Imaginings, Children's Parliament, Edible Estates, Tree Time, Edinburgh Greenspace, Rhet, Edinburgh Botanic Gardens to support them in providing learners with a variety of rich experiences within their school grounds and their local community.
- Almost all schools provide a residential experience for their learners and most Edinburgh schools visit either Benmore or Lagganlia Outdoor Centres.
- Some schools are participating in various award schemes as part of the work they are undertaking with learners including the RSPB Wild Challenge, John Muir Award, DofE, JASS, Hi5, RRSA, Eco Schools etc.
- 19 schools (15 primary, 3 Secondary, 1 Special School) have submitted evidence of their Eco Schools work to Keep Scotland Beautiful to successfully renew their Green Flag this session.
- 17 schools (13 primary, 4 secondary) participated in "Live Lessons" provided by Keep Scotland Beautiful to support their climate education work.
- The S2 pupil team from Boroughmuir High School won the National Final of the Scottish Schools' Hydrogen Challenge at Aberdeen Science Centre.
- The S2 pupil team from Leith Academy took third place at the National Final of the Scottish Schools' Hydrogen Challenge.
- Most CEC schools have either registered or are undertaking work directly linked to Rights Respecting Schools. This session, 18 schools (16 primary, 2 secondary) have been awarded Bronze, 6 schools (5 primary, 1 special) have been awarded Silver and 4 schools (3 primary schools, 1 secondary) have been awarded Gold. 1 primary school has been successful in having their gold status reaccredited.

## What are our Next Steps?

- Create a Learning for Sustainability strategy, framework, and policy to support all schools in becoming a sustainable learning setting by 2030. The strategy will include our vision for LfS in Edinburgh, support for staff in delivering the vision, resources available to support and details of partner organisations who can support and complement the work taking place in schools and settings.
- Targeted Career Long Professional Learning to build confidence and capacity in staff to ensure that LfS is an entitlement for all learners and to ensure a whole school approach is in place.
- Monthly meetings will be held for LfS champions to promote strategy, share practice, and support collaboration across schools.
- Climate Fresk and Climate Ready Classrooms training to be provided for staff and learners to support understanding of climate change.
- Conference and showcase event held to recognise, celebrate, and share practice across all Edinburgh schools.

- Encourage schools who are not currently engaging with RRSA to participate through sharing work and successes of other schools.
- Encourage schools to participate in projects such as 1.5 Max Project and British Council Guided Partnerships project to support collaboration with climate vulnerable countries.
- Establish an LfS partnership group with national and local partners to support schools with work being undertaken.
- Formally launch the Outdoor Learning toolkit for schools to support improvement work.
- Continue to promote that schools use sustainable forms of transport for any trips undertaken to support reducing their carbon footprint.
- Encourage schools to reduce their energy use and track their journey throughout the year.
- Continue to provide opportunities for staff and learners to develop their understanding of biodiversity and the benefits of rewilding.
- Continue to promote alternative green routes to school, college and work, e.g., cycle, scoot, walk etc.

## Learning for Sustainability Action Plan – Session 2023-2024

Our work within schools aligns with the following actions identified within Edinburgh’s Climate Strategy which was published in December 2021:

- 1.2 Maximise opportunities to focus on climate change across our whole education system, all CEC, and other schools.
- 4.1 Work with young people in schools and in communities, to embed a legacy of change, drawing on COP26 coming to Scotland.
- 4.2 Maximise opportunities to use school buildings and grounds to engage young people on climate change, help reduce schools’ emissions and increase their contribution to greenspace and biodiversity.
- 4.3 Strengthen climate change within our curriculum.
- 4.4 Deliver a hydrogen education programme and schools’ challenge.

	Outcomes	Tasks	Measuring impact	Timescale	Progress
<b>Curriculum – Leadership, Learning, Teaching, Assessment &amp; Pedagogy</b>	All schools will ensure that Learning for Sustainability is part of their curriculum.	-Sustainability champions will participate in self-evaluation session to ensure that their plan is robust, demonstrable and is supported by leadership at all levels.	-Baseline survey taken at beginning of session 2023/24 to determine confidence levels of school, strengths, and development needs. -Post survey responses will reflect progress made by schools at the end of session 2023/24.	-Baseline survey – September 2023 -Ongoing evaluation encouraged over course of session – data collected at various points -Post survey – June 2024	
	Sustainability champions will develop their knowledge and skills of planning for and delivering high quality LfS	-Provide support and guidance to schools, including making connections across the policy landscape including curriculum reform, UNCRC and	-Participation by Sustainability champions. -Self-evaluation activities will allow data to be collected to evidence progress being made.	-Ongoing monthly meetings throughout session 2023/204	

	experiences.	STEM. -Monthly meetings held termly will promote strategy, provide opportunities to share practice and support collaboration across schools.			
	All staff in Edinburgh schools will benefit from clear guidance.	-Create an LfS strategy, framework, and policy to support all schools in becoming a sustainable learning setting by 2030	-Sustainability Champions will form workstreams to produce materials which will be collated and shared with staff to support practice in LfS beyond June 2024	-Strategy, framework, and policy will be produced by June 2024	
	Edinburgh practitioners will be able to deliver high quality, rich curricular experiences for learners.	-Targeted CLPL will be provided to build confidence and capacity in staff to ensure that LfS is an entitlement for all learners and to ensure a whole school approach is in place.	-Staff reflections achieved through pre and post staff survey responses.	-Ongoing throughout session 2023-2024	
	Learning for Sustainability will be part of the curriculum in all Edinburgh schools.	-Recognise, celebrate, and share practice across all Edinburgh schools	-Conference and showcase event held either in person or online. -Presentations will be shared on an online platform to support further development of practice in future school sessions.	-May/June 2024	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Practice shared by schools will evidence work undertaken and the impact.</li> <li>-National and local partner organisations to share/promote work and collaborations through a marketplace.</li> </ul>		
<b>Culture – Learner voice, UNCRC, ethos, relationships</b>	<p>Learners in Edinburgh schools will have opportunities to lead learning in their classrooms and beyond to support positive change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Empower young people to be drivers of change and lead change in their own establishments, local communities and beyond.</li> <li>-Climate Conference led by young people for young people to share work undertaken.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Learner views collected through discussions/surveys/participation in LfS activities at school and local authority level.</li> <li>-Evaluation of conference experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ongoing throughout session 2023-2024</li> <li>-Climate Conference in March 2024</li> </ul>	
	<p>Learners and staff will highlight and share practice which is influencing change at a local level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Showcase of learner work undertaken through participation in 1.5 Max Project and British Council Guided Partnerships which supports collaboration with climate vulnerable countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learner views collected.</li> <li>-Examples of practice collated and shared.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-December 2023 and potentially again in March/April 2024</li> </ul>	
	<p>Participants will improve their understanding of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Opportunities will be provided for staff and pupils to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Evaluations obtained for training undertaken.</li> <li>-Examples of action plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ongoing throughout session 2023-2024</li> </ul>	

	climate education.	develop an understanding of climate change education and encourage behaviour change, e.g., Climate Fresk, Climate Ready Classrooms	created shared to support good practice.		
	Increase Edinburgh schools participating in Rights Respecting Schools by 10%.	-Encourage and support schools who are not currently engaging with RRSA yet to participate through sharing work and successes of other school. -Encourage schools to create partnerships to support one another in achieving bronze, silver or gold levels.	-Gather practitioner views from sessions.	-Ongoing throughout session 2023-2024	
	Increase opportunities for learners to develop their awareness of "green" careers.	-Provide opportunities for S2 learners to participate in Scottish Schools' Hydrogen Challenge	-Evaluations of learner and staff participation in workshops and Edinburgh and National finals.	-March 2024	
<b>Community – Place, partnerships,</b>	Increase number of schools working with local partners by 20%.	-Establish an LfS partnership group with national and local partners to support schools,	-Gather feedback from schools and partner organisations. -Share practice being undertaken with schools and partner organisations.	-Meetings held regularly throughout session 2023-2024	

<b>families, local action</b>		<p>staff and learners with LfS work being undertaken.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Provide opportunities for partners to share work being undertaken and initiate opportunities for schools and partners to collaborate.</li> </ul>			
<b>Campus – Buildings, grounds, transport, energy and water use</b>	<p>Schools will develop their knowledge and skills of planning for and delivering high quality Outdoor Learning experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Formal launch of Outdoor Learning toolkit for schools.</li> <li>-Staff will have access to a 2- year CLPL programme to support improvement in Outdoor Learning experiences being planned and delivered for learners.</li> <li>-Significant focus will be on Leadership and Management to support schools with transforming their planning and delivery of Outdoor Learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Case studies of work being undertaken in schools will be developed to share practice and support other schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Formal launch in August 2023.</li> <li>-Ongoing throughout session 2023-2024</li> <li>-Review of resource in March 2024</li> </ul>	

	<p>All schools should use sustainable forms of transport when planning trips.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Continue to promote using sustainable forms of transport for any trips to support reducing carbon footprint.</li> <li>-Schools able to make use of carbon calculator to support this.</li> <li>-Involve learners, staff and parents in making decisions to reduce travel distances and multiple “legs” of their journey.</li> <li>-Explore different providers and check out their “green” credentials.</li> </ul>	<p>-Gather feedback from schools to support continued progress.</p>	<p>-Ongoing throughout session 2023-2024</p>	
	<p>Edinburgh schools will take steps to reduce their energy use, carbon emissions and contribute to addressing the climate emergency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Continue to encourage schools to sign up to Energy Sparks to support them in reducing their energy use, tracking their journey throughout the year.</li> <li>-Work with pupils from Currie PS and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Learners from Currie PS will create video and campaign which will be shared with all Edinburgh schools.</li> <li>-Track the number of schools signing up throughout the year.</li> </ul>	<p>-Campaign will be created in September/October 2023 and shared thereafter with schools.</p> <p>-</p>	

		CEC energy colleagues to create a council wide energy campaign and share work already undertaken in this area.			
	Edinburgh schools will support ecosystems being rebuilt within school grounds and local community spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Continue to encourage schools to create a rewilding space within their school grounds or local community spaces in conjunction with partners where possible.</li> <li>-Provide opportunities for staff and learners to develop their understanding of biodiversity and the benefits of rewilding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Staff, learner and partner views.</li> <li>-Capture pictorial documentation of rewilding spaces to be shared with others.</li> </ul>	-Ongoing throughout session 2023-2024	
	Increase number of learners and staff walking, cycling or scooting to school and workplaces by 20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Continue to promote alternative green routes to school, college and work, e.g., cycle, scoot, walk etc</li> <li>-Continue to promote school involvement in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Gather feedback regarding improvements made in schools.</li> <li>-Gather feedback from Travel team.</li> </ul>	-Ongoing throughout session 2023-2024	

		<p>Active Travel campaigns such as WOW, Big Walk and Wheel, Big Pedal etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Encourage schools to participate in walking bus, bike bus initiatives to reduce car journeys.</li><li>-Encourage schools to evaluate their school travel plans in collaboration with CEC Transport colleagues.</li></ul>			
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