



Effective & Sustainable Travel Planning for Schools

Paul Lulham Director, DHA

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There is a buzz at Conservative Party conference, insists Badenoch



DHA – Who are we?

- Multi-disciplinary consultancy
Planning, Transport, Environment, Design, Infrastructure & Land
- 80+ staff with offices in **Maidstone, Gatwick, London and (now) Leeds**
- National coverage across all sectors with dedicated Education team
- Expanding graduate programme
- RTPI South-East Planning Team of the Year 2021 and Insider Media South-East Specialist Consultancy of the Year 2023
- Experience across the sector working on nursery, primary, secondary, SEND and higher education projects
- Work with a range of contractors, Universities, Trusts, Local Education Authorities and the DfE.



638,000m² + of Space

Securing over 638,000m² of new educational and teaching space



250 + School Projects

Advising on over 250 education projects, including primary, secondary and SEN schools



50 + Partners

We've worked with over 50 different education providers, including the DfE, local authorities, trusts, building contractors and private schools



41,000 + School Places

We've worked to provide over 41,000 additional school places across England

Current School Travel Challenges

- Congestion
- Safety
- Air Quality
- Health and Wellbeing

What does this mean for Planning?

Implications for:

1. Programme
2. Cost
3. Delivery

How can these be tackled....?

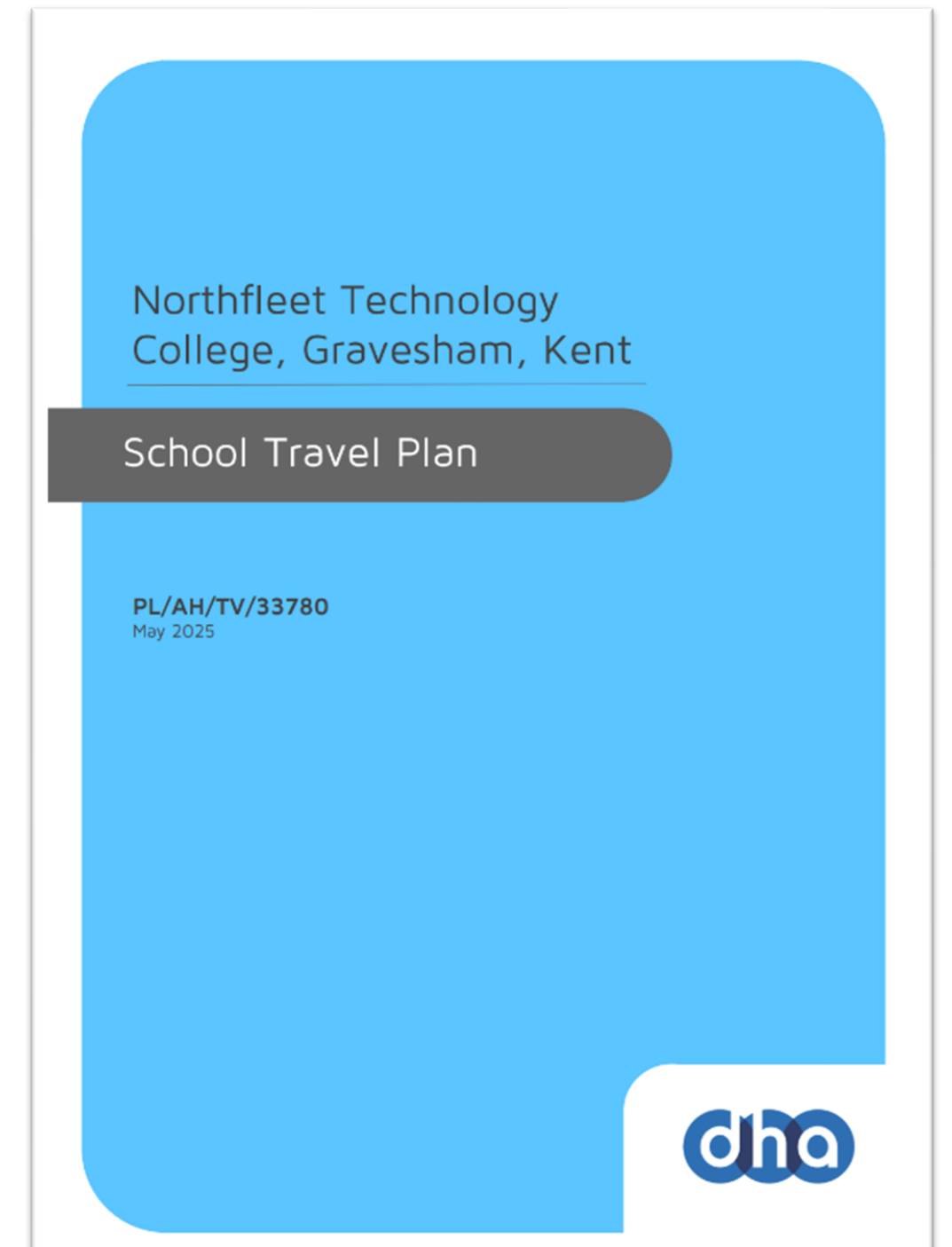


School Travel Planning

What is a School Travel Plan?

"School Travel Plans offer practical measures to promote active, healthy, safe and sustainable travel to and from children's centres, schools and colleges."

- Targets & objectives
- Initiatives & measures
- Monitoring & review



School Travel Planning - Benefits

For Schools

- Reduced traffic congestion & improved air quality
 - Road safety skills
- Safer and healthier environment for pupils
 - Build community relations

Planning & Construction

- Strongly endorsed by national and local planning policy
 - Addressing key highway issues
 - Overcoming NIMBY concerns
 - Avoiding delays to programme

New builds

Inform suitable school locations based on multi-modal accessibility

Build early relationships with parents, pupils and neighbours

SRP projects

Addresses existing highway challenges

Opportunity to improve existing school facilities

Effective Travel Planning

- Early engagement with local authorities
- Ongoing commitment to reviewing and updating the Travel Plan
- Using Travel Plans as a guide to promote active travel as part of the school curriculum
- Exploring funding opportunities
- Tackling existing local highway issues
- Active involvement in local initiatives and ongoing liaison with local authority Active and Sustainable Travel Officers



Case Study - Initiatives

Medway School Streets

As of September 2025, School Streets have been implemented across seven schools in Medway, with funding secured from the Govt's Active Travel Fund.



Medway School Streets

- A pedestrian and cycle only area at set times of day/year
- Vehicles must not enter unless exempt
- ANPR technology used to enforce the scheme
- First contravention triggers a warning notice
- Thereafter, PCNs are issued
- Scheme proving popular; five more locations being rolled out this term...

School streets

Warnings issued to drivers entering the roads illegally



	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul*
Burnt Oak Primary, Gillingham <i>Richmond Road, Cornwall Road, Devonshire Road</i>	1,836	896	971	1339	824
Greenvale Primary, Chatham <i>Symons Avenue</i>	282	364	390	128	146
Miers Court Primary, Rainham <i>Silversport Close</i>	441	120	169	109	120
Phoenix Primary, Chatham <i>Glencoe Road, White Road, Sturla Road</i>	565	245	291	617	412
St Mary's Primary, Gillingham <i>Greenfield Road</i>	5	8	65	7	4
St Peter's Infants, Rochester <i>Holcombe Road</i>	79	22	36	15	6
St Thomas More Primary, Chatham <i>Bleakwood Road</i>	127	80	62	49	32
TOTAL	3,335	1,735	1,954	2,264	1,544

Up to July 19, 2024 Source: Medway Council

Designing for Active Travel

Design Considerations

- Prioritising walking, cycling and scooting within the site layout
- Overlooked, secure and accessible cycle and scooter parking
- Landscaping
- Shower facilities and lockers for staff
- Priority parking for car sharers



Challenges

- Prepared at planning stage - seen as a planning requirement rather than a live document
- Lack of collaboration
- Targets are unachievable or not representative
- Obtaining meaningful staff & pupil travel data

Opportunities

- Early pre-application engagement with Local Highway Authorities
- Collaboration with school and design teams on suitable initiatives
 - Data and AI...



HomeRun

STEP

The AI Engine for School Travel Planning

SEPTEMBER 2025



Fundamental barrier to
improving the school run:

There is no consistent,
scalable data on school travel.

How is this impacting school travel planning?



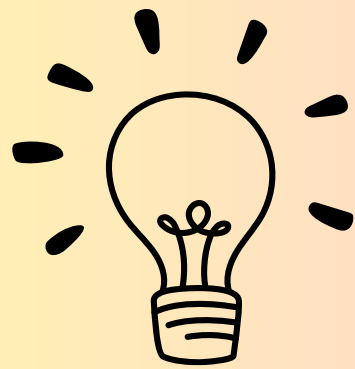
Overreliance on schools to undertake time-consuming and manual activities



Admin over outcomes



Unreliable and shallow data leaves school travel requirements outside of key transport strategies



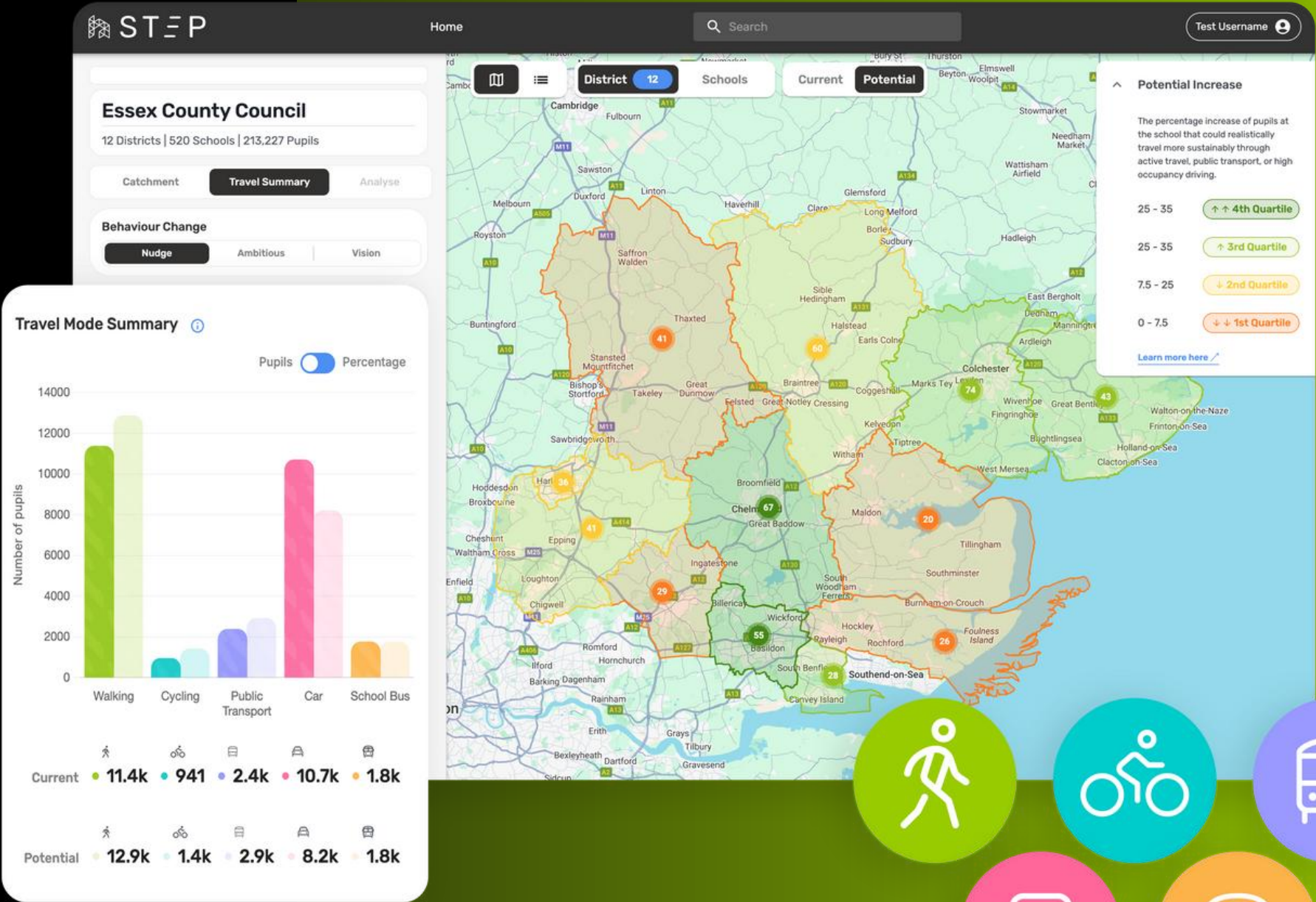
We had an idea!

Can we combine our expertise, insights from 100,000+ UK school journeys we had collected, and the advancements in Machine Learning (AI), to get school travel data **without the need to work with schools?**



Our Solution: HomeRun STEP

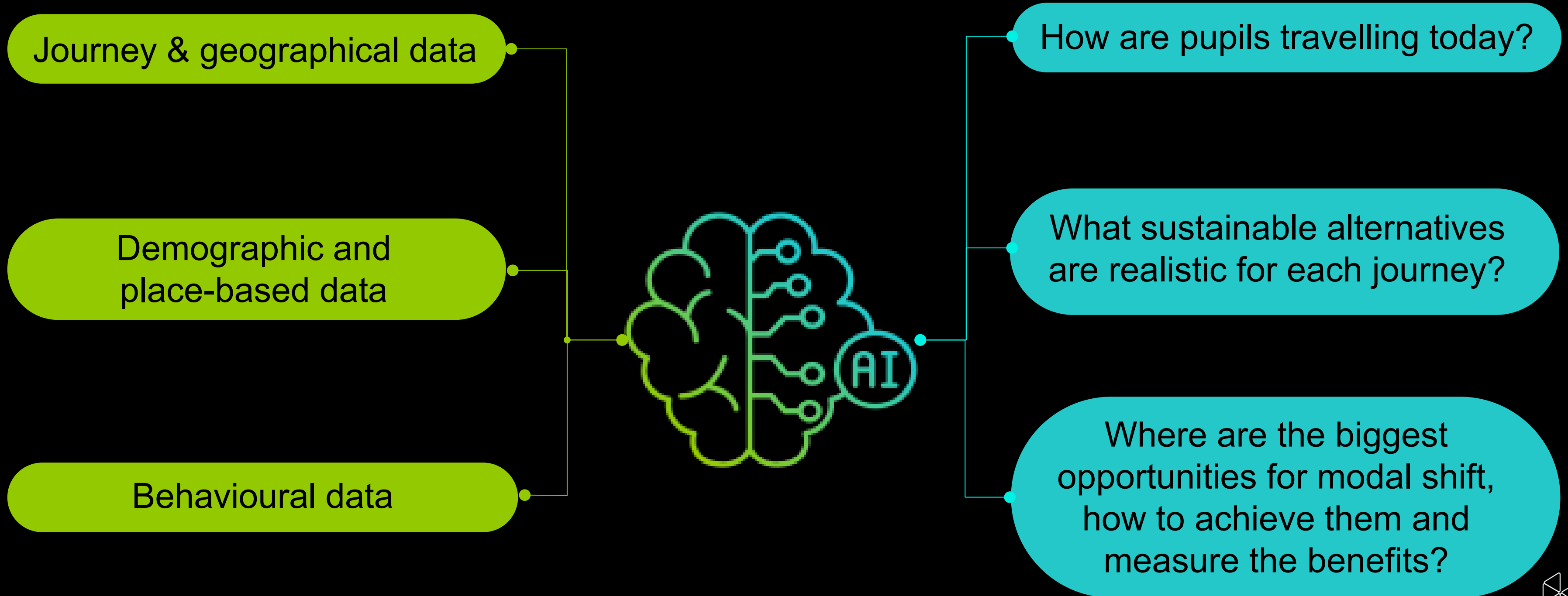
The UK's first AI powered intelligence platform for the school run



In partnership with



How STEP works





HomeRun

STEP

School Travel Evaluation Platform



Piloted across Essex

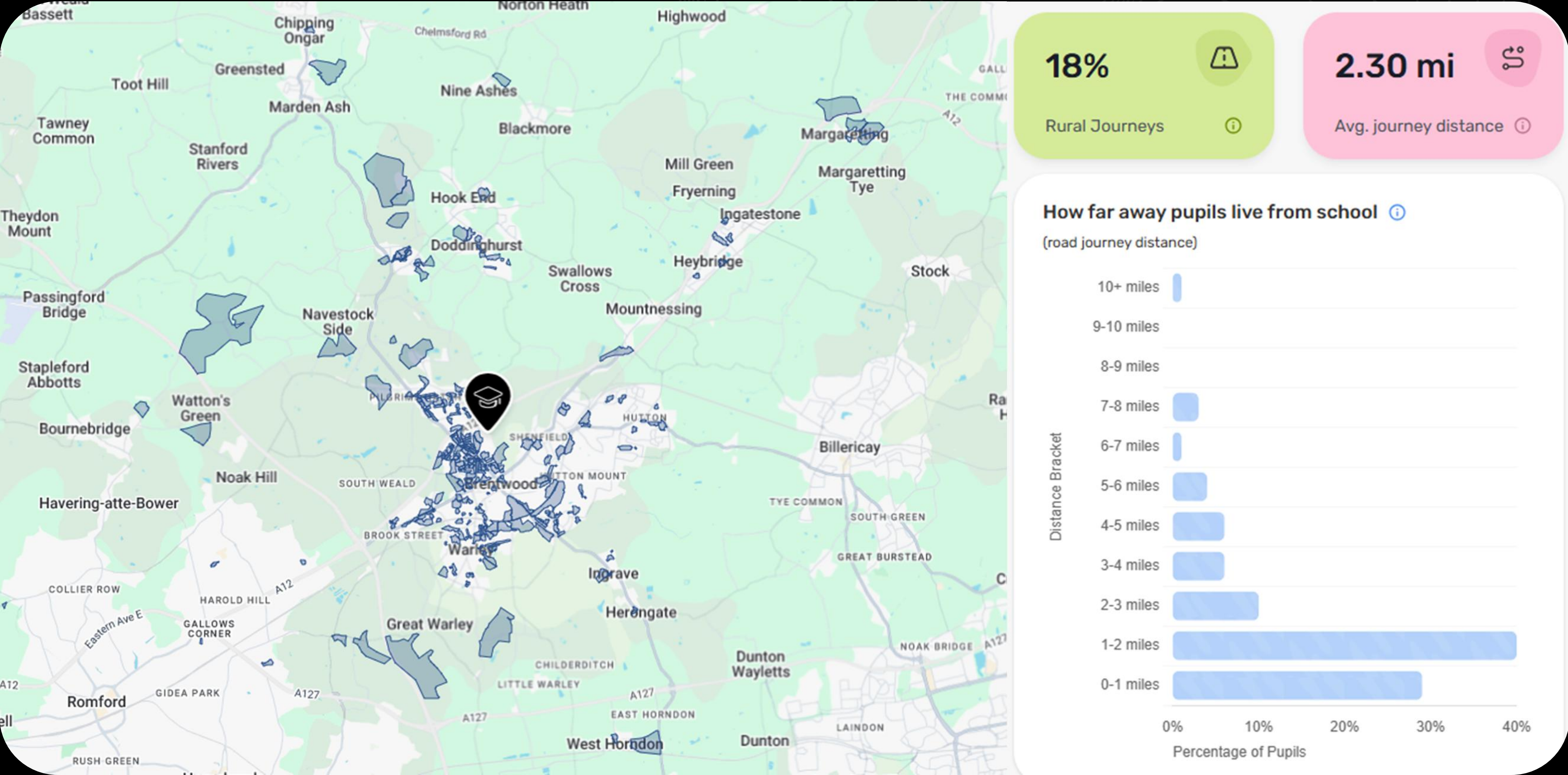
> Created a flexible machine learning model for:

212k+ pupil journeys across

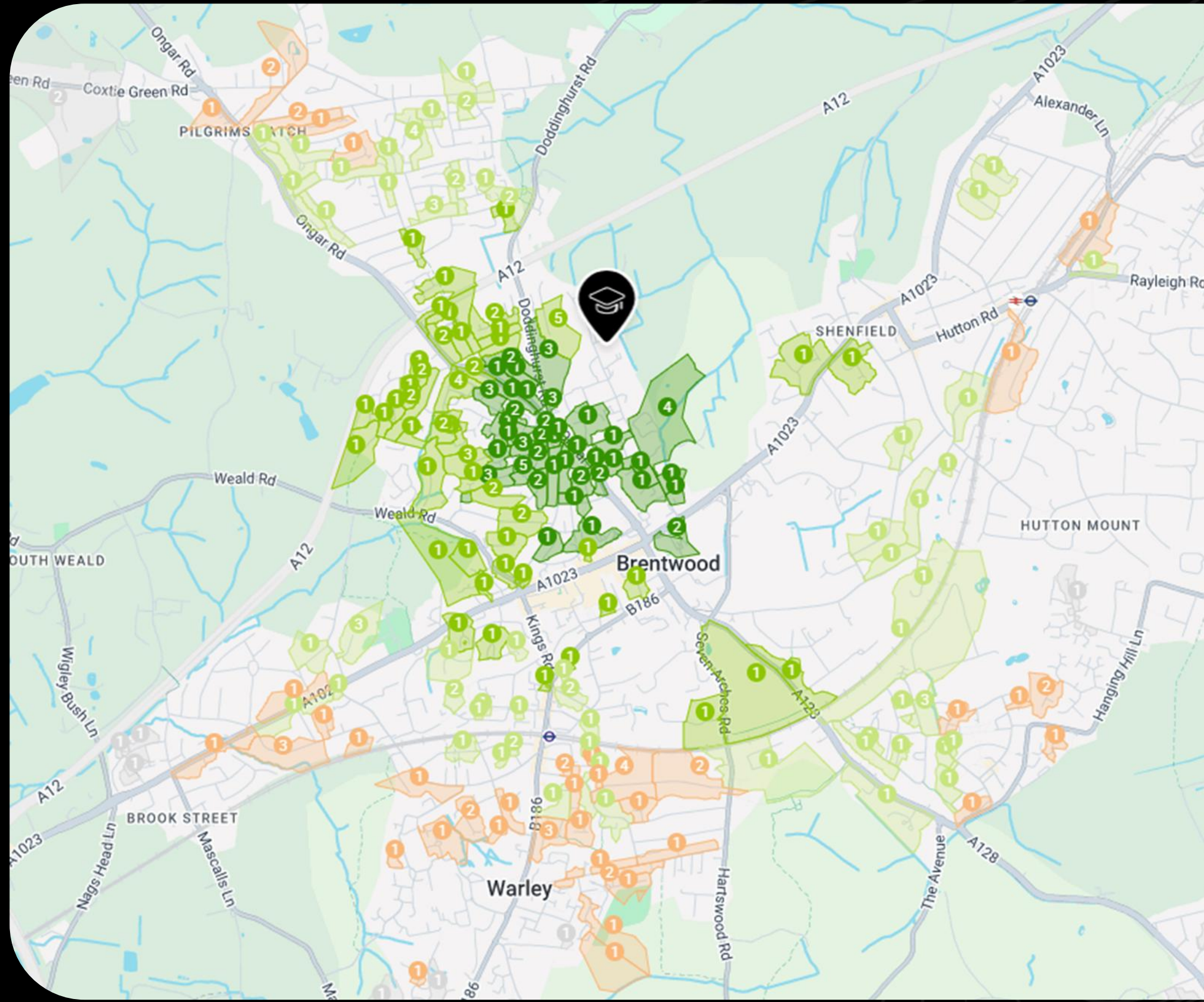
520 schools, covering

3,670 square kilometers.

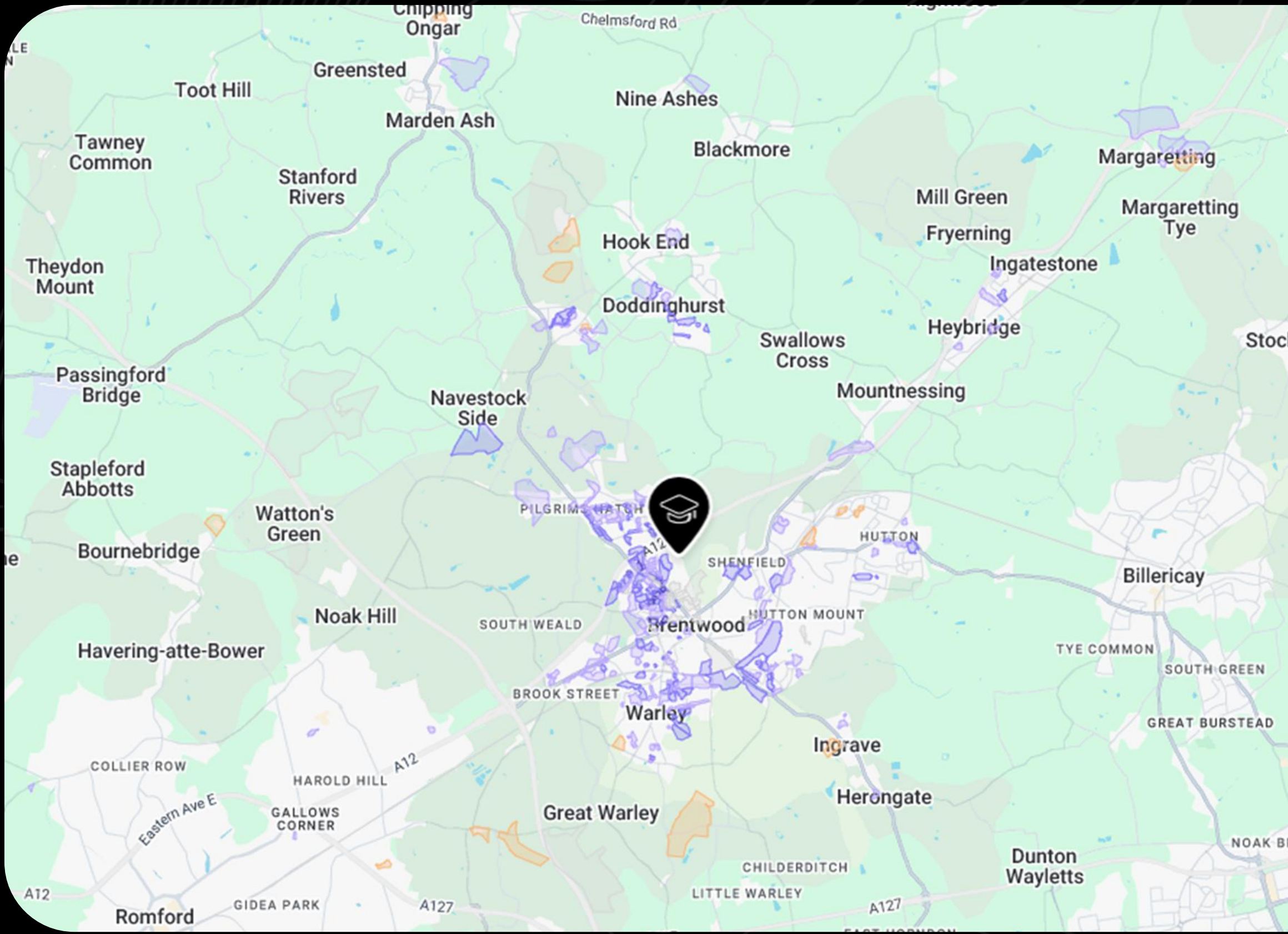
Example > Primary School with 360 pupils



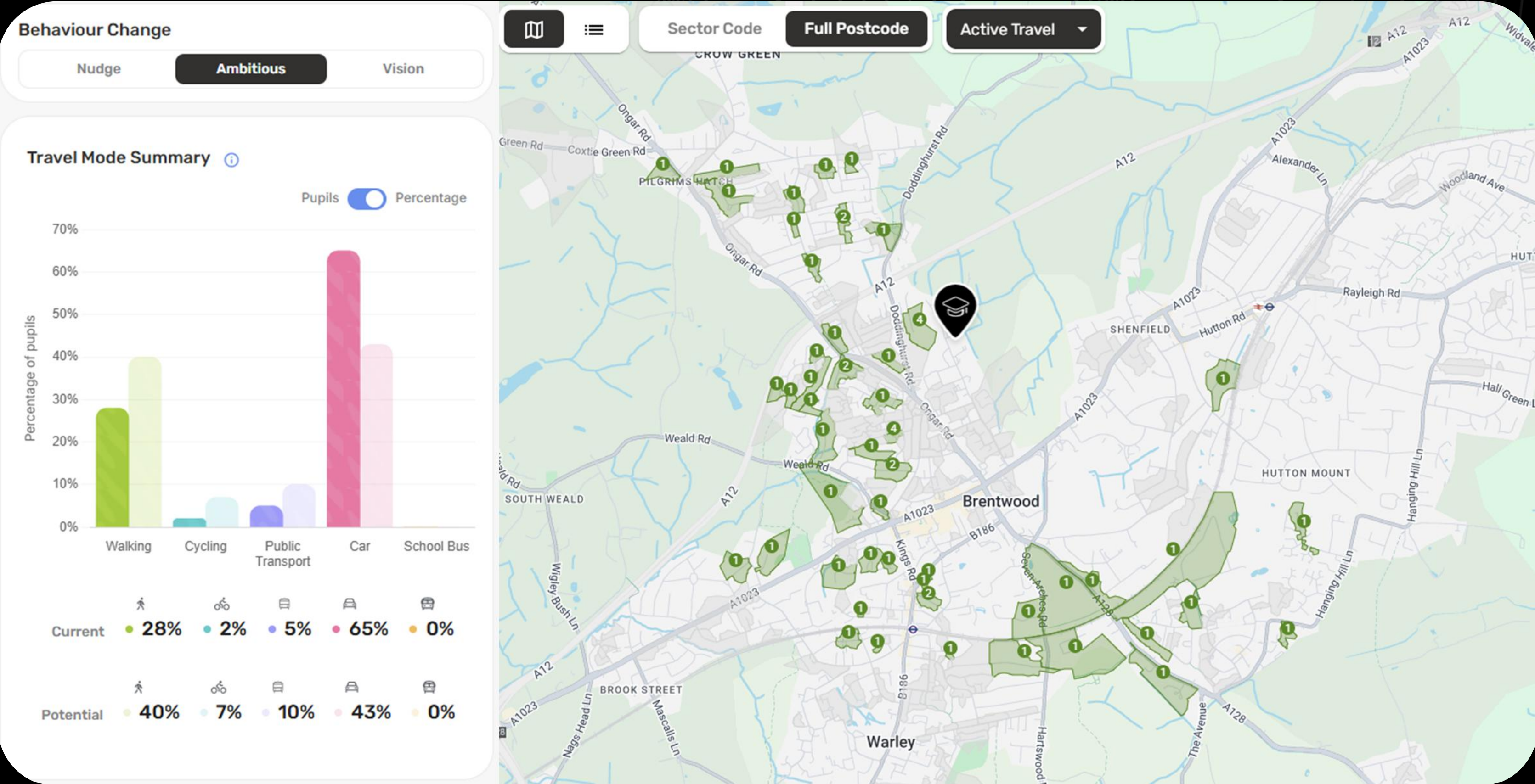
STEP analyses the **feasibility of transport options** at a journey level



Public transport > multi-stage analysis



Calculates **current** travel habits and **potential** for change



Essex County Council HomeRun STEP at scale:

212,125 pupils going to school in Essex

135,762 pupils already travel sustainably



16,042 currently have **no feasible alternative to driving**



60,321 have feasible modal shift opportunities



+33,7542 pupils could travel **actively**



+18,681 pupils that do not have feasible active travel options, **could use existing public transport services**



+7,886 pupils that have **no other alternative**, have good conditions **for car sharing**

Benefits of modal shift



28.1 million
fewer peak
car trips per year



16.7k tonnes
CO₂ reduced
annually



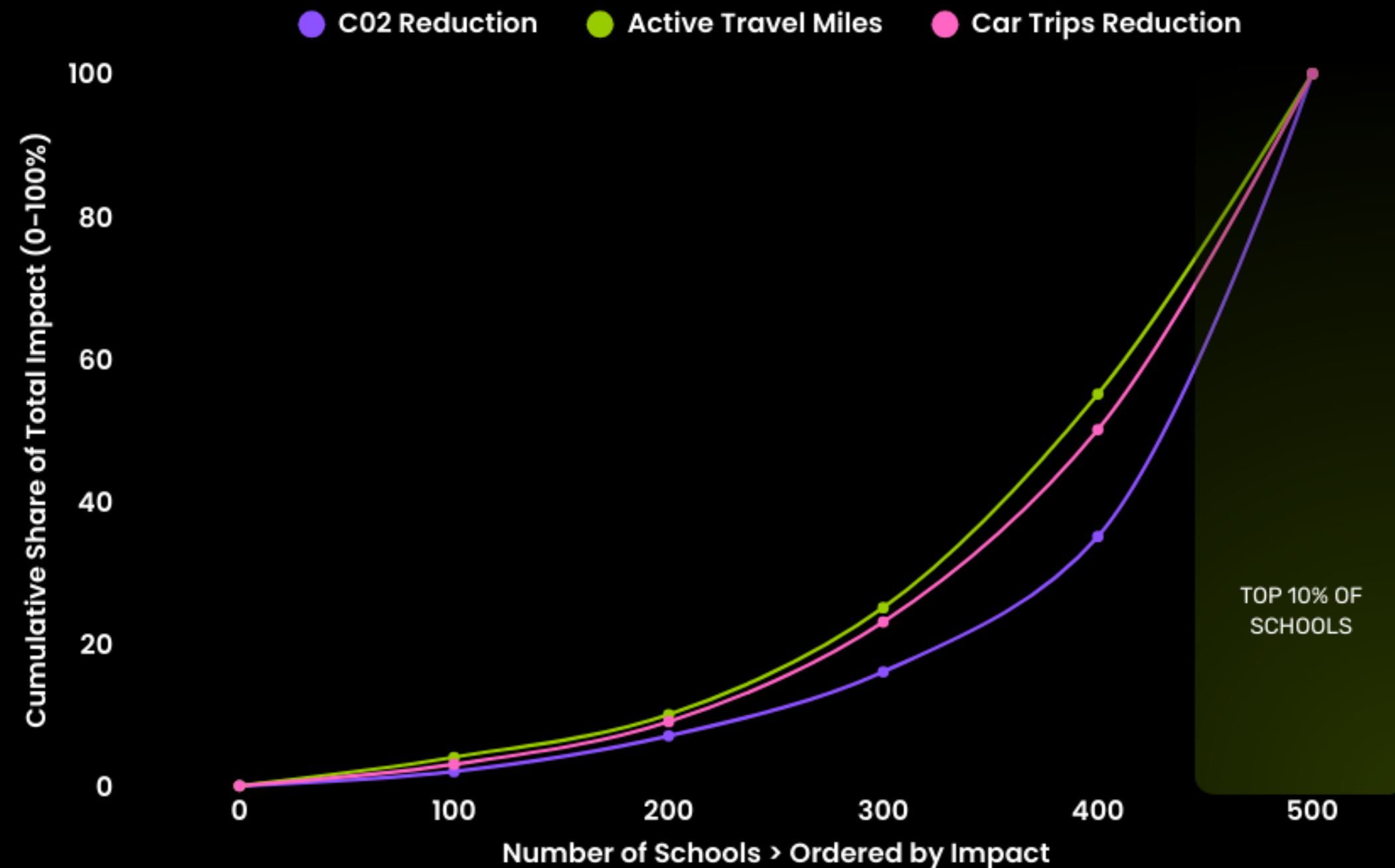
98.8k
more miles
walked/cycled every day

Case study > Essex

The power of
HomeRun STEP AI:

5X

More impact per £ spent



> Tracey Vickers - Head of Sustainable Transport

“STEP is so exciting because it gives us the evidence base that we never had before, and that lets us prioritise according to the impact we can deliver with taxpayer funding”

STEP is going to national scale –
creating a model for 8.5m pupil journeys
to school across the UK



With the potential to target the reduction
of 1.1bn peak-time car trips per annum.

Unlocking new possibilities

The opportunities ahead are vast - just a few examples we are considering:



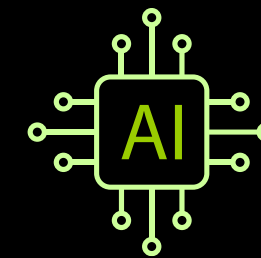
Automating school travel planning

Saving 90% of manual workload, and the equivalent of hundreds of teachers' time each year.



Integrating transport planning

Linking school-run changes with broader infrastructure and land-use planning.



AI-powered school run assistant

Guiding parents towards their most sustainable travel options.



Contact Us

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> www.homerun-app.com

Designing for active school journeys

Will Elliott
Senior Planning Guidance Officer





Active Travel England





52% of children and young people are taking less than the recommended 60 minutes of activity per day.

Children with obesity are five times as likely to live with the condition as adults.



"Making walking and cycling more practical and safer would go a long way toward removing barriers to improving physical activity levels and could significantly improve the health of England's population."

51% of children want to cycle more than they currently do, 33% want to walk more.



What are we doing?

We support our partners to perform.

We build capability.

We enhance safety and accessibility.

We invest in impactful programmes and share what works.



MODESHIFT 



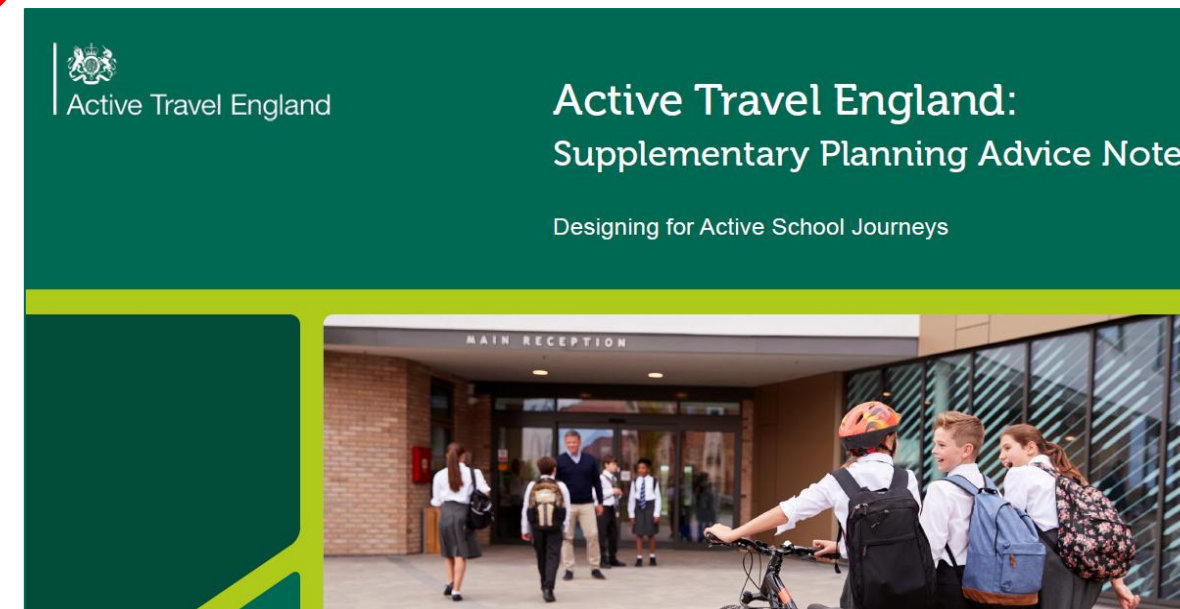
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MODESHIFT 





Active Travel England

Active Travel England: Supplementary Planning Advice Note

Designing for Active School Journeys



Designing for active school journeys

Travel Plans

Distance

Masterplanning

Cycle parking

School frontage

Community

Pick-up & drop-off

Reclaim, Upgrade,
Protect, Activate

Placemaking

Routes to school

Walking buses

Cycling buses

School location

School streets

Engagement

Park and Stride

Play

Car-free

School frontage



Designing for active school journeys

School frontage

- **Few or no cars, design for slow speeds**
 - Staff parking to the side or rear.
 - Re-locate any drop-off & pick-up facilities (Park and Stride).
 - Not on a primary road or by a complex junction.
- **Prioritise placemaking**
 - Create an attractive space to wait, meet and play.
 - Vision-led. Schools as heart of new community, not infrastructure.

What does it not look like?



What does it not look like?



What do we want to see?



What do we want to see?



Designing for active school journeys



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