

Meeting date: 10th January 2019
Report to: Transport and Highways Cabinet



Subject/report title: **SCHOOL STREETS PILOT PROJECT - 12 MONTH UPDATE AND REVIEW**
Report from: Head of Highway Services
Report author/lead contact officer: David Keaney/Paul Tovey

Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph: Select an Exemption paragraph from the Quick Parts drop-down list

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the first 15 months of the School Streets project; to determine whether the associated Traffic Regulation Order should be made permanent and if so, consider whether to expand the scheme to include other Schools in the borough.

2. Decision(s) recommended

- 2.1 Cabinet Member is asked to:
- (a) Note the performance of the project at the three pilot locations over the first 15 months of the scheme.
 - (b) Approve making the three Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders permanent that support the School Street project as listed in paragraph 3.1.
 - (c) Agree to issue new larger permits in response to residents' feedback as detailed in section 4.3.
 - (d) Agree to implement new variable message signage and an experimental traffic management scheme at the Oak Cottage site only. These changes are being proposed in response to concerns received and will help manage the impact of the

scheme during school holidays and to deter traffic travelling through the Oak Cottage zone as detailed in section 5.9 below.

- (e) Agree to investigate the expansion of the School Streets project to cover some of the schools identified in paragraph 4.7 in preparation for the new School year starting September 2019, and
- (f) Agree to receive a further report in June 2019, to continue monitoring the performance of the School Streets project and to approve which, if any, locations should be progressed as part of phase two.

3. What is the issue?

- 3.1 In September 2017 the Council launched an innovative project known as Solihull School Streets at the three Schools listed below:
 - (a) Haslucks Green Junior School
 - (b) Marston Green Infant Academy
 - (c) Oak Cottage Primary School
- 3.2 Through the scheme most traffic has been prohibited from entering selected road/s leading to the three pilot schools during drop-off and pick-up periods. The intention being to create a safer, more pleasant environment which encourages active travel to school, and in consequence, reduces congestion and improves air quality in the area and overall contributes towards the Council's improving health and wellbeing priority.
- 3.3 The restrictions have been imposed by virtue of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order which introduced a Prohibition of Motor Vehicles, applicable Monday to Friday during school pick-up and drop-off times, with exemptions for permit holders. Permits have been issued to residents living on roads affected by the Order, with a limited number also allocated to the three schools and other stakeholders, as deemed appropriate by the project team.
- 3.4 The project also introduced a 20mph speed limit throughout the 'School Streets' area effective at all times to promote road safety for all road users, and in particular for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.5 Initially introduced as a pilot lasting up to 18 months, this project has now been in operation for just over 15 months and as a result a decision now needs to be made as to whether the project should be made permanent or revoked.
- 3.6 This report follows on from a 6 month update presented to the decision-making session in June 2018. That report considered the scheme's initial findings and included the results from the statutory consultation process alongside feedback from parents, residents and an analysis of traffic data.
- 3.7 This process concluded that the project was generally well supported and has the potential to achieve its objectives. 70% of residents responded favourably, however there was less support from parents, for whom the scheme has the greatest impact. Where specific issues have been raised, the team has and will continue to work with

parents and residents on a case by case basis to assist them, for example, with cases of ill health or disability, through the permit system.

- 3.8 A full summary of parent and resident feedback can be found in appendix A and B of the June 2018 report.
- 3.9 Recently, doorstep surveys of residents and hands-up counts within the three schools have confirmed that the results of the 6 month review remain relevant and illustrate a general support and acceptance for the objectives of the project with 90% of residents surveyed supporting the continuation of the scheme. **Appendix A** of this report provides a summary of the most recent survey data collected.
- 3.10 Whilst the scheme is supported, feedback identified three key issues/concerns which were also highlighted as part of the 6 month review. Since that time Officers have attempted to mitigate and address these concerns, it is however recognised that the following issues remain areas of concern:
- (a) **Lack of Enforcement** - including contravention of the Prohibition of Driving restrictions and exceeding the 20 mph speed limit.
 - (b) **Permit Management** – including size, visibility and distribution of permits.
 - (c) **Impact of restriction on accessibility** – including the impact on both parents and residents.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

4.1 Through the introduction of this scheme a positive reduction in the number of vehicles driving into the restricted school streets during the start and end of the school day can now be seen. There is a significant improvement at all three locations, but there is not 100% compliance. Traffic Surveys undertaken as part of the 6 month review showed a positive reduction in traffic volume of between 35% to 54% across the three sites. Further traffic surveys have now been commissioned to understand the current position and an update on this matter will be provided at the meeting. Whilst this data points to some positive trends in travel behaviour, it is apparent that a number of challenges remain, and that these continue to pose a risk to the success and reputation of the scheme.

4.2 Lack of Enforcement

4.2.1 Enforcement of the Prohibition of Driving restrictions and the 20 mph speed limit is the responsibility of the Police. Whilst, as partners they were engaged at the inception of the scheme, it is recognised that their resourcing priorities mean that, since its launch, the scheme has seen only very limited ad-hoc enforcement as resources allowed.

4.2.2 This lack of enforcement has consistently been raised by the local community, and has created a situation where some motorists continue to drive along the School Streets whilst the restriction is in force.

4.2.3 Over a third of all responses received through our initial consultation exercise highlighted enforcement of the scheme as their main concern.

- 4.2.4 Whilst many motorists do adhere to the restrictions when in force, which is highlighted by prominent signage at the entrance/s of the restricted streets, the greatest long term risk to the scheme undoubtedly comes from a lack of enforcement, as this is likely to lead to increased non-compliance and unfortunately, devalue what has the potential to be a very positive initiative.
- 4.2.5 It is considered that occasional enforcement (1 to 2 visits a month) by the police would be sufficient to improve compliance by ensuring that drivers are aware that contravention of the restriction is being monitored and may result in prosecution.
- 4.2.6 Unfortunately, Local Traffic Authorities, outside the London area, are not permitted by the Department for Transport to enforce this type of restriction. Recognising this, the Department for Transport has been lobbied to consider changing the powers. At the time of drafting this report a response had not been received. An update on this matter will be provided at the meeting.
- 4.2.7 In the short term, Officers will continue to seek support from the Police and encourage more regular enforcement of the restriction and will continue to undertake advisory operations on site utilising our staff to advise and educate drivers on the benefits and requirements of the restriction.
- 4.2.8 To support the project's objectives, Officers will also engage with the three schools to send out reminders to parents and will also continue to deploy the mobile speed visor signs in the streets to encourage compliance with the 20 mph speed limit.

4.3 Permit Management

- 4.3.1 Concerns continue to be expressed by residents around the management and visibility of the current permit system. The initial permit process was selected for its ease of application and management with 2 permits being issued to all residents living within the zone and additional permits available on request. Permits were also made available to the School/nurseries within the zone for the use of staff as appropriate. In addition, permits have been allocated on a case by case basis to residents or parents with specific medical needs. Permits are also available to new residents moving into the zone on request.
- 4.3.2 The current permits are considered to be too small and inconspicuous when on display in an exempt vehicle. To resolve these concerns and help improve compliance it is proposed to reissue new larger permits at the start of the spring term. The new permits will be approximately twice the size and feature a revised layout and brighter colouring with space for residents to add a registration number to limit reuse/circulation. This new permit will both aid enforcement of the scheme by the Police as well as encourage self-monitoring by residents.

4.4 Impact on residents and parents

- 4.4.1 The impact on residents and parents of the scheme was considered in detail as part of the 6 month review. The findings and recommendations made as part of that report are still relevant and as such it is not intended to revisit this matter in further detail as part of this report. The feedback received from residents and parents, since the 6

month review, has been consistent with the concerns previously raised and considered.

- 4.4.2 Whilst it is acknowledged that the scheme has different impacts on different people depending on their individual circumstances, overall the scheme is of benefit to the community as a whole.
- 4.4.3 One issue of concern raised by residents relates to the year round operation of the scheme, including during school holidays. The original intention of the project was to apply the restrictions only during school term time; unfortunately the associated variable signs were not approved by the Department for Transport so this option was not progressed. This concern really only applies to the Oak Cottage zone and whilst not desirable, it is practical to replace the signs with a new type of sign that could be manually opened and closed at the start and end of every school holiday period to allow motorists to travel through the zone. This option would also be appropriate on special days such as Polling Days when the wider community needs access to their local polling station which is at the school. Once the signs are effectively covered over, the Prohibition of Driving restriction would be rendered unenforceable. The speed limit would not be affected.
- 4.4.4 There would be an initial small capital cost to replace the signs, in the region of £3,000, which could be funded from the Community Liveability Allocation in the Local Transport Plan. There would also be a small on-going revenue cost to open and close the signs, and this could be funded from existing revenue budgets. If approved this option would overcome the concerns expressed by the local community.

Phase 2 – Expansion of the School Streets Project

- 4.5 The three pilot sites have demonstrated that the concept of School Streets can have a positive impact and facilitate changes in travel behaviour and traffic management associated with the “school run”. If approved to make the scheme permanent, consideration will need to be given as to whether the scheme is expanded and rolled out to cover additional suitable locations across the borough.
- 4.6 The pilot project has demonstrated that the concept of School Streets in most suited to locations where the restriction can be to a greater extent self-enforcing. As a result, in addition to those factors considered when selecting the pilot sites, it is recommended that following site characteristics should be prioritised:
 - (a) Locations with a single point of access and/or which are not used by through traffic.
 - (b) Locations covering a smaller physically extent, so as to minimise residential traffic and to minimise walking distances for parents.
 - (c) Locations with a suitable alternative facility to minimise disruption caused by displacement parking and to aid parents getting to school.
- 4.7 Officers having reviewed potentially suitable locations from across the borough have identified the following sites which could benefit from the introduction of the School Streets concept:

1. Castle Bromwich Junior School at Bentley Road.
2. Tudor Grange, St James Primary School at Halifax Road and Danbury Road.
3. Dickens Heath Primary School at Three Acres Lane.
4. St Andrews Primary School at Windrush Close.
5. Burman Infant school at Velsheda Road (part).
6. Yew Tree Primary School at Wherretts Well Land and Lugtrout Lane (part).
7. Yorkswood Primary School at Kingshurst Way between Yorks Wood Drive and Stonebridge Crescent.
8. Marston Green Junior School at Wayside.

4.8 It is proposed that, subject to the decision at this session, further investigation, including consulting the schools identified is undertaken to explore the appetite and feasibility of introducing a viable scheme at these locations. The sites would then be prioritised and reported back to the cabinet member in June 2019 with recommendations for phase 2 priorities.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 At both Haslucks Green Junior School and Marston Green Infant Academy the restricted zones are based around a cul-de-sac road layout which limits the scale and impact of non-compliance caused by through traffic. The relatively short nature of both zones also naturally encourages compliance with the new 20mph speed limit introduced through the scheme.
- 5.2 At these locations alternative parking provision was identified at the start of the scheme which has minimised the impact of displacement parking on surrounding roads and it is suggested that this type of location, in terms of layout and size is naturally suited to the successful deployment of a School Streets initiative as they promote self-enforcement.
- 5.3 At both locations the scheme is well supported by local residents and compliance by parents is generally good. There does however remain a recurring frustration over a lack of enforcement, with residents keen to see high levels of consistent compliance achieved.
- 5.4 Whilst this is unlikely to be feasible in the short term, it is considered that the scheme adds value to both locations and should therefore be made permanent.
- 5.5 The Oak Cottage School Street zone varies from the two locations detailed above in that it covers a much wider area and includes interconnecting roads which are subject to through traffic including rat running during peak periods.
- 5.6 As a result it is acknowledged that Oak Cottage faces its own unique challenges that make effective enforcement and compliance of the scheme more critical to its success than arguably the other two sites.

- 5.7 Whilst Oak Cottage is covered by a larger School Streets zone, the number of parents adhering to the restriction and walking to school is again very positive. Officers were unable to identify a suitable alternative location for parents to park and as a result concerns over possible displacement parking were raised at the schemes launch. These concerns have not been realised and whilst there has been some minor displacement the overall impact has been minimal. Oak Cottage was initially selected as a result of the high number of pupils living within a 1 mile radius of the school and it appears likely that many are now making the whole journey on foot which is a benefit to them and will minimise displacement parking.
- 5.8 Concerns from residents and parents regarding non-compliance, speeding and temporary footway parking by vehicles servicing (loading and unloading) properties within the restricted zone continue to be the main issues raised.
- 5.9 Whilst our ability of control footway parking associated with loading and unloading as part of this initiative is limited, it is recognised that there is a need to further control the volumes and speed of through traffic at Oak Cottage in order to aid scheme compliance. To this end it is recommended that a temporary trial of a revised road layout at Bryanston Road at its junction with Cheltondale Road and potentially further supporting measures on Greswolde Road should be trialled to understand their impact and potential benefit in aiding traffic speed and management in this area. It is therefore proposed that in consultation with Local Ward Members, revised temporary road layout options are developed and if appropriate subsequently trialled using the Authorities Experimental Traffic Regulation Order powers.
- 5.10 Whilst Oak Cottage does continue to provide the greatest challenges in terms of scheme compliance it is still considered to add value to the local area. When combined with the potential improvements proposed through changes to road layout, to permit size, and signage it is suggested that the benefits of the scheme outweigh any perceived shortcomings and it should as a result be made permanent.

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 Delivery of key themes in the Council Plan:

How will the options/proposals in this report contribute to the delivery of the key themes in the Council Plan? *(select which themes apply and briefly state how the options / proposals in this report contribute to their delivery):*

- Improve Health and Wellbeing - the stated outcomes of the project include seeking to reduce car usage and encourage sustainable forms of travel to school.
- Managed Growth -
- Build Stronger Communities - by helping to manage on-street parking in residential communities.
- Deliver Value –

6.2 **Implications for children and young people, vulnerable groups and particular communities:**

- 6.2.1 The primary focus of the School Streets initiative is to enable and encourage sustainable forms of travel to and from schools and is therefore intended to make children's journeys to school both more pleasant whilst addressing reported concerns associated with obstructive school gate parking.
- 6.2.2 Through the consultation and engagement process information on the impact of the scheme has been sought from a cross section of society including children, and vulnerable groups.
- 6.2.3 Officers have attempted to implement the scheme in a flexible manner and have positively reacted to feedback and works to address any specific needs raised by individuals and groups in order to minimise any potential negative impact of the scheme whilst still working to achieve the initiatives overall objectives.

6.3 **Consultation and Scrutiny:**

- 6.3.1 As part of the statutory process to introduce restrictions on the Public Highway the Council follows a number of statutory processes to ensure that all stakeholders have an appropriate opportunity to feed into and influence the Councils decision making process. A 6 month consultation process was undertaken between September 2017 and March 2018 and this has been supplemented with survey engagement with residents and parents at all three sites.
- 6.3.2 This matter has not been considered by the Scrutiny Board.

6.4 **Financial implications:**

- 6.4.1 £30,000 was made available from the Local Transport Plan Integrated Block capital allocation as agreed by Cabinet Member at the decision-making session in January 2017. From this figure £29,365 was committed against the project during the 2017/18 financial period which covered the initial set up and implementation costs associated with the scheme including Officer time.
- 6.4.2 In March 2018 an additional £30,000 from the Community Liveability Programme was provisionally allocated for 'School Streets' in recognition of the potential to further expand the initiative as part of a phase 2 rollout. Subsequently in June 2018, following the 6 month review on the project it was determined that £20,000 of the £30,000 allocation for the current year would not be needed in the current financial year and as such has been fed back into the Community Liveability Programme for 2018/19 and used to bring forward a scheme on the reserve list. The remaining £10,000 will be used to cover the costs to reissue the permits and replace the gateway signage as set out within the main body of the report.
- 6.4.3 In order to progress the proposed phase 2 of the School Streets project a further £30,000 has been provisionally allocated from the Community Liveability Programme for 2019/20. This funding will be utilised to progress additional School Street sites from September 2019.

6.5 Legal implications:

- 6.5.1 Traffic Regulation Orders are introduced in accordance with the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. The Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders made as part of the introduction of this scheme have been done so with reference to and in compliance of all relevant legislative processes.

6.6 Risk implications:

- (a) An intended goal of the project was to reduce the number of vehicles and vehicle movements taking place in and around the school gate of the three sites at the start and end of the school day. In doing so, it was anticipated that children's journeys to school would be more enjoyable, subjected to less pollution and safer.
- (b) It is clear that the number of vehicle movements that occur around the school gate has reduced as a result of the schemes introduction. Whilst the scheme has undoubtedly required some parents to change their routine and route to school, including creating, in some cases, a need to cross additional roads, there is no evidence to date that this has resulted in any decrease or increase in reportable incidents as a result of the introduction of the scheme. Officers will continue to monitor this in line with our standard working processes.
- (c) As set out within the main body of this report, the main risk to this project is associated with the impact of the current level and potential need for greater levels of enforcement. Active enforcement to ensure that road users continue to adhere to the restriction when in force is at present the concern most regularly highlighted in feedback on the scheme.
- (d) Since its launch the scheme has unfortunately seen only minimal enforcement and despite attempts by Officers to look for viable alternatives, it is likely that we will not see a significant increase in the level of enforcement whilst Police resources remain at their current level.
- (e) Whilst feedback from the local community is keen to see a greater level of compliance, it remains the case that the restrictions at all three sites and in particular at Haslucks Green and Marston Green remain to a certain extent self-enforcing and as a result do continue to positively influence changes in travel behaviours to school among many parents as they take their children to school.
- (f) The Corporate Risk Management Approach has been complied with to identify and assess the significant risks associated with this decision / project. This includes (but is not limited to) political, legislation and reputation risks.
- (g) The Approach is not intended to eliminate all risks and not all the risks identified can be managed all of the time. Also, risks will still exist that have not been identified.
- (h) Based on the available information it is the officers' opinion that there are no net "Red" risks to the Council associated with the recommendation of the report. The Corporate Risk Management Approach has been complied with to identify and assess the significant risks associated with this decision / project. This includes (but is not limited to) political, legislation and reputation risks.

- (i) The Approach is not intended to eliminate all risks and not all the risks identified can be managed all of the time. Also, risks will still exist that have not been identified.
- (j) Based on the available information it is the officers' opinion that there are no net "Red" risks to the Council associated with the recommendation of the report.

6.7 Statutory Equality Duty:

- 6.7.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires decision-makers to consider how their decision will affect different groups of people. An assessment of Traffic Regulation Orders was completed in 2010 and found that the function positively contributes to equality of opportunity - particularly for disabled people, older people, children and young people, and people with pushchairs/prams by enabling them to negotiate crossing points and improving their general movement around the highways.

7. List of appendices referred to:

- 7.1 Appendix A – Residents Engagement and Survey Summary

8. Background papers used to compile this report:

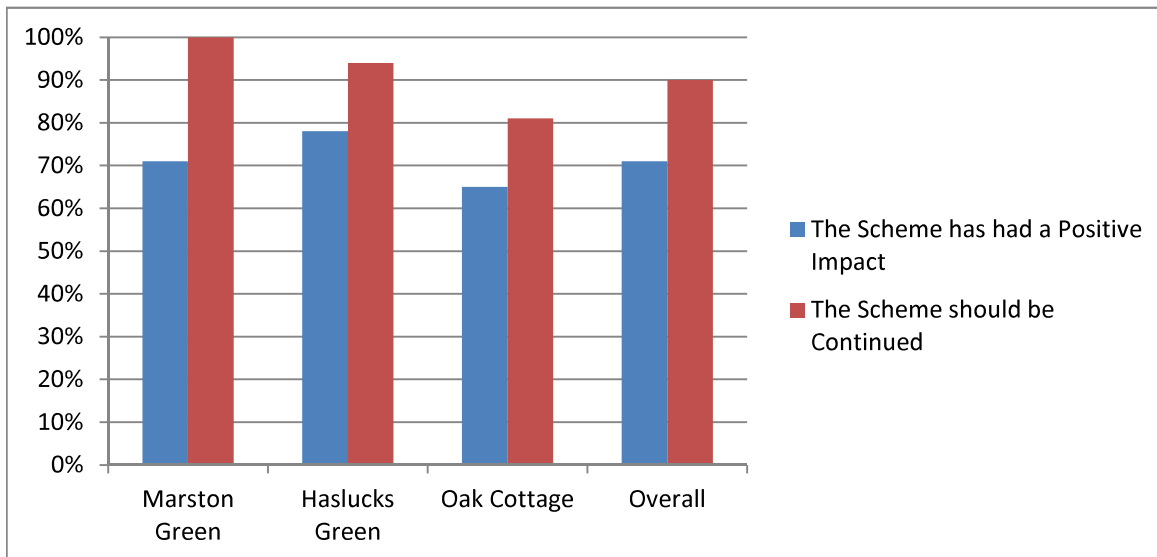
- 8.1 School Street Pilot Project – 6 Month Update and Review
June 2018 Transport and Highways Cabinet Member Decision Session

9. List of other relevant documents:

- 9.1 NA

Residents Door Knocking Survey (November 2018) Results

	The Scheme has had a Positive Impact	The Scheme should be Continued
Marston Green	71%	100%
Haslucks Green	78%	94%
Oak Cottage	65%	81%
Overall	71%	90%



School Hands up Survey (November 2018) Results

Oak Cottage

How did you travel to school today?	Pre Scheme	6 month	Nov-18
Drove all the way to school	31%	8%	6%
Parked outside School Streets and walk	-	15%	29%
Walked all the way	40%	36%	46%
Cycled	5%	7%	2%
Scooted	24%	34%	17%

Haslucks Green

How did you travel to school today?	Pre Scheme	6 month	Nov-18
Drove all the way to school	35%	20%	10%
Parked outside School Streets and walk	15%	21%	44%
Walked all the way	35%	38%	34%
Cycled	1%	6%	3%
Scooted	9%	10%	9%

Marston Green

How did you travel to school today?	Pre Scheme	6 month	Nov-18
Drove all the way to school	<p>Awaiting response. An update will be provided at the meeting</p>		
Parked outside School Streets and walk			
Walked all the way			
Cycled			
Scooted			