
To: The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)

Date: 8th February 2024

Subject: School Streets (Update)

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To provide an update of the use of School Streets to create a safer environment outside schools during entry and exit times at the start and end of the school day and encourage modal shift.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) is recommended to:
 - 1) Note the report and the steps being undertaken to trial the use of School Streets and the proposed School Street programme being undertaken as an 18-month trial in collaboration with Transport for West Midlands.
 - 2) Identify any further recommendations for the Cabinet Member

3 Background and Information

- 3.1 Many schools experience significant road traffic problems at school start and finishing times, and this can result in resident frustration, increased vehicle emissions and road safety problems associated with hazardous driving and dangerous vehicular parking. Historically, residents living close to schools have requested solutions to these problems, and, recently, Local Highway Authorities have been granted the legal mechanisms to install measures that prevent non-residents from travelling on problematic streets close to schools at school opening and closing times.
- 3.2 School Streets use Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to restrict School based traffic from entering roads at the start and end of the school day with the intention of creating an environment with fewer vehicles, that encourages and enables walking and cycling.
- 3.3 The proposed School Streets programme is a collaborative initiative between Coventry City Council and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM); and is principally funded through the Walking and Cycling Programme. School Streets aim to minimise the negative effects of motorised traffic at school opening and closing times by reducing the vehicles that can access specific roads around the school at these times. The School Streets scheme has numerous road safety benefits and secondary benefits include a reduction in air pollution and an increase in walking and cycling, helping to create a healthier and safer place for children and young people.

- 3.4 Residents are still permitted to access/egress their property during the times of the restriction using a permit system. Access is permitted at all times for emergency services.
- 3.5 The proposed School Streets will be introduced using Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders. These differ slightly from traditional TROs as they provide an opportunity to see how the scheme works for a period of up to 18 months, allowing monitoring and assessment to be undertaken before a final decision is made whether they should be made permanent. The first 6 months of operation are also an objection period, allowing parents, residents, drivers etc to see how the scheme works before making comments or before a decision is made on whether the scheme should be made permanent after 18 months after considering objections.
- 3.6 Coventry City Council is trialling School Streets at five locations.
- 3.7 The first School Street scheme has recently been installed in the Knights Templar Way Area (Templars Primary School). This became operational on 27th February 2023. This was funded separately and not through the Walking and Cycling Programme and was introduced in response to safety concerns raised by local residents and Councillors. An initial 12 month review of the successes of the Knights Templar Way School Street is ongoing, and the outcomes will be shared as soon as they become available.
- 3.8 With the implementation of the City's first School Streets, four further School Street schemes are proposed to be funded through the Walking and Cycling Programme. The schools selected for the trial are Stanton Bridge Primary School, Southfields Primary School, Ravensdale Primary School and Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School
- 3.9 Initiatives such as School Streets or Low Traffic Neighbourhoods aim to reduce the reliance on motorised vehicles. They are residential areas where a variety of tools are used to significantly reduce traffic levels and to create a more comfortable environment for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.10 Reducing the reliance on car travel, we will also significantly improve conditions to encourage more people to walk and cycle, as well as introducing new forms of micromobility. We will seek to do this in an inclusive way, ensuring that areas are designed to be accessible to everyone.
- 3.11 School Streets typically see changes in walking levels of 3-11% after intervention and Park and Stride increases to between 3-13%. Evidence undertaken by Sustrans demonstrates that School Streets mainly show drops in traffic volumes with limited displacement of traffic onto other streets.
- 3.12 To achieve a successful School Street project, we have identified areas where there is a strong appetite for these measures following issues raised by the school and local residents, it is proposed to design the schemes collaboratively with the school and residents.

4 School Streets in Collaboration with TfWM and Research Outcomes by TfL

- 4.1 The proposed School Streets programme consisting of Stanton Bridge Primary School, Southfields Primary School, Ravensdale Primary School and Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School is a collaborative initiative between Coventry City Council and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM); and is funded through the Walking and Cycling Programme.

- 4.2 School Streets have been implemented across the UK, including the West Midlands; including 23 School Streets already installed across Birmingham, Walsall, and Solihull. The TfWM collaboration is the first regional cross-border school streets programme. The existing initiatives have been installed with relatively good outcomes, including increasing walking and cycling.
- 4.3 Local Authorities submitted a bid for potential School Streets. These have been prioritised to 16 locations, to be delivered by September 2024, based on a number of criteria including, level of school/local political support, links to Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP)/cycling and walking infrastructure and existing framework to promote School Streets. Local authorities needed to demonstrate they had a high-level project plan deliverables to demonstrate success, including to measure any benefits.
- 4.4 **Research from Transport for London (TfL) where over 500 School Streets are in operation across 31 London Boroughs has highlighted very good outcomes including:**
- Improvements relating to a safer, calmer, cleaner and more healthy area where the School Streets have been installed.
 - School staff and parents appreciating the first-hand benefits of reduced traffic congestion, improved child safety and reduced pollution.
 - Improved social interaction and convivial pleasant atmosphere at School gates.
 - Growing sense of “neighbourhood”.
- 4.5 Key learning from the TfL research highlighted the importance of allowing behaviour change over time, as changes to driving patterns is unlikely to be linear and will take time to embed into drivers' mindsets. Other learning from the study was that operational times are explicit to parents. Coventry will ensure that all signage is correct and that School leaflets detailing the operational times will be distributed in advance of scheme go-live.

5 Consultation with Local Residents and Councillors

- 5.1 Coventry City Council has engaged and consulted all schools, parents, local Councillors and residents at all four school locations. Consultation has taken place using email communications, letters and by distribution of a “streetnews” consultation leaflet.
- 5.2 A streetnews leaflet highlights the scheme aims and includes the benefits of the scheme. It also provides residents with the opportunity to complete a questionnaire to feedback support for the scheme or oppose the scheme. The leaflet also enables residents to provide qualitative feedback on whether the scheme could be improved or amended to make the scheme more effective.
- 5.3 All feedback was analysed and then integrated into the overall scheme where possible. Coventry City Council requires “overall” support for the scheme to progress, and the vast majority of responses from residents fully support the initiative.
- 5.4 The most significant feedback from residents were broadly positive but requested cameras enforcement instead of Police enforcement. The enforcement of School

Streets are critical to their success. Changes in legislation enables the Council to support the Police and carry out camera based enforcement of restrictions of this type, the Council is required to demonstrate over an extended period that non camera based enforcement been trialled and found to be ineffective before being granted the powers to use cameras. Cameras that can effectively enforce this type of restriction has limitations, as the technology is new.

- 5.5 The Head Teachers at each of the schools selected to be involved in this initiative (Stanton Bridge Primary School, Southfields Primary School, Ravensdale Primary School and Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School) have all been consulted and are supportive of being part of a School Street scheme.

6 Budget, Monitoring and Enforcement

- 6.1 The budget for the School Streets programme is £410,000 and will be paid through a grant to the local authorities via a grant agreement/grant claim process. The ATF3 grant is capital only and will not fund any revenue activities such as behaviour change/promotion, the maintenance of any School Streets infrastructure or school management costs associated (i.e. resources), nor will it fund any changes to ETROs that are not costed as part of the deliverables or the cost of any reinstatements.
- 6.2 Local Ward Councillors, for the areas where the 4 schools chosen to be part of the School Street initiative are located, have already been consulted and support the initiative.
- 6.3 The Head Teachers at each of the schools selected to be involved in this initiative (Stanton Bridge Primary School, Southfields Primary School, Ravensdale Primary School and Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School) have all been consulted and are supportive of being part of a School Street scheme.
- 6.4 Extensive monitoring of each of the four schools comprising the trial has been undertaken, including vehicular speeds, vehicular numbers and personal injury collision investigations. These have been captured before the schemes become operational and will be repeated at 6 months, 12 months and 18 months post go-live. The comparisons in the data will provide a barometer of whether the scheme is working effectively or whether we need to amend/ change the scheme. Changes to the scheme are permissible as an ETRO has been used to install the schemes.
- 6.5 Post scheme go-live, qualitative sampling from residents, parents, Councillors and school staff will be analysed to understand whether the schemes are perceived as being effective or not.

7 Timescales and Milestones

- 7.1 The School Streets initiative has undertaken extensive consultations and will be delivered by the end of March 2024 and the following milestones have already been achieved or are on schedule to be achieved by the defined timescales.
- **Milestone 1:** Consultation has gained support of residents, Councillors and Schools at all four Schools:
 - **Milestone 2:** Detailed Scheme Design is completed, and the scheme is scheduled to be installed in February 2024:

- **Milestone 3:** ETRO has been drafted and this will become operational in March 2024
- **Milestone 4:** Scheme to be enforced in March 2024, followed by ongoing monitoring to assess whether the experiment is working effectively or requires “camera enforcement”.

8 Health Inequalities Impact

- 8.1 The reduction in traffic outside a school during the start and end of the school day, as a result of a School Street, will contribute to improving safety and air quality, providing health benefits to those attending the school and in the vicinity of the school, helping to address health inequalities and create a healthier and safer place for children and young people. The reduction of traffic at this time should encourage modal shift, reducing the reliance on the car and encouraging walking and cycling. Principally

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