

Report to Councillor Joy Dennis, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

July 2024

Active Travel: formalisation of Traffic Regulation Orders for 'School Streets' Trial Sites

Report by Assistant Director (Highways, Transport and Planning)

Electoral division(s): Arundel and Courtwick, Shoreham South, and Tarring

Summary

As part of the Government's Active Travel Fund (ATF) initiative, the County Council developed signage only School Streets trials. School Streets seek to provide a safer and more attractive environment to the roads outside of schools that nurtures walking, wheeling, and cycling for the journey to and from school.

In July 2023, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport approved the [implementation of three Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders](#) for three schools - Arundel Church of England Primary School, Thomas A Becket Junior School, and Swiss Gardens Primary School.

This report explains how the trial School Streets schemes operate. The trial was monitored for a period of 6 months that ended on 31 March 2024. An end of project report is planned for publication in due course.

The trial sites were operated under an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) which is valid for a period of 18 months. The intention is to formalise these restrictions by making the orders permanent i.e., with Traffic Regulation Orders.

Recommendation

That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport authorises the Director of Law and Assurance to make the Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETRO) for the three School Street Trial sites permanent, as set out in section 2 of the report.

Proposal

1 Background and context

- 1.1 The concept of a School Street has been developed nationally over recent years with the aim of reducing motor vehicle traffic from roads in the vicinity of school entrances at busy times and to make journeys to and from school safer and more appealing for active travel modes i.e. walking and wheeling. Formal guidance is still awaited.

- 1.2 During the last few years, various local authorities ran trials of School Streets which included vehicular access restrictions during school drop off and pick up times. These were made by way of a TRO and were either self-enforcing or were enforced by street marshals or cameras.
- 1.3 The trials sought to test:
- the impact of a School Street on schools, communities, residents, businesses, and wider communities
 - if a School Street has a positive impact on sustainable travel modes such as walking, wheeling, or cycling
 - road user compliance with School Street restrictions
 - the suitability of individual sites (i.e. location of the school, surrounding environment and impact on local infrastructure, community and school support)
 - if the sites required further capital infrastructure improvements to support walking and wheeling
 - the feasibility of delivering a signage only School Street
- 1.4 The trials included strengthened parking enforcement on surrounding roads, together with regular data monitoring throughout the project to ensure effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1 On 4 September 2023 WSCC (West Sussex County Council) implemented and tested a signage-only School Streets trial at three schools, backed by a minimum 6-month or maximum 18-month Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO). The signage-only approach prohibits motor vehicles entering the road directly at the school gates at drop-off and pick-up times, with exceptions for residents' vehicles, businesses, Blue Badge holders, emergency services and certain others.
- 2.2 The intention is to formalise these restrictions by making the orders permanent i.e. a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).
- 2.3 The following schools participated in the trial and restrictions varied at each site. It is proposed that the trial restriction are made permanent. The details are listed below:
- Arundel Church of England Primary School, Jarvis Road, Arundel (Restriction: Motor vehicles prohibited between 8am to 9am and 3pm to 4pm)
 - Thomas A Becket Junior School, Glebeside Avenue, Worthing (Restriction: Motor vehicles prohibited between 8am to 9am and 2:30pm to 3:30pm)
 - Swiss Gardens Primary School, Swiss Gardens, Shoreham (Restriction: Motor vehicles prohibited between 8am to 9am and 2:30pm to 3:30pm, buses are among permitted vehicles)

- 2.4 The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) specifies that illumination is required during hours of darkness to ensure the prohibitions are visible to road users, even during non-applicable periods, to reduce the likelihood of road user uncertainty. Signs must be illuminated on a street-lit road with a speed limit greater than 20mph. It is intended to undertake these additional infrastructure improvements.
- 2.5 Participating schools will be asked to continue monitoring of the school streets and capture any data in a Travel Plan. School Travel Plans (STP) are owned and managed by each school, and they are a tool to help manage issues as part of the journey to and from school. STPs should include surveys of travel behaviours, near misses and potential identification of further improvements.

3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 3.1 It is an option to remove the current signage and revert the road back to the same situation prior to the School Streets trial. This was discounted based on the level of support from the school community.

4 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 4.1 The participating schools and local county councillors have been consulted and support the proposal for the trial sites to have the restrictions made permanent as part of a TRO.
- 4.2 The process for making an ETRO includes a 6-month open consultation during which all comments made are reviewed. Provided the scheme is not being modified, the ETRO can be made permanent after any comments received are considered. It is not intended to alter the restriction included as part of the ETRO. A breakdown of objections and support per scheme can be seen in the appendix.

5 Finance

- 5.1 Revenue consequences - none
- 5.2 Capital consequences

	Current Year 2024/25 £m	Year 2 2025/26 £m	Year 3 2026/27 £m	Year 4 2027/28 £m
Capital budget	0.010	0.005	0	0
Change from proposal	0	0	0	0
Remaining budget	0	0	0	0

- 5.3 The effect of the proposal:

(a) How the cost represents good value

The capital cost of modifying the restriction signage at the trial sites to accommodate permanent restrictions and illumination will cost in the region

of £0.015m. The signage that requires illumination will be installed and maintained through the WSCC Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract. The PFI is a procurement method which uses private sector investment to deliver public sector infrastructure. This work will be funded from unallocated Active Travel Funds (ATF) currently held by the County Council which is subject to formal agreement by Active Travel England (ATE). To ensure appropriate governance is followed, approval is also required by the WSCC ATF Programme Board. This represents good value for money to the County Council as all planned spending is secured through external grant.

(b) **Future savings/efficiencies being delivered**

No further capital costs are envisaged.

(c) **Human Resources, IT and Assets impact**

None.

6 Risk implications and mitigations

6.1 Failure to demonstrate the County Council’s commitment to active travel improvements may hinder the success of future funding bids to ATE and consequently frustrate plans for investment in associated infrastructure improvements.

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
School withdraws support	Each school has signed a Memorandum of Understanding detailing their commitment to provide resource and time to support and promote the activity.
Displacement of vehicles	Type of mitigation will vary according to location and each trial will be regularly monitored.
Public objection	Thorough engagement with local community and key stakeholders shows support for the trials.

7 Policy alignment and compliance

7.1 Our Council Plan – School Streets support the ambitions set out in the Council Plan and the West Sussex Transport Plan. School Streets aim to improve safety outside the school gates for vulnerable road users, giving them the opportunity to choose to travel more actively and sustainably. School Streets respond to concerns raised by communities and schools which ultimately will allow communities to make use of the improved road network. The School Streets trial is included in the draft active travel strategy action plan to be considered alongside a range of other interventions to promote walking, wheeling, and cycling.

7.2 Legal implications – it is necessary to formalise the existing ETRO into a permanent TRO or withdraw it. It is necessary to advertise a notice stating the Order has been made permanent which will permit the restriction to come into effect immediately.

- 7.3 Equality duty and human rights assessment –there is a foreseeable positive impact for groups with visible and hidden disabilities by reducing traffic levels at peak times in the immediate school street area. Blue Badge holders may access the School Streets trial areas at all times which will afford them better provision than that afforded to non-Blue Badge holders. There are no human rights implications.
- 7.4 Protecting the environment – not applicable.
- 7.5 Crime and disorder – no impact on crime and anti-social behaviour. As part of the 'School Streets' trial, additional presence from Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) and police is requested at each site, where resources permit, which will help to mitigate any crime or anti-social behaviour.
- 7.6 Public health – this trial is aimed at improving public health by nurturing confidence in walking, wheeling, and cycling and encouraging communities to choose an active method of travel.
- 7.7 Social value – no implications.

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Appendices

Appendix – Summary of objections and positive comments

Background papers

None