

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

**October 2024**

### **Active Travel – New ‘School Streets’ and other travel to school improvements**

#### **Report by Assistant Director (Highways, Transport and Planning)**

**Electoral division(s): Littlehampton Town, Chichester West, Langley Green & Ifield West**

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#### **Summary**

This report outlines the next steps for School Streets in West Sussex and further work across the county to improve on the number of children travelling to school using active modes; the approach for the implementation of a further three School Streets using a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO); the development of an active travel to school capital programme; and the approach of behavioural change educational activities that can be offered to school communities.

#### **Recommendations**

That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport approves -

- (1) the following three schools to be promoted as School Streets - The Mill Primary, Crawley; River Beach Primary, Littlehampton; and St Joseph’s Primary, Chichester; and
  - (2) the approach for broader Active Travel to School capital pipeline improvements.
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#### **Proposal**

##### **1 Background and context**

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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 prohibited 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. The trial was monitored for a period of 6 months that ended on 31 March 2024. Data from monitoring and evaluation was analysed and the results indicated that the signage only approach had been successful.

1.3 The following schools participated in the trial and restrictions varied at each site:

- 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 were among permitted vehicles)

1.4 The trial was delivered using an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) which specifically tested the approach for introducing a signage only scheme. It is therefore not possible to deliver further School Streets using the same approach with an ETRO. Further schemes must be delivered using a permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) that is subject to standard legal consultations and advertisements.

1.5 During this trial several other schools expressed an interest in taking part in a future extended rollout of the initiative. Three further schools (see section 2 of the report) have now been identified to participate in an extension to the School Streets initiative. These schools were selected based on their suitability against the agreed criteria together with their willingness to commit to the project.

1.6 In addition, officers have been working with various schools over the last 12 months with the intention of developing a capital pipeline programme aimed at increasing active travel to school. This pipeline will seek to implement improvements to nurture and encourage active travel choice for the journey to and from school together with making road safety improvements. Proposed improvements are subject to consultation and funding.

## **2 Proposal details**

2.1 The three schools listed below have been prioritised based on their suitability and interest in participating. Each school has confirmed their support and are:

- The Mill School, Crawley (suggested restriction times: 08:15/09:00hrs to 14:30 / 16:00hrs)
- River Beach Primary, Littlehampton (suggested restriction times: 08:15/09:00hrs to 14:30 / 16:00hrs)
- St Joseph's Infant and Junior School, Chichester (suggested restriction times: 08:15/09:00hrs to 14:30 / 16:00hrs)

- 2.2 During the trial a number of schools expressed an interest in being part of a future School Street. Three schools were selected having been prioritised against a criteria that included:
- engagement with the trial and an expression of interest to participate in a future School Street
  - commitment to dedicate resources to participate and engage with their community
  - existing engagement in relation to active travel
  - potential to deliver walking and wheeling uplift
  - Assessment of risk
  - suitability of the site location to accommodate the restriction requirements
- 2.3 During the proposed restriction periods, access will be available for business premises on the street, emergency services, school transport, refuse collection, blue badge holders, residents and carers of residents who live in the street. This parallels the approach undertaken for the trial School Streets.
- 2.4 The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) specifies that illumination is required during the 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 street-lit roads with speed limits greater than 20mph. It is intended to undertake these additional infrastructure improvements that will be necessary at The Mill Primary School (2 signs) and River Beach Primary School (1 sign). The details of the design may alter subject to ongoing consultation and design requirements.
- 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 identify 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.
- 2.6 An important part of the approach to School Streets is behavioural change which is delivered through education, training and publicity (ETP) in-school. 'Sustrans' were commissioned to deliver this work as part of the trial and it is intended to employ their services again to ensure consistency of approach. It is also being considered to commission 'Living Streets' to support wider school engagement through the delivery of promotional activities such as WOW (Walk Once a Week), route audits and 'Next Steps'. These ETP approaches have strong connections with Road Safety ETP approaches.
- 2.7 The ongoing School Streets work will continue to be overseen and prioritised through internal governance as part of the wider approach to Active Travel to School. This will also incorporate the development of a capital pipeline of improvements to nurture and encourage active travel for the journey to and from school. Potential capital schemes will seek Active Travel England grant funding once bidding windows are opened. Should the current available funding be reduced or withdrawn, the proposals will be reviewed accordingly.
- 2.8 It is intended to begin the in-school education activities in quarter 4 of 2024/25. This will help to inform the wider school community in preparation

for a potential launch of the School Streets in the spring of 2025. This is intended to include in-school education and awareness raising activities that directly engage families in active travel choice for the journey to and from school.

### **3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)**

- 3.1 There is the option to not run a further School Streets activity, however, levels of support for active travel to school initiatives are high.
- 3.2 It is important to recognise that not all school communities are suitable for a School Street initiative and many schools are unable to commit to the time and resource required to make the project effective.

### **4 Consultation, engagement and advice**

- 4.1 An important and integral part of the approach to School Streets is consultation and engagement. Without the 'hearts and minds' within school communities to embrace compliance, the likelihood of success and behavioural change is reduced. Engagement and consultation with key stakeholders within school communities will remain a focus for the potential schemes. This will include school leaders, councillors, and residents.
- 4.2 The local county councillors (please add names and electoral divisions) have been contacted seeking confirmation of their support for this approach.
- 4.3 The local county councillors will also be consulted before the TROs are advertised and implemented to confirm their support for the approach.

### **5 Finance**

- 5.1 Revenue consequences
- 5.2 There is a requirement to access both capital and revenue funds for the ongoing delivery of this initiative. It is estimated that each school will require £10k of revenue funding for in school ETP together with an estimated average of £10k of capital for signage, illumination and infrastructure. The revenue costs will be met from the Active Travel Capability Fund Grant (2024), whilst the capital costs will be funded from unallocated Active Travel Fund (ATF). Going forward, efforts will be made to secure available and eligible s106 funds together with CIL once Parish Councils are consulted and in agreement.
- 5.3 The £0.030m revenue cost of the proposal will be met from the Active Travel Capability Fund Grant (2024). This will be used to fund in school education, training and promotional activities.

	Current Year 2024/25 £m	Year 2 2025/26 £m	Year 3 2026/27 £m	Year 4 2027/28 £m
Revenue budget	0.015	0.015	0	0
Change from proposal	0	0	0	0

	Current Year 2024/25 £m	Year 2 2025/26 £m	Year 3 2026/27 £m	Year 4 2027/28 £m
Remaining budget	0	0	0	0

#### 5.4 Capital consequences

The capital cost of erecting restriction signing at the three trial sites, which will require illumination, and supporting infrastructure is estimated to cost in the region of £0.018m. This will be funded from unallocated Active Travel Funds (ATF) currently held by the County Council. To ensure appropriate governance is followed, the WSCC Active Travel Fund (ATF) Programme Board met on the 9 July and approved the proposed funding. Active Travel England (ATE) are yet to confirm their agreement for the funds to be used for this purpose.

	Current Year 2024/25 £m	Year 2 2025/26 £m	Year 3 2026/27 £m	Year 4 2027/28 £m
Capital budget	0.015	0.003	0	0
Change from proposal	0	0	0	0
Remaining budget	0	0	0	0

#### 5.5 The effect of the proposal:

##### (a) **How the cost represents good value**

This represents good value for money to the County Council as all planned spending is secured through external grants.

##### (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

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating Action (in place or planned)</b>
School withdraws support	Each school will be asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding detailing their commitment to provide resource and time to support and promote the activity.
TRO objections	It is necessary to formally consult and advertise the proposed Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) for the restrictions to be implemented. There is

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
	potential for objections to be received as part of this process and any such objections will need to be considered and mitigated as far as possible.
Availability of Funding	<p>It is possible to provide revenue funding for the three School Street sites via the currently available Capability Fund (2024) grant that was awarded to the County Council by Active Travel England (ATE). There is no guarantee of future or ongoing funding beyond the current grant award.</p> <p>It is possible to fund the capital costs from the currently unallocated Active Travel Fund (ATF) grant that was awarded to the County Council by ATE. ATE are yet to confirm their agreement for these funds to be used for this proposed purpose.</p>
Displacement of vehicles	Thorough engagement with local community and key stakeholders showed support for the trials. Any objections will be considered. The capacity of Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) to attend schools on a regular basis is limited.

## 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. School Streets will be considered alongside a range of other interventions to promote walking, wheeling, and cycling.
- 7.2 Legal implications – It is necessary to advertise and implement a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) at each of the proposed new School Street Sites.
- 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 – There is potential to reduce vehicle emissions as part of the journey to and from school as a direct result of fewer cars using

the designated School Street zone. Fewer vehicles will also potentially lead to less noise intrusion.

- 7.5 Crime and disorder – no impact on crime and anti-social behaviour. As part of the proposed new School Streets, additional presence from Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) and the police will be 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**

None

**Background papers**

None