

# Diversity impact assessment

<b>TITLE</b> Name / description of the issue being assessed	Medway School Streets schemes
<b>DATE</b> Date the DIA is completed	23/06/2023
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b> Name, title and dept of person responsible for carrying out the DIA.	Ruth Du-Lieu - Assistant Director of Frontline Services

## 1 Summary description of the proposed change

- What is the change to policy / service / new project that is being proposed?
- How does it compare with the current situation?

Medway Council are proposing to introduce School Streets at 11 schools across the borough. A School Street is a road outside a school with a temporary restriction on most motorised traffic at school drop-off and pick-up times, enabling and encouraging more people to walk, scoot or cycle safely for the school journey.

Proposals have been developed to implement School Street schemes at 11 schools. These are as follows:

- St. Mary's Catholic Primary School
- The Pilgrim School
- St. Peter's Infant School
- St. Nicholas Church of England Infant School
- Miers Court Primary School
- Phoenix Primary School
- Burnt Oak Primary School
- Hempstead Junior School
- St. William of Perth Church of England Primary School
- St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School
- Greenvale Primary School.

School Streets aim to improve safety and transform often busy and polluted school roads into safer, cleaner, and healthier environments for everyone.

By limiting motor vehicle access outside schools, we can improve road safety at pick-up and drop-off times and create safer walking, cycling and scooting routes to and from school. Restrictions only operate at certain times of the day during the school term and don't impact local residents or emergency services vehicles. Residents and businesses who live and work on a School Street will be able to register for an exemption as well as Blue Badge holders. The scheme will not operate in the school holidays or at weekends.

By adopting this approach, roads are made safer for students, pedestrians, a and encourage more sustainable modes of transport in our community.

Currently motorists can park close to the school gates at all 11 locations. The

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exception is where there are existing School Keep Clear markings, that are enforceable during school drop-off and pick-up and waiting restrictions which are located outside some of the Schools.

## 2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment.

- Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user records etc.
- Eg: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile

Medway Council considered a potential list of school sites for School Street trial implementation and the following criteria were used to determine the final 11 sites proposed:

- Schools with known road safety/parking congestion issues, particularly during drop-off and collection times
- Council officers, local knowledge of the school settings. This included whether the school was already working with the Council on sustainable transport initiatives, such as the zig-zag banner campaign, walk to school and road safety education delivery.
- Locality and/or suitability of a School Street; i.e., those largely located within cul-de-sac locations and not on the main transport network, etc
- The potential of encouraging modal shift, based on pupil mode of travel data.

An informal consultation commenced on Friday 2 June 2023 and ended on Sunday 25 June 2023. A total of 1,482 survey responses were received across the 11 School Streets proposals.

The following key findings have been identified through analysis of the consultation responses.

There has been overall support in response to 6 of the 11 School Street proposals. These are:

- **St Marys Catholic Primary School, Greenfield Road, Gillingham**
- **St Peters Infant School, Holcombe Road, Rochester**
- **Miers Court Primary School, Silverspot Close, Rainham**
- **Burnt Oak Primary School, Cornwall Road, Gillingham**
- **St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Bleakwood Road, Walderslade**
- **Greenvale Primary School, Symons Avenue, Chatham**

There has been a mixed response to 2 of the 11 School Street proposals. These are:

### **Phoenix Primary School, Glencoe Road, Chatham**

- Parents who responded were supportive of the proposal.
- Local residents who responded had concerns about displacement and access to neighbouring roads. These concerns will be

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alleviated through the delivery of the Greenvale Primary School Street and local resident exemptions.

- Some responses were received from staff members who suggested alternative start times, which will be considered in discussion with the school.

### **St William of Perth Catholic Primary School, Canon Close, Rochester**

- Local residents who responded were supportive of the proposal
- Multiple respondents felt the afternoon restriction times should be reviewed to better suit school pick-up times, which will be considered in discussion with the school.
- People were concerned about the impact of vehicle displacement on other nearby streets and schools. Parking restrictions on key nearby junctions will be looked at to deter parking around the entrance / exit to the School Streets.

There has been opposition in response to 3 of the 11 School Streets proposals. These are:

- **The Pilgrim School, Warwick Crescent, Borstal**
- **Hempstead Junior School, Birch Grove, Hempstead**
- **St Nicholas Church of England Infant School, Montford Road, Rochester**

Given the proximity of three infant/junior schools in the neighbourhood of St Nicholas Church of England Infant School it is proposed that at a future date to be determined consideration is given for a neighbourhood micro place shaping approach.

During the consultation period, we received feedback from additional schools and residents outside of the eleven School Streets proposals who are keen to be part of the Safer Healthier Streets programme. Requests for a School Street were received for:

- **High Halstow Primary Academy**
- **St Benedicts Catholic Primary School**

Given the positive indication of support from the additional schools listed above, School Streets at these locations will be investigated and where feasible, it is recommended a public and statutory consultation is progressed to understand if parents, local residents, and stakeholders would welcome the introduction of a School Street at the additional locations. This would be supported by comprehensive communications and allow Council to respond quickly to these requests from community.

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### 3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

Is it likely to :

- Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups?
- Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups?
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't?

(insert ✓ in one or more boxes)

Protected characteristic groups (Equality Act 2010)	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age		✓	
Disability	✓	✓	
Gender reassignment		✓	
Marriage/civil partnership		✓	
Pregnancy/maternity		✓	
Race		✓	
Religion/belief		✓	
Sex	✓	✓	
Sexual orientation		✓	
Other (e.g., low income groups)		✓	

### 4 Summary of the likely impacts

- Who will be affected?
- How will they be affected?

**All groups** – The overall equalities impact of School Streets is generally positive. While students, parents, staff and those living in close proximity will be the primary beneficiaries, School Streets can also have positive impacts for the wider community, particularly in terms of air quality improvements from less vehicles outside the school, and improved health and wellbeing from potential increases in walking and cycling.

Air quality exposure is worse inside of a vehicle than outside of it, so **all groups**, including those with protected characteristics, will benefit from increased active travel by lower exposure to poor air quality. They will also benefit from the other positives of active travel, such as the associated health

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benefits.

Implementing the School Street Plan will therefore benefit **all groups** by improving air quality at the schools with the worst air quality and improving road safety at schools with the worst road safety issues.

Those who could be most **positively** impacted by the implementation of the School Streets include:

**Age** – young children attending the school, who will benefit from reduced risk and exposure to both air pollution and road danger. [Data](#) on air quality shows that it is particularly harmful for children and elderly people. Children under the age of 12 have the [highest percentage](#) of pedestrian fatalities. The peak time for pedestrian injuries from vehicles is during the morning rush hour, which includes the school run. Therefore, young children will benefit most from the road safety improvements.

**Age** – older local residents who are at greater risk of experiencing negative health impacts of air pollution will benefit from reduced exposure to air pollution during the restriction times. [Data](#) on air quality shows that it is particularly harmful for children and elderly people.

**Disability** – Air quality exposure is worse inside of a vehicle than outside of it, so all groups, including those with protected characteristics, will benefit from increased active travel by lower exposure to poor air quality. They will also benefit from the other positives of active travel, such as the associated health benefits. Implementing the School Streets will therefore benefit these groups by improving air quality at the schools with the worst air quality and improving road safety at schools with the worst road safety issues.

**Deprivation** - 2023 research by The Runnymede Trust showed 20 per cent of the UK's most deprived areas experience some of the worst impacts of air pollution. Interventions like School Streets, designed to reduce exposure to poor air quality, can help reduce the impacts of air pollution and advance equality, particularly with regard to public health outcomes.

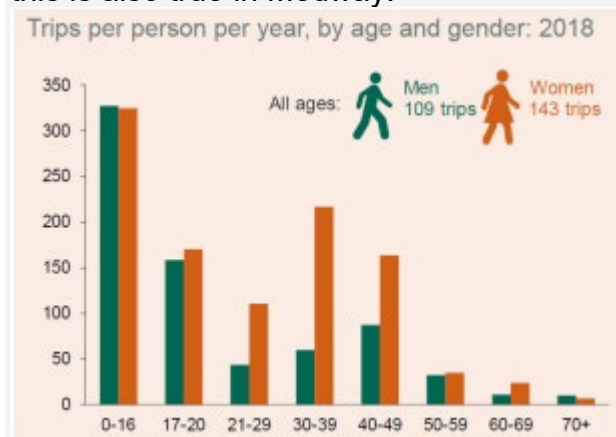
The positive impacts School Streets can deliver include:

- Improved air quality due to reduction in vehicles at drop off and pick up times, improving public health outcomes.
- Safer routes to and from the school due to a reduction in vehicles at school drop off and pick up times, reducing road danger risk.
- More opportunities to walk and cycle in the area of the school, enhancing public health and well-being outcomes.
- A nicer environment on the School Street for everyone using it, especially children.

**Sex** – Data from [Scotland](#) and the [UK Transport Survey](#) finds that women

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were more likely to escort children to school than men. We can assume that this is also true in Medway.



The graph above, from the UK Transport Survey, demonstrates that women between 21-49, who are the group most likely to have primary school aged children, make more trips on average than men. When taken with the data showing that women are more likely to accompany children on the school run, this suggests that women are making more of the school run trips in Medway than men. Therefore, women are more likely to be positively impacted by improvements to air quality and safety outside the schools than men. This would also apply to **pregnant** women.

Air quality exposure is worse inside of a vehicle than outside of it, so all groups, including those with protected characteristics, will benefit from increased active travel by lower exposure to poor air quality. They will also benefit from the other positives of active travel, such as the associated health benefits. Implementing the School Street Plan will therefore benefit these groups by improving air quality at the schools with the worst air quality and improving road safety at schools with the worst road safety issues. Implementing a Healthy School Zone will benefit these groups by improving air quality in and around the schools and reducing exposure levels.

Those who could be **negatively** impacted by the implementation of the School Streets include:

**Age** - young children will be walking to and from school with some parents choosing to drive and park outside of the School Street. This could create congestion / increase road danger at School Street entry points.

**Age** – older local residents may be negatively impacted by the School Street as it could affect relatives / unofficial carers coming to care for them during the times of restriction, taxis coming to collect them (e.g. for hospital appointments) during the times of restriction, and access to good and services during restriction times.

**Disability** - School Streets have the potential to affect a disabled resident's



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access to their road or property. It would also affect any disabled person who needs vehicle access to the road for other reasons, such as disabled pupils being driven to the school. Those persons with a disability and not in receipt of the disabled persons parking badge may need to park outside of the School Street zone to walk / wheel into the zone. They will also not be allowed to drive through the zone during the periods of restriction. Section 5 includes recommendations for those with blue badges, who require access to a property within the School Street, to be exempt from the School Street restrictions to mitigate this.

**Sex** – As per the above data, it is statistically likely that women will be making more trips to school than men. Therefore, women will be more affected by this proposal than men, as they may have to change the way they get to school which could have negative impacts on their daily routines.

Additional potentially negative impacts of School Streets could include:

- Local residents: travelling into the School Streets to get to their homes. Residents will be eligible to apply for an exemption permit.
- Local businesses on the School Streets: employees, visitors and suppliers travelling into the School Streets to access the businesses. Deliveries will need to be made outside of the restriction times.
- Parents of schoolchildren –driving into the School Streets to drop off and pick up children.
- School staff –driving to and from the schools included in the School Street schemes. School staff will have an exemption to the School Street for access to the school car park only.
- Formal and informal carers: driving to visit patients in the School Street schemes. Registered carers will be eligible to apply for an exemption permit.

**The mitigations identified for these in section 5.**

### **5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?**

- What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?
- Are there alternative providers?
- Can demand for services be managed differently?

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The following actions have been identified to mitigate against adverse impacts:

- Ensuring School Streets are only in operation during school drop-off and pick-up times, and school terms, minimises the impact on other residents, and their ability to access homes and services, including specialist carers
- Providing local residents in the zone with exemptions means they can access their property at any time, including during restricted hours.
- School transport strategies can be put in place to promote safer commutes to school, cycle safety provisions and to promote with the school and the community on School Streets and sustainable transport.
- Providing exemption permits for specific groups of people, for example Blue Badge holders, means people who need to travel through the street at the restricted time can do so without receiving a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN).
- Provide necessary arrangements for emergency permit provision.
- Ensure timely and clear communications in preparation of the School Street schemes and for signage and information once the School Street schemes are implemented.

Exemption permits would be provided for:

- Emergency Services
- Residents within the zone
- Blue badge holders needing access
- Carers of vulnerable residents needing access
- Utility providers attending emergencies
- School buses
- Parents/ carers dropping off or collecting students with special educational needs or disabilities
- Bicycles
- Postal Service
- Refuse vehicles
- School staff who are entering the school car park only

## 6 Action plan

- Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date
Ensure communications regarding the introduction of the School Street schemes is completed in a timely manner using plain English and offer all relevant materials in different languages and formats, as required.	TBC	TBC



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Ensure information is provided to all those eligible regarding the School Street scheme exemption permit process in a timely manner	TBC	TBC
Clearly communicate intentions to implement the School Street schemes to affected residents and schools, as appropriate.	TBC	TBC

## 7 Recommendation

The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be:

- to proceed with the change, implementing the Action Plan if appropriate
- consider alternatives
- gather further evidence

If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.

It is recommended that the ten school streets listed below are taken forward to statutory consultation, the schools are:

- St Marys Catholic Primary School, Greenfield Road, Gillingham
- St Peters Infant School, Holcombe Road, Rochester
- Miers Court Primary School, Silverspot Close, Rainham
- Burnt Oak Primary School, Cornwall Road, Gillingham
- St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Bleakwood Road, Walderslade
- Greenvale Primary School, Symons Avenue, Chatham
- Phoenix Primary School, Glencoe Road, Chatham
- St William of Perth Catholic Primary School, Canon Close, Rochester
- High Halstow Primary Academy, High Halstow
- St Benedicts Catholic Primary School, Lambourn Way, Chatham

The implementation of the schemes provides clear benefits, as detailed in Section 4 above, including a better street environment, improved air quality, safer and quieter routes for children travelling to school and more opportunities for everyone to walk, cycle or wheel in the School Street area.

No other alternatives have been considered as the School Streets schemes are bespoke to addressing the issues experienced by schools with high traffic at drop off and pick up time and the subsequent impacts of poor air quality, potential road traffic accidents and a generally poor environment for children travelling to and from school. There are actions that can be taken to mitigate any negative impact from the School Streets implementation as listed in Section 5.

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## 8 Authorisation

The authorising officer is consenting that:

- the recommendation can be implemented
- sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned
- the Action Plan will be incorporated into the relevant Service Plan and monitored

**Assistant Director**

**Date**

Contact your Performance and Intelligence hub for advice on completing this assessment

RCC:	phone 2406	email: <a href="mailto:annamarie.lawrence@medway.gov.uk">annamarie.lawrence@medway.gov.uk</a>
C&A:	phone 1173	email: <a href="mailto:michael.hood@medway.gov.uk">michael.hood@medway.gov.uk</a>
BSD:	phone 2472	email: <a href="mailto:lesley.jones@medway.gov.uk">lesley.jones@medway.gov.uk</a>
PH:	phone 2636	email: <a href="mailto:david.whiting@medway.gov.uk">david.whiting@medway.gov.uk</a>