

## **Cabinet**

**19 November 2024**

### **Safer, Healthier Streets Programme – School Streets Tranche 2**

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alex Paterson, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement

Report from: Ruth Du-Lieu – Assistant Director, Front Line Services and Deputy Director of Place

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#### **Summary**

School Keep Clear markings were first established in the 1964 Traffic Signs Regulations and keep the space outside of schools free from parked vehicles so children can be seen more easily when crossing the road. In 1964 there were fewer than 7 million vehicles on the road, today this figure has increased to more than 38 million. School Streets extend this original principle by closing the road outside a school to motor vehicles during drop-off and pick-up times. Access restrictions do not apply to residents and the schemes only operate during term time.

As part of the renewed emphasis on quality of life and place shaping in local neighbourhoods, the School Streets initiative provides safe spaces for our school children and their parents, carers, or guardians to travel to and from school. Building on the successful delivery of Tranche 1, school streets will aim to improve safety, air quality in the vicinity of our schools and support the wider community to choose more sustainable ways to travel.

This report provides Cabinet with the details of Tranche 2 of the School Streets programme including the results of the recent informal public consultation and proposed next steps. The report seeks approval to progress to a formal statutory consultation, and where appropriate, for the School Streets to be implemented.

#### **1. Recommendations**

1.1. The Cabinet is asked to:

- 1.2. Note the results of the School Streets consultation as set out in Appendix A to the report.
- 1.3. Agree to progressing School Streets at *Cliffe Woods Primary School, Cliffe Woods Pre-School and the City of Rochester School, Cliffe Woods* to statutory consultation.
- 1.4. Agree to progressing School Streets at *Fairview Primary School, Rainham* to statutory consultation
- 1.5. Agree to progressing School Streets at *High Halstow Primary Academy, High Halstow* to statutory consultation.
- 1.6. Agree to progressing School Streets at *Hilltop Primary School, Frindsbury* to statutory consultation.
- 1.7. Agree to progressing School Streets at *St Margaret's Church of England Junior School and St. Margarets Infant School, Rainham* to statutory consultation.
- 1.8. Agree to progressing School Streets at *St William of Perth Catholic Primary School, Canon Close, Rochester* to statutory consultation.
- 1.9. Agree to the proposed amendments to the School Streets at *Crest Infants School / Delce Academy, Rochester Cliffe Woods Primary School*, following the feedback received during consultation and agree to proceed to statutory consultation for a period of 6 weeks which provide opportunity for additional stakeholder feedback on the changes.
- 1.10. Agree to the proposed amendments to the School Street at *Horsted Primary School, Chatham*, following the feedback received during consultation and agree to proceed to statutory consultation for a period of 6 weeks which provide opportunity for additional stakeholder feedback on the changes.
- 1.11. Agree to the proposed amendments to the School Street at *The King's Pre-Preparatory School and Nursery*, following the feedback received during consultation and agree to proceed to statutory consultation for a period of 6 weeks which provide opportunity for additional stakeholder feedback on the changes.
- 1.12. Agree to delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement to consider the outcome of the statutory process (where necessary any amendments) and to take forward necessary infrastructure work and implementation (subject to the statutory process).

## 2. Suggested reasons for decision(s)

- 2.1. The School Streets initiative, within the Safer Healthier Programme, meet several key strategic polices and action plans set out by the Council. The

implementation of the recommendations will create a safer environment for students, the wider school community, and residents, by enabling and encouraging more sustainable transport choices.

### 3. Budget and policy framework

- 3.1. The implementation of tranche 2 school streets will be a continuation of the £2,019,488 capital budget for moving traffic offences and school streets. Additional funding will also be obtained through the governments grant for Active Travel. This is approximately £450K.
- 3.2. The continued roll out of School Streets will help the Council manage the road network, improving safety and traffic flow at specific locations during key parts of the day. School Streets will support Council priorities and contribute to key objectives in the Local Transport Plan including:
  - Supporting a safer, healthier and more secure community in Medway by promoting active lifestyles and by reducing the risk of death, injury or ill health or being the victim of crime.
  - Supporting a healthier natural environment by contributing to tackling climate change and improving air quality.
- 3.3. The School Streets projects contribute to the implementation of the Council's Environment Strategy, the Sustainable School Travel Strategy, the Air Quality Action Plan, Local Transport Plan (LTP) and emerging Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).
- 3.4. The core objectives of the School Streets projects are to:
  - provide a safe immediate environment and thereby increase the number of children and carers who walk or cycle to school;
  - reduce traffic levels and air pollution levels; and
  - provide a safe local environment and thereby maximise the number of residents who walk or cycle, reduce traffic congestion and pollution levels from specified residential school roads.
- 3.5. Child-friendly Medway launched in April 2021 as part of Council's ambition to make Medway one of the best places in the country to grow up – a place where children and young people's voices are recognised and they feel safe, valued, and included.
- 3.6. Over 3,000 children and young people participated in a survey, with education, the environment, and access to parks and green spaces all being high priorities for young people. A strong sense of community, which included their school and neighbouring streets, as well as safer public spaces, were also important to children and young people. The School Streets initiative can contribute very positively to the aims and objectives of child-friendly Medway.

- 3.7. School Streets prioritise public space for student pedestrians, and cyclists, rather than vehicles, and make streets near their schools feel safer and more welcoming.
- 3.8. Improving accessibility to schools by walking, cycling and public transport is identified as one of the key ways Medway can support healthy children and young people and is set out in Medway's Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2024.
- 3.9. A Traffic Regulation Order is applied to a street around a school, temporarily restricting access to motorised vehicles. That street will, in effect, become a pedestrian and cycle only zone. Times for the restrictions are determined in agreement with the school and local residents. These can be for between 45-60 minutes and only on weekdays, during term times.

## 4. Background

- 4.1. A School Street is a timed restriction on roads outside schools, which prevent vehicular traffic passing through during school drop-off and pick-up times. They work by introducing measures, often a timed road closure, to significantly reduce the volume of traffic when children are likely to be moving around arriving in the morning and leaving in the afternoon. This means the street becomes a pedestrian and cycle zone at these times.
- 4.2. Roads around schools have become increasingly busy with a surge of traffic concentrated over a 50-minute period at drop off and pick times. This results in increased risk of collisions with vulnerable road users and other motorists, unlawful parking, traffic jams, road rage. People on foot and cycling are left with the feeling that roads are no place for them, and this has long term implications for everyone, especially children.
- 4.3. Statistics from the Department of Transport reveal that 14% of children killed on Great Britain's roads in 2018 were between the morning school run (7-9am) and 23% after school between 3-5pm. A report from insurer Admiral shows a 43% fall of road collisions during the holidays at school run time.
- 4.4. In Medway, over the 3-year period up to the end of December 2023, there were 223 collisions which involved 248 child casualties up to the age of 16. This was an increase from the previous 3-year period (up to the end of December 2022), where 199 collisions, involving 220 child casualties occurred.
- 4.5. Analysis by the University of Westminster in 2022 showed School Streets deliver a notable decrease in motorised traffic during temporary restriction hours, but also contribute to a general decrease beyond these times. This has been our experience within Tranche 1 of the school streets programme which has been operational in 7 locations since March 2024.

*'I dropped <CHILD> off at Miers court today.....I was actually very impressed with the impact. There was such a calmness walking to school, surprisingly no one parked on the yellow lines opposite the junction. It was actually quite*

*remarkable the difference it made. I did notice some cars parking further down the street, but quite some distance from the school. So as long as the parking is sensible further away, I see a positive impact.* Feedback from a Parent, Miers Court Primary School.

- 4.6. With any changes to the highway, it is important to recognised that introduction of new schemes will always involve some element of traffic displacement, especially within the short term.
- 4.7. However, while this potential for displacement is acknowledged, it is pertinent to emphasise that the intention of a school street is to reduce the immediate risk of vehicle collisions with more vulnerable road users, like pedestrians, outside of the school gate. By doing this, we can improve safety outcomes for our children.
- 4.8. Additionally, the feedback received to date, has not suggested displacement on current Tranche 1 schools is an issue and therefore it is assumed has been spread out across the wider network.
- 4.9. Medway as part of the implementation is also undertaking extensive traffic and Air quality monitoring of the implemented school streets. Given we are in the preliminary stages of this process, further data capture is still required to understand longer terms impacts. However, Medway continues to monitor the Tranche 1 school for unintended traffic impacts and is committed to updating the scheme as required.
- 4.10. The School Streets programme is also delivered in conjunction with a range of sustainable transport initiatives, that focus on building understanding of the importance of active travel and encouraging participation in young people. These active travel initiatives include programmes such as road safety education sessions, Bikeability courses to increase confidence when riding on two wheels, Walking Bus initiative, School Travel Planning and delivery of national focus campaigns, such as Walk to School Month. During the 2023/2024 academic school year, more than half of Medway's schools participated in at least one of these programmes. This included all of the School Streets programme Tranche 1 schools.
- 4.11. In Tranche 2, nine proposed School Street schemes have been consulted on (two 60-minute time restrictions per day on weekdays, to be enforced during term time only). The consultation started on Monday 16 September 2024 and ended on Sunday 27 October. The schools included in the consultation were:
  - Crest Infant School / Delce Academy, Rochester
  - Cliffe Woods Primary School / Cliffe Woods Pre-School and the City of Rochester School, Cliffe Woods
  - Fairview Primary School, Rainham
  - High Halstow Primary Academy, High Halstow
  - Hilltop Primary School, Frindsbury
  - Horsted Primary School, Chatham

- The King’s Pre-Preparatory School and Nursery, Rochester
  - St Margaret’s Church of England Junior School and St. Margarets Infant School, Rainham
  - St William of Perth Catholic Primary School, Canon Close, Rochester.
- 4.12. It is proposed that the nine schemes are enforced via the installation of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras with supporting signage. This was made clear within the consultation materials and survey.

## 5. Options

- 5.1. There are several design options that can be considered to restrict vehicles entering School Streets, including physical barriers and installation of ANPR camera enforcement. In July 2023 Medway cabinet approved use of ANPR camera enforcement.
- 5.2. The use of ANPR cameras is a commonly used design option for School Streets. Using ANPR allows exemptions for those who need to access the street during the restricted time, such as emergency service vehicles or Blue Badge holders (a full list of proposed exemptions can be found in the table in section 5.3). In addition, there is no time or resource requirement from volunteers or school staff. Following implementation, a lower compliance rate can be observed for a short period, as drivers may disregard signage and continue to drive along the school street.
- 5.3. A considerable benefit of ANPR cameras is the option to exempt certain drivers from the restrictions. The table below provides the proposed exemption policy for Medway’s School Streets. It draws upon best practice across the country and reflects responses and comments made during consultation and discussion with schools. Exemptions are only required when School Streets are in operation at the start and end of the school day, outside of these times, all drivers can use the street as they normally would.

Exempt	Not Exempt
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Emergency Services</li> <li>● Residents within the zone</li> <li>● Blue badge holders needing access</li> <li>● Carers of vulnerable residents needing access</li> <li>● Utility providers attending emergencies</li> <li>● School buses</li> <li>● Parents/ carers dropping off or collecting students with special educational needs or disabilities</li> <li>● Bicycles</li> <li>● Postal Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parents</li> <li>● Delivery drivers</li> <li>● Tradespeople</li> <li>● Visitors</li> <li>● Businesses</li> <li>● Motorcycles/ motor scooters</li> <li>● Taxis</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Refuse vehicles</li> <li>● School staff who are entering the school car park only</li> </ul>	
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Figure 1 Table of Exemptions

## 6. Advice and analysis

6.1. We recognise there are good reasons to exempt certain road users from the restriction of a School Street which, if managed properly, will not have a detrimental impact on the effectiveness of the scheme, the purpose of which is to provide safe spaces for our school children and their parents, carers or guardians to travel to and from school. All School Streets have therefore been designed with ANPR cameras to enable this.

6.2. An informal consultation commenced on Monday 16 September 2024 and ended on Sunday 27 October 2024. The consultation programme has been outlined in section 6 of this report.

6.3. A total of 1231 survey responses were received across the nine School Streets proposals. Appendix A provides a summary of the responses of the consultation.

6.4. In summary the consultation results show there is strong indication from all users that there is a conflict with traffic, congestion and safety outside these schools at these times. Local residents of the schools streets agree with the proposals however those residents outside the area and parent dropping of school have raised some concerns.

6.5. Of the nine proposed school streets, it is recommended that six are taken forward to statutory consultation as per the original designs. These include:

- Cliffe Woods Primary School, Cliffe Woods Pre-School and the City of Rochester School, Cliffe Woods
- Fairview Primary School, Rainham
- High Halstow Primary Academy, High Halstow
- Hilltop Primary School, Frindsbury
- St Margaret's Church of England Junior School and St. Margarets Infant School, Rainham
- St William of Perth Catholic Primary School, Canon Close, Rochester.

6.6. Based on feedback received and key issues raised, we are proposing to take these 6 schools forward to the next stage of statutory consultation, with the following considerations:

Issue	Response
Concerns around timings	Some respondents felt that restriction times should be reviewed to better suit school drop-off and pick-up times.

	<p>This will be considered in discussion with each school and changed as required to suit individual school needs appropriately.</p>
<p>Concerns raised about impacts to visitors in particular for vulnerable members of the community</p>	<p>Further communications with residents regarding exemptions policy, outlined paragraph 3.3 which enables assistance for care functions to resume as normal.</p>
<p>Impacts to families outside an immediate catchment area and must drive some of the journey to school.</p>	<p>Council will investigate the establishment of park and stride locations, or waling bus initiatives alongside any implementation.</p> <p>This could include allowing use of council car parks if appropriate.</p> <p>This would operate in line with the school street restrictions (weekdays, only during school term)</p>
<p>Some respondents were concerned about displacement traffic.</p>	<p>Where appropriate, Medway will investigate further traffic calming measures alongside proposed school streets.</p> <p>Options may include realignment of the central hatching, to help manage footway parking issues as well as ongoing traffic and air quality monitoring to ensure any scheme implemented doesn't not have any unintended impacts.</p>
<p>Concerns for traffic impacts on Maidstone Road Rochester near St William of Perth, and possible negative impacts on pedestrians.</p>	<p>The council will look to reduce illegal footway parking to ensure they remain clear for pedestrians.</p> <p>As part of implementation and subject to statutory consultation the council will develop pedestrian safety measures along Maidstone Road Rochester. This can include the realignment of the central hatching to enable safe parking, north of Canon Close as well as additional bollards to prevent vehicles from mounting the curb and blocking pedestrian access.</p>



	Any potential changes will be subject to a road safety audit to ensure compliance.
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6.7. For the remaining three school streets, it is recommended that designs are amended based on stakeholder feedback and taken forward to an extended statutory consultation. These schools include:

- Crest Infants School / Delce Academy, Rochester Cliffe Woods Primary School
- Horsted Primary School, Chatham
- The King’s Pre-Preparatory School and Nursery, Rochester.

**Crest Infants School / Delce Academy, Rochester**

During the school pop ups, teaching staff from Delce Academy raised concerns that the current proposal didn’t address the main area of concerns for the School along The Tideway. we are therefore proposing several changes to design including:

- extension of the school street to include The Tideway, from Hawser Road to Barnaby Terrace. The proposed static School Keep Clear camera would be removed, and pedestrian area expanded to improve pedestrian safety near entrance more regularly used by this school.
- Extension of school street zone to include Windward Rd and Leedward Road, down to The Fairway. This is to stop additional traffic accumulating at the entrance to Crest Road during operational hours.
- Revised plan is outlined in Appendix B to the report.

**Horsted Primary School, Chatham**

While in support of a School Street, the Head Teacher and school governors raised concerns that current design is not extensive enough to address problems faced by the school. To better improve child safety and journeys to school it is proposed to:

- extend the school street zone along Binland Grove, Barberry Avenue to Watson Avenue
- introduce camera enforced school keep clear markings along Crescent Way
- Revised plan is outlined in Appendix C to the report.

**The King’s Pre-Preparatory School and Nursery, Rochester**

The King’s School has raised concerns about the proposed School Street and introduced timed restrictions on Lockington Grove. Further feedback from residents along Roebuck Road, raised concerns of displacement, given the pedestrian pathway that connects Roebuck Rd with King Edward Road. Base on this feedback it is proposed that:

- Lockington Grove remain within the school street zone to ensure objectives of reducing traffic out the front of school gates can be achieved
- Roebuck Road between Watts Avenue and St Margaret’s St be included within the timed restriction

- Revised plan is outlined in Appendix D to the report.
- 6.8. A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) (Appendix F) has been undertaken to identify potential impacts of the schemes on school pupils and their families, residents and visitors to the areas and identified mitigations where needed. A full range of stakeholders were consulted for this purpose, including the Emergency Services.
- 6.9. Overall, School Streets advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristics, but in particular regarding age – with improved public health outcomes for young people. Where suggested, mitigation measures arising from the DIA will be incorporated into the detailed scheme designs where possible, and others will be met via the proposed exemptions policy and carried across into the relevant Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).

## 7. Risk management

- 7.1. The table below identifies some potential risk with the programme and the actions to manage that risk.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Procurement of ANPR cameras	The procurement of the ANPR camera's following agreement to continue may delay the progress of the programme	Discussion are already being held with the procurement team to ensure all necessary process are put in place ready to action should they be required	DII
Objections to Statutory consultation	Within the next stage of consultation there maybe objections to the schemes.	By undertaking an informal consultation first, we have identified any key concerns and through exemption and detail design phase have provide solutions where possible.	CII

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely	I Catastrophic
B Likely	II Major
C Unlikely	III Moderate
D Rare	IV Minor

## 8. Consultation

- 8.1. An informal 6-week public consultation began on Monday 16 September 2024 and ended on Sunday 27 October 2023. Residents within an agreed distribution area were hand-delivered leaflets detailing information on what a School Street is, how it is enforced, as well as providing details on

exemptions. A QR code to the website was provided where more information was detailed, as well as the link to the survey. An example of the leaflet can be found in Appendix E to the report.

- 8.2. A leaflet with a QR code and website link was developed for schools and parents and was emailed to all schools for them to circulate via parent/guardian mailing lists.
- 8.3. As a support measure, one metre advertisement boards were placed at two points of the proposed School Street, these boards had information relating to the scheme and provided the website link and QR code.
- 8.4. Pop-up sessions took place during the 6-week period where Council representatives visited schools during school pick-up and drop-off to answer any questions and provide information about the proposed School Streets.
- 8.5. Following the approval of the recommendations set out in section 10 of this report, a statutory 21-day consultation is proposed for the 6 School Streets identified in 6.5, with an extended statutory consultation to be held for School Streets identified in 6.7.

## 9. Climate change implications

- 9.1. The School Streets initiative will contribute to Medway Council achieving its Climate Change Action Plan. This initiative will actively encourage schools to take part in discussions on providing sustainable routes to school and the impact of travel on air quality, and public health. In turn, we expect to see a reduction in the number of school journeys by private car during the most congested part of the day.
- 9.2. If Medway does not continue the implementation of School Streets, this could negatively impact, and delay, achievement towards targets set out the Medway Climate Change Action Plan.

## 10. Financial implications

- 10.1. There are several implementation costs associated with the introduction of nine school street sites. This includes the design, undertaking engagement and consultation, associated advertisement costs, a statutory consultation, CCTV infrastructure (ANPR Cameras), carriageway changes and new signage.
- 10.2. The implementation of tranche 2 school streets will be a continuation of the £2,019,488 capital budget for moving traffic offences and school streets. Additional funding will also be obtained through the governments grant for Active Travel. This is approximately £450K.
- 10.3. The total implementation cost is approximately £475K.

## 11. Legal implications

- 11.1. The making of any Traffic Management Order is authorised by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended, which includes a general power to take into account anything that a local authority might consider relevant.
- 11.2. In processing permanent traffic orders in due course, the provisions of The Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, as amended, will need to be followed.
- 11.3. In making a traffic order a local authority also follows the provisions of The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, as amended. Failure to follow all requirements in making a traffic order would expose the Council to risk.
- 11.4. To facilitate enforcement of School Streets via ANPR, Medway Council obtained the relevant powers to enforce moving traffic offences. The Department for Transport (DfT) approved the powers for Medway as part of the agreement from the Parliamentary, Business and Legislation (PBL) Committee to lay the SI "The Civil Enforcement of Moving Traffic Contraventions Designations Order 2023" on 27 June 2023. These powers came into force on 22 July 2023.

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### Appendices

Appendix A – Summary of Consultation responses  
Appendix B – Revised design for Crest Infant School and Delce Academy  
Appendix C – Revised design for Horsted Primary School  
Appendix D – Revised design for King's School Rochester  
Appendix E – Example of Consultation leaflet  
Appendix F – Diversity Impact Assessment

### Background papers

None