

**MEDWAY COUNCIL**

REPORT	<b>Delegated Decision Report - 27/09/2023</b>
Report Title	<b>Safer, Healthier Streets Programme - Provision of Pedestrian and Cycle Zones outside Schools TRO Results of Consultation and Recommendations</b>
Department	Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration Frontline Services
Report Author/ Contact details	Alex Constantinides – Strategic Lead, Frontline Services
Wards affected	Gillingham North, Chatham Central and Brompton, Rainham South East, Rochester West and Borstal, Wayfield and Weeds Wood
Public Access	
Appendices	Appendix A Notice of Proposals (published in the Medway Messenger) Appendix B Responses received

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 As part of the renewed emphasis on quality of life and place shaping in local neighbourhoods, the School Streets initiative will provide safe spaces for our school children and their parents, carers, or guardians to travel to and from school. Building on our successful recovery from the pandemic, School Streets will improve air quality in the vicinity of our schools and support the wider community to choose more sustainable ways to travel.
- 1.2 On 11 July 2023, a report was presented to, and approved by, Cabinet on the details of the Safer Healthier Streets Programme - School Streets.
- 1.3 This report was produced following a public consultation on the proposed School Streets which took place between 2 June and 25 June 2023.
- 1.4 The Cabinet considered a report and agreed the following at its meeting on 11 July 2023:  
The Cabinet noted the results of the School Streets consultation as set out in Appendices A and B to the report (decision no. 99/2023).  
The Cabinet agreed to progressing the following eight School Streets, as detailed in paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6 in this [Cabinet] report, to statutory consultation, and subject to the statutory process, delegated authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, to proceed with necessary infrastructure work and implementation:
- Burnt Oak Primary School, Cornwall Road, Gillingham
  - Greenvale Primary School, Symons Avenue, Chatham
  - Miers Court Primary School, Silverspot Close, Rainham
  - Phoenix Primary School, Glencoe Road, Chatham
  - St William of Perth Catholic Primary School, Canon Close, Rochester

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Greenfield Road, Gillingham
- St Peter's Infant School, Holcombe Road, Rochester
- St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Bleakwood Road, Walderslade (decision no. 100/2023).

1.5 The statutory process referred to above means the formal Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process and the outcome of the statutory 21-day consultation period.

1.6 Feedback from the public consultation requested two additional schools be considered for the Safer, Healthier Street Programme. The Cabinet, at the same meeting on 11 July 2023, agreed the following:

The Cabinet agreed to progressing immediate feasibility studies for the following two Schools Streets, as detailed in paragraph 4.9 of this [Cabinet] report, and where appropriate, delegated authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, to proceed to statutory consultation and, subject to the statutory process and to proceed with any necessary infrastructure work and implementation:

- High Halstow Primary Academy, High Halstow
- St Benedict's Catholic Primary School, Lambourn Way, Chatham (decision no. 101/2023).

1.7 This report considers the outcome of the statutory consultation and makes recommendations on the following orders which can be found in Appendix A:

(The Medway Council (School Streets) (Pedestrian and Cycle Zones) (No. \*) Traffic Order 202\*

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DIRECTOR OF PLACE, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND STRATEGIC REGENERATION**

2.1 For the reasons set out in this report and the Cabinet report presented on the 11 July 2023 it is recommended that the Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration in line with approved delegated authority (Cabinet decision nos. 100 and 101/2023):

- Note and consider the objections received to these traffic orders and associated officer's response as detailed in appendix B of the report.
- Agree to make the traffic orders which give permanent effect to the 8 school streets as laid out in section 1.4 under the provisions of section 124, Schedule 1 and Part IV of Schedule 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 regulations 23 and 24.
- Agree to pause the permanent making of the traffic order for St Benedict's Catholic Primary School and High Halstow Primary Academy until further clarification engagement with key stakeholders including local residents take place.

### **3. TRO CONSULTATION PROCESS**

- 3.1 The statutory TRO consultation took place between 17<sup>th</sup> August and 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023 which included:
- Publication of the “Notice of Proposals” in the Medway Messenger on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2023;
  - Street notices were placed on lamp columns in and around each school street site
  - Emails to statutory / representative organisations, including the emergency services, and other key stakeholders.
- 3.2 The Notice of Proposals referred to above is attached as Appendix A.

### **4. STATUTORY OBJECTIONS / FEEDBACK**

As part of the consultation process, emails were sent to all statutory consultee’s notifying them of the advertised traffic orders and inviting feedback on the proposed scheme. Feedback received has been provided below:

#### Emergency services

- 4.1 On 22 August 2023 a representative from Kent Police confirmed that they had no specific objections to the scheme. The remaining emergency services have not raised any specific concerns, objections or comments in relation to the Medway school street traffic orders.

#### Road Haulage Association

- 4.2 The Road Haulage Association have not raised any specific concerns, objections or comments in relation to the Medway school street traffic orders.

#### Freight Transport Association

- 4.3 The Freight Transport Association have not raised any specific concerns, objections or comments in relation to the Medway school street traffic orders.

#### Bus companies

- 4.4 The Bus Companies have not raised any specific concerns, objections or comments in relation to the Medway school street traffic orders.

#### Other statutory feedback

- 4.5 As part of the TRO process, we delivered over 2000 letters to residents and business in the local areas to the school, emailed all impacted schools and updated the council website to keep the community informed.
- 4.6 During the 3-week statutory TRO consultation ten objections were received. The details of each objection can be found within Appendix B of this report and have been considered and officers comments provided.
- 4.7 Five of the ten objections were related to St Benedict’s School. Key themes raised included requirements for blue badge holders, impacts to traffic on surrounding streets and opportunity to provide feedback. All residents will be provided with a detailed

response addressing items raised and reassurance that further engagement will take place, prior to any scheme being implemented.

4.8 One objection was related to Burnt Oak Primary School. In it the resident questioned the following:

Theme	Question/concern/comment	Officers' comments
Restriction timings	If afternoon session could be reduced to a 45min window between 2.30 – 3.15pm.	Timings were developed in consultation with Burnt Oak Primary School and aim to address peak school traffic times.  Once implemented all schemes will be undergo a period of monitoring and review to understand if times need to be adjusted.
Deliveries and visitors access	Impacts to residents regarding visitors and deliveries.	Friends and family who do not hold an exemption can still visit any property, they just won't be able to entre and drive through the School Street zone for 2 hours a day. Delivery drivers will still be able to deliver goods, as long as they park outside of the zone during operational hours. Importantly restrictions are only in place for 2 hours on days when schools are in operation - that is only on weekdays during term time.
Traffic displacement	Concerns regarding an increase in traffic to neighbouring street outside the school zone.	The programme area will be subject to a monitoring period in the first few months of operation. If the data shows the programme is having unintended consequences, a review will take place and changes can be made if and where appropriate.
Alternate proposals	Request to consider a 'walking bus'.	Medway council has supported 'walking bus' programmes in the past, however given they are resourcing heavy many are no longer operational. A key part of implementing this scheme is working with schools to support the roll out, and the council would be open to exploring this opportunity, if was raised by Burnt Oak Primary as a priority. It would not be considered in lieu of a School Street, but an addition.

4.9 Four of the ten responses were related to St William of Perth Catholic Primary School who were objecting to the proposal. Concerns raised included:

Theme	Question/concern/comment	Officers' comments
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Operational times	Lack of opportunity to influence operational times of the school street.	Officers acting on behalf of Medway contacted the school multiple times to discuss the scheme and understand preferred times. Following an initial meeting St William of Perth, the school did not accept further offers to meet to finalise details of the scheme hence times listed in the TRO were standardised. Opportunity to further discuss was again reiterated to the Head teacher when notification of statutory consultation went out however the school refused to engage.
Objection process	Lack of publicity on how to raise objections	The public were notified that statutory consultation would take place via the council website and through the local press via the <i>Medway Messenger</i> . Notifications were also placed on site. All Head Teachers, including Mr Wills were notified via email of the consultation commencing. Mr Wills was also emailed a direct link to the TRO webpage, which outlined details for where formal objections could be raised
Evaluation data	Request for data supporting decision.	All schemes will be subject to a monitoring period, which includes conducting before and after surveys to assess the impact once a scheme has been implemented. Surveys will record traffic levels and monitor emissions around each school including St William of Perth Catholic Primary School.
Safety outcomes	Concerns around possible negative impacts on safety due to displaced traffic and need to walk children to school.	<p>The scheme aims to promote the use of alternative modes of transport to and from school. In most cases the catchment areas are small so it would be assumed that many children attending the school live within the area. Noting this may not always be the case and a vehicle may be required at times, school streets only extend to the closet roads around a school to allow parents to park outside of the zone and make a short walk to pick up or drop off a Child. In the case of St William of Perth Catholic Primary, Priestfield car park is located less than 10 minutes walk from the school.</p> <p>Further to this the programme area a monitoring period in the first few months of operation. A road safety audit will also be undertaken by an independent team. If the data shows the programme is having unintended consequences, a review will take place and changes can be made if and where appropriate.</p>

Consultation process	Concerns that the consultation process was bias and conflicted with other areas of the programme.	In line with best practice and council policy, an open and accessible engagement process was conducted to build understanding and seek feedback on the proposal. From May 2023, council officers directly engaged with schools and conducted a public consultation between 2 June and 25 June 2023. All outcomes of the consultation process were published in the report listed under item 6, which was presented in full to council and is publicly available.
Alternative proposals	Why were physical barriers not used/ considered as an alternative.	The council did consider a range of options. Physical Barriers are one design option to restrict vehicle movements within a School Street. This can be by placing barriers or planters across the road at the start of the street. The benefits to this method are very high compliance as vehicles cannot physically drive into the area. However, this option requires volunteers or school staff to install them at the beginning and end of each session, demanding substantial time and resource. This option can also put volunteers at risk, should drivers deliberately disregard the timed restriction. In addition, the use of physical barriers prevents access for residents or those who require access to property during the time of restriction.
Programme support	Concerns regarding a lack of general support.	As outlined in the report linked in item 6, 71% of local residents within the proposed School Street Zone were supportive of initiative going ahead.

## 5. IMPLICATIONS

The financial, legal and equalities implications of the scheme, and the impact on Climate Change, the environment and health and wellbeing are set out in the Cabinet Report approved on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

## 6. BACKGROUND INFORMATION (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

- 11th July 2023 – Cabinet Report: Safer, Healthier Streets Programme – School Streets

## 7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The core aims of the Schools Streets programme presented in these orders are to encourage people to walk and cycle more, improve air quality, improve road safety and reduce vehicular traffic outside schools. These core aims are at the centre of several council policies to help tackling the climate emergency, improve air quality and making Medway a safer place.

- 7.2 As part of the decision to advertise these orders through the cabinet papers the council has carefully considered the residents and stakeholders thoughts and opinions from the informal consultation.
- 7.3 No objections were received for the following six schools:
- Greenvale Primary School,
  - Miers Court Primary School,
  - Phoenix Primary School,
  - St Mary's Catholic Primary School,
  - St Peter's Infant School,
  - St Thomas More Catholic Primary School.
- 7.4 Burnt Oak Primary School received a single objection which outlined concerns on the times of school street, deliveries and impacts on surrounding streets. Discussions have been held with the school who provided the appropriate times and other feedback from residents in the local area have been positive. Given the concerns raised by this resident, the scheme will be monitored once implemented, and changes made, if necessary, to limit and mitigate any issues that occur.
- 7.5 St William of Perth Scheme receive 4 objections from 3 respondents.
- 7.6 It is acknowledged and has been considered that there have been concerns raised by the school and parents of St William of Perth of potential negative impacts on the implementation of the scheme. However, it is felt that the scheme will improve the environment and safety for those who choose to travel in an active manner to the school. It will also improve the condition of those residents that live nearby to the school. Given the concerns raised by the school and residents, the scheme will be monitored once implemented, and changes made, if necessary, to limit and/or mitigate any issues that occur.
- 7.7 This report and appendices have outlined the process and the outcome of the statutory consultation. Although we understand the cause for concerns at two of the schools, a robust monitoring process will be put in place and the schemes continue to be in line with the Council's corporate objectives and policies. There are no valid or relevant compelling reasons that has been presented during the statutory consultation that would require either a turn-round or substantive change to the traffic orders and the 8 school street schemes should therefore be made permanent.
- 7.8 St Benedict's Catholic Primary School received 5 responses from local residents in the area. These responses included request for information on how the scheme would operate for requirements for blue badge holders, impacts to traffic on surrounding streets and for the opportunity to provide feedback on scheme design. Given the scheme was a request during the informal consultation stage there should be an opportunity for further clarification engagement with residents and key stakeholders prior to the formal decision on the traffic orders.
- 7.9 No objections or concerns were made in regard to the High Halstow Primary Academy scheme however given the scheme was a request during the informal consultation stage there should be an opportunity for further clarification engagement with residents and key stakeholders prior to the formal decision on the traffic orders.

## **8.0 Final Decision**

8.1 The Director of Place, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, has noted and considered the objections received to these traffic orders and associated officer's response as detailed in appendix B of the report.

8.2 The Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, has agreed to proceed to implementation with seven of the proposed school streets listed below;

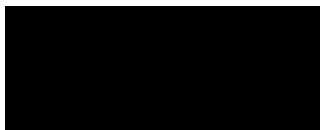
- Burnt Oak Primary School, Cornwall Road, Gillingham
- Greenvale Primary School, Symons Avenue, Chatham
- Miers Court Primary School, Silverspot Close, Rainham
- Phoenix Primary School, Glencoe Road, Chatham
- St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Greenfield Road, Gillingham
- St Peter's Infant School, Holcombe Road, Rochester
- St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Bleakwood Road, Walderslade

and has agreed to make the traffic orders which give permanent effect to the seven school streets as set out above under the provisions of section 124, Schedule 1 and Part IV of Schedule 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 regulations 23 and 24.

8.3 For St William of Perth Catholic Primary School, Canon Close, Rochester, the Director of Place has agreed, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, to pause on implementation having received three objections during the statutory consultation, this will enable us to conduct further engagement with the three respondents in order to address their objections prior to making a final decision.

8.4 The Director of Place has agreed, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration, to pause the permanent making of the traffic order for St Benedict's Catholic Primary School and High Halstow Primary Academy until further clarification engagement with key stakeholders including local residents take place.

Signed



Date

19.10.2023

Adam Bryan

Director of Place

Medway Council



Signed



Date

24.10.23

Councillor Simon Curry

Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration

Medway Council