

ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	School Streets
Meeting date	17 January 2024
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>School Streets are a way to manage traffic around schools in a way that is particularly beneficial for children and their families travelling to them on foot or by other active modes.</p> <p>Six School Streets have been successfully implemented/trialled with the BCP area with the last 2 years and this report provides an update on the programme to date.</p> <p>School Streets are aligned with the existing and emerging new Corporate Strategy objectives.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>The Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress to date and endorses the continuation of the roll out of School Streets across the three towns.</p>
Reason for recommendations	School Streets are a popular and worthwhile initiative, bringing improvements to health, safety and well-being. They are in line with existing and emerging Corporate Strategies around community, the environment, sustainability and young people.
Portfolio Holder(s):	<p>Councillor Millie Earl, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Connected Communities</p> <p>Councillor Andy Hadley, Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy</p>
Corporate Director	Jess Gibbons, Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	<p>Beth Barker-Stock, Sustainable Travel Team Leader</p> <p>Richard Pincroft, Head of Transport and Sustainable Travel</p>
Wards	Not applicable
Classification	Information

Background

1. A School Street is a road outside a school where motor vehicles are not permitted to enter during specific periods of time at the beginning and end of the school day. Exemptions for residents, disabled drivers etc may be permitted.
2. School Streets are now widespread across the UK, with most local authorities using them as a way to improve safety, perception of safety, and the environment around school gates.
3. The Council introduced its first School Streets on a trial basis in February 2022. There are six School Streets currently operational in the BCP Council area:

School	Trial start date	Current status	Notes
St Michael's Primary Somerville Road	February 2022	Permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) now in place	Additional physical changes currently in design ¹
Hamworthy Park Junior School Ashmore Crescent	February 2022	Permanent TRO now in place	Additional physical changes currently in design ¹
Livingstone Road Infant and Junior Schools Livingstone Road, Poole	March 2022	Permanent TRO now in place	Additional physical changes currently in design ¹
St Clement's & St John's Infant School St Clements Gardens	March 2022	Permanent TRO now in place	Additional physical changes currently in design ¹
Pokesdown Community Primary School Livingstone Road, Bournemouth	February 2023	Still operating under an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO); consultation has ended	Officer recommendation will be to make permanent – due at March Cabinet.
Oakdale Junior School School Lane	April 2023	In trial/consultation period	Trial period has been extended to allow adjustments to timing and operation to be consulted upon

¹ Additional changes funded by Active Travel England and have been subject to separate public consultation.

4. In line with experiences elsewhere in the country, the School Streets have been very popular and transformational in terms of the positive impact they have had on the schools and families travelling to school. The public consultation on the first four School Streets showed that between 79% and 93% of respondents believed that the School Street should be continued beyond the trial phase. Therefore officers believe that, subject to ongoing funding and resource availability, and keenness by local schools themselves, the Council should continue to roll out additional School Streets at suitable locations.
5. To date, the School Streets have been fully funded by Government revenue and capital grants, and led by the Sustainable Travel Team, with support from Sustrans officers who also deliver the Bike It Plus programme in schools on the Council's behalf. All the School Streets schools are also Bike It Plus schools and it is therefore difficult to confidently attribute any modal shift or behaviour change to one project or the other. The two are jointly funded (£143k this year) and as

they complement each other so well there is every intention, subject to funding, to continue assigning Bike It to any new School Streets schools.

Outline of Process

6. Early engagement takes place with ward members, school staff, school community and local residents and businesses in advance of the School Street being launched.
7. School Street implemented as Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETRO), whereby formal consultation takes place during the course of the trial for minimum 6 months (can be up to 18 months). The consultation uses the Have Your Say online engagement platform and parents and local residents are actively encouraged to feed back. Support has generally been very positive.
8. Results from the consultation, as well as observations from officers and school staff, are used to recommend whether or not to make the TRO permanent ahead of final decision.
9. School Streets are relatively new and as such, officers have been learning lessons through the schemes implemented thus far. Officers have also been learning from other local authorities and participate in a quarterly southern region School Streets forum. Officers have recently drafted a BCP officer guidance document, which summarises the lessons learned and should maximise efficiency and positive results going forward.

Outcomes (from first four schools):

10. An increase in children travelling actively to school more often (11.5%)
11. Air quality (informed by monitoring) improved across 3 of the 4 schools, although please note that the air quality monitoring undertaken had limitations – more detail about the methods used and outputs can be found in the appended Sustrans report. The fact that more children are walking and cycling suggests that there are fewer motor vehicles overall, reducing localised air quality outside of the School Street, as well as within the School Street itself.
12. Majority of children (59%) and carers (80%) feel safer.
13. Vast majority of people (85%) wished to see their local School Street be made permanent after the trial.

Options Appraisal

14. This paper is for informational purposes and as such there is no requirement for an options appraisal, however the pros and cons of continuing and/or stopping the delivery of school streets are set out below.
15. Continuing to deliver the Council School Streets programme means that officers can continue to work towards introducing School Streets at our local schools, aiming ultimately to trial a School Street at all suitable and agreed locations. This will enable a large proportion of local children to experience the benefits of this initiative – namely a calmer, safer, more pleasant arrival at and departure from school. School Streets are just one tool available to the Council to improve road safety around schools, and therefore the wider roll-out of School Streets does not preclude or reduce the implementation of other suitable measures as may be required.

16. The impact of stopping the delivery of school streets would be that the benefits of School Streets are not seen in locations where this initiative could potentially have a transformative positive effect.

Summary of financial implications

17. The School Streets programme is scalable according to available funding and staff resource. There is adequate revenue and capital funding, via Active Travel England (ATE) grants, for 2024 (£143k from Capability Fund Tranche 3 – external).
18. Subject to approval the 2024/25 Local Transport Plan (LTP) Capital programme shall include a budget (amount to be confirmed at Council) for School Streets to help deliver permanent changes at School Street locations once successful trials (ATE grant funded) have been undertaken to make it easier for them to continue to operate/exist into the future. Officers will continue to bid for further external revenue funding for future years delivery.
19. The revenue and/or capital budgets include allowance for the recharge of any programme management overheads including financial, consultation and communications support.

Summary of legal implications

20. The School Streets schemes are initially trialled using Experimental Traffic Orders (ETROs) made pursuant to the provisions of Section 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ("the Act") and can legally remain in place for a period of up to 18 months. This period allows for the time required for decision-making and implementation of a permanent TRO (if applicable), following a six-month consultation period running from the start of the trial.
21. Highway Authorities can revoke, amend and / or make permanent ETROs under the Act.
22. Highways Authorities are required to advertise proposed Orders and must consider any objections that are made in accordance with the Traffic Regulation Order process. In terms of the decision about making a School Street permanent at the end of the trial period, consideration is given to the consultation responses received, traffic impact, the wider national and local policy context, and to the assessment undertaken in respect of impact upon those with protected characteristics. The final decision is then made in accordance with the Council's standard procedure for TROs, currently via Cabinet.

Summary of human resources implications

23. As per the Summary of financial implications, the School Streets programme can be scaled according to available staff resource. Where external revenue funding is available additional support (currently Sustrans officers) can be brought in to deliver School Streets alongside officers from the Sustainable Travel Team with the Transport and Sustainable Travel Unit.

Summary of sustainability impact

24. School Streets help promote sustainable travel locally, in line with wider national and local transport policy. They are also likely to improve air quality outside the

school gates, by removing the majority of motor vehicles. Therefore the environmental impact of this measure is considered to be positive locally.

25. Some of the benefits may be offset by the displacement of traffic, however observation at existing School Streets has shown this to be limited due to the nature of the schemes and the short time duration over which they operate. School Streets will typically be on residential, non-strategic roads and therefore have minimal impact on general traffic. Any potential displacement of traffic may be offset where the School Street succeeds in promoting more local travel by sustainable modes.

Summary of public health implications

26. Sustainable travel measures help promote more active travel modes and these modes help promote a healthy lifestyle and improve mental and physical well-being. Existing School Streets have shown that they do lead to more children travelling actively to school, more often.
27. Reducing traffic at the school gates can help improve air quality by reducing air-borne particulates and engine fumes which can be concentrated in such areas.
28. Public Health Dorset supports School Streets across BCP.

Summary of equality implications

29. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) conversation screening document was completed prior to implementing the first BCP School Streets, and this was discussed at and approved by the EIA panel. It included the following:
- The School Streets schemes have an overall **positive** impact on people from protected characteristic groups, to varying degrees.
 - Both nationally and locally, the transport network has for many years been dominated by the private motorcar. Whilst the car undoubtedly brings advantages to many people in terms of mobility and convenience, its dominance has tended to be to the detriment of other transport modes, including walking and cycling. This has had a disproportionate effect on people who don't drive – which is more likely to be older people, people from low-income households, disabled people, people from a black or ethnic minority background, women, and of course, children. Many of these people are also the most likely to be adversely affected by air pollution and road danger. Certain groups in our population are more likely to be involved in and impacted by traffic accidents including school aged children. All of these things are of particular concern outside many of our local schools.
 - The aim of School Streets is to reduce road danger and air pollution, whilst encouraging and enabling travel to school by means other than driving. Rebalancing our streets will benefit everyone – including those who have no choice but to travel by car.
30. Note: feedback from the initial BCP School Streets has included reports that blue badge holders have found it easier to park outside the school, as parking spaces aren't taken up by other drivers, and that the calmer environment has helped children with Special Educational Needs.

Summary of risk assessment

31. A risk assessment is carried out for each individual School Street, in order to identify and mitigate any risks associated with that specific location and scheme.

Background papers

BCP School Streets Pilot: Creating safer spaces and increasing Active Travel to school, Sustrans, 2022

BCP Bike It Plus & School Streets – Annual Report September 2022 to August 2023, Sustrans, 2023

Appendices

Appendix 1 – BCP School Streets Pilot: Creating safer spaces and increasing Active Travel to school, Sustrans, 2022

Appendix 2 – BCP Bike It Plus & School Streets – Annual Report September 2022 to August 2023, Sustrans, 2023