

**COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25 FEBRUARY 2021**

SCHOOL STREETS INITIATIVE REVIEW GROUP

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To present the outcome and findings of the Review Group established by this Scrutiny Committee to review the initial findings of a commission considering the potential for School Street Initiatives and to make appropriate recommendations to Cabinet.

Summary

2. At a meeting of the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee held on 10 December 2020 a draft Terms of Reference (**Appendix 1**) in relation to the School Streets Initiative was approved by the Committee and it was agreed to establish a Task and Finish Review Group. All Members of the Scrutiny Committee were invited to participate in the Review.
3. An initial meeting of the Review Group was held on 16 December 2020 with an invitation extended to all Councillors. Officers from Darlington Borough Council were also in attendance.
4. A further meeting of the Review Group was held on 14 January 2021 to enable Members of this Scrutiny Committee to identify recommendations to be considered as part of the next stage of the initiative.
5. A number of issues have been considered and discussed at the meetings and the notes of those meetings are attached (**Appendix 2**).

Recommendation

6. (a) That the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee consider the following recommendations of the School Streets Initiative Review Group :-
 - (i) that the School Streets Initiative should be progressed to the next phase;
 - (ii) that the prioritisation of the top three schools for phase three be conducted using the 'Essential', Traffic Impacts' criteria and 'Supporting Criteria'; and
 - (iii) that a Quad of Aims be submitted to this Scrutiny Committee to establish a Task and Finish Review group to review additional measures available to address issues associated with traffic problems around schools.
- (b) That, if agreed, the above recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration

**Councillor Renton
Chair of School Streets Initiative Review Group**

Hannah Fay : 5801

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Health and Well Being	The initiative could have a positive impact on people's health and well-being.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Diversity	There are no issues relating to diversity which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	Potentially all Wards with a school
Groups Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Group is considered to be minimal
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	Not a key decision
Urgent Decision	Not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	To enable people to be more healthy and independent, to enable children with the best start in life, to enable people to be more active and involved and to provide a safe and caring community
Efficiency	The outcome of this report does not impact on the Council efficiency agenda
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. Darlington Borough Council has commissioned PWLC Projects LLP to undertake a review of Darlington schools to see which, if any would be suitable for a School Streets scheme. Members of the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee agreed undertake a review of the initial findings of this review of Darlington Schools to consider recommendations to inform the next stages of the work.
8. At the initial meeting of the Review Group on 16 December, Officers from Darlington Borough Council informed Members of the work that had been undertaken in respect of the Schools Street Initiative, outlining the aims of the initiative and providing details of the initial assessment undertaken to ascertain the deliverability of the scheme for all Darlington schools. This initial assessment identified eleven schools for further analysis and prioritisation.
9. At the meeting of the Review Group on 14 January Members held an in-depth discussion regarding the criteria which had been used to rank the eleven schools that were identified for further analysis and prioritisation and concluded that the proposed use of the 'Essential', Traffic Impacts' criteria and 'Supporting Criteria' to prioritise the top three schools for the pilot was fair.
10. The review group acknowledged that parking problems outside of schools was not a new issue and that enforcement, whilst difficult, was needed. Members also acknowledged that extensive consultation was a necessity, to ensure that schools, parents, carers and young people were willing to engage with the initiative.
11. The Review Group concluded that the pilot should be undertaken when schools are no longer subject to lockdown measures and highlighted the requirement for a review of additional measures that could be used in conjunction with the School Streets Initiative.

**QUAD OF AIMS (MEMBERS' REQUEST FOR ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED BY SCRUTINY)
SECTION 1 TO BE COMPLETED BY MEMBERS**

Appendix 1

NOTE – This document should only be completed if there is a clearly defined and significant outcome from any potential further work. This document should **not** be completed as a request for or understanding of information.

REASON FOR REQUEST?	RESOURCE (WHAT OFFICER SUPPORT WOULD YOU REQUIRE?)
<p>School Parking problems continue to be an ongoing issue for Schools, Residents, Parents and Children.</p> <p>A piece of work has commenced investigating the concept of Schools Streets that may form one of the options available to address these issues if the conditions and circumstances are conducive.</p> <p>The reason for the Quad of Aims is to enable Scrutiny members to understand the work to date, input their experience and their perspectives to inform the work going forward.</p>	<p>An officer resource would be required to brief councillors at a task and finish session on the work to date, proposed next stages and then consider any views and input from Members into the next stages of the work.</p>
PROCESS (HOW CAN SCRUTINY ACHIEVE THE ANTICIPATED OUTCOME?)	HOW WILL THE OUTCOME MAKE A DIFFERENCE?
<p>To form an online Task and Finish Group to review initial findings of a commission considering the potential for School Street Initiatives, to include discussion and recommendations to inform next stages of work and potential future Transport Programmes being put forward to Cabinet.</p>	<p>To enable Scrutiny members to understand the work to date, input their experience and their perspectives from Wards to inform the work going forward. If this initiative considered feasible it could be delivered at appropriate schools across the Borough to improve the environment from several perspectives.</p>

Signed Councillor*Cllr Culley*.....

Date16 November 2020.....

SECTION 2 TO BE COMPLETED BY DIRECTORS/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS
(NOTE – There is an expectation that Officers will discuss the request with the Member)

	Criteria
<p>1. (a) Is the information available elsewhere? Yes NoNO.....</p> <p>If yes, please indicate where the information can be found (attach if possible and return with this document to Democratic Services)</p>	<p>1. Information already provided/or will be provided to Member</p>
<p>(b) Have you already provided the information to the Member or will you shortly be doing so?</p> <p>No</p>	<p>2. Extent of workload involved in meeting request</p>
<p>2. If the request is included in the Scrutiny Committee work programme what are the likely workload implications for you/your staff?</p> <p>The output from this piece of work would add value to the process and inform the next stages of development. ...</p>	<p>3. Request linked to an ongoing Scrutiny Committee item of work and can be picked up as part of that work</p>
<p>3. Can the request be included in an ongoing Scrutiny Committee item of work and picked up as part of that?</p> <p>This is a stand-alone piece of work that will feed into the Scrutiny Committee work on the Local Transport Plan.....</p>	<p>4. Subject to another Council process for enquiry or examination (such as Planning Committee or Licensing Committee)</p>
<p>4. Is there another Council process for enquiry or examination about the matter currently underway?</p> <p>There is an ongoing Officer commission that would benefit from early Member engagement and input.</p>	<p>5. About an individual or entity that has a right of appeal</p>
<p>5. Has the individual or entity some other right of appeal?</p> <p>.....Not applicable</p>	<p>6. Some other substantial reason</p>
<p>6. Is there any substantial reason (other than the above) why you feel it should not be included on the work programme?</p> <p>.....Not applicable</p>	

Signed ...  Position ...Assistant Director – Transport & Capital Projects..... Date ...02/12/20

SCHOOL STREETS INITIATIVE – REVIEW GROUP

16 DECEMBER 2020

PRESENT – Councillors Renton (Chair), Bartch, Culley, Durham and Haszeldine

APOLOGIES – Councillors Cossins, Donoghue, McCollom, Tait

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors Ali, Crudass, Curry, Heslop, Lucas, Mrs Scott, Snedker and Wright

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Dave Winstanley (Assistant Director – Transport and Capital Projects), Sue Dobson (Transport Manager), Janet Easley (Transport Planning Officer), Hannah Fay (Democratic Officer)

The Transport Manager advised Members of the work being undertaken in respect of the School Streets Initiative. It was reported that there were plans for 400 Government funded initiatives across the UK; and that an external consultant was commissioned, using funding from the TVCA to undertake a feasibility study for school streets in Darlington.

The aims of the initiative are to reduce traffic, including parked cars; to encourage walking and cycling; and to improve air quality. Roads around schools would be restricted for use by motor vehicles; and a number of different enforcement measures were available including time restrictions, temporary infrastructure, physical enforcement and penalty charge notices.

Members were advised that all Darlington schools were assessed as part of the feasibility study with ten priority schools identified for further investigation/design work as part of phase two. Those schools were Hummersknott Academy, Bishopton Redmarshall Church of England Primary School, Harrowgate Hill Primary School, Heathfield Primary School, Heighington Church of England Primary School, Northwood Primary School, St Augustines RC Primary School, West Park Academy, Whinfield Primary School and Mowden Infants and Junior School.

A discussion ensued in respect of a number of points raised by Members:

- Following concern raised with regard to the initiative not considering individuals' needs, reference was made to a programme of schemes which could be used in conjunction with the school streets initiative. This included a series of 20mph zones which were in development.
- It was suggested that consideration be given to the introduction of timeslots for people that needed to drop their children off close to schools e.g. due to disability; and it was highlighted that different solutions were needed for different circumstances.

- It was highlighted that a number of different initiatives had already been tried to try reduce the traffic around some schools in Darlington, and that focus should be on the education of parents. Members were advised that 'walking bubbles', a new scheme had been launched to support active travel to school, using 5-minute walking zones; and that communications had been circulated widely to encourage this. It was highlighted that schools in Darlington do not have catchment areas, meaning that parents have a choice as to which school their child attends which may not necessarily be the closest school.
- Members made reference to the impact of Covid-19 on school streets noting that more children were walking with their peers; more parents were able to walk their children to school as result of working from home; and the staggered start times had resulted in less traffic around schools.
- Members were advised that the consultation process for the school streets initiative would be very thorough with a commencement date of Summer/Autumn Term 2021; and that this ideally would be face to face consultation.
- Following a question in relation to the number of secondary schools identified as part of phase two, Members were advised that less children travelled to school by car at secondary school and instead travelled independently by walking, cycling, or public transport however there was no data available regarding how secondary school children travel to school.
- Members were advised that in terms of road safety, Darlington was a safe place, with no child fatality since 2013. Members were provided with a demonstration of the North East England Road User Casualty Dashboard.

IT WAS AGREED – That a further meeting be arranged to enable Members to identify recommendations to be considered as part of the next stage of the initiative.

SCHOOL STREETS INITIATIVE – REVIEW GROUP

14 JANUARY 2021

PRESENT – Councillors Renton (Chair), Allen, Cossins, Culley, Durham, Haszeldine, McCollom and Tait

APOLOGIES –

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE –

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Hannah Fay (Democratic Officer)

A discussion ensued in respect of a number of points raised by Members:

- Members stated that parking problems outside of schools was not a new issue and that enforcement, whilst difficult, was needed alongside clear messaging that action will be taken. Reference was made to measures previously taken at schools to address the issues of parking, including mini police, enforcement, and engagement with children.
- Reference was made to the criteria used to rank the deliverability of the scheme at each school in Darlington as part of the initial assessment and Members queried whether choosing the schools which were the most straightforward to implement would provide the information required to be able to proceed with the rollout to other schools in Darlington. Members agreed that it may not always be possible to target the schools with the biggest problems hence the need to review additional measures that are available to address issues associated with traffic problems around schools.
- Members questioned the timing of the rollout of the pilot, highlighting that schools have already put in place a number of measures due to COVID-19 which have helped to address traffic issues around schools and that due to the current lockdown, fewer pupils were attending school in person. Members felt that the pilot should be undertaken when schools are out of lockdown and have returned to a level of normality.
- Members felt that extensive consultation should be undertaken to ensure that schools are on board and willing to engage with the initiative.
- Members discussed the criteria used to rank the eleven schools identified for further analysis and prioritisation and agreed that the use of the 'Essential', 'Traffic Impacts' criteria and 'Supporting Criteria' to prioritise the top three schools for the pilot was fair.

IT WAS AGREED – (a) That the School Streets Initiative Review Group submit the following recommendations to the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee for approval:

- i. Cabinet be advised of the Scrutiny Committee's view that the School Streets Initiative be progressed to the next phase;
- ii. Cabinet be advised that the Scrutiny Committee agree that prioritisation of the top three schools for phase three be conducted using the 'Essential', Traffic Impacts' criteria and 'Supporting Criteria'.
- iii. A Quad of Aims be submitted to the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee to establish a Task and Finish Review group to review additional measures available to address issues associated with traffic problems around schools.