

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT SUB COMMITTEE		
DATE:	15 June 2022	AGENDA ITEM:	6(a)
TITLE:	SCHOOL STREET - PARK LANE JUNIOR SCHOOL		
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Sub-Committee to make the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order permanent. In Spring 2020 the Council launched a School Street application process including guidance and has subsequently engaged with several schools which have expressed an interest in the potential implementation of a School Street outside their school. Park Lane Junior School was the first school to submit an application and Committee approval was granted in November 2020 to implement an experimental School Street on Downing Road and Lambourne Close.
- 1.2 Delegated authority was previously granted at the March 2021 SEPT Committee for the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services to be authorised to make the experimental Traffic Regulation Order permanent on the basis that no objections were received. However during the duration of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order for the School Street one objection to the scheme was received and is detail in paragraph 4.5.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to update the Sub Committee on progress with delivering the Park Lane Junior School Street as part of the Council's Active Travel programme and to seek approval to make the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order permanent.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub Committee notes the progress of the School Street scheme for Park Lane Junior School as outlined in this report.**
- 2.2 That the Sub Committee authorises the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services to make the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order permanent for Park Lane Junior School.**

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Council's Corporate Plan supports the delivery of new transport infrastructure in order to manage levels of congestion, improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions, whilst accommodating the significant levels of planned economic growth. The Council's approved Capital Programme provides capital funding for key infrastructure projects.**
- 3.2 Consultation on the Council's new Local Transport Plan (LTP) was undertaken from 4 May to 30 August 2020. The new strategy is being developed to help achieve wider objectives including the Reading 2050 Vision, the Climate Emergency and improved air quality. The LTP will be heavily focused on addressing these wider challenges through a package of solutions to provide realistic sustainable alternatives to the private car, alongside measures to manage demand to improve air quality and congestion. The new strategy will be aligned with other Council strategies including the new Local Plan and draft Climate Emergency Strategy.**
- 3.3 The Park Lane Junior School Street scheme aligns with the principles of the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP), Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), Climate Emergency Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy by addressing safety and parking issues that can impact in pupils and parents during drops-off and picks-up.**

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 At the meeting of SEPT Committee in March 2021, approval was granted to implement an experimental School Street on Downing Road and Lambourne Close (Park Lane Junior School).**
- 4.2 On the 16 December 2020 Reading Borough Council made an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order under Section 9 and 10 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The effect of which prohibited any motor vehicle, except eligible vehicles as agreed by Reading Borough Council, to enter into or proceed in the full lengths of Downing Road and Lambourne Close from 8.30am to 9.00am and 2.55pm to 3.35pm, Monday to Friday term time only. Downing Road and Lambourne Close shall become a Pedestrian and cycle zone.**
- 4.3 The Experimental Traffic Regulation Order came into operation on 18 January 2021 for a maximum period of eighteen months from that date.**
- 4.4 The experimental Traffic Regulation Order is due to end on 18 July 2022**

- 4.5 During the period of the Experimental Order one objection was received by the Royal British Legion Club, who were concerned that the closure would adversely impact their daily activities. Officers explained that the club and its members would be entitled to enter and exit Downing Road at any time during the closure period, and they were provided with stickers to help the marshals easily identify them.
- 4.6 Since implementing the Experimental School Street, Council Officers have continued to undertake parking and traffic surveys on Downing Road, Lambourne Close and neighbouring roads, to determine the current baseline usage of the streets. The results of the surveys are as follows:
- Analysis of the parking survey has shown a significant reduction in cars parked on the School Street, Downing Road, as well as on Walnut Way and The Triangle - disabled parking during pick-up times, which may suggest increased walking and cycling.
 - The survey has also identified an increase in cars parked in The Principle pub car park and on Chapel Hill.
 - Officers have undertaken traffic surveys in relation to pedestrian and vehicle movements during school street periods. The analysis shows that during the School Street restrictions there is an increase in number of pedestrians on the surrounding roads, which may suggest a modal shift.
- 4.7 A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) was undertaken on the 4th of November 2020 by an independent road safety auditor, followed by a further RSA Stage 2 on 15 December 2020. No issues were identified at this stage. The RSA Stage 3 identified recommendations relating to PPE, signage, marshalling and training, all of which were addressed prior to the implementation of the experimental scheme.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 In order to support the achievement of the Council's vision, as identified within its Corporate Plan 2022/25, the Council has developed three key themes:
- Healthy Environment
 - Thriving Communities
 - Inclusive Economy
- 5.2 This School Street will directly support the Council's vision for a Healthy Environment, and will have a positive impact for students, school staff, parents and residents, providing a safer environment during school drop off / collection.
- 5.3 Transport is integral to the functioning of business and the economy and monitoring of the Experimental School Street scheme suggests that this measure has had a positive impact in promoting active travel.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Transport is the biggest greenhouse gas emitting sector in the UK accounting for around 27% of total carbon emissions. As set out in the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25, this figure is lower in Reading with transport accounting for around 20% of carbon emissions. However, significant investment in sustainable transport solutions is vital in order to respond to the Climate Emergency declared by the Council in February 2019 and to help achieve our target of a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.
- 6.2 Proposals set out in this paper seek to support a step-change in transport infrastructure and services and a shift towards walking and cycling as attractive alternatives to private vehicles. This builds on the considerable success of increasing the number of walking, cycling and public transport trips into Reading town centre to 80% as part of the delivery of previous Local Transport Plans.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 The schemes included within the current major transport scheme programme have and will be communicated to the local community through public exhibitions, consultations and Council meetings as set out within the report.
- 7.2 Prior to implementation of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order an informal consultation was undertaken by Park Lane Junior School. An informal consultation letter was sent to local residents on 16 of September 2020.
- 7.3 A summary of the informal consultation responses was presented to SEPT Committee on the 18 November 2020.
- 7.4 A Statutory consultation was conducted between 17 December 2020 and 18 October 2021 in accordance with appropriate legislation, including Traffic Regulation Orders as appropriate. Notices were advertised in the local printed newspaper and were erected on lamp columns within the affected area.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, a public authority must have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act,
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Experimental Traffic Regulation Order is made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and has been advertised in accordance with the procedure laid down by Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996. Any comments or objections to the order can be made during the first 6 months of operation, after which the Council will consider and decide to either continue with the experiment for a further 12 months, remove the experiment or make the scheme permanent.
- 9.2 If agreed to become permanent, the Traffic Regulation Order will be made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and advertised in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.
- 9.3 If once the permanent TRO is made the school is no longer able to marshal the school street, Officers will decide in consultation with Legal Services and the School as to whether the Order should be revoked, or whether this is a temporary situation. Officers will also consider whether alternative methods of enforcement can be introduced.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Funding for the Park Lane Junior School Street is has been allocated from the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund, Capability Fund and Travel Demand Management grant funding allocations for Reading.
- 10.2 The purpose of this funding is to manage travel demand following the Covid lockdowns and to encourage a mode shift towards more sustainable modes. School Streets is one element of this work which includes a programme of incentivisation and information initiatives with a particular focus on walking and cycling.
- 10.3 The Council will continue to provide the necessary PPE, signage and any ancillary equipment required to maintain the School Street. This is not expected to exceed £1k per annum.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Strategic transport schemes update 14 March 2022
- 11.2 Major transport schemes update 16 November 2021
- 11.3 Active Travel Programme and School Streets Update 30 June 2021
- 11.4 Active Travel Programme and School Streets Update 15 March 2021
- 11.5 Active travel programme and school streets update 18 November 2020