

ITEM No ...7.....

REPORT TO: CITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 25 JANUARY 2021

REPORT ON: SAFER ‘SCHOOL STREETS’ TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT POLICY

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

REPORT NO. 30-2021

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council’s policy of road traffic management around Dundee’s primary school estate and seeks approval to implement measures that will create an environment for safer and more active journeys to school.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a approves the policy of implementing “School Streets” interventions at appropriate primary schools; and
 - b remits the Head of Sustainable Transport & Roads to progress Traffic Regulation Orders and undertake complementary measures that will support the required traffic prohibitions.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The measures outlined in this report will be met from the Capital Plan allocation for Sustainable Transport projects between 2021 and 2026.
- 3.2 With reference to paragraph 6.2 of this report, to support the implementation of this project it is planned to recruit a temporary member of staff. Funding for this temporary post has been secured from the Sustrans “Places for Everyone” programme for financial year 2021/2022.

4 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Scottish Government’s National Transport Strategy has placed walking and cycling at the top of the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and has asked local authorities to develop policies that support this ambition. Policies that support active travel to school will help the Council achieve a number of priority outcomes relating to climate change, air quality and health inequality.
- 4.2 Dundee City Council has recognised the need to improve the accessibility of school journeys and take steps to create a safer environment that encourages active travel. The School Parking and Pupil Safety Working Group, chaired by the Executive Director of Children and Families Service is a member/officer group that meets regularly throughout the calendar year and discusses key issues relating to school travel. The group has identified a need to improve road safety in the near vicinity of schools, tackle irresponsible parking and create a better environment for children to walk, scoot and cycle.
- 4.3 Dundee City Council records progress towards its ambition of achieving higher levels of active travel and fewer pupils being driven to school through its participation in the annual Hands Up Scotland Survey which takes place in September each year. The record shows that while there has been an increase in the number of pupils cycling and scooting to school, the numbers of pupils being driven to school remains above the Scottish local authority average.

The survey results from Dundee schools recorded between 2008 and 2019 can be viewed at the following webpage:

www.dundee.gov.uk/service-area/city-development/roads-and-transportation/hands-survey-scotland-how-dundees-school-pupils-travel-to-school

4.4 Dundee City Council has adopted a range of behavioural, enforcement and road design solutions to support families and children to make the decision to walk or cycle rather than drive to school:

- Headteachers regularly communicate with parents about what is expected of them at the school gates, and a number of classroom interventions that seek to promote sustainable travel have been delivered over the years to pupils;
- Safer Routes to School leaflets have been produced for all primary schools and are accessible on the Council's website;
- Bikeability (successor to Cycling Proficiency) has expanded significantly in Dundee in the last 2 years following the establishment of a dedicated "Schools Active Travel" team based at the Ancrum Centre;
- the "Play on Pedals" funded by Cycling Scotland initiative has been successfully rolled out across Dundee nurseries, creating a younger generation of cyclists;
- cycle parking facilities have been improved at most schools and the new campus schools have been designed to include high quality bike sheds;
- the Council's Parking Enforcement Team undertake enforcement operations, where possible in conjunction with colleagues from Police Scotland, throughout the school year in an effort to support schools which experience parking problems;
- part-time 20mph zones exist in the near vicinity of all Dundee schools with the potential for a growing number of schools to be located within permanent 20mph zones following the Spaces for People programme of 2020;
- a decision not to build extensive car parks and drop-off/pick up facilities next to schools thereby attracting more traffic, and instead a focus on promoting park and stride areas that encourage drop off and collection away from the school gates; and
- at Forthill Primary School and St Mary's Primary School, Lochee, part-time vehicle prohibitions were introduced in 2013, excluding all vehicles from the approach roads to the school, and Dundee's first "School Streets" initiative is targeted in 2021 at Fintry Primary School.

5 POLICY CRITERIA FOR SCHOOL STREET INTERVENTIONS

5.1 The 33 primary schools in Dundee are situated in a variety of settings with access and egress on to a range of different road environments. The aim of the Safer School Streets initiative is to minimise vehicular traffic during school drop off and pick up times but it also takes regard of the wider travel needs of the public and businesses.

5.2 It is recognised that the school drop off and collection hours coincide with peak road user demand periods and where school entrances are situated on main roads that also serve as key corridors for business, public transport and emergency services, prohibiting the movement of traffic for an extended period on two occasions each day is likely to be impractical.

- 5.3 In situations where traffic prohibition cannot be implemented, alternative safe active travel routes will be identified and developed with an onus on segregating vehicular traffic from school pupil movements. Where possible the creation of alternative entrances, accessible from minor roads will be explored.
- 5.4 For the purpose of this policy, schools whose only entrance is directly accessed from principal A class roads will not be promoted for traffic prohibition orders. Similarly, some B and C class roads may feature constraints associated with nearby economic activity or public facilities that suit an alternative approach to traffic prohibition. Accordingly, all primary school locations will be individually assessed on their suitability for a School Streets intervention and where found unsuitable, alternative approaches to improving the walking and cycling environment will be explored.
- 5.5 Active travel route improvements will continue to be developed at the eight secondary schools in Dundee as part of the School Travel Plans. The secondary schools are not being promoted for School Streets part-time prohibition of driving orders due to their varying access times and positioning on main roads.
- 5.6 Motor vehicles that do not belong to local residents will be prohibited from driving in the designated School Streets during the hours of the Traffic Regulation Order. The timing of the prohibition of driving order will be shown on signage situated on the boundary of the zone. Parked vehicles within the zone would not be affected by the restriction.
- 5.7 Residents of the School Streets will be exempt from the prohibition of driving along with emergency vehicles and contracted taxis for school transport. There would be no other exemptions and all other vehicles will be subject to enforcement by Police Scotland.
- 5.8 With the prohibition of driving for all vehicles with the exception of those belonging to local residents and contracted taxis, there will be some changes in driver behaviour. It is anticipated that there will be a limited amount of displacement of vehicles to adjacent streets. The part time prohibition of driving would be in place Monday to Friday on school days from 8.30 am - 9.15 am, and 3.00 pm – 3.30 pm. Accordingly, visitors arriving by car and delivery drivers may choose an alternative arrival and departure times to avoid the periods of the 'School Streets' closures.

6 NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 The School Streets initiative, which prohibits non-resident traffic from driving in the streets immediately adjacent to a school during designated hours, has been identified as one of the most effective approaches to creating a safer space for pupils. Councils across the UK have been introducing School Streets or school exclusion zones over a number of years, and it is proposed that this approach is taken forward in Dundee at all schools where such interventions are appropriate. An academic study reviewing existing literature from projects across the UK, including School Streets projects in Edinburgh, East Lothian and Perth & Kinross concluded that School Streets can support the number of children walking and cycling to school without creating road safety issues such as displacing traffic to neighbouring streets. A copy of the report can be viewed at the following webpage: www.napier.ac.uk/about-us/news/school-street-closures.
- 6.2 The introduction of School Streets at a city-wide level will require additional staffing resource and a temporary 'School Travel Officer' post will be established within the Sustainable Transport and Roads Division of City Development to deliver as their primary focus the programme of traffic management intervention schemes. Initial funding has been secured from the Sustrans 'Places for Everyone' programme for financial year 2021/22 and it is anticipated that future funding can be secured from this fund, or one of the many external funding programmes available to support sustainable travel policies.

- 6.3 The School Travel Officer will be able to learn from a growing community of school travel specialists working in local authorities across Scotland and help bring latest thinking and knowledge of the most successful projects to Dundee. They will also be available to support school communities when developing and renewing their School Travel Plans. Each individual school (or joint campus) will have an up to date and accurate School Travel Plan that records the actions that are being taken to support pupils. School travel plans also help to identify the interventions needed to improve the walking and cycling environment for individual schools and reduce the number of pupils travelling to school by car.
- 6.4 The School Parking and Pupil Safety Working Group has previously identified six schools/campuses, including Fintry Primary School, for priority interventions. From the start of the 2021/2022 financial year, the schools listed below will be promoted for a rolling programme of Traffic Regulation Orders to enable part time prohibition of traffic over extents of road meeting this policy's criteria.
- Downfield Primary School;
 - Craigiebarns Primary School;
 - North East Campus (Longhaugh Primary School and St Francis Primary School);
 - Coldside Campus (Rosebank Primary School and Our Lady's Primary School); and
 - St Andrews Primary School.
- 6.5 The Traffic Regulation Orders will be promoted in minimum batches of five school locations and it is targeted to implement this policy at all schools in Dundee meeting the policy criteria by 2025. To enable a consistent and timely project implementation programme, a single formal consultation with statutory bodies and the public shall be carried out as part of the draft Traffic Regulation Order process for each school location promoted for part-time prohibition of driving. The formal consultations shall be supported with literature detailing the nature and purpose of the School Streets interventions which will be issued to the schools within the scope of this policy's criteria.
- 6.6 The success of the School Streets initiative following implementation will be measured bi-annually against the September 2019 baseline results of the Hands Up Survey referenced in Paragraph 4.3 of this report to identify the level of reduction in school car journeys achieved.

7 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. There are no major issues.

8 CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The Council Management Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are in agreement with its content.

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None.

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