

13 December 2021

School Gate Parking

Ward(s): All

Portfolios: Regeneration

1. Aim

- 1.1. "Road safety affects everyone in our region and improving the safety of our roads is a key factor in making the West Midlands an attractive place to live, work and visit."¹ The council's approach to road safety, including outside schools, strives to provide a multifaceted methodology for reducing the number of people killed or injured as a result of road traffic collisions and to make our roads safer for all road users.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That Overview and Scrutiny Committee support the formation of a members working group to consider the council's approach to the specific issue of school gate parking.

3. Report detail – know

- 3.1. The regional road safety strategy, developed by emergency services and local authorities across the West Midlands, sets out an ambition of a 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on the West Midlands Roads by 2028. This ambitious target is founded on a 2015 - 2017 baseline of 1,021 incidents across the region.
- 3.2. Since 2017 both the number of killed or seriously injured [KSI] road casualties, and the number of slight casualties, have reduced year on year in Walsall. The total number of recorded incidents in 2020 was over 30% lower than in 2017.
- 3.3. At many locations across the borough, roads around schools experience a surge of traffic concentrated over a 50 minute period at school drop off and pick up times. This results in an increased risk of collisions with vulnerable road users and other motorists, unlawful parking, congestion and consequential impacts on air quality.
- 3.4. Statistics from the Department of Transport reveal that 14% of children killed on Great Britain's roads in 2018 were harmed during the morning school run between 7am and 9am and 23% after school between 3pm and 5pm. In Walsall, between 2017 and 2020, these figures were 10% and 18% respectively.
- 3.5. Additionally, a report from insurer Admiral shows a 43% fall of road collisions during the holidays at peak school times.

¹ Andy Street, West Midlands Mayor – West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategy

- 3.6. Work to improve road safety outside schools is carried out by a number of council departments who deliver a multi-faceted approach:

Road Safety Education

- 3.7. Road safety education is fundamental to achieving the regional ambition of a 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on the West Midlands Roads by 2028. The education programme is delivered to a wide range of ages and road user groups including school aged children.
- 3.8. Much of the road safety education delivered to educational establishments from pre-schools through to colleges is delivered through the A*STARS programme. There are currently 77 of a possible 86 primary schools and 13 out of 18 secondary schools on the A*STARS programme, some of which have highlighted school gate parking as a cause for concern.
- 3.9. A*STARS couples road safety education and the promotion of active and sustainable modes of travel in support of Public Health objectives and the Black Country Healthy Schools Programme. Just some of the initiatives delivered through this programme are pedestrian training for pupils in reception and year 3, transition training, scooterability, safety in the car sessions, smarter parking and 5 minute walk zones.
- 3.10. In addition to our transition work with students in year 6, 'Streetwise' is an interactive workshop for students in year 7 is delivered in secondary schools; focusing on distractions on the road. It is delivered in the first term when students have just started secondary school.

Enforcement

- 3.11. Traffic Regulation Orders [TROs] are legal documents that restrict or prohibit the use of the highway network, in line with The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. They help to manage the highway network for all road users, including pedestrians and they aim to improve road safety and access to facilities such as schools.
- 3.12. A mix of restrictions are in place across the borough and they are continually being evolved to take account of the longer operational hours of schools and the heightened demand for on street parking. Although not routinely reviewed, when concerns are raised, resource is dedicated to investigate the circumstances both adjacent to the school and in the surrounding roads so that a full understanding of the problem and the potential implications of different solutions can be assessed.
- 3.13. TROs follow a statutory process and key to that process is robust consultation. TRO consultations, combined with statutory processes can mean a typical and often simple TRO can take between 12 and 18 months to deliver. Complex or contentious TROs can take longer.
- 3.14. Once a TRO is in place, there are three ways in which the council can enforce against school gate parking:
- Fourteen civil enforcement officers carry out foot patrols on a daily basis including an average of five visits to schools per day.
 - Two CCTV vehicles are deployed across the borough during both the morning and afternoon peak school drop of times.
 - Four static CCTV cameras are used at locations that are able to accommodate the infrastructure

- 3.15. Based on the available resource, the council aim to carry out at least one visit per school per term. Additional enforcement is carried out across the borough during the first two weeks of September; at A*STARS schools; known parking hotspots and; in response to specific requests.
- 3.16. In the past 12 months, 1,473 parking charge notices have been issued for parking offences on school keep clear lines with enforcement activity focused during school run times. Additional parking charge notices have been issued for offences on double yellow lines however the way that this data is reported does not differentiate between locations close to schools and other locations where double yellow lines are in place.

Road Safety Engineering

- 3.17. All scheme requests are recorded, assessed and categorised. In the case of local safety schemes, sites must have a minimum of six personal injury collisions in the previous three years to be considered as part of this programme. This is indicative of the number of injury collisions which occur on the highway in the borough on an annual basis and generates a list of schemes which exceeds the current level of funding available. The traffic engineering team undertake the annual review of injury collisions to prioritise those schemes where road safety interventions will be most effective in reducing casualties.
- 3.18. Schemes that have a lower number of injury collisions are transferred to the promotion of community health and safety programme (PCHS) for further review. In addition to road safety, the factors used to assessment schemes in this programme include the potential impact on access to schools, local shops and public open space. The schemes are then ranked in priority order and delivered based on the availability of funding.
- 3.19. The council co-ordinates a Safer Routes to School program which aims to improve the safety of journeys to and from school and encourage sustainable travel choices. Investment in engineering measures is prioritised based on a number of factors including collision information, the school travel plan, the proximity to other amenities such as shops and the contribution to walking and cycling objective. Additionally, all schemes go through a consultation process with young people and the local community.
- 3.20. The schemes are designed to have community wide benefits extending beyond the locality of the school, and where possible are linked with other pedestrian and cycling schemes forming part of a network. Successful Safer Routes projects involve more than just engineering measures, with education, training and publicity campaigns all playing an important part.
- 3.21. The 2021/22 Safe Routes to School programme comprised of 70 potential schemes ranging from school keep clear markings and cycle parking to more substantial crossing improvements. The programme value is c.£1.4m with 8 measures totalling just over £50k scheduled for delivery this financial year. Details of the criteria used to prioritise investment is outlined at **Appendix A**.
- 3.22. Details of all of the above mentioned road safety programmes of work are reported to Cabinet on an annual basis as part of the wider Highways & Transport Capital Programme.

School opening times

- 3.23. In England, local authority maintained schools must open for at least 380 sessions (190 days) during a school year. Term dates are determined by school employers. The local authority is the employer for community, voluntary-controlled, community special or maintained nursery schools. For foundation, voluntary-aided and foundation special schools, the employer is the governing body.
- 3.24. The head teacher of a maintained school will recommend the length of a school day, including session times and breaks. The governing body must agree the recommendation. This is not in the remit of the local authority. Academies, including free schools, set their own term dates and school day.
- 3.25. This issue of schools operating a shortened day was raised in Parliament after a number of schools shortened their working weeks, closing early on Fridays, citing funding issues. The Schools Minister has stated that it is “unacceptable for schools to shorten their working week when it is not a direct action to support and enhance their pupils’ education.” Any changes to the school week/day must be evidenced by positive impact to children’s education.
- 3.26. Children’s Services work closely with our schools to facilitate, support and influence through a variety of regular meetings, weekly bulletins, forums and visit from our School Improvement associates Challenge Education

Financial information

- 3.27. In 2021/22, £560k of the council’s integrated transport block allocation from the Department for Transport [DfT] is being used to fund road safety engineering and associated assessments and design at locations with high number of injury collisions. Although future DfT funding is yet to be confirmed, there is an early indication that the council’s allocation will not be reduced over the next five years.
- 3.28. A further £120k of council capital is allocated for the promotion of community health and safety schemes. This funding stream is included in the Capital programme for the forthcoming financial year. This investment stream focus on locations with a lower number of injury collisions. In addition to road safety, the factors used to assessment schemes in this programme include the potential impact on access to schools, local shops and public open space. The schemes are then ranked in priority order and delivered based on the availability of funding.
- 3.29. As noted above, annual investment in the Safe Route to Schools programme is around £50k with investment prioritised using the criteria provided at Appendix A.
- 3.30. The income from parking enforcement is allocated to a parking account and the cost of operating the enforcement service is deducted. Any surplus parking enforcement income is ring fenced for traffic improvement projects as required by legislation.

Reducing Inequalities

- 3.31. The road safety education programme strives to target a range for groups and seeks to identify those groups who may not be reached by existing messaging so that an alternative targeted approach can be taken.
- 3.32. Road Safety engineering forms part of the wider delivery of the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan [STP]. Consideration has been given to ensuring that the

needs of all sections of the community are considered in transport projects. Further the West Midlands STP has been subject to an equalities impact assessment.

- 3.33. The road safety engineering programme will assist in improving facilities for all modes of transport. Plans will focus on improving access to key services and facilities such as education facilities.
- 3.34. TROs follow a statutory process and key to that process is robust consultation. This robust consultation seeks to understand the implications of the proposed order on all groups so that an informed and balanced decision can be made with respect to implementation. Equalities implications are a key consideration in this process. TROs generally seek to offer an overall improvement with respect to highway access by either improving safety or reducing congestion. Improved access to the highway reduces inequalities impacting older people; younger people; people with limited mobility and parents by improving access to amenities, work, education, leisure activities, friends and family.

4. Decide

- 4.1. School gate parking is a complex issues that demands a multifaceted response.
- 4.2. Overview and Scrutiny Committee could consider the approach set out in this report and endorse its ongoing implementation.
- 4.3. Alternatively, Overview and Scrutiny Committee could support the formation of a Member's working group to consider the council's approach to the specific issue of school gate parking.

5. Respond

- 5.1. If Overview and Scrutiny Committee support the recommendation set out in this report, a Members working group will be established in the first quarter of 2022. The work of the group will then be utilised to inform school engagement in the 2022/23 academic year and investment in road safety engineering in the 2023/24 financial year.

6. Review

- 6.1. The wider integrated transport capital programme is monitored by a group of council officers that meet at least every two months to review progress and consider any recommendations to be put forward to the transport capital delivery board, which is made up of senior officers and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration.
- 6.2. The transport capital delivery board meets at least every two months (aligned to the officer meetings) and considers performance against intended progress at regular intervals throughout the financial year. The board can make decisions about remedial action; budget virements; and project full or partial completion.
- 6.3. The effectiveness of all road safety projects and programmes is monitored on an ongoing basis and is reflected in key data e.g. traffic counts; KSI monitoring; school active travel measures etc. The council's monitoring activity is also supported by regional monitoring and reporting.

Background papers

Regional Road Safety Strategy -

<https://www.tfwm.org.uk/media/blti33m5/wmca-regional-road-safety-strategy-version-1-updated.pdf>

Walsall Road Safety Strategy -

https://go.walsall.gov.uk/roads_parking_and_travel/roadworks_and_road_maintenance/making_our_roads_safer#145821606-safer-routes-to-school-srts

Further information about the A*STARS programme -

<https://www.astarswalsall.co.uk>

West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan Settlement and Capital Programme Cabinet Approval –

<https://cmispublic.walsall.gov.uk/cmisis/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/3113/Committee/406/Default.aspx>

RS03 - Procedure for the introduction of Traffic Calming Measures -

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/images/importeddocuments/rs03l.pdf>

RS15 - Procedure for assessing Safer Routes to School schemes -

https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/images/importeddocuments/procedure_for_assessing_safer_routes_to_school_schemes_final.pdf

School admissions policies -

https://go.walsall.gov.uk/schools_and_learning/schools_in_walsall/school_admissions/school_admissions_policies

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Appendix A

Extract from RS15 - Procedure for assessing Safer Routes to School schemes

Our approach

Following the completion of the action plan contained as part of the School Travel Plan all scheme requests should be recorded on the Scheme Tracking System and then assessed and assigned to the appropriate category.

Where schemes meet the following criteria they should be considered under the Safer Routes to School programme. The Safer Routes to School programme is ranked using a scoring system.

The initial criteria is based around the schools need for a scheme. These criteria score 1pt each and are weighted at 50%.

- Requested by school;
- Contribution to Cycling Strategy;
- Contribution to Walking Strategy
- Identified in School Travel Plan
- No of collisions within 500m radius
- No. of child collisions within 500m radius
- STP completed
- STP reviewed

The second element of the criteria relates specifically to the scheme being promoted and the schools active involvement contributing towards modal shift. These elements score 1pt each while each collision will score 1pt.

- Collisions affected by the scheme;
- Nearby shop(s);
- Link to existing cycle network;
- Cycle storage at school;
- Site meets SCP criteria;
- Registered on STW;
- Undertake regular Pedestrian training;
- Undertake regular Bikeability training;

The final element of the score comprises the estimated cost of the scheme based on the number of affected pupils.

The calculation below should be used to calculate the score:

Cost points =	(No. pupils that cycle + no pupils that walk)	X 1,000
	Estimated Scheme Cost	

Estimating scheme costs

The cost of schemes is estimated based on the area. A unit cost of £30 per square metre is used to estimate scheme costs. Experience has proven that this cost provides a realistic estimate for these type of traffic calming schemes. The cost points are then added to the other two areas to give an overall score for that request. The spreadsheet automatically

calculates the overall score for each request. Once the scores have been updated then the data should then be sorted by the overall score to give the new rankings.

Consultation

It is recommended that the consultation process identified in RS03 - Procedure for the introduction of Traffic Calming Measures be followed in implementing this nature of work.