

Cabinet – 20 March 2024

School Gate Parking Update

Portfolio:	Councillor Murphy – Street Pride
Related portfolios:	Councillor Andrew – Deputy Leader & Regeneration Councillor Mark Statham – Education & Skills
Service:	Highways Transport & Operations – Place & Environment
Wards:	All
Key decision:	No
Forward plan:	No

1. Aim

- 1.1. To provide a highway network that is safe for all users, facilitates active travel choices and enables access to education.

2. Summary

- 2.1. In 2022, a Scrutiny Overview Committee working group considered the multi-faceted approach that the council takes to manage school gate parking. The group made 16 recommendations, a number of which have been progressed over the past 12 months as they align with existing approved policies and plans.
- 2.2. This report sets out progress to date and seeks support for continued implementation of the recommendations as set out at **Appendix A**.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That Cabinet note the progress to date and support the continued implementation of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Overview Committee in respect to school gate parking.

4. Report detail – know

Context

- 4.1. 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.

- 4.2. In March 2022, schools were invited to partake in an online survey about school gate parking. Sixty-three schools and early years' settings responded and of those establishments 63% said that school gate parking was always a problem around their site.
- 4.3. Between April 2022 and January 2023, a Scrutiny Overview Committee working group considered the multi-faceted approach that the council takes to manage school gate parking. They considered the following themes:
- Engineering
 - Partnerships
 - Education
 - Enforcement
- 4.4. The working group made 16 recommendations, provided at **Appendix A** of this report.
- 4.5. Progress against the recommendations is provided at **Appendix B**.
- 4.6. The most significant progression since the submission of the working group report is the implementation of moving traffic enforcement. In July 2023, the council was empowered to carry out the enforcement of several prescribed offences at specific locations, including in respect to school streets. Cameras were installed at all ten school street locations and enforcement commenced in September 2023.
- 4.7. During the first six months, councils are required to issue a warning in the first instance and advise that any further contraventions at the same location will result in the issue of a penalty charge notice [PCN].
- 4.8. Across the ten school streets, the council issued 2,556 enforcement warnings and 432 PCNs during the 2023 autumn term.

Council Plan priorities

- 4.9. **People:** Improving road safety around school gates empowers children and families to make active travel choices, helping them to improve their health and wellbeing.
- 4.10. **Children:** Providing safe access to education establishments contributes to giving children and young people the best possible start in life with access to learning opportunities.
- 4.11. **Communities:** A safe road network connects communities and contributes to creating a safe and healthy place for them to live, work, learn and socialise.

Risk management

- 4.12. 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, lower than the national average in both instances.

Financial implications

- 4.13. Measures to improve road safety during peak school times, including the implementation of school streets enforcement, have been funded from surplus parking and bus lane income. This income can only be used for funding costs of enforcement, costs of operating public transport and highways improvements.
- 4.14. Additionally, the council's Local Network Improvement Plan capital grant funding is split between three headline programmes: -
- Major scheme development and delivery programme
 - Strategic transportation programme
 - Road safety and sustainable travel programme

- 4.15. The road safety and sustainable travel programme comprises of £800,000 of investment including an allocation of £40,000 for safer routes to schools' initiatives.

Legal implications

- 4.16. The Highways Act 1980 places a general duty on the highway authority to keep its highways reasonably free of obstruction and in a condition that allows the safe passage of people and goods. Section 39 of The Road Safety Act 1988 places a statutory duty for highway authorities to:
- prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety;
 - carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles; and
 - take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to prevent such accidents.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.17. Any contractual arrangements will be procured in compliance with the applicable national Regulations and the council's contract rules.
- 4.18. Where necessary, the council's Procurement and Contract Management and Legal Services teams will work with Highways, Transport & Operations officers to ensure that call-offs from any frameworks are conducted in compliant ways and that all contracts for schemes procured under this capital programme will be validly entered into before any services are provided to the council.

Property implications

- 4.19. All physical interventions and enforcement activities are implemented on the adopted highway.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.20. A safe road network and active travel options promote physical and mental well-being by reducing accidents and encouraging activities like walking and cycling.

This fosters cardiovascular health, fitness, and community engagement while curbing sedentary lifestyles and contributing to overall public health and wellbeing.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.21. Enhancing road safety near schools addresses inequalities by ensuring all students, regardless of socio-economic backgrounds, have secure access to education. Safer roads diminish risks for disadvantaged communities, promoting equal opportunities for education. This proactive approach fosters a more inclusive and equitable learning environment, bridging gaps in access and safeguarding vulnerable populations.

Staffing implications

- 4.22. There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

Climate Impact

- 4.23. Improved road safety offers greater opportunities to make active travel choices. Increased walking or cycling decreases carbon emissions, alleviates traffic congestion, and fosters sustainable transportation habits, collectively promoting environmental well-being and supporting the efforts the council and residents to combat climate change.

Consultation

- 4.24. All road safety engineering measures and traffic regulation orders are subject to local consultation as part of the implementation process.

5. Decide

- 5.1. Cabinet is asked to note the work being carried out in respect to school gate parking and support the continued implementation of the recommendations set out at **Appendix A**.

6. Respond

- 6.1. If approved, Highways, Transport & Operations officers will continue to progress the actions set out at **Appendix A**.

7. Review

- 7.1. Progress against the action tracker will be reported to the Cabinet member on a quarterly basis at Portfolio Holder briefings.

8. Appendices

Appendix A: Scrutiny Overview Working Group Recommendations

Appendix B: Scrutiny Overview Working Group Recommendations Tracker

9. Background Papers

9.1. Scrutiny Overview Working Group Report: [Improving School Gate Parking](#)

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7 March 2024



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Portfolio Holder – Street Pride

7 March 2024

Scrutiny Overview Working Group Recommendations

Engineering

1. That the Council continue to support the roll out of the School Streets Programme through the continuation of investment into school enforcement static cameras.
2. The Head of Highways, Transport & Operations investigate, in consultation with the Head of Planning, the use of Section 106 contributions to improve the safety of roads surrounding schools.
3. That Head of Highways, Transport & Operations investigates the potential benefit of creating 20mph zones around schools as part of 'We Are Walsall 2040'.
4. That the Head of Highways, Transport & Operations investigate the creation of standard non-statutory signage for use on school premises outside schools in Walsall to encourage responsible driver behaviour with respect to parking and idling. The signage should include a warning that CEOs operate in the area.

Partnership

5. That Officers of the Council work in partnership with West Midlands Police to combat problem areas for the school gate parking. The Working Group support the establishment of a liaison group (to discuss enforcement activity) between the Council and the Police.
6. Continue to encourage parents/carers and pupils to use alternative methods of travel to and from school
7. That the Council produce a new education campaign before the start of the new school year on the issue of road safety and school gate parking a. To invite schools as part of this campaign to design new road signage and contribute to a road safety video aimed at parents and pupils.
8. To request that the Council's two representatives currently sitting on the Transport for West Midlands Transport Delivery Committee raise the relevant recommendations of this working group at a strategic level.
9. Request that the Portfolio Holder for Education and the Executive Director of Children's Services write to all head teachers in the Borough to highlight best practice and provide guidance (including the A*Stars programme) in relation to safety of children on roads near their schools.

Education

10. That the Council continue to encourage schools currently not participating in the A*STARS programme to become involved.
11. To encourage, through the A*STARS Programme, parents/carers to access schools via sustainable modes, but if they must drive to park five minutes' walk from the school gate to alleviate congestion and to contribute to public health.

- a. Schools are requested to identify local parking provision (where possible) to provide park and walk opportunities.

Enforcement

12. That the Head of Highways Transport & Operations explores the extension of Traffic Regulation Officers surrounding schools to maximise their use to improve safety.
13. To request that the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration write to the Secretary of State for Transport to ask that the Government support the rollout of powers to Councils to enforce via CCTV Traffic Regulation Orders and that loopholes in the existing legislation be closed, including supporting the granting of powers to Councils to enforce obstructions of highways offenses.
14. That the Council uses the Moving Traffic Offences powers once granted.
15. That the Head of Highways Transport & Operations work with APCOA to explore changing the uniform of Civil Enforcement Officers to make them more visible to the public and act as a deterrent.
16. That the level of enforcement around schools is increased.

Appendix B

Scrutiny Overview Working Group Recommendations – Progress Tracker

Action	Detail	Status	Comments
Engineering			
1	That the Council continue to support the roll out of the School Streets Programme through the continuation of investment into school enforcement static cameras.		School street camera enforcement now in place at 10 schools with further opportunities for schemes, funded from parking and bus line income, being explored.
2	The Head of Highways, Transport & Operations investigate, in consultation with the Head of Planning, the use of Section 106 contributions to improve the safety of roads surrounding schools.		Section 106 Board was established in October 2022 and is ongoing with regular highways and transport officer representation
3	That Head of Highways, Transport & Operations investigates the potential benefit of creating 20mph zones around schools as part of 'We Are Walsall 2040'.		On hold - Awaiting revised government guidance on 20mph speed limits.
4	That the Head of Highways, Transport & Operations investigate the creation of standard non-statutory signage for use on school premises outside schools in Walsall to encourage responsible driver behaviour with respect to parking and idling. The signage should include a warning that CEOs operate in the area.		Railing banners with appropriate / considerate parking messages and anti-idling are available for schools to loan through the A*STARS programme. Additional permanent signage detailing restrictions is installed outside schools as standard.
Partnership			
5	That Officers of the Council work in partnership with West Midlands Police to combat problem areas for the school gate parking. The Working Group support the establishment of a liaison group (to discuss enforcement activity) between the Council and the Police.		Liaison with the police has been ongoing, particularly since the implementation of moving traffic enforcement. A local road safety working group comprising council officers, the police and other partners is being explored and considerable joint work already takes place regionally.
6	Continue to encourage parents/carers and pupils to use alternative methods of travel to and from school		This is promoted through the council's A*STARS programme.
7	That the Council produce a new education campaign before the start of the new school year on the issue of road safety and school gate parking (a) To invite schools as part of this campaign to design new road signage and contribute to a road safety video aimed at parents and pupils.		Resources are sent to guardians of new school starters promoting active travel methods and the associated benefits and explaining the parking restrictions and reasons to adhere to these. Transition training to pupils moving from primary to secondary school also promotes the use of active travel, coupled with

Action	Detail	Status	Comments
			Bikeability training to educate pupils on using active modes of travel safely. Additional investment will need to be secured if a road safety video is to be delivered.
8	To request that the Council's two representatives currently sitting on the Transport for West Midlands Transport Delivery Committee raise the relevant recommendations of this working group at a strategic level.		To be raised once a further update has been provided to Cabinet.
9	Request that the Portfolio Holder for Education and the Executive Director of Children's Services write to all head teachers in the Borough to highlight best practice and provide guidance (including the A*Stars programme) in relation to safety of children on roads near their schools.		
Education			
10	That the Council continue to encourage schools currently not participating in the A*STARS programme to become involved.		Several new schools have joined the A*STARS programme this year as part of targeted engagement activity.
11	To encourage, through the A*STARS Programme, parents/carers to access schools via sustainable modes, but if they must drive to park five minutes' walk from the school gate to alleviate congestion and to contribute to public health. (a) Schools are requested to identify local parking provision (where possible) to provide park and walk opportunities.		In the autumn term of this academic year (23/24) 24 schools have set up or plan to set up a 5 minute walk zone, 3 schools plan to introduce a park and stride scheme, 3 schools are hosting 'let's walk together' events and 4 schools either have or plan to set up a Walking Bus. The Walking or Wheeling scheme recorded 75,308 active journeys in the autumn term.
Enforcement			
12	That the Head of Highways Transport & Operations explores the extension of Traffic Regulation Officers surrounding schools to maximise their use to improve safety.		Traffic regulation orders are amended twice yearly. Any amendments to the restrictions outside schools will be identified in partnership with the schools via our A*STARS engagement and delivered via this process.
13	To request that the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration write to the Secretary of State for Transport to ask that the Government support the rollout of powers to Councils to enforce via CCTV Traffic Regulation Orders and that loopholes in the existing legislation be closed, including supporting the granting of powers to Councils to enforce obstructions of highways offenses.		A consultation on enforcement of public highway obstructions already undertaken by the Department for Transport nearly 2 years ago – the consultation has now closed and the outcome is awaited. The implementation of moving traffic enforcement powers has significantly increased the scope

Action	Detail	Status	Comments
			of enforcement that local highway authorities can do via CCTV.
14	That the Council uses the Moving Traffic Offences powers once granted.		The council was granted moving traffic enforcement powers at specific locations, including all ten school streets, in July 2023.
15	That the Head of Highways Transport & Operations work with APCOA to explore changing the uniform of Civil Enforcement Officers to make them more visible to the public and act as a deterrent.		Uniform requirements for civil enforcement officers are detailed in the relevant legislation with limited scope for change.
16	That the level of enforcement around schools is increased.		The implementation of camera enforcement in respect to school streets and school keep clear markings has significantly increased enforcement provision.