



**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 5 NOVEMBER 2019**

SUBJECT: SCHOOL STREETS

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND
FINANCE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report details the recent School Streets one day road closure at New Elgin Primary School and gives consideration to a possible way forward for further trials to inform a policy decision on whether the introduction of School Streets road closures in Moray should be pursued and how they should be implemented.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (F) (17 and 20) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to traffic management functions, including the preparation and implementation of traffic management schemes, and the making of Orders for the regulation and management of traffic.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Committee is asked to:-

- (i) note the outcomes of the one day School Streets event at New Elgin Primary School;**
- (ii) approve a trial of School Streets at two locations in Moray funded from Cycling Walking & Safer Streets Grant Funding;**
- (iii) delegate authority to the Head of Environmental & Commercial Services to select the sites – based on the criteria in para 6.6; and**
- (iv) note that the findings of the trial and a recommended policy position will be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A School Street is when the roads around a school are temporarily closed to vehicles on each school day, during set times when pupils are being dropped

off or picked up. Residents who live on the closed roads are permitted to continue to use their vehicles. Access for doctors and utility companies is also generally permitted.

- 3.2 The purpose of a School Street is to remove / drastically reduce the number of moving vehicles in the vicinity of a school in order to:
- Tackle air pollution
 - Reduce road safety risks
 - Encourage active travel and its associated health & environment benefits
- 3.3 On 6 September 2019 a one-way School Street closure was enacted at New Elgin Primary School in conjunction with the sustainable transport charity Living Streets who had organised a prize giving event for that day.
- 3.4 Moray Council utilised a Temporary Restriction of Traffic Order for the one-day closure. If School Street trials for a longer period were to be undertaken at any location, then an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order would need to be promoted and implemented. Enforcement of a School Street and the related Traffic Order is by Police Scotland.

4. SCHOOL STREETS IN OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITY AREAS

- 4.1 School Street closures which restrict the use of cars and other motorised vehicles from streets outside and/or around school entrances have been implemented in Edinburgh with pilot projects also taking place in Glasgow.
- 4.2 The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) invited schools within their area to apply for inclusion in their School Street Pilot, which was a commitment in their Local Transport Strategy 2014-2019. More than thirty schools expressed an interest in the pilot, with nine schools being selected. All of the selected schools had road safety concerns resulting from number and behaviour of drivers around the school entrances and met previously agreed selection criteria.
- 4.3 An Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) was implemented at each school site to facilitate the legal restriction of motor vehicles (with some exemptions) on relevant streets. To make drivers aware of the restrictions, large signs were installed at all entry points to the Schools Streets area which flash during school drop off and pick up times. Exemptions for specific vehicles were included in the ETRO e.g. care providers, emergency vehicles, and residents within the closure areas. These users were exempt from any restrictions so long as they applied for and displayed a permit through the council.
- 4.4 In the Edinburgh pilot there were issues associated with motorist compliance and enforcement difficulties and the displacement of vehicles during school drop off and pick up times to surrounding streets. Occasional requests for Police presence at locations experiencing non-compliance were made with the Police issuing nine conditional offers and numerous warnings to motorists during the pilot period.
- 4.5 There were a number of benefits evidenced throughout the pilot, which included lower vehicle speeds and an overall reduction in number of vehicles

on the streets surrounding the schools during the restriction times. The perception of the parents/carers and residents in the school area improved throughout the pilot with regard to safety, compliance and inconvenience. The number of children walking to/from school increased with those being driven having decreased.

- 4.6 The cost of the CEC School Streets Pilot was £186,218 (spread over the financial years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017). This equated to £21,000 per school. Approximately half of this cost was for the provision of signage and road markings. The costs also included staff costs, the provision and administration of permits, traffic surveys and consultation and communications. Some school resources were also required. It should be noted that the CEC project did not make any physical changes to the road network. The requirement for any changes to road infrastructure would significantly increase the cost of any pilot project.
- 4.7 Glasgow City Council are also in the process of running School Streets pilot projects for six schools, which began in August 2019.

5. NEW ELGIN PRIMARY SCHOOL ONE DAY CLOSURE

- 5.1 A one day School Street closure took place at New Elgin Primary School on 6 September 2019. This temporary closure was in association with a Living Streets event and prize giving at the school. From 8:30 to 09:00 in the morning and from 14:30 to 15:00 in the afternoon, the junction at School Brae Place and Bezack Street was closed to through traffic. A map showing the area of the closure and the diversion routes is attached as **Appendix A**.
- 5.2 This one day closure acted to further raise awareness of ongoing issues and concerns regarding illegal parking and unsafe practices around the school. Traffic Calming has already been installed on the roads around the school and a School Travel Plan was developed in 2013, with behaviour change programs enacted at various times. Police Scotland have also run Road Safety Operations around the school to enforce nearby restrictions and educate drivers about their parking and driving.
- 5.3 For the one day closure a ‘Temporary Restriction of Traffic’ application was submitted to enable the road closure. This was supported by letters to all residents within the closure area sent one week prior to the closure. The school were involved in planning the event with prior notification given to staff, pupils and parents.
- 5.4 The following table illustrates some of the benefits and challenges of delivering this one day intervention in New Elgin.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and pupils highly engaged and ‘on message’ before closure was planned. • Council and partners (including police, public health and public transport) supportive of idea. • Small scale scheme able to be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little time for changes and adaptations to the plans ahead of closure – tight timescale due to prize giving date already fixed at school. • One day only – impact likely to diminish afterwards

managed with limited staffing.	
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense that everything else has already been tried to resolve the traffic issue • The day was deemed to be successful by participants and observers. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional charges for signage / traffic orders • Residential streets and cul-de-sac areas difficult to manage with some traffic ‘trapped’ on those streets during the closures.

5.5 Living Streets undertook before and after surveys to gauge the perception of pupils, parents, residents and school staff of the one day closure. The survey issued to the school, parents and residents after the event is attached as **Appendix B**.

5.6 The results of the online feedback have been received. However paper copies of the surveys have yet to be collected and analysed. The majority of online respondents were parents of pupils at the school

5.7 Vehicle and Pedestrian surveys were also undertaken by Living Streets in the direct vicinity of the school. However the data proved to be inconclusive as it did not cover the surrounding streets where displacement activity would have been present e.g. parents/carers still driving as close as possible to the school.

- 84% of the online respondents considered that the closure made a positive difference to the area around the school.
- 70% of online respondents rated the part time trial closure as the most effective measure for helping to promote safe and active travel and easing congestion.
- 77% of respondents stated that they would be supportive of further part time School Street closures, with the remainder of respondents stating that their support would be dependent on the detail of any closure.

An update of the responses will be given at Committee to include any paper surveys submitted to the school.

5.8 Information from ‘Travel Tracker’, which is used to monitor pupils travel behaviours at the school, indicated that more children chose to actively travel on the closure day, 92%, with fewer children being driven into school. On the following Friday (13th September) only 56% of children travelled actively to school.

5.9 Vehicle and Pedestrian surveys were also undertaken by Living Streets in the direct vicinity of the school. However the data proved to be inconclusive as it did not cover the surrounding streets where displacement activity would have been present e.g. parents/carers still driving as close as possible to the school.

6. SCHOOL STREETS FOR MORAY

6.1 The one day event at New Elgin was clearly well received, and there has already been interest in extension of the School Streets concept across Moray.

- 6.2 Further trials or pilot projects would be required to objectively determine if School Streets are appropriate for Moray and, if so, to develop a policy position with clear guidance relating to the criteria and conditions around a school that would result in a School Street project being promoted and implemented.
- 6.3 It is proposed that two trial sites are identified using the criteria in para 6.6 below. The trial project is proposed to run from 13 April 2020 (start of summer term) to 18 December 2020 (end of winter term).
- 6.4 The trial sites will measure success in achieving the purpose of School Streets (as set out in para 3.2 above) by assessing
- Reduction in vehicle movements
 - Levels of active travel
 - Perception of safety
 - Road safety incident statistics
- 6.5 The cost of the trial should be no more than £40,000 (£20,000 per site), based on costs for Edinburgh City Council. The funding for this will come from the annual Cycling Walking and Safer Streets ring fenced grant from Scottish Government. It should be noted that if the trials are successful and a decision is made to make the trial sites permanent, then the additional costs would be relatively modest, as the initial funding would cover the principal costs of signs and lines etc. If the trial is not successful then any alterations to signs and lines would be removed.
- 6.6 In Edinburgh, where there has been some success with School Streets projects, key selection criteria was used to rank schools which were interested in being included for as part of their pilot project, which was updated to address some of the outcomes of the pilot. These criteria include:
- The proven positive support from school staff, parents and school councils, with schools willing to formally sign a written commitment to ensure that they will pro-actively promote the scheme to parents, regularly ascertain pupil travel data, and facilitate the gathering of views from parents/the school community;
 - The current number of travel planning, walking, cycling and curriculum initiatives being undertaken;
 - The practicalities of delivering the scheme, including availability of diversion routes around the closure, the ability of surrounding streets to accommodate displaced traffic movements including appropriate areas for parking;
 - The school entrance must not be on a bus route;
 - The availability of suitable 'Park and Stride' locations (i.e. alternative locations where parents can park away from the school and walk, e.g. non-residential parking areas), with surrounding streets being able safely enable 'Park and Stride' movements via footways and crossing points;
 - High levels of car use to/from the school;
 - High levels of congestion at the school entrances;
 - The proposed School Streets have little by way of alternative trip attractors (i.e. care homes, doctors surgeries) that would necessitate increased vehicle exemption permits; and

- The Schools Streets have sufficient space and visibility options for the positioning of signage (at entries and potentially internal repeater signage).

7. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

A School Streets policy would contribute to the corporate and LOIP priorities relating to healthy & connected communities and a growing diverse and sustainable economy.

(b) Policy and Legal

Enforcement of a School Streets closure in Moray would be undertaken by Police Scotland.

(c) Financial implications

There is a cost associated with progressing a School Streets trial, with anticipated costs of £40,000 which will be funded by from the Cycling Walking and Safer Streets annual grant.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no specific risks associated this report. However there are risks associated with the implementation of a School Streets pilot project which include lack of enforcement, insufficient local community support to progress projects, non-compliance by motorists and no change in parental behaviour. The purpose of the trial sites is to assess these aspects.

(e) Staffing Implications

Staff time and resources will be required to approach school and undertake the initial assessment. Further staff time and resources would be required to prepare a policy, design and implement of a programme of School Street closures. This will be resourced from the existing team, and balanced with other planned priorities.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equalities and Rights Impact Assessment would need to be carried out to support any School Streets pilot. The introduction of a school street pilot could bring enhancements to life, health, education and learning through removing/reducing the number of vehicles within the School Streets zone for periods of around 30 minutes before and after school times.

It could provide opportunities for children to walk and cycle to school so bringing about reductions in childhood obesity and providing them with opportunities to gain practical road safety skills and knowledge.

The group likely to be impacted on the most is the disabled if access was denied to blue badge holders; it would be an issue if the distance they

were required to park away from the school was beyond the distance they could be expected to walk. This could be mitigated by allowing blue badge holders an exemption. Exemption permits could also be made available for all School Streets residents with a motor vehicle registered at their address.

(h) Consultations

The Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment & Finance), Legal Services Manager, Principal Accountant (P Connor), Equalities Officer, and Committee Services Officer (L Rowan) have been consulted and their comments incorporated into this report.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 There is the potential for a School Streets policy to enhance the health and environment for young people and to address road safety perceptions, however, it is important to assess the likely effectiveness, feasibility and affordability of such a policy. Conducting an objective trial with assessment criteria will enable Committee to make an informed policy decision at a future date.**

Author of Report: Diane Anderson, Senior Engineer (Transport Development)

Background Papers:

Ref: