

Cheshire East Council

Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	10 th October 2017
Report of:	Frank Jordan, Executive Director for Place
Subject/Title:	Safer Parking for Communities around Schools
Portfolio Holder:	Leader of the Council

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The 2010/11 School Census reveals that 21% of high school pupils are driven to school, with the figure for primary schools, which are principally in residential areas, being significantly higher at 45%. Since this Census the impacts of parking around primary schools has been highlighted as an issue by some residents and communities owing to the pressure it places on the local highway infrastructure.
- 1.2. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up a Task and Finish Group (“the Group”) to review Safer Parking for Communities around Schools in November 2015. The Group’s remit was to review the approach to safer parking for communities and identify initiatives the Council could consider to improve the outcomes for local communities around schools.
- 1.3. The Group’s findings and recommendations were presented to Cabinet on 11 July 2017. The purpose of this report is to provide the formal response to each of the Group’s recommendations.
- 1.4. On 22 August 2017 Cabinet approved a pilot project, in line with the Group’s recommendation, to test the community benefits and dis-benefits of introducing off highway parking and drop-off areas within schools to inform whether this type of measure should be included as part of the Council’s overall policy approach. This report considers the overall Council response to the rest of the Group’s recommendations.
- 1.5. The Group’s proposed approach of promoting proactive policies and a programme of work to address both the root causes of congestion and parking, particularly around primary schools, as well as action to manage its direct impacts is accepted. Within this, the importance and extent of the role the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service play in delivering the Council’s road safety education programme is also supported.

- 1.6. The policy changes proposed by the Group are welcomed. The Council is in the process of refreshing its Local Transport Plan and it is felt that these policies are considered as part of this work in consultation with the Task and Finish Group. The principle of establishing a Safer Routes to School Programme to support the delivery of the Local Transport Plan policies is accepted, which will ensure that the Council has a coherent programme of activity that will all contribute to reducing the impacts of school travel.
- 1.7. The full set of responses to the recommendations appears in Section 3.0 of this report.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1. Thanks the Group for their work in reviewing Safer Parking for our Communities around Schools.
- 2.2. Endorses the formal responses, detailed in Section 3, to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations.
- 2.3. Authorises the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Communities, the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and the Director of Finance and Procurement to allocate resources and funding from the 2018/19 Local Transport Plan budget to support a Safer Routes to Schools programme and review this for subsequent years.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The group's recommendations were split into two categories, firstly to address the root causes of concerns, and secondly to manage the impact of them.

Root Causes

Recommendation 1: That a draft Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy be prepared by the Council by September 2017, for anticipated implementation by September 2018.

Response: A draft Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy is being prepared and will be submitted to Cabinet in June 2018 for implementation in September 2018.

Recommendation 2: That schools be encouraged to produce a Travel Plan, and if required, the Council assist with its formation. The plan should include the appropriate initiatives set out in paragraph 15.2 of the supporting report.

Response: The Council's Transport Policy Officer will be available to assist schools in the development of their Travel Plans.

Initiatives and improvement schemes identified in the Plan will feed into Recommendations 3, 6 and 7.

Recommendation 3: That the safer routes to schools scheme be resurrected and safe cycling routes be promoted by the Council in accordance with the Cycling Strategy.

Response: As part of the 2018/19 programme it is proposed that funding will be allocated from the Council's LTP Integrated Transport block to support safer routes to school initiatives developed through School Travel Plans. The funding allocation and the criteria by which it is allocated will be approved by the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Infrastructure and the Director of Finance and Procurement.

Recommendation 4: To request that the education programme provided by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service includes safer parking and to request that a joint letter from Cheshire Fire, Police and Cheshire East Council be sent out to all parents highlighting the importance of road safety and safer parking.

Response: Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service have agreed to include safer parking as part of their road safety training across all Cheshire East schools. This will be formalised as part of the 2018/19 road safety programme which will incorporate a joint letter for each school to educate parents on road safety around schools.

Recommendation 5: That the possibility of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service attending schools at school drop off time with a fire engine is explored as part of the road safety education programme.

Response: This will be considered with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service as part of the 2018/19 road safety programme to educate parents on the requirement to ensure emergency access is maintained. This could be a targeted initiative.

Recommendation 6: To request that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service consider the introduction of a walking to schools with heroes campaign.

Response: This will be considered with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, providing a suitable 'hero' resource can be identified and that this initiative is part of a School Travel Plan proposals.

Recommendation 7: That the Council encourage the funding of Safer Routes to Schools from development through appropriate use of Conditions and S106 Agreements.

Response: Improvement schemes identified through the school Travel Plans will be captured and reported to the Development Management team to assess whether funding can be secured through the planning process.

Recommendation 8: That schools are encouraged to investigate the possibility of setting up arrangements whereby local spaces such as pub or community centre car parks can be used at drop off and pick up times, to encourage park and stride.

Response: This should be explored as part of School Travel Plans, including any additional measures to ensure the walking routes to the school from such locations are accessible.

Managing the Impact

Recommendation 9: That any opportunity provided by a development project on or near a school (including conversion to an academy), be carefully considered and that discussions take place between the Council and school concerned to ascertain whether or not it would be feasible to provide a safer parking or drop off zone

Response: Cabinet approved a pilot on 22 August 2017 to test the community and user benefits and dis-benefits of introducing off highway parking and drop-off areas within schools. The evaluation of this project along with a review of other schools where such facilities already exist will inform the Council's overall policy approach.

Recommendation 10: Note that there was a window of opportunity to include a discussion about safer parking and drop off zones, where appropriate, when schools were applying for academy status.

Response: The recommendation is noted and will be incorporated in future academy applications considered by the Council's Director of Education.

Recommendation 11: That signs be erected by the Council outside schools showing pictures of correct and incorrect ways to park.

Response: The Council is working with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service to jointly fund and trial kiddie pavement signs in order to reinforce appropriate parking practices. Such schemes would be considered as part of any schools who request such measures when submitting a School Travel

Plan for the proposed Safer Routes to School Programme funding.

Recommendation 12: That adequate resources be provided by the Council to enable enforcement patrols to be increased.

Response: The Civil Enforcement team numbers have been increased by up to an additional 10 officers in 2017/18. All Civil Enforcement Officers have annual objectives linked to enforcement patrols around schools.

Recommendation 13: That the Council share this report with all schools.

Response: The report will be shared with schools through the development of the School Travel Plans and informing them of the establishment of the Safer Routes to School programme..

4. Other Options Considered

4.1. The Council's current proactive initiatives being delivered are predominantly focussed on managing the impacts of traffic outside schools and include:

- Development and implementation of parking restriction schemes
- Advisory 20mph zones outside all schools in Cheshire East
- Road Safety education which is delivered annually to all schools in Cheshire East
- Parking Enforcement Officer visits to all schools in Cheshire East
- Keep Clear markings are refreshed and enforced at all schools
- Provision of guidance on the website to assist schools in developing Travel Plans and safer routes to primary schools projects

5. Background

5.1. The former Portfolio Holder for Communities, requested a Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group be setup to investigate safer parking for communities around schools as:

- School traffic and parking was a major problem for the whole community
- Children were at risk
- There were issues with enforcement

- 5.2. The Task and Finish group report was presented to Cabinet on 11th July 2017. Portfolio Holders agreed to come back to Cabinet with a formal response to each of the recommendations, with the responses submitted to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the problem in Cheshire East.

6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members

- 6.1. All wards and ward members are potentially affected by the proposal.

7. Implications of Recommendation

7.1. Policy Implications

- 7.1.1. This report is recommending the development of a policy approach to articulate the actions which the Council could utilise to achieve a reduction in the number of children driven to school, supported by the implementation of a pilot scheme. This supports the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) to ensure a sustainable future by increasing the use of sustainable modes of transport, as well as the Council's Cycling Strategy which seeks to enable more people to cycle safer, more often and with confidence for everyday and leisure journeys.

7.2. Legal Implications

- 7.2.1. Safer Routes to School interventions may require statutory legal processes to be followed depending on the individual proposals.

7.3. Financial Implications

- 7.3.1. It is proposed that Budget allocations are made as part of the 2018/19 business plans to support a Safer Routes to Schools programme. The Budget would be allocated from the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport block.

7.4. Equality Implications

- 7.4.1. Better managed school parking and promotion of more sustainable travel modes could benefit all children although it is recognised that children with particular needs may have to be accommodated separately. All proposals submitted by schools will be subject to an equality impact assessment before they are agreed.

7.5. Rural Community Implications

- 7.5.1. Given the larger catchment areas associated with rural schools, these do create a tougher challenge in terms of encouraging modal shift towards walking and cycling.

7.6. Human Resources Implications

7.6.1. None.

7.7. Health and Wellbeing Implications

7.7.1. The Public Health England 'Everybody Active, Every Day' strategy recognises that walking and cycling are good for our physical and mental health and the many ways the built and natural environment impacts on the choices people are able to make. It emphasises that by developing 'active environments' that promote walking and cycling, we can help to create active, healthier, and more liveable communities.

7.7.2 Walking to and from school helps children achieve the recommended government targets of physical activity. Physically active children are more alert, ready to learn, do better in tests and achieve better grades than children who are driven to school.

7.8. Implications for Children and Young People

7.8.1. Modern lifestyles and concerns regarding children's safety and security have led to increased car use as a mode of traveling to school. Measures to increase walking and cycling as a mode of choice need to be evaluated, together with management measures to encourage greater use of sustainable travel modes. Incorporating physical activity into a child's daily routine is a good way to promote a healthy and more active lifestyle.

7.9. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Implications

7.9.1. The recommendations will be presented back to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7.10. Other Implications (Please Specify)

7.10.1. None.

8. Risk Management

8.1. Lack of a formal Policy approach could lead to increased pressure on existing services in managing the impacts of traffic outside schools.

9. Access to Information

9.1. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish group report and covering Cabinet Report, July 2017.

10. Contact Information

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