

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 3 June 2014

Delivering the Local Transport Strategy 2014-2019: School Streets - Update on Project Development

Item number	7.4
Report number	
Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	All

Executive summary

The new Local Transport Strategy (LTS), approved by the Transport and Environment Committee 14 January 2014, contains a commitment to pilot 'school streets' at between three and five schools. School street closures form part of a suite of options for helping to create safer, more pleasant environments to encourage travel to school by foot and by bike. The part time closure of streets to traffic (ie at school start and finish times), however, will not be appropriate for all schools.

This report outlines the rationale behind school streets, lists key selection criteria, identifies risks, notably issues concerning enforcement and access for residents and service vehicles, and describes the proposed selection and consultation process in identifying schools for inclusion in this pilot. All proposals will be developed through discussion with residents, the relevant Schools and Parent Councils, and Police Scotland.

Links

Coalition pledges	P32 , P44
Council outcomes	CO5 , CO22
Single Outcome Agreement	SO4

Delivering the Local Transport Strategy 2014-2019: School Streets - Update on Project Development

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - 1.1.1 notes the progress made on developing the project;
 - 1.1.2 agrees the process for selection and consultation; and
 - 1.1.3 requests a report on the outcomes of the consultation to a future Committee.

Background

- 2.1 One of the Issues for Review in the Local Transport Strategy for 2014–2019, approved at the Transport and Environment Committee on 14 January 2014, was the proposal to introduce School Streets. This was included as the results of the public and stakeholder consultation showed that nearly 60% of the respondents supported the option to introduce School Streets on request from School Councils.
- 2.2 The Council will initially pilot this approach at up to five schools where School Councils request it.

Main report

- 3.1 The new Local Transport Strategy (LTS), approved by the Transport and Environment Committee on 14 January 2014, contains a commitment to pilot 'school streets' at between three and five schools. School streets involve prohibiting traffic on streets outside or around school entrances at specific times of day.
- 3.2 School street closures (already being operated by East Lothian Council and Dundee City Council) form part of a suite of options for helping to create safer, more pleasant environments to encourage travel to school by foot and by bike. The part time closure of streets to traffic (ie at school start and finish times), however, will not be appropriate for all schools.

- 3.3 Effective school streets can help encourage active lifestyles, increases in walking and cycling journeys, fewer car trips and improved road safety outside schools during peak periods due to less motor vehicle movements. They can also lead to reductions in child obesity.
- 3.4 There is public demand from parents and residents for school streets, which build on the popularity¹ of the ParkSmart and Park and Stride initiatives, which both encourage motorists not to park outside of school entrances. The school streets concept goes one step further than these initiatives by banning motor vehicles from streets outside or around school entrances.
- 3.5 Key selection criteria being developed to rank interested schools for inclusion within the pilot are:
- proven positive support from school staff, parents and parent councils;
 - current commitment to promoting walking and cycling activities;
 - the school's location on the road network;
 - good infrastructure provision (ie surrounding streets can accommodate displaced traffic movements);
 - the availability of suitable 'Park and Stride' locations;
 - high levels of car use to school; and
 - high levels of congestion at school gates.

In addition to the above the school entrance should not be on a bus route.

- 3.6 The rationale behind the initiative is that the road network outside the school gate or in surrounding streets will be closed to vehicular traffic, except cycles and emergency vehicles for set periods each day. Schools with gates onto main roads which serve as bus or emergency service routes would not be considered as the impact of diverting high volumes of traffic through adjacent residential streets could create additional safety issues. This will reduce the number of suitable schools to those with entrances on routes with no, or limited through traffic.

¹ In a 2013 review with School Councils in primary schools, respondents were asked what initiatives schools would like to participate in to reduce the impact of the car outside schools. The two highest scoring options were Park Smart (supported by 61% of parents) and Park and Stride (40%). ParkSmart is a behaviour change campaign to persuade motorists not to park on the School Keep Clear zig-zag markings, whilst Park and Stride initiatives designate an area away from the school gate, such as supermarket car parks or surrounding streets, where motorists are encouraged to park and walk their children the short distance to school.

- 3.7 As a pilot is proposed, a variety of different layouts will be selected, to evaluate the schemes' effectiveness in different scenarios through the development of best practice. This could potentially then be applied to more schools across the city in the future.
- 3.8 Regardless of location, school streets would require the creation of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order prohibiting vehicular traffic during specified time periods. It is therefore proposed to promote an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order at the pilot schools, prohibiting vehicular traffic during specified time periods for a maximum period of 18 months. It is anticipated that the closure would be around 30 minutes at school entry and exit times.
- 3.9 School streets would also require the erection of entry signage to prevent vehicles entering the street: it is not intended to use physical barriers. Discussions have started with Transport Scotland to get the necessary special authorisation for the requisite signage.
- 3.10 To serve as a timetable of activities, the following provides a project update:
- Invitations to participate to primary schools, issued in April 2014.
 - Evaluation and selection of suitable three to five schools by Sept 2014.
 - Development of consultation plans for each school by Sept 2014.
 - TRO process to run in parallel.
 - Scheme comes into force - earliest summer term 2015.
 - 18 month trial period to Dec 2016.
- 3.11 The school community will also have a role to play in making any scheme a success by undertaking promotional and training activities to encourage more walking and cycling journeys. These could include travel information on school websites and in new parents' introductory packs, pedestrian training schemes such as Traffic Trails and Kerbcraft, cycle training, Walk Once a Week scheme and Junior Road Safety Officers. Successful pilot schools will be expected to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate a range of activities to demonstrate a modal shift of journeys from the car to walking and cycling.

Measures of success

- 4.1 Success will be measured through:
- i) a reduction in traffic congestion and speed around school gates as measured through before and after traffic speed and volume surveys;
 - ii) an increase in walking and cycling and reduction in car trips as measured through the annual Sustrans Hands Up Survey; and

- iii) a wide ranging and clear consultation and engagement process that demonstrates customer focus and commitment to listening to all stakeholders as measured through attitude surveys.

Financial impact

- 5.1 The costs of implementing the proposed changes will be determined through the development of the detailed design and will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The principal risks associated with this initiative are summarised as:
- lack of enforcement;
 - insufficient local community support;
 - non-compliance by motorists; and
 - no change in parental behaviour.
- 6.2 These risks will be managed through the School Streets Steering Group which will oversee the project. The Steering Group will comprise members from the Transport, and Children and Families Services, Police Scotland and Transport Scotland. As part of the project governance, these risks will be identified, assessed and managed through an appropriate risk register.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 An Equalities and Rights Impact Assessment will be undertaken in parallel with the consultation process. The consultation process will also ensure that all representative groups are fully engaged with, and that any proposed changes are fully inclusive of all user groups.
- 7.2 The group most likely to be impacted on are those with disabilities, if access is denied to blue badge holders. This will require further investigation and development.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The impacts of this report have been considered in relation to the three elements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Public Bodies Duties and the outcomes are summarised as follows. The proposals in this report will reduce carbon emissions, increase the city's resilience to climate change and help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because aims of the initiative are to reduce the number of vehicles outside school gates and the levels of carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions. It also aims to improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians thus promoting personal wellbeing.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 An invitation letter was sent out to School Council Chairs and Head teachers of primary schools on 15 April 2014. In order to give School Councils time to meet and discuss the project, a closing date for responses was set for 30 May 2014. A list of interested schools will be made available at the Committee meeting.
- 9.2 It is proposed that consultation is undertaken with all stakeholders identified in the attached *Consultation and Engagement Plan* (Appendix 1) over a four to six week period early in the new school year. This will enable new school parents to input their views into the consultation. It will look to finalise the details of the scheme for each of the proposed pilot schools having regard to the risks highlighted in paragraph 6.1.
- 9.3 The outcome of the consultation process will be reported back to this Committee and will include recommendations as to the further development and implementation of preferred schools.

Background reading/external references

Local Transport Strategy 2014-2019

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/12323/the_new_local_transport_strategy_2014-2019

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Links

Coalition pledges	P32 – Develop and strengthen local community links with the police P44 – Prioritise keeping our streets clean and attractive
Council outcomes	CO5 - Our children and young people are safe from harm or fear of harm, and do not harm others within their communities CO22 – Moving efficiently – Edinburgh has a transport system that improves connectivity and is green, healthy and accessible.
Single Outcome Agreement	SO4 - Edinburgh’s communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric
Appendices	Appendix 1 Consultation and Engagement Plan

SCHOOL STREETS
CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT PLAN
AUTUMN TERM 2014

Appendix 1

Stakeholders:	Details	Method of Communication/Consultation:
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent Council - Head Teacher & staff - Parents - Pupils 	Letters, Questionnaires, meetings, focus groups
Residents & local businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residents associations and groups - Residents and local businesses in proposed school street and surrounding streets 	Letters, questionnaires, drop in event
Elected members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Councillors - MSPs - MPs 	Briefings, letters
Statutory Consultees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergency Services (fire, police and ambulance) - Bus operators - Freight associations 	Letters, meetings
Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transport Forum - Edinburgh Disability Access Forum 	Meetings