

**Date: 1 September 2022**

**Subject: School Streets**

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Lead member: Councillor Stephen Alambritis, Cabinet Member for Transport

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## **Recommendations:**

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That the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel consider the information provided within this report which sets out the delivery of the school street programme during 2020 / 2021 and 2022 financial years.

Merton is the leading borough in London for the greatest number of schools located in a school street with 30 schools within school streets. There are 2 schools within the same school street.

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## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1. The report sets out the background and the various aspects of how school streets were delivered, particularly during 2020/21; its benefits; objectives; impact and financial implications.

## **2 DETAILS**

2.1. A school street is a road that accommodates a school's pedestrian gate whereby motorised access is restricted during the drop-off and pick-up times. The restricted area was previously called a school safety zone.

2.2. As part of the Council's objective to reduce congestion, pollution, collisions, risk and provide a safe environment within the vicinity of schools, pre pandemic, the Council had a rolling road safety and accessibility programme. Measures that were often implemented include 'school keep clear' zig-zag road markings to prevent drivers parking close to the school gates and to improve sightlines; 20mph speed limits / zones with some accompanying traffic calming measures and road safety education. Historically these measures have been very successful in most areas, as there has been an improvement in perception of safety with a reduction in risk of injury. Although these measures have been successful in ensuring access and safety, the level of congestion, risk and air quality outside schools remain a concern. The contributing factor is the high- localised volume of vehicular traffic and obstructive parking within the vicinity of schools often generated by parents / carers of pupils attending the school.

2.3. In general School streets allow and encourage children to safely walk, cycle and scoot to and from school. Reducing motorised journeys and reducing traffic congestion immediately outside schools is important for improving road safety, air quality, and can help toward addressing climate change whilst encouraging a change in behaviour and attitude toward the use of private motorised vehicles and toward sustainable and active modes of travel.

2.4. During the school street restricted periods, the road is predominately a 'pedestrian and cycle only' zone. Residents who live in the directly affected roads are allowed access as are teachers and those with special needs children (blue badge holders) who need to be

driven to school. Those who may qualify for an exemption are required to register with the Council via Ringo and renew their registration annually.

- 2.5 In September 2019, under our School Safety Zone programme, the Council introduced restricted access outside three of its schools and by all accounts they have been operating well and at the time it was always the Council's intentions to introduce more of such measures using the Borough's annual LiP funding on a rolling programme. However, due to the pandemic all Borough's LIP funding was paused for 2020. In 2020, during tranche 1 of the TfL/DfT funding process, DfT and TFL provided funding specifically for COVID19 active travel measures. One of these initiatives was School Streets (new branding for what was previously School safety zones). This funding was subject to successful bids to both TfL and DfT.
- 2.6 As part of Merton's commitment, a report dated 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020 titled 'School Streets– Restricted Vehicular Access Experimental Traffic Management' was submitted to the Cabinet Member for approval to implement a number of school streets. Cabinet Member decision was made to implement the school street programme under Experimental Orders.
- 2.7 The school street programme was rolled out across the borough during September and October 2020 under individual Experimental Orders, all but one came into effect on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020. An Experimental Order is valid for 18 months and it allowed the Council to introduce and enforce the scheme during the statutory consultation period which is normally 6 months. However due to the various lock downs the statutory consultation remained active until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021. This allowed residents and the schools sufficient time to experience the restrictions prior to making an informed comment. However, across the board, it was noted that many had commented before allowing the scheme to settle.
- 2.8 All the signs (the legal signs as well as the advance signs) were erected during September 2020 and all the residents who are directly affected by the restrictions were informed via newsletters.
- 2.9 At the time of implementation, the restricted hours were based on the schools' then opening / closing hours. Being mindful of the fact that parents often arrive earlier than the starting and finishing times, it was considered necessary to extend the initial proposed hours by at least 15 minutes. However, since then, feedback and observations have revealed that across the board some parents are arriving just prior to the start or after the restricted times. At some schools, this has led to children being dropped off late or picked up late. For some of those schools, the additional periods have been increased.
- 2.10 Following the conclusion of the Experimental Orders, between November 2021 and January 2022, all representations for each School Street along with Officer's recommendations were submitted to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency in individual reports for each School Street. It was recommended that each school street be made permanent and a statutory consultation be undertaken to change the hours of the restrictions so that they would be in line with the school's new core hours. Following Cabinet Member's approval, separate statutory consultations were undertaken for each affected school street. After the start of the statutory consultation, on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2022, the Council learned that the previously approved hours of operation for some schools were no longer appropriate and it became necessary to abandon the statutory consultation and undertake new statutory consultations for the appropriate change in hours for each relevant school.
- 2.11 On 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2022 the outcome of these consultations were reported to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency who agreed to implement

the necessary changes. These changes will be in place for schools' September 2022 term time. Table 1 in Appendix 1 sets out the school street restrictions.

- 2.12 Throughout the process, all Ward Councillors were fully engaged and updated during each phase. Newsletters were delivered to all those properties within the catchment area which detailed updates after each stage. Schools were also contacted with updates.
- 2.13 In terms of publicising the school streets programme there was an article on School Streets in My Merton magazine [the Winter 2020 edition](#). This copy was distributed to all households in Merton from 19 November 2020. There was also a news article in [the Spring 2021 edition](#) which was published on 25 March 2021.
- 2.14 Each school was provided with a banner to be attached to the school gate. The banner set out the details of the restrictions and affected roads. The school was also requested to inform and remind parents of the restrictions.
- 2.15 Due to the extremely tight time frame and allocated budgets as set by DfT / TfL, effective enforcement was not possible; the restrictions were enforced by the very few mobile cameras the Council had at the time and each school street was enforced on a rota basis. As more funding became available, following further successful negotiations, TfL provided some funding for permanent ANPR cameras and following a successful internal bid, the Council was able to provide further ANPR cameras. There were also cases where some existing ANPR cameras were used from elsewhere in the Borough.
- 2.16 Throughout the entire process, concerns and objections have been considered and where possible have been addressed by reviewing and updating the exemption policy; for example, the need for visitors and carers and local businesses have been accommodated. The exemption policy that has been developed through addressing the feedback from residents is one of the most generous exemption policies in London and highlights that the scheme is not aimed at disadvantaging residents, but purely to reduce vehicle movements and concentrations of poor air quality caused by the school-run at school times.
- 2.17 It is considered that the benefits of the scheme outweigh some of the inconveniences some residents / motorists may experience; particularly with reference to the generous exemption policies that have been put in place. School streets are a strategic fit in line with other policies and initiatives across the borough and London, seeking to address road safety, congestion, mitigating poor air quality outside schools and promoting better public health through walking and active travel.
- 2.18 Benefits include improved safety / perception of safety; the removal of the school-associated obstructive parking; reduced risk to all road users; reduced pollution, including noise pollution; improved air quality in the restricted road as well as reduced traffic in general, after all if parents or other visitors are discouraged to drive during the peak periods, there will be reduced traffic on route to and from schools with less vehicular traffic directly adjacent to schools.
- 2.19 It is appreciated that the restrictions may cause some inconvenience to some residents, and where possible the Council has and will endeavour to accommodate residents and schools. For the scheme to be a success, the Council would require the continued cooperation of the school, parents and residents.
- 2.20 **Issues**
- 2.20.1 Across a number of school streets, there have been some displacement into neighbouring roads causing obstructive parking. Obstructive parking and illegal parking within CPZ areas can be addressed by effective enforcement; however, this cannot be enforced by

ANPR and due to extremely limited available enforcement officers, it is not possible to address these issues effectively. Currently parking enforcement is undertaken on a rota basis but given the number of school streets, other schools not within school streets that also require enforcement and other parking contraventions throughout the borough, there are insufficient resource available to provide a meaningful and effective enforcement. In the absence of enforcement, instilling change in behaviour will continue to be slow and residents suffering the obstructive parking by parents will continue to remain dissatisfied.

- 2.20.2 Those who qualify for an exemption are required to register via Ringo on an annual basis. There have been a number of complaints from residents, schools and some Councillors regarding the difficulty in using this system. This in turn has placed pressure on Council officers, particularly those within Parking Services. There are some schools who do find the system problematic and burdensome and Parking services have been providing additional support but again this places additional pressure on limited available resources.
- 2.20.3 There continues to be demands for more users to be added to the exemption list but compared to other boroughs, Merton does have a generous exemption policy. For the scheme to remain effective, it is essential that the number of exemptions are kept to a minimum and although there may be a desire to accommodate every eventuality and need, it would not be prudent to accommodate every request. Merton has an extremely generous exemption matrix which does require a full review.
- 2.20.4 School Streets are only in operation during school term times. One common complaint has been that many motorists are not aware of the school term times and therefore these should be advertised on signs. Having term times available on a sign is not a possibility as term times vary each year for each school and there is a fine balance of having too much information for motorists to observe whilst driving prior to making a decision (a common complaint the Council receives about too many signs and too much information). With the London wide publicity and increase in the number of school streets and LTNs, many drivers are now fully aware of their existence. All drivers are obligated to be fully aware of their surroundings, plan their routes and adhere to the various traffic and parking regulations.
- 2.20.5 There have also been demands for installation of amber flashing signs when the school streets are in operation. Amber flashing signs are used primarily on main roads on approach to schools and many motorists associate these amber flashing signs to mean children crossing the road / beware of children etc, they simply would not associate it with a school street and its restrictions. Additionally in the event of equipment failure, motorists will assume that the restrictions are not in place which would make enforcement ineffective and an increase in appeals. It will also cause confusion in areas where there are amber flashing lights when there is no school street restriction. There has also been suggestions that the actual signs would have amber flashing signs. Given the number of school streets, these would have enormous cost implications (installation and maintenance) and again there would be the issue of failed flashing signs and enforcement implications and any deviation from the legally required signs would require DfT approval which is something that has not been forthcoming with at least one borough attempting to obtain one.
- 2.20.6 Consideration was given to covering the signs during school holidays; however given the number of school street signs including advance warning signs it would not be cost effective nor best use of limited available funding. This would require an on-going funding which is not available and given many other priorities it would not be the best use of limited available funding the Council may have. It would also be resource intensive as it would require a reasonable number of staff to simultaneously cover and uncover all the signs at the start and end of each term. Additionally, this too would be subject to

vandalism as there may be those who may cover the signs within term times which has been experienced elsewhere.

2.20.7 There have been some vandalism of the signs which has incurred additional maintenance costs.

2.20.8 The Council has been reactive toward changing the restrictions to be in line with the school's core hours; and there have been some school who do change their core hours. However, this would involve a statutory consultation and change in all the signs. This can be costly and certainly resource intensive.

### **3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

3.1. None for the purpose of this report.

### **4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

4.1 The Experimental Orders were made under Section 9 of Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended). The permanent Traffic Management Orders were made under Section 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended). The Council is required by the Local Authorities Traffic Order (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 to give notice of its intention to make a Traffic Order (by publishing a draft traffic order). These regulations also require the Council to consider any representations received as a result of publishing the experimental order.

4.2 All those residents within the catchment / affected areas were kept informed and updated at every stage via newsletters. Residents were encouraged to submit their feedback on the Council's website using specific on-line feedback link. All available information was also posted and updated on the website [Introducing new school streets | Merton Council](#)

4.3 As per statutory requirement, street notices were erected on lamp columns and Council's intentions were published in the local papers and the London Gazette. As per adopted practice, all those within the affected roads have received newsletters through out the whole process.

### **5 TIMETABLE**

5.1. None for the purpose of this report.

### **6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1. None for the purpose of this report.

### **7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1. None for the purpose of this report.

### **8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

8.1. None for the purpose of this report.

### **9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

9.1. None

### **10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1. None for the purpose of this report.

### **11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

### **12 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – EMTO results- All Saints C of E Primary School dated 1/12/21 & Cabinet Member decision dated 03/12/21

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – EMTO results- Aragon Primary School dated 19/11/21 & Cabinet Member decision dated 09/11/21

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – EMTO results- Garfield Primary School –dated 17/12/21 & Cabinet Member decision dated 23/12/21

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – EMTO results- Gorringe Park Primary School dated 9/12/21 & Cabinet Member decision dated 16/12/21

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – EMTO results- Holy Trinity C of E Primary School dated 21/01/22 & Cabinet Member decision dated 26/01/22

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – EMTO results- Merton Park Primary School dated 16/11/21

School Streets – EMTO results- Pelham Primary School dated 19/01/22 & Cabinet Member decision dated 26/01/22

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – EMTO results- Stanford Primary School dated 15/12/21

School Streets – EMTO results- St Mark's Primary School dated 14/12/21 & Cabinet Member decision dated 16/12/21

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – EMTO results- St Teresa's RC Primary School dated 13/12/21 & Cabinet Member decision dated 16/12/21

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – EMTO results- The Sherwood Primary School dated 16/12/21 & Cabinet Member decision dated 17/12/21

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – EMTO results- St Matthews Primary School dated 17/12/21 & Cabinet Member decision dated 17/12/21

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – EMTO results- Wimbledon Park Primary School dated 14/01/22 & Cabinet Member decision dated 18/01/22

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – EMTO results- Poplar Primary School dated 7/12/21 & Cabinet Member decision dated 16/12/21

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – EMTO results- Rutlish School dated 12/01/22 & Cabinet Member decision dated 18/01/22

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – EMTO results- St Mary's RC Primary School dated 19/01/22 & Cabinet Member decision dated 19/01/22

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – EMTO results- William Morris Primary School dated 16/12/21 & Cabinet Member decision dated 17/12/21

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – Change of hours- Amendment to previous Cabinet Member decisions dated 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Cabinet Member report - School Streets – amended hours - various dated 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2022

**School Streets & operational periods**
**Appendix 1**

School	Restricted roads	Restricted periods Term times only
All Saints C of E Primary School	Hanover Rd Deburgh Rd (between Norman Rd & Hanover Rd)	8.00 - 9.15am 2.45 - 4.00pm Mon-Fri
Aragon Primary School	Aragon Rd (between Kingsbridge Rd & Cleveland Rise) Aragon Place	8.00 - 9.15am 2.45 - 4.00pm Mon-Fri
Beecholme Primary	Beecholme Ave	8.15– 9.15am 2.45 – 3.45pm Mon-Fri
Benedict Academy	Benedict Road	8.00– 9.15am 2.45 – 3.45pm Mon-Fri
Bishop Gilpin C of E Primary School & Ricards Lodge High School	Lake Rd (between Leopold Rd & Church Hill) Ricards Rd; Leopold Ave; Helme Close	8.00- 9.00am 2.45 -4.00pm Mon-Fri
Date Valley	Cricket Green (cul-de sac section)	8.00 -9.15am 2.45 –3.45pm Mon-Fri
Garfield Primary	Garfield Rd (between Tennyson Rd & Milton Rd) & Dryden Rd	8.15 - 9.15 am 2.45 - 3.45 pm Mon-Fri
Gorrige Park Primary School	Sandy Lane (between Fernlea Rd & Streatham Rd) Harbour Close; Tide Close; Summerhill Way; Spring Grove	8.00– 9.00am 3.00- 3.45pm Mon-Fri
Harris Primary Academy 2019	Ivy Gardens	8.00-9.30am 2.30-4.00pm Mon-Fri
Hillcross Primary School	Ashridge Way (between Leamington Ave & Hillcross Ave) Woodland Way Monkleigh Rd (between Hillcross ave & Northernhay Walk) Shaldon Drive (between Monkleigh Rd & Northernhay Walk)	8.00 – 9.15am 2.30 – 3.30 pm Mon-Fri
Holy Trinity C of E Primary School	Effra Rd (between Evelyn Rd & Trinity Rd) Faraday Rd (between Evelyn Rd & Trinity Rd)	8.00 -9.15 am 2.45 -3.45 pm Mon-Fri
Hollymount Primary School	Cambridge Rd, SW20 (between Pepys Rd & Lambton Rd)	8.15 – 9.15am 2.45 -4.00pm Mon-Fri
Links Primary School 2019	Frinton Road & Gunton Road	8.00-9.30am 2.45-4.00pm Mon-Fri

Malmesbury Primary School	Malmesbury Rd Newminster Rd Neath Gardens	8.15 – 9.00 am 2.45 – 3.45 pm Mon-Fri
Merton Park primary	Erridge Rd (from its junction with Poplar Rd to its junction with Stratton Close) Stratton Close; Stratton Road; Keswick Ave Church Lane (cul de sac)	8.30– 9.15am 3.00 – 3.45pm Mon-Fri
Pelham Primary School	Southey Rd, SW19 (between Pelham Rd & Kingston Rd)	8.15 -9.15 am 2.45 – 4.00 pm Mon-Fri
Poplar Primary School	Poplar Rd South (between Cranleigh Rd & Crown Lane)	8.00 - 9.15am 2.30 - 4.00pm Mon-Fri
Rutlish school	Watery Lane, Manor Gardens	8.00 – 8.45 am 2.30 – 3.45 pm Mon-Fri
St Marks Primary School	St Marks road (between St Mark's Rd & Armfield Crescent) Chalkley Close	8.00 -9.15 am 2.45 -3.30 pm Mon-Fri
St Mary's RC Primary School	Russell Rd, SW19 (between Pelham Rd & car Park entrance)	8.00 - 9.15am 2.45 - 4.00pm Mon-Fri
St Matthews primary	Cottenham Park Rd, SW20 (between Burdett Ave & cul de sac)	8.15 -9.15 am 2.45 -3.45 pm Mon-Fri
St Teresa's RC Primary	Montacute Rd (between Middleton Rd & Lillishall Rd) Newminster Rd	8.00 - 9.15 am 2.45 – 3.45 pm Mon-Fri
St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School 2019	Commonside East (access / spur Rd)	8.00-9.30am 2.30-3.30pm Mon-Fri
Singlegate	North Gardens; South Gardens; Valley Gardens (between South Gardens & No 5 Valley Gdns)	8.00 – 9.15am 2.30 – 3.45pm Mon-Fri
Stanford Primary School	Chilmark Rd, SW16 Hassocks Rd Oxtoby Way Byards Croft	8.00 – 9.15 am 2.30 - 3.45 pm Mon-Fri
The Sherwood Primary	Abbots Rd (between Sherwood Park Rd & Commonside East) Castleton Rd Hadley Rd	8.15 -9.15 am 2.45 -3.45 pm Mon-Fri



Ursuline High School	Crescent Road Southdown Drive	8.00 -9.00 am 2.45-3.30 pm Mon-Thursday
William Morris primary	Recreation way, Mitcham Between the roundabout and Huntington Close	8.00 - 9.15am 2.30 - 3.45pm Mon-Fri
Wimbledon Park primary	Havana Rd SW19 Wellington Rd	8.15 -9.15 am 2.45 -3.45 pm Mon-Fri

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