

Lessons learnt by the cross-party working group

The cross-party working group has discussed a number of issues and the outcomes from these discussions are summarised below.

Safety outside schools - it was recognised that:

- **there are very few accidents involving children walking and/or cycling near schools or occurring on school journeys.** Based on the accident data, poor safety around schools is therefore mostly a perception rather than a reality, although this still needs to be considered if more children are to be encouraged to walk or cycle to school (thereby reducing car trips to school)
- **parking outside schools acts as a speed reducing feature** and is likely to be a factor in keeping speed and accidents down
- **the impacts of potential measures need to be carefully considered as they may worsen road safety outside or on routes to school** (see comments below about the introduction of parking restrictions outside schools and the introduction of crossing facilities where there isn't use throughout the day).

Parking outside schools - it was recognised that:

- the reported accident data indicates that dangers from parents **parking outside schools is a perceived danger rather than it actually resulting in child casualties** (as casualties outside schools are very rare and the parking occurs every school day outside almost every school)
- **parking issues generally occur for only a very short period of time** (predominantly at the end of the school day as parents only park for short periods at the beginning of the school day); and only Monday to Friday during term-time only
- **only a minority of parents park inconsiderately**, on 'keep clear' markings or across driveways, and do not react to measures/advice from the school
- **introducing parking restrictions such as double yellow lines or residents' parking schemes are not supported by the police (or the Council) as they can worsen road safety and only push the problem elsewhere.** Road safety can be worsened due to the fact that drivers expect to see school pupils outside schools but if parents park further away from the school the child pedestrian movements are spread across wider areas where drivers may not expect them to be present. Also, yellow lines allow drivers to set down and pick up passengers, so this activity is not actually made illegal by the introduction of double yellow lines, or a residents parking scheme will not stop parents from waiting or dropping off/picking up pupils. It can also cause drivers to 'rush' and take more risks to avoid being caught, again creating a road safety hazard
- **it is the school community (parents and sometimes teachers/school workers) that are causing the parking issues outside schools**
- as the school community create the short-term problem, **the identification and delivery of options to address the parking issues must be led by the school community**
- **many head teachers already undertake work to engage with parents and the local community on parking issues** around schools
- **there is a need to better manage affected residents' and parents' expectations** concerning both the level of the problem (i.e. it only occurs for short periods of time) and the measures to address it (i.e. traffic regulation orders will not resolve the issue)
- **there is not a 'one size fit all' solution to these issues** due to the different circumstances outside each school (and of the parents attending).

Planning – it was recognised that:

- **school locations are not driven by access (including safety) issues** but more by available land and cost implications
- when designing new schools/extensions to schools often **site constraints prevent the creation of safe on-site pick-up and drop-off facilities**
- **there is an opportunity when designing new schools to better consider the impacts of the proposals on the wider local area and consider mitigation** (e.g. on-site parking provision, highways layouts, etc.)
- there is a **perceived disconnect between the planning and construction of new schools**, particularly in relation to the provision of highways traffic management/safety comments/advice on their design
- despite transport assessments funded by schools/academies to satisfy planning conditions stating that there will be no transport impacts and no new infrastructure is required, there is still an **expectation from schools that the County Council will fund highway improvements to address the impacts of school developments.**

Engineering measures – it was recognised that:

- **engineering measures can help in encouraging more children to walk and/or cycle to school if targeted effectively and co-ordinated with promotional activities delivered as part of a school travel plan**, although there is a lack of evidence to demonstrate that this was the case in Nottinghamshire when they were delivered to support school travel plans
- **the County Council continues to invest in crossings on routes to schools where these will not potentially worsen road safety, as well as cycle routes that help link schools to residential areas.** The County Council currently allocates £100,000 of its integrated transport block allocation towards the delivery of pedestrian crossings on routes to schools. Such pedestrian crossings are introduced at locations where pedestrians cross throughout the day and there aren't sufficient gaps in the traffic that allow them to do this. Introducing pedestrian crossings at locations that currently do not have high flows of pedestrian use throughout the whole day can, however, worsen road safety. This is because if crossings are not used throughout the day drivers do not expect to have to stop at them and then fail to stop when required to do so. This increases the possibility of driver complacency which increases the risk of collision/injury. It is also important to note that on average over the last three years (2015 to 2017 inclusive) there has been 1.3 injury accidents at light-controlled pedestrian crossings and on average 0.69 injury accidents at zebra crossings during the same period.

School travel plans – it was recognised that:

- **funding to support the development/delivery of school travel plans was withdrawn by the DfT in 2010** and this resulted in the withdrawal of these services
- **the support previously given to schools to develop/deliver travel plans had been much appreciated**
- **there are currently very limited revenue funding sources available to bid for/secure in order to provide staff resources to help schools deliver school travel plans**
- whilst Ofsted inspections include determining if a school has a travel plan, **it is not Ofsted's role to ensure that all schools have a travel plan, or are delivering the measures contained within it.**

School crossing patrol service – it was recognised that:

- **the County Council's criteria for provision of a site is below the national criteria meaning that more sites are provided** than if the national criteria were adopted
- **recruitment to school crossing patrol posts is often difficult**, especially in more affluent areas. Currently there are 143 sites in total, 90 of which are staffed, 23 of which are being actively recruited to, with the remaining 30 being monitored
- school crossing patrols **encourage people to make better choices about safe places to cross.**

Changes in pupil placement policies – it was recognised that:

- **they have often resulted in a disconnect between parents and the local community** around a school as the parents aren't a part of that community
- **they have resulted in parents/pupils travelling greater distances to schools**, especially since the secondary tier are now wholly academies
- **the switch to academies has also removed many of the Local Authority's levers to encourage schools to adopt best practices concerning school travel.**