

18 March 2019**Agenda Item: 9**

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

ROAD SAFETY AROUND SCHOOLS

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for the actions identified to help address perceptions about road safety and parking issues around schools that have been identified through the cross-party working group established to consider these issues. If approved, the proposals (which will enable the Council to offer all schools in the County more efficient, consistent and timely advice on road safety and parking issues around schools) will then be referred to Policy Committee for final approval.

Information

2. The number of pupils attending schools in Nottinghamshire has been increasing over the last five years. Whilst secondary schools have seen their cohorts decline, primary schools have witnessed rapid growth and the number of pupils attending primary schools was 11% higher in September 2017 than it was in 2011-2012. Changes in pupil placement policies have also resulted in some parents/pupils travelling greater distances to both primary and secondary schools, typically by car. It has been reported by communities that this increase in the primary cohort and changes in placement policies has increased the volume of traffic on roads in and around schools at the start and end of the school day. Head teachers, school governors, and local residents regularly express concerns relating to driver behaviours and the challenges facing schools as more children are driven to school. Road safety is also a key concern of parents and carers, as well as County Council members of all political parties.
3. Given these concerns, at its meeting on 18 March 2018, Children and Young People's Committee approved the establishment of a cross-party working group to explore ways to improve road safety for children particularly in and around schools, and to review existing and develop new advice for schools, governors, parents and other stakeholders in Nottinghamshire.
4. The group included County Council members as well as County Council and VIA EM Ltd officers with responsibilities for planning, road safety, traffic management and transport strategy. Representatives from academies (to represent the school community) and from the Midland Service Improvement Group and Road Safety Great Britain (to review national best practice) also attended group meetings. The group met three times and undertook:

- An **analysis of accidents outside schools and on school journeys** to identify trends and factors to inform the work of the group
- A **review of the County Council's current approach to safety outside schools** in terms of education, engineering, enforcement, and the planning of new school buildings
- A **review of approaches to addressing highway issues outside schools including best practice from across the UK**
- **Identification of proposed actions to improve road safety around schools in Nottinghamshire** based on the above (which form the recommendations of this report).

Accidents around schools

5. Whilst unfortunately accidents involving school pupils do still occur on school journeys, investigation of the casualty data during the three year period 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2017 (2017 being the last full calendar year of data currently available) shows that accidents on school journeys in Nottinghamshire are very rare and accidents outside schools are even rarer. During the three year period 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2017, on average, in Nottinghamshire there:
 - were no fatal accidents in the County involving children walking or cycling to school
 - was one serious injury accident and two slight injury accidents per year in the whole County that occurred within 100m of a school involving children walking or cycling to school
 - when the study area was extended to accidents within 250m of a school there were an additional five slight injury accidents per year in the whole County involving children walking or cycling to school.
6. The accident data therefore identifies that there are very few accidents involving children walking and/or cycling near schools, or occurring on school journeys. The view that road safety around schools is poor is therefore currently mostly a perception as it is not currently borne out by the reported casualty data. This view, however, still needs to be considered if more children are to be encouraged to walk or cycle to school (thereby reducing car trips to school).

Current services provided to facilitate road safety around schools

7. The County Council takes the issue of road safety (and parking) around schools very seriously and consequently already provides an extensive programme of measures to help school communities address these concerns. The casualty data indicates that the measures historically and currently provided to address safety concerns around schools are proving successful at reducing/minimising accidents occurring on school journeys. The County Council recognises, however, that the situation outside schools can be improved and therefore the existing measures will need to continue to be delivered and reviewed in order to maintain, and reduce, the low numbers of accidents occurring on school journeys (existing measures are listed below with further detail included as **Appendix 1**):
 - advance school warning signs for motorists
 - the introduction of advisory 20mph speed limits outside school entrances
 - enforceable 'School Keep Clear' road markings

- the introduction of camera enforcement cars to enforce 'School Keep Clear' road markings
 - the development of targeted road safety education programmes
 - engineering measures to address casualties and encourage pupils to walk/cycle to school
 - the provision of school bus services
 - school crossing patrol service
 - planning advice on school design (at all stages including pre-submission of applications).
8. Discussions with regional and national organisations highlighted only two measures that the County Council does not currently undertake – the closure of roads to all vehicles at school start/finish times which is being introduced in Scotland and Hackney in London; and assisting schools to develop travel plans. It is not, however, possible for the County Council to close roads to all vehicles at school start/finish times as this is only currently permitted in Scotland, Wales and London through their devolved powers.
9. The County Council does, however, have existing powers to implement additional traffic regulation orders, such as introducing 'School Keep Clear' road markings on both sides of the road, which are considered when conditions concerning road widths are met; as well as alternatives to the camera enforcement car, such as scooters or fixed cameras, which could be considered to address recognised road safety issues outside schools. The road safety and amenity (parking) impact on the wider surrounding area does, however, need to be included as part of any considerations before such measures are introduced.

Lessons learnt by the cross-party working group

10. The work undertaken by the group (detailed in **paragraph 4**) has included discussions on a number of issues. The outcomes from these discussions are included as **Appendix 2** and are summarised below. The discussions undertaken by the group have identified three distinct issues outside schools – road safety concerns, congestion, and inconsiderate parking/behaviour by some parents. This report does not review inconsiderate parking/behaviour by some parents, although some of the recommendations may help schools to address this issue.
11. Parking outside schools is a perceived danger rather than it actually resulting in child casualties (as accidents outside schools are very rare and the parking issue occurs every school day outside almost every school). In fact parking outside schools acts as a speed reducing feature and is likely to be a factor in keeping speed and accidents down. Introducing parking restrictions such as double yellow lines or residents' parking schemes are not considered as a feasible option as they can in fact worsen road safety and simply push the problem elsewhere. It is important, however, that parents and pupils crossing outside schools have a clear safe space to do so (i.e. 'School Keep Clear' road markings) and that this designated area is kept clear of parking through effective traffic management.
12. Parking issues generally occur for only a very short period of time (at the start/end of the school day during term-time only) and it is the school community (generally parents but sometimes teachers/school staff) that are causing the parking issues outside schools. Similarly, in most areas only a minority of parents park inconsiderately, or do not react to advice from the school. As the school community creates the short-term problem, it is

within the school's ability to address this issue and therefore the identification and delivery of options to address the parking issues must be led by the school community. Lots of schools already recognise this and many head teachers already undertake work to engage with parents and the local community on parking issues around schools. There is, however, a need to better manage the expectations of parents and affected residents 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. additional traffic regulation orders will not resolve the issue).

13. Due to the different circumstances outside each school (and of the parents attending) there is not a 'one size fit all' solution to parking issues outside schools.
14. With regards to planning it was recognised that the locations of new schools 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, but there is still an opportunity when designing new schools to better consider the impacts of the proposals on the wider local area and consider mitigation. There is a marked disconnect between the planning and construction of new schools, particularly in relation to the provision of highways traffic management and/or safety comments/advice on the design of schools. There is also still an expectation from schools that the County Council will fund highway improvements to address the impacts of school developments, despite the transport assessments, undertaken by schools/academies to satisfy planning conditions, stating that there will be no transport impacts and no new infrastructure is required.
15. It was accepted that engineering measures can help to encourage 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). Whilst the County Council continues to invest in crossings on routes to schools, as well as cycle routes that help link schools to residential areas, locations of such schemes need to be carefully considered as they can actually worsen road safety outside or on routes to schools. It is also important to note that the provision of a formal crossing may increase the number of casualties on journeys to schools as on average over the last three years (2015 to 2017 inclusive) there have been 1 injury accidents per year at light-controlled pedestrian crossings and zebra crossings.
16. School/academy representatives stated that the support previously given to develop and deliver school travel plans had been much appreciated by schools. The funding provided by the Department for Transport (DfT) to support the development/delivery of school travel plans was, however, withdrawn in 2010. There are currently very limited revenue funding sources available to bid for/secure to provide staff resources to help schools deliver school travel plans and therefore this resulted in the withdrawal of these services by the County Council. 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.
17. It was acknowledged that school crossing patrols can help people make better choices about safe places to cross. The County Council's criteria for the provision of a site is below the national criteria meaning that more sites are provided than if the national criteria was

adopted but recruitment to school crossing patrol posts is often difficult, especially in more affluent areas.

18. It was noted that pupil placement policies have resulted in parents/pupils travelling greater distances to schools, especially since the secondary tier is 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. Pupil placement policies, and the fact that pupils travel further to school, have also often resulted in a disconnect between parents and the local community around a school, as the parents are often not part of the local community.

Potential services/actions

19. The County Council is committed to continuing the existing services detailed above in **paragraph 8** (and **Appendix 1**). As detailed above, discussions with regional and national organisations highlighted only two measures that the County Council does not already undertake. The powers to introduce road closures to all vehicles at school start/finish times are not currently available to the County Council (only in London, Scotland and Wales) and therefore this cannot currently be considered in Nottinghamshire. 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 as the County Council does not have the revenue funding available to fund this work. This has meant that since 2010 the County Council (and subsequently VIA EM Ltd) has not been involved in the development of school travel plans or the delivery of the actions contained within them. Whilst the Council (and VIA EM Ltd) has unsuccessfully attempted to secure alternative funding to provide this support, revenue funding sources available to bid for/secure to provide staff resources to help schools deliver school travel plans are also very limited.
20. The discussions the working group has undertaken with interested parties and officers has, however, identified a number of actions to introduce new ways of helping to deliver travel plans, or enhancing existing services to address some of the issues raised, as detailed below.

Education and information for schools and their local communities

- a. **Development of a school travel plan advice toolkit** – the working group has identified that the school community is best placed to address the parking (and perceived road safety) issues around schools but requires advice in order to do so. It is considered that a toolkit will deliver a cost effective means of providing schools with advice on mechanisms to help them address the specific parking issues outside their school. The proposed toolkit would be made available on the County Council's website so that any school can access it. The development of the toolkit will include a review of existing traffic management delivery mechanisms and best practice in school travel planning to inform the review of all advice currently given to schools and would provide:
 - i. information and advice to enable schools to develop, deliver, and maintain their own school travel plan (e.g. templates for plans, surveys, forms, sharing information/marketing, identification of 'school champions' [governors, parents, staff, and pupils], etc.)

- ii. information and advice for head teachers, governors/trustees, parent teacher associations, individual parents, and affected residents to help address parking issues outside their school (e.g. their roles and responsibilities in addressing issues)
- iii. information and advice on improving connections between the schools and their local community (e.g. how to engage the local community in finding solutions to the local parking problems as well as marketing advice)
- iv. information and advice on options available to help address parking issues outside their school (e.g. working with the local community to identify alternative parking locations such as identification of potential parking/drop-off point for use by parents at the start/end of the school day, information and advice on how to set up a 'park and stride' scheme, as well as information on what can and what cannot be provided, such as additional parking restrictions, and the reasons why they are/are not provided)
- v. information and advice on the benefits of independent and active travel to school and links to existing health promotion programmes
- vi. information on analysis of accidents on school journeys undertaken and the education programmes available to schools to address any patterns of accidents
- vii. information and advice on curriculum links between road safety education and active travel to school
- viii. information and advice to assist schools to fund their own bus services should they wish to do so (the County Council funds and/or organises school bus services across the County; schools could, however, fund their own bespoke bus services).

Should a toolkit be developed, the persons/organisation commissioned to develop it will need to work closely with County Council education and transport strategy officers, as well as Via EM Ltd officers, to ensure that it considers and complements existing strategies and policies.

- b. **Offer additional 'paid for' services** to help schools to develop and deliver school travel plans – until such time that revenue funding can be secured to fund school travel plan co-ordinators, schools should be able to fund the development of travel plans, or to deliver the actions included in a travel plan they have written, to specifically address issues outside their school. The choice of who to engage to deliver such services would be up to the school but a menu of potential services, details of how to engage organisations that are able to deliver them, and their likely costs could be included in the toolkit.
- c. **Investigate strengthening the links between developer contributions and the development and delivery of school travel plans** – developers can be required to draw-up and deliver travel plans as a condition of planning consent. It is considered that further investigation of this process should be undertaken to determine when such conditions should be applied so that they are done so consistently in the future. Should these be adopted in the future they would be included within the Council's 'Developer Contributions Strategy'.

Enforcement

- d. **Purchase and deployment of an additional camera enforcement car** – the two existing camera enforcement cars cover approximately 300 schools. An additional camera enforcement car could be purchased to enable greater coverage of 'School Keep Clear' road markings to help ensure that parents and pupils crossing outside schools have a clear safe space to do so. It should be noted that should this option be progressed, the

procurement of the vehicle will mean that it would be unlikely to be available until the 2019/20 academic year.

Planning

- e. **Earlier engagement between scheme designers and road safety colleagues** – To ensure that the impacts on the local highway network are considered fully, where new schools are being built, or existing schools are being extended, early engagement between designers and road safety/traffic management officers needs to be undertaken prior to planning permission being sought. There should be an expectancy that these officers will make comments on all applications (and pre-submission of planning applications) to ensure that when new schools are built, or schools are extended, consideration is given to how increases in local traffic and the school population may impact on road safety in the future. The budget allocated to building new, or extensions to, schools should also consider and make allowance for the cost of mitigating any impacts on the highway.

Raising awareness

- f. **Raise greater awareness of the tools available to address parking and safety around schools** amongst County Council members, as well as school governors, parent teacher associations and head teachers – it was cited that a number of members, and schools, were not aware of the existing measures available to help improve parking and views on safety around schools (e.g. camera enforcement cars and road safety education). The development (and delivery) of a communications strategy utilising existing mechanisms such as the 'Schools Hub', the Governors Trust Board, and directors reports to governors, would help to address this issue. Should Committee approve the development of a travel plan toolkit, making people aware of the toolkit will also need to form part of the communications strategy.

Other Options Considered

- 21. The other options considered (as well as the reasons for not adopting them) and those that are currently being delivered (and proposed to continue) are set out within this report and its appendices. A number of options have been considered but ruled out due to the road safety concerns of their delivery (e.g. double yellow lines and residents' parking schemes) and these options are also included within the appendices of this report.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

- 22. The proposed recommendations detailed within this report have been developed based on input from representatives from schools, national road safety practitioners, and County Council officers to help ensure sustained delivery of County Council and national priorities. The measures detailed in the report have been developed to reflect a balance of member, public and stakeholder priorities, evidence of need, value for money and the delivery of the County Council's vision and objectives.

Statutory and Policy Implications

23. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

24. Additional funding will need to be identified and secured to deliver two of the recommended actions – the development of a school travel plan advice toolkit and the purchase of an additional camera enforcement car.
25. It is estimated that a school travel plan best practice advice toolkit will cost approximately £10,000-£15,000 to develop. It is estimated that an additional camera enforcement car will cost approximately £47,000 to purchase and annual running costs of up to a further £12,000 per year. The costs for the development of the travel plan toolkit and additional camera enforcement car could be met through existing revenue funding secured through penalty charge notices.
26. Additional 'paid for' services and earlier engagement between school developers, planning officers and road safety officers would have no direct cost to the Council.

Public Sector Equality Duty implications

27. All programmes detailed within this report comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. An equality impact assessment was undertaken on the Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan 2011/12 - 2025/26 in March 2011 to ensure that the strategy and its programmes to deliver it (including travel planning, enforcement of traffic regulation orders, education and awareness raising, and transport development control) met the duty.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

28. All of the proposed programmes and measures contained within this report have been developed to address congestion, its knock-on effects on air quality and its impacts on local communities.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That this Committee recommends the proposals to Policy Committee for approval as listed below, in addition to continuing the current approach to road safety and parking around schools (as detailed in **Appendix 1**):

- 1) the competitive procurement for the development of a best practice school travel plan advice toolkit

- 2) the undertaking of a 12 month pilot of the school travel plan advice toolkit with a limited representative number of schools across the County in order to refine it and ensure it is fit for purpose (including a review of the toolkit at the end of the 12 month period) prior to it being made available to all schools
- 3) the purchase and deployment of an additional camera enforcement car
- 4) the establishment of a formal early engagement process between school developers, planning officers and road safety officers to consider the traffic management and safety impacts of school developments
- 5) the development of a communications strategy to ensure County Council members, school management (and their governing bodies) are made aware of the services/advice available to them to address parking issues around schools.

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Constitutional Comments (EP 18/02/19)

29. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SES 01/03/19)

30. The financial implications are set out in paragraphs 24 to 26 of the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Road safety around schools: report to Children & Young People's Committee on 18th March 2018
Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan Strategy 2011/12 - 2025/26
Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan 2018/19 - 2021/22

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1221