

Evaluation of Leeds School Streets Trials

Date: 16 November 2022

Report of: Principal Transport Planner

Report to: The Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Summary

In October 2021, Leeds City Council commissioned Living Streets to carry out an evaluation of the Leeds School Streets programme. The purpose of the evaluation was to understand the impact of the trials summarise key learning about School Streets from other authorities and make recommendations for future rollout of School Streets in Leeds.

This report summarises key learning from the evaluation and makes recommendations about the approach to future School Streets implementation in Leeds.

Recommendations

The Chief Officer, Highways and Transportation, is asked to:

- a) Note the contents of this report
- b) Consider and approve the Evaluation of the School Street Trials in Leeds (**Appendix A**)
- c) Consider and approve the proposed approach and methodology for future School Streets in Leeds (**Appendix B**)
- d) Note the funding implications of future School Streets

What is this report about?

Background

1. School Streets are where a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is used to restrict vehicular access on roads outside of schools during the morning drop off and afternoon pick up times, with exemptions for access permit holders, authorised vehicles and blue badge holders.
2. Fourteen School Streets were installed in Leeds as part of an 18-month trial during the Covid-19 pandemic using (Emergency) Active Travel Funding ((E)ATF) to support social distancing outside of schools, increase active travel to and from school, whilst also improving air quality and road safety (see table 1).

3. Following some initial evaluation work of the trial by Council Officers, it was agreed at Highways Boards in December 2021 and February 2022 that twelve of the School Streets sites would be made permanent and two of the trial sites, Beecroft Primary School and Cross Gates Primary School would be withdrawn.

Table 1: Leeds School Streets

Phase 1 School Streets June 2020	Phase 2 School Streets September 2020
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cross Gates Primary (withdrawn) 2. Clapgate Primary, Belle Isle 3. Ingram Road Primary, Holbeck 4. Lane End Primary, Beeston 5. Pudsey Primrose Hill Primary 6. Thorpe Primary 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Beecroft Primary, Kirkstall (withdrawn) 8. Chapel Allerton Primary 9. Great Preston VC CofE Primary 10. Hollybush Primary, Bramley 11. Hugh Gaitskell Primary, Beeston 12. Middleton St Mary's Primary 13. Westgate Primary, Otley 14. Woodlesford Primary, Woodlesford

Evaluation of School Street Trials

4. Council's Influencing Travel Behaviour team (ITB) commissioned Living Streets to conduct an independent evaluation of the Leeds School Streets trials (phase 1 and 2). The evaluation report (**Appendix A**) covers the following areas:
 - Impact of the Leeds School Streets trials
 - Whether Leeds City Council should support a future School Streets programme
 - Methodology for selecting future School Streets (stages, responsibilities, timescales)
 - Further support required to formalise and enforce School Streets in England; and
 - Resource and funding implications of implementing future schemes
 - Identify additional national measures required to ensure School Streets are successful i.e. enforcement powers, legislation, approval of signage etc; and
 - Recommend additional measures at each site and to support further School Streets programmes in Leeds.
5. To inform the evaluation, Living Streets Ltd used data from online surveys conducted by the ITB team in summer 2021 with families, staff and residents and traffic surveys (counts and parking beat) commissioned by ITB in August and September 2021. Between October and December 2021, Living Streets carried out further data collection, conducting interviews with delivery partners, DfT, Council officers and West Yorkshire police. They also carried out a survey of other local authorities in the UK who have delivered School Street schemes. Of the forty authorities contacted, twenty completed the survey.
6. A Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating methodology was developed to review the success of the trial sites against the programme objectives. This methodology was refined as part of the evaluation study to provide a mechanism for selecting, assessing the suitability and prioritising future School Street schemes in Leeds.
7. It was concluded that, with the exception of two School Street sites, the trials were successful in meeting their objectives:
 - **Social Distancing:** 68% of families agreed that, 'the School Streets make it easy to maintain social distancing.'
 - **Improve road safety:** Before School Streets 65% of families surveyed reported being concerned about road safety. After the school streets were introduced, this dropped to 34%. This is based on perception rather than road safety data.
 - **Improve air quality:** Over half (55%) of families responding agreed with the statement that, 'the air around the School Streets seems clean.' 30% of families reported a reduction

in concerns about ‘the health impact of car fumes.’ Again, these results give an insight into *perceptions* of air quality rather than measurements of air quality data.

- **Encourage sustainable travel on the journey to and from school:** Family survey responses indicate that on average there has been a six percentage-point increase in the use of active modes across the School Street trials. All schools reported noticing an increase in pupils walking or cycling to school.

Key Findings and Recommendations from the Evaluation Study

- Adopt a **methodology for shortlisting and scoring future School Streets** sites. There are key characteristics that mean a School Street is unsuitable and these are proposed as Stage 1 Self-Selection Criteria.
- Set up a **School Streets Steering Group** with membership from across the Council to undertake the selection and review of future School Streets including ITB, Highways and Network Management engineers, Parking Services, Education with advice from other areas such as Air Quality and Public Health as required. Highways Board should remain the final decision-making body with a lead member briefing.
- Additional before monitoring data should be conducted before sites are selected. Continued **monitoring and evaluation** of existing School Streets is vital to communicating the benefits and at least **10% of budgets** should be dedicated as such.
- Require a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between schools, Leeds City Council teams and delivery partners (Police) so that roles and expectations on all sides are understood and managed from the outset.
- Leeds City Council should follow recently published guidance on **ensuring representative consultation** takes place before any schemes are withdrawn.
- Publish answers to **Frequently Asked Questions** on School Streets and redirect issues raised to other relevant Council teams.
- Confirm the **preferred legal Traffic Regulation Order instrument** to be used for future School Streets in Leeds. Review and follow guidance on TROs (BPA endorsed by DfT, 2019).
- **Confirm an enforcement regime** with the Police and Council Civil Enforcement officers and provide clear information online about how the access restrictions are enforced.
- Investigate the potential to apply for an order under **Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004** designating powers to civilly enforce School Street access restrictions using **ANPR cameras**.
- Source and trial **folding School Streets signs** to overcome the need for and expense of ‘sign-bagging’ during school holidays as the TRO applies all year round.
- Provide **additional resources to future programmes** to ensure that all aspects of implementation, infrastructure, education, information, data collection and staffing are covered.

Recommendations for Future School Streets in Leeds

8. In response to the key recommendations from the evaluation, a proposal is provided as **Appendix B** for how future School Streets in Leeds are selected, implemented and resourced.
9. An approach to the selection and prioritisation of future School Street sites is explained. The aim of this approach is to ensure that future schemes are in suitable locations and that adequate preparation and before monitoring takes place to increase the likelihood of their success. This three-stage process is summarised in **Figure 1** with further detail provided in **Appendix B**.

Figure 1:
Selection and Prioritisation Stages

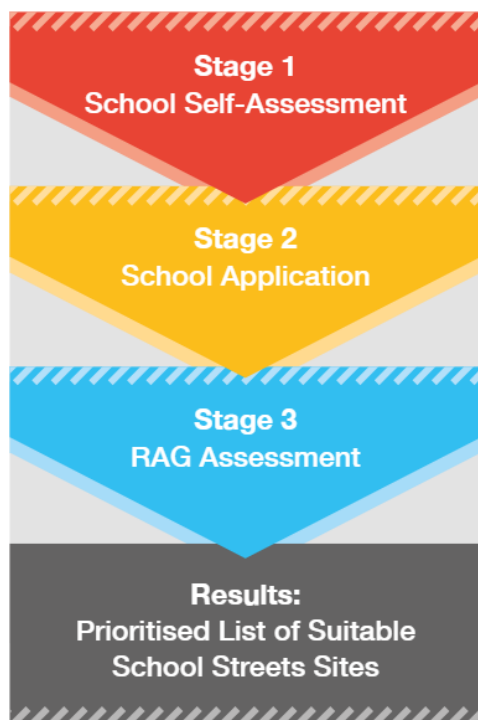


Figure 2:
Stage 1 Self-Assessment



10. A template project plan for School Streets in Leeds, capturing the range of tasks required through the stages of scheme Selection, Preparation, Implementation, Maintenance and Monitoring is included as **Appendix C**. This plan illustrates the extent of works required by both the team delivering School Streets but also other teams within the Council (Traffic Engineering, Parking Services) and partners (West Yorkshire Police and the schools themselves).
11. The proposed approach takes into account the lessons learned from the trials. The ITB team continue to keep abreast of local and national guidance on School Streets as it is developed as well as sharing experiences and resources as they produced with other Local Authorities implementing School Street schemes. This is particularly the case around issues such as enforcement (including the use of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras), signage and MoUs.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

12. Since the trial commenced in 2020, the ITB team have been approached by local members, schools and parents to request the installation of School Streets at over 50 sites.
13. For the future success of School Streets in Leeds, it is essential that the key learning and recommendations from the evaluation are incorporated into a process to ensure the most suitable sites are selected in the future, the schemes are properly resourced with funding and staff to deliver them effectively.
14. In March 2022, WYCA announced that funding has been made available from DfT for approximately five School Streets in Leeds (from a collective funding pot of £350k for the five West Yorkshire districts).
15. School Street access restrictions are being requested and recommended as part of school expansions and redevelopment works. A methodology for deciding whether this is the most

appropriate measure and how it should be secured in terms of funding, roles and responsibilities needs to be agreed.

What impact will this proposal have?

16. The continuation of existing and the implementation of more School Streets in Leeds will maintain the positive impacts recorded, including increased levels of active travel on the journey to school, improved perceptions of road safety and air quality outside school gates. Any groups of people with protected characteristics and or those who are disproportionately represented on the school run could potentially benefit more from the impact of School Streets. These groups could include (pregnant) women, carers, lower income/unemployed households, children (with respiratory conditions such as asthma), disabled etc.
17. A robust, well-understood process for selecting and prioritising future School Street locations will help to manage expectations of all those interested in the schemes including school staff, families of pupils, residents, Members etc.
18. A more thorough approach to monitoring and data collection as part of the aforementioned selection process and during the implementation of schemes will ensure that it is possible to measure the impact of schemes and assess progress towards meeting the scheme objectives. Well-informed decisions can then be made about whether scheme should be retained or withdrawn.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

19. School Streets contribute to the following Best Council Plan outcomes:
 - Be safe and feel safe.
 - Enjoy happy, healthy, active lives.
 - Do well at all levels of learning and have the skills they need for life.
 - Move easily around a well-planned, sustainable city that's working towards being carbon neutral.
20. By offering safer and cleaner routes to school this will encourage more parents and children to walk, cycle and scoot to school which will help to deliver the Best Council Plan Priorities.
21. Creating safer spaces outside the school gates will increase people's likelihood to walk and cycle to school and for any linked trips afterwards i.e. errands, commuting to a workplace. Consequently, there will be health benefits linked to air quality, and improved wellbeing.
22. Reduced reliance on motor vehicles will also reduce carbon emissions, contributing towards Leeds' climate emergency targets.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards Affected: All

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

23. School staff, families of pupils, residents and ward Councillors provided feedback and correspondence to the Influencing Travel Behaviour team, including via a dedicated School Streets email inbox (schoolstreets@leeds.gov.uk) throughout the trials. All correspondence received has been responded to.

24. Information has been available online throughout the trial at: <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel/school-streets>.
25. Surveys of staff, families of pupils attending the schools and nearby residents were conducted during the summer (June-August 2021). Table 1 includes a breakdown of the survey results.
26. Interviews and information gathering via phone and email has been conducted by Living Streets with key delivery partner representatives including Council officers (Influencing Travel Behaviour, Parking Services and Traffic Engineering), Neighbourhood policing teams/West Yorkshire Police and the Department for Transport (DfT).
27. Ward Councillors covering Phase 1 and 2 Schools were advised by email of recommendations to retain the School Street and were asked to provide any relevant feedback.

What are the Resource Implications?

Staffing

28. The evaluation emphasised the importance any future School Streets programme being adequately resourced with capital, revenue funds and staff time. The evaluation recommends that vital steps of before monitoring, data collection and scheme preparation that were missed or curtailed during the trials owing to the 'Emergency' nature of the funding and implementing the schemes quickly in response to the Covid-19 pandemic are properly resourced in future schemes.
29. Analysis of timesheet software reveals that School Streets schemes have required 1.2 full time equivalent (FTE) Highways and Transportation staff hours (37 hours/week) throughout their implementation.
30. It is proposed that the ITB team can continue to manage the implementation of Phase 3 School Streets (plus the one currently secured through planning) and oversee the post-implementation monitoring and maintenance of the twelve Phase 1 and Phase 2 School Streets.
31. However, additional staffing resource will be needed to support an enhanced programme and any additional site locations. ITB does not have the capacity to support additional School Streets without continuing to significantly reduce Travel Plan review and support offered to schools, workplaces and residential developments. At least an additional SO2 officer post is required to oversee an enhanced School Streets programme.

Capital

32. To date, the School Streets trial has been supported by monies from the Emergency Active Travel Fund ((E)ATF) – tranches 1 and 2, with a third funding allocation from DfT via WYCA currently being agreed. School Streets costings based on experience in Leeds to date have been provided in **Appendix D**. Each School Street costs an average of £19,000 to implement, but varies depending on factors such as the geographical extent of each scheme, the number of schemes per TRO, number of gateways etc. This figure includes signage, consultations and TRO costs. TRO costs can be reduced if multiple schemes are covered under the same order. This figure does not include staffing costs, enforcement or ongoing maintenance such as sign replacement.

Phase 3 School Streets

33. In January 2022, West Yorkshire Combined Authority (the "Combined Authority") were advised that a bid for ATF3 Active Travel Capital Schemes funding to deliver a West Yorkshire School Street Fund package was pulled in for further information by DfT. This led WYCA to invite the West Yorkshire District Authorities to identify a list of potential School Street locations. The ITB team are in the process of applying the proposed Selection and Prioritisation criteria to schools where interest has been expressed in School Streets to identify

ten further potential School Street locations. ITB have proposed the delivery timetable set out in paragraph 32 below to WYCA to enable the Selection, Preparation and Implementation stage work identified in this paper and the Evaluation work to take place.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

Selection and Prioritisation of Future Sites

34. There are twelve continuing School Street schemes in Leeds for which full TROs are in place and renewed access permits have been issued. There is a growing interest from other schools, parents and particularly Council Members in the ability to put their school forward for a School Street scheme. This paper therefore proposes how Leeds City Council should respond to future requests for School Streets and manage expectations of all interested parties.
35. The risk of not having agreed processes in place for selecting, prioritising and monitoring future School Streets is that School Streets may be implemented in inappropriate locations, causing them to be unsuccessful, fail and/or detrimentally impact the overall success and reputation of the School Street concept.

Compliance and Enforcement

36. Currently, there is no regular enforcement regime in place. Fixed Penalty FPNs for the contravention of the School Streets TRO can only be issued by West Yorkshire Police (including PSCOs). During the trials a Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) was set up and one Leeds City Council civil enforcement officer (CEE) undertook training that enables them to flag vehicles down, check permits, direct traffic and pass details of non-compliance to the RPU for enforcement action. However, to date a regular enforcement regime has not been established, the CEE has not been deployed and no FPNs have been issued
37. The risk of not having a clear, agreed and visible enforcement regime agreed between ITB, Parking Services and West Yorkshire Police (WYP) is that levels of non-compliance will increase, more problematic sites will fail. High levels of non-compliance or a belief that the schemes are not enforced will impact on the general credibility of and dilute the effectiveness of the wider School Streets programme.
38. Parking Services have committed to visiting each School Street site at least once per academic term to enforce parking restrictions, including school zig zags and yellow lines.
39. It has been confirmed that Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) officers including PCSOs can issue a non-endorsable Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for contravention of the School Street TRO issuing a fine of £50 using offence code RR84171 "Vehicle contravene local traffic order other than parking (e.g. bus lane)".
40. ITB send regular requests and reminders to NPT to attend School Street locations and ensure that each school knows how to contact their NPT.

What are the legal implications?

41. The Chief Officer, Highways and Transportation, has been delegated by the authority to approve the recommendations contained within this report.
42. Not eligible for call-in.
43. The works contained in this report are not of such a value or impact on the public at large that they constitute a key decision.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

44. An alternative would be to discontinue any further expansion of the School Streets programme in Leeds. However, if this option was pursued, the positive benefits gained by the trials would be lost. In addition, there would likely be an adverse response from school staff, ward members and members of the public who have been largely supportive of the trials.
45. All Leeds schools are encouraged to participate in the Modeshift Stars programme which rewards the successful implementation of school travel plans with incremental awards of green, bronze, silver, gold and platinum. School Street schools will be encouraged to record the impact of the initiative via this accreditation system.

b) How will success be measured?

46. The success of School Streets will be measured using the selection criteria metrics. Before monitoring data collection will be repeated once the scheme is operational. Through comparative analysis of the data sets, the achievement of the scheme objectives will be assessed. This analysis will reveal any positive or negative changes in:
- The uptake of active or sustainable travel modes for journeys to school,
 - Perceptions of air quality and road safety,
 - The level of car parking around schools and any displacement on surrounding streets,
 - Traffic flows and/or congestion.

c) What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

47. We are in the process of identifying suitable sites for a potential Phase 3 of School Streets in Leeds. The following timetable was proposed to WYCA by ITB, LCC although this is subject to change:

- ↓ Expression of Interest by LAs – April/May 2022
- ↓ Site visits and eligibility checks – October 2022
- ↓ Preferred list of 5-10 schools – November 2022
- ↓ Before monitoring surveys and data collection February - March 2023
- ↓ Confirmation of preferred sites and signing of MOUs – March/April 2023
- ↓ TRO and required consultation – March 2023
- ↓ Engagement – March-May 2023
- ↓ Implementation – September 2023

Appendices

48. Appendix A – Leeds School Streets Evaluation Report (Living Streets, April 2022)
49. Appendix B – Proposed Approach to Selecting and Implementing School Streets in Leeds
50. Appendix C – School Streets Project Plan: Selection, Preparation, Implementation, Monitoring, and Maintenance
51. Appendix D – School Streets Costing and Resourcing Estimates
52. Appendix E – Business Case for Future School Streets
53. Appendix F – EDCI Screening

Background papers

54. Previous reports to Highways Board:

- May 2020 School Streets Locations (Phase 1)
- July 2020 School Streets Phase 2
- December 2021 School Streets Trial Phase 1
- January 2022 Phase 2 School Streets Recommendations