

Southend-on-Sea City Council

Agenda
Item No.

Report of Executive Director
(Neighbourhoods and Environment)
To
Traffic Regulation Working Party & Cabinet Committee
On

Monday 20th February 2023

Report prepared by: Andrew Gibbons, Engineer - Civil
Engineering

West Leigh 'School Street' – Ronald Hill Grove

Cabinet Member: Councillor Steven Wakefield – Cabinet Member for Highways,
Transport & Parking
(Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform the Traffic Regulation Working Party and Cabinet Committee of the commencement of the statutory consultation of the Traffic Regulation Order in respect of Ronald Hill Grove (West Leigh School Street) and implementation of the scheme should the Traffic Regulation Order be made.
- 1.2 The scheme is capital funded by Active Travel Tranche 2 which was resolved at Cabinet on 13th January 2022 and Place Scrutiny on the 7th February 2022.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the report be noted

3. Background

- 3.1 A 'School Street' is a scheme which restricts access of motorised traffic to the roads outside schools, during school drop-off and pick-up times during term time only with the aim of creating a safer and less congested street around the school to encourage alternative and greener modes of transport, such as cycling and walking, and improving air quality in and around our local schools.
- 3.2 The first tranche of funding was announced by the Secretary of State for Transport in May 2020 as part of the work to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial grant funding supported local transport authorities with producing cycling and walking facilities.
- 3.3 As part of this initiative the school streets pilot schemes were introduced to 4 schools in the City; Greenways, North Street, West Leigh and Bournes Green.

4. Scheme Details

- 4.1 Following consultation with a number of schools across the City, an experimental scheme was introduced which banned vehicles from using the roads during the schools during drop off and pick up times.
- 4.2 Volunteers were trained by our Traffic Management contractor and barriers were placed in the road to secure the closure which was supported by signage either end of the street in accordance with TSRGD and other design standards.
- 4.3 The experimental scheme lasted 18 months; and this allowed the scheme to be monitored and any comments made and considered during the first 6 months in operation. Although the scheme was very well received, the deadline for transition from experimental order to permanent order was missed and therefore we now plan to advertise a permanent Traffic Regulation Order for West Leigh School Street.
- 4.4 The scheme proposals for West Leigh School Street can be found in Appendix 1.

5. Corporate Implications

5.1 Contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map

Safe & Well - This scheme contributes to the Council's visions, particularly in terms of moving towards a safer City by improving safety for pedestrians and school children whilst ensuring residents feel safe and secure in their neighbourhoods. This is in line with the Policy 16, taken from the Councils Local Transport Plan, which highlights the need to "carry out a programme of measures designed to improve road safety and to promote road safety for all road users."

Active & Involved – By improving safety, the ambition of the scheme is to encourage our residents to use active and sustainable transport options. This will be achieved by improving the perceived safety for pedestrians, who would be more inclined to use active travel options if it was their belief that these options were safe enough for use by both adults and children. This is in line with the Councils Green City Action Plan sub-priority 2.4, which highlights the need to enable sustainable transport within the City and the actions that can be taken to achieve this

5.2 Financial Implications

The costs for the advertising of the Orders and implementation of the measures will be met from the capital funding which was agreed for the project.

5.3 Legal Implications

The statutory consultation process for Traffic Regulation Orders will be followed. Any objections received will be responded to by the service area. Ward members will be included in the circulation of the notice and any comments received will be considered in the consultation process.

5.4 People Implications

Works required to implement the agreed scheme will be undertaken by existing staff resources.

5.5 Property Implications

None

5.6 Consultation

Consultation with all Council Members has taken place to agree the measures. A report on the Active Travel Plan went to Cabinet on 13th January 2022 where it was referred to Place Scrutiny on the 7th February 2022. It was resolved with authority be delegated to the Executive Director (Neighbourhoods and Environment), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Parking.

A residential and stakeholder consultation was carried out on *Your Say Southend* which ran from 12th October to 11th November 2022 for the School Streets at West Leigh and Bournes Green:

- A total of 1,200 people accessed the campaign of that 244 responded online, the rest were informed, but chose not to comment on the survey. The consultation included a survey with questions and a free text box for further comments requesting feedback on certain elements of the whole project. Not every respondent answered all the questions.
- The consultation was promoted across social media and was available on the Councils interactive consultation portal <https://yoursay.southend.gov.uk/> it was also made available in a hardcopy format if requested. Letters were sent to those properties that fall under the proposed schemes. The results were as follows:
 - The overall consensus from those responding was that they understood and supported what the Council is trying to achieve in considering making permanent the School Street Scheme.
 - Of those responding 81% agree that it has enabled more people to walk and cycle to school in a safer environment, 5% were unsure if it had made a difference.
 - 77% agreed that the School Street scheme has created a healthier environment, only 17% didn't think this was the case.
 - 71% agreed that School Street Scheme has encouraged them to leave the car at home.
 - 86% of the respondents would support the implementation of the School Streets Scheme permanently.

The statutory consultation will be carried out in accordance with primary legislation including advertisement of the proposals in the local press, on-street at each location and letter drops to the adjacent properties. The information will also be accessible on-line via the Councils website and can be inspected at the Civic Centre reception during normal office hours.

5.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

Any implications have been taken into account in designing the schemes.

5.8 Risk Assessment

The proposals are designed to improve highway safety with the aim of creating a safer and less congested street around the school to encourage alternative and greener modes of transport such as cycling and walking, and improving air quality in and around our local schools.

5.9 Value for Money

Works associated with the draft scheme in Appendix 1 will be undertaken by the Council's term contractors, selected through a competitive tendering process to ensure value for money.

5.10 Community Safety Implications

The proposals in Appendix 1, if implemented, are likely to lead to improved community safety.

5.11 Environmental Impact

The proposals in Appendix 1, if implemented, are likely to lead to improved air quality.

6. **Background Papers**

None

7. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Draft West Leigh School Street Proposals