

Meeting: Traffic Regulations Working Party
Cabinet Committee

Date: 26 October 2023

Classification: Part 1

Key Decision: No

Title of Report: **West Leigh School Street – Ronald Hill Grove**

Executive Director: Alan Richards – Executive Director (Environment and Place)

Report Author: Andrew Gibbons – Senior Engineer, Civil Engineering

Executive Councillor: Councillor Kevin Buck, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Parking

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform the Traffic Regulation Working Party and Cabinet Committee of the summary of comments received during the statutory consultation of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in respect of Ronald Hill Grove (West Leigh School Street) and implementation of the scheme; should the objections to the scheme be overruled, the TRO be agreed and made.
- 1.2 To inform the Traffic Regulation Working Party and Cabinet Committee of the majority support for the scheme on the 'Your Say Southend' Consultation which ran from 12 October to 11 November 2022.
- 1.3 The scheme is capital funded by Active Travel Tranche 2 which was resolved at Cabinet on 13 January 2022 and Place Scrutiny on the 7 February 2022.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **Based on the 'Your Say Southend' Consultation where 86% (209) of the 244 respondents supported the implementation of the School Streets Scheme permanently; To overrule the 5 objections (found in section 5.6 of this report) to the scheme received during the statutory consultation period, as this is a safety scheme with majority support.**
- 2.2 **The Traffic Regulation Order be agreed and made as advertised.**

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 environmentally friendly 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 providing 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 prevents vehicles from using the roads during the schools during drop off and pick up times.
- 4.2 Volunteers were trained by the Council's 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 national legislation and 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 implement a permanent TRO for West Leigh School Street.
- 4.4 The scheme design for West Leigh School Street can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

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 Policy 16, taken from the Council's Local Transport Plan 3, 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 Council's 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 advertising the TROs and implementation of the measures will be met from the capital funding which was agreed for the project.

5.3 Legal Implications

The statutory process for TRO has been followed including a consultation. The objections received will be responded to by the service area. Ward members will be included in the circulation of the notice.

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

Member Consultation

Consultation with Council Members has taken place to agree the proposed measures. A report on the Active Travel Plan went to Cabinet on 13 January 2022 where it was referred to Place Scrutiny on the 7 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. However, the West Leigh School Street is not being progressed under delegated authority, as this is across two Wards; Leigh and West Leigh – therefore the authority to make the Order after the statutory consultation, must be made by Members at the appropriate Council Meeting/s.

Statutory Consultation – Traffic Regulation Order

The statutory consultation was carried out in accordance with primary legislation including advertisement of the proposals in the local press. All of the TRO documents were available / accessible on-line via the Councils website and available for inspection at the Civic Centre reception during normal office hours. In addition, consultation letters were dropped to residents within the vicinity of Ronald Hill Grove.

During the statutory consultation: A total of 6 responses were received. The nature of the responses has been provided in Item 5.6, Table 1 of this report. From these responses, key themes were identified within the responses, a

summary of the key themes has been provided in item 5.6, Table 2 of this report.

Table 1

| Response type | Total received | % overall |
|---------------|----------------|-----------|
| Against | 5 | 83.33% |
| Query/Request | 1 | 16.67% |

Table 2

| Key themes | Total count | % overall |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| No difference in air pollution | 3 | 25.00% |
| No enforcement | 3 | 25.00% |
| Parking displacement | 2 | 16.67% |
| Timings of the closure | 1 | 8.33% |
| Road condition | 1 | 8.33% |
| No changes in mode of transport | 1 | 8.33% |
| Scheme extension requested | 1 | 8.33% |

Your Say Southend – Consultation

A residential and stakeholder consultation was carried out on Your Say Southend which ran from 12 October to 11 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:

- o 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.
- o 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.
- o 77% agreed that the School Street scheme has created a healthier environment, only 17% didn't think this was the case.
- o 71% agreed that School Street Scheme has encouraged them to leave the car at home.
- o 86% of the respondents would support the implementation of the School Streets Scheme permanently.

5.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

Any implications have been taken into account during the design stage of the "School Streets" scheme.

5.8 Risk Assessment

The proposals are designed to improve highway safety for all highway users, with the aim of creating a safer and less congested street around the school to encourage alternative and greener (environmentally friendly) 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 scheme – design provided in Item 7 Appendix 1 to this report, 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 - within the design, provided in Item 7 Appendix 1 to this report, and scheme details provided in Item 3 of this report – if implemented, lead to improved community safety.

5.11 Environmental Impact

The proposals - within the design, provided in Item 7 Appendix 1 to this report, and scheme details provided in Item 3 of this report – if implemented, are likely to lead to improved air quality.

6. Background Papers

The report which was submitted to Traffic Regulations Working Party (TRWP) in February 2023 making members aware of the advertisement of the safety scheme, has been provided in Item 7, Appendix 2 of this report.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – West Leigh School Street Proposals

Appendix 2 – West Leigh - TRWP Report (Monday 20th February 2023)