



Northumberland County Council

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY SERVICE DIRECTOR - LOCAL SERVICES

Paul Jones

Temporary 'School Streets' Closure at Newsham Primary School in Blyth

Cabinet Member: Glen Sanderson – Leader of Council

Purpose of Report

This report sets out the background to the proposed temporary 'School Streets' Closure at **Newsham Primary School in Blyth**.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the 'school streets' closure is undertaken during the school pick up and drop off times operating on a temporary basis over 18 months during specified times outside **Newsham Primary School in Blyth**.

Link to Corporate Plan

Living - "We want you to feel safe, healthy and cared for"

Enjoying - "We want you to love where you live"

Learning - "We want you to achieve and realise your potential"

Key Issues

1. The Covid-19 Pandemic and resulting 'social distancing' measures mean that schools need to adopt a host of operational changes to the way pupils move around the premises. That includes how they arrive and depart from school using the adopted highway. 'School Streets' closures are intended to assist in maintaining social distancing and reduce the level of congestion that normally takes place. The Department for Transport has asked for Local Authorities to implement measures around schools to encourage walking and cycling to school, through measures such as 'school streets,' where traffic is restricted at pick-up and drop-off times'.
2. The proposal has been developed following ongoing concerns raised by residents in the area and school representatives in relation to the

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volume, and indiscriminate nature, of parking in neighbouring streets around **Newsham Primary School in Blyth**.

3. Council representatives have been working closely with the Head Teacher of Newsham Primary School, to consider traffic management proposals that will help promote the required 'social distancing' measures outside the school.
4. 'School Streets' closures have been successfully trialed outside other schools in Northumberland. They are being actively promoted by the Department for Transport (DfT) and rolled out by other Local Authorities across the country.
5. In an effort to reduce the level of parking and address road safety concerns, it is proposed to trial a 'school streets' closure.
6. NCC will write to affected residents in the area to advise of the proposals.
7. Children should be safe, encouraged to play and enjoy their entire school experience, which includes the journey to and from school.
8. The scheme is supported by Councillor Campbell and the head teacher Mrs Armstrong, as well as other representatives from the school.
9. The scheme is funded within the 2020/21 LTP programme.

Background

Over the last year School Streets closures have been successfully implemented at several schools in London and Scotland. To promote best practice for their implementation, Hackney Council disseminated a toolkit for use for all Local Authorities in May 2019. The DfT are encouraging this process, with added emphasis on their implementation as both an 'Active Travel' measure and to assist in 'social distancing' requirements.

The benefits of sometimes closing a street include but are not limited to:

- Encouraging healthier and more sustainable travel opportunities by leaving the car at home and opting to walk, scoot or cycle;
- Reduction in car use resulting in greener streets and cleaner air quality;
- Reduction in potential conflict between motorists and children therefore improving road safety;
- Reduced access issues for residents;
- Encouraging play and activities before and after school.

Following a review of the guidance provided by Hackney Council and engagement with other Local Authorities in relation to their implementation, Hareside Primary School in Cramlington was chosen as the test site for a Trial 'Streets Closure' last year. The trial at Hareside took place on Thursday 11th and Friday 12th July 2019 between 8.00am and 9.00am at the start of the school day and between 2.15pm and 3.15pm at the end. A Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) was introduced to facilitate the process.

The key benefits of the trial are detailed below;

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- Feedback from residents, school representatives and parents alike was largely positive in nature, with 87% of respondents enjoying the event. Furthermore, 78% stated that they would like to see the event happen more often or made permanent, with only 1.3% disagreeing (20.7% were undecided).
- Children were able to negotiate the streets and play in locations which were free from traffic.
- Surveys carried out show a 47% increase in walking, cycling and scooting over the 2 days.
- Vehicle counts show that there were fewer cars in the closed areas and surrounding streets compared to normal conditions.
- The closed sections benefited from improved air quality.
- The absence of traffic resulted in road safety benefits including fewer interactions between motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

On the basis of the successful trial, it has always been the intention to introduce these measures in other areas both in temporary and permanent form where there is a similar need and with increased regularity. Given recent circumstances and the need for 'social distancing' that need is considered even greater.

Covid-19 Pandemic and Social Distancing

Whilst schools are working hard to ensure 'social distancing' requirements can be maintained whilst staff, visitors and pupils are on campus, the means by which they travel to, enter and leave the campus also forms a key element of the 'social distancing' process to minimise risk of infection.

A 'School Streets' closure offers the following benefits specific to those requirements;

- A process of 'diffusion' can occur, moving traffic and people from a high concentration operating in confined spaces to a low concentration, spread across a wider area creating smaller pockets.
- They are intended to promote more active travel such as walking and cycling, and offer longer term benefits as well operating in the open air.

Methodology

An Emergency Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) can be used if necessary to cover the School Streets Closure. Pupil numbers in schools have returned to normal and when combined with the current risk of infection, there is a need to react quickly and efficiently. An ETRO affords the opportunity to introduce the 'School Streets' closure in a timely manner that meets the requirements of the school. The ETRO will be in place for a period of 21 days.

During the period of operation of the ETRO, a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) will be introduced to allow the scheme to be extended for a period of 18 months. During which time, more detailed information and consultation will be provided to affected parties and residents. The school will

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take responsibility for the promotion and advertising of the scheme itself, with the assistance of Council representatives.

Proposal

The following streets will be closed for the duration of the School Streets TRO;

- € Warwick Street, Blyth (Part way in, beyond New Delaval and Newsham Working Mens Social Club to maintain access).
- € Brockwell Court, Blyth (the entire section)

School representatives will provide an ad hoc presence to offer advice to parents. The school will be provided with temporary signs in the short term with a view to implementing permanent signing following a review of the measures and further consultation with the school. To allow users to form an appreciation of the scheme in the short term, 'Road Ahead Closed' signs will be placed on site by school representatives during the period of operation.

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Implications Arising out of the Report

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|---|---|
| Policy | Consistent with existing policies |
| Finance and value for money | Scheme will be funded from LTP 2020/21 |
| Legal | TROM 198 |
| Procurement | N/A |
| Human Resources | None |
| Property | None |
| Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A |
| Risk Assessment | This proposal has been specifically designed to reduce risks to vulnerable road users. |
| Crime & Disorder | Regulations in place to carry out enforcement. |
| Customer Consideration | A reduction in speed and motor vehicle traffic will lead to a safer environment for all road users. |
| Carbon reduction | Speed reduction and motor vehicle reduction assists with carbon reduction |
| Wards | Newsham and New Delaval Ward in Blyth Valley |

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Background papers:

File reference - S:\Highways\PROJECT\18\HF LOCAL SAFETY SCHEMES\Local Safety Schemes

Appendix A – Scheme Plan - Temporary Signage Layout

Author and Contact Details

Report Author **Paul McKenna, Programme Engineer**

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DECISION TAKEN

Title of Officer: Service Director, Local Services

Subject: Emergency and Temporary Proposed School 'Streets Closure' at specific streets around Newsham Primary School in Blyth.

Consultation: Engagement with the school, consultation to be undertaken by the school in the first instance, then further consultation to take place by Council representatives.

Decision Taken: To approve Emergency and Temporary TRO associated with the 'School Streets' Closure.

Signature of Director

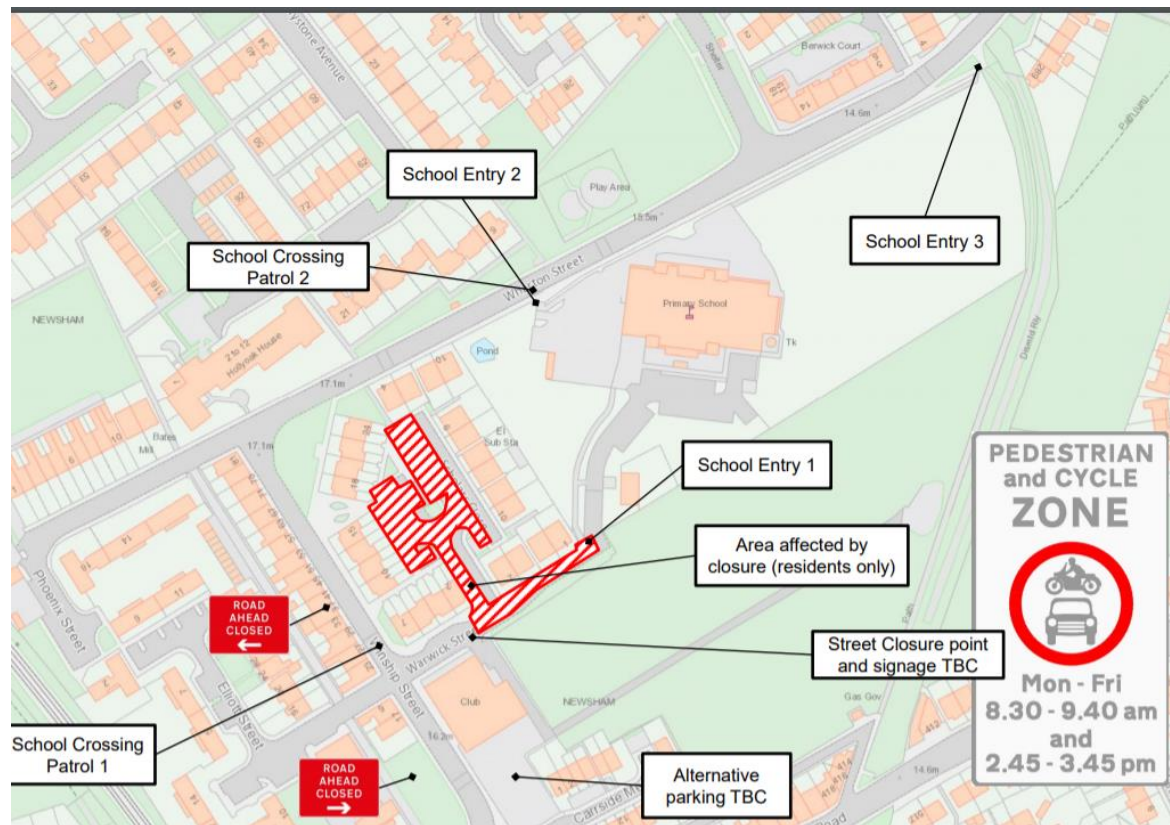


Date

13th November 2020

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Appendix A



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