



# Northumberland County Council

## RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY SERVICE DIRECTOR - LOCAL SERVICES

Paul Jones

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### Experimental 'School Streets' Closure at Hareside Primary School, Cramlington

Cabinet Member: Glen Sanderson - Environment & Local Services

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#### Purpose of Report

This report sets out the background to the proposed Experimental 'School Streets' Closure and associated minor improvements at Hareside Primary School in Cramlington.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that the 'school streets' closure is implemented during the school pick up and drop off times operating on an Experimental basis over 18 months during specified times outside Hareside Primary School.

#### 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 (DfT) has asked for Local Authorities to implement streets 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 historic and ongoing concerns raised by residents in the specific area and by school

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- representatives in relation to the volume, and indiscriminate nature, of parking in neighboring streets around the various schools identified.
3. A number of community engagement sessions and activities with pupils at the school have been carried out to date in order to identify the specific areas of concern, initiate community involvement and encourage active travel to the school. Hareside Primary has also consistently participated in the Council's Child Pedestrian Training and been an active and successful participant in the 'Modeshift Stars' programme.
  4. A trial scheme was successfully carried out in July 2019 to test the school streets closure and its effect on the surrounding streets.
  5. Council representatives have been working closely with the Head Teacher of the school, to consider traffic management proposals that will help promote the required 'social distancing' measures outside their premises.
  6. 'School Streets' closures have been successfully trialed outside other schools in Northumberland. They are being actively promoted by the Department for Transport (DfT) and implemented out by other Local Authorities across the region and the country.
  7. To reduce the level of parking and address road safety concerns, it is proposed to trial a 'school streets' closure.
  8. NCC will write to affected residents in the area to advise of the proposals.
  9. Children should be safe, encouraged to play and enjoy their entire school experience, which includes the journey to and from school.
  10. The scheme is supported by the Local Councillor for the school and the head teacher, as well as other representatives from the schools.
  11. The scheme is funded from the 2020/21 LTP programme.

## Background

Hareside Primary School lies centrally in a large residential estate, with a number of adjoining residences and cul-de-sacs. It borders two cycleways, which interconnect the nearby Learning Village, town centre and estates further afield.

Concerns have been raised in the past with regards to indiscriminate parking and congestion in the surrounding road network and cul-de-sacs that highlight both a road safety concern and a diminished uptake of active travel, despite the nearby facilities.

Numerous engagement exercises in the past have failed to formulate an agreeable solution. More recently, an emphasis on 'soft measures' and community engagement sessions have been aimed at encouraging active travel in the school, while seeking to find an appropriate highways solution or measure that will discourage unnecessary vehicles.

Residents' drop-in sessions were carried out in May and Sept 2016, then subsequently in June and July 2019. The School has been an exemplar participant with the Council's Go Smarter programme, achieving Bronze level

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at Modeshift Stars and receiving notable recognition regionally. The School also regularly participates in the Bikeability and Child Pedestrian Training programmes.



Figure 1: Parents and residents drop-in session carried out in June 2019.

### Hareside School Streets Trial

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 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.

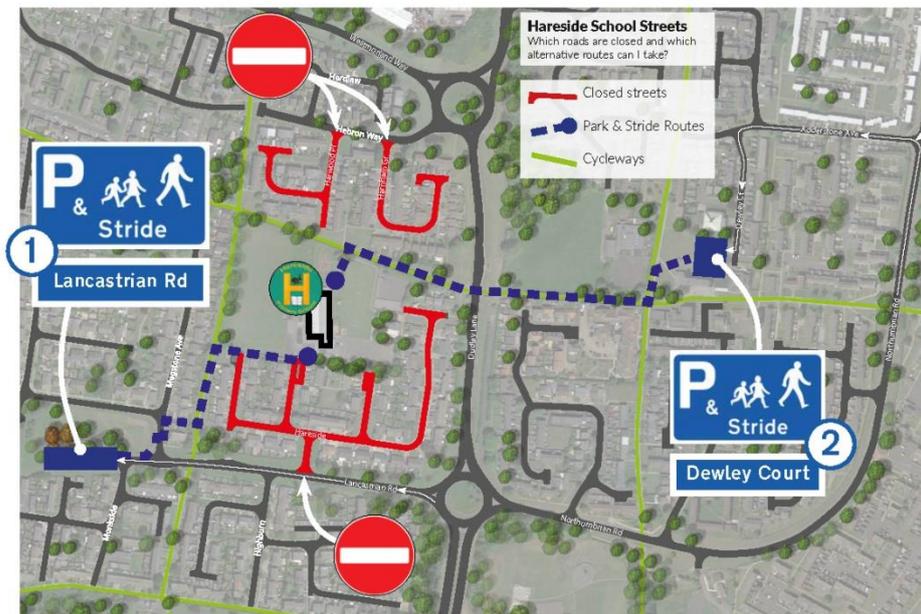


Figure 2: Street closure map, excerpt from flyer produced for the event.

Flyers and correspondences to residents were distributed to parents, residents and staff prior to the event. NCC staff also carried out door-to-door visits in the affected areas to speak to residents and discuss any concerns.

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The key benefits of the trial are detailed below;

- 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.

## **School Streets Nationally**

Over the last year School Streets permanent 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 more recently to assist in 'social distancing' requirements.

The benefits of closing a street include, but 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.

## **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;

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- 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.

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.

### Methodology

An Experimental Traffic Regulation Order is proposed to cover the 'School Streets' Closure. An ETRO affords the opportunity to introduce the 'School Streets' closure in a timely manner that meets the requirements of the school. The Experimental Traffic Regulation Order 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 take responsibility for the promotion and advertising of the scheme itself, with the assistance of Council representatives.

'No Waiting at Any Time' restrictions will also be introduced to ensure the entries to the estates in the vicinity of the closures are also kept clear, to prevent the displaced traffic from parking in the immediate vicinity of the closures and to reinforce signage and messaging around the closures.

To actively promote alternative parking where it is considered safe to do so, 'Park and Stride' areas have been promoted by the schools to encourage those parents that use vehicles park in a more appropriate area that is well served by footways to the school entrances. To reinforce these spaces and designate these spaces for pick-up and drop-off traffic, although not exclusively for this purpose, 'Park and Stride' signage will be installed at the following locations:

- Lancastrian Rd- western extent of road prior to its termination point
- Dewley Court- car park at the rear of shops.



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*Figure 3: Proposed 'Park & Stride' signage to be installed at allocated parking locations*

*Figure 4: Indicative School Streets signage*

### Proposal

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

- Hareside
- Harnham Grove
- Harwood Close

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 schools.

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### Implications Arising out of the Report

<b>Policy</b>	Consistent with existing policies
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	Scheme will be funded from LTP 2021/22
<b>Legal</b>	Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders
<b>Procurement</b>	N/A
<b>Human Resources</b>	None
<b>Property</b>	None
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	This proposal has been specifically designed to reduce risks to vulnerable road users.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	Regulations in place to carry out enforcement.
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	A reduction in speed and motor vehicle traffic will lead to a safer environment for all road users.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	Speed reduction and motor vehicle reduction assists with carbon reduction
<b>Wards</b>	Cramlington Village

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### **Background papers:**

File reference – [Hareside School Streets closure, 02\\_Hareside Primary School](#)

### **Author and Contact Details**

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Report Author     **Martin Podevyn, Senior Programmes Officer**

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### DECISION TAKEN

**Title of Officer:** Service Director, Local Services

**Subject:** Experimental School 'Streets Closure' at Hareside Primary School, Cramlington

**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 the Experimental TRO associated with the 'School Streets' Closure.

Signature of Director



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**Date**

28<sup>th</sup> April 2021

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