



Northumberland

County Council

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY SERVICE DIRECTOR – LOCAL SERVICES

Paul Jones

School Streets Closure and Proposed Parking Restrictions at Seaton Sluice Middle School

Cabinet Member: Councillor John Riddle

14 July 2022

Purpose of Report

This report sets out the background to the proposed School Streets Closure on Alston Grove, and associated minor improvements in the form of parking restrictions on St Ronan's Drive, Alston Grove and Astley Villas in relation to road safety improvements at Seaton Sluice Middle School.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Pedestrian & Cycle Zone is implemented as proposed on Alston Grove and the associated parking restrictions on St Ronan's Drive, Alston Grove and Astley Villas are implemented as proposed.

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 proposal has been developed following historic and ongoing concerns raised by residents, the local County Councillor and by school representatives in relation to the volume, and indiscriminate nature, of parking in neighbouring streets around Seaton Sluice Middle School.
2. Council Officers have been working closely with school representatives to consider traffic management proposals that will help promote active

Delegated Decision

travel and improved road safety outside their premises as part of their engagements with the 'ModeShift STARS' initiative.

3. To reduce the level of parking and address road safety concerns, it is proposed to introduce a School Streets closure on Alston Grove.
4. The School Street closure will be implemented through the introduction of a Pedestrian and Cycle Zone. This will be effective Monday to Friday only between the hours of 8:15-9:15am and 2:45-3:45pm.
5. It has been decided that it would be appropriate to omit the "Except for access" supplementary plate from the sign design. Section 6.2.3 in Chapter 3 of the Traffic Signs Manual 2019 states "The use of the permitted variant 'Except for access', on its own or combined with another exception, should be given careful consideration. This could attract too many vehicles and compromise pedestrian safety. It could also make parking enforcement difficult in fully paved roads where yellow lines are not provided". The 'Except for access' signage has caused numerous issues in the sense that the wording is too generic and in turn allows motorists who aren't residents to contravene the restrictions with the Police finding enforcement difficult.
6. School Streets have been successfully piloted outside other schools in Northumberland since 2019. They are being actively promoted by the Department for Transport (DfT) and implemented by other Local Authorities across the region and the country.
7. The Department for Transport (DfT) has asked for Local Authorities to implement streets around schools which encourage walking and cycling to school, through measures such as School Streets, where traffic is restricted at pick-up and drop-off times.
8. Children should be safe, encouraged to play and enjoy their entire school experience, which includes the journey to and from school.
9. The scheme is supported by the local County Councillor for the school and the head teacher, as well as other representatives from the schools.
10. The scheme is to be funded by the 2022/23 Local Transport Plan (LTP) programme.
11. Implementation of the scheme may assist the Council in achieving its aims of halving the County's carbon footprint by 2025 and make the County carbon neutral by 2030.

Delegated Decision

Background

Seaton Sluice Middle School is located near several residential streets and concerns have been raised regarding road safety issues due to the high levels of parked vehicles and traffic congestion during school start and end times. Similar issues exist outside many schools across the county and also throughout the country, however recent initiatives which involve prohibiting motor vehicles from entering roads directly outside school entrances during peak hours have proven successful in promoting active travel and reducing private vehicle usage. These restrictions are known as School Streets schemes.

The benefits of closing a street(s) outside a school during school start and end times 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 government guidance and engagement with other Local Authorities in relation to their implementation, several schools in Northumberland have had School Streets schemes introduced on an experimental basis for 18 months. Whilst these continue to be reviewed, the benefits of the trials so far are detailed below:

- Feedback from residents, school representatives and parents alike is largely positive in nature;
- Children are able to negotiate the streets and play in locations which are free from traffic;
- Surveys carried out show an increase in walking, cycling and scooting;
- Vehicle counts show that there are fewer cars in the closed areas and surrounding streets compared to normal conditions;
- The closed sections benefit from improved air quality;
- The absence of traffic results 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 similar measures in other areas both in temporary and permanent form where there is a similar need and with increased regularity.

Proposal

The scheme associated with Seaton Sluice Middle School will see the introduction of a Pedestrian & Cycle Zone on Alston Grove. This will be effective Monday to Friday between the hours of 8:15-9:15am and 2:45-3:45pm. In addition, various 'No Waiting' parking restrictions will be introduced

Delegated Decision

on Alston Grove, Astley Villas and St. Ronan's Drive. A plan summarising all restrictions is attached as Appendix A.

School representatives will provide an ad hoc presence to offer advice to parents on the new restrictions. The school will take responsibility for the promotion and advertising of the scheme itself, with the assistance of Council representatives.

Directly affected residents were consulted as part of the process and the responses are detailed in Appendix B. The local County Councillor also supports the proposal.

Full details of the scheme are attached as Appendix C. Northumbria Police, other emergency services and relevant statutory consultees will be notified of these amendments as part of the process for making the Traffic Regulation Orders.

It should be noted that it has been decided that it would be appropriate to omit the "Except for access" supplementary plate from the sign design. Section 6.2.3 in Chapter 3 of the Traffic Signs Manual 2019 states "The use of the permitted variant 'Except for access', on its own or combined with another exception, should be given careful consideration. This could attract too many vehicles and compromise pedestrian safety. It could also make parking enforcement difficult in fully paved roads where yellow lines are not provided".

The "Except for access" signage has caused numerous issues in the sense that the wording is too generic and in turn allows motorists who aren't residents to contravene the restrictions with the Police finding enforcement difficult.

Delegated Decision

Implications Arising out of the Report

Policy	Consistent with existing policies
Finance and value for money	Scheme will be financed through the LTP 2022/23 programme
Legal	Motorists will be required to comply with the Traffic Regulation Orders
Procurement	Signage and road markings to meet Regulations for Traffic Regulation Orders
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	None
Crime & Disorder	Regulations in place to carry out enforcement
Customer Consideration	Statutory consultees and directly affected residents have been informed
Carbon reduction	Promotion of active travel assists with carbon reduction by reducing car usage
Wards	Hartley

Delegated Decision

Background Papers:

File reference –

S:\Highways\PROJECT\21\HE Minor Improvements\HE213539D - Seaton
Sluice Middle School

Appendix A – Summary Plan

Appendix B – Consultation Responses

Appendix C – Scheme Layout

Author and Contact Details

Report Author **William Binks, Programme Officer**

Delegated Decision

DECISION TAKEN

Title of Officer: Service Director, Local Services

Subject: School Streets Closure at Seaton Sluice Middle School

Consultation: Engagement with the school, directly affected residents and statutory consultees have been informed

Decision Taken: To introduce a new Pedestrian & Cycle Zone and associated parking restrictions as part of the School Streets scheme for Seaton Sluice Middle School

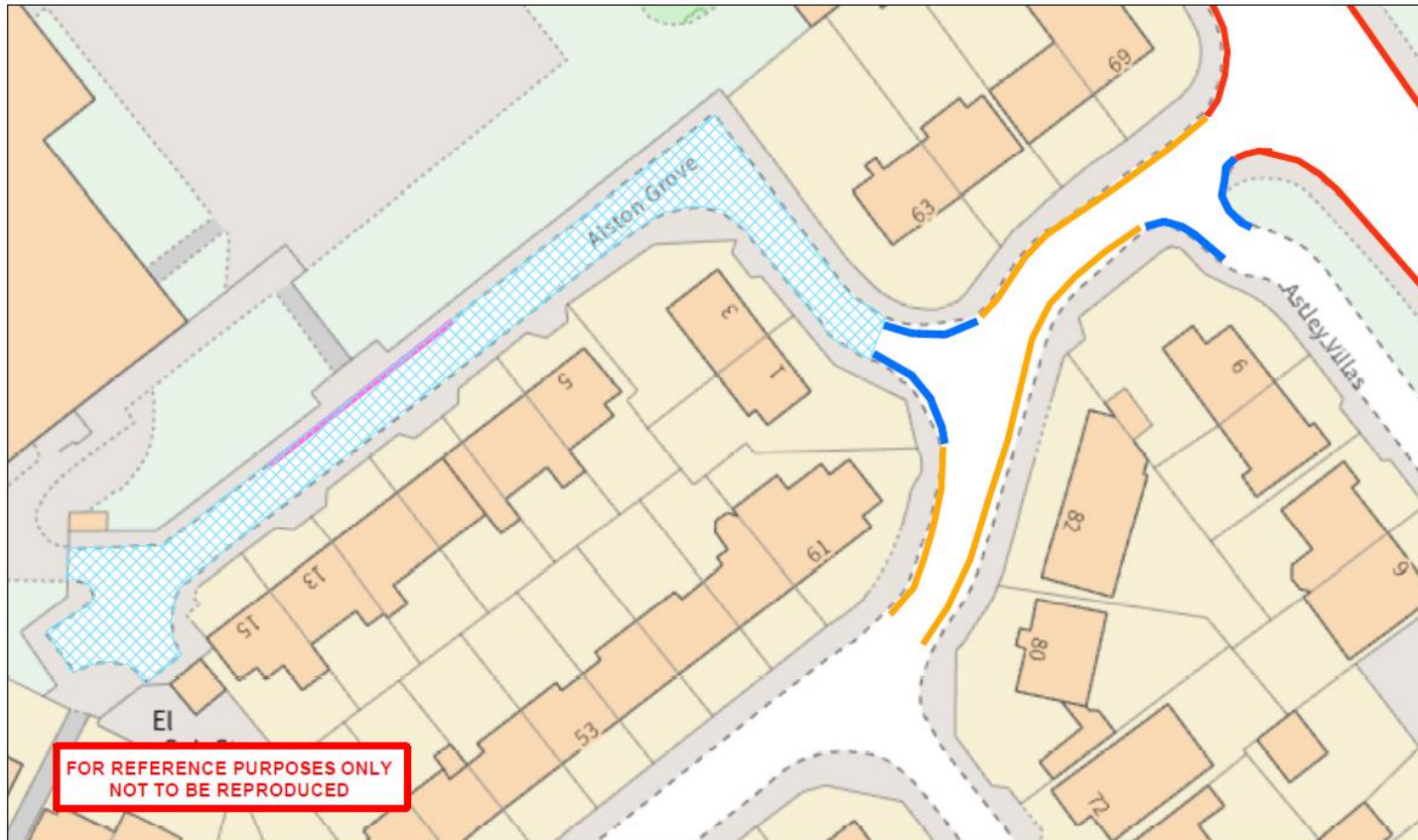
Signature of Director




Date
19.10.22

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Appendix A – Summary Plan



 <p>Northumberland County Council</p>	<p>Network Management Information System</p>	<p>Title: School Streets Seaton Sluice Middle School Seaton Sluice</p>			<p>Key:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Existing 'No Waiting at Any Time' Restrictions (Double Yellow Lines) to Remain — Proposed 'No Waiting at Any Time' Restrictions — Existing 'School Keep Clear' Restriction to Remain XX Proposed 'Pedestrian & Cycle Zone' Mon - Fri 8.15 - 9.15am & 2.45 - 3.45pm — Proposed 'No Waiting Mon - Fri, 8 - 9.30am & 2.30 - 4pm' Restrictions (Single Yellow Lines)
<p>Northumberland County Council County Hall Morpeth Northumberland NE61 2EF Tel: 0345 600 6400</p>	<p><small>This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. License no. 100049048 (2019).</small></p>	<p>Drn: WB</p>	<p>Date: 09.06.2022</p>	<p>Scale: 1:600</p>	

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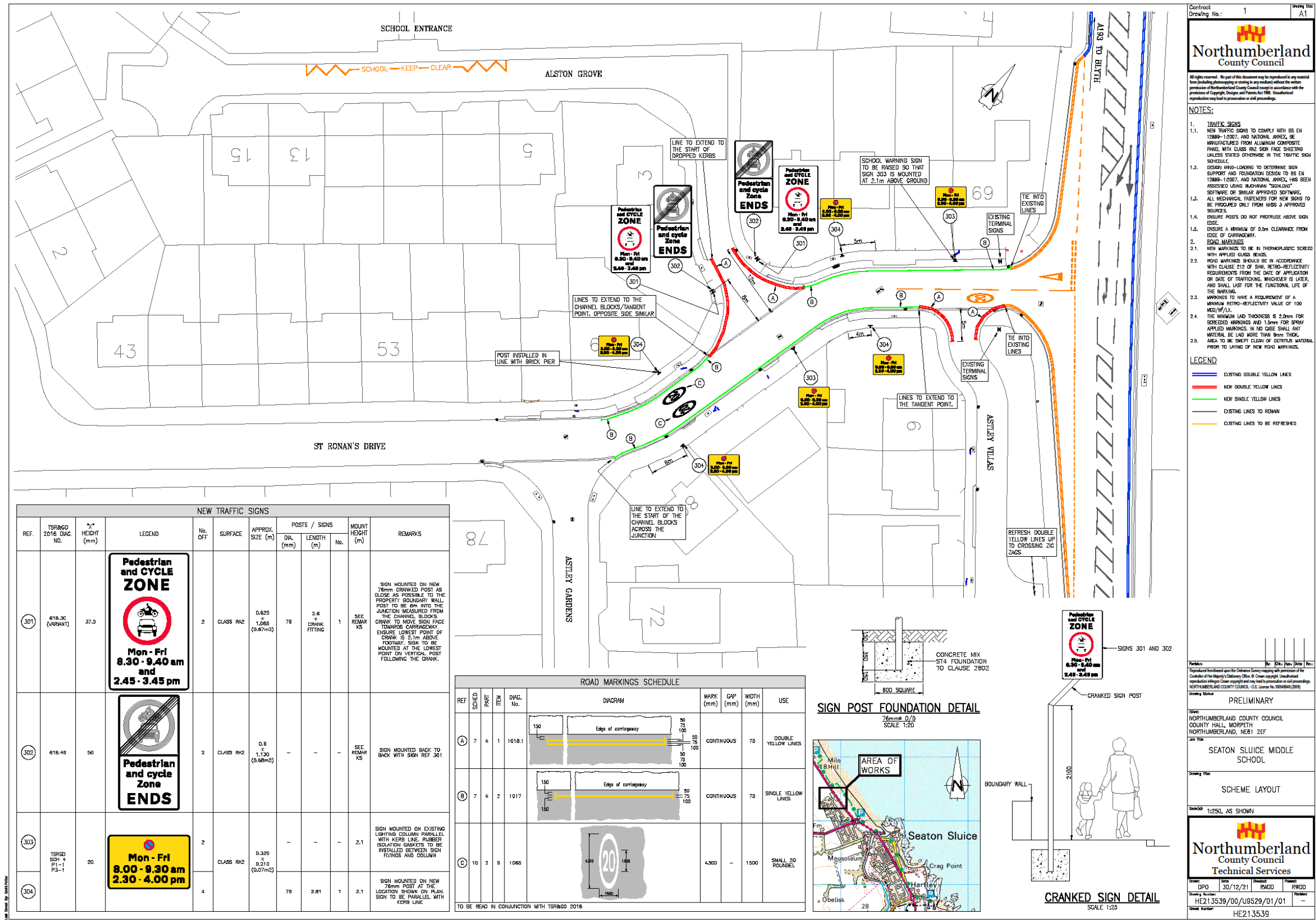
Appendix B – Consultation Responses

Key:

- F = For
- A = Against

RESPONSE	F	A
Further to the above consultation and review of the proposals, we wish to confirm that Building Conservation offers no objections to the scheme. The proposed area is not within the Seaton Sluice Conservation Area and the nature of the proposed works will not result in any harmful impacts to heritage assets.	✓	
Can residents receive zonal passes to avoid confusion as work departure/arrival or First School drop off/pick up can be in the times stated? Alston Grove to be 10mph road so residents and teachers are keeping the road as safe as possible? The pathway on the residents side of Alston Grove needs tarmacked like the school side of the road, as the slabs are uneven causing trip hazards and gathering large puddles. Speed camera needs moved to outside the village or whole road to Blyth 40mph as the speeds on this road and overtaking will cause a road or pedestrian accident. Entrance needed to roadside car park at village arrival point as only access is up at old toilet block. Allows school parents to park without entering estate, safe crossing point over main road and access to school via playing fields to the side of town houses.	✓	
I live on Alston Grove, the mornings are dreadful with school traffic and not only parents of children but also staff who park on the street all day. Surely there is sufficient parking on school grounds for staff? In the afternoons parents park up to half an hour before the children leave school - smoke and throw cigarette ends on the street - there music playing loudly from their vehicles and regularly park across the end of the drives. I have had verbal abuse when trying to get on or off the drive. I hope the scheme will be extended to evenings when there are events at the school as the parking then is worse than any normal school day, residents often cannot park close to home and have to go out and retrieve vehicles once the evening at the school has concluded. I fully support the proposals.	✓	

Appendix C – Scheme Layout



Contract Drawing No.: 1 A1

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NOTES:

- TRAFFIC SIGNS**
 - NEW TRAFFIC SIGNS TO COMPLY WITH BS EN 12899-1:2007, AND NATIONAL ANNEX, BE MANUFACTURED FROM ALUMINUM COMPOSITE PANEL WITH CLASS RA2 SIGN FACE SHEETING UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE IN THE TRAFFIC SIGN SCHEDULE.
 - DESIGN WIND-LOADING TO DETERMINE SIGN SUPPORT AND FOUNDATION DESIGN TO BS EN 12899-1:2007, AND NATIONAL ANNEX, HAS BEEN ASSESSED USING MACHINAM "SIGNLOAD" SOFTWARE OR SIMILAR APPROVED SOFTWARE. ALL REQUIRED FIXTURES FOR NEW SIGNS TO BE PROVIDED ONLY FROM HHS 3 APPROVED SOURCES.
 - ENSURE SIGNS DO NOT PROTRUDE ABOVE SIGN EDGE.
 - ENSURE A MINIMUM OF 0.5m CLEARANCE FROM EDGE OF CARRIAGEWAY.
- ROAD MARKINGS**
 - NEW MARKINGS TO BE IN THERMOPLASTIC SCREENED WITH APPLIED GLASS BEADS.
 - ROAD MARKINGS SHOULD BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH CLAUSE 212 OF SIGN, RETRO-REFLECTIVITY REQUIREMENTS FROM THE DATE OF APPLICATION OR DATE OF TRAFFICING, WHICHEVER IS LATER, AND SHALL LAST FOR THE FUNCTIONAL LIFE OF THE MARKING.
 - MARKINGS TO HAVE A REQUIREMENT OF A MINIMUM RETRO-REFLECTIVITY VALUE OF 100 MED/REF/L.
 - THE MINIMUM LAD THICKNESS IS 5.0mm FOR SCREENED MARKINGS AND 1.5mm FOR SPRAY APPLIED MARKINGS. IN NO CASE SHALL ANY MATERIAL BE LAD MORE THAN 0.8mm THICK. SIGNS TO BE SWEPT CLEAN OF DEBRIS MATERIAL PRIOR TO LAYING OF NEW ROAD MARKINGS.

LEGEND

- EXISTING DOUBLE YELLOW LINES
- NEW DOUBLE YELLOW LINES
- NEW SINGLE YELLOW LINES
- EXISTING LINES TO REMAIN
- EXISTING LINES TO BE REFRESHED

Particulars: No. Dtd. Rev. (Date) No.

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Job Title: SEATON SLUICE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Drawing Title: SCHEME LAYOUT

Scale: 1:250, AS SHOWN

Northumberland County Council
 Technical Services

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