



Northumberland County Council

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY SERVICE DIRECTOR – LOCAL SERVICES

Paul Jones

School Streets Closure at Seghill First School

Cabinet Member: Councillor John Riddle

09 January 2022

Purpose of Report

This report sets out the background to the proposed School Streets Closure at Seghill First School in Seghill.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the School Streets scheme is implemented via a Pedestrian & Cycle Zone applying at school start and end times outside the entrance of Seghill First 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 proposal has been developed following historic and ongoing concerns raised by residents, the previous local County Councillor and by school representatives in relation to the volume, and indiscriminate nature, of parking in neighbouring streets around Seghill First School.
2. Council Officers have been working closely with school representatives to consider traffic management proposals that will help promote active travel and improved road safety outside their premises as part of their engagements with the ‘ModeShift STARS’ initiative.

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3. To reduce the level of parking and address road safety concerns, it is proposed to introduce a School Streets closure on Cheviot View and Parker Place.
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 school 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 as part of the Safer Routes to Schools initiative.
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.

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Background

Seghill First 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 most schools across the county and also throughout the whole of 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 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 government guidance and engagement with other Local Authorities in relation to their implementation, several schools in Northumberland have had School Streets schemes introduced on a trial basis. Whilst these continue to be reviewed, the benefits of 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 trials, 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.

Proposal

The scheme will implement a 'Pedestrian & Cycle Zone' on Cheviot View and Parker Place during school start and end times as outlined in Figure 1 below. School representatives will provide an ad hoc presence to offer advice to parents on the new restrictions. The school will take responsibility for the

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

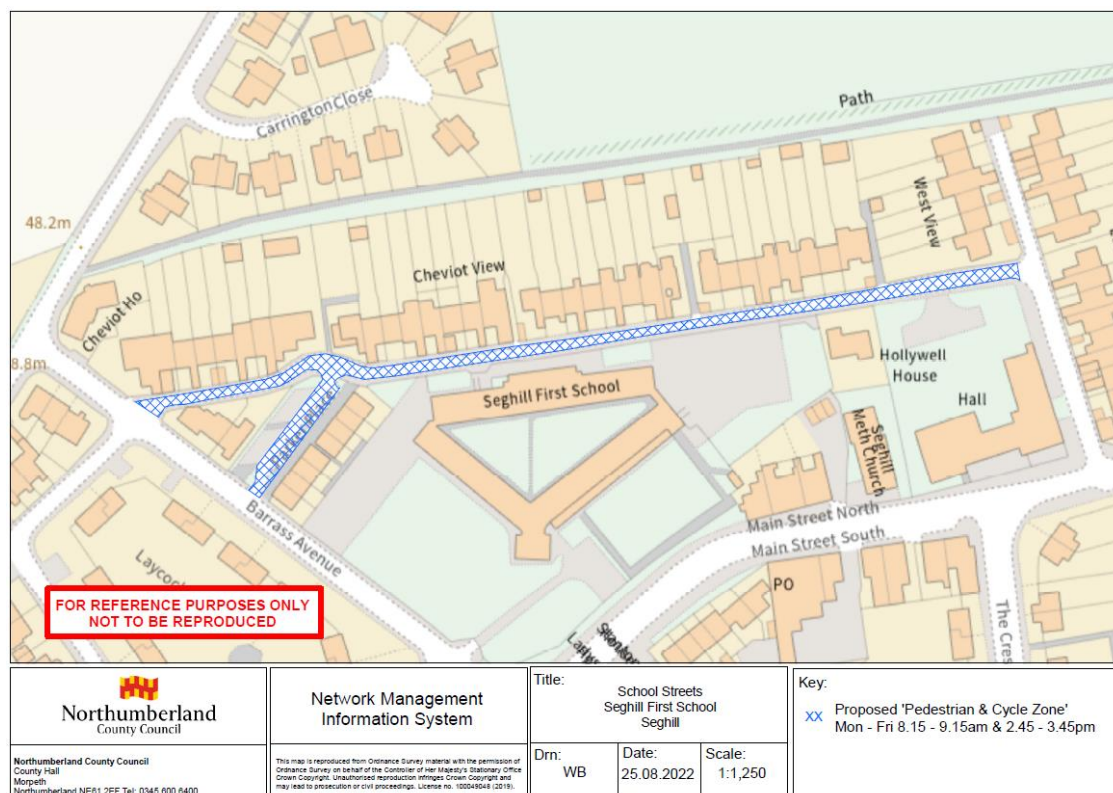


Fig 1: Proposed new School Streets scheme at Seghill First School

Directly affected residents were consulted as part of the process and the responses are detailed in Appendix A. The current local County Councillor did not raise any concerns during this period.

Details of the proposal are shown on the plan at Appendix B. 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.

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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 Order
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	Seghill with Seaton Delaval

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Background Papers:

File reference –

S:\Highways\PROJECT\21\HE Minor Improvements\HE213585D - Seghill
First School - School Streets

Appendix A – Consultation Responses

Appendix B – Scheme Layout

Author and Contact Details

Report Author **William Binks, Programme Officer**

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DECISION TAKEN

Title of Officer: Service Director, Local Services

Subject: School Streets Closure at Seghill First School

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

Decision Taken: To introduce a new 'Pedestrian & Cycle Zone' as part of the School Streets Closure at Seghill First School

Signature of Director



Date

16.01.23

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Appendix A – Consultation Responses

Key:

- F = For
- A = Against

RESPONSE	F	A
I would like to raise concerns around the planned changes to Cheviot View and Parker Place. The impact on Laycock Gardens and Barrass Avenue will add to the already high level of parking problems. At peak school times the road is often restricted with double parking, parents parking in double yellow lines. We live X Barrass Avenue and cannot get our car in or out of the garage at peak times I have to ring the school to get cars moved. Can you please consider the impact this proposed plan will have on Barrass Avenue and Laycock Gardens which is also a school street.		✓
I welcome the concept of the proposed School Streets plan. You have asked for feedback and I have listed mine below- proposed School Streets plan is excellent news and will hopefully keep our children and their families safer; proposed School Streets plan is excellent news and will hopefully keep our neighbours safer; there is a hard stand area at the east end of Cheviot View on the unused land behind the Hall and Hollywell House. This is used by some parents for parking. My only concern about the proposal is that by making the plan cover the entire length of Cheviot View, and therefore not having any parking at all, the antisocial and dangerous behaviours will be pushed out onto East View and Barrass Avenue, which are already congested. Is there an option to introduce the School Streets zone from higher up Cheviot View to allow access to the hard stand area? I hope you understand the question I have raised. Very happy to meet either in person or virtually to discuss, as I am very keen to support the proposal.		✓
Thanks for the recent update on the proposed pedestrian and cycle zone. I think it's a good idea, and as a resident of Cheviot View I think it will make a difference if it's enforced. The school needs to play a big part in regularly reminding parents of the merits of a school street scheme though. There are also a few parents parking issues in the surrounding street of Barrass Avenue, where recently installed double yellow lines and chevrons are ignored on a daily basis. The existing parking restrictions don't seem to be enforced, and that street is an accident waiting to happen at school pick up and drop off times. The school street scheme on Cheviot View might make that situation worse, but it would be good to see that checks were being made to ensure compliance on both streets. Will there be a resident permit issued to avoid issues between residents of Cheviot View and visiting parents who ignore the signage (to demonstrate exemption)? Would it be more practical to change the starting position at the eastern end of Cheviot View so it allowed vehicular access to an unofficial but well used off road parking area next to The Institute? It would give parents an area that was practical for drop off by car, if it was genuinely needed. How will the restricted access work for deliveries and workmen access during those times? Mindful that workmen can be controlled by the households (to a large extent) but deliveries from couriers and Royal Mail would be impossible to control, even if the sender was advised accordingly? Would they also have exemption? Thanks again for the informative letter, and pleased to support this forward-thinking scheme.		✓
As a resident of Cheviot View this is a good idea but will it be policed properly? How do timings affect contractors who may be working at a residence in the street and similarly delivery drivers?		✓

Appendix B – Scheme Layout

