



Northumberland

County Council

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

Paul Jones – Director of Environment & Transport

School Streets Closure & Proposed Parking Restrictions at Heddon on the Wall St. Andrew's Church of England Primary School

Cabinet Member: Councillor John Riddle, Improving Our Roads & Highways

26 September 2024

Purpose of Report

This report sets out the background to the proposed School Streets Closure and associated minor improvements in the form of parking restrictions on Trajan Walk in relation to road safety improvements at Heddon on the Wall St. Andrew's Church of England Primary School.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Pedestrian & Cycle Zone and the associated parking restrictions on Trajan Walk are implemented as proposed.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the following key themes in the Corporate Plan for 2023-26:

'Thriving Places and Culture – Neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained'

Key Issues

1. Northumberland County Council has received concerns in relation to the volume and indiscriminate nature of parking in neighbouring streets around Heddon on the Wall St. Andrew's Church of England Primary School.

Delegated Decision

2. The proposal has been developed following historic and ongoing concerns raised by residents, the local County Councillor, Heddon Parish Council and by school representatives.
3. 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.
4. To reduce the level of parking and address road safety concerns, it is proposed to introduce a School Streets closure on Trajan Walk directly outside the school entrance gates.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
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 County Councillor, Heddon Parish Council and the school's head teacher.
11. The scheme is to be funded by the 2024/25 Local Transport Plan (LTP) programme.
12. 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.

Background

Heddon on the Wall St. Andrew's Church of England Primary School is located on Trajan Walk near several residential streets and concerns have been raised directly outside the school entrance 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 restricting access to 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 the County of Northumberland have had School Streets schemes trialled and then introduced on a permanent basis. 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 restricted 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 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 Heddon on the Wall St. Andrew's Church of England Primary School will see the introduction of a Pedestrian & Cycle Zone on Trajan Walk. This will be effective Monday to Friday between the hours of 8:15-9:15am and 2:45-3:45pm. In addition, 'No Waiting at Any Time' parking restrictions in the form of double yellow lines will be introduced on Trajan Walk

at junctions and where obstructive parking has been observed both on the footway and carriageway. The 'School Keep Clear' zig-zag markings are also proposed to be extended to cover the turning head outside the school entrance (see Figure 1 below), which is currently used for all day parking but causes obstructions for motorists navigating around the road. A plan summarising all proposed restrictions is attached as Appendix A.



Fig.1: Existing layout directly outside school entrance on Trajan Walk at Heddon on the Wall (Source: Google Maps, 2024)

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 and Heddon Parish Council also support the proposal.

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 for Pedestrian & Cycle Zones within School Streets schemes. 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".

Delegated Decision

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 2024/25 programme.
Legal	Motorists will be required to comply with the Traffic Regulation Orders.
Procurement	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Risk Assessment	The proposal is designed to reduce the risks associated with obstructive and indiscriminate parking.
Crime & Disorder	Regulations in place to carry out enforcement.
Customer Consideration	Statutory consultees and directly affected properties have been consulted.
Carbon reduction	Promotion of active travel assists with carbon reduction by reducing car usage
Wards	Ponteland South with Heddon

Delegated Decision

Background Papers

File reference – HE243821D-05

Appendix A – Scheme Layout

Appendix B – Consultation Responses

Author

Report Author **William Binks, Programme Officer**

DECISION TAKEN

Title of Officer	Director of Environment & Transport
Subject	Proposed School Streets at Heddon on the Wall St. Andrew's Church of England Primary School
Consultation	Engagement with the school, directly affected residents and statutory consultees have been consulted
Decision Taken	To introduce a new Pedestrian & Cycle Zone and associated parking restrictions as part of the School Streets scheme for Heddon on the Wall St. Andrew's Church of England Primary School

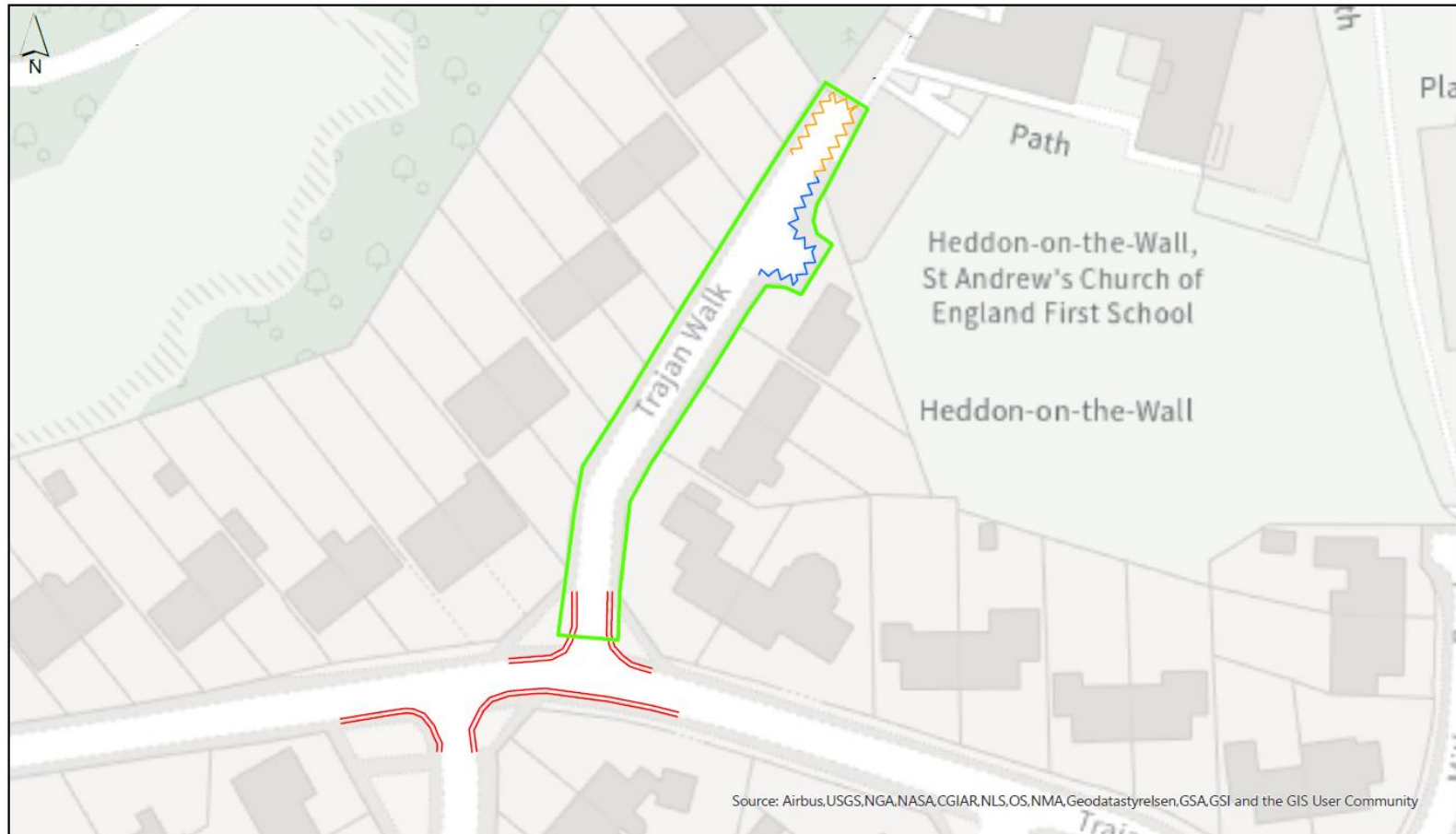
Signature of Director








Date

27th September 2024

Appendix A – Scheme Layout



 Northumberland County Council	Proposed Traffic Restrictions Trajan Walk Heddon-on-the-Wall				Key:  Proposed Pedestrian & Cycle Zone Mon-Fri 8:15-9:15am & 2:45-3:45pm  Proposed 'No Waiting at Any Time' (Double Yellow Lines) Restrictions  Proposed 'No Stopping on School Entrance Markings' (School Keep Clear) Mon-Fri 8am-5pm  Existing School Keep Clear to Remain
Northumberland County Council County Hall Morpeth Northumberland NE61 2EF Tel: 0345 600 6400	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 (2010).	Drm: WB	Date: 23.07.24	Scale: 1:1,500	

Delegated Decision

Appendix B – Consultation Responses

Key: F = For; A = Against

F A		RESPONSES
1		We have received your proposal of action to be taken on Trajan Walk. We live at number X which is part of the proposed Pedestrian and Cycle zone. Firstly I wanted to let you know how pleased I am that some action is finally being taken to resolve the inconsiderate, dangerous and potentially deadly situation the cars pose to the community and most importantly the children. I am glad to know that the residents are exempt from these restrictions. I would like to suggest a possible extension of the time the no car entry zone starts particularly the proposed pick up time no car zone of 14:45 - 15:45. At school pick up time I witness cars arriving from anywhere between 14:00 and regularly from 14:30, so I foresee parents simply arriving a little bit early to get the closest they can to the school. Is there perhaps the option of installing, in addition to the Pedestrian & Cycle zone, residents only parking at certain times of the day on this stretch of road to prevent early arrival parking?
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