

Place Overview & Scrutiny Task and Finish Group

Parking at Schools Toolkit

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Introduction

In October 2023, Thurrock Council agreed to launch a Task and Finish Group to explore the issues and challenges of parking outside schools. To undertake this investigation, the council assembled a Task & Finish Group, reporting to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A Task & Finish Group is a member led review group, supported by the council's Democratic Services, and technical officers to investigate a topic and to feed back an outcome to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Thurrock Council has three such Overview and Scrutiny Committees, (Corporate, People, and Place) and each committee can commission two Task and Finish Groups. Each Task and Finish group is scheduled to complete its investigation within ten weeks.

Members of the Parking Task and Finish Group

The following elected members formed the Parking Task and Finish Group:

- Councillor F Massey – Chair
- Councillor A Green – Vice Chair
- Councillor P Arnold
- Councillor D Day
- Councillor S Shinnick
- Councillor C Sisterson

About the Toolkit

This toolkit is the outcome of the Parking at Schools Task and Finish Group, and its purpose is to provide details of the measures available for the council to explore in helping to support schools across the borough when looking to address parking challenges on site. Each school has its own challenges, and its geographical setting and the supporting infrastructure will impact in how the issues of congestion and parking problems can be addressed. The toolkit can be used to explore what may fit within the current arrangements and layouts at the school, while a more holistic approach to reviewing the school may identify further measures which can be implemented with the appropriate funding and support to reduce the barriers for children to walk, scoot and cycle to school.

This toolkit has been designed to show the various measures which could be implemented, with details about each measure, and the experience Thurrock Council, or other authorities have experienced in implementing these. These include both soft and hard measures. Soft measures are schemes which do not require significant infrastructure changes or capital expenditure – e.g. Bikeability provides cycle training for school aged children and is an example of a soft measure. Hard measures are those that require the installation or redesigning of infrastructure, such as installing bollards, creating a new road crossing, or reconfiguring the road layout.

Purpose of Toolkit

Travel to school forms a key part of young people's daily life, how they get from the home to the school and back. How this journey is made has changed with an increased number of journeys being made by car, creating increased pressure on the roads and the availability of parking outside schools and surrounding areas. With schools sometimes located in urban locations, often alongside residential properties, there are increasing levels of congestion, and conflict on the roads, with insufficient space for vehicles to pass, park and turn around.

There are numerous reasons why there are increased levels of trips to school by car. Sometimes it is convenience – the parent of the pupil is travelling to work and the school is located along the way or it is quicker to drive; distance to school is also a challenge with some pupils needing to travel more than a reasonable distance to walk; or safety concerns – parents are increasingly concerned about the risks to their children walking or cycling to school, having concerns about the risk of physical safety with crossing busy roads and congestion around the school. Whatever the reason, the challenge around the school to accommodate cars has resulted in more calls to the council to develop a solution. Unfortunately, while the provision of additional parking may be possible outside or near some schools in the borough, in many other locations this has already been implemented, and hasn't always solved the problems.

Therefore, this toolkit has been developed to assemble a package of measures available for consideration by the council when considering the needs of any school. Using a combination of soft measures – those that don't require new infrastructure, and hard measures – those that may require modification to the public highway and environment, the council can work with schools to consider solutions which may work and be implemented to solve the challenge.

The purpose of this toolkit is not to demonise trips being made to school by car, some of the reasons listed above are often valid – and the use of the car to the school site may be the correct mode of travel for some children and pupils, but encouraging other modes for trips, both active travel (walking and cycling) and sustainable modes of transport (bus), these can bring significant benefits to parents, pupils and the wider community. Obvious benefits include reduced congestion outside schools, leading to improved air quality and reduced levels of harmful emissions and particulates, which disproportionately impact the young and developing lungs of children at the school, as well as the onsite staff and residents who live in the vicinity of the school site, but also improves the safety for all road users. Increased levels of non-car trips also improve physical activity levels of pupils, as they walk or cycle to school or to- and from- transport stops. However other benefits which are less obvious include improved communication skills for children, improved alertness, and ability to learn in the classroom, and improved road crossing skills and awareness of danger as they hone their skills on a daily basis at a young age.

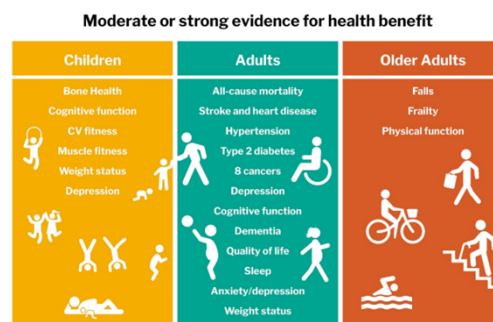
The following structure of the document has broken down the available opportunities into both soft measures, and hard measures, followed by a recommendation on how to consider trialling the use of this toolkit.

Moving forward, the recognition that continuing to provide more and more space for cars outside schools is not the primary solution can help create an opportunity for a new culture of travel to school into future years and for future generations. This toolkit is meant to be updated as new types of schemes and opportunities are identified, developed, and implemented both in Thurrock and elsewhere across the country.

Health and Wellbeing Benefits of Active Travel

It is well evidenced that promoting physical activity through active travel modes such as walking, cycling, and wheeling can help to tackle some of the most complex Public Health challenges – improving air quality, addressing climate change, improving health and wellbeing e.g. reducing obesity and tackling health inequalities as well as combatting congestion on our roads¹.

Physical activity involves bodily movement that requires expenditure of energy. It takes many forms, can happen in a range of settings, and serve many purposes such as daily activity, active recreation, or sport². There are many benefits of walking, cycling, and wheeling for health and wellbeing. These types of physical activity can help to prevent and manage over 20 chronic conditions including some cancers, obesity, heart disease and type 2 diabetes. A 2014 systematic review and meta-analysis provided evidence of significant reductions in all-cause mortality associated with both walking (11%) and cycling (10%)³. Conversely, physical inactivity is responsible for one in six UK deaths (equal to smoking)¹. Physical activity can also support good mental health, preventing or enabling an individual to manage common mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety.



Source: Department of Health & Social Care 2019

Although physical activity of any intensity provides health benefits, greater intensity provides more benefit for the same amount of time. Activities need to be of at least moderate-to-vigorous intensity to achieve the full breadth of health benefits.²

In addition to the health benefits, walking, cycling, and wheeling provide broader environmental and social co-benefits, including creating savings to the NHS and wider society, reducing congestion, addressing air pollution, combatting climate change, and improving social equity and the liveability of places. For example, active travel has the potential to make our high streets more vibrant and prosperous, can support community cohesion and improve quality of life^{4, 5}.



Source: Department of Health & Social Care 2019

Finally, active travel is considered one of the easiest and most sustainable ways of increasing physical activity levels as it can be easily integrated into everyday life, for example commuting to work or education, or undertaking daily errands³.

¹ Department for Transport. (2020). *Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking*. Available at: [Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking](#)

² Department of Health and Social Care. (2019). Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines. Available at: [UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines](#)

³ Friel, C. et al. (2024). Health benefits of pedestrian and cyclist commuting: evidence from the Scottish Longitudinal Study. *BMJ Journal*. Available at: [bmjpublichealth.bmj.com/content/bmjph/2/1/e001295.full.pdf](#)

⁴ Ma, L., Ye, R., & Wang, H. (2021). *Exploring the causal effects of bicycling for transportation on mental health*. Transportation Research Part D. Available at: [Exploring the causal effects of bicycling for transportation on mental health](#)

⁵ Thurrock Council. (2021). *Thurrock Active Travel Needs Assessment*. Available at: [Thurrock Council - Active Travel needs assessment, April 2021](#)

Soft Measures

Park & Stride

Park and Stride (P&S) means driving part of the way to school, parking up and walking the rest of the way. It is particularly good for families that live further away from school and are unable to walk the full distance. The premise is to encourage pupils and parents to park a short distance away from the school, typically 5 to 10 minutes away, and walk the remainder of the journey. Parking arrangements could be both informal (a local side street) or formalised with agreement from a landowner, such as a church car park, community hall car park or a local business.

Background – The scheme was developed to encourage parents to avoid ‘dangerous and unsafe’ parking during pick up and drop off times outside schools.

This type of scheme has been adopted in many other boroughs throughout the country with varying degrees of success.

Costs – Low – Less than £500 per school - Initial set up of the scheme involves officer time in working with schools and researching sites, liaising with site owners, risk assessments and other administrative tasks. Low costs could be associated with the purchase of stickers or “permits” to help parking sites to manage use and identify users. Promotion could be cost free with advertising of the scheme by the school to parents via newsletters or parent portals, or with a low cost in creating a basic leaflet/map to show locations. Small incentives could be provided initially for promotion of the scheme such as stickers, pencils etc to encourage children.

After initial set up, scheme continuation costs remain low with time for scheme monitoring and ongoing promotion, and ongoing engagement with formalised parking area landowner.

Benefits - A simple way to encourage adults and children to add some physical exercise to their day, creating healthier families, while also removing additional cars from congested areas around the school.

This scheme offers opportunities for parents and carers to teach children valuable lessons in road safety. It can highlight dangers and provide strategies to overcome hazards to help reduce traffic accidents.

A great way to chat and catch up with friends before and after school.

Can help reduce congestion outside the school gates.

It’s better for the environment and helps keep our air clean by reducing pollution.

Challenges – Doesn’t discourage the use of car travel to school.

Increasing challenges in identifying suitable sites to offer parking - historically car parking at supermarkets, public houses and leisure centres were used but increasingly these landowners are reluctant to allow the use of their sites, especially if the parking is abused or schools are competing for spaces with customers. The increased prevalence of ANPR monitoring of short stay car parking is also a new challenge.

Requires ongoing support either by the school or local authority to maintain relationships with landowners, address issues and promote the scheme. Thurrock has established P&S alongside

schools which were successful but relied on ongoing officer support which was not always available.

Case study – Between 2005 – 2009 seven primary schools in Thurrock set up a P&S for their parents and pupils with the aim of reducing congestion around the school premises.

Dilkes Primary Academy (South Ockendon) were seeing an increase in the numbers of vehicles outside their school. The school is set on a very narrow road and the extra vehicles were not only creating danger for all road users, but also stopping neighbours from being able to exit their properties. The headteacher approached Thurrock Council's Road Safety team and asked if they could help. A P&S scheme from a local public house car park was identified.

The Road Safety team approached the owner of the car park who was very happy to help, a risk assessment of the site was undertaken, and the walking route was identified. The school arranged the promotion of the scheme to their parents and pupils. It was agreed that the car park could only initially be used by the parents for the morning drop off with a view to adding the afternoon pick up at a later time.

The scheme was welcomed by both parents and residents and proved initially to be effective but going into the winter months it was noticed that there was a drop in usage. Promotion was again sent out which helped to extend the scheme to run for the rest of the school year.

A P&S can be set up at any site that can provide vehicle parking and should be between 5-10 minutes' walk to the school. The school will need to continue promotion of the scheme so as not to lose momentum, so that the P&S is able to continue with very little ongoing external support from the local authority.

Parking Enforcement

Prior to September 1993, the enforcement of prohibited parking was carried out by police traffic wardens. Permitted parking was enforced under criminal legislation and non-payment pursued through Magistrates Courts. As a result of legislation in the Road Traffic Act 1991 (RTA91), decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE) was introduced in Thurrock in 2005.

Background

A team of 22 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) support parking enforcement across Thurrock. The high visibility and recognition of CEOs enables them to support enforcement of inappropriate or illegal parking of cars, thus in turn supporting and encouraging sensible and legal parking and improved parking compliance, which has a knock on impact of reducing congestion in and around schools, and thus making the roads safer for all road users within the vicinity of the school. The work of the Parking Enforcement team is supported by a Parking Enforcement Policy, which sits alongside the council's wider Parking Strategy, and underneath the council's upcoming Transport Strategy.

Priority Enforcement

Priority enforcement is committed to ensuring main traffic routes are clear of obstruction, thus enabling free traffic flows and to hotspot school locations to encourage and promote compliant parking behaviours by vehicle owners. The CEOs can issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) under The Traffic Management Act (TMA) 2004 to vehicles parked in contravention of the given parking restrictions in operation. Such contraventions include parking on restrictions such as school keep clear markings and yellow lines.

Costs – High –£50,000 per annum per Civil Enforcement Officer - While there are a number of CEOs already employed in Thurrock, this number is still insufficient to oversee every school across the borough. The CEO's need to work in pairs to support their safety, given the role they fulfil. Smaller schools can be supported by just two CEO's though larger schools with multiple entrance points and large volumes of vehicles will need a larger number in attendance, and may be supported by a team of five CEOs. Such large numbers then makes it impractical support each school on a regular basis. To increase the team of CEOs would require an additional budget of at least £50,000 per annum.

Benefits

The high visible presence of Civil Enforcement Officers increases parking compliance and improves driver behaviour. This results in more sensible and legal parking.

Reduces congestion and improves free traffic flow.

Increases road safety for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians including School children.

Where relevant, ensure disabled parking spaces are kept free for their proper use by Blue Badge holders.

Allows buses and emergency service vehicles to not become delayed in congested areas unable to pass inappropriate parked vehicles.

Reduces Anti-Social Behaviour outside Schools.

Parking Enforcement supports improvements to air quality and the general environment.

Challenges

Civil Enforcement Officer resourcing is a significant challenge as the demand for Parking Enforcement at Schools is extremely high. There are more than fifty schools in the borough and the council has a team of 22 Officers. Priority deployment is undertaken every day to schools during peak times, based on supporting data of identified hotspots. However, dependant on the size of school areas deployment required can be two to six CEOs per site. Therefore, the council cannot meet the service demand or commit to daily or more frequent patrols at any one school.

Additionally, the absence of CEO presence at schools significantly reduces parking compliance and results in an increase in poor, inconsiderate parking behaviour.

A vehicle is permitted to wait for as long as is necessary to enable a person to board or alight a vehicle. (This means CEOs are unable to issue a PCN to drivers who stop on yellow lines for the purpose of actively dropping off or picking up their children).

There are no footway parking restrictions in or around schools, so CEOs have no powers to address footway parking that is causing a nuisance, hazard or obstruction. The introduction of a TRO to restrict footway parking at school locations would enable CEOs to issue instant PCNs to vehicles parked on footway areas.

There are very few no loading/ waiting restrictions at school sites. The introduction of such restrictions during school pick-up and drop-off times will enable CEOs to issue instant PCNs to any vehicle that parks on the yellow lines.

Case Study

The council's Parking Enforcement team have for a number of years undertaking ongoing priority of providing a presence at all schools across the borough. As stated in the benefits above, the visibility of CEOs ensures far higher levels of compliance of legal and appropriate parking to reduce congestion and improve safety for all road users. However, the demand for CEOs outstrips the availability of resource from the council, and as such every school cannot be visited on a frequent basis. This means that when the team are unable to attend a site, this allows inappropriate parking to take place, with roads becoming blocked, and people parking in restricted areas such as on the school keep clear markings. For the council's Parking Enforcement team, increasing the number of CEOs is not viable, due to the high ongoing revenue costs, and the potential for diminishing returns through enforcement – higher compliance ultimately leads to lower levels of enforcement action, and thus making enforcement with a high number of CEOs a challenge for the council to maintain.

Walking Bus

A Walking Bus (WB) is an organised walk to school along a determined route with children joining as the group proceeds through a residential area towards the school. Adult volunteers - either teachers or parents/carers - supervise and support the children along the way. One adult is at the front (the driver) and one at the back (the conductor). They will walk the same way each day. To begin with, the walking bus may only operate as little as one day a week, before increasing in frequency. 'Bus Stops' allow children to be picked up or dropped off along the designated route to/from the school.

Background – Walking buses were first set up in the 1990's to discourage vehicle use around schools and used where there was a history of low attendance due to lateness, encouraging parents to make use of the walking bus to avoid lateness as their child would be picked up along the route.

Costs – Low – Less than £500 per school - Initial set up of the scheme would involve officers time, meetings with parents/potential 'conductors' researching routes, undertaking DBS checks of volunteers, risk assessments and other administrative tasks such as compiling registers, contracts for parents etc.

High-visibility tabards for all users of the bus.

Cost of additional school staff time to act as conductors if volunteers cannot be recruited.

Benefits – An opportunity for children to socialise with friends before and after school.

Reduction in congestion outside the school.

Environmental and air quality benefits through a reduction in congestion and idling vehicles outside the school.

Opportunities for road safety training along the route for all participating children.

Independence for pupils.

Can help with parents and pupils where timekeeping and lateness is a problem at the school.

Allowing children to have regular daily exercise and reinforcing the habit of walking. for shorter journeys.

Challenges – There is a significant amount of work needed to set up a WB but can be divided between volunteers and school.

Difficulties in recruiting volunteers to commit to all school days therefore there will be a need for a list of supporting adults with availability, who all must be DBS checked.

If a 'passenger' on the bus is late arriving at the stops this will cause the bus to be delayed thereby causing ongoing issues for the remaining stops.

Some parents may see this as a sitting service, afternoon drop offs could be a problem leaving the conductors with responsibilities for the children beyond their remit.

Parents may see a reduction in their physical activity by switching pupils to the walking bus, where they may have accompanied their children to/from the school.

Case study – Between 2008-2012 six primary schools in Thurrock had Walking Buses with ten routes operating daily.

Stifford Clays Primary School were the first school to set up a WB in Thurrock after being contacted by the council's Road Safety team about the advantages of this scheme. The school is set on a 'through road' where non-school traffic would shortcut and at the time the road formed part of a bus route. Pupil numbers at the time were approximately 350 and it was shown that many lived relatively close but were still brought in by car.

The initial response for a WB was very positive with six volunteers and fourteen pupils 'travelling' on the bus. This route covered five stops, approximately one mile, with age ranges between 5 and 10 years and ran four mornings a week. It was estimated that this bus reduced ten vehicles coming to the vicinity of the school on each leg of operation.

This WB continued to flourish and after seven months two additional WB routes were created with fifteen pupils using the two new routes.

The school was very proactive in constantly promoting the WB and holding birthday parties for every year the WB were running. The three buses ran for three years.

The Road Safety team were very engaged with the buses scheme at the school, travelling along with them at least once a week but due to work loads, officers were increasingly unable to provide ongoing support, and the WB were left to continue with only support from the schools. This saw a decline in promotion of the scheme and the volunteers no longer felt they had the support of the authority. As such the numbers of volunteers and pupils became reduced until it was deemed the walking buses would no longer continue. This was also seen with other schools and their WB routes.

Bikeability Cycle Training

Bikeability is the national cycle training programme funded by the Department for Transport. It helps children and adults learn practical skills and understand how to cycle on live roads. Bikeability gives everyone the confidence to cycle and enjoy this skill for life. There are five Bikeability levels- Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3, Balance Bikes and Learn to Ride. Each are designed to improve cycling skills. They take riders from the basics of balance and control, all the way to planning and making safe and independent journeys on busier and more challenging roads.

Background – The authority has been providing cycle training in Thurrock’s schools for over 30 years, with the DfT Bikeability training guidelines as the training model since 2007.

Over 2000 pupils take part in various elements of the cycle training every year in Thurrock, training is provided by fully qualified Bikeability cycle instructors.

Costs – Low – Less than £500 per school – All costs are covered by a grant provided by the DfT via the Bikeability Trust. There is currently no cost to schools, parents, and pupils for all Bikeability cycle training in Thurrock. Expenditure for the delivery of the scheme by the council is recovered from the received Bikeability grant.

Benefits - Bikeability cycle training equips children with vital life skills. Pupils not only learn to cycle safely alongside traffic, but they also gain independence, social skills and a sense of wellbeing.

Children are better at responding to risk and report increased confidence. As a result, more children cycle to school which in turn improves mental health and wellbeing. This allows children to get more out of the classroom, improving their attention span and engagement. Healthier habits lead to increased attendance and improve academic results.

Parents are more confident in allowing their child to cycle to school.

It’s better for the environment and helps keep our air clean by reducing pollution.

A great way to encourage pupils to take regular physical activity in a fun way.

Challenges – Parents/carers may be reluctant for their child to participate in the training due to not understanding the processes, therefore their child may not be able to take part. Parents are also sometimes reluctant to trust their children following participation in cycling to school alongside traffic.

Children would need to be able bring a suitable sized, mechanically sound and road worthy cycle into the school for up to four days. This may not always be feasible for parents/carers again a child may not be able to take part in the training.

Case study – Since 2019 cycling instructors have been holding learn to ride days during the school holidays for riders aged 5 and over so they can learn how to ride a cycle unaided. This has helped in the rise of pupils taking part in the next levels of Bikeability training which can encourage more pupils to cycle to school with confidence. To overcome the fact that some riders have bikes that are not always road worthy a cycle mechanic inspects the cycle before the training starts. The Bikeability Trust in 2023 granted additional funding so that riders of all abilities could take part in cycling. The instructors have also worked more closely with SENCO teachers in schools so riders with additional needs are able to participate and feel included.

School Travel Plans

A school travel plan (STP) is a living document that sets out how schools will manage sustainable travel to school, through a number of practical ways to help reduce the amount of car trips made to a school, encourage more use of public transport, walking, cycling and scooting and to improve safety on the school journey.

The travel plan aims to raise awareness among pupils and parents of the harmful effects of increasing car use on children's health, safety, and independence. It highlights the implications of travel choice and the benefits of encouraging more sustainable travel to school. Plans are developed by schools in Thurrock in partnership with pupils, teachers, parents, carers, school governors and residents. The plan should demonstrate the school's commitment to environment and community concerns and to the safety and welfare of pupils.

Background – Thurrock Council has been active in helping produce and promote STP's for over 20 years. Thurrock was the first authority in England to have an approved and documented STP for every school in the borough. In 2009 an online portal - Modeshift STARS – was established for all schools to be able to complete their plan online – providing guidelines and a template on what should be included into the STP.

Modeshift STARS is now the council's preferred method for the recording of effective school travel plans and ongoing monitoring. The system recognises schools and other educational establishments that have shown excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable and active travel with accreditation based on the level of detail and commitments.

Thurrock has consistently been ranked as one of the top two authorities based on its size across the country for the highest percentage of schools having an accredited STP's on the STARS portal.

Costs – Low – Less than £500 per school – There are currently no monetary costs for developing a STP and uploading on Modeshift STARS. A member of school staff, volunteer would need to commit time monthly to upload information to the plan online. The council has a small outlay each year to be a registered member of the Modeshift Scheme and have a Modeshift STARS license. Officer time is also required to initially support schools in recording their STP onto the system.

Benefits – Encourage more active and sustainable travel choices to and from school.

Reduce the number of vehicles on the journey to school.

Supports physical activity by encouraging walking, scooting, and cycling.

Promotes travel awareness and road safety skills.

When a school develops a STP it is showing a commitment to promoting a safer and cleaner environment for the local and wider community. It can also lead to funding from the Department of Transport and other sources towards the cost of delivering some travel proposals.

Establish safer walking and cycling routes around the school.

A STP can contribute to or support additional school policies and programmes – e.g. Eco Schools and Healthy Schools.

Having a STP helps schools by creating accountability to your goals and provide you with a focus for achieving the prioritises for your school when seeking additional support and funding.

Challenges – Schools are required to maintain their STP, and update it at least annually – this includes undertaking a formal travel to school survey, and submitting their STP for accreditation.

Schools which are not involved in the STP process sometimes find it difficult to understand the benefit of undertaking and managing an STP. While it is relatively simple to manage, the time required to initially input, and record challenges may see it not be undertaken. A change in school personnel or Head Teacher may also see the STP no longer pursued.

Case study - Case study – Horndon on the Hill Primary School first developed an online STP with help from the authority in 2017 after experiencing parking issues outside their school. They had tried advising parents of the problems of driving to school and to encourage more sustainable travel methods through the school newsletter but felt it was not making any difference.

Their aim was to educate their wider school community on how active and sustainable travel can benefit them. To create a behaviour change, no matter how small, and keep promoting this for their pupils that are attending school now and for those who attend in the future.

The Modeshift STARS online portal enabled the school to list what problems they had, what they could potentially do to resolve them and to list what they already did as a school.

The school's first STP in 2017 achieved a 'Good' accreditation level which showed the schools commitment in promoting sustainable travel.

The plan included setting up a working group with included pupils, staff, senior leadership, and residents which meant the whole community felt they were involved in developing a plan that would help alleviate parking issues and promoting sustainable travel and healthy alternatives to travelling in the car.

A Walking Bus, Park & Stride and a "5-minute Walking Bubble" have all been set up and are in regular use which gives parents and pupils sustainable options rather than use a car.

Regular hands up surveys are conducted to ensure the targets set are on track and these surveys show that car use is down from 47% to 26% from 2017 – 2024.

Other modes of travel including walking, cycling, car share and P&S have steadily risen over the period.

The school has gone on to achieve an 'Outstanding' accreditation in 2024 which is the highest level of accreditation and were also awarded Modeshift STARS Local Authority Primary School of the year 24/25 for their outstanding plan and commitment to sustainable travel.

School Crossing Patrols

A School Crossing Patrol (SCP) is a familiar measure for many people across the country, often referred to as a “lollipop lady/man”. The SCP Officer supports the safety of children while crossing the road on the way to school by having the powers to stop the flow of traffic at a given point, often on a route with heavy flowing traffic. At times, the SCP may be positioned at other formal crossings to help further improve the safety of the crossing point.

The School Crossing Patrol (SCP) service is a non-statutory function. While the SCP Officer provides a level of support with children crossing the road, it continues to remain the responsibility of the parent/carer for the safety of their child.

Background – School Crossing Patrols, or more colloquially known as “lollipop men and women”, provide a front-line service across communities, helping children get to school safely by crossing some of the borough’s busiest roads around schools. They are seen as a core pillar of our communities, promoting road safety and a key part in addressing the challenge of helping encourage walking to school.

Within Thurrock, there are 14 areas which are identified as having a School Crossing Patrol. Currently only 10 of these sites are operational with a staffed Officer. While the SCP service is highly requested, it is not necessarily feasible for all schools to be supported by an officer. Therefore, the council uses a well-established and nationally recognised approach in allocating SCP’s.

The guidelines are issued by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and takes into account traffic and pedestrian counts to assess a threshold score. Across a 30minute period, a count of crossing children and flow of traffic vehicles is taken and entered into a formula – PV^2 where P is the number of crossing children and V is the number of vehicles. The minimum score for the consideration of an SCP is 4 million.

Costs – High - £10,000 per annum per School Crossing Patrol Officer – Each SCP site is staffed by a paid officer, and this adds a significant ongoing cost to deliver the service. While not trialled by Thurrock Council, other authorities have experimented with volunteers to help reduce the cost of such a service, and increase sites, but oftentimes have reverted to a formal officer. Ongoing management of the officer and monitoring of the site also needs to be considered.

The annual cost of one SCP Officer is £7,068 which includes £280 for essential uniform costs per year.

Benefits – Improves pedestrian safety enabling safe passage across busy roads.

The SCP acts as a traffic calming measure, enabling traffic to come to a stop.

Visual prompts for alleviating speeding vehicles – full Hi-Viz uniform.

Deters parking at high risk crossing sites outside schools.

Encourages parents to allow children to walk to school independently.

SCP Officers only operate at certain hours of the day and therefore are a temporary control measure at key times, while not impeding traffic at other times of the day.

The SCP is well respected and recognised by communities as a “good thing” and therefore are most often supported.

Challenges – Due to the low number of working hours per week, coupled with the fixed schedule, it can sometimes prove difficult to attract staffing for vacant SCP Officer roles, as officers are required to work each day during term time, on two separate occasions per day. As a result, sometimes sites can be unfilled for a significant period. Lone working, and the working conditions (live traffic, weather) create additional barriers to recruitment.

Staff absences from existing sites can remain unmanned for periods of time as the service does not cover sickness.

Complaints regarding SCP sites and service – additional waiting times for drivers to pass site.

Nature of the role and lone working can result in verbal/physical threats and abuse from car drivers towards SCP's.

Case study – Aveley Primary School, Aveley is a primary school with 432 pupils.

The school is set on a busy narrow road (Stifford Road) which is regularly used as a 'short cut' to gain access to Lakeside Shopping Centre. There are often reports of HGV vehicles using the road – although there are restrictions in place.

The SCP site is situated directly outside the school and reaches a threshold score of greater than 24 million (see background). The site is heavily used by both children, parents, and members of the community.

Having this site available has encouraged parents to allow their older children to walk independently to school knowing that they will be safely crossed on the busy road.

Parking in the vicinity of the SCP site has lowered and traffic speeds are significantly reduced at the site.

Small Scale Soft Schemes

The following is a short selection of smaller programmes which can be implemented by schools and supported by the council to promote active travel or reduce car use around the school. These have relatively low cost of implementation and can be run as singular one-off activities or a package of activities. Each of these activities can be recorded into a Schools Modeshift Travel Plan to support opportunities for accreditation. The below list is just a small number of programmes, with many more available and accessible for schools to amend to their specific needs.

Living Streets – www.livingstreets.org.uk/

Living Streets is a charity which promotes walking by encouraging more people to participate and to create better walking environments. The charity promotes a number of schemes including National Walking Month and supporting World Car Free Day.

Walk Once a Week (WOW)

The WOW scheme encourages pupils to record their mode of travel to school using a tracker, and are then rewarded with a physical badge for each month where they use active travel to get to school at least once every week. The design of the badge changes from month to month and therefore are unique and become collectable. The theme of the programme changes from time to time, reflected in the badge design.

The aim is to encourage more sustainable and active trips to school, helping to reduce traffic flows and congestion within the vicinity of the school. When both parents and pupils can see the benefits and how enjoyable it is to Walk Once a Week, they can try to incorporate it into their daily routines. The scheme can then make a real difference, as it promotes walking throughout the entire school year. The programme has seen a reduction of 30% in car journeys taken to school, and a 23% increase in walking rates⁶.

Cost – Low - £500 per annum – There is an ongoing revenue cost of approximately £500 per annum per school to purchase the appropriate resources and access to the system. There is likely a low level of administration required by the school in issuing badges on a monthly basis.

Walk to School Week

Walk to School Week is another programme, aimed primarily at Primary level, which aims to encourage all pupils to walk to school for the duration of one week. The programme is held during May every year. The scheme is school led, with resource packs available to show how schools can implement the scheme.

Cost – Low - £200 per annum – There is cost per resource pack which is sufficient for each class, and therefore a school is likely to need 10 to 20 packs to participate.

⁶ WOW – The Walk to School Challenge - <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/walk-to-school/primary-schools/wow-the-walk-to-school-challenge/>

Modeshift STARS – www.modeshiftstars.org/

Modeshift is a not-for-profit organisation promoting sustainable travel across the community. Modeshift is a membership organisation, and supports Local Authorities, Schools, Workplaces, and Transport Planning profession. As part of their work, Modeshift offers a Travel Plan service – Modeshift STARS. The STARS programme was initially an online tool to record Travel Plans for schools, but is now enhanced to support commercial sites, and allows Local Authorities to manage travel plans across its area.

Active Travel Ambassador

Aimed primarily at Secondary Schools, the Active Travel Ambassador (ATA) programme supports schools in promoting transport issues through a peer-led pupil engagement programme. The programme encourages pupils aged 11 upwards to have the confidence and skills to speak with their peers to discuss and tackle the transport issues affecting their school. With support from a Modeshift ATA Coordinator and school staff, the ATA's research and develop behaviour change campaigns, focusing on active travel and road safety, and promoting these to their fellow pupils to encourage more sustainable travel to school. The ATA programme also benefits the school by aligning with a number of links to the curriculum including Citizenship, Science, Geography, Maths and English.

Cost – Medium –£5000 per school – There is a low cost to participate in the programme, with costs attributed to some support from Modeshift working with the schools ATA's. In 2023, participation in the scheme by 72 schools across 15 Local Authorities, and saw an average 2.3% increase in active travel.

Sustrans – www.sustrans.org.uk/

Sustrans is a charity which promotes active travel for all communities, and creating healthier places and communities. The organisation is primarily known for promoting cycling and are guardians of the National Cycling Network (NCN). Thurrock is home to two NCN routes – Route 13 and Route 137.

The Big Walk and Wheel

The Big Walk and Wheel is Sustrans newest programme, replacing its Big Pedal. The scheme promotes walking, cycling, wheeling and active travel to school over a two-week period on the spring of each year, and is a competition amongst all participating schools. It is open to both primary and secondary schools, and encourages SEN school participation. Schools record the levels of active travel to site each day, and the best five days are used to record the schools overall position across the programme. Participation is free for the school.

Cost – Low – Free to participate – There is no costs required for participation or registering with the programme, but may require some small administrative/staffing costs.

Intelligent Health – Beat the Street

Intelligent Health are one of a number of growing digital health improvement companies delivering schemes and support to promote the health of communities. One of their key longstanding programmes is "Beat the Street". As one of its earliest programmes, Beat the Street uses gamification and rewards to encourage communities to walk more. Within Thurrock, Beat the Street has previously been used across the borough, and there is a proposal to implement the scheme in the near future as part of Sport England's Place Partnership programme in Ockendon, Tilbury and Purfleet. Beat the Street uses counters placed on posts and lighting columns on the

street, and participants can tap the box using a card or mobile app to record their activity. The more participants walk and tap these boxes, the more points they acquire and earn greater rewards. The programme has shown to increase physical activity and modal shift.

Cost – High – More than £30,000 plus additional expenses – There is a high cost per year for programme participation, as there is a cost associated with the counters, the issuing of cards and rewards, and the management of the scheme, as well as additional costs to the authority for installing and removing the counters from posts and lighting columns.

Thurrock Council/Road Safety Team led Schemes

Scooter training

This training programme is aimed at pupils in year one. Scooter training aims to educate children to become better and more responsible scooter riders, while ensuring that they are aware of the safety implications of riding a scooter in public spaces. This programme then helps children to have more confidence in scooting safely, and having a better understanding of some of the dangers they face in the road, and thus encouraging more pupils and parents to walk and scoot to school.

Cost – Low - £50 per session - There is a small cost for schools to receive this training. This is delivered by the council's trained instructors.

Smart Parking Campaign

To promote safe and considerate parking outside schools. Schools can develop campaign and resources to run their own Smart Parking Campaign. This may include developing banners and posters to encourage parents to not park inappropriately.

Cost – Low – Less than £100 per school – There is a low cost for printing posters and banners. Consideration for support from Council Officers with the school.

Car Sharing

Working with schools to promote car sharing on the school journey between parents and pupils. This is in many cases an informal programme between parents and school friends, but schools can develop a campaign and resources to run their own Car Share Campaign, thus helping to reduce traffic journeys and flows around the school.

Cost – Low - Free

Parking Charter

These are aimed at managing the parking that is around the school site. Schools develop a charter to encourage sensible parking, which parents then sign, promising to park in a defined way or place for the safety and benefit of the school community. Although this may not reduce the numbers of vehicles, it should put the onus on parents to behave in a particular way, and reduce inappropriate parking outside schools, helping to improve safety and reduce congestion.

Cost – Low - Free

School Drop-Off Zones

Schools may designate specific locations for a year groups/key stage groups as drop off points in the mornings. If the designated space is limited schools could implement staggered drop off times as used during covid epidemic. The experience from the pandemic identified that staggered drop-off and pick up times through could lead to additional delays and congestion outside schools, where parents with children in different year groups or classes resulted in them waiting outside the school for a longer time period.

Cost – Low - Free

Reward Schemes

Various reward schemes can help to promote sustainable travel to pupils and parents. Schools can develop campaign and resources to run their own rewards campaigns. This may be similar to other schemes mentioned previously (such as WOW). Rewards can include simple prizes such as pencils and snap bands.

Cost – Low – Less than £200 per year

Car Free Days

These can be promoted through the school and can be held weekly/monthly/termly to encourage pupils to arrive via alternate means rather than by private car. Schools can develop a campaign and resources to run their own Car Free Days Campaign.

Cost – Low - Free

Clean Air Days

Similar to other activities which discourage car travel to school, or reduced levels of traffic flows outside the school entrance, this scheme is focused more primarily around promoting the dangers of poor air quality and the impact of idling vehicles and congestion on the health and development on young people. Congestion outside the school, and idling vehicles increase the prevalence of emissions and particulates which are damaging to the lungs and wellbeing of young children, as well as local residents who are exposed to these air quality issues every day.

This programme can be promoted through the school and can be held weekly/monthly/termly basis. Schools can develop a campaign and resources to run their own Clean Air Campaign.

Cost – Low – Less than £200 per school – Some cost for creating materials/posters/banners to promote this activity.

Five-Minute Zones

This is a basic scheme which can involve the participation of pupils in identifying a five-minute walking cordon outside school gates, and promoting pupils and parents to park outside this “walk-zone” and walking the final 400m to school. Stickers or markers can then be placed on the road to indicate this cordon, and a map can be developed showing the extent of the five-minute walk zone outside the school. Creating this short walk-zone can then also help improve the physical activity levels and alertness of children at the start of the day.

Cost – Low – Less than £200 per school – A small cost for printing maps and markers, plus some additional support from Council Officers in helping to develop these materials.

Hard Measures

Parking Restrictions

Background - Parking Restrictions are a fairly common measure implemented on the public highway across the borough and throughout the country. These are typically recognisable line painting on the road/footway, or restrictions stated by signage. Every school has some form of parking restriction – the most common being the “School ZigZag” – formally the School Keep Clear markings outside the entrance, prohibiting parking by vehicles at key times, typically school drop off and pick up. Targeting parking restrictions on school roads or surrounding roads can help to prevent inappropriate parking which may block the movement of vehicles or access. Other examples are single or double yellow lines which are a “No Waiting” restriction and should indicate parking or waiting is prohibited. Unused in Thurrock, but red lines could be used for “No Stopping”. Elsewhere in the borough there may be permit parking which allows permit holders only to park at set times.

All of these options require a Traffic Regulation Order to be implemented and enforced, and this typically will require the council to undertake a statutory consultation process with residents and stakeholders to understand their views and support for the proposed restrictions. This could be a barrier in implementing these if the proposal is contentious for any reason.

While many road users understand the restrictions, and are aware they are not permitted to park, oftentimes these are ignored if there is no ongoing parking restrictions. During both the school pick up and drop off, vehicles drivers can often be seen to ignoring the restrictions while waiting. This therefore requires ongoing and effective enforcement either by the Councils own Parking Enforcement Team or by the Police.

Costs – Low to Medium – Up to £5000 per restriction – Implementing a parking restriction is relatively low cost in comparison to other hard measures, as typically they involve line painting on the highway or installing signage. They also tend to have low ongoing maintenance costs associated. The Traffic Regulation Order is typically associated with a cost of £2000, and there are likely to be costs associated with consultation and officer time for design and project management, depending on the complexity of the scheme.

Benefits – Parking restrictions are relatively easy to implement with a general good understanding of the measures by the public, and experience within the council of implementing.

Generally self-enforcing, as most members of the public are aware of requirements of the restriction and abide by these.

Enforcement of these restrictions is typically simple.

Parking Enforcement, if effectively implemented can help to prevent congestion outside schools and improve safety by improving visibility for all road users, and allows space for vehicles to pass more freely, in turn reducing opportunities for conflict.

Challenges – To make parking restrictions fully effective, they require ongoing enforcement, typically by the council’s Civil Enforcement Officers, who patrol the borough on a daily basis. Due to the number of enforcement officers, it continues to be a challenge to patrol every school at both the morning and afternoon, which can result in the restrictions being ignored.

Parking Restrictions typically impact all road users, and this can often be local residents too. Yellow lines prevent parking outside homes at key times, unless a permit system is implemented,

and therefore residents may have a case to complain or object to a scheme. However residents are often appreciative of restrictions as these help to reduce the impact of school traffic on their daily lives.

Yellow Line waiting restrictions do not prevent loading and unloading, and while this may not be frequent, it may take place at peak school traffic times, which will likely contribute further to the challenges in vehicle movements at these times.

Case study – At the Ockendon Academy, Erriff Drive, South Ockendon, “School Keep Clear” road markings with the following restriction: “No Stopping Mon-Fri 8 am-5pm on School Entrance Markings” were implemented directly outside the school gates to prevent parents parking immediately in front of-, and blocking access to-, the school entrance. With this restriction the council’s enforcement team can instantly issue a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) should a vehicle be stopped at this location during the times of restriction. This ensures the main carriageway remains free flowing, with visibility at the school gates being clear and not obscured by vehicles parking in the road. This creates safety for pupils as they emerge from the school, as they have better visibility across the section of road where there is likely to be the highest level of pedestrian movements.

Additionally, the council built parking laybys along Erriff Drive outside the schools with additional parking restrictions. These bays are restricted with “limited waiting Mon-Fri 8am-5pm 30mins no return within 2hr” sign plates and backed up by a Road Traffic Order, to allow enforcement. These were created to assist parents at drop off and pick up times on school days, with the aim to minimise the impact on local residents. Residents and others are permitted to park their cars here in the evenings and weekends, outside the stated hours of restrictions. The restrictions only provide a short waiting time for parked vehicles, which prevents them from parking for extended time, or discouraging all day/commuter parking. However, these restrictions are only as effective with ongoing monitoring and enforcement.

School Streets

A “School Street” is an initiative which aims to tackle congestion, air pollution and road safety concerns in and around schools. Although schemes vary from place to place, traditionally they do this by restricting motor traffic in and around schools, transforming those streets into walking, cycling and wheeling 'healthy' zones. This is achieved through use of timed road closures on residential roads, usually for around 30-60 minutes at the beginning and end of the school day.

Such schemes are usually run by schools and local authorities in collaboration with parents / carers and local communities. During the timed closures, residents, emergency services and blue badge holders have access but through traffic is banned. They can be run every day or as one-off events.

Background - School run related traffic accounts for a quarter of cars on the road. This results in increased risks of collisions with vulnerable road users and other motorists, unlawful parking, traffic congestion, and potentially road rage. As of July 2024, almost 700 School Streets were in place across London, and approximately another 200 across the rest of England.

Costs – Medium to High – £2000 - > £40,000 per school – Depending on the location and needs of the school, bespoke measures may need to be implemented for a school street. Some school streets are managed by volunteers or school staff, and are able to implement a closure of the road using cones, or barriers – these will have a lower cost for implementation. At the top end of the scale, new powers available to Thurrock Council through Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 now allow camera enforcement to manage vehicles. This has a higher implementation cost with ongoing management costs for the operation of the cameras. A Traffic Regulation Order may also be required to allow the street to be closed down, and this requires a statutory consultation process.

Benefits - Reduce traffic volumes immediately outside the school.

Improve air quality and reduce air pollution and emissions from engine idling.

Increase walking and cycling to school.

Reduce car travel and inconsiderate parking.

Incidents of traffic collisions are reduced outside schools where these are implemented, helping to improve safety for all.

Challenges – Implementing a School Street scheme will need input from various groups which could prove challenging.

Schools may be unwilling to agree to a scheme due to neighbour/residents' concerns.

Potential for objection and opposition from community groups due to restrictions placed – e.g. access restrictions during key times

Needs an enforcement mechanism to ensure compliance

A manually implemented school street may require volunteers or school staff, and there may be reluctance to those without enforcement powers to ensure non-authorized vehicles from accessing.

Volunteers and school staff also require training in how to operate the equipment and implementing the school street, with appropriate risk assessments.

Thurrock Council has yet to formally implement a School Street, and so lacks experience in the challenges such a scheme may present. This also creates a barrier for residents who are unable to refer to another scheme in the borough to understand its success and challenges.

Implementing enforcement through a station camera will require high purchase costs and ongoing revenue costs to maintain the system. While the council has already procured a background management system for road traffic camera enforcement, there are costs associated with maintaining the system and reviewing evidence. If very successful there is a risk the camera could become uneconomical to maintain.

Case study - currently there are no School Streets schemes operational in Thurrock. The case study below is from Bessemer Grange primary School, Southwark which has many of the same demographics of many schools in the borough.

The School Street was first introduced as a trial during the Autumn term in 2018 following a school led parent consultation which raised concerns about poor air quality, road safety and dangerous parking during the school drop off and pick up times. All vehicles are banned from the School Street during the hours of operation, with the exception of emergency services, residents and registered carers of residents who live within the closure area, Southwark school transport vehicles and school transport vehicles operating from outside of the borough. Blue Badge holders working or dropping off people at the school are eligible to apply for a permit.

During the trial, the closure operated Monday to Friday from 8am to 10am and 2:30pm to 4:30pm, and was enforced by turtle gate barriers and signage on surrounding roads. School Staff were responsible for setting up and taking down the barriers at the start and end of each closure. Residents and blue badge holders with disabled parking were allowed access to the closure during the operation times. The School Street was launched with a celebration "Play Streets" event. An evaluation by the London Borough of Southwark found the objectives of the trial had been met.

Results included a 6% increase in users walking and cycling, and a general improvement of perception of road safety. Following the success of the trial, the School Street was made permanent with the new closure timings of 8:30am to 9:30am and 3pm to 4pm, and collapsible bollards and ANPR cameras to enforce the scheme.

An evaluation of the scheme found the average number of motorised vehicles per hour driving through the School Street was 82% lower during the closure period than outside it. The average speed of motorised vehicles during the morning drop off was 7.2mph and 6.7mph during the afternoon pick up, compared to 11.8mph and 13mph respectively outside of the closure period. Increased numbers of pedal cycles were observed during the School Street operation hours, with 23 captured per hour during the drop off and pick up times, compared to ten per hour outside of the closure period. The scheme is still active.

As of July 2024 almost 700 School Streets are in place across London, with around 200 across the rest of England.

20 mph Zones & Speed Restrictions

Reduction in speed limits are proven to reduce the opportunity for and severity of accidents and provide a safer environment for all road users. Typically, they will consist of a speed limit to advise drivers of the maximum speed their vehicle should be travelling, and these may be supported by self-enforcing measures such as “horizontal” or “vertical” deflection methods – width restrictions and vehicle priority are examples of horizontal deflection, and speed humps and raised crossing tables are examples of vertical deflection.

Background – Typically while urban residential streets have a 30mph speed limit, there is an increasing prevalence of 20 mile per hour speed zones being located across the country, which help to reduce the speed at which traffic is moving. This in turn helps to make our streets much safer by slowing down vehicles, reducing noise, improving congestion, improving air quality, improving visibility and significantly reducing the severity of any incident. Across Wales, it has become the default position to make urban residential streets 20mph and this has already shown benefits to communities, though remain contentious. Speed limits of 20mph are supposed to be self-enforcing, hence the need for speed reduction measures alongside the reduced speed limit. Implementing a 20mph speed limit outside schools and on surrounding roads helps to encourage walking and cycle by making the roads feel safer through reduced speeds.

Costs – Medium to High – Minimum £5000 – Costs are dependant on the measure implemented. While a speed restriction on its own will have a lower cost, other infrastructure measures on the road will significantly add complexity and costs with increased levels of public engagement. A speed reduction will also require a Traffic Regulation Order with minimum costs of £2000.

Benefits – The implementation of speed limits and speed reduction measures are relatively well understood by the public and can be adhered too if the correct measures are put in.

Installation is relatively simple and the council well experienced in implementing speed limits and installing vertical and horizontal deflection methods.

Reductions in speed of vehicles provide wider benefits to the community, including reduced speeds and better environment for all road users, therefore enabling the opportunity to better encourage walking and cycling.

Speed reductions significantly reduce incidents of collisions and the severity of collisions, creating a safer environment for all road users. Lower speeds also reduce roadside noise from tyres and engines, and help to improve air quality.

Challenges – Such measures require engagement with communities and stakeholders, which could present challenges in proceeding with measures. Speed limits are often contentious issues for the wider public as it can often feel unnatural to drive at 20mph, and sometimes the road environment has been designed for higher speeds and naturally allow vehicles to go faster.

While speed reduction measures help to reduce speeds, enforcement of speeding helps to further support compliance. Speeding however can only be implemented by the Police or through additional speed cameras, where a case is required to be made to show the need. Such a measure then requires additional resources to be implemented by the council before being handed over by the Safer Essex Roads Partnership.

Case study – Stifford Clays Primary School, Whitmore Avenue Grays saw a 20mph zone implemented on the local streets around the school. This was in order to reduce the speeds of

passing vehicles immediately outside the school entrance, thereby improving the safety for all road users and in particular pupils accessing the school site. Up to date accident data shows there have been no recorded vehicle incidents within the past 3 years, showing that the scheme has had a positive impact. Undertaking speed surveys would also help the council to monitor if the speed limits are being adhered to by drivers on these roads.

Increasing Parking Capacity

Creating additional spaces for parked vehicles can help to create capacity on existing roads, helping to reduce inappropriate parking, and enable the free flow of vehicles along the road, where previously they may have been restricted due to double parking on either side of the road.

Background – Schemes to provide additional parking, in effect creating additional road space capacity can vary in size and nature depending on the requirements and reasoning behind the need. Dependant on the target audience, the scope of the scheme will differ. In some instances, safeguarding existing available parking spaces for targeted users can be implemented using measures such as a Parking Permit Area or other parking restriction. More details of these have been covered above. In other scenarios it may be appropriate to create additional parking capacity by allocating and converting land as new spaces for vehicles to park for either a short or longer periods. These could be through creating additional laybys or parking spaces by reallocating land which may be within the boundary of the public highway but which is not designed for vehicle use, such as grass verges or other small spaces which are not for recreational use. On the other scale, this may include building a dedicated car parking facility, with the capacity dependant on the availability of space. While the council would primarily facilitate such a measure on land it already controls, it may be possible for parking capacity to be created on private land, such as within the schools boundary, creating drop off and pick up facilities.

Costs – Medium to High – Variable cost dependant on scope of scheme (Up to £100,000's) – The nature of creating additional parking will mean it is difficult to provide associated costs, given that in many cases this will require physically building parking capacity and heavy engineering work. The cost of delivering a car park can vary significantly, especially if there is a need to install new or move existing drainage and utilities.

Benefits – Additional parking can help reduce congestion on the road outside schools, with more spaces for parents to wait and drop off.

Reduced levels of conflict between road users, parents and residents, where the additional capacity may stop instances of parents parking outside residents' drives. For residents this may also mean they are able to access their properties easier during peak school hours.

Additional parking could also provide space for school visitors during the middle of the school day, reducing on street parking where the school doesn't have capacity onsite.

Residents may be able to make use of this additional capacity outside school hours, especially if there is high demand during evenings and weekends.

May formalise existing parking taking place on grass verges or pavements, which is likely not permitted.

Reduced congestion on the road outside of a school as a result of additional parking may also bring other benefits such as improved road safety, more free flowing traffic, and improved air quality.

Challenges – Additional parking may result in the loss of existing greenspace, which may be limited in urban areas. This is likely to have a biodiversity impact, but also acts as a natural flooding prevention measure

There is a high cost for installing car parking due to the greater level of work and materials required, and there may be a cost for the use of land.

Creating additional parking may also create additional latent demand – i.e. demand that may have been reduced due to congestion, but additional capacity makes driving in the vicinity more attractive.

Creating additional space for residents to use outside of hours may also create more demand for car ownership or storage of additional vehicles.

Where schools may be encouraged to create space and opportunities on site, experience has shown that schools do not always maintain and facilitate access, creating challenges in the future.

Case study – Following long-term issues with congestion and inappropriate parking at East Tilbury Primary School, Princess Margaret Road, East Tilbury, the council were able to provide direct support in the enhancement of an existing public car park immediately outside the school. The existing car park was unmarked, unlit, with poor surfacing, and became unattractive to use with no formal mechanism for cars to park.

Supported by the council's Education service, the council has been able to extend the car park, as well as provide formal marking for spaces, installing disabled spaces and electric charging points. Lighting was installed and a one-way system for entry and exit. While there are no timing restrictions for parking on the site, there is now an increased availability of parking, which has helped to reduce the congestion outside the school during pick up and drop off times, further helped by the operation of the one-way system.

Improved Walking and Cycling Infrastructure

While a large number of children are driven to school every day, a significant proportion arrive via active travel, in particular walking, cycling or at a primary level scooting. To enable access for pedestrians, there is a need for good footways and crossing points.

Background - Improving and upgrading existing the public highway infrastructure to enable more people to be able to walk or cycle, with less conflict with -, and higher priority than motor vehicles is key to encouraging more journeys to be made via foot or cycle. The growth in travel to school by car over the past 30+ years has had a negative impact on the number of children walking and cycling to school. Safety fears due to traffic, congestion and speeding vehicles, and parents becoming more risk averse has resulted in few children walking or cycling to school, creating a cycle of reduced physical activity and increased car use into adulthood. Transport planning policies have prioritised the movement of vehicles, and subsequently the parking of vehicles, with a less pleasant environment for active travel. In particular, fewer children cycle to school in because of the concerns with safety of cycling and a lack of trust by parents.

Creating improved routes to school, with better crossings and less conflict with vehicles can help to reduce congestion as more pupils walk to school. In turn, this helps to improve road safety awareness at a younger age in children, further reducing incidents between pedestrians and motor vehicles.

Costs – Medium to High – Variable cost dependant on scope of scheme (Up to £10000) – Depending on the nature of the scheme, this will impact greatly on the cost. Building a safe crossing point across a road will likely have a lower cost than widening and extending an existing footway alongside a grass verge. Signalised crossings (e.g. Toucan) have higher levels of complexity and have additional expenses.

Benefits – creating enhanced walking and cycling facilities can help to promote modal shift for pupil and parents to walk to the school due to reduced safety concerns

Increased walking to school also improves physical activity levels for young children

Enhancing infrastructure on the public highway making it easier to walk and cycle to schools will also create infrastructure for other residents to use to make trips to elsewhere, thereby helping to encourage more walking and cycling overall, and more trips to be made to key destinations.

Changes to the highway can result in fewer cars making through trips or rat running, if designed as such, which also helps to reduce congestion and improve air quality, and potentially create more informal play space.

Challenges – some locations can be difficult to implement features due to the existing layouts there is no room to provide an adequate safe width for the shared/footway.

Implementing improvements or changes to the public highway will require consultation with residents and the public, and sometimes schemes of this nature are not supported.

Potentially to impact residents and access arrangements for their vehicles

High cost of some schemes requires funding.

Requires a change in policy to prioritise walking and cycling over cars

Risk that walking and cycling infrastructure can be abused by private vehicles using the space for parking and waiting, and therefore may require additional street furniture to prevent these activities.

Case study – Improvements were made to the footway along Dock Road and Calcutta Road Tilbury to be upgraded and increase the width of the footway to create a shared use path. This supported access to two primary schools in Tilbury – Landsdowne Primary Academy and St Marys RC Primary School. The shared path has been installed across the width of Tilbury, extending from the east to the west of the town, with enhancements at junctions giving pedestrians priority across minor roads, improving the standards and safety for pedestrians, as well as improving the National Cycle Network Route in Tilbury (NCN13). However, due to the increased width of the new shared use path, this has allowed some vehicle users to park off the carriageway on the new facility, creating additional risk to pedestrians and cyclists.

Recommendations and Next Steps

The preceding list of soft and hard measures helps to understand just some of the opportunities available to support the issues surrounding travel to school, and to help reduce travel by car, improving congestion, increasing physical activity, improving safety concerns, and starting a change in culture in promoting active travel as the primary mode of travel to school.

In truth, no one single measure will be effective in achieving this. At some schools, there may be minor issues which a small scheme or measure may be able to address, but the likelihood is the need for a package of measures and support from multiple stakeholders, primarily the school and the council, but others including resident groups and community forums to promote the reasons behind these measures and to make people aware of the benefits, where they may initially see an obstruction to their daily lives.

Sport England Place Partnership Programme

Sport England has a responsibility for growing and developing sport and promoting physical activity. While their primary focus has been on promoting organised sport, they are now focusing on a new approach to support key localities where there may be low levels of physical inactivity, and high levels of inequality to promote a place partnership approach in tackling these challenges. From an initial programme in 12 local areas across England – including 3 in Essex (Basildon, Colchester, and Tendring) Sport England is expanding their approach to another 80 locations. Working with Active Essex, Thurrock Council and other key stakeholders are submitting a proposal to be one of these new programme locations, focusing on Chadwell St Mary, South Ockendon, and Tilbury. The purpose of his programme is to work in partnership with key groups and stakeholders to tackle specific barriers to physical activity within communities and creating lasting opportunities. Data from Intelligent Health has identified that 45% of all physical activity across the UK comes from active travel, compared to only 15% from organised sport and fitness activities. Therefore, our street scene and highway infrastructure is critical in supporting the overall health and wellbeing of our communities in Thurrock.

The opportunity from the Sport England Place Partnership Programme aligns with the learnings from the Parking Task and Finish Group to support a wholistic approach to creating better environments and opportunities for young children to walk and cycle to school, and to encourage modal shift away from the car where possible, through delivering a package of carefully selected measures which are appropriate to selected schools. Already, early funding to develop the full application to Sport England is proposing to run a trial of Beat the Street, alongside the consideration for a School Street at a yet to be identified school within one of the three identified localities. These singular measures will help to encourage some modal shift and a growth in walking and cycling, but there is an opportunity to create a long-term “whole-systems” approach, and a culture change in making active travel to school the norm.

The Next Steps

Through the Sport England Place Partnership Programme, work collaboratively with partners to identify an appropriate school where the council can work closely with the school to develop and implement some of the measures identified in this toolkit as a pilot to explore modal shift measures. At the centre piece is a need to find a school located within one of the three Place Partnership communities within Thurrock, which is receptive towards working closely with the council and implementing key measures within its control. This will include working with its staff and with parents and pupils to actively promote and encourage active travel and tackling inappropriate parking outside schools. Then with funding from the Place Partnership programme, to explore physical infrastructure measures which helps improve access and safety for pedestrians

and cyclists to get to school. This includes identifying key routes for access to the school, extending beyond the immediate vicinity of the school gates, and as far as up to 1km from site. This will likely need to take consideration of where current and future pupils live around the school and where barriers and opportunities exist. Through the creation of enhanced infrastructure, this should look at giving priority to vulnerable road users over vehicle movements, helping to slow down traffic speeds, and creating an environment supporting walking and cycling. If the funding from the programme can be used to support developing the design work for these schemes, funding can then be leveraged from the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund programmes, to help undertake construction of these schemes. Some money has already been awarded to the council for active travel infrastructure, but a coherent scheme supporting active travel can access additional funds.

Developing and monitoring a pilot programme can help the council see how a different approach to the school journey can help to tackle issues around parking outside schools, which has been a long-term issue within the borough. Creating additional parking spaces has rarely solved the problem, nor has it reduced demand. If successful, the scheme can be expanded to other areas, and help create an opportunity for a culture shift in how communities move from a young age. Furthermore, creating enhanced routes to school through improved infrastructure and priority will also likely translate into more walking and cycling trips at other times of the day, as other members of the community use these facilities to make trips to other destinations, including local centres, or to access transport and jobs. This in turn will help to reduce the wider demand for parking and road space in these areas, especially as proposed growth across the borough is delivered into the future.