

**Report of the
Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

Parking at Schools Task and Finish Group



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Introduction from the Chair

The Place Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee is a cross-party committee made up of local Councillors who want to improve services for residents' and monitor the performance of the Council.

In 2024, the Place O&S Committee established the Parking at Schools Task and Finish Group to run for a 10-week period and undertake an in-depth review of parking at schools and active travel in Thurrock, and how this could be improved for residents. I was elected as Chair at the first meeting, and we quickly came to understand the issues at Thurrock schools, neighbouring boroughs, and across Essex.

This report sets out the current issues surrounding parking at schools and encouraging active and sustainable travel, and the work that we have undertaken to understand these problems. We have met with Thurrock Council officers, external stakeholders, and undertaken a comprehensive consultation. Based on our research and findings, we are proposing a new Parking at Schools Toolkit, which will give officers a framework of processes and mechanisms that can be utilised at individual schools across the borough to improve parking and encourage sustainable travel.

The Members of the Parking at Schools Task and Finish Group would like to thank officers and external stakeholders for their contributions to the Task and Finish Group. We would also like to thank those residents and members of the public who took the time to complete the consultation – the answers you provided were invaluable in helping to shape the Toolkit and understand the issues of parking at schools.



Councillor Fraser Massey

Chair of the Parking at Schools Task and Finish Group, and
Ward Member for East Tilbury

Recommendations

The Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

1. Approve the Parking at Schools Toolkit, as attached at Appendix 1.
2. Note and comment on the key activities and consultation responses, as attached at Appendix 2.

The activities of the Parking at Schools Task and Finish (T&F) Group played a pivotal role in shaping the development of the Parking at Schools Toolkit. Over the course of its work, the T&F Group undertook extensive research, gathered input from various stakeholders - including Youth Cabinet, transport officers, parents, and residents – and conducted a consultation to assess the challenges and concerns related to parking near schools.

Through detailed discussions and analysis, the group identified key issues such as traffic congestion, safety hazards for children, hard and soft traffic infrastructure requirements, environmental concerns regarding traffic, and the utilisation of active and sustainable travel schemes. These findings were used to inform the structure and content of the Parking at Schools Toolkit, which serves as a comprehensive guide for officers to address these issues in a practical and sustainable manner.

The Toolkit itself outlines a series of mechanisms and strategies aimed at improving parking around schools and encouraging active travel. It provides Council officers a clear outline on which tools can be used improve parking outside schools to create a safer environment outside schools, more efficient hard and soft traffic infrastructure systems, and reduce traffic congestion.

In essence, the work of the Parking at Schools T&F Group was instrumental in ensuring that the Parking at Schools Toolkit was well-informed, evidence-based, and aligned with the needs of the community, offering a holistic approach to managing parking challenges at schools.

Background and Context – October 2023 – July 2024

In October 2023, former Councillor Joy Redsell submitted a motion to Full Council, which is laid out below:

“Members resolve that a Task and Finish Group or similar be established to look at options for tackling school parking across the borough. Further, that a report on such options should be produced at the conclusion of the group’s review.”



Members debated the motion and agreed that problem parking outside schools was a long-standing issue across the borough, and safety remained paramount for parents, schools, and Ward Members. Members requested that any potential Task and Finish Group should look at innovative ways to tackle the problem and have clear and tangible outcomes. Members also felt that there should be a co-ordinated approach across the borough that should include input from Members, schools, parents, and school children. Members voted on the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

The Overview and Scrutiny function was undergoing significant restructuring and development in 2023. Following the recruitment of two Overview and Scrutiny Officers in January 2024, they began the scoping exercise for the review in accordance with the new protocols and guidance put in place following improvement work on scrutiny processes.

Overview and Scrutiny Officers met with transport colleagues to discuss the scope of the proposed Task and Finish Group. Officers discussed potential activities and workstreams that could be undertaken, and any background comparative work which officers could begin before the formal work of the Task and Finish Group. At the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2024, Members agreed to begin a 10-week Parking at Schools Task and Finish Group which would commence in September 2024 when schools returned after the summer



holidays. The Terms of Reference and Scoping Documents (Appendix 3) were agreed at this meeting, and it was agreed that Members would work with Officers to develop a new Parking at Schools Toolkit. The new Toolkit would outline what measures Thurrock Council could undertake to tackle the issue, and would include feedback from schools, residents, and other key stakeholders. The goal would be to improve parking and safety outside schools during drop-off and pick-up times and encourage active travel to and from schools.

Informal Meeting – 28th August 2024

Before the formal commencement of the Parking at Schools Task and Finish Group, Members of the group and officers were tasked with collating background information regarding the issue. This meant that all Members and officers had a knowledge base, including what measures were currently in place to tackle the problem.

Members of the Task and Finish Group initially worked with schools and residents in their Ward to find out about the issues and provide preliminary feedback. Early feedback to Members included considering enforcement action, protecting pavement space, banning idling engines, and parked cars slowing down passing traffic. Members also received some comments from residents in their Ward regarding congestion outside schools during drop-off and pick-up times, dangerous zebra crossings, and lack of safe parking around schools. Residents pointed out that they often had to drive their children to school as they needed to go to work after dropping their children off. Several schools also provided introductory feedback through Members including improving education regarding active and sustainable travel, enforcing speed limits more rigorously, and adding additional crossing points on busy roads.

Officers also collated background data that was shared with Task and Finish Group Members. This data outlined the funding of the Integrated Transport Block which included funding for the Council's Safer Routes to Schools scheme. It outlined how officers prioritised schools in this scheme, and highlighted the schools which were planned for treatment in 2024/25 including Harris Primary Academy Chafford Hundred, Herringham Primary Academy, Lansdowne Primary Academy, Thameside Primary School, and Arthur Bugler Primary School. Officers also detailed the work of the Road Safety Lead, and how they work to encourage schools to create and implement School Travel Plans and acted as a liaison between the officers and headteachers. Officers outlined the potential use of school streets in the borough and their effectiveness; solutions that neighbouring boroughs have developed; Thurrock's own parking policies and strategies; and past governance on the issue. Detailed notes from this meeting can be found at Appendix 4 of the report.

This informal meeting helped Members and Officers understand the issues being faced by residents and schools, and the work already being undertaken by the Council. It was a detailed discussion which laid the groundwork for the first formal meeting.

First Formal Meeting – 10th September 2024

The first formal meeting of the Task and Finish (T&F) Group was held on 10th September 2024, during which Cllr Fraser Massey was elected as Chair, and Cllr Aaron Green was elected as Vice-Chair. The Terms of Reference were also formalised and adopted by T&F Group Members.

The first job for the T&F Group was to decide which potential activities they wished to undertake during the 10-week period of the T&F Group. It was confirmed that all research and substantive activity would need to be completed by 19th November, from which the Parking at Schools Toolkit could then be developed.

Members agreed that it was important to gather views from a variety of sources and undertake several different activities, including site visits and witness sessions.

Members requested several different activities to take place including drafting a questionnaire to gather views of residents which could be publicised on social media and put into libraries; a witness session with Thurrock's Road Safety Lead; site visits to schools with and without parking issues; and a session with Youth Cabinet. Members also requested that data be collected identifying hotspots across the borough based on the number of school parking complaints, enforcement notices issued, and accidents in an area outside of a school at drop off and pick up time.

Data Collection – w/c 16th September 2024

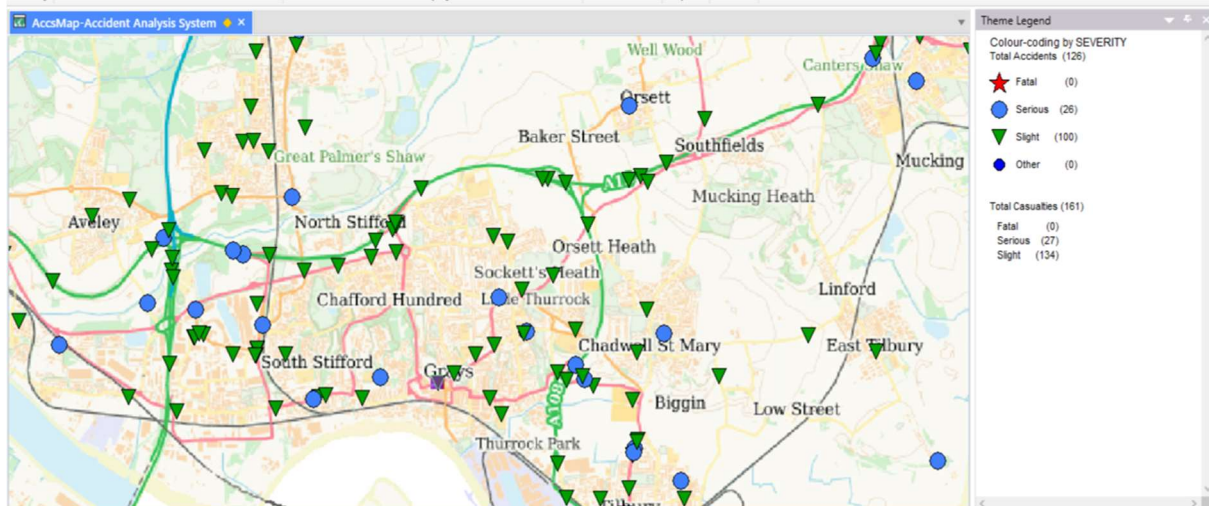
Throughout this week, data was collated by officers and sent to T&F Group Members for their feedback and comment. The first data set outlined the number of Parking Charge Notices (PCNs) issued outside schools during the 2023-24 academic year between 8.30am-9.30am and between 2.30pm-3.30pm. This information is included below, but in summary a total of 749 PCNs were issued during this period. The schools with the highest number of PCNs issued were Harris Academy Chafford Hundred, Thameside Primary School, Stifford Clays Primary School, St Mary’s Catholic Primary School, and the Hathaway Academy.

PCNS Issued for school year Sept 23 - August 24 - *PCNs issued are by location between 8.30am-9.30am and 2.30pm-3.30pm

School Name	Road Name	Total PCNS issued
Abbots Hall Primary Academy	Abbotts Drive	38
Bonnygate Primary School	Arisdale Avenue	4
Tudor Court Primary School	Bark Burr Road	6
Quarry Hill Academy	Bradleigh Avenue	30
St Mary's Catholic Primary School	Calcutta Road	57
Grays Convent High School	College Avenue	28
Stanford-le-Hope Primary School	Copland Road	8
Holy Cross Catholic Primary School	Daiglen Drive	28
Tilbury Pioneer Academy	Dickens Avenue	5
Somers Heath Primary School	Foyle Drive	17
Warren Primary School	Gilbert Road	49
Woodside Academy	Grangewood Avenue	4
The Hathaway Academy	Hathaway Road	52
Horndon on the Hill Church of England Primary School	Hillcrest Road	2
Lansdowne Primary Academy	Lansdowne Road	33
Thameside Primary School	Manor Road	70
The Gateway Primary Free School	Marshfoot Road	1
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	Mayflower Road	96
Belmont Castle Academy	Parker Road	15
East Tilbury Primary School	Princess Margaret Road	5
Little Thurrock Primary School	Rectory Road	32
Chadwell St Mary Primary School	River View	11
Orsett Church of England Primary School	School Lane	9
West Thurrock Academy	Schoolfield Road	1
	Schoolfield Way	2
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	Scratton Road	12
Ortu Gable Hall School	Southend Road Slh	9
Aveley Primary School	Stifford Road	27
Kenningtons Primary Academy	Tamar Drive	7

Purfleet Primary Academy	Tank Lane	10
Graham James Primary Academy	The Sorrells	1
Benyon Primary School	Tyssen Place	11
St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School	Ward Avenue	7
Thames Park Secondary School	West Street	2
Stifford Clays Primary School	Whitmore Avenue	60
	Grand Total	749

Officers also collated data regarding the number of accidents which occurred outside schools between 21st April 2021 and 31st March 2024, which is included below. During this period, no fatal accidents occurred at any schools. This accident data had been given a weighting score by officers and was included as part of the prioritisation for the Safer Routes to School scheme. Members were also given access to the raw data for the Safer Routes to School Scheme, which included information regarding if school keep clear markings were in place, if the school had an adequate School Travel Plan, if a risk assessment for school roads had been completed, if there was a potential for school streets or a Park and Stride Scheme, and any parking enforcement issues.



Thurrock Road Safety Lead: Witness Session – 24th September 2024

As part of the activities agreed, Members requested a witness session with Thurrock's Road Safety Lead (RSL) to hear her experience of parking outside schools and discuss the schools with the largest number of parking complaints.

Before the meeting, the RSL provided Task and Finish Group Members with her views and explained that every school had a 'problem with parking' at drop-off and pick-up times, but this was often related to the size of the school and accessibility of the surrounding road network. She highlighted that parking outside schools is a nationwide problem and different initiatives are used dependent on the area but promoting sustainable travel through various programmes such as school travel plans, walking buses, park and stride, cycle training, school streets, and other sustainable road safety campaigns had great benefit, as they helped to alleviate parking issues around schools.

The witness session was held via Teams on 24th September and began with the RSL introducing her role, background, and experience. She outlined her team members including the school crossing patrols and road safety officers, and the work they undertook including advising all Thurrock schools on their School Travel Plans, working with the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP), and the bike-ability scheme. She stated that those schools with excellent Travel Plans, such as Warren Primary School and Lansdowne Primary School, often had fewer complaints about problem parking.



The discussion then moved on and the RSL confirmed that parking problems around schools included poor, dangerous, and inconsiderate parking. This occurred at all 54 schools in the borough to varying degrees and was a national issue. She advised that historically the schools with the most complaints were St Thomas' Catholic Primary; Quarry Hill Primary; Grays Convent High School; and the Harris schools along Mayflower Road. It was advised that problems in the morning were often limited to 20-25 minutes, but some parents arrived up to an hour before school finished for afternoon pick-up which caused problems. The RSL advised that a new road crossing officer had been put in place outside the Harris schools along Mayflower Road and this was proving successful. In addition, the transport delivery team were considering funding a parking area in this location through grant funding as part of the Safer Routes to School initiative, and this was currently being consulted on with residents and Ward Members.

This discussion was then followed by a general Q&A with the RSL, and Members questioned the stakeholders involved in SERP; problems experienced regarding certain schools such as Kenningtons Primary School; use of child-sized bollards; the differences between primary and secondary school parking issues; park and stride schemes; and the data regarding fatalities and accidents outside schools.

Visits to Schools

During the 10-week Task and Finish Group, Members undertook individual visits to primary and secondary schools across the borough. These visits were undertaken during drop-off or pick-up times whereby Members observed parking in the roads surrounding the schools. Members visited schools which were often cited as having problems with parking outside schools, and schools which had 'outstanding' rated School Travel Plans to compare the difference. The O&S Officer working with the T&F Group also undertook a site visit to a school in a neighbouring borough, to see what parking issues they faced, and how other local authorities were tackling it. Overall, Members found that schools in built-up areas had more problem parking due to the infrastructure in the surrounding locale, than those schools which were comparatively more rural. Geography and infrastructure are therefore vital when considering the issue of parking at schools and active travel, as active travel may not be possible in some areas of the borough and increasing availability of parking may not be possible in others.

The following schools were visited:

- **Horndon-on-the-Hill Primary School.** This school has received an 'outstanding' status in the ModeShift Stars School Travel Plan scheme and was subsequently nominated in the East of England Regional Awards Final in October 2024. Members found that many of the children at Horndon-on-the-Hill Primary walked to school and it therefore had fewer parking issues overall. It was noted that it was a small primary school in a village setting, which could have an impact on parking.
- **Thameside Primary School.** The school is on a road in a busy housing area and is a no throughway. This causes lots of issues as cars are often parked on both sides of the road, and parents need to turn around after dropping off or picking up their child.



- **Little Thurrock Primary School.** The school is on a main road, which is already busy outside of school drop-off and pick-up times. Members found there was no easy way for parents to park, and this could cause dangerous or inconsiderate parking outside local residents' houses.



- **East Tilbury Primary School.** This school has recently had upgrades to its parking system, which included a one-way system through a parking area. This made it easier for parents to drop-off and pick-up their children. Members found that some school staff used the new parking area which impacted on the amount of free spaces for parents.



- **Grays Convent High School.** This school also was on a no-through road, which led to lots of problems with parents parking to drop-off or pick-up their children and then being unable to turn around.



- **North Crescent Primary School, Wickford.** This school is on a sharp bend, with one school entrance on a no through road. The school has recently received upgrades such as repainted zigzags outside the school and new metal barriers to stop pavement parking. Officers found that parking was a problem during drop-off and pick-up times, and the road could be at a standstill due to inconsiderate or dangerous parking.



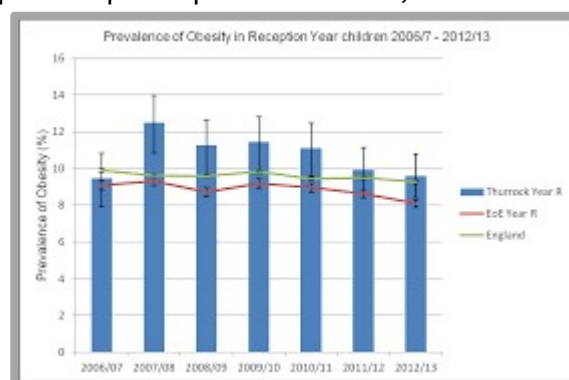
Joint Session with the Childhood Obesity Task and Finish Group – 10th October 2024

A joint meeting between the Parking at Schools T&F Group and Childhood Obesity T&F Group was held on 10th October to discuss the synergies and overlap between the two groups. This was attended by officers from the public health and transport teams to ensure a broad and overarching view of the issues.

The meeting started with an overview of the aims and objectives of each Task and Finish Group. Parking T&F Members heard how the Childhood Obesity Task and Finish Group were looking at a timeline from pre-conception onwards to tackle the underlying causes of obesity and consider what interventions could be recommended to reduce the problem. The Chair of the Childhood Obesity T&F Group advised that meetings had taken place with the public health team, midwives, health visitors, primary care, schools, and youth groups. One of their objectives was to achieve better collaboration between different agencies and Council departments.

The link between the two T&F Groups was acknowledged, and it was agreed that if children walked to school this would alleviate parking concerns and would have health benefits for children by increasing physical activity. The Groups discussed how to increase the numbers of children walking to school, including using park and stride schemes, walking to school policies, and ensuring children's routes to school were safe through improved infrastructure. It was agreed that the focus of the two T&F Groups was not to provide easier access for cars to drop-off or pick-up their children, but to encourage walking to school.

The Head of Public Health gave a presentation highlighting the health challenges in Thurrock, leading to increasing trends in obesity. It was agreed that this was highly complex with several influential factors including where we live, lifestyle, employment, and income.



Members noted the opportunities to collaborate included increasing daily physical activity, reducing traffic and congestion, and improving air quality. This could be achieved using school streets; road safety training; active travel infrastructure; park and stride; ModeShift Stars School Travel Plans; walking buses; and Bike-ability schemes. It was acknowledged that each initiative on its own would not have significant impact; and would not be appropriate for every school; but could have a significant impact if multiple initiatives were embedded into the Parking at Schools Toolkit.

It was agreed that the Parking at Schools Toolkit, developed by the Parking at Schools T&F Group, could not be a 'one size fits all' policy, but could be a toolbox of initiatives that could be presented to schools to improve parking and encourage active travel, as

due to infrastructure and engagement at schools, different approaches would work at different schools.

The T&F Group Members discussed how to encourage children to walk to school, for example through using gaming challenges to encourage walking to school, and securing funding from Sport England.

Members agreed that the results of the parking at schools' consultation and draft Parking at Schools Toolkit would be circulated to the Childhood Obesity Task and Finish Group.

Meeting with Youth Cabinet – 22nd October 2024

On 22nd October 2024, Members of the Parking at Schools T&F Group, alongside officers, met with representatives from Thurrock's Youth Cabinet. The Youth Cabinet Members were asked to give their views and share their experiences of school travel and parking. Youth Cabinet Members agreed that parking at their schools (primary and secondary) had been a big problem, with issues including:



- Poor road infrastructure around schools.
- Do not park signs and yellow lines ignored.
- Blocked roads caused by school traffic.
- Parked cars on both sides of the street which stopped the passage of two-way traffic.
- Dangerous driving by parents, including mounting curbs and pulling into laybys that children were standing in.
- Staff parked outside the schools as well, causing more problems.

The discussion then moved onto Active Travel and how this was promoted in schools. Officers explained School Travel Plans and how these were used to promote safe and sustainable travel to schools. The Road Safety Lead explained how she engaged with schools regarding their School Travel Plans and explained the nationwide initiative (ModeShift Stars) which promoted safe and sustainable travel through an accreditation scheme and rewards. Youth Cabinet Members asked if you could train teachers in road safety and give them permission to move people on who were dangerously parked. It was explained that only the police, the road crossing patrol officer, or enforcement officers could legally move cars on.

Youth Cabinet Members discussed the advantages of school streets, including safer travel for children, improved health benefits, and reducing congestion. The disadvantages including pushing the problem into surrounding streets and more congestion in the wider community were also discussed. Designated drop off points were discussed, but it was advised that although these are a good solution for secondary schools, they do not work as well in primary schools, as younger children needed to be walked in by an adult. It was agreed that although drop-off zones could reduce problem parking, they did not reduce traffic near a school or promote children walking to school.

Finally, Youth Cabinet Members were asked if they could give any ideas or proposals on how to reduce problem parking, and they suggested the following:

- Teach children within a school setting the problems that driving to school causes, so they can feed this back to their parents.

- Incentivize walking to schools, for example give Amazon vouchers, food vouchers, or gym vouchers to those children that regularly walked to school. It was acknowledged that funding these incentives could be an issue/barrier.
- Improve education to children and their parents on the danger of driving to school and the benefits of walking/cycling to school.
- Promote the ModeShift Stars School Travel Plans with pupils and parents.
- Speak to Community Forums to help promote active travel and gather the wider community's views on how to enable more children to walk, and possible funding options.
- Provide and promote safe travel zones, including safe car parks for parents to use that pupils can walk to school from.
- Appealing alternatives to driving to school needs to be highlighted to parents.
- Start a cultural change regarding the way children and their parents view getting to school.
- Stricter enforcement and punishment.
- Make streets near schools one-way to allow traffic to flow more freely.

Youth Cabinet Members were asked what age they were allowed to walk to school on their own. Youth Cabinet Members agreed it was around 10 years old (Year 6). They were asked if they felt more could have been done to make them feel safe when walking to school, and some agreed that safer crossing points would have made a big difference, especially when crossing busy main roads. They also felt that more schemes in schools to promote road safety would have made a difference.

Parking at Schools: Resident Questionnaire Results

As part of gathering residents’ views, a questionnaire was developed by officers and Members asking people their views regarding problem parking at schools, and if they could offer any potential solutions which could be included in the Parking at Schools Toolkit.

Overall, survey respondents suggested numerous solutions and ideas for officers to consider and include as part of the Parking at Schools Toolkit. As outlined below in the dataset analysis, some measures such as school streets and hard infrastructure solutions will be unsuitable or inappropriate for some schools, and other solutions may be necessary. All datasets and suggestions have been discussed and have formulated the basis for the Toolkit, although it is noted that each school has different requirements for parking and active travel which will require different solutions.

The questionnaire went live on the Council’s engagement portal on Friday 20th September 2024 and ran until Sunday 20th October 2024. The questionnaire was publicised through the Council’s resident newsletter, staff newsletter, headteacher newsletter, and through social media channels such as Facebook and X (Twitter). The survey was also publicised through local media outlets, such as Thurrock Nub News. Hard copies of the questionnaire were made available in all Council libraries and hubs, and were publicised using an A4 poster, which also included a QR code link for additional access options. Several hard copy questionnaires were collected from Chadwell St Mary Library and Grays hub, and these have been added to the raw dataset analysed below. Resident groups also gathered consultation responses and additional evidence which was delivered directly to the Council offices. Members and Officers would again like to thank those people that took the time to complete the questionnaire.

Overall, there were 419 responses from both the online questionnaire and completed hard copies. There were over 4000 total visits to the site on the engagement portal, and 210 new people registered their details on the Council’s engagement portal so they could complete the survey. This is shown in Figure 1 below, which also includes the date in relation to the number of page views, visitors, visits, and new registrations.

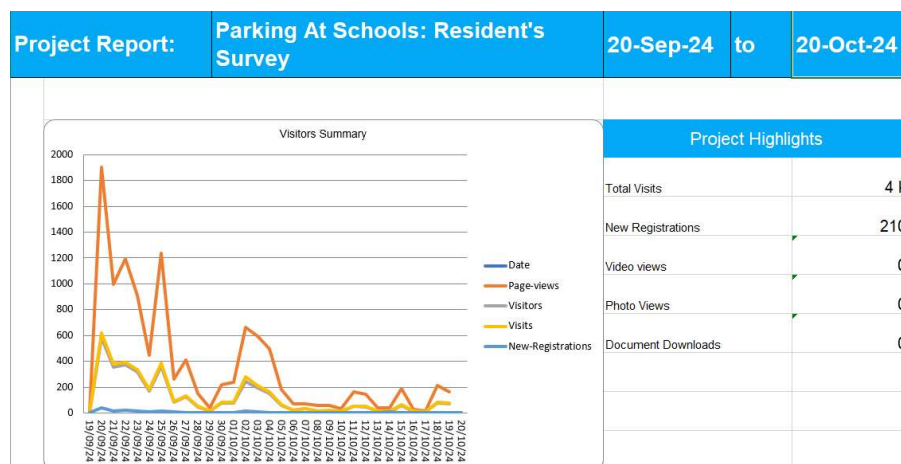


Figure 1

Date	Page-views	New-Registrations
19/09/24	0	0
20/09/24	1900	38
21/09/24	995	15
22/09/24	1195	22
23/09/24	911	17
24/09/24	447	7
25/09/24	1236	14
26/09/24	259	8
27/09/24	410	3
28/09/24	154	0
29/09/24	38	4
30/09/24	218	2
01/10/24	235	6
02/10/24	665	14
03/10/24	596	7
04/10/24	497	2
05/10/24	184	2
06/10/24	68	2
07/10/24	73	2
08/10/24	59	4
09/10/24	60	2
10/10/24	32	2
11/10/24	164	3
12/10/24	144	1
13/10/24	39	4
14/10/24	43	7
15/10/24	190	1
16/10/24	28	1
17/10/24	14	3
18/10/24	215	4
19/10/24	164	1
20/10/24	113	0

Figure 2 shows how many people viewed the page and how many people registered with the Council’s engagement portal by date. This does not necessarily mean that those who viewed the page and/or registered completed the survey, but it suggests that the majority of people engaged with the survey in late September/early October, and this dropped as the survey neared its closing deadline in mid-October.

At the start of the survey, there were some teething problems. For example, all questions required an answer which meant that some residents who did not have a child in a school struggled to complete survey. This problem was resolved within a day of officers being notified. Some respondents were also unhappy with the 200-character limit on long-form answers, which was also removed once officers were notified. These issues did not have a major impact on the survey, as respondents were still able to complete it and the issues were quickly rectified.

Figure 2

Figure 3 below outlines how residents were finding out about and accessing the survey. In total, 419 responses were collected: 385 residents accessed the survey online, and 34 hardcopy surveys were delivered directly to the Council offices or completed at libraries/hubs. Of these responses, the traffic sources of residents accessing the surveys are outlined below:

- Direct via the Council’s website/newsletter: 259 (62%)
- Facebook: 77 (18%)
- Hardcopies: 34 (8%)
- Referrals via Thurrock Nub News: 19 (5%)
- Search engines: 16 (4%)
- Referrals via Android App: 9 (2%)
- X (Twitter): 2 (>1%)
- Email: 2 (>1%)
- .gov sites: 2 (>1%)

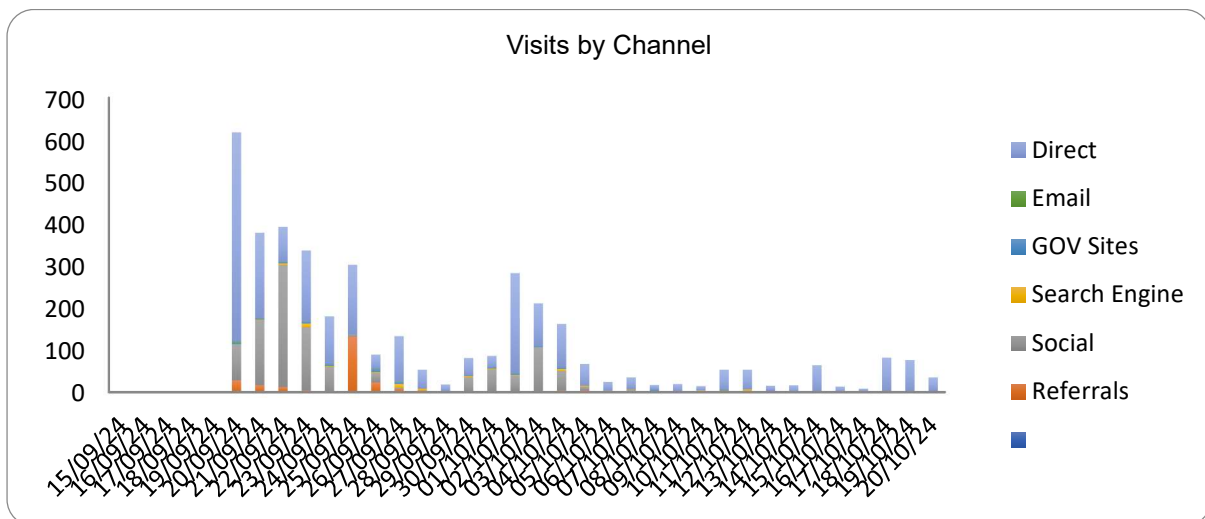


Figure 3

Questions

Overall, there were eight questions to complete as part of the survey: three multiple choice questions and five longform open-ended questions. There was also a section for respondents to add any other comments regarding parking at schools. The questions were developed based on other best practice local authority questionnaires regarding parking at schools, such as Central Bedfordshire Council and Warwickshire County Council. T&F Group Members had sight of the draft questionnaire before it went live and were able to make comments and amendments.

The questions were divided up into two sections: parents; and residents living near a school. Although the questions were broadly divided into parents and residents living

near a school, some respondents fell into both categories. The first section of the survey included the following questions:

1. Do you have a child(ren) at a Thurrock school?
2. If yes, which school do they attend?
3. How does your child(ren) usually travel to school?
4. If you regularly drive your child(ren) to schools, please tell us in your own words why this is your preferred option.
5. Does the school regularly promote sustainable methods of travel, for example walking or cycling?

The second section of the survey included the following questions:

6. Do you live close to a school and are you affected by parking outside schools during drop-off and pick-up times?
7. Please provide details of any problems the school experiences with regards to parking outside, or in the vicinity, of the school.
8. Please tell us what measures or support you feel would be helpful to improve parking outside schools.
9. Please add any further comments you may have on parking outside schools.

These questions asked residents, as well as parents and any other respondents, to suggest measures that could be implemented to improve parking and give us their ideas, as well as leaving any further final comments for inclusion in the survey. Some comments have been included as part of this report for interest, but the majority of the comments have been combined with the dataset.

Do you have a child(ren) at a Thurrock school?

Figure 4 represents the answer to the questions ‘do you have a child(ren) at a Thurrock school?’. 251 respondents (60%) answered no, and 168 respondents (40%) answered yes. Of those that answered ‘yes’, the largest numbers came from the following schools:

- Harris Academies (Mayflower and Chafford Hundred) – 22
- Treetops, Dilkes – 7
- Abbots Hall, Deneholm, Little Thurrock, Purfleet, Quarry Hill, St Thomas’, Woodside – 6

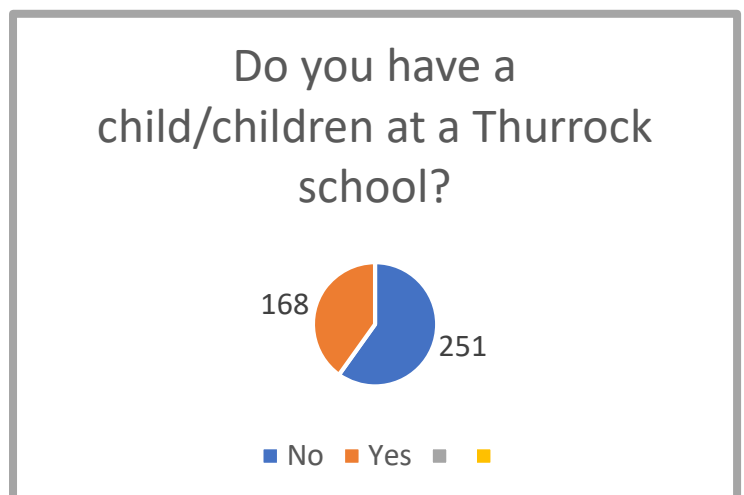
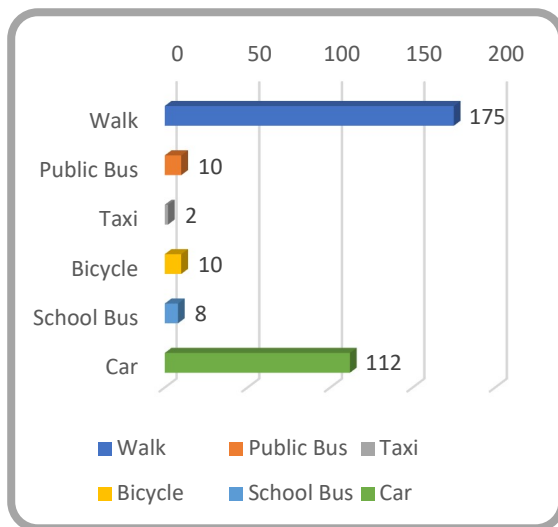


Figure 4

How does your child(ren) usually travel to school?



There were 317 responses to this question. In comparison only 168 respondents replied, 'yes' to the previous question 'do you have a child(ren) at a Thurrock school?'. There could be several reasons why more people answered this question compared to question 1, for example parents may not have wished to respond or list the specific school their child attends.

The largest response was for walking to school, closely followed by driving. Relatively few parents took their child to school by bike, bus, or taxi.

bus, or taxi.

Figure 5

If you regularly drive your child(ren) to school, please tell us in your own words why this is your preferred option?

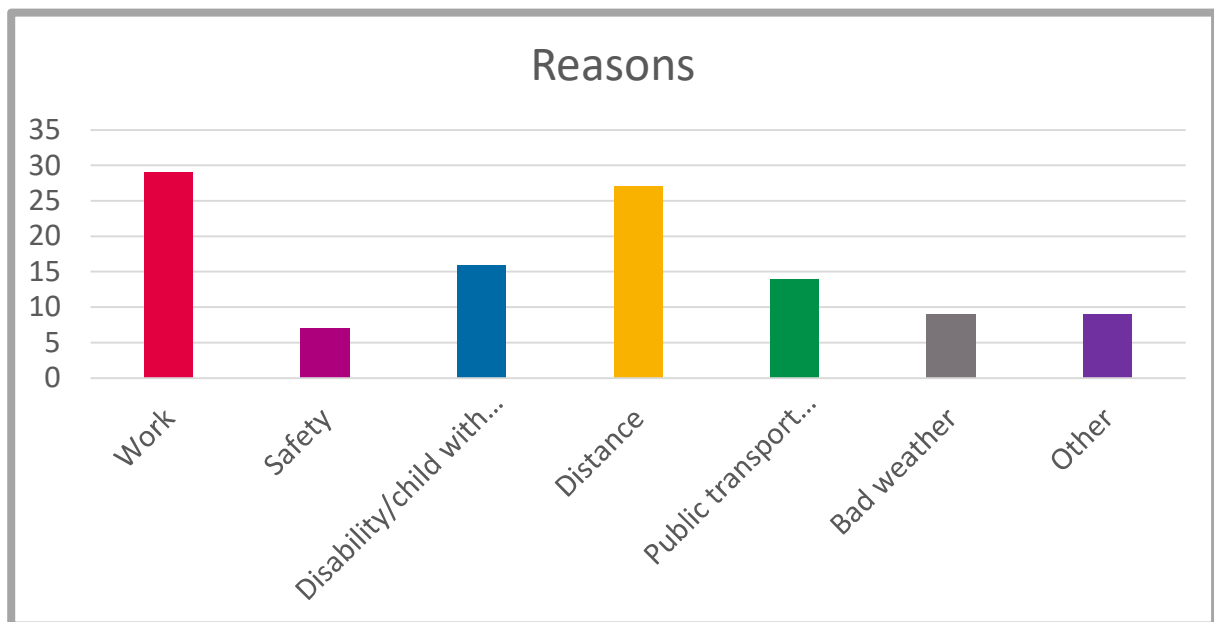


Figure 6

Overall, there were a variety of reasons why parents chose to drive their children to school. The biggest reason was work (29 responses), meaning the parent/carer was dropping off or picking up their child on their way to/from work. The second biggest reason for parents driving their children to school is due to distance (27 responses). Following on from this, parents cited their own or their child's disability or special educational needs (16 responses); issues with public transport such as it being too expensive, infrequent, or unreliable (14 responses); bad weather (9 responses); and safety (7 responses).

The final reason has been included as ‘other’(9 responses), as these responses did not fit into any other category. For example, this included having extra-curricular activities starting soon after school; having other children to drop off at other schools; not having time to walk due to other responsibilities; and not having any other means of transport.

It is important to note that in the previous question, 112 respondents answered that they drove to school, but there were only 102 responses to this question.

This answer allowed for longer-form responses, and some specific comments received are listed below:

“It is unreasonable to punish parents who have to work and cannot walk by removing the option to drive kids to school. The problem is that not enough spaces have been added in the years after the school opened.”

“My 11-year-old daughter is too young to walk to school by herself as she has to walk alongside fields and past busy roads which is not safe.”

Does the school regularly promote sustainable methods of travel? For example, walking and cycling.

Figure 7 below shows that the largest response to this question was no response/not applicable at 163 responses.

This was followed by ‘yes’ at 142 responses. These ‘yes’ responses were spread evenly across schools in the borough with the Harris Academies receiving 12 yes responses, followed by Woodside at 7, and Dilkes Academy at 6.

There were 78 ‘no’ responses, and again these were spread evenly across schools in the borough. Again, the largest number of ‘no’ responses was regarding the Harris Academies (9 responses), followed by St Cleres with 4 no responses.

It is important to note, that many schools received both yes and no responses regarding their promotion of sustainable travel. So, this data needs to be considered in the context of parents engaging or not engaging with their child’s school, children not relaying messages to parents etc.

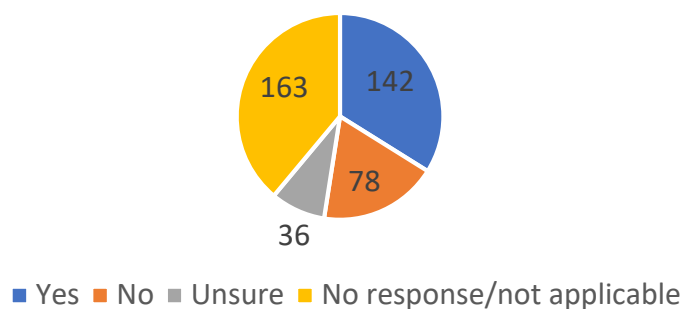


Figure 7

Do you live close to a school, and are you affected by parking outside schools during drop-off and pick-up times?

As shown in Figure 8 below, most respondents (176 – 42%) replied ‘yes’ that they lived near a school and were affected by parking. The next largest response was ‘no response or not applicable’ (114 – 27%), followed by ‘other responses’ (86 – 21%) and finally ‘no’ (43 – 10%).

This question allowed for longform responses, which have been categorised as ‘other response’. For example, some respondents suggested measures to improve parking issues and these have been captured as part of other datasets.

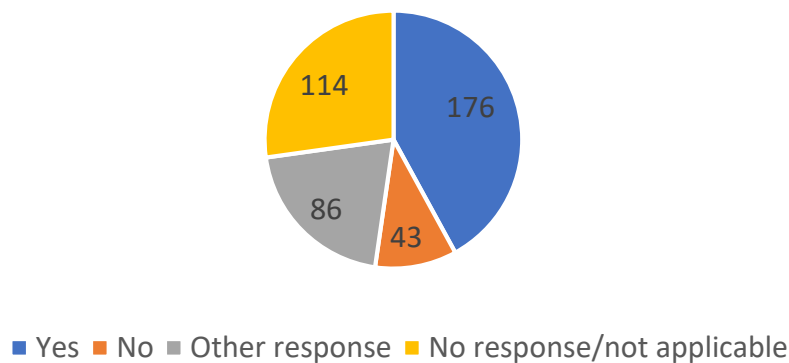


Figure 8

Please provide details of the problems the school experiences with regards to parking outside, or in the vicinity of the school.

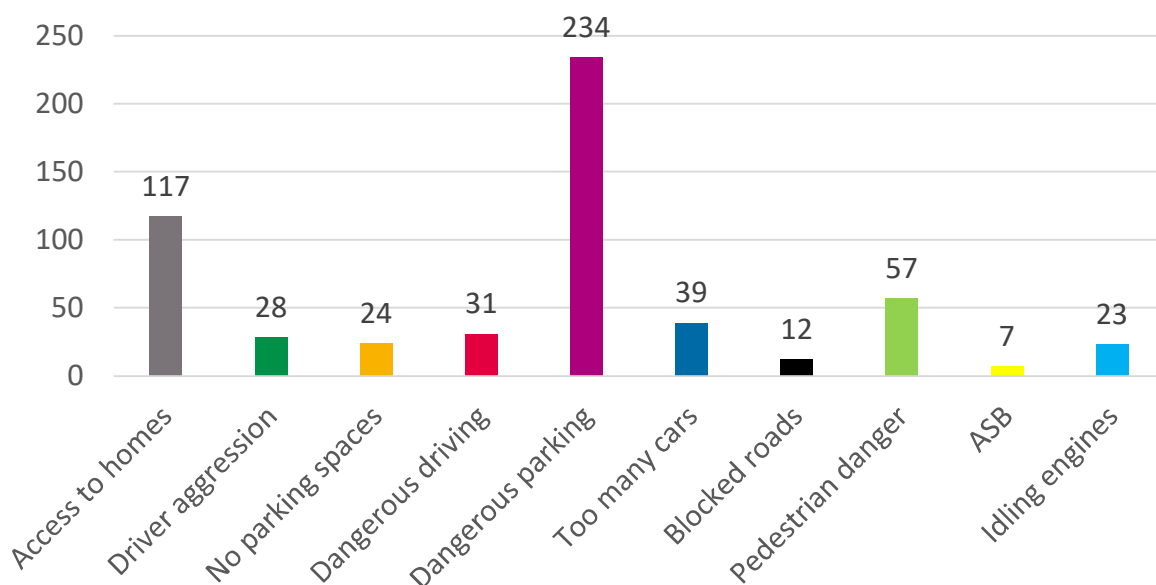


Figure 9

Figure 9 details the problems identified by respondents regarding parking around schools. This was a longform question, and responses were analysed and categorised,

as you can see in Figure 9. Many respondents named more than one issue in their response, which is why the figures total more than the 419 overall responses. This bar chart also includes data that was captured in other longform response questions.

The largest response was regarding dangerous parking. This category included any response referencing poor, dangerous or inconsiderate parking. The schools mentioned most often regarding dangerous parking were: the Harris Academies (Mayflower and Chafford Hundred) – 23 mentions; Woodside Primary Academy – 14 mentions; and St Thomas’ – 13 mentions. Overall, 48 separate schools, colleges, and nurseries were mentioned as having problems with parking during drop-off and pick-up times, and these were spread evenly across the borough. There were many examples in the responses of people having their cars hit, near misses involving children and pedestrians, and gridlock.

The second largest problem picked up through this survey was access to/from houses being blocked by problem parking. 117 respondents mentioned this as one of their leading concerns, and again these responses came from residents living near 26 schools, colleges, and nurseries from across the borough. The data did not show any outliers in terms of which schools or areas had the largest problems regarding blocked access to driveways and homes. There were some comments where residents had been unable to get off their drive to seek medical attention, attend appointments, or visit relatives in hospital due to driveways being blocked.

The third largest response related to dangers for pedestrians due to dangerous, inconsiderate, or poor parking, as this was mentioned 57 times by respondents. This was raised 10 times in relation to the Harris Academies in Mayflower Road, but overall, 22 schools were listed from across the borough. This mainly concerned pedestrians having to walk in the road due to cars on the pavement, including people in wheelchairs and with prams.

The next largest response was regarding there being too many cars on the road, followed by dangerous driving or speeding outside schools, and then driver aggression or rudeness. There were some specific comments made regarding these issues.

This is a response from a headteacher of a school - *“Cars are waiting in our road from 2.30pm. Parents block drives, and my staff often direct traffic after school, get abuse from local residents and car drivers, and have been knocked over on the corner and on school grounds by someone reversing.”*

This was another response from a local resident: *“I live in Ward Avenue and St Thomas’ school parents park continuously over my driveway stopping me from leaving my property to collect my children. I have even been attacked by a parent who was arrested and prosecuted. The Council need to address the school parking.”*

Finally other areas also mentioned by respondents included there not being enough parking spaces near schools for parents to drop-off or collect their children; idling engines causing pollution; roads being blocked by problem parking to emergency

service vehicles, busses, and bin lorries; and anti-social behaviour such as littering and noise. This was highlighted by a teacher in a Thurrock school who responded: “I work at a Thurrock school and regularly have to stand in the road to direct traffic as parents block gates, meaning we cannot get coaches or bin lorries in.”

Please tell us what measures or support you feel would be helpful to improve parking outside schools.

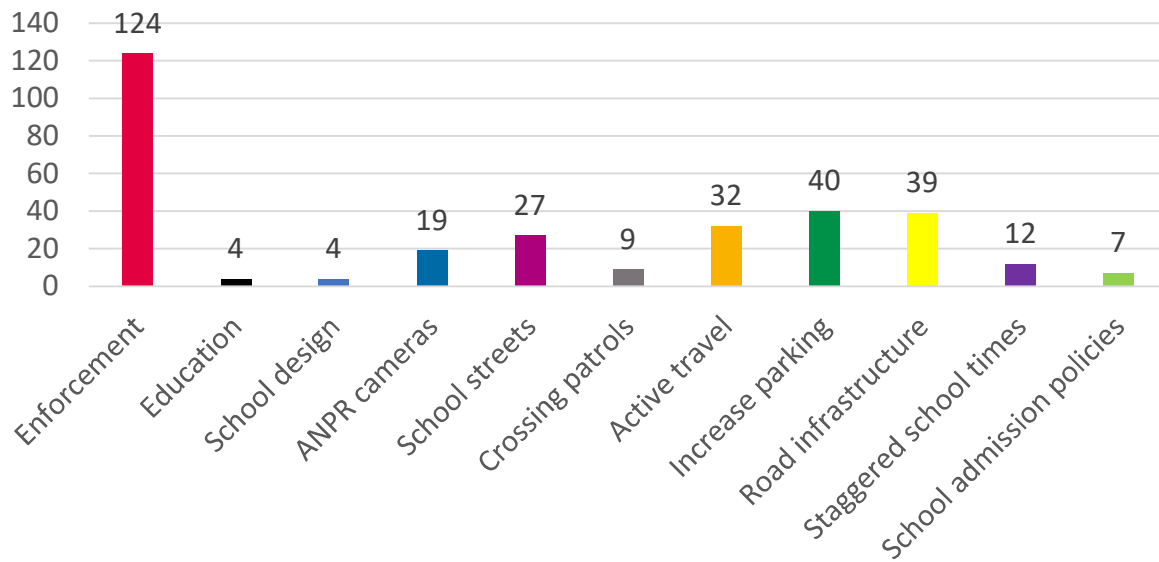


Figure 10

As per figure 9, there were more responses to this question than number of overall responses, and this was due a number of respondents listing more than one measure to help improve parking outside schools, with some respondents mentioning up to six improvements that could be made.

Figure 10 shows that the largest measure respondents felt would be useful was additional enforcement, for example Civil Enforcement Officers attending schools during drop-off and pick-up times. Most comments submitted as part of the survey mentioned this and felt it would be a positive step.

The next largest response was to increase parking around schools, which included introducing drop-off or pick-up zones near schools. This was followed by increasing and improving road infrastructure such as road markings, permit areas, bollards, and road signs.

There were also 32 responses which mentioned encouraging and incentivising active and sustainable travel such as walking and cycling. This included giving children more opportunities to walk and cycle, introducing school buses or car share schemes, and giving children financial support to be able to use public transport.

Following on from this, 27 respondents mentioned utilising school streets and many suggested banning cars on school roads during drop off and pick up times or closing the road to non-residents.

There were also a number of other smaller suggestions including: increasing education regarding responsible parking (4 responses); designing new schools to have drop off and pick up locations in building plans (4 responses); putting ANPR cameras on school roads (19 responses); introducing crossing patrols or lollipop men/women (9 responses); staggering school times for schools in the same vicinity (12 responses); and changing school admissions policies and introducing catchment areas (7 responses).

There were also some other suggestions which have not been included in this chart including putting a 20mph limit outside all schools, planting trees and bushes on grass verges near schools to stop pavement parking and increasing fines for illegal parking.

These suggestions and comments have been discussed and analysed by officers and some form part of the Parking at Schools Toolkit, which will provide a framework for officers to utilise when dealing with problem parking outside schools.

Respondents to the survey also made 41 specific suggested solutions for schools. Officers have access to, and have discussed the raw data and all 41 suggestions, as part of developing the Parking at Schools Toolkit. Some of the specific suggestions have been outlined below:

- St Cleres – install a zebra crossing outside the school; arrange to open the car park at Maple Park.
- Giffards Primary – make Queen Elizabeth Drive a one-way street.
- Stanford-le-Hope Primary – make the right-hand turn into the school from Copland Road accessible for staff and residents only.
- Deneholm Primary – install railings on the corner of Premier Avenue and Crowstone Road to prevent cars parking on the footpath.
- Bulphan Primary – raise the height of the speed bumps outside the school.
- Harris Academies (Mayflower & Chafford Hundred) – close Mayflower Road during drop-off/pick-up times; install metal railings on the bend of Mayflower Road; promote a park and stride scheme with Chafford Sainsburys; make Mayflower Road one-way.
- St Thomas’ – make the street outside the school one-way and install a zebra crossing outside the school.
- Benyon Primary – create a school street in Tyssen Place.
- Graham James Primary – double yellow lines on Andersons and Allensway.

Please add any further comments you may have on parking outside schools.

Overall, the majority of the 419 respondents included final comments and all of these have been analysed and included in the datasets above. A range of comments have been included below for interest:

- “Typically, school drop-off is quick. If more space and allowances were made for parents to drop their kids off safely there would be no issue. Most parents drive their kids to school for a host of reasons. Stopping us from driving is not the answer.”
- “We need more traffic wardens on show or have the ability to register vehicles for illegal parking online, similar for reporting fly-tipping or missed bin collection.”
- “There needs to be more availability to park for blue badge holders that need to park close to the school.”
- “Life as a resident is miserable during school times. I never know if I can get to my house or will suffer abuse. I have video footage to prove the issues we face daily during term times.”

During the survey, we also received some positive comments regarding parking outside schools and active travel, and some of these have been included below:

- “Herringham has been good for parking as it seems a lot of families walk. The area is well co-ordinated with cones and a traffic warden.”
- Well done on providing enforcement officers so far. They are regularly around Warren Primary School. It’s great to see. I wish they could dish out more tickets. We need permanent cameras for days when they’re not there otherwise drivers come back the next day.”
- Parking Enforcement Officers could be used around schools more – they are an effective measure at Little Thurrock Primary School.”

Overall, the survey responses provided an effective tool for officers and Members to understand further what issues parents and residents faced regarding parking, and what measures could be implemented to tackle them. These suggestions have helped to formulate the Parking at Schools Toolkit, and suggestions for individual schools have been discussed with officers for further analysis and investigation.

Summary

In summary, the Parking T&F Members and officers worked hard over the 10-week period from September to November 2024 to understand the issues surrounding parking at schools. We found that the main reason parents drove their children to school was due to work, and there were sometimes no other options available for parents, but other factors such as weather, safety, and distance were also important.

We collected and analysed a variety of safety and enforcement data and found that some schools were more at risk of serious accidents than others, and these had been factored into the Council's Safer Routes to School scheme. We considered the current Safer Routes to School scheme and discussed this in detail with officers to understand work currently being undertaken and planned in the future.

We worked closely with external stakeholders and a variety of Council directorates to understand how the issue of parking outside schools and active travel affected other areas such as childhood obesity. We would like to thank the Childhood Obesity T&F Group, Thurrock's Road Safety Lead, and Youth Cabinet for their time and input into the work of the Parking at Schools T&F Group.

Work was also undertaken to understand the impact of School Travel Plans and the ModeShift Stars scheme through visiting schools with 'outstanding' rated Travel Plans in comparison to schools without. These school visits were useful in understanding the impact of the location of schools and the limitations in implementing ideas such as additional parking spaces and school streets, as these might not be feasible in all locations.

Members also discussed potential solutions to the problems including:

- Introducing school streets at select schools across the borough.
- Increasing enforcement action during drop-off and pick-up times.
- Encouraging and incentivising active and sustainable travel.
- Installing hard infrastructure measures such as bollards, zigzags, and crossings.
- Working with parents and schools more closely to encourage active travel.
- Staggering school start/finish times in areas with more than one school.

We noted that there are advantages and disadvantages to every proposed solution, and some solutions may not be suitable for all schools. This led us to agreeing that the Parking at Schools Toolkit should be an overarching framework and outline of all measures available to schools and Council officers to improve parking at schools, as it would not be possible for each school to implement and adopt all measures. The Parking at Schools Toolkit will provide a basis for officers to work with schools to see which measures would be appropriate for utilisation at their schools. This will then be used as a starting point for improving parking at schools and encouraging active and sustainable travel.

Next Steps

