

School Safe Environment Zones

Cabinet

Date: 1st July 2020

Author: Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services
Head of Highways & Transport
Wards: All
Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals to deliver a programme of road safety improvements outside schools over the next 5 years.
- 1.2 At Full Council on 19th September 2019, in response to a petition Officers were asked to bring a report to Cabinet outlining the road safety priorities for the Borough and for this report to consider the measures required for the Borough including Hay Lane (Council Minute 32).
- 1.3 Subsequent conversations with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services confirmed that whilst the wording of the resolution was quite broad, the key focus of the concerns raised were around school-related travel and road safety outside schools and it is this topic on which the report is focused.
- 1.4 This report links to Priority 3 - Ensure clean and safe streets and improve our public spaces and local culture.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Agree that the road safety improvements on Hay Lane, West Swindon as set out in paragraph 3.12 of this report be delivered and that the petitioners be advised accordingly.
- 2.2 Agree the process set out in paragraphs 3.16 – 3.19 of this report to deliver road safety improvements outside schools across Swindon over a 5 year programme in line with the approved Capital programme.
- 2.3 Agree that the Head of Highways and Transport be authorised to implement the School Safe Environment Zones 5 year capital programme and to oversee the 5 year programme of road safety improvements outside schools across Swindon.
- 2.4 Agree that the Head of Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member oversees an annual review and update of the prioritised list of schools using the latest data available.

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3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 At Council on 19th September 2019, Members considered the receipt of a petition containing 425 signatures (with 409 signatures in an on-line version) requesting the Council to “make the section of Hay Lane in Grange Park safe to cross for residents”. In response to the Petition, Council resolved:

3.1.1 This Council: i) Thanks the petitioners for raising this important issue.

3.1.2 ii) Requests the Cabinet Member for Highways, Maintenance and Waste Services to bring a report to Cabinet detailing how the Council can make the section of Hay Lane in Grange Park safe to cross for pedestrians, including reviewing the following measures: a) Introduce a 20mph speed limit b) Insert a road-wide speed hump on or near to the pedestrian crossing and c) Improved signage to ensure motorists are aware of the zebra crossing and to slow down motorists.”

Response to the Resolution

- 3.2 Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 requires highway authorities to “carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles” and “prepare and deliver a programme of measures designed to improve road safety”.
- 3.3 Wiltshire Police share data with the Council as the Local Highway Authority on reported injury road traffic collisions that have occurred on roads within Swindon Borough (STATS19).
- 3.4 In accordance with the Road Traffic Act Officers undertake an annual review of this collision data to identify emerging patterns and trends from which to determine a programme of road safety engineering schemes or road safety education based initiatives for delivery through the annual Local Transport Plan (LTP) Implementation Programme.
- 3.5 The Council's Strategic Plan for Accident Reduction - 2010 and beyond (SPAR) sets out how the Council expects to achieve its road safety objectives and commits to take forward initiatives to ensure young people are safe on their journey to, from and between school.
- 3.6 In response to this commitment, between 2009 and 2015 the Council delivered the phased introduction of School Safety Zones outside 61 schools in Swindon, in conjunction with the Council's Safer and Smarter Journeys to School strategy. Limited school safety zone features have also been incorporated into the design of new schools built across Swindon in the last 5-10 years.

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- 3.7 Work to review and update the Council's road safety strategy is currently underway; the commitment to ensure the safety of young person's remains a priority in our approach to road safety.

Hay Lane, West Swindon

- 3.8 In November 2016 a collision occurred on Hay Lane, West Swindon involving a car and pedestrian. A 14 year old male was seriously injured as he crossed Hay Lane using the Zebra crossing near the junction with Sleaford Close. The driver of the vehicle involved was found guilty of driving without due care and attention. This reported injury collision is one of just two reported injury collisions on Hay Lane between its junctions with Grange Park Way and Tregoze Way in the last 5 years (September 2014 – August 2019).
- 3.9 Discussion during the Full Council meeting in September 2019 highlighted that the focus of resident's concerns lies with school children travelling to and from school, particularly given the close proximity of Tregoze Primary, Lydiard Park Academy and bus stops served by local school bus services.
- 3.10 As part of the petition presented to the Council a series of possible road safety improvements were suggested by the petitioners, including but not exclusively; the introduction of a 20mph limit; introduction of a raised table; and improved signage.
- 3.11 Officers have considered a range of possible road safety improvement measures for Hay Lane giving thought to design regulations and guidance and the feasibility of implementing each engineering measure. A summary of the findings is presented in Appendix One.
- 3.12 As a result of this assessment it is recommended that new school warning signs be provided on either approach to the Zebra crossing designed so as to improve their visibility and accompany these with 'SLOW' road markings in the carriageway. These signs would incorporate an advisory 20mph speed limit to coincide with peak periods of school-related travel on and around Hay Lane. Secondly, it is recommended that the zebra crossing belisha beacons be replaced with LED powered, ultra-visible beacons to further improve forward visibility of the crossing facility.
- 3.13 On the 2nd October 2019 the West Swindon Parish Council Planning and Environment Committee resolved that a budget of £1,000 be allocated for road safety signage to highlight awareness of the crossing (Item 173). The Parish Council monies could be used to contribute towards the new school warning signs and road markings.

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- 3.14 In light of the concerns raised in respect of Hay Lane and in the knowledge that similar concerns exist for other areas in Swindon with respect to pupil safety both outside schools and on the way to or from school, Officers have sought capital funding to deliver a programme of improvements.
- 3.15 In February 2020 (Council Minute 64) Cabinet approved the allocation of £500,000 over 5 years towards the delivery of School Safe Environment Zones to tackle road safety and congestion.
- 3.16 Officers have undertaken a review of all schools in Swindon and identified a process whereby schools may be ranked and a subsequent priority allocated to each school in order to deliver a 5 year programme of improvements.
- 3.17 A series of criteria have been identified against which schools may be scored and these include; 3 years of reported injury collision data involving children outside or en-route to school during the peak hours of school related travel; Mode of Travel data; local road characteristics; evidence of existing concerns; and the existence of an up-to-date School Travel Plan. The full list of criteria against which schools have been considered is provided in Appendix Two.
- 3.18 Scoring of sites also takes into account whether the school has previously benefitted from road safety improvements as part of the introduction of a school safety zone between 2009 and 2015 and the scale of the works.
- 3.19 The resulting prioritised list of schools will be used to deliver road safety and congestion improvements outside schools on a phased implementation over the 5 year programme. The individual scores for each school will be subject to an annual review using the most recent data available to ensure the priority allocated to each school reflects the latest circumstances.
- 3.20 Officers will work with Schools and the local Ward Councillors to ensure that the design of road safety improvements at each location is tailored to suit the specific concerns and circumstances of that school. A menu of standard interventions appropriate to the main causes of concern will be used to determine the combination of features introduced at each site.
- 3.21 In taking this approach, it is recognised there will need to be flexibility in the number of schools at which road safety improvements will be delivered each year within the 5 year programme and the scale of measures implemented at each.
- 3.22 Road safety initiatives targeting other priority themes across the Borough will continue to be delivered as part of the Council's annual programme of road safety measures in accordance with the Council's Strategic Plan for Accident Reduction (SPAR).

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- 3.23 Subject to Cabinet approval to the process for prioritisation of schemes to be delivered, the programme of schemes will be managed by the Head of Highways and Transport in the same way as other Local Transport Plan Funded schemes, i.e in accordance with the “Protocol for approving capital funded Highways and Transport schemes” approved by Cabinet at its meeting in April 2020 (Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan) (Council Minute 81).

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 There is an option to do nothing and continue to deliver road safety improvements at locations highlighted by the annual review of injury collision data.
- 4.2 The above option was considered and rejected on the grounds that delivery of a programme of road safety measures targeted to those schools for which there is greatest need identified through a collective assessment of all schools in Swindon would offer a more productive and effective approach to improving road safety around schools.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The cost of delivering a 5 year programme of road safety measures is to be met from the approved Capital Programme. Future maintenance of any road safety measures introduced would fall to the Council’s existing highway maintenance budget.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights legislation have been considered in the preparation of this report and it is considered to be compatible with convention rights. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, any interference with the convention rights of individuals is justified by the overall benefit to the community

Climate Change Impact

- 5.3 The proposals would not bring a change in service delivery and Officers believe that there is no expected effect on the Council’s carbon footprint.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.4 Introducing road safety measures outside schools may help to improve the perceived safety risk associated with walking or cycling to/from school by pupils and their parents/carers which in turn could help to deliver health benefits to those concerned.

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Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 A diversity impact assessment has been completed in relation to school safe environment zones and a copy is available from the report author. It identified that the proposals are not expected to create any adverse impact for groups or individuals, such as those with mobility impairments and our project is likely to have a significant positive impact on equalities groups that are more socially and economically deprived.

Risk Management

- 5.6 There is a risk to the Council's reputation in not responding to the concerns raised by the residents of Hay Lane, West Swindon.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Corporate Director of Finance and Assets (s151 officer) and Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix One – Hay Lane Road Safety Options assessment.
8.2 Appendix Two – List of factors against which schools have been considered.

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

- 9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for June 2020.