

PLACE SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
22 APRIL 2026

Update on School Streets Enforcement

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee is RECOMMENDED to

Consider the report, raise any questions, and to AGREE any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.

Executive Summary

2. The Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee has requested an item for its meeting on 22 April 2026, on school streets. The request is for a general overview of the project but there are also a number of key questions members are keen to have answered. This report answers those questions raised as well as giving an overview of the school streets project.
3. The school streets programme supports the ambitions of the 'Oxfordshire Strategic Plan 2025-2028' by contributing to its vision for a 'Greener, Fairer and Healthier Oxfordshire'.
4. The Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) aims to reduce car journeys by a quarter by 2030, and by a third by 2040. School streets supports this aim by reducing the volume of car journeys taken by parents/carers to and from schools. The Oxfordshire County Council's School Streets policy is set out in the LTCP at Policy 11 - '*Travel to School and Work*', stating OCC will: *Work with schools to develop a programme of walking and cycling measures for travel to and from school. Work with employers and businesses in the county to improve promotion and education of travel choices.*

Background and Context

5. School streets have now been implemented at scale across the UK and internationally, with over 1,000 schemes operating nationally, including more than 500 across all London boroughs, as well as schemes in Birmingham, Bristol, Newcastle and Edinburgh. The evidence base is well-established and shows that school streets are effective in reducing motor traffic at school gates, improving road safety, and increasing walking, wheeling, cycling and "park and stride" travel. A large national study covering almost 500 schools found an average 6% increase in active travel and a 5% reduction in car use, with benefits observed across different geographies and levels of deprivation. Evaluations also demonstrate improvements in air quality during operating times, reduced

vehicle speeds, and high levels of community support once schemes are in place, with no evidence of significant traffic displacement. As a result, school streets are now endorsed by the Department for Transport, Active Travel England and Transport for London as a proportionate, low-cost intervention to create safer and healthier environments around schools.

6. In Oxfordshire, the air quality impact of the first phase of school streets is undergoing an evaluation. The draft report shows that there were reductions in air pollutant concentrations across all School Street sites including the control sites. However, two School Streets sites had larger reductions than those seen at control sites, providing preliminary evidence of the effectiveness of school street interventions in Oxfordshire.
7. The Phase 1 schools have shown a reduction in the numbers of pupils who are driven to school, with between 3% - 22% fewer car trips to school. Increases in cycling and park & stride have been seen alongside this. More detail is set out later in the report.
8. A parent from Manor School in Didcot, who also led the volunteer team during the school street's trial said: "It's made it a much calmer environment for the children – lots of children on scooters and bikes and we've had a lot of compliments from residents on the street as well saying how much they think it certainly has benefits. And the kids seem to love it as well!"
9. A school street is a timed restriction on the road or roads outside of a school which prevents entry by non-exempt vehicles during the school's 'drop -off period and 'pick-up' times. This encourages modal shift towards choosing active travel options, such as walking/wheeling, cycling, and kick-scooting, making the street safer for children, as well as improving air quality, and is one of the programmes of work contained within our Sustainable School Travel Strategy (SSTS).
10. A school street forms one part of a school's overall sustainable and active travel approach, which includes a wide range of different active travel schemes such as Walk once a Week (WoW) scheme, Walk to School Week, Footsteps road safety training, the BetterPoints app incentives, Park and Stride wayfinding, cycle training, and travel planning. This work is primarily delivered by the two school engagement officers in the Behaviour Change & Travel Plans team.
11. Oxfordshire school streets are developed in line with the Department for Transport Guidance document - [School Streets: how to set up and manage a scheme - GOV.UK](#)
12. The council has delivered two phases of school streets and is currently preparing to deliver a third phase.

Phase 1 Schools

- Abingdon – St Nicholas CofE Primary School
- Oxford – Larkrise Primary School
- Oxford – St Ebbe's CofE Primary School

- Oxford – Windmill Primary School

Phase 2 Schools

- Oxford – Sandhills Primary School
- Oxford – Tyndale Primary School
- Oxford – St Mary and St Johns CofE Primary School
- Oxford – New Hinksey Primary School
- Didcot – Manor Primary School

Phase 3 Schools (anticipated 'go live' summer term 2026)

- Didcot – St Birinus Secondary and Willowcroft Primary schools (Combined School Street)
- Carterton – Edith Morehouse Primary School and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Combined School Street)
- Banbury – Harriers Banbury Academy Primary School
- Oxford - expansion of phase 2 Sandhills Primary School scheme

13. The funding for the school streets programme is through a combination of council budget and Active Travel England grant. Funding for phases 4 and 5 has been secured.
14. The consultancy WSP have been commissioned to carry out a review of all schools in Oxfordshire to assess their suitability for a school street programme. This information will be used to develop a programme of future school streets. A key part of the delivery of the school streets is the school community working with the school engagement officers to develop and deliver a school travel plan; and embedding an active travel culture at the school.
15. The compliance with the restrictions is monitored and if certain trigger points are reached then the site's data is reviewed and consideration is given to options for increasing compliance, whether that be working with the school, or enhanced or different signage etc., with a view to try and increase adherence to the restrictions.

Questions from Scrutiny

The specific questions that the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee have asked when commissioning the report are as follows, with officer responses provided underneath.

- 1. Why are so many fines being issued? Why are we seeing so many reports of residents telling us that there are multiple car drivers going through school streets?**

Please see **Appendix 1** for the school streets excel file that sets out the statistics for school streets since they were first introduced.

- 1.1. It should be noted that there are a number of exemptions, which means certain vehicles are allowed to drive within the school street during the restricted times. The exemptions are covered lower down in the report and it may be that these legitimate vehicles may make up a significant percentage of vehicles seen within the restriction which is what the residents report back to members.
- 1.2. If a vehicle is exempt then the cameras do not log that vehicle's movement through the restriction, it is detected by the ANPR camera and the data automatically deleted. Therefore, there is no way to accurately report on total number of vehicles travelling within a school street area, without undertaking a specific traffic count survey.
- 1.3. As shown in Appendix 1, the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in 2023 varied across the different school streets and also included warning notices. Warning notices are issued to vehicles passing through the restriction within the first six months of the permanent school street going live / being implemented to warn them the restriction is being enforced by ANPR cameras and if they contravene it again then they will be issued a PCN. Once the six-month notice period is over, a PCN will be issued to any vehicle observed in contravention of the restriction. Officers expect to see a higher number of PCNs (including warning notices) issued in the first year following enforcement by ANPR camera.
- 1.4. The warning notices are usually a good deterrent to encourage compliance and officers would expect to see less PCNs issued in year 2 and so on. The data shows this for the first tranche of school streets, with the exception of Margaret Road/St Annes Road at Windmill School, which saw a minor increase, that then dropped significantly in year 3. It is too early to see tranche two trends.
- 1.5. Windmill School, unlike many of the other school streets, is on a through-route, near the hospitals, and it is thought that there are higher contraventions here due to vehicles routing off the main roads. Additional signage and lining will be introduced early in 2026/27 to try and further alert drivers to the restrictions in place.
- 1.6. The numbers of PCNs issued, based on 2025 figures across the year, (based on Oxfordshire County Council terms dates) are:
 - 58% of the school streets are issuing less than 2 PCNs per day
 - 17% are 2-3 per day
 - 8% are 3 – 4 per day and;
 - 17% are 5 – 6 PCNs per day

This is an average: so on some days no PCNs will be issued whereas on another there could be more (sometimes higher numbers can be seen at the start of a new term or when there is bad weather).

2. What are the regulations around Highways signs, can we put up more signs?

2.1. Local authorities are responsible for ensuring that restrictions are clearly, adequately and lawfully signed so that motorists can understand them. If existing signs are judged to be unclear, insufficient, or could benefit from reinforcement, the council is permitted to add extra signs, provided that:

- the additional signs comply with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD); the placement is appropriate and does not cause confusion: they are used to improve clarity, not to alter the legal restriction.
- Adding supplementary signage is a normal and lawful step where it helps improve visibility, understanding or compliance, and as covered above the Council is starting to implement more advanced signage to school streets.

2.2. As seen in Appendix 1, there are some school streets, such as Windmill School, that have a higher rate of contraventions. In these cases, officers will work closely with the schools to better understand the causes and undertake a site visit to see what additional signage could be implemented to help alert highway users to the presence of the restriction. In the case of Windmill school this will include 'School Street' painted on the carriageway at the restriction point. There will be additional advance blue signage along with flashing signage that will operate at the time of the restrictions. It is hoped that these additional measures will drive better compliance.

2.3. The School Engagement Officers speak to the schools to ensure they are taking all the action they can to ensure compliance from the school community, parents and carers, as part of their on-going commitment to active travel'.

2.4. If people wish to challenge a PCN and don't agree with the council's decision on the formal representation, then they can take the appeal to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT), which is an independent adjudication service whereby the decision is made by an adjudicator and their findings are binding (for both the council and the appellant). For all school street TPT appeals where signage has been given as the reason for the contravention, all have been found in the council's favour, i.e. that the signage is adequate for the restriction and in line with TRSGD.

3. What's the split of fines by schools - is the majority coming from one school or several?

- 3.1. Appendix 1 sets out this information. It can be seen that from the first tranche of school streets, the Margaret Road/Wharton Road junction for Windmill School and Boundary Brook Road for Larkrise School had a higher proportion of warnings and PCNs issued.
- 3.2. As explained above, it is thought there is a higher percentage of fines issued at Windmill School due to it being on a through route, and people using it to avoid the main roads. Boundary Brook Road is a harder one to understand, given this is on a cul-de-sac, but it is the only vehicular access to the school and other streets in the cul-de-sac arrangement. There do appear to be a few repeat offenders as well as a number of vehicles where we are unable to locate the owner. For Tyndale Primary, officers will have a better idea in the next six months to see if the PCNs issued remain higher, now that we are six months beyond the notice period.

Possible issue: ANPR exemptions issued to taxis which are taking their own children, rather than looked after children to the school. Taxis aren't allowed to violate school streets if they are dropping their own children at schools. So could we be told for each of the schools how many taxis have driven through the school streets in a period of say, 6 months, and how many looked after children there are - as well as what mechanism is in place to stop this happening?

- 3.3. Taxis are only allowed through a council restriction, including school streets, when picking up/dropping off a fare. They cannot use their exemption to pick up/drop off their own children. However, it isn't something that officers can enforce due to the way the legislation is set out and the way the ANPR cameras capture data. Once a taxi driver gives the council proof that they are licenced to operate as a taxi (whether private hire or Hackney carriage) then they are added to the exemptions list. The council does not record the number of cars travelling through the ANPR camera that are on the exemption list. The camera will only capture vehicles not on the exemption list. Therefore, the onus is on the taxi driver to comply with the rules.
- 3.4. Regarding the question of how many taxis have driven through school streets in the last six months, this data is not held. Once a vehicle is on the exemption list the camera automatically discards them so no data on those is held.
- 3.5. The taxi companies will be contacted by officers to request that they remind their drivers that they are only exempt from a school street if they are in operation in accordance with their licence, and that if they are using their car for personal use they are not exempt.
- 3.6. A potential option would be in circumstances where the licencing authority (City and District Councils) are able to prove abuse of the restrictions by

certain licence holders, then officers could remove those specific vehicles from specific exemptions lists. If the licencing authority's team were to write to state that they have proof that the vehicle in question (providing the vehicle registration mark (VRM)) has been abusing the system, and ask council officers to remove that vehicle from the exemption list for a specific restriction, then that vehicle could be removed.

4. Possible issue: parents issued with temporary passes, e.g. for a broken leg, never get the exemption removed. Data on how many exemptions are removed.

4.1. Schools contact the school streets email address to request that a parent or carer be temporarily added to the exemption list. Their email will outline the reason for the request and specify how long the exemption is required. This may be for a defined period of time or, alternatively, until the end of the current school year. Once approved, officers add the vehicle to the exemption database. When the exemption period ends, the entry automatically expires and is removed. No data is retained on the number of exemption requests received.

5. Summary of reasons for exemptions and process for reviewing them

5.1. The following vehicles can generally apply for an exemption from a PCN/fine:

- A resident
- A resident's visitor
- Unregistered carer
- Registered carer
- Disabled Blue Badge holder (pupil, parent, carer school staff)
- Local businesses' staff within the school street area with a requirement to park
- User of private off-street parking accessed within a school street zone
- School staff and regular school visitors with a requirement to park onsite
- Emergency service vehicles and other public service vehicles such as waste collection
- Hackney carriages and public hire vehicles (taxis)
- Public buses
- School transport vehicles
- Dial-a-Ride
- Specialist public passenger transport services
- Branded/liveried delivery vans registered as commercial vehicles such as Royal Mail, UPS and DPD
- Road works and utility vehicles undertaking works (including inspection) i.e., street lighting, gas, electricity, water, drainage, and communication services in or adjoining that road.

5.2. The details included on the list set out the evidence required, and the officers processing these requests verify and validate the evidence provided. Further information on exemptions can be found [here on the council website](#).

5.3. The exemptions are written into the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) that underpins the restriction and as such are not reviewed unless the TRO is being amended. The process of digitising all TROs is underway, and as part of that, the TROs for all the school streets will be looked at to ensure the exemptions are consistent across all school streets (unless a specific exemption is required for a particular school street).

6. What criteria are they using to prioritise schemes, and can there be some transparency about this? Otherwise schools and parents and campaigners are going to waste their time campaigning for schemes when they're not going to be considered.

6.1. Expressions of Interest (EOI) for schools who could potentially be suitable for a school street come from several sources including, councillors, parents, and directly from the schools themselves. This EOI list has been reviewed to shortlist which schools would be most suitable for a school street, using the following criteria:

- Is the school itself interested in going forward with a school street?
- Is the school working with the School Engagement Officers on any sustainable/active travel projects and developing a school travel plan?
- What is the schools' geographical positioning? Is it suitable for a school street? Are they on a main road, on a bus route etc.,? The information from the WSP report will be used to assess the school location.

If the school is not suitable for a school street, the School Engagement Officers can still work with the school on a range of other sustainable and active travel and behaviour change projects, such as those listed above. Not all schools will be suitable or want to pursue a school street.

7. What is the process for residents reporting taxis or vehicles who they believe are violating the school streets ANPR and what is the process which will be followed?

7.1 There is not a dedicated reporting system for this type of scenario. If it is believed an exemption is being used fraudulently, then an email should be sent to enquirieschoolstreets@oxfordshire.gov.uk. The matter will be investigated and contact will be made with the permit holder to confirm that the exemption is being used in line with the terms, conditions, and the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). "Licenced / Private Hire Vehicle" means a vehicle constructed or adapted to seat fewer than 9 passengers (other than a taxi) for the purpose of carrying passengers for hire or reward". "Taxi" means a vehicle licensed under Section 37 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847."

7.2 As previously stated, if the licencing authority obtains evidence of abuse happening then it is possible to remove a vehicle from a specific exemption, based on information from the licencing authority.

7.3 Due to data protection rules officers would only accept the request from the licensing authority rather than a member of the public or the school themselves.

8. What are the criteria for exemption permits for existing schools, and how is this managed centrally? There is resident concern that school staff are being pressured to give out exemptions and have no support in saying no.

8.1. As outlined in the link above, each school is required to provide the necessary information relating to school-based exemption requests. The school is responsible for confirming the details and supplying any supporting evidence required for the exemption to be processed.

9. For all of the above, what is best practice; what are other LAs doing; what are we learning from them?

9.1. Regular reviews and monitoring of all school streets sites takes place. Where evidence shows a high level of non-compliance, additional measures can be considered to improve adherence. This may include installing further signage.

9.2. School streets are developed in line with the Department for Transport Guidance document - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-streets-how-to-set-up-and-manage-a-scheme/school-streets-how-to-set-up-and-manage-a-scheme>

9.3 The Behaviour Change & Travel Plans team is a member of the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans) South East Region School Streets Network where best practice and issues regarding school streets are discussed. Membership of Modeshift also enables sharing of best practice with other members via the forum pages. The officers also regularly attend conferences and webinars where the delivery of school streets is discussed.

9.3. Oxfordshire County Council was an early adopter of ANPR enforcement for school streets and has advised on the drafting of the national guidance.

10. How are the trials going for the most recently implemented trials?

10.1 Data is collected pre- and post- scheme implementation, as well as one year post-delivery. The data collected is:

- Travel Mode – this is collected as part of the school travel plan via the Modeshift STARS platform
- Air Quality data – collected via Zephyr sensors, and by traffic counts - via tube counts on the entry point to the school street areas

The Phase 1 schools have shown a reduction in the numbers of pupils who are driven to school. The number of pupils travelling to Larkrise School by car reduced from 35% to 13%, whereas the number of pupils cycling to school increased from 23% to 44%. At Windmill School, car use decreased by 3% and park & stride increased by 3%. St Nicolas Primary School saw a 6% increase in cycling, alongside driving decreasing by 6%.

St Ebbe’s School also saw an increase in pupils cycling from 34% to 38% and saw driving to school reduce by 4%. St Ebbe's School had a slightly higher level of cycling than some other local schools already, with a parent having established a bike bus, and proactively working to help set up a bike library and improve access to cycling. That parent is now the school's Active Travel Champion. The data for post installation for phase 2 schools is not yet available.

Financial Implications

11. There are no new financial implications as part of this update report.
12. Funding for the school streets programme is from Active Travel England grant funding rounds and from OCC council funding. Funding for future phases is secured. An overview of capital and revenue funding is provided here:

Table 1: School Streets funding overview			
<i>*italics indicates revenue</i>			
	<u>Phase & year</u>	<u>Funding source</u>	<u>Amount</u>
	1 – 2023/24	ATE 3	£160,000
	2 – 2024/25	OCC Capital funding	£500,000
	3 – 2025/26	ATE4 Extension funding <i>OCC revenue funding</i>	£350,000 <i>£77,000</i>
	4 – 2026/27	OCC capital funding <i>OCC revenue funding</i>	£450,000 <i>£47,000</i>
	5 – 2027/28	ATE 5 <i>OCC revenue funding</i>	£168,000 <i>£47,000</i>

13. The ongoing cost for the management and operation of the school streets ANPR enforcement is currently fully funded by the income generation from management of all moving traffic offences by ANPR charges. If this is not enough, then income from the council’s related parking account will be used.

Comments checked by:

Filipp Skiffins, Finance Business Partner
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Legal Implications

There are no new legal implications as part of this report.

16. School Streets are created using a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), and often following an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) both of which require a public consultation before the TRO or ETRO can be made permanent. These consultations must comply with the consultation requirements for the various elements as required by law including under the Highways Act 1980, the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and any other relevant legislation.
17. The Council uses its powers under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to enforce the relevant ETRO and/or TRO and complies with its duties and responsibilities under the UK data monitoring and protection laws in respect of the operation of the scheme.

Comments checked by:

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Staff Implications

18. There are no known staff implications for this update. As further phases of school streets are developed or more ANPR cameras are introduced, the workload will increase, but this will be monitored going forward.
19. A Project Manager will be recruited to join the Travel Plans and Behaviour Change team as part of the implementation of the Phase 3 school streets and for future school street phases.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

20. There are no known equalities or inclusion implications resulting from this update report.
21. As part of the Cabinet Members Decision report prepared for each school street scheme, following the consultation on each school street, an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) is undertaken to ensure that equalities implications of the scheme have been assessed in a fair and thorough manner.

Sustainability Implications

22. There are no known sustainability implications linked to this update report.

As part of the Cabinet Members Decision report prepared for each school street scheme, following the consultation on each school street, a Carbon Impact

Assessment is produced to ensure carbon implications of the scheme have been assessed in a thorough manner.

Risk Management

23. There are no known implications linked to this update.

PAUL FERMER

Director of Environment and Highways

Annex 1: Penalty Charge Notice statistics

Background papers:

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