

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 23 FEBRUARY 2021

EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC ORDER FOR SCHOOL EXCLUSION ZONES

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE

ABSTRACT

This report relates to the making of an Experimental Traffic Order in respect of School Exclusion Zones at Ferryden Primary School, Montrose; Langlands Primary School, Forfar And Muirfield Primary School, Arbroath.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council:

- (i) approves the making of the Experimental Traffic Order to include Ferryden Primary School, Montrose;
- (ii) approves the making of the Experimental Traffic Order to include Langlands Primary School, Forfar; and
- (iii) approves the making of the Experimental Traffic Order to include Muirfield Primary School, Arbroath.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/COUNCIL PLAN

- 2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality Plans:

PLACE

- Safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable communities.
- An enhanced, protected and enjoyed natural and built environment.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Elected members, local residents and other members of the public regularly raise a number of concerns over matters arising from vehicles dropping off or picking up school children on the roads serving Primary Schools. These include concerns relating to restricted visibility at junctions, restricted access to premises, general congestion and congestion at or near the school entrances.
- 3.2 Based on the various requests or suggestions made for Primary Schools across Angus, three locations have been identified and explored by Traffic & Transport officers in consultation with a dedicated stakeholder group for each school, made up of Police Scotland, local members, Community Councils, school staff and members of the relevant Parent Council/Teachers' Association. In terms of the locations proposed, it is considered that the introduction of an Experimental Traffic Order for School Exclusion Zones is appropriate in the interest of pedestrian and traffic safety.
- 3.3 Experimental Traffic Orders are made under Section 9 to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. An experimental traffic order shall not continue in force for longer than 18 months
- 3.4 Effective "School Exclusion Zones" are one of the options to consider in promoting Active & Sustainable Travel. School Exclusion Zones can help encourage active lifestyles, increases in walking and cycling journeys, fewer car trips and improved road safety outside schools during peak periods due to less motor vehicle movements. They can also lead to reductions in child obesity.

- 3.5 School Exclusion Zones are already being operated in other local authority areas, including Glasgow, Dundee, East Lothian, Perth and Kinross and Edinburgh. They form part of a suite of options for helping to create safer, more pleasant environments to encourage active travel to school. The evaluation from these projects has been positive and has resulted in further requests for similar measures in other areas. However, the part-time closure of streets to traffic (i.e. at school start and finish times) will not be appropriate for all schools.
- 3.6 The rationale behind the initiative is that the road network outside the school gate or in the surrounding streets will be closed to vehicular traffic, except those permitted to be there, i.e. cycles, blue badge holders, residents with permits, school buses and emergency vehicles for set periods each day. Schools with gates onto main roads that serve as bus or emergency service routes would not be considered. This is due to the impact of diverting high volumes of traffic through adjacent residential streets creating additional safety issues. This reduces the number of suitable schools to those with entrances on routes with no, or limited, through traffic.
- 3.7 In general, the restricted “School Exclusion Zones” should be appropriate to the road environment and, therefore, self-enforcing to the driver leading to a situation where little or no formal enforcement is required. However, it is accepted that certain drivers will disregard good practice and some enforcement activity by Police Scotland and, through DPE (Decriminalised Parking Enforcement), by the Council’s Community Enforcement Wardens may be necessary. As part of our partnership working, Angus Council works closely with Police Scotland when considering any possible changes to the road network and these sites have been reviewed with them.
- 3.8 There will be exemptions given to residents, local businesses, Blue Badge holders and other permitted vehicles, such as emergency services, school contract buses, and roads and utility companies undertaking emergency works. A permit system will be implemented to allow authorised vehicles to access/egress the restricted area.
- 3.9 At the entrance to the scheme, there will be large signs that will have flashing lights to indicate when the scheme is in operation. An example of the type of sign that would be used is shown in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.10 Based on the success of the School Exclusion Zones at these three locations, consideration for further sites can be given along with the development of an assessment tool to prioritise additional sites.

Requests for School Exclusion Zones

- 3.11 The problems being experienced at the three schools chosen for the trial is common at a number of other schools in the Angus area. It is therefore anticipated that there will be a number of requests for “School Exclusion Zones” at other schools. However, given the necessary costs for signing and the additional maintenance expenditure, pressure will be placed on limited financial resources. It is, as a result, important that the evaluation of the trial is carried out before further schemes are identified and implemented.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The first Stakeholder meetings were held on Thursday 5 November 2020, where the scopes of the Experimental Traffic Order were discussed, as was how the schemes were going to be declared a success or not. It was agreed at each of the Stakeholder meetings that the measures proposed in this report should be implemented for the trial period of 18 months.
- 4.2 The Council’s Communications Team have published details of the proposed Trials on Social Media prior to the presentation of this report, detailing the need for Committee approval for the Experimental Traffic Order to be implemented.

5. PROPOSALS

School Exclusion Zones Trial

- 5.1 It is proposed to make a single Experimental Traffic Order to introduce “School Exclusion Zones” at three schools in the Angus area for a period of 18 months each. The locations have been experiencing ongoing road safety issues caused by drivers bringing their vehicles too close to the school gates. The following three schools were chosen for the trial, which have the support of each Headteacher:
- Ferryden Primary School, Montrose;
 - Langlands Primary School, Forfar; and
 - Muirfield Primary School, Arbroath;
- 5.2 The locations of each proposal are detailed in **Appendices 2 to 4**.
- 5.3 The three chosen schools will allow an evaluation of the scheme’s effectiveness in different scenarios, through the development of best practice and allow better decisions to be made regarding future requests. This could potentially then be applied to further schools across the Angus area.
- 5.4 The Traffic & Transport team will work with the schools and communities to identify and promote locations away from schools where parents can park, which will disperse traffic over a wider area than at present. Reward schemes such as Living Streets WoW (Walk Once a Week) Initiative will be introduced to encourage use of these “Park and Stride” sites, as well as pedestrian and cycle training and, where necessary, the provision of additional cycle and scooter parking. WoW is a year-round incentive scheme, which rewards children walking to school at least once a week with a collectible WoW badge.
- 5.5 Similar to the part-time 20mph speed limits at schools, which also contain amber beacons, it is proposed to install a School Exclusion Zone signage on the nearside of the carriageway, at each entrance point.
- 5.6 Improvements to roads infrastructure, such as additional dropped crossings, may also be required, which would be prioritised through other Roads & Transportation programmes of works and budgets.

Experimental Traffic Order

- 5.7 The “School Exclusion Zones” will require the creation of an Experimental Traffic Order prohibiting vehicular traffic during the specified time periods. The times that the prohibition of vehicles will be in place, when the school is in session are as follows:
- Ferryden Primary School, Montrose – 08:30 to 09:30 and 14:45 to 15:30
 - Langlands Primary School, Forfar – 08:30 to 09:15 and 14:45 to 15:30
 - Muirfield Primary School, Arbroath – 08:30 to 09:30 and 14:45 to 15:30
- 5.8 The Experimental Traffic Order will be in place for 18 months. During this period, additional traffic surveys will be undertaken to monitor the impact of the restrictions on parking and travel patterns at each site.

Evaluation

- 5.9 In order to evaluate the scheme, a number of “before” and “after” surveys will be carried out to provide a baseline of data against which the scheme will be evaluated. These will include:
- Air pollution samples taken at the school gates;
 - Road Traffic Accidents;
 - Traffic Flows;
 - Active Travel uptake; and
 - Public Perception, i.e. support for the proposals or otherwise (see 5.12 below).

- 5.10 The data gathered will be analysed to assess the success or otherwise at each site. A report will then be submitted to the Communities Committee to recommend either the retention or the removal of the restrictions at the respective sites.
- 5.11 The success of the trial will be measured through:
- A reduction in traffic congestion and speed around school gates as measured through before and after traffic speeds and volume surveys;
 - An increase in walking and cycling and reduction in car trips as measured through the annual Sustrans Hands Up survey and WOW Travel Tracker;
 - An improvement in air quality at the school gates; and
 - Consultation with stakeholders as measured through attitude surveys.

Objections

- 5.12 In addition to the evaluation detailed above, any person may object to the Experimental Traffic Order being made permanent in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. An objection must be made within the period of six months –
- (i) beginning on the date the order comes into force; or
 - (ii) if the Order is varied by another Order or modified beginning with the day on which the variation or modification or the latest variation or modification comes into force.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The estimated cost of implementing the proposals is £32,000. Additional costs may be required throughout the length of the trial should any reactive measures become necessary to ensure a safe environment for vulnerable road users and motorists, which is estimated at £1,000 per school.
- 6.2 The costs of removing the infrastructure, should the proposals be deemed unsuccessful, are estimated at £1,000 per school.
- 6.3 The costs for the trial can be contained within the Roads & Transportation budgets. Should further sites be identified, the affordability within existing budgets would need to be reviewed and considered, which would be reported to future meetings of the Communities Committee.

7. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive Director of Finance, Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the local Police Commander of Tayside Division were consulted in the preparation of this report.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Indicative Design of Road Sign for School Exclusion Zones
- Appendix 2 – Location and Extents of School Exclusion Zone at Ferryden Primary School, Montrose
- Appendix 3 – Location and Extents of School Exclusion Zone at Langlands Primary School, Forfar
- Appendix 4 – Location and Extents of School Exclusion Zone at Muirfield Primary School, Arbroath