

## **School Streets Phase 1b Briefing Note**

### **Introduction**

Oxfordshire County Council was successful in bidding for £2.9 million from the Department for Transport's Travel Demand Management (TDM) fund to develop, upgrade and enhance schemes that facilitate sustainable travel. As part of the TDM 2 funding which aims to build in long-term transport upgrades, councillors have identified several measures that support sustainable travel including the need for School Streets in Oxford, Bicester and Witney.

Five School Streets have either commenced or are scheduled to commence in May for the first phase of School Streets (Phase 1a). This note summarises the plans for the second stage of the first phase of School Streets (Phase 1b).

### **About School Streets**

A School Street (SS) is a timed road closure that restricts access for motor vehicles at school drop-off and pick-up times. The initial phase of School Streets in Oxfordshire is for a trial period of six weeks and will cover 12 schools. This phase is compiled of two stages; phase 1a for five schools across Oxford and Bicester which has already commenced and phase 1b for seven schools in Oxford, Witney and Abingdon.

The aim is to create a safe, welcoming and attractive environment where children, parents and teachers can walk, cycle, scoot or park and walk to school with less risk of air pollution and traffic congestion. Creating a car-free environment outside school gates will also support social distancing when children return to school following lockdown.

During closure times at pick-up and drop-off, roads around the school site will only be open to people walking, cycling, and anyone in a vehicle with a valid exemption.

A lead steward assisted by volunteers from the school and local community will manage and marshal the road closures by operating temporary barriers and opening them for any exempt vehicles. Exempt motorists include residents with vehicles registered to an address on the street only, blue badge holders and emergency vehicles. We will also continue to work with the schools to ensure that anyone with specific needs is not affected.

The road closures will apply to the whole school community including teachers and support staff though it is likely teachers and support staff will arrive and leave outside School Street closure times.

### **Current School Streets in Oxford**

Phase 1a has seen the introduction of three School Streets in Oxford from 22 March and two scheduled in Bicester from 10 May. These schools are:

- St Christopher's CE Primary School
- Windmill Primary School
- East Oxford Primary School
- St Edburg's CE Primary School
- Bure Park Primary School

### **Engagement with Schools and Local Members and the surrounding Communities**

The process of selecting the schools was begun in July 2020 following a request for an expression of interest in School streets from the schools and local members. Further engagement work has been carried out with the schools to outline the project to them in more detail and to check that the project would be supported by the head teachers and the wider school community.

The locations of the pilot sites were included in locality meetings in Bicester and Witney regarding the EATF infrastructure improvements which involved a wide range of stakeholders,

Site meetings have been carried out at all the shortlisted schools with Sustrans and where possible the local members to agree any local issues and the proposed closure points.

The houses that have a frontage on to the area that will be impacted by the school streets closure will be written to, to advise them of the ETRO and how it will operate. In collaboration with Sustrans OCC have published a FAQ guide outline of the school streets project. Sustrans have been working with the selected schools to engage with the wider school communities in preparation for the delivery of the school streets project.

### **Phase 1b School Streets**

The following sites are currently being reviewed to assess their feasibility to participate in the second stage of the first phase of School Streets:

- St James (Oxford)
- St Ebbs (Oxford)
- Tyndale Community School (Oxford)
- Larkrise (Oxford)
- The Henry Box School (Witney)
- Tower Hill (Witney)
- St Nicholas (Abingdon)

These sites have been selected to tackle existing issues caused by vehicular traffic, such as congestion, dangerous parking or driving by parents or other road users, poor local air quality or challenges with accessibility for pupils and parents travelling by active modes.

St Ebbs and Tyndale will be community led schemes and run by the school, parents and the local community and therefore input from OCC will be limited.

### **Timescale**

The current planned start dates for Phase 1b School Streets are 24 May. This is dependent on the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order process, which include assessing feedback about the schemes from statutory consultees and residents.

All pilot schemes will run for six weeks, Monday to Friday, during term-time only. Specific road closure times will vary depending on each school but will incorporate 15 minutes on either side of the usual pick-up and drop-off times.

The first phase of the trial will last six weeks where the impact of the School Street will be continually monitored with a view to extending to continue running School Streets for 18 months should the trials be successful.

For more information on School Streets in Oxfordshire, please go to:  
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/emergency-active-travel-fund/active-travel/school-streets>

If you have any questions regarding the School Streets project, please contact:  
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