

Scrutiny Report – Air Quality – School Streets and Anti-idling

Purpose of Paper/Decision Required

- To update scrutiny on
 - Anti-idling feasibility work
 - School Streets

Summary of recommendations

- Note the way forward and make any comments to improve the proposals

Anti-idling

- Full Council asked the Mayor to:
 - By spring 2020 investigate, and implement if financially feasible, the introduction of an enforceable “anti-vehicle idling” zone outside every school and in every park in the city
 - Work with the police and other agencies to jointly tackle the vehicle idling problem and to enforce the “anti-vehicle idling” zones, noting that PCSOs often already patrol outside schools to monitor parking.
 - Work with our NHS and other healthcare partners, to look at extending “anti-vehicle idling” zones outside medical buildings, in hospital pick-up areas, and outside care homes.
 - Use the experience of the pilot zones to determine whether these measures should be implemented via the existing legislation, enforceable enhancements to existing Council policies, or via a new by-law. This should include investigation as to whether the existing level of fine from the legislation can be increased.
- Legal Context: Idling when parked is an offence everywhere and as such there are no powers to introduce specific zones, nor signage to support them. Attempts to introduce zones might be confusing and encourage motorists to think it is acceptable elsewhere
- It is a Criminal Offence, but difficult to enforce (the power has been used less than 60 times since its introduction in 2002) and it will not be self-financing.
- The source of the problem is cars queuing in traffic which is not an offence, so the greatest potential benefit is to encourage motorists to switch off their engines (in older cars where this does not happen automatically)
- Schools Further investigation has revealed that although Air Quality is a citywide problem only very few schools in the AQMA suffer from AQ that is at or close to the legal limit, although of course we want the air to be as clean as possible. By their nature these schools are close to major routes where school streets would not be viable.

- Existing work with a cohort of schools is already undertaken in the form of comprehensive travel planning to encourage families not to travel by car. Also work to ensure that the zigzags are enforceable and publicised is part of this work.
- There is a risk that focusing only on anti-idling could tacitly undermine the broader message to schools. However the schools on busy routes might be able to be channels (e.g. banners) for an anti-idling behaviour change campaign
- A behaviour change campaign – for example imagery below has been produced by York – aimed at motorists might be the most appropriate way to progress anti-idling, and might get more public support by inviting people to be part of solution which may be a better approach than fines? Possible channels for this are:
 - Could use VMS/Bus Backs/radio campaigns; bus backs have in the past been identified as particularly effective at targeting motorists on key arterials (which is where the AQ problem is worst)
 - Possibly banners outside key buildings
 - Maybe in key hotspots (Rail stations?)
 - Work with licensing?
 - Work with businesses and last mile delivery providers?
 - School railings on busy arterial routes
- At an informal scrutiny session various other questions were asked, the summary of this is at Appendix 1.



**Switch off
engine
Reduce
emissions**

- Permission could be sought to install the above signage at bus stops and other key areas (which are not approved for use in general, so

specific DfT authorisation is required, which has so far been applied only to bus and coach stops)

School Streets

- The aims of schools streets align with council policies in terms of increasing active travel, improving air quality and road safety. They are focused purely on streets in close proximity to schools to reduce traffic volumes on streets at “school run” time turning them into pedestrian and cycle zones.
- The evidence is that school streets need to work alongside a wider effort to achieve modal shift; this is work undertaken with 30-40 schools funded by the DfT Access programme to 2020.
- Officers have developed and are now rolling out air quality sessions with schools tied into active travel pledges through our School Active Travel Officer and Air Quality team.
- Officers have been liaising with other areas and the experience appears to have been
 - Make it a full legal order not a voluntary scheme
 - Work with 4-6 schools in the initial tranche over a 2 year period, and then as lessons are learnt rollout to two or three per year, as appropriate.
- Most schemes have short timed closures at the beginning and end of the school day. The way drivers are made aware of restrictions can vary depending on the school location, but outside of London (where camera enforcement can be used) most schemes rely on the installation of large signs at all entry points or / and collapsible or removable bollards at the main access points.
- In Bristol schools have been invited to express an interest and an assessment matrix is in development which assesses
 - the school’s location to determine whether the site is feasible (if the school is located on a main road at this time, they will not be considered for the pilot as the traffic impacts would be too great and might make AQ worse)
 - the other work travel planning being undertaken to ensure maximum benefit and rank the applications; Schools must have tried a broad range of other engagement and supporting measures before they are considered for school streets to increase the probability of success. A well engaged school is more likely to have an appetite for this type of scheme. Most successful schemes have a park and stride and so this forms one part of the assessment criteria
- Appendix 2 has the details of how the next steps proposed to pilot 2 or 3 sites as soon as possible

- **APPENDIX 1:**

Scrutiny feedback to the brief presentation (at Appendix 3) was:

- Issue of vendors in parks sat idling for long periods of time – can this be stopped?
 - Parks have carried out a programme of works to put electric hook up in parks where this is practical. It is our aim to move towards no idling engines by 2022.
 - 6 sites have had electric installed and 2 already had electric in place.
 - 5 are not let – to be re-advertised as no running engines (will need to use gas/electric to operate)
 - 1 is not let and is due to have electric installed
 - 1 has been withdrawn as not cost effective to put in electric
 - 3 we are allowing trading within parameters:
 - two are on carriageway and running a Euro 5 engine
 - one is using freezers that require less power.
- Buses and coaches parked on side of road idling
 - Use of soft enforcement by CEOs
 - Use of non-standard signage developed in Westminster
- Any approved signage to stop idling
 - Following a call for information from the Urban Transport Group, the only Highways signage that has been approved is in Westminster where a formal DfT authorisation process resulted in a sign being approved for use in Bus Stops and Coach bays with the text “Switch off Engine. Reduce emissions”.
- **People in their cars are more affected**
 - Could be part of the message of a behaviour change campaign
- **Risk of confusing messages outside schools with banners (don't want them to bring cars at all if not absolutely necessary)**
 - General acceptance that this is correct, but want to remember that children are the worst affected
 - Possible use of banners etc. at schools on main road where school streets not possible.
- **Use a targeted approach – specifically target behaviour change**
 - Raise the profile of it being generally socially unacceptable – so not only relying on enforcement
 - Bus backs considered suitable as effective in any case and well targeted by location
- **Discussion about retro fitting buses**
 - Buses cannot be retrofitted to switch off the engine when not moving, and turning on/off the engines on older buses is not simple, and results in the ticket machine and other devices being rebooted. Currently approx. 60 buses have stop/start technology

- However, we have been working with operators using central government funds to
 - retrofit 86 bus engines.
 - We have funding to retrofit a further 166 buses.
 - First are introducing 77 gas buses in the spring of next year to replace older, more polluting buses.
 - This will result in over 90% of the City's Bus Fleet being at Least EuroVI standard, meaning they are cleaner than a Euro 6 diesel car.
- **Parking officers to reinforce the message**
 - Parking officers can be tasked to reinforce the message, particularly if they observe taxis/buses idling.
- **Delivery companies and buses need to get the message out**
 - Behaviour change again – consider pushing the message through BIDs and the business community locally
- **A public health issue Suggested it may be worth asking public health if they have any resources that can be for this**
 - Work in progress – DPH meeting planned
 - Discuss how to work with the NHS as per Full Council steer
- Consider working with BNES
 - Not yet taken forward in any way. Awaiting Steer and induction of new executive members

APPENDIX 2: School Streets next steps

- Site Assessments - This will include identification of footway locations for signs; park and stride drop off points, capturing baseline data through hands up surveys, traffic volume and speed data including bikes using automatic traffic counts in a multitude of locations including surrounding roads. Where possible take air quality readings and undertake parking surveys and carry out postcode plots looking at the catchment areas to see if pupils live in 10 minute walking zones.
- Consultation and Engagement - This will include extensive engagement before implementation to assess perception of the each scheme through surveys gathering views on traffic issues, possible benefits and compliance of a potential scheme. An external stakeholder group for each pilot school will also be set up and will include the school contact, parents, governors, local residents, businesses and possibly the police (depending on the enforcement type). Officers will also continue to meet regularly with the Clean Air Parents Group representatives to update them on progress as it is made; this might potentially be formalised into an advisory group.
- Design and installation - Depends on scheme type but might include entry / exit signs, folding signs, physical measures and possible advanced warning signs. The traffic order will have also been progressed and an agreement reached over enforcement and a permit scheme / exemptions. Get agreement on who is responsible for day to day provision on schemes e.g. who is folding signs out of term time, or collapsing the bollards etc.
- Promotion / Comms - Promotion and awareness raising will be key to this project and through the engagement work officers will ensure residents / businesses have applied for permits (if this is the chosen method), organise a launch of the scheme, put up advanced warning signs and use social media outlets to let drivers know that the school street is closed for short times. Door knocking in the local surrounding streets and/or other methods of making local contact will also be applied.
- Evaluation - This would involve a repeat of the baseline surveys e.g. hands up, air quality, ATCs, parking and perceptions looking for improvements to road safety, air quality and decrease in car journeys and modal shift to active travel modes. Effects on traffic displacement would also be required and would be achieved with ATCs on surrounding roads and any specific businesses surveys to report a difference in trade. Officer would also need to report on enforcement and monitor no. permits given out. Case studies and testimonials are also great resources to help progress the following school street schemes.
- Officers have also been in contact with Sustrans who are applying to the Road Safety Trust to evaluate the impact of School Streets from a safety perspective, particularly on the influence on surrounding streets and traffic displacement. The funding is for the evaluation and some coordination of the programme and Sustrans are looking to work with 2 cities who are implementing school streets. They currently have agreement and sign off to work with Cardiff and would be keen to work with Bristol if the timing works.
- A budget for this is being considered at the time of writing.