

## **London Streetspace Programme (Harrow)**

### **School Streets Schemes - December 2020 / January 2021**

#### **Introduction**

We are making a real difference to our environment to encourage our residents to improve their health through active travel – all while reducing the chance of people catching Covid-19.

The Street spaces initiative will allow more space for people to safely walk or cycle in Harrow amid the coronavirus pandemic. Temporary cycle lanes and wider pavements and areas with reduced traffic flow are among the changes being made in many parts of the borough, thanks to Harrow Council working with TfL and Dft.

In May the Secretary of State for Transport issued statutory guidance under Section 18 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 to all highway authorities in England and the Secretary of State, Grant Shapps, describes the moment as:

*“a once in a generation opportunity to deliver a lasting transformative change in how we make short journeys in our towns and cities. According to the National Travel Survey, in 2017-18 over 40% of urban journeys were under 2 miles – perfectly suited to walking and cycling.”*

The guidance says that local authorities in areas with high levels of public transport use should take measures to reallocate road space to people walking and cycling to encourage active travel and enable social distancing due to the impact of social distancing on public transport capacity.

The Harrow Street Spaces programme took forward the government directive via Transport for London to deliver a range of active travel schemes including school streets schemes. These schemes are implemented on residential access roads to schools in order to create walking and cycling zones at the school opening and closing times in the week.

The schemes consist of restrictions on vehicular access at the morning and afternoon school drop off and pick up times. Exceptions are granted for vehicles belonging to residents and school staff in the zone. The school streets schemes have been implemented in 4 locations in the borough and the list of schemes is shown in the table below:

<b>SS-01</b>	Grimsdyke School, Hatch End
<b>SS-02</b>	Newton Farm School, Rayners Lane
<b>SS-03</b>	Marlborough School, Wealdstone
<b>SS-04</b>	Park High School, Stanmore, Middx.

#### **Methodology**

At the special meeting of TARSAP on 10<sup>th</sup> August it was recommended and subsequently agreed by the Deputy Leader on the 19<sup>th</sup> August that a review of the schemes would be conducted on a monthly basis to test the need for the measures to address the health crisis. The methodology to be used to assess the need for the schemes will take account of the following information:

- Pedestrian / cycling / vehicle activity (measured by counts)

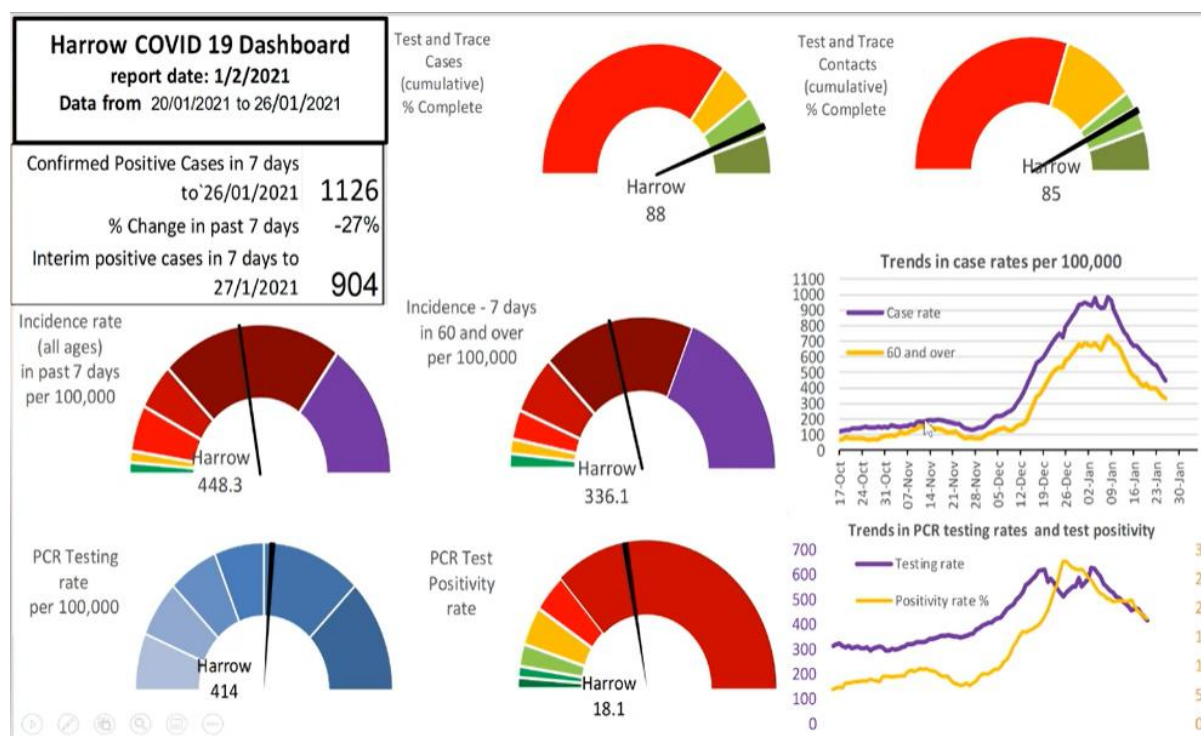
- Emergency services comments
- Bus services comments (TfL)
- Officer observations regarding operational performance
- Residents feedback
- Schools feedback

All of these factors will be reviewed, and a course of action recommended in this report.

The recommendation will be reviewed by the Portfolio Holder – Environment and Corporate Director – Community and the future of the schemes decided.

## Current situation with the pandemic

The latest position with the rate of infection in Harrow is shown in the chart below. New cases of Covid-19 remain at high levels across the borough but have decreased from the peak in mid-January. They are still more than 3 times higher than when the country went into the second lockdown. Hospital admissions are stable, but at a high level. Deaths have increased since the New Year and are predicted to remain at a high level for some weeks to come.



The government restrictions have changed constantly since they were first introduced in late March 2020 in order to contain the spread of the virus and take account of the changing situation across the country. These changes have had variable impacts on the demand to travel by all modes of transport. The changes in London and the impacts are summarised below.

Date	Measures in London	Impact on travel
23/03/2020	National lockdown (1) - stay home, non-essential shops and schools closed	Very high
13/05/2020	Relaxation 1 - outdoor recreation permitted	High
01/06/2020	Relaxation 2 - be at home overnight / meet outside with 6	Medium

	people	
04/07/2020	Relaxation 3 – stay alert, hospitality opens / meet up to 30 people / Covid secure guidance	Low
14/09/2020	Rule of six indoors / outdoors introduced	Low
25/09/2000	10pm curfew on hospitality	Low
14/10/2020	3 tier system introduced, London tier 2	Medium
05/11/2020	National lockdown (2) - non-essential business closed / meet 1 person only outside, schools open	High
02/12/2020	lockdown ends, 3 tier system reinstated - stricter restrictions on hospitality	Medium
19/12/2020	tier 4 added - similar to lockdown 2 rules, includes London, due to concerns about new variant of virus	High
30/12/2020	tier 4 extended to 75% of country	High
06/01/2021	National lockdown (3) - stay home, non-essential shops and schools closed	Very high

When considering the traffic data presented in this report it is necessary to consider the government restrictions in force at the time. The higher the impact of the restrictions then the lower the traffic flows.

### **Pedestrian / cycling / vehicle activity (measured by counts)**

Pedestrian and cycle activity counts and vehicle volume counts are being regularly undertaken at the sites. The pedestrian and cycle counts are taken at a mid-point in the scheme and repeat counts are undertaken at the same points for consistency. Both a weekday and weekend day are surveyed between 7am and 7pm to cover the busy periods. Surveys are undertaken by recording CCTV footage during the period of observation and later analysed by the survey company at their premises. Automatic traffic counters have also been used at each site to monitor traffic flows over the period of a week and calculate the average volume of daily vehicular traffic flow. The dates for data collection are as follows:

#### CCTV counts

- August 19<sup>th</sup>
- September 16<sup>th</sup>
- October 14<sup>th</sup>
- November 11<sup>th</sup>
- December 9<sup>th</sup>
- January 20<sup>th</sup>

#### Automatic traffic counters

- July 8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>
- September 16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>
- October 12<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>
- November 7<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>
- December 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>
- January 18<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>

The surveys were undertaken at the following locations as follows:

- Sylvia Avenue - east of Lyndon Avenue (SS-01)
- Sylvia avenue – north of Colburn Avenue (SS-01)
- Drake Road – east of Kings Road (SS-02)
- Drake Road – west of Alexandra Avenue (SS-02)
- Ravenswood Crescent – east of Kings Road (SS-02)
- Marlborough Hill – west of Badminton Close (SS-03)
- Marlborough Hill – east of Harrow View (SS-03)
- Burnell Gardens – south of Crowshott Avenue (SS-04)
- Thistlecroft Gardens – south of Crowshott Avenue (SS-04)

The table below gives details of the pedestrian, cycle and vehicle counts undertaken at the survey points.

<b>Morning</b>	<b>SS-01 Grimsdyke School</b>			<b>SS-02 Newton Farm School</b>			<b>SS-03 Marlborough School</b>			<b>SS-04 Park High School</b>		
	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles
July / August	12	5	125	35	1	161	175	11	306	11	0	74
September	874	3	159	398	15	254	1003	23	605	315	5	113
October	983	3	88	600	18	153	1087	13	365	48	2	77
November	1019	8	70	604	16	201	1113	12	258	297	7	68
December	961	8	71	584	10	195	994	10	337	192	3	78
January	143	3	76	88	2	95	205	3	256	33	0	56

<b>Afternoon</b>	<b>SS-01 Grimsdyke School</b>			<b>SS-02 Newton Farm School</b>			<b>SS-03 Marlborough School</b>			<b>SS-04 Park High School</b>		
	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles
July / August	3	1	80	5	3	153	69	4	269	5	0	80
September	713	2	104	343	14	226	896	10	569	284	5	58
October	938	1	47	511	20	116	1060	6	299	32	4	49
November	963	3	65	531	11	171	1070	11	268	232	4	47
December	896	6	52	533	9	151	1063	7	283	161	6	43
January	196	2	34	87	1	80	181	3	250	21	2	55

The counts in July / August reflect conditions prior to the schools opening, in September the conditions when the schools opened without a school streets scheme and thereafter the conditions with a school streets scheme operating up to December.

The vehicle flows at all sites clearly show an increase in September when the schools opened and then a reduction from October when the school streets scheme was introduced. Significantly the volume of pedestrians has increased at primary school sites in conjunction with the reduction in vehicles since September. This is likely to be as a consequence of more local walking to school. For Park High School the October data is not showing many pedestrians as the school was not open to students on that particular survey date. In January the third lockdown resulted in schools closing and this is reflected by the decrease in all travel modes.

The volume of cyclists has remained low despite the introduction of the school streets. This is probably due to the school street only improving conditions in the immediate vicinity of the school rather than over the whole of the route being used by cyclists between home and school. The whole journey experience is important to an uptake in cycling. It will take

much longer to change the uptake of cycling and this was likely to be the case early on in the trial. The weather conditions are also not favourable for cycling as the trial will run into autumn and winter.

### **Emergency services comments**

The Metropolitan Police, Fire & Rescue Service and Ambulance service have been contacted to seek their views about the impact of the school streets schemes on their respective services. No operational issues have been highlighted.

### **TfL bus services comments**

Transport for London oversee the commissioning and operation of bus services in London and they have been contacted to seek their views about the impact of the school streets schemes on bus services. No operational issues have been highlighted.

### **Officer observations regarding operational performance**

Officers have undertaken on-site observations periodically to check on the operation of the schemes.

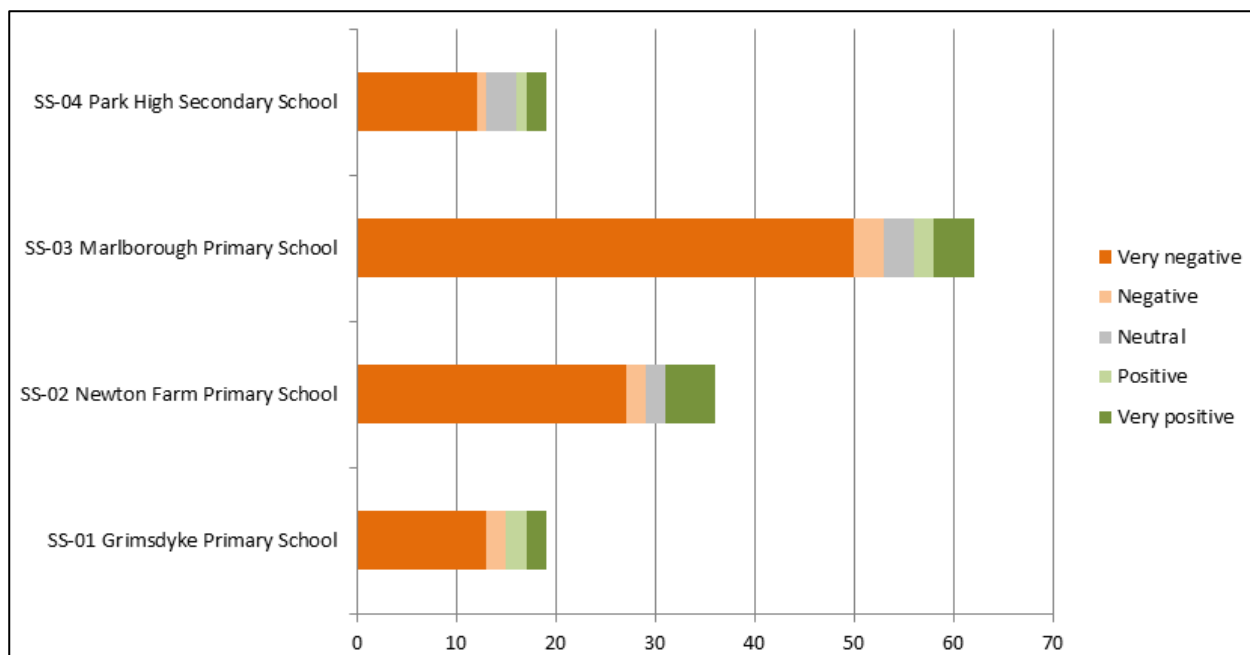
There is generally good compliance by vehicles within the restricted areas. Fixed CCTV enforcement is in place at Park High school and Grimsdyke school. The other sites are being enforced by the deployment of the camera cars. Currently enforcement is soft with only warning letters being issued to vehicles not complying with the restrictions. The introduction of hard enforcement with the issue of penalty charge notices will be considered at a later date.

The issue of permits to residents and school staff exempt from the restrictions was deployed smoothly and there have been very few operational issues. The web portals used for processing applications are functioning well.

A review is being undertaken of any potential parking and traffic issues caused by displaced drop off and pick up of pupils / students on neighbouring roads surrounding the restricted streets. This is a known potential consequence of school street schemes and will be regularly monitored.

### **Public engagement**

An engagement portal was setup at the beginning of October to facilitate the receipt of public comments for all of the on-going streetspace schemes trials. A summary of the feedback for school streets schemes in October can be seen in the table below.



The engagement feedback indicates a continuing level of unpopularity amongst the community towards these schemes. A more detailed analysis of the free comments received highlighted the following common issues:

- About 37% of responses were from residents living within the scheme, the remainder were non-residents travelling in the area.
- Some concerns were expressed that working parents can't adjust to the changes easily.
- Some concerns were expressed that traffic and parking has just been displaced away from the school and affects traffic congestion.
- There is an impact on tradesman or visitors needing to visit premises in restricted streets.
- Students being picked up and dropped off of by car takes longer because of having to park further away.
- There were many derogatory comments that were not substantiated with any reasons.

Most comments are a reaction to changes that affect lifestyles that rely heavily on using the private car and it is expected that making changes is something that will happen over a longer period of time. This is the experience of other London boroughs that have introduced similar schemes. The initial reaction to the schemes is understandably more negative as a consequence.

### **Schools feedback**

The Schools have been contacted to seek their views about the impact of the school streets schemes on the schools. No operational issues have been highlighted.

## **Options**

- The school streets schemes are retained until the next review is undertaken.
- The next review of the schemes is undertaken before the end of February.

## **Decision**

The schemes are to remain until the next review.