

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET1 December 2022Report by Head of Environment (Chief Planning Officer)OPTIONS FOR THE TIMED TRAFFIC RESTRICTION ON ACADEMY ROAD AT
GIFFNOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL AND FUTURE POLICY DEVELOPMENT**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to update Members on the outcomes of the timed traffic restriction ('School Street') on Academy Road at Giffnock Primary School and to outline possible future options for Academy Road and the development of a policy for timed traffic restrictions at schools in general.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Cabinet is asked to consider the following two options:
 - a. Option 1:
 - i. Note the ending of the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) for the timed traffic restriction at Academy Road on 6th December 2022.
 - ii. Approve the development of a policy and assessment criteria for the use of timed traffic restrictions at schools for future consideration by the Cabinet.
 - iii. Thereafter, use the agreed policy when assessing the suitability of roads for timed traffic restrictions at schools (including Academy Road).
 - b. Option 2:
 - i. Instruct the Roads Service to seek approval from the National Authority (Transport Scotland) for a six-month continuation of the existing TTRO. In the event that an extension is approved, the existing temporary restriction would continue on the same terms for a further 6 months to 6th June 2023 and a permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) would require to be promoted within that period.
 - ii. Approve the development of a policy and assessment criteria for the use of timed traffic restrictions at schools for future consideration by the Cabinet.
 - iii. Thereafter, use the agreed policy when assessing the suitability of roads for timed traffic restrictions at schools (including Academy Road).

BACKGROUND

3. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, East Renfrewshire Council's Education Department made the decision to prohibit parental access to school grounds during pick-up and drop-off times. This resulted in greater pressure on Academy Road as large numbers of parents and children congregated on the carriageway to maintain a safe distance from each other. It should be noted that the policy of restricting access to school grounds was temporary and is no longer in place.

4. In response, East Renfrewshire Council used powers afforded to them by Transport Scotland's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance on Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders and Notices to introduce a temporary timed traffic restriction on Academy Road during pick-up and drop-off times. This aimed to facilitate safer social distancing.
5. As the first example of a timed traffic restriction at a school in East Renfrewshire, this was also viewed as an opportunity to evaluate the outcomes of such measures (in the context of policy positions such as encouraging active travel, achieving net zero, and improving public health) as well as to understand the practical challenges and inform future plans related to school travel.
6. The timed traffic restriction at Academy Road commenced on 7 June 2021 and will expire at midnight on 6 December 2022. It prohibits most vehicles from the street during its hours of operation, but various exemptions are in place for residents, Blue Badge holders, and others.
7. The existing TTRO cannot continue to be in force beyond 6 December 2022 without special permission being given from the National Authority, Transport Scotland, as the maximum period for a temporary traffic order is 18 months. Transport Scotland will only consider granting permission for a 6-month extension to the temporary order if it is the intention of the Council to promote a new permanent TRO which reproduces the provisions of the temporary Order.
8. Any new permanent TRO would need to be promoted on alternative grounds as the COVID-19 reasons are no longer valid.

REPORT

9. East Renfrewshire Council engaged extensively with the school community, local residents and other stakeholders; and monitored the outcomes of the temporary restriction both internally and by appointing an external consultant. In summary, this work indicates that:
 - a. The introduction of the measures positively correlated with a slightly increased rate of active school travel.
 - b. The measures are perceived positively among the majority of the school community and local residents.
 - c. There was a slight reduction in the number of motor vehicles using Academy Road during the restricted periods and a minimal reduction in vehicle numbers overall during the total vehicle count period. This suggests that some drivers may have adjusted their time of travel to avoid the restriction.
 - d. There is some evidence of traffic and parking displacement from Academy Road and Orchard Park to neighbouring St Catherine's Road and Rosslea Drive, although this does not exceed available on-street parking capacity.

10. There are two options for the future of the timed traffic restriction on Academy Road.

11. Option 1: Note the ending of the existing Temporary TRO at Academy Road and develop a policy for future use of timed traffic restrictions at schools as per paragraph 2 (a) above.

The benefit of this option is that it would allow the development of a policy and assessment criteria to use when considering timed traffic restrictions at schools prior to any permanent TROs being promoted at any school. Therefore there would be no risk of a precedent being established in advance of the policy/criteria being properly considered and agreed.

Roads at schools, including Academy Road, could then be assessed against that agreed policy/criteria and their suitability determined accordingly without any precedent having already been set.

This option would, however, result in the timed traffic restriction ending at Academy Road on 6 December which will be unwelcome by the school community who strongly support the restriction which is currently in place.

12. Option 2: Seek approval from Transport Scotland to continue the TTRO at Academy Road for a further 6 months, promote a permanent TRO for Academy Road and develop a policy for future use of timed traffic restrictions at schools as per paragraph 2 (b) above.

Approval of an application for a six-month continuation of the TTRO by the National Authority (Transport Scotland) is conditional upon there being an intention to continue the existing restriction on a permanent and uninterrupted basis.

The Roads Service would therefore be required to promote a permanent TRO, albeit under alternative reasoning (as Covid is no longer a valid reason), so as to continue the existing restrictions with no alteration to their current provisions. The benefit of this option would be that the existing temporary Order would remain in place whilst a permanent TRO was promoted.

This option would, however, set a precedent in advance of a policy and assessment criteria being properly considered and agreed by Cabinet which could potentially lead to a demand from other school communities for similar restrictions in what could be determined by future policy to be unsuitable locations.

It is important, therefore, to note that should this be the preferred option of the Cabinet then no further timed traffic restrictions at schools should be considered in advance of a policy and assessment criteria being agreed. Should this option be chosen then it would also be necessary to subsequently assess and reconsider the suitability of Academy Road against the final agreed policy/criteria.

CONSULTATION

13. During the trial, a School Street Working Group met approximately every eight weeks and functioned as a forum for discussion of issues related to the trial. Membership comprised ERC officers, elected members, Police Scotland officers, the school Head Teacher, and members of the school Parent Council.

14. Public consultation was conducted with the school community and residents from May to November 2021, primarily online through the Commonplace Spaces for People platform.
15. An ERC officer and members of the external consultancy team visited Giffnock Primary School in April 2022 for a workshop attended by the school's Junior Road Safety Officers, a group of Primary 5 pupils.
16. Advice from Legal Services was sought and their advice is reflected in the report.
17. ERC officers investigated the experiences of other local authorities in Scotland which have implemented, or are planning to implement, School Streets on a temporary and/or permanent basis. This investigation will be further expanded when considering and developing the proposed policy and assessment criteria.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

18. This project has involved close partnership working with Education, Police Scotland, the staff and parent council of Giffnock Primary School, and elected members.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL

19. The development of a policy and assessment criteria for timed traffic restrictions at schools will require some staff resource (both Options).
20. The continuation of the timed traffic restriction at Academy Road (Option 2) will require some staff resource to promote a permanent TRO and to allow continued administration of the permitting system.
21. The resource implications of a future policy for timed traffic restrictions at other schools will need to be considered as part of that policy development.

Equality Fairness & Rights Impact Assessment

22. An Equalities Fairness & Rights Impact Assessment (EFRIA) screening has been completed as part of these proposals and there is no need to complete a separate EFRIA for this report. The development of a policy for timed traffic restrictions would require an EFRIA.

Climate Change Impact Assessment

23. A Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) screening has been completed as part of these proposals and there is no need to complete a separate CCIA for this report. The development of a policy for timed traffic restrictions would require a CCIA.

CONCLUSIONS

24. The timed traffic restriction at Academy Road has successfully achieved a modest increase in active travel and a slight reduction in vehicle traffic on Academy Road during the restricted time period. It is recognised, however, that some vehicular traffic associated with the 'school run' has been displaced to surrounding streets and the issues created by COVID-19 restrictions are no longer relevant.
25. Support for a timed traffic restriction across the school community is strong. Any loss of the restriction will be unwelcome, regardless of any alternative proposals which may ultimately be offered.
26. Two options are available for the future of the timed traffic restriction at Academy Road as detailed above.
27. Both options include the development of a policy and assessment criteria for the use of timed traffic restrictions at schools for future consideration of the Cabinet.
28. The benefits and drawbacks of each option are as detailed above.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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 - ii. Approve the development of a policy and assessment criteria for the use of timed traffic restrictions at schools for future consideration by the Cabinet.
 - iii. Thereafter, use the agreed policy when assessing the suitability of roads for timed traffic restrictions at schools (including Academy Road).

REPORT AUTHOR

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31. Report date: November 2022

BACKGROUND PAPERS

32. Background papers: N/A

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