

REGULATORY COMMITTEE
13th APRIL 2005

BARFORD ST. MARTIN: B3089 - SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOL SCHEME

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval to make permanent the temporary traffic management scheme in West Street, Barford St. Martin.

Background

2. Funding was allocated by the Committee from the "Taking Action on School Journeys" budget to a Safer Routes to School scheme involving a widening of the footway along the frontage of Barford St. Martin Primary School on the B3089. The desirability of a footway opposite the school and widening of the existing footway outside the school was identified in the school's Travel Plan in order to address safety concerns.
3. Due to insufficient carriageway width to accommodate a two-way traffic flow with widened footways, a priority system was designed to introduce a safe working arrangement.
4. Copies of the drawing showing the proposed priority scheme were sent to residents in the vicinity of the school and comments were invited. At the November 2003 meeting of Barford St. Martin Parish Council a presentation was given by officers of the County Council on the detail of the scheme and the representations received from residents. Twenty-eight members of the public were present at the meeting.
5. The Parish Council agreed to adopt the proposals on an experimental basis with a review after a period of 12 months operation. Monitoring of traffic flows and speeds was requested over the experimental period, including traffic on Mount Lane and Horse Shoe Lane where concern had been expressed regarding their use as rat-runs to avoid the priority scheme. Also the effect of any queuing back to the junction of the B3089 and A30 needed to be monitored.
6. In January 2004 a meeting was held with the Chairman of the Parish Council and the Headteacher of the school to finalise the details of the scheme and to agree the monitoring arrangements.
7. The experimental scheme, shown on the drawing at **Appendix 1**, was implemented during the Easter school holidays in April 2004.

Main Considerations for the Council

Monitoring

8. Vehicle speeds and flows were surveyed in West Street, near the school, on four occasions between February 2004 and February 2005. The surveys were undertaken for seven full days on each occasion during school term time. The results showed minor fluctuations in the number of vehicles using West Street

consistent with normal seasonal variations. Slight reductions in the speed of traffic were recorded.

9. Random visits were made to observe the operation of the priority arrangement. These highlighted that for the majority of the time the system worked well with general compliance by motorists. However, it was noted that on occasions motorists failed to give way resulting in a two-way traffic flow within the narrowed section of the carriageway. A further narrowing of the carriageway from the current 4 metres width to 3.5 metres should overcome this problem. On no occasions were long tailbacks or queuing back to the A30 junction observed. No injury accidents were recorded during the experimental period.
10. In response to the concerns of possible rat-running, similar traffic counts were undertaken in Mount Lane and Horse Shoe Lane. Over the 12 months experimental period the traffic flows in Mount Lane decreased and no significant change in the traffic flows in Horse Shoe Lane has been recorded.
11. On 16th March 2005 the Parish Council held a public meeting to consider the priority scheme. The meeting was well attended by residents and other members of the public. A briefing paper setting out the results of the monitoring was presented by officers, a copy of which is attached at **Appendix 2**. After hearing comments from those attending the meeting the Parish Councillors voted three for the complete removal of the scheme and three for making the experimental scheme permanent.
12. The school considered very carefully how the scheme has affected the health and safety of pupils and questionnaires were sent to parents. Of the 37 families contacted 18 responded. All but one considered the scheme was successful and should be made a permanent feature. The Headteacher stated that the widening of the paths had proved significantly beneficial to parents and children. However, she has requested that the carriageway be narrowed to overcome the incidence of two vehicles attempting to pass one another.
13. The Chair of the School Governors indicated that the Governors would like to record their complete support for the scheme and their desire to have it in place permanently. However, a further narrowing of the carriageway and clearer signing have been requested.
14. A number of residents have expressed concerns regarding the impact of the scheme. In particular, delays to traffic, driver behaviour in the use of the priority system and reports of driving on the footways being a regular occurrence. Further concern has been expressed about the effects on surface water drainage in the area, although it has been accepted that no such incidents occurred during the experimental period.

Environmental Impact of the Recommendation

15. The provision of enhanced footways should encourage parents and children to walk to school as an alternative to using the car, with obvious environmental benefits.

Risk Assessment

16. Should the experimental scheme be removed, there is a risk that the targets of the school Travel Plan will be more difficult to achieve.

Financial Implications

17. At its meeting on 2nd March 2005, the Regulatory Committee allocated funding from the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport budget to cover the cost of making the scheme permanent.

Options Considered

18. To remove the experimental scheme.
19. To make the experimental scheme permanent with amendments.

Reasons for Recommendation

20. The success criteria for the scheme were set as follows to reflect the design objectives of the scheme:-
- School Travel Plan aims - Pedestrian safety has been observed to have benefited. This has been confirmed by comments from the school and parents.
 - Concerns expressed by residents and others affected by the scheme - The monitoring carried out during the experimental period indicates that the concerns expressed prior to the introduction of the scheme have not materialised.
 - Parents' and children's views - The responses to the parent questionnaires indicate that the scheme is considered a success

Recommendation

21. That the experimental priority in West Street, Barford St. Martin, be made permanent subject to a further narrowing of the carriageway of the B3089 to 3.5 metres.

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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

Correspondence with the Parish Council, School and School Governors