

School Road Traffic Issues – experimental road closure

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is a scheme being implemented?

School Road has become unacceptably dangerous. On a daily basis, pedestrians – very often including children – are driven at by vehicles mounting and travelling along the pavements, frequently at speed. This problem is not limited to one area of the road, but in fact occurs along several stretches. There have been countless near misses and it is only a matter of time before there is a serious injury or fatality. Daily occurrences of gridlock also lead to road rage, anti-social behaviour and dangerous driving. Furthermore, vehicles regularly travel well in excess of the 20mph speed limit and this is a particular risk where the road and pavements narrow at either end of the road.

Why a road closure?

School Road is a residential road, not built for through traffic due to its narrow width and many bends. However, it has high volumes of traffic as it is used continually as a cut-through from Moseley to Kings Heath and vice-versa. Creating a block for vehicles will mean drivers will have to take alternative routes, all of which will be longer and more convoluted. Similar schemes in other areas have seen decreases in volumes of traffic as drivers re-route their journeys and the area becomes a 'Low Traffic Neighbourhood'.

Why is the closure located between Greenhill Road and Cotton Lane?

By placing the closure at this point, drivers using School Road as a cut through will be forced to travel all the way down to Billesley Lane, or up to the A435 to re-join School Road further along. This increase in the length of their journeys means School Road will no longer be a convenient cut-through, thereby decreasing the volume of traffic. Placing a single block anywhere else along School Road would be less effective as parallel roads, such as Cotton Lane or Clarence Road, could be used as a quick alternative to get back onto School Road.

Have other solutions been considered?

Yes, but many would create further problems:

- **Removing parking**
This would allow traffic to flow more freely but would likely lead to higher volumes of traffic and higher average vehicle speeds as School Road became an even more attractive bypass to the A435.
- **Passing bays**
Passing bays exist along sections of School Road due to dropped kerbs but are often ignored by drivers. Limited visibility due to the curve of the road means that drivers are unable to see if passing bays are empty when committing to passing parked cars. Passing bays rely on drivers to drive considerately. When bays naturally occur due to gaps in the parking, pavement driving still occurs.

- **Moving parked cars onto the opposite side of the road between Cambridge Road and Prospect Road**
Drivers pulling out of Blenheim Road would not have a clear sightline to manoeuvre safely and this would not address problems on other sections of School Road.
- **Creating a series of one-way sections along School Road or neighbouring roads**
A series of one-way roads would have a similar effect to the road closure, dispersing traffic in the area, but would likely lead to higher average vehicle speeds requiring extensive and often ineffective speed calming measures.
- **Bollards and fences on the pavement**
Although these would protect pedestrians on the pavement it would make it much harder for those with wheelchairs and pushchairs to pass as the pavement is narrow. Bollards and fences would not alleviate the problems of gridlock and road rage due to the volume of traffic using a residential road, narrow and curved in nature. They also endanger pedestrians crossing the road as they cannot easily get onto the pavement if in danger.

What will the benefits of the road closure be?

Once drivers have altered the routes they take, the only traffic along School Road should be deliveries, waste collection and residents and visitors setting out from or returning to homes. Low traffic neighbourhoods create more attractive environments for residents, pedestrians and cyclists and create a safer environment for children to walk to school.

What traffic assessments or modelling has been carried out to inform this scheme?

A Traffic Impact Study for School Road was carried out in 2017, and relevant information from this is being used to inform the current proposals. Further traffic counts are being arranged where required, and further traffic modelling will also be carried out using the SATURN model to determine the expected behaviour of traffic after School Road is closed to through traffic. Trialling this road closure is the most accurate way to determine the impact on traffic flow while having an immediate impact on improving safety.

What is an 'experimental' road closure?

An experimental traffic order is being used to trial the road closure for a maximum of 18 months. During the first six months of operation, anyone can submit written comments or objections. The council will monitor the road during this closure to see whether traffic is reduced and road safety improved. Before the closure could be made permanent, a statutory process would need to be followed which includes publication of notice and formal consultation.

Where can I find out more?

You can visit www.birmingham.gov.uk/schoolrd and/or attend ward meetings where low traffic neighbourhoods and the status of the scheme will be discussed.