

**Minutes****PROPERTY, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT  
SELECT COMMITTEE****18 October 2023****Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre****SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW INTO THE COUNCIL'S ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVE  
AND ACTIVITIES AROUND THE BOROUGH'S SCHOOLS** (*Agenda Item 5*)

The Chairman introduced the item highlighting that the first witness session for the Select Committee's review into road safety initiatives and activities around the Borough's schools would focus on evidence gathering from internal officers and the relevant Cabinet Member. With the following session focussing on external stakeholders such as school representatives and pupils.

The Chairman welcomed the witnesses to the meeting and thanked them for attending. Witnesses for this session included:

- Councillor Jonathan Bianco - Deputy Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport
- David Knowles – Head of Transportation and Town Centre Projects
- Sophie Wilmot – Senior Transport Planner
- Lisa Mayo – Road Safety and School Travel Manager
- Steve Austin – Traffic, Parking, Road Safety and School Travel Team Manager

In giving an overview of road safety around the Borough's schools, officers stressed the importance of having a working partnership between the Council and Hillingdon's schools. Of the dozens of schools across the Borough, each school was different in terms of its students, road environment, accessibility, outlook and attitudes. The Council aims to collaborate with the Borough's schools although it requires responsiveness from the schools themselves, which varied from school to school. Where the Council does work with schools, officers can offer a range of tools and projects to help improve road safety in the local vicinity of schools, these were outlined further in the report.

The Committee heard from Lisa Mayo, Road Safety and School Travel Manager, who's remit included the School Travel and Road Safety Team (STaRS). The team ensure the safety and well-being of students on their journeys to and from school; working closely with schools, parents, and local communities to promote safer and more sustainable travel options for students and develop Transport for London (TfL) Accredited School Travel Plans. The STaRS Team including a manager, two officers, a Borough Cycling Support Officer, a team of Practical Pedestrian Trainers, a team of cycle instructors, and the School Crossing Patrol Officers (SCPOs). The team was available to work with any school in the Borough, not just those maintained by Hillingdon as the local education authority.

The Committee were informed that recent changes had taken place regarding the naming of TfL's road safety education programmes; since September 2023, all road safety education programmes now came under the umbrella of TfL Travel for Life.

The Committee sought clarification regarding the Council's School Crossing Patrol Officers (SCPOs) as to the reasons why their numbers had dwindled in recent years, why it was difficult to recruit new SCPOs, and what was being done to combat the difficulty in recruiting. Officers highlighted that SCPOs tended to be very dedicated personnel, likely to be of an older generation and often had a link to the school at which they operated as an SCPO for example as a parent or ex-parent of a pupil at the school. It was a notoriously difficult role to recruit into given the unusual daily working hours through all seasons and there was a huge challenge in finding the right people for the role. Some neighbouring London Boroughs had suspended their SCPO programmes indefinitely where Hillingdon still had 12 SCPOs. By way of clarification, officers informed the Committee that, in terms of what was being done to ensure road safety was maintained, officers were looking at alternative methods. Engineering means were able to compensate for a lack of SCPOs in many cases and more investment in road safety engineering was deemed to be a more appropriate use of efforts due to the difficulty in recruiting SCPOs; more vivid and suitably located pedestrian crossings were highlighted as useful engineering means of helping to ensure road safety at the start and end of the school day. The Committee noted that engineering solutions were among the best solutions that can be achieved and discussions between officers and any schools identified as in need of possible assistance were paramount to identifying what kind of help could be delivered. Officers highlighted a recent example of productive cooperation between Council officers and St Helens College who were in need of improvements to an adjacent pedestrian crossing, it was noted that the school were a useful partner which resulted in the necessary crossing improvements being implemented.

The Committee discussed with officers the possibility of promoting the SCPO roles as a volunteer position among parents at schools. Officers confirmed that schools had been approached to this effect in the past and it was regarded as an additional responsibility that staff and parents were not willing to take on; this was respected by officers as the primary function of schools and staff was education matters. Members sought clarification whether an engineering approach was more cost-effective than SCPOs; it was noted that there had been instances of schools having a member of staff, and in some instances a SCPO, present at traffic lights merely to press the zebra crossing button which was clearly an inefficient use of time.

With regard to the free Adult Cycle Training that was due to resume in 2024 following the Covid-19 pandemic, it was highlighted that a trial session had taken place in mid-October 2023 to scope the delivery of these sessions going forward; the trial was a success and Members were encouraged by the commencement of these sessions from April to October 2024. Members also sought clarification regarding the attendance data around Cycle Training/Bikeability schemes. Officers noted that they report the attendance of these schemes to the Bikability Trust quarterly and that this information could be provided for the Committee.

The Committee queried the impact that the rise in popularity of electric bikes was having on the delivery of cycle safety programmes. Officers confirmed that there were concerns regarding the power and speed of e-bikes, it was noted that it was an emerging area and

advice may need to be forthcoming. The Council had issued advice previously on e-scooters and there was a possibility that similar such advice would be needed.

The Committee noted that a lot of the secondary schools in the Borough were academies and wanted to know what challenges officers faced when communicating with these schools. Officer confirmed that, following the Covid-19 pandemic, there had been a steady return to engagement from academies in the Borough, however it was noted that there were challenges with regard to engagement. All of the schemes offered by the Council were free of charge but it was dependent on the appetite from the schools as to whether they take up the Council's offer. Officers regularly approached all varieties of schools to offer sessions but the response received was dependent on the schools' willingness to engage. If concerns had been raised from residents or parents regarding specific schools and their road safety conditions then the team would be inclined to use local Ward Councillors as a means of facilitating engagement from schools.

The Committee particularly praised officers efforts with regard to Practical Pedestrian Training where the report had stated:

*"In 2013/14, Hillingdon trained 5310 children in both KS1&2. In 2022/2023, the borough has trained 13,484 pupils ranging from 3 to 11 years old. This identifies a 154% increase in 9 years."*

It was confirmed that this increase could be attributed to the improved levels of engagement and communication between officers and schools over that time period. In comparison to other London Boroughs, it was noted that Hillingdon was highly regarded in the delivery of these types of sessions. The Chairman confirmed this as a member of the London Road Safety Council. Hillingdon was in the minority of Boroughs that provide these schemes in-house, it was noted that a number of London Borough's outsourced the delivery of these schemes.

The Committee noted that the 'Safe Drive Stay Alive' programme was no longer being funded by TfL. Since the removal of funding for this programme, TfL had developed a similar programme called 'Travel Smart' which touched upon cycling and pedestrian safety in addition to driving, the resource had a quiz element to it; it was noted that the new resource was engaging but it lacked the emotional impact of the 'Safe Drive Stay Alive' sessions. Officers highlighted that Hillingdon was the only London Borough to have delivered this programme in schools, however the future of 'Travel Smart' was uncertain as TfL had put the programme on hold.

The Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport addressed the Committee noting that in the last year there had only been one petition heard with regard to road safety specifically around the vicinity of a school in the Borough. It was noted that, on occasion there were requests to reduce the speed limit around some schools to 20mph; whilst the Cabinet Member was reluctant to consider 20mph zones generally, the exception to that was around the Borough's schools where further consideration of these requests and the circumstances would be made. The Cabinet Member emphasised the road safety schemes offered to schools for free by the Council and sought to highlight the need for the Borough's schools to engage with these programmes where there would be any road safety concerns as education of these matters was important in improving

the road safety risk. On a separate level, it was noted that the Borough utilised other means of road safety around schools including zigzag lines by the entrance.

The Committee congratulated officers on the excellent work they did educating the Borough's children in road safety matters at such a formative and important age. However, it was noted that a common issue communicated to Ward Councillors regarding road safety around schools was the behaviour of parents; instances of blocking driveways, double parking and inconsiderate parking were endemic at the start and end of the school day.

The Committee thanked officers for providing a list of schools whereby engineering measures were proposed in the coming years and were minded to explore what further detail there was for school related engineering measures and proposals in the 2023/24 year as these would currently be in various stages of development.

The Chairman thanked officers for attending and congratulated them on the positive work they do for the Borough.

**RESOLVED: That the Select Committee used the first witness session of the review to broaden understanding of the Council's practical and strategic approach to road safety around the Borough's schools.**

**Minutes****PROPERTY, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT  
SELECT COMMITTEE****14 November 2023****HILLINGDON**  
LONDON**Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre**

**42. SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW INTO THE COUNCIL'S ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES AROUND THE BOROUGH'S SCHOOLS - WITNESS SESSIONS 2**  
*(Agenda Item 5)*

The Chairman introduced the item and welcomed a number of witnesses to the meeting with regard to the Committee's major scrutiny review into road safety initiatives and activities around the Borough's schools. It was noted that this session would focus on gathering evidence from external stakeholders such as school representatives, travel leads and pupils.

The Chairman welcomed the witnesses to the meeting and thanked them for attending. Witnesses for this session included:

- Lisa Mayo - Road Safety and School Travel Manager
- Danielle Stanley-Watts - School Travel and Road Safety (STaRS) Officer
- Rayna Ramtohol-Butler – Representative from Grange Park Junior School (School Travel Plan Lead)
- Leo Harrington - Representative from St Helen's College (School Travel Plan Lead)
- Sharon Cargill - Representative from St Helen's College
- Charlee Green – Junior Travel Ambassador, St Helen's College
- Raiden Bhabara – Junior Travel Ambassador, St Helen's College

The two Junior Travel Ambassadors (JTAs) from St Helen's College addressed the Committee delivering a presentation and summary of their work on the JTA programme. They noted how proactive the programme was and informed the Committee of a number of different projects and activities the JTAs had engaged in, including:

- The JTAs submitted a Dragon's Den style pitch to apply for funding for their projects.
- They ran a comic strip competition for students of St Helen's College years 2 – 6 with prizes for the winners and entrants including a road safety box with high visibility clothing and cycle helmets.
- The St Helens College JTAs had also won an award for 'top road safety influencers', the award was presented at an evening event held at the Kennington Oval.
- They had written to Blue Peter to propose the introduction of a new road safety Blue Peter badge to raise awareness for road safety within the younger community. The JTAs had created some eye-catching designs to go with the

letter, unfortunately they were unsuccessful, however in their response, Blue Peter were supportive of the children's efforts.

- They noted that the Hillingdon School Travel and Road Safety (STaRS) Team had run sessions with the school promoting road safety and various projects that the pupils could take part in.
- Other projects run by the JTAs at their school included their weekly meetings, a walk to school loyalty card scheme, Be Bright Be Seen days, having police officers attend the school to teach pupils about speed awareness, Parents Parking Pledges and a JTA suggestion box.

The Committee commended the JTAs and the staff supporting them on the work they were doing for the safety of pupils, staff, parents and residents around their school, Members commented that it was important to have a good level of enthusiasm and engagement at both student and staff levels. It was noted that there were six JTA positions at St Helen's College, the students were asked to apply for the positions in the style of a job application. It was noted that there were over 20 applications for the JTA positions. It also was noted that the JTA role would soon be rebranded by Transport for London to Travel for Life Explorers (TfL Explorers). Officers noted that they would look into contacting other London Boroughs to see if it would be possible to adopt a cross London approach to taking forward the JTAs idea of a bespoke road safety Blue Peter badge.

In terms of suggestions that the witnesses had for actions that could improve the levels of road safety around their schools, it was highlighted that encouraging parents who drive to school to use the correct locations for drop-off/pick-up, and to adopt usage of the Park and Stride maps which detailed the locations at which parents could drop-off/pick-up whilst causing the least disruption to the school and highways in the immediate vicinity of the school. A further prominent issue that was primarily caused by parents of pupils at the schools was inconsiderate parking and blocking of residents driveways during pick-up and drop-off, it was a huge issue that caused considerable amounts of disorder at the school gates on a regular basis. The JTAs had attempted to combat this by installing "Think before you park" signs at the school gates.

The Committee highlighted that engagement with schools was paramount and discussed the difficulties of engaging with schools who were less willing to reach out and access the positive projects that the Council offered. Officers noted that every school willing to engage would receive support from the STaRS Team. The school representatives present highlighted that programmes such as the JTAs were reliant on school leaderships willingness to put in the additional work required to facilitate them, this enthusiasm from school staff was seen as the crux of making programmes such as the JTAs viable.

School representatives highlighted that a key thing the Council could do to assist schools in cooperating with parents and residents on road safety matters was to give schools effective and comprehensive advice as to what they could do as schools to intervene, communicate and advise parents and residents when instances of inconsiderate parking were taking place.

It was highlighted that parking restrictions had been implemented outside of a number of schools which were deemed incredibly useful and effective by school staff in terms

of alleviating pressures; however, the levels of enforcement varied and once parents were aware that they may not receive any enforcement action, they were more willing to disregard the restrictions and park illegally.



## **Minutes**

### **PROPERTY, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE**

**10 January 2024**

**Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre**

**49. SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW INTO THE COUNCIL'S ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES AROUND THE BOROUGH'S SCHOOLS - WITNESS SESSION 3**  
*(Agenda Item 5)*

The Committee considered its third and final witness session on its review into the Council's Road Safety Initiatives and Activities Around the Borough's Schools.

**Witness testimony from local resident**

Mr Rakesh Kumar, a local resident who lived in close vicinity of a school, addressed the Committee. The Committee was informed that on Wood End Green Road there were several education establishments all near each other.

Concerns were expressed about the traffic and safety issues caused by school-related activities in the area. It was noted that the proposed development at the school would cause even further issues with traffic congestion and road safety. Issues highlighted included chaotic road conditions during drop-off and pick-up times, lack of bus stops, disregard for parking rules, and the need for better traffic management and safety measures. The school days started early from 7.30am and activities went on until 6pm where local residents were impacted by school related parking violations and traffic. There was often anti-social behaviour including beeping, swearing and near miss fatal accidents with children crossing roads. The traffic on the road was described as 'horrendous' with 'wild west' driving tactics.

Solutions such as improved infrastructure, increased awareness through multilingual communication, and the possibility of bringing certain services like CCTV monitoring in-house to enhance community involvement. It was also suggested that students become involved in addressing parent behaviour and parking enforcement was undertaken more regularly. There was an overall concern for the safety and well-being of children, residents and the community.

During Member discussions it was noted that there were similar school and road safety issues across the borough. Schools, parents and the Council all had a responsibility to put measures in place to uphold road safety particularly near schools.

The Committee thanked the witness for attending and their frank account.

**Witness testimony from a teacher and representatives from Youth Travel Ambassadors (YTA), Guru Nanak Sikh Academy**



The Committee heard from Ms Marina Botros, a teacher at Guru Nanak Sikh Academy and a number of Youth Travel Ambassadors who all provided an insight into the different activities undertaken to increase road safety and suggestions for improvements.

It was noted that there had already been a lot of work undertaken between the school, Transport for London and the Council to encourage sustainable methods of school drop offs and pick ups.

Members heard about the YTA's experience with zebra crossings, cycle lanes and walking groups. It was noted that there were issues with the right turn junction on Springfield Road and concerns were raised regarding abandoned vehicles in the area which were sometimes left for months.

It was suggested that staggered drop offs and pick ups, better signage and working with local businesses to manage traffic congestion in the area could improve the situation. The Committee was informed that the YTA hosted competitions to encourage students to ride and walk to school.

In terms of how parents were being engaged with, it was reported that coffee mornings took place, correspondence from the school was sent out and students often relayed the message to be more mindful of the safety issues caused around drop offs and pick ups.

The YTA were encouraged to speak to local businesses in the area to highlight the issues and discuss proposed solutions to manage the issues.

The Committee welcomed initiatives such as the walking group with older students encouraging younger students to walk to school and alleviate any parental safety concerns.

It was acknowledged that Guru Nanak Sikh Academy was located in an usual location with many industrial sites nearby and commercial businesses.

The Committee noted the YTA's passion for road safety. Members were pleased to hear from YTA and thanked them for the useful and positive contribution to the review.

**Witness testimony from Mr Sidhu, headteacher at Guru Nanak Sikh Academy**

The Committee heard about the school's alternative car park at Minnet Although Minnet country car park was available for car parking on a daily basis. Although the use of this car park helped during rush hour times, many parents were often in a rush so did not always use the car park. Staff members usually directed parents to areas of safe parking and ensured the flow movement of traffic. There were some safety issues with using the Minnet country car park however the introduction of lighting and CCTV could improve the situation. .

A new initiative had been introduced encouraging parents to use the Lombardy car park, a 10-minute walk from the school. Students were encouraged to walk to school as much as possible particularly as many children lived nearby. This initiative had been welcomed by parents.

In response to questions about the use of the Lombardy car park, it was noted that parents and children usually travelled underbridge to attend the school and there were some safety issues. There was a good relationship with the Safer Neighbourhoods Police Team but it was noted that it would be difficult to deploy someone on a daily basis. It acknowledged that this area needed to be looked into particularly in relation to lighting. In terms of managing parent behaviours such as parking on pavements and blocking driveways, correspondence was sent from the school through a regular newsletter and road safety was always an agenda item for the school's Health and Safety Committee. It was noted that some schools had used a "name and shame" policy for parents violating rules and it had worked to prevent road safety issues.

It was agreed that educating children about road safety was a good way to hold parents accountable.

There was an issue with abandoned lorries and enforcement help was requested.

The Committee thanked all the witnesses for their attendance and useful input into the review. The Committee was pleased to hear from a diverse range of witnesses. It was clear to the Committee that discussions emphasised the importance of collaboration between the school, local authorities, and parents to address safety concerns and traffic issues around school areas.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the evidence received.**