

12 July 2022

To all School and Academy Trust Headteachers and Chairs of Governors

Dear colleagues

As another academic year draws to a close, I wanted to take the opportunity to say a huge thank you for everything you have done to support Derbyshire children and their families over the past 12 months.

It's been another extremely busy year where we continue to find new meaning to the word "unprecedented", but I'm so proud of how well our schools and academies have risen to the challenges being thrown at us in this new post-pandemic era. I know from speaking with many of you how hard you are all working to keep giving our children the best possible start in life and on behalf of the county I want to say how much we appreciate and value everything you do.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to highlight a new initiative we are looking to pilot with some of you during the next academic year, which we hope will help to deal with some of the parking and road safety issues that I know many of our schools struggle with, while also promoting more sustainable modes of transport and improving air quality for our young people and their families. Despite improvements in the air quality in England over the previous decades, it remains the highest environmental risk factor. For children and young people, however, the effects are even greater as their bodies are still developing.

You will hopefully already be aware of the huge amount of work Derbyshire County Council does to support sustainable transport to school and I'm sure many of you will have met Rob Bounds who leads on this with initiatives such as:

- Modeshift STARS – the national accreditation scheme for School Travel Plans – [www.modeshiftstars.org](http://www.modeshiftstars.org)
- Travel Smart week – our twice-yearly campaign to promote active travel to school – [www.derbyshire.gov.uk/travelsmart](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/travelsmart)

As well as delivering practical activities such as Scooter Smart training and Balanceability alongside promoting national campaigns such as Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel, National Clean Air Day, and Bike Week.

Some local authorities in other parts of the country have started to trial a scheme known as "School Streets", to help where some of the issues are most acute. School Streets is an initiative which goes further than other schemes in its aims to limit traffic around schools at key times by designating them as "Pedestrians & Cycles Only" for part of a day, usually during peak school hours.

The benefits of implementing a “School Street” include:

- Discourage car journeys to school and encourage in walking and cycling – promoting an active lifestyle for children and parents
- Promotes active travel to school
- Reduction in traffic, congestion, and pollution outside school.

There are lots of different models for how the scheme can be run, including voluntary, non-marshalled and marshalled. We’re keen to pilot a few of these with some willing participant schools in the next academic year so we can assess what works best and whether there is an opportunity to scale up the scheme to cover more schools in the County.

Clearly, the different locations of our schools and wider circumstances will affect what solutions might be available and therefore, I’ve appended a criteria below similar to what other local authorities have used as a guide to which schools the scheme might be most applicable to.

As a next step, if you’re willing to work with us as a possible pilot and you meet most, if not all, of the conditions in the criteria attached, could you please drop me an email on [alex.dale@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:alex.dale@derbyshire.gov.uk) to let me know and briefly explain some of the main issues affecting your school. If you can please do this by Friday 16 September, that would be great.

From there, a working party made up of Councillors and officers will look through the expressions of interest and try to identify a few to progress as pilots.

Thank you once again, have a fantastic summer break when it comes, and I look forward to hearing from some of you to hopefully progress School Streets from the Autumn.

Best wishes

Cllr Alex Dale

Cabinet Member for Education at Derbyshire County Council

## **Draft Criteria:**

### **Location**

- Most suited to roads where there is little or no through road access, e.g., cul de sacs (more likely to be considered if only one/two points of entry)
- Main arterial/distributor roads and roads used by bus services cannot be included.
- Surrounding streets should be able to accommodate any displaced traffic/parking.
- Local infrastructure is in place to support alternative means of travel, especially walking and cycling, e.g., local routes, safe crossing points, cycle storage.
- Availability of suitable 'Park & Stride' locations nearby.
- Consideration of any other traffic generators in the vicinity, e.g., shops, businesses, health centres, leisure facilities which could have an impact on the scheme.

### **Engagement and commitment**

- Schools need to be willing to sign up with the Modeshift STARS programme (including working towards accreditation and completion of a travel plan).
- Undertake pre and post project hands up surveys for pupil mode of travel to be submitted online via Modeshift STARS (if the school doesn't already do this)
- Previous activities or initiatives to encourage safer, greener, and healthier travel.
- Previous activities or initiatives to address problem parking at the school gate.
- Schools may need to recruit volunteer marshals to staff the closure for at least the early stage of the scheme. Reminder activity will take place at the start of and intervals throughout every term.
- Commitment from the school to promote and support the pilot as appropriate
- Proven support from school staff, parents, residents and, where possible, local councillors.