

Councillor Call for Action

Obstructive and illegal parking around Whitehouse Primary School

Background

The Councillor Call for Action submitted clearly articulates a number of interventions that have been introduced around Whitehouse Primary School over a number of years. These measures include traffic regulation Orders to control obstructive and illegal parking.

Injury collision records indicate that there have been no injury accidents in and around the surrounding highway network of Whitehouse Primary School in the last three years.

Environmental Health have confirmed that they have not received any complaints regarding honking horns, playing of car radios etc. in the vicinity of Whitehouse Primary School. Noise issues are difficult to prove and enforce against. Of the items noted in the CCfA, only loud radios potentially could be investigated and would only be enforceable from a source point and over an extended period.

Information obtained from the school admission service shows that Whitehouse Primary School has a capacity of 385 pupils and had on roll as at January 2019 school census 383 pupils Reception to Year six. Of these, 64 are from the Whitehouse Primary designated admission zone, with 303 from other North / Central Stockton areas, with the remaining numbers from Billingham, Thornaby, Ingleby Barwick and Eaglescliffe. This is probably mainly due to 'parental preference'. It could also be some SEN children attending in upper year groups. The catchment area and walking distances from Whitehouse Primary School are included at [Appendix 1](#).

There have been 96 enforcement patrols around Whitehouse Primary School this calendar year. With 21 Penalty Charge Notices issued in the vicinity of the school.

The Council undertook a School Parking Scrutiny Review (see item CAB 56/16 via the link: <http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/users/public/admin/kab12.pl?cmte=CAB&meet=152&arc=71>) with a number of recommendations that are included at [Appendix 2](#). One of these recommendations was that site specific improvements or changes to assist with enforcement or education of drivers to reduce the impact of school parking should be considered. A scheme was developed following an ATS request, this has been implemented and is included at [Appendix 3](#).

Discussion

Living Streets report:

This provides good practice guidance on 'swap the school run for a school walk' (https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/3618/living_streets_school_run_report_web.pdf) and includes 21 recommendations. A number of these recommendations relate to where Local Authorities can directly influence the school journey as follows:

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Recommendation 7 – *Local Authorities should adopt a ‘children first’ approach to planning and street design, prioritising safe and enjoyable streets for children in all existing and new developments.*

The School Parking Scrutiny Review included a recommendation that maximum consideration to future school planning submissions is given by Planning Committee to ensure travel arrangements alleviate wherever possible parking outside schools.

Many schools have ‘school zones’ and advisory 20mph limits introduced on surrounding highway.

Recommendation 8 – *Local Authorities should make 20mph the default speed limit for all streets where people live, work, shop and play and consider other road safety enhancements to provide the maximum safety benefit for children.*

Since the early 1990’s the Council has introduced traffic calming and highway design in residential areas that is 20mph by design, this includes around many schools built since that time.

The School Parking Scrutiny Review included a recommendation where if requested by individual schools Stockton Council will consider site specific improvements or changes to assist with enforcement or education of drivers to reduce the impact of school parking. This may involve additional engineering measures or a review of restrictions as examples.

20mph limits are in place around Whitehouse Primary School.

Recommendation 9 – *Local Authorities should use their powers to create Controlled Parking Zones around schools, to prohibit parking on streets near schools.*

Most schools have zig zag lines and waiting and loading restrictions in place that are clearly marked that give information to drivers. Whitehouse Primary School has parking restrictions in place to prevent illegal parking around the school.

Recommendation 10 – *Local Authorities should support calls for street closures through pilot projects and roll out schemes on a permanent basis where these are proved to be effective.*

Closing streets could be effective, but is very resource intensive to prevent vehicle movements. This would also be restrictive for any residents as physical closures would be in place. I am aware of pilot projects that have cost in the region of £30k and then rely on the Local Authority to implement the closures, the ongoing revenue cost is unlikely to be sustainable. A potential consequence of street closures is displaced parking in surrounding residential areas.

Recommendation 11 – *Local Authorities should work with schools to deliver evidence based and effective behaviour change initiatives and accreditation schemes, as well as co-ordinate strategic planning for active school travel.*

The Council had a dedicated School Travel Plan Officer, however this post was deleted as part of a service review in 2014. A number of schools worked with the Council to develop travel plans, however with the change in pupils each year they quickly become out of date. Active travel and road safety is encouraged in schools through the Junior Road Safety

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Officer project. The Council works with a number of schools following the School Parking Scrutiny Review recommendation. Dedicated travel planning for every school, every year unfortunately cannot be sustained with current resource levels. Whitehouse Primary School do have a travel plan group, Enforcement Officers as well as highway officers attend these meetings.

Recommendation 12 – *Local Authorities should collect and monitor robust data on rates of walking to school in their area.*

This is not currently carried out as higher priorities exist. Collecting data and evidence is important but the interventions that are put in place is a higher priority.

Other recommendations in the Living Streets report are around Central Government as well as the individual schools themselves. A recommendation of the Scrutiny Review was to write to central Government. The response is included at Appendix 4.

Public Space Protection Orders

A public space protection Order can be implemented using The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to tackle anti-social behaviour such as dog fouling or alcohol consumption in public places. Guidance is provided at the following link:

https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/10.21%20PSPO%20guidance_06_1.pdf.

Some Local Authorities have used this legislation to implement an Order to prevent 'dropping off and picking up children' in an area designated under a Public Space Protection Order.

Gateshead Council is currently introducing a pilot scheme at one school in the near future. They have been through the legislative process and the scheme is just about to come into force. Signing available is similar to a highway sign, see Appendix 5.

If a Public Space Protection Order is introduced to prevent dropping off and picking up of children then it can be enforced in a number of ways and can be a criminal offence or can be done by serving notice. It can be enforced on site or using cameras. It should be noted that any camera enforcement does require a resource to process the surveillance as well as issue the fixed penalty notice. Siting of a camera or cameras would require careful consideration as it is unlikely that an entire area could be covered fully by cameras. Any placement of cameras must be done given full consideration to key pieces of legislation to protect human rights.

A public space protection Order would be signed and is likely to cover a range of prohibitions, any implementation would require extensive communication to ensure motorists are aware of the restrictions and that they applied to them. This is because no yellow lining would be in place that motorists would understand.

Currently zig zag markings and significant waiting restrictions exist around Whitehouse Primary School that are often abused or lead to parking displacement in surrounding areas, this controlled parking area gets significant enforcement resource and parking infringements persist.

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Summary

Introducing alternative controls such as PSPO could lead to confusion for motorists as it is not highway law, or included in the Highway Code. A PSPO still requires significant enforcement and could criminalise those who offend.

Alternatives measures to encourage walking and cycling to school are supported through the school travel plan meetings but supporting all schools in such a way cannot be sustained with current resource levels.

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