

HIGHWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL DRIVE THROUGH WORKING PARTY
Monday 8th November 2021 at 6.00pm
Minutes

Present: William Brooks (Co-opted governor), Alan Brompton (Street Champion), Anjali Carter (Finance & Premises Manager), Angela Goontilleke (Parent governor) Olivia Gowers (Staff governor), Krzysztof Matyskiewicz (Site Manager), Beverley Pratt (Parent), Bindu Rai (Headteacher) and Paul Richards (Councillor for Bushey North Ward)

Apologies None

	Item	Actions
1.	<p>Welcome and introductions AC welcomed all to the first meeting. Introductions were made and each party member gave some background.</p>	
2 & 3.	<p>Terms of Reference & context AC went through 5 elements making up the ToFR:</p> <p><u>Background</u> Planning permission for the school to have an operational one-way drive through system granted in 2012. Entry from Mead Way exit on Bushey Mill Lane. Historically whilst open, this has been difficult to manage by school staff and has presented significant H&S risks in addition to challenging behaviour of those using the drive through. Current drop off and pick up measures mean that it is still not feasible to re-open the drive through</p> <p><u>Objectives</u> To work together as a group to come up with ideas and best practice in order to make the drive through operational.</p> <p><u>Issues</u> H&S management (both on site and off) Management of challenging behaviour Traffic build up around Mead Way & Bushey Mill Lane Inconsiderate parking for local residents</p> <p><u>Methodology</u> Initial discussion with all party members Suggestions put forward and worked through Trial timelines put in Implementation of trial in place Review Final action</p> <p><u>Expertise</u> School staff with knowledge of school and community School governors with accountability Parental/community assistance Borough Council experience and knowledge Street Champion</p> <p>All members were asked to note that the discussions held are confidential and should not be divulged until such time as the minutes are made public.</p>	
4.	<p>Supporting statements from party representatives</p>	

Krzysztof Matyskiewicz

Krzysztof has been heavily involved with ensuring the day to day operational management of the drive through since the start and has been responsible for the safety of those using it. His concerns relate to the following:

H&S risk to those using and accessing the drive through

- Parents do not adhere to the speed limit of 5 mph, often going faster. This could be because parents are in a rush and running late. The frustration at having to drive around continually could result in frustration
- Parents are not careful. They pull out of parking bays and don't look where they are going. 4 minor collisions have been witnessed and multiple near misses
- Issues with multiple young children – if a parent has to get one child in a buggy, the other child is left unattended and can stray into the middle of the drive through
- Pedestrian crossings – Parents will often let children scoot or run along the pavements to school and as a result will not be alongside the children at the crossing. Children are not aware of the danger of vehicles and can run out onto the drive through.
- There is a reliance on the driver being very aware and vigilant of children, particularly younger ones who have limited knowledge of the dangers of cars.
- The absence of any fencing between the pavement and drive through presents a risk to all using it.

The stress and wellbeing of those involved with managing the drive through daily:

- Parents don't respond well when being challenged- for e.g., windows will be closed or conversations on mobile phones will be taking place. Parents will pretend that staff can't be seen or will walk away without acknowledgement. Statements such as "I won't be long" or "you can make a complaint about me" have been said
- When staff are policing the drive through, they are subjected to rudeness from a small minority of parents. Krzysztof went on to recount some upsetting experiences, including an unsavoury exchange with a member of the community and a governor complaints hearing.

Parents not following the rules

- Exceeding of the speed limits
- Letting children out without supervision
- Double parking
- Parking in the wrong bays
- Driving around the one-way system continuously
- Not stopping at pedestrian crossings.

Krzysztof's final point was to state that when the drive through is operational, there are 23 spaces alongside it which fill very quickly. This then contributes to a long line of traffic along Mead Way and Bushey Mill Lane and frequently cars drive around and around the one-way system which does not alleviate the traffic

Alan Brompton

Alan's observation from living directly opposite the school is that closing the drive through has exported the H&S issues from the school and into the surrounding roads. There are blocked drives, parking on yellow lines and double parking along the length of Mead Way albeit for short periods of time in the mornings and evenings. This presents danger to young children who cannot see the hazards and he is amazed that there hasn't been an accident so far. Particularly dangerous driving has been observed where cars drive up to the vehicular gate and then reverse out onto Mead Way. Although Alan accepts there is an element of being realistic when living near a school, he feels that when Mead Way is completely blocked, this presents a danger in the event of an emergency. In summary, this is unsatisfactory from the resident's point of view but is equally unsatisfactory from the school's with regard to the safety and the well-being of staff. The drive through, even when operational presented problems and for it to work in the long term, physical modifications would need to be made.

Beverley Pratt

Beverley walks to school every day and has not needed to use the drive through. That said, she has witnessed many of the near misses and dangerous driving. As a childminder and a parent, the logistics of getting around the site are currently challenging. When open, the Drive through is as dangerous as the main road. She feels it is impossible to use Mead Way due to the narrow pavement, parked cars with open doors, thorny bushes and cars parked over the yellow markings outside the KS2 gate. Using the path next to the pond is safer but with a few challenges – the path is not wide enough for a double buggy and there are steps to navigate.

The drive through and the school are not being used as intended; the children are not lining up outside the classrooms any longer and as a result, there is no space elsewhere to accommodate this. Changes are needed to make the school safe for the future.

Paul Richards

As a parent, Paul pointed out that he has faced similar challenges in other schools. He agrees that parents do not have enough understanding of situations like these. Paul as ward councillor for Hertsmere Borough Council works closely with Lawrence Brass of Hertfordshire County Council. HCC signed this project off as the transport issues fall within their remit. Paul has spoken with Lawrence Brass and the idea of interim steps to resolving this issue have been put forward. These would include active travel schemes and fostering of better relationships with the school community and residents. Paul accepts that this is a tricky situation and will speak to Lawrence about him joining the working party so that he can assist.

Angela Goontilleke

Like Alan, Angela feels that the risk factors have not been taken away with the closure of the drive through, but that they have been taken outside the school. Like Beverley, Angela feels that the school is not being used as intended. By not allowing the children to line up outside the classrooms, there has been a change to the feel of the school. It no longer feels like a community school and the impression is of a school trying to keep parents away. In terms of the wellbeing for the children, it is better for them to have an easy access to the classroom.

Olivia Gowers

As a class teacher both in Early Years and KS1, Olivia represents the teacher's viewpoint. The teachers are not opposed to having parents on site but are concerned about the safety of the children, particularly the younger ones. Each classroom has multiple exit/entry points and when the parents were lining up outside the classrooms, it was very difficult to keep the children safe. Many times, children would walk out of the class into a group of adults, some would walk out of the site completely and onto the drive through. There were occasions when parents would be able to access the classroom directly and from multiple points. In addition, there were issues about toys/resources going missing and the safety concerns about younger siblings playing on the equipment, unsupervised. Parents collecting late or being rude because of the issues on the drive through all contributed to an unpleasant experience for the teachers.

Olivia's statement was appreciated but it was commented that from a safety perspective, it is far worse now than before. The KS1 arrangement, whilst managed well by staff, is not effective unlike Early Years which is working well.

Bindu Rai

While this situation is not unique, what is unique to Highwood is that the school has multiple entrances which add to the existing problems. The drive through presents complications to the organisation of the school premises. The priority is for physical changes to be made in order to make the drive through a success. It is a privilege to have this in a primary school setting and it must be something we make work. In her previous setting, the children were more involved through Pupil Voice, leadership and being at the forefront of decisions made.

5. **Suggestions to support moving forward**

	<p>The school's proposal of moving the entrance to the KS2 gate (lower down on Mead Way) was suggested. This would allow for the existing entrance to be used only as vehicular access and drop off/pick up points. There are staffing considerations to be thought out, but the school is anxious to segregate vehicles from pedestrians. Moving the entrance to the KS2 gate was not liked but the suggestion to access the school via the fields was received well. There was acknowledgement that physical changes would have to be made to prevent the field from becoming a mud bath, but it is a suggestion that the school can think about. In addition, the idea of using the drive through as originally intended was also liked. The school could ask staff to fill the bays, thereby not allowing parking. Further details need to be worked out, but it is a starting point. Financial assistance from HCC was asked for and noted.</p> <p>Further comments about interim steps included keeping the staggered entry and exits times and needing more PCSO's on the streets.</p> <p>The soft starts introduced for KS2 in the mornings have worked well practically but there is still a lack of personal contact with the class teacher.</p> <p>Suggestions from the PTA include life size bollards, stop signs all of which are reliant on the site team to move and place where appropriate.</p>	
6.	<p>Timelines The school still intend to trial a plan for the week commencing 13.11.2021 for 2 weeks but there is further consultation on what this plan will look like.</p>	AC, KM, BR to develop and bring to committee
7.	<p>AOB Not discussed</p>	
8.	<p>Date of next meeting AC to confirm once new trial plans have been drawn up</p>	AC
9.	<p>Close of meeting Alan Brompton left at 7.25pm All others left at 7.30pm</p>	