

Committee: Cabinet Member Report

Date: 06 December 2021

Agenda item: N/A

Wards: Cricket Green

Subject: School Streets – EMTO results- Date Valley

Lead officer: Chris Lee, Director of Environment & Regeneration.

Lead member: Councillor Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency

Forward Plan reference number: N/A

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Recommendations:

That the Cabinet Member considers the issues detailed in this report and:

- A) Notes the results of the Experimental Traffic Management Order used to implement the School Street and its associated restrictions as shown below and on plan in Appendix 1.

School	Restricted Roads	Restricted periods Mon-Fri Term times only
Date Valley	Cricket Green (cul-de sac section)	8.00 – 9.15am 2.45 – 4.00pm

- B) To consider all the representations received as set out in section 4 of this report and agrees to proceed with making the existing Experimental Traffic Management permanent.
- C) Agrees to the undertaking of a statutory consultation to change the hours of operation to 8.00– 9.15am and 2.45 – 3.45pm Mon-Fri term times only (to reflect the schools' new hours).
- D) Agrees to exercise his discretion not to hold a public inquiry on the consultation process.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report details the result of the Experimental Traffic Management Order used to introduce the School Street restrictions in September 2020.
- 1.2 It seeks approval to proceed with making the Experimental Traffic Management Order (ETMO) permanent and retain the School Street. This will ensure that the objectives associated with school streets are met and retained.
- 1.4 This report also seeks approval to undertake a statutory consultation to change the hours of operation to 8.00– 9.15am and 2.45 – 3.45pm Mon-Fri term times only.

2.0 DETAILS

- 2.1 As part of the Council's objective to reduce congestion, pollution, collisions, risk and provide a safe environment within the vicinity of schools, the Council has a rolling road safety and accessibility programme. Measures that are often implemented include 'school keep clear' zig-zag road markings to prevent drivers parking close to the school gates and to improve sightlines; 20mph speed limits with accompanying traffic calming measures and road safety education. These measures have been very successful in most areas, as there has been an improvement in perception of safety with a reduction in risk of injury. Although these measures have been successful in ensuring access and safety, the level of congestion, risk and air quality outside the schools remain a concern. The contributing factor is the high localised volume of vehicular traffic and obstructive parking within the vicinity of schools often generated by parents / carers of pupils attending the school.

Air Quality

- 2.2 To assess the level of air quality around schools, in January 2017 the Mayor of London commissioned an assessment of air quality outside 50 London schools. A report was published in May 2018 (the Mayor of London on School Air Quality Programme) detailing its findings of unacceptable levels of air quality during the school opening and closing periods of the day. One of the contributing factor to this poor air quality within London is road transport, of which the Mayor of London has introduced a series of measures to improve the air quality especially around schools, however this still remains a concern. It is considered that without significant intervention, as the Capital grows rapidly with increasing congestion, adverse health and safety implications are set to continue.
- 2.3 The Mayor's Air Quality report also identified that school travel in some areas often does not contribute substantially to local emissions, as many walk, scoot, cycle or travel by public transport, with much of the road transport emissions emanating from the nearby busy main roads. However, seeking to manage and reduce school related car travel still has an important role to play. Cars picking up and dropping off children near the school gates result in a concentration of emissions amongst larger numbers of children, worsening exposure including the increase in risk of collisions. The recommendations also often focus on delivering broader improvements to the environment around the schools for walking and cycling, and the promotion of sustainable transport including footway widening, kerb build-outs, improved crossing facilities on desire lines and traffic calming.
- 2.4 The Mayor's Air Quality report highlights that without significant intervention, as the capital grows rapidly with increasing congestion, the air quality levels are forecast to rise considerably, which will impact on adverse health and safety implications. Health implications include triggering or exacerbating chronic diseases such as asthma, hearth attack, bronchitis and other respiratory problems.
- 2.5 Recommendations in the Mayor's report is for local authorities to try and minimise the level of pollution outside schools by introducing measures to minimise vehicular traffic outside school gates. Due to the pandemic, since May 2020, all local authorities have been encouraged to expedite such improvements.
- 2.6 In addition to the above, in response to a green recovery, DfT / TfL provided funding (subject to a bid process) for boroughs to consider, consult and implement School Streets so as to reduce congestion, remove the obstructive parking that is often associated with schools; promote active and sustainable modes of travel; improve safety and air quality particularly outside schools. Further information is available on the Council's website www.merton.gov.uk/schoolstreets
- 2.7 During tranche 1 of the funding process, the Council was successful in its bid to DfT/TfL in securing funding to design and implement a number of school streets throughout the borough. However, due

to extremely tight deadlines set by TfL/DfT, the programme was introduced under an Experimental Order. As per legislation, the Council does need to make a decision no later than 18th month of the ETMO coming in to effect.

2.8 As part of Merton’s commitment, a report dated 3rd August 2020 titled School Streets–Restricted Vehicular Access -Experimental Traffic Management was submitted to the Cabinet Member for approval to implement a number of school streets including Merton Park Primary. Cabinet Member decision was made to implement the school street under an Experimental Order.

2.9 Although it is normal practice to undertake before and after surveys that can be used for an impact assessment, particularly on the neighbouring roads, due to the pandemic / lock down and a general change in traffic pattern and behavior, any survey at the time would not have yielded a true reflection.

3.0 SCHEME

3.1 To achieve a number of objectives such as improving safety and air quality and encourage active travel, the Council introduced a school street on Cricket Green (cul-de sac section). The school street restricts motorised traffic during specific times based on schools’ starting and finishing times. The restrictions only apply during school term periods.

School	Restricted Roads	Restricted periods Mon-Fri Term times only
Date Valley	Cricket Green (cul-de sac section)	8.00 – 9.15am 2.45 – 4.00pm

3.2 Initially the Council intended to use a default period of 08.15 - 09.15am and 15.00-16.00hrs. However, the restricted hours were based on the schools’ then adopted opening / closing hours. Being mindful of the fact that parents often arrive earlier than the starting and finishing times, it was considered necessary to extend the initial proposed hours by 15+ minutes. However, since then, feedback and observations have revealed that across the board many parents are arriving just prior to the restricted times.

3.3 During these periods, Cricket Green (cul-de sac section) is predominately a ‘pedestrian and cycle only’ zone. Residents who live in the affected road are allowed vehicular access as are teachers and those with special needs children who need to be driven to school. This is via an on-line exemption process. Others who may also qualify for an exemption can also register with the Council; exemptions are subject to meeting the appropriate criteria. Location plan and exemption catchment area is attached as appendix 1.

4. CONSULTATION

Statutory Consultation

4.1 Due to extremely tight deadlines set by TfL/DfT, the programme was introduced under an Experimental Order. This type of Order enables the implementation of a scheme during the statutory consultation stage. An Experimental Order allows the restrictions and the Order to be in place for a maximum of 18 months before a final decision is made. Anyone can make a representation within the first six months (the statutory/formal consultation period) of the Experimental Order coming into force. The EMTO allowed the Council to meet its extremely tight deadlines but more importantly, it enabled the school, residents and other road users to experience the restrictions, thereby allowing them to make an informed decision prior to responding to the consultation. It also allows the Council to make minor adjustments. Consultees had in excess of 6

months to respond to the consultation and residents were encouraged to allow sufficient time to experience the scheme before making a representation.

- 4.2 The consultation began on 29th September 2020 and concluded on 31st July 2021. Newsletters were delivered to all those properties directly affected (see plan in appendix 1). The newsletter detailed the consultation process; the proposed measures and a location plan. A copy of the newsletter with the plan is attached in Appendix 1.
- 4.3 Residents were encouraged to submit their feedback on the Council's website using specific on-line feedback link. All available information was also posted on the website. [Introducing new school streets 2020 \(merton.gov.uk\)](#). Street notices were erected on lamp columns and published in the local papers and the London Gazette.
- 4.3.1 In terms of publicising the school streets programme there was an article on School Streets in My Merton magazine [the Winter 2020 edition](#). This copy was distributed to all households in Merton from 19 November 2020. There was also a news article about it in [the Spring 2021 edition](#) which was published on 25 March 2021.
- 4.3.2 The school was provided with a banner to be attached to the school gate. The banner set out the details of the restrictions and affected roads. The school was also requested to inform and remind parents of the restrictions.
- 4.4 There has not been any representations from within the newsletter postal area namely Cricket Green (cul-de sac section); however, there are 4 representations from outside the postal area, 3 of which are in support and 1 objection. All representations are detailed below:

Road	View	Comment
Church Rd 6248840 6252805	Agree	Same person - The signage is not currently visible and motorists are unaware of the restrictions. How will the restrictions be enforced? Its not currently safe for children to cycle along this road but many do and more would like to if it were safer. ----- There are still no signs marking the restrictions. When will it be enforced?
Elm Lodge 6246571	Agree	It is a good idea, but it requires a diligent reinforcement by the council, is the council workforce capable to monitor it? I was told that the council is thinking to use mobile camera in the scheme and I wonder how effective it would be to cover such a wide area in Mitcham? there is no information of the penalty once you are in breach of the restriction. Does the restriction is only applied to normal vehicles? Are those service vehicles such as ambulance, fire engines, gas/telephone/electricity repair service vehicles etc. exempt from the restriction? Any scheme has to be practical, enforceable and informative, otherwise, it would be a waste of time and money.
Tolverne Road 6347945	Agree	This response is on behalf of Merton Residents Transport Group (MRTG). We strongly support the school street at Date Valley School. School streets such as this one play a critical role in reducing road danger to children, improving air quality and enabling walking, cycling and scooting for a wider range of people of different ages doing the school run. They additionally reduce the number of motor vehicle journeys, lower pollution near the school, and reduce congestion. Additionally, we would encourage Merton to take further measures to enhance the visibility and effectiveness of the school street: - Ensure consistent enforcement with the use of permanent cameras; these could pay for themselves and provide funds to further enhance the school street - Install planters at the entrance to the school street to narrow the road width and create a gateway into the school street, enhancing its

		presence - Provide signage at a lower height, and more clearly delineate the zone We look forward to the continued safety and health benefits arising from the school street, and encourage Merton to further expand the scheme to schools not currently covered. Sincerely, MRTG
Arlington Drive 6248493	Disagree	While I understand, appreciate and encourage such schemes, the implementation in the case of Date Valley School and closure of Cricket Green is poor and particularly problematic for users of the Birch Close polyclinic and Jigsaw Nursery, both of which operate during those times and should not have their access restricted. I've recently relocated from Mitcham to Carshalton and have tried to maintain my children's places at Jigsaw Nursery. They are 2 years old and 5 months old. Taking public transport is problematic in rush hour with the prams and during the pandemic, and driving to find increasingly elusive parking further from the nursery is getting very difficult. As I and other parents with young children continue to drive, this has the reverse effect of that intended by the zone. The environmental impact, safety of our children, and congestion from pickup drop-off are not reduced but all increased. Albeit we represent a small percentage of the total, it's rather unhelpful and frustrating. In my case, it has doubled the length of my commute

- 4.5 One of the objective is to deter car trips for 'the school run', which is a major source of congestion and poor air quality outside schools as well as on route to and from schools. In the past the Council has attempted to address school related traffic and parking issues through School's travel plan, Road safety Education and parking management. However, it has become very clear that a more stringent action is required to change the behavior of parents and motorists in general. A school street can be an effective method of bringing about this change.
- 4.6 Due to the pandemic and various guidelines, at the time of the implementation of the scheme, many schools had to establish some form of staggered hours, which had to be accommodated within the restrictions. However, the school has advised the Council of its new hours and if the scheme is made permanent, a statutory consultation will be undertaken to reflect the new school hours. The hours will allow for additional minutes to capture the many parents who arrive early particularly during afternoon pick up periods.
- 4.7 A full assessment of all school street signage across the borough has been carried out and arrangements have been made to further improve the signage in terms of numbers, position and visibility across the borough. This would be over and above of is actually required and considered as necessary. If the scheme is made permanent, 'Term Time only' supplementary plates will be added to the main entry signs. All advance signs which already include this text are being redesigned as more of a pictorial sign, thereby making it easier for drivers to observe.
- 4.8 All the residents who are directly affected by the restrictions were informed of the restrictions and they are exempt by undergoing the registration process. All vehicles registered to the address can be registered for exemption. In terms of *affected* residents, only those who have no alternative vehicular access to their homes are classed as directly affected; all others who have an alternative vehicular route are classed as indirectly affected and cannot be exempt. To meet the objectives of the school street, it is necessary to minimise volume of traffic and it would not be possible to provide an exemption to anyone who has an alternative route. By facilitating non-essential traffic, it will do nothing to encourage a change in behavior. Notwithstanding, in light of issues that have been raised, the Council has been reviewing exemptions; for example, there are already provisions within the system for residents to enter the vehicle registrations of taxis that are being used to transport them for medical reasons. There are also provisions for carers and household emergencies. In terms of neighbouring roads, Parking Services will pay additional attention in this area to address the displacement.

- 4.9 All statutory bodies have been consulted and no objections have been raised. All emergency services are exempt.
- 4.10 The local Ward Councillors have been engaged during the consultation process. The results of the consultation and officer's recommendations were presented to the Ward Councillors prior to preparing this report.

5. OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is clear that there are no objections from the residents who are directly affected. It is considered that the benefits outweigh some of the inconveniences some residents / motorists may experience. School streets are in line with other policies and initiatives across the Borough and London, and believed to be the right step toward changing behavior as well as achieving the various benefits. Benefits include improved safety / perception of safety; the removal of the school-associated obstructive parking; reduced risk to all road users; reduced pollution, including noise pollution; improved air quality in the restricted road as well as reduced traffic in general; after all if parents or other visitors are discouraged from driving during the peak periods, there will be reduced traffic on route to and from the restricted roads.
- 5.2 It is recommended that the permanent Order is made to retain the school street.
- 5.3 To reflect the change in the school's hours, it is recommended that a statutory consultation is undertaken to change the existing restricted hours to 8.00– 9.15am and 2.45 – 3.45pm.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 To remove the restrictions. This would compromise if not undo all the benefits that have been gained thus far and it would do nothing to encourage a change in behaviour. It would be contrary to the various objectives the Council is trying to achieve.

7. TIMETABLE

- 7.1 A newsletter detailing the results of the consultation and Cabinet Member decision will be distributed to all consultees soon after a Cabinet Member decision is made and published. The permanent Traffic Management Order will be made and published soon after.
- 7.2 The statutory consultation to reduce the restricted hours will be undertaken soon after Cabinet Member decision is made and residents will be informed accordingly.

8. FINANCIAL RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 All the associated costs are covered by the LSP funding provided by DfT / TfL.

9. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Traffic Management Orders would be made under Section 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended). The Council is required by the Local Authorities Traffic Order (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 to give notice of its intention to make a Traffic Order (by publishing a draft traffic order). These regulations also require the Council to consider any representations received as a result of publishing the experimental order.
- 9.2 The Council has discretion as to whether or not to hold a public inquiry before deciding whether or not to make a traffic management order or to modify the published ETMO. A public inquiry should be held where it would provide further information, which would assist the Council in reaching a decision.

9.3 The Council's powers to make Traffic Management Orders arise mainly under sections 6, 45, 46, 122 and 124 and schedules 1 and 9 of the RTRA 1984.

10. HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHENSION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Council carries out careful consultation to ensure that all road users are given a fair opportunity to air their views and express their needs. The design of the scheme includes special consideration for the needs of people with blue badges, local residents, school children and businesses without prejudice toward charitable and religious facilities.

10.2 Bodies representing motorists, including commuters are included in the statutory consultation required for draft traffic management and similar orders published in the local paper and London Gazette.

10.3 The retention of the restrictions / improvements affects all sections of the community especially the young and assists in ensuring improved road environment and air quality for all road users and achieves the transport planning policies of the government, the Mayor for London and the Borough.

11. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None

12. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There may be some dissatisfaction but the benefits of the scheme outweigh any inconvenience.

12.2 The risk of not retaining the restrictions would be a step backward in terms of Council's objectives and will not be in line with the Council's various strategies and projects.

13. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

13.1 When determining the type of schemes to be designated on the highway, section 45(3) requires the Council to consider both the interests of traffic and those of the owners and occupiers of adjoining properties. In particular, the Council must have regard to: (a) the need for maintaining improved movement of traffic, (b) the need for maintaining reasonable access to premises, and (c) the need to reduce road collisions.

13.2 The restrictions removes traffic from this section of the road that makes it safer and more environmental friendly for residents and visitors.

14. Public Health Implications

14.1 School Streets and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) have important implications for public health in terms of physical activity, air quality and safety by creating healthy and secure neighbourhoods.

14.2 The implementation of School Streets and LTNs encourage the use of active travel options such as walking and cycling and build physical activity into daily routines. The removal or reduction of traffic from certain roads may encourage residents (particularly children) who would not usually consider active travel options to take these up in a quieter and safer environment ([Aldred, R. and Verlinghieri, E. 2020](#)).

14.3 Traffic is a key contributor to poor air quality in the borough which can have important health implications. The reduction of traffic in primarily residential areas or streets with schools can improve air quality in local areas and reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and other health

conditions. Studies from Waltham Forest found that in particular, there was a reduction in the amount of pollution caused during the school run where these schemes were in place ([Dajnak, 2018](#))

14.4 Implementation of these schemes have an important role to play in improving our local areas in terms of road safety. Reducing the flow of traffic in residential areas or in areas close to schools can reduce the risk of residents being involved in a serious collision with a vehicle.

15. APPENDICES

15.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report.

Appendix 1 - Newsletter & Plan

SCHOOL STREETS

Restricted Vehicular access

Date Valley School



ISSUE DATE : 25 AUGUST 2020

INTRODUCTION

As part of the Council's objective to reduce congestion, pollution, risk of collisions and provide a safe environment within the vicinity of schools, the Council has a rolling road safety and accessibility programme. Measures that are often implemented include 'school keep clear' zig-zag road markings to prevent drivers parking close to the school gates and to improve sightlines; localised 20mph speed zones with accompanying traffic calming measures and road safety education. These measures have been very successful in most areas, as there has been an improvement in perception of safety. Although these measures have been successful in ensuring access and safety, the level of congestion, risk and air quality outside the schools remain a concern. The contributing factor is the high localised volume of vehicular traffic within the vicinity of schools often generated by parents / carers of pupils attending the school.

PROPOSAL

To improve safety, active travel and air quality, and in response to Covid-19 pandemic, the Council intends to restrict motorised access in and out of the identified roads that accommodate school pedestrian gates during the morning school opening and afternoon school closing periods under an Experimental Traffic Management Order (ETMO). During these periods, the road will be predominately 'pedestrian and cycle only' zone. Residents who live in the affected roads will be allowed access as will staff who are based at the school; those with special needs children who need to be driven to school would also be exempt. Those who are exempt must register with the Council; exemptions would be subject to meeting the appropriate criteria.

The appropriate signs will be in place to inform all motorists of the hours of closure.

The restrictions will be enforced by a camera

The surrounding roads will be enforced against obstructive / illegal parking

This measure is introduced to protect children and we would appreciate your assistance and support

It is appreciated that this may cause some inconvenience and where possible the Council will endeavour to accommodate residents; however, for the scheme to be a success, the Council would require the cooperation of the school, parents and residents. We ask that the school and residents support our proposals and rearrange certain activities such as deliveries and receiving visitors outside the identified hours during each school term.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

The proposed measure is being introduced at the start of September term and will operate term times only during the published hours under an Experimental Traffic Management Order.

The Experimental Traffic Management Order will allow the Council to implement the restrictions during the consultation period.

- It allows the Council to assess and monitor the restriction and its impact.
- It will enable the residents and other road users to experience the restrictions thereby allowing them to make informed comments.

www.merton.gov.uk

The restrictions and the Order will be in place for a maximum of 18 months. Anyone can object and make representations within the first six months (the statutory/formal consultation period) of the experimental Order coming into force and the implementation of the works. Consultees (mainly residents) are encouraged to make their comments at least 3 months after implementation. Consultees will have 6 months to respond to the consultation. All representations will be considered prior to making a final decision which could include its removal, making some modifications or making it permanent.

Additional notices will also be erected within the vicinity of the proposals to inform residents and road users of the start of the restrictions and the statutory consultation

All available information including updates will be posted on the website.

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/covid-19-transport-projects>

All representations must be made on line using the above link. Please note that you may not be able to submit any comments until November 2020. A response will not be made until the consultation is concluded and a final decision is made. The Council will monitor the situation and will make the appropriate adjustments if and when necessary.

To APPLY FOR EXEMPTIONS

Exemptions will be given to residents, teachers and special needs children. Residents and teachers MUST register with the Council to qualify for the exemption. Carers visiting residents who live in the road will also be exempt if their registration are logged with the Council. However, we respectfully request that, if possible, visitors arrange their visits outside the restricted hours.

The quickest and easiest way to apply for School

Street exemption is to use our self-service website which we are in the process of setting up. Please check the website for updates.

ENFORCEMENT

During the restrictions, enforcement will be carried out using cameras. However, please note that full enforcement will not be carried out until residents are given the opportunity to apply for exemptions.

We do apologise for the short notification and the fact that the exemption process will not be available immediately but we believe that starting the process will have some benefits.

CRICKET GREEN WARD COUNCILLORS

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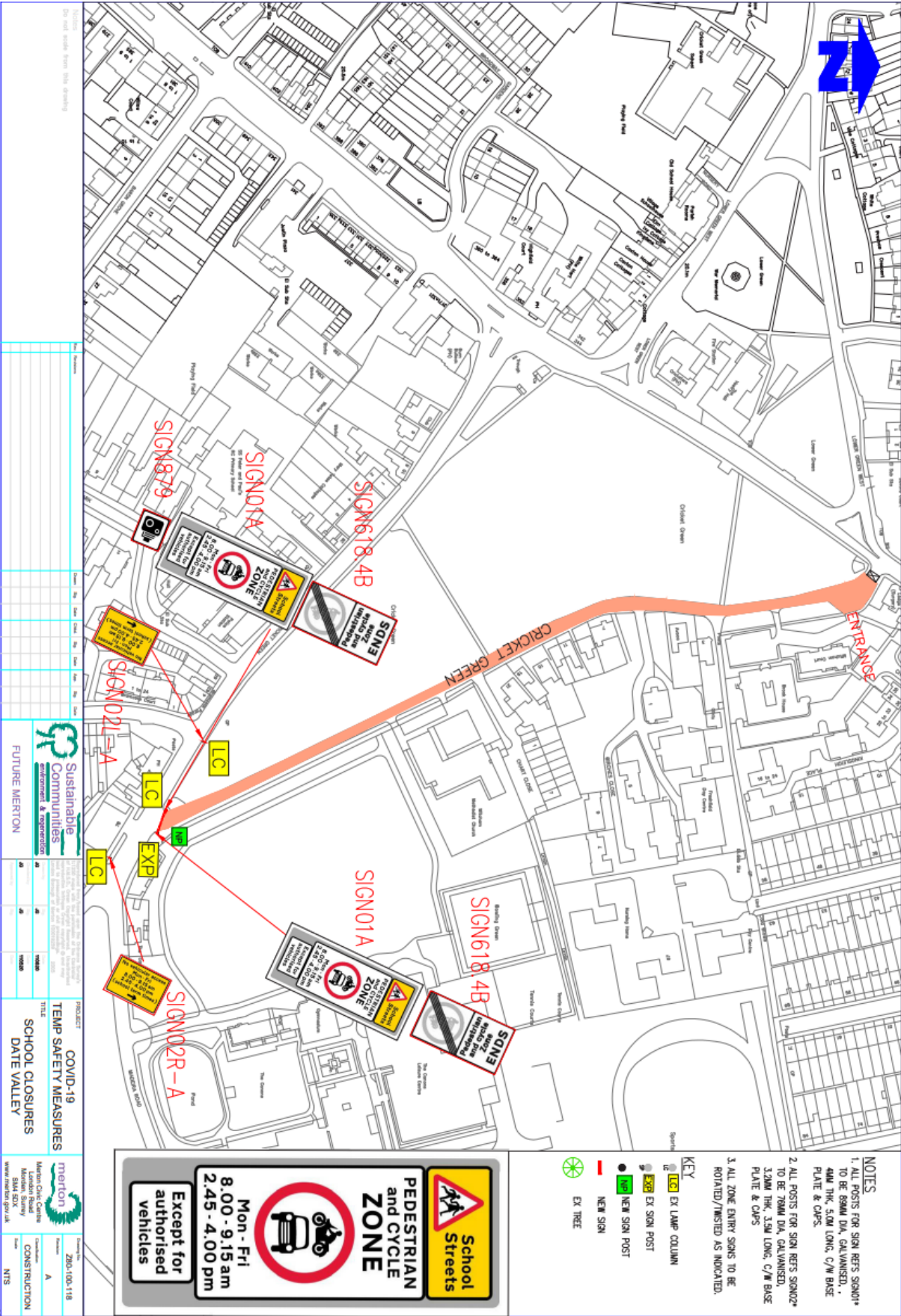
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**Cabinet Member for Regeneration,
Housing and Transport.**

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- NOTES**
1. ALL POSTS FOR SIGN BEES SIGN01* TO BE 80MM DIA, GALVANISED, 4MM THK, 5.0M LONG, C/W BASE PLATE & CAPS.
 2. ALL POSTS FOR SIGN BEES SIGN02* TO BE 76MM DIA, GALVANISED, 3.2MM THK, 3.5M LONG, C/W BASE PLATE & CAPS
 3. ALL ZONE ENTRY SIGNS TO BE ROTATED/TWISTED AS INDICATED.

- KEY**
- EX LAMP COLUMN
 - EX SIGN POST
 - NEW SIGN POST
 - NEW SIGN
 - EX TREE

School Streets

PEDESTRIAN and CYCLE ZONE

Mon - Fri
8.00 - 9.15 am
2.45 - 4.00 pm

Except for authorised vehicles

PROJECT COVID-19 TITLE TEMP SAFETY MEASURES SCHOOL CLOSURES DATE VALLEY	
	280-100-118 A CONSTRUCTION NTS