



# FINGAL SCHOOL STREETS

## PILOT REVIEW 1

March 2020

Ref: 300548

Comhairle Contae  
Fhine Gall  
Fingal County  
Council



# SYSTRA



# SCHOOL STREETS PILOT

## THREE MONTH REVIEW

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Report Purpose

- 1.1.1 The first Fingal County Council School Streets pilot initiative (and the first in Ireland) was approved by the Howth-Malahide Area Committee on November 7<sup>th</sup> 2019, and was officially launched on November 25<sup>th</sup> 2019. This followed detailed exercises in scoping and design, and a comprehensive period of consultation and stakeholder engagement. The details and summary of these phases are included in full in the '*Fingal School Streets Pilot – Consultation Summary*' (Ref: 300548).
- 1.1.2 This document aims to report on the progress to date with delivery of the initial objectives of the pilot during the first three months of its operation, quantifying and summarising its impact across a number of elements – for example mode choice change by pupils, air quality impacts and local traffic impacts.
- 1.1.3 This report is intended to aid Fingal County Council's decision making process in relation to the future operation of this 18 month pilot, and the future roll out of other School Street pilots across the County.

## 1.2 The School Streets Pilot – Overview and Objectives

- 1.2.1 In June 2019, Fingal County Council Road Safety staff began developing a pilot programme for the introduction of timed pedestrian and cycle zones outside schools around the county. St. Oliver Plunkett's School, Grove Road, Malahide was identified for the initial pilot scheme on foot of ongoing public representations, complaints from residents, school wardens, parking wardens and in consultation with An Garda Síochána.
- 1.2.2 The Road Safety Authority had recently issued a warning regarding traffic congestion outside school gates, saying the environment is proving "incredibly dangerous" for small children. This added weight to Fingal County Council's own concerns of the negative impact on the community in relation to school gate parking, in particular on the impact on children's sustainable travel habits, exposure to air quality issues and road safety concerns.
- 1.2.3 Therefore, in an effort to tackle the issues raised at both St Oliver Plunkett's School and the problem at school drop off and collection times generally, Fingal County Council proposed the introduction of the School Streets pilot. The aim of the pilot is to improve road safety, promote active travel (i.e. walking, cycling, scooting etc.) and improve air quality by reducing congestion associated with the school run. The initiative supports national objectives, policies and plans such as the National Planning Framework in encouraging active lifestyles and reducing transport related emissions.
- 1.2.4 There were a number of more local challenges near the school that the initiative also aimed to tackle, including:
  - The concentrated risk of conflict between vulnerable road users and vehicular traffic directly outside of the school.

- Local traffic congestion
- Road safety risks caused by inconsiderate parking
- Car dependent, less physically active children; and
- The damage to young lungs from cars parked with their engines idling resulting in air pollution to the wider community.

1.2.5 The three core Pillars of the School Streets initiative are:

- Improve Road Safety
- Encourage Sustainable Travel and Healthy Living
- Climate Action



Figure 1. School Streets Core Pillars

## 1.3 Report Contents

- 1.3.1 Chapter Two provides background to the pre-implementation phase of the School Streets pilot initiative. The aims and objectives of the initiative are outlined, and reflect the main elements against which the initial impact of the pilot is measured against.
- 1.3.2 Chapter Three and Four highlight the main outcomes of the initiative to date. Quantitative impacts are based on three predominant methods: junction traffic surveys, air quality monitoring and pupil mode share surveys.
- 1.3.3 Following this, qualitative insights are outlined, based on stakeholder engagement and correspondence following implementation, for example from St. Oliver Plunket's staff, St. Andrew's staff and parents, and local business owners.
- 1.3.4 Chapter Five outlines recommendations for the continued implementation of the initiative, taking account of observed impacts.

## 2. BACKGROUND TO THE PILOT

### 2.1 Objectives of the Pilot – the need for School Streets

- 2.1.1 School Streets initiatives continue to be successfully introduced across Europe and the UK – improving active, healthy travel choices and enabling more children to safely walk, scoot and cycle to school. Pilot schemes have been very beneficial in the UK roll out of School Street programmes, enabling stakeholders to gain confidence in the benefits before a permanent decision is made.
- 2.1.2 A School Street initiative typically takes the form of a temporary closure of a street (or section of a street) to vehicular traffic during school drop off and pick up times – in order to facilitate young children to safely walk, cycle, scoot or park and stride to and from school. They are typically implemented and evaluated as a pilot over an 18-month period, in order to identify their longer term outcomes and to aid informed decision making on whether or not the pilot should become a permanent scheme.
- 2.1.3 The concept of implementing the School Streets pilot was driven by the requirements to help to alleviate the school gate and local traffic congestion issues identified at St Oliver Plunket's School in Malahide, as illustrated in the Figure below.
- 2.1.4 The pilot aimed to minimise the current risks to vulnerable road users near the school, while also reducing air pollution by removing vehicles from the concentrated area outside the school and encourage pupils and their parents to choose more active, healthy and sustainable modes of travel to get to school.



**Figure 2. Traffic on Grove Road prior to the School Streets pilot implementation**

- 2.1.5 The pilot at St Oliver Plunket's School includes timed restrictions on vehicular access to the section of Grove Road near the school during school opening and closing times (term time only), providing a more managed approach to school related traffic dropping off and collecting students. Please see Section 2.3 for further details of the scheme.



- 2.1.6 The pilot aimed to provide a degree of order to the traffic that enters the area for school collection and drop off times, by ensuring the vehicular traffic on Grove Road and The Rise is all facing the same direction, therefore minimising conflicting flows, unsafe U-turns in the middle of the carriageway and parking on both footpaths blocking passing traffic (which also prevents pedestrian access to the footpaths).

## 2.2 Consultation summary

- 2.2.1 Prior to Council approval and implementation of the pilot, a thorough and comprehensive consultation campaign was developed. A diverse range of methods were employed to achieve as robust a representation of the relevant community and stakeholder feedback on the proposals as possible. These methods are outlined below.

### 2.2.2 Formal Submissions

This consultation was in the form of a public invitation to submit observations and opinions. Fingal County Council hosted this through their online consultation portal ‘consult.fingal.ie’ between 10th October to 31st October 2019. All parties could make a formal written submission through this medium and attach supporting documents if desired.

### 2.2.3 Opinion Surveys

As an accompaniment to the formal consultation submissions, the public also had an opinion survey form available. This was also hosted on ‘consult.fingal.ie’ between 10th October to 31st October 2019. Respondents were provided with the relevant information about the initiative, and could answer a series of short questions, gauging their opinions on its various components. There was also the option for a free text submission as part of the survey.

### 2.2.4 Public Meeting

Approximately 200 citizens attended a Public Meeting held at the Portmarnock Hotel & Golf Links, Portmarnock. Following the initial circulation of information, this Public Meeting was advertised via leaflet drop, social media, and SMS communication to St. Plunkett’s parents. This meeting was held on Tuesday 8th October 2019, and invited the public to raise any questions and concerns following a presentation of the proposed initiative.

### 2.2.5 School Gate Engagement

Fingal County Council and SYSTRA Ltd undertook three school gate engagement sessions during the proposed hours for the School Streets Initiative during the morning and afternoon on the 17th, 21st and 23rd of October 2019. During these engagements, parents and residents were asked to fill out paper versions of the online opinion survey. Respondents were given information leaflets, and also given the option to fill the survey out in their own time and submit via mail to the Road Safety Section.

### 2.2.6 Hands Up Surveys

Upon consultation with St. Oliver Plunkett’s School, it was agreed that it would be beneficial to gauge the opinion of the students on the factors which form this initiative, as well as establishing their current travel habits. The method chosen for this input was in the form of a ‘hands up survey’, whereby students were asked how they currently travel to school, as well as how they would like to travel. This was also undertaken for the staff in the school. These

surveys not only represented useful insights into the potential design and success of the initiative, but also provided data for the baseline conditions of the study area.

## 2.2.7 Stakeholder Meetings

Approximately 100 attendees attended a follow up meeting in Malahide Library, Malahide. Regular meetings and workshops were also held as part of the consultation period. Due to the dynamic nature of the consultation phase, these were often reactionary to submissions and concerns received. Interested parties such as Malahide Chamber of Commerce, St. Oliver Plunkett's Parents Association, St. Andrew's School and St Andrew's Parent Association were met with to discuss the initiative. Thorough consultation was also undertaken with the school principals, teachers, school wardens and parking wardens and An Garda Síochána, regarding the daily workings of the proposed initiative.



Figure 3. Consultation timeline



## 2.2.8 Consultation Actions:

Following the stakeholder engagement, the project team for the School Streets pilot reviewed approximately 670 public responses, along with 880 pupil responses, in order to inform the design of the final proposal and the development of a series of supporting measures for this initiative. These actions are summarised below.

### 2.2.9 1. *24/7 One-Way System*

In response to submissions received throughout the consultation phase, the Council revised the original proposed one-way system. This was replaced with a 'no right' / 'no left' turn from The Mall onto The Rise. In addition, this revision was time plated to be in operation during School Street times only, i.e. 08:30 to 09:15; 13:00 to 14:45 (Mon-Fri, term time only).

### 2.2.10 2. *School St. at Grove Rd. will impede junior/senior infants*

To support the challenges faced by parents with younger students, the Council aimed to support additional measures to increase active travel. One example of this is through the introduction of 'walking buses' (See Supporting Measure 2). With the support of local community and parents, this can deliver a multi-school, cross-community solution to safe and active travel. A drop off zone very near the school was also provided, so parents who wanted to drive young children to school can still do so.

### 2.2.11 3. *The initiative will displace traffic onto Church Rd. and Village*

In response to submissions and feedback received throughout the consultation phase, the Council acknowledged the issue of displaced congestion and traffic as a primary concern. To address this challenge, the Council made available the surrounding car parks of Bridgefield, Back Road and Seabanks (See Supporting Measure 1) to be utilised as Park and Stride locations.

The Council revised the proposed one-way system. This was replaced with a 'no right' / 'no left' turn from The Mall onto The Rise. In addition, this revision was time plated to be in operation during School Street times only, i.e. 08:30 to 09:15; 13:00 to 14:45 (Mon-Fri, term time only).

An upgrade of the traffic signals at the Diamond was also carried out to put the junction on Mova, an intelligent traffic control system. An adjustment to the movements through the junction was also carried out with the upgrade. This aimed to ensure the most safe and efficient movements of traffic through the Diamond, in order to maximise the efficiency of traffic flows and pedestrian movements at this junction.

### 2.2.12 4. *18 months is too long for a pilot given the risks present*

The impact and success of this initiative will be closely monitored by the Council, both in the immediate days and weeks of its launch, and at a formal 3 and 6 monthly review. Traffic and air quality levels were monitored to establish the baseline conditions in the surrounding area. These monitors remained in place following the launch, so that a rigorous comparison analysis can be undertaken.



The 18 month duration includes the times when the schools are not in session. Therefore, School Streets will not be in operation during weekends, mid-term breaks, bank holidays, summer, Christmas or Easter holidays.

#### **2.2.13 5. *St. Andrew's students will be put at risk due to increased traffic on Church Rd.***

The Council consulted with St. Andrew's Primary School and have recorded concerns relating to their students and safety concerns on Church Road. Traffic and parking enforcement on Church Road is an issue that is clearly visible. However, in order to mitigate against the issues that have been raised on Church Road, the following measures formed part of the mitigations to the issues raised:

- Parents/carers of St. Andrew's and St. Oliver Plunkett's to be encouraged to walk, cycle, scoot to school, or use nearby car parks to Park and Stride, therefore reducing the numbers of cars in the area.
- Inclusion of St. Andrew's in proposals to set up Walking Buses from surrounding car parks, supplemented by School Wardens initially to help implementation, again reducing the numbers of cars in the area.
- An Garda Síochána and Fingal Traffic Wardens to enforce illegal parking.
- Parents of both St. Oliver Plunkett's and St. Andrews to be informed, prior to implementation, of concentrated enforcement to be carried out.
- Bollards to be considered along Church Road where parking on footpaths remains an issue.
- Hedge cutting notice issued to properties where footpath width is reduced due to overgrown hedge line.
- Maintenance issues to be addressed on existing footpaths where there are particular issues.
- Upgrade to the Diamond junction to improve flows and improve its safety.

#### **2.2.14 6. *Communication (e.g. 'lack of liaison with St. Andrews School', 'late notice of launch', 'incomplete canvassing of residents')***

A full public consultation took place as part of the initiative proposed in accordance with the statutory requirements for a traffic calming scheme. This was complemented by advertising the proposal in a national newspaper, carrying out two letter drops to local residents, posting on social media sites, messages circulated to the local community forums, engagement with stakeholders, a public meeting to reach the community and follow up meeting with the residents and Chamber of Commerce. As part of the process, Fingal County Council provided 3 school gate engagement sessions to consult with parents of St Oliver Plunkett's and met with the Parents Association, School principal and teachers. St. Andrews School was also engaged with during the consultation period.

An online consultation portal, survey and questionnaires were made available to the community in Malahide.

### 2.2.15 7. Need for a drop-off zone in close proximity to school entrance

A drop off zone was provided at the top of the Rise in the current diagonal car parking spaces, and a school bus drop off zone will also be provided at this location.

## 2.3 School Streets Pilot – Outline

2.3.1 The recently redeveloped St Oliver Plunket's School on Grove Road, Malahide was chosen as a suitable location for this pilot initiative. The reasons for this include the prevalence of 'rat running' through Grove Road to gain access to Coast Road and Church Road. There have also been reports about low standards of road safety in the immediate area surrounding the school and concerns over localised air pollution associated with the high level of congestion from idling cars at pickup/drop-off times.

2.3.2 The School Streets initiative at St Oliver Plunkett's School includes (for the period of the 18-month pilot):

- A time limited curtailment of people driving on the section of Grove Road between Church Road R124 and The Rise
- A 'no right' / 'no left' turn from The Mall onto The Rise, time plated to be in operation during School Street times only, i.e. 08:30 to 09:15; 13:00 to 14:45 (Mon-Fri, term time only).

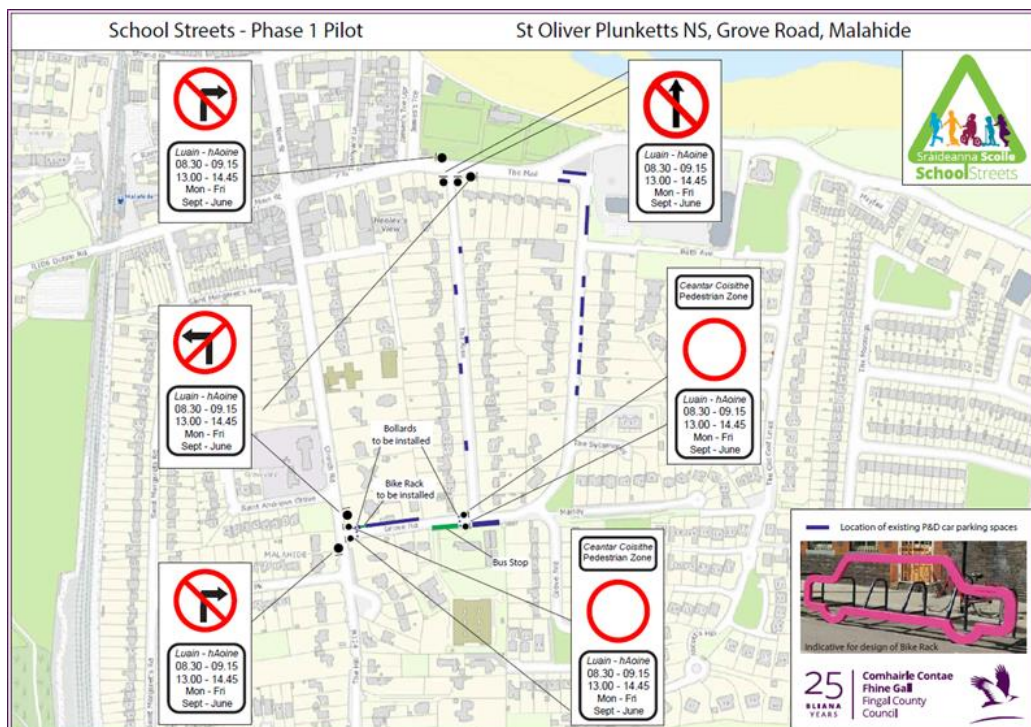


Figure 4. School Streets pilot – initial implementation arrangements

- 2.3.3 Certain exemptions are available for residents living on this section of Grove Road and for certain disabled badge holders who need to park to pick up/drop off children. School Streets does not operate on school holidays or at weekends.
- 2.3.4 A thorough and extensive public consultation process was undertaken to ascertain the comments, opinions and concerns of the local population to ensure that as many risks to the scheme's success were identified, considered, and where possible, mitigation measures provided to remove, reduce or control the risks identified. These supporting measures are described in the section below.

## 2.4 School Streets Pilot – Supporting Measures

### 2.4.1 Park & Stride Zones

To help address concerns over displaced congestion resulting from the initiative, the Council advised that surrounding car parks be used as a pickup/drop-off zones, facilitating a 'Park & Stride' amenity. These locations (Back Road, Seabanks, and Bridgefield) were chosen due to their proximity and short walking/cycling times to the school (see below). These areas are also suitable for commencing 'Walking Buses' (below).

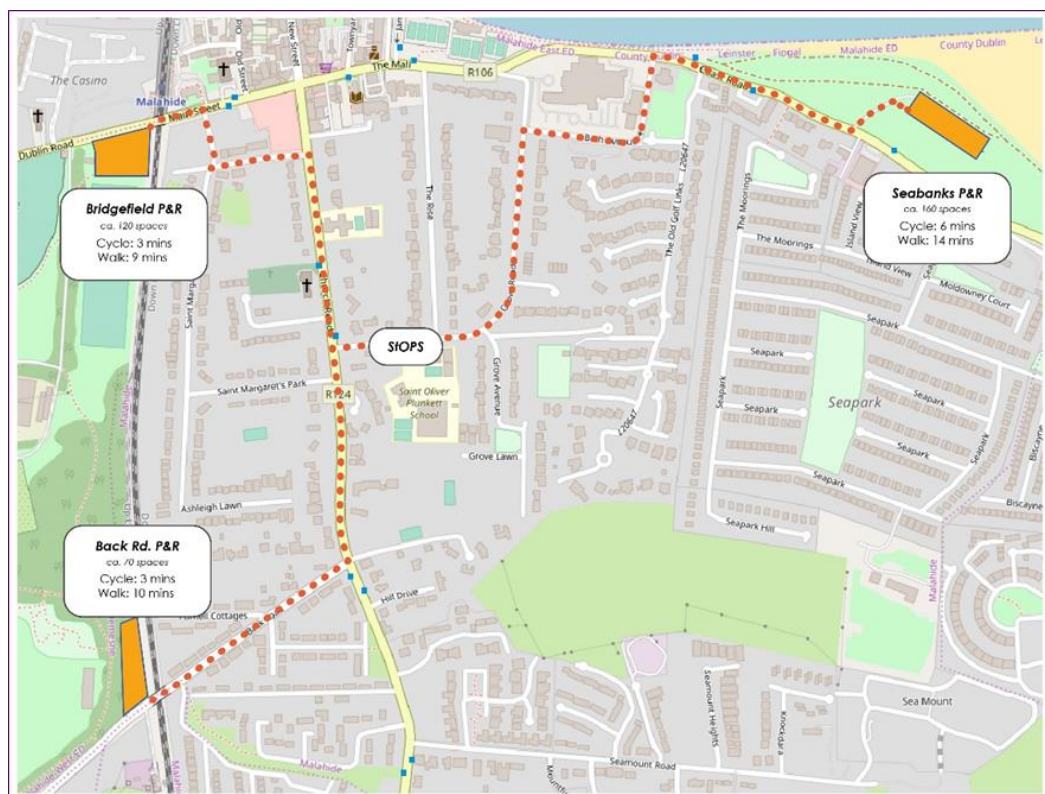


Figure 5. Park & Stride locations

### 2.4.2 Walking Buses

To support the challenges faced by parents with younger students, the Council aims to support additional measures to increase active travel. One example of this is through the



introduction of ‘walking buses’. With the support of local community and parents, this can deliver a multi-school, cross-community solution to safe and active travel.

Typically, a walking bus is a group of primary school children who walk to and from school, led by an adult at the front and back of the ‘bus’. All participants wear fluorescent reflective jackets and children are supervised until they reach school, home, or are met by a parent.

The bus travels along a pre-arranged route collecting or dropping off children at ‘bus stops’ along the way.

School Wardens engaged by Fingal County Council helped to support the implementation of these measures in the initial weeks, with walking bus now set up from the Back Road car park and operating daily.

#### **2.4.3 Drop Off Zones**

A drop off zone is provided at the top of the Rise in what was the diagonal car parking spaces and a school bus drop off zone was also provided at this location to address concerns over younger students’ safety also.

The existing Pay & Display bays on both Church Road and Grove Road have also been relined to provide set down areas. This is aimed at Church Road particularly in order to address parking illegally and the safety concerns surrounding St. Andrew’s students.

#### **2.4.4 One-Way System Revision**

In response to the significant concerns expressed by local residents over the extent and time of the proposed one-way system, the Council amended its initial proposal and replaced it with a ‘no right’ / ‘no left’ turn from The Mall onto The Rise. In addition, this revision is time plated to be in operation during School Street times only, i.e. 08:30 to 09:15; 13:00 to 14:45 (Mon-Fri, term time only).

#### **2.4.5 Parking Permits**

2,000 Parking permits have been issued to parents of St. Andrews and St. Oliver Plunkett’s as part of the School Streets initiative to permit free parking in the surrounding Park & Stride car parks and along the Mall for a short duration during drop off and collection times. The permits operate for 2 hours at the collection and drop off times. This allows parents/guardians to shop locally and is anecdotally resulting in increased business in the village (See comments from the Retail Forum/Shop Malahide in section 4 of this report).

#### **2.4.6 Repairs to pedestrian and active travel infrastructure**

The Operations Department of FCC carried out repairs to footpaths, signage and kerbing in the vicinity of Grove Road, the Rise, Church Road and the Diamond, to improve pedestrian movements in the area. This includes the issuing of hedge cutting notices.

Additional bike parking facilities have also been erected on Grove Road to encourage active commuting.



#### **2.4.7 Yellow Box extension at the Mall/Rise Junction**

The Yellow box has been extended at the junction of the Mall and the Rise to permit a larger area for vehicles exiting the Rise to turn into, to prevent delays on the Rise.

#### **2.4.8 Enforcement**

Enforcement against illegal parking is being carried out in a concerted and intensive manner in the surrounding areas of Grove Road, the Rise, the Mall, and Church Road, and the immediate environs. Enforcement effort is carried out by An Garda Síochána and Fingal County Council traffic wardens.

#### **2.4.9 Bollards**

Continued consideration will be given to the provision of bollards on Church Road to prevent illegal parking on the footpath should the issue resurfaces.

#### **2.4.10 Footpath Link from Robswall**

A new footpath link has been developed from Robswall to Jamestown Orchard, reducing the travel time for pedestrians and cyclists from these areas to St. Oliver Plunkett's, St. Andrew's and Malahide Community School. This reduced the distance from Robswall to St. Oliver Plunkett's from 3km to 2km, making it a walkable/cyclable commute.

#### **2.4.11 Upgrade to the Diamond Junction Traffic Signals**

As part of the scheme, an upgrade of the traffic signals at the Diamond was carried out to put the junction on Mova, an intelligent traffic control system. An adjustment to the movements through the junction was also carried out with the upgrade. This will help to ensure the most efficient movements of traffic through the Diamond to improve safety and maximise the traffic flows and pedestrian movements at this junction. Adjustments to the signal timings was carried out in December following feedback from businesses and residents in the area, to alleviate congestion issues that had manifested on the Mall.

#### **2.4.12 St. Andrews National School**

Through the School Streets consultation process, the Council identified road safety and traffic concerns for St. Andrews National School, Church Road including concerns regarding the displacement of traffic from Grove Road onto Church Road adding to the already chaotic environment at school drop-off and collection times as a result of School Streets.

As the R124 is a main road on a main bus route, it was not possible for the zone directly outside this school to be pedestrianised. However, the following measures were put in place to include St Andrews in the initiative:

- Increased enforcement of illegal parking through An Garda Síochána and Fingal County Council Traffic Wardens. This resulted in the complete removal of the illegal parking that had resulted in the entire footpath outside St Andrews being cleared. Whereas, prior to the implementation, both footpaths were blocked by parked cars and buses. This was so out of control that the School Warden was unable to safely cross children at this location due to a lack of visibility as a result of cars parking in



the immediate vicinity of the crossing. Now both footpaths outside of St Andrews are clear of parked cars, and the drop off zone is in operation.

- The Council also carried out repairs to pedestrian infrastructure, discouraging illegal parking on Church Rd. and as a result facilitating safe pedestrian movements past and into St. Andrew's school.

## 2.5 Summary

- 2.5.1 The School Streets pilot (and supporting measures) was officially launched on 25 November 2019.
- 2.5.2 The launch received positive media coverage, with articles in the Irish Times, Today FM and Newstalk radio interviews along with social media reach (6,015 people on Facebook reached with 1,307 engagements on the launch day itself, along with 3,366 Twitter impressions).

### 3. PILOT OUTCOMES – QUANTITATIVE

#### 3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 To facilitate the assessment of the impact of the pilot initiative, a series of methods were put in place following its launch to survey and monitor:

- Air quality
- Pupil mode shift
- Vehicular traffic
- Parking enforcement.

3.1.2 This section provides the results of these impacts, comparing where possible against the baseline conditions in the areas of the School Street pilot.

#### 3.2 Air Quality

3.2.1 The Air Quality monitor is located at the junction of the Rise and Grove Road adjacent to the school, so that it is in an area that is trafficable.

3.2.2 In the week prior to the implementation of the School Streets pilot, Nitrogen Oxide ( $\text{NO}_2$ ) (a pollutant associated with vehicular traffic) values averaged  $44.66 \text{ ug/m}^3$ .

3.2.3 This dropped to  $34.25 \text{ ug/m}^3$  by the end of the following week at the 9am drop off time, a significant enough decrease to suggest it is as a result of the decrease in vehicular traffic.

**20% reduction in air pollution around the School Streets zone.**

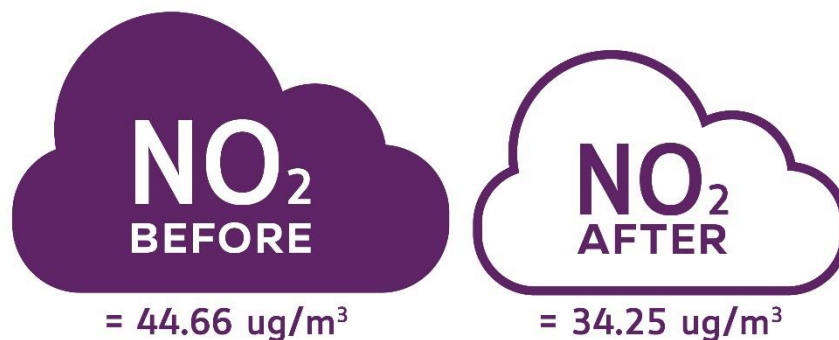
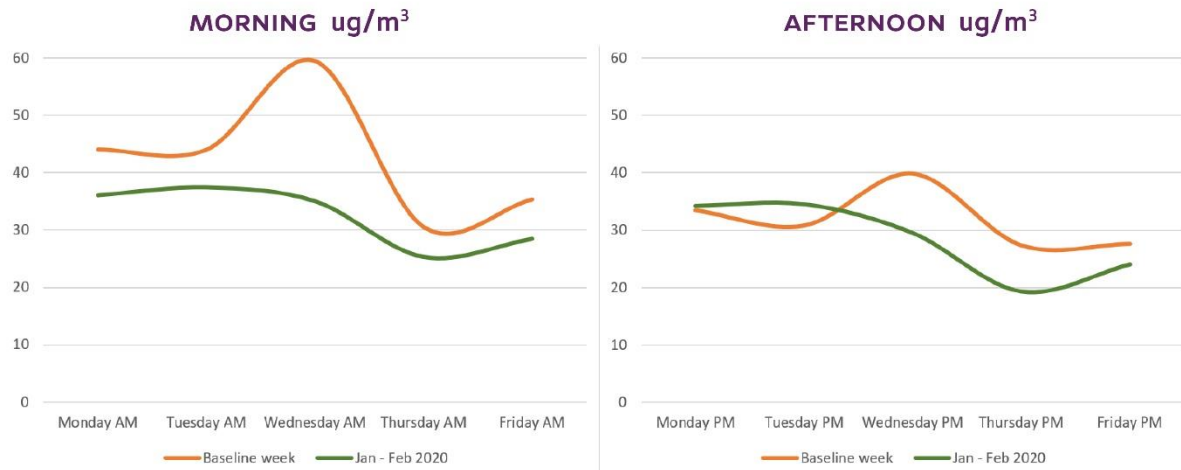


Figure 6. Air Quality – Before and After

3.2.4 Analysis of air quality was also undertaken to look at the daily variance through the week and also within the day. The figure below shows a significant reduction in Nitrogen Dioxide levels across the week, noticeably on Wednesdays, when levels were at their highest.

3.2.5 The only day where observed NO<sub>2</sub> levels remained above baseline level was Tuesdays PM (approximately 4 ug/m<sup>3</sup> higher).



**Figure 7. Air Quality – Before and After (Day/Week Variance)**

### 3.3 Pupil Mode Share – St. Oliver Plunkett’s

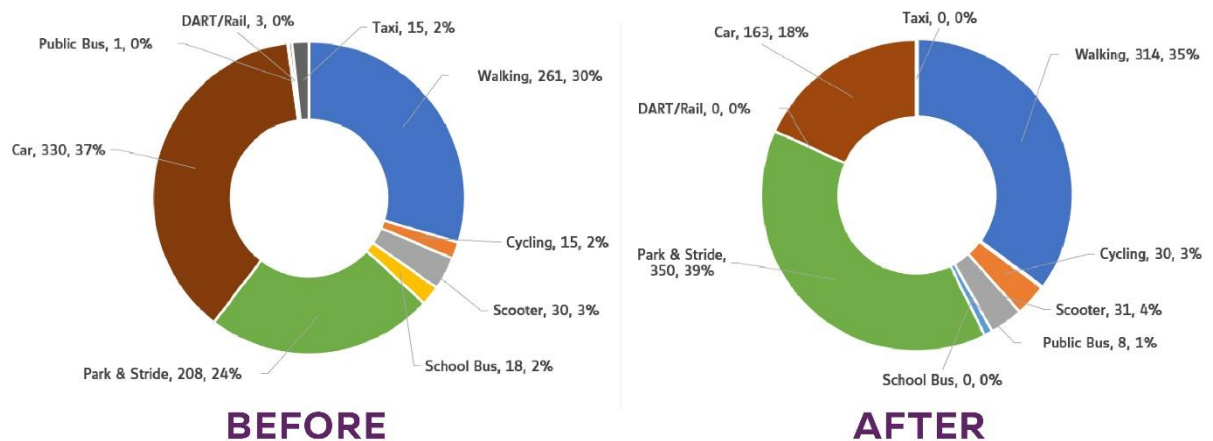
3.3.1 Upon consultation with St. Oliver Plunkett’s School, it was agreed that it would be beneficial to gauge the opinion of the students on the factors which informed the development of the pilot, and to benchmark their travel habits prior to the implementation of the School Streets initiative. The method chosen for this input was in the form of a ‘hands up survey’, whereby students were asked how they currently travel to school.

**Active traffic mode choice among St. Oliver Plunkett’s students has increased by 43%**

3.3.2 The main shift that can be observed after the launch of the initiative is an increase in the number of pupils starting their trip by car and ending it by walking (Park and Stride) from 24% to 39%. Cycling numbers doubled, albeit from a low number and fifty more students walk door to door.

**The usage of car to travel to school has decreased significantly, from 37% to 18%.**

**Walking has also increased significantly, increasing from 30% to 35%.**



**Figure 8. Mode Share – St Oliver Plunkett School Pupils – Before and After**

### 3.4 Pupil Mode Share – St. Andrew’s National School

3.4.1 Similarly to St. Oliver Plunkett’s, St. Andrew’s students were surveyed to gauge modal shift. The same method of a hands up survey was used for this school.

**Active traffic mode choice among St. Andrew’s students has increased by 16%**

3.4.2 The main shift that can be observed after launch of the initiative has been observed as an increase of the number of pupils starting their commute by car and ending it by walking (Park and Stride) from 31% to 42%.

Car travel also saw a decrease of 9%. The significance of other commuting patterns remained broadly unchanged.

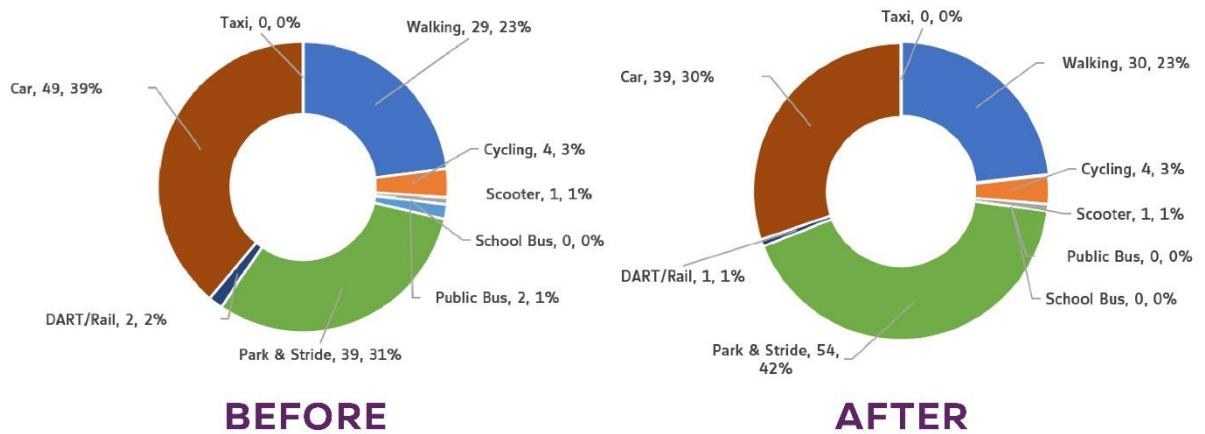


Figure 9. Mode Share – St Oliver Plunkett School Pupils – Before and After

### 3.5 Traffic Surveys

3.5.1 Junction Turning Counts were undertaken at a variety of locations around Malahide before and after the implementation of the School Streets Pilot to assess the impact of the pilot on traffic conditions in Malahide. These counts were taken on 09/10/2019 and 12/12/2019. Below is an analysis of traffic at key junctions at Grove Road, Church Road and The Diamond between 08:30 and 09:15.

3.5.2 It must be noted that when reviewing these statistics, there may be unavoidable variables in the study area which affect the outcome. In this instance, weather conditions were an influencing factor. When baseline traffic was surveyed, there were mild weather conditions in effect in Malahide, with 0.6mm rainfall, whereas on the day of the follow-up surveys, conditions were significantly more adverse, with a daily rainfall figure of 10.4mm.

#### 3.5.3 Junction of Grove Road and Church Road

3.5.4 There was a significant level of traffic using Grove Road in front of St. Oliver Plunkett's School before the pilot implementation between 08:30 – 09:15. The pilot has led to a reduction of **over 300 vehicles driving directly outside St. Oliver Plunkett's School** in the morning.

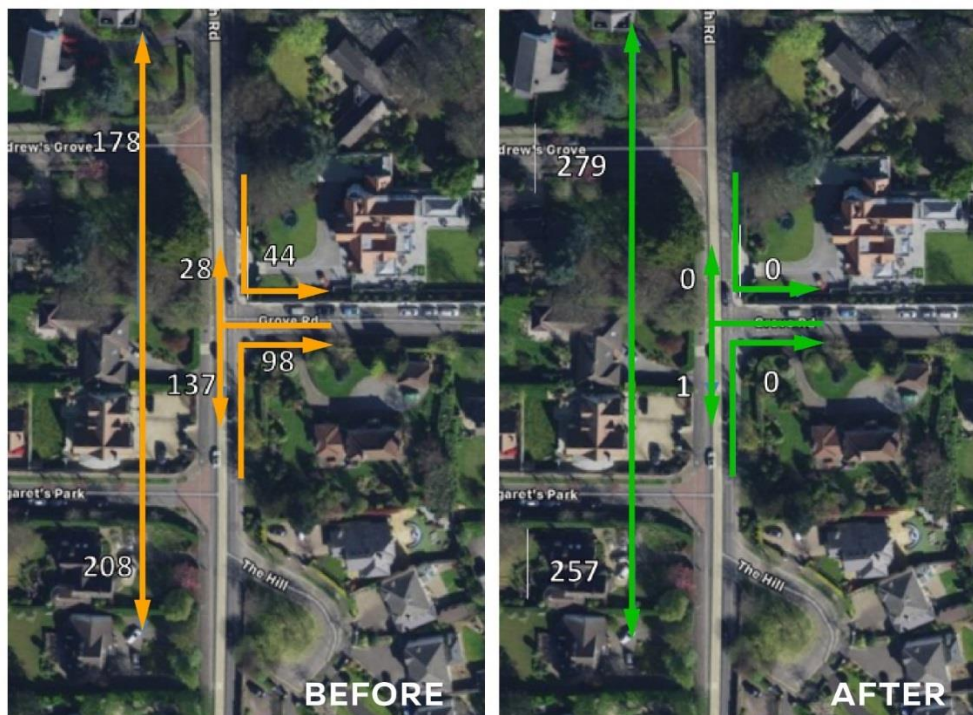
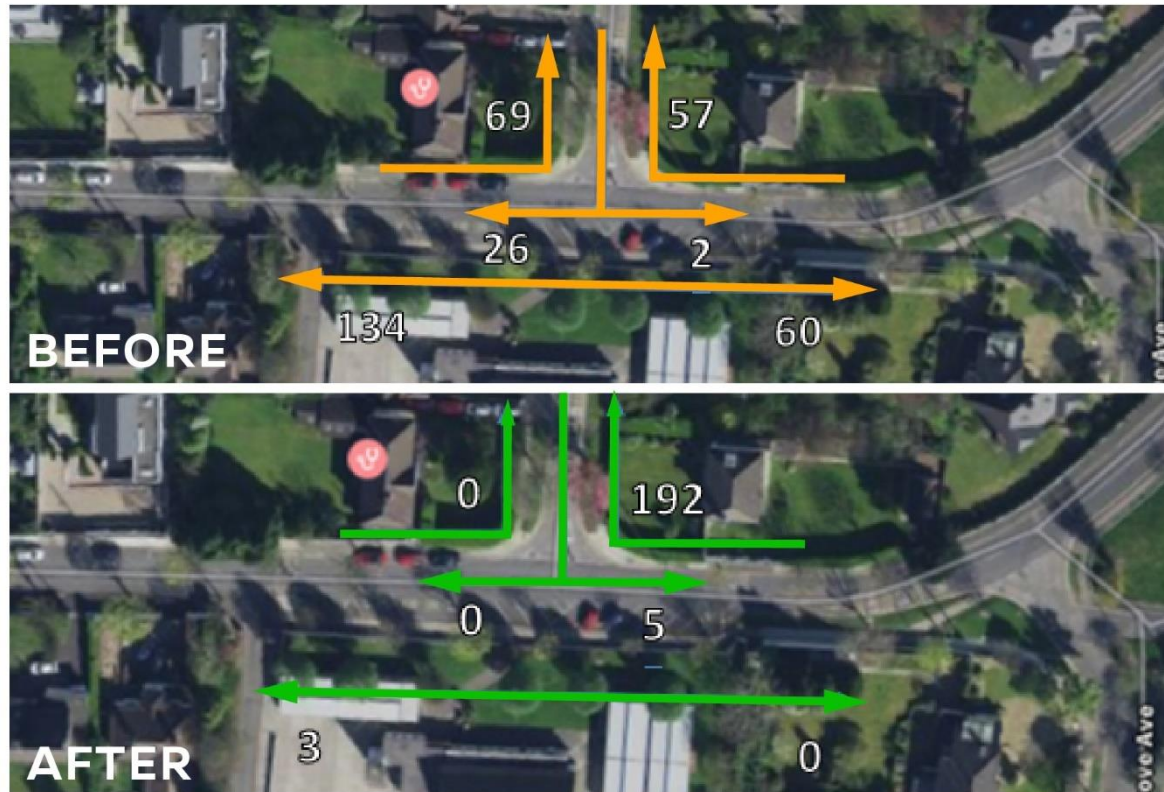


Figure 10. Grove Road School Streets – Before and After

3.5.5 There is a decrease in traffic heading southwards along Church Road. Combining traffic turning from Grove Road and traffic travelling southwards along Church Road, there were 345 vehicles in the October 2019 count, this dropped to 258 in the December 2019 count. This represents a **25% decrease** in traffic heading southbound on Church Road, after the Grove Road junction.

3.5.6 Northbound traffic along Church Road before the junction, combining northbound traffic turning right into Grove Road from and traffic travelling south to north along Church Road, was stable with 276 vehicles before and 279 after. Overall there is a reduction in total traffic

movements on this section of Church Road from 693 vehicles to 536, this represents an overall **23% decrease** in Traffic on Church Road.



**Figure 11. Junction of Grove Road and The Rise – Before and After**

- 3.5.7 The decrease in traffic associated with the School Streets Pilot on Grove Road is distinct, as would be expected. As also would be expected given the turning restrictions in place for the pilot scheme, there is an increase in traffic turning right from Grove Road to The Rise.
- 3.5.8 It is evident that an informal “one-way” system is in operation, with traffic turning from The Rise onto Grove Road decreasing from 28 vehicles to 5. Traffic in both directions on The Rise has increased from 154 vehicles to 197, an increase of 28% between 08:30–09:15 (flows increase on The Rise by only 12%, taking an 08:00–09:30 time period).
- 3.5.9 However, given the informal one-way system, traffic is moving much more smoothly. Total traffic volume at this junction between Grove Road and the Rise has decreased significantly from 348 to 200 vehicle movements.

**This represents a 43% combined reduction in school related traffic along Grove Road and The Rise combined, with the added benefits to morning traffic flow along The Rise arising from the informal one-way system.**



Figure 12. The Diamond – Before and After

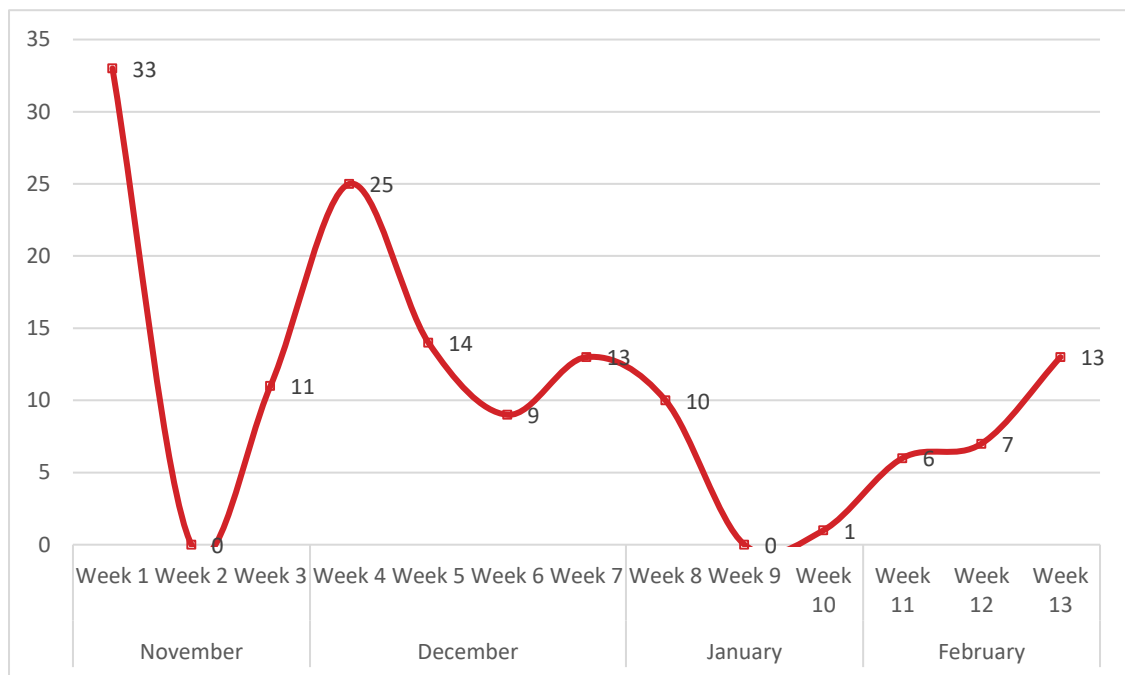
3.5.10 Total traffic volumes at The Diamond increased slightly by 8% (975 after pilot, 902 before). However, this increase is marginal enough to be seen on a day to day basis, therefore conclusions in relation to School Streets cannot be drawn – apart from noting that a significant increase in traffic at The Diamond has not occurred. Combined with an upgrade of the signalling system at this junction there should be improvements in traffic flow.

**Reminder: Follow-up traffic surveys were carried out on a day where there was 9.8mm more rainfall (daily) than the date of baseline surveys.**

### 3.6 Parking Enforcement

3.6.1 The local area surrounding St. Oliver Plunkett's and St. Andrew's schools were experiencing high levels of illegal parking and resulting pavement congestion prior to the implementation of School Streets. As a supporting measure, Fingal County Council enacted an increased focus on parking enforcement.

3.6.2 The graph below shows the local issuing of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) since the launch of School Streets.



**Figure 13. Parking Enforcement**

3.6.3 In the week initially following the launch of the pilot initiative, there was high level of PCNs issued, with 33 in Week 1. This dropped significantly in the subsequent week, likely as a result of increased word-of-mouth and local knowledge of the measures. In the initiative's fourth week, the number of PCNs issued rose significantly to a level of 25, however since then, it has gradually decreased.

**The quantitative impacts of the first three months of the pilot are positive, with:**

**Reductions in air pollution**

**Increases in sustainable travel modes by students**

**Decreases in car travel and commute by students**

**Improvements in traffic flows at local junctions**



## 4. PILOT OUTCOMES – QUALITATIVE

### 4.1 Qualitative feedback from pupils, teachers, parents and local residents

- 4.1.1 Following implementation and launch of the School Streets pilot, correspondence and stakeholder engagement was maintained to ensure a period of responsibility and monitoring surrounding its impact.
- 4.1.2 Meetings were held with a number of key stakeholders and interested parties. These ranged from both schools directly affected, the local Chamber of Commerce, Malahide Retail Forum/Shop Malahide, Parents Associations, and residents.
- 4.1.3 The key parties directly involved in the initiative have provided feedback since the implementation and there has been agreement in the improvement to road safety for students and parents.

*“ The children are particularly happy to have their safety ensured as they walk on Grove Road. They like the space to chat and play in complete safety. ”*

- CLAIRE O'CONNOR, ST. OLIVER'S PRINCIPAL

*“ School Streets is the best thing that has happened Malahide. Before it started I had to walk out blindly onto the road to cross children as cars were parked all along the footpath ”*

- BRED A CRAWFORD, ST. ANDREW'S WARDEN

- 4.1.4 There has also been positive feedback in relation to the environmental and climate change focus that one of the initiative's core pillars based on.

*“ We think that the School Streets initiative is enhancing our community as it vastly decreases Malahide's carbon footprint ”*

- DANIEL KELLY, STUDENT COUNCIL



- 4.1.5 While the above can be interpreted as having a positive impact on the health of students and other users, there was also distinct feedback commenting on the marked improvement in the morale and attitude of students.
- 4.1.6 This can be attributed to the increased exposure to active travel, but there may also be psychological factors influencing this trend, for example the effect of having more contact with peers before class, and the indirect impact of spending less time in an idle car or caught in congestion.

*“ It is helping to develop independence and confidence as the children are no longer dropped at the gate by their parents. They are more alert and ready to learn, having had fresh air and exercise ”*

- CLARE O'CONNOR, ST. OLIVER'S PRINCIPAL

*“ The School Streets initiative is bringing us closer together with our friends through the walking buses as pupils are given the chance to enjoy the commute to school whilst spending time with their fellow students ”*

- MIA DEUTROM, SCHOOL GREEN TEAM

- 4.1.7 The impact the initiative has had on morning routines have also been observed through feedback from parents of students.

*“ Mornings are extremely stressful for most working parents and the new system has certainly alleviated much of this ”*

- PARENT

- 4.1.8 Further insights were received from local stakeholders in Malahide. The sentiment received from residents has been particularly positive, with some citing an “excellent improvement” among long and short term residents alike.
- 4.1.9 Local commerce has also expressed their support for the initiative, with positive feedback being received from Malahide Chamber of Commerce and the Malahide Retail Forum. There have been positive impacts seen among local businesses in terms of footfall and consumer behaviours and patterns.

*“from a business perspective I’ve experienced a much busier morning trade, to the extent that I now bring an extra member of staff in for the first hour ”*

- AINE MCCABE, LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER  
& MALAHIDE RETAIL FORUM MEMBER

- 4.1.10 There have also been some concerns raised over the local traffic impact, and the recently introduced Mova signalling at The Diamond junction. There have been some reports of an initial backlog following implementation, while some have also expressed a noticeable review and adaptive change to the system.

*“it did create a backlog initially (...) I think the traffic light signalling is still not perfect, but hopefully the ‘intelligent’ system will perfect this over the next few months ”*

- LOCAL BUSINESS OWNER  
& RESIDENT

- 4.1.11 In some cases, there has been concerns raised over the displacement of traffic and congestion as a result of the Grove Rd. temporary closure. Local residents in particular are best placed to observe this impact, with some citing a heightened risk when increased flow is combined with some motorists exceeding the residential speed limit.
- 4.1.12 Other views have seen a change in travel patterns, suggesting adaption as a result of specific elements of the initiative.

*“There has been a noticeable increase in traffic on the road at school times. Some of this increase would appear to be people avoiding the new traffic light configuration at The Diamond ”*

- RESIDENT, ST. MARGARET'S RD.

- 4.1.13 Some residents have also commented on the safety implications involved in this pattern of displaced traffic. Residents of St. Margaret's Park have voiced concerns over illegal parking and dangerous manoeuvres during pick up and drop off times.

*“Essentially this road has become a drop off and pick up zone with a lot of congestion and illegal parking. The real dangers are drivers doing three point turns and backing into residents’ driveways while children are walking along the paths.”*

**- RESIDENT, ST. MARGARET'S PK.**

- 4.1.14 Other residents echo this call for increased monitoring and enforcement against illegal parking and manoeuvres, with some citing the prevalence of dangerous driving of larger vehicles and SUVs. A low level of yellow line adherence has been observed by St. Margaret's Rd. residents, and caution has been urged in relation to areas where there is little pavement and pedestrian infrastructure.
- 4.1.15 Opinions of those resident immediately surrounding the initiative, with one resident from The Rise noting an increase in driver speed and ignoring of road signs.
- 4.1.16 One resident of Grove Road raised concern over accessibility issues, particularly in relation to emergency vehicles. Traffic congestion and displaced flows were also raised as an issue here.

*“The present traffic arrangement has turned Malahide Village into a traffic jam particularly from the Portmarnock direction”*

**- RESIDENT, GROVE RD.**

- 4.1.17 Some residents also offered suggestions as part of feedback, with some proposing a bus link from the two designated park and stride locations, as a reaction to ensuring greater safety for students and pedestrians.
- 4.1.18 There have also been submissions made by residents that are in favour of the initiative, even in light of some observed disadvantages. One resident from Marley, perpendicular to Grove Rd., states that although congestion in the village has been experienced, it is somewhat justified by the increased safety on Grove Rd. and its surroundings.



- 4.1.19 This view was also associated with a need to continue current enforcement efforts (by An Garda Síochána and FCC parking wardens), to maintain and preserve the continuation of these positive impacts.

*“ Much better traffic management overall and there has been an excellent enforcement of necessary traffic regulations (...) Concern would be that over time the enforcement of traffic regulations reduces and we then encounter access and exit problems on top of the road closures ”*

- RESIDENT, MARLEY

- 4.1.20 As an important element in the enforcement and monitoring of local parking adherence, An Garda Síochána have expressed their positive view of the initiative, commenting on a marked change in community spirit and collaboration between authorities.

*“ From a Garda perspective, there have been very few parking issues in the area of the school, which frees up resources and allows Gardaí to focus their efforts in other parts of the community ”*

- AN GARDA SIOCHANA

- 4.1.21 The National Transport Authority have also expressed their support for the initiative, commending the pilot on a policy context, and the precedent it has set in relation to the redesign and configuration of public space.

*“ This project has been important in showing how space can be managed differently, rebalancing priority away from vehicles and towards community, while helping people adjust and think about their car journeys ”*

- NATIONAL TRANSPORT AUTHORITY



## 5. FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Existing pilot at St Oliver Plunkett's School

- 5.1.1 Given the positive quantitative and qualitative impacts noted above, it is recommended that the current School Streets pilot at St Oliver Plunkett's School continues for its planned 18-month duration.
- 5.1.2 It is also recommended that follow up outcome monitoring activity is undertaken in order to fully assess the impact of the pilot over its proposed 18-month pilot duration – utilising both quantitative and qualitative measures.
- 5.1.3 During this continued period of the pilot, continued resources will be required to implement the supporting measures including parking enforcement and the continued development and delivery of Walking Buses.
- 5.1.4 Continued engagement with both St Oliver Plunkett's and St Andrew's School communities and local residents will also be key, to ensure any emerging issues are identified early and mitigation measures developed to address these.

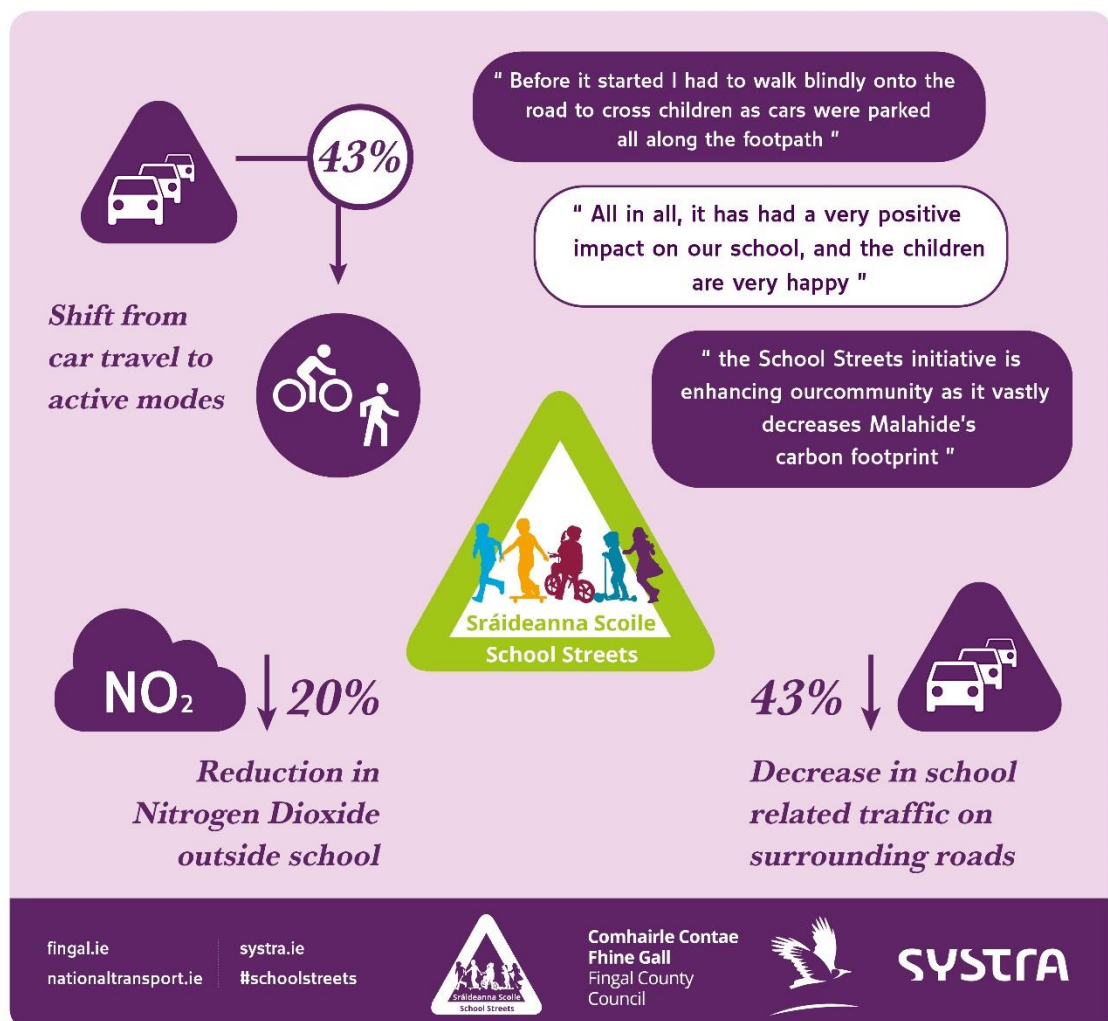
### 5.2 Future roll-out of the School Streets pilot programme

- 5.2.1 Given the positive outcomes noted to date in the current School Streets pilot, it is also recommended that consideration be given to extending the School Streets pilot to two further schools within Fingal County Council.
- 5.2.2 This will enable the concept to be tested in different locations and school settings, while building on the experience and lessons learned from the initial Malahide pilot (for example the need for intensive and early engagement with local stakeholders prior to implementation and the benefits of adopting an iterative approach to the design of the scheme based on stakeholder feedback).
- 5.2.3 The lessons learned and outcome data from this wider pilot programme will help inform any future decisions as to future County wide roll out of School Streets at appropriate schools.
- 5.2.4 Adopting a wider pilot programme will also build a solid evidence base as to the outcomes of School Streets, along with valuable learnings for such a roll out based on testing the concept in a variety of school settings.

### 5.3 Further actions

- 5.3.1 In addition to the existing supporting measures, it is advised that a series of actions are also enacted to aid their effectiveness and longevity.
- 5.3.2 One of the main actions required is the installation of new barriers at the designated zones on either side of Grove Rd. These are required due to unforeseen deterioration of the initial coffin bollards.
- 5.3.3 Following interaction with the Parent's Association of St. Oliver Plunkett's, the following steps were proposed and have been chosen to be implemented.

- 5.3.4 The number of disabled bays are to be increased in the area directly outside the school , and reconfigured.
- 5.3.5 New time plates are to be erected in closer proximity to the set down areas.
- 5.3.6 The existing bus bay is now also been designated to be moved to the northern extent of The Rise. The implementation of this is to be combined with the construction of a concrete plinth, to allow for the safe and accessible boarding and alighting of students. This was agreed with the two residents directly affected.
- 5.3.7 An additional effort will also be given to the communication of the School Street operation. This is deemed necessary over time as more students, parents, and residents become aware or open to adapting to the initiative. User pattern may also change over time, for example by moving residence, and therefore more thorough and regular dissemination of information is beneficial.
- 5.3.8 In relation to the drop-off zones, Fingal County Council have agreed that more information and time plates are to be erected here, and a '3 minute drop-off time' is to be implemented and enforced. This measure will facilitate the effective operation of drop-off zones, and mitigate pressure on car park capacity/access, as well as pressure on surrounding junctions.



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