

Via email

Councillor Owen Bierley
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Dear Councillor Bierley and Ian,

WALKING AND CYCLING TO SCHOOL – ROAD SAFETY MEASURES – WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT

Thank you for the letter that you sent through to Lincolnshire County Council on the 23 March 2022, regarding walking and cycling to schools in the West Lindsey District. I have investigated your request and the information detailed in the following paragraphs should better inform you of the works and actions that Lincolnshire County Council is undertaking and reinforce to you how important we take the concerns raised within your letter.

You will have seen that we launched a series of initiatives over recent times to address the shortage of funds that we receive to maintain the highway services we provide for Lincolnshire's residents. Unfortunately, the recent 'Fix Our Funds To Fix Our Roads' campaign was unsuccessful and left a significant shortfall in available funding to maintain the existing highway assets. The DfT's allocation we did receive, doesn't factor in inflation or the fact that labour and material costs have significantly increased, and this leaves a £36m funding gap we need to fill over the next three years. We are still hopeful that the government and the DfT will recognise that Lincolnshire and other rural counties play an equally important role within the UK and deserve a fairer share of funding for roads and other essential services.

When it comes to maintaining our highways infrastructure, we'll continue working efficiently and making the most of the funding we have received. Funding priorities are based on our 'Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plans', which balances up the needs of all assets that we have a duty to maintain. The funding allocated to footway and cycleway maintenance is prioritised to produce scheme programmes based on the exiting surveyed condition, insurance claims received, customer transactions and those with a high usage around schools and village amenities. We also carry out routine safety inspections that identify and arrange faults and programme rectification works for any works that could cause hazards.

Regarding speeding traffic, a 30mph speed limit is in place outside all statutory age schools in the county in accordance with our speed limit policy. In addition, requests for measures to manage parking outside schools are given priority and we continue to deliver schemes to introduce waiting restrictions and mandatory school keep clear markings in these areas across the county. The park and stride schemes you mentioned have also been introduced and are facilitated by local schools, where they have utilised village hall facilities to direct cars away from the immediate school roads.

Within your letter you mention the potential usage of a mandatory 20mph speed limits outside schools in line with new initiatives. We have previously held back from blanket 20mph zones across Lincolnshire, as it is felt this would reduce their overall effectiveness and not address driver behaviours if they became a standard feature. Our current speed limit policy does already allow for such provision, but we would normally only consider this option where they form part of a much larger scheme to promote accident reduction. The Speed Limit Policy was last amended in 2015 and is due for review in the near future. The review planned will include all aspects of speed management and other network management schemes and consider the aims and objectives within Lincolnshire's Local Transport Plan 5.

This council has recognised that there is a desire to invest in more sustainable travel options and has created a Sustainable Travel Group to set standards for travel to school, develop a programme of Links to School routes, carry out re-appraisal of unsuitable routes, engage with schools to develop Travel plans and continuing to deliver the Independent Travel Trainer and Max Respect programmes. We have been allocated £799,900 from Tranche 2 of the Active Travel Fund that has been promoted by the Department of Transport. As part of this fund, we are proposing a range of schemes for market towns around the county to encourage walking and cycling initiatives. We have engaged with our residents to gather information and feedback on a variety of proposed schemes with the intent to establish general attitudes to active travel measures around the county.

We have also enacted a series of educational concepts, through the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership, which focuses on engaging with schools and communities and attempting to change behaviours and offer alternative options through a series of free lessons. At a Primary school level, we help teach children important safety lessons in how to keep themselves and others safe, the road environment and how it functions and how to influence changes in that environment.

At the lower key stages, we help to teach how to appropriately address approaching road safety challenges through a series of lessons that include understanding visibility and how to stay the most visible when on and near the road, an introduction to crossing places, understanding and practicing pedestrian safety in a variety of circumstances, awareness and understanding of own responsibility inside a vehicle and some introduction to the law, knowledge of different crossing places and what to do in their absence, understanding your environment and adapting to different environments with the focus of road safety, understanding the importance of wearing a helmet and the potential consequences of not doing so and the Junior Road Safety Officer scheme - Direct and peer engagement focussing on local topics throughout the academic year.

At secondary school level we help to teach children important safety lessons in understanding and recognising unsafe situations, developing coping strategies and techniques to stay safer on the road, promoting positive related behaviour among peers and discouraging negative peer pressure.

At the upper key stages, we help to teach how to appropriately address approaching road safety challenges through lessons that include understanding consequences and generating prevention ideas and techniques around safe roadside use, staying safe inside a vehicle and being prepared to challenge behaviour, Johnny's Story around Cycle safety and maintenance importance, understanding large vehicles and me, Ghost Street around distractions and risks for pedestrians and cyclists, focussing on collision investigation and prevention and the 2fast2soon concept which focuses on understanding the risks, consequences, peer pressure and effects on the family following a road traffic collision as well as promoting prevention strategy planning.

Whilst I do understand that your requests relate to the schools within WLDC, this authority will always make decisions based on the needs of all residents across the County that can be applied in a fair and equitable manner. Your request for timescales is difficult to answer without knowing the specific locations that you are referring to and, as you will see from the information above, there is already a significant amount of works ongoing across a wide range of initiatives and improvements. If you do have any specific concerns that we are not already aware of, I would suggest that you ask these schools to engage with this authority directly so we are able to advise on any potential works that could be undertaken to address any potential concerns

Yours sincerely



Councillor Richard Davies
Executive Councillor
Highways, Transport and IT