

# Uplands Avenue School Safe Haven Zone Report – St George’s Primary and Ridgeway Infant School

Derby City Council

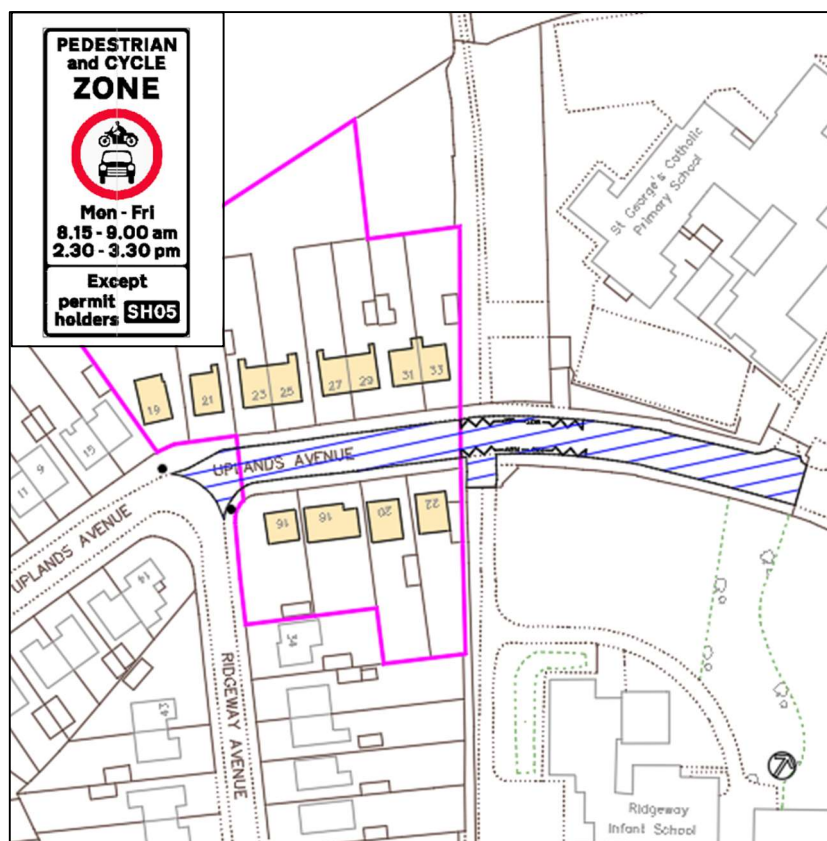


Document Reference

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## Introduction

On 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022 a new 'No Motor Vehicle Monday-Friday 08:15-09:00 14:30-15:30' restriction was introduced on Uplands Avenue, from its junction with Ridgeway Avenue to the end of the cul-de-sac, adjacent to the entrance to St. George's Primary School (see plan 1). The restriction, known locally as a School Safe Haven Zone, was introduced using experimental powers. The experimental process lasts for a total of 18 months. This provides sufficient time to monitor the scheme and consider whether to make it permanent, modify or revoke the restriction completely.



**Plan 1** – Location of Uplands Avenue School Safe Haven Zone

The Zone was introduced following receipt of funding from the Department of Transport (DfT). The funding was provided to try and replicate the success of the School Streets programme. Across the Country several local authorities were successfully introducing School Streets', helping to promote cleaner air, reduce congestion, improve road safety and increase levels of active travel.

St George's Primary and Ridgeway Infant School are two of seven schools included in the trial. All the schools selected had some experience of road closures by taking part in several event days to promote clean air. The location of the schools offered a variety of settings, Uplands Avenue being a cul-de-sac which has long had issues with congestion during the school run times.

The initial proposal included Gayton Junior School, on Gayton Avenue, which is just off Ridgeway Avenue. The school shares a site and access with Gayton Community Centre and Swimming Pool. A number of concerns were raised during the statutory consultation process in relation to ensuring

access to the community buildings during the restriction times. This resulted in Gayton Junior School being withdrawn from the proposal and the scheme being introduced only on Uplands Avenue.

## **Public consultation**

Prior to the start of the trials, the Council conducted an initial public consultation for a period of 12 weeks. The consultation raised several questions and allowed the public to make comments.

125 responses were received in relation to Gayton, Ridgeway and St George's with some expressing concerns about the impact on local residents in terms of access and vehicle displacement on Ridgeway Avenue. Nevertheless, 80% had experienced difficulties during school drop off and pick up times, 91% agreed there was a need to improve safety and 82% agreed there is a need to remove traffic congestion near the school entrance.

With the above results in mind, the Council, in agreement with St George's Primary School, Ridgeway Infant School and local Councillors, decided to proceed with introducing the Zone on Uplands Avenue on an experimental basis, for a period of 18 months. The experimental process would allow sufficient time for stakeholders and members of the public to experience the Zone and provide opinion on whether it should become permanent.

## **The start of the Zone**

The Zone was demarcated by regulatory signs:



The week before the new restriction was due to begin the Council's Cycle Derby team visited the school to encourage and promote walking and cycling.

On the first day pupils arrived on bikes and scooters to help launch the Zone. During the first two weeks of the scheme, staff from the Council and two schools helped manage the entry points and raise awareness. The majority of comments received during this period were positive with parents saying how much safer they felt and even a delivery driver praising the ambition of the scheme.

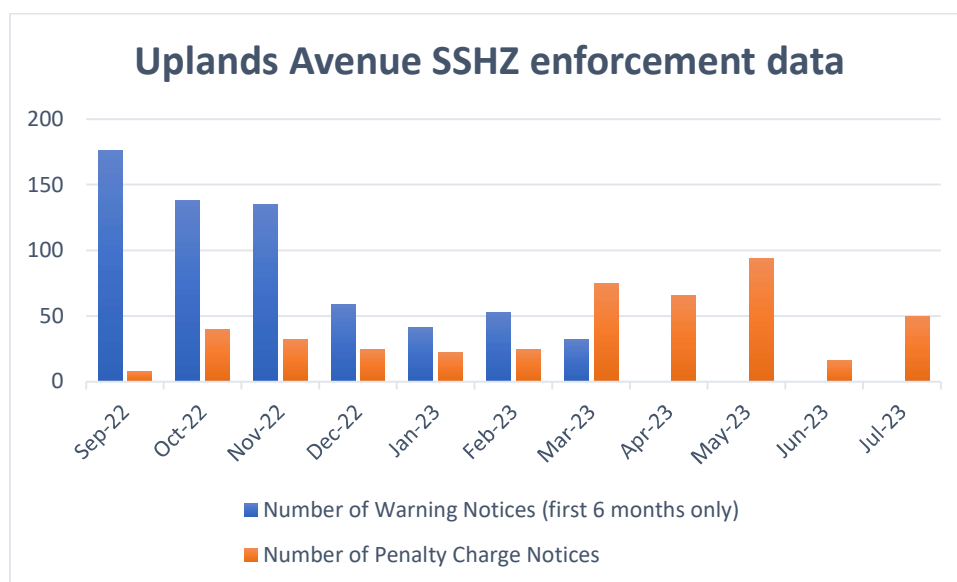
## **Camera enforcement**

Unfortunately, approval to allow camera enforcement was delayed until September 2022. However, this provided an opportunity to review the performance of the Zones without enforcement.

The need for cameras became apparent with many drivers ignoring the restriction causing schools to question the purpose of the scheme. However, when enforcement began the number of contraventions fell, helping to protect the Zone and re-establish support for the scheme.

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 to 27th July 2023; 634 warning notices were issued for vehicles entering the Uplands Avenue School Safe Haven Zone during the restricted times, and 453 penalty charge notices. Each vehicle registration will have been issued with a warning notice for the first contravention, then a penalty charge notice for any subsequent contraventions. Warning notices are only issued for the first six months of a new restriction being introduced, after which point, all vehicles receive penalty charge notices.

The graph below shows the number of warning notices and penalty charge notices issued by camera enforcement on the Uplands Avenue School Safe Haven Zone.



The number of warning notices declined over the initial six month period, while the number of penalty charge notices issued gradually increased. The fact that penalty charge notices are still being issued 11 months after the scheme has been introduced supports the need for enforcement measures to be in place permanently, so that the zone can operate as intended.

## **Experimental TRO - public consultation results**

Once the Experimental Order started a period of Public Consultation opened for a period of 6 months. There was an advert placed in the local paper, information was put online, and Street Notices were placed onsite which were checked every week for 6 months.

The Council received no valid objection during this period.

## **School & Parent Engagement**

Following the formal public consultation period, the schools were contacted to help review the future of the Uplands School Safe Haven Zone. Both schools are in support of the project and would like to see the zone remain in place. One of the schools may require the time of the morning operational period to be amended, they are going to review their data to establish whether there has been a significant change in late attendance since the introduction of the scheme.

Parents of both schools and the residents of Uplands Avenue were also contacted again and asked to complete a quick survey about the Zone. 15 responses were received in total, with 87% wanting the Zone to become permanent. Although the response was low, many of the comments were really positive and in support of the project, for example 'Gone are the days when people (parents!) were mounting the pavements while doing three-point-turns outside the school gates. I hope the council won't allow those days to return.'

## **Recommendations**

Based on all the consultation and engagement, including parent and resident survey results, it is clear the School Safe Haven Zone is extremely popular, receiving no formal objections. The level of support within the two schools, amongst teachers and parents, remains high. In terms of the local community, although the initial introduction of the Zone caused some residents to express concern, the level of correspondence has steadily reduced as awareness has improved. The permit process for both those living within the zone and the allocation of special exemptions was sometimes difficult, with the process and eligibility criteria occasionally causing confusion. However, this also settled down as the weeks passed. In summary, the Zone is performing well and achieving many of the proposed benefits. It retains significant support from both schools and is clearly benefiting the children. It is therefore recommended that the Uplands Avenue School Safe Haven Zone is retained and made permanent.