

STATES OF JERSEY



SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOL

**Presented to the States on 29th November 2005
by the Environment and Public Services Committee**

STATES GREFFE

REPORT

Background

Safer routes to school projects (SRTS) aim to reverse the trend toward car use for the school journey and to encourage more children to walk and cycle to school. This is done by making changes to the local infrastructure, principally by reducing traffic speeds and volumes and re-allocating road space; but also by providing safer means of travel to and from school and by raising awareness of transport, sustainability and health. SRTS projects are co-operative ventures between Island and Parish Authorities, school staff and students, parents and local residents.

There are many benefits from the setting up of SRTS schemes –

- To reduce traffic congestion and pollution.
- To improve safety.
- To benefit our children's health.
- To encourage children's confidence and independence.
- To reduce parental time escorting children.

History of the Group

Deputy Scott-Warren, as a member of the Public Services Committee and the Health and Social Services Committee, was given responsibility for setting up a safer routes to school group in 2000. The Group now fulfil the commitments made in policy TT12 of the Island Plan 2002 and the Sustainable Transport Policy. Support has been received from past and present Environment and Public Services Committees, Health Promotion, Education, Sport and Culture Committees and the Home Affairs Committees. Officers representing these Committees were appointed to help move the scheme forward.

Initially the Group gathered information on other similar schemes around the United Kingdom to gain a greater understanding of the aims of similar schemes, lessons learnt from the U.K. experience and how best to proceed for the benefit of the Island. Aims and objectives were agreed by the Group.

During the developmental stage of the group, several safety issues were raised by local schools that the members became involved in addressing, such as the speed of traffic at Plat Douet School, school bus parking and exiting problems at JCG and pedestrian crossing issues at Grainville and Haute Vallée schools.

Development of the Pilot scheme

With the assistance of the President of Finance and Economics, the Public Services Committee was allowed to use £250k from its Car Park Trading Fund to develop initiatives in Sustainable Transport. Environment and Public Services became the lead committee to facilitate a pilot project. £50k of this was allocated to a Safer Routes to School project. At this point the Group was joined by a traffic engineer with U.K. experience of SRTS projects.

The Group was invited to present the concept of SRTS to a primary Head-teachers' meeting. Following this meeting, a questionnaire was sent to all primary Heads asking whether any schools were interested in being considered for the pilot scheme. Seven schools expressed an interest and provided information on the type of project they believed was needed for their school.

A period of intense research was carried out by the Group to determine the most suitable project to pursue. From this process St. Martin's School was chosen as the pilot project.

At this point an engineering plan was developed and a full consultation process was rigorously carried out involving the school, pupils, parents, local residents, Parish Authorities, local businesses, Connex and the emergency services.

In April 2004 the Environment and Public Services Committee was presented with the plans. The Committee approved the working group's recommendation to go ahead with the St. Martin's scheme subject to some parking issues being resolved with the Parish.

Final approval for the scheme was given by the Committee on 15th July 2004. Works commenced at the start of the school summer holidays to cause as little inconvenience as possible to the local community. An official launch of the scheme was held in September 2004.

Outcomes of the pilot project

In September 2004 (shortly after the launch of the scheme) a check on speeds was conducted by PSD engineers (see Appendix 1) that showed reductions in speed of 7mph for eastbound traffic and 4mph for westbound traffic. In September 2005 another speed check was carried out which showed only a very small (2%) increase in speed over 12 months. Traffic speeds were therefore still significantly lower than speeds measured before the scheme was implemented.

Regular road safety input has been provided by the Road Safety Officer to school pupils before and since the completion of works. It has been noted that even during the cold winter weather increased numbers of pupils and their parents are now using the facilities and walking to school. Additional support is being provided to the school by the RSO. A pedestrian training scheme (Kerbcraft), where volunteer parents are receiving training to go into school and provide practical training to Year 3 pupils to encourage more pupils to use the scheme. Cycling proficiency courses will begin as the warmer weather approaches when older children may express an interest to ride to school.

Connex have agreed to plan their timetable to enable children to use the bus service to and from school, something that would appear to be receiving much parental support.

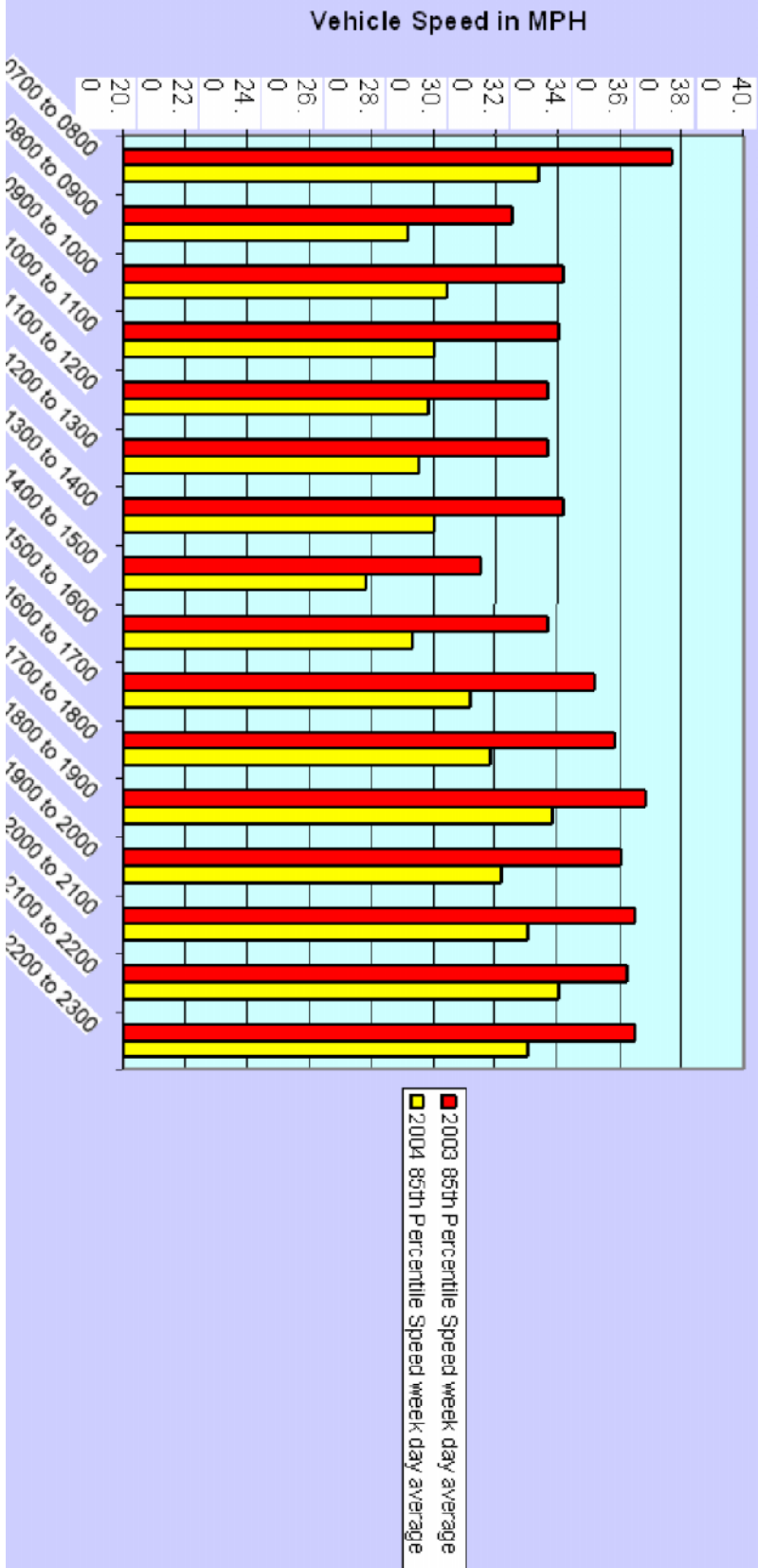
Additionally, most residents are very supportive of the scheme and are now seen using the new facilities. Their usage of the scheme is expected to increase once new car parking facilities are completed by the Parish.

The future

The group has received requests from several other schools for new projects to be considered now that the benefits of these schemes are becoming more obvious. Concern has been expressed to the group regarding the number of new housing developments near schools and the need for more SRTS schemes to ensure child road safety. A representation has also been received regarding the completion of a cycling network that would connect St. Peter's Village with Les Quennevais providing an off-road route between St. Peter's Village and Les Quennevais School. It is acknowledged that not all schemes need to be of the size of the St. Martin's School project in order to make a significant impact on the school community and local residents. Often other arrangements such as improved school bus pick-up and drop-off timings, or the introduction of a walking bus, can achieve a great deal at very little cost to the taxpayer. However significant funds will need to be identified and allocated in order to drive forward with this type of worthwhile community project. Developing more safe routes to schools is one of the measures identified in the Environment and Public Services Committee's Sustainable Travel and Transport Plan Draft Framework "Turning Travel Around". Subject to the States approving P.174/2005, a programme of safer routes to schools projects will be identified and implemented within the first 5 years of the Plan.

Appendix 1 - Speed Measurements for September 2003 and 2004

Comparison of Week Day Average 85th Percentile Speeds Before and After Traffic Calming Outside St Martin's School For West Bound Traffic



Appendix 1 - Speed Measurements for September 2003 and 2004

Comparison of Week Day Average 85th Percentile Speeds Before and After Traffic Calming Outside St Martin's School For East Bound Traffic

