

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Thomas's Kensington School Street Consultation Report - June 2025
Report by the Sustainable Travel Apprentice
10 July 2025

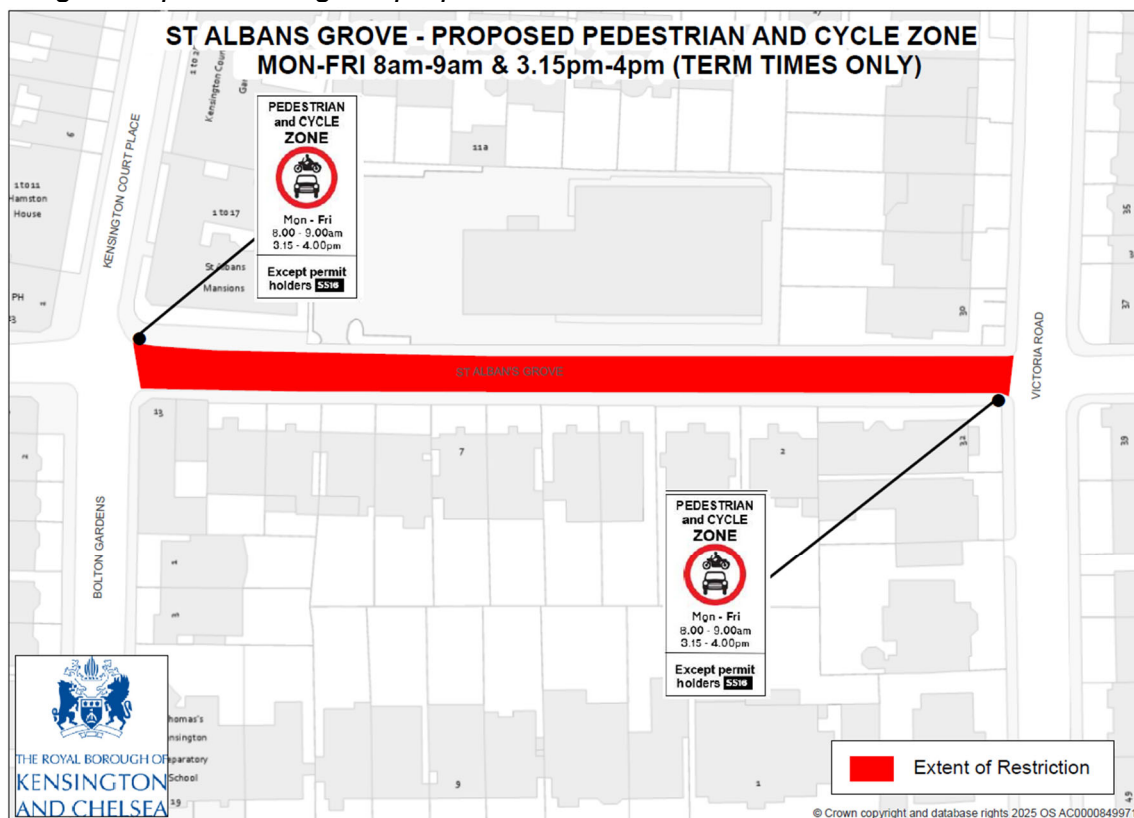
1. Introduction

- 1.1. School Streets temporarily remove motor traffic outside a school by creating timed road closures during school opening and closing times. They are a well-established way of helping more school children and others to walk, cycle, scoot or wheel to school, providing a virtually traffic-free environment which reduces the risk of collisions, congestion and poor air quality directly outside school gates. The Council introduced its first School Street on Lonsdale Road for Colville Primary School in 2019 and the borough now has ten active permanent School Streets.
- 1.2. From 30 April 2025 to 11 June 2025 the Council consulted on a new School Street in St Albans Grove. Responding to plans to consolidate Thomas's Kensington School's locations in Cottesmore Gardens and Victoria Road to Atlantic House in St Alban's Grove, officers recommended a School Street as a way to reduce the impact of school-generated car trips on local residents. In 2023, the Council's Planning Committee resolved to grant planning permission for the new school subject to the requirement to consult on a School Street. The granting of planning permission was conditional only on a School Street being consulted upon; it is for the Director of Highway and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Environment and Planning to decide whether, following such consultation, a School Street should be implemented.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 The map of the proposed School Street closure is provided below. The proposed operating times for the road closure on which we consulted were 8.00 – 9.00am and 3.15 - 4.00pm, reflecting the school's operational requirements.

Fig 1. Map illustrating the proposed School Street closure area and times



- 2.2. The proposed closures would be operational during the school term and would not operate during the school holidays or at the weekends. Vehicles already in the zone when the closures begin would be able to leave at any time, but vehicles would not be able to enter the restricted section of the street during this time, unless they have been given an exemption. Residents and business within the School Street location would be able to register for an exemption. Blue or Purple Badge Holders would also be exempt from the restriction.
- 2.3. If the scheme proceeds, barriers would be used at the times of operation, preventing vehicles from entering the closed streets. School staff would operate these barriers. Timed 'Pedestrian and Cycle Zone' signs would be placed at each closure point to inform drivers of the timed restrictions in place (Fig. 1).
- 2.4. In our consultation material, we proposed to introduce the scheme under a Traffic Management Order, from the start of the school year, in early September 2025.
3. **Consultation**
 - 3.1. On 30 April 2025 officers wrote to households in the vicinity of the school. The school promoted the consultation on their current school websites and via newsletters. Ward councillors were also informed that the consultation was due to take place.
 - 3.2. Officers notified 2,533 households and 161 businesses and the consultation received 35 responses (a 1.3% response rate). In summary:

- Eighteen responses supported the School Street in full, believing that it is essential to manage traffic, make the street safer for school children when going to school or returning home and will improve the air quality.
- Eight respondents supported in part, believing that it will improve safety of the street, but may displace some traffic onto surrounding roads.
- Nine objected to the scheme believing that it would increase traffic and restrict road access for residents, businesses and emergency services.

4. Analysis of key themes arising from consultation responses

- 4.1. The table below summarises key themes frequently mentioned by respondents across the consultation. Appendix 1 lists the responses received in full. Officers have not provided a response to comments considered out of scope of the proposals, or to the positive points raised, but acknowledge that introduction of a School Street closure is likely to prevent congestion and improve air quality immediately outside of the school gates.

Issue	Officer Response
Displacement of traffic increasing congestion.	<p>A degree of displacement is almost inevitable when a road is closed, no matter how wide or small the closure area, and the impact of this displacement will depend on the number of vehicles involved and the nature of the streets affected. While some drivers may decide to avoid entering the Victoria Road area completely, remaining on Kensington High Street, officers expect that some drivers will divert along Cottesmore Gardens. Officers acknowledge that this will affect residential amenity in this road, but consider that this would be a more efficient operation of the local highway network than leaving St Albans Grove open to traffic.</p> <p>Displacing some traffic to a road that already has traffic, does not necessarily make it less safe. But removing traffic from a road - reducing it to near zero - does make it safer, particularly for school children who are disproportionately involved in traffic collisions.</p> <p>To the extent that displacement does take effect, it is likely to be for very short periods of time during the closures and to be dispersed over surrounding streets rather than immediately outside the schools as at present. Travel surveys with the school will enable officers to understand whether the closures have had an impact on encouraging more sustainable modes of travel, by surveying students and seeing how they travel to and from school.</p> <p>Cars that are parked in the zone are able to leave the zone at any time.</p>

There will be limited road access for residents, deliveries, emergency services and school buses from other schools.	Residents and businesses of St Albans Grove would be entitled to register for a free exemption (Blue and Purple Badge holders would be exempt without requiring registration for an exemption). Emergency services will also be exempt from the closure times. Even if exemptions for residents of the street did not exist, as the closure times are not overnight, the proposals have no impact on parking for residents at night. School Buses for other schools will need to pick up from an alternative location if doing so during closure times area.
The School Street timings are too long.	The school believes the timings are the busiest periods for pick-up and drop-off of children. If in practice, the timings are too long – or too short – a further traffic order consultation can be undertaken.
There are alternative solutions available, such as school buses, car-sharing schemes, or traffic management schemes.	The Council has no power to force the school to operate a school bus – or for parents to use it for their children, nor to enforce car-sharing. A school drop-off system – even with the drop-offs taking place within the grounds, via a one-way in/out traffic system, or an educational campaign for parents regarding safe drop-offs would do nothing to reduce the congestion of parent vehicles using St Alban's Grove at peak times which can disrupt resident's use of the road. As the Council has a borough-wide resident parking permit scheme, a timed parking restriction would apply to all residents, not just parents' vehicles. This is likely to be undesirable for residents. Officers consider the school street is the only method that we as the highway authority can implement that we can be confident will work.
Exemptions for the School Street should be extended to residents on surrounding streets: Cottesmore Gardens, Eldon Road, Victoria Road, Stanford Road.	One of the purposes of School Streets is to reduce the number of motor vehicles using a street within the given time period. Hence, it would be counterproductive to allow residents on surrounding streets to have an exemption. This would not adhere to the aim to improve air quality and makes the street safer for children. All School Streets in the borough limit exemptions to those living or working in the closure area. With multiple parallel roads, residents of nearby streets can leave the area quite easily without needing to go through St Albans Grove.
Barriers operated by staff might not be sufficient to ensure timely closure; a street camera at both ends might be necessary.	The Council's current policy is not to use cameras for school street enforcement. Furthermore, a PCN given after a vehicle has contravened the pedestrian and cycle zone, does not prevent a vehicle entering in the first place, posing more of a risk to children's safety.
The timings on Friday should be different due	The school closing times are stated as the same every day of the week on their website, and the school has confirmed the timings once they move to St Albans Grove are correct.

to the school finishing earlier.	
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5. Next steps

- 5.1. In view of the above, officers recommend that the Director of Transport and Regulatory Services agrees to proceed with the new School Street on St Albans Grove from early September, under a Permanent Traffic Order. The scheme will be reviewed a year following implementation.

Appendix 1: Responses received to the Thomas's Kensington School Street consultation

Objection – One

It will impact traffic massively - especially when accessing Gloucester road. Traffic on high ken increased due to cycle lane and this will now be even worse.

Objection – Two

Why do residence need to be inconvenienced- there are multiple solutions that can be put in place. For starters encourage kids to use a school bus. We residence shouldn't have to be inconvenienced by not being able to use a road for certain periods of the day because a school has the entitlement to think they can take over a road because they're too lazy to come up with an idea where everyone wins!!!

Objection – Three

Closing the street, and don't allow cars access, would severely limit for residents, deliveries , emergency services .

Objection – Four

It's not clear what happens if you are a resident in a nearby street to St Albans Grove, and you need to access your car parked inside the zone during the School Street times. The proposal does not clarify this. It implies this will result in a violation. If this is the case, it would make the parking spaces lost to residents around the street, especially overnight. I object strongly to this outcome.

Objection – Five

It would restrict my possibility of movements

Objection – Six

It pushes the problem of congestion and parking into the neighbouring streets.

It also prioritises non-residents over residents with use of access to roads on our doorstep. We should not be penalised as to where we can drive because parents are coming further afield by car to drop off their child.

Objection – Seven

I do not support this proposal at all. As a resident of South End Row, this closure would severely disrupt my daughter's daily school bus pickup and our general access during peak hours. The road is already narrow, and blocking it will increase congestion on Victoria Road and surrounding streets, which are already under pressure.

This scheme punishes residents for the school's poor traffic planning. The school should have included drop-off management within its grounds — such as an in/out system or staff-led coordination — especially since the School Street was a condition of their planning approval. The Council is shifting the problem onto local people instead of holding the school accountable.

There are alternative ways to manage traffic that don't involve a full road closure. This should not go ahead in its current form.

Objection – Eight

As a resident of [REDACTED], with [REDACTED] children, I object to the change proposed to switch the street to Pedestrian or Cycle Only. This is a key Artery for residents to exit through via car or taxi, and any diversion will cause further congestions. My wife is [REDACTED], and it's a critical route to drive to Chelsea & Westminster Hospital. In fact, when we've needed an ambulance they all arrived through 3 in roads into Thackeray Street one of which is St Alban's Grove.

I strictly am against any change.

Secondly, with regards to "Cyclists" we consistently find cyclists to be a lot more dangerous from Thackeray Street to St Alban's Grove, than any car. They have on a number of occasions nearly collided when our son is out in his Push Chair (or Pram) and been extremely vulgar. Majority of them cycle with absolutely no regard of any rules, the primary motive to maintain speed, and we find them exceeding speeds of a car including on turns. Lastly, we also find Cyclists abandoning lime bicycles from St Alban's Grove, Builders Arms, to Thackeray Street causing nuisance and impeding residents parking and traffic. Please see attached.

This is a critical issue that must be addressed for the safety of Pedestrians, residents, wheel chairs or Push Chairs.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Objection – Nine

I am writing to formally object to the proposed School Street closure on St Albans Grove outside Thomas's Kensington School, as detailed in your notice dated 30 April 2025. My family and I are residents of South End Row, and we are directly affected by this proposal.

Disruption to Daily Routine

This closure would severely disrupt our daily life. My [REDACTED] is collected each day by a school bus from a location that will no longer be accessible during the proposed closure times. This not only affects her ability to attend school punctually and safely, but also forces us to make significant changes to accommodate a scheme that we were not consulted on during the school's planning process.

Impact on Residents and Local Roads

The closure will:

- Block access to key roads during peak traffic hours.
- Increase congestion on Victoria Road and surrounding routes.
- Inconvenience residents, deliveries, and tradespeople who do not qualify for exemptions.

The burden of traffic management is being unfairly shifted onto residents, while the school's own grounds — which include a car park — remain underused as a solution.

Planning Mismanagement

This should have been addressed during the initial planning application, not after the fact. As the consultation documents admit, the School Street is a condition of the planning approval. The school should have been required to manage its drop-off procedures internally, through:

- A one-way in/out traffic system within school grounds.
- Parking bay suspension and monitored short-stay drop-off points.
- Promoting walking and cycling, as the planning documents suggested they would.

Residents are being asked to pay the price for an issue that stems from the school's growth and poor traffic design planning.

Alternatives Ignored

There are multiple feasible alternatives to full closure:

- Timed parking restrictions instead of a hard closure.
- Enhanced supervision and enforcement by school staff.
- Better parent education around respectful drop-off conduct.

These would achieve safety and environmental objectives without penalising residents.

I urge the Council to reject this proposal and instead require the school to implement traffic solutions on-site. Please confirm receipt of this objection, and include me in any future updates regarding this scheme.

Support in Part – One

I live on Victoria Road. I worry that by pushing traffic off St Albans Grove, the traffic will congregate around Victoria Road between St Albans Grove and Cottesmore Gardens, creating chaos on our street. How can this be monitored and reduced?

Support in Part – Two

It is a fallacy that you claim this will decrease traffic congestion and pollution on the school street when it will obviously push the traffic down to Cottesmore Gardens, Eldon Road, Victoria and Stanford roads, causing increased congestion and pollution in the areas outside the school street.

Support in Part – Three

In principle a school street makes sense. However, in practice parents will simply use Cottesmore Gardens and Eldon Road as temporary parking and/or traffic management solutions for drop-offs and/or parking. What can the council do to prevent these roads from simply taking the congestion from St. Alban's Grove?

Also, please note that currently parents constantly stop/park in the private driveways of homes on the north side of the the intersection of Victoria Road and St. Alban's Grove. This is also likely to increase if the street is closed (and along Victoria Road south of the stop sign).

Support in Part – Four

The junctions at each end of St Albans are very narrow and a very large number of parents at that school drive ever wider and larger SUVs. My fear is that they will all be queuing back up Kensington Court Place to the West and Victoria Road to the East to drop their children off for at least 15 minutes every morning - trapping those of us who need to get in and out of the roads to the south, whether in cars or on bikes. Thomas's should be made to enforce car sharing, or no cars at all.

Support in Part – Five

As a resident of the neighborhood, I am concerned that redirecting traffic during school hours could lead to increased congestion on nearby streets that are normally quieter and safer. While I understand the need to manage traffic around the new school, I hope that the Council will carefully consider the wider impact on the surrounding area and look into possible measures to minimize disruption for all residents.

In addition, I question the proposed time slots of nearly an hour for each closure. It would seem more reasonable to limit the restrictions to a shorter window — for example, ten minutes before and ten minutes after the school's start and finish times — to minimize unnecessary disruption while still achieving the intended safety benefits.

Support in Part – Six

For those of us living at St Albans Mansion, at the corner of St Albans Grove and Kensington Court Place, exactly where the proposed school street begins, the ability to park on St Alban's Grove is critical. Due to the limited space available in resident bays on Kensington Court Place for the various blocks of flats on the road, parking on St Albans Grove is often the only nearby option for available resident bays. We park our family car just as frequently on St Albans Grove as we do on Kensington Court Place.

Since St Albans Mansions is at the intersection of the proposed school street, and our windows are on St Albans Grove and also overlook the school, I would like to request that our building residents also be included among those with the exemption to park on St Albans Grove during the school street times.

I also have a question - what happens if my car is already parked on St Albans Grove, as it often is, and I need to drive it during school street times? Are parked cars permitted to move?

Thank you for considering my opinion as a neighbouring resident who will be very much impacted to the change of St Albans Grove to a school street.

Support in Part – Seven

While I agree with the introduction of a School Street closure, the suggested range of times seems excessive when compared to other schools in the borough (i.e. Burnaby Street).

I suggest reviewing the suggested times to closely match the school hours. Keeping the street closed for a full hour in the morning until 9am when school starts at 8:30am is unnecessary. It is also worth noting that Thomas's finishes earlier on a Friday which is not currently reflected in the proposed times.

Burnaby Street is closed for 40 minutes and 25 minutes in the afternoon. Thomas's is suggesting a closure of 1 hour in the morning and 45 minutes in the afternoon.

My suggestion would be:

Mon-Fri
8:05-8:45am

Mon, Tue, Wed & Thu
3:15pm – 4pm
Fridays
3:15pm-3:40pm

Support in Part – Eight

I am responding to the above consultation as a long time resident on Kensington Court Place [REDCATED].

Whilst the proposed pedestrian and cycle zone will alleviate potential traffic jams and pollution for residents along St Alban's Grove itself, I am concerned that this would instead cause issues on the neighbouring roads especially those that lead towards St Alban's Grove, such as Kensington Court Place.

As you are aware, unlike the other main road (Victoria Road) that leads to St Alban's Grove, Kensington Court Place is narrower and whilst it allows two way traffic, only a single lane of traffic can pass through at any one time.

If the school street restriction is implemented, this will cause more traffic to flow through our road, and also build up if they should park/stop on our road for drop-offs. This will not only cause more jams but also noise and air pollution with the increased amount of busy and slower moving traffic during those school street times, 5 days a week. Further, it doesn't help that there is already very limited spaces to park on our road.

In addition, as our car is usually parked on the road itself, I am concerned that implementing a school street on a key conduit road will make it much more difficult for us as residents to do our own school runs - access to key roads such as High Street Kensington or Gloucester Road via Launceston Place will be reduced and made much more inconvenient with the build up of traffic along the neighbouring roads.

We already experience the occasional build-up of traffic at current junctions where Thomas is operating (e.g. between Victoria Road and St Albans Grove). I believe implementing the school street might cause or even make worse the same issue on the junction of Kensington Court Place and St Alban's Grove.

If it is being implemented, then I would like to suggest that the school street scheme be extended to other roads including Kensington Court Place to protect the rights of the residents living in close proximity to the school.

This could alleviate some of the many issues of a large school operating in the heart of a small residential area, including:

- (a) the expected increase in student numbers for the new school, which will cause a significant increase the number of school runs and traffic
- (b) the reduced access to neighbouring roads that will make it more difficult for residents living in close vicinity (note - many who also have young children who have to go to school) to enter/exit the area during those school pick up and drop off timings.
- (c) the impact on the health of the residents due to the inevitable increase in traffic noise and air pollution to slower/non moving traffic, especially now with the school street restriction.

I hope you can give due consideration to the needs and concerns of the neighbouring residents and also to the suggestion to extend the school street to some of the neighbouring roads as part of your planning.

Happy to discuss on a call if it will be of help.

Support in Full – One

It will make St Albans Grove safe for schoolchildren when going to school or returning home.

Support in Full – Two

Concern that the barriers operated by staff might not be sufficient to ensure timely closure. Given the risk of congestion perhaps a street camera at both ends might be necessary.

Support in Full – Three

This project is absolutely essential in order to avoid traffic chaos in this area and, hopefully, help discourage the delivery of children by car to this new school.

Support in Full – Four

Exemptions should also be possible for residents of the grid, Cottessmore Gardens, Eldon Road, Victoria Road, Stanford Road. Whilst unlikely residents would this street at those time, it would be unfair to receive a PCN.

A parking camera should be placed at the junction of Victoria Road and St Albans Grove to give out PCNs to people who park illegally whilst dropping off their kids. This is a problem currently and will be far worse at the new location with the school street restrictions.

Support in Full – Five

This seems like a sensible and manageable plan

Support in Full – Six

I am very much in favour of school streets to improve air quality, safety for children and young people and to promote health, wellbeing and active travel. It's great to see this being advocated for.

Support in Full – Seven

Parking must be very strictly enforced in neighbouring streets or there will be double parking chaos.

Support in Full – Eight

I think your proposal to introduce a school street in St Alban's Grove is a great idea!

Support in Full – Nine

[No comment supplied]

Support in Full – Ten

[No comment supplied]

Support in Full – Eleven

[No comment supplied]

Support in Full – Twelve

[No comment supplied]

Support in Full – Thirteen

[No comment supplied]

Support in Full – Fourteen

[No comment supplied]

Support in Full – Fifteen

[No comment supplied]

Support in Full – Sixteen

[No comment supplied]

Support in Full – Seventeen

[No comment supplied]

Support in Full – Eighteen

[No comment supplied]