Wick Community Campus Redevelopment

Safer Routes to School
Travel Plan
2014

Our Schools

The new 3-18 school campus will be built on land currently occupied by Wick High School and Pulteneytown Academy Primary School in an area currently used as school playing fields. This will have the capacity to accommodate up to 900 pupils of secondary school age and a primary school roll of 320 pupils. The existing Pulteneytown Academy Primary School catchment area will be extended to incorporate that of South Primary School, i.e. pupils from the Roxburgh Road/Wellington Avenue areas as well as part of the catchment area of North Primary School, i.e. south of the river in the Breadalbane Terrace and Thurso Street areas.

The existing library, currently located on Sinclair Terrace at its junction with Francis Street (A99) will be relocated to the campus together with the Community Sports Centre.

Vehicular access for the school, sports centre and library will be taken from Newton Road via two simple priority T-junctions, with the northernmost access being for bus and car drop offs/pick ups and the southern access being for staff and visitor parking as well as deliveries. Pedestrian and cycle access will be provided from Newton Road and from West Banks Avenue.

For the high school, sports centre and library a total of 210 car parking spaces will be provided, comprising:

- 120 spaces for high school staff and visitors;
- 16 “limited waiting” drop off/pick up spaces;
- 20 spaces for community clubs/groups;
- 4 dedicated spaces for library users;
- 40 spaces for sports centre users; and
- 10 disabled spaces, to be sited as close as is reasonably practical to the three destinations.

Within the parent drop off/pick up area, six bus stands will be provided to accommodate school buses.

Vehicular access for staff and parents at the primary school will be taken via the existing Pulteneytown Academy Primary School point from Seaforth Avenue. Approximately 150m to the north, the existing dedicated pedestrian access from Seaforth Avenue will be retained for all pupils accessing the community site.
For the primary school a total of 101 car parking spaces will be provided, comprising:

Aims

1. To make travel to and from school as safe as possible for all pupils and staff.
2. To promote road safety around the school and approaches.
3. To promote pupils’ health and fitness through active methods of travel to and from school.
4. To encourage pupils’ independence and heighten their road safety awareness.
5. To enable the users of the New Community School Campus to be a ‘good neighbours’.

 43 spaces for primary school staff and visitors;
 56 “limited waiting” drop off/pick up spaces; and
 2 disabled spaces, located as close as is reasonably practical to the school building entrance.

Within the parent drop off/pick up area, three spaces will be provided to accommodate school midi-buses.

70 cycle parking spaces will be provided on-site, consisting of 35 Sheffield-type stands. These will be distributed as follows:
 22 stands for the high school;
 4 stands for the library and sports centre; and
 9 stands for the primary school.

All cycle parking will be covered and located between the main car parking areas and the building entrances. There will be room for expansion should cycling demand exceed the space provision.

Travel Patterns

As the new schools are yet to open, the SRTS survey needed to be carried out indicating intended routes/methods of transport to the school for pupils currently at both Primary Schools and the High School. Whereas all Primary pupils live on the south side of the river Wick High School currently has 11 feeder Primary Schools with many pupils living rurally and so requiring to be bussed in to school. Two surveys were therefore carried out, one for the primary pupils and one for the secondary pupils, and these were analysed separately.

Primary School Survey

153 surveys were completed and returned by parents, covering a total of 212 pupils. This was a return of 70%, the total population of the two schools currently being 301pupils.

Pulteneytown Academy and South Primary School

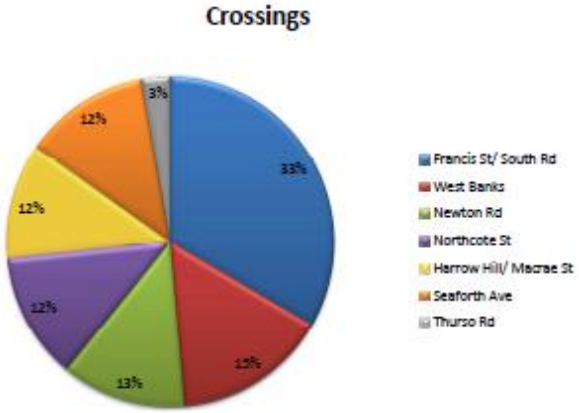
Statistics here cover the number of pupils involved (not just surveys returned)

Total surveys returned		153	(3 void so actual total 156)						
nr of pupils covered:		212	(+3 in voids)						
N3	11	11	**Q3 Wick Zone:**			**Q2 Distance from School**			
N4	27	27	ThursoRd/WestBanks	THWB	36	L1	145		
P1	29	29	Seaforth Ave	SFAV	16	1TO2	49		
P2	26	26	Lower Pulteney	LOPT	1	2TO3	12		
P3	25	25	Upper Pulteney	UPPT	24	M3	6		
P4	16	16	South Primary area	STPR	73	Tot	212		
P5	29	29	Kennedy area	KEND	27				
P6	28	28	North of river	OUTN	14				
P7	21	21	West on A882	OUTW	14				
Tot	212		South on A99	OUTS	2				
			SouthWest/Newton Hill	OUTSW	5				
					212				
Q4 Coming to School			**Going home**			**Q5 Accompanied**			
CAR	23		Car (one child)	CAR	20	Adult	ADLT	92	
CARM	48		Car (many children)	CARM	46	Other kids	OCH	34	
WALK	125		Walk	WALK	128	Adult&kids	AOCH	42	
SBUS	8		School Bus	SBUS	10	No company	NOT	43	
CYCL	1		Cycle	CYCL	1			211	
PANS	7		Park and stride	PANS	7				
	212				212				
Q6 What affects your decision to let child walk				**Q7 Your preference**			**Q8 Child's preference**		
CROS	127	Safer crossing		WALK	146		116		
SPED	100	Speed reductions		CYCL	7		28		
PATH	40	Cycle/footpaths		CAR	30		43		
STOR	32	Cycle storage		BUS	23		22		
OCH	57	Other children		OTHR	5		0		
ADLT	49	Accompanying adult			211		209		
RSED	70	Road safety education							
HINF	8	Info on health benefits							
OTHR	9	Other							
	492								

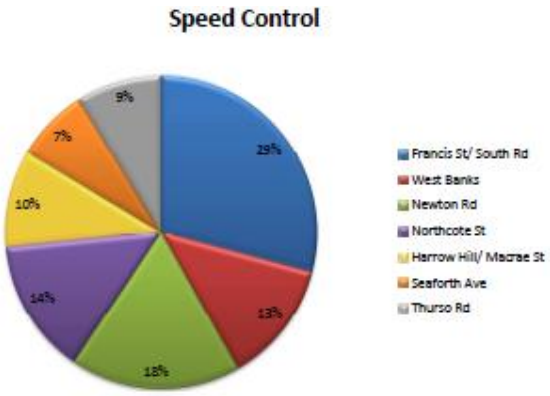
Parents were also asked which entrance to the new school campus they were most likely to use:-

Q10 Entrance		
A	31	Seaforth Ave entrance
B	44	Seaforth Ave ped path ('barriers')
C	31	West Banks ped path
D	39	Newton Road entrance
	145	

Of the 127 who answered that safer crossings were required when asked ‘What affects your decision to let child walk or cycle to school?’ the following crossings were mentioned.



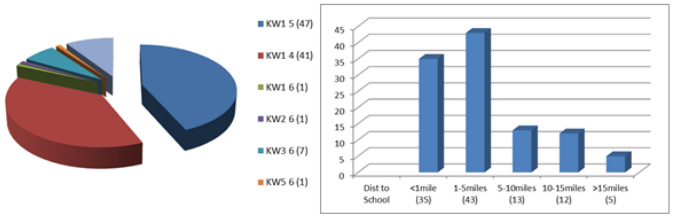
Of the 100 who answered that more speed controls were required when asked ‘What affects your decision to let child walk or cycle to school?’ the following locations were mentioned.



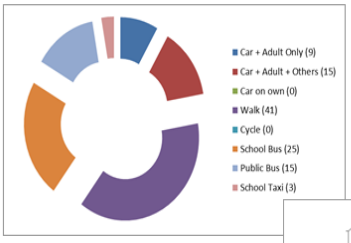
Secondary School Survey

The Wick High School guidance structure is organised around 5 vertically organised houses. Each house has a different Eco-Schools topic, each topic addressed through House Councils, House Assembly and Tutor Time, a 55 minute period per week. Transport is currently the chosen topic of Morven, which consists of 133 pupils. 108 surveys and mapping exercises were completed and analysed, an 81% return.

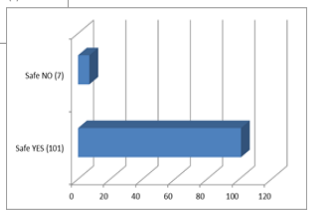
Home Postcode & Distance to School



Current method of travel



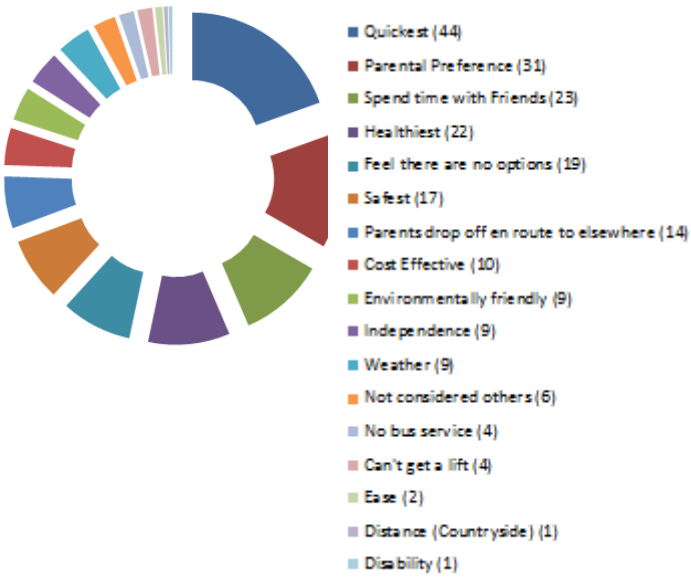
Those who thought their method of travel wasn’t safe, commented on waiting for buses on dark country roads, walking adjacent to, and crossing busy roads as well as buses dropping off at busy roads



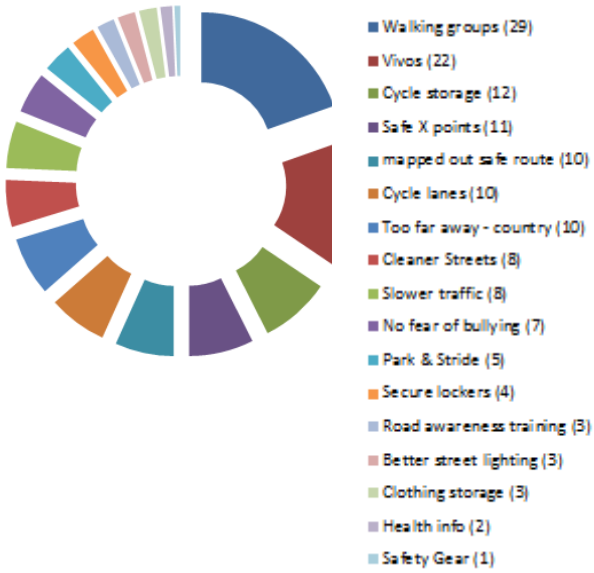
Preferred method of travel

Method & Comments		Method & Comments	
Car	10	Larger / more buses	1
Car - quicker	10	Walk	10
Car - more comfortable	5	Walk - easier	3
Car - distance	1	Walk - live close enough	3
Car - easier	1	Walk - health & fitness	6
Car - safer	2	Walk - social	3
Bus	5	Walk - environment	1
Bus - environment	1	Helicopter / Plane!	2
Bus - more comfortable	1	Bike - health & fitness	1
Bus with fewer connections	1	Train	1
Bus - easy	4	Train - quick	1
Bus - social	4		
Bus - safer	1	Total Responses	78

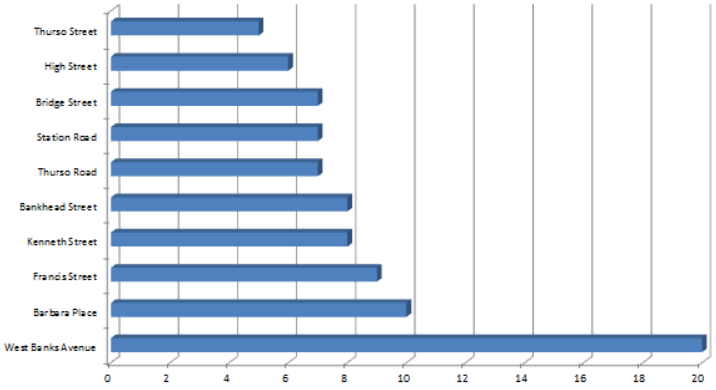
Reasons for current travel method



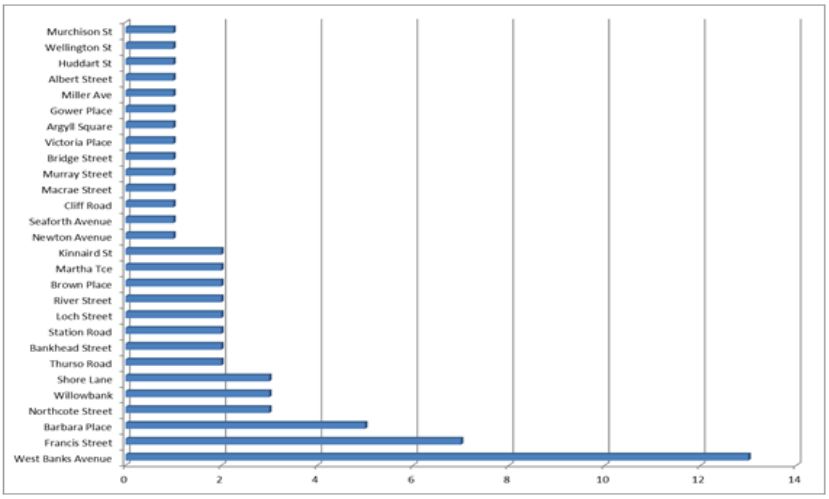
What would encourage you to walk?



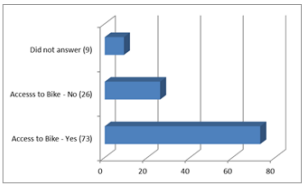
Most common routes: Lunch



Most common routes: Expected



Bike usage

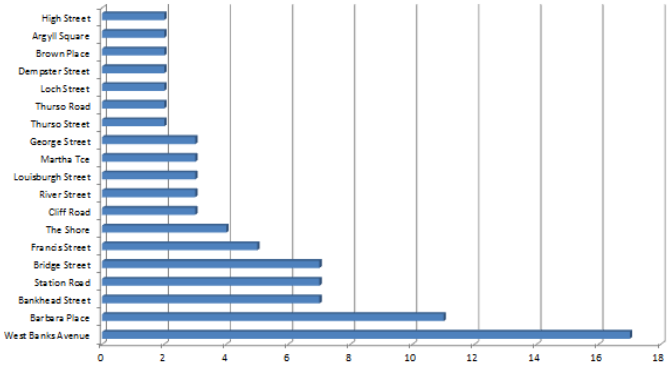


I use my bike for...	
Fitness	28
Leisure	22
Transport	20
Competition	2

I'd cycle to school if we had...	
Safe cycle storage	38
Access to bike	12
Cycle training	10
Bike maintenance classes	4

Pupils were also asked to complete some mapping exercises, showing the routes they use most commonly now, both on route to school and at lunchtimes, and were expecting to use once using the new school. Their routes were analysed using spreadsheets and are graphed below.

Most common routes: Morning



Initiatives

The two new schools will work together to undertake activity which supports initiatives such as:

- Walk to School Week
- JROS's
- Cycling Proficiency Scheme
- Wearing of Hi-Viz items

Publicity and Promotion

The SRTS activity will be promoted regularly through the Parent Council, the School Websites and through the JRSO's. Local media promotional opportunities will also be a feature of this work.

Monitoring and Review

The Wick Campus travel plan will be reviewed each term by the Safer Routes to School Team and by Morven House in the Secondary School as a part of their Eco-Schools project. Updates will be highlighted through the publicity and promotion information process.

Transport Assessment

A full Transport Assessment for the new site was carried out by Mott MacDonald on behalf of Highland Council. The report concludes with a number of recommended improvements. The Wick Campus SRTS Group has responded with further comments that identify issues we feel still need addressing.

Recommended improvements

The suggested improvements have been added to the map above. These are also prioritised below.

1. Lights controlled pedestrian crossing to be installed on the A99 adjacent to Agnes St. In addition the footpath on Agnes St is to be extended to meet the footpath at South Road, surface improvements carried out to path where required and street lighting installed. The crossing point was identified from mapping data as the point pupils are most likely to use to access the new school from residential areas close to South Primary School. Routes surrounding the crossing are to be marked with footprints to direct pupils towards the crossing. Additionally, the pedestrian route between the A99 (new crossing) and Seaforth Avenue needs to be improved/realigned to compliment the positioning of the new crossing and made more attractive to pedestrians - bollards need to be installed to keep the pavement clear (e.g. no parked caravans).

2. Crossing Patroller - to be positioned on the A99 at Northcote Street - West Bank Avenue. A Crossing Patroller is considered to be the only solution to control this awkwardly aligned junction/crossing point. One Crossing Patrollers is essential, but a second Crossing Patroller (2 patrollers) north of the junction, near Loch Street, would enhance pedestrian safety where there is large numbers of pupils crossing the A99 to get to the school.

3. Pinch point / build out on Seaforth Avenue (where marked on map) to provide visibility to pedestrians beyond parked cars and narrow road width for safe crossing. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving to be installed. Anti-skid road surfacing and priority traffic flow.

4. Install a Zebra Crossing on West Banks Avenue adjacent to the new pedestrian/cycle boulevard to provide a safe crossing point for large numbers of pupils exiting/entering the school. This may need to be enhanced by road narrowing as this is a very wide road. If a crossing is not suitable install a raised table similar to the one at the end of West Banks Avenue (west end) with dragons teeth, bollards and stop/look/listen signs to raise pedestrian awareness that vehicles have priority – road narrowing if necessary.

5. Provide bus shelters for waiting pupils and community in adverse weather. We would like service buses to come into the school car park. If this is not possible then a widened pavement on the south side of West Banks Avenue, so that it is safe for pupils to queue, is needed along with bus shelters. Pupils from rural areas have also commented on the dangerous positions they are expected to use to wait for buses and the lack of bus shelters. Safe waiting positions are required for all routes, including rural villages.

6. Add a pedestrian crossing phase to the light controlled junction across A99 between Dempster Street and Thurso Street.

7. Devise a strategy to keep pupils walking on north side of West banks Avenue as this pavement is safer and direct them to the Zebra Crossing at the boulevard. The strategy could be a combination of education, footprint markings, stop/look/listen signs and pedestrian guard rails at the corner of West Banks Avenue/A99 (Francis St).

8. Footpath along Northcote St (south side) is in poor condition and should be a high priority for improvement to the surface - along the full length of Bignold Park.

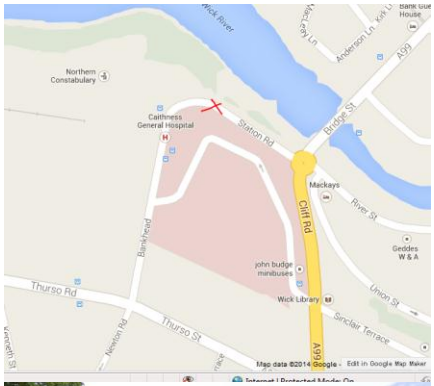
9. Install Pedestrian Guard Rails and anti-skid road surfaces at all pedestrian entry/exit points into the new school campus.

10. Stop Look Listen signs and footprints to be installed at crossing points requested in this Travel Plan. Drop Kerbs and tactile paving also to be installed at common crossing points on school walking routes along Northcote St, Westbanks Av, Newton Rd & Seaforth Av where they are not already in place.

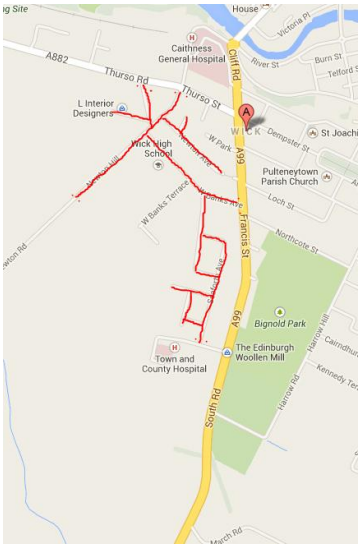
11. Drainage culverts to be covered / made safe where necessary.

12. The schools are committed to Bikeability, but cannot see any easy/obvious cycling routes. As outlined in the Transport Assessment the core paths (CA15.08 & CA15.23) should be explored for use; providing that cycling is on paths and not lanes on the road - paths should be upgraded to shared use standard. We also agree with TA Figure 8.24 in respect of paths linking the school to the core paths, but also recommended these are upgraded to shared use specification. Routes should be supplemented by adequate signage for cyclists and pedestrians and supplemented by drop kerbs where not already installed.

13. Install an Island Crossings to improve pedestrian safety by narrowing Station Road where the footpath ends to overcome this blind corner. Drop kerbs, tactile paving, stop/look/listen markings. Pupils to be educated to use the Zebra Crossing at the top of Bankhead Road – highlight with footprints. Location marked on map below and photograph. Alternatively narrow the road with a build out and priority traffic flow to improve safety for crossing pedestrians subject to transport assessment.



14. A permanent 20mph limit is set on residential streets surrounding the school (see map below) enhanced by VAS (smiley face), repeater signs and 20 roundels on the road. This is in-keeping with Highland Council policy to make communities safer.



15. As outlined in the Transport Assessment a speed table is to be installed at the junction of Newton Road/West Banks Avenue to assist crossing pedestrians and reduce traffic speeds. Concerns with this option are that pupils using a raised crossing at this location will then use Kenneth Street to access the shop (Co-op), which is not on the desire line of the Zebra Crossing on Thurso Road, and ultimately cross this busy road without using the crossing (which presently happens). Therefore, if the speed table is to be considered the Zebra Crossing would either need to be moved closer to Kenneth Street/Thurso Road junction to encourage pupils to use it or street furniture (pedestrian guardrails) installed to force/direct the pupils to the existing Zebra Crossing.

Or

As an alternative solution upgrade the existing raised table on West Banks Avenue (west end) by re-grading the deflection to adequately slow approaching vehicles (presently not steep enough), remarking dragons teeth and installing stop/look/listen signs to raise pedestrian awareness that vehicles have priority. Footprints to be placed on footpaths to direct pedestrians to cross on the raised table and to direct pupils to the shop via Newton Road and to the existing Zebra Crossing on Thurso Road (this route places the crossing within the desire line of walking pedestrians). To compliment pedestrian safety a further raised table should be installed on Newton Road (cross on map below – similar to the existing table on West Banks Av.) to benefit pedestrians and slow traffic. Education would reinforce this as the the main pedestrian route between the school and shop.

16. A882, ie Thurso Road, out towards Milton; The Milton Residents Association recently had a meeting about this. The speed limit of 30 mph should extend from town to the entrance to Milton as well as

the pavement along that route improved with widening to shared use standard and guard rails at certain points to improve cycling and walking conditions, it is presently too dangerous. Consideration should be given to this as a cycling route through Community Links Funding.

17. Consideration also needs to be given to a pedestrian crossing on Newton Road – close to the entrance of the new school to align with footpaths at the car park. This is likely to be used by members of the public and pupils accessing the site. This could be in the form of a build out or raised table similar again to the one on West Banks Av.