



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

An Extraordinary Meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** will be held in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **MONDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2018 AT 7.30 PM**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Manjeet Gill'.

Manjeet Gill
Interim Chief Executive
Published on 7 September 2018

This meeting will be filmed for inclusion on the Council's website.

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

A great place to live, an even better place to do business

Our Priorities

Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential

Invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth

Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well designed development

Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough

Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services

The Underpinning Principles

Offer excellent value for your Council Tax

Provide affordable homes

Look after the vulnerable

Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life

Maintain and improve the waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency

Deliver quality in all that we do

MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE

Charlotte Haitham Taylor	Leader of the Council
Richard Dolinski	Adults Social Care, Health and Wellbeing
Pauline Helliard-Symons	Children's Services
Norman Jorgensen	Environment, Leisure and Libraries
Pauline Jorgensen	Housing
Philip Mirfin	Regeneration
Stuart Munro	Business and Economic Development and Strategic Planning
Anthony Pollock	Highways and Transport
Simon Weeks	Planning and Enforcement

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
39.		<p>APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence</p>	
40.		<p>DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest</p>	
41.		<p>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME To answer any public questions</p> <p>A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice.</p> <p>The Council welcomes questions from members of the public relating to the item on the agenda only.</p> <p>For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions</p>	
42.		<p>MEMBER QUESTION TIME To answer any member questions</p> <p>A period of 20 minutes will be allowed for Members to ask questions submitted under Notice relating to the item on the agenda only.</p> <p>Any questions not dealt with within the allotted time will be dealt with in a written reply.</p>	
42.1	None Specific	<p>Gary Cowan has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:</p> <p>Question Cllr. Ferris in Member questions (26 July Executive minutes para 24.3 refers) challenged the quoted</p>	

random £600.00 per site for upkeep. He also challenged why there was no replacement costs. My question is including school crossings how many pedestrian crossings in total has WBC got and are they all budgeted at £600.00 per annum for maintenance?

TO CONSIDER A REPORT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

43. Coronation;
Emmbrook;
Loddon; Maiden
Erlegh; Norreys;
South Lake;
Twyford;
Wokingham
Without

CALL-IN OF EXECUTIVE DECISION - SCHOOL CROSSING PATROL SERVICE - CONSULTATION REPORT 2018

At its meeting of 26 July 2018 the Executive considered a report relating to the School Crossing Patrol Service – Consultation Report 2018 and resolved that:

- 1) WBC continue with its proposal to provide safe, permanent crossings at the seven locations that currently have a school crossing patroller, and, following their installation, remove the school crossing patrol service once the permanent crossings are complete as set out in Option 2, Appendix 1 of the report;
- 2) all affected schools are reminded that they have access to the Council's road safety and My Journey teams who can facilitate further road safety training for pupils if requested.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, five non-Executive Members of the Council submitted a formal notice "calling in" the Executive decision to remove the School Crossing Patrol service from seven sites across the Borough once permanent crossing facilities were installed.

The decision was called in on the following grounds:

- 1) The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 a) of the Council's Constitution, in that the action being proposed is not proportionate to the desired outcome.
 - a) A blanket decision has been made to replace all remaining School Crossing Patrols (SCP) with pedestrian crossings, despite the different characteristics and requirements of the locations.
 - b) The desired outcome appears to be to save

money yet the costs both of the crossings and the school crossing patrol have not been fully or correctly stated. None of the other options quoted had any costs provided.

- c) The decision was made on the basis of costs for crossings which have not yet been designed – as a redesign is taking place at four sites due to the first design not being suitable; it is therefore unclear whether a crossing is actually the right answer for those locations, as well as the costs being unknown.
- 2) The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 b) of the Council's Constitution, in that due consultation and the taking of professional advice from Officers has not occurred.
- a) The consultation was not complete at the point at which the decisions to withdraw the service were made.
 - b) The consultation was not carried out at an early stage, and was not meaningful, and contravened the Council's own rules on consultation.
 - c) There was no consultation with ward Members on the withdrawal of the service.
 - d) The replacement crossings were designed without reference to ward Members and before the consultation was carried out – and ward Members were not even informed until mid-July that the crossings had been designed.
 - e) Wokingham Town Council's consultation response has not been taken into consideration.
 - f) Letters putting the staff at risk of redundancy were issued before the consultation was concluded.
 - g) The Council's responses to the points made by respondents are inadequate.
 - h) At least one crossing was scheduled to be installed before the decision on the outcome of the consultation took place.
 - i) At least one safety audit was done during the school holidays.
 - j) No Equality Impact Assessments accompanied the information in the report.
 - k) It is not clear that all guidelines for the provision of safe crossings have been observed.
 - l) It is not clear that all the evidence comparing the appropriateness of SCP versus crossings has been taken into account.

- 3) The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 d) of the Council's Constitution, in that openness has not been observed.
 - a) At least one of the crossings was designed in February but this was not communicated to ward Members.
 - b) Some information was shared with individual members of the public but was not made available to all.
 - c) No overall plan for the removal of SCP was made available following the removal of the funding in the 2015 Medium Term Financial Plan.

- 4) The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 e) of the Council's Constitution, in that clarity of aims and desired outcomes has not been achieved.
 - a) The recommendations refer to a proposal to provide safe, permanent crossings – yet four of the crossing proposals have been rejected in the period shortly before the Executive meeting that made the decision, and therefore the decision has been made before there is certainty that the recommendation can be delivered, or that the costs are as given in the report.
 - b) Due to the failure to present all costs for all options it is not possible for the Executive to have come to a properly informed decision.
 - c) Due to the failure to present the Equality Impact Assessments it is not possible for the Executive to have come to a properly informed decision.

- 5) The decision has contravened Section 1.4.2 f) of the Council's Constitution, in that the details of all the options and reasons for the decision have not been recorded.
 - a) A set of options has been laid out but it excludes the most obvious option of replacing some but not all of the patrollers with crossings.
 - b) There was a presumption that no funding was available for the service to continue, whereas a supplementary estimate could have been used to find the money, but was not considered.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee met on 3 September 2018 to consider the call-in and following consideration of the evidence presented made the following resolution:

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Executive be requested to review their 26 July 2018 decision on the School Crossing Patrol Service in light of the evidence presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee;
- 2) the request to the Executive for a review is based on the following reasons:
 - a) the original 2015 decision to remove the School Crossing Patrol Service was taken prior to the consultation, and, with the substantive decision having been taken, subsequent consultation exercises were not seen as meaningful;
 - b) the original 2015 decision was taken without an underpinning business case and the 26 July 2018 Executive report did not contain detailed information showing the current costs of the service and the full financial implications relating to the proposed implementation, maintenance and future replacement of the new permanent crossing facilities;
 - c) the original 2015 decision was taken without an underpinning Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and the subsequent April 2018 EIA did not contain detailed information about consultation with specific groups and did not reflect the individual circumstances relating to each of the proposed crossing sites.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will attend the meeting to present the Committee's findings and recommendations.

43.1

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Executive consider the Overview and Scrutiny's recommendations.

The following documents are included for reference within the agenda:

- 1) School Crossing Patrol Service – Consultation Report 2018 – report considered at the Executive meeting held on 26 July 2018 (**pages 9-24**);
- 2) Extract from the minutes of 26 July 2018 Executive meeting (**pages 25-32**);
- 3) Draft minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 3 September 2018 (**pages 33-44**). Documentation presented at the meeting can be found on the Council's website or on request from Democratic Services.

A decision sheet will be available for inspection at the Council's offices (in Democratic Services and the General Office) and on the web site no later than two working days after the meeting.

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TITLE	School Crossing Patrol Service – Consultation Report 2018
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on 26 July 2018
WARD	Coronation; Emmbrook; Loddon; Maiden Erleigh; Norreys; South Lake; Twyford; Wokingham Without;
DIRECTOR	Director of Locality and Customer Services - Josie Wragg
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Highways and Transport -

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The findings from the Safe School Crossing consultation are considered by Executive before a decision is taken on the future provision of the service.

The decision would cease the provision of a discretionary service currently consisting of school crossing patrollers currently operating at seven locations across the borough during the morning and afternoon start and finish of the school day only. New crossings will be provided at these locations that will be available to all users at all times.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive agree that:

- 1) WBC continue with its proposal to provide safe, permanent crossings at the seven locations that currently have a school crossing patroller, and, following their installation, remove the school crossing patrol service once the permanent crossings are complete as set out in Option 2, Appendix 1 of the report;
- 2) all affected schools are reminded that they have access to the Council's road safety and My Journey teams who can facilitate further road safety training for pupils if requested.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Medium Term Financial Plan agreed at Full Council in 2015 to remove funding for the School Crossing Patrol (SCP) service. This has been partially implemented with the removal of eight patrollers last year. It is now proposed to remove the remaining seven patrollers and to replace these with safe crossing facilities.

Despite the previous MTPF decision, options for the future of the SCP service are set out in the report (see Appendix 1). Removing the remaining SCP service will result in a reduction on service, and the council has consulted on this in line with the constitution. The results are set out in the report and have not raised any specific issues or comments that were not anticipated or that should prevent WBC continuing with its proposal to remove the SCP service and provide safe permanent crossings at the seven locations. However, it is acknowledged that this could have some negative implications as SCP are valued by the community. This needs to be balanced against the wider

benefits of the new crossing facilities for a wider proportion of the Councils residents and also the financial benefits of the proposal.

The report provides a summary of comments received from the 393 individual responses received to the public consultation including one objection from Twyford Parish Council in relation to the crossing patrol serving Polehampton Schools. In addition there was an E-Petition set up during the consultation entitled 'Save our School Crossing Patrollers' which ended in June 2018 which had 222 names attached. All comments have been considered and a summary of the key issues raised along with WBC's response is contained at Appendix 2.

A further petition has been received with 1640 names and this will have been debated at the July Full Council Meeting

Background

School Crossing Patrollers (SCP) are currently employed by the Council to help children cross the road safely, primarily to and from school. Some parents may believe the Authority assumes responsibility for the safety of their children on their whole journey to and from school when it provides a SCP. This is a misconception and even where a SCP is provided, parents remain responsible for ensuring their children's safety, just as they do when a zebra crossing or signal controlled crossing is provided. The provision of the School Crossing Patrol service is discretionary and currently provides assisted crossings for pupils of 10 schools within the borough of which there is a total of 55 primary, infant and junior schools and 10 secondary schools.

The Council removed funding for the SCP service from the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) agreed at Full Council in 2015. Implementation of this decision was delayed and a 'special item' within the MTFP was agreed for 2017/18 to cover the cost of the service for one final year subject to rolling the unspent balance forward into 2018/19 to fund the reduced service to July 2018. As part of last year's budget setting, a capital bid was approved for a sum of £600,000 to deliver the new or improved permanent crossing facilities at the schools currently served by SCP.

Following a consultation last year, the decision to withdraw the service was partially implemented with the removal of eight patrollers who had been operating at locations that already had a safe formal crossing facility (zebra or signal controlled crossing). This change has been successfully implemented with no recorded increase in safety issues or personal injury accidents. (In the three years previous to the implementation of the changes there were two recorded slight injury accidents during school start and finish times at the controlled crossings. Since the removal of the patrollers at these locations there has been one recorded slight injury).

The SCP service continues to operate at seven sites across the borough. Two further sites are currently vacant. The SCP Service currently employs seven patrollers (1.16 FTE) and a part time designated SCP organiser (0.59 FTE) who recruits, plans and supervises the remaining patrollers.

The affected sites are:

- All Saints Primary School, Norreys Avenue, Wokingham;
- St Paul's Junior & Walter Infant Schools, Murray Road, Wokingham;
- Keep Hatch Primary School, Keep Hatch Road, Wokingham;
- Willow Bank Infant & Junior School, Duffield Road Woodley;
- South Lake Primary School, Nightingale Road, Woodley;
- Woodley CE Primary School, Hurricane Way, Woodley; &
- Polehampton Infant & Junior School, London Road Twyford.

In addition two sites which are currently unmanned have been assessed for the provision of a formal crossing, namely;

- Oakland's Infant & Junior School, New Wokingham Road, Crowthorne &
- Loddon Primary, Silverdale Road, Earley

At each of these sites, the Council has carried out an assessment with accordance to the processes described in the Road Safety GB document entitled 'School Crossing Patrol Service Guidelines'. Where the assessment has indicated that assistance to cross the road is justified, the Council has proposed suitable formal pedestrian crossing facilities to

be provided. It is proposed that the remaining SCP service will cease once the permanent crossings are complete.

To support the above proposal, a number of options were considered (see Appendix 1)

Analysis of Issues

To support the above proposal, a number of options were considered (see Appendix 1). There are advantages and disadvantages to each of the options proposed but primarily, these are to retain the SCP service, to provide alternative crossing facilities or to provide both. The main issues are the loss of the valued SCP service and any public dissatisfaction with this (see consultation responses section) must be balanced against the benefits of the new permanent crossing that will serve a wider proportion of the Borough's residents. Further, the financial implications must be considered and both are set out below.

Consultation

The MTFP decision to remove funding for the SCP service, represents a reduction in service requiring public consultation. Between 22 January and 2 March 2018 public consultation was undertaken about the following proposal:

- End the remaining SCP Services in July 2018 (to coincide with the end of the academic year);
- To allow, design and deliver permanent pedestrian crossings (zebra or signal controlled) before September 2018 (to coincide with the start of the academic year), These works would be funded through the Council's capital programme (either within the exiting Integrated Transport Capital Programme, through appropriate CIL/S106 funding).

The table below provides details of the number of responses received by the Council in response to this consultation.

School	Number of responses relating to a pupil at school (please note parents could tick more than one school)
All Saints Primary School	5
St Pauls Junior School	157
Walter Infant School	132
Keep Hatch Primary School	103
Willow Bank Junior School	13
Willow Bank Infant	13
South Lake Primary School	Zero
Woodley CofE Primary School	6
Polehampton CofE Infant School	12
Polehampton CofE Junior School	5
No school	7

How children of the respondents get to school	Number of responses			
	4 or more	3	2	1
Walk, ride, scoot with an adult	14	30	119	117
Walk, ride, scoot on their own	11	4	10	51
Are driven to school	2	5	19	17

What school year respondents' children are in	
Foundation	98
Year one	80
Year two	63
Year three	76
Year four	73
Year five	66
Year six	70

In addition, a response from Twyford Parish Council has been received stating that “Twyford Parish Council object to the withdrawal of the school crossing patroller role”. No further comments were provided by the parish.

Appendix 2 below provides the key issues raised by consultees along with responses from WBC.

Consultation Summary

It is very clear that School Crossing Patrollers at each of the locations are well-respected and valued by those responding, with many commenting that the SCP provides not only assistance for those requiring to cross the road but also additional safeguarding of young road users in general.

Of the 393 individual responses received, 9 were in support of the proposals. Comments included “sounds fine as I can cross the road with my child”; “I am fine with removing SCPs if permanent crossings are in place. Parents can easily handle this”; “[I would] rather the money was spent elsewhere, parents can cross the road” & “a 24 hour road crossing would be safer”.

A large proportion of the other comments related to general road safety issues such as dangerous driving, speeding vehicles and poor parking. Issues such as these are not unique to locations near school crossing patrol sites and ultimately it is drivers’ responsibility to drive safely and legally and any concerns relating to poor driving should be reported to the police on the non-emergency number 101. Parking issues can now be dealt with directly by Wokingham Borough Council following the transfer of enforcement powers from the police last October (2017) through Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE). Parking adjacent to schools is a known concern and since the introduction of CPE, the council has prioritised visits by the enforcement officers at schools. The team is relatively small in number and it is therefore not possible to be at every school every day therefore any specific problems relating to parking can be reported to the councils parking enforcement team. The team will then work with the schools to address these issues and target areas of concern in their patrols.

The general safety for children on their journey to school was also raised as a significant concern. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of the parent or carer to ensure their child is safe on the highway. Parents and carers play a vital part in teaching children general road safety and also how to cross the road safely. The council through its Road Safety Education Team also work with schools to provide road safety training and activities and this service will continue.

The zebra crossings and a signal (light-controlled) crossings proposed to serve the schools to replace the SCP are safer places for pedestrians to cross the road. Fundamentally, these facilities will benefit all users 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and not just at school times. The table below gives details of the proposals at each site at the time of writing. Some sites are currently being reviewed to confirm the level of provision is acceptable. As a result of this review some of the proposed crossing treatments may change.

Proposed Crossing Treatment	Location
Zebra Crossing	St Paul's Junior & Walter Infant Schools, Murray Road, Wokingham Keep Hatch Primary School, Keephatch Road, Wokingham Willow Bank Infant & Junior School, Duffield Road Woodley South Lake Primary School, Nightingale Road, Woodley Woodley CE Primary School, Hurricane Way, Woodley
Traffic Signal Crossing (PUFFIN)	Oakland's Infant & Junior School, New Wokingham Road, Crowthorne Loddon Primary, Silverdale Road, Earley Polehampton Infant & Junior School, London Road Twyford.
Enhancement to existing Crossing location	All Saints Primary School, Norreys Avenue, Wokingham

Financial Information

Annual cost of current SCP service

Year		
Annual cost of SCP service 2018/19	Staff of 7 patrollers (1.16 FTE's) and a part time designated School Crossing Patrol Organiser (0.59 FTE)	£40,000 Revenue
	SCP specific risk assessments	£4,200
Total annual cost		£44,200
Cost year to date		£9,600

Removal of service cost

Redundancy costs	£18,300	Revenue
Crossing facilities	£361,000	Capital

The cost of the School Crossing Patrol service for this current financial year is approximately £44,200 revenue which covers staff and annual risk assessments. Any further works required to mitigate risks identified would be undertaken from the existing traffic management reactive maintenance budgets.

As part of last year's budget setting, a capital bid was approved to enable appropriate new pedestrian crossing facilities at each appropriate school crossing patrol. Appropriate crossing have been designed as per table 2 with an estimated capital cost of £361,000. These new facilities will have a life span of approximately 15-20 years (industry average) before they will require upgrading or replacing.

From an invest-to-save perspective, the cost of the new permanent crossing facilities and removal of SCPs will be cost neutral within eight years of implementation. After eight years, the saving to the Council will be £44,200 per annum.

Conclusion

The SCP service is valued by the community it serves but this is limited in its scope to children attending the local schools and during the beginning and end of the school day. Permanent crossings will serve a wider proportion of the Borough's residents through the full day. If the SCP service is removed, the financial cost of providing permanent crossing facilities will be recovered after eight years.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	(£6,000), £361,000	Yes	(Revenue) & Capital
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	(£44,600)	Yes	(Revenue)
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	(£44,600)	Yes	(Revenue)

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

Cross-Council Implications

None

List of Background Papers
None

Contact Matthew Gould	Service Place
Telephone Tel: 0118 974 6460	Email matthew.gould@wokingham.gov.uk

Options – School Crossing Services

Option	Pros	Cons	Financial implication
1. Retain all seven SCP's and provide no new controlled crossings (status quo)	<p>Continuation of a well-respected and valued community service.</p> <p>Personal assistance to users crossing the road at school times</p>	<p>Ongoing annual revenue cost to provide a discretionary service</p> <p>Only benefits the school community during short periods of the day</p> <p>Annual Safety assessment required at SCP each site</p>	<p>Annual revenue costs of the service £40,000</p> <p>Additional £4,200 for annual H&S risk assessments + associated remedial measures to mitigate any identified risks</p>
2. Remove all SCP's and provide new controlled crossings where appropriate	<p>No Annual H&S risk assessments required at SCP each site</p> <p>New crossings will provide assistance to all users wishing to cross the road at all times of the day</p> <p>No annual revenue costs</p>	<p>One off capital expenditure</p> <p>No School Crossing Patrol Service</p>	<p>Ongoing annual revenue saving of £44,200</p> <p>One off Capital cost of £361,000</p>
3. Assess all SCP locations and retain only those where a SCP is justified, & provide no new crossings	<p>Continuation of a reduced well-respected and valued community service at those sites where the patrollers are retained</p> <p>Personal assistance to users crossing the road at school times</p>	<p>Ongoing annual revenue cost to provide a discretionary service</p> <p>Only benefits the school community during short periods of the day</p> <p>Disestablishment of one site resulting in no crossing</p>	<p>Reduction of one patroller reducing the cost of the service by circa £4,000</p> <p>Reduces cost of annual H&S risk assessments by £600</p> <p>Total annual revenue cost of service circa £39,600</p>

		provision or SCP assistance	
4. Provide appropriate new crossings at all sites and retain all seven SCPs	<p>Continuation of a well-respected and valued community service.</p> <p>Personal assistance to users crossing the road at school times</p> <p>New crossings will provide assistance to all users wishing to cross the road at all times of the day</p>	<p>Ongoing annual revenue cost to provide a discretionary service</p> <p>Patrollers operating on controlled crossings and in the case of signal control will be duplicating resources and may be confusing to drivers</p> <p>Annual Safety assessment required at SCP each site</p> <p>Implications in relation to the decision made last year, may need to re-instate previously disestablished sites</p>	<p>Annual revenue costs of the service £40,000</p> <p>Additional £4,200 for annual H&S risk assessments + associated remedial measures to mitigate any identified risks</p> <p>Capital cost to provide new crossings of £361,000</p> <p>Potential increase in revenue costs to reinstate previous SCP locations circa £50,000</p>
5. Provide appropriate new crossings at all sites and retain 2/3 SCPs	<p>Partial continuation of a well-respected and valued community service.</p> <p>Some personal assistance to users crossing the road at school times</p> <p>New crossings will provide assistance to all users wishing to cross the road at all times of the day</p>	<p>Ongoing annual revenue cost to provide a reduced discretionary service</p> <p>Annual Safety assessment required at retained SCP sites</p> <p>One off capital expenditure</p> <p>Patrollers operating on controlled crossings and in the case of signal control will be</p>	<p>Annual revenue costs of the service £15,000</p> <p>Additional £1500 for annual H&S risk assessments + associated remedial measures to mitigate any identified risks</p> <p>One off Capital cost of £361,000</p>

		<p>duplicating resources and may be confusing to drivers</p> <p>Implications in relation to the decision made last year, may need to re-instate previously disestablished sites</p>	
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Summary of consultation responses and WBC response

Responses relating to All Saints Primary School	
Key Themes	WBC response
Poor driving – speeding in the area	Speed limit enforcement is a matter for Thames Valley Police and any concerns should be reported to them on the non-emergency number 101.

Responses relating to St Paul’s Junior School	
Key Themes	WBC response
The SCP is a reassuring and popular figure for parents and children and is part of school community (including comments by two teachers)	It is acknowledged that SCP are popular however, the service they have been employed to provide is to ensure children can cross safely and this would duplicate the function of the Pedestrian Crossing once installed.
The area is heavily used by traffic during school drop-off and pick-up times	Pedestrian Crossings provide safe crossing points and are appropriate for busy roads
Frequent incidence of poor driving– including cars mounting the kerbs	It is drivers’ responsibility to drive safely. The Council will ensure all lining, signing and other site aspects are present and in good condition before the start of the new school year (Sept 2018). Matters of poor driving should be directed to the police via the non-emergency number 101.
Pavements too narrow for the volume of pupils	It is parents’ and carers’ responsibility to ensure the safety of their children on journeys to and from school. SCP’s role is to ensure people can cross roads safely not to ensure safety in other areas.
There are significant incidents of poor parking in the area which increases the risk to children	Poor parking is a problem at many schools however it is the responsibility of car driver to ensure they do not park inconsiderately and it is not the responsibility of the SCP to prevent poor/illegal parking. WBC will pass on comments to its Civil Parking Enforcement contractor to investigate and see if additional patrol are required

Responses relating to Walter Infant School	
Key Themes	WBC Response
Frequent incidence of poor driving	It is drivers’ responsibility to use the highway in a safe manner and follow the laws of the road. The Council will ensure all lining, signage and other site aspects are present and in good condition before the start of the new school year (Sept 2018) When WBC takes over Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) from the police later this year it will be able to target problem areas more effectively

There are significant incidents of poor parking in the area which increases the risk to children	Poor parking is a problem at many schools however it is the responsibility of car driver to ensure they do not park inconsiderately and it is not the responsibility of the SCP to prevent poor/illegal parking. WBC will pass on comments to its Civil Parking Enforcement contractor to investigate and see if additional patrol are required
Incidence of children running from parents and need for SCP to help 'crowd control'	It is parents' and carers responsibility to ensure the safety of their children on journeys to and from school. SCP's role is to ensure people can cross roads safely not to ensure safety in other areas.
The area is heavily used by traffic during school drop-off and pick-up times	Pedestrian Crossings provide safe crossing points and are appropriate for busy roads

Responses relating to Keephatch School	
Key themes	WBC response
The SCP is a reassuring and popular figure for parents and children and is part of the school community	It is acknowledged that SCP are popular however, the service they have been employed to provide is to ensure children can cross safely and this duplicates the function of the Pedestrian Crossing
Housing development in the area is leading to increase in traffic on local roads	Pedestrian Crossing provide safer crossing points and are appropriate for busy roads
Poor driving. Speeding is a problem in the area and police have taken action in the past	It is drivers' responsibility to drive safety and legally and any concerns should be reported to the police on the non-emergency number 101. There is a series of traffic calming in place around the school and an enforceable speed limit. Issues regarding noncompliance should be reported to the police on the non-emergency number 101.
SCP are important in encouraging children to walk to school and this may decrease if SCP are remove	There is no reason that the replacement of SCP with a permanent crossing should deter children from walking and WBC provides support to school to encourage their children to walk through Road Safety Education.

Responses relating to Willow Bank Infant and Junior School	
Poor driving – speeding	It is drivers' responsibility to drive safely and legally and any concerns should be reported to the police on the non-emergency number 101. The school is in a 20mph zone and can be enforced by the police
SCP is popular part of the school community	It is acknowledged that SCP are popular however, the service they have been employed to provide is to ensure children can cross safely and this duplicates the function of the Pedestrian Crossing

SCP are important in encouraging children to walk to school and this may decrease if SCP are remove	There is no reason that the replacement of SCP with a permanent crossing should deter children from crossing and WBC provides support to school to encourage their children to walk through Road Safety Education.
Poor parking is common and obscures views	Poor parking is a problem at many schools however it is the responsibility of car drivers to ensure they do not park inconsiderately and it is not the responsibility of the SCP to prevent poor/illegal parking. WBC will pass on comments to its Civil Parking Enforcement contractor to investigate and see if additional patrol are required

Responses relating to Woodley CofE Primary	
Key themes	WBC response
The SCP is a reassuring and popular figure for parents and children	It is acknowledged that SCP are popular however, the service they have been employed to provide is to ensure children can cross safely and would duplicate the function of the Pedestrian Crossing once installed
The area is heavily used by traffic during school drop-off and pick-up times	Pedestrian Crossings provide safe crossing points and are appropriate for busy roads
The junction where the SCP operates in complicated and it is hard to tell where traffic is going to come from	It is parents' and carers responsibility to ensure the safety of their children on journeys to and from school. The provision of a formal crossing facility will assist all users in crossing the road in the same way a SCP would. As with a school crossing patroller, there is a legal requirement for vehicles to stop ether at a red traffic signal or when a person is using a Zebra Crossing.
SCP are important in encouraging children to walk to school and this may decrease if SCP are remove	There is no reason that the replacement of SCP with a permanent crossing should deter children from walking and WBC provides support to school to encourage their children to walk

Responses relating to Polehampton CofE Infant and Junior Schools	
Key themes	WBC response
The area is heavily used by traffic during school drop-off and pick-up times	Pedestrian Crossings provide safe crossing points and are appropriate for busy roads
Some comments supported the prosed change as a safety improvement	Both SCP and permanent crossing provide safe crossing points, however permanent crossing have the advantage of being available 43/7
SCP are important in encouraging children to walk to school and this may decrease if SCP are remove	There is no reason that the replacement of SCP with a permanent crossing should deter children from walking and WBC provides support to school to encourage their children to walk

General responses (and those not relating to a school)

Poor driving – in particular drivers failing to stop and speeding

It is drivers' responsibility to drive safely. Additional speed reducing measures could be considered at individual sites if problems persist however enforcement is the responsibility of Thames Valley Police and any measure could only be introduced in collaboration with them. Any concerns should be reported to them on the non-emergency number 101.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 26 JULY 2018 FROM 7.30 PM TO 8.40 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Charlotte Haitham Taylor (Chairman), Julian McGhee-Sumner, Richard Dolinski, Pauline Helliard-Symons, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Stuart Munro, Anthony Pollock and Simon Weeks

Other Councillors Present

Laura Blumenthal
Prue Bray
Rachel Burgess
Gary Cowan
Andy Croy
Lindsay Ferris
Dianne King
Helen Power
Angus Ross
Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

23. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chairman invited members of the public to submit questions to the appropriate Members.

23.1 Trevor Sleet asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

I would like to ask a question regarding the loss of the lollipop lady in Murray Road.

Has a published cost benefit analysis been carried out regarding the cost of the lollipop lady v's that of installing a pedestrian crossing at this location?

Answer

Broadly speaking yes however this site is subject to a redesign following my intervention in the last few weeks and therefore the cost benefit will be recalculated following the redesign. This information will be made public.

Supplementary Question

I have a copy of the road safety audit report that was based on the decision to remove the lollipop lady in Murray Road and in that safety audit report the site visit was done on the 13th February when the schools were on half term. So it is no wonder that there was no traffic at that time.

My question will be therefore will Wokingham Borough Council accept the failings of this report and reinstate the lollipop lady?

Supplementary Answer

I attended the site on Monday, along with our Road Safety Auditor, and I observed the activity outside the school and he was with me during that time so I think the Council has viewed that site during school times with school pupils going in and out of the school.

23.3 Sally Cairns asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Can the decision about the school crossing patrollers be considered on a site by site basis? The number of consultation responses from the different sites indicates very different levels of concern, and the full Council meeting debate highlighted that the situation is very different outside the different schools – in terms of how helpful a crossing will be given the road layout, and whether there are likely to be other groups of people wanting to cross the road at different times of the day. Does this have to be an all or nothing decision, or can the best solution be chosen for each location?

Answer

I have visited each of the sites concerned along with Officers and the crossings have been designed with specific reference to each site. That is what we have already done. We have taken into account the different characteristics of each site. We have done surveys of numbers of cars and numbers of children accessing school so I think we have done that and certainly I have tried to look for solutions that will work at each site taking into account each sites' characteristics.

Supplementary Question

That seems to be a decision about what type of crossing in each location and I suppose my question is it might be that a crossing is the best for some and keeping the school crossing patroller is the best for others and it is whether there can be that flexibility in the decision?

Supplementary Answer

As we have decided to withdraw the funding for the crossing patrollers a number of years ago I am looking at what we put in to those sites to make them as safe as we can. So I think the answer to that is probably no.

23.4 Annette Medhurst had asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question which in her absence was asked by Sally Cairns:

Councillor Pollock - having observed the situation at the Murray Road crossing on Monday morning – and the constant fluctuation in the numbers of people waiting to cross, the queues of cars needing to get through, and the somewhat random parking behaviour – would you agree that a school crossing patroller – who can constantly adjust to what is happening, is a better solution than any kind of formal crossing – and that although a fixed crossing may seem like a reliable long-term solution, in many ways it is a very risky solution, since you don't know how well it is going to work, particularly when the weather changes, or there are roadworks on surrounding streets – and if additional measures are needed, it could all become much more expensive than the current efficient and adaptable school crossing patroller.

Answer

As you say I attended the school on Monday morning along with our Road Safety Auditor. I attended from 8.15am to approximately 9.15am. The first 20 minutes or so was without the school crossing patroller being present and I was particularly impressed by the curtesy of drivers towards the children crossing or seeking to cross the road. I didn't see any driver speed through the crossing when a child was there. I particularly saw one car very

carefully stop and let the child and parent cross so my impression was generally speaking that the motorists were behaving particularly well. I do accept that there was a problem further down the road where a couple of cars met each other as one came down and one went up but I think that is nothing to do with school crossing patrollers and something to do with parking generally and maybe that needs to be addressed or looked at. So that is separate from the school crossing patroller and I don't think the school crossing patroller sited where she was could have intervened with those two cars that were arguing with each other over a piece of road space.

So as far as the crossings themselves we have replaced school crossing patrollers with crossings throughout the Borough over the last 10 years or so and I don't think any of them are more dangerous now than they were before and in some instances where the traffic was of a higher speed than they are here it was actually beneficial.

As I have said I am going to look at this site particularly. Since I visited it when I was Chair of the Education Committee there are more children going to the site so there may be some issues on that front but the principal is that I don't see that the crossing itself is inherently less safe than a school crossing patroller.

23.6 Diane Burch asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Tony Johnson reported in the local Wokingham Paper (dated July 19th), that the Council Leader said; "The residents sent us a clear message on 3rd May - If our residents feel that they are not being listened to, then we need to redouble our efforts to show that we have taken on board what they have to say".

Bearing this in mind; why does it appear that they not listening to the parents and children at least at the Keephatch and Murray Road crossings – who realise not only how dangerous these alternative crossings will be at their particular locations but, according to the survey undertaken by the independent Road Safety Experts in April of last year, the conclusion was (on the Murray Road crossing) that: "Under the justification criteria outlined in Section 6, this location does not require a pedestrian facility."

Might I also point out that according to these figures, between the hour of 5pm and 6pm only 10 pedestrians crossed the road at the crossing. Announcing that "other road users can safely cross the road using the automated crossings" doesn't apply to this site so to the untrained eye – it does look like needless and unwanted expense.

Bearing all this in mind, would the Council please consider delaying the installation of automated crossings (at least at these two sites) until a further (and perhaps more detailed) survey can be completed, instead of (what appears to be) trying to rush through these unwanted and expensive alternatives?

Answer

Formal crossings such as zebra and puffin controls are safe forms of crossing facilities and the designs for the proposed crossings have been through an independent road safety audit to confirm this.

The assessment process you refer to uses the Department for Transport's guidance to establish if a pedestrian crossing is required. This guidance assumes no existing crossing is provided and considers pedestrian demand and traffic over the entire day. As you have

highlighted because the maximum demand is during two relatively short periods of the day and the assessment considers the demand throughout the day, the survey results when analysed showed that no crossing was necessary.

However recognising that the demand is focused over two short periods of the day, we used the Road Safety GB guidance for establishing if a crossing patroller would be justified. This assessment would also identify whether a formal crossing could be considered rather than providing a patroller.

The assessment for both Murray Road and Keephatch identified a patroller would be justified. Where the assessment identified one would be justified we have proposed to install a formal crossing as an alternative.

Delaying the delivery of the crossings and undertaking further surveys is not considered necessary as it will not change the outcome of the assessment.

However, as a result of the concerns you and the public have raised the designs of both crossings are being reconsidered with a view to providing traffic signal controlled crossings instead.

Supplementary Question

We heard of the death a few years ago of a school crossing patroller up north. The details were discussed at one of our meetings and we learnt that the accident was probably caused by the driver being unable to see the school crossing patroller in the road due to low sun and probably the glare of a wet road. Are there any additional safety measures that they would be willing to take at the Murray Road crossing because during the winter months the low winter sun and glare off wet roads are a real hazard in the months of December and January?

I have had a few drivers confess that they genuinely cannot see me on the crossing and, of course, I am always in high-viz clothing. There is a real concern on my part that if they cannot see me in high-viz wear what chance does any pedestrian, child or adult, have in normal clothing?

Supplementary Answer

When I was with you the other day, as I said to a question earlier, I was very impressed with how motorists came up to the crossing and were relatively slow. They were not driving at 60mph or even 30 or 40mph and the parked cars to some extent also do provide for drivers slowing down because of the parked cars beside. However I do think perhaps there needs to be examination of some of the parking aspects. I think you and I saw two cars arguing as to who had the right of way and I noticed that perhaps a couple of the cars in front of that car had been parked there for quite a while so I don't know what the parking restrictions are.

So I will look into things a bit more at that site because I do take your point. I think the issue of low sun perhaps we need to put covers over some of the lights when they are installed so that they can be seen and they are not blinded by the sun. So I take your point and thank you for that and we will take that into account.

24. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chairman invited Members to submit questions to the appropriate Members

24.3 Lindsay Ferris asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

I have considerable concerns that the financial information presented for the closure of the School Crossing Patrol Service (see pages 21/21 of this Agenda) are inaccurate and omit a number of ongoing Revenue costs associated with the provision and future running of the crossing facilities proposed to be provided.

Why have these ongoing revenue costs been excluded, as it gives a false impression of any supposed savings?

Answer

I believe the costs you are referring to relate to any interest payments associated with capital borrowing and the ongoing maintenance and operation costs once the sites have been installed.

I can confirm that the majority of the capital funding has been allocated from grants with a very small proportion from developer contributions. Therefore there are no additional costs associated with borrowing in this part.

As for maintenance and operation these costs are relatively small and will be absorbed within the existing maintenance budgets. The new lights will all be LED so power consumption and therefore cost will be very low and in terms of faults the most common fault is bulbs requiring replacement. With LED this is no longer a regular issue. As these installations will be new any maintenance or faults during the first few years will be covered under warranty. For new traffic signal installations the approximate annual cost is less than £600 per site.

Supplementary Question

I beg on the debate to differ if necessary on the interest payments because not all your money will be coming from that because it is a question of how the money is funded. So I will query that later.

I will also just make a comment before I get to my question. You mentioned that the decision was made a little while ago about this. My understanding is that it was on the first phase that the decision was made and that the paper presented said it would review the second phase so I have an issue with that. Also you were asked about not being able to do something about keeping any school patrollers. You know you can do that via a supplementary estimate so that is not an issue.

The issue I now have is there is an ongoing replacement cost for these control systems. They last somewhere between 10-15 years. So somewhere in the costs will need to be a replacement cost and I also do believe that the maintenance of seven new crossings, which is what you are putting here, would actually be quite a significant increase on the number so I will be asking you to come up with a specific issue regarding how you are going to increase the contract associated with the maintenance of the crossings that we

have in the Borough and how that will come as I think the figures you mentioned of £600 a year is actually low but I would like you to provide that and if you could provide it by a written answer I am happy for you to do that?

Supplementary Answer

I said that the maintenance costs are relatively small and I don't think that is likely to change the number of crossings here and there are other crossings that we have in the Borough. The answer says that it is not going to significantly increase the maintenance budget but I will seek to get the more detailed answer you have asked for but I believe that the answer I have given is accurate.

24.5 David Hare had asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question. Due to his inability to attend the meeting a written reply was provided:

The Council designed a zebra crossing for Murray Road which was due to be installed on 25th July – before any decision was finally made about the effectiveness of these controls. It has now been delayed, but would it have been pulled if the anger of local residents had not been expressed at the last Council meeting, with questions about the validity of this idea abounding. An uncontrolled crossing on Murray Road would cause traffic chaos and might well lead to injury of the crossing users.

Answer

Following a site meeting with the local ward Member on the 10 July 2018, Officers have been considering a request to change the original proposed zebra crossing to a Puffin Crossing. The scheme will now be redesigned. I visited the school on 23rd July and observed the children arriving at school with their parents, and spoke to parents, a teacher and Mrs Birch which provided additional information on other issues beyond the issue of a school crossing patroller. I will take these into account during the redesign process.

24.6 Rachel Burgess asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

The School Crossing Patrol consultation raises a significant number of safety concerns. With regard to the Keephatch Road crossing these concerns are backed up by the independent road safety audit. The audit states that the proposed site of this zebra crossing is not safe for two reasons: poor visibility and, more crucially, proximity to the roundabout. The audit states that “the close proximity of the proposed zebra pedestrian crossing to the...roundabout...could result in an increased risk of...collisions”. Are the findings of the road safety audit going to be ignored at the Keephatch Road site?

Answer

No not all. All findings from a Road Safety Audit are an integral part of the design process and where applicable recommendations that have been identified have been adopted and included in the final scheme design.

The Road Safety Audit did not identify that the design would provide an unsafe crossing facility but highlighted recommendations that if implemented would improve safety further.

With regard to the hedgerow, clearance has started on site. The final design for the crossing has been proposed as far north as possible without taking pedestrians away from the desire line.

Supplementary Question

I would just like to focus on the location of the crossing. I don't believe that the crossing should be placed where it was originally proposed because of what it says in the Road Safety Audit. It cannot be placed much further north, as the Road Safety Audit suggested, because that is not practical and I don't think anyone thinks it would be. It cannot be placed at the south side of the roundabout because of the dropped kerbs and houses there. So do you not agree with me that the only safe solution, in this particular setting, is a school crossing patroller on the south side of the roundabout?

Supplementary Answer

I am advised that it is safe on the north side of the roundabout at a suitable distance from the roundabout to ensure that there is safety.

24.7 Andy Croy asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Clearly, the main driver to cut the School Crossing Patrollers (SCPs) is financial – the cut first appears in the 2015 Medium Term Financial Plan and if safety were an issue I am sure the Borough would have replaced these SCPs years ago.

The financial information provided in the report excludes:

- Any attempt to quantify the value of non-core services (e.g. road safety training to children, a pillar of community cohesion, an extra set of official eyes and ears) provided by the SCPs;
- Maintenance costs of the proposed crossing sites, including, for example, maintenance of any high friction road surfaces which will need to be added.

Why are the Executive making a financial decision based on incomplete financial information?

Answer

The decision being made today is not based on financial considerations. That decision was made in 2015 and we are today deciding on whether we continue to implement that decision.

Supplementary Question

The decision was made in 2015 and indeed you said earlier that it was decided to withdraw the funding in 2015 and that is why we are where we are today. So what you are saying is that there are no revenue implications for the maintenance of the high friction road surface and no revenue implications for the continued clearance of the vegetation on, for example, the Keephatch site and there are no revenue implications, for example, in the changes in the parking markings that you have eluded to all over these sites? There are revenue implications that are not included in the financial assessment.

So the question is why are you making a decision based on incorrect financial information?

Supplementary Answer

I do not agree with you that there are missing revenue implications because I think that what we are doing is actually spending capital money to make these places safe.

25. SCHOOL CROSSING PATROL SERVICE - CONSULTATION REPORT 2018

The Executive considered a report setting out the findings from the Safe School Crossing consultation.

The Executive Member for Highways and Transport advised the meeting that following consultation with local Ward Members it was intended to redesign the crossings proposed at four of the sites: Murray Road, Norreys Avenue, Keephatch Road and Hurricane Way. Officers would then come back with redesigns and as the new crossings would take 3-5 weeks to build it would therefore be necessary to reprogramme the delivery of these sites.

Councillor Pauline Jorgensen commented that she had received a lot of positive feedback in relation to the Silverdale Road site as residents were looking forward to the crossing.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) WBC continue with its proposal to provide safe, permanent crossings at the seven locations that currently have a school crossing patroller, and, following their installation, remove the school crossing patrol service once the permanent crossings are complete as set out in Option 2, Appendix 1 of the report;
- 2) all affected schools be reminded that they have access to the Council's road safety and My Journey teams who can facilitate further road safety training for pupils if requested.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2018 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.15 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Parry Batth (Chairman), Andy Croy, Lindsay Ferris, Kate Haines, John Jarvis, Ian Pittock, Bill Soane and Shahid Younis

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Prue Bray, Rachel Burgess, Carl Doran, Anthony Pollock, Helen Power, Malcolm Richards, Imogen Shepherd-DuBey and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Officers Present

Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Matt Gould, Lead Specialist, Highways and Transport
Clare Lawrence, Assistant Director, Place
Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer
Josie Wragg, Director of Locality and Customer services

31. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Guy Grandison, Mike Haines, Philip Houldsworth and Ken Miall.

John Jarvis attended the meeting as a substitute.

Malcolm Richards attended the meeting as a witness in relation to his former role as Executive Member for Highways and Transport.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

33. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

34. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chairman invited Members to submit questions.

Gary Cowan had asked the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee the following question:

Question

Can the Chair clarify if a declaration of interest should be declared by any member/s of the Committee who have a crossing under consideration in which the evidence would indicate that a correct safety audit and proper costing was not carried out of which that member was aware?

In Councillor Cowan's absence, the following written reply was provided.

Answer

The Council's Code of Conduct sets out the rules relating to the disclosure of pecuniary and personal interests. The list of subjects requiring declaration include employment, contracts, land, licences, corporate tenancies and securities.

It is unlikely that the work carried out to install pedestrian crossings would require a Member to declare an interest. This position may change if, for example, the crossing was being installed adjacent to a Member's property or he/she had a financial interest (such as shares) in the contractor carrying out the work.

Consequently, I do not believe that Members are required to declare interests in relation to the scenario you raise.

35. CALL-IN OF EXECUTIVE DECISION - SCHOOL CROSSING PATROL SERVICE - CONSULTATION REPORT 2018

The Committee considered the Call-In of the decision taken by the Executive, at its meeting on 26 July 2018, relating to consultation on the proposed replacement of the School Crossing Patrol Service with fixed crossing facilities.

The Executive decision was that:

- 1) WBC continue with its proposal to provide safe, permanent crossings at the seven locations that currently have a school crossing patroller, and, following their installation, remove the school crossing patrol service once the permanent crossings are complete as set out in Option 2, Appendix 1 of the report;
- 2) all affected schools are reminded that they have access to the Council's road safety and My Journey teams who can facilitate further road safety training for pupils if requested.

The decision had been called in by Councillors Prue Bray, Clive Jones, Helen Power, Imogen Shepherd-Dubey and Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey.

The following witnesses were invited to submit evidence and/or answer questions in order to assist the Committee in its deliberations.

- Councillor Imogen Shepherd-Dubey to set out the reasons for the Call-In, supported by Diane Burch, Keith Malvern and Annette Medhurst.
- Councillor Anthony Pollock to provide justification for the Executive decision supported by Councillor Malcolm Richards, Josie Wragg (Director of Locality and Customer Services), Clare Lawrence (Assistant Director, Place) and Matt Gould (Lead Specialist, Highways and Transport).

Councillor Parry Batth (Chairman) welcomed the witnesses and explained the format of the meeting.

Witnesses would be invited to make a short address to the Committee followed by a question and answer session. Following the witness sessions the Committee would consider all the written and oral evidence and either confirm the decision or make appropriate recommendations to the Executive.

Councillor Imogen Shepherd-Dubey addressed the Committee and confirmed that the Executive decision had been called in on the following grounds:

- 1) The decision had contravened Section 1.4.2 a) of the Council's Constitution, in that the action being proposed was not proportionate to the desired outcome.
 - a) A blanket decision had been made to replace all remaining School Crossing Patrols (SCP) with pedestrian crossings, despite the different characteristics and requirements of the locations.
 - b) The desired outcome appeared to be to save money yet the costs both of the crossings and the school crossing patrol had not been fully or correctly stated. None of the other options quoted had any costs provided.
 - c) The decision had been made on the basis of costs for crossings which had not yet been designed – as a redesign was taking place at four sites due to the first design not being suitable; it was therefore unclear whether a crossing was actually the right answer for those locations, as well as the costs being unknown.

- 2) The decision had contravened Section 1.4.2 b) of the Council's Constitution, in that due consultation and the taking of professional advice from Officers had not occurred.
 - a) The consultation was not complete at the point at which the decisions to withdraw the service were made.
 - b) The consultation was not carried out at an early stage, and was not meaningful, and contravened the Council's own rules on consultation.
 - c) There was no consultation with ward Members on the withdrawal of the service.
 - d) The replacement crossings were designed without reference to ward Members and before the consultation was carried out – and ward Members were not even informed until mid-July that the crossings had been designed.
 - e) Wokingham Town Council's consultation response had not been taken into consideration.
 - f) Letters putting the staff at risk of redundancy were issued before the consultation was concluded.
 - g) The Council's responses to the points made by respondents were inadequate.
 - h) At least one crossing was scheduled to be installed before the decision on the outcome of the consultation took place.
 - i) At least one safety audit was done during the school holidays.
 - j) No Equality Impact Assessments accompanied the information in the report.
 - k) It was not clear that all guidelines for the provision of safe crossings had been observed.
 - l) It was not clear that all the evidence comparing the appropriateness of SCP versus crossings has been taken into account.

- 3) The decision had contravened Section 1.4.2 d) of the Council's Constitution, in that openness had not been observed.
 - a) At least one of the crossings was designed in February but this was not communicated to ward Members.
 - b) Some information was shared with individual members of the public but was not made available to all.
 - c) No overall plan for the removal of SCP was made available following the removal of the funding in the 2015 Medium Term Financial Plan.

- 4) The decision had contravened Section 1.4.2 e) of the Council's Constitution, in that clarity of aims and desired outcomes had not been achieved.
 - a) The recommendations referred to a proposal to provide safe, permanent crossings – yet four of the crossing proposals had been rejected in the period shortly before the Executive meeting that made the decision, and therefore the decision had been made before there was certainty that the recommendation could be delivered, or that the costs were as given in the report.
 - b) Due to the failure to present all costs for all options it was not possible for the Executive to have come to a properly informed decision.
 - c) Due to the failure to present the Equality Impact Assessments it was not possible for the Executive to have come to a properly informed decision.
- 5) The decision had contravened Section 1.4.2 f) of the Council's Constitution, in that the details of all the options and reasons for the decision had not been recorded.
 - a) A set of options had been laid out but it excluded the most obvious option of replacing some but not all of the patrollers with crossings.
 - b) There was a presumption that no funding was available for the service to continue, whereas a supplementary estimate could have been used to find the money, but was not considered.

Councillor Imogen Shepherd-Dubey made the following points:

The evidence indicated that the decision to remove the school crossing patrol service was included in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2015/16, agreed at the Council meeting in February 2015. The MTFP contained the line "School Crossing Patrols – investigate alternative sources of funding", but this did not refer to the removal of the service and its replacement with permanent crossings.

Following the removal of the school crossing patroller at Emmbrook Infant and Junior in 2017, there had been a growing number of complaints about inappropriate parking. If the service was to be fully removed the Council must increase its parking enforcement activity in relation to local schools.

The feedback report following the 2018 Consultation exercise stated that the consultation did not raise any issues that were not anticipated. However, the feedback did raise a large number of issues which should be addressed. It also appeared that some consultation responses were not included in the feedback, for example, Wokingham Town Council raised concerns about the Keephatch Road crossing which were not reflected in the Agenda papers.

The Agenda set out the legal principles relating to fair and effective consultation. The Council had not followed these principles in relation to the school crossing patrol decision. For example, the requirement for consultation to take place when proposals were at a "formative" stage and the product of the consultation to be "conscientiously" taken into account in finalising any decisions.

No business case had been produced to support the 2015 decision to remove the service and the financial information included in the Agenda papers appeared to be inconsistent. For example, a special item of £85k was included in the budget for 2016/17 and 2017/18 to cover the costs of the service while the process of removing the patrollers was

completed. However, eight of the patrollers were removed in 2017 which should have resulted in a smaller special item for 2017/18. Similarly, the Agenda papers indicated that the School Crossing Patrol Organiser spent 100% of his/her time managing the service even though the number of patrollers had reduced from 25 to seven.

The Agenda papers included an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), dated April 2018, which covered all the remaining crossing sites. This EIA was inadequate in that EIAs should be started at the beginning of the design phase and should be updated as the project develops. The April 2018 EIA was also inadequate in that it did not cover the full range of people with protected characteristics who could be affected by the service change. This included disabilities relating to hearing, sight, mobility, learning difficulties and cognitive processing disabilities.

Finally, it was apparent that one of the safety audits had been carried out during the spring half term holiday when there would have been much lower levels of activity outside the school in question.

Members of the Committee raised the following points:

The Job Description for the School Crossing Patrol Organiser (page 131 of the supplementary agenda) indicated that the post holder was responsible for the management of 25 permanent part-time patrollers. It appeared that this information was out of date as there were only seven patrollers remaining. Similarly, the July 2018 Executive report indicated (page 32) that the Organiser post was 0.59 FTE even though there were only 7 patrollers left.

It was clear that the 2015/16 MTFP did not include reference to the replacement of the School Crossing Patrol Service with permanent fixed crossings.

Diane Burch addressed the Committee and made the following points:

Diane was the current School Crossing Patroller at Murray Road. She outlined the work she did to assist children and parents. Diane felt that removing the patroller at Murray Road would increase the risk of accidents. She also gave details of a survey undertaken by local residents which indicated a much higher level of pedestrians and traffic compared to the Council's own survey.

Members of the Committee raised the following points:

The Agenda papers indicated that the school traffic patrollers received letters relating to redundancy before the 2018 consultation exercise was completed. Diane Burch confirmed that she received a letter in February 2018. (It was subsequently confirmed that this letter related to the Council's 21st Century Council change programme and was not part of a redundancy procedure).

The Council's Constitution stated that the Council aimed to consult with residents and stakeholders to ensure that they had a voice. Was the 2018 Consultation exercise seen as "meaningful" by local parents. Diane Burch felt that, based on discussions with parents, the 2018 consultation had the appearance of being a "tick box" exercise.

What level of support did the School Crossing Patrollers received from the SCP Organiser? Diane Burch felt that, as she was an experienced patroller, there was no need

for frequent contact. She felt that her contact with the Organiser amounted to approximately three hours per term with occasional meetings and an annual appraisal.

Keith Malvern addressed the Committee and referred to a written statement from Trevor Sleet which made the following points:

There could only be two reasons for removing the School Crossing Patrol Service and replacing it with permanent crossings – financial and enhanced safety for children. The written evidence from Councillor Keith Baker confirmed that the School Crossing Patroller service was a much lower cost compared to the capital cost of installing pedestrian crossings.

In relation to finance, a patroller was paid around £3k per annum. The cost of installing a crossing was around £40k with annual maintenance costs of £600 and the crossing would need replacing after 15 years.

In relation to safety, a recent report indicated that, on average, there were 20 accidents every day involving pedestrians on crossings. Between 2012 and 2016, Department of Transport statistics indicated that there were 251 fatalities on all types of crossing, but only four on crossings controlled by humans.

In relation to Murray Road, the existing patroller provided a safe crossing for children attending St Paul's, Walter Infant School and Meadow Nursery. There was concern that the Road Safety Audit was carried out on 13 February 2018, during the half term break. The Executive Member had also visited the site. This visit took place on 23 July 2018 when St Paul's and Walter Infants were open, but Meadow Nursery was not and a number of other schools in the area had broken up for the summer.

Members of the Committee raised the following points:

In relation to the Murray Road crossing, did the schools hold after school activities and, if so, was there any impact on road safety. It was confirmed that the majority of after school activities were held at St Paul's and it was felt that a fixed crossing would not have an impact on safety relating to the after-school activities.

Annette Medhurst addressed the Committee and made the following points:

Annette was the Chair of the Management Committee at Meadow Nursery and was able to comment on concerns from staff and parents about road safety. Annette felt that each crossing site should have been assessed on its own merits and that the Council's communication with parents had been disappointing. The Murray Road site was in Emmbrook Ward and two of the Borough Council Members opposed the removal of the patroller service.

Annette believed that the consensus amongst parents and staff at the local schools was that the Murray Road patroller should be retained on the grounds that this was the safest option.

Members of the Committee raised the following points:

Did stakeholders in the Murray Road area feel that the 2018 consultation exercise was meaningful? Annette felt that the consultation was unlikely to deliver a change in the Council's position. Consequently a petition was started.

If local residents felt that the consultation was a tick box exercise, did they contact the Council with their concerns? Annette confirmed that parents had been urged to submit a consultation response but, at the same time, the petition and a letter writing campaign were started. Councillor Imogen Shepherd-Dubey confirmed that she did contact the Council with concerns about the consultation exercise.

Anthony Pollock addressed the Committee and made the following points:

The decisions relating to the School Crossing Patrol Service were taken in line with the requirements set out in the Council's Constitution.

The consultation exercises in 2017 and 2018 had been carried out in line with agreed procedures. The Council had endeavoured to listen to the views of residents. After considering the consultation responses Councillor Pollock had concluded that permanent crossings were safer. This reflected the earlier work overseen by Councillor Pollock as part of the Safer Routes to School programme.

The petition organised by Annette Medhurst had been the subject of detailed discussion and public debate at the July 2018 Borough Council meeting.

Councillor Pollock had visited each of the proposed crossing sites and had been satisfied that drivers acted responsibly.

The views of local ward Members had been sought and their feedback had been incorporated into the design of the new permanent crossings.

Members of the Committee raised the following points:

In relation to the 2018 consultation exercise relating to Murray Road, were any specific representations made from other schools in the area? Councillor Pollock confirmed that no specific representations had been received. He had visited the schools affected by the service change and had concluded that two additional crossings should be installed. The consultation feedback raised similar concerns at each of the sites currently covered by a patroller.

The consultation feedback indicated that 98% of respondents opposed the proposals. What level of opposition would have resulted in a change to the Council's plans? Councillor Pollock confirmed that the consultation was open to residents across the Borough. The consultation feedback did not contain any evidence of significant safety risks which had not already been assessed through site visits and safety audits, etc. Also, evidence from the eight sites where patrollers were removed in 2017 did not indicate a reduction in safety following the changes.

The financial information reported to the Executive on 26 July 2018 indicated that the annual cost of the service was £44,200. This was made up of the cost of the seven patrollers, the part-time School Crossing Patrol Organiser (0.59 FTE) and site risk assessments. As the evidence indicated that the cost of each patroller was around £3k, was the financial information and business case accurate? Also, as there would be a

replacement cost for the new crossings in 15 years' time, should these costs not be included in the business case? Councillor Pollock stated that the financial information also included on-costs for staff. It was also important to note that the decision to change the service had not been made on financial grounds, it was made on safety grounds. It had become increasingly difficult to recruit patrollers whereas the fixed crossings would provide a permanent safe solution.

In relation to the information in the 2015/16 MTFP, as the budget papers were circulated to opposition Members one week before the Budget Council, was this a reasonable amount of time for Members to analyse and research every line in the budget? Councillor Pollock confirmed that, during his time as Executive Member for Finance, he did speak to opposition Members in advance of the budget meeting. In practice, he recognised that analysing the budget papers in a week was challenging.

Matt Gould (Lead Specialist, Highways and Transport) addressed the Committee and made the following points:

The Council agreed to remove funding for the school crossing patrol service at the Budget Council in 2015. Implementation was delayed until 2017 when the eight patrollers already working on fixed crossings were removed. Consultation on the removal of the final seven patrollers took place between January and March 2018. Discussions were held with the patrollers to inform them of the process, but notices of redundancy were not issued at this time.

The consultation feedback did not raise any significant new issues and, as a result, it was agreed that the implementation of the permanent crossings would proceed. It was at this point that the patrollers were given "at risk" letters. Redundancy notices had not yet been issued.

More complex issues had been identified in relation to the Murray Road site and the patroller would remain in place until these issues were addressed satisfactorily.

It was important to note that the school crossing patrol service was discretionary. However, the Council recognised the importance of safer routes to schools and believed that the permanent crossings would deliver a permanent safe solution.

Members of the Committee raised the following points:

The design documents relating to the new crossings indicated that some design work had started before the 2018 consultation had been completed. Matt Gould confirmed that the aim had been to complete the new crossings in the school summer break. In order to achieve this timeline the design work had to proceed whilst the consultation was ongoing. The details of the agreed crossing schemes were not released until after the consultation had concluded and the feedback had been considered.

Once the Call-In procedure had been invoked, was work on the crossings suspended? If work carried on, under what authority did this happen? If work did continue, was there a formal Member or Officer decision to proceed?

Josie Wragg (Director of Locality and Customer Services) confirmed that the Council's Capital Programme provided authority to deliver the permanent crossing facilities. Following discussions between Josie and Councillor Pollock it was agreed that halting the

works would have significant financial risks for the Council. Clare Lawrence (Assistant Director, Place) referred to the supporting papers which stated that there was no Constitutional need for the July Executive to agree to provide the crossings or funding as this decision had already been made.

Andrew Moulton (Monitoring Officer) confirmed that, in principle, implementation of the Executive decision should have been suspended following the Call-In. However, as stated, the Director of Locality and Customer Services also had authority under the Constitution to deliver approved schemes within the Capital Programme. In response to an earlier enquiry, Andrew confirmed that no Individual Executive Member decision had been taken in relation to this issue.

Councillor Malcolm Richards addressed the Committee and made the following points:

Councillor Richards had been appointed as Executive Member for Highways and Transport in 2016, after the decision had been taken to remove the School Crossing Patrol Service as set out in the 2015/16 MTFP.

Councillor Richards carried out research and looked at the approach to this service taken by other local authorities. The service was not statutory and many Councils had taken the decision to remove it. This reflected the fact that it was increasingly difficult to recruit and retain patrollers. Councillor Richards had also examined Department of Transport statistics which indicated that permanent crossing facilities were generally very safe.

In 2017, the eight patrollers operating on existing crossings were removed. Evidence collected following the removal of these patrollers indicated that there was no reduction in safety.

In relation to the remaining seven sites with patrollers, Councillor Richards had examined the safety statistics for each of the sites and held detailed discussions with Officers. He reached the conclusion that the permanent crossings would improve safety and would be in use 24/7.

Members of the Committee raised the following points:

There appeared to be a conflict between Councillor Richard's evidence on national statistics relating to the relative safety of School Crossing Patrol operated sites versus fixed crossing solutions and the earlier evidence submitted by Keith Malvern. Councillor Anthony Pollock confirmed that, whatever the national statistics indicated, there was strong evidence that fixed crossings in the Wokingham Borough were very safe.

In addition to the evidence submitted to the Committee, there was anecdotal evidence that the School Crossing Patrollers were highly valued by local communities. It was difficult to translate this added value in financial terms.

Councillor Parry Batth explained that a plenary session would take place enabling the witnesses to clarify any points following the submissions and points raised by the Committee. The following points were raised:

Councillor Pittock sought clarification on the correspondence sent to the School Crossing patrollers during the 2018 consultation period. Matt Gould confirmed that the patrollers had

received a letter relating to the Council's 21st Century change programme in February 2018. This was not an "at risk" or "notice of redundancy" letter relating to the service changes being consulted on.

Annette Medhurst asked about the requirement for the consultation exercise to take place. Matt Gould confirmed that the consultation had taken place in line with the requirements of the Council's Constitution.

Councillor Croy referred to the legal principles relating to fair consultation and asked if the Council had followed these principles correctly. Also, was the political process – lobbying, petitioning, etc., more effective than the consultation process? Councillor Pollock stated that the Council had tried to act in a fair manner and listen to the views of residents. It had carried out detailed assessments and safety audits. The aim was to deliver a solution which was as safe, if not more safe, than the existing arrangements.

Councillor Imogen Shepherd-Dubey addressed the Committee and made concluding remarks.

Councillor Shepherd-Dubey stated that the Call-In was not about the outcome relating to the service, it was about the decision making process and the importance of following the correct legal principles. The 2015/16 MTFP did not contain a specific decision about the replacement of patrollers with fixed crossings and the subsequent consultation process was flawed. The financial information supporting the proposals did not add up and the 2018 Equality Impact Assessment was inadequate and did not meet the Council's statutory requirements.

Councillor Anthony Pollock addressed the Committee and made concluding remarks.

Councillor Pollock stated the decision making process had not breached the Council's Constitution. The process had been fair and sought to build on the safety improvements delivered earlier through the Safer Routes to School programme. The detailed safety audits had demonstrated that the proposals were safe and feedback from residents and Members had strengthened the outcome. The specific issues relating to Murray Road would be addressed before the final scheme was implemented.

The Committee discussed the written and oral evidence and considered its decision.

Councillor Parry Bath outlined the options open to the Committee, viz:

- a) to confirm the 26 July Executive decision;
- b) to request that the Executive review the 26 July decision and provide reasons to support the request;
- c) to confirm the 26 July Executive decision and provide advice to the Executive via a letter from the Chairman to the Leader of the Council.

Councillor Lindsay Ferris referred to Paragraph 6.3.12 of the Council's Constitution which referred to use of a "party whip" in Overview and Scrutiny deliberations (i.e.

predetermination on political lines) and requested Members to notify the Committee if a party whip was in place. Members confirmed that no party whip was in place.

Councillor Lindsay Ferris stated that the decision making process had been flawed and the decision should be referred back to the Executive in relation to three issues: inadequate consultation, inaccurate financial information and incomplete Equality Impact Assessments.

Councillor Andy Croy stated that the decision should be referred back to the Executive in relation to predetermination and flawed/ineffective consultation.

Councillor Ian Pittock stated that the decision should be referred back to the Executive in relation to the inadequate business plan, predetermination in advance of consultation and inadequate Equality Impact Assessments. Councillor Pittock also noted the wider issues relating to Budget Scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Councillor Shahid Younis noted the concerns raised about the decision making process but felt that the Executive decision should be confirmed with advice to the Executive in relation to clarity about consultation and the need to look at each site on its individual merits.

Councillor Bill Soane noted that the Executive decision was focussed on improving safety and not on financial savings. He also agreed that each site should be assessed to understand the local situation.

Councillor John Jarvis agreed that there were concerns about the process but felt that the evidence showed that the Executive did listen to the views of residents.

Councillor Kate Haines noted that the decision making process had not been followed correctly and felt that the Executive should be informed of the Committee's findings.

It was proposed by Councillor Andy Croy and seconded by Councillor Ian Pittock that:

- 1) the Executive be requested to review their 26 July 2018 decision on the School Crossing Patrol Service in light of the evidence presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee;
- 2) the request to the Executive for a review is based on the following reasons:
 - a) the original 2015 decision to remove the School Crossing Patrol Service was taken prior to the consultation, and, with the substantive decision having been taken, subsequent consultation exercises were not seen as meaningful;
 - b) the original 2015 decision was taken without an underpinning business case and the 26 July 2018 Executive report did not contain detailed information showing the current costs of the service and the full financial implications relating to the proposed implementation, maintenance and future replacement of the new permanent crossing facilities;
 - c) the original 2015 decision was taken without an underpinning Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and the subsequent April 2018 EIA did not contain detailed

information about consultation with specific groups and did not reflect the individual circumstances relating to each of the proposed crossing sites.

On being put to the vote the proposal was **agreed**.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Executive be requested to review their 26 July 2018 decision on the School Crossing Patrol Service in light of the evidence presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee;
- 2) the request to the Executive for a review is based on the following reasons:
 - a) the original 2015 decision to remove the School Crossing Patrol Service was taken prior to the consultation, and, with the substantive decision having been taken, subsequent consultation exercises were not seen as meaningful;
 - b) the original 2015 decision was taken without an underpinning business case and the 26 July 2018 Executive report did not contain detailed information showing the current costs of the service and the full financial implications relating to the proposed implementation, maintenance and future replacement of the new permanent crossing facilities;
 - c) the original 2015 decision was taken without an underpinning Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and the subsequent April 2018 EIA did not contain detailed information about consultation with specific groups and did not reflect the individual circumstances relating to each of the proposed crossing sites.