

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, 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; &
- 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 boroughs 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 existing 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	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

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