

REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Cabinet met on 11 November 2014. Attendance:-

Councillor Glazier (Chair)

Councillors Bentley, Dowling, Elkin, Maynard, Simmons and Tidy

1. Scrutiny Review of School Crossing Patrols alternative funding

1.1 The Cabinet has considered a report of the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee on its review of School Crossing Patrols alternative funding. The report is included elsewhere on the agenda (see item 9). The Scrutiny report has previously been circulated to all Members.

1.2 The aim of the review was to examine expenditure on School Crossing Patrols which is funded from the Road Safety Budget. As part of the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RRP&R) process, there was a requirement to identify savings of £305,000 in 2014/15 to be achieved by reducing Road Safety Education activities and considering alternative delivery models. Cabinet on 15 October 2013 resolved to consult on ceasing to fund School Crossing Patrol sites which did not meet Policy PS 5/1, and, consider and implement alternative means of funding those schools that do meet the Policy. It was identified that the saving for the Road Safety budget from the changes to School Crossing Patrol sites would initially be £50,000 in 2014/15 with the potential to rise up to £100,000 as alternative means of funding was implemented.

1.3 The consultation on the proposed changes to School Crossing Patrol sites led to considerable public opposition with a number of petitions submitted to the County Council. The final outcome was to implement funding sites meeting the Policy only at this stage. Considerable time was spent trying to assist schools find sponsorship for those existing sites that no longer met the Policy. £34,000 savings were achieved which is slightly below the level expected, and some schools have only been able to find alternative funding for one year. The Scrutiny Committee then resolved to examine alternative means of funding for School Crossing Patrol sites. The Scrutiny Committee resolved on 10 September 2014 to refer the Review to Cabinet for consideration.

1.4 The Scrutiny Review is welcomed by the Communities, Economy and Transport Department because it does appraise in depth the advantages and disadvantages of the use of sponsorship or other alternative means of funding for School Crossing Patrol sites. The Action Plan arising from the Review is contained in Appendix 1. It is recognised that the current savings do make a contribution to the overall financial position of the County Council. However, before implementing further changes to the funding of sites that do meet Policy PS 5/1, there needs to be consideration of the implications of effectiveness of alternative funding. The Review provides an input to this process.

1.5 In welcoming the findings of the Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet has considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport (as set out in Appendix 1 to this report – circulated separately to all Members) on the specific recommendations and endorsed it as its response to the recommendations.

1.6 The Cabinet, in welcoming the report, recommends the County Council to –

- ✧ approve the response of the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport on the implementation of the recommendations in the Scrutiny Committee's report.

2. Looked After Children Annual Service Report

2.1 The Cabinet considered the annual report on activity within the Looked After Children (LAC) service. The Corporate Parenting Panel was asked to note and endorse the contents of the report at their meeting on 10 October 2014 and this was agreed at that time. The report set out the many ways in which the County Council's role as corporate parent has been discharged, and included a summary of progress made by children looked after by the County Council. It also outlined a summary of the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel itself which includes regular review of inspection reports for the children's homes for which the County Council is responsible. The report and supporting appendices have previously been circulated to all Members.

2.2 The annual report from the LAC service indicated that there is a well functioning and responsive service. This view was endorsed by the Ofsted inspection in January-February 2014 which rated the services as 'good' overall. The service works with some of the most vulnerable children in the County.

2.3 The Corporate Parenting Panel is also working diligently and effectively with officers to ensure that standards remain high.

11 November 2014

KEITH GLAZIER
(Chair)