

Report to: **Scrutiny Committee for Economy, Transport and Environment**

Date: **10 September 2014**

By: **Chair of the Scrutiny Review Board**

Title of report: **Scrutiny Review of School Crossing Patrol Alternative Funding**

Purpose of report: **To present the outcomes of the scrutiny review and make recommendations.**

RECOMMENDATION: That the Committee considers the report of the Review Board and makes recommendations to Cabinet for comment, and County Council for approval.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 The financial implications are set out in the report of the Review Board.

2. Summary

2.1 The Review Board comprised Councillors John Hodges (Chair), Mike Pursglove, Pat Rodohan, and Richard Stogdon.

2.2 The attached report (appendix 1) contains the findings and recommendations of the Review Board. An evidence pack of supporting documentation is available on request from the contact officer.

2.3 The Committee is recommended to receive the Review Board's report for submission to Cabinet and County Council on 11 November 2014 and 2 December 2014 respectively.

3. Recommendation

3.1 The Committee is requested to consider and endorse the report of the Review Board for submission to Cabinet and Full Council.

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Chair of the Review Board

Contact Officer: Martin Jenks

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Local Members: All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

Scrutiny review of school crossing patrol (SCP) alternative funding

Report by the Review Board

of the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Councillor John Hodges (Chair)

Councillor Mike Pursglove

Councillor Pat Rodohan

Councillor Richard Stogdon

July 2014

Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee – 10 September 2014

Cabinet – 11 November 2014

Full Council – 2 December 2014



Report of the scrutiny review of school crossing patrol (SCP) alternative funding

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Recommendations		Page
1	<p>Light controlled crossings (e.g. Pelican & Puffin crossings) can be used as an alternative to school crossing patrols, but it only makes financial sense to do so in limited circumstances. Therefore, the review board recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration is given to installing light controlled crossings where appropriate and sufficient funding is available. 	6
2	<p>The evidence from the review suggests schools will need support and guidance in order to be able to secure alternative ways of funding their school crossing patrol. The review board recommends that an enhanced information pack is developed for schools by the Council that will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) An explanation of the process of securing a sponsor; b) Advice on developing a sponsorship proposal, including support from the Council's Marketing & Communications department; c) Fund raising advice for school PTA's and other sources of information such as the PTA UK and the Council's external funding team. 	9
3	<p>Some schools do not have the time or expertise to secure sponsorship for their school crossing patrol. The review board recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers evaluate the possibility of using of an external agency to secure sponsorship for school crossing patrols. 	9
4	<p>It is not certain whether commercial sponsorship will be a viable, long term alternative to existing funding methods. Therefore, the review board recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the time being the Council maintains core funding to ensure the provision of school crossing patrols where they meet the Council's policy criteria, and in circumstances where sponsorship or other approaches for provision are not currently possible. 	9
5	<p>Schools can engage volunteers as an alternative way of providing a school crossing patrol. However, for this to work effectively the school needs to have the appropriate management capacity and expertise. The review board recommends that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Officers develop a guide for schools to use who wish to involve volunteers to operate their school crossing patrol and; b) Officers evaluate the feasibility of commissioning volunteer management support from the voluntary sector to assist schools who wish to involve volunteers to operate their school crossing patrol. 	10
6	<p>Academies have more flexibility around how they spend their budget and can pay for school crossing patrols if they wish, whereas maintained schools cannot. The review board recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers consider updating policies to reflect the difference in how funding can be spent by academies and maintained schools. 	11

Overview

1. School crossing patrols (SCP's) are one of the most visible parts of the Council's road safety activities. They are more popularly known as the lollipop ladies or lollipop men, who help children and parents safely cross the road on their way to and from school. School crossing patrols were established by the School Crossing SCP Act 1953, which came into force on 1 July 1954.
2. There are currently 61 school crossing patrols in East Sussex, mainly serving primary schools. Out of the 61 school crossings, 8 are operated by volunteers and 15 are funded by Parish Councils or school Parent Teacher Associations (PTA's). At present 38 of these crossings are funded by the Council at a cost of approximately £140,000 per year. There is an additional cost of £14,000 per year to provide supervision for all the school crossings in the County. Each school crossing patrol costs approximately £3,750 per year to operate.
3. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) does not have a legal duty to provide school crossing patrols. However, it provides and funds those crossings where they meet the criteria set out in the Provision of School Crossings Policy (PS 5/1).
4. The Council's medium term financial plan identified the requirement for savings to be made from the Road Safety budget during the 2013/14 and 2014/15 financial years. The Council's Cabinet agreed on the 15 October 2013 to consult on ceasing to fund 13 (of the 61) school crossing patrols that do not meet the Council's policy criteria. The Cabinet also agreed to consider alternative means of providing a School Crossing Patrol for those schools that meet the criteria.
5. This review looks at alternative ways of providing school crossing patrols and examines the use of commercial sponsorship, using volunteers and alternatives such as light controlled crossings (such as Puffin or Pelican crossings) to replace school crossing patrols.
6. From the evidence it is apparent that one solution will not meet the needs in every situation. The alternative sources of funding available to schools depends on:
 - Where the school is located.
 - Whether it is in an urban or rural area.
 - The size of the school.
 - The capacity of local community and the school's PTA.
7. We have made recommendations as to how the Executive might address these issues, and develop a range of solutions. We believe that it is possible to secure commercial sponsorship for school crossing patrols. However, this will not be possible in all circumstances and the Council will need to maintain some core funding to provide school crossing patrols and to supervise them.

Issues

1. Policy

School crossing patrol policy

8. The Council's existing policy for the provision of school crossing patrols (SCP's) is set out in the Provision of School Crossings Policy (PS 5/1). The policy contains a number of specific policy statements that detail the Council's approach to providing and funding school crossing patrols. In essence, the Council will provide a school crossing patrol if it meets the criteria set out in School Crossing Patrol Service Guidelines produced by Road Safety GB (formerly the Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association). These are nationally accepted guidelines based on an assessment of the number of pedestrians crossing the road, the number of vehicles using the road and other road traffic conditions.
9. The Council will fully fund school crossing patrols that meet the criteria set out in the School Crossing Patrol Service Guidelines. Where a site does not meet the criteria, an unpaid volunteer(s) or an appropriate sponsor can be used to fund a school crossing patrol. The school or another local community body, such as the Parish Council, are then responsible for recruiting the volunteer(s) or securing sponsorship. In these circumstances the County Council will train, equip, insure and supervise the patrol officer.
10. The Council's policy does not place a limit on the number of school crossing patrols it will fund, provided they meet the criteria. There are regular requests for new crossing patrols, so the number of school crossings funded by the Council could increase in the future.

2. Alternatives to current provision

Light Controlled Crossings

11. School crossing patrols are one form of road crossing facility. It is possible to replace them with a light controlled crossing such as a Puffin crossing. The capital cost of providing a light controlled crossing ranges between £50,000 to £75,000 depending on the exact requirements of the location. To replace school crossing patrols with light controlled crossings would require a significant capital (one off) investment.
12. Light controlled crossing have an expected working life of 10 years. Given that it costs the Council approximately £3,750 per year to provide a school crossing patrol, it will be difficult to make a business case to replace them with light controlled crossings. The review board considered that it did not make financial sense for the Council to replace school crossing patrols with light controlled crossings.
13. It may be possible for the Council to install light controlled crossings where new schools are built, or where they are being significantly re-developed. In these circumstances appropriate guidelines and training on their use should be given for unaccompanied children using the crossing. Sufficient sums of money would need to be provided in the school building project budgets for this to be possible.

14. New development resulting from planning permission can have an impact on highways issues such that improvements are considered necessary. However, any provision of a light controlled crossing would have to be directly related to the new development and in a location that mitigates the impact of the new development. It is unlikely that this would often coincide with where there is an existing school crossing patrol or where one is planned. Therefore, it is unlikely that developer contributions could be used to provide light controlled crossings.

Alternatives methods of provision for school crossing patrols

15. It is accepted that it is not feasible to replace school crossing patrols with light controlled crossing. The alternatives are to seek different sources of funding, or different ways of operating the school crossing patrols. The three main alternative methods of provision are:
- The use of commercial sponsorship.
 - The use of other sources of external funding.
 - The involvement of volunteers.
16. These alternatives are explored in more detail below.

Recommendations

1. Light controlled crossings (e.g. Pelican & Puffin crossings) can be used as an alternative to school crossing patrols, but it only makes financial sense to do so in limited circumstances. Therefore, the review board recommends that:

- **Consideration is given to installing light controlled crossings where appropriate and sufficient funding is available.**

3. Sponsorship

17. Using commercial sponsorship is one potential source of alternative funding. There has been some limited use of sponsorship in the past, but no school crossing patrols in East Sussex currently use this source of funding. A sponsorship pack was developed to support those schools that needed to secure alternative sources of funding for their school crossing patrol. To date this has had limited success, with schools stating that they have neither the time nor the expertise to secure sponsorship agreements.

Attracting a Sponsor

18. The review board considered what a potential sponsor's requirements would be in order to develop a business case, or 'offer', that the Council or school could use to attract sponsorship. Evidence suggests that businesses will use sponsorship to meet their strategic business needs. These needs may be to:
- Obtain publicity for their business.
 - Raise their standing in the local community.
 - Generate goodwill for their business, or to be associated with the Council.
 - Give something back to the local community, or to fulfil a corporate community giving initiative.

19. It is considered that it would be better for schools to take the lead in seeking sponsorship. This is because potential sponsors will want to be sure that their money is going to support the school and not Council services in general.
20. The evidence suggests that the way a potential sponsor perceives the benefits of financially supporting a school crossing patrol, will affect their willingness to give money. The term sponsorship implies a purely commercial or financial arrangement, which may not reflect the community support aspects of corporate giving. Referring to the funding of a crossing patrol as a “community partnership” may be a more beneficial way of describing the relationship between the school and a business or donor.
21. School crossing patrols provide a positive opportunity for businesses to be involved with the local community. In return for sponsorship it is possible to offer a potential sponsor a range of tangible benefits such as:
 - A screen printed tabard with the sponsors name and/or logo on it, to be worn over the school crossing patrol uniform.
 - Branding on the school entrance signs.
 - Banners by the school gates (subject to planning permission advertising constraints).
 - Branding on the school web site.
 - Press and media coverage (e.g. press releases etc.).
22. The review board found evidence that potential sponsors will want to maximise the advertising they can get for their money. The amount of advertising available from school crossing patrols is limited and may not be enough to attract a sponsor. One way to make sponsorship more attractive is to offer additional advertising as part of the sponsorship package. For example, this could be by paying for advertising campaigns on media such as local buses, or displaying an advert on the Council’s web site or in its publications.
23. The ability of a particular school crossing patrol site, or school, to attract a sponsor will depend on a number of factors. These are:
 - Where the school is located.
 - Whether it is in an urban or rural area.
 - The size of the school.
 - The capacity of local community and the school’s Parent Teacher Association (PTA).
24. There is a higher concentration of businesses in urban areas and therefore more potential sponsors. Schools in high traffic, urban locations may have a better chance of securing a sponsor due to the greater number of people that will see the sponsors name and the number of businesses that can be approached.
25. Schools that have an active PTA, and strong local community support, may be more effective in making contact with potential sponsors. This is because using existing contacts and building on existing business relationships is an effective way of gaining introductions to potential sponsors.

The cost of sponsoring a school crossing patrol

26. The total cost of sponsoring a school crossing patrol and the length of the agreement are also important factors in securing a sponsor. In addition to the £3,750 per year that is required to run the school crossing, there will be additional one-off costs for tabards, signs, banners and other promotional material. If an agency is used to secure a sponsor, or additional advertising is used, the cost to the sponsor will have to include these costs.
27. A longer sponsorship agreement allows the one off costs to be spread over a number of years. The review found most sponsorship agreements were for one year only. This presents problems in managing the funding and staffing of crossing patrols. There may be gaps between sponsors, or situations where replacement sponsors cannot be found. The evidence suggests that agreements for two years (or more) are better as they reduce the amount of time spent securing future funding.
28. If the total cost of sponsorship is too high for potential sponsors, it will be difficult to secure sponsors. A cost sharing approach could be considered where the sponsor meets some of the costs and the remainder is paid for by the school PTA, academy, Parish Council, or from another source.

Other local authority experience

29. A number of other local authorities have investigated the use of sponsorship to fund school crossing patrols and some have developed schemes, which have secured sponsorship. There are examples of several different types of approach that have been taken:
 - Some local authorities have taken on the task of securing sponsorship themselves, with feedback from some that it can be a lengthy and time-consuming process.
 - Bedfordshire Council has developed a scheme where they allow a sponsor to support any school crossing and pay any amount. They pool the sponsorship income to support a number of the school crossings that they manage.
 - Another local authority has procured the use of a sponsorship agency to secure funding.
30. There is evidence from other local authorities that Parish Councils are funding school crossing patrols and some schools are funding the crossing patrol through their PTA. The review found one example of a local authority that was sharing the cost of the providing the school crossing patrol with the schools.

Constraints

31. Experience from other local authorities has highlighted that it can be difficult maintain sponsorship funding over the long term. Typically, sponsorship agreements last for one year. Renewing sponsorship agreements and securing new sponsors (where existing ones have withdrawn), can be very time consuming. Given the Council's budget constraints it will not be possible to support schools with Officer time to undertake these tasks.
32. Evidence from the review, and the consultation work with the affected schools, has highlighted the lack of capacity some schools have to seek sponsorship. Those schools that have sought sponsorship have found it very difficult to find businesses interested in supporting their school crossing patrol. It may be possible to develop an option to use an outside commercial agency to secure a sponsor. This would have the advantage of reducing the demand on the schools time and address the issue of a lack of expertise.

33. Commercial sponsorship has not been used before to fund the long term operation of school crossing patrols in East Sussex. Therefore, it is difficult to determine if it will provide a sustainable source of funding into the future. Consideration needs to be given by the Executive as to how gaps in funding between sponsors will be met. It is the review board's view that some core funding will need to be retained to pay for crossings that cannot secure other sources of funding and to meet central supervision costs.

Recommendations

2. The evidence from the review suggests schools will need support and guidance in order to be able to secure alternative ways of funding their school crossing patrol. The review board recommends that an enhanced information pack is developed for schools by the Council that will include:

- a) An explanation of the process of securing a sponsor;**
- b) Advice on developing a sponsorship proposal, including support from the Council's Marketing & Communications department;**
- c) Fund raising advice for school PTA's and other sources of information such as the PTA UK and the Council's external funding team.**

3. Some schools do not have the time or expertise to secure sponsorship for their school crossing patrol. The review board recommends that:

- Officers evaluate the possibility of using an external agency to secure sponsorship for school crossing patrols.**

4. It is not certain whether commercial sponsorship will be a viable, long term alternative to existing funding methods. Therefore, the review board recommends that:

- For the time being the Council maintains core funding to ensure the provision of school crossing patrols where they meet the Council's policy criteria, and in circumstances where sponsorship or other approaches for provision are not currently possible.**

4. Involvement of volunteers

34. The involvement of volunteers is another possible approach in the provision of school crossing patrols. At present there 8 school crossing patrols that are operated by volunteers. In these situations the Road Safety Team carry out the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and provide uniform, equipment, insurance, training and supervision. The school, or other suitable community organisation, is responsible for recruiting the volunteer(s). Some schools however, believe that the school crossing patrol officer should be a paid role.

35. The involvement of volunteers in providing this service requires the school to have someone to co-ordinate and manage the volunteers in order to ensure a consistency of service. There can be issues with trying to provide cover when no one is available to operate the service.
36. There is a legal requirement for the Council to ensure that school crossing patrols are operated safely. The involvement of volunteers still requires a level of input from the Road Safety Team, which has an associated cost.
37. The capacity of a school to manage and co-ordinate volunteers will vary from school to school. For smaller primary schools, this may be a particular issue. In order to build capacity, it may be possible to commission a voluntary sector organisation to provide support to schools in the co-ordination and management of volunteers. It might also be beneficial to produce a handbook or guide, to help schools involve volunteers in operating their school crossing patrol.

Recommendations

5. Schools can engage volunteers as an alternative way of providing a school crossing patrol. However, for this to work effectively the school needs to have the appropriate management capacity and expertise. The review board recommends that:

- a) **Officers develop a guide for schools to use who wish to involve volunteers to operate their school crossing patrol and;**
- b) **Officers evaluate the feasibility of commissioning volunteer management support from the voluntary sector to assist schools who wish to involve volunteers to operate their school crossing patrol.**

5. Other sources of funding

38. Currently, the main source of alternative funding is from Parish Councils. In some cases Parish Councils have stepped in to fund a school crossing patrol after period of commercial sponsorship has finished and it has not been possible to find another sponsor. Funding from Parish Councils tends to be more stable than commercial sponsorship. Some urban areas such as Eastbourne and Hastings do not have Parish Councils, so this source of funding is not available everywhere in the County.
39. It is not possible for local authority maintained schools to directly fund school crossing patrols due to School Finance (England) Regulations. However, academies have more flexibility around how they spend their budget and can use their budget to fund school crossing patrols. An increasing number of primary schools are becoming academies. The review board recommends that Officers consider how school crossing patrols are funded to reflect the difference in funding constraints.
40. There are a small number of Parent Teacher Associations (PTA's) in the County who fund school crossing patrols. The capacity of the PTA to raise sufficient funds to pay for the school crossing patrol each year is a limiting factor, as not all school PTA's will be able to do this.

41. The review board has received evidence that PTA's are unlikely to be able to raise enough money to fund school crossing patrols, particularly where the school is in an area of deprivation. PTA's typically fund raise to subsidise school trips, to buy additional equipment, and have established programmes of what they wish to fund.
42. It is possible for school PTA's to apply for grants and other sources of funding, such as crowd funding. Grant funding has limitations and is usually provided for time-limited projects which would have to include other initiatives in order to attract funding for school crossing patrols. It is unlikely that grant funding could be used to pay for school crossing patrols.

Recommendations

6. Academies have more flexibility around how they spend their budget and can pay for school crossing patrols if they wish, whereas maintained schools cannot. The review board recommends that:

- **Officers consider updating policies to reflect the difference in how funding can be spent by academies and maintained schools.**

6. Concluding comments

43. During this review, the review board examined a range of alternative sources of funding and different approaches to the provision of school crossing patrols.
44. The evidence suggests that one single approach will not meet the needs for funding, or the provision of school crossing patrols in every situation. It is the review board's recommendation that the Council develops a range of measures to support schools in securing alternative forms of funding, or provision, for school crossing patrols. The measures that should be developed include:
 - An enhanced information pack / guide for schools to use to secure sponsorship and other sources funding.
 - Further investigation of the use of a sponsorship agency to assist schools in securing sponsorship.
 - The development of support for schools, who would like to involve volunteers in operating their school crossing patrol.

Appendix

Scope and terms of reference

On 15 October 2013 the Council's Cabinet took the decision to consult on ceasing to fund a number of School Crossing Patrols that do not meet the Council's policy criteria set out in PC 2 of Policy PS 5/1. It was agreed that the Council would support the affected schools in finding alternative means of providing the service where funding was to cease. Cabinet also agreed to consider and implement alternative means of providing a School Crossing Patrol for those schools that meet the criteria.

On 17 March 2014 the Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee established this scrutiny review board to examine alternative funding options for school crossing patrols. The review looks at the specific issue of sponsorship, to find out what would work well, what would be acceptable in terms of commercial sponsorship.

Review Board Members

Councillors John Hodges (Chair), Mike Pursglove, Pat Rodohan, Richard Stogdon

Support to the Board was provided by the following officers:

Geoff Mee, Assistant Director – Environment

Tony Cook, Head of Planning

Brian Banks, Team Manager – Road Safety

Hannah Matthews, Democratic Services Assistant

Witnesses

Paul Clark, Marketing & Communication Account Manager, ESCC.

Veronique Poutrel, External Funding Manager, ESCC.

Mark Barfoot, Managing Director, Keegan Ford Sponsorship Ltd.

Philippa Roberts, Business Development Executive, Exterior Media

Ms Caitlin Yapp, Head Teacher, Denton Community Primary School

Imogen Kelley, School Business Manager, Heron Park Primary Academy

Review Board meeting dates

28 April 2014

12 May 2014

23 May 2014

24 July 2014

List of evidence papers

Item	Date
School Crossing Patrol Service Guidelines, Road Safety GB (formerly Local Authority Road Safety Officers' Association).	November 2013
ESCC Provision of School Crossing Patrols Policy. Policy PS5/1	01.09.2008
School Crossing Patrol Sponsorship Pack. (SCP Sponsor letter, Sponsorship Terms and Conditions).	November 2013
ESCC Corporate Sponsorship Policy	October 2011
ESCC A Guide to Raising Sponsorship	October 2011
School Crossing Patrols, Other Local Authority Evidence - Summary	May 2014
School Crossing Patrol Uniform – Guidance Note	May 2014
School Crossing Patrols, Advertising Signs – Guidance Note	May 2014
School Crossing Patrols, Developer Contributions – Guidance Note	July 2014

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