

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

The Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee met on 10 September 2014.

Present: Councillors Richard Stogdon (Chair), Mike Pursglove (Vice-Chair), Claire Dowling, John Hodges, Pat Rodohan, Rosalyn St. Pierre and Barry Taylor.

Also present: Councillor Carl Maynard (Lead Member for Transport & Environment).
Councillor Rupert Simmons (Lead Member for Economic Development)

1. Scrutiny Review of School Crossing Patrol Alternative Funding

1.1 The Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee has completed its Scrutiny Review of School Crossing Patrol Alternative Funding. A copy of the Committee's full report has previously been circulated to all members and is available on request from Andy Cottell (Tel: 01273 481955).

1.2 At the time of the review there were 61 school crossing patrols (SCP) in East Sussex. Of these 15 were funded by Parish Councils and 8 were operated by volunteers. Cabinet agreed on the 15 October 2013 to consult on ceasing to fund 13 (of the 61) school crossing patrols that did not meet the Council's funding policy criteria.

1.3 The Review looked at alternative means of providing school crossing patrols and examined the use of commercial sponsorship; using volunteers and; the use of light controlled crossings (such as Puffin or Pelican crossings). The Review found that:

- Sponsorship is possible, but does not provide secure funding in the long term.
- Schools do not have the capacity or expertise to find sponsors and need help to access this and other funding.
- Other sources of funding are available from Parish Council's and Parent Teacher Associations (PTA's), whilst academies may be able to fund school crossing patrols directly.
- The use of light controlled crossings is not financially viable at a capital cost of £50k - £75k per crossing.
- The involvement of volunteers to operate school crossing patrols is possible but requires management by the school, and some central supervision by the ESCC Road Safety team.
- A mixture of funding solutions is needed to meet the circumstances of each school crossing patrol.

1.4 The Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee **recommends** to the County Council –

1.4.1 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 Scrutiny Committee recommends that consideration is given to installing light controlled crossings where appropriate and sufficient funding is available.

1.4.2 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 Scrutiny Committee 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.

1.4.3 Some schools do not have the time or expertise to secure sponsorship for their school crossing patrol. The Scrutiny Committee recommends that Officers evaluate the possibility of using of an external agency to secure sponsorship for school crossing patrols.

1.4.4 It is not certain whether commercial sponsorship will be a viable, long term alternative to existing funding methods. Therefore, the Scrutiny Committee 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.

1.4.5 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 Scrutiny Committee 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.

1.4.6 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 Scrutiny Committee recommends that Officers consider updating policies to reflect the difference in how funding can be spent by academies and maintained schools.

[See also Report of the Cabinet]

10 September 2014

RICHARD STOGDON
(Chair)