

3 January 2017

Consider alternative funding for category 2 school crossing patrol wardens

Ward(s): All

Portfolios: Cllr A Nawaz – Personnel & Business Support

Purpose of Report:

A proposal to consider funding for category 2 school crossing patrol wardens is currently out for consultation as part of the budget consultation. Part of the response to that consultation has been a petition which has over 500 signatures. The detail of the petition is as follows:

“Walsall Council must not remove the school crossing patrol service from Category 2 crossings. Whilst we understand the increasingly difficult decisions the council are faced with to save £86million in the next three years. Compare the cost of one accident against the cost of one SCP warden (£4,709.02 per annum) ambulance, police, hospital admissions, ongoing care, rehabilitation, loss of earnings, legal prosecution costs, defence costs and courts costs. These far outweigh the cost of one SCP wage”.

The government’s own national statistics show a dramatic fall in the number of casualties and deaths at crossings with human control (see Department for Transport statistics at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2015>).

This essential service saves lives, saves injury, saves families and saves money.

As the petition has more than 500 signatures it requires a hearing at Scrutiny and the Chair of Corporate and Public Services Overview and Scrutiny panel.

This report gives information relating to school crossing patrols to enable scrutiny by the panel and make any appropriate recommendations to council.

Information:

Walsall School Crossing Patrols

The council operates 83 school crossing patrols across the borough. School crossing patrols fall into two categories:

Category 1 is for a school crossing patrol warden to be on duty at specific times during school opening hours because of the potential road safety risks and is not supported by secondary crossing facilities i.e. pelican, zebra crossings etc.

Category 2 is for a school crossing patrol warden supported by secondary crossing facilities i.e. pelican, zebra crossings. Therefore these are risk-scored lower than a category 1 crossing.

School crossing patrols are not a statutory service and, if staff are not available and the relief staff are already committed, crossings are left without a school crossing patrol. This issue is managed on a risk basis with an emphasis on ensuring the high risk crossings are covered.

The need for school crossing patrols and the appropriate categorisation is undertaken by the council's Traffic Safety and Operations Department. There is a close working relationship between the council's Traffic Safety and Operations Department and the Facilities Management team which is responsible for managing school crossing patrol wardens.

School crossing patrol wardens all receive appropriate training which is refreshed on a regular basis.

There is a rolling survey programme of school crossing patrol sites which ensures a crossing is surveyed at the minimum every two years

Category 2 crossing patrols are listed in appendix (a).

Parental Responsibility

Road Safety GB (formerly Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association) are clear that "parents are responsible for ensuring their children are able to travel to school safely, whether or not the Authority is able to provide safer routes or safer crossing facilities".

Types of Crossing

Zebra crossings have two sets of flashing amber beacons (known as Belisha beacons). They have an area of road between them that is painted in black and white stripes. Drivers are legally obliged to give way to pedestrians waiting to cross. Zebra crossings do not have traffic lights but they do have a broken give-way line that you must not cross when you stop. Failing to give way to pedestrians is a criminal offence.

Pelican crossings differ from zebra crossings in that the flow of traffic is controlled by traffic lights. Pedestrians waiting at a pelican crossing are able to press a button that changes the traffic lights to red after a timed delay.

Puffin crossings are essentially the same as pelican crossings, except that a puffin crossing has its sequences controlled by sensors mounted on the lights, rather than a timer. These sensors can detect whether any pedestrians are on the crossing and control the colour of the lights accordingly. Once the control button has been pressed, the lights will only change back to green once the crossing is clear. A puffin crossing does not have a flashing amber phase; you have to wait until the lights turn green before you move off.

Toucan crossings are designed for pedestrians and cyclists to use at the same time; that is not to say that cyclists can't use zebra, pelican and puffin crossings, but they should get off their bikes and wheel them across. With a toucan crossing, the area is wider, leaving plenty of room for cyclists to ride across.

Accident Data

A link on the petition takes you to a suite of documents on the Government's website. The page is titled *Reported road casualties Great Britain, annual report: 2015*. There is a mass of data relating to road accidents and to assist the Scrutiny panel some key statistics are shown here:

- A total of 408 pedestrians were killed in 2015, down from 446 in 2014 but just above the figure of 398 in 2013.
- 4940 pedestrians were seriously injured in 2015 which is 2% down from 2014.
- In 2015 there were 25 pedestrian child fatalities aged 15 and under. This equates to 3% of road deaths.
- 25% of the 24,061 pedestrian casualties occurred in incidents between 4pm and 7pm. 29% of the 16,103 child casualties occurred between 3pm and 5pm and 39% of child casualties were pedestrians.
- Trends identified in the report *Factors affecting reported road casualties* indicate a genuine improvement in child road safety that are above and beyond changes in the child population size.
- National Travel Survey data suggests that the proportion of children travelling to school by walking is falling, implying that children's exposure to roads is decreasing.
- There is a general view that accident reporting is under-reported to police.

Feedback from Consultation

The council has undergone a public consultation on the proposal to consider alternative funding for Category 2 school crossing patrol wardens. The council has received six replies. In addition, there have been two petitions received. The first is the on-line petition:

"Walsall Council must not remove the School Crossing Patrol Service from Category 2 Crossings. Whilst we understand the increasingly difficult decisions the council are faced with to save £86million in the next 3 years. Compare the cost of one accident against the cost of one SCP warden (£4,709.02 p.a.) Ambulance, police, hospital admissions, ongoing care, rehabilitation, loss of earnings, legal prosecution costs, defence costs and courts costs. These far outweigh the cost of one SCP wage".

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The second is a petition from Blue Coat schools. It contains over three hundred signatures and states that the petitioners believe that the Springhill Road crossing patrols:

- Provide a vital service which keeps safe thousands of users of Walsall's transport infrastructure (pedestrians, motorists, children travelling to many different schools in the area)
- Must be coordinated and maintained by the local authority to ensure the safe movement of the population around an extremely busy area

Legal Position

School crossing patrols are a discretionary service. They were established by the School Crossing Act 1953 and instituted on 1st July, 1954 through the School Crossing Order 1954.

The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (Sections 26-28) gave 'Appropriate Authorities' (defined as county councils, metropolitan district councils, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and the Common Council of the City of London) the power to appoint school crossing patrols to help children cross the road on their way to or from school, or from one part of a school to another, between the hours of 8.00am and 5.30pm.

Other Factors

A*Stars

The council already works with over 70% of Walsall's primary schools through the A*STARS road safety programme. (Active Sustainable Travel And Road Safety). The programme includes key initiatives, such as parent and child road safety training in Reception, practical pedestrian training for all Year 3 children and cycle training for Years 5/6. In addition to these key road safety initiatives, schools also select a number of other initiatives specific to their own needs and priorities, such as seatbelts, "park and stride" and cycle maintenance. These initiatives form an annual action plan on which the school is monitored. Schools which are part of the A*STARS programme also benefit from priority parking enforcement and funding for physical measures around the school, such as school zones and traffic calming.

Any schools affected by the proposed changes to the school crossing patrol service will be encouraged to join the programme if they are not already registered.

More details of the A*STARS programme can be found in appendix (b).

Schools' Finances

A report entitled a Review of Current Balance Control Mechanism was discussed at


Schools Forum on the 6th December 2016. It identified that, since implementing the current balance control mechanism in 2012/13, the total level of uncommitted balances across all maintained schools has continued to reduce – from £8.638m at the end of 2013/14, then £8.520m at the end of 2014/15, and £7.749m at the end of 2015/16.

Other Local Authorities

School crossing patrols, because it is a discretionary service, are being reviewed by many councils across the UK. Our Black Country neighbours have all reviewed or are reviewing their provision.

Contact Officer:

Paul Gordon – Head of Business Change

 07792 920257

Paul.gordon@walsall.gov.uk

Appendix (a)

CATEGORY 2 SCHOOL CROSSINGS

School	Crossing No.	Type	Signs	Hazard Lights	Post Occupation
Alumwell Infant	001	Zebra	Zebra crossing, not school signs	No	Vacant
Alumwell Junior	001	Zebra	Zebra crossing, not school signs	No	Vacant
County Bridge Primary	005	Zebra	None	No	Vacant
Croft Academy	025	Pelican	None	No	Occupied
Delves Junior	026	Pelican	Child signs	No	Occupied
Barcroft Primary	031	Pelican	None	No	Occupied
Hillary Primary	037	Pelican	Yes	No	Occupied
Palfrey Junior	053	Zebra	Humped crossing	No	Vacant
Palfrey Infant	053	Zebra	Humped crossing	No	Vacant
Old Church CE Primary	056	Pelican	None required	No	Occupied
Pinfold Street Primary	056	Pelican	None required	No	Occupied
New Invention Junior	067	Pelican	None	No	Occupied
Beacon Primary	067	Pelican	None	No	Occupied
New Invention Infant	067	Pelican	None	No	Occupied
Woodlands Academy of Learning	070	Humped Zebra	To south only	No	Occupied
Greenfield Primary	082	Pelican	None	No	Vacant
St James Primary	091	Puffin	None	No	Vacant
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary	091	Puffin	None	No	Vacant
St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary	109	Pelican	Yes	No	Vacant
Sunshine Infant	137	Zebra	None	No	Occupied

School	Crossing No.	Type	Signs	Hazard Lights	Post Occupation
Blakenall Heath Junior	137	Zebra	None	No	Occupied
New Invention Junior	145	Pelican	None required	No	Occupied
New Invention Infant	145	Pelican	None required	No	Occupied
Birchills CE Community Academy	008	Zebra	Signs	No	Occupied
Beacon Primary	011	Split Pelican	Signs and ambers	No	Occupied
St Peter's Catholic Primary	014	Pelican	Yes, and ambers to north east	Yes	Occupied
Blue Coat CE Infant	016	Puffin	Sign to south, no sign to north	No	Occupied
Blue Coat CE Junior	016	Puffin	Sign to south, no sign to north	No	Occupied
Blue Coat CE Junior	017	Puffin	Sign to south, no sign to north	No	Occupied
Blue Coat CE Infant	017	Puffin	Sign to south, no sign to north	No	Occupied
Moorcroft Wood Primary	027	Zebra	School zone signs	No	Occupied
Edgar Stammers Primary Academy	028	Zebra	None	No	Occupied
Elmore Green Primary	032	Pelican	Yes	No	Occupied
Hydesville Tower	038	Pelican	None	No	Occupied
Whitehall Nursery and Infant	040	Pelican	Only on east side, + ambers	No	Occupied
Leamore Primary	043	Pelican	School + plates	No	Occupied
Lower Farm Primary	047	Humped Zebra	Yes	No	Occupied
New Invention Junior	051	Pelican	Not needed	No	Occupied
New Invention Infant	051	Pelican	Not needed	No	Occupied
Pinfold Street Primary	055	Pelican	None required	No	Occupied
Old Church CE Primary	055	Pelican	None required	No	Occupied
St Giles CE Primary	060	Zebra	Yes	No	Occupied

School	Crossing No.	Type	Signs	Hazard Lights	Post Occupation
Pelsall Village Primary	094	Pelican	None	No	Occupied
St Francis Catholic Primary	101	Zebra	Signs	No	Occupied
Greenfield Primary	101	Zebra	Signs	No	Occupied
Mayfield Preparatory	121	Zebra	Yes	No	Occupied
Greenfield Primary	133	Zebra	None	No	Occupied
Hydesville Tower	139	Pelican	None	No	Occupied
New Invention Junior	144	Pelican	None required	No	Occupied
New Invention Infant	144	Pelican	None required	No	Occupied
Butts Primary	147	Humped Zebra	Yes	No	Occupied
Ryders Hayes Primary	149	Zebra	None	No	Occupied



Appendix (b)

What is A*STARS

The A*STARS programme is a series of walking, cycling, scooting and road safety initiatives, along with training, expertise and support that is given to schools to help them to develop and promote safer, healthier lifestyle choices for all.

The programme promotes health and wellbeing by combining and providing road safety, health and sustainable travel education, training and awareness. It targets all educational establishments and school communities; supporting children's development at every stage from birth to adulthood.



The Benefits of the A*STARS Programme:

- Ensures that schools have access to road safety, sustainable travel, parking enforcement and other council services
- Offers a tailor made package of road safety and sustainable travel measures designed to suit an individual school's needs
- Offers free resources, training and support
- Raises awareness of road safety issues in and around school
- Provides opportunities to increase levels of physical activity
- Uses a dedicated A*STARS website to support and deliver the programme

Objectives:

- Increase the number of pupils using safer, sustainable travel to and from schools and provide evidence of modal shift
- Increase knowledge and understanding of healthy lifestyles, road safety and sustainable travel
- Provide a safer, cleaner environment in the vicinity of schools to benefit everyone
- Enable schools to take ownership of the programme and promote its key messages to parents and the wider community

Targets:

Short term

- Increase walking and cycling
- Every school to participate in one active travel/road

- Provide training/volunteering opportunities for adults
- Every school to have student advocate groups to lead the programme
- safety campaign per year
- Every school to have a dedicated school champion

Long term

- All schools registered on A*STARS programme
- Increase walking and cycling levels by 1% per annum
- Increase the number of 10-16 year olds participating in Bikeability Training in line with DfT targets
- Every primary school participating in Pedestrian Training
- Educate young adults on safer driving and sustainable travel

Achievements

Health & Sustainable Travel

- Year-on-year increase in Active Travel (walking / cycling / scooting) for A*STARS primary schools, now up to **55.9%** compared to National average of **48%**
- Cycling levels in A*STARS primary schools almost 3x higher than non A*STARS schools (**2.5%** compared to **0.9%**)
- Year-on-year increase in cycling at Walsall Secondary Schools over last 3 years, following increased Bikeability training for year 6 pupils

Environment

- Year-on-year reduction in car journeys to A*STARS Primary School over last 3 years, now **39.6%** compared to a national trend which has remained constant at **46%**
- **60%** of A*STARS Schools in a 20mph speed limit, advisory 20mph or 'safe school zone'
- Installation of new cycle shelters at A*STARS schools, resulting in a significant increase in pupils cycling to school
- **500+** School parking patrols as part of a targeted enforcement campaign outside schools



Education / Promotion

- **76% (66)** of Walsall Primary Schools (including academies, PRU's and special schools) participating in the programme
- Over **900+** pupils and parents receiving cycle maintenance training, to remove barriers to cycling
- **224** pupils trained as "Sheriffs" to be ambassadors for the programme

Road Safety



- **2086** year 3 pupils received practical pedestrian training during the last academic year to ensure 'active travel is also safe travel'
- Over **2100** Reception pupils and parents received practical pedestrian training to encourage active travel as a preferred choice from the outset
- Over **900** pupils at A*STARS schools trained to Bikeability level 2 or 3 standard during the last academic year, as part of an expanding Bikeability programme