

Cabinet – 23 October 2013

Report of Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel

Petition: Park Hall Infants & Junior School Crossing Patrol

Summary

The Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel considered a petition requesting the provision of a crossing patrol function at Park Hall Infants & Junior School at its meeting on 5 September 2013.

The petition was signed by over 500 people which requires referral to a Scrutiny and Performance Panel under the petitions scheme contained in the Council's Constitution.

The petition read:

***Background:** We the undersigned parents of Park Hall Infant Academy and Park Hall Junior Academy would like to raise awareness of the importance of the provision of a lollypop person following the serious accident which took place on the pedestrian crossing outside the school on Wednesday 24 April 2013*

At the meeting the Panel considered the views of the lead petitioner, Councillor Zahid Ali along with a response from the Facilities Manager.

Following a long debate the Panel resolved to recommend to Cabinet to undertake to try and resolve the issue raised by the lead petitioner. This should include the identification of funding solutions to enable a school crossing warden to be reintroduced at Park Hall School

Recommendations

That Cabinet ask officers to identify funding solutions to enable a school crossing warden to be reintroduced at Park Hall Infant Academy and Park Hall Junior Academy.

Signed:



COUNCILLOR LOUISE HARRISON
CHAIR, REGENERATION SCRUTINY & PERFORMANCE PANEL
27 September 2013

Contact officer

Craig Goodall – Scrutiny Officer

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DATE: 5th September 2013

Park Hall Infants & Junior School Crossing Patrol Request

Ward : Paddock

Portfolios: Councillor A. Andrew
Councillor Z. Ali
Councillor R. Andrew

Recommendation: Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel is asked to consider and comment on the report.

Summary of report:

A petition containing over 500 signatures was submitted to Council on 24th July, 2013. The petition states "*We the undersigned parents of Park Hall Infant Academy and Park Hall Junior Academy would like to raise the awareness of the importance for the provision of a LOLLYPOP PERSON following the serious accident which took place on the pedestrian crossing outside the schools on Wednesday 24th April 2013*"

Walsall Council provides a Non Statutory School Crossing Patrol Function to 82 sites across the borough. The Funding for the service is incorporated within the Local Government Settlement and the budget for this service is £491,940, managed on a break even basis. Property Services delivers the School Crossing Patrols Service on behalf of the Council.

The service currently comprises of 44 category 1 crossings and 38 category 2 crossings but there is demand for a further 27 crossings. There are two types of crossings and these are risk assessed by Road Safety colleagues as to which criteria they meet in line with national standards for road safety.

Category 1 is for a School Crossing Patrol Warden to be on duty at specific times during school opening hours and is not supported by secondary crossing facilities i.e. pedestrian, pelican, zebra crossings etc. In the case of absences/vacancies these are automatically covered by one of the mobile relief wardens. The risk score from Road Safety sets the position on the category listings.

Category 2 is for a Warden supported by secondary crossing facilities therefore these are risk scored lower than a category 1. In the case of absences/vacancies these are NOT covered by relief wardens. The risk score from Road Safety sets the position on the category 2 listing.

Budget savings have been offered up in the past, funding was removed from supporting 27 Category 2 sites in 2010. Park Hall Infants and Junior School was

one of these sites.

The School Crossing Patrol facilities outside Park Hall School were de-authorised on the 4th November, 2003 as it failed to meet the criteria for an authorised crossing site. To reduce traffic speed a humped zebra crossing was installed in 2003.

Following the accident on the 24th April 2013 at the site a risk re-assessment by Road Safety was carried out on the 29th June 2013, this identified that the site now meets the criteria for a category 2 School Crossing Patrol Warden but is only evaluated at 19th in the list of category 2 sites which currently do not receive a service.

The criteria for assessing the need for a School Crossing Patrol is based on a formula PV2 where (P) is the number of child Pedestrians crossing the road and (V) the number of passing Vehicles. The resultant PV2 helps determine the potential conflict at the site and the delays that are experienced by pedestrians.

The number of child pedestrians (P) crossing the road on their way to and from school are generally concentrated into short periods of time. Therefore the assessment is based on the peak 30 minute time period at the start or end of the school day. The passing vehicles (V) are calculated in Passenger Car Units (PCUs) that take into account the different forms and size of vehicles i.e. a car has a rating of 1 whereas motorcycles are 0.5; heavy goods vehicles and buses have a value of 3.

To calculate the PV2 the (P) value is multiplied by the square of the total number of vehicles (V). If the resultant PV2 is greater than 4 million then a School Crossing Patrol can be justified.

Reason for scrutiny:

The Council's petitions scheme requires that, when a petition containing at least 500 Signatures is received by the Council, the relevant senior officer will give evidence at a public meeting of one of the Council's Scrutiny and Performance Panels. The authority has determined that the response to such petitions must be given by either the Chief Executive or one of the Executive Directors, Assistant Directors or Heads of Service.

Resource and legal considerations:

The prevailing economic climate and reduction in public finances means it is essential that the delivery of services will continue to be reviewed to ensure that they are viable and sustainable to meet future requirements.

The school crossing patrol service does not have available financial resources to meet this request (the service receives several requests a year in relation to providing school crossing patrol wardens to category 2 sites).

Some schools have indicated that they are willing to enter into a legal arrangement with the Council whereby they are willing to finance this post annually and scrutiny panel may wish to make comment upon this approach.

The School Crossing patrol service is a non statutory function.

Comparative data from other school crossing patrol services at West Mercia Councils is included in Appendix A which shows part or full payment for non-core sites similar to Park Hall.

Citizen impact:

Clearly as part of the Highways Authority Statutory duties, road safety will continue to play an important role in the future, particularly the education of children in learning to ride a bike and cross the road safely both of which support the journey to and from school. The Council has to carefully consider all aspects, organise and implement its services to ensure road safety priorities are met within available budgets.

A key initiative from Engineering and Transportation Road Safety Unit to meet this objective is the preparation of Active Travel Strategy to integrate the AStars programme, which targets educational establishments, with the wider work surrounding other aspects of the community. The strategy seeks to combine latest thinking by Department of Health and Department for Transport with local best practice to address improvements to road safety awareness, health and well being, tackling obesity and reducing carbon emissions.

Through delivering a range of initiatives relating to road safety and sustainable travel in this way, the Council is able to affect many of the issues encountered by this key group in a coordinated, holistic way, this approach ultimately support the delivery of the school crossing patrol operation whilst ensuring that children are equipped with the appropriate skills to travel around the highway network safely at all times.

Environmental impact:

NONE

Performance management:

The current council Strategy and Policy fully endorses the service delivery of the School Crossing Patrol Warden Service, subject to compliance criteria and a budget cap, and embraces the joined up approach of sourcing safer routes to school to ensure the children are equipped with appropriate skills, to travel safely at all times.

Equality Implications:


There are no direct equality implications arising.

Consultation:

Park Hall Headteachers to discuss Road Safety findings, Engineering and Transportation Road Safety clients.

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School Crossing Patrol Survey with West Mercia Group Authorities

	Councils			
	Wolverhampton	Warwickshire	Coventry	Rotherham
Are schools charged for providing a Warden Service?	No	No	No	Yes
Existing Site	No	No	No	Yes
New Site	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Are they charged full/part costs for new sites?	Full	Full	N/A	50%
Is cover provided for absences?	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
Do you charge Academies?	No	No	N/A	Yes
Is this a contractual arrangement?	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes