

Meeting date: 12th July 2022

Report to: Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure

Subject/report title: School Crossing Patrol - Service update

Report from: Paul Tovey, Head of Highway Management

Report author/lead contact officer: David Keaney / Rob Wyatt

Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege
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Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph: NA

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the performance of the School Crossing Patrol (SCP) Service and consider future deployment priorities and site removal.

2. Decision(s) recommended

2.1 Cabinet Member is asked to:

- (a) Note the School Crossing Patrol service update.
- (b) Endorse the School Crossing Patrol deployment priorities, set out in **Appendix B**.
- (c) Agree to remove the long-term unmanned sites at L20 Damson Lane, L78 Auckland Drive and L68 Highwood Avenue, as set out in paragraph 4.4 and 4.5.
- (d) To approve the temporary suspension of site L81 at Blackford Road, in response to current parking practices, set out in paragraph 4.6.

3. Matters for Consideration

- 3.1 School crossing patrols provide an important service to our local communities and form part of a wider “Safer Route to School” service that help young people in the borough travel safely and sustainably to and from school.
- 3.2 There are currently 25 approved school crossing patrol sites in the borough, the location of which are shown in Appendix A.
- 3.3 Across the sites, recent usage counts indicate the service supports young people, under 11 years, to cross some of our busiest roads over 650,000 times each year.
- 3.4 Following the recommendations of a 2018 service review, the service continues to seek opportunities to upgrade sites to permanent formal crossing facilities, to enhance resilience and support communities to cross roads safely, at all times of the day.
- 3.5 Since 2018, 6 sites have been upgraded to zebra/parallel crossings with a new facility on Yorkminster Drive due to be commissioned later this year:
 - (a) Balsall Street East o/s school
 - (b) Haslucks Green Road o/s school
 - (c) Hurst Lane North at Green Lane
 - (d) Widney Lane at Clifton Crescent
 - (e) Gilson Way at St Anthony's
 - (f) Chelmsley Road at Marlene Croft
 - (g) Yorkminster Drive at Pike Drive
- 3.6 The introduction of these new pedestrian crossing facilities and disestablishment of the school crossing patrol site has enabled existing staff to be redeployed, which has benefited the wider service through enhanced resilience.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 4.1 It is not always possible to provide a school crossing patrol at every approved location due to staff sickness, leave and difficulties with recruitment. Whilst the service typically covers over 90% (23 out of 25) of sites, this does mean that on occasion, there may not be sufficient staff available to provide cover at every site. In such instances, an agreed site prioritisation process is followed, ensuring the most people, crossing the busiest streets that are without any other form of support, are prioritised first.
- 4.2 The last site prioritisation exercise took place in 2017/18 and it is therefore proposed to refresh this process to ensure the priorities remain appropriate and reflect current usage levels and risks. To support this review, a pedestrian and traffic count was undertaken at all 25 sites in April and May. The results are shown in Appendix B.
- 4.3 At present, 22 of the 25 approved sites are operational. This includes two sites which operate on existing permanent signal controlled pedestrian crossing facilities.

- 4.4 There are currently three long term unstaffed crossing sites, located at:
- L20 Damson Lane at Rowood Drive.
 - L78 Auckland Drive at Kingfisher Drive, and
 - L68 Highwood Avenue
- 4.5 All three sites have remained unstaffed for over two years following the retirement / resignation of the school crossing patrol officers. There have been no reported safety issues and the number of un-accompanied school children, under 11 years of age, remains low. It would not be appropriate, therefore, to replace these locations with a formal pedestrian crossing facility at this time.
- 4.6 Activity at site reference L81, Blackford Road at Stratford Road, is currently being monitored as a result of parking charges being introduced at the adjacent privately owned car park. This has removed demand for children to cross Blackford Road. If usage does not return, it is proposed to suspend the crossing from September 2022 and redeploy staff to another site whilst activity is monitored. If the site remains unused for a 2-year period, then it will be recommended for permanent removal.
- 4.7 Looking forward, the service is planning further changes over the next year, including:
- **Site L08 Cranmore Boulevard at Northlands Road** is a split site with the SCP moving between points on Cranmore Boulevard during each shift in response to demand. This site will be supplemented with a new parallel crossing facility later this year. Due to the split demand, it is proposed to retain the existing SCP, who will operate from a single location (at the junction with Northlands Road), moving forward. The impact of the new parallel facility will be monitored to understand the impact on where and how pedestrians cross this road.
 - **Site L79 Whitefields Road** will form part of the Whitefields Road Pedestrian Improvement Project for which the Council have secured external funding as part of its 2022/23 Active Travel Fund submission. As part of this project, opportunities to provide a permanent pedestrian crossing to facilitate and manage pedestrian demand will be considered.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 The list of prioritised sites (Appendix B) and the changes summarised in section 4 of this report outline the operation of the SCP service when staff are not available. This system works well and ensures that available resources are directed to those sites with the greatest road safety risk.
- 5.2 Where a service cannot be provided, the school will be informed at the earliest opportunity so parents can make alternative arrangements if necessary.
- 5.3 The permanent removal of three long term unmanned sites will aid overall service resilience by ensuring that available resources can be directed to priority sites.

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull. 2. Good quality, responsive, and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it. 3. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities. 4. Enable communities to thrive. 	<p>Safety and accessibility is at the heart of everything the Council does when considering making changes to how the public highway operates. This includes the safety of children, young people and our most vulnerable road user groups.</p> <p>The School Crossing Patrol Service directly benefits children and young people by removing barriers and enabling and encouraging safe and sustainable access to school.</p>
<p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Develop and promote the borough's economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres. 6. Maximising the opportunities of UK Central and HS2. 7. Increase the supply of affordable and social housing that is environmentally sustainable. 	<p>No direct impact</p>
<p>Environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce net carbon emissions. 	<p>School Crossing Patrols are part of the Councils Safer Routes to School programme which focuses on encouraging more people to travel sustainably and encourage active travel to school. Doing so have the potential to positively contribute to targets associated with air quality and carbon emissions.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Promote employee wellbeing 	<p>Studies have shown that walking and active travel can have a positive impact on people's health and wellbeing. By reducing the demand for school related journeys to be made by car it promotes and encourages active forms of travel whilst helping manage congestion and aid traffic management.</p>

6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.2.1 None.

6.3 Financial implications:

- 6.3.1 The School Crossing Patrol Service is funded predominately from core Council revenue funding. Historically the service was unable to operate within the allocated funding, however, the transition of a number of sites in recent years to formalised crossing facilities has enabled the service to both meet its previous medium term financial savings target and operate within its current budget allocation.
- 6.3.2 The provision of a permanent crossing facility is delivered through capital funding allocations secured through the CRSTS (City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement) previously known as the Local Transport Plan, or some form of other capital grant funding and as such, do not impact directly on the School Crossing Patrol Service revenue budget.
- 6.3.3 The proposed operational changes to the service outlined above will ensure that the service can continue to operate within its current budget amount of £138,430. Any permanent annual savings estimated at approximately £9,000 per year, will be realigned to offset pressures created on the Street Lighting budget for other related service priorities within the delivery of the Highway Services Asset Management Plan.

6.4 Legal implications:

- 6.4.1 The School Crossing Patrol service is not a statutory service. Consequently, as a discretionary service provided by the Authority there are no significant legal implications associated with the recommendations set out within this report.

6.5 Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:

- 6.5.1 The Corporate Risk Management Approach has been complied with to identify and assess the significant risks associated with this decision / project. This includes (but is not limited to) political, legislation and reputation risks.
- 6.5.2 The Approach is not intended to eliminate all risks and not all the risks identified can be managed all of the time. Also, risks will still exist that have not been identified.
- 6.5.3 Based on the available information it is the officers' opinion that there are no net "Red" risks to the Council associated with the recommendation of the report.

6.6 Equality implications:

- 6.6.1 No issues identified as part of this report.
- 6.7 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Local Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):
- 6.7.1 The School Crossing Patrol Service forms part of the measures undertaken by the authority to deliver regional road safety targets associated with reducing the number of young people killed or seriously injured on roads across the region.

7. List of appendices referred to

- 7.1 Appendix A – Plan of current School Crossing Patrol Sites
- 7.2 Appendix B – Proposed SCP Resource Deployment Prioritisation List 2022 – 2026.

8. Background papers used to compile this report

- 8.1 Safer Routes to School – A Review of School Crossing Patrols 2017. 2nd November 2017 Transport and Highways Cabinet Member Decision Session.
- 8.2 Safer Routes to School - School Crossing Patrol Service Review Update 2018. 29th November 2018 Transport and Highways Cabinet Member Decision Session.

9. List of other relevant documents

- 9.1 West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategy
- 9.2 Highways Management Traffic Management Plan on a Page