

Lancashire Local – Lancaster District

Meeting to be held on 19 January 2010

Part I - Item No. 7

Electoral Division affected:
Lancaster Central

Proposed Disestablishment of School Crossing Patrol, (Point B18) Bowerham Community Primary School, Greaves Road, Lancaster, Lancaster District

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

Neil Fletcher, 01772 531470, Lancashire County Council Environment Directorate
neil.fletcher@lancashire.gov.uk

Executive Summary

At the meeting of Lancashire Local, Lancaster on 10 March 2009 a report was presented seeking the Local's approval to disestablish the School Crossing Point (Point B18) Bowerham Community Primary School, Greaves Road, Lancaster.

During the meeting the decision was taken that the proposal to disestablish the school crossing patrol be deferred to enable further contact to be made with the school in order to seek their views on the proposal as none had been received. Following the meeting, the school was contacted again. A request for an appeal assessment was received verbally from the school in April 2009. An appeal count was completed by the Police on 18 November 2009 which revealed that no unaccompanied children of primary school age crossed at the point therefore not meeting the criteria.

Approval is now sought to disestablish the school crossing patrol at Bowerham Community Primary School, Lancaster in line with the County Council's agreed criteria. This point has been subject to a scored assessment (using two counts on different dates) based on agreed criteria for maintaining a school crossing patrol, and on each occasion has been insufficient to enable the continuation of this point. Lancashire Constabulary has also conducted an appeal count (a final count undertaken for verification purposes) which has also resulted in the criteria not being met to enable the continuation of this point.

The school has been notified of the results.

Decision Required

That the Lancashire Local considers the disestablishment of the school crossing patrol at Bowerham Community Primary School, Lancaster in the light of the information contained in this report.

Background and Advice

The County Council took over the responsibility for the school crossing patrol service from Lancashire Constabulary in 1996. The current budget provision for this service is £1.5m and it was recognised that guidelines were required to ensure some consistency in provision, provide an opportunity for new crossings to be created and enable review of existing ones as appropriate. The County Council agreed the criteria to establish/disestablish all school crossing patrols and this is attached for reference at Appendix 'A'.

The basic criteria for provision of a school crossing patrol is a calculation of the numbers of vehicles and unaccompanied primary age children that cross during the busiest half hour (the evaluation is conducted over a one hour period spanning the start and finish times of school). This is called the pv^2 where p =number of pedestrians and v =number of vehicles.

When the formula has been applied, together with any additional adjustment factors which may include sight lines, lighting, junctions, casualty data and other environmental issues at this point, the result based upon National recommendations should equal 4 million with a minimum of 15 unaccompanied children of primary school age crossing to qualify for a crossing patrol. However, in Lancashire the figure used is 2 million, half the nationally accepted figure, and 10 unaccompanied children. The criterion used in Lancashire is significantly more generous than the national recommendations.

The crossing patrol at Bowerham Community Primary School, Lancaster has come up for review owing to the post becoming vacant. When a crossing patrol officer retires or resigns it is standard practice to reassess the point to determine if it still meets the County Council's criteria.

This crossing point has been assessed on two occasions, on 8 and 19 September 2008 respectively. The point did not meet the required criteria on either of these occasions. During a site visit by a Road Safety Adviser on 2 October 2008 observations of traffic, pupils and parents took place and all available adjustment factors were taken into account. A further visit was made by a Principal Road Safety Adviser on 24 November 2008 and all findings were verified. The point scored a pv^2 of 6,166,096 but only a maximum of 5 children crossed at the point therefore not meeting the criteria. On one occasion no children were observed crossing.

During these observations, it was noted that drivers and children acted appropriately and parents took responsibility for the safety of their children on the journey to and from school.

An examination of the recorded casualties within 50 metres either side of this point has been carried out and no child casualties (during school travel times) have been recorded in the last three years.

The Local Authority Road Safety Officers' Association supported by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and the Department for Transport state:

“Even where a School Crossing Patrol (SCP) is provided, parents remain responsible for ensuring their children’s safety, just as they do when a zebra crossing or pelican crossing is provided. Some parents may regard the provision of an SCP as an indication that the Authority is assuming responsibility for the safety of their children on their whole journey to and from school. This is a misconception that must be countered, perhaps by conducting local ‘awareness raising’ campaigns to reinforce the message of parental responsibility”.

Following assessment, a letter was sent to Bowerham Community Primary School, Lancaster regarding the proposal to disestablish the School Crossing Patrol. The letter also contained an offer to appeal against this decision. A request for an appeal assessment was received verbally from the school in April 2009.

An assessment was completed by the Police on 18 November 2009 which revealed that no unaccompanied children of primary school age crossed at the point therefore not meeting the criteria.

Consultations

The County Council's School Travel Plan team have also been consulted and have confirmed that Bowerham Community Primary School have an approved school travel plan for 2005/06, currently due to be reviewed, encouraging sustainable travel to school, such as public transport and walking. It is felt important to note that a high percentage of children attending the school currently walk; a survey conducted in April 2005 indicated that the figure was 55%. The School Travel Plan team are continuing to work with the school which has been engaging positively with the process which is ongoing.

Lancashire County Councils Road Safety Group offer to all schools a free Road Safety Service for their pupils, and over the last few years Bowerham Community Primary School has been engaged in the following activities:

- Passport To Safer Cycling, (Module 1) March 1998 – October 1999, December 2004, June 2007 – May 2009.
- Passport To Safer Cycling, (Module 2) June 2007 - July 2009
- Right Start Pedestrian Training Stages 1 and 2 April 2006 – July 2008
- In September 2006, the award winning “Journeys” guide was issued to the school.

There are a number of additional road safety resources such as starting school information / the green cross code that have been issued to or offered by the Road Safety Group, who are keen to work with the school to improve pedestrian awareness and safety for their pupils.

The Lancashire Local is therefore requested to consider the proposed disestablishment of the school crossing patrol at Bowerham Community Primary School, Lancaster.

Implications:

e.g. Financial, Legal, Personnel, Human Rights, Crime and Disorder or Other

This item has the following implications:

Financial

The cost of the School Crossing Patrol (Point B18) is £3,858 per annum and comes from the HEM Revenue DFM budget (school crossing patrols).

Risk Management

The school is naturally concerned about the impact of the loss of the patrol on the safety of children crossing the road at this point, however this could be mitigated by continuing to deliver the "Right Start Child Pedestrian Training Programme", offered free by the County Council and the establishment of a proactive approach to road safety education.

Any representations made to the Directorate prior to the issue being considered in accordance with the Public Notice of Forward Plans

Name:	Organisation:	Comments:
-------	---------------	-----------

N/A.

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Council/Tel No
-------	------	------------------------

Nil.

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A.