

Evidence, Engagement and Consultation Summary

Ref no. P2 Phased changes to school crossing patrols

Description of proposal

Title for consultation: Phased changes to school crossing patrols

The safety of our children crossing the roads is our priority and we want to expand our Safe School Gate Parking Scheme to keep more traffic away from the roads outside all Walsall's schools.

The recruitment of school crossing patrol wardens is becoming increasingly difficult. Where there are already zebra or pelican crossings in place and where it is safe to do so, we propose to gradually reduce the number of school crossing patrols as wardens leave the Council or retire. School crossing patrols will continue to provide support where alternative crossing facilities are not available.

Estimated Net Saving / new income 2025/26

£190,000

Summary of evidence, engagement and consultation

82 people commented on this proposal. Most respondents do not support the proposal / have concerns / amendments:

- 24% fully support
- 37% support but with concerns / amendments
- 38% do not support
- 1% don't know.

Comments in relation to how the proposal might affect them included:

Many people are concerned about the safety of children crossing busy roads without school crossing patrols. They believe that removing these patrols will increase the risk of accidents and injuries, as drivers often do not stop for crossings at busy times.

"Lack of school crossing patrols will be awful for school children, drivers are not stopping for crossings at busy times."

"Traffic is getting worse in the area as is parking so losing more school crossings will be incredibly dangerous."

"I work in a school on a very busy main road. Despite there being a crossing with traffic lights, some cars do not stop when our young children and their families need to cross. This has resulted in some very near misses."

"Driving near schools during starting/leaving times is already dangerous enough with children who don't pay attention to their surroundings. This will clearly make the situation worse."

"My son attends Bloxwich C of E and there is neither a patrol warden or zebra crossing. Both of which are desperately needed. It is a danger to cross in the mornings and peak times across Lichfield Rd with small children so reducing provisions elsewhere is absurd."

In addition some parents have expressed that their children cross very busy roads daily and that the presence of crossing patrols provides a sense of additional safety and security.

"My children have to cross very busy roads to get to and from school every day."

"I have school age children one of whom will be going to senior school next year and will be crossing main roads. I understand difficulty recruiting and appreciate the need to prioritise places with no crossing however a crossing supervisor is more than just to help crossing in my opinion. They are a point of safety and can give children a sense of familiarity and general security walking home."

There are also comments about the potential increase in traffic and parking issues around schools if crossing patrols are removed. Some people are worried that parents will park in nearby streets, causing congestion and safety issues.

"The traffic will be moved from the immediate school roads but local road infrastructure will become a safety issue as parents will still attempt to park as close as possible ignoring parking regulations and road safety. Therefore the surrounding roads need to be considered."

"I have 2 SEND children neither one have awareness to danger of roads. At Goldsmith Primary academy. The actual road Goldsmith is gridlocked cars are badly parked and they just drive up the road doing 30+ I've seen for myself how close children have gotten to being hit by cars."

Others believe that automated crossings, such as zebra or pelican crossings, could be a more efficient and cost-effective solution, but they emphasize the need for proper implementation and education for children.

"I have a school age child. I would prefer this only in places pelican crossing. It makes no sense employing staff to push the button in pelican crossing. Long-term saving replacing staff with pelican crossings."

"I think this is sensible because I have never understood why there is a school crossing patrol where there are traffic lights or other crossings - it was just a waste of money."

"I don't see why patrol officers are needed at zebra crossings."

"Working in a school I feel in busy areas school patrol wardens are important. But, with further support in these areas in more independent means such as zebra crossings, I think this is a positive step. I do think there needs to be considerations made for schools to teach students, and practice with them as part of the roll of such measures. Patrol wardens do not give young people the independence they need to improve their safe crossing skills. - look to schools to implement and practice."

"While I agree in principle that there isn't the need for as many SCPWs as there are (including vacancies), I would like to see this tempered with a longer-term plan to introduce more pelican crossings. However, I'd suggest these may be more needed in the vicinity of secondary schools where pupils are far less likely to be escorted by parents."

A few individuals mentioned that the proposal would not impact them personally, but they still expressed concerns about the overall safety of children and the potential for accidents.

"Not me personally, but I would be horrified if someone was killed at one of these crossings."

Overall, the majority of comments reflect a strong concern for the safety of children and the potential negative impact of removing school crossing patrols.

Alternative suggestions

- School Staff Involvement: Schools could offer a member of staff at the beginning and end of the day to facilitate safer crossing of children across busy roads. Volunteers or PTA members could take on this role with free accessible training from the council. Alternatively, a charging system for schools wanting a School Crossing Patrol could be introduced.
- Fines for Parking Violations: Use parking control wardens to police illegal parking around schools to raise funding. Money could be made to support payment of crossing patrols by fining people who park across two spaces in car parks, on pavements that stop those with buggies, wheelchairs, etc., from moving safely. Introduce residents-only parking schemes near schools and enforce this and other parking violations with traffic wardens.
- Volunteers: Use volunteers to be crossing wardens or recruit volunteers for this task as other areas of the council are willing to source outside help from local community groups. In Germany and other places in Europe, school crossing wardens are done by teams of volunteers and in many places by senior school children. Walsall has plenty of opportunities for volunteers willing to do more.
- Pedestrian Lights and Zebra Crossings: Install more pedestrian lights and zebra crossings and get rid of all lollipop people. Introduce pedestrian light-controlled crossings instead of zebra crossings. This would reduce the need for traffic wardens. Additionally, fine more motorists who go through a red light by introducing cameras.
- Road Safety Awareness: Teach children more road safety awareness and only remove crossing patrol wardens from schools on less used roads. Encourage parents to walk their children to school instead of driving.
- Speed Bumps and Lighting: Install road bumps/speed bumps to slow traffic down before they reach pedestrian crossings that aren't staffed. Ensure sufficient lighting and parking restrictions where the crossings aren't staffed.
- Management Cuts: Savings should not be made at the possible risk to lives. Instead, management of the service is where the cuts need to be made rather than at ground level. Cut the pay of senior council executives.
- Government Grants: Put pressure on the government to increase grants for local councils.

Overall opinion from engagement and consultation

Respondents do not support this proposal / have concerns.

Justifiable action from the evidence, engagement and consultation suggested in the Equality Impact Assessment

B – Adjustments are needed to mitigate adverse impact and to better promote equality

Mitigating actions required, if proposal approved

Council to continue to support and aid road safety education through it's A*STARS programme

People potentially negatively affected, if proposal approved

Children, those with disabilities

Response from Walsall Council on Proposal Ref P2

Following consideration of consultation feedback and equality impact assessment, Cabinet intend to implement the proposal.