

REPORT NO 261/00

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
ROADS COMMITTEE7 MARCH 2000
9 MARCH 2000CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOL CROSSING PATROLS

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF ROADS AND DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

This report examines the national criteria for determining whether or not a School Crossing Patrol is justified, considers their fitness for application at existing school crossing patrol sites within Angus and recommends the adoption of criteria based on 50% of the national guidelines (i.e. a less stringent requirement than that of the National Standard). The report also details proposals for rationalisation of working hours for School Crossing Patrollers.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education and Roads Committees agree: -

- (i) to the use of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and the Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association (LARSOA) Criteria for assessing any future requests for school crossing patrol sites within Angus but with threshold values reduced to 50% of the guideline criteria, (i.e. a less stringent requirement than that of the National Standard).
- (ii) to note the findings of the surveys carried out at the existing sites which indicate that a number of existing school crossing patrols do not meet these proposed Angus criteria,
- (iii) that where existing school crossing patrols are not justified in terms of the Angus criteria the following options be investigated:
 - a) The removal of the school crossing patrollers from light controlled ("red and green man") crossings to be implemented in conjunction with a training programme for schoolchildren to be provided by Tayside Police.
 - b) Re-deployment of school crossing patrollers to new sites which meet the Angus criteria or to alternative duties (e.g. "walking bus") where these are feasible.
 - c) The provision of physical traffic safety/road improvement measures to allow a reduction in the number of school crossing patrollers in the medium term.

- d) The retention of existing school crossing patrollers at other sites which do not meet the Angus criteria with a view to not replacing these patrollers when the posts become vacant due to natural employee turnover in the longer term.

It is recommended that the Education Committee agree:-

- (iv) to note the proposed rationalisation of working hours for school crossing patrollers.

2 INTRODUCTION

Report No 268/99 was approved by the Education and Roads Committees in March 1999 when it was agreed that surveys be carried out at all locations within Angus which had School Crossing Patrollers (90 sites in total). These have now been carried out and comparisons made with the criteria in Appendix A (attached) which were set down by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and the Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association (LARSOA)

3 DETAILS

All the existing school crossing patrol sites in Angus have been surveyed and the details of these surveys converted into PV^2 figures (where P is the number of school children crossing, and V is the number of vehicles passing the location in a 30 minute period), as laid down in the RoSPA/LARSOA guidelines (see Appendix A). As stated in the previous report to committee on this matter, for a site to be considered for a crossing, the PV^2 value should be equal to or greater than 4.0×10^6 . In Angus there are 32 sites which meet or exceed this threshold value.

For sites not meeting this criterion the guidelines allow a factoring process using environmental factors laid down in the guidance to allow the calculation of an adjusted PV^2 value. There were 12 The sites which had an adjusted PV^2 value greater than 4.0×10^6 .

Thus on the basis of the surveys carried out to date there are only 44 sites, out of a total of 90 sites in Angus, which comply with the national RoSPA/LARSOA criteria.

Given the current generous provision of school crossing patrollers in Angus it is proposed to reduce the PV^2 threshold by 50%. This is in line with the practice adopted by a number of other Scottish Local Authorities as previously indicated to committee (Report 263/99). In Angus therefore, it is proposed that a school crossing patroller be provided at sites where the PV^2 is 2.0×10^6 or greater once all environmental factors have been taken into account. On these reduced criteria a further 14 sites would also justify the need for a school crossing patroller.

This still leaves 32 sites which, at present, have a school crossing patroller but which, under the proposed Angus criteria of 50% of the RoSPA/LARSOA criteria, appear not to merit the provision of this service. On the basis of the survey information gathered to date these sites appear to have very low levels of pedestrian and/or vehicle flow. This may well be due to a change in circumstances over the years (for example

a reduction in school roll or a change in catchment area) since the time when the school crossing patrol was first provided. On the other hand some of the surveys were carried out towards the end of the summer term when the volume of pedestrian and/or vehicular traffic may not have been typical of a normal school day. It may be advisable therefore to re-survey those sites to ensure that the PV² figure is truly representative.

If the proposed Angus criteria are approved, the Director of Roads will be able to provide the Director of Education with robust, objective, technical advice regarding the need for a school crossing patroller on a site-by-site basis, not only for existing locations as circumstances change, but also for any new sites where a school crossing patrol is requested.

This in turn will allow the Director of Education to make an informed decision following consultation with the School Board, Parents Associations etc, and the local elected member regarding the need for a School Crossing Patroller at a particular location taking all the circumstances into account.

It is important that School Crossing Patrollers are considered as part of the 'Safe Routes to Schools' strategy and at particular locations, should a patroller be removed, consideration will be given to improvements to the road system such as additional signing, lining, barriers, footway build-outs, red carriageway surfaces etc. An essential element of this approach will be full consultation with school community.

It is also proposed that school crossing patrols should be removed from signalised junctions and pedestrian crossings where there are "red and green men". In such locations it can be confusing for motorists to see a green light but be required to stop by the school crossing patroller. Tayside Police will provide specific training to schoolchildren to allow this transition to be carried out safely.

It is proposed that, where an existing school crossing patrol is deemed not to be justified, consideration be given by the Director of Education as to how the patroller could be better utilised, for example re-locating the school crossing patroller to a new site locally which meets the proposed Angus criteria or perhaps redeployment to new duties supervising or escorting children over a wider area (e.g. a "walking bus"). If this is not feasible then consideration could be given to retaining the School Crossing Patrol until opportunity arose (e.g. through retiral, etc) not to refill the post.

It should be emphasised that ultimately the responsibility for the safety of children

travelling to and from school remains a parental one and that the Council's powers relating to the provision of School Crossing Patrollers are discretionary and not a statutory duty.

4 **RATIONALISATION OF WORKING HOURS**

Angus Council inherited a position whereby the times covered by the 90 school crossing patrol sites varied, partly due to the fact that there were variations in school opening times even within burghs. In addition School Crossing Patrollers are contracted to work 195 days, (190 school days plus 5 in service days).

In a large number of cases the recent rationalisation of school hours has altered the requirements for School Crossing Patrollers to be on duty. These changes to the school day have provided an opportunity to standardise the shift patterns of School Crossing Patrollers throughout the authority which will now be as follows:-

Morning Shift - The School Crossing Patroller will be required to be on duty in the morning 30 minutes before the schools start time and will remain on duty until 10 minutes after the school has commenced.

Lunch Time Shift – The School Crossing Patroller will be required to be on duty 5 minutes before the schools lunch starts and remain on duty until 10 minutes after the school has re-commenced.

Evening Shift – The School Crossing Patroller will be required to be on duty 5 minutes before the schools dismissal time and remain on duty until 10 minutes after the final dismissal.

The adoption of these shift patterns will result in a reduction in the working hours of the majority of School Crossing Patrollers.

Proposals

- i) Implement the new shift patterns outlined above.
- ii) Reduce the School Crossing Patrollers working year from 195 to 190 days to take into account in-service days where School Crossing Patrollers are in the main not required, although in particular circumstances it may be necessary to ask School Crossing Patrollers to work on in-service days eg. where not all schools within an area are having in-service.
- iii) Offset any reduction in pay as a result of i) and ii) by increasing the hourly rate for School Crossing Patrollers to reflect a 37 hour working week in line with the 'single status' agreement. Where the increase in hourly rate failed to offset the reduction, the postholder would continue to receive their existing pay on a personally preserved basis. New Patrollers would be recruited on the new shift pattern/reduced working year basis with hourly rates based on a 37 hour working week.
- iv) School Crossing Patrollers will be required to undertake training on election days and other days when they are expected to be at work but for any reason children do not require to cross the road.

5 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The budget provision for school crossing patrollers in 2000/01 is £321,000 which is well in excess of Granted Aided Expenditure (£177,000). While there are no immediate financial implications resulting from this report it is expected that longer term revenue savings may be achieved. Any proposals regarding the requirements for

physical measures to improve road safety will be assessed on a site-by-site basis and would be the subject of a future report(s) to Committee.

6 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Administration, the Director of Finance, the Director of Personnel and the Chief Constable have been consulted in the preparation of this Report.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The existing school crossing patrol sites in Angus have been assessed against the National Guidelines issued by RoSPA/LARSOA. It is proposed that a less stringent standard (50% of the national standard) be adopted for the assessment of the need for the provision of school crossing patrols in Angus. Even with this relaxation of the criteria there are some sites in Angus where the provision of a school crossing patrol appears not to be justified.

There is scope for the rationalisation of working hours for school crossing patrollers to remove the anomalies inherited from Tayside Regional Council and to reflect the recent rationalisation of school hours in Angus.

Dr Bob McLellan
DIRECTOR OF ROADS

Jim Anderson
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

NOTE

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above Report (list papers concerned): -

RoSPA/LAROSA - Guidelines for the Management and Operation of the School Crossing Patrol Service
Committee Report No: 268/99 - Criteria for the Establishment of School crossing Patrol Sites.

FDCN/VN
7 February 2000
REPORTS/school.cross

CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOL CROSSING
PATROL SITES

Initial Assessment: This is based on a measure of pedestrian demand (P) and vehicle flow (V) over a 30 minute period at the busiest time of day, usually between 8.15 am and 9.15 am. These factors are then combined in the formula PV^2 and compared against predetermined threshold values to determine if a patrol is justified. The pedestrian demand is assessed by recording the number of children crossing the road, either with or without an adult, within 50m of the proposed crossing site. If less than 15 children cross the road during the 30 minute period, a patrol should not be considered. The vehicle flow consists of all vehicles passing along the road, including pedal cycles. To take account of the relative disruption caused by various types of vehicle, they are classified as "light vehicle equivalent" ie an HGV is regarded as two light vehicles and a cycle constitutes 0.3 units.

The combined PV^2 value is then measured against threshold values as follows:-

PV^2 greater than 4×10^6 - patroller justified;
 PV^2 between 1.33×10^6 and 4×10^6 - take into account other environmental factors;
 PV^2 less than 1.33×10^6 - only examine other factors in exceptional circumstances.

Adjustment Factors and Multipliers: Where PV^2 assessment does not prove conclusive, the following environmental factors should be considered to assign factors according to the level of crossing difficulties:

- (i) vehicle speeds
- (ii) carriageway width
- (iii) footpath width
- (iv) gradient of road
- (v) visibility
- (vi) street lighting
- (vii) complex road layout
- (viii) existing facilities
- (ix) accident record
- (x) average age of children crossing the road

Adjustment factors are then allocated. These range from 1 to 14, depending on the relative safety implications eg if the average age of children was 8 years the factor would be 3, but if the age was over 11, the factor reduces to zero. The factor can also be negative where its presence reduces the justifications for a patrol (eg the presence of other crossing facilities). The factors are then summated and are used to determine Multipliers (between 1 and 3.8) to amend the initial PV^2 value. The amended PV^2 value is again compared with the threshold values to determine if a patrol is justified.

Additional Facilities: Where flow of pedestrians and/or vehicles is significantly high, additional facilities such as central islands, pelican or zebra crossings may be required. A separate assessment procedure is available for pedestrian crossings. It should be noted that if a central island is constructed, it can, in effect, create two crossings which could require two patrollers, depending on the number of children crossing and the design of the island. It is possible that, because of heavy traffic flow, high vehicle speed or other factors, a site is not a suitable location for a patrol and another solution may be required.

This summary is based on the criteria in the "Guidelines for the Management and Operation of the School Patrol Service" jointly produced by the County Road Safety Officers' Association and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) and issued in August 1994.