

## Agenda Item 14

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# Report

**Subject** : Potential cost to Salisbury District Council arising from recommendations of Environment & Transport Scrutiny Review on School Transport

**Report to** : The Cabinet

**Date** : 13 December 2006

**Author** : Geoff Hobbs

**Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport:** Councillor Dennis Brown

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### 1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To set out the financial costs of implementing the recommendations made by the Environment and Transport Scrutiny Review on School Transport, which are within the remit of the District Council. The report fulfils a request made by Cabinet at their 12th July 2006 meeting to bring back costs for consideration before the end of the year.

### 2. Background

2.1 During the first half of 2006, the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Panel established a Review Group to carry out an examination of school transport and its effectiveness. This group presented its final report to Cabinet on 12th July 2006. Of their 22 recommendations, three were for individual schools to take up, seven were for Wiltshire County Council to consider, two were dependent on central government action (including the extension of free concessionary fares to under 16s), and five were for the District Council to progress in partnership with schools.

2.2 The Cabinet resolved:

- (1) *the Environment and Transport Scrutiny Panel be thanked for producing such a thorough and comprehensive report for Cabinet's consideration;*
- (2) *any cost neutral actions emanating from the Panel's recommendations that can be achieved be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport to implement now, without further recourse to Cabinet and therefore without the need to await any further officer report; and*
- (3) *the Officers produce a report and action plan for those matters not covered under (2) above, having consulted with all third parties concerned, recommending actions to be taken for consideration by Cabinet by the end of the year.*



Awarded in:  
Housing Services  
Waste and Recycling Services



- 2.3 This report aims to address the third element of the July Cabinet decision. An appropriate starting point is to review all the Panel's recommendations that fall within the remit of the District Council. The five in this category are reproduced below:
1. *The review group investigated the use of park and ride sites as drop off points from which students could walk or cycle to school, or be collected by a mini bus on a shuttle service such as the "Kiss and Run" operated by Leaden Hall. This has support from the former Salisbury District Council leader and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder. In the opinion of the review group, considerable scope exists for extending this to other schools. Therefore it is recommended that the Head of Forward Planning and Transportation at the District Council make contact with the schools listed in the report to progress this.*
  2. *Whilst it is acknowledged that there may be planning constraints upon building a school on one site at Shrewton Primary School, the review group would request that Salisbury District Council's Development Services Unit offers appropriate guidance.*
  3. *St Osmunds School, Salisbury – It is recommended that the Council set up a meeting as a priority with the school and representatives of the Friary and agree an action plan to take this issue forward as a matter of high importance and that Salisbury District Council enforce residents' off road parking areas within Friary to prevent unauthorised parking.*
  4. *The review group recommends that parking ambassadors should visit schools on an occasional basis on days convenient to the schools. Further to this the review group considers that the visits of the ambassadors should be unannounced and any parents in violation of parking restrictions should be penalised.*
  5. *During interviews, the Headteacher of St Edmunds School on the Laverstock campus indicated that she would support the use of the park and ride sites as strategic drop off points particularly the London Road site for St Edmunds. This would require a safe walking route to link the Park and Ride site with the Laverstock campus and could be a continuation of the Bishopdown/Laverstock cycle way. Children travelling from Amesbury to Salisbury schools could be dropped off at the Beehive Park and Ride site and then buses could be used for the remainder of the journey, children attending Westwood St Thomas' (now renamed Salisbury High School) could be dropped off at Wilton Park and Ride and Britford Park & Ride is available for a minibus pick-up for Trafalgar school. Sites could be equipped with bicycles for the students to be able to cycle the remainder of the journey to school, or the students could walk or be collected by bus. Salisbury District Council and Wiltshire County Council should investigate this further as a priority.*
- 2.4 Of these five, recommendations 1, 2 and 3, as reproduced above, do not have any resource implications for the District Council, so the bulk of this report (sections 3 and 4) will address recommendations 4 and 5 in detail considering the resource implications of implementation.
- 2.5 Recommendation 1 has resource implications for the schools that choose to operate such a service. Leaden Hall School is a private school, and may have access to resources that some state schools might not. It would be up to schools to devise a way of covering the costs of operating a "Kiss and Run" scheme (in terms of extra expenditure on vehicles, fuel and staff time). All secondary schools within Salisbury have been written to setting out how the Leaden Hall School scheme operates. In this letter schools were invited to initiate discussion with officers as to how a scheme involving their school could be set up.
- 2.6 Recommendation 2 requires Development Services to provide advice on Shrewton Primary School. If the school intends to locate all its activities on a single site, then this service unit will provide guidance, as it does with all applications of this nature.
- 2.7 Recommendation 3 has already been addressed by the District Council, to tackle the issue of parents parking in off street car parks for Friary residents. Since January 2004, a scheme to discourage St.Osmunds School parents from parking in off-street car parks for residents of The Friary has been operating successfully. Parents who wish to use these car parks are required to pay £30 for an annual parking permit, which allows them to park for up to 30 minutes in Lacock House and Glastonbury House car park for pick up and drop off at school start and finish times only. The school retains 10% of this income for the cost of administering this permit scheme, and the remainder is paid into an account held by the District Council for use by the Friary Tenants and Community Association. This scheme was devised by a working group comprised of the District Council's Transportation Officer,

the Headteacher, governors of the school and the Chairperson of the Friary Tenants Association. This scheme is working well to ensure that the impact of the school run on the Friary Estate is mitigated by having a financial disincentive to parents in driving to the school by car.

- 2.8 In the following sections, the costs associated with the implementation of recommendations 4 and 5 as outlined above, will be considered.

### **3 Costs and considerations of providing occasional parking enforcement in the vicinity of schools at start and finish times**

#### **3.1 Types of parking offence ambassadors have powers over**

The District Council parking ambassador team have powers to enforce residents parking zones and yellow line restrictions. Currently, no local “School – Keep Clear” road zigzag markings are backed up by Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and are therefore unenforceable. To prepare TROs to make these markings enforceable would involve significant resource expenditure, which would not be realistic in the present financial climate. This would comprise expenditure of £5,000 on legal work and would require the recruitment of additional ambassadors to carry out enforcement of these markings. The current establishment levels would not be sufficient. Experience elsewhere suggests that parents only comply when they see a traffic warden outside the school, and ignore the zig zag markings at other times. Therefore it is not recommended that TROs be introduced for these particular markings, due to the inherent difficulties in enforcing them.

In locations with double yellow lines, ambassadors can issue Penalty Charge Notices unless vehicles are “setting down or picking up passengers” – which is permitted under the TROs. The Parking Manager has advised that occasional enforcement of yellow lines outside schools (two or three visits per school per term) could be carried out if resources permitted. Current MTFS savings from the parking account may reduce this possibility however.

#### **3.2 Need for policy decision to define “set down / pick up of passengers”**

As explained in section 3.1, the TROs outside schools allow drivers to park on double yellow lines for the purposes of the setting down and picking up of passengers. In order for the yellow lines to be effectively enforced outside schools, councillors would need to clearly define how long a parked car could be left unattended before it no longer constituted “setting down and picking up of passengers”. Other councils have implemented a policy whereby if a car is parked unattended on a double yellow line in the vicinity of a school for more than 5 minutes, then a PCN can be issued. A stricter or more lenient time limit could be set. The more strict the definition, the more complaints that the Council would be likely to receive from parents. Councillors would need to then be prepared to stand up to whatever level of public opposition arises as a result of implementing their policy decision.

### **4. Costs and considerations regarding the use of the Park and Ride sites as strategic drop off points for onward travel to school via minibus or cycle**

- 4.1 The scrutiny report suggested that four Park and Ride sites be developed into recognised car drop off and pick up points in the following way:

- London Road Park and Ride site as a drop off/ pick up point for Laverstock Schools
- Beehive Park and Ride site as a drop off/ pick up point for South Wilts Grammar School
- Britford Park and Ride site as a drop off/ pick up point for Trafalgar School
- Wilton Park and Ride site as a drop off/ pick up point for Salisbury High School

- 4.2 The report referred to onward transportation from these sites to the relevant school by minibus. As with recommendation 1, it would be up to the schools concerned to provide the necessary financial resources to cover the vehicle and staffing costs of running minibuses to and from the relevant Park and Ride site at the appropriate times.

- 4.3 A further suggestion was that over time such initiatives could be developed to provide bicycles and bicycle storage at the park and ride sites to enable students to use these to finish their journeys to school, where safe off-road cycle routes linking with the relevant school existed.

- 4.4 A continuous off road cycle route exists from Beehive Park and Ride to the Stratford Road junction of the A345 Castle Road. When the planning permission for an office and nursing home development on London Road is implemented, a new Toucan crossing will be installed by the entrance to the London

Road Park and Ride site, which will link in to the existing cycle route along the north side of London Road. When the planning permission for residential development off Downton Road is implemented, the developer must make a contribution to the construction of a shared used cycleway between the Britford Park and Ride site and the Shell garage on Downton Road, providing a continuous route to the city centre. The Joint Transportation Team are working in partnership with Sustrans and the Highways Agency to identify ways of delivering a safe Wilton to Salisbury cycle route. Provision of such a route is dependent on successful negotiation with landowners along a preferred route and is subject to funding.

- 4.5 Setting up a 10 bicycle scheme would cost at least £10,700 per P&R site (see Table 4.1). In addition, there would be ongoing costs of £300 per annum per site for bicycle servicing, which could be met by the participating schools. This amount cannot be funded by the District Council from existing budgets, and considering the present financial climate, it will not be possible to justify this investment. Therefore it is recommended that other sources of funding to set up such a scheme be explored. Provided that the relevant school had an up to date School Travel Plan, they are eligible to apply to Wiltshire County Council (WCC) for a *Taking Action on School Journeys* capital grant to cover the cost of a cycle shed at the relevant P&R site. Bids are required to be submitted by the end of November each year, for award in the following financial year. The grant would need to be spent by the end of that financial year. Other sources of funding for the revenue expenditure costs would need to be identified. Table 4.1 below gives a cost breakdown of how this figure is derived.

**Table 4.1 – Cost breakdown of setting up a “Kiss and Cycle” scheme per P&R site**

Component	Cost	Type of funding	Eligible for WCC funding
Purchase of ten bicycles appropriately sized for 11-16 age group.	£1200	Revenue	N
1x Lockable metal framed perspex cycle storage compound (including delivery & installation)	£9300	Capital	Y
safety and security equipment purchase for ten bikes (HV vests, helmets and bike locks)	£200	Revenue	N
Cycle proficiency training can be arranged by the schools and is offered free through the Road Safety Unit at Wiltshire County Council	-	N/A	N/A

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 That the points made above are noted.
- 5.2 That the Cabinet ask the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Panel to consider the issue raised in section 3.2 and make a recommendation of a maximum permitted time limit for the “set down and picking up of passengers” outside of schools for future consideration by Cabinet. This recommendation should be based on policies that operate successfully in other local authorities and should involve consultation with school Headteachers and governors.
- 5.3 That officer time is provided to initiate discussions with South Wilts Grammar School, Bishops Wordsworth School and the three Laverstock secondary schools to encourage these schools to submit a bid to WCC Travelwise by 30 November 2007 for Capital funding towards a pilot “Kiss and Cycle” scheme from either Beehive, Britford or London Road Park and Ride site, subject to space being available within the sites to store bicycles.

## 6. Implications:

**Financial** : details contained within report

**Legal** : none

**Human Rights** : none

**Personnel** : none

**Community Safety** : none

**Environmental** : A reduction in congestion in the vicinity of school entrances at school start and finish times.

**Council's Core Values** : Providing excellent service, being environmentally conscientious, wanting to be an open, learning council and a willing partner.

**Wards Affected** : All wards with schools within them.

**Consultation** : This report will be considered at meeting of Environment & Transport Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 4th December 2006 and their comments will be passed on for consideration by Cabinet.