

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 7
12 JANUARY 2009	Public Report

Report of the Executive Director of Strategic Resources

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SAFE ACCESS TO THE VOYAGER SCHOOL – PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report is following a request by the Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 29 September 2008 for a progress report on the implementation of previous recommendations of the Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee consider and comment on the progress of the recommendations made at the meeting on 7 March 2007.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Committee on 29 September 2008, a progress report on the implementation of previous recommendations was requested. Some of the outstanding recommendations related to the off-site highway works in relation to the build of the Voyager School.
- 3.2 At their meeting on 7 March 2007, the Committee considered a request to call-in a decision made by the Leader of the Council regarding the off-site highway works related to the build of the new Voyager School and the expansion and refurbishment of Ken Stimpson and Jack Hunt schools. Following discussion and questions on each of the reasons stated for the request to call-in, it was agreed not to call-in the decision, however it was agreed to ask the Executive for a number of assurances and guarantees. The Leader of the Council supported the Committee in taking these recommendations forward.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The progress made on implementing the recommendations of the Committee is detailed in Appendix 1.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Any implications are contained within Appendix 1.

6. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 6.1 That the Committee considers and comments on the progress made in implementing the recommendations made by the Committee on 7 March 2007.

7. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Minutes of the meeting of Scrutiny Committee held on 7 March 2007.

8. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Progress on recommendations

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

OFF-SITE HIGHWAY WORKS RELATED TO THE BUILD OF THE NEW VOYAGER SCHOOL AND THE EXPANSION AND REFURBISHMENT OF KEN STIMPSON AND JACK HUNT SCHOOLS

MONITORING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Ref.	Recommendation	Progress
1.	That the Council will arrange for a plan of the minimum levels of lighting required along the school routes.	It is confirmed in respect of points 1 and 2 that all PCC adopted highway routes are lit to the appropriate highway lighting standard. The only exception to this is the Parkway system around the city where the current policy is that 2 out of every 3 lights are turned off. It is estimated that it would costs £5,000 to formally carry out a review to assess the lighting works implemented.
2.	That following completion of the lighting works a survey be carried out to confirm lighting levels meet or exceed the minimum levels set.	
3.	The Council should ensure that, out of courtesy, they respond to the proposals, recommendations or requests of external bodies consulted on any proposals, for example Parish councils, in a timely manner, and that in this specific case confirmation be given that a response was made to Bretton Parish Council's submission. If a response has not been made to Bretton Parish Council then one should be provided.	A formal response was sent by Stephen Forster (Head of Secondary Schools Transition) to the Clerk of Bretton Parish Council on 12 March 2007. A copy is attached at Annex A.
4.	The Council to work with other agencies to actively seek a reduction in the speed limit along Lincoln Road where children are expected to cross on their travels to and from school, to include either a fixed reduction to 30 miles per hour or the imposition of a variable speed limit.	Since the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 7 March 2007, officers have sought the views of the Cambridgeshire Police Traffic Office and it can be confirmed that any proposal to reduce the existing 40mph speed limit along the section of Lincoln Road containing the new pedestrian crossing would not be supported unless the ambient speed attained by traffic in normal conditions was consistent with that appropriate for traffic travelling in a 30mph speed limit zone. Traffic characteristics along Lincoln Road remain consistent with the existing 40mph limit and therefore no further action is proposed to be taken at this point in time. If any additional factors, sufficient to significantly change the characteristics of Lincoln Road traffic occur in the future, the matter may be reviewed subject to the availability of resources.

Ref.	Recommendation	Progress
5.	That a full review be carried out 12 months after completion of the works referred to in the decision notice, the review to be carried out in conjunction with the Scrutiny Committee if so required.	It is estimated that to carry out such a review would cost in the region of £20,000 involving both officer time, staff from the Voyager school as well as specialist external consultants. The impact of such a review may identify a considerable element of work requiring further capital investment of £250,000.
6.	To ensure that all appropriate agencies involved in the provision of lighting along school access routes maintain the lighting in good condition and expedite repairs accordingly.	A system exists for the regular inspection and maintenance of all PCC lighting including that along school routes.

Conclusion :

The various surveys and investigations referred to by Scrutiny Committee can be carried out subject to funding being provided. It should however also be noted that the impact of such a review may identify a considerable element of further capital investment being required, possibly up to £250,000. Given the present financial constraints within the Authority, this may not represent value for money and therefore the merit and value of carrying out such a review is questioned.

To: Clerk of Bretton Parish Council

I am replying to the comments that Bretton Parish Council sent in to the Scrutiny Committee meeting on Wednesday 7th March.

The first series of points were about the bridge over the railway at Marholm Road,

- we do not accept that this route is inherently unsafe: we note that already 137 students use this route every day to attend Walton School as well as a significant number of local residents. Of course we would have wished to replace the footbridge if the seven figure sum needed had been available. However, we believe that the improvements that will be carried out are significant and will increase safety levels
- we have commented to the Department concerned about the Sustrans perception that PCC would not support a replacement bridge; I believe this team has been supportive of Sustrans, within the resources it has available
- we are disappointed at your suggestion that Bretton Parish Council comments have not been taken into consideration. Comments have always been given very careful consideration and implemented where possible
- we proposed a 'safe drop off point' in Wedgwood way, exactly along the lines that you suggested. Unfortunately, Highways were unable to approve this for a number of technical reasons, as was explained at the Scrutiny meeting. However, as a compromise, we will be improving this area so it will be safer to use as an 'informal' drop-off point.

We note your comments about the route across the railway line from Westwood to Rhubarb Bridge via PC World. However, we have designed a single safe route over the Marholm Road bridge that is suitable for all students from Bretton to walk or cycle to the new Voyager School. The alternative route that you mention has therefore formed no part of our thinking or planning. As part of the Secondary School Review, Westwood and Ravensthorpe have been transferred to Jack Hunt School catchment area: the small number of students who will continue to attend Voyager for a limited time from those areas (mostly current Year 10 to complete GCSE courses, plus some Sixth Formers completing A-levels) will be recommended to take the underpass to Bretton then follow the approved route to Voyager. I believe that, following the debate at Scrutiny, the route via PC World will be examined as part of a review of lighting throughout the City, however, this is quite separate from the provisions of the Secondary School Review.

We agree entirely with the proposal to reduce speed limits to 30 mph. Highways have been unable to approve these changes for a number of technical reasons, but, following the debate at Scrutiny, I understand that there will be a further examination of the Lincoln Road position.

I hope that you find my comments helpful, but, as always, I am happy to discuss further.

Regards

Stephen

*Stephen Forster
Head of Secondary School Transition Team
Peterborough City Council*