

MB009.STS

Agenda Item No: 4

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE****01 April 2014****Joint Report of the Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults and
the Strategic Director - Economy, Transport & Environment****HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT – HAZARDOUS ROUTES**

1. **Purpose of Report** To consider a request for a home to school route to be declared 'hazardous' for the purpose of establishing an eligibility to free transport within the statutory walking distances.
2. **Information and Analysis**

2.1 Background

The Authority provides assistance with travel for full-time primary and secondary school pupils who do not live within walking distance of their normal area school. This distance, as defined in the Education Act 1996, is 2 miles for children under 8 and 3 miles for children aged 8 and over, measured by the nearest available route. From 01 September 2012 all primary age pupils resident in Derbyshire, who live more than 2 miles from their normal area school are provided with transport assistance.

An exception may be made to these distance rules if the Authority agrees that a particular route is hazardous for a pupil, accompanied if necessary, to undertake on foot. In making such a decision, the Authority would consider not only the nature of the route or alternative routes the pupil could reasonably be expected to take, but also the age of the child and the ability of a parent to accompany him or her.

- 2.2 **Criteria** The Authority's criteria for the assessment of route safety in relation to home to school transport situations are set out below:-

- a) In assessing the safety of a particular route, consideration be given only to danger relevant to traffic/highway conditions;
- b) It is essential that each case be considered objectively on its merits;
- c) It is assumed that the child is accompanied, if necessary, by a parent or other responsible person and will be suitably clad;
- d) Where a footway or roadside strip of reasonable width and condition, public footpath or bridleway exists, this will normally be assumed to provide a safe route for that part of the journey;
- e) Where, on a lightly trafficked or narrow road, a verge exists which is not easy to walk on, but which can be stepped onto by the child and accompanying person when vehicles are passing, it can normally be assumed to provide a safe route for that part of the journey;
- f) Many routes may lie along roads having neither footway nor verge. On such roads consideration should be given to the width of the carriageway, traffic speed and composition (such as frequent heavy goods vehicles) and to visibility (i.e. sharp bends with high hedgerows or banks);
- g) The absence of street lighting is not in itself a measure of the availability of a safe route although where children are unable to step off the road surface it could become a significant factor;
- h) Consideration should be given to the relevant accident record of the route with particular regard to the effect on pedestrian movement; and
- i) Where road crossings are necessary, the availability of facilities to assist such crossings should be taken into consideration as should the extent of visibility.

Where a route is deemed hazardous for any of the above highway reasons the matter should also be referred to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to consider if the danger can reasonably be removed by appropriate highway management means. Granting of "hazardous route" status should be on the clear understanding that this status would cease if and when necessary highway measures are taken to remove the cause of the danger.

3. Mapleton Village to Ashbourne

Background

The request for the route to be assessed in accordance with the Authority's criteria for route safety for the purposes of home to school transport has been made by a parent whose children attend Schools in Ashbourne. The distance from the Village to the schools in Ashbourne is less than two miles and there is no entitlement to free transport. The parent maintains that the route from home to Ashbourne is unsafe for pedestrians to walk along.

Route Assessment

There is no footway along the route once leaving Mapleton village itself until arriving in Ashbourne. There is very little grass verge to step onto and no street lighting. The road has a number of bends with poor visibility. A copy of a route assessment is attached as Appendix A, together with a map of the route identifying accident details in the vicinity over a three year period attached as Appendix B.

Implications

No children currently attend St. Oswald's Infant or Parkside Junior from Mapleton village. However, there are five students attending Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School and should the route be deemed hazardous for the purposes of home to school transport which would require the need for a minibus if all pupils travelled and this would cost approximately £60 per day i.e. £11,400 per annum

Date of Inspection

Thursday 6 February 2014

Panel's Recommendation

Hazardous

Financial Considerations Any routes which are declared hazardous by the County Council automatically require the provision of free transport to children who have to travel along those routes if there is no alternative route under the relevant 2 or 3 miles walking distances (see paragraph 2.1). Therefore, any routes so designated have on-going financial consequences for the Authority which would have to be met from its Education Transport budget. In each case under consideration the cost does not have a bearing on the question of whether the route should be regarded as hazardous.

4. In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered:
Prevention of Crime & Disorder, Equality of Opportunity; and
Environmental, Health, Human Resources, Legal & Human Rights and
Property considerations.
5. Background Papers, Reports and Minutes of meetings as mentioned in this report.
6. **Recommendations** The Cabinet Member is asked to consider the Hazardous Routes Panel's recommendation for the route indicated and to determine whether or not the route should be declared hazardous, in accordance with the Authority's Home to School Transport Policy.

<u>HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT - CRITERIA FOR ROUTE SAFETY</u>	<u>ROUTE: Mapleton Village to Ashbourne</u>	
In assessing the safety of a particular route consideration should be given only to danger relevant to traffic/highway conditions. It is essential that each case be considered objectively on its merits.	<u>RELEVANT INFORMATION (where applicable)</u>	<u>OFFICER'S COMMENTS</u>
1. It is assumed that the child is accompanied if necessary by a normal caring parent or other responsible person and will be suitably clad.		
2. Where a footway or roadside strip of reasonable width and condition, public footpath or bridleway exists, this will normally be assumed to provide a safe route for that part of the journey.	A footway exists within Mapleton village.	It does not exist on both sides through out the village and there is a stretch on the eastern side of the road with no footway.
3. Where, on a lightly trafficked or narrow road, a verge exists which is not easy to walk on, but which can be stepped onto by the child and accompanying person when vehicles are passing, it can normally be assumed to provide a safe route for that part of the journey.	Very little verge on the majority of the route to Ashbourne.	It would be difficult for pedestrians to step off the road when two vehicles are passing.
4. Many routes may lie along roads having neither footway nor verge. On such roads consideration should be given to the width of the carriageway, traffic speed and composition (such as frequent heavy goods vehicles) and to visibility (ie sharp bends with high hedgerows or banks).	Most of the route has no suitable verge and is along a country road ('B' road) and a humped back bridge to negotiate. There is also a number of bends and an unrestricted speed limit.	The vehicle count on 19/11/13 between 8.15-8.45am was 13 cars and 1 van. No pedestrians were seen. The bends make it difficult for drivers to see pedestrians. Vehicles could not possibly drive at 60mph on this route without losing control.
5. The absence of street lightening is not in itself a measure of the availability of a safe route although where children are unable to step off the road surface it could become a significant factor.	There is no street lighting along the route	Very few places to step off the road but road crossing would not be necessary as the road is similar on both sides.
6. Consideration should be given to the relevant accident record of the route with particular regard to the effect on pedestrian movement.	See appendix B - a map of the area with accidents identified.	No collisions on the route ha been recorded in the last three years.
7. Where road crossings are necessary, the availability of facilities to assist such crossings should be taken into consideration as should the extent of visibility.	There are no road crossing facilities along the route.	There is no advantage to crossing the road.



Collisions between Ashbourne and Mapleton village - last three years (01/07/2010 to 30/06/2013)

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