

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**14 November 2013**

**Joint Report of the Strategic Director for Children and Younger Adults and  
Director of Environmental Services.**

**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 1996 Education Act, is 2 miles for children under 8 and 3 miles for children aged 8 and over, measured by the nearest available route. From September 2012 Derbyshire County Council has provided transport assistance to all primary age pupils who live more than 2 miles from their normal area school, measured by the nearest available route.

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 (ie 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 hazard 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 hazard.

### **3. New Houghton to Shirebrook Academy, via Stoney Houghton**

#### **Background**

The majority of pupils resident in New Houghton are eligible for free transport to Shirebrook Academy on the basis that although their shortest available route to school (via Pleasley) is less than 3 miles, it has been found to meet the criteria for designation as hazardous for the purposes of home to school transport. Any alternative routes are over the 3 mile limit.

From some properties on the northern side of New Houghton the shortest route to Shirebrook Academy is via Stoney Houghton. Using this route a small number of children live slightly less than the statutory 3 mile walking distance to school, and are therefore ineligible for automatic transport assistance.

A 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 property measures less than the statutory walking distance to the school.

#### **Route Assessment**

A pro forma is attached (Appendix A) with the route indicated on the attached map (Appendix B). Accident details for the last three years are also attached (Appendix C).

Officers undertook an assessment of the route between New Houghton and Shirebrook Academy via Stoney Houghton. The assessment indicated that there is no footway between New Houghton and Stoney Houghton and no footway between Stoney Houghton and Common Lane (for Shirebrook Academy).

Both roads are narrow with limited verge and restricted visibility. The officer view is that the route meets the criteria for designation as hazardous for the purposes of home to school transport.

### **Implications**

If the route from New Houghton to Shirebrook Academy via Stoney Houghton is found to meet the criteria for designation as hazardous for the purposes of home to school transport, approximately 7 pupils living on the north side of New Houghton would become eligible for free transport.

The cost to the Authority would be £1.20 per pupil per day in loss of revenue.

### **Date of inspection**

### **Panel's Recommendation**

Wednesday 17 April 2013

Hazardous

## **4. 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 statutory walking distances (see paragraph 2.1).

Therefore, any routes so designated have ongoing 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.

5. In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered:  
Prevention of Crime and Disorder, Equality of Opportunity and Environmental, Health, Legal, Personnel and Property considerations.

6. **Background Papers, Reports and Minutes of meetings as mentioned in this report.**
7. **Chief Officers' Recommendations The Cabinet Member is asked to consider the Hazardous Route Panel's recommendation for the route indicated and to determine whether the route should be declared hazardous, in accordance with the Authority's Home to School Transport Policy.**

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT - CRITERIA FOR ROUTE SAFETY	ROUTE FROM Shirebrook Academy	TO New Houghton
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.	RELEVANT INFORMATION (where applicable)	OFFICER'S COMMENTS
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.	No footway throughout	
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.	Limited step-off in places. On leaving Common Lane, when walking from school there is a very short section of verge. However, this then disappears and leads to sloping verge (not possible to step on) or no verge at all. An incline in the road restricts visibility.	
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).	Narrow single carriageway road, bends and hedges impede visibility. In places the hedgerows directly meet the carriageway. The speed limit is 50 mph on the Rotherham Road and derestricted Stoney Houghton and Shirebrook (50 mph applies). <u>Vehicle counts as follows:</u> <b>Rotherham Road</b> 23/11/12: 56 vehicles travelling towards Rotherham and 82 vehicles travelling from Rotherham. <b>Stoney Houghton to Shirebrook road</b> 08/02/13: 18 vehicles travelling towards	Officers consider that that the route meets the criteria for designation as hazardous.

APPENDIX A

	Shirebrook and 18 vehicles travelling towards Stoney Houghton.	
5. 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.	No street lighting beyond Shirebrook and New Houghton	
6. Consideration should be given to the relevant accident record of the route with particular regard to the effect on pedestrian movement.	Accident record attached.	
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.	Some road crossing necessary. No crossing facilities, limited visibility in places.	

\_\_\_\_\_



## TRAFFMAP

## INTERPRETED LISTING

Run on: 11/02/2012

AccsMap - Accident Analysis System

Accidents between dates 01/09/2009 and 31/08/2012 (36) months

Selection:

Notes:

0000630/09 11/2009 Time 1035 Vehicles 1 Casualties 1 Serious  
 Raining without high winds Road surface Wet/Damp Daylight:street lights present  
 Special Conditions None Road Type Single carriageway  
 LC  
 Occurred on SHIREBROOK SLANT LANE J/W C120 COMMON LANE - LOC N/V

Vehicle Reference 1 Bus or coach Moving off  
 Not in restricted lane No skidding, jack-knifing or overturning  
 Vehicle direction SE to NW  
 FRV Not foreign registered vehicle Journey Journey as part of work  
 Casualty Reference: 1 Passenger Severity: Serious

C000526/09 10/2009 Time 1040 Vehicles 2 Casualties 1 Slight  
 Fine without high winds Road surface Dry Daylight:street lights present  
 Special Conditions None Road Type Single carriageway  
 LC sk  
 Occurred on SHIREBROOK B6407 MAIN STREET J/W B6407 COMMON LANE

Vehicle Reference 1 Car Turning right  
 Not in restricted lane No skidding, jack-knifing or overturning  
 Vehicle direction S to NE  
 FRV Not foreign registered vehicle Journey Other/Not known  
 Casualty Reference: 1 Passenger Severity: Slight

Vehicle Reference 2 Car Going ahead  
 Not in restricted lane No skidding, jack-knifing or overturning  
 Vehicle direction NE to SW  
 FRV Not foreign registered vehicle Journey Other/Not known