

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Agenda Item No 6

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

5 August 2014

**Joint Report of the Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults and
the Strategic Director - Economy, Transport and 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 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.

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. Darley Dale to Highfields Lower School

Background

A parent on Wheatley Gardens Darley Dale has raised concerns that the shortest available route to Highfields Lower School using Oddford Lane is hazardous. A copy of a route assessment is attached as Appendix A, and a route map as Appendix B.

Route Assessment

Oddford Lane from the Darley Dale side begins on a downward slope with properties to either side and then after the garden centre becomes a winding country lane. There are no footways or lighting along the whole of Oddford Lane and there visibility issues at the Matlock end of the Lane and difficult for vehicles to pass each other.

Implications

The pupils who would become entitled, if the route is deemed hazardous, currently travel on commercial services and they could be included on the school service bus which is pass only and running with 26 spare places. It is believed that approximately 10 pupils in total would become entitled and it would not therefore incur any additional costs to the Authority.

Date of Inspection

Thursday 15 May 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 may 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 and 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 Route 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.

Ian Thomas
Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director Economy, Transport and Environment

<u>HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT - CRITERIA FOR ROUTE SAFETY</u>	<u>ROUTE: Highfields School – Lower site to Darley Dale via Oddford Lane</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.	There is no footway along Oddford Lane.	
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.	Oddford Lane is a single track lane for the most part measuring approximately 470 metres from the junction with Greenaway Lane to the junction with Chesterfield Road (B5057).	From the junction with Greenaway Lane to the garden centre, there are no verges. A narrow verge exists to the front of the garden centre.
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).	The carriageway is mainly single track width. The speed limit along Oddford Lane is 30mph. A vehicle count took place on a school day between 0730 and 0800. Visibility from the garden centre to the junction with Chesterfield Road is good.	There are limited areas along the road where two cars can pass with care. Vehicle count: Cars – 6 Vans – 2 There are high hedges from the junction with Greenaway Lane to the garden centre.
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 street lighting from the garden centre to the junction with Chesterfield Road.	There is no street lighting from the junction with Greenaway Lane to the garden centre and pedestrians are unable to step off the road surface along this section.
6. Consideration should be given to the relevant accident record of the route with particular regard to the effect on pedestrian movement.	There are no recorded accidents along Oddford Lane for the period 01.09.10 to 31.12.2013.	
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.	It is not necessary to cross over Oddford Lane.	Visibility from the garden centre to the junction with Chesterfield Road is good. Visibility from Greenaway Lane to the garden centre is restricted.

