

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – JOBS, ECONOMY AND  
TRANSPORT

11 November 2014

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

PEAK FOREST PRIMARY SCHOOL – PETITION REQUESTING  
RETENTION OF EXISTING FLASHING AMBER WARNING  
LIGHTS

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To inform the Cabinet Member of investigations undertaken following the receipt of a petition requesting the retention of the existing flashing amber warning lights on Hernstone Lane on each approach to the school.

(2) **Information and Analysis** At the meeting on 9 September 2014, the Cabinet Member acknowledged receipt of 19 letters from pupils of Peak Forest Primary School. The letters are being treated as a petition. The letters were accompanied by a covering letter from the Head Teacher which reads as follows:

*“We have just been alerted to the fact that you were proposing to remove the school warning lights from outside the school at Peak Forest. It is with great joy that I found out that you had agreed to keep them in place. I cannot understand how a village school like Peak Forest, on the extremely busy A623, has no warning lights that work.*

*Very little of the traffic that comes through Peak Forest even knows that there is a school here. We are worried when the children are walking on the pavement because of the speed of the traffic and the large quantity of heavy goods vehicles that come through.*

*The children and I have talked about your proposal to remove the signs. They wanted to know why the signs do not work and I had no explanation. Therefore we are asking you to explain why the school warning signs don't work, as they do around most other schools.*

*The children have written to you, asking you to reinstate the school warning lights to ensure they remain safe. As you are aware, children's safety is of paramount to everyone at Derbyshire County Council, and I cannot see what*

## Public

*this removal of the lights would possibly save the council from a financial point of view.*

*I look forward to hearing your comments and reading your response to the children in school”.*

### **Officer Comment**

Traffic signals were installed at the crossroads in the middle of Peak Forest in 2008. The flashing amber warning lights in Peak Forest were turned off at that time and are currently awaiting removal.

The function of the traffic signals is threefold; they aid side road traffic emerging onto the main road, they help to regulate vehicle speeds on the A623 and they also incorporate a crossing facility to enable pedestrians to cross under controlled conditions.

The national guidance on the provision of flashing amber warning lights states that “*Lights should not be used near level crossings, traffic signals, Pelican, Puffin, Toucan or Zebra crossings if this might cause confusion or distraction. They should never be used to warn of children crossing at signalled or Zebra crossings*” (Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 4, Department for Transport 2004). Clearly, the children should now be using the pedestrian crossing facility at the traffic lights, so, should not require additional warning lights.

As a matter of good practice and compliance with this national guidance, Derbyshire County Council usually removes flashing amber warning lights where controlled crossings are installed. Electronic vehicle activated signs have also been erected within the village which are on each approach to the school. Therefore, it is not considered necessary for the additional flashing amber lights as well as these and the traffic lights. It also has to be borne in mind that this is a Conservation Area within the Peak District National Park.

It is intended, however, to leave the school warning signs in place to highlight the fact that there is a school present and there is the possibility of children ahead.

Due to the continued concern about traffic speeds through the village, investigations are taking place into adapting the existing traffic signals to detect vehicle speeds and react accordingly (for example, change to red should any drivers be detected exceeding the speed limit). Any future scheme will be brought to a future meeting of the Cabinet Member.

### **Local Member Comment**

Councillor Jocelyn Street has been consulted.

## **Public**

(3) **Financial Considerations** The removal of the flashing amber warning lights will cost £439 including electrical disconnections.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(4) **Key Decision** No.

(5) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(6) **Background Papers** Held on file in the Traffic and Safety Section of the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details – Steve Alcock, extension 38176.

(7) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That the Cabinet Member approves that:

- 7.1 The flashing amber warning signs be removed as proposed from Peak Forest.
- 7.2 The school warning signs remain in place to provide adequate warning to motorists of the presence of the school.
- 7.3 Investigations continue into the technology required to incorporate speed detection equipment within the existing traffic signal equipment.
- 7.4 The local Member and petitioners be notified accordingly.

**Mike Ashworth**  
**Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment**