

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – JOBS, ECONOMY AND
TRANSPORT**

9 September 2014

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**PETITION – CHESTERFIELD, NEWBOLD ROAD - ST MARY'S
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL - ROAD SAFETY ISSUES AND
REQUEST FOR PEDESTRIAN CROSSING**

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To seek approval of the Cabinet Member to proposals following an investigation as a result of a petition requesting improved road safety measures and a controlled crossing on Newbold Road, outside St Mary's Catholic High School, Chesterfield.

(2) **Information and Analysis**

Background

On 10 March 2014, a pupil at St Mary's Catholic High School, Chesterfield was involved in a road traffic accident whilst crossing Newbold Road when leaving school. As a result of this accident, the pupils and teachers at St Mary's Catholic High School have expressed deep concern over the road safety outside their school and subsequently, the pupils prepared letters to the Authority which were reported as a petition to the Cabinet Member on 17 June 2014 (Minute No. 99/14 refers).

The pupils at the school have spent considerable time and energy carrying out their own observations of the traffic along Newbold Road and their suggestions to improve road safety outside the school have been documented in their individual letters to the Authority. The letters and petition were handed to the Cabinet Member - Jobs, Economy and Transport at a site meeting held at the school with the Head Teacher and the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment Department.

There were 203 letters received, each with a small map showing the exact location of the accident, along with a brief summary of their observations and a written suggestion of what the students consider could be a solution to the problems. They are very concerned over the volume of traffic along Newbold Road and the dangers and fears they experience when crossing Newbold

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Road. They feel that that the only way to alleviate their concerns is to have a controlled crossing, bridge or subway installed to help them cross the road.

Officer Comment

Officers have visited the site to look at pedestrian movement at school exiting time and a full pedestrian count was carried out to establish the actual number of pedestrians crossing Newbold Road against the volume of traffic. This type of survey is used to show whether there is sufficient pedestrian demand in order for a controlled crossing to be justified.

The count was carried out on 21 May 2014. The results showed that the pedestrian numbers at school operating times fell well below the required number to support a controlled crossing.

At the recent site meeting with the Head Teacher, he confirmed that a number of the students were absent the day when the count was carried out due to study leave. However, a previous count carried out by officers on 1 April 2014 showed that there were around 58 pupils crossing Newbold Road outside the school in comparison to 61 pupils picked up on the survey dated 21 May 2014; a very similar amount despite many students being on study leave.

The pupils that crossed Newbold Road at this location either walked through to Thirlmere Road or were picked up by parents waiting in the crescent off Newbold Road.

Officers' observations on 1 May 2014 showed that approximately 3% of students crossed the road at this location, with others walking down the road to cross at the Loundsley Green traffic signalled junction which incorporates a pedestrian phase. The majority of the pupils catch buses as the school attracts students from a large catchment area, not necessarily just students who live close by and are able to walk to school.

Examination of information relating to this stretch of highway showed that in the last five years there have been two slight reported injury accidents, both being rear end shunts, one in January 2009 at the Keswick Drive junction and the other outside Orwins Close in November 2010. The only reported injury accident involving a vulnerable road user, in the last five years, is the most recent one involving a pupil from St Mary's Catholic High School.

Officers appreciate the school's desire to see a controlled crossing installed at this location. However, the volume of pedestrians falls well below the required number to justify the costs of installing and maintaining a controlled crossing. Officers are also mindful that there is already a crossing facility 200 metres further down the road and those pupils who crossed the road to be picked up by parents waiting in the crescent off Newbold Road could use this facility as an alternative.

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Having looked at the existing facilities along Newbold Road, officers feel that there are some small changes that could make significant improvement to the safety around the school.

There are already School Safety Zone signs with flashing amber warning lights, however, additional 'SLOW' markings could be provided. In addition, a dedicated crossing point, with tactile paving and coloured surfacing across the carriageway, would highlight the point where pedestrians cross to the motorist. In conjunction with this, tactile paving to the two crossing points of the Newbold Road Crescents could also be provided. A sign to the school opposite the junction would also highlight the school entrance better as the existing school and signs are hidden from view.

The trees fronting Newbold Road in the vicinity of the School have been inspected by an officer at Chesterfield Borough Council and he confirms that visibility improvements could be achieved by a crown lift to 5.2 metres over the highway, clearing the main stem of any epicormic growth (suckers) and ivy up to the first major limbs, and a crown clean to remove any dead and obvious weak branches. This will remove any hazards in the trees and give a clear visibility splay. The trees have very good amenity value and should not be removed or lopped in any way.

The work to the trees would improve visibility for pedestrians and for the motorist. However, whilst they are located within the visibility splay, County Council's highway records show that they do not fall within the curtilage of the Highway Boundary. To the west of Gatefield Close the area of land is owned by the Diocese of Hallam Trustee and of Diocese of Hallam Pastoral Centre, and to the east, Upper Newbold Housing Association Ltd.

Officers will write to Upper Newbold Housing Association Ltd asking it to carry out this necessary work and the school could arrange to carry out the work to its trees located to the front of the building.

Local Member Comment

Councillor Innes has been consulted and no response has been received.

(3) **Financial Considerations** The cost of the proposed dropped kerbs, coloured surfacing, and additional signing and lining are estimated at £6,000 and will be funded from the 2014/15 Local Transport Plan.

(4) **Legal Considerations** Section 122 (1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 states that it shall be the duty of every Local Authority exercising the functions conferred by that Act (so far as practicable having regard to the matters listed in subsection (2)) to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including

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pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway.

The matters referred to in Section 122(2) are:

- (a) the desirability of securing and maintaining reasonable access to premises;
- (b) the effect on the amenities of any locality affected and (without prejudice to the generality of this paragraph) the importance of regulating and restricting the use of roads by heavy commercial vehicles, so as to improve the amenities of the areas through which the roads run;
- (bb) the national air quality strategy prepared under Section 80 of the Environment Act 1995;
- (c) the importance of facilitating the passage of public service vehicles and of securing the safety and convenience of persons using or desiring to use such vehicles; and
- (d) any other matters appearing to the Local Authority to be relevant.

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

(5) **Key Decision** No.

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

(7) **Background Papers** Correspondence held on file in the Economy Transport and Environment Department. Officer Contact Details – Bridget Gould extension 38759.

(8) **OFFICERS RECOMMENDATIONS** That the Cabinet Member agrees:

- 8.1 The request for a controlled crossing on Newbold Road, Chesterfield outside St Mary's Catholic High School be refused.
- 8.2 Additional pedestrian dropped kerbs, coloured surfacing and additional signs and white lines as detailed in this report be provided.
- 8.3 The Local Members and petitioners be informed accordingly.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment