

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

HAZARDOUS ROUTES PANEL

15th January 2007

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

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT – DANGEROUS ROUTES

1. Purpose of Report To consider a request for a home to school route to be declared 'dangerous' 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 1996 Education Act, is 2 miles for children under 8 and 3 miles for children over 8 measured by the nearest available route.

An exception may be made to these distance rules if the Authority agrees that a particular route is dangerous 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 dangerous for any of the above highway reasons the matter should also be referred to the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Communities to consider if the danger can reasonably be removed by appropriate highway management means. Granting of "dangerous 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.

Stoney Middleton to Curbar Primary School

Arising from the consultation regarding the proposed closure of Stoney Middleton Primary School, concerns were expressed about the nature of the route from Stoney Middleton to Curbar Primary School. Officers were asked to put into effect a formal assessment of the route in accordance with the Authority's criteria.

Enclosed is a pro-forma regarding the route assessment undertaken between the above locations. Accident information is attached. Copy correspondence from parents and other interested parties will be available to Members in a file held by Development Section. The route is as indicated on the attached map. The views of the local County Councillor have been sought and he has indicated he will make these when he accompanies the Panel.

Relevant information about the nature of the route is provided on the pro-forma.

Officers take the view that the route is not hazardous for the purposes of an entitlement for free home to school transport given the availability of a footpath and facilities to aid road crossing.

Financial Considerations Any routes which are declared dangerous 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 3 miles. 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 dangerous.

Implications

If the decision is made to close Stoney Middleton Primary School and should the route be declared hazardous the financial implications of providing free transport have been assessed as follows:-

An existing school service for Lady Manners could collect children in Stoney Middleton at 8.25 a.m. arriving at Curbar at 8.30 a.m. This would have no cost implication for the Local Authority. There is no suitable provision in the afternoon. The cost of making this provision would be approximately £7,600 per annum. If the use of the existing provision in the morning is deemed inappropriate due to the disparity in ages of the pupils using the service, the cost of a bespoke bus service for morning and afternoon would be £11,400

per annum. The cost of providing transport for either the afternoon only or for the morning and afternoon journeys would be a pressure against the Local Authority's Home to School Transport budget.

4. 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.

5. Background Papers, Reports and Minutes of meetings as mentioned in this report. Report of the Strategic Director for Children and Younger Adults to the Cabinet on 12th December 2006.
6. Chief Officers' Recommendations The Hazardous Routes Panel is asked to consider all relevant information from the site visit and other evidence and then recommend to the Cabinet Member for School Planning and Support whether the above request for the route indicated to be declared as a dangerous route in accordance with the Authority's home to school transport policy should be approved.

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

<u>HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT - CRITERIA FOR ROUTE SAFETY</u>	<u>ROUTE: STONEY MIDDLETON TO CURBAR PRIMARY SCHOOL</u>	
	<u>RELEVANT INFORMATION (where applicable)</u>	<u>OFFICER'S COMMENTS</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.		
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.	Pavements exist on one or both sides of the road for the entire route.	The pavements are of reasonable width.
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.	A footpath exists opposite Meadow Close junction and runs alongside the A623 into Stoney Middleton village.	Access to footpath means crossing A623, however, there are reasonable gaps in the traffic to enable pedestrians to cross the road.
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 route is paved. Speed limits vary between 30 mph and 40 mph.	Traffic is fairly consistent, with a significant number of heavy goods vehicles using the A623.
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.	There is street lighting along the entire route.	It is not necessary to walk along the road at any point
6. Consideration should be given to the relevant accident record of the route with particular regard to the effect on pedestrian movement.	Accident statistics enclosed.	There have been 11 accidents in the last three years, one of which involved a pedestrian.
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.	Traffic lights with pedestrian crossing in place at Calver Sough crossroads. A pedestrian subway runs under A623 which avoids need to cross over road opposite Curbar Primary School.	Should pedestrians choose to cross over the A623 opposite Curbar Primary School, visibility is good.

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 Reference B000530/03 Loc - STONEY MIDDLETON A623 ENT TO
 ROCKMILL BUSINESS PARK
 Severity Slight Time 0630 First Rd A623 60 mph
 Day Wed Weather FINE Second Rd U 30 mph
 Date 17/09/2003 Surface DRY Lighting DAY-NO LIGHTS

Veh Cas
 1 CAR Turning Right W S
 2 M<125 O/Take stry Veh on O/S W E 1 DRIVER 19 Sli

Reference B000081/04 Loc - CALVER KINGSGATE J/W BASLOW
 ROAD (KNOWN LOCALLY AS DONKEY LANE)
 Severity Slight Time 1525 First Rd A623 30 mph
 Day Sun Weather FINE Second Rd U 30 mph
 Date 22/02/2004 Surface DRY Lighting DAY-LIGHTS

Veh Cas
 1 CAR Overtaking on nearside NW SE 1 PASSENGER 49 Sli
 2 OMV Turning Right NW SW

Reference B000067/04 Loc - STONEY MIDDLETON THE DALE O/S THE
 QUARRY ENTRANCE
 Severity slight Time 1205 First Rd A623 60 mph
 Day Wed Weather FINE Second Rd U 30 mph
 Date 25/02/2004 Surface WET Lighting DAY-NO LIGHTS

Veh Cas
 1 CAR Going ahead other E W 1 DRIVER 37 Sli
 2 G<3.5 Parked E PKK 2 DRIVER 45 Sli

Reference B000206/04 Loc - EYAM A623 THE DALE J/W B6521
 Severity Serious Time 1055 First Rd A623 60 mph
 Day Sat Weather FINE Second Rd B6521 60 mph
 Date 01/05/2004 Surface DRY Lighting DAY-NO LIGHTS

Veh Cas
 1 CAR Turning Right E N
 2 CAR Waiting to go ahead E W 1 PASSENGER 40 Sli
 5 PASSENGER 10 Sli
 3 CAR Waiting to go ahead E W 2 DRIVER 38 Sli
 3 PASSENGER 41 Sli
 4 CAR Stopping E W 4 DRIVER 53 Ser

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 Reference B000306/04 Loc - CALVER A623 J/W B6001 CALVER X/RDS
 Severity Serious Time 1020 First Rd A623 30 mph
 Day Fri Weather FINE Second Rd B6001 30 mph
 Date 25/06/2004 Surface DRY Lighting DAY-UNKNOWN

Veh Cas
 1 CAR Turning Right E N 1 DRIVER 45 Ser
 2 CAR Going ahead L/H bend NW E 2 DRIVER 34 Sli
 3 PASSENGER 9 Sli
 4 PASSENGER 7 Sli

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 Reference B000445/04 Loc - EYAM A623 J/W B6521
 Severity Serious Time 1445 First Rd A623 60 mph
 Day Wed Weather FINE Second Rd B6521 60 mph
 Date 02/09/2004 Surface DRY Lighting DAY-NO LIGHTS

Veh Cas
 1 CAR Turning Right N W
 2 CAR Turning Right E N 1 DRIVER 61 Ser

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 Reference B000346/05 Loc - STONEY MIDDLETON A623 THE DALE
 Severity Slight Time 1623 First Rd A623 60 mph
 Day Wed Weather FINE Second Rd
 Date 06/07/2005 Surface DRY Lighting DAY-NO LIGHTS

Veh Cas
 1 G>7.5 Going ahead other E W 1 DRIVER 39 Sli
 2 G>7.5 Going ahead other W E

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 Reference B000333/05 Loc - CALVER A623 KINGSGATE CALVER
 CROSSROADS J/W B6001
 Severity Slight Time 2133 First Rd A623 30 mph
 Day Sun Weather FINE Second Rd B6001 30 mph
 Date 10/07/2005 Surface DRY Lighting DAY-NO LIGHTS

Veh Cas
 1 CAR Going ahead R/R bend E NW 1 PASSENGER 21 Sli
 2 CAR Turning Right NW SW 2 DRIVER 30 Sli

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 Reference B000380/05 Loc - CALVER A523 KINGSGATE J/W DONKEY
 LANE
 Severity Slight Time 1300 First Rd A523 40 mph
 Day Sat Weather OTHER Second Rd U 30 mph
 Date 30/07/2005 Surface WET Lighting DAY-NO LIGHTS

Veh Cas
 1 TAXI Waiting to go ahead W E 1 DRIVER 41 Sli
 2 CAR Turning Right W S
 3 CAR Stopping W E
 4 G<3.5 Going ahead other W E

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 Reference B000486/05 Loc - EYAM A623 THE DALE 20 MTRS EAST
 J/W B6521
 Severity Slight Time 1402 First Rd A623 60 mph
 Day Fri Weather FINE Second Rd B6521 30 mph
 Date 23/09/2005 Surface WET Lighting DAY-NO LIGHTS

Veh Cas
 1 CAR Going ahead other E W 1 DRIVER 41 Sli
 2 CAR Going ahead other E W 2 PASSENGER 42 Sli

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 Reference B000141/06 Loc - STONEY MIDDLETON A623 THE AVENUE
 LOC N/V
 Severity Slight Time 1615 First Rd A623 30 mph
 Day Fri Weather FINE Second Rd mph
 Date 31/05/2006 Surface DRY Lighting DAY-LIGHTS

Veh Cas
 1 CAR O/Take stry Veh on O/S NW SE 1 PEDESTRIAN SW 16 Sli
 2 PSV Parked PPK PPK

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 The above information relates to personal injury accidents recorded by Derbyshire
 Constabulary on the STATS19 form. The accident description is an initial account
 and may be subject to amendment after further investigation.
