

## Renfrewshire Council

To: HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY POLICY BOARD

On: 2 NOVEMBER 2004

Report by  
Director of Planning & Transport

### **GUIDELINES ON ASSESSING WALKING ROUTES TO AND FROM SCHOOL**

#### **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of revised guidelines for assessing walking routes to and from school produced by the West of Scotland Road Safety Forum and seek approval for the adoption of these guidelines by Renfrewshire Council.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Board is asked to approve the use of the West of Scotland Road Safety Forum guidelines for assessing an acceptable walking route to school when carrying out future assessments in Renfrewshire.

#### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Council provides free school transport to primary pupils residing more than 1 mile (1,609 m) from school and for secondary pupils living more than 2 miles (3,218 m) from school.
- 3.2 In some circumstances parents request free school transport where the distance would not normally entitle this. In these cases, the Department of Education and Leisure Services request that the Roads Division carry out an assessment of the safety of a route to school. This is carried out using the former Local Authority Road Safety Officers' Association (LARSOA) Guidelines.
- 3.3 LARSOA published new guidelines on the identification of hazards and the assessment of risk of walked routes to school in March 2002. Following this, the West of Scotland Road Safety Forum established a group of officers to review these and the Forum's existing guidelines on assessing walking routes to school.

- 3.4 The group has completed their review of both sets of guidance and produced an updated West of Scotland Road Safety Forum guide. This updated guidance clarifies the role of the Education Authority and adopts much of the previous procedures for assessing the suitability of routes. A shortfall of the existing guidance was that it did not provide a procedure for assessing safety when a road was crossed. The guidance now incorporates a procedure for assessing the suitability of roads and traffic conditions for pedestrians to cross.
- 3.5 The West of Scotland Road Safety Forum decided to support and adopt the revised guidelines at the meeting on Monday 15th March 2004. A copy of the guidance is attached (Appendix 1).
- 3.6 In some circumstances the implications of the new guidelines could mean the provision of school transport would be required.
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### **Implications of this Report**

- 1 **Financial Implications** - Acceptance of this report may mean additional costs that at this time have yet to be quantified.
- 2 **Personnel Implications** - none.
- 3 **Community Plan Implications**
- Social inclusion - none.
- Modernising government - none.
- Sustainable development - Adoption of the West of Scotland Road Safety Forum Guidelines will improve road safety for children and encourage more walking.
- 4 **Legal Implications** - none.
- 5 **Property Implications** - none.
- 6 **Information Technology Implications** - none.
- 7 **Race Equality Implications** - none.

**WEST OF SCOTLAND ROAD SAFETY FORUM**

This document produced by the West of Scotland Road Safety Forum gives guidance on the identification and assessment of road safety hazards to pedestrians on route to school.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Each Education Authority has a policy on the provision of free school transport within council areas. Where provision is denied under this policy, parents may appeal on the grounds of road safety if they consider the route to school unsafe to walk.

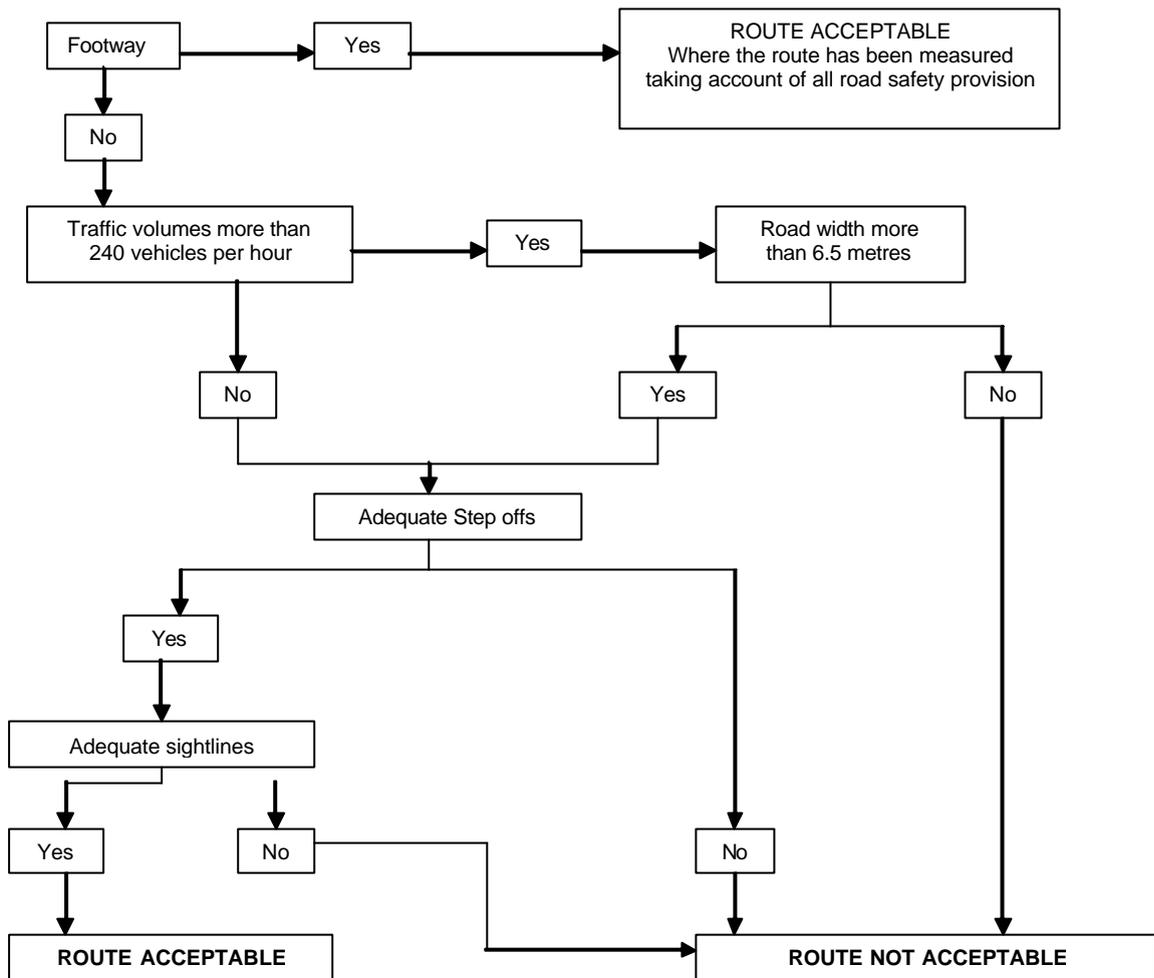
1.2 In considering any appeal the Education Authority arrange for a road safety assessment to be carried out by the council service responsible for road safety. The Education Authority must specify the route to be assessed. This assessment considers the road safety risks resulting from pedestrian and vehicle conflict or safety hazards resulting from defects within the road such as tripping points. Personal security issues are not addressed by this assessment.

**2. THE ROUTE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE**

2.1 In carrying out the assessment, it is assumed that the parent or carer has arranged for the child to be accompanied as necessary by a responsible person.

### **3. WALKING ALONG A FOOTWAY**

- 3.1 The assessment will require the route to be walked in both directions on a school day and where practicable at a time when the child or children would be expected to walk.
- 3.2 During the assessment, any hazards that present unmanageable road safety difficulties be noted.
- 3.3 Where a footway is provided it should be continuous – excluding gaps of up to 20m – or be an acceptable local equivalent e.g. dedicated part of road sectioned by white lining.
- 3.4 Areas where children are expected to congregate such as bus pick up points should be of adequate size to safely accommodate the required number of pedestrians
- 3.5 Some routes may lie along roads that have neither footway nor verge. On such roads, consideration must be given to the width of the carriageway, traffic speed and composition (such as frequent long / heavy goods vehicles) and to both pedestrian and driver visibility. (ie sharp bends with high hedgerows or other obstructions to visibility). Refer to the flow chart below for guidance.



#### 4 ROAD CROSSING ASSESSMENT

4.1 Where pedestrians are required to cross a road the availability of any facility (e.g. central refuges, pedestrian crossing, traffic signals etc) to assist such crossing should be taken into consideration. Where no crossing facility exists, a suitable location should be identified and an assessment of the risk generated by crossing the road should be made.

4.2 If a crossing manoeuvre is required, the gap time in traffic should be measured to ensure child pedestrians have frequent and sufficient time gaps to cross the carriageway. The assessment procedure is detailed below.

#### 4.3 Crossing Time and Visible Gap Time

The crossing time required for a child pedestrian to safely cross a carriageway should be calculated as;

Crossing time (seconds) = Thinking time + Carriageway width / Walking Speed

This is based on 1 second thinking time and a walking speed of 0.9metres per second

e.g.  $1 + 7.3 / 0.9 = 9.11$  seconds

The visible gap time in traffic is the time between approaching vehicles in either direction to reach the crossing point. At sites where visibility is limited a measure of time should be taken from when a vehicle comes into view until it reaches the crossing point and that should exceed the time required for pedestrians to cross the road.

For a crossing to be considered acceptable, 4 visible gap times each greater than the crossing time is required in each 5 minute period.

#### 4.4 Site Survey.

The heaviest vehicle flows usually occur during the morning journey period. Therefore, the site surveys should generally be conducted during this period, unless it is proven that the afternoon period is the busier. The crossing should be walked in both directions to ensure adequate visibility from both sides of the road.

#### 4.5 Traffic Counts

There is no need to classify vehicles as pedestrians do not consider vehicle classification when determining whether to cross or not

### **5 REPORTING ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 A completed road safety assessment should be reported to the Education Authority stating whether the route is considered acceptable to be walked or not.
- 5.2 If hazards are identified that are unreasonable for supervised, child pedestrians to cope with these should be listed along with any recommended measures required to mitigate them.