

Halesowen Area Committee – 12th November 2008

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Wollescote Primary School – Safer Routes to School

Purpose of Report

1. To seek the Area Committee's views on the provision of improved footway facilities in the vicinity of Wollescote Primary School, Cradley by introduction of a road narrowing scheme.

Background

2. Wollescote Primary School is situated within a mixed residential and industrial area in the Cradley Area of the Borough and although its main entrance is located off Drummond Road, the school is also bordered by Balds Lane and Careless Green as well as being close to the mini roundabout at the junction of these two busy roads with Crabbe Street.
3. Whilst the school is served by an existing zebra crossing in Drummond Road and two school crossing patrols near to the mini roundabout, there are parts of Balds Lane, Careless Green and Crabbe Street, that have either very limited or no footway facilities for children and parents travelling to and from the school. This position can, therefore, lead to a situation whereby two people travelling in the opposite direction can find it extremely difficult to pass without at least one of the parties having to wait or otherwise having to step into the carriageway.
4. The narrowness of the carriageways in this area also has an impact on this situation because vehicles inevitably have to travel close to the kerb in order to avoid oncoming traffic whereas any parked vehicles often pull partly onto the footway, which further compounds the problem by reducing the already limited width for pedestrians.
5. As part of the Safer Routes to School programme, in response to a request from the school, safety guard railing was recently provided at a the location of a new access to the school off Careless Green. The guard railing was also supplemented with bollards to protect the existing footway provisions in the vicinity of the junction with Balds Lane and Crabbe Street. Unfortunately these measures and in particular the bollards constrain the existing limited footway space and hinder pedestrian flow.

- 6 To increase the width of the existing footways it would be necessary to reduce the existing carriageway width by a corresponding amount. This can be achieved in the vicinity of the mini roundabout with only relatively minor changes to the existing layout, but in relation to Careless Green, any modifications to the existing carriageway would have the consequential effect of reducing the available road width and thereby impact upon the free flow of traffic and ability to pick up and drop off passengers along this street.
- 7 Having regard to the nature of the surrounding area and the various access requirements of both residents and frontages, it is felt that the introduction of a one way street along Careless Green would not be appropriate in this instance. However, the introduction of a road narrowing scheme, incorporating a priority "Give-Way" system and the provision of wider footways would seem to offer a reasonable alternative. A proposal illustrating the principle for a road narrowing measures is shown on Drawing No. HT2719 attached as Appendix A to this report.
- 8 In consultation with officials at Wollescote Primary School the proposal were considered to have some merit; however, there were concerns for the impact on walk routes about the junction of Crabbe Street and Balds Lane and the passenger pick and drop off from Careless Green.
- 9 The Government encourages the involvement of schools and their children in developing such proposals and the school has indicated they would welcome further involvement preferably in liaison with the Councils School Travel Plan Advisor accordingly their views are to be sought and will be considered along with the Committees views in presenting a scheme to the Cabinet Member for Transport for approval.

Finance

- 10 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report as the implementation of any measures would be subject to subsequent approval as part of a future programme of works.

Law

- 11 The Council carries out its functions to provide, improve and maintain highways under Sections 24, 41 and 62 of the Highways Act 1980 and exercises traffic regulatory powers under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
- 12 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate or is conducive to or incidental to the discharge of any of its functions.
- 13 The Council has a statutory responsibility for the promotion of road safety measures to reduce the number and severity of road accident casualties under the provision of the Road Traffic (Consequential Provisions) Act 1988.

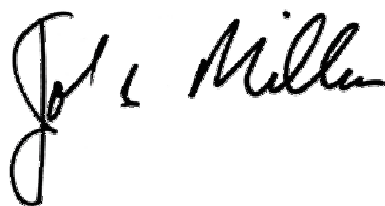
14 Guard rails may be provided under Section 66 of the Highways Act 1980.

Equality Impact

15 The Capital Programme includes specific provision to benefit pedestrians and other vulnerable road users of the highway, assist social inclusion and the mobility of the less able with measures that seek to improve access for young people to schools.

Recommendation

16 That, subject to further consultation with Wollescote Primary School, the Cabinet Member for Transport be recommended to consider the inclusion of a proposal as part of the Council's Safer Routes to School programme for 2009/2010



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List of Background Papers

Various requests to improve facilities for pedestrians travelling to and from the Wollescote Primary School

Appendices

Appendix A – Drawing No HT2719