

AT A MEETING of the REGULATORY COMMITTEE B – SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEAL PANEL held at The Basingstoke Country Hotel, Nately Scures on Thursday 8 November 2012.

**PRESENT:**

Councillors: J. Porter (Chairman), C. Carter, R. McIntosh

**1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

That Councillor J. Porter be appointed Chairman for this meeting only.

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that, where they believed they had a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter considered at the meeting, they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council’s Members’ Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore, Members were mindful that where they believed they had a non-pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting, they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

There were no declarations of interest made by the members of the panel under this item.

**3 DEPUTATIONS**

Two appellants made verbal representations, but no other deputations were received

**4 SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEAL: HATCH LANE, OLD BASING, TO THE COSTELLO SCHOOL, BASINGSTOKE, VIA CRABTREE PLANTATION**

The panel considered the report of the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment (Item 4 in the Minute Book) on the walking route between Hatch Lane, Old Basing, and The Costello School, Basingstoke, via Crabtree Plantation.

Having previously walked the route that morning accompanied by officers from the Economy, Transport and Environment Department and the appellants, the panel carefully considered the evidence and concerns expressed by the appellants and concluded that the route was available accompanied, but not unaccompanied.

Members were mindful of section 8 of the national guidelines for the assessment of walked routes to school, and they felt that the available route was safe for an accompanied child. The panel’s particular reasons for their finding were:

- The route was within 3 miles of the school (as determined by section 444(5) of the

Education Act 1996)

- There was limited inter-action with traffic, particularly when crossing Crabtree Plantation
- When there was interaction with traffic, there was pavement and these pathways were well lit
- When crossings needed to be made at Black Dam and Old Common Road, there were subways to cross the roads
- When a crossing needed to be made at Blenheim Road, there were sufficient gaps in the traffic flow and sight lines to allow opportunities to cross safely

The panel were concerned about the crossing at Byfleet Avenue and London Road. Members found that they were uncertain when to cross at this junction, as whilst there was a light controlled crossing for London Road, there was not a light controlled crossing for Byfleet Avenue. They believed that such confusion would make it difficult for a young person to predict when to cross safely and they felt that parental vigilance was necessary to ensure the safety of a child crossing Byfleet Avenue

Members were content that the route walked was the shortest available route deemed safe by the County Council, and that it was still below the national limit of 3 miles for children of 11-16 to walk to school. The panel were also mindful that they were looking at the route to address the risks resulting from the inter-action between pedestrians and traffic and understood from advice given that their decision could be on this basis only.

Therefore, whilst the panel believed that in accordance with the national guidelines, there was a route available, this was only the case when a child was accompanied by a responsible parent or carer. Consequently, they concluded that the route between Hatch Lane, Old Basing to the Costello School, Basingstoke, via Crabtree Plantation, was available accompanied, but not unaccompanied.

It was noted that because of this decision, separate consideration would be given by the Children's Services Department to any parents or carers who are unable to accompany their children by virtue of individual circumstances.

**RESOLVED:**

That the walking route between Hatch Lane, Old Basing and The Costello School, Basingstoke, via Crabtree Plantation is available accompanied, but is not available unaccompanied.