

Shropshire Council's Extremely Hazardous Routes Policy Revision Proposals

Draft Response from Ludlow21 Sustainable transport Group

Ludlow 21 Sustainable Transport Group welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

1. Assumptions

We are being asked to comment on the aspect of Section 508B of the 1996 Act which states: "This Policy relates only to those children who are defined by the Act as eligible for home to school transport if they "cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest suitable school because the nature of the route is deemed unsafe to walk".

(Department for Education Statutory Guidance 2014)

2. Ludlow Schools

Ludlow has 3 State Schools many of whose pupils walk (either alone or accompanied) to and from school:

- Ludlow County Primary School comprising an Infant and Junior school on a split site.
- Ludlow St Laurence's Primary School
- Ludlow Church of England School

3. Hazardous routes for Ludlow Primary School children

3.1 Ludlow Infants school (ages 4-7). The entrance to the school is located on a busy highway (Sandpits Avenue) and children approaching the school come from along the whole of Sandpits Avenue and from roads to the west (Gravel Hill, Livesey Road and Avenue Sandpits Avenue) and the east (Dodmore Lane, Whitbread Road, Wheeler Road and Riddings Road). Many approaching from the north enter Sandpits Avenue from the New Road/Henley Road area. Most infants are accompanied by responsible adults but many older children making shorter journeys are not and all should be considered within the terms of this review.

Hazards

There is a poorly marked crossing across Sandpits Avenue opposite the entrance to the school which has signage and speed 'humps' either side of the crossing. However, there are no road markings and the speed humps do not slow traffic sufficiently.

Requirements

We believe that this important crossing should be adequately marked, preferably as a Pelican crossing with traffic lights.

3.2 Ludlow Junior School (ages 6/7- 11). The entrance to the Junior School is in a residential area of Clee View Ward and there are no identified hazardous routes in its vicinity although, of course, pupils travelling from other areas of the town could travel along some.

3.3 Ludlow St Laurence's Primary School (ages 4-11). This school is located at the end of Jockey Field Road – a residential area which, in itself, poses no hazards for children getting to

the school and they will, in any case, usually be accompanied by an adult. However children approaching Jockey Field Road from the west must cross Old Street - one of the main exit roads from the town centre and busy at all times.

Hazards

The crossing point for Jockey Fields is in the downhill section of Old Street where the 20mph speed limit changes to 30mph and traffic increases speed. This road is used by heavy traffic including buses and HGVs and parents have long complained about the lack of a pedestrian crossing here.

Requirements

This important crossing point should be adequately marked, preferably as a Pelican crossing, and the 20mph section extended to encompass it.

4. Hazardous routes for Ludlow Church of England School (ages 11-16)

Ludlow CoE School is situated at the north end of Bromfield Road which is a very busy road and the most direct route to the town centre for traffic travelling south along the A49. Children from outside the town either travel by school buses or are brought to the school by private car. The majority of children living within Ludlow walk, cycle or use scooters to reach the school and they come along all roads leading into the Bromfield Road especially Henley Road, Fishmore Road, New Road, Coronation Avenue and Corve Street.

Hazards - Bromfield Road

The short section either side of the school entrance is well signed as 20mph but the remainder of the road is 30mph. Traffic routinely exceeds 30mph along the length of Bromfield Road – a source of great annoyance to local residents – and is a major hazard for pedestrians and cyclists. There are two pedestrian crossings - well marked and with beacons in the section leading into Coronation Avenue but only one is in the 20mph zone. The next crossing on the Bromfield Road as it turns east towards New Road has a central reservation but is otherwise unmarked. During the working week the footpaths in this section are usually filled with parked cars, sometimes so much so that pedestrians must walk in the road. At its junction with Fishmore and Henley roads, there is a mini roundabout but no safe crossing point at all and no footpath on the south side as it passes under the railway bridge. Children have to wait for a break in the traffic or risk crossing against oncoming traffic which is often speeding coming down the hills on Fishmore and Henley Roads.

Requirements

The whole of the Bromfield Road should be a permanent 20mph zone. The mini roundabout should also have pedestrian crossings to enable pupils to cross safely.

Hazards - Coronation Avenue

This starts at the junction between Bromfield Road and Burway Lane and is a 30mph area. There is a new pedestrian crossing opposite the Apple Green service station but the road markings are badly faded – especially on the southbound side. The Beacon on the southbound side is totally obscured when a tree in a nearby private garden is in leaf.

Requirements

The pedestrian crossing needs to be properly maintained to ensure that is clearly recognisable and there should be a 20mph limit along its length up to and including Corve Street.

5. Hazards applying to both Ludlow Primary and Ludlow Church of England schools

Hazards

The children who come along Henley Road and New Road to Ludlow school must negotiate the mini roundabout at the junction of New Road, Henley Road, Gravel Hill and Dodmore Lane. This roundabout has a designated crossing near the bus stop which once had a 'Lollipop person' ensuring safe passage for children during school opening and closing times. Now, traffic rarely slows and there is well documented evidence of very scared children trying to cross the road during the morning and late afternoon rush hours. This crossing is also used by children attending the Infants School so is even more of a concern. Children reaching this area must cross a number of roads – including Gravel Hill, Dodmore Lane and Sandpits which have no marked crossing points at all.

Shropshire Council, at the request of Ludlow Town Council, carried out a Road Safety Audit Stage 3 on this junction on 04. 05. 2021 [Report Reference Shropshire/2021/001]. As yet, none of the recommendations have been carried out!!

Requirements

Every road along which unaccompanied children walk must be designated as 20mph.

Conclusion

The main issue impacting the safety of children journeying to Ludlow schools is speeding traffic. Ludlow town residents and Ludlow Town Council have requested that the whole of Ludlow's residential areas are classified as 20mph zones but Shropshire Council continue to ignore the requests.

20mph speed limits are known to improve safety for all road users, especially children and those with mobility issues, but they also reduce noise and air pollution, increase healthy travel modes (walking, cycling etc) and are a much less expensive method of controlling traffic for councils. It also enables excessive and ugly signage to be removed so increasing the attractiveness of our medieval town.

Providing safer transportation to schools should not be necessary for children able to walk or cycle to school (which is a much healthier option) and so, once again we make a plea for Ludlow to become a 20mph town.