



# **Pedestrian Route Assessments**

Walked Routes to Schools

FINAL Version 1.2, November 2017

Children, Families and Adults

<b>Current Document Status</b>			
<b>Version</b>	1.2 FINAL (updated)	<b>Approving body</b>	Cabinet
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<b>Responsible officer</b>	Sharon Hindley Senior Manager, Place Planning, Access and Inclusion	<b>Review date</b>	May 2018
<b>Location</b>			

<b>Version History</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Author/Editor</b>	<b>Comments</b>
November 2017	1.2	Helen Peerless	Amendment to reflect change to walking distance for children in Years 4 to 6.
May 2016	1.1	Helen Peerless	Final draft approved by Cabinet.
March 2016	1.0	Helen Peerless	First draft for consultation.

<b>Comprehensive Impact Assessment Record</b>					
<b>Date</b>	<b>Type of assessment conducted</b>	<b>Stage/level completed (where applicable)</b>	<b>Summary of actions taken decisions made</b>	<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Impact Assessment review date</b>
April 2016	Initial	Complete	NFA	Helen Peerless, Policy and Organisation Manager	

<b>Document retention</b>	
<b>Document retention period</b>	5 years in hard and electronic copies.



## Introduction

Local Authorities have a statutory duty under the Education Act 1996 to provide home to school transport for eligible children (as defined by Section 508B of the Act).

One of the categories of eligible children for whom transport must be provided is defined as 'children who 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). This applies to children who live within statutory walking distance of their nearest suitable school (currently up to two miles for primary aged children in Reception to Year 3 and three miles for primary aged children in Years 4 to 6 and secondary aged children).

The legislation places a duty on local authorities to identify such routes but does not prescribe how routes should be assessed to determine their suitability.

This document sets out the policy and procedure against which Cornwall Council will assess pedestrian routes to school to determine if they are considered 'unsafe to walk'.

Where concerns are raised about the safety of a route which is below statutory walking distance and is:

- Between the child's home and his or her nearest or designated school
- Between the child's home and a school where she or he has been allocated a place as the nearest school with room
- Between the child's home and the designated pick-up point for home to school transport provided by the local authority

a pedestrian route assessment in accordance with this policy will be commissioned by Education, Health and Social Care and undertaken by the Road Safety Engineering Team in CORMAC.

The procedure is based on guidelines issued by Road Safety GB in 2012 entitled 'Assessment of Walked Routes to Schools' and should be read in conjunction with those guidelines.

## **Principles of the assessment process**

The assessment procedure is based on the following principles as determined by statutory guidance, the Road Safety GB guidelines and associated case law.

### **Available routes**

The measurement of the walking distance between a child's home and school in order to determine eligibility is defined by the statutory guidance as 'the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk safely' and which 'may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads'. Route assessments to assess the safety of the route therefore take into account all such rights of way.

### **Accompaniment**

Cornwall's Home to School Transport Policy makes it clear that it is considered the responsibility of the parent/carer to accompany a child (or arrange suitable supervision) as necessary when walking to and from school, including to and from a provided transport pick-up and set-down point. The Pedestrian Route Assessment Process therefore assumes that a child will be accompanied by a responsible parent or carer.

### **Risks**

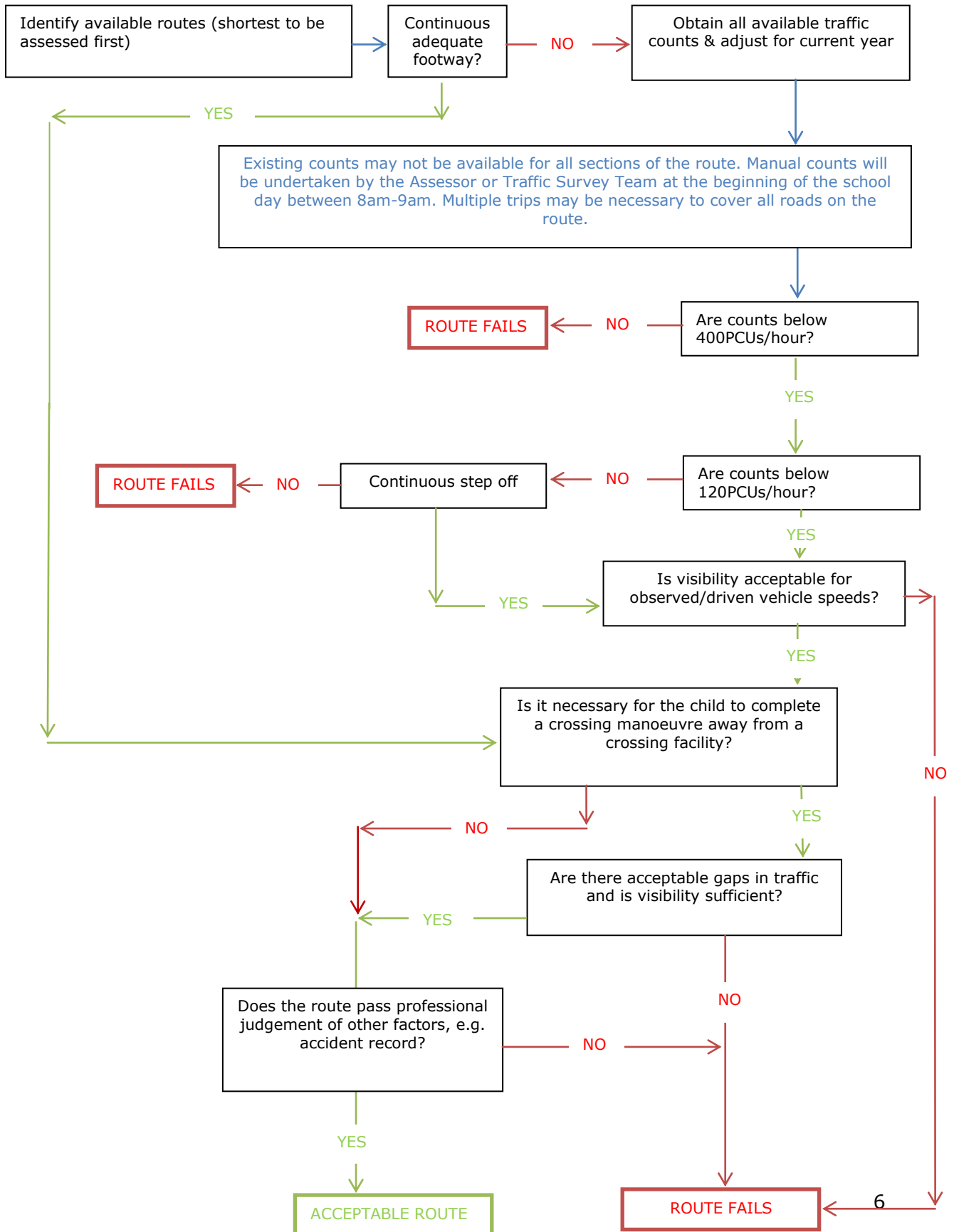
The assessment process takes into account only the potential risk/s created by traffic, highway and topographical conditions. It does not take into account issues of personal security as it is assumed a child will be accompanied as necessary by a responsible parent or carer.

### **Site visits**

At least one site visit will always be undertaken during the route assessment process. Where it is necessary to undertake traffic counts or speed readings the visit/s will be undertaken at the beginning of the school day between 8am and 9am. If it is not necessary to undertake traffic counts or speed readings, a site visit may be performed at any time of day. The route will be walked and photos taken along its length. Any sections of the route which may be of specific interest (poor visibility, footpath sections, speed limit signing, and hazards) will be photographed and noted.

## The assessment procedure

The flowchart below shows the assessment procedure which will be undertaken to determine a route's suitability for school pedestrian use. Definitions and further explanation of the criteria used are given in the next section.



## Assessment criteria and definitions

### Continuous adequate footway

Adequate footway is considered to be a footway or roadside trip which is of adequate usable walking width for the circumstances. To be usable it should be clear of any overgrowth (i.e. shrubs and tree obstructing the footway).

### Traffic flows

Where there is not continuous adequate footway, it will firstly be necessary to consider traffic flows for that part of the route. Annual Averaged Daily Traffic (AADT) counts will be used where these are available, and will be factored up using national growth factors to provide a current flow. Where traffic counts are not already available a manual count will be undertaken or ATC's, Radarclass or Speedvisor counts will be used. Traffic counts will be undertaken at the beginning of the school day between 8am and 9am but will be performed at any time of the year, regardless of weather.

Traffic counts will determine the traffic flow for each section of the route in line with the following definitions:

Heavy traffic flow: over 840 Passenger Car Units (PCUs) per hour

Medium traffic flow: 400 to 840 PCUs per hour

Light traffic flow: up to 400 PCUs per hour

Very light traffic flow: up to 120 PCUs per hour

Passenger Car Units will be calculated as follows:

3 pedal cycles	= 1 PCU
2 motorcycles	= 1 PCU
1 car	= 1 PCU
1 light goods vehicle (up to 3.5 tonnes gross weight)	= 1 PCU
1 bus/coach (over 3.5 tonnes)	= 2 PCUs
Goods vehicles (over 3.5 tonnes)	= 2 PCUs
Goods vehicles (over 7.5 tonnes/multi axle lorries)	= 3 PCUs

### Step offs

Step offs are defined as providing an opportunity to step clear of the roadway onto a reasonably even and firm, surface such as a roadside verge.

### Visibility / lines of sight

Routes with light traffic flow and adequate step offs, or very light traffic flow without step offs, will only be considered non-hazardous where:

- lines of sight are sufficient for pedestrians to see oncoming vehicles and have sufficient time to safely take avoiding action.
- lines of sight for drivers are sufficient for them to see pedestrians walking along the carriageway and have sufficient time to safely take avoiding action at the speed they are travelling.

Lines of sight for drivers are measured from a height of 1.05m and must be equal or greater to the overall minimum stopping distance for traffic at the recorded 85%ile speed of traffic on that section of the route. Visibilities will

be measured at their shortest point from where a driver could see a pedestrian on a bend.

### **Speed surveys**

Speed readings will be measured using a radar gun, or similar device. If this is impractical, average speed surveys will be carried out using time & distance over sections of the route.

Where traffic speeds are very low (20mph or below), the route will be presumed safe unless there are exceptional factors.

### **Crossings**

Where there is a need to cross roads, a route will only be considered non-hazardous where there is either:

- Crossing facilities (e.g. zebra, pelican or puffin crossing), pedestrian phase at traffic lights, school crossing patrol or pedestrian refuge/s; or
- Sufficient gaps in the traffic flow and sight lines to allow enough opportunity to cross safely.

'Sufficient gaps' is defined as four gaps in each five minute period, based on a walking speed of 3 feet per second. A gap survey will not be considered necessary where flows are below 800 PCUs per hour, as traffic flows below this level are considered to provide sufficient gaps. If traffic flows are in excess of this, a gap survey will be undertaken.

Visibility should allow a vehicle to stop, given the 85%ile speed for traffic on that section of the route.

### **Road accident and casualty record**

The road accident record and road casualty record will be considered for all route assessments.

### **Road width**

On routes without continuous footway or verge, consideration will be given to the width of the carriageway and speed and type of traffic using the route.

### **Street lighting**

In line with the Road Safety GB guidelines, the presence or absence of street lighting is not considered to be a factor. This is because adequate sight lines and visibility are considered as part of the assessment process and it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that pedestrians are dressed and equipped appropriately for the journey and weather conditions.

### **Rural schools**

Where schools are located in rural or village locations without footway or step offs, traffic flow may exceed the 'very light' threshold at certain times of the day (such as school beginning and end times) in the immediate



vicinity of the school and/or village. It would be impractical to suggest that such village or school locations are not suitable for any pedestrian use, and professional judgement will therefore be exercised and consideration given to factors such as speed limits or other road safety measures in determining the outcome of the assessment.

### **Professional judgement**

The Road Safety GB guidelines make it clear that, particularly in rural areas, the exercise of continuous professional judgement is likely to be required. No criteria can provide the answers to every situation or risk that may be encountered.

Professional judgement will be exercised in all route assessments. For example, where a route passes all criteria but there is an exceptional reason for judging the route unsuitable (e.g. unacceptable width with the proportion of HGV flow) the route may be failed on the basis of the assessors' professional judgement.

## **Appeals process**

Where a parent/carer disagrees with the outcome of a Pedestrian Route Assessment, they have the right to submit an appeal under the Home to School Transport Policy two-stage appeals process.

### **Stage 1**

The parent/carer has 20 working days from receipt of the Local Authority's decision to make a written request asking for a review of the decision.

Appeals under Stage 1 are considered by a Senior Officer who has not been involved in the original decision.

### **Stage 2**

The parent/carer has 20 working days from receipt of the Local Authority's Stage One decision to make a written request to escalate the matter to Stage Two.

Appeals under Stage 2 will be heard by the Local Authority's Transport Appeals Panel, made up of elected Councillors who are independent of any previous decisions which have been made regarding the transport application or Stage 1 appeal.

**While waiting for an appeal to be heard the responsibility for the child's attendance and safe travel to and from school remains with the parent/carer.**

### **Local Government Ombudsman**

The Panel's decision is final and there is no further right of appeal. However, there is a right of complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman if the complainant considers that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal was handled.

If the complainant considers the decision of the independent panel to be flawed on public law grounds, the complainant may apply for judicial review.