
To: Petitions Board

On: 25 March 2024

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Petition – Safe Travel to School, Elderslie

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Council has agreed procedures in relation to the submission of petitions including parameters for determining valid petitions and those areas where petitions would not be valid.
- 1.2 All valid petitions are to be submitted to the Board for consideration and a summary report is to be prepared on any petitions which are not considered to be valid in terms of the procedures. It is for the Board to determine the validity of such petitions.
- 1.3 A petition containing 275 signatures has been received from Ms L Clulow in the following terms: -

“Lack of safe places to cross the main road and council policy are putting children residing in the streets surrounding Newton Avenue (including Roundhill Dr; Newton Dr; Newton Ave and part Main Rd) in danger. This small pocket of streets which is 0.02 miles under the qualifying 2 mile zone excludes secondary school children from travelling to and from Castlehead using the council's 'Safe travel to school' bus.

This policy technicality means:

a lone child can be expected to make a 48 min each way walk on own crossing 2 busy roads with no safe crossing.

OR

The child could use public transport (on own). With no nearby safe crossing (running gauntlet of main rd or crossing over cycle bridge which is known for daylight sex attacks not viable options) the child must walk 10 mins (in opposite direction to where they are going) to the bottom of Glenpatrick Rd to use pedestrian crossing and then get the public bus from the same stop their peers wait for the school bus. They would then have to traverse from the museum to the school on foot (and in the dark during winter months)

Both these options are deeply unsettling for both parent and child.

This petition is asking that the council provide children residing in these areas attending Castlehead with a safe place to cross the main road and an unconditional school bus pass allowing travel to and from school safely with peers.

The councils 'safe travel to school' policy hasn't been reviewed in 10 years. There have been significant traffic, societal and infrastructural changes since then. With the new houses being built at the top of Newton Ave, the existing traffic problems is only going to worsen.

the petition and signatures can be viewed here:

<https://chnq.it/tRYLPjYdbW>

Newspaper article relating to this issue can be viewed here:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/in-your-area/renfrewshire/mum-scots-girl-left-travel-31770134>”

- 1.4 The Road Safety Officer, Environment, Housing & Infrastructure, and the Resources Support Manager, Children’s Services have provided a response to the concerns raised in the petition and where appropriate suggested actions to resolve them as outlined below: -

“Renfrewshire Council, Children’s Services has an approved home to school transport policy. This was approved by the Education Policy Board in May 2013. The policy sets out the council’s qualifying criteria for home to school transport. All routes within the policy were assessed for safety in 2010, the assessments were carried out by a qualified road safety officer from the council following the West of Scotland Road Safety Forum Guide known as Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association (LARSOA) Guidelines.

As part of that policy, Renfrewshire Council provides home to school transport to secondary school pupils living more than two miles away from their catchment schools or where there is no safe walking route to the school. The assessment of a walking route is carried out by the Roads Department and is done using West of Scotland Road Safety Forum Guide previously known as Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association (LARSOA) Guidelines.

The last review of this route was carried out in 2009/2010 and whilst, since then, there have been infrastructure changes and housing developments, Road Safety Audits will have been carried out at certain sections to ensure routes remained safe. Environment, Housing and Infrastructure also has inspectors maintaining routes regularly to ensure our networks are safe. As the result of this, we believe Renfrewshire Council's network remains safe and accessible for all.

I am sorry that the petitioners feel that this route is no longer safe. However, we stress that this policy states, under section 2.1, that in carrying out the assessment, there is an assumption that the parent or carer will arrange for the child to be accompanied as necessary by a responsible person.

In response to the concerns raised and due to the time passed since the last assessment, Renfrewshire Council will conduct a full assessment of this route and will report back findings in line with the Guidelines on "Safe Walking Route to and from School – Assessing Walking Routes to and from School."

In relation to crossing requests, Renfrewshire Council are happy to conduct a crossing assessment on Main Road, Elderslie in line with this petition. We would request a location be shared with colleagues prior to the assessment being carried out. All findings will be shared."

- 1.5 The role of the Board is to consider the petition and take the appropriate action in respect of the petition which will be one of the following:
- (a) that no action is taken, in which case the reasons will be specified and intimated to the petitioner;
 - (b) that the petition be referred to the relevant director/and or policy board for further investigation, with or without any specific recommendation; or
 - (c) refer the petition to another organisation if the petition relates to that organisation.
- 1.6 The principal petitioner, together with one supporter has been invited to attend the meeting.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Board considers the petition.
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3. Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – none

2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** - none
4. **Legal** – none
5. **Property/Assets** – none
6. **Information Technology** - none.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - none

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** - none
9. **Procurement** - none
10. **Risk** - none.
11. **Privacy Impact** - none
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – not applicable.
13. **Climate Risk** – not applicable

List of Background Papers

- (a) Background Paper - 1 Petition

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