

# RCT School Walking Route Assessment

Ysgol Llanhari to Y Pant Comprehensive  
School

March 2025





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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Redstart has been commissioned by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCT) to undertake an assessment to determine the availability of the walked route between Ysgol Llanhari and Y Pant Comprehensive School, Pontyclun.
- 1.2 A route is considered to be available and safe for a learner to walk alone or, if appropriate for the age of the learner, accompanied by an adult. In determining the comparative safety of a walking route, an assessment of the risks that escorting parents/guardians and learners might encounter along the route between home and school needs to be made.
- 1.3 Such assessments will follow the Welsh Government Statutory Provisions on the Risk Assessment of Walked Routes to School, as laid down within the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014.

## 2. Policy Alignment

- 2.1 The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 sets out the legal framework within which travel provisions are made for learners travelling from home to school. In June 2014 the Welsh Government published the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance to aid local authorities in the implementation of the Measure.
- 2.2 Local authorities are under a legal duty to assess the travel needs of learners who walk to school. The Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance enables local authorities to determine whether a route to school is 'available' (safe) to walk or is deemed 'unavailable' (unsafe) and the safeguards that could be put in place to ensure that the route is or can become 'available' (safe) to walk.
- 2.3 The Welsh Government document requires the following issues to be considered in assessing a route;

For a route to be classed as available (safe) the route needs to be;

- A continuous adequate footway on roads which carry medium to heavy traffic; **or**
- "Step offs" on roads which have low traffic flow but adequate sight lines to provide sufficient advance warning to drivers and pedestrians; **or**
- On roads with very low traffic flow, no "step offs", but sufficient good sight lines to provide adequate advance warning.

If there is a need to cross roads it is recommended that there should be one of the following safety measures:

- Pedestrian refuge; **or**
- Visibility – it should be good enough to allow vehicles to stop safely (given the 85th percentile speed rule, vehicle stopping distances are as those set out in the Highway Code); **or**
- Sufficient gaps in the traffic flow and sight line to allow enough opportunities to cross safely; **or**
- Sufficient crossing facilities (for example, zebra, pelican crossings); **or**
- Sufficient pedestrian phases at traffic lights (including necessary refuges); **or**
- Sufficient School Crossing Patrols (lollipop people).

- 2.4 The following information should be considered as detailed in the Learner Travel document and summarised below;
- a) Speed limits around or near schools;
  - b) Two-way traffic flows recorded in Passenger Car Units (PCUs) - low traffic flow is determined below 400 vehicles in a 1-hour period, medium traffic flows between 400 to 840 and heavy traffic flows over 840 vehicles per hour. Below 240 vehicles per hour is assessed as safe to cross, equivalent to 1 vehicle every 15 seconds;
  - c) An analysis of gaps in traffic during 5 consecutive minutes is required. 4 gaps within such a 5-minute period is considered acceptable. At a walking speed of 1 metre per second most people will be able to cross two lanes of normal urban traffic in 4 to 6 seconds whilst others may need a larger gap of around 10 to 12 seconds;
  - d) A minimum of previous collision history for 3 years;
  - e) Footpath / footway width, condition, and visibility. On roads of low traffic flow a verge that can be stepped on by a child and accompanying parent when traffic is passing can normally be assumed to provide an available route;
  - f) Where roads need to be crossed, it is recommended that the availability of crossing facilities such as central refuges, pedestrian crossings or traffic signals be taken into consideration;
  - g) Potential flooding and, if necessary, safety features including signing, lighting, safety barriers should be considered;
  - h) Any planned changes to the area that may have an impact on pedestrian routes;
  - i) Level crossings;
  - j) Social danger caused by any potential anti-social behaviour;
  - k) Any changes to the characteristics of the people walking the route.
- 2.5 Social Danger is open to different interpretations and is subjective. In terms of quantifying social danger, the existence of any such dangers should be supported by evidence.
- 2.6 In conducting risk assessments, it is recommended that local authorities work in partnership with organisations/agencies which have expertise in (including responsibility for) tackling and quantifying social danger. The Police or Police Community Support Officers have responsibility for crime, disorder, and anti-social behaviour, whilst the Local Safeguarding Children Boards have responsibility for safeguarding/child protection matters.
- 2.7 Their involvement includes the exchange of information, assessment, and management of any such risks. Therefore, Redstart have not been commissioned to identify issues of social dangers caused by anti-social behaviour.

## 3. Procedures

### 3.1 Site Visit

3.1.1 A walking site assessment was undertaken to investigate the route and to identify hazards / possible remedial works required in order to provide a safe walking route. The route was walked at times to capture typical traffic conditions during the time that school children were walking the route.

3.1.2 Listed below are examples of typical site hazards that will be considered as a result of the walking assessment:

- Inter-visibility between drivers and pedestrians, both along the route and at minor junctions;
- Potentially high volumes of traffic at crossing points and types of vehicles using the route;
- Condition of footway surface, usable width, and connectivity between adjacent footways;
- Any overgrown foliage hindering pedestrian movements/narrowing the usable width;
- Vehicles parking on the footway causing an obstruction/narrowing the usable width.

### 3.2 Information to be provided

3.2.1 The following information is to be provided as part of the assessment:

- a) A plan showing the routes assessed;
- b) A report identifying potential hazards/risks and possible remediation for each potential hazard identified.

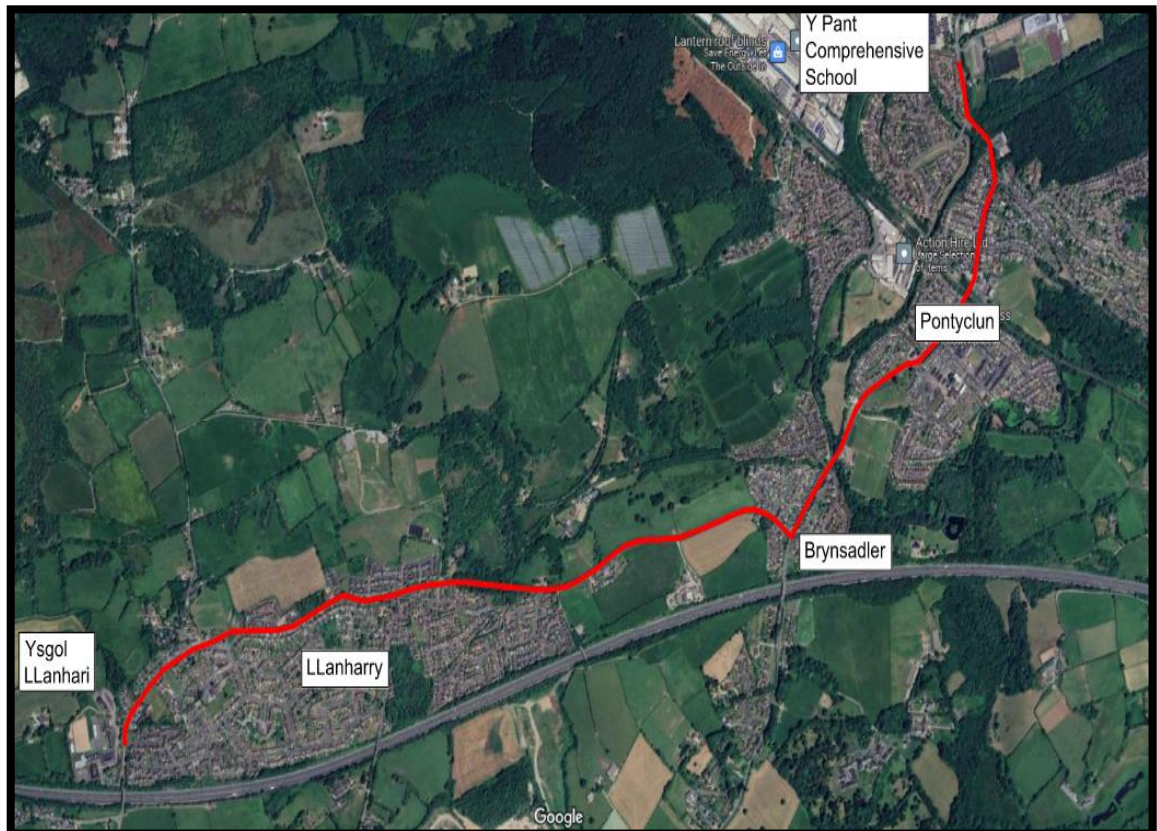


## 4. Site Location & Walking Route

### 4.1 Route Overview

- 4.1.1 The route commences at the gates of Ysgol Llanhari, CF72 9XE which is situated on Addison Avenue, Pontyclun. The route proceeds eastwards along the following roads Llanharry Road, Cowbridge Road, Llantrisant Road, Cowbridge Road to the gates of Y Pant Comprehensive School, as shown in **Image 4.1 below**. There are continuous lengths of footway, with crossing opportunities and street lighting present along the route.

**Image 4.1 – Ysgol Llanhari to Y Pant Comprehensive School (Image © 2024 Airbus)**



- 4.1.2 Footways along the route are sufficiently wide in most areas, allowing pedestrians to pass each other without issue. This reduces for some short sections with the requirement for pedestrians to either give way to each or step into the verge to pass. Pupils already walk this route from Stryd Silurian to Y Pant Comprehensive School and Clos Brenin to Ysgol Llanhari, where the route is already available and in daily use. Links to / from Primary Schools at Llanharry and Pontyclun are already available and in daily use.
- 4.1.3 Where side roads were required to be crossed vehicular/pedestrian conflict was considered low risk.
- 4.1.4 Connectivity between footways is provided throughout by zebra, signal control, central refuge, and other defined uncontrolled crossing points.



- 4.1.5 A 30mph speed limit is in place along most of the route. Vehicle flows were observed to be moderate.
- 4.1.6 In places, vegetation needs clearance to improve the usable footway width and visibility for pedestrians.
- 4.1.7 Photographs 4.1 to 4.23 taken along the walking route are shown below.

**Photograph 4.1 – Uncontrolled crossing— outside Ysgol Llanhari**



**Photograph 4.2 – Footway parking at crossing point on Carreg Arwyn**



**Photograph 4.3 – Footway parking narrowing on northern footway Llanharry Road**



**Photograph 4.4 – Footway narrowing on southern side of the carriageway Llanharry Road**





**Photograph 4.5 – Narrow footway on southern side of Llanharry Road and bus over hanging the footway**



**Photograph 4.6 – Controlled crossing point east of SPAR Convenience Store Llanharry Road**



**Photograph 4.7 – Narrow footway on northern side of Llanharry Road and bus over hanging into footway**



**Photograph 4.8 – Overgrown vegetation on northern side of Llanharry Road**





**Photograph 4.9 – Uncontrolled crossing point between northern and southern footway where northern footway ends, Llanharry Road.**



**Photograph 4.10 – Uncontrolled crossing point between northern bus stop and southern footway Llanharry Road**



**Photograph 4.11 – Footway narrowing on southern side of carriageway Llanharry Road**

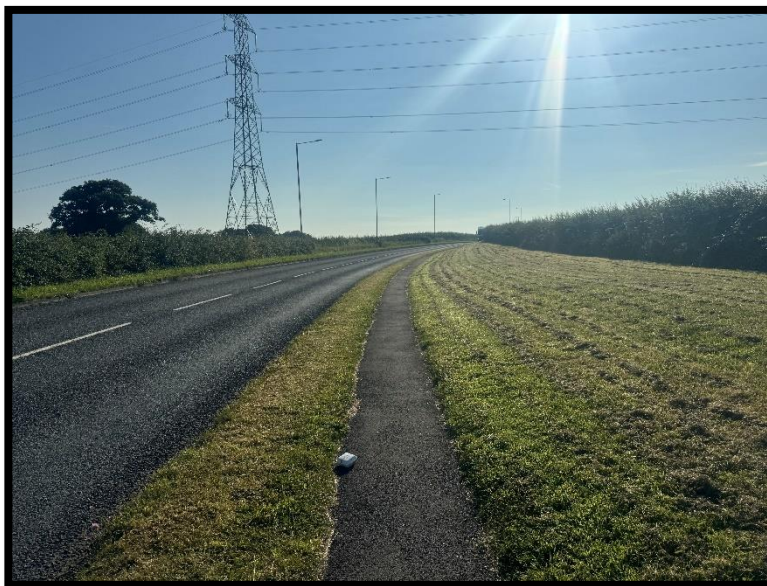


**Photograph 4.12 – Overgrown vegetation west of Strawberry Lane**





**Photograph 4.13 – Footway narrowing with wide verge east of Strawberry Lane**



**Photograph 4.14 – Footway parking on northern footway Llanharry Road.**





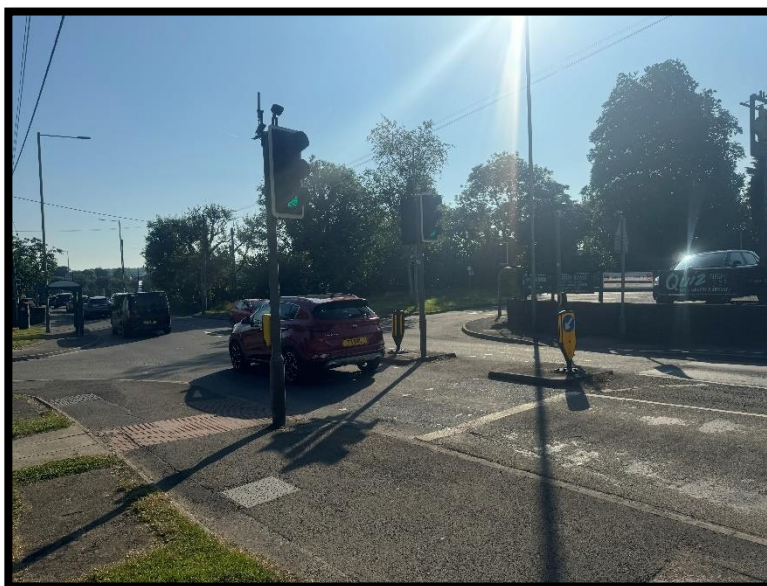
**Photograph 4.15 – Localised pinch point and footway narrowing on western footway Cowbridge Road.**



**Photograph 4.16 – Parking along western footway of Cowbridge Road, heavy traffic and large vehicles operate informal give and take to manoeuvre between parked vehicles.**



**Photograph 4.17– Signalised junction east of Clos Brenin**



**Photograph 4.18 – Overgrown vegetation western footway of Cowbridge Road**





**Photograph 4.18 – Zebra Crossing north of Heol Yr Orsaf**



**Photograph 4.19 – Grade separated footway north of Lewis Street**



**Photograph 4.20 - Uncontrolled crossing point between eastern and western footway in advance of roundabout Llantrisant Road**



**Photograph 4.21 - Overgrown vegetation on eastern footway Llantrisant Road**

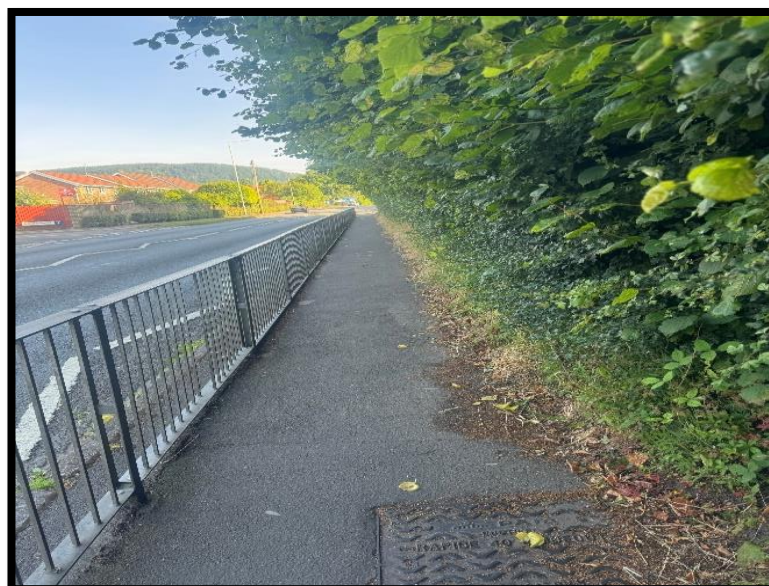




**Photograph 4.22 - Signalised puffin crossing linking eastern and western footway in advance of Y Pant Comprehensive School**



**Photograph 4.23 - Overgrown vegetation on eastern footway Llantrisant Road**



## 5. Pedestrian / Traffic Surveys

- 5.1 Learner Travel Guidance states: Where roads need to be crossed, it is recommended that the availability of crossing facilities such as central refuges, pedestrian crossings or traffic signals be taken into consideration. Where there are no crossing facilities, the route's risk assessment ought to consider each required road crossing, bearing in mind traffic speed and flows, sight lines etc.
- 5.2 If there is a need to cross roads there ought to be:
- Sufficient gaps in the traffic flow and sight lines to allow enough opportunities to cross safely. The gap time analysis should be used where necessary **or**
  - Pedestrian refuges **or**
  - Crossing facilities (e.g., zebra, pelican, puffin crossing etc.) **or**
  - Pedestrian phase at traffic lights **or**
  - School Crossing Patrol.
- 5.3 If a road needs to be crossed the visibility at the location should allow a vehicle to stop, given the 85th percentile speed (the speed at which 85% of the vehicles travel below) of the traffic flow. Vehicle stopping distances should be taken as those given in the Highway Code. In many rural areas, the exercise of continuous judgement is likely to be required. No criteria can provide all the guidance or answers to every situation that may be encountered.
- 5.4 If roads have to be crossed to use a footway or to improve sight lines, it may be necessary to advise on safe crossing places. On some country roads the footway may not be continuous.
- 5.5 An informed judgement will have to be made about the availability of "step off" points.
- 5.6 The difficulty of crossing at a site can be assessed by considering the number of gaps in the traffic flow that are acceptable to pedestrians. Free flowing traffic may provide gaps randomly and fairly frequently, but speeds tend to be higher, and gaps would need to be longer in order to cross the road safely.
- 5.7 An acceptable gap to cross from kerb to kerb varies with each person. Most people will be able to cross two lanes of normal urban traffic in 4 to 6 seconds. Others may need larger gaps of around 10 to 12 seconds.
- 5.8 It is recommended that the survey records the number of gaps in each 5 minute period that are longer than the road crossing time, using one metre per second as the walking speed. Four gaps in each 5 minute period indicate a road that can be crossed without too much delay. Longer gaps could be classified as multiple gaps rather than as just one gap.
- 5.9 With the above criteria in mind, traffic surveys were undertaken to establish flows, 85th%tile speeds and crossing gaps at the following locations:

- 5.9.1 On Cowbridge Road near the section of 0.7m wide footway along the north eastern side of the A4222 Cowbridge Road in Brynsadler, with no adjacent footway. This is currently managed by pedestrians stepping into the carriageway to pass one another.



- 5.10 RCT Transport Officers undertook traffic counts at various locations throughout the route.
- 5.11 The Learner Travel Statutory Guidance and Operational Guidance – June 2014 outlines what is required when assessing Traffic Flow on Roads.
- 5.11.1 Low traffic flow occurs on roads that have a traffic flow below 400 vehicles in a 1 hour period; medium traffic flow occurs on roads with traffic flow between 400 to 840 vehicle per hour; and heavy traffic flow occurs on roads with a traffic flow of over 840 vehicles per hour.
- 5.11.2 Most people will be able to cross two lanes of normal urban traffic in 4 to 6 seconds. Four such gaps within a 5 minute period are considered acceptable. For this report, we have used 5 seconds and where the gap is more than or equal to 12 seconds this has been counted as 2 or more gaps.
- 5.11.3 Traffic counts were undertaken at this locations on 2 different days, with counts carried out between 07:30 and 08:30 and 15:00 and 16:00. In accordance with Learner Travel Guidance the period that recorded the highest traffic volumes has been “revisited” to confirm the data consistency.
- 5.11.4 **Location 1 – Llanhari Road / Cowbridge Road Junction to All Step Off (one-way count) 10/12/2024**
- ❖ **AM:** 608 vehicles per hour, medium traffic flow. Gaps of 5 seconds during each 5 minute period ranged from 14 to 23, with a total of 223 gaps over the 1 hour period.
  - ❖ **PM:** 520 vehicles per hour, medium traffic flow. Gaps of 5 seconds during each 5 minute periods ranged from 16 to 32, with a total of 276 gaps over the 1 hour period.
- 5.11.5 **Revisit Location 1 – Llanhari Road / Cowbridge Road Junction to All Step Off (one-way count) 11/12/2024**
- ❖ **AM:** 614 vehicles per hour, medium traffic flow. Gaps of 5 seconds during each 5 minute period ranged from 8 to 27, with a total of 187 gaps over the 1 hour period.

**The traffic flow and gaps at this location for both AM and PM satisfy the criteria outlined in the Learner Travel Guidance.**



## 6. Social Issues

- 6.1 The section of footway along the Llanharry Road between Station Terrace and Danybryn has very few overlooking buildings or natural surveillance for circa 1200m, other than by passing traffic or other pedestrians, see **photograph 6.1** below.

**Photograph 6.1 – A4093 between Station Terrace and Danybryn**



- 6.2 There may be other issues that are not obvious from a walked assessment, which may be identified by other user groups. The local authority would need to consider these aspects with the Police and other safeguarding agencies.

## 7. Collision Data

- 7.1 Pedestrian collision data for the 5 years from 2020 to 2024 (verified) have been investigated through Crashmap.co.uk and Police Recorded Road Collision data. Note that the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance requires assessors to incorporate 3 years of collision history into the assessment of a route.
- 7.2 The collision data has been investigated during the times that school children would be walking the route to capture typical traffic conditions during the time. These times have been set at 07:00 – 09:30 for the AM journey, and 14:30 – 17:00 for the PM journey.
- 7.3 There were no collisions that involved pedestrians along the route during the period assessed.

## 8. Route Overview

### 8.1 Main Route – Ysgol Llanhari to Y Pant Comprehensive School

- 8.1.1 The route lies within 20/30mph speed limits.
- 8.1.2 There are continuous footways present in reasonable condition along the route.
- 8.1.3 There are discrete sections of footway 1m wide or less along Llanharri Road. The footway outside the Corner house (south of Saint Illtyd's church) on the northern side of the carriageway requires pedestrians to cross the road and use the southern footway as vehicles were observed to park on the narrowed footway. Visibility here appears to be restricted by parked vehicles and the geometry of the road, crossing can be made safely after the junction with Aelfryn (when walking toward Y Pant Comprehensive School) or at the signal controlled crossing before the Post Office (when walking toward Ysgol Llanhari), where the visibility in both directions is satisfies the Learner Travel requirements. The local neighbourhood policing teams are also working with residents to help reduce the risks posed to pedestrians by indiscriminately parked vehicles.
- 8.1.4 There is a localised section of footway on the Llanharri Road (40mph section) where the footway width is circa 0.7mm for approximately 1.2km, which will require pedestrians to step into the grass verge to pass one another at this location.
- 8.1.5 The footway on Cowbridge road west of High Street is narrow with some discrete sections circa 0.7m wide. Vehicles in this area were also noted to park on the footway. Whilst pedestrians may be required to step into the carriageway to pass one another at this location, vehicle flows are moderate (608 vehicles per hour in the morning and 520 vehicles per hour in the afternoon) with a total of 223 gaps of 5 seconds per hour in the morning and 276 gaps of 5 seconds per hour in the afternoon. It is also noted that the narrowing occurs over a short (circa 14m long) length of footway with step-offs provided in the form of property entrance gates.
- 8.1.6 Trees and vegetation were observed to be overhanging sections of the footway throughout the route as identified in Section 4.
- 8.1.7 Street lighting is present throughout the route although ongoing tree maintenance is required in some areas to ensure that lighting levels are not compromised.
- 8.1.8 Investigation into pedestrian collisions has been undertaken between 2020 and 2024. There were no collisions that involved pedestrians during the times assessed.
- 8.1.9 At side roads, the observed conditions were considered to provide a safe environment for pedestrians to cross with vehicular / pedestrian conflict assessed to be low risk noting sufficient crossing gaps to comply with Learner Travel Guidance. At the time of the site visit, when pedestrians were observed to cross, they were able to do so without issue.
- 8.1.10 There are controlled crossing facilities at the following locations:
- Signalised Crossing – Llanharri Road west of Sycamore Road.
  - Signalised Crossing- Cowbridge Road west of The Hollies
  - Zebra Crossing – Cowbridge Road East of Heol Yr Orsaf.
  - Signalised Crossing – Cowbridge Road south of Pant Y Dderwen.
- 8.1.11 One section along the route is not overlooked by residential or commercial properties but are well used either by passing traffic or pedestrians:
- The footway along Llantrisant Road, Station Terrace and Danybryn for circa 1200m.

8.1.12 Traffic counts were undertaken at 4 different locations on 2 different days, with counts carried out between 07:30 and 08:30 and 15:00 and 16:00. The site locations and traffic counts are detailed below:

- Location 1 – Llanharri Road / Cowbridge Road Junction to All Step Off (one-way count)

**The traffic flow and gaps at these locations for both AM and PM times, meet the criteria outlined in the Learner Travel Guidance.**

## 9. Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 The route meets the criteria and is considered available to walk in line with the Learner Travel guidelines. However, further enhancements to the walked route **could be considered** to improve conditions for route users. These include the following:

- Monitor the condition of overhanging trees and foliage. Where trees and/or foliage overhang or encroach into footways, these areas should be cut back to improve the usable width, sight lines and natural surveillance. In addition to this leaf debris should be removed from footways when required.
- Monitor footway obstructions. Where footways widths continue to be restricted by parked cars, action be taken in conjunction with the local neighbourhood policing teams.
- Consider a minor junction improvement at the footway narrowing on Cowbridge Road along the north eastern side of the A4222 Cowbridge Road in Brynsadler. This is currently circa 0.7m wide and managed by pedestrians stepping into the carriageway to pass one another. This could be improved to 1.2m (minimum) through the narrow section to allow pedestrians to pass one another without stepping into the carriageway.

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