



**Highways and
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Date 13th September 2017

David W.G.Ridley
H.M. Senior Coroner for Wiltshire and Swindon
Wiltshire & Swindon Coroner's Court
26 Endless Street
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP1 1DP

Dear Mr David Ridley

Regulation 28 report - inquest into the death of Nina Maggs

I have received your Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths, dated 20th July 2017, detailing the issues arising from the investigation and inquest into the death of Nina Maggs. The following letter details the Council's formal response, as Highway Authority, to that report and the matters of concern raised by you.

As part of my response I would like to place on record the Council's condolences to Ms Maggs's family. Fatalities across Swindon's highway network remain relatively rare however the Council do recognise the tragic impact that these have on families and communities across Swindon.

Historical position

The current accident record at the junction is generally good, despite high levels of traffic using the junction. There are no particular historical issues or trends relating to pedestrian or vulnerable users, however it is clear that crossing the junction creates a number of difficulties for pedestrians.

Pedestrian demand and desire lines exist across all of the arms of the junction. In recognition of this, pedestrian dropped kerbs were previously installed at the traffic signal stop lines to serve the needs of pedestrians, using these established desire lines, rather than these being installed as a facility to corral or encourage pedestrians to cross at this location.

The 'all red' phase of the signals that exists at present is predominantly a phase that helps to prevent vehicular conflict between different arms and to allow right turning traffic to safely clear the safely junction, rather than a provision to directly assist pedestrians to cross.

Council's actions

Following the fatal accident an analysis of the current operation of the traffic signals at Kingsdown Crossroads was carried out, including an analysis of the current traffic levels. A scheme to

potentially modify the signals to include a signal phase for pedestrians (with a 'green man' and audible signal) on all four arms of the junction has been developed.

Modelling the impact of a pedestrian crossing phase and therefore an "all red" phase for traffic, has identified that there will be a considerable increase in peak time delays to vehicles using this junction.

Consideration has been given to the morning peak hour delay to traffic which co-incides with the pedestrian morning peak, as school and general commuter peaks tend to occur at similar times in the morning.

In the evening the school travel peak is at a different time to the general travel peak. Hence analysis has considered that a pedestrian phase would be called less frequently as pedestrian demand is lower at non-school times.

Alternative options

A range of alternative options have been considered for the junction. These have included a do nothing option, zebra crossings, different pedestrian phasing arrangements and the potential to significantly widen or expand the junction itself. The junction is however very constrained in relation to sight lines and pavement space and each of these options have been ruled out on either benefit or deliverability grounds when compared to the current proposed way forward

Wider considerations

Pedestrian safety at the junction was raised in the Regulation 28 report as of 'upmost concern' and this reflects the Highway Authority's current considerations and statutory requirements. Historical analysis and professional experience requires us to also consider safety across the wider network for all users, including pedestrians, on a holistic basis.

Additional delays will impact on traffic and this has the potential to influence driver behaviour. This may influence drivers to change their route and divert their journeys onto smaller less suitable roads in order to avoid these delays, effectively 'rat-running' through neighbouring areas; there is potential for speeds to increase as a result of driver frustrations caused by long delays either on the adjoining network or on roads used as 'rat-runs'; and there is a potential for an increase in red light running at the junction as a result of driver frustration with the length of time taken to progress through the signals.

As such the balance of benefits to be achieved for pedestrians at this location (by introducing a pedestrian phase at the signals) needs to be considered against the potential for these changes to introduce other risks to pedestrians and all network users at this location and in the surrounding areas likely to be impacted by anticipated changes in driver behaviour.

Current progress

Initial analysis and design options had been undertaken whilst the Coroner's inquest and investigation was in progress. Initial design has been carried out in respect of the technology elements (the traffic signal equipment) and the civil engineering elements (the ducting, cabling and tactile paving). This has included carrying out checks on the presence of service utilities in the footway and carriageway.

This means that much of the preliminary work to understand the deliverability of the proposal has been completed, should the current proposal be taken forward for implementation. It was of course felt to be appropriate to await the Coroner's report, informing some of these considerations, before programming any potential next steps.

Since receipt of the Regulation 28 notice, further work has included the preparation and sign off of a briefing note for the Council's Cabinet Member for Communities and Place and sign off by myself as Head of Highways and Transport. This has recommended and approved a proposal to take the proposed scheme forward to further investigation and consultation with stakeholders and the public.

Whilst delegated powers would effectively allow the Highway Authority, under certain circumstances, to effectively progress the implementation of highway works without stakeholder consultation; the significant impact on traffic delays and safety implications across a wider network, combined with the otherwise good safety record for the junction does indicate that the Council should seek stakeholder views before progressing further.

The next stage is therefore for the Council to undertake stakeholder consultation with regard to the proposals and the balance between those aspects of safety and impact noted above.

Proposed actions

Consultation will commence on 18th September 2017 and will include Ward Councillors, Stratton Parish Council, major employers and public institutions (e.g. schools) as well as the wider public (via an on-line survey). Comments within the Regulation 28 report will also be considered alongside this feedback.

The proposed timeline is:

- Commence stakeholder consultation - 18th September 2017
- End of stakeholder consultation - 9th October 2017
- Analysis of consultation results and feedback – by end of October 2017.

The level and content of feedback will provide an indication with regard to the next steps in the process after October 2017 and an indication of the decision making mechanisms that could be used. I would anticipate decisions related to future steps to be taken in November 2017.

I am not able to pre-judge the outcome of any consultation or indeed the next steps that may be required, however to reflect the comments within the Regulation 28 report and to ensure that any scheme (if supported) could be taken forward expediently, I have provisionally arranged for resources to be assigned this financial year (ending March 2018) to progress with the design of the scheme, if required. I have further provisionally arranged for resources to be made available for the potential delivery on site of the works, if required, during next financial year (April 2018 - March 2019).


Given the requirement to consult and take due regard of wider stakeholder feedback on the proposal, I would intend to update yourself as Senior Coroner on the outcome of the consultation and associated decisions during November 2017.

If you do require further information at this stage then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely




Head of Highways and Transport Delivery Services


Board Director
Communities and Housing