

11 June 2019

Department: Chief Executive

Contact Name: Josie Wragg

Contact No: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Our Ref:

By email

Mrs H Connor
Senior Coroner for Berkshire
Coroner's Office
Reading Town Hall

Dear Mrs Connor

Following the Coroner's inquest on 2nd April 2019 and the subsequent Regulation 28 report that was issued to Slough Borough Council on 17th April 2019, please find below how the Council intends to improve safety at the junction of High St, Langley and the A4.

Immediately after the Inquest which took place on 2nd April 2019, the Service Lead for Major Infrastructure Projects at the Council commissioned an independent road safety engineer to carry out a full review of this junction in conjunction with a traffic signal engineer. Those professionals met on 29th May 2019 to discuss preliminary findings. Once the review has been fully carried out, including a detailed assessment of collision data, a detailed report will be provided with full proposals for any further improvements. It is envisaged that this report will be provided within approximately 6-8 weeks, following which recommendations for further action will be put forward for implementation. The report will identify options for the short, medium and long term, to address the road safety collisions at this junction.

Matters of concern raised by the Coroner were fourfold and the response from the Council to each is set out below:

(i) Improvements to signs at and before this junction

Slough Borough Council (SBC) has undertaken an extensive programme of improvements to the road junction in question which began in December 2017. In direct response to observations and recommendations from Thames Valley Police (TVP), together with the Council's own road safety monitoring regime, several phases of work were undertaken to improve road safety at this particular junction with a view to improving signs at and before this junction. This programme of improvement was completed in May 2018; just less than six months after concerns were raised.

As stated in the Collision Report from [REDACTED] this junction is a multi phased traffic light controlled crossroads between the A4 London Road linking the High Street from the north and Ditton Road to the south. The approach to the junction on the Slough bound carriageway consists of four wide lanes, split into two pairs. The off-side lanes are dedicated to vehicles wanting to turn right into the High Street, the near side lanes are for vehicles travelling straight along the London Road or those turning left into Ditton Road. The lane designation signs for High St, Langley are being reviewed by the independent engineer and will form part

(ii) Primary and secondary traffic light heads

As part of the recommendations from TVP, a decision was taken in November 2017 to split the two secondary traffic signals at the junction which served vehicles approaching the junction from High St, Langley. This work was completed in May 2018 – prior to that date these two traffic signal heads were directly opposite the junction on the pedestrian refuge area. In May 2018 work was completed to separate them out, one was moved to the left hand side of that part of the junction directing traffic to turn left and the other traffic signal head remaining in situ directing vehicles to make a straight on or right turn from the off-side lane.

This work was carried out in a very short space of time between December 2017 and May 2018. Additional guidance markings were also put in at the junction to guide drivers safely round toward the motorway as part of the TVP recommendations.

TVP were of the view that separating out the traffic signal heads would improve the situation of the primary and secondary traffic light heads at this junction and therefore Slough Borough Council acted on this recommendation very quickly. The independent report will look further at this change.

SBC also carried out a full refreshing of the road markings from December 2017 to May 2018. The road markings on the approach to the junction from High St, Langley were all refreshed and the yellow box junction marking was also refreshed and made new over this timescale.

(iii) Layout and line of sight on the approach to this junction from the B470 High Street Langley

At this point in time, it is not possible to speculate on what improvements to the layout and line of sight can be introduced and therefore this point will be reviewed in line with the road safety report recommendations. There is a much larger programme of works already planned for this financial year where action will be taken to upgrade sections along this corridor which lead to the junction with the M4.

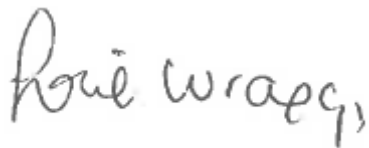
All road safety measures depend upon drivers paying due care and attention to their own manoeuvres, to road safety signage and the conduct of other drivers (Highway Code). Measures will only be effective if drivers are strict in correctly obeying road signs and the improvements made so far.

(iv) LED Traffic lights

It has been established that the traffic lights at this junction are not LED but halogen light based. The change to LED is not considered a road safety improvement and where other junctions in the town have been upgraded this has been to reduce maintenance risks for traffic signal contractors. In terms of road safety, drivers are legally obliged to adhere to the phasing of traffic lights which they must always do whether the lights are LED or halogen based and it is considered that for the considerable cost of replacing all signal heads, cabling and the controller, there is not a significant enough difference between the two to warrant a wholesale change from one to the other at this junction.

I hope the information contained in this letter sets out how serious the Council takes the safety of users on its highway network and the measures we have and will be taking to improve road safety at this junction.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josie Wragg". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Josie Wragg
Chief Executive
Slough Borough Council