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12th December 2019

Our ref: RR/B5017BurtonRdCallingwood
Your ref:

Dear Mr Haigh,

Re: Steffan Gareth Evans (Deceased)

I refer to your Regulation 28 Report regarding the Inquest into the death of Steffan Gareth Evans and your comments concerning the B5017 Burton Road between Needwood and Burton. This letter is in response to your matters of concern recorded in section 5 of your report.

Some of the information that will be outlined below, has been included within email exchanges with [REDACTED] that I believe you have been copied into. Therefore, I apologise for the duplication, though I feel it is necessary to reiterate the actions undertaken.

Following the collision in January, as is the process following all fatal road traffic collisions; the collision history at this location was examined. The search concluded that no personal injury collisions had been recorded within 300m of where the fatal collision took place within the latest three years of complete data that we had available at the time. When the search area was widened, two slight personal injury collisions have been recorded on the stretch of B5017 between Five Ways Island, Needwood and the change of speed limit east of The Acorn Inn.

This collision history does not indicate a requirement for speed reducing features. If patterns of treatable collisions are identified, remedial measures proportionate to the accident problem, will be proposed and prioritised against other locations across Staffordshire. As the budget for road safety improvements is finite, it is the sites with the greatest proven need which are treated first, and these will have a cluster of incidents with a discernible trend or pattern in the cause of each.

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On the 14th February, a Hazard Report Card was received from [REDACTED] requesting we 'assess the need for a reduction on the speed limit and the addition of signage to indicate the presence of hidden entrances'. A speed and volume survey to ascertain vehicle speeds was undertaken during the 10th and 19th July and 85th percentile speeds of 56mph in both directions over a 24-hour period were recorded. These speeds indicate good compliance to the National Speed Limit; however, we received a report highlighting that it was felt that these speeds did not represent a true reflection of vehicle speeds travelling on this section of the B5017.

The survey was completed following roadworks on Burton Road that involved temporary traffic lights close to Five Ways Island and it was suspected that drivers had sought alternative routes and traffic had not returned to normal. Following receipt of this local insight, it was agreed that a new speed and volume survey would be undertaken. This second survey was undertaken between the 7th and 15th November and 85th percentile speeds of 51mph eastbound and 55mph westbound over a 24-hour period were recorded.

These speeds again highlight good compliance to the National Speed Limit. Based on this data, speed enforcement activities either by fixed cameras or mobile camera vans would not be initiated as criteria has not been met. There was a slight increase in vehicle volume for the second survey as an average (7-day average) of 6526 vehicle speeds were recorded over a 24-hour period compared to 6153 vehicles for the first survey.

Regarding the request for additional signage to indicate the presence of private accesses onto Burton Road, there is no prescribed sign within the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions for concealed entrances and therefore this is not an option we can consider.

Following the Inquest, I received a letter from [REDACTED] dated the 18th October where an invitation was made to visit their property. On Friday 22nd November, [REDACTED] (Strategic Community Infrastructure Manager) and [REDACTED] (Road Safety Manager) met with [REDACTED] at their property. A request for a speed limit reduction was made, however it was explained that the budget available to the Council for highway improvements is extremely limited and reducing speed limits is usually accompanied by additional robust measures such as lining, signage, carriageway narrowing, gateway features or build outs – in order to help promote good compliance with the lower limit.

These additional measures obviously come at a cost which must be justified, and it is right therefore that we firstly target those locations where a demonstrable reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads can be achieved, by prioritising locations where there is a cluster of incidents with a discernible trend or pattern within the accident data.

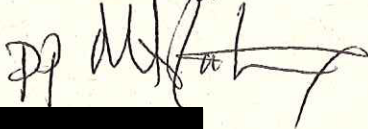


I acknowledge that reducing the speed limit to 40mph for this section of the B5017 is desired, however, this would be a significant reduction from the existing National Speed Limit, and it would be very difficult to achieve driver compliance. Some drivers may choose to ignore such a change which could lead to an increase in manoeuvres involving risk, for example overtaking or tailgating. Any reduction is therefore unlikely to be successful without additional costly engineering measures as discussed above.

In summary, based on the collision data we hold for this location, the site would otherwise not be considered for any traffic calming measures at this time. However, there is a possibility that it will be feasible to include this section of Burton Road as part of another funded scheme in the local area, and we are investigating this possibility. Throughout these investigations, we will endeavour to keep [REDACTED] informed.

I hope the above information is of benefit, however if further clarification or detail is required, I am more than happy to provide further information.

Yours sincerely,



[REDACTED]
Assistant Director for Highways and the Built County



HM CORONER'S OFFICE
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