

REGULATORY COMMITTEE
9th JANUARY 2002

MELKSHAM: TOWN BRIDGE - TRAFFIC CALMING

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the following Notice of Motion from Mrs. A.B. Barker and Mr. T.P. Chivers:-

In view of the great local concern at the recent traffic calming that has been installed on the Town Bridge, Melksham, this Council takes urgent action to improve highway safety in this area.

- (i) *Consult with local residents and businesses, as well as Melksham Town Council, before improvements are made in the area.*
- (ii) *Ensure that any improvements include improved signage.*
- (iii) *Ensure that an improved crossing is included that is wheelchair friendly.*
- (iv) *Councillors and local residents are informed of the cost of the present failed scheme and the cost of improvements in bringing this scheme up to a safe standard.*

Background

2. The Notice of Motion was included in the Summons of the 20th November 2001 meeting of the County Council. A report was requested to be considered by this Committee.

Detail

3. In 2000, a scheme (see **Appendix 1**) was formulated to provide a safe crossing for pedestrians using the Riverside Walk where it crosses Bath Road. This was in response to a request from the Melksham Trust Riverside Project Committee. The scheme involved a speed cushion on the northern side of the Town Bridge and a wide flat top road hump south of the bridge which pedestrians could use to cross the road.
4. Alternative facilities to assist pedestrians to cross Bath Road were considered but discounted due to site limitations and for safety reasons. The solution of slowing traffic was agreed as the appropriate action.

5. In view of the traffic sensitive nature of Bath Road, the construction of the scheme was programmed to be undertaken on completion of Transco road works, utilising the road closure implemented for these works. Unfortunately, due to extra work undertaken by Transco, the time-slot remaining for construction of the traffic calming scheme was extremely short. Consequently, insufficient time had passed to allow the hardening of the material used to construct the road hump before Bath Road was reopened to traffic. This resulted in the deformation of the road hump, thus not providing the pedestrian-friendly facility intended.

Consideration of the concerns raised

6. Prior to the construction of the traffic calming scheme, extensive consultation was undertaken, including seeking the views of the Town Council, Melksham Without Parish Council, the Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, Disabled Groups and the emergency services. The proposal was advertised in the local press and by way of street notices and received overwhelming support. Melksham Without Parish Council, on behalf of the Riverside Project Committee, indicated that "Councillors have asked me (the Clerk) to emphasise that they feel the best solution has been reached at a potentially difficult site with many differing factors." From the previous consultation undertaken, it is clear that the principle of the scheme is supported. The problem appears to be how the scheme has been implemented. In these circumstances, there would appear little to be gained in re-consulting on the scheme.
7. On each approach to the road hump and cushion there are warning signs. However, at the southern end, due to the proximity of a mini-roundabout and its associated signing, motorists have a number of signs to comprehend. This lessens the impact of the road hump warning sign. The sign has been placed on a backing board to increase its conspicuity. Also, arrangements are being made for the warning signs to be illuminated.
8. Further work to ensure the road hump is fully accessible by people with disabilities, as originally intended, has been arranged. The ends of the road hump are to be reconstructed and adjustments made to the kerbs and footway. Tactile paving is also being provided to assist visually impaired people.
9. The scheme has been implemented as a joint scheme with funding from the Town Council, Melksham Without Parish Council, Melksham Charities and Melksham Women's Institute. The cost of the work was £8,500 with the County Council contribution being £4,000. The remedial work is primarily required as a consequence of the action of the contractors. In the circumstances, the extra work will not be charged to those jointly funding the scheme.

Recommendation

10. That it be noted that:-
 - (i) From previous consultation, the principle of the traffic calming scheme at the Town Bridge, Melksham, is supported; and
 - (ii) Work to make the road hump accessible by people with disabilities is to be undertaken shortly at no cost to those jointly funding the scheme.

Reason for Recommendation

11. To amend the scheme to ensure it is provided as intended and agreed with others.

RICHARD J. LANDERDirector of Environmental Services

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

Letters received in response to consultation.

Environmental impact of the Recommendations contained in this Report:

None.