

REGULATORY COMMITTEE
11th SEPTEMBER 2002

MELKSHAM: A3102 SANDRIDGE ROAD

Purpose of Report

1. To consider a Notice of Motion concerning safety at the junctions of Sandridge Road, Church Lane and Blackmore Road, Melksham.

Notice of Motion

2. At the 9th July 2002 meeting of the County Council, Mr. Chivers moved and Mrs. Barker seconded the following Notice of Motion:-

"Due to increasing local concern in the Melksham area, from local residents and many local Councillors, this Council agrees to take urgent action investigating possible ways of improving highway safety at the new junction in Sandridge Road."

3. The County Council resolved:-

"To refer this Motion to the Regulatory Committee for consideration and report back."

Background

4. In April 2000, a petition was considered calling for safety improvements in Sandridge Road following a road accident involving injury to two young pedestrians, one sustaining serious injury when crossing the A3102.
5. A scheme was prepared for Sandridge Road at the Blackmore Road and Church Lane junctions, involving the installation of a zebra crossing, pedestrian refuge and provision of two mini-roundabouts. Gateway treatment was also installed at the commencement of the 30 mph limit to the east of the junction. A site meeting was held to explain the proposals to the organiser of the petition, which was also attended by other interested residents together with representatives of the Town Council and the local Member.
6. The proposals were advertised in the local press and by way of street notices, and the Police, District and Town Councils were formally consulted. As a consequence of the consultation no adverse comments were received and the scheme was implemented early in 2001 as part of major maintenance works planned for Sandridge Road.

Detail

7. The scheme has been in operation for almost 18 months and no injury accidents involving pedestrians have been reported. This is encouraging given that the primary objective of the scheme was to improve pedestrian safety.
8. Records indicate that two injury accidents have occurred since March 2001 at the junction of Sandridge Road and Blackmore Road, both involving slight injury. Details are as follows:-

September 2001	A car turned left out of Blackmore Road into the path of a car travelling west on Sandridge Road
January 2002	Hit and run accident involving a car driving into the rear of a car travelling west on Sandridge Road
9. Safety at the junction has been considered by Melksham Town Council and it has been suggested that further consultation be undertaken to ascertain the views of residents regarding the scheme. Concern has been expressed that on occasions large vehicles overrun the footway when turning left out of Blackmore Road due to the presence of the new pedestrian refuge in Sandridge Road.
10. Correspondence has been received from residents concerning the speed of traffic through the junctions and the positioning of the zebra crossing between the two mini-roundabouts at the Blackmore Road and Church Lane junctions. Mention has been made of an accident that occurred at the junctions in June 2002. The local Police have been contacted and are aware of a hit and run accident involving a car being driven into the rear of another car, but no injury accidents are recorded other than those indicated in paragraph 8.

Comment

11. A survey was undertaken to establish pedestrian movements across Sandridge Road at the Blackmore Road and Church Lane junctions. The zebra crossing has been located between the two junctions where the majority of pedestrians were observed to cross the A3102 and a pedestrian refuge located on the west side of Blackmore Road to further assist pedestrians to cross.
12. To ensure the zebra crossing is clearly visible at night and during times of poor visibility floodlighting has recently been installed.
13. An independent safety appraisal was commissioned due to safety concerns regarding the junction. The resultant report is available for inspection in the **Members' Room**. No fundamental safety problem was identified but minor signing improvements have been suggested.

14. To ensure drivers approaching the junction from the east are fully aware of the zebra crossing and mini-roundabouts a new warning sign indicating a pedestrian crossing and roundabout ahead on a yellow backing board is proposed. The carriageway markings on the eastern approach are also to be enhanced with the provision of hatching. To provide additional protection for pedestrians crossing on the zebra crossing anti-skid material is to be laid on the approaches.
15. The left turn from Blackmore Road into Sandridge Road is difficult for large vehicles but with care this manoeuvre can be carried out without overrunning the footway. To ease the radius at the junction to facilitate large articulated lorries would cost in the region of £4,000 because this would involve alterations to the carriageway drainage. It is envisaged that the statutory undertakers apparatus in the footway could be adjusted, avoiding the cost of relocation which was originally envisaged. Given the infrequent occurrence of large articulated vehicles turning left out of Blackmore Road and the fact that the manoeuvre is undertaken at very slow speed, it is difficult to justify this level of expenditure at the present time. The situation will continue to be monitored.

Financial Implications

16. There is no budget for the proposed alterations. However, the £4,500 required for the signing, lining and anti-skid material can be funded from the £150,000 allocated by the Committee for Local Safety Schemes from the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport block allocation.
17. This will obviously reduce the funding available for remedial measures at sites identified from the accident cluster list for treatment this year.

Recommendation

18. That it be noted that:-
 - (i) The Road Safety Appraisal of the scheme introduced on Sandridge Road did not identify a fundamental safety problem.
 - (ii) The signing warning westbound drivers on the A3102 of the presence of the zebra crossing and roundabouts are to be enhanced and additional carriageway markings provided.
 - (iii) Anti-skid surfacing material is to be installed on both A3102 approaches to the zebra crossing.

Reasons for Recommendation

19. Whilst the accident record for the junction does not support the allegation that the alterations to the junction are unsafe, there are obvious local concerns regarding safety here.

20. The provision of an additional warning sign and enhanced carriageway markings should ensure approaching drivers are fully aware of the crossing and roundabouts. The anti-skid material will assist vehicles to stop more quickly and safely in the event of an incident.

RICHARD J. LANDER

Director of Environmental Services

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

Letters from the Town Council and residents. Road Safety Appraisal Report.

Environmental impact of the Recommendation contained in this Report:

The additional signing and road markings could be considered environmentally intrusive but safety is of primary importance, although signing is placed as sympathetically to the environment as possible.