

REGULATORY COMMITTEE

5th FEBRUARY 2003

**EAST KNOYLE/WEST KNOYLE: AMENDMENT TO WEIGHT LIMIT ON THE
B3098 BETWEEN TWO MILE DOWN AND WILLOUGHBY HEDGE**

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Members' approval to proceed with the public advertisement of alternations to the weight limit on the B3089 between Two Mile Down and Willoughby Hedge.

Background

2. WS Atkins, working on behalf of the Highways Agency, have identified a number of measures to overcome accidents occurring at the junction of the A303 and the A350, locally known as the Furze Hedge junction. A repeat accident pattern has been identified at either end of the slip road linking the A303 with the A350. At both these locations the accidents involve right turning vehicles pulling out from the slip road and being in collision with straight through vehicles on the A roads.
3. WS Atkins have proposed the installation of traffic signals on the A350/slip road junction and a ban of the right turn movement from the slip road onto the A303. The banning of the right turn onto the A303 would force southbound A350 traffic wishing to travel west on the A303 to stay on the A350 as far as the existing traffic signal controlled junction at Two Mile Down which would be upgraded to cope. Vehicles would then turn right onto the B3089 and access the A303 by a left turn manoeuvre at Willoughby Hedge junction.
4. The B3089 between Two Mile Down and Willoughby Hedge is currently provided with a 7.5 tonne weight limit. To allow diverted HGV's to access the A303 at Willoughby Hedge via the B3089 the weight limit in the westbound direction would need to be revoked. An eastbound weight limit would remain. WS Atkins have predicted that the altered traffic routes would result in an increase of 600 vehicles per day on the B3089. This equates to a 20% increase compared to current traffic levels. Of this figure, the additional HGV movements are estimated to be 50 vehicles/day.
5. As the B3089 is a County Road it is for the County Council as Highway Authority to promote the change to the weight limit. The Highways Agency has indicated that they will cover the County Council's expenses in dealing with this.
6. A location plan of the area is included at **Appendix 1**.

Consultation

7. WS Atkins have undertaken consultation with both East and West Knoyle Parish Councils, including site meetings. Both Parish Councils have indicated to Atkins that they would not support the removal of the westbound weight limit as they consider Willoughby Hedge junction to be unsafe and not capable of taking the extra traffic movements.
8. In discussion with the Parish Councils, WS Atkins have indicated that they are prepared to undertake some minor improvements works at Willoughby Hedge. This includes an additional traffic island, renewal of road markings and additional signs. Copies of correspondence can be found at **Appendix 2**.
9. After discussion with the local Member, Mr. Read, it was decided that the County Council should approach East and West Knoyle Parish Councils and the Police for their formal view of the proposals. Copies of the consultation letter together with responses from West Knoyle Parish Council and the Police can also be found at **Appendix 2**.
10. The Police have indicated their support for the proposal whilst West Knoyle Parish Council continue to be unsupportive. No response was received from East Knoyle Parish Council.

Accidents

11. A study of the recorded personal injury accident (PIA) over the last three-year period indicates that at the:
 - A303/A350 Furze Hedge junction there have been 7 PIA's, all of which have involved right turning manoeuvres.
 - A350/B3089 Two Mile Down junction there has been 1 PIA involving loss of control of a vehicle.
 - A303/B3089 Willoughby Hedge junction there have been no recorded PIA's.

In the 3 years prior to that above, the records indicate that at the:

 - A303/A350 Furze Hedge junction there have been 11 PIA's, 9 of which have involved right turning manoeuvres.
 - A350/B3089 Two Mile Down junction there have been 5 PIA's of which 3 have involved right turns for A350 north traffic turning right to Hindon.
 - A303/B3089 Willoughby Hedge junction there have been 3 PIA's, none of which involved B3089 left turns onto the A303.
12. The records back up the WS Atkins findings that Furze Hedge junction suffers from a right turn accident problem and that there are no left turning accident problems at Willoughby Hedge.

Consideration

13. It is considered that the proposals put forward are a practical way in which to deal with the turning accidents taking place at Furze Hedge. The accident record at Willoughby Hedge does not back up the perceived problems raised by West Knoyle Parish Council. Furthermore, the improvements put forward by WS Atkins at Willoughby Hedge should to some extent help the situation.

Options Considered

14. To pursue the amendment to the weight limit.
15. To abandon the proposal.

Recommendation

16. That the amendment to the westbound weight limit is formally advertised and that any objections be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.

Reasons for Recommendation

17. The overall proposals at Furze Hedge junction are intended to reduce the number of personal injury accidents which are occurring. Given that no personal injury accidents have occurred at Willoughby Hedge in the last 3 years it is not considered that the additional traffic which would use this junction will cause any problems.

RICHARD J. LANDER

Director of Environmental Services

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

None

Environmental impact of the Recommendation contained in this Report:

There will be an environmental impact on the B3089 due to the increase in traffic using this route. However, this is offset by the potential accident savings at the Furze Hedge junction.