



**A29 ROUTE STUDY FEEDBACK**  
**LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR MOLE VALLEY**  
**8 DECEMBER 2004**

**KEY ISSUE:**

This report provides feedback on the A29 working groups findings and suggests a way forward for resolving safety issue along the route of the A29.

**SUMMARY:**

A report was presented to this Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2003 that detailed the results of a behavioural study undertaken along the route of the A29. The high number of Personal Injury Accidents (PIA'S) occurring on the A29 between Beare Green and the County boundary has given cause for concern in recent years, principally because a high percentage of the accidents involved single vehicles. This report identifies the key locations where accidents are occurring and suggests remedial measures that may address the problems identified. The working group that was set up in 2003 has viewed the various measures that are suggested and these are prioritised, in order that a phased implementation can take place to fit with the funding available within the Local Transport Plan (LTP).

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is requested to approve:

- i) the progression of measures on the A29 as outlined in this report.
- ii) the negotiation of land issues as required as well as any necessary acquisition of land.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 A report was presented to this Committee on the 12 February 2003 that detailed the results of a behavioural study undertaken along the route of the A29. The high number of single vehicle Personal Injury Accidents (PIAs) occurring between Beare Green and the County boundary on the A29 has given cause for concern over recent years.
- 1.2 A working group of local members, representatives from the Parish Council and officers was set up which met to discuss the issues and attempt to find a way forward.
- 1.3 Some of the key issues that were highlighted in the previous report to this Committee are identified below in order that the desired outcomes are better understood:
- 95% of the accidents involve a single vehicle only
  - engineering measures have been installed at various locations previously, but with little effect
  - the University of Surrey was asked to review the issues as it is believed that human error is involved in nearly all of the accidents
  - the study findings were focused on: environmental effects, behaviour and attitude prior to any crash occurring
  - to better understand the above issues, three methods of analysis were adopted. These were the analysis of accident data between 1995 and 2001 to identify accident clusters and driver / environmental factors that contributed to the accidents; the analysis of experts opinion relating to the A29 and their perceptions of hazard locations / reasons, together with experts perceptions of the publics driving behaviour / ability; lastly an analysis of the views and opinions of the public who live near the A29 and of those whom use the road regularly (Their perceptions of the road, accident locations, self reported driving behaviour, demographic details and accident history were investigated)
- 1.4 From the above work, four separate locations were identified where measures should be taken forward to alter the environment in an attempt to reduce accidents. The four locations are Buckinghamhill Farm Bend, Henhurst Lane Junction, Coles Lane / Ockley Rd Junction, and the approach to Ockley Village from the south. In addition the conclusions of the analysis are that a large number of the accidents along the A29 are caused by the driver of the vehicle(s) concerned, creating an environmental situation which exceeds their ability to resolve (i.e. the demands of the task exceed their performance).

## **2.0 ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY**

- 2.1 A series of measures are suggested to attempt to highlight the dangers or mitigate them. These include:
- Speed enforcement through mobile camera use by the Police
  - Surface treatments to improve skid resistance and / or to highlight junctions/ bends
  - More positive road signage at some locations
  - Improved visibility through bends by either carriageway realignment or vegetation clearance
  - Vehicle Activated Signs to provide warning of bends or vehicle speed.
- 2.2 The key problems identified and measures suggested for each of the locations along the A29 are detailed below:

### **Buckinghill Farm Bend**

Problems:

The A29 is derestricted at this location with an advisory 20mph sign for north bound traffic. The access to Buckinghill Farm is the natural 'forward path' for vehicles heading north and the bend has been treated to recognise this fact with anti-skid surfacing, slow signs and chevron signs. Vehicles enter the bend at too great a speed and simply leave the carriageway and enter into the farm land at approximately the mid-point of the bend. Drivers approaching the bend in a south bound direction, do so after a series of challenging bends (further north). The principle issue at this location is motorcyclists who enter the bend at excessive speed (possibly following the 'racing line') when the forward visibility is partially limited due to the alignment of the carriageway and the existence of a tree and hedgerow.

Measures:

North bound: The ideal option would be to increase the radius of the bend so that forward visibility is such that the road is more easily understood. This would require land acquisition and could commit a considerable amount of one years total LTP funds to the project. The recommended solution is therefore the installation of Vehicle Activated Signage ( VAS ) and accompanying coloured antiskid surfacing round the bends to highlight the danger to motorists. Additionally, it is suggested that negotiations with the land owner, at the access to the farm are entered into in order that the layout of the access can be amended.

South bound: The preferred option south bound would again be the realignment of the carriageway. However, the first practical solution is the removal of as much vegetation as possible whether on the public highway or not to greatly improve forward visibility and the application of coloured anti skid surfacing round the bend. The removal of some of the vegetation will have to be done through negotiation with the land owners or failing that, by statutory notice.

**Henhurst Cross Junction**

Problems:

The bend at the junction of Henhurst Cross Lane is again well signed with Advisory 20mph signs and chevron signs. The road also has a double white line system through the junction. The alignment of the bend appears to be a spiral radius rather than a consistent radii curve. This leads to a tendency for drivers, particularly motorcyclists, who are not familiar with the area, travelling at excessive to break when realising the deceptive nature of the bend. This in turn causes vehicles to slide sideways while breaking into the oncoming traffic. Forward visibility through and beyond the bend appears to be a problem.

Measures:

It is recommended that the majority of the vegetation that is within the 'sightline zone' is removed to allow motorists to have a clearer perception of the severity of the bend. In association with the vegetation clearance, the junction should be treated with a coloured antiskid surfacing, in both directions, to emphasis the dangers. Lastly, in the south bound direction, vehicle activated signs are likely to significantly improve the warning of the 'hazard'.

### **Coles Lane / Lake Road junctions**

#### Problems:

Lake Road junction with the A29 sits on the crest of a hill on a straight section of road with excellent forward visibility. There is a double white line system in existence, which is frequently abused. Both the Coles Lane junction and the Lake Road junction, although signed, are not defined that well and the nature of the road appears to invite excessive speed and right turning traffic (at both ) is therefore 'at risk'. The road, at present, has anti skid surfacing, although this surfacing does not relate particularly well to the highway geometry or hazards associated with this stretch of road.

#### Measures:

It is recommended that the two junctions are highlighted with anti skid surfacing and that the road markings are reviewed in order that the existence of the junctions are made more obvious. At Coles Lane, there may be some limited vegetation clearance (off highway) that is possible in order that signing of the junction can be improved. At Lake Road, the existing sign assembly should be reviewed so that the junction is emphasised.

### **Southern end of Ockley Village**

#### Problems:

The A29, being an old roman road, does encourage drivers to travel at relatively high speeds. The village does have some buff anti skid material laid a various locations, but most are too small to have any impact and they do not relate particularly well to the locations along the route where hazards are most likely to be apparent. There are vehicle activated speed warning signs in both directions in the village but these have been unusable for some time.

#### Measures:

There are very few practical and affordable engineering solutions to this area of Ockley. The measure that is most likely to have an impact is enforcement of the speed limit and in order to enhance this, VAS could be considered. Areas of special significance (e.g. junctions) could be highlighted (throughout the junction) with coloured anti skid surfacing.

2.3 Officers are aware of Members concern with the use of coloured surfaces but it is considered that the measures would not be excessive and they would be beneficial in trying to address the injury accident problems along the route. An example of this type of treatment can be seen in the Meon Valley in Hampshire. The Meon Valley is one of the most attractive valleys in Southern England and the coloured surfacing has not destroyed the rural nature of the area.

2.4 In order that best use is made of the limited resources available, it is suggested that priority is given to the locations that have the worst history of injury accidents. This would therefore mean that funding should be directed first towards the Buckingham Farm bend and the junction of Henhurst Cross Lane.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 Funding could be assigned from the LTP funds allocated locally. The LTP bid highlights this route as requiring funds for a number of years in order that works can be phased. It is expected that in total the schemes will amount to approximately £200,000.

### **4.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The proposals seek to reduce the negative impacts of the motor vehicle. Both speed reduction and accident reduction are strategic aims of the Council.

### **5.0 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report at this time.

### **6.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no equalities implications associated with this report at this time.

## **CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is considered that the measures described above will go some way to addressing the injury accident problems along the route of the A29. It is therefore recommended that the schemes are progressed on an incremental basis to assist with funding constraints. It is also important that the communities' expectations are not overly raised and it was with this in mind, that some practical solutions have been investigated to help ensure scheme delivery. Officers understand that Members and the wider community may have concerns with respect to vegetation clearance and possible tree removal. Additionally, there are indications that the community would wish for measures to be installed first, within Ockley village, rather than other locations along the route. Whilst the reasons for this are understood, it is considered that there is more justification for progressing initially with the Buckingham Farm bend and the junction at Henhurst Cross Lane.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: Previous committee papers**

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