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Mrs S Richardson

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<i>Date</i>	25 February 2019	<i>Email</i>	ete.customer.feedback@hants.gov.uk

Dear Mrs Richardson

Roadworks - s278 scheme - Brickyards Plantation - Pale Lane - Fleet

Thank you for your letter dated 24 January 2019 regarding the S278 scheme at Brickyards Plantation - Pale Lane, Fleet. Firstly, I can assure you that all enquiries regarding this scheme have been responded to within a few days of each enquiry, with each enquiry being considered fully before a response was sent.

I can appreciate that the changes to the junction at Pale Lane do require vehicles to slow down on Fleet Road ready to negotiate the turn into Pale Lane, whereas before they could use the diverge lane. However, the presence of the original diverge and merge lanes at this junction made the junction area overly large. It was felt that reducing the overall size of the junction would help to reduce traffic speeds through the junction and in turn help address the accident history.

The purpose of the revised junction is to address the existing accident history, improve pedestrian/cycle/public transport connectivity and obviously accommodate the additional traffic for the development on the northeast side of the junction. To address the accident issue, right turn lanes have been introduced to enable drivers to wait safely whilst waiting to turn right into either of the side roads. Prior to the works, this manoeuvre required drivers to wait stationery on the mainline carriageway until there was an opportunity to cross the opposing flow. This had resulted in a series of shunt type accidents occurring.

Director of Economy, Transport and Environment
Stuart Jarvis BSc DipTP FCIHT MRTPI

To provide right-turn lanes as well as diverge and merge lanes would have resulted in an even larger junction area which wouldn't help to reduce the speeds through the junction. The road was also widened on the Pale Lane side to accommodate the right-turn lanes so the area used originally for the diverge lane into Pale Lane became the northbound lane of Fleet Road.

The introduction of the ghost islands either side of the turning lanes has enabled the introduction of a traffic island, pedestrian crossing points and footway link to the improved bus stops. They also help to reduce the width of the junction, again helping to influence speeds through the junction.

Diverge and merge lanes are not favoured by Hampshire County Council due to the increased safety risks associated with them. Such lanes are primarily used to avoid the turning traffic from impeding the flow of the major road. However, vehicles utilising the diverge lane restrict the visibility for vehicles emerging from the side roads onto the major road which can then result in vehicles pulling out of the side junctions into the path of a vehicle travelling straight through on the mainline carriageway. Such lanes also increase the risk of accidents for motorcycles and cycles travelling along the mainline carriageway. To have vehicles slowing on the major road to turn into the side road (rather than utilising a diverge lane) also helps to reduce the overall speed of traffic through the junction.

Another aspect of the junction design was to remove the original crossroad effect of the side roads. Crossroads are particularly dangerous because of the "see through" effect from one side road directly into the side road on the opposite side of the major road which can result in the minor road traffic travelling straight across the junction without giving way to/being aware of the major road. The introduction of the smaller radius kerblines has enabled a small stagger to be introduced removing the "see through" effect.

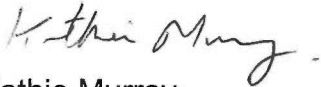
The S278 Team Leader has reviewed the Road Safety Audits produced for the scheme and has identified where the confusion is. A Stage 2 Safety Audit is undertaken at the detailed design stage and the Stage 3 Audit undertaken at the completion of the construction works. Any issues raised by the independent Safety Audit Team must be responded to by the Designer. For this particular scheme, the Road Safety Audit team have reported all of the previous Stage 2 Audit issues in the report (including the Stage 2 Designers Response) – this runs from page 5 to page 9. The Safety Audit Team did highlight the tightness of the Pale Lane kerb at the Stage 2 Audit and the Designer then provided their response. Given this together with the concerns raised through various enquiries during the construction of the works, Richard Fowke did ask the Road Safety Team to consider the as-built alignment of the turn into Pale Lane at the Stage 3 Audit. Whilst undertaking the Audit on site, they did watch several vehicles turn into Pale Lane, however, the Safety Audit Team did not identify any concerns regarding the removal of the Pale Lane diverge or the tightness of the kerblines at the Stage 3 Audit.

I can assure you that the junction has been assessed for the current traffic and the new brickyard plantation traffic. Although the Designer has referred to the development at Elvetham Chase in their response to the Stage 2 Audit, this hasn't influenced the design. The design is to accommodate the existing and committed traffic demand for the junction only. The Auditors categorically state that they have followed standard Audit procedure (cl1.14) ie "examined and reported only on highway safety implications of the scheme as presented".

The Developer's Designer has also provided acceptable tracking drawings as part of the S278 Design Check.

We will continue to monitor the revised junction during the maintenance period. Should any accidents occur during this period, a Stage 4 Road Safety Audit will be held and the Developer's Designer will have to address any items raised in the Audit.

Yours sincerely



Kathie Murray
Group Engineer