



**TWEEDDALE AREA FORUM
TO BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 31ST
AUGUST, 2016**

**Please find attached the Appendix in respect Item on
the agenda for the above meeting**

	<p>(a) Caerlee Corner, Innerleithen Consider briefing note by Depute Chief Executive Place. (Copy attached.)</p>	<p>(Pages 1 - 6) 15 mins</p>
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CAERLEE CORNER

Briefing Note by the Depute Chief Executive, PLACE

31 AUGUST 2016

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This briefing note outlines the background and gives an update on the situation at Caerlee Corner, Innerleithen where an accident pattern has developed in recent years.**

2 BACKGROUND & ACCIDENT HISTORY

- 2.1 There have been a number of injury accidents reported at Caerlee Corner in the last five years. Previous to this there were few reported accidents at the location and despite having checked obvious aspects such as surface texture and skid resistance there is no obvious reason why there has been such a marked increase.
- 2.2 The road geometry at the location is somewhat complicated with 3 bends within a bend. Heading eastbound there is a 33m length of 110m radius followed by a 20m length of 235m radius and a 45m length of 75m radius.
- 2.3 Accident analysis is based on the injury accident statistics provided by Police Scotland from the three previous years. An accident cluster site is identified where there are 3 or more accidents over that period within a 200 metre length of each other or associated with a distinct feature. Each year the Road Safety team identify all the sites in the Scottish Borders where this criteria is met and undertake further analysis on causation factors and the pattern of accident.
- 2.4 Caerlee Corner first appeared as an accident cluster site in 2013 analysis – prior to that there were very few reported accidents at the location.
- 2.5 Two distinct but potentially linked accident patterns are present at the bend. Firstly heading east there is a loss of control type accident on the initial westernmost section of the bend. Secondly, also heading east there is a loss of control on the last part of the bend as it tightens up again coming into the town. Loss of control heading out of the town is less common.
- 2.6 In 2013 it was the initial west most part of the bend that identified itself with 2 slight injury accidents and 1 serious accident over the period 2010 – 12.

Accident Summary

2/3 vehicles west to east 2/3 in daylight 2/3 in damp conditions
2/3 poor vehicle manoeuvre 2/3 loss of control 1/3 in rain
2/3 vehicles crossed over centre line and collided with oncoming vehicle
1/3 motorcyclist

2.7 The location was one of eight identified out of the long-list of 17 cluster sites for further investigation and potential treatment through the Accident Investigation Prevention (AIP) programme. **Work subsequently undertaken was to remove vegetation in the lead up to the existing bend sign and reduce speed now plate and the painting black and white of the existing safety barrier in order to increase conspicuity of the approaches and help guide vehicles round the bend. A new bend ahead sign for west bound traffic was also erected.**

2.8 The bend also appeared in the 2014 accident analysis but following closer analysis it was identified that this was triggered by a new set of accidents further east with 3 of the accidents occurring over a 6 week period in the summer of 2013.

Accident Summary

4/4 single vehicle accidents 4/4 in daylight 3/4 on dry roads
3/4 vehicles west to east 2/4 loss of control 1/4 in rain

The east to west accident was a restart from a junction and ignored in terms of pattern / causation factors.

As a consequence of the 3 accidents in 2013 this section of the corner will automatically trigger again as a cluster site in the 2016 analysis (based on 2013 – 15 stats) as indeed it did in the 2015 stats despite no further injury accidents at this location occurring in 2014 or 2015.

2.9 On this occasion the location was one of ten identified out of a long-list of 23 cluster sites for further investigation and potential treatment through the Accident Investigation Prevention (AIP) programme. **Work subsequently identified was the renewal of the red textureflex at the 30 mph limit and the provision of village name plate with road safety message on the offside for eastbound drivers. In the process of the investigation, it was also noted that the second countdown marker to the 30mph limit was missing. Arrangement was made to have this replaced.**

2.10 Local concern continued during this period and a site meeting was held with Members 27.10.14. At this meeting the proposals above were discussed and a number of other interventions suggested. Agreement was subsequently given to further measures including **new SLOW road markings; additional bend signs in both directions and the provision of chevrons as well as the clearing of gravel deposits on the outside of the bend.**

2.11 The work described in 2.8 & 2.9 above was all ordered in November 2014 and signed off on the system as undertaken and erected on site by the Neighbourhoods team. The exception to this were the chevron signs which

it was reported could not be installed at the location as gabion baskets could not support the foundations and the second gateway sign where there was a lighting complication.

- 2.12 Following a further injury accident in May 2015 and reports of damage only accident later that year it was agreed to have a further look at the issue. This piece of work was assigned to a team member with no previous involvement in the project in order to bring a fresh perspective and objectivity. During this investigation it came to light that some of the signing work previously ordered and signed off as undertaken was not actually in place.
- 2.13 The January 2016 investigation took this into account and a revised plan of engineering measures was drawn up to APG-E115 (Trunk Road standard). The normal practice is to have a consistency of standards appropriate to the route characteristics but an extremely rare exception has been made here for a higher standard of intervention in recognition of the issue and the depth of local concern.
- 2.14 This work was ordered but implementation delayed by the need to undertake Bellwin* schemes as priority to comply with the Scottish Government deadline requirements for claiming funding.
- Bellwin is the scheme where local authorities can apply to Scottish Government for additional funding to meet extraordinary expenditure (in this case extensive structural damage associated with Storms Desmond and Frank)
- 2.15 This work has now been completed, including a revised chevron design. This followed the undertaking of trial holes to establish that poles could in actual fact be located on the outside of the bend despite the presence and proximity of the gabion baskets.
- 2.16 A request for a **speed limit extension** was considered as part of the 2015 speed limit review. The site went forward as a shortlisted location for review on site. The conclusion of the officers undertaking the review was that the site did not meet the national criteria (lack of direct frontage) and that there was additional engineering measures still to be undertaken. It was also noted that there was no suitable location for police vehicles for enforcement purposes. Following further requests from the Community Council and local Members it was agreed to revisit this decision and a re-assessment, with Police Scotland, has now taken place.
- 2.17 The review concluded that extending the limit westwards was contrary to the national guidance and that the original decision was consistent and understandable. It was agreed however that this had to be balanced against the continuing accident record and the very high degree of local concern. Following considerable discussion it was agreed that a case should be made, supported by Police Scotland and council officers, for a 40 mph buffer zone that started before the initial bend.
- 2.18 In terms of arriving at the above conclusion there was concern that a 30 mph extension would, in part, prove counterproductive. Experience elsewhere has shown that at locations similar to this where there is limited frontage development and the reasons for a limit are not immediately apparent then there is a tendency for vehicle speeds to start to creep up again. The obvious concern being that further into Innerleithen speeds

would be greater than they are with the current arrangement. The benefit of a 40 mph buffer being that the existing 30 mph signs would remain in place to reinforce the message to drivers. It would also allow the 30 mph countdowns to remain in place (whereas if the 30 mph limit was moved there is no case for having 30 mph countdowns as it would be a straight approach to the 30 mph signs and there would be no rationale for needing countdown boards).

- 2.19 Further survey work has also been undertaken on the surface quality and skid resistance characteristics of the road. This specialist work was undertaken by a national company and is currently being analysed.
- 2.20 There is additional local concern that errant vehicles have a tendency to end up on the outside of the bend and potentially come into conflict with pedestrians using an informal but well-used local path that is immediately adjacent to the road.
- 2.21 Officers have drawn up some alternative schemes to divert the path away from the road and provided indicative costings for these. Such a scheme would be outwith the AIP programme and budget, but the Community Council have been put in touch with the SBC Grants Officer who is giving assistance in this regard.

3 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

- 3.1 There have been a number of injury and non-injury accidents just outside Innerleithen at Caerlee Corner on the A72.
- 3.2 A number of minor engineering interventions (signs and road markings) have been implemented in recent years to try and address the accident pattern.
- 3.3 Further signs and road markings improvements, to Trunk Road standards, have very recently been implemented.
- 3.4 Agreement has been reached with Police Scotland to promote the introduction of a 40 mph speed limit on the western approach to Innerleithen.
- 3.5 It should be noted that the process for introducing a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to amend the existing speed limit is a lengthy and legally protracted one that can typically take up to a year to be implemented on site.

Approved by

Chief Officer, Roads

Signature

Author(s)

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Background Papers: None
Previous Minute Reference: None

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