

A39 Bucks Cross Safety Assessment

Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendation: It is recommended that:

- (a) Members note the contents of this report;**
- (b) the Stage 4 Safety Audit report be brought back to this Committee when it becomes available so that Members can determine whether any further action is required.**

1. Background/Introduction

At the Torridge HATOC meeting of 26 February 2019 members requested that Officers investigate issues at Bucks Cross and report to the next meeting.

2. Main Text/Proposal

At the meeting on 26 February the Chair of Woolsery Parish Council requested the following:

- 1. That a crossing point across the A39 be funded and provided;
- 2. That an explanation be given as to why a crossing point had not been provided when the new school was built;
- 3. That the existing 40mph speed limit be extended to cover the entrance to the new school.

At the HATOC it was determined that Officers would investigate the options available with the Parish Council and report to the next meeting.

Following that meeting a safety assessment was undertaken by county council officers on 8 March 2019, a copy of the report of that assessment is attached as Appendix I.

3. Options/Alternatives

These are discussed in Appendix I.

It is intended that both the extension of the speed limit and the provision of a crossing point will be reviewed through the stage 4 (post opening and monitoring) safety audit process for the college.

Provision of a pedestrian crossing was not included in the proposals when the new school was built because it has been difficult to identify a site with sufficient width for a pedestrian refuge.

4. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

A crossing point and an extension of the 40mph speed limit have been requested by Woolsery Parish Council.

5. Financial Considerations

Any schemes will need a detailed design and study before the feasibility, costs and the implications on traffic flows can be fully considered. No budget has currently been identified for the proposals.

6. Environmental Impact Considerations

Improving the facilities to enable crossing of the A39 may have a positive environmental impact if it encourages people to walk in the village.

7. Equality Considerations

Improving the facilities to enable crossing of the A39 may have a positive benefit for pedestrians if it encourages people to walk in the village.

8. Legal Considerations

There are no specific legal considerations.

9. Risk Management Considerations

There has been one reported slight injury collision at Bucks Cross in the period 2014 to 2018, where a driver turning right out of the Woolsery Road hit a pedestrian who was attempting to cross the A39.

10. Public Health Impact

Improving the facilities to enable crossing of the A39 may encourage more people to walk in the village.

11. Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

It is recommended that any decision is deferred until the results of the Stage 4 Safety Audit become available.

Meg Booth
Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

Electoral Division: Bideford West & Hartland

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
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A39 Bucks Cross - Safety Assessment

Team Members

- Mike Jones Senior Traffic Officer
 - Nigel Flower Strategic Safer Travel Officer, Devon County Council
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1.0 Background

A number of concerns were raised by a member of the public at the Torridge HATOC meeting on 29 January 2019.

The issues of concern are:

1. Lack of a crossing facility in Bucks Cross, the Parish Council are requesting that any crossing includes a Pedestrian Island.
2. Annoyance that a previous S 106/278 agreement which was to have provided a crossing had never delivered and the Parish Council have not been informed why.
3. Extension of the 40mph speed limit to cover the entrance to the new college as this would also add protection to the residents of Walland Drive when exiting on the A39.

2.0 Site Visit

Friday, 8 March 2019

Weather: dry, overcast/cloudy, light winds.

3.0 Speed limit

The current speed limit through Bucks is 40mph, the most recent Speed data from Bucks Cross is from May 2010 so should only be used as a guide. In 2010 the 24hr mean speed was 32.7 mph and the 85%ile was 40.mph, this would be considered as a compliant speed limit.

At that time the daily vehicle flow was just under 7,000 vehicles in a 24hr period.

4.0 Collision data

In the last five years 2014-2018, (2018 has not been fully validated) of reported collisions there has been one slight injury collision, which occurred in 2018.

The collision involved a vehicle turning right out onto the A39 towards Bideford, the pedestrian was attempting to cross the A39. As the vehicle pulled out the pedestrian started to cross the road at the same time and the collision occurred. Both the pedestrian and driver were local.

5.0 Issue 1: Lack of a crossing facility in Bucks Cross

The crossroads at Bucks Cross has wide verges and currently provides good inter-visibility for pedestrians and vehicles entering and exiting the highway. During busy times it may take pedestrians time to cross the road waiting for gaps in the traffic flow. Currently there is no formal crossing point and pedestrians were observed crossing in a couple of different locations.

The road, including narrow central hatching appears to be a standard 7.3m wide. This is not wide enough to safely provide a refuge which would need to be at least 2.5m wide for pedestrians to use safely and maintain a minimum of 3m carriageway width. There are a couple of locations where a dropped crossing could be accommodated. One is to the west of the crossroads and one to the east.

A problem with providing dropped kerbs as an uncontrolled crossing point will be the hatching in the centre leading to the possibility of pedestrians waiting in the hatched areas to cross the road. This may already occur but was not observed during the site visit. The location east of the crossroads would possibly require significant changes to signing to achieve adequate inter-visibility between motorist and pedestrians.

6.0 Issue 2: previous S 106/278 agreement

From site observations siting a pedestrian island would not have been possible without significant investment.

If the 2 bus laybys were to be filled in and revert to the more usual on road stops there may be potential to use the space to construct an adequate pedestrian refuge and localised road widening. The costs involved would be significant, but this would also provide an effective traffic calming feature within the village.

7.0 Issue 3: Extension of 40mph limit

As part of the Road safety audit process for the new college the speed limit was discussed. During the stage 3 road safety audit visit the college assured the audit team that no students crossed the road and so it was agreed that this issue would be reviewed in the stage 4 audit.

Visibility from the Walland Drive junction was observed to be excellent in each direction. There are no reported injury collisions in the previous five years 2014-2018 (2018 data not yet fully validated). There is one reported collision between Walland drive and the college and that was due to a puncture.

As discussed in previous e-mails, the appearance of the road approaching the school junction does not encourage lower speeds apart from the presence of street lighting

which, from the wide speed distribution observed in the survey, does provide some uncertainty regarding the actual speed limit. This is not necessarily a good thing as a wide differential of speeds regarded as acceptable by drivers on the same section of road may result in collisions. The function of the road carrying both local/school traffic as well as longer distance commuters/freight does not lend itself well to a lower speed limit, particularly as the section of road between the school junction and Bucks Cross returns to rural tree lined without street lighting for approx. 500m. The spread of speeds throughout a 24 hour period shows that higher volumes and school activity result in Mean Speeds of 41.5mpm and 85th%ile of 54mph. As volumes drop and away from either end of the school day average speeds increase to around 50mph and 85th%iles exceed 60mph.

The speed limit will be reviewed through the Stage 4 road safety audit process for the college.

10.0 Conclusions

Issue 1: Whilst it may take time on occasions to cross the road it is not inherently dangerous. It would benefit from having pedestrian refuge installed to aid the crossing of the A39 but this would not be a casualty reduction scheme as all casualty reduction sites are prioritised by the severity and number of collisions occurring at the location.

The installation of a pedestrian refuge would have a number of engineering challenges, any change to the width of the road could decrease the inter-visibility for vehicles entering the A39 from the side roads, introducing a danger that is not currently there.

Issue 2: It has been difficult to identify a site where a crossing with a pedestrian refuge may be placed. This will be reviewed as part of the Stage 4 Road Safety Audit.

Issue 3: This will be reviewed as part of the stage 4 road safety audit.