

Wash Water Speed limit ID report
Appendix A

1. Statement of reasons and assessment report.

The Order is necessary in the interest of road safety to reduce the 50 mph speed limit in this area to 40 mph as identified in a traffic management assessment of the area in June 2015 (reproduced below) and agreed by the Council's speed limit review panel in September 2015

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT REPORT

LOCATION: A343 Sandpit Hill and Wash Water Junction. Newbury

Parish Ref. No. TM 38.1 Falkland

Proposal / Request:

This Location has been identified for investigation as part of the Local Safety Scheme 2014/15 works programme.

Background

The A343 is the main route from the south west (Andover) into Newbury. For an 'A' classification route it is relatively lightly trafficked. Wash Water joins the A343 from the west, close to the authority border with Basingstoke and Deane, the junction was subject to a projects team improvement scheme approximately seven years ago where the junction was improved by widening the turn into Wash water from the south. To the north of the Wash Water junction the A343 has a double bend on a moderate Hill, this is known as Sandpit Hill. See attached plan for the layout of the area.

Travelling south down the A343 away from Newbury there is a 40 mph limit as the houses thin out. Entering Sandpit Hill is a left hand, downhill bend, at this point the speed limit changes to 50 mph. The bend is delineated with marker posts. There is a junction warning sign on the nearside, this is in poor condition, set against foliage and not in the driver's line of site. Visibility from the last bend to the junction exceeds 175m, however the offside junction itself is masked by a hedge and the driver's initial attention is drawn to the nearside sign structure opposite it. For vehicles turning north to west the visibility to on coming vehicles from the south is good with approximately 150 metres.

For vehicles travelling north on the A343 towards the junction there is good view, however the speed limit terminal signs are in poor condition.

Travelling from Wash water towards the A343, although there is clearly a junction ahead the give way sign is masked by the nearside hedge. At the junction the drivers view to the offside, towards Hampshire is 100 metres and is a slightly acute angle.

Accident History

In the last three years there have been a total of four accidents at the junction. All four accidents were classified as 'slight' resulting in four casualties. These are summarized as follows.

1. 2nd October 2012, Vehicle 2 travelling from the north braking to turn right into Wash Water vehicle 1 travelling behind failed to stop and hit rear of vehicle 2.
2. 5th September 2013, Vehicle 1 travelling from the north turning right into Wash Water turned into the path of vehicle 2 travelling north (reportedly at speed).
3. 24th December 2013, Vehicle 1 travelling from the north turning right into Wash Water turned into the path of vehicle 2 travelling north.
4. 15th July 2014, Vehicle 1 travelling from the north waiting to turn right into Wash Water vehicle 1 travelling behind failed to stop and hit rear of vehicle 2.

In addition there has been one accident on Sandpit Hill north of the junction, this involved a car travelling north, at speed, crossing onto the oncoming lane and hitting a car travelling south. This was classified as serious injury.

Officer Analysis

At the junction there is no concern with wet or dark accidents as three of the four accidents occurred in the dry and during the day. All the accidents involved a vehicle turning right from north to west. Two of the accidents were rear end shunts and the other two involved collisions with vehicles travelling south to north.

The approach from the north is downhill with a series of bends approaching the junction however

Speed

A speed survey was carried out at the junction in June 2015, this showed an average speed of 36 mph southbound (85th %ile 45)
Northbound average 37 (85th %ile 46)

Speed was a probable causation factor in at least two of the accidents. The current speed limit at this location is 50mph. The character of the highway changes slightly to the north of the junction and this may be leading drivers to increasing speed as they leave the built up area.

Officer Recommendations

1. A343 southbound towards the junction. Refurbish the bend marker posts. Replace the junction warning sign in a more prominent position, repeat it on the offside. Redesign the signs at the junction by removing the tourist signs and replacing them with advance signs which would be additional warnings of the junction.
2. A343 northbound, refurbish the speed limit terminal signs.
3. Wash Water, consider putting in an advance give way sign if space allows.

Speed limit, consider reducing the 50 speed limit to 40 mph. This is because the change from 40 to 50 as a driver leaves the built up area implies he can accelerate into safe environment, whereas he is approaching a hazard. This would also improve the safety margin for vehicles travelling north.

2. Objection from Mr Brown. (No further explanation given)

I object to this proposal as the stretch of road specified is outside the residential area.

3. **Letter to Mr Brown**, no reply received as of 21st September 2016.

12th September 2016

Mr G Edwards
Limes
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Highways and Transport

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Your Ref:

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Dear Mr Edwards

Proposed extension of the 40 mph speed limit on the A340/Wash Water.

This letter is a follow up to the e mail sent on 6th September, in case that has gone astray and is an acknowledgement that we have received your objection to this proposal and it will be duly considered.

Part of the process is that I should attempt to resolve your concerns so that the order can be made as proposed or amended to cater for your concerns.

I am the engineer responsible for the proposal which arises from a safety review into the Wash water junction, for your information a copy of the report is attached.

I am loath to propose reducing speed limits but in this case it is appropriate, as you will see the current limit increases to 50 and is an invitation for a driver, not familiar with the area, to increase speed only to find he is accelerating into a hazard. We could move the start of the 50 limit but this would then mean the length of 50 was below the minimum distances recommended by the Department of Transport. The only viable option is to remove the short sections of 50 mph completely so we have a uniform 40 mph limit to the authority boundary.

The proposal was discussed at the council's speed limit review panel in September last year when it was agreed by all parties so there is a consensus that the limit should be reduced. The consultation has closed and your objection is the only representation that has been made.

If you would like to discuss this please give me a ring on my direct number but in any case could you indicate if you still wish to pursue the objection. If you wish to pursue the objection the next step is the proposal will be referred to the councilor responsible Highways and Transport who will make a decision on the outcome based on all the representations made, which will include yours.

Yours sincerely

Bob Bosley, Project Engineer, Traffic and Road Safety