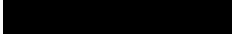


Our ref:
Your ref: CAO/AB/845&846/15

HM Coroner's Office
PO Box 282
Bishop Auckland
County Durham
DL14 4FY


Regional Director, Yorkshire & Humber
and North East
Lateral
8 City Walk
Leeds LS11 9AT

Direct Line: 0300 470 2438

24 November 2015

For the attention of Crispin A. Oliver

Dear Mr Oliver

**Response to Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths
The Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013**

**A66 Hulands Quarry Access, east of Bowes, County Durham
In relation to the Deaths of Mr Kenneth and Mrs Mary McCurdy**

I refer to your letter of 9 October 2015 and accompanying Regulation 28 Report to prevent future deaths in relation to the above.

Highways England was saddened by the news of the death of Mr and Mrs McCurdy and would wish to extend sincere condolences to their family in this respect. We note your conclusions of accidental deaths in both cases.

Your report details concerns in relation to the current lack of signing at this central reservation gap and that you believe that Highways England has power to take action to prevent future deaths. Highways England accepts that it has power to take action and would refer you to the measures that are set out below.

I note that the Report indicates that it could not be explained to the inquest why the driver executed his manoeuvre through this central reservation gap.

Following receipt of the Report, a detailed examination of the circumstances of this collision has taken place and an inspection and assessment of the road's layout has been undertaken.

The collision history reveals no other injury collisions in this vicinity in at least the last 10-years. Highways England's investigation has drawn a number of conclusions:

- There is no currently legally approved or appropriate sign that can be installed on the A66 westbound carriageway to indicate to drivers that the gap cannot be entered by vehicles passing from the eastbound carriageway. Vehicles exiting the Hulands Quarry access have the need and right to pass through the central

reservation gap at this location, and hence such a sign could provide westbound drivers with misleading information which might in itself cause a danger to drivers;

- By prohibiting certain turning manoeuvres, Highways England has a duty to provide an alternative facility for users. In this case, drivers would be required to divert elsewhere to perform U-turn manoeuvres. Currently there are no suitable alternative U-turn facilities on the A66 between Bowes Interchange and Cross Lanes junction.

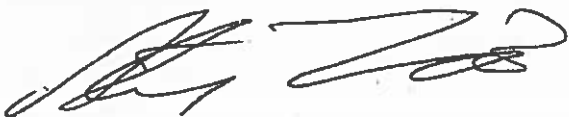
Highways England proposes the following to address your concerns relating to this and the adjacent central reservation gap to East Lowfield Farm. Measures are proposed to enhance the existing facilities and to positively encourage use of the central reservation gaps where offside diverge lanes are installed. These measures would include signing and road markings to highlight the appropriate facility.

It is however recognised that Mr McCurdy was performing a U-turn manoeuvre when the collision occurred. Such manoeuvres are normally made when a driver either realises that he is driving, or he is under the misconception that he is driving, in the wrong direction. Highways England therefore proposes to work with Durham Constabulary in December to identify the route that Mr McCurdy had intended to take. Using this information, we will investigate enhancements to signing and road markings at appropriate locations that will provide drivers with improved advance information. This is aimed at reducing driver confusion and hence reducing future collision risk. By 31 March 2016 we aim to deliver investigations that will recommend proposals for this length of the A66

Regrettably at this time, no funding is currently available to undertake this work, beyond the investigations described. A bid will be placed to request funding, which is normally allocated on a priority basis to ensure that funds are targeted at sites that are likely to provide the greatest collision savings and safety benefit to road users.

I trust that this information is of assistance in explaining Highways England's proposals in relation to this location.

Yours sincerely




Regional Director, Yorkshire & Humber and North East

Email: 