



HM Senior Coroner
Mr J Pollard
The Coroner's Court
Mount Tabor, Mottram Street
Stockport
SK1 3AG

[REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

Ask for: [REDACTED]

28 April 2016

Dear Mr Pollard

Inquest into the death of Aleeza Ahmed

We acknowledge receipt of your report to prevent future deaths dated 3 March 2016. We note your observations within the report that during the course of the inquest the evidence revealed matters giving rise to concern and that in your opinion there is a risk that future deaths will occur unless action is taken.

The matters of concern relate to the type of kerb stones to the offside of the carriageway of Crookilley Way, Stockport, and the absence of a protective Armco type barrier on the central reservation at this point. You have recommended that action is taken to prevent future deaths and that you believe Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council ("SMBC") have the power to take such action.

SMBC has carefully considered your report and responds as follows.

Background

Crookilley Way A560 is a carriageway that runs from the A6 Portwood roundabout via the Crookilley roundabout to Ashton Road roundabout in Bredbury. The stretch of road on which this road traffic collision occurred is a dual carriageway linking the two roundabouts. The speed limit on the carriageway is 50mph. A survey conducted in September 2013 indicated a total day time flow in excess of 14,300 vehicles on the south bound side of this carriageway.

SMBC is the highway authority for highways maintainable at public expense within Stockport. The network consists of 944km of carriageway, 1,501km of pavement and 437km of footpaths, bridleways and byways. The carriageway consists of a combination of A, B and C class and unclassified roads.

The design, construction and maintenance of roads in England is governed by Standards for Highways (the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges ("DMRB")). Standards guidance is provided in manuals for each specific element of designing, constructing and maintaining roads. Each standard has its own specifications for implementation.

The standards which applied when the Crookilley Way carriageway was constructed would have been those applicable at the time the road was designed. The design for Crookilley Way was approved in the mid-1980s and was constructed by Highways England (as it now is) as part of the side roads works for the M63 (Portwood to Denton) extension. The road opened in April 1989.

Kerb stones

Road kerbs serve a number of purposes:

- Retaining the carriageway edge to prevent 'spreading' and loss of structural integrity
- Acting as a barrier or demarcation between road traffic and pedestrians or verges
- Providing a physical check to prevent vehicles leaving the carriageway
- Forming a channel along which surface water can be drained

A splayed kerb is used on Crookilley Way, which is the type of kerb used on dual carriageways and motorways and where there are no adjacent footpaths. Whilst one of the purposes of a kerb is to provide a physical check to prevent vehicles leaving the carriageway, the design of the splayed kerb used on such a carriageway has an angled face which presents an inclination. This is designed to allow a vehicle to mount the verge in an emergency and keep the carriageway clear, which is of critical importance on a dual carriageway or motorway.

A 90 degree square kerb or half battered kerb more commonly used on roads with a lower speed limit could prevent vehicles clearing the carriageway and cause them to remain in the carriageway, potentially creating a hazard. This is not appropriate for a dual carriageway such as Crookilley Way. A high containment kerb is designed to prevent traffic leaving the carriageway at potentially vulnerable or sensitive areas to protect those areas from vehicle incursion. However, these can create an additional risk of injury to vehicle occupants and other vehicles by blocking the carriageway so are not suitable for use on dual carriageways or motorways.

The relevant guidance which applies to kerbs on carriageways is TA57/87.

Central barrier

Current design standards are contained within the Standards for Highways Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 2: Highway Structures: Design (Substructures and Special Structures) Materials, Section 2: Special Structures, Part 8 TD19/06 Criteria and Guidance for the Provision of Permanent Safety Barriers. This specifies that a safety barrier must be provided on dual carriageway roads where the width of the central reserve measured between opposing edges of carriageway road markings is 10 metres or less.

It is not known why it was deemed that there was no requirement for a protective safety barrier to be erected on the central reservation at the time of the design of Crookilley Way.

The current design standard need only be implemented on trunk roads with speeds of 50mph or more where that road is new or where the highway cross section is being altered permanently. Consideration of the standard must only be given when upgrading the existing road restraint system or installing a new system where an existing one does not exist when other works (excluding routine maintenance) are being carried out near a hazard that is currently without provision for which the road restraint risk assessment process indicates provision is required.

Following the establishment of Transport for Greater Manchester ("TfGM") from the former Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive ("GMPTE") in April 2011 the remit of the new organisation was expanded to include, among other things, joint highway responsibility with the local authorities over a network of strategic roads known as the key route network ("KRN"). Parts of the A560 within Stockport are identified as being part of the KRN, including Crookilley Way.

It is the responsibility of TfGM to identify and initiate potential improvements to the KRN. As part of this responsibility TfGM asked the local highway authorities, including SMBC, to identify possible improvements on the KRN that the authorities might consider beneficial in the next five years. This request was made in December 2015 and SMBC responded by supplying a list of possible improvements sent to TfGM on 24 December 2015.

Among the schemes proposed for consideration was inclusion of a possible central barrier on Crookilley Way. No details of the form of the barrier were known or detailed on the list. This was proposed on the basis that at the time of the review there was no such barrier in place on Crookilley Way and installing such a barrier would potentially avoid cross over type collisions and bring the road up to modern standards.

As Crookilley Way is part of the KRN any installation or amendments to the carriageway would need the support of TfGM. No response has been received from TfGM to the submitted list of potential improvements to the KRN and no funding has been received from TfGM for this installation. It is estimated that the cost of such a barrier would be in excess of £50,000. SMBC has extremely limited finding for road safety improvements and the budget for 2016/2017 is already committed so funding will have to come from some other source for this installation to be made. There is potential for a bid to be made to the Greater Manchester Casualty Reduction Partnership ("GMCRP") and we anticipate making such a bid during the course of 2016/2017.

SMBC is also planning to undertake a review of the speed limit on this part of Crookilley Way. We anticipate that the speed limit will be reduced from 50mph to 40mph between Ashton Road and the southern side of the M60 junction 25 southern roundabout. This will assist with safety on both this road and on the large roundabout itself and consideration of the installation of a barrier cannot be considered in isolation.

SMBC fully appreciate the recommendations of the report and is committed to ensuring the necessary actions are progressed as a priority. This goal, however, is one which will require the active involvement, consent and funding from a range of parties including TfGM.

Yours sincerely



Corporate Director, Place