

Newcastle and North Tyneside
Coroner's Office
Civic Centre
Barras Bridge
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE1 8QH
For the attention of Karen Dilks, Assistant Deputy Coroner



Date: 29th August 2023

This matter is being dealt with by:  Group Engineer, Transportation
Development

Dear Madam,

Thank you for your letter and report dated 25th May 2023 with the case reference number 308348. This matter is in relation to the death of Jean Hardy who unfortunately passed away following a road traffic collision which occurred on Doxford Park Way in Sunderland.

Following the conclusion of the inquest in April 2023, the Council received your Regulation 28 report detailing the following concerns:

- (1) The B1286 Doxford Parkway is bordered by Multiple housing estates and the evidence confirmed that local practice of crossing at non designated crossing points which are more easily accessible and convenient is common and well known.
- (2) Access to the carriageway is not restricted by fencing (save for limited fencing at designated crossing points) and there is no signage prohibiting crossing at non designated crossing points or warning of the risks to the public of doing so.
- (3) There is a risk of further deaths occurring in this location and in similar circumstances. To prevent future deaths there should be a comprehensive review of current pedestrian crossing provision on B1286 Doxford Parkway.

Northumbria Police generally contact the Council's Local Highway Authority road safety representatives to request a site meeting following a road traffic collision resulting in a fatality. This only happens if the Police investigating officer is of the view that the highway layout or highway condition at the time was a potential contributory factor. There were no requests received from the Police to undertake a site meeting. However, following your request, the Council arranged and met on site with the investigating officers from Northumbria Police to help understand the circumstances and any contributory factors in relation to this fatality. This took place at the collision location on 15th August 2023.

It is unknown why Mrs Hardy chose to cross at the location where the collision occurred; however, it should be noted that there is an existing footway following the northern side of Doxford Park Way and appropriately located pedestrian crossing points nearby to this location. These are found at the roundabout junction with Moorside Road / Noirmont Way approximately 120 metres to the west, and a controlled crossing approximately 180 metres to the east near Morrison's and the local shopping centre.

The investigating officers from Northumbria Police were of the view that the tragic accident would not have been prevented by additional road safety measures due to the circumstances involved. A suggestion made by the Police is to install warning or advisory signs.

In response to your concerns and request for action, the Council has undertaken a road safety review of the location concerned; and has also investigated the suitability of the existing pedestrian crossing point locations on Doxford Park Way. The issues you have raised around provision of fencing within a central grassed reservation and signing has been considered. This was discussed on site, and the view of the Police is that this would encourage barrier hopping by more agile pedestrians and would not be supported by them.

As an action, the Council are proposing to install signing on both sides of Doxford Parkway to direct pedestrians to nearby crossing points.

I trust this satisfactorily addresses the concerns and actions identified within your report.

Yours sincerely



Assistant Director of Transport and Infrastructure

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