

Cllr Rob Humby
Executive Member for Environment & Transport
Hampshire County Council
The Castle
Winchester
SO23 8UJ

6th December 2016

When we met in your office at The Castle on 20th September this year, I once again raised with you the troubled 'Cart & Horses' junction on the A33 at Kings Worthy.

As you will be aware from your predecessor – and your officers - it has been the source of great concern to me and local councillors (parish, city and county) for many years. The record will show a steady flow of accidents, near misses and concerns raised by residents around safety at the site. There have been numerous questions raised at Full Council over the years as well as deputations from members; including, of course, last month.

I personally brought the Secretary of State for Transport to the site in late 2013 so he could see for himself the challenge we face and, as widely reported since, he described it as a “nasty junction” within minutes of being on the ground.

We were hopeful of positive change when the County Council agreed, in September 2014, to implement a £103,000 scheme to improve the junction for motorists and pedestrians. I welcomed the investment of course but said publicly at the time, this must be followed in due course by a wholesale review of the effectiveness of the changes so we can judge, based upon expert (not amateur) opinion how the junction is operating.

I am also on record as saying this should be seen as “part one” of a “fundamental road layout change” at some future point and go hand-in-hand with a lowering of the official speed limit.

Ultimately we can make small changes (albeit at not insignificant cost) but if we do not bring right down the speed at which vehicles approach this junction – from both north and south – we will never make it safer. My view, and that of many of my constituents who have contacted me about this junction, is that this is best likely achieved through a fundamental layout change.

Since the current work was completed, in early Summer this year, we have seen a number of road traffic accidents and there is no question I have seen a further increase in correspondence from concerned constituents. And of course, just last month we had the absolute tragedy of a young pedestrian killed while crossing the A33 at the junction.

As you would expect I am in contact with Hampshire Constabulary and the investigating officer has given me an initial briefing on the incident. However, as I said in the local press last week, we must wait for the findings of what is a big police investigation. What we need now are cool-heads and hard evidence not conjecture and, as a result, decisions made in haste.

However, everything I have said above remains valid and it would be unfair on any of us who represent the area to categorise our demands for change as solely a response to last month's fatal accident at the site. That has given an added impetus to us of course, but has above all greatly saddened everyone concerned.

The main purpose of this letter is to let you know that I met with Roads Minister, Andrew Jones MP, in Westminster last week to brief him on this junction in the light of the Autumn Statement.

As you will know, the Chancellor spoke at length about the need to invest in infrastructure and the productivity challenge our economy faces. Part of the response to that is a £3bn investment on improving roads in England.

That includes a £925m fund to tackle congestion, provide upgrades and improve safety on local roads and I am keen to explore whether Hampshire can bid, via myself as the Member of Parliament for the area, for a slice of this to revisit the A33 junction. I am acutely aware Hampshire's resources are extremely tight so we will need external help to do this.

The Minister is looking for worked up schemes which broadly tick three boxes; productivity, the local environment/air quality and of course, safety.

I would be extremely grateful if you can discuss this with Stuart Jarvis in your team and help me move this forward. We may not be successful of course but I intend to try and we cannot wait to get this work underway. I stand ready to help in any way I can and, if necessary, to connect you with the Minister's office as you seek to get this in the best possible order for a bid.

Finally, I have copied this letter to Highways England and will send a copy to Margaret Paren at the South Downs National Park Authority who are a key player in this as the junction is a 'gateway' to the park area. I will copy you to my letter to SDNP.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Brine