



CABINET – 18TH OCTOBER 2023

SUBJECT: B4251 YNYSDDU TO WYLLIE SAFETY REVIEW

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Cabinet on additional proposed safety measures for the above highway and to seek cabinet approval to undertake the associated works.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 A road safety review was carried out in March 2020 on the B4251 Ynysddu to Wyllie which made a few recommendations. These recommendations were actioned during the summer of 2020 and included, areas of resurfacing, chevron signing, speed limit reduction along with other minor maintenance issues.

Following the completion of these safety measures a significant tree felling operation commenced in September 2020 to remove “Ash Dieback”. The removal of these substantial trees opened-up the embankments and renewed perceptions of danger and requests for a Vehicle restraint system (VRS) at certain points along the stretch of highway. While the independent safety reports did not recommend the installation of VRS or fencing, schemes were developed to see what could be accommodated should the authority wish to consider a non-compliant VRS scheme or alternate fencing along this route. In February 2022 Cabinet approved the installation of a chain-link boundary fence along the B4251.

Following completion of previous improvement measures, installation of the chain-link fence and representations from the local ward members and members of the public, it was agreed that a further road safety review would be independently undertaken to evaluate the works and improvements undertaken to date.

This review was undertaken in an open and transparent way and resulted in a meeting on 15/06/23 where all relevant parties met council officers, Gwent police and authors of the independent safety report to review and analyse the outcomes.

A final meeting was then held with local residents and Councillors on the 16th August 2023 to agree the proposed actions. All actions agreed at the meeting are contained within the report Table 1 (5.5).

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet are asked to consider the contents of this report and approve the additional road safety review conclusion that the B4251 between Ynysddu and Wyllie does not have any major road safety issues and that the suggested minor improvements identified (which are generally maintenance or preventative related) be actioned as part of ongoing highway maintenance schedules or as described in Table 1 at paragraph 5.4 below. These improvements will also be monitored against any recorded accident data received over the coming years.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure that this section of highway is as safe as possible taking account of current highway design standards.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The current road safety assessment undertaken by Local Transport Projects (LTP) in March 2023 replicates the same study area as the original safety Improvement Study commissioned with AMEY consultants in March 2020. The study area focused on the then de-restricted section of the road (road has now had a 40mph restriction placed on it) which begins at the north end of Ynysddu and terminates just south of the Gelligroes roundabout on the A472 and also included the 40mph section leading to the roundabout at that time. The road runs north to south adjacent to the Sirhowy River and has 5 no. bus stops and a river over-bridge. There are reflective road studs throughout the de-restricted section. The street lighting in the area was changed from permanent lighting to a part-night regime between midnight and 5.30am in 2010 in accordance with the inter urban route policy for part night lighting.

- 5.2 The Road Safety Review and Road Restraint System (RRS) Assessment forms a review and assessment of the current highway conditions at the time of the study (February/March 2023). Reference to previous reporting/assessment work undertaken by others is made within the report as appropriate. (See report Appendix 1)

- 5.3 The scope of the Road Safety Review and Road Restraint System (RRS) Assessment is summarised below:

1. Road Safety Review – Assessment of current highway conditions on the route, including:

- Assessment of vehicle speed, vehicle flow and injury collision data for the route.
- Site-based and desktop assessments of cross section, geometry, surface condition, carriageway falls/drainage, kerbing, road markings/studs, signing, road lighting, road restraint system, fencing and other relevant features; and
- Overall, Road Safety Review conclusions and recommendations.

2. Road Restraint System (RRS) Assessment – RRS Assessment for the study route with reference to 'Provision of Road Restraint Systems on Local Authority Roads' (PRRSLAR) (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011) which provides an appraisal process to help authorities decide when a RRS is justified.

- 5.3.1 Previous RSS Assessments have been undertaken as follows:

- October 2019 – ‘CCBC Vehicle Restraint System Risk Scoring Assessment’ (CCBC,2019). This assessment was undertaken when most of the study route was subject to a 60mph speed limit. It is understood that the assessment was undertaken with reference to the PRRSLAR guidance (rather than TD 19/06). The route scored as a medium priority site; and
- March 2020 – ‘Caerphilly CBC – B4251 Safety Improvement Study’ (Amey Consulting, 2020). Although a 60mph speed limit was in place on most of the route, a draft risk scoring assessment with reference to the PRRSLAR guidance was undertaken on the assumption that a 40mph speed limit would be implemented on the route. The route scored as a medium priority site.

- 5.3.2 The current RRS Assessment undertaken as part of the latest review forms a new assessment and is based on the existing conditions on the route. Where appropriate, this RSS makes use of relevant data/information obtained and analysed as part of the Road Safety Review.
- 5.3.3 Although previously assessed by others as a **medium** priority site (9-13pts), it is considered that the recent non-RRS interventions (e.g., 40mph speed limit implementation, chevron signing, localised resurfacing etc) have contributed to reducing the risk on the route to the **lower** priority category (0-9pts) as the route achieved a total scoring of only 8pts.
- 5.4 A table of minor improvements and additional preventative measures is summarised below in Table 1. These measures were discussed and approved with consultees on 16th August 2023. All measures below are subject to a routine Road Safety Audit (RSA). Any recommendations from the RSA will be reviewed and actioned by the Head of Service under their delegated powers.

Table 1

Source of recommendation	Works Item	Delivery timeframe (weather dependant)
Recommended by Safety Review	Surface Condition - Some minor defects identified mainly relating to carriageway depressions, cracking and potholing.	To be reviewed by Highways Maintenance team and works undertaken during future road surfacing maintenance works – Review within 4 weeks of Cabinet approval
Recommended by Safety Review	Falls and Drainage - Some minor items/issues identified mainly relating to gathered detritus at gullies, evidence of ponded surface water and cracking at gully frames.	To be reviewed by Highways Maintenance team and works undertaken during future road surfacing maintenance works – Review within 4 weeks of Cabinet approval Road channels to be swept/cleansed – Part of routine maintenance (last sweep confirmed as 9th Aug)

Recommended by Safety Review	Kerbing - Some minor items/issues identified mainly relating to detritus masking the kerb, kerb upstand inconsistencies and damaged kerbs	To be reviewed by Highways Maintenance team and undertaken during future road surfacing maintenance works – Review within 4 weeks of Cabinet approval. Kerb line to be swept/cleansed – Part of routine maintenance (last sweep confirmed as 9th Aug).
Recommended by Safety Review	Road Markings - Revise central hatch marking to a 4m mark, 2m gap (currently 6m mark, 3m gap). Consider provision of edge of carriageway road makings to provide enhanced delineation of the edge of carriageway. A small number of worn road markings were identified.	Central road marking lengths - to be amended during future road surfacing programmes. Edge of carriageway marking (100mm wide) and worn road markings. To be laid and refreshed within 10 weeks of Cabinet approval.
Recommended by Safety Review	Road Studs – Missing Road studs were identified at three locations.	To be reviewed by Highways Maintenance team and undertaken during future road surfacing maintenance works – Review within 4 weeks of Cabinet approval.
Recommended by Safety review	Signing - Replace existing 40mph terminal signs with standard 40mph repeater signs. Review location of all chevron signing in relation to edge of carriageway. Some minor items/issues identified relating to sign face cleaning, minor sign face damage, obscured visibility of signs and lack of bi-lingual information.	Replace speed limit terminal signs with speed limit repeaters. - Within 10 weeks of Cabinet approval Chevron relocation not achievable. Sign face cleaning - Within 10 weeks of Cabinet approval. Remaining minor items to be reviewed by Highways Maintenance team – Review within 4 weeks of Cabinet approval

Recommended by Safety Review	Road Lighting - Some minor items/issues identified mainly relating to foliage obscuring lanterns and leaning lighting columns.	Review undertaken August 2023 / Vertical realignment due end Sept 2023 (No immediate concerns noted) Excess vegetation removal - Review planned by Arboriculturalist Officers end of August 2023. (NB: Full detailed survey from Gelligroes to Full Moon due under routine maintenance inspection regime winter 23/24)
Recommended by Safety Review	Existing VRS Terminal - CCBC to replace terminal inline with current standards	Replaced under capital works programme - Complete.
Additional preventative Interventions proposed by CCBC	Upgrade existing Bend Warning Signs and include supplementary Vehicle Activated warning signs at both ends of the site	Subject to Road Safety Audit Stage 1/2 - Within 10 weeks of RSA / Cabinet approval.
Additional preventative Interventions proposed by CCBC	New High friction surfacing colour red and bilingual SLOW/ARAF markings adjacent to the Bend Warning signs	Subject to Road Safety Audit Stage 1/2 - Within 10 weeks of RSA / Cabinet approval.
Additional Safety Interventions proposed by CCBC	Install new High Visibility Bend Marker posts.	Subject to Road Safety Audit Stage 1/2 - Within 10 weeks of RSA / Cabinet approval.

It should be noted that while consultees agreed and welcomed the actions within Table 1 at the meeting on 16th August 2023, they expressed their disappointment that the report did not recommend a VRS or physical barrier along the road or that streetlighting part night lighting policy would not be removed for this road.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The Road Safety Review undertaken in March 2023 has not identified any major road safety issues on the length of the B4251 between Gelligroes and Ynysddu.

The vehicle restraint system assessment has now reduced from “medium“ to “low” following the interventions identified in the previous independent safety assessment where the relevant recommendations such as reduction of speed to 40mph from national speed limit have been implemented.

Some suggested minor improvements have been identified as part of the second independent safety review which are considered minor defects/issues/items which are generally maintenance related. This information is summarised within Table 1(5.4).

In addition to these recommended measures subsequent meetings with local residents and Councillors have also identified a number of preventative measures that should also be implemented as outlined in Table 1, above (5.4)

It is recommended that the road safety review is accepted as factually correct, and the information is reviewed and forwarded to Highway Operations Group to implement and action the minor repairs and preventative measures in accordance with CCBC policies.

No further safety reviews or reports are required at this stage, but routine highway inspections will continue in line with council policies, with all actionable defects repaired as they arise.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been made.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

7.1 The proposed works form part of our Highway maintenance work stream and as such do not require an IIA.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There is no additional funding required. All defects will be managed by Highway Services using residual funding from the phase one chainlink boundary fencing works and their Highway maintenance budgets.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The views of consultees and interested parties, who were present at liaison meetings as part of the review process, have been incorporated and addressed within the report. On the 16th August 2023 the works listed in Para 5.4 were agreed and welcomed, however, reservations were made that :-

- No substantial barriers were being installed on the bends.
- The street lighting part night lighting policy decision was not being reversed for the road.

10.2 A family member has asked that Cabinet members attention is drawn to the final paragraph of item 5.4 and paragraph 10.1 of the report. They wished to reiterate their thanks for the work undertaken and that while they agreed and welcomed the actions within Table 1 they expressed their disappointment that the report did not recommend a VRS or physical barrier along the road or that street lighting part night

light policy decision would not be revoked for the road.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Highways Act 1980.

Author: Chris Adams, Highway Engineering group Manager

Consultees:

- Cllr Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure
- Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive
- Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
- Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
- Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure
- Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
- Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
- Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
- Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Group Manager
- Gareth Richards, Highway Services Group Manager
- Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer – Equalities, Welsh Language
- PC David J. Thomas – Gwent Police
- Cllr Janine Reed, County Councillor (Ynysddu)
- Cllr Jan Jones, County Councillor (Ynysddu)
- Jo Jones,
- Leighton Reardon,

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Road Safety Review and RRS assessment
Appendix 2 Site Location Drawing – This document is an Engineering Drawing and cannot be made accessible. Therefore, should anyone wish to discuss the content they may contact Chris Adams, Author of the Report on adamsc@caerphilly.gov.uk