

An Assessment of Road Traffic Collision data for the A1152 and B1084 Bromeswell

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Data cut-off date: 31/07/2023

Introduction

Purpose

This document has been written in response to concerns held by Bromeswell Parish Council (BPC) regarding the safety of the A1152 and B1084 through Bromeswell. The findings and judgements within this document will be used by BPC to highlight high-risk areas along these roads with a view to influencing decision makers to take timely and proportionate action that will improve road safety to the mutual benefit of residents and visitors using the roads as pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and vehicle drivers.

Key Judgements

The three key judgements in this document are that:

1. The speed limit on the A1152 from the Wilford Bridge Roundabout to the Eyke/Sheepdrift Road junction should be reduced to protect pedestrians and road users.
2. The Orford/Eyke Road junction layout should be altered to reduce the number and severity of incidents now and in the future.
3. Road safety measures should be introduced to aid pedestrians to cross and walk along the A1152 in safety.

The risks from judgements 1 and 3 are increased due to the lack of a footpath along the majority of the A1152 and a lack of a cycle lane. Existing plans to build 140 new homes in Eyke and Rendlesham will increase traffic flow and risk along the A1152. Future developments should also be expected to increase the traffic flow further as well as increased traffic flow from Bentwaters Industrial Park and Sizewell C.

Methodology

The author of this document is a councillor for BPC. To avoid the report being influenced by the author's and/or BPC's bias, the author has employed techniques adopted by the analytical professions of UK Government. These techniques are designed to mitigate against personal and institutional bias and fallacies.

Data Source and Reliability

The findings and judgements of this document are based on the analysis of data provided by Suffolk Constabulary and CrashMap.co.uk.

Suffolk Constabulary data was provided through a Freedom of Information request (reference FOI 002657-23) and covers the period **01/08/2016 to 31/07/2023**.

CrashMap.co.uk data has been sourced online and references incidents that have resulted in one or more injuries. Crashmap state that they source the data from the Department for Transport. Crashmap data used in this document covers the period **01/01/2000 to 18/11/2020**.

One fatal collision that occurred on 29/01/2016, is shown by CrashMap at an incorrect location. CrashMap has this incident located in a garden off the B1084 but local knowledge and media sources show the event occurred on the A1152 to the west of the Unruly Pig gastro pub.

With the sole exception of the 29/01/2016 location, all other data supplied by CrashMap and Suffolk Constabulary is considered reliable.

Whilst the data received from Suffolk Constabulary and CrashMap is judged to be reliable, it is apparent that only 7 of the 65 reported incidents did not incur an injury. Suffolk Constabulary reported all 7 of

the non-injury records. As Suffolk Constabulary data starts from 2016, it is almost certain that other non-injury incidents occurred in the period 2000-2016 but have not been recorded or published by CrashMap.

As neither data-set highlighted near misses, it is also almost certain that many potentially dangerous incidents have not been reported or have not been captured in the data.

The setting of the A1152 and B1084 Bromeswell

The A1152 and B1084 are busy single-carriageway roads that act as converging routes for private and commercial vehicles heading to/from the Wilford Bridge crossing of the River Deben. Whilst traffic flow has not been monitored by BPC, the experience of the BPC and local residents suggests traffic flow on both roads has increased significantly since 2000, both in terms of private vehicles and commercial; including HGVs from the nearby Bentwaters industrial park.

It is expected that the majority of increased traffic flow has arisen from the expansion of Rendlesham and other nearby residential developments. This increase is expected to continue with two more approved developments along the A1152 at Rendlesham and Eyke. These developments will lead to an additional 140 homes and subsequent vehicles. Additional developments should also be expected in the area, including a large forestry centre in Rendlesham forest. The building of Sizewell C is also expected to increase traffic flow through workforce and construction vehicles, especially when the A12 is subject to road works, accidents and other incidents.

Bromeswell's setting along the border of the Suffolk Coasts & Heaths AONB mean the A1152 and B1084 are frequently used by tourists. Those visitors are attracted to Sutton Hoo, Snape Maltings, Orford, Rendlesham forest and the many other delights of the area which helps to boost the Suffolk economy. Visitors also include cyclists who use the A1152 and many walkers of all ages and varying fitness levels who travel along the Sandlings Walk that crosses the A1152 at School Lane, Bromeswell (see hotspot E below).

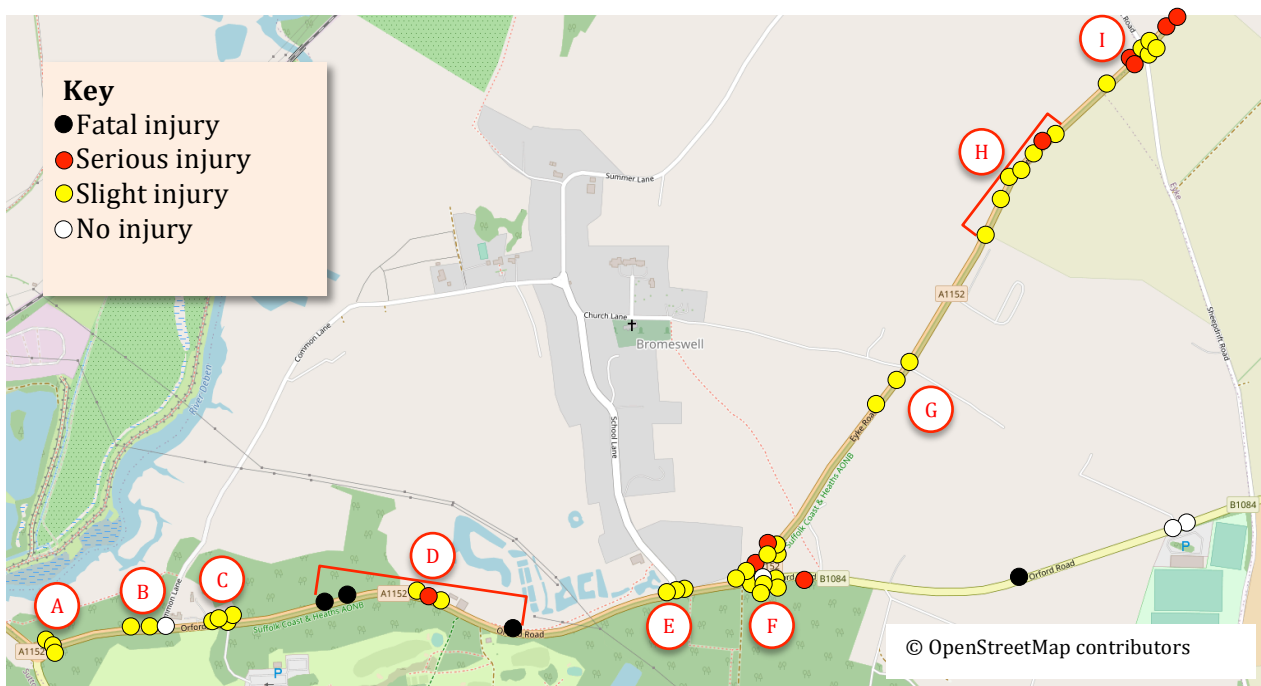
Findings

Summary of Incidents

CrashMap and Suffolk Constabulary reported a total of 65 separate incidents. To avoid double counting, reports from different sources that pertain to the same incident have been amalgamated.

The 65 incidents involved 60 motorised vehicles, 5 pedal cycles and 1 pedestrian and resulted in:

- 4 fatalities
- 15 serious injuries¹
- 70 slight injuries¹.



Incident Hotspots

Plotting the reported incidents where a location can be identified shows there are nine hotspots:

- A. At or near the Wilford Bridge Roundabout: 3 incidents
- B. At or near the junction with Common Lane: 3 incidents
- C. At or near the junction with Woodbridge Golf Club: 4 incidents
- D. Bends either side of the Unruly Pig: 6 incidents
- E. At or near the junction with School Lane: 3 incidents
- F. At or near the Orford/Eyke Road junction: 14 incidents
- G. At or near the junction with Swann's Nursery: 3 incidents
- H. Bend north of Swann's nursery: 7 incidents
- I. At or near the Eyke/Sheepdrift Road junction: 11 incidents

Using data over a 23-year period has potential to over emphasise the risk of particular locations. Nevertheless, three of the hotspots listed above are considered as significant.

- **D. Bends either side of the Unruly Pig**

Despite being approx. 0.25 miles in length, this stretch of road has seen 6 incidents since 2000 that have resulted in 3 fatalities, 4 serious injuries and 5 slight injuries. For each incident resulting in a fatal or serious injury, the description of the cause suggests vehicles were driving too fast to avoid slower road users, or at a speed where the driver lost control of their vehicle.

¹ The categories, 'serious injury' and 'slight injury' are defined by the data providers. It is not known what constitutes a serious or slight injury.

- **F. At or near the Orford/Eyke Road junction**

14 incidents at this junction have resulted in 2 serious injuries and 11 slight injuries. Whilst this may not appear significant over a period of 23 years, a comparison must be made with the 3 incidents at Wilford Bridge Roundabout in the same period. Both junctions join three roads with comparable characteristics (speed limits, width, traffic flow etc.)

It is the opinion of Bromeswell PC that the data supports their long-held view that the Orford/Eyke Road junction is unsafe due to the speed of traffic and road layout.

Existing plans to build 140 new homes in Eyke and Rendlesham and a forestry centre in Redlesham forest will increase traffic flow and, thereby, the risk at this junction. Future developments should also be expected to increase the traffic flow further as well as increased traffic flow from Bentwaters Industrial Park and Sizewell C.

- **I. At or near the Eyke/Sheepdrift Road junction**

11 incidents have occurred near this junction resulting in 6 serious injuries and 13 slight injuries. The data shows that, as with hotspot D, traffic speed is a significant factor for the majority of these incidents.

Judgements

Neither the author nor Bromeswell Parish Council are experts in road safety. It is recognised that the decision-making process for highway alterations is complex and dependent on competing priorities, on which BPC is not sighted. As a result, this document avoids making recommendations for action but does ask that Suffolk Highways and other stakeholders review and respond to the following judgements.

1. **The speed limit on the A1152 from the Wilford Bridge Roundabout to the Eyke/Sheepdrift Road junction should be reduced to protect pedestrians and road users.**

Every junction on this stretch of the A1152 has seen multiple incidents since 2000. The most significant in terms of the severity of casualties occurs on the bends either side of the Unruly Pig.

The visibility of drivers on these and other bends on the A1152 through Bromeswell is often obscured by roadside vegetation in the form of trees and shrubs. A lack of footpath, cycle lanes and the location of junctions mean drivers can often meet slow moving obstacles around a blind bend. The speed limit on this road is 60mph but drivers travelling at that speed on these bends have little time to react to pedestrians or slow-moving traffic ahead. The data shows that this can and does result in collisions and vehicles swerving into the path of oncoming traffic with fatal consequences.

The Highway Code states that, "it is often not appropriate or safe to drive at the maximum speed limit." It is BPC's view that driving at 60mph is unsafe at all points on the A1152 through Bromeswell. Road markings and signs advising drivers to slow down support this view. As an example, the A1152 between Wilford Bridge roundabout and the Orford/Eyke Road junction is approximately 0.8 miles in length and has 9 locations with "SLOW" marked on the road (5 eastbound, 4 westbound). Driver error will be a significant factor, but so many warnings for drivers to slow down plus the number and severity of accidents suggests that the speed limit is too high.



2. **The Orford/Eyke Road junction layout should be altered to reduce the number and severity of incidents now and in the future.**

The number of collisions at the Orford/Eyke Road junction when compared to the Wilford Bridge roundabout is a clear indicator that an alternative layout at the Orford/Eyke Road junction will significantly reduce the number and severity of accidents.

Existing and future developments will result in increased traffic flow across this junction and action now will help to mitigate the risk to road users. It is BPC's judgement that alterations to the junction layout are required as a matter of urgency.

It is also significant that this report does not include near misses. Anecdotal evidence from local users highlights the risk from the Orford/Eyke Road junction in terms of:

- Traffic from the Eyke road often pulling out in front of traffic proceeding straight along the A1152 from the direction of Wilford Bridge roundabout to the B1084.
- Traffic turning left from the A1152 into School Lane (hotspot E). The proximity of the School Lane junction with the Eyke Road junction leads many drivers to assume a vehicle ahead of them that is indicating left will turn up the Eyke Road with little change in speed. Those drivers can be surprised when the vehicle ahead brakes early to turn into School Lane.

3. Road safety measures should be introduced to aid pedestrians to walk along and cross the A1152 in safety.

A reduction in the speed limit for the A1152 is expected to improve safety for road users but the volume of traffic on this road presents a risk to pedestrians crossing the road and walking along the verge – no footpath exists for the majority of the road.

The highest risk is judged to be at the Orford Road/School Lane junction, which is used by residents when using the bus service and visitors traversing the Sandlings Walk. Bus users include children travelling to school on a daily basis and elderly residents travelling to Woodbridge and elsewhere. Thankfully no collisions with pedestrians have occurred at this crossing point to date but residents regularly highlight the dangers of the crossing at Bromeswell PC meetings. BPC request consideration is given to introducing measures to prevent future serious incidents from occurring.