

Don't get the hump when crossing the road

IT'S NOT that long ago that I wrote about crossing the road in Horsham, in particular the dangers of crossing Albion Way followed by the slip road leading into Swan Walk car park so as to get from London Road into the town centre.

Since then, Horsham District Council has released the report prepared by Urban Consultants on the future prosperity of Horsham in which, not too surprisingly, the user unfriendly nature of crossing Albion Way is identified. Despite this, there has been a deadly silence from WSCC.

Even more recently, Norman Baker, the Transport Minister,



by
David Moore
chairman of the
Horsham Society

announced that the Department for Transport was going to make it easier for councils to slow down cars by removing the red tape around installing speed limit signs.

Under the current regulations, the installation of a speed hump does not need approval, though it's seen as an expensive option at £450 per hump.

On the other hand, the

installation of a 20mph sign costs £175, whilst painting the speed limit on the road only costs £45; both need government approval.

Removing the need for government approval for speed signs is seen as being part of the devolution of power to local authorities.

Mr Baker's belief seems to be that "signs can do the job cheaper and more effectively without annoying people".

Unfortunately, pedestrian safety does not seem to be a consideration.

One has to question the logic of this approach as I had always thought that speed signs pre-dated humps.

The humps were put onto certain roads because the

signs did not slow down the traffic sufficiently.

A good example of what was an operational speed hump is on the service road leading into Swan Walk car park. Even with the humps in place, the traffic speed down the slip road tended to be too high, especially in the absence of a proper crossing.

Recently, part of the road has been resurfaced, simply by laying asphalt on top of the existing dressing.

This has reduced the effective height of the hump and, as a result, appears to have resulted in an increase in traffic speed.

As a driver, I have to admit that I dislike speed humps because they force me to slow

down to avoid damage to my vehicle.

As a pedestrian, I breathe a sigh of relief when I see traffic being slowed down by humps when I am crossing a road, where there is no pedestrian crossing.

By all means get rid of the speed humps on the service road into Swan Walk car park if it's more cost effective and if, as claimed, it helps to reduce traffic noise and carbon emissions but do it openly.

Don't just reduce the effective height of a hump by using a road dressing and accept an increased traffic speed.

Remember the poor pedestrian, who needs a

safe place to cross any road. Put some clear and effective crossing point in place for all of us, having crossed Albion Way, to then get across the slip road into the town centre.

It's time that WSCC or whoever is responsible for the slip road took notice of these concerns.

The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces. Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone, who shares these concerns. For more information, visit our website www.horshamsociety.org or telephone 01403 263870.