

18.PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF DAVE HUBBARD

Introduction

- 18.1. This report discusses the contents of road safety audits, conducted to date on this scheme's proposals. Road safety audits are conducted on all highway improvement schemes, at specific stages, during their development and after construction. The audit is conducted, to a nationally recognised standard, by an engineer who is independent from the promotion of the scheme. The auditor inspects the scheme's design and site to assess and identify any potential collision risks the scheme could present to the road user. The auditor recommends alterations to the scheme and ensures that they are implemented.
- 18.2. The auditor is a qualified civil engineer with over seventeen years of post qualification experience in investigating and preventing crashes. The auditor has practiced road safety audit continuously for over nine years and has conducted over one thousand audits. The auditor is a member of the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation and is required annually to accrue at least two days of specific training and two days of other road safety experience to maintain auditor credentials.
- 18.3. The terms of reference of this report are as agreed between the Scheme Promoter and the auditor. The auditor has only reported on the road safety implications of the scheme as presented and has not examined or verified the compliance of the design to any other criteria.
- 18.4. Preliminary-level audits have so far been carried out in respect of the road safety aspects of ESCC's proposed fencing scheme. The level of audit is preliminary because the scheme does not yet have the necessary permission. Further audit stages will follow when the level of detail reaches implementation level.
- 18.5. Generally, the items considered during the road safety audits are as defined in East Sussex County Council "Road Safety Audit Policies & Procedures 2006" document.

Discussion

- 18.6. The aim of this audit was to assess the feasibility of the scheme for road traffic purposes and to eliminate any aspect of the scheme that could present an unacceptable risk to highway users.
- 18.7. The author carefully considered the principle of keeping roaming livestock beside the highway. The author compared this scheme with similar locations where livestock is managed or animals are naturally abundant. The principle was not identified as a problem in the audits.

18.8. To determine the risk of collision with livestock, the auditor compared the scheme with an established scheme on Crowborough Road at Duddleswell, in East Sussex. The auditor considered this to be a reasonable comparison because the highway setting is similar to Chailey Common. Other sites exist nationally but they differ in many respects from Chailey in terms of environment and historical development.

18.9. The comparison involved a study of the comparison site's history of reported crashes and the proposed site's pre-existing crash history. The aim of the comparison was to determine the likelihood of collisions with livestock or any part of the scheme. The previous crash histories were considered along with the average vehicle flows, length of roads. A similar density and make up of livestock was assumed.

18.10. The comparison scheme was completed in August 1998. Nine years of crash data was used to investigate the frequency and type of collision. Crashes not involving injury were discounted. Crashes occurring at the crossroads between Beggars Wood Road and North Common Road were not considered because they are outside of the cattle grids.

18.11. The annual crash risk calculations are presented in the following table:

Road	Length (kmx10 ⁸)	AADT (vehs)	Crash Rate (PIA/yr)	Risk (PIA/10 ⁸ vehkm)
Crowborough Road	0.001780	2850	0.44	24
Beggars Wood Road	0.001217	3130	0.33	27
North Common Road	0.008110	2402	0	0
National Average				26

18.12. The calculation results indicate that the roads have a risk comparable with the national average, which is published in "Reported Road Casualties: Great Britain: 2008 Annual Report".

18.13. The study identified two crashes, resulting in slight injury, involving livestock in a nine year period.

18.14. The study identified two crashes at the cattle grids on Crowborough Road. A cause of the crashes was conflict between opposing vehicles where the carriageway carries single file traffic. The cattle grids at Chailey will allow two-way traffic.

18.15. Approximately twelve injury crashes involving animals occur per year in the whole of East Sussex.

Conclusions

- 18.16. The auditor accepts that introducing livestock could bring about similar crashes, which would otherwise be avoided. However, balancing the risk of these crashes against the potential reduction in crashes from traffic speed reduction, or better road user behaviour should not be discounted.
- 18.17. Collision could also occur with other animals such as dogs, horses or deer. This could happen on any rural part of the highway. Where practicable, the highway authority erects suitable warning signs. The lengths of road involved in the scheme and the random nature of these crashes means that no extraordinary measures should be required to prevent them.
- 18.18. The auditor is satisfied with the safety of the locations, nature and design of all of the highway features.

Item	Location	Category	Cost (£)	Value (£)
1	North Green Road	Category 1	1000	1000
2	North Green Road	Category 2	2000	2000
3	North Green Road	Category 3	3000	3000
4	North Green Road	Category 4	4000	4000
5	North Green Road	Category 5	5000	5000
6	North Green Road	Category 6	6000	6000
7	North Green Road	Category 7	7000	7000
8	North Green Road	Category 8	8000	8000
9	North Green Road	Category 9	9000	9000
10	North Green Road	Category 10	10000	10000

19. PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF CHRIS MARRABLE

Introduction

19.1. Chris Marrable has worked on Ashdown Forest for 25 years, initially as a Chase Ranger but for the last five years as Conservation Officer. He manages the Forest's Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme, reporting to the Conservators of Ashdown Forest Conservation Committee and the HLS Panel set up to audit this scheme. His main duties are to plan practical conservation effort across the Forest, to advise Chase Rangers on all aspects of heathland and woodland conservation, to organise and report on wildlife surveys and to handle all correspondence on conservation issues.

19.2. The purpose of this statement is to describe the grazing regime that is in place on Ashdown Forest and to discuss similarities between Ashdown Forest and Chailey Common.

19.3. Ashdown Forest is an area of common land approximately 7 miles north of Chailey. It covers an area of some 2500 ha, with around 1000 ha of woodland and 1500 ha of lowland heathland. It is a 'forest' in the original sense of the word – a medieval deer hunting area subject to harsh forest law. Chailey and Ashdown share a similar geology, both overlying sandstone, and a similar pastoral tradition which largely explain their similarity in terms of vegetation cover and potential conservation issues.

History of grazing on Ashdown Forest

19.4. Over the last thousand (or so) years Ashdown Forest has been maintained as a lowland heathland by commoners who grazed pigs, cattle and, later, sheep, cut firewood (birch and gorse) and cut bracken.

19.5. Since the end of World War 2 there has been a decline in the take-up of common rights by commoners and the Forest has experienced the following major vegetation changes: i) increase in woodland from 10% to 40% of Forest area ii) heathland vegetation becoming older and more dense, with a loss of bare ground iii) increases in dense bracken and gorse. All these changes are contrary to the objectives defined for heathland in favourable conservation condition. Conservation of the heathland, at the simplest level, can be achieved by re-instating all those activities which maintained the area over the last thousand years.

19.6. Grazing never completely stopped on Ashdown Forest but, by 1984, only one commoner was economically dependent on exercising his common rights. The biggest problem was the increasing volume and speed of road traffic, killing unenclosed livestock. In 1989, using a stipulation in the Ashdown Forest Act, 100 acres (ca. 40 ha) was enclosed, for trial purposes. The trial was meant to test i) the public reaction to fencing the common, ii) the ability to restrain sheep and cattle on the common, despite improved grazing near-by, iii) aspects of husbandry associated with restraining the livestock on the common and iv) the ability of the livestock to fulfil the conservation grazing requirement. The trial was successful

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- The commoner-grazier invariably loses a few animals without explanation; probably killed by cars or dogs, or stolen.

19.13. There are two other anecdotal effects of the grazing:

- The first is that visitors choose to come to the grazed areas of the Forest specifically because they want to see the animals. Also, the presence of the cattle-grids and the likelihood of livestock on, or very close to, the highway, has a significant calming effect on a busy 'rat run' road;
- The second is that some visitors appear to avoid the grazed area in the summer because they fear that their dogs may attack the animals; it is apparent that a high proportion of sheep worrying incidents involve dogs that are meeting grazing sheep for the first time, owned by first-time visitors to the Forest (Rangers, pers. comm.).

19.14. Chailey Common compared with Ashdown Forest:

- The conservation challenge is identical: a change from traditional usage, leading to a decline in the wildlife value which the managing authority wishes to redress;
- Ashdown is significantly larger, which allows visitors a greater choice in which areas they visit, with or without grazing livestock. The same can be achieved on Chailey by 'zoning' the grazing;
- The type of visitor may be different, with a higher proportion of visitors to Chailey made up of 'locals'. Ashdown also has a lot of visitors from local areas but attracts a large number of longer-distance visitors.
- Both sites are dissected by relatively busy roads.