

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (SURREY HEATH)****DATE: 10 DECEMBER 2015****LEAD OFFICER: ANDREW MILNE****SUBJECT: PETITION RESPONSE – IMPLEMENT SAFETY MEASURES TO MIDDLETON ROAD / UPPER PARK ROAD BRIDGE FOR ALL USERS****DIVISION: SURREY HEATH****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Response to petition received by the Local Area Committee in July 2015. The petition requested highway improvements to resolve safety concerns.

The petition details read: "Following an incident, involving a pedestrian and a car, we would like the Council to implement safety measures for the protection of the general public, which includes cyclists, pedestrians and drivers. The bridge sees heavy pedestrian usage around school hours from both directions ranging from Nursery School to Sixth Form children. It is also used as a general thoroughfare for dog walkers and other pedestrians throughout the day due to its easy accessibility to the town centre.

The bridge has significant danger factors:

Blind bends at each end, two way traffic with no pedestrian safety area, no pavement/lighting, the hump on the bridge is prone to skidding in icy conditions, restricted width, insufficient/confusing road signage & markings, traffic speed.

This subject has been raised several times over the last few years to no avail and this time we would like to ensure that safety measures are implemented. Please support the safety of your local community now and into the future".

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Surrey Heath) is asked to agree that:

- (i) Signage improvements are implemented as identified within the report.

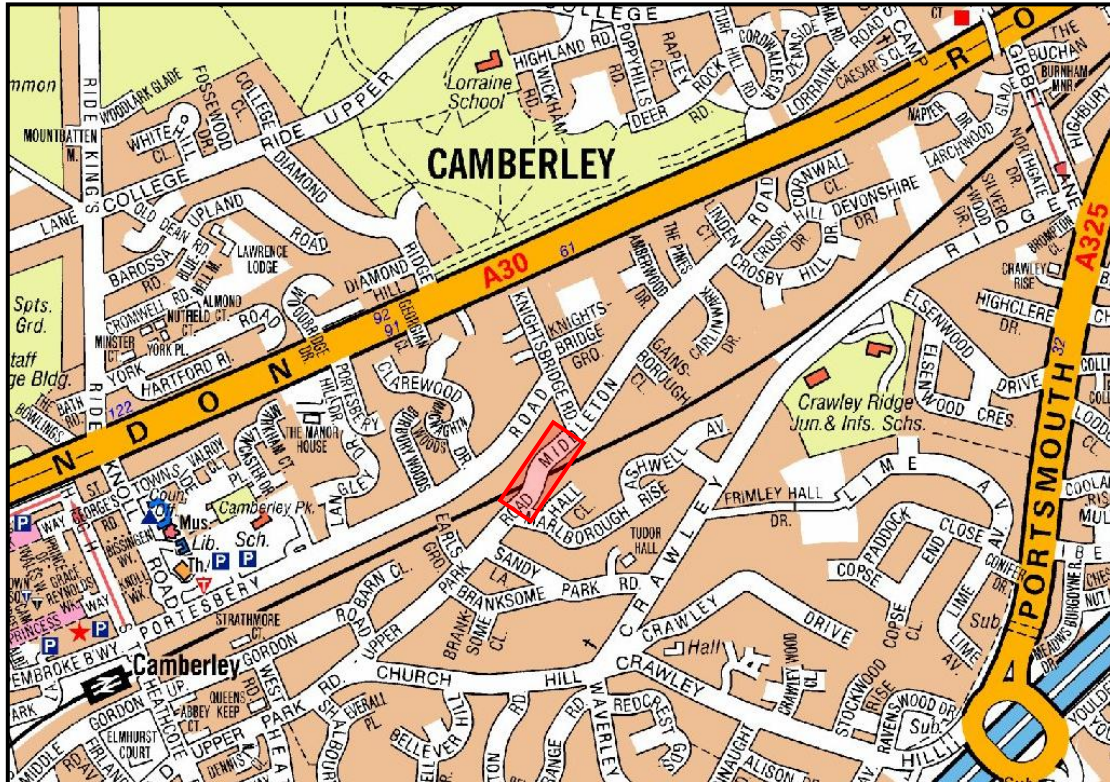
REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Aside from the incident earlier this year, there have been no personal injury collisions on this stretch of road in the last 15 years. Although data shows that pedestrians and motor vehicles use the route on a regular basis, Surrey County Council's priority is to reduce the number of personal injury collisions on the public highway, reducing the priority of this location with regards to safety.

However, the area can be quite dark due to vegetation and replacing the signage on either approach will help make the situation clearer.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 Middleton Road is a privately owned road with highway rights over it. Upper Park Road is an adopted road and joins Middleton Road half way across a bridge over the railway line between Bagshot Station and Camberley Station.



- 1.2 Both approaches to the bridge are at an angle to the railway, whilst the bridge straightens up over the railway to minimise its length. This minimises visibility over the bridge in both directions.
- 1.3 The bridge is the only pedestrian access across the railway from Heathcote Road to Gibbet Lane and provides access for pedestrians to Crawley Ridge Junior School and Collingwood College.
- 1.4 Both Middleton Road and Knightsbridge Road have been closed off at the junction with London Road (A30) in the past. Closure of these accesses minimises the traffic over the bridge. Although through traffic can use this route to reach the A30, via Knightsbridge Road and Portesbury Road, most traffic is likely to use Upper Park Road and Heathcote Road. Most traffic using the bridge will be local or seeking access.
- 1.5 The signage on the approach to the bridge includes warning signs for a narrow carriageway and for pedestrians in the carriageway. Priority signs are also present, giving traffic approaching from Middleton Road priority over traffic coming from Upper Park Road. None of these signs have yellow backing.
- 1.6 The bridge is a Network Rail asset - it would be responsible for any alterations to the structure.

- 1.7 Personal injury collision data for the bridge shows that there have been no personal injury collisions on the bridge in the last 15 years.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 Following the original response to the petition at the Local Area Committee meeting in July, Surrey Highway officers met with the petitioner and County Councillor Chapman on site in early September to review the situation. During the meeting, it was agreed that a traffic survey was to be undertaken to determine how the bridge is used during term time.



- 2.2 A manual count was undertaken at this site between 0700 and 1900 on Tuesday 10 October as it required the counting of pedestrians which cannot be done any other way. In addition to pedestrians, the survey included the number and classification of vehicles during those hours. The key data has been provided in **Annex A**.
- 2.3 The data shows a peak in pedestrian usage between the hours of 08:00 and 09:00 and between 15:00 and 16:00. During these two hours, a combined total of 189 cars, 13 Light Goods Vehicles, 2 Other Goods Vehicles (Class 1) and 2 Buses or Coaches drove over the bridge.
- 2.4 The data clearly shows that there is the potential for conflict between pedestrians and vehicles during these times. However, a number of improvements have already been introduced in the area to improve the safety for pedestrians. These include warnings signs (narrow road and pedestrians in carriageway), priority give way signage and markings, and SLOW road markings for either direction.
- 2.5 Although SatNavs have been mentioned as a potential cause for some of the traffic over the bridge, investigations have shown that journey predictions for

traffic between Church Hill and Knoll Road always encourage traffic via Heathcote Road. Although new technology can use up-to-date traffic information to improve journey times, predictions for traffic during peak hours, both during the week and weekend, still encourage traffic along Heathcote Road. This suggests that a non typical situation would be required to encourage traffic over the bridge and would not be a regular occurrence. As a result, traffic over the bridge is likely to be either residential or seeking legitimate access.

- 2.6 Reviewing the current situation, there is scope to improve the signage on the approaches to make it more visible for those approaching the bridge. This will primarily include the replacement of the current signage with yellow backing, but could also include altering the priority give way signage to include a plate below stating "Give way to oncoming vehicles". This is recommended by the Department for Transport Guidance and reinforces the priority over the bridge.
- 2.7 During the meeting on site, it was asked whether a new footway structure could be attached to the current bridge specifically for pedestrians. Not only is this a Network Rail asset and not within Surrey County Council's remit to alter, doing so would not resolve the issue with conflicts on the approach. Given other options, this is not supported or recommended by Surrey Highways.
- 2.8 Another subject discussed on the day was altering the verge next to the road to an informal pedestrian footway. Although considered on the day, because of the embankment, any works near the top would need to be carefully considered because of outcomes such as landslides. Given the potential cost of a formal review, this is not being recommended to the Local Area Committee.
- 2.9 One of the more favourable options supported by the petitioner was formalising a pedestrian crossing and retaining the carriageway for single traffic. This could be done either with a formal one-way system, or by providing traffic signals. However, both suggestions would potentially increase the speed of traffic over the bridge and requiring physical measures to be placed between the road and footpath. Given the number of vehicles using the route, potentially the best option would be to introduce traffic signals, although the system would be on privately owned highway and would require an agreement with the landowner regarding maintenance of the system. However, these proposals would cost a substantial amount and would need to be considered as part of the list of Integrated Transport Schemes. Depending on the score the scheme receives, it may be a number of years before it is prioritised. In view of the above, this proposal would not be supported or recommended by Surrey Highways
- 2.10 Traffic calming features are a potential option on the approach to the bridge, but national guidance suggests that for two cushions placed side by side, the road should be a minimum of 5.45m wide. The current carriageway is less than 5m, requiring two cushions to be placed at diagonals to each other. As pedestrians walk in the carriageway, there is a risk that the speed cushions would encourage drivers to drive closer to the edge of the carriageway and closer to pedestrians. Although the motorist is likely to be travelling at a lower speed, encouraging drivers closer to pedestrians is likely to increase fears. It is also worth noting that these features would only be on Upper Park Road

approach to the bridge as the regulations allowing the introduction of traffic calming on adopted roads only. A full width speed table could be a trip hazard for pedestrians who would have to walk over it given the lack of a separate footway. As a result, these proposals are not supported or recommended by Surrey Highways.

- 2.11 Following the meeting, a further review of the situation raised another two possible options. The first of these was to install a Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) to reinforce to motorists the possibility of pedestrians on the carriageway. Unfortunately, the most effective location for the VAS would be near to the bridge and the limited space means that the sign is more likely to overhang the carriageway and increase the risk of vehicle strikes. Not only would it increase the cost of maintenance to Surrey Highways, but also potentially cause the sign to not work. As a result, it is recommended that this is considered following improvements to the current signage if there is support for this option.
- 2.12 The final option proposed following the meeting on site was to close vehicle access across the bridge completely, making it a pedestrian and cycle only area. This option completely removes conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians and would encourage it's use for sustainable methods. However, restricting access on any highway is predominantly done to reduce the number of personal injury collisions in a location, or where doing so encourages the economy, such as Park Street in Camberley. This option should be considered as a last resort for this location as it will force all vehicles to Middleton Road and adjacent roads via Portesbury Road and Knightsbridge Road. The restriction is likely to cause concern for the residents along Portesbury Road due to the increase in traffic along the road, and potentially from those on Middleton Road as they would be required to enter and exit via the mini roundabout between Portesbury Road and Knoll Road. Due to the comments above, this proposal is not supported or recommended by Surrey Highways at this time.

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 The recommended option for the area is to improve the signage on both approaches towards the bridge, in line with the points raised in section 2.6.
- 3.2 Add a scheme to the Integrated Transport Scheme list to review the option of providing a formal pedestrian footway on the approaches to the bridge.
- 3.3 Add a scheme to the Integrated Transport Scheme list to introduce traffic signals over the bridge and barriers for a dedicated pedestrian facility. If the Local Area Committee chose to progress this option then legal advice will be sought to determine the processes necessary in placing signals on privately maintained highway.
- 3.4 Add a scheme to the Integrated Transport Scheme list to install a Vehicle Activated Sign in line with section 2.11.
- 3.5 Add a scheme to the Integrated Transport Scheme list to undertake public consultation on the possibility of closing access to the bridge for motorised vehicles.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

4.1 Surrey County Council have consulted with Surrey Police on the current layout and the accident history of the bridge.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 No funding has been determined at this point.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 It is an objective of Surrey Highways to treat all users of the public highway equally and with understanding. Appropriate and proportionate consultation is carried out with residents, and bodies representing particular user groups, to ensure that the interests of all highway users are considered.

7. LOCALISM:

7.1 Through the views and needs expressed by local communities, and accommodating where possible the involvement of local communities in looking after the public highway, localism is routinely considered as part of the consultation and bidding processes for highway-related works.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report.
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report.
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report.
Public Health	Set out below.

8.1 Public Health implications

The personal injury collision recently was the only collision in the last fifteen years. Although only three years of data is considered, the history of the bridge suggests that the location is comparatively safe against others within Surrey Heath.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

9.1 Aside from the incident earlier this year, there have been no personal injury collisions on this stretch of road in the last 15 years. Although data shows that pedestrians and motor vehicles use the route on a regular basis, Surrey County Council's priority is to reduce the number of personal injury collisions on the public highway, reducing the priority of this location with regards to safety.

9.2 The road has been reviewed in the past and there have been a number of improvements to the signage and markings to improve the safety of pedestrians over the bridge. However, the area is quite narrow and signage can be lost behind vegetation.

9.3 It is recommended that the current signage is replaced with a yellow backing to improve their visibility. The proposal will reinforce to all highway users that there are pedestrians in the carriageway and to take additional care.

9.4 Given the location limits the amount of through traffic, and there have been no personal injury collisions on the bridge in well over three years, the typical timescale for assessing locations, expensive improvements are not warranted in this location.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

10.1 If the Local Area Committee agrees to improve the signage for the bridge then the necessary design will be drawn up whilst funding is sought.

10.2 If the Local Area Committee agree to add a scheme to the ITS list then it will be scored ready for the 2017/18 financial year.

Contact Officer:

Peter Orchard – Traffic Engineer (0300 200 1003)

Consulted:

Surrey Police

Annexes:

Annex A – Traffic survey location and results

Annex B – COBA Vehicle Categories

Sources/background papers:

30/15: Receive Petition – Implement Safety Measures to Middleton Road / Upper Park Road Bridge for all road users

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