



ROYAL KINGSTON VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGNS PROPOSAL

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S
LOCAL COMMITTEE (ELMBRIDGE AREA)
19 JANUARY 2005**

KEY ISSUE AND SUMMARY

This item introduces the proposals by Transport for London (TfL) and Royal Kingston for the introduction of Variable Message Signs (VMS) around Kingston, and the work of the London Traffic Control Centre.

Approval is sought for the erection of one VMS sign within the Elmbridge area.

ELECTORAL DIVISION AND MEMBER

Esher & Molesey East – Mr A Pegler
Claygate and Hinchley Wood – Mr J Pincham
The Dittons – Mrs M Martin

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

- 1) Notes the TfL and Royal Kingston wider programme of VMS.
- 2) Approves the erection of the VMS sign at the chosen preferred primary location on the A307 Portsmouth Road outside Sandown Park as shown at Appendix A.

LEAD CONTACT OFFICER: Frank Apicella - Senior Engineer
Chris Paisley - Senior Principal Engineer

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01372 832513/832510

BACKGROUND PAPERS: A3 drawing portfolio of proposals – August 04

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Surrey County Council's Elmbridge Local Transportation Service (LTS) has recently been contacted by Royal Kingston, regarding the erection of Variable Message Signs (VMS) along strategic routes around the Royal Borough.
- 1.2 This is an expansion of the Transport for London (TfL) project within London, which currently consists of 80 VMS signs in and around the capital. In order to deal with congestion more effectively and efficiently it is proposed by TfL to further extend their VMS signing and CCTV network.
- 1.3 Officers attended a meeting held on the 17th November at the Guildhall, Kingston, where the proposals were explained by TfL representatives to all concerned within the Kingston neighbourhood area. Additionally concerns raised by neighbouring Authorities such as Surrey County Council and the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames were discussed.
- 1.4 Subsequently officers have attended a presentation at the London Traffic Control Centre (LTCC) in Victoria, on Friday 10th December 2004. This provided a very valuable insight into the professional operation of the LTCC. TfL work closely with various partners, including the Metropolitan Police, to orchestrate a multitude of planned events and provide a rapid response to accidents and congestion.
- 1.5 The funding for this proposal has been approved for expenditure during this financial year by TfL. Royal Kingston acting as Agents to TfL, plan to have purchased and hopefully erected the VMS prior to April 2005.

2 PROJECT DETAILS

- 2.1 The system works by sending encrypted radio messages to the signs via the Vodaphone Pacnet system, which is located at the LTCC. These messages can be sent to all signs or just a chosen few signs where the message will be appropriate to motorists on that route.
- 2.2 All messages are sent in freetext, which means that the message can be very specific and accurately inform drivers of the exact problem locations, what to expect, and what to do, rather than generic preformed messages. No safety campaigns such as seat belt campaigns or advertisements will be transmitted to the signs in order to ensure that the importance of these alerts are not diluted and that only important messages affecting the motorists travel are given.
- 2.3 It is from this Centre that the proposed VMS sign will be administered and all messages would originate.
- 2.4 There are nine proposed sites, which form part of this package of VMS. Five have definitive locations and are located wholly within Royal Kingston whilst the other four have various siting options. For information the proposed sites are as follows:

Road Name	Option	Location
A2043 Malden Road	1	By Manor Drive
B282 Burlington Road	1 2	By Claremont Avenue By Albert Road
A243 Hook Road	1 2	Outside nos 410 & 412 By Trewenna Drive
A308 Hampton Court Road	1	West of Hampton Court Palace
A307 Upper Ham Road	1	By Church Road
A307 Portsmouth Road, Esher	1 2	By Sandown Racecourse On approach to Scilly Isles Roundabout
A3 Kingston Bypass	1	South of Tolworth junction
A238 Coombe Lane	1 2 3	Outside nos 125 & 123 By Raynes Park Station opposite Amity Grove Outside nos 189 & 187
A289 Bushey Road	1	Opposite Princes George's Avenue

2.5 The DfT has given two proposed locations on the A307 Portsmouth Road, which it would like to pursue for the erection of the VMS as shown in the table.

2.6 The speed limit at both sites is 40 mph and this determines the character height of the sign. The details of the sign are as follows:

Text height 160mm
4 lines of 15 characters per line
Sign dimensions 2.0m wide x 1.5m high
Sign erected with 2.5m height clearance on a 250mm square post.

2.7 Option 1 (By Sandown Racecourse)

This VMS is proposed by the grass verge at the back of path opposite New Road in Esher, to the east of the access to Sandown Park Car Park. This location is shown at Appendix A.

2.8 Option 2 (On approach to Scilly Isles Roundabout)

This VMS is proposed on the grass verge area just west of the small access road leading to Yew Tree Cottages.

2.9 The erection, electrical connection, messaging and future maintenance will all be the responsibility of TfL.

3 IMPLICATIONS AND PARTNERING POSSIBILITIES

- 3.1 An informal meeting was held with both the Chairman and Mr Pegler on the 8th December 2004 to discuss the proposals. The agreed view was that the sign located outside Sandown Park (Preferred Primary Location site) would be the most suitable location of the two options. This was for a number of reasons:
- The location on the approach to the Scilly Isles was considered likely to actually distract motorists;
 - Although there are residential properties on the opposite side of the road to the preferred location, they are well set back;
 - A message well in advance of the Scilly Isles would give motorist time to consider alternative routes and take necessary action.
- 3.2 Although Mrs Martin and Mr Pincham were unable to attend the meeting they have expressed support for the project.
- 3.3 The LTS have been in consultation with staff from the Network Management Information Centre (NMIC) in Leatherhead as it would be very useful if Surrey County Council were also given the option to display suitable driver information on the sign and are consulted prior to messaging by LTCC. This is to ensure that any diverted traffic can be accommodated on routes which are not already adversely affected by congestion or roadworks.
- 3.4 Officers from the NMIC have also visited the LTCC and will be in consultation with TfL to discuss the various messaging protocol options available.
- 3.5 The NMIC are also proposing similar VMS signs around the County in the very near future with similar aims and objectives as TfL.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

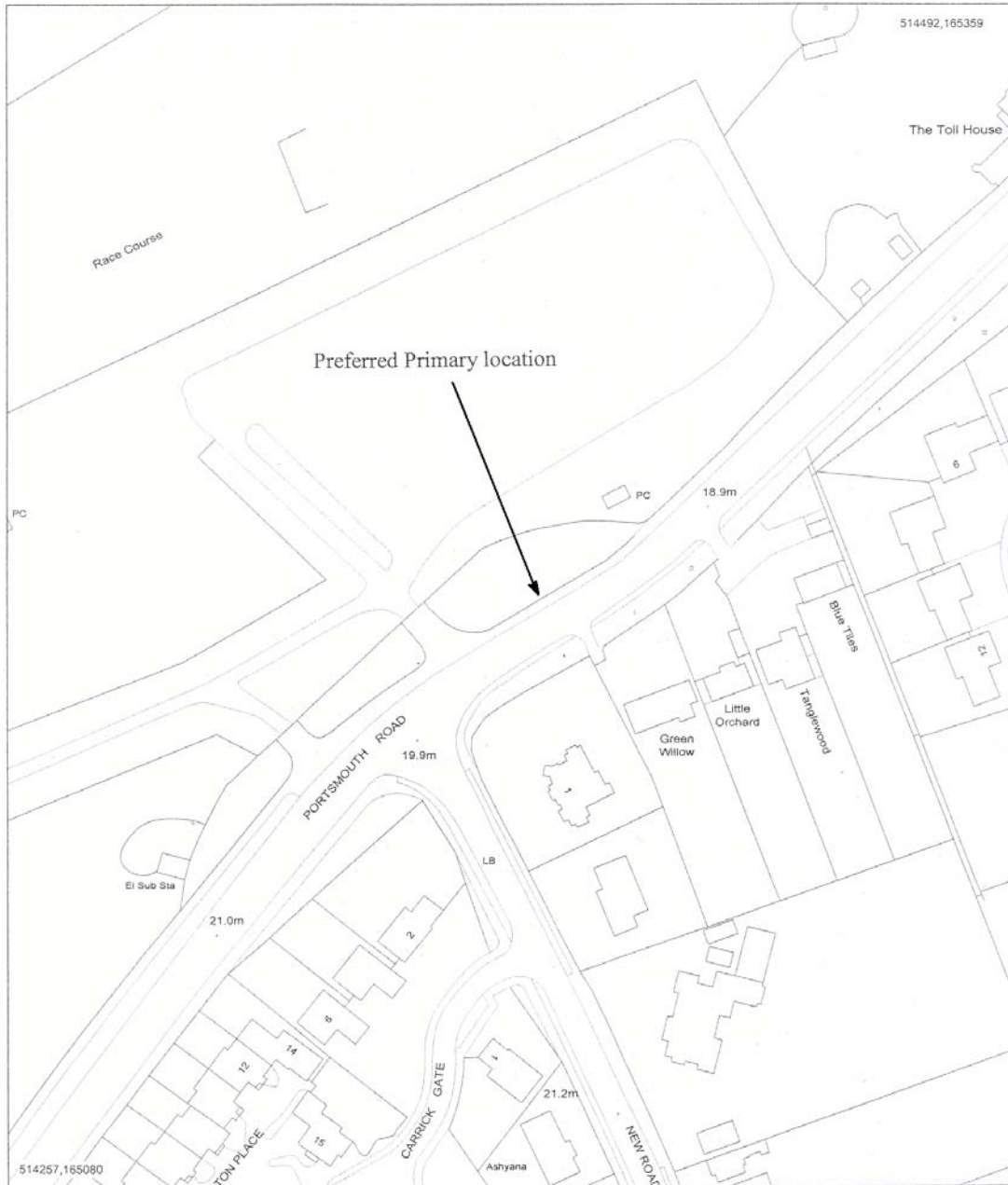
- 4.1 All Capital funding and future maintenance will be the responsibility of TfL.

5 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Sustainability is a specific key objective within the County Council's Local Transport Plan and this scheme will have due regard to that.

6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Although it is not anticipated that these VMS will attract crime they may lead to attacks of vandalism, the attacks of which they have been designed and constructed to withstand.



**Royal Kingston Variable Message Signs Proposal
Local Committee 19th January 2005**

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