



## OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE Epsom and Ewell

### Blenheim Road Community Recycling Centre, Epsom Access Arrangements

10 March 2008

#### KEY ISSUE

To seek approval for improvements on the highway around the Blenheim Road Community Recycling Centre (CRC) that should lead to improved access for users of the CRC and local businesses.

#### SUMMARY

Last year Surrey Waste Management Ltd put forward proposals to alter the interior layout of the Community Recycling Centre (CRC) in Blenheim Rd, Epsom in order to increase internal capacity and queuing space. These changes were approved and are currently underway. Additional benefits for local businesses and users of the CRC can also be achieved by improving access arrangements on roads leading to the CRC. This report considers the options for such improvements and seeks approval for a number of recommendations.

#### OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Epsom and Ewell) is asked to agree that:

(i) A number of short term solutions are carried out to improve access to the CRC on local roads when the road closure is in operation at weekend and bank holidays, namely:

- (a) footway parking is prevented by the use of bollards where appropriate;
- (b) the existing waiting restrictions are renewed and enforced;

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- (c) improvements to the existing temporary barrier are investigated in consultation with local businesses and Surrey Waste Management.
- (d) the signs advising of the weekend closure of Blenheim Rd in Longmead road are improved.
- (e) keep clear markings are provided at the entrance to the CRC and other locations to help reduce obstruction.
- (f) traffic usage of the CRC is monitored following internal changes to the facility by Surrey Waste Management and that the outcome of the monitoring is reported to the Local Committee in approximately 1 years time.

And/or

(ii) a more permanent barrier is investigated and introduced in consultation with Surrey Waste Management and local businesses of a form and in a location to be agreed by a working group consisting of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Local Member and Chair of the E&E Environment Committee.

And/or

(iii) any Traffic Regulations Orders (TRO's) necessary to implement a barrier, including waiting restrictions, be progressed and that any objections as a result of advertising TRO's be considered and resolved by the East Area Group Manager in consultation with the working group described in ii) above.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Surrey Waste Management Ltd currently operates the Community Recycling Centre (CRC) at Blenheim Rd on behalf of Surrey County Council. Access to the site is via Blenheim Road through the Longmead Industrial Estate. A location plan is shown in ANNEXE 2.
- 1.2. A planning application has been approved for Surrey Waste Management to alter the internal arrangements of the CRC in order to increase throughput of residential vehicles that need to dispose of household waste. It will also provide increased queuing capacity for them within the site.
- 1.3. In addition the proposals aim to separate the large waste carrying HGV's and residential traffic by providing a separate HGV lane within the site.
- 1.4. In late October a meeting was held at the CRC with local Councillors, representatives from Surrey Highways and Surrey Waste Management and local businesses. The proposals were discussed and it was agreed that a feasibility study was needed to determine improvements to traffic management on roads approaching the CRC.
- 1.5. Large numbers of residential vehicles use the site for disposing household waste, particularly at weekends and bank holidays. In the past traffic queues have formed on roads approaching the site causing obstruction difficulties for waste lorries and nearby businesses.
- 1.6. An existing Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) prohibits access by vehicles to the northern part of Blenheim Rd from Longmead Road at weekends and bank holidays.
- 1.7. This means that during these times vehicles must gain access to the Community Recycling Center via Felstead Rd. In this way, at peak periods vehicles waiting to enter the CRC queue in a generally orderly manner along Blenheim Road, from the direction of the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Environmental Services Depot.
- 1.8. A temporary barrier is placed across the road at weekends by SITA employees in location A shown in ANNEXE 1. Two plastic barriers are used, one for each lane, however they need to be staggered because of the drop kerb access to the Epsom Motor group premises and other nearby accesses.
- 1.9. Local businesses have reported increased usage of the CRC on weekdays, particularly after bank holidays. On these days the TRO is not in operation so vehicles can access the CRC from the northern end of Blenheim Rd contributing to congestion in this area which in turn causes problems for local businesses such as Epsom Coaches. There are however a number of additional factors that increase congestion on weekdays in Blenheim Rd. These are:

- SITA HGV's (large 44T articulated) collect waste from the site more regularly on weekdays.
  - There is more activity generated by Longmead Industrial Estate businesses during the week, eg deliveries and visitors.
  - On weekdays, employee's of local businesses on the industrial estate tend to park in Felstead and Blenheim Roads and are increasingly parking in Longmead Road. The existing waiting restrictions at the northern end of Blenheim Road are worn (and possibly not enforceable in their current condition). They are in any case not adhered to, leading to parking on both sides of the road. This causes significant obstruction problems for CRC traffic and local businesses. There is less parking on these roads at the weekends when many local businesses are closed.
  - A mobile catering van parks behind the footway near the Bourne Stream bridge (opposite Epsom Coaches). Customers often driving HGV's and skip lorries park on the road and footway contributing to the obstruction problems.
- 1.10. Planning permission has been granted to SITA to carry out improvements inside the CRC that will enlarge the facilities for the disposal of residential waste as well as creating more queuing or stacking space within the facility. This could lead to shorter queues at busy times on roads approaching the CRC. The widened access to the CRC will have segregated entry lanes for HGV's and residential vehicles. A single exit lane will be provided and shared by all traffic. This work is likely to be completed this summer.
- 1.11. The internal changes to the CRC will increase its capacity (or the number of spaces cars can use to dispose of household waste) as well as the queuing space within the site. HGV's will also be able to bypass the queuing vehicles by the introduction of a separate HGV lane. This may lead to shorter queues forming on the highway.

## 2. OPTIONS

### **Option 1 - Extend the current weekend closure on Blenheim Rd to 7 days a week.**

- 2.1. In order for this to be effective and self enforcing a permanent barrier would be required in the northern part of Blenheim Road. Reliance on signs alone or a barrier across half the road is likely to be ignored and could lead to conflict between motorists as has occurred in the past.

- 2.2. A barrier would also need to cater for HGV's collecting from the CRC to allow them to use the northern end of Blenheim Rd as the route for all other vehicles via Blenheim Rd/Felstead Rd would be more congested, particularly with the weekday parking on these roads.
- 2.3. It is likely with this option that parking on the approaches to the CRC via Felstead and Blenheim Rd would need to be far more restricted to allow large vehicles to access the CRC without obstructing other local traffic using the estate.
- 2.4. There are three types of permanent barrier that could be used to restrict access to the CRC at the northern end of Blenheim Rd but still allow HGV's collecting from the CRC to pass through it:

a) A manual barrier or gate.

This would need to be raised for every SITA HGV that requires access meaning almost full time attendance during the day (Mon-Sun) to be effective. Operation of the gate would therefore be required by local businesses or SITA. Depending on the location of the gate it would also need to be raised/lowered for HGV's using the logistics depot (shown on the plan below)

b) A gate across Blenheim Road at the entrance to the CRC.

This would require the alteration of the proposed HGV 'in' lane in to an 'in/out' lane and would mean HGV's could use the northern end of Blenheim Road whilst residential users of the CRC would approach from Felstead Road.

The viability of this option would depend on further investigation of the proposed alterations to the entrance to the CRC. It is recommended that this be carried out in conjunction with Surrey Waste Management and considered by a working group over the next few months.

It is likely with this option that additional parking restrictions would be required in Felstead Road and Blenheim Rd between the access to the CRC and Felstead Rd.

The estimated cost of this option is £20000.

c) An automated barrier.

Automated gates are not favoured on the highway (other than level crossings) as there is a risk that when lowering or closing the gate could malfunction and injure a pedestrian or damage a vehicle.

Rising Bollards are the most commonly used type of automated barrier, however there are a number of potential problems associated with their installation and operation:

- The possibility of a device rising under a wheelchair or pushchair should be taken into account.
- Whilst most applications will be to enable the passage of one vehicle at a time, there will be instances where two or more vehicles attempt to pass through in close succession.

- The system should ensure that bollards cannot rise beneath a vehicle because of the danger this would create. It is better to risk a certain amount of violation by "tailgating" vehicles, rather than put road users at risk.
  - Any system, however well designed, will fail to operate correctly on occasions. The system should fail to a safe state, ideally with the bollards retracted. In the event if an accident the emergency services may need to override the control system and retract the bollards.
  - Installations used on one way roads are relatively straightforward; the safety considerations become much more complex when there is two way traffic.
  - All current systems use some form of vehicle detection. There are various types of detector technology that can be used. The advantages and disadvantages of each type and technology of detector must be considered. Loops, for example, may not detect some types of vehicles so an alternative detection system may be needed.
  - Within the range of possible configurations, it is unlikely that all road vehicles could be detected in all instances. This should be considered during the risk assessment, together the effects of detector or other system component failures.
  - In order to install these devices to operate safely a significant amount of associated detector/warning equipment is required as well.
  - For these reasons a rising bollard system is likely to cost in the region of £60000 to install. In addition rising bollard and gate systems require regular maintenance which can cost in the region of £5000 per annum. This would have to be met for the highway maintenance budget.
- 2.5. Whatever type of barrier to be used it would require authorisation by the DfT. Their advice is as follows in this regard *'Authorisation will only be given to indicators, variable message signs or other information or related control devices if they are of a type approved by the Secretary of State. A properly conducted risk assessment should assist in gaining equipment approval.'*
- 2.6. An initial assessment by Surrey Traffic System Engineers concluded that it would not be possible to install a barrier system in location A (ANNEXE 1) which is a more suitable location in terms of accessibility for local businesses. The main problem is a drop kerb access to the Epsom Motor Group on the inside of the bend and the close proximity to the CRC access would not allow HGV's to straighten up before passing through or be detected adequately.
- 2.7. An automated barrier may be possible but difficult to do successfully in location B where there is footway both sides and more room for the detection equipment as described above.

- 2.8. The additional traffic generated by the barrier on the southern end of Blenheim Road and Felstead Road may require additional parking restrictions in these area's. There is already some parking displacement onto Longmead Road and this could increase.

**Option 2 - Introduce a one way system.**

- 2.9. This could allow all vehicles to enter via Felstead Road and leave by the northern end of Blenheim Rd.
- 2.10. It would mean that traffic could flow more freely around the estate, although access to some premises on the estate may be more complicated. It could mean higher fuel costs for local businesses such as Epsom Coaches.
- 2.11. Additional parking restrictions would be required and much of the existing on street parking along this route could be lost.
- 2.12. It would be less expensive to implement than automated barriers, possibly around £20,000.

**Option 3 - Retain existing arrangements – with improvements.**

- 2.13. During the week access to the CRC from the northern end of Blenheim Rd is made difficult by obstructive parking as described in the introduction. Consequently the following changes could be made to improve this situation
- Retain the existing restriction preventing access to the CRC via the northern end of Blenheim Rd at weekend and bank holidays.
  - Improve the signing of this restriction on Longmead Rd.
  - Provide improved temporary barriers for use at the weekend and locate them at position B or nearby to accommodate local businesses.
  - Remark and enforce existing waiting restrictions at the northern end of Blenheim Rd.
  - Place bollards on the footways to prevent footway parking in this area.
  - Review the operation of the CRC following the internal reorganisation of the facility.
  - Provide a keep clear marking across the access to the CRC.

2.14. The estimated cost of this option is £10,000.

### **3. CONSULTATIONS**

- 3.1. Consultations have been carried out with Councillors, Surrey Waste Management and some local businesses such as Epsom Coaches. Epsom Coaches are generally in agreement with the proposals described in recommendation i) however they are supportive of a permanent barrier at the entrance to the CRC. This would mean HGV's would be able to use the northern end of Blenheim Rd and other traffic the Felstead Rd approach. This option is highly likely to require the further alteration of the access to the CRC beyond what has already been approved, however if these are relatively minor changes then this should be possible.
- 3.2. A meeting will be held to discuss this further prior to the meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> March.
- 3.3. Any alterations to the highway layout around the CRC will be formally consulted upon prior to works going ahead.

### **4. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. This report and study has been carried out by the Epsom and Ewell Local Highways Team without the need for specialist consultants to design an automated barrier. Consequently the vast majority of the £7000 from the Committee's Capital Allowance remains and could be used to implement recommendations.
- 4.2. Additional funding could be provided from the 08/09 LTP settlement or other sources.

### **5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. There are no equality or diversity implications associated with this report.

### **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A well-understood and clear means of access to the CRC should reduce the likelihood of conflict between motorists trying to gain access from different directions.

### **7. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**



- 7.1. An automated barrier system in the northern part of Blenheim Road would be expensive to install and maintain and there is a strong possibility that it could not be designed to function adequately given the constraints at the northern end of Blenheim Road described previously.
- 7.2. A permanent gate or barrier at the entrance to the CRC is possible, however it would require the access and internal layout of the CRC to be changed. This could be possible whilst the existing works are underway and will be further developed with Surrey waste Management.
- 7.3. A one way system is likely to reduce congestion however it would cause difficulties for some businesses in terms of more difficult access and increased costs. In addition on street parking would be lost on Felstead Road and part of Blenheim Road causing difficulties for employees and visitors of/to local businesses.
- 7.4. Relatively low cost improvements can be made to the northern end of Blenheim Road as described in Option 3. These can be implemented in the short term with the other internal changes to the CRC whilst more permanent solutions are investigated leading to accessibility improvements for local businesses and CRC users.

## 8. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 8.1. Depending on the outcome and recommendations made at the meeting improvements could be carried out by September 2008.

**LEAD OFFICER:** David Curl, Local Highways Manager, Epsom and Ewell  
**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** 08456 009 009  
**E-MAIL:** eastsurreyhighways@surreycc.gov.uk  
**CONTACT OFFICER:** As above  
**TELEPHONE NUMBER:**  
**E-MAIL:**  
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