



## SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

### LOCAL COMMITTEE IN EPSOM & EWELL 17 December 2009

#### MEMBER QUESTIONS

##### **Question 1**

**Cllr Robert Leach**

**Re: Carillion**

"On 22 September 2009, the Office of Fair Trading imposed fines of £129.5 million on 103 construction firms for operating an illegal cartel and for rigging tenders against the interests of their customers. The seventh largest fine, of £5,375,689, was against Carillion JM Ltd whom I believe are responsible for highways maintenance in this borough.

"Can the county give a categorical assurance that it has not been the victim of this unlawful activity? What assurances can the county provide that the Carillion bid was a result of a fair and unrigged tender process? What plans do the county have for continued working with this company in the light of this disclosure?"

##### **Officer Response:**

Following notification of the OFT judgement in August, Surrey County Council undertook a full investigation of all named suppliers who held a contract with the authority. This confirmed that the OFT judgement was not directly against Carillion, but a secondary company (Mowlem Plc) who Carillion acquired in February 2006. The OFT found that "Mowlem Plc" was guilty of breaching the Competition Act in relation to property construction contracts tendered in 2002, however, as the new parent company (from 2006) Carillion was ultimately liable. This was recognised by the OFT who reduced the overall fine by 45% in recognition of the steps Carillion had taking to eradicate illegal tender practices employed by "Mowlem Plc" prior to their acquisition by Carillion.

Officers are therefore fully satisfied that Carillion as a company was not directly responsible for any the breach of the Competition Act, while an internal separate investigation also confirmed there was no evidence of any price collusion in relation to highways contract awarded in 2003. Officers thus have no objection (subject to standard due diligence) to Carillion applying for any future public sector contracts

##### **Question 2**

**Cllr Anna Jones**

**Re: Burgh Heath Road**

Please could I have confirmation on what is happening to the resurfacing work on Burgh Heath Road. The pot holes between the S-bend and the mini-roundabout at Downs Road are so bad that they are real risk to cyclists. Cyclists have to weave around both the speed cushions, on the inside of the road, and then go further into the road to avoid the potholes. This is incredibly dangerous and immediate action is required.

**Officer Response:**

Burgh Heath Road is included in the projected programme of carriageway surface treatment works for 2010/11. The programme is subject to Cabinet approval of the necessary funding but, if this is forthcoming, works are anticipated summer 2010.

**Question 3**

**C Cllr Chris Frost**

**Re: Epsom High Street**

Last year the Local Committee agreed to a programme to 'de-clutter' Epsom High Street. The report mentioned the following items would be delivered with the £60,000 allocated:

- Upgrade lanterns on streetlights
- Remove unnecessary signs/posts/street clutter
- Repair block paving in places
- Provide more cycle stands
- Replace damaged guard rails
- Paint street furniture (if funds allow)

Have all these items been carried out? If so, how many signs/posts were removed as a result of this exercise?

**Officer Response:**

A package of works was carried out last financial year which included removal of approximately 20 unnecessary posts and signs; 15 cycle stands (outside the Station, Lloyds Bank and Waterstones); general paving repairs and replacement of guardrailling (at the Upper High Street/ Church St/ High Street junction. However, given the forthcoming PFI lighting contract, only limited repairs to street lighting was undertaken.

**Question 4**

**Cllr Michael Arthur**

**Re: Windmill Lane**

In the 2007/08 Maintenance Programme, the cleaning of a blocked drain gully in Windmill Lane, Ewell was due to be undertaken. To my knowledge this has still not been done and is now a matter of urgency - can you please advise when this maintenance work will be undertaken?

**Officer Response**

A crew attended site in Windmill Lane last year to clear this gully which had been reported as blocked. However it was found impossible to carry out the clearance and it is believed the pipe connection has collapsed. Excavation to replace the damaged pipe is planned this financial year.

**Question 5**

**C Cllr Jan Mason**

**Re: Lights - Ruxley Lane/Gatley Avenue/Chessington Road**

I have reported three lights out around these roads (Ref No. 8339725), and one lamp column has been out since February 2009 - when are these likely to be repaired as this is a health and safety issue on these well used roads?

**Officer Response:**

- light column 5, Chessington Road opposite Derek Avenue; has been passed to BBIS (Council Contractor) for inspection and report
- light column 30, Ruxley Lane; attended 5th November - new lamp fitted and should now be working
- light column 2, Gatley Avenue; attended 12th November - new lamp fitted and should now be working
- light column 46, Ruxley lane; new lantern required - to be repaired January/February
- light column 42, Ruxley Lane; requires new lantern
- light column 47, Ruxley Lane; requires new lantern

Pending the introduction of the PFI contract in April 2010, resources for lighting column repair are extremely limited. Those units needing a new lamp (bulb) are being repaired but if the column or lantern needs replacement, repairs are not being carried out except in the most urgent cases. Urgent cases are defined as those where there is a high risk of street crime and there are no other working lighting columns within 60 metres.

**Question 6**

**Cllr Anna Jones** [2<sup>nd</sup> question]

**Re: Downs Road/Treadwell Road junction**

After the site visit at the Downs Road/Treadwell Road junction on November 6th 2009, please could I have confirmation that some STOP signs and extra markings on the road be actioned at the earliest opportunity. With both the police and local residents considering this junction to be extremely hazardous there are real fears that a fatality/serious injury will happen.

**Officer Response:**

In order to accord with the provisions of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 and Traffic Signs Manual, stop signs may only be placed with the approval of the Secretary of State and if the visibility splay does not exceed 4.5/30 m or less (for a 30 mph road). Although sight splays have not been measured on site, it is thought they exceed the stated criteria and thus an application for stop signs may not receive Secretary of State approval without sufficient justification.

At this time, accident data for this junction is being collected and a view will be taken once a fair comparison can be made with data recorded before the reconfiguration took place. It is not unusual for there to be an increased frequency of accidents shortly following alterations to the highway whilst regular drivers become accustomed to the new layout. Encouraging have been the survey results recently collected which indicate speeds along Downs Road have reduced slightly despite the removal of the former mini roundabout. Combined with improved visibility splays by virtue of markings positioned to provide a more prominent view of oncoming traffic, there is optimism that accident statistics will show an improvement over the forthcoming years. It should be noted that only those accidents resulting in injury are used for analysis

**Question 7**

**C Cllr Chris Frost** [2<sup>nd</sup> question]

**Re: New lights in Rosebery Park**

At a meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008 the sum of £3,400 was agreed from the Committee's Capital allocation for two new lights for Rosebery Park. (They are for one of the paths for which the County Council has responsibility). At the time of writing 14 months have elapsed, and there is no sign of the lights. Why is it taking so long, and when will they be installed?

**Officer Response:**

It was not possible to collate additional information regarding this matter in advance of the Committee meeting. Councillor Frost will be updated once the facts are known.

**Question 8**

**Cllr Michael Arthur** [2<sup>nd</sup> question]

**Re: Cycle/pedestrian path by Court Recreation Ground**

Shared cycle and pedestrian footpath - at the side of Court Recreation Ground - running from Waterloo Road into Long Grove Road - can a marked out, designated cycle path be considered as currently there is confusion due to the absence of markings for pedestrians and cyclists?

**Officer Response**

The signs and markings currently displayed identify the path as shared unsegregated and comply with current regulations. Segregated paths of the type suggested are normally reserved for areas where there is a reduced likelihood of pedestrians wandering into cycle lanes and where cyclists can expect their route to be largely uninterrupted. In general terms, unsegregated paths tend to encourage cyclists to take greater care and this is deemed to be the most appropriate arrangement in this case.

**Question 9**

**Cllr Jan Mason** [2<sup>nd</sup> question]

**VAS - 432 Chessington Road, near Thomas' Coaches**

This VAS has been out of action since October 2008, and whilst having had a discussion with the Local Highways Manager a while ago, this has still not been fixed, and cars are speeding down this road - when can some action be taken on this sign?

**Officer Response:**

This VAS unit is out of warranty and, at the present time no revenue budget has been identified for this type of apparatus. A survey of all VAS within the County is about to be carried out centrally in order that all defective units can be identified, a cost estimate for repair established thus enabling a decision on which are to be retained and which removed. It is hoped that, once repair costs are known, funding can be found to undertake a programme of works.

Unlike traditional signs, VAS are regarded as semi permanent only and once they have reached a point beyond economical repair, will be removed altogether unless a capital sum for replacement is available. The contract for supply has, until recently, included a guarantee of just one year. The new procurement matrix includes only those suppliers offering guarantees of two years or more which will ensure greater reliability of VAS in the future.

**Question 10**

**Cllr Anna Jones** [3<sup>rd</sup> question]

**Re: Wallace Fields**

A chevron has been requested for the sharp bend on Wallace Fields. What is the timescale for any investigation and the implementation of this safety "device"?

**Officer Response**

In consultation with Surrey Police and the resident of 53 Wallace Fields, arrangements are in place to install a triangular warning sign indicating "left hand bend ahead" on the southbound approach along Wallace Fields, immediately beyond Windmill Close. It is anticipated this work will be carried out during the current financial year.

**Question 11**

**Cllr Michael Arthur** [3<sup>rd</sup> question]

**Re: Ewell Spring Hotel complex traffic lights**

Given that there are light volumes of traffic and pedestrians in late evening and during the night, could consideration be given to making the traffic light system a part time one as motorists have complained about long waits at a red light when there is virtually zero traffic. Additionally this would be a positive measure to counter the poor air quality measured close to the junctions.

**Officer Response:**

The various signals in this vicinity are linked together and phases are coordinated to optimise traffic movements through the village. The system incorporates vehicle sensors which can trigger adjustments to the length of each phase and allow the system to adapt to reduced traffic volumes. However, limits are set to the available adjustment and, despite perceived unnecessary delay, drivers may be held to allow programmed movements elsewhere on the network.

For safety reasons, the option of switching off the control system is not one we would consider. In addition, drivers who travel regularly through the area tend to become accustomed to the sequence of phasing and, if this is changed, they will sometimes anticipate a signal control message even if it fails to display. Experience shows this can lead to driver confusion or error and an increased potential for collision.

Details of this enquiry have been passed to the Council's Network Management Centre with a request to investigate whether there is any scope to make adjustment to the traffic system controller which would reduce delays during the night time period"