



**A246 YORK ROAD JUNCTION WITH
LONDON ROAD, GUILDFORD:
PROPOSED JUNCTION IMPROVEMENT:
OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS**

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)**

8th OCTOBER 2008

KEY ISSUE

This report considers comments received on the proposed junction improvement scheme.

SUMMARY

The report sets out comments received from residents to the proposed junction improvement following recent consultation. It recommends that the comments/views expressed are noted and to proceed with the implementation of the scheme as proposed.

Report by

LOCAL HIGHWAYS MANAGER

Surrey Atlas Ref.

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GUILDFORD B.C. WARD (S)

HOLY TRINITY
FRIARY & ST. NICOLAS

COUNTY ELECTORAL DIVISION (S)

GUILDFORD SOUTH EAST

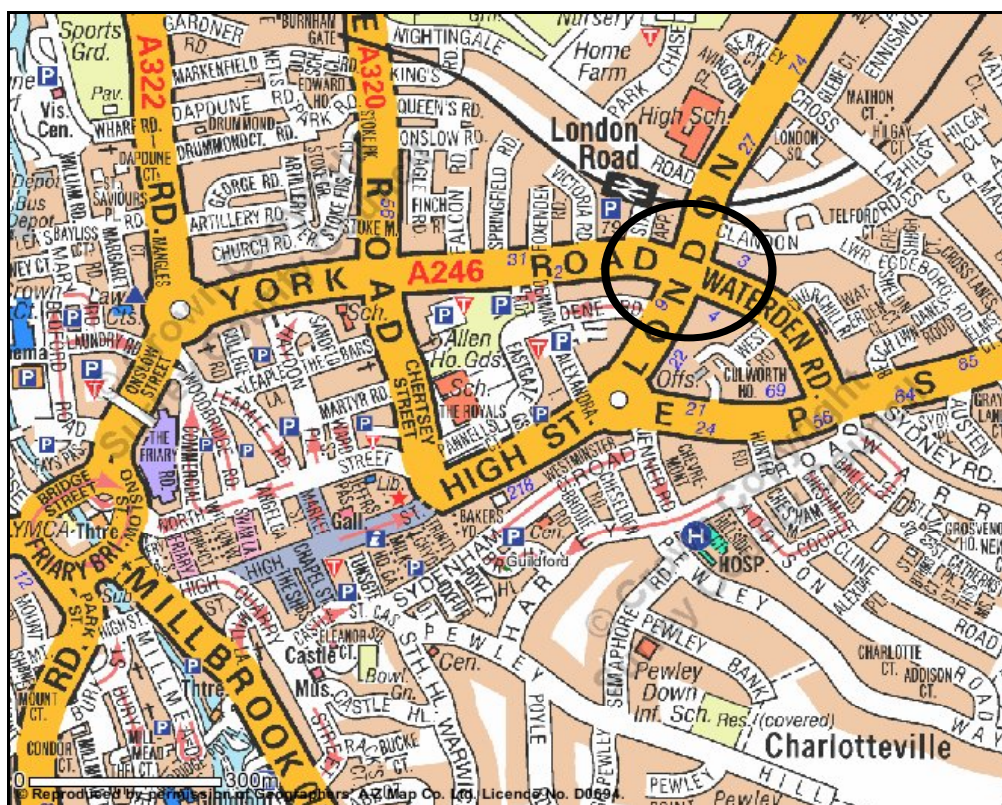
OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to agree:

- (i) that the comments received be noted.
- (ii) that the proposed highway improvement shown on the plan attached as **ANNEXE A** be approved for implementation, as set out in Option 1, paragraph 15.

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

- 1 On 12 February 2008 (Item 11), the Committee approved the Minor Improvement programme for 2008/09. Subsequently on 23 April 2008 (Item 7) funding was made available for the scheme.
- 2 The proposals include local widening of York Road and London Road, to provide traffic lanes of adequate width, widening of footways, improved road markings and updated traffic signal facilities. The scheme's objectives are to reduce the number of personal injury accidents, to discourage red light violations at the signals and to reduce congestion.



- 3 This is a key junction in the Guildford town road network, effectively linking the town centre via the A246 York Road, with the A3100 London Road to the northeast and the A25 and A246 Epsom Road to the east via Waterden Road. A location plan is shown above for reference. The roads are subject to a 30mph speed limit and are characterised by a mixture of residential properties, including a large sheltered housing unit called Denehyrst Court, together with businesses along the southern arm of London Road.

- 4 The junction carries heavy traffic flows, and the lane widths are currently substandard particularly for traffic travelling southbound on London Road and eastbound on York Road. This results in congestion and delays especially during peak periods. The frustration this causes has led to red light violations, and this has contributed to a significant and increasing rate of personal injury accidents (PIAs). There were 14 recorded PIAs between August 2003 and July 2008. Of these 3 involved pedestrians and 2 involved pedal cyclists. Further analysis shows that 2 of these were of serious nature and 32 slight injuries. This casualty rate is abnormally high. Pedestrian crossing provision at the junction is limited.
- 5 The scheme is therefore designed to provide two lanes of standard width on the York Road (eastbound) and London Road (southbound) approaches, and to provide widened footways, most notably on the south east corner. These improvements encroach on the grassed area on the northwest corner of the junction, which is land in the control of SCC as highway authority. It is also necessary to remove two mature platanus X hispanica (London Plane) trees on London Road on the north west of the junction.

CONSULTATIONS

- 6 Letters were delivered to 48 properties in the vicinity of the junction, as well as to local County and Borough Councillors, the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee, Guildford Borough Council and the emergency services. The letter was accompanied by a plan showing the proposals explaining the background and reasons for the scheme.
- 7 Up to the time of drafting this report, 11 letters and one petition have been received in response. These are summarised below.

Respondent	Address	Comments
Mrs Pauline Smith House Manager	Denehyrst Court York Road	On behalf of majority of residents support the proposals and removal of the trees, with request that additional vegetation also be removed.
Petition with 6 signatures	Denehyrst Court York Road	Supports the scheme and removal of trees
Mrs M Llewellyn	Denehyrst Court York Road	Supports the proposals and removal of the trees, with request that additional vegetation also be removed
Mrs B Appleby	Denehyrst Court York Road	Supports the proposals and requests cyclist to be stopped from using the footway
Mr F L Holford Mrs JJ Holford	London Road	Objections to removal of trees from residents of London Road on the northeast corner of the junction.
Mr M Forman Ms D Dando Mr D Humphris	London Road	
Ms R Newenham	Pewley Bank	
Ms Moon	Cline Road	Objections to removal of trees from residents some distance away.
G Longhurst	Stoke Fields	

- 8 Surrey Police have commented that they believe that the scheme will result in the anticipated improvements and fully support these proposals. Surrey Fire & Rescue and Surrey Ambulance have been consulted, but no reply has been received.
- 9 Officers will update the Committee verbally in the event of further responses received after this report was prepared.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSE

- 10 A number of representations have been received in support of the proposals, including removal of the two trees. These include a letter from Mrs. Pauline Smith, House Manager of Denehyrst Court, who claims to speak on behalf of the majority of the residents (35 in total). Officers have attended a meeting with some 15 of the residents, all of whom supported the proposals. Mrs Smith has undertaken to obtain signatures from those supporting the proposals; officers will report verbally on this. In addition officers have received a petition with 6 signatures and two further letters from individual residents. All of these are from Denehyrst Court.
- 11 A total of 8 objections to the removal of the two trees have been received. Five of these are from residents of two properties in London Road, while three are from some distance away.
- 12 The County Council's Arborist has been consulted regarding the loss of the trees. He has responded as follows: "**RECOMMENDATIONS / WORKS:** The existing situation is a risk to highway users due to kerb either missing or below specification engineered for safe use of highway. To effect the design improvements to overcome these problems it will be necessary to remove these two trees from site, as there are no effective arboricultural measures available, through which retention is possible. It is within the scope of the scheme to mitigate tree losses with replacement planting on the nearby, grassed area." Photographs of the trees and the full arborist's report will be available at the meeting.
- 13 Enquiries with Guildford Borough Council (GBC) have shown that there are no preservation orders on these two trees. The junction is, however, in a conservation area. It may therefore be necessary to apply to GBC for conservation area consent.
- 14 It is clear that the majority of respondents support the scheme and favour the removal of the trees. These are the residents of Denehyrst Court. Against this are a number of objections from residents of London Road on the northeast corner of the junction, and three further objections from some distance away.
- 15 A number of comments have been made regarding the scheme as a whole, but the pivotal issue is clearly whether the loss of two trees is justified by the potential benefits of the scheme. As set out above, the scheme is primarily intended to address a high and rising accident rate, which has resulted in 32 casualties over a 5 year period.

OPTIONS

Option 1 : proceed as planned

- 16 The Committee may choose to proceed with the proposal as currently envisaged. The project is currently being designed in detail and construction is programmed for early 2009. The scheme will widen the two busiest approaches to the junction, reducing congestion and red light violations, and thereby reducing the collision rate. This will result in the loss of the two trees. It would be possible, however, to provide suitable replacements in the vicinity.

Option 2 : redesign the scheme

- 17 If the Committee is minded to avoid the loss of the trees, officers could review the design of the scheme, dispensing with the widening of the London Road southbound approach. This would delay the project, making it unlikely that it will be delivered in 2008/09. The loss of the London Road widening would mean that the current very substandard lane widths would remain, as would traffic congestion and accidents to some extent. It would still be possible to widen the York Road approach, but the accident savings would be substantially reduced, while the cost would remain roughly as currently estimated (due to the position of the utilities' equipment).
- 18 This option was examined in detail during the feasibility stage, when the loss of more than two trees was originally proposed. Officers were successful in saving a number of trees without compromising the design of the project, but do not consider that any further trees could be saved without serious effects on the scheme's objectives.

Option 3 : abandon the project

- 19 Option 2 would mean that the scheme's objectives were compromised, while the cost would still be high. The Committee may therefore feel that it longer represents value for money, and should be abandoned.
- 20 Either Option 2 or 3 would result in a considerable financial under-spend and under-delivery during 2008/09. This project represents more than half of the Committee's minor schemes budget for the year. No other schemes are ready for implementation at short notice. There would be no guarantee that the funds saved would be carried forward into 2009/10. The funds may therefore be lost.

FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 21 The budget estimate of the scheme cost is in the region of £220,000, including the diversion of utilities' equipment. The cost has been allowed for as part of the Local Transport Plan devolved funding for 2008/09.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 22 The proposed scheme is intended to address highway safety issues and has some benefits through reduction in congestion and pollution.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 23 This report has minor implications for equality and diversity in that the root damage caused to the kerbs and footways may represent a tripping hazard to the disbenefit of elderly or disabled people. Option 1 would address this; options 2 and 3 would not.

CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 24 This report has implications for crime and disorder in that it is designed to discourage red light violations thereby reducing accidents and improving road safety. Option 1 would address this, while option 2 would do so only partially and option 3 not at all.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 25 The proposed scheme has been considered and designed in accordance with the approved Department for Transport (DfT) guidelines and design criteria. It will address a serious accident problem, and thereby contribute to the County Council's and government's accident reduction targets.
- 26 The loss of two trees is regrettable, but the trees concerned are already causing damage to kerbs and footways, with resulting tripping hazards. A majority of those who responded are in favour of removal of the trees. The Committee is recommended to overrule the objections and proceed with the scheme as proposed in Option 1, paragraph 15.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 27 Assuming that the officer recommendation is approved, the proposals will be implemented during the current financial year. It is possible that the two trees will be removed in advance of the construction starting in order to avoid the nesting season. If Option 2 is approved the project will be delayed while it is redesigned. It may start before the end of the financial year, but this cannot be guaranteed. If Option 3 is approved there will be no further action.

LEAD OFFICER

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Guildford Local Committee Reports and Minutes:
❖ 12 February 2008 (Item 11)
❖ 23 April 2008 (Item 7)
All correspondence referred to in report
SCC Arborist's report

