



GRANGE ROAD, STOUGHTON OUTCOME OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)

11th MARCH 2009

KEY ISSUE

This report sets out options to deal with traffic issues in Grange Road, together with the results of consultations with local residents and others.

SUMMARY

The report sets out the traffic problems in Grange Road, and details of the feasibility study which has been carried out to investigate these. It describes two feasible options to tackle the issues, and a range of options which are dismissed as non-feasible. It sets out details of the consultation which has been carried out of over 3000 local residents as well as a range of stakeholders. The technical report of the feasibility study concludes that Option 1 (waiting restricted in the critical section of Grange Road) is the preferred solution. This report leaves an open recommendation, taking account of the controversial nature of this project.

Report by

LOCAL HIGHWAYS MANAGER

Surrey Atlas Ref.

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GUILDFORD B.C. WARD (S)

STOUGHTON

COUNTY ELECTORAL DIVISION (S)

GUILDFORD NORTH

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to agree:

- (i) that the information in the report be noted.
- (ii) to indicate to officers which option or combination of options, if any, they wish to see developed through detailed design and implementation.
- (iii) that officers be authorised to proceed with any necessary actions including traffic orders, advertisements and notices of intent in order to deliver these projects as soon as 2009/10 budgets are known.

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

- 1 Grange Road, Guildford is narrow (typically 5.8m wide), and the footways are narrow on both sides (between 1.1m and 1.4m wide) between Northmead Junior School and Stoughton Road. A row of parked vehicles on the west side of this section narrows the road further so that there is not enough width for two-way traffic. Southbound drivers routinely mount the footway to avoid conflict with northbound drivers, creating a safety hazard for pedestrians.
- 2 Local residents, residents' associations and schools have raised concerns for pedestrian safety in the area over several years. Petitions have been presented to previous meetings of the Committee.
- 3 Officers met with local Members and representatives of the residents' associations at the start of this project in order to agree the extent of the problem and the scope of the feasibility study. It was agreed that there are no significant concerns regarding traffic congestion or speed at the present time. The over-riding concern was for the safety of pedestrians, particularly children, due to vehicles mounting the kerb.

FEASIBILITY STUDY

- 4 A feasibility study has been carried out, including the generation and analysis of options, traffic and parking surveys, and public consultation. The study coincided with major works to renew gas mains in the area. This meant that a temporary one-way system was in operation in Grange Road, one of the options considered. These works caused significant disruption in the area, but were beneficial in that they gave the opportunity to assess the pros and cons of one-way working. However their extended duration has meant that traffic and parking surveys have been delayed and were not available to inform the public consultation. Further delays have occurred to the surveys due to the heavy snowfall in early February.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 5 Public consultation commenced on 1 December 2008. Letters were sent to 3,060 addresses in Stoughton, including schools and business premises, inviting people to attend one of two public exhibitions, held on the evening of Thursday 11th December and on the morning of Saturday 13th December. Both exhibitions were held at local venues - Stoughton Infants School and Stoughton Methodist Church. There was also opportunity for people to respond by post or by e-mail if they were unable to attend one of the public exhibitions.
- 6 The original closing date for responses to the consultation was Friday 19 December. However following representations from various stakeholders, this deadline was extended to Friday 9th January. Responses continued to be received up to this deadline.
- 7 In total there were 293 responses from 245 addresses. This represents a response rate, by address, of 8%. There were 29 responses from within the problem area – that is Grange Road between Northmead School and Stoughton Road.
- 8 At the time of writing, all questionnaires have been processed. However it has not yet been possible to transcribe and analyse all the comments received. Many respondents wrote very lengthy comments. It is hoped to be able to disaggregate these into common themes by the time Committee meets on 11th March. Moreover it has not been possible as yet to read all the letters that were sent in the context of the consultation, many of which were very lengthy.

OPTIONS

Option 1: Waiting Restrictions in the southern section of Grange Road

- 9 This option would implement waiting restrictions (single and/or double yellow lines) in the southern section of Grange Road, to prevent parking at the times when the problem occurs. This would provide room for two-way traffic, thereby avoiding the need for vehicles to drive on the footway.
- 10 Waiting restrictions could be designed to operate only at the times of day when the problem exists, thus minimising the impact on residents. Consultation results suggest that the problem occurs during the day, principally during the morning and evening rush hour. Therefore a new single-yellow-line operating between 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday, could be considered. Option 1 would affect the fewest people, but has a number of implications:
 - People who currently park in the narrow southern section of Grange Road, between Northmead School and Stoughton Road would have to find alternative parking during the hours of operation of the waiting restriction
 - People living in roads to which parking could be displaced, would experience additional demand for parking in their roads.

- 11 As parking would be displaced, it may be necessary to consider new waiting restrictions being introduced outside the problem area to avoid creating new problems, or exacerbating existing problems elsewhere. Roads which might be affected include Grange Road to the north of the problem area, Stoughton Road, Badger Close, and North Road.
- 12 As detailed below, this is the preferred option by respondents to the public consultation – favoured by 172 out of 293 respondents (59%).

Option 2: One-Way System

- 13 This option would create a length of one-way operation in the southern section of Grange Road. This would remove the need for vehicles to drive on the footway by removing the conflict between drivers travelling in opposite directions.
- 14 The precise extent and the direction of one-way operation has not been considered in detail. Traffic survey results suggest that the predominant traffic flow is southbound. This might suggest that the impact of southbound one-way operation might be less than the impact of northbound operation. In addition if it were to be southbound, there is more flexibility as to the extent of the one-way operation, as there would be no need to provide a turning facility.
- 15 However Surrey Fire and Rescue have raised the objection that one-way operation would increase response times in the event of an emergency, and would therefore potentially place lives in increased danger. Arriva believes strongly that Grange Road should not be made one-way, and reserve the right to object if such a proposal was to be advertised formally. If such an objection was sustained, a public inquiry would be necessary to resolve the issue.
- 16 This option has many far-reaching implications, and a wide range of people would be affected. In the problem area itself:
- This option would retain parking in Grange Road between Northmead School and Stoughton Road.
 - This option would enable slight footway widening, which could further benefit pedestrians.
 - This option could result in increased vehicle speeds in the problem area – traffic calming measures may have to be considered within the problem area to restrain vehicle speeds.
- 17 For Northmead School:
- This option would be highly beneficial for the School Crossing Patrol who would only have to manage traffic coming in one direction.
 - This option would greatly simplify traffic patterns during the school run for those parents who have no choice but to drive their children to school.

- 18 For traffic patterns within Stoughton:
- Drivers would need to find an alternative route in one-direction – this alternative route could be up to 1½ miles longer.
 - There is likely to be an increase in traffic along Johnston Walk, Tylehost and Railton Road, as these roads form the shortest alternative route.
- 19 For bus services within Stoughton:
- This option would result in the permanent diversion of the 26/27 bus service. As a result this route would no longer serve Woodbridge Hill, Manor Road, or Grange Road between Railton Road and Stoughton Road.
 - A new route and new bus stops would be established along Johnston Walk, Tylehost and Railton Road.
 - The bus gate between Tylehost and Railton Road would be opened for bus use.
 - The 26/27 route would include a length of double running along Worplesdon Road, which would be confusing to passengers.
- 20 This is not the preferred option among respondents to the public consultation – favoured by 93 out of 293 respondents (32%). In addition, and again as detailed below, a number of important stakeholders have raised objections to this option.

Option 3: Do nothing

- 21 This option would not solve the problem of vehicles driving on the footway in Grange Road. This option would retain parking in Grange Road, and would have no effect on the 26/27 bus service. This is the least popular option among respondents to the public consultation – favoured by 9 out of 293 respondents (3%).

OTHER NON-FEASIBLE SUGGESTIONS

- 22 A number of other suggestions have been made for Grange Road. Unfortunately these suggestions were not feasible. They are as follows:
- 23 **Improved enforcement of existing parking and waiting restrictions.** While improved enforcement may prevent parking on existing double and single yellow lines, it is the existing legal parking, which narrows the road to single file.
- 24 **Traffic lights to control single-file traffic through the problem section.** To ensure safe operation any section of road controlled by traffic lights must not have any parking or driveways. Therefore this option is not possible in the problem section of Grange Road due to the driveways and parking.

- 25 **Install bollards to prevent vehicles driving on the footway.** Bollards must be installed 450mm from the kerb edge. For Grange Road, this would mean any bollards would have to be installed in the centre of the footway. This would obstruct pedestrians – especially parents with buggies and wheelchair users.
- 26 **Compulsory purchase of additional land to widen Grange Road.** Compulsory purchase is a complex and highly expensive legal process with no guaranteed outcome. It is therefore only normally used for major schemes – for example major new trunk roads.
- 27 **Install tall kerbs to prevent vehicles mounting the footway.** If the kerb was tall enough to deter drivers from driving on the footway, there would be an increased risk of a pedestrian falling from the footway into the carriageway – especially as the footways are very narrow to start with. On the east side of Grange Road, the driveways slope downwards away from the carriageway – this means there is a risk of vehicles grounding if the threshold was raised.
- 28 **Close Grange Road as a through route.** This would remove through traffic from Grange Road – but only through traffic. Buses could be provided access through the closure. This would result in traffic being diverted in both directions. This would mean that Northmead Junior School was in a cul de sac, meaning that all parents driving their children to school would have to turn their vehicles and leave the way they came – this could make the existing problem worse as it would create even more potential for conflict between drivers.
- 29 **Increase carriageway width and reduce footway width.** This would provide enough room for parking and two-way traffic. The existing footway is already very narrow. It would not be acceptable from a pedestrian point of view to make it any narrower.
- 30 Officers believe that Options 1 to 3 constitute the only 3 feasible options for Grange Road.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

- 31 Several responses have been received from partner or stakeholder organisations. These are summarised below.
- 32 **The Pegasus bus service** to Northmead Junior School would not be affected by option 1 but could potentially be affected by option 2. They would prefer to see southbound operation as the temporary arrangement worked well during the gas board works.

- 33 **Surrey Police** consider that Option 2 would provide the best solution for the school pedestrians and leave in place the off street parking for the residents of the southern part of Grange Road. However this has far reaching implications and would permanently affect many people including the local bus services, and Surrey Police have concerns on the alternative routes that drivers would use. The obvious route of Johnston Walk, Tylehost and Railton Road is not really suitable to take this amount of traffic. Option 1 would affect the fewest people, but the residents in the southern section of Grange would have to find alternative parking during the operating hours of the restrictions. The success of this option, would to some degree, be reliant on an amount of enforcement of the waiting restrictions by GBC. Also it is conceivable that parents would park within the restricted area to drop off their children, thereby causing an obstruction, but in such cases this may not amount to an offence. Taking all the above into consideration, Surrey Police favour Option 1.
- 34 **Surrey Fire and Rescue** has raised no objection to options 1 and 3, but is opposed to Option 2 since this would increase attendance times and potentially place the lives in increased danger.
- 35 **Guildford Borough Council's** parking team raised no objection to the parking based solution.
- 36 **Arriva** believes strongly that Grange Road should not be made one-way, for a number of reasons:
- a) The 26/27 route along Woodbridge Hill, Manor Road and the southern section of Grange Road serves a substantial number of passengers and residents – these passengers and residents would lose their bus service.
 - b) Loss of significant numbers of passengers would be detrimental to Arriva from a commercial point of view.
 - c) Any alternative route would include a length of double-running.
 - d) From a passenger's point of view, and from a commercial point of view, the current route of the 26/27 is better than any of the possible alternatives.
- 37 Any one-way proposal would have to be the subject of a Traffic Regulation Order. Arriva reserve the right to object formally at this stage. Such an objection would result in a compulsory Public Inquiry."
- 38 **Queen Elizabeth Park Residents' Association** notes the opposition of many of their residents to one-way working and against the bus being diverted through Queen Elizabeth Park. They therefore favour proposals based on Option 1 or Option 3 with some adjustments to the parking restrictions or other changes which might improve traffic flow. QEPR also expressed concern for local businesses such as Budgens.
- 39 **Cllr. Searle**, SCC Member for Guildford North, and **Cllr. May**, GBC Member for Stoughton both expressed concern about Option 2.

- 40 **Northmead Junior School** favours Option 2 as a permanent solution. Their comments, received during the temporary one-way arrangement due to the gas main renewal, were (inter alia): “The problem of vehicles driving on the footway has disappeared. There is now no conflict between drivers attempting to pass along Grange Road in opposite directions. Normally the School Crossing Patrol is in the centre of this conflict between drivers attempting to pass along Grange Road in opposite directions. With this conflict removed, and with only having to control traffic approaching in one direction, the School Crossing Patrol has reported that the situation is much better. There has been no reported increase in speed through the temporary one-way section of Grange Road. There has been no negative feedback from parents. Permanent one-way operation may inconvenience Northmead’s 60 staff on their journeys to or from school, and may also inconvenience local residents. Some parents may have to park further away from the school gates.”
- 41 The **Cycle Touring Club** (which is based in business premises in Queen Elizabeth Park) does not support Option 3. CTC considers both Options 1 and 2 to be feasible, and made a number of suggestions as to how both options could be implemented in ways that benefit cyclists
- 42 **No responses** have been received to date from Cllr Harwood, Anne Milton, MP for Guildford, Stoughton Infants School, Surrey Ambulance Service or Stoughton Community Association (SCA). The lack of response from SCA is particularly disappointing, since it was sustained pressure from SCA which brought this project forward in the first place.

FEASIBILITY STUDY REPORT CONCLUSIONS

- 43 The technical report of the feasibility , having considered all of the above, concludes that Option 1 is the preferred solution, and recommends promotion of a new Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm waiting restriction in Grange Road. This would remove parking at times when the problem is most widely perceived to occur, while allowing residents to park at other times. This option would minimise impact on the local community. It is recommended to review the problem again one year following implementation, with a view to extending the restriction to at-any-time if necessary.
- 44 It further recommends working closely with GBC’s parking team to ensure targeted and sustain enforcement is applied to the new parking restrictions. This would ensure that the new restrictions have the desired effect, and also provide reassurance to local residents.
- 45 Finally, it recommends that the suggestion for a new one-way system be ruled out formally. The impact on the 26/27 bus service, the displaced traffic onto Johnston Walk, Tylehost and Railton Road, and the length of the diversion for residents, would all have a detrimental impact on the quality of life for many residents of Stoughton.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

46 This report has no implications for equalities and diversity.

CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

47 This report has no implications for crime and disorder.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

48 The objective of this project is to address issues of road safety, both actual and perceived, as well as encouraging sustainable travel, particularly school travel. The project also seeks to take account of the opinions and needs of local residents, businesses and the local economy.

FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

49 The estimated costs of the options may be broken down as follows:

Option 1: waiting restrictions:

Physical works (signs and road markings)	£5,000
Legal processes	<u>£15,000</u>
Total	£20,000

Option 2 : one-way operation:

Physical works (signs and road markings and some kerb realignment)	£30,000
Legal processes, which may include a public inquiry	<u>£40,000</u>
Total	£70,000

50 The Committee is asked to note that these are very broad estimates, and may vary considerably as the project progresses through detailed design and implementation.

CONCLUSIONS & REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

51 The feasibility study and consultation have been carried out thoroughly and have reached a conclusion which can be supported by the evidence gathered. The conclusion is logical, in that in recommending Option 1, it puts forward the cheapest solution, the solution which is supported by the majority of respondents, and the solution which prejudices the interests of the smallest number of respondents.

52 However the two options put forward were always likely to polarise the community. Those that stand to benefit are relatively small in number – the residents of the southern part of Grange Road and parents and children walking to school. Those who suffer the disbenefit are much more numerous in the case of Option 2 than in Option 1.

- 53 For this reason, although the technical report recommended Option 1, this report makes no recommendations. Members may choose to agree any of the three options, or to ask officers to investigate further. Whichever option is taken, further detailed design, and possibly some more locally-focussed consultation will be required, for example to determine the extent and duration of waiting restrictions, or the direction and extent of one-way working.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 54 Depending on the option selected by the Committee, the scheme will be developed in detail, and if required further local consultation will take place.. The Committee may wish to be reminded that the major maintenance of Grange Road was deferred from 2008/09 to 2009/10, partly to enable the feasibility of this project to be considered, and partly because of the gas main replacement in the area. If this project proceeds to implementation, the intention would be to carry out the maintenance and improvement elements simultaneously to minimise disruption.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS	Feasibility Study Report
