

## **A25 Guildford Road Response to Pedestrian Crossing Petition**

**MOLE VALLEY LOCAL COMMITTEE,  
23 October 2002**

### **KEY ISSUE:**

This report responds to the petition that was presented at the Mole Valley Local Committee meeting on 24 July 2002.

### **SUMMARY:**

At the meeting of the Mole Valley Local Committee in July 2002, a petition was presented "requesting the installation of pedestrian operated traffic lights on the A25 at the point in Westcott where children from the school cross the road".

This report presents information on the feasibility of a range of options and the likely advantages / disadvantages of the proposal.

### **OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Committee is asked to agree

- (i) that officers continue to assist the school in exploring ways of employing school crossing patrol staff, and;
- (ii) that a feasibility study be undertaken to ascertain the likely cost and impact of a signalled pedestrian crossing.

**REPORT BY:  
JOANNA HILLS**

**SURREY ATLAS REF:  
Pg 135, C6**

**MOLE VALLEY DISTRICT WARD:  
WESTCOTT**

**COUNTY ELECTORAL DIVISION:  
DORKING SOUTH**

## **1. INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND**

1. 1 At its meeting on 24 July 2002, Members were presented with a petition “requesting the installation of pedestrian operated traffic lights on the A25 at the point in Westcott where children from the school cross the road”. The school referred to is Westcott Church of England First School.
1. 2 In the past, a School Crossing Patrol has assisted crossing of the road at this point, adjacent to the Crown Inn. The school has however been without a person in this role since the previous post-holder retired in October 2001. The school has been attempting to recruit a replacement without any success.
1. 3 The problem of recruitment to School Crossing Patrol posts exists across the whole of the East Surrey area. In January 2002 the Surrey Mirror printed a press release issued by County Highways, highlighting the problem of recruiting school crossing patrol staff. This article drew particular attention to Westcott School and asked potential recruits to step forward. It was followed up by a large campaigning feature in the Surrey Mirror, which was also unsuccessful in finding a replacement post-holder.
1. 4 Westcott School is an infant school, serving approximately 70 pupils, aged 4 to 8. A significant proportion of these pupils need to cross the A25 road adjacent to the Crown Inn. Due to the age of the pupils at the school, many pupils crossing here are accompanied by younger siblings in pushchairs. The school is the main journey generator for pedestrians crossing the road at this point.
1. 5 The school community feels that crossing the road at this point without any assistance is dangerous and has requested physical measures in the form of a signalised crossing on the highway to assist with safe crossing.

## **2. ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY**

2. 1 There are several possible physical measures that could assist pedestrians crossing at this point. These are:
  1. Pedestrian refuge
  2. Kerb build-outs with pram ramps
  3. Signalled pedestrian crossing
  4. Zebra crossing
2. 2 The advantages and disadvantages of each option are discussed in the following paragraphs.
2. 3 Pedestrian refuge  
The carriageway width at this point is not sufficient to allow for a pedestrian refuge to be installed on the A25. The A25 is a major link from Dorking to Guildford, and as such needs to have a minimum

carriageway width of 6.75m to meet the 'Surrey Design' carriageway geometry criteria. Widening of the carriageway at this point would be expensive.

2. 4 Kerb build-outs

Kerb build-outs would reduce the crossing distance. The present carriageway width is not sufficient to allow for this type of installation and conflicts with current guidance.

2. 5 Pedestrian crossing with signals, or zebra crossing

A signalised crossing would be preferable for safety reasons at this site, as it gives clear guidance for both pedestrians and drivers as to who has priority, and is less likely to lead to confusion for young children.

Initial investigations indicate that the sight-line criteria for a signalised crossing are met, if it were to be sited at the apex of the bend. Such a crossing would therefore be technically feasible. However, prior to it being able to be accepted as a viable potential site further feasibility work would be required to confirm:

- the precise numbers of pedestrians, not solely school related, likely to use such a facility;
- volumes and speeds of traffic;
- additional safety considerations.

2. 6 Such a study can be undertaken this financial year, for consideration when allocating the next financial year's budget, should it prove feasible.

2. 7 Safe Routes to Schools priority system

The Safe Routes to Schools programme contains many other sites where new pedestrian crossing improvements have been requested. A priority system has been developed in order to rationalise the progression of these schemes. 'Points' are allocated to schools according to set criteria, with the points then being tallied up to produce a score for use in ranking priorities. The assessment procedure gives consideration to:

- Any over-riding or unusual safety issues and/or other projects being undertaken at the site which make it rational to prioritise a site;
- The numbers of personal injury accidents in the vicinity, with an additional 'weighting' given to numbers of child pedestrian and cycle accidents;
- The amount of Safe Routes to School resources that has been spent on a school to date;
- The level of commitment shown by the school, through their take-up of road safety training, travel education, traffic reduction projects, and school travel planning;
- A measure of local demand and value of a project to the wider community;

- Numbers of children at the school potentially benefiting from the project, and numbers of children at other nearby schools who would also use this route.

2. 8 Accidents and safety issues

A School Crossing Patrol, operating at the times of day when pedestrians are using this route, is the optimum safety solution for this site. Whilst feasibility work continues, it is recommended that the school and the local community continue to actively pursue the possibility of recruiting School Crossing Patrol staff, or of operating a rota system if a single person cannot be recruited to do the job every day.

2. 9 Site observations indicate that the vast majority of the people crossing at this point are doing so to access the school at school time. If a signalised crossing were provided, this pattern of usage could leave the crossing unused for much of the day and throughout the school holidays. There is a safety concern that drivers would become accustomed to the crossing being unused and may be caught unaware when the facilities are in use.

2. 10 The proposed signalised crossing may slightly reduce vehicle speeds due to increased driver caution on the approach as a response to the associated speed-reducing measures, such as enhanced signage or lighting. However there has only been one Personal Injury Accident within a kilometre of this site in the last three years. This involved two vehicles in a rear shunt impact 700m away from the proposed site in 1999.

2. 11 A study of existing pedestrian crossing facilities on A and B roads across the County has indicated an average of 1.4 personal injury accidents per year, per site, at or near a crossing facility. This would indicate that there is a possibility that the installation of a signalised crossing at this site may actually increase accident rates.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The costs associated with the installation of a signalised crossing would be met from the Mole Valley Local Transport Plan, capital allocation, if Members were to consider it a priority during the 2003/4 financial year. Costs for the feasibility, design and implementation of a crossing of this type are likely to be in the region of £40 000. However further measures that may be required to improve the safety of such an installation may increase this cost.

**4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

4. 1 The proposed signalised crossing at this point would not result in modal shift towards the use of sustainable transport in the journey to Westcott Infant School. Parents' cars cannot sensibly travel along School Lane

to the school gates due to the width of the lane. Parents need to park elsewhere and walk along this section of the school route already.

4. 2 The school is an infants' school, serving pupils up to the age of 8 years old. It would not be the intention that a crossing here would promote independent walking as a means of school travel for the pupils.

**5. ECONOMIC & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no Economic or Environmental Implications associated with this proposal.

**6. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

Parents and children are experiencing difficulties in crossing the A25 at this site and have been unable to recruit replacement School Crossing Patrol staff. It is therefore suggested that officer time is given to further detailed consideration of the feasibility of a pedestrian crossing with signals at this location. A scheme could be added to the Safe Routes to Schools programme if found to be appropriate. Its progression would be dependent on available and appropriate finances becoming available. In addition, the scheme would need to be considered in relation to the usual priority system of the Safe Routes to Schools programme for Mole Valley.

Whilst the above investigations can be progressed, the optimum safety solution for a crossing point with this type of usage is the provision of a School Crossing Patrol. As feasibility work continues, it is strongly recommended that the school and the local community continue to advertise and actively recruit for School Crossing Patrol staff.

**Report by: Joanna Hills, Senior Engineer, Sustainable Development**

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: Committee Papers from 24 July 2002.**

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