



DORKING DECONGESTION STUDY

**Local Committee for Mole Valley
23 February 2005**

KEY ISSUE:

This report gives an update of progress so far with the Dorking Decongestion Study initiative and Members are asked to agree the way forward.

SUMMARY:

At this Committee on 26 May 2004, members adopted a general strategy for dealing with traffic and transportation issues in Dorking. This report gives more information with respect to the work carried out so far and in some cases it is considered necessary to revise the programme that was adopted, in principle, at this meeting in May. Included within this report are findings from the Pump Corner traffic experiment; a progress report from the Travel Management Executive; a feasibility report of the proposed amendments to Dene Street; design proposals for Vincent Road; conceptual drawings for a "gateway" scheme in West Street and a strategy for providing a pedestrian crossing in South Street.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:

- (i) Approve the continued appointment of the Travel Management Executive presently engaged in promoting non-car forms of transport with local companies.
- (ii) Approve the progression and implementation of proposals for Dene Street as per the recommendations detailed in **Annexe E**
- (ii) Approve advertisement of a Road Traffic Regulation Order to make part of Dene Street one-way only (northbound), and if no objections are maintained the order be made.
- (iii) Approve in principle and subject to safety audit, the measures for Vincent Road and South Street, as set out in the conceptual design under **Annexe F**.
- (iv) Authorise the Local Transportation Director, in consultation with the Chairman and Local Members, to consider and agree the detailed design and implementation of the measures detailed in (iii) above.
- (v) Approve implementation of a gateway scheme in West Street as detailed in **Annexe G**
- (vi) Approve, if deemed suitable, the advertisement of a Road Traffic Regulation Order to reduce the speed limit in West Street from 30 to 20 mph. and if no objections are maintained the order be made.
- (vii) Approve progression of 'phase 2' of the Pump Corner experiment to implementation as detailed in **Annexe C**
- (viii) Approve, in principle the additional cycle measures that may be added later, to the Pump Corner scheme, as detailed in **Annexe D**
- (ix) Approve the advertisement of a Road Traffic Regulation Order banning the left turn from West Street into North Street, and if no objections are maintained the order be made.
- (x) Approve reconvention of the Members' Working Group to investigate and review parking restrictions in and around Dorking.
- (xii) Agree a Town Centre Access Study is progressed within this project.
- (xiii) Give authorisation to the Local Transportation Director in consultation with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Local Members to consider and resolve any objections to the proposals, detailed in (ii), (vi) and (ix) above.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On 26th May 2004, a report went before the Mole Valley Local Committee, which followed an investigation of congestion issues in Dorking. Recommendations set out in the report included:
- Implementation of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE)
 - Changing priorities for vehicles at Pump Corner followed by monitoring and review.
 - Deployment of a Travel Officer.
 - Additional resources to promote safer routes to school.
 - Design of revised parking controls for High Street and West Street.
 - Design of measures to improve pedestrian safety and rationalise traffic flows in Dene Street and Vincent Road
- 1.2 In addition, a recommendation was agreed at the Committee's meeting of 29th September 2004 that, in response to a petition for a pedestrian crossing in South Street, options be investigated as part of the Dorking Decongestion Study.
- 1.3 Progress in relation to the above issues is detailed below and where appropriate the suggested next steps are identified. Following the unsuccessful 'street scene' bid made recently with respect to West Street, it is felt prudent to include for measures at this location within the decongestion study. Additionally, it is suggested a 'Town centre access audit' is carried out, in line with the Counties intentions to promote 'access for all'. These two new 'additions' to the decongestion project list are also discussed below.

2.0 DECRIMINALISED PARKING ENFORCEMENT

- 2.1 Decriminalised parking enforcement began in Dorking during May 2004 with handover from the Police proving seamless. With a greater number of parking attendants on patrol, the level of illegal parking has been reduced. However, at certain times of the day, congestion is caused by parked vehicles, particularly in High Street, which are legally parked and in the process of loading or unloading. Now that DPE has had a chance to "settle in", the potential exists to further improve matters with a review of parking restrictions. Given that reviews have now taken place in the Ashted area, it is suggested that the working group, that has in the past considered and reviewed parking restrictions in the Dorking area, reconvenes to look at this issue.

2.2 The Local Transportation Service receives many communications from Dorking residents requesting parking controls in their street to prevent parking by commuters and visitors to the town. Opportunities exist to shape travelling habits with the selective and appropriate introduction of parking controls and are many likely to enjoy robust public support.

3.0 TRAVEL OFFICER

3.1 A Travel Management Executive was appointed in late summer to represent the Local Transportation Service. Despite the huge task faced, much has been achieved to reduce reliance on the car in association with the town's major employers Kuoni, Unum, Friends Provident, Sabre Insurance, Waitrose and Sainsburys. All participate in a regular breakfast forum to brainstorm ideas for reducing car use and sharing resources. A full statement of progress made to date is given in **Annexe A**.

4.0 PUMP CORNER

4.1 Works to implement the experimental traffic scheme at Pump Corner junction were completed in September following a major Transco pipe renewal scheme in the summer. In order to satisfy safety audit requirements, a build out of interlocking concrete kerb segments was incorporated alongside the southern footway. This was done to introduce deflection to the path travelled by vehicles and highlight the need to give way to traffic from the right.

4.2 Initially there were a number of minor (damage only) accidents at the junction as drivers, unaccustomed to the presence of the build out, struck the temporary kerb. To assist drivers when negotiating the junction, cones were fixed along the new kerb to act as a visual reminder of the build out.

4.3 Prior to commencement of the Transco scheme, counter tubes were placed across the carriageways of all approaches to the junction. Once sufficient time had passed for local motorists to become accustomed to the new arrangement and the exceptional circumstances of the Christmas period had passed, tubes were once again used to collect traffic data. A summary of the data collected and the conclusions it prompted is given in **Annexe B**.

- 4.4 The data shows that there has been a general increase in the flow of traffic through the junction indicating that the experimental measures have increased efficiency. Encouraged by this, proposals to extend and further develop the experiment have been designed and are set out in **Annexe C**. This second phase of measures includes banning the left turn from West Street into North Street and the provision of new controlled pedestrian crossing points, synchronised to maximise traffic throughput. Until such a scheme is proven, it is suggested the signals are surface mounted, in barrels.
- 4.5 If, after a suitable period, the signalised arrangement for the junction is seen to be working well, an available addition to the design is the inclusion of a cycle facility as indicated in the drawing entitled **Annexe D**. Though unavailable to northbound vehicles, the southernmost end of North Street will remain two-way and may be used by cyclists. The route made available by this revision will allow westbound cyclists to travel from High Street via North Street, Church Street and Station Road to continue west along Westcott Road. In the past when routes through Dorking have been discussed with the Mole Valley Cycle Forum, this particular option has been much favoured. It is suggested therefore that this element of work is added to the overall scheme at Pump Corner.

5.0 DENE STREET

- 5.1 The recently installed traffic calming measures in Chart Lane North have done much to moderate driver behaviour and discourage non-essential use of the northbound route from A24 Deepdene Avenue to Dorking High Street. However, many calls and letters are received from residents of the Dene Street area and from local people who use Dene Street as a route to and from the town centre, complaining of conflict between vehicles and between vehicles and pedestrians. Over much of its length the carriageway of Dene Street is only 3 metres wide and bounded by footways just 1 metre wide. Dene Street is a two way road and, in order to pass one another, vehicles must mount the footway, risking conflict with pedestrians. **Annexe E** is a report that has been prepared following a study of vehicle movements at the site and includes a recommendation to make Dene Street one-way northbound between High Street and Heath Hill.

- 5.2 The alterations proposed include narrowing the carriageway to 2.5 metres and marginally increasing the width of the footway on one side. With one-way operation, this will help slow traffic and, with the potential for conflict removed, make the route safer for pedestrians. By formalising traffic movements, an additional benefit will be a reduction of disruption to traffic flows in High Street by removing the likelihood of queues forming as drivers wait to turn into Dene Street heading south. A possible disbenefit to local residents will be the anticipated increase in southbound traffic using Cotmandene, rather than Dene Street, as a route to access Deepdene Avenue.

6.0 SOUTH STREET PEDESTRIAN CROSSING AND VINCENT ROAD

- 6.1 Following the Committee's decision to investigate a means of providing a crossing point in South Street, a study was conducted to determine the options available. It has been identified that crossing movements are concentrated near the junction with Vincent Road, leading to a proposal to combine pedestrian improvements for the side road with a crossing point on the main road. **Annexe F** illustrates a conceptual design at the Vincent Road / South Street junction, which will provide both a safe point to cross South Street and safety improvements for pedestrians wishing to cross the headway of Vincent Road. A second drawing illustrates a proposal to create a build out in Vincent Lane at the junction of Vincent Road which will allow drivers emerging from Vincent Road to have improved visibility and safer egress. In combination, the two pedestrian improvements for Vincent Road will also serve to deter drivers from using the street as a cut through particularly those in larger vehicles.

7.0 WEST STREET

- 7.1 A bid was recently submitted under the Council's Streetscene initiative to win a grant for a gateway scheme in West Street. Though a very worthy concept for Dorking, the proposals did not fully accord with the Streetscene objectives and was unsuccessful in attracting funding. However, the merits of a gateway feature on the western approach to Dorking, fit well with the aims of the decongestion study as it will improve the environment for pedestrians and serve to moderate the behaviour of drivers as they enter the town's busy centre. Though considerably more modest than the scheme developed for the Streetscene bid, the measures detailed in **Annexe G** would provide visual impact and may be built upon with further improvements at a later time as funding permits. The scheme includes the implementation of a 20 mph speed limit, which would be dependant upon establishing that the 85th percentile speeds would be within the required limits, following placement of the gateway feature. Design suggestions for an ornamental sign have also been attached.

8.0 SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL – ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

- 8.1 With LTP funding at a premium, a means of alternative funding has been sought. When the level of pupil participation in cycling to Ashcombe School was last investigated as part of the Decongestion Study, it was found that just 1% of pupils used this means of travelling and poor storage facilities at the school was identified as a key reason. During negotiations that the Travel Management Executive has had with local businesses, Kuoni have very kindly offered to donate manpower and resources to providing new cycle sheds at the school. Complimentary funding has since been discussed with the County Council's School Policy Travel Coordinator and Ashcombe School. There is much optimism that a new facility, with a total cost of £11,000, can be provided before the end of the Spring term.

9.0 TOWN CENTRE ACCESS STUDY

- 9.1 Surrey County Council is promoting "Access for All" and the intention is to audit all 28 towns across the County to determine the potential difficulties that may be faced by persons who may be physically or mentally disadvantaged. Within a defined boundary, volunteers with a wide range of mobility impairments would note issues preventing ready access to the town's facilities. Officers would then be assigned to develop a list of coherent proposals and a prioritised programme of works. Priority may be awarded to reflect greatest impact, ease of implementation or affordability but with the aim of making the town centre accessible for all. It is suggested that this element of work is added into the overall 'aspirations' for Dorking Town, particularly as the initial investigative work would be free.

10.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The measures proposed for Pump Corner have been developed in consultation with local Members and their understanding of the needs of local people has been key to shaping the design. Formal statutory public consultation for a traffic regulation order will be needed to impose the right turn ban included in the proposals.
- 10.2 A traffic order and statutory public consultation will be required to enforce one-way traffic in Dene Street.
- 10.3 A traffic order and statutory public consultation would be required before a 20 mph speed limit could be introduced for West Street.

11.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Following discussions with the Travel Management Executive, it has been confirmed that a high level of service could be maintained during the next financial year for the sum of £40,000. This sum would be required to be met from the revenue budgets.
- 11.2 The cost of proposals outlined to expand the experimental traffic scheme at Pump Corner is estimated at £40,000.
- 11.3 Implementation of the scheme suggested for Dene Street, inclusive of the necessary Traffic Order, would cost approximately £35,000
- 11.4 The works outlined to create a crossing point in South Street, combined with an entry treatment for Vincent Road could be undertaken for an estimated sum of £40,000.
- 11.5 The cost of implementing the West Street proposals, including the imposition of a 20mph speed limit would be in the region of £27,000. It is anticipated that Mole Valley District Council will make a contribution, over and above this amount in order to provide superior quality, natural paving materials.
- 11.6 Funding would be assigned from the LTP budgets assigned locally.

12.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The spirit of the Decongestion Study has followed the accepted strategies of sustainable transport by:
- Aiming to reduce congestion thus reducing fuel consumption and pollution.
 - Identifying means of encouraging people to walk thus reducing car use and promoting personal fitness.
 - Providing safe cycle routes.
 - Promoting use of public transport.
 - Exploring other alternatives to single occupancy car use by engaging with local businesses and schools.

13.0 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The new secure cycle store proposed for Ashcombe School will help prevent the theft of cycles from the school grounds when left unattended.
- 13.2 There are no other crime and disorder implications to the proposals made in this report.

14.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 Design of the proposals made in this report for Dene Street, Pump Corner, South Street and West Street include measures to assist wheelchair users and the visually impaired.
- 14.2 An access audit, as identified in paragraph 9.1 and its resultant 'actions', will assist in providing improvements for all user groups.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The measures set out in this report directly address the issue of congestion which, if left unchecked, will weaken the economic viability of Dorking and reduce its appeal as a place to live and work. It is suggested that the Local Transportation Service takes forward the issues identified within this report, as per the recommendations.

Report by: Roger Archer-Reeves, Local Transportation Director, Mole Valley Transportation Service

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Steve Williamson, Senior Engineer

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01372 832635

BACKGROUND PAPERS: Previous Committee Papers
