



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE  
(Mole Valley)**

**Pump Corner – Dorking**

**12th March 2008**

**KEY ISSUE**

There are four key issues:

1. Feedback from the Task Group that met on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2008;
2. Position statement of the traffic levels set against the pedestrian counts;
3. The legal position with regards the Highway Authority if any changes are made that go against best professional advice;
4. Possible mitigation measures for Pump Corner traffic levels.

**SUMMARY**

1. The Pump Corner Task Group met at Dorking Halls on the 13 February 2008 and they were taken through the various traffic counts, queue length and comparison work undertaken by officers. The meeting was held in public in the Masonic Hall. The outcome of the meeting was a need to better understand where risk sits if the scheme was varied against the professional advice of officers and seek some mitigation to the queuing taking place in West Street
2. The traffic / pedestrian counts undertaken recently at the end of West Street, (eastern end) and on the staggered pedestrian crossing on the High St, (approximately outside Costa Coffee) show a need in highway safety terms for the pedestrian controlled facilities remaining.
3. The legal position on whether to remove or not “anything” from a safety perspective, sits with Surrey County Council as the Highway Authority and cannot be passed (or liability) to elected members. The professional officers are delegated with the function of discharging highway duties, and the local committees do not have the delegated authority to “pull” a scheme.
4. There is some opportunity to examine potential under capacity within the immediate confines of Pump Corner to increase overall network capacity and officers will be advising over this.

## **OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Local Committee Mole Valley is asked to agree/note that:**

- (i) Ask officers to investigate the under capacity possibilities within the local network to Pump Corner and use any under spends from Local Transport Plan and or Local Allocation funds to do so;
- (ii) To change the Task Group Pump Corner Terms of Reference so that it does not meet in public;
- (iii) Note the need for the present two pedestrian crossing facilities at West Street and High Street, Pump Corner, Dorking;
- (iv) Note the legal position for both officers and elected members with regards to the removal/ changing of schemes as regards the law;

## **1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The present scheme at Pump Corner was derived from work commenced in 2002 on the Dorking Paramics Model and the desire to improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Various propositions for changes to the highway network were proposed of which Pump Corner was one location. The present scheme was installed in 2007 and was tasked to give equal opportunity for both motorised vehicles and pedestrians to use the Pump Corner junction. Since the scheme installation there has been comment from certain quarters with regards to queuing west of the town of Dorking and apparent economic concerns with traders due to the scheme implementation.

## **2 ANALYSIS**

- 2.1 The queue lengths of traffic in Westcott Road and West Street (east bound) have been exasperated for several months by the work being undertaken by Transco to lay a gas main from Dorking towards Westcott.
- 2.2 The queue lengths in West Street have been compared to those known to have existed in February 2002 during the morning and afternoon peak periods. The comparison of the morning peak shows little significant difference when comparing February 2002 and November/ December 2007. The afternoon peak over the same period shows greater variance, however the December 2007 queues are less. It needs to be noted that inconsiderate parking and / or other capacity issues do appear to have a relatively quick and significant effect upon the immediate area.
- 2.3 The capacity of any piece of road is a variable determined by some of the following factors: junction(s) capacity along its length, turning movements, number of side roads, speed of traffic, on-street parking, carriageway width, volume of heavy good vehicles and passenger transport vehicles, pedestrian movements, frontage development and weather conditions etc.
- 2.4 The Department of Transport has a number of design guides and technical notes to assist engineers and transportation professionals to make informed judgements. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges is one such document; Volume five (Assessment and Preparation of Road Schemes) Section1: Preparation and Implementation, Part 3 TA 79/99 Amendment No1 Traffic Capacity of Urban Roads. This document gives some robust ground rules with regards to capacity of urban networks. West Street and High Street Dorking are categorised UAP4, (urban all purpose 4). A UAP4 is a busy high street location; the capacity of such a link is dependent upon its width and will vary from 750 vehicles per hour up to 1320 per hour. West Street is very narrow in parts and would have a capacity according to the advice note of between 750 and 900 vehicles per hour. The actual volumes using West Street are all near the top end of the capacity assessment. The mean average morning capacity flow from four survey days from September to December 2007 was 821 and for the same times afternoon peak flow 788. The key issue with West Street and Pump Corner east bound is simply one of capacity.
- 2.5 The volume of traffic leaving West Street and turning into South Street is up to 50% of the total flow. If this traffic could be rerouted through utilising under capacity else where in the network then Pump Corner junction would become far less congested.

- 2.6 The justification of the two crossings was driven by the need to give equality of opportunity at Pump Corner for all. Local Transport Note 1/95, was used to advise what factors should be considered (it is not prescriptive); the onus sits with the Highway Authority as to how it moves forward. Surrey policy since 1996 supports the principles behinds the Local transport Note, but advises a simpler approach as the procedures are long and unnecessarily complex. The traditional approach to controlled pedestrian crossing facilities was discontinued in 1995 (numeric approach) in favour on LTN1/95, however the Department of Transport are now about to commission a study into the reintroduction of such an approach. Both approaches have a condition/requirement that safety should not be compromised. The numeric approach has the advantage of comparing numbers to quantify the level of risk at individual sites.
- 2.7 The numeric approach has been used as a check on the two Pump Corner controlled crossing facilities (West Street and High Street Pump Corner) to gauge the need for them and potential risk. A straight forward crossing facility with no central island would need a number of 1 or greater to justify its existence, West Street has 1.32. A staggered crossing facility would need a number of 2 or greater, High Street has 2.73. The actual numbers of 1.32 and 2.73 are relatively large and therefore do give concerns to the officer team if the controlled pedestrian facilities were removed. It is the officer team view in consultation with others that it would be wrong to remove the two crossing facilities or to undertake any works to them which prevented there operation as envisaged.
- 2.8 The Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Act 2007 will be enacted in April of this year. This new piece of legislation is helping us all to understand our respective roles ( powers and duties ) in context with the constitution of the council etc. Any decision to remove or vary substantially any scheme and whether this is a safe and appropriate action, rests with Surrey County Council as the Highway Authority and cannot be removed ( or liability passed ) by reacting to pressure from local groups or elected members. The professional officers are delegated with the function of discharging highway duties, and the local committee(s) do not have delegated authority to "pull" or substantially vary a scheme. Further, if injury / fatality were to occur, the committee being the "driver" for the decision would not absolve the service, in its professional capacity, from responsibility under the "senior management test" in the Act. A local committee could put a motion to the Executive to ask the service to investigate the rights and wrongs of the scheme as implemented. If this was a matter the Executive wish to pursue under their powers, they can then act on the findings / recommendations of any report and decide to keep a scheme or vary etc.
- 2.9 The threat of liability will still sit with the Council as Highway Authority and officers will still have some responsibility regardless of a decision by the Executive.
- 2.10 There has been no documentation presented to Surrey County Council or the Highway Authority to date that shows / justifies any statement regarding loss of business and or economic vitality to Dorking due to the Pump Corner traffic arrangements. It would be desirable to see proof by those so lobbying so that the economic case can be understood.

### **3 OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The key issue at Pump Corner is one of capacity. The only link in the immediate network that may have some spare capacity is Junction Road. The original Paramics work in 2002 looked at reversing the flow in Junction Road and making the southern section two-way, to and from Waitrose with South Street. It is considered that this should be looked at further to mitigate traffic flows through Pump Corner and ease congestion.

### **4 CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1 The Pump Corner Task Group has met once with mixed results. The officer view is that it would be more productive to have the recognised and standard approach of meeting quietly out of the public immediate gaze to do its business.
- 4.2 It would be useful to meet with those residents and traders who front Junction Road and seek their views.

### **5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 It is too early to estimate what costs are involved with changing priorities at Junction Road, this will be reported as soon as information is known. However any under spends from this year LTP and or Local Allocation should be directed towards some initial work.

### **6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The free passage along and across the public highway should be a recognised opportunity for all regardless of being in a powered vehicle or walking and without barriers to personal mobility concerns.

### **7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are none.

### **8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 The existing controlled pedestrian signal arrangements at Pump Corner are viewed as appropriate and further it is viewed that it would be unsafe to remove them.
- 8.2 The key issue at pump Corner is one of capacity and hence the need for additional work to recognise any under capacity issues in the network.
- 8.3 The pump Corner Task group should continue but ideally in a more appropriate format
- 8.4 Members are asked to note the legal position over liability.

### **9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 As set out in the body of the report; however primarily: capacity, liability.

## 10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

10.1 Subject to noting and recommendations being accepted, the officers will look at under capacity issues and report back to the next appropriate committee, whilst keeping the task group members fully briefed.

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<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b>	TA 79/99, LTN1/95, Transport in the Urban Environment, Task Group Papers Pump Corner 13 February, Dorking Decongestion Study 2002.