



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)

MEMBER QUESTIONS

9th December 2009

The following seven questions were submitted in accordance with Standing Order 46.

Question from District Councillor David Howell, Ashstead Common

Waste Lorries through Ashtead High Street

Residents have noted that Britannia waste lorries which are not fully covered are again routing through Ashtead High Street along the A24. The lorries had more recently been routed through Malden Rushett thus avoiding more densely populated areas. These lorries are not covered and in the dry weather have been reported as spewing unknown waste dust and particles as they pass (often at relatively high speed) through the village.

Response from the Environment Agency

“Waste carriers have a duty of care to ensure that the waste they carry does not cause nuisance or harm to the environment. It is a matter of good practice to ensure that they don't lose waste during transit, ie use the covers most waste vehicles are fitted with. The Environment Agency will ask one of my officers to contact the company in question and remind them of their duty.

Poorly secured loads are also an issue for the police.”

Surrey Police would also encourage members of the public to report incidents to them.

Gas Pipework Replacement in Woodfield Lane Ashtead

Having recently had the road dug up for two services causing severe disruption, it is now time for the gas pipes to be replaced. Residents were extremely critical of the very limited hours actually worked by previous utilities' contractors when undertaking the replacement of services. Out of the normal working day for most residents, the operatives were actually on site for approximately half that time. Residents believe that Surrey County

Council are too lax at granting the road closures thus enabling the utility companies to adopt a very disadvantageous method of working as far as the residents are concerned. Can officers please advise what steps are being taken to ensure that things improve and that the delays on this occasion (which currently cover the period up to Christmas) will be kept to a minimum.

Response from Streetworks Manager

Inspections of ongoing works are undertaken by the Community Highways Officer (CHO) for the area. These inspections are generally undertaken on a random sample basis, but additional ad-hoc inspections can also be undertaken. The CHO for Ashted has therefore been instructed to carry out periodic inspections on these works, with particular regard to working hours as far as possible (daily inspections are unfortunately not feasible, given current resource levels). Any feedback or information on significant periods of non-attendance (ie days or half-days, rather than hour-by-hour) would be welcomed, as this would enable us to challenge the utility on causing undue delays, if appropriate.

With regard to comments on the granting of road closures, I would like to assure Members that almost all utility requests for road closures follow site meetings with Streetworks Officers, where it has been agreed that a closure is necessary to undertake the works safely – this includes consideration of the safety of the travelling public, residents and of the utility workforce. Where closures are agreed, this often results in the overall planned duration of the works being reduced, as different working practices can be used. Whilst every effort is made to minimise the inconvenience to residents and road users, safety must remain the over-arching concern.

- Have all the emergency services been advised about the work and diversion routes?

Details of road closures and the associated diversion routes are circulated as a matter of course to Surrey Police, Surrey Fire & Rescue and Surrey Ambulance Service.

- Have all the statutory procedures have been followed?

The legal processes necessary for planned road closures are carried out by the Traffic Management Team. This includes the statutory publication of proposed closures in the local press and on site within prescribed timescales, and subsequent publication of confirmation that the Order has been made, in the same manner. The Traffic Management Team have confirmed that these processes were followed for the recent closures of Woodfield Lane.

- Can the resurfacing be completed as soon as possible?

Details of the resurfacing schemes have yet to be finalised by the Area Highways team and the Constructor, and the start date cannot therefore be confirmed at this time. However, they have been provisionally programmed for February 2010, following the completion of the current works by Southern Gas Networks. (Please note that it will be necessary to carry out core sampling on the SGN works prior to the resurfacing works, in order to ensure that any failures to comply with the appropriate standards can be addressed beforehand).

District Councillor David Sharland

- Why had local District Councillors not been informed?

As discussed above, the information on road closures is issued to the Emergency Services, to the Passenger Transport and Traffic Signals Groups and other countywide recipients by the Traffic Management Team. The Local Highways Team advise them on who should also receive copies for information at a local level, and this would include which local Members.

However, it has been acknowledged that more information on forthcoming works by both Surrey Highways and the utility companies should be made available to Members, and a weekly bulletin is now being issued by the East Area Highways Group. This has been running for five weeks, and in the initial trial period is being issued to county Members only, but this may be reviewed in due course. additional information on specific schemes will be provided as and when required.

Parking Restrictions near St John's School Leatherhead

Residents are complaining that the situation is getting worse with more cars on both sides of the road making access even more difficult. This is actually discouraging some residents from shopping in Leatherhead. When will new traffic orders be in place, and in the meantime is it not possible to liaise with the police in order that severe congestion on a main artery to Leatherhead can be prevented.

Response from Local Highways Manager

It is intended that the formal advertisement of the proposals for the Traffic Regulation Order will be published next month so that a report to consider any objections could be prepared for the Local Committee. As with all Traffic Orders, there is a statutory consultation that needs to take place before advertisement. The work that enables this to happen is nearing completion and it is intended that the adverts will be placed in the local press in October. After a consultation period of 4 weeks it will then be possible to consider any formal objections to the proposals. The objections will need to be considered by the Local Committee in December 2009 or March 2010, after which the detailed design can be finalised and the Traffic Order can be made, provided there are no changes to the scheme that would legally require re-advertisement. It is therefore possible that the Leatherhead area scheme could be reach fruition in Summer 2010. In the meantime, officers will speak to Surrey Police concerning the congestion on the route in to Leatherhead.

