



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)

HEADLEY ROAD, LEATHERHEAD – PROPOSED SAFER CROSSING FACILITY OUTSIDE HEADLEY COURT

07 DECEMBER 2010

KEY ISSUE

To seek approval for the detailed design and construction of a safer crossing facility on Headley Road for use by people at Headley Court.

SUMMARY

The Ministry of Defence's Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC) provides rehabilitation to personnel from all three Services injured during duty.

Currently an uncontrolled crossing point exists across the existing road table plateau but concerns have been raised by representatives of Headley Court due to a number of near-miss incidents in recent years whilst pedestrians have been attempting to cross the road. A request has been made by Headley Court DMRC for Surrey County Council to provide a safer crossing facility. All costs for any proposed crossing facility will be borne by Headley Court DMRC. Approval from the Local Committee will be required for the scheme to progress.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Mole Valley) is asked to agree that:

- (i) the safer crossing facility shown in Annex A is progressed and implemented, subject to funding provided by the Ministry of Defence.
- (ii) the necessary statutory process required to enable construction of the scheme be carried out.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The role of Headley Court DMRC has changed over the years and its facilities have developed and expanded to cater for the unfortunate increase in Service personal sustaining injuries from amputees to neurological injuries whilst undertaking active duty. Headley Court provides world-class facilities and aims to return ill or injured Service personnel to duty wherever possible or to civilian vocational activity appropriate to their abilities. The facility provides care for 200 patients supported by 300 dedicated staff. It also has a key role in coordinating the care of casualties returning from operations and is the specialist centre for the rehabilitation of all Service amputees. This has led to the site having to expand as new and improved facilities have been built. This has meant that land on the opposite side of Headley Road has had to be built on leading to a divided site necessitating staff and patients to cross the road to gain access to each set of facilities.
- 1.2 Currently an uncontrolled crossing facility with dropped kerbs is provided within the flat plateau area of the road table adjacent to the main entrance into Headley Court. Warning signs are provided on each approach to this crossing but due to this not being a formalized arrangement there is ambiguity as some drivers stop for pedestrians whilst others continue leading to uncertainty and conflict between both groups.
- 1.3 Over the last two years due to the increased need for staff and patients to cross Headley Road on a regular basis, at least eight times a day, during daylight hours concern has been voiced to the County Council by representatives of Headley Court DMRC about the current facility and requesting a safer crossing facility. Officers met with representatives of Headley Court, the local county councillor and a representative from the parish council to discuss the current situation and the problems they are experiencing.
- 1.4 The recorded history of injury collisions shows there were 4 such incidents on the road from January 1989 to February 2010 within 100m either side of the current uncontrolled crossing point on the road table. One injury collision has occurred in the immediate area of the current crossing point, which occurred in October 1989.
- 1.5 Since April 2007, Headley Court DMRC have recorded, in their Incident Monitoring log, six near misses between pedestrians and vehicles at the current crossing point.
- 1.6 A feasibility study has been completed and a design layout is proposed that should provide an improved balance between all users and address the main concerns of Headley Court DMRC.

2 ANALYSIS

2.1 Speed and vehicle count surveys were undertaken between Friday 8th October and Friday 15th October 2010 which showed that on average 1478 vehicles travelled in a northbound direction and 1531 in a southbound direction between 7:00am and 7:00pm. The 85th percentile speeds ranged from 14mph to 18.9mph in each direction 50m either side of the existing crossing point.

2.2 A pedestrian count was carried out on Tuesday 12th October 2010 between 7:00am and 7:00pm at the existing crossing point and for 50 metres each side of it. Within this period there were 1498 pedestrian movements of which:

174 were mobility impaired excluding wheelchair users
23 were in wheelchairs
1301 were able bodied

A significantly large proportion of the above figures, 92 percent, were recorded using the existing crossing point. This is a very significant figure for a single location. Pedestrians were observed crossing Headley Road on the northwest side of the current crossing point having walked up The Drive from the car park areas.

The peak pedestrian periods are between 8:00am and 9:00am, 12:00pm to 2:00pm and 4:00pm to 5:00pm. During these periods the ratio of able bodied pedestrians to mobility impaired/wheelchair users is on average 4:1

2.3 A gap data survey was undertaken between Friday 15th October to Friday 22nd October 2010 and showed that although there were gaps in the traffic of seven seconds for an able bodied person to cross the road and up to twenty four seconds for a disabled person (both figures established from empirical data) these did not occur as often during the morning and evening rush-hour periods when the number of pedestrians attempting to cross the road were high. By providing a controlled crossing facility this will alleviate the lack of gaps in the traffic presently and provide a safer crossing facility where the pedestrian has precedence.

3 PROPOSAL

3.1 The design, shown in Annex A, provides for a Zebra crossing facility in the same location as the current crossing which will provide a formal facility giving pedestrians precedence over vehicles. There is very little scope for alternative locations for this facility due to the restricted nature of the site to the southeast of the current crossing position due to the perimeter of the building adjoining the road and no footway being present on either side of the road. To the northwest of the current facility again there is no footway and no available access points into Headley

Court. Access/egress to the facilities on either side of Headley Road are currently centred around the existing crossing facility.

- 3.2 At present the bus stops are located within the road table/uncontrolled crossing point. As zig-zag markings are to be provided on both approaches to the Zebra crossing to protect forward visibility it will be necessary to relocate the two stops to the northwest of the new crossing. New sections of footway will need to be provided which will entail the removal of the grass verge and sections of the existing hedgerows.
- 3.3 The current road table will require extending by an additional 1.5 metres to comply with current SCC guidance which stipulates that a 7.5 metre (plateau length) shall be provided where bus routes exist. By providing this additional length the full extent of the crossing point and associated give way road markings can be located on the flat plateau.
- 3.4 The scheme, as shown in Annex A, has received a stage 1 safety audit and requires some qualification regarding drainage, levels and visibility but can be progressed to detailed design. The design will of course be subject to a stage 2 safety audit before implementation. A stage 3 safety audit will be carried out after implementation. Therefore there could be changes to the design.
- 3.5 Other options considered as part of the feasibility:

Enhance existing layout

The current layout already provides a 4.8m wide crossing point and has warning signs on both approaches to the crossing. The signing is currently being reviewed and upgraded as an interim measure.

There are very few alternative measures that can be introduced which are not already in place to provide a safer crossing point and give precedence to the pedestrian.

Pedestrian refuge

By providing a refuge in the centre of the road where the existing crossing point is located it would allow them to cross only one lane of traffic at a time thereby providing a safer facility.

The current road width would not allow accommodate the pedestrian refuge without the need to widen the road. This proposal would provide a more formal crossing but not acceptable gaps in the traffic and will not give precedence for pedestrians over vehicles which is one of the major concerns raised by Headley Court.

Kerb build out with priority give way

By building out the kerb on one side of the carriageway this will narrow the road to one lane with a priority give way system in place for traffic to negotiate past it. This will provide a shorter distance for pedestrians to cross but acceptable gaps for mobility impaired pedestrians will not be created and will still not give them precedence over vehicles.

Pelican crossing

This would create a controlled crossing where vehicles have to stop on a red signal and so positively controls both pedestrians and vehicles.

Some of the patients being rehabilitated at Headley Court may have lower than average levels of cognitive understanding caused by the injuries they received or from the medication they are taking. Concern has been raised by Headley Court that this may lead to patients failing to recognise the need to wait for the pedestrian green walking phase.

This option would be substantially more expensive than the Zebra crossing option.

4 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Following the initial meeting in October 2010 there is strong support from the County Councillor Hazel Watson and from the Parish Council. The latter are currently undertaking an informal consultation with the local community to gauge reaction to the proposal of providing a safer crossing facility for use by Headley Court.
- 4.2 At the meeting various options were discussed with the outcome that Headley Court would like to see a Zebra crossing installed.
- 4.3 Due to the need to relocate the bus stops away from the new crossing facility SCC Travel and Transport have been consulted and support the proposals which will provide enhanced facilities for passengers using the stops.
- 4.4 Surrey Police have stated "[Surrey Police still support upgrading of the facility outside and still consider a Zebra Pedestrian crossing to be the most appropriate for the speed of the traffic in the road and also for the number of people who will use the crossing. I am also sure that the patients and staff at DMRC would be grateful for an upgrade and we believe that this is something that is long overdue](#)"
- 4.5 It will be necessary to formally consult Surrey Police, public notice and written notification to the Secretary of State before the crossing is established.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Headley Court will be wholly funded the proposals subject to their approval of the proposed design provided by Surrey County Council.
- 5.2 Indicative costs only at this stage, excluding Statutory Undertakers and legal order costs are in the region of £100,000 to £120,000 to construct the Zebra crossing.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Surrey Highways always endeavours to undertake works on the public highway that do not prejudice any user group. The proposals will provide a safer crossing point and one that does not have any detrimental effect to any pedestrian whether able bodied or mobility impaired.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Positive control of vehicles in favour of pedestrians should reduce the likelihood of conflict between the two groups, which is currently experienced at the current crossing point.

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The proposed Zebra crossing will provide a long-term solution for staff, civilians and patients to be able to access facilities across the entire Headley Court site in a much safer manner and overcome the current problems of conflict being experienced.
- 8.2 Future expansion of Headley Court will lead to a greater demand by pedestrians for a safer crossing facility which does not cause detriment to either able bodied or mobility impaired pedestrians and so the proposed scheme will alley the current, and potentially, future issues that could arise from these developments.
- 8.3 Unlike the majority of pedestrian crossing points installed across the county this location is unique in that there is a significantly greater number of mobility impaired pedestrians requiring the need to cross a road on a regular basis throughout daylight hours. These individuals require longer gaps in the traffic to cross compared to able-bodied pedestrians and the provision of a Zebra crossing will assist in providing the necessary gaps.
- 8.4 Currently speed is not a major concern for the authority due to the presence of traffic calming measures but the volume of traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian, at peak periods throughout the day means that acceptable gaps may be few and far between under the current arrangement and could become even worse in future years as Headley Court expands and traffic levels increase.

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Approval of the recommendations will allow the scheme to progress with the detailed design completed this financial year. The intention would be to implement the scheme in Summer 2011.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 Once the recommendations have been approved by the Local Committee, officers will develop the detailed design whilst consulting with Headley Court DMRC and all other stakeholders including the SCC Street Lighting contractor so that the scheme will be ready for construction for the next financial year.
- 10.2 Before the scheme can be constructed there will be a need to advertise the Notification of Intention to install the new Zebra crossing.
- 10.3 Early involvement with the new contractor undertaking all Integrated Transport Schemes on behalf of Surrey County Council will be required so that a cost estimate and programme of works can be obtained at the earliest opportunity to allow the scheme to be implemented during the first quarter of the new financial year.

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