



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE  
(REIGATE & BANSTEAD)**

**FRENCHES ROAD, REDHILL  
– EXPERIMENTAL SUSPENSION OF BUS GATE**

**5 DECEMBER 2011**

**KEY ISSUE**

To consider permitting access to all traffic through the existing bus gate at the northern end of Frenches Road, on an experimental basis.

**SUMMARY**

Frenches Road is closed at its northern end to all traffic apart from buses, emergency vehicles and cyclists. A bus gate was installed consisting of a road narrowing with rising bollards to make the closure self-enforcing.

Residents are requesting that measures be taken to permit access to Frenches Road through the existing bus gate at the northern end of the road. The impact on the volume of traffic using Frenches Road is difficult to quantify. Therefore it is suggested that the operation of the bus gate is suspended on a temporary basis to enable traffic counts and full consultation to take place.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Local Committee (Reigate and Banstead) is asked to agree that:**

- (i) The bus gate at the northern end of Frenches Road is suspended for a maximum experimental period of 18 months;
- (ii) Authorise the advertisement and introduction of an experimental Traffic Regulation Order under sections 9 & 10 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the effects of which will be to suspend the

Surrey County Council (Frenches Road, Redhill) (Prohibition of Driving) Order 2005 on an experimental basis;

- (iii) Officers submit a further report to the Local Committee to seek a decision on whether to make the experiment permanent or to reinstate the existing closure.

## **1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 In May 2005, following the completion of the Holmethorpe Relief Road, Frenches Road was closed to all traffic apart from buses, emergency vehicles and cyclists. A bus gate consisting of a road narrowing with rising bollards was installed at the northern end of Frenches Road. A location plan is attached as **Annex 1**.
- 1.2 The road closure was introduced to prevent rat-running traffic using Frenches Road. Also, the new junction between the relief road at Ormside Way and Frenches Road is set at an oblique angle and was not considered of a sufficient standard to carry large volumes of through traffic. The road closure limited the number of vehicles using the new junction to local residential traffic.
- 1.3 As reported to Local Committee in June 2006, the introduction of the bus gate in Frenches Road resulted in less traffic using the Frenches Road/Trowers Way and the A23/Linkfield Lane/Frenches Road junctions. A reduction in recorded personal injury accidents in Frenches Road was also noted.

## **2 ANALYSIS**

- 2.1 Earlier this year roadworks in the Redhill area caused access problems for the residents of Frenches Road. There were requests from residents to lower the barrier so they could access their properties from the north. This request was supported by the Member of Parliament for Reigate.
- 2.2 Residents of Elmwood Road have also reported that HGVs are using Frenches Road from the south and, upon being unable to gain access through the bus gate, are turning in the junction of Elmwood Road. This is reportedly happening despite signing on both the A23 south of the Frenches Road junction and also in Frenches Road prior to the Ladbrooke Road/Frenches Road roundabout.

## **3 OPTIONS**

### **Issue of Key Fobs**

- 3.1 The issue of key fobs to residents to enable them to operate the rising bollards has been suggested. The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which enables the closure of the Frenches Road at its northern end provides exemptions for buses, emergency services and cycles. The order does not make provision for allowing residents from specified roads to be exempt from the restriction. Trying to allow this facility within the TRO would be fraught with difficulty. We could not name the residents as any change of address would require making an amendment TRO. Naming just the property would cause enforcement problems in that the key fob could be given to anyone at that property, even visitors, and could cause major enforcement problems for the police.

### **Lowering of Bollards to Permit Access**

- 3.2 Residents have asked that the barrier be lowered when there are roadworks in the area affecting their access to Frenches Road from the south. Under the existing Traffic Regulation Order, even when the barrier is lowered any motorist driving through the closure would be committing an offence and could be prosecuted by the Police. This could be overcome by introducing a temporary TRO which temporarily 'opens' up the route to everyone during any future roadworks.

### **Permanent Revocation of the Bus Gate**

- 3.3 The bus gate was implemented to prevent the use of Frenches Road by rat running traffic and to minimise the amount of traffic using the junction of Frenches Road and Ormside Way. There is a risk that the permanent revocation of the Traffic Regulation Order covering the bus gate could result in an unacceptable increase in through traffic using the Frenches Road. This could lead to an increase in collisions at the Frenches Road/Ormside Way junction. There is no way to accurately determine the volume of traffic that might be attracted to Frenches Road if the bus gate were to be removed.

### **Suspension of the Bus Gate**

- 3.4 The temporary suspension of the bus gate would allow the bollards to be locked in the down position for an experimental 6-month period. To achieve this, an experimental Traffic Regulation Order would need to be advertised and its introduction would have the effect of suspending the existing road closure order. The experimental order would remain in force for 18 months. Consultation and monitoring would take place during the first 6 months, giving time for a decision to be made regarding the future of the experiment and, if agreed, a permanent order to be made during the following 12 months.
- 3.5 An experimental scheme would enable traffic to be monitored both before and after the suspension of the closure to determine the impact on traffic levels in Frenches Road and safety at the junction of Frenches Road and Ormside Way. Full consultation would be carried out with

local residents, the emergency services and other interested parties during the experimental period.

- 3.6 Frenches Road has been narrowed at the bus gate and if the road were to be opened up to through traffic again, even on an experimental basis, there would be a risk of conflict between opposing traffic trying to beat each other through the narrowed section. This could be addressed by the implementation of priority give-way working at the road narrowing for the duration of the experiment, giving priority to southbound traffic. This could be achieved through the use of road signs and markings.
- 3.7 Following the 6-month experiment, a further report would be brought to Local Committee and Members would be asked to decide whether or not to make the scheme permanent, based on the monitoring and consultation responses.

#### **4 CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1 The Police have been consulted on the proposed temporary suspension of the bus gate and have responded as follows:

“The current arrangement was not favoured by any of the emergency services, as it would affect our response times. It was introduced at the insistence of the developers to prevent 'rat running'. I would envisage that any conflicts could be managed by a well-signed priority give way system. Given the above I can confirm that in principle we would have no objection to the new proposal.”

- 4.2 The views of the Passenger Transport Group have also been sought and have indicated that they don't have any strong feelings either way on the proposal. They commented that the bollards have been regularly down and out of action. Buses may gain a slight running time advantage from not having to stop each time and won't have the occasional issues where the bollard gets stuck in the upward position.
- 4.3 Surrey County Council's Traffic Signals Team arrange for the existing bollards to be maintained. They have commented that they would welcome all such bollards being removed as they cause substantial problems and are expensive to maintain. They have also noted that they will not be able to maintain the equipment once it is 'submerged' for a lengthy period. Therefore, it cannot be guaranteed that the bollards will work if/when they are brought back into use and the equipment may require servicing.
- 4.4 If approval were given for the experimental suspension of the bus gate, residents would be informed of the proposal before the works are carried out and there would then be a full consultation during the experimental period.

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

- 5.1 The estimated cost of advertising the Traffic Regulation Order is £1,000. The other costs associated with the experiment (amendments to existing signing, provision of priority give-way working, road safety audit) are estimated at £1,500. Following the experiment, there will be additional costs associated with either returning the bus gate to its original operation or permanent removal of the bus gate.
- 5.2 The estimated £2,500 total cost of this scheme could be met from the Small Safety Schemes and Speed Management heading of the Integrated Schemes capital budget 2011/12.

## **6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Highway Service is mindful of its needs within this area and attempts to treat all users of the public highway with equality and understanding.

## **7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 A well-managed highway network can reduce fear of crime and allow the Police greater opportunity to carry out their enforcement duties.

## **8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 Residents have requested that measures be taken to permit access to Frenches Road through the existing bus gate at the northern end of the road. It is recommended that the operation of the bus gate is suspended on a temporary basis.

## **9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 The suspension of the bus gate on a temporary basis will enable traffic counts to be carried out to determine the impact on traffic flows in Frenches Road and safety to be monitored at the junction of Frenches Road and Ormside Way. It will also allow full consultation to be carried out during the experiment, with residents being able to give their views on what is actually happening rather than what they perceive might happen.

## 10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

10.1 Subject to Local Committee approval, the suspension of the Traffic Regulation Order on an experimental basis will be advertised. Full consultation will be carried out during the 6-month experimental period and a further report will be presented to Local Committee for decision on whether to make the experiment permanent or restore the operation of the existing bus gate.

<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	John Lawlor, Area Team Manager (SE)
<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>	03456 009 009
<b>E-MAIL:</b>	highways@surreycc.gov.uk
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Anita Guy, Engineer
<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b>	03456 009 009
<b>E-MAIL:</b>	highways@surreycc.gov.uk
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b>	Reigate & Banstead Local Committee – 5 June 2006 Item 16 Letter from Crispin Blunt, MP dated 8 June 2011