KEY ISSUE

To inform members of objections received to the proposed Traffic Regulation Orders linked to the Holmethorpe Estate Relief Road and proposed housing development.

SUMMARY

As a result of the proposed construction of the Holmethorpe Estate Relief Road it has become necessary to make various Traffic Regulation Orders to support the scheme, mostly on the grounds of road safety and to maximise the benefits of environmental improvements.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1 Approve Traffic Orders the purpose and effect of which will be that:

   a. No person driving or riding a motor vehicle, with the exception of emergency vehicles and local buses, shall cause or permit that motor vehicle to enter or proceed into or along the length of Frenches Road, Redhill from a point 12.29 metres south of its junction with the southern kerbline of Fairhaven Road southwards for a distance of 13.41 metres.
b. No person driving or riding any motor vehicle shall cause that motor vehicle to enter or proceed in the length of Fairhaven Road at its junction with London Road.

c. No person shall cause or permit any vehicle the overall width of which together with the load if any it carries exceeds 6’ 6” to proceed through that point of Nutfield Road, Merstham which lies at a point approximately 120 metres to the south of the current 6’ 6” width restriction.

d. Speed Cushions (dimensions approximately 3.5m long, 1.7m wide and 75mm high) shall be created at the following points

- 2 Abreast at a point 7.84 metres north of its junction with the northern kerbline of College Crescent
- 2 Abreast at a point 3.19 metres north (to centre) of its junction with the southern kerbline of Alpine Road
- 2 Abreast at a point 5.38 metres north (to centre) east of its junction with the north eastern kerbline of Gordon Road

2 That the following Traffic Order the cause and effect of which will be that:

a. No person driving or riding any vehicle shall cause or permit it while travelling north east on Frenches Road to turn right into Ormside Way

b. No person driving or riding any vehicle shall cause or permit it while travelling north west on Ormside Way to turn left into Frenches Road.

should not be progressed.
1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 A report detailing the background and final proposals for the Holmetherope Estate Relief Road was presented to the Local Committee on November 6th 2002. In this report it was recommended that seven Traffic Orders should be advertised in order that the scheme could be progressed. The details of which were to be confirmed at a Task Group meeting comprising the Chairman, the Member for Reigate East, the Member for Reigate North, Cllr Moore representing Redhill East and Cllr Dann representing Merstham.

1.2 A meeting of the Working Group was held to discuss the traffic orders on 16th January 2003. At this meeting the current situation regarding the Relief Road was discussed along with the proposed programme for the Traffic Regulation Orders. It was agreed that there may be a need to propose a Weight or Width restriction on Frenches Road in addition to the seven proposed Traffic Orders.

2 ADVERTISEMENT OF TRAFFIC ORDERS

2.1 The first five traffic orders were advertised on 13th March 2003, these being

- The Surrey County Council (Frenches Road, Redhill) (Prohibition of Driving) Proposals 2003
- The Surrey County Council (Fairhaven Road, Redhill) (Prohibition of Traffic) Proposals 2003
- The Surrey County Council (Frenches Road, Redhill) (Traffic Calming) Proposals 2003
- The Surrey County Council (Frenches Road & Ormside Way, Redhill) (Prohibition of Turning Movements) Proposals 2003
- The Surrey County Council (Nutfield Road, Merstham) (Physical Width Restriction) (Amendment No. 1) Proposals 2003

3 OBJECTIONS RECEIVED.

3.1 FRENCHES ROAD (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) ORDER 2003

3.1.1 A petition of 208 names was received from residents of Westway Gardens, Elmwood Road and other roads both in AND out of the Borough, opposing the closure of Frenches Road.

3.1.2 A petition of 116 names has been received from Merstham Residents Association (MRA) objecting to the closure of Frenches Road. They have considered that to force all traffic leaving South Merstham, and all traffic using Merstham as a by-pass for central Redhill, onto the A23 is totally unreasonable. Any incident on the local ‘A’ roads or Motorways causes drivers to use the local roads as a potential escape route, and to restrict the use of Frenches Road will compound the problem because traffic in peak periods and emergency situations needs to be able to diversify.

3.1.3 MRA has considered that any environmental improvement for the residents of Frenches Road would be extremely limited and is totally outweighed by the
inconvenience caused to residents of Merstham and others who will be
denied an alternative route when travelling to or from Redhill.

3.1.4 MRA would prefer the closure of Fairhaven Road to be replaced by the
installation of a physical width constriction at a convenient position
somewhere along the length of Fairhaven Road.

3.1.5 As well as the two petitions, 498 households wrote in letters of objection to the
closure of Frenches Road. Of these 116 came from the Frenches Road area,
352 from Merstham and 30 from elsewhere both in out of the Borough (see
Annex C).

3.1.6 The main objections from the residents of the Frenches Road area were as
follows:

a. Residents have complained for a long time about the traffic and dirt but the
proposals will only benefit 39 houses in Frenches Road.
b. The businesses in Nutfield Road and Merstham will be affected as
residents of Frenches Road/Westway Gardens/Elmwood Road will now
use Redhill to shop, as the journey to Merstham will take much longer.
c. Access to Redhill via Fairhaven Road and Gatton Park Road will no longer
be available, residents will use Linkfield Lane which has two schools and
will create more traffic and danger to school children.
d. Many residents will have a longer journey to the Doctors and Post Office in
Merstham.
e. If there was an accident on Frenches Road and it was blocked there would
be no alternative route to the A23.
f. There will be nowhere for the delivery lorries to the Jolly Bricklayers Arms
to turn.
g. Why should Fairhaven Road be singled out to become a cul-de-sac, there
are many other roads in the Borough which could do with the same
treatment.
h. Many residents turn left from Elmwood Road and use the Battlebridge
Lane junction, as they consider Frenches Road to be dangerous.
i. All roads should be kept open so the traffic runs smoothly. The closure
will cause traffic congestion.
j. The proposals will increase traffic at the already busy junction of London
Road and Linkfield Lane and result in long queues forming at peak hours.
k. For many people the reason for living in Frenches Road is the easy
access to the M25 and surrounding areas to the north without having to
pass through Redhill.

3.1.7 The main objections to the closure of Frenches Road from the residents of
Merstham were as follows:

a. The scheme is ill conceived, it will force all traffic leaving Merstham to exit
onto the already crowded A23 or via Cormongers Lane to the M25.
b. It will cause dangerous overuse of School Hill, an already dangerous
junction. Traffic travels too fast through Merstham Village and it is already
difficult to access the A23.
c. The Battlebridge Lane/Nutfield Road junction is already congested,
increased traffic will gridlock South Merstham.
d. School Hill is already backed up during rush hour and often blocked by
parked cars. These proposals will cause chaos.

e. Frenches Road is a necessary access to Redhill for Merstham residents, particularly those with school children.

f. Undue favour is being shown to a few residents in preference to the needs of many.

g. All roads should be used to their full potential.

3.1.8 In addition to the objections received within the legal objection period a further Joint Statement was received for and on behalf of; Merstham Residents Association (MRA), New Merstham Residents Association, Holmethorpe Estate Association and Elmwood & Westway Gardens Residents, stating that the Associations unanimously objected to the Traffic Regulation Order closing Frenches Road to general traffic.

3.1.9 Enclosed with the Joint Statement was a summary of the MRA’s grounds opposing the closure of Frenches Road. As well as the grounds listed in paragraph 4.5 they were concerned that there had been no public consultation on the proposed closure of Frenches Road before 13th March 2003, when notice of a proposal to make a ‘prohibition of driving’ traffic order was published in the Surrey Mirror.

3.1.10 MRA had previously sent in a revised junction layout for the Relief Road as they were concerned about the safety of the crossing point for pedestrians who wish to cross over the Relief Road and enter Frenches Road. This revised plan was considered by the Developer, however, it was found although the scheme was logical, it cut through a piece of land which was in neither the client’s or Highway Authority’s Ownership.

3.1.11 If the bridge height is critical, then MRA would accept the oblique junction design, as proposed, providing the junction is signalised. They have been advised that additional costs for additional signals plus traffic modelling would be in the region of £70,000 which they consider to be a small cost to pay when set against the estimated £8m cost of the new relief road.

3.2 FRENCHES ROAD, REDHILL (TRAFFIC CALMING) PROPOSALS 2003

3.2.1 The MRA objected to the traffic calming proposals because they are inconvenient for emergency service vehicles and for passengers preparing to get off a bus. The design will also reduce the number of parking spaces that are of crucial importance to the residents and businesses of Frenches Road. The Association considered that speed cameras would be a better option.

3.2.2 There were 5 other objections of a similar nature although none from the Residents of Frenches Road or the Fire or Police Services.

3.2.3 Surrey Ambulance Service NHS Trust are opposed to traffic calming measures. Whilst they understand the reasons why these measures have been put in place and support all proposals to reduce road traffic accidents and speed reduction in built up areas, they do however note that traffic calming can cause damage to the suspension of their vehicles and inflict additional pain and stress to their patients.

3.3 FRENCHES ROAD & ORMSIDE WAY, REDHILL (PROHIBITION OF
3.3.1 There were two objections to the Prohibition of Turning Movements, one from MHR and one from a resident of Nutfield Road.

3.3.2 They considered that the prohibition of turning movements would make route planning difficult for the residents of Fairhaven Road who work on the Holmethorpe Estate and for parents of boys attending the Battlebridge Boys Club. This would also affect the residents of the 400 new homes who might like to use the Boys Club.

3.3.3 MHR stated that the junction had been badly designed and should be re-aligned nearer to the proposed railway under-bridge. This would improve the sight lines, so that drivers turning right into Frenches Road would be able to see traffic oncoming under the railway bridge.

3.4 NUTFIELD ROAD, MERSTHAM (PHYSICAL WIDTH RESTRICTION)(AMENDMENT No. 1) PROPOSALS 2003

3.4.1 There were no objections to this proposal.

4 PETITIONS IN FAVOUR OF THE PROPOSALS

4.1 A petition of 51 names was received from residents of Fairhaven Road, expressing their support for the proposal to close the western end of Fairhaven Road.

4.2 A petition of 100 names was received from residents of Frenches Road who supported the proposed closure of Frenches Road and the construction of the new Relief Road into the Holmethorpe Industrial Estate. They stated ‘that their road has suffered from heavy traffic for the last few years due to cars and trucks using it as a short cut. Some parts of the road are so narrow that only one lane of traffic can get through which has is turn caused accidents and damage to residents’ own cars.’

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 All costs associated with the Order making process and construction of all the schemes detailed in Annexes D – H will be met by the Developer of the enabling development.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Holmethorpe Relief Road and supporting Traffic Management Package, together with the relocation of the Sand Processing Plant to North Park Farm, Godstone, will create an improvement in environmental terms. HGV trips will be significantly reduced in and around Redhill and particularly in Frenches Road. New bus services will be provided for the enabling development, which will also enhance existing bus services throughout the area and hence reduce the need for car-borne trips. Residents in Merstham, Nutfield Road and the
Orpin Way area, will have a frequent bus service direct to Redhill, which in turn will link to Redhill Railway Station, with a direct line to London.

6.2 The Transportation Assessment and the Highways Section of the Environmental Statement have established that any minor diversion created by the Frenches Road closure, will have a relatively insignificant effect. The potential noise increase by the introduction of traffic calming in Frenches Road will be outweighed by the removal of HGV and through traffic in the road.

6.3 The proposals would require additional signs and road markings.

6.4 These measures should have a positive effect upon the economy of the area.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 An advertisement detailing the proposals was published in the local newspaper and posted on site.

7.2 A letter drop was made to the residents of Frenches Road and the surrounding area detailing the proposed closure of Frenches Road.

7.3 A letter drop was made to the residents of Fairhaven Road showing details of the proposed closure of Fairhaven Road.

7.4 Details of the proposals were sent to the local emergency services and the Holmethorpe Estate Association for their comments.

7.5 Surrey Police agreed with the proposals in principle, as they felt it was long overdue and had no objection to the closure of Frenches Road, the Physical Width Restriction in Nutfield Road or the Prohibition of Turning Movements from Frenches Road and Ormside Way, however they had a few concerns and alternatives for consideration.

7.5.1 Fairhaven Road Closure – If the road is closed they would like to see a ‘No Waiting at any time’ provision around the turning head to enable vehicles including emergency vehicles the room to turn around. They suggest that maybe consideration could be made to making it No Entry from the Brighton Road, with the road width reduced to one lane by kerb build outs and a short section of one-way for westbound traffic in Fairhaven Road towards Brighton Road. This could be controlled by a No Right Turn out of Fairhaven Road as a safety measure.

7.5.2 Ormside Way and existing roads on Holmethorpe Estate – At the present time the waiting restrictions on the Holmethorpe Industrial Estate are largely ignored. Ormside Way, will, once the new bridge is constructed, become the main route into the existing estate. The police note that there are 16 new off road spaces. However, they think there will be a far greater number of vehicles displaced by the new parking regulations.

7.5.3 Bus Gates – The means of access for emergency vehicles give them most concern. Surrey Police currently have a fleet of 488 vehicles of which 200 are
used throughout the county for emergency use. To fit all these vehicles with transducers is not only expensive but also time consuming to arrange and fit.

7.6 **Surrey Ambulance Service** – The ambulance service are concerned about access through the bus gate as they do not carry bolt croppers and have doubts about using swipe cards or padlocks as they would require some 90 cards or keys.

7.6.1 They would also totally oppose the closure of Fairhaven Road as there is no suitable turning point for their vehicles. They suggest that there should be a ‘no right turn’ from Fairhaven Road onto the A23 and a ‘no right turn’ from the A23 into Fairhaven Road.

7.7 **Surrey Fire Service** – The Fire Service are also concerned about the method of operation of the bus/emergency services gates. If a transponder or swipe card system were used then sufficient cards would need to be provided to ensure every frontline appliance within Surrey is supplied, at no cost to the service.

7.8 **Holmetherpe Estate Association** – The Holmetherpe Estate Association are opposed to the proposed closure of both Frenches Road and Fairhaven Road.

7.9 **Jolly Bricklayers** – Publicans of the Jolly Bricklayers are concerned that their delivery vehicle will have difficulty in turning once it has made its delivery.

8 **RESPONSES TO OBJECTIONS**

8.1 The provision of a relief road for the presently very poorly accessed Holmetherpe Industrial Estate has been an aspiration of many since the mid 1980s when 13 options for access to the estate were considered by the County Council, of which this was one. The Relief Road was proposed as a solution to the current problems of accessing the Holmetherpe Industrial Estate, which is presently accessed by a very substandard road under the rail bridge directly from Frenches Road. This is the only public vehicular right of way into and out of the site, and at the moment most over-height vehicles have to unload and load in Frenches Road. Alternatively, they undertake a significant detour around Redhill and Nutfield to access the site via a private bridge under the fast London to Brighton Railway line in the east. This facility is only available through a private arrangement with the landowner, and could be terminated at any time. Not only is the current highway access substandard in terms of headroom, but also there is no provision for pedestrians or cyclists to enter the site safely, nor can buses penetrate the area.

8.2 The option that was chosen and adopted by both Surrey County Council and Reigate and Banstead Borough Council in the mid 1980s was Option 9B, which showed the closure of the northern end of Frenches Road to all vehicles except emergency vehicles, buses and cycles. The proposed closure of Frenches Road, in association with the Link Road provision, has, therefore, always been an integral part of the scheme that has been developed through the Compulsory Purchase Order and planning process in
the intervening period. The scheme has therefore been the subject of much public debate and has been supported at all levels. It is necessary to bring about the much requested environmental benefits of the scheme. The closure is also required to minimise the volume of traffic through the oblique junction between the new relief road and the old Frenches Road. The design of this junction was primarily determined by the necessity to provide the adequate forward visibility under the new bridge that could only be provided at one specific point on the railway. The bridge is critically located where the railway embankment is at its highest to enable us to achieve the full standard headroom. This has the added advantage that it avoids the nearby Gatton Brook. The land forming part of the allotments was never acquired using Compulsory Purchase powers. It was instead acquired by Hepworths' from the Allotments Association in an effort to avoid this land being part of the Compulsory Purchase procedure. Hepworths' sold the part of the land not needed for the road just to the north of the Public House to Crest Homes. Only sufficient land to build the road as designed was the subject of the Compulsory Purchase Order as ‘every square inch’ needed to be justified as necessary.

8.3 The resulting junction will be acceptable to carry the minimal local residential traffic from the Fairhaven Road area together with buses, but it would not be of a sufficient standard to carry the through traffic levels that would otherwise use Frenches Road were it to remain open.

8.4 Traffic that has a genuine need to travel along Frenches Road will be able to do so safely, by using the new Relief Road and passing under the newly signalised Trowers Way bridge, involving only a minor diversion.

8.5 The maximum benefit will be not only to those households between Holmethorpe Avenue and the Bus Gate, but the whole of Frenches Road and Ladbroke Road will benefit from significantly less traffic, especially HGVs. There will no longer be any HGV traffic other than that associated with the existing residential and business properties served from Frenches Road. Although it is accepted that there is a railway line in proximity to the properties in Frenches Road, railway trains run to a timetable and the associated noise is something that the residents get accustomed to. HGVs unloading results in random spasmodic noise. The presence of vehicles passing in itself is an intrusion and the speed of vehicles relative to a pedestrian can be intimidating. In addition, over-height vehicles have been known to park opposite residents' houses and off-load with forklift trucks, which then ferry backwards and forwards under the bridge. This operation is both hazardous and noisy.

8.6 Businesses in Nutfield Road and Merstham are unlikely to be affected as the estimated new route along the Relief Road will take approximately one or two minutes longer. There are potentially 400 extra families (new customers), plus the potential from the Industrial Park who may also use the Merstham shops. It will be easier to walk, cycle and take a bus to these shops. This is also true for visits to the Doctors and Post Office in Merstham.

8.7 Visibility at the Fairhaven Road junction is poor and the Police are in favour of closing the junction due to the poor accident history. Some displaced motorists may choose the Linkfield Lane route to Reigate, however, the
alternative route along the new Relief Road and New Battlebridge Lane to access the A23 is likely to be quicker and less busy.

8.8 If Frenches Road were to be blocked due to an emergency, Surrey Police would be able to manually drop the bollards at the bus gate and control traffic at the new junction with Frenches Road.

8.9 Delivery vehicles, such as those delivering to the Jolly Bricklayers will be able to turn in the junction of Fairhaven Road or Elmwood Road.

8.10 Although MRA seem to be unaware of any public consultation prior to 13th March 2003, the closure of Frenches Road was mentioned in the Draft Holmethorpe Development Brief which was on deposit at various public exhibitions held in 2001. These exhibitions included drawings of the scheme including the possible bus gate and various comments were received on the proposals at that time. The exhibitions were held at the following venues in 2001:

- Mon 13th – Thurs 16th August - Merstham Library
- Fri 17th – Sat 18th August – Canada Hall, Battlebridge Lane
- Mon 20th – Wed 22nd August - Holmethorpe Industrial Estate
- Thurs 23rd August – Thurs 6th September – Merstham Library
- Fri 7th – Sat 8th September – East Surrey College.

8.11 Following a meeting to discuss the redesigned junction submitted by the Merstham Residents' Association, the Consultants were requested to revisit their design to see if there was any possibility of allowing the left turn out of and right turn into Frenches Road. They have now produced a revised scheme that allows for these turning movements.

8.12 Further discussions have taken place with the Emergency Services and Metro Bus with regards to the working of the bus gate and it has been explained that the rising bollards can be activated (lowered) in the following ways:

- Transponders – for buses
- Key pads on Traffic Indicator bollards – for all Emergency Services
- Electricity Feeder Pillar with padlock – for Fire Service

8.13 A similar system has recently been installed in Pixham Lane, Dorking, which is maintained by Surrey County Council's Traffic System Division at Leatherhead. If a fault should occur Surrey County Council will be notified automatically and the bollard system will automatically be lowered to the ground.

9 CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

9.1 For the Holmethorpe Relief Road to progress, it in necessary to make the advertised Traffic Orders which support the scheme. These Orders are required on the grounds of road safety and to maximise the benefits of environmental improvements in the area.

9.2 Following the slight re-design of the junction of Frenches Road and Ormside
Way it is no longer necessary for the banned turns into and out of Frenches Road to be progressed.

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Version No. 4 02.07.03