

Rowtown and Ongar Hill Traffic Calming Consultation - Annex 4

Issues Raised During the Public Consultation

65 Comments: ***Parking issues must be addressed outside the Holy Family School***

Officer Comment

Officers recognise the fact that congestion is a concern outside the Holy Family School in Ongar Hill during school drop off and pick up times. The existing car park beside the church is under utilised and parents tend to wait on the road outside the school causing congestion in Ongar Hill.

It is proposed that parking be formalised and restricted to one side of the road by extending the “school keep clear” zigzag markings and relocating them outside the main entrance of the school. Restricting parking to one side of the road should help to improve traffic flow in Ongar Hill at school drop off and pick up times.

The recent review of waiting restriction across Runnymede in preparation for Decriminalised Parking Enforcement included all “school keep clear” zigzag markings and these will now be enforceable under the new regime.

In addition to this the Runnymede Local Transportation Service will continue its commitment to the Safe Routes to Schools initiative and work with all schools across Runnymede to encourage alternative modes of transport and reduce the reliance on the car.

45 Comments: ***Too many speed cushions are proposed***

Officer Comment

Traffic calming schemes require a road design that encourages smooth driving behaviour where the speed of vehicles at the traffic calming feature is similar to the speed between the features. In order to achieve a consistent speed a relatively high frequency of features with low spacing between is required.

The recommended spacing for speed cushions is between 70m and 100m and the spacing originally proposed was between 70m and 85m. Therefore there is scope to increase the spacing to 100m, thus reducing the total number of traffic calming features from 19 pairs of speed cushions plus two flat top humps to approximately 13 speed cushions plus two flat top humps, subject to detailed design.

41 Comments: ***The traffic calming scheme should be extended to include the surrounding roads***

Officer Comment

The Hare Hill, Rowtown and Ongar Hill road safety feasibility study presented to the Local Committee on 23rd January 2004 identified a speeding problem and a history of personal

injury accidents in Rowtown and Ongar Hill. Therefore it was recommended that priority be given to addressing the problems on these two roads.

Of the 41 comments received requesting that the scheme be extended to adjacent roads 25 requests were received from residents in Hare Hill. However the road safety feasibility study reported that there had been no personal injury accidents in Hare Hill during the five year period between August 1998 and August 2003 and automated traffic surveys indicated that speeds were lower in Hare Hill. Therefore traffic calming was deemed unjustified for Hare Hill.

However the automated traffic surveys indicated that traffic speeds in Hare Hill fall within threshold for roads to be considered for the speed poster campaign. Therefore it is proposed that Hare Hill be included in the schedule for the speed poster campaign.

It is also proposed that automated traffic surveys will be conducted in Hare Hill and Woodham Park Road twelve months after the implementation of the traffic calming scheme and that personal injury accident records be continuously monitored to assess the impact of the traffic calming scheme on the adjacent roads.

37 Comments: *Speed cushions are inappropriate and alternative forms of traffic calming should be considered*

Officer Comment

Several local residents questioned whether speed cushions are the most appropriate form of traffic calming for Rowtown and Ongar Hill and suggested that features such as kerb build outs, pinch points, central refuges, narrowings or chicanes would be preferable.

Physical traffic calming can be grouped into two categories. Horizontal deflections alter the horizontal alignment of the carriageway over a short distance and can include the use of kerb build outs, pinch points, central refuges, narrowings or chicanes. Vertical deflections alter the vertical alignment of the carriageway over a short distance and include the use of humps and cushions.

The width of the majority of Rowtown and Ongar Hill is insufficient for the provision of horizontal deflections such as central refuges, narrowings or chicanes. The average width of Rowtown and Ongar Hill is only 6.2m which is already close to the minimum recommended carriageway width of 6.1m and does not leave much scope for the provision of horizontal deflections.

However pinch points could be considered whereby a kerb build out is constructed to reduce the carriageway to a single lane over a short distance. This arrangement can be formalised with a priority give-way whereby traffic in one direction is given priority over traffic in the opposing direction.

However automated traffic surveys conducted as part of the initial road safety feasibility study indicate that traffic volumes in Rowtown and Ongar Hill are high. Therefore the introduction of pinch points with priority give-ways could increase congestion and result in queues of traffic waiting at the pinch point for an opportunity to negotiate the obstruction. This could lead to increased driver frustration and potential accidents.

Therefore the use of horizontal deflections was not recommended and the use of vertical deflections was proposed.

The use of speed cushions rather than the conventional full width road hump was recommended as the preferred method of traffic calming for a variety of reasons including the fact that they allow larger vehicles, such as emergency vehicles, to pass relatively unhindered and therefore do not affect emergency response times. Also speed cushions do not disrupt bus services, which is particularly important because both Rowtown and Ongar Hill are on bus routes.

31 Comments: *Permanent speed cameras should be considered*

Officer Comment

Surrey Police's mobile speed camera is frequently deployed in Rowtown and a number of speeding motorists have been successfully prosecuted.

The introduction of a permanent speed camera site was considered as part of the initial road safety feasibility study. Surrey County Council's Speed Management Policy and the Safety Camera Partnership outline the procedure for the introduction of new permanent speed camera sites.

The guidelines state that the following criteria must be met for the introduction of a permanent speed camera to be considered.

- The site must have a substantial history of personal injury accidents caused by a violation of the speed limit (either four killed or seriously injured per kilometre in three years or eight personal injury accidents per kilometre in three years)
- The 85th percentile speed must be in excess of 10mph above the posted speed limit
- The existing speed limit must be considered appropriate
- The installation must be supported by Surrey Police
- All other traffic management measures must be considered inappropriate

The initial road safety feasibility study did not identify any suitable sites on Rowtown or Ongar Hill that would meet all of the above criteria and therefore the introduction of a permanent speed camera was not recommended.

30 Comments: *Vehicle activated signs should be considered*

Officer Comment

Vehicle activated signs have been shown to reduce the number of accidents at specific accident sites, such as dangerous bends or hazardous junctions, by reducing speeds. This is achieved by alerting drivers to the road conditions and encouraging them to adopt a safer speed by flashing up a simple message relating the nature of the road ahead.

In August 2002 a pilot scheme was commissioned by Runnymede Borough Council and the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) to investigate the effectiveness of vehicle activated signs in reducing traffic speeds and improving safety across a wide study area, rather than concentrating on specific accident sites. The scheme involved the installation of several vehicle activated signs along the A320.

The signs were introduced a little over two years ago and although initial results have been encouraging the long term effectiveness of the signs is yet to be established. A three year period is the standard minimum required when examining accident records to draw statistically sound conclusions whilst taking into account random fluctuations in the number of accidents.

Therefore the use of vehicle activated signs was not recommended as an appropriate alternative to physical traffic calming because the accidents in Rowtown and Ongar Hill are spread over a wide area and there are no specific sites that would have a definite long term benefit from the introduction of a vehicle activated sign.

However vehicle activated signs could be used to enhance the traffic calming scheme.

Therefore two vehicle activated signs have been proposed at the southern end of Rowtown, one of which, in the northbound direction, will be used as an entry feature to the traffic calming scheme and the other of which, in the southbound direction, will be used to emphasise to drivers that although they have left the traffic calmed area the road is still subject to a 30mph limit.

15 Comments: ***Traffic noise and pollution will increase as a result of the traffic calming scheme***

Officer Comment

Research conducted by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) examining traffic noise alongside road humps concluded that noise levels from light vehicles such as cars is reduced by traffic calming schemes using road humps, including speed cushions. The study also showed that noise levels from larger vehicles can also be reduced but that the use of full width road humps can result in considerable noise generated by rattling bodywork. However this problem can be avoided by using speed cushions rather than full width humps. The gradient of the on and off ramps can also be reduced to help limit noise.

Research into the effects of traffic calming on vehicle emissions suggests that some early traffic calming schemes constructed to earlier design specifications may have resulted in increased emissions due to the harsh acceleration and deceleration of vehicles using the road. Traffic calming schemes require a road design that encourages smooth driving behaviour where the speed of vehicles at the traffic calming feature is similar to the speed between the features. In order to achieve this a relatively high frequency of features with a low spacing between is required to encourage a consistent speed and minimise any increase in noise and emissions.

12 Comments: ***Hare Hill will become a rat-run***

Officer Comment

It is proposed that automated traffic surveys be conducted in Hare Hill twelve months after the implementation of the traffic calming scheme and that personal injury accident records be continuously monitored to assess the impact of the traffic calming scheme on Hare Hill. A similar approach will be adopted for Woodham Park Road to assess the impact of the traffic calming scheme on the adjacent roads.

Automated traffic surveys conducted in Hare Hill as part of the initial road safety feasibility study indicated that traffic speeds in Hare Hill fall within threshold for roads to be considered for the speed poster campaign. Therefore it is proposed that Hare Hill will be included in the schedule for the speed poster campaign.

10 Comments: ***A pelican crossing should be considered rather than a zebra crossing***

Officer Comment

The use of signal controlled crossings, such as pelican crossings, is recommended where vehicle speeds are high and pedestrians have difficulty in ascertaining precedence. However the introduction of traffic calming scheme will reduce vehicle speeds in the vicinity of the proposed raised zebra crossing and pedestrians will be able to ascertaining precedence over the traffic.

Also caution should be exercised when proposing a signal controlled crossing if pedestrian flows are generally light or light for long periods of the day because drivers may become accustomed to not having to stop at the crossing and may begin to ignore its existence, with dangerous consequences.

Therefore a zebra crossing is the preferred option for providing a controlled crossing in Ongar Hill.

10 Comments: ***Road safety should be examined at the junction of Hare Hill and The Ridings and traffic speeds in Hare Hill must be reduced near the junction***

Officer Comment

The junction of Hare Hill and The Ridings is located on the brow of a hill and on the inside of a bend, which restricts visibility. However in the five year period between August 1998 and August 2003 there were no personal injury accidents at the junction.

Despite the good injury accident history at the junction and in recognition of the resident's concerns it is proposed that the existing "concealed entry ahead" warning signs be yellow backed to improve their conspicuousness and that the slow markings be refreshed and enhanced with red patches.

9 Comments: ***Improved pedestrian crossing facilities should be considered in Hare Hill and Rowtown near the Walton Leigh Recreation Ground***

Officer Comment

The initial Hare Hill, Rowtown and Ongar Hill road safety feasibility study identified three possible small scale pedestrian improvements within the study area. However it is also feasible that pedestrian facilities could also be improved in the vicinity of the Walton Leigh Recreation Ground. Therefore it is proposed that additional uncontrolled crossings (dropped kerbs with tactile pavings) be provided in Hare Hill and Rowtown to improve pedestrian access to the Walton Leigh Recreation Ground.

6 Comments: ***Road safety should be examined at the mini roundabout junction of Ongar Hill, Spinney Hill and Church Road***

Officer Comment

During the five year period between August 1998 and August 2003 there were two personal injury accidents at the mini roundabout junction of Ongar Hill, Spinney Hill and Church Road. The initial road safety feasibility study did not identify any anomalies and therefore no further road safety improvements were proposed at this junction.

Concerns have been raised over the siting of the M25 sound proof fencing, which restricts visibility for drivers in Ongar Hill. However the site has been examined by Surrey County Council and Surrey Police and the sight lines are above the minimum requirement. Therefore no further improvements are proposed at the junction.

6 Comments: ***Traffic speeds in Hare Hill must be reduced prior to the junction with Rowtown and Ongar Hill***

Officer Comment

It is proposed that each of the entry points to the traffic calming scheme will be treated with soft measures such as warning signs, road markings and red surfacing. Such “entry features” are proposed in Hare Hill and at the southern end of Rowtown. The mini roundabout at the northern end of Ongar Hill acts as a suitable entry feature.

However it is also proposed that an additional set of speed cushions will be provided in Hare Hill to the west of the junction of Hare Hill, Rowtown and Ongar Hill. This will reduce the speed of traffic prior to the junction and should also reduce traffic speeds in the vicinity of the junction of Coombe Drive.

4 Comments: ***Driver education must be improved***

Officer Comment

On 27th May 2004 Surrey County Council conducted a Speed Advice Day in Woodham Park Road. The advice day was aimed at raising awareness and educating drivers about road safety in the area, including Rowtown and Ongar Hill. Over twenty drivers were stopped and invited into the mobile exhibition unit to watch a short film warning drivers of the possible consequences of speeding.

It is a concern that despite the majority of the drivers who were stopped being local to the area and familiar with the road, over half were unaware that Woodham Park Road was subject to a 30mph speed limit and that the 30mph limit continued along Rowtown and into Ongar Hill.

4 Comments: ***A 20mph speed limit should be considered rather than physical traffic calming***

Officer Comment

Surrey County Council's Speed Management Policy states that lowering an existing 30mph speed limit to 20mph is unlikely to be effective in reducing vehicles speeds if the existing 85th percentile speeds are above 24mph.

The 85th percentile speeds recorded in Rowtown and Ongar Hill as part of the initial feasibility study were in the region of 38mph to 43mph. Therefore introducing a 20mph speed limit without other supporting measures, such as physical traffic calming, would have little impact.

** NOTE: The 85th percentile speed is a standard guideline used when assessing the speed of traffic. This indicates the speed at or below which 85% of motorists drive on a given road and represents the speed considered safe and reasonable by the majority of motorists.*

3 Comments: ***The use of 30mph repeater signs should be considered***

Officer Comment

The use of 30mph repeater signs is not authorised under the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 on roads where the appropriate system of street lighting exists (street lighting not more than 200 yards (183m) apart).

All of the roads within the study area have the appropriate system of street lighting and therefore the use of 30mph is not permitted. This includes the use of the 30mph roundel marking on the carriageway.
