



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (SPELTHORNE)

D6283 CHURCH ROAD, SHEPPERTON

PETITION RESPONSE

REQUEST FOR A VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGN

10 OCTOBER 2011

KEY ISSUE & SUMMARY

To provide Members with an Officer response to the petition submitted at the previous Local Committee Meeting, requesting a permanent Vehicle Activated Sign.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Spelthorne) is asked to:

- (i) note the content of the report;

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A Petition has been submitted to this Committee, signed by **XXX** signatories from Church Road, Church Square and Chertsey Road, Shepperton. The full details are as follows:

We the undersigned, are all householders or business proprietors/managers on Church Road, Church Square and part of Chertsey Road near the Square, in Old Shepperton. We have long been concerned about the danger posed by cars driving too fast along Church Road, especially around the s-bend in the region of Winches Cottage & La Macarena. Over the years there have been many car crashes on this bend, often by drunken drivers misjudging the bend and crashing into people's property. We believe that it is only a matter of time before someone is killed here. We are writing to ask that Surrey County Council and Surrey Police should help our efforts by installing a permanent Vehicle Activated Sign on Church Road.

- 1.2 Church Road Shepperton is a quiet, narrow, rural road, which forms part of the Shepperton Conservation Area.
- 1.3 Church Road and Chertsey Road provide access to several local pubs, hotels and small businesses situated in Church Square and along Church Road. Shepperton lock can also be accessed via Ferry Lane, which is situated at the lower end of Chertsey Road.
- 1.4 There are two public houses situated in Church Square and another on Towpath, which is accessed via Chertsey Road. Residents have pointed out that a number of accidents are as a result of intoxicated drivers misjudging the bend.
- 1.5 Residents of Church Road have been in contact with Surrey County Council (SCC) and Surrey Police over the past year regarding their concerns about perceived vehicle speeds and accidents at the S-bend near Winches Cottage and La Macarena.
- 1.6 Representatives of SCC and Surrey Police met with Mr Dally of Winches Cottage on Tuesday 25th January 2011 to discuss his concerns about vehicle speeds and accidents. Mr Dally requested that SCC consider traffic calming and Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) to be installed along the length of Church Road.
- 1.7 A request has also been made to set the Vehicle Activated Sign trigger speed to 30 mph rather than 35 mph, which is in line with A.C.P.O. (Associated Chief of Police Officers) guidance and consistent with other Vehicle Activated Signs throughout the borough and Police Speed Enforcement.

2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 Following the initial contact with Mr Dally, SCC arranged for vehicle speed checks to be carried out by Surrey Police in November 2010. The speed checks were taken close to the location of the latest accident and outside of The Lodge.
- 2.2 The results of the speed check were collated by Surrey Police and presented to Mr Dally at the meeting on 25th January 2011. The results showed an average speed in both directions along Church Road of 23.4 mph. 6.8 % of vehicles exceeded the 30 mph limit with a recorded top speed of 38 mph.
- 2.3 Accident analysis has shown that there have only been two recorded injury accidents in the last five years at this location, one of which was within the last three years. Both accidents were recorded as slight injuries and neither were speed related. The latest accident occurred on 26/06/10, showed a positive breath test.

- 2.4 Surrey Police agreed to place a temporary Vehicle Activated Sign at the location where the speed checks were taken. This was used to try and reinforce the 30 mph speed limit on the approach to the bend by Winches Cottage and La Macarena.
- 2.5 Church Road has been risk assessed and is now an approved Community Speed Watch (CSW) Site. This project allows residents to be trained by Surrey Police on the use of hand held enforcement equipment, which enables users to carry out speed checks at various approved locations. Information on speeding vehicles is then passed to the Police who write to offenders advising them that they have been witnessed speeding at a certain location.
- 2.6 Residents would like a permanent Vehicle Activated Sign with a trigger speed of 30 mph to reinforce the efforts of the Community Speed Watch.
- 2.7 Given that there have been no speed related collisions in the vicinity in recent years and there are low average speeds it is difficult to justify the purchase of a permanent Vehicle Activated Sign at this location.

3 CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 Surrey Police have been actively involved with the residents and SCC. Speed checks and Community Speed Watch training have been carried out over several months. Evidence suggests that average speeds are very low and not an immediate cause of concern for targeted police enforcement.
- 3.2 SCC Road Safety Engineering Team were asked for their recommendations on the use of a Vehicle Activated Sign in Church Road. The following comments were received:
- 3.3 The Road Safety Engineering Team is currently evaluating VAS in the County and has gained valuable experience in their use. They advise that at this location a VAS may reassure residents but in fact may have little or no effect on speeds and safety. VAS Are not a replacement for speed limit signs and when used, are meant to warn motorists that they are exceeding the speed limit. If a trigger speed of 35 in a 30 mph limit was only rarely being activated, reducing the trigger speed to 30 mph may increase the number of activations but will have no other effect. VAS should only be used where they are effective in achieving a clear purpose and in the present financial climate this must be where there this is the reduction of personal injury accidents. We also believe that the effectiveness of VAS at casualty reduction sites may be eroded by their use at other sites. We advise that local engineers should carefully consider the use of VAS in the future and agree that this location is unsuitable.

- 3.4 Permission would need to be sought from Skanska who own the Street Lighting units, which would be used for siting the VAS on a permanent basis.

4 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The total cost to supply and install a permanent Vehicle Activated Sign for Church Road would be approximately £6000 - £8000.
- 4.2 The very low average speeds and accident history combined with the fact that residents want to reduce the trigger speed from 35 to 30 mph suggest that there is very little need for a Vehicle Activated Sign in Church Road, Shepperton.
- 4.3 The Road Safety Engineering Team have indicated that resources are scarce and should be concentrated on sites that would receive a benefit in casualty reduction and that it is not sustainable to place VAS for the purpose of public reassurance.

5 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no implications.

6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Vehicle Activated Signs are frequently targeted by youths and vandals. Maintenance for VAS can be very expensive and there is little funding available to maintain the existing 517 signs situated throughout the County.

7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The use of a permanent Vehicle Activated Sign may provide reassurance to the residents of Church Road, but it may be at the expense of another casualty site in the Borough that may require more immediate and urgent attention to reduce injury accidents.
- 7.2 Given the reasons above it is recommended that no further action is taken.

8 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 8.1 It is recommended that the residents continue with Community Speed Watch in combination with random speed enforcement and the deployment of the temporary VAS from Surrey Police.
- 8.2 Subject to the above recommendation being agreed, the location will be monitored and if the situation changes it will be identified via the Spelthorne Road Safety Working Group which consists of Officers from the Road Safety Engineering Team, Surrey Highways, Surrey Police, Surrey Fire & Rescue.

LEAD OFFICER: Mathew Scriven
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 03456 009 009
E-MAIL: highways@surreycc.gov.uk
CONTACT OFFICER: Adrian Selby
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 03456 009 009
E-MAIL: highways@surreycc.gov.uk
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None