SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL

OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
SURREY HEATH

A30 LONDON ROAD BUS LANE CASUALTIES AND CONGESTION

13 OCTOBER 2011

KEY ISSUE:

This report presents options for improving the safety of the A30 London Road in Camberley and for tackling problems of congestion.

SUMMARY:

The A30 London Road in Camberley from the junction with Park Street to the junction with Victoria Avenue (approximately 1km) suffered 31 collisions resulting in 47 casualties in the three years to the end of July 2011. In addition some local committee members have expressed concerns about the effectiveness of the bus lane on this road in dealing with problems of congestion. This report describes the extent and nature of the collision problem on the A30 and presents options for amendments to the bus lane to address the problem. The report also advises upon the reasoning for the provision of the bus lane, the impact of the bus lane on congestion, and the likely impact of the different options on congestion and bus services in the area.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to:

(i) (a) agree the intention of the County Council to make an Order under Sections 1, 2 and Part III & IV of Schedule 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to extend the operation of the existing bus lane on A30 London road, Camberley to 7am - 7pm on all days be advertised and that if no objections be maintained, the Order be made.

(b) agree where significant objections are received to a made Traffic Regulation Order, the Area Team Manager in consultation with the divisional member and the Local Committee Chairman / Vice Chairman to decide whether the Traffic Regulation Order may be confirmed.

(ii) agree that yellow box markings be implemented on the offside westbound lane of the A30 London Road at the junctions with Grand Avenue, The Avenue and Osnaburgh Hill.

(iii) note that the estimated costs of implementing these improvements (£10,000) are funded from the county council's central safety scheme budget.

(iv) in addition to the urgent low cost work to address existing safety problems, request Surrey County Council, jointly with Surrey Heath Borough Council, to carry out a review of the operation of the A30 between and including the Meadows Gyratory and the junction with Knoll Road, to include:

- **Traffic surveys of existing and forecast future traffic movements**
- **Reviewing the speed limit**
- **Improving the phasing and operation of traffic signals along the route**
- **Improving the resilience of the A30 when there are congestion problems in the surrounding road network**
- **Identifying how best to manage bus and other vehicle movements, including the operation and/or removal of the bus lane**
- **Consultation with local residents and key stakeholders, including Surrey Police and the bus operators**
- **Improving the safety of the route for all road users**
- **Improving access to the town centre**
- **Reviewing parking provision for local shops along the A30**
- **Improving access to places of worship along the A30**
- **Identifying sources of funding for both the review and any subsequent improvement work**
- **Regular liaison with a Task Group to include members of the Surrey Heath Local Area Committee**

(v) recognise that County Council and Borough Council's resources are limited and request that this review work be accorded a high priority.

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

Description of A30 London Road and bus lane

1.1. Prior to the construction of the existing bus lane between Park Street and Victoria Road, the A30 London Road was a relatively wide single carriageway with a single traffic lane in each direction between junctions, and two or more lanes in each direction provided on the immediate approach to the signal junctions. The bus lane was constructed during 2004 to allow buses to use the nearside lane in the westbound direction. This was achieved by implementing two narrower 3m wide traffic lanes in the westbound direction and required the carriageway to be widened at some points to accommodate this change. It is worth noting that the introduction of the bus lane did not result in a reduction in the number of traffic lanes in the westbound direction in-between the junctions, as there was only one westbound lane before the bus lane. However the length of the two lane sections on the immediate approach to some of the signal junctions may have been reduced.

1.2. The bus lane operates during the periods 7am – 9.30am and 4pm - 7pm, Monday to Friday, and is only allowed to be used by buses, taxis, pedal cyclists, and goods vehicles over 7.5 tonnes during these periods. Goods vehicles over 7.5 tonnes are larger vehicles, usually with three or more axles. Most “white vans” are two-axle light goods vehicles in the 3.5 to 7.5 tonne category. This means that “white van man” is not allowed to use the bus lane when it is in operation. The bus lane is open to all traffic outside these operating periods and is open to all traffic at weekends. There are typically 13 buses per hour in the peak operating period on the route including the following services:

- Route 1 (Stagecoach), six buses per hour serving Old Dean Estate, Camberley, Frimley, North Camp and Aldershot
- Route 3 (Stagecoach), four buses per hour serving Aldershot, Ash, Frimley Park Hospital, Camberley, The Meadows, and Yately.
- Route 10: (Stagecoach), one bus per hour serving Camberley, Yorktown, Blackwater, Hartley Witney, Winchfield, Odiham, Hook and Basingstoke.
- Route 194 (First) two buses per hour serving Camberley, Yorktown, Owlsmoor, Sandhurst, Crowthorne and Bracknell.

Why was the A30 bus lane introduced?

1.3. The root cause of congestion is that the number of cars on Surrey’s roads has grown far more quickly than the road network. This has lead to a saturation of the network where many roads are operating above their theoretical capacity. On an average day, most car journeys are

reasonably reliable, but the network does not cope well when there is an unexpected blockage on one of the main roads, such as the M3 motorway.

1.4. There is no easy solution to this problem. Although the current recession has caused a minor dip in traffic levels, the overall trend is for the number of cars (and hence the level of traffic) to increase year on year. There are no funds for a major programme of new road building.

1.5. The County Council's approach is to tackle congestion problems using a number of different methods. Firstly, we are looking to make the best use of the roads that we already have through effective traffic management, including the phasing of traffic lights. We are working to improve the information that drivers receive about traffic hold-ups through the internet, local radio and variable message signs by the side of the road. This will help drivers to avoid an area if there has been a blockage.

1.6. A key part of our strategy is to improve the alternatives to the car, such as walking, cycling and public transport (e.g. rail and bus). We are also promoting ideas such as car sharing and working from home. These methods will not suit everyone or every journey, but every car journey we switch to another mode helps to reduce congestion.

1.7. Bus lanes are a useful part of this strategy. One of the main issues that dissuade people from using buses is the extra time that it will take them when compared with a similar car journey. Bus lanes improve the speed of bus journeys. Bus lanes also help buses to avoid congestion, which in turn enables them to keep to their timetables more easily. The fact that there are relatively few buses compared to cars means that car drivers are not significantly affected by allowing buses to get ahead of them.

1.8. A well-planned and implemented bus lane reduces congestion by encouraging more people to switch from car to bus. This is likely to become more important in future as the number of cars registered in the UK grows without a corresponding increase in the amount of road-space for them to use.

1.9. The A30 bus lane was constructed as part of a package of local authority-led infrastructure improvements within the Blackwater Valley Quality Bus Partnership, initiated in 2001. A more recent "Umbrella Quality Bus Partnership" for Blackwater Valley involving local authorities Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Wokingham District Council, Surrey County Council, Hampshire County Council, Stagecoach South, Arriva Southern Counties and First Group was signed on 25 June 2004, and included a schedule of commitment to "initiatives that the partners wish to pursue to improve and develop

high quality bus services in the Blackwater Valley, that are reliable and customer friendly".

1.10. In response to Surrey County Council's investment in the A30 bus lane, bus operators were able to invest in new vehicles on the route. Stagecoach upgraded its buses on Route 1 in both 2004 and 2009; the latest upgrade being the introduction of "Goldline" buses which feature high specification exteriors and interiors. The new fleets represented investments of £1.1 million and £1.5 million respectively. As a consequence of the bus lane, buses were able to travel along the route more quickly and operators were able to increase the frequency of services. The Route 1 service now runs every 6 to 7 minutes during peak hours compared to every 15 minutes prior to the bus lane, and is now one of the most frequent bus services in Surrey.

1.11. Since the introduction of the bus lane in 2004, the patronage on the two main routes using the bus lane has increased. From Table 1 it can be seen that the patronage increased by 71 per cent on the Route 1 (comparing 2010/11 with 2004/2005). The patronage on the Route 3 service increased by 66 per cent over the same period. Part of the reason for this will be the introduction of free concessionary fares in 2006/7 (replacing the previous half fare scheme). However it can be seen that patronage has continued to rise after this. Consequently, unlike most other parts of Surrey there are enough passengers to run the services at a profit without the need for the county council to provide a subsidy to the bus companies. We do not believe that these improvements to service and usage would have been achieved without the package of measures including the A30 bus lane.

Table 1: Patronage of the main bus services using the A30 London Road

Year	Route 1 Million Passengers	Route 3 Million Passengers	Total Million Passengers
2004/05	1.15	0.44	1.59
2006/07*	1.57	0.62	2.19
2010/11	1.97	0.73	2.70

* Free concessionary fare scheme introduced

Ongoing investment to improve bus travel in Camberley

1.12. Substantial investment in measures to improve bus services on the A30 London Road and the wider area is ongoing. This includes the expansion of the Surrey Real Time Passenger Information system to include a number of Stagecoach and First operated bus services in and around Camberley. This system tracks buses electronically to provide 'live' real-time bus information to the public at bus stops, and through mobile phone and internet.

1.13. Intelligent bus priority equipment is due to be installed in selected traffic signal junctions in central Camberley. This will enable traffic signal timings on bus routes to be adjusted and give priority to buses when they are detected as running late.

1.14. Capital investment and revenue funding for these systems has been allocated from Surrey County Council's Local Transport Plan budgets and other central government funds. Funding has also been obtained from developer contributions, notably from The Atrium development for Camberley, and from match funding from bus operators.

1.15. Along with bus lanes, Real Time Passenger Information and intelligent bus priority systems are part of a package of bus priority and infrastructure measures that are designed to improve the reliability and punctuality of buses, and to encourage further modal shift to bus travel to reduce congestion.

Other Measures to Optimise Traffic Flow on the A30 London Road

1.16. The westbound capacity of the A30 London Road in Camberley is largely determined by how many cars can pass through the section where the road narrows to one lane after the junction with Victoria Avenue (where there is on-road parking), and by the capacity of the Meadows roundabout.

1.17. The Meadows roundabout and adjacent junctions on the A30 London Road and A331 Blackwater Valley Route are controlled by traffic signals that are linked together in a Urban Traffic Management Control "region". The signals within this region operate using a technique called SCOOT (Split Cycle Offset Optimisation Technique). This system works by monitoring all the varying traffic demands on each approach and exit within the region, and automatically varies the signal timings and sequences to optimise traffic flow. The system adapts in real time to changes in traffic flows within set parameters that are developed following extensive traffic surveys and computer modelling taking into account the relative hierarchy or importance of each approach to a junction. This results in the most efficient management of traffic flow under normal day-to-day traffic conditions.

1.18. Increasing the flow of traffic arriving at the Meadows roundabout Urban Traffic Control region would not be desirable if the roundabout is already operating at maximum capacity during congested conditions. This is because an important feature of the SCOOT system is that it will deliberately hold traffic back from entering the controlled region to ensure that the links within the region remain free flowing. This ensures that the roads within the region do not suffer gridlock due to blocking back of traffic from one set of signals into another.

1.19. Until recently the aging signal equipment at the Meadows roundabout had been proving unreliable due to an unreliable electrical supply and communications faults. In some cases this resulted in complete signal failures, in other cases it resulted in inefficient operation because the SCOOT system could not work correctly. Consequently the signals were fully refurbished with new equipment and cables in August 2011 at a cost approaching £100,000. This will result in the signals being far more reliable in the future.

1.20. The other signal junctions on this stretch of the A30 London Road (the junctions with Frimley Road, Lower Charles Street and Park Street) operate using the MOVA control system. MOVA stands for Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation and works by distributing the green time at the junction depending upon the level of queuing traffic that is being detected on each arm by vehicle detector loops. MOVA is the most advanced method of control available at stand-alone junctions.

1.21. Until recently there was a temporary fault at the traffic signal junction with Lower Charles Street whereby the MOVA system at this site behaved as if there was a constant queue of traffic on the approach to the junction from Lower Charles Street. This would result in the system giving priority to vehicles exiting Lower Charles Street Road to the detriment of traffic travelling on the A30 London Road. This fault was rectified on the 26 August 2011 and means that this junction will now operate efficiently as possible.

Extent and nature of collision problem on A30 London Road

1.22. Analysis of personal injury collisions for the A30 London Road between Park Street and Victoria Avenue (1 km approximate length) is summarised in Table 2 below. For any one collision there may be more than one casualty, therefore Table 2 includes the number of casualties (in brackets) as well as the number of collisions.

1.23. Data on collisions resulting in personal injury is recorded by the police using a national standard reporting system and is then compiled and validated by Surrey County Council's road safety team to allow analysis. The police do not systematically record information on collisions resulting in damage only (only some of these are reported to the police anyway). Therefore this data is not available for analysis.

Table 2: Collisions and casualties on A30 London Road between Park Street and Victoria Avenue

Period	Collisions (Casualties)				Total
	Involving eastbound vehicles turning right into side roads			Other types of collision	
	During bus lane operating hours	Weekday outside bus lane operating hours	Weekend (bus lane is not in operation)		
Three years **before** bus lane (1/9/01 – 31/8/04)	1 (1)	1 (2)	1 (1)	31 (42)	34 (46)
Three years **after** bus lane (1/9/04-31/8/07)	6 (8)	9 (10)	9 (16)	49 (69)	73 (103)
Most recent three year period (1/8/08 – 31/7/11)	7 (11)	1 (1)	8 (16)	31 (37)	47 (65)

1.24. From inspection of the data in Table 2 it can be seen that the number of collisions more than doubled in the immediate three-year period following the introduction of the bus lane. There is a clear pattern apparent within the data that shows that one third of the collisions involved eastbound vehicles turning right into side roads conflicting with westbound vehicles travelling in the bus lane. None of these collisions involved buses, large goods vehicles or taxis (which are allowed to use the bus lane). One quarter of the westbound vehicles travelling in the bus lane that were involved in these collisions with right turning vehicles were doing so during the bus lane operating hours (illegally), and three quarters were using the bus lane outside of the operating hours (including weekends). The westbound vehicles involved in these collisions were attempting to continue straight ahead (rather than turn left).

1.25. In the most recent three year period the number of collisions has reduced compared to the period immediately after the introduction of the bus lane. However a clear pattern remains that one third of collisions involve eastbound vehicles turning right into side roads conflicting with westbound vehicles travelling in the bus lane. Seven were doing so during the bus lane operating hours (illegally) and nine were using the bus lane outside of the operating hours. Again, none of these collisions involved buses, large goods vehicles or taxis (which are allowed to use the bus lane), and all the westbound vehicles involved in these collisions were attempting to continue straight ahead (rather than turn left).

1.26. A “balloon diagram” showing the pattern and location of the right turn collisions in the most recent three-year period is included within Annex A. (For sake of clarity, other collisions involving other manoeuvres are not shown). It can be seen that out of the 16 right-turn collisions, three slight injury collisions were at the junction with Grand Avenue, six were at the junction with The Avenue (two of these resulted in serious injury, four in slight injury), and six slight injury collisions were at the junction with Osnaburgh Hill. No such right turn collisions took place at the other junctions on this stretch (the other junctions operate under traffic signal control whereas the junctions suffering these collisions do not).

1.27. Site visits involving police, local engineers and road safety engineers have been undertaken to supplement local knowledge and information in collision reports to assess the nature of the problem in more detail. Consequently we believe that the reason for this pattern of collisions is because the eastbound vehicles were attempting to turn right into side roads through gaps in queuing traffic travelling westbound in the offside lane. The right turning vehicles have then come into conflict with vehicles that are travelling westbound in the nearside bus lane that are partially obscured by the queuing traffic in the offside westbound lane.

1.28. The collisions have not involved buses, large goods vehicles or taxis travelling in the westbound nearside lane. We believe that in the case of buses and large goods vehicles this is because these larger vehicles would be easier to see. The westbound vehicles involved in these collisions were all attempting to continue straight ahead (rather than turning left). It is thought that any westbound vehicles attempting to turn left would be travelling much slower in order to make the left turn, and therefore would be less likely to be involved in such collisions.

1.29. It appears that the operating periods of the bus lane are not well understood by drivers using the route. Consequently the bus lane is not well used by vehicles outside of the operating times. This contributes to an increased risk of collision between eastbound right turning vehicles and westbound vehicles because the drivers of the eastbound vehicles are not expecting any oncoming vehicles to be in the bus lane when occasionally there are. Some of the collisions have involved vehicles travelling in the bus lane illegally. This may be due to the confusion as to when the bus lane is operating or due to the driver wilfully breaking the bus lane restrictions.

2. OPTIONS

Option 1: Do nothing

2.1. Obviously no investment would be required if it was decided to do nothing. However if nothing was done it is highly likely that this stretch of road would continue to suffer a high level of collisions (including a clear pattern of right turn collisions) resulting in personal injury.

2.2. As well as the pain, grief and suffering associated with road collisions resulting in death or injury, there is an economic cost to society too. This includes lost economic output of the injured persons, hospital and heath care costs, legal and administrative costs, costs of vehicle and other damage, and costs incurred by the emergency services. The Department for Transport publish an annual estimate of the value of preventing a personal injury collision for use in economic appraisal of highway schemes. In 2010 the average value for preventing a single personal injury collision was given as £68,323 (at June 2009 prices), (source: Reported Road Casualties Great Britain 2009, DfT).

Option 2: Extend bus lane timings to operate from 7am to 7pm, weekdays and weekends

2.3. The aim of this option would be to reduce the number of westbound vehicles (other than buses, large goods vehicles and taxis) using the bus lane by removing the period during the middle part of the day on weekdays and at the weekend when it is currently legal to use the bus lane. It would also reduce confusion for motorists travelling in the westbound direction by simplifying the periods that the bus lane is in operation. A reduction in the numbers of vehicles using the bus lane (other than buses, large goods vehicles and taxis) would result in reduced risk of collision with eastbound vehicles attempting to turn right across the bus lane.

2.4. Although an extension to the bus lane operating times would reduce the number of vehicles using the bus lane during the middle part of the day on weekdays, and at weekends, there would be a continuing possibility that some vehicles would use the bus lane illegally. However it is expected that the proposed simplification of the timings would make it easier for drivers to understand the operating times and therefore reduce illegal use of the bus lane that occurs inadvertently. In addition Surrey Police have been consulted and have confirmed that they would be able to provide occasional enforcement to deter inadvertent or wilful illegal use of the bus lane.

2.5. This option would also contribute to a reduction in congestion. This is because there would be less congestion that occurs as a result of collisions (including those resulting in damage only that are not systematically recorded by the police). It would also contribute to making bus services more reliable during a longer period during weekdays and weekends. This would make bus use more attractive,

which in turn would encourage more people to use the bus rather than their car. The extended period where there is a reduction in road space for other westbound vehicles will not have a significant impact on congestion because the flow of traffic on this stretch of road is constricted by the section of road after the bus lane that reduces to one lane after the junction with Victoria Avenue, and by the capacity of the Meadows roundabout.

2.6. We also propose that yellow box junctions are implemented to keep the westbound offside lane clear on the mouths of the junctions with Grand Avenue, The Avenue and Osnaburgh Hill. The aim would be to provide a larger gap in any queuing traffic in the offside lane to increase the visibility between any eastbound vehicles turning right and any vehicles travelling in the westbound nearside lane. Surrey Police have been consulted and have advised that they do not have any objection to the provision of yellow box junction markings in principle, subject to being consulted on the detailed design.

2.7. We estimate that the cost of this proposal would be about £10,000, which would be paid for from the central safety scheme budget. This cost estimate includes the need to change and advertise the legal Traffic Regulation Order to change the timings of the bus lane, changes to the roadside signing advising drivers of the bus lane operation along the route, and the implementation of three yellow box junctions. This estimate also includes the expected cost for rectifying an incorrect bifurcation arrow carriageway marking on the approach to the junction with Grand Avenue and other small errors in the carriageway markings on the route that have arisen following various highway works on the A30 since 2004.

2.8. A disadvantage of this option is that bus lanes are unpopular among a minority of road users. Some motorists do not always understood why they are provided, and it is thought by some that they cause congestion rather than contribute to alleviating it. Therefore any changes to the bus lane timings would be accompanied by publicity to explain the reasons for the changes.

Option 3: Extend bus lane timings to operate continuously, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

2.9. This option is proposed for the same reasons as described above for option 2. Yellow box junctions would also be implemented for the same reasons as described in paragraph 2.6. The cost of this proposal would be the same as for option 2 (at about £10,000), and would be funded from the central safety scheme budget.

2.10. There may be a small additional advantage to extending the bus lane to operate continuously in that this simplification could be even more effective in reducing confusion for motorists compared with the 12 hour periods proposed in option 2. There would also be an increase in

the periods that bus services would benefit from improved reliability, which would make their use more attractive during these periods.

2.11. There may be only small additional benefits in terms of reducing collisions over option 2, because only one out of the 16 right turn collisions in the last three years took place outside of the 7am to 7pm time period. The additional benefits in terms of reduced congestion would also be small as the level of congestion outside the 7am to 7pm time period is also much less. A disadvantage of option 3 over option 2 is that the opposition among a minority of road users who do not like bus lanes could be greater.

Option 4: Remove bus lane and provide two lanes for westbound traffic

2.12. We do not believe that the removal of the bus lane would have a positive impact in reducing the number of collisions occurring due to eastbound vehicles turning right into the side roads and conflicting with westbound vehicles. This is because without the bus lane there would be two lanes with westbound traffic for the right turning vehicles to negotiate across. There may continue to be a problem with the visibility between right turning vehicles and westbound vehicles travelling in the nearside lane being obscured by queuing vehicles travelling westbound in the offside lane. Although the provision of yellow box junctions, (which will need to extend across both the nearside and offside westbound vehicle lanes), may assist in this, the increase of traffic in the westbound nearside lane as a consequence of removing the bus lane is likely to increase the instances of potential conflict with right turning vehicles.

2.13. It is unlikely that removal of the bus lane would have a significant positive impact on congestion on the A30 London Road. This is because westbound traffic flow is constricted by the stretch of the road west of the junction with Victoria Avenue that reduces to one westbound lane. Traffic flow on the westbound A30 is also constricted by the capacity of the Meadows roundabout.

2.14. Instead the removal of the bus lane is likely to result in a worsening in traffic congestion by increasing the length of bus journeys and reducing their reliability. This would result in fewer, less reliable bus services and lower bus patronage. This could result in more journeys being made by car, resulting in more congestion on this route.

2.15. The improvements in bus services and increase in bus patronage as a result of substantial investment already undertaken by Surrey County Council, the bus companies and other neighbouring local authorities (described in section 1) would be greatly reduced if the bus lane was removed. The expected benefits from ongoing investment in intelligent bus priority and real time passenger information would also be jeopardised.

2.16. The cost for amendments to the highway to remove the bus lane would be about £80,000 including removal and resurfacing of the bus lane, road markings and removal of the signing and the cost for remodelling, resetting of the timing parameters of the signalised junctions on the route and relocating of carriageway detector loops.

2.17. A decision to remove the bus lane would also be subject to a public inquiry. Surrey County Council would be responsible for the cost of the inquiry including the cost for appointing a planning inspector to undertake the inquiry (which could be about £30,000). The removal of the bus lane may also result in the bus services no longer being commercially viable and so may require ongoing subsidy by the county council to keep them operational.

Future measures to improve traffic flow on the A30 London Road

2.18. In future years it is possible that further funding for transport improvements in the Camberley area may become available linked to new development. Surrey Heath Borough Council is currently developing a Camberley Town Centre Access Strategy in order to guide development within Camberley in the period up to 2028. The strategy explores how access to the services and facilities within the town centre could be improved. It is likely that comprehensive modelling of traffic flows throughout Camberley Town Centre would be carried out as a result of future developer funding, the results of which would also inform future transport improvements.

2.19. We would therefore propose that the future of the bus lane should be considered as part of that modelling work and in conjunction with the Camberley Town Centre Access strategy. This will ensure that future transport investment across Camberley is coordinated effectively rather than decisions being taken on individual schemes in isolation. It is expected that Surrey Heath Borough Council will issue their strategy for wider consultation with stakeholders and Members in the coming year.

2.20. As part of the emerging Camberley Town Centre Access Strategy a number of possible improvements to the traffic signal junctions on the A30 London Road have been suggested. These improvements could include linking these junctions to an Urban Traffic Control system to improve the flow of traffic on the A30 London Road and in the vicinity of Camberley Town Centre. However this would depend upon the results of modelling of traffic flows throughout Camberley Town Centre.

2.21. A further possible improvement would be to develop a second strategy for the Urban Traffic Control SCOOT system on the Meadows roundabout specifically for use in the event of a major incident on the M3 that causes a diversion of traffic onto the A30 London Road. This

would work by allowing county council engineers to switch to the second strategy as soon as they are aware that an incident has occurred. The second strategy would result in the SCOOT system operating to a different set of parameters to try to process the large and untypical flows occurring on different approaches to the junction as a result of the incident as effectively as possible.

2.22. Concern has been raised over the fact that the A30 bus lane causes congestion when vehicles are waiting to turn right into the Islamic Centre, No. 282, London Road. This causes queuing behind the vehicle waiting to turn right because other vehicles are unable to pass on the nearside without entering the bus lane illegally. However this only occurs for a short period of time on Fridays. Therefore it is not recommended that the bus lane be amended over this short stretch to reduce this problem because this would increase the confusion for drivers as to when the bus lane is operating, and would remove the benefits of the bus lane. It could also cause collisions between vehicles using the nearside bus lane legitimately, and vehicles changing lanes to enter the nearside lane.

3. CONSULTATIONS

3.1. Surrey police have been involved in the investigation of the extent and nature of the collision problem on the A30 London Road. Surrey police support the proposals to extend the bus lane operating timings and have no objection in principle to the implementation of yellow box markings on the offside westbound lane at the junctions with Grand Avenue, The Avenue and Osnaburgh Hill, subject to being consulted on the detailed design.

3.2. The Blackwater Valley bus network covers several local authority areas including Surrey, Hampshire, Bracknell Forest and Wokingham. These local authorities signed up to the Blackwater Valley Umbrella Quality Bus Parntership in 2004, which commits all partners to develop and implement bus priority measures. While the operation of the A30 London Road bus lane is not the direct responsibility of neighbouring local authorities, investment in bus infrastructure in Surrey benefits bus services that also serve neighbouring local authority areas, and vice versa. For example the nearby bus lanes in Hampshire operate on a 24-hour basis. Neighbouring local authorities would not therefore welcome the removal of the bus lane on the A30 London Road as this would have a negative impact on bus services and could contribute towards congestion in their areas.

3.3. As a signatory to the Blackwater Valley Umbrella Quality Bus Partnership the bus company “Stagecoach”, (which operates the Routes 1, 3 and 10 along the A30 bus lane) has been consulted. Stagecoach strongly supports the bus lane, viewing it as part of a package of measures that has seen passenger numbers increase on its services, and delivered benefits to the punctuality of bus services.

3.4. The commitment shown by the county council in terms of constructing the bus lane meant that Stagecoach was able to commit to the future of its services by introducing new vehicles and improving service frequencies. The Route 1 was upgraded to "Stagecoach Gold" standard in 2009 (buses featuring high specification exteriors and interiors, including leather seating) with a fleet of new buses costing £1.5m. In September 2011, service frequencies in weekday peak hours on the Route 1 were increased to every 6 to 7 minutes. The Route 1 previously ran every 10 minutes, and before the bus lane was constructed, every 15 minutes. Stagecoach's preferred option for the bus lane is 24-hour operation, 0700-1900h would be its second preference and it would strongly oppose removal of the bus lane.

3.5. As a signatory to the Blackwater Valley Umbrella Quality Bus Partnership the bus company "First", (which operates the Route 194 service along the A30 bus lane) has also been consulted. First say that the bus lane helps them maintain punctuality, especially at peak times. First says that patronage on the route 194 is growing at approximately 2% per annum. Of First's local routes, it is amongst the most successful in terms of growing passenger numbers. As a result, First is examining ideas for service and vehicle improvements, but notes that this is closely related to the continued success of the bus service, which itself is related to the continued operation of the bus lane. First opposes removal of the bus lane on the grounds that it will impact on bus service punctuality. Its preferred option is 24-hour operation, while 7am-7pm operation is its second preference on the grounds that congestion is less severe outside these hours.

3.6. Surrey Heath Borough Council officers have been consulted upon the issues covered by this report.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1. The financial implications of each option have been described alongside the description of each option.

5. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Options 2 and 3 would enhance the provision of bus services on the A30 London Road and would therefore improve alternatives to car travel. This would reduce congestion and the pollution that results from congestion. Options 2 and 3 would also reduce road collisions and so would also reduce congestion that occurs as a result of road collisions. Options 2 and 3 would also reduce the waste that results from damage to vehicles and damage to street furniture.

5.2. Option 1 would result in a similar number of collisions continuing to occur on this stretch of road, which would result in congestion as a result of the collisions and waste from the damage to vehicles and

street furniture. Option 4 would increase congestion and would not necessarily reduce the number of collisions on this stretch.

6. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1. There are no crime and disorder implications to the proposals.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1. There are no equalities implications to the proposals.

8. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. We recommend that option 2 (to extend the bus lane operating timings to operate from 7am to 7pm, weekdays and weekends) should be the preferred option. This is because this option provides a low cost solution that would reduce a significant proportion of the collisions taking place on this stretch of road. It would also have the additional advantage of being likely to contribute to a reduction in congestion by making bus services more reliable for a greater period of time throughout the day during weekdays and at weekends. It is recognised that bus lanes are not always understood and are therefore unpopular with a minority of road users. Therefore any changes to the bus lane would need to be accompanied by publicity to explain why the changes are being undertaken. Following implementation, the effect on collisions, congestion and bus use will be monitored closely.

8.2. Option 2 would be preferred to option 3 (to extend the bus lane operating timings to operate continuously) because the additional advantages of option 3 over option 2 in terms of reducing collisions and contributing to a reduction in congestion would be only small, and there may be stronger opposition to an extension to the bus lane to operate continuously.

8.3. We recommend that option 1 (to do nothing) should be rejected as it would be morally unacceptable to continue to tolerate the same level of collisions on this road when there are potential low cost interventions that could reduce the problem. The continued economic cost to society of these collisions would also be far greater than the potential low cost solutions.

8.4. We recommend that option 4 (to remove the bus lane) should be rejected because it is not clear that this would reduce the level of collisions. Removing the bus lane could also contribute to increased congestion and would be contrary to the commitments given by Surrey County Council as a signatory to the Blackwater Valley Quality Bus Partnership. The cost of removing the bus lane is estimated as £80,000. This option would also be subject to a public inquiry, which could cost a further £30,000. This option would also negate the substantial investment that has already taken place to improve bus

services on the A30, and would jeopardise the ongoing investment in improving bus services in the Camberley area.

8.5. There could also be further ongoing costs if the county council then has to provide ongoing bus subsidy if the bus services are no longer commercially viable, which may require a further report to be presented to the appropriate county council committees. Instead we propose that the future of the bus lane should be considered as part of the Camberley Town Centre Access strategy.

Report by: Duncan Knox

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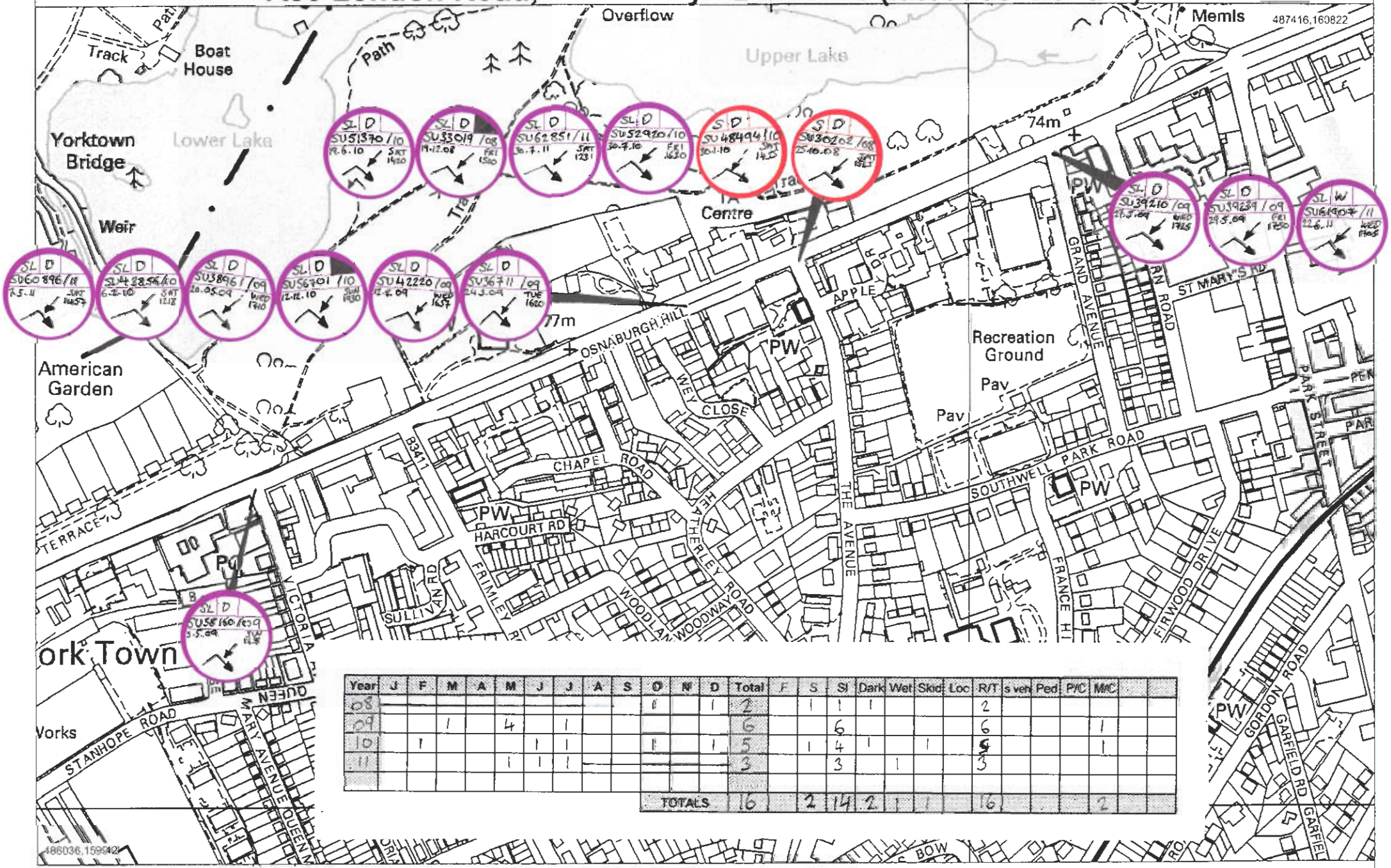
BACKGROUND PAPERS: **None**

ANNEX A: **RIGHT TURN COLLISIONS ON THE A30 LONDON ROAD BETWEEN VICTORIA ROAD AND PARK STREET IN THE THREE YEARS TO THE END OF JULY 2011**

A30 London Road, Camberley - Bus Lane (latest 36 months) 1.8.08 - 31.7.11



Year	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Total	F	S	Sl	Dark	Wet	Skid	Loc	R/T	s veh	Ped	P/C	M/C		
08										1		1	2		1	1	1				2						
09			1		4		1						6			6					6				1		
10		1				1	1			1		1	5		1	4	1		1		5				1		
11					1	1	1						3			3		1			3						
TOTALS													16		2	14	2	1	1		16				2		

Scale 1:5000

Date: 08/09/2011

Item 11, Annex A