



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(WAVERLEY)**

UPPER HALE ROAD: RESPONSE TO RESIDENTS' PETITION

14 SEPTEMBER 2007

KEY ISSUE

To respond to a petition of 110 signatories presented to the previous meeting of the Local Committee from residents of Upper Hale Road, Farnham.

SUMMARY

Residents of Upper Hale Road, Farnham have presented a petition to this committee requesting action to mitigate the impact of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) on the local area.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Waverley) is asked to agree:

- (i) To note the contents of this report.
- (ii) To ask the Farnham Transportation Task Group to consider the requests made by the petitioners against other priorities in the area.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Details of the petition received from 110 signatories living in the vicinity of the A3016, Upper Hale Road, Farnham are available electronically at www.surreycc.gov.uk/waverley . Essentially residents have expressed their desire to seek a reduction in the impact of HGVs on Upper Hale Road by implementing the following measures:

- Investigate the possibility of width and/or weight restrictions to prevent large HGVs having access to Upper Hale Road.

- Inform HGV operators that they should stay on the A331 and not use the Upper Hale Road and not to use satellite navigation systems which are taking them down the A287 / A3016.
- Install signposts to the effect that the A287 and A3016 are unsuitable for HGVs, which should be directed to use the A331 Blackwater Valley Route. (BVR).

1.2 In addition, the petitioners have expressed their concern that the carriageway condition on Upper Hale Road is poor, due in part to the trench excavations undertaken by Southern Gas Networks as part of their mains replacement programme.

2 ANALYSIS

2.1 Lorries and HGVs are an essential part of the modern economy. They are needed for distributing goods to businesses and the general public. However, it is recognised that HGVs often have a significant impact upon the neighbourhoods through which they travel. Surrey County Council (SCC) has the difficult task of balancing the needs of residents and businesses. Therefore SCC's county signing policy applies a hierarchy of route signs, in accordance with national criteria as established within the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002. This criteria is established to keep all traffic on the highest category of road as possible until near the point of destination/delivery. In this way the impact on towns and villages can be kept to a minimum, with less need to put restrictions on local roads.

2.2 The A3016, Upper Hale Road, is designated as a County Primary Road. Prior to the completion of the BVR the road was signed as the main link road between the M3 and the A31. Signing on both the M3 and the adjoining road network reflected this status. Upon completion of the BVR all signs were altered to allow for the fact that the BVR was determined as the most appropriate link between the A31 and the M3. At present Odiham is the major destination signed along the A3016. Signs at the Shepherd and Flock roundabout (Farnham) and the A31 sign traffic to and from Guildford and Basingstoke and the M3 via the A31 and the BVR. Signs on the M3 direct Farnham-bound traffic via the A331 BVR at Junction 4. At Junction 5, the Odiham/A287 exit, there are no signs directing traffic to Farnham.

2.3 Works on the A3016, Upper Hale Road, have been undertaken by Southern Gas Networks (SGN) for over 18 months as part of a mains replacement and re-connection programme. The works have involved substantial excavation of the carriageway as governed by the New Roads and Street Works Act of 1994 (NRSWA). Upon completion of the finished re-instatement SCC's NRSWA supervisor 'defected' approximately 200m of the trench re-instatement and SGN were made to re-instate. The final works are expected to be completed shortly and at this point another inspection will be carried out. The works have a two-year guarantee and as such a subsequent inspection will be carried out prior to the ending of this guarantee to ensure that no deterioration has occurred prior to SCC assuming responsibility.

3 OPTIONS

3.1 Three separate ideas for mitigating HGV traffic impact on the A3016 have been put forward by the petitioners. A comment has been made about the appropriateness or otherwise of each suggestion in turn below:

1. Investigate the possibility of width and/or weight restrictions to prevent large HGVs having access to Upper Hale Road.

SCC's policy on the installation of a physical restriction to prevent access by vehicles of a designated size requires that the road is physically unsuitable for that specification of vehicle. i.e. if a bridge is only physically capable of taking vehicles of a certain weight/height, then it is legitimate to propose a restriction on vehicles exceeding this limit, if the strength/height cannot be improved. It is advisable to only install a weight restriction on an 'A' classification road where specifically a restriction needs to be applied because of a structural weakness that requires the restriction.

In order to implement a width/weight restriction on Upper Hale Road on environmental/amenity grounds, a local alternative route for HGVs would need to be found. The most commodious choice of route other than the A3016 is the A287 into Folly Hill and Castle Street. It is unlikely that the statutory process associated with the advertising of a restriction that saw additional HGVs through the town centre would receive much support and would inevitably result in a public enquiry (legally required in response to any objection received by either a Freight Transport Association representative and/or a bus operating company). As previously stated, SCC's hierarchical signing policy would seek to keep HGVs away from a town centre unless for local deliveries, because of the far greater impact of HGVs within a pedestrian environment.

2. Inform HGV operators that they should stay on the A331 and not use the Upper Hale Road and not to use satellite navigation systems which are taking them down the A287/A3016.

As stated in 2.2 (above) all traffic is signed along the BVR as opposed to the Upper Hale Road.

There is considerable work going on at present with the Freight Transport Authority (FTA) and satellite navigation companies. The majority of this work is based upon the many stories of HGVs getting stuck or using inappropriate roads because of SatNav systems. However, this work is based upon the incidents of HGVs accessing single track lanes/bridleways and is unlikely to have significant relevance to the A3016.

3. Install signposts to the effect that the A287 and A3016 are unsuitable for HGV's, which should be directed to use the A331 Blackwater Valley Route. (BVR)

The A3016 is not unsuitable for HGVs. There is no structural reason why large vehicles cannot use this road. The county signing policy directs inter-county traffic along the A331 as opposed to the Upper Hale Road. The only method available on this section of highway to reduce numbers of HGVs is to sign all through traffic via the A331, which is what has been undertaken.

4 CONSULTATIONS

4.1 This report has been forwarded to Surrey Police for their comment which, if available, will be reported to this committee verbally.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no specific implications.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no specific implications.

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Whilst many people would like to see a reduction in the impact of traffic on their daily lives, in many cases it is simply not possible to put in place measures that can realistically achieve such an effect. It is not possible to prevent HGVs utilising the Upper Hale Road to access the A31 or the M3, only to install signing that promotes better alternatives such as the A331 (BVR).

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Farnham Transportation Task Group (FTTG), consists of local elected members who are tasked with making representations to the Local Committee on priorities for spending the devolved Local Transport Plan capital allocation. By presenting the petition for discussion to the FTTG, it may be possible for proposals to be brought forward that could go some way towards mitigating the impact of HGVs on Upper Hale Road. For example, the FTTG could make the recommendation that additional Vehicle Activated Signage be installed to help control vehicle speeds. Also, the FTTG can liaise with Surrey Police in order to request additional enforcement to that which already occurs.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

10.1 If the recommendations are agreed by this committee the petition will be presented to the next meeting of the FTTG.

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