

**LOCAL COMMITTEE (WAVERLEY)****PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND
RESPONSES****12 MARCH 2010****1. From Mr N Lyons (Birtley Green, Bramley)**

I have lived for the past 26 years at Birtley Green just south of Bramley, and my house fronts the heavily trafficked A281. It is many years since any form of road maintenance was effected between Birtley Green and Rushett Common. As can be seen from the circulated photographs taken in early February, the surface of this stretch of road has been seriously degrading and is now fragmenting over long sections. Substantial and lengthy cracks have also opened in the road-bed itself which are, of course, letting in water, leading to the inevitable effects of frost. Chippings are continually breaking away and spray onto pavements and driveways, mine included. The underlying road stone is becoming exposed. All this loose material forms an increasing hazard for vehicles and cyclists following the many heavy lorries on the A281 and for pedestrians walking along the narrow pathways.

I drew this matter to the attention of Bramley Parish Council in August 2009. Their office immediately contacted Surrey County Council Highways. As far as I am aware, no action has been taken towards any repair and the recent cold weather has, of course, exacerbated the situation. The photographs clearly indicate that the road surface has deteriorated to such an extent that surface dressing is no longer adequate. Large sections of this stretch of the road demand full resurfacing. Otherwise we shall find ourselves in a similar situation in a short period of time. From my personal observations, the condition of this section of the A281 is worse than any other for many miles in either direction.

Could this matter be investigated urgently and positive steps taken to rectify the situation without delay ?

Response

Nationally our roads suffered badly as a result of the unusually severe winter weather. In January Dr Andrew Povey, Leader of Surrey County Council, dedicated an additional £500,000 towards repair work in anticipation of the level of damage. This has been targeted at the most damaged roads and in the Bramley area an extensive area of the A281 has been re-surfaced leading towards the Guildford boundary (see Item 9). However, available funds limit the amount of surfacing work carried out each year, and the County Council Highways Service uses an assessment system to prioritise the order in which roads are surfaced. Over the coming months officers will be reviewing prioritisation in the light of winter damage, and the A281 between Birtley Green and Rushett Common will be included in this review, as will the entire A-road network. As always, pending any capital maintenance work (re-surfacing or surface dressing), Surrey's roads are kept safe by repairing potholes, etc, identified by cyclic inspections, or reported by the public (Contact Centre 0300 200 1003, Website www.surreycc.gov.uk).

2. From Dr J Masding (Alfold Parish Council)

Alfold Parish Council would like to remind the Committee of the long promised road safety measures on the B2133 in the centre of Alfold village. It has long been accepted by County Council Highways engineers that some changes are necessary in this area, such as anti-skid surfacing, new signage at both ends to warn of hazard and possible white parking lines outside houses to emphasise legitimate parking areas – and we have this in writing. The funding for this was agreed in April 2007 and Highways asked us to make public the proposed changes in August 2007 which we did, BUT the funding went and residents' expectations and frustrations remain. The safety issues in the centre of the village are still a great concern to us and are in fact much worse due to the increase in very large HGVs now using this route south. We are aware of the financial issues facing Surrey County Council but we do stress that the worsening situation in the area needs urgent attention before a bad accident occurs between an HGV and car. There are reports of frequent 'near misses'. Would the Committee consider very seriously the need to allocate funding in the next financial year to safety measures in this location ?

Response

In the previous financial year, 2008/09, the Local Committee funded kerbing works and a footway extension at Alfold Crossways to improve safety and pedestrian amenity at this end of the village. The speed limit was also reduced on the A281 through the crossways and out towards the aerodrome, and new village gateways encouraging drivers to slow down were installed on the A281. Plans for relatively low-cost traffic calming measures on the Loxwood Road towards the village centre have been

discussed by officers with the Parish Council, but no further funding has been allocated by the Committee at this point. The Cranleigh and Eastern Villages Transportation Task Group will shortly be considering priorities for the area, and will consider this request against others. However, given the Council-wide drive to reduce costs, funding available for highway improvement schemes is expected to be significantly reduced in 2010/11 in comparison to recent years. A report on the proposed 2010/11 improvement programme will be brought to the next meeting of this committee in June.

3. From Mr Chris Meeks (Waverley and Guildford Friends of the Earth)

With the recent replacement of traffic lights in Godalming, many local people hoped for an improvement in the ability of pedestrians to cross the road. Is the Local Committee aware of the astonishment felt locally at the failure to effect such improvement? Why, for example, is there still a lack of pedestrian phasing in the traffic lights at the Flambard Way/Woolsack Way junction when large numbers of families from the Wharf Nursery School are traversing this junction?

Will the Local Committee ensure a new policy is effected for the future so that whenever traffic lights are installed the presumption is in favour of pedestrian phasing on every arm of a junction unless there is good reason otherwise?

Response

Traffic signals are maintained on a countywide basis by the Network Management Team based in Leatherhead. The Team controls a budget for routine maintenance and replacement of installations as they wear out. However, this covers like for like replacement only, with the exception of using more modern electronics and signal heads. The only County Council budget available for upgrading traffic signals, for instance the addition of pedestrian phases, is the Integrated Transport Scheme budget controlled by this Committee, although developer funding may also be directed to such improvements. It would be useful for members and local officers to be aware of the forward programme of signal replacement and the Local Highways Manager has asked the signals team for the programme for Waverley.

4. From Mrs J Nye (Witley)

During the last five years there has been difficulty for some parents in Witley in getting their children into any of the first choice local schools. In fact, despite being given three schools to choose from, these have all been unable to give the children a place, resulting in some parents having to take their small 4½ year-old child to a school some miles away. Could the Committee:

- reassure parents that the problem is being dealt with and that they will be given a place in their local school this year ?
- say whether other parishes have experienced the same situation ?

Response

Before addressing the detailed point around Witley, we would like to say a few words about the wider context of primary school admission in Surrey.

Since 2001 the number of births in the county has been rising. The effects vary in detail from area to area, but the broad consequence is that the County Council is increasing the number of places with each new year that starts school. What makes this particularly difficult is that capital funding is very difficult to raise: firstly because of the present attempts to reduce government spending; but also because Surrey has been placed in the most disadvantaged group of authorities for access to government funding for school places. We are therefore having to make our investment decisions extremely carefully, prioritising those areas where pupils would find it most difficult to obtain places without additional provision being opened.

For admissions across the county as a whole this year, some 83% of parents obtained their 1st ranked preference for their children with 96% being allocated one of their three preferences. At a Junior level 86% of first ranked preferences were met and 97% were allocated one of their three ranked preferences.

The Witley area has three primary age schools, namely Witley Infants, Milford Infants and The Chandler Junior School. First preferences were for the most part met in all three schools. At Witley there were 33 first preferences by parents for 30 places, at Milford there were 49 first preferences for 49 places and at The Chandler there were 79 first preferences for 84 places.

Witley Infants has had issues in the past but very nearly balanced first preferences versus places this year. Witley Infants is a small but very popular infant school recognised as an outstanding school by Ofsted. The pressure of applications varies considerably from year to year and in 2008 in particular many parents were disappointed and some had to travel considerable distances to alternative schools.

This year, as usual, Witley Infants offered 30 reception places. There were 33 first preference applications so we can broadly say that supply and demand aligned. Some 52 children lived closer to Witley than any other school, but of these 18 have been offered a place at a school of higher preference. This leaves four children for whom Witley is the closest school and who have been offered a place at a more distant school which they wanted less. Two have been offered Green Oak and two Grayswood,

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and we understand that the two who were offered Grayswood did have this school as a specified preference, albeit lower than Witley.

This is the situation in early March and of course there may be changes by September that mean that some who are disappointed now may still obtain the places they want. We have to say, though, that these late changes are less common here than in some other areas.