



**SMARTS HEATH ROAD RAILWAY
BRIDGE – PEDESTRIAN FACILITY**

**LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR WOKING
28 JANUARY 2004**

KEY ISSUE:

To consider the points raised in the petition presented to Committee on 23 July 2003 expressing concerns about pedestrian safety on Smarts Heath Road Railway Bridge.

SUMMARY:

A petition was presented to Committee from residents in Mayford Village concerned about the safety of pedestrians using the Smarts Heath Road Railway Bridge.

Officers were asked to investigate the current situation and make proposals to Committee for possible solutions.

A survey of Mayford residents revealed that many would use the bridge, as pedestrians, if their perception of danger were removed.

Four options were considered: -

- a. To provide a footpath over the bridge with traffic lights restricting traffic to single line working and incorporate traffic calming.
- b. To provide a footbridge alongside the existing bridge.
- c. To provide traffic calming and improved street lighting.
- d. To take no action.

CONSULTATIONS:

Mayford Village Society

306 Mayford Village Residents

Ward and Divisional Members

Woking for Pedestrians

Surrey Police

Surrey County Council Structures and Traffic Signal groups

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to agree

- (i) that the results of the Resident survey reveal a need to provide a safe pedestrian crossing facility over the bridge.**
- (ii) that option a. to provide a footpath and incorporate traffic calming is taken to detailed design and brought back to Committee for final approval.**

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

1. The B380 Smarts Heath Road at Mayford crosses the Guildford to Woking railway line by means of a bridge (Annex A). This bridge allows two lanes of traffic to use the road but no separate facilities are provided for pedestrians who therefore cross the bridge by walking in the carriageway.
2. The Local Committee was presented with a petition by Woking Borough Councillor James Palmer at its meeting on 23 July 2003 in the following terms –“We the undersigned being concerned about the dangers posed by road traffic to pedestrians on Smarts Heath Road Railway Bridge, hereby request that the Committee takes action to protect the safety of pedestrians using the bridge.”
3. Officers were requested to examine the current situation, report on options and make recommendations.

ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

4. The B380 connects the A322 Guildford to Bagshot road with the A320 Guildford to Woking road. The speed limit from the A322 is 50 mph throughout its length until immediately before the start of houses on the nearside in Mayford Village it becomes 30 mph continuing to the A320.
5. A survey of pedestrians who use the bridge was carried out on 17 June 2003 between 0700 and 1900. West to East 17 pedestrian movements were detected and East to West 23 pedestrian movements.
6. A traffic and speed survey was carried out between the 20 and 27 November 2003 on either side of the railway bridge. In a 24 hour period West of the bridge an average of 2500 vehicles travelled in each direction with an 85th percentile speed of 44 mph. On the East of the bridge the reciprocal figures were 3500 vehicles and 35 mph. An additional survey was carried out in Saunders Lane close to the junction over the same period. At least 1000 vehicles travelled in both directions along the Lane. This indicates a significant route taken by drivers through Saunders Lane to and from the A320.
7. No relevant injury accidents are recorded in the area during the last 3 years.
8. A questionnaire (Annex B) was sent to 306 residences in Mayford Village (area covered shown at Annex A). Its aim was to elicit not just who would use any facility but for what reason and how often.

9. The following resident responses were received: -

	living West of bridge	living East of bridge	not offering an address	Total
Responses	93	37	2	132
For proposal	88	30	2	120
Against	5	7		12

10. Not all the respondents gave answers to subsequent questions. Answers to the question “would you use the facility” broadly followed the pattern in 9. above with those for the proposal intending use and those against not.
11. Of those who would use the facility 45 stated it would be for daily use, 39 weekly use and 27 monthly use.
12. A number of reasons were given why a pedestrian facility would be used but the key factors are to visit shops or garden centres, leisure walking, getting to bus stops on the A320, being able to walk to school, visiting friends within the village and getting to the Village Hall and Mayford Centre for various events and activities.
13. The survey highlighted the fact that facilities within the village, often within a short distance of a residents home cannot be reached on foot without crossing the bridge; The Village Hall and Smarts Heath Common for people to the East of the bridge and the Post Office, Public Houses and bus stops on the A320 for those on the West of the bridge. Residents commented that their perception of walking across the bridge was danger from the vehicles due to their size and speed and the lack of any footway. Clearly car journeys are undertaken over short distances where the driver and passengers would walk if they felt safe crossing the bridge.
14. The Mayford Society supports proposals to provide a safe crossing facility. Woking for Pedestrians provided a comprehensive submission with four suggested options including a footbridge and traffic lights. The Police Casualty Reduction Officer is concerned about the speed of vehicles on this road and supports a proposal to increase pedestrian safety whilst calming the traffic speeds.
15. Officers have examined three alternative proposals to provide a safe facility for pedestrians wishing to cross the bridge. The installation of traffic lights to effect single direction traffic running and allow a footway to be built on the existing road surface. The construction of a footbridge, continuing the existing footway on the Northern side, across the railway line. Initially these options have been examined as to their practicality and effect. Whilst both would achieve the purpose they have construction considerations and effects on other highway users. A third option would provide traffic calming and

improved lighting.

16. Providing a footpath on the bridge would involve delays for drivers. Whilst the B380 is in Mayford village and subject to a 30 mph speed limit it is also a major route for many drivers as shown by the traffic survey. The position of the bridge in relation to the road means that to provide drivers with adequate sight lines and due to the current speed of vehicles when travelling towards the A320 the traffic light heads would be 100 metres apart increasing delays. It would be sensible, when considering the traffic survey and whether this scheme is introduced or not to reduce current vehicle speeds by traffic calming. This may allow a reduction of the distance between traffic lights and resultant delays. Initial indication of cost for traffic lights and a system of traffic calming is in the region of £100,000.
17. This proposal would provide additional safety for the railway line. Currently traffic passes close to the parapets with the attendant risk of vehicles, if they left the road, running onto the line. This proposal would allow a build out on the Southern side and with the footway opposite take vehicles away from the parapets.
18. Providing a footbridge would clearly meet the pedestrian need whilst not impacting on motorists. It would require consent from Network Rail and acquisition of or rights over their land whether by purchase or gift. A similar bridge within the County has been price quoted at £80,000 and with the additional cost of any land purchase and other engineering works the total cost of the scheme would be in the order of £150,000 to £200,000. In addition to a bridge it would be desirable, when considering the 85 th percentile speeds, to introduce traffic calming on Smarts Heath Road. Network Rail will be consulted about these proposals.
19. Providing traffic calming and improved lighting would improve the situation for pedestrians by decreasing vehicle speed and be a less costly option. However the current perception of danger experienced by bridge users and potential users may not be allayed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

20. Currently no funding is allocated. A provisional bid for £50,000 has been put into the Local Transport Plan programme for 2004/2005. If the recommendation is accepted additional funding would be required.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

21. The recommended pedestrian facility would: -
 - a. provide access to village amenities
 - b. increase pedestrian journeys and reduce use of vehicles
 - c. encourage walking for exercise

- d. reduce vehicle speed through the Village

CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 22. Traffic calming should reduce the speed of vehicles travelling above the speed limit.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 23. There are no equalities implications.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 24. The resident survey has highlighted that Mayford Village is divided for pedestrians by their not being confident to walk across the bridge. This precludes them from accessing local amenities and undertaking recreational walking. The outcome is that they use vehicles to travel relatively short distances.
- 25. Whilst the footbridge scheme would not cause delays to drivers the speed of vehicles shown on the traffic survey suggests that traffic calming would be appropriate whichever proposal is accepted.
- 26. There is sufficient demand to justify the provision of a safe pedestrian facility and a need to reduce the speed of vehicles in the area. Providing a footpath with traffic controlled by lights would meet both these needs and allow a greater safety margin for the railway line by moving vehicles away from the parapets.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Nil

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