



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (WOKING)

LOWER GUILDFORD ROAD, KNAPHILL - SPEED LIMIT AND PEDESTRIAN CROSSING FACILITY

20 FEBRUARY 2008

KEY ISSUE

To consider a proposal to introduce a signal controlled pedestrian crossing on Lower Guildford Road, Knaphill, immediately to the south of its junction with Northwood Avenue and to reduce the 40mph speed limit on Lower Guildford Road and Hermitage Road, along with the introduction of 30mph flashing speed signs to emphasise the new limit.

SUMMARY

Lower Guildford Road is a potential barrier for pedestrians making their way to and from various locations in Knaphill and Hermitage. A significant number of children cross the road to go to and from school or the playground at the end of Cubitt Way or the sports field / pitches alongside Redding Way. Physical constraints preclude the construction of a signal controlled pedestrian crossing to the north of Northwood Avenue but there is scope to construct one immediately to the south of this junction, which may also be of use to an pedestrians making their way to or from Knaphill. The southern half of Lower Guildford Road is subject to a 40mph speed limit, as is Hermitage Road between The Surrey Public House and its junction with Blackhorse Road. Based on the recorded speeds, Surrey Police are supportive of a proposal to reduce these limits to 30mph, with the introduction of some 30mph flashing speed signs in support of the lower limit.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Woking) is asked to agree that:

- (i) A Puffin crossing should be constructed on Lower Guildford Road, to the south of its junction with Northwood Avenue, as outlined on drawing 12597 (Annex A).
- (ii) The necessary Notice under Section 23 of The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, advertising the Council's intent to construct the crossing be published.
- (iii) The 40mph speed limit currently in place over parts of Lower Guildford Road and Hermitage Road should be reduced to 30mph
- (iv) The necessary Notice under Section 84 of The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, advertising the Council's intent to reduce the speed limit be published.
- (v) Any objection(s) will have to be considered by the Chairman of the Local Committee (Woking), the Divisional Member and the Local Highways Manager.
- (vi) Vehicle Activated Signs should be introduced on Hermitage Road and Lower Guildford Road, the approximate locations of which are shown on drawing 12602, to emphasise the reduced speed limit.
- (vii) A Vehicle Activated Sign should be introduced in Redding Way, the approximate location of which is shown on drawing 12602, to emphasise the existing 30 mph speed limit.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Lower Guildford Road is one of the main roads leading into Knaphill and directly connects the A324 Hermitage Road to the village. It is subject to a 40mph speed limit between its roundabout junction with the A324 to a point approximately 60m north of its junction with Northwood Avenue, where the limit becomes to 30mph.
- 1.2 Lower Guildford Road forms a barrier for pedestrians. Many of these pedestrians are children making their way to or from school or to the playground or one of the sports fields / pitches within the old Brookwood Hospital site.
- 1.3 Hermitage Road is subject to a 40mph speed limit from a point adjacent to The Surrey Public House to its junction with Blackhorse Road. This limit continues for a short distance to the west of this junction, by which time the A324 has become Brookwood Lye Road. There is less pedestrian traffic across these roads, although many school children walk along the footway on the north side of Hermitage Road between the roundabout and The Surrey PH.

2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 It was already clear that a good number of children crossed Lower Guildford Road on their way to or from school, in addition to any adults

who cross the road. A pedestrian survey during school time would simply have confirmed this, so a survey was carried out in the vicinity of the Northwood Avenue junction during the summer holidays and including a weekend, to ascertain the demand at other times, given the proximity of a playground at the end of Cubitt Way and the various sports fields / pitches off of Redding Way.

- 2.2 This survey confirmed that there is a reasonable flow of pedestrians across the road and indicated that more people crossed the road to the north of Northwood Avenue. Unfortunately, there is no scope to provide a controlled crossing point in this length of Lower Guildford Road.
- 2.3 When a pedestrian crossing is installed, it is desirable in some locations to locally widen the footway on one or both sides, particularly if the existing footway is relatively narrow. This local widening allows pedestrians passing along the footway to pass by anyone who is waiting to cross the road. It also ensures that there is enough room for anyone in a wheelchair or pushing a buggy to pass by the traffic signal poles etc.
- 2.4 Vehicle speed surveys have been carried out in Lower Guildford Road and both parts of Hermitage Road that have previously been described, with a view to possibly reducing the 40mph limit to 30mph. In each case, the recorded mean speeds were slightly in excess of 30mph, which according to Surrey County Council policy should preclude us from introducing a lower limit without the provision of any additional traffic management measures.
- 2.5 Residents of Lower Guildford Road, who live along the service road that runs parallel to the main road have all be sent a consultation letter, in response to which, some concerns have been raised about the possibility of increased use of the service road by drivers trying to “by-pass” the crossing. From anecdotal evidence, some drivers already use this service road even though they are not accessing any properties on it and often do so at speed. No speed survey has been carried out in the service road.
- 2.6 There have been no collisions along this length of Lower Guildford Road in the last three years that have resulted in any personal injury to pedestrians.

3 OPTIONS

- 3.1 Although more pedestrians were seen to cross Lower Guildford Road to the north of Northwood Avenue, there is no scope to introduce a crossing in this length of road. The footways are too narrow and, irrespective of this, the private driveways along this length of road would make locating a crossing extremely difficult without severely compromising the residents’ access and egress.

- 3.2 To the south of Northwood Avenue, the deep verge between the main road and the service road in front of Nos 74 to 100 Lower Guildford Road offers an area without driveways and the scope to locally widen the footways. A proposal for a puffin crossing in line with the garage of No 76 Lower Guildford Road is shown on drawing 12597 at Annex A. This crossing is as close to Northwood Avenue as is desirable. Any closer and there would be an increased risk of the drivers of vehicles turning left out of Northwood Avenue not seeing pedestrians on the crossing in time to react, given that they are likely to be concentrating on activity to their right as they pull out.
- 3.3 It is acknowledged that this location is off of the desire line for the majority of pedestrians but it has been located as close as possible to it and could be of use to pedestrians who would otherwise cross to the north of Northwood Avenue, if they preferred to cross under the protection of a controlled crossing.
- 3.4 The proposal for the pedestrian crossing is shown at **Annex A**, on drawing Number 12597.
- 3.5 It should be noted that in the absence of an existing casualty history, there is a chance, statistically, that the construction of this crossing will introduce casualties. This would be true for any type of controlled crossing.
- 3.6 The recorded mean speeds are slightly higher than 30mph, which would preclude a reduction in the existing 40mph limit unless additional traffic management measures were introduced. It is proposed to introduce Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) along Hermitage Road and Lower Guildford Road to emphasise the reduced speed limit. These signs would flash a “30” symbol to any drivers exceeding the speed limit. With these measures in place, Surrey Police would support a reduction in the 40mph speed limit. Hermitage Road is currently one of Surrey Police’s Casualty Reduction Routes. The approximate locations of these signs are shown at **Annex B**, on drawing 12602.
- 3.7 Following discussions with residents, it is suggested that an additional VAS should be erected on Lower Guildford Road in the vicinity of the current speed limit change point, for vehicles leaving Knaphill village, who tend to accelerate into the (current) higher limit having negotiated the Anchor Hill junction and on-street parking etc around Victoria Road and Queens Road. It is further suggested that a sign is erected on Redding Way, somewhere between the roundabout junction with Lower Guildford Road and Cubitt Way. It should be noted that at the time of writing this report, arrangements are in hand to erect similar VAS along that part of Redding Way that runs parallel to Broadway. The approximate location of this sign is shown at Annex B, on drawing 12602

- 3.8 Residents of the service road (ie Nos 74 – 100 Lower Guildford Road) are concerned about the potential increase in traffic along the service road by drivers who are keen not have to stop at the pedestrian crossing. It is not known if this will happen or to what extent. At the time of writing this report, Officers have yet to meet with residents and the Divisional Member, on site to discuss any possible options for dealing with this. Residents have suggested traffic calming but the concrete carriageway of the road might preclude this option. Closing the road off at one end has also been mooted but there will be difficulty in securing any consensus as to which end should be closed off and some form of turning head would have to be provided. Officers will report verbally on this matter at the meeting of this Committee.

4 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 The Divisional and Ward Members have been consulted, along with Surrey Police and residents in the immediate vicinity of the proposed crossing. The Woking Access Group has also seen the proposal and is supportive of it.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Based on recent, similar schemes, it is estimated that the proposals, including the VAS and the reduction in speed limit, will cost approximately £85,000.
- 5.2 There is no pedestrian casualty history at this location that this proposed scheme could affect. However, with regard to overall road safety, accessibility, inclusiveness and promoting walking, the scheme will represent a very worthwhile improvement.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This proposal will provide a controlled crossing for all pedestrians and will be particularly beneficial for anyone with limited mobility or a visual impairment.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no crime and disorder implications.

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Lower Guildford Road presents a barrier for pedestrians, many of whom are children making their way to or from school. The proposal will provide a controlled crossing point for these pedestrians, although it is acknowledged that for some, it will not be in the most ideal location.
- 8.2 There have been no recorded pedestrian casualties in this part of Lower Guildford Road, although the provision of a controlled crossing will

improve accessibility between the St Johns / Hermitage area and Knaphill, particularly the old Brookwood Hospital site.

- 8.3 Hermitage Road is currently one of Surrey Police's Casualty Reduction Routes and a reduction in the speed limit along Hermitage Road, combined with the proposed VAS will help in this aim. If the speed limit on the A324 was reduced, it would be imprudent not to reduce the limit in Lower Guildford Road, given that recorded speeds are similar. Such a reduction, in conjunction with the VAS, should help to improve the overall road safety, especially with the provision of a Puffin crossing. It is therefore recommended that the proposals shown on drawings 12597 and 12602 be approved for construction.

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The construction of a Puffin crossing would provide a controlled crossing point over a busy road, over which a large number of pedestrians are known to cross. It will improve accessibility and should help in the Council's aim of promoting walking. A reduction in the speed limit in Lower Guildford Road and Hermitage Road should help to improve overall road safety, particularly in the latter case, which is currently one of Surrey Police's Casualty Reduction Routes.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 The scheme will be passed to our Constructer Partner for detailed design (2008/09 subject to funding). Once this has been done, the proposal to construct the crossing will need to be advertised, as will the proposed speed limit reduction. Any objections to either proposal will have to be considered by the Chairman of the Local Committee (Woking), the Divisional Member and the Local Highways Manager. Construction is currently planned during 2009/10 (subject to funding).

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

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