

OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (WOKING)

RESPONSE TO PETITION REGARDING HERMITAGE ROAD

7 JULY 2010

KEY ISSUE

To advise the committee of the response to a petition received at the 3 February 2010 meeting.

SUMMARY

Petition urging Surrey County Council to install a zebra crossing on Hermitage Road in the vicinity of Five Oaks Close. The petition had over 128 signatures.

Wording of Petition

“We would like to highlight the dangerous situation the children of St Hugh of Lincoln are subject to on their way to school.

At present there are 210 children attending St Hugh of Lincoln Catholic Primary School. 99% of them cross the Hermitage Road in order to gain access to the school. This is the only way the children can get to school. Currently we have no crossing attendant and although the council have advertised for someone, the role has not generated any interest. The simplest solution would be to organize for a **zebra crossing** to be positioned on a suitable location. Our up most concern is for the safety of our children. It will only be time before an accident occurs, unless we can arrive at a speedy solution.”

Concerns

Pedestrians, particularly School children are unable to cross the road safely as it is considered dangerous due to the constant flow of traffic.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Woking) is asked to note the contents of this report.

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

1. The St Hugh of Lincoln Catholic Primary School is located at the end of Five Oaks Close. Many parents park either in the Wickes car park or The Surrey Public House car park, both of which necessitate them and their children crossing the A324 Hermitage Road to make their way to or from the school.
2. The road is very busy and at peak periods, the eastbound flow, ie towards Woking, is often nose-to-tail, slow moving or stationary.
3. During the last 3 years, there have been three personal injury collisions along the length of Hermitage Road, between The Surrey pub and Inkerman Road. One tragically resulted in a fatality of a pedestrian and occurred outside The Surrey pub and late at night (approximately midnight) when conditions were significantly different to those at school times. None of the collisions in the last 3 years have involved pedestrians in the vicinity of the school crossing patrol site, refuge island and potential zebra crossing location.
4. The School Crossing Patroller (SCP) who used to operate on Hermitage Road resigned and finished work at the end of the 2008/9 academic year, i.e. at the start of the summer holidays in 2009. Since then, pedestrians have been able to use a pedestrian refuge island approximately 20m away from where the SCP operated (Note; SCPs do not operate at refuge islands). Alternatively, they can use the signal controlled crossing approximately 115m away, although this takes them further out of their way and involves crossing Inkerman Road. The island at the end of Inkerman Road was recently enlarged and improved as part of the Cycle Woking works.

ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

5. The footway on the north side of Hermitage Road, ie the Wickes and The Surrey PH side of the road does not have any features along it that would prevent the construction of a zebra crossing. There is a dropped kerb that was put in approximately 18 months ago at the SCP location to make it easier for anyone with a pushchair to cross the road and there is a similar dropped kerb further along the road at the pedestrian refuge island. Both of these could be removed and superseded by a zebra crossing.
6. On the south side of the road and over the same length, the situation is significantly different, as there are a number of driveways, the junction with Five Oaks Close and a bus lay-by. Furthermore, there is no footway adjacent to Hermitage Road between Five Oaks Close and a point opposite The Surrey pub. Consequently, it is not possible to accommodate a zebra crossing to the west of Five Oaks Close without removing the bus lay by and repositioning the bus stop further west along the road. The amount of available highway at this point means that any repositioned bus stop would have to be on the carriageway and not in a lay by, which could cause sight line problems for a zebra crossing and

would result in buses using the stop obstructing traffic on Hermitage Road.

7. Between Five Oaks Close and Inkerman Road, it would appear to be possible to replace the existing pedestrian refuge island with a zebra crossing. However, this would be extremely close to the junction with Inkerman Road and only 95 – 100m away from the toucan crossing that is between Inkerman Road and Amis Road. It should also be noted that this toucan crossing is only approximately 115 – 120m from the pelican crossing near to The Winston Churchill School.
8. A zebra crossing may not provide the simple, safe solution that the petitioners have assumed it will and given the current personal injury collision history mentioned earlier, it is not possible to provide a statistically safer crossing facility. It should also be noted that, unlike the signal controlled crossing between Inkerman Road and Amis Road, which is on a desire line to the shops and likely to be used throughout the day, a new zebra in place of the refuge island could be unused for long periods of the day. At a school crossing patrol or signal controlled crossing, pedestrians gather and cross in discreet groups, either when the patroller stops traffic or the signals change. Because traffic has to give way to pedestrians when they step onto the crossing, it is possible that if the pedestrians cross a zebra crossing in small but very frequent groups or cross in a single more drawn-out line, the additional traffic stoppages could add significantly to the driver frustration that already exists on Hermitage Road, particularly in the morning peak period. This heavy traffic heading towards Woking could also dangerously obscure pedestrians who are crossing from the Wickes / The Surrey pub side of the road. If pedestrians cross between stationary vehicles the freer and faster moving west-bound traffic might not see them until they reach the middle of the road.
9. There appears to be scope to enlarge the existing pedestrian refuge island both in width and depth so that it could accommodate more pedestrians. There are also plans, as part of the Cycle Woking works, and for which there is still funding, to widen the footway on the south side of the road to provide a shared use pedestrian / cycle facility, which has been requested by the school as it completes the link between the school and the rest of the cycle network in the vicinity.
10. The school is responsible for recruiting the School Crossing Patroller, although Surrey County Council will train the patroller, provide the necessary equipment and fund the position. Even though SCC is looking to make savings to the SCP budget, we are keen that this site should not be deleted. We understand that someone is interested in the position and that the school is going through the necessary interview / recruitment process. Given the engineering difficulties associated with installing a crossing in this location, the provision of a School Crossing Patroller is considered to be the most viable option.
11. There is no budget for Integrated Transportation Schemes / improvement work for this financial year and that it is likely to be the case for the next

four years or so. Consequently, the provision of a replacement School Crossing Patroller is the only viable option.

CONSULTATIONS

12. No consultations have been undertaken as no works are proposed

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. There is no budget for Integrated Transportation Schemes / improvement work for this financial year and that it is likely to be the case for the next four years or so.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

14. There are no sustainable development implications.

CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

15. There are no direct crime and disorder implications.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

16. There are no equalities implications.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

17. The recommendation to note the contents of this report is the only one that can be given due to the budget position. Even with an ITS budget, it is likely that a future recommendation would be that the provision of a replacement School Crossing Patroller is the only viable option.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

18. No other work can be undertaken until the reinstatement of the Integrated Transport Scheme budget and such work will be undertaken when the scheme is reached on the ITS programme. The rate of progress through that programme will be dependant upon the budget that is received. That, combined with the scheme's ranking in the programme at that time, will determine when the scheme is considered again. The situation will need to be re-assessed at that time before the appropriate course of action is taken.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:	None			
Version No. 1	Date: 23/06/2010	Time: 0900	Initials: KP	No of annexes: 0

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