



## OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (WOKING)

### RESPONSE TO PETITION REGARDING BLACKHORSE ROAD JUNCTION WITH SAUNDERS LANE AND HEATH HOUSE 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 significantly upgrade the traffic calming measures at the crossroads junction. The petition has 820 signatures.

#### **Wording of Petition**

“For a significant upgrading of traffic calming measures at the junction of Blackhorse Road, Heath House Road and Saunders Lane.

Since November 2008, there have been 7 injuries, 1 death and numerous other accidents at this junction. We feel that major improvements are vital to slow or stop traffic and prevent further serious accidents.”

#### **Concerns**

Although improvement works were undertaken at this junction in 2004, including the reduction of the speed limit on Blackhorse Road, collisions continue to occur at this junction. A fatal collision took place at the crossroads on 14 September 2009.

#### **OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

## **INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND**

1. A report was submitted to this Committee on 28 January 2004 outlining the collision history at this junction together with a proposed package of works to try and reduce the number of incidents that took place at the crossroads. As a result of that report, the speed limit on Blackhorse Road was reduced to 30mph and permanent Vehicle Activated Signs installed on Blackhorse Road on each approach to the junction. These signs flash a warning of the crossroads and complement the static crossroads warning signs. Buff coloured anti-skid surfacing was also applied on these approaches. We have also put the cutting of vegetation at the junction on the routine programme for Serco to undertake.
2. Applications to erect STOP signs on Heath House Road and Saunders Lane were submitted to the Government Office for the South East (a highway authority cannot simply erect these signs – authorisation needs to be gained). However, GOSE only gave permission for such signs on Heath House Road as the sight lines from Saunders Lane were deemed not to be sufficiently restricted.

## **ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS**

3. Given that authorisation was only received for STOP signs at the Heath House Road junction, it is ironic that most of the personal injuries seem to have been sustained as a result of vehicles failing to give way at, or emerging from, Saunders Lane. This type of manoeuvre took place in 4 of the 5 collisions that occurred at the junction during the last 3 years (the petitioners figures for injuries and fatalities are correct, with the addition of another slight injury in late 2007). In 3 of these 4 collisions, the vehicle on Blackhorse Road was travelling north even though the sight line of a driver in Saunders Lane south along Blackhorse Road is one of the better ones at this junction. It is interesting that in 2004, the majority of collisions at this junction involved vehicles failing to give way or emerging from Heath House Road and not Saunders Lane.
4. We do not have any current speed data but if vehicle speeds are as high as the petitioners' concerns suggest, it is worth highlighting this as an example of the fact that simply reducing the speed limit does not automatically mean that vehicle speeds will go down. A further reduction in the speed limit is not proposed.
5. Traffic calming cannot be introduced in Blackhorse Road without first introducing a system of street lighting (the few columns at the junction do not constitute a "system" in technical and legal terms). This was explained in the January 2004 report, as were the reasons for not introducing a mini-roundabout.
6. Traffic signals might seem to provide the solution, although a set of signals in isolation in what is, to all intents and purposes, the middle of a country lane would be likely to suffer from poor compliance. They would certainly urbanise the area and the surrounding vegetation would

undoubtedly cause more of a maintenance issue than it already does, as it would obscure most of the traffic signal heads without constant attention. This is assuming that the signal poles can be accommodated within the very limited extent of highway that exists along the road. It is highly probably that some trees would have to be removed to provide adequate visibility of the signals. These trees are not on the highway and their removal would improve sightlines with or without the signals and this should be considered in any case. Signalising the junction would also be extremely expensive and would impose an additional burden on the already limited signal maintenance budget.

7. As already mentioned, the extent of highway along Blackhorse Road and at the crossroads junction is very limited and certainly not sufficient to allow a conventional roundabout to be constructed. It should be noted that although there may be room for a mini-roundabout (as opposed to a conventional one) such a measure would be wholly inappropriate for this location and would not be considered.
8. This junction was considered at the Woking Casualty Reduction Working Group (CRWG) meeting in January. The casualty statistics for the last 3 years were discussed and because of the apparent pattern, with vehicles on Blackhorse Road travelling north as mentioned earlier, the police officers present offered to review the original witness statements that were taken at the time. Only the basic collision data is available to us on our mapping system and it was hoped that these statements might contain some useful information, which in turn might allow us to develop engineering measures to improve the junction. We have not received that information yet but intend discussing it at the CRWG later in July. That having been said, there may be some merit in highlighting the junction using reflective bollards. Although its location should be obvious, when travelling north along Blackhorse Road, this is not always the case and this use of bollards is used in other parts of the country (please note that until the witness statements are reviewed, we cannot say if this was a contributory factor in any of the collisions).
9. We will cut back any vegetation that is encroaching into sight lines; we endeavour to this anyway as part of ongoing maintenance work. Similarly, we will refresh the white lining at the junction and the Blackhorse Road approaches to it.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

10. No formal consultations have been carried out, although the location is discussed with Surrey Police at meetings such as the Casualty Reduction Working Group.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

11. There is currently no budget available for any work at this junction.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

12. There are no sustainable development implications.

### **CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

13. There are no direct crime and disorder implications.

### **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

14. There are no equalities implications.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

15. The recommendation to note the contents of this report is the only one that can be given due to the budget position. The scheme should remain on the ITS programme for consideration at the appropriate time when funding is made available again.

### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

16. Any improvements such as the refreshing of the road markings and cutting back of vegetation that can be undertaken as part of a maintenance function, for which there are limited budgets, will be carried out as such.

17. 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.

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<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b>	None

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