



## OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (WOKING)

### RESPONSE TO PETITION FROM ST DUNSTAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL REGARDING ONSLOW CRESCENT

9 FEBRUARY 2011

#### KEY ISSUE

To advise the Committee of the response to a petition received from St Dunstan's Catholic Primary School.

#### SUMMARY

A petition urging Surrey County Council to introduce measures in Onslow Crescent to prevent a serious accident from occurring, was presented to the Local Committee (Woking) at its meeting on 20 October 2010.

#### Wording of Petition

"This petition is to Surrey County Council to introduce traffic calming measures in Onslow Crescent GU22 7AX to improve safety for children attending St. Dunstan's Catholic Primary School and residents. In particular, a one-way system starting at the Woking Station end of Oriental Road and clear road markings (double yellow lines) on the opposite side of Onslow Crescent to the school are requested. Re-marking of the zigzags for emergency access outside the school entrances are also requested. The petition's aim is to prevent a serious accident occurring."

#### Concerns

As is common outside of many urban schools during dropping-off and picking up times, congestion occurs in Onslow Crescent during these peak periods in the vicinity of St Dunstan's Catholic Primary School, accompanied by inappropriate parking and some highway users travelling against the flow of the voluntary one-way system that is in operation.

## OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Local Committee (Woking) is asked to:**

- i. Note the contents of this report.

## INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

1. St Dunstan's Catholic Primary School is situated on the Eastern-most side of the 'U' formed by Onslow Crescent. Due to the wide-reaching catchment area of the School, a large proportion of pupils travel in and return home by car. It is noted that since the re-location of St Dunstan's Church to Shaftesbury Road, a significant number of vehicles bringing children to school are able to park in the church car park and, therefore, away from the immediate vicinity of the school itself. The parents who park in the church car park walk their children the short distance to the school, aided by a School Crossing Patroller situated on Pembroke Road.
2. There are currently no double yellow lines in the vicinity of the school, which would be enforceable "At Any Time". The single yellow lines and parking bays that are present, by virtue of the road being within Zone 5 of the Woking Controlled Parking Zone, are only enforceable between 9.30am and 11.30am, Monday to Friday. The School Keep Clear markings do not have any accompanying signs alongside them and so cannot be enforced by Woking Borough Council's Civil Enforcement Officers. Consequently, there are no waiting restrictions that can be enforced at school dropping-off and picking-up times.
3. The school operates a voluntary one-way system, which all parents using Onslow Crescent are encouraged to comply with. This system operates in an anti-clockwise direction, so traffic enters from the western junction of Onslow Crescent / Oriental Road and exits via the eastern junction of Onslow Crescent / Oriental Road. Any traffic entering from Park Road or Pembroke Road is also encouraged to travel in an anti-clockwise direction, exiting at the Eastern-most junction. No signs are present because of the voluntary nature of the one-way system.
4. Surrey Police Officers have undertaken a lot of work outside the school to improve the parking and congestion situation but this obviously places a significant burden on available resources and it cannot continue at the same level in the longer term.
5. Apart from at the junctions with Oriental Road, no reported personal injury collisions are shown in our records for Onslow Crescent. These records go back as far as 1987. However, we have been informed by the school that a previous head teacher was slightly injured in an incident outside the school several years ago. This incident does not appear to have been reported, and therefore is not reflected in our records.

## ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

6. Surrey Highways Officers have attended site on several occasions, sometimes with officers from other departments and authorities. On each occasion the School Keep Clear marking was ignored by a number of parents who parked on it to drop off their children. Although this practice is the complete opposite of the intention of the marking, it did not appear to cause any problems. The situation gets worse whenever a vehicle drives against the voluntary one-way system and a number of such vehicles were witnessed during the various visits. Sometimes, the “offending” vehicles drove along the footway opposite the school to get past the traffic that is adhering to the voluntary one-way system. It was evident that not all of the drivers who were seen driving against the voluntary one-way system were unaware of it and some parents of pupils attending St Dunstan’s were seen driving against it. We have been advised that traffic levels are higher and the situation much worse when there are road works in the town centre, particularly when work occurs in the vicinity of the A320 Victoria Arch.
7. The residents of Onslow Crescent generally seem to tolerate the voluntary one-way system but correspondence from a number of residents has made clear that the idea of the one-way system being introduced as a permanent measure would not be considered acceptable. Similarly, it is likely that proposing the introduction of significant lengths of double yellow line in Onslow Crescent would result in considerable objection.
8. A significant number of illuminated signs would be required for the one-way system to be made permanent and it is estimated that the cost of these signs, revised road markings for the one-way system and the process of making the traffic regulation order will be in the region of £25,000.
9. It is entirely likely that a permanent, signed one-way system could result in an increase in vehicle speeds. This sometimes occurs because drivers quite reasonably expect not to encounter other drivers coming towards them.
10. A permanent, regulatory and properly signed one-way system will only be of benefit by prohibiting the occasional vehicle from driving against the main flow of traffic, otherwise, it is unlikely to have any real effect on the traffic situation outside the school; vehicle volumes and the amount of parking will remain the same. Similarly, it would only offer any benefit for a relatively short period of time despite being imposed upon road users and residents on a permanent basis.
11. Although it had been suggested that double yellow lines could be considered between Abbotsford Close and the link road to Pembroke Road, this was merely to formalise what already happens; parking

generally occurs on the school side of the road only. For the majority of the time, there would be no reason for such restrictions.

12. The Parking Strategy and Implementation Group are unable to justify and recommend the introduction of these double yellow lines. However, as part of a future review, some of the existing on-street parking bays might be relocated. Arrangements are being made to remove a bay, close to the eastern junction with Oriental Road, which does not appear on our Waiting Restriction Traffic Order plans. The School Keep Clear marking will also be refreshed.
13. Based upon the personal injury collision history alone, there is no justification for implementing a permanent one-way system or traffic calming of any other description.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

14. No formal consultations with residents have been carried out. However, the residents are aware of the suggestions for more restrictions and a permanent one-way system and have made their opposition known. At a local level, Surrey Police are in favour of a permanent one-way system and modified waiting restrictions. However, our usual point of contact within Surrey Police who comments with specific regard to traffic and the highway network matters is also of the opinion that a permanent one-way system would only be of limited benefit.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

15. Within the Local Transport Plan programme, no work is proposed in Onslow Crescent and, consequently, there is no highways budget. The removal of the parking bay close to Oriental Road and which does not appear on the waiting restrictions Traffic Order and the provision of a sign alongside the School Keep Clear marking are expected to cost no more than £1000.

### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

16. There are no sustainable development implications.

### **CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

17. There are no direct crime and disorder implications.

### **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

18. There are no equalities implications.

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

19. The problems that exist outside St Dunstan's Catholic Primary School do so for relatively short periods each school day. The particular issues

that a formal one-way system could resolve only exist if a vehicle travels against the flow of the voluntary one-way system during these short periods. It is unlikely to have any real impact on the general congestion outside the school. For the majority of the time, the road can function usefully as a two-way road. The residents of Onslow Crescent have made it clear that they oppose a permanent one-way system and any significant changes to the waiting restrictions.

20. On our accident database, which goes back as far as 1987, there are no reported injury collisions of any kind outside the school. It is impossible, therefore, for any engineering measures such as formalising the one-way system to reduce such collisions. Furthermore, the one-way system would only be of very limited benefit in reducing congestion outside the school. Consequently, based upon our scheme prioritisation system, any works to reduce congestion or formalise the one-way system would be unlikely to attract funding when compared against other potential schemes.
21. The introduction of waiting restrictions would, for the most part, not be beneficial. Parking for the parents away from the immediate vicinity of the school exists at the church car park and further along Shaftesbury Road.
22. The introduction of a walking bus between St Dunstan's School and the Church car park could significantly reduce the impact of traffic in Onslow Crescent, and mitigate many of the safety concerns expressed. This option was discussed directly with the school as part of the wider discussions about safety in Onslow Crescent, and, whilst it is noted that there were potential hurdles to the school implementing this, it remains a positive self-help option that Surrey County Council would fully endorse.
23. Some modifications to the existing parking bays may improve the situation and will be considered by the Parking Strategy and Implementation Group for inclusion in the next appropriate parking review. In the shorter term, the removal of the on-street parking bay closest to Oriental Road, on the Eastern most arm of Onslow Crescent would reduce the congestion at this location. This congestion can happen at any time of the day, so removing the bay will have a positive impact. It does not appear on our Traffic Order plans and can be removed without the usual requirement to advertise the intention to modify the Order.
24. The Parking Team had intended to remove this bay as part of the lining work that is required for the implementation of the 2010 parking review (approved in February 2010 with funding allocated in September 2010), but they are now seeking to implement the bay removal at the earliest opportunity.
25. The provision of a time plate alongside the School Keep Clear marking will also be implemented by the Parking Team to allow the road marking to be properly enforced.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

26. The School Keep Clear marking will be refreshed and the Parking Team will consider refreshing other lining associated with restrictions in the road. The parking bay that does not appear on our plans will be removed, and the time plate will be provided.

**LEAD OFFICER:** Andrew Milne, Local Highways Manager

**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** 0300 200 1003

**E-MAIL:** wah@surreycc.gov.uk

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Kevin Patching, Engineer

**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** 0300 200 1003

**E-MAIL:** wah@surreycc.gov.uk

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** None

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