

DRAFT

Minutes of the meeting of the
Guildford LOCAL COMMITTEE
held at 7.00 pm on 20 September 2016
at Council Chamber, Guildford Borough Council, Millmead House, Millmead,
Guildford, Surrey, GU2 4BB.

Surrey County Council Members:

- * Mr W D Barker OBE
- * Mr Mark Brett-Warburton
- Mr Graham Ellwood
- * Mr David Goodwin
- * Mr George Johnson
- * Mrs Marsha Moseley
- * Mrs Pauline Searle
- * Mr Keith Taylor (Chairman)
- * Mrs Fiona White
- * Mr Keith Witham

Borough / District Members:

- * Cllr Matt Furniss (Vice-Chairman)
- * Cllr Nigel Manning
- * Cllr David Bilbe
- * Cllr Julia McShane
- Cllr Tony Phillips
- * Cllr Tony Rooth
- * Cllr David Wright
- * Cllr Illman
- * Cllr Reeve
- * Cllr Sarti

* In attendance

164/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Graham Ellwood and Tony Philips.

165/16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING [Item 2]

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 June were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. It was noted that Councillor Reeve had not received an update on air quality from David Ligertwood recorded under item 9 Travel Smart Programme Close Overview.

166/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

167/16 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS [Item 4]

There were no announcements.

168/16 PETITIONS & LETTERS OF REPRESENTATION [Item 5]

There were no petitions submitted.

169/16 PETITION RESPONSE: [Item 5a]

There were no petitions submitted.

170/16 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME [Item 6]

There were no written public questions submitted within the required timescale. The Chairman agreed to distribute an email form Fiona Curtis, Chairman of the Compton Parish Council as set out below:

Compton Parish Council responded to the consultation held, yet was not informed that this item would be an agenda item and hence has not had opportunity to formally raise questions at tonight's meeting. Council wishes to raise this as we believe due process may have been compromised.

If the matter is discussed without the opportunity for parish representation, then we would like clarification of the following and ask that these matters be raised.

The emergency services wish to retain access for emergencies only, but this request is not as we understand it, considered viable. We question how appropriate it is to close this gap on the basis of safety (4 road traffic accidents over 3 years) whilst at the same time increasing risk to the lives of residents by making it more difficult for emergency services to reach them.

We would wish to have further details about the increased time it will take emergency services, i.e. how it was calculated and whether this is an average time and if so, what peak times look like. Likewise, what this figure will look like taking into account growth plans for Surrey.

Evidence shows that one of the reasons given for accidents at this point is people being lost and trying to get off the dual carriageway. Improving signage would appear eminently sensible, yet concern is raised that signage might lead to more vehicles using the route? Could we suggest that signage that indicates the route is for access only be trialled before making this drastic decision to close the gap altogether?

Due to the proximity of this proposal to the highly controversial proposal at Blackwell Farm, there are very real concerns that there may be other agendas. In order to demonstrate transparency and fairness in the decision making process we would like a list of all similar clusters (3 accidents at or close to one place within a 3 year time frame), how many of these accident clusters resulted in road closure and what alternative actions were taken where closure did not take place.

We would like to see the minutes of the meeting held in 1999 which tabled details of the decision concerning the covenant. Because of questions concerning the covenant, GBC were unable to discuss the closure at a previous meeting, yet appear to be willing to do so now, without giving residents time to take appropriate advice or notice to enable further clarification? This will undoubtedly be challenged and we would support residents' rights to have this matter dealt with fairly.

Finally, we support residents' views that a 50mph stretch seems eminently sensible. If the police lack the resources to police this, then speed cameras would help, just as they do on the A3.

171/16 MEMBER QUESTION TIME [Item 7]

There were no written Member's questions submitted.

172/16 A31 HOG'S BACK GAP AT EAST FLEXFORD LANE [Item 8]

This item was introduced by John Hilder, the Area Highways Manager (SW) and Duncan Knox, Road Safety Team Leader. It was noted that this was essentially the same report that had been brought forward in March which had been deferred to a later meeting following advice of the Surrey County Council legal team.

It was noted that this issue had been discussed at length at the Road Safety Group meeting for Guildford which included representatives from the County Road Safety Team, Surrey Highways and Surrey Police when accident data was looked at over the past three years.

For the period June 2012 to September 2015 there were 15 accidents. Four of these were considered to be caused by drivers trying to use the gap; two attempting to turn right from the eastbound carriageway and two attempting to turn from the westbound carriageway. Police considered the main theme to be that drivers were lost or were looking for somewhere to turn around. None were local people. It was noted that there had been no accidents in the past year.

A number of existing rights of way exist which pre-dated the development of the road into a high speed dual carriageway. There was no record of collisions involving pedestrians. It was explained that increasing the signage and clearing of vegetation around the gap might well increase usage and consequently increase the potential for more accidents. It was noted that there were currently broken signs and vegetation along the road. Planned cutting back was currently undertaken twice a year and the next cut would be in October and the signage would be reinstated at the same time.

The report explored alternatives to full closure of the gap, but these were all discounted due to the overriding safety concerns. In particular the report concluded that installing a gate in the gap to allow access for emergency services only was likely to present new hazards for road users which outweigh

the additional journey time of 3.5 minutes anticipated by Surrey Fire & Rescue in the event of an emergency in Flexford Lane East.

It was suggested that there was a conflict between local traffic and through traffic. Vehicles moving from the nearside lane to the offside lane and then slowing down was not expected by other drivers who did not live in the area.

It was suggested that four accidents in the last four years was not a high figure given the volume of traffic using the road. However the figure was high for the limited number of vehicles trying to use the gap.

The report concluded that there were no alternatives, affordable or otherwise, that would reduce accidents to the extent that closure would and that the gap should be closed as originally recommended by the Road Safety Working Group for Guildford. While this would undoubtedly inconvenience residents this must be balanced against the record of accidents and injuries associated with use of the gap. The fact that it would remain on SatNav systems for some years to come was a concern, but this would be unavoidable and could be mitigated by the inclusion of 'gap closed' signs installed on both A31 approaches. The Area Team had already identified shortcomings in the signing for side roads and accesses along the length of the Hog's Back and are in the process of carrying out a review, with additional signs funded from the ad-hoc signs & lines budget.

The Local Committee (Guildford) agreed by 15 votes to 3 (with 1 abstention) to:

- (i) Having reviewed the objections to the formally advertised closure of the A31 central reservation gap at East Flexford Lane at Annex 1 agree that the traffic order be made and the gap permanently closed to all vehicular traffic.

The Committee agreed to the gap closure in the interests of road safety.

Members requested that an update be provided at the December meeting of the signage improvements that had been made.

173/16 HIGHWAYS UPDATE [Item 9]

This item was introduced by John Hilder, the Area Highways Manager (SW).

It was noted under the heading Lengthman Scheme that there were only three applications submitted and not four as the report said.

The Highways team were congratulated by the Committee on the Guildford Setts project and in particular the decision not to repaint the yellow lines. This project was highlighted as a good example of collaborative working which was delivered within budget and on time.

It was noted that despite heavy duty pressure washing some yellow paint remained on some of the setts, it was anticipated that this would erode in time.

Concern was expressed about the number of roads under project Horizon which had been re-designated as 'up for reconsideration'. It was noted that two further Horizon projects were being considered to cover structures and flooding. Members were concerned that these should not be looked at in isolation.

The Local Committee (Guildford) agreed:

- (i) To note progress of the 2016/17 programme of highway works and operations detailed at Annex 1.
- (ii) That revenue budget is capitalised as necessary to deliver the agreed programme of works.
- (iii) To endorse the experimental traffic regulation order for Guildford High Street which imposes no waiting restrictions throughout the length of the pedestrian zone and which makes yellow lines unnecessary.
- (iv) To note the successful conclusion of the High Street Setts project, which was completed in August.

The decision above allowed the implementation of ITS schemes included in the 2016/17 programme of highway works.

174/16 WALNUT TREE CLOSE PROPOSED EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC RESTRICTION [Item 10]

This item was introduced by Robert Curtis, Transport Strategy Project Manager.

It was noted that this was one of several projects funded by the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership and would be the first to be implemented. The scheme was initially investigated for inclusion within the Town Centre Transport Package after a petition signed by 342 residents was handed to SCC in 2013 requesting that the road be made closed to through-traffic. Residents claimed that a significant amount of the traffic on the road use it as a "rat run" between the A25 and the gyratory.

The consultation was carried out for 6 weeks between 13 June and 24 July 2016. Respondents were asked to consider 2 options for Walnut Tree Close; with the results of the consultation assisting with the decision on which option to take forward as an Experimental Traffic Order which would be in place for up to 18 months. Respondents were also given the option to "do nothing".

The two options presented were:

- A point closure of Walnut Tree Close, preventing any vehicles (except emergency services) from passing through a barrier to be positioned immediately north of the access road to Yorkies Bridge on Walnut Tree Close
- A one-way restriction enabling vehicles to travel north along Walnut Tree Close but preventing southbound vehicles from travelling along the section between Kernal Court and immediately north of the access road to Yorkies Bridge.

The consultation received the highest response rate of any recent major schemes consultation with 630 questionnaire responses received. Opinion was evenly divided between Option 1 (33%), Option 2 (30%) and neither Option 1 nor 2 (34%).

The Committee supported the proposal for both options to continue to be explored. They were keen that the start date be brought forward but this might not be possible under the terms of the LEP funding agreement.

There was a general preference for the complete closure to be tried first with a commitment that if it clearly did not work it would be removed.

It was noted that although the survey attracted a high response rate, those drivers using the road who did not live or work in the road would have been unlikely to comment. It was suggested that signs should be put up in the road telling people how they could comment.

The Local Committee (Guildford) agreed:

- (i) To note the results (Annex 1) of the high level analysis of the public engagement event proposed traffic restrictions on Walnut Tree Close and note that further consideration of the comments received will be taken forward as the scheme develops.
- (ii) The proposed trial of two different options for Walnut Tree Close; it was further agreed that decisions regarding details of the proposed trial would be delegated to the Transportation Task Group.
- (iii) To note that the Local Committee would be updated on a regular basis during the life of the project.

These decisions were made to enable the Local Committee to determine the outcome of the project and to keep them informed of the scheme development.

175/16 COMMUNITY SAFETY REPORT [Item 11]

This report was introduced by the Chairman. It was noted that the Local Committee had a delegated budget of £3,000 for community safety projects and this report recommended the introduction of a simple process enabling the Local Community Safety Partnership and other organisations to outline their planned spend for projects that meet the criteria.

The Local Committee (Guildford) agreed that:

- (i) The delegated Community Safety budget of £3,000 per Local Committee for 2016/17 is to be retained by the Community Partnership

Team, on behalf of the Local Committee, and that the Community Safety Partnership is invited to submit proposals that meet the criteria and principles for funding, as defined at paragraph 2.6 of this report.

- (ii) Authority is delegated to the Community Partnership Manager, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Local Committee, to authorise the expenditure of the Community Safety budget in accordance with the criteria and principles stated at paragraph 2.6 of this report.
- (iii) The Committee receives a report detailing the projects that were successful in being awarded the local community safety funding and the outcomes and impact they have achieved.

176/16 DECISION TRACKER [Item 12]

Members noted progress on the Decision Tracker.

177/16 FORWARD PLAN [Item 13]

Members noted the items on the forward plan and invited to let the Chairman know of any other items to be included at future meetings.

Meeting ended at: 9.35 pm

Chairman