

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)****DATE: 4 DECEMBER 2013****LEAD OFFICER: JOHN LAWLOR, AREA TEAM MANAGER****SUBJECT: A24 HORSHAM ROAD, BEARE GREEN
CENTRAL RESERVATION VEHICLE OVERHANG****DIVISION: DORKING RURAL****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The central reservation is not wide enough to accommodate large vehicles, including buses, turning right out of the southern arm of Old Horsham Road onto the A24 Horsham Road southbound. A successful trial lane closure on the northbound carriageway of the A24 was carried out in 2012. This report considers options for introducing a permanent scheme to protect large vehicles waiting in the central reservation.

The report also considers safety concerns at a gap in the central reservation on the A24 Horsham Road opposite Henfold Drive and suggests that this gap is permanently closed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:**The Local Committee (Mole Valley) is asked to:**

- (i) Approve the reduction of the A24 Horsham Road northbound carriageway width to one lane in advance of the opening in the central reservation at the southern arm of Old Horsham Road (Option 1), as shown in Annex 2;
- (ii) Approve the closure of the gap in the central reservation of the A24 Horsham Road opposite Henfold Drive (Option 4), as shown in Annex 4;
- (iii) Authorise the making of a Traffic Regulation Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the effect of which will be to close the gap in the central reservation of the A24 Horsham Road opposite Henfold Drive; and
- (iv) Authorise delegation of authority to the Area Team Manager in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Local Committee and the local Divisional Member to resolve any objections received in connection with the advertised Traffic Regulation Order.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To provide protection for vehicles turning right out of Old Horsham Road to join the A24 Horsham Road southbound. To prevent the unsafe use of the gap in the central reservation opposite Henfold Drive.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 The opening in the central reservation at the southern junction of Old Horsham Road with the A24 Horsham Road is frequently used by buses, including school buses, to turn right out of Old Horsham Road to join the A24 southbound. The central reservation is not wide enough to accommodate large vehicles undertaking this manoeuvre and vehicles overhang the outside lanes of the dual carriageway.
- 1.2 There have been 3 recorded personal injury collisions in the vicinity of the opening in the central reservation over the past 3 years, 1 resulting in serious injury and the other 2 in slight injuries.
- 1.3 Mole Valley Local Committee allocated funding from the Integrated Transport Schemes budget in 2011/12 to investigate the feasibility of providing improvement measures for a safer vehicle crossing at the southern arm of the Old Horsham Road and the A24 Horsham Road.
- 1.4 An experimental lane closure on the northbound carriageway of the A24 was carried out at the end of October 2012 for 10 days. The lane closure provided additional storage space in the central reservation for vehicles using the opening. A CCTV survey was undertaken to observe the behaviour of the traffic during the trial to establish whether the layout could be successful under permanent conditions.
- 1.5 Safety concerns have been raised by the Road Safety Team and the Police relating to the use of the gap in the central reservation on the A24 directly to the north of the petrol station, opposite Henfold Drive. Vehicles have been observed leaving the petrol station from the site's entrance in order to use the gap in the central reservation to travel northbound. This manoeuvre brings exiting vehicles into conflict with vehicles entering from the A24. It also means that vehicles are travelling a distance of approximately 10 metres against the flow of traffic in the deceleration lane for vehicles leaving the A24 before crossing the carriageway into the gap. This is particularly dangerous at night as southbound drivers are confronted by the oncoming headlights of vehicles carrying out this movement.
- 1.6 A location plan is attached as **Annex 1**.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 The survey carried out during the trial concluded that there was little affect on journey times or traffic flows as a result of closing the outside lane of the northbound carriageway between Beare Green roundabout and the opening in the central reservation at the southern junction of Old Horsham Road.
- 2.2 The survey also showed that the gaps between the flowing traffic travelling northbound in the remaining (nearside) lane was reduced by the effect of merging vehicles from two lanes into one. This resulted in there being fewer opportunities for traffic wishing to join the A24 from Old Horsham Road.
- 2.3 The trial successfully provided protection to stationary vehicles within the opening in the central reservation without causing congestion or impacting on the safety of the travelling public.

3. OPTIONS:

3.1 Following the success of the trial lane closure, options have been considered for introducing a permanent scheme to protect large vehicles waiting in the central reservation.

3.2 **Option 1:** Reduce the northbound carriageway width to one lane in advance of the opening in the central reservation, as trialled in 2012.

Option comprises road markings and advance warning signs, as shown in **Annex 2**.

Advantages:

- Trial did not result in congestion or vehicle queues
- Successfully provides protection to large vehicles stationary within the central reservation
- Reduces the vehicle crossing distance into the central reservation
- Provides an improved U-turn facility for motorists travelling northbound

Disadvantages:

- Reduced gap lengths between vehicles travelling northbound on the A24 increases the difficulty for motorists crossing/joining the A24 from Old Horsham Road (southern arm)

3.3 **Option 2:** Reduce the southbound carriageway width to one lane in advance of the opening in the central reservation.

Option comprises road markings, advance warning signs, physical kerb build out and street lighting, as shown in **Annex 3**.

Advantages:

- Successfully provides protection to large vehicles stationary within the central reservation
- Provides protection to vehicles joining the southbound carriageway

Disadvantages:

- Potential conflict area for vehicles joining the A24 southbound from the central reservation but wishing to cross the nearside lane to access the petrol station or properties
- Street lighting would be required due to the provision of a physical island

3.4 **Option 3:** Reduce the width of both carriageways to one lane in advance of the opening in the central reservation.

Option 3 combines options 1 and 2. In addition to the advantages and disadvantages of options 1 and 2, as set out above, option 3 would provide increased protection to large vehicles stationary within the central reservation together with greater turning space.

3.5 **Option 4:** Closure of the gap in the central reservation directly north of the petrol station (opposite Henfold Drive).

Option comprises kerb works, conversion of existing carriageway to soft verge and removal of existing traffic signs, as shown in **Annex 4**. Requires statutory process to be followed under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

Advantages:

- Improved safety
- Diverts vehicles currently using this gap to a higher standard opening in the central reservation 170m north or to Beare Green roundabout 360m south, depending on direction of travel
- Reduces the number of conflict areas and turning movements on this section of the A24

Disadvantages:

- Increased distance to travel, particularly for residents in Henfold Drive

4. CONSULTATIONS:

4.1 Surrey Police have been consulted on the options set out above. Option 1 is their preferred option as they consider it would help protect vehicles in the central reservation whilst having a minimal impact on traffic flows. The Police also support option 4. They are of the view that closing the gap near the petrol stations should cause only minor inconvenience but will greatly reduce the potential for a collision.

4.2 If the Local Committee were to approve option 4, the residents directly affected would be informed of the proposal and statutory consultation would be carried out as part of the legal process for closing the gap.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 The cost of implementing the options have been estimated, as given below.

Option 1	£20,000
Option 2	£50,000
Option 3	£70,000
Option 4	£15,000 - 20,000

5.2 In order to proceed with any of the options, funding will need to be allocated from the Local Committee's Integrated Transport Schemes budget. The highways forward programme 2014/15 – 2015/16 is the subject of a separate report to this meeting of the Local Committee. This report recommends that £60,000 be allocated to the A24 Horsham Road/Old Horsham Road scheme.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 The Highway Service is mindful of its needs within this area and attempts to treat all road users of the public highway with equality and understanding.

7. LOCALISM:

7.1 The Highways Service is mindful of the localism agenda and engages with the local community as appropriate before proceeding with the implementation of any highway scheme.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	Set out below
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	Set out below
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report

8.1 Crime and Disorder implications

A well-managed highway network can contribute to reduction in crime and disorder.

8.2 Sustainability implications

The use of sustainable materials and the recycling of materials is carried out wherever possible and appropriate

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

9.1 Option 1 proposes making permanent the successful trial of the lane closure on the northbound carriageway of the A24. The Police have confirmed that this is their preferred option. Option 4 closes the gap in the central reservation opposite Henfold Drive where there are safety concerns relating to use of this gap by vehicles leaving the petrol station. This option is also supported by the Police.

9.2 It is recommended that options 1 and 4 are progressed, subject to the allocation of funding from the Integrated Transport Schemes budget for 2014/15. The closure of the gap will require a statutory process to be followed.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

10.1 Subject to Local Committee approval and the allocation of funding, detailed design of options 1 and 4 will be carried out. The Traffic Regulation Order to close the gap in the central reservation opposite Henfold Drive will be advertised. Subject to no objections being maintained, the Order will be made. Options 1 and 4 will then be implemented.

Contact Officer:

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Consulted:

Surrey Police

Annexes:

Annex 1: Location Plan

Sources/background papers:

- A24 Horsham Road, Vehicle Overhang – Feasibility Report. June 2013

