

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (WOKING)

DATE: 4 DECEMBER 2013

SUBJECT: WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

DIVISION: WOKING



1. Question from Mr Simon Baluch-Jenkins

Would the Committee please note and attempt to solve the following situation:
We have, on the main A320 through Woking three or four pedestrian crossings, which take no cognisance of traffic flow and act on immediate demand of a button being pushed. The worst performing lights are the ones by the market, just up from the fire station and the ones outside Evans Cycles, south of the bridge. It has taken me, and I should think hundreds of others, 25 minutes to travel from outside the theatre to the police station, during rush hours. In addition the queue coming from Guildford into town can stretch back towards the junction for the Leisure centre. On observation, the pedestrian lights go green to cross irrespective of the traffic. They have changed twice in a minute when I have been driving. The other lights, south of the bridge, work without co-ordination to the Market ones and hence the gridlock that often experience.

Could I suggest co-ordinating these lights with traffic lights so that pedestrian flow is when the side roads have right of way. Already the response has been, to my County Councillor, that it will done when the new High St road is installed. But this is more wasted time and petrol for another few years.

If this cannot be done now, is it possible to put a delay timer on the pedestrian lights so that it can only change once every two or three minutes, and can the two sets of above mentioned lights be linked.

Incidentally, the system at the Chobham Road junction works well for cars and pedestrians.

Answer from Chairman on behalf of the committee:

The Woking region traffic signals run on SCOOT (Split Cycle Offset Optimisation Technique) and are controlled by UTC (Urban Traffic Control). SCOOT is a tool for managing and controlling traffic signals in urban areas. It is an adaptive system that responds automatically to fluctuations in traffic flow through the use of on-street detectors embedded in the road surface.

Alongside the SCOOT loops (which detect vehicles entering/exiting the SCOOT/UTC region), a database is built, which aids control and helps to eliminate congestion within that region.

Currently, the following junctions (which are linked using SCOOT & UTC) are being looked at:

- Victoria Way near Goldsworth Road, Woking (near the Market) - Toucan Crossing
- Church Street j/w Victoria Way, Woking (near Fire Station) - Junction incorporating pedestrian facilities
- Lockfield Drive j/w Victoria Way, Woking - Junction only
- Peacocks Shopping Centre j/w Victoria Way, Woking + The Toucan Crossing nr the Lightbox - Junction incorporating pedestrian facilities
- Chobham Road j/w Victoria Way, Woking - Junction incorporating pedestrian facilities

There are certain issues which have been identified with the above junctions and these are currently being rectified. Over the coming weeks there will be various site visits to report what is happening on street so any fine tuning to the database and timetables are accurate and reflect current traffic conditions. It is anticipated that improvements should be seen in the next few weeks, and fine tuning taking place into the New Year. Once this work has been completed, it will then be assessed to see if the crossing by 'Evans' (other side of the Arch) will need to be added to UTC. The works are all due to be completed by March 2014.

2. Question from Mr W Doe

An application has been submitted under the reference PLAN/2013/0864 to construct a footpath to link the existing school in Connaught Road to the new Junior School to be built on the land at the Brookwood Farm development.

My understanding is that this foot way is to be only used for the use of school children and their minders.

It has been suggested that the County Council are mindful of upgrading this to a public footpath/cycle track. Can you please confirm that this is not the intention, now nor will it ever be so designated?

Answer from Chairman on behalf of the committee:

The path was originally approved as part of the residential development planned for Brookwood Farm. It is part of the sustainable transport plan for the development and it will link the residential area with Brookwood Station and the Canal. The route Mr. Doe describes is to be dedicated as a Public Footpath (open to all) by the freeholder of the site (Woking Borough Council). Planning Application 2013/0864 proposes an upgrade to the surface of the path to make it easier to use by school to school pedestrian traffic. It is hoped that at some point in the future the legal use of this attractive route will be upgraded further by designating it as a 'Cycle Track' for the benefit of the public.

3. Question from Mrs J Smith

I have lived in Brookwood for the last 11 years. I have always considered Brookwood to have a nice small village environment, however I am becoming increasingly concerned at the amount of traffic that is going through the Village. I live half way along Connaught Road and now have to leave home 20 -30 minutes early in order to get to either the arch at Pirbright end or the Crossroads at the other end. This is due to the increasing build up of traffic that is going through the village. It appears that

some of the build up is caused due to a rephasing of the traffic lights at the crossroads end, in order to keep Bagshot Road clear but simply clogs Connaught Road and Brookwood Lye Road. Travelling towards the arch, is congested due to parking bays on either side of the road, stopping the traffic from flowing freely. I am concerned at the continued plans to build more houses/flats in Brookwood and adjoining areas which will cause more traffic and simply add to this existing problem.

I would like to know what is being done to alleviate this increasing problem with the flow of traffic which in turn is causing increased pollution in the village and especially around the school.

Answer from Chairman on behalf of the committee:

As reported at the September 2013 Local Committee, officers of Surrey County Council (SCC) and Woking Borough Council (WBC) have agreed to undertake a traffic study of the area which will consider the existing traffic flows and explore options to reduce congestion for local traffic whilst recognising the strategic role of the A322. This study will include a review of the operation of the traffic lights at Brookwood Crossroads and the scope for improving traffic flows in the study area. The timescale for completion of this study is planned to be reported to the Local Committee by April 2014.

Several years ago, some on-street parking bays close to West Hill Close were moved into the nearby bus layby and the bus stop positioned on the road to allow traffic to flow freely away from Brookwood Crossroads, subject to there being no bus at the bus stop. Unfortunately, there is no scope to move the on-street bays further along Connaught Road off of the carriageway to improve traffic flow. Removing them completely would allow traffic to flow more freely but is unlikely to be popular with those residents that have no other off-street parking and the bays' removal may also lead to an increase in vehicle speeds.

The traffic signals team have been contacted to undertake a check of the main signal timings, but I am not aware of any recent changes being made to these. Unfortunately, with the physical constraints at this junction, and it being the intersection point of two heavily used A roads, congestion will occur during times of peak flow.

4. Question from Mrs Morton

We would like the local committee to investigate either installing a pedestrian crossing, or ask that a lollipop person is employed outside of Horsell C of E Junior School, to enable pupils at the school and their parents and carers to cross the road to school safely.

Background

The problem is that Meadway Drive is an exceptionally busy route with cars, vans and buses travelling in both directions, including parents making their way to and from Woking High School by car, making crossing the road to the school extremely difficult and dangerous.

Typically you find that traffic is queuing on Meadway Drive on the approach to the High Street, which means to cross the road outside of the school, you need to step out between queuing traffic and look around the vehicles to see if the opposite direction is free. As you will appreciate this can be very difficult as you need to be

far enough forward to check the road is clear but not far enough forward to be hit if it isn't.

You also find that cars go quite quickly outside of the school in the direction of the high school, as that direction typically has a lighter traffic flow, thus giving drivers the opportunity to increase their speed, at the worst possible place for those trying to cross.

This problem affects anyone coming from the side of the village beyond Meadway drive, and also anyone who has to go on from the junior school to the infant school, we strongly feel that this problem needs to be addressed as year on year the number of vehicles on our roads increases, thus the problem will only continue to increase.

We feel that the children, and their parents and carers deserve a safer access to the school, and if either of these measures were implemented that this would encourage more people to walk to school, thus leading to a positive impact both on health and the environment.

Answer from Chairman on behalf of the committee:

Concerns about safety outside of Horsell C of E Junior School have been raised with Surrey Highways previously, and site surveys have been carried out by Surrey County Council's Safer Smarter Travel team. These have led to this location being classified as low risk for pedestrians, and for this reason no funding has been made available for a School Crossing Patrol officer.

Meadway Drive is straight in character, and so provides good visibility both for pedestrians and motorists. There is a formalised crossing point immediately outside of the school, and School Keep Clear markings have been provided together with double yellow lines to deter parking and improve safety.

Requests for provision of crossings are assessed and prioritised using a number of criteria, which include factors such as accessibility and the accident history. In this case, there have been no personal injury accidents in the vicinity of the school over the last three years, and so this request is likely to be determined as low priority for a crossing facility in comparison to other locations where there is an accident history. Although a three year period is the normal period over which to consider the accident record, having reviewed the five year period, it is noted that one slight personal injury accident has occurred. This was sustained when two cars collided in a nearby layby. However, this incident did not involve pedestrians.

Due to the concerns expressed about speeding, Meadway Drive was included on Woking's Speed Management Plan in October 2012, and will be periodically reviewed by Surrey Police in association with Surrey Highways. To date, there is no evidence to suggest that speeding is in fact an issue at this location. In general, speeds outside of schools are found to be relatively low due to congestion associated with drop off and collection times. However, this site will continue to be monitored, and if unacceptable driver behaviour is recorded, appropriate action will be taken by Surrey Police.