

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)

DATE: 5 MARCH 2014

LEAD OFFICER: VICTORIA JEFFREY, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AND COMMITTEE OFFICER

SUBJECT: PUBLIC QUESTIONS

DIVISION: MOLE VALLEY



### **Question from Cllr Paul Potter, District Member for Brockham, Betchworth and Buckland**

My ward has been badly affected by the recent flooding and Brockham and Strood Green have been particularly affected. Whilst accepting that the recent weather has been exceptional, I believe the situation in these villages has been made worse because of delays in dealing with known problems.

- The Brockham Flood Forum was set up over a year ago to deal with past problems in several parts of the village. What has been achieved in that time? Have definitive solutions been identified? When will these be implemented?

The problems in my ward may have a variety of causes including possibly:

- Control of the flow of the River Mole and the release of water by Gatwick Airport. What powers and duties does the County Council have to help with this and what actions are proposed for the future?
- Lack of clearance of the Council's ditches – will the Council be taking urgent steps to ensure that all its ditches are regularly cleared?
- Lack of clearance of ditches by landowners – how does the Council intend to use its powers to require landowners to clear the ditches to reduce the risk of future flooding such as occurred at Gadbrook Road, Betchworth?

### **Response from the SCC Highways Team:**

The Brockham flood forum was set up last year. It is based around the Parish Council who provides the local focus and supported by the District Council, Environment Agency, Thames Water and Surrey County Council. The forum's main focus to date has to been to establish the drainage issues and identify drainage assets. In addition, just recently the forum has been developing an emergency response capability.

The Forum has established that the drainage in the area has historically developed without any clear direction. Sections have been modified by landowners without full appreciation of how it affects the other parts of the network and the system has become very complex

The forum has been successful in identifying areas of concern and works have been carried out on highway systems and on ditch systems to reduce the risk of flooding.

There is much work to be done and the forum is currently pursuing funding to establish a long term plan for the area. The local community through the forum will be at the centre of this long term plan

The Environment Agency take the lead role in managing the risk associated with flooding on the main rivers. The Environment Agency are investigating the flooding on the Mole and the County Council will carry out an associated investigation to ascertain which Risk Management Authorities have duties with regard to the flooding incidents in this area.

The County owns very few ditches in the area as it generally doesn't own the land under the highway; it only legally has the right of passage over the land for the highway. The ditches at the side of the road generally belong to the adjacent landowners and the County is currently identifying these owners and will encourage them to carry out maintenance on these ditches. If they are unwilling, then the County may serve notice and carry out the works.

#### **Question from Cllr Iain Murdoch, District Member for Capel, Leigh and Newdigate**

There have been problems with flooding in Vicarage Lane, Capel for many years. I understand that the County Council has now jetted most of the length of the drainage from The Street towards the junction with Broadwood Cottages. However, there is a small section that requires a drainage scheme near the junction with Broadwood Cottages because the system is blocked by concrete. When will this work be done please?

Also just east of the narrow bridge that is currently being worked on and west of the above problem I have observed that there is still a rather large puddle covering most of the carriageway.

Are these problems related or is this another issue that needs an urgent remedy and can you tell me when it will be rectified please?

#### **Response from SCC Highways Team:**

Investigations have been carried out in Vicarage Lane Capel in connection with surface water drainage issues. In addition, work has been carried out to reinstate the ditch. This work, together with the investigation, shows that there is no existing pipe work linking the ditch to the outlet further towards the culvert and a scheme would be required to deal with the issue. There is one section of pipe that has been located under a concrete hard standing but it is apparent that this is not connected and will need to be replaced as a part of any scheme.

The opportunity will be taken to deal with other drainage issues at that time in the vicinity.

The site will be scored along with other capital drainage schemes as a part of the wet spots review process that will take place shortly. Therefore it is not possible at the current time to give a timescale for when a scheme might take place.

### **Question from Roger Troughton, Member of Mole Valley Cycling Forum**

Following a response from officers at the December meeting of the Committee regarding improving signage and access for both cyclists and pedestrians into the new Tesco store on Reigate Road; could officers please clarify:

1. What would be the timescales for any signage improvements?
2. While improvements have been made to the Deepdene Roundabout, what improvements will be made to the entrance to Tescos?

### **Response from SCC Highways Team:**

Officers contacted Tesco following the question raised at the December 2013 Mole Valley Local Committee regarding signing improvements at the entrance to their store on the A25 Reigate Road near Deepdene roundabout. In response, Tesco have indicated that they may be willing to consider the provision of a sign in their car park to indicate to drivers that they are crossing a cycle route. However, they have reservations given that this situation with vehicles crossing an off-carriageway cycle route is no different from other junctions along the route. Whilst this is the case, it is the volume of movements to and from the Tesco site that could impact on safety at the Tesco site. Officers propose to set up a meeting with Tesco to look at possible signing improvements both within the Tesco site and on the public highway. It should be noted that there is no funding allocated to progress new signs until the new financial year.

### **Question from Sandra Baxter, Dorking Rural Resident**

Why is Pebble Hill Road still designated as a 40 mph road? This is despite the fact that the road is steep, has exits from many driveways, zig zag bends, cars overtaking at speed and a significant traffic jam when the Betchworth crossing is down with traffic stacking back to blind bends. Station Road the other side of the roundabout is designated as 30 mph and has none of these hazards.

### **Response from SCC Highways Team:**

A petition was presented to Mole Valley Local Committee on 5 December 2012 requesting a speed limit reduction on Pebble Hill Road / Station Road between the start of the properties and the A25. I refer to the response to that petition, a copy of which is appended below.

Amendments to the signing have been carried out to ensure that all necessary 40mph repeater signs, bend signs and chevron signs are in place. Resurfacing works on Pebble Hill as part of Operation Horizon are programmed for the financial year 2014/15. Alterations to the road markings, including providing a Keep Clear marking on the southbound carriageway at the junction with The Coombe, will be carried out as part of this work. It is planned to measure vehicle speeds again once the new road markings are in place, with the results being reported to the Local Committee Chairman, Vice Chairman and Divisional Member.

### **Appendix: Petition to Local Committee 5 December 2012 B2032 Pebble Hill Road/Station Road, Betchworth**

Request for reduction of speed limit on B2032 Pebble Hill Road and Station Road, Betchworth to 30mph from the start of the properties south to the A25.

**Response:**

The B2032 Pebble Hill Road/Station Road links the A217 to the north and the A25 to the south and is currently subject to a 40mph speed limit. A traffic survey was carried out in Pebble Hill Road in October 2012. The mean vehicle speeds, which is the measure used when assessing speed limits, are recorded as 32mph southbound and 37mph northbound. During the survey period, 4.2% of southbound vehicles and 17% of northbound vehicles were recorded as exceeding the existing 40mph speed limit.

Experience has shown that lowering a speed limit on its own will not guarantee that average speeds will be reduced. If a speed limit is set much lower than the existing traffic speeds then some motorists may ignore the limit unless the character of the road or environment indicate otherwise. The police have limited resources to enforce speed limits. Surrey's speed limit policy therefore recommends that a speed limit should only be reduced on its own where existing speeds are close to the proposed new limit. Given the speeds recorded on Pebble Hill Road, a reduction in the speed limit to 30mph would not comply with Surrey's speed limit policy.

Analysis of recorded personal injury accidents over the three year period August 2009 to August 2012 shows that there were 14 slight injury accidents on the B2032 Pebble Hill Road/Station Road between the start of the properties and the A25. Speed was recorded by the Police as a possible factor in three of the accidents, two of which were rear end shunts involving queuing traffic.

The petitioners' concerns were discussed at the Mole Valley Road Safety Working Group meeting held on 22 November 2012. This group consists of road safety experts from both Surrey Police and the County Council as well as engineers from Surrey Highways. The Police advised that they would not support a reduction in the speed limit to 30mph, as requested by local residents.

Pebble Hill Road is included on the Mole Valley Speed Management Plan. Speed management plans have been compiled for every District and Borough to identify with Police colleagues the sites that need the most enforcement attention to reduce speeds and what can be done to tackle the high priority sites. Pebble Hill Road is already on the Mole Valley Speed Management Plan and the Police have confirmed that they carry out enforcement at this location using hand-held speed guns on Pebble Hill Road. Local residents had set up a Community Speed Watch group but this has now ceased to operate.

Officers would not recommend a reduction in the speed limit to 30mph. However, it is proposed that a sign audit be carried out to check that the appropriate signing is in place for the 40mph speed limit, bends and to warn of likely traffic queues in advance of the level crossing. It is also proposed that a Keep Clear road marking is provided on Pebble Hill Road southbound at the junction with The Coombe to assist drivers turning right when traffic is queuing for the level crossing.

**Question from Michael Agius, Bookham Resident**

Eastwick Road Bookham. Would SCC consider making the section of this road from Pine Dean to the Lower Road a 20 miles per hour restricted area? This is because there is no footway, the road is narrow, is used by a heavy goods haulage company and a through route to and from the busy Lower Road and the A246. All of these factors cause safety concerns to the residents here and pedestrians.

### **Response from SCC Highways Team:**

Surrey's Speed Limit Policy, informed by Department for Transport guidance, recommends that the length of road over which a speed limit change is considered should be at least 600m. This aims to ensure against too many speed limit changes that could be confusing to the motorist. The section from Pine Dean to Lower Road is approximately 190m in length. Therefore Officers would not recommend the introduction of 20 mph speed limit in the short length of Eastwick Road between Pine Dean and Lower Road.

### **Question from Peter Seward, Chairman Bookham Residents Association**

We wish to express our thanks to both SCC and MVDC for their rapid response to our request for funds to find alternative school routes in Bookham due to flooding of the existing safe route to school. Without this, the solution implemented during half term could not have been achieved. This action by the two councils is greatly appreciated by the local community and The Howard of Effingham School.

Flooding

Dorking Road. What progress has been made by SCC on agreeing and implementing a solution to the long outstanding SCC agreed Wet Spot for this location? Also when regular gully cleaning was carried out here in late January 11 critical gullies were missed., This resulted in water and mud overflow causing at least one resident to spend over 7 hours removing the resulting mud from his drive way.

Flooding East Street/Lower Road. Has the investigative work SCC undertook here especially under the Squareabout produced any information which might result in resolving this long standing problem?

Lower Road and Manor House Lane. Is there any timescale available as to when these flooded and closed locations will be repaired and reopened?

### **Response from SCC Highways Team:**

1. Officers are continuing to pursue negotiations with the land owner in order to formulate an acceptable solution to the drainage problem. January suffered some exceptionally high levels of rainfall and all resources were engaged on emergency responses to serious flooding issues. We are sorry to hear that residents suffered as a result of the debris washed down the road. The missed gullies have been referred back to the contractor for completion as soon as resources are available and the Maintenance Engineer will liaise with colleagues in the District Council concerning street sweeping in this location.
2. A full CCTV survey has been completed on site and the data has recently been passed to Officers to review the results. Operational demands on officers as a result of the serious flooding throughout the county have delayed the analysis of this data. It is hoped however that once reviewed, the data will greatly assist in formulating possible solutions to the drainage issues in the vicinity of East Street/Lower Road and the

Squareabout. When this work is completed the information will also be reported back to the Bookham Flood Forum.

3. The damage caused as a result of the volume of flowing water from the springs that have opened up in a number of locations just south of Lower Road will be repaired following the cessation of the water flow from the springs. At the present time it would be difficult to estimate a timescale given the current groundwater levels and the high volume of flowing water. The situation will continue to be monitored. Manorhouse Lane has temporarily been closed for safety reasons as a result of the damage suffered to the road surface and will be re-opened as soon as the necessary repairs have been completed.

*MVLC 5 March 2014*