

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)

DATE: 10 SEPTEMBER 2014

LEAD OFFICER: VICTORIA JEFFREY, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AND COMMITTEE OFFICER

SUBJECT: PUBLIC QUESTIONS

DIVISION: MOLE VALLEY



Question from Mike Ward, Dorking South and the Holmwoods Resident

The Committee agreed new speed limits for Hookwood some time ago with one change having to be referred to the relevant Cabinet Member. I understand that the Cabinet Member gave approval some time last autumn. Why have the new limits not yet been implemented and when is it intended that they will be implemented?

Response from the SCC Highways Team:

Unfortunately it is taking some time to implement the Hookwood revised speed limits. The delays are due in part to the complexity of the existing speed limit orders. The original orders need to be amended and new orders made in order to implement the proposed changes. Current workload pressures in the Traffic Orders Team have also contributed to the delays. The Traffic Orders team are currently working on the speed limit changes and the speed limit orders were advertised in the Crawley News on 3 September and the Surrey Mirror on 4 September. The process allows 28 days for any objections to the orders to be lodged. Local Committee has devolved authority to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and local Divisional Member to resolve any objections. Once the legal process has been completed the speed limit change will be implemented.

Question from Peter Seaward, Chair of Bookham Resident's Association

During the exceptional wet weather through the winter of 2013 and 2014 in Bookham we suffered a series of serious flooding issues. These were at three locations in the Lower Road. One was at the junction of Child's Hall Road and the north western corner of the Lower Road recreation ground. The second at the junction of Lower Road and Manor House Lane where foul and surface water drainage systems failed. Foul water as a result entered local properties. The third was again on the Lower Road between the playing fields of The Howard of Effingham School and the Vineries Nursery causing the main footpath to the school to become impassable.

Work between SCC, MVDC and ourselves eventually found ways of alleviating these problems but not permanent solutions.

It was agreed that this summer meetings would take place on site with SCC Highways officials to determine ways of rectifying these problems more permanently. These meetings have not taken place.

Could the Local Committee provide dates so that these meetings can take place and ways found to avoid a repetition of these problems in the coming winter?

Response from the SCC Highways Team:

The flooding that occurred over the winter period 2013/14 was of a prolonged nature, enough to raise the groundwater levels in several locations, causing the initiation of Emergency Protocols across the County. This resulted in the Armed Forces being deployed to assist the County Council with the evacuation of residents and the construction of emergency flood defence measures. As was seen last winter, groundwater flooding can last for a considerable time after the rainfall event has finished.

The flooding in the Lower Road area around Manor House Lane and Child's Hall Lane was as a result of the groundwater discharging to the surface along a major spring line. The increased water flow proved to be more than the surface water systems could cope with.

In Child's Hall Road, the increased flow highlighted deficiencies in the system in private properties which have since been rectified by Surrey Highways. Similarly the increased flow in Manor House Lane highlighted the fact that there had been illegal connections made onto the foul system on private properties. Surrey understands that these connections have now been made to the appropriate carrier pipe.

The water issuing from the recreation ground was the largest of the springs and for a time made it difficult for pedestrian access without the correct footwear. Surrey Highways provided a temporary section of elevated footway. While it has been possible to correct the deficiencies at the other two locations, it has not been possible to address the situation on the recreation ground. This will require further work. Until this can be carried out, the County will provide a temporary access when the spring is active.

The County Council, working with the Bookham Flood Forum, has submitted a bid for funding to the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to carry out major work to address the flood risk in the Bookham area. There is a high degree of confidence that this bid will be successful. The nature of this proposed project would be able to look into the major issues caused by groundwater in the area.

Question from Mike Brookes, Bookham, and Fetcham West Resident

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When the cleaning out of the soakaways in the Dorking Road was done in June only the gullies attached were cleaned out. I was told by the team doing the work that another gully vehicle would come next week to clean the rest of the gullies. This hasn't happened and now all the gullies that collect the water etc. are blocked or full (some 25 in number). I also asked for the road to be swept at the junction of Admirals Road/ Chapel Lane as both these roads produce at least 75% of the silt, mud and gravel on to the Dorking Road. Admirals Road has mud from lorries using it to turn round and cutting into the banks. Chapel Lane is a single track road with only passing places and cars have and still do cut into the bank and bring silt and shingle into Dorking Road, Proper passing places with kerbs and signs needed here.

This problem of silt coming down the Dorking Road causing blocked gullies and subsequent flooding throughout this road has been an issue accepted by SCC as part of their Wet Spot programme for at least 8 years now.

Could I be reassured that until the longer term solution is found that these two roads, Chapel Lane and Admirals Road, and the problems they produce be dealt with and the gullies in Dorking Road cleaned out more frequently than only once per annum - 4 times preferably - and so ensure that the system works with the soakaways effectively.

An update on the long term solution for the Wet Spot activity would be welcome.

Response from the SCC Highways Team:

The Mole Valley Maintenance Engineer has been working with the County's Operations team to try to resolve an issue with access to a soakaway within the boundary of the stables.

The Operations team have advised that the gullies in Dorking Road are cleaned twice a year. The last visit took place on 13 June 2014, with the next clean due in December.

Phase 1 of the works associated with the Dorking Roads wetspot was carried out several years ago. The second phase involves holding the water back at the top of Dorking Road, which will also address the siltation problem. The County is in sensitive negotiations with land owners which has delayed the scheme.

Unfortunately, a full answer cannot be provided to this question at the present time due to the Maintenance Engineer being on leave. Mr Brookes, together with the Local Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman, who is also the divisional Member, will be provided with a full response on the officer's return.

Question from John Meudell:

For the new Leatherhead to Ashtead cycle route:

1. Will the committee provide an estimate of the extent of work, and the costs, necessary to bring the path up to the requirements for safety of disabled road users?
2. Will the committee explain why the path as constructed deviates significantly from the proposals in the public consultation, and is of considerably lower standard (and higher cost) than that promised?
3. Furthermore, given the extended period between initial submission of the scheme to the Department of Transport and the consultation (approximately 12 months), why were these deviations not identified and notified to both the public, in that consultation, as well as stakeholder groups beforehand?

Response from the SCC Highways Team:

This will be responded to as part of the Leatherhead to Ashtead item on the agenda.

Question from Peter Browne, Leatherhead and Fetcham East Resident

The Ashtead to Leatherhead cycle path project, which includes elements for pedestrian safety, was given approval to proceed by this Committee in September 2013 based on a budget of £850k and with a project programme of 18 weeks.

The tender received for the project amounted some £1.5m. After a value engineering exercise reduced the costs by £400k, the project was committed to construction at a cost of £1.1m. The nature and extent to which design changes gave rise to the substantial cost increase to £1.5m, and further changes to reduce the scheme to £1.1m, remain unclear.

The estimated cost of the project, as provided on 5th August in response to Fol request 11229, had risen to £1.225m, representing a 44% increase on the cost of the scheme approved by the Committee. With the DfT contribution now standing at £695k (an increase of £100k) Surrey CC's contribution has more than doubled (by 107%) from the original commitment of £255k to £530k. The cost of 1.225m is also additional to the elements of the scheme provided in 2009/10 at a cost of £625k resulting in overall expenditure on this route of £1.85m. It is not yet clear whether costs will rise further, e.g. in respect of any additional works arising from the safety audit or the disruption of the project due to the delays.

As of 4th September the 18 week project has continued into a 29th week awaiting the replacement of road direction signs obstruction the cycle path on the Epsom Road. Only 11% of the cycle path (circa 250 metres between Melvinshaw and Garlands Road) provides segregation between cyclists and pedestrians – including an impracticable and dangerously narrow constriction

at the landing point for the pedestrian crossing on the Epsom Road serving Downsends Infants' School. The other 2,050 yards are a shared, sometimes narrow, pathway with no demarcation between cyclists and pedestrians. The safety railings between the raised pathway and the Knoll Roundabout have not been replaced; reprofiled junctions on the Epsom Road have created new hazards for road and pathway users and added to traffic congestion; and the junction at Grange Road where the footbridge was removed has been left in an appallingly bumpy condition. These, and other defects and safety issues, have been highlighted separately to Surrey Highways. The cycle path is being largely ignored by local cyclists who continue to use the road and who are also frequently to be seen on the footpath on the other side of the road. Photographs and comments illustrating some of these issues are on Twitter @ashleacyclepath.

The cost of the 2009/10 and 2014 elements of the cycle path project using the costs so far provided amount to £1.85m. This equates to £804 per linear metre (£533 per metre for the 2014 element alone) based on the stated length for the cycle path of 2,300 metres. By way of comparison, a report was made at the September 2013 meeting of the Committee introducing Project Horizon. This was said to be a £100m project to rebuild 300 miles of the worst roads in Surrey, specifically targeting roads where the sub-base is no longer fit for purpose and full reconstruction is required. This is a cost of £207 per linear metre and involves much more substantial engineering works than for the cycle path and over much wider carriageways, typically some 3 times the width of the foot/cycle path.

Are members of the Local Committee able to say on what basis the expenditure incurred so far on the cycle path could be said to be value for money; and in the light of this can members be confident that the costs estimated for the more substantial highways engineering works and wider carriageways associated with Project Horizon, administered by the same managing agent as for the 2014 cycle path, can be delivered for £207 per metre?

Response from the SCC Highways Team:

This will be responded to as part of the Leatherhead to Ashted item on the agenda.

MVLC 10 September 2014

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