

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (ELMBRIDGE)

DATE: 8th DECEMBER 2014

LEAD OFFICER: NICK HEALEY, AREA TEAM MANAGER

SUBJECT: ESHER ROAD, EAST MOLESEY

DIVISION: EAST MOLESEY AND ESHER



SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

This report updates members following a petition by Ms Leona Farquharon to the September 2014 meeting of the Local Committee concerning pedestrian crossing safety, and speed of traffic along Esher Road, East Molesey, in particular between the two bridges.

This report responds to the concerns raised.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Elmbridge) is asked to:

determine the course of action to be taken based upon the available options of either

- (i) Allocate funding for a detailed feasibility study to be funded from next year's allocation, if members determine this to be a priority scheme they wish to pursue.

or

- (ii) To await the construction of the new bridge over the River Mole which will be designed to accommodate a wider carriageway and footways on either side.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

There is no obvious solution to the issues raised as any scheme would be expensive and members would need to be satisfied that the funds represented a good benefit cost return. The new bridge however, will be designed to provide a new footway on the west side hence removing the need for pedestrians to cross between the two bridges.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 A petition was submitted to the September 2014 meeting of the Local Committee, signed by 58 residents, concerning pedestrian safety when crossing, and speed of traffic along Esher Road, East Molesey, in particular between the two bridges.
- 1.2 Ms Leona Farquharon spoke in support of the petition explaining that 58 people had signed the online petition requesting
 - a. Actions to be taken to slow the traffic down, between the 2 bridges, as motorists demonstrate little regard for the speed limit.
 - b. Action to be taken to make the road safer to cross at the Ember bridge.
- 1.3 In addition the petitioners were requesting improvements to warning signage and a reduction in speed limit and the introduction of speed bumps. It was claimed that it is difficult to cross the road safely, particularly for disabled people and parents with children.
- 1.4 In support of the request it was added that the last 4 incidents had been due to drivers speeding or not paying attention.
- 1.5 County Councillor Stuart Selleck, Divisional Member for Esher and East Molesey supported the investigation of a 20mph zone but was not in favour of speed bumps.
- 1.6 Borough Councillor Steve Bax would support the construction of a new path on the west side, including a bridge extension, and the purchase of land.
- 1.7 The narrow bridge over the River Mole effectively determines the extent of the available public highway. It only carries a narrow footway on the east side and hence pedestrians are required to use the pedestrian refuge islands either side of the bridges to cross the carriageway.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 In early 2000 a casualty reduction scheme was introduced along Ember Lane and Esher Road, to directly impact the high numbers of road casualties, reduce vehicle speeds, prevent overtaking and provide additional safer pedestrian crossing points.
- 2.2 Between the Ember bridge and Embercourt Road, four pedestrian refuge islands were constructed, together with central hatching along the entire section. The first Pedestrian refuge islands was located just south of Embercourt Road, the second by number 181, a third just south of Ember Farm Way, and the fourth south of Riverside Avenue.
- 2.3 Centre hatching was also applied to the entire length to prevent overtaking, provide benefit for turning vehicles into side roads, and create a sterile area for pedestrians wishing to cross.

- 2.4 Crossing points were not introduced between the 2 river bridges due to the site limitations and existing layout of the bridges over both the Mole and Ember rivers. However SLOW road markings on red patches were installed to remind drivers, either side of the Ember bridge. A junction ahead warning sign was also installed on the southern approach to Aldersgrove, coincident with the SLOW marking to additionally warn drivers of the junction.
- 2.5 Due to the discontinuity of pedestrian footway on the west side near Summer Road due wholly to the narrow bridge over the River Mole, a further scheme was also carried out to benefit pedestrians directly. This included improvements to the footway near the roundabout with Walton Road, together with road widening, and the introduction of a pedestrian refuge island. This also included landscaping of the site of the former residential dwelling, where the pumping station now resides, on the western corner opposite the old Police Station.
- 2.6 Pedestrians can hence cross both Embercourt Road and Esher Road but near to Riverside Avenue are encouraged to cross to the eastern footway, which will facilitate easier access to Walton Road, due to the environmental limitations. It is appreciated however that residents of Aldersgrove will be placed at a disbenefit, as they would need to walk to the first island south of Riverside Avenue to be able to use the crossing points provided.
- 2.7 The 3 year personal injury collision data has been investigated for this area of Esher Road between the period 01/01/2011 to 31/08/2014 and is as shown in the following table:

Location	Date	Factors
Aldersgrove	16/11/2012	Vehicle being driven slowly for delivery, looking for address, caused shunt.
Riverside Avenue	11/07/2013	Vehicle pulled out of junction causing incident.
	17/07/2013	Vehicle lost control and collided with refuge island.
Broadfields	13/12/2012	Vehicle turning right shunted by vehicle whose driver was distracted
	12/07/2013	Vehicle turning right has collided with cyclist crossing from footpath.

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 All the accidents appear to be wholly random with no identifiable pattern, and the circumstances are such that these could have occurred on any road.
- 3.2 There have been no personal injury accidents involving pedestrians recorded during this time frame.
- 3.3 The aim of the County Council is to set speed limits that are successful in managing vehicle speeds and are appropriate for the main use of the road. Reducing speeds successfully may reduce the likelihood and severity of collisions, and can help to encourage more walking and cycling. This can

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help to make communities more pleasant places to live, and can help sustain local shops and businesses. The desire for lower speeds has to be balanced against the need for reasonable journey times and the position of the road within the county council's strategic priority network.

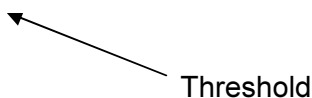
- 3.4 Experience shows that changing to a lower speed limit on its own will not necessarily be successful in reducing the speed of traffic by very much if the prevailing mean speeds are much higher than the proposed lower speed limit. If a speed limit is set too low and is ignored then this could result in the majority of drivers criminalising themselves and could bring the system into disrepute. There should be no expectation that the police would be able to provide regular enforcement if a speed limit is set too low as this could result in an unreasonable additional demand on police resources. It is also important to set reasonable speed limits to ensure consistency across the country.
- 3.5 Where the existing mean speeds are above 24mph then a 20mph scheme with traffic calming measures (known as a 20mph zone) will be required. Research has shown that 20mph zones with traffic calming measures have been very effective in reducing speeds and casualties, however these schemes are more expensive, and residents are not supportive of such measures, due to the intrusion element and additional noise and vibration implications.
- 3.6 It has not been possible to carry out a speed assessment for the section of road in question, however it is anticipated that the average speeds will be in excess of 24mph.
- 3.7 Extract from Speed limit policy below showing the threshold required to introduce traffic calming with and without traffic calming. Figures show the predicted mean speed following a speed limit change.

Table 1 – Predicted change in mean speeds following a reduction to a 20 mph speed limit (with traffic calming)

Measured mean speed before	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Predicted mean speed after	14.9	15.1	15.3	15.5	15.8	16.0	16.2	16.5	16.7	16.9	17.1	17.4	17.6	17.8	18.1	18.3	18.5	18.7	19.0	19.2	19.4

Table 2 – Predicted change in mean speeds following a signed-only reduction in speed limit

Change from urban and rural 30 mph speed limit to 20 mph speed limit (without traffic calming)																					
Measured mean speed before	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Predicted mean speed after	19.9	20.6	21.4	22.2	23.0	23.7	24.5	25.3	26.1	26.8	27.6	28.4	29.2	29.9	30.7	31.5	32.2	33.0	33.8	34.6	35.3
	New lower speed limit allowed					New lower speed limit only allowed with supporting highway measures															



- 3.8 Although Surrey County Council as the highway authority introduces highway schemes and speed limits, it does so in accordance with Government aims to reduce personal injury accidents. It is only fair and equitable that this is done where high numbers of personal injury accidents are occurring ahead of locations where there are few or even perceived, in order to best utilise its very limited funding.
- 3.9 Speeding is essentially a Police enforcement issue as driving in excess of the posted speed limit is a criminal offence, for which the Police as the sole highway enforcement agency, have powers to deal with offenders to unashamedly flout the law, quickly and effectively.

- 3.10 The location has no suitable position or gaps large enough to locate a further pedestrian refuge island as the road already accommodates many vehicle crossovers to the properties fronting the road. The only location would be on the Ember Bridge itself,
- 3.11 An initial investigation has shown that the bridge construction is very shallow and cannot accommodate traffic signal poles or any other highway furniture. It is for this reason that street lighting poles are positioned either side of the bridge and not on it as they would affect the structural integrity of the structure.
- 3.12 Unfortunately this would preclude the construction of either a Pelican crossing or a pedestrian refuge island on the structure.
- 3.13 A more detailed feasibility report could be carried out to look at the options in greater depth, than has been possible in this report.
- 3.14 A principal inspection has been carried out of the bridge over the River Mole, which has shown that the structure is nearing the end of its serviceable life. It is 120 years old and suffering heavy corrosion. A further assessment is to be carried out later this financial year. Pending the outcome of the assessment, it is anticipated that funding will be secured for a replacement bridge within the next few years.
- 3.15 The current bridge is narrow and there is scope to improve the width and alignment and introduce a wider bridge with suitable footways on both sides subject to the availability of the required land and the necessary funding.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 Public consultation would be required in the development of any scheme but in particular pedestrian crossings, 20mph zone or a traffic-calming scheme as raised devices such as road tables and cushions necessitate legal notices advising residents of the proposed locations of measures, whilst speed limits require a legal traffic regulation order process.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The cost of making a traffic regulation order for a 20mph zone, together with signing lining and illumination is likely to be in the region of £5,000. It is difficult to place a price on a traffic calming scheme, but this could be in the region of £75,000.
- 5.2 The cost of introducing a zebra crossing is likely to be £50,000 whilst a pelican could be as much as £100,000. However a suitable location is not available for either feature.
- 5.3 A detailed feasibility study is likely to cost in the region of £5,000 to determine if a solution exists and the likely cost.
- 5.4 The cost of a replacement bridge over the River Mole is unknown at this stage.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 It is an objective of Surrey Highways to treat all users of the public highway equally and with understanding.

7. LOCALISM:

7.1 The solutions identified are in response to perceived concerns raised by the local community. The Divisional Member can prioritise funding to implement any of the measures identified, if these are considered to be local priorities.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 A well-managed highway network can contribute to reduction in crime and disorder as well as improve people's perception of crime.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

9.1 It is important to note that the data confirms that there have been no cases of recorded personal injury accidents involving pedestrians.

9.2 Due to the complexity of the location, any solution would come with a large price tag. Members will need to be mindful of this and whether this would represent value for money in terms of benefit cost.

9.3 A new bridge over the River Mole will provide the necessary continuous footway for pedestrians and remove the necessity to cross between the two bridges.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

10.1 If members determine that this is a priority scheme which they wish to pursue, then funding for a detailed feasibility study would need to be allocated from next year's allocation.

10.2 Otherwise it would be prudent to await the construction of the new bridge which will be designed to provide the necessary benefits in terms of pedestrian accessibility.

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- **Contact Officer:** Nick Healey, Area Team Manager (NE)
 - **Consulted:** None.
 - **Annexes:** None
 - **Sources/background papers:** None.
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