

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (TANDRIDGE)

DATE: 12 DECEMBER 2014



LEAD OFFICER: CAROLINE SMITH
TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT PLANNING TEAM MANAGER
EAST

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE DEVELOPER FUNDED
SPEED MANAGEMENT MEASURES IN GODSTONE ROAD,
LINGFIELD

DIVISION: LINGFIELD

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

The Local Committee Tandridge, at the meeting on 9 December 2011 determined that a development related speed management scheme should be introduced in Godstone Road, Lingfield for a period of one year in the first instance in order to monitor the impact and to make amendments if necessary.

The Local Committee determined that the monitoring would be on the basis of congestion, traffic diversion, traffic speeds and recorded personal injury accidents.

This was legally recognised in the Section 278 Agreement between the County Council and the developer. This was completed on 18 September 2012 and the highway works in their entirety were completed on 5 September 2013, although the kerb-build outs were completed in December 2012.

This report summarises the outcome of the monitoring and considers the impact of the scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Tandridge) is asked to agree that:

- (i) The monitoring of the speed management scheme in Godstone Road, Lingfield has demonstrated that in terms of congestion, traffic diversion, traffic speeds and recorded personal injury accidents, there is no justification for the removal of the scheme.
- (ii) Should the Committee determine that the scheme should be removed and/or substantially amended, it would not be reasonable to undertake this at the expense of the applicant.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The outcome of the monitoring shows that traffic speeds on Godstone Road have reduced, albeit with an increase in journey times, and the monitoring indicates that there is no justification on the basis of the agreed criteria to require the developer to

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amend or remove the build-outs.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 Planning permission was granted on appeal in January 2011 for 18 affordable dwellings at land at The Bays (now known as Bay Trees), Godstone Road, Lingfield. A speed management scheme comprising of the relocation of the 30 mph speed limit to a point around 225m north west of the existing position and the provision of 2 kerb-build outs was a requirement of the planning permission granted.
- 1.2 The proposals were highly controversial in the Lingfield area and the Local Committee agreed at the meeting on 9 December 2011 when the Traffic Regulation Order for the change in the speed limit was discussed that the speed management scheme should be monitored for a year. The monitoring was to be on the basis of congestion, traffic diversion, traffic speeds and recorded personal injury accidents.
- 1.3 The County Council entered into a Section 278 Agreement under the Highways Act 1980 on 18 September 2012 to enable the developer to undertake the works on the highway and these were commenced within weeks of the Agreement being signed. The kerb build outs and the moving of the speed limit were completed in December 2012. A Stage 3 Road Safety Audit was conducted in February 2013 and amendments to the scheme to address the issues raised were undertaken by the developer at their expense in spring 2013. The access works were completed in September 2013 and the formal monitoring period began on this date.
The monitoring period ended on 5 September 2014 and, under the terms of the Section 278 Agreement, the County Council has 6 months to consider the outcome of the monitoring and to request amendments, should they be considered necessary.
- 1.4 Permanent traffic counters were laid in the carriageways of Godstone Road, to measure traffic volume and speed, and Station Road and Saxby's Lane, to measure traffic volume in April 2012. There have been problems with all of the counters from time to time and the results are not continuous but there is enough data for Godstone Road and Saxby's Lane to inform the Local Committee's decision. Unfortunately there is little data for Station Road. This counter has been persistently problematic.
- 1.5 A petition is due to be submitted to the Local Committee in respect of the build-outs stating ' Thousands of drivers wait daily in gridlocked traffic behind Lingfield's Pinch-Points in their cars, lorries, buses, horse boxes and coaches – engines ticking over and patience wearing thin causing bad driving like speeding through hand on horn to clear a path and near-misses causing braking, skidding and loud swearing. Empty pinch-points make drivers speed to get through before oncoming traffic. Priority is bewildering, unclear and too close to bends e.g. why slow down to get out of a village? Flood-water has been diverted and crosses the road. Surrey County Council did not let these well-known facts stop their plans, they can put pinch-points anywhere to enable new-builds. Their 'blind-eyes' attitude is costing us several thousands of pounds in repairs every time they re-build the pinch points, an enormous and endless expense to us as taxpayers. The pinch-points don't calm the traffic,

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were against police advice, are doing more harm than good and have caused the only accidents that have happened here. Changes are expected in September: demolish the pinch-points.'

- 1.6 The Parish Council has submitted a public question to this committee stating 'Lingfield parish council was invited by SCC Highways to join in the monitoring of Godstone Road pinch-points. Motorists, having negotiated the Eastern 'pinch-point' (nearest the village), are disinclined to give way to traffic leaving Bay Trees. Parked cars further East along the Godstone Road ensure traffic speeds are not excessive whilst the Westerly pinch point would continue to reduce speeds into Lingfield. The parish council is of the view that the Eastern pinch-point is dangerous and does not allow traffic from Bay Trees to exit in safety. Please would the Local Committee confirm that the £30,000 bond held by Surrey County Council against Asprey Homes Ltd, will be retained until the Easterly 'pinch-point' is removed and the original road at this point is reinstated?'

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 **Congestion** – Congestion was monitored by the Parish Council. A methodology was agreed but the Parish Council decided not to continue with further monitoring of the scheme in March 2014 as they believed the evidence they were collecting did not explain the main issue that concerns them with the pinch points. They consider that the issue is vehicles speeding up to beat other traffic through and to avoid having to wait. Congestion was only observed at peak times. The longest queue observed was 15 vehicles, but with no indication of how long the wait was. The results of the Parish Council's congestion monitoring are attached at Annexe 1.
- 2.2 The County Council's Transport Studies Team considers that queue surveys are subjective as people's perception of what constitutes a queue tends to vary. They use journey time data derived from sat nav information supplied by the Department for Transport as that is more reliable. Sat nav data is currently only available to the end of August 2013, the data to the end of August 2014 not being available until December at the earliest. If it becomes available in advance of the meeting, it will be circulated in an addendum to this report. The sat nav journey time summary is attached at Annexe 2.
- 2.3 The data covers 12 month periods, with the exception of 2013 which covers the period 1st January to 31st August. It covers the stretch from Lingfield Common Road to Mount Pleasant Road. Journey times on Godstone Road were relatively stable from 2009 to 2011 with the available data showing that there has been an increase in journey time in 2012 and 2013. As the works to facilitate the development did not commence until September 2012, it is likely that there were other factors during that year that also affected journey times. Average journey times in 2013 increased by 23 seconds northbound and 20 seconds southbound in the morning peak, 16 seconds northbound and 18 seconds southbound during the interpeak and 19 seconds northbound and 23 seconds southbound above the lowest average journey times during the period 2009 to 2011.
- 2.4 Unfortunately, given that there were extensive roadworks in the area during 2012 and 2013, including those associated with the development (although not exclusively), it is impossible to say with any certainty what the impact of the

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works alone has been on journey time. Additionally, the reduction in the speed limit itself will have increased journey times.

- 2.5 It is fair to say however that the introduction of the measures has introduced queuing at the pinch points where none existed previously. As common sense would dictate, the queues are the longest during the peaks. Given that even when there were road works causing additional delays in the area, the impact on journey time did not exceed an additional 23 seconds, it is not considered that the measures themselves have caused significant congestion in the area.
- 2.6 **Traffic Diversion** – There was concern expressed by the Parish Council and local residents that the introduction of traffic calming on Godstone Road would result in significant traffic diversion from this route to Lingfield Common Road/Station Road and/or Saxby's Lane. Of particular concern was the impact on Station Road and Saxby's Lane and, as a result, traffic counters were placed in these roads to monitor this. Unfortunately there have been significant problems with the Station Road counter and there is very little data upon which to come to a view. A summary of the traffic count data is attached at Annexe 3.
- 2.7 Traffic in Saxby's Lane has fluctuated during the monitoring period, with some months significantly higher than others. It was lower in August 2013 than in August 2012 and higher than both in July 2014 for example. Traffic levels on Godstone Road have also fluctuated during the monitoring period.
- 2.8 The fluctuations on Saxby's Lane largely mirror those on Godstone Road - when traffic levels decrease or increase on one, the same happens on the other. There are exceptions. In February 2013, April 2013 and October 2014, traffic increased on Godstone Road and decreased on Saxby's Lane and in March 2013, the reverse occurred. It may also have occurred in October 2013, but as the Godstone Road figures are derived from the south east flow only for this month, there is less certainty. There would appear to be no discernible trend and no evidence that significant levels of traffic have permanently diverted from Godstone Road to alternative routes.
- 2.9 **Traffic Speeds** – Prior to the introduction of the scheme, the 85%ile traffic speed on Godstone Road adjacent to the site access was around 41 mph with a mean speed of 35/36 mph. The most recent data we have, from October 2014, shows that the 85%ile speed has reduced to 35 mph and the mean speed to 30 mph N.W bound and the 85%ile speed to 34 mph and the mean speed to 27/28 S.E bound. This demonstrates that traffic speeds have reduced as a result of the speed management measures, even taking account of anecdotal evidence from the Parish Council that vehicles speed up to pass through the build-outs. The mean speeds are now at or below the 30mph speed limit. As previously stated, the reduction in traffic speeds will also have contributed to the increase in journey times recorded along this route. A summary of the speed data for Godstone Road is appended to this report at Annexe 4.
- 2.10 **Recorded Personal Injury Accidents** –The County Council have records of personal injury accidents to the end of August 2014. According to these records, there have been no recorded personal injury accidents related to the build-outs. The accident history is appended to this report at Annexe 5. County Officers are aware of two damage only accidents, one at each of the build outs. The first in December 2013 at the pinch point furthest from the village resulted in a claim against the County Council which was rejected by Croydon

Magistrates Court; the second in June 2014 demolished the signs on the build out closest to the village. It appeared to officers that a vehicle had driven onto the build out and then over the signs. The driver did not report the incident to the County Council.

- 2.11 Additionally, the Parish Council has informed the County Council that a Lingfield resident slipped on ice on the resurfaced pavement and injured themselves in the process. The Parish Council has kept a log of incidents since the completion of the scheme and this is appended to this report at Annexe 6.

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 The Committee needs to decide, on the basis of the criteria previously agreed and legally binding within the Section 278 Agreement, whether any amendment to the scheme is necessary and, if so, what amendments should be required.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 A meeting was held with the Parish Council on January 2013 to discuss the monitoring of the scheme. Information has been forwarded to them as it has become available. There has been significant communication between the County Council and the Parish Council. The Parish Council has brought a number of matters to the County Council and these have been investigated and dealt with as appropriate. Submissions from the Parish Council are appended to this report.
- 4.2 Surrey Police were asked for their view on the operation of the scheme, especially in view of the fact that they raised concerns about the proximity of the western build-out to the bend. They have stated that they cannot support the removal of the installations as it would return the average speeds to an unacceptable level with the potential for an increase in collisions and injuries.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The developer has made provision for £25,000, included within the S278 Agreement, for amendments to the scheme should they be necessary, pending the outcome of the monitoring and the decision of this Committee.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 None.

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 The speed reduction scheme was introduced to facilitate the development of 18 affordable dwellings to meet an identified need in Lingfield itself.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report
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

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1 The speed management scheme has reduced traffic speeds but led to a slight increase in journey times. There is no evidence that this has led to traffic diverting to other routes. There have been no personal injury accidents reported to the Police associated with the scheme. In the circumstances, it would not be reasonable to require the developer to significantly amend the scheme, although some minor amendments to address some of the concerns raised in the petition may be appropriate.
- 9.2 In respect of the matters raised in the petition, the available information on increases in journey times does not support the suggestion that ‘thousands’ of vehicles are gridlocked on a daily basis. The signs at the build-outs are clear and comply with both the Highway Code and the Traffic Signs Manual. There is no ambiguity over priority – poor decision making cannot be blamed on the build-outs. The evidence is that traffic speeds have been reduced overall. Police concerns were raised specifically about the western build-out and additional signing to address this was required as part of the Stage 3 Safety Audit. The initial concerns raised by the Police have not materialised.
- 9.3 In respect of the Parish Council’s comments, there seems to be some misunderstanding of the purpose for the eastern pinch-point. The purpose of the pinch-point was two-fold; firstly to reduce the speed of traffic approaching the junction and, secondly, to ensure that traffic exiting Bay Trees has adequate visibility. Traffic on Godstone Road has the right of way. Traffic exiting Bay Trees should not proceed until it is safe to do so, there is no obligation on Godstone Road traffic to give way.
- 9.4 Whilst no substantive works are required, some minor amendments may be in order to improve the current arrangement. For example, in order to address the potential for traffic entering the village queuing through the pinch-point and preventing traffic from exiting, a ‘keep clear’ box could be painted on the carriageway.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 The developer will be asked to address any construction shortcomings with the scheme (broken kerbing, uneven road surface, problems with highway drainage etc) that have become apparent since the scheme was constructed. If

any wider amendments are necessary, these will need to be requested at the same time.

Contact Officer:

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Consulted:

Lingfield Parish Council
Surrey Police
Surrey Highways
County Councillor Michael Sydney

Annexes:

- Annexe 1 - Lingfield Parish Council congestion monitoring
- Annexe 2 - Sat nav journey time summary
- Annexe 3 - Traffic count data summary
- Annexe 4 – Traffic Speeds on Godstone Road
- Annexe 5 – Recorded personal injury accident record
- Annexe 6 - Lingfield Parish Council list of incidents (redacted)

Sources/background papers:

- Tandridge Local Committee Report and minutes of 9 December 2011
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