



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (WOKING)

ST JOHN'S HILL ROAD BRIDGE UPDATE

5 DECEMBER 2012

KEY ISSUE

Temporary barriers and traffic signals have been in place at St John's Hill Road Bridge to manage the risk of vehicle incursion onto the railway line below since 2005. A permanent solution is now proposed.

SUMMARY

A permanent scheme to address the risk of vehicle incursion onto the railway line in the vicinity of the bridge was presented to Woking Local Committee at their meeting on the 26 September 2012. The scheme presented included reverting to a Give Way priority system at the site.

As significant local opposition to the proposed form of traffic control was expressed at the Committee Meeting, an option to provide permanent traffic signals has now been investigated and is presented in this report as an alternative, subject to funding.

All of the options presented will incorporate measures to reduce the risk of vehicle incursion onto the railway.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Woking) is asked to:

- i) Agree which traffic control option to approve and inform the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment.

ii) If option 3 is approved, to:

a) approve the installation of permanent signals as shown on the plan in Annex 3.

b) confirm that the remaining £30,000 will be funded via a Local Committee budget.

iii) To give authority to advertise notice of a 13T weight restriction on the bridge, and subject to no objections being maintained, the Order be made.

Where significant objections are received, the Area Team Manager to decide in consultation with the divisional member and the Local Committee Chairman/Vice Chairman whether the Traffic Regulation Order may be confirmed.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A full explanation of the Rail Vehicle Incursion Risk Ranking process is included in the paper that went to Local Committee on the 26 September 2012 (attached as Annex 1).
- 1.2 In summary, measures have been agreed between Surrey County Council and the bridge owner, Network Rail, to reduce the level of risk to an acceptable level.

2. ANALYSIS

- 2.1 The agreed measures include the installation of bollards on the approaches and a higher standard of signing and carriageway markings.
- 2.2 The traffic control system, whether by traffic light or priority give way, has little impact on the risk of vehicle incursion onto the railway line.
- 2.3 The strength assessment for the bridge shows that a weight restriction is required at this site.
- 2.4 All of the options outlined below will be designed to accommodate the width restriction that may be needed to enforce the weight restriction.

3. OPTIONS

- 3.1 The rail incursion risk reduction measures will be included whatever traffic control measure is implemented. The traffic control options are as follows:
 - 3.2 OPTION 1: Retaining the current traffic management arrangement.

This option is not an appropriate permanent arrangement. There have been drainage difficulties at the site which are exacerbated by the presence of the temporary barriers. The temporary signals are also vulnerable to faults, which has caused considerable inconvenience at the site on numerous occasions.
 - 3.3 OPTION 2: Reverting to a Give Way priority system similar to that which operated prior to 2005 (Annex 2). The drainage issues would be improved by removing the existing temporary barriers.
 - 3.4 OPTION 3: Replacing the current traffic signals with permanent traffic signals (Annex 3).

The signals would be programmed to sit on red on both sides of the bridge, and only change to green once an approaching vehicle has slowed (i.e. driver views a red signal, slows and then demand is registered which turns the light to green) for speed control purposes. This integrated scheme would include drainage and surfacing works.

- 3.5 Although approval of the Rail Vehicle Incursion risk reduction programme does not come under the remit of the Local Committee, the authority to choose the traffic control which accompanies the installation of these measures has been delegated to the Local Committee on this occasion.

4.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Local Members have expressed a preference for permanent traffic signal controls at the site.
- 4.2 Notice of a petition from the residents in Firbank Lane/Firbank Drive which supports the installation of permanent traffic signals has also been received. This will be presented under Item 4 on this agenda.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The implementation of either option 2 or 3 will save on the ongoing costs of maintaining the temporary arrangement.
- 5.2 Option 2 which has an estimated cost to SCC of £40,000 would be fully funded by the Structures Budget. (This is additional to the cost of improved fencing which will be funded by Network Rail.)
- 5.3 Option 3 has an estimated cost of £110,000. The Structures Budget would contribute the £40,000 that is needed to address the rail vehicle incursion risk. In addition to this and in response to the concerns expressed by local Members and residents, it has been agreed that a further £40,000 will be made available from the Structures Budget. This additional contribution is subject to the Local Committee contributing the remaining £30,000 from the 2013/2014 Highways Budget, or another local budget, for the integrated scheme.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The width of the footpath will be slightly reduced by the presence of the bollards but a minimum clear width of 900mm will be maintained and the route will remain usable by wheelchairs and pushchairs.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Options 2 and 3 are both technically satisfactory.

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The reason for the recommendation is to provide a robust permanent solution at this site. As well as reducing the risk of vehicle incursion onto the railway, the integrated solutions recommended will also improve drainage and the quality of the highway surfacing in the vicinity of the bridge.
- 9.2 The weight limit is needed as the strength assessment calculations for the bridge indicate that it is not adequate for full highway loading. The route is not of strategic importance for HGV traffic and so has a low priority for strengthening. The bridge owners, Network Rail, have requested that a 13T weight limit is imposed and this is considered appropriate from a highway perspective.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 If Option 2 is selected, removal of the signals and reinstatement of the Give Way system would be undertaken simultaneously with the barrier works and so be executed this financial year.
- 10.2 If Option 3 is selected and the Committee provides a contribution of £30,000 from the Local Highway Budget (2013/2014), the scheme will be executed in 2013/2014.
- 10.3 Permanent traffic signals can only be installed with the permission of the Local Committee. If the Local Committee is unable to fund the £30,000 contribution towards an integrated scheme, then this will be referred to the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Item 9 of Woking Local Committee Meeting
on 26 September 2012 (Annex 1)

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