



WOKING JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE: 24 JUNE 2015
LEAD OFFICER: KEVIN ORLEDGE, STREET WORKS MANAGER (SCC)

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO PETITION: VICARAGE ROAD, KINGFIELD

AREA: KINGFIELD AND WESTFIELD

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

1.1 A petition containing 273 signatures has been submitted for consideration at the Woking Joint Committee regarding utility works on Vicarage Road, Kingfield.

1.2 **Wording of the petition:**

On Tuesday 11/11/14 Thames Water closed Vicarage Road for a period of 26 weeks to upgrade sewage infrastructure for the Kingsmoor Park development. The closure has already caused rush hour havoc for local residents, commuters travelling through the area, and children on their way to the area's various schools; with reported delays on Westfield Avenue of up to 40 minutes. The closure was effected with little to no consultation of residents, insufficient prior notification of the full extent of the closure and poor efforts to mitigate the impacts.

We petition the Council to reconsider how the closure may be shortened or mitigated to reduce impact.

We also petition the Council to bring to account all departments and persons involved in the closure, to:-

(1) Show that such blatant disregard for residents' wellbeing is not considered acceptable by Surrey County Council,

(2) Ensure that similarly misjudged closures do not occur again in the future.

RESPONSE:

2.0 Legislative Background

Under the section 1 of the Highways Act 1980, *“the Council of a County are the Highway Authority for all highways in the County”*. In Surrey this is Surrey County Council.

Works carried out by Statutory Undertakers under section 48 of the New Roads and Street Works Act (NRSWA) 1991 are defined as Street Works.

Under the relevant enabling Act, Statutory Undertakers have the right to carry out Street Works in “highway maintainable at the public expense” (generally known as adopted or public highway). The Highway Authority cannot stop this.

Under section 59 of the NRSWA the Highway Authority has a Duty to co-ordinate works. The Act stating:-

A Street Authority shall use their best endeavours to co-ordinate the execution of works of all kinds in the streets for which they are responsible:-

- (a) in the interests of safety,
- (b) to minimise the inconvenience to persons using the street (having regard, in particular, to the needs of people with a disability), and
- (c) to protect the structure of the street and the integrity of apparatus in it.

The Traffic Management Act (TMA) 2004 section 16 adds further to this with the statement:

“It is the Duty of a local traffic authority to manage their road network with a view to achieving as far as is reasonably practicable the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority’s road network”

2.2 Kingsmoor Park

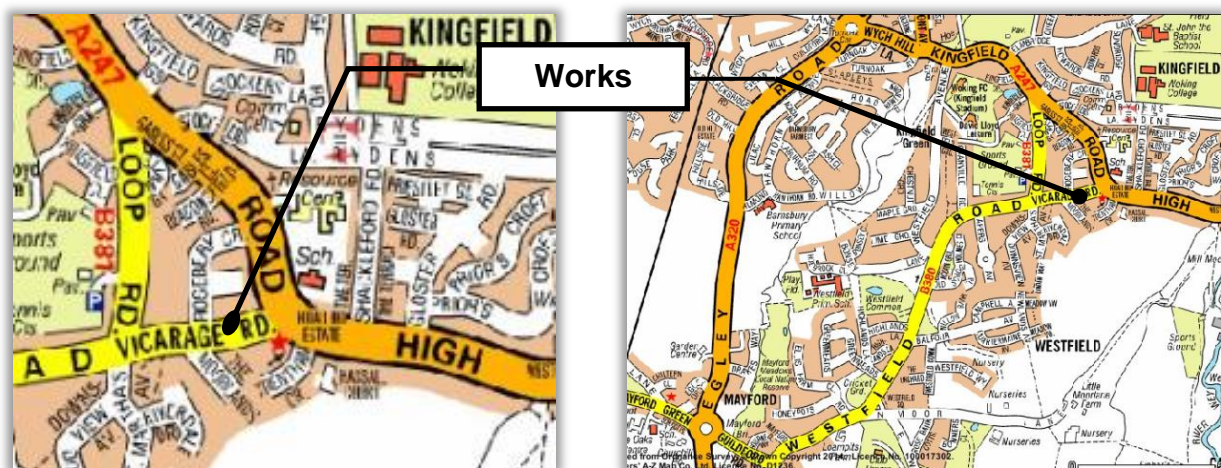
In support of the Woking Borough Council (WBC) Housing Strategy document 2011 – 2016, a mixed-tenure housing development of 371 new homes was approved under Planning Application PLAN/2013/0081. This Development, by a partnership between WBC, Kier and Thames Valley Housing is in the Westfield area of Woking and is known as Kingsmoor Park. The requirement for the Development was tested under an Examination in Public for the current Approved Woking Core Strategy October 2012 which identifies the site for the provision of some 440 dwellings

Consultation for the Kingsmoor Development formed part of the Planning Application. (PLAN/2013/0081).

2.3 Background to Works Requirement

Thames Water is the utility company responsible for waste water in the Woking area.

Thames identified that to support the building of the Kingsmoor Park Development it would be necessary to upgrade the local waste water capacity with a sewerage attenuation system taking the form of a gravity fed holding tank. As such this became a Condition of the Planning Approval. The most suitable site for this storage facility was identified by Thames as the B380 Vicarage Road, Kingfield between the junction with The Moorlands and the A247 Kingfield Road.



2.4 SCC – Thames Water Interactions

An initial meeting was held between Thames Water and SCC Officers on the 22 May 2014. At this meeting Thames advised the necessity for the project, showed the likely design of the holding tank and consequently the impact on the highway was first indicated.

To create the required capacity, over sized pipe work of an external diameter of 1150 millimetres was required for a length of approximately 125 metres.

A series of project review meetings followed this with various attendees including SCC and WBC Local Councillors, Surrey Police Road Traffic Safety and Woking Borough Council.



2.5 Timing and Duration of Works

It is recognised that the timing of the works was undesirable with regard to available daylight hours and potential for disruptive weather patterns. The required completion date of the project was determined by the projected occupancy dates of the properties on Kingsmoor Park. The effect of this being that the project could not be deferred until a potentially more suitable time of year.

Initial discussions indicated a potential start date for the project to be late August 2014. Difficulties within Thames Water delayed this to the 11 November 2014.

The duration of the works was estimated at six months. The works represented a significant civil engineering project unlike normal pipe laying and the duration could only be approximated at the outset.

Extended working hours were instructed which included Saturday working to expedite the works. (The time of year and associated day light hours ultimately restricting this, although flood lighting was used whenever work type permitted).

It was necessary for Affinity Water, the provider of fresh water in the area, to relocate their underground supply pipe work before Thames could begin excavation to create sufficient space for the holding tank. This represented a two week period at the start of the works before the Thames excavation could commence.

Towards the latter stages of the project, issues arose regarding the discovery of an uncharted gas supply pipe in the line of excavation. Initial thoughts indicated the pipe to be redundant however further investigation revealed it to be live and supplying property.

The works to arrange an alternative gas supply point and remove the obstructing pipe unfortunately prevented the project being finished ahead of schedule.

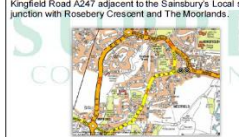
2.6 Publicity / Notifications

The task of publicising any works on the highway is the responsibility of the works promoter, in this case Thames Water.

With significant projects, SCC augments this by the release of Street Works Information Sheets. These are distributed electronically to a variety of stakeholders including SCC Members, Woking Borough Council Members, emergency services, local commerce, local community groups, local schools, local churches and contacts that can be established by a reasonable investigation using an internet search engine, with a request to pass on to interested parties.

SCC released information in this format on six occasions; 16 August 2014, 7 November 2014, 1 December 2014, 1 February 2015, 14 April 2015 and the 28 April 2015.

www.woking.gov.uk
www.surreycc.gov.uk/woking

Advanced Information on Street Works	
Road Name and Number	Vicarage Road B380 -, Kingfield, Woking
Utility Company	Thames Water
Reason for Works	Thames Water require to install a sewerage attenuation system related to the Moor Lane housing development. It is needed due to the marginal capacity of the current foul water system and will take the form of an underground storage area created by significantly increasing the volume of the existing pipe work.
Additional Information	Works will be in the carriageway and will require the road to be closed for the duration of the project. There will be no vehicular access through the site. Rosebery Crescent will also be closed at its junction with Vicarage Road. Loop Road will also be closed at the southern end for the initial period of the works. Advance warning signs have been erected at suitable locations. A "drop in" information session was held and a letter drop was undertaken to local residents. Buses (34) will be diverted via Westfield Avenue with new stops sited in Westfield Road adjacent to the Westfield Avenue junction and at the northern end of Westfield Avenue before the junction with Kingfield Road. New parking restrictions are being introduced at the northern end of Westfield Avenue for the duration of the project.
Extents of Works	The works will be in Vicarage Road, Kingfield extending from the junction with Kingfield Road A247 adjacent to the Sainsbury's Local store through to the junction with Rosebery Crescent and The Moorlands. 
Highway Impact	A diversion route will be signed via the A247 Kingfield Road, A320 Wych Hill Lane, the A320 Egley Road and the B380 Westfield Road Significant traffic impact with delays can be expected
Works Duration	Work will start on the 10 th of November and is expected to continue for up to six months.
SCC Contact Number	0300 200 1003 SCC Street Works contacts Natasha Haider
Thames Contact Number	0800 316 9800 Date Issued: 07 11 2014
Type of Works	Major Issue number: 002

Thames Water were instructed to undertake a letter drop to include Riverdale Drive, Linden Way, St Marthas Avenue, Downsview Avenue, Loop Road, Rosebery Crescent, The Moorlands, the parade of shops on Kingfield Road and Westfield Road, Apers Avenue and Granville Road.

Thames Water have confirmed this instruction from SCC was not fully complied with resulting in a smaller area having been included in a letter drop than had been requested.

Multiple advanced warning signs were instructed to be positioned by Thames Water on the approaches to the section of Vicarage Road to be closed, two weeks prior to the actual closure being invoked.

Thames Water did not comply fully with this request compromising advanced warning of the works.

Thames Water did undertake an open public “drop in session” at the New Life Church at the junctions of Vicarage Road and Kingfield Road on the 8 October 2014.



In line with statute, (Road Traffic Act 1984), legal Notices were placed in the local press (Woking News and Mail) on the 23 October and the 6 November 2014 advising of the forthcoming road closures and Notices of the closure were placed on site. (These take the form of laminated A4 sheets attached to suitable street furniture such as lamp or sign posts).

Further to this on the 31 October 2014 the local newspaper, the Woking News and Mail, ran an article detailing the closure. An item also featured in the Woking Advertiser and a local political party included information in a leaflet distributed to all homes in Kingfield, Westfield and Barnsbury.

2.7 Bus Services

The closure of Vicarage Road made redundant bus stops on Westfield Road, Vicarage Road and Kingfield Road for the 34 Guildford / Camberley service

The Passenger Transport department within Surrey County Council are responsible for liaison with bus operating companies. Initial views from Passenger Transport were to use Loop Road for the redirected service with parking restrictions invoked on the west (playing field) side. Due to reasons detailed below, the use of Loop Road was not deemed a suitable option. In conjunction with the operator Arriva buses, Westfield Avenue was selected as the alternative route for the 34 service with temporary stops being established at both ends. (A review of passenger numbers indicated a relatively low take up from the stops decommissioned).

Consideration was given to restructuring the route of the 462 / 463, Woking to Guildford service which runs along Old Woking High Street, taking in Rydens Way and the Elmbridge estate to provide a service along Kingfield Road. This was advised as not being viable financially for the operator.

Under the legislation relating to Street Works activities, there are no powers afforded to the Highway Authority to instruct costs for any alternative public transport provision be borne by the works promoter. Surrey County Council has no budget provision to support an alternative service.

A Woking Borough Council initiative provided a shuttle bus service to support local residents who found themselves without means to access town centre commerce.

2.8 Diversion Route

In line with criteria defined by the Department for Transport, the B380 Vicarage Road is categorised as a Traffic Sensitive road. Local knowledge is available that substantiates this with particular reference to the morning and evening commuting and school run periods.

With the absolute need for the works, the requirement to close the road for the duration unequivocal and traffic volumes understood, consideration had to be given to managing the displaced traffic.

The Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 8 section D3.15.3 states that diversions should be planned with the Highway Authority taking account of the suitability of the diversionary route for the expected traffic flows. Best practice within the industry indicates that where ever possible diversions should be on similar or higher category roads. 'A' road to 'A' road, 'B' road to 'B' or 'A' road etc. In addition, use of residential roads is avoided wherever possible.

Consequently the diversion route was set and signed using the B380 Westfield Road, the B380 Guildford Road, the A320 Woking Road, the A247 Wych Hill and the A247 Kingfield Road. (And vice versa).

Whilst selecting and signing an official diversion route, it is recognised that there is no obligation for this to be followed by road users.

Rosebery Crescent (directly adjacent to the closure) was considered unsuitable as a diversion route, being both a small residential road and road category 'D'. It also served as an appropriate location for the necessary site compound including material storage, site office and welfare unit.

Extensive discussion was undertaken regarding the potential use of Loop Road for diverted traffic. This road is a category 'B' road however it is residential and can be highly parked primarily on its western side. The eastern side at the top end represents the first location for parking outside of the Controlled Parking Zone and is also subject to significant parking on Woking Football Club match days. In addition it is the coach pick up point for St John the Baptist School, coaches parking in the lay by area at the northern end of the road to pick up students.



www.woking.gov.uk
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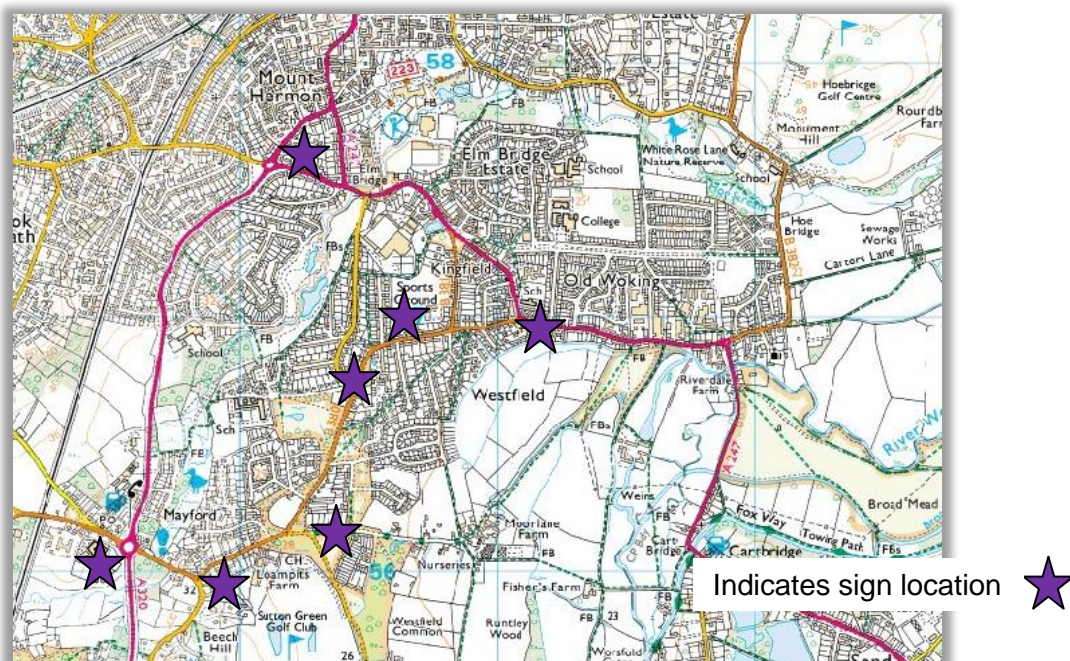
Suspension of parking in Loop Road was reviewed and considered unfavourable to the local community.

As a consequence of the above factors Loop Road was not selected for use as a diversion.

The viability of using Westfield Avenue was also considered. This is a category 'D' road and is residential. It had also been selected by Arriva buses as the alternative route for the number 34 service. Hence it was also not considered suitable for the official diversion. In addition traffic was not encouraged to use this road to avoid an unduly disruptive effect on the bus service.

The requirement for Road Closure and Diversion signage is detailed in the Traffic Signs Manual, specifically Section D3.15 Diversions/Road Closures and sub sections D3.15.14 and D3.15.15 refer. Road Ahead Closed, Road Closed and Diversion signage was placed in line with the requirements of the Manual.

In addition to the legislative requirements, large supplementary signage specifically referencing Vicarage Road was positioned at prominent locations on roads leading to the site, indicated on the illustration below.



In addition Businesses Open as Usual signage was positioned to support local commerce affected by the loss of passing traffic.

It has to be stated that the initial Road Closure sign layout by Thames Water was inadequate and one week into the project the supplier of the signage was changed.



2.9 Loop Road Closure

Following consultation with Surrey Police, the decision was taken to close Loop Road at the southern end junction with Westfield Road for the initial start up period of the works. The decision was based on the high possibility of this road becoming grid locked by displaced traffic not following diversion signage. It was assessed this would be a highly undesirable situation with potential safety issues arising.



Due to a continued disregard for the signage advising of the road closure and of the diversion signage, it was considered the closure could not be lifted and Loop Road remained closed for the duration of the works. Residents of Loop Road were written to individually initially to advise of the situation and subsequently when the decision was taken for the road to remain closed.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The six months duration was estimated based on the enormity of the works. The lack of similar works for reference and the potential for unknown factors were included in this timescale. Expectations with unhindered progress had been for an early completion. Due to factors contained in the report the project did not complete early but to planned timescale.
- 3.2 Extensive planning for the project was undertaken as detailed in the body of the response, resident issues being considered throughout, however no viable alternatives existed with regards to the works themselves or the management of displaced traffic.

- 3.3 The closure was not misjudged. Appropriate actions were taken by Officers at Surrey County Council at all times.

4. COMMENT

- It is noted that Vicarage Road had previously been closed between the 14 and 17 April 2014 to enable Thames Water to undertake the digging of trial holes to establish the location of other underground services. This period was selected to coincide with the school Easter holiday vacation when traffic volumes are known to be reduced.
- The responsibility for notification of works lies with the works promoter, in this case Thames Water. Their non compliance with requests from Surrey County Council with regard to pre event publicity was unhelpful. SCC will review this situation with a view to establishing greater influence in similar future scenarios. In addition the geographical area to be included in future requests to a utility company will be reconsidered.
- Information on proposed and actual works can be found on the Surrey County Council web site and also on the national web site www.roadworks.org

RECOMMENDATIONS

Woking Joint Committee is asked to agree the response provided.

Contact Officer:

Kevin Orledge, Street Works Manager: 0300 200 1003.

Consulted: N/A

Annexes: N/A

Sources/background papers:

New Roads and Street Works Act 1991

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/22/contents>

Traffic Management Act 2004

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/18/contents>

Highways Act 1991

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66>

Department for Transport Street Works web page

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/street-works-faq>

Street Works Coordination Code of Practice

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/street-works-co-ordination>

Safety at Street Works and Road Works a Code of Practice

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safety-at-street-works-and-road-works>

Kingsmoor Park web site

<http://kingsmoorpark.com/>

Woking Borough Council web site

<http://www.woking.gov.uk/housing/newdevelopmentsstrategies/priorityhomes>

Planning Application reference - PLAN/2013/0081

Decision Notice

<http://kingsmoorpark.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Planning-Conditions.pdf>

Woking News and Mail

<http://www.wokingnewsandmail.co.uk/?p=8566>

Thames Water

http://www.thameswater.co.uk/thameswaterlive/index.htm?k=qu22_9bt