



SURREY

SCC LOCAL COMMITTEE IN SPELTHORNE – 27 July 2015

AGENDA ITEM 6

MEMBER WRITTEN QUESTION TIME

1. Cllr Chris Frazer will ask the following question:

“What is the up to date position on resolving the following challenges in Ashford:

1. The Clockhouse Lane Bridge
2. Road nuisance, safety and disturbance on Clockhouse Lane
3. Road nuisance, safety and disturbance on Feltham Road?”

Nick Healey, SCC Highways Area Team Manager (NE), will give the following answer:

“1. At the last update given to Committee the feasibility study was virtually complete, with ground investigation works outstanding on the southern side of the railway. The London Borough of Hounslow (LBH) had been working with their Legal team to gain access to the land in question. LBH were unable to gain access to the land and have chosen not to pursue this at the present time as there is currently no funding available for the construction. The ground investigations would not add significantly to the feasibility study. The feasibility report concluded that the construction costs would be in the region of £1.1 million to £1.4 million. After factoring in design costs and other fees the total cost would exceed £2 million. LBH do not currently have any funding allocated for construction of this scheme, although it remains an aspiration of LBH to implement the scheme.

To deliver a project of this scale would require LBH to submit a major scheme bid to TfL. The Local Committee has previously agreed to fund 50% of the cost of the scheme; this contribution would need to be assembled before the scheme could go ahead.

A significant risk highlighted by the feasibility report is that of land acquisition. The existing footways are some distance from the bridge on south-west and north-east sides. In order to join the new footbridge to the existing footways it would be necessary to acquire some land that is owned by external parties. The land to north-east is within LBH and Network Rail ownership and therefore this could be progressed in parallel to any design work. However, the land to the south-west is in Network Rail and private ownership, and it is the land in private ownership that is of particular concern. Surrey County

Council may need to acquire this area of private land before the scheme is taken forwards to give have confidence that the scheme can be delivered.

The Area Highway Manager has asked LBH for the final version of the feasibility report, and will circulate this to members of the Local Committee when it is received. A draft version has previously been circulated to Members.

2. There are no plans for any Highway improvement scheme in Clockhouse Lane at the present time. A scheme to improve pedestrian crossing facilities near Parkland Road has been add to the Integrated Transport Scheme prioritisation list at the request of the Divisional Member, but no funding has been allocated to develop this scheme.

3. There are no plans for any Highway improvement scheme in Feltham Road at the present time. A scheme to mitigate the impact of HGV traffic is on the Integrated Transport Scheme prioritisation list, but no funding is allocated to develop this scheme.”

AGENDA ITEM 7

PUBLIC WRITTEN QUESTION TIME

1. Mr Andrew McLuskey will ask the following question:

“In the light of the recent Sutton Trust’s Social Mobility Index showing that Spelthorne ranked 526 out of 533 parliamentary constituencies (with 1 being the best and 533 the worst) what action does the Local Committee propose to take to remedy this situation?”

Kerry Randle, Area Education Officer – NE, will give the following answer:

“Thank you for raising this question. The Spelthorne Education Action Group (SEAG) was set up in May 2014 to improve standards for all children in Spelthorne, following the publication of the academic progress report in March 2014. The group’s aim is to work closer with schools to drive up standards, to support schools and promote the spread of innovation to the benefit of all. The SEAG also aims to provide the vision and strategic leadership to improve the quality of outcomes for children, young people and their families within Spelthorne, by bringing together and encouraging greater partnership at a local level.

The SEAG discussed the Sutton Trust Mobility Index at their last meeting and it was agreed that Spelthorne data overall is becoming a more positive picture with an emphasis on school improvement, with two schools moving from ‘Requires Improvement’ to ‘Good’ under Ofsted inspections this year. SEAG will continue to monitor school improvement, with a further ten Spelthorne schools receiving focussed school support going forward.

Further analysis will be undertaken and the SEAG will provide a progress report on the group’s first 18 months and this will be issued to Local Committee members.”

2. Mr Andrew McLuskey will ask the following question:

“Given that the recently released final report of the Airports Commission would appear to involve, for Stanwell, a) extremely clogged roads during the building of the M25 tunnel, b) the loss of our ‘green lung’ (centred on Stanwell Quarry and an area Surrey CC has planned for public recreation) and c) the building of a RAILWAY(sic) through the village and estate - what steps does the Committee propose to take to counter these disastrous proposals and ensure that Sipson - type blight does not now affect the area, especially in regard to property prices?”

Katharine Harrison, SCC Principal Spatial Planning Officer, will give the following answer:

“The Local Committee cannot take action on a matter of strategic corporate interest. Regarding the Airports Commission proposals - there is no consultation process underway at the moment. Whilst the Airports Commission has made a recommendation to government on the option for expansion, the mitigation measures are still to be resolved through whatever process Government decide to take - all currently uncertain.”

3. Mr George Rushbrook will ask the following question:

“The pressure [at the Sunbury Cross Junction] is increasing; can we residents be assured that Surrey CC Highways and the Highways Agency are aware of these problems and are responding to the challenge before it is too late?”

Background:

“Local residents are becoming increasingly concerned at the traffic congestion at the Sunbury Cross Junction. This multi lane strategic junction within Surrey is also Junction 1 of the M3 Motorway and numerous approved local developments and other events are putting it under severe strain. The area is a bus route and there is a catchment for 4,000 plus school pupils. The London Irish Site for 190 dwellings in The Avenue is under construction. Other dwelling sites immediately at The Cross have been approved. The Costco Retail Warehouse site with yards of the junction opens in August 2015 with some 615 parking spaces and Heavy Goods deliveries. Kempton Park Racecourse has several events and a large weekly market. Numerous events at nearby Hampton Court have an impact, which I am sure members of the Committee are aware of.

It should also be noted that the junction is recorded as an ‘air pollution hot spot’ where readings show that it is consistently above permitted limits. This is a matter of ongoing discussions with Spelthorne B.C.”

Nick Healey, SCC Highways Area Team Manager (NE), will give the following answer:

“Traffic levels are steadily increasing on the Public Highway network, including local roads and the major junction at and Sunbury Cross. At the present time Surrey County Council has no plans for any major improvement of the large roundabout junction at Sunbury Cross. Officers are not aware of any plans that Highways England (previously the Highways Agency) might have.”

4. Mr Nigel Cook will ask the following questions:

“i) Why does the S19 report claim that the floodwater from the Aqueduct only “contributed” to the floodwater entering the River Ash?

ii) What evidence does the County Council have that floodwater from any other source than the Thames Water Aqueduct entered the River Ash? I live next to the River Ash in Leacroft and I can tell you that there was no flooding of the River Ash before the 9th February. The very heavy rainfall at the time had very little impact on the water level in the River Ash. The river levels rose suddenly and dramatically at the same time as Thames Water were having their crisis with the floodwater spilling out of their Aqueduct. This is confirmed by the telemetry data from the Environment Agency which only records raised water levels in the River Ash at times that coincide with the failure to control the floodwater in the Aqueduct.

iii) Why does the report not make it clear that the flooding of the River Ash was solely due to the floodwater being channelled into Staines, and the River Ash, by the Thames Water Aqueduct?

iv) What evidence do you have to argue otherwise?”

Doug Hill, SCC Strategic Network Resilience Manager, will give the following answers:

i) The S19 report is only required to determine which risk management authorities have flood risk management functions for a specific incident and whether each of these authorities have exercised, or are proposing to exercise, these functions in response to the flood. The sources of the flooding and the interaction between the aquaduct and the River Ash is a question for the Environment Agency and Thames Water and will be considered as part of the modelling currently being carried out by the EA. We would kindly advise that you contact the Environment Agency direct should you require any further information regarding this particular issue.

ii) Surrey County Council is not required to investigate or collect evidence on the exact source of flooding, only to determine which risk management authorities have flood risk management functions for a specific incident and whether each of these authorities have exercised, or are proposing to exercise, these functions in response to the flood. Specific questions regarding the exact cause of the flooding should be directed to the Environment Agency who are investigating potential options to reduce flood risk in this area.

iii) The S19 report is not required to determine the exact cause of flooding. Modelling work currently being carried out by the Environment Agency will consider the source of flooding as part of their work to investigate options to reduce flood risk in the area and any questions regarding this should be directed to the EA.

iv) Surrey County Council is not required to investigate or collect evidence on the exact source of flooding, only to determine which risk management authorities have flood risk management functions for a specific incident and whether each of these authorities have exercised, or are proposing to exercise, these functions in response to the flood. Specific questions regarding the exact cause of the flooding should be directed to the Environment Agency who are investigating potential options to reduce flood risk in this area.”

5. Mr David Woods will ask the following question:

“I live in Leacroft Staines, and my family home was flooded 18 months ago by a catalogue of errors! It took almost a year to get my home back in order. My question to the council is, does the County Council agree with the factual statement of events relating to the flooding of the River Ash, February 2014 made by Kwasi Kwarteng MP in the House of Commons on 12th May?”

Doug Hill, SCC Strategic Network Resilience Manager, will give the following answer:

“The County Council does agree with the content of his statement to the house. He clearly indicates the protocol which existed between Thames Water, as the statutory water undertaker, and the Environment Agency. He then states the perception about maintenance of the infrastructure and the failure to close a particular sluice gate, added to the subsequent flooding. The 2003 protocol clearly stated that Thames Water should pump water out of the aqueduct when that threat of flooding existed. Further, if that failed to operate, sluice gate 8 at Moor Lane should be shut. The protocol was clear, but was not adhered to as requested by the EA. Mr Kwarteng indicated strongly that that should be investigated. He then produced the sequence of events which fully reflects the section 19 report. He then comments on the investment that Thames Water have put in to maintain the infrastructure, as these private bodies being held to account is at the centre of the issues in his view.”

6. Mr Martin Cherrett will ask the following questions:

“The following questions relate to the Flooding of the River Ash and the report recently published by the Lead Flood Risk Management Authority, Surrey County Council:

i) The S19 report says that it examines ‘whether the relevant risk management authorities have exercised, or propose to exercise, their risk management functions (as per section 19(1) of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010)’. Why does the report not acknowledge that the Environment Agency was unable to fulfil its risk management function under the 2003 River Ash Protocol, the objective of which stated ‘it is essential to stop the floodwater being carried down the aqueduct’?

ii) Why does the S19 report not acknowledge that the Environment Agency was unable to fulfil its risk management function because Thames Water, who operate the Aqueduct, were unable to operate the Moor Lane Sluice Gate? The Environment Agency’s Flood Incident Duty Officer’s Log clearly records that he was told that the Sluice Gate was ‘not functional’. Why does the report not mention this central fact?

iii) The S19 report states that Thames Water ‘Partially closed the Moor Lane sluice gate following an instruction from the EA in order to control flow levels on the River Ash and Colne Brook’. Why does the report not also acknowledge that there was a four day delay between the Environment Agency first seeking to invoke the River Ash Protocol, which required the Sluice Gate to be shut, and the time the provisions of the Protocol were implemented? It was during this four day delay that people’s homes were flooded. This is a serious omission from the factual record of the course of events.

iv) The S19 report states that ‘On 10 February, consideration was given to closing the gate. However, Thames Water raised concerns that making an active decision might lead to further flooding upstream for a number of reasons, namely: the gate had not been operated for 10 years; closing it might lead to further flooding upstream and severely limit pumping capability; and, in order to guarantee that the gate could be re-opened once closed, additional lifting gear would be required’. Why does the report not record Thames Water did not raise these considerations until some considerable time after they had told the EA that the Sluice Gate was ‘not functional’? Thames Water only raised these ‘considerations’ at a time when they were not able to operate the Sluice Gate.”

Doug Hill, SCC Strategic Network Resilience Manager, will give the following answers:

“i) The Staines Reservoir Aqueduct is a private asset owned by Thames Water. The River Ash protocol is an agreement between the Environment Agency and Thames Water on how the aqueduct might be operated during a flooding scenario. Neither the protocol or the operation of this asset are ‘Flood Risk Management Functions’ as defined in the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The report gives a chronology of what action was taken and by whom and is not required to go further. Specific questions over the operation of the aqueduct and the sources of the flooding should be directed to Thames Water and the Environment Agency.

ii) Again, neither the protocol or the operation of the aqueduct are ‘Flood Risk Management Functions’ as defined by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The report gives a chronology of what action was taken and by whom and is not required to go further. Specific questions relating to the Environment Agency’s Flood Incident Duty Officers log should be directed to the EA.

iii) The report specifies the date that the EA requested Moor Lane sluice Gate be closed (9 February 2014) and when the sluice gate was reported to have been 50% closed (12 February 2014). The report is not required to go beyond this factual account. Specific questions regarding the operation of the Moor Lane sluice gate should be directed to the Environment Agency and Thames Water.

iv) As stated above, the operation of the aqueduct is not a 'Flood Risk Management Function' as defined by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The report gives a chronology of what action was taken and by whom and is not required to go further. Specific questions relating to the operation of the aqueduct and sluice gate should be directed to Thames Water and the Environment Agency.

The Environment Agency is currently carrying out modelling work to determine the risk of flooding in the area and to investigate potential options for reducing flood risk in the future. Surrey County Council will be supporting this work and would be happy to meet with the community group, subject to their agreement, alongside the Environment Agency to discuss how this work is progressing, but will not comment further on specific actions carried out by partner organisations during the flooding of 2013/14. The County Council has fulfilled all of the duties placed upon it by the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) in relation to this flood event."

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