



Surrey Heath Local Area Committee
Date: 2 July 2015

Annex B

Written Public Questions, Responses and Supplementary questions

Q. Written question from Mr Carl Crease, Old Dean Resident

My question is in relation to the situation with the change of access and egress arrangements at Pine Ridge Infant School, Esher Road, Camberley, GU15 4AL.

Myself and my family moved into our home in November 1999, and had lived in a relatively peaceable atmosphere until approximately two and a half years ago.

In the past 2 ½ years myself and other residents have been trying without success to persuade the school to revert their access and egress arrangements to the original state, an arrangement that worked very well for the school, it's pupil's and visitor's and the local community for approximately 40 Years.

The situation is now that the school have closed their "Main Entrance" to pupil and parent/guardian access during school times as follows:

08.30 to 09.15

11.30 to 12.30

14.30 to 15.15 hrs approximately each day Monday to Friday.

The closure of the main entrance is of a spurious nature and the only reason that has been given so far is that the staff of the school feel that access is "awkward" and their vehicles have been "scratched" by the pupils and visitors.

By closing the main entrance the school have moved their pupil and parent/guardian access and egress to a private driveway and Garage/Parking area which is also an Emergency Services Access Route for 9 local residents. This "driveway" is not part of the highway and is owned by Accent Peerless Group, a nominal fee for the upkeep of this private driveway is paid by the residents who have land adjacent to this driveway and garage/parking area. The "new entrance" is a single width gate of wooden construction and is 870mm wide open. The Building Regulations stipulate a clear width of 1000mm for external doors for public access, there is also a stipulation for a minimum width of 1500mm for the access route which has to be a clear of obstacle pathway, the school does not have the facility for this at the rear entrance due to kerbs and dropped kerbs and grassed/unmade path areas.

No planning for a “Material Change of Use” is known to have been entered into at this time, had this opportunity arisen the local residents of which 44 have signed a petition would have objected, however this public consultation right has neither been offered or given.

The New Main Entrance is now in a position where the pupils and parents/guardians have no other option than to park on the public highway (Mitcham Road). The section of highway closest to the gate is the main bus route and has three “T” Junctions within a 100m stretch of road. At this section of road there are 2 road traffic warning signs to notify of school children crossing in the vicinity, however one of these signs is obscured by a private hedge which is not cut back on a regular basis, therefore any driver not familiar with the road layout, travelling from Bracknell Road past these junctions would not be aware of any potential children crossing. There are no forms of road marking in relation to a school and there is no crossing patrol, so therefore no traffic calming or control measures are in place apart from as already mentioned, One Visible Warning sign. There is a Blue “for Information” road traffic sign which shows the “Pedestrian Route” to the rear of the school.

The parking situation in Mitcham Road is of a standard which is to say the least Dangerous, the pavements are blocked to foot traffic and pushchair and wheelchair traffic on a daily basis. Parking on pavements and across dropped kerbs and around the “T” junctions at Mitcham Road/ Surbiton Road and Mitcham Road/Mitcham Road (cul-de-sac area) and Mitcham Road/Driveway.

Pushchairs being pushed down the road and pedestrians walking in the road due to blocked pavements is a daily occurrence, Children having to cross a main bus route between parked vehicles because the vehicles have no other option at this location but to park on the pavements.

The School has a purpose built Main Entrance at the front of the school which has served its purpose for 40 years or more as mentioned earlier. This purpose built Main Entrance is on a no through road (Esher Road) and off of the main bus route therefore traffic calming and control is self-containing and self-managing, within this no through road (Esher Road) that serves it there are also parking bays off of the highway.

The situation is now a case of as follows:

- Reduced Disability Access and egress which does not comply with Part M of the Building Regulations at the School Premises.
- Children having to stand in the road, **30mph speed limit**, to see if it is safe to cross.
- Children having to cross the road on a main bus route.
- No Highway Markings to warn of a school entrance.
- One Warning Sign Visible to traffic on the Highway.
- Three “T” Junctions and Eight Private Driveways to negotiate.
- Public access Dropped Kerbs blocked, installed primarily for Disabled Use.
- No Traffic calming measures or control.
- ”Safe Routes to School Initiative” being ignored.
- Increase in Traffic and Noise and Disruption to Local Residents.

- Increase in Anti-social behaviour, foul language, litter etc.
- Damage to Residents Private Property.
- Damage to Residents Vehicles.

The irony of the situation is that outside Tomlinscote Secondary School and Collingwood Secondary School, **11 to 18 year olds**, traffic calming and management has been put in place for the protection of pupils, the “Chicanes” at Collingwood have been a contentious issue since their installation but SHBC has repeatedly refused to remove them, and yet outside a primary school, of **2 to 7 Year olds**, the local council have paid no attention, aside from one “Site Visit” by Cllr. Chapman about a year ago. Still nothing has been done.

I have written to the Headteacher at Pine Ridge School, once with not even an acknowledgement, and again in the last week, awaiting an acknowledgement on that one.

This situation must change and change before there is a serious incident at this location, my suggestion would be to revert to the original site arrangement in September, this would only involve sending a letter to the Parents and Guardians explaining the situation until the proper site surveys have been completed and the proper Guidance and Disabled Access rules have been followed which are at present not.

In conclusion I find it a sad indictment on today’s Teaching Profession and the Local Council that the ability of staff to park at a school has become more important than a child’s welfare, health or potentially life for that matter. I also cannot understand why, despite two petitions already being submitted to this council, this has been allowed to continue for so long, why this council is not proactive when it comes to road safety and why the Children and Disabled Persons and Local Residents are put secondary to the selfish whims of this school its management and staff.

A. Response from Chairman on behalf of the Committee:

Thank you for your written question, which raises some interesting points.

There is a report tabled on the agenda to discuss Pine Ridge School and Members will discuss the issues you raise under that item.

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