

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)

DATE: 09 SEPTEMBER 2015

LEAD OFFICER: SARAH SMITH, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AND COMMITTEE OFFICER

SUBJECT: LC MEMBERS' WRITTEN QUESTIONS

DIVISION: ALL



Questions received from Mr Stephen Cooksey (Dorking and the Holmwoods)

1. There has been speculation in Dorking that one reason for the increased congestion experienced over recent months is the phasing of the various sets of traffic lights in the town centre. Would you please indicate how regularly the phasing of traffic lights is tested in Dorking town centre, when the last tests were undertaken, what were the findings of those tests and was any remedial action found to be necessary? When will the phasing next be tested?

Response from SCC Highways:

The frequency of reviews of signal timings and revalidation of traffic signal sites, normally depends on what type of mode the site is running, ie. if the signals are Vehicle Activated or operate on an automatic system such as MOVA (Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation). The data sets used at MOVA sites are normally revalidated every 2 to 3 years, although this can in practice be considerably longer if there are no known problems at a site. Sites are reviewed on an ad-hoc basis when information is received from Surrey's Traffic Control Systems, Police, Councillors or the public to say they are not running to their optimum performance. It should be noted that the timings used at traffic signals are required to comply with Department for Transport specifications.

The traffic signals in Dorking town centre are mainly vehicle activated (VA), with the signals at the Westcott Road/Vincent Lane junction and High Street/London Road/Reigate Road junction both controlled through MOVA. The Westcott Road/Vincent Lane junction was last validated in 2009 and is currently being reassessed. The High Street/London Road/Reigate Road junction was last assessed in December 2013. The 'Pump Corner' junction, which is a VA site, was re-designed in 2009. This site had on-going issues following construction and was the subject of numerous complaints. Subsequent work by the Traffic Operations team resulted in these signals running to their optimum efficiency.

Traffic signal controlled pedestrian crossings are normally only checked when reports are received that they are not running efficiently.

Development, highway and utility works both in Dorking and in the surrounding area have impacted on traffic flows through Dorking in recent months. Resurfacing of part the A25 through Dorking town centre as part of the Operation Horizon programme is due to start later this month. This will also impact on traffic flows and the traffic signal detection loops in the carriageway. Once this work has been completed, and subject to their being no other works having a major impact on traffic in Dorking, the traffic signals team will be able to monitor the traffic signals to assess current operation and determine if any changes can be made to the timings to optimise capacity at the junctions. The findings will be reported to the Local Committee Chairman, Vice-Chairman and divisional Members.

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 2. When was the last time that traffic movements through Dorking town centre were modelled and what action was taken as a consequence of that modelling? When is it next proposed to undertake modelling of traffic movements in the town centre and what resource does County Highways propose to set aside to implement any actions that are revealed as being necessary to reduce congestion as a result of that modelling process?

Response from SCC Highways:

The last modelling undertaken specifically on Dorking was in 2011/12, and was associated with potential developments in the town. The work was undertaken for Mole Valley District Council (MVDC), who hold the information. MVDC would need to be approached directly to obtain any information.

Modelling work has been carried out subsequently, but this has been at the strategic level considering the District as a whole rather than Dorking specifically. This was carried out for MVDC as part of their Local Plan.

There are no current plans to undertake the modelling of traffic movements within Dorking.

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 3. At the last meeting of the Local Committee I was informed that work was being undertaken to deal with the problem of speeding traffic in Punchbowl Lane. What progress has been made with this project and when can we expect proposals to come forward for consultation.

Response from SCC Highways:

As reported to the Local Committee in June 2015, Surrey's Design Team has been instructed to investigate proposals to address speeding issues in Punchbowl Lane. As advised in the Highways Update Report on this agenda, schemes that are design only are only started in the latter part of the

financial year. The divisional member will be updated when proposals for Punchbowl Lane have been developed.

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4. The ITS budget for 2015-16 has allocated £20,000 for design and construction of a scheme of one way working for Dene Street, Dorking. Could you please indicate what progress has been made with this scheme and when proposals will be forthcoming?

Response from SCC Highways:

The proposal for making Dene Street one-way from the A25 Dorking High Street to Heath Hill is being progressed. It has been agreed that the one-way working will be introduced on an experimental basis which will enable local residents, businesses and other interested parties to comment on the actual rather than the perceived impact of the scheme. The experimental Traffic Regulation Order would be valid for 18 months with consultation carried out during the first 6 months of the experiment. Local residents and businesses directly affected by the proposals would be informed of the proposal prior to implementation. A formal consultation letter/questionnaire would be distributed once the one-way is operational and traffic movements settled down. The results of the consultation will form the subject of a future report to Local Committee for decision on whether or not to make the one-way working permanent.

Details of the scheme will be shared with the divisional Member once finalised. Officers will liaise with the divisional Member regarding information and consulting local residents and businesses. It is expected that the experimental one-way working will be implemented in February, after the Christmas and January sale period.

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Questions received from Mrs Hazel Watson (Dorking Hills)

1. A representative of Surrey Police and I recently drove in Hollow Lane and Leith Hill Road from the A25 towards the Ockley Road to discuss the suitability of the current 60 mph speed limit on this road and whether it would be more appropriate to reduce the speed limit to 40mph. The representative of Surrey Police also took a number of sample speed readings which indicated that cars using the road were travelling at around 40 mph - a sample test which indicates that a 40 mph speed limit could be appropriate to improve the quality of life of local residents where there are no

pavements and there are poor sight lines where there are bends in the road. Such a 40 mph speed limit would also be consistent with the speed limit implemented a couple of years ago on the parallel road of Fedlay Road / Holmbury Lane.

After reviewing the geography of the road and conducting the sample test, Surrey Police indicated that they were likely to be sympathetic to a 40mph speed limit on Hollow Lane / Leith Hill Road if a speed limit survey supports the findings of the sample test carried out. As such, can provision be made in the budget for such a speed limit review to be carried out and then can the speed limit review be carried out so that this much needed reduction in the speed limit can be progressed?

Response from SCC Highways:

Hollow Lane and Leith Hill Road (plus Leith Hill Lane) form a route between the A25 to the north and Ockley Road to the south, a distance of approximately 4.2 miles. The roads are currently subject to speed limits of 60mph, i.e. the national speed limit for single carriageway roads. The roads are rural in nature, with a number of adjoining roads. There are residential accesses, mainly along Hollow Lane and near the junctions with Abinger Common Road and Pasture Wood Lane.

It is proposed that automatic speed surveys are undertaken this financial year, subject to the identification of suitable survey sites. These surveys can be funded from the Mole Valley Local Committee's revenue budget. The surveys will be carried out in accordance with SCC's speed limit policy 'Setting Local Speed Limits'.

The results of the surveys will be assessed in accordance with SCC's speed limit policy, including consultation with SCC's Road Safety Team and Surrey Police's Road Safety and Traffic Management Team. The outcome of the assessment will be reported to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and divisional Member.

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2. When granting the road closure order for the Prudential RideLondon cycle event in August 2015, the County Council had to comply with the legislation which states: "...but no such order shall be made with respect to any road which would have the effect of preventing at any time access for pedestrians to any premises situated on or adjacent to the road or to any other premises accessible for pedestrians from, and only from, the road."

In relation to the Prudential RideLondon cycle event, did the County Council ensure compliance with this legislation and ensure that unimpeded pedestrian access was maintained to all properties adjacent to all roads on the route at all times having regard to the speed of the peloton along the narrow country lanes used for this event?

Response from SCC Highways:

The events team have confirmed that all roads were available to residents and pedestrians throughout the RideLondon event, in accordance with the legislation. Exemptions to the closure are set out in the Traffic Regulation Order made by the Highway Authority and delivered by the event organiser.

Risk assessments, delivery and management of the event safety arrangements are delivered by the event organiser. These plans are reviewed by Surrey Partners through the Safety Advisory Group.

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3. The footpath alongside the A25 from the bottom of Coast Hill in Westcott through Wotton and to Abinger Hammer is badly overgrown with vegetation, making it impassable for pedestrians. Having raised this with Highways, I was recently informed that the footpath alongside the A25 is incorrectly missing from the areas to be cut by the District Council's contractors, but that this is now being resolved. Can assurance be given that the overgrowth will be cut back and the whole length of the footpath will be made passable by pedestrians by the end of September at the latest?

Furthermore, in view of this confusion which follows the responsibility for Highway verge cutting transferring to the District Council from the County Council earlier this year, are there any other footpaths alongside other roads that have not been cleared of vegetation by the District Council's contractors and if so what action is being taken to resolve this problem?

Response from SCC Highways:

The footpath alongside the A25 from Coast Hill, Westcott to Abinger Hammer was omitted from the areas to be cut by Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) when they took over the responsibility for verge maintenance. Surrey officers have confirmed with the District that this is an error and that this section of the A25 should be cut as part of the rural flail programme. MVDC are responsible for programming the date when the flailing will take place and have been made aware of the urgency of carrying out this cut.

The Mole Valley Maintenance Engineer has offered to assist MVDC with any advice about any highway areas they are unclear about in the future. Officers will also be liaising with them regarding highway hedges to ensure these are included. If Members are aware of any other areas of verge maintenance that appear to have been omitted, these should be raised with the Maintenance Engineer so they can be raised with the District as appropriate.

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4. In response to a request by me for gullies to be cleared on Adlers Lane at the junction with Pilgrims Close in Westhumble, Highways informed me

that "these drainage assets are not plotted and do not form part of our program". Given this response, can I be assured that these gullies have now been plotted and that they will be on the Council's gully cleaning program from now on? Furthermore, can an assessment be given as to the extent of the problem of gullies not being plotted and thus the extent of the problem of gullies being missed out from the annual cleansing program and that if this is an issue what action is being taken to resolve the situation?

Response from SCC Highways:

The gullies on Adlers Lane at the junction with Pilgrims Close will require a visit from the jetter to be logged onto the system. Once it is on the system, the gullies will be emptied as part of the cyclic gully cleaning programme. The Mole Valley Maintenance Engineer is aware that this needs to be carried out and will ensure that the gullies are added to the asset inventory at the earliest opportunity.

The contractor has raised concerns with SCC that there are a number of roads in Mole Valley that need to be added to the system as they are currently not showing any drainage assets and so do not form part of the cleaning programme. The contractor has started a list of these roads. If Members are aware of any roads in their division which have gullies that appear to be missing from the asset inventory, they can advise the Mole Valley Maintenance Engineer who will liaise with the contractor.

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5. There is a finger post in Abinger Common on an island at the junction of Abinger Lane with Water Lane near the church with no sign on it but just a wooden post. Also the sign in the finger post at the junction of Raikes Lane with Abinger Lane is broken. In July 2014 I wrote to Highways and to Surrey Hills AONB to request these missing and damaged signs to be replaced, but no action has been taken. When will the missing and damaged signs be replaced?

Response from SCC Highways:

The missing signs were custom-made wooden signs on oak posts incorporating the Surrey Hills logo. Advice has been sought from Surrey Hills AONB and the original finger signs were painted soft wood, which have proved to be less durable than anticipated. Current practice is to use a more durable recycled material. It is proposed that officers investigate the existing condition of the posts and liaise with SCC's contractor to procure replacements of the finger signs. Surrey Hills AONB representatives have agreed to continue to advice and highways officers will report on progress to the divisional Member.

Question from Mrs Helyn Clack (Dorking Rural)

Recently the Brockham Flood Forum listened to a presentation from Persimmon Charles Church about solving the flooding problems in the village and community of Strood Green. This was, Persimmon admitted a precursor to a new planning application for building homes on Tanners Meadow.

During the winter of 2013/2014 over 90 properties were affected by flooding in Brockham. The flood forum local membership has repeatedly stated that there is a very large surface water drain pipe originating in Strood Green travelling across farmland to Tanners Brook which is unconnected to any surface water ditches in the community and therefore dry. After several enquiries it was discovered that Thames Water owned this pipe.

Persimmon drainage consultants told the flood forum that if this pipe was connected to surface water drainage in the Strood Green Community it would vastly relieve the pressure of flood waters arriving in the community from the surround locality during and after heavy rainfall. They have said that they would include this pipe in their proposals for any application for drainage relief as a requirement for planning.

Whilst the flood forum is pleased that others now recognise the importance of this pipe to flood relief, the community does not need or want additional housing in order to make use of this resource. Is it possible for this drainage pipe to be adopted by Surrey County Council, Mole Valley District Council or even the local Brockham Parish Council in order that works can be undertaken to connect it to local drainage. Can the District Council's Scrutiny Committee call in Thames Water to account for this unused resource?

I welcome the District council's initiative on the Infrastructure Needs Assessment which will give the flood forum, the residents of Strood Green and the Parish Council the opportunity to formally put their infrastructure needs forward (as well as doing the same for all other communities) giving the district a mandate to work with the water authorities.

Will the local authorities agree to investigate whether they could invest a small amount of funding to connect this surface water drainage pipe in order to relieve the pressure of flooding on the community of Strood Green in Brockham?

Response

The issue raised is a complex one which will require further investigation. An interim response is provided below. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and divisional Member will be updated once more information is available.

It is understood that the pipe in question is likely to be registered as a public sewer and as such would be under the responsibility of Thames Water. From the information held, it appears that the pipe currently drains a series of small private ditches although further information would be required to assess

whether it could be utilised to relieve flooding in the area. Any proposals to connect to a surface water sewer, either as part of a flood alleviation scheme or development, would need to be formally agreed with Thames Water.

Surrey County Council has been allocated funding by the Thames Regional Flood Coastal Committee to carry out an initial investigation into potential options to alleviate flooding in Brockham and Strood Green. This investigation will look at Surface Water Flooding in the area as a whole in order to find the best solution for the flooding issues, although any viable scheme that is identified would need to secure funding to take forward. Officers will continue to work with the Brockham Flood Forum in carrying out this work and would be happy to discuss any potential options with them.

Adopting a public sewer would need to go through a complex legal process that would take a considerable amount of time to achieve. Officers believe that the best course of action would be for SCC to continue to work with both Thames Water and the Brockham Flood Forum in identifying potential options for reducing flood risk in this community.

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