



SCC LOCAL COMMITTEE IN ELMBRIDGE – 21 March 2016

AGENDA ITEM 8

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question 1: Clare Hillman (resident)

Would you agree that Ember Lane in Esher is a near perfect location for implementing Surrey's extensive and ambitious cycling strategy, as an example of how infrastructure can influence behaviour and environment? A safe, separated cycle route along Ember Lane will fulfil nearly all the aims of the strategy, most notably:

- 1 - fulfilling the Olympic legacy aim of making it possible for all children to be able to cycle safely to school (rather than currently be driven up our road in their hundreds each morning)
- 2 - sharing the road for benefit of ALL street users (rather than currently optimised for speeding cars and lorries)
- 3 - support cycle events (as it is used by hundreds of sports and recreation cyclists each week, currently obliged to weave around potholes and deep drains with cars overtaking them even on bends)?

Response:

The Elmbridge Local Committee is developing an aspirational cycle strategy. This involves collecting evidence on existing travel choices. It also involves analysing origins and destinations to identify opportunities to encourage modal shift towards cycling. The intention is to develop an aspirational cycle network, starting with Weybridge and the surrounding area and spreading out to include the whole Borough. At the present time the Local Committee has not allocated any funding to develop any part of this network through feasibility, detailed design and / or construction.

One of the principles of the Cycling Strategy is that cycle facilities may be appropriate on busier roads, where slower and less confident people will probably be deterred from cycling. The cycle path on Hampton Court Way clearly fulfils this function. At the other end of the scale, if someone felt less confident about cycling on residential roads, then, in most cases, training would be the more appropriate solution. Some roads fall between the two and the most appropriate form of provision is not immediately obvious.

Ember Lane forms part of the B3379 connecting the A307 Portsmouth Road to Walton Road and Bridge Road. As such it forms part of a parallel route to the A309 Hampton Court Way. There is anecdotal evidence that Ember Lane is used by drivers to avoid congestion in Hampton Court Way. A number of traffic islands have been installed in Ember Lane in previous years, together with the central hatching, as a form of traffic calming, and also to provide pedestrian crossing opportunities.

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From a technical point of view, between the River Ember and The Woodlands, the carriageway width in Ember Lane (and Esher Road) is approximately 9m, and the total width of the Highway (including footways) is approximately 14m. With these widths it would be possible to provide a segregated cycle facility. This could take the form, for example, of on carriageway cycle lanes. It could also take the form of a shared surface on a widened footway on one or both sides of the road. To the south of The Woodlands, and to the north and west of the River Ember along Bridge Road or Walton Road, there is not sufficient space within the available Highway width to create a segregated cycle facility of any sort. This means that any new facility in Ember Lane would need to be linked to a wider network along either residential back streets, or along busy main roads with no segregation, to avoid being an isolated link. To achieve a segregated cycle facility would mean the existing pedestrian refuge islands and central hatching would need to be removed, to be able to create the space for the cycle facility. The detail and cost of a new cycle facility would need to be explored firstly through a feasibility study at a cost of approximately £5,000, and then detailed design for a further cost of approximately £5,000. Public consultation would also be essential before any significant change was constructed. Any feasibility study commissioned by the Local Committee would need to consider how best to serve the anticipated cyclists who would use the facility, noting that sports cyclists prefer to cycle on the carriageway, and less confident cyclists prefer to use off-carriageway routes. It may not be possible to design a facility suitable for both groups.

From a strategic cycle network point of view, the wide section of Ember Lane could, subject to funding, provide a cycle route of approximately 2km in length. At the present time no work has been done to assess the value that such a link would provide, in isolation. Further work would be needed to assess whether such a link could feasibly be linked to a wider network, and what additional benefits this could bring.

Question 2: Councillor Barry Fairbank**Reinstatement of restricted parking lines and other road markings**

It is my understanding that contractors engaged to repair/replace road surfacing on behalf of Surrey County Council are also required to replace/repair any road markings, including those relating to parking restrictions, which are damaged or removed in the process.

Can you please, therefore, explain why contractors have failed to carry out appropriate repairs /replacement of road markings in a number of locations in Long Ditton (see below) following resurfacing and why this failure appears not to have been noted by SCC Highways Officers inspecting the 'finished' work?

Windmill Lane (between Effingham Road and the railway bridge)

Double yellow lines not replaced upon completion of resurfacing but subsequently replaced several months afterwards.

Windmill Lane (between road narrowing and resident parking bays)

Section of single yellow lining has been damaged or obliterated. Replacement has yet to be carried out.

Fleece Road (opposite No 6)

Section of single yellow line not replaced upon completion of resurfacing.

Replacement has yet to be carried out.

Rectory Lane

Central road markings have not been replaced after recent road resurfacing work.

Response:

Replacement of road markings is indeed part and parcel of resurfacing works delivered by Surrey County Council's supply chain. There are a number of reasons why road marking replacement can be delayed. Sometimes these are missed by our sub contractor(s). Sometimes replacement is hampered either by the weather or parked vehicles. Resurfaced roads are normally batched to minimise the payment of mobilisation costs.

The work in Windmill Lane and Fleece Road is about to be ordered and, along with the road markings in Rectory Lane, should be completed by the end of May at the latest.

Question 3: David Bellchamber (resident)

Last June the Local Committee was asked about the monitoring of road works relating to a water main replacement being carried out by Sutton & East Surrey Water (the water company) on Stoke Road and Woodlands Lane in Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon. The Committee was satisfied that effective measures were being taken to ensure the road works were back to a schedule that would see the planned work completed by March 2016.

The position now is that the water company has had difficulty in completing even the road works from Leigh Hill Road to Blundel Lane (some 1600 metres) in the time in which it said it would complete both that and the section east from Blundel Lane, which is more than 1,000 metres and over more difficult terrain (the outstanding section).

Having put up with delays on Stoke Road for a year, it seems that the community will be experiencing a further extensive period of disruption for work to be carried out along the outstanding section. Given the failure of the water company to adhere to a schedule over the last year there is a need to restore confidence in the process. There is a need to know when resurfacing will take place, what additional work is involved, when that work will take place, the extent of the disruption and the measures in place for monitoring.

What steps has Surrey County Council taken to agree the future proposals of Sutton & East Surrey Water for both resurfacing and for the outstanding section, to ensure that the water company will continue to devote the maximum feasible resources to the extended project and minimise the time over which disruption takes place?

Response:

The network of under surface supply pipes and cables for the utility industry along with other plant such as surface water drainage, sewers, etc., has evolved over many years. Recent works in the east of the County involved working with pipes first laid in the 1890's. Many of these services remain unmapped. Maps that are available indicate only indicative positions of equipment and whilst techniques do exist to survey roads before works commence, an accurate picture is only established when the surface is broken and works started. This also applies to ground conditions where whilst it can reasonably be anticipated what will be found, the only certainty comes from excavation.

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Surrey County Council have liaised closely with Sutton and East Surrey throughout the works on Stoke Road, especially with regard to progress of the project. Problems with unmapped plant have been identified and this has adversely affected project progress. This can be evidenced by the circuitous route the trench has taken against the original straight line plan.

The original scope of the project included the continuation of main laying over the rail bridge, under a full road closure, and continuation to and along part of Woodlands Lane. As a consequence of pressure brought to bear by SCC it is now proposed to use an alternative route cross country to complete the substantive part of the project. Whilst the requirement for some work to continue on Stoke Road remains to secure supplies to properties, major disruption will be avoided.

Officers from Surrey County Council will shortly be holding a formal project review meeting with Sutton & East Surrey Water in order to establish the exact content of the remaining works and the schedule for completion. A Surrey County Council Information Sheet update will be released following this.

Resurfacing works on Stoke Road will follow at a suitable time following the completion of the utility works. The Divisional Member has allocated funding for this from her share of the 2016-17 Local Committee Highways budgets.

Question 4: Hussam Raouf (resident)

I wish to bring to the Committee's attention a problem we are experiencing with displacement parking caused by commuters.

Silver Tree Close is located near Walton-on-Thames train station and parking is restricted to permit holders between 0800-0930 on weekdays with a further 2 hour limit for non permit holders between 0930-1200. However we have recently noticed a surge in commuters parking in the Close after the end of these restrictions until late in the evening in order to avoid the parking fee at the station car parks. As a result of this residents now struggle to find a place to park their cars when they return from work.

We would therefore like to have an additional restriction placed on parking in Silvertree Close and propose that parking be restricted to Permit Holders between 16:00 and 17:00 on weekdays (in addition to the existing restrictions) to deter commuters from leaving their cars in Silvertree Close from lunchtime onwards. I understand from the Surrey County Council website that parking is only reviewed every few years and in the case of Walton-on-Thames is not expected now until 2018. I have obtained the written support of more than 70% of the properties of Silvertree Close to the above proposal. I was wondering if you could assist us in expediting the matter ahead of 2018 especially as it should be simple change to implement?

Response:

In 2015 the county council's parking team started a rolling programme of parking reviews, as part of the new parking strategy for Elmbridge agreed by the local committee in February of that year. The review of parking in Walton and Hersham is due to start in the third year of the programme (2017/18) and it will include a comprehensive review of the controlled parking zone (CPZ) that surrounds Walton station. The CPZ has been in place for many years during which time people's

working habits and lifestyles have changed, while the days and times of operation of the CPZ have remained the same.

Any change to parking controls requires the county council to follow a procedural as well as a legal process, with its inherent costs. In order to minimise these costs the council deals with the introduction of new parking controls en masse, rather than on an individual basis, which would be neither practical nor economically viable to do.

We have received a number of requests for changes to the existing CPZ, all of which have some merit, and all of which may seem a relatively simple change to implement, and we will consider them all during the review, but it is not possible for us to consider any one in advance of the others.

Question 5: Sarah Tourell (resident)

Every 5 or 6 years my neighbours and I have a problem with the lime tree in front of our houses, no.s 170 & 172 Molesey Road, Walton as there is no routine maintenance of the tree. The council own the tree and I feel the council should maintain it, and that means a regular programme of maintenance which includes a cycle of crowning and pollarding when it gets too big. The issue is that the tree drips a maple syrup solution all over the front of our houses (namely 170 and 172 Molesey Road) and cars. It's like treacle and damages the paintwork. We have to write every 5 years and get into debate with the council, causing frustration and irritation and eventually the tree outside our house might get some attention.

When can we expect the tree to be cut back and on a regular basis so it doesn't overhang our property and cause these issues?

Response:

There are approximately 2,000,000 trees on the Public Highway in Surrey, with an annual budget of approximately £800,000 for their maintenance - approximately 40p per tree per annum. Of necessity this means we have adopted a policy and strategy of minimal intervention. What this means in practice is that if a tree is healthy, growing according to its natural ecology and in and of itself is not presenting an immediate safety hazard, we leave it alone. We inspect all Highway trees as a matter of routine, and arrange works to address any defects that would present a safety hazard on a priority basis. We also respond to residents' reports of potentially dangerous trees. Other than that we have a very limited pollarding programme, but cannot extend this beyond the existing pollard stock. We undertake epicormic growth control to prevent obstruction of the Highway. We do not usually undertake tree works for any other reason, unless specific funding is made available in addition to the regular arboricultural budget.

Our policy is best defined by two documents - green for what we do and red for what we don't do - these documents are attached with this response.

Usually we would consider sap to be an ordinary inconvenience of life - something that we would not respond to. In this particular case the Divisional Member has previously allocated funding from her individual Members' allocation for maintenance to mitigate the sap produced. The County Council cannot offer routine maintenance of trees to reduce the effects of sap.

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Question 6: Mark Sugden (resident)

Many Claygate families, with children at Claygate Primary School, have not been offered a place at one of their preferred secondary schools. Could the Elmbridge Local Committee urgently press Surrey County Council to ensure that, now and in the future, there are enough first preference local secondary school places for residents of Claygate?

Response:

An enquiry asking for an analysis of the offers of places and an explanation of the general situation regarding Claygate children and secondary admissions in 2016 has been requested by the Local County Councillor Michael Bennison and also by the MP Dominic Raab. Officers in the School Commissioning and Admissions teams of Surrey County Council are working to provide a full reply to these requests in the next few days.

As far as the above comment/ question from Mr Sugden is concerned the Elmbridge Local Committee has no direct responsibility for the allocation of school places and is not in a position to influence this. The law states that Surrey County Council as the Local Education Authority should ensure that there is a sufficiency of school places in its area of jurisdiction. SCC also has a legal responsibility to co-ordinate the admissions arrangements of the various local admissions authorities and allocate school places based on the application of each school's admissions criteria. In doing so the LA must have due regard for parental preference **but there is no legal duty to meet first preference or indeed any preference**. Having said this, SCC always seeks to meet the highest number of first preferences that it can when allocating school places, based on the admissions criteria of each school.

For 2016 Surrey has ensured that there are sufficient secondary school places for all Claygate/Elmbridge residents who have requested one. It has made 1066 offers to parents. The majority of these Year 7 places are in Elmbridge borough secondary schools although a small minority of offers have been made out of borough to other Surrey schools with vacancies.

All Elmbridge secondary schools are academies and are responsible for setting their own admissions criteria and their published admission number (PAN - the number of places in Year 7). **SCC has no power to change the admissions criteria or to change the PAN of an academy**. LA officers do consult all Head teachers and governing bodies each year on admissions matters, particularly once the Authority has received all the parental preferences at the close of the annual admissions round. This is to make sure that the LA has met its statutory duty to supply sufficient places and can make a reasonable offer of a school place to everyone on offer day.

Therefore SCC cannot guarantee that all Claygate residents will get the offer of a place at the nearest school ie Hinchley Wood or Esher High. This is because both schools have named feeder primaries, catchment areas and criteria that give priority to siblings when allocating school places. These admissions arrangements are legal and not unusual. Both schools are now operating at maximum capacity for their sites and there are no plans by their Academy Trusts to expand either school, as far as we are aware.

In years where there are a large number of siblings at Claygate Primary and the other Hinchley Wood (or Esher High) feeder schools there will be fewer places available for children with no siblings attending Hinchley Wood or Esher High School.

This year there were 96 siblings wanting a place at Hinchley Wood, compared to 73 last year. This has meant that not all pupils attending Claygate Primary have been offered a place at Hinchley Wood because those pupils in other feeder schools must live nearer to the school. Children attending an Esher High feeder school are unlikely to be offered a place at Hinchley Wood, even if they live in Claygate. This will remain the case in the future while ever the current admissions arrangements are in place.

Question 7: Jeremy Coombs (resident)
(question amended for data protection)

Fiona Coombs is a disabled senior resident of the borough and her husband Jeremy is her full-time Carer. They applied for a Disabled Parking in May 2014 and in March 2015, Surrey County Council duly installed a Disabled Bay outside their home at Oakbank Avenue, a Cul-de-Sac in Field Common. Access to the road is problematic and on two occasions an attending ambulance was unable to reach their home, however neighbours and delivery vehicles routinely utilise and abuse the provisions of the bay, despite clear markings and this has caused obstruction to their reasonable access, not least of concern, as due to Mrs.Coombs' medical condition it is necessary for Mr. Coombs to gain access to their Motability car or for an attendant Ambulance, to utilise the bay, if available to do so.

In order to legally enforce the bay for this established purpose, it is necessary for a marked signage post to be installed adjacent to the bay, this was formally applied for in February of 2015 and Mr & Mrs Coombs were then advised in writing that this would go to committee for consent in September of last year, however, no such action was undertaken and on further enquiry they were advised of a deferment until 2018 (at the earliest). This matter has already caused Mr & Mrs. Coombs considerable emotional distress as this can be life threatening and has now brought them into direct conflict with their neighbours.

We would therefore request of the committee full consent to the provision of a marked post with immediate effect. We believe the cost to be modest and the benefit to be evident and substantial, not least in light of the recent provisions of the Carers Act 2016.

Response:

The county council has an established procedure for considering the formalisation of parking controls, by way of reviews of parking in an area as a whole, rather than on an individual basis. One of the main reasons for this approach is to reduce the costs involved in the legal process that has to be followed, in particular the formal advertisement of the council's intention to make the relevant changes to its traffic regulation order. To place individual advertisements for each change would incur considerably more expense than placing one advertisement for a number of changes. While the council is sympathetic to the needs of vulnerable residents, and installs advisory disabled bays to try and help with their parking needs, as has happened in this case, it has to also consider the broader financial picture. At its meeting in February 2015, the Elmbridge Local Committee adopted a new approach to reviewing parking in the borough, choosing to carry out a programme of more comprehensive reviews on an area by area basis, rather than of the borough as a whole, which had previously been the case. As a result the next review of parking in Walton is not due to start until April 2017, when the possible formalisation of the disabled parking bay can be considered.

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