



WOKING JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE: 9 MARCH 2016

SUBJECT: WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

DIVISION: WOKING

1. Question from Marianne Meinke

Roads, speeding and maintenance of pavements – Oriental and Maybury Roads

I notice that there has been traffic calming in White Rose Lane and Pembroke Road and hear of future plans for similar in Maybury and East Hills, Mount Hermon Road and Albert Drive. I believe this useful investment followed speed measurement in these roads.

In the past I have expressed concern about congestion and speed of traffic in Oriental Road, which is in a residential area. Traffic has increased with developments both at the station end of Oriental Road and at the Mosque/church/retail park end. To add to the mix a large development has been approved for White Rose Lane. Maybury Road too suffers from speeding traffic as demonstrated by the plea for drivers to "Drive slow" painted by someone on a fence panel where the road joins Maybury Hill. It is worrying that slowing traffic in nearby roads may well lead to the creation of a race track around Oriental and Maybury Roads.

Speeding and increased traffic puts pedestrians at risk along Oriental Road since they must walk in the road when vehicles are parked on the pavement opposite the Mosque. Along the length of Oriental Road it can be difficult to cross the road. Even at pedestrian crossings there is a chance that speed will prevent cars stopping.

Uneven pavements in Oriental and Maybury Roads are challenging when walking from the town and railway station at night, particularly in areas where lighting levels are much dimmer than before. Dips in the pavement are not easy to see. Overhanging branches can be tricky to see in poor light. Hedging growing onto the pavement creates shadows. I was pleased that Ray Morgan undertook (at a recent Police Commissioner's meeting) to help pedestrians, especially the disabled, by getting hedging cut back although action has not been taken where I live as yet.

All of this leads to the question:

Could Oriental and Maybury Roads be subject to regular traffic speed measurement and, as a busy pedestrian thoroughfare, improvement in terms of provision of traffic calming (throughout its length), together with cutting back of overgrown hedging?

Answer from Chairman on behalf of the committee:

Oriental Road and Maybury Road are on our Speed Management Plan. The speeds that were recorded by Surrey Police in Maybury Road showed good compliance with the speed limit. However, the recorded speeds in Oriental Road are higher and the road is subject to speed monitoring and enforcement by Surrey Police, although reduced police resources mean that this is less regular than before.

An item already appears on our work programme for speed reducing measures on Oriental Road, although the current description suggests that this would be limited to the vicinity of the mosque's access. However, as has already been stated to Mrs Meinke in previous correspondence, personal injury collisions have occurred elsewhere along Oriental Road and the scope of any scheme could be expanded to include the rest of the road.

Footways are routinely inspected to identify safety defects and ad-hoc inspections will be made in response to specific enquiries. Undulations in a footway surface will not always fall within the category of a safety defect, which is usually defined as a trip hazard with a vertical upstand of 20mm or more. However, an additional inspection of the footways can be arranged, including an inspection of any overhanging vegetation. If any overhanging, obstructive vegetation is identified, the first step would be to issue a notice to the resident, instructing them to cut the vegetation back; only if this is not done will arrangements be made for Surrey County Council's contractor to cut back the vegetation. Woking Borough Council's approach should be the same, which is likely to account for the lack of any visible progress.

The single yellow line waiting restrictions in the vicinity of the mosque are only enforceable between 9.30am and 11.30am, Monday to Friday and the footway parking that Mrs Meinke mentions could possibly be addressed by the adoption of double yellow lines in this area, which the Joint Committee may wish our colleagues in the Parking Team to pursue in a future review of waiting restrictions.

2. Question from Helen Allen

I live in Horsell and take the well-trodden route into Woking by crossing Victoria Way near the Lightbox.

I have witnessed several near misses involving pedestrians and cars on this crossing across the busy one-way system. Cars frequently go through red lights and speed up at the lights making the crossing extremely dangerous.

Last week, I saw an elderly woman almost run down at high speed. She set off when the lights were green to pedestrians but was a very slow walker and did not get across before the lights changed.

Improved safety measures are urgently required at this junction, including penalties for drivers who jump the lights.

Answer from Chairman on behalf of the committee:

Penalties can only be imposed on drivers who run red lights by the installation of a "Red Light Violation" camera, similar to the one that is in place at the nearby Victoria Way / Chobham Road junction. Strict criteria must be met before such a camera can be installed, which are not met in this instance, despite there having been 2 personal injury collisions at this crossing in the last 3 year period. It is not clear from the descriptions whether a vehicle running a red light was the cause of these incidents.

We have been advised by our colleagues in our Traffic Signals team that this crossing forms part of the Peacocks Car Park access junction which, along with other traffic signals in the vicinity, are controlled by a system known as Urban Traffic Control (UTC).

Some "stand alone" pedestrian crossings can have additional detectors fitted to them which sense the presence of a pedestrian on the crossing and which can extend the time given to that pedestrian to cross if they are slower moving. Unfortunately, such additional detectors and extendable timings cannot be used within a UTC system and the only way to give pedestrians more time to cross would be to change the timings permanently, so that more time would be given with every pedestrian phase whether the extra time was needed or not. The Joint Committee will be aware that the highway network is very sensitive to any changes to the traffic signals along this part of the A320 and any such permanent change at this crossing would have an effect on traffic flows along Victoria Way and, most likely, along Guildford Road and Lockfield Drive, too. This could result in an increase in driver frustration which could off-set any benefit for pedestrians that the changes may have initially created.

The current timings at this crossing give 6 seconds "Green man" time followed by 3 seconds of "Pedestrian blackout" (the period between the Green man and Red man, during which time vehicle signals remain at red). This should be enough time for most pedestrians to cross, although less mobile users may need a bit longer. That having been said, if someone has started to cross with a Green man and they are still on the crossing when the signals change, drivers must still let that person cross and should not re-start.

This issue will be discussed further with Traffic Signals colleagues and Surrey Police to see if there are any further measures that could improve pedestrian safety, but where signal controlled crossings are already in place, these are intended to provide the greatest level of pedestrian safety available.

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