



**WOKING JOINT COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** 9 MARCH 2016  
**SUBJECT:** WRITTEN MEMBER QUESTIONS  
**DIVISION:** WOKING

**1. Question from Cllr John Lawrence, Woking Borough Council**

Could consideration be given to amending the priorities of traffic entering Rydens Way? As the roads have different priorities to most other UK roads, could the safety aspects please be investigated as there is a school and college at one end of Rydens way and a new cost cutter shop at the other?

**Answer from Chairman on behalf of the committee:**

It is not unusual for priorities to be changed as part of a re-development or a traffic calming scheme as a means of slowing traffic down or improving a turning manoeuvre. However, if the previous priorities are long established it can take time for the changes to become effective and accepted by long-time users of that junction.

Concern has been raised about the changed priorities at the Rydens Way junctions with Gloster Road and Coniston Road and consideration has been given to returning priorities back to their original configuration. This intention remains, but the signing and lining changes need to take place at the same time so as not to create confusion. It is noted however that since the priorities were changed, there have been no personal injury collisions at either of these junctions that could be attributed to the revised layout.

The majority of traffic making its way to and from the school and college is likely to use the Shackleford Road junction and not Gloster Road or Coniston Road and a convenience store at the eastern end of Rydens Way pre-dates the changes.

**2. Question from Mr Will Forster, Surrey County Council**

Following growing concerns from local residents about road safety and a serious road traffic accident before Christmas, please will the County Council consider safety improvements to Prey Heath Road such as installing more street lights, providing a safe area for pedestrians to walk, and/or introducing speed reduction measures?

**Answer from Chairman on behalf of the committee:**

Surrey Police have been contacted about this personal injury collision. Although full details are not yet confirmed, it is understood that a pedestrian suffered slight injuries after having been struck by the wing mirror of a passing car. It appears that the pedestrian may have been walking with the flow of traffic, contrary to the good practice advised in the Highway Code, which is to walk on the right hand side of the road contrary to flow of traffic so that approaching traffic can be seen.

Prey Heath Road is classified as a rural road. It is relatively narrow with verges for pedestrians to stand aside on when traffic is passing. There are no formalised footways, and with the limited amount of pedestrian traffic, the cost of installing these could not be justified, even if there was sufficient highway width to construct them.

The 40mph speed limit is appropriate for a rural road such as Prey Heath Road and Surrey Police's most recent speed monitoring data suggests that there is good compliance with it and that as a result, speed reducing measures would not be appropriate. The recorded speeds also indicate that a 30mph speed limit would be unrealistically low.

There have been no enquiries received about public safety at this location, and Prey Heath Road has an excellent safety record, with no personal injury accidents recorded since 2009.

Based on the information available, and the safety record at this location, investment in footpaths, enhanced lighting and other safety measures could not be justified.

**3. Question from Mr Will Forster, Surrey County Council**

Surrey County Council has recently refurbished and replaced many traffic lights around Woking and beyond the borough boundary. Please can the Chairman confirm the cost of this work, and the expected benefits?

**Answer from Chairman on behalf of the committee:**

Although the question makes reference to works beyond the boundary of Woking, this response has focused on those works of interest to the Woking Joint Committee, as it would be impractical to list all refurbishment works that have taken place across the County over the course of the present financial year.

The Traffic Operations Team have refurbished the following Traffic Signals; (Site Reference/Location/cost)

J405 / Garibaldi Crossroads, Knaphill/ (£27.5k )  
 J403 / Anchor Hill, Knaphill (ongoing)/ (est £20-30k)  
 P404 / A247 Kingfield Road, nr Vicarage Road, Woking / (£15.5k)  
 P424 / A247 Kingfield Road nr Stockers Lane, Woking / (£15.5k)  
 P441 / A320 Guildford Rd nr Hillview Road, Woking / (£13.5k)  
 P301 / A322 Guildford Road nr Gosden Rd, West End / (£17.5k)  
 P303 / A322 Guildford Road Wilcott Gardens, Bisley / (£12.8k)

The benefits of such refurbishments are to ensure resilience of correct operation ,

and longevity of such operation at each location, as part of our over-arching County Wide Asset Management function.

When each site is refurbished, if site layout changes are appropriate these are undertaken and the control method of the site is also reviewed and upgraded where appropriate, to ensure optimum efficiency of the traffic signals.

Where refurbishments are for the purpose of upgrading pedestrian crossings from pelicans to puffins, there will be additional safety benefits and reduced levels of congestion.

#### **4. Question from Mr Will Forster, Surrey County Council**

Thank you for the answer about cycle funding. As you may know, the Prime Minister and Government have set a target of spending £10 per person per year on cycling.

The transport minister (with specific responsibility for cycling), Robert Goodwill, has recently said that it is up to local authorities to bring cycle funding up to £10 per head per year. He did say that Central Government funding will help, but as this is declining, it will be principally up to councils to fund cycling infrastructure.

Therefore, my follow up question is - will Surrey and Woking Councils agree a plan to bring cycle funding up to £10 a year?

This could be done by earmarking some Community Infrastructure Levy funding and the Joint Committee's transport budget.

#### **Answer from Chairman on behalf of the committee:**

Woking Borough Council and Surrey County Council have already invested significant sums in cycling infrastructure and are committed to doing more as resources permit. The Borough Council has published its Regulation 123 list which details how CIL monies will be spent and it includes a significant number of cycling infrastructure schemes. However, it is important to stress that the CIL will never generate sufficient sums to meet all infrastructure deficits and aspirations. Neither Authority have a spend policy based on £s per head of population for any aspect of transportation. Spending plans are based on local need and achieving the greatest public benefit with the resources available. To meet the aspiration of £10 per head funding of just under £1,000,000 would be required, and this is not credible in the present economic climate.

Funding for Major transport schemes, including cycle schemes, can be obtained through the submission of successful Business cases to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), which has obtained funding from the Government for its Strategic Economic Plan through the Growth Deal Funding streams 1 and 2, covering the period 2015/16 to 2018/19. However, it should be noted that Business cases must meet the strict criteria of the LEP's priorities and objectives contained within its Strategic Economic Plan, and have sufficient local contribution secured for the project.

## 5. Question from Mr Will Forster, Surrey County Council

Woking Borough's road network has been significantly impacted by recent roadworks. Please can Surrey County Council confirm how many roadworks and road closures (whether full or part closures) have been taking place in Woking Borough since 5th January?

Why have so many roadworks being allowed to take place at the sametime? I appreciate several of these roadworks were classes as emergency and urgent work, but why is permission for non-urgent work on other roads not removed when emergency work is taking place to assist traffic flow?

How does the County Council monitor working hours by utility companies on roadworks? The Council often requests for long working hours and traffic lights to be manually controlled, does the Council believe these requests are always followed?

### **Answer from Chairman on behalf of the committee:**

#### **Background**

Road works are inevitable, this is due to many factors whether road safety improvements, new Developments, new technologies, maintenance of existing services and supplies, etc. and they will invariably cause some interruption to normal traffic flows, particularly given the high volume of traffic on Surrey roads. The term Road Works is used to encompass both Street Works as carried out by statutory undertakers and Works for Road Purposes, the term assigned to the highway authorities own works.

The Traffic Management Act 2004 states "It is the Duty of a local traffic authority to manage their road network with a view to achieving as far as is reasonably practicable the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network" The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 states:-

- (1) A Street Authority shall use their best endeavours to **co-ordinate** the execution of works of all kinds (including works for road purposes) in the streets for which they are responsible:-
  - (a) in the interests of safety,
  - (b) to minimise the inconvenience to persons using the street (having regard, in particular, to the needs of people with a disability), and
  - (c) to protect the structure of the street and the integrity of apparatus in it.

The Act also states that it is necessary "to balance the conflicting interests of road users and undertakers customers", meaning we also have to give due consideration to the promoter of any road works and their needs.

In Surrey County Council this Duty is fulfilled by the Network Coordination team within the Street Works department.

There are various issues that drive the timings for works. Our own ongoing resurfacing works are required as part of a multi million pound investment to bring the Counties roads up to standard. SCC also carry out general highway maintenance works including drainage upgrades, minor resurfacing and road marking refreshing and improvement works such as pedestrian crossing installation, junction safety improvements and cycle pedestrian facilities. Asset management, safety, public demand and funding availability generally being the drivers.

Utility companies have rights in statute to access, lay, maintain, inspect, adjust etc their apparatus in the highway and are primarily driven by Regulator (Ofgem, Ofwat etc.) requirements. For example water companies not meeting targets on leak rates will be subject to Regulator fines. In the case of the gas industry there is a Directive by the Health and Safety Executive to replace all metallic gas pipe work within 30 metre of property over thirty years following the explosion in Larkhall South Lanarkshire in 1999. (A programme which has a further 15 years to run). Utility companies also have a Duty of Supply whereby they are bound by Regulators to provide or to allow a new supply of gas, electricity, etc., when requested and to do so in a specific timescale. Most commonly this is associated with new Developments.

On top of this are emergency works due to such issues as gas or water leaks, power failures or telecom disconnections. In these instances statute allows for works to begin without reference to the highway authority hence they can be some of the most disruptive as they are not accounted for in any planning. Highway works are controlled by a system of Permits. For planned works, works promoters must get a Permit approved by SCC before works start. We have powers to Grant a Permit application or to Refuse until the application meets the necessary requirements. We do not have powers to ultimately prevent works from being undertaken.

There are powers under street works legislation which means Conditions can, where the works type allows, instruct certain time constraints or works methodology to reduce traffic disruption such as works being undertaken at off peak times or on occasions longer working hours to reduce the overall duration. The later tending to be time of year dependant with daylight hours generally being the controlling factor in a dangerous industry. Conditions that can be applied are set out by the Department for Transport.

Whilst each Permit application is reviewed and considered on its merits, more focus, by DfT guidance, is applied to applications that are on roads classed as traffic sensitive.

The coordination of works is carried out under the basic principles of the Department for Transport document "Code of Practice for the Co-ordination of Street Works and Works for Road Purposes and Related Matters" which is aligned to the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991.

In simple overview, where possible major works are scheduled to encompass periods of school vacation when it is known that traffic volumes will be reduced. Smaller works will be directed to be undertaken outside of peak traffic flow times. Where this is not possible, longer working hours are instructed to reduce the duration of the works. When used on a traffic sensitive road at peak periods, temporary traffic signals are instructed to be controlled manually over riding the automated functionality as this can assist the movement of traffic.

### **Detail**

Between the 5th of January date requested and the 29th of February – Planned Works

- 208 new planned works sites were started in the Woking Borough area.
- 68 of these were on roads classified as Traffic Sensitive under the Department for Transport criteria.

[www.woking.gov.uk](http://www.woking.gov.uk)  
[www.surreycc.gov.uk/woking](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/woking)

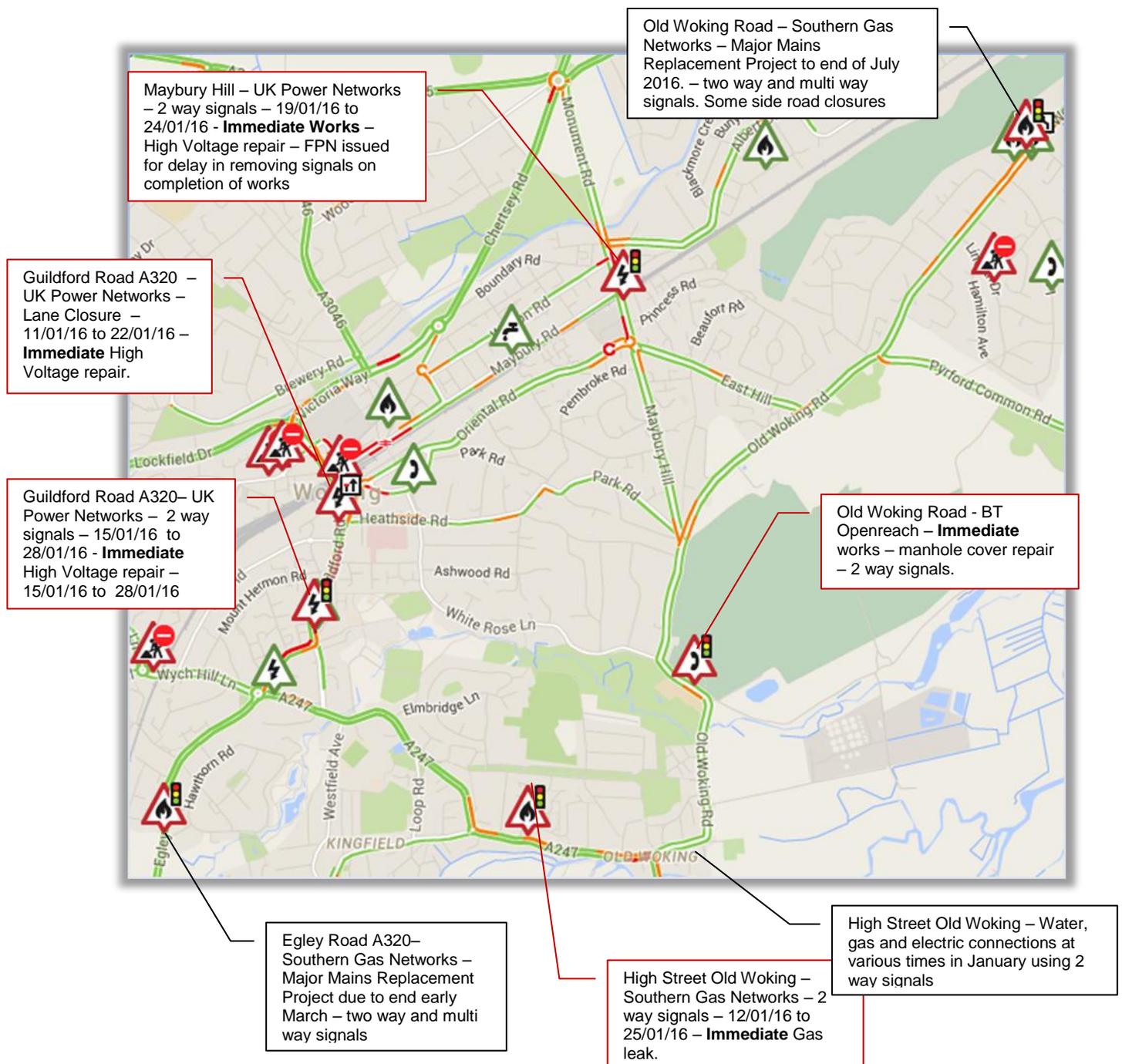
- Of the 68, 18 used temporary traffic signals and 2 used stop and go boards
- Out of the total 208 sites, 33 sites used temporary traffic signals and six sites used stop and go boards.
- 38 sets of works were undertaken by Surrey County Council ranging from lining works, footway siding works, traffic island construction to resetting a collapsed manhole.
- Of this 38, 18 were raised by Woking Borough Council for town centre works.
- 3 sets of works involved a full road closure (although in two instances, these were side roads associated with the B382 Old Woking Road Southern Gas Networks project and were closed to facilitate the movement of traffic on the main road).

Between the 5th of January date requested and the 29th of February – Immediate Works

- 272 sets of Immediate works were recorded.
- 56 of these were on roads classified as Traffic Sensitive under the Department for Transport criteria.
- Of the 56, 15 used temporary traffic signals and 1 stop and go boards
- Out of the total 272 sites, 20 sites used temporary traffic signals and 4 sites used stop and go boards.
- 83 sets of Immediate works were undertaken by Surrey County Council, primarily for pot hole repairs.
- 1 set of Immediate works was raised by Woking Borough Council for a wall repair outside of Weatherspoons Public House
- 6 sets of works required a full road closure.

A snap shot of the 1<sup>st</sup> of March shows 72 sets of works in progress across the Borough. 26 of which are listed as Immediate Works. 6 of these works involved a road closure and 10 with temporary traffic signals.

The screen shot below shows works on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 2016 broadly in the Woking South East area.



As can be seen from the above, 5 sets of works were listed as Immediate. The South East Permit Scheme as operated by Surrey County Council does provide provision for SCC to request suspension of works at any time. In practice this relies on cooperation from the works promoter and consideration has to be given to the practicality of any request where works are in progress and open excavations evident.

To monitor works by utility companies, the Street Works department structure includes a Compliance Team which has nine mobile Officers and a team Manager. The function of this team is to check all aspects of Compliance by regular site visits. Non compliance issues are identified and recorded. Where appropriate Fixed Penalty Notices are issued and recurring issues discussed at regular performance meetings with utility companies.

With specific reference to working hour monitoring, this does represent a challenging issue with the number of Officers against the number of works against Officer working hours. High profile works sites will be targeted however in general sites will be inspected on a random sample basis as resource allows.

A small fund exists for overtime payments to enable an Officer presence out of normal working hours.

With regard to temporary traffic signals, these work with limited intelligence. They can be set to operate purely in fixed timings or run in Vehicle Activation mode. Neither method is the best possible for ensuring traffic is managed effectively in all conditions.

The automated functionality can be over ridden to allow a more reactive response to traffic conditions. This may be to avoid queues backing up past a given point, to allow for tidal flows throughout the day or simply to optimize the “all red” period required to clear the shuttle lane. At least one operative is required on site to effect manual control. Where queues are long or blind to the works site, spotters may be required to assist. Consequently there can be significant on cost to a works promoter to comply with this Condition.

Manual Control is instructed by a Condition attached to the Permit. Being a Condition it is legally binding and non compliance can be dealt with by either prosecution or by offering liability to be discharged by payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice. (There is considerable industry debate as to whether failure to comply with a Condition is a single or continuing offence with multiple FPN's issued. i.e if the Condition is not complied with on consecutive days can FPN's be issued for each day. A judicial view is that if the offence continues, prosecution should be considered).

Surrey County Council generally instruct the manual control of temporary traffic signals on roads defined as traffic sensitive at what would be considered rush hour periods to assist traffic flows. The effectiveness is always reliant on the competency and commitment of the operatives on site and enforcement is carried out in line with the enforcement of working hours.

During the period April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 to January 31<sup>st</sup> 2016, 24 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued for non compliance with the Condition relating to manual control of traffic signals.

### **Notes**

BT Openreach have works at the Norfolk Farm Road junction with the B382 Old Woking Road, requested between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of March. These are currently refused on the basis of clashing with the SGN gas project and we are requesting collaborative working.

Southern Gas Networks have the requirement to undertake a major mains replacement project on the A247 Send Road. We have insisted these works are deferred at least until the Old Woking Road SGN project is clear.

The timing for SGN mains renewal project on the A320 Egley Road was agreed due to the forthcoming works associated with the road re layout required for the building of the new Hoe Valley Free school and also to avoid any through traffic conflict with the Affinity Water works on northern section of the A320 from this summer onwards. When there are works of a significant duration such as the major gas mains project on the Old Woking Road, it is not possible to delay all other works although as much mitigation as possible is used to reduce the combined effects and consequential traffic disruption.

A review of which streets are identified as traffic sensitive in Surrey will commence this year. It could be reasonably expected that this will increase the amount of roads falling into this criteria.

The criteria for designation is copied below:-

One or more of the following criteria should apply before a street authority may designate a street as traffic-sensitive:

- (a) The street is one on which, at any time, the street authority estimates traffic flow to be greater than 500 vehicles per hour, per lane of carriageway, excluding bus or cycle lanes.
- (b) The street is a single carriageway two-way road, the carriageway of which, is less than 6.5 metres wide, having a total traffic flow in both directions of not less than 600 vehicles per hour.
- (c) The street falls within a congestion charges area.
- (d) Traffic flow contains more than 25% heavy commercial vehicles.
- (e) The street carries more than eight buses an hour.
- (f) The street is designated for pre-salting, by the street authority as part of its programme of winter maintenance.
- (g) The street is within 100 metres of a critical signalised junction, gyratory or roundabout system.
- (h) The street, or that part of a street that, has a pedestrian flow rate in both directions at any time, of at least 1,300 persons per hour, per metre width of footway.
- (i) The street is on a tourist route or within an area where international, national, or significant major local events take place.

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