

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (SURREY HEATH)****SURREY**

DATE: 30 June 2016
LEAD OFFICER: ANDREW MILNE
AREA HIGHWAYS MANAGER (NW)

SUBJECT: PETITION RESPONSE: ADDRESS THE ROAD SAFETY CONCERNS RELATING TO INAPPROPRIATE/UNSUITABLE HGV/PSV USE OF LUCAS GREEN ROAD, WEST END

DIVISION: LIGHTWATER, BISLEY AND WEST END

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

The Local Committee received a petition on the 10 March 2016 signed by 132 local residents requesting the Local Committee address the amount of HGV and PSV using Lucas Road, Bisley.

The petition stated that "Lucas Green Rd a country lane in a residential area, is totally unsuitable to carry large HGV vehicles (many over 11m in length). The road has a number of sharp bends where visibility is severely reduced, combined with the road not being wide enough for vehicles to pass each other forcing them to mount pavements, reverse hundreds of meters and destroying grass verges. This rural road is located in the Green Belt, is a cycle route and a conservation area – the road needs to be used by residents cars, pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders without fear for their own personal safety."

RECOMMENDATIONS:**The Local Committee (Surrey Heath) is asked to note:**

- (i) Surrey County Council have objected to HGV operator licence applications, but limitations on the grounds under which objections can be made means that highway conditions away from the entrance to the site will not be considered.
- (ii) Surrey County Council were concerned about Planning Application SU/12/0235, but considered that the proposed vehicle size and length would be no different to that which the site could generate under its the existing lawful use.
- (iii) A proposal to introduce an informal one-way system for HGVs along Lucas Green Road (between Kerria Way and Ford Road) is included in the list of schemes to be considered for inclusion in the Local Committee's 2017/18 programme of works. The proposal is currently ranked 26 in the list of 47 schemes.
- (iv) Other options to improve the current layout have been considered but were found to not be suitable.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

No recommendations were made in this report.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 Lucas Green Road is part of the publically maintained highway connecting Kerria Way with Priest Lane. The road is approximately 1.8km long and has both residential properties and commercial businesses located on it. Lucas Green Road is connected to the A322 via Kerria Way and Ford Road. The speed limit for the road is 30mph by virtue of the system of street lighting.
- 1.2 Much of the land around Lucas Green Road has typically been used for commercial purposes. Historic maps seem to indicate that Lucas Green Farm, now Lucas Green Manor, was the primary property on Lucas Green Road with a number of smaller properties nearby. Over the years the number of commercial and residential properties has increased.
- 1.3 The layout of Lucas Green Road was altered in 1989 to remove the original connection to Guildford Road (A322) and instead connect to Kerria Way. Passing points were provided along the road later on to reduce the amount damage to the verge caused by passing traffic. The speed limit along most of Lucas Green Road was also lowered in 2010 along with Priest Lane and Ford Road from national speed limit (60mph) to 30mph. The reduction was part of a group of speed limits assessments across the borough and was done to bring the speed limit in line with the policy at the time.

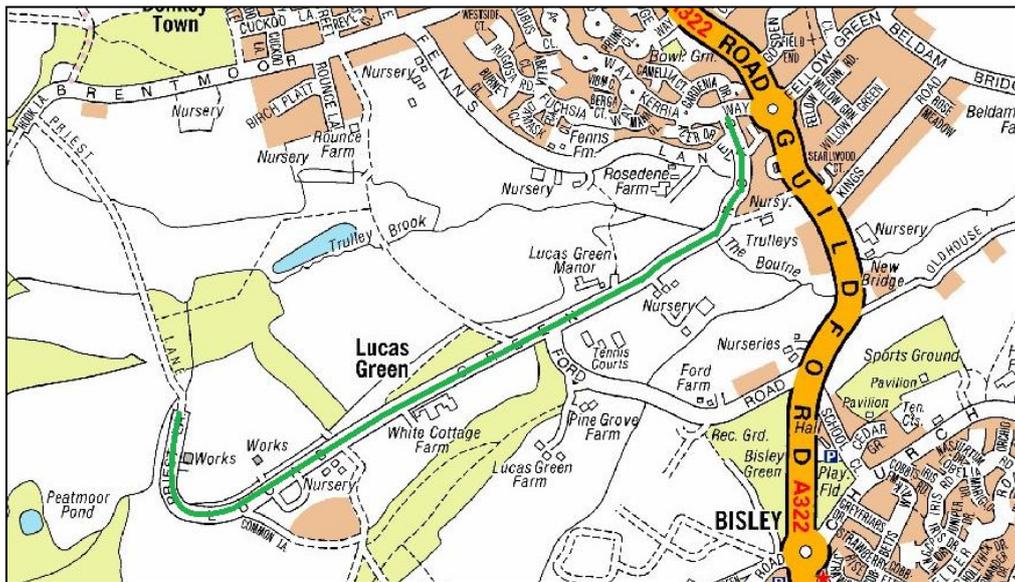


Figure 1 - Plan of Lucas Green Road, Bisley

- 1.4 The majority of commercial properties on Lucas Green Road are located between the junctions with Ford Road and Priest Lane. However, there is a nursery located between the junctions with Ford Road and Fenns Lane.
- 1.5 A list of current licences with Operating Centres along Lucas Green Road have been provided below:

PSV:

Newtons Coaches	15 vehicles
Brian Robert Newton trading as Newtons of Guildford	13 vehicles
Gary John Newton	4 vehicles
Total	32 vehicles

HGV:

Baker Steel Trading	1 vehicle
Challenge Fencing	1 vehicle
Glatthaar Fertiggeller Ltd	1 vehicle and 3 trailers
Jaymark Forest Products	3 vehicles
Marquees First	3 vehicles
Pennyhill Timber	3 vehicles
Harrington and Jessup	12 vehicles
Matthew Richard Warren Prestwich and Partners	4 vehicles
Total	28 vehicles and 3 trailers

1.6 The commercial properties provide a valuable source of local employment.

2 ANALYSIS:

2.1 Licensing and Planning Applications

2.1.1 Surrey County Council's role in Operator Licensing (O Licence)

Local Authorities have a statutory right to object to PSV and HGV licence applications. There are distinct differences in respect of the grounds under which those objections can be made. This is a discretionary power, it is not mandatory or obligatory. For both types of licences, local authorities can object if the applicant does not satisfy the requirements of good repute, appropriate financial standing, professional competence, adequate arrangements or facilities to maintain vehicles or being able to comply with the law. With a very few exceptions, we have no knowledge about these matters and would not wish to comment. For HGV licences only, local authorities can object on environmental and technical suitability grounds. Technical suitability includes capacity, availability and highway safety at the point at which the access meets the public highway. Traffic Commissioners will not consider the suitability of approach roads to a site - it has long been established by Case Law that this should not be a consideration. Surrey County Council has monitored applications for HGV operators' licences for some 30 years for highway safety implications and, to a lesser extent because in the main we have been less successful, environmental impact. As we cannot object to PSV operators' licences in the same way, we do not monitor them for site suitability.

Surrey County Council has objected to a number of HGV O'Licence applications on Lucas Green Road since 2007, most recently in 2015.

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The 2007 application was granted subject to conditions limiting the size of vehicles, number of movements and times of operation by the Traffic Commissioner for the South Eastern & Metropolitan Area after a public inquiry. County Council officers gave evidence in respect of the environmental suitability of Lucas Green Road. The Traffic Commissioner wrote in his decision letter *'I cannot refuse the Application on the basis of the suitability of the road in highway terms, even though I agree with the residents that it is of inadequate width and construction for passage by HGVs'*. In view of the Traffic Commissioner's decision, the County Council has objected and requested the same conditions be attached to subsequent applications.

2.1.2 Planning Application response to SU/12/0235

- The petition presented by residents to Surrey Heath Local Committee raised concerns that Surrey County Council did not object to planning application reference SU/12/0235 for change of use to a coach depot. Surrey County Council's response to the application included an explanatory text that outlined, although Surrey County Council was concerned about the use of the site as a coach depot, it was considered that the number and size of vehicles would not be materially different to that which the site could legitimately generate under the existing lawful use. The County Council did not therefore consider that there were grounds to object to the application. The full text has been provided as an annex to this document.



Figure 2: Photo of Lucas Green Road

2.1.3 Surrey Heath Borough Council have previously objected to operator licences. Their concerns were rejected by the Traffic Commissioners on the grounds that the Borough Council could not object on highway issues. The timber yard itself is a long established use and the Borough

Council cannot resist uses that comply with the established use certificate and similarity for the other sites.

2.2 Improvements

2.2.1 The petition also outlines a number of options identified by residents for Surrey Highways to consider and review. The options identified include a weight/size limit, controlled one way system through the bends, barriers on the footway, and a centre line through the bends.

2.2.2 Along with the options, the petition document presented to the Local Committee gives the responses provided by Surrey Highways. An outline of the basic options have been provided below:

- Barriers on Footway – Where possible, a footway should be kept to a minimum of 1m over short distances to allow general movement for those with wheel chairs. The current footway is approximately 1m with and any feature would reduce the width below the 1m.
- Centre lining – Centre lines should be avoided where vehicles would regularly overrun them. Drivers see the centre line as the edge by which they can travel. By omitting the centre line, it encourages drivers to regularly assess their position on the road and reduces the risk of collisions.

2.2.3 With regards to the two other options, a weight/size limit and traffic lights, the responses provided by Surrey County Council were questioned within the petition document.

2.2.4 Weight/size limit

The option of a weight and/or size limit is not considered appropriate since the only alternative to Lucas Green Road would be to require HGV traffic to use Ford Road instead. Ford Road is a similar type of road that is also narrow in parts. Forcing traffic away from Lucas Green Road would therefore simply move the issue with conflicting HGVs from one road to another.

2.2.5 Traffic signals

With regards to the traffic lights, although traffic using the whole of the road was a concern, it was not the only concern. The other concerns have been outlined below:

- Experience has shown that introducing a one-way system is likely to result in an increase in vehicle speeds. This is because drivers no longer have to expect the possibility of encountering oncoming vehicles.
- The layout of the road means that any traffic lights would include uncontrolled accesses within the area controlled. With these accesses being uncontrolled, and forward visibility being poor, there is no way for those exiting the access to know which way traffic is travelling when they exit. When this is combined with higher speeds it raises the risk of collisions and personal injuries.
- Pedestrians, cyclists and horseriders will not be able to pass through the area controlled by the signals in the same time as most vehicles. As a result, they are likely to come across oncoming vehicles. As drivers will be travelling faster because of the one-way system in place, this raises the risk of personal injury collisions.

- 2.2.6 In addition to these option, the petition document explains that Surrey County Council have also considered straightening the road, and how it would require the purchase of land from adjacent land owners. The purchase of land makes this scheme in excess of £1,000,000 and would not be possible through Local Committee funding alone.

2.3 Current proposals

- 2.3.1 A proposal to introduce an informal one-way system for HGVs along Lucas Green Road (between Kierra Way and Ford Road) is included on the list of schemes to be considered for inclusion in the Local Committee's 2017/18 programme of works. The scheme would involve introducing signing to direct HGV drivers to use Kerria Way and Lucas Green Road when travelling to sites on Lucas Green Road but to then return to the A322 using Ford Road. Prior to such a scheme being introduced it would be necessary to undertake public consultation.
- 2.3.2 Local residents are aware of the above proposal and have indicated in their petition that they do not consider this to be an effective solution. However, whilst it would not resolve all the issues associated with HGVs using Lucas Green Road, it would help address the problem with HGVs travelling in opposite directions meeting through the series of bends (where the road is narrow and forward visibility is restricted) between Kerria Way and Ford Road.
- 2.3.3 Surrey County Council have previously installed passing points, short sections of road where the carriageway has been widened. These allow drivers to pull in whilst HGV traffic passes. However, recent comments have suggested that the passing points are not long enough and HGV traffic are still required to drive over the verge when using them. The extending of the passing points will be considered as part of the scheme on the Integrated Transport Schemes list.

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 No options have been provided as part of this report

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 Local residents and businesses will be consulted in line with Surrey County Council consultation policy and good practice.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 There is currently no budget allocated to improve Lucas Green Road.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 The Highway Service is mindful of its needs within this area and attempts to treat all users of the public highway with equality and understanding.

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 Through the views and needs expressed by local communities, and accommodating where possible the involvement of local communities in looking after the public highway, localism is routinely considered as part of the consultation and bidding processes for highway-related works.
- 7.2 This report responds to concerns raised by members of the local community in Bisley.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1 Lucas Green Road has traditionally been both a commercial and residential area.
- 9.2 The section of Lucas Green Road near to the junction with Keria Way is narrow and has limited visibility. Conflict between HGV traffic in this area has lead to congestion whist drivers resolve the situation.
- 9.3 Currently, the commercial properties hold a combined total of 12 operator licences. These licences cover a combined total on 21 PSVs and 28 HGVs (with 3 trailers).
- 9.4 Surrey County Council provided a response to planning application SU/12/0235 that outlined its concerns about the application, but considered that the proposed vehicle size and length would be no different to that which the site could generate under its the existing lawful use.
- 9.5 Surrey Highways have provided responses to each of the proposed options identified by residents of Lucas Green Road as to why they cannot be progressed.
- 9.6 However, there is currently a proposal to introduce an informal one-way system for HGVs along Lucas Green Road (between Kierra Way and Ford Road) included on the list of schemes to be considered for inclusion in the Local Committee's 2017/18 programme of works.
- 9.7 Other options to improve the current layout have been considered but are not considered to be appropriate.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 The proposed one-way system for HGVs will be assessed alongside schemes requested at other locations in Surrey Heath and considered by the Local Committee for inclusion in its 2017/18 programme of works.

Contact Officer:

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Consulted:

None

Annexes:

None

Sources/background papers:
None
