

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

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

SUBJECT: **PETITION RESPONSE: STOP DIRECTING HGV TRAFFIC THROUGH WEST END, BISLEY, KNAPHILL, BROOKWOOD TO WOKING**

DIVISION: **LIGHTWATER, BISLEY AND WEST END & BAGSHOT, WINDLESHAM AND CHOBHAM**

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

The Local Committee received a petition on the 10 March 2016 signed by 61 local residents requesting the Local Committee stop encouraging HGV traffic to use the A322 through West End and Bisley.

The petition stated that "SCC have erected a sign on Lightwater bypass approaching West End that directs HGV onto A322/A324 to Woking. The reason being to deter HGV passing through Chobham High Street en route to Woking. An alternative route should be promoted to use M3/M25 of which this route has significantly less residential built up areas. The alternative route would facilitate good fuel efficiency, lessen damaging environmental emissions in built up areas, reduce noise and disturbance for a significant amount of people that reside on A322/A324. The journey times are not significantly different to outweigh the potential huge benefits to residents.

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

- (i) The A322 and A324 are strategically important roads within Surrey's highways network and would be expected to be used by HGVs when crossing the county.
- (ii) Diverting traffic via the M3 and M25 will require traffic to use the A320 (a road of similar character to the A322 and A324) and extensive changes to existing signing.
- (iii) The route from Junction 3 of the M3 to Woking is approximately 6 miles longer when travelled via the M3, M25 and A320 than it is when travelled via the A322 and A324.
- (iv) HGV drivers now use technology to determine routes to meet demands on them to maximise efficiency. As a result, highway signs are less likely to have an impact on driver behaviour.

The Local Committee (Surrey Heath) is recommended:

- (i) That the existing signing remains unchanged and that no action is taken to encourage HGV traffic to use alternative routes to the A322 and A324 when travelling to Woking from Junction 3 of the M3.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The A322 and A324 is an appropriate route for HGV traffic and is the shortest route to Woking from Junction 3 of the M3 avoiding weight limit restrictions. Diverting HGV traffic for Woking away from the A322 and A324 and via the M3 and M25 increases every journey by approximately 6 miles. The M24 route also results in HGV traffic using the A320, a road similar in nature to the A322 and A324.

In addition, HGV drivers typically use SatNav technology to improve delivery times. The specific devices not only include restrictions, such as weight and width restrictions, but also includes traffic information to minimise their journey times and maximise efficiency. With the rise of this technology, drivers are unlikely to follow diversion signs that take the driver an additional 6 miles unless the journey is faster, which the device would communicate.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 Guildford Road (A322) runs through West End and Bisley on the main route from Guildford to Bracknell. The route provides easy access to locations such as Woking, Lightwater and Reading. The A322 also connects directly to the M3, A3 and A30.



Figure 1: Plan of area

- 1.2 Guildford Road (A322) connects to the Brookwood Lye Road (A324) at the Brookwood Traffic Lights and allows access to either Woking or Aldershot.
- 1.3 Signs on the M3 direct all traffic bound for Woking to exit at Junction 3 and join the A322 Lightwater By-pass.
- 1.4 The most direct route from Junction 3 of the M3 to Woking is along the Lightwater By-pass and through the centre of Chobham. However, an 18T weight limit currently restricts access to the Chobham High Street (A3046) for large vehicles.
- 1.5 In January 2015, Surrey County Council installed two new signs on the Lightwater By-pass informing HGV traffic of the weight limit on Chobham High Street. The signs also encourage HGV traffic to use the A322 and A324 as an alternative route to Woking.
- 1.6 Whilst there are alternative routes that HGVs can use to access Woking, the A322/A324 is considered the most appropriate for the reasons set out in section 2 of this report.



Figure 2: A322 junction with Church Lane, Bisley

2. ANALYSIS:

2.1 Guildford Road (A322) and Brookwood Lye Road (A324)

- 2.1.1 Current signage on the Lightwater Bypass (A322) encourages HGV traffic for Woking to divert along the A322 and A324 in advance of the junction with Bagshot Road (A319). The sign was installed to reduce the number of HGV traffic seeking access to Woking through the 18T restriction on Chobham High Street (A3046).

2.1.2 The A322 and A324 are generally wide roads, with the majority of properties set back from the carriageway. The route has been altered over the years and junctions have been upgraded. The junctions along the route are suitable for use by HGV traffic.

2.1.3 These A-class roads are strategically important roads and the A322 and sections of the A324 are designated as priority 1 roads, the highest priority of road within Surrey's highway network. Roads of this nature cater for the distribution of traffic in and around local towns and settlements and for the movement of traffic between these places and the Primary Route Network (motorways and trunk roads). As such, they would be expected to carry large volumes of traffic including significant numbers of HGVs.

2.2 Chobham High Street (A3046)

2.2.1 Chobham High Street has primarily commercial properties adjacent to the highway, with on street parking to support the economic sustainability of the centre.

2.2.2 The weight limit on Chobham High Street was established in 1988 to restrict through traffic over 17T in weight. The order was subsequently updated to 18T in 2008 to reflect the change in legislation at that time.

2.3 Alternative Routes

2.3.1 There are two alternative routes to the A322 and A324 that HGV traffic can use to get to Woking. The first is following the A319 to Ottershaw and then along the A320 Guildford Road. The second is via the M3, M25 and subsequently along the A320 Guildford Road.

2.3.2 The route following the A319 requires traffic to negotiate the junction between High Street, Windsor Road (B383) and Chertsey Road. This junction has a history of personal injury accidents, restricted visibility and limited space which makes it difficult for large vehicles to easily make some manoeuvres. Due to existing concerns, Surrey County Council is currently assessing possible options to improve safety and reduce congestion at the junction.

2.3.3 In addition to the concerns about the above junction, the route diverts traffic onto the A320 Guildford Road. The A320 is a very similar road to the A322 with residential properties along part of the route. As the main route from Woking to the M25, the A320 is already heavily used by HGVs (and traffic more generally). As such, HGVs would be diverted onto a route of similar nature to the A322 where residents already express similar concerns about the volume of HGVs using the road.

2.3.4 To divert traffic via the M3 and M25 would direct traffic along a route approximately 6 miles longer than the journey via the A322. It would also require extensive and costly changes to signs on both Surrey's highway network as well as the motorway network (which would require the agreement of Highways England). In addition, the route would again require traffic to use the A320 Guildford Road where, as outlined above, residents already express concerns about HGV flows.

2.4 Current Technology

- 2.4.1 With demands on commercial drivers to maximise their efficiency, many HGV drivers use special SatNavs that use up to date information on traffic to direct the drivers on the most efficient route.
- 2.4.2 Satnavs are available specifically for HGV drivers so that they can set a route that specifically avoids HGV restrictions on the network. Similar to the typical Satnavs, these devices now consider traffic flow in their arrival estimates.
- 2.4.3 Even if signs were installed on the M3 directing traffic to use the M3/M25/A320 route to access Woking, the demand on these drivers to deliver in the shortest time means that they would be unlikely to follow HGV signs if their technology directs them along a different route.

3. OPTIONS:

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

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 No consultation is planned under the current recommendations.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 There are no budgetary implications for the recommendations made.

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:

ITEM 11

- 9.1 As strategically important A-class roads, the A322 and A324 form a main through route for Surrey and would be expected to carry high levels of traffic including a significant volume of large vehicles.
- 9.2 Encouraging HGV traffic away from using the A322 would simply move this traffic to alternative roads such as the A319 and A320 which are considered no more suitable for HGV traffic than the A322.
- 9.3 If traffic were to be actively encouraged to use the M3 and M25 as an alternative, traffic will still need to use the A320 to access Woking. In addition, directing traffic from Junction 3 of the M3 to Woking via the M25 is 6 miles longer than the route via the A322 and A324. Directing traffic via this route would also require a considerable amount of costly changes to existing direction signs.
- 9.4 With the improvement of Satnav technology, including general easy access, highway users are becoming less and less reliant on highway signs to find their way and rely more on technology. With the demanding timescales placed on HGV drivers, many rely on technology to seek out the quickest route and deliver their goods as quickly as possible. With HGV specific Satnavs that consider restrictions on HGVs when planning a route, drivers often choose to follow their Satnavs rather than follow traditional highway signs.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 If the Local Area Committee agrees the recommendation then no further action is required.

Contact Officer:

Peter Orchard (Assistant Engineer) – 0300 200 1003

Consulted:

None

Annexes:

None

Sources/background papers:

None
