



**SURREY**

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL  
LOCAL COMMITTEE EPSOM & EWELL  
19 September 2016**

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS**

**Question 1 – Peter Kalinowski on behalf of Association of Ewell Downs Residents**

**Re: Longdown Lane North – traffic issues**

Longdown Lane North is a very busy cut through route which enables drivers to escape heavy congestion on Reigate Road and at the Drift Bridge junction.

There are three main issues as follows:

**Blind bends and overtaking**

Drivers travelling from Epsom Downs towards Reigate Road tend to accelerate down the slope and enter the blind curve at more than 30mph. Problems occur when approaching the entrance to Higher Green at speed. If vehicle in front is signaling to enter Higher Green, drivers often try to overtake this vehicle by driving on the wrong side of the road on a blind bend. Given that they are now travelling at more than 30mph there is little time or space to pull over when another vehicle traveling in the direction of Epsom Downs suddenly appears in view.

Similarly drivers travelling from Reigate Road towards Epsom Downs encounter a blind bend at the junction with Ewell Downs Road which gives rise to similar issues about overtaking on the blind bend as described above particularly as cars tend to park on this blind bend and it is necessary to pull out on the blind bend in order to proceed.

**Accidents at the junction with Higher Green**

There have been two serious accidents at the junction with Higher Green when cars leaving Higher Green have been hit at speed by cars travelling along Longdown Lane North. Fortunately there have been no fatalities but the cars involved have been write-offs. Higher Green slopes downwards away from Longdown Lane North so it is difficult for a driver on Longdown Lane North traveling at speed to be able to see clearly cars exiting Higher Green as the junction is very close to the blind curve. There is thus little time and space to avoid a collision. Similarly cars leaving Higher Green have the same problem of visibility.

In addition there is another issue due to the design of the junction Higher Green/Longdown Lane North as it is a “Y” shape ie a left-hand exit/entrance and a right-hand exit/entrance. Drivers frequently misunderstand how this junction works and assume that the left-hand is for exiting only and the right-hand is for entrance to Higher Green, despite clear marking in the road. These instances are increasing as Higher Green itself is being used as cut-through to avoid the busy junction at the Homebase roundabout and to by-pass Epsom congestion.

## HGVs getting stuck in Higher Green

The road width in Higher Green is abnormally narrow and adjacent to the high grass bank on all three sides such that large vehicles can get stuck when trying to pass a parked car. There have been several incidents when very long articulated vehicles have got stuck for up to an hour trying to extricate themselves. Higher Green can get completely blocked by parked cars due Wallace Fields Infants School and associated Nursery. Thus the school run takes place up to six times a day.

These HGVs were all in transit and not making deliveries in the immediate area. When we have spoken to the drivers of these vehicles they have stated that their SatNav has recommended driving through Higher Green to access Kiln Lane and other directions. Trees have been damaged and one had to be felled.

Would the Committee agree to make the following changes to address these issues?

1. Place new signs at the entrances to Longdown Lane North at the junction with College Road and Reigate Road stating "30mph Please Drive Carefully." This will remind drivers that there is a speed limit.
2. Install double white lines on the blind bend areas of Longdown Lane North. Alternatively make one of the two broken lines a solid white line.
3. Place a new sign at the entrance to Higher Green stating "Unsuitable for HGVs".

### Officer Response:

Longdown Lane North has a 30mph speed limit. The road does have curves but they are not blind bends and are not severe enough to require chevron boards on their approach. There is a strip of hatched road markings down the centre of the road which narrows the lane widths and deters overtaking compared to a single white warning line.

Motorists overtaking on bends is clearly poor driver behaviour but double white line road markings could not be justified as the road layout does not meet the criteria for a double white system. Sight lines from Higher Green are good in both directions.

Longdown Lane North is currently on the Speed Management Plan. This is a joint initiative with Surrey Police to target roads with speed and accident problems. There are many roads currently on the plan and Surrey Police do carry out regular enforcement by prioritising roads with the greatest need. The latest data shows average speeds of 33mph northbound, and 34mph southbound.

Observations indicate that Longdown Lane North is not excessively used as a short cut. Very rarely does traffic form queues at the Longdown Lane North / Longdown Lane South / College Road junction.

Higher Green is a public highway and therefore vehicles whether big or small are allowed to use it. There is a form available on Surrey's website that can be used to inform SCC of inappropriate use of a road by vehicles. The link is shown below.

<http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/cycling-and-driving/large-goods-vehicles/report-a-lorry-incident>

With regard to the specific requests, 30mph signs can only be used at terminal points where there is a change in speed limit. (all roads with a street lighting system have a 30mph speed limit unless otherwise indicated) So given that all approaches to the

College Road / Longdown lane North and South are within a 30mph speed limit restriction it would not be possible to introduce a 30mph sign. Similarly the speed limit on Reigate Road at the junction with Longdown Lane North is 30mph so we can not introduce a 30mph sign at the entrance to Longdown Lane North.

Longdown Lane North does not meet the criteria for introducing a double white line system. Double white lines are used where there is severe limited visibility such as hump back bridges.

We receive many requests from residents all over the Borough asking for 'unsuitable for HGVs' signs. There would have to be exceptional circumstances for the use of this type of sign, and there are many legitimate reasons why HGVs should be able to use Higher Green and Wallace Fields, such as for home deliveries or house moving.

**Question 2 – Cllr Michael Arthur  
Re: Kiln Lane Junction Resurfacing**

I was disappointed to learn that phase five of Project Horizon had, in effect, been cancelled and the expectations of works anticipated for that year will not be undertaken. Instead, a new five year programme is being established with fresh submissions all on a level playing field which will at some point be programme scheduled.

I believe within the original year five programme was the resurfacing of the whole of East Street plus part of Epsom Road which would embrace the very badly worn junctions at Kiln Lane and High Street East.

For cyclists, the above junctions are very hazardous requiring great care indeed they are bumpy for bus and car passengers too.

Can any hope be offered that the promised resurfacing of East Street may soon be done?"

**Officer Response:**

This section of road is currently subject to assessment using the agreed prioritisation criteria, along with other roads across the County. It is not possible to say at this point whether it will be resurfaced. It is anticipated that the programme of roads for inclusion in the next phase of the Project Horizon programme will be published in October.

**Question 3 – Cllr Michael Arthur  
Re: Highway Trees**

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council are set to hand over the street tree contract to Surrey from 1/4/17. Part of that work is the planting of replacement street trees.

Epsom & Ewell has enjoyed good liaison over the years with the Tree Advisory Board ensuring that street trees are regularly planted to ensure the future continuance of a pleasant leafy suburban environment.

The future for this aspect looks very much in jeopardy with high unit cost of replacement planting.

Could a meeting be set up between SCC officers and Epsom Tree Advisory Board to establish a positive way forward for this important service?

**Officer Response:**

Surrey County Council has no specific budget to plant new trees. If funding for new tree planting were to be identified, Officers would be pleased to assess suggested sites and arrange for new trees to be planted.

The Borough Council may also continue to plant trees on the Public Highway after the agency agreement has ended, subject to gaining permission from the County Council. The opportunities and process for the Borough Council to plant trees on the Public Highway are detailed on our website here: <http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/road-permits-and-licences/planting-trees-on-the-highway>.

Officers are aware that the Borough Council has a relationship with the Epsom and Ewell Tree Advisory Board (E&ETAB). There is no intention for the County Council to form any kind of formal relationship with the E&ETAB, or to give the E&ETAB any special status. Rather the intention is to treat the E&ETAB with due respect as would be afforded to any other regular customer.