

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)****DATE:** 16 NOVEMBER 2016**LEAD OFFICER:** SARAH J SMITH, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AND COMMITTEE OFFICER**SUBJECT:** QUESTIONS FROM LOCAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS**DIVISION:** ALL**Question from Cllr Haque (Fetcham West)**

Would SCC Highways consider introducing a 20mph speed limit in Gatesden Road, Fetcham? There are particular concerns about drivers going too fast during the school dropping off and pick up times.

**Response:**

Surrey County Council has an approved Speed Limit Policy which sets out the criteria under which a reduction in speed limit by signs alone would be considered. The policy requires that the length of road over which a speed limit change would be considered should be at least 600m in length. This is to ensure against too many speed limit changes that could be confusing to the motorist along a length of road. The suggestion being put forward by Cllr Haque would meet this criterion.

The policy also requires existing speeds to be measured over a 7 day continuous period using automatic survey equipment. The measured existing mean speeds are then compared to a threshold set out in the policy and if the recorded mean speeds are below the threshold, then the council will consider reducing the speed limit. For a reduction from 30mph to 20mph, the threshold mean speed is set at 24mph.

There is no recent speed survey data available for Gatesden Road. It is proposed to set aside a small sum from the revenue budget to fund speed limit surveys in 2017/18. Officers will arrange for a speed survey to be carried out at appropriate locations within Gatesden Road to determine existing speeds, in accordance with the speed limit policy. It should be noted that speed surveys should not be carried out if the results would be affected by other factors such as adverse weather conditions or school holidays. Therefore it is proposed to carry out this survey in spring 2017. The results of the speed survey will be reported to the Local Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman and divisional Member.

A road safety assessment in line with Surrey County Council's Road Safety Outside Schools Policy was carried out on 20 September 2016 in Gatesden Road at the rear entrance to Oakfield Junior School. This assessment was as a result of concerns raised by residents about inconsiderate parking, drivers approaching the bend too fast, and pedestrians crossing the road. The Officers carrying out the assessment did not consider excessive traffic speeds to be of concern. The assessment recommended that school warning signs be provided in Gatesden Road either side of the rear entrance to the school in order to raise driver awareness of this entrance,

and these signs have been ordered. There are already “school keep clear” road markings at this entrance. However there are no signs associated with these markings informing what times of day the school keep clear markings are in operation. Surrey County Council’s Parking Team arrange for the provision of these signs, and this matter has been raised with them.

#### **Questions from Mr Tim Hall (Leatherhead and Fetcham East)**

1. A number of roads in Mole Valley previously listed for Operation Horizon have not been repaired and do not appear on the Forward Programme for 2017 onwards.

Could the Highways Management please list which roads have not been completed and are not on the 2016/7 or 2017-21 Programmes.

**Response:**

DISTRICT	ROAD NAME	ROAD NO	LIMIT (START)	LIMIT (END)	LENGTH (m)
Mole Valley	Abinger Road	D289	Anstie lane	Broome Hall Road	450
Mole Valley	Beare Green Rd	A29	Henhurst Cross Lane	Knowfield Copse	600
Mole Valley	Buckingham Rd	D299	Warwick Rd	End	150
Mole Valley	Church Close	D3905	Burwood Road	Turners Lane	230
Mole Valley	Cotmandene	D2834	Chart Lane North	Moore's Road	400
Mole Valley	Guildford Road/Hawk's Hill	B2122	Cobham Road	The Ridgeway	1350
Mole Valley	Honeywood Lane	C50	Oakwoodland Lane	Ruckmans Lane	751
Mole Valley	Kingston Road	B2430	Plough R/A	Oxshott Rd	900
Mole Valley	Knoll R/A	A24	Leatherhead	Roundabout All Approaches	600
Mole Valley	Knoll Road	D2841	Flint Hill	End	360
Mole Valley	Little Bookham St	D2525	Lower Rd	Sole Farm Rd	615
Mole Valley	Lyefield lane	D279	Ockley Road	Lower Breache Rd	1500
Mole Valley	Meadow Way/ the Copse	D2544	Eastwick Drive	The Glade	492
Mole Valley	Monks Green	D2508	Entire Length		175
Mole Valley	Norfolk Rd	D299	Warwick Rd	End	130
Mole Valley	Nower Road	D2830	Hampstead Lane	End	320
Mole Valley	Oakfield Road	D2621	Entire length		400
Mole Valley	Park Rise	D2629	Kingston Road	End	100
Mole Valley	Pebble Hill Road	B2032	Level Crossing	Dorking Road	600
Mole Valley	Rough Rew	D2859	Entire Length		200
Mole Valley	Sheephouse Lane	D285	Guildford Rd	Damhurst Lane	750
Mole Valley	Stane Street	A29	Coles Lane	Friday Street	450
Mole Valley	Stane Street	A29	Cathill Lane	Sewage Works	450
Mole Valley	Upper Fairfield	D2600	Linden Road	End	230

	Road				
Mole Valley	Warwick Road	D299	Horsham Rd	End	130
Mole Valley	Waterway Road	B2122	Station Road	Mill Lane	300
Mole Valley	Willow Vale (2)	D2544	Spring Grove	End	100
Mole Valley	Young Street	A246	Start Of HFS Approx. 50m W 'R/A J/W B2122 Guildford Road	'Givons Grove' 'R/A J/W A24	1950

Over the past 18 months an assessment has been carried out on all remaining schemes on the Operation Horizon programme, as requested by John Furey. An assessment has also been carried out on the many additional schemes that have been generated from condition surveys.

All of the schemes (some 800+) have been prioritised against others countywide into a new 5 year list. Unfortunately the number of schemes involved means not all the scheme on prior Operation Horizon lists will now appear on the new version. However Local Committee will have the opportunity to allocate the final 20% of roads major maintenance schemes during the November/December meetings.

2. Could the Highways Management explain why Embankment and Retaining Wall at the Kingston Road Railway Bridge in Leatherhead are only on the forward programme to be assessed in 2018/2019, when it is fairly obvious that the road, pavement and retaining wall are all coming apart or subsiding at a rapid rate?

**Response:**

Kingston Road Railway Bridge in Leatherhead is owned by Network Rail and the sheet pile retaining wall on the north-west corner of the structure is maintained by Surrey County Council. The retaining wall is inspected by Surrey County Council as part of their structures inspection regime in accordance with National Guidelines.

The maintenance of the embankments on the approaches to the Kingston Road Railway Bridge are the responsibility of Network Rail. This is supported by a copy of an agreement from 1964 between British Rail and Surrey County Council about maintenance of highways on rail bridges, recorded as AGT8820. This confirms that, for a commuted sum, Surrey County Council will be responsible for surfacing and surface water drainage and British Rail (now Network Rail) "remain responsible for maintaining adequate support for road surfaces and drainage works over both the bridges and the approaches".

The Transport Act 1968 made changes to the maintenance of highways over rail bridges, by making them maintainable at public expense. This didn't affect Network Rail's responsibility for maintenance of any part of the bridge or its approaches other than the surface of the highway.

**Questions from Mrs Hazel Watson (Dorking Hills)**

1. Can clarity be given on exactly what is meant by "hedge cutting has been passed back" to the County Council (ie what constitutes a hedge as opposed to a number of bushes on the side of the highway or number of plants growing a couple of feet high in the verge and thus define exactly has been passed back to the County Council) and what is the contract value that has been handed back to the County Council? Furthermore, can information be given as to who at the County Council is now responsible for this work, what budget (amount) has been allocated for this work, and what contract has the County Council entered into for the work to be carried out?

**Response:**

In 2016 following negotiations with Surrey County Council (SCC), highway hedge management was handed back to SCC from Mole Valley District Council (MVDC).

There is no specific definition of a hedge or a species to align it with. Generally, it is a plant that acts as a screen, and is maintained in that manner to define a boundary. However, not all hedges belong to the highway (SCC), but SCC are empowered to ensure that owners and occupiers remove or cut back trees, shrubs and hedges that obstruct or endanger highway users under the Highways Act 1980 (section 154). However the act does not provide specific guidance on what would be appropriate clearance, but guidance can be found at the following location of SCC's website;

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/road-maintenance-and-cleaning/trees-grass-and-vegetation/trees-and-shrubs-near-roads>

There is no contract value, as it is an adhoc activity. An allowance was given to MVDC when they carried out the highway hedge management, but it was in the context of other horticultural activities that they carried out, such as grass and weed control, so it is not possible to put a direct value on it.

The Highways Service is now responsible for the programming of hedge flailing. The local team input into this process, and are also able to commission works locally if necessary, the budget for this work for the Mole Valley District for the 2017/18 financial year is £11,601. However the budget is subject to change once the final budget has been confirmed. In addition Local Committees may also allocate some of their delegated highway budgets to hedge management.

2. Where footpaths run alongside the road but with trees etc between the road and the footpath, such as on the A25 between Westcott and Abinger, which Council is responsible for cutting back the grass and hedges alongside and overhanging the footpath and what frequency (and in which month) is this scheduled? Furthermore, what additional cutting is planned for future years to address the failure to keep the path clear over much of the last two summers?

**Response:**

MVDC are responsible for the cutting of the grass footpaths that run alongside the A25. These will be cut 3 times a year, normally in May, July and September.

This year it appears that the grass was only cut on the roadside, and behind the hedge, where the footpath runs was initially missed. MVDC and SCC worked in partnership to clear this area once it was brought to their attention.

The highway hedge is the responsibility of SCC, and work to manage this hedge will be prioritised alongside other horticultural works. Large hedges are generally not recommended to be cut yearly, as this encourages growth and reduces the food available for wildlife.

3. Where cycle paths run alongside the A24 between Dorking and Leatherhead, which Council is responsible for cutting the vegetation on either side of the cycle path, ensuring sight-lines are open at all junctions where cars can cross the cycle path (side-turnings such as Swanworth Lane) and keeping the path clear? Which Council is also responsible for keeping the cycle path clear of broken twigs and branches etc and on what frequency is the path swept to ensure that the cycle path can safely be used by cyclists?

**Response:**

SCC are responsible for ensuring that vegetation is maintained to ensure sightlines are clear. However, MVDC is responsible for cutting the grass verges in this area, and weed control. Following feedback from residents, MVDC cut less of the verges in the first cut of the year as there was a desire to support local biodiversity. It was clear that in the first cut too much grass had been left uncut, which caused concerns about certain areas of the A24. MVDC responded to this, with the support of SCC, by bringing forward the second cut of the year to undertake a full cut.

There is currently no set frequency for sweeping the cycle paths along the A24, although this is something that can be addressed with MVDC's street cleansing contractor.

4. Which Council will be responsible for cutting the verge and roundabouts on the A24 next year; the "verge" in the central reservation is part grass verge and part hedge / trees? Is responsibility split as would appear from the comments made?

**Response:**

This is a shared responsibility between MVDC and SCC. MVDC is responsible for cutting the grass, and SCC is responsible for the hedges and shrubs.

5. Where the roadside of country lanes which includes significant vegetation as opposed to just grass needs to be cut back to ensure signposts can be seen etc, which Council had responsibility for this work in the past, and which will in the future?

**Response:**

In the past this was joint partnership between SCC and MVDC. It still is in many respects, however principally if it is highway owned vegetation in that it is prioritised by SCC to remove or cut back. If vegetation is private, then SCC will contact the landowner to request that they carry out maintenance work.

6. What action is planned to co-ordinate the verge cutting work with leaf clearance etc to ensure that gullies and drains are not blocked by verge cuttings and falling leaves?

**Response:**

The verge cutting work and leaf clearance generally happen at different times of the year. In terms of the verge cutting work, this is a matter that MVDC will address with its contractor. They are required to ensure that the highway is left clear after they have undertaken their works. In terms of the falling leaves, MVDC's street cleaning contractor brings in additional resource every autumn/winter to specifically focus on leaf clearance.

On roads subject to high speed traffic, works have to be carried out under traffic management which gives all parties an opportunity to work together to ensure that cyclical maintenance is carried out. This includes all street cleansing, gully emptying, sign and barrier repairs, grass cutting, specialist weed control, safety defect repairs, arboriculture works as well as litter picking.

SCC officers and MVDC officers work together to ensure works are programmed together for the best outcome.