

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (RUNNYMEDE)

DATE: 3 JULY 2017

LEAD OFFICER: ANDREW MILNE – AREA HIGHWAYS MANAGER (NW)

SUBJECT: ROAD SAFETY OUTSIDE THORPE LEA PRIMARY SCHOOL – PETITION RESPONSE

DIVISION: EGHAM



SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

The Local Committee received a petition at its meeting on the 13 March 2017 signed by 89 individuals concerned about road safety outside Thorpe Lea Primary School. A supporting letter was also received from the Head of Governors at Thorpe Lea School (attached at Annex 1).

The petition stated that “We the undersigned parents and carers of children attending Thorpe Lea Primary School, hereby vehemently demand that Surrey County Council put safety measures in place in the vicinity of the school immediately in order to reduce the risk of accidents and to make the approach to school feel safer for all children and adults alike. Thank you.”

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Runnymede) is asked to note:

- (i) that a safety outside schools assessment has been completed and recommended the following:
 - subject to support from the school, a Park SMART initiative is organised.
 - the school produce a school travel plan with the support of the county council’s sustainable travel team.
- (ii) the parking problems outside the school have been reported to the parking services manager at Runnymede Borough Council and parking enforcement officers have visited the location on a number of occasions since the assessment was undertaken.
- (iii) An increased number of parking enforcement officers are expected to be available next term which will enable the location to be targeted for more frequent enforcement.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

An assessment of safety outside the school has confirmed that the roads around the school have a good safety record and that vehicle speeds are relatively low

ITEM 4

(especially at school drop off and pick up times). However, site observations confirm a problem with illegal/inconsiderate parking taking place. The above measures have therefore been recommended to deter parents from parking on the double yellow lines/school keep clear markings and to educate them about the hazards created by illegal/inconsiderate parking. In addition, the introduction of an effective school travel plan can help reduce the number of vehicles needing to park near the school.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 Thorpe Lea Primary School is located in Huntingfield Way (Egham) opposite its junction with Langton Way as indicated on the below plan. A nursery school also operates on the same site as the school.
- 1.2 Huntingfield Way and the other roads around the school are residential in nature and are subject to a 30mph speed limit.

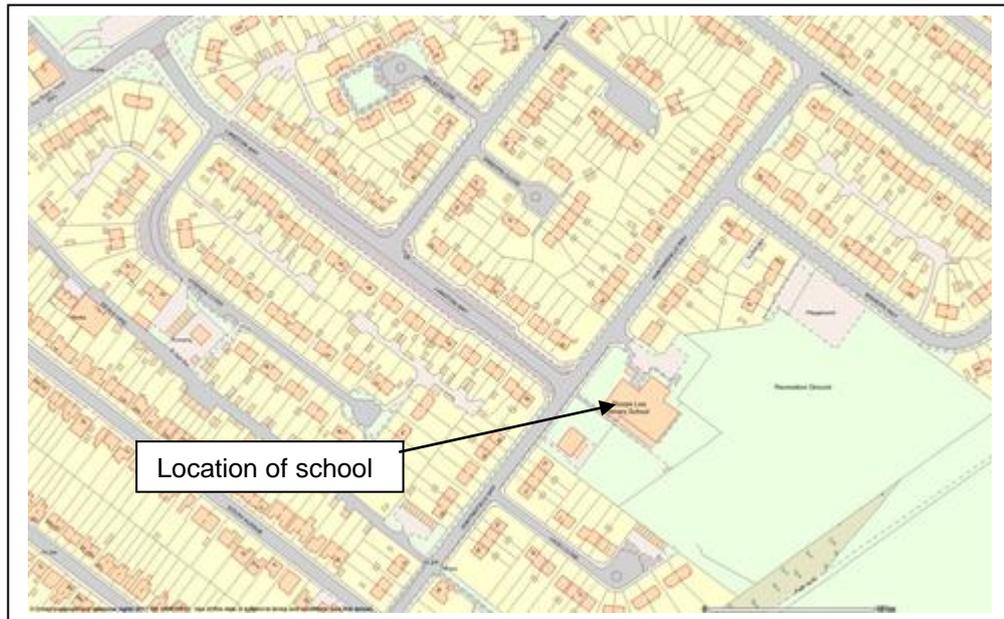


Figure 1 – School Location

- 1.3 At school drop off and pick up times the roads in the immediate vicinity of most schools in Surrey experience high levels of pedestrian and vehicle activity. With large numbers of parents parking near schools at these times, roads often become very congested leading to frustration for motorists.
- 1.4 Concerns are also frequently expressed about the safety of children outside schools at these times and the county council's "Road Safety Outside Schools" policy sets out the process used for investigating and responding to such concerns.
- 1.5 As part of the process the county council's sustainable transport team arrange a site assessment with key colleagues including the council's local highways engineers, road safety engineering team and Surrey Police Road Safety and Traffic Management Team.
- 1.6 The assessment includes analysis of collisions, vehicle speeds, existing road conditions, signing, highway infrastructure and vehicle/pedestrian behaviour.
- 1.7 Following the assessment a report is produced detailing the findings and any recommendations or options for tackling concerns identified.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 In response to the concerns raised in the petition, a site assessment was undertaken outside Thorpe Lea Primary School during the afternoon pick up period on Wednesday 24 May 2017.
- 2.2 The findings/observations from the site assessment are detailed below together with information about vehicles speeds and the road safety record at the location.

Road Safety Record

- 2.3 Personal injury collision records have been examined for the roads in the area around the school (including both Huntingfield Way and Langton Way as well as the adjoining side roads) for the last 3 years.
- 2.4 Over this period there has been one personal injury collision in these roads. This occurred outside school times on a Saturday evening at the junction of South Avenue with Oak Avenue. The circumstances of the collision were exceptional and involved non-highway factors.

Vehicle Speeds

- 2.5 Surrey Police carried out a speed survey from 16 to 23 May 2017 on the section of Huntingfield Way outside the school. The survey recorded a total of 4,765 vehicles and an overall average vehicle speed of 20mph. As you would expect, due to the increased level of vehicle and pedestrian activity, the average speed specifically at school drop off and pick up times was lower than the overall average (the weekday average speed of vehicles was 16mph between both 8.30am and 9.00am and between 3.00pm and 3.45 pm).

Infrastructure

- 2.6 During the site assessment the following were noted as being present:
- Signs on all 3 approaches to the school warning drivers of the likelihood of encountering children going to school in the road ahead. (Advance visibility of the sign located on Huntingfield Way to the west of the school was obscured by vegetation at the time of the inspection).
 - An extensive length of school keep clear markings across the school frontage together with the appropriate signs to indicate that stopping on the markings is prohibited between Monday and Friday from 8.15am to 9.15am and from 2.30pm to 4pm. These markings are enforceable.
 - Double yellow lines round the junction of Huntingfield Way with Langton Way.
 - Uncontrolled pedestrian crossings in Huntingfield Way either side of the junction with Langton Way and also an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing in Langton Way on the immediate approach to its junction with Huntingfield Way. All the crossings have dropped kerbs/tactile paving and are protected by either double yellow lines or school keep clear markings.

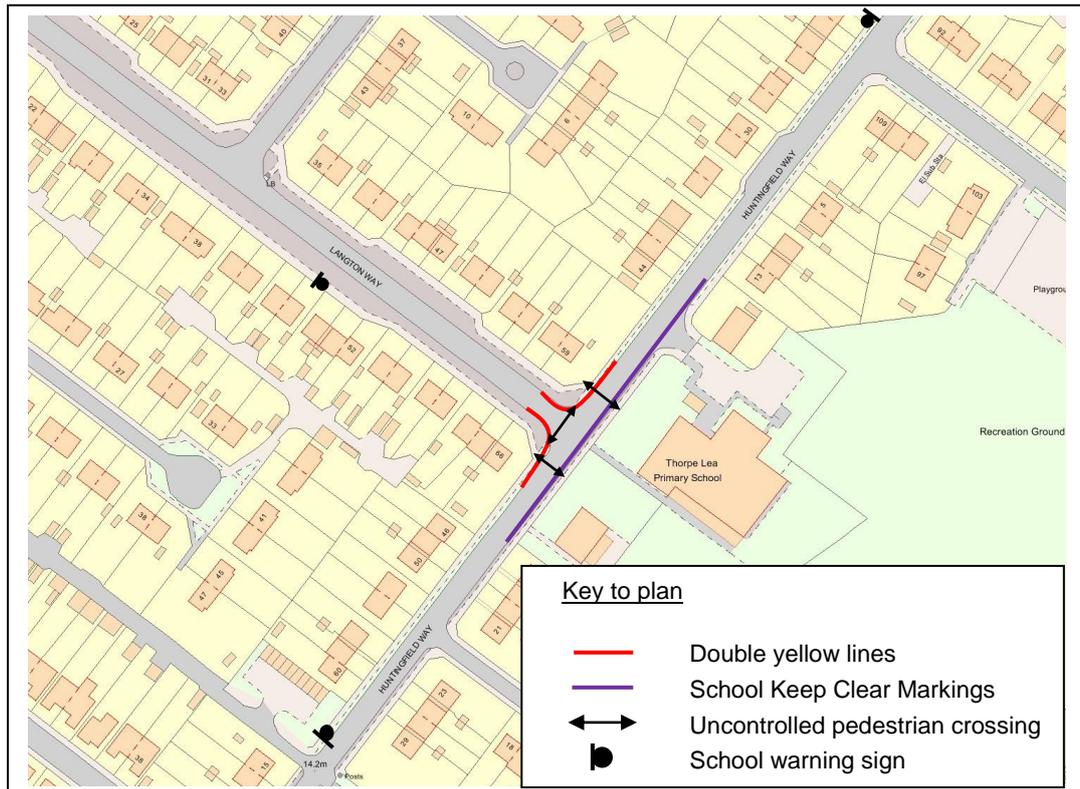


Figure 2 – Location of parking controls, signs and crossing points

Site Observations

- 2.7 Officers from Surrey County Council and Surrey Police spoke to the school's headteacher, deputy headteacher and caretaker prior to, and during, the site assessment. They highlighted their principal concern is an ongoing problem with some parents parking in an illegal or inconsiderate manner.
- 2.8 Site observations during the assessment supported these concerns as parents were witnessed parking on the double yellow lines at the junction of Langton Way and Huntingfield Way. This parking restricted visibility for vehicles turning in and out of the junction and created congestion issues. The parking also restricted visibility for pedestrians at the crossing points (these were not obstructed at the time of the assessment but school staff reported there are occasions when parents park across them).
- 2.9 Generally the school keep clear markings were well respected.
- 2.10 Vehicle speeds appeared to be very low during the assessment due to the levels of congestion. School staff indicated that vehicles speeds were not a significant concern.
- 2.11 In addition to the site assessment carried out on 24 May 2017 during the afternoon pick up period, Surrey Police's Casualty Reduction Officer also visited the location during the morning drop off period on 25 May 2017. Observations during this visit reflected those during the site assessment. Vehicle speeds were low but some parents were again observed parking on the double yellow lines and two vehicles parked briefly at either end of the school keep clear markings to drop off children.

ITEM 4

- 2.12 It should be noted that whilst the parking problems observed are a concern and create a safety hazard as well as cause congestion, they are not as severe as those observed at some other schools. However, this may be due to school staff being present outside the school at drop off and pick up times.

Report

- 2.13 Following the site assessment, the county council's sustainable transport team produced a report detailing the above findings and the resultant recommendations (as detailed in this report). A copy of the report, which has been sent to the School and the Local County Councillor, is attached at Annex 2.

3. OPTIONS:

RECOMMENDED OPTIONS

- 3.1 The results of the assessment identified parking problems as creating a safety hazard and parking is also the principal concern of the school. Measures aimed at addressing these issues would therefore potentially have the greatest safety benefit. As such, the assessment recommends the following options should be progressed:

Park SMART

- 3.2 The Park SMART campaign is a partnership between Surrey Police and Surrey County Council that aims to inform motorists about current parking regulations and encourage sensible parking.
- 3.3 The campaign includes an initiative to specifically target problems with parking outside schools. As part of this initiative, groups of pupils (up to 12) patrol the road around a school and issue tickets (in the form of a leaflet) to drivers parking illegally, dangerously or anti-socially. The pupils also explain to the driver why their parking is not acceptable and creates a safety hazard.
- 3.4 The pupils are briefed on the purpose of the initiative and what to do and say before they start. A police officer and member of the county council's sustainable travel team then walk with the children while they issue leaflets to drivers and try to educate them.
- 3.5 Subject to support from the school, it is recommended that such an event is organised with children at Thorpe Lea Primary School to help educate parents and encourage safer parking outside the school.

School travel plan

- 3.6 A school travel plan (STP) is a document which identifies the journeys made to and from school and looks for ways in which these can be made safer and more sustainable for pupils, parents and teachers.
- 3.7 When new schools are created or existing schools are expanded then a school travel plan is required. In other circumstances, schools create a travel plan on a voluntary basis.

- 3.8 At present Thorpe Lea Primary School does not have a school travel plan. It is therefore recommended that the school creates one. The county council's sustainable travel team can provide help and support to the school in producing a travel plan.

OTHER OPTIONS

- 3.9 In the context of the findings of the assessment, the following measures are unlikely to result in significant safety benefits for the reasons explained below.

20mph speed limit

- 3.10 The introduction of a 20mph speed limit would involve significant costs (due to the legal process involved and signing required) and is unlikely to result in reduced vehicle speeds given that the average speed outside the school is already 20mph (and lower at school drop off and pick up times). As such, it would have limited benefit for safety.

Additional/enhanced warning signs on the approach to the School

- 3.11 There are existing warning signs on all 3 approaches to the school. Installing additional signs is therefore unlikely to have any significant impact. Furthermore, the nature of the roads around the school means that most of the motorists using them will be visitors to the school or local residents. As such, they will already be aware of the presence of the school.

Traffic calming measures

- 3.12 Traffic calming measures such as road humps are costly to install and are not universally popular. As such, they are generally only installed at locations that have a poor safety record (and only following extensive public consultation). However, the roads near the school have a good safety record and the average vehicle speed outside the school is already lower than the average speed you would typically expect on a traffic calmed road. The cost of introducing traffic calming measures near the school is also likely to exceed the total capital budget available to the Local Committee based on current budget levels.

Vehicle Activated Signs

- 3.13 The low speeds at school times mean the signs would not be activated and therefore they would do little to help improve road safety.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 The headteacher, deputy headteacher and caretaker at Thorpe Lea Primary School were consulted as part of the assessment process.
- 4.2 Surrey Police were part of the joint assessment team.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

ITEM 4

- 5.1 There are no financial implications for Local Committee budgets resulting from the recommendations of the assessment.

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 This report responds to a petition from residents about an issue of local concern.

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 The safety outside schools assessment concluded the following:
- Vehicle speeds outside the school are relatively low (especially at congested school drop off and pick up times) and are unlikely to be reduced further by the introduction of either a lower speed limit or traffic calming measures.
 - The roads in the area around the school have a good safety record.
 - School keep clear markings prohibit parking over the length of the school frontage and double yellow lines prohibit parking around the junction opposite the school.
 - Uncontrolled pedestrian crossing points have been provided to help parents and children cross the road near the school.
 - There are warning signs on all approaches to the school and additional signs are likely to be of limited benefit (especially given most motorists using the road are already familiar with the area).

- There is an ongoing problem with some parents parking illegally or/inconsiderately outside the school (although not to the same extent as outside some other schools).

9.2 Further to the findings of the assessment and discussions with the school, parking issues have been identified as the main safety concern outside the school. The recommendations of the assessment therefore focus on trying to address these issues and include the following:

- Subject to the support of the school, a Park SMART initiative is organised.
- the school produce a school travel plan with the support of the county council's sustainable travel team.

9.4 In addition, it should be noted that the following actions have been taken since the assessment was undertaken:

- the parking problems have been reported to the Parking Services Manager at Runnymede Borough Council and parking enforcement officers have visited the location on a number of occasions since. An increased number of parking enforcement officers are expected to be available next term which will enable the location to be targeted for more frequent enforcement.
- the tree branches obscuring advance visibility of the warning sign located to the west of the school have been cut back and the sign is now fully visible.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

10.1 Subject to the school being keen to pursue the Park Smart initiative and create a school travel plan, the county council's sustainable transport team will liaise with the School and Surrey Police to help progress these proposals.

10.2 The location will continue to be targeted by the Borough Council's parking enforcement officers.

Contact Officer:

Jason Gosden – 0300 200 1003

Consulted:

Annexes:

Annex A – Letter from Head Of Governors at Thorpe Lea School

Annex B – Safety Outside Schools Assessment Report

Sources/background papers:

None

