

Petition (tabled)

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)



DATE: 22 June 2017
SUBJECT: PETITION – to reduce traffic congestion in Dorking.
DIVISION: Dorking South and the Holmwoods,

PETITION DETAILS:

We demand that action is taken to reduce the traffic congestion in Dorking, which has reached intolerable levels. Five minute journeys are taking up to an hour and a half. Tailbacks are unacceptable causing gridlock, delay and pollution. People are being put off coming into the town resulting in lost revenue for businesses. All traffic lights need reviewing and appropriate alternatives considered. Specific congestion sites that must be reviewed are the traffic lights at Pump Corner, Waitrose and the junction of Vincent Road and Westcott Road and in addition to the width of the road at the entrance to Lidl. We require a transparent survey to be conducted with the publication of the results and recommended solutions. Thereafter we demand that the appropriate remedial action is taken.

OFFICER COMMENT:

Concerns were raised at Local Committee in September 2015 by the divisional Member for Dorking South and the Holmwoods regarding traffic congestion. Officers worked with County and District Members to identify issues in Dorking town centre, with particular regard to the operation of the existing traffic signals, and to agree actions to review and where possible, improve capacity at the signals so as to reduce congestion in Dorking. A report was presented to Local Committee at the December 2015 meeting summarising these discussions.

A further report was presented to the March 2016 meeting of the Local Committee which confirmed that the traffic signal work to repair and reconfigure the traffic signals in the town centre to provide optimum operation had been completed. The report recognised that there was still a need to seek funding opportunities to further improve traffic flows through the town centre, given recent new developments and anticipated increases to traffic volumes in future years.

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) funding has been secured to improve sustainable transport infrastructure in Dorking. An expression of interest was submitted seeking funding for further sustainable transport measures. This bid recognised that a complementary Dorking Transport Study is required to identify traffic related measures for which funding can be sought through future bids to the LEP.

The cost of the Dorking Transport Study is being shared between Surrey County Council and Mole Valley District Council. Funding was agreed in principle but unfortunately could not be specifically identified by either authority to carry out this work in 2016/17 as budgets had already been allocated. In addition, the scope of the study had not been determined at that stage. However, allowance has been made in the current financial year to enable the study to proceed.

A study brief is being finalised and a procurement route being determined to secure as soon as possible a reputable traffic consultant experienced in this field of work. The purpose of the study is to identify potential schemes to address congestion issues in the town. It is the intention that these schemes would be developed into an investment package for Dorking, but preparing such a package ready for submission in a LEP bid would be the subject of a subsequent commission.

Part of identifying schemes and to help future bid preparation, as much supporting assessment work as possible will be undertaken within the confines of the study. This will include a requirement for the consultant to carry out traffic surveys to supplement traffic data already held. It is anticipated that the surveys will be carried out early in September once schools have returned after the summer break.

The brief recognises that there is unlikely to be an appetite for major interventions in the town centre, but that there may be opportunities to consider suitable major schemes elsewhere. An example given includes consideration of the feasibility and benefits of providing a new access of the A25 Westcott Road, given the location of the previous industrial area off Vincent Lane and the Priory School. The study would identify the area that this would include so there is no map available at the current time. Other areas of focus of the study would include the A24/A25 Deepdene roundabout, Pump Corner, A25/Vincent Lane junction, A25/Station Approach junction and optimisation of the traffic signals to complement Surrey's current Wider Network Benefits project.

It is anticipated that the output of the study will be a mixture of potential traffic management and larger schemes from which a package of schemes can be devised that would be suitable for a future potential LEP bid.

Funding is available until March 2018 so the study must be completed by that time, although it is likely that the report will be completed before this. It is anticipated that a report will be presented to the Local Committee at the March 2018 meeting, setting out the findings of the study. It should be noted that it is not envisaged that consultation will be undertaken as part of the study. Consultation would be required prior to any potential business case being submitted to the LEP. An officer project board will be formed to oversee the work of the consultant. The Local Committee will be kept

informed of progress through the quarterly Highways Update report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Local Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the officer's comment

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