



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(Elmbridge)**

**PETITION – ROAD SAFETY,
LONG DITTON**

25 February 2013

KEY ISSUE

To update members on the investigations carried out, together with the conclusions and recommendations, following the presentation of a Petition to the November 2012 meeting of this committee.

SUMMARY

This report updates members following the Petition by Mr. Williams at the November Committee highlighting safety concerns generally in the vicinity of the Long Ditton Schools. A report to the Committee was agreed following further investigation, and this report presents the results.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee Elmbridge is asked to either:

- (i) Approve that a feasibility study is carried out to determine, the most appropriate solution, to the petitioner's requests, subject to the funding for the feasibility being provided by the Divisional Member's next year's allocation.

OR

- (ii) Approve the introduction of a pedestrian refuge island immediately outside Long Ditton Infants School, at the location of the existing crossing point where the School Crossing Patrol operated, subject to the funding being provided by the Divisional Member's next year's allocation.
- (iii) Approve the inclusion of a raised road table at this location dependent upon the level of funding allocated from the Divisional Member.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members are reminded that a Petition was submitted to the November 2012 meeting of the Local Committee, signed by 197 residents, concerning safety, speed and volume of vehicular traffic in the vicinity of Long Ditton Infants School and St Mary's Junior School.
- 1.2 The Petition requested a 20 mph zone encompassing both Long Ditton & St Mary's schools, traffic calming, and a pedestrian crossing at the Infants School in the form of a raised table.
- 1.3 The road is subject to a 30mph speed limit and is well lit by a continuous system of street lighting. Pedestrian footways are provided on both sides of the road.
- 1.4 A comprehensive traffic calming and safe routes to school scheme was introduced in 1998 between Ditton Hill Road, Fleece Road, Ewell Road, Sugden Road, and Rectory Lane.
- 1.5 This followed much consultation with Divisional, and Local Borough Members, Head teacher of St Mary's Junior School, shopkeepers and local residents.
- 1.6 The scheme comprised:

Sugden Road (Outside St Mary's Junior School)

- Dragons teeth white carriageway marking;
- Traffic Island;
- Kerb build out incorporating wider footway, bus stop, and tactile paving for raised road table crossing point;
- Widened verge and knee rail posts;
- Improved footways and road signing;
- Raised table and island to facilitate school crossing patrol.

Ewell Road

- Priority Give Way under railway bridge;
- Formalised parking bays either side of carriageway;
- Improved footways and crossing points and tactile paving;
- Dragons teeth white carriageway marking;
- School Keep Clear carriageway markings;
- Pedestrian safety railings;
- Road table & tactile crossing point;
- Mini Roundabout j/w Sugden Road & Fleece Road, with all associated signing and lining requirements;
- Grassed verge, footway link, and knee rail fencing.

Fleece Road

- Formalised parking bays outside local shops;
- Mini roundabout j/w Ditton Hill Road, with all associated signing and lining requirements.

Rectory Lane

- Pedestrian refuge island and tactile paving.

- 1.7 A road table was also proposed to be located centrally along Fleece Road to act as an additional traffic-calming device and crossing point, however Borough ward members removed this element from the proposal at the time of the agency agreement.
- 1.8 A subsequent project was introduced immediately outside the Long Ditton Infants School in 2008, following an all-inclusive consultation with Divisional Members, Local Councillors, School, and Parents.
- 1.9 Prior to this second project there was a drop kerb crossing located in the layby, outside the school entrance, protected with pedestrian guardrails. This facility was utilised by the School Crossing Patrol to assist parents and children crossing the road. However it was necessary for the crossing patrol to step into the (carriageway) lay-by in order to gain visibility around the slight bend in the road.
- 1.10 The School keep clear lay-by markings were ineffective at school arrival and departure times, as there was no enforcement activity, and additionally vehicles parking in the lay-by overnight regularly blocked the existing drop kerb crossing point. Parked vehicles in this lay-by also restricted visibility for pedestrians wishing to cross from the northern side of the road.
- 1.11 The scheme foreshortened the lay-by immediately outside the School by increasing the footway area and included for the construction of a new uncontrolled pedestrian crossing point, complete with dropped crossings, tactile paving slabs, and pedestrian safety barriers.
- 1.12 The pedestrian guardrails and the dropped kerbs on southern side of the road were removed in order to encourage the use of the new improved crossing facility. The dropped kerbs on the northern side of the road were retained to provide a facility for the mobility impaired being picked up or dropped off outside of the school during times when the School Keep Clear was not in operation.

- 1.13 The new kerb build-out and uncontrolled pedestrian crossing was located approximately 15m west of the existing location to enable improved visibility for both pedestrians and vehicular traffic on the slight bend. An additional lamp column was provided on the southern side of the road to further improve the crossing point during the hours of darkness.
- 1.14 The signing was also improved on both approaches to the school and new school flashing amber lights installed.
- 1.15 The scheme also had the benefit of incorporating the flexibility that a pedestrian refuge island could be built in the future, should the need arise, if the School Crossing Patrol left. This would also have the benefit of providing some speed reduction immediately outside the School.
- 1.16 Although Surrey County Council as the highway authority introduces traffic calming, it does so in accordance with Government aims to reduce personal injury accidents. It is only fair and equitable that this is done where high numbers of personal injury accidents are occurring ahead of locations where there are few, or even perceived accidents, in order to best utilise its very limited funding.
- 1.17 Speeding is essentially a Police enforcement issue as driving in excess of the posted speed limit is a criminal offence, for which the Police as the sole highway enforcement agency, have powers to deal with offenders to unashamedly flout the law, quickly and effectively.

2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 In August 2006 the Department for Transport (DfT) published Circular 1/06 'Setting Local Speed Limits' which gives guidance on the framework that traffic authorities should follow when setting and reviewing local speed limits, including 20mph limits and 20mph zones. It recommends that 20mph speed limits and zones should not be implemented on roads with a strategic function or main traffic route, they should be generally self-enforcing and take into account the level of Police enforcement available.
- 2.2 **20mph speed limits** are introduced by the use of terminal speed limit signs and 20mph repeater signs at regular intervals along the road(s) covered by the limit, with no supporting engineering measures. Research has shown that the introduction of a 20mph speed limit by signing alone only reduces vehicle speeds by approximately 2mph. 20mph speed limits are only suitable where vehicle speeds are already low, with Setting Local Speed Limits suggesting that the introduction of a 20mph speed limit where mean speeds are at or below 24mph is likely to lead to general compliance with the new speed limit.

- 2.3 **20mph zones** are generally introduced over several roads and require the provision terminal speed limit signs at all entry points to the zone and traffic calming features to reduce speeds. Research has shown that 20mph are effective in reducing collisions and injuries, particularly those involving children. 20mph zones are used where excessive speeds occur, requiring traffic calming measures to be introduced to ensure speeds are at or below 20mph.
- 2.4 Both 20mph speed limits and zones are introduced through the making of a Speed Limit Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
- 2.5 Surrey's Speed Limit policy rejects the Department for Transport guidance for 20mph speed limits as it was felt that it would jeopardise the existing credibility of the 20mph limit sign and could be detrimental to road safety. Therefore Surrey County Council's policy will only authorise a 20mph zone or limit if the average free flow speed at a representative site does not exceed 20mph.
- 2.6 Unlike other limits, '20mph' is associated with effective self-enforcement and drivers do not expect to have the choice of whether to obey the speed limit (or not). In order to sustain this understanding it is important that drivers continue to appreciate that '20 means 20' and our current policy reflects this.
- 2.7 One of the main issues is the environment along the route to school and in particular immediately outside the school gates. This is where, for a short time particularly in the morning, there is vehicle congestion, short-term parking mixing with other rush hour traffic and pupils crossing. This situation exists at many schools but in most cases, excessive vehicle speed is not the main problem. The apparent chaos reduces the possibility of speeding and solutions to improve safety are more likely to involve improved visibility and crossing facilities.
- 2.8 The County Council database, supplied by Surrey Police, of personal injury collisions shows that between 1 January 2010 and 30 September 2012, there have been 2 personal injury collisions in the area in question. Neither of these two incidents, which occurred at the same location, was classified by the Police as having been speed related.

Location/near to	Collisions	Date	Nature
Ewell Road, Sugden Road, roundabout	2	17/05/2011 16/07/2012	Slight Slight

3 OPTIONS

- 3.1 The road is subject to a 30mph speed limit, which is the appropriate limit for this type of road, and is the lowest limit than can be applied in Surrey, without traffic calming measures.
- 3.2 A feasibility study to look at the options in a more detailed nature could be carried out from next year's allocation.
- 3.3 The scheme constructed in 2008 included the option of incorporating the flexibility that a pedestrian refuge island could be built in the future, if the School Crossing Patrol left. This would also have the benefit of providing some speed reduction immediately outside the School.
- 3.4 The personal injury accident record along the road does not justify additional wide scale traffic calming proposals.
- 3.5 A raised road table could be located at the current crossing location in lieu of or in addition to the pedestrian refuge island.

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 None.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The estimated cost of carrying out the feasibility assessment would be in the region of £5,000 and could be included within next year's budget, if the Divisional Member is mindful to fund this project.
- 5.2 The estimated cost of a pedestrian refuge island is £10,000 and a further £10,000 for the road table, associated signage and lines. The scheme could be funded from the next financial year's budget, if the Divisional Member is mindful to fund this project.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None.

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The report recommends three options. The first to carry out a feasibility study to look at the various issues raised in greater detail.
- 8.2 The second option of introducing a pedestrian refuge island immediately outside the school, at the location of the existing crossing point where

the School Crossing Patrol used to operate. This is in line with the options set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report approved on the 21st January 2008.

- 8.3 The third option of a raised road table which could be constructed in isolation or together with the pedestrian refuge island to further reduce speeds and increase road safety in the area. This would be wholly dependent upon funding being made available by the Divisional Member.

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The proposal would reduce vehicular speeds immediately outside the school and should also benefit pedestrian safety and encourage walking/cycling by creating a greater confidence and safer environment for more vulnerable users.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 If the Committee are mindful to approve the feasibility study element of the recommendations, and the Divisional Member agrees to fund this element, then the feasibility design will be placed on the programme for completion early next financial year, with a further report to this Committee for determination.
- 10.2 If the Committee are mindful to approve the island and/or road table element of the recommendations, and the Divisional Member agrees to fund part or all of the proposals, then this will be placed on the programme for construction early next financial year.

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