

GUILDFORD LOCAL COMMITTEE 19 SEPTEMBER 2017

WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question 1 from Shere Parish Council

Will the committee now actually consider and make a decision on our specific and localised petition, of June 2014 to establish a ban on HGVs over 7.5 ton from travelling through Shere Village? Such consideration being based upon:

- The ‘Shere Area Rural HGV Review’ - to review and address HGV issues within the Shere Parish area and beyond - having been completed, concluded / recommended that an area wide ban should not be established.
- The detailed evidence and arguments provided in support of a specific and localised restriction covering solely Shere Village – as originally petitioned for.
- The availability of a more suitable and safer alternative route for vehicles transiting to and through the AONB, which avoids Shere Village.
- The response Shere and Albury Parish Councils received, from Graham Cannon of the Police Road Safety and Traffic Management Unit for the area, on the question of the more suitable and safer route available
- The supporting arguments and evidence being attached to this letter.

Background at Annex A

Answer:

The County’s Freight Strategy encourages a twin-track approach regarding freight measures:

- **Countywide or strategic initiatives** - addressing wider issues of freight movements across areas and boundaries
- **Local freight measures** - addressing specific freight issues in the county

We are sympathetic to the issues raised by Shere Parish Council and do recognise that Surrey Police noted an alternative route through Albury to be “slightly more suitable for HGV’s than Shere village” and that they “would have no objection to this proposal, so long as it had the support of the Albury Parish”. Nevertheless, a 7.5t ban covering Shere village falls within the latter category of *Local Freight Measures* and therefore needs careful consideration of specific local issues and constraints – particularly the availability and suitability of alternative HGV diversion routes.

The strategy states such measures should be assessed against three criteria:

1. Policy compatibility, by assessing the contribution measures will make to meeting policy objectives, including impacts in relation to climate change and air quality;
2. Cost of implementation and requirement for future maintenance/operation, and potential funding opportunities;
3. Deliverability and risk, considering the likelihood of being able to implement interventions successfully.

ITEM 6

The following points are relevant when considering a local HGV ban in Shere against the three criteria above:

Policy Compatibility (Effectiveness, Reliability, Safety, Sustainability)

- 'Safety' is the main policy objective relevant to the proposed ban.
- The likelihood of whether a ban would assist road safety objectives in the local vicinity should be considered, as should the impact on road safety of the proposed diversion.
- Surrey Police's statement notes the proposed diversion route is "slightly more suitable for HGV's than Shere Village".

Cost & Deliverability

- A cost to raise and advertise a TRO would apply, in addition to actually installing the scheme.
- Given that there are premises in Shere which require delivery via HGVs, the ban would need to exempt HGVs that enter the area for 'access only'. So any contravention could only be judged by determining whether an HGV had travelled through the zone without stopping.
- A potential funding source has not as yet been identified for the proposed 'mitigation measures' put forward in the letter by Albury Parish Council.
- Albury's letter also requests the proposed ban be extended to cover Little London and Brook Lane which Surrey Police's statement does not consider.

Risk

- If a banning order is not meaningfully enforced, there is a risk to the potential success of the scheme.
- Formal consultation on the TRO would be required during which any objections must be considered.
- The risk of traffic displacement to both intended and unintended routes should also be considered.

We would also refer members to Annex B of Item 12 on the Agenda which considered the feasibility of a 7.5t HGV ban in Ewhurst. Although not specifically focussed on Shere village, many of the points raised are relevant.

Question 2 from Guildford Society Transport Group Sept 2017, (Hugh Anscombe speaking)

Would SCC and GBC be prepared to consider these two ideas relating to Onslow Park and Ride?

Suggestion 1

Consideration should be given to encourage P&R use by groups of passengers in cars, during the day and particularly on Saturdays. A simple ticketing choice could be provided by a machine at the bus stop, between a low fee for a single driver and higher one for up to (say) 5 passengers.

Suggestion 2

One possibility, as an interim measure, rather than simply restricting the use of the car park to those using the bus into the town centre, would be to allow an area of the car park to double officially as a long stay car park.

Answer

We always welcome suggestions from the travelling public on ways to improve the park & ride services. Stagecoach operate the bus services to/from the four park & ride sites on a commercial basis however a payment is made in respect of the Onslow bus service while usage at the site grows.

We continue to see an increase of patronage, some of which has been driven by the new sign on the A3 and the completion of the waiting room.

Stagecoach have plans to improve the marketing and promotion of the park & ride services across Guildford. As part of this, they will be considering the fare structures and availability of ticket options. Currently park & ride offers free travel for up to two children under 16 with every fare-paying adult. Most recently contactless payment has been introduced across the park & ride network, which has helped speed up boarding time and improve service reliability. There are plans to operate the bus service for longer hours and possibly include further stops along the route. Surrey County Council have also recently been awarded DfT funding to introduce nine brand new fully electric buses onto all P&R routes. These measures should further increase usage.

A change of use of the car park to provide local long stay parking would require a change in the lease and an amendment to the planning permission. Highway's England are still working on their proposals for the A3 but we are encouraging them to include better access to the park and ride. The barrier operation at the car park is being implemented and should be operational in the next few weeks.

We are aware of parking pressures in the local area and are in discussion with the University and Hospital about improving the situation. One of the factors limiting further parking provision is the capacity of the A3 interchange at Edgerton Road.

Question 1 - Annex A - Background

1. In June 2014 Shere Parish Council presented a petition with 238 signatures for implementation of a 7.5ton HGV ban through Shere Village – this being an outstanding element of the Shere traffic calming measures previously approved but only partially completed.
2. At the September 2014 meeting the local members ‘requested that the task group review the matter in a holistic way considering also boundaries and parallel routes’
3. At the March 2015 meeting the Committee agreed to endorse a proposal from Peter Hitchins of the Transport Policy Team to establish a project entitled Shere Area Rural HGV Review ‘to review and address HGV issues within the Shere Parish area (and beyond)’ – this project to be run alongside the Surrey Hills Working Group project on Quiet Lanes and De-cluttering, to ensure common aims within the AONB were met.
4. In January 2017 Peter Hitchins presented to the Surrey Hills working group his report, prior to its scheduled submission to the Local Committee. The report is entitled ‘Proposed Quiet Lane (unsuitable for HGVs) Zones and Local Committee Update’
5. This study / report -- submission of which has already been deferred for consideration for 3 meetings, but is scheduled for the September 2017 agenda for consideration -- concluded: ‘none of the lanes through the area could be regarded as suitable for large vehicles’

But an area wide restriction would be impossible to control and enforce due to the multiple accesses and routes through the area. Surrey Police confirmed that they would not support a weight restriction’ through this area. It is accepted that positively directing large vehicles around the periphery by improved signage can only help reduce use of the current ‘de facto’ preferred route through Shere Village and over Hound House Rd - a route that is currently actually advised by sat-nav and route planning web sites.

An area wide ban would further and more forcibly modify vehicular behaviour. However If the Local Committee do not accept the logic and deterrent value of an area HGV ban then Shere Parish Council wishes to reprise its 2014 original petition and asks for a ban on HGVs through Shere Village, by the introduction of mandatory weight restriction signs at the start of Gomshall Lane, Upper Street and Sandy Lane.

Alternative routing to and through the area should then be signposted via New Rd and Park Rd as the safer and more appropriate ‘permitted’ route into and through the quiet lanes area.

The evidence in support of the requested HGV ban:

- Shere Village has a very busy centre, with many residents, children and tourists using the narrow roads and pavements, (where they exist), as they visit the village’s shops pubs and cafes, walk to the school and 2 children’s nurseries (catering for over 100 children) and attend the Doctors’ surgery.
- Middle St, the central and only street through the village is particularly difficult. It starts at a junction which has restricted manoeuvrability. It is narrow and invariably crowded with parked cars. It crosses the Tillingbourne via an ancient narrow one-vehicle width bridge and exits the village via a blind double bend into Sandy Lane.
- The village and community understand and willingly accept the necessity for the 3 / 4 regular delivery lorries that enter and exit the village centre each day to service the Co-op Store and the two pubs. And of course the 28 buses that transit each day along Upper St and Gomshall Lane. It is obvious however that when accommodating these essential vehicles it is difficult for other large vehicles to transit through the village

without causing congestion at the very least, mounting the pavements and threatening pedestrian safety, and frequently causing physical damage to the fabric of adjacent listed buildings by directly hitting them, not to mention the consequences of excessive ground reverberation

- If specific access for loading / unloading in the village is not the reason for entering the village (which is only possible via three roads – Gomshall Lane, Upper St and Sandy Lane) then a perfectly viable, straightforward, less busy, safer route avoiding the narrow streets of a conservation area is available by using Park Rd and New Rd to access the wider ‘quiet lanes zone’.
- Roads where there is a weight restriction - a ban – are marked as such on UK and Continental lorry sat- nav systems. The current signs saying ‘Unsuitable for HGVs’ are not necessarily properly understood by foreign drivers. Also only being advisory and not weight/size defined they can encourage a driver to believe - take the chance - it really only means very large articulated trucks! Also such advisory classification is not shown as denied routes on sat-navs.
- The parish council organised a 7.00am to 7.00pm photographic record of all HGV movements into and out of Middle St for 3 days in July 2016 – Monday 4th, Wednesday 6th and Friday 8th. This ignored the 28 bus movements at the junction but still recorded an average of 45 HGV movements a day at the access and exit junction of which less than 20% were accounted for by regular ‘in-village’ deliveries. A ban will not prevent all of the challenges presented by HGVs meeting other traffic in the village but it would reduce the potential for such interactions by 80%. see attached log and dated photographic record of HGV movements
- Damage to the fabric of listed buildings and walls will continue unless all reasonable measures are taken to prevent unnecessary HGV movements through the centre of the village – see attached letters and photos re ongoing damage
- The police reluctance to support an area wide ban, citing lack of resources to enforce it, should not influence what is the Local Committee’s decision on the matter. Reductions in police resourcing unfortunately mean there are many mandatory traffic regulations that are not actively enforced. However the fact that for drivers to ignore such a ban is a traffic offence and so carries the risk of prosecution, and penalty points, means its very existence would represent a deterrent to professional drivers who rely on their licence for their living.
- Report from Graham Cannon, Road Safety and Traffic Management Unit, to Shere and Albury Councils, copied to SCC - I quote

‘Further to our recent meeting on the HGV restrictions, I have now had replies from others and can now give you an update. We discussed the possibility of a 7.5t HGV weight restriction that just covers Shere Village (from the A25 to Sandy Lane at the junction Park Road). Having driven the alternative route for HGVs, being Park Road, New Road and Sherbourne, with you I do consider this to be slightly more suitable for HGV’s than Shere Village. I have checked the injury collision data on this alternative route and can confirm that there has only been two rtc’s, but these did not involve a goods vehicle. Having said that I am still slightly uneasy about the issue of displacement and that it does not address the HGV issue in Hound House Road. However, after further consideration I informed SCC that I would have no objection to this proposal, so long as it had the support of the Albury Parish and that it was understood that it would not been seen as an enforcement priority. SCC acknowledged my comments on the above proposal, but indicated that that was not part of the current proposals. I suppose this is now a matter for you to discuss with them’.

Question 2 – Annex B – Background

By all accounts the Onslow P&R is substantially under-used and an annual operating cost of £300,000 has been quoted in the press. Although the number of trips increased by 28% between 2015 and 2016, the Onslow P&R is by some margin the least cost-effective of the four Guildford P&R sites, because it only delivers 10% of the passengers for 37% of the P+R costs. A fresh approach to the continued use of this facility is needed.

Cheap deals for Passenger Groups: Consideration should be given to encourage P&R use by groups of passengers in cars, during the day and particularly on Saturdays. A simple ticketing choice could be provided by a machine at the bus stop, between a low fee for a single driver and higher one for up to (say) 5 passengers. This would remove the need for the bus driver to collect fares. Either ticket would operate the exit barrier.

Longer term expectations: We hope we are correct in assuming that direct access to the Onslow P&R from the south would form part of any project by Highways England to increase the capacity of the A3. This should increase usage by making the site much more convenient for potential users. Also, we understand that plans are being prepared for increased parking capacity close to the RSCH. In the meantime it seems that, in the absence of barrier operation, vehicles have been able to park for long periods free of charge. Increase income through higher utilisation: Given the general acknowledgement that car parking spaces are at a premium in this part of Guildford, one possibility, as an interim measure, rather than simply restricting the use of the car park to those using the bus into the town centre, would be to allow an area of the car park to double officially as a long stay car park. This would not only meet a need but could also generate an income to reduce the net cost of the present P&R system.

There is no evidence that the car park has ever been full. The price for long stay users should be set so that the car park is better utilised but still always has spaces for people using it as a P&R facility.