



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE  
(REIGATE AND BANSTEAD)**

**PETITION RESPONSE**

**GATTON PARK ROAD, REIGATE – PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST  
SAFETY**

**4 MARCH 2013**

**KEY ISSUE**

To consider a petition requesting Surrey County Council to consider ways of improving safety, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, and of cutting traffic speed along the 30mph zone of Gatton Park Road, Reigate.

**SUMMARY**

A petition has been received, signed by 163 residents, with the following request:

“We, the undersigned, petition Surrey County Council to consider ways of improving safety, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, and of cutting speed along the 30mph zone of Gatton Park Road that runs from Wray Common to just after Carlton Road.”

**The petitioner has provided the following background information:**

“Gatton Park Road is a busy A road. The stretch from Wray Common to just after Carlton Rd is a 30 zone and route to St Bede’s and Wray Common Primary School. Poor signage and road markings do little to inform drivers of the limit, while traffic islands, intended to force drivers to slow, result in them increasing speed, forcing cyclists to the kerb. Drivers risk collisions by turning at speed into Carlton Rd. Recent Police checks showed nearly 6,000 drivers in a week going over 40mph, and up to speeds over 60. We ask SCC to consider: Installing Vehicle Activated Signs in each direction alerting speeding drivers of the speed limit. Removing 2 traffic islands located on GPR approaching the mini roundabout Installing a traffic island at the exit of Carlton Rd to force drivers to slow and turn safely into Carlton Rd and give

pedestrians an island to cross to in the middle of the road. Introducing cycle lanes to protect cyclists and provide pedestrians space between them and vehicles.”

**Response of the Area Highways Manager:**

The petition raises a number of road safety issues on the 30mph section of Gatton Park Road between Carlton Road and Wray Lane and a separate response to each is given below.

**Signing of 30mph speed limit**

The section of Gatton Park Road between Carlton Road and Wray Lane is classed as a restricted road under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The system of street lighting in the road indicates to drivers that the speed limit is 30mph. Surrey, as highway authority, has to comply with national regulations covering the signing of speed limits. For a restricted road the 30mph speed limit can only be signed at its terminal points and it is not permitted to use repeater signs or 30mph carriageway markings.

**Removal of traffic islands**

It was originally proposed to introduce a series of speed cushions and a speed table as part of a safety improvement scheme in Gatton Park Road. However, objections were received from the Fire and Ambulance services as they considered the speed reducing features would affect attendance times to reach the communities of Merstham and Hooley. In March 2007, Local Committee approved traffic islands as an alternative measure to reduce traffic speeds without adversely affecting the response time of emergency vehicles.

Surrey’s Traffic Calming Good Practice Guide states:

“For a cyclist to be safely overtaken, the width required depends upon the width of the overtaking vehicle but in general a lane width of 4m is needed. For widths of between 3 and 4m the cyclist will be ‘squeezed’. Road widths less than 3m ensure the overtaking vehicle must wait behind the cyclist. Therefore for a cyclist to be safely overtaken, in general a lane width of 4 metres is needed.”

Department for Transport guidance on the provision of traffic islands suggests that carriageway widths of between 2.75m and 3.25m should be avoided as within this range some motorists will attempt to overtake cyclists, even though there is insufficient room to do so safely. The guidance also advises that the width available should either be sufficient to allow vehicles to overtake cyclist safely or narrow enough to discourage overtaking altogether.

The available carriageway width alongside the islands in Gatton Park Road varies between 3.0 metres and 3.2 metres which is on the margins of the advice given in both Surrey’s and the Department for Transport’s guidance.

The islands were introduced to address safety in Gatton Park Road. Over the 3 year period 2003 to 2005 there were 10 personal injury collisions, (2 serious and 8 slight) on the length of Gatton Park Road between Wray Lane and Carlton Road. The

[www.surreycc.gov.uk/reigateandbanstead](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/reigateandbanstead)

corresponding figures for the latest available 3 year period, November 2009 to October 2012, show a reduction in personal injury collisions, with a total of 3 slight collisions.

A traffic survey was carried out by the Police in Gatton Park Road north of Carlton Road between 5 and 11 July 2012. The average speed (the measure used to determine speed limits) was found to be 29mph. However, the data shows that, on average, over half the vehicles were travelling in excess of the 30mph speed limit and 15% of the vehicles surveyed were travelling at speeds in excess of 36mph.

There is no evidence to suggest traffic speeds have increased as a result of the provision of the traffic islands to the south of Carlton Road. Traffic islands are an acknowledged technique used in traffic calming schemes to reduce vehicles speeds and experience from across the country has shown that they are effective in this regard. The islands were introduced to address a known accident problem and since their implementation, the number of collisions in Gatton Park Road have reduced in both number and severity. It is likely that the removal of the islands would not only increase traffic speeds but would also increase the number of collisions along this length of road.

The removal of the islands would require further investigation to be carried out, which would include consultation with the Police. It is proposed that Officers carry out further investigation and report their findings to the divisional Member. It should be noted that there is no funding allocated at the current time to progress a scheme to remove the islands, should this be found to be feasible.

### **Provision of Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS)**

Vehicle Activated Signs advise drivers of the speed limit in force by displaying the speed limit and the message 'Slow Down'. They can assist in modifying driver behaviour but their effectiveness reduces over time. The cost of the supply and installation of a VAS is in the region of £4,000. The Local Committee's budget for 2012/13 is fully committed. The forward programme for 2013/14 – 2014/15 is the subject of a report to this meeting of the Reigate and Banstead Local Committee and suggests money is allocated to fund small safety schemes. VAS in Gatton Park Road could be funded either from this allocation or from an alternative source of funding, to be agreed with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and divisional Members.

### **Safety at Carlton Road**

The collision data for the 3 year period November 2009 to October 2012 shows only 1 slight personal injury accident at the junction of Gatton Park Road and Carlton Road, and did not involve vehicles turning into Carlton Road. The provision of a pedestrian refuge as suggested by the petitioners would assist in reducing the speed of vehicles turning into Carlton Road and would also help pedestrians crossing Carlton Road.

The provision of a pedestrian refuge at this location is not on the current Integrated Transport Schemes list for Reigate and Banstead. Schemes have to be assessed and prioritised against set criteria (Congestion, Accessibility, Safety, Environment and Maintenance) in accordance with the County's Local Transport Plan to ensure

that the limited available public funds are used effectively. It is proposed that Officers will carry out an assessment and following consultation with the divisional Member, add the request for a pedestrian refuge to the list for consideration for future funding, if appropriate.

### **Provision of cycle lanes**

The provision of on carriageway advisory cycle lanes requires a minimum road width of 9.0 metres. This is made up of two 1.5 metre wide cycle lanes, the minimum acceptable for a road such as Gatton Park Road with high flows, although 2.0 metre wide lanes would be preferred, and two 3.0 metre wide traffic lanes. At around 4.7 metres in width, there is insufficient carriageway width to provide cycle lanes on this section of Gatton Park Road.