

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)**

DATE: 14 March 2018
LEAD OFFICER: Zena Curry
 Area Highways Manager,



SUBJECT: UPDATE ON DORKING TRANSPORT STUDY

DIVISION: DORKING HILLS, DORKING SOUTH & HOLMWOODS

SUMMARY OF ISSUES:

This item is to update members on the current status of the current Dorking Transport Study, which was commissioned to provide evidence to support a potential future funding bid for a sustainable transport package for Dorking Town Centre which could be submitted to the C2C LEP to address increasing town centre congestion problems.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Mole Valley) is asked to:

- (i) Note the current status and emerging themes of the Dorking Transport Study Stages 1 & 2 Data Collection and Issues & Opportunities made to date.
- (ii) Note the potential options proposed as stated in Paragraph 9.1 for further analysis in Stage 3 Option Testing & Developing Strategy.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) To ensure that the Local Committee is kept informed, the Local Committee is asked to note the current status and emerging themes of the current Dorking Transport Study and potential options proposed for further analysis in Stage 3 Option Testing & Developing Strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 Historically, there have been concerns over delays to traffic and the impact of congestion within Dorking Town Centre.
- 1.2 Since the mid 1990s Dorking Movement Study there have been numerous well documented studies and investigations including extensive data collection exercises and option testing using sophisticated traffic models in order to find suitable, sustainable and deliverable solutions to tackle Dorking's traffic related problems. A timeline and short summary of these previous studies and outcomes is provided in Annexes 1 and 2 respectively.

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- 1.3 Following the last 'Update on Dorking Town Centre' Local Committee Report 2 March 2016, recommendations were agreed to undertake a further Dorking Transport Study in order to provide evidence that would support a potential future Business Case bid to fund a sustainable transport package for Dorking Town Centre which could be submitted to the C2C LEP to address Dorking's traffic problems.
- 1.4 The study concluded that there was no small scale engineering solution to the congestion problems of Dorking that is both deliverable within available funding limits and environmentally acceptable.
- 1.5 Peter Brett Associates were commissioned jointly by Surrey County Council and Mole Valley District Council in September 2017 to undertake a further Dorking Transport Study to provide evidence to support the potential future funding Business Case.
- 1.6 The study was structured into 3 Stages:
 - Stage 1: Data Collection;
 - Stage 2: Issues & Opportunities &
 - Stage 3: Option Testing & Development Strategy.
- 1.7 This report describes the current status and emerging themes of the Dorking Transport Study Stages 1 & 2 Data Collection and Issues & Opportunities made to date.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 A Dorking Transport Study draft report has been written to summarise the findings of the Stage 1 the Baseline information and data collection. Both county and district officers are currently reviewing and scrutinising the draft report before publication.
- 2.2 Stage 1 has included the following desktop review to understand the current transport network movement patterns and has revealed the following:
 - Surrounding the town (excluding the south) lies within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ANOB);
 - Protecting the built heritage of the town and the quality of the surrounding Surrey Hills is essential, which discounts any large scale infrastructure;
 - The area is served by 2 Secondary Schools & 7 Primary schools, with previous data showing high % of younger children being driven to school;
 - 60% of residents within walking distance of the Town Centre (within 1.2km) and hence access the town centre with 10 minutes;
 - Narrow streets with Historic centre constrains pedestrian access;
 - There is a reasonable cycle network, with town centre access by pedal cycle within 5-10 minutes;
 - SCC have undertaken recent improvement for cycle provision in Dorking, including a cycle hub at the station;
 - Cycle path provision within Dorking town centre is mainly located to the north, with limited provision south of West Street for use by the residential areas. There are parts of the existing cycle way which are not of a sufficient width within guidance (DfT Manual for Streets).

- Adequate bus stop provision with 99% of population within 400m of a bus stop, but recognise that the local bus service frequency inhibits more bus journeys as alternative to the private car;
- The town is well served with 3 rail stations, including a radial route into London \ South Coast and orbitally via North Downs Line;
- The narrow one way roads within the town centre create a gyratory system with a number of traffic signal junctions, as a consequence, frequent queues and delays occur in both am and pm peak periods;
- Site observations revealed loading and deliveries along the A25 can cause 'immediate short term gridlock' due to the narrow lanes;
- SCC have undertaken recent works to manage peak period congestion by improving the operational efficiency of some traffic signal junctions;
- Accident records show that there were 147 accidents resulting in 167 injuries, with no fatalities;
- There is adequate car park provision within Dorking, with only the High Street Public car park at capacity for most of the day, the others appear to be under-utilised, (comparison data not available for Waitrose or Lidl car parks);
- Dorking Railway Station car park is at capacity before the network peak hour (08:00-09:00).
- Census data analysis shows that 55% of Dorking Residents travel to work by car, whilst over 20% use the train to commute and 19% commute by foot.

2.3 As part of Stage 1 a number of traffic surveys were undertaken between 14th and 20th October 2017. Both county and district officers are currently reviewing and scrutinising the traffic survey data before publication.

2.4 The traffic survey data collection included the following surveys:

Car Park Accumulation and Occupancy surveys at four car parks in the centre of Dorking.

Manual Classified Traffic Counts (MCTC) at six of the key junctions, including queue length surveys.

Automatic Traffic Counts (ATC) at four key locations to understand the daily traffic flow, profiles and speed along the road.

An Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) survey covering both an inner and outer cordon around the town, with an additional survey at Dorking Station.

2.5 Initial analysis of the different survey methods and data has revealed the following:

- There is adequate car park provision within Dorking, with only the High Street Public car park at capacity for most of the day, the others appear to be under-utilised;
- The largest volume of traffic in the AM and PM peak hours utilise the A24;
- Over 90% of vehicles travelling between the north and the south in the AM and PM peak hours use the A24 and do not go through the centre;
- For vehicles travelling along the east-west corridor, 90% and 84% use the High Street in the AM and PM peak hours respectively.

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- Ashcombe Road is utilised by vehicles travelling on the west-north corridor;
- Of the vehicles going through the centre of Dorking, HGV percentages are considered low between 1-3%.

2.6 The Stage 1 & 2 draft Dorking Transport Study report contains extensive presentation of all the 2017 survey data and hence, has not been included in this report. However, a simple comparison of some traffic survey data from previous studies has been compared to the 2017 data for:

- Deepdene Roundabout;
- Pump Corner and
- Vincent Lane \ Westcott Rd which is provided in Annexe 3.

2.7 Although there are some factors to take into consideration, in summary the traffic survey data reveals that the traffic flows have remained largely the same with only a small percentage increase from 2003, 2007 and 2017 of less than 10% over a 14/15 year period, which suggest that the highway network was and still is at capacity during peak periods. Indeed at Pump Corner the data suggests that traffic volumes have decreased from the original layout back in 2003 compared to the current road layout, which provides more priority to pedestrian and cyclists than the previous junction arrangements. Although there is very little difference between the 2007 & 2017 data.

2.8 In summary the traffic data indicates that the highway network is at capacity during the am and pm peak hours but that the peak hour has extended into a peak period longer than 60 minutes, and that small incidents such as poor on-street parking or loading \ unloading can lead to short intense periods of congestion or “gridlock”.

2.9 Previous studies have evaluated many different options for key junctions and traffic management arrangements within Dorking, which resulted in little or even dis-benefits to traffic, given the similar volumes observed in 2017 compared to previous years, it is unlikely that any of those small scale engineering solutions previously considered would resolve the current congestion problems that would be deliverable in planning or highway land terms, environmentally acceptable and attract funding.

2.10 The quantitative and qualitative findings above have been used to identify a variety of possible interventions measures to meet the main objectives set out below

- Reduce congestion;
- Improve the cycle & walk environment in the town centre to increase modal shift; &
- Identify local capacity improvements on the road network.

2.11 The options as interventions range across a variety of information, infrastructure and innovative measures. These are provided in **Annexe 4**, and are categorised into potential deliverability periods in short medium and long term (1-5 years, 5-10 years and >10 years respectively).

3. OPTIONS:

3.1 Along with previously proposed and tested options a number of other initiative solutions were considered but discounted on due to feasibility , deliverability and unlikely to receive funding support and hence have not been put forward to Stage 3. These included:

i. Installation of guard rails and removal of pedestrian crossings at pump corner

- This solution increases the efficiency of the pump corner junction by removing the pedestrian crossing phase.
- Forces Pedestrians to use crossing outside Waitrose
- Likely to increase pedestrian accidents through attempts to cross the road where there are no pedestrian facilities or worse still scale the guard rails rather than take a significant detour.
- Likely objections from Surrey Police on safety grounds.

In addition to the installation of guard rails a further option at pump corner is to prioritise east bound traffic through Dorking by preventing right turns into South Street from West Street and remove the traffic signals completely. Vehicles wishing to turn into South Street (from West Street) would drive along the High Street go completely round Deepdene Roundabout and travel back along the High Street and on to South Street. Would add additional vehicles to the Deepdene roundabout which is already working to capacity and subject to queuing in the peak periods. Unnecessary air pollution in the town centre through vehicles doubling back on themselves.

ii. Vincent Lane re-engineered to two way traffic

- Compulsory Purchase Order of land needed.

iii. South Street re-engineered to two way traffic

- A stage two option once Vincent Lane is made two way is to remove parking and make South Street two way that would then allow West Street to be pedestrianised. West street would need to be pedestrianised as no traffic would take the longer route round (for east bound travel) were it to remain a one way street.
- Removal of short stay on street parking that is considered essential for the shops along South Street.

iv. Dorking Bypass

A bypass linking the A25 (west of the town centre) to the A24 (north of the town centre)

- Would need to span railway tracks;
- Would go through an AONB and other sensitive environmental area of significance.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

4.1 A steering group of local county and district members along with key town holder stakeholders has been informally consulted on the purpose and preliminary finding of Stages 1 and 2.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Any detailed business case for a the scheme submitted will require, as part of the business case, a value for money statement, derived through the calculation of the benefit cost ratio (BCR). Any large major scheme greater than £10m will need to demonstrate a BCR of 2-4, i.e. will need to demonstrate either transport or economic benefits in the order of £20-£40m, and it is considered unlikely that these can be achieved without significant increases in the number of homes or employment opportunities within the Dorking area to support the economic case of any such scheme given the competitive nature to secure C2C LEP funding against schemes from other Local Authorities.

5.2. Any Business Case submitted to the C2C LEP will need to demonstrate the ability to provide as least 20% local contributions from either Local Authorities allocations or other 3rd Parties such as developers or other public sector organisations.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 It is the objective of Surrey Highways to treat all users of the public highway equally and with understanding. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA's) will be carried out for any Major scheme LEP funded bid as part of the detailed design process.

7. LOCALISM:

7.1 Dorking Town Centre residents and business primarily impacted along with motorists travelling through the town centre. Any proposed recommendation should provide improvements to those affected by current traffic volumes and other associated other issues of air quality. A package of sustainable transport measures will help provide alternatives to car use.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	Set out below
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	Set out below.

8.1 Sustainability and Public Health implications

Potential reduction in Carbon Emissions associated with any reduction in traffic congestion

Increased walking and cycling has a positive impact on the health of a person. The NHS identifies cycling as an activity which provides significant health benefits.

It is also expected that increased levels of walking and cycling to and around the town centre will have a positive effect on Dorking's retail economy with recent studies suggesting that pedestrians and cyclists actually spend more on a trip into a town than a motorist.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1 The Local Committee are asked to note that based on the emerging travel patterns and traffic data analysis from Stage 1 and 2 of the Dorking Transport Study that the following proposals should be put forward for further analysis in Stage 3 to further consider the feasibility and deliverability of these proposals towards the inclusion into a Dorking Sustainable Transport Package that could be prepared to be submitted to the C2C LEP.

Reduce the Need to Travel:

- Click & collect points at Dorking rail stations
- Superfast broadband

Walking:

- Develop and promote an integrated walk / cycle network
- Update school travel plans

Cycling:

- Develop and promote an integrated walk / cycle network
- Proposals for quiet road routing

Rail Travel:

- Expansion of car parking spaces at Dorking rail station
- Season ticket & (reserved) car parking combo
- Electric car charging & electric buses serving the station.

Servicing & Delivery:

- Freight activity survey with local businesses
- Deliveries to shops along south street alternating between the two sides of the street to prevent double parking

Bus Travel:

- Increased provision of RTPI

Car Travel:

- Option 1 – removal of some of the parking bays on south street following pump corner
- Option 2 – Safeguarding land along Vincent lane
- Junction proposals for Priory School link road on to the A25
- Further ANPR data analysis for trips between the West & North corridors into Dorking & between the West & South entrance corridors (viability of two way on Vincent lane)
- Design review of Pump Corner junction configuration – Does the design meet current best practise? Could the pedestrian buttons be better located to reduce confusion? Removal of cycle phase.

- 9.2 The Local Committee are asked to note that given the outcomes of the previous studies and early indications of the current Dorking Transport Study that it is unlikely that 'one large solution' will materialise and it more likely that a package of measures of sustainable transport will emerge as the most favourable approach to receive funding support, but this will be confirmed

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following Stage 3 and the issue of the final report of the current Dorking Transport Study.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 The emerging options taken forward from Stage 2 (in paragraph 9.1) will be developed further during Stage 3 to ensure that they are feasible and deliverable and adequately evidenced to be included in a Business Case for a package of Sustainable Transport Measures.
- 10.2 Subject to the approval of this Local Committee, a full Final Report of the Dorking Transport Study will be reported back to the Local Committee.
- 10.3 Subject to the approval of this, any recommendations from the Stage 3 Final Report will be considered for inclusion in any potential business case to be submitted to the C2C LEP to support the District Council's Future Mole Valley Local Plan and reduce congestion within Dorking Town Centre.

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Consulted:

Annexes:

Annex 1: Timeline of Previous Studies

Annex 2: Summary of Previous Studies Outcomes

Annex 3: Comparison of Traffic Flows

Annex 4: Draft list of proposed options

Sources/background papers:

Dorking Movement Study 1998 Committee Report 14/04/99

Dorking Decongestion Committee Report 26/04/04

Pump Corner Committee Report 12/03/08

Update on Dorking Town Centre (Traffic Signals) Committee Report 2/03/16