

Questions from members of the public

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (REIGATE & BANSTEAD)



DATE: 05 MARCH 2018
LEAD OFFICER: SARAH J SMITH, PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE OFFICER

SUBJECT: QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

DIVISION: EARLSWOOD & REIGATE, REDHILL WEST & MEADVALE, REDHILL EAST, REIGATE

Questions from Cycle Redhill and Reigate:

- Can you please advise what steps and process we need to take to be officially recognised by the council so we can become actively involved in consultations on transport plans and the development of the local transport strategy and local cycle plan?

Response: The Transport Policy Team within the county council maintain a list of organisations who will be proactively notified of any consultations on major highway improvement projects and policies. Cycle Redhill and Reigate (cyclerandr@gmail.com) will be added to the list and so will be notified of any such consultations.

-Would any of the councillors or council officers join us on a local 'cycle safari' looking at current cycle infrastructure to get a better understanding of what works and doesn't work for cycle users?

Response: The county council's cycling officer has a good knowledge of the existing cycling facilities throughout the Borough of Reigate & Banstead and the potential limitations and opportunities. The officer would be happy to meet representatives of Cycle Redhill and Reigate to consider ways of improving the network and will be in touch in due course. Local members can be invited and/or notified of any issues raised.

- Cycle infrastructure varies significantly in quality throughout the borough and even recently constructed routes have issues and inconsistencies. Therefore will the council commit to a cycle design standard for the borough in-line with best practice? Whilst it has some deficiencies, our suggestion would be to adopt the London Cycling Design Standards, as this is already written, has DfT approval, is proven at increasing cycling's modal share and as the borough borders London it would help to ensure a level of consistency for all road users. To further aid consistency will the council confirm whether they already follow Highways England guidance 195/16 to ensure cycle provision on major roads within the borough and if not, whether this could be adopted?

Questions from members of the public

Response: The county council's design team make reference to the London Cycling Design Standards, the Welsh Active Travel design guidance and any other relevant design guidance and best practice when developing new schemes. Funding would need to be allocated by the local committee to improve the standard of existing facilities that may not be compliant with the latest standards and best practice.

- Lots of residential roads in the borough would be useful cycle routes but the combination of parking and rat-running traffic make them unsafe and unpleasant. In outer London 20mph limits, modal filtering and cycle contra-flows have proved successful in making these routes significantly better for active travel. These are low-cost interventions, which can be easily trialled before permanent introduction and often prove popular with residents who get a quieter less polluted street as a result. Is the council open to looking at the feasibility of this within the borough and if so working with us on potential trial sites?

Response: Suggestions for such schemes would need local support and could be considered by the local committee. Officers would be happy to advise upon the likely viability of any proposals that could then be presented to the local committee for consideration for funding for more detailed feasibility work. The committee will need to weigh up suggestions for such schemes against other requests for highway improvements across the Borough.

- From our early feedback, one transport issue residents feel strongly about further opening up active travel to schools and other educational institutions in the borough. The difference in traffic during school holidays illustrates the impact the school-run traffic has on local congestion. However, with few safe routes and anti-social parking and driving near schools, parents who would happily walk or cycle don't see it as a pleasant, safe or viable option and consequently drive further adding to congestion, road danger and air pollution around schools. Will the council commit to investigating and working with us on potential solutions which properly enable active travel to schools within the borough?

Response: The county council's Safer Travel Team work with Surrey's schools on a range of initiatives to promote sustainable and active travel. The team also lead on a Road Safety Outside Schools process (available on the county council's website) to consider potential infrastructure improvements to support active travel and improve road safety in the vicinity of schools. The team will be happy to consider any additional suggestions and will be in touch in due course. The local committee will need to weigh up suggestions for such schemes against other requests for highway improvements across the Borough.

-The A25 between Redhill and Reigate is a main traffic corridor and needs to form a key part of any cycle network but has multiple issues for the cycle user and a poor safety record. In the period 2012-2017 there have been 22 collisions resulting in injury to cycle users, 4 of them resulting in severe injuries. There is nothing currently in the forward plans regarding this stretch of the A25. Whilst the preferred solution for a road with this volume of traffic is grade segregated cycle ways, we understand budgets are limited and this may be a longer term goal. Therefore in the interim will the council commit to working with us to look at funding and delivering lower cost solutions such as increased parking controls and specific work on junctions to improve the safety of cycle users? We welcome the decision to introduce double yellow lines along the south side of the road between Chart Lane and Reigate Police Station opening up the cycle lane but further controls are needed along both sides to make sure the cycle lanes are usable. Also, could alternative measures such as a

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Questions from members of the public

CPZ be considered as the paint on double yellow lines is a skid risk (especially in the wet) reducing the effective width of the cycle lane?

Response: Officers would be happy to meet with representatives of Cycle Redhill and Reigate to consider suggestions for improvements to specific locations. Potential schemes would need local support and would require funding from the local committee to undertake more detailed feasibility work and then further funding for implementation. The local committee will need to weigh up suggestions for such schemes against other requests for highway improvements across the Borough.

-Redhill centre is confusing for cycle access and permeability. There is a signed cycle route which goes through an area at the top of Marketfield Road with a traffic regulation order making it illegal to use. Station Road has signage indicating it is a permissible route but also a pedestrianisation order excluding all vehicles. The Borough Council has also introduced a PSPO which prohibits cycling along both routes (which we will address separately with them. The only entirely permissible way to cycle through the centre appears to be the busy gyratory. Will the council consider amending the Traffic Regulation Order on Marketfield Road and the Pedestrianisation Order on Station Road (if necessary with time restrictions to avoid pedestrian conflict) to permit cycle usage?

Response: Officers would be happy to meet Cycle Redhill and Reigate to clarify the restrictions for motor vehicles and cyclists on the routes in question, and if necessary consider amendments with Borough Council officers. Proposals will be presented to the local committee or Reigate & Banstead Borough Council for approval where required.

-Whilst as a group our focus is on utility cycling, leisure cycling is great for health and can be good for building confidence for new cyclists and children. Currently there isn't an obvious place within the borough for safe traffic free cycling. Will the council commit, with our assistance, to identifying funding and a suitable location for a circular family cycling route with an all-weather surface within the borough?

Response: Improvements have recently been implemented to National Cycle Route 21 which includes long sections of off road path suitable for family cycling between Redhill and Horley. It is hoped that improvements may also be possible on the sections north of Redhill in future years. The County Council are responsible for highways and rights of way whereas the Borough Council are responsible for Parks and recreation areas. Officers would be happy to receive suggestions for any family cycling routes and provide advice.

A25 Buckland Road Enhanced Gateway Scheme

We have seen the installation of the islands and are worried about how these will impact on cycle users. The meeting minutes state *"Members raised the point that the A25 varied in width at different points, and asked for reassurance that the island would not be installed in one of the narrower sections, which would impede cyclists using the highway. In response officers explained these issues would have been considered as part of the design's safety audit and that a further one would be carried out at the point of construction. There was also an adjacent, dedicated cycle lane off the carriageway."*

One of the islands (the second one heading east towards Reigate) is positioned on curve on a particularly narrow part of the road, naturally pushing motor vehicles into the cycle lane and risking unsafe close passes. We would like to understand how

Questions from members of the public

this was assessed in the safety audit as from experience it is going to be particularly unpleasant and potentially dangerous design for cyclists.

The minutes indicate that the decision was based on the advice from the council officer that there was a "dedicated cycle lane off the carriageway." As far as we are aware the only cycle lane is an on-carriageway advisory lane. Could the council advise where the dedicated cycle lane is or advise whether the decision to approve was taken based on incorrect information?

Response: The scheme provides an enhancement to the speed limit gateway and a physical narrowing of the road in place of existing central hatching. The aim of the scheme is to encourage greater compliance with the speed limit on this stretch of road that had suffered a number of collisions and where speeds have been measured and found to be excessive. If successful the scheme will improve the safety for all road users including cyclists. The provision of the central islands as part of the scheme is similar to the existing islands further to the east travelling towards Reigate town centre, and retains the width of the existing cycle lane and vehicle lane.

A217 Cycle Route

A 700 signature petition was presented in November 2017 for a safe cycle route along the A217, at the time it was unclear whether money from the Department of Transport for Safer Roads funding could be applied and there was no other funding currently available to proceed. Clarification has now been sought regarding whether the Department for Transport Safer Roads Funding money applied for and can be used to also improve the safety of cycle and footways. See attached letters from Sir Paul Beresford, MP for Mole Valley and Jessie Norman, Under Secretary of State for Roads and local Transport, pointing out that improving safety for cyclists is a Government priority and the Department wants to encourage cycling through various initiatives. The letter states categorically that successful applicants can spend the Safer Roads Funding on any type of scheme or schemes to improve safety on the road in question.

Following this clarification, please can the committee provide an update on re-categorising and clearing the footway to be used as a shared route? The hedge along the Western side near Sandcross Lane has recently been cut back and it has been measured that the tarmac footway is between 2 and 3 metres wide along the full stretch and therefore could easily meet guidance for a shared use path.

An alternative has been suggested about providing a cycle path along Meath Green Lane. Whilst we welcome any additional cycle provisions, this should be as part of a network and would not work as an alternative to the A217 as cycle users generally prefer direct routes which connect facilities and amenities. It is also questionable how this would be made accessible for all as without modal segregation, the speed and volume of traffic along this route make it only an option for confident and experienced cyclists.

Response: The Department for Transport's Safer Roads Fund can be used to improve facilities for cycling or any other measure that would reduce casualties. However the application criteria required that bids had to demonstrate how the specific measures proposed would reduce the risk of collisions taking place on the route. Therefore any substantial investment in cycling facilities would need to show how an existing cycling casualty problem would be addressed. As this stretch of road did not have a very high level of cycling casualties, then such a substantial investment in cycling facilities would not meet the Department for Transport's criteria for this fund.

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Questions from members of the public

There is limited funding for cutting back vegetation next to the highway, and this is prioritised on safety grounds. Sometimes, the trees and shrubs are on private land and in those cases the land owners will be contacted. Certain types of vegetation clearing is not possible between the spring and autumn, because of the bird nesting season and other environmental factors. Further details about vegetation cutting back can be found here:

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roadworks-and-cleaning/report-a-highway-problem/trees-grass-and-vegetation/trees-and-shrubs-near-roads/what-is-our-responsibility-for-trees-and-vegetation>. There are no current plans to create a shared use pedestrian/cycle route at this location.

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