

SURREY HEATH LOCAL COMMITTEE

DATE: 28 FEBRUARY 2019
SUBJECT: WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS
DIVISION: SURREY HEATH

Question 1: Rodney Bates, Local Resident

"Child poverty within our community is an extremely serious and worrying issue and yet according to the most recent figures, there are around 2,500 children affected within Surrey Heath. In particular, Old Dean had the second highest levels across the whole of Surrey with 1 in 3 (418 children) living in poverty, Watchetts (243) and St.Michael's (302) around 1 in 4 and even around 1 in 5 children within Chobham.

A recent report to the Borough Council Executive suggests that this situation has worsened by almost 15% in just two years. Whatever our individual political beliefs, we must all surely agree that every child in Surrey Heath matters and therefore it is totally unacceptable that so many innocent children are suffering in this way. Therefore,

(A) What specific action is Surrey County Council taking to reduce child poverty within Surrey Heath?

(B) Recognising the importance of partnership working and that several aspects of this come under Borough responsibility (benefits, communications, community support to name but a few), what practical steps from the Borough would help assist the County Council with addressing this?

(C) Would you agree that one helpful and specific action already established by several other authorities around the UK would be to set up a poverty commission for the area also involving relevant charities?"

Answer from the Chairman on behalf of the committee:**Background**

The data on Childhood Poverty provide a measurement of relative income. Children in households with an income of less than 60% of the average household income are said to be living in poverty.

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Thus the standard quoted data are in fact a measurement of **inequality of income**. Being significantly poorer and otherwise deprived is damaging in many ways. This is illustrated by the 10 year gap in average life expectancy between the most affluent and most deprived parts of Surrey Heath. This gap in life expectancy is growing.

Children from deprived families suffer worse than others from the increased problems of childhood obesity and emotional and mental ill-health.

Local Government is able to help alleviate some of the problems which arise – discussed further below.

What is perceived as '**poverty**' in any **absolute sense** varies over time and place. For example: in the UK in the 1930s, and persisting into the 1940s and 1950s, a great many people lived in a level of poverty which is now the condition of people in parts of the developing world.

Any increase in financial inequality across society can be slowed or reversed by:

- A combination of progressive taxation and increased provision of benefits to the relatively worse off, or:
- Raising the overall income of the Country so that everyone's level of prosperity is raised, including the poorest – the so called 'trickle-down effect'.

Decisions on the balance between those 2 approaches is taken at National level. Some of the implementation of the political decisions are taken by Local Government, namely the Borough and County Councils.

Action to Reduce Child Poverty in Surrey Heath

The Borough and County Councils are working with the M3 Local Enterprise Partnership to improve the general economy of Surrey Heath, which will help to provide a wide range of employment opportunities.

The Borough Council helps to support the Camberley Job Club which specifically helps less well paid people to find employment.

Other Actions to Improve Conditions for Deprived Young People

The Borough and County Councils are active in a number of other ways to improve the conditions of young people living in the most deprived households.

- The Borough Council can help children and families in need with its work in housing and benefits – especially with the introduction of universal credit.
- The County Council is refocusing its Children's Services to ensure that resources are directed to those children and their families that are most in need.
- In Surrey Heath the Borough and County Councils will continue to work in close partnership with the NHS in pursuing the objectives and plans of the

Surrey Heath Health and Wellbeing Board. These objectives and plans are aligned with those of the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board, which themselves are being realigned with the recently published NHS Long Term Plan, from which they already differ very little. Particular relevant section of the NHS Plan are:

- Chapter 2: More NHS Action on Prevention and Health Inequalities
Smoking; Obesity; Alcohol; Air pollution; Antimicrobial resistance;
Stronger NHS action on health inequalities
- Chapter 3.1: A strong start in life for children and young people
Maternity and neonatal services; Children and young people's mental health services; Learning disability and autism; Children and young people with cancer; Redesigning other health services for children and young people

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-term-plan/>

The County Council has no current plans to establish a poverty commission itself, but would, in principal, be interested in participating if it were to be established by other agencies.

Cllr Dr Bill Chapman
Chairman, Surrey Heath Local Area Committee

Question 2: Jenny Garner, Local Resident

A full background has been provided and is available on request.

Kings Ride has suffered from speeding traffic for many years. However there was an opportunity to address the speeding issue without the need for Council funding, this came about because of a development at the old Whitehill Farm site. The Care home is now complete and occupied but the traffic calming scheme meant to be in place before taking residents has failed.

The planning condition stated traffic calming; a scheme that reduces traffic speeds. The evidence suggests the opposite. If the scheme is not slowing or calming speed it cannot therefore be called a traffic calming scheme. If it is not a traffic calming scheme then the planning condition has not been discharged.

Now we have the evidence that the implemented traffic calming scheme has made no reduction to speeding and is ineffective, will the Council make arrangement (cost to be borne by the Developer) for the current scheme to be altered to ensure that traffic is calmed on Kings Ride?

Added to this the Developer is looking to appeal the Borough's decision not to grant a 3rd floor to the existing building and further development of the rest of the

protected site, as an assisted living care village. The Council also has the opportunity to ensure that the Inspectorate is aware that previous planning conditions were not discharged satisfactorily.

Answer from the Chairman on behalf of the committee:

The developer of Kings Lodge Care Home had the traffic calming added as a condition on their planning permission in order to better manage traffic speeds within the vicinity of the development. Due to the small scale of the development, it was not considered reasonable to ask the developer to implement a fully-fledged traffic calming scheme along Kings Ride. The purpose of the provided traffic calming was not to solve pre-existing speeding problems. Developments should not be seen as an opportunity to address existing speeding issues.

When comparing the results of the traffic survey undertaken in 2012 with that carried out in 2018, it shows a slight reduction in the 85 percentile speed (which is the Highway Authority's measure for road safety purposes) in the southbound direction from 35 mph to 34 mph and a small increase in the northbound direction from 34 mph to 36 mph, but in real terms it is indiscernible and variance in speeds is easily attributable to daily fluctuations.

The traffic calming provided was not intended to be a fully-fledged traffic calming scheme and therefore it is not possible to get the 85 percentile speeds below the 30 mph speed limit. The maximum speeds that vehicles are able to achieve along Kings Ride has reduced from 70 mph in 2012 to 62 mph in 2018. It is worth noting that the traffic flows along the road have reduced significantly since the survey carried out in 2012.

Based on the evidence to hand, which shows a reduction in traffic flows, little difference in the 85 percentile speeds and a reduction in the maximum speeds vehicles are able to achieve (which has reduced from 70 to 62 mph), there is no justification to require the developer to undertake further works.

Question 3: David Powell, Local Resident

Camberley Town Centre suffers from street parking on single yellow lines on Sundays, particularly on Knoll Road and Park Street. This area falls within a Controlled Zone the sign for which (in Park Street just round the corner from Park road) states that the zone applies Monday to Saturday.

Does the respective council have any plans to bring the controlled parking zone in Camberley Town Centre up to date so that it applies for all seven days of the week?

The current parking zone must pre-date Sunday trading and of course Sunday is now the busiest day in the retail trade. The cars on these roads and on pavements on Sundays look unsightly and in places on Knoll Road they

effectively restrict the width of the road making it difficult for two vehicles, certainly large vehicles, to pass.

Answer from the Chairman on behalf of the committee:

Making the Camberley CPZ apply on Sundays and up to 8pm was advertised as part of a parking review several years ago, but due to residents objections at that time, this was not taken forward.

Knoll Road is heavily parked on a Sunday. Knoll Road pavements are heavily parked in the evenings near the junction with Portesbery Road as patrons of the boxing club park after 6.00pm. Surrey Heath Borough Council have already received a complaint and have written to the boxing club to request they ask their patrons not to park on the pavements.

More vehicles are parking on Park Street, partially on the footway in the evening after 6.00pm between Pembroke Broadway and the railway bridge and double yellow lines in these areas would enable evening enforcement to prevent this parking.

Thank you for raising this and these suggestions have been submitted as part of the Surrey Heath Parking Review process 2019.

Question 4: Trefor Hogg on behalf of the Larchwood Glade and Napier Drive Residents Group

Noted under Item 7 that the proposed speed limit on Gibbet Lane 20mph speed limit is regarded by SCC as not appropriate without additional traffic calming measures. The reason for that decision was stated to be because the results from the study conducted as part of the design exercise suggested driving speeds were too high and 20mph would not be complied with without traffic calming measures.

However, those measurements were taken in the upper part of Gibbet Lane where vehicles are entering from the A30 50mph speed limit and on the hill in Larchwood Glade where drivers naturally speed up to get up the hill. Residents of The Buchan, Larchwood Glade and Napier Drive feel that those measurements do not properly represent speeds in Gibbet Lane. We believe that the narrow single track section of Gibbet Lane is an effective traffic calming measure that already exists and the introduction of the limit with appropriate signage would result in a further significant reduction in vehicle speeds.

The evidence from last year's study (20mph Research Study Process and Impact Evaluation Headline Report November 2018 Report by Atkins, AECOM, and Professor Mike Maher (UCL)) of 20mph limits is very clear. *Twenty mph limits empower drivers to travel slower and raise awareness of potential hazards.* According to the report that is true even when compliance isn't perfect.

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This will be particularly true at the times when the road is busy with school children which is at the centre of our concerns.

We therefore ask for the committee to further consider and implement the 20mph speed limit as proposed.

Answer from the Chairman on behalf of the committee:

SCC's Setting Local Speed Limits policy includes specific guidance relating to the introduction of 20mph speed limits. There are two different types of 20mph schemes, a 20mph speed limit and a 20mph zone. A 20mph speed limit is a scheme that relies on signing alone. A 20mph zone is a 20mph area where a combination of traffic calming and signage is used to enforce the speed limit.

Research into signed-only 20 mph speed limits shows that they generally lead to only small reductions in traffic speeds. Signed-only 20 mph speed limits are therefore most appropriate for areas where vehicle speeds are already low. As such, the county council's policy is to only introduce signed-only 20mph speed limits where average speeds are 24mph or below. Where the existing average speed is above 24 mph then a 20 mph scheme with traffic calming measures will be required.

As part of the assessment process, traffic surveys were undertaken at 3 locations from 11 to 17 July 2018. The locations of the surveys are marked on the attached plan. At each of these locations the following average speeds were recorded:

Site 1, Larchwood Glade, Camberley – Northbound 19.2mph/Southbound 18.2mph

Site 2, Gibbet Lane, Camberley - Southbound (one-way) 22.9mph

Site 3, Gibbet Lane, Camberley - Southbound (one-way) 29.1mph

The survey carried out at site 3 recorded an average speed significantly greater than the 24mph threshold outlined above. This survey was undertaken within the one-way section of Gibbet Lane a significant distance away from its junction with the A30.

Further to the survey results, in accordance with our speed limit policy, it would be necessary to install traffic calming measures to enable a 20mph speed limit to be introduced. As such, the scheme would be relatively costly (since it would involve undertaking consultation, detailed design, legal work as well as the construction costs of the traffic calming measures themselves).

Gibbet Lane has a very good safety record with no personal injury collisions having occurred between 1999 (earliest available data) and November 2018 (latest available data). On this basis it would be difficult to justify introducing

traffic calming measures in Gibbet Lane as a priority when there are so many other roads within the Borough which have a much poorer safety record.

PLAN ATTACHED

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