

Open Forum Session
Mole Valley Local Committee Meeting – 13 March 2019

1. Question from Dr Rita Antonelli:

Only two schools in Ashted have been selected for a 20mph speed limit reduction. Surrey County Councillor Chris Townsend has already organised for the speed limit to be lowered to 20mph around St Giles School and City of London Freeman's School in Park Lane & Dene Road. It is due for final implementation this year (the signs are already there)", as reported by the Ashted Residents' Association web page. From data publicly available (SCC Report dated September 2014), it appears that these two schools were selected for a pilot 20mph advisory scheme in March 2012. However, the two selected schools have only 942 students in total, making this not the busiest area of the village. On the other side of the village from the A24, four schools (Downsend with 419 pupils, St Andrew's Secondary with 1179 students, St Peter's Primary with 336 pupils and West Ashted Primary with 338), counting a much higher number of pupils and students (2272 vs 942), are in a very congested area, being all within less than a mile from each other and accessible by a warren of narrow lanes with little protection for pedestrians. The streets leading to these four schools are also used as a rat-run by impatient drivers to avoid congestion on the A24. These schools would have been a much better sample to be considered for the pilot scheme. What were the criteria used to select those two schools in first instance, and what are the criteria used recently by the Council to select again the same two schools for a local speed limit reduction to 20mph? Basically, why do the schools in one half of the village have 20mph zones but the schools in the other half not?

Response from Zena Curry: I will follow up with a full written answer. The schemes are prioritised using scoring against various criteria and data.

Response from Chris Townsend: Previous conversations has been had with the Head Teachers of the other schools not selected for the pilot. The view of many of these Head Teachers was to not do anything, particularly as a 20mph speed limit is hard to enforce. The nature of the roads, with cars parked along it meant drivers struggled to drive over 20mph anyway.

Response from Tim Hall: Some of the schools not included currently have planning applications in place and it was therefore decided that as these schools were subject to changes they should not be considered for the pilot scheme.

Response from Clare Curran: The schools selected across the district were done so because of the different characteristics. The results of the pilots has shown the change in speed limit didn't have a lasting major impact on the area and advisory signage alone is insufficient to change driver behaviour.

Response from Zena Curry: For 20mph to be successful it does require supporting engineering measures as signs alone are insufficient.

2. Question from Kate Harper:

The question is in relation to a live petition for a safer crossing on Guildford Road between Groveside and Hawkwood Rise near to Howard of Effingham School. We are trying to encourage our children to walk to school but currently it's difficult with no safe place for them to cross. It has been pointed out that there is a pedestrian crossing 250m away from this point towards Bookham High Street. This is however away from the school and difficult to encourage school pupils to use as it adds to their route to school.

Back in December Cllr Daly asked about previous accidents at this site and was told there had been 2 in the last 3 years. My question is therefore is there any further data that goes back longer than 3 years that shows any more accidents between pedestrians, cyclists and cars, as we believe there must be more accidents.

Response from Zena Curry: I will answer this question in more detail for you outside the meeting. I understand there has been a Road Safety outside schools assessment undertaken at this site not too long ago.

Question from Kate Harper:

We understand there has been a safer route to school plan developed but has Howard of Effingham is in Guildford and many of the children who attend live in Mole Valley we wondered whether this had been taken in to account and whether their might be funds available from other sources to make the route safer.

Response from Duncan Knox: I can look out the most recent road safety outside school assessment to find the conclusions for this location. The school could also have their own travel plan and offer road safety training and education to the pupils. If areas in Mole Valley have been missed from the assessment we can ensure these are looked at and included.

Response from Clare Curran: I recall that this area has been looked at in the past. A cycling group had looked at the possibility to install an informal island in the centre of the road, allowing pedestrians to cross in two stages. However this area, where Groveside meets Guildford Road is on a bend and causes a problem with sightlines making it a difficult place to cross. It was therefore decided that this location was not a suitable place to encourage pedestrians to cross due to the nature of the road.

3. The Chairman gave the following update on the liquidation of Buses Excetera and the effects on the 479 bus route

As of Monday 11 March Buses Excetera ceased operation on all its routes. SCC have been working to find new suppliers for these routes. The company ran two all-day services on Mondays to Saturdays and six public services specifically for various schools and colleges. None of these services were provided under contract to the council, being run on a commercial basis. New suppliers were found for all 6 of the school routes but conversations are still ongoing to find a new supplier for the 479 that runs from Epsom to Guildford via Ashted, Leatherhead, Fetcham and Bookham. This is a major route that needs addressing and updates will be provided when available.