

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL



LOCAL COMMITTEE (SURREY HEATH)

DATE: 13 JUNE 2019
 SUBJECT: PETITION – REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL GUARDRAILING
 ON THE A30 NEAR THE JUNCTION WITH CAESAR’S
 CAMP ROAD
 DIVISION: CAMBERLEY EAST

PETITION DETAILS:

An online petition has been started by the students of Collingwood College and at the time of writing this response, it had obtained 312 signatures. The wording of the petition is as follows;

“As part of our GCSE, we have been asked to choose a topic that will impact the local area/ community. We would like to put up guardrails along the A30, near the Caesar's Camp Road junction; this would mean that students and pedestrians would have to cross using the footbridge or at the traffic lights.

This idea had been enforced by the lives that have been lost due to collisions with cars, crossing the road, therefore the barriers will help to keep them safe and stop people being careless. For example, in 2016 a student ran across trying to dodge the cars but ended up getting hit and sadly passed away so the barriers will help to prevent future occurrences. The barriers will also act as a form of protection because it will stop pedestrians getting hit by cars that have gone out of control and causing possibly fatal injuries.

By signing this petition, you are not only helping us with our GCSE but helping the community make it safer.”

RESPONSE:

The main purpose of guard railing is to improve safety by trying to prevent pedestrians from crossing the road at an inappropriate place or from straying into the road inadvertently. Guard railing can also be used to offer some protection to pedestrians at locations where the path of large vehicles, such as buses and heavy goods vehicles, takes the vehicles close to the footway, sometimes overhanging it, although this often means that this guard railing is more susceptible to being damaged.

There is an increasing emphasis on improving the streetscape by removing street clutter and providing better pedestrian accessibility whilst still maintaining road safety. It is recognised that where pedestrian guard railing is badly sited or over installed it not only alienates pedestrians but also looks unsightly, easily becomes damaged which in turn leads to increased maintenance costs and complaints.

Guard railing can be the right solution when the objectives of installing it are fully considered but a lot of guard railing has been installed in the past where it is not really needed and where additional problems can be created, as mentioned below and the more guard rail that there is on the road network, the more chance there is of it being damaged. Maintenance budgets are now likely to be much smaller than when most of the existing guard railing was put in and it is often not possible to replace damaged sections.

Because there is so much guard railing that is unnecessary and so much that is damaged, a number of highway authorities and Transport for London (TfL) in particular, have reviewed their guard railing and removed large amounts of it. Although one of the purposes of guard railing that was mentioned earlier was to offer some protection to pedestrians from over hanging large vehicles, TfL became aware that cyclists were sometimes being caught between large vehicles and guard railing with very serious consequences and this was another reason for the removal of certain lengths of railing.

It is important to remember that along the length of the A30, between Caesar's Camp Road and Gibbet Lane, there are a number of places where gaps would have to be left in any guard railing that might be provided, such as at the bus stops so that passengers could get on and off of buses, in front of the fire station and where the cycle path re-joins the A30 just to the east of Caesar's Camp Road. These gaps would allow any pedestrians who did not want to use the traffic lights or bridge to cross the road to get on to the A30. However, these gaps would not line up and so if someone did use one to get on to the road, they would have to cross it at an angle, which would not be the shortest route, or they could become trapped between the barrier and passing vehicles, because the guard railing would stop them from getting back on to the footway; this is a similar situation to that involving cyclists, mentioned above.

Pedestrian guard railing is intended to guide pedestrians along a route. It is not intended to stop vehicles from leaving the road and mounting the footway. It is not strong enough for this and the number of sections of damaged and bent guard railing that can be seen is evidence of the fact that it is relatively easy for a vehicle to deform it.

We cannot find any reference on our accident database to a fatality involving a student along this length of the A30 and we have been in touch with our police colleagues about this. If someone is injured in a road traffic collision and passes away at the time or within 30 days, the incident will be recorded as a "fatal" incident (as opposed to "serious" or "slight"). If the injured person passes away after 30 days, the incident is classed as "serious", as is set out in the guidelines that the police have for completing road accident reports.

There was an incident in January 2015 that matches the description given in the petition, although the police's records do not show that the casualty subsequently passed away. This incident took place at the pedestrian facility that is included in the traffic signals that control the Caesar's Camp Road junction and the

description of the incident suggest that the pedestrians involved did not use the crossing correctly and crossed when vehicles had priority.

Because of the disadvantages and potential hazards that would come with long lengths of pedestrian guard railing and that there is no personal injury collision history involving pedestrians crossing the road other than by the bridge or the traffic lights (when used correctly), there are no plans to install any along this length of the A30.

Although it may sometimes take longer to cross the road using the bridge or the signals at the junction, we would always urge pedestrians to use them. In the case of the signals they should be used correctly and, as the Highway Code says about using any type of crossing, pedestrians should check that the traffic has stopped before starting to cross.

RECOMMENDATION

The Local Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the officer's comment.

Contact Officer: Andrew Milne

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