

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (EPSOM & EWELL)****DATE: 24TH JUNE 2019****LEAD OFFICER: NICK HEALEY, AREA HIGHWAY MANAGER (NE)****SUBJECT: ROAD SAFETY OUTSIDE SCHOOLS
ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, ROSEBANK, EPSOM****DIVISION: EPSOM TOWN AND DOWNS****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The access arrangements to St Joseph's School changed in October 2018. Previously part of the school community accessed the school via St Margaret's Drive, a private road across Abelea Green, and the car park at St Joseph's Church. This access route was closed to the school community in October 2018, which means the only approach routes to St Joseph's School are now via Rosebank and Whitehorse Drive. The reasons for this change are outside the scope of this report.

Since this change, road safety concerns have been raised in both Rosebank and Whitehorse Drive. In response officers have met the head teachers of both St Joseph's and Rosebery Schools, and arranged site audits in accordance with the County Council's "Road Safety Outside Schools" policy. This report outlines observations, analysis and recommendations for minor highway improvements arising from these meetings and audits.

The school run in Rosebank and Whitehorse Drive is quite typical for Surrey schools, and works significantly better than for a fair number of other schools. The only observed safety concerns were to do with the operation of the pick up and drop off system in the school's car park, which is accessible from Rosebank.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Epsom & Ewell) is asked to choose between:

- a) Allocate funding to begin a feasibility study for St Joseph's School this Financial Year 2019-20, to include consideration of measures in both Rosebank and Whitehorse Drive (this would mean deferring another project);
- b) Add St Joseph's School to Committee's prioritisation list of possible future schemes, for consideration in a future Financial Year, or;
- c) Do nothing at the present time.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

From a purely technical point of view, there are engineering improvements in Rosebank and Whitehorse Drive that would be beneficial. Committee is asked to

decide whether to investigate the feasibility of these improvements this Financial Year 2019-20, or potentially in a future Financial Year, or not at all.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 One of the most frequently expressed road safety concerns is that of the safety of children outside schools. At school drop off and pick up times the roads in the immediate vicinity of schools are especially busy and there is usually a higher level of vehicle, pedestrian, scooter and cyclist activity. This causes slower vehicle speeds and congestion and very often leads to frustration from residents and motorists at the apparent chaos caused by parents and children arriving or leaving the school.
- 1.2 The access arrangements to St Joseph's School changed in October 2018. Previously part of the school community accessed the school via St Margaret's Drive, a private road across Abelea Green, and the car park at St Joseph's Church. This access route was closed to the school community in October 2018, which means the only approach routes to St Joseph's School are now via Rosebank and Whitehorse Drive.
- 1.3 Since this change, road safety concerns have been raised in both Rosebank and Whitehorse Drive. These concerns have been expressed by the head teacher and others within the St Joseph's School community, the head teacher of Rosebery School, and residents of Whitehorse Drive. These concerns were the subject of two petitions presented to Committee in December 2018.
- 1.4 The Area Highway Manager has been in dialogue with the head teacher at St Joseph's for some time. The Area Highway Manager, the Senior Parking Engineer, and the Divisional Member met the head teachers of both St Joseph's and Rosebery Schools in October 2018 to observe the afternoon school run in Whitehorse Drive and discuss the schools' concerns in person.
- 1.5 Visits to both Rosebank and Whitehorse Drive during the school run were conducted in April and June 2019 involving the county council's Road Safety Team, Safer Travel Team, Local Highway Engineers and Surrey Police. Casualty data recorded by the police has been assessed. The current provision of road safety education and the status of the school's travel plan has also been assessed.

2. ANALYSIS:

2.1 Rosebank – observations

- 2.1.1 The following observations were made of the afternoon school run in April 2019, during a Road Safety Outside Schools audit. The side notes from this audit are included in Annex B.
 - A number of pedestrians crossed the road immediately opposite the school's car park exit – this is one of the busiest points on the road due to the way the afternoon pick up system is operated. (Please see below for further comments on the pick up and drop off facility.) This is the most natural desire line for pedestrians approaching the school through Mount Hill Gardens to cross Rosebank.

- There was a high volume of pedestrians, low numbers on scooters, and very few (if any) cyclists. It has been suggested that there are a number of barriers to cycling, including the gradient of Rosebank, a perception that the junction of Rosebank and West Hill is unsafe for cyclists, and concerns over cyclists competing for road space with parked and moving vehicles.
- Most pedestrians approached the school on the same side of the road as the school – this means that they must have crossed the road further down the hill.
- In Dalmeny Way and other side roads drivers were observed to be parking on double yellow lines and on footways. This does not appear to be so much of an issue in Rosebank itself.

2.1.2 There are a number of concerns relating to the existing pick up and drop off system using part of the St Joseph's School car park:

- If there were to be any incident within the school's boundary resulting from this arrangement, the school could be legally liable. (For this reason most schools do not allow parents to drive onto their sites.)
- In the afternoon, drivers circulate continuously while waiting for their children to emerge from the school building. This results in a continuously moving circular queue of vehicles snaking between the school car park and Rosebank. This moving queue crosses the footway twice – at the entry and exit points of the car park.
- There is poor visibility between the exit from the school car park and the approach up the hill along Rosebank, through the single file section formed by the parking bay adjacent to the school exit. This means that drivers approach the school up the hill and get stuck in the circulating queue, which fills both the school car park and the section of road between the car park entrance and exit. This means that any driver trying to exit the car park to move away from the school down the hill cannot proceed, as they are blocked by the stuck vehicle trying to approach up the hill. The result is gridlock, which can only be resolved by drivers reversing down the hill through the single file section. The head teacher reported that she often has to intervene personally to unlock this gridlock, by requesting drivers to reverse back down the hill.
- In the morning drivers trying to use the drop off point in the school car park were observed to be obstructed from pulling off Rosebank, as drivers within the car park stopped part way through to drop off their children, rather than stopping as far forward as they could before reaching the car park exit.
- The operation of this pick up and drop off system, and the interaction of the resulting circulating queue with pedestrians crossing the road, were the only safety concerns observed in Rosebank.

2.1.3 A number of vehicles associated with a local car and van hire company were parked on the footway at the foot of Rosebank, on the approach to the traffic signals. This is a regular occurrence, which is well known to the Borough Council's parking enforcement team. This unlawful parking reduces the approach to the traffic signals to single file. Anecdotal evidence suggest that as a result of this, drivers entering Rosebank have felt forced to drive on the footway to clear the junction. During the audit, Surrey Police visited the office of the car and van hire company, to point out the impact of the unlawful parking, and request that they desist. A representative of the car and van hire company agreed that they would stop parking their vehicles unlawfully.

2.1.4 The school run in Rosebank is typical for schools in Surrey, and works significantly better than a fair number of other schools in the county.

2.2 Whitehorse Drive – observations

2.2.1 The following observations were made of the afternoon school run in October 2018:

- Drivers started parking before 2:30pm to get the best places.
- Drivers were parking on double yellow lines and across driveways, reducing Whitehorse Drive to single file with few passing places.
- When students started to emerge, it was very busy, but calm, and no safety concerns observed.
- Very high pedestrian flows along Whitehorse Drive.
- A fair number of pedestrians crossed Whitehorse Drive by the school entrance; no problems observed.
- Parents in cars moved off gradually, slowly and carefully.
- A limited number of cyclists observed, who passed along Whitehorse Drive with no observed problems.
- All in all very busy but very orderly with no significant safety concerns observed.

2.2.2 The following observations were made of the morning school run in June 2019 during a Road Safety Outside Schools audit. The site notes from this audit are included in Annex C.

- The morning arrival time for Rosebery and St Joseph's students is staggered. This means that all the Rosebery students are in before any St Joseph's students start to arrive.
- The balance of arrivals was split fairly evenly between those arriving by car and those arriving on foot. A very small number were observed to be scooting or cycling. It has been suggested that there are a number of barriers to cycling, including perceived safety concerns, and concerns over cyclists competing for road space with parked and moving vehicles.
- Pedestrians approaching on the Rosebery side of the road are obliged to cross the road to access the Cabbage Patch town path. A new footway around the end of the turning area would mean that pedestrians approaching on this side did not have to cross the road.
- St Joseph's School provides a member of staff to operate a drop off point, so that parents can stop momentarily in the turning area, let their children out, and then drive away. The children then proceed to a rear entrance, where another member of staff is stationed. This arrangement seems to work very smoothly, although would benefit from the footway around the turning area mentioned above.
- No significant safety concerns were observed.

2.1.3 The school run in Whitehorse Drive is typical for schools in Surrey, and works significantly better than a fair number of other schools in the county.

2.3 Analysis of road collision data

- 2.3.1 There are no recorded injury collisions on either Rosebank or Whitehorse Drive in the last five years.
- 2.3.2 Although any one collision resulting in road casualties is one too many, the collision history near the school does not represent a concentrated pattern of collisions compared with many other sites across Surrey. (The location and summary information on road collisions can be viewed on www.crashmap.co.uk).
- 2.3.3 A fear of poor road safety can deter people from walking, scooting and cycling. Site observations suggest that road safety fears are not a deterrent to sustainable travel choices in this case.

<h3>3. OPTIONS:</h3>

3.1 Travel planning and education options

- 3.1.1 Surrey County Council's "Road Safety Outside Schools" policy highlights that road safety education and training for children is just as important as the infrastructure outside schools. The county council's Safer Travel team provide a range of resources for schools to use which include Pedals, Bikeability and Pedestrian Training. Both St Joseph's and Rosebery Schools actively support these initiatives.
- 3.1.2 Specifically for St Joseph's School, there are two travel planning options that would be beneficial:
- Complete Modeshift STARS travel plan
 - Complete pedestrian training for year 3
- 3.1.3 The Safer Travel Team will work with the school to introduce these sustainable travel and road safety education activities.
- 3.1.4 The provision of pick up and drop off facilities would tend to encourage car journeys to St Joseph's school. If Committee were to consider measures to assist the pick up and drop off facility, Committee should be aware that this may encourage more car journeys, and ultimately make the situation worse. Although it is not a decision for Committee, there is a begging question as to whether St Joseph's School's facilitation of a pick up and drop off facility is beneficial in encouraging sustainable travel choices, or whether it validates and encourages an unsustainable mode of transport.
- 3.1.5 Following the meeting with the head teachers of St Joseph's and Rosebery Schools in October 2018, officers prepared a list of potential on and off street parking opportunities that could support Park & Stride. These would enable those coming from a long distance to park further afield from the school and walk the last part of their journey. This list of Park & Stride opportunities is included in Annex D.
- 3.1.6 The list of Park & Stride opportunities was provided to St Joseph's and Rosebery Schools. The St Joseph's school community undertook surveys of the suggested sites. Their findings are detailed in Annex E, which was produced by the St Joseph's School community. It is accepted that there may

not be sufficient Park & Stride capacity to accommodate all those coming from a long distance, but is an opportunity to provide some mitigation of the concerns in Rosebank and Whitehorse Drive. The school advertised the Park & Stride locations to parents as soon as they were received, and a number of these opportunities are in regular use – evidenced in the school's own recent 'hands up' surveys. The school has repeated messages about using the Park & Stride in newsletters. The most popular Park & Stride location seems to be around Hookfield.

3.1.7 In December 2018 the St Joseph's School community petitioned Committee for new parking to be provided in St Margaret Drive and St Elizabeth Drive. At the same meeting residents of these roads presented a counter petition opposing any such parking provision. Any new parking in these roads would be 0.6 miles (12 minutes) from St Joseph's via Mounthill Gardens, and slightly further via Whitehorse Drive. This distance is very comparable to a number of the existing Park & Stride opportunities listed in Annex D.

3.1.8 If Committee were to consider making additional parking provision for the school run, it would need to take into account that any additional parking provision would tend to encourage car journeys, and discourage sustainable travel choices.

3.2 Engineering options

3.2.1 A number of engineering measures could be investigated further by means of a feasibility study. The following improvements are options for Rosebank:

- Improvements to pedestrian crossing points (dropped kerbs) in Rosebank, including:
 - Across the school entry and exit points – at this location there are dropped kerbs, but these could be improved by widening the drop, ensuring the drop is flush with the carriageway, and providing tactile paving.
 - Across the entrance to Meadow Court, where there are currently no dropped kerbs.
 - Across Rosebank at points where pedestrians commonly cross the road. Currently the only dropped kerbs to assist pedestrians crossing Rosebank are residents' Vehicle Crossovers.
- Measures to prevent obstructive and unlawful parking on the approach to the traffic signals at the foot of Rosebank.
- Measures to prevent obstructive and potentially dangerous footway parking in Dalmeny Way.
- Provision of an exit / entry point for cyclists to access the Cabbage Patch town path from Dalmeny Way. The Cabbage Patch town path is a designated cycle route, which is easily accessible for cyclists at the Whitehorse Drive end, but which has no easy access for cyclists at the Rosebank end.
- Measures to prevent mounting of the footway at bottom of Rosebank.
- (The problem with the traffic signal detection, mentioned in the notes of the meeting with head teachers in October 2018, has already been addressed.)

3.2.2 Two engineering measures could be investigate further, subject to agreement from Epsom & Ewell Borough Council. These two measures would affect land belonging to Epsom & Ewell Borough Council between the back edge of the

footway and the St Joseph's School boundary fence. The relevant Epsom & Ewell Borough Council land is shown in Annex F.

- Widening the pedestrian access to St Joseph's from Rosebank, where it crosses Epsom & Ewell Borough Council land between the back edge of the footway and the St Joseph's School boundary fence, as indicated in Annex F.
- Construction of 4 alternative parking spaces for to replace the two bays between the St Joseph's School car park exit and Dalmeny Way. These two bays currently reduce the vehicular approach the St Joseph's to single file, which leads to the grid lock of the pick up and drop of facility. To construct 4 alternative parking bays would require using some of the land owned by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council land between the back edge of the footway and the St Joseph's School boundary fence, and also some Highway verge as indicated in Annex F. In considering this option, Committee needs to bear in mind that any measure to assist with the pick up and drop off facility would tend to encourage car journeys, and discourage sustainable travel choices.

3.2.3 Damian Roberts, Chief Operating Officer at Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, has advised that he has no objection in principal to the release of the grass verge immediately in front of the school to enable existing car parking spaces to be relocated. He advised that if the local Committee were to agree to undertake the necessary works and allocated the funding to do so, a formal decision on the release of the land would then be sought from Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Strategy and Resources Committee.

3.2.4 The following improvements are options for Whitehorse Drive:

- Railings at the end of the cabbage patch to prevent children running into the turning area at the end of Whitehorse Drive.
- Pavement around end of Whitehorse Road – currently children on the Rosebery side have to walk in the carriageway to access the cabbage patch.
- Measures to prevent mounting of the pavement in Whitehorse Drive.

3.2.5 It has also been suggested that improving the cycle route connecting to Ashted would encourage sustainable travel choices among that part of the schools' communities that lives in Ashted.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 Officers have met the head teachers of both St Joseph's and Rosebery Schools to understand their concerns.
- 4.2 Site visits were undertaken in April and June 2019. These included representatives from Surrey police, local highways, road safety team, and sustainable travel team.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 A feasibility study to investigate the suggested engineering measures would cost £5,000. To be able to move forwards with this feasibility in the current Financial Year 2019-20, Committee would need to defer another scheme from its capital ITS programme.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 This report has been created in accordance with the council's "Road Safety Outside Schools" Policy which has been subject to Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment. Highway improvements are subject to independent road safety audit which takes into account the needs of all road users including those with mobility impairment. The proposals presented here would create a positive improvement for people with mobility impairment.

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 The proposals presented here have been developed following consultation with the school community and Divisional Member.
- 7.2 A number of the suggested improvements would benefit those choosing sustainable modes of transport. If these were to be implemented they might encourage more walking, cycling and scooting to school and help reduce car journeys, anti-social parking and congestion which have a negative impact on the local community.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	Some of the suggested improvements have the potential to encourage more sustainable travel choices. If there were to be a reduction in the number of car journeys to this school, we would expect a reduction in anti-social driving, anti-social parking and potential confrontations between parents, other road users and residents.
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	Some of the suggested improvements have the potential to encourage more sustainable travel choices. This would result in fewer carbon emissions and less air pollution.
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	Some of the suggested improvements have the potential to encourage more sustainable travel choices. This could in turn reduce the risk of road collisions. Active travel tends to improve the health of the participants.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1 Concern has been expressed over the safety of children arriving and leaving St Joseph's and Rosebery Schools via Rosebank and Whitehorse Drive. Observations have been undertaken in accordance with the county council's "Road Safety Outside Schools" policy. This has included assessment of the history of road collisions, site observations and assessment of the school travel plan and road safety education activities delivered by the schools.
- 9.2 From a purely technical point of view, there are engineering improvements in Rosebank and Whitehorse Drive that would be beneficial. Committee is asked to decide whether to investigate the feasibility of these improvements this Financial Year 2019-20 (by deferring another scheme and re-allocating funding), or potentially in a future Financial Year, or not at all.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 The Safer Travel Team will work with the school to introduce a number of sustainable travel and road safety education activities.
- 10.2 Subject to Committee's decision, The local Area Highways Team will add the proposals to the list of possible schemes for prioritisation and possible future Local Committee funding.

Contact Officer: Nick Healey

Consulted: Head teachers at St Joseph's and Rosebery Schools, Surrey Police

Annexes: 6

Sources/background papers: None

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