

Item 6

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL**



JOINT COMMITTEE (RUNNYMEDE)

DATE: 25 NOVEMBER 2019

**AGENDA ITEM 6
WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Question from Colin Perkins

Question 1

Middle Hill – Traffic

With the closure of the Bagshot road leading to the A30 some years ago, the traffic control humps on St Judes Road and now Tite Hill, Middle Hill has turned into a “rat run” for traffic and the number of vehicles using it as the main route to and from Egham has increased exponentially. As a consequence, as can readily be verified by Cllr Japneet Sohi (who noted cars driving on the pavement), traffic using Middle Hill are regularly driving at fast speeds and due to impatience, driving up onto the pavements at speed, to avoid having to wait. Given that whilst weeding my garden from the pavement I have twice nearly been hit by vehicles riding on the pavement, does the council intend to wait until someone gets hurt or even killed before something is done to prevent the speeding and pavement driving.

Officer Response

A speed survey has previously been undertaken (over 7 days) in the lower section of Middle Hill where high levels of on-street parking takes place. This survey recorded an average vehicle speed of 24mph which indicates a good level of compliance with the 30mph speed limit. This would be expected because the parked vehicles have the effect of restraining speeds. Any problems will more generally relate to aggressive driving behaviour or inappropriate speed for the conditions.

The lower section of Middle Hill also has a good safety record with no personal injury collisions having occurred between Parsonnage Road and the A30 in the 3 year period from March 2016 to February 2019 (latest available data).

ITEM 1

The problem with driving over the footway occurs because vehicles are often parked over significant continuous lengths and the alignment of the road means forward visibility is restricted. As a result, situations occur where drivers travelling in opposite directions continue passed the parked cars and then find they can only pass each other if one drives over the footway. Drivers may also become frustrated at having to wait to pass the parked vehicles and this affects their behaviour.

Sections of the footway along Middle Hill are relatively narrow (especially on the southern side of the road) and this means it is not possible to install posts since they would cause an obstruction for prams/pushchairs and wheelchair users.

An alternative solution would be to regulate the parking (by introducing a combination of marked parking areas and yellow lines) to create shorter lengths of parked vehicles with gaps in between to allow vehicles to pass each other. This is likely to help reduce incidences of vehicles trying to squeeze passed each other and having to drive over the footway.

Such a proposal was considered as part of a previous parking review but residents raised objections because it resulted in a reduction in the amount of parking available. As a result, it was not progressed. However, residents have more recently asked for the introduction of parking restrictions to be considered again. A revised proposal to introduce new parking restrictions based on residents' comments has therefore been recommended as part of the 2019 Runnymede Parking Review.

The recommendations of the 2019 Parking Review are being considered by the Runnymede Joint Committee at its meeting on 25 November 2019. If the proposed restrictions are approved and introduced they should help reduce the problem with vehicles driving over the footway.

Question from Colin Perkins

Question 2

A30 Traffic Works

Over recent months and years, there appears to be a constant number of occasions throughout the year when intensive and remarkably extended road works are being undertaken and it is often the case that the congestion means that traffic jams are often reaching back to the Egham by-pass. It is also seemingly often the case to see little if any work being completed at times and yet the traffic control is still in place. Can the council please explain why firstly, the number of works are so regularly required on this stretch of road which is a main artery between Heathrow and Bracknell/Camberley and secondly, why contractors cannot be required to work over a 24 hour shift arrangement to ensure that works are completed in the shortest possible time?

Officer Response

A large variety of different works take place across the Surrey highway network including improvement and maintenance schemes, utility works and development related works. In addition to planned works, emergency works are also frequently required (for example, due to incidents such as burst water mains, gas leaks, fallen trees etc).

SCC operates a permit scheme to help coordinate and manage these works as effectively as possible to minimise traffic disruption whilst allowing the promoters the necessary time and space to complete their activities (which they have a statutory right to do).

In recent years a number of sites have been developed along Egham Hill requiring works on the highway (including utility connections and delivery of improvements agreed as part of planning consents). In addition, major gas main renewal works have taken place following a series of gas leaks which resulted in emergency works on 7 separate occasions over the last 2 years.

Emergency works do not allow any opportunity for planning but the remainder of the works have been coordinated and managed to avoid conflicts and minimise disruption as far as possible. However, when temporary traffic control is required on such a busy strategic road it will inevitably have a significant impact on traffic.

The most substantial works, the gas main renewal scheme, were scheduled to span the summer holiday period when traffic flows are reduced and other works were coordinated around these. Whilst the gas company did not work 24 hours a day (due to noise and health and safety considerations) the following conditions were imposed to minimise the duration of the works and their impact on traffic:

- Extended working hours.
- Weekend working.
- Manual control of temporary traffic signals.

Regular inspection of works are undertaken by the county council's Streetworks team to ensure permit conditions are being complied with and works are being completed efficiently. However, there are a number of reasons why there may be traffic management in place when no works are taking place. These include the workmen taking entitled breaks, material curing, venting of gas leaks, awaiting delivery of materials (which can be delayed by factors such as traffic conditions), equipment failure and to protect public safety when open excavations are present during non-working periods. In addition, gangs working on planned utility works are sometimes called away to assist with significant emergency works that arise.

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