

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**LOCAL COMMITTEE (TANDRIDGE)**

**DATE: 6 March 2020**

**SUBJECT: Public Question: Godstone Road, Whyteleafe**

**DIVISION: Caterham Valley**



### **Background**

On the 9th January 2020, there was a road traffic accident on the Godstone Road (A22), near the junction of Hillside Road, which resulted in the death of a pedestrian.

The Godstone Road which runs the length of Whyteleafe handles a high volume of traffic. Other busy roads include Whyteleafe Hill and Hillbury Road.

The control of traffic speed and flow is crucial to safety.

### **Question**

There is a Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) on the Godstone Road, near Hillside Road, installed by Surrey County Council (SCC) and several speed camera warning signs that are incorrectly positioned.

There is a VAS sign on Whyteleafe Hill (approaching Whyteleafe School) and another on Hillbury Road (prior to the entrance to Whyteleafe Recreation Ground).

What commitment can we as Village Councillors get from SCC to reassure our residents that these road safety tools are positioned correctly, functioning properly and maintained effectively?



Godstone Road VAS near Hillbury Road, Whyteleafe (not working?)



Speed camera sign (facing houses) at 146 Godstone Road



Speed camera sign at 129 Godstone Road but where's the camera?



Hillbury Road VAS near entrance to Whyteleafe Recreation Ground (not working?)



Whyteleafe Hill VAS near Whyteleafe School (not working?)

**Response:**

The conventional “Box Brownie” speed camera warning signs referred to, (positioned outside 126 and 146 Godstone Road), are intended to face northbound traffic travelling into the London Borough of Croydon. From inspection of historic Google Streetview images, it seems that the signs were in situ at least as far back as July 2008. The reasoning and the year that these signs were installed is lost in the “annals of time”.

Within Surrey, camera warning signs are provided on the approach to all fixed camera enforcement sites, and on the approach to sites where regular mobile camera enforcement takes place. The aim of this is to encourage drivers to stick to the speed limit without the need to issue penalties. However in some cases in previous decades such signs were installed on the approach to other sites where there were concerns over speeding, as a deterrent, irrespective of whether any real camera enforcement was taking place. In these cases, elsewhere in Surrey, such signs have been removed in recent

years, as their presence is unlikely to have any effect without the presence of real enforcement. The signs also add to signage clutter and the council's maintenance burden, and could reduce the impact of signage on the approach to sites where camera enforcement is really taking place. Consequently officers could arrange for these signs to be removed, or if local councillors prefer we can arrange for the sign outside house number 146 to be twisted back into place to face northbound traffic.

Electronic vehicle activated signs will illuminate for drivers who are approaching too fast to remind them of the speed limit or to warn of enforcement or of a hazard. They are set so that they illuminate only for a smaller number of drivers that exceed the limit by a few miles per hour. National and local research and monitoring has shown that the signs encourage slower speeds, and that the effect is enduring. Within Surrey there are approximately 600 vehicle activated signs.

The electronic vehicle-activated sign on Hillbury Road, on the approach to the junction with Westhall Road was installed in March 2012. The sign is mains powered, and displays the 30 mph speed limit roundel and "SLOW DOWN" if drivers are approaching too fast. The unit was subject to a repair in July 2019, after which the sign was observed as working again.

The electronic vehicle-activated sign on Whyteleafe Hill, near the junction with Regent's Close was installed in March 2008. The sign is solar powered and displays the 30 mph speed limit and "SLOW DOWN" if drivers are approaching too fast. Experience has shown that solar powered vehicle activated signs are a lot less reliable than those connected to mains power. This is because the solar powered batteries can run out of charge, and the batteries themselves degrade over time and need replacing. The effectiveness of the solar panels can also be affected by tree cover (which this site may suffer from). Officers suspect that this sign is beyond economic repair and will remove the sign sometime within the next financial year. Funding would need to be found for a replacement (approximately £2,500). Any new sign would be mounted on a lamp column and connected to mains power. New mains powered signs are very reliable and have a six year warranty as standard.

The electronic vehicle-activated sign on the A22 Godstone Road, near the junction with Hillside Road, was installed in March 2008. The sign is solar powered and displays the 30 mph speed limit roundel and safety camera warning sign if drivers are approaching too fast (the sign is positioned on the approach to the fixed speed camera). Within Surrey we have installed vehicle activated signs on the approach to most of our fixed speed cameras to warn of the presence of the enforcement if drivers are approaching too fast. These signs on the approach to safety camera sites have been funded from the safety camera partnership to encourage greater compliance with the speed limit rather than issuing penalties. For the same reasons described above, officers suspect that this solar powered sign is not working correctly, and is beyond economic repair. Consequently officers will seek to remove this sign and will provide a mains powered replacement in the new financial year. As this is on the approach to a safety camera site, funding will be sought from the safety camera partnership.

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