

**GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL and
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**



**GUILDFORD
BOROUGH**

JOINT COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)

DATE: 01 JULY 2020

LEAD OFFICERS: FRANK APICELLA, AREA HIGHWAY MANAGER, JEFF WILSON, TRANSPORT PLANNER, SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: PUBLIC WRITTEN QUESTIONS

DIVISION: GUILDFORD SOUTH-WEST

The following question was received from Mr Peter Watts.

Would the Joint Committee agree to the introduction of pedestrian and cyclist prioritisation and the 'greening' of the streetscape along Ridgemount and Alresford Roads in Guildford (GU2) in order to:

1. Build on the momentum of pedestrian priorities being created in Guildford Town Centre.
2. Create a proper walking and cycling route from the back of Guildford Railway Station through to the University and Cathedral, and onwards to the Hospital, Surrey Research Park and Surrey Sports Park.
3. Create a cycling and walking route from the back of the station that links in a safe manner into the Christmas Pie Track via Stephenson Road in the Research Park.
4. Develop a proper C2 cycle route, building further on the infrastructure developments of recent months.
5. Develop and enhance the environmental credentials of the two roads, by improving and adding to the existing protected hedges, trees, green verges, and shrubs.
6. Address the runoff flooding that flows off Stag Hill into the road and driveways of the housing.
7. Begin to develop a coordinate plan that looks to increase the greening of the urban landscape in line with data (see addendum).
8. Fully develop a coordinated response to the #BuildBackBetter movement that takes advantage of the reduction in vehicle traffic due to the pandemic and builds neighbourhood focused environments where the car is not the centre of planning.
9. Create a vibrant example of street life that prioritises nature and people, utilising roads that in the case of Ridgemount and Alresford are already half-way there and therefore easy to convert.
10. Be part of the movement of similar progressive developments by Councils that are on the vanguard of sound environment and social thinking (see addendum below).

Addendum

A. Hackney

This is the main example, a couple more are also included for reference.

Article on Hackney's plan see: <https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2020/02/12/public-realm-boss-reimagine-hackney-streets-climate-crisis/>

The Hackney Strategy Document:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1n8zbQY0bm7i3m8lBub1UFTlqeaPqnhfG/view>

Hackney have been developing a planned and coordinated approach to changing the priorities of many of their residential roads to enhance the pedestrian and cycle access and improve environmental features and landscaping.

Please see the below narrative from Hackney Council:

1/ One of many new rainwater gardens for Hackney. By systematically eliminating paving and replacing it with gardens and additional trees, we're helping to reduce summer temperatures in a warming city, increase biodiversity and manage high rainfall events.



2/ This #depave programme is part of a broader approach (including the largest urban tree scheme in Europe) to cooling the streets of Hackney, improving air quality, and contributing better mental health and wellbeing outcomes for our residents.

3/ But, this is just the beginning. The most radical #depave work we're undertaking is not through the delivery of rainwater gardens, but through our **21st Century Streets programme**. Neighbourhood parks eliminate cars, cool streets, and provide play space.

4/ In particular, Hackney been heavily influenced by this fantastic piece of work from Carly Ziter and others, which focuses on the relationship between canopy cover, depaving, and urban temperatures... see: <https://www.pnas.org/content/116/15/7575>

5/ So, rather than put an arbitrary number against the street trees we'll plant in Hackney, we're working towards a minimum of 40% canopy cover, beyond which we know we can significantly reduce temperatures and therefore pressure on medical services and energy demand for cooling.

6/ Once we knew what level of canopy cover we wanted to achieve on-street, we sat down and costed it. Mature trees - the kind we plant with care on-street - are expensive. There are labour costs, root directors, caging, staking, after-care...

7/ We realised that, to get to 40% canopy cover on-street, we'd need to invest circa £9m. When you consider that Hackney's annual Gov't grant has been cut by £140m since 2010, that's a big commitment; the kind of commitment made by people who take the **#climateemergency** seriously.

8/ Then we decided what we could afford to invest this term, which is why we've committed to deliver 30% ten year canopy cover by 2022, with 40% cover achieved by 2024. As we currently have 20% canopy cover from 10k street trees, we know we'll to deliver a further 5000 by 2022.

9/ This all sounds a bit tedious, I know, but it matters. Why?

- because it allows us to tell the public a credible story about where our numbers come from.
- because we know it will work to deliver what we want. Evidenced-based policy-making in action.

B. Gateshead

A similar guide can be found from Gateshead: <https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/media/3798/Gateshead-Homezone-Guide/pdf/Gateshead-Homezone-Guide.pdf?m=636440102986370000>

C. Freiburg, Germany

A team of architects reviewed what was happening in Freiburg: <https://emmettrussell.co.uk/news/study-trip-to-vauban-freiburg/>



D. Enfield

See website: <http://betterstreets.co.uk/low-traffic-neighbourhoods/>

A local group that is campaigning to develop a better balance on Enfield's streets between cars, bikes, public transport and pedestrians.

Their main aims are:

- Street design takes into account the needs of those who walk, cycle and use public transport as well as those who drive
- Riding a bike is a safe, convenient travel option for all ages and abilities
- Children can walk or cycle to school, for better health, wellbeing and independence
- Fewer short journeys are made by car, reducing air pollution and leaving more space for those who need to drive

- Residents can lead a healthier, more active lifestyle, saving money for the NHS
- Residential streets are communities rather than conduits for traffic
- High streets are pleasant places to spend time and money.

The group works in partnership with the Council to coordinate and action developments.

E. Oxfordshire Living Streets

See: www.oxlivsts.org.uk

The OLS Plan is guided by five tenets:

- Roads are to move people
- Neighbourhoods are for living
- Cities are destinations
- Towns are for people
- Countryside connection

The aim is to work with the Council to address the challenge of vehicular excess, and thereby improve Oxfordshire and Oxford City liveability in a short space of time and for the long-term. By incentivising active travel (by foot or by bike), travel by car is made unappealing. This will increase physical activity, thus improving public health. This will decrease pollution and congestion, thus bringing down health costs and highway maintenance costs.

Officer response

The [Surrey Cycle Strategy](#) outlines the council's commitment to improve infrastructure for cycling, including the utilisation of quiet streets. Officers recognise a propensity for walking and cycling along the Alresford Road / Ridgemount corridor given the character of the roads and the connectivity they provide to local destinations.

Surrey County Council identified this as a 'suggested route' in the [Guildford cycling plan](#), indicating its desire for the route to be considered for the introduction of on-street measures to make it easier to travel by bike when suitable funding opportunities become available.

It should be noted that Guildford Borough Council (under licence from Surrey County Council) recently undertook work on this corridor as part of the Sustainable Movement Corridor West project. This involved widening the link path from The Chase to Alresford Road to allow its shared use by cyclists and pedestrians with the addition of markings on the carriageways of Alresford Road and Ridgemount to support cycling along this route. There are also already existing traffic calming measures (speed cushions) along Ridgemount.

The additional measures proposed in the question would require a level of funding that means that it could not be implemented in the short term. If the proposals are to be considered further, a scheme should be placed on the running list of the Joint Committee for prioritisation and for a thorough feasibility study which will likely include the requirement for public consultation with local residents.

Recommendation

The Joint Committee is asked to note the response.