

ANNEX B TO THE MINUTES



WOKING JOINT COMMITTEE
DATE: 11 NOV 2020
SUBJECT: WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS
DIVISION: WOKING

Question 1: Claire Johnston, local resident

2 years on from the initial petition, Sopwith Drive still needs a safer pedestrian crossing for access to Brooklands Community Park and Cherrylands Nursery.

What action will this committee take in 2020 to make the crossing safer for the children and people of our communities?

Answer from Highways Office

This petition was presented to the Elmbridge Local Committee at its meeting on 26 November 2018 and although the petition was never formally presented to the Woking Joint Committee, a question was asked about this matter at the Joint Committee meeting on 13 March 2019.

An item to consider the introduction of a controlled pedestrian crossing on Sopwith Drive had been included within our overall work programme for a number of years prior to the petition and question; it remains on our programme and is currently ranked 18th out of 70 or so potential schemes on our list.

All the schemes on this list are point scored against the same criteria to allow us to prioritise them as best as we can and whilst the petition and question have highlighted to the members of the Elmbridge and Woking Committees it does not alter the way in which the schemes are ranked. Whilst officers will make recommendations about which schemes should be promoted in any given year, the Members of the Woking Joint Committee are at liberty to promote schemes out of priority order or to add extra items to our list of schemes. As Members will know, it is sometimes necessary to promote the schemes that are on our list out of priority order to make best use of the available budgets.

This length of road has a relatively good collision history compared with many locations although it is acknowledged that the only collision along the length of Sopwith Drive in the last 5 year period, between the Parvis Road and Barnes Wallis Drive roundabouts (but not including the roundabouts themselves) did involve a young male cyclist who was crossing the road. However, Members will remember that one of this year's ITS schemes was to improve the existing uncontrolled crossing point to the north of Viscount Gardens and this work was completed by the end of June 2020. Visibility along Sopwith Drive from this existing crossing point is very good and the double yellow lines that were applied over the summer appear to have removed the obstructive goods vehicle parking that had become particularly bad during the first national Coronavirus lockdown.

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It is also acknowledged that there could be a certain amount of suppressed demand due to the absence of a controlled pedestrian crossing but it is also clear that the work that would be required to provide such a crossing would exceed the Joint Committee's annual budget, based on current and recent funding levels. Although the Elmbridge Local Committee has indicated that there may be scope for some CIL funding from the Weybridge / Brooklands area

Supplementary question from Claire Johnston

I wanted to follow up the response and I thank you for answering this, but I interpret from this that no action will be taken. I understand that money is tight, but I wanted to know what could be done to try to progress this.

Andrew Milne, Area Highways Manager

It is a sad fact that we have a long list of requests for Woking (reflected across the County) and that although this is an item that is of interest to Members and has been so for 2 years, the list of other outstanding improvements includes schemes that have been outstanding for a lot longer.

We use a prioritisation system for schemes and constantly review this, but this scheme is not at the top. We are always looking at other funding sources and try to work with developer funding and CIL funding too. We continue to actively search for ways of delivering schemes on the list at all times.

MP Jonathan Lord, Woking

I am sympathetic to this, but I also do understand the financial constraints and difficult decisions for the Committee. I do understand that this scheme is on the cusp between Woking and Elmbridge and I wondered if there were scope to combine funds and use CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funds from both sides of the boundary. I am happy to liaise with the neighbouring MP if this would help.

It was therefore agreed that further attempts would be made to try to secure cross boundary funding for this scheme.

TO BE ADDED TO THE DECISION TRACKER

Question 2: Trevor Caldwell, Sally Cormac and Andrew Murrin, Woodham Road residents

SPEEDING AND DANGEROUS DRIVING ON WOODHAM ROAD

Residents are seriously concerned about speeding and dangerous driving on Woodham Road, with over 200 hundred residents having signed a petition (<http://chng.it/WR8d7B9h>) seeking action to tackle the problem. This concern has been echoed by Halstead School and parents. The petition was sparked by the horrific fatal crash that occurred on Woodham Road on Sunday 30th August. One young man is dead, and the accident could have been much worse with two pedestrians close enough to witness the flying motorcycle.

Residents have previously raised the issue of speeding on Woodham Road and two small roundel flashing 30's have been erected. These are unfortunately frequently ignored with vehicles failing to brake when the sign illuminates. Recent speed monitoring using a 7-day automatic traffic count has confirmed both the level of traffic on Woodham Road and the excessive speed of users, where between 7:00 am and 7:00 pm, 50% of the traffic exceeds the 30 mph limit and a vehicle exceeds 40mph every 5 minutes or so.

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Speeding is clearly a problem on this road. This is compounded by the quantity of traffic, with 3 vehicles a minute during the rush hour as Woodham Road becomes increasingly a rat run into Horsell and a bypass of the traffic queues both going west on Shore's Road and going east on Chertsey Road.

More obviously needs to be done to lower speeds and hence reduce the likelihood and severity of collisions and make our community a more pleasant place to live. Whilst we understand that the accident investigation has not yet been completed, and officials are restricted in what they can say, we do believe that further action will be required and we request the JC to ;

- 1. Immediately undertake a comprehensive assessment of speed levels along Woodham Road. We would propose monitoring at least at either end and in the middle to both determine speed limits and to understand traffic flows.**
- 2. Confirm that funds will be made available in the 2021-22 budget to implement whatever measures are required both to address this serious problem and to prevent further tragedy.**
- 3. Add speeding and dangerous driving on Woodham Road to the March 2021 agenda of the JCC to allow the results of the monitoring and of the accident investigation to be considered and appropriate measures planned for the 2020-21 budget year.**

Answer from Highways Office

We are aware of residents' concerns about vehicle speeds on Woodham Road, which, along with a many other roads in the Borough, is recorded on our Speed Management Plan.

The Speed Management Plan (SMP) is a prioritised list of roads where concerns have been raised about vehicle speeds. This is periodically reviewed in conjunction with colleagues in our Road Safety Team and Surrey Police Officers. All the roads on the list have speed surveys undertaken to determine the extent of any speeding issues and these results, combined with the personal injury collision history for each road, allow the police to prioritise their enforcement resources. Any roads where it is determined that there is no issue with excessive speeds will generally remain on the Speed Management Plan, but would not be an active site in terms of police enforcement or routine speed monitoring.

Speeds do appear to have increased on Woodham Road since it was first included on the SMP, and as a result of correspondence that we had with several other residents of the road in 2018 and 2019, the road was elevated to the "high" category within the SMP. Also as a result of that correspondence, an item was added (in May 2019) to our overall work programme for "speed reducing measures" to be considered along the road. This item was added before the fatal collision took place, and at that time, the only personal injury collisions along the road had taken place at the Woodham Rise junction. The main contributory factor in these collisions was a failure of vehicles on Woodham Rise to give way at the junction with Woodham Road, despite the presence of give way and advanced give way signs. These signs

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have subsequently been replaced with yellow backed versions of the same signs to make them more prominent (it should be noted that the provision of a yellow backing board is not a legal requirement).

As a result of the personal injury collision history along the road at that time, and given that physical traffic calming tends to be used as a casualty reduction measure rather than solely to reduce vehicle speeds, it was not possible to confirm to residents when any scheme may be promoted at this location. All highway improvement schemes within Woking are prioritised, and proposed to the Woking Joint Committee for funding in priority order.

It was also suggested to a couple of residents, including one of the petitioners, that consideration might be given to submitting a petition to the Woking Joint Committee to show the level of residents' concern. One other suggestion that was made was to consider an approach that was taken in Park Road, Maybury whereby the on-street parking places were "de-regulated" and rather than being subject to any time limits or permit only use, they could allow all day parking. We have had complaints about the parking that takes place in the 50mph section of Woodham Road and so it seems reasonable to assume that some of this might transfer to the bays in the 30mph section, which are very often unoccupied, and this would provide a degree of natural traffic calming, similar to the effect of chicanes. We would still urge residents to consider this as an option.

The average speeds that were recently recorded by the resident funded speed survey were 29.9mph eastbound (ie towards Six Crossroads) and 30.9mph westbound, with corresponding 85th percentile speeds on 35.6mph and 36.7mph. The 85th percentile speed is the speed at which or below, 85% of vehicles are travelling. These figures are slightly lower than those that we have recorded, using a different monitoring device, a little further along the road.

The Department for Transport's document, "Circular 01/2013 – Setting Local Speed Limits", on which SCC's own speed limit is based, states, "Mean speed and 85th percentile speed (the speed at or below which 85% of vehicles are travelling) are the most commonly used measures of actual traffic speed. Traffic authorities should continue to routinely collect and assess both, but mean speeds should be used as the basis for determining local speed limits."

Based on the mean speeds, the officers who are involved in the SMP would consider the recently recorded speeds to indicate relatively good compliance with the speed limit compared to some other roads. However, the disparity between the mean and 85th percentile speeds is greater than we would hope to see, and this is another reason why an item was added to our work programme.

In a road such as Woodham Road, we would tend to promote speed cushions as the form of traffic calming. These are raised areas in each running lane with a gap between them and at each side, between the cushion and the adjacent kerb. These do not impede drainage in the same way as full width traffic calming. They are preferred by the emergency services because they do not impede wider vehicles so much and the impact of noise and possible vibration from any lorries that might pass over them is also lessened. However, they do not have a significant effect on motorbikes, which can pass between or to one side of them.

The item on our work programme is currently ranked 32nd out of about 70 schemes on the list. The Members of the Joint Committee will therefore need to decide if they wish to promote the scheme during the 2021/22 financial year. However, it is

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recommended that the results of the police investigation into the recent fatal collision are known before such a decision is made. It should also be noted, that at this point in the financial year we do not have any funding for additional speed surveys along the road, but it should be possible to undertake these quite early in the new financial year.

Supplementary question from Trevor Caldwell

Although average speeds were close to half an hour, half of the cars were going faster than that and even going 40mph. Traffic has increased, which reduces the average but not the speeds.

We would be interested in reducing parking restrictions and allowing further parking in order to decrease speeds.

Cllr Beryl Hunwicks stated that she was appreciative of all that Trevor Caldwell and the residents have done since the fatal accident in the area. She was interested in the de-restriction of parking and appreciated the efforts of the Police and the Area Highways Manager in looking at the issue and what could be done.

Cllr Ben Carasco thanked the Highways Officer Kevin Patching for his work, and noted that speed humps were not appropriate for the area, but was pleased that Officers were working hard to look at this.

It was not known when the Police investigation would be completed but Members would be kept informed on this.

Supplementary question from Andy Murrin

Andy asked whether speed limits could be changed (lowered) whilst the outcome of the investigation was awaited?

The Area Highways Manager answered that in short, no this could not happen, as it would not fit with the SCC speed policy. He stated that Officers were keen to work with residents to try to resolve issues and that they would look at this again once the outcome of the investigation was known.

TO BE ADDED TO THE DECISION TRACKER

Question 3 – Adam Kirby, Claire Draper and Neil McPherson, Horsell Moor residents

What is possible in terms of protecting green spaces against illegal traveller incursions? (such as that currently taking place on Horsell Moor) and what is WBC currently planning to do to address this and/or provide alternative provision for travellers?

There is currently an ongoing problem with a traveller incursion on Horsell Moor. This has happened three times in the last six months, involving the same group, but it seems that the dispersal order can't be enforced. **Can posts or some similar barrier (perhaps similar to the ones on Wheatsheaf Common) be installed around the green space at Horsell Moor to prevent future illegal incursions?**

Answer from Woking Borough Council

To date council officers have worked successfully with police colleagues to deal with unauthorised encampments in the Borough.

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In every case there are clear guidelines to follow which can involve court action which is the case for Horsell Moor. However, continued attention from council and police officers encouraged the group to move on and this has proven to be a robust and effective method to prevent unauthorised encampments remaining in one location for extended periods.

Practically, it is rarely possible to completely secure all our green spaces and even on sites which are gated and fenced it is often the case that locks are broken to enable entry. For Horsell Moor we will assess whether any further measures are practical and we will continue to work with police colleagues to review our working arrangements.

Finally, we do have static traveller sites in the Borough, but Surrey do not have a transit site although we are in discussions with other Surrey Districts and Boroughs regarding this type of provision to use in the future”.

Supplementary question from Adam Kirby

As this is the same group using the same spot each time, would this help speed up the legal position? What are the costs of the clear up each time – this might help to resolve the issue and push the debate forward?

Answer from Geoff McManus, Woking Borough Council

Traveller incursions are difficult. We do try to avoid going to Court (this can result in longer stays) but we try to work with travellers to move them on.

In terms of costs of the contract with SERCO, there is no additional cost involved. We do have the cost of disposing of the waste, but we are quite lucky in Woking that this type of incursion is limited.

Question 4 – Maddie Key, Pyrford Resident

I would like to draw attention to the issues around Marshall Parade, Pyrford. I have been a resident at Onslow way for 30 years and I am concerned for road safety in this area. The shops and flats in this already busy area are to be extended by the removal of the garages, and I am concerned about the impact of this development. Cars park on the corner of Lovelace drive, blocking sight lines and the area gets very busy at school drop off and pick up times.

Can anything be done to improve road safety here?

Answer

This area was looked at under the 2020 parking review and there is a proposal under item 11 to extend double yellow lines in Lovelace drive with no waiting at any time restrictions.

The road safety outside schools team recently reviewed the area and the personal injury collision database indicates that there have been no such incidents in the area around the shops since at least 2012.

The Woking parking enforcement team could be asked to undertake some visits to the site, but would only be able to enforce existing parking restrictions.

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Time restrictions on parking bays around the shopping parade could be considered as part of the next parking review.

Work will be undertaken with Cllr Graham Chrystie to look at this issue.

Councillor Discussion

Cllr Liz Bowes welcomed the proposal under the parking review and felt that this might help. Cllr Chrystie felt that the new premises would make things much worse and that we needed to keep the area under review.

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