

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (REIGATE & BANSTEAD)

DATE: 16 SEPTEMBER 2013
LEAD OFFICER: JOHN LAWLOR, AREA TEAM MANAGER



SUBJECT: PETITION RESPONSE – SOMERS ROAD, REIGATE

DIVISION: REIGATE

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

To consider a petition containing 249 signatures, requesting that:

- A raised zebra crossing be provided outside Micklefield School
- The speed limit be reduced to 20mph
- The 30 minute parking bays be extended to provide more parking
- The parking restrictions on St Alban's Road be changed to time limited restrictions.

RESPONSE:**Response of the South East Area Team Manager:*****Background***

Somers Road in Reigate (the D1207) links the A217 Reigate Hill to the east with Nutley Lane to the west. It has junctions with Somers Close and St Alban's Road. There are residential properties and footways on each side. Micklefield School is situated on the north side, towards the east end and approximately 100 metres from the junction with the A217.

Somers Road is currently subject to a 30mph speed limit. There is a sign on each approach to the school consisting of a triangular warning diagram for children, with a supplementary plate 'School' on a yellow backing board. There is a sign for westbound traffic near the junction with Somers Close and for eastbound traffic near the junction with St Alban's Road. There are yellow 'school keep clear' markings directly outside Micklefield School, on the eastbound side of the road.

Speed surveys outside Micklefield School were carried out by Surrey County Council in November and December 2012 using automatic traffic counters which continuously collected data on volumes and speeds. The mean vehicle speeds, the measure used when assessing speed limits, were recorded as follows for the periods 20 November to 3 December and 10 to 16 December 2012:

Westbound:
 22mph in morning peak (7am to 10am)

22mph in evening peak (3pm to 6pm)
23mph over 12 hour period (7am to 7pm)
Eastbound:
25mph in morning peak (7am to 10am)
24mph in evening peak (3pm to 6pm)
25mph over 12 hour period (7am to 7pm)

Analysis of recorded personal injury accidents over the three year period to June 2013 shows that there were no personal injury accidents in Somers Road.

Existing Officer Proposals

The divisional Member has been in discussion with the Headteacher and parents of Micklefield School regarding road safety issues outside the school. The Area Highways Team, in consultation with the divisional Member, has investigated the concerns raised, including carrying out a speed survey as reported above and a site audit of existing signing in Somers Road.

The speed survey shows that drivers are not contravening the 30mph speed limit in Somers Road. However, drivers may not be fully aware that there is a school in this road as the school is housed in converted residential buildings. Officers are proposing to introduce measures to raise awareness of the presence of Micklefield School to users of Somers Road. There are currently signs on yellow backing boards warning of school children on both approaches to the school. It is proposed that flashing 'wig-wag' signals are installed under both these signs, which will operate at the start and end of the school day during school term time. These types of signals are effective in drawing drivers' attention to the presence of a school and increased pedestrian and vehicle movement experienced during these times.

The divisional Member has agreed to fund these improvement measures from her local allocation. The works are currently being progressed and it is hoped that they will be in place by the Autumn half term, dependent on the necessary electrical connections being completed.

Raised zebra crossing outside Micklefield School

Somers Road is signed as a route to the industrial estate in Albert Road North. This is to minimise the use of the less suitable residential roads in the immediate area. As such, any raised traffic calming in Somers Road would have adverse effects in terms of noise and possible vibration when larger vehicles use the road. This would impact on both residents and Micklefield School. Therefore, traffic calming measures such as raised tables are not considered appropriate in Somers Road.

Zebra crossings are effective where there are regular pedestrian flows. In Somers Road, the main pedestrian demand would be from parents and their children going to Micklefield School. This would mean that the majority of the pedestrian movement would be concentrated in two short periods of time at the start and end of the school day and during term time only. Outside of the school opening and closing times and throughout school holiday periods, demand for the zebra crossing will be minimal and drivers using the road during these times on a regular basis may become accustomed to not seeing pedestrians using the crossing. This could lead to complacency of the drivers then travel along Somers Road at times when the crossing is in use by children and parents, resulting in drivers failing to stop for pedestrians waiting to use the crossing.

A raised zebra crossing outside Micklefield School would not be recommended for the above reasons.

Reduction of the speed limit to 20mph

The speed surveys show that, on average, vehicles are not travelling at speeds in excess of the 30mph limit. Mean speeds at the start and end of the school day were recorded as between 17mph and 21mph. No benefit would therefore be gained at this time of day from introducing a 20mph speed limit.

Speed limits are set in accordance with Surrey's speed limit policy, which also sets out the process for assessing speed limits. Experience has shown that lowering a speed limit on its own will not guarantee that average speeds (the measure used to determine speed limits) will be reduced. Surrey's speed limit policy states that for a 20mph limit, the mean speeds should be 20mph or less. The mean speeds recorded in Somers Road at times other than the start and end of the school day were between 23mph and 25mph. Therefore a reduction in the speed limit to 20mph could not be recommended, as it would not comply with the policy.

Parking issues

The area around Micklefield School is under very high demand for parking by a number of different user groups including residents, staff and commuters, making parking challenging at school drop-off and pick-up times, all be it for a relatively short period of time.

It is recognised that being able to park for school pick-up and drop-off is important to parents of children at the school. Therefore, the current parking review proposes the provision of additional parking bays on Somers Road. Proposals for Manor Road have also been amended so as to allow parking during school pick-up and drop-off times.

It is not possible to consider the request for further changes (such as additional spaces on Somers Road or St Alban's Road) as part of the current review, as such significant changes would require Surrey to re-advertise the proposals, which would mean delaying the whole review by several months and adding further costs to the process. However, these suggestions have been added to the Parking Team's list and will be considered at the next review of parking in the borough.

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