



JOINT COMMITTEE (SPELTHORNE)

DATE: 22ND NOVEMBER 2021

LEAD OFFICER: ZENA CURRY
HIGHWAYS ENGAGEMENT AND COMMISSIONING
MANAGER

SUBJECT: HIGHWAYS UPDATE

DIVISION: ALL

SUMMARY OF ISSUE(S):

The Leader of Spelthorne Borough Council and Divisional Member for Ashford have met with a Cabinet Member for the London Borough of Hounslow to discuss the Clockhouse Lane railway bridge project. It was agreed to investigate options based on traffic signals.

Officers are making progress with the project to replace the rising bollards in Staines High Street. Additional funding is required from the Joint Committee's Highways budgets to pay for a maintenance contract for the new bollards.

The reductions in speed limits on the A308 Staines Road West, previously approved by Committee and implemented in 2016, have resulted in significant reductions in the frequencies of accidents and casualties on this road.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Joint Committee (Spelthorne) is asked to:

- (i) Authorise an additional up to £10,000 funding from the Joint Committee's capital Highways budget to develop options for a traffic signals-based solution to provide pedestrian accessibility over the Clockhouse Lane railway bridge (paragraphs 2.1 to 2.4 refer);
- (ii) Decide an option for the maintenance contract for the proposed new Staines High Street rising bollard system, and then authorise funding to be allocated to pay for this, including the deferment of an existing scheme if necessary (paragraphs 2.5 to 2.10 refer);
- (v) Authorise the Highways Engagement and Commissioning Manager in consultation with the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and relevant Divisional Member(s) to undertake all necessary procedures to deliver the agreed programmes.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Support from the London Borough of Hounslow is needed for any scheme to be implemented to provide pedestrian accessibility over the railway bridge in

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Clockhouse Lane – as any scheme would cross the boundary between the boroughs of Spelthorne and Hounslow. Of the options currently under consideration for this scheme, the London Borough of Hounslow would only be supportive of an option based on traffic signals. Further funding is necessary to explore what traffic signals options might be feasible and the costs of these options.

When the CIL application for funding to renew the Staines High Street rising bollard was first submitted, it was anticipated that a maintenance contract could be included in the initial implementation phase and would therefore be covered by the CIL award made by the Joint Committee in March 2021. Officers have subsequently become aware that CIL funding cannot be used for the maintenance contract. This means that additional funding now needs to be identified to pay for this maintenance contract.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 Surrey County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) aims to improve the highway network for all users. In general terms it aims to reduce congestion, improve accessibility, reduce the frequency and severity of road casualties, improve the environment, and maintain the network so that it is safe for public use.
- 1.2 The Spelthorne Joint Committee has been delegated Highways budgets to be able to contribute to the objectives set out in Surrey County Council's LTP, according to local priorities.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 On the morning of 19th October the Leader of Spelthorne Borough Council (SBC) and Divisional Member for Ashford have met with a Cabinet Member for the London Borough of Hounslow (LBH) to discuss the Clockhouse Lane railway bridge project. The meeting was supported by officers of SBC, LBH, and Surrey County Council (SCC). The meeting seemed to be generally positive. During the meeting the entire group walked across the railway bridge from Hounslow into Spelthorne and then back again.
- 2.2 The key points of the meeting are summarised as follows:
 - A project for Clockhouse Lane here would not be a priority for LBH, as it would not benefit any of their residents. All the benefit of a project would be for Ashford residents. Therefore it would be difficult for LBH to justify allocation of funding or resource.
 - A bridge-based solution – with likely price tag of at least £6M – is not realistically affordable or deliverable.
 - LBH would not support a one-way system due to the inevitability of traffic being displaced onto alternative routes.
 - LBH would consider a traffic signals-based solution.
 - All agreed that for a traffic signals-based solution to be feasible and safe, the footways would need to be extended closer to the bridge, to reduce significantly the length of single file traffic that would be controlled by signals.

- It was agreed that SCC and SBC would investigate options for a traffic signals-based solution, but we need to manage residents' expectations that the extension of footways on both sides of the bridge could be a technically challenging and substantial piece of engineering work.
 - The land constraint on the Spelthorne side of the bridge was highlighted – for which we are wholly reliant on favourable landowners – compulsory purchase is not an option.
 - If the Joint Committee were to approve additional funding of £5,000 to £10,000 (in addition to the £5,000 already allocated to explore the land constraints) the initial feasibility work for traffic signals-based options could be completed by March 2022.
 - So far Network Rail has not been engaged in this project. It is unlikely they would object to a scheme; they will need to be engaged at some stage, depending on how the option development goes.
- 2.3 It is recommended that the Joint Committee authorise an additional £5,000 to £10,000 – in addition to the £5,000 already allocated – to explore traffic signals-based options for this project.
- 2.4 There are two significant risks that Committee should be aware of. It will take a considerable amount of engineering to extend the existing footways up the approach embankments, and this will be expensive. Land will be needed on the Spelthorne side, and this may or may not be forthcoming from adjacent landowners. Compulsory purchase is not an option for this project.
- 2.5 In March 2021 the Joint Committee awarded £110,000 CIL funding to renew the rising bollards that control access to the Staines High Street pedestrian zone. These bollards have been inoperable for a number of years, leading to regular abuse of the pedestrian zone by drivers.
- 2.6 SBC and SCC officers have been working in close partnership to prepare for implementation of this scheme. This includes renewal of the bollards themselves, CCTV coverage, operation of the bollards following renewal, and an amendment to the Prohibition of Traffic Order that governs access to the High Street.
- 2.7 It was intended that as part and parcel of the procurement of the bollard renewal, a service contract would be put in place with the supplier of the bollard. This service contract would provide for a response in the event of a breakdown or emergency, as well as regular servicing of the equipment. Without a service contract, any servicing, repairs or emergency response would need to be procured separately on a reactive basis. It was anticipated that the CIL funding awarded by the Joint Committee would fund the entire project, including a service contract. However, it came to light in early November 2021 that CIL cannot be used to pay for a service contract. This means that if a service contract is to be put in place, the Joint Committee would need to allocate funding.
- 2.8 The renewal of the rising bollard system itself will cost approximately £77,000. This includes the cost of a new CCTV camera to ensure coverage for the Elmsleigh Centre security desk. Officers have endeavoured to obtain alternative quotes for the bollards themselves but without success. A further

- Three years before scheme 63 accidents
81 casualties including 1 fatal and 8 serious.
- Three years after scheme 44 accidents (30% overall reduction)
58 casualties including 1 fatal and 10 serious.

2.14 There has been a significant reduction in the overall frequency of accidents, and also a significant reduction in the frequency of slight casualties. There is concern that the frequency of serious casualties does not appear to have reduced. There has been some change to the reporting of serious accidents in recent years, which has been examined in a countywide and national context, but not in the context of individual lengths and junctions. There have been rises in serious accidents elsewhere. The frequency of fatal accidents do not conform to any established pattern, so focussing on them could be misleading. It appears that the reductions in accident frequencies are most prominent in the section that was reduced from 50mph to 40mph.

2.15 Officers are hoping to be able to examine this information in greater detail, to maximise the learning from this project.

3. OPTIONS:

3.1 As described above.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

4.1 As described above.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 As described above.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 It is an objective of Surrey Highways to take account of the needs of all users of the public highway.

7. LOCALISM:

7.1 The Joint Committee prioritises its expenditure according to local priorities.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	A well-managed highway network can contribute to reduction in crime and disorder as well as improve peoples' perception of crime.
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	A number of schemes being promoted by the Joint Committee are intended to promote sustainable transport.
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report.

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report.
Public Health	A number of schemes being promoted by the Joint Committee are intended to promote active travel.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1 Committee is asked to allocate additional funding from its Highways budgets for the Clockhouse Lane railway bridge project, and for the renewal of the rising bollards in Staines High Street.
- 9.2 The reductions in speed limits on the A308 Staines Road West have been successful in reducing the frequencies of accidents and casualties on this road.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 The Engagement and Commissioning Manager will work with Divisional Members, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to deliver this Financial Year's Divisional Programmes, and to develop next Financial Year's programme of investment.

Contact Officer: Zena Curry

Consulted: N / A.

Annexes: N / A.

Sources/background papers: None
