



## **WOKING JOINT COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 4 APRIL 2022**

**SUBJECT: WRITTEN MEMBER QUESTIONS**

**DIVISION: WOKING**

### **Question 1 – from County Councillor Will Forster**

Following several accidents and concerns about road safety and speeding in Sutton Green, I have raised these issues with Surrey County Council.

A scheme to improve road safety by creating a footway in the centre of the village is my top priority scheme for my division, and I understand that it is one of the two schemes promoted from Woking Borough to the Council's county-wide Integrated Transport Scheme fund.

Please can the Joint Committee receive an update on improving road safety in Sutton Green?

What is the likelihood of the Sutton Green footpath getting funded via the County-wide ITS fund, and what is the timescales?

### **Answer from Kevin Patching and the Highways Team**

From previous correspondence with Councillor Forster, we are aware of residents' concerns about vehicle speeds and road safety through Sutton Green, particularly on the sharp bend where New Lane becomes Sutton Green Road, and the desire for a footway to connect those parts of the community in each road.

There have been two personal injury collisions on the bend in the last 5-year period, with one involving an inexperienced or learner motorcycle rider and the other involving a vehicle that was being pursued by the police. We are aware that some damage-only collisions have also taken place and enhancement works using marker posts and new chevron signs have been undertaken in the last few years. The two collisions mentioned earlier pre-date these enhancement works.

Two other collisions have occurred on New Lane during the last 5 years. A motorcyclist swerved to avoid a deer and came off his machine and a driver

## ITEM 6

following a bus, which had to brake suddenly, is thought to have hit their accelerator rather than the brake and left the carriageway as a result. Although warning signs for wild animals can be erected, the rural nature of the road should indicate to drivers that they might encounter wildlife and unless drivers significantly reduce their speed when they see a wild animal warning sign, occasional conflicts with animals will continue.

In addition, two personal injury collisions have taken place on the bend at the junction with Whitmoor Lane in the last 5 years. In one incident, a motorcyclist lost control on a patch of wet leaves and mud and in the other collision, the driver appears to have been impaired by both drugs and alcohol.

Speed surveys were undertaken in New Lane, Sutton Green Road, Blanchards Hill and Whitmoor Lane between 31<sup>st</sup> October and 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to determine existing vehicle speeds and whether a reduction in the speed limit might be appropriate. The mean speeds that were recorded in Whitmoor Lane and Blanchards Hill were low enough to allow the speed limit to be reduced to 30mph, in accordance with our speed limit policy but those in Sutton Green Road and New Lane were above the threshold to allow a reduction using signs alone.

The creation of a new length of footway might change the character of the road enough to reduce vehicle speeds in New Lane and Sutton Green Road and allow the speed limit to be reduced through the village, from the current 30mph limit in Jacob's Well to the 30mph in Westfield, near the junction with Moor Lane.

However, it is clear that the provision of a footway will not be easy because of the limited extent of highway land, the need to pipe a ditch to accommodate a footway and the adjacent, overhanging vegetation. The scheme is also likely to be relatively expensive due to the length of footway involved. For this reason, officers have already suggested that this scheme should be one of Councillor Forster's schemes that will go through an assessment and prioritising process later in the year.

Between April and September 2022, the Highway Engagement and Commissioning team will work with all 81 county councillors to identify their 1 priority scheme for ITS funding in the 2023/24 financial year. During this time, councillors may have a scheme that they wish to prioritise but are unsure if it technically feasible, in such cases each member can put forward 1 scheme for a technical appraisal to check whether it is technically viable and deliverable in the 2023/24 financial year. Councillor Forster could choose to put forward this scheme for a technical appraisal.

The technical appraisal will be funded from the centralised parking surplus.

Given the constraints and potential difficulties in providing a footway along New Lane, the technical appraisal will be very beneficial. Officers are currently working on a robust process for assessing the Countywide ITS programme (for 23/24 onwards) and we are therefore not able to currently say where such a scheme will prioritise for funding from the 2023/24 County-wide ITS budget.

**Question 2 – from County Councillor Will Forster**

A notable number of pedestrians including children attending the Hoe Valley School, use Woking Footpath 53 between the A320/Egley Road and the Hoe Stream. However, this footpath is normally muddy, and sometimes is flooded.

Please could the County Council confirm what action, if any, it can take to improve this footpath?

**Answer from John Baker, Countryside Access Officer - West Surrey**

I have recently spoken to a resident who raised this issue. I have visited the path and agree that it needs improving especially as I am now aware, thanks to the resident, that the path is used by children going to and from the school.

The path is not on our identified list of improvements for 2022/23 which was agreed some time ago, but I will be pushing hard to get the path added to the list, dependant on the finalisation of our budget.

The works will entail clearing the existing ditch, scraping off the mud and then raising the path surface with a suitable material which will be graded to shed water towards the ditch.

If the committee are able to identify an alternative source of funding then I would be happy to commission the works immediately. These are anticipated to be in the region of £8,000.

**Question 3 – from Borough Councillor Ellen Nicholson, Mount Hermon Ward**

A local resident has approached me with a request for a street light to be sited at the corner of the Guildford Road, A320 and Mount Hermon Road, on the opposite side to Quadrant Court. This is a particularly dark spot when turning into and out of Mount Hermon Road. The resident has raised legitimate concerns that the updated highway code which gives right of way to pedestrians in the new hierarchy of road users may impact on anyone crossing and cars entering and exiting Mount Hermon Road.

Can the feasibility for a new LED, low carbon street light at this junction be investigated and completed during the coming months before the darker nights reoccur later in 2022.

**Answer from Street Lighting team**

## ITEM 6

To be provided outside the meeting.

### **Question 4 – from Borough Councillor Ann-Marie Barker**

How do Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council plan to work together to support local people who need to park on street or in communal car parks to charge their electric vehicles?

#### **Answer from Sashi Fernando**

To be provided on the evening or outside the meeting

### **Question 5 – from Borough Councillor Ann-Marie Barker**

Please provide a summary of penalty parking notices handed out in the current municipal year to date, broken down by those for parking on double or single yellow lines, in the vicinity of zebra crossings, across dropped kerbs, in abuse of disabled parking spaces, for dangerous parking near schools and pavement parking.

#### **Answer from Ian Reynolds, Parking Services Manager, Woking Borough Council**

Please see the figures for the current financial year for the contraventions asked for.

#### **Penalty Charge Notices Issued in Woking**

<b>Requested areas</b>	<b>Contravention Description</b>	<b>Total</b>
On a double or single yellow line	Parked in a restricted street	3585
Across dropped kerbs	Dropped footway in a SEA	46
In abuse of disabled parking spaces	Disabled person's parking	762
Parking near schools	Restricted school area	22
On white zig zags adjacent Zebra crossing	Pedestrian crossing	82

### **Question 6 – from Borough Councillor Simon Ashall**

Could officers investigate ways that speeding can be addressed as cars travel eastwards along Smarts Heath Road as it becomes a residential area and merges with Saunders Lane? Residents are very concerned that safety issues remain along that stretch of road where rural and residential road conditions converge and the impact of noise and pollution is negatively affecting their quality of life.

In particular will officers investigate alterations to signage that may be appropriate, along with any traffic calming? The measures previously employed are felt to be ineffective.

### **Answer from Kevin Patching and the Highways Team**

Some residents of Smarts Heath Road will remember that approximately 17 years ago, consultation was carried out regarding the provision of a footway over the railway bridge to the east of Saunders Lane and, in response to concerns about vehicle speeds, this consultation also included the possibility of introducing physical traffic calming between Saunders Lane, westwards to the start of the 30mph speed limit. The traffic calming was to consist of speed tables (spanning the entire width of the road) and speed cushions (raised areas within each running lane) but this received a lot of adverse publicity and was never welcomed as an option by residents.

Many residents were, and are still, concerned about the noise and vibration that might result from such features, which can be a particular issue in some of the very old, historic properties adjacent to the road. These concerns are increased because the road is one of the routes to the Martlands Industrial Estate in Smarts Heath Lane and consequently carries a relatively high proportion of heavy goods vehicles. Indeed, during the 2020/21 financial year Surrey County Council removed the “dragon’s teeth” markings that were at the start of the 30mph because even these were creating noise and vibration for the nearest properties, partly due to the build-up in thickness of the thermoplastic lining material. Surrey County Council initially tried simply to remove the markings, but the remaining “scars” were equally noisy and so the area of carriageway was resurfaced. The effectiveness of the markings was debatable, and they have not been reinstated.

As a result of the consultation in 2004/5, the physical traffic calming proposal was dropped and “virtual” traffic calming was adopted instead to try to reduce vehicle speeds without increasing noise and vibration for residents. This consisted of “speed cushions” being marked, using road lining material, at intervals along the road. They have not been successful either in Smarts Heath Road or Boundary Road where they were also applied, and it seems unlikely that they would be reinstated after any future road resurfacing.

Smarts Heath Road has been included on Surrey County Council’s Speed Management Plan (SMP) for Woking since its inception. The SMP is a list of those roads where concerns have been raised about traffic speeds. Some earlier speed surveys that were carried out to gather data to populate the SMP showed higher than ideal mean and 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds (the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is the speed at which, or below, 85% of traffic is travelling). The most recent speed data indicates slightly lower speeds than have previously been recorded, although some individual speeds are still high. Our personal injury collision database shows that there has been no personal injury collision on Smarts Heath Road in the last 5-year period for which data is available (from 01/01/2019 to 31/12/2021).

## ITEM 6

Members might be aware that there were proposals for the development of a gymnastics centre on the Ten Acre Farm site on the south side of Smarts Heath Road, and it was hoped that changes to the road could be made as part of this development to provide some traffic calming effect without the need for vertical traffic calming. However, nothing has been heard about this proposal for several years.

There used to be two solar powered Vehicle Activated Signs on this length of Smarts Heath Road, with one pointing in each direction. These were life-expired and unserviceable and have been removed in the last year. There are higher priority sites for VAS replacement, and it is unlikely that the Safety Engineering Team will be able to replace these signs quickly. If Borough Members wished to submit a CIL application to fund their replacement, we can liaise with our Safety Engineering Team colleagues regarding any CIL application for the replacement of such signs.

The 30mph signs at the start of the speed limit are very prominent, being on contoured yellow backing boards and including the legend "MAYFORD Please drive carefully" and these are supported by a '30' carriageway roundel marking. Drivers therefore have very clear indication of the speed limit and other than the use of VAS, there are no other signs that would be appropriate. It should be noted that there are a couple of 30mph repeater signs on one of the lamp columns in the road that are not appropriate and should ideally be removed because such signs should not be used in a 30mph road that is illuminated by a system of streetlighting.

### **Question 7 – from Borough Councillor Simon Ashall**

Further to case reference 1961282 at Egley Road in Woking, could the committee receive an update as to when 30mph signage will be forthcoming for the stretch of the road for which a speed reduction was agreed? Drivers are still not obeying the new speed limit and residents feel that amplified signage could help address this problem.

### **Answer from Kevin Patching and the Highways Team**

A search of our correspondence system using that reference number did not give any results, however, in every response to any enquiry that we have received asking for additional signing along Egley Road we have explained that extra signing along the road would not be permitted.

When traffic surveys were carried out in June 2019 as part of the speed limit assessment, prior to the reduction to 30mph, there was one section of the road where the mean speeds in both directions were slightly too high to permit the reduction in accordance with our speed limit policy. This was in the vicinity of the bend and hill at the Hillside and Almond Avenue junctions. Elsewhere, the recorded mean speeds were sufficiently low to permit the speed limit to be reduced from 40mph to 30mph and Surrey Police were happy to support the

reduction on condition that Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) were erected on the length of road where the higher mean speeds had been recorded.

When the speed limit was reduced, the VAS were installed and the 40mph speed limit signs were removed. However, at the northern end of Elgey Road, in Mayford Green and Westfield Road where the new 30mph joined an existing 30mph limit, no new large diameter speed limit terminal signs could be erected (because drivers were no longer passing from one speed limit into a different limit) and signs stating "New 30mph speed limit in force" were erected. These signs are only meant to be temporary, although they are still in place. The only location where new large diameter '30' signs could be erected was on the A320 to the south of the Mayford Roundabout where drivers pass to or from the 50mph limit that extends southwards along the A320.

Unlike higher speed limits, if a road is subject to a 30mph speed limit and is also illuminated by a system of streetlights, no additional, small diameter speed limit repeater signs can be used. In these circumstances, the road is classified as a "restricted road" whereby the 30mph limit is indicated by the system of streetlights. Consequently, no further speed limit signing is permitted for Egley Road.

Speed surveys were undertaken after the speed limit was reduced in Oct/Nov 2020 and at every location there was a slight reduction in the recorded mean speeds.

SITE REF	LOCATION	DIRECTION	MEAN SPEED BEFORE (June 2019)	MEAN SPEED AFTER (31 <sup>st</sup> Oct to 6 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2020)
Site 1	B380 Guildford Road near bridge	Eastbound	34.7	33.3
		Westbound	32.6	30.3
Site 2	A320 at speed limit change south of Mayford roundabout	Northbound	41.5	39
		Southbound	40.9	37.8
Site 3	LC 42 near junction with Drakes Way	Northbound	31.1	30.8
		Southbound	33.3	31.3
Site 4	LC 32 approx mid-way between Hoe Valley School and Almond Ave	Northbound	37.1	34.7
		Southbound	35.8	33.3

ITEM 6

Site 5	LC19 near pedestrian island south of junction with Old Hill	Northbound	33.2	31.6
		Southbound	34.2	33.3
Site 6	Direction sign near junction with Turnoak Lane	Northbound	28.7	28.2
		Southbound	33.3	32.6

**Table 1 – Before and After speed survey data**

Although most speed surveys will generally show an element of speeding with some individual high speeds, it should be noted that in line with Department for Transport guidance, we and Surrey Police use the overall mean speed of traffic, along with the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed to determine the level of any speeding issue in a road, or when we compare one road with another. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is the speed at which, or below, 85% of vehicles are travelling.