

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (RUNNYMEDE)

DATE: 30 SEPTEMBER 2013

LEAD OFFICER: ANDREW MILNE, AREA TEAM MANAGER

SUBJECT: PETITION RESPONSE – LYNE ROAD WIDTH RESTRICTION

DIVISION: FOXHILLS, THORPE AND VIRGINIA WATER

**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The Local Committee received a petition at its meeting on the 8 July 2013 signed by a number of residents from Lyne Road concerning a width restriction installed at the western (Trumps Green Road) end of the road in January/February 2012.

The petition stated that “the undersigned agree that the new barrier raises concerns regarding safety to the lives and property, and this situation must not be allowed to continue”.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Runnymede) is asked to agree that:

- (i) the existing 6’6” width restriction is retained.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The relocation of the width restriction in Lyne Road has resulted in road safety benefits and addressed a problem with drivers of large vehicles trying to use the road as an alternative route when realising they cannot pass under the Trumps Green railway bridge.

Removing or altering the width restriction would involve significant cost and would result in no general highway benefits compared to the existing situation.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

1.1 Lyne Road is a D-class road that provides access to a combination of residential properties and farmland. It is a through road with junctions with Bridge Lane and Trumps Green Road at either end.

1.2 A 6’6” width restriction was installed at the eastern (Bridge Lane) end of Lyne Road a number of years ago by Runnymede Borough Council. It is understood that it was intended to help manage a problem with fly tipping.

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- 1.3 The width restriction required all vehicles wider than 6'6" having to enter/exit Lyne Road from Trumps Green Road to access any properties west of the restriction.
- 1.4 More recently, concerns were raised about large vehicles using this junction due to its alignment, the width of the road and the restricted visibility for vehicles emerging onto Trumps Green Road (due to the railway bridge). It was also reported that some drivers of large vehicles turn into Lyne Road if they are unable to pass under the Trumps Green railway bridge. Due to the narrow width of Lyne Road, these vehicles then had to be reversed back out of the road.
- 1.5 These issues resulted in a request for the width restriction to be relocated to the eastern end of the road. The Runnymede Local Committee considered this request together a number of other suggested schemes and decided to prioritise it for inclusion in its' 2011/12 work programme.
- 1.6 A public consultation was therefore undertaken to seek the views of residents, the emergency services and the Borough Council on the proposal. All residents received a letter detailing the proposal and the reasons for it together with a questionnaire and a pre-paid envelope.
- 1.7 Responses were received from 7 residents (a 20 percent response rate). 4 of the responses favoured the relocation of the width restriction whilst the other 3 responses were against it. Neither Runnymede Borough Council nor any of the emergency services expressed any objection or concerns about the proposal.
- 1.8 The views expressed during the consultation were reported to the Runnymede Local Committee at its meeting held on 10 October 2011. Having considered this information the Local Committee decided that the width restriction should be relocated.
- 1.9 In accordance with statutory processes, a Traffic Regulation Order was then advertised in the local press. A period of 28 days was allowed for representations to be made. None were received. The scheme was therefore programmed for construction and resources procured.
- 1.10 Immediately prior to construction of scheme commencing, SCC was contacted by a resident (Lead Petitioner) who was worried that the proposal would impact on access to his property. The resident had not responded to the public consultation and therefore SCC was not previously aware of his concerns.
- 1.11 The resident has a relatively narrow access and has a specialist trailer used for towing horse drawn carriages to shows. The size of the trailer combined with the width and alignment of the access would make it difficult to turn the vehicle and trailer left into and right out of his property (which would be the required manoeuvres if the width restriction was relocated). The alignment of the access means that it is slightly easier (but still very awkward) to turn right into the access and left out of it with the large trailer.
- 1.12 At the time the resident contacted SCC, it was not possible to cancel the proposed works without incurring a large proportion of the overall scheme costs (since materials had already been procured, contractor resources

programmed and consultation/design/legal works completed). Since the proposal did not impact on reasonable access to the resident's property, the works therefore progressed. Construction of the scheme was completed during January 2012.

- 1.13 Following completion of the scheme, the resident made a formal complaint to SCC and this was investigated by the Customer Relations Team. A complaint was then also subsequently made to the Local Government Ombudsman. In both cases it was concluded that SCC had followed the appropriate processes in implementing the scheme.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 The relocation of the width restriction has resulted in all large vehicles having to enter/exit Lyne Road from its junction with Bridge Road rather than via its junction with Trumps Green Road as previously. This junction is wider, has a better alignment and greater visibility for drivers. The new position of the width restriction also prevents drivers of large vehicles from trying to use Lyne Road as an "escape route" if they cannot pass under the Trumps Green railway bridge.
- 2.2 Prior to the width restriction being relocated, there had been a width restriction at the eastern end of Lyne Road for many years. Large vehicles (including Fire Appliances and Ambulances) could therefore only access the road from one end (which is essentially the same situation for anyone living in a Cul-de-sac). The effect of relocating the width restriction means that large vehicles can still only access the road from one end (but now from the opposite end). As such, the scheme should not have significantly impacted on response times for emergency service vehicles.
- 2.3 The lead petitioner has highlighted the potential risk of access being obstructed for emergency services if materials are fly-tipped in the highway at eastern end of Lyne Road. However, the same risk existed when the width restriction was in its previous position (when there could have been a fly-tip at the opposite end of the road).
- 2.4 The Local Highway Team is not aware of any residents having previously expressed concerns about safety when the width restriction was in its original location. Similarly, there is no record of the Fire Service (or any of the emergency services) having raised any concerns.
- 2.5 The relocation of the width restriction has resulted in a resident (Lead Petitioner) experiencing difficulty in manoeuvring a large specialist trailer into and out of his property. However, it has not affected access to the property for more standard vehicles such as cars and small vans.
- 2.6 The access to the property is relatively narrow and is flanked by 2 small sections of wall (with various signs of damage). Due to the restrictive nature of its design, it would previously still have been difficult to manoeuvre such a large trailer into and out of the property.
- 2.7 Widening the existing access where it joins the highway would overcome these specific difficulties by making it easier for large vehicles to enter/exit the property.

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- 2.8 No other complaints have been received from residents about difficulties accessing their properties following the relocation of the width restriction.

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 The following options could be considered in response to the petition:

Retain the existing 6'6" width restriction

This option would involve no additional costs being incurred but would not address the specific access difficulties being experienced by the lead petitioner.

Remove the width restriction

This would mean large vehicles could access Lyne Road from both ends. This could result in a recurrence of problems with large vehicles getting stuck in the road when drivers seek an alternative route after realising their vehicle will not pass under the Trumps Green Railway Bridge. As such, this option would undo all of the benefits achieved through the existing restriction. It may also result in increased levels of fly-tipping. The cost of removing the restriction would be similar to the cost of its installation, meaning that an additional £15k would be spent to achieve a negative public benefit.

Increase the width of the restriction

The lead petitioner has suggested that the width of the restriction could be increased to 8'9". However, this would effectively have the same impact as removing the width restriction completely since most large vehicles would be able to pass between the barriers. In the circumstances, there would be no need for a Traffic Order or regulatory signs due to the available width. Additional costs have not been calculated for this option, but are likely to be in the order of £2-4k.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 The residents, emergency services and Runnymede Borough Council were consulted prior to the Local Committee previously agreeing that the width restriction should be relocated. The Traffic Regulation Order was then advertised in accordance with legal requirements prior to the 6'6" restriction being imposed. No objections or concerns were raised by any of the emergency services or Borough Council on either occasion.
- 4.2 The same level of consultation would have to be undertaken before making any changes to the existing width restriction.
- 4.3 The lead petitioner has advised SCC that the Fire Service's Local Watch Manager has stated that it is essential that Fire Appliances are able to gain access to properties from both ends of Lyne Road.
- 4.4 SCC has carried out further consultation with the Fire Service, making direct contact with the Local Watch Manager. Although it is always the Fire Service's preference for access to be unimpeded, the Fire Service has no

objection to the existing width restriction. It is recognised that the existing width restriction serves a necessary function and that the Fire Service have the same level of access to all properties along Lyne Road that they had prior to the width restriction's relocation.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The total cost of relocating the width restriction was approximately £15,000 and the scheme was funded from the Local Committee's devolved capital Integrated Transport Scheme budget.
- 5.2 Removing or altering the width restriction would require a further consultation to be undertaken and the existing Traffic Order would have to be revoked (and a new one being made depending on the proposal). The existing bollards/kerb build outs and signs would also have to be removed or amended. The cost of removing or altering the existing restriction would therefore also be approximately £15,000.
- 5.3 There is currently no funding allocated to undertake either of these options. As such, the Local Committee would need to make provision to fund any proposed changes as part of its 2014/15 capital works programme (unless an alternative source of funding could be identified).
- 5.4 There would be no costs associated with retaining the existing 6'6" width restriction.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 The Highway Service is mindful of its needs within this area and attempts to treat all users of the public highway with equality and understanding.

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 The existing width restriction impacts on local residents by preventing vehicles greater than 6'6" in width from entering or exiting Lyne Road from its western end via its junction with Trumps Green Road.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	Set out below.
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report.
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	No significant implications arising from this report.

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8.1 Crime and Disorder implications

There have been problems with fly tipping in Lyne Road for many years. Whilst the original width restriction may have been introduced to help address this issue, the relocation of the width restriction was proposed on road safety grounds and was not expected to have any impact on fly-tipping.

Removing or increasing the width of the existing restriction could result in increased levels of fly-tipping since large vehicles will be able to access Lyne Road more easily from either end.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

9.1 The relocation of the width restriction in Lyne Road took place following full consultation with residents and the emergency services. It has resulted in no significant change either in general access to properties or safety. Large vehicles simply now access the road from the opposite end (and vehicles less than 6'6" wide continue to have access from both ends as previously).

9.2 However, the change means that large vehicles now access Lyne Road using a wider junction, with better alignment and greater visibility for drivers. Furthermore, it prevents drivers of large vehicles from trying to use Lyne Road as an "escape route" if they cannot pass under the Trumps Green railway bridge.

9.3 Removing or altering the width restriction would involve significant cost and would result in no general highway benefits compared to the existing situation.

9.4 It is therefore recommended that the existing 6'6" width restriction is retained.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

10.1 The lead petitioner will be advised of the Local Committee's decision.

10.2 No additional action will be required if the Officer Recommendation is approved by the Committee.

Contact Officer:

Jason Gosden, Senior Engineer, Telephone: 0300 2001003

Consulted:

Residents, emergency services, Borough Council and Local Members were all consulted prior to the width restriction originally being relocated.

Annexes:

None

Sources/background papers:

Report to Local Committee on 10 October 2011, Item 15 – Lyne Road Width
Restriction

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