

Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth Decisions

27 February 2024

Title: Stop the closure of the Right turn at the bottom of 7 Hills Road in Cobham**Statement:**

We the undersigned petition Surrey County Council to Allow the junction with 7 Hills Road and Byfleet Road to keep its right turn once the M25J10 works are completed -the Highways scheme never included this closure it was requested by Surrey CC without consultation or even advising local residents.

Justification:

Surrey CC should reverse their decision and keep both right and left turns at the end of 7 Hills Road.

Submitted by: Julia Lindon-Travers

RESPONSE:

The response to this petition sets out:

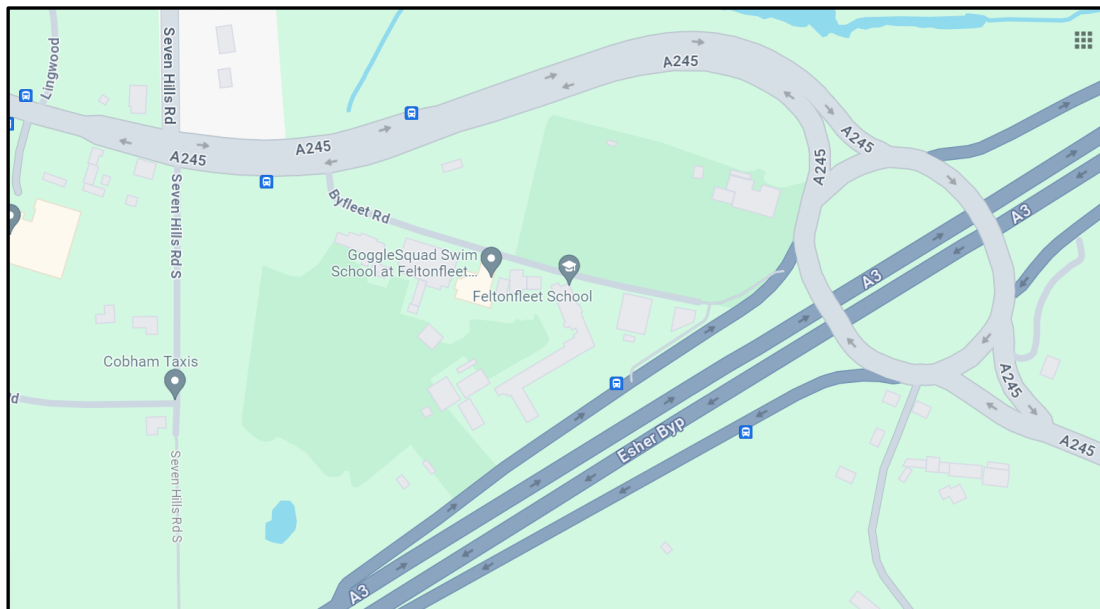
- 1 The need for the proposed change for a left only turn from Seven Hills Road North
- 2 Inclusion in the National Highways scheme and traffic assessment
- 3 The Consultation Undertaken
- 4 The views of the Secretary of State
- 5 Summary
- 6 Next Steps

1 The need for the proposed change for a left only turn from Seven Hills Road North

The need for the proposed change for a left turn only from Seven Hills Road North is as a direct result of the impacts from the M25 Junction 10 / A3 Wisley interchange project. These impacts and potential mitigation were identified during the Development Consent Order (DCO) process. The DCO is the process whereby National Highways secured Secretary of State for Transport permission to construct the scheme, following the consultation processes.

The elements of the M25 Junction 10 scheme that impact on the A245/B365 Seven Hills junction are:

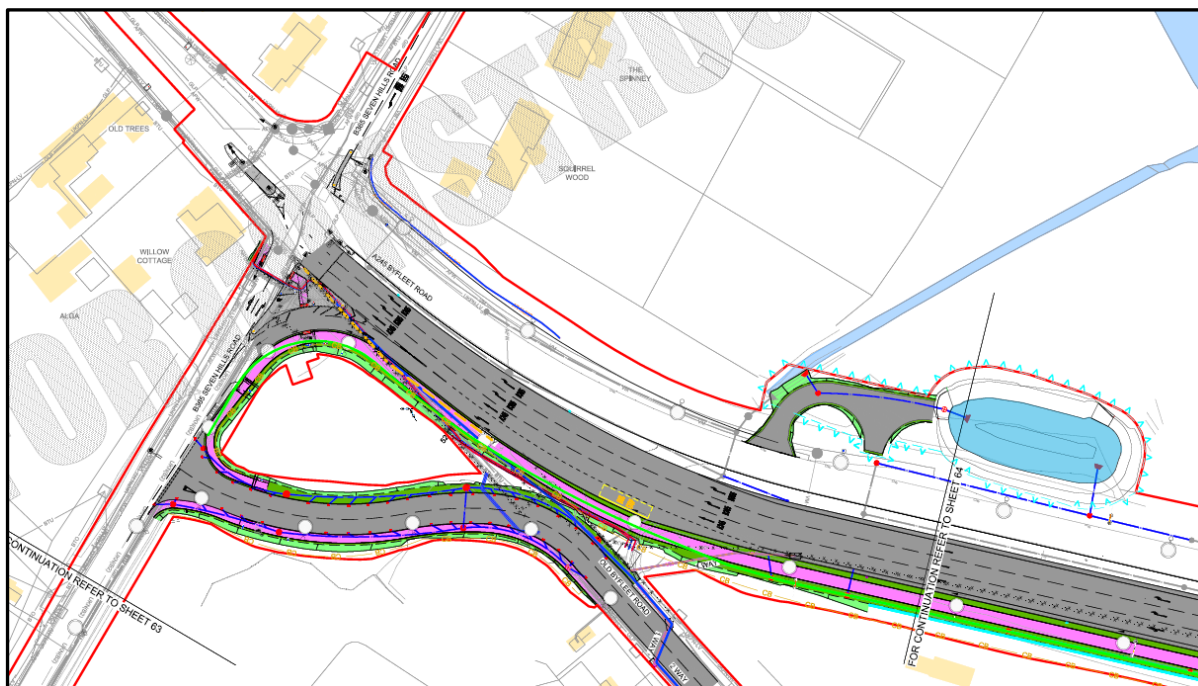
- (i) Changes to the A3 northbound off slip to address road safety issues on the A3,
- (ii) Closing side road accesses from the A3 and re-routing these on a new link road connecting into Seven Hills South,
- (iii) New pedestrian cycle routes linking to the A245/B365 Seven Hills junction along the A245 from Painshill Roundabout and parallel to the A3 which then link into Seven Hills South.



(i) Changes to the A3 northbound off slip to address road safety issues on the A3

There is an existing road safety issue on the A3 that traffic on the A3 northbound off slip queues back on the main A3, This is a significant road safety issue and one of the main objectives that the M25 Junction 10 scheme was approved to resolve.

To address this issue the scheme includes widening both the A3 off slip and the A245 westbound from the Painshill Roundabout to the A245/B365 Seven Hills Road junction. This results in traffic from the A3 arriving sooner and at higher speeds onto the A245 towards the A245/B365 Seven Hills Road junction. Therefore to improve road safety the current central reserve gap allowing the right turn into Feltonfleet school is to be closed and a new access to Feltonfleet School provided from Seven Hills Road South (see extract of the proposed new layout below).



This additional volume of traffic onto the A245 also creates a need to reduce the consequential queuing at the A245/B365 Seven Hills Road junction and the associated risk of high speed traffic from the A3 encountering this queuing.

To mitigate this impact modifications to the A245/B365 Seven Hills junction were identified. This included a left turn only from Seven Hills North as this will remove a stage from the traffic signals and as a result increase the capacity and reduce the queues. A lower speed limit from 70mph to 40mph is also being implemented.

Traffic modelling showed that removing the right and ahead turn movements from Seven Hills Road North to A245 would increase capacity at the junction, and as these movements were a small proportion of the overall vehicle numbers this left only turn would provide a much wider overall benefit.

(ii) Closing accesses from the A3 and re-routing these on a new link connecting into Seven Hills South

A further issue that the M25 Junction 10 / A3 scheme addresses is the road safety issue arising from the number of side access roads off/onto the A3 serving the San Domenico / Starbucks site and several residential properties.

To address this, the project closes off these accesses and reroute them via a separate private access road parallel to the A3 which links into Seven Hills South.

Again for road safety reasons the existing central reserve gap on the A245 to access Feltonfleet school is also being closed, and rerouted into a new road which again links into Seven Hills South.

These road safety changes increase the traffic flows/volumes and drive a need to improve the capacity of the A245/B365 Seven Hills Road junction. Therefore, again by providing the left turn only out of Seven Hills North, capacity improvements can be achieved at the Seven Hills junction to accommodate this additional traffic.

(iii) New cycle routes linking to the A245/B365 Seven Hills junction along the A245 from Painshill Roundabout and parallel to the A3 which then link into Seven Hills South

A further road safety objective of the M25 Junction 10 scheme is to ban cycling on the widened A3 and instead provide new pedestrian and cycle routes linking to the A245/B365 Seven Hills junction along the A245 from Painshill Roundabout and parallel to the A3 which then link into Seven Hills South.

These cycle routes would also link into existing and planned future Surrey County Council pedestrian and cycle routes in the area and along Seven Hills Road North to provide a coherent and joined up cycle network.

As such National Highways have additional funding to design and implement a crossing across the A245 and provide a safe north-south pedestrian/cycle crossing across the A245 and to Feltonfleet school and as such would not need to be funded by Surrey County Council.

This crossing would make it safe for pedestrians and cyclists who wish to cross the A245 and increase sustainable travel options by encouraging people to walk and cycle.

Cyclists who may be travelling along Seven Hills Road North instead of using the off road facility will have the opportunity to dismount and use the proposed pedestrian/cycle crossing facilities to continue their journey if they are going west on Byfleet Road or south towards the new M25 Junction 10 facilities beyond Seven Hills South.

This pedestrian/cycle crossing is currently being designed by National Highways but as the crossing will need to be incorporated into the traffic signal stages/hold some traffic movements when pedestrians and cyclists activate the costing it will need the improved capacity at the junction, which can only be provided by, a left turn only out of Seven Hills Road North.

National Highways consultants are currently designing the crossing and therefore a decision is sought whether to progress with the crossing which can be provided with the left turn only which provides the capacity for the crossing or whether to not

provide the crossing and allow the higher capacity for vehicles with just the left turn only.

2 Inclusion in the National Highways scheme and traffic assessment

For the operational and safety reasons stated above, National Highways, presented this change to the junction in the Legal Development Consent Order, and the associated documents, which was approved by the Secretary of State for Transport.

A disbenefit of a left turn only from Seven Hills Road North is that traffic wishing to travel west towards Byfleet out of Seven Hills Road North would have to travel extra distance.

The traffic modelling indicates that those drivers with an origin and/or destination close to the A245/B365 Seven Hills Road junction will continue to use the A245/B365 Seven Hills Road junction, and this will involve travelling an additional relatively short distance (less than 1 mile) to U-Turn at the Painshill Roundabout to then travel in the direction of Byfleet. However, traffic from Seven Hills North wishing to make this manoeuvre are a small proportion of the overall vehicle numbers at the junction.

Although the model is showing the additional travel time could be up to nearly 2½ minutes longer at certain times, it is indicating that at other times of the day journey times will be quicker; this is because when the junction just permits the left turn out of Seven Hills Road North it is operating more efficiently than compared with accommodating the right turn manoeuvre as well.

For those drivers with origins and destinations further away, the traffic model suggests they will choose to reroute and avoid the junction altogether. However if the right turn is permitted the junction would operate less efficiently and with reduced capacity means that drivers would also choose to use alternative routes.

In addition improvements are to be made to both the road markings and traffic signal vehicle detection at the Painshill Roundabout to improve and manage the flow of traffic using this junction.

Therefore it is considered that this left only turn would provide a much wider overall benefit to the highway network in terms of both road safety and traffic capacity.

3 The Consultation Undertaken

The consultation for the M25 Junction 10 A3 Wisley Interchange scheme, including changes to Surrey County Council's road network was undertaken by National Highways as the promotor of the scheme as they all formed part of the M25 Junction 10 DCO proposals.

This consultation included various public consultations and a wide range of organisations including Surrey County Council as the Highway Authority for the Local Road Network (such as A245).

National Highways have advised that they consulted significantly on the M25 Junction 10 project throughout the development of the scheme. Initially, proposals for the entirety of the M25 Junction 10 scheme were consulted at the beginning of 2018, resulting in some 2000 responses. During the development of the scheme in 2018, Surrey County Council identified the potential impact on the A245/B365 Seven Hills Road junction, as a direct result of the M25 Junction 10 scheme.

To address these impacts Surrey County Council, in response to the consultation, requested that National Highways improve the overall capacity at the junction. The left turn only option was identified and assessed and resulted in an overall benefit to the highway network in terms of

both road safety and traffic capacity. National Highways therefore incorporated this mitigation within the M25 junction 10 scheme and included this in their consultations.

National Highways have also confirmed that they undertook a further consultation between 3rd April 2019 and 3rd May 2019 and included reference to the proposed Seven Hills junction changes. This design was also the subject of the DCO examination in public by the Planning Inspectorate of the National Highways DCO application. The Development Consent Order (DCO) examination process was widely publicised, and any interested party was invited to submit representations from 6th September 2019. The examination itself lasted for 8 months between 12th November 2019 to 12th July 2020 and was available for anyone to submit written or verbal material.

National Highways also undertook post DCO award public information events in June 2022 and used an engagement van to raise awareness of the scheme with events during late June in Guildford Town Centre, Ripley Village, RHS Wisley, Cobham Sainsburys, Woking Town Centre and Tesco Brooklands.

National Highways and Surrey County Council have subsequently met with the petitioners on two occasions (27th October 2023 and 15th February 2024) to discuss the consultation process and the reasons for the left turn only out of Seven Hills Road in terms of both road safety and capacity. As a result of these meetings National Highways are investigating how late in the M25 Junction 10 delivery programme the left turn only could be implemented to allow other parts of the M25 Junction 10 scheme to be completed and how they would impact on the A245/B365 Seven Hills Road junction under current conditions.

4 The views of the Secretary of State

The M25 Junction 10 A3 Wisley Interchange scheme has required a Development Consent Order to progress, this is a legal document and to obtain this National Highways has had to undertake consultations and submit the scheme to an examination in Public by the Planning Inspectorate who then produced its recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport to determine whether the scheme as presented should progress. In May 2022 the Secretary of State subsequently confirmed that the scheme should progress including works on Surrey County Council's road network including the A245 and at the Seven Hills Road junction.

As the left turn only at the Seven Hills Road North junction forms part of the M25 Junction 10 project and has passed through the DCO process it is now part of the DCO legal documentation approved by the Secretary of State. Therefore, it would be the Secretary of State's decision as to whether any amendments to the DCO legal documents, including the left turn only, could be made and not Surrey County Council's.

It is understood that the petitioners have written to the Secretary of State for Transport regarding the left turn only from Seven Hills Road North. The Secretary of State has responded (in December 2023) that the scheme has followed due process and that decisions such as these are not taken lightly and that extensive analysis is completed by National Highways during the development of any scheme to ensure that the proposed solution represents the best option. The Secretary of State also confirmed that there was a robust process in place to ensure that the consideration of these types of projects is appropriate and that during the DCO application National highways will have evidenced the need for the scheme, the impacts, benefits and that they have sufficiently consulted on their proposals.

Therefore, into account the need for the left turn only for both road safety and capacity/congestion reasons it is not anticipated that the Secretary of State will come to a different decision regarding the provision of the left turn only from Seven Hills Road North.

5 Summary

Without the National Highways M25 DCO scheme the changes at the A245/B365 Seven Hills Road junction would not have been required. The effect of the M25 Junction 10 A3 Wisley Interchange project is that drivers exiting the M25 will arrive at the Seven Hills Road junction sooner than they do now. Given that traffic frequently queues back down the A3 off-slip onto the mainline carriageway, causing a safety hazard, the chance of the queueing becoming worse meant that the Seven Hills Road junction needed improving as part of the overall scheme.

While it is acknowledged under the current proposals some drivers would be disadvantaged by needing to travel further and use the Painshill junction to perform a U-turn, many would realise a benefit. The proposals also permit improved access to and from Feltonfleet school and the provision of walking and cycling facilities. Without providing the left turn only scheme it is not possible to introduce pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities at this junction, including to and from Feltonfleet school.

The decision for the M25 Junction 10 A3 Wisley Interchange project lay with the Secretary of State for Transport who determined the scheme should progress, including the changes at A245/B365 Seven Hills Road junction and the Secretary of State has reiterated this in his recent correspondence with the petitioner.

For the reasons stated above Surrey County Council consider that the proposed changes to the A245/B365 Seven Hills Road junction address and mitigate the impacts arising from the National Highways M25 Junction 10 DCO approved project.

6 Next Steps

6.1 Left Turn Only

Following the meetings with the petitioners National Highways are investigating how late in the M25 Junction 10 delivery programme the left turn only could be implemented to allow other parts of the M25 Junction 10 scheme to be completed and how they would impact on the A245/B365 Seven Hills Road junction under current conditions.

National Highways would then still continue to then construct the left turn only as it is part of the M25 Junction 10 Legal DCO.

However, once the National Highways M25 Junction 10 scheme is complete and the provisions of their legal requirements under the DCO are met National Highways will “hand over” the completed works on Surrey County Council’s road network back to the County Council to maintain.

Surrey County Council can then monitor the operation of the left turn only at the A245/B365 Seven Hills Traffic signals and traffic flows/speeds along the A245 to assess whether any changes are justified taking account of how road users may have adapted to the new road layout.

6.2 Pedestrian/Cycle Crossing

National Highways consultants are currently designing the crossing and therefore a decision is sought whether to progress with the crossing which can be provided with the left turn only which provides the capacity for the crossing or whether to not provide the crossing and allow the higher capacity for vehicles with just the left turn only.

Matt Furniss

Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth

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