

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (REIGATE & BANSTEAD)

DATE: 16 SEPTEMBER 2013
SUBJECT: PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS
DIVISION: ALL REIGATE & BANSTEAD DIVISIONS



1. Consultation on Planning Applications – Prof Garth Swanson

“When the borough council receives a planning application, it asks the County Highways department for comment. The response is made on a form with a number of check boxes and the opportunity to state if the site was visited. Having looked at a number of applications with which I have close acquaintance, I find that the responses are often made very casually without even visiting the site.

A close examination of the case would certainly have brought forward a completely different response from the County. Is the Local Committee satisfied that the Highways department is acting diligently in this respect?”

The Chairman responds on behalf of the Local Committee:

“Every single application published on the Reigate and Banstead weekly list of planning applications is looked at by an officer from Transport Development Planning (TDP).

TDP will consider whether the application will have an impact on road safety as the primary concern, but in addition, concerns relating to traffic congestion, and wider transportation policy issues are included in our assessment. These wider considerations include the need to reduce reliance on the private car, and issues relating to parking, changes to access, pedestrian and cycle access/parking, rights of way and travel planning to name a few. This happens initially as a desk top assessment - looking at the application documents submitted and using local knowledge to make a decision on whether or not there is likely to be any impact on the public highway.

If the decision is made that there is unlikely to be any impact on the public highway, the form referred to below is filled in and submitted to Reigate and Banstead Borough Council without a site visit being made. Officers have assured me that the response is therefore not made casually but only after careful consideration as described above. Officers also state that they err on the side of caution with these assessments and will always choose to make a site visit even if they are unsure about whether there will be an impact.

On applications where officers consider there is likely to be an impact that needs further consideration and a site visit, they do not fill in the form referred to in the question, but complete what is known as a CR1 document - making recommendations either for approval with conditions or refusal - depending on their assessment.

It is also worth noting that, in Reigate and Banstead alone, TDP are consulted on approximately 2,000 applications a year, and therefore in terms of resource officers have to use their knowledge and experience to make desk top assessments as it is not possible to make site visits for the more minor applications where the impact is likely to be insignificant or negligible.”

Contact Officer:

Martin Gilmour, Senior Transport Development Planning Officer, 020 8541 7423

2. Proposed 20mph Zone for Chipstead (relates to Agenda Item 13) – Mr Vic Parks

“I am opposed to the Chipstead Residents Association proposal to introduce 20mph zones on the following grounds:

There is a real danger that the anti-motorist lobby will end up treating humans like robots. For example, automatic speed limiters would prevent drivers from making reasonable driving judgements. Thus – controlled by a computer.

Safety is the “unsinkable argument” often used by “anti” pressure groups. The anti-motorist lobby uses this excuse (Chipstead RA in this case), even though surveys show that Britain is one of the safest places to drive with the safest drivers in the world. Whatever measures are used to make roads 100% safe (accident free), it is an impossible dream. “Making us safe” over the past few decades has been at the cost of more and more unreasonably restrictions, bizarre safety measures and the making of huge in-roads into our civil liberties.

Although a motorist, I occasionally ride a bike. A few motorists do need educating to take care when near cyclists. 20mph zones will not deter these motorists who put cyclists at risk. I believe few motorists deeply resent cyclists and, sometimes, deliberately put them at risk. Apart from the increase in road rage 20mph zones are likely to cause, pollution will increase in low gears. From recent research into 20mph zones, accidents will go up, which contradicts the safety argument! Vehicle wear will also increase substantially. At peak times it is rare to get above 20mph and for off-peak times, 20mph 24/7 is unreasonable.

I wonder whether the influential lobby behind the proposal is the horse-riding fraternity. For example, the report states that “...the lanes were originally intended for horses.” It adds: “[Cyclists and horse riders]...provide a compelling reason for the adoption of the 20mph zone.” I suppose these take precedence over the thousands of people using the local road networks to travel to work, business, domestic, social and pleasure, etc?

According to their report, they considered privatising the roads so that they could “...bring about road closures.” Going down this somewhat selfish road could lead to dividing our national road networks into toll gated roads to be used by a privileged few. Currently, we all own the public road network and pay for it through motor taxes, amongst other means.

Although I sympathise with the Chipstead residents wishing to keep a rural feel about the village, it is a reality that the Greater London sprawl and technological developments, over decades, have finally caught up with them. Chipstead Residents' Association needs to be very careful about what it wishes for. If passed, this proposal would be a precedent and a "thin end of the wedge". Before long, this could spread around other parts of the borough, surrounding areas and nationally like a plague. In Brighton and Hove, for example, the attack on motorists over recent years has reached a crescendo by the council's proposal to make most roads 20mph. This has caused considerable public anger. It is clear that the public do not want them!"

Verbal response to be provided during the discussion on Agenda Item 13.

3. Reigate and Banstead Parking Review Ratification of Proposal of Consultation re. Parking Restrictions – Manor Road, Reigate (Agenda Item 9) – Mrs Jane Straker

"I represent the undersigned members of the community and co-authors of this statement, interested in safety for all road users in the area of Manor Road. Unfortunately several of these persons are unable to attend due to work, family and holiday commitments.

We all supported the original proposal for all day parking restrictions in Manor Road, believing that it addressed our concerns for the safety of all users of Manor Road during the working day. However, we feel that the revised proposal and recommendation is inadequate and will only address our concerns for a small part of the day, and that after 11am, there will be a build up of parking and the current problems will remain for the balance of the day.

We do appreciate that the road is a public resource, and that demands for parking facilities are ever increasing, but feel that this should not be at the expense of safety to road users and residents, which is our sole concern.

Under the consultation, it was proposed that a "No waiting restriction, Monday to Saturday, 08.00 to 18.30 hours" on the south side of Manor Road from the proposed extended double yellow lines on the south side of the road, to the boundary between numbers 5 and 7 be implemented. The recommendation before the committee today is to "Introduce a revised proposal on Manor Road, 'no waiting Monday-Friday, 10am-11am'".

Manor Road, between Somers Road and the boundary of numbers five and nine is made up of two reciprocal bends. Motorists regularly park on both sides of the road and pavement. This compromises the safety of all road users in the immediate area of Manor Road, Pilgrims' Way, Nutley Lane and Somers Road, due to the visibility lines of Manor Road through the bends being totally obscured by parked cars. Negotiating the crossroads of these four roads is extremely dangerous due to lack of visibility. In addition, the need for access from driveways onto the road is disregarded by parking motorists, who often park inconsiderately on or beyond the edges of driveways. Residents endeavouring to exit their driveways have to do so blindly as it is impossible to see whether any vehicles are approaching. Again, this has proved to be an extremely dangerous manoeuvre (these situations are demonstrated by the accompanying photographic evidence).

Despite the recommendations before the committee, the residents remain extremely concerned about the safety of all persons using this area during the time parking will be permitted on the south side of the road.

We would obviously prefer the original proposal, but at the very least, would ask the committee to consider extending by one hour the hours of the restriction of parking indicated in the recommendation, and would suggest an additional one hour period of restricted parking, say between 2pm and 3pm. This would exercise some control over both the morning and the afternoon sessions of long-term parking motorists, but still permit Micklefield parents to park when collecting their children at 3.15pm.

However, the priority is to try and deal with the matter of safety for all road users, and regardless of which scheme is adopted, we feel strongly that there should be a review of the situation within three to six months, to ensure that these road proposals satisfy the objective. If the dangerous situation remains, even for part of the day, we, the residents, will press for further action."

The Chairman responds on behalf of the Local Committee:

"Manor Road and the surrounding roads in this area are used for parking by residents, rail commuters, school parents, local workers and other visitors. Parking space is generally at a premium in this part of Reigate and reducing it will generally have a knock on effect and can cause displacement elsewhere.

The advertised proposal in this location, to introduce a single yellow line waiting restriction with operational times between 08.00 and 18.30 Monday to Saturday, was requested and proposed to reduce obstructive parking and help improve access for residents on this length.

The statutory consultation process resulted in 12 objections from school parents and nearby residents (including a 233 signature petition) highlighting concerns about this proposal. These were that the planned restriction would reduce parking for the nearby school at pick up and drop off times and that other nearby residents and their visitors would have less space to park as a result of displacement.

The modified proposal is to have a restriction between 10.00 and 11.00am, Monday to Friday. This will prevent all day commuter parking on this stretch of road whilst still allowing school parents to park for the school run for short periods each day and other residents to use the road outside the restriction times.

Whilst we recognise the concerns raised in Mrs Straker's question about some residents difficulties using their driveways on occasion, this problem is not uncommon in towns and villages across the UK. Obstruction of a drop kerb access on to the highway is an offence and can be reported to Surrey police or the Reigate and Banstead parking team for enforcement action. The revised proposal being put to the Committee for approval is a compromise to try to meet the needs of all concerned and should improve the current situation."

Contact Officer:

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