



WOKING JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE: 13 MARCH 2019

SUBJECT: WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS x 3

DIVISION: WOKING

Question 1: Mr Bob Tilley, Woking resident

Please can you advise when the vehicle activated signs (VAS) on Coldharbour Road, outside Pyrford Primary, which is now a very large school, will be mended?

Answer from Highways Officers

Officers have previously been in correspondence with Mr Tilley about this issue and, specifically, with regard to the budgets that are available to repair faulty Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS).

Maintenance of VAS is undertaken by our Safety Engineering Team using a relatively modest budget that is also intended to fund the maintenance of School flashing signs, sometimes referred to as “wig-wags”. This budget is also intended to fund the task of programming the “wig-wags” so they flash at the correct times of day and during term-time only. Our colleagues in the Safety Engineering Team have advised that out of their £20,000 maintenance budget for the 2018/19 financial year and which is for the entire county and not just Woking, the “wig-wag” maintenance and programming accounted for approximately £12,000 which leaves just £8,000, county-wide, for VAS maintenance. This is insufficient for the maintenance that is required to bring all of the County’s non-working VAS back into operation. It is expected that the Safety Engineering Team’s budget will remain the same for the 2019/20 financial year.

The existing signs, which flash “30” and “SLOW DOWN” when working and triggered, are solar powered signs and were installed in May 2007. Experience with this type of sign by this manufacturer suggests that the issue might be with the battery that is stored in the base of the post on which the sign is mounted and which is charged by the solar panel. Replacement of the battery can be relatively inexpensive (the last time that this had to be done, several years ago, the cost was in the region of £300) but there will be also be a cost for the contractor to attend site and assess the sign to determine exactly what the problem is. Given the age of the sign and based on experience, it is likely that additional problems will be identified. These could include the need for a new control board – the last time this had to be done, the cost was just under £1,000. In another instance, when a new control board and some replacement LED clusters were required, the cost was in the region of £1,900 (compare this to the cost of a mains powered speed limit repeater type VAS that could be installed for approximately £2250 and which would have a 6 year warranty).

As a result and assuming that it is actually cost effective to do so, getting these two signs back into working order could require a significant amount of the VAS element

ITEM 4

of the Safety Engineering Team's budget. Even if the signs were repaired, the original units will still be 12 years old and will potentially be more susceptible to further faults and expense. Complete replacement of the units, with mains powered versions of a type that experience has shown to be more reliable, might be the most appropriate option, although to replace both units, including the removal of the old solar powered units, would cost in the region of £5,500.

The Woking Joint Committee will have noted that there is no revenue maintenance budget for the 2019/20 financial year and so the repair of the solar powered units could not be undertaken by the Joint Committee. Whilst there is a recommendation that £10,000 of the capital budget is set aside for signing and lining work and for the provision of dropped kerbs, it is not proposed that this should be used for the provision of Vehicle Activated Signs because of the individual unit cost of these signs; VAS have previously only been funded from the capital budget if they form part of a larger speed reducing / safety scheme. The Safety Engineering Team's maintenance budget is intended to be used for the maintenance of existing signs rather than their complete replacement with new ones.

Members have their own allocation which has sometimes been used to fund VAS. However, with the absence of a revenue budget during 2019/20, it is recommended that this allocation is not fully or substantially committed on a single project such as the provision of VAS as this may be required to deal with routine maintenance issues that are likely to arise throughout the year.

We will continue to work with our colleagues in the Safety Engineering Team to identify other potential sources of funding that could be used to repair, or ideally replace, the VAS in Coldharbour Road.

Supplementary Question taken at the meeting

I understand that capital funds are needed to replace the VAS signs and note that WBC have funds to upgrade car parking signage and systems, so could this be used?

Answer given at the meeting

The car park funds are not appropriate for this, but Cllr Liz Bowes proposed to look at whether she could use her Members allocation.

Question 2: Mr Richard Thomas, Woking resident

When street furniture [railings] are damaged by RTCs etc are these replaced /repaired and painted and within what timescale?

Answer from Chairman on behalf of the Committee

When pedestrian guardrails are damaged, they are not always replaced; more often than not, repair of a damaged panel in-situ is not possible due to the type and extent of the damage.

For a number of years, there has been a general move towards trying to de-clutter the highway, which includes the rationalisation of guardrailing. In this same vein, Transport for London undertook an assessment of guardrailing with a view to removing as much unnecessary and redundant railing as possible.

Whilst Surrey County Council has never undertaken a similar exercise, damaged guardrailing is often assessed to see if it needs to be replaced and whether

removing the damaged railing (and possibly additional lengths) would compromise pedestrian safety. It is commonly thought that guardrailing must improve pedestrian safety but it is interesting that after TfL had removed large amounts of railing, an “after study” found that, *“The results showed that following the removal of railings at the 70 sites there was a statistically significant fall of 56% (43 to 19) in the number of collisions involving pedestrians who were killed or seriously injured. There was also a fall of 48% (109 to 57) in the number of KSI collisions for all users.”*

Replacement guardrails are generally unpainted, galvanised steel units and they are usually not painted after installation, principally for cost and maintenance purposes.

If a damaged guardrail is causing a danger, it is likely to be removed quickly via our “A & E” emergency response mechanism. However, replacement of railings can take between 3 and 6 months, although depending upon our contractor’s workload and our priorities, it can be longer.

Question 3: Ross Daniell, local resident

Can a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) be introduced prohibiting vehicles parking on the Foot (pavements) and Cycle paths within the boundaries of Knaphill?

Answer from Parking Strategy and Implementation Team

Firstly, the Joint Committee do not support pavement parking because it is antisocial and causes problems for pedestrians and vulnerable road users, however we have limited powers to prevent it.

Pavement parking is a growing problem in many parts of Surrey and the UK as the number of vehicles on the road increases and off street parking is not always available. Outside of Greater London, in the absence of waiting restrictions, it is not specifically prohibited to park on the pavement and when it takes place can only be enforced by the police where an obstruction has been caused.

As you suggest councils do have powers to make Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO’s) to formalise or ban pavement parking (and then enforce this) but it can be an expensive process requiring a statutory advert in the local paper and extensive signing to impose the restriction over an area on each occasion. For example in Knaphill, the national regulations covering parking restrictions would require us to put up boundary signs and repeaters on lamp columns across the whole area. This could cost tens of thousands of pounds for one area so we rarely have these resources to seriously consider this type of approach.

We carry out regular parking reviews in Woking Borough and respond to parking problems with this process. It is possible this more targeted approach could help solve any specific pavement parking difficulties you experience. Requests for new restrictions to be included in the next Woking Parking Review [can be made here](#) (on the SCC website) and a report detailing the proposed locations will be considered by the committee in September this year.

In the meantime the best course of action is to call Surrey Police on the non emergency number (111) when there are clear cases of obstruction caused by pavement parking.

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