



SCC LOCAL COMMITTEE IN ELMBRIDGE – 8 MARCH 2021

AGENDA ITEM 05

WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question 1: Peter Barnes

Re: Lay-by on Ashley Road, Walton-on-Thames

Background

There is currently a lay-by on Ashley Road which was created for a beauty salon on the opposite side as compensation for increased parking restrictions in some local roads over 20 years ago. The shop has since been formally changed to a residential unit by planning request and has operated as a residential address for over 10 years. The layby now serves no purpose, all surrounding houses have substantial off street parking, the time constraints on parking are very short (2hours), there are only between 3-4 real parking spaces available (due to the road configuration) and the road itself barely accommodates any safe parking as it is so narrow. It isn't suitable for parking for either the high street (900mt) nor the train station (1000mts), both of which have substantial designated parking. It is in a state of disrepair, requires resurfacing and it is unsightly to the street scene.

Proposal

As the resident directly facing this lay-by we are willing to fund the conversion of this lay-by to a green area with trees and planting, replacing the tarmac currently there.

The benefits to the community would be as follows;

1. The street scene would be improved.
2. Recently lost green areas (nearby Stompond Lane development for example) would be partially offset, between 15-20 trees planted.
3. Money would be saved on resurfacing and the ongoing maintenance that is currently required and will be required in the future.
4. There would be no loss of access to services nor access for pedestrians (pavements would remain untouched).

Local residents, Surrey Highways, and the local Councillor are supportive of the proposition. I include supportive correspondence, a diagram of the proposed change and a current picture.

This I believe would be a rare occurrence of real green development in the area, this could be used as an example of such to other similar situations and would be done with a net saving to Surrey Council.

In terms of cost, a structure needs to be agreed, however my proposal would be to fund the conversion bar some minor kerb changes which could be done by Surrey highways. I would investigate the possibility of grants for the trees and I hope this could be part of Surrey' commitment to plant 1.2m trees by 2030. We realise the

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conversion of the road would be substantial but we are willing to fund this under the right conditions, we would also be willing to maintain the area going forward, something that isn't happening to the adjacent small green area. In order to protect against any reversal in the future (after funding the conversion) we would like to have a long lease to the land or actual ownership, whichever is deemed legally appropriate/acceptable.

Please may we have your approval on the proposal?

Supporting information



Correspondence with Surrey Highways

Dear Peter Barnes

Thank you for your enquiry reported on 03 Dec 2020 14:20 which has been logged as follows:

Reference number: 1735769

Location: ASHLEY ROAD, WALTON-ON-THAMES

Details: Carriageway and Footway - Carriageway enquiry

Cllr Samuels has contacted us yesterday to ask that we respond to you. I have looked up records of previous correspondence and can see you have had a response from Nick Healy in February. Please see below.

Changing the parking bay into a tree planted verge area would need to be funded and approved by the local committee to include on their list for prioritisation. That said, if external funding were available, then it may influence committee's decision but would still have to fit within their highways programme.

I can see you have already contacted Cllr Samuels which is a good start .

Dear Mr Barnes,

Reference number: 1459451

Location: ASHLEY ROAD, WALTON-ON-THAMES

Your argument is very logical and (for me at least) quite persuasive. Ultimately any decision to alter the subject layby would be made by Surrey County Council's Local Committee for Elmbridge. All the County Councillors in the Elmbridge area sit on this Committee, together with an equal number of Borough Councillors. This Committee has delegated authority to change parking arrangements, and also has access to funding that could be used to make minor changes to road layouts.

I would suggest approaching your County Councillor to explore whether or not your suggestion is likely to be received favourably by this Committee.

Kind regards,
Nick Healey
Area Highways Manager
Surrey Highways

Officer response:

Mr Barnes has raised this question and suggestion to Surrey Highways and was advised of the processes required, i.e. "Changing the parking bay into a tree planted verge area would need to be funded and approved by the local committee to include on their list for prioritisation. That said, if external funding were available, then it may influence committee's decision but would still have to fit within their highways programme." Hence, Mr Barnes has raised the question to the committee.

The layby is subject to parking controls; stay is limited to three hours, Monday to Friday between 8am and 6pm, with no return within two hours.

We do not hold data on usage of the layby but photographic images* suggest the layby is regularly used, with space for approximately six vehicles. Should parking restrictions be removed we would anticipate usage of the layby would increase. SCC's Parking Team has requested that Elmbridge Borough Council monitor the location to ascertain occupation and usage. However, the ongoing restrictions due to the Covid pandemic may not allow for an accurate representation at the current time.

In terms of amenity it is approximately 500 metres from the layby to the southern end of the High Street and 650 metres to the High Street access to The Heart shopping centre. This equates to a walk of approximately 8 minutes*. The layby is approximately 900 metres from Walton Railway Station, via Ashley Park Road, a walk of approximately 11 minutes*.

[* Source: Google Streetview; Google Maps]

As highlighted in the question, the costs to convert the layby could be substantial. Further investigation would be required to determine the construction costs. These works would need to consider:

- Most suitable treatment for the area, e.g. existing make-up of the ground below surface level and depth available for proposed tree planting.
- Impact on the road drainage system – there are existing drainage gullies in the layby as well as the Ashley Road main carriageway.
- Impact on underground utilities – there is a service cover within the layby carriageway surface.

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- Provision of access for utility maintenance – there are utility boxes situated to the back of the footway adjacent to the layby. Maintenance vehicles are currently likely to use the layby when accessing the boxes.
- Suitable planting

These issues could be investigated, and potential costs determined, in the context of a feasibility study. A study could also establish the usage or demand for parking in the layby and provide commentary as to the effect of a net reduction in on-street parking.

Future maintenance, such as cutting of grass or planting of bulbs and shrubs, can be carried out by residents under a cultivation licence.

As well as construction and ongoing maintenance costs, a scheme to convert the layby would require a legal traffic order to prohibit vehicles from the area, which would remain public highway. Should a scheme be developed, statutory consultation would be required to implement. There is no guarantee of an outcome favourable to a scheme to convert the layby.

Should external funding be available, as suggested by Mr Barnes, development of the scheme would be subject to resources. Committee agreed its highways programme for 2021-22 in November 2020. New works would usually be promoted and included in the next available programme, which would likely be 2022-23, with consideration of other priorities. To be able to move ahead with the requested scheme before 2022-23 another scheme, which is already in Committee's programme, would need to be deferred.

It is recommended that Committee decides whether to add the proposed scheme to its prioritisation list of Integrated Transport Schemes (ITS Schemes) for consideration in a future programme.