



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (ELMBRIDGE)

LETTER OF REPRESENTATION CYCLING IN ELMBRIDGE

27 JULY 2009

KEY ISSUE

To update Members following a letter of representation presented to the March meeting of this committee.

SUMMARY

This report updates members following the submission a letter of representation by Mr C Dallas at the March Committee, accompanied by a verbal presentation by Mr Taylor-Gregson, highlighting concerns for cyclists using the highway network. A report to the Committee was agreed, and this report presents the results.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee Elmbridge is asked to:

- (i) Note the report for information.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Members are reminded that a letter of representation was submitted to the March 2009, meeting of the Local Committee, signed by 68 Surrey residents concerning cycling generally in the Elmbridge area.

- 1.1 The letter of representation was submitted with a letter containing additional questions, outside the scope of the letter of representation, but specific to the A3050 Oatlands Drive.
- 1.2 Oatlands Drive is the A3050, which is a strategic route on the County network. It is the main classified principle road running from north east to south west, linking the A244 New Zealand Avenue, Walton, to the A317 Monument Hill, Weybridge, and is 2.5 Kilometers long, It further continues east through Walton on Thames until it eventually reaches Hampton Court bridge, at East Molesey, where it meets the A309 Hampton Court Way.
- 1.3 The River Thames forms a natural boundary to the North with the only crossing points at Weybridge Road to the west, Walton Bridge centrally and Hampton Court Bridge to the East. Several Thames Water reservoirs also form natural boundaries to the south along the A3050 Hurst Road, in West Molesey.
- 1.4 There are also low railway bridges to the south on the A244 Hersham Road in Walton on Thames and the lower arched railway bridge on Molesey Road, in Hersham, adjacent to Hersham railway station.
- 1.5 Junction 2 of the M3 to the north also links to the M25 at junction 12 connecting Weybridge directly by way of the A317. This makes the A3050 a strategic link for all vehicles directly between Walton on Thames and Weybridge.
- 1.6 Due to the environmental conditions of the surrounding area, with the limited river crossings, low railway bridges, reservoirs, M25 and M3, it does mean that vehicular traffic is very limited in its ability to access the Weybridge area without utilising the A3050 Oatlands Drive.
- 1.7 The road is subject to a 30mph speed limit and is well lit by a continuous system of street lighting. Pedestrian footways are provided on both sides of the road.
- 1.8 In the early 1990's a scheme was developed and installed along the A3050 Oatlands Drive to address the inordinate high numbers of personal injury accidents that had been occurring in previous years. These had included pedestrian fatalities, together with serious and slight accidents also additionally involving vehicle drivers, and cyclists. The

major factor in the majority of these incidences had been excessive vehicular speeds.

- 1.9 The aim of the scheme was to reduce the very high numbers of personal injury accidents, and this was undertaken by the introduction of several pedestrian refuge islands complete with cycle bypasses to reduce vehicular speeds, and prevent much of the high speed overtaking which was occurring.
- 1.10 Vertical traffic calming was not deemed an option at the design stage as the considerable noise generated by the high numbers of heavy goods vehicles, would have been very intrusive and inappropriate for the local residents fronting this principal route.
- 1.11 Since the introduction of the scheme the accident numbers have been significantly reduced along this road, which is a welcome sign to the successful nature of the project.
- 1.12 The Thames towpath route 4 was also constructed along side the river Thames during the early 1990's to again provide a recreational route from Borough boundary at Hampton Court Bridge to the boundary at Weybridge. This has now been continued by others to provide a long distance cycle route. This was also deemed to provide a non highway solution to the A3050 for cyclists.
- 1.13 Although Surrey County Council, as the highway authority, introduce highway schemes and traffic calming, it does so in accordance with Government aims to reduce personal injury accidents by 40% by 2010. It is only fair and equitable that this is done where high numbers of personal injury accidents are occurring ahead of locations where there are few, or even perceived accidents, in order to best utilise its very limited funding.
- 1.14 Speeding is essentially a Police enforcement issue as driving in excess of the posted speed limit is a criminal offence, for which the Police as the sole highway enforcement agency, have powers to deal with offenders who unashamedly flaunt the law, quickly and effectively.

2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 The petitioner tabled 8 separate areas of concerns, and the following aims to respond to those issues raised.
 - The high numbers of heavy goods vehicles, which use this route for legitimate business, would have caused severe noise issues had vertical traffic calming been introduced. This would have been very

intrusive and inappropriate for the local residents fronting this principal A class road.

- At the time the design solution chosen was deemed to be the most appropriate resolution to the inordinate accident history. The cycle solution was derived in whole by the County's Cycling Officer, aimed directly at improving cycle facilities and links whilst increasing its usage. The scheme was also independently safety audited both prior and following the construction.
- The engineering solution used is not classified as traffic calming scheme, but as a casualty reduction initiative.
- Consultation was carried at the time with all parties, including residents, Borough Councillors, County Councillor, Cycling tourist club representative, freight associations, bus operators, Surrey Police, Surrey Fire Service, Surrey Ambulance Service, etc.
- Each solution is designed bespoke based upon the specific localised road characteristics, including, available highway widths, residential frontages, bus stops, pedestrian desire lines, accident levels and more specifically patterns and locations etc. It is not as simple as one solution fits all; hence it would be impossible to make direct comparisons with other similar projects either in Surrey or outside.
- The cost of repair to the bollards is similar to that of other sites across the County, and is an unfortunate consequence of highway maintenance. When any street furniture is hit by vehicular traffic the highway authority will always attempt to claim for the damage to their equipment directly from the drivers insurance. As bollard technology has developed over the years the units have been replaced with the latest design, which are highly reflectorised, and rebound to the upright position when hit, reducing the ongoing maintenance costs.
- The pedestrian refuge islands and associated cycle bypass and markings differ slightly along the route depending on many factors. As stated earlier the design is commensurate with the problem and the position hence the solution is aimed to address this at the specific location. Obviously the highway has been in existence for many years and no two points are identical, hence the design accommodates the variances in the environmental conditions, including such factors as road width, footway width, vicinity of private driveway access, junction, street lights, underground services, etc. The design solution would have been introduced within the design parameters and as with all highway schemes, received an independent safety audit on completion of the works, to ensure its compliance with minimum distances and standards.

3 OPTIONS

- 3.1 In 2008/9, Transport for Surrey was able to allocate £40,000 capital funds (Local Transport Plan) across the county, to increase cycling infrastructure and journeys by bike in order to reach its targets. The County Cycling Officer, Alan Fordham, in agreement with local highways offices allocates this to local schemes and the continued development of the national cycle network in Surrey. The A307 Portsmouth Road, Esher, cycle lanes was allocated funds from this budget recently.
- 3.2 It is also proposed to utilise funds from this budget in the future to increase cycle parking in several locations across Elmbridge to enhance access in town centres.
- 3.3 Central funds are also allocated county wide to promote cycling e.g. school cycle parking, safety and skills cycle training. Elmbridge is very active in this area and has 110 Bikeability (skills training) courses booked, several bike clubs, most schools have active travel plans, whilst Company Travel Plans are encouraging adults to cycle. Surrey is promoting cycling as a healthy and green activity, and to this end, the new National Cycle Training standards have been implemented in order to offer the most up-to-date training for new users in order to afford them the possibility to be as safe as possible.
- 3.4 Beyond this central infrastructure funding, the Local Committee decides any further cycle related schemes based on its LTP local priorities. Cycling schemes are without doubt very difficult to introduce retrospectively on an existing highway network, due to existing road widths, and other location specific factors.
- 3.5 On-carriageway cycle lanes can only be introduced where there is sufficient road width to accommodate 1.5 metre wide lanes. Few roads in Surrey have these available widths, but however it can also be difficult to find a cycle scheme that suits all highway user groups' cyclists, residents and pedestrians alike.
- 3.6 Surrey's priority for transport funding is to maintain the road network, but it is likely that there will also be a small allocation for cycling infrastructure. Surrey County Council's priority for allocating cycle infrastructure funding is likely to be for Surrey's "hub" towns and to complete the national cycle network
- 3.7 Surrey has recently received recognition from the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) for its very strong progress on its Local Transport Plan and for achieving some of its targets early. Targets to

increase journeys by bike in Surrey are on target, and journeys to railway stations exceeded.

- 3.8 A dedicated officer from the east area office meets with representatives from the Elmbridge area as well as others in the east area cycle forum, on a regular basis, in order to identify where additional cycle facilities would be helpful and of benefit to cyclists. These are then assessed in order to best fit these schemes within existing highway projects or new schemes, within the limitations of the funds and scheme prioritisation.
- 3.9 It is proposed during 2009/10 to complete the cycling infrastructure, both on and off road, from the Scilly Isles to Hampton Court Station, linking up other measures introduced previously.

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 None.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None.

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Committee note the content of the report in response to the letter of representation received.

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the Committee note the work that has been carried out along the A3050 Oatlands Drive in previous years, as a direct response to the inordinate numbers of personal injury accidents, and that they are

mindful to continue in the prioritisation of cycle initiatives in the Elmbridge area.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

10.1 Cycling projects will continue to be progressed alongside other priorities across the County commensurate with the limited LTP funding currently available to finance such initiatives.

LEAD OFFICER: Frank Apicella, Local Highways Manager
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 03456 009 009

E-MAIL: eastsurreyhighways@surreycc.gov.uk

CONTACT OFFICER: Frank Apicella, Local Highways Manager
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 03456 009 009

E-MAIL: eastsurreyhighways@surreycc.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Version No. 01 Date: 2/07/2009 Time: 19:20 Initials: FA No of annexes: 00