

# Sutton Living Streets response to the Informal Public Consultation, Local Safety Scheme (T3074), Sutton High Street

## Overview

Sutton Living Streets supports all of the proposed streetscape improvements for High Street, Sutton (Crown Road to Angel Hill) as outlined in the Informal Public Consultation Leaflet (Local Safety Scheme reference T3074)<sup>1</sup>. If implemented, the proposals should help achieve the primary objectives of reducing accidents in the area, making the 'road' environment safer for pedestrians and cyclists, and reducing the speed of traffic accessing residential streets.

There are, nevertheless, certain reservations with some of the proposals as presented in the consultation. These generally relate to a concern that there could be an element of "lost opportunity" in the overall scheme, and that an even greater enhancement to the public realm could be achieved if the proposals were a little more robust. Additionally, it has been noted that several of the ideas put forward at the Community Street Audit in June 2009, and detailed in the London Borough of Sutton Community Safety Audit Report of the event<sup>2</sup>, have not been adopted for the consultation stage. These include consultation options for a zebra crossing in Oakfield Road, an extension of the paved pavement across access points to car-parks and service roads, and a 20 mph speed limit<sup>3</sup>. This note, therefore, is intended as both a response to the consultation questionnaire and an opportunity to highlight some remaining issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Details of the informal public consultation are available from the link '**T3074 Informal Public Consultation Leaflet [372kb]**' available here: <http://www.sutton.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1203> (3/09/2009)

<sup>2</sup> A report on the community street audit, prepared by the London Borough of Sutton, is available from the link '**T3074 Community Street Audit report [1Mb]**' here: <http://www.sutton.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1203> (3/09/2009)

<sup>3</sup> For further details see Sutton Living Streets **Notes on a Community Street Audit in preparation for a Local Safety Scheme Sutton High Street 23 June 2009**, available from <http://www.suttonlivingstreets.org.uk/2009/09/11/64/>

## Consultation questionnaire

1. *Do you support introducing a pedestrian and bicycling signal controlled crossing facility (Toucan Crossing) between Hallmead Road and the traffic signals at Angel Hill?*

Yes, to the introduction of an improved crossing facility, but question whether the best location for a signalised crossing is 25 metres to the south of the existing crossing point. There is some concern that access to a crossing located here could regularly become blocked by stationary road traffic on the northbound carriageway queuing at the Vermont Road/Angel Hill Drive/Angel Hill/All Saints Road junction. The facility should be designed in such a way as reduce the likelihood of this occurring (possibly through road surface markings)<sup>4</sup>.

2. *Do you support the proposal to allow bicycling on the footway in the shaded areas to link the cycle route through Rosehill Park to Sutton Green?*

Yes. Some sort of segregation should be included to reduce potential conflict and, importantly, to delineate the cycle-way. The existing paved area of the pavement may need to be widened. Although this could result in the loss of some grassed areas, the effect of this loss could be reduced by sympathetic landscaping to further enhance the overall appearance of the area. Consideration should be given to an entry treatment for Vermont Road, as the existing pedestrian crossing point is less than satisfactory. It is also noted that although the existing pavement of Angel Hill Drive is potentially suitable for shared use on the shaded areas of the plan, the pavement becomes very narrow at the intersection with Sutton Common Road. Ideally, proposals are needed to address this. Furthermore, consideration for some form of crossing, or road markings, on Sutton Common Road at the point at which it is proposed to locate the cycle route crossing would also give value to this proposal.

3. *Do you support the proposals to introduce raised entry treatment in the side roads of Hallmead Road, Benhilton Gardens, Vale Road and Burnell Road?*

Yes, raised entry treatments can be an effective form of traffic calming. Preferably the raised entry treatments will have appropriate surfacing to distinguish them from the tarmac road surface. It has been noted that recently installed entry treatments, such as at Waverley Avenue/Angel Hill and at Cranleigh Gardens/Angel Hill, shown in Figures 1 and 2, could be considered to do little to distinguish the nature of the main road with the residential road and pavements, despite being raised and with road surface markings. Unless the scheme has impact, its value may be in question.

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<sup>4</sup> It is presumed that it is not technically feasible to install a zebra crossing close to a signalised crossing, although if it was this would probably be the preferred option.

Fig 1. Entry treatment on Waverley Avenue at intersection with Angel Hill, SM1 (Sutton)



Source: Charles Martin 06/09/2009

Fig 2. Entry treatment on Cranleigh Gardens at intersection with Angel Hill, SM1 (Sutton)



Source: Charles Martin 06/09/2009

In contrast, entry treatments can be designed to provide a more clearly defined demarcation between two interconnecting roads<sup>5</sup>. Figures 3 and 4 show a bolder approach, but still with a minimum of clutter, that has been developed at one junction in Penge. The result clearly indicates that the needs of pedestrians and cyclists have been more readily considered in the design.

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<sup>5</sup> Although the High Street does not form part of the Transport for London Road Network, a TfL streetscape guidance report *TfL Streetscape Guidance: Technical Guidance Footways and Carriageways* (available from <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/businessandpartners/publications/4858.aspx>) provides some relevant background to side road entry treatments. Page 7.12, notes that “Entry treatments are generally used to divide the change in the character between a main traffic route and a road of lower order”, and “.....aim to create a strong visual threshold for traffic leaving or entering the main road”.

Fig 3. Entry treatment on Thicket Road at intersection with Crystal Palace Park Road, SE20 (Bromley)



Source: Charles Martin 10/09/2009

Fig 4. Entry treatment on Thicket Road at intersection with Crystal Palace Park Road, SE20 (Bromley)



Source: Charles Martin 10/09/2009

An appropriate entry treatment should also be considered at Vermont Road (as noted in 2 above). Entry treatments, or pavement resurfacing, should also be considered to access roads and car parks on the west side of the High Street south of the junction with Vale Road (also see *Remaining Issues* below).

4. *Do you support the proposal to introduce a raised entry treatment and to narrow the junction of Oakhill Road and High Street?*

Yes. The proposed kerb build-out to narrow the bell-mouth of the junction and tighten the turning radius is very much welcomed. Again, the entry treatment should ideally provide a strong contrast to the tarmac road surface.

5. *Do you support the proposal to improve the junction of Bushey Road and High Street?*

Yes.

6. *Do you support the proposal to introduce a zebra crossing on the High Street between Vale Road and Burnell Road?*

Yes.

7. *Do you support the proposal to introduce Double Yellow Lines (no parking at any time) on the junctions of Vermont Road, Hallmead Road, Vale Road, Oakhill Road and Benhilton Gardens?*

Yes, but perhaps consideration could be given to narrowing the carriageway as an alternative deterrent to motorists parking vehicles close to junctions. Parking within about 15 metres of any junction should be discouraged to ensure that good visibility is provided for road users and pedestrians.

8. *Do you support the proposal to introduce a yellow box junction on the southbound lane of Angel Hill across the junction with All Saints Road as shown?*

Yes, on the presumption that this traffic management feature is needed to discourage road traffic, travelling westbound from All Saints Road to Angel Hill Drive and Sutton Common Road, from blocking the flow of southbound traffic on Angel Hill.

## **Remaining issues**

The London Borough of Sutton Community Safety Audit Report for the Local Safety Scheme notes that the audit was productive, and that it allowed representatives to give views (albeit, on occasion, divided) on a range of issues. Overall, the Audit Report details thirty-five suggestions and provides recommendations for these. The report adds that some suggested ideas were to be excluded from the scheme, either because they were outside the remit of the scheme or because they were long term proposals that could not be achieved in the timescale of the scheme<sup>6</sup>. Sutton Living Streets would like to take this opportunity to comment on this aspect of the Safety Scheme.

Sutton Living Streets appreciates that a consolidation of the views gathered at the event has been necessary as part of the process of progressing towards a consultation stage. It also acknowledges that many of the suggested improvements were not directly related to safety issues on the High Street or that they may require a longer time to implement than the scheme allows for. Nevertheless, Sutton Living Streets is disappointed about the rejection of some of these ideas, and with some of the reasons given for the rejection.

One area where several of the suggestions have not been taken forward to consultation is Oakfield Road. Although potential improvements to the junction of Oakhill Road with the High Street are being addressed in the consultation (and this is welcomed as noted above), a number of other ideas for the road are not being progressed.

Many participants of the audit suggested that they would value a pedestrian crossing (zebra preferred) on Oakhill Road (ideally located somewhere between the Lewis Road and Brunswick Road junctions) on grounds of safety and convenience. The

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<sup>6</sup> The consultation leaflet notes that the proposals, if implemented, are scheduled to be completed by March 2010.

London Borough of Sutton Audit Report suggests that locating a crossing here may be hard to achieve because of the high number of dropped kerbs and the difficulty in achieving one desire line. Given the technical difficulties associated with the construction of a zebra crossing in Oakhill Road it could be argued that even more impetus should be given to the other suggestion for the road, namely the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit. The introduction of a 20 mph speed limit would go some way towards reducing the need for a formal crossing.

Sutton Living Streets is surprised that the suggestion that “Oakhill Road should be a 20 mph zone” has been declared as “outside the remit of the scheme”, especially when the scheme has a remit to reduce accidents and it is known that pedestrian casualties are likely to be reduced on streets with 20 mph speed limits<sup>7</sup>. Even if the introduction of 20 mph is outside the immediate remit of the scheme, the consultation may have been a chance to obtain respondents' views on the potential for the introduction of a 20 mph limit in the future (especially as traffic speed data, as supplied in the Consultation Leaflet, indicates that mean speeds are close to 20 mph anyway).

Another issue, highlighted at the Audit but which has not made it through to the consultation stage, is the potential for pavement improvements/footway extensions across the access roads to the entrances of the various car-parks that are located primarily at the southern end of this section of the High Street. It is hoped that such improvements will be part of the ongoing regeneration of the High Street.

In conclusion, Sutton Living Streets believes that the opportunity should be taken to improve the area further and pick up on the aspirations that go beyond safety, such as the Smarter Travel Sutton and Active Steps initiatives both of which attempt to encourage walking, cycling and taking the bus. The time is right, politically and economically, to incorporate such ideas, and to make the case for the provision of funding to support them. This view appears to be supported by the London Assembly Transport Committee. In *Response to the Mayor's Transport Strategy Statement of Intent*<sup>8</sup>, they wrote “The Mayor is investigating in some significant schemes to encourage walking and cycling but we believe small changes agreed at local level, particularly in outer London, are also important and provide an opportunity to secure some ‘big wins’ through relatively small investments.”

Charles Martin  
Sutton Living Streets  
September 2009

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<sup>7</sup> The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) has reviewed accident data from nearly two-hundred 20 mph zones, and noted that the number of accidents involving pedestrians in these areas has reduced by between 40% and 63%.

([http://www.rosipa.com/roadsafety/advice/driving/speed\\_policy.htm](http://www.rosipa.com/roadsafety/advice/driving/speed_policy.htm)). In areas of London where 20 mph zones have been introduced there has been a 42% reduction in casualties (see *Braking point: 20 mph speed limits in London*, GLA, April 2009 (available from <http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/transport.jsp>). The report also suggests there is some evidence to suggest that 20 mph limits make a positive contribution to encouraging walking and cycling, improving traffic flows and reducing emissions but insufficient research has been done on these potential wider benefits.

<sup>8</sup> Response to the Mayor's Transport Strategy, London Assembly Transport Committee, July 2009, page 14 (<http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/transport/response-statement-intent170709.pdf>)