



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE  
(SURREY HEATH)**

**PIRBRIGHT BENDS – SPEED LIMIT CHANGES**  
14<sup>th</sup> March 2013

**KEY ISSUE:**

The D46 Mytchett Place Road and the B3012 Gole Road and Gapemouth Road between Pirbright and Frimley Green have suffered a large number of collisions with the majority involving loss of control of a single vehicle. This report presents proposals to amend the speed limits supported by improved hazard warning signing to encourage safer driving and fewer casualties.

**SUMMARY:**

This is a scheme promoted by the Road Safety team and funded by their Central Road Safety Budget. It is a response to a very bad accident record along these roads. The Committee is asked to consider the report and whether the reduced speed limits should be introduced. Most of the area concerned is in Guildford and a similar report has been submitted to their Local Committee.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Local Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the results of the safety investigations
- (ii) Agree that, the speed limits should be changed as follows:-
  - Travelling westwards,
    - a) 40mph (from 60mph) from existing 60mph terminal sign in B3012 Gole Road to a point in B3012 Gapemouth Road, approximately 200m east of the railway bridge.
    - b) 30mph (from 60mph) from this point, continuing under the railway bridge along B3012 Gapemouth Road for approximately 600m
    - c) 40mph (from 60mph) from this point along B3012 Gapemouth Road / Guildford Road to the 30mph limit terminal. The western section of this route is in Surrey Heath.
    - d) 30mph (from 60mph) from the railway bridge, along D46 Mytchett Place Road for approximately 1500m.

e) 40mph (from 60mph) from this point to the existing 30mph terminal sign, just south of Mytchett Lake Road. The western section of this route is in Surrey Heath.

The proposed new speed limits are shown in Annex 1.

(iii) Authorise the advertisement of a notice in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the effects of which will be to implement the proposed speed limit changes and revoke any existing traffic orders necessary to implement the changes, and subject to no objections being upheld, the Order be made.

(iv) Authorise delegation of authority to the Area Team Manager in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Local Committee and the local Divisional Member to resolve any objections received in connection with the proposals.

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

1.1. In May 2012, Surrey County Council Road Safety Working Group (RSWG) identified a very poor accident record along the B3012 Gole Road / Gapemouth Road / Guildford Road and the D46 Mytchett Place Rd, referred to henceforth as the Pirbright bends. Further studies were carried out and the results brought to the RSWG in November.

1.2. The roads in question are in Surrey Heath and mostly Guildford. However, it is not logical to split the scheme into two parts as this relates to routes, district boundaries are not relevant to the accident locations.

## **2. ACCIDENT ANALYSIS – PIRBRIGHT BENDS**

2.1 There were 77 personal injury accidents between January 2009 and July 2012 inclusive. Of these 61 involved skidding or loss of control and 55 involved a single vehicle.

2.2 56 accidents involved vehicles leaving the carriageway into a ditch, hitting other objects such as lamp columns or overturning.

2.3 39% of drivers were males aged between 17 – 23 years old. Of 57 drivers breath-tested, 2 were positive, both females aged 34 and 58.

2.4 Postcode data has shown that there is no significant involvement of soldiers from the local barracks.

## **3. VEHICLE SPEEDS**

3.1 The geometry of the bends does not encourage very fast speeds, but the nature of the accidents suggests that many drivers are driving above the appropriate speed for the location. Annex 2 shows the average speeds of over 1000

vehicles (fitted with compatible mobile devices, such as satnav) during 2011. Also, shown is speed data obtained using automatic speed measuring equipment continually over a week in February 2013

- 3.2 It is difficult to get meaningful average speeds because the bends mean that vehicles are continually braking and accelerating but it is clear that the slower speeds are occurring in the middle section near the railway bridge

#### **4. EXISTING SPEED LIMITS AND SIGNS**

- 4.1 The existing speed limit along most of the Pirbright bends is 60mph, apart from a section of 40mph east of the junction with Stanley Hill.
- 4.2 There is some advanced signing of bends ahead and the main bends have chevron boards. In Mytchett Place Rd, there are many hazard marker posts which are either in disrepair, knocked over, or missing. The local maintenance team is to replace them. The road surface is generally sound, the only current area of concern is on Gapemouth Rd, east of the railway bridge, which will also to be addressed by maintenance.
- 4.3 There are 4 vehicle activated warning signs (VAS) located at specific bends within the area in question. Three have resulted in significant accident savings, though there has been an increase in accidents in the vicinity of the VAS at the western end of Mytchett Place Rd.

#### **5. SPEED LIMIT POLICY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 Surrey County Council (SCC) speed limit policy will need to be reviewed shortly in the light of the recent publication of new guidance from the DfT Circular 01/13 "Setting Local Speed Limits".
- 5.2 Existing SCC speed limit policy states that 'in all cases, the primary purpose of reducing speed limits will be to reduce the number and severity of casualties by reducing average speeds to that which is appropriate to the nature of the road'.
- 5.3 The new guidance implies that the national speed limit (60mph) is inappropriate for many existing de-restricted rural roads, but makes a point of advising that such speed limits should not automatically be reduced. This stance seems pragmatic, advising authorities to consider lower speed limits where clearly justified.
- 5.4 Circular 01/13 provides a Speed Limit Assessment Tool. Briefly, this predicts the effect on average speed following a speed limit change, based upon a variety of circumstances and speed data from a large sample of sites. Applying this guidance to the Pirbright bends suggests the proposed speed limits would result in roughly a 2mph reduction in average speeds. i.e. in the 30mph sections, average speeds would approximate to 30-34mph and 37-40mph in the 40mph sections.

## **6. PROPOSED SOLUTION**

- 6.1 It is clear that the present situation is unsatisfactory. For whatever reason, drivers are adopting inappropriate speeds. The speed management options are limited given the geometry of the roads, which also makes police speed enforcement impractical.
- 6.2 Surrey Police and SCC Road Safety engineers have driven these roads on numerous occasions but also at constant speeds of 40mph and 30mph to assess the appropriate speed limit. They found that some sections, mainly on both approaches to the rail bridge, could only be driven safely and comfortably at 30mph, whilst 40mph was the maximum advisable speed for the remainder.
- 6.3 One theory is that some drivers accelerate along the short straight sections, accelerate out of the first bend and are travelling too fast for the second or third bends. It may not be any individual bend that is the problem, but the cumulative effect of a series of bends.
- 6.4 The view of the RSWG is that 30mph is the safest speed to negotiate the severest series of bends where a 40mph limit is too fast, whilst a blanket 40mph would have no effect on adopted speeds on the most dangerous sections.
- 6.5 The proposed new speed limits are shown in Annex 1.
- 6.6 As existing speeds are not excessive, this marginal reduction in speed may be just enough to prevent many of the accidents occurring. Also, unlike previously,

the posted limit will be providing the driver with suitable advice as to the appropriate speed to adopt.

6.7. In addition to the speed limit changes, 6 new warning signs are proposed to highlight specific locations (shown on Annex 3) within the 40mph speed limit.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

7.1 The proposed speed limit changes were developed in conjunction with Surrey Police and have their approval.

## **8. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The whole scheme will be funded from the Central Road Safety Budget.

8.2 Preliminary estimates suggest that the proposed speed limits (signs, order, advertising) would cost £12,200 and the additional warning signs cost £3,000. A total cost of £15,200.

8.3 With road safety schemes, it is practice to base the scheme priority on the cost compared to the return in terms of personal injury accidents saved. The average cost to the community of a single road accident is currently estimated to be in the region of £100,000. Given a typical accident reduction for the scheme of 30%, this would result in a saving of about £2m over 3 years.

## **9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The Highway Service is mindful of its needs within this area and attempts to treat all users of the public highway with equality and understanding.

## **10. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 A well-managed highway network can reduce fear of crime. Reduced accidents means less of a burden on the emergency services, in particular allowing the police to attend to other matters.

## **11. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

11.1 As above

## **12. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

12.1 If agreed, changes to speed limits authorised by the Local Committee will be implemented during 2013/14.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS : Annex 1,2, and 3