



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE

(Surrey Heath)

Red Road, Lightwater
Proposed Change in Speed Limit
30 June 2011

KEY ISSUES

To reaffirm the position regarding the proposed reduction in speed limit on Red Road and to ask Committee to decide how this matter may be responded to and progressed.

SUMMARY

In response to the results of a speed limit assessment, at its meeting on 26 February 2009 Surrey Heath Local Committee was asked to agree a reduction in the speed limit on Red Road from 60mph to 50mph. However, the Local Committee decided that Surrey County Council (SCC) should instead advertise a Traffic Regulation Order that would reduce the speed limit to 40mph along the full length of Red Road.

Following the advertisement of the Order, a number of objections to the proposed 40mph speed limit were received, including one from Surrey Police. Having considered these objections at its meeting on 15 October 2009, the Local Committee decided to amend the proposal and agreed that SCC should:

- advertise a Traffic Regulation Order introducing a speed limit of 50mph over the length of Red Road between A322 and Lightwater Road.
- make a Traffic Regulation Order introducing a speed limit of 40mph over the length of Red Road between Lightwater Road and The Maultway.

This decision was subsequently called-in and reviewed by the Cabinet who agreed that the decision could not be supported because it was contrary to Surrey County Council's Speed Management Policy. However, the Cabinet also agreed that a review of this Policy should be undertaken.

As a result of this review, the Cabinet approved a new Speed Management Policy that gives Local Committees more discretion in agreeing changes to speed limits. Surrey Heath Local Committee is therefore being asked to make a decision on how it wishes to proceed in the light of the new Speed Management Policy.

The Officer recommendation remains that Committee should agree to advertise a Traffic Regulation Order that would introduce a 50mph speed limit along the full length of Red Road.

This recommendation is supported by Surrey Police, who have no objection to a 50mph speed limit being introduced. It is noted that Surrey Police do not support the introduction of a 40mph speed limit.

Committee is advised that, should a 40mph speed limit be approved contrary to Officer recommendation, in accordance with the new Speed Management Policy the decision would have to be endorsed by the Cabinet Member for Transport.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Surrey Heath) is asked to:

- (i) approve advertising of a Traffic Regulation Order to enable implementation of a 50mph speed limit over the following lengths of road (as shown in Annex 1 attached to this report):
 - the complete length of Red Road
 - the short length of Lightwater Road between its junction with Red Road and the start of the existing 40mph speed limit;
- (ii) approve the revoking of any existing Traffic Orders necessary to implement the above changes;
- (iii) approve that any objections to the Traffic Regulation Order should be considered and resolved by the Area Team Manager for Highways in consultation with the Divisional Member and Chairman, and that this only returned to Committee if any objections prove insurmountable;
- (iv) approve that once any objections have been considered and resolved, that the Order be made.
- (v) agree and approve funding for this item.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The results of a speed limit assessment for Red Road (undertaken in accordance with the then Speed Management Policy) were reported to the Local Committee at its meeting on 26 February 2009.
- 1.2 The findings of the assessment indicated that a reduction in the existing speed limit from 60mph to 50mph over the full length of the road would be appropriate. Surrey Police stated that it had no objection to a reduction in the speed limit to 50mph.
- 1.3 The Officer Recommendation to the Local Committee was therefore to agree a reduction in the speed limit to 50mph. However, the Local Committee decided not to accept this recommendation and instead agreed that SCC should advertise a proposed reduction in speed limit to 40mph over the full length of the road.
- 1.4 The proposed reduction in speed limit was advertised in July 2009 and in accordance with legal requirements a period of 28 days was allowed for representations to be submitted.
- 1.5 A number of objections were made in response to the notice advertised, including one from Surrey Police and one from a local Ward Member.
- 1.6 These objections were reported to the Local Committee at its meeting on the 15 October 2009. The Officer Recommendation was to uphold the objections and advertise a new Traffic Regulation Order proposing a reduction in the speed limit from 60mph to 50mph.
- 1.7 However, the Local Committee resolved the following:
 - to uphold the objections in relation to the length of Red Road from the A322 at Gordons Roundabout to Lightwater Road and authorise the advertisement of a new permanent Traffic Regulation Order to propose a reduction in speed limit from 60mph to 50mph.
 - to overrule the objections in relation to the length of Red Road from Lightwater Road to The Maultway, and authorise the advertisement of a new permanent Traffic Regulation Order to enable the speed limit to be reduced from 60mph to 40mph.
- 1.8 The above decision was then called-in by the Deputy Leader of the Cabinet. The Cabinet agreed at its meeting on the 1 December 2009 that the decision could not stand since it was in contravention of Surrey County Council's then Speed Management Policy.
- 1.9 At this time, the Cabinet also agreed that the existing Speed Limit Policy should be reviewed with the aim of giving more discretion to Local Committees.
- 1.10 Following completion of this review, the Cabinet agreed to adopt a new Speed Management Policy. Whilst most of this remained unchanged from the previous policy, it does include a small number of amendments that give greater discretion to Local Committee in agreeing new speed limits. In specific relation to the change in speed limit proposed for Red Road, the new policy includes the following paragraph:

A proposed new lower speed limit should only be introduced as an individual measure if it is likely to lead to lower speeds. Ideally, the new speed limit should bring average speeds down to a level approaching or

below the proposed limit. A Local Committee may decide, exceptionally, to implement a speed limit which does not reduce speeds to a level approaching the new limit, although a new limit should always reduce average speeds. Where the Police object to the proposed speed limit reduction and the local officer also recommends against proceeding with the reduction without additional measures, the decision should be endorsed by the Cabinet Member for Transport, having taken advice from Officers and the Police. The Local Committee may find it useful to have a site visit of the road in question, to which the Cabinet Member should be invited.

2.0 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 Since the speed limit assessment for Red Road was originally undertaken there have not been any changes in factors that would impact on the outcome of the assessment.
- 2.2 In accordance with the findings of the speed limit assessment, the Officer Recommendation therefore remains that a reduction in the speed limit to 50mph speed limit would be appropriate.
- 2.3 In addition, it is recommended that a 50mph speed limit is introduced on the short length of Lightwater Road between its junction with Red Road and the start of the existing 40mph speed limit. This will avoid leaving a short length of 60mph speed limit in Lightwater Road which could cause confusion for drivers.
- 2.3 On the basis of speed survey data and the results of the speed limit assessment, a further reduction in the speed limit on Red Road to 40mph is not considered to be appropriate.
- 2.4 It is recognised that changing the speed limit will not necessarily change driver behaviour, as motorists determine their speed based on the character of the road and the prevailing conditions. In the case of Red Road, speed survey data shows that the majority of drivers feel it is appropriate to travel at speeds in excess of 40mph. As such, without continual Police enforcement, evidence suggests that if a 40mph speed limit was introduced it is likely to be widely disregarded. As such, it would have little value in improving road safety. Furthermore, the introduction of unrealistic speed limits could also undermine the effectiveness of, and respect for, speed limits more generally.
- 2.5 The analysis of the 23 personal injury accidents occurring between 16th June 2007 and 8th June 2010 shown in the table below highlights that the majority of accidents occurring on Red Road are not recorded as being speed related:

Contributing factor	No. of accidents
Speeding	6 (1 alcohol related)
Failing to look properly	5
Careless driving	4
Alcohol related	3 (1 speed related)
Other causes	5

It is noted that the majority of accidents also occur largely in clusters where features such as junctions and pronounced bends exist. Identifying specific improvements at cluster locations (e.g enhancements to signage and road markings) would be an effective way of improving safety rather than reducing the speed limit below 50mph, as accident statistics in relation to the series of bends at the Western end of Red Road show that the introduction of enhanced warning signs have had a positive effect in reducing accident numbers.

3.0 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Surrey Police have previously been consulted and had no objection to a reduction in the speed limit on Red Road from 60mph to 50mph.
- 3.2 Surrey Police formally objected when the Traffic Regulation Order proposing the introduction of a 40mph speed limit on Red Road was advertised. The reasons for the objection included the following:
- a 40mph speed limit would go against Surrey County Council's own Speed Assessment Policy and Department for Transport guidelines.
 - a 40mph speed limit would be unrealistic and would require regular Police enforcement since there is likely to be widespread disregard for the limit.
 - practical considerations would make it difficult for Surrey Police's Casualty Reduction Officer to undertake enforcement.
- 3.3 Surrey Police have confirmed their position remains unchanged and that they would support a 50mph speed limit but would object to any further proposal to introduce a 40mph speed limit on Red Road.

4.0 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The cost of introducing a 50mph speed limit along the full length of Red Road would be approximately £20,000.
- 4.2 The cost of introducing a 50mph speed limit from the A322 to Lightwater Road and then a 40mph speed limit from Lightwater Road to The Maultway would be approximately £45,000.
- 4.3 The above estimates include the cost of installing new signs, amending road markings (if necessary) and advertising/making the required Traffic Regulation Order.
- 4.4 Legislation requires that the lengths of the centre lines and the gaps between them differ for roads with a speed limit of greater than 40mph from those for roads with a speed limit of 40mph or less. The existing centre line and road studs would therefore have to be removed and re-laid over any length of Red Road where a 40mph speed limit were introduced (but not over any lengths where a 50mph speed limit were introduced). This explains the reason for the significant difference between the estimates.
- 4.5 No provision has currently been made to fund the introduction of a reduced speed limit on Red Road. The Local Committee would therefore need to allocate funding if it wishes to proceed with such a proposal.

5.0 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no equalities and diversity implications arising from this report.

6.0 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Speeding traffic has been identified as a major concern for residents in Surrey Heath. SCC remains committed to working in partnership with Surrey Police to tackle issues of speeding and improving road safety through the implementation of a combination of appropriate enforcement, education and engineering measures.

7.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The results of a speed limit assessment for Red Road indicate that it would be appropriate to reduce the existing speed limit from 60mph to 50mph. Surrey Police has indicated it would support the introduction of a 50mph speed limit.
- 7.2 However, contrary to Officer Recommendation and Police advice the Local Committee previously decided to support the introduction of a 40mph speed limit along part of Red Road.
- 7.3 This decision was called-in and Cabinet agreed that it could not stand.
- 7.4 Following changes to Surrey County Council's Speed Management Policy, the Local Committee is being asked to review this matter and decide how it wishes to proceed.
- 7.5 In accordance with the results of the speed limit assessment and Police advice the Officer recommendation remains that the Committee should agree the proposed introduction of a 50mph speed limit.
- 7.6 The Local Committee may decide not to support the Officer recommendation and instead agree a proposal to introduce a 40mph speed limit. However, in accordance with the new Speed Management Policy, this decision would have to be referred to the Cabinet Member for Transport for endorsement before it could be progressed.
- 7.7 The Local Committee will need to allocate funding to introduce any proposed reduction in speed limit that is agreed.

8.0 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 8.1 If the Local Committee approves the Officer recommendation to reduce the speed limit to 50mph along the whole of Red Road, and funding is agreed, then a Traffic Regulation Order would be formally advertised and public notices displayed in the local press and on site.
- 8.2 Any formal objections to the Order would have to be considered. Subject to no irresolvable objections being received in response to the public notices, the new speed limit would be introduced.
- 8.3 Alternatively, if the Local Committee decides to proceed with the resolutions previously made at its meeting held on the 15 October 2009 (or any proposal to introduce a 40mph speed limit on Red Road) then the decision would need to be referred to the Cabinet Member for Transport.

LEAD OFFICER: Andrew Milne

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 03456 009 009

E-MAIL: highways@surreycc.gov.uk

www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyheath

CONTACT OFFICER: Jason Gosden
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 03456 009 009
E-MAIL: highways@surreycc.gov.uk
BACKGROUND PAPERS: SCC Speed Management Policy
Reports previously presented to the Surrey Heath Local
Committee at its meetings on the 26 February 2009 and 15
October 2009

Version No. 1 Date: 16th June 2011 Time: 14:02 Initials: JG No of annexes: 1