



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (ELMBRIDGE)

PETITION A245 STOKE ROAD – STOKE D'ABERNON 7 DECEMBER 2009

KEY ISSUE

To update members on the investigations carried out, the results obtained, the conclusions and recommendations made, following the petition to the September meeting of this committee.

SUMMARY

This report updates Members following the petition received at the September Committee, accompanied by a verbal presentation by a representative of the lead petitioner, highlighting concerns regarding the speed limit along the section of the A245 currently covered by a 40 mph speed limit, requesting a reduction to 30mph. A report to the Committee was agreed following further investigation, and this report presents the results of those findings.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee Elmbridge is asked to:

- 1) Note all the works carried out over the last 3 years, along this particular section of the A245, which this Committee has approved and funded from the Local Transport Plan budget, and in particular the marked impact on the personal injury collisions, these recent schemes have had.
- 2) To agree that based upon this evidence and positive trend there is very little justification to further propose a change in speed limit at this time.
- 3) To continue to support improvement schemes along this route as identified in the feasibility study carried out in 2003.

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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members are reminded that a petition was submitted to the September 2009, meeting of the Local Committee, concerning the existing 40mph speed limit along the A245 Stoke Road.
- 1.2 The letter requested a reduction in the existing 40mph limit to a 30 mph speed limit be applied to this section of the A245 from Tilt Road to Woodlands Lane.
- 1.3 Stoke Road is the A245, which is a strategic principal route on the County network linking Woking to Leatherhead, with connections and links to the A3 in Cobham, the A246, A243, A244, A24, and M25.
- 1.4 Due to the environmental conditions of the surrounding area, with the River Mole to the south and west, M25 to the south, A3 to the north, and A244 to the East, Railway line which also cuts through the area, vehicular traffic is very limited in its ability to access the area without utilising this important route.
- 1.5 This section of road is currently subject to a 40 mph speed limit and is well lit by a continuous system of street lighting. The limit along the section from Tilt Road to the railway bridge near Blundell Lane was reduced in 1963, whilst the section from the railway bridge to Woodlands Lane was reduced from 60mph to 40 mph in 1996.
- 1.6 A presentation was made to the Local Committee identifying the outcomes of the A245 Stoke Road (Painshill Interchange to Stoke D'Abernon) linear route feasibility study in September 2003.
- 1.7 In September 2005 the Local Committee approved the construction of a new puffin crossing which was completed during early 2006.
- 1.8 The feasibility study also raised other issues along the A245 corridor from Woodlands Lane to Tilt Road, including a lack of pedestrian crossing locations, lack of continuous footway on the southern side, and collisions at the junction of Fairmile Lane, and at Blundell Lane.
- 1.9 The Local Committee also agreed in January 2008 to carry out works to ameliorate this situation, and construction commenced in April 2008.
- 1.10 Local carriageway widening of the A245 Stoke Road near the junction with C157 Fairmile Lane, has been introduced providing a dedicated right-turn lane, facilitating vehicles turning into Fairmile Lane from the Stoke Road.

- 1.11 A new footway was also constructed on the southern side of the A245, following the piping in of the existing open ditch, and additionally two pedestrian refuge islands were also installed.
- 1.12 The construction of the dedicated right-turn lane appears to have improved safety for vehicular users reducing the number of shunt accidents and also reducing delays to westbound traffic.
- 1.13 The pedestrian refuge islands have afforded pedestrians the ability to cross at the dedicated crossings points creating a safer environment, whilst preventing overtaking and reducing vehicular speeds generally.
- 1.14 A scheme at the Blundell Lane junction was not included at that time as an independent and separate design would be required due to the complexity of the location, and this remains on the programme for future years.
- 1.15 The County Council database, supplied by Surrey Police, of personal injury collisions shows that between 1 January 2006 and 31 July 2009, there have been 14 personal injury collisions along this section of road, covered by the 40mph limit. None of these were classified by the Police as having been speed related.

Road name	Collisions	Date	Nature
Woodend Park Road	1	10/11/2008	Slight
Ravenswood	2	07/05/2006 01/12/2008	Slight Serious
Pipers Close	1	15/09/2006	Slight
Avenue Road	1	03/11/2006	Serious
Oxshott Way	2	18/05/2009 21/04/2006	Slight Slight
Fairmile Lane	1	26/09/2006	Slight
Tilt Road	1	28/09/2007	Alcohol related
Vincent Road	2	05/06/2007 19/5/2007	Slight Serious
Blundell Lane	4	03/02/2006 24/12/2006 28/09/2007 14/06/2008	Slight Serious Serious Slight
Blundell Lane to Woodlands Lane	0		

- 1.16 The Elmbridge Casualty Reduction Working Group convenes twice a year to assess locations where 2 or more personal injury accidents occur in any 12 month period. The Group consists of officers from the Casualty Reduction Group, Road Safety officers, Surrey Highways, Surrey Police, and Surrey Fire & Rescue. The group automatically investigates fatal accidents, once the details and any contributory

factors are available from the Police. Casualty reduction works have been introduced previously along the A245.

- 1.17 Although Surrey County Council, as the highway authority, introduce traffic management schemes on the public highway, 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 regularly occurring ahead of locations where there are few, or even perceived accidents, in order to best utilise its very limited funding.
- 1.18 Speeding is essentially anti social behavior, and 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 Two individual and independent surveys were carried out along the route. A radar gun survey on the 30 September 2009, and two seven day, 24 hour, full automatic traffic speed and volume surveys during the period 13 October to 19 October 2009.
- 2.2 The 85%ile speed is a numerical average used by Highway Engineers to assess vehicular speeds, as it uses a mathematical standard distribution, resulting in a speed that 8 out of every 10 drivers achieve.
- 2.3 The device was located at lamp column 9, just west of Ravenswood Close, whilst the other at a British Telecom pole, just west of Fairmile Lane.

Automatic Traffic Counter (mph)	Northbound 85%ile	Southbound 85%ile	Northbound mean	Southbound mean	Northbound daily Flow	Southbound daily Flow
Ravenswood Close	40.8	40.9	36.1	36.3	6821	6563
Fairmile Lane	41	41.2	35.3	36	6990	6957

- 2.4 The data obtained from the first device showed that the northbound 85%ile speed of the traffic travelling along the road was 40.8 mph, with a 7-day average daily northbound flow of 6821 vehicles. The mean speed was 36.1 mph.
- 2.5 Southbound 85%ile speed of the traffic travelling along the road was found to be 40.9 mph, with a 7-day average daily southbound flow of 6563 vehicles. The mean speed was 36.3 mph.

- 2.6 The data obtained from the second device showed that the northbound 85%ile speed of the traffic travelling along the road was 41 mph, with a 7-day average daily northbound flow of 6990 vehicles. The mean speed was 35.3 mph.
- 2.7 Similarly southbound 85%ile speed of the traffic travelling along the road was also found to be 41.2 mph, with a 7-day average daily southbound flow of 6957 vehicles. The mean speed was 36 mph.
- 2.8 The free flow speed of vehicles has also been recorded, utilising a radar speed gun. This is the average of at least 100 readings in each direction, taken of the lead vehicle in free flow, dry weather conditions. The covert survey was carried out on the 30th September 2009 between the hours of 11.30 and 14.30.
- 2.9 This was carried out at 3 different locations along the route, between Ravenswood Close to Tilt Road, Oxshott Way to Fairmile Lane, and Woodlands Road to Chelsea FC.

Radar (mph)	Northbound 85%ile	Southbound 85%ile	Northbound mean	Southbound mean
Ravenswood Close – Tilt Road	38	38	34	34
Oxshott Way – Fairmile Lane	38	37	33	33
Woodlands Lane - Chelsea FC	40	39	35	35

- 2.10 It is interesting to note from paragraph 1.13 that there have been no collisions between Woodlands Lane and Blundell Lane, during the last three and a half years, and yet the radar data above shows that the speeds along this narrow section, even though within the posted limit, are only slightly higher than along the rest of the route.
- 2.11 By summarising the collisions in paragraph 1.15 by year, clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of the various measures previously introduced, which since their introduction, can be shown to have had a marked effect on the collision rate along the A245.

Year	Number of collisions	Treatments
2006	7	None
2007	3	VAS Signing
2008	3	Puffin Crossing
2009	1	Footway, islands, right hand turn lane.

3 OPTIONS

3.1 Surrey County Council has a speed management policy for determining and applying speed limits on the public highway. This was updated in 2005 to reflect the changes arising from the Department of Transport's revised speed limit guidance. This has been used to assess the limit on the A245 Stoke Road.

3.2 This section of road is currently subject to a 40 mph limit, and was assessed prior to 2005.

3.3 Surrey County Council's speed limit policy states

“that where the preferred new limit is lower than the existing limit, existing speeds will need to be compared to the proposed new limit to check if they are close enough for the new limit to be successfully introduced on its own, or whether other supporting speed reducing measures will be required.”

3.4 Experience has shown that lowering a speed limit on its own will not necessarily reduce speeds sufficiently. If a speed limit is set much lower than the existing traffic speeds then motorists are likely to ignore the limit unless the character of the road or environment indicate otherwise. There are likely to be insufficient police resources to provide effective enforcement for locations where speed limits are unrealistic.

3.5 If the average speeds are substantially above the proposed speed limit then the options are either to:

(i) Retain the existing higher speed limit in order to manage speeds at a realistic level or:

(ii) Implement other speed management measures to achieve speeds closer to the preferred limit, and then introduce the lower limit.

3.6 Any proposed changes in speed limit should be undertaken in consultation with Surrey Police, as they will have the responsibility for the enforcement of the new speed limit.

3.7 Surrey police have been consulted and as the speeds are below the current speed limit, but sufficiently above the requested 30 mph limit, they would not support a reduced limit without physical changes to the road layout to positively effect driver behavior.

3.8 Tier 1 roads are primary roads consisting of trunk roads and main A-Class roads plus some important B-Class roads. These would have a preferred limit of 50 or 60 mph depending upon the rate of personal injury collisions per 100 million vehicle km. 50 mph for more than 35 and 60 mph for less than 35 personal injury collisions per 100 million vehicle km

- 3.9 Tier 2 roads are district distributors, local distributors and access roads. There are some A-class roads but these are mainly B, C, and unclassified D roads. These would have a preferred limit of 40 or 50 mph depending upon the personal injury collision rate per 100 million vehicle km. 40 mph for more than 60 and 50 mph for less than 60 personal injury collisions per 100 million vehicle km
- 3.10 The A245 Stoke Road is classified as a Tier 1 road, and hence should have a preferred limit of either 50 mph or 60 mph, in accordance with the current policy.
- 3.11 Due to the high volumes of traffic using this 2 km section of strategic A road of almost 14,000 vehicles per day, when the calculation for personal injury collisions per 100 million vehicle km is undertaken, this gives a figure of 38.4, which would suggest that the preferred limit for the road is 60mph.
- 3.12 The 40 mph limit was set along this section in 1963 and 1996, when the criteria for setting speed limits was different to that which currently exists.

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Consultation has been carried out with Surrey Police and their view is that they would not support a reduction to 30 mph as it does not comply with the Joint traffic management strategy. The speeds are below the current speed limit, but sufficiently above the requested 30 mph limit, hence support for a reduced limit, without physical changes to the road layout, would not be forthcoming.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of making a Traffic Regulation Order, removal of existing signs and posts, would be in the region of £3,500. The funding for this would have to be met from the Committees Local Transport Plan funding.
- 5.2 Approximately £750 has been spent from this budget to carry out the data collection and analysis.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None.

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 To introduce a 30 mph limit, would require the entire removal of all the existing 40 mph entry and repeater signage, This would also include all the existing 30 mph signs from the side roads, which are currently 30 mph already.
- 8.2 The only entry signs displaying the 30 mph speed limit to drivers entering Cobham and Stoke D'Aberton area would continue be at the existing locations, namely the A245 Painshill, to the north west, A307 Portsmouth Road, near Icklingham Road, to the north east, Downside Bridge Road to the west, and A245 Woodlands Land to the south.
- 8.3 This would accord with both Road Traffic Regulation Act section 81, 82, and the Highway Code section 103.
- 8.4 This complete absence of reminder speed limit signs could lead to an increase of speed as drivers would not be afforded the existing 40 mph reminders along the route and the additional information when leaving the A245, of the 30 mph signs at each of the side roads.
- 8.5 A reduction in the speed limit of a Tier 1 category A-class principal route, to 30 mph, could not be considered under the current County policy, without further physical changes to the road layout, and would not receive the support of Surrey Police as the enforcement authority, and statutory consultee to the traffic order making process.
- 8.6 Many changes and highway improvements have been carried out over very recent years, which have been shown to be of great benefit to the personal collision rate and driver behaviour along the A245 Stoke Road. There are others, which remain on the programme for future years, and it is anticipated that the works already carried out together with future works will continue to reflect this trend.

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Paragraph 2.11 clearly demonstrates that the recent schemes introduced along the route have had a marked impact on the personal injury collisions, and based upon this positive trend there is very little justification to further propose a change in speed limit at this time.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 It has been found that the numbers of 40 mph repeater signs along this route are less than that required, and hence a number of new signs have now been ordered. This will further ensure compliance with the limit and enable Surrey Police greater enforcement ability.

10.2 This should continue to have a positive influence on driver speed, driver behaviour and personal injury collision rate, along the A245 Stoke Road.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Determining and applying speed limits
Speed management policy

Version No. 01 Date: 29/10/2009 Time: 12.51 Initials: FRA No of annexes:0