



**BEECH AVENUE, EFFINGHAM  
SPEED LIMIT ASSESSMENT**

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL  
LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)**

**15<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2006**

**KEY ISSUE**

This report considers the case for and against a change in the above speed limit and recommends no change from the current situation.

**SUMMARY**

The report summarises the history of this matter, and sets out the assessment of the appropriate speed limit, the Parish Council's response to this and the officers' comments thereon.

**Report by**

SENIOR LOCAL TRANSPORTATION  
MANAGER

**Surrey Atlas Ref.**

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**GUILDFORD B.C. WARD(S)**

EFFINGHAM

**COUNTY ELECTORAL DIVISION(S)**

HORSLEYS

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is asked to agree

- (i) that no alteration be made to the current speed limit in Beech Avenue, and that Effingham Parish Council be informed accordingly.
- (ii) that this matter be reconsidered if and when national policy changes, resulting in a further need to amend SCC policy.

**INTRODUCTION**

- 1 The question of the appropriate speed limit for Beech Avenue, Effingham has been under consideration since 2002. Briefly, the sequence of events to date has been as follows:
  - (i) 4 October 2002: Following a request from Effingham Parish Council for a reduction in the speed limit on Beech Avenue, the Transportation Task Group recommended that this be added to the assessment list.
  - (ii) 12 December 2002: Local Committee agreed to include Beech Avenue on the assessment list.
  - (iii) Subsequent assessment against the policy in force at the time showed the appropriate speed limit to be 40 mph as far as the last house in Beech Avenue. This was supported by Surrey Police. The Parish Council was informed.
  - (iv) 4 May 2004: A petition was received from 35 residents of Beech Avenue, supported by the Parish Council, rejecting the proposed limit and seeking a 30 mph limit extending to St. Teresa's School.
  - (v) Discussion between officers and the Parish Council were unable to resolve the issue, which was referred to the Local Committee on 22 July 2004.
  - (vi) The Committee resolved (inter alia) "to recommend to the (SCC) Executive that a speed limit of 30 mph in Beech Avenue extending as far south as the entrance to St Teresa's School should be advertised and (subject to the resolution of any objections received) implemented, or, failing that, a decision on the speed limit should be deferred until the review of the speed management policy is completed.

- (vii) 12 October 2004: The matter was considered by SCC's Executive which resolved "that the matter be deferred pending the approval of the revised speed management policy and that the Guildford Local Committee should reconsider the speed limit for Beech Avenue in the context of that new policy. The stated reasons for this decision were that "County policy is provided to ensure consistent application of speed limits across the county. Whilst it is recognised that from time to time exemptions will be justified, in this case the reasons for this site being treated as a special case have not been set out."
- (viii) 19 July 2005: A revised speed management strategy was formally agreed by the SCC Executive, although the long-awaited national policy had not (and at the time of writing still has not) been published. The strategy comprises two guidance documents: 'Speed Management Policy' and 'Determining and Applying Appropriate Speed Limits'.
- (ix) January and February 2006: Officers undertook a revised assessment of the appropriate speed limit for Beech Avenue against the new SCC policy. Its recommendation was that the existing derestricted (60 mph) limit should remain in force. This assessment was sent in full to the Parish Council, and is attached as **ANNEXE A**.
- (x) 26 May 2006: The Parish Council submitted a report supporting its continued request for a 30 mph speed limit. This is attached as **ANNEXE B**.
- (xi) Officers have prepared responses to a number of the points in the Parish Council's report. These are attached as **ANNEXE C**.

## OPTIONS

2 Three options are open to the Committee:

- (a) Agree the principle of the 30 mph limit sought by the Parish Council and residents. This remains contrary to the revised SCC speed management policy and it would therefore be necessary to request once more that this matter be considered by the SCC Executive as an exception to that policy. Officer advice is that the circumstances of Beech Avenue are not sufficiently different to many other roads in the county, that such a decision would be ineffective in reducing vehicle speeds in the road, and may serve to undermine effective speed management by bringing speed limits into disrepute. Given the decision previously reached by the Executive, it is the view of officers that the outcome is unlikely to be different on this occasion.
- (b) Agree that no alteration be made to the current speed limit. Clearly this would be a major disappointment to the Parish Council and residents.

- (c) Agree that consideration be once again given to this matter when national policy changes, resulting (in Officers' view) in a further need to amend the SCC policy. There is no indicative timescale for this at present.
- 3 Options (a) and (b) above are alternatives, but it would be possible to agree both options (a) and (c), or indeed options (b) and (c).

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4 Any financial implications of this report will be met from the £50,000 reserved for speed management projects from LTP capital funding at the meeting of this Committee on 30 March 2006.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 5 The Parish Council and residents believe that the introduction of a 30 mph speed limit will improve safety of road users. There is a risk that a speed limit introduced against the advice of the speed management policy may be ineffective and/or may undermine the effectiveness of speed limits generally.

**CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6 County policy is provided to ensure consistent application of speed limits across the county. Whilst it is recognised that from time to time exemptions may be justified, in this case it is the view of officers that there are insufficient reasons for Beech Avenue to be treated as a special case. Option (b) - no change to the existing situation - is therefore recommended to the Committee. Option (c) - that the matter be reconsidered if and when policy changes - is also recommended.

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**LEAD OFFICER:** DEREK LAKE  
SENIOR LOCAL TRANSPORTATION MANAGER

**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** 01483 517501

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** Guildford Local Committee Report 22.07.04

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## ANNEXE A :

### SPEED LIMIT ASSESSMENT CARRIED OUT BY OFFICERS

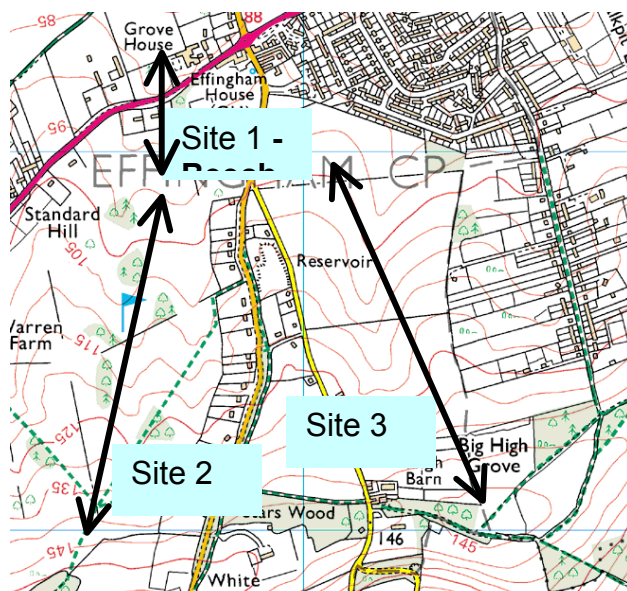
#### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following a speed limit assessment carried out in January 2006, it is recommended that the present National Speed Limit (60mph) in Beech Avenue and High Barn Road is retained.

Surrey County Council's new speed limit policy indicates a 30mph limit should not be used. Speed limits of 40mph or 50mph could be introduced. However, because mean speeds are currently below 40mph, signing 50mph may encourage higher speeds. Signing 40mph is unlikely to have a significant effect on speeds, and the necessary repeater signs would constitute clutter.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A request has been received from local residents to undertake a speed limit assessment based on Surrey County Council's new (2005) speed limit management policy.
- 2.2 The speed limit assessment has been undertaken in accordance with following reference documents:
- Determining and Applying Appropriate Speed Limits (SCC, 23 August 2005)
  - Traffic Advisory Leaflet 'Village Speed Limits' (DfT, January 2004)
- 2.3 The area of interest was divided into 3 sections shown on the map below which also shows the locations of the speed survey carried out in December 2003.



**Location plan with speed assessment locations**

### 3. EXISTING SPEEDS

- 3.1 A comprehensive 7-day speed survey was carried out 4 to 12 December 2003. This utilised detector loops, and so provided 24 hour information. This type of survey yields more reliable results than 'speed gun' surveys, since drivers are not inhibited by the presence of a survey team.
- 3.2 The results are summarised in Table 1 below. A fuller analysis is included at Annex A.

Site	Road	Direction	Number Vehicles (24hrs)	Mean (average) speeds mph	85% ile vehicle speeds mph
1	Beech Avenue North	Northbound	1127	32	37
		Southbound	1215	32	36
2	Beech Avenue South	Northbound	930	38	44
		Southbound	993	38	44
3	High Barn Road	Northbound	132	33	41
		Southbound	151	35	43

**Table 1: Existing Speeds**

- 3.3 The mean speed is the average of all vehicle speeds. The 85% ile speed is the speed below which 85 in 100 vehicles are travelling.
- 3.4 The survey demonstrates that while the roads are de-restricted (60mph), drivers are travelling well below the limit.
- 3.5 Drivers generally travel at speeds at which they feel they can comfortably stop if the encounter an obstruction in the road, or in the case of narrow roads, oncoming traffic. It is undoubtedly due to the character of these roads, which are generally narrow, bendy/hilly, often without a verge, and with trees and hedges close to the carriageway edge, that drivers are choosing lower speeds.
- 3.6 In February 2006, 'speed gun' readings were taken at or near the three original survey sites. These validated the 2003 results, with recorded speeds a little lower, as one would expect as a result of driver awareness of the survey team.

### 4. ACCIDENTS

- 4.1 Table 2 shows accidents recorded in the most recent three-year period.

Site	Road	Length of section of road	Accidents (PIA) (2002-2005)
1	Beech Avenue – North	360m	1(slight)
2	Beech Avenue – South	1200m	3(all slight)
3	High Barn Lane	1100m	0

**Table 2: Accidents**

- 4.2 All four accidents involved vehicles only, and the police did not report excessive speed as a contributory factor in any of them. An examination of the reports for these accidents does not suggest any particular pattern, other than that perhaps the narrowness of the road, and restricted forward visibility, may have been factors.

## 5. SPEED ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Table 3 below is abstracted from Surrey's new speed limit policy document 'Determining and Applying Appropriate Speed Limit', and shows that the choice of speed limit depends on road hierarchy and character, and is helpful in understanding the discussion that follows.

Road category	Speed Limit				
	60mph	50mph	40mph	30mph	20mph
Tier 1 (mainly A roads plus some important B roads)	X	X			
Tier 2 (some A roads but mainly B, C and D roads)	X	X	X		
Partial Development (similar to village thought not fulfilling all the 'Village' category criteria)			X		
Village (rural single carriageway with frontage development)				X	
Quiet Lanes (minor single track lanes where appropriate speeds are achieved through natural layout)					X

Table 3: Hierarchy of speed limits in rural areas

- 5.2 Before assigning an appropriate speed limit the road has to be assessed and classified as 'Quiet Lane', 'Village', 'Partial Development', 'Tier 2' or 'Tier 1'. Existing speeds and accident rates are then the main factors influencing the choice of speed limit for any road.
- 5.3 In order to consider introducing a 30mph speed limit roads (in rural areas) must be categorized as 'Village'.
- 5.4 In order to be classified as 'Village', a road must have frontage with 20 or more houses, have a minimum of 600m length and have at least 3 dwellings per 100m of frontage. These environmental features are needed to maintain the message to driver that they are in a village.
- 5.5 There are not enough houses on High Barn Road to classify the road as 'Village'. Beech Avenue (North and South) has 20 houses and length of more than 600m but those houses do not create a 'Roadside Village Environment', as they are not generally visible from the road, and do not form a village environment recognisable to drivers. Therefore, in this case the 'Village' category cannot be used. See also photographs below showing Beech Avenue South (Photograph 1) and High Barn Road (Photograph 2). For comparison there is an example of Frontage Village Development underneath these photographs (Photograph 3).



***Photograph1: Beech Avenue***



***Photograph2: High Barn Road***



***Photograph3: Example of Frontage Village Development***

- 5.6 The 'Partial Development' category cannot be used from similar reasons as in 4).
- 5.7 In special circumstances, where there is poor safety record along stretches of road, a 30mph speed limit can be introduced as a special measure. In this case there is no record of excessive speeding for existing conditions, significant numbers of pedestrians, or a particular accident problem (see Tables1 and 2 above).

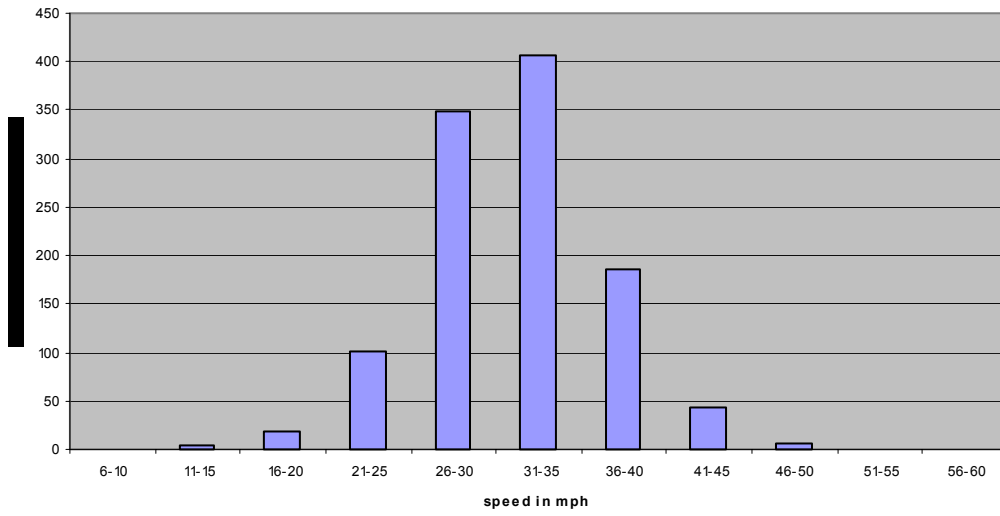


- 5.8 All three sections of road are best categorised as 'Tier 2', which covers Surrey District Distributors, Local Distributors and Access Roads (some A roads, but mainly B, C and D roads). In this category there are 3 options: National Speed Limit (60mph), 50mph or 40mph.
- 5.9 The policy states that the default national speed limit on roads in rural areas is 60mph, but goes on to state that in certain circumstances there is a strong safety or social case for lower limits. Examples of such circumstances are through villages, along country lanes, or along stretches with a poor safety record. All three sections under consideration are country lanes, but mean speeds are well below the 60mph limit, there are few pedestrians, and there is no identifiable accident problem. 60mph therefore seems a reasonable limit, corresponding with SCC policy.
- 5.10 The policy indicates speed limits of 50mph or 40mph should be considered for Tier 2 roads that have increasingly bad accident records. As previously stated all three sections of road have low accident rates, and therefore the policy indicates these lower limits need not be considered.
- 5.11 The DfT speed assessment spreadsheet was used to assess the effect of introducing limits of 40mph and 50mph (this assessment method has not been adopted by SCC as yet, but is an interesting comparison). This indicated that a 40mph limit would have no effect on mean speeds, and that a 50mph limit would result in higher mean speeds. This tends to validate the practical consideration that signing limits in excess of the speeds many drivers are currently choosing, could lead to them driving faster, since their judgment of the appropriate speed for the character of the road could be influenced by signs showing higher values.
- 5.12 So a 40mph limit may be appropriate, but is unlikely to alter speeds, and would see the introduction of repeater signs at regular intervals along the two roads – sign clutter which the DfT assessment suggests will serve no purpose.

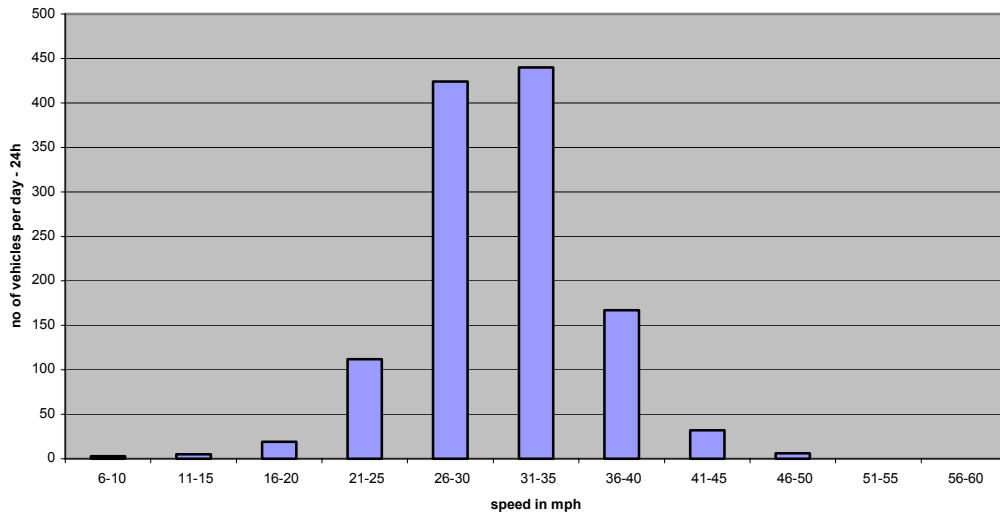
## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 It is recommended that the present National Speed Limit (60mph) in Beech Avenue and High Barn Road is retained, since this accords with Surrey's new speed limit policy.
- 6.2 The same policy precludes signing 30mph limits, and does not indicate that 40mph or 50mph limits should be introduced.

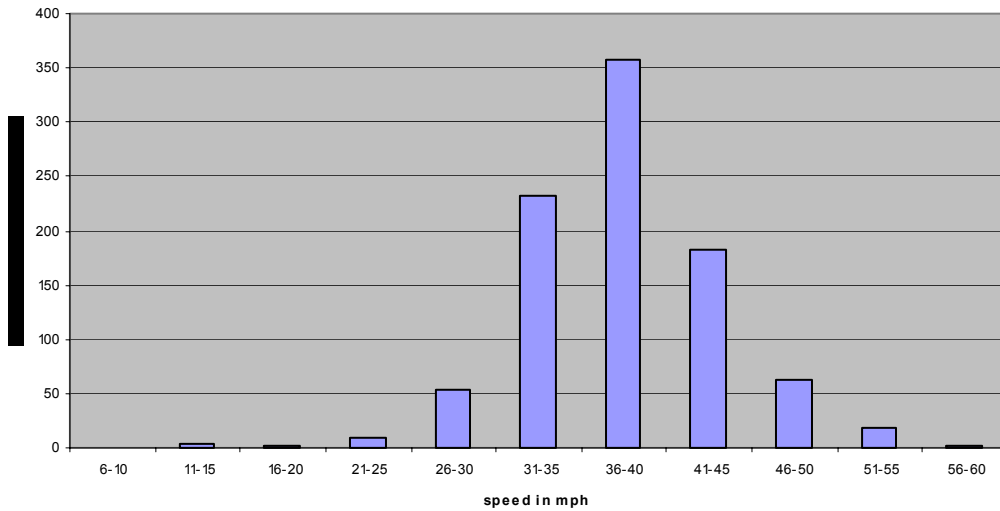
Existing speeds - Site 1 - Beech Avenue - N bound



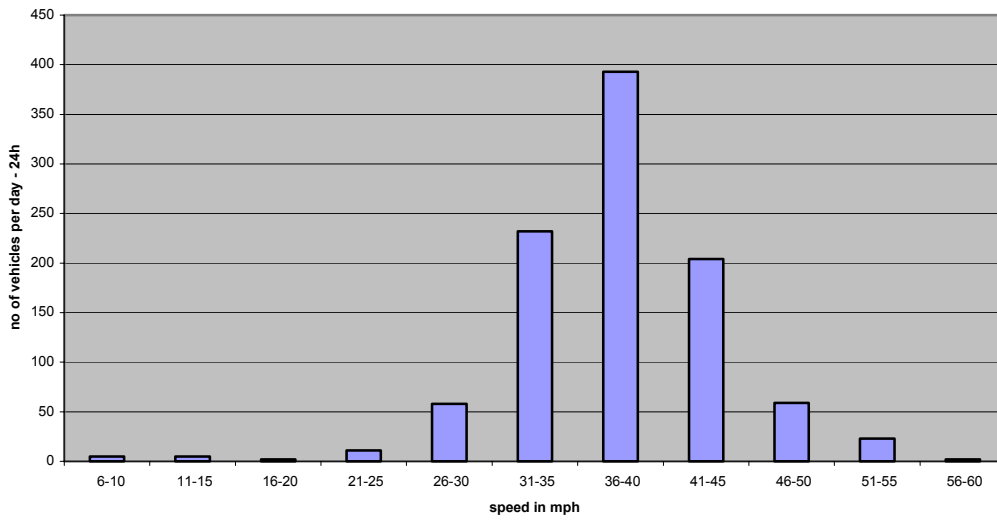
Existing speeds - Site 1 - Beech Avenue - S bound



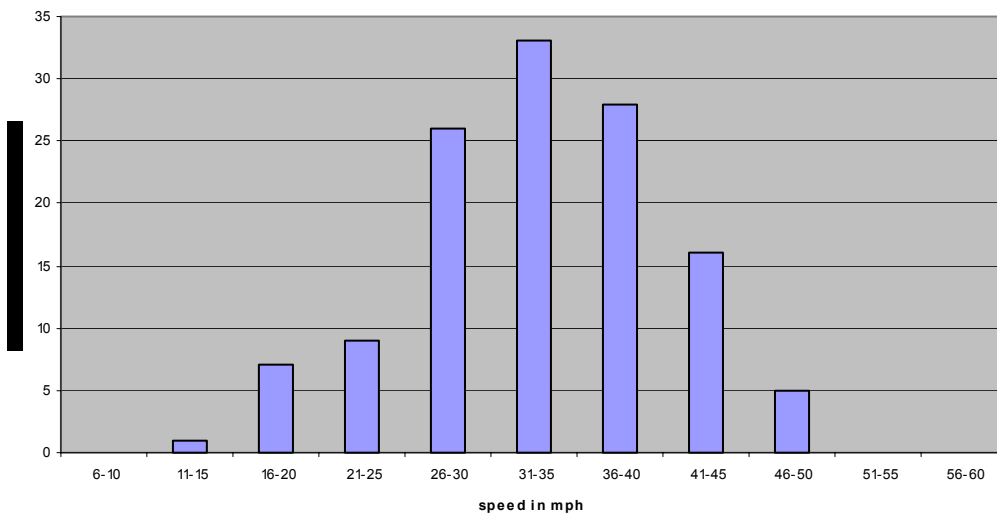
Existing speeds - Site 2 - Beech Avenue - NEbound



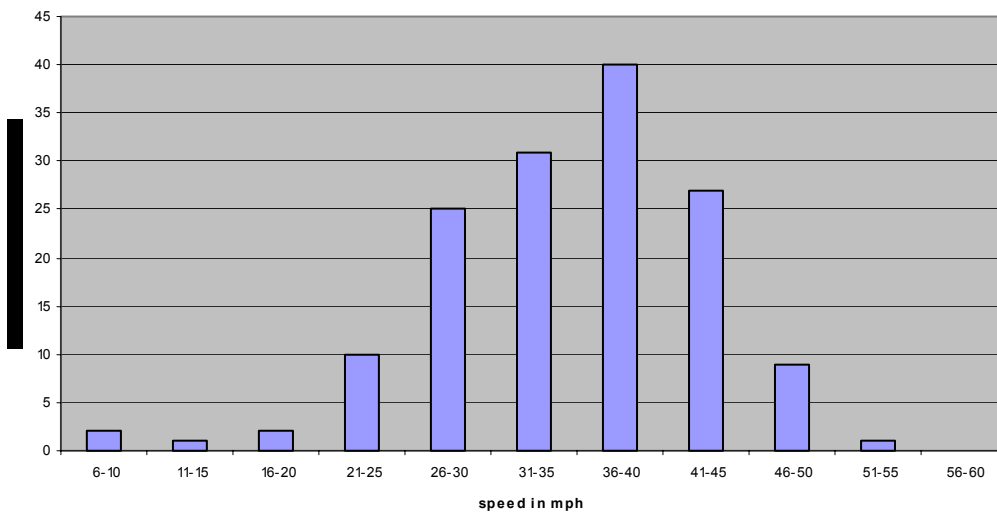
Existing speeds - Site 2 - Beech Avenue - SW bound



Existing speeds - Site 3 - High Barn Road - NW bound



Existing speeds - Site 3 - High Barn Road - SE bound



**ANNEXE B:****RESPONSE FROM EFFINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**SCC Officers' note:** *This is the entire text of the Parish Council's response without amendment, except that the reference numbers in brackets [R1 to R19] have been added to link with the officer responses shown in ANNEXE C.*

**In accordance with a previous commitment, Effingham Parish Council asks Guildford Local Committee to support the residents of Beech Avenue Effingham in their request for a speed limit of 30mph, against the Officer recommendation of retaining 60mph**

**Brief Resumé**

Beech Avenue residents have been pressing for a speed limit assessment for years, wanting a 30mph limit as against the unlimited 60mph [R1] at present. They are aware of continual levels of dangerous driving at unsafe speeds and minor collisions which are not recorded in official statistics [R2]. The local anecdotal evidence of residents, parents taking children to school and school coach drivers is a continuing litany of near misses, serious scares and frightening conditions induced by the combination of

- narrowness
- incline, steep in places
- blind bends (the narrowest stretches are at blind bends, where two wide vehicles cannot pass, but requests for width restrictions have been refused),
- poor visibility
- public footpaths crossing the highway at concealed points
- high banks, so no escape for pedestrians, cyclists or horse-riders in emergency for much of the road
- poor road surface and dangerously pot-holed edges
- no roadside drainage, which means that the road, which runs downhill for a mile, becomes a watercourse under conditions of heavy rain and the edges are constantly eroded
- heavily affected at some times (rush hour, school terms).

The residents had to apply great pressure over many years to get a speed assessment undertaken.

This first speed limit assessment was undertaken in December 2003 and the report issued in January 2004. It proposed a reduction of the limit to 40mph. Residents of Beech Ave rejected this. They felt strongly that they would prefer no limit rather than 40mph, because of the implied message to motorists about the safety of the road.

With the strong support of the Parish Council, in July 2004 residents presented a petition to the Local Committee asking for a review of the assessment. The Local Committee supported this. However to reverse or change an Officer's recommendation required a decision by the SCC Executive [R3]. Meanwhile, SCC was about to review its policy on speed assessment.

On a proposal by Effingham's Borough Councillor Liz Hogger, the Local Committee therefore referred Beech Avenue's case to the Executive with a recommendation that 30mph be adopted, or, if not, that a re-assessment be done when the new policy was in place. The Parish Council also wrote to the Executive reiterating its support.

The Executive did not accept the recommendations of the local representative bodies. Beech Ave was therefore referred for a second assessment. There were protestations at this decision by County Councillor Bill Barker and Effingham Parish Council. County Councillor Helyn Clack (Lead Member, Transport, on the Executive Committee) replied to the Parish Council's letter saying that 'I believe the Guildford Local Committee will revisit this case', i.e. after the review of the speed assessment policy (letter of 26 October 2004). This is now wanted.

### **Second speed assessment and report – concerns about methodology and conclusions**

The second assessment was undertaken in either January or February 2006 (the report says both) [R4] and a copy of the report sent to the Parish Council in March 2006. It concluded that 'the introduction of a 30mph speed limit along Beech Ave and High Barn Road could not be justified'. It recommended the retention of the existing 60mph limit. 'Speed limits of 50mph or 40mph could be introduced. However, because mean speeds are currently below 40mph, signing 50mph may encourage higher speeds. Signing 40mph is unlikely to have a significant effect on speeds, and the necessary repeater signs would constitute clutter.'

However, the way the findings for the second assessment were achieved and the report itself have raised concerns about the validity of the recommendation.

1. The data collected for the second assessment (in either January or February 2006) is not shown in the report [R5]. It is difficult to make judgements about this data, which might have been taken at a weekend or half term, over a short or long time, including or excluding rush hour traffic, dry or frosty weather etc, which is significant on a road with its particular patterns of use.
2. The method used to collect the second data was apparently hand-held laser gun [R6], which, if the holder were visible (and it is hard to see how this could not be the case in Beech Ave) would have the effect of unnaturally slowing drivers and bringing down the mean speeds to the point where it looks as if less folk are speeding.
3. The data collected for the second assessment is said to validate the data collected the first time. Mr Clive Batchelor of SCC Highways Speed Policy Unit confirmed in conversation with the Clerk that that method of collecting the data for the first assessment (24 hour detector loops) was now recognised to be flawed [R7], because it could result in readings which suggested the average speed of traffic was lower than it was in reality. He said this method of data collection has since been discontinued. Thus data collection for both assessments has used methods which can have the effect of recording slower traffic speeds.

4. SCC's new speed assessment policy requires measurements of traffic speed to be taken over a distance of at least 600m [R8], and states 'SCC gives careful consideration to the start and end points of a limit as existing features of the road may provide natural thresholds illustrating a change in its character. Consequently in some cases a slightly shorter length may be suitable'. But readings for the second survey were apparently 'taken at or near the ... original sites' for two stretches on Beech Ave. At that time (i.e. first assessment), policy apparently stated that the desirable minimum distance was 800m, but the distances used seem to have been 360m (Beech Ave North) and 1200m (Beech Ave South) to judge by the diagram provided and the lengths quoted for the accident record. It is therefore not clear how the second assessment was a fresh look at the situation under the methods required by the new policy.
5. To exclude Beech Ave from qualification for a 30mph limit as a village road, the officers who wrote the report introduced a requirement [R9] for 'roadside village environment' based on frontage development, which is not in the new policy.
6. SCC's Speed Management Policy (para. 2) says 'Surveys of Surrey residents show that traffic and speeds are a major concern and that fast vehicles may discourage walking, cycling and horse-riding'. Also, (para.7 in the section Developing a Local Speed Management Plan), 'speeding traffic may be having a detrimental impact on the quality of life of residents and road users'. It is surprising that the Officer's report makes no mention of the two residents' petitions in recent years [R10], nor of the many factors not of a statistical nature which were presented to the Local Committee (nature of the road – bends, incline etc).
7. The report mistakenly includes High Barn Road, although the residents actively opposed re-assessment through a petition [R11].
8. The Officer's report also does not give consideration to the proposal, (agreed by the Local Committee) that the limit should start / finish at the southern end of the entrance to St Teresa's School [R12]. The 'village' criteria end with the last house in Beech Ave (East Court), but this immediately precedes a dangerous S-bend on a steep hill; the DfT guidance of 1/93 states that limits should not start / end at such places [[R13]. Once this hazard is passed, it is only a couple of hundred yards to the school entrance and the Local Committee agreed it would be foolhardy to give an 'unrestricted' sign just before the school.

### **Reasons for referring this issue back to the Local Committee**

The Parish Council again strongly supports the residents of Beech Avenue in wishing to refer this issue back to the Local Committee, for referral to the Executive. It feels there are sufficient valid arguments for doing so, which together amount to a realistic case. These include:

## 1. Methodology

The methodology of both reports has not established convincingly the 40mph limit, and gives reason to question whether it should be lower.

## 2. Definition of a ‘village’ for speed management policy, and issues related to the use of ‘discretion’ in the new policy

- a) In January 2004 the government produced guidance (Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/04: Village Speed Limits) [R14] defining the sort of village roads which would automatically qualify for a 30mph speed limit: ‘20 or more houses; and a minimum length of 600m’. The guidance went on to say ‘Where the character of a village falls outside this definition, local authorities are encouraged to use their discretion in deciding whether a lower speed limit is appropriate’. By reason of housing density (density of at least 3 dwellings per 100m), Beech Ave only narrowly misses automatic qualification as a 30mph village road on the government’s definition. It has an average density of 2.5 houses over the required distance as opposed to 3. Twenty-four of the 26 houses are visible from the roadway, and each has its own visible entry driveway. Beech Avenue is the only road in the parish without a speed limit, even though a section falls within the settlement area. However, as the Parish Council pointed out when the draft policy was circulated, SCC has not reserved for itself the discretion mentioned in the government guidance, but put the police forward, and the police’s ability to enforce, as the only route to ‘discretion’. Owing to availability of resources the police would hardly undertake to enforce any limit in Beech Ave, so they can effectively veto any appeal to discretion without even being asked [R15]. Because it is tied to available police resources, *Surrey’s speed management policy cannot apply equally across all roads and for all residents.*
- b) At 5.7 in the report on the second speed assessment, the Officer writes ‘In special circumstances, where there is a poor safety record along stretches of road, a 30mph speed limit can be introduced as a special measure. In this case (i.e. Beech Ave) there is no record of excessive speeding for existing conditions, significant numbers of pedestrians, or a particular accident problem’. This is an unfair offer of ‘special circumstances’, since in reality it can never be taken advantage of [R16]. There can be no pedestrians in Beech Ave – the road is too dangerous. The accident record of scrapes and near misses is plentiful and frightening, but the police do not record this sort of data and SCC does not accept this sort of testimony as part of its deliberations. There seems to be no usable mechanism for identifying ‘special circumstances’.

## 3. Residents prevented from helping with enforcement in their own area

SCC’s policy states that speed limits alone do not bring speeds down but can only do so with other installations such as road humps etc or enforcement. SCC feels that neither of these are wanted or available in Beech Avenue. However, although the police do not have the resources to enforce speed limits, increasingly local folk are, under the local Community Speedwatch initiatives. But unless there is a 30mph limit in place, the residents cannot attempt to improve driver behaviour [R17].

#### **4. Yet more traffic projected**

Since the second assessment was done, it is known that St Teresa's School will submit a planning application to move the Junior School from its present Guildford Road site to join the Senior School on Beech Avenue – i.e. an expansion of 50% in pupil numbers. Additional traffic at rush hour will further worsen driving conditions and residents' safety. There is no hope of this school being able to implement a Safe Routes to Schools plan that will encourage its pupils to cycle or walk **[R18]**.

#### **5. Yet more drivers unaware of the local conditions**

It is acknowledged that the increasing use of satellite navigation by drivers has had the effect of bringing more long-distance drivers onto small local roads, where they do not know the conditions. The nature of Beech Avenue, with its combination of narrow road, sharp bends, steep incline and poor road surface is such that it presents several nasty surprises to people who do not know the road. The likelihood of meeting cars travelling too fast unaware of the dangers they face, or very wide vehicles unaware of how narrow the road is, is already frightening local residents **[R19]**.



**ANNEXE C:**

**OFFICERS' RESPONSE TO THE PARISH COUNCIL REPORT**

*The reference numbers R1 to R19 refer back to the Parish Council's report shown in ANNEXE B.*

- R1** Beech Avenue is currently derestricted, and therefore subject to the national speed limit (60 mph on single carriageways).
- R2** It is acknowledged that there will be more collisions and 'near misses' than are recorded in official statistics. The only objective way of comparing accident rates in different locations is to use 'personal injury collision' data, since there are the only reports which are required by law.
- R3** It is not true to say that only the Executive can change an officer recommendation. The Executive delegates to Local Committees a range of decisions provided that these are made within policies agreed by the Executive. Where a Local Committee believes that an exception should be made, the matter must be referred to the Executive. Officers have no discretion in this.
- R4** The second speed limit assessment was initiated in January 2006, and completed the following month.
- R5** Speeds were measured using a hand held radar gun on Friday 10 February 2006. The weather was dry, cold and overcast, and there was little traffic. Only a few readings were taken in each direction at each of three locations. This was in part because of the low numbers of vehicles, and the relative difficulty (and safety) of taking readings in narrow lanes without verges. The intention was to check whether speeds appeared materially different than those recorded in December 2003, not to carry out a new survey. The gun results indicated that speeds were not materially different, which is to be expected, as the physical characteristics of the road had not changed in the intervening period.
- R6** The previous speed surveys were validated using a hand held radar gun. The point that driver awareness of 'speed gun' team, and resulting lower speeds, is acknowledged in the second assessment report at paragraph 3.6.
- R7** There is some misunderstanding here. Speed surveys carried out using loops or tubes on the road are generally more accurate (as well as providing longer-term data) than those obtained using hand-held equipment, since it is not necessary for staff to be present, thus possibly changing driver behaviour. The Parish Council's report appears to have reversed this conclusion. We generally only use hand-held devices either to carry out quick preliminary surveys prior to a decision to deploy an automatic counter, or (as in this case) to determine whether there has been any material change in vehicle speed since a previous automatic survey. In the case of Beech Avenue, the hand-held surveys showed no significant changes since the earlier automatic surveys.
- R8** Again, there is a misunderstanding here. The requirement is that a length of road affected by a speed limit should not be less than 600 metres. There is no requirement that speed surveys should be undertaken along the entire length of a road under investigation.
- R9** The new policy directly links the degree of frontage development with the preferred hierarchy for rural speed limits. The policy advises that 'villages with

extensive development', where the preferred speed limit is 30mph, should have a density of 3 dwellings per 100 metres.

- R10** The report concerned (see **ANNEXE A**) is an independent officer-to-officer report of an objective assessment of Beech Avenue against the speed management policy. The petitions are an important consideration in the Committee's deliberations; they are not material to an objective, professional evaluation.
- R11** This point is accepted. There is no proposal to alter the previous decisions reached regarding High Barn Road.
- R12** If the section of Beech Avenue fronting a number of residential properties does not qualify for a lower speed limit, there is no possibility that the more rural section towards St. Teresa's will do so.
- R13** The precise location of the terminal point for a speed limit is always a matter of professional judgement, but it is recommended that wherever possible that any change in speed limit should occur where the environment changes. While officers do not support any alteration in the speed limit, if it is decided to do so, the best location, in officers' view, is on the northbound approach to the first house on Beech Avenue (Warren Field).
- R14** Traffic advisory leaflets are not statements of policy. Unfortunately the DfT has not formally revised its policy, and there is therefore no automatic qualification for a 30 mph limit.
- R15** Surrey Police have no veto over a County Council decision. Nevertheless if a lower speed limit were imposed in Beech Avenue, the residents would be reliant on the Police to enforce this. It would be wrong to introduce such a change without first consulting the enforcing authority. The Police supported the previous assessment which recommended a 40 mph limit.
- R16** The Parish Council's report seems to be agreeing that there are no special circumstances in this case. It is not correct that there are no special circumstances which would allow an exception to the policy. If, for example, despite the existing traffic speeds and environmental factors, there was a poor safety record, this could be used as a special measure, as the officer report acknowledges (para. 5.7).
- R17** The involvement of local people in Community Speed Watch (CSW) would be most welcome. However CSW can only support the Police in the enforcement of the appropriate speed limit. If the appropriate limit is 60 mph (derestricted) it should not be reduced to 30 mph merely to justify CSW.
- R18** The point regarding Safe Routes to Schools is accepted in terms of there being no opportunity to encourage walking or cycling to the school. We would, however, encourage any school to prepare a School Travel Plan with a view to reducing school travel where possible. Any increase in traffic in Beech Avenue during school peak periods would be likely to reduce, rather than increase vehicle speeds.
- R19** The suggestion that satellite navigation is encouraging greater use of minor roads is being made with increasing frequency, but officers are aware of no objective evidence to support this. Any increase in traffic, while no doubt unwelcome to local people, may actually have the result of reducing vehicle speeds, as above. Satellite navigation systems also give advance warning of bends and junctions, so may assist with driver anticipation.