



GUILDFORD SPEED MANAGEMENT PLAN

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)

14th DECEMBER 2006

KEY ISSUE

This report outlines various measures which are available to manage the speed of traffic.

SUMMARY

The report sets out the approach of the County Council and its partners to the setting of speed limits, installation of traffic calming and other minor highway improvement schemes, community speed watch and the use of speed visor signs. It also covers education activities including speed awareness days and the national driver improvement scheme. Finally it sets out details of some of the partnerships which contribute to these activities, including the Safety Camera Partnership, Safer Guildford and the Local Partnership Service Agreement.

Report by

Surrey Atlas Ref.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION MANAGER

N/A

GUILDFORD B.C. WARD(S)

COUNTY ELECTORAL DIVISION(S)

ALL

ALL

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked:

- (i) to agree that the report be noted

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1 Traffic speeds, both actual and perceived, are probably the single most controversial / common complain received by the Transportation Service from residents of Guildford. In response to this, a wide range of activities is undertaken by several agencies and partnerships monitor traffic speeds, assess and if necessary alter speed limits, carry out enforcement
- 2 The management of speed has links to collision reduction, and as importantly affects perceptions of safety, which in turn influence peoples' choices of travel mode, for example taking children to school by car because it is believed to be unsafe to walk or cycle.
- 3 Speed management is the responsibility of a range of organisations and partnerships within Surrey and is not entirely the responsibility of the County Council (SCC). The Report sets out details of these.
- 4 Last year this Committee considered a report on SCC's revised Speed Limit Policy and resolved (i) that the Speed Management Strategy be noted and should form the basis of all future speed limit assessments in Guildford, and (ii) that a Speed Management Plan be developed and brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

SPEED LIMITS

- 5 The making of traffic orders which give effect to speed limits is the responsibility of SCC. This power is devolved to the 11 Local Committees subject to SCC's speed limit policy (available on the SCC website). This sets out a procedure by which the most appropriate speed limit can be assessed. The law as applied to speed limits is complex and often misunderstood. Where a system of street lighting is in place, a 30 mph limit applies. Where this is not the case, either a speed limit order is in place, or the national speed limit applies - 60 mph and 70 mph on single and dual carriageways respectively.
- 6 Guildford Local Committee and its predecessor has had a strong tradition of speed management, and proposed limits are brought forward each year to the Transportation Task Group and approved by Committee. The investigation, order making and signage are funded by Local Transport Plan capital funds, the County's Local Capital Allocation and occasionally through Member Revenue funds or by Parish Councils.

- 7 Speed limits need to be appropriate to be respected by drivers and therefore effective in controlling speeds. It is therefore important that the appropriate speed limit is selected in each case. It is frequently the case that residents, their associations and Parish Councils are dissatisfied with the outcome of assessments and that they wish to see lower limits applied than the policy allows. It should be noted that the application of lower than appropriate speed limits has little effect on the actual speed of vehicles, and therefore is both a waste of scarce funds and brings speed limits in general into disrepute.
- 8 20 mph speed limits are frequently sought in residential areas. County policy is that these should only be installed where speeds are already low, or failing that that appropriate traffic calming measures should be installed to ensure that traffic speeds are kept low. A 20 mph limit have recently been imposed in School Lane, Pirbright and a further such limit will shortly be installed in School Lane, Normandy. Both are supported by traffic calming measures

TRAFFIC CALMING

- 9 'Traffic calming' is a term subject to many definitions. In this report it is intended to apply to 'hard' engineering measures such as speed humps, table or cushions (vertical measures) and chicanes or pinch points (horizontal measures).
- 10 Traffic calming is frequently sought by residents concerned about traffic speeds. In general these are the most effective measures available in terms of speed reduction, and sometimes therefore in terms of accident reduction. The area-wide traffic calming measures in North Guildford reduced an annual injury collision record of 25 per annum to low single figures. Despite this residents frequently ask for these measures to be removed due to the inconvenience, noise, vibration or other perceived disadvantages.
- 11 Traffic calming is almost always controversial. Recent examples in Cemetery Pales, Pirbright (vertical measures) and Trodds Lane, Merrow (horizontal measures) are cases in point. Traffic calming is expensive to install and maintain and is a heavy burden on officer time due to the need for extensive and complex consultation. It may displace traffic onto other unsuitable routes (or be perceived to do so).
- 12 Traffic calming is normally funded by LTP devolved funds, but may also be funded using developer (Section 106) funds, for example the Southway facilities which were funded by the Tesco development.
- 13 For all of the above reasons it is the view of the West Area Transportation Group Manager that traffic calming should be seen as a last resort after all other avenues have been fully explored.

COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH

- 14 This is a relatively new initiative where local people, often organised by a residents' association or Parish Council, carry out their own speed enforcement. The equipment and clothing has in many cases been funded by Member Revenue allocations. Training of the volunteers is provided by Surrey Police and covers use of the equipment and other aspects such as anger management.
- 15 Surrey Police carry out risk assessments of the proposed monitoring sites to ensure the safety of the volunteers and of drivers, and the volunteers may not therefore choose their own sites.
- 16 Volunteers record the speeds and registration numbers of drivers exceeding the limit by more than 10 mph. These drivers then receive a written warning from Surrey Police. Where repeat offences are involved, or where the speed is very high in the case of a first offence, the driver will be visited at home and warned by a Police officer. Finally the matter may be referred to the courts.
- 17 This is a valuable addition to the toolbox of speed management measures. It is effective in getting the message over to drivers without resorting immediately to court action. It also involves the local community in the process, and the presence of local people wearing high visibility clothing by the roadside is a highly visible warning by itself. Finally in those cases where speeds are not excessive, it is effective in getting the message over to the volunteers and thereby to the community as a whole.

SPEED VISOR SIGNS

- 18 These signs are becoming well known in Guildford. Often referred to as Vehicle Activated Signs (VASs), they are given their proprietary name in this report to distinguish them from permanent VASs (see below). These signs have in many cases been funded by Member Revenue allocations. They are deployed by Surrey Police in locations where there are concerns about high speeds. They are usually in place for around two weeks in a particular location.
- 19 For the first week they appear to drivers to be switched off, but are at this stage collecting speed data to determine the extent of the problem. For the second week they are switched on, and display a flashing legend, usually of the actual speed of those vehicle exceeding the limit. They continue to collect speed data. This provides a 'before and after' comparison, showing whether the intervention has been effective, and suggesting whether further intervention, such as enforcement activity by Surrey Police, may be necessary or desirable.
- 20 These signs are usually effective in reducing speeds and provide important data to inform further activity.

SAFETY CAMERA PARTNERSHIP

- 21 Members have considered a report on the activities of the Partnership in the recent past so this is merely a summary of the position. The Partnership covers fixed cameras enforcing both red light and speeding offences, as well as mobile cameras in certain locations.
- 22 The activities of the partnership are closely controlled by standards imposed by the Department for Transport and the partners (SCC, Surrey Police, Highways Agency and the Courts Service) do not therefore have total freedom. In particular criteria are set for the locations in which cameras may be placed.
- 23 The advantage of the partnership is that it allows a degree of hypothecation of the income received from fines imposed, allowing this to be deployed into further enforcement activity. The funds may not be deployed on projects or activities other than road safety, despite claims from some sections of the press that safety cameras are a hidden form of taxation. From next year, the hypothecation arrangement will change to an additional grant from central government which will depend on the performance of highway authorities.
- 24 County Members receive regular newsletters from the partnership which cover key facts and the achievements of the partnership. Individual County Members are informed when it is proposed to install or alter a camera location in their division.

SPEED AWARENESS DAYS

- 25 These are driver education events organised by Surrey Police and SCC's Safer & Smarter Travel Group (formerly the Traffic & Road Safety Group). They are targeted on roads with established speeding problems. Drivers exceeding the speed limits are stopped by the Police and give a choice of a fixed penalty and penalty points on their licence, or speaking immediately to a road safety officer (now known as Community Travel Advisors reflecting their wider role). Such drivers are advised of the potential consequences of their actions but the matter is taken no further. Drivers' details are recorded however, and if they re-offend they are not given the choice of the education option, and proceed directly to fixed penalty or prosecution.

NATIONAL DRIVER IMPROVEMENT SCHEME (NDIS)

- 26 This nationwide scheme allows drivers who could be charged with driving without due care and attention as an alternative to prosecution for dangerous driving to attend a 2-day course at their own expense. This course is delivered by SCC staff and Advanced Driving Instructors. It culminates in an assessment covering both theory and driving skills. Drivers who do not pass this, who refuse the course or fail to attend are referred back to the courts for prosecution.

- 27 This scheme is aimed at higher-level offenders than the speed awareness days. The training is more intensive and the cost greater, but both are seen as an effective alternative to court action. The possibility exists of an extension of the NDIS scheme to drivers who commit serious speeding offences

POSTER CAMPAIGNS

- 28 An additional measure deployed by SCC officers in the Local Transportation Services is the use of poster campaigns to reinforce other speed management measures. These highly visible posters are generally sponsored by third parties, and they are mounted in frames on lamp columns. This Committee has an approved policy for their deployment which is designed to maximise their effectiveness and to ensure that they are deployed for limited periods so that drivers do not become accustomed to them. Copies of the policy are available on request. Posters can only be funded from revenue, not from capital, which has implications for their future deployment.

LOCAL PARTNERSHIP SERVICE AGREEMENT (LPSA)

- 29 SCC has entered into an LPSA with the government covering a range of activities, one of which is road safety and speed management. All boroughs have been invited to join SCC, Surrey Police and the Fire and Rescue Service in this partnership and seven, including Guildford, have done so. Modest levels of pump priming are available to supplement the funding of normal speed management activities, and if the partnership achieves its targets, which are based on early achievement of Local Transport Plan collision reduction targets, financial rewards will be available to the partners.

SAFER GUILDFORD PARTNERSHIP

- 30 The Safer Guildford Partnership has an established interest in road safety and speed management through the former transport working group. This provided a forum for useful dialogue between those (often Parish Councils) who sought lower speed limits and those such as the Association of British Drivers (ABD) who believed that fewer speed limits were desirable. While this dialogue took a great deal of officer time, it was successful in eliminating the objections which were being lodged to every advertised speed limit order by the ABD. Safer Guildford however imposed additional burdens on officer time in terms of targets and reporting while bringing forward no additional resources to support these. In the present climate therefore, SCC officers are unable to provide more than token support to this partnership.

HIGH SHERIFF OF SURREY

- 31 The High Sheriff of Surrey has made road safety a priority of his period of office, and has personally funded a considerable number of road safety posters, advertising hoardings and Vehicle Activated Signs. Members will be familiar with the posters and hoardings, a number of which are currently in place in and around Guildford. SCC officers have commissioned this publicity and selected the site based as far as possible on collision data and to complement other initiatives, thereby maximising the benefits in terms of speed and accident reduction.

SCC MINOR HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

- 32 This Committee promotes and funds a range of minor schemes designed to reduce speed and improve road safety. Other than the speed limits mentioned above, these include:
- traffic islands, which as well as assisting pedestrians 'channelise' traffic and encourage lower speed though actual or perceived reductions in lane widths
 - improved signage such as yellow backed speed limit signs and repeaters as well as other warning signs
 - improved road markings such as 'slow' markings, speed limit roundels (often on red surfacing to draw attention)
 - 'rippleprint' surfacing, about to be laid on the approaches to St. Catherines, which is designed to induce vibration within vehicles without increasing noise experienced by residents.
 - Vehicle Activated Signs, such as those installed on the A281 Tillingbourne Bridge near Shalford.
- 33 These measures are often but not exclusively installed as part of a Village Safety Scheme. Funding for these comes from Local Transport Plan capital funds, the County's Local Capital Allocation and occasionally through Member Revenue funds or by Parish Councils.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 34 This report has no direct financial implications as it merely summarises a raft of measures funded by a range of budgets and agencies.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 35 Effective speed management affects road safety and the quality of life of residents and others.

LEAD OFFICER:	DEREK LAKE WEST AREA TRANSPORTATION GROUP MANAGER
TELEPHONE NUMBER:	01483 517501
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	None
