



**OFFICER RESPONSE TO PETITION  
LOCAL COMMITTEE  
(MOLE VALLEY)**

**SPEED LIMIT ON BELL LANE, FETCHAM**

**PETITION**

**03 MARCH 2011**

From Mole Valley District Councillor Raj Haque

Councillor Haque sets out the background to road safety in the vicinity of Fetcham Village Infants School and Oakfield Junior School, Fetcham. He is concerned that Bell Lane which links the two schools is narrow with two sharp bends, a narrow footway and high pedestrian movement at the start and end of the school day. He feels that something needs to be done to reduce the risk of an accident and if vehicle speeds were reduced, the likelihood of an accident would be similarly reduced.

*"I urge the Surrey County Council to put up a 20 miles speed limit and consider series of measure such as – warning signs, skid protection, pavement improvements, improved road safety education. Also improved co operation and co ordination with the safer route to school group."*

**The Operations, Highways Area Team Manager (South East) responds:**

Surrey Highways, working with the Fetcham Safer Routes to School Group, has implemented a number of safety improvements in the vicinity of the two schools in recent years. In February 2008 a new puffin crossing was introduced together with revised signing in the local area. There are 'Bend ahead' and 'School Children' warning signs together with 'Slow' road markings on each approach to both bends. Trief kerbs and guard railing have been provided on the bend south of Oakfield Junior School and chevron boards and a safety barrier are in place on the bend by School Lane. The footway is approximately 1.8 metres wide, sufficient for two pushchairs to pass.

There have been no recorded personal injury accidents (PIAs) in Bell Lane over the period 1 Jan 2007 to 31 November 2010 (the latest available data).

For the same period, there have been 3 PIAs in The Street (2 slight, 1 serious) and 1 PIA (slight) in School Lane. Only one of the accidents recorded speed as a possible contributory factor.

Regulations allow for two methods of reducing the speed limit to 20mph. A 20mph speed *limit* involves signing alone, without any supporting engineering measures and is a relatively low cost method. A 20mph *zone* works through the introduction of engineering measures (typically traffic calming) to slow drivers, supported by signing, and tends to be self-enforcing but is a high cost option.

A review of the County's Speed Limit Policy has recently been undertaken and a revised policy approved by Cabinet in October 2010. The policy states that the length of road over which a speed limit change is being considered should be at least 600m and that it is generally recommended that 20mph speed limits (including 20mph zones) should be introduced over an area consisting of several roads and not just an individual road.

Experience has shown that lowering a speed limit on its own will not guarantee that average speeds will be reduced. The revised policy therefore confirmed that 20mph speed limits by signs alone would be appropriate only where speeds are already low (mean speed of 20mph or less, 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed of 24mph or less).

A 20mph speed limit in Bell Lane, which is approximately 320 metres in length, could not therefore be considered in isolation. The Street and School Lane would also have to be considered for a speed limit reduction. Speed data collected in The Street in August 2007 recorded mean speeds of 28mph southbound and 28mph northbound. Under Surrey County Council's speed policy Officers would not recommend the introduction of a 20mph speed limit using signing alone.

As indicated above, introducing a 20mph zone would require the introduction of extensive traffic calming, with regulations requiring a traffic calming feature every 100m. There is no funding allocated at the present time for traffic calming in the Bell Lane area. A scheme to introduce traffic calming would need to be assessed and prioritised against set criteria in accordance with the County's Local Transport Plan (Congestion, Accessibility, Safety, Environment and Maintenance) to ensure that the limited available public funds are used effectively. It is unlikely that such a scheme at this location would score highly due to the low incidence of speed related accidents.

Road collisions across the County are continually monitored. If there should be any significant change or increase in the pattern of collisions in Bell Lane, then the matter would be referred to the Mole Valley Casualty Reduction Working Group for action to be determined. This group consists of Road Safety experts from both Surrey Police and the County Council as well as engineers from Surrey Highways.

Surrey officers will continue to work with the Fetcham Safer Routes to School Group where resources allow. The Safer Travel Team will also continue to work with the schools to provide road safety education and training.