



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)

ADVISORY 20MPH OUTSIDE SCHOOLS

12th September 2012

KEY ISSUE

To seek approval to pilot an advisory 20mph speed limit at one school in Mole Valley.

SUMMARY

This report sets out the background to the different methods available to introduce 20mph speed limits. Advisory 20mph speed limits can now be introduced in the vicinity of schools through the use of signing accompanied by flashing school warning lights. Advisory 20mph speed limits do not require speed limit orders, so are not enforceable and operate at the start and end of the school day. It is proposed that one school in Mole Valley be identified to pilot an advisory 20mph speed limit.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Mole Valley) is asked to agree that:

- (i) A pilot 20mph advisory speed limit be introduced at one school in Mole Valley;
- (ii) The Chairman and Vice-Chairman, in consultation with Members and the Area Team Manager, decide which school to take forward for implementation of the pilot advisory 20mph speed limit; and
- (iii) Officers monitor the effectiveness of the advisory 20mph speed limit on reducing speeds and present their findings in a report to a future meeting of the Local Committee.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In 2006 the Department for Transport (DfT) published the Circular 'Setting Local Speed Limits' which gives guidance on the framework that traffic authorities should follow when setting and reviewing local speed limits, including 20mph limits and 20mph zones. It is recommended that 20mph speed limits and zones should not be implemented on roads with a strategic function or main traffic route, should be generally self-enforcing and should take into account the level of Police enforcement available.
- 1.2 **20mph speed limits** are introduced by the use of terminal speed limit signs and 20mph repeater signs at regular intervals along the road(s) covered by the limit, with no supporting engineering measures. Research has shown that the introduction of a 20mph speed limit by signing alone only reduces vehicle speeds by approximately 2mph. 20mph speed limits are only suitable where vehicle speeds are already low, with Setting Local Speed Limits suggesting that the introduction of a 20mph speed limit where mean speeds are at or below 24mph is likely to lead to general compliance with the new speed limit.
- 1.3 **20mph zones** are generally introduced over several roads and require the provision terminal speed limit signs at all entry points to the zone and traffic calming features every 100 metres to reduce speeds. Research has shown that 20mph are effective in reducing collisions and injuries, particularly those involving children. 20mph zones are used where excessive speeds occur, requiring traffic calming measures to be introduced to ensure speeds are at or below 20mph.
- 1.4 Both 20mph speed limits and zones are introduced through the making of a Speed Limit Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
- 1.5 Surrey's Speed Limit policy rejects the Department for Transport guidance for 20mph speed limits as it was felt that it would jeopardise the existing credibility of the 20mph limit sign and be detrimental to road safety. Therefore, a 20mph zone or limit will only be authorised if the average free flow speed at a representative site does not exceed 20mph.
- 1.6 The Department for Transport has recently carried out a traffic signs policy review and the outcome of this review, 'Signing the Way' was published in October 2011. As part of this review, the DfT announced that English local authorities would be able to introduce advisory part-time 20mph speed limits for use in the proximity of schools. The Secretary of State has provided special authorisation of signs to enable local authorities to implement this change.
- 1.7 The Department for Transport have recently revised the circular Setting Local Speed Limits and the draft circular is currently the subject of consultation. This will give local authorities greater flexibility in the use

of 20mph zones and speed limits and should reduce the cost of introducing 20mph zones.

- 1.8 In March 2012, the Local Committee approved the allocation of funding from the 2012/13 Integrated Transport Schemes budget for the investigation of 20mph speed limits outside schools using recently approved methods.

2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 Advisory part-time 20mph speed limits can be introduced in the proximity of schools through use of the sign shown in **Annex 1**, in conjunction with flashing school warning lights.
- 2.2 The advisory speed limit operates for the same period as the flashing school warning lights ie. at the start and end of the school day. No speed limit order is required to introduce an advisory 20mph speed limit which means that it is not enforceable. However, it will advise drivers to slow down and informs them why a low speed is required, which should encourage compliance.

3 OPTIONS

- 3.1 Surrey County Council does not have an approved policy in relation to advisory 20mph speed limits. In order to help inform the drafting of a policy, it is proposed that one school in Mole Valley be identified to pilot an advisory 20mph speed limit in this financial year.
- 3.2 In selecting a school to take forward for the pilot scheme, the following factors should be taken into consideration:
 - (i) the location of existing flashing school warning lights. If there are existing lights, this will help reduce costs, even if the lights are not currently working and so require repair.
 - (ii) existing vehicle speeds. Where speeds are already low at the start and end of the school day, for example as a result of parking in the vicinity of the school, the benefits of introducing an advisory 20mph will be minimal.
 - (iii) accident history
 - (iv) if the school has a Travel Plan and if it identifies speed in the vicinity of the school as an area of concern.
- 3.3 It is proposed that Members inform the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of schools in their divisions that they consider would be suitable to be used as the pilot school. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman, in consultation with the Area Team Manager, would then agree which school to take forward for implementation of the pilot advisory 20mph speed limit. Before and after traffic speed surveys would be carried out to enable

officers to monitor the effectiveness of the advisory 20mph speed limit in reducing traffic speeds in the vicinity of the school.

- 3.4 Depending on the success of the pilot scheme, Local Committee may wish to initiative a programme of introducing advisory 20mph speed limits outside schools where traffic speeds are an issue. All schools in the District would need to be assessed and prioritised using the factors outlined in para 3.2 and funding would need to be allocated from the Local Committee's future Integrated Transport Schemes budget.

4 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 No consultation has been carried out to date. Once a pilot school has been identified, consultation will be carried out with the school, local residents and businesses directly affected and the emergency services prior to implementation.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In March 2012, Local Committee allocated £5,000 from its 2012/13 Integrated Transport Schemes budget for the investigation of 20mph speed limits outside schools using recently approved methods. It is estimated that a pilot advisory 20mph outside one school in Mole Valley can be funded from this allocation.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Highway Service is mindful of its needs within this area and attempts to treat all users of the public highway with equality and understanding.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 A well managed highway network can reduce fear of crime and allow th Police greater opportunity to carry out their enforcement duties. It should be noted that advisory 20mph speed limits are not enforceable.

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Advisory 20mph speed limits outside schools is a low cost method of reducing speeds at the start and end of the school day in the vicinity of the school. They act to slow drivers at the time of day when vulnerable young people are walking to or from school. It is recommended that one school in Mole Valley be identified to pilot an advisory 20mph speed limit. It is further recommended that the school to take part in the pilot

scheme be agreed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, in consultation with Members and the Area Team Manager.

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To monitor the effectiveness of advisory 20mph speed limits outside schools.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 The Chairman and Vice-Chairman, in consultation with the Area Team Manager, will agree which school to take forward for implementation of the pilot advisory 20mph speed limit. The advisory 20mph speed limit will be implemented by end of March 2013 and impact of the scheme monitored. The scheme will be monitored and the results presented in a report to a future meeting of the Local Committee.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:	Report to Local Committee 7 March 2012 Setting Local Speed Limits, DfT Circular 01/2006 Signing the Way, DfT October 2011 Setting Local Speed Limits, Draft DfT Circular 01/2012 SCC Speed Limit Polic

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