



## **OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE REIGATE & BANSTEAD**

### **REVIEW OF 20MPH SPEED LIMITS OUTSIDE SCHOOLS 7 DECEMBER 2009**

#### **KEY ISSUE**

To review the 20mph speed limits installed outside four schools in Reigate & Banstead approved by Local Committee on 10 January 2005. This report also provides an update on current Surrey County Council policy regarding 20mph speed limits outside schools and considers the previous Local Committee approval to introduce 20mph speed limits outside all schools in Reigate and Banstead.

#### **SUMMARY**

The Local Committee at the meeting on 10 January 2005 considered a report outlining the findings of a speed limit review outside schools within Reigate and Banstead and agreed to initially implement a 20mph speed limit outside four schools and to adopt a programme of implementation borough wide, in priority order. This report reviews the effectiveness of the 20mph pilot schemes outside the four schools, provides an update on current policy and in light of both the results of the pilots and current policy, seeks approval to revoke the previously approved programme in favour of a school/site specific approach to delivering Safer Routes to Schools in Reigate and Banstead.

#### **OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Local Committee Reigate & Banstead is asked to agree that:**

- (i) The required Traffic Regulation Order be made to formalise the 20mph speed limit at the four pilot schools.
- (ii) Any objections to the Traffic Regulation Order be reported to the next available meeting of the Local Committee for their consideration.

- (iii) The decision to implement 20mph speed limits outside all schools in Reigate and Banstead be revoked and a revised approach be adopted whereby the specific issues at each school are considered and appropriate, staged, interventions undertaken, subject to the identification of funding in the forward programme.

## 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following a wide ranging review of 20mph zones across Britain by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), Surrey County Council included the following key proposal within its first Local Transport Plan (LTP1) in 2001:

“We will implement 20mph zones in a systematic way as part of area wide schemes in urban areas, and the streets around schools will generally be made 20mph zones. If there are clear reasons for a higher speed limit being retained, other lining, signing and calming measures will be employed”.

The latest Local Transport Plan (LTP2), published in 2006 makes no reference to 20mph zones in relation to travel to school although they continue to be one measure that can be used to address speed issues outside schools.

- 1.2 At the 8 March 2004 Local Committee it was agreed to allocate funding to initiate the implementation of 20mph speed limits within the District. Following this resolution speed surveys were undertaken in the vicinity of school entrances, the results of which were presented to Local Committee on 10 January 2005. A pilot scheme involving four schools was approved for implementation. It was further agreed that a programme of implementation be continued to reduce the speed limit to 20mph outside schools in the Reigate and Banstead area, in a priority order developed in conjunction with the Members Task Group.
- 1.3 The four pilot schools were Meath Green Junior (Horley), Reigate St Mary’s Preparatory (Reigate), Kingswood Primary (Lower Kingswood) and St Anne’s Catholic Primary (Banstead). The extents of the 20mph speed limits are shown on the plans in **Annex A**.
- 1.4 Since 2005 the four pilot schemes have been implemented and have now been reviewed. In addition, policies relating to 20mph speed limits and speeds outside schools have been revised, taking into account updated research and best practice in this area, as discussed in section 2 of this report.
- 1.5 This report briefly sets out the policy in force at the time of the Local Committee report of 10 January 2005 and provides details of the current policy that should be applied to speed limits outside schools. An assessment of the four pilot schemes is provided and a recommendation made on whether to make these schemes permanent. Finally a commentary is provided as to how speeds

outside schools should be treated in a way that addresses the specific problem faced to provide a value for money solution as opposed to continuing with the “blanket approach”.

## 2 POLICY AND TECHNICAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 It is important to make a distinction between 20mph speed limits and 20mph zones. A 20mph speed **limit** involves signing without any supporting engineering measures. A 20mph **zone** works through the introduction of engineering measures (typically traffic calming) to slow drivers, supported by signing, and tend to be self-enforcing. Both 20mph limits and zones are introduced through a Traffic Regulation Order.
- 2.2 In the 1990s the Government initiated a national **variable speed limit** trial whereby 20mph speed limits came into operation outside schools, but only during identified school peak periods. The trial, which included St John’s School in Pendleton Road, Redhill, showed that such speed limits alone have little, if any, speed reduction effect. As a result, the Department for Transport will approve no further variable speed limits.
- 2.3 Monitoring of 20mph speed limits, such as the trial carried out in Pendleton Road, has shown that a speed reduction of around 2mph can be achieved by the introduction of signing alone, depending on local site conditions. Research carried out by the Department for Transport has shown that a reduction in speed reduces the severity of injuries should a collision occur. At 20mph the chances of survival are 90%, at 30mph they are reduced to 50% and at 40mph they are only 10%.

### Department for Transport Guidance

- 2.4 Department for Transport (DfT) provides guidance on the application of 20mph speed limits. In 1999 DfT advised that a 20mph speed limit is inappropriate where the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed (ie. the speed at or below which 85% of traffic is travelling) exceeds 24mph. This equates to an average speed of 20mph. In 2006 (Circular 01/06 Setting Local Speed Limits) this guidance was relaxed to allow average speeds of 24mph (ie. 85<sup>th</sup>ile speeds of 28mph) and therefore some speeds in excess of 30mph. Up until 2006, unlike other speed limits, in practice 20mph always meant 20mph and the latest 2006 DfT guidance departs from this concept.

### Surrey County Council Policy

- 2.5 As part of Surrey County Council’s speed limit review, itself a requirement of the 2006 DfT guidance, the new DfT guidance was rejected 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. This approach was approved by the Portfolio holder at the time.

- 2.6 The implication of Surrey’s policy is that it is unlikely that 20mph speed limits will be introduced at any locations as speeds exceed 20mph. Speed reduction, and the benefits to road safety, occurs as a result of physical traffic calming features, not signing alone. The speed reduction effect of traffic calming is self-enforcing, irrespective of whether it is accompanied by a 20mph limit. It is a matter of judgement whether there is any advantage in making a formal 20mph zone where, by definition, average traffic speeds have been reduced to this level with a combination of existing road geometry and traffic calming measures.
- 2.7 The benefits of encouraging pupils to walk and cycle to school are well documented. One of the main issues is the environment along the route to school and in particular, immediately outside the school gates. This is where, for a short time at the start and end of the school day, there is vehicle congestion, short term parking mixing with rush hour traffic and pupils crossing the road. This situation exists at many schools but, in most cases, excessive vehicle speed is not the main problem. The apparent chaos reduces the possibility of speeding and solutions to improve safety are more likely to involve improved visibility, providing crossing facilities, repairing or widening the footway together with involving pupils, parents and the school community. Surrey’s guidance concludes that identifying the precise nature of a problem outside schools is the key to finding the best solution.

**3 REVIEW OF THE PILOT SCHEMES**

- 3.1 In 2005 four schools were selected as a pilot to test the impact of implementing 20mph speed limits with minimal signing and road markings. The schools were selected to cover the Reigate and Banstead area geographically. ‘Before’ speed surveys were undertaken in 2004 between 10am and 3pm, Monday to Friday, within the close vicinity of the school entrances, providing results that were not influenced by peak time congestion. ‘After’ surveys were carried out in 2008 at the same locations. The results are given below.

<b>School</b>	<b>Road</b>	<b>Before(2004) 85<sup>th</sup> % mph</b>	<b>After (2008) 85<sup>th</sup> % mph (mean mph)</b>
Meath Green Junior	Meath Green Lane	33.88	32 (26.5)
	Greenfields Road	24.90	27 (22)
Reigate St Mary’s Prep	Chart Lane	28.48	26.5 (22)

Kingswood Primary	Buckland Road	30.60	25.5 (22.5)
St Anne's Catholic Primary	Garratts Lane	34.04	29.5 (26)
	Holly Lane	38.00	34.5 (30)
	Bolters Lane	28.54	29 (29)
	Court Road	24.54	22 (18.5)

3.2 Analysis of the accident history for the four sites has also been carried out before and after implementation of the 20mph speed limits, as below.

School	Accident Data				
	Before (1999-2004) / After (2005-Sept 2009)				
	Slight	Serious	Fatal	Pedestrian casualties (age)	Speed related
Meath Green Junior School					
– Meath Green Lane	0/0	1/0	0/0	1 (14)/0	0/0
– Greenfields Road	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
Reigate St Mary's Prep					
– Chart Lane	0/0	1/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
Kingswood Primary					
- Buckland Road	4/0	0/0	0/0	2 (14/child)/0	0/0
St Annes Catholic Primary					
– Garratts Lane	2/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
– Holly Lane	1/3	1/0	0/0	0/0	1/0
– Bolters Lane <sup>(1)</sup>	7/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
– Court Road	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0

(1) Accidents at the roundabout junction. All vehicle only accidents, mainly the result of drivers failing to give way.

3.3 It can be seen from the above data that the effect on 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds after the implementation of 20mph limits at the four schools has ranged from increased speeds of 2mph to speed reductions of 5mph. However, apart from in Court Road in Banstead, 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds have not reduced to the level required by Surrey County Council's speed policy for the introduction of 20mph speed limits.

3.4 None of the four pilot schemes selected had a speed related personal injury accident problem prior to the measures being installed. At all locations except Holly Lane, Banstead, reported personal injury accidents have reduced within the pilot 20mph speed limit areas. Personal injury accidents have been reducing countywide over this

period and **it is not possible to tell whether the changes noted at the four pilot sites result from this overall accident trend or from the reduced speed limits.**

#### **4 VIEWS OF SURREY POLICE**

- 4.1 The following comments were made by Surrey Police prior to implementation of the four pilot schemes and :

“Surrey Police will always support safe routes to schools schemes as they are designed to protect one of the most vulnerable road user groups, and a reduction in the speed of vehicles around schools could ultimately lead to reduction in the number and severity of collisions.

Our only area of concern are that any reductions in speed limits will be self enforcing as it would be impossible to provide enough coverage on a regular basis to every school. We would of course enforce any restrictions as part of our normal patrols and when duties permit. Also although in theory we support 20mph speed limits outside schools each must be treated on its merits with respect to the detail of what measures are required at each school, as there will always be differences to be considered. The 85%tile speeds at the various locations are very important as I feel just by signing a 20mph speed limit a reduction of a few miles an hour may be achieved but if the speeds are too high in the first place measures other than signing will need to be considered. This is why each site needs to be considered on its merits.”

#### **5 WAY FORWARD FOR 20MPH LIMITS OUTSIDE SCHOOLS**

##### **Pilot Schools**

- 5.1 The pilot 20mph speed limits outside the four schools has demonstrated that signing alone does not produce the levels of speed reduction required to bring traffic speeds down to 20mph. However, to remove the 20mph limits and return the roads in question to a 30mph limit could be seen as encouraging speed and is likely to be perceived in a negative light by both the schools and parents concerned. It is therefore proposed to retain the 20mph speed limits at the four pilot schools.
- 5.2 The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) covering the 20mph speed limits at the four pilot schools were formally advertised for public comment in May 2005. Objections were considered by Local Committee in September 2005 and approval was given to proceed with implementation. It should be noted that as these were pilot schemes and subject to change, a ‘have made’ TRO was not progressed. Due to the length of time elapsed since the original statutory consultation, It will be necessary to readvertise the 20mph speed limits outside the four schools. Local Committee will need to consider any objections made during the new statutory public consultation period.

- 5.3 A review of the 20mph signs and road markings at the four schools will be carried out and any replacement or new signs provided, as required. This will ensure that the 20mph speed limit is clear to all road users and can be enforced by the Police.
- 5.4 Speed reduction at the four pilot sites is likely only to be achieved through the introduction of physical traffic calming features or through enforcement. The allocation of limited resources to fund the provision of physical measures could not be justified by the accident record at these sites when prioritised against other accidents sites in the Borough.
- 5.5 The enforcement of speed limits is a matter for Surrey Police but until there is a TRO in place covering the 20mph limit outside the four schools, the Police cannot carry out enforcement action. Once the TRO has been made, the Police can be approached to request enforcement action be carried out at the four pilot schools.

#### **Other schools in Reigate & Banstead**

- 5.6 In light of the results of the pilot schemes and revision of policy it is recommended that the previous recommendation approved at the Local Committee on 10 January 2005 to implement 20mph limits at all schools is revoked and a revised approach be taken whereby the specific issues at each school are considered and appropriate interventions undertaken.
- 5.7 Staged interventions may deliver a more comprehensive solution and provide better value for money. In general a hierarchy approach based on the three E's (enforcement, education, engineering) could be taken. This approach would involve identifying whether the school has a Travel Plan, what issues have been raised in the Travel Plan, whether enforcement is an appropriate first step, then whether education and training could address the issues before expectations are raised to provide an engineered solution for which funding then needs to be sought. Indeed, engineering measures may well have limited benefit during the school start/end times but cause problems for local residents outside of those times
- 5.8 In terms of delivering a managed, value for money and deliverable approach to Safer Routes to Schools in Reigate and Banstead, a database has been produced that contains a list of all schools in the Borough along with, among other aspects the following details:
- School Travel Plan (in place or being produced)
  - Walking training
  - Cycle training
  - Speed limits/measured speeds
  - Accident history
  - Issues raised by school

- Engineering schemes identified
- Engineering schemes delivered

It is proposed that this database forms the basis for prioritising the future Safer Routes to School programme.

## **6 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The cost of advertising the draft Traffic Regulation Order and making the Order is estimated to be £2000. This assumes that the Order can be advertised in one local paper. However, because of the geographical spread of the schools, it may be that the advert will need to be placed in more than one local paper, which will result in increased costs. This can be funded from the Local Transport Plan Safer Routes to School budget. If necessary, any shortfall could be funded from the Small Safety Schemes and Speed Management Local Allocation budget.
- 6.2 The cost of providing new or additional signs and road markings, if required, can be funded from the Reigate & Banstead Local Revenue budget.

## **7 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The reduction of vehicle speeds outside school will encourage more people to walk and improve the local environment.

## **8 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no crime and disorder implications.

## **9 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 The implementation of 20mph speed limits at four pilot schools in Reigate and Banstead has achieved limited success in reducing speeds in the vicinity of the schools and has demonstrated that signing alone does not produce the levels of speed reduction required to bring traffic speeds down to 20mph, as required by Surrey's speed policy.
- 9.2 To remove the 20mph limits and return the roads in question to 30mph could be viewed as encouraging speed and is likely to be perceived in a negative light by both the schools and parents concerned. It is therefore proposed to retain the 20mph speed limits at the four pilot schools and readvertise the Traffic Regulation Orders to provide the legal backing required for enforcement.
- 9.3 In light of the results of the pilot schemes and Surrey County Council's policy regarding the introduction of 20mph limits outside schools, it is recommended that the previous Local Committee approval to introduce 20mph limits at all schools in Reigate and Banstead be



revoked. A revised approach is proposed whereby the specific issues at each school are considered and appropriate, staged, interventions undertaken.

**10 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 The retention of the 20mph speed limits at the four pilot schools would reinforce the message about the need to drive at appropriate speeds outside schools where concentrations of vulnerable road users are found. The advertising and making of the appropriate Traffic Regulation Order would provide the legal backing required for the Police to enforce the 20mph speed limits.
- 10.2 The consideration of specific issues at each schools would allow appropriate, staged, interventions to be made, providing a managed, value for money and deliverable approach to Safer Routes to Schools in Reigate and Banstead. This approach will be subject to the identification of an appropriate source of funding in Reigate and Banstead's forward programme.

**11 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

- 11.1 If Local Committee approves the recommendations, work will commence to readvertise the 20mph speed limits at the four pilot schools. A review of the existing 20mph signs and road markings at the four sites would be carried out in the new year.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS** Department for Transport:  
- Circular 05/99 20mph Speed Limits  
- Traffic Advisory Leaflet 9/99 20mph Speed Limits  
and Zones  
- Circular 01/06 Setting Local Speed Limits  
Surrey County Council traffic policy and good practice  
Local Committee reports - 10 January 2005  
- 19 September 2005