



## OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE SURREY HEATH

### A331 BLACKWATER VALLEY ROAD – SPEED LIMIT ASSESSMENT

13 OCTOBER 2011

#### KEY ISSUES

To report on the outcome of the speed limit assessment recently undertaken along the A331 Blackwater Valley Road, between A30 London Road and its junction with the M3 motorway, Frimley.

#### SUMMARY

A speed limit assessment has recently been undertaken for:

- A331 Blackwater Valley Road (between A30 London Road, Camberley and its junction with the M3 motorway, Frimley).

This road is currently subject to a de-restricted speed limit, which is 70mph for a dual carriageway. The road character has been assessed under Surrey County Council's Speed Limit Policy.

The 'preferred limits' have been determined using appropriate hierarchy from Surrey's speed management policy document, 'Determining and Applying Speed Limits'. Additionally there has been informal consultation with Surrey Police.

#### OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. note the results of the speed limit assessments undertaken,
- ii. give authority to advertise a notice in accordance with the Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the effects of which will be to implement the proposed speed limit changes and revoke any existing traffic orders necessary to implement the changes as

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shown on Annexe 1 and subject to no objections being maintained the Order be made

- iii. that the Area Team Manager in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Local Committee, and Local Member resolve any objections received in connection with the proposals.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The A331 is a primary road within Surrey's highway network. It is an essential route running north south, linking the A30 London Road and A321 Marshall Road to the north (Meadows gyratory), and junction 4 of the M3 motorway and continuation of the A331 to the south.
- 1.2 The speed limit of A331 Blackwater Valley Road between A30 and M3 junction is currently de-restricted at 70mph.
- 1.3 The Meadows Gyratory to the north is restricted to 30mph, and approximately 800 metres of the A331 to the south of the M3 junction is restricted to 50mph.
- 1.4 Further to analysis and concerns over the accident history along this length of road, it has been considered for a potential reduction in its speed limit to help reduce accidents.
- 1.5 Surrey's policy for determining speed limits was updated in November 2010. This is a 4 step approach consisting of:

Step 1 – Determining the length of road or roads to be assessed; giving consideration to start and end points, and road features.

Step 2 – Determining the preferred speed limit. Each road is considered under its respective location category: urban or rural. The road is then assessed against a number of pre-determined factors and definitions – a formulaic hierarchy – to determine the preferred speed limit.

Step 3 – Comparison of the preferred limit to existing speeds. This determines whether drivers are likely to comply with the 'preferred limit'. Where existing speeds are at, close to, or below, the preferred limit then changes would be considered appropriate. Where existing speeds are significantly above the 'preferred limit' then either an appropriate higher limit is recommended, the existing limit retained, or speed management measures are introduced to achieve speeds closer to the preferred limit. It is essential therefore, that Step 3 of this process is conducted in close discussion with the Police so that collective agreement can be reached on the implications of the 'preferred limit'.

Step 4 – Monitoring of a change in speed limit. Monitoring of any introduced speed limit to ensure level of compliance is satisfactory. A review of this information will then take place including the possibility of introducing speed management measures to ensure compliance.

- 1.4 Speeding is essentially anti-social behaviour and a Police enforcement issue, as driving in excess of the posted speed limit is a criminal offence. The Police, as the sole highway enforcement agency, have the necessary powers to deal with offenders.

## 2.0 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 Speed data for the sites have been assessed.

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2.2 The results are shown in the following table:

Road	Average daily flow	Average 85%ile speed (mph)	Average mean speed (mph)
Stanhope Rd – Riverside Way northbound	15,555	61.9	53.3
Stanhope Rd – Riverside Way southbound	16,676	58.8	50.6
Riverside Way – Sainsburys northbound	15,828	56.6	47.4
Riverside Way – Sainsburys southbound	16,394	52.0	41.5
Sainsburys – M3 roundabout northbound	16,747	59.6	52.8
Sainsburys – M3 roundabout southbound	17,073	55.5	46.4

2.3 The majority of accidents occur at the junctions and the roundabout to the South.

2.4 This length of carriageway has 4 sets of traffic signals which is unusual on a 70mph dual carriageway. The signals are linked (although work independently during power failure) and this can mean drivers having to stop at every signal installation, with this potentially leading to shunt accidents. A reduction in the speed limit is likely to have a beneficial effect on the likelihood and severity of accidents.

2.5 For consistency, the length of the A331 between (and including) the northern and southern roundabouts at the M3 interchange will be changed to the same speed limit as that to the North and South of the motorway junction.

2.6 Accident data records show the number of personal injury collisions in the last 3 years:

Year	Number of collisions
2008	17
2009	23
2010	11
2011 (Up to April)	2

- 2.7 Using Surrey County Council's policy on the setting of speed limits, these figures indicate a collision rate of 61 per 100,000,000 vehicle km, and for an A class road recommends a speed limit of 50mph.
- 2.8 Following the results above, the table below indicates the 'preferred limit' following assessment.

Road	Current limit	'Preferred limit'
A331 Blackwater Valley Rd	National (70mph)	50mph

- 2.9 As a general point, mean speeds are now being used as the basis for determining local speed limits, whereas in the past, 85th percentile speeds were used. These are underpinned by extensive research demonstrating the well-proven relationship between speed and collision frequency and severity. Mean speeds also reflect that the majority of drivers perceive that speed to be appropriate for the said road. It is therefore the aim that the local speed limit is aligned so that the original mean speed driven on the road is at or below the new posted speed limit.

### **3.0 CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 Consultation has been carried out with Surrey Police, who agree that 50mph is an appropriate speed limit for this length of road and would support the proposed change.

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

- 4.1 The cost of changing any speed limit includes legal advertisement costs associated with the statutory process, together with the costs of design and implementation. It is also possible that some electrical works would be required. It is likely that a reduction in speed limit would cost in the region of £20,000 and funding for this will be met from the Safety Engineering Team budget.

### **5.0 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 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.

### **6.0 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A well-managed highway network can reduce fear of crime and allow the Police greater opportunity to enforce speed controls.

### **7.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 This report details the speed limit assessment conducted, and how the 'preferred limits' have been obtained. It is recommended that the speed limit is changed from the existing de-restricted 70mph limit to a proposed 50mph speed limit.

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**8.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 Recommendations have been made based upon existing policy.

**9.0 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

9.1 Subject to Committee approval, the proposal to make a Traffic Regulation Order is advertised in the local press, and following the making of the Traffic Regulation Order, the contractor is instructed to install the necessary signing. The likely date that signing would be implemented if the Committee approve the recommendation is January 2012.

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<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b>	None