

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: 24 JUNE 2014****REPORT OF: MR JOHN FUREY, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS,
TRANSPORT AND FLOODING RECOVERY****LEAD OFFICER: TREVOR PUGH, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE****SUBJECT: ROAD SAFETY POLICY UPDATE****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

This report presents an update to the council's policy on "Setting Local Speed Limits" and presents a new policy "Road Safety Outside Schools" for approval by the Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet decides on the best way of reaching a final decision where there is a dispute (paragraphs 11 and 12 in the main report and Steps 6 and 8 in Annex 1).
2. Subject to the outcome of recommendation 1 above, the policy "Setting Local Speed Limits" as set out in Annex 1 be approved.
2. The policy "Road Safety Outside Schools" as set out in Annex 2 be approved.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The county council's policy on "Setting Local Speed Limits" has been updated in light of new government guidance, and in order to improve the existing assessment procedure. A new policy "Road Safety Outside Schools" has also been developed to tackle concerns over road safety outside schools. As part of this the school crossing patrol policy has been updated to ensure that the provision of school crossing patrols is maintained and prioritised at sites where they are most needed.

DETAILS:**Introduction**

1. Successful management of vehicle speeds is important because excess speed can increase the risk of collision and the consequences, irrespective of the other causes. Anti-social road use, speeding in particular, is frequently cited as a primary concern of Surrey's residents (e.g. Crime and Disorder Surveys) and is often thought of as having a negative effect on communities, shops and local businesses, and being a major barrier to more walking and cycling.

2. In January 2013 central government issued new national guidance for local authorities on setting speed limits (Circular 01/13). Consequently the county council's own policy has been reviewed to take into account the latest national policy, and to improve Surrey's existing policy and procedure to ensure money is invested successfully on speed management schemes in response to local concerns.
3. Fortunately, the number of child casualties in the vicinity of schools is comparatively small. Between 2005 to 2011 there was an average of 6,085 road casualties (all ages) per year, and 392 child casualties (under 16) per year across the whole of Surrey. There were about 50 child casualties per year taking place specifically in the vicinity of a school gate during school journey times (there are over 500 schools in Surrey). Most schools in this seven year period did not have any child casualties near their school gate. None-the-less one of the most frequently expressed road safety concerns is that of the safety of children outside schools. The perceived danger to children on busy roads on the school journey, especially in the vicinity of a school, can prove to be a barrier to more walking and cycling. Consequently a new policy "Road Safety Outside Schools" has been created to set out how the council will respond to such concerns.
4. The county council's policy on school crossing patrols has also been reviewed and updated, and forms part of the "Road Safety Outside Schools" policy. The new policy has been designed to ensure that the county council's limited resources for the provision of school crossing patrols is maintained and prioritised at sites where they are most needed.
5. The county council's Planning and Regulatory Committee has also developed a "Transport Strategy for Schools Place Programme" to mitigate the transport impacts of the county council's school place programme which is providing over 18,000 additional school places between 2014 and 2018. The draft strategy has been presented to the Environment and Transport Select Committee on 12 June 2014, and will be presented to the Children and Education Select Committee on 10 July 2014. The final draft Strategy will be presented to Cabinet in the Autumn 2014 following public consultation over the summer.

Setting Local Speed Limits

6. It is proposed that with respect to setting speed limits, the county council's scheme of delegation will remain the same (repeated below for easy reference), but that the speed limit policy referred to within the scheme of delegation will be updated.

"Local Committees will be responsible for the following:

To agree local speed limits on county council roads, within their area and to approve the statutory advertisement of speed limit orders, taking into account the advice of the Surrey Police road safety and traffic management team and with regard to the County Council Speed Limit Policy." (SCC Scheme of Delegation Part 3 Section 2 paragraph 7.2, b(iii)c).

7. The new draft policy "Setting Local Speed Limits" is included within Annex 1. The new policy highlights the key point that simply changing a speed limit with signs alone will not necessarily be successful in reducing the speed of traffic

by very much if the prevailing mean speeds are much higher than the proposed lower speed limit. For the first time the new national guidance (Department for Transport Circular 01/13) provides formulas that can be used to predict the likely change in mean speeds from a change in speed limit using signs alone. The new policy contains tables that have been generated using these formulas, and a threshold is shown within the tables, below which a new lower speed limit with signs alone would be allowed. For cases where existing mean speeds are above the threshold shown in the table, then supporting engineering measures will need to be considered alongside any reduction in speed limit.

8. The new policy indicates that new 20 mph speed limits using signs alone will be allowed where existing mean speeds are 24 mph or less. Additional supporting engineering measures will need to be considered where existing mean speeds are above 24 mph in order to get speeds down. This is the same as the new national guidance (Circular 01/13), and is a change to Surrey's previous policy where 20 mph speed limits using signs alone are only allowed where existing mean speeds are 20 mph or less.
9. With regard to speed limits outside schools, the new policy advises that there should always be an overall assessment of the safety issues outside a school to investigate and define the problem rather than consideration of the speed limit in isolation. For example, the problems being experienced may be associated with inconsiderate parking or difficulties in crossing a road that will not be solved through a change in speed limit on its own. The new policy advises that the new "Road Safety Outside Schools" policy should be referred to instead, and requires that the school travel plan is reviewed and updated.
10. The new policy contains a requirement that the Surrey Police Road Safety and Traffic Management Team are consulted on all proposed speed limit changes, and that their views are contained within any report to the Local Committee considering the change in speed limit. The police Road Safety and Traffic Management Team have been consulted and are supportive of the new process.
11. Following speed surveys and feasibility work, the Area Highway Manager will present a report to the Local Committee with recommendations for a change in speed limit, or not, along with supporting engineering measures, if required, based on the new policy. If the Local Committee disagree with the recommendations presented to them by the Area Highways Manager, and wish to proceed with an alternative option, then the issue could either be submitted for decision by the Cabinet Member responsible for road safety or decided by the Local Committee.
12. The new policy advises that speed surveys should be undertaken after a new speed limit has been introduced to check whether it has been successful. If it has been unsuccessful in reducing speeds to a level below the threshold in the table, then another report will be submitted to the Local Committee for them to consider whether any further engineering measures should be introduced. An alternative could be to remove the new lower speed limit and return to the original or different, higher speed limit. Again if the Local Committee disagree with the recommendations presented to them by the Area Highways Manager, and wish to proceed with an alternative option, then the issue could either be submitted for decision by the Cabinet Member responsible for road safety or decided by the Local Committee.

Road Safety Outside Schools

13. There are over 500 schools in Surrey (including private schools). Fortunately the number of child (under 16) road casualties in the vicinity of Surrey's schools is comparatively small. Research covering the seven year period from 2005 to 2011 showed that most schools had not had a child road casualty within 250m of their school gate. During the seven year period studied there were
- an average of 6,085 casualties per year (all ages)
 - an average of 392 child (under 16) casualties per year
 - an average of 50 child casualties per year within 250m of a school gate during school journey times
 - six fatal child casualties in seven years. None of these occurred within 250m of school gates.
14. None-the-less there should be no complacency, and the perceived danger to children on busy roads on the school journey, especially in the vicinity of a school, can prove to be a barrier to more walking and cycling, even if the actual number of casualties is comparatively small.
15. Therefore a new policy has been developed "Road Safety Outside Schools" (included within Annex 2) that sets out the process that will be used by Surrey County Council for investigating and responding to concerns about road safety outside schools. The aim is to reduce the risk of collisions, and to make the road feel safer in order to improve the attractiveness of walking and cycling to and from schools.
16. The new policy highlights that Local Committees are allocated funding for highway improvements, and that the perceived problems will be investigated by county council officers who will then report back to the local councillors. The policy also highlights that schools and parents have a vital role to play in child pedestrian and cycle training, and encouraging responsible attitudes to using motor vehicles as children grow older. Therefore an assessment of the road safety education provided within a school and the school travel plan will always be undertaken alongside an assessment of the road safety situation outside the school gate.
17. The new draft Road Safety Outside Schools Policy incorporates the council's policy on school crossing patrols. The aim of the policy is to ensure that the provision of school crossing patrols is maintained and prioritised at sites where they are most needed, within the existing budget allocation.
18. At the time of writing there are 65 school crossing patrols operating within Surrey, with a further 10 approved sites vacant. It is the intention of the county council to continue with an existing budget of £213,000 to support all approved school crossing patrol services at maintained schools. It is proposed that a charge of £3,600 per year will be made to Academies, Independent and Free schools, to cover salary and training costs.
19. National guidance advises that school crossing patrols should not operate where there is a light controlled crossing already in situ as this is a duplication of resources and could cause confusion. Therefore it is proposed that the small number of sites in Surrey where this is the case will be reviewed and subject to risk assessment, and may be relocated or withdrawn.

20. If a new light controlled or zebra pedestrian crossing is installed (or installed nearby to) where a school crossing patrol is currently operating, then the service will be reviewed and may be relocated or withdrawn after a provisional period of 3 months. Requests for new school crossing patrols where there is already light controlled or zebra crossings will not be approved. If there is a request for a new school crossing patrol where there is a pedestrian refuge, this will be subject to risk assessment.
21. Whenever a vacancy arises at an existing school crossing patrol site or a request for a new site is received, then the site will be risk assessed before a decision is taken to recruit a new or replacement school crossing patrol. Where there is insufficient funding for new or vacant sites then a waiting list will operate and future funds will be allocated on a priority basis. If the existing budget is fully committed, schools will have the option to pay for the service themselves via alternative means at a cost of £3,600 per year.
22. If a school leadership disagree with a decision by the county council in relation to a school crossing patrol, then a meeting will be held with the school staff and governing body to explain the reasoning behind the decision. The school staff and governing body will then have the right to appeal to the Cabinet Member responsible for road safety if they wish.

CONSULTATION:

23. Surrey Police Road Safety and Traffic Management Team were consulted when developing the "Setting Local Speed Limits" and the "Road Safety Outside Schools" policies, and have confirmed their support to them.
24. Earlier drafts of the policies were presented to the Environment and Transport Select Committee on 23 January 2014 and then subsequently to all 11 of Surrey's Local Committees during February and March 2014.
25. The two policies have also been subject to public consultation via the county council roads and transport consultations webpages for a period 6 weeks from 14 March 2014 to 25 April 2014. A list of stakeholders usually consulted on highways and transport matters were alerted by email to the opportunity to comment on the new policies. The new policies were also submitted to Surrey's Schools Phase Councils for comment.
26. A consultation report is included within Annex 3. This report lists all the feedback received from local committees and 41 others who responded, along with an officer response to each comment received. The main issues arising from the consultation responses are described below.

Referral to Cabinet Member for Speed Limits

27. Councillors at three local committees (Waverley, Mole Valley and Runnymede) questioned the need for decisions on speed limits to be referred to the Cabinet Member if the local committee disagree with the Area Highways Manager's recommendation based on the policy. The local committees felt that they should be able to take decisions contrary to the policy and officer recommendations without referral to the Cabinet Member if they wanted to. Waverley Local Committee made the suggestion that the policy be changed so that in these cases local committee decisions could be

called in by the Cabinet Member if required, rather than the automatic assumption that all such cases would be referred to the Cabinet Member.

Calls for 20 mph limits outside schools

28. Ten respondents called for the introduction of 20 mph speed limits outside schools. Successful 20 mph schemes can reduce casualties and encourage more walking and cycling. However the type of roads and problems will not be the same outside every school. There may be a mix of different problems such as inconsiderate parking, inappropriate vehicle speeds or difficulties in trying to cross the road. Often speeds are not that great at drop off and pick up times due to congestion. Therefore highway improvements provided outside one school will not necessarily be effective or useful outside another school. Therefore the policies will retain the principle that there should always be an overall assessment of the safety issues outside a school to investigate and define the problem rather than introducing a 20 mph speed limit outside all schools that may not help address the problems being experienced.

Charging Non Maintained Schools for School Crossing Patrol Service

29. Members of Guildford Local Committee and three other respondents objected to the consultation proposal to charge Academies, Independent and Free Schools £3,000 per year for their school crossing patrol service. An example was highlighted by the Head Teacher of Warlingham Village Primary School which is an Academy school with two school crossing patrols. The Head Teacher advised that his comparatively small school would not have the financial capacity to cover the costs of two school crossing patrols. The Head asserted that the proposed policy discriminates against pupils attending Academy schools.
30. After careful consideration this aspect of the policy has not been amended. In order to ensure county council resources are prioritised at the sites that need the most attention, it is necessary to charge those schools that are funded directly from central government for their crossing patrol service. Such schools have a larger budget per pupil than maintained schools and have greater flexibility in how that budget is spent. Following a recent increase to the salary of School Crossing Patrol colleagues since the consultation, the charge being made will be £3,600.
31. However it is recognised that on occasion there may be valid exceptions to the rule, so the proposed policy retains the principle that if a school leadership disagree with a decision by county council officers in relation to a School Crossing Patrol, then a meeting will be held with the school staff and governing body to explain the reasoning behind the decision. The school staff and governing body can then appeal to the Cabinet Member responsible for road safety if they wish.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

32. Excessive speed can increase the risk of collisions, and can increase the severity of injuries. Anti-social road use, speeding in particular, is frequently cited as a primary concern of Surrey's residents in Crime and Disorder Surveys. The fear of busy, speeding, traffic can be thought of as having a

negative effect on communities, shops and local businesses and a major barrier to more walking and cycling.

33. The updated policy "Setting Local Speed Limits" aims to ensure an efficient process for considering changes to speed limits, and that any new speed limits and supporting engineering measures (if necessary) will be successful in managing vehicle speeds.
34. If new speed limits are implemented that are unsuccessful in managing vehicle speeds then this could result in increased risk of collision, injury and death to road users. It could also result in the wider system of speed limits being brought into disrepute, wasting money and damaging the reputation of the council.
35. The new policy "Road Safety Outside Schools" has been developed in order to ensure an efficient process for investigating concerns over road safety outside schools. Lack of an effective process could result in increased casualties outside schools, and increased fear of walking and cycling leading to more car journeys and congestion. A lack of effective process could also result in investment in ineffective measures that do not address the problems being raised.
36. The policies were developed with careful reference to national policy and guidance issued by the Department for Transport, the Association of Chief Police Officers and Road Safety Great Britain. Surrey Police are responsible for the enforcement of speed limits and so were consulted when the policy was being developed.
37. The policies have also been presented for comment to local committees who will be responsible for setting local speed limits in their area. The policy ensures that police views on any speed limit proposals are reported to the local committee and that monitoring is undertaken following the implementation of any new speed limit to check that the scheme is successful in managing vehicle speeds. The Road Safety Outside Schools policy also ensures that schools and local Members are consulted to ensure that local knowledge is taken into account. Wider public consultation has also been undertaken to inform upon any amendments to improve the policy.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

38. The draft policies aim to ensure an efficient process for considering changes to speed limits, or additional road safety measures outside schools. The new policies also aim to ensure that new highway measures are selected that will be effective in tackling the identified problem. The cost of a change in speed limit or new highway measures outside schools will always be presented to local committee for decision on whether to invest their local budget.
39. The new Road Safety Outside Schools policy introduces a charge of £3,600 to Academies, Independent and Free Schools for their school crossing patrol service. These schools receive greater funding from central government. This will allow the county council's resources to be prioritised at other sites with the greatest need, based upon risk assessments.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

Setting local speed limits

40. Financial implications associated with individual changes to speed limits or other road safety proposals will be made clear to local committees as and when they are presented with proposals. Costs will be met from existing local committee budgets.

Road safety outside schools

41. The Road Safety Outside Schools Policy and the Medium Term Financial Plan includes the introduction of charges to academies independent and free school, explained in paragraph 39.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

Setting local speed limits

42. As Highway Authority the County Council has a statutory duty to promote the safety of those using the public highway. Government guidance recommends that highway authorities adopt policies in relation to the setting of speed limits and concerns over road safety outside schools. Department of Transport Circular 1/2013 provides a framework that traffic authorities should follow when setting and reviewing local speed limits. The County's updated policy reflects that new guidance.

Road safety outside schools

43. While there is no statutory duty to provide school crossing patrols, s508A of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 stresses the duty of local education authorities to promote sustainable modes of travel to meet the school travel needs of their area. s26 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 provides that the County may make arrangements for the patrolling of places where children cross roads on their way to and from school. The Road Safety GB School Crossing Patrol Guidelines 2012 make clear that authorities providing the service should decide how best to apply the guidelines and the criteria for assessing SCP sites. This is reflected in the County's new policy. s3.2 of the Localism Act 2011 establishes a general power to charge in the absence of any statutory provision which requires the authority to provide the service. Unlike maintained schools, there is no explicit restriction in the legislation barring the charging of non-maintained schools for the provision of school crossing patrols.

Equalities and Diversity

Setting Local Speed Limits

44. There is overwhelming national and international research that shows that higher speeds can increase the risk of collision and the extent of the consequences. Research has shown that children and older people are less adept at judging the speed of oncoming traffic, and less agile in taking evasive action. If they are struck, then they can suffer greater injuries due to their frailty. Lower speeds and successful speed management can improve

safety and accessibility for pedestrians, especially pedestrians with mobility impairment, and younger and older road users.

45. Following Equalities Impact Assessment the policy has been amended to include specific mention of vulnerable road users such as children, older people and those with mobility impairment within road casualty analysis which is completed in order to inform upon the need for speed management measures. The policy has also been amended to include the fact that speed reducing features could also form part of improved facilities for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, children and older people.

Road Safety Outside Schools

46. The Equalities Impact Assessment highlighted that there will be a positive impact for younger and older people because the provision of a school crossing patrol will assist them in crossing the road. The provision of a school crossing patrol will also assist those with a disability to cross the road. The site assessment procedure has been amended to check whether any dropped kerbs are provided at the crossing point so that wheel chair users, mobility scooter user and people with children in pushchairs will be able to use the crossing point.

Public Health implications

47. Effective speed management on all Surrey's roads, and improvements to safety outside schools will reduce the risk of road casualties. Reducing the fear of speeding vehicles and the fear of traffic will encourage more walking and cycling which improves the health of participants.

Climate change/carbon emissions implications

48. Improving safety and reducing the fear of traffic in the vicinity of schools and on the journey to school will help encourage more walking and cycling to school, and so will help reduce carbon emissions from vehicles.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

49. Following Cabinet approval of the policies, local committees, relevant officers in highways and road safety and police colleagues will be notified so that the policies will be applicable with immediate effect. The county council's website will also be updated so that the policies are available to the public online.

Contact Officer:

Duncan Knox, Road Safety Team Manager, 020 8541 7443

Rebecca Harrison, Sustainable School Travel Officer, 01483 517515

Consulted:

See paragraphs 22 to 24 above.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Draft Setting Local Speed Limits Policy

Annex 2: Draft Road Safety Outside Schools Policy

Annex 3: Consultation Report

Annex 4: Equalities and Diversity Impact Assessment

Sources/background papers:

- Setting Local Speed Limits (Circular 01/13), Department for Transport Jan 2013
 - Speed Enforcement Policy Guidelines 2011 to 2015: Joining Forces for Safer Roads, Association of Chief Police Officers
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