

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (SPELTHORNE)

DATE: 27 JULY 2015

LEAD OFFICER: NICK HEALEY, AREA TEAM MANAGER (NE)

SUBJECT: ASHFORD ROAD

DIVISION AFFECTED: LALEHAM AND SHEPPERTON, STAINES SOUTH AND ASHFORD WEST

**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The Spelthorne Local Committee received a petition from Mrs Michelle Redman on 23.03.15 signed by 104 signatories calling on Surrey County Council to reduce the speed limit of Ashford Road from 40mph to 30mph. This report responds to the concerns raised.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Spelthorne) is asked to:

- (i) Decide whether to proceed with a full speed assessment in the context of a feasibility study, noting that funding of approximately £5,000 would need to be allocated for this purpose.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

1.1 The text of the petition is as follows:

The Ashford Rd, Laleham, Staines is currently set at 40mph. It is a residential road & the houses are set quite close to the road. Cars speed over & above this limit all the time & despite some serious accidents & one fatal, I believe. This situation is dangerous & the noise, especially from motorbikes speeding, is deafening. Can we please request the speed limit be reduced to 30mph & maybe have some sleeping policeman to help? Thank you

1.2 The B377, Ashford Road, Laleham is a 'B'- classified semi-rural, two-way single carriageway road, approximately 1.3 km in length and averaging 6.5 metres in width. It forms part of the B377, which runs from Laleham to Ashford and is part of Surrey County Council's Priority Route Network 3. Ashford Road is currently monitored by Surrey County Council's Speed Management policy.

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1.3 The section of Ashford Road from its junction with The Broadway to approximately 80 metres south of its junction with New Farm Close is subject to a 30mph speed limit; the remaining section of the road to approximately 66 metres north of the junction with Gloucester Crescent is subject to a 40mph speed limit.

1.4 The road has a continuous system of street lighting. The residential properties that bound the section of Ashford Road in question, have off-street parking and are generally set back from the carriageway edge by an average distance of about 4 metres. A footway runs between the residential properties and the carriageway.

1.5 Speeding is essentially a Police enforcement issue as driving in excess of the posted speed limit is a criminal offence for which the Police, as the sole highway enforcement agency, have powers to deal with offenders who unashamedly flout the law, quickly and effectively.

2. ANALYSIS:

2.1 The B377 is a key road on Surrey County Council's road network and has been for many years. It remains an important link between Laleham and Ashford for all vehicles types.

2.2 The section of Ashford Road in question is located 80 metres south of its junction with New Farm Close to 60 metres north of the junction with the Gloucester Crescent.

2.3 The existing road surface condition is very good. The road layout including the signs, road markings, speed limit are all adequate and appropriate for the road and the hazards presented and there is sufficient information given for drivers to treat the road with respect.

2.4 A three (3) year personal injury data has been investigated for the section of Ashford Road in question between the periods of 1st January 2012 to 31st March 2015 and is shown in the table below:

Location	Date	Primary Factor	Severity of Injury
Junction with Charles Road	18/06/2012	Driver disobeyed giveaway or stop sign	Slight
Junction with Gloucester Crescent	19/06/2012	Loss of control	Slight
20 metres south to junction with Gloucester Crescent	28/01/2013	Driver failed to look properly	Serious
Junction with Charles Road	10/01/2014	Travelling too fast for road conditions and failed to look properly	Slight
Junction with Gloucester Crescent	14/04/2014	Not provided by the police	Slight
12 metres south to junction with Gloucester Crescent	25/04/2014	Slippery road surface and failed to judge other person's path	Slight
Outside number 345 Ashford Road	14/05/2014	Driver failed to look properly	Slight

50 metres south to junction with Charles Road	10/04/2014	Not provided by the police	Slight
Junction with Charles Road	08/07/2014	Careless and reckless driving	Slight
Junction with Shaftesbury Crescent	01/12/2013	Driver failed to look properly	Serious
20 metres south to junction with Shaftesbury Crescent	20/03/2013	Driver impaired by alcohol	Slight
Junction with Bingham Drive	18/04/2013	Aggressive driving and poor turn	Slight
Junction with Bingham Drive	20/11/2013	Driver failed to look properly	Serious
Outside number 151 Ashford Road	16/06/2012	Poor turn and manoeuvre	Slight
Junction with New Farm Close	05/09/2013	Failed to judge other person's path or failed to look properly or following too close	Slight
Outside number 131 Ashford Road	18/06/2014	Exceeding speed limit and failed to judge other person's path	Slight
Outside number 103 Ashford Road	14/06/2014	Careless and reckless driving and aggressive driving	Serious

- 2.5 Data obtained from Surrey Police's accident database show there have been two (2) accidents with speeding as the primary contributory factor. These accidents have been highlighted in the above table.
- 2.6 A spot speed survey carried out by Surrey Police from 21st April to 29th April 2015 show mean speeds for vehicles travelling northbound and southbound to be 38mph and 41mph respectively. By reference to Surrey County Council's Setting Local Speed Limits Policy, it is highly unlikely that a reduction in speed limit would be successful without significant supporting engineering measures. Simply changing the posted speed limit is likely to lead to mass defiance by drivers.
- 2.7 Data obtained from Surrey Police's Speed Management Plan updated on the 27th May 2015 show Ashford Road is not identified with speeding issues. There has been one (1) complaint regarding vehicle speeds since October 2014.
- 2.8 All the accidents above appear to be wholly random and no identifiable pattern with driver error being the predominant cause and the circumstances are such that these could have occurred on any road.

3. OPTIONS:

Reducing the Speed Limit

- 3.1 Experience has shown that lowering a speed limit on its own will not necessarily reduce speeds sufficiently. If a speed limit is set much lower than the existing traffic speeds then motorists are likely to ignore the limit unless the character of the road

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or environment indicate otherwise. There are likely to be insufficient police resources to provide effective enforcement for locations where speed limits are unrealistic.

- 3.4 Any changes to the existing speed limit would be undertaken in consultation with Surrey Police, as they will have the responsibility for the enforcement of the new speed limit.

Traffic Calming

- 3.5 Research has shown that traffic calming measures have a positive effect on reducing speeds and casualties. However, these measures are rarely used on 'B' class roads, where the road's function is to carry large volumes of traffic at reasonable speeds.
- 3.6 Residents are frequently not supportive of such measures, due to the intrusion element and additional noise and vibration implications.
- 3.7 Similar traffic calming on major roads showed drivers can often be more focused on their driving line through traffic calming, than on other road users or events.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 Informal consultations have been carried out with Surrey Police and their view is that they cannot make any comments until a full speed assessment has been carried by Surrey County Council.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The estimated cost of carrying out speed assessment on the B377 Ashford Road in the context of a feasibility study is within the region of £5,000. This cost will have to be funded through the divisional members' allocation.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 It is an objective of Surrey Highways to treat all users of the public highway equally and with understanding.

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 The Local Committee prioritises its expenditure according to local priorities.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 A well-managed highway network can contribute to reduction in crime a disorder as well as improve people's perception of crime.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The existing road layout including the signs, road markings, speed limit are all adequate and appropriate for the road and the hazards presented. There is sufficient information given for a responsible driver treat the section of road in question with respect.
- 9.2 To introduce a 30 mph limit on Ashford Road would require the entire removal of all the existing 40 mph entry and repeater signage and all the existing 30 mph signs from the side roads.
- 9.3 Although vertical traffic calming measures would provide positive control on speed, officers would not recommend it for 'B' classified roads because it generates noise and causes problems for snow ploughs.
- 9.4 At the time of writing this report, both elected members of the affected divisions had indicated their support for reducing the existing speed limit from 40mph to 30mph.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 If the Spelthorne Local Committee decide to pursue this request, the Area Highways Team, who report to the Spelthorne Local Committee, will lead the process to assess a potential change in speed limit, in the context of a feasibility study.

The Area Highways Team will be assisted by the Road Safety Team and will consult with Surrey Police's Road Safety and Traffic Management Team.

The output would be a report and recommendations in accordance with Surrey County Council's speed limit policy for consideration by the Local Committee, who will then decide whether to allocate funding for a scheme to change the existing speed limit or not.

Contact Officer: Nick Healey, Area Team Manager (NE)

Consulted: None.

Annexes: None.

Sources/background papers: Setting Local Speed Limits – SCC's Speed Limit Policy

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