

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**LOCAL COMMITTEE (TANDRIDGE)**

**DATE: 11 December 2015**

**LEAD OFFICER: Duncan Knox**

**SUBJECT: ROAD SAFETY OUTSIDE SCHOOLS REPORT  
LIMPSFIELD CHURCH OF ENGLAND INFANT SCHOOL**

**DIVISION: OXTED**



**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Concern has been expressed over the safety of children arriving and leaving Limpsfield C of E Infant School. This report outlines investigations into the nature and extent of the concerns, and possible highway and road safety education improvements to reduce them. The highway improvements would also support the proposed reduction in speed limit from 40 mph to 30 mph approved by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Flooding, improving the likelihood that this would be successful in reducing vehicle speeds.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Local Committee (Tandridge) is asked to:**

- (i) Agree that the highway improvement proposals presented in paragraph 3.2 of this report are added to the Integrated Transport Scheme list of possible future highway improvements for Tandridge, for consideration for future funding; and
- (ii) Note that Limpsfield C of E Infant School will be asked to update their School Travel Plan and carry out supporting road safety education and training initiatives as described within this report, supported by the county council's Sustainable School Travel Team.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The proposed highway measures recommended in this report will increase the likelihood that the proposed reduction in speed limit from 40 mph to 30 mph will be successful in reducing vehicle speeds in the vicinity of the school. They will also improve the parking arrangements on the eastbound approach to the school. There are also suggestions on how to sustain the school crossing patrol service over the longer term. The recommended school travel plan and road safety education improvements will also help to improve road safety skills for the children attending the school.

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

- 1.1. Concerns have been expressed by the Divisional Member and Limpsfield C of E Infant School community the over the safety of children arriving and leaving the school. There have also been concerns over the long term future of the school crossing patrol services outside the school. County council officers and colleagues from Surrey Police Road Safety and Traffic Management Team are also concerned that without supporting highway measures the reduction in speed limit from 40 mph to 30 mph (approved by the county council's Cabinet Member for Highways Transport and Flooding on 9 September 2015) is unlikely to be successful in reducing vehicle speeds in compliance with the new lower limit.
- 1.2. This report describes the results of investigations into these issues and presents possible highway and road safety education improvements to address the concerns. These have been developed in accordance with the county council's "Road Safety Outside Schools" and "Setting Local Speed Limits" policies approved by county council Cabinet on 24 June 2014.

## **2. ANALYSIS:**

### **Site Description and Existing Infrastructure**

- 2.1 Limpsfield Church of England Infant School caters for children aged 4-7 years and is located on the A25 between Oxted and Westerham. The school has a pupil admission number of 60 per year. Presently there are 180 pupils on roll and 33 members of staff.
- 2.2 The school is located on the north side of the A25 Westerham Road Limpsfield. This stretch of road is currently subject to a 40 mph speed limit. For vehicles travelling westbound towards the school from Kent the speed limit begins as the national speed limit (60 mph for cars), and then changes to 40 mph approximately 430m to the east the school, and then remains at 40mph past the school and beyond on the A25 into Limpsfield and then Oxted to the west of the school.
- 2.3 Outside the school the A25 Westerham Road is divided by a central reservation with a gap for right-turning vehicles accessing Kent Hatch Road to the south opposite the school and the car park adjacent to the school on the north side. Just to the west of the school the central reservation widens to incorporate a long pedestrian island. There is guard railing around the island and on the north side of the road to guide pedestrians to cross at a point away from the bus stop lay-bys on the north and south sides of the road. At school journey times there are two school crossing patrol colleagues that work at each end of the central pedestrian island to supervise pedestrians crossing the eastbound and westbound carriageways in two stages. There is "antiskid" high friction road surfacing on both eastbound and westbound approaches to the crossing points.
- 2.4 There are "school keep clear" zig-zag markings on the eastbound carriageway with a supporting timing plate road sign describing the times of operation to deter any vehicles stopping on the zig-zags between the bus stop lay-by immediately outside the school and the crossing point to the east of the school.

- 2.5 An advisory 20 mph speed limit was introduced outside Limpsfield C of E Infant School in March/April 2013. This was implemented through the provision of school flashing “wig-wag” signs with advisory plate “20 mph when lights flash” on both the eastbound and westbound approaches to the school.
- 2.6 There is a small public car park to immediately adjacent to the school (on the west side) that is accessed from the A25 Westerham Road. This is used mostly by school staff. There are advisory cycle lanes on both eastbound and westbound carriageways.
- 2.7 The eastbound approach to the school has an uphill gradient with two traffic lanes, one of which is a right turn lane for vehicles turning right into Kent Hatch Road. Initially the road has one lane at the eastbound exit from the traffic signals at the junction with Limpsfield High Street which then divides into two lanes approximately 40m from the junction. The traffic signal junction incorporates crossing facilities for pedestrians.

### **Perceived problems**

- 2.8 There is concern that the speed of traffic is too great especially considering the proximity of the infants school, the need to cross the road near the school and the busy school related traffic at dropping off and picking up times. The “20 mph when lights flash” signs are advisory and not enforceable. Whilst speeds are lower at the start and end of the school day, they do not approach the advised 20mph speed. The traffic survey referred to in paragraph 2.13 recorded average mean speeds for the school week (Monday to Friday) of 35.3 mph eastbound and 34.7 mph westbound in the morning drop off period (8am to 9am) and 34.5 mph eastbound and 31.4 mph westbound in the afternoon pick up period (3pm to 4pm).
- 2.9 There are currently two school crossing patrol colleagues who supervise pedestrians crossing the road outside the school. There is concern over the long term sustainability of this service because should these colleagues leave their role, then experience has shown that it is very difficult to recruit replacements (there is funding available to pay for replacements, but it is difficult to find people to take up the role). Without a school crossing patrol service or alternative at this site it would be difficult for parents and children to cross the road safely and comfortably.
- 2.10 At school journey times there is a lot of parking on the eastbound carriageway to the west of the school on the uphill stretch where there are two eastbound lanes. Most motorists park half on the footway, half on the carriageway. The vehicles parked at the western end nearest the school block the visibility between oncoming eastbound traffic and the school crossing patrol site. The vehicles also partly block the footway which makes it difficult for pedestrians to pass, especially those with pushchairs or mobility scooters.

### **Analysis of Road Collision Data**

- 2.11 The county council’s database of personal injury collisions recorded by the police has been checked. This shows that in the last three years to the end of August 2015 in the vicinity of the school (from the junction with Limpsfield High Street to the 40 mph speed limit boundary to the east of the site) there were four collisions resulting in slight injury. (This does not include collisions

resulting in damage only as this is not systematically reported to, or recorded by the police). None of the casualties were pedestrians or children (under 16 years old). A summary of these collisions is given below.

- 05:00, 17 November 2013, 50 m west of the junction with Kent Hatch Road, slight injury to 32 year old male car driver, single vehicle loss of control collision with a lamp column.
- 21:16, 11 September 2014, 50 m west of the junction with Kent Hatch Road, slight injury to 18 year old female car driver, vehicle caused to swerve by unknown vehicle, leading to loss of control, collision with central reserve and then wall in front of 3 Pebble Hill cottages.
- 16:29, 18 December 2012, junction of A25 with Grub Street, car turning out of Grub Street pulled out in front of westbound car resulting in slight injuries to 67 year old male, 81 year old female and 51 year old female car occupants.
- 13:25, 10 December 2012, junction of A25 with Grub Street, westbound driver dazzled by the sun and collided with central island resulting in slight injury to 18 year old female driver.

- 2.12 Although any one collision resulting in road casualties is one too many, the collision history around the school does not represent a very concentrated pattern of collisions compared to many other sites across Surrey. (Information on personal injury collisions throughout Great Britain is available to view via [www.crashmap.co.uk](http://www.crashmap.co.uk)).

#### **Analysis of Speed Survey Data**

- 2.13 As reported to the Cabinet Member in September 2015, a speed survey was carried out over a continuous 7 day period (25 February to 3 March 2015) using automatic traffic survey equipment located between the eastern end of the central island and Grub Street. This showed that the average mean speeds were 38.7 mph in the eastbound direction and 38.6 mph in the westbound direction. This is within the existing 40 mph speed limit, but is much greater than the approved lower 30 mph speed limit. Surrey County Council's policy "Setting Local Speed Limits" highlights that without supporting engineering measures a reduction in speed limit on its own is unlikely to be successful in reducing vehicle speeds to be within compliance with the new lower speed limit.

#### **Road User Behaviour Observations**

- 2.14 A site visit involving county council highway engineers, road safety team, school sustainable travel team, and police road safety colleagues was undertaken on the morning of 7 October 2015. Two of the school governors were also present. The following observations were noted:
- A large number of parents park outside the golf club and in the car park opposite the golf club on Grub Street and then cross the A25 Westerham Road to the school using the school crossing patrol and central island.

- There is also a “Walking Bus” which operates from the National Trust car park located to the north of the school. This route is off-road and does not require children to cross any roads.
- A number of parents were partially parking on the footway on the eastbound approach to the school. The parking extended from the access to the car park adjacent to the school almost as far as the traffic signal junction with Limpsfield High Street. This reduces the footway width making it very difficult to negotiate with a pushchair or mobility scooter. At the eastern end it also restricts visibility between the school crossing patrol officer and oncoming eastbound vehicles. This parking also results in the advisory cycle lane being blocked.
- A small number of drivers were observed to briefly stop illegally on the “school keep clear” zig-zag markings to drop their children off.

### **Measures already due to be implemented**

- 2.15 Approval has already been given to reduce the speed limit from 40 mph to 30 mph on this stretch of road. A proposal for some changes to parking controls has also been consulted on and are also due to be implemented. These include a small amendment to the length of the “school keep clear” zig-zag markings so that they do not coincide with the bus stop lay-by. Vehicles (including buses) should not stop anywhere within the zig-zag markings even if there is a lay-by, so the proposal to slightly shorten the zig-zags will resolve this contradiction.
- 2.16 There is also a proposal to introduce “no waiting at any time” double yellow line parking restrictions from the end of the bus lay-by outside the school westwards to a point level with the western edge of Pebble Hill Cottage. This is proposed so as to deter parking which currently restricts the visibility between the school crossing patrol and eastbound vehicles.

## **3. OPTIONS:**

### **School Crossing Patrol**

- 3.1 There are two school crossing patrol officers who provide a valuable service supervising children and parents crossing between the school and the golf club car park. The role is undertaken by the school caretaker and catering colleague in addition to their usual duties. There is concern that if they decide to leave their school crossing patrol role there could be difficulty in replacing them. This is because although there is county council funding available, experience elsewhere in the county has shown that it is difficult to recruit people to take up the job. This could be especially difficult because there needs to be two school crossing patrol colleagues to supervise the two stage crossing at this site. An alternative to a school crossing patrol would be to provide a signalised pedestrian crossing. However it is estimated that this could cost in the region of £150,000 and is therefore likely to be prohibitively expensive in the short term. Therefore in the absence of funding for a signalised crossing the following options could be considered should the current patrol officers leave their role. The county council’s Sustainable School Travel team will provide advice and assistance to the school regarding these:

- The school crossing patrol duties could be formally incorporated into the job description of a wider role within the school should there be a suitable vacancy in the future. There may then be greater likelihood of successful recruitment to a position that includes the school crossing patrol duties as just one part of a wider role within the school.
- Elsewhere in Surrey some schools have been successful in recruiting a number of volunteer parents who operate a rota to provide the school crossing patrol service. The county council's Sustainable School Travel team would provide equipment and training. It is recognised that this option may be more challenging to achieve than at other sites because of the fact that there are two positions to cover. However this may be a way of providing cover for at least one of the positions should there ever be a need to in the future.

### **Speed Management Highway Improvement Measures**

3.2 The following measures are proposed in order to support the reduction in speed limit from 40 mph to 30 mph. It is hoped that these will improve the likelihood that speeds would be reduced in compliance with the new lower speed limit.

- **Village gateway speed limit signing.** The new 30 mph speed limit boundary signing to the east of the junction with Grub Street (replacing the existing 40 mph boundary signing) will be enhanced with additional features that could include white post gateway style fencing, and a "Welcome to Limpsfield Please Drive Carefully", or similar sign. An additional central island could also be considered as well as 30 mph roundel carriageway markings. The aim of this would be to highlight the boundary to the new 30mph speed limit to a much greater extent to motorists compared with standard 30 mph signs on their own. Estimated cost (excluding central island): £5,000 to £10,000.
- **A reduction in speed limit on the westbound approach to the new 30 mph speed limit.** The existing national speed limit (60 mph for cars) on the westbound approach from the Kent border to the new proposed 30 mph speed limit could be reduced to 50 mph. As reported to Tandridge Local Committee in March 2015, measured mean speeds on this section of the A25 comply with a reduction in the speed limit to 50 mph. Consultation and agreement with Kent colleagues and decision makers would be required as the lower 50 mph limit would need to extend over the border into Kent. If successful this would help reduce speeds prior to the new 30 mph limit. Estimated cost: £5,000.
- **Two Vehicle Activated Signs.** An electronic vehicle activated sign could be positioned on both the westbound and eastbound approaches to the school. The signs would illuminate to remind drivers of the 30 mph speed limit and to "slow down" if they are detected as approaching too fast. The advisory "20 mph when lights flash" signs would be changed to standard school flashing warning signs so as not to contradict the 30 mph vehicle activated signs. Estimated cost: £8,000.
- **Reduction from two lanes to one on eastbound approach.** It is proposed that the nearside lane up the hill on the eastbound approach to the school could be changed to provide a marked parking bay. There is

no need for a long right turn lane for vehicles turning right into Kent Hatch Road, as this makes the road wider and look and feel as though it would have a higher speed limit than 30 mph. Instead the right turn lane would become a single westbound lane with parking in the nearside lane up to Pebble Hill Cottage where the new “no waiting at any time” parking control begins. At this point a new shorter right turn lane could be provided much closer to the junction with Kent Hatch Road. As well as encouraging lower speeds, the provision of a marked parking bay to replace the nearside lane would remove the need for parents to park half on the footway and so would reduce obstructions for pedestrians. It would also provide a better on-road parking facility for the local residents. The advisory cycle lane could be repositioned on the outside of the marked parking bay so that it would no longer be blocked by parked vehicles. Estimated cost: £8,000 to £10,000.

- 3.3 More accurate costs would become apparent following more detailed design, at which point if the costs exceed the available budget, the scope of the scheme would be reviewed with Members.

### Road Safety Education and Training

- 3.4 Surrey County Council’s “Road Safety Outside Schools” policy highlights that road safety education and training for children is just as important as the infrastructure outside schools. The county council’s Sustainable School Travel team provide a range of resources for schools to use. A meeting between a colleague from the county council’s Sustainable School Travel Team and the school’s leadership took place on 11 November 2015 to assess the road safety education and training provided within the school. Consequently the opportunities to take up more of the resources offered by the county council Sustainable School Travel Team were identified, as summarised below:

- **School Travel Plan.** The school has a travel plan, but this has not been updated for five years. It is recommended that the travel plan is updated and the county council’s Sustainable Schools Travel team will assist in this.
- **Golden Boot Challenge.** This is an annual inter-class competition to encourage more sustainable travel to school including walking, scooting, cycling and park and stride. It is recommended that the school take part in the challenge to encourage reduced car use and congestion in the immediate vicinity of the school.
- **Pedestrian Training Year 1.** The school have been providing pedestrian training to year 1 pupils. There are also resources available for training year 3 pupils which could be adapted for use with year 2 pupils within the school.
- **Road Safety Playbox.** The county council provide a box containing resources and toys for use with nursery pre-school children to begin teaching initial awareness of road safety. It is recommended that the school take up the Playbox.
- **Pedals.** The county council provide cycle training for year 1 and 2 pupils called “Pedals”. Pupils can take part on balance bikes and scooters if

they are not yet confident on a pedal bicycle. As well as practicing to control their bicycle or scooter, the training also improves general awareness of road safety. It is recommended that the school start offering the Pedals course to pupils.

- **Park SMART.** Following the implementation of the proposed new parking arrangements described above, a Park SMART initiative could be considered if anti-social parking persists. The initiative involves pupils accompanied by a local police officer outside the school to provide leaflets and advice to any parents who are observed parking inconsiderately.

#### **4. CONSULTATIONS:**

- 4.1 Site visits have been undertaken with representatives of the school leadership, police road safety colleagues, local highway engineers, Road Safety Team and School Sustainable Travel Team. The proposals have also been discussed with the local Divisional Member. Surrey Police Road Safety and Traffic Management team have been consulted and support the proposals. Their full written response is included as Annex 1.
- 4.2 Should the outline proposals be approved by the local committee then, subject to the allocation of funding, further consultation would be undertaken and would include the local Parish Council and school leadership following more detailed design.

#### **5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:**

- 5.1 The total estimated costs of the highway improvements are approximately £26,000 to £33,000 though these are broad estimates only, based upon the experience of officers. More accurate costs would become apparent following more detailed design, at which point if the costs exceed the available budget, the scope of the scheme would be reviewed with Members. Opportunities to utilise developer contributions will be sought to help fund the scheme.
- 5.2 The recommended school travel plan and road safety education activities could be delivered using existing staff resources. There would be benefits to the local economy if the measures successfully encourage more walking, scooting and cycling and hence reduce road traffic congestion on local roads.

#### **6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:**

- 6.1 This report has been created in accordance with the council's Road Safety Outside Schools Policy which has been subject to Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment. Highway improvements are subject to independent road safety audit which take into account the needs of all road users including those with mobility impairment.

<b>7. LOCALISM:</b>
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- 7.1 The proposals presented within this report have been developed following consultation with the local Divisional Member and school leadership. If implemented they would improve road safety and encourage more walking, and scooting to school and would help reduce speeding, car journeys, anti social parking and congestion which have a negative impact on the local community.

<b>8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:</b>
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Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	Set out below
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	Set out below
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	Set out below

8.1 Crime and Disorder implications

The proposals would contribute to reduce anti social driving offences. They would also help to reduce anti-social parking and speeding which will help reduce confrontations between parents and residents.

8.2 Sustainability implications

The proposals would reduce road danger and encourage more sustainable modes of travel. This would result in fewer carbon emissions and less air pollution.

8.3 Public Health implications

The proposals would encourage active travel which improves the health of the participants.

<b>9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>
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- 9.1 Concern has been expressed over the safety of children arriving and leaving Limpsfield C of E Infant School, specifically relating to the speed of traffic, the long term sustainability of the school crossing patrol service outside the school, parking and congestion. Investigation has been undertaken in accordance with the county council's "Road Safety Outside Schools" and "Setting Local Speed Limits" policy. This has included assessment of the history of road collisions, traffic speeds and site observations as well as an assessment of the road safety education and training provided within the school.
- 9.2 Consequently it is recommended that the school update their school travel plan and take up additional road safety education and training resources

