



SCC LOCAL COMMITTEE IN ELMBRIDGE – 4 December 2017

AGENDA ITEM 03

WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

Question 1: Arthur Way

I have read the papers concerning 'A245 Stoke Road – Speed Limit' and, as a resident on the Stoke Road in Stoke d'Abernon (45 Stoke Road, KT11 3BH), would like to lend my complete support to the submission by Surrey Police that the speed limit reverts to 40 mph.

My impression is that the 30mph limit has made no difference to vehicle speeds along the road, which is borne out by SCC's survey which shows that average speeds have actually risen.

I would also like to voice my opposition to any form of traffic calming measures along Stoke Road. It is a very busy road, quite unsuitable for chicanes, speed bumps and other impediments. Quite apart from the huge cost and disruption of 'developing and implementing a scheme of engineering measures to encourage drivers to slow down', there would be implications for local pollution levels as vehicles slow down and then accelerate again. In addition, Stoke Road is used by a wide variety of emergency services – including fire, police, ambulance and paramedics – on a daily basis, and also carries a high level of large commercial vehicles (trucks, buses and coaches), even more so when there is a problem on the M25.

At a time when budgets are stretched seemingly to the limit, and in the light of Surrey Police's observations, do the councillors believe that it is a wise use of the Council's limited financial resources to allocate money on what seems to be a totally unnecessary project?

Officer Response:

The question is noted, it will be for the Committee to decide what action they think is appropriate.

Question 2: Martin Elbourne

In the Surrey Police report dated 20/11/2017 which forms part of the supporting documentation to the Highways A245 Stoke Road – Speed Limit Report, which is to be considered at the SCC Local Committee (Elmbridge) on 4 December 2017, paragraph 1.3 states that '....there appears to be no historic data for sites 4 and 5.....'.

Can Highways please explain why historic data from the speed assessments carried out along Stoke Road in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2016 was not made available to the Police?

Officer Reponse:

Sites 4 and 5 were additional sites to provide further information, as per paragraph 2.2 of the SCC report.

The historical data (prior to 2014) is not material to the decision, and therefore hasn't been included. In terms of the policy, only the very latest data from September 2017 is needed to assess whether the speed limit reduction has been successful. Regardless of any historical data, most of the mean speeds measured in September 2017 are above threshold set within the policy for the scheme to be deemed successful.

Following the reduction in speed limit there were speed surveys in March 2015. Following the change of speed limit, there was a short window before the start of extended utility works. Surveys were commissioned, but there wasn't enough time before the utility works to wait the full three months settling in time required by the policy, so in terms of the policy the 2015 surveys cannot be used for decision making.

There were also speed surveys in September 2016. These were intended to be the 'after' surveys required by the policy, following an extended period of extensive utility works. However, additional utility works then took place in the period immediately before the 2016 surveys, meaning that these speeds would then be seen as unrepresentative in line with the policy (i.e. the time needed for the scheme to settle down). Hence the additional surveys in March 2017 were commissioned, being the next opportunity for representative surveys following a settling in time. The 2015 and 2016 results were shared with Surrey Police for information, but do not form part of the assessment. The police comment "there appears to be no historic data for sites 4 and 5" is correct insofar as the data cannot be used as 'before' speeds for comparison.

All data used in the assessment has been shared with Surrey Police. Stoke Road was discussed at a recent (16th November 2017) partnership meeting of Surrey's Road Safety Team and Surrey Police's Road Safety and Traffic Management Team. The recent speed survey results were noted for consideration in police enforcement duties.

Question 3: Mike Prentice

Regarding the Stoke Road speed restriction, I write to put forward the following questions:

1. Following the report that states that a 30mph restriction is not working and has recommended the continued use of 40mph, on what grounds would the council not follow the advice given?
2. This investigation seems to have been pursued by a narrow interest group led by individuals who are involved with Surrey Council, Cobham Conservation and Heritage Trust and Stoke D' Abernon Residents Association. These individuals all live either on Stoke Road or adjacent to it, therefore potentially there can be a perception that there is a conflict of interest on this issue. Should the council decide to ignore the safety recommendations made, what safe guards would the council put in place to ensure that any further investigations of alternative methods of controlling speed would be led by parties with no potential conflict of interest?

3. Currently, local communities have little or no knowledge of the intent to change the speed limit on Stoke Road or the process that has been taking place. Should the Council decide to continue these investigations, what action will the council take to ensure that everyone who will be impacted by any change will have the opportunity to be provided with information about any proposal and be consulted?
4. It is documented that the most effective way of reducing traffic speeds is with vertical shifts in carriageway and that other measures are of limited use. Should the council decide to consider traffic calming measures, will any proposal contain within it evidence of the likely effectiveness of speed reduction and consider the unintended consequence of potential increase in traffic noise, pollution and congestion?
5. The road is frequently used by lorries eg refuse trucks going to and from the Leatherhead Refuse centre, how will the Council ensure traffic calming measures eg chicanes do not create dangerous motoring situations and congestion?
6. Stoke Road has the appearance of a semi rural road. It is mainly straight, tree lined and attractive. Will the council take into consideration any negative impact of visual amenity that would occur with additional street furniture and obstacles.

Officer response:

1. The report has recommended that Committee either reinstates the previous 40mph speed limit, or develops a scheme of engineering measures to encourage drivers to slow down. In terms of the policy either option is equally valid and it is Committee's choice one way or the other. The only option that is not available to Committee is to keep the current 30mph speed limit with no additional engineering measures.
2. Committee cannot ignore the recommendations that have been made. Any investigation of engineering measures to encourage drivers to slow down would be led by Surrey County Council's engineering teams in consultation with the Divisional Member. Before additional measures could be introduced, there would need to be a public consultation to give any interested party an opportunity to comment.
3. Surrey County Council's Highways Service has recently adopted new guidelines for consultation when promoting changes to Highway infrastructure. These guidelines stipulate that for a proposed change of speed limit, we would ensure details are published on the County Councils website. We would inform the Divisional Member, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Local Committee, the Borough Council, Surrey Police, any residents' association, frontagers, users of the highway (by means of large signs displayed on site, and bus operators (if there was a possible impact on services). For a scheme that involved traffic calming, we would also inform the fire and ambulance services, any local cycling interest group, any local chamber of commerce, residents of adjacent roads (where an impact is likely on adjacent roads), and the Road Haulage Association & Freight Transport Association if a weight / width / length restriction is proposed.
4. Officers would agree that one of the most effective ways to reduce traffic speeds is by implementation of road humps – and also that such features lead to concerns about noise, vibration and pollution. Road humps do not normally result in traffic congestion. Any proposal to introduce any kind of traffic calming would be reported to Committee to decide whether to proceed, and Committee would

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need to consider both the benefits and drawbacks of any proposed scheme, and also the responses to the public consultation.

5. All Highway improvement schemes are subjected to a three stage Road Safety Audit process. The first two Road Safety Audit stages are during the design phase, to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that a scheme would be safe for all road users if implemented. The third Road Safety Audit stage takes place after a scheme has been implemented and is in operation, to check for any safety problems that were not anticipated during the design phase. Schemes involving road humps do not normally result in congestion. Schemes involving chicanes and pinch-points can result in congestion, and this drawback would need to be considered by Committee in any decision to promote such a scheme.
6. Some traffic calming measures do tend to make a road feel more urban and cluttered. This is a drawback that Committee would need to consider in any decision to promote such a scheme.