

# SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL



## LOCAL COMMITTEE (EPSOM & EWELL)

DATE: **24 June 2019**  
 SUBJECT: **PETITION – Introduce 20 mph speed limits in Ewell Village**  
 DIVISION: **Ewell**

### **PETITION DETAILS:**

We the undersigned petition Surrey County Council to Introduce 20 mph speed limits in Ewell Village

Walking and cycling in Ewell Village can be very hazardous, particularly for young children, and countless traffic-related near misses have been recorded. A change in the culture of driving through the village is desperately needed, to improve safety and for everybody's wellbeing. 20 mph limits have already been proven as a cost effective way to save lives in other areas, as well as reducing noise pollution and helping to encourage walking and cycling. We are therefore petitioning for this to be introduced in Ewell, to make it a safer, more pleasant place for us all.

**Lead petitioner: Clare Clark Signatures: 552**

### **RESPONSE:**

#### **Speed limits**

Surrey County Council (SCC) aims to set speed limits that are successful in managing vehicle speeds and are appropriate for the main use of the road(s). Reducing speeds successfully may reduce the likelihood and severity of collisions, and can help to encourage more walking and cycling. This can help to make communities more pleasant places to live, and can help sustain local shops and businesses. The desire for lower speeds has to be balanced against the need for reasonable journey times and the usage of the road, for example to ensure traffic is not diverted onto less suitable routes.

SCC's current policy 'Setting Local Speed Limits' is based on national policy issued by central government via the Department for Transport and speed enforcement policy issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Experience shows that changing to a lower speed limit on its own will not necessarily be successful in reducing the speed of traffic by very much if the prevailing average speeds are much higher than the proposed lower speed limit. If a speed limit is set too low and is ignored then this could result in the majority of drivers criminalising themselves and could bring the system of speed limits into disrepute. There should be no expectation that the police would be able to provide regular enforcement if a speed limit is set too low as this could result in an unreasonable additional demand on police resources. It is also important to set reasonable speed limits to ensure consistency across the country.

Whilst the national speed limit in roads with a system of street lighting is 30mph, such as in most of Ewell, it is recognised that this may not be an appropriate speed to travel at. It

## ITEM 7

should also be noted that the stated speed limit is the maximum permitted speed and not a target. As well as being the legal limit, speed limits are a key source of information to road users, particularly as an indicator of the nature and risks posed by that road both to themselves and to all other road users. The setting of a suitable speed limit aims to ensure that the majority of drivers will naturally drive at the appropriate speed. This enables the police to target drivers that are deliberately driving at inappropriate speeds.

### **Safety**

Surrey Police records details on road collisions where personal injury has resulted. This data is shared with Surrey County Council. Data is publicly available at

[www.crashmap.co.uk](http://www.crashmap.co.uk)

Surrey Highways, in partnership with Surrey Police, identifies locations with a poor safety record by analysing collision data and trends. It is standard for the most recent three year period to be considered in order to determine patterns that may be addressed through measures such as physical changes, enforcement, or educational campaigns.

Available data for the last three years shows the largest number of injury collisions on the bypass (A24/A240) which is to be expected as the major route in the area carrying the most traffic. There are also injury collisions on the most significant 'local' roads including High Street, Reigate Road, Cheam Road, Chessington Road, London Road and Kingston Road. These roads also carry significant numbers of traffic. There are a number of injury collisions resulting in child, pedestrian or cyclist casualties. However the data does not record 'damage-only' collisions or near misses.

### **20mph limits**

Research into signed-only 20 mph speed limits shows that they generally lead to only small reductions in traffic speeds. Signed-only 20 mph speed limits are therefore most appropriate for areas where vehicle speeds are already low. If the average speed is already close to 20mph, introducing a 20 mph speed limit through signing alone is likely to lead to general compliance with the new speed limit. Where the existing average speeds are not close to 20mph then traffic calming would be required to encourage lower speeds. Research has shown that 20mph zones with traffic calming measures have been very effective in reducing speeds and casualties, may encourage more walking and cycling and may result in reductions in traffic flow as drivers choose alternative routes.

However traffic calming measures are expensive and are not always universally popular. For example, residents close to speed tables, cushions or priority give way features may object on the grounds of increased vibrations and noise.

### **Introducing 20mph limits**

In order to introduce a 20mph limit a feasibility study would be required to investigate and establish the existing conditions, including measurement of existing vehicle speeds. The nature and contributory factors in collisions causing injury would be assessed. This would inform the development of appropriate measures to ensure that resulting vehicle speeds are commensurate to the new limit as well as addressing safety issues where possible. Measures may include road tables, cushions, priority give way features or chicanes. Features generally need to be spaced so that drivers are not encouraged to speed up in between. In terms of the siting of features, constraints to be considered include accesses to public roads, commercial premises and residential properties.

Other measures can influence driver behaviour, such as changing permitted traffic movements to make particular routes less attractive. There is the issue of potential re-routing of traffic to less appropriate roads and the usage of the road in question would also need to be considered. For example, Ewell High Street has mixed use and is also used by buses. In order to accommodate large vehicles, the type of traffic calming feature may be more limited than on residential roads. It is also likely that on-street parking provision would be affected to accommodate traffic calming features.

The scope of any proposed measures would directly influence the scale of works required. The extents of any desired 20mph limit would need to be defined. For example, Ewell High Street is a relatively short linear route but there is a significant number of surrounding roads. It is worth noting that any measures to alter road layouts are likely to be prohibitively expensive based on likely committee budgets, although external funding may be an option. Even with external funding, it is very unlikely that the features required to support 20mph limits across Ewell as a whole could be funded. Potential roads or sections of roads would need to be prioritised which may include consideration of the type of use, number of vehicles and pedestrians, and presence of schools or sites with vulnerable users. The existing safety record may also be considered, as well as the concerns of residents. Any vertical traffic calming or changes to speed limits or permitted vehicle movements require statutory consultation including with the emergency services. A traffic order would be required to implement a change in speed limit.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Local Committee is asked to:

- (i) *Decide:*
- a. *to allocate funding for a feasibility study (it should be noted that the Local Committee's highways programme for financial year 2019-20 was agreed at its meeting of 25 March 2019).*
  - b. *to place this suggestion on the prioritisation list for future consideration*
  - c. *to do nothing at this stage*

### **Contact Officer:**

Nick Healey, Area Highway Manager (NE)

Tel: 0300 200 1003

This page is intentionally left blank