

Minutes from Tandridge Local Committee on Friday 21 June 2019. Minutes will remain in draft until the next formal Local Committee meeting in Friday 20 September. Members of the Local Committee have had the opportunity to comment on the draft minutes.

18/19 A25 GODSTONE ROAD, BLETCHINGLEY - SPEED LIMIT REVIEW CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL COMMITTEE (SERVICE MONITORING AND ISSUE OF LOCAL CONCERN) [Item 8]

Declarations of Interest: None

Officer attending: Zena Curry, Area Highways Manager and Duncan Knox, Road Safety and Active Travel Manager

Petitions, Public Questions, Statements: The Chairman invited public questions/statements after the members' discussion.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Matt Furniss, SCC Cabinet Member for Highways to the Tandridge Local Committee, and explained that at previous meetings where this item has been for decision, the Committee had disagreed with the Officers recommendation and therefore in accordance with Surrey County Councils approved 'Setting Local Speed Limits' (2014) policy, the issue must now be referred to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for road safety.

The Chairman confirmed he had received a letter from Godstone Parish Council on 18 June, which has been circulated to Members and the Cabinet Member.

The Chairman invited the county councillor for the Godstone division to speak first, and then invited Mr Furniss to speak. The Cabinet Member for Highways advised he had asked Highway officers to prepare an open ended draft report for future decision by the Cabinet Member, and this draft paper was included in the agenda for this committee meeting. He had reviewed the committee's discussion from the previous meeting in March, and was aware of the strength of feeling on this contentious issue. He invited the committee to comment on why they felt this proposal should be a special case which rejects the Officer and Police recommendation that it should be 40mph.

Members Discussion- Key Points:

1. The Divisional Member stated that the speed limit should stay at 30mph to guarantee the safety of residents when exiting their properties, crossing the road, accessing the cemetery and travelling to school. It is what the whole of the village of Bletchingley want and the residents need the stability of knowing the speed limit will remain the same. Mrs Rose Thorn offered her member highway funding, and is willing to match fund with the Parish Council if any further measures, such as further signage, could be installed to enhance the 30mph speed limit.
2. Members suggested it was too soon to move Step 8 of the speed limit policy where the matter is referred to the Cabinet Member for decision, given that the additional

supporting measures agreed in 2011 have not been fully implemented. Previous reports have proposed different supporting measures. This included an enhanced gateway, which was agreed in 2011, but never implemented. This is not the current gateway which was installed by the Parish Council. It remained on the committee's to do list for several years until in 2013 it was argued that the width was too narrow so it was not installed. At this point another measure was recommended, which was a central crossing island.

3. Another proposal was to move the Vehicle Activated Sign, which has now been absent from its location outside the cemetery for a number of months and this has not made any difference to the average speeds on this road. Given it has not made any difference to the average speeds, why not move it to a new location within the 400m section of the speed limit review where it might make more of a difference.
4. Members expressed concern that officers are stating that the speeds are too high for a speed limit change to be effective through signs alone. However this is because no additional supporting engineering measures have been installed, apart from the 'dragons teeth' road markings which have since faded.
5. The assumption made in the officer's report at previous meetings is that changing the speed limit will not change drivers' behaviour, but locally residents disagree and feel that average speeds will increase as drivers start to go faster. Members noted that the county council's own speed limit policy guards against this risk, as set out in step 3 of the policy. The evidence from when the speed limit was reduced from 50mph to 30mph in 2011, shows that speeds reduced dramatically.
6. Changing the speed limit to 40 mph is not in line with the policy as there would be five different speed limits in a one mile section between Godstone and Bletchingley. Step one of the policy guards against this and states the stretch of road should be over 600m, the A25 review is on a section of road that is 400m, the part in Godstone is also 400m. Members questioned how these frequent changes in speed limit could be monitored and enforced.
7. Planning permission has recently been granted to extend the cemetery to allow access from the A25, the additional traffic this will generate means that's increasing the speed limit would not be a sensible option.
8. Members and local residents are not suggesting the road be narrowed but simple engineering measures such as enhanced gateways, rumble strips and central islands crossing points need to be considered to reduce speeds. These are already in place along other parts of the A25.

9. When Knights Way development was built the developer offered to pay for a central island, however this was refused. There is CIL funding available and it would be appropriate for an application to be made for CIL for this scheme. The question of funding should be a separate issue and if engineering measures could be installed to remain at 30mph, then this should be considered.
10. Members were concerned at the amount of time and money being spent on these issues when there are sites which are of greater concern with regards to road safety. Accident data shows there was only one accident when the speed limit was at a 50mph and there has only been once since it was reduced to 30mph. It was suggested that the Local Committee should be spending its time and money focusing on bringing about improvements to known accident black spots.
11. A member raised concern that the side roads of Sunnybank and Chevington Villas are included within the 40mph speed review, as these are residential roads and completely unsuitable for a 40mph speed limit.
12. Members noted that there are future developments planned for the area that may impact on the current use of the road - SES water have plans to develop their site on North Park Lane with access onto the A25 and planning permission may be sought for 150 homes there. The limit there should be 30mph, not 40mph as proposed by officers. Godstone Parish Council also wish to develop a car park on the A25 and these factors must be taken into consideration.

Petitions, Public Questions, Statements:

Gill Black, District Councillor for Nutfield and Bletchingley, addressed the committee stating that a petition presented to the Committee in September 2018 had been signed by over 500 residents, and also had the support of both Godstone and Bletchingley Parish Council and local groups and their views should be listened to. The Vehicle Activate Sign (VAS) close to the cemetery had not been reinstated after being removed for repair several months ago. This has made no difference to the speeds on the road at this point, therefore the VAS should be located in the section of road being reviewed. Residents feel this speed limit review needs to take consideration of the whole section of the road between the two villages of Godstone and Bletchingley as it has an impact on both rather than in isolation.

Janine Marks, resident in Sunnybank Villas, Bletchingley stated that both Sunnybank and Chevington Villas are part of the village, the gateway was moved by the Parish Council, at their expense, to incorporate the properties. Mrs Marks felt the speeds have reduced since the speed limit was reduced to 30mph, and with the A25 getting busier and cars more powerful the increase to 40mph would mean that drivers drive over 40mph, and an increase to the limit would see speeds return to the levels they were at before the limit was reduced. Permission has recently been granted for an extension to the cemetery with an access road on to the A25, therefore it makes no sense to increase the speed limit. It would make turning into and out of the entrance extremely dangerous.

Eddie Woods, resident at Knights Way, Godstone. Mr Woods wished to speak on behalf of residents at the Godstone end as should be taken into consideration in the review. Residents there are also concerned for speeding traffic and road safety. Waterhouse Lane on to the A25 is a difficult junction to exit because of the bend. This junction is well used by members of Divers Cove, which has seen a huge increase in membership in recent times – 130-140 people swim there on weekends - and also by agricultural vehicles and HGVs using the junction. There are two bus stops, but there is no pedestrian refuge for people to cross and the pavement runs out on the north side. Lighting needs to be improved for the safety of pedestrians crossing to the bus stop. Ramblers and horse riders sometimes use it too. Residents living in Knight's Way have difficulty exiting the development due to the high speeds on the A25 approaching Godstone, and there have been a number of near misses that residents have experienced. The 30mph speed limit should be extended as far as North Park Lane to give the traffic a chance to slow down on approach to Godstone. The parish council is looking to put in a car park, and so it's important that the speeds are reduced. The Cabinet Member needs to listen to the high number of local residents, including the parish council and Orpheus Centre.

Patrick Unwin – resident of Sunnybank Villas – concurred with the points made by residents and members, about the difficulties of exiting onto the A25 due to the high speeds and dangerous sightlines.

District Councillor Elias wished for it to be recorded that he disagreed that the policy was being correctly followed with regards to this speed limit review as the supporting measures have not been implemented.

The Cabinet Member thanked the members of the Committee and public for their comments. Having visited the site ahead of the meeting he was clear the current limit is not working, and would take the points made away and would ensure the committee is kept informed ahead of the final report in September.

The Chairman confirmed that the decision will now be taken by the Cabinet Member for Highways at a decision meeting in Tuesday 3 September at 4.30pm at County Hall Kingston. It would be a meeting in public and anyone is welcome to attend.

The Chairman thanked all members of the public for their comments and contributions on the item. Expressing his personal thanks to Highway Officers, Community Partnership Officers and to the Vice Chairman for their work on this item.

Resolution

The Local Committee (Tandridge):

- i) NOTED that a decision on the speed limit on the A25 at Bletchingley will be taken by the Cabinet Member for Highways at a meeting on 3 September 2019.

- ii) NOTED that at the meeting on 3 September 2019, the Cabinet Member for Highways will be asked to determine whether to progress the speed limit increase, endorse the decision of the local committee on 1 March 2019, (at paragraph 1.5 of this report) or alternatively keep the existing speed limits as they currently are, with a refresh of the road markings.

- iii) RESPONDED to the draft report to the Cabinet Member Document 1, outlining the information they wish the Cabinet Member to take into account when taking a decision on this matter.

This page is intentionally left blank