

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)



DATE: 4 SEPTEMBER 2019
SUBJECT: INTRODUCE A 20MPH SPEED LIMIT IN ASHTEAD
DIVISION: ASHTEAD

PETITION DETAILS:**Mole Valley Local Committee Petition (4 Sept) Summary:**

We call on Surrey County Council (SCC) to introduce a 20mph speed limit on all residential streets in Ashtead, with the exclusion of the A24. We call for 20mph signs and paint road markings to be particularly visible on the streets approaching schools.

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 roads. Whilst reducing speeds successfully may reduce the likelihood and severity of collisions, the desire for lower speeds has to be balanced against the need for reasonable journey times and the use of the road, for example to ensure that 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 reducing the speed limit using 20mph signs and road markings alone (without physical measures such as traffic calming), 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 to low, using signs and road markings alone, it can be easily ignored by drivers and become ineffective at reducing speeds. There should be no expectation that the police would be able to provide regular enforcement if a speed limit is set too low, because 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 which a system of street lighting in place is 30mph, such as in most of Ashtead, it is recognised that this may not be an appropriate speed to travel at, especially outside schools. It 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 the 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.surreycc.gov.uk/molevalley

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 of collisions which have resulted in people being injured, that may be addressed through measures such as physical changes, enforcement, or educational campaigns.

Available data for the last three years (2016 – 2018) shows the largest number of injury collisions on the A24, which is to be expected because it is the major route through Ashted carrying the most traffic. There are also injury collisions on Barnett Wood Lane and Craddocks Avenue, which are significant “local” roads providing access to Leatherhead, local shops and Ashted railway station. Both Barnett Wood Lane and Craddocks Avenue have a 30mph speed limit in place with traffic calming installed. However not all personal injury collisions are caused by vehicle speeds and Surrey Police did not record excessive vehicle speed as a contributory factor in any of the collisions on Barnett Wood Lane and Craddocks Avenue. Several of the collisions involved cyclists, 1 of which resulted from a pedestrian being hit by a cyclist whilst crossing Craddocks Avenue.

All other roads within Ashted, especially the small residential roads, have a very low number, or no personal injury collisions within the last three years.

The data does not record “damage only” collisions or near misses.

20mph limits

Research into signed-only 20mph speed limits which are supported by Traffic Orders, shows that they generally lead to only small reductions in traffic speeds. Signed-only 20mph speed limits are therefore most appropriate for areas where vehicle speeds are already low. If the average daily speed is already close to 20mph, introducing a 20mph 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.

In September 2012 the Mole Valley Local Committee agreed to install a signed only 20mph advisory speed limit in Dene Road, Ashted outside St. Giles C of E Infant School. This was part of a pilot project to see if installing 20mph advisory speed limits outside schools using signs alone was effective at reducing vehicle speeds to 20mph. However, the results of speed surveys carried outside some of the pilot schemes both before and after the 20mph advisory speed limits were installed, showed no significant change in vehicle speeds, with average speeds remaining closer to 30mph rather than 20mph. As a result the Local Committee agreed to the provision of self - enforcing 20mph speed limits or zones, using traffic calming measures, outside the schools at the pilot sites which included St. Giles C of E Infant School in Ashted. Work to install a self-enforcing 20mph speed limit outside St. Giles C of E Infant School using traffic calming measures is to be constructed before the end of March 2020.

Schemes to provide self – enforcing 20mph speed limits outside the other schools in Ashted, using traffic calming measures, have been added to the Integrated Transport Scheme list for possible future funding.

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

Introducing 20mph limits

In order to introduce 20mph speed limits in all of the roads in Ashted, except the A24, one week automatic speed surveys would need to be carried out on all of the roads in Ashted. These surveys would gather comprehensive data on existing mean vehicle speeds and would determine whether installing 20mph speed limits using signs alone would be effective at reducing driver's speed to 20mph.

There is currently no funding available to carry out speed surveys in any of the requested roads in Ashted to assess whether or not the existing mean speeds on these roads comply with Surrey County Council's policy for a signed only 20mph speed limit. On roads where existing mean speeds do not comply with SCC's policy for a signed only 20mph speed limit, traffic calming measures would need to be installed to ensure that the 20mph speed limit is self-enforcing. Any change in speed limit would also require a supporting traffic order and the support of Surrey Police.

It should be noted that the introduction of traffic calming measures are likely to be extremely expensive, and available budgets focus on those areas that will make the biggest difference to road safety. It is unlikely that the measures required to support a 20mph speed limit on all of the requested roads within Ashted would be prioritised for the limited funding available.

Traffic calming measures are also not universally popular and residents on some roads may not wish to have traffic calming measures installed on the roads on which they live, in order to support a 20mph speed limit.

There is also the possibility that should traffic calming measures need to be installed on only certain roads to support a 20mph speed limit, traffic could be displaced on to less suitable roads in order to avoid those roads with traffic calming measures.

The analysis of the most recent personal injury collision data shows that away from the A24 and "local" roads in Ashted, residential roads have a very low number, or no personal injury collisions within the last three years. This indicates that these roads would be a low priority for the introduction of speed management measures.

Officers could also work with the divisional Member and Ashted Residents Association to explore whether the Residents Association are in support of this request. If supported, then the Residents Association could support any work to assess the feasibility of this request, for example funding speed surveys, a feasibility study or identifying match funding.

RECOMMENDATION

The Local Committee is asked to note:

- 1). That the introduction of a 20mph speed limit on all of the requested roads in Ashted petition and response.

2). To continue to support the introduction of self-enforcing 20mph speed limits outside schools in Ashtead.

3). That officers could work with the divisional Member and Ashtead Residents Association to explore whether the Residents Association are in support of this request. If supported, then the Residents Association could support any work to assess the feasibility of this request, for example funding speed surveys, a feasibility study or identifying match funding.

Contact Officer:

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