

SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – 22 MARCH 2021

PROCEDURAL MATTERS – PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1. Question submitted by Paul Kennedy

A growing number of communities across Surrey are showing interest in introducing wider 20mph speed limit areas, which rely on alternatives to expensive traffic calming, and which aim to promote wider objectives beyond road safety such as promoting active travel and increased community engagement and wellbeing. However, such schemes may not fully meet the enforcement-led criteria for police support set out in Surrey County Council's guidance on Setting Local Speed Limits (2014 - [Setting Local Speed Limits \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](http://surreycc.gov.uk)).

What is your approach to such schemes, and do you agree with me that this guidance needs updating?

Response:

Thank you for this question, which is very timely. For some time now I have been pressing for a review of the countywide DriveSmart programme, so that it can build on the successes of the past and further improve the safety and environment of our county. I am pleased to say that, as a first step, we have a meeting arranged on 24 March with Surrey County Council, Surrey Police and myself, to scope out informally what we want to achieve and to give a clearer direction to officers on aims, priorities, timetables and finances. The outcome I hope will be a consultation document which will allow all residents to contribute fully to how we tackle issues such as road safety, community cohesion, adoption of latest technology, climate change and many others. I will bring the subject of 20 mph limits to that discussion.

I have mixed feelings on whether there should be a general increase of these limits. On the one hand there is clear evidence that road traffic accidents at lower speeds have fewer devastating consequences, contribute to a healthier environment, and that there is a significant number of residents who are passionate to see them introduced. On the other hand, there is also evidence that just introducing these limits by themselves has little effect in practice - motorists tend to ignore them - and so can waste money, bring the law into disrepute and contribute adversely to the street scene.

What should the balance be? It is surely time that there is a proper debate on the issue, and I hope the re-launch of DriveSmart will give impetus to that.

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