

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (ELMBRIDGE)

DATE: 2 SEPTEMBER 2013

LEAD OFFICER: NICK HEALEY, NE AREA TEAM MANAGER

SUBJECT: PETITION RESPONSE – A245 BYFLEET ROAD, WEYBRIDGE

DIVISION: WEYBRIDGE



SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

To update members on the investigations carried out, the results obtained, the conclusions and recommendations made, following the petition to the June meeting of this committee.

This report updates members following the petition received from Borough Councillor Peter Harman, accompanied by a verbal presentation by County Councillor Christian Mahne, highlighting concerns of vehicular speed along the A245, but in particular near Camp End Road. A report to the Committee was agreed following further investigation. This report presents the results of those findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

For information only.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The current 50mph speed limit on the A245 Byfleet Road is the appropriate limit and complies with the current speed limit policy, in the context of which the Committee resolved to approve a reduction from 60mph to 50mph in December 2008.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 Members are reminded that a petition submitted to the September 2008, meeting of the Local Committee, concerning speeding of vehicular traffic along the A245 Byfleet Road, requested a 30 mph speed limit be applied to the road.
- 1.2 The road was assessed and under the speed limit policy the Committee were able to agree to reduce the limit from unrestricted 60mph to 50mph, in December 2008.
- 1.3 A further 109 signatory petition was submitted to the June 2013, meeting of the Local Committee, requesting a reduction in speed limit from 50mph to 40mph.
- 1.4 Byfleet Road is the A245, which is a principal route on the County network linking the A3 trunk road at the Painshill interchange to the Borough boundary with Woking. The road in question is 2.0 km long and runs more or less east/west.
- 1.5 Due to the environmental conditions of the surrounding area, with the A3 trunk road to the east, St Georges Hill private estate to the north, hotel and golf course to the south, vehicular traffic is very limited in its ability to access the area without using this route.
- 1.6 The road is currently subject to a 50mph limit and is well lit by a continuous system of street lighting. A continuous pedestrian footway is provided on the southern side of the road only.
- 1.7 The Surrey County Council (SCC) database, supplied by Surrey Police, of personal injury accidents shows that between 1 January 2011 and 31 May 2013, there have been 17 personal injury accidents along this 2 km length of the A245, one of which was a fatal, the remainder were all slight injury accidents. None of the accidents recorded by Surrey Police were deemed as being speed related.
- 1.8 Speeding is essentially a Police enforcement issue as driving in excess of the posted speed limit is a criminal offence, for which the Police as the sole highway enforcement agency, have powers to deal with offenders who unashamedly flout the law, quickly and effectively.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 The 85th percentile speed is the speed at or below which 85% of vehicles are travelling.
- 2.2 A permanent full time data recording station is sited on the A245 Byfleet Road, in the vicinity of the Silvermere Pet Cemetery. Data obtained from this shows that the 24 hour, monthly average 85th percentile speed of the Eastbound traffic along the road to be 41mph, with a daily eastbound flow of 12,639 vehicles.
- 2.3 Similarly the West bound data shows that the 24 hour, monthly average 85th percentile speed to also be 41mph, with a daily westbound flow of 13,943 vehicles.

- 2.4 The 85th percentile speeds suggest a very good level of compliance with the existing 50mph speed limit. However Members should bear in mind that the road is heavily congested at certain times of the day. This congestion reduces traffic speeds, and therefore skews any speed measurement downward.
- 2.5 It is also possible that the undulating vertical alignment of the road also reduces traffic speeds, as it restricts forward visibility for drivers. To get a true picture of the “natural” speed of the road, it would be necessary to survey speeds in free flow conditions.

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 Surrey County Council (SCC) has a speed management policy for determining and applying speed limits on the public highway. This was updated in 2005 to reflect the changes arising from the Department of Transport’s revised speed limit guidance, and again in 2010. This later amendment allows the Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment to consider the limit if the Committee resolve that a limit is introduced in discord with the policy. This Policy has been used to assess the limit on the A245 Byfleet Road.
- 3.2 The road is currently subject to a 50mph, following reassessment in 2008.
- 3.3 SCC’s policy on speed limits is that they should only be lowered if there is a good chance that motorists will observe the new lower limit. The rationale for this policy is that drivers will often ignore a speed limit if it is set much lower than the natural speed for that road. This could lead to a general lack of respect for speed limits, which could in turn increase the number of casualties on Surrey’s roads.
- 3.4 Experience has shown that lowering a speed limit on its own will not necessarily reduce speeds sufficiently. If a speed limit is set much lower than the existing traffic speeds then motorists are likely to ignore the limit unless the character of the road or environment indicate otherwise. There are likely to be insufficient police resources to provide effective enforcement for locations where speed limits are unrealistic.
- 3.5 If the average speeds are substantially above the proposed speed limit then the options are either to:
- (i) Retain the existing higher speed limit in order to manage speeds at a realistic level or;
 - (ii) Implement other speed management measures to achieve speeds closer to the preferred limit, and then introduce the lower limit.
- 3.6 Any proposed changes in speed limit should be undertaken in consultation with Surrey Police, as they will have the responsibility for the enforcement of the new speed limit.
- 3.7 In rural areas the default national speed limit on single carriageway roads is 60mph. However in villages with extensive roadside development, it is SCC policy that the speed limit should be the same as the standard limit in an urban area (30mph). In order to be classified as a village for 30mph speed limit assessment purposes, SCC guidance is that a settlement should have:-

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- (i) At least 20 houses within 600 metres along its main road
- (ii) A clear limit to its extent, characterised by a change in roadside frontage
- (iii) Community facilities at its core e.g. shops, pub, church, green etc.

- 3.8 Other rural roads without extensive or partial roadside development are divided into Tier 1 and Tier 2 roads depending on their position within Surrey's Distributor Road Network
- 3.9 Tier 1 roads are primary roads consisting of trunk roads and main A Class roads plus some important B-Class roads. These would have a preferred limit of 50 or 60 mph depending upon the rate of personal injury collisions per 100 million vehicle km. 50 mph for more than 35 and 60 mph for less than 35 personal injury collisions per 100 million vehicle km.
- 3.10 Tier 2 roads are district distributors, local distributors and access roads. There are some A-class roads but these are mainly B, C, and unclassified D roads. These would have a preferred limit of 40 or 50 mph depending upon the personal injury collision rate per 100 million vehicle km. 40 mph for more than 60 and 50 mph for less than 60 personal injury collisions per 100 million vehicle km
- 3.11 Byfleet Road is classified as a Tier 1 road, and hence should have a preferred limit of either 50 mph or 60 mph, in accordance with the current policy. In addition when the calculation for personal injury collisions per 100 million vehicle km is undertaken a figure of 34.19 is reached, which confirms the preferred limit for the road at 60mph.
- 3.12 When this assessment was carried out in 2008, the calculation for personal injury collisions per 100 million vehicle km resulted in a figure of 46, and hence the limit was reduced from 60mph to 50mph. This was based upon the accident rate at the time of 26, compared with 17 now, and a slightly higher daily volume of 27522, compared with 26582.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 Informal consultation has been carried out with Surrey Police and their view is that they agree with the assessment carried out, and that the current 50mph speed limit is the most appropriate limit for the nature of the road.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The cost of changing any speed limit includes legal advertisement costs associated with the statutory process, together with the costs of design and implementation. It is also possible that some electrical works would be required. Whilst likely costs are difficult to establish until a design is available, it is likely that a reduction in speed limit, if it were to proceed would cost in the region of £5,000.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 It is an objective of Surrey Highways to treat all users of the public highway equally and with understanding.

7. LOCALISM:

7.1 The Local Committee prioritises its expenditure according to local priorities.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

9.1 The Local Committee agreed to reduce the speed limit from 60mph to 50mph at their meeting of the 8th December 2008, following a speed limit reassessment.

9.2 The road has again been reassessed, following the petition submitted in June, and the appropriate limit shown to now be 60mph based upon the latest data.

9.3 It is not proposed to recommend raising the current 50mph limit back to 60mph.

9.4 It is not recommended to reduce the speed limit on the A245 from its current 50mph to 40mph, as this would be in discord with the County speed limit policy. In accordance with paragraph 37 of the current policy the Committee are however able to exceptionally request that the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment be asked to consider the speed limit.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

10.1 There will be no change and the speed limit along the A245 Byfleet Road will remain at 50mph in accordance with the speed limit policy.

Contact Officer: Nick Healey, NE Area Team Manager, 03002001003

Consulted: Surrey Police

Annexes: None

Sources/background papers: SCC Speed limit policy

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