

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL



LOCAL COMMITTEE (SURREY HEATH)

DATE: 21 OCTOBER 2021
 SUBJECT: A30 LONDON ROAD, BAGSHOT
 DIVISION: BAGSHOT, WINDLESHAM AND CHOBHAM

PETITION DETAILS:

A petition has been received stating the following:

“Due to increasing devastating accidents and near misses, we are requesting that Surrey County Council reduce the speed limit along the A30 in Bagshot to 30mph (from Jenkins Hill at Waitrose to the A322 junction) along with the installation of speed cameras.

With a large number of vehicles speeding along this section of the A30, which is crossed regularly by many residents (including vulnerable children and the elderly) it is vital that the speed limit is reduced to a safer speed in order to reduce the likelihood of further fatalities.”

RESPONSE:

INTRODUCTION

The A30 London Road is a strategic A-class road and is assigned as a Priority 1 road (highest priority) within the County Council's classification of its highway network. It therefore carries a high volume of traffic including significant numbers of large vehicles.

The section of London Road between its junction with Waterers Way (access to Waitrose) and a point approximately 250m north of its junction with Bridge Road/Station Road is currently subject to a 40mph speed limit. It is then subject to a 50mph speed limit heading in a northly direction towards Windlesham.

There are a series of signalised junctions, as well as a signal-controlled pedestrian crossing, along the A30 through Bagshot. These signals help restrain vehicle speeds and have previously resulted in concerns being raised about delays and congestion.

However, concerns have also been raised about speeding. London Road is therefore an existing site on the Surrey Heath Speed Management Plan, although it is not a location that is currently being prioritised for any measures since

previous speed surveys have indicated a good level of compliance with the speed (see below data).

SPEED DATA

A speed survey was undertaken in London Road from 26 September to 3 October in 2014 between its junctions with Bridge Road and the High Street (near the site of the former Jack's Fish and Chip restaurant). The survey recorded an average mean speed of 32mph and an 85th percentile speed of 41mph (this is the speed at which 85% of traffic is travelling at or below).

A further speed survey was undertaken more recently from 5 to 10 November 2019 between the junctions with Yaverland Drive and the High Street. This survey also recorded an average mean speed of 32mph and an 85th percentile speed of 41mph.

Both surveys indicate a good general level of compliance with the existing 40mph speed limit.

SAFETY RECORD

Personal injury collision records have been examined for the length of London Road between (and including) its junctions with Waterers Way and the A322 for the 3-year period between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2021 (latest available data).

Over this period there have been 16 personal injury collisions. 13 of the collisions resulted in slight injuries, 2 of the collisions resulted in serious injuries and one of the collisions resulted in a fatality.

8 of the collisions occurred at, or near, the signal-controlled junction with Waterers Way and 3 occurred at the signal-controlled junction with Yaverland Drive.

The fatal collision involved a pedestrian and occurred whilst temporary traffic management was in place at the site of the collision. The initial information about the circumstances suggest that excessive speed was not a contributory factor. However, the cause(s) of the collision cannot be confirmed at present since a detailed Police investigation into the collision is still ongoing.

Excessive or inappropriate speed was not recorded by the Police as a contributory factor in any of the other collisions.

OPTIONS - SPEED REDUCING MEASURES

The petition requests the introduction of a 30mph speed limit and speed enforcement cameras. Comments are provided below about each of these suggestions and about alternative speed reducing measures:

(a) Introduce reduced speed limit

The County Council's policy on setting speed limits aims to set speed limits that are successful in managing vehicle speeds and are appropriate for the main function of the road.

The policy requires that a speed limit assessment is undertaken if a change in speed limit is being considered. As part of the assessment process several factors are considered to determine whether a change in speed limit is appropriate. These include existing vehicle speeds and the views of Surrey Police (who are responsible for enforcing speed limits).

The policy notes that lowering a speed limit on its own will not necessarily reduce vehicle speeds. This is because motorists determine their speed based on the character of the road and conditions at the time. If a speed limit is set much lower than prevailing vehicle speeds, it is likely to be widely disregarded. As such, it would have little value in improving road safety. Furthermore, introducing unrealistic speed limits could also undermine the effectiveness of speed limits more generally.

The policy therefore includes a series of thresholds (based on average mean vehicle speeds) for speed limits for different characters of roads. If the measured existing average mean speeds for a road are below the threshold for a particular speed limit then the introduction of this limit can be considered with signing only. If the measured average mean speed is above the threshold then a reduction in speed could still potentially be considered but appropriate supporting engineering measures would be required.

Where measured average mean speeds are below the threshold for a lower speed limit it does not automatically mean that the speed limit should be reduced. There are other factors that also need to be considered, and the desire for lower speeds must be balanced against the position of the road within the County Council's Strategic Priority Network and the need to ensure consistency in speed limits and reasonable journey times.

It should also be noted that London Road currently has speed limit repeater signs at regular intervals to remind drivers of the existing speed limit. However, if a 30mph speed limit were introduced there would be no repeater signs (repeater signs are not permitted in roads which have a 30mph speed limit and a system of street lighting). The character of London Road means it may not give the impression of being a 30mph road to some drivers. This could lead to confusion over the speed limit and speeds could potentially increase (a situation that has occurred previously when speed limits have been reduced in roads of similar character).

(b) Traffic Calming Measures

Traffic calming measures, such as speed tables or speed cushions, can potentially be installed in roads with street lighting and a speed limit of 30mph or less. However, the introduction of such measures would not generally be considered as

appropriate for busy strategic A-class road such as London Road. This is because they may lead to traffic diverting onto other less suitable lower-class local roads. In addition, there is an increased risk of residents suffering problems with noise and vibration due to the significant volumes of large vehicles that use such roads.

(c) Permanent Spot Speed Camera or Average Speed Cameras

The introduction of permanent speed cameras in Surrey has historically been prioritised at casualty hotspots where speeds have been confirmed to be excessive.

However, a new policy on the use of safety cameras in Surrey has recently been introduced. This expands the use of average speed cameras and spot speed cameras in Surrey beyond only being deployed at the worst casualty hotspots.

The new policy enables speed enforcement cameras to be introduced at two categories of sites: “core casualty reduction safety camera sites” and “community concern safety camera sites”.

Surrey’s Safer Roads Partnership will prioritise their central funding towards “core casualty reduction sites” with the greatest potential for reducing casualties. These will be selected using a points-based system which will continue to prioritise casualty hotspots where excessive speed is a problem.

Speed enforcement cameras will also be considered for “community concern” sites. These are sites where there is a lower level of collisions, but where speeding traffic is a major concern of the local community. Funding for these sites will not ordinarily be provided from the central budget of the Safer Roads Partnership. An alternative source of funding will therefore need to be secured prior to any implementation. This might be from the budgets allocated to local county councillors for highway improvements, Community Infrastructure Levy funds, or as part of major schemes for example.

As with core casualty reduction sites, new community concern sites will only be considered at locations where surveys confirm speeding is a problem and only as a last resort after engineering solutions to manage speeds have been considered first.

In response to the petition’s suggestion of introducing a reduced speed limit and speed enforcement cameras, it should be noted that speed enforcement cameras would not be introduced at the same time as a new lower speed limit. New speed limits introduced in compliance with the county’s speed limit policy should be successful on their own. However, in accordance with the county council’s speed limit policy, an assessment would be undertaken following the introduction of a new speed limit to determine whether it has been successful.

If the scheme has not been successful, then it would be necessary to consider whether any further engineering measures may be possible to encourage greater compliance with the new speed limit. An alternative could be to remove the new lower speed limit and return to the original or different, higher speed limit.

(d) Mobile speed enforcement

Surrey Police target a number of sites around Surrey for speed enforcement using mobile camera equipment. These are locations that are included on the speed management plans for each of the Boroughs and Districts and have been identified as priority sites after the results of speed surveys have indicated a poor level of compliance with the speed limit. As outlined above, the A30 London Road in Bagshot is included on the Surrey Heath speed management plan. However, it is not currently being targeted for mobile speed enforcement since speed surveys previously undertaken have indicated a relatively good level of compliance with the existing 40mph speed limit.

(e) Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS)

The installation of VAS can help encourage improved driver compliance with the speed limit. However, such signs are used sparingly since overuse could potentially undermine their effectiveness. The installation of VAS would therefore only generally be considered at sites identified as having a significant problem with excessive speed (or a safety problem where VAS are being installed to warn of a specific hazard such as a bend or a junction).

FURTHER ASSESSMENT

The effects of the pandemic have had a significant impact on traffic flows resulting in temporary atypical conditions. However, traffic conditions have begun to return to more normal levels during recent months, and a series of speed surveys are to be undertaken along the A30 London Road between its junctions with Waterers Way and the A322. These surveys are due to take place in the next 4 weeks.

The results of the surveys will provide up to date information about vehicle speeds. This will help to establish whether there is a problem with speeding and, if there is, over what sections of the road. It will also help assess whether the introduction of speed reducing measures should be considered and what type of measures are most appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION

The Local Committee is asked to note that:

- (i) Previous speed surveys undertaken along the A30 London Road have indicated a generally good level of compliance with the existing 40mph speed limit through Bagshot. As such, it has not been identified as a priority site on the Surrey Heath Speed Management Plan and there are no existing proposals to introduce speed enforcement cameras or other alternative speed reducing measures. However, some of the speed data is now relatively old and it does not cover all sections of the A30 London Road through Bagshot.

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- (ii) A series of new speed surveys are to be undertaken shortly to provide updated information about vehicle speeds over all sections of the A30 London Road between its junctions with the A322 and Waterers Way.
- (iii) The results of the surveys will help determine whether there is a problem with speeding and whether the introduction of speed reducing measures should be considered (and what type of measures would be most appropriate).
- (iv) The Local Committee will be updated further once the surveys have been completed and the data analysed.

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