

**GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL AND  
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**



**GUILDFORD  
BOROUGH**

**GUILDFORD JOINT COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 16 MARCH**

**LEAD OFFICER: DUNCAN KNOX ROAD SAFETY AND SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL  
TRAVEL TEAM MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: RURAL SPEED LIMIT REVIEW**

**DIVISION: SHERE**

Most rural roads in the south and southwest of Surrey are still subject to the national speed limit of 60mph. The 60mph speed limit is inappropriate for these rural roads. The Drive SMART Road Safety Partnership have agreed to provide £100,000 funding which will be supplemented by additional funding for road safety from Surrey County Council to review and implement lower speed limits on rural roads in the south of Surrey in a proactive, strategic, area wide basis. This report presents proposals for a reduction in speed limits across a wide area of the south of rural Surrey and seeks agreement from the committee to proceed. If the lower speed limits result in successful reductions in speeds, this will reduce the number and severity of road collisions, support active travel, improve air quality, and could also help address concerns over excessive vehicle noise.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Joint Committee (Guildford) is asked to:**

- (i) Agree that the speed limits be reduced on the roads as shown in Appendix B that are in the Guildford Joint Committee area. (Other roads within the Waverley and Mole Valley areas are also shown for information and are being presented to the Local/Joint Committees for those areas for approval separately).
- (ii) Authorise the advertisement of a notice in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the effect of which will be to implement the proposed speed limit changes, revoke any existing traffic orders necessary to implement the change, and, subject to no objections being upheld, that the order be made.
- (iii) Note that after 1 April the Highways Engagement and Commissioning Manager will be responsible for resolving any objections received in connection with the proposal in consultation with the relevant Divisional Member.
- (iv) Note that if the reductions in speed limit have not been successful, then further supporting highway measures or a higher speed limit may be necessary.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Reducing the speed limit on these roads will help to manage vehicle speeds to a level more appropriate to the use of road and will reduce the risk and severity of collisions. Lower speeds can also reduce air and noise pollution, and make it safer, easier and more pleasant to walk, cycle and ride horses.

### **1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

- 1.1 The national default speed limit on single carriageway rural roads (without street lighting) is 60mph, but local authorities have the power to change the speed limit if they so wish. The 60mph default speed limit is inappropriate for most minor rural roads because driving at this speed on such narrow and winding country lanes would be reckless (and probably impossible in many cases).
- 1.2 On minor narrow winding country lanes, past advice has been that the 60mph speed limit is not a target and drivers should choose the speed at which they should drive in accordance with the nature and characteristics of the road rather than treating the 60mph speed limit as a target. However, in more recent times within the road safety industry, there has been a greater emphasis on managing speeds on rural roads as part of the “Safe Systems” best practice approach to reducing road casualties. This approach asserts that the organisations responsible for improving road safety should work together towards making the “system” as safe as possible to mitigate the mistakes of road users. A key part of this is to manage vehicle speeds to reduce the risk of collisions (which will also reduce their severity). From 6 July 2022, all newly launched cars will legally have to be fitted with a speed limiter to assist drivers to stick to the speed limit, so it will be even more important to set speed limits that will improve road safety and be appropriate to the nature and use of the road.
- 1.3 It has been noted by officers from inspection of speed limit mapping, that over time the default national 60 mph speed limit on nearly all the rural roads in the southeast of Surrey (to the east of the A24 and south of the A25) have been reduced from 60mph, to a lower level. Although some rural speed limits have also been reduced to the west of the A24, this has happened to a far lesser extent, typically one scheme at a time in response to isolated incidents, location specific concerns and/or lobbying by different local communities and members. It is more expensive in the long run to implement the speed limits incrementally in this way, and results in an inconsistent network of speed limits across rural areas.
- 1.4 Therefore, Surrey police have agreed to provide £100,000 funding from the Drive SMART Road Safety Partnership to review and implement lower speed limits on rural roads in the south of Surrey in a proactive, strategic, area wide basis. This budget will be supplemented by additional investment in road safety recently announced by the county council. It is acknowledged that the speed limit reductions on their own are unlikely to reduce speeds by very much in any one location. However, a small difference at lots of locations across a wide area will add up to a bigger difference overall.
- 1.5 It is anticipated that the proposals presented here will be the first phase of a continuing longer-term project to review the remaining 60mph national speed limits across the rest of the southwest of Surrey.

## 2 ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 Surrey County Council has a [Speed Limit Policy](#) with the aim of setting speed limits that are successful in managing vehicle speeds and are appropriate for the main use of the road. The policy sets thresholds for existing mean vehicle speeds below which a speed limit can be reduced using signs alone, without the need for additional supporting engineering measures. The thresholds for lowering the existing 60 mph national speed limit to lower limits are summarised thus:
- Reduction to 40mph: existing mean average speeds must be 46mph or less
  - Reduction to 30mph: existing mean average speeds must be 35mph or less
  - Reduction to 20mph: existing mean average speeds must be 24mph or less
- 2.2 Within this first phase of the project the speed limits on the roads bounded by the line of the A25 in the north, the A24 in the east, a rough line between Shere and Cranleigh in the west and the county boundary in the south have been reviewed. A series of maps are presented within Appendix A showing the existing speed limits, and the locations and results of numerous one week speed surveys undertaken across this road network using pneumatic tubes.
- 2.3 The data from the speed surveys along with a map of the proposed new speed limits is presented within Appendix B. The new speed limits (within the area bounded by the pink line on the map) have been determined with reference to the existing mean speeds shown within Appendix A and with reference to the requirements of the county council's speed limit policy described above, along with inspection of the road network through site visits and desk study of GIS mapping and Google Street View. Care has been taken to select the locations of the boundaries between different speed limits to coincide with changes in "look and feel" of the road due to changes in adjacent land use and/or width of the carriageway for example.
- 2.4 It can be seen from the proposals within Appendix B that several roads will be reduced to a 20mph speed limit. Most of these are stretches of road that are single track lanes with passing places, or village centres with bends and features that would make driving much faster than 20mph dangerous and inappropriate. Other roads have been set at 30mph or 40mph where the width allows for two vehicles to pass and where the existing speeds are more in keeping and appropriate for a 30mph or 40mph limit. One part of the B2128 Horsham Road to the southeast of Cranleigh will be reduced to a 50mph speed limit where the road is a long straight with good visibility and where the existing speeds are in keeping with a lower 50 mph limit. The A25 Shere Bypass will be reduced to a 50mph speed limit too.
- 2.5 Detailed design of the new speed limit proposals is ongoing, and the precise locations of the new speed limit terminal signing will be decided as part of this. The detailed design will then be subject to public consultation through the advertising of a speed limit order describing the new speed limits in the usual way.
- 2.6 The new speed limits will require additional signing to be installed along some stretches of the rural roads in question. However, care is being taken to design speed limit boundary signing on the approach to villages to be sensitive to the aesthetics of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and to use

wooden posts if appropriate. Wherever possible repeater signs will be co-located with other existing signs on existing posts to minimise additional “street clutter” too.

### **3 OPTIONS:**

#### **3.1 Option 1: Reduce the speed limits as shown within Appendix B**

This is the recommended option as it will reduce the risk and severity of collisions and will help to make walking, cycling, and riding horses safer, easier, and more pleasant on these roads.

#### **3.2 Option 2: Retain the existing speed limits on some or all roads**

This is not recommended because the opportunity to improve road safety and improve conditions for walking, cycling and horse riding would not be realised.

### **4 CONSULTATIONS:**

4.1 A copy of the proposals were sent to Surrey Police for comment, and their full response is contained within Appendix C. In summary they offer “no objection”, though they raise some points for consideration. These include the explanation that “there should be no expectation that deployment of Police resources would be considered to bolster any length of revised limit that does not appear to be working as a result of the reduction”. They also express reservations that some of the proposed 20 mph speed limit roads will not “look and feel” like a 20mph speed limit road, and so additional countermeasures and adequate mitigation should be considered and budgeted for from the outset. They also highlight the need to monitor the success of the new speed limits after implementation.

4.2 Officers will indeed be commissioning additional countermeasures in the form of enhanced village gateways (which will be budgeted for), and will indeed commission repeat speed surveys after implementation to gauge the effect of the new lower speed limits. As per the county council’s speed limit policy, there will be no expectation of additional enforcement by the police to make the new lower speed limits work. This is because the new lower speed limits have been set at a level close to existing speeds so that experience shows there will be generally good compliance without the need for additional enforcement.

### **5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:**

5.1 It is expected that the cost of the scheme will exceed £100,000, though the precise cost will not be known until ongoing detailed design is completed and detailed bill of quantities produced. This includes the cost of removing existing terminal signs and replacement with new speed limit terminal signs, enhanced gateways and provision of speed limit repeater signs and the costs of advertising the legal orders. These costs will be met from £100,000 provided by Surrey Police through the Drive SMART Road Safety Partnership. Further costs will be met from additional central funding provided by the county council for road safety.

5.2 The Department for Transport publish the value of the prevention of collisions for use in cost benefit analysis annually:

Collision severity	Cost per collision £ (2020)
Fatal	2,120,669
Serious	246,109
Slight	24,960
Average for all severities	101,415
Damage only	2,303

5.3 If the proposals successfully contribute to successful reductions in vehicle speeds, research shows that this is highly likely to result in a reduction in collisions. This is likely to represent very good value for money because the cost of the proposals is small in comparison to the value of preventing collisions, especially collisions resulting in fatal and serious injuries.

## 6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 Successful management of vehicle speeds can make it easier for people with mobility impairment to walk, cycle or ride horses. It can also make using roads safer for vulnerable age groups such as children and older people.

## 7 LOCALISM:

7.1 The speed of traffic and collisions are frequently mentioned concerns of Surrey residents. Moderated speeds and driver behaviour will have a positive impact on local communities because as well as reducing the risk and severity of collisions it will support more walking and cycling, reduce noise and air pollution, thus making places more pleasant to live.

## 8 OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	Successful management of vehicle speeds can help to reduce driving offences and anti-social driving.
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	Successful management of vehicle speeds can help to reduce carbon emissions and air pollution from internal combustion engines. It can also help to reduce emissions through encouraging more people to walk or cycle instead of using a motor vehicle.
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications
Public Health	Successful management of vehicle speeds can help reduce air pollution and support more walking and cycling which is healthier.

## **9 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 10.1 The 60mph default speed limit is inappropriate for most minor rural roads because driving at this speed on such narrow and winding country lanes would be reckless (and probably impossible in many cases). This report presents the outcomes of the first phase of a review of the speed limits on the network of 60 mph speed limit rural roads across the south of Surrey.
- 10.2 It is recommended to proceed with Option 1 to reduce the speed limits as shown in the map in Appendix B. This is recommended because if lower speed limits are successful in encouraging speeds that are more appropriate to the use and nature of the road, this will reduce the risk and severity of collisions and will help to make walking, cycling, and riding horses safer, easier, and more pleasant.

## **10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

- 10.3 Design work will be completed, and the legal speed limit orders will be advertised in the local press and the county council's consultation portal "Surrey Says". Subject to any objections being considered by the Highways Engagement and Commissioning Manager in consultation with the Divisional Member, the new speed limits will be implemented within the first half of the next financial year.
- 10.4 After the new speed limits have been implemented, the speed surveys will be repeated to evaluate the success of the schemes. Further measures will be considered to encourage greater compliance with the speed limit if necessary.

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### **Consulted:**

Surrey Police  
Relevant Parish Councils were informed in advance of the project

### **Annexes:**

Appendix A: Mapping of the existing speed limits and results of speed limit surveys  
Appendix B: Map of proposed speed limits  
Appendix C: Police response to consultation on the proposals

### **Sources/background papers:**

Surrey County Councils "Setting Local Speed Limits" Policy

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