

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (WOKING)****DATE: 25 SEPTEMBER 2013****LEAD OFFICER: ANDREW MILNE, NORTH WEST AREA HIGHWAYS MANAGER****SUBJECT: BLACKHORSE ROAD – SPEED LIMIT ASSESSMENT****DIVISION: WOKING SOUTH WEST****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Blackhorse Road has a record of personal injury collisions, the majority of which have taken place at the crossroads junction with Saunders Lane and Heath House Road.

The road is subject to a 40mph speed limit and a request was made in 2012 for this to be assessed with a view to reducing it to 30mph; the assessment confirmed that the existing speed limit was correct for this road.

An additional request for a lower speed limit has since been made.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Woking) is asked to agree that :

- (i) No further action is taken with regard to the speed limit on Blackhorse Road.
- (ii) Accident mitigation efforts remain focused on improvements to the junction of Blackhorse Road with Saunders Lane and Heath House Road, and that the design of these improvements continues as part of this years ITS programme in accordance with Committee's previous approval.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Surrey County Council's current speed limit policy and assessment criteria confirm that 40mph is the correct speed limit for Blackhorse Road. A further reduction to the existing speed limit is not supported by Surrey Highways Officers or Surrey Police, and following a recent review of this issue by Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment, retaining the existing 40mph speed limit was upheld.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

1.1 Blackhorse Road has a record of personal injury collisions, with most of the collisions taking place at the crossroads junction with Saunders Lane and Heath House Road.

1.2 The road, and particularly the crossroads junction, have been the subject of a number of previous reports to Local Committee and in January 2004,

approval was given to reduce the speed limit from 50mph to 40mph. The limit was reduced in early 2005.

- 1.3 Personal injury collisions still take place along the road but as has always been the case, the majority take place at the crossroads junction.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 The speed limit assessment carried out in 2012 confirmed that the existing 40mph speed limit was appropriate for the road and that 30mph would be inappropriately low.
- 2.2 No additional speed surveys have been undertaken. However, the 85th percentile speeds recorded in 2012 were 44mph and 46mph with 38mph and 40mph being the corresponding mean speeds. In 2004, the 85th percentile speeds ranged between 43 and 48mph with corresponding mean speeds of 36 to 41mph.
- 2.3 With such consistency between the 2004 and 2012 data, there is no reason to believe that current vehicle speeds are any different. Similarly, with no change to the physical nature of the road, the previous conclusion that the current 40mph limit is the preferred limit for the road remains true.
- 2.4 Since the last report to this committee in September 2012, two additional personal injury collisions in the road have been recorded, both of which took place at the crossroads. In both cases, a vehicle emerged from the minor road into the path of a vehicle on Blackhorse Road, with the driver failing to look properly or to judge the other person's path correctly.
- 2.5 We are aware of another collision at the railway bridge. However, due to the recency of this, details are not yet available from Surrey Police. It is therefore not included in the table below.
- 2.6 The following table lists the collisions that were tabulated in the previous committee report plus those that have occurred since.

Date	Location	Contributory factor	Resulting injuries (Fatal, Serious, SLight)
05/11/2007	Crossroads	Animal / obstruction in road	1 x SL
14/07/2008	South of crossroads	Poor / defective road surface	1 x SL
22/11/2008	Crossroads	Failed to look properly	2 x S, 1 x SL
12 /02/2009	North of crossroads	Slippery road (ice)	1 x SL
06/04/2009	Crossroads	Failed to look properly	2 x SL
23/06/2009	Crossroads	Failed to look properly	2 x SL
14/09/2009	Crossroads	Junction overshoot / failed to look	1 x F
25/12/2009	North of crossroads	Too fast for conditions (ice)	1 x S, 1x SL
01/03/2010	North of crossroads	Slippery road (ice)	3 x SL
10/08/2011	Crossroads	Failed to look properly	1 x SL
30/09/2011	Crossroads	Failed to look properly	2 x SL

09/04/2012	Crossroads	Disobeyed Give Way or STOP	1 x S, 2 x SL
05/04/2013	Crossroads	Failed to look properly	4 x SL

- 2.7 It can be seen from this data that 9 of the 13 recorded incidents relate to accidents that have occurred at the junction of Blackhorse Road with Saunders Lane and Heath House Road. Speed has been cited as a contributory factor on only one occasion, and this related to a vehicle driving too fast for the prevailing wintery conditions.
- 2.8 It remains the case that neither Surrey Highways Officers or representatives of Surrey Police support a reduction to the present 40mph speed limit, and instead it is recommended that efforts to reduce accidents are focussed on junction improvements at the location where the majority of accidents have occurred as this action is more likely to reduce existing accident levels.

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 The existing vehicle speeds and the current policy suggest that the speed limit should remain at 40mph. A lower limit would not be respected and Surrey Police have pointed out that enforcement would be extremely problematic, to the point that it is unlikely that any would be possible. There is nowhere for an enforcement van to be safely positioned. Similarly, there is nowhere for an officer to carry out hand-held speed enforcement which requires vehicles to be pulled over for the offence to be processed.
- 3.2 However, Members are reminded about the changes to the Speed Limit Policy that now apply. The changes state that in exceptional circumstances, the Local Committee may wish to proceed with a change to a speed limit against Officer advice. In such an instance, the final decision would be taken by the Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment. Members may also be invited to undertake a site visit to inform their decision. If a new speed limit is introduced, after 12 months the vehicle speeds, casualty record and safety concerns would be reviewed; in the event of the new speed limit being ineffective, the policy recommends that remedial action be considered. This review may be needed earlier if there are extenuating circumstances that warrant prompt action.
- 3.3 It should be noted that the Cabinet Member considered the Local Committee's previous decision not to accept officer advice to retain the 40mph speed limit and following a site review, upheld that the limit should remain unchanged.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 This matter has been discussed with Surrey Police who continue to express their objection to any proposal to reduce the speed limit.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 There are no Financial and Value for Money implications.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 There are no Equalities and Diversity implications.

7. LOCALISM:

7.1 Through the views and needs expressed by local communities, and accommodating where possible the involvement of local communities in looking after the public highway, localism is routinely considered as part of the consultation and bidding processes for highway-related works. Specific details regarding localism are included in individual reports as appropriate.

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 A 30mph speed limit along Blackhorse Road would be inappropriately low and an assessment using the current speed limit assessment policy and criteria confirms that the current 40mph speed limit is the right limit for the road. It is therefore recommended that the current limit remains unchanged.

9.2 The majority of the personal injury collisions along the road occur at the crossroads junction with Saunders Lane and Heath House Road. Generally, the dominant factor in most of these collisions is the failure to look properly before emerging from either of the side roads onto Blackhorse Road. The speed of vehicles on Blackhorse Road is not cited as a contributory factor in these collisions. An unrealistically low speed limit will not be respected by drivers and reducing the speed limit on Blackhorse Road is therefore unlikely to have any effect on the collisions at the crossroads.

9.3 The Woking Local Committee have previously approved a scheme to design safety improvements at the crossroads, and this is considered to be the most effective means of addressing the present accident history.

9.4 Blackhorse Road is identified for resurfacing work as part of Operation Horizon and, subject to Committee approval, it is intended to tie in junction improvement works with this proposed resurfacing.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

10.1 The Local Committee is requested to note the contents of this report. It is anticipated that the design of junction improvement works will continue.

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Consulted:**Annexes:****Sources/background papers:**

Woking Local Committee, 22 October 2003 – Item 4 (Petitions)
Woking Local Committee, 28 January 2004 – Item 14
Woking Local Committee, 3 February 2010 – Item 4 (Petitions)
Woking Local Committee, 7 July 2010 – Item 13b
Woking Local Committee, 26 September 2012 – Item 12

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