

WEDNESDAY, 5 JULY 2023

A NEW ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY FOR SURREY BASED ON A 'VISION ZERO' SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH, ENCOMPASSING A NEW SPEED LIMIT POLICY

Purpose of report:

To inform and seek the views of the Select Committee on the development of a new Road Safety Strategy for Surrey based on the principles of a 'VisionZero' safe system approach that aims to manage vehicle speeds and introduce more 20mph limits, inclusive of a draft new Speed Limit Policy that will shortly be subject to a public and stakeholder consultation.

This report also seeks to respond to Will Forster's (Woking South) Motion to the Council on 23 March 2023 (Item 9 [ii] made under standing order 11) when it was agreed that the matter would be considered by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee.

Introduction:

1. At the beginning of this year, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience tasked the Highways and Transport Service with creating a new Speed Limit Policy to best meet the needs of the county and our residents. This included a clear ambition that a new policy must facilitate the delivery of lower and more appropriate speed limits in all, town centres, residential areas, village centres and outside schools.
2. Work to develop a new Speed Limit Policy has therefore been ongoing since the beginning of the year, including consideration of best practice and an assessment of potential approaches. With work well underway, after several months a Motion to Council was tabled in respect to the Council's speed limit policy and approach. The work already completed, the approach being proposed and the future tasks to be completed as set out in this report enables a response to the Motion to be provided, noting that the creation of a new Speed Limit Policy to best meet the needs of the county and our residents was already in hand.

Background

3. There are on average nearly 30 deaths on Surrey's roads each year. The Council proposes to set a target of zero, or as close as possible, fatalities and life changing injuries by 2050 with a 50% reduction by 2030. We propose to achieve this by developing and implementing a new Road Safety Strategy for Surrey based on the principles of the 'Vision Zero' and a Safe System approach. Doing so will reduce death and serious injury on our road network, ensuring the Council's strategy and approach reflect best practice and protects road users as far as we are able.
4. Our Vision Zero approach includes a draft new Speed Limit Policy that will shortly be subject to a public and stakeholder consultation. This draft new policy proposes a default speed of 20mph in town centre, residential areas, village centres and outside schools.
5. A summary of our intended approach to developing a New Road Safety Strategy for Surrey is set out in **Annexe 1**, including the areas it will cover.
6. A summary of the principles for a draft new Speed Limit Policy is attached at **Annexe 2**, whilst Will Forster's Motion to the Council is attached at **Annexe 3**.

Approach

7. A Safe System approach to road safety puts people at its centre, coming from the belief that every road death or serious injury is preventable. It is built upon two basic facts about people:
 - People make mistakes and will make mistakes when on the roads.
 - People are vulnerable to being killed or seriously injured if they are involved in a collision.
8. A Safe System approach recognises these facts and seeks to design them out of the equation. Put simply, it means that all elements of the road system - vehicles, infrastructure, speed limits, road users, and post-collision care - work together as one to minimise the chance of a collision, or, if a collision does take place, to prevent death or serious injury from occurring.
9. This approach is based on the belief that no death or serious injury is acceptable on roads. A Safe System approach has five pillars that work together to minimise risk, namely:
 - i. Safe roads and streets
 - ii. Safe speed
 - iii. Safe vehicles

- iv. Safe road users and behaviours
 - v. Post collision care
10. Our new Road Safety Strategy will adopt this approach. It will be developed in partnership with key stakeholders, including Surrey Police, Surrey Fire and Rescue and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. This will happen over the coming months.
 11. As part of this approach we have drafted a new Speed Limit Policy, reflecting the impact speed has in terms of causation of collisions and the severity of injuries, noting that speeding is a key resident and community issue. It is now in a state of readiness for a public and stakeholder consultation, which is important given public and community concern over speeding traffic. A comprehensive consultation will help shape the final policy, whilst also helping to socialise the 'Vision Zero' and a Safe System approach with residents and stakeholders.
 12. The draft new Speed Limit Policy, if adopted, will likely impact all communities at a local level. A delivery plan will therefore also be produced, detailing local changes and impacts, timescales and implementation cost estimates. The final new Road Safety Strategy for Surrey is expected to be presented to Cabinet in early 2024. This will include the findings and outcome of the Speed Limit Policy consultation that will be used to create the final Policy and accompanying delivery plan.
 13. This work has strong links to our Surrey Transport Plan, particularly around the network hierarchy that priorities pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users over other road users, alongside the ambition to reduce speeds in communities and create liveable neighbourhoods. In reflecting this, our draft Speed Limit Policy proposes a default speed of 20mph in town centres, residential areas, village centres and outside schools. This will protect local communities by reducing the incidence and severity of collisions on our roads.
 14. There are also clear links to the 2030 Community Vision, Climate Change Strategy and Climate Change Delivery Plan and our ambition to be net zero carbon by 2050.

Conclusions:

15. The Council proposes to set a target of zero, or as close as possible, fatalities and life changing injuries by 2050 with a 50% reduction by 2030. We propose to achieve this by developing and implementing a new Road Safety Strategy for Surrey based on the principles of the 'Vision Zero' and a Safe System approach. This approach includes a new draft Speed Limit Policy, which will shortly be subject to public and stakeholder consultation.

16. This report, the overall approach and supporting annexes responds to the Motion to Council tabled on 23 March 2023.

Recommendations:

17. That the views of the Select Committee on the proposed Vision Zero approach and the draft new Speed Limit Policy be provided to the Council's Cabinet in advance of Cabinet considering this matter on 25 July 2023.

Next steps:

The views of the Select Committee be provided to the Council's Cabinet in advance of 25 July 2023.

The public consultation on the new draft Speed Limit Policy will take place for three months over the summer and autumn.

The new Road Safety Strategy for Surrey based on the principles of the 'Vision Zero' and a Safe System approach, inclusive of a final new Speed Limit Policy and delivery plan be reported in detail to Cabinet in early 2024.

Report contact

Duncan Knox, Road Safety and Sustainable School Travel Team Manager

Contact details

duncan.knox@surreycc.gov.uk

Sources/background papers