

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (WOKING)

DATE: 25 SEPTEMBER 2013

SUBJECT: WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

DIVISION: WOKING SOUTH EAST



1. Question from Mrs Sandra Stonehouse

I would like to put to the committee that they consider reducing the speed limit along The Old Woking Road from 40mph. This limit itself is rarely adhered to as can be seen from the speed sign at the top of the hill which continually is lit up. There have been 2 bad accidents near this speed sign in the past 6 months with the road closed for a significant amount of time and a fatality a few years ago. It is densely populated area with many side roads and really 30mph would be a much more appropriate limit.

Answer from Chairman on behalf of the committee:

The length of Old Woking Road identified is listed in our Speed Management Plan, and forms part of one of Surrey Police's Casualty Reduction Routes. As a result, this location receives a higher level of speed enforcement than most other roads in the Borough.

The speed data that Surrey Police collected in October 2012 indicates that there is good compliance with the existing 40mph speed limit, with a mean speed of 38mph in one direction and 39mph in the other. This does not mean that every driver is travelling below the speed limit, but it does strongly indicate that the existing speed limit is well respected by the majority of motorists who drive at speeds below the police's intervention level for enforcement.

The speed sign that Mrs Stonehouse refers to is assumed to be the vehicle activated flashing bend warning sign, situated near Dean Close. The trigger speed for this sign is set at 40mph which is why it is illuminated so frequently, giving the impression that many vehicles are travelling significantly faster than the speed limit.

Six personal injury collisions have taken place on Old Woking Road between Lincoln Drive and Broomcroft Drive in the last 3 years. Of these, 4 resulted in slight injuries and the other two, both of which took place this year, resulted in serious injury. None of the 6 collisions had excessive speed listed as a contributory factor, although one did cite "travelling too fast for conditions" as a factor.

Assessment of the appropriateness of speed limits is determined in accordance with the County Council's speed limit assessment policy. In this case a 30mph speed limit would be inappropriate given the character of Old Woking Road and the respect for the existing speed limit.

It is worth noting that the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 prohibit the placing of 30mph repeater signs where there is a system of street lighting, and, as a system of street lighting exists in Old Woking Road, if the limit was reduced to 30mph, all of the existing speed limit signs would have to be removed.

Despite it being a basic rule of motoring, many drivers appear not to appreciate the connection between street lights and 30mph speed limits, and removal of the existing 40mph speed limit signs to accommodate a 30mph speed limit may result in average speeds increasing.

In view of these considerations, I am afraid that promotion of a 30mph speed limit at this location would not be supported by Surrey Highways.