

REPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES, ENVIRONMENT & HIGHWAYS SELECT COMMITTEE

Item under consideration: Surrey RoadSafe Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy 2024 to 2035

Date Considered: 17 July 2024

The Community, Environment and Highways Select Committee received a report on the **Updated Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy (Including a New Approach to 20mph Speed Limits)**. The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth. In December 2023 the Committee considered an earlier draft of the strategy and submitted recommendations to Cabinet requesting further work to clarify the process of local community engagement and the funding available to support rollout of 20mph speed limits.

In considering the new updated Strategy and new 20mph Speed Limit approach, the Select Committee noted the following key points:

1. The Strategy has been updated following a ten-week public consultation from 11 January to 24 March 2024. The main changes in response to the consultation were additional emphasis on ensuring local people are consulted on proposals and on the need for 20mph limits to be self-enforcing meaning they do not require additional enforcement from the police and present a better investment of public money being implemented only where they are likely to work.
2. The public response to the consultation revealed a lack of confidence that the strategy would improve road safety in Surrey, with resident feedback suggesting road condition and potholes had a greater impact on road safety. There was a mixed response on the proposals for a new approach to 20 mph speed limits which reflected both disagreement to the policy but also a misunderstanding of how the policy would be implemented. There were lessons to be learned about the consultation methodology which did not clearly explain the new approach to speed limits that was proposed. A

communications and outreach plan would be important in addressing the concerns and misconceptions highlighted in the public consultation and to explain the benefits of 20mph limits.

3. A very clear delivery plan and set of priority deliverables and KPIs would be necessary to ensure the strategy has impact and to realise the Vision Zero road safety strategy ambition to achieve the target of reducing by 50% people killed or seriously injured in road accidents by 2035. The main theme emerging from the consultation was the lack of confidence that the strategy would improve road safety in Surrey. The Committee sought reassurance that the strategy would be underpinned by clear actions that would improve safety on high-risk roads and deliver the target reduction in KSIs.
4. Officers clarified the expectation that Councillors will be involved from the very beginning of the process where any proposal is received for a locally funded 20mph scheme to be introduced. Prior to commissioning speed and feasibility surveys an initial judgement by the local Councillor would be necessary on the financial feasibility of any scheme and availability of ITS funds. At the conclusion of the local engagement process the results would be shared with the Local Divisional Member who would take a decision on whether or not the scheme should proceed to the formal statutory consultation stage, taking account of the range of factors and responses received during informal engagement. This would be a value judgement and no specific criteria or threshold for the required level of support would be set.
5. The Committee reiterated its concerns regarding the availability and adequacy of funding to support the rollout of 20mph speed limits and questioned the calculations behind the unallocated £2.5m in the capital budget pipeline to support implementation of 20mph schemes over a 5-year period. Officers highlighted that by year end £3m would be invested in improving safety outside schools and that this investment was making a real difference in Surrey.

After detailed discussion and noting the responses to its key lines of enquiry, the Select Committee agreed the following conclusions and recommendations for Cabinet to consider.

RESOLVED

That the Communities Environment and Highways Select Committee:

- I. Supports the Vision Zero Roadsafe Strategy in broad terms and the consultative approach that is being taken but notes the public concern about whether the impact of this strategy will succeed and its likelihood of meeting the target to reduce KSIs by 50% by 2035 (758 to 375). Notes that this will be addressed in future communications and engagement plans to better explain the policy to the public.
- II. Expresses concern at the consultation results specifically related to speed limits and lack of clear message/result and supports future work to improve consultation methodologies.
- III. Recommends more detailed targets are produced to monitor progress and ensure impact including a *delivery plan* with key deliverables aimed at reducing deaths and KPIs.
- IV. Recommends appropriate prioritisation of funding and sufficient resources to deliver the strategy.
- V. Recommends that supporting communication and outreach addresses the public perception (raised in the public consultation) that fixing potholes and improving roads would have a greater impact on road safety and highlights the Councils highways improvement programme.
- VI. Recommends revisions to the strategy to address the comments raised by the Committee in discussion to clarify the role of the local Councillor in 20mph scheme proposals and the process for local engagement (including parish council involvement) and to amend Annex 5 accordingly. This should clarify that a pragmatic/flexible approach can be taken to local consultation.

Keith Witham

Chairman, Communities, Environment & Highways Select Committee

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