

Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No. /23

Date: 13 July 2023

Briefing note to: All Members of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: To set out the rationale for speed limit changes implemented on the southern section of Deanwood Drive in 2022, and the outcome of the post-implementation traffic speed survey.

1 Background

- 1.1 Deanwood Drive serves a predominantly residential area and connects with Maidstone Road to the north and the south. The southern section of Deanwood Drive has an undeveloped character with wooded areas to each side of the carriageway. The northern section is developed, with side road junctions connecting it with residential roads and cul-de-sacs. Both sections of Deanwood Drive were subject to a 30mph speed limit. No speed limit repeater signs were present as these are not permitted under national highway signing regulations.
- 1.2 Speed surveys undertaken on the southern section indicated that the 85th percentile speed of traffic (the speed at or below which 85 percent of traffic is travelling) was around 39mph in both directions. The average speeds were recorded at around 34mph in both directions.
- 1.3 Speed surveys were also undertaken on the northern section of Deanwood Drive. These indicated 85th percentile speeds of 38mph in each direction, with average daily speeds of 33mph in each direction.

2 Rationale for speed limit changes

- 2.1 Local Highway Authorities are responsible for keeping speed limits on their networks under review. The survey results provided the evidence required to review the speed limit on Deanwood Drive, which would take into consideration guidance provided by the Department for Transport (DfT).
- 2.2 DfT guidance for built-up areas recommends 30mph limits should be considered where there is development on both sides of the road. On higher quality suburban roads with good width and layout or those on the outskirts of urban areas where there is little development and few cyclists, pedestrians, or equestrians, a 40mph speed limit is generally appropriate. The review therefore concluded that the road environment on the southern section did not align with the speed limit of 30mph and did not provide road users with clear messaging to encourage compliance. The review also concluded that the higher speeds of the southern section were carried into the developed section of

Deanwood Drive. These conclusions were supported by the results of the speed surveys.

3 Measures implemented

3.1 As a result of the review, the following measures were implemented:

- A 40mph speed limit on the southern section of Deanwood Drive
- A gateway feature on Deanwood Drive to the south of its junction with Hawbeck Road where the speed limit reduces to 30mph, including upright signs, red surfacing, and painted roundels.
- A Vehicle Activated Sign supporting the 30mph limit to the south of the junction with Nares Road.

3.2 The 40mph speed limit would reflect the character of the road on the southern section of Deanwood Drive. The gateway feature on the approach to Hawbeck Road would highlight the 30mph speed limit and encourage motorists to adopt an appropriate speed whilst travelling along the developed northern section. This message would be reinforced by the Vehicle Activated Sign.

4 Post-implementation

4.1 Post-implementation traffic surveys carried out between Maidstone Road and Hawbeck Road, now subject to a 40mph speed limit, indicated a minor decrease in vehicle speeds, with a reduction in eastbound 85th percentile speeds of 0.1mph and a reduction in the westbound 85th percentile speed of 0.7mph. In addition, the percentage of motorists travelling at or above 40mph has decreased in both directions, with a reduction from 13.8% to 13.0% in the eastbound direction and 12.7% to 9.7% in the westbound direction.

4.2 Surveys undertaken within the built-up northern section of Deanwood Drive indicate that 85th percentile speeds have reduced by approximately 2mph in both directions. There has also been a reduction in the percentage of vehicles exceeding the 30mph speed limit.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Implementing a 40mph speed limit on Deanwood Drive between Maidstone Road (south) and Hawbeck Road enabled the introduction of a prominent gateway where the speed limit reduces to 30mph, reinforcing the change in the character of the road and providing road users with clear messaging as they meet the residential area.

5.2 The changes accord with Department for Transport guidance on the review and setting of speed limits.

5.3 The post-implementation speed surveys indicate that the scheme has reduced traffic speeds and improved speed limit compliance on both sections of Deanwood Drive.