



Sanity for the “mad mile”?

Lower speed limits along a notorious “high risk” danger road, dubbed the “mad mile”, are to come into force from next year.

Surrey County Council has agreed to restrictions on the **A217 between Sutton and Banstead** in the new financial year after receiving a petition calling for greater safety measures.

The dual carriageway currently has a speed limit of 60mph which petition papers presented to the council said were “often abused” with cars even “racing” with “no heed to other road users”.

This, it said, “led to severe accidents on that stretch, most of which could have been avoided if there was an imposed limit of 40 mph.”

In March this year a woman died in hospital three weeks after a crash happened involving two cars along the A217. Both vehicles were travelling south from Belmont Rise roundabout towards the traffic lights at Fir Tree road.

Website crashmap shows the junctions at either end of the “mad mile” are particular hotspots.

The petition added: “There is no valid reason why this short stretch of road should allow a limit of 60 mph, when the rest of the A217 stretch has a limit of 40 mph.”

Ram Nandula who led the efforts, addressed the Tuesday, July 25, cabinet meeting. He said: “We’ve seen how dangerous the road is because of the change over from 40 to 60 and then back to 40 as people git the road they start racing with each other on both lanes. It’s a high risk road, and it’s not safe for pedestrians or cyclists.”

He added that the rest of the road was 40mph and changing this stretch would allow for “a smoother flow of traffic”.

The meeting was chaired by cabinet member for highways and community resilience, Councillor **Kevin Deanus**. He said: “Yes we agree and we will do it. We’ve looked at the number of collisions, there are collisions at either end. Partially due to people approaching too fast. There are crossing points and a 60 mph dual carriageway is not a nice place for a pedestrian to cross the road.”

He said that long term the council was minded to introduce a signalled crossing on the road and that speed data collected along the road backed up the need for tighter controls there.

The council understands the road “a history of collisions including some resulting in serious injury”. As for time frames, Cllr Deanus said that highways money had been budgeted for so the new measures would be introduced and evaluated in the 2023/24 financial year.

According to the county council, its road safety engineering team has already allocated its central road safety budget on schemes across the county with a history of collisions.

The official response to the petition read: “Therefore, we would be able to tackle this stretch with our central budget to implement a lower 40 mph speed limit in the following financial year starting in April 2024.

“Once implemented we will undertake similar speed surveys to check on the success of the scheme and compliance with the new speed limit. This will inform on the need for any additional measures to manage speeds successfully on this stretch.”

Mr Nandula said: “Thank you so much, I understand how important getting the budget is, and better late than never.”

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