

Divisions affected: *Didcot East & Hagbourne*

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

23 MAY 2024

ASTON TIRROLD & ASTON UPTHORPE: MORETON ROAD – PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMIT EXTENSION

Report by Corporate Director for Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member for Transport Management is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) **Approve the extension of the existing 20mph speed limit on Moreton Road, as advertised.**

Executive Summary

1. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on proposal to extend the existing 20mph speed limit on Moreton Road, from a point 185 metres northeast of its junction with Fullers Road/The Croft, further out of the village to a point 280 metres northeast of its junction with Alisons Lane, as shown in **Annex 1**.

Financial Implications

2. Funding for consultation and the proposals themselves has been provided by the County Council's 20mph Speed Limit Project.

Legal Implications

3. No legal implications have been identified in respect of the proposals.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

4. No implications in respect of equalities or inclusion have been identified in respect of the proposals.

Sustainability Implications

5. The proposals would help encourage walking and cycling within Aston Tirrold & Aston Upthorpe by making them safer and more attractive.

Formal consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 03 April and 26 April 2024. A notice was published in the Oxfordshire Herald Series newspaper, and an email sent to statutory consultees & key-stakeholders, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Bus operators, countywide transport, access & disabled peoples user groups, South Oxfordshire District Council, the local District Cllrs, Aston Tirrold and Upthorpe Parish Council, and the local County Councillor representing the Didcot East & Hagbourne division.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Thames Valley Police re-iterated their views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits, they consider their view as 'having concerns' rather than a formal objection, whilst stating that they were not aware that anything had changed in the area including recent collision history. They also raised serious concerns regarding the nature of the road, with the road being straight and on the outskirts of the village, and therefore unlikely to see any change in driver behaviour.
8. Thams Travel Bus Company whilst not objecting, were keen to stress that these proposals and others along the route, would result in the need to review service to ensure that it can still be provided in accordance with the law as set out in the Transport Act 1985 (as amended) as well as in compliance with The Highways Act and Road Traffic Regulation Acts.
9. The parish council outlined their support for the proposals, citing that it remained in-line with the existing 20mph speed limit that had already been implemented in both Aston Upthorpe and Aston Tirrold villages.
10. The consultation responses are shown in **Annex 2**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Officer Response to Objections/Concerns

11. The main purpose of the scheme is to encourage greater use of active travel by reducing speeds; this is also expected to reduce accidents. The aim of reducing speed limits is to change driver's mindsets to make speeding socially unacceptable and make more environmentally friendly modes of travel such as walking and cycling more attractive, and also help reduce the Counties carbon footprint. This forms part of a countywide programme of works that seeks to deliver 'a safer place with a safer pace'.
12. The authority considers objections along the lines of it being unjustified, anti-car, a waste of money, not enforceable or pointless to not warrant amendments

to a proposal. As such the authority has not addressed any specific comments made of this nature in this report

13. Noting the response of Thames Travel, the proposed extension on the speed limit on Moreton Road is approximately 200m in length and this very modest increase in the overall extent of the speed limit in the villages will likely have minimal impact on the bus journey times.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director for Environment and Place

Annexes Annex 1: Consultation plan
 Annex 2: Consultation responses

Contact Officers: Anthony Kirkwood (Team Leader – Vision Zero)
 Matt Archer (Portfolio Manager - Programme Delivery)

May 2024

Aston Tirrold/ Upthorpe 20mph

Legend	
Proposed 20	
Existing 20mph	
Existing NSL	
Not Public Highway	

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved
1.0	28.06.23	Proposal 1	C.R		



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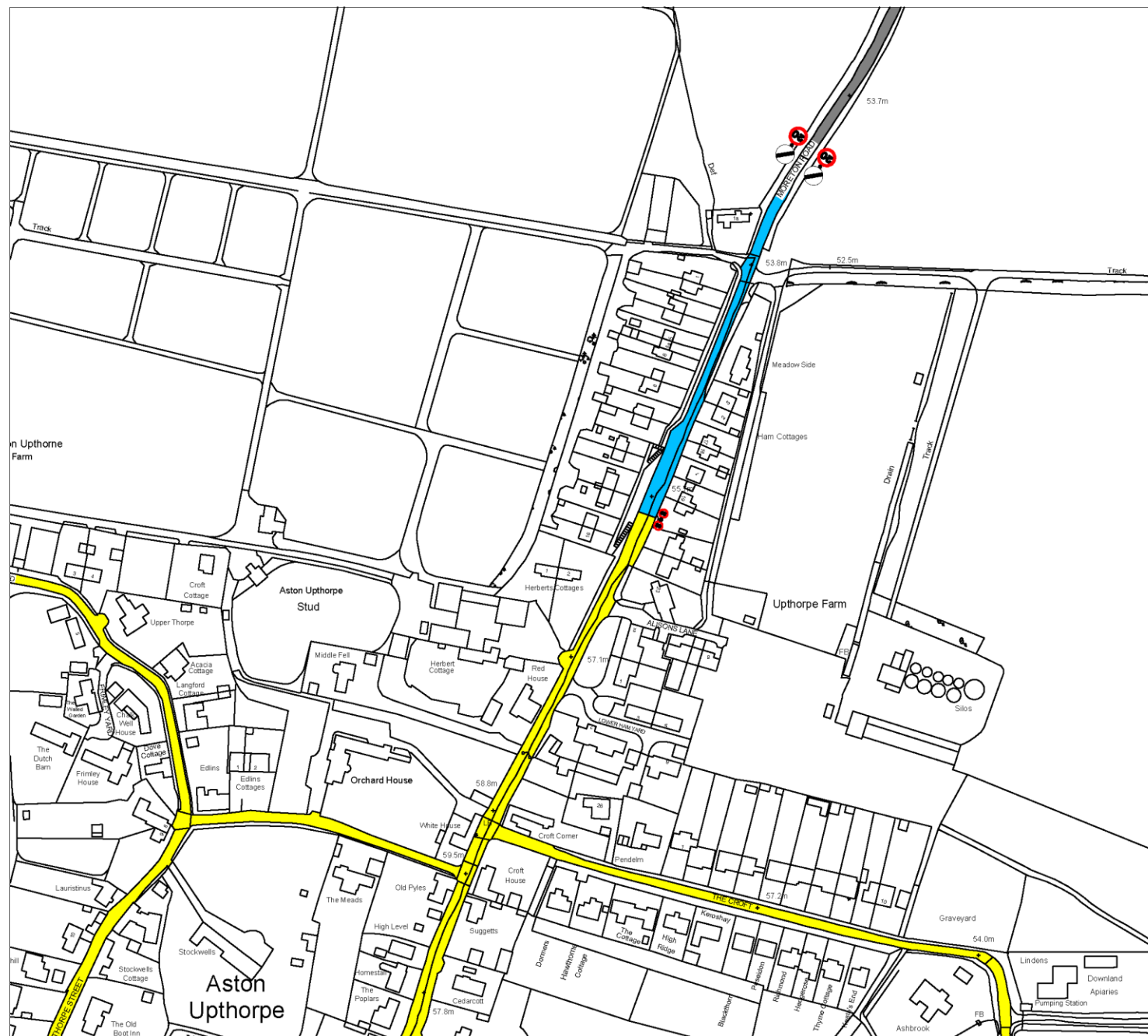
Project title:
 Aston Tirrold/ Aston Upthorpe 20mph Extension

Drawing title:
 Aston Tirrold/ Upthorpe 20mph Scheme Overview

Drawing Status

Scale @ A3	Drawn by: C.R	Checked by: G.J.B	Approved by: G.J.B
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RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
<p>(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)</p>	<p>Concerns – I am aware most of the roads within these villages have been subject to 20 following consultation in September 2018 . At that time Moreton Road was not included and remained 30 .I am not aware that anything has changed here including collision history . I have serious concerns knowing the nature of the road, about driver compliance with a lowered speed limit . The road is straight and on the outskirts of the village and unlikely to see any change in driver behaviour.</p> <p>Thames Valley Police welcome the opportunity to engage on plans for road safety improvement and acknowledge that 20mph limits can be a useful tool in road safety. There are other reasons 20mph limits may be desirable for communities, such as environmental concerns, and creating a shared space environment to encourage greater diversity of road users.</p> <p>Compliance with 20mph limits is a challenging issue as there is a difference between the achievable results of the various available schemes. For example a sign-only scheme will only have a limited effect on the mean speeds, as opposed to other schemes that influence the road environment, which is recognised as being key to achieving compliance. If a speed limit is set too low and is ignored then this could result in the vulnerable road user being less safe. It can also cause a dis-proportionate number of drivers to criminalise themselves and could bring the system of speed limits into disrepute.</p> <p>Thames Valley Police have no policy to enforce based on arbitrary speed limits alone but will enforce based on threat of harm, risk and resourcing. 20mph limits are not excluded from this and will be enforced where appropriate. There should be no expectation that the police would be able to provide regular enforcement if a speed limit is set too low as this could result in an unreasonable additional demand on police resources and there are no additional resources available to support extra enforcement. Messages from partners that police will not enforce need to be discouraged. Such messaging can encourage non-compliance and should be avoided.</p> <p>The policy of Thames Valley Police is to use sound practical and realistic criteria (Setting local speed limits - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)) when responding to Highway Authorities in an effort to promote consistency and to reduce the burden of constant and unnecessary enforcement. The advice shown in Circular Roads 1/2013 states.</p>

	<p>The key factors that should be taken into account in any decisions on local speed limits are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • history of collisions • road geometry and engineering • road function • composition of road users (including existing and potential levels of vulnerable road users) • existing traffic speeds • road environment <p>However I recognise Oxfordshire County Council now have their own Policy for Setting Speed Limits and I expect full compliance of that policy going forward in relation to both monitoring , future engineering and self-enforcement through Community Speed Watch .</p> <p>Our stance remains that primarily 20 mph speed limits and zones should be self-enforcing</p> <p>Speed limits should be considered as part of a package of measures to manage vehicle speeds and improve road safety. Changes to the highway (for example through narrowing, providing vertical traffic calming or re-aligning the road) may be required to encourage lower speeds in addition to any change in speed limit. Though these may be more expensive, they are more likely to be successful in the long term in achieving lower speeds without the need for increased police enforcement to penalise substantial numbers of motorists.</p>
<p>(2) Head of Strategic Development and the Built Environment, (Go-Ahead Group)</p>	<p>No objection – Aston Tirrold is served by Thames Travel Route 94A. This provides services 6 days a week in both Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe, as part of a wider pattern of service on two loops that combine to provide broadly hourly frequency in the bigger settlements served six days a week – specifically Blewbury and The Hagbournes. The level of service on offer is good compared with the size of the settlements and the actual demand we see from them. The 94a settlements – the Astons and the Moretons - by virtue of their size generate extremely limited patronage. The whole service pattern, serving as it does several villages in succession, is especially liable to bus productivity being affected directly by the imposition of multiple extensive 20mph limits, contrary to Government Guidance formally set out in LTN 01/2013 amended March 2024.</p> <p>The service is among the most marginal of all we operate in every sense of the word, as the Council ought to appreciate.</p>

	<p>The proposed extension of an already extensive 20mph signed limit is, frankly, of only about 250m in extent and therefore its direct impact on the 94a service can only be considered “de minimis”. As such it would be churlish and needlessly obstructive to offer an objection in this instance.</p> <p>However, we wish to make the Council and stakeholders aware that pursuant to the Council’s actions here and elsewhere on the route, we unavoidably need to review the 94 and 94a service to ensure among other things that it can still be provided in accordance with the law as set out in the Transport Act 1985 (as amended) as well as in compliance with The Highways Act and Road Traffic Regulation Acts. Consistent failure to reliably operate services is illegal under the 1985 Act, and the Office of the Traffic Commissioner has a range of sanctions it can apply to us in this regard. Obviously, we have much more fundamental reasons to operate in accordance with our timetables, in order to ensure that the public have the most dependable possible service and thereby securing the revenue stream to maximise economic sustainability.</p> <p>While we present no objection in this instance, we invite the Council to note the contents of this response carefully.</p>
(3) Aston Tirrold and Upthorpe Parish Council	<p>Support – The PC discussed the proposal at its meeting on Wednesday 17th April 2024 and voted unanimously to support this proposal which is in-line with the 20mph speed limit that is already rolled out in both Aston Upthorpe and Aston Tirrold villages.</p>