

Divisions affected: *Witney West and Bampton*

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

23 MAY 2024

BLACK BOURTON: PROPOSED 20MPH & 30MPH SPEED LIMITS

Report by Corporate Director for Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

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

- a) **Approve the proposed introduction of the 20mph & 30mph speed limits in Black Bourton, as advertised.**

Executive Summary

1. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits at Black Bourton, as well as a new 30mph speed limit on the B4020 Station Road, 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 Brize Norton by making them safer and more attractive.

Formal consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 21 February and 15 March 2024. A notice was published in the Witney Gazette 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, West Oxfordshire District Council, the local District Cllrs, Black Bourton parish council, and the local County Councillors representing the Witney West and Bampton division.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Thames Valley Police re-iterated their views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits and wish their response to be listed as 'having concerns' rather than an objection. They also had similar views on the proposed 30mph speed limit on the B4020 Station Road.
8. Oxford Bus Company objected on the grounds that the cumulative impact of multiple substantial reduction in speed limits on bus productivity and scheduling is very material especially so in peripheral parts of the network which are in all senses marginal, commercially and operationally.
9. Black Bourton Parish Council support the proposals, but also added that they support the proposal from a local resident to extend the 20mph limit to north of the railway bridge, as opposed to terminating south.

Other Responses:

10. 12 responses were received from local residents & a local Cllr, with five objecting, four in support, two partially supporting, and one non-objection. One of those supporting wished to see the limit extended further northwards to beyond the railway bridge.
11. The responses are shown at **Annex 2**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Officer Response to Objections/Concerns

12. The main purpose of the scheme is to encourage greater use of active travel by reducing speeds; this will also 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 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'.
13. 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.

14. The objection from Oxford Bus Company to the proposed 30mph speed limit is noted; while accepting the reduction in the speed limit from the current national speed limit to 30mph over a 1.1km length will impact on journey times, the current speeds of vehicles is likely to be appreciably below the national speed limit (taking account also of the sharp bend at the south east of the proposed limit) the actual changes in journey times for buses is expected to be low.

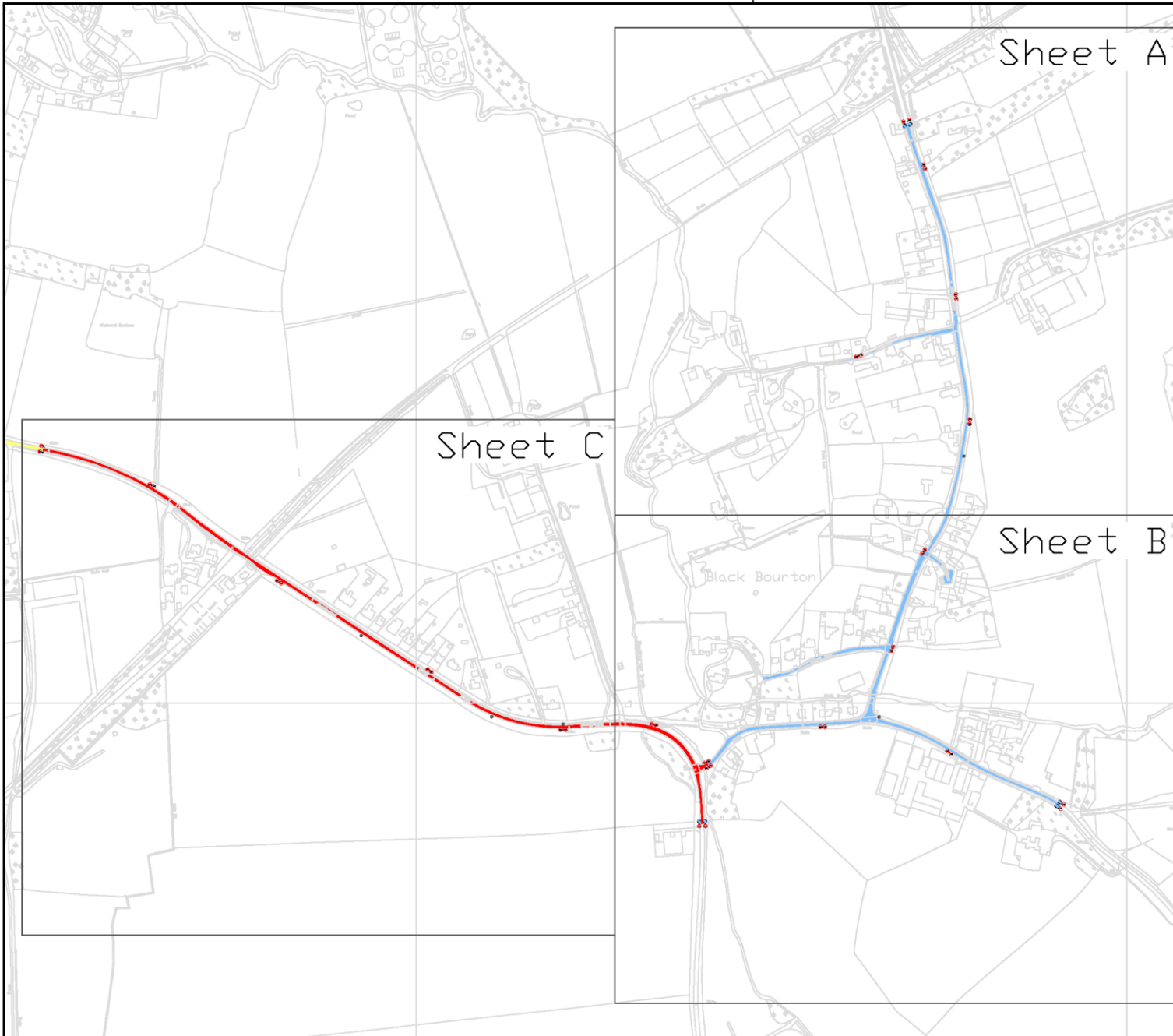
15. The request of Black Bourton Parish Council to consider an extension of the proposed 20mph speed limit on Burford Road is noted. Officers however consider that the proposed terminal position – which is where the current terminal of the village 30mph speed limit is sited- remains on balance the most appropriate location.

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



Drawing No. _____

Notes:

- Existing 20mph limit
- Proposed 20mph limit
- Proposed 30mph limit

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
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Project title
Black Bourton 20mph

Drawing title
General Layout

Drawing Status

Scale @ A3	Drawn by ER	Checked by GJB	Approved by GJB
	Date drawn 09/01/24	Date checked 09/01/24	Date approved 09/01/24

Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref

Drawing No.	Revision

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p>Concerns - This applies to both 20 and 30 proposals.</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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Built Environment and Infrastructure, (Go-Ahead Group)</p>	<p>Object – Pulhams Coaches operates the 19 service along the B4020 through Alvescot and Black Bourton. It is financially supported by Oxfordshire County Council. Service 19 is very long established but has always had some level of financial support from the County. Stagecoach attempted to operate the service commercially briefly from the withdrawal of the entire supported bus services budget in Summer 2016. The service is now tendered, but the bulk of resources to support this have been from those secured from residential development, mainly in Bampton and Aston which the route also serves. These resources cannot be relied upon in the long term.</p> <p>Both the current operation reflects the need to operate extensive mileage within a vehicle cycle, through multiple settlements. As we have made plain repeatedly to the Council, the cumulative impact of multiple substantial reduction in speed limits on bus productivity and scheduling is very material especially so in peripheral parts of the network which are in all senses marginal, commercially and operationally.</p> <p>The length of B4020 involved within these proposals, used by buses, will see a 40mph limit reduced to 30 mph. The immediate materiality of this, over a length of just over 1km, is not so great to pose a problem per se. No 20 mph limits are proposed. However, the cumulative impact with recent and potential future speed limit reductions, not least on route 19 through Bampton, Aston, Brighthampton and Standlake, could be something that causes very serious problems that directly serve to compromise the ongoing economics of bus operation, and the attractiveness and</p>

	<p>relevance of the service to the public. We need to examine these further, both internally and with Council officers, including the public transport function.</p> <p>It also bears mentioning that policy expectations of self-enforcement of a 30mph limit in this area, given the nature and character of the road, rely on extremely optimistic assumptions that we see no evidence of being empirically based. The effectiveness of the measures may in practical terms, be extremely limited, save for the further erosion of bus operation, in an extremely challenging geography.</p> <p>Thus, we are minded to object</p>
(3) Black Bourton Parish Council	<p>Support – the Parish Council to voice its support for the request (as per response no.) that:</p> <p>“the proposed 20 mph speed limit on the north end of Burford Road by the old railway bridge is extended from 57m before (ie to the south of) the mid-point of the bridge to 110m after (ie to the north) of the mid point. Signs placed at 110m north would not impede pedestrians/traffic, access, or cause an obstructed view of the road or bridge.”</p>
(4) Local Cllr (i.e. Town/Parish/District), (Black Bourton, Alvscot Road)	<p>20mph – Support The areas where the 20mph limit is being proposed have no, or very little, by way of footpaths. This means any pedestrians have to walk on the road. Reducing the current speed limit would help ensure the safety of any pedestrians.</p> <p>30mph – Support The area where the reduction in speed limit from 30mph to 40 mph is often subject to speeding motorists and there has been a number of accidents along this stretch of road There is also a bus stop at the Clanfield end of this stretch of road that is currently sited in the 60mph section of road which will be a much safer place for those waiting for a bus once the speed limit is reduced to 30mph.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
(5) Local resident, (Black Bourton, Station Road)	<p>20mph – No objection Village resident</p>

	<p>30mph – Support We are farmers (Glebe Farm, Station Rd, Black Bourton (OX18 2PP). Our driveway comes onto the B4020 just as the steep bend starts where the road bends away southwards towards Clanfield. Over the 37 years that we have lived and farmed here, we have had a number of near misses with traffic passing either way across the bottom of our drive, both when entering our drive with large loads, and also exiting onto the road. In addition to the speed limit restriction, would it be possible to have a 'Tractors Turning' warning sign at either end of the bend please?</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(6) Local resident, (Bampton, Church Street)</p>	<p>20mph – Object No history of accidents. Few pedestrian movements. 30 limit already adequate. Lowering the limit likely to lead to significant non-compliance and lack of respect for limits.</p> <p>30mph – Object No history of accidents. Few pedestrian movements. Houses well set-back from the road. 40 limit already brealy complied with as it's often too low. Lowering the limit likely to lead to significant non-compliance and lack of respect for limits.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(7) Local resident, (Black Bourton, Bampton Road)</p>	<p>20mph – Object Completely unnecessary reduction that will incite more contempt for the law</p> <p>30mph – Object Pointless idiocy.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(8) Local resident, (Black Bourton, School Lane)</p>	<p>20mph – Object The people who take no notice of 30mph will take no notice of 20mph and the rest of us will be inconvenience.</p> <p>30mph – Object</p>

	<p>Unnecessary</p> <p>Travel change: Other</p> <p>Not a lot of options in a rural village.</p>
<p>(9) Local resident, (Black Bourton, Burford Road)</p>	<p>20mph – Object</p> <p>After driving through the other local villages that have reduced their speed limit to 20mph i have seen no difference in the way or speed of other drivers. I believe that drivers who ignore a 30mph speed limit will certainly ignore a 20mph speed limit making the hugely expensive change of signage pointless. As an example, while I was driving through Bampton at 20mph I was overtaken by another car, I have also heard of other drivers experiencing this. I believe this change of speed limit will not result in slower vehicles and is a waste of public money.</p> <p>30mph – Object</p> <p>Again my reasons are the same. I believe drivers who ignore a 40mph speed limit will definitely ignore an even slower speed limit therefore making the changes pointless and a waste of public resources</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(10) Local resident, (unknown)</p>	<p>20mph – Object</p> <p>Like all of the other 20mph zones installed in Oxfordshire, this is an unnecessary waste of valuable taxpayers money which should be spent on projects to benefit communities. Blanket 20mph zones are rightly disregarded by motorists, increase conflict on the roads and mean that zones which are actually really needed around areas such as schools are also ignored instead of being used properly to flag areas for greater safety awareness. Cllr Gant in particular is pushing these zones in the face of increasing opposition, evidence that they do not reduce accidents (increasing them in some areas) and needs to urgently reconsider what he is doing. Be bold enough to pause this policy, to evaluate the impact and to admit mistakes - many of the existing 20mph zones need reverting to 30mph, just as the Welsh Government are finding and are doing. The pity is that valuable public funds are being wasted in the face of clear need to spend on other genuine priorities or in not increasing taxation on those living in poverty - it is no exaggeration to say that families who cannot properly afford to feed their children or heat their homes are having to pay their council tax to pay for projects like this which is an absolute disgrace. I know OCC will not change policy, will not listen, but I live in hope that one day those responsible for this will look back and feel guilty that they missed their chance to effect meaningful benefit for the people of the county to push this agenda.</p>

	<p>30mph – Object no reason to change existing limit</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(11) Local resident, (Black Bourton, School Lane)	<p>20mph – Partially support It is evident from other areas where a 20mph limit has been introduced that it is largely ignored unless it is clear that 20mph is logical. The blanket imposition of 20mph zones is ideological and has no empirical evidence to support it especially in Black Bourton. I am not aware of any accidents involving injury to pedestrians or cyclists in the 28 years I have lived here with one exception of a school child being hit by a reversing bus. I might support a speed limit of 20mph on the Burford Road and adjacent side roads of school lane and mill lane but only if there is evidence to support its introduction.</p> <p>30mph – Object It will not be observed</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(12) Local resident, (Black Bourton, Burford Road)	<p>20mph – Partially support The proposal to end/begin the 20mph zone just before the old railway bridge at the north end of Burford Road should be extended in the interests of safety to cover the approaches to the bridge (which is a hump-backed bridge).</p> <p>30mph – Support Current speed limit is 40 mph, which is regularly exceeded by drivers. Reducing the limit to 30 mph will help reduce speeding, and also cut down on road noise and vibration.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(13) Local resident, (Black Bourton, Alvescot Road)	<p>20mph – Support I am a local horse rider, any reduction in speed can only be a good thing</p> <p>30mph – Support</p>

	<p>As a horse rider I have always felt unsafe on the road which up to now has been national speed limit</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(14) Local resident, (Black Bourton, Burford Road)</p>	<p>20mph – Support small lane / road many cars parking and it is a village area - people walking, companion animals, horse riding, wildlife - all of this is threatened by fast driving. it needs publicising more widely - some still driving at 40 mph - especially to businesses thank you</p> <p>30mph – Support 30 mph helps traffic to slow down before the 20 mph limit</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(15) Local resident, (Black Bourton, Burford Road)</p>	<p>Support – I support the proposal to bring in a 20 mph speed limit in Black Bourton. However, having reviewed the Consultation Plan I would like to propose on the grounds of road safety:</p> <p>That the proposed 20 mph speed limit on the north end of Burford Road by the old railway bridge is extended from 57m before (ie to the south of) the mid-point of the bridge to 110m after (ie to the north) of the mid point. Signs placed at 110m north would not impede pedestrians/traffic, access, or cause an obstructed view of the road or bridge.</p> <p>The rationale is as follows:</p> <p>The old railway bridge is semi hunch-backed, and the approaches rise 5 meters up from the flat, relatively narrow road. This presents a very considerable road hazard because there is no footpath either side on the approaches, and the speed limit for traffic at the bridge is unrestricted. Consequently, highly vulnerable users share the road with traffic. Users include: regular use by pedestrians, horses, dog-walkers, joggers - particularly as the road forms part of a running/walking circuit for local and RAF Brize Norton personnel. Hence, vulnerable road users and vehicles mix frequently.</p>

Heading north on the approaches, the current speed limit is 30mph up to 57m before the crest, after which it is unrestricted.

Conversely, heading south approaching the bridge, speed is unrestricted until the driver crests the bridge, at which point the driver has almost no time to comply with the 30 mph sign.

The built-up environment extends north beyond the bridge by 400m to the end of Burford Road (ends at the RAF Brize Norton perimeter fence). Along this relatively short stretch there are:

- An access to livery stables, with horses using the road and bridge daily.
- 10 houses.
- A distillery, plus a visitors centre.
- An access road to the Carterton Sewerage works, and a large woodyard.
- A plethora of small businesses at the former mushroom farm.
- A weighbridge, for HGV traffic.
- Farm vehicles from the woodyard.

I am sure that drivers would understand why there should be a 20 mph speed restriction to include the bridge.

{Ideally, the 20 mph restriction would extend to near the end of Burford Road, ie approximately 400 north of the proposed site of 20 mph signs A1 and A2 on the consultation map.}

Lastly, my proposal has the support of the Black Bourton Parish Council, and my neighbours who live near the bridge. Incidentally, I have lived next to the bridge (by the 30 mph signs, A1 and A2) for the last 40 years – I know how dangerous it is.