

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT – 16 FEBRUARY 2012

A44 YARNTON TO BEGBROKE & A4095 AND B4030 IN BICESTER AREA – PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SPEED LIMITS DUE TO HIGHWAY CHANGES ARISING FROM DEVELOPMENT OF ADJACENT LAND

Report by Deputy Director for Environment and Economy (Highways & Transport)

Introduction

1. Development of land off the A44 at Begbroke and to the south west of Bicester adjacent to the A4095 Chesterton Road and B4030 Middleton Stoney Road has, in accordance with the respective planning consents, resulted in the construction of new junctions and other alterations to the road layout. The proposals for the associated revised speed limits also contained in the planning consents have been taken to consultation and the responses are presented below for decision.

Consultation

2. Formal consultations were carried out between 15 December 2011 and 12 January 2012. Objections were received as set out below – the proposals are shown at Annex Ai and Bi.

A44 between Yarnton and Begbroke

3. Thames Valley Police (TVP) consider it inappropriate that the new signalled junction has been designed for a 40mph speed limit given that there are no other planned alterations to the road to encourage compliance. Given their finite capacity to carry out enforcement, they are concerned that this may present a danger to road users. Additionally, they are concerned that they were not properly consulted prior to the planning approval consent being given for the design of the junction including the introduction of a 40mph limit.
4. Begbroke Parish Council consider that the introduction of a 40mph limit only on the length currently proposed is inconsistent, given that the adjacent sections of the A44 in both Begbroke and Yarnton include the roundabouts and other junctions, and also pedestrian crossing points. They consider the new limit may compromise safety on these adjacent lengths by giving drivers a misleading message that a higher speed is appropriate on lengths of the road which have higher levels of frontage activity and crossing, and request that the 40mph limit be extended to the north to include the junction with Langford

Lane, and to the south to the roundabout junction of the A44 with Cassington Road, Yarnton.

5. Yarnton Parish Council made no formal response to the consultation, but was subsequently contacted and expressed no objection to the proposal as advertised.
6. In response to the above, it is accepted that both the TVP and Begbroke Parish Council concerns over the inconsistency in reducing this section of the A44 to 40mph have merit. However, the suggestion of Begbroke Parish Council to increase the length of the limit as described above is not considered appropriate, as the current 50mph limit is judged to be consistent with the character of the road and the reported accident record does not suggest that there is an existing accident problem that would be addressed by introducing a lower speed limit.
7. Construction of the new junction is well advanced and modifications (involving changing the location of the traffic sensor loops in the carriageway) to permit the signals to safely operate with the current 50mph speed limit (currently estimated to be around £15,000) would have to be funded by the County Council; no budget is currently available to fund this work. It should however also be noted that a lower design speed facilitates the efficient operation of the junction in terms of traffic delays, and this would help offset the relatively small additional travel time that would result from a 40mph limit.
8. To resolve this matter it is proposed - subject to further local consultation – to modify the current proposals by introducing a shorter length of 40mph speed limit confined to the approach to the junction (as shown in Annex Aii). This may help in part address the concerns of TVP. Any additional costs of providing the speed limit signs in the locations required for this option, as compared to the location in Annex Ai which reflects the position given in the planning consent, could be contained within the funding already provided for the introduction of the speed limit.

A4095 and B4030 Middleton Stoney Road

9. While no formal objections have been received, Thames Valley Police have expressed a major reservation over the proposed introduction of the 30mph limit (to replace the current 50mph permanent limit) on the Middleton Stoney Road in advance of the traffic calming measures included in the planning consent (but subject to statutory consultations). At present no definite date can be given when these will be in place. However, there is now one development plot with occupation accessed directly off the Middleton Stoney Road between east of the new roundabout junction of Shakespeare Drive and Westlands Way and, in view of this, it is considered appropriate to proceed with introducing the 30mph limit from just west of the roundabout eastwards to the terminal of the current permanent 30mph limit just west of the junction with Villiers Road.

10. It is however considered premature to introduce the 30mph limit as advertised between the Howes Lane and Shakespeare Drive roundabout before the planned development is in place. By deferring making this part of the order, the permanent speed limit on this length would remain at 50mph, but a temporary 40mph limit could be introduced on this length that would link in to the permanent limit, starting just east of the Howes Lane roundabout, as included in the current proposals. The duration of the temporary 40mph limit would be reviewed in the light of the progress with the development and the planned traffic calming measures. This revised arrangement is shown at Annex Bii.
11. The cost of implementing this revised arrangement can be contained within the funding already provided for the introduction of the speed limit.

How the project supports LTP3 objectives

11. The proposed reductions in speed limit will contribute to improved safety at the revised road layouts arising from the development. The proposed reductions on the Middleton Stoney Road, in conjunction with the planned traffic calming measures, will facilitate walking and cycling.

Financial Implications

12. The costs of implementing these changes will be met from the funding already provided by the respective developers.

RECOMMENDATION

13. **The Cabinet Member for Transport is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) **delegate authority to the Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Highways & Transport) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport to consult locally and make a revised speed limit Order amending the proposals for A44 as shown in Annex A11 to this report;**
 - (b) **approve the implementation of speed limits on the A4095 and B4030 as advertised but with an interim arrangement as shown in Annex Bii to this report.**

STEVE HOWELL

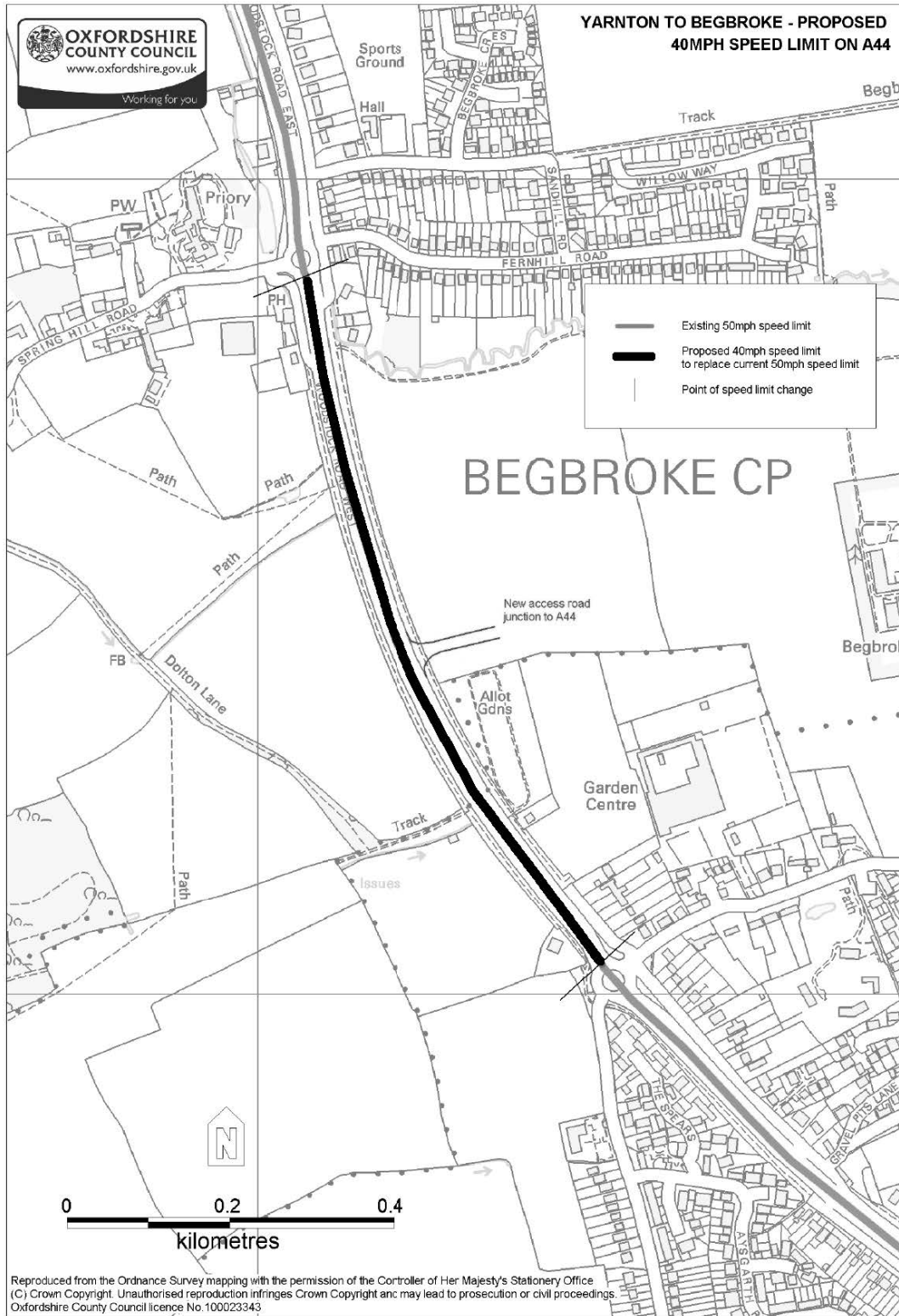
Deputy Director for Environment and Economy – Highways and Transport

Background papers: Consultation Documentation

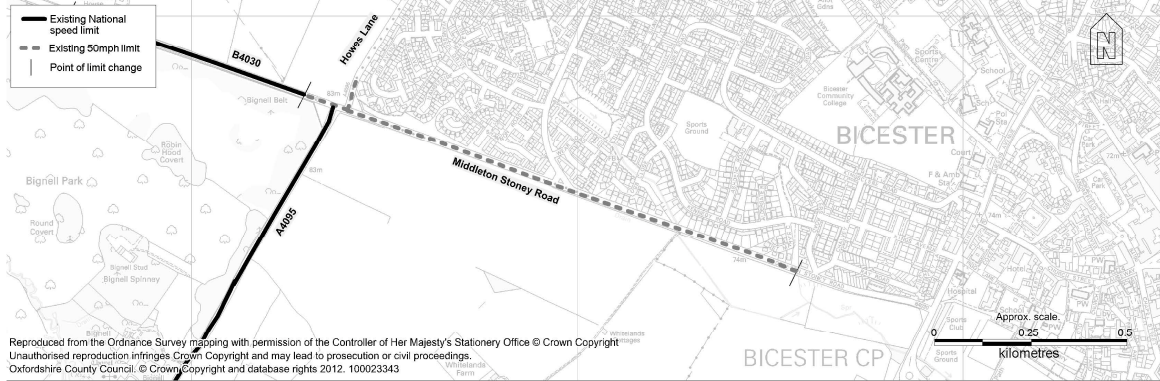
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January 2012

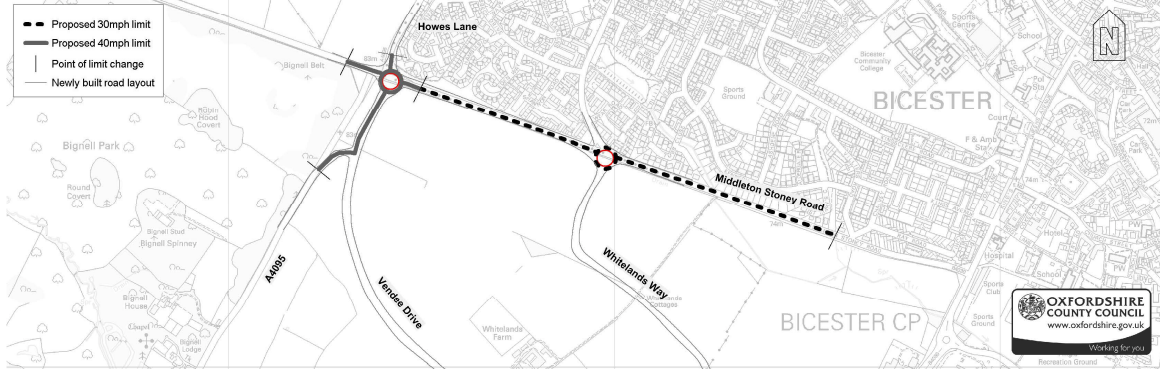
PLAN Ai



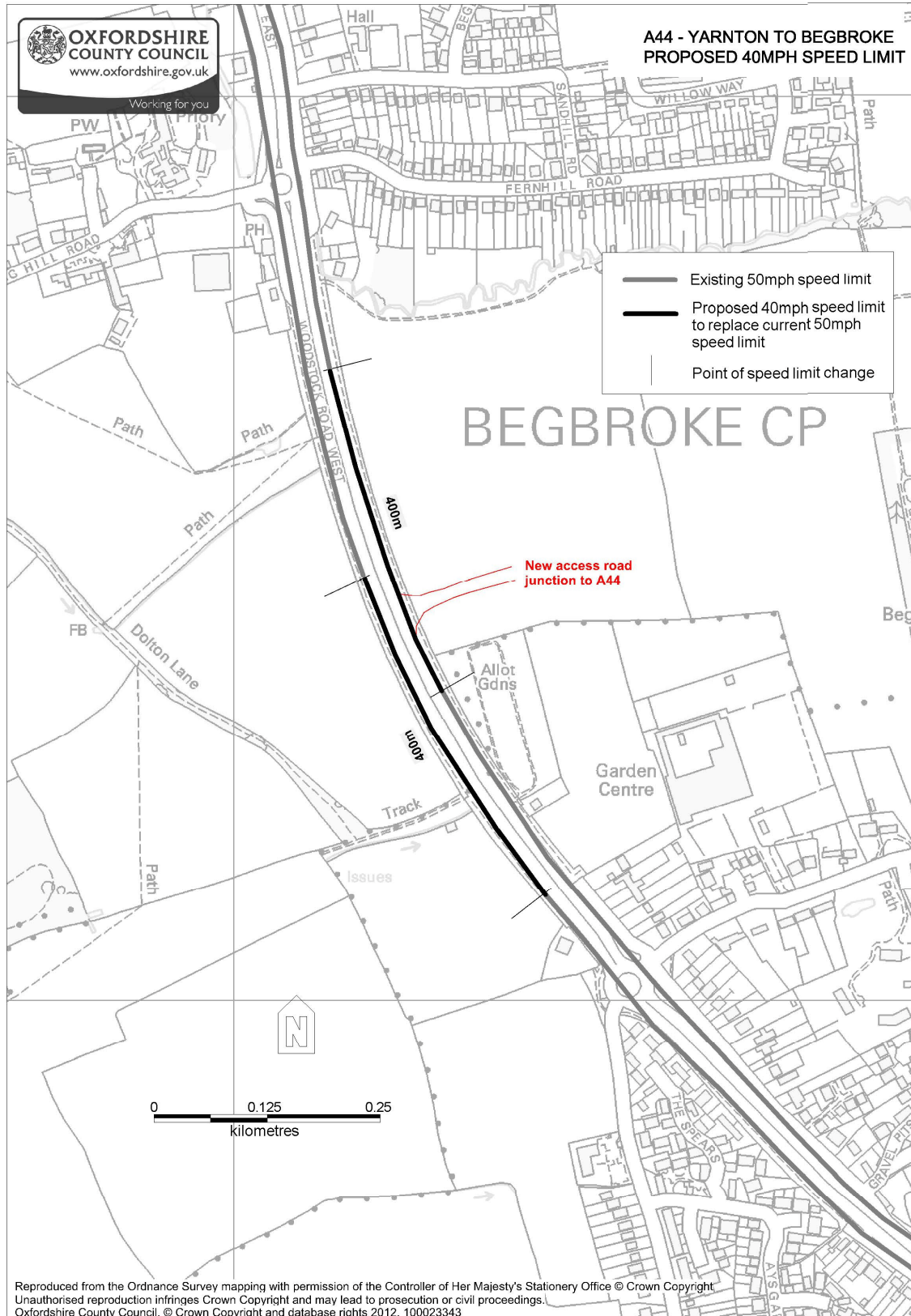
PLAN Bi
CURRENT SPEED LIMITS AFFECTED BY PROPOSED CHANGES



PROPOSED NEW SPEED LIMITS

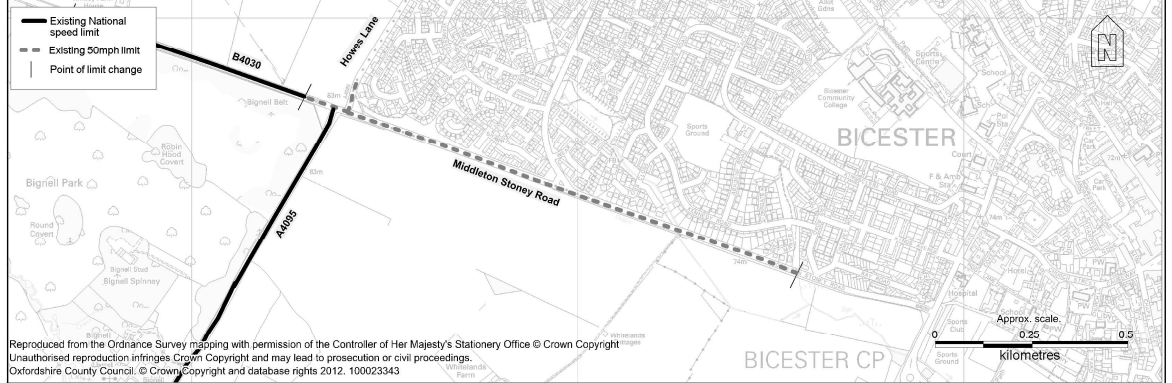


PLAN Aii



PLAN Bii

CURRENT SPEED LIMITS AFFECTED BY PROPOSED CHANGES



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PROPOSED NEW SPEED LIMITS

