

Divisions affected: *Bicester North; Bicester Town; Bicester West; Otmoor*

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

27 MARCH 2025

BICESTER – PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMITS

Report by Director of Environment & Highways

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) **Approve the introduction of 20mph speed limits in Bicester as advertised.**

Executive Summary

1. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits in Bicester 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. The consultation that has been undertaken complies with the consultation requirements for the various elements as required by law including under the Highways Act 1980, the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and any other relevant legislation.
4. The scheme has been promoted by Oxfordshire County Council as the Highway Authority and Traffic Authority under the Highways Act 1984, and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

Comments checked by:

Jennifer Crouch (Head of Law - Environmental)

Jennifer.Crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Equality and Inclusion Implications

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

Sustainability Implications

6. The proposals would help encourage walking and cycling within Bicester by making them safer and more attractive.

Formal Consultation

7. Formal consultation was carried out between 16 January and 14 February 2025. A notice was published in the Bicester Advertiser and Garth Gazette newspapers, 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, Cherwell District Council, the local District Cllrs, Bicester Town Council, and the local County Councillors representing the Bicester North, Bicester Town, Bicester West and Otmoor divisions.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

8. Thames Valley Police re-iterated views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits which they consider as 'concerns' rather than an objection.

Other Responses:

8. 704 online responses were received via the online survey, comprising of 485 objections (69%), 96 partially supporting (14%), 97 supporting (14%), and 26 non-objections (4%).
9. Those who responded online were also asked whether if the 20mph speed limit proposals were implemented, would it likely influence a change to their mode of travel in the area, the results of which are shown below:

Travel Change	Number
Yes – walk/wheel more	28 (4%)
Yes – cycle more	29 (4%)
Yes – scoot more	2 (0.5%)
No	601 (85%)
Other	44 (6%)

10. Additionally, a further 13 emails were received directly, with five objections, two partially supporting, and three in support from local residents or those who had responded to the previous informal consultation, whilst three local groups

(‘Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel’, ‘Oxfordshire Liveable Streets’, and ‘Bicester Bike Users’ Group’) submitted responses partially supporting, offering suggestions for further amendments to the proposed extents of the scheme.

11. The consultation responses are shown in the separate **Annex 2**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Officer Response to Objections/Concerns

12. Due to the large number of responses received, the majority of comments can be summarised under the following headings rather than being individually evaluated:

13. Support:

- a) Safety concerns – Will enhance safety, particularly near schools and areas with high pedestrian use, and will reduce severity of accidents.
- b) Environmental benefits – Will reduce emissions and noise pollution.
- c) Active travel – Will encourage walking and cycling.

14. Objection:

- a) Traffic congestion – Longer journey times and detrimental impact on emergency services.
- b) Enforcement – Lack of enforcement will mean that new limits are ignored.
- c) Economic impact – Shoppers and visitors will be deterred, affecting local businesses. Deliveries and public transport will be less efficient.
- d) Environmental concerns – Increased emissions and pollution.
- e) No need – Current 30mph limit is adequate and the money could be better spent elsewhere.

15. Partial Support:

- a) Extent of limits – Agree on some streets but not on others.
- b) Driver behaviour – May lead to dangerous driving due to frustration.

16. The main purpose of the scheme is to improve road safety and to encourage greater use of active travel by reducing speeds; this will also reduce collisions. 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 to reduce the County’s carbon footprint. This forms part of a countywide programme of works that seeks to deliver ‘a safer place with a safer pace’.

17. The proposals reflect the Town Council’s strong concern around unduly low limits on major routes adversely affecting traffic flows, with accordingly all such routes currently proposed to remain 30mph.

18. The concerns of Thames Valley Police comprise observations applicable to the overall 20mph project but no site-specific comments relating to the proposals for Bicester.

19. The responses from Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel, Oxfordshire Liveable Streets and Bicester Bike Users' Group are noted and their suggestions for additional lengths of 20mph limit and have been recorded for consideration in the context of the planned monitoring and evaluation of the scheme, subject also to funding and further consultation.
20. 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.

Paul Fermer
Director of Environment and Highways

Annexes

Annex 1: Consultation plan

Annex 2 (*separate document*): Consultation responses

Contact Officers: Anthony Kirkwood (Team Leader - Vision Zero)
Daron Mizen (Operational Manager – Highway Schemes)

March 2025

Sheet A

REVISION 1.0

Legend

Proposed 20	
Proposed 20 NHB	
Existing 20	
Existing 30	
Existing 40	
Existing 50	
Existing NSL	
Not Public Highway	

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved



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