

Divisions affected: Burford & Carterton North

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT – 17 NOVEMBER 2022

BRIZE NORTON: PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMITS

Report by Corporate Director, Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet Member for Highway Management is **RECOMMENDED** to approve the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits as advertised.

Executive summary

2. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits in Brize Norton as shown in **Annex 1**.

Financial Implications

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

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.

Consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 28 September and 28 October 2022. 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, Brize Norton parish

council, and the local County Councillors representing the Burford & Carterton North, and the Carterton South & West divisions.

7. Five responses were received via the online consultation survey during the course of the formal consultation, and these are summarised in the table below:

Proposal	Object	Concerns	Support	No opinion/ objection	Total
20mph speed limit	4	-	1	-	5

8. 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	1
No	4

9. Additionally, five emails were received from: Thames Valley Police, West Oxfordshire District Council, the local County Councillors representing the Burford & Carterton North, Brize Norton Parish Council, and Stagecoach Bus Company.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

10. Thames Valley Police re-iterated their views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20 mph speed limits and wish their response to be listed as 'having concerns' rather than an objection. The local member registers his support; the Parish and District Councils have no objections.
11. Stagecoach Bus Company objected on the grounds that they viewed the proposals to be unnecessarily extensive, and its safety benefits will not be equally achieved over the extent of the proposed Order, while the cumulative effect of so extensive an approach will be to threaten the reliable operation, and ultimately the financial sustainability of the bus service in the village. The full response can be found in **Annex 3**.

Other Responses:

12. Four responses were received from members of the public with one supporting and four objecting, most objections were generic, and officers consider them irrelevant to this consultation (see para 15).
13. The responses are shown at **Annex 2**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Response to objections and other comments

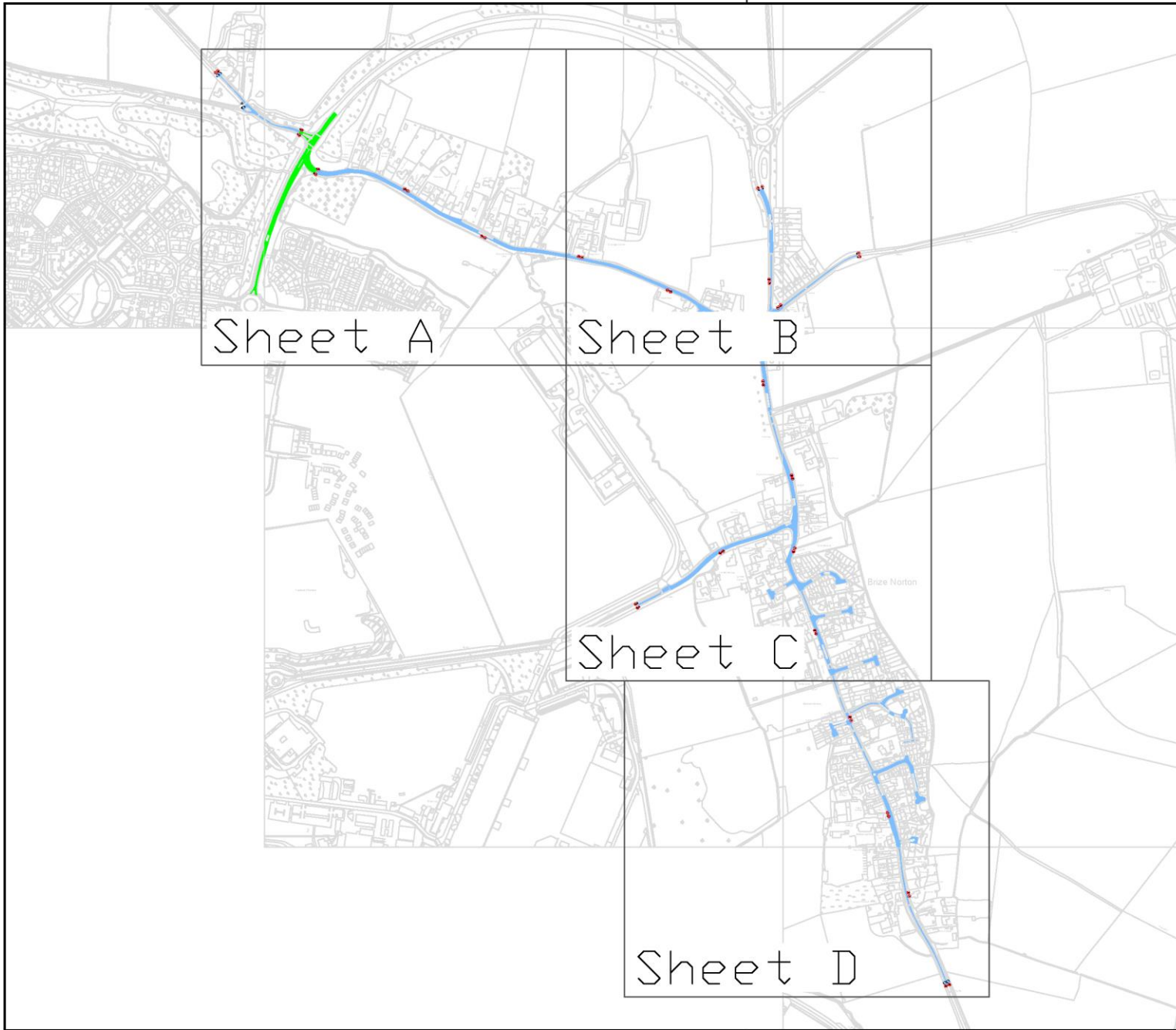
14. The main purpose of the scheme is to encourage greater use of active travel by reducing speeds; this will also reduce accidents. The aim of reducing speed limits is to change driver's mindsets to make speeding socially unacceptable and make more environmentally friendly modes of travel such as walking 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'.
15. Officers will monitor the impact on the bus journey times at this location and work with the bus companies given the concerns that they have raised as part of the consultation.
16. 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.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes Annex 1: Consultation plan
 Annex 2: Consultation responses
 Annex 3: Stagecoach full response

Contact Officers: Tim Shickle 07920 591545
 Geoff Barrell 07392 318869

November 2022



Sheet A

Sheet B

Sheet C

Sheet D

Drawing No.		Revision							
<p>Notes:</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: lightblue; margin-right: 5px;"></div> Proposed new 20mph </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: lime; margin-right: 5px;"></div> Existing 40mph limit </div>									
© Crown Copyright and Database rights 1002343 2017									
Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="font-size: x-small;">Drawn</td> <td style="font-size: x-small;">Checked</td> <td style="font-size: x-small;">Approved</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 20px;"></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Drawn	Checked	Approved			
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<div style="font-size: x-small; margin-left: 5px;"> <p>OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL Bill Cotton Director of Communities Operations Oxfordshire County Council County Hall New Road Oxford OX1 1ND Tel: 0845 310 1111</p> </div>									
Project title									
Brize Norton 20mph Limit									
Drawing title									
General Layout									
Drawing Status									
Scale @ A3	Drawn by	Checked by	Approved by						
	Date drawn	Date checked	Date approved						
Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref									
Drawing No.		Revision							

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p>Concerns - 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>
(2) Brize Norton Parish Council	<p>No objection – We also note the reference to the 40mph speed limits in the Parish of Brize Norton which will remain on the B4477 Monahan Way, Norton Way and Carterton Road. However, the Parish Council wishes to place on record, their concerns, along with some residents of Brize Meadow, regarding the number of hazards present on Monahan Way between the north roundabout (entry into Brize Meadow) and the middle roundabout (entry to Sports Pavilion and continuation of Norton Way) relative to the current 40mph speed limit.</p> <p>Could you please update the Parish Council regarding the current 30mph speed limit within the Brize Meadow development which, according to OCC requirements, should be a 20mph speed limit?</p>
(3) West Oxfordshire District Council	<p>No objection – We raise no objections to the proposals provided any signage and associated works are kept to a minimum.</p> <p>We agree that the existing 40mph speed limit on the B4477 Monahan Way/Norton Way and Carterton Road should remain in place when considering the current road environment. We wonder if a 30mph phased section would assist motorists rather than the 40mph limit immediately abutting the proposed 20mph speed limit.</p>
(4) County Cllr, (Burford & North Carterton division)	<p>Support – I would support the Brize Norton Parish Council with this request.</p>

<p>(5) Stagecoach Bus Company, (Head of Strategic Development & the Built Environment)</p>	<p>Object – [See Annex 3 for full response]</p>
<p>(5) Member of public, (Long Hanborough, Main Road)</p>	<p>Object – There is no need. Traffic passes through the village at a reasonable speed due to the existing speed calming measure.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(6) Member of public, (Oxford, Banbury Road)</p>	<p>Object – 20mph is extremely slow and this change has not been adequately justified, nor can it be since the road is perfectly safe and adequate to support traffic at the current speeds. Again this is an unnecessary change proposed by an unfit council which is fundamentally anti-car.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(7) Member of public, (Witney, Crundel Rise)</p>	<p>Object – Another unnecessary 20mph zone without any evidence of the need or success of other zones. It seems to be a blanket 20 mph requirement without any proper research all over Oxfordshire</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(8) Member of public, (Brize Norton, Chichester Place)</p>	<p>Object – This is defined as a “Clearway” route in the event of any major incident at RAF Brize Norton. Whilst the emergency services have an exemption from speed limits they all have policy which defines how much they may exceed the speed limit. A 20 mph speed limit would inevitably lead to a delay in emergency services attending incidents both in the village and surrounding areas. In addition there is no evidence to support the need for a 20mph speed limit. Collisions that have occurred in the village have been attributed to impairment of alcohol, drugs or sight and have not been attributed to speed. In addition to this who is going to enforce the speed limit? Data from the police have confirmed that there has not been a speeding ticket issued in Station Road since 2014 and the only speed enforcement undertaken in Brize Norton is focussed on the Burford Road and Carterton Road and not through the main route through the village. The parking of vehicles on the road already negates vehicles speeding through the village and on this basis it is not in the public interest to invest in a 20mph speed limit.</p>

	Travel change: No
(9) Member of public, (Brize Norton, Burford Road)	Support – My reason is specifically for the Burford Road stretch. The road is heavily worn and in some places in such poor repair that its effectively single track. To make the road safer for pedestrians and cyclists the road needs to be 20 Mph. Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more



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September 29th 2022

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Traffic Regulation Team for the
Director for Environment & Place,
Oxfordshire County Council,
County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND.

Dear Sirs,

Ref: CM/12.6.143 Proposed Brize Norton Speed Limits Order Amendments

1. Background

I am writing with regard to the proposed amended Traffic Regulation Order published on 27th September 2022 and referenced above.

Stagecoach West operates the vast majority of bus services in West Oxfordshire, including to from and within the towns of Witney and Carterton, also serving Brize Norton village. The village lies between these two much larger towns and has benefited from bus services as a result for many decades, since the village otherwise has entirely too little population to support a regular bus service arising from the demand arising within it.

These services have been run largely commercially, without public subsidy, for many decades. The County's own revenue support budget for unremunerative but socially necessary services was entirely withdrawn in Summer 2016. To the degree that some services remain funded through the County Council, these are supported by developer funding agreed and required under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 (an amended), with a view that those service should become financially self-sustaining in the foreseeable future through passenger fares. Service 233 running through Brize Norton since 28th August 2022 is one such service, operating broadly every hour Monday-Saturday.

Oxfordshire County Council should therefore already be broadly aware, across all its transport and highways functions, that the [District](#) is highly dependent on bus to meet mobility needs and that, furthermore, any meaningful measures to materially reduce car dependence, congestion and carbon emissions from transport, will depend on not only maintaining, but over time greatly improving the relevance, reliability, efficiency and journey time of bus services across the District. Any actions that the Council takes that have either an intended or unintended consequences of:

- Making bus journeys slower
- Making bus journeys more unreliable
- Raising the cost of operating bus services
- Making the use of bus materially less attractive in comparison with private car use

should be considered to seriously prejudice the County's wider transport policy objectives.

Stagecoach has considered the proposals set out in the draft Order. These involve, very simply, reducing the speed limit of all roads within in the village under a 30 mph limit to 20mph, irrespective of their function and the immediate context along the lengths concerned. This proposal therefore directly affects the operation of bus services in Brize Norton.

2. Stagecoach position of the proposed Order

Stagecoach objects to the proposed Order. In essence this is because it is unnecessarily extensive, and its safety benefits will not be equally achieved over the extent of the proposed Order, while the cumulative effect of so extensive an approach will be to threaten the reliable operation, and ultimately the financial sustainability of the bus service in the village.

The intent of the 20mph is, of course to improve the safety and attractiveness of active travel. The Stockholm Declaration principles on which the County's policy is based, applies to:

- Built up areas
- Where there is a degree of "planned mixing" of motorised traffic with more vulnerable users
- Is explicitly to be focused on areas of more intense activity, such as where there are commercial and other service uses, where the safety risks of this mixing are elevated.

Stagecoach well recognises the validity of the logic that lies behind the Declaration. Safety is at the heart of all our operating systems and processes. The bus industry in general represents one of the safest modes of personal mobility of all, reflecting this.

Brize Norton is a very long established community that has evolved slowly and organically over centuries and its linear form reflects this history. The character of the village is quite heterogeneous alongside the extensive lengths of the road covered by the current 30 mph limits and proposed for reduction to 20 mph.

We accept that there are parts of the village core that are both more built up, and where the character of the through roads are such that a lower speed limit of 20mph is justified. The most densely populated and built up part of the village, evidently lies south of the junction between Carterton Road, Manor Road and Station Road. There are numerous side streets and this is where service and facilities including the Primary School are found.

However, a larger part of the village and its environs covered by this Order are very much less urbanised. The Order covers roads that exhibit only sporadic development, with no wider development behind, and in effect representing quite discontinuous development in the countryside. In fact, we dispute that it is reasonable to describe the character of the village north of the Carterton Road mini-roundabout as a "built up area". At its south end, the high stone wall on the east side of the road nearer the mini-roundabout provides a high degree of enclosure – and helps to reinforce the passive enforceability of the current 30mph limit through "visual friction". There are a number of private drives serving repurposed former agricultural complexes and some large properties but these are well set back from the road, relatively few in number and allow cars to enter and leave in forward gear. There are relatively ample footways, in the case of the eastern side, where it exists closer to the village set well back from the carriageway behind a substantial verge.

The approach to the village along Carterton Road is not dissimilar, until one reaches the newly-installed buildout before the Church. The existing 30mph starts in open countryside a considerable distance – about 200m further west of the build-out so this buffer zone would still be sufficient to allow traffic to decelerate progressively to the point the 20mph might appropriate take effect. In fact for the 20mph to be credibly complied with from the point of the proposals it would probably be necessary to reduce the speed limit on the entire section between Carterton and the

existing change, and that would clearly require enforcement and traffic calming measures – potentially quite aggressive ones - to achieve this outcome.

At its furthest northern extent on Elm Grove and on Minster Road there are short extents of linear development with a number of private driveways, but it is apparent that a footway exists on one side of the road, verges are ample, and so are sight lines.

Manor Road does tighten up at its north end and the footways are both lost for a short distance of about 60m approaching the mini-roundabout, north of the junction with Chapel Hill as far as Burford Road. In this immediate locality it is clear that there is “planned mixing” of vulnerable users with traffic, albeit levels of walking and cycling in this area are not very high. The nature of this locality itself tends to reduce speeds substantially. A 20mph limit south of the mini-roundabout area could formalise this situation and more clearly direct driver behaviour.

Service 233 uses Minster Road, Manor Road and Carterton Road. Elm Grove is no longer served by regular bus services. The linear extent of the Order affecting the 233 route is a little less than 1km. this is sufficient to add up to 1 minute to operating running time in both directions. On its own this is relatively inconsequential. However, as the service runs through other settlements, including Witney and Bladon, where 20mph are being introduced, or likely to be, it is essential that the application of such limits is targeted to those stretches of road where its positive benefits are most appropriately achieved, in all the settlement concerned, including this one, to avoid the service becoming inoperable without adding expensive additional operating resource. Slowing buses down also hardly encourages greater use. It is also directly contrary to national and local policy.

Stagecoach considers a 20mph limit is appropriate in most of the village include the village core around the junction of Carterton Road with Station Road, extending west to the existing build-out, and northwards for a short distance along Manor Road. There is a case for a second 20mph inset between the immediate approaches to the mini-roundabout on Minster Road, including Chapel Hill and extending south along Manor Road 60-80m through the narrow throttle, which in any case should tend to slow traffic below the existing limits by its character.

We urge that the existing 30mph limit is retained along the remaining lengths of Minster Road, Manor Road and Carterton Road, used by the 233 service. We consider that this reflects an appropriate interpretation of the logic of the Stockholm Declaration and its application to the context of the village.

This advice reflects that presented to the Council in letters with respect to Orders in Witney of June 29th 2022, and a joint operators’ letter to the Corporate Director and Cabinet Portfolio Holder of August 5th 2022.

Finally with regard to the potential cumulative impacts, to be more specific, if the approach taken to application of 20mph proposed here is equally extensively pursued in Long Hanborough, North Leigh, and Minster Lovell, we can advise that the Company would serve notice on the Council to cease operating service 233, as this would be operationally infeasible in its current form. There would clearly not be enough time to run the timetable within currently allocated resource.

3. Conclusion

As you and the wider Council are aware, we are of the view that there are substantial risks arising from an indiscriminate “blanket” approach to the application of 20mph limits without detailed consideration of the local context or potential deleterious impacts on public transport. While we have objected to the submitted Order this has been on the basis of careful consideration and the experience of decades of bus operation through the village.

As our letter makes clear, we have no objection to the vast majority of the Order proposals through the Parish. However, we consider an approach following the logic and advice above will lead to the appropriate balance being pursued between a number of important transport policy objectives across the County. We therefore urge the Council to pay due regard to the advice set out heretofore.

Yours sincerely

Nick Small

Head of Strategic Development and the Built Environment