

Divisions affected: *Wheatley*

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT – 7 SEPTEMBER 2023

WATERSTOCK: PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMITS

Report by Corporate Director, Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

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

Executive summary

2. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits in Waterstock 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 Waterstock by making them safer and more attractive.

Formal consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 06 July and 28 July 2023. A notice was published in the Oxford Times 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, Waterstock Parish Meeting, and the local County Councillor representing the Wheatley division.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Thames Valley Police were the only statutory consultee respondent; they reiterated views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits, they consider their view as 'having concerns' rather than an objection.

Other Responses:

8. A single objection was received from a member of the public from Witney who responded at great length including citing *"20mph propaganda imposed by unelected and unwanted bureaucracy that seems to be a delegation full of personnel that seem to hate cars and people it creates further hidden hypocrisy of politicians the obsession with 20mph signs that are like Zs you see in a Russian street? it will be seen as totalitarian propaganda"*.
9. The responses are shown in **Annex 2**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Officer response to objections/concerns

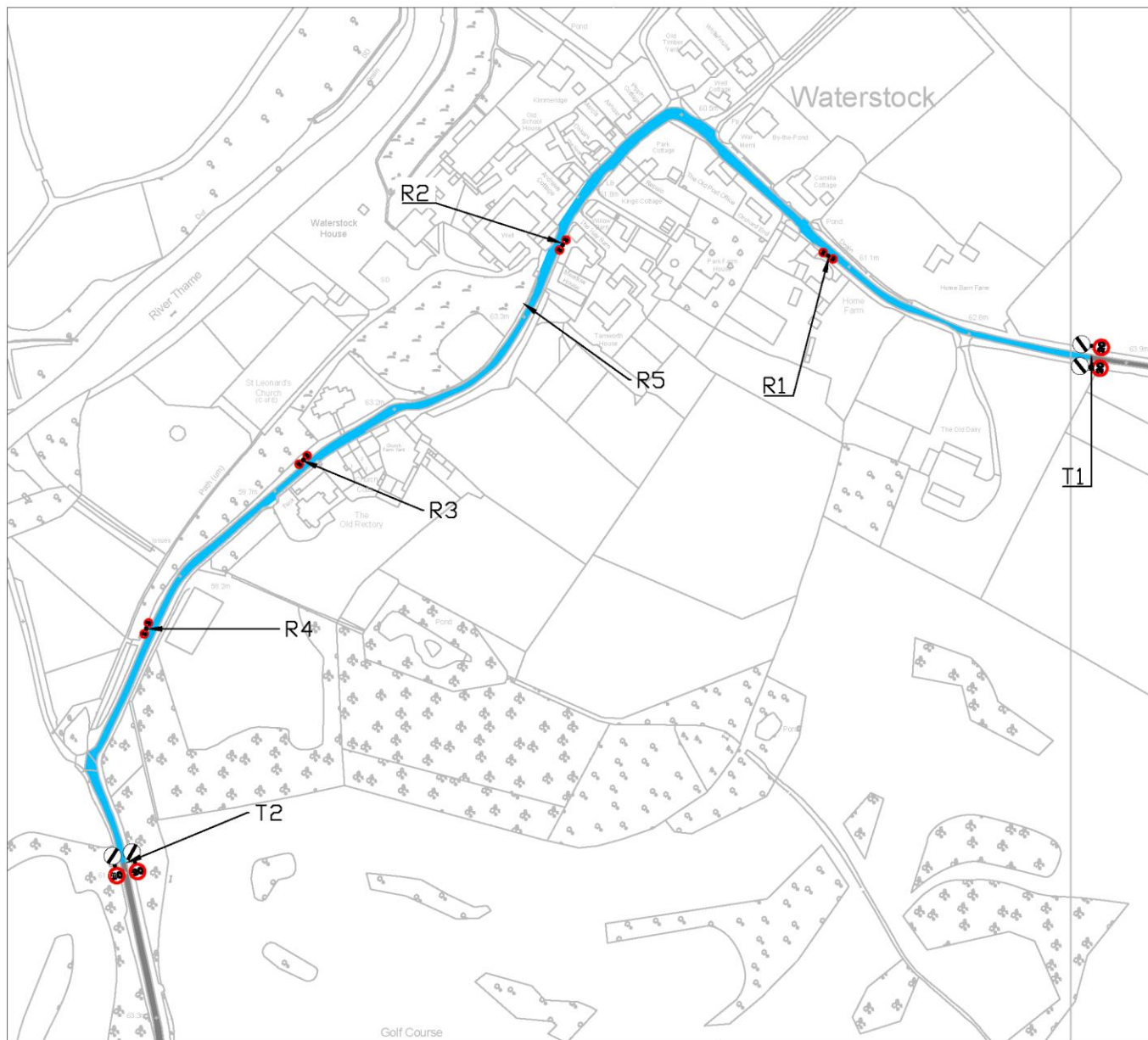
10. The main purpose of the scheme is to encourage greater use of active travel by reducing speeds, this is also expected to reduce accidents. The aim of reducing speed limits is to change driver's mindsets to make speeding socially unacceptable and make more environmentally friendly modes of travel 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'.
11. 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 the comments made of this nature in this report.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes Annex 1: Consultation plan
Annex 2: Consultation responses

Contact Officers: Phil Whitfield 07912523497
Geoff Barrell 07392 318869

September 2023



Waterstock Overview		Revision 1.0													
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<p>OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL <small>Owen Jenkins Director for Infrastructure Delivery Communities Oxfordshire County Council County Hall 100 High Street Oxford OX1 1ND Tel 0845 310 1111</small></p>															
<p>Project title: Waterstock 20mph Scheme</p>															
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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 • 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) Member of public, (Witney, Oxford Hill)</p>	<p>Object – Pleasure to drive through and visit the Village on a regular basis to not only enjoy the local nature, Golf course and area but also escape from the depressing 20mph propaganda imposed by unelected and unwanted bureaucracy that seems to be a delegation full of personnel that seem to hate cars and people. This is a waste to Council tax payers money that only want to see the roads surfaced and prioritise potholes. It is unacceptable that road surfacing has not been prioritised, leaving this wonderful County a depressing place to live ruined by activists that refuse to accept 30s plenty and allow personal responsibility where mainly pedestrians don't care or check speed limits of those driving past them. All inspired by Covid Lockdowns as per usual. Looking at the data of the Village in question, there has not been any accidents or incidents in the Village and has been no increase a risk so don't understand the rationale behind attacking yet another peaceful Village/Town. Concerns on the main roads going through as well which has no explanation why they cannot remain at 30mph.</p> <p>There is no valid reason proposed as to why the speed limit needs changing and creates further hidden hypocrisy of politicians including emergency services (even when not responding to calls) driving at 30mph no problem including the public. This is a huge waste of money when our roads need resurfacing but yet 0 action on Oxfordshire roads. Why the obsession with 20mph signs that are like Zs you see in a Russian street? 20mph road signs will create a further divide and create personal depression for huge numbers of people living in the area because it will be seen as totalitarian propaganda. Signs will be ignored by a significant majority driving through the village and is a main road that has 0 risk to the public. A real waste of my time here writing this why bother a consultation when it is ignored all the time?</p>