

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 7 SEPTEMBER 2017
PROPOSED EXTENSION OF 20MPH SPEED LIMIT B4495 WINDMILL ROAD OXFORD

Report by Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Introduction

1. This report presents responses received in the course of a statutory consultation to extend a 20mph speed limit on the B4495 Windmill Road, Oxford, southwards to include the full length of the road to its junction with Old Road.

Background

2. The request for the extension of the 20mph speed limit on the B4495 Windmill Road southward to include its full length was made in the course of the wider consultations on the Access to Headington. At the Cabinet Member for Environment decisions meeting on 9 June 2016, it was resolved that officers carry out a formal consultation on this proposal. A plan showing the proposed extent of the 20mph speed limit is shown at Annex 1.

Consultation

3. Formal consultation was carried out between 13 July and 11 August 2017. A public notice was placed in the Oxford Times newspaper, and sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Oxford City Council and the local County Councillor.
4. Thirty four responses were received as summarised at Annex 2. Copies of the full responses are available for inspection in the Members' Resource Centre.
5. Responses comprised objections from Thames Valley Police and two members of the public with expressions of support from the local County Councillor, Oxford City Council, the Windmill Road Residents Action Group, Windmill Primary School and Cyclox (a cyclist action and support group within Oxford) and twenty six members of the public, primarily residents of Windmill Road and adjacent roads.
6. Thames Valley Police's objection was on the grounds that while average speeds were within the threshold of 24mph as recommended in the Department of Transport guidance on 20mph speed limits without supporting traffic calming measures, the speed surveys also showed that a significant

number of vehicles were travelling appreciably faster than this, and consequently it was unrealistic to expect good levels of compliance with the proposed 20mph limit. This could not only potentially lead to a more general disrespect of speed limits but also result in demands for police enforcement which cannot be accommodated within present resources.

7. Objections from members of the public were on the grounds that the proposal was unnecessary and could lead to driver frustration and increased delays, with one respondent suggesting that a shorter extension of the 20mph speed limit to its junction with Margaret Road, south of which the road widens, might be more acceptable.
8. Expressions of support primarily cited improved safety for all road users and in particular children, pedestrians and cyclists. However, several of these responses also stated the importance of enforcement of the lower speed limit should it be approved and that without this its benefits would be much reduced.

Response to Objections and Concerns

9. The concerns of Thames Valley Police on the likely high levels of abuse of the speed limit are noted and it is accepted that police resources for speed enforcement – including by the use of speed cameras – are already under severe pressure and that it would, therefore, be unrealistic to expect significant enforcement of the proposed 20mph speed limit.
10. The objections from the members of the public on the grounds of need are similarly noted. However, the accident record of the part of the road where the reduced limit is being proposed (one serious and seven slight accidents have been reported in the latest 5-year period available, to 31 July 2017) does point to there being valid safety concerns, even when allowing for the fact that the circumstances of some of these incidents were low speed collisions.
11. The significant number of responses in support of the proposal - notwithstanding that some of these were qualified by concerns over its benefits in the likely absence of any appreciable enforcement activity given the severe pressures on police resources – is noted and it would, therefore, appear that the proposal has significant local support, together with that of Cyclox, representing wider cyclist interests in the city.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

12. The proposals would help facilitate the safe movement of traffic.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

13. The costs of the 20mph speed limit would be met from the budget allocated to the Access to Headington project.

RECOMMENDATION

14. **The Cabinet Member for Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposals as advertised**

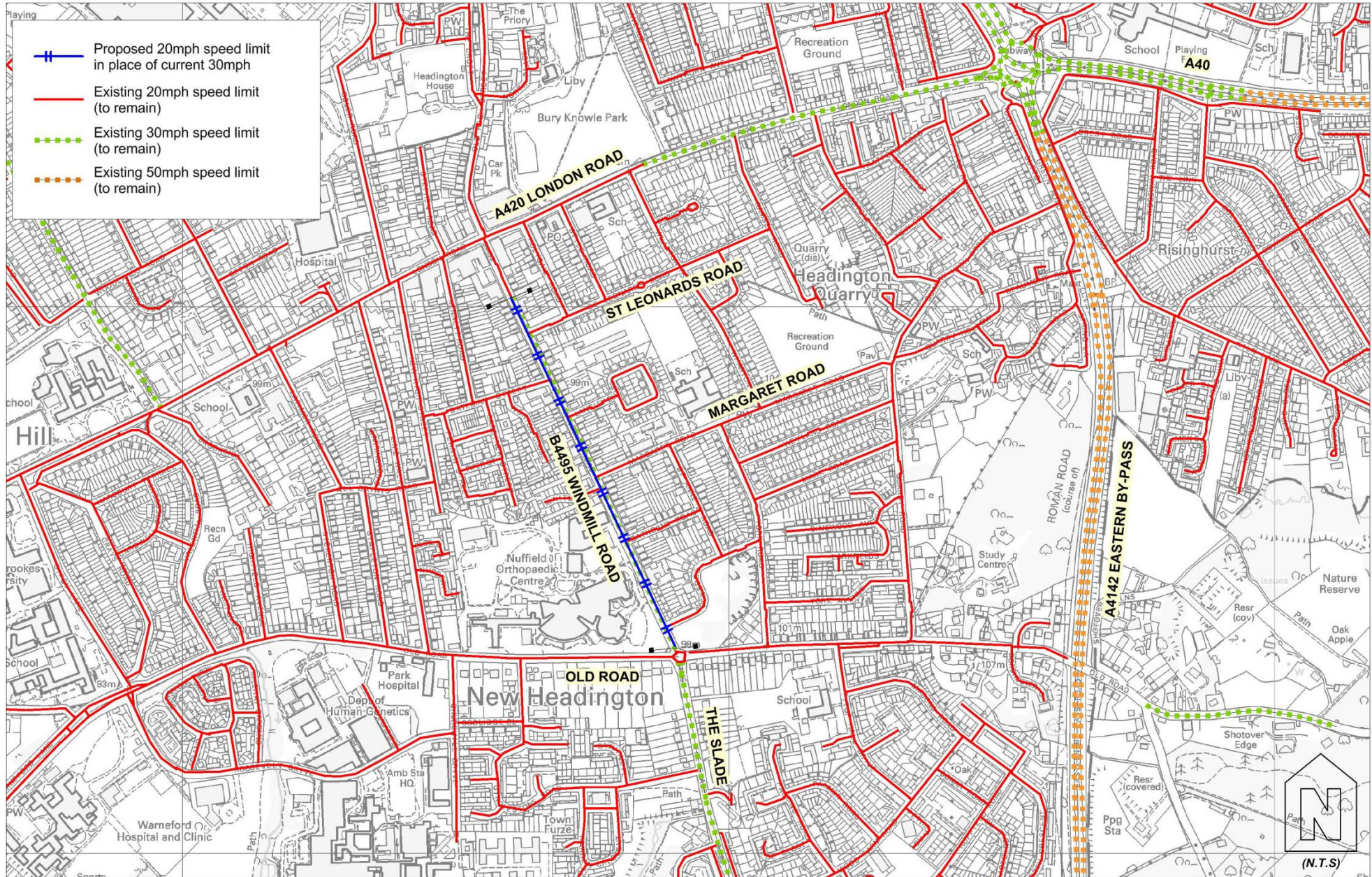
OWEN JENKINS
Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Background papers: Plan of proposed restrictions
 Consultation responses

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OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT



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RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Thames Valley Police	<p>Object - We are already aware both locations are already subject to some police enforcement. Although the speed data provided for Windmill road shows mean speed around 21/23 mph, they also show considerable numbers of vehicles already exceeding 24mph . Making a signed only limit wholly unacceptable.</p> <p>Experience shows that changing to a lower speed limit on its own will not necessarily be successful in reducing the speed of traffic by very much if the prevailing mean speeds are much higher than the proposed lower speed limit. If a speed limit is set too low and is ignored then this could result in the majority of drivers criminalising themselves and could bring the system of speed limits into disrepute. 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. It is also important to set reasonable speed limits to ensure consistency across the country.</p>
(2) County Cllr for Headington & Quarry Division, City Cllrs for Headington Ward	<p>Support - We have discussed this issue with residents in the affected area on doorsteps, at street surgeries and at public meetings. There is broad support in the area for the introduction of a 20 MPH limit throughout the whole of Windmill Road to minimise risk of road accidents and facilitate better and safer amenity for residents. We know that Windmill Road Residents' Action Group and the governors at Windmill Primary School support this proposal.</p> <p>A significant number of those residents favouring the 20 MPH limit have indicated to us that they would also like to see more robust speed limit enforcement. We are discussing these concerns with the Thames Valley Police Neighbourhood Team who have offered to make available speed indication devices for community speed watch operations. Various police speeding operations have taken place in the area over the recent past and a number of speeding tickets were issued.</p> <p>We support the proposal to introduce a 20 MPH limit along the whole length of Windmill Road.</p>
(3) Oxford City Council Planning	<p>Support - The City Council recognise that this proposal flows from earlier transport work around the 'Access to Headington' project, and as such would fully support this proposal, which would encourage lower vehicle speeds in the area with benefits for both highway, pedestrian and cycle safety.</p>

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	<p>Finally whilst the City Council are fully supportive of these lower speed limits and the benefits that it would bring to the areas concerned their active enforcement within the City should be made a priority.</p>
(4) Cyclox	<p>Support - the extension of 20mph for the whole length of Windmill Road, though Cyclox's position is that we wish to see 20mph across the city.</p>
(5) Windmill Primary School, (Margaret Road, Headington)	<p>Support - we support the introduction of a 20mph speed limit and urge the Council to implement the proposal to make Windmill Road a 20mph zone.</p>
(6) Windmill Road Residents' Action Group)	<p>Support - WRRAG believe that the time is now right as part of the Access to Headington highways works to introduce a 20mph limit along the entirety of Windmill Road</p>
(7) Online response, (unknown)	<p>Object - An unnecessary amendment overall. 30mph has served very well for many years and I am aware of no incidents which might suggest that a reduction is an essential requirement. If anxiety levels need assuaging, perhaps an extension of the 20mph limit from London Road up to its junction with Margaret Road, where the road widens. Past this point it is likely to anger and frustrate drivers who will see no purpose in an enforced crawl along what will be a generous carriageway. It is worth noting that Windmill Road is always light on traffic outside rush hours, when it is too busy to achieve speeds even of 20mph. 20mph is also an inefficient speed for Internal combustion engines and will contribute significantly to pollution.</p>
(8) Local Resident, (St Annes Road, Headington)	<p>Object - We believe that the traffic on Windmill Road is not too bad except during short peak hours. We think that slowing the traffic to 20 all the way down Windmill will ultimately increase the congestion, leaving more cars on the road for a longer period of time. We would like to point out that the controlled crossing light just north of Margaret Road is very efficient and gives pedestrians an effective way to safely cross.</p> <p>We drive and walk Windmill Road several times a day and except for weaving around parked cars north of Margaret Road, we find the traffic level and speed to be perfectly acceptable.</p> <p>Contrary to what the vocal minority says, we are happy with the current speed limit on Windmill Road.</p>

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(9) Local Resident, (Windmill Road, Headington)	Support - This 20mph speed limit must be enforced as many people travel up the road at greater than 30mph currently. Windmill Rd traffic has increased significantly over the past 10years and having had one accident reversing out of my drive any traffic management proposal to reduce speed and keep it safer is warmly welcome.
(10) Online response, (unknown)	Support – <i>No comment.</i>
(11) Local Resident, (Langley Close, Headington)	Support - As a resident of a side street off Windmill Rd (Langley Close) I strongly support the proposed speed restriction. I have been worried for years that vehicles may easily mount the narrower stretches of pavement in Windmill; indeed I have seen them do it. Restricting speed should reduce this danger. I also welcome the removal of some parking spaces in Windmill Road, especially opposite the entrance to Langley Close, but it will be important for the neighbourhood parking scheme to be actively enforced. I fear some vehicles unable to park on Windmill Road may poach residents only parking spaces in adjacent streets.
(12) Local Resident, (Gathorne Road, Headington)	Support - I support the introduction of the 20mph speed limit, indeed I was the speaker who asked for it at the Access 2 Headington meeting last year when A2H was signed off and am very grateful that the Council is now consulting on it. Because of the removal of on street parking at the narrowest section of the road, where the carriageway and narrow pavements (and yes, I understand the need to improve flow), this change removes any protection for pedestrians, especially parents with prams and young children unaware of the dangers moving vehicle present, one of whom caused a two car accident Spring 2016, one of the drivers ending up in hospital. The pavements in this section are about a door's width wide and wholly inadequate for the pedestrian traffic especially for people passing with prams and young children in opposite directions. The combination of narrow pavements and a narrow carriageway leaves no margin for error on the part of any road user unlike the southern section of Windmill Road and this is why I am advocating a 20mph speed limit. As an example a couple of days ago, I was returning to Gathorne Road from shopping at Waitrose and walking along the East side narrow section between Langley Close and Margaret Road when a bus passed by me from behind at 30mph, it's nearside wheels right next to the kerb, it's wing mirror flying past my shoulder. If I have been a foot over to the right and the driver hadn't spotted me, I could easily have been hit. I also fully support the submission of Windmill Primary School on this matter.

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<p>(13) Local Resident, (St. Anne's Road, Headington)</p>	<p>Support - Windmill Road is a busy road with two schools and a nursery nearby. There are many mums with buggies and pre-school children as well as school age youngsters. 20mph is plenty given that vehicles may need to stop urgently. When parking is reduced on the road under Access to Headington, the clear road may well encourage motorists to speed up. Instead they should slow down. It makes sense for the whole area to have a 20mph speed limit. Bits here and there are very confusing for drivers who are also controlling a vehicle and looking out for other vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians etc.</p>
<p>(14) Local Resident, (St. Anne's Road, Headington)</p>	<p>Support – <i>No comment.</i></p>
<p>(15) Local Resident, (Old Road, Headington)</p>	<p>Support - Improves pedestrian and cyclist safety.</p>
<p>(16) Local Resident, (Windmill Road, Headington)</p>	<p>Support - We support reducing the speed limit to 20 mph, especially as residents car parking between Mattock Close and Bateman Street will be removed when A2H goes ahead. With no car parking there will obviously be a tendency to speed, currently the parked cars act as a sort of chicane, slowing down the traffic. And it would be helpful if a flashing sign to indicate the speed is 20 mph was also installed somewhere along the road to remind drivers of the lower speed limit.</p>
<p>(17) Local Resident, (Windmill Road, Headington)</p>	<p>Support - My support for this reduction in speed limit is only given if the speed restrictions are actually enforced; otherwise I see no point in this expenditure. I have not seen any Police mobile speed cameras or other enforcement activity on Windmill Road and the surrounding areas for at least 3 years now; and there are no fixed speed cameras here.</p> <p>If we are paying for yet more signage, it should necessarily be supported by enforcement measures or the traffic speeds will rise anyway, particularly as a result of the parking bays and other obstacles to increasing traffic speeds on Windmill Road being removed.</p>
<p>(18) Local Resident, (St Annes Road, Headington)</p>	<p>Support - My daughter goes to school near here and we live near here and it would greatly improve safety of pedestrians to have this, particularly children going to and from school and because the pavements are so narrow</p>

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	along Woodstock Road.
(19) Local Resident, (Windmill Road, Headington)	Support - As a resident on Windmill Road I have concerns that once street parking has been removed, motorists will see a clear run and speed. There is already exists an issue with buses and HGVs thundering up and down the road, shaking the house and causing cracks in the plaster. An enforced reduction to 20mph would do well to alleviate this. With no crossing provision between Margaret Road and London Road it will also improve safety for pedestrians crossing the road.
(20) Local Resident, (Gathorne Road, Headington)	<p>Support - One of the justifications for the Access to Headington scheme was that it would encourage journeys by means other than by car. Unfortunately, most of the changes in the scheme have the opposite effect by increasing the road speeds for vehicles particularly outside the peak hours. As it stands, by removing some of the parking bays will result in increased speeds of cars - as seen in Iffley Road when similar measures were taken - Councils's own figures show this. Also the scheme does not provide any additional safety features for those cyclists to turn right into NOC or Mattlock Close. Since, turning right is a particularly dangerous for cyclists, reducing the speed limit to 20mph will reduce the severity of any accident should one occur. In addition, many children cross Windmill Road to get to Windmill Primary School, so again reducing the speed limit to 20mph speed limit would limit the severity of any accident should one occur.</p> <p>Reducing the speed limit to 20mph would have little effect on the alleged reduction in journey times for cars and buses that for the basis for the justification of the A2H scheme, as in peak hours, the speeds are much lower than this, with congestion at the traffic lights at both ends of Windmill Road.</p>
(21) Local Resident, (Nuffield Road, Headington)	Support - In full support of speed reduction. I use this route very frequently, and it has never made sense to me that part of it was 30mph.
(22) Local Resident, (Watington Road, Headington)	Support – <i>No comment.</i>

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(23) Local Resident, (Woodstock Road, Headington)	Support - <i>No comment.</i>
(24) Local Resident, (Windmill Road, Headington)	Support - Excellent idea - long overdue for a busy and largely residential road used by lots of cyclists and pedestrians, including children on their way to school. Would be good to also see it enforced.
(25) Local Resident, (Windmill Road, Headington)	Support - <i>No comment.</i>
(26) Local Resident, (Gathorne Road, Headington)	Support - <i>No comment.</i>
(27) Local Resident, (Windmill Road, Headington)	Support - As a family living on Windmill Road, it is obvious to us that there are problems with speeding at non peak times. Motorcycles are a particular issue. Apart from noise, the issue of safety (given the nearby school etc.) is paramount. A reduction to 20mph for Windmill Road is a sensible move which we fully support.
(28) Local Resident, (Windmill Road, Headington)	Support - <i>No comment.</i>
(29) Local Resident, (Windmill Road, Headington)	Support - In principle I support the 20mph Speed Limit along all of Windmill Road but I would like to see it enforced. The current 20/30 limit on the road isn't enforced and so a number of drivers speed along the road during most times of the day but particularly at night. I also see a number of drivers speed on Old Road and London Road, where the 20mph has been in place for a while. If there is no enforcement or penalty for speeding along these roads then there is no point in changing the speed limit.
(30) Local Resident, (Gathorne Road, Headington)	Support - <i>No comment.</i>

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<p>(31) Local Resident, (Windmill Road, Headington)</p>	<p>Support - but also hope that the limit will be enforced by fixed and mobile cameras (I understand that other fixed traffic calming measures would be inappropriate given that Windmill is frequently used by the emergency services). The current speed limit of 30 mph is clearly frequently breached (particularly at night, where I estimate it is breached by a considerable margin), and this is a road along which many families with young children travel on foot or by bicycle to school. I consider that the new limit will have numerous benefits, including; reduction of atmospheric pollutants; reduction of noise pollution; reduction of congestion at controlled intersections; improved flow of traffic during busy periods; enhanced safety for pedestrians and cyclists; easier access to driveways for residents of Windmill Road; will reduce the risk of collisions particularly around the main entrance to the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre (which has been a hot-spot since we have been resident on Windmill Road and most probably before).</p>
<p>(32) Local Resident, (Langley Close, Headington)</p>	<p>Support - use Windmill Road every day. People drive there much too fast, and it is too narrow for the speeds used. Cars often mount the pavement to get round parked traffic, too.</p>
<p>(33) Online response, (unknown)</p>	<p>Support – <i>No comment.</i></p>
<p>(34) Local Resident, (Windmill Road, Headington)</p>	<p>Support - Having lived here for nearly forty years I have seen the decline of the area. Everything has to change in time but, safe road has now turned into a race track, pedestrians are at risk and I am only surprised that no-one has actually been hit by a lorry or a car – crossing at any point is a real problem for everyone. Safety should be the prime concern, please make our lives a little less fought and ensure that any speed limit is enforced.</p>