

Divisions affected: *Charlbury & Wychwood*

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT –  
8 DECEMBER 2022**

**FAWLER: 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 Fawler as shown in **Annex 1**.

**Financial Implications**

3. Funding for consultation and the proposals themselves has been provided by the County Council's 20 mph 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 Fawler by making them safer and more attractive.

**Consultation**

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 27 October and 25 November 2022. 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, West

Oxfordshire District Council, the local District Cllrs, Fawler parish meeting, and the local County Councillor representing the Charlbury & Wychwood division.

7. Eight responses were received during the course of the formal consultation, and these are summarised below.

#### **Statutory Consultee Responses:**

8. Thames Valley Police responded re-iterating their views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits and consider their response as 'having concerns' rather than an outright objection. Stagecoach Bus Company stated it had no objection but recommends that the proposals be modified to reduce the extent of 20 limits where they are proposed beyond the built-up areas to help the timetable and viability of rural bus services currently running at narrow margins. The Parish Meeting sought a northwards extension to cover a junction perceived as hazardous, and to protect a single outlying dwelling (the residents submitted a similar request) so an opposing view to the bus operator; neither cited it as an objection. West Oxfordshire District Council raised no objections.

#### **Other Responses:**

9. Four further responses were received with 2 expressions of support from a resident and the Oxford Cycling Network. The residents cited above didn't object but requested an extension to cover their property and a Long Hanborough resident objected on the grounds that it was unnecessary.
10. 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**

11. Bus operator concerns are well-documented; however, the proposed limits only extend beyond the core village on the North approach; the proposal replicates the extent of the existing 30 limit and the Parish Meeting is very sensitive to any reduction in extent. However, there is no overriding justification for extending the current proposed North approach 20 limit. The single objection is noted but officers consider it irrelevant to this consultation (see para 13).
12. 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'.
13. 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

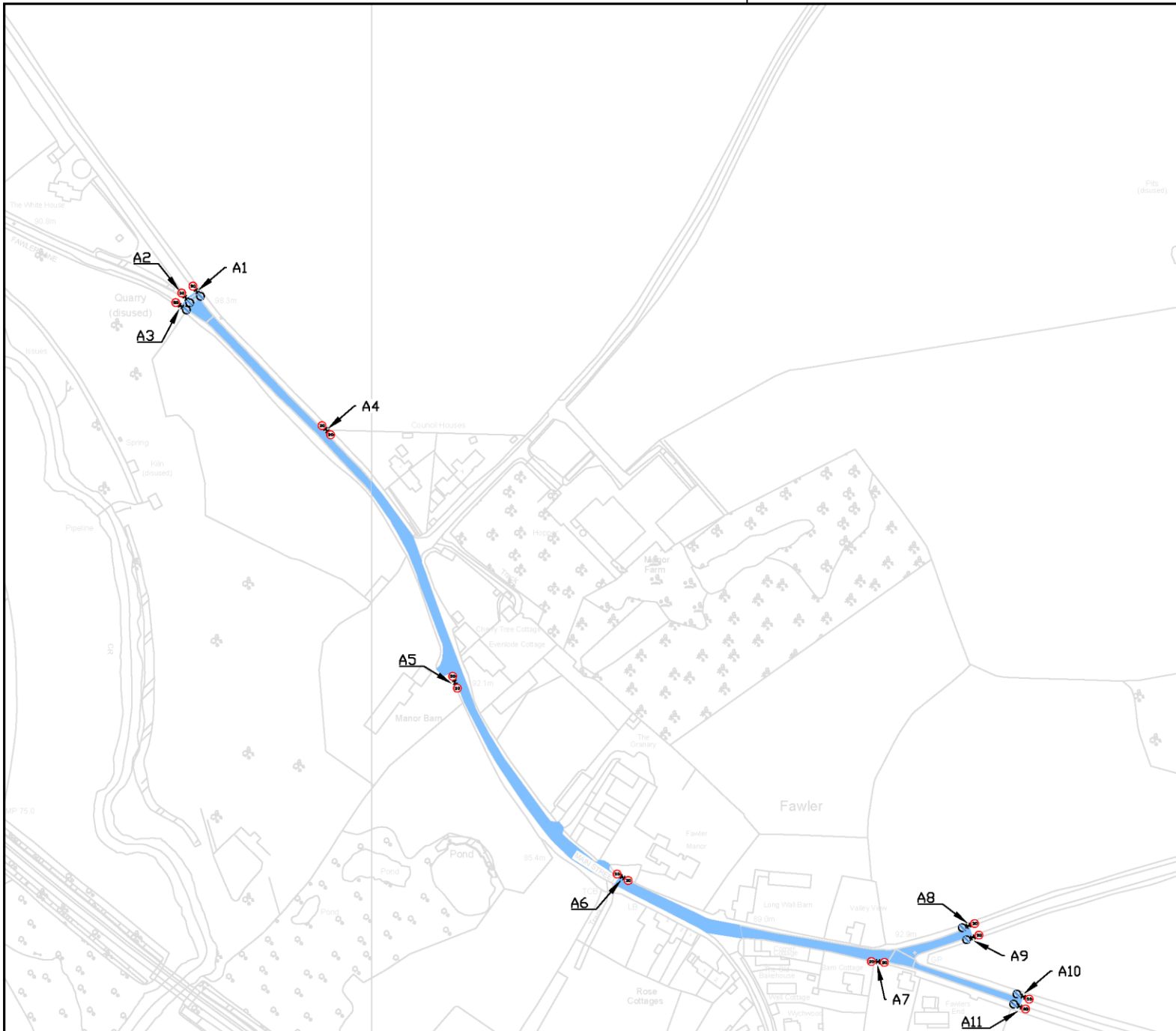
to a proposal. As such the authority has not addressed any specific comments made of this nature in this report.

Bill Cotton  
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes                      Annex 1: Consultation Plan  
                                    Annex 2: Consultation responses

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December 2022



Drawing No.		Revision							
<p>Notes:</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 5px;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #add8e6; margin-right: 5px;"></div> <span>Proposed new 20mph</span> </div>									
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<div style="display: inline-block; font-size: x-small; vertical-align: middle; margin-left: 10px;">             Bill Cotton              Director of              Communities Operations              Oxfordshire County Council              County Hall              New Road              Oxford              OX1 1ND              Tel: 0845 310 1111         </div>									
<p>Project title</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Fawler 20mph Limit</p>									
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RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p><b>Concerns</b> – 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 (<a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a>)) 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"> <li>• history of collisions</li> <li>• road geometry and engineering</li> <li>• road function</li> <li>• composition of road users (including existing and potential levels of vulnerable road users)</li> <li>• existing traffic speeds</li> <li>• road environment</li> </ul>

	<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) Stagecoach Bus Company, (Head of Strategic Development &amp; the Built Environment)</p>	<p><b>No objection</b> – Thank you for notifying us of this proposal which affects a number of journeys on services 7 and S3 between Charlbury and Woodstock. These services have been run commercially for a number of years, but have always been extremely marginal. Since hourly service was put in place on the parallel rail service between Charlbury and Oxford there has been significant loss of patronage.</p> <p>We have considered the proposals in some detail. As you know we are very concerned to ensure that bus operating speeds and times are not unduly prejudiced to the point that services become impractical/uneconomic to operate.</p> <p>In this case, the nature of the hamlet, its form and the widths of the roads concerned make it practically impossible to operate above about 20mph in any case with the vehicles involved. There is a length of single track working and forward visibility is often limited. The principle of a 20 mph limit is considered to be appropriate and better indicates the level of caution required of all road users.</p> <p>However this sits between derestricted sections to the east and west. The self-enforceability of the limit approaching the village from either end is questionable. There is a case to create two buffer areas of 30mph either end of the village, or alternatively to reduce the speed limit to 40mph between Stonesfield and Fawler. In connection with the former, the 20mph zone might better be reduced slightly in length at either end, to extend the length of the transitional limit.</p> <p>Stagecoach has no objection to the proposal in principle. However, we recommend that the proposal is modified in some manner to better reflect the objectives that the scheme seeks within the national guidelines.</p>

<p>(3) West Oxfordshire District Council, (Principal Planning Policy Officer)</p>	<p><b>No objection</b> – provided any signage and associated works are kept to a minimum.</p>
<p>(4) Fawler Parish Meeting</p>	<p><b>Comments</b> – Fawler Parish Meeting met to discussed your 20mph proposals on November 4th. It was decided that although residents would choose to have the 20mph zone start at the Fawler name sign which delineates the village to the west, they are so keen to have the new limit installed, they would give up this point if it meant that there would be a delay.</p> <p>We were advised by Councillor Liz Leffman at the Meeting that an extension along Charlbury Road even though it would be a matter of only about 50 yards would necessitate a delay. I therefore replied to your consultation letter on November 7th saying that we were happy to accept the proposals.</p> <p>Since then, Mr Geoff Barrell has kindly informed me that there should be no delay whether we choose the extension or stick to the present 30mph marking.</p> <p>I have written to the residents with this information asking them to give me their views by today and all who have replied have reiterated the wish that if it does not cause a delay , we would ask to have the 20mph zone start at the point where the sign indicates the beginning of the village at the west.</p> <p>The reasons, apart from it being the logical place, are as follows.</p> <p>The junction of Fawler Lane and Charlbury Road is extremely hazardous. Fawler Lane is single track and cars entering it cannot see whether there is traffic exiting it until they have committed themselves to entering. This often means having to reverse.</p> <p>The angle at which cars exit the lane means that they have to travel over the 'Stop/Slow' markings and stick out into the road in order to see whether the Charlbury Road to their left is clear. This is difficult for all vehicles but exceedingly so for vans. The result is that they are in the way of cars travelling along that road from their right who have to give way or drive into the righthand lane of Charlbury Road in order to pass. Minor collisions and near-misses are frequent.</p> <p>All drivers need to be extremely vigilant at this point and the added necessity of noting a change in speeds is often missed.</p>

	<p>Placing the 20mph sign at the Fawler village sign would give advance notice and cars would be able to slow down before reaching that nasty area.</p> <p>There is no pavement for pedestrians at this point, like elsewhere in Fawler. Residents wait for the bus between the houses and Fawler Lane and some walk down to the station.</p> <p>All this is hazardous and we believe that installing the 20mph limit at the beginning of the village, thus giving advance warning, would help.</p>
(5) Member of public, (Long Hanborough, Millwood End)	<b>Object</b> – 30mph limit is perfectly adequate.
(6) Member of public, (Fawler, Charlbury Road)	<p><b>Support</b> – We are very pleased that OCC are proposing to implement a 20mph speed limit in Fawler. However, we feel it would be a good opportunity to improve the safety at the junction of Main Street and the lane from Fawler Mill (Fawler Lane) by extending the 20mph limit to the Fawler entry sign, opposite The White House. Currently the 30mph limit sign is sited virtually on the junction of Main Street and Fawler Lane, so traffic quite legally meets this awkward junction at 60mph. This is a junction on a tight angle, on a slope and often with limited visibility due to irregularly cut verges.</p> <p>Siting the 20mph sign at the Fawler entry sign would give traffic a much better chance of slowing down to a safer speed by the time the junction is reached (hopefully 20mph).</p>
(7) Member of public, (Fawler, Main Road)	<b>Support</b> – The road is used as a cut through and is not safe as it is not wide enough, so people need to slowdown
(8) Local group/organisation, (Cycling UK Oxfordshire)	<b>Support</b> – We support the reduction of speed limits to 20mph in Fawler. 20 limits are proven to reduce speeds and this improves safety for residents and road users. It creates a better environment for walking, wheeling and cycling, encouraging these healthy transport modes.