

Divisions affected: *Berinsfield & Garsington*

**CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT –  
14 DECEMBER 2023**

**DORCHESTER-ON-THAMES: PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMITS**

Report by Corporate Director, Environment and Place

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet Member for Transport Management is **RECOMMENDED** to approve the introduction of 20mph speed limits in Dorchester-on-Thames as advertised.

**Executive summary**

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

**Formal consultation**

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 26 October and 17 November 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, Dorchester-on-Thames parish council, and the local County Councillor representing the Berinsfield & Garsington division.

**Statutory Consultee Responses:**

7. 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. Oxford Bus Company stated they did not object to the proposals.

**Other Responses:**

8. 19 online responses and an email were received from local residents. 12 expressed support and six objected, one had concerns, and one claimed to have no opinion – but then provided a response, these have been considered as concerns and are included in the analysis below.
9. The following table is a synopsis of the objections and concerns, with the views of some respondents covering more than one category:

<b>View/Opinion</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Not necessary	7
Will not be respected	2
Will frustrate drivers	2
Waste of money	2
Use VAS signs instead / main problem is on 30 limits on approaches / Will not be enforced / Sign clutter / Excludes Abingdon Rd which is the main problem / It’s paranoid / Drivers distracted as focussing on speedometer / More hazardous for cyclists as mingling with cars	1 each

10. 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:

<b>Travel Change</b>	<b>Number</b>
Yes – walk/wheel more	2 (11%)
No	16 (84%)
Other	1 (5%)

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

## **Officer response to objections/concerns**

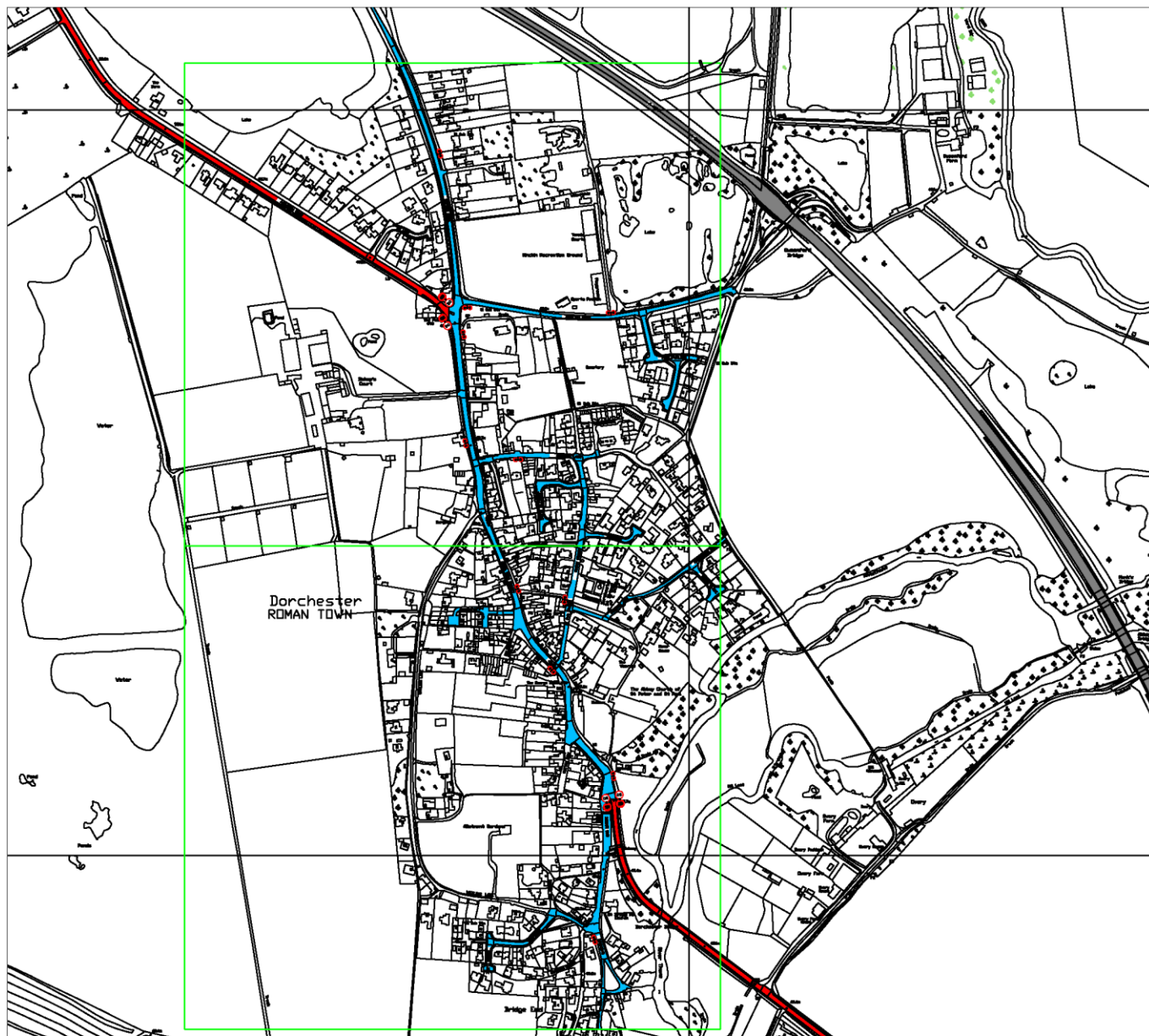
12. The main purpose of the scheme is to improve road safety and to encourage greater use of active travel by reducing speeds; this will also reduce collisions. The aim of reducing speed limits is to change driver's mindsets to make speeding socially unacceptable and make more environmentally friendly modes of travel such as walking and cycling more attractive – and also 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'.
13. The most common objection was over the limit being unnecessary as speeds are already constrained in the High St. Abingdon Rd was excluded at the request of the Parish Council following consultation with residents. 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

Contact Officers:              Geoff Barrell (Team Leader – Traffic and Road Safety)

December 2023



**Dorchester Overview** Revision 1.0

Legend	
Proposed 20	
Existing 30	
Existing NSL	
Not Public Highway	

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved
1.0	02.08.23	Proposed 1	C.R.		

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**Project title:** Dorchester 20mph Scheme

**Drawing title:**  
Dorchester 20mph Scheme Overview

**Drawing Status**

Scale @ A3	Drawn by: C.R.	Checked by <b>E.J.J</b>	Approved by <b>G.J.J</b>
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Drawing No. 1.0	Revision 1.0
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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> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>
(2) Managing Director, (Oxford Bus Company)	<b>No objection</b>
(3) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames)	<p><b>Object</b> – Please may I register my disquiet about this proposal which is now logged in phase 2.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I see no need to impose 20mph through the built-up part of the village. The sinuous High Street and the ubiquitous parking along the High Street and side streets already controls vehicle speed (usually to 20mph or less).</li> <li>2. Imposing 20mph frustrates drivers and in areas where 20mph already exists I see little evidence of drivers observing the limit.</li> <li>3. The main problem in Dorchester-on-Thames is from vehicles which travel at speed (exceeding 30mph) along the Abingdon Road, north of the village centre, and between Meadside and Dorchester bridge.</li> <li>4. A better solution to slowing the traffic would be a flashing sign on each of these approach roads indicating to the driver the speed of the vehicle. These signs are effective; 20mph permanent signs are not effective.</li> </ol>
(4) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames, Jemmetts Close)	<p><b>Object</b> – The current speed through the village is slow due to the parked cars up the high street. Therefore self regulated</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>

<p>(5) Local resident, (Dorchester on thames, Queen Street)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – 20mph is not possible through the village because of parked cars on both sides of the road. One is concentrating on the speeds rather than the road. There are 9 different speed limits between Abingdon andDorchester!!! Paranoia sets in!</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(6) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames, Abingdon Road)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – You can't go faster that 20 through the village anyway and I don't want the asthetics and the signage. It's not going to include the Abingdon road which is the actual road with a speeding problem. I would rather have some caution horses signs put up for the horse rider in the village. Absolute waste of money</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(7) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames, Drayton Road)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – The village already benefits from a natural reduction to traffic speed due to parking in the village on both sides of the road. Having lived in the village for over 15 years, and having brought up children, I have never witnessed traffic speeding excessively in these parts of the village.</p> <p>I have experienced the 20 mph zones in nearby areas such as Little Milton and Abingdon, and feel these do not help be be a safer driver as I have to concentrate hard on my speedometer to ensure I observe the speed limit.</p> <p>Furthermore, as a recreational cyclist I find 20mph speed limits a hazard as I often catch and mingle with moving vehicles. As a driver, I also have to pay significant attention to my mirrors in 20mph zones to look out for cyclists catching me, and this also distracts my attention from the road. Dorchester is a popular village for recreational cyclists, both residents and those passing through to avoid having to use the a4074.</p> <p>In the less built up parts of the village, the 30mph is sensible, with perhaps the exception being the northern end of the Abingdon Road where I feel a 40 or 50 mph would be safer and reflect the common practice.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(8) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames, Monks Close)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – I fully object to this proposal as it is a complete waste of public funds.</p> <p>The only areas that the 20mph will apply to are the areas where cars a parked on both sides of the road and you are frequently met head on by other traffic. In this area currently you can rarely drive at more than 15mph. As it is clear that these 20mph zones are not enforced this is a ridiculous waste of money that could be better spent in other ways.</p>

	Travel change: <b>No</b>
(9) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames, The Limes)	<p><b>Concerns</b> – I live just beyond where the 20 mile an hour speed limit would end on the Abingdon Road and I think frustrated drivers turning into this road are likely to accelerate sharply and drive recklessly once outside the 20 limit. It's already dangerous to cross the road there as cars swing around the corner at speed</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
(10) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames, Abingdon Road)	<p><b>Support</b> – You cannot safely drive faster than 20mph through the village anyway.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
(11) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames, Haven Close)	<p><b>Support</b> – Currently traffic speeds through the village sometimes exceed 30mph which is really dangerous and irresponsible considering the narrow roads and proximity to residential properties.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
(12) Local resident, (Dorchester On Thames, High Street)	<p><b>Support</b> – Moderation of car speeds in approach roads to centre. this will keep us aligned with other communities as 20mph rolls out. Evidence that 20mph both saves lives and improves community use of their roads and streets.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
(13) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames, High Street)	<p><b>Support</b> – Having been part of Speedwatch since 2015, this is the necessary and important conclusion of the process.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>Yes – walk/wheel more</b></p>



<p>(14) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames, High Street)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – I believe this is a safe and sensible speed for a small, old village like this.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(15) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames, Wittenham Lane)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – Village to Overy, including Henley Road bridge would be much better and safer. Why is Overy excluded?</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(16) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames, Abingdon Road)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – It would be unsafe to drive faster than 20mph on the High Street and residential roads, due to cars parked on the road and blind spots.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(17) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames, Abingdon Road)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – Will make the village safer for residents and visitors but the speed limits of 30mph on the Abingdon and Henley Roads are frequently excessively exceeded and NEED TO BE ENFORCED (please)</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(18) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames, Haven Close)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – Safety. I see a lot of speeding.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>Yes – walk/wheel more</b></p>
<p>(19) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames, Oxford Road)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – Very much needed, cars race through the village, unsafe for children bikers at that speed.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>Other</b> Yes, not using car - walk, cycle, scoot</p>

<p>(20) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames, Wittenham Lane)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – I support 20mph speed limits through the village but question whether it is worth the expense of formally creating them as due to parked cars it seems to be the speed at which most vehicles travel anyway</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(21) Local resident, (Dorchester on Thames, Overy Lane)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – i fully support OCC's proposal for the 20mph limit on the bridge to start at the entrance to the village as opposed to the Overy end proposed by some people. the village end provides a clear message to drivers that they are entering the built up area with a greater chance of drivers adhering to the limit.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(22) Local resident, (Dorchester-on-Thames, Tenpenny)</p>	<p><b>No opinion</b> – I haven't experienced problems with speeding in Dorchester other than with the kind of drivers who deliberately ignore the speed limit and I don't think those people will pay any more attention to the 20 mph limit unfortunately.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>