

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 29 JUNE 2017
PROPOSED 30MPH SPEED LIMIT AND PUFFIN CROSSING – A417
EAST HENDRED

Report by Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Introduction

1. This report presents responses received in the course of a statutory consultation on a proposal for the introduction of a 30mph speed limit and a 'puffin' signalled crossing on the A417 at East Hendred.

Background

2. The above speed limit change and crossing is proposed in conjunction with a residential development on the north side of the A417 east of its junction with White Road. A plan of the proposals is shown in Annex 1 (Speed limit) & Annex 2 (Puffin crossing).

Consultation

3. The formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 4 May and 2 June 2017. A public notice was placed in the Oxford Times newspaper, and an email sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Vale of White Horse District Council, East & West Hendred Parish Councils and the local County Councillor. Letters were sent directly to 11 properties in the immediate vicinity of the proposed crossing.
4. Nine responses were received which are summarised at Annex 3. Copies of all of the full responses received are available for inspection in the Members' Resource Centre.
5. Thames Valley Police have not objected to either proposal, though did note that the proposed puffin crossing would be quite close (approximately 100 metres) to the existing crossing to the west of the White Road junction, which might potentially cause some traffic congestion at peak times were both crossings being heavily used at these times.
6. East Hendred Parish Council expressed support in principle for the proposed 30mph speed limit but requested that consideration be given to extending it westwards to the start of the 50mph limit at the west end of West Hendred, or at least to include the junction with Allins Lane, and eastwards to include the junction with Featherbed Lane. The council did not object to the proposed puffin crossing, but did express concerns on the width (approximately 2

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metres) of the proposed footway/cycletrack on the south side of the A417 then linking the crossing to the White Road junction, which they considered inadequate to provide a safe facility, noting also that maintaining this width would also require regular cutting back of the hedge, which may in practice be difficult to deliver given the pressures on the County Council's maintenance budgets.

7. West Hendred Parish Council similarly expressed support in principle for the proposed 30mph speed limit, but expressed a preference that it be extended to the west to the start of the 50mph speed limit at the west end of West Hendred, partly on the grounds that they consider that too many speed limit changes can undermine respect for the limits.
8. County Councillor Fox-Davies supports the representations from the parish councils.
9. One objection to the proposed speed limit was received from a member of the public on the grounds that it was too short and should be extended to the west and also to the proposed puffin crossing on the grounds that the visibility of the crossing for drivers approaching on the A417 was restricted, that it is too close to the junction with White Road and additionally that the width of the new footway on the south side of the A417 was inadequate.
10. Objections to both the proposed 30mph speed limit and puffin crossing were received from another member of the public but with no specific grounds cited.
11. One response from a member of the public was received in respect of both proposals, stating that the speed limit would improve safety and that the proposed puffin crossing was preferable to the original proposal (although not formally consulted on) for a toucan crossing, the latter being a crossing for the use of both pedestrians and pedal cyclists.
12. A further response was received from a member of the public in respect of the provision of an access gate for their property. However, it appears that this response is not directly related to either of the proposals.

Review of responses

13. The response of Thames Valley Police is noted. In respect of their observation that the proposed crossing will be quite close to the signalled crossing to the west of the White Road junction, the spacing (at just over 100 metres) is considered acceptable (with other examples of similarly spaced crossings elsewhere in the county) and in respect of the possible traffic congestion, it is not anticipated that either crossing will have especially heavy use even in the peak periods.
14. The request of both parish councils (and the support given to them by County Councillor Fox-Davies, the local member) that the 30mph speed limit is extended has been given careful consideration. Officers apply the guidance on setting local speeds limits issued by the Department for Transport (DfT)

when considering speed limit changes required as a result of development. In the case of East Hendred, while no change in limit was judged to be required when the recent housing to the west of the White Road junction was approved, with the approved development to the east of the junction, it is judged that the character of the road will be sufficiently changed to now merit the introduction of a 30mph limit to include the frontage of both developments, with the length of the proposed 30mph limit – at around 600 metres – meeting the DfT guidance on the recommended minimum length of a speed limit.

15. While noting the requests on the part of the parish councils and other respondents to extend the proposed limit further to the west, the character of this part of the A417 is unchanged, with there being minimal road-side development other than the small group of houses by The Hare Inn. The reported accident history on this length of the road is also very low, other than a small cluster of slight injury accidents at the junction of The Greenway at West Hendred. The current 40mph speed limit is therefore considered to be consistent with the DfT guidance.
16. The request of East Hendred Parish Council to extend the 30mph limit eastwards to include the junction with Featherbed Lane is noted. While this would represent only a small extension to the current proposal, the proposed major improvement scheme for Featherbed Lane includes the construction of a roundabout here, and with the speed limit on Featherbed Lane also being reduced to 40mph; taking these into account it is considered that the proposed terminal point of the 30mph limit just to the west of the roundabout is appropriate and in accordance with the DfT guidance on setting speed limits (noting that the latter advises that the speed limit at a roundabout should – where speed limits on the approaches differ – be set at the limit applying to the majority of the approaches).
17. The concerns of East Hendred Parish Council – and other respondents – on the width of the footway on the south side of the A417 linking the proposed crossing to White Road are noted. This facility is not intended for use by cyclists as originally envisaged (as reflected in the crossing now being a puffin rather than a toucan crossing). The 2 metre width is considered adequate, and consistent with many other locations in the county.
18. The objection received from the member of the public in respect of the visibility of the crossing for drivers approaching from the west, and its proximity (25 metres) to the White Road junction are similarly noted. An independent road safety audit of the crossing has been carried out with no design issues flagged as a concern.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

19. The proposals would help facilitate the safe movement of pedestrians and traffic.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

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20. Funding for the proposed 30mph speed limit and puffin crossing has been provided by the developer of land adjacent to the A417.

RECOMMENDATION

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

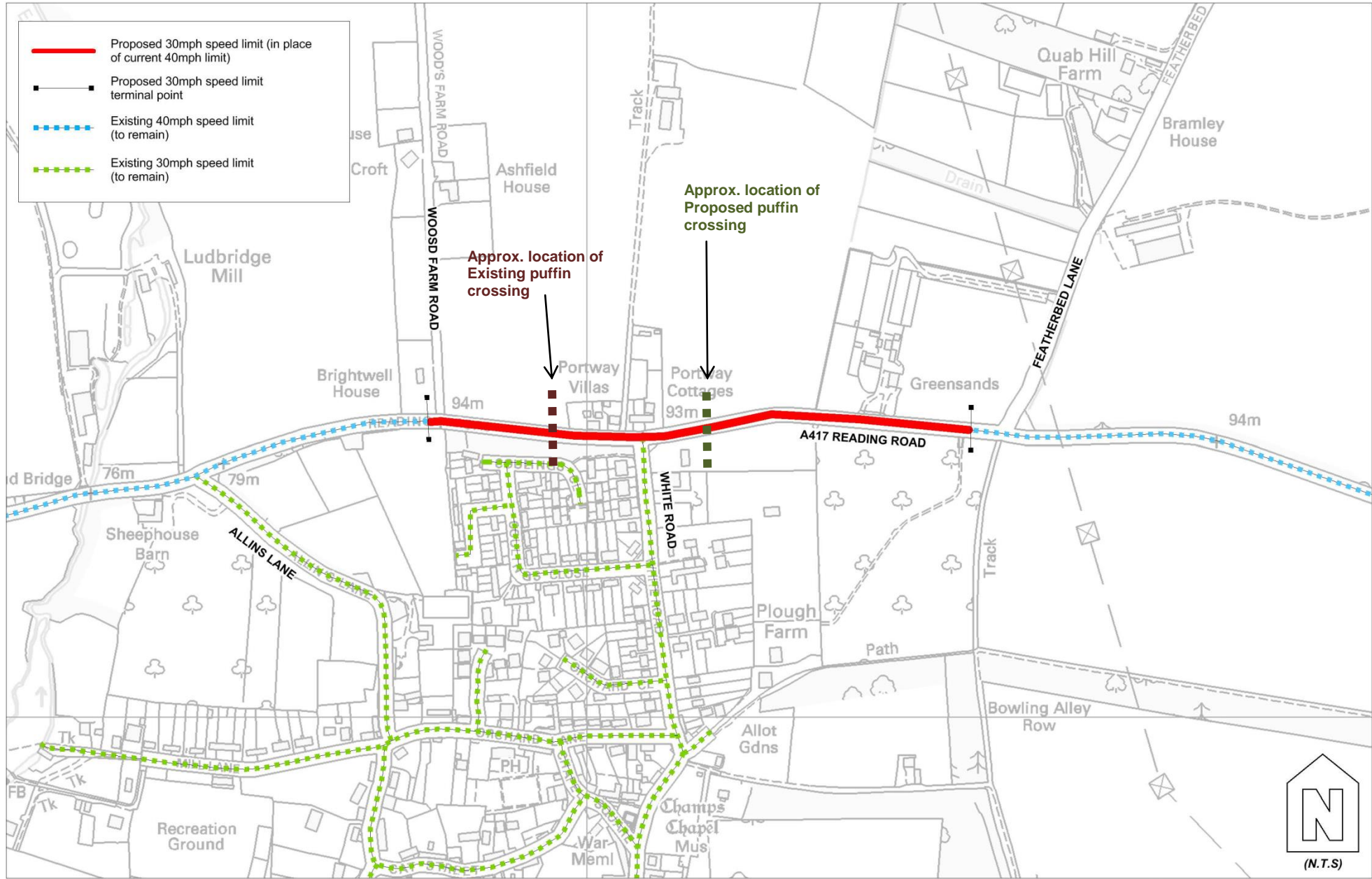
OWEN JENKINS

Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Background papers: Plan of proposed restrictions
 Consultation responses

Contact Officers: Anthony Kirkwood 07392 318871

June 2017



RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Thames Valley Police	<p>No objection - My only observation in relation to the new formal crossing point, is its close proximity to the existing crossing point installed last year on the west side. At peak times queuing for both crossings may cause difficulties for traffic trying to exit White Road.</p> <p>Please ensure this new pedestrian crossing fully complies with current pedestrian crossing legislation and that traffic speeds meet such design.</p>
(2) Cllr Mike Fox-Davies, Local Member	<p>Support - I would like to add my support to the representation of the two Parish Councils. As a regular user of that road I fully endorse their views</p>
(3) East Hendred Parish Council	<p>Support - However, in order to reduce the number of changes in speed limit between Wantage and Rowstock we would prefer the 30mph limit to be extended at the western end to just west of The Greenway at West Hendred, where the speed limit becomes 50mph.</p> <p>If this option is unacceptable we strongly recommend that the western end is extended to the west of Allins Lane. This is because the area between the western end of the Hendred dip and Woods Farm Lane is a notorious accident black spot, with recent fatalities.</p> <p>Given the OCC proposal for the location of a new roundabout on the A417 at the junction of Featherbed Lane, we also request that the eastern end of the 30mph limit is extended eastward to beyond this junction. The Featherbed Lane junction with the A417 is another accident black spot.</p> <p>East Hendred Parish Council notes the requirement for a puffin crossing. We believe that the combined footway/cycleway on the South side of the A417 leading from the proposed crossing is dangerous. This is proposed to be only 2m wide which is less than OCC's guidance of 2.5m minimum. In addition to our concerns over the narrowness of the footpath/cycleway, we have reservations about whether the proposed (narrow) width can be maintained given the that the hedge on the southern side is protected by a planning requirement (condition 10 of approved planning application P12/V1786/FUL), particularly because maintenance of roadside trees and hedges in the county has been reduced.</p>

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	<p>Unless the existing streetlight and telegraph pole sited on the proposed footpath/cycleway are repositioned, the already inadequate width of the footpath/cycleway will be even further reduced.</p>
(4) West Hendred Parish Council	<p>Support - However, in order to reduce the number of changes in speed limit between Wantage and Rowstock we would prefer the 30mph limit to be extended to the west of West Hendred, where the speed limit becomes 50mph. Too many changes in the speed limit will encourage drivers to ignore them altogether.</p>
(5) Vale of White Horse District Council	<p>No objection - Having reviewed the documents provided the Vale of White Horse District Council raises no objection to the proposal and is satisfied for Oxfordshire County Council's Traffic Regulation Team to determine the application.</p>
(6) Email response	<p><u>30mph speed limit</u> Object – the current proposal is too short; the 30mph speed limit should be extended to the west end of West Hendred to include the hazardous Hendred dip / Allins Lane junction, and to avoid multiple changes in speed limits which can be confusing for drivers.</p> <p><u>Puffin Crossing</u> Object – the sight lines available to the crossing for traffic travelling east on the A417 are not adequate, and the crossing is too close (25 metres) to the White Road junction; the width of the footway on the south side of the road is also too narrow. The combined effect of the above will be a crossing that is hazardous.</p>
(7) Resident, (Reading Road, East Hendred)	<p><u>30mph speed limit</u> – Support - This will help crossing the road much safer.</p> <p><u>Puffin Crossing</u> – Support - A better option than a toucan crossing.</p>
(8) Online response	<p><u>30mph speed limit</u> – Object (but with no other comments supplied)</p> <p><u>Puffin Crossing</u> – Object (but with no other comments supplied)</p>
(9) Resident, (Reading Road, East Hendred)	<p><u>Puffin Crossing</u> – No objection - Would it be possible to have an access gate from the front of this property? Trying to cross the busy road is a problem.</p>

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