

Divisions affected: *Benson and Cholsey; Berinsfield and Garsington*

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT –
17 NOVEMBER 2022**

**BENSON - A4074 AND OXFORD ROAD: PROPOSED 40MPH &
30MPH SPEED LIMITS**

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet Member for Highway Management is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed introduction of 40mph and 30mph speed limits as advertised on the A4074 and Oxford Road at Benson as advertised.

Executive summary

2. This report presents responses received to a consultation on the proposed introduction of introduction of 40mph and 30mph speed limits as on the A4074 and Oxford Road at Benson as shown at **Annex 1**.

Financial Implications

3. Funding for consultation on the proposals has been provided by the **Benson relief road project**, who will also fund their implementation if approved

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 facilitate the safe movement of traffic.

Consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 29 September and 28 October 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, Benson & Warborough Parish Councils, South Oxfordshire District Council, the local District Cllrs, and

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
<p>(1) Thames Valley Police, (Traffic Management Officer)</p>	<p>Concerns – Thames Valley Police welcome the opportunity to engage on plans for road safety improvement.</p> <p>Compliance 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>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) Stagecoach Bus Company, (Head of Strategic Development & the Built Environment)	<p>No objection – It concerns a key junction on a very important inter-urban bus corridor. While we do not operate the services in question, we are maintaining a close interest in the approach taken by Council to speed limit reduction, and in particular in this kind of context.</p> <p>While of course we recognise and hold in great regard the safety rationale of the policy of reducing speed limits, it is essential that measures taken are effective, proportionate, and do not serve to unnecessarily damage the efficiency, relevance and attractiveness of bus services. Trunk inter-urban routes like the "River Rapids" route group, are critical to securing the County's wider transport policy objectives, set out in LTCP5.</p> <p>We leave it to colleagues at Thames Travel as operator to respond. We offer no objection but we trust that officers will give any concerns raised by the operator very great weight.</p>
(3) Oxford Bus Company, (Interim Managing Director)	No objection
(4) Benson Parish Council	Support – for road safety reasons.
(5) Local Cllr, (South Oxfordshire)	<p>30mph – Support 40mph – Support</p> <p>I support any plans to reduce speeding on these roads which are so close to housing, schools and busy junctions.</p>

	<p>Given the proximity to the roundabout, it is unlikely that cars would be able to travel much above 40mph anyway, and at such a busy junction speeds to be kept to the minimum to improve road safety.</p>
<p>(6) Member of public, (Oxford, Banbury Road)</p>	<p>30mph – Object 40mph – Object</p> <p>Unnecessary changes. The current speed limits are prohibitive enough and the road is perfectly adequate and safe to support traffic at the current speeds. Again it is clear the motivation for this change is simply the council's fundamentally anti-car agenda.</p>
<p>(7) Member of public, (Benson, St Helen' Avenue)</p>	<p>30mph – Support 40mph – Support</p> <p>I support this proposal as it simplifies the current mix of speed limits.</p>
<p>(8) Member of public, (Benson, Castle Square)</p>	<p>30mph – Support 40mph – Support</p> <p>I am strongly in favour of reducing speed limits into, through and within Benson to improve road safety, reduce congestion and enhance residents' daily lives. This speed limit proposal addresses just one aspect of this and I hope other speed limits will soon be added - specifically a 20mph zone on key roads within the village and rationalisation of the speed limits on the A4074 and the Elm Brook Roundabout</p>
<p>(9) Member of public, (Oxford, Richards Lane)</p>	<p>30mph – Support 40mph – Support</p> <p>I would like to see Oxford become a car free; and bike and pedestrian friendly city.</p>