

Divisions affected: *Ploughley*

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT – 7 SEPTEMBER 2023

LOWER HEYFORD: PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMITS

Report by Corporate Director, Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet Member for Highway Management is RECOMMENDED to approve the introduction of the following proposals as advertised:
 - a. New 20mph speed limits in Lower Heyford (including Caulcott),
 - b. 60 metre extension to the existing 30mph speed limit on the B4030 Bicester Road.

Executive summary

2. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits in Lower Heyford & Caulcott, and a minor extension to the existing 30mph speed limit on the B4030 Bicester Road as shown in **Annexes 1 to 3**.

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 Lower Heyford by making them safer and more attractive.

Formal consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 13 July and 04 August 2023. A notice was published in the Bicester Advertiser 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, Cherwell District Council, the local District Cllrs, Lower Heyford Parish Council, and the local County Councillor representing the Ploughley division.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Thames Valley Police were the only statutory consultee respondent; they reiterated views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits, they consider their view as 'having concerns' rather than an objection.
8. The Parish Council supported the majority of the proposals welcoming the 20mph limits in Lower Heyford and Caulcott. However it believed the proposals missed two significant safety concerns and sought lower limits at 1) the crossroad junction between Freehold Street/Station Road/B4030, and 2) on the B4030 through Caulcott Village, as shown in **Annex 5**.

Other Responses:

9. Five online responses were received, two local residents supported the proposals, and two objected on the grounds it was unnecessary and unjustified in accident reduction terms. A Witney resident objected stating that they could find no evidence of anyone who supported the intrusion of 20mph speed limits.
10. The responses are shown in **Annex 4**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Officer response to objections/concerns

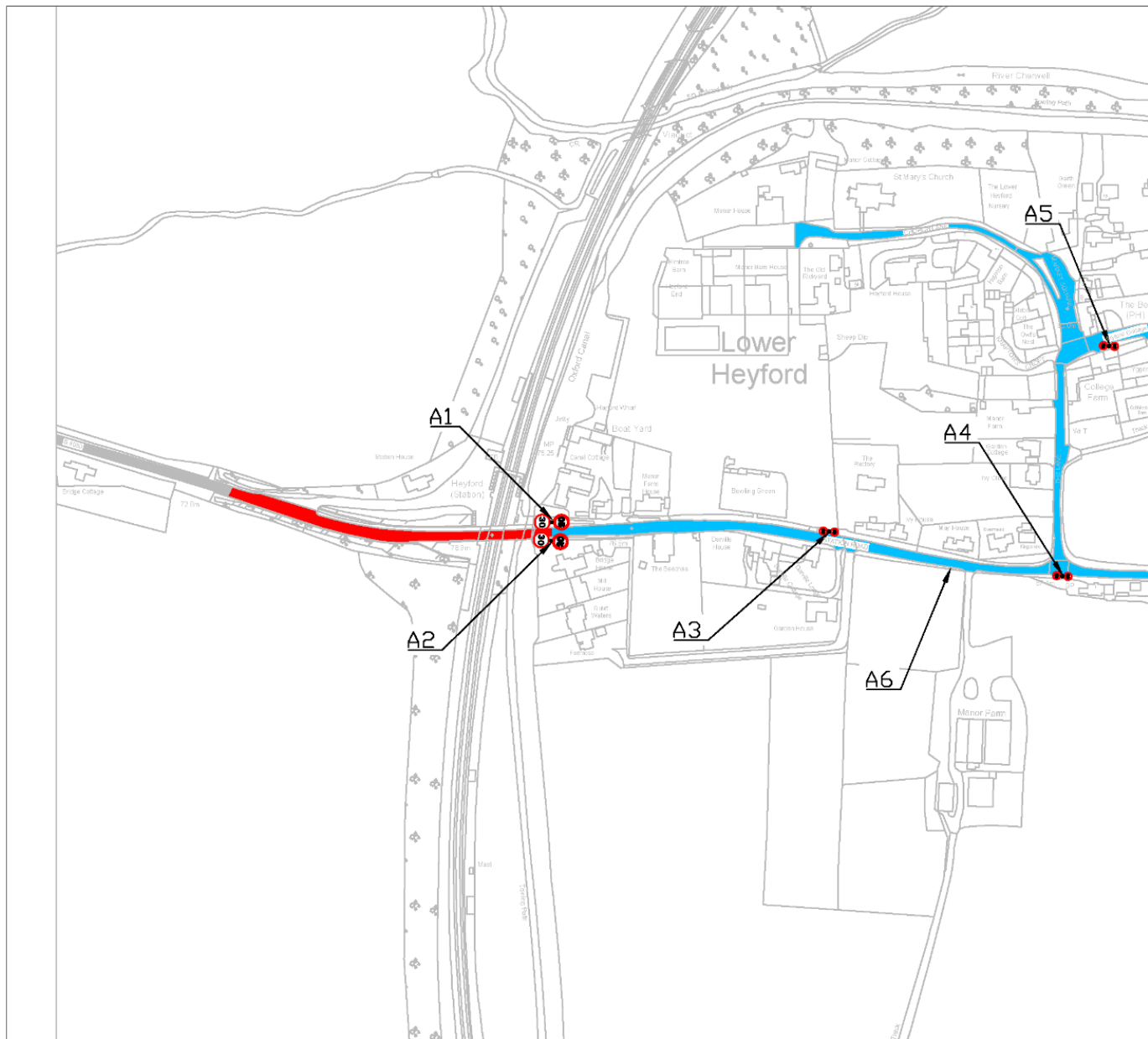
11. The main purpose of the scheme is to encourage greater use of active travel by reducing speeds; this is also expected to reduce accidents. The aim of reducing speed limits is to change driver's mindsets to make speeding socially unacceptable and make more environmentally friendly modes of travel such as walking and cycling more attractive, and also help 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'.
12. Officers were previously aware of the Parish Council's aspirations and had made it known that their ambitions for lower speed limits outside core residential areas were inappropriate to the highway environment. 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 the comments made of this nature in this report.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes Annex 1-3: Consultation plans
 Annex 4: Consultation responses
 Annex 5: Parish council full response

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September 2023



Sheet A Revision 1.0

Legend	
Proposed 20	
Existing 30	
Not Public Highway	

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved
1.0	14.06.23	First draft	C.W		



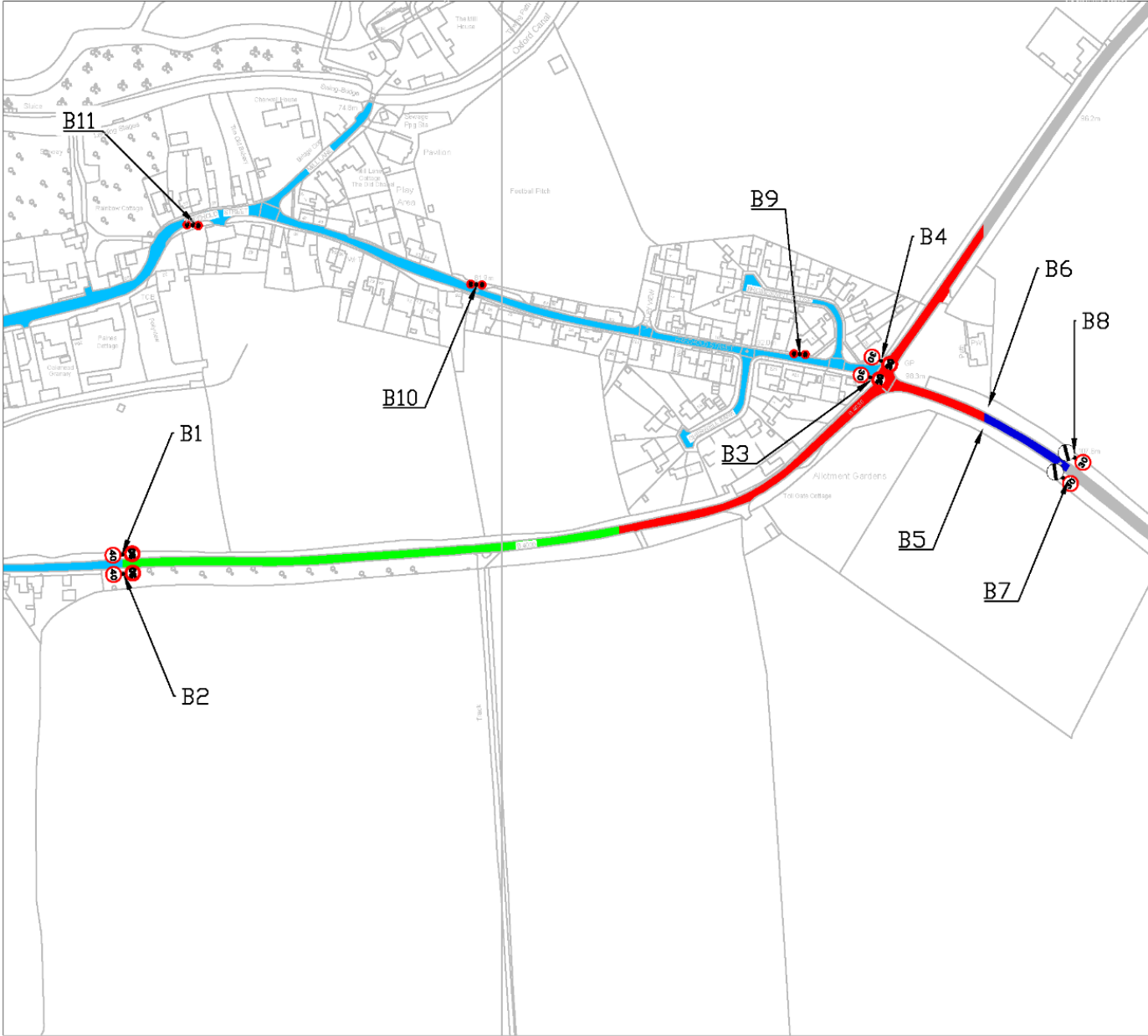
Project title: Lower Heyford 20mph Scheme

Drawing title:
Lower Heyford 20mph Scheme Sheet A

Drawing Status			
Scale @ A3	Drawn by: C.W	Checked by: GJB	Approved by: GJB
	Date drawn: 14.06.23	Date checked: 11.07.23	Date approved: 11.07.23

Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref

Drawing No. 1.0 Revision 1.0



Sheet B Revision 1.0

Legend	
Proposed 20	█
Proposed 30	█
Existing 30	█
Existing 40	█
Existing NSL	█
Not Public Highway	█

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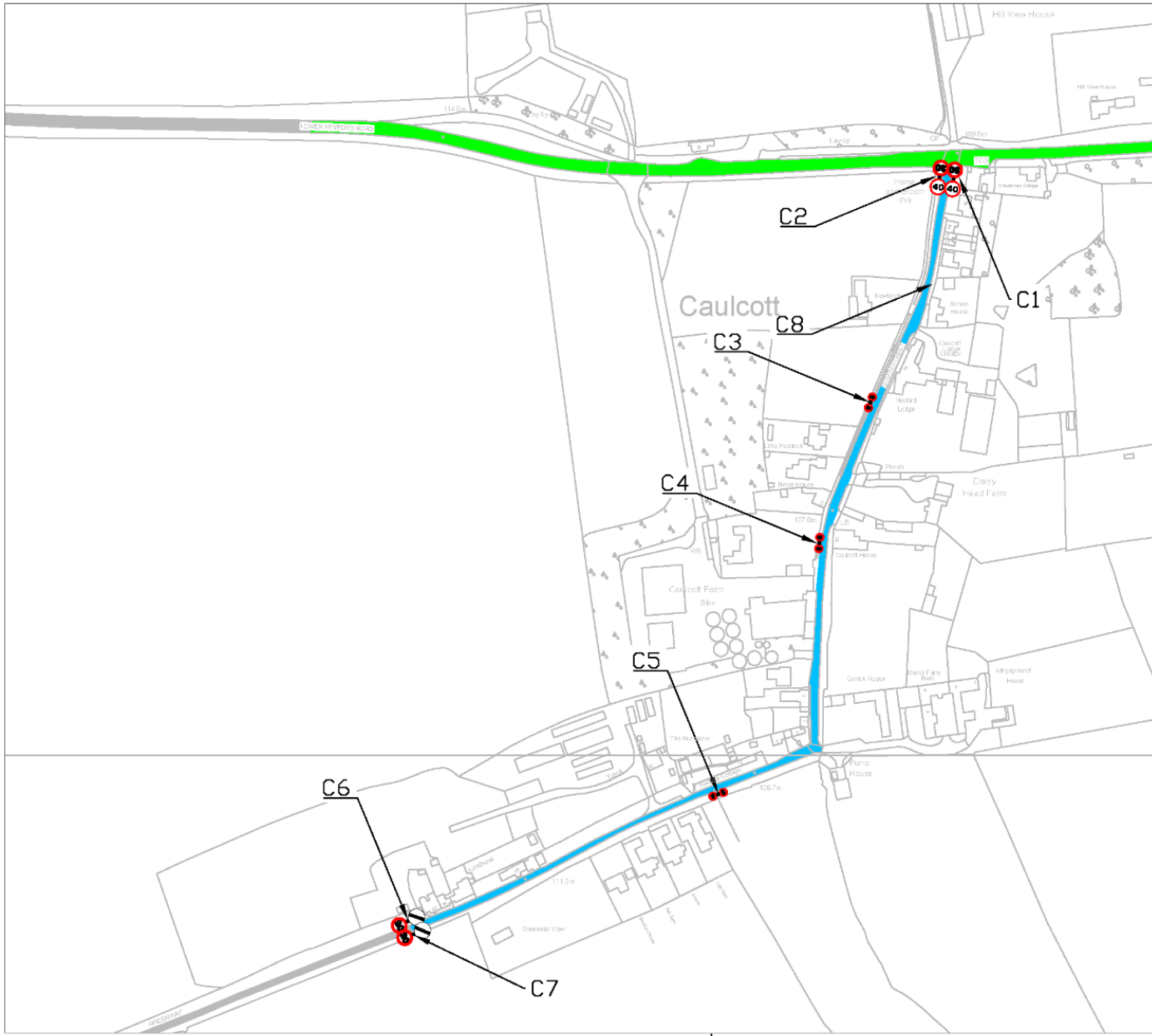
Project title: Lower Heyford 20mph Scheme

Drawing title:
Lower Heyford 20mph Scheme Sheet B

Drawing Status

Scale @ A3	Drawn by: C.W	Checked by: G.J.B	Approved by: G.J.B
	Date drawn: 14.06.23	Date checked: 11.07.23	Date approved: 11.07.23

Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref Revision 1.0



Sheet C Revision 1.0

Legend	
Proposed 20	█
Existing 40	█
Existing NSL	█
Not Public Highway	█

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Project title: Caulcott 20mph Scheme

Drawing title:
 Caulcott 20mph Scheme Sheet C

Drawing Status

Scale @ A3	Drawn by: C.W	Checked by: G.J.B	Approved by: G.J.B
	Date drawn: 12.07.23	Date checked: 14.07.23	Date approved: 14.07.23

Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref

Drawing No. 1.0	Revision 1.0
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RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p>Concerns – 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 (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>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) Local Resident, (Caulcott, Kirtlington Road)</p>	<p>Lower Heyford – Object Waste of money through Lower Heyford village you should not be getting up to 20</p> <p>Caulcott – Object Again who gets up to 20</p> <p>B4030 30mph – Concerns Over taking will increase on bends with people not staying behind those keeping to speed limit, happens elsewhere</p>
<p>(3) Local Resident, (Kirtlington, Portway)</p>	<p>Lower Heyford – Object There is no need to reduce the present limit on safety grounds as there has not been any serious injury collisions along this road</p> <p>Caulcott – Support This is a village off the main road so would be safer with limit reduction due to width of road and no pavement</p> <p>B4030 30mph – Object 30 is fine along this route there are no reports of serious collisions to warrant reduction</p>

<p>(4) Member of public, (Witney Oxford Hill)</p>	<p>Lower Heyford – Object No data showing support of needing this intrusion as nobody in the community I spoken to are in support of this and as ever demoralised and depressed that this will be bulldozed through with nothing they can do about it.</p> <p>Caulcott – Object Looking at the data of the Village in question, there has not been any accidents or incidents in the Village and has been no increase a risk so don't understand the rationale behind attacking yet another peaceful Village/Town. There is no valid reason proposed as to why the speed limit needs changing and creates further hidden hypocrisy of politicians including emergency services (even when not responding to calls) driving at 30mph no problem including the public. This is a huge waste of money when our roads need resurfacing but yet 0 action on Oxfordshire roads. Why the obsession with 20mph signs that are like Zs you see in a Russian street? 20mph road signs will create a further divide and create personal depression for huge numbers of people living in the area because it will be seen as totalitarian propaganda. Signs will be ignored by a significant majority driving through the village and is a main road that has 0 risk to the public. A real waste of my time here writing this why bother a consultation when it is ignored all the time? This is going to affect tourism of our communities and put travellers off visiting and using our businesses.</p> <p>B4030 30mph – Object No need to change at all.</p>
<p>(5) Local Resident, (Lower Heyford, Freehold Street)</p>	<p>Lower Heyford – Support For the safety of residents.</p> <p>Caulcott – Support For the safety of residents.</p> <p>B4030 30mph – Support For the safety of residents.</p>
<p>(6) Local Resident, (Lower Heyford, Station Road)</p>	<p>Lower Heyford – Object The traffic very rarely keeps to the 30mph on the B4030.</p> <p>Caulcott – Object</p>

I only support this if it includes the B4030 through Caulcott where traffic goes at an alarming speed.

B4030 30mph – Support

It makes no sense having such a small 40 mph section in the middle of the 30 mph. The traffic hurtles through at an alarming rate ignoring the speed limit

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (LOWER HEYFORD PARISH) (SPEED LIMITS) ORDER

Lower Heyford Parish Council wishes to submit the following comments and amendments to the proposed *Oxfordshire County Council (Lower Heyford Parish) (Speed Limits) Order*.

The Parish Council is content with the majority of the proposals and welcomes the 20mph limits in the villages of Lower Heyford and Caulcott. We feel that the current proposal misses two key opportunities to address significant safety concerns within the Parish that could be resolved through minor amendments to the plan where the benefits far outweigh any costs. If these amendments are made at this point, the costs are likely to be insignificant.

Amendment 1: Crossroad junction between Freehold Street/Station Road/B4030.

- **Current Proposal.** Sheet B of the proposal highlights the maintenance of the existing 30mph limit and extend on B4030 (Bicester Road) and the existing 40mph limit on Station Road
- **Requested Amendment.**
 - 1.1 Convert the existing 30mph limit around the crossroads of Freehold Street and Station Road (inc proposed extension on B4030 Bicester Road) into a 20mph limit.
 - 1.2 Convert the existing 40mph limit on Station Road (West of the junction) to a 30mph limit.
 - 1.3 Introduce a 40mph buffer between the NSL on Station Road (East of the junction) and the start of the 20mph limit.
- **Rationale and Evidence.** The junction in question has experienced no less than 4 significant vehicle accidents within the last 12 months. There is little to no paved area at that junction, yet a bus stop exists on both sides of the road (opposite and adjacent to Kingdom Hall), which is used by school children and the elderly. In addition, vehicles approaching the junction from the West have limited visibility of vehicles and pedestrians at the junction. Vehicles entering the junction from Freehold Street are at significant risk of a collision due to limited visibility at the junction. The data collected from the Speed Identification Devices since May 21 identifies that approximately 76% of traffic is exceeding the 30mph limit when travelling from NW to SE. Approximately 46% of traffic over the same period is exceeding the 30mph limit when travelling SE to NW around this junction. A reduction in speed limits in and around this junction is likely to reduce the risk of a serious collision between vehicles or with a pedestrian. The introduction of buffers (Amendments 1.2 and 1.3) are viewed as essential to assist the reduction of speed before this high-risk junction.

Amendment 2: B4030 through Caulcott Village.

- **Current Proposal.** Sheet C of the proposal highlights that there is no planned amendment to the speed limit on the B4030 through Caulcott Village.
- **Requested Amendment.**
 - 2.1 Convert the existing 40mph limit into a 20mph limit.
 - 2.2 Introduce a 40mph buffer between the NSL and the start of the 20mph limit.
- **Rationale and Evidence.** The speeds through this part of Caulcott are the most excessive in the Parish. SID data highlights that 70% of vehicles travelling West and 49% travelling East are exceeding the current 40mph limit, with speeds of over 90mph

being recorded. This stretch of road passes close to residential property and also the Horse and Groom public house. Car parking for the pub is on the opposite side of the road and there is no safe crossing between the parking and the pub. The persistent excessive speeds present a real risk of a fatality or serious collision, and the Parish Council feels that a reduction in speed limit to 20mph is essential for sending a message to all drivers about the nature of this location. The reduction in limit now would also be congruent with other traffic calming measures being investigated for this location.