

Divisions affected: *Sutton Courtenay & Marcham*

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT –
12 OCTOBER 2023**

DRAYTON (ABINGDON): 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 20mph speed limits in Drayton (Abingdon) as indicated by the orange, red, and yellow sections outlined in **Annexes 3A & 3B**, which are less restrictive than the proposals originally advertised.

Executive summary

2. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits in Drayton as shown in **Annexes 1 & 2**. A report was initially tabled in July but following strong objections from bus operators was deferred pending further discussion.

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 Drayton by making them safer and more attractive.

Formal consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 07 June and 30 June 2023. A notice was published in the Oxfordshire Herald Series 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, Vale of White Horse District Council, the local District Cllrs, Drayton (Abingdon) parish council, and the local County Councillor representing the Sutton Courtenay & Marcham division.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Three responses were received from statutory consultees. Thames Valley Police re-iterated their views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits, they consider their response as 'having concerns' rather than an objection. Oxford Bus Company (OBC) object to proposals for extensive 20mph limits on the B4017 and wish to see them restricted to a short length between the Red Lion pub to the North and Kiln Lane to the South. Drayton Parish Council expressed support for the proposals.

Other Responses:

8. All eight online responses were objections. A Witney resident objected suggesting blanket limits were an unnecessary waste of money with the County Council pursuing political ambition rather than representing the views of the electorate. Six local residents, and someone representing a group objected on the grounds that the proposals were unnecessary, would increase congestion and dilute the impact of more valid lower limits. One objector supported 20mph limits in residential roads.
9. The responses are shown in **Annex 4**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Subsequent Bus Operator Discussions

10. Following the deferment of a decision in July, further discussions with bus operators were undertaken to seek an acceptable solution. However, while some reduction to the originally proposed and advertised 20mph speed limit scheme was agreed, it was not deemed appropriate to reduce to the extent that the bus operators wished without compromising the impact and intent of the 20mph policy. As such their concerns and objection remains.

Officer response to objections/concerns

11. The main purpose of the scheme is to improve safety and create an environment to encourage greater use of active travel by reducing speeds. 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. 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.

13. Officers sympathise with operator concerns and acknowledge the importance of this bus corridor and recognise the argument that it is relatively, open and the sections of the road in question is strategic. However, officers professional view, taking into account also the strong support for 20mph speed limits from the local council, local member and several strong advocates in the community, is that implementation of the 20mph speed limit, as now proposed within this report, align with the 20mph policy and will help create a safer environment.

14. The proposals and their impact, as with all schemes, will be kept under review including liaison with the bus company. Speed limits could be changed in the future should bus services prove to be in serious jeopardy.

Bill Cotton

Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes
Annexes 1 & 2: Consultation plans
Annexes 3A & 3B Plans of amended proposals
Annex 4: Consultation responses

Contact Officers: Phil Whitfield 07912523497
Geoff Barrell 07392 318869

October 2023

A B



Drayton Overview Revision 1.0

Legend	
Proposed 20	█
Existing 20	█
Not Public Highway/ Private road	█
Existing 30	█
Existing 40	█
Existing 50	█
Existing NSL	█
Not Public Highway	█

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved
1.0	27.04.23	Proposed 2	C.R		

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
 Owen Jenkins
 Director for Infrastructure Delivery
 Communities, Oxfordshire County Council
 County Hall
 100 High Street
 Oxford
 OX1 1ND
 Tel: 0845 310 1111

Project title: Drayton 20mph Scheme

Drawing title:
 Drayton 20mph Scheme Overview Sheet 1

Drawing Status

Scale @ A3	Drawn by: C.R	Checked by: E.JB	Approved by: G.JB
	Data drawn: 27.04.23	Date checked:	Date approved:

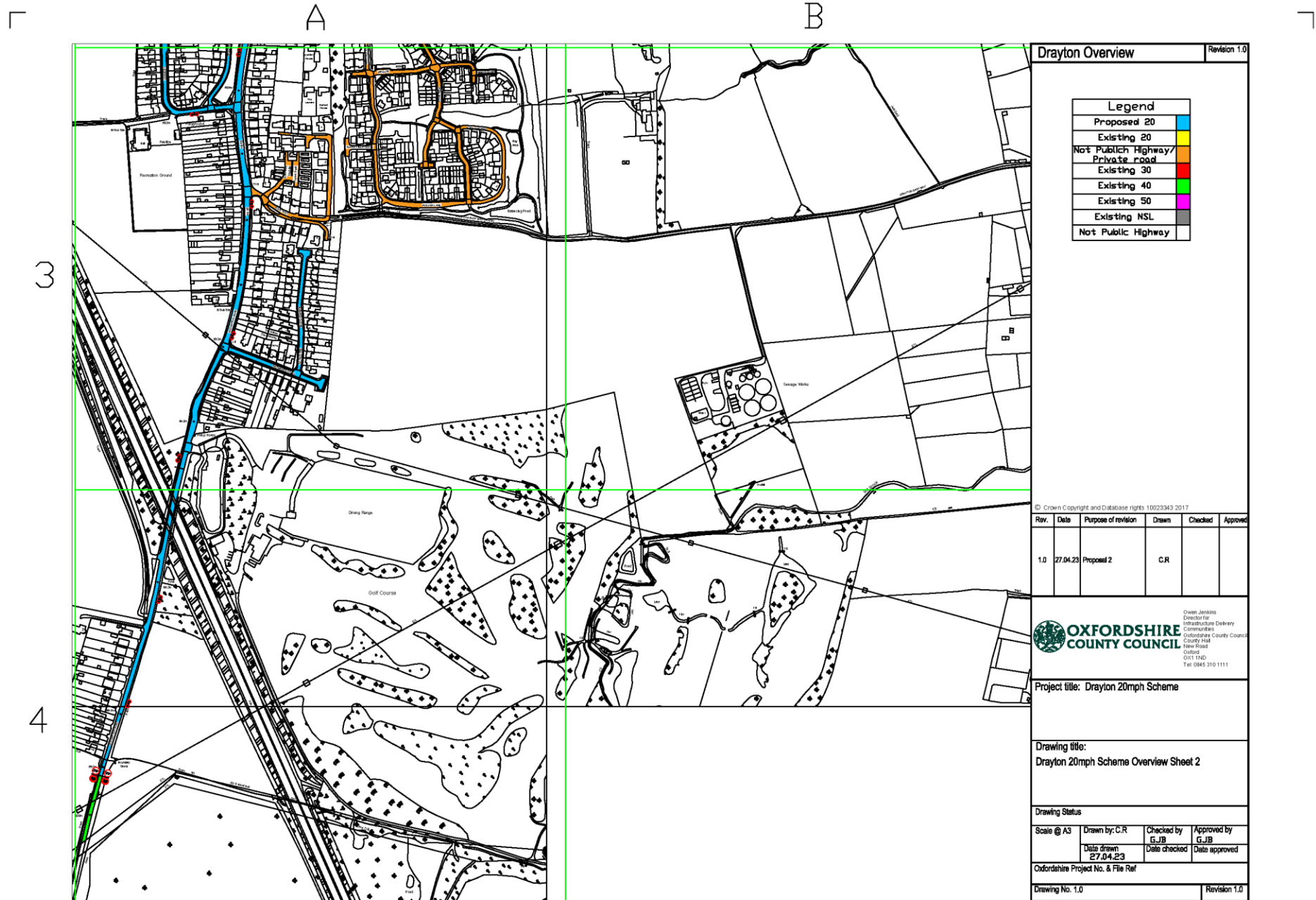
Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref

Drawing No. 1.0	Revision 1.0
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Drayton Overview Revision 1.0

Legend	
Proposed 20	█
Existing 20	█
Not Public Highway/ Private road	█
Existing 30	█
Existing 40	█
Existing 50	█
Existing NSL	█
Not Public Highway	█

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OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
Owen Jenkins
 Director for Infrastructure Delivery
 Communities
 Oxfordshire County Council
 County Hall
 Cherwell Road
 Oxford
 OX1 1ND
 Tel: 0845 310 1111

Project title: Drayton 20mph Scheme

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 Drayton 20mph Scheme Overview Sheet 2

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1

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Drayton 20mph B4017 Revision 1.0

Legend	
Original 20mph Proposed for Consultation	
Extent of 20mph initially accepted by bus operator	
Section officers recommend can reasonably stay at 30mph	
Proposed 20mph after further bus operator discussion	
Section bus operators continue to object to following further discussions but officers propose as 20mph	

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1.0	28.09.23	B4017 20mph Extent	C.R		

Owen Jenkins
Director for
Infrastructure Delivery
Communities
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
Glen Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND
Tel: 0845 310 1115

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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Drayton 20mph B4017 Revision 1.0

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OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
Owen Jenkins
 Director for Infrastructure Delivery
 Communities
 Oxfordshire County Council
 County Hall
 100 High Street
 Oxford
 OX1 1ND
 Tel 0845 310 1111

Project title: Drayton 20mph Scheme

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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>
(2) Drayton Parish Council	<p>Support – Drayton PC supports the 20 mph scheme</p>
(3) Business Development & Partnerships Manager, (Oxford Bus Company / Thames Travel)	<p>Object – Drayton has excellent bus service provision in terms of frequency, spread of the day/week that service is available. Drayton has direct services to Abingdon, Didcot and Oxford provided by the Thames Travel X2 service. This operates up to every 20 minutes Mondays to Saturdays with a bus up to every 30 minutes on Sundays and Public Holidays. There is also the night bus NX2 service that provides similar journeys in the early hours of Saturday and Sunday mornings. The village is also served by buses to schools and the Kasam Stadium.</p> <p>We have no problem with and support these proposals where they do not affect bus services. However, we have concerns about the 20mph to be applied to the B4017 which is the main road running north south through the village.</p> <p>We believe the introduction of a 20mph speed limit in the centre of Drayton near the village green and Post Office is a sensible suggestion given the frontages and planned mixing between vulnerable road users and motorised traffic and so support this section. North of the Red Lion PH and south of Kiln Lane there are minimal direct frontages and commercial activity which would see planned mixing between vulnerable road users and motorised traffic. We therefore object to the proposed reduced speed limit for these two sections of the B4017 road. Indeed, on the southern section there are large parts with no frontages at all on one or both sides of the road.</p> <p>Whilst the two sections of road which we object to the reduced speed limit may seem modest in length, the cumulative reduction in speeds on bus journey times need to be considered. In recent time the speed limit between Drayton and Abingdon has been reduced from 50mph to 40mph and there are plans to introduce 20mph speed limits in both Abingdon and Steventon.</p>

	<p>It is important that buses are able to make progress where it is safe for them to do so. Slowing journeys makes services less attractive to passengers and would serve to encourage negative modal shift from public transport to private motor vehicles, which is contrary to the council's policies. Ultimately if journey times become too great, either, extra bus and driver resource needs to be added to maintain the same level of service (i.e. increased cost for no increased revenue) or alternatively timetables need to be trimmed so that they can be operated with the existing resource (i.e. reduced revenue from the same operating cost). This could lead to the X2 service becoming financially unsustainable in its current form and so could lead to service reductions.</p> <p>Given the nature of the B4017 and the distance involved it is unlikely that walking will make up significant mode share along the wider corridor (for example Drayton to Oxford or Drayton to Didcot). Therefore, the council should be seeking to maximise support for public transport on this corridor to help achieve our decarbonisation aims.</p>
(4) Local Resident, (Drayton)	<p>Object - 20mph zones should be carefully targeted to reflect clear risk not imposed in a blanket way which dilutes their impact where they are actually needed</p>
(5) Local Resident, (Abingdon, King Street)	<p>Object - Do not feel this is necessary, road is safe and fine as it is</p>
(6) Local Resident, (Abingdon, Bowler Gardens)	<p>Object - I object on 20 mph speed limits being imposed on the major roads through the village (Abingdon Road, Steventon Road (both part of the B4017) and High Street (B4016)). The traffic is slow enough on these roads due to current traffic speed reductions schemes (traffic lights, zebra crossing, speed bumps) and due to parked cars (mainly on High Street) that further speed reduction is not needed. Having a 20 mph zone across the whole village will slow traffic too much, and create longer commutes, including in buses, which is not a way to increase the numbers of people taking public transport.</p> <p>Can the council show the data where road accidents have been caused in these specific areas due to excessive speed? It seems the blanket excuse "road safety concerns" is rarely backed up by figures.</p> <p>I'm in support of 20 mph zones on non-main roads (e.g. Sutton Wick Lane, Henleys Lane), and the roads around the Drayton Primary School. I'd also support timed 20 mph limits on Abingdon Road which coincide with school drop off and pick up time (e.g. flashing lights and warnings, especially at crossing points).</p>

<p>(7) Local Resident, (Abingdon, Saxton Road)</p>	<p>Object - With the current traffic issues already in Abingdon lowering the speed limit in certain areas is not going to improve anything just more of a nuisance</p>
<p>(8) Local Resident, (Abingdon, Bowler Gardens)</p>	<p>Object - I don't believe that this will increase safety within the suggested area. 30 MPH currently has no issues and traffic is a struggle at flowing with a higher speed limit. The area is not immediately built up enough to warrant a reduction in speed limits</p>
<p>(9) Local Resident, (Abingdon, Bowler Gardens)</p>	<p>Object - Why does it need to be 20? It's going to increase the traffic more than it already is. Constant queues etc. Barely any pathways near the side of the road anyway</p>
<p>(10) As part of a group/organisation, (Abingdon, Crescent)</p>	<p>Object - Entirely not required.</p>
<p>(11) Member of public, (Witney, Oxford Hill)</p>	<p>Object - Drayton given the size and geography of this occasion (and a pleasure to visit) does not need the 20mph zones as this is not beneficial to the small communal area. Residents I spoken to in the local shop are seeing what is happening elsewhere and commented how depressing it is to be reminded every 10 yards of the new limit considering it unnecessary, cruel and becoming a dictatorship. I could not agree more as it is a bit like a Russian street being fed Z propaganda every 10 yards if you google it.</p> <p>The area does not need the speed limits to be reduced and neither does it need services slowed further which only causes anger and creates less trust in local politics. The roads do not need additional restrictions and the signs are better off used in school roads, retirement communities and high streets but does not need blanket restrictions everywhere. Totally uncalled for. This makes pollution far worse if people are made to slow down but undoubtedly to sceptics that know how this works, is the Council will see the data and will smear the motorist further not getting out the cars and then considers further restrictions/sanctions which will only play in to the hands of conspiracy theorists that the pie in the sky net zero is about taking people out of their cars by force going back to the dark ages. So really do not recommend this goes ahead but undoubtedly the stalinist minds have already made their mind up and the consultation will be a sham unfortunately.</p>