

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 29 JUNE 2017
PROPOSED SPEED LIMIT REDUCTIONS ON A423 OXFORD
SOUTHERN BYPASS AND ADJACENT ROADS

Report by Strategic Director, Communities

Introduction

1. This report presents responses received in the course of a statutory consultation on a proposal to introduce a 50mph speed limit on the A423 Oxford Southern Bypass, and 30mph speed limits on roads linking the bypass to Kennington and Oxford.

Background

2. The above speed limit changes have been proposed following consideration of the post completion road safety audit of the major improvement scheme at the A423 Kennington roundabout completed in late 2014. In considering the extent of the proposal, account was taken of the existing 50mph speed limit on the adjacent A423 Heyford Hill roundabout, and the existing 30mph limit at Kennington and on the Old Abingdon Road in Oxford. A plan of the proposal is shown at Annex 1.

Consultation

3. The formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 30 March and 28 April 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, South Oxfordshire & the Vale of White Horse District Councils, Oxford City Council, Kennington, South Hinksey, Sandford, Littlemore & Sunningwell Parish Councils and the local County Councillors.
4. Four responses were received. These are summarised at Annex 2. 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 the proposed 50mph speed limit on the A423 Southern Bypass, providing the necessary speed data fully supports the proposal. They did, however, raise an objection to the proposed 30mph on the roads linking the bypass to Kennington and Oxford, taking account of the character of these roads which have no or minimal road-side development, and which, therefore, they do not consider would be perceived

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by drivers as suitable for a 30mph limit, with the consequent risk of there being high levels of non-compliance. Additionally the police response noted the low number of reported injury accidents on these roads (3 slight injury accidents have been recorded in the most recent 5-year period for which data is available), which in their opinion also reduced the case for a speed limit reduction.

6. The proposals were supported by an elected member of the Vale of the White Horse District Council for this area and also by a member of the public, who also requested that consideration be given to extending the existing 50mph speed limit on the A34 at Botley southwards to include the Hinksey hill interchange.

Review of responses

7. The response of Thames Valley Police is noted and it is accepted in respect of their objection to the proposed 30mph speed limit on the linking roads to the southern bypass that the level of road-side development is low.
8. Alternatives to the current proposals that would help address this objection would be to extend the proposed 50mph speed limit into the linking roads to meet the current 30mph speed limits, or to introduce a 40mph limit on these roads (the latter would only be appropriate for the roads to the north of the A423, given the very short length of the link road between the westbound A423 and the existing 30mph terminal signs).
9. Both of the above would also have the advantage of retaining the existing 30mph terminal sign locations which arguably would have a stronger benefit in terms of reminding drivers to reduce speeds on the entry to the built up areas, noting that as the linking roads have street lighting, it would not be possible to provide 30mph repeater signs if a 30mph limit was approved.
10. It is therefore recommended that the proposed 50mph speed limit on the A423 Oxford Southern bypass is approved, but with a further consultation being carried out on:
 - a) Extending the proposed 50mph limit into the link road to/from the westbound A423 carriageway to meet the existing 30mph limit (**A** on plan at Annex 1)
 - b) Introducing a 40mph speed limit on the linking roads (including the north end of Kennington Road) to/from the eastbound A423 carriageway (**B** on plan at Annex 1)

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

11. The proposals would help facilitate the safe movement of traffic.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

12. Funding for the speed limit changes is available from the residual budget for the major improvement scheme at the A423 Kennington roundabout.

RECOMMENDATION

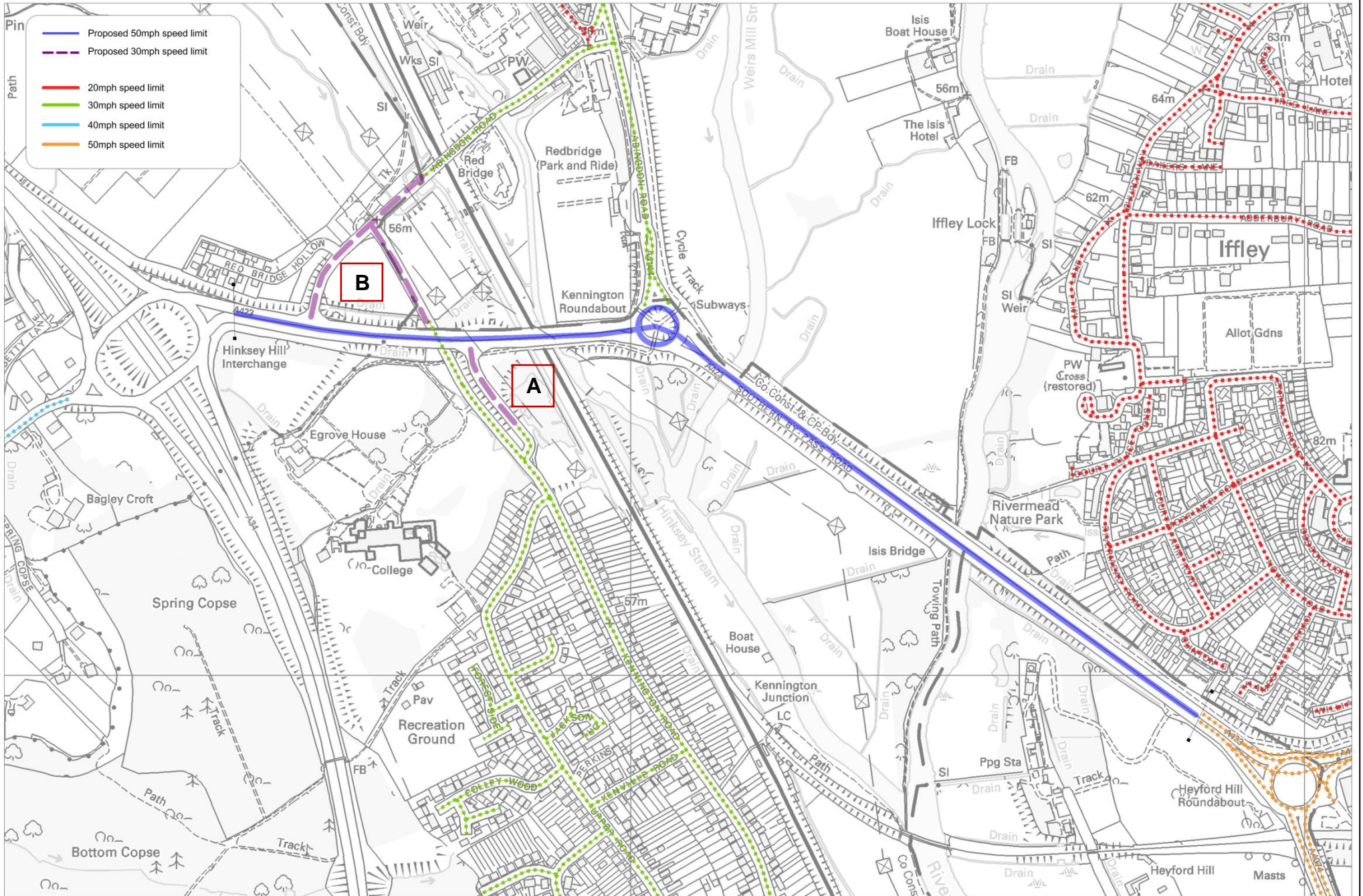
13. **The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposal for a 50mph speed limit on the A423 Oxford Southern bypass as advertised, but with a further consultation being carried out on revised proposals for the linking roads as set out in paragraph 10 of this report.**

OWEN JENKINS
Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Background papers: Plan of proposed restrictions
 Consultation responses

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RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Thames Valley Police	<p><u>Proposed 50mph (A423 Southern Bypass)</u> – No objection – this will make it consistent with most of the other roads that form part of the Oxford City ring road, providing the necessary speed data has already been gathered and that data fully supports this proposal.</p> <p><u>Proposed 30mph (linking Roads)</u> – Object - having taken into account: collision history, speed of existing traffic, road environment, enforcement, road character and driver perception etc.</p>
(2) Vale of White Horse District Councillor	Support - <i>No response.</i>
(3) Vale of White Horse District Council Planning	No objection.
(4) Online response	Support - I would also like to see the speed limit reduced to 50 mph on the A34 between just south of Botley (where the 50mph limit stops going south) and the Hinksey interchange. I guess this is not under County control but any pressure you can bring to bear on Highways England would be welcome.