

Divisions affected: *Wheatley*

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT – 14 DECEMBER 2023

ELSFIELD: PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMITS

Report by Corporate Director, Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet Member for Transport Management is **RECOMMENDED** to approve the introduction of 20mph speed limits in Elsfield as advertised.

Executive summary

2. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits in Elsfield as shown in **Annex 1**.

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 Elsfield by making them safer and more attractive.

Formal consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 09 November and 01 December 2023. 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, South Oxfordshire District Council, the local District Cllrs, Elsfield parish meeting, Beckley & Stowood parish council, and the local County Councillor representing the Wheatley division.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Thames Valley Police re-iterated views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits which they consider as 'concerns' rather than an objection. The Chairman of the Parish Meeting explained that 45% of residents supported the proposals while 54% had no strong opinion and 1% objected. The Parish Meeting consequently support the proposals; however they state 'up to the B4027' whereas the proposals do not extend this far but instead replace the existing 30mph limit and only cover the built-up village area.

Other Responses:

8. As the whole community responded to the Parish Meeting's consultation the only online response was from a member of the public from Bicester who responds to almost all 20mph limit consultations. The person quotes university studies claiming that 20 limits have little impact on road safety and suggests the proposals are about more control and making life harder for drivers in an ideological war.
9. The consultation responses are shown in **Annex 2**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Officer response to objections/concerns

10. The main purpose of the scheme is to improve road safety and to encourage greater use of active travel by reducing speeds; this will also reduce collisions. 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 reduce the County's carbon footprint. This forms part of a countywide programme of works that seeks to deliver 'a safer place with a safer pace'.
11. The Parish Meeting's implied suggestion that the proposals should extend to the B4027 is not realistic as it would include 1.2km of rural road with an alignment that prevents casual excessive speeds by drivers. 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 any specific comments made of this nature in this report.

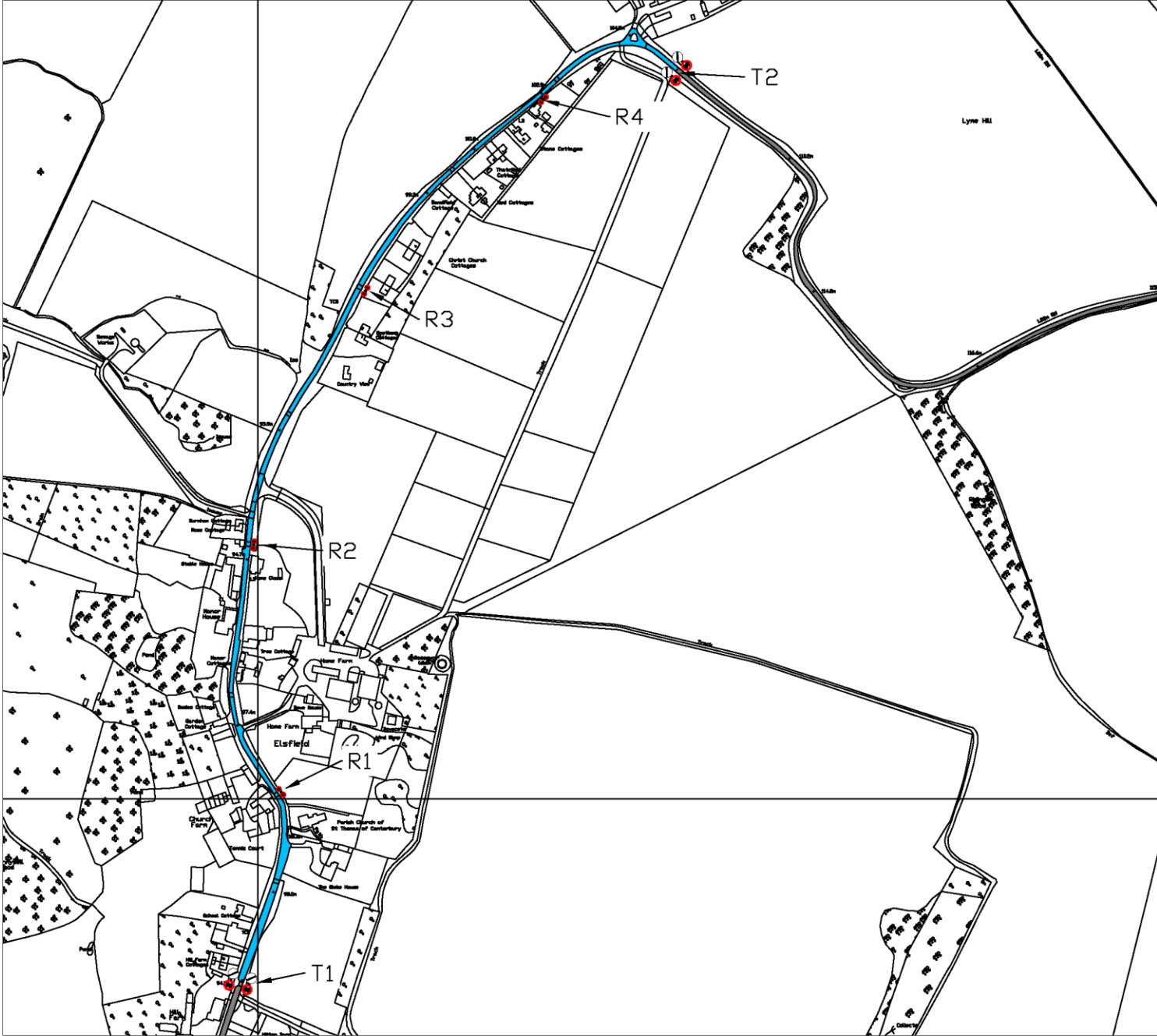
Bill Cotton
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes

Annex 1: Consultation plan
Annex 2: Consultation responses

Contact Officers: Geoff Barrell (Team Leader – Traffic and Road Safety)

December 2023



Elsfield Overview						REVISION 1.0							
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Legend</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #00AEEF; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Proposed 20</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #A9A9A9; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Existing NSL</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #FFFFFF; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Not Public Highway</td> </tr> </table>						Legend			Proposed 20		Existing NSL		Not Public Highway
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© Crown Copyright and Database rights 10023343 2017													
Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved								
2.0	11.08.23	Proposal 2	C.R										
<div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle; font-size: x-small; margin-left: 10px;"> Owen Jenkins Director for Infrastructure Delivery Communities Oxfordshire County Council County Hall New Road Oxford OX1 1ND Tel: 0845 310 1111 </div>													
Project title: Elsfield 20mph Scheme													
Drawing title: Elsfield 20mph Scheme Overview													
Drawing Status													
Scale @ A3	Drawn by: C.R	Checked by: G.JB	Approved by: G.JB										
	Date drawn: 11.08.23	Date checked: 11.08.23	Date approved: 11.08.23										
Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref													
Drawing No. 1.0					Revision 1.0								

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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) Elsfield Parish Meeting	<p>Support – In May 2022, residents of Elsfield met with Tim Bearder in our Village Room and discussed the historic issues of vehicles speeding through the village. Whilst the village lacks pavements along the majority of its road, people walking dogs and children in buggies are particularly vulnerable to speeding traffic. Furthermore, people riding bicycles and horses have reported “close calls” with impatient and inconsiderate drivers.</p> <p>The nine speed bumps through the village have flattened over time and, with the prevalence of large 4x4 cars, are now ineffective as a traffic calming measure.</p> <p>Whilst we have had a fortunate lack of major injuries or fatalities along the road, the council is unable to upgrade the speed bumps.</p> <p>It was also noted that the national speed limit sign on the single track road, off the B4072, enables cars to travel faster on the single track road than the 50mph limit on the 2-lane B4072 that they had left. This makes no sense and adds to the dangers for vulnerable road users along the stretch of road before entering the north end of the village.</p> <p>Having discussed the options of reducing the enforceable speed limit through the village to the B4072, every resident present at the meeting voted. For those residents who were not present, an email was sent asking whether they were in favour of a speed reduction to 20mph.</p> <p>The collective responses were:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In favour – 41 (45%) - No strong opinion – 49 (54%) - Against – 1 (1%) <p>Given the collective responses from Elsfield residents, we would like to support the County Council's proposal to reduce the speed limit through Elsfield, up to the B4072, to 20mph.</p>
(3) Member of public, (Bicester)	<p>Object – Reducing speed limits from 30mph to 20mph has "little impact" on road safety, according to a study from Queen's University Belfast, Edinburgh University and the University of Cambridge:</p> <p>https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/news/motoring-news/do-20mph-speed-limits-reduce-the-number-of-car-crashes-and-casualties/</p> <p>This 20mph scheme is all about more control and making life harder for drivers. The council is paid by us to serve us, not to run ideological wars on us.</p>