

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 7 SEPTEMBER 2017

PROPOSED SPEED LIMIT REDUCTIONS ON LINK ROADS TO A423 OXFORD SOUTHERN BYPASS

Report by Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Introduction

1. This report presents responses received in the course of a statutory consultation to introduce revised speed limits on the roads linking the A423 Oxford Southern Bypass to Kennington and Oxford.

Background

2. Following a formal consultation on proposed speed limit changes on the A423 Oxford Southern bypass and roads linking the bypass to Kennington and Oxford, the Cabinet Member for Environment on 29 June 2017 approved introduction of a 50mph speed limit on the bypass between the A34/A423 Hinksey Hill interchange and the existing 50mph speed limit on the bypass north west of the A423/A4074 Heyford Hill roundabout. However, it was recommended - after considering the responses to the consultation - that proposals for introducing a 30mph speed limit on the linking roads should not be progressed but that a further consultation be carried out on revised speed limit proposals on these roads as shown at Annex 1.

Consultation

3. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 13 July and 11 August 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 local County Councillors.
4. Six 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 expressed no objection but did raise a query on the reasoning for the proposals. The Vale of the White Horse District Council simially expressed no objection.

6. Kennington Parish Council while not expressing a formal objection suggested that a 30mph speed limit on these roads - as was consulted on and reported to the Cabinet Member for Environment decisions meeting on 29 June 2017 - would be less confusing.
7. Cyclox and Cycling UK, groups representing cyclists interests, formally objected to the proposals, requesting that a 30mph speed limit should be introduced on these roads, although noted that the current proposals would still have some benefit. It was also suggested that a 20mph speed limit is considered on the Old Abingdon Road between the Kennington Road and Bertie Place junctions. A similar objection was received from a member of the public, though this suggested that the proposed 40mph speed limit would be appropriate on the short length of the northern link road between the A423 and the Red Bridge Hollow junction and on the southern link road between the A423 and Kennington Road.
8. One expression of support for the proposals was received from a member of the public.

Review of responses

9. The response of Thames Valley Police is noted. The current proposals were drawn up following consideration of the police objection to the proposed introduction of a 30mph speed limit on these roads on the grounds that their character was not consistent with the Department for Transport (DfT) guidance on setting local speed limits. Officers considered alternative options taking account of the DfT guidance, as discussed below.
10. On the roads to the north of the A423 bypass, the options considered were either the introduction of a 40mph or 50mph speed limit; the former was considered more appropriate taking account of the character of the road and the presence of some accesses, including that for Red Bridge Hollow. The proposed 40mph speed limit will require signs not only at the terminal points, but also repeater signs along these roads, which should address the concerns raised by Kennington Parish Council on possible confusion for drivers. Indeed one advantage of the current proposal in this respect as compared to the previous proposal for a 30mph speed limit is that the latter would have resulted in there only being 30mph signs at the A423 junction, as national regulations on speed limit signing prohibit the use of 30mph repeater signs or carriageway roundels on roads - as here - with street lighting. There would therefore have been a potential risk that if drivers failed to see the 30mph signs on turning off the A423, they might mistakenly proceed on both the Old Abingdon Road and Kennington Road assuming the 50mph speed limit (which has been approved but yet to be implemented on the A423) still applied.
11. On the link road to the south of the A423, the only alternative option to extending the 30mph speed limit to the A423 junction (which was not supported by the police in the previous consultation) is to extend the 50mph speed limit on the bypass to meet the current 30mph speed limit, given that

CMDE4

the affected length of the link road is only 150 metres, and so is too short to have a separate speed limit.

12. The suggestion of CycloX/Cycling UK that a 20mph speed limit is considered on the Old Abingdon Road between the Kennington Road and Bertie Place junctions is noted, but is not considered to be consistent with DfT guidance on setting local speed limits.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

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

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

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

RECOMMENDATION

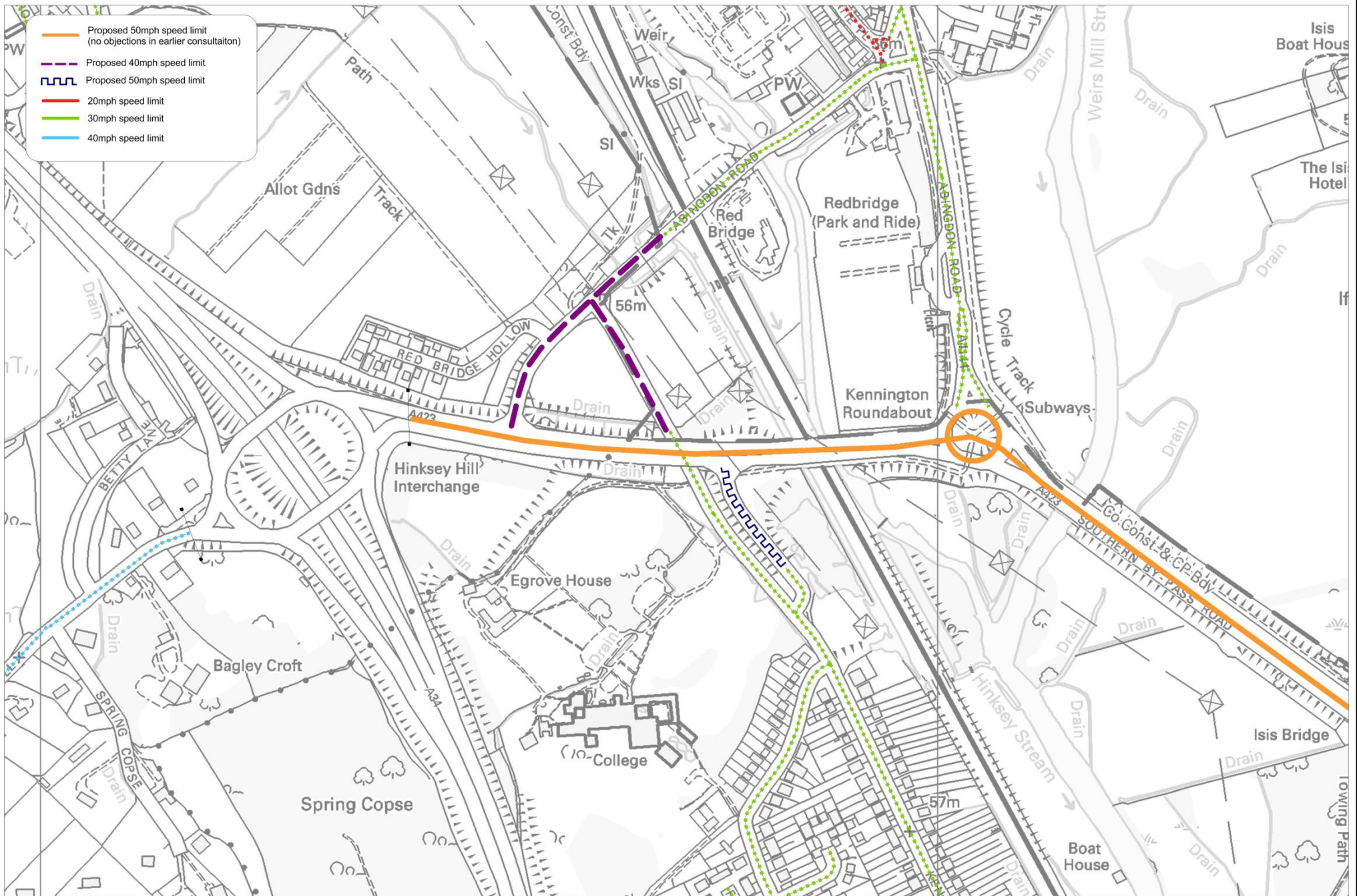
15. **The Cabinet Member for Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposals as advertised.**

OWEN JENKINS
Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Background papers: Plan of proposed restrictions
 Consultation responses

Contact Officers: Anthony Kirkwood 07392 318871

September 2017



RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Thames Valley Police	No objection - On a point of consistency I am slightly confused that the speed limit on the roads north of A423 will be subject to a 40 mph whereas the slips road on the south side (a much shorter road) will be subject to a 50 limit.
(2) Kennington Parish Council	Neither – but noted the view that the proposed 40mph speed limit change may be confusing for drivers, and the council suggested that this is changed to 30mph.
(3) Vale of White Horse District Council	No objection.
(4) Cyclox & Cycling UK	<p><u>40mph Speed Limit on Kennington Road</u> – Object – This stretch of road is designated a "Cycle Super Route" in LTP 4. While works beyond the scope of this consultation are needed to achieve Super Route specification, lowering the speed limit to 30 mph would make the road environment more cycle friendly. Whilst the proposals as advertised MAY have some beneficial effect, Cyclox and Cycling UK object to what we see as 'interim' limits between speed regimes and call for 30 mph. It is a change that would be a best fit with LTP4 objectives. Indeed, looking at the accident data for this road between Kennington Road and Bertie Place, a 20 limit would be a change that would be a best fit with LTP4 objectives.</p> <p><u>40mph Speed Limit on Northern slip road</u> – Object – This stretch of road is designated a "Cycle Super Route" in LTP 4. Some of this road has a substandard cycle track, and some of this road has no on/off road cycle provision at all. While works beyond the scope of this consultation are needed to achieve Super Route specification, lowering the speed limit to 30 mph would make the road environment more cycle friendly. Whilst the proposals as advertised MAY have some beneficial effect, Cyclox and Cycling UK object to what we see as 'interim' limits between speed regimes and call for 30 mph. It is a change that would be a best fit with LTP4 objectives..</p> <p><u>50mph Speed Limit on Southern slip road</u> – Object – This stretch of road forms an important link between 2 "Cycle Super Routes" in LTP 4 (linking Kennington Road with the A 423 cycle track to Kennington and Heyford Hill roundabouts). While works beyond the scope of this consultation are needed to achieve Super Route specification,</p>

CMDE4

	<p>lowering the speed limit to 30 mph would make the road environment more cycle friendly, noting that the slip road slip road is used by cyclists top access the well used segregated cycle track by the A 423 (which is a good link to southern and eastern Oxford employment areas). This requires crossing the slip road at the top just as vehicles exit the A 423. There is no central refuge to use, and some vehicles exit the A 423 quite fast. With this in mind, a 50 mph limit is unacceptable. It would be more appropriate to extend the 30 limit all the way up to the top of the slip road (and move the "Kennington" village sign to the top of the slip road as a reinforcement). Whilst the proposals as advertised MAY have some beneficial effect, Cyclox and Cycling UK object to what we see as 'interim' limits between speed regimes and call for 30 mph. It is a change that would be a best fit with LTP4 objectives..</p>
<p>(5) Online response, (unknown)</p>	<p><u>40mph Speed Limit on Kennington Road</u> – Object – I believe the proposed changes in speed limits are potentially confusing and the opportunity should be taken to simplify them. I believe the proposed 40mph section should be 30mph with the exception of the northern and southern slips (eg from A423 to before Red Bridge Hollow, and Kennington Road to A423). I would also like to see the priority changed or the installation of a mini-roundabout to improve the junction between Kennington Road and Old Abingdon Road with traffic travelling east on Old Abingdon Road giving way. At present Old Abingdon Way is used as a rat run for traffic from the A34 to the city centre south..</p> <p><u>40mph Speed Limit on Northern slip road</u> – Object – Should be 50mph reducing to 30 (see above).</p> <p><u>50mph Speed Limit on Southern slip road</u> - Support – <i>No comment.</i></p>
<p>(6) Resident, (Headington, Oxford)</p>	<p><u>40mph Speed Limit on Kennington Road</u> - Support – <i>No comment.</i></p> <p><u>40mph Speed Limit on Northern slip road</u> - Support – <i>No comment.</i></p> <p><u>50mph Speed Limit on Southern slip road</u> - Support – <i>No comment.</i></p>