

Divisions affected: Deddington

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT – 26 JANUARY 2023

SOMERTON: PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMITS

Report by Corporate Director, Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet Member for Highway Management is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits as advertised.

Executive summary

2. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits in Somerton 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 Somerton by making them safer and more attractive.

Formal Consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 17 November and 16 December 2022. 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, Cherwell District Council, the local District Cllrs, Somerton Parish Council, and the local County Councillor representing the Deddington division.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Thames Valley Police re-iterated their views on OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits; they consider their response as 'having concerns' rather than an outright objection. A local district or parish councillor who appeared to respond on behalf of their Council also voiced support.

Other Responses:

8. A further 13 online respondents expressed support. The sole objection was received from a member of the public from South Oxfordshire who suggested the proposals would increase danger and frustration and could prompt the unusual scenario of cyclists being held up and lead to accidents as they overtook cars adhering to the lower limit.
9. The Parish Council report that all responses from a What's App group covering approximately 80% of households were positive.
10. Those who responded online, were also asked whether if the 20mph speed limit proposals were implemented, would it likely influence a change to their mode of travel in the area, the results of which are shown below:

Travel Change	Number
Yes – walk/wheel more	7 (50%)
Yes - cycle more	2 (14%)
No	4 (29%)
Other	1 (7%)

11. The responses are shown in **Annex 2**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Officer response to objections/concerns

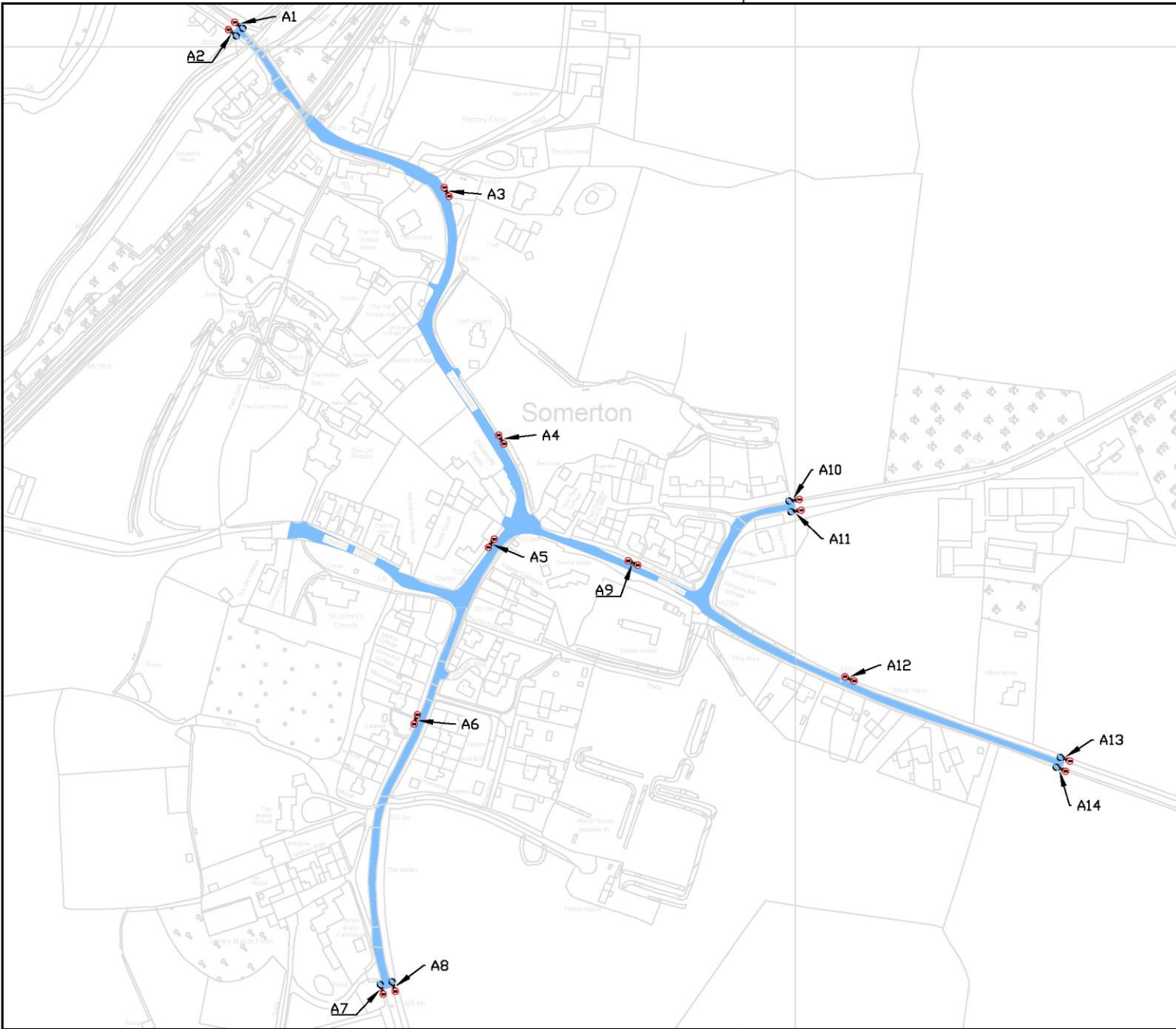
12. The sole objection is similar to those expressed and considered in earlier schemes which were then not deemed to warrant a change in proposals.
13. The main purpose of the scheme is to improve road safety and to encourage greater use of active travel by reducing speeds; this will also reduce accidents. 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 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'.


Bill Cotton
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes Annex 1: Consultation Plan
 Annex 2: Consultation responses

Contact Officers: Tim Shickle tim.shickle@oxfordshire.gov.uk
 Geoff Barrell geoff.barrell@oxfordshire.gov.uk

January 2023



Drawing No.		Revision			
Notes:					
		Proposed 20mph Limit			
© Crown Copyright and Database rights 10023943 2017					
Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved
		Bill Cotton Director of Communities Operations Oxfordshire County Council County Hall New Road Oxford OX1 1ND Tel: 0845 310 1111			
Project title					
Somerton 20mph Limit					
Drawing title					
Sheet A					
Drawing Status					
Scale @ A3	Drawn by	ER	Checked by	GJB	Approved by
	Date drawn		Date checked		Date approved
			6/01/23		6/01/23
Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref					
Drawing No.		Revision			

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/Member of public, (Moulsford, Ferry lane)</p>	<p>Object – This proposal for 20mph limit is in nobody's interest. As a motorist I always strive to strictly observe 20mph limits just as I observe other limits, but it usually leads to a very unpleasant driving experience owing to tailgaters, and often leads to dangerous overtakes by less patient drivers.</p> <p>As a pedestrian, when stepping into or crossing a road I certainly won't simply assume that oncoming traffic is crawling along at 20mph, just because there's a 20mph sign. Most will be going much faster and and therefor there is absolutely no benefit to the pedestrians - we still have to treat all traffic as travelling at similar speeds to a 30mph limit. Even worse, just occasionally, a vehicle will turn out to be actually driving at 20mph thereby causing me to wait longer for it to pass, before I can safely cross behind it.</p> <p>Regarding speed limit TROs, they have no legal significance for cyclists, yet many reasonably fit cyclists often exceed 20mph. This will give rise to the bizarre situation whereby those few motorists who actually observe the limit could find ourselves tailgated by impatient cyclists and when assisted by a slight gradient, perhaps even overtaken by cyclists - which is highly unlikely to be a safe manoeuvre. It may also give rise to a further temptation for cyclists to illegally ride on the footway, if it allows them to get past 20mph traffic more easily.</p> <p>Travel change: Other</p> <p>When walking I will need to be a lot more cautious of vehicular traffic, especially cyclists.</p>
<p>(3) Local or County Cllr, (Somerton, Ardley Road)</p>	<p>Concerns – The village and the surrounding roads have seen a massive increase in traffic since the developments at Heyford Park despite an agreed routing agreement. Soho Farmhouse is also a through route for London traffic from Junction 10. As well as a through route from the west to the M40 jnc 10 and the Bicester Stations.</p>

	<p>The village has very few pavements and it has become increasingly dangerous for vulnerable road users with vehicles reaching inappropriate speeds for the road conditions. We welcome this initiative.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
(4) Local Resident/Member of public, (Somerton, Ardley Road)	<p>Support – It will make the roads safer and the village more pleasant.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(5) Local Resident/Member of public, (Somerton, Dovecote Lane)	<p>Support – My family and I are very supportive of reducing the speed limit. People can drive very fast through the village. The roads are narrow, there are some blind corners, and there are a lot of children in the village who are often out and about. Everyone who lives in the village will be much happier and safer if a 20 mph speed limit was introduced.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
(6) Local Resident/Member of public, (Somerton, Paddock)	<p>Support – No pavements, rat run during rush hour with speeding traffic. Dangerous for walking to the playground or down to the canal / footpaths with children</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
(7) Local Resident/Member of public, (Somerton, Heyford Road)	<p>Support – Enhance safety</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
(8) Local Resident/Member of public, (Somerton, Heyford Road)	<p>Support – The road through Somerton is narrow and bordered on both sides by close residential housing. There are young children and old people and many pets in the village. We have lost 4 cats during our time of living in Somerton. 30mph is too fast for vehicles or heavy tractors to stop in emergency. Many vehicles already exceed 30mph, especially coming down the hill into the village.</p>

	Travel change: No
(9) Local Resident/Member of public, (Somerton, Water Street)	<p>Support – Many tight turns with concealed entrances make this proposal sensible. Traffic often too fast around corners where entrances exist</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
(10) Local Resident/Member of public, (Somerton, Water Street)	<p>Support – Vehicles currently drive too quickly in the road. Narrow roads, few pavements, concealed drives, lots of farm traffic. 20MPH would make it far safer for pedestrians and cyclists</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
(11) Local Resident/Member of public, (Bicester, Canal Wharf, Water Lane)	<p>Support – Traffic is increasing. This is a dangerous road with blind bends and dangerous corners and no pavements. Cars travel far too fast at the moment and ignore speed limits. They have to be re-educated to slow down in built up areas.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
(12) Local Resident/Member of public, (Somerton, Water Lane)	<p>Support – As a regular walker and runner in Somerton I am frequently scared and feel threatened by cars passing me closely at 'high' speeds especially on narrow roadways and blind bends</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
(13) Local Resident/Member of public, (Somerton, Water Street)	<p>Support – There are no pavements where I live, I have two young children who are not road safe, drivers career around blind corners, even at 30 a collision would be fatal. We need the speed to be 20 and we need drivers to be aware of children, elderly and that they are driving through a very pedestrian village</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>

<p>(14) Local Resident/Member of public, (Somerton, Heyford Road)</p>	<p>Support – The 20 limit is proven to be a safer speed limit, in a rural environment like Somerton it is very appropriate, the village has a long narrow main street with the village hall in the middle, cars tend to speed past which is of grave concern</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(15) Local Resident/Member of public, (Somerton, Heyford Road)</p>	<p>Support – Cars do travel at over 30mph in our small village despite the lack of pavements on both sides plus closeness of dwellings to the main thoroughfare, Heyford Road. A 20mph limit may not be followed to the letter by many but would, I believe, slow people down to safer speeds.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>