

Divisions affected: *Shrivenham*

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT – 7 SEPTEMBER 2023

LONGCOT: 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 Longcot as advertised.

Executive summary

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

Formal consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 13 July and 04 August 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, Vale of White Horse District Council, the local District Cllrs, Longcot Parish Council, and the local County Councillor representing the Shrivenham division.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Thames Valley Police were the only statutory consultee respondent; they reiterated views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits, they consider their view as 'having concerns' rather than an objection.

Other Responses:

8. One online and two email responses were received. A local resident objected considering the limit to be unnecessary and also expressed strong concerns believing the consultation was underhanded and woefully inadequate at engaging with those most affected. Another local resident raised road safety concerns for vulnerable road-users including pedestrians & horse-riders, and wanted the proposals to include the residential houses on Majors Road.
9. A Witney resident also objected on the basis the proposals were not required and would jeopardise the economy by deterring travel.
10. 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

11. The main purpose of the scheme is to encourage greater use of active travel by reducing speeds; this is also expected to 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 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. Majors Road is considered unsuitable for a 20 limit given the open alignment with minimal frontages and its function as a distributor road and bus route with bus operators indicating they would object strongly to a lower limit given its adverse effect on timetabling. 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. Regarding concerns over poor engagement with residents, it should be noted the consultation was conducted in accordance with regulations governing proposed changes in speed limits including publishing a notice in the local press, a consultation page set up on OCCs 'Let's Talk' website and engagement with statutory consultees & key-stakeholders; including Parish/Town councils, local County Cllrs, and local District Cllrs.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes Annex 1: Consultation plan
 Annex 2: Consultation responses

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September 2023

Longcot Overview

| Legend | |
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| Proposed 20 | |
| Existing 30 | |
| Existing 40 | |
| Existing NSL | |
| Not Public Highway | |



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Drawing title: Longcot 20mph Scheme Overview

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| RESPONDENT | COMMENTS |
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| (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 |

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| | <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) Member of public, (unknown) | <p>Object – I have problem and that is the consultation on the 20mph speed limit proposed for Longcot. This has been done in a totally underhanded way by putting the consultation into the hidden recesses of the OCC website, rather than a letter through the door. Whenever we have been requested to say or do something to change the situation here in Longcot, it has always come via the post. On this occasion, it is being done by stealth and simply put on the website, difficult to find with a very short consultation period.</p> <p>There has, to my knowledge, never been an accident in Longcot in the 20 years I have lived here. The "concerns of the parish" are a sham and it is simply a way of getting the 20mph limit in across the county, just like reducing the speed limit from 60mph to 50mph on the major roads. This is not how democracy is supposed to work. Somebody is getting the lower speed limits through the requirements of legislation by acting in a seemingly proper way but being totally underhanded about this.</p> <p>For your added information, I most certainly disagree with the proposal and I bet many other people would also disagree if they had been informed of such a proposal by post.</p> |
| (3) Member of public, (Witney) | <p>Object – Village does not need blanket 20mph signs and no cost analysis has been done as to what damage will this cause to the local economy when outsiders won't visit because they won't travel through 20 zones.</p> |

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| <p>(4) Local resident, (Longcot, Majors Road)</p> | <p>Concerns – I am v keen to request the scheme is extended to outside the residential houses on Majors Road, Longcot (just outside the village boundary).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All the houses have equestrian facilities, and we all ride horses along the road.• There are also often walkers with dogs and children on this part of the road.• Currently the road is straight and has a speed limit of 50 mph, cars race down it at speed which makes riding and walking very stressful/frightening.• It is only a question of time before a serious accident occurs. Already there have been a number of near misses (spooked horses and a dog run over).• Being included in the 20 mph zone would massively reduce these risks. |
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