

Divisions affected: *Berinsfield & Garsington*

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT –
12 OCTOBER 2023**

NUNEHAM COURTENAY: 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 Nuneham Courtenay as advertised.

Executive summary

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

Formal consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 31 August and 22 September 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, Nuneham parish council, The Baldons parish council, and the local County Councillor representing the Berinsfield & Garsington division.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Two statutory consultees responded. Thames Valley Police re-iterated views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits, they consider their view as 'having concerns' rather than an objection. Oxford Bus Company (OBC) objected on the grounds that many buses travelled that route and any compromise to journey times would affect the viability of services. This is especially so of the Oxford to Wallingford service, where customers have commented on long journey times and the County Council is apparently to use funds in an attempt to reduce the trip duration.

Other Responses:

8. Two other responses were received. Unlimited Oxfordshire, a charity focused on those with physical and sensory disabilities, supports the proposals and in addition seeks a 40mph limit to the south between the village and Golden Balls roundabout. A member of the public objects to the proposals on the basis that the road is part of a major arterial route benefitting many thousands of motorists daily which should be balanced against the very few residents. They suggest the existing limit is a good compromise especially given the minimal pedestrian or cycle activity.
9. 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

10. 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'.
11. The objection from the Go-Ahead Group (incl. Thames Travel) is straightforward, however seven-day survey data from late in 2022 shows the mean speed in both directions to already be below 30mph. It was higher at the northern end, perhaps due to the downhill gradient and the shorter distance between the terminal signs and first building. The mean speed at the southern end by the speed camera warning sign was 23.1mph and 26.4mph at the northern end. Officers see no immediate benefit for a 40mph limit south of the village that might justify its inclusion in this programme.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes Annex 1: Consultation plan
 Annex 2: Consultation responses

Contact Officers: Phil Whitfield 07912523497
 Geoff Barrell 07392 318869

October 2023

Nuneham Courtenay Overview

Legend

Proposed 20	Blue
Existing 30	Red
Existing 50	Purple
Existing NSL	Grey
Not Public Highway	White

© Crown Copyright and Database rights 10023343 2017

Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved
1.0	30.06.23	Proposal 1	C.R		

Owen Jenkins
 Director for
OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
 Infrastructure Delivery
 Communities
 Oxfordshire County Council
 County Hall
 New Road
 Oxford
 OX1 1ND
 Tel: 0845 310 1111

Project title: Nuneham Courtenay 20mph Scheme

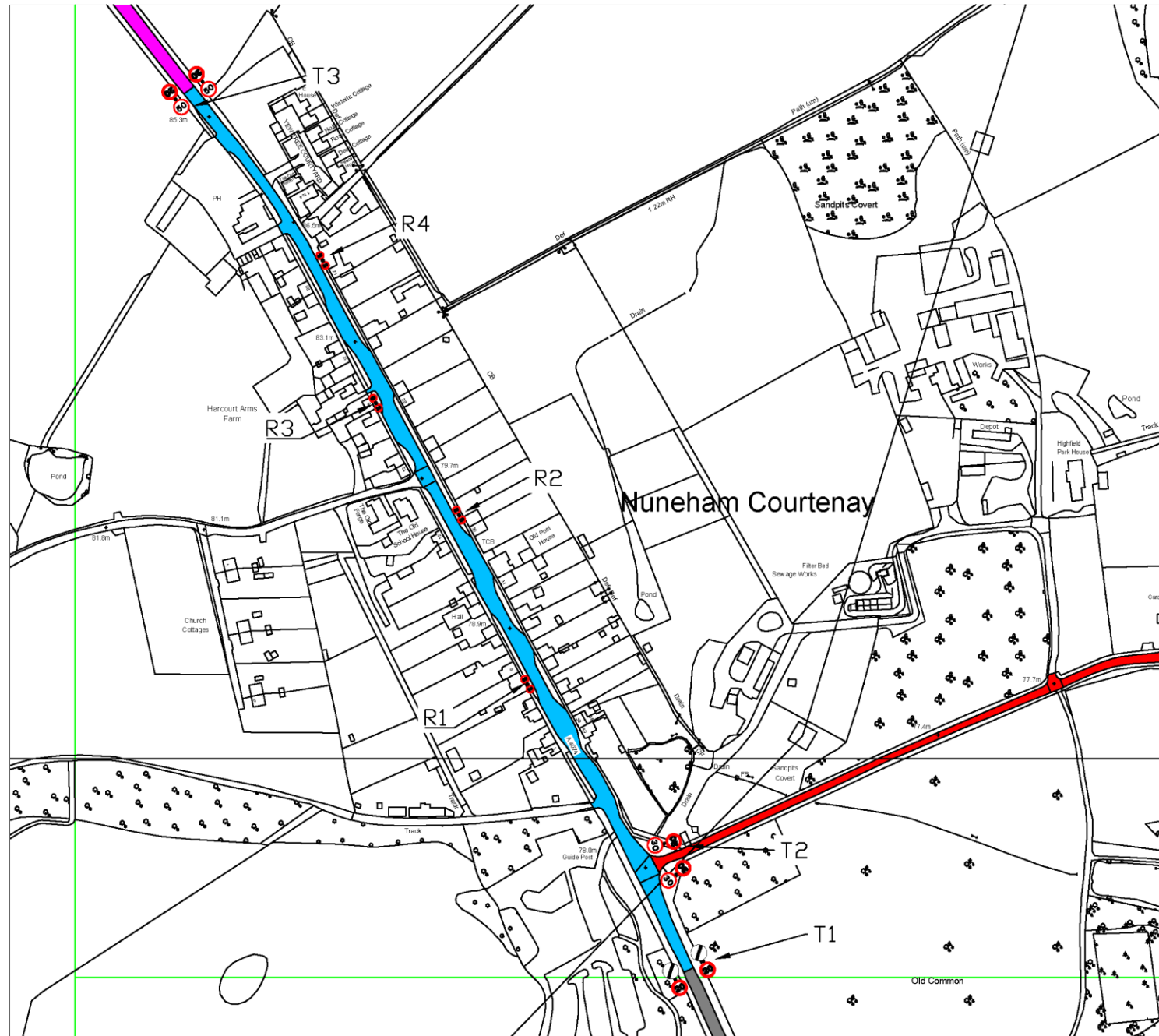
Drawing title:
 Nuneham Courtenay 20mph Scheme Overview

Drawing Status

Scale @ A3	Drawn by: C.R	Checked by: G.J.B	Approved by: G.J.B
	Date drawn: 30.06.23	Date checked: 30.06.23	Date approved: 30.06.23

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 .</p> <p>Compliance with new speed 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. 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 (Speed data received would support a lower speed limit) • 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>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) Managing Director, (Go Ahead Group, Oxford Bus Company, Thames Travel)</p>	<p>Object – Thames Travel operates bus services X40 and 45 to Nuneham Courtenay, and on a typical weekday has 82 bus movements through Nuneham Courtenay village.</p> <p>We have been working with the county council on plans to enhance the X40 service between Wallingford and Oxford, to both add additional journeys and to provide faster end to end journeys, as there is dissatisfaction with the current journey time among many customers. To support this, the County Council has stated that it is planning to use £214,285 of BSIP+ funding provided by central government to divert some journeys on the X40 service via a less commercially viable route, in order to offer improved end to end journey times for customers and to try to grow bus modal share between Wallingford and Oxford, which is a journey that is not viable to undertake via other active travel modes for any but the most committed and enthusiastic cyclist - due to both the distances involved and the high speed nature of the A4074 for much of the journey, with very limited walking and cycling infrastructure available.</p> <p>Implementing a 20mph zone in Nuneham Courtenay will slow down end to end bus journey times on this important corridor and will act to nullify a significant portion of the effect of the proposed journey time improvements. It will also not materially improve the attractiveness of walking or cycling on the A4074 corridor, due to the factors noted above.</p> <p>We understand that in areas where there is frequent and planned mixing between motor traffic and vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists - for example where there are high levels of active frontages, or where evidence suggests that there are collision hotspots involving vulnerable road users - that 20mph limits are likely to be a sensible step to improving road safety in such areas.</p> <p>However, we oppose the blanket implementation of 20mph zones across all built up areas, including areas which do not meet the above criteria, as such a policy can have significant deleterious impacts on bus journey times and can</p>

	<p>serve to make public transport less attractive than other, less sustainable modes. In severe cases, this can lead to bus cycle times becoming unachievable, which in turn can put the continued operation of bus services under threat.</p> <p>We do not perceive Nuneham Courtenay to be an area where frequent and planned mixing between motor traffic and vulnerable road users exists, as there are no real active frontages in the village fronting the A4074, and walking and cycling through the village is not attractive due to the character of the wider A4074 corridor either side of the village, and lack of walking and cycling infrastructure provided.</p> <p>We would therefore wish to register an objection to this proposed scheme. It is important that buses are able to make progress where it is safe for them to do so. Slowing journeys makes services less attractive to passengers and would serve to encourage negative modal shift from public transport to private motor vehicles, which is contrary to the council's policies. Ultimately if journey times become too great, either, extra bus and driver resource needs to be added to maintain the same level of service (i.e. increased cost for no increased revenue) or alternatively timetables need to be trimmed so that they can be operated with the existing resource (i.e. reduced revenue from the same operating cost).</p>
<p>(3) Local group/organisation, (Unlimited Oxfordshire)</p>	<p>Support – welcome the proposal for a 20mph speed limit in Nuneham Courtenay. In busier periods the village is effectively cut in two by almost continuous streams of traffic. This will get even worse when the proposed Clifton Hampden bypass has been built.</p> <p>However, I consider that there should also be a 40mph speed limit to the south of Nuneham Courtenay, between the Golden Balls roundabout and the proposed start of the 20mph speed limit. At present, northbound vehicles, after leaving the Golden Balls roundabout, can legally get up speed to 60mph, and, with the downhill approach to Nuneham Courtenay, some of them fail to reduce speed sufficiently to comply with the existing 30mph speed limit before reaching the Baldons junction.</p> <p>Also, advance warning signs for the 20mph speed limit should be provided. I can remember applying to the Department for Transport, when I was working for the County Council, for authorisation of advance warning signs (countdown signs 300, 200 and 100 metres in advance) for a 30mph speed limit (I can't remember the location of the speed limit, my application was between 15 and 20 years ago). The DfT refused authorisation because they said non-compliance was not likely to be an issue. I hope that the DfT will allow advance warning signs for the 20mph speed limit at Nuneham Courtenay; the way they assess such applications may have changed since they refused my application.</p>

	<p>Something else that should be considered: a pedestrian crossings is desirable near each of the two pairs of bus stops in Nuneham Courtenay. With a 20mph speed limit, zebra crossings would be the most appropriate type.</p> <p>I'll be interested to know, in due course, whether my suggestions for 40mph to the south of Nuneham Courtenay and for zebra crossings will be followed up.</p>
<p>(4) Member of public, (Rickmansworth, New Road)</p>	<p>Object – The A4074 is a major arterial route and is the fastest, most direct road between Oxford and Reading. The stretch through Nuneham Courtney has already been subject to speed reductions in the past, and is one of many along the A4074 in recent years, including approach to the Heyford Hill roundabout, the Wallingford area, the approach to Berinsfield and through Cane End, all of which combine to increase journey times and weaken links to one of our closest neighbouring major towns. Such speed limit reductions and the severing of cross-city vehicle travel in Oxford city are seemingly designed to encourage more vehicles to use the A34, placing more strain on what must be one of the most ineffective National Highways in the country. What's more, this route adds nearly 70% more distance when travelling between town centres, which is of course less desirable from an environmental stance. The needs of tens of thousands of vehicles moving between Oxford and Reading and all towns in between need to be given greater consideration against the hundred or so residents on the stretch of road in question. The local Parish council and local residents will already be aware that A Roads are designated as such because they are important routes for vehicular traffic. 30mph is already a fair compromise. There is little pedestrian or cyclist activity, and if safety is such a concern then efforts would be better invested in installing a crossing.</p>