

**CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 7 SEPTEMBER 2017**  
**PROPOSED 40MPH SPEED LIMIT – SUTTON COURTENAY ROAD /**  
**MILTON ROAD**

**Report by Director for Infrastructure Delivery**

**Introduction**

1. This report presents responses received in the course of a statutory consultation on a proposal to introduce a 40mph speed limit on the Sutton Courtenay Road and Milton Road linking Sutton Courtenay and Didcot.

**Background**

2. As part of measures to improve the safety and amenity of cyclists travelling between Didcot and Milton Park and Sutton Courtenay, it is proposed to introduce a 40mph speed limit on these roads as shown at Annex 1. The measures comprise the provision of new street lighting predominantly on the northern side of Milton Road, but with some lighting units located on the southern side of the road at the bend at the western end of Milton Road.
3. The reduction of the existing speed limit from 60mph to 40mph would support the implementation of a lighting scheme fully compliant with current standards taking account of the offset of such equipment from the carriageway, boundary fences and other street furniture that are present along the route, and will therefore contribute to road safety and encourage the greater usage on this improved commuter route by pedestrians and cyclists.

**Consultation**

4. The formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 21 June and 21 July 2017. A public notice was placed in the Oxford Times and Didcot herald newspapers 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, Didcot Town Council and Sutton Courtenay, Milton, West Hagbourne and Harwell Parish Councils.
5. Twenty seven responses were received. These are summarised at Annex 2 with copies of all of the full responses received available for inspection in the Members' Resource Centre.
6. Thames Valley Police objected to the proposal stating they were not convinced that reducing the speed limit alone to 40 will achieve a safe cycle environment and suggested other options are explored for this route.

7. Didcot Town Council also objected to the proposal, stating that it was considered unnecessary.
8. The Vale of the White Horse District Council expressed no objection to the proposal.
9. The remaining twenty four responses were from members of the public. Twelve expressions of support, ten objections and two responses expressing neither objection or support. The objections were primarily on the grounds that the proposed speed limit was unnecessary given the character of the road and the provision of the existing shared use footway/cycle track on the south and west side of the road, though additionally objections were received from cyclists on the grounds that the proposal failed to address the deficiencies of the cycle track in respect of its width and maintenance condition.

### **Review of responses**

10. The objections from Thames Valley Police, Didcot Town Council and other respondents in respect of the justification of the proposal are noted, as are those relating to the need for a more comprehensive improvement to the cycle track. However there are significant site and financial constraints that would make the latter impractical to deliver in the short to medium term, and the proposal is essential to delivering street lighting compliant with current standards without the need for land acquisition and other costly measures. The lighting will significantly increase the attractiveness of this cycle route which has the potential to attract an appreciable number of additional cycle trips between Didcot (where there are very large residential developments in progress) and Milton Park, a key employment site.

### **Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)**

11. Funding for the proposed speed limit change is available from the Science Vale Cycle Network project. The cycle network improvements will enhance sustainable access to employment in the Science Vale area. This strategy has been supported by the LEP and Department for Transport in awarding a grant allocation under the Local Growth Fund (LGF).

### **How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives**

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

### **Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)**

13. Funding for the proposed speed limit change is available from the Science Vale Cycle Network project.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

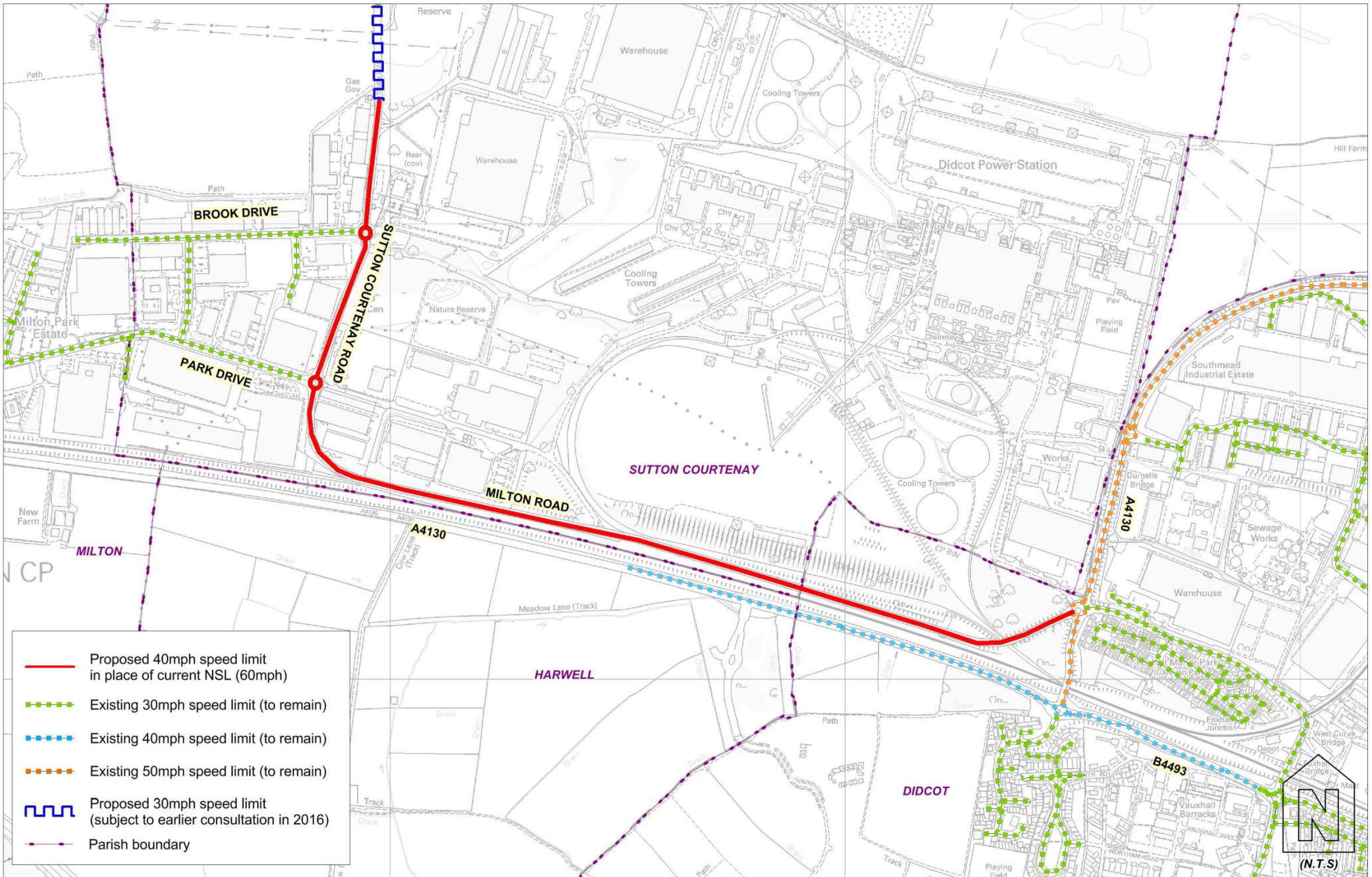
14. **The Cabinet Member for Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposal as advertised.**

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	<b>Object</b> – I am not convinced that reducing the speed limit alone to 40 will achieve a safe cycle environment and that other options are explored for this route.
(2) Didcot Town Council	<b>Object</b> – Didcot Town Council opposes the reduction in speed limits on this road as it considers the proposed measure unnecessary.
(3) Vale of White Horse District Council	<b>No objection</b> – Satisfied for Oxfordshire Country Council’s Traffic Regulation Team to determine the application.
(4) Local Resident, (The Cleave, Harwell)	<b>Neither</b> – <i>no comment.</i>
(5) online response, (unknown)	<b>Object</b> – This road already has a cycle path. I can see no benefit to the community or commuters to have a 40mph speed limit along this road. As far as I am aware, this road at its current mph does not cause large amounts of accidents. Reducing it to 40mph may cause more accidents as people may try to over take more.
(6) Local Resident, (Barrow Lane, Harwell)	<b>Support</b> – The shared pavement along this section of road is completely inadequate as a cycle facility. A lower speed limit is essential.
(7) (Park Drive, Milton Park)	<b>Support</b> – Feedback from potential cyclists at Milton Park indicates that the lack of lighting and the speed of vehicles (particularly HGVs) along this road is a major barrier to cycling to work. We therefore are very supportive of the plan to reduce the speed limit and look forward to further improvements such as lighting on this and other routes into the Park.
(8) (Olympic Avenue, Milton Park)	<b>Support</b> – As a cyclist I find the speed & closeness of vehicles very concerning. It can be dangerous to pass a pedestrian or oncoming cyclist as it means cycling close to the kerbside. Please install any street lighting so that it is not in the cycle path as this causes a hazard as well!.

CMDE14

(9) online response, (unknown)	<b>Support</b> – <i>no comment.</i>
(10) (Park Drive, Milton Park)	<b>Support</b> – <i>no comment.</i>
(11) online response, (unknown)	<b>Object</b> – I am a frequent cyclist, and a slower speed limit will do nothing to stop cars / HGVs behaving aggressively to cyclists. Instead cyclists need to be aware of their rights and attend training courses if they feel they are being intimidated by cars / HGVs to improve their confidence. Wasting public money on providing lighting and lowering the speed limit is overkill, as the cyclist anyway has to be able to cope with the next road junction where the speed limit increases once more and the lighting disappears. Police should be stationed to observe aggressive driving against cyclists, with stiff on the spot penalties enforced, and with training provided to offenders of what rights a cyclist has.
(12) online response, (unknown)	<b>Support</b> – The infrastructure linking Milton Park to Didcot is woeful and an embarrassing failure of planning policy. There should be a flat, lit, traffic free cycle-path from Milton Park to the train station!!! Also, the bridge over the train tracks that the Milton Park bus goes over should be closed to all but public transport. This is the first baby step towards moving into the 21st century by encouraging people out of cars and onto bikes/public transport. But you need to do more... a 30 mph limit, with traffic calming measures.
(13) Resident, (Swindon)	<b>Support</b> – I mostly support the new lighting and if the speed limit needs to be 40 to allow that then that's just a bonus. However as a cyclist who commutes on that road i will welcome the lower speed limit from a cyclist safety perspective.
(14) Local Resident, (Brunstock Beck, Didcot)	<b>Object</b> – The road running past the old power station is straight and you have a long line of sight whilst driving down it. There is also a cycle path to keep cyclists separate from traffic (though many cyclists do not use it). To lower the speed limit would only encourage dangerous overtaking. To improve safety the road should be drained better, as it often has standing water when it rains. Fixing the pot holes would also go a long way to making the road safer.
(15) Local Resident, (Roebuck Court, Didcot)	<b>Object</b> – Congestion to and from Milton Park will only get worse. This will be exaggerated further in coming years as the park expands and more traffic is also flowing out of great western park.

CMDE14

(16) online response, (unknown)	<b>Object</b> – The road already has a segregated space for cycles. The road is largely completely straight. There has been no serious incidents to warrant a reduction in the speed limit. Hundreds of cars use the road every day safely. Cars these days are safer, and have shorter stopping distances. If anything, the speed limit should be increased.
(17) Resident, (Maidenhead)	<b>Neither</b> – <i>no comment.</i>
(18) online response, (unknown)	<b>Support</b> – <i>no comment.</i>
(19) online response, (unknown)	<b>Object</b> – As someone who cycles this route everyday from Didcot to Milton Park I can assure you this isn't addressing the problem. The issue is that the off-road cycle path is too often overgrown and thus too narrow which then leads to the insecurity of cyclists (next to traffic or in dark etc).This cycle path needs to be properly maintained, surfaced, widened (up to the network rail fences) and kept free of glass/stones/grit which regularly adorn the surface. Reducing the speed limit solves none of these underlying issues. There needs to be a focus on improving infrastructure for cyclists rather than just penalising motorists and hoping it makes a difference. Falling off your bike into oncoming traffic at 40 or 60 mph makes no difference in the outcome!.
(20) Resident, (Bristol)	<b>Support</b> – <i>no comment.</i>
(21) Local Resident, (High Street, Milton)	<b>Object</b> – A marked cycleway running alongside would be preferable both to vehicle users, by maintaining the current speed limit, and to cyclists, who would be safer on a separate cycleway. Given that there is also an excellent cyclepath running along the A4130 (which will soon be linked to the western end of Milton Park) it seems that the reduction in limit is largely unnecessary for cyclists who already have good amenities in the Milton Road area. It would however impact the majority of users of that route who are driving vehicles along a road where 60mph poses minimal risk to off road cyclists. I'd suggest a survey of road vs path cyclists and cyclists vs vehicles and I suspect the outcome would be that the many would be negatively impacted so very few could benefit. This seems to be a lack of common sense especially when a much easier solution is at hand.
(22) Local Resident, (Westwater Way, Didcot)	<b>Support</b> – <i>no comment.</i>

CMDE14

<p>(23) Local Resident, (Western Avenue, Milton Park)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – The road is not causing a problem with the speed limit that is currently in place - it appears that people want to change it so they seem to be doing something pro active when in fact it will make no change. If there is a bike there - then no one is able to do more than 20 anyway and in order to overtake the bike between bends it is needed to do more that 40 in some cases.</p>
<p>(24) Local Resident, (Merton Close, Didcot)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – I regularly commute along this road by bicycle. Any reduction in the speed limit would reduce the probability of being injured in an accident. It would also encourage more people to cycle between Didcot and Milton Park.</p>
<p>(25) Local Resident, (Abbott Close, Didcot)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – I cannot support changing the speed limit of the road and wasting resources on lighting. Given the information I am aware of, you'd be better served simply making the cycle path wider. Sometimes I consider running to work, it's 3 miles, but I would rather run it than cycle. If this path was made wider, running would also be viable.</p> <p>To be honest, I don't even think the outlay of the current plans is justified when existing cyclists quite regularly choose not to use the path that is provided. It is a bit paradoxical granted, but I can't get behind it, since I just don't believe it will yield the necessary improvements.</p>
<p>(26) Local Resident, (Slade Road, Didcot)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – I don't see any reason as to why the speed limit here should be changed to 40mph. The roads in and around Didcot are suffering with constant change with traffic lights at the Great Western Park causing backed up traffic in and around all roundabouts in this area e.g. Foxhall Road, Station Road and the outer perimeter roads from Appleford direction. So to slow the traffic down once it enters the Basil Hill exit towards Milton Osrk sound only help cause more issues.</p>
<p>(27) Local Resident, (Innovation Drive, Milton Park)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – <i>no comment.</i></p>