

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 14 FEBRUARY 2019**

### **CHECKENDON: PROPOSED 30MPH AND 20MPH SPEED LIMITS**

#### **Report by Director for Infrastructure Delivery**

#### **Recommendation**

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed introduction of a 30mph speed limit at Exlade Street as advertised but defer approval of the proposed 20mph on the Main Street at Checkendon pending consideration of the provision of traffic calming measures to support compliance with the limit.

#### **Executive summary**

2. Speed limits are reviewed when there are changes to the road layout as a result of development, when requested by local councils as a result of road safety concerns, and as part of the on-going monitoring of reports on road accidents. Proposed changes are assessed applying the County Council's Procedure for Speed Limits.

#### **Introduction**

3. This report presents responses received in the course of a statutory consultation on a proposal to reduce the speed limit on the village road at Exlade Street to 30mph (from the national speed limit of 60mph) and introduce a 20mph speed limit (in place of the current 30mph limit) on the Main Street at Checkendon in the vicinity of the school, village hall and other village amenities together with residential properties.

#### **Background**

4. The above proposals as shown at Annexes 1 and 2 have been put forward by Checkendon Parish Council due to concerns over the danger posed by traffic at these locations and, if approved, would be funded by them.

#### **Consultation**

5. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 20 December 2018 and 18 January 2019. A public notice was placed in the Herald Series newspaper and sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, the South Oxfordshire District Council, Checkendon Parish Council and the local County Councillor.

6. Sixteen responses were received comprising the following views in respect of each speed limit as summarised in the table below (not every respondent expressed views on both proposed limits). Although no response was received from Checkendon Parish Council, their support for the proposals can be assumed given the council is providing the funding for the scheme (and is therefore as such recorded in this summary table).

	<b>Object</b>	<b>No Objection</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Support with qualification</b>
<b>Main Street 20mph</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Exlade Street 30mph</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>

7. The responses are recorded at Annex 3 with copies of the full responses available for inspection by County Councillors.

### **Response to objections and other comments**

8. Thames Valley Police expressed no objection to the proposal for a 30mph limit at Exlade Street but objected to the proposal for 20mph speed limit on the main street on the grounds that the average speeds (at just under 29mph) were appreciably above the recommended threshold of 24mph specified in the Department for Transport guidelines on setting local speed limits if no supporting traffic calming measures are provided.
9. South Oxfordshire District Council expressed support for both proposals.
10. The remaining responses were from residents or businesses in the area; comprising in respect of the proposals for the main street one objection (but with no grounds cited), six expressions of support, and one expression of support, but qualified because of concerns over the effectiveness of the proposal given the lack of enforcement for speed limits generally.
11. In respect of the proposal for main street, it is acknowledged that the current average speeds are in excess of national guidelines given that no traffic calming measures are currently proposed. Although supported by the parish council and six members of the public, it is recommended that approval of a 20mph limit be deferred pending discussions with Checkendon Parish Council on additional measures to achieve compliance with the proposed 20mph limit.
12. The objection to the proposed 30mph limit at Exlade Street from a member of the public was on the grounds that speeds were already typically below 30mph and that for drivers who chose to drive faster, the proposed limit would have no effect, but lead to unwelcome sign clutter. Twelve expressions of support were received, although six of these were qualified, on the grounds that the proposed limit should be extended to the south to the A4074 junction and to the north to the junction with the main street given the use of the road by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians, and also noting that it would help

deter the use of the road by rat running traffic and deliver greater overall benefit.

13. Although the above concerns are noted, the current proposed extent of 30mph limit at Exlade Street is judged to be consistent with national guidance on setting local speed limits and would lead to better compliance within the settlement.

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

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

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

15. Funding for the proposed measures has been provided by Checkendon Parish Council.

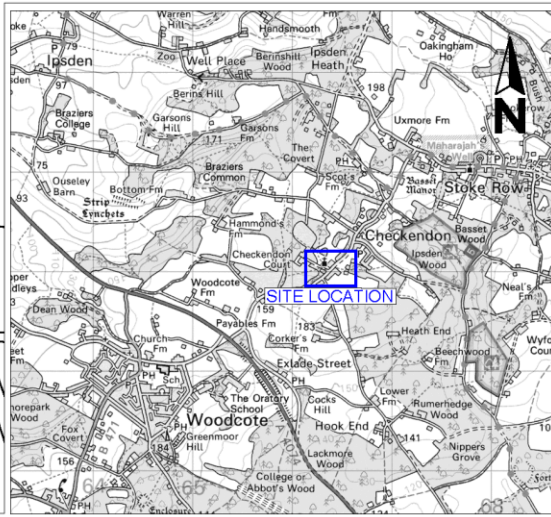
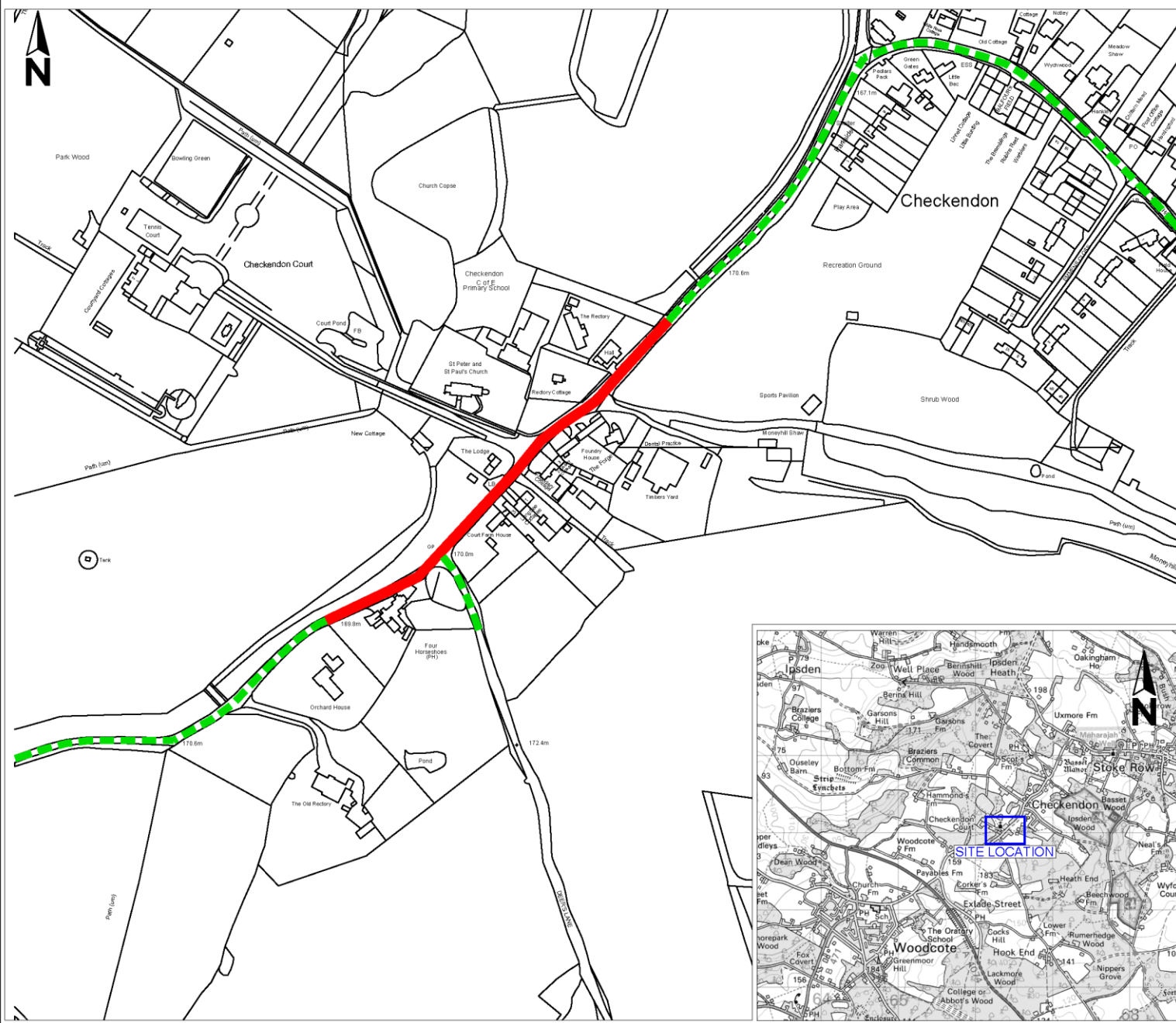
OWEN JENKINS  
Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Background papers:            Plan of proposed speed limit  
   Consultation responses

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February 2019

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Drawing No.		Revision 0	
<b>Key</b>			
<span style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">—</span>		Proposed 20mph Speed Limit in place of existing 30mph (approx 345 metres)	
<span style="color: green; font-weight: bold;">- - -</span>		Existing 30mph Speed Limit (to remain)	
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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn Checked Approved
Owen Jenkins Director for Infrastructure Delivery Communities Oxfordshire County Council County Hall Oxford OX1 1ND Tel: 0345 310 11 11 Fax: (01865) 241577			
Project title			
PROPOSED 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT			
Drawing title			
CHECKENDON			
Drawing Status			
Scale @ A3	Drawn by	Checked by	Approved by
N.T.S.	Date drawn	Date checked	Date approved
	06/18		
Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref			
Drawing No.		Revision 0	

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**Key**  
 Proposed 30mph Speed Limit in place of existing national speed limit (approx 500 metres)

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved

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Project title  
**PROPOSED 30 MPH SPEED LIMIT**

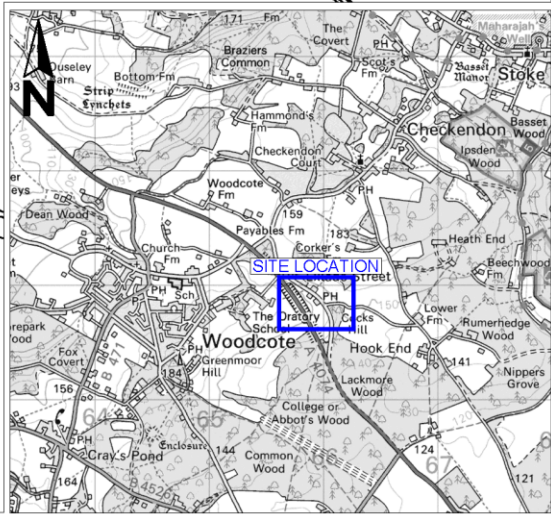
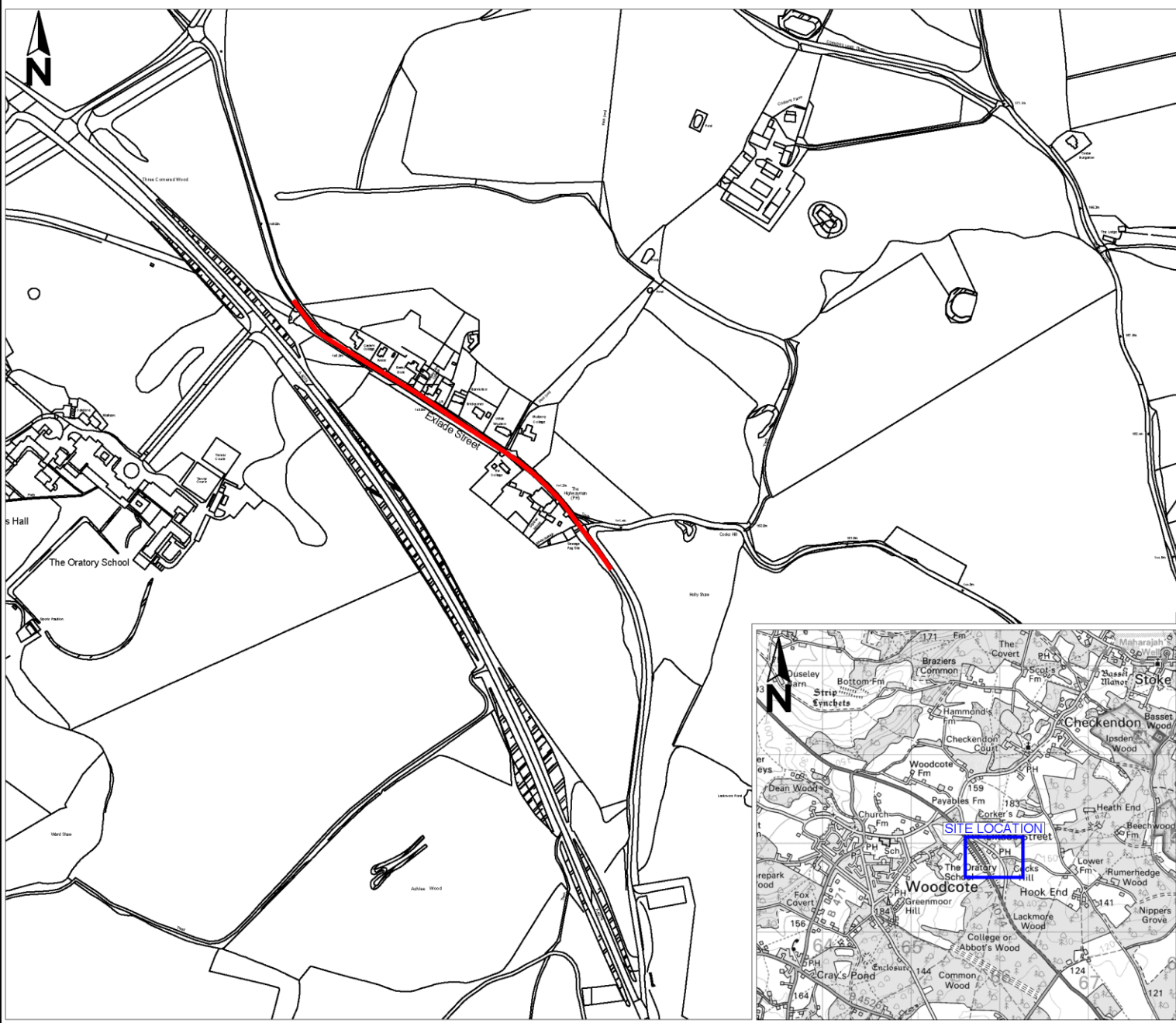
Drawing title  
**CHECKENDON EXLADE STREET**

Drawing Status

Scale @ A3	Drawn by	Checked by	Approved by
N.T.S.	JaC		
	Date drawn 06/18	Date checked	Date approved

Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref

Drawing No.	Revision
	0



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RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p><b>Exlade Street 30mph: No objection</b> - I am aware of previous informal consultation on this speed limit dated 10 November 2016</p> <p><b>Main street 20mph: Object</b> - Thames Valley Police are not opposed to lowering speed limits providing they are appropriate to the road environment and likely to have casualty reduction benefits. There is a proven link between road environment/character and driver speed. Drivers must respect the need for a speed limit. If it is not accepted as realistic it will quickly be abused and be the source of constant demands for police action. <u>I am aware this village has been subject to previous complaints of speeding traffic.</u> The police stance still reflects that 20 mph limits and zones should still be self-enforcing in accordance with national guidance on setting local speed limits. If existing speed profiles are above 24 mph then I would object, unless substantial engineering is included as part of this proposal.</p>
(2) District Councillor, (South Oxfordshire DC)	<p><b>Exlade Street 30mph: Support</b>  <b>Main street 20mph: Support</b></p>
(3) Local Resident, (Checkendon)	<p><b>Exlade Street 30mph: Object</b> - I object to the proposal to install a speed limit on Exlade Street for a number of reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As I understand it, recent speed surveys conducted showed that very few vehicles were actually travelling at a speed greater than 30mph.</li> <li>2. Presumably the reasons for the speed restriction is for the reduction of accidents? What is the recent history of accidents in Exlade Street?</li> <li>3. People who travel in Exlade Street fall into 4 categories; a) residents of Exlade Street - as a resident, I have never seen any of these travelling at a great speed, b) residents living at Hook End - similarly, there are very few people here and all seem to travel with caution, c) customers of The Highwayman and delivery drivers. These people are all travelling slowly looking for somewhere to park, d) people using Exlade Street as a cut - through on their way to and from Reading. These people are looking to save time on their journey and are the people who probably travel at a greater speed. Unfortunately, in my experience, no amount of speed limits are going to slow these people down.</li> </ol>

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	<p>4. For the reasons above, imposing a speed limit is unnecessary and a waste of public money.</p> <p>5. The proposed limits of the restriction are ludicrous. The top end of the road can be travelled at 60mph. With the new proposal you will then be limited to 30mph for a length of 500 metres, followed by a length of approximately 400 metres at 60 mph before entering the A4074 where the limit is currently 50mph.</p> <p>6. The erection of more road signs contributes to the further urbanisation of the countryside. The natural beauty of the countryside is something our parish council and Oxfordshire CC should be aiming to preserve.</p> <p>7. I presume from the plans accompanying the notice that Cocks Hill will remain with a limit of 60mph? Where are the de-restriction signs proposed to be placed? Will this encourage people to increase their speed up this extremely narrow lane and will I have to peer out of my window at more road signs?</p>
(4) Local Business (Checkendon)	<p><b>Exlade Street 30mph: Support</b> - I agree with 30 mph in Exlade Street</p> <p><b>Main street 20mph: Object</b></p>
(5) Local Business (Checkendon)	<p><b>Exlade Street 30mph: Support</b></p> <p><b>Main street 20mph: Support</b></p>
(6) Local Resident, (Checkendon)	<p><b>Main street 20mph: Support</b> - I support lowering the speed limit around the school in Checkendon. However, as the issue is that the current speed limit of 30mph isn't enforced I cannot see how that will change when the limit is lowered. Could additional traffic calming methods be considered, for example speed humps or rumble strips? The speed that traffic approaches the village from both the Woodcote side and the Stoke Row side is an issue, more approach signalling is needed in addition to isolating the school area.</p>
(7) Local Resident, (Checkendon)	<p><b>Exlade Street 30mph: Support</b></p> <p><b>Main street 20mph: Support</b> - Traffic speeds through the village so slowing it down, especially with the school and playground close to the road would be great. The pavement is quite narrow in places and it is quite scary how close people's wing mirrors can get.</p>
(8) Local Resident, (Checkendon)	<p><b>Exlade Street 30mph: Support</b></p> <p><b>Main street 20mph: Support</b></p>



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<p>(9) Local Business (Checkendon)</p>	<p><b>Exlade Street 30mph: Support</b> - Exlade Street has a number of pets and children who are vulnerable to accidents as the lane is narrow and has no pavements, there have been a number of close shaves. Several driveways open directly on to the road. Drivers regularly speed in excess of 30mph. I strongly support this proposal for both Main Street and Exlade Street.</p>
<p>(10) Local Resident, (Checkendon)</p>	<p><b>Exlade Street 30mph: Support</b> - We, as residents fully support suggestions to make the whole of Exlade Street a 30mph zone. In the interest of safety, it makes common sense.</p>
<p>(11) Local Resident, (Checkendon)</p>	<p><b>Exlade Street 30mph: Support (with concerns)</b> - I support the proposal for a 30mph speed limit. However, I would request that consideration is given to extending the 30mph speed limit to the whole length of Exlade Street. The whole of Exlade Street is used extensively by walkers, dog-walkers, cyclists, and horse riders and there are no footpaths, street lights or road marking (apart from at the northern and southern end junctions). The northern and southern “uninhabited” sections both suffer badly from ingress of the verges and protruding branches, shrubbery and brambles. The road has narrowed so much that it is impossible for even two average sized cars to pass without one or both having to drive partly onto the verge. It would be less expensive to incorporate the whole of Exlade Street into a 30mph limit as fewer new signs would be needed – at the southern end the “de-limit” roundels just need changing to “30”, and at the northern end the “de-limit” signs on Main Street would need moving 100m or so closer to the junction with the A4074 so that they are beyond (to the west) of Exlade Street.</p>
<p>(12) Local Resident, (Checkendon)</p>	<p><b>Exlade Street 30mph: Support</b> <b>Main street 20mph: Support (with concerns)</b>- I fully support both proposals. However, I believe that consideration should be given to extending the 30mph speed limit to the full length of Exlade Street, which is used by cyclists, horse riders, dog walkers and other pedestrians, including people who walk to the Highwayman pub from Checkendon and Woodcote (we often hear people walking past our house in the evening on their way to and from the pub). There are no lights or houses at either end of the street which makes it very hazardous in the dark, nor are there any verges that people can use to avoid passing cars. Because of overhanging trees and undergrowth, the street narrows at both ends making it impossible for two cars to pass without slowing significantly and/or pulling into one side of the road. It would be less expensive for the council and less confusing for drivers to simply have one sign at either end of the street restricting the speed to 30mph and would discourage people from using it as a rat run, as happens currently.</p>

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	<p>These are also the people who are most likely to drive through the hamlet at high speed.</p>
<p>(13) Local Resident, (Checkendon)</p>	<p><b>Exlade Street 30mph: Support</b> (with concerns) - As a dog walker regularly accessing the woods at the top of Exlade Street close to the junction with the 4074, I often find myself leaping out of the way as drivers speed past oblivious to the fact that the road is extremely narrow between the Highwayman and the 4074. As residents of Payables House whose driveway exits opposite the Exlade Street junction, we would like to reconfirm the great need for a 20/30 limit on Main Street directly off the 4074 and BEFORE the junction with Exlade Street. This is to slow speeding traffic down before it reaches the cars exiting from our track/drive also shared with Payables Farm. The cars exiting from this drive face two close corners left and right on Main Street. Speeding traffic on Main Street has caused a number of near misses on exiting the drive no matter how careful the driver is.</p>
<p>(14) Local Resident, (Checkendon)</p>	<p><b>Exlade Street 30mph: Support</b> (with concerns) - I welcome and support the proposed measures. In addition, I would like to suggest that maximum impact for the houses on Exlade Street might be more likely achieved if all of Exlade Street is included i.e. the 30mph zone commences at both junctions of the A4074 or alternatively at the junction with the A4074 and the junction with Main Street. Leaving a 50mph main carriageway to a 60mph lane for a relatively short distance before the safer 30mph does not necessarily reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. As such this may not encourage self-compliance with the required 30mph speed limit. In addition to self-compliance, with the associated collision and casualty savings, there are a number of other associated benefits from including all of Exlade Street which might be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reducing public anxiety - inclusion of only a 'part of' Exlade Street leaves residents and other users anxious;</li> <li>• improvement in conditions and facilities for vulnerable road users - motor vehicles often do not have the same perception of the hazards of speed as do the pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians that use the whole length of Exlade Street;</li> <li>• improvement to the environment - The quality of life and community benefits will be improved along with the encouragement of healthier and more sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling;</li> <li>• costs of implementation - minimal additional costs would be incurred;</li> <li>• costs of engineering measures and their maintenance - fewer signs are required with reduced installation and maintenance costs.</li> </ul>

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<p>(15) Local Resident, (Checkendon)</p>	<p><b>Exlade Street 30mph: Support</b> (with concerns) - I support the proposal for a 30mph speed limit. However, I would request that consideration is given to extending the 30mph speed limit to the whole length of Exlade Street. The current proposal extends slightly beyond the section containing the 13 houses of the hamlet and the Highwayman Inn. We are fortunate to have a thriving pub/restaurant and fully support it. We reside directly next to the pub and the parking gets very congested to the point it is often difficult for us to get in and out of the driveway. This not only makes it dangerous for cars trying to navigate past but there is even more reason why the speed limit should be reduced. The whole of Exlade Street is used extensively by walkers, dog-walkers, cyclists and horse riders and there are no footpaths, street lights or road markings (apart from at the northern and southern end junctions).The northern and southern “uninhabited” sections both suffer badly from ingress of the verges and protruding branches, shrubbery and brambles. The road has narrowed so much that it is impossible for even two average sized cars to pass without one or both having to drive partly onto the verge. It seems incongruous that, at the southern end, one turns off a major road (the A4074) with a 50mph limit, onto an almost single-track road on which the national speed limit applies. Many vehicles speed up as they turn off the main road with little or no regard to the restricted width of the road or the surface conditions. [Whilst a separate issue] Exlade Street often suffers from fly-tipping which further restricts the flow of traffic.</p> <p>It would be less expensive to incorporate the whole of Exlade Street into a 30mph limit as fewer new signs would be needed – at the southern end the “de-limit” roundels just need changing to “30”, and at the northern end the “de-limit” signs on Main Street would need moving 100m or so closer to the junction with the A4074 so that they are beyond (to the west) of Exlade Street.</p>
<p>(16) Local Resident, (Checkendon)</p>	<p><b>Exlade Street 30mph: Support</b> (with concerns) - As a resident of Exlade Street I would like you to appreciate the issues faced on this road.</p> <p>The road is very well used by pedestrians, cyclists, farm vehicles and horse riders. It is narrow with verges and hedges overgrown and no footways, thus limiting available space to move away from passing traffic. All the residential access drives lead directly onto the road, there are no “visibility splays” and hence one has to be very careful when attempting to enter the road as the National speed limit applies and most drivers take advantage of this fact, thus greatly reducing driver reaction times when faced with a hazard such as vehicles attempting to join the road from the residences abutting the road. Safety related issues – as mentioned above; plus, the blind bends, the copious overhanging vegetation at each end of Exlade Street and the overflow parking outside the Highwayman Public House. Resident’s needs – as a resident of Exlade Street I would appreciate slower moving traffic in the hamlet as there is a blind bend immediately outside of my house (Carters Cottage) and cars approaching at speed from the Checkendon road have one second of reaction time from exiting the bend to passing my drive gate. Other residents have similar issues due to the historic nature of the access and egress points of their properties.</p>

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	<p>Therefore, I feel it would be appropriate to have a 30-mph speed limit along the entire length of Exlade Street with signs placed appropriately. This (hopefully) will lead to slower moving traffic entering the residential zone, thus facilitating increased driver reaction times and delivering a safer environment for all users of the road, not just the residents.</p>
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