

Divisions affected: Sonning Common

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT –
17 NOVEMBER 2022**

SONNING COMMON: 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 Sonning Common 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 Sonning Common by making them safer and more attractive.

Consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 23 September and 21 October 2022. A notice was published in the Henley Standard 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, Sonning Common, Kidmore

End, and Rotherfield Peppard parish councils, and the local County Councillors representing the Goring, and Sonning Common divisions.

7. 21 responses were received via the online consultation survey during the course of the formal consultation, and these are summarised in the table below:

Proposal	Object	Concerns	Support	No opinion/objection	Total
20mph speed limit	2 (9%)	1 (5%)	18 (86%)	-	21

8. 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	3 (14%)
Yes – cycle more	10 (48%)
No	8 (38%)

9. Additionally, three emails were received from: Thames Valley Police, Stagecoach Bus Company, and one member of the public.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

10. Thames Valley Police re-iterated their views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20 mph speed limits and wish their response to be listed as 'having concerns' rather than an objection. The local bus operator did not reply but Stagecoach stated informally that our proposals in Sonning Common gave encouragement that the correct balance was close to being identified.

Other Responses:

11. Two objections were received; one generic that officers consider irrelevant to this consultation (see para 14) and the other a local resident concerned at the sign clutter and who believes it will be ineffective with police enforcement required instead. Concerns were raised by one person who supported the proposals but sought the inclusion of an additional junction, which is outside the parish. 7 Local or County Councillors and 12 members of the public supported the proposals.
12. The responses are shown at **Annex 2**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Response to objections and other comments

13. The main purpose of the scheme is 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'.
14. 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 any specific comments made of this nature in this report.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes Annex 1: Consultation plan
 Annex 2: Consultation responses

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November 2022

Drawing No. Sonning Common Overview Revision 1.0



Legend	
Proposed 20	Blue
Existing 20	Yellow
Existing 30	Red
Existing 40	Green
Existing 50	Magenta
Existing NSL	Black
Not Public Highway	Black

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved
1.0	15.06.22	First Draft	C.R		

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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) Stagecoach Bus Company, (Head of Strategic Development & the Built Environment)</p>	<p>No objection – Stagecoach has no formal comments or observations to make in this instance. Reading Buses is the operator in the area as you may be aware and I trust that they will make a response.</p> <p>Informally - for what it's worth - the approach taken here seems pretty sensible from an initial glance and gives me some broader encouragement that the right balance is close to being found.</p>
<p>(3) Member of public, (Sonning common, Crowsley Way)</p>	<p>Object - I don't see that changing the area to 20mph will have any effect on the speed that drivers do on the roads around Sonning common, we need police back in the village to make sure people stick to doing 30 around the village which will have a far greater outcome, also it creates loads of unnecessary signage around the village ruining the natural beauty of the area.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(4) Member of public, (Oxford, Banbury Road)</p>	<p>Object - 20mph is extremely slow and this change has not been adequately justified, nor can it be since the road is perfectly safe and adequate to support traffic at the current speeds. Again this is an unnecessary change proposed by an unfit council which is fundamentally anti-car.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>

<p>(5) Member of public, (Peppard Common, Gallowstree Road)</p>	<p>Concerns - I fully support the 20mph limits, however I am concerned they do not appear to have been proposed for one of the most accident laden junctions, just off your map, but the roads leading to it are red, IE staying at current 30mph, the junction is the crossroads between Gallowstree Road and the Stoke Row Road. After some very serious collisions there surely this should be a 20mph zone?</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(6) Local Cllr, (Rotherfield Greys, Shepherds Green)</p>	<p>Support - Evidence shows that reducing speed reduces the risk of death and serious injury from road crashes. Sonning Common as a rural community has a great many residential streets where people and traffic mix in close contact. Children making their ways to school, people popping across the road from the Co-Op to the pharmacy, families going for a walk, all face the stress and danger of being in close proximity to fast-moving motor vehicles. I support Sonning Common Parish Council in its efforts to make Sonning Common a safer, more enjoyable place to live for all residents, including walkers, cyclists, children going to school and those whose lives are blighted by speeding cars.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
<p>(7) Local Cllr, (Sonning Common, Kennylands Rd)</p>	<p>Support - Make the village a safer place for pedestrians and cyclists</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
<p>(8) Local Cllr, (Sonning Common Parish Council, Woodlands Road)</p>	<p>Support - I think installing this zone across Sonning common is critical to help manage speeds through the village which are concerning along Kennylands Road and particularly near schools on Reades lane and Grove road</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
<p>(9) Local Cllr, (Sonning Common, Kedge Road)</p>	<p>Support - I have serious concerns about the traffic speed in Sonning Common. Particularly around schools and parks eg. Reades Lane.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>

(10) Local Cllr, (Sonning Common, Westleigh Drive)	<p>Support - It is the natural evolution for urban traffic safety</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
(11) Local Cllr, (Sonning Common, Woodlands Road)	<p>Support - Safety, Air and noise pollution reduction.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
(12) Local Cllr, (Sonning Common, Kennylands Road)	<p>Support - Speeding throughout Sonning Common and the surrounding feed routes such as Kennylands Road has to be addressed before there is a serious incident. Too many motorists treat Kennylands road as a long fast main road when in fact it is made up of many residential properties whose driveways and gardens do not have a safety barrier of a footpath.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
(13) Member of public, (Sonning Common, Newfield Road)	<p>Support - Because the vehicles are being driven far too fast around the village putting residents, walkers and cyclists at risk, especially the elderly and children. Some roads are used like a rat race!</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(14) Member of public, (Sonning Common, Kennylands Road)	<p>Support - Cars drive too fast through the village and there is a lot of traffic by the shops in Wood Lane. It is very dangerous trying to cross the road. We also have children walking to both a primary school and a secondary school</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>

<p>(15) Member of public, (Peppard Common, Shiplake Bottom)</p>	<p>Support - Great idea, I hope it works. Please can you add Shiplake Bottom to the 20 zone. Lots a people use it as a cut through and drive over 30mph on this residential road.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(16) Member of public, (Sonning common, Blounts Court Road)</p>	<p>Support - Why not include the length of Blounts Court Road instead of a minimal section?</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(17) Member of public, (Sonning Common, Kidmore Lane)</p>	<p>Support - I support the proposed 20mph speed limit as it will improve the safety of pedestrians, walkers, cyclists and horse riders - as well as vehicles - who use the roads in the village. The entry roads to the village, particularly Kidmore Lane, are narrow with blind corners and so the lower the speed, the better for all road users.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
<p>(18) Member of public, (Sonning Common, Westleigh Drive)</p>	<p>Support - Make walking and cycling safer. Too many drivers don't even keep to 30 limit!</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
<p>(19) Member of public, (Sonning Common, Wood Lane Close)</p>	<p>Support - Despite pandemics and the conflict in Ukraine, the climate crisis is undoubtedly the one defining problem facing us and future generations. We can't fix it overnight but must begin to take the first steps NOW. Anything which reduces pollution in our village, encourages active travel around it, and creates a more pleasant atmosphere in the village centre, can be nothing but beneficial to all, whether residents, retailers or visitors. Increased safety will be a beneficial by-product.</p> <p>The Dutch have managed it (not "because it is flat" but because they wanted it) we must follow their example.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle & walk more</p>

<p>(20) Member of public, (Sonning Common, Wood Lane Close)</p>	<p>Support - As a cyclist who is finding the bike easier than my arthritic walking across the living room, its use is my salvation. Increasing dangers of speeding and of reckless and insensitive motor use, are severely hampering my security and freedom. The shopping focus of the village is particularly dangerous with its history of illegal, greedy parking. Reduction of motoring speed could partly ameliorate the potentially lethal hazard for pedestrians, cyclists and other traffic. Wood Lane in Sonning Common is a particular rat-run. A 20mph speed limit might deter eager roadhogs. Cutting speed can significantly reduce emissions of pollutants, particularly reducing NOx and particulate matter (PM) output from diesel vehicles. (The safety gains from slower driving are also indisputable.)</p> <p>I know SEVERAL people who would cycle around the village, but for their fear of its dangers. The elderly, disabled, infirm, the very young....; ALL would benefit.</p> <p>With reference to Question 4: I would employ several modes of access through the village, i.e. walking, cycling and very occasional motoring (the person who drives me barely uses the car and cycles rather than do so.)</p> <p>When I wheeled my mother along Wood Lane, the many cars parked partly on pavements along its length, forced me on to the road in the face of oncoming traffic. We sometimes dived with death. On a similar principle, looking at question 4 in this survey, there may come a point when a mobility scooter becomes essential for me. The prospect of negotiating this road (off which I live), is rather frightening; the lower speed of traffic would make it less unsafe.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
<p>(21) Member of public, (Sonning Common, Kennylands Road)</p>	<p>Support - I think it will help in reducing the overall speed of traffic in the village.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
<p>(22) Member of public, (Sonning Common, Westleigh Drive)</p>	<p>Support - The village is now a very busy one and I am concerned about the amount of traffic and speed through the village. There are lots of children walking about and 2 schools in the village so it will increase safety. There aren't any zebra crossings in the village at all so speeds need to be reduced. We definitely need traffic calming measures in the village to protect children and the elderly who are very slow to cross the road.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>

<p>(23) Member of public, (Sonning Common, Wood Lane)</p>	<p>Support - The area is well-built and has schools. Therefore, the area is used by many children walking/cycling to school.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
<p>(24) Member of public, (Sonning Common, Blount Courts Road)</p>	<p>Support - As a father of 2 young children, I've had serious concerns about the increase in the traffic and speed of the vehicles travelling in and around Sonning Common and particularly Blounts Court Road of which I'm a resident. So I whole heartedly back the reduction in speed limit to 20mph that is being proposed across the Parish.</p>