

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 26 FEBRUARY 2014**

### **PROPOSED 50MPH SPEED LIMIT A417 WANTAGE TO WEST HENDRED**

**Report by Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Commercial)**

#### **Introduction**

1. This report presents the objections received during the consultation for the proposal to introduce a 50mph speed limit on the A417 Reading Road between Wantage & West Hendred in place of the current national speed limit.

#### **Background**

2. This proposal (shown at Annex 1) arises from a request from County Councillor Stewart Lilly, in response to local concerns over road safety. The accident record for the most recent 5-years (2010 to 2014), although not unduly high in relation to the traffic flows, includes 4 serious and 10 slight injury accidents.

#### **Consultation**

3. The consultation on the proposals was carried out between 8 October and 7 November 2014. Objections have been received from a member of the public and Wantage Town Council, while support has been received from both East Hendred and West Hendred Parish Councils, as well as a member of the public.
4. Thames Valley Police raised no objection due to the fact that the vehicle speeds recorded in recent speed surveys were well below the TVP limit that would raise concerns regarding the suitability of the 50mph speed limit.
5. Copies of these responses are available for inspection in the Members' Resource Centre and a summary is attached at Annex 2.

#### **Objections**

6. The objection by Wantage Town Council was on the grounds that the need for the limit was currently not strong, noting that the prevailing speeds were in any case already below the current national speed limit, and that the introduction of the proposed limit would require national speed limit signs to be provided at the entry to the side roads which were of a lower standard than the A417. The Town Council suggested that the need for the speed limit reduction would be more sensibly assessed in conjunction with the planned major residential development (Crab Hill) at the east end of Wantage.

7. The objection of the member of the public was on the grounds that the need had not been established, with the proposal reflecting a perceived wish by the County Council to reduce all roads currently subject to the national speed limit to 50mph. The view was also expressed that driver education was an appreciably more effective means to improve safety as compared to reducing the speed limit.

### **Response to objections**

8. The speed limit on this length of road was last reviewed as part of a county-wide review of speed limits on the County's A and B road network, completed in 2011. No change was then recommended, reflecting the fact that the accident rate was below the threshold recommended in the then current Department for Transport (DfT) guidelines on setting speed limits. This guidance was updated in January 2013, and for rural roads, it now states that a 50mph limit should be considered for lower quality A and B roads that have relatively high number of bends, junctions or accesses, and / or also where mean speeds are below 50 mph.
9. Officers consider that the proposals comply with the current DfT guidance; there are nine junctions and accesses (excluding minor field accesses) and surveys at three locations showed that average speeds were below 50mph. While it is accepted that the planned residential development will result in higher flows here, there would appear to be no strong case for deferring consideration of the proposal given that the DfT criteria are already met.
10. In respect of the concerns that the introduction of a lower speed limit on the A417 could lead – through the use of national speed limit signs on the entry to the minor roads – to higher speeds on the latter, this has not in practice been a problem at the large number of locations on other A and B class roads where a lower limit has been introduced but where the minor roads remain at national speed limit.
11. Likewise, monitoring of 50mph limits in other locations has typically shown worthwhile safety benefits and while agreeing that driver education also has an important role to play in improving safety, it is recognised that reducing the still very high toll of human and other costs arising from road accidents can only be achieved by a range of interventions, including road safety engineering measures (including speed limits), road user education and training, and enforcement

### **How the Project supports LTP3 Objectives**

12. The proposals would help reduce the risk of accidents and improve road safety.

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

13. The costs will be met from Councillor Lilly's Area Stewardship Fund allocation. Maintenance of the signs will be met from the highways maintenance budget.

The appraisal of the proposals and consultation has been undertaken by E&E officers as part of their normal duties.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 14. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the implementation of a 50mph speed limit on the A417 Reading Road between Wantage & West Hendred in place of the current national speed limit as advertised.**

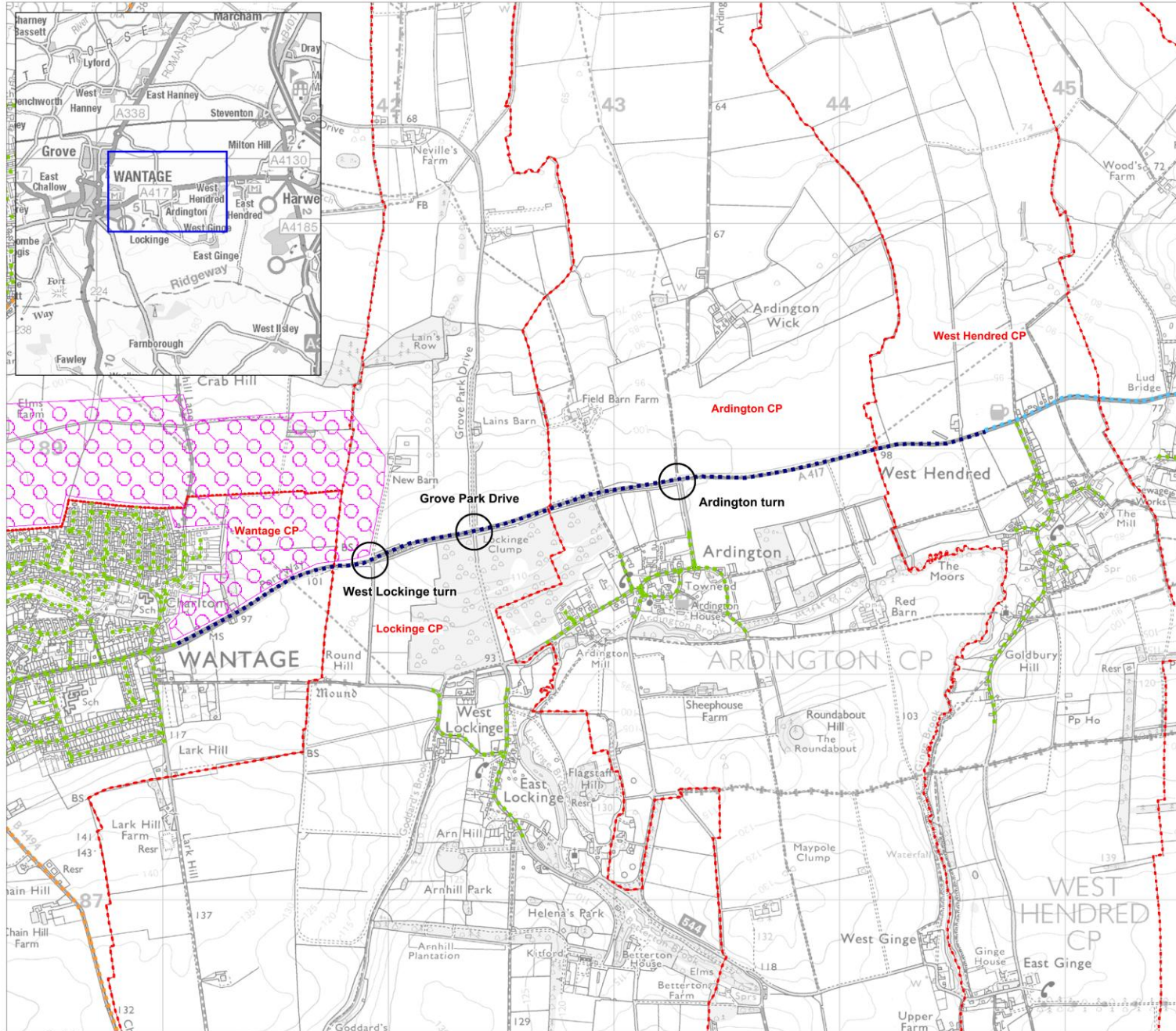
MARK KEMP

Deputy Director of Environment & Economy (Commercial)

Background papers:            Plan of proposed limit  
   Plan of speed survey locations  
   Consultation responses

Contact Officers:                Owen Jenkins 01865 323304

February 2015



Drawing No. Revision 2

- - - - - Proposed 50mph speed limit
- Existing 30mph speed limit
- Existing 40mph speed limit
- Existing 50mph speed limit
- - - - - Parish Boundary
- ⊗ Site of proposed Crab Hill development
- Junction mentioned in consultation responses
- Site Location

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FOR ENVIRONMENT  
26 FEBRUARY 2015

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PROPOSED 50MPH SPEED LIMIT

Drawing Status		
Drawn by:	Checked by:	Approved by:
CJM		
Date drawn:	Date checked:	Date approved:
03/02/2015		

Drawing No. Revision 2

CMDE6

ANNEX 2

RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
Thames Valley Police	No objection.
East Hendred Parish Council	Supports - the Parish Council wishes to register its support for the proposal.
West Hendred Parish Council	Supports - the Parish Council strongly supports your proposal and welcomes every effort to improve safety on this overcrowded road.
Wantage Town Council	<p>Objects on the following grounds:</p> <p>a) It regards the change as unnecessary, as road conditions mean that normally vehicles do not exceed speeds of 50mph and it will cause confusion for drivers using side roads where the national speed limit of 60mph applies.</p> <p>b) believes the situation should be reconsidered when the Crab Hill development proceeds.</p>
Member of public (via website)	<p>Objects on the following grounds:</p> <p>a) does not understand the need for the reduction as proposed,</p> <p>b) feels that any road that is currently national speed limit has been targeted for reduction, and</p> <p>c) feels that cutting speed limits won't cut accidents, driver education would.</p>

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<p>Member of public (via website)</p>	<p>Supports proposal in merit - especially in light of the dangerous junctions at Ardington and the Grove Park/Ardington crossroads, but has the following suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) a 40mph limit from some 200m west of the crossroads to a point beyond the easternmost Ardington junction to slow traffic down, with the remaining as a 60mph general limit,</li><li>b) a proper combined pedestrian/cycle path along the whole length of the A417 from Wantage to Rowstock, and</li><li>c) full bus lay-bys at the Ardington request stops to enable buses to pull off the carriageway to help improve traffic flow.</li></ul>
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