

Divisions affected: *Benson and Cholsey; Chalgrove and Watlington*

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT – 16 DECEMBER 2021

BENSON - B4009: PROPOSED EXTENSION OF 30MPH SPEED LIMIT, PROHIBITION OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC CALMING BUILD OUT

Report by Corporate Director, Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet Member for Highway Management is RECOMMENDED to approve as advertised:
 - a) the extension of the Benson village 30mph speed limit to include the new roundabout;
 - b) a prohibition of motor vehicles on the section of the B4009 The Sands which is proposed to be closed to motor vehicle traffic and will be used as a dedicated two-way cycle track;
 - c) a traffic calming 'build-out' feature on the southern side of the carriageway with vehicle priority given to traffic travelling out of the village.

Executive summary

2. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation on measures required due to adjacent residential development and the associated construction of a proposed new roundabout junction and carriageway realignment which will see the existing Benson village 30mph speed extended by approximately 380 metres north-eastwards to cover the proposed new roundabout and its circulatory carriageway and replacing the existing 50mph speed limit. Additionally, due to the proposed carriageway realignment, a section of the B4009 The Sands will be closed to motor vehicle traffic and used as a dedicated two-way cycle only track and a traffic calming 'build-out' feature constructed on the southern side of the carriageway with vehicle priority given to traffic travelling north-eastwards out of the village.

Financial Implications

3. Funding for consultation on the proposals has been provided by the developer of land adjacent to the B4009 who will also fund implementation of the proposals should they be approved.

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 facilitate walking and cycling and safe movement of traffic.

Consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 21 October and 19 November 2021. A notice was published in the Oxford Times newspaper and an email sent to statutory consultees including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Bus operators, Benson Parish Council, Chalgrove Parish Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and local County Councillors.
7. Twenty-two responses were received during the formal consultation. These are summarised in the table below:

Proposal	Object	Concerns	Support	No opinion / objection	Total
30mph speed limit	2	3	15	2	22
Prohibition of Motor Vehicles	8	3	9	2	22
Traffic calming	5	1	12	4	22

8. The responses are shown at Annex 2 with copies of the original responses available for inspection by County Councillors.
9. Thames Valley Police did not object but requested that the prohibition of motor vehicles is made self-enforcing through the use of bollards. These will be provided.
10. The local member expressed concern on the proposed 30mph limit and requested that it should be extended to include the Braze Lane junction, rather than stopping short. Further to ensure consistency the short stretch of national speed limit between the B4009 and Rokemarsh should be reduced to 30mph given planned developments in the area and the expected increase in vulnerable road users.
11. Noting the above comments, it is recommended that wider changes to the speed limits on the B4009 are considered but that it would be appropriate to approve the current proposals now as a potentially interim measure to facilitate the currently approved development and by doing so in no way precludes further changes should these be required.

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12. The agents for the owner of land adjacent to the proposed prohibition of motor vehicles stated that their client does not object to the principle of the proposals but requests that the existing rights of access are preserved and that development potential is not compromised, should this come forward. It is confirmed that the access to the field will be maintained and that in the course of further work on the project the agent will be kept informed of progress with the scheme.
13. The remaining responses were from members of the public and included objections to the speed limit (2), prohibition of motor vehicles (8) and traffic calming built out (5). The grounds for objection included queries over the need for the measures and inconvenience for road users and residents, though also included concerns that the 30mph speed limit should be extended . It appears that at least some of the objections to the proposed prohibition of motor vehicles have arisen from a misunderstanding over the scope of the restriction, which only applies to the length of the B4009 superseded by the realignment of the road as a result of the construction of the roundabout.
14. Expressions of support were received in respect of the speed limit (15), prohibition of motor vehicles (9) and traffic calming build out (12).

BILL COTTON

Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes

Annexe 1: Consultation Plan

Annex 2: Consultation responses

Contact Officers:

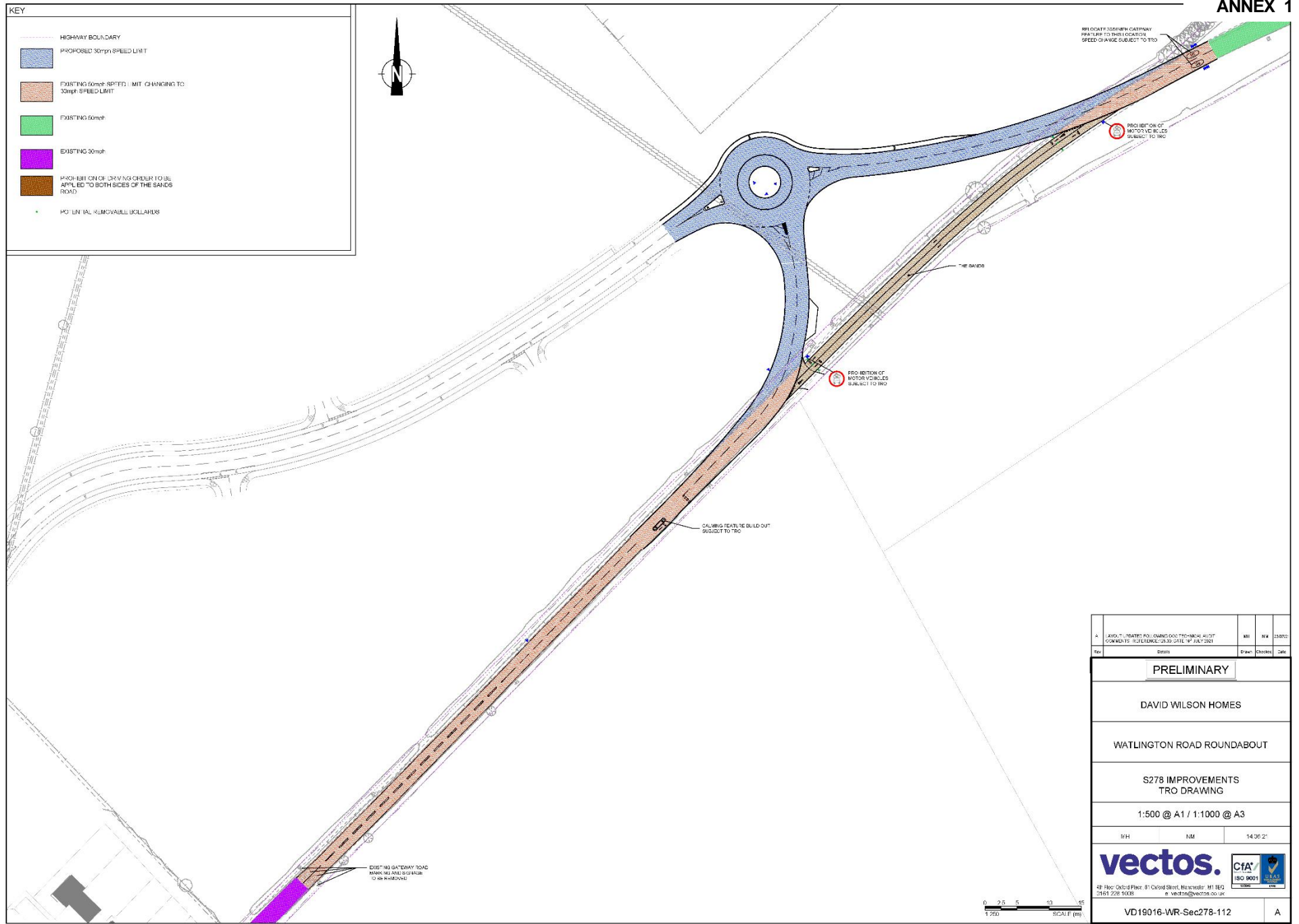
Tim Shickle 07920 591545

Jet Dehal

December 2021

KEY

- HIGHWAY BOUNDARY
- PROPOSED 30mph SPEED LIMIT
- EXISTING 60mph SPEED LIMIT CHANGING TO 30mph SPEED LIMIT
- EXISTING 60mph
- EXISTING 30mph
- PROHIBITION ON DRIVING ORDER TO BE APPLIED TO BOTH SIDES OF THE SANDS ROAD
- POTENTIAL REMOVABLE BOLLARDS



NO.	DATE	BY	CHKD	DATE
1	14/07/21			

PRELIMINARY

DAVID WILSON HOMES

WATLINGTON ROAD ROUNDABOUT

S278 IMPROVEMENTS
TRO DRAWING

1:500 @ A1 / 1:1000 @ A3

/H	/M	14/07/21
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vectos.

4/F Floor Oxford Place, 81 Oxford Street, Newcastle, NE1 3EQ
0161 228 1000 | info@vectors.co.uk

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RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
<p>(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)</p>	<p>No objection - In principle the police have no objection. However, I would stress the need that the Prohibition of Motor Vehicle restriction does need to be self-enforcing with the introduction of physical measures to prevent general use. A single bollard as mentioned in the notice may not be sufficient to deter two wheeled motor vehicles.</p> <p>Enforcement of this restriction must not fall upon the Police and a signed only restriction deemed unacceptable.</p>
<p>(2) Local County Cllr, (Chalgrove & Watlington Division)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Concerns</p> <p>To ensure safety at the Braze Lane junction with the B4009, the proposed 30mph limit should be extended to include the junction, rather than stopping short. Further to ensure consistency the short stretch of national speed limit between the B4009 and Rokemarsh should be reduced to 30mph. Given planned developments in the area and increases expected increase in vulnerable road users, this should be included in the changes proposed.</p>
<p>(3) Local Landowner</p>	<p>Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Concerns</p> <p>Having reviewed the documentation, I understand the proposals consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An extension of the existing 30mph speed limit - A prohibition of motor vehicles on part of the B4009 that will be bypassed by the new road layout - A traffic calming features on the southern side of The Sands <p>The consultation plan (reference VD19016-WR-Sec278-112) illustrates these proposals with the context of the new roundabout associated with residential development. Our client's interest relates to land to the south of the existing alignment of The Sands, specifically the field adjacent to the area that will be subject to the prohibition of motor vehicles, which is denoted on the plan by the brown dotted area. As a result of this order the existing carriageway will become a footway/cycleway with no access for vehicular traffic, although it is noted that removeable bollards are provided, presumably to facilitate emergency access if required.</p>

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	<p>The drawing appears to make allowance for the existing agricultural access to the field to which our client's interest relates. The apparent agricultural access is between the proposed removeable bollards and the re-aligned route of The Sands. However, the brown dotted area covers the area between the re-aligned route of The Sands and the field in question. It is therefore suggested that the drawing is revised such that the proposed prohibition of motor vehicles extends from the removable bollards north-eastwards.</p> <p>This will ensure that a) agricultural access to the field is maintained and b) that any future development potential on the site is not compromised.</p> <p>Whilst our client does not object to the principle of the proposals, they are keen to ensure that existing rights of access are preserved and that development potential is not compromised, should this come forward. I would, therefore, respectfully request that the proposed plan and associated TRO are amended to ensure that access to the field in question is maintained.</p>
(4) Local Resident, (Benson)	<p>30mph speed limit - Support Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Support Traffic calming - Support</p> <p>People do not adhere to the current speed limit, the traffic through the village should be discouraged as it is already overwhelmed. Zebra crossing is regularly ignored by traffic.</p>
(5) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<p>30mph speed limit - Concerns Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Object Traffic calming - Object</p> <p>The provided documents do not give any indication of where the development is relative to the stretch of road. Without understanding this it is not possible to say whether a 30mph speed limit is appropriate. If houses do not back onto this stretch of road I would doubt it is.</p>
(6) Local Resident, (Chalgrove)	<p>30mph speed limit - Concerns Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Concerns</p>

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	<p>Traffic calming - No opinion</p> <p>Why are developments allowed to go ahead if they are going to affect current speed limits and vehicle access? Surely developments should be planned to take into account the current situation and not be allowed to affect them.</p>
<p>(7) Local Resident, (Wallingford)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Support Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Object Traffic calming - Object</p> <p>Roundabout is unnecessary and such a short cycle lane onto a main road is completely pointless. Just extend the 30mph limit and put a T-junction in so the developer can use the money saved to fund something genuinely useful for the community like a park, school or community centre.</p>
<p>(8) Local Resident, (Chalgrove)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Support Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Support Traffic calming - Support</p> <p>Appears a reasonable solution for a new development. Through traffic should be able to move freely.</p>
<p>(9) Local Resident, (Benson)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Support Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Object Traffic calming - Support</p> <p>Traffic coming from Watlington into Benson along The Sands always comes into the village at a terrible speed, so residents on Blacklands Rd, Sands Way and Westfield Road have trouble turning out onto the road safely. I think it's a good idea to use measures to slow this traffic. But I would be very concerned about any stretch of that road being turned into cyclists only. Many Benson residents take children to school in Watlington or go to work via the M40, and this would be a massive inconvenience with no real benefit? As a resident on Sands Way my opinion is that slowing the traffic coming into Benson is the main concern. There is also a large amount of heavy vehicle that come through benson this way. If you close any part of the road to vehicles, they would get directed through other villages which is not good. I'm glad to see that traffic calming measures are being considered here though, it's very much needed.</p>

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<p>(10) Local Resident, (Benson)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Support Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Support Traffic calming - Support</p> <p>The village is growing and there needs to be something in place to alleviate the amount of traffic coming through the village. Having said this I am concerned about the re-routed traffic going adjacent to Sands Way and Sunnyside. Hale road is used by a lot of walkers. The by-road is needed I agree, but the villagers need safe access to the beautiful country walls we have.</p>
<p>(11) Local Resident, (Benson)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Object Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Object Traffic calming - Object</p> <p>Proposals are not necessary & will cause congestion.</p>
<p>(12) Local Resident, (Benson)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Support Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Support Traffic calming - Support</p> <p>Something needs to be done here to make it safer and more friendly towards pedestrians who to live in Benson. There is a school bus stop here. And also a community hall and children's park. Sadly cars and motorbikes do not respect this, making a quite a few points along this part of the village very difficult to cross safely.</p>
<p>(13) Local Resident, (Benson)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Support Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Object Traffic calming - Support</p> <p>Closing B4009 to motor vehicles will re-route them through the high street. The high street is already congested and is where all major shops are located. By re-routing the through traffic, a bottleneck will be created in central Benson, which will be both unpleasant for residents and unsafe for pedestrians in the centre. Traffic calming measures and a speed limit will certainly be enough to slow and deter traffic.</p>

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<p>(14) Local Resident, (Roke)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Object Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Concerns Traffic calming - Concerns</p> <p>The plan submitted by David Wilson Homes totally ignores the existing B4009/Rokemarsh junction and sets up a very dangerous junction for people turning left at this rural junction. It seems to imply that at the point where residents of Roke/Rokemarsh/Berrick Saolme slow down to turn left here when exiting Benson, the B4009 will move from 30mph to 50mph - just when vehicles are slowing down to turn left. The location of the Ben 3/4 estate roundabout is already a worry for those of us who live in the Roke/Rokemarsh/Berrick Saolme hamlets as it is too close to our rural lane turning. The addition of a complex vehicle/bikes/pedestrian interchange will exacerbate the danger of this B4009/Rokemarsh turning, and will be very confusing during hours of darkness.</p>
<p>(15) Local Resident, (Benson)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Support Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Support Traffic calming - Support</p> <p>Traffic needs to be encouraged to route down new road. Doing nothing to the old road will mean that the majority of traffic will just continue on and plough through the village and past the school at high speed.</p>
<p>(16) Local Resident, (Benson)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Support Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Support Traffic calming - Support</p> <p>The roads in Benson need to be made safer and obstructive parking needs to be dealt with. The Highway Code needs to be enforced so that all road users are kept safe - not so people can use public Highway as their personal car park.</p>

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<p>(17) Local Resident, (Benson)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Support Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Support Traffic calming - Support</p> <p>We need to slow the traffic going through Benson. So any measures to do this I am in supportive of. Better still would be to divert passing traffic away from the village.</p>
<p>(18) Local Resident, (Benson)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Support Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Support Traffic calming - Support</p> <p>Changing the speed limit to 30 m.p.h. makes sense, particularly once the proposed housing is built and the effective edge of the residential part of the village moves further north-east along the B4009 to encompass it. The prohibition of motor vehicles along what what will become a redundant part of the current B4009 Watlington Road will have no impact on the traffic flow along the new road as it has no vehicular access / egress requirements. As this part of the B4009 is quite a straight stretch of road, traffic calming measures will be needed to curb drivers to 30 m.p.h. particularly for traffic arriving from the direction of Watlington and its current speed limit of 50 m.p.h. It is also assumed that the existing traffic calming 'build-out' close to The Meer will also remain in place.</p>
<p>(19) Local Resident, (Benson)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Support Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Support Traffic calming - Support</p> <p>The road is very busy and needs to be kept at a safe speed</p>
<p>(20) Local Resident, (Benson)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Support Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Object Traffic calming - Support</p> <p>I think the prohibition of motor vehicles will make all the traffic come down the new road. I think it would be better for the traffic to be split between through traffic and that going into the village. Otherwise roads like Hale Farm road will be</p>

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	<p>too busy going by the playing field. In Port Hill Road we will feel cut off from the rest of the village and it will be such a busy road with everything having to come that way. Also I think that new part going behind Sands Way should be a 20 there as there is lots of pedestrian activity going across it for walks and children and old people walking to the village.</p>
<p>(21) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Support Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Object Traffic calming - Object</p> <p>I regularly visit close family in Benson. I need to get to my elderly parents by car. I am also concerned that this will push too much traffic to the new road that will make it very dangerous for my niece and nephew who will need to regularly cross the new road to get in to the village from their home in Port Hill Rd. It will also add to the noise pollution for the whole of my sister's family.</p>
<p>(22) Local Resident, (Dorchester on Thames)</p>	<p>30mph speed limit - Support Prohibition of Motor Vehicles - Object Traffic calming - Object</p> <p>Closing the road will put too much pressure on other roads through the village</p>