

Divisions affected: *Kennington & Radley*

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT –
22 JUNE 2023**

WOOTTON (ABINGDON): 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 within the parish of Wootton (nr Abingdon) as advertised.

Executive summary

2. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on proposals to introduce 20mph speed limits in Wootton (nr Abingdon) including Old Boars Hill - as shown in **Annexes 1 & 2**.

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 Wootton by making them safer and more attractive.

Formal consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 19 April and 12 May 2023. A notice was published in the Oxfordshire Herald Series 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, Vale of White

Horse District Council, the local District Cllrs, Saint Helen Without, Wootton, and Sunningwell parish councils, and the local County Councillors representing the Sutton Courtenay & Marcham, Kennington & Radley and Kingston & Cumnor divisions.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Two responses were received from statutory consultees. Thames Valley Police re-iterated their views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits, they consider their response as 'having concerns' rather than an objection. The Oxford Bus Company provided a detailed response listing the elements they supported and the single element to which they objected.

Other Responses:

8. Seven online responses were received, six were from local residents all of whom objected to the proposals. A wide range of reasons were given with frustration, overtaking and a false sense of security for pedestrians leading to increased accidents were listed by all objectors. Longer journey times, a lack of enforcement, increased pollution and congestion, and it deemed a waste of money were each also cited by two objectors. One respondent claimed the majority of the community were against the proposals. A Witney resident objected in principle suggesting it was a dark day for democracy and the start of a dystopian future with 20mph signs akin to the 'Z' sign displayed universally across Russia.
9. The responses are shown in **Annex 3**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Officer response to objections/concerns

10. The main purpose of the scheme is to encourage greater use of active travel by reducing speeds; this is also expected to 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'.
11. All objections and concerns are comparable to those expressed and considered in earlier similar schemes and were not seen as warranting a change in those previous proposals given the explicit intention of the County Council's 20mph limit policy. 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 the comments made of this nature in this report.
12. Although it was suggested the proposals were against the wishes of the majority of the community, only six local public objections were received. The section of proposed 20 limit to which the bus operator objected was not part of

the consultation as initial proposals had already been withdrawn but confusion arose as the draft Traffic Regulation Order had not yet reflected that change.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes Annexes 1-2: Consultation plans
 Annex 3: Consultation responses

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June 2023

Wootton & St Helen 20mph Revision 1.0

Legend	
Proposed 20	
Existing 20	
Not within Highway Boundary	
Existing 30	
Existing 40	
Existing NSL	
Parish Boundary	

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved
1.0	17.03.23	Proposal 1	C.R		



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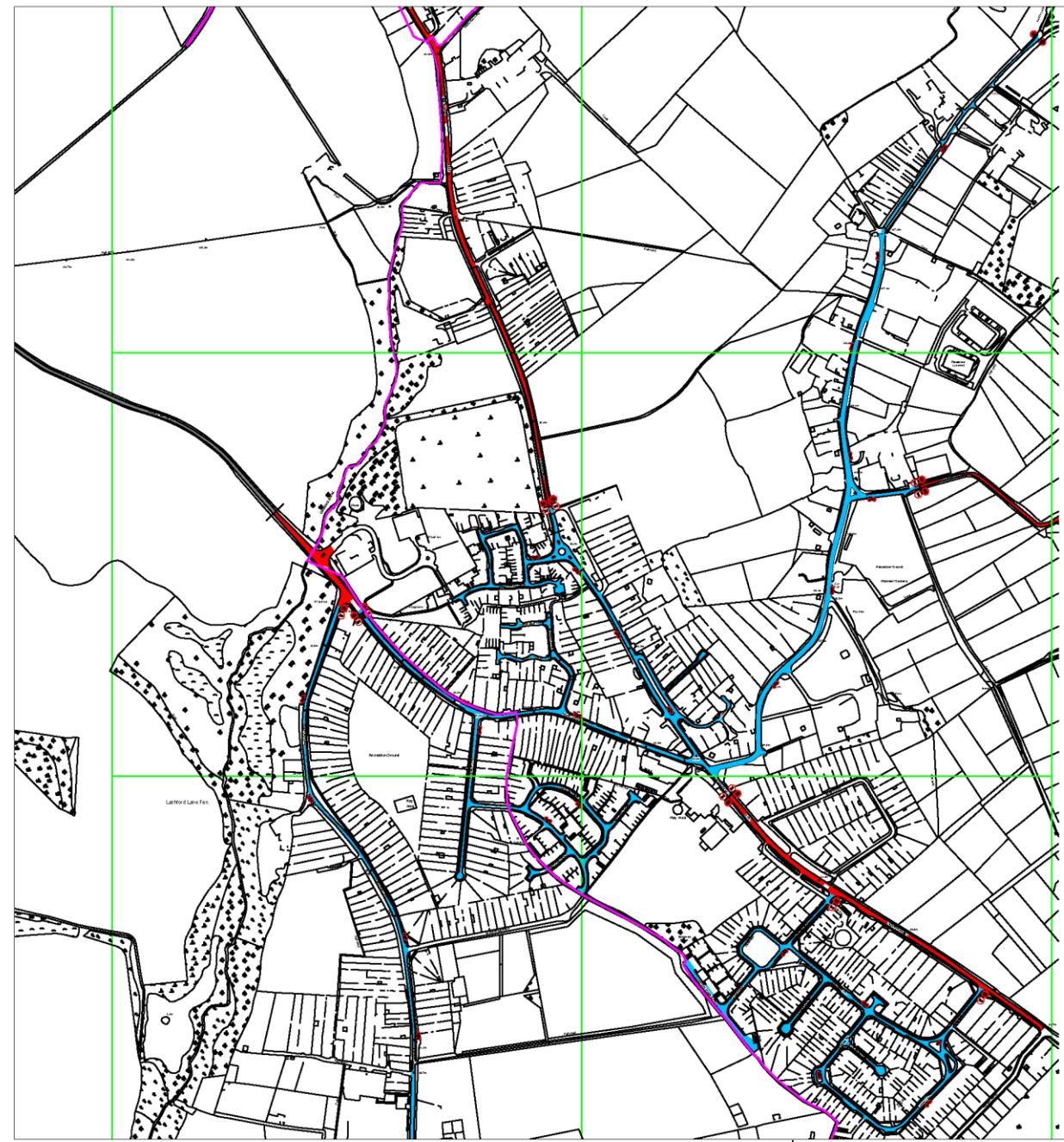
Project title: Wootton & St Helen 20mph Scheme

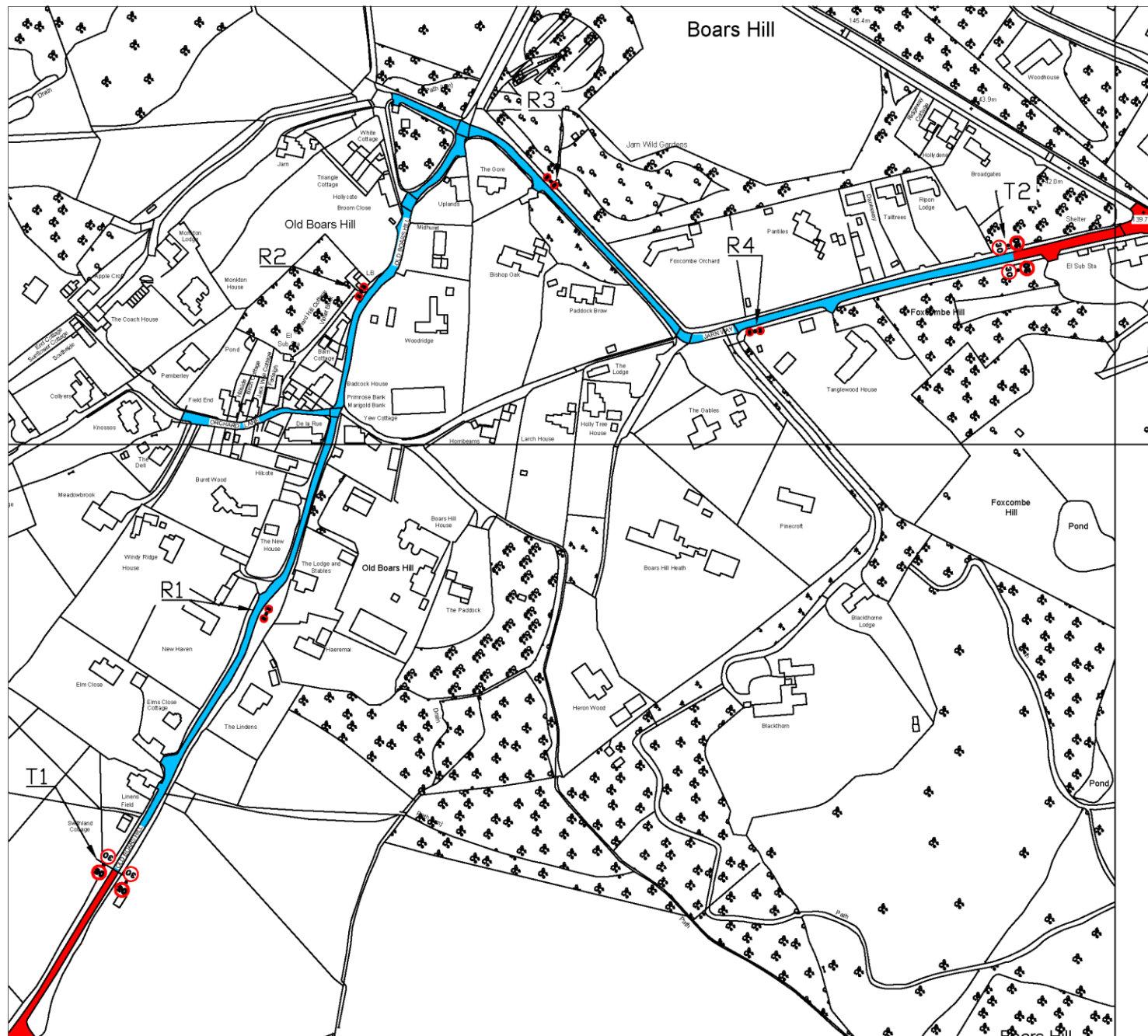
Drawing title:
Wootton 20mph Scheme Overview

Drawing Status

Scale @ A3	Drawn by: C.R	Checked by: G.J.B	Approved by: G.J.B
	Date drawn: 17.03.23	Date checked:	Date approved:

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Old Boars Hill 20mph

Legend				
Proposed 20	Blue			
Existing 20	Yellow			
Not within Highway Boundary	White			
Existing 30	Red			
Existing 40	Green			
Existing NSL	Light Green			
Parish Boundary	Pink			

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RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
<p>(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)</p>	<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

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) Business Development and Partnerships Manager, (Oxford Bus Company)</p>	<p>Support / Object – We have no problem with and support these proposals where they do not affect bus services.</p> <p>We have concerns about the 20mph to be applied to the B4017 from a point 50 metres south of its junction with Wotton Village Road to a point 60 metres north of the roundabout with Robinson Road. There are minimal direct frontage access and minimal commercial activity on this section of road. However, whilst doubting that a 20mph limit will be self-enforcing we do not object to a 20 mph speed limit on this section of the B4017.</p> <p>We believe the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit on Besselsleigh Road near the Bystander PH and shops is a sensible suggestion given the frontages and so Support this section.</p> <p>We see no justification for a reduced 20mph speed limit on the section of B4017 Cumnor Road from a point 250 meters north of the roundabout with Robinson Road to a point 485 metres north of its junction with White Hill Lane. Although not shown on the map sent with the consultation as proposed to be reduced to 20mph it is included in the Draft Traffic Regulation Order. There are minimal direct frontage access and no commercial activity on this section of road which would see planned mixing between vulnerable road users and motorised traffic. We therefore object to the proposed reduced speed limit for this section of road.</p> <p>It is important that buses are able to make progress where it is safe for them to do so. The section of road we object to the proposed 20mph speed limit is approximately 1KM long.</p>

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	<p>Slowing journeys makes bus services less attractive to passengers and would serve to encourage negative modal shift from public transport to private motor vehicles, which is contrary to the council's policies.</p> <p>The 33 bus service that operates along the B4017 operates in and out of Oxford along the Botley Road which is subject to considerable variation in bus speeds and significant congestion at times. It is therefore important to provide significant amounts of "recovery" time at both Oxford and Abingdon to ensure the service can be operated reliably. Reducing bus speeds will increase the running time and so eat in to the recovery time leading to a potential impact on reliability.</p> <p>Given the nature of the B4017 and the distance involved it is unlikely that walking will make up significant mode share on this corridor. Therefore the council should be seeking to maximise support for public transport on this corridor to help achieve our decarbonisation aims.</p>
(3) Local Resident, (Wootton, Lamborough Hill)	<p>Wootton 20mph – Object I object to making the main road, Lamborough Hill and Sandleigh Road, as they are main roads which receive large amounts of traffic including lorries and busses. These are some of the places where the 20 mph speed limits make no sense and achieve nothing but needlessly slow down and frustrate residents and passers-through. The British transport network should be efficient to allow Britain to thrive as a country and as an economy, this will be harmed by unnecessarily slow speed limits lengthening journey time and frustrating people</p> <p>Old Boars Hill 20mph – Concerns I think as you're coming down the hill and out of the more built up area it should remain a 30 as visibility down the road for oncoming traffic is good and there are large verges allowing pedestrians to move out of the road for an oncoming car.</p> <p>I would also like to use this box to highlight problems with the application in general as one hasn't been provided. I am severely concerned for the money being spent on this application as it is tax payers money, to which all they are receiving (of the proportion of their tax used on this application) is a few very poorly constructed maps that make it unclear where the location in focus is and a summary which completely contradicts itself, which is before even looking at the St Helens Without application which also includes some of the areas in question in this application and have an again different plan on where the new 20 limits should start and finish.</p> <p>The conduct of this application is shameful, its suggest a slap dash approach is taken toward the proposal to make our roads safe. It further implies the council has no interest in the surrounding smaller villages.</p>

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	<p>I highly doubt this proposal is within the parameters of the government protocol or the law as there is no real definitive plan given in any of the proposal notes.</p> <p>I would like to state as a resident of Wootton I take the slapdash approach taken towards making potential improvements to our road network as an Insult and hope the residents can receive a definitive proposal which is easy to understand for all the age ranges you allow to take this form</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(4) Local Resident, (Wootton, Manor Road)	<p>Wootton 20mph – Object</p> <p>Changes in speed limits for short stretches of main routes is unhelpful. It results in too many additional signs, causes confusion and is often ignored by frustrated drivers, resulting in more erratic and dangerous driving and a false sense of security for pedestrians who expect the cars to be travelling slower than they actually are.</p> <p>Where drivers do observe the 20mph limits for short stretches of busy roads, it results in increased congestion. The staggered junction near the Bystander PH is already frequently blocked with queuing traffic during busy periods. Reducing the speed limit to 20mph along the Cumnor and Besselsleigh roads will make this even worse and residents will find it more difficult to get out of their driveways, and residential roads due to continuous slow moving traffic. I strongly object to the introduction of a 20mph limit on any part of the B4017 between Cumnor and Abingdon, it is too slow for such a busy road and will result in increased congestion, too many road signs and more accidents. Instead the council should construct a separate cycle track and continuous path for pedestrians between Cumnor and Abingdon.</p> <p>The inadequate public transport in Wootton results in people walking from Cumnor or Abingdon on faster sections of the route where there is currently no path or lighting, and no changes proposed. The more dangerous parts of the B4017 for pedestrians are those with no footpath. Rather than reducing the speed limit, which will cause more problems than it solves, the council should ensure that there is a continuous path to separate pedestrians from vehicles on the full stretch of road between Cumnor and Abingdon, and include a cycle path to encourage other forms of travel. The proposal to reduce the speed limit will just result in more congestion and do nothing to encourage people out of cars, as there is no viable alternative.</p> <p>In my opinion changing the speed limit is a waste of tax payers money, which would be better spent filling the ever increasing pot holes and improving public transport and footpaths.</p> <p>I object.</p>

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	<p>Old Boars Hill 20mph – Object 20mph is too slow.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(5) Local Resident, (Wootton, Manor Road)</p>	<p>Wootton 20mph – Object The area covered by the 20mph limit is far too wide. I object to 20mph limits on through routes. A 20 mph limit on a housing estate or Dead End route may make sense in some cases but I OBJECT TO THIS PROPOSAL.</p> <p>Old Boars Hill 20mph – Object I object to 20mph limits on through routes. They may make sense on Dead End roads and housing estates but I OBJECT TO THIS proposal as it is far too wide.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(6) Local Resident, (Wootton, Whitecross)</p>	<p>Wootton 20mph – Object No need for reducing limit. Those who speed will continue to speed and will ignore the new limit. Law abiding drivers will struggle to stick to the new limit. It will cause MORE overtaking and road rage. The Council should be fixing the road (filling in potholes), enforcing the current limits and creating proper cycles lanes between Abingdon and Cumnor. Buses will be even more delayed. Driving so slowly is NOT good for the environment and cars are not designed to go so slowly. DO NOT WASTE MONEY ON SOMETHING THE PUBLIC DO NOT WANT.</p> <p>Old Boars Hill 20mph – Object No need for reducing limit. Those who speed will continue to speed and will ignore the new limit. Law abiding drivers will struggle to stick to the new limit. It will cause MORE overtaking and road rage. The Council should be fixing the road (filling in potholes), enforcing the current limits and creating proper cycles lanes between Abingdon and Cumnor. Buses will be even more delayed. Driving so slowly is NOT good for the environment and cars are not designed to go so slowly. DO NOT WASTE MONEY ON SOMETHING THE PUBLIC DO NOT WANT.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>

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<p>(7) Local Resident, (Wootton, Manor Road)</p>	<p>Wootton 20mph – Object This is an unnecessary adjustment to existing speed limits which are already excessively low. This will significantly increase travel times for an extraordinary large number of individuals whom will have less free time to spend with their families, participate in hobbies or relax etc. (what you might consider to be a small increase in travel time makes an enormous difference when we consider the fact that all of this wasted time adds up across a longer period of time such as a year).</p> <p>Furthermore this ludicrous proposed change is against the view of the majority of local residents - to go against this would be categorically undemocratic.</p> <p>And finally this will not have the desired effect as the speed limit will just be ignored by the vast majority of drivers due to the proposed limit being both morally and ethically unjust.</p> <p>Old Boars Hill 20mph – Object This is an unnecessary adjustment to existing speed limits which are already excessively low. This will significantly increase travel times for an extraordinary large number of individuals whom will have less free time to spend with their families, participate in hobbies or relax etc. (what you might consider to be a small increase in travel time makes an enormous difference when we consider the fact that all of this wasted time adds up across a longer period of time such as a year).</p> <p>Furthermore this ludicrous proposed change is against the view of the majority of local residents - to go against this would be categorically undemocratic.</p> <p>And finally this will not have the desired effect as the speed limit will just be ignored by the vast majority of drivers due to the proposed limit being both morally and ethically unjust.</p> <p>Travel change: Other I will increase the use of my petrol powered vehicle as a form of silent protest.</p>
<p>(8) Member of public, (Witney, Oxford Hill)</p>	<p>Wootton 20mph – Object No reason for this to be implemented. Electric bikes/scooters and normal bikes capable of going faster than that will be hazardous to motorists and create further risk. There is no good valid reason to change this in such a small community that is fine with the way 30mph is. Unfortunately though this objection will be ignored like many others.</p>

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	<p>There is no valid reason proposed as to why the speed limit needs changing and creates further hidden hypocrisy of members of the public, politicians including emergency services (even when not responding to calls) driving at 30mph no problem. This is a huge waste of money when our roads need sorting. Why the obsession with 20mph signs that are like Zs you see in a Russian street? Only reason Parish Council could express concern on the speed limit is likely a false flag.</p> <p>Old Boars Hill 20mph – Object No reason for this to be implemented. Electric bikes/scooters and normal bikes capable of going faster than that will be hazardous to motorists and create further risk. There is no good valid reason to change this in such a small community that is fine with the way 30mph is. Unfortunately though this objection will be ignored like many others. There is no valid reason proposed as to why the speed limit needs changing and creates further hidden hypocrisy of politicians including emergency services (even when not responding to calls) driving at 30mph no problem including the public. This is a huge waste of money when our roads need sorting. Why the obsession with 20mph signs that are like Zs you see in a Russian street?</p> <p>Only reason Parish Council could express concern on the speed limit is likely a false flag. Boars Hill signs will be ignored as it is driving through the village and is a main road that has 0 risk to the public.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(9) Local Resident, (Wootton, Lamborough Hill)</p>	<p>Wootton 20mph – Object The proposal documents are not clear are contradict themselves. This will cause more danger as people will get frustrated driving along the Cumnor Road at an inappropriate speed of 20mph. This section was 40 mph until recently and this was reasonable. However, it is those who brake the speed limits that are causing issues not the speed limit. It will just result in greater danger due to people overtaking those sticking to the limit. Same applies to Besselsleigh Road.</p> <p>Old Boars Hill 20mph – Support You can't go over 20mph in these areas</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>