

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 30 APRIL 2020**

### **WENDLEBURY: A41 – PROPOSED EXTENSION OF 40MPH SPEED LIMIT AND 50MPH SPEED LIMIT**

**Report by Interim Director of Community Operations**

#### **Recommendation**

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is **RECOMMENDED** to approve the extension of the 40mph speed limit and introduction of a 50mph speed limit on the A41 as advertised.

#### **Executive summary**

2. Speed limits are reviewed when there are changes to the road layout or usage as a result of development and when requested by the local member or local councils due to concerns over road safety.

#### **Introduction**

3. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation to extend the 40mph speed limit on the northbound carriageway of the A41 on the approach to its roundabout junction with Vendee Drive and also to introduce a 50mph speed limit to the south of the extended 40mph.

#### **Background**

4. The above proposals as shown at Annex 1 have been put forward following a review of the recent accident history and specifically at the A41 roundabout junction with Vendee Drive, where there has been a significant record of injury accidents involving northbound vehicles on the A41 travelling at excessive speed and, if approved, would be funded by the Road Safety budget within the County Council's Capital programme.

#### **Consultation**

5. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 28 February and 27 March 2020. A public notice was placed in the Bicester Advertiser newspaper and sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Chesterton & Wendlebury Parish councils, Bicester Town Council, Cherwell District Council and local County Councillors.

6. Eight responses were received. 3 objections, 3 expressions of support, 1 response expressing concerns and 1 not objecting. These are recorded at Annex 2 with copies of the full responses available for inspection by County Councillors.

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

7. Thames Valley Police did not object noting the poor safety record of the road which in part they consider to be attributable to the unconventional layout of the roundabout. If approved the scheme will include improved access for the police to operate mobile speed enforcement within the 40mph speed limit, which will also be facilitated by the proposed extension of this limit.
8. Councillor Sames, the member for the Otmoor division, objected on the grounds that the proposed speed limits were unnecessary.
9. A member of Bicester Town Council expressed concerns that the proposals will not appreciably address the safety problems at the roundabout which they attributed primarily to the layout of the roundabout, noted specific concerns with the proposed signing changes and made suggestions for additional traffic signs and road markings. These comments are noted and a further review of possible amendments and additions to the proposed traffic signs and markings will be carried out.
10. Wendlebury Parish Council objected and in their detailed response raised concerns over the evidence that was used in the assessment of the proposals (for example querying the availability of speed surveys), noting concerns over the impact of further possible development adjacent to this part of the A41 and also the actual effectiveness of the proposals without further information on speed enforcement.
11. A major concern of the parish council is the safety of pedestrians crossing the A41 to and from the bus stops and it is confirmed that an options appraisal is currently being carried out and will be made available to the council when completed. It is accepted that there has regrettably been a significant delay in progressing this work due to the very high workload of officers over the past year. The parish council's suggestions for a more extensive review of speed limits on the A41 to include both carriageways will form part of the options appraisal as will improved signing, including the possible use of vehicle activated signs. As noted above, the proposed works will include the provision of access for police mobile camera equipment in respect of the proposed speed limits. While it seems unlikely that the 30mph speed limit proposed by the parish council at the Vendee Drive roundabout would comply with national guidance on setting speed limits, as referred to above a further review of possible measures at the roundabout will be carried out.
12. A response was also received from a member of the public which, while not expressing an objection, raised concerns that the a 50mph speed limit would not be effective unless enforced and that a lower (possibly 40mph) speed limit would be appropriate at the junctions along the route. Concerns were

expressed also on the need for improved road markings and signing at the junctions in particular.

13. An objection was received from a member of the public expressing the view that the proposed speed limits would lead to driver frustration and that enforcement of the current 40mph limit would be sufficient to improve safety.
14. Three expressions of support were received including from BicesterBUG (the Bicester Bike User Group) and two members of the public. The BicesterBUG response did, however, emphasise the need for measures to further improve safety at the Vendee Drive roundabout, in particular for pedestrians and cyclists crossing the A41 and the other arms of the this junction. Additionally, the importance of speed enforcement was raised by one of the members of the public expressing support.

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

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

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

16. Funding for the proposed speed limit has been provided from the Road Safety budget within the Oxfordshire County Council Capital programme.

JASON RUSSELL  
Director of Community Operations

Background papers:            Plan of proposed speed limits and traffic signing  
   Consultation responses

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March 2020

Drawing No. Revision 0

Existing 40 mph speed limit  
 Proposed extension to the 40 mph speed limit.  
 Proposed 50mph speed limit

**SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION**

IN ADDITION TO THE HAZARDS/RISKS NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE TYPES OF WORK DETAILED ON THIS DRAWING, NOTE THE FOLLOWING SIGNIFICANT RESIDUAL RISKS

CONSTRUCTION	(ENTER 'NONE' IF APPLICABLE)
MAINTENANCE/CLEANING	(ENTER 'NONE' IF APPLICABLE)
USE	(ENTER 'NONE' IF APPLICABLE)
DECOMMISSIONING/DEMOLITION	(ENTER 'NONE' IF APPLICABLE)

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved


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Project title  
**A41 - Proposed 40mph extension  
 Proposed new 50mph  
 Schedule**

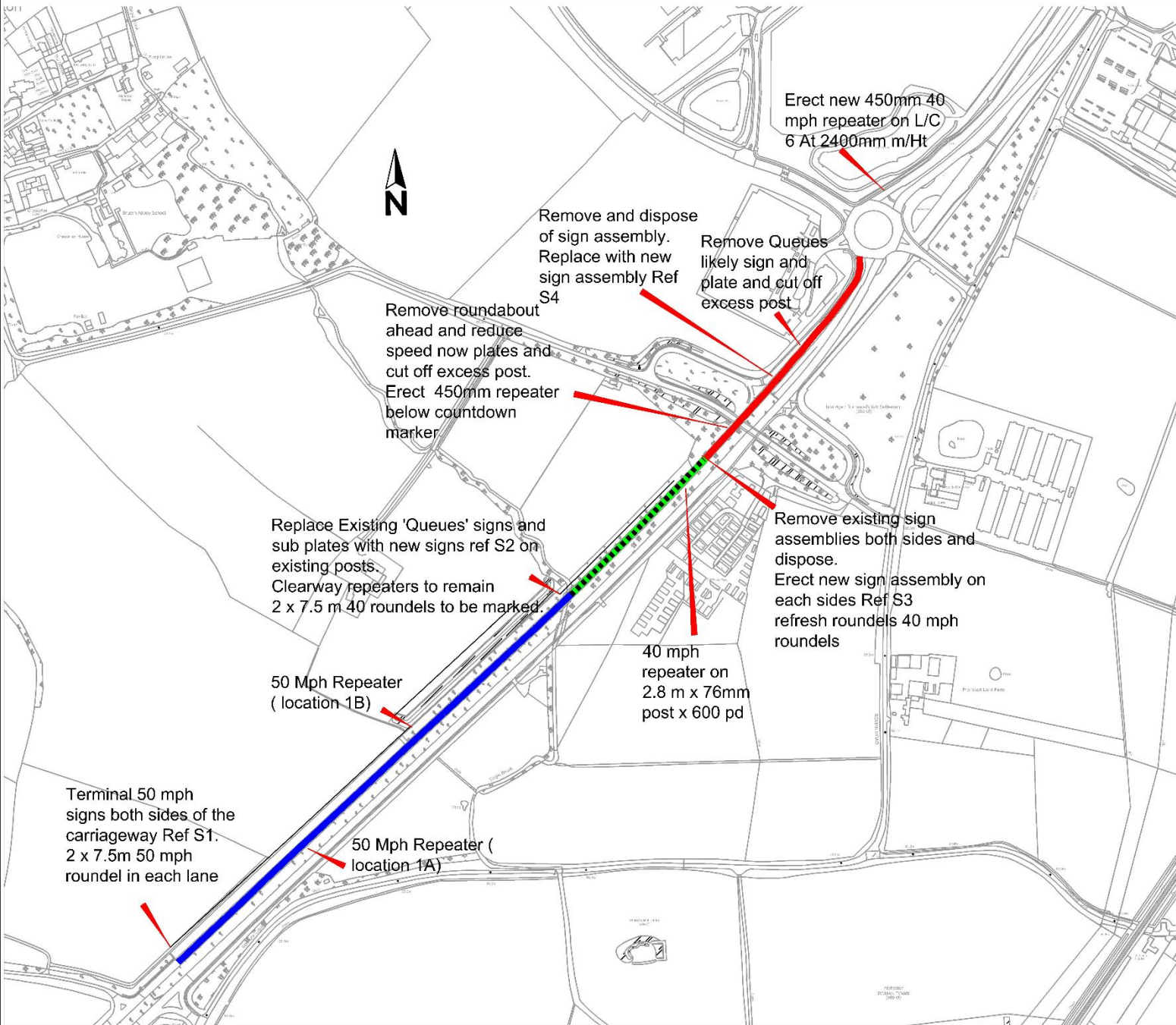
Drawing title  
**A41 Bicester**

Drawing Status

Scale @ A3	Drawn by GG	Checked by MW	Approved by
	Date drawn 16/12/19	Date checked	Date approved

Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref

Drawing No. Revision 0



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RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p><b>No objection</b> – These speed limits and amendments have been subject to Police on site enforcement consultation of an accepted collision hazard location. Whilst Police do encourage new road design and layout that do not require supervision this is accepted as an unwelcome addition to our safety site list and will get some attention going forward. The speed limit lengths have been adjusted to allow safe use within the type approvals and site lines for enforcement (Mobile van).</p> <p>We would encourage OCC to monitor the situation when complete and consider any appropriate engineering solution that may improve what we consider to be a poorly designed offset roundabout on the A41, where straight through scenarios have been common.</p>
(2) Local County Cllr, (Otmoor Division)	<p><b>Object</b> - I do not believe a reduced speed limit is necessary on this stretch of road. There is plenty of time to change speed with the present restrictions. An earlier change in speed serves no purpose.</p>
(3) Local Town Cllr, (Bicester West)	<p><b>Concerns</b> - Unfortunately, I do not consider the Statement of Reasons and Public Notice to simply reduce the speed limit to have gone far enough to actually address the safety of road users using the Vendee Drive Roundabout.</p> <p>I have taken the opportunity to speak with local residents within my area about the considerations of amending the speed limit on the A41 to assist alleviating the problems of safety on and entry to the roundabout. The consensus of feedback was largely the same. The comments were from local residents using the area both frequently and infrequently. I myself have to use the area multiple times a day with my commute and see many of the issues on a daily too.</p> <p>Collated feedback is as such:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempting to reduce the speed limit from J9 northbound A41 will most likely have little impact on the actual speed of traffic on the carriageway unless enforced, and may be excessive for the 2.5miles to the problem area much like that around the Botley intersection of the A34.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extending the 40mph segment currently in place will have little impact on the actual speed of traffic. Vehicles currently slowing to 40 from the current 70mph actually create more problems, causing undertaking, and heavy braking. True this is attributed to the current speed of the road, however a vehicle travelling at 40 still tends to chance pulling out on traffic already with right of way. This has been openly witnessed countless times, and is largely terrifying whilst on the roundabout to the Park &amp; Ride, accessing Vendee Drive having vehicles pull out at speed.</li> <li>• Removing roundabout ahead signs would be detrimental to safety of users unfamiliar with the road layout.</li> <li>• Visibility of the actual roundabout due to the left hand curve in the road at 300 yards is a problem and could be attributed to some of the near misses.</li> <li>• The roundabout is currently accessed by 3 lanes which immediately close down to 2, actually on the roundabout for northbound traffic from A41 turning right; which will increase with the new developments and Southbound from A41 turning right, without any lane markings on the road surface causing poor lane discipline.</li> <li>• Trajectory of vehicles entering the roundabout northbound is poor due to the recessed entry/exit of the Park &amp; Ride.</li> <li>• Current layout of Southbound A41 Pioneer Way accessing the roundabout currently evokes vehicles to barely slowdown as the A41 beyond is an almost straight road and the offset roundabout largely does not slow traffic trajectory. Fencing to reduce visibility of traffic on the roundabout to help slow traffic might be something to consider.</li> <li>• Speed of entry to the roundabout from both North and South is a major problem, but is in part also caused by modern driving styles of poor lane discipline and non-indicating of direction intent.</li> <li>• Suggestions of raised yellow road painted rumble chevrons to warn and slow vehicles at both main entry points would be welcomed.</li> <li>• Requested lane markings on the roundabout itself, somewhat similar to those on the Cutteslowe indicating clear lane definition.</li> </ul>
<p>(4) Wendlebury Parish Council</p>	<p><b>Object</b> - The closing date for comment was 27 March 2020, and in view of our new meeting format, OCC's flexibility in receiving our response is appreciated.</p> <p>The Parish Council takes the view that reducing the national speed limit on the A41 from Junction 9 to Vendee Drive is</p>

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crucial on both carriageways.

The Parish Council is unable to support the proposals as there is a lack of information to make an effective judgement and therefore wish to formally object to the proposals on the following grounds:

1. There was no evidence base to support the case for the speed reductions, i.e taking into account the 85% percentile based on the current numbers of vehicles and the average speed, will the proposals be achievable?
2. There appears to be no assessment of the full costs or benefits of the proposals.
3. There is no assessment on the potential impact of the extra traffic generated by planning developments at Bicester Gateway. OCC has known for some time the unsafe conditions on the A41, yet continue to support development proposals. The Tritax Symmetry aspirations for a logistics park on land near Little Chesterton between the M40 and A41 (<https://tritaxsymmetry.com/projects/symmetry-park-oxford-north/>) will have a major impact on the speed proposal.
4. Proposals will not reduce speed danger. Surveys show some vehicles speed at over 100mph.
5. There is no discussion about enforcement of these proposals. The Parish Council believes, that a range of enforcement options should be considered, including mobile Police enforcement, average speed cameras and permanent monitoring from Chesterton Road Bridge, but no arrangements are shown on the plan.

The Parish Council is extremely disappointed that the proposals do not address the speeding traffic on the southern section from Vendee Drive to Junction 9 M40. Particularly as one of the fatal accidents occurred by the public right of way crossing from Wendlebury to Little Chesterton in August 2018.

Residents held a meeting in September 2018, following this accident, attended by County Council staff, with a clear outcome to build a bridge over the A41. In spite of updates to the Parish Council from Councillor Ian Corkin, at no time has the Council been appraised of progress on this issue by OCC staff.

It is the Parish Council's view that:

1. Both sides of the carriageway should be given the same consideration.
2. A 50mph limit needs to be introduced on the entire length of the A41 from Junction 9 to Vendee Drive and vice versa.
3. Any speed reduction should also be part of route management strategies, for example a complete review of the Vendee Drive roundabout, by reducing the approach speed to 30 mph.
4. Vehicle-activated signs should be used as an additional measure to warn drivers of a potential hazard or to remind them of the speed limit in force.

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	The proposals may be seen as a small step forward going north, but do not improve the quality of life for Wendlebury residents and achieve a better balance between road safety, accessibility to this rural community.
(5) Local Resident, (Bicester)	<b>Object</b> - Rather than having a long stretch of reduced speed limit the 40 zone near the roundabout should be better enforced. A reduced speed limit for a greater length that necessary will just frustrate road users.
(6) Local Group, (Bicester)	<b>Support</b> - Although 'BicesterBUG' welcomes the new and extended speed restrictions on the A41, it does not address the real risk and concerns of active travel around the Vendee Roundabout which will remain a high-speed roundabout.  The safety of active travel (cyclists and pedestrians) crossing the arms or using the carriageway of the roundabout is still in question due to the wide entries and exit which must be crossed.
(7) Local Resident, (Bicester)	<b>Support</b> - This should have been done years ago as set out in the Safety Audit
(8) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<b>Support</b> - While I support the intent of the proposals, from observation the existing 40mph speed limit is seldom adhered to. At times, it is dangerous to do so as other traffic often has no intention of slowing down. Has the council considered installing a speed camera to enforce the new limits? As a motorist who uses this road daily I would very much support that.