

Divisions affected: *Ploughley*

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT – 2 SEPTEMBER 2021**

### **CHESTERTON: PROPOSED 20MPH AND 40MPH SPEED LIMITS**

Report by Corporate Director, Environment and Place

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet Member for Highway Management is RECOMMENDED to approve as advertised:
  - a) the proposed 20mph speed limit on the village roads to the south of the A4095 and east of The Hale in place of the current 30mph speed limit.
  - b) the proposed 40mph speed limit on Green Lane and The Hale in place of the current national speed limit.

#### **Executive summary**

2. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation to introduce a 20mph speed limit on the minor village roads in place of the current 30mph speed limit and a 40mph speed limit on The Hale south of the current 30mph speed limit and Green Lane west of the current 30mph speed limit following a request by Chesterton Parish Council.

#### **Financial Implications**

3. Funding for consultation on the proposals has been provided jointly by the local member Councillor Ian Corkin from his Councillor Priority Fund and the Parish Support budget, which 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 within the village and safe movement of traffic.

## Consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 15 July and 13 August 2021. A notice was published in the Bicester Advertiser newspaper and an email sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Bus operators, Cherwell District Council, Chesterton Parish Council and local County Councillor.
7. 26 responses were received during the formal consultation. 3 objections (12%), 6 expressions of concern (23%) and 17 in support (65%). The responses are shown at Annex 2 with copies of the original responses available for inspection by County Councillors.
8. Thames Valley Police concerns are that the proposal in part does not meet criteria. If the mean speed is 4 mph or more over the proposed limit it is unlikely to be effective without other measures such as engineering or continual enforcement.
9. In the main the 20mph as proposed does meet criteria, the exception being Green Lane which does have a mean speed between 25.6mph to 27.3mph above the required 24mph. However, funding has not been identified to introduce physical measures but we can look at the gateway to the village to improve conspicuity and further emphasise the entry to the 20mph. There will also be repeater signs along Green Lane. To address TVP's concern Green Lane could be removed from the order to meet criteria.
10. Objection (3) Traffic calming measures are more effective.
11. Traffic calming would be more effective, but significantly more expensive, and more intrusive from both noise and air pollution.
12. One objection (4) was received on the grounds that the proposed measures were a stealth tax. The suggestion being that the 20mph speed limit would generate an income through fines raised by speed enforcement of non-compliant drivers.
13. The Department for Transport suggests that 20mph speed limits should be self-enforcing to avoid additional demand on police resources. In the main local conditions suggest compliance due to parked cars, geometry of roads. Green Lane being the exception, as mentioned above.
14. Objection (5) suggests that the proposal is vague and suggests it is inappropriate to change the limits as the surroundings dictate otherwise and would be at odds with normal driving behaviour.
15. Green Lane west of the village is subject to the national speed limit of 60mph. These proposals introduce a buffer 40mph speed limit, thereby allowing vehicles to decelerate and be aware before entering the 20mph rather than entering the 20mph at 60mph.

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16. It is acknowledged that surroundings can dictate driver behaviour but equally the introduction of speed limits does encourage good practice in many drivers. Unfortunately, there is always a small minority who choose to ignore speed limits.
17. Regarding the concerns raised in the main they have a similar theme which is that the measures do not go far enough, for instance they do not cover the whole village, nor do they extend to cover Little Chesterton.
18. Regarding the above point the proposed measures cover all the minor roads and residential parts of Chesterton, but did not include the A4095, which is a major road, currently with a 30mph limit and traffic calmed, so was not included in the initial consultation.
19. Officers will shortly be speaking to Little Chesterton regarding suitable measures there.

**BILL COTTON**

Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes

Annex 1: Consultation Plan

Annex 2: Consultation responses

Contact Officers:

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September 2021

Drawing No. Revision 0

40mph Proposal



20Mph Proposal



Existing 30mph Speed Limit (to remain)



**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

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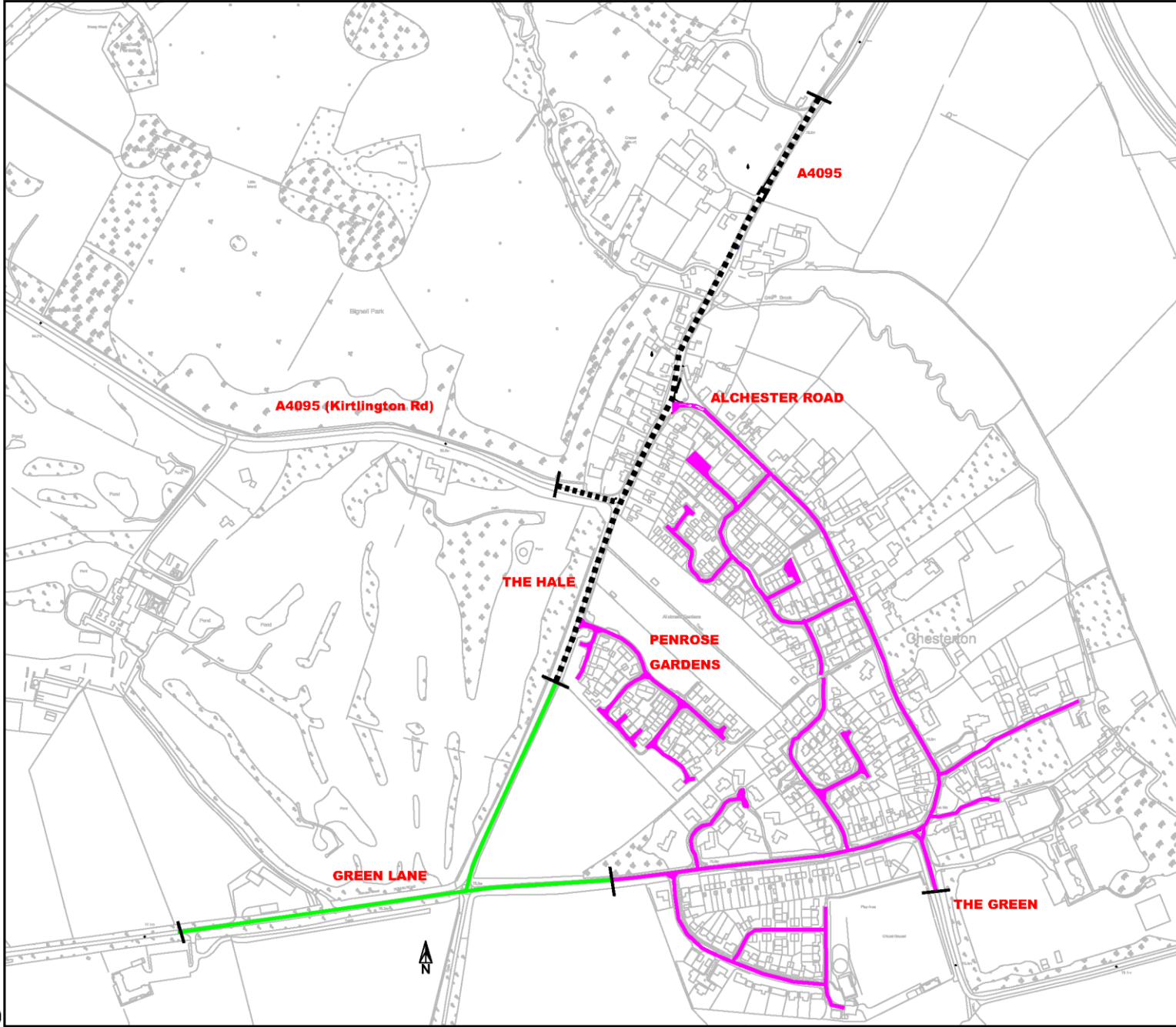
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Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref

Drawing No. Revision 0

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RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
<p>(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)</p>	<p><b>Concerns</b> – Thames Valley Police are not opposed to lowering speed limits providing they are appropriate to the road environment and likely to have casualty reduction benefits .All aspects of the proposed speed limit are taken into account i.e. collision history ,speed of existing traffic, road environment, enforcement, road character and driver perception etc.</p> <p>The current speed of traffic is a reliable indicator of how acceptable a new speed limit would be. The recognised way of ascertaining this level of self-compliance is the mean speed. If the mean speed is 4 mph or more over the proposed limit it is unlikely to be effective without other measures such as engineering or continual enforcement.</p> <p>There is a proven link between road environment/character and drivers speed. Drivers must respect the need for a speed limit .If it is not accepted as realistic it will quickly be abused and be the source of constant demands for police action.</p> <p>The police stance still reflects that 20 mph limits and zones should still be self-enforcing.</p> <p>The policy of Thames Valley Police is to use sound practical and realistic criteria (Circular Roads 1/2013) 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 Speed Limit should not be used to attempt to solve the problem of isolated hazards, for example a single junction or reduced forward visibility.</p> <p>No speed data has been received in support of these proposals and there is no mention of what physical engineering measures may be necessary.</p> <p>In light of the recent introduction of the 20 mph Steering Group I feel it inappropriate to comment further on this proposal when its neighbouring parish Kirtlington is likely to implement a 20 limit under differing criteria. I note in the Chesterton proposal that the A4095 will remain unchanged.</p> <p>Any implementation needs to be consistent in its application in order to receive respect from the motoring public.</p>

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<p>(2) Local Group, (Cycling UK Oxford)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – For the residential areas over short distances, 20mph should be viewed as the normal speed limit, and it substantially improves safety and ease of crossing for people walking, and safety and confidence for people cycling. For the 40mph proposal, the most important factor is the large number of crashes that have occurred at the junctions of Green Lane with The Hale and entrance to Golf Club: 5 since 2015. Reducing the speed of traffic on these roads should be a significant improvement to safety.</p>
<p>(3) Resident, (Bicester)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – Traffic calming measures are more effective.</p>
<p>(4) unknown, (Oxford)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – OBJECTION: STEALTH TAX There is no need for a 20 mph in this vicinity, it is an unreasonable speed to impose on its residents. There will be no timed or flexible restriction, and no effort has been made to adapt it to peak times, because Oxford city council does not want drivers to avoid people getting fined or support the village residents. It is as low as Oxford city council can go whilst pretending that it is for the safety of the village residents. Any lower then it will affect house prices in the village as people will see it for what it obviously is which is a stealth tax. An organised objection will then be raised and Oxford city council will find it harder to impose this, therefore it is pitched at just the right speed so that it does not appear as harassment and thereby cause an organised objection, but low enough to generate a healthy income from ongoing fines and penalties without having to explain itself or defend this patently transparent stealth tax.</p>
<p>(5) Email response, (unknown)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – The proposal is vague and states there are road safety concerns, then fails to state if these are speed related and fails to give any details of what current; average, 85th percentile speed are or any prediction of what is expected in terms of drops in actual traffic speeds through the village, or levels of compliance as a result of making this change.</p> <p>I would also add that I think many people responding to the consultation may be under the presumption that if you drop the speed limit 10mph then average speeds drop by the same amount or close to it, and/or that those who genuinely treat the roads as a race track will only dare drive 5 or 10mph over the posted limit and support it on this basis. It should be the council's responsibility to subvert people demanding lower speed limits based on this belief.</p> <p>If just setting the speed limit very low was thought to work, that would always have been the way you set them. It was the realisation that that didn't work that lead to the abandonment of the 20 limit in favour of the 30 limit in 1934. It's also the fastest you can go under ideal conditions hence the need for other laws like reckless and dangerous</p>

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	<p>driving should you be deemed to be driving too fast for the prevailing conditions and cause an accident.</p> <p>You may achieve a small drop in average speed, this would be achieved by prohibiting the behaviour of drivers going speeds well down into the low 20s even when clearly safe to be doing so.</p> <p>However, it's the fastest 1-5% of drivers who are some of the least likely to slow down, the most likely to do harm and the drivers properly set speed limits are more efficient at singling out. All the while some of the most vulnerable road users may be given a false indication of actual traffic speeds, it's not uncommon for 20 limits to have non-compliance rates of over 90% as you've just prohibited normal driver behaviour.</p> <p>As for the "buffer zone" they make sense when the road changes in character of the approach to a village, for example when there's a small number of isolated houses, when this happens the limit also makes sense in both directions.</p> <p>There is no grace distance for UK speed limit signs, and speed limits are meant to be "self-explaining", so there should be no need for ANY kind of buffer zone without a change to the road's character, a sign warning of the speed limit drop ahead would makes sense though.</p> <p>I see no change to the road's character where the 40 limit is proposed to start, it looks entirely arbitrary. This can also have the effect of causing some people to brake suddenly endangering cars behind.</p> <p>If you have a link to a study that support the efficacy of speed limit changes in arbitrary locations, I would like to read it.</p> <p>If you have a speed limit change where no change in a road's character occurs drivers are more likely to not notice it or dismiss it as irrelevant, it helps to create apathy towards speed limits, if drivers are not slowing down before they get to settlements this may be a learned behaviour that comes about as a consequence of councils setting the speed limits back.</p> <p>It also makes even less sense for traffic leaving the settlement which is told to remain at 40 for no other reason than because you can't have different speed limits in different directions.</p>
<p>(6) Local Resident, (Chesterton)</p>	<p><b>Concerns</b> – I support the principle of introducing a 20mph speed limit and addressing the issues with speeding down The Hale. However, this skirts around the problem entirely. The 20mph limit areas are restricted to residential closes where speeds are almost impossible to reach 30mph anyway. The issue is not due to local residents speeding, it is people travelling through the village primarily via the A4095 from Bicester, and via The Hale.</p> <p>Under your plans, both roads will remain at 30mph, so there will be no discernible impact on the speeding problem where it is most acute.</p>

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	<p>1) The 20mph limit should be extended to the entirety of the village limits, incorporating the black and white 30mph designated area in the proposal.</p> <p>2) A traffic calming measure should be introduced at the A4095/Hale junction as it at this point that people start accelerating and speeding - ignoring the 30mph limit down past the entrance to Penrose Gardens.</p> <p>The Hale could for example be turned into an access only route, it could be made one-way only, the entrance to the Hale from the A4095 could be made more defined (forcing cars to slow into the turn), or a chicane could be constructed.</p>
<p>(7) Local Resident, (Little Chesterton)</p>	<p><b>Concerns</b> – I would like to request that the speed limit from Chesterton through Little Chesterton should also be reviewed. This little single track lane has multiple blind bends and is frequently used by joggers, walkers and cyclists. I feel that the current car speeds are dangerous and should be reduced.</p>
<p>(8) Local Resident, (Little Chesterton)</p>	<p><b>Concerns</b> – I have lived in Little Chesterton for many years and am absolutely astonished and also relieved that there have not been any fatalities due to speeding.</p> <p>I am on one of the blind bends and over the last year have witnessed several near miss head on collisions. I am seeing drivers come off the A41 into Little Chesterton at speed which is then maintained as they drive through the hamlet. When they hit the first blind bend at speed no attempt is made to slow down unless a car is coming down the opposite side of the road, I then see the same drivers hit the second blind bend at speed.</p> <p>To date I have seen several instances of drivers ending up in the ditch on the opposite side of the road. I have also had an insurance adjuster ask if I was witness to a driver hitting the wall outside of the house. As the bends in Little Chesterton are blind bends, drivers seem to come around them in the middle of the road because they are going too fast. They are then unable to correct their position on the road by the time they realise how sharp the bends are.</p> <p>It would be shameful to not ask for action to be taken about the speed restriction, we should not have to wait until somebody has died to request a change in policy. I would like to request that a limit of 20mph should be put in place for both Chesterton and Little Chesterton.</p>



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<p>(9) Local Resident, (Little Chesterton)</p>	<p><b>Concerns</b> – I would like to make a representation with regard to the road through Little Chesterton.</p> <p>Unfortunately, we have cars travelling through the hamlet on a daily basis at very high speeds. We have three blind bends on a single track road with limited passing width. Due to the presence of a working farm, there is also regular movement of livestock and farming machinery on the lane. It can only be a matter of time before someone is severely injured or killed.</p> <p>I have personally experienced a very near miss whilst standing on a grass verge outside my home talking with a neighbour. A car came speeding from the direction of Chesterton and in attempting to pass an oncoming vehicle, without reducing speed, mounted the verge missing me by inches as I jumped clear of the vehicle. The driver sped away with damage to his vehicle and leaving the marker post, which protects the verge, substantively damaged. The driver of the oncoming vehicle, a woman with three pre-school aged passengers was forced off the road and was clearly distressed by the incident.</p> <p>This type of incident is all too regular in Little Chesterton on a road which is routinely used as a ‘rat run’ shortcut which avoids the roundabout on the A41 for motorists coming from J9 of the M40.</p> <p>It is wholly unacceptable for elected officials to wait for a death to occur on this lane before pro-active action is taken to reduce risk to pedestrians, livestock and residents. There is an opportunity for preventative measures to be adopted at relatively little cost and I urge you to act in this regard.</p>
<p>(10) Local Resident, (Chesterton)</p>	<p><b>Concerns</b> – I am a resident of Chesterton, living on The Green. I am writing to provide my support for the speed reductions through Chesterton (as outlined here). I have been lobbying our local councillor (Ian Corkin) to help get this in place for the past 2 years, particularly as vehicles driving along The Green regularly drive at 40-50mph in the evenings.</p> <p>I am in full support of all the proposed reductions, however, feel they will only be effective if they are appropriately enforced. I would recommend that the existing speed hump on The Green be repaired/upgraded so that it cannot be driven over (safely) at more than 20mph (similar to those in Bucknell), and I would also recommend that additional traffic calming measures be introduced as necessary to ensure the traffic adheres to these new limits through the village. A lot of traffic uses Chesterton village as a "rat-run" (from the Wendlebury road and down The Green) and I would like to see additional measures introduced to discourage this.</p>

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	I would also recommend a further reduction to 30mph before the junction at "The Hale"/"The Green" - this is a regular accident spot with many near misses as drivers do not look properly before pulling out of that junction.
(11) Local Resident, (Chesterton)	<b>Support</b> – I welcome the 20mph but we must also have some enforcement of the limit.
(12) Local Resident, (Chesterton)	<b>Support</b> – We have a house on Alcester Road and cars speed along there when they can - also there is a school on the road and we need to be mindful of the children.
(13) Local Resident, (Chesterton)	<b>Support</b> – I support this application since traffic is heavy through the village and frequently drivers travel too fast so hopefully additional speed limit reduction and buffer zones would help this situation as long as it is enforced
(14) Local Resident, (Chesterton)	<b>Support</b> – I live on Green Lane and would be pleased to see a reduced speed limit in the village for the safety of residents. This will become even more important when the proposed water park is built on part of the golf course, resulting in an increase in the amount of traffic driving through the village. I would have preferred to see the 30mph restriction extended along the entirety of The Hale, as the road is extremely narrow and dangerous, and I think it should also be extended as far as the entrance to the golf club and the Chesterton Sports Association.
(15) Local Resident, (Chesterton)	<b>Support</b> – Please, please allow these speed reductions, we really need this. People speed through our village and it's not safe. I support the campaign to reduce the speed.
(16) Local Resident, (Chesterton)	<b>Support</b> – I am writing in support of the proposed speed reductions.
(17) Local Resident, (Chesterton)	<b>Support</b> – We are in support of reducing the existing 30mph speed limit to 20 mph speed limit on the roads highlighted. How this will be enforced is another matter as they already ignore the 30mph signs.
(18) Local Resident, (Chesterton)	<b>Support</b> – I am writing to inform you of my strong support for the Chesterton proposed speed reductions.

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<p>(19) Local Resident, (Chesterton)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – We write very much in support of the long-awaited and desperately need speed restrictions in Chesterton, as stipulated.</p> <p>In the last three years that we have lived in Chesterton, we have noticed a considerable increase in the amount of traffic (both private and commercial) travelling through the village (often as a ‘shortcut’ to and from faster roads) at speeds far exceeding even the current limits. This, in itself has been the cause of several accidents and many unrecorded ‘near misses’ as our old, narrow village roads with their many bends and junctions are surrounded by housing, with many elderly people and young families residing adjacent to and constantly traversing along these roads (in places without even the option of a footpath!). The excessive speeding results in the narrow junctions and bends being negotiated in a dangerous manner and the longer straight stretches being driven at totally inappropriate speeds. The main road through the village centre (Alchester Road) along which many children walk to school, suffers a great deal of on-street parking, adding to the dangers caused by speeding traffic.</p> <p>The recommended new village speed limits (in conjunction with the much needed weight restriction on The Hale) are vital in my view and totally appropriate throughout Chesterton to ensure the improved safety and quality of life of both residents and other road users.</p> <p>We are extremely grateful to the Parish Council for pursuing these vital speed limit reductions with OCC Highways in order to help restore a considerable degree of safety and enjoyment to the lifestyle of its local residents and other road users, as Chesterton becomes an increasingly used ‘rat run’ and will become even more so in the coming years!</p>
<p>(20) Local Resident, (Chesterton)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – I would just like to say that I fully SUPPORT this proposal.</p>
<p>(21) Local Resident, (Chesterton)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – I am writing in support of the proposed speed reductions as detailed in the public consultations.</p> <p>Specifically relating to the reduction from 60 mph to 40 mph along the Hale, I would ask that consideration could be made to reduce it to 30 mph along all of the Hale. There is only a small length of footpath, and for the remainder, walkers and cyclists are very exposed to traffic so it would be/feel much safer to reduce it to 30 mph completely.</p>

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<p>(22) Local Resident, (Chesterton)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – I agree with the speed restrictions and please introduce speed humps across the entire roads - it is the only way to stop traffic from circumnavigating themselves around humps. In addition 4 wheeled vehicles can avoid the small humps altogether.</p>
<p>(23) Local Resident, (Chesterton)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – I am contacting you as a resident of Chesterton village, near Bicester, to say that I support the planned changes to the speed limits – reducing it to 20mph in the village and 40mph on the outskirts.</p>
<p>(24) Local Resident, (Chesterton)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – We live in Chesterton and have witnessed first hand vans bouncing over the hump outside the School, large 4x4 cars and SUV's just race over the hump without even slowing down as if the hump did not exist. 20mph is plenty and so any measures that can help enforce the new proposed 20mph limit along Alchester road would be welcomed. I do agree that we don't want too much additional signage along the proposed route so this must be taken into consideration.</p> <p>I hope this helps gain support for 20 is plenty in Chesterton</p>
<p>(25) Local Resident, (Chesterton)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – living in this area for many years, would in my opinion be absolutely appropriate!</p> <p>In fact as a resident of Little Chesterton, the hamlet on a single track road with THREE blind bends just outside of Chesterton (see attached photos), please consider this request that we are also included on any and all reviews regarding speed limits in the area. The rat run traffic through our hamlet and a need for traffic calming measures has been an ongoing issue for those of us in Little Chesterton. Our road is actually quite dangerous and we all have stories of being run off the road by vehicles rushing through our hamlet. A reduced speed limit and corresponding signage would certainly help alleviate the problem.</p>
<p>(26) Local Resident, (Chesterton)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – I am writing to support the proposed reductions in Chesterton.</p>