

Divisions affected: Chalgrove & Watlington

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT –
23 MARCH 2023**

WATLINGTON: 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, but with the amendments in Britwell Road as outlined in paragraphs 11 and 12.

Executive summary

2. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits in Watlington, including Christmas Common 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 Watlington by making them safer and more attractive.

Formal consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 02 February 2023 and 03 March. A notice was published in the Oxford Times 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, South Oxfordshire District

Council, the local District Cllrs, Watlington, Pyrton, and Pishill with Stonor parish councils, and the local County Councillor representing the Chalgrove & Watlington division.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Three 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 outright objection. Stagecoach Bus Company had no objections as they do not operate within Watlington but asked that we take any concerns from other operators regarding the effect of the proposals on the viability of rural bus services seriously. Thames Travel Bus Company – whilst raising some concerns that further reductions in speeds could make bus services even less attractive to potential passengers – supported the 20mph proposals due to the nature of the roads in the area.

Other Responses:

8. Eleven online responses and one email were received from members of the public plus one online reply from a local councillor who while supporting the principle of the proposals expressed a concern that they were too universal. Nine people expressed support, two had concerns, and there was a single objection. One supporter believed the proposed 20mph limit should extend further out along Shirburn Road to meet the existing 50mph limit so avoid the proposed 30mph buffer adjacent to the recreation ground. Similarly the two people who expressed concerns support the proposals but seek lower limits further out along the Britwell Road. The single objector supports the proposals in principle but petitions for Harmans Way (not currently on these proposals) to become a 20mph limit.
9. The responses are shown in **Annex 3**, and copies of the original submissions are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Officer response to objections/concerns

10. The main purpose of the scheme is to improve road safety and encourage greater use of active travel by reducing speeds; this will also 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 County's carbon footprint. This forms part of a countywide programme of works that seeks to deliver 'a safer place with a safer pace'.
11. Harmans Way will form part of Watlington Edge Road and is being designed to be at 30mph to encourage use of the bypass for through traffic which makes up a high percentage of the flow. It is understood that this has the support of the Cabinet Member following earlier discussions which also agreed that the Edge Road 30mph limit should meet the existing 50mph limit on Britwell Road. This would result in the section of Britwell Road from the Harman Road junction to

the 50mph limit terminal, approximately 300m, currently proposed as 20mph to remain at 30mph in preparation for the Edge Road due to open in Spring 2025.

12. It is considered that the proposals generally strike the correct balance for speed limits on the approach roads but in the case of Britwell Road that the proposed 20mph limit stops at Harman Road in preparation for the Edge Road construction.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

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

Contact Officers: Tim Shickle 07920 591545
Geoff Barrell 07392 318869

March 2023



Watlington Overview		Revision 1.0			
<p>Legend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed 20 Existing 20 zone Not within Highway Boundary Existing 30 Existing 40 Existing 50 Existing NSL Not Public Highway 					
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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved
1.0	25.08.22	First Draft	C.R		
Owen Jenkins Director for Infrastructure Delivery Communities Oxfordshire County Council County Hall New Road Oxford OX1 1ND Tel: 0845 310 1111					
<p>OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL</p>					
Project title: Watlington 20mph Scheme					
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Scale @ A3	Drawn by: C.R	Checked by: G.J.B	Approved by: G.J.B		
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Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref					
Drawing No. 1.0					Revision 1.0



Christmas Common Overview

Legend			
Proposed 20			
Existing 20			
Not within Highway Boundary			
Existing 30			
Existing 40			
Existing 50			
Existing NSL			
Not Public Highway			

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved
1.0	16.01.23	First Draft	C.R		

Owen Jenkins
Director for Infrastructure Delivery
Communities
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1HD
Tel: 0945 310 1111

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Project title: Christmas Common 20mph Scheme

Christmas Common 20mph Scheme Overview

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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

	<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) Head of Strategic Development and the Built Environment, (Stagecoach Bus Company)</p>	<p>No objection – Stagecoach does not operate services in the settlements covered. We offer no formal objection.</p> <p>However, there are other operators in Watlington and the proposals are likely to have some effect on these services, especially when considered cumulatively with those in other settlements along the line of significant rural services.</p> <p>We would therefore urge the Council to pay particular attention to other operator responses. Material increases in service running time in rural areas can have a disproportionate impact on bus operating economics.</p>
<p>(3) Business Development and Partnerships Manager, (Thames Travel Bus Company)</p>	<p>Support (with concerns) – Watlington is served by the 11 service between Watlington and Oxford via Chalgrove and Garsington. A number of traffic measures have been put in place recently that have impacted the 11 service resulting in buses operating at slower speeds. The cumulativel impact of these schemes is necessitating a revised timetable with buses allocated more running time to make the same journey. In order to not add any additional buses (and so extra cost) on to the route this will result in a reduction of service with two fewer journeys per day in each direction Monday to Saturday. This reduced level of service will make taking the bus less attractive and result in modal shift away from buses resulting in less revenue to cover a similar cost.</p> <p>We therefore have concerns that further reductions in speeds will make bus services even less attractive to potential passengers and so make it harder for the council to achieve its goals to reduce car journeys. Given the distances involved and the nature of the B480 corridor it is unlikely that cycling or walking will make up significant mode share</p>

	<p>for journeys 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> <p>Having set out the challengers that reduced speeds are having on the 11 service overall we believe that the nature of the roads in Watlington is such that we support the 20mph proposals in this particular instance.</p>
(4) Email response	<p>Support – I would like to argue that T1 on map 4/6 ought to be 20 mph as the road passes the rec and play areas as well as the new housing that is for seniors as these would be well used by adolescents and seniors and when the Edge Road is in place it would need to be 20 mph from the new roundabout proposed for Station Rd/Pyrtan Lane Junction with the understanding that the aforementioned Edge Road would be 30 mph and the alternative route along Shirburn Rd at 20 mph would be a deterrent for taking the route through town. Otherwise these look fine to me, looking forward to it being implemented.</p>
(5) Local Cllr, (Watlington, Couching Street)	<p>Watlington - Concerns Reason's for supporting 20mph: For much of the town the pedestrian pavements are narrow, very narrow or non-existent. Most drivers recognise this, but that is not universally the case. In particular, those on the routes through the town, especially heavy vehicles, pass very close to pedestrians. Lack of enforcement: The experience of Cuxham was that the 20mph limit did lead to significant reduction in speed through the village. My concern is that in parts of the parish such as Christmas Common where the roads are clearer and with less housing directly on the road the 20mph will be largely ignored. Other places where this might be the case are Brook Street, Howe Road as far as Ingham Lane, Hill Road from the icknield Way into town, as well as the entrances into town along Shirburn Road, Cuxham Road and Britwell Road.</p> <p>Christmas Common - Support The route through Christmas Common is used by drivers going to or from the M40, many of whom do not respect the narrowness of the road and lack of roadside pedestrian paths through the village.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(6) Local Resident/Member of public, (Cuxham, Unnamed road)	<p>Watlington - Object Residential roads through new housing developments should be treated the same as Watlington and have 20mph by default. OCC's officers previously considered new residential roads in Watlington and concluded "12. Noting the</p>

	<p>above, and following discussions with the councils Road Agreement Team, it is agreed that the Edge Road is considered to be appropriate for a 20mph speed limit, in line with the current OCC guidelines. It is therefore proposed that the speed limit be re-considered when plans for the proposed wider 20mph speed limit scheme is designed for Watlington. This forms part of the initial phase of OCC's countywide programme of 20mph speed limits that seeks to deliver 'a safer place with a safer pace' for the residents of Oxfordshire." This is in reference to this consultation being held on 20mph "throughout" Watlington, but new roads have not been included, for example Harmans Way. OCC's cabinet member Cllr Pete Sudbury was also promised by OCC officers that 20mph would apply to proposed new roads through housing estates.</p> <p>Christmas Common - No opinion No experience</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(7) Local Resident/Member of public, (Watlington, Britwell Road)</p>	<p>Watlington - Concerns I would like to support the 20mph speed limit but want the 50mph limit on Britwell Rd to White House Farm area reduced. I live in White House Farm, Britwell Rd, Watlington, OX49 5JY and often walk into the town. I have a 3 year old and a 6 year old who like to walk with me and a dog and husband. We need a footpath to get into town as the roadside is often overgrown and unwalkable and the 50mph limit here is extremely dangerous when walking. Cars speed up as soon as they hit the 50mph sign after the red kite development and they go past our house and past us walking at dangerous speeds. My neighbours and the people working in the White House Farm units also often walk into Watlington town and the 50mph limit here is putting everyone in danger. Please reduce the speed limit on this section of the road and do not increase to 50mph until past the houses and businesses.</p> <p>Christmas Common - Support agree with this</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(8) Local Resident/Member of public, (Watlington, Britwell Road)</p>	<p>Watlington - Concerns I live on the Britwell road Whitehouse Farm which at present is 50 mph , I believe that the 30 mph should be moved from present location a further 400 yards passed the entrances for industrial estate and the two house entrances, for health and safety and environmental reasons.. As you know this is going to</p>

	<p>be a very busy road and there are many people walking into Watlington and back on a hourly basis from the 2 residential and 6 industrial property's . Minimum 30mph ,best 30mph, cycle lane and foot path. There is plenty of room for the later as you see above the property's pay a lot of tax and rates collectively so funding is not a problem by the council.</p> <p>Christmas Common - Support Reducing speed limits is a safe idea.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(9) Local Resident/Member of public, (Oxford, Howard)</p>	<p>Watlington - Support I am an occasional but regular visitor to Watlington. The streets inside the town are narrow and in many places have impaired visibility, and would benefit immensely from slower speeds.</p> <p>20mph limits will not be entirely complied with, of course, but if they resulted in average speeds even 4-5mph lower that would be a significant improvement.</p> <p>Christmas Common - Support I come to Christmas Common several times a year for walking. Walking routes from/to or through the area often require crossing, or walking along, roads that lack footways or any kind of marked crossings, and this would be significantly safer and less stressful - especially when with young children - if motor traffic were moving more slowly.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(10) Local Resident/Member of public, (Watlington, Couching Street)</p>	<p>Watlington - Support Watlington has appalling traffic. It is a blight that makes life in the middle of Watlington miserable. Road are particularly bad.</p> <p>Christmas Common - Support Christmas common is lovely, or at least it is when cars aren't charging through it. Really hazardous.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>

<p>(11) Local Resident/Member of public, (Watlington, Howe Road)</p>	<p>Watlington - Support Have lived in Watlington for over 20 years and experience huge increase in traffic volume, traffic pollution and noise. Walking around the main roads through town is very dangerous due to excessive speed of traffic.</p> <p>Christmas Common - Support This is an area of beauty with great walks; dangerous at times due to traffic volume and speed</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(12) Local Resident/Member of public, (Watlington , Britwell Road)</p>	<p>Watlington - Support My wife and I live on Britwell Road with our two children. Cars drive far too quickly down our road and even overtake at certain points making it dangerous for us to walk down to the town with our children and dog into Watlington.</p> <p>We fully support this speed limit change and it would make residents, cyclists, runners and everyone who uses the road lives far far safer. It will also reduce noise pollution when we are outside playing in our garden,</p> <p>Everybody in the village will support this change.</p> <p>Please make this change happen as it will have a big impact on the community.</p> <p>Christmas Common - Support Same reasons as previously mentioned it will make the community safer</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(13) Local Resident/Member of public, (Watlington , Britwell Road)</p>	<p>Watlington - Support I live in watlington on the britwell road. I have children and dogs the road is very fast outside my property and dangerous. The 20 mile an hour needs to extend to the extent of the village as the new builds and us, like to use our beautiful town and countryside safely. Bringing the overall area to a slower pace would make a difference to the town as a whole.</p> <p>Christmas Common - Support</p>

	<p>The area is beautiful and lots of walkers use the roads. There's little or no footpaths at the side of the roads so the traffic being brought down to 20 mph makes for a safer road system.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(14) Local Resident/Member of public, (Watlington, Shirburn Road)</p>	<p>Watlington - Support support as safer in built environment.</p> <p>Christmas Common - Support support as safer in built environment</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(15) Local Resident/Member of public, (Watlington, Hill Road)</p>	<p>Watlington - Support Excessive speed on Hill Road also requires traffic calming measures</p> <p>Christmas Common - Support Again excessive speeds need reducing</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(16) Local Resident/Member of public, (Watlington , Hill Road)</p>	<p>Watlington - Support Excessive speeds already at 30 mph limit 20 mph help reduce speeds provided enforcement traffic calming measures excessive speeds along this straight road with no enforcement of existing speed limit would suggest average speed cameras along stretch of road or physical calming measures</p> <p>Christmas Common - Support Again need reduce excessive speeds</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>