

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT – 28 JULY 2011

A329 AT CHOLSEY AND MOULSFORD – SPEED LIMITS

Report by Deputy Director for Environment and Economy (Highways and Transport)

Introduction

1. A general review of speed limits on the County's A and B class roads was carried out in 2009 in accordance with the Department for Transport guidelines on setting speed limits. This resulted in a recommendation to reduce the speed limit on the A329 between Cholsey and Moulsoford to 40mph on safety grounds, which was approved following consideration of the responses to consultation by the former Transport Decisions Committee on 11 February 2010.
2. Implementation of the above change was however delayed pending a review of priorities for capital expenditure. At the same time, development of the former Fairmile Hospital site was started, which required – in accordance with planning conditions – installation of traffic calming measures on the A329 and associated amendments to the speed limit in the vicinity of the site. The latter were introduced by a temporary speed limit order which came into effect on 22 November 2010.
3. Formal consultations on a permanent speed limit order to reflect all the above changes were carried out in January 2011, and although the responses from the local community were broadly supportive, the following amendments were requested for consideration:
 - an extension of the 'buffer' 40mph limit at the north end of the development to include the junction of Caps Lane (the original proposal- reflected in the current temporary order – was for the 40mph limit terminal to be south of the Caps Lane junction);
 - the introduction of a 50mph limit north of Caps Lane to the roundabout junction with the A4130 Wallingford bypass.
4. Taking into account these responses, it was agreed to undertake a further consultation incorporating the suggested amendments. For the sake of clarity all the proposed changes to speed limits on this length of the A329 were included in the notice (the plan at Annex 1 sets out the proposals). This report details the responses to the consultation with officer comment and seeks a decision on whether the advertised proposals should be approved.

Consultation

5. The formal consultation period extended between 12 May and 10 June 2011. Responses are summarised at Annex 2. High levels of support have been received from the local community, including the local member Cllr Patrick Greene and Cholsey Parish Council
7. Thames Valley Police have objected, primarily on the grounds that they do not consider the proposals as they stand (without additional measures to achieve better compliance) accord with Department for Transport guidance, taking account of speeds as surveyed in 2010. Their objection at Annex 3 also refers to concerns over the design of, and consultation on, traffic calming features introduced as part of the Fairmile development.
8. Although the objections of the police are noted, our experience of speed limit reductions on comparable roads has overall been very positive in terms of improved safety, even where it has not been possible to provide the requested supporting measures to increase compliance.

How the project supports LTP3 objectives

9. This project aims to reduce the risk of accidents and encourage the use of walking and cycling especially in the context of the large residential development at the former Fairmile Hospital site.

Financial Implications (including Revenue)

11. The anticipated costs of implementing the scheme will be met from contributions secured from the developers of the Fairmile Hospital site
12. Ongoing maintenance costs are not anticipated to be significant.

RECOMMENDATION

13. **The Cabinet Member for Transport is RECOMMENDED to approve implementation of the A329 Cholsey and Moulsoford speed limit order effecting changes in speed limits as set out in Annex 1 to this report.**

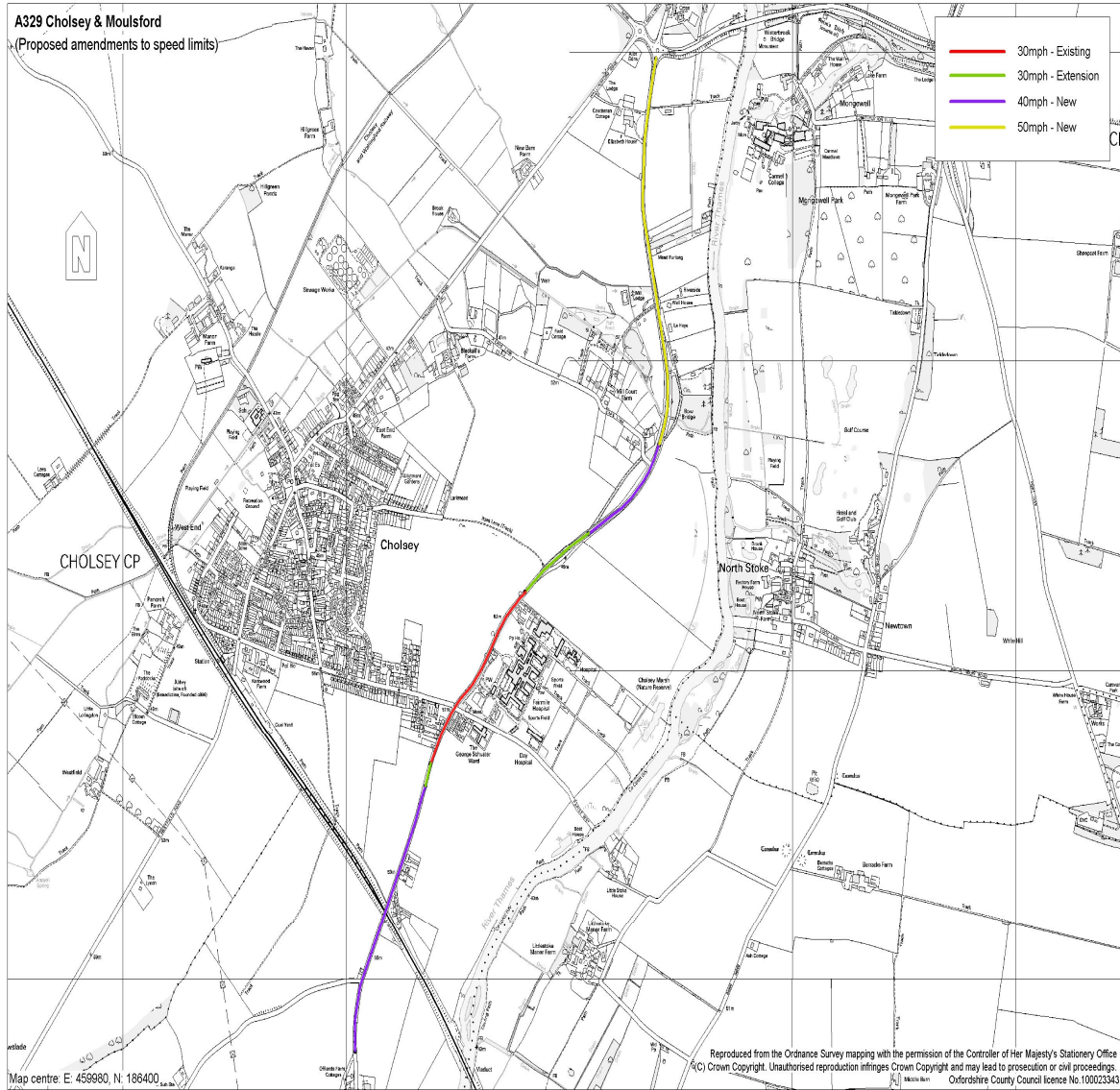
STEVE HOWELL

Deputy Director for Environment and Economy- Highways and Transport

Background papers: Copies of all the legal documents and letters and emails received in response are available in the Members Resource Room

Contact Officer: Anthony Kirkwood, Tel 01865 815704

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24 May 2011

Our Ref HQ 178/1/236 TM – CH 129/11

Oxfordshire County Council
Environment and Economy
Speedwell House
Speedwell Street
Oxford
OX1 1NE
For the attn. of Mr Anthony Kirkwood

Dear Sir,

Oxfordshire County Council (Cholsey and Moulsoford)(Speed Limits)Order 20**

I refer to your letter dated 11 May 2011 regarding the above, in which you invite my comment.

The speed limits subject to these proposals were first consulted upon in January 2011 following the completion of Traffic Calming works at the location.

Thames Valley Police raised strong objection to the proposals and I attached a copy of my previous response, detailing the reasons for that objection .

I am aware that this new proposal now amends the 40 mph speed limit on the north side to include the junction with Caps Lane and includes a new 50 mph speed limit to the roundabout on the northside at the junction with the A4130.

Previous objection to the new speed limits proposal still applies for the following reason:-

- The underlying principles of DfT Circular Roads 01/2006 have been ignored.
- Your own speed limit criteria dated 20 July 2004 has not been applied.
- The current measures would appear to have increased collision history rather than reduce it.
- The speed data gathered in 2010 does not support the proposed lower limits.
- Following a Road Safety Audit carried out on 20 April 2011 concern was raised regarding the general lack of compliance to these speed limits and road safety implications with the Traffic Calming features in place.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Hulme'.

Chris Hulme
for Superintendent i/c
Roads Policing

THAMES VALLEY POLICE

Division/Station : Roads Policing Bicester

From : Chris Hulme - Traffic Management

To: Superintendent Roads Policing

Ref : HQ 178/1/236

TM : CH 002/11

Date : 20 January 2011

Tel.No. 01993 893926

Subject

1.Oxfordshire County Council (Cholsey and Moulsoford)(Speed Limits)Order 20***Reference**

This report is in response to a letter of consultation/draft Traffic Regulation Order and drawing number S/TRO 09/10/1 received from Oxfordshire County Council regarding the above subject.

History

There are no previous papers on file in relation to this particular subject.

Investigation

In conjunction with the development of land formerly Fairmile Hospital site at Cholsey, Oxfordshire County Council are proposing to extend the existing 30 mph speed limit on the A329 through Cholsey at its northern end by 340 metres, and its southern end by 70 metres, and to introduce a 40 mph speed limit from a point 290 metres south of its junction with Papist Way, Cholsey, southwards to a point 70 metres north of the boundary of No 1 Offlands Farm Cottages, Moulsoford. And from a point 832 metres north of its junction with Papist Way .Cholsey, northwards for a distance of 300 metres

Consultation

The existing National speed limit along the A329 between the villages of Moulsoford and Cholsey was previously discussed as part of the speed limit review. Despite police objection, the County Council agreed to implement this change in speed limit from National to 40 mph

It is understood these further proposals were agreed following a planning application and to accommodate traffic calming features already installed at both entry points to Cholsey.

A Temporary Traffic Order reducing these speed limits has been in place since the 22 November 2010 in order to accommodate works on the highway.

I did meet Malcolm Bowler at this site on Wednesday 12th January 2011 where these proposals were discussed at length.

Conclusion

Thames Valley Police work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council on the Speed limit reference group .The aim of the partnership is to discuss/implement new speed limits which have casualty reduction benefits .All aspects of the proposed speed limit are

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taken into account i.e. collision history ,speed of existing traffic, road environment, enforcement,road character and driver perception etc.

The collision history shows 3 injury collisions in the last three years.

Two collisions in the vicinity of Half Penny Lane and Petrol station forecourt and the 3rd involving a vehicle emerging from Papist Way.

There is no previous collision history recored in the last 3 years along the A329 north of Papist way.

The current speed of traffic is a reliable indicator of how acceptable a new speed limit would be. The recognized way of ascertaining this level of self compliance is the 85th percentile speed. If the 85th percentile speed is 7mph or more over the proposed limit it is unlikely to be effective without other measures such as engineering or continual enforcement.

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.

The policy of Thames Valley Police is to use sound practical and realistic criteria (Circular Roads 1/2006) when responding to Highway Authorities in an effort to promote consistency and to reduce the burden of constant and unnecessary enforcement.

Although I have been provided with speed data which shows a considerable reduction in vehicles speeds, taken at various points both before and after the introduction of the traffic calming measures I raise concern that the mean speed of vehicles entering the new 40 mph limit is still too high on the north side and no data has been provided for the new 40 mph limit on the south side.

Our initial objection to lowering the nation speed limit remains , unless further measures are considered to reduce current vehicle speeds.

The new traffic calming measures already installed without formal police consultation, I would suggest are regularly monitored.

Recommendation

That a letter be sent to Chris Lees at Oxfordshire County Council for his information outlining the points made in this report.

Chris Hulme
Traffic Management Unit

