

Divisions affected: *Chalgrove & Watlington*

**CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT –
14 DECEMBER 2023**

**EWELME: GREEN LANE AREA –
PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMITS**

Report by Corporate Director, Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet Member for Transport Management is RECOMMENDED to approve the introduction of 20mph speed limits in Green Lane, Eyre's Lane and Benson Road in Ewelme as advertised.

Executive summary

2. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits in Green Lane, Eyre's Lane, and Benson Road to fill a gap in the 20mph limits previously implemented in Ewelme in March 2022, as shown in **Annex 1**.

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 Ewelme by making them safer and more attractive.

Formal consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 12 October and 03 November 2023. 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, Ewelme, and Benson parish councils, and the local County Councillors representing the Chalgrove & Watlington, and the Benson & Cholsey divisions.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Thames Valley Police re-iterated views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits which they consider as 'concerns' rather than an objection. They do however stress that Green Lane is a long-standing mobile enforcement site with poor compliance of the current 30mph limit.
8. The 'Go Ahead' Group (which includes Thames Travel bus company) objected to the proposals on Benson Lane and Green Lane due to the impact on the 136 service. Despite the modest 400m length, the cumulative impact of other speed reductions along the route including in Benson and Wallingford must be considered and may result in a reduction in services.

Other Responses:

8. 27 online responses were received, all from local residents, one also a district councillor, except for one member of the public and the neighbouring parish of Benson. All respondents were supportive given the sole expression of concern queried whether the proposals would receive enforcement. A South Oxfordshire District councillor for the Benson & Crowmarsh ward (which includes Ewelme) also responded, submitting their support.
9. Those who responded online were also asked whether if the 20mph speed limit proposals were implemented, would it likely influence a change to their mode of travel in the area, the results of which are shown below:

Travel Change	Number
Yes – walk/wheel more	13 (48%)
Yes - cycle more	4 (15%)
No	9 (33%)
Other	1 (4%)

10. The consultation responses are shown in **Annex 2**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Officer response to objections/concerns

11. The main purpose of the scheme is to improve road safety and to encourage greater use of active travel by reducing speeds; this will also reduce collisions. The aim of reducing speed limits is to change driver's mindsets to make speeding socially unacceptable and make more environmentally friendly modes

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p>Concerns – Especially in relation to Green Lane. This is a long-standing mobile enforcement site with poor compliance of the current 30mph limit.</p> <p>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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • road function • composition of road users (including existing and potential levels of vulnerable road users) • existing traffic speeds • 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, (Go Ahead Group)</p>	<p>Object – Thames Travel service 136 operates up to every 30 minutes at peak times between RAF Benson and Cholsey via Wallingford and hourly off-peak.</p> <p>We object to the proposed speed limit reduction from 30mph to 20 mph on Benson Lane and on Green Lane south from its junction with Benson Lane due to the impact it will have on the 136 service.</p> <p>Although these sections of road, amounting to approximately 400m may seem modest, the total cumulative impact of other speed reductions along the route including in Benson and Wallingford needs to be taken into account.</p> <p>The Cholsey end of the 136 route operates as a loop and so there is no recovery time at this end of the route. There is generally just three minutes of recovery time at RAF Benson. Therefore, if bus speeds continue to deteriorate along the route, a point will be reached where it is no longer possible to operate an hourly service with just one bus.</p> <p>The 136 service already receives financial support from the County Council and it is theoretically possible for the Council to fund an extra bus to maintain the existing route and frequency. However, ongoing Local Authority funding cannot be guaranteed. It was the ability to operate a return trip within an hour (along with transferring entitled scholar</p>

	<p>flows to the service) that enabled the route to continue in 2016 when all Local Authority funding for supported bus services was removed.</p> <p>If the point is reached where it is no longer possible to operate a round trip within an hour and additional funding is not available it is likely that a revised route will be required. This will mean that certain journeys currently possible by bus will cease to be possible. It is therefore vital that buses are able to make progress where it is safe for them to do so.</p>
(3) Local District Cllr, (Benson & Crowmarsh Ward)	Support – Happy with the proposed extension to the Ewelme 20mph zone.
(4) Benson Parish Council	<p>Support – We agree with the reduction of the speed limit.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(5) Local resident, (Benson, Oxford Road)	<p>Concerns – The lack of enforcement by police</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(6) Local resident/District Cllr, (Ewelme, The Street)	<p>Support – I am very supportive of this proposal. The current 20mph limit along The Street is rarely observed (and is not very well signposted) so extending the limit along Benson Road, Green Lane and Eyres Lane should help to slow traffic as it enters the village. As many HGVs use this route it is really important that they are slowed down to improve safety and to minimise disruption to local residents. I know residents in Eyres Close are regularly woken up at 5am by HGVs thundering down Eyres Lane and hitting a dip in the road. Also, I regularly walk my dog from The Street to the bridleway along the back of Eyres Close and with no pavement it can be extremely dangerous with vehicles traveling at 30mph and more. The inclusion of this end of the village in the 20mph zone will be welcomed by residents of Green Lane and Eyres Lane who have felt very aggrieved at its omission to date.</p> <p>Travel change: Other</p> <p>I already walk and cycle most days in this area, so reducing the speed limit won't change my habits but will make this practice far safer and should avoid the "near misses" I regularly experience at the moment.</p>

<p>(7) Local resident, (Benson, Gravel Close)</p>	<p>Support – Pedestrian safety concerns</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(8) Local resident, (Benson, Gravel Close)</p>	<p>Support – Accessing the bridleways/ footpaths with young children will be safer</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(9) Local resident, (Ewelme, Eyres Close)</p>	<p>Support – I live in Eyres Close which opens on to Eyres Lane. Currently traffic proceeding north and south in Eyres Lane including the HGV traffic from the Hazell and Jeffreys site in Eyres Lane, represents a considerable risk of injury at the current 30 mph limit, which is often exceeded. The lower end of Eyres Lane has several points with very limited visibility which is hazardous to residents of Eyres Close exiting onto Eyres Lane</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(10) Local resident, (Ewelme, Eyres Close)</p>	<p>Support – I live in Eyres Close off Eyres Lane. I supported the 20mph limit in the rest of Ewelme, I thin it has worked well. Eyres Lane sadly still sees traffic exceeding 30mph, so I welcome the 20mph limit on this dangerous road that is frequently used by walkers in the hope it will reduce the speed of traffic entering the village from this road.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(11) Local resident, (Ewelme, Eyres Close)</p>	<p>Support – Eyres Lane is a road used by walkers and cyclists. This stretch of road has no footpaths. It is busy and there is a blind spot at the junction with the Pyghtle. Traffic frequently enters the village too fast. Also, there is inappropriate use of the road by Hazell and Jeffery HGVs. Sometimes they go in convoy of five plus vehicles. Hopefully, this danger and nuisance will be addressed by the completion of the Benson relief road and banning of H&J lorries from Ewelme.</p> <p>As a dog walker I have had to jump into the verge/ hedgerow when vehicles entering the village have come down Eyres lane too fast. This could be addressed by a chicane system. I understand that previously the Highway authority have claimed that the approach to Ewelme on Eyres Lane doesn't have enough space for a chicane. This appears</p>

	<p>contrary to the situation on the entrance to Benson on the B4009 between the new roundabout and Benson Village which is a similar distance.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
(12) Local resident, (Ewelme, Eyres Close)	<p>Support – I live in Eyres Close and I am concerned about the speed of traffic down Eyres Lane. It is very dangerous trying to exit Eyres Close onto Eyres Lane as traffic (cars and lorries) drive very fast into village, they know they have to come to a stop at junction at bottom next to pub. They show no intention of slowing down even to 30mph. I also walk my dog up this road for a short distance and this can be extremely dangerous too.</p> <p>I fully support the 20 down Eyres Lane BUT there must be some large signs (current signs get hidden in bushes) and large road markings/ rumble strips. Plus a permanent SID (speed indicator device).</p> <p>Also weight restriction to limit lorries (tip /skip and concrete lorries) through village, the number of these have increased dramatically over recent few years.</p> <p>Also signs that say please drive carefully through our village, children playing, hidden turning etc. anything that may slow traffic past our road end would be welcomed.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
(13) Local resident, (Ewelme, Eyres Lane)	<p>Support – This section of Eyres Lane is used extensively and regularly by pedestrians, moving between footpaths and the residential roads. The walkers are invisible to vehicles, travelling in either direction, until they only have around 20 meters of stopping distance. There have been many near misses for pedestrians with the current 30 mph limit on this road with blind bends and road turnings and driveways on both sides.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
(14) Local resident, (Ewelme, Eyres Lane)	<p>Support – I live on The Bank, Eyres Lane and fully support the proposed 20mph extension as I have daily experience of being a pedestrian and living in this area.</p> <p>There is no footpath or street lighting on Eyres Lane and a bend in the road gives limited visibility to the vehicles hurtling down Eyres Lane into the village. This means that every time either myself or my neighbours have to cross the road, to get to our off road parking, we take our life in our hands.</p>

	<p>The increase in traffic, particularly the number of large lorries, speeding along this section of road over the past few years has made it extremely hazardous for pedestrians, children, cyclists, workmen, delivery drivers and our beloved pets (I've had 2 cats killed by speeding vehicles).</p> <p>The lorries frequently pull onto our car parking property in order to be able to pass each other, as the road is not wide enough for them, leaving no room for pedestrians either who maybe in the way.</p> <p>It is notable that many drivers speed up as they cross the bridge, before turning onto Eyres Lane as the road rises upwards when traveling out of the village and when traveling into the village, they brake for the junction with The Street as they pass Eyres Close.</p> <p>In an ideal world more robust calming measures could be implemented however, in my opinion, the reduced speed limit is a good first step.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
(15) Member of public, (Ewelme, Eyres Lane)	<p>Support – Road safety</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
(16) Local resident, (Ewelme, Hampden Way)	<p>Support – I support the extension as the area proposed to be included in the 20mph zone is one where there are residential properties. Children use these routes to walk/cycle to school. Wait for school buses (often where there are not footpaths)</p> <p>It's a well known fact that the speed in which vehicles enter the village (both via Eyres Lane & Green Lane) is already well above the current 30mph speed limit (both these routes are down hill too & endure several vehicles per day from Hazell & Jefferies-located just outside the village)</p> <p>Any additional measures we can implement to reduce speed & make our roads/village safer must be supported.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(17) Local resident, (Ewelme, High Street)	<p>Support – Slow vehicles down to improve road safety especially for walkers & cyclists</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>

<p>(18) Local resident, (Ewelme, Parsons Lane)</p>	<p>Support – Traffic too fast with too many lorries and anything to slow and calm the traffic along outskirts of Ewelme very welcome</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(19) Local resident, (Ewelme, Parsons Lane)</p>	<p>Support – I believe any reduction in speed through built up areas saves lives of people and animals.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(20) Local resident, (Ewelme, The Street)</p>	<p>Support – I and others walk dogs daily up Eyres Lane into the face of oncoming HGV and other traffic to access one of the three public footpaths round a blind corner and, without a walkway or at least a lower speed limit, I feel exceedingly vulnerable</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(21) Local resident, (Ewelme, The Street)</p>	<p>Support – No pavement, traffic too fast through village. HGVs</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
<p>(22) Local resident, (Ewelme, Wingfield Close)</p>	<p>Support – The existing 20mph speed in the centre of Ewelme has slowed traffic (some people actually drive at 20mph) and has made walking/cycling through the village a lot safer. This needs to be extended to all roads in Ewelme.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
<p>(23) Local resident, (Ewelme, Wingfield Close)</p>	<p>Support – To make it safer for local residents. There is no footpath on that stretch of road and it is often used as a rat run to/from the Watlington Rd (B4009) with traffic not respecting the fact that it is a village location where people often walk (with dogs/children), cycle or ride horses.</p>

	<p>That section of road also suffers from HGV traffic to/from the Hazell & Jeffries site and Grundon. The lorries often drive too fast through that part of the village. It is primarily a safety reason.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(24) Local resident, (Ewelme, Cat Lane)	<p>Support – Most vehicles enter the village at well over the current 30mph speed limit, including a large number of HGV's. There are many pedestrians and dog-walkers on that stretch of the road.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(25) Local resident, (Ewelme, Chaucer Court)	<p>Support – I walk along Eyres Lane most days, with my dog. For most of the route, there is no footpath; vehicles frequently do not adhere to the current speed limit and drive dangerously qclose when traffic passes in both directions. Anything to slow the traffic down on this dangerous stretch of road.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(26) Local resident, (Ewelme, Chaucer Court)	<p>Support – Walking up Eyres Lane today, a large lorry came hurtling down and almost collided with me and my dog. This is not an infrequent occurrence. They do need to slow down. There are no pavements on either side.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(27) Local resident, (Ewelme, Eyres Lane)	<p>Support – Extension of the 20mph limit will be to the benefit of residents, pedestrians, road users and the environment.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
(28) Local resident, (Ewelme, Parsons Lane)	<p>Support – Our children get on and off the school bus by The Shepherds Hut in the mornings and evenings and the traffic is too fast around there - an accident waiting to happen.</p>

	Travel change: No
(29) Local resident, (Ewelme, The Street)	Support – Cars travel too fast, there's no pavement and it makes walking very dangerous Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more
(30) Local resident, (Ewelme, Chaucer Court)	Support – No street lighting or pavements Travel change: No