

Berinsfield 20mph

Oxford Bus Company and Thames Travel maintain an objection against the planned 20mph scheme for Berinsfield, specifically the proposals for the Eastern section of Fane Drive between Tower Industrial Estate and the A4074. We are supportive of the remainder of the proposals.

The reason for our objection is that we do not believe that the proposals for this section of road will achieve any of the stated objectives to improve walking and cycling within Berinsfield, as the road in question does not lie within the settlement but is an edge road which does not serve any desire lines for intra-Berinsfield trips. The road itself has been designed for higher speed limits using urban design principles such as minimal frontage access, minimised animation and the “Radburn” layout used in the wider estate which removes the need to cross this road.

However, the proposals will result in a slowing of bus services. While OCC has conducted some limited analysis of bus speeds on the road in question, they have done this over a sample of a single journey, conducted at off-peak time, when bus schedules are under less time pressure. This does not constitute sufficient empirical evidence of the speeds buses typically travel at on this section of road, or of the speeds necessary to be operated when schedules are under the most pressure – at peak times.

Given forthcoming development plans at Berinsfield it is important to ensure that it remains attractive for bus operators to provide services within the settlement of Berinsfield itself. The main Reading – Wallingford – Oxford bus service does not divert into the estate, serving parkway stops on the A4074 and the reason for this is due to the significant time penalty that results from serving the settlement. These proposals will increase the size of this penalty.

Service 45, which provides a service within the development currently, is supported by time limited s106 developer funding, and in the medium term is likely to need to be supported by funding from developments at Culham. It will be paramount for the residents of these developments to have a fast journey time to east Oxford employment sites, and therefore it is likely that the continued provision of the service through Berinsfield village will come under pressure at this point. These proposals will serve to increase this pressure, and increase the likelihood of the service needing to be “straightened out” to speed up journey times. If this was to happen it would of course have highly adverse consequences for those of limited mobility living in the settlement, as they would need to reach the bus stops on the A4074 to access bus services.

The DfT has recently issued Circular 01/2013 “Setting Local Speed Limits” which provides some useful clarification to local authorities in properly discharging their statutory duties, including the “Network Management Duty” under the Traffic Management Act 2004. We would highlight the following sections, which we would

argue have not been given due consideration in the case of the Berinsfield proposals:

“123. The aim of speed management actions is to deliver a balance between safety objectives for all road users and mobility objectives to ensure efficient travel, as well as environmental and community outcomes. Every effort should be made to achieve an appropriate balance between actual vehicle speeds, speed limits, road design and other measures. This balance may be delivered by introducing one or more speed management measures in conjunction with the new speed limits, and/or as part of an overall route safety strategy.”

“87. Based on this positive effect on road safety, and with positive support from residents, traffic authorities can consider introducing 20mph speed limits or zones on:

- ***major streets where there are – or are likely to be – significant numbers of journeys on foot, and/or where pedal cycle movements are an important consideration, and this outweighs the disadvantage of longer journey times for motorised traffic***
- *residential streets in cities, towns and villages, particularly where the streets are being used by people on foot and on bicycles, there is community support **and the characteristics of the street are suitable***

*88. Schemes need to aim for compliance with the new speed limit. Where new limits are put in, **they should be in places where most drivers are likely to comply**. We know that compliance is better on smaller, narrower roads than on wider roads where the layout gives drivers a clear run.*

*89. Successful 20mph zones and 20mph speed limits are generally self-enforcing: that is, **the existing conditions of the road** together with measures such as traffic calming or signing, ...*

*91. While 20mph limits and zones can be an important tool in improving road safety in residential areas, over-use risks undermining public acceptance, as well as burdening car and bus users with slower journeys, potentially with increased pollution. **20mph schemes should be considered on a road-by-***

road basis based on the safety case to ensure local support, not as blanket measures. Particular consideration should be given to maintaining through routes for motorists.

More specific commentary is set out in paragraphs 100-108, on “signed-only” 20mph limits, as opposed to 20mph Zones where streets are comprehensively engineered and altered to secure vehicular speed reductions.

100. Research into signed-only 20mph limits shows that they generally lead to only small reductions in traffic speeds – less than 1mph on average. Signed-only 20mph limits are, therefore, most appropriate for areas where vehicle speeds are already low. This may, for example, be on roads that are very narrow, through engineering or on-road car parking.

102. The implementation of 20mph limits over a larger number of roads should be considered where mean speeds at or below 24mph are already achieved over a number of roads.”

Summary Table 1 makes the following statement about all 20mph limits, whether sign- only or more comprehensively engineered “20mph Zones”:

“These should not be introduced as a blanket measure, but in streets that are primarily residential and in other town or city streets where pedestrian and cyclist movements are high, such as around schools, shops, markets, playgrounds and other areas, where motor vehicle movement is not the primary function.”