

Divisions affected: *Sonning Common*

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT – 13 Oct 2022

SHIPLAKE: A4155 PROPOSED 30MPH SPEED LIMIT & TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

Report by Corporate Director, Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet Member for Highway Management is RECOMMENDED to approve:
 - a) The proposed 30mph speed limit in place of the current 40mph speed limit
 - b) The following proposed traffic calming measures:
 - A solid white line on the northbound carriageway approximately 280m along Reading Road to legally restrict drivers being able to overtake.
 - Visual road narrowing achieved using white lining at two new areas of red coloured textured surfacing.
 - Renewal of existing red coloured textured surfacing.
 - A new vehicle activated sign (VAS)
 - 'SLOW' road markings
 - 30mph roundel on the carriageway.

Executive summary

2. This report presents responses received to a consultation on a proposed 30mph speed limit and traffic calming measures on the A4155 at Shiplake as shown in **Annex 1** to permit safe access including for pedestrians to residential development (a retirement village) adjacent to the A4155 for which consent was granted by the Planning Inspectorate following an appeal by the developers to a decision by South Oxfordshire District Council not to approve the development.
3. The current 40mph speed limit was introduced in August 2019 following approval at the Cabinet Member for Transport decisions meeting on 25 April 2019 to increase the speed limit from 30mph at the request of Shiplake Parish Council due to their concerns that then 30mph speed limit – which ran through largely open countryside – was poorly respected and resulted in undesirable behaviours (for example following the vehicle ahead too closely and overtaking) and reduced respect for the 30mph speed limit on the A4155 in the more built up parts of Lower and Upper Shiplake. The parish council funded both the consultation on and implementation of the 40mph speed limit.

Financial Implications

4. Funding for the consultation on the proposals and their implementation if approved has been provided by the developers of adjacent land.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

5. No implications in respect of equalities or inclusion have been identified in respect of the proposals.

Sustainability Implications

6. The proposals would help facilitate walking and the safe movement of traffic.

Consultation

7. Consultation on the proposals was carried out between 26 August and 23 September 2022. A notice was published in the Henley Standard newspaper and emails were sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Bus operators, countywide transport, access & disabled peoples user groups, Shiplake Parish Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, and the local County Councillor representing the Sonning Common division.
8. Thirty-two responses were received during the course of the formal consultation, comprising of: 29 objections (85%), and 3 in support (15%).
9. The responses are shown at **Annex 3**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.
10. Thames Valley Police objected to the proposal citing that the suggested 'soft-calming' measures will not do anything to achieve compliance and that extending this limit could only weaken the existing 30 limits on this road, unless further engineering is included.
11. Councillor David Bartholomew, the local member and Shiplake Parish Council both objected to the proposal, emphasising the rationale behind the speed limit change made in 2019.
12. The remaining objections were received from members of the public, with the grounds of objection focussing on concerns over road safety, unwelcome urbanisation and the suitability of the approved development, with it being noted that planning consent was granted on appeal with the then 40mph speed limit.
13. Three members of the public expressed support for the proposals.

Officer response to objections/concerns

14. Following the technical submission to the Road Agreements Team of the proposed junction giving access to the development it become clear that the vision splays that could be achieved did not meet the requirements of a 40mph road, OCC have had two speed surveys carried out in the vicinity of the proposed new junction and this further highlighted the need to reduce the speed limit to 30mph, so that the planning approved vision splays were suitable without the need to lose or remove any trees to the south of the new junction when applying the national Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) standard.
15. A further reason for the proposed 30mph speed limit is to improve the safety and amenity of pedestrians using a proposed new 1.5m wide footway from the northern corner of the retirement village that spans across the frontage of the Westbourne Homes development that links into the existing footway provision. The existing carriageway width is not excessive and therefore passing vehicles do so close to the kerb line, at 40mph (or more) pedestrians using this footway are subject to close passing vehicles at speed, therefore reducing the speed limit to 30mph will decrease the speed and make walking along this footway more pleasant and will give a greater sense of safety to its users.
16. In addition to the speed limit, it is proposed to introduce the following traffic measures:
- A solid white line on the northbound carriageway approximately 280m along Reading Road to legally restrict drivers being able to overtake.
 - Visual road narrowing achieved using white lining at two new areas of red coloured textured surfacing.
 - Renewal of existing red coloured textured surfacing.
 - A new vehicle activated sign (VAS)
 - 'SLOW' road markings
 - 30mph roundel on the carriageway.
17. More detailed comments on the issues raised by those objecting to the proposals are set out in the table below.

Summarised objection	Officer response
Planning given when road was 40mph, so why does it need to change?	Many of the refer to the fact that when the appeal was won the road was subject to the 40mph, this is correct but recent speed surveys do show an increased speed along this section of road to enhance the Highway safety aspect it is proposed to lower the speed limit to 30mph as set out as an obligation in the Unilateral Undertaking

	(UU agreement) between OCC and the developer (this UU formed part of the planning appeal permission documentation) of the retirement village._____
Urbanisation of Shiplake	<p>Concerns are raised in relation to the urbanisation of Shiplake and not agreeing with the District's local plan. The consultation has been undertaken to reduce the speed limit on Reading Road and comments regarding the wider developments within Shiplake</p> <p>The public consultation has been carried out for the proposed speed limit change on Reading Road, it is not an opportunity for views to be put forward in relation to development within Shiplake or the District's local plan. Nevertheless, I disagree with the comments that changing the speed limit of the section of road is urbanising Shiplake.</p>
Motorists speeding when the road was 30mph, so 40mph is correct	Some of the objections mention that people were speeding on the road when it was subject to a 30mph and therefore 40mph is the correct speed, it should not be that speeding vehicles are accommodated by increasing speed limits, this is further supported by Oxfordshire County Council's 'Vision Zero' policy, which sets out to "Eliminate all fatalities and severe injuries on Oxfordshire's roads and streets, to have a safer, healthier, and more equitable mobility for all. Work closely with partners and stakeholders to take a whole system approach, working together on infrastructure, behaviour, technology and legislation to achieve this change".
Reading Road is a rural road	Objections are made on the grounds that this road is rural and therefore a 30mph speed limit is not appropriate, whilst it maybe a rural setting there is adjacent consented development, together with requirement for new

	<p>footway from Retirement Village alongside the reading Road. The nature of the place is changed, together with the addition of interface between pedestrians and vehicles as such 30mph limit is considered appropriate.</p>
<p>Safety issues with new 30mph speed limit</p>	<p>Objections are made on the grounds that this road is rural and therefore a 30mph speed limit is not appropriate, whilst it maybe a rural setting there is adjacent consented development, together with requirement for new footway from Retirement Village alongside the Reading Road. The nature of the place is changed, together with the addition of interface between pedestrians and vehicles as such 30mph limit is considered appropriate.</p> <p>None of the objections provides any specific reasons for this comment, reducing the speed limit increases the safety of the new junctions and Reading Road for reasons contained in this report.</p> <p>As noted in the report taken to the Cabinet Member for Transport decisions meeting on 25 April 2019 when the proposed increase to 40mph was being considered, there were no reported injury accidents when the 30mph speed limit was in place following its introduction in 1999 in place of a 50mph limit.</p> <p>No injury accidents have been reported in the 40mph speed limit since its introduction in August 2019.</p>
<p>Effectiveness of proposed traffic calming measures</p>	<p>While accepting that the type of calming measures proposed will not provide as strong a control of speeds as may be achieved by road humps or chicanes / build-outs, they should still help reduce speeds sufficiently to achieve acceptable levels of safety.</p>

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes Annex 1: Consultation Plan
 Annex 2: Consultation responses

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October 2022

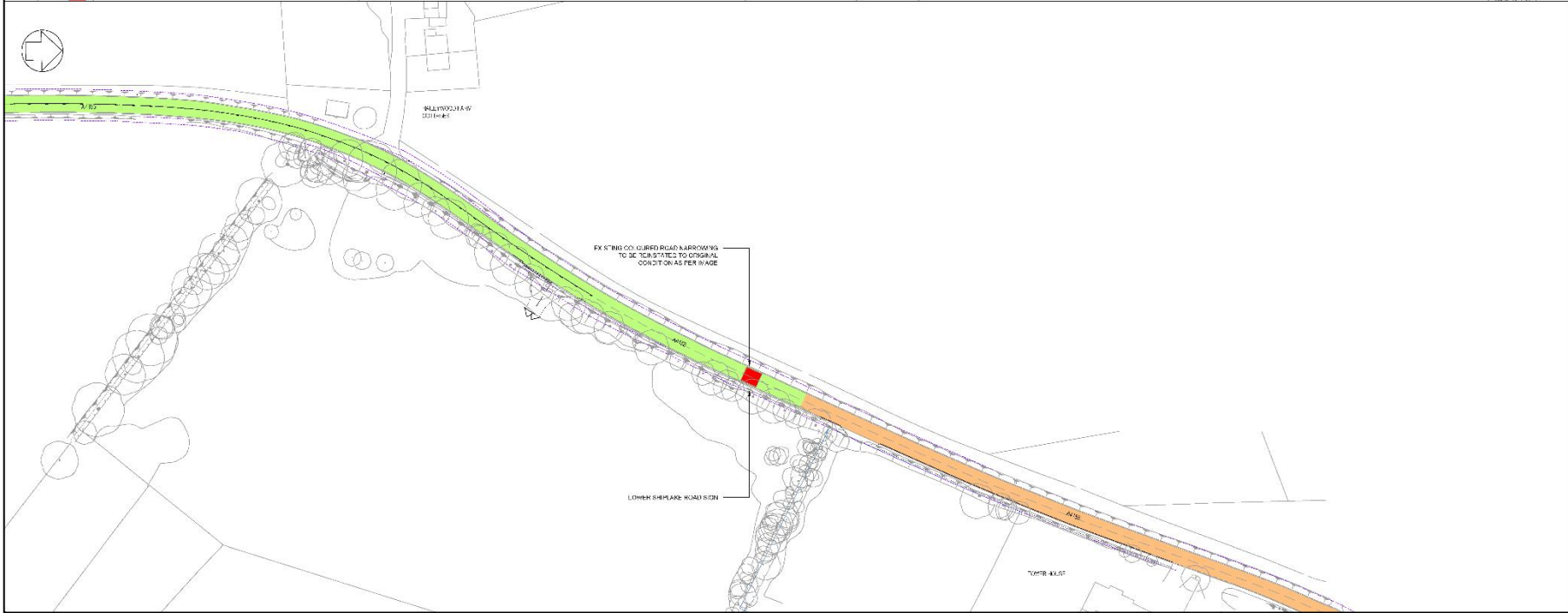
ANNEX 1

ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN METERS
UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE

- KEY
- EXISTING 20m ZONE
 - EXISTING 30m ZONE
 - PROPOSED 30m ZONE (TO REPLACE EXISTING 40m ZONE)



EXISTING COLOURED ROAD NARROWING TO BE REINSTATED TO ORIGINAL CONDITIONS PER IMAGE



EXISTING COLOURED ROAD NARROWING TO BE REINSTATED TO ORIGINAL CONDITIONS PER IMAGE

LOWER SHIPLAKE ROAD SIGN

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

THE CONSULTANT HAS CONDUCTED VISUAL CHECKS OF THE PROPOSED WORK AND HAS FOUND NO OBSTRUCTIONS TO THE PROPOSED WORK.

Plan B

Land Use of Resisting Road
Resisting Road, Road Signage,
Handwritten Signs

TRO & Traffic Calming Consultation Plan

Task	Date	Status
Task 1	15/11/22	AS
Task 2	15/11/22	AS
Task 3	15/11/22	AS

Preliminary
Project No: 20095 - PLB - XX - ZZ - DR - H - 002

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p>Object - 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 new speed 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.. 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.</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 • 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>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>I do not believe the suggested measures will do anything to achieve compliance and that extending this limit could only weaken the existing 30 limits on this road.</p> <p>I therefore object unless further engineering is included</p>
(2) County Cllr, (Sonning Common division)	<p>Object - I do not understand why this proposal has been put forward.</p> <p>It is only three years ago that a decision was made to increase the limit from 30mph to 40mph. This was taken with wide local support. You will find the detailed reasoning for the change in the relevant officer reports and consultation responses.</p> <p>The retirement village was given permission in the full knowledge that the speed limit was 40mph and this was deemed to be safe. In the context of the above, the draft reasons in the document make no sense.</p>
(3) Shiplake Parish Council	<p>Object - Shiplake Parish Council always has road safety at the forefront of its mind. We supported and paid for the change to 40mph specifically because OCC Highways advised that an increase to 40mph would improve traffic safety, in particular outside Shiplake College and at the junction between the A4155 and Mill Lane. There has been no material change in the intervening period so we are at a loss to understand why OCC now considers that the speed limit should be reduced to 30mph.</p>
(4) Member of public, (Shiplake, Crowsley Road)	<p>Object - Shiplake is a traditional rural village and the modern urbanising features are inappropriate and unsightly. The speed limit reduction is unnecessary and ironically will make drivers less cautious</p>

<p>(5) Member of public, (Lower Shiplake, A4155)</p>	<p>Object - Increased urbanisation and safety concerns. This limit will be flouted .It is safer at 40mph on this rural stretch</p>
<p>(6) Member of public, (Shiplake, New Road)</p>	<p>Object - I feel the reduction of the speed limit would decrease road safety for the reasons set out and agreed in the report CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 25 APRIL 2019 A4155 BETWEEN LOWER AND UPPER SHIPLAKE - PROPOSED 40MPH SPEED LIMIT.</p> <p>I so strongly object to the urbanising effects that the proposal would have. The village of Shiplake is being increasingly urbanised especially by highway changes along the A4155. This is a rural village and I, like many others, would like to keep it feeling that way.</p> <p>I except that some development is inevitable but I believe the effects should be mitigated as far as possible. Not future urbanising the A4155 in this location feels like an easy win.</p>
<p>(7) Member of public, (Lower Shiplake, Baskerville Lane)</p>	<p>Object - safety and unwelcome urbanisation</p>
<p>(8) Member of public, (Shiplake Cross, Orchard Close)</p>	<p>Object - Planning approval for the retirement village was granted when the existing 40mph limit was in operation which was deemed to be safe.</p>
<p>(9) Member of public, (Lower Shiplake, Bolney Road)</p>	<p>Object - I object on safety given the reasoning for the 49mph limit being instigated only a couple of years ago and the unwelcome urbanisation of red road painting flashing LED Speed warning signs etc.</p>
<p>(10) Member of public, (Shiplake, Mill Road)</p>	<p>Object - Object on the grounds of safety and unwelcome urbanisation.</p>
<p>(11) Member of public, (Shiplake, Reading Road A4155)</p>	<p>Object - I live in one of the villages affected by this. It's another example of urbanization, that'll actually make the road more challenging to commute on</p>

<p>(12) Member of public, (Shiplake, Crowsley Road)</p>	<p>Object - Traffic will always exceed 30 mph on this piece of road and I can see no reason to change it. The developers of the retirement village knew that there was a 40 mph speed limit when they obtained planning permission and started construction and were clearly happy at that time; nothing has changed.</p>
<p>(13) Member of public, (Lower Shiplake, Mill Lane)</p>	<p>Object - The original decision to increase the speed limit on safety grounds was well founded and proved effective. The planning permission for the retirement village was granted on the basis that the 40 MPH. If this is no longer the case, the planning permission should be withdrawn.</p>
<p>(14) Member of public, (Shiplake, Crowsley Road)</p>	<p>Object - the current speed limits seem to be sensible and were approved in 2019. The planning for a retirement home was given KNOWING the current speed limit and was considered acceptable at that time.</p>
<p>(15) Member of public, (Shiplake, Lowes Close)</p>	<p>Object - The only additional properties on this stretch of road appear to be the recently approved care home. This planning permission was granted by an Inspector with full knowledge that the road speed was 40 mph. I cannot see why the sudden need to reduce the speed limit - it is not as if there will be many elderly people walking on foot to Shiplake and few methods for allowing them to do so</p>
<p>(16) Member of public, (Shiplake, Station Road)</p>	<p>Object - Current 40 mph space between the two Shiplake settlements confirms the rural nature of this area, currently under severe threat from overdevelopment. This proposal includes “traffic calming” measures indicating clutter and intrusion on a rural road. Speed limits should always be appropriate to the road situation and be seen to be reasonable. 40 mph is correct and would be for the entire village except past the school. The urbanisation of Shiplake is unwelcome and is resisted.</p>
<p>(17) Member of public, (Shiplake, Mill Lane)</p>	<p>Object - Shiplake is already being subjected to urbanisation and over development, which the local people and the approved Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan are strongly opposed to. The development on the Reading Road was not supported by local people, and it was approved when the speed limit was known to be changing to 40mph. Changing it back to 30mph and adding the additional urbanising features will further destroy the look and feel of Shiplake - which is a small, semi-rural village on the edge of an AONB - and it will encourage further applications for development on the A4155 in Shiplake. This is unnecessary, and not merited by the neighbourhood plan or by any wider-reaching</p>

	development plans. It is not fair to the people or the wildlife/natural area of Shiplake, to risk further urbanisation and destroying its character further.
(18) Member of public, (Shiplake, Station Road)	Object - The road in this rural setting supports a 40 MPH limit safely. Cars will be more tempted to overtake if a car in front is travelling slower than this. The proposed old peoples home was deemed safe with a 40 limit. Please help us keep this a rural village without the further urbanising features proposed.
(19) Member of public, (Shiplake, Station Road)	Object - 40 mph is much more appropriate in this rural area.
(20) Member of public, (Shiplake, Bolney Road)	Object - Grounds of safety - when it was 30 mph several years ago, it caused lot of frustration and dangerous overtaking. 40 mph has proven successful. The developers and planning authorities knew it was 40 mph when applying for permission and granting it. Don't let this be yet another example of the tricks developers play knowing they will normally get things through retrospectively. Unwelcome urbanisation with the road changes near entrance, no doubt lighting, loss of trees/greenery let alone speed limit change.
(21) Member of public, (Lower Shiplake, Northfield Avenue)	Object - 40mph deemed safe as part of retirement village planning approval. Measures suggested of painting, narrowing, additional signage will worsen the increasing urbanisation of this country road.
(22) Member of public, (Lower Shiplake, Oaks Road)	Object - The 40mph limit was only introduced recently. It has had the effect of providing the more obvious gateway speed signs at each end of the A4155 through open countryside between the Shiplake villages. This in turn has reduced vehicle speeds, reduced dangerous overtaking, and relieved the frustration for drivers of an unnecessary speed limitation. It has certainly had the effect of changing my own driving behaviour for the better along this frequently-used stretch of road. Permission for the new development was granted in full knowledge of the existing speed limit. This application is yet another example of developers being granted planning under one set of terms, then coming back to change the deal at a later date to the detriment of local residents. This has happened with Thames Farm, and the retrospective proposal to cover the entire site with 15m of concrete; to the Wyevale site, initially granted B2 development status, but now applying for 65 domestic residences. And now this.

	<p>The developer should ensure that, instead of renegeing on an agreed deal, access to their site is safely achieved under the conditions they were fully aware of when they made their initial application.</p>
<p>(23) Member of public, (Lower Shiplake, Oaks Road)</p>	<p>Object - I think the marked difference between the entrance and exit to our village is better served with the 30 zone markers and outside that (where this proposal is) should remain 40</p>
<p>(24) Member of public, (Shiplake)</p>	<p>Object - The large 40mph signs make it more obvious that drivers should slow down when approaching the 30mph signs at the Station Road/Woodlands Road crossroad heading north and the Mill Lane/Memorial Avenue crossroad when heading south. Drivers unfamiliar with the area are far less likely to attempt dangerous overtaking manoeuvres if cars in front are travelling at 40mph rather than 30mph.</p>
<p>(25) Local organisation, (Thames Farm Action Group) & Member of public (Lower Shiplake, Reading Road)</p>	<p>Object - This latest decision to seek the reduction in speed limit shows how poor and ill-prepared the County Council is when making consultations on planning applications. Nor does there appear to be any recognition of how damaging its actions and responses might be to the applications made for development.</p> <p>A very short while ago the Highways department concluded that this stretch of road should have a speed limit of 40mph which was done in response to local concerns/wishes. Subsequently, the Authority stated at the Appeal hearing for the Retirement Village that is now being constructed along this section of road that the development of the site was safe at the current limit of 40mph.</p> <p>The consent was then granted based on that consultation. Had the advice been that the development was not safe, it is quite likely that the Appeal here would have been rejected on the grounds of highway safety. To therefore find that a short time later the Highway Authority is stating that the changes are now proposed for reasons of highway safety makes a complete mockery of the Planning Consultation purpose and the advice provided by the Highway Authority at that time. This entire fiasco brings into question the competency and reliability of statements made by the Highway Authority and means that any knowledgeable party could reject/disclaim the Highway Authority's advice on Planning as wrong and meaningless.</p> <p>This proposal entirely undermines the reliability and Authority of the Highways Consultations. The road and speed limit is either safe or it is not this vacillation is very unhelpful and will have far-reaching consequences .</p>

<p>(26) Member of public, (Shiplake, New Road)</p>	<p>Object - 'Safety: -The large 40mph signs that would replace the small 30mph repeater signs would make it more obvious that drivers should slow down when approaching the Station Road/Woodlands Road crossroad heading north and the Mill Lane/Memorial Avenue crossroad when heading south -Drivers unfamiliar with the area and local speed limits would be far less likely to attempt dangerous overtaking manoeuvres if cars in front were travelling at 40mph rather than 30mph. Also the urbanising features in our rural setting. The retirement village is already a blot on the landscape and so why do we need to spoil the countryside environment further by having red roads etc.</p>
<p>(27) Member of public, (Shiplake, Baskerville Lane)</p>	<p>Object - Object due to safety and unwelcome urbanisation, and against the last survey and neighbourhood plan.</p>
<p>(28) Member of public, (Lower Shiplake, Bolney Road)</p>	<p>Object - The current speed limits work well and drivers slow down as they approach the Memorial, particularly coming from Reading. Permission for the Shiplake Meadows Retirement Village was granted knowing the speed limit was 40mph and it was deemed safe. Changing to a 30mph limit will open the floodgates for further development along this rural stretch of road and the urbanising features would be totally out of character here. I strongly object to any change.</p>
<p>(29) Member of public, (Lower Shiplake, Bolney Road)</p>	<p>Object - The current speed limits work well and drivers slow down as they approach the Memorial, particularly coming from Reading. Permission for the Shiplake Meadows Retirement Village was granted knowing the speed limit was 40mph and it was deemed safe. Changing to a 30mph limit will open the floodgates for further development along this rural stretch of road and the urbanising features would be totally out of character here. I strongly object to any change.</p>
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<p>(31) Email response, (unknown)</p>	<p>Object - I do object to this change of speed limit as all the reasons the 40 mph limit was brought in still apply. I certainly have felt safer driving on that section as I am no longer unsafest overtaken by those not observing the speed limit - which was a frequent occurrence when the limit was 30. There is also not as much “tail- gating” to try to force you into speeding!</p> <p>Also the other changes would bring excessive urbanisation to that part of the road. Shiplake is a semi-rural village and the approach along that section is important ant in maintaining the character of the village and keeping with the recently adopted neighbourhood plan.</p> <p>Allowing these changes would be yet another example of creeping urbanisation in spite of guarantee that the rural character would be protected.</p>
<p>(32) Member of public, (Lower Shiplake, Brampton Chase)</p>	<p>Support - I was against the increase in the speed limit from 30 mph to 40 mph as it is too close to the junction and vehicles already exceeded the 30 mph limit and now it is even higher. The 30 mph is the correct one in my opinion.</p>
<p>(33) Member of public, (Shiplake, Woodlands Road)</p>	<p>Support - It's become incredibly dangerous to cross from woodlands road to station road as cars speed along and around the corner ignoring the 30mph signs</p>
<p>(34) Member of public, (Shiplake, woodlands Road)</p>	<p>Support - Additional drives onto main road increase risk of accidents, but the 30 mph should be on a risk assessed section where there is a specific increased risk of accidents.</p> <p>Also proposed 20 mph limit for reading road stretch opposite shiplake memorial as when driving from woodlands road onto reading road towards reading, it is always very tight</p> <p>Basically, it is dangerous and one day, there will be a serious/fatal accident as cars are coming round the corner from henley and also reading giving the driver turning onto the road very little time to respond as you need to check both left and immediately right with both views very limited. I would recommend that someone from the Council comes and risk assesses this turning.</p>