

Divisions affected: Deddington

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

NORTH ASTON: PROPOSED 20MPH & 50MPH 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 and 50mph speed limits in North Aston as advertised.

Executive summary

2. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits in North Aston, and a new 50mph speed limit on the A4260 Oxford Road between Deddington & North Aston 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 North Aston 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 Bicester Advertiser 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, Cherwell District Council, the local District Cllrs, North Aston and Middle Aston parish meetings, Deddington and Duns Tew parish councils, and the local County Councillor representing the Deddington division.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Five statutory consultees responded. 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 services in the area. North Aston Parish Meeting support both proposals and also seek a 40mph limit between the A4260 and village. Cherwell District Council have no observations or objections. Deddington Parish Council support the proposed 50 limit on the A4260.

Other Responses:

8. 11 responses were received from members of the public. Nine supported the proposal for 20mph limits within the village, with two raising concerns. Additionally, six supported the proposal for a 50mph limit on the A4260; with three raising concerns, and two objecting – one of which thought it unnecessary, so essentially an objection, and another considered it should be 40mph. Six of the respondents also sought a 40mph limit on the short section between the main road and the village entrance. One person urged us to supplement the village 20mph limit with soft calming.
9. The responses are shown in **Annex 2**, 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. The responses show clear support for both the 20mph and the 50mph speed limit proposals. The single objection to the proposed 50mph limit on the A4260 is considered insufficient to prevent the proposal. While there is a strong call for a lower limit on the connecting road from the A4260, this is a predominantly rural area without any specific mitigating factors to support a lower speed limit.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

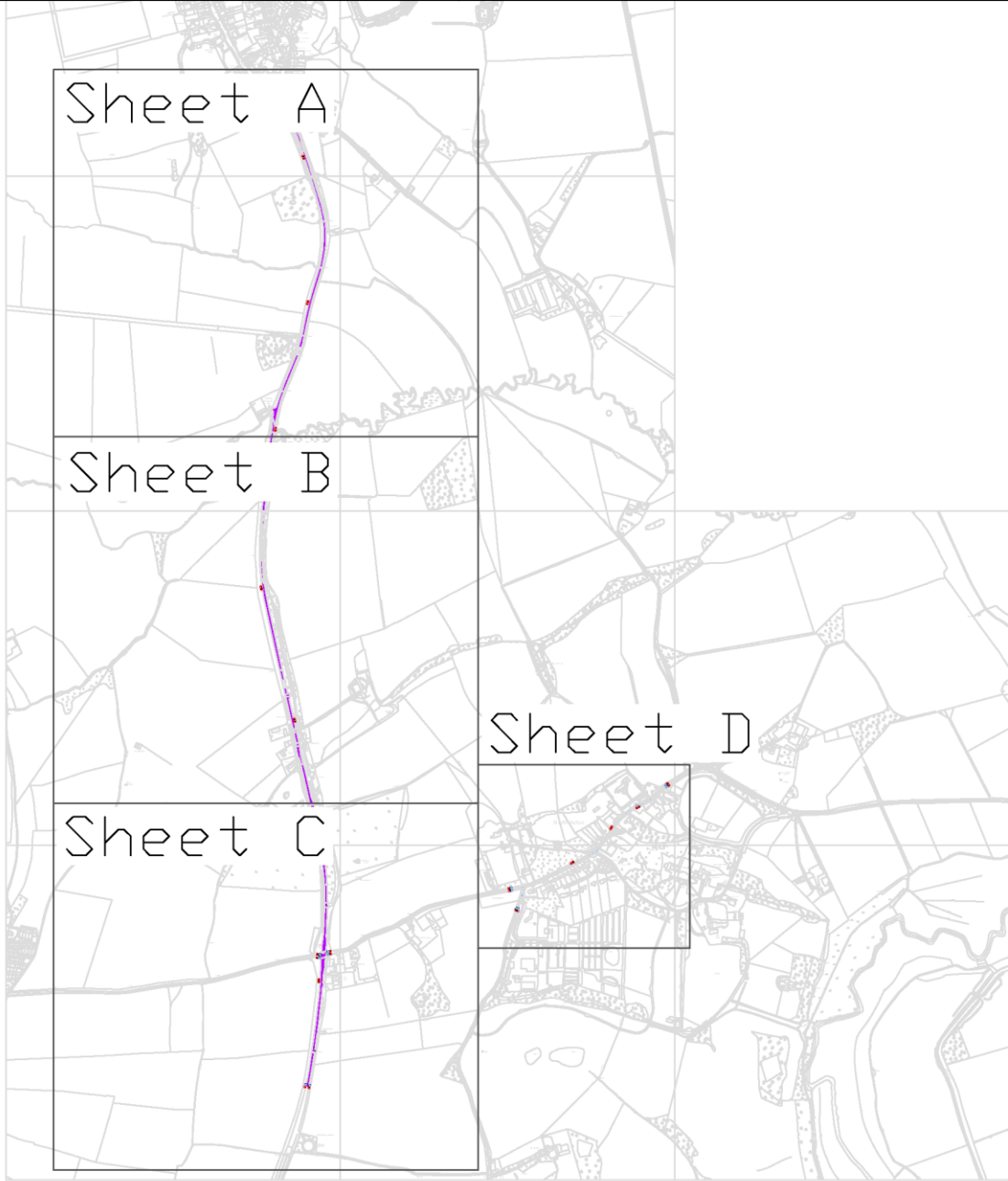
Annexes

Annex 1: Consultation Plan
Annex 2: Consultation responses

Contact Officers:

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March 2023




Drawing No. _____

Notes:

- Proposed new 20mph
- Proposed new 50mph

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved

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ANNEX 2

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>This response also applies to the 50 proposal on the A4260 . Looking at the Collision history it is mainly focused at the junction to North Aston .Would it not be better to treat this junction in some way rather than lowering the speed limit all the way to Deddington.</p>
(2) Head of Strategic Development and the Built Environment, (Stagecoach Bus Company)	<p>No objection – I can confirm that Stagecoach has no services operating on the affected roads, nor is it ever likely to. I therefore confirm we offer no objection.</p>
(3) North Aston Parish Meeting	<p>Support – I am the Treasurer of the Parish Meeting and the Transport Rep.</p> <p>As a village we have discussed this previously and we are in support of the 20mph limit as suggested. We are also in support of the 50mph limit from the Dual Carriageway all the way to Deddington.</p> <p>We would also like to request a 40mph limit from the Duns Tew Crossroads and into North Aston. You would be leaving the new 50mph and be able to do up to 60mph before having to be doing 20mph for the village. This is dangerous. This was suggested and agreed by the village.</p>
(4) Deddington Parish Council	

	<p>Support – At its meeting last week, Deddington Parish Council voted unanimously to support the introduction of the new, lower speed limits.</p> <p>The 50mph limit on the A4260 will be particularly welcome since we are anticipating that Deddington village too will have a 20mph limit introduced in the years 2023/24.</p> <p>In light of this limit on the A4260, we very much hope that you will agree to our request, already forwarded to you, that you introduce a 50mph limit on the B4031 connecting Hempton to Deddington and Deddington to Clifton. Clifton and Hempton have also both been promised 20mph limits.</p>
(5) Cherwell District Council	<p>No objection</p>
(6) Local Resident/Member of public, (North Aston, Someton Road)	<p>20mph speed limit - Concerns The purpose of my response is that having lived on the A4260 / North Aston / Duns Tew junction since 1988, I have experience of both the changing traffic volumes and the type of Driver / road user.</p> <p>50mph speed limit – Concerns I support the principal but have reservations as to the ability of all users to observe the limits. thus believe it to only do as intended if allied to further changes.</p> <p>Initially with the progressive opening of the M40, traffic volumes dropped and whilst there was a general observance of the speed limits enforced from time to time, accidents did happen at the junction in front of us. The northbound Bus shelter has been demolished on several occasions, once by a motor cyclist being propelled at it! He was an off duty policeman. I am actually at my study window watching the junction as I write. As to accidents, some serious, many not so and some even fatal. there have already been a couple this year. With the initial road speed bumps and subsequent speed Camera installation this has NOT changed for the better. All the more so given the "rat run" usage to overcome the local Bicester based A34 hold ups but more so now with the Housing expansion all around. eg; Upper Heyford, Deddington, Banbury, Bloxham etc. Again all the more so since "Lock down" and the use of the Somerton Road as a short cut to and from the population expansion in and around Bicester in both accommodation as well as employment. This has been further exasperated by the growth in traffic on the side roads through the "Astons" which include Middle Aston Road - Heavy Transport, Buses, Vans, Lorries etc as well as School children deliveries in SUV's. The road edges are seriously collapsing and with the growth in Articulated lorry arrivals for deliveries and the width of the road not meeting current needs due to expansion in vehicle size, the surfaces are seriously eroded and breaking up. Thus slower speeds and greater driver reaction timing is desirable. Thus the imposition of multiple speed</p>

levels over short lengths of road make little sense. Reduce the cost of installation of signage etc by going from the proposed 50mph on the A road to 30 / 20 in one sweep at the junction of the two roads. Keep this in place until exiting either North Aston on the way to Somerton and the same in the run to Middle Aston through to Steeple Aston's exit points. Time cost minimal, potential accident cost prevention, significant. Constant switching of speeds over a few hundred yards such as on the Bladon, Long Hanborough Witney road is laughable and not ecologically sensible. Constant gear changes and breaking cause greater fuel usage and thus pollution as well as frustration to Drivers. Thus less observance of the rules by them. Once again, time loss minimal, cost of signage much reduced and life dependency improved. Resurfacing in a proper way - rather than the cheap spaying and graveling that has gone on in recent years - is probably out of the question given the paucity of funds in all pockets at present.

As to the Main A4260 suggestion, the creation of a north / south lozenge shaped island with a long vehicle length bay across the centre for protection in the centre would both give crossing / turning vehicles as well as pedestrians a chance to a longer and better life. All the more so as now the traffic volume is higher than it has ever been. At the same time move the speed camera closer to the junction to further slow down approaching vehicles to the crossing.

There are more vehicles passing along Somerton road than in all the 30+ years we have been here. Much more so since the considerable expansion of Nicholsons, a local business in the village with over 90 employees as well as a fleet of their own vehicles / trailers. This is added to by the use of Somerton Road to Duns Tew etc., as a cut through to Soho farm in Great Tew. The number of fast and inexperienced drivers on country lanes in Merc's, Bmw's, Porsches and a few Italian super cars is unbelievable. All the more so as they hit the junction unexpectedly coming from North Aston. Several forced off the road outside our walls. One driving into our drive wall and their car being crushed as a result of low sun in their eyes in the opposite direction. What is more, there is no where for pedestrians to go other than on the road surface. Such are all country roads and long may they be so. Do not forget however that we have on the A road, an under privileged girls support hostelry / school next door but one - past the Southbound Bus Stop - they walk their clients down these side roads as do villagers and school children from the bus stop! The churning up of the verges on both sides of the entry to Somerton road off the A 4260 is ample evidence of the size of vehicle now using the side road. 35 ton earth movers are regular visitors as are the large modern tractors used today.

Thus to finish. A 4260. Move the speed camera closer to the road junction to stop accelerating cars impact levels at the cross over. Do impose the 50 mph limit on the A 4260. If cash available, build the safety reservation. Do impose a consistent limit of 20 or better 30mph across the collapsing narrow roadways in and through the Astons. Save long term lives, costs and emissions. All in one?

<p>(7) Local Resident/Member of public, (North Aston)</p>	<p>20mph speed limit - Support The strength of road that this relates to (the existing 30mph zone) is aligned by housing and this is a fair and reasonable approach which will make members of the community feel safer and reduce risk of accidents</p> <p>50mph speed limit – Object I believe this to be unnecessary. Other than the junction with Somerton Road (North Aston) and a couple of houses to the north there are no junctions that would benefit from such a long stretch of the A road having a reduced speed limit. What would benefit the Somerton Road (North Aston) junction is preventing local businesses from cluttering up the verges with advertisement signs and even a branded vehicle (which has been parked during business hours for a number of years) attempting to lure traffic into their out-of-town retail premise on Middle Aston Lane. These signs and vehicles block sight lines and create distractions. A branded marketing vehicle was recently hit by a distracted driver. Before these marketing campaigns took place on the verges around this junction I am unaware of any incidents occurring.</p>
<p>(8) Local Resident/Member of public, (North Aston)</p>	<p>20mph speed limit - Support Reducing the current 30mph speed limit to 20 mph through North Aston is welcome and sensible. I wish to support this.</p> <p>50mph speed limit – Object Regarding the proposals for a new 50 mph speed limit is proposed on the A4260 Oxford Road between the existing 30 mph speed limit at Deddington and a point south of the junction with Somerton Road (North Aston). I believe this to be unnecessary. Other than the junction with Somerton Road (North Aston) and a couple of houses to the north there are no junctions that would benefit from such a long stretch of the A road having a reduced speed limit.</p> <p>What would benefit the Somerton Road (North Aston) junction is preventing local businesses from cluttering up the verges with advertisement signs and even a branded vehicle (which has been parked during business hours for a number of years) attempting to lure traffic into their out-of-town retail premise on Middle Aston Lane. These signs and vehicles block sight lines and create distractions. A branded marketing vehicle was recently hit by a distracted driver. Before these marketing campaigns took place on the verges around this junction I am unaware of any incidents occurring.</p>

<p>(9) Local Resident/Member of public, (North Aston)</p>	<p>20mph speed limit - Support Very much support this idea, having seen many incidents in the village that could have caused serious injury or worse due to speeding. What measures will be in place to enforce this new speed - I assume a range of traffic calming measures? It would be good to know what is proposed</p> <p>50mph speed limit – Concerns I do not think a reduction to 50MPH is sufficient, especially as you approach the North Aston/Duns Tew junction. I think it should be 40MPH max and introduction of speed cameras that are in working order).</p>
<p>(10) Local Resident/Member of public, (North Aston)</p>	<p>Concerns – would like to express my general support for all the proposal made, as far as they go. This includes the reduction of the speed limit through the village from 30 mph to 20 mph, and also the reduction in the limit to 50 mph along the A4260 from the dual-carriageway, northwards, into Deddington.</p> <p>However, while very welcome, these changes do not go as far as the agreement we had previously reached with OCC Highways, through George Gibb (since departed OCC) and David Catling, following various on-site meetings and discussions with them in 2021 and 2022. This specifically included the physical extension of the current demarcation of the village limits to include the entrance to Bee Cottage, a new residential development currently outside the 30 mph zone, and the reduction in the speed limit between the Fox Crossroads (A4260, North Aston / Duns Tew) and the village from 60 mph to 40 mph.</p> <p>Through the efforts of Tony Buxton, our own Traffic Officer, now sadly deceased, we had established that the preferred position of the village sign, and the extent of the proposed 20 mph zone, would be moved to a point some 50 yards (approximately) south-west of the entrance to Bee Cottage, some 100 yards or so south-west of the current position. It had also been discussed that the demarcation eastwards would also be extended, to include the entrance driveway into Coldharbour Farm and Manor Farm, and that a 40 mph limit would be introduced from there, eastwards, to include the Lodge and entrance to Manor drive.</p> <p>These discussions were still on-going in May last year, shortly before Tony's untimely death. I believe Kildare Bourke-Borrowes has since taken over responsibilities as village Traffic Officer.</p> <p>While I appreciate that the changes eastwards along the Somerton Road might pose more of a challenge, I would urge you to adopt the proposal that the extent of the 20 mph zone should be extended south-west to include the</p>

	<p>access to the Bee Cottage, and that the speed along that stretch from the Fox Crossroads into the village be reduced to 40 mph, as agreed.</p> <p>With regard to the crossroads themselves, I welcome the suggested modifications to the approaches for those turning off the A4260, either towards Duns Tew or North Aston, but fear they do not go far enough. The junction really requires a complete re-think, with either a roundabout (for which there is space) or traffic lights being the only long-term solution. Removing the central turning space, while reducing the ambiguity of the current arrangement, may simply result in more rear-end accidents and, potentially, further fatalities.</p>
<p>(11) Local Resident/Member of public, (North Aston, Somerton Road)</p>	<p>20mph speed limit - Support I live alongside this road, and the current speed of traffic through the village is excessive.</p> <p>50mph speed limit – Support While a general reduction in speed is welcome anyway, this particular reduction will have a greater impact on the safety of the crossroads at The Fox, where the North Aston-Duns Tew road crosses the A4260. This is a notoriously dangerous junction, but heavily used, and accidents occur here far too frequently. Hopefully, reducing the speed of passing traffic will make this junction safer for local residents.</p>
<p>(12) Local Resident/Member of public, (North Aston)</p>	<p>Support – Along with most, if not all of the other residents of North Aston, I am delighted and 100% supportive of these proposed measures both in our village and on the main road to Deddington. My only concern is that whereas the proposed limits are excellent, it will be difficult to enforce them without any additional traffic calming measures?</p> <p>Somerton Road is a rat run nowadays for traffic wishing to cut across from Bicester to Chipping Norton, and certainly during rush hour periods, many drivers appear to be obviously oblivious to any form of existing restriction!!! I'm not a fan of speed bumps, but do favour the introduction of single line gates at either end of the village, as seen locally in Somerton and Bucknell?</p> <p>Perhaps worthy of consideration to make the new system work for everyone?!?!</p>
<p>(13) Local Resident/Member of</p>	<p>Support – I think it is an excellent idea to make the speed limit through North Aston village 20 mph.</p>

<p>public, (North Aston, Middle Aston Lane)</p>	<p>And I would like to make two further recommendations. The single track lane between North Aston and Middle Aston, used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders, is currently 'unrestricted' - so potentially legally 60 mph. A restriction of this lane to 20 or 30 mph would not just be welcome to residents but sensible from the safety aspect.</p> <p>As would a restriction to 40 mph for the road from North Aston to the Duns Tew crossroad at the A4260.</p>
<p>(14) Local Resident/Member of public, (North Aston)</p>	<p>Support – I am emailing to confirm my very strong support for a reduction in the speed limit through North Aston to 20 miles per hour. I live along the Green and am only too aware of how fast some cars drive through the village. This is both extremely dangerous as there are often pedestrians walking along the road, some of whom are elderly or children, and also very noisy.</p> <p>I would also very much welcome a reduction in the speed limit along the road to Deddington to 50 miles per hour. There are so many accidents at the Fox crossroads it is important to introduce any measures which would make this less dangerous.</p> <p>Finally, I am strongly in favour of a reduction in speed limit from the crossroads until the village to 40 miles an hour. This would both be safer and encourage drivers to go more slowly through the village itself.</p> <p>I feel very strongly that these speed restrictions should be introduced as soon as possible. The volume of traffic through the village and along the road between Steeple Aston and Deddington has increased hugely over the last few years and is likely to increase further with proposed nearby developments. Any measures which will help mitigate the impact of this on local residents should be brought in as soon as possible.</p>
<p>(15) Local Resident/Member of public, (North Aston)</p>	<p>Support – I would like to express my total support to the proposed reduction in speed limit for the village of North Aston from 30 to 20 miles an hour. It is of grave concern that cars and heavy vehicles pass through the village at excessive speeds when children are walking up to catch the bus to school. The pavements are narrow and vision poor and is an accident waiting to happen. The added developments at Heyford Park and Soho Farm House traffic have resulted in a “rat run” between Somerton and the A4260, which brings me on to support the proposal to reduce the speed to 40 miles an hour from the main A4260 crossroads into the village. There is no footpath from the village to the main road to get the bus and both young and old have to risk their lives walking this distance. Why are our lives of no value? I’m not anti car but I am opposed to antisocial drivers who care nothing for the residents or the environment and it seems that tighter restrictions are the only solution.</p>

	<p>I understand there is also a proposal to reduce the speed limit between the Duns Tew and North Aston crossroads on the A4260 to Deddington. Long overdue. To road is not designed to take the volume of traffic travelling at excessive speeds with poor visibility and roads exposed to the elements resulting in icy conditions.</p>
<p>(16) Local Resident/Member of public, (North Aston)</p>	<p>Support – I write as someone who has been involved with traffic problems through our village for many years dating back to when the Upper Heyford Air Base was operational and with the volume of traffic through the village it created. We may be up to those numbers again. At that time in a bid to have some small impact on the speed of vehicles through the village the Parish purchased and installed a Pair of "North Aston Please Drive Slowly "signs from The Royal Sign Factory Witney for just £144! These remained in place until we achieved a 30 mph limit through the village. Our original signs were then replaced with rather inappropriate and over sized 30mph signs and our old signs were taken away and lost . Over many months there have been meetings on site with council officials and the suggestion of an official 20mph limit through the village was met with full approval . What also seemed a very practical requirement was the plan for 40mph limit preceding the 20mph limit rather than the National Speed limit of 60mph . Without the 40mph limit before the village an area of sudden braking would be found necessary. While in dry fine weather that maybe acceptable in wet icy conditions it certainly has the potential for creating an accident . Surly the 40mph limit before the 20mph limit would give drivers time to adjust to the slower speed necessary through the village. Another benefit of the 40mph limit would occur when leaving the village in a westerly direction i.e the Parkfarm entrance is situated just beyond a bend and in the Summer months is obscured by verge-side vegetation. Tractors with their long trailer loads make an exit from here all the year round but it is an area that is particular accident prone in the busy Summer months. The fact is, the most modest of small cars (ignoring the Soho House Traffic) can now quickly accelerate to 60mph when leaving the village, and they do!</p> <p>Please look again at introducing the 40mph before the village limit of 20mph The 50mph limit on the A4260 would be a welcome upgrade.</p> <p>The reordering of the Duns Tew / North Aston crossroad marking to prevent vehicles finding themselves nose to nose , their vision obscured , while waiting to take a right hand turn to either village can only be seen as an improvement</p>