

Divisions affected: *Wroxton & Hook Norton*

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT – 7 SEPTEMBER 2023

SOUTH NEWINGTON: PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMITS

Report by Corporate Director, Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet Member for Highway Management is RECOMMENDED to approve the introduction of 20mph speed limits in South Newington as advertised.

Executive summary

2. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits in South Newington 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 South Newington by making them safer and more attractive.

Formal consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 20 July and 11 August 2023. A notice was published in the Banbury Guardian 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, South Newington and Milcombe Parish Councils, and the

local County Councillors representing the Wroxton & Hook Norton, and the Bloxham & Easington divisions.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Thames Valley Police were the only statutory consultee respondent; they reiterated views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits, they consider their view as 'having concerns' rather than an objection.

Other Responses:

8. Three email and 11 online responses were received, with nine local residents in support and two expressing identical concerns that there should be a longer 20mph limit proposed on the A361. Two local residents objected citing the proposals as totally unnecessary and the funds far better spend on road maintenance. A Witney resident also believed the proposals to be unnecessary and also undemocratic.
9. Four of those that responded online stated that they would consider changing their mode of travel in the area by walking more if the 20mph speed limit proposals were implemented.
10. The 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 encourage greater use of active travel by reducing speeds; this is also expected to 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 help reduce the Counties carbon footprint. This forms part of a countywide programme of works that seeks to deliver 'a safer place with a safer pace'.
12. The authority considers objections along the lines of it being unjustified, anti-car, a waste of money, not enforceable or pointless to not warrant amendments to a proposal. As such the authority has not addressed the comments made of this nature in this report.
13. The extent of the proposals on the A361 cover the built-up section of the community with a relatively open environment beyond this. The A361 is a major route and we do need to be mindful of the need not to impede progress unduly where it is safe to do so.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes

Annex 1: Consultation plan
Annex 2: Consultation responses

Contact Officers:

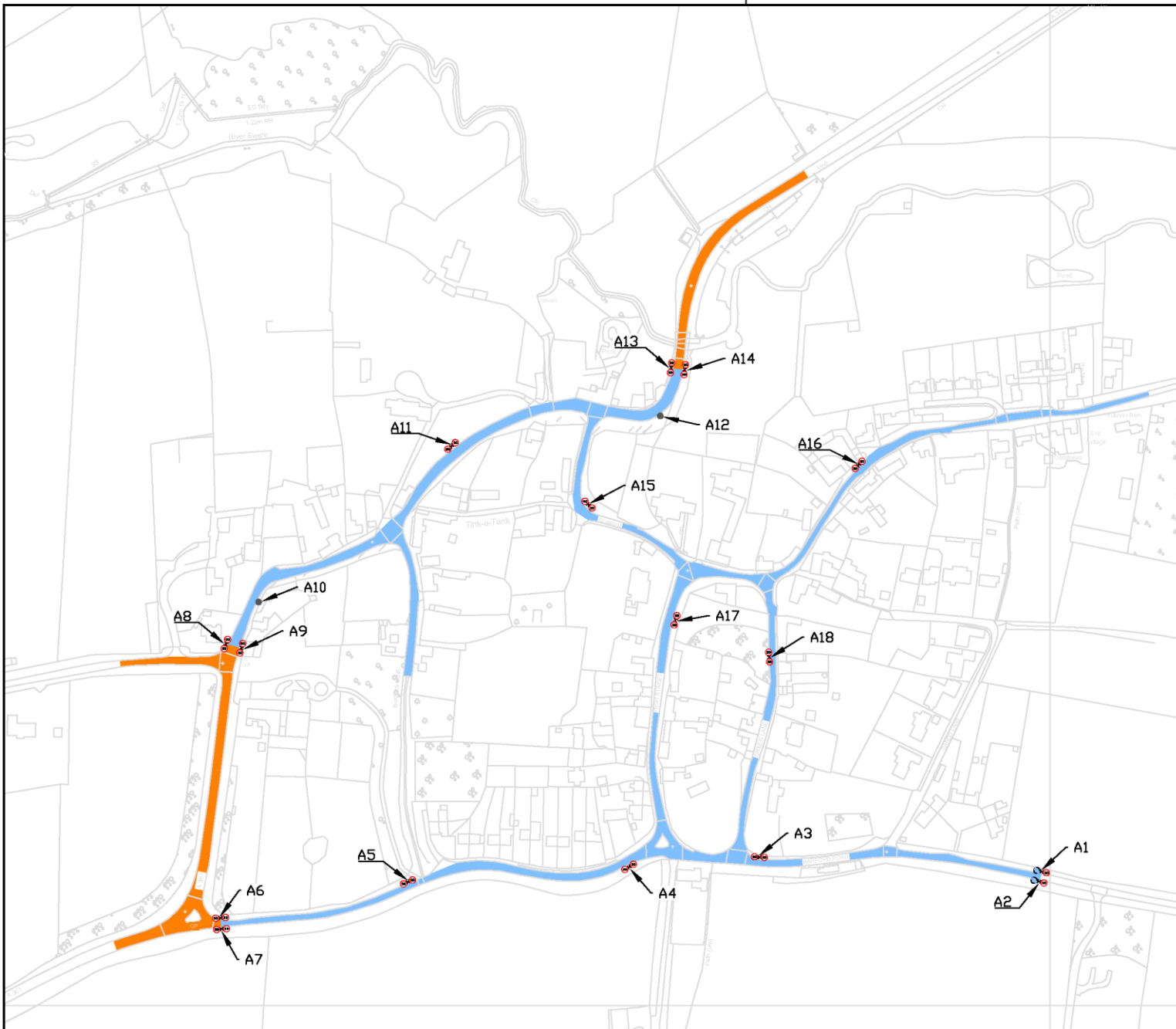
Phil Whitfield 07912523497
Geoff Barrell 07392 318869

September 2023

Drawing No.

Notes:

- Proposed 20mph limit
- Existing 30mph limit



© Crown Copyright and Database rights 10023943 2017

Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved



Bill Cotton
 Director of
 Communities Operations
 Oxfordshire County Council
 County Hall
 New Road
 Oxford
 OX1 1ND
 Tel: 0845 310 1111

Project title

South Newington 20mph

Drawing title

Sheet A

Drawing Status

Scale @ A3	Drawn by	Checked by	Approved by
	ER	GJB	GJB
	Date drawn	Date checked	Date approved
	28/06/23	29/06/23	29/06/23

Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref

Drawing No.	Revision
-------------	----------

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<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 • 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>
(2) Local Resident, (South Newington)	<p>Object - There is no need to lower the speed limit as the current one has no effect for some drivers. The funds for this proposed project should be put in to repairing the unsafe state of the country roads where drivers swerve to miss potholes!</p>
(3) Local Resident, (South Newington, Sands Lane)	<p>Object - No idea what problem is being fixed by a 20mph limit? Is it environmental, in which case it makes no difference at all. Is it safety, in which case let's see the evidence. The money could be much better spent on repairing the roads. The proposal is utterly ridiculous</p>
(4) Member of public, (Witney, Oxford Hill)	<p>Object - Zero reason looking at the data that this is necessary and given nobody has even been asked at the ballot box about this. This does not need being implemented into this village at all.</p>
(5) Local Resident, (South Newington, A361)	<p>Concerns - The response given to SNPC, that the southern end 30mph limit on the A361 should remain, is inaccurate in describing the road as “an open straight road to a good standard and with only one isolated access”. The stretch of road in question, between the planned southern end of the 20mph limit and the existing southern end of the 30mph limit is approximately 200 metres long and features, from north to south:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a T-junction on the right (with Wigginton Road) • Pedestrian access on the left to South Newington House

- Vehicular and pedestrian access on the left to The Old Farm
- A footpath joining it on the left
- A tight (and blind) right-hand bend at the southern end, combined with the junction with the Barford Road.

The road has no pavements or street lighting. Both sides are wooded and deer often cross – I have seen a number struck on the road. The verges are of variable width and are not maintained by the Local Authority to a standard suitable for pedestrians and non-motorised traffic.

Because of the footpath and the proximity to the lightly-used Wigginton Road, the northern half of this stretch (between the footpath and the Wigginton Road) sees considerable pedestrian traffic – hikers, dog walkers, local use, etc. Depending on the condition of the verges, and because walking the route requires crossing the A361, it is common to see pedestrians picking their way along the edge of the carriageway and crossing quickly between gaps in the traffic. This can be risky because of the blind bends at either end, and a 20mph limit would greatly enhance the ability of pedestrians to safely cross when they can see the entire stretch is clear. The existing 30mph limit is widely disregarded particularly in the southbound direction (uphill) and particularly by motorcycles. A 20mph limit may be equally disregarded, but would probably reduce average speeds by 10mph or so.

Local equestrian facilities mean that there is much horse traffic along the whole stretch, with horse riders passing from the Barford Road to the Wigginton Road and back again. The facilities are located on the Wigginton Road and use the A361 in this way to access the bridleways that leave South Newington in other directions. Again it is common to see horse riders picking their way along the road and making use of the verges where possible, and because of the volume/type of traffic on the A361 respect for their presence is generally poor with insufficient space given and insufficient speed reductions. A 20mph limit would make a big difference to these road users, even if not fully respected.

Retaining the 30mph stretch here also means more road signage, which is unsightly (the sign at A6 will be inside the conservation area) and it will be too close to bends/junctions to be sensible. The planned signage at A8 and A9 – firstly there quite probably isn't even room here to put the signs in, and the sign at A9 will almost certainly force pedestrians (there is pedestrian traffic right round the tight bend at A10, despite the Local Authority not maintaining the pavement after the bend) into the road, and secondly drivers are negotiating some very tight bends and should be concentrating on the road rather than having to take note of signs. It just isn't a good place to change the limit – there's too much else going on.

The northern stretch of the A361 has a number of the same issues. There is much pedestrian traffic along the edge of the carriageway and on the verge, connecting with the footpath leading to Milcombe near the Thames Water facility on

	<p>the outside of the bend. This bend is also blind and makes crossing the road (as a pedestrian must do to access the footpath from the village) a risky endeavour. Because of the downhill gradient into the village, road traffic tends to enter the village retaining excess speed even after entering the present 30mph limit.</p> <p>At both ends of the village, traffic leaving on the A361 tends to accelerate prematurely and apply significant power because of the uphill gradients. This leads to excessive noise throughout the village (but particularly for houses on the A361) and is especially noticeable on fine weather days when motorcyclists are out in significant numbers. Extending the planned 20mph limit to match the present 30mph limit would lead to a significant reduction in noise pollution.</p> <p>The very tight bend just north of the A10 position causes particular problems. It is worth noting that the map seems inaccurate, as it does not convey just how sharp and narrow this blind bend is. It is common for HGVs going north to carry speed down the hill towards that bend and sound their horn repeatedly as they approach it, essentially telling southbound traffic which is out of sight and approaching the bend from the other direction “I am coming through here without slowing and will be occupying both sides of the road, you had better get out of my way”. Relatively minor collisions are common, as southbound traffic presses itself into the wall or reverses into the vehicle behind to avoid an oncoming HGV. These collisions go unreported as the HGVs don't stop. Several times a day there is a ‘coming together’ at the bend where someone has to do some reversing so that a large vehicle can get round, and when this happens the northbound traffic queues all the way up the hill to the junction with the Barford Road. This means that the end of that queue is blind to approaching traffic, and having the 20mph limit where the existing 30mph limit is would reduce the risk of collisions here.</p>
<p>(6) Local Resident, (South Newington, A361)</p>	<p>Concerns - Whilst I support the 20mph limit, the current boundaries for in which do not keep to current village limits are impractical and dangerous for the reasons set out below. The response to SNPC, that the southern end 30mph limit on the A361 should remain, is inaccurate in describing the road as “an open straight road to a good standard and with only one isolated access”. The stretch of road in question, between the planned southern end of the 20mph limit and the existing southern end of the 30mph limit is approximately 200 metres long and features, from north to south:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a T-junction on the right (with Wigginton Road) • Pedestrian access on the left to South Newington House • Vehicular and pedestrian access on the left to The Old Farm • A footpath joining it on the left • A tight (and blind) right-hand bend at the southern end, combined with the junction with the Barford Road. <p>The road has no pavements or street lighting. Both sides are wooded and deer often cross – I have seen a number</p>

struck on the road. The verges are of variable width and are not maintained by the Local Authority to a standard suitable for pedestrians and non-motorised traffic. There is considerable pedestrian traffic – hikers, dog walkers, local use, etc. Depending on the condition of the verges, and because walking the route requires crossing the A361, it is common to see pedestrians picking their way along the edge of the carriageway and crossing quickly between gaps in the traffic. This can be risky because of the blind bends at either end, and a 20mph limit would greatly enhance the ability of pedestrians to safely cross when they can see the entire stretch is clear.

Local equestrian facilities mean that there is much horse traffic along the whole stretch, with horse riders passing from the Barford Road to the Wigginton Road and back again. The facilities are located on the Wigginton Road and use the A361 in this way to access the bridleways that leave South Newington in other directions. Again it is common to see horse riders picking their way along the road and making use of the verges where possible, and because of the volume/type of traffic on the A361 respect for their presence is generally poor with insufficient space given and insufficient speed reductions. A 20mph limit would make a big difference to these road users, even if not fully respected.

Retaining the 30mph stretch in places means more road signage, which is unsightly inside and adjacent to the conservation area and it will be too close to bends/junctions / driveways to be sensible and not limit visibility splays. In particular those suggested to be placed on the barford road at the junction just before the A361 will be particularly dangerous where the road is only just wide enough for two cars, not for heavy goods vehicles which are common along here and have to pull onto the verge. Likewise the lack of visibility here will be further compromised by signs, which would not be required if the 30mph zone is extended to village limits as at present.

The northern stretch of the A361 has pedestrian traffic along the edge of the carriageway and on the verge, connecting with the footpath leading to Milcombe near the Thames Water facility on the outside of the bend because of the downhill gradient into the village, road traffic tends to enter the village retaining excess speed even after entering the present 30mph limit. Again a 20mph to the village limit would really benefit road, cycle and dog walkers here for safety.

The very tight bend just north of the A10 position causes particular problems, goods vehicles going north carry speed down the hill often braking at the last minute or forcing oncoming cars to reverse at speed as they go around the bend without care to oncoming traffic. This can cause traffic backing up the main road here, whether as result of an accident or because traffic has to wait as one vehicle rounds the corner in any case. Having a 20mph limit where the existing 30mph limit is would reduce the risk of collisions here as traffic would not start speeding down the hill. I am concerned that moving from a 20mph to 30mph just as the bend finishes and before the hill will actually increase traffic speeds above the current levels as road users will assume the restricted zone has finished. Likewise it will cause excess

	acceleration and more noise and emissions pollution known to come from acceleration. This is a particular problem with motorbikes and would be exacerbated by the proposals if the zone is not extended to the village limit.
(7) Member of public, (Chipping Norton, Russell Way)	Support - I have driven between Chipping Norton and Banbury almost every day over a 6 week period, visiting my wife in hospital. The second bend into South Newington from the Chippy side is a real stinker and a 40ft container lorry will span this. I have had quite a few worrying encounters there. One evening, returning home, I saw the loom of lights on this bend against the wall and stopped well short. A container lorry came round the bend and jammed itself against the wall. I had to reverse some way before the lorry could free itself. Without those lights, I could have been trapped. There have been many less worrying incidents on the other bends. I have noted that HGVs seem to manage to get through South Newington significantly faster than I do for my lead on them has usually significantly decreased.
(8) Local Resident, (South Newington, Barford Road)	Support - The stats show that pedestrians are more likely to be killed if in a collision with a car driving at 30 mph rather than 20 mph. In South Newington, vehicles using the 2 main roads designated to potentially have 20mph speed limits often exceed the 30 mph speed limit as it is. To cross the A361 on foot can feel as though you are taking your life in your hands! Barford Road is regularly used by HGVs that travel at or above the speed limit - residents often comment that walking and cycling along this narrow road has become increasingly dangerous . I fully support the 20 mph zone, and wish it could extend further along Barford Road to the benefit of those walking and cycling, some of whom are older/disabled. As I live on Barford road, the speed of traffic , especially HGVs, has both a noise impact and at times can affect the house itself - e.g windows rattling
(9) Local Resident, (South Newington, Green Lane)	Support - Already vehicles exceed the 30 mile speed limit within the village, particularly the delivery vehicles so maybe with 20 limit things might improve
(10) Local Resident, (South Newington, The Town)	Support - There are a considerable number of HGV's on the A361 going through the village who need to take up the whole road going round the two very tight bends and a 20mph limit would make this more safe.
(11) Local Resident, (South Newington, High Street)	Support - To make the road safer, and stop speeding

<p>(12) Local Resident, (South Newington, The Old Farm Yard)</p>	<p>Support - Slowing down the traffic in the village will have a positive impact on the local residence, the roads can be narrow in places and sharp turns has seen many accidents in the two years I have lived in the village. Reduction of emissions and air quality will also be a benefit to us. I would also like to note that the location of the 20mph sign at A15 should be reconsidered as that corner is a blind corner, single track and I feel it could obstruct the view of an already difficult bend in the road. Would it also be possible to have a vehicle speed indicator with smiley activated message (SAM) these have been seen in neighbouring villages seem very effective.</p>
<p>(13) Local Resident, (South Newington)</p>	<p>Support – As a resident of South Newington I would like to thank you for your proposals based on the note received from the Parish Council.I wish to indicate the following:</p> <p>I am in favour of the 20mile limit; I would like to propose that consideration be given to cautioning traffic near the children’s playground on High Street; Slowing traffic down near the Turn-off to Barford Road heading to Chippy Norton (Hawthorn Hill), as an accident is imminent; Slowing down cars near the Duck on the Pond due to cars turning and travelling towards Bloxom (Hawthorn Hill) another dangerous spot as oncoming cars and cars exiting South Newington on Slibber Road are unable to see each other quickly enough.</p>
<p>(14) Local Resident, (South Newington)</p>	<p>Support – I am writing to express my full support for the proposal to convert the speed limit in South Newington (including on the portion of the A361 running through the town) to 20 miles per hour. As a resident of this area, I strongly believe that this change will improve the safety of our roads and reduce the risk of accidents. The current 30mph speed limit is ineffective and motorists are frequently driving well in excess of the limit when transiting through our town.</p> <p>In addition to this, I would also like to suggest that further safety improvements be made to the three sharp blind curves on the portion of the A361 passing through South Newington. This could be achieved by adding speed bumps every 300 meters or so prior to and following each blind curve on the road. This would help to ensure that drivers are more cautious when driving through South Newington, particularly as there are many local residents and other pedestrians who cross the A361 regularly. This will additionally make it safer for vehicles to turn out of roads and driveways onto the A361 within South Newington.</p>

	<p>I believe that making these changes to our roads is essential to ensure the safety of all road users, including drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. By slowing down traffic and making the area more pedestrian-friendly, we can make our community a safer and more pleasant place to live.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to consider my views on this important issue. I trust that you will give this matter the attention it deserves and take the necessary steps to improve road safety in our local area.</p>
(15) Local Resident, (South Newington)	Support – I am all in favour of 20 mph through the village