

Divisions affected: *Ploughley*

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

### **BLACKTHORN: 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 Blackthorn as advertised.

#### **Executive summary**

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

#### **Formal consultation**

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 14 September and 06 October 2023. 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, Blackthorn, Ambrosden, and Piddington parish

councils, and the local County Councillors representing the Ploughley, and Otmoor divisions.

### **Statutory Consultee Responses:**

7. Thames Valley Police provided the only statutory consultee response; they reiterated views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits which they consider as 'concerns' rather than an objection.

### **Other Responses:**

8. 30 online responses were received, all from local residents except for one from a group or organisation. One respondent had no opinion, and the two stating concerns were more accurately objections – giving 16 in support and 13 objecting. Two objectors cited increases in pollution and congestion, but all the remaining objections centred around the proposals being ignored, not being enforced, a waste of money, and calming being a better option.
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:

<b>Travel Change</b>	<b>Number</b>
Yes – walk/wheel more	3 (10%)
Yes - cycle more	2 (7%)
No	23 (76%)
Other	2 (7%)

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**

10. 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 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 30 respondents were evenly balanced between supporters and objectors but as noted above, the objections were more focussed than on many previous consultations. 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 any specific comments made of this nature in this report.

Bill Cotton  
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes                      Annex 1: Consultation plan  
                                     Annex 2: Consultation responses

Contact Officers:              Geoff Barrell (Team Leader – Traffic and Road Safety)

December 2023



Drawing No. \_\_\_\_\_

revision \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

- Proposed 20mph limit
- Existing 50mph limit

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved

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Project title  
**Blackthorn 20mph**

Drawing title  
**General Layout**

Drawing Status

Scale @ A3	Drawn by ER	Checked by GJB	Approved by GJB
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RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p><b>Concerns</b> – 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 (<a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a>)) 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"> <li>• history of collisions</li> <li>• road geometry and engineering</li> <li>• road function</li> <li>• composition of road users (including existing and potential levels of vulnerable road users)</li> <li>• existing traffic speeds</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>road environment</li> </ul> <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, (Blackthorn, Lower Road)	<p><b>Object</b> – 30 is a perfectly acceptable speed that people adhere to. As a member of Blackthorn for the past 12 years I have never felt unsafe when cars drive past.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
(3) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Lower Road)	<p><b>Object</b> – We have a problem with speeding. People don't obey the 30mph limit. Reducing it to 20mph will not alter the behaviour of those who currently speed. 30mph is suitable for a village like Blackthorn, what we need is traffic calming to ensure people do stick to 30mph.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
(4) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Station Road)	<p><b>Object</b> – The current 30 mph limit is blatantly ignored by most vehicles, dropping the limit to 20mph will have no beneficial effect as that would also be ignored. I agree to a 20 limit next to schools or other areas where people are at risk, this being a sensible move! A lower limit, if followed, would increase noise and pollution as vehicles would need to use a lower gear/higher engine speed, that is assuming drivers follow the limits!! I feel that the cost of implementing 20 limits would be better directed in providing chicanes and /or restricting or preventing traffic using Lower rd. and Station rd. These roads are used as a rat run and discouraging commuters would have a marked improvement to the safety in the village.</p>

	<p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(5) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Station Road)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – The speed limit isn't adhered to by anyone as it stands. A better measure of reducing the speed at people drive would be to have speed bumps and chicane or a speed trap entering/exiting station road into the village.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>Other</b> No, the surrounding roads are too dangerous to use other modes of transport.</p>
<p>(6) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Station Road)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – The village is used as a rat run. I would like to see the end of station Road that joins the main Thame road (B4011) closed off to through traffic. If they can't use the village, it would keep traffic on the main carriageways. Chicanes at points within the village would slow vehicles down, as they have in other villages. As drivers don't head the 30 speed limit, I cannot see why they would keep to 20 mph. And this could aggravate tempers of drivers who don't want to take notice of speed restrictions.</p> <p>Although the village does not have a school, a national limit of 20mph would negate the special treatment outside school areas, the importance of this reduced and differed limit in these areas would get lost. As for an alternative method of transport in this rural area, a bus service that can be relied upon would be preferable to a cycle path. These I feel are an expensive and don't get used.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>Other</b> Unless there is a regular daily bus service, I have to use my car. I don't want to cycle, it's too dangerous. A 20mph limit in the village doesn't encourage me to buy and use a bicycle.</p>
<p>(7) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Thame Road)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – Drivers rarely travel at 30mph or below through the village, including residents. An unenforced lower speed limit would be pointless. The lay out of the village with a large field in the middle and lack of street lighting makes it counter intuitive for drivers to think of a 20mph limit</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>

<p>(8) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Lower Road)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – I have no belief that 20 will be adhered to any better than the current 30. I would prefer the current limit was enforced instead of the proposed reduction</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(9) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Station Road)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – Blackthorn is a cut through and this high level of traffic is the issue. What difference will a reduced speed limit achieve? People will continue to speed as they cut through.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(10) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Station Road)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – 20mph will not stop the rat run speeders. Traffic calming measures would have more effect coming in to all points of the village. Cars parked on the roads cause enough reduction of speed along station road specifically until it opens up at the bottom towards the A41. 20mph on station Road would just cause a complete bottleneck with drivers going nowhere, increased pollution and noise.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(11) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Station Road)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – Not required</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(12) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Weir Farm Close)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – There are no consequences for speeding through the village so changing to 30 will make little difference</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(13) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Lower Road)</p>	<p><b>Concerns</b> – The current 30 mph limit is largely ignored. I have no reason to believe that a 20mph limit will be treated with any more respect. The signage will be another example of wasting public money to no effect. Serious consideration should be given to close the side roads to Blackthorn (exception for farm vehicles) thus preventing Blackthorn being a rat run.</p>



	Travel change: <b>No</b>
(14) Local group/organisation, (Blackthorn, Station)	<p><b>Concerns</b> – A 20 mph limit is unnecessary. It is just an overreaction due to the fact that the 30mph limit is not observed. The same people who do not observe the 30 mph limit will ignore the 20 mph limit.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
(15) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Station Road)	<p><b>Support</b> – It has become an unsafe road with many non residents utilising it as a cut through and not being aware of people or animals that are on the road. Hopefully reducing the speed limit will allow other road users to understand this is a rural community.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
(16) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Station Road)	<p><b>Support</b> – Support</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
(17) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Station Road)	<p><b>Support</b> – its safer and quieter</p> <p>Travel change: <b>Yes - cycle more</b></p>
(18) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Station Road)	<p><b>Support</b> – Station Road in particular is used as a rat run from the A41. Some cars travel at dangerous speeds for children and pets. In my experience since the 20mph has been introduced in Launton it feels like traffic has become slower in that village. While I have concerns that it may still be ignored, I believe it's a step in the right direction. I'd also be supportive of speed bumps or other traffic calming measures.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>

<p>(19) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Station Road)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – I live on Station Road. Our house does not have a driveway. Therefore I have to put my two young boys (4 year old and 2 year old) in our car which is parked on the road. Cars fly past me. They rarely slow down. Most must see me at the same time everyday standing strapping one of my children into their car seat stood on the road. The cars are so fast it is even a worry if you're walking round the village or riding the balance bike to the village park. Something absolutely needs to be done about the speed in Blackthorn. I would be very grateful for any speed measures. Thank you.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>Yes – walk/wheel more</b></p>
<p>(20) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Thame Road)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – Road isnt suitable for a 30mph limit. Needs enforcing though! So some road work to make that happen is also required.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(21) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Lower Road)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – Supporting</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(22) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Lower Road)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – Reduce speed of all traffic</p> <p>Travel change: <b>Yes - cycle more</b></p>
<p>(23) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Lower Road)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – Speeds through the village are too fast but 20mph needs policed</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(24) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Lower Road)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – The question should not be 'should Blackthorn should have a 20mph limit'; rather why has a 20 limit not been imposed much earlier?' It seems we must be the last village in Oxfordshire to achieve the new limit. Otherwises</p>

	<p>speeding is a real issue in the village, especially from people using it as a rat-run. My wife has started to step out in front of speeding vehicles in an attempt to get them to slow down and I do fear she may be hurt.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>Yes – walk/wheel more</b></p>
(25) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Station Road)	<p><b>Support</b> – Too many drivers ignore the limit in Station Road, especially at peak times. I would like to see the speed restriction supported with a camera. The dot matrix sign helps slow drivers coming from A41 but drivers from the opposite direction have no controls &amp; frequently travel at excessive speeds</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
(26) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Station Road)	<p><b>Support</b> – Traffic already going far too fast through village. Evidence shows less damage done to pedestrians at 20 mph. Now we also need enforcement- something which CDC and local police no longer do</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
(27) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Station Road)	<p><b>Support</b> – Safety issues around pedestrians. A reduction to 20mph hopefully would reduce some of the speeding drivers to 30mph or lower.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>Yes – walk/wheel more</b></p>
(28) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Thame Road)	<p><b>Support</b> – Motorists currently drive in excess of 30mph, posing clear danger to dog walkers, children, and other motorists.</p> <p>I support a 20mph limit, which has been successfully implemented in Launton and other nearby villages. However it <b>MUST</b> be accompanied by robust enforcement.</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>

<p>(29) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Thame Road)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – at 35 mph there is a 50 percent chance they will be killed. at 30 mph there is a 20 percent chance they will be killed. at 20 mph there is a 2.5 percent chance they will be killed.</p> <p>Walking around village there are very little pavement in Lower Road, Weir Lane and Station Road. Living in Thame Road through traffic certainly do not adhere to the 30 mph speed limit. So a reduction is necessary Accident waiting to happen children crossing road to play park</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(30) Local resident, (Blackthorn Village, Lower Road)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – I very much support the proposal to install a 20mph speed limit in Blackthorn village and my reasons are numerous....most importantly...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Immediate action is needed.</li> <li>2. There are only partial pedestrian facilities around the village. (Where there are no paths it is not safe to walk in the road)</li> <li>3. There are alternative main roads. (Short cutting through villages = speeding)</li> <li>4. Past traffic calming measures (gathering of information etc) has been ineffective.</li> </ol> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>
<p>(31) Local resident, (Blackthorn, Chapel Close)</p>	<p><b>No opinion</b> – I have no issues with traffic in the village. If there is majority support for the speed change then I support it</p> <p>Travel change: <b>No</b></p>