

CABINET – 18 DECEMBER 2012

ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Question received from the following Members:

Councillor Jean Fooks to Councillor Rodney Rose

“Councillor Rose has been quoted recently as saying he would not introduce any more 20mph limits until the police started to enforce them. Nevertheless, people have noticed reductions in speed in residential roads and there is evidence that accidents are down. Were the 20mph limits to be enforced, which is still not happening despite an apparent change of mind by the police, speed would certainly be further reduced and this is almost certain to be accompanied by a reduction in accidents of all kinds. When the 20mph limit was introduced in almost all residential roads in Oxford, the County Council said that if the signs were insufficient on their own to reduce speeds, physical measures would be considered. As many residents, not only in the city but across the county, are keen to have the benefits of lower speeds, would the Cabinet member consider

- encouraging the police to do more enforcement
- consulting with members and residents where new 20mph limits might be introduced when funds are available from whatever source?”

Answer

“Monitoring at 60 sites in Oxford show that the average reduction in speed following the introduction of the 20mph speed limit in September 2009 was 1mph. Some roads however have seen appreciably greater reductions, of up to 4mph; as would be expected, on minor roads where the speeds were on average already lower than 20mph before the limit was reduced, there has been little change.

We are planning to carry out further surveys in the summer of 2013 to see if there have been any further change - as with other speed limits, it can take time for drivers to adjust their behaviour when a limit is introduced. We very much hope to see increasing compliance which can only help to improve safety especially for pedestrians and cyclists, but until we have more positive evidence of their effectiveness, we are not proposing to introduce any new 20mph limits.

Enforcement of 20mph limits has been a resource and prioritisation issue for the Police but I am aware they are reviewing their approach on a national basis.

I await more certainty on our coming Budget position before supporting use of any funding on anything but Highway maintenance, and would expect this to be on the assumption that all of the County had the same opportunity to gain from any change in focus, not just in our more wealthy areas.”