

Divisions affected: *Deddington*

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

20 JUNE 2024

MIDDLE ASTON: PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMITS

Report by Corporate Director for Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) Approve the introduction of 20mph speed limits in Middle Aston as advertised.

Executive Summary

1. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits in Middle Aston as shown in **Annex 1**.

Financial Implications

2. Funding for consultation and the proposals themselves has been provided by the County Council's 20mph Speed Limit Project.

Legal Implications

3. No legal implications have been identified in respect of the proposals, with proposed changes to existing Traffic Regulation Orders governed by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and other associated procedural regulations. Failure to adhere to these statutory processes could result in the proposals being challenged.

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 Middle Aston by making them safer and more attractive.

Formal Consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 11 April and 3 May 2024. 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, Middle Aston Parish Council, and the local County Councillor representing the Deddington division.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Thames Valley Police re-iterated their views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits, they consider their view as 'having concerns' rather than a formal objection. Oxford Bus Company & Cherwell District Council offered no objection.

Other Responses:

8. 12 responses were received via the online consultation survey during the course of the formal consultation, comprising of three objections (25%), eight in support (67%), and one non-objection (8%).
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:

| Travel Change | Number |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Yes – walk/wheel more | 6 (50%) |
| No | 6 (50%) |

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'.

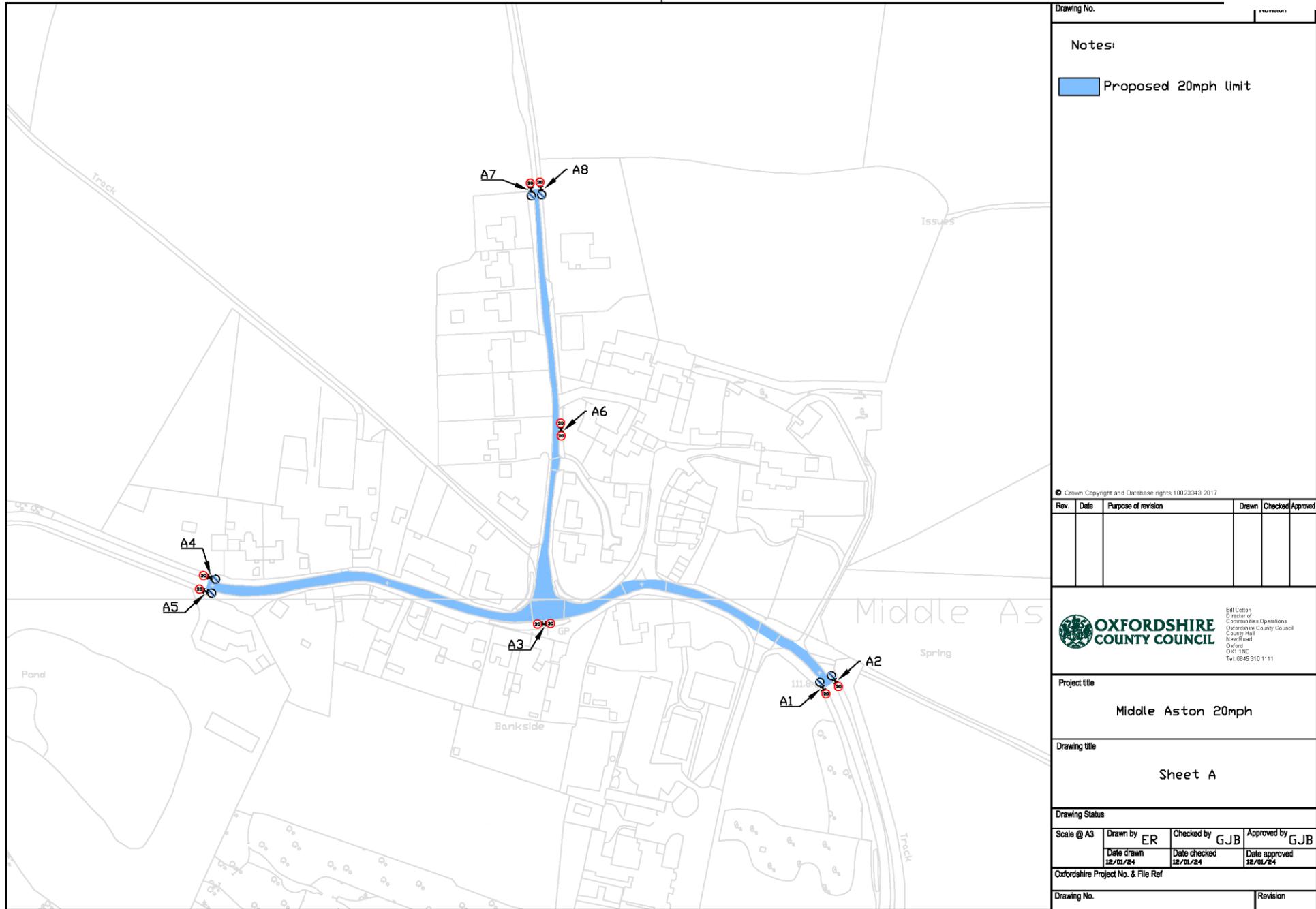
12. The authority considers objections along the lines of it being unjustified, anti-car, a waste of money, not enforceable or pointless to not warrant amendments to a proposal. As such the authority has not addressed any specific comments made of this nature in this report.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director for Environment and Place

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Annexes | Annex 1: Consultation plan Annex 2: Consultation responses |
| Contact Officers: | Matt Archer (Portfolio Manager - Programme Delivery) Anthony Kirkwood (Team Leader – Vision Zero) |

June 2024

ANNEX 1



ANNEX 2

| 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 |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <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> |
| (2) Head of Built Environment and Infrastructure, (Go-Ahead Group) | No objection – The proposals have no impact on regular scheduled bus services, and we accordingly offer no objection. |
| (3) Cherwell District Council, (Development Management) | No objection – the local planning authority has no observations to make. |
| (4) Local resident, (Middle Aston, Home Farm Lane) | <p>Object - There is more pollution from cars at this speed - also few people adhere to it . I also object to the over spending on signs which I believe could be spent better for the people of OXON</p> <p>Travel change: No</p> |
| (5) Local resident, (Middle Aston, Middle Aston Lane) | <p>Object - Anti-motorist policy designed to restrict people's movement. Unnecessary.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| (6) Member of public, (Oxford, Abingdon Road) | <p>Object - To slow to drive</p> <p>Travel change: No</p> |
| (7) As part of a group/organisation, (Abingdon, Bostock Road) | <p>Support - We support a reduction of this speed limit to make the streets safer for people, and to enable walking, wheeling and cycling. 20mph speed limits have been shown to reduce average speeds, even with no enforcement, with the reduction being large when the original speed is faster, and more importantly they have been shown to reduce road casualties. This contributes to a street environment that is more friendly for people to walk, wheel and cycle, which means in turn fewer journeys by car, which reduces the dangers still further.</p> <p>The plan for Middle Aston is to reduce speeds in the residential area of the village, much of which has no footways. Even Google Streetview you can see pedestrians having to walk in the carriageway.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p> |
| (8) Local resident, (Middle Aston, Lane from Middle Aston to A4260) | <p>Support - The roads are very narrow and there are no pavements for pedestrians. I frequently walk on the roads with my grandchildren and dogs and having a slower speed limit would be nicer and safer.</p> <p>A reduced speed limit between Middle Aston and Steeple Aston would also be nice as currently is set at national speed limit.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p> |
| (9) Local resident, (Middle Aston, Main road through) | <p>Support - The village road is narrow and it is unsuitable for driving at 30mph. There are several young children in the village (some of which walk to preschool/school in Steeple Aston) and the lack of path makes it especially important for drivers to come through the village at 20mph. Beyond the village limit the lack of pavement between Middle and Steeple Aston is not ideal for encouraging walking to school and preschool - a lower speed limit (where it is currently the national speed limit) would also be beneficial.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | |
| (10) Local resident, (Middle Aston) | Support - There is no footpath so a lower speed limit will allow safer walking through the village. Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more |
| (11) Local resident, (Middle Aston, Middle Aston Lane) | Support - Support 20mph. Bringing the speed limit down will make it safer for our village lanes. Travel change: No |
| (12) Local resident, (Middle Aston, North Aston Lane) | Support - I support the proposal because of the very narrow roads in our village with no pavements or safe passing points. Despite these very apparent limitations, vehicles will all too often still travel at or over 30 mph and only brake when they absolutely have nowhere else to go. We are a village of people young and old, with children riding bikes, pedestrians travelling to our neighbouring village of Steeple Aston for community and school. Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more |
| (13) Local resident, (Middle Aston, Middle Aston Lane) | Support - I'm supporting the proposed 20 mph speed limit as cars regularly speed through the village causing concern for the many walkers on the village roads. Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more |
| (14) Local resident, (Middle Aston, Middle Aston Road) | Support - With the increased traffic through our village due to the expansion of the Hatch End industrial park, and the continued business at Middle Aston House we are increasingly exposed to non resident traffic driving considerably above the current speed limit through our village, not respecting and unaware of the many driveways coming directly onto the road at hidden points, such as our own. Applewood entrance sits right on the bend opposite home farm lane |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>and is completely hidden of view by drivers from both directions. Our roads are narrow and in very poor state and cars frequently have to swerve to avoid pot holes and other uneven surfaces. At speed this poses even greater danger to pedestrians and other oncoming drivers who suddenly find themselves in the path of the speeding drivers. Reducing the speed limit to 20 mph will go some way to enhance the safety of our children and other residents. A lot of neighbouring village residents as well as middle Aston residents take dogs for walks through middle Aston to access the many footpaths, and many school children walk to school in Steeple Aston. While I believe further speed restricting measures are required to prevent the worst offenders from speeding through our village, a reduced speed limit is a good start.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p> |
| (15) Local resident, (Middle Aston, Middle Aston Village) | <p>No objection - This attempt to make the roads of Middle Aston safer doesn't address the main issue of having no safe walkways or paths. Particularly towards Steeple Aston which forces residents to walk in the road. Regardless of speed limit this failure to provide safe walking passage is the route cause of danger to pedestrians.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p> |