CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 13 SEPTEMBER 2018 HENLEY – PROPOSED 20MPH AND 40MPH SPEED LIMITS

Report by Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Introduction

1. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation to introduce a 20mph speed limit in place of the existing 30mph limit in Henley town centre and a 40mph limit north of the existing 30mph speed limit on the A4130 The Fairmile,.

Background

- 2. The above proposals have been put forward by Henley Town Council and the local member Councillor Stefan Gawrysiak in response to concerns over road safety and the wider adverse impact of traffic on residents. Plans showing the proposals are provided at Annexes 1 and 2.
- 3. As part of the technical appraisal of the proposals, speed surveys were carried out at 15 locations which showed current speeds to be very largely compliant with the advice issued by the Department for Transport in respect of the proposed speed limits.

Consultation

- 4. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 6 July and 3 August 2018. A public notice was placed in the Henley Standard newspaper, and sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, South Oxfordshire District Council, Henley Town Council and the local County Councillor.
- 5. Thirty-six responses were received. 30 (83%) expressions of support and 5 (14%) objections in respect of the proposed 20mph speed limit in the town centre (with 1 responding as neither) and 31 expressions of support (86%), 3 (9%) objections and 2 (5%) responses not objecting in respect of the proposed 40mph at the A4130 The Fairmile.
- 6. These responses are summarised at Annex 3. Copies of the full responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Response to objections and other comments

- 7. While Thames Valley Police considered that the proposed 40mph speed limit on the A4130 The Fairmile complied with national guidance, they objected to the proposed 20mph speed limit within the town centre due to concerns that speeds outside the core of the town were higher than advised by guidance for a 'sign only' 20mph limit. They recommended that consideration should be given to providing supporting traffic calming measures.
- 8. The above concerns of the police are noted. However, surveys at 14 sites within the proposed 20mph limit (most of these being carried out in August 2018) showed speeds to be within the recommended level of 24mph for a 20mph limit without supporting traffic calming measures. At the one location where this was not the case where the average speed was just below 26mph is not considered to be of undue concern taking account of the survey location being close to the boundary of the proposed 20mph limit.
- 9. Five objections were received from members of the public to the proposed 20mph limit. The reasons cited included concerns that the proposal was unnecessary and a waste of public funds taking account other priorities including road maintenance and that it would have a minimal impact on speeds. Also the lower limit could increase vehicle emissions and noise due to vehicles using a lower gear. One respondent also cited concerns that the limit did not extend into other residential areas such as Deanfield Road, where there were concerns over speeding and dangers posed to children walking to school.
- 10. Although it is accepted that the limit if approved will unlikely lead to a major reduction in speeds, experience of such limits in other locations suggests that even relatively modest speed reductions can help reduce the number and severity of accidents, but without causing issues with additional emissions and noise. The scheme if approved is to be funded by Henley Town Council, with its scope having been agreed by the town council, noting though that in the longer term the council may seek to extend it.
- 11. One objection was received in respect of the proposed 40mph speed limit on the A4130 The Fairmile on the grounds that this should be extended north westwards to include its junction with the B480. However, such an extension is not considered to accord with national guidance on speed limits taking account of the character of the road and the current speeds.
- 12. Expressions of support for both proposals were received from the local member and Henley Town Council, with a considerable majority of the responses from members of the public also supportive. Henley Town Council commented that they would like the County Council to consider extending the 20mph limit to other parts of the town which was also requested by some members of the public expressing support. However, some of the roads requested for inclusion in a limit would likely require costly traffic calming measures and there are currently no funds for that.

13. Similarly, some of the respondents expressing support for the 40mph speed limit also requested that it be extended to the B480 junction, although as noted above this is not considered to accord with national guidance.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

14. The proposals would help facilitate the safe movement of traffic.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

15. Funding for the proposed speed limits has been provided by Henley Town Council.

RECOMMENDATION

16. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve proposals to introduce a 20mph speed limit in place of the existing 30mph limit in Henley town centre, and on the A4130 The Fairmile, a 40mph limit north of the existing 30mph speed limit as advertised.

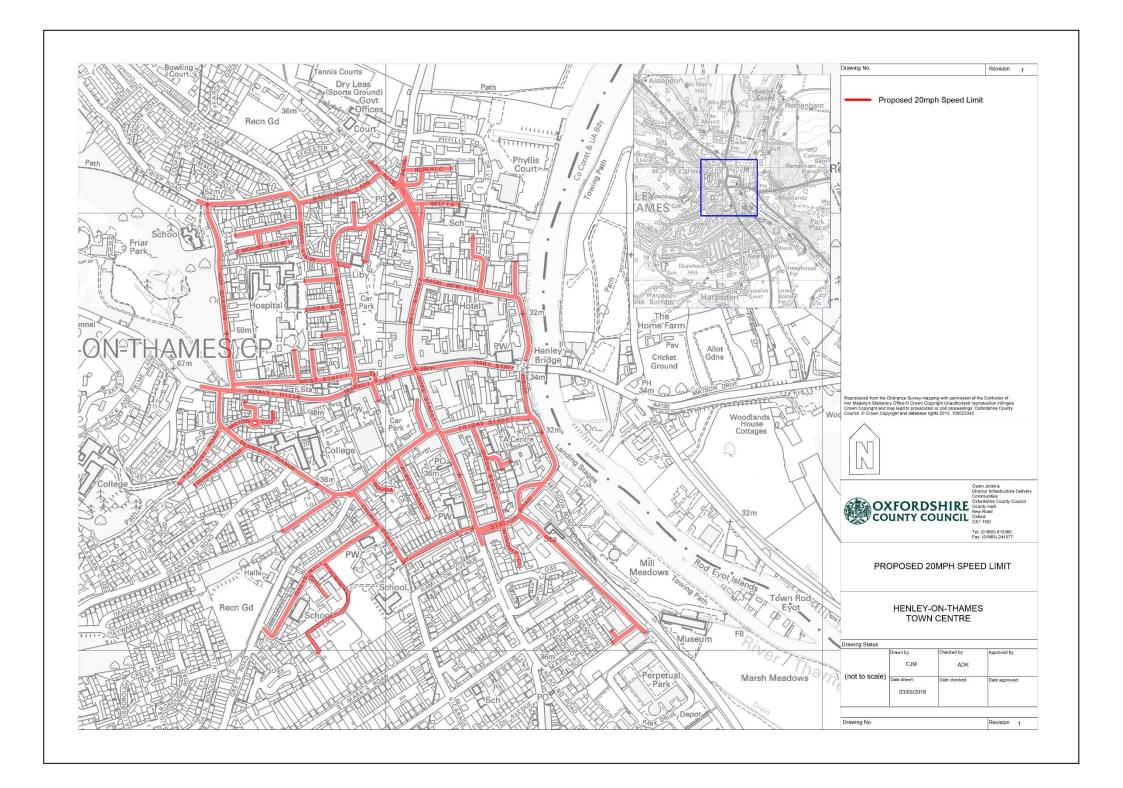
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Director for Infrastructure Delivery

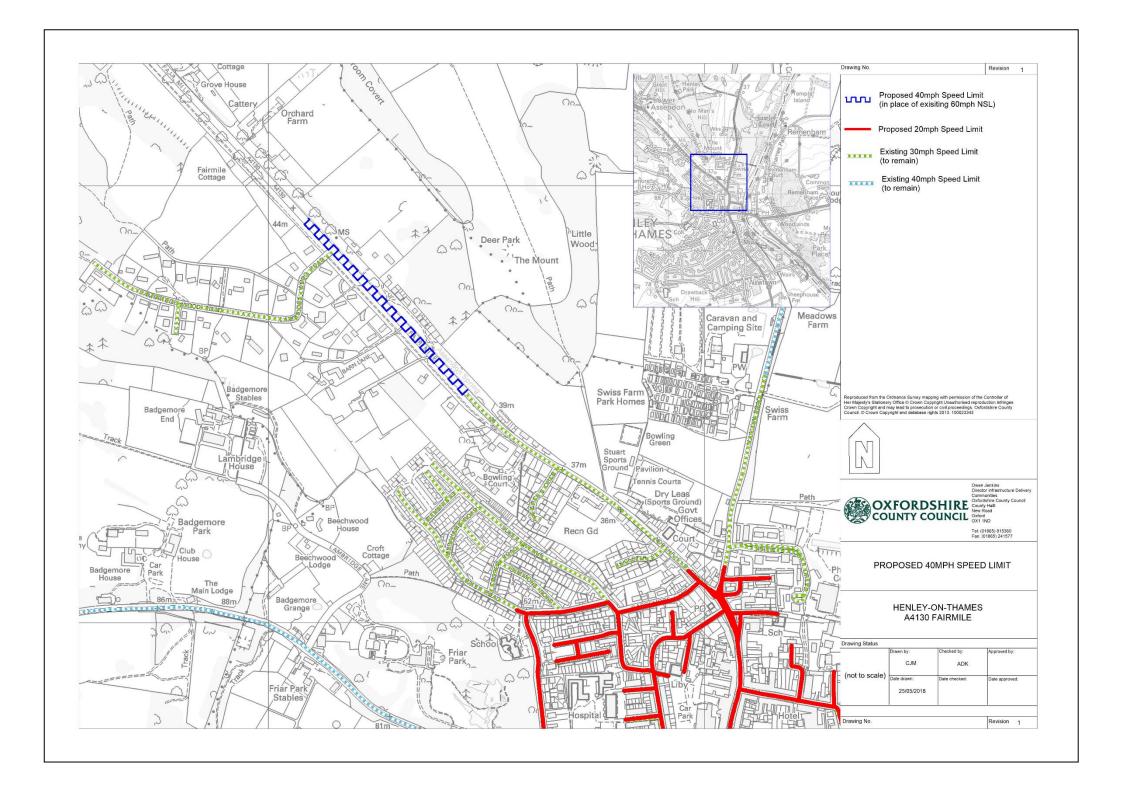
Background papers: Plan of proposed speed limits

Consultation responses

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September 2018





ANNEX 3

RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	20mph Speed Limit - Object – to the sections where current speeds are higher than the accepted criteria. The core part of this town would meet our policy but outside these bounds require consideration to calming for compliance in our view. 40mph Speed Limit – No objection – is within the accepted guidelines and is accepted without comment on that basis.
(2) Local County Councillor (Henley-on- Thames)	As the County Councillor for Henley on Thames May I fully support these new traffic schemes. I as the member have designed these schemes for the benefit of Henley residents. These are also fully supported by Henley Town Council. 20mph Speed Limit - Support – The reason for this is to lower speeds in Henley to further improve the safety of pedestrians. Henley is subject to an Air Quality Management Area which for many years has readings higher than the European standards for air quality. SODC has recently allocated £100,000 for AQ measures. Slower speeds will ensure that the AQ on Henley will improve. The main trust of this measure is AQ and to ensure that Henley is a "friendly" pedestrian zone. 40mph Speed Limit – Support – County regulations suggest that transitions should occur when moving from National Speed limits to 30mph. This does not happen on the Fairmile which is a fast straight road into Henley. It goes from National speed limit to 30 mph. Henley Town Council and residents of the Fair Mile fully support this transitional measure. County officers fully support this scheme. In Conclusion - Officers, Henley Town Council, residents and myself as the County Councillor fully support these schemes and would hope that this would also receive the support of the Cabinet portfolio holder.

(3) Town Council	Support - would like to ask OCC to consider the addition of the following roads to the 20mph speed limit area: St Andrews Road, St Mark's Road, Harpsden Road. Reading Road from the town centre as far as the Three Horseshoes public house, Greys Road from the town centre as far as Gainsborough Road & Deanfield Road.
(4) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment 40mph Speed Limit - Support - we are concerned by the excessive speed of lorries and cars using Fairmile. The speed of the traffic makes access onto the road difficult for residents and also contributes to excessive noise pollution in the area. We wholeheartedly support this proposal.
(5) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	Object - Please don't waste time dressing this up as a safety issue, as if you took the time to conduct any form of research, you will discover that, since lowering speed limits across the country for the last ten years has NOT resulted in accident rates falling, in fact, in certain areas they have indeed risen, this due to people becoming frustrated behind the wheel. Why don't you simply stick to the "Highway Code" 30 mph in towns and 60mph on A Roads This has nothing to do with safety, it is to do with raising more funds via fixed penalties. Instead of wasting money why don't you spend the same money fixing all of the pot-holes around the town, as that presents a definite hazard, especially to motorcycles, not to mention the number of alloy wheels they get destroyed on cars, only for you to thereafter deny any responsibility for!
(6) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Object – It will cause even more traffic problems than those at the moment and 30mph is a reasonable speed particularly when there are two pedestrian crossings, close to each other in the main street. 40mph Speed Limit – Support – on several occasions have seen a large herd of deer crossing the Fairmile in the early morning. As the speed of some vehicles is clearly in excess of 60mph, there is the strong possibility of absolute carnage at some time in the future. In addition, to turn right off the A1430 to reach my house, involves sitting in the middle of the road with on coming

	vehicles approaching at extremely fast speeds.
	It is my view that the speed limit should be extended along the length of Fairmile, not stopping halfway down as shown on the consultation plan as residents have to cross the Fairmile further down and to allow an increase in speed in this area would be extremely dangerous.
(7) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support – I am concerned at the excessive speed cars drive up and down Gravel Hill. I have witnessed this many times and it is very dangerous. 40mph Speed Limit – Support – see above.
(8) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Object - 1. The roads identified for this proposal are already so short, or in such a poor condition that it is already difficult to exceed 20 mph. On Gravel Hill - uphill (in particular), I cannot drive comfortably at more than 15 mph due to its appalling condition. Duke Street, Reading Road, Hart Street, Bell Street, Greys Road, Kings Road, are all too short or too narrow, to make 30 mph realistic. 2. I don't believe the authority has conducted any survey of current speeds on the identified roads, so I have to think that the statement of reasons ("road safety concerns") is based on subjective opinion, not on hard evidence, and is possibly not valid. 3. I am not aware of any recent accidents due to excessive speeds on these roads. I am aware of the issues of being seriously injured at 30 mph compared with 20 mph, which are often cited by Road Safety Campaigners, but these issues do not apply in Henley in my opinion. Existing speeds are just too low already! 4. To incur the costs of implementation, on something which is so ill-thought-out is a misuse of public funds. If OCC do have spare funds, they should be aimed at repairing or improving the existing roads, which are the worst of any town I am aware of in a 25 mile radius 5. I cannot see that such blanket restrictions (if implemented) will be rigorously enforced; the police certainly do not have resources to spare - and I would object strongly to further speed cameras. 6. I do not believe these measures will make a scrap of difference to driver's behaviour. There are already a number of unrealistic speed limits in the area, which are widely ignored (e.g. A4155 Shiplake 30 mph - widely ignored by cars, buses and commercial vehicles) 7. Recent publicity for this proposal has also cited concerns about air-pollution, but this is not mentioned in the statement of reasons. In any case, I would not accept that air pollution will be improved at all by these measures. Most cars will require to be in a lower gear at 20 mph, which means more r

	road (which is generally what I drive at down there), but 40 mph is an over-reaction and on such a straight road with excellent visibility, is unlikely to be complied with by most drivers. I would also like to know if there has been any analysis of accident rates down this road, with excess speed given as a cause.
(9) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Object - It seems ridiculous we are going to spend money on signs and the implementation of signs on cul-de-sac roads such as Milton Close and Norman Avenue and leave out more dangerous roads like Deanfield Road. Often it is impossible to drive above 20mph in Henley due to the traffic. Instead of a blanket 20 mph zone and incorporating roads such as Milton close and Norman avenue, where the roads are too short to drive fast, 20 mph roads should be introduced where needed. Deanfield road is a housing estate and suffers from speeders and the current limit of 30 mph is not being enforced. It has the college students racing up and down the road. Further up, there is also Valley road school where 20 mph would also be appropriate. Henley needs to reduce pollution and improve through flow of traffic in, through and out of town. A 20 mph zone will not help this. It may help reduce accidents, but if it's not going to be put on the roads such as Deanfield road where accidents occur then it becomes irrelevant. In certain areas of the town, the current 30 mph is not enforced. How and why will a 20 mph zone help if there is no enforcement. I would prefer to the money to be spent on traffic calming measures (physical designs) or more traffic patrols. The 20 mph zone I believe will end up being an expensive folly, solving none of Henley's traffic issues. 40mph Speed Limit - Neither - I would support the 40 mph zone if it started sooner. The 40 mph zone should start when the A4130 changes from a dual carriage way to a single road before the B480 (Assendon) road. This is because entering the A4130 from the B480 can be difficult, especially at busy times. You have cars trying to enter the A4130 from a standing start with cars coming down on them at 60-70 mph. There is also a busy turning off fair-mile into The Old Station Nursery and Cattery. At certain times there are many cars coming and going and trying to pull out into a space with cars driving at 60 mph is difficult.
(10) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - This would lead to a significant environmental improvement of the town centre. 40mph Speed Limit - Support - The proposed 40 mile limit would result in significant improvement on many fronts such as: - enhanced road safety (currently too much speeding in residential area), - reduction of noise pollution and general improvement of the Fairmile environment, - general improvement of traffic flows on entering the town (current abrupt 60/30mile transition does not work and undermines the 30 mile zone compliance). The proposal is fully in line with the Oxfordshire County Council's traffic policy guidelines as published on the OCC's

	website and is long overdue! Extension of the proposed 40 mile zone to the start of the Fairmile including the entry/exit to Old Station Nursery (child care/day nursery) would seem logical.
(11) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - I am very pleased that these limits are coming but I would like to see the 20 mph limit extended further to include the "rat run" of St Andrews Road / St Marks Road, Green Lane and Greys Road that is used by rush hour traffic seeking to get around the long queues at the traffic lights on Reading Road. In these conditions it can be difficult to emerge from a driveway or side turning onto Green Lane because of the speed of traffic, exacerbated by the absence of a pavement on one side of the lane in combination with high hedges; this means a vehicle must emerge almost blind into traffic just in order to see it. It is also hazardous to turn south onto St Andrews Road from the southwest end of Green Lane because southbound traffic on St Andrews Road can appear suddenly around the bend close to the northwest of this junction. The Road Traffic Regulation Act of 1984 in its definition of "restricted road" could not have foreseen the subsequent enormous growth in density of traffic on our roads and therefore could not have foreseen that 30 mph would eventually become inadequate in giving residents and users of "restricted roads" the intended degree of mitigation of accident risks. 40mph Speed Limit - Support - I support this limit but believe it should be extended further to the northwest so that it links directly with the existing 70mph limit on the dual carriageway section of the A4130. This is because the existing national limit of 60 mph that will continue to apply to this section under these plans means that the junction to the Assendons remains a very dangerous junction indeed. The dual carriageway section of the A4130 should also have its limit reduced - from 70 mph to 50 mph - because traffic can be seen coming down at very high speeds on this downhill stretch heading for the Assendons junction at the bottom of the hill. There should also be warning rumble strips and other measures in the last few hundred metres of the southeast-heading carriageway because of the sudden and potent
(12) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment 40mph Speed Limit - Support - Being a resident on the Fairmile, I firmly support the proposed 40mph speed limit, although feel it could be even lower to 30mph. We often turn right into our lane and encounter oncoming cars or motorbikes speeding up (over speed limit) to overtake, hence almost colliding with us. This has happened on multiple occasions. With 3 young children this is worrying and very dangerous.

	Additionally, the Fairmile, especially at weekends, has become a racetrack for motorbikes with total disregard for the speed limit. I would personally recommend making the 40mph limit extend to the top of the Fairmile at the Assendon turn off. This would totally discourage speeding and dangerous driving behaviour.
(13) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment 40mph Speed Limit - Support - As a resident along the Fairmile with three very young children, it is a dangerous road where cars race along and frequently overtake. It is frightening trying to attempt to cross it (to get to the nursery) and the speed limit definitely should be lowered. I personally think 30 miles an hour all the way to Assendon would be better, but 40 would be way better than the current 60. Motorbikes are also an issue with many bikers racing up and down the road at all hours of the day and night. Although the Fairmile has a wide bumpy pavement on one side, the flat side, where it is better for little children on scooters and bikes, is right next to the road and having cars zooming along is far from ideal. Trying to cross the road currently at 60 miles an hour is pretty dangerous, if not impossible at times.
(14) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment 40mph Speed Limit - Support - 20mph speed limit in town centre would help with safety, pollution and noise but the latter also requires good road surfaces to be effective eg the road surface on New Street is a complete patchwork which adds to noise levels.
(15) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment 40mph Speed Limit - Support - I am Deputy Manager at The Old Station Nursery on The Fairmile and I think the current speed is not suitable. Trying pull out onto the road can sometimes be a scary experience. Also if you get stuck in the middle when trying to turn into the nursery having cars speeding past you from both sides can be a bit unnerving. It's just a matter of time before there is a serious accident.

(16) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment 40mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment
(17) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - Highly supportive but at the same time very surprised to see certain roads excluded, eg given the presence of some significant schools (Trinity, St. Marys), why wouldn't (part of) Vicarage Road, St. Andrews Road, Hamilton Avenue, St Marks Road also be included in order to increase safety in these specific areas? Also: not sure why e.g. the road leading away from the station in south easterly direction (no name given in the consultation document), would be included? 40mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment
(18) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment 40mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment
(19) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - The key benefits of a 20mph zone is reduced casualties, the attractiveness of active travel (walking and cycling) and reduced air pollution. To achieve all 3 objectives the 20 mph zone must be all the 30mph zone we have today. This is especially true for reducing the speed on several edge of town straight roads (St Andrews, Greys Road, Reading Road, Northfield End, Marlow Road, Gravel Hill etc). Many drivers do not keep to 30mph today so we need to kill speed there to ensure 20mph is maintained in the centre. With no enforcement likely this helps to set the tone of Henley being a special place to visit and worth preserving. On air pollution when I drive at 20 mph around town my fuel consumption improves by about 10% and the impact on air pollution will be significant. This is proven in many implementations across the UK. 40mph Speed Limit - Support - This is very sensible but there should not be a 40 then a 30 then a 20 mph zone so quickly. 40 to 20 is better.

(20) Local Resident, (Bix)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment 40mph Speed Limit - Object - We would prefer the 40mph limit to be extended as far as the crossroads at Bix. The engine noise of cars, and especially motorbikes, accelerating up the dual carriageway once out of the Fairmile speed limit, is unacceptable and very intrusive on our property. We hope this might be taken into consideration and would surely be a safety option.
(21) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment 40mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment
(22) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - I hope this is a first stage only and that after experience with this limit that the area will be extended over the whole town from all the entrances to the built up and all residential streets. 40mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment
(23) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - There is a large amount of tourist driving traffic and pedestrian traffic and there is a need to slow traffic down in order to ensure safety for those living, working and enjoying the ambience of Henley on Thames. I have witnessed too many people wandering into the path of traffic and pavements in Henley are narrow in relation to the footfall. 40mph Speed Limit - Support - The traffic is loud, people drive outside of the relevant speed limit. It is dangerous. I have disturbed sleep due to the level of noise the traffic creates. There are also wild animals that meander from the forest across the Fairmile and it is not safe to continue to allow people to travel at the speed they currently do I would welcome a reduction in the speed limit.

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(24) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment 40mph Speed Limit - Support - I am delighted that the council are considering reducing the speed limit on the Fairmile and would strongly support moving it to 30mph if possible.
(25) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment 40mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment
(26) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment 40mph Speed Limit - Support - I totally support the proposed 40mph speed limit on Fairmile, as a resident of Fairmile it seems ridiculous not to have the 40mph buffer - to go from 60mph straight into a 30mph zone is not only dangerous but at least 75% of vehicles do not slow down in time for the 30mph limit and as such are breaking the law, and putting the lives of residents at risk.
(27) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - It's not normally possible to go faster than this anyway due to excessive traffic. Would be great if there was another bridge across the Thames between Marlow and Reading as it would ease traffic. 40mph Speed Limit - Support - I would prefer if it was 30mph!!! I live in this stretch of road and the traffic noise is excessive - in particular motorbikes accelerating from the current national speed sign.
(28) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - With the proposed development of 72 house along the Fairmile, as the entrance and exit to this site will be in the present derestricted part of the Fairmile, it would appear, to me, that the proposed limit from the junction just past Lambridge Wood Road should be 30mph and not 40 as suggested. 40mph Speed Limit - Support - <i>No comment</i>

(29) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - I support the proposal to reduce speed limits since I am a wheelchair and mobility scooter user that often has to run the gauntlet of moving vehicles in Henley. If possible please extend the proposed 20mph limit up Greys Road to where it meets Greys Hill (next to the Saracens Head pub). I regularly cross Greys Road near the pub to reach a Multiple Sclerosis physiotherapy group in Brunner Hall and have had a number of near misses with speeding vehicles coming up Greys Road. The crossing risk is exacerbated when looking right down Greys Road as the road curves and parked cars obscure the view. As a result I have to move into the road to see vehicles coming up the road only to quickly reverse when confronted with a speeding vehicle. A 20mph limit on this section would also encourage drivers to drive more safely where the road width is restricted due to parked cars (just up Greys Road from the junction with Deanfield Avenue). 40mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment
(30) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment 40mph Speed Limit - Support - I am very pleased to see this proposal. Bikes and cars have a noisy habit of revving up, right past my house, coming out of town immediately after the speed restriction cancellation signs. But this is still a residential area for a few hundred yards yet.
(31) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - Not before time! I hope that it will be enforced. 40mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment
(32) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - No opinion - No comment 40mph Speed Limit - Support - I live on the Fairmile and have done so for ten years. I consider the current speed limit of 60 mph to be too high and a danger to residents. Motorcycles are a particular nuisance.
(33) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - No comment 40mph Speed Limit - Support - 90% of the cars, and especially motor bikes, are way in excess of the limit. Hopefully by reducing the limit on The Fair Mile they may then be doing 40 mph (in a 30mph) instead of the usual 60 mph.

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	In view of the numerous accidents at the junction of the A.4130 and the turn to Stonor B480 could you look at bringing in the 40 mph where the dual carriageway becomes single lane-this would very much help in preventing accidents at this junction and make the whole of The Fair Mile 40 mph We urge you ' to look into this.
(34) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - We should like to express our support for your proposals to limit traffic speeds within Henley-on-Thames and along the Fairmile. 40mph Speed Limit - Support - We should merely like to add that these restrictions will be of no use, unless they are monitored and regulated. In particular, the motor cycle and sports car traffic, whilst accelerating into the Fairmile, is very noisy and well beyond limits already in place, particularly at weekends - but there is no presence from traffic officers to stop this.
(35) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - I should like to express our support for your proposals to limit traffic speeds within Henley-on-Thames and along the Fairmile. 40mph Speed Limit - Support - I should also suggest the 40 mph on the Fairmile to end at the end of the Fairmile (just before the dual carriage way) and not just beyond Lambridge Wood Road. The motorbikes and sports cars revving from Kings Road round-about towards the Fairmile is excessive. I hope to see a speed camera installed and traffic officers present to enforce new speed restrictions and excessive noise.
(36) Local Resident, (Henley-on-Thames)	20mph Speed Limit - Support - We would wholeheartedly support this proposal. 40mph Speed Limit - Support - concerned by the excessive speed of lorries and cars using this road. Speed of the traffic makes access onto the road difficult for residents and also contributes to excessive noise pollution in the area. We would wholeheartedly support this proposal.

CMDE4