

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 21 MAY 2020

OXFORD / NORTH HINKSEY: BOTLEY ROAD & WEST WAY - TRAFFIC MEASURES – PROPOSED EXTENSION OF 20MPH SPEED LIMIT

Report by Interim Director of Community Operations

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposals as advertised.

Executive summary

2. The Botley Road Improvement project builds upon objectives set out in the Oxford Transport Strategy where a study of Botley Road was completed in 2016 which confirmed, following stakeholder feedback, the value of a high-quality route prioritising sustainable transport modes to ease congestion, reduce journey times and improve journey experience. The project includes a package of measures aimed at:
 - a. encouraging greater use of more sustainable modes of transport - buses, cycling and walking
 - b. easing congestion on the route
 - c. improving bus journey times so buses have an advantage over general traffic
 - d. providing a safer, more continuous and attractive route for cyclists and pedestrians
 - e. reducing vehicle emissions and improving air quality.
 - f. unlocking economic growth and job creation opportunities by benefiting development sites with improved access and additional capacity.
3. The principal elements of the scheme were approved at the Cabinet Member for Environment decisions meeting on 19 December 2020 following a consultation in the autumn of 2019. At this meeting it was, however, agreed to carry out a consultation on an extended length of 20mph speed limit to that originally proposed; the revised proposal is shown at Annex 1.

Consultation Summary

4. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 23 January and 21 February 2020. A public notice was placed in the Oxford Times newspaper and sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Oxford City Council and the local County

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Councillors. Notification (via email) was also sent to all of those who responded to the original consultation.

5. Twenty-seven responses were received. 4 objections (15%), 21 expressions of support (78%) and 2 neither objecting nor supporting. The responses are recorded at Annex 2 with copies of the full responses available for inspection by County Councillors.

Response to objections and other comments

6. Thames Valley Police offered no objection to the proposal to extend the 20mph speed limit but reminded of their stance that any proposals for such speed limits or zones should be self-enforcing.
7. Highways England similarly expressed no objection.
8. Expressions of support were received from Cyclox, a local group representing cyclists, the Oxford Pedestrian Association, OXTRAG, a local group representing the mobility impaired, the University of Oxford Estates Services Sustainable Transport, Oxford Health and sixteen members of the public.
9. Objections were received from four members of the public, including on the grounds of the appropriateness of a 20mph speed limit taking account of the character and function of the road and also citing concerns on its likely effectiveness given the lack of enforcement of 20mph speed limits elsewhere.
10. While noting the above comments, the overall balance of the responses is clearly supportive.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

11. The proposals would help facilitate the convenient and safe movement of all users including pedestrians, cyclists and bus users leading to the encouragement of more use of public transport and improved air quality.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

12. Funding for the proposed measures has been provided by a combination of National Productivity Infrastructure Fund, Local Growth Fund and local s106 contributions. Funding to deliver Phase 1 of the project has been secured whilst Phase 2, Binsey Lane to Botley Road rail bridge is currently only funded up to completion of preliminary design.

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Background papers: Plan of proposed speed limit
 Consultation responses

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RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p>No objection – One of the underlying principles of setting speed limits is the current speed of traffic. Despite asking no speed data has been forthcoming in support of this extension.</p> <p>The police stance still reflects that 20 mph limits and zones should still be self-enforcing. Providing that speed monitoring has already taken place at the location and current mean speeds support this extension. I do not object.</p>
(2) Highways England	<p>No objection - Highways England has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the strategic road network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such Highways England works to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.</p> <p>In the case of this proposals, our interest is in the A34, specifically A34 Botley Junction. We have consulted our colleagues in Service Delivery and Maintenance team, to ascertain if the proposals will not have any adverse impact on their activities and they advised that they have No Objections.</p>
(3) Local Group, (Cycling UK Oxfordshire)	<p>Support – Many people will want to cross the road in the extension space due to the Bus Stops, the houses and Waitrose. Also, many vehicles will enter and exit Waitrose and the storage depot. The 20mph limit would provide extra protection for these people.</p> <p>This argument could be extended further down Botley Road, but the proposed extension is a short distance with a lot of activity in it, and thus gains a lot of accident prevention benefit for a small amount of speed reduction time delay. Thus, we support it as a proportionate measure.</p> <p>We think it is essential that this is an actual 20mph. 84% of drivers break 20mph speed limits, putting pedestrians and cyclists at risk. Single point speed cameras will be ineffective on long roads like Botley Road, so we would like to see average speed cameras in place.</p>

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<p>(4) Local Group, (Oxford Pedestrian Association)</p>	<p>Support – OxPA has long campaigned for 20mph limits to be extended to so-called ‘arterial’ routes, all of which in Oxford are residential streets, degraded in living terms by their designation over many years are thought motorised traffic routes.</p> <p>Therefore, we warmly support measures to extend the 20mph limits as outlined, with the following comments:</p> <p>Roads which are intended to be kept safe for vulnerable road users and residents should have some form of calming or narrowing applied as drivers will often ignore speed limits where they can. Failing this some other means of enforcement should be in place.</p> <p>We would wish to see 20mph limits set and enforced throughout the whole of Oxford, with a maximum 15mph limits set on roads where children play or outside schools.</p>
<p>(5) Local Group, (OXTRAG)</p>	<p>Support – In Windmill Road, the lower speeds will make crossing Windmill Road safer for slow walkers and wheelchair users. This will be particularly helpful to people visiting the Nuffield Hospital, as most of those using cars but without blue badges park in side-streets on the far side of Windmill Road.</p> <p>Also, many children attending Windmill Primary School in Margaret Road have to cross Windmill Road on their way to and from the school. A 20mph speed limit might encourage some parents to escort their children on foot rather than take them by car. Reduction in traffic, and more exercise for children and their escorts, will be beneficial all-round.</p>
<p>(6) University of Oxford, (Estates Services Sustainable Transport)</p>	<p>Support – As articulated in our response to the November TRO consultation on 29 November (attached), the University of Oxford’s Estates Services Sustainable Transport team strongly supports the Botley Road Scheme (Phase 1) to improve facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and buses by reallocating road space away from private motor vehicles.</p> <p>The team is pleased to see that in this latest TRO consultation the 20mph proposals have been further enhanced by extending the 20mph zone Westwards to the Waitrose service road access. The team supports these proposals which should be expected to improve safety for vulnerable road users in a location which has high footfall and cycle</p>

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	traffic in and out of Waitrose and along the Botley Road corridor itself.
(7) Local Group, (Oxford Health)	<p>Support – Oxford Health has several bases in Headington in particular (Warneford Hospital, The Slade etc) as well as a significant number of staff travelling in on Botley road.</p> <p>As a health organisation and progressive employer, we strongly support anything to make the roads safer / less polluted, and which encourages our staff and patients to take healthier, more environmentally-friendly travel options such switching from driving cars to cycling.</p>
(8) Local Resident, (Wantage)	<p>Object - this is a waste of time and money. Traffic typically is slower than 20mph. Even if the limit is brought in, it will not be policed. So just save the money and effort and put that effort into something that is really needed</p>
(9) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<p>Object - Setting an obligatory 20mph zone as suggested will impede the flow of traffic out of Oxford on Botley Road. I do not believe that there is any good justification for this reduction in speed limit.</p>
(10) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<p>Object - The Botley Road is a major arterial road within Oxford. While I'm broadly in favour of 20mph limits on residential roads, restricting speed on larger arterial roads is counter to the idea of maintaining throughput on these roads. Where 20mph limits have been applied to major roads (e.g. St Giles), they are inappropriately slow and ignored by almost all drivers.</p>
(11) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<p>Object - There is no point in extending 20 mph speed limits, when the current ones are not enforced.</p>
(12) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<p>Support - This proposal will make cycling and walking safer which should be encouraged.</p>
(13) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<p>Support - This seems entirely reasonable from my experiences there.</p>

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<p>(14) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - I would prefer the 20mph zone to include all of Botley Road that is bounded by housing (i.e. is a mixed-use road). This would include Earl Street and Duke Street side turnings. However, extending to include the crossing is welcome.</p>
<p>(15) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - It is not the speed limit that slows traffic in Oxford (or anywhere), it is the junctions, and their efficiency. 20 mph is by its nature less polluting (2/3rds as much acceleration, less time sat still with the engine running at the next junction.)</p>
<p>(16) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - <i>No comments.</i></p>
<p>(17) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - It should extend to Lamarsh Road, therefore including entrances to main residential Roads</p>
<p>(18) Local Resident, (Abingdon)</p>	<p>Support - <i>No comments.</i></p>
<p>(19) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - Motor vehicle traffic along the Botley Rd is a huge problem, and there are no simple solutions. Reducing the speed limit along this section will at least have the effect of making the road safer for the many non-car users, and will perhaps encourage others to leave their cars and use more sustainable modes of transport.</p>
<p>(20) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - <i>No comments.</i></p>
<p>(21) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - <i>No comments.</i></p>

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<p>(22) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - The Botley road rarely travels at over 20mph anyway. It seems a backwards way of implementation, with extra costs as the 20-30mph signage etc on the side roads needs to be amended.</p> <p>If the scheme is likely to be extended again further down the Botley road, after all what is the difference for pedestrian and cyclists at Binsey lane as further west on the Botley road.</p> <p>The major difference I note is the two speed cameras. How many drivers are caught from these two cameras? Can you realign them to 20mph?</p> <p>I live off the Botley road, work with n the Botley road and travel along the whole Botley road A420 frequently. I see no reason why 20mph limit couldn't be extended to the boundary with VoWH.</p>
<p>(23) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - Botley Road is increasingly unusable due to congestion. Reducing the speed will make little practical difference to drivers but hopefully reduce the amount of traffic and make it safer.</p>
<p>(24) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - I live on the affected stretch and am both a driver and regular cyclist. Given the difficulty in widening the road in places and of having a decent size cycle lane, I believe the proposed lower speed limit will improve safety, above all for cyclists.</p>
<p>(25) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - I think the traffic tends to flow that slowly anyway because of congestion, but when it doesn't it can be intimidating for cyclists (I cycle). It would be nice to see the proposed 20 mph zone extended past Aldi (or extra traffic lights being introduced there/a zebra crossing); it's very hard to turn right onto Botley Road when leaving that area.</p>
<p>(26) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - Please also put speed cameras on this road and actually prosecute people who drive above 20mph. Without this, drivers will just ignore the new speed limit like they do pretty much everywhere else in Oxford.</p>
<p>(27) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - As a resident of Headington who walks along Windmill Road daily, and who sometimes uses Botley Road, I strongly support the proposals to extend the 20mph speed limit on both roads..</p>