

Divisions affected: *Wallingford*

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

05 SEPTEMBER 2024

LITTLE WITTENHAM - PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMITS

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) **Approve the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits in Little Wittenham, as advertised.**

Executive Summary

1. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits in Little Wittenham, 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 to encourage walking and cycling within Little Wittenham by making them safer and more attractive.

Formal Consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 12 June and 05 July 2024. A notice was published in the Oxfordshire Herald Series newspapers, 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, South Oxfordshire District Council, local District Cllrs, Little Wittenham, and Long Wittenham Parish Councils, and the local County Councillor representing the Wallingford division.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Thames Valley Police re-iterated their views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding 20mph speed limits and wish their response to be listed as 'having concerns' rather than an objection.
8. Oxford Bus Company offered no objection, citing that the proposals would have no impact on regular bus services.
9. The local County Cllr responsible for the Wallingford division responded, highlighting the fact that there would be two transitions in speed limits from 60mph to the newly proposed 20mph. They suggested that a 40mph 'buffer' speed limit would be a sensible option on the road heading out to the North-West towards Long Wittenham.
10. Long Wittenham Parish Council supported the proposals, highlighting success of their 20mph speed limit at reducing the overall speeds of traffic within the village, which was introduced in 2021.

Other Responses:

11. 23 further responses were received via the online survey during the course of the formal consultation, comprising of: 22 in support (96%), and one non-objection.
12. 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	3 (13%)
Yes - cycle more	5 (22%)
No	15 (65%)

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
<p>(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)</p>	<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 disproportionate 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 • 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 proposal has no impact on regular bus services.
(3) Local County Cllr, (Wallingford division)	My only comment on this is that there are two 20 to 60 transitions here. The one coming in from the South isn't too much problem, because it is unlikely anyone would be at speed on that section. The one heading out to the North-West towards Long Wittenham, is dead straight coming in / out from the sign. It is also a cut-through used by vehicles coming to/from the Earth Trust...That road should probably be limited to 40, but if it isn't. there should be a buffer zone and perhaps rumble strips, too.
(4) Long Wittenham Parish Council	Support – A 20mph speed limit was implemented in Long Wittenham in 2021 and it has been successful in reducing the overall speed of vehicles driving through the village. The majority of residents support the speed limit. Travel change: No
(5) Member of public, (Appleford, Sinodun Row)	Support – An area with very narrow country roads where a 20 MPH limit would actually make sense Travel change: No

<p>(6) Local resident, (Little Wittenham, Hillside)</p>	<p>Support – Some cars drive far too fast through our village,with its narrow lanes and 90% turn off the Main Street onto the road to Long Wittenham,being taken at speed,with squeaking of tyres.This is a quiet backwater,so often used as a RAT RUN to avoid the chicanes down Long Wittenham high street.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(7) Local resident, (Little Wittenham, Hillside)</p>	<p>Support – Narrow single car lane through village with no lighting and no footpath. Blind bend going up towards Earth's trust. Dead end towards Church. Often used by Earth's Trust visitors and as a 'rat run' to bypass traffic in Long Wittenham. 30mph is much too fast and dangerous.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(8) Local resident, (Little Wittenham, Hillside)</p>	<p>Support – Traffic needs to be slowed down through the village, particularly at the top of the village where there is a sharp bend. Since the introduction of Long Wittenham's 20mph limit, Little Wittenham is now a 'rat run' by those avoiding that limit. Too many people drive too fast through the village.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(9) Local resident, (Little Wittenham, Hillside)</p>	<p>Support – I support the proposed speed reduction as I believe it will make the road safer and prevent accidents. The road through Little Wittenham is very narrow in places, and cars need to stop to let the other pass. When drivers approach those areas at 30 mph it makes the road more dangerous and I have witnessed and experienced lots of near misses. We also have a lot of agricultural vehicles passing through the village and it will be safer if cars approach theses vehicles at a lower speed. The road also bends sharply and lowering the speed limit will also make it safer when approaching these tricky points in the road. The other factor is that I have witnessed is an increase in general speeding, most likely, in my opinion, since the 20 mph zone was introduced in Long Wittenham. Hopefully, a reduction in speed will deter speeding and those using the village as a rat run.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>

<p>(10) Local resident, (Little Wittenham, Hillside)</p>	<p>Support – People drive too fast through the village as there is very little signage.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(11) Local resident, (Little Wittenham)</p>	<p>Support – I've lived in Little Wittenham for 56 years, and the traffic has gradually got heavier and faster. When I first lived her it was bliss. The speed of cars coming through the village is dangers to people, their children and animals.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(12) Local resident, (Little Wittenham)</p>	<p>Support – We are a village without footpaths and one which large numbers of people visit to walk on the Clumps, around the village and to the Earth Trust. The village is also home to a number of children who walk and cycle in the village and who would benefit hugely from the additional safety of a 20mph zone. The Earth Trust also regularly walks groups of school children across the road to the Clumps at the top of the village where cars begin to speed up (or fail to slow down) as they leave or enter that side of the village. A 20mph zone would reinforce the need to drive safely through the village.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
<p>(13) Local resident, (Little Wittenham)</p>	<p>Support – There are blind corners and many walkers and cyclists far too dangerous with the present speed limit</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
<p>(14) Local resident, (Little Wittenham)</p>	<p>Support – Traffic builds up in summer and for houses facing the road speed is an issue</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(15) Local resident, (Little Wittenham)</p>	<p>Support – Traffic speeds need to be curbed through the village, both for residential traffic and large agricultural machinery. The road through the village is also used by pedestrian and vehicular visitors to the village, cyclists on cycle route 5 and rat-run motorists. The lane is single track and anything we can do to discourage use and/or reduce speed is to be welcomed.</p>

	Travel change: No
(16) Local resident, (Little Wittenham, Hillside)	<p>Support – Safety. Drivers speed through the village past residents We have many narrow and blind spots that one day there could be an accident</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
(17) Local resident, (Little Wittenham, Hillside)	<p>Support – The roads immediately approaching and through the village are narrow and in some places not wide enough for 2 days to pass. Current speeds are inappropriate for these roads and unfortunately many drivers don't seem to appreciate that fact so rather than hope for common sense to apply perhaps a legally imposed limit might do the trick. We live in hope.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
(18) Local resident, (Little Wittenham, Hillside)	<p>Support – Lots of people walk through Little Wittenham visiting Wittenham clumps so a lower speed limit would be safer for pedestrians.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(19) Local resident, (Little Wittenham, Hillside)	<p>Support – Very regularly cars floor it out of the village, either from the village phone box heading up the hill or towards long wittenham.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(20) Local resident, (Little Wittenham, Hillside)	<p>Support – The village is constantly used as a rat-run for commuting traffic. As this can't be stopped, every action should be taken to at least limit the speed of vehicles through the village.</p> <p>Additionally, the lane through the village is too narrow for vehicles travelling at anything more than 20mph. To limit the chances of collisions at higher speeds, the limit should be reduced.</p>

	Travel change: Yes - cycle more
(21) Local resident, (Little Wittenham)	<p>Support – The vehicles travel way to fast on small country roads with little or no regard for walkers/children/cyclist. The route is used as a rat run and its getting worse with all the new housing in the area</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
(22) Local resident, (Little Wittenham)	<p>Support – I live here. There aren't proper sidewalks here so pedestrians must walk on the road. Seems safer for walkers and will hopefully reduce emissions N</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(23) Local resident, (Little Wittenham, Little wittenham Road)	<p>Support – We live in a small village and many of the houses line the main road through the village. There are a number of children and pets in our village and 20mph would make it safer for all. As it is the only road through the village many people walk on the road too and it is narrow. I support the introduction of a 20mph speed limit</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(24) Local resident, (Little Wittenham, Little Wittenham Road)	<p>Support – Effectively a single track road with no pavement</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(25) Local resident, (Little Wittenham, Main Street)	<p>Support – As a resident of 32 years living on the main road in the village, I am increasingly taking my life in my own hands to try and slow the increased visiting traffic. I completely accept we are 'a go to' beauty spot for all walkers but it is counter intuitive that a dog walker might kill my cats on the road because they are driving too fast to get their pet's walking destination. As a dead end road you would think we wouldn't have numerous animal deaths, but we do ... The road is narrow and I've had many near misses in my own car over the years. An introduction of 20mph might encourage people to slow down.</p>

	Travel change: No
(26) Local resident, (Little Wittenham, Hillside)	Support – Improvement of road safety is needed Travel change: No
(27) Local resident, (Little Wittenham, Little Wittenham Road)	No objection – Increased speeding traffic through the village to and from The Clumps and Earth Trust , car drivers using the road as a-short cut through to Culham to avoid Long Wittenham speed restrictions humps Lack of driver awareness using small country roads Travel change: No