

Divisions affected: *Goring*

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

14 NOVEMBER 2024

STOKE ROW – 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 Stoke Row, as advertised.**

Executive Summary

1. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposals to introduce 20mph speed limits within Stoke Row, 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 Stoke Row by making them safer and more attractive.

Formal Consultation

6. Formal consultation was carried out between 04 and 25 October 2024. A notice was published in the Henley Standard 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, South Oxfordshire District Council, the local District Cllrs, Stoke Row, Checkendon, and Rotherfield Peppard Parish Councils, and the local County Councillors representing the Goring, and Sonning Common divisions.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

7. Thames Valley Police re-iterated their views concerning OCC's policy and practice regarding speed limits, and wish their response to be listed as 'having concerns' rather than an objection.
8. Oxford Bus Company submitted a non-objection, citing that the proposal wouldn't affect local bus operations.

Other Responses:

9. 15 responses were received via the online survey during the course of the formal consultation, comprising of ten objections (67%), and five in support (33%).
10. The responses are shown in full at **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 will also 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 reduce the County's 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.

Paul Fermer
Director of Environment and Highways

Annexes Annex 1: Consultation plan
 Annex 2: Consultation responses

Contact Officers: Roger Plater (Senior Officer – Vision Zero)
 Matt Archer (Portfolio Manager - Programme Delivery)

November 2024

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Stoke Row 20mph Revision 2.0

Legend	
Proposed 20	█
Existing 30	█
Existing NSL	█
Not Public Highway	█

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved
1.0	20.11.20	Proposed 1	C.R		
2.0	20.08.24	Change to T2 (A1) & R8 (B1)	E.R		

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Project title: Stoke Row 20mph Scheme

Drawing title:
 Stoke Row 20mph Scheme Overview

Drawing Status

Scale @ A3	Drawn by: C.R	Checked by: AJK	Approved by: AJK
	Date drawn: 20.08.24	Date checked: 20.08.24	Date approved: 20.08.24

Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref
 Drawing No. 1.0 Revision 2.0

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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)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • existing traffic speeds (No data provided) • 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 a substantial number of motorists.</p>
(2) Head of Built Environment and Infrastructure, (Oxford Bus Company)	<p>No objection – We can confirm that this does not affect bus operations and thus we raise no objection.</p>
(3) Local resident, (Checkendon, Uxmore Road)	<p>Object – Unnecessary, the road is always full of parked cars it's always stop/start through Stoke Row. I wish the County Council would spend the money on fixing the awful minor roads in the area. I live in Checkendon, the 20mph limit is universally ignored and the Police can't/don't have the resources to enforce it.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(4) Local resident, (Kingwood Common, Lime Avenue)	<p>Object – Existing paths and cycle paths provide plenty of safe options for cyclists and pedestrians. Poor road surfaces and parked cars keep speeds down by default</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(5) Local resident, (Stoke Row, Main Street)	<p>Object – Total waste of money. The road has naturally low speeds where it matters due to parking by the school during drop-off and pick up, near the shop due to parking when the shop is open and ditto near the Cherry Tree pub</p>

	Travel change: No
(6) Local resident, (Stoke row, Main street)	<p>Object – Silly suggestion, 30 is fine and there's plenty of cars parked in the road anyway so can't get much faster</p> <p>Travel change: Other It's just going to piss me off when I'm driving it will not change the way anyone uses this road</p>
(7) Local resident, (Stoke Row, Stoke Row Road)	<p>Object – This is not needed, there is unlikely to be enforcement.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(8) Local resident, (Stoke row, Stoke row road)	<p>Object – Slowing down vehicles throughout the village will only cause more traffic, more trucks stopping and more danger to nearby residents. The 30mph limit is already enough and safe for the main road, considering you cannot possibly do 30mph anyway with the amount of parked cars! The parking is the issue. Not the speed.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(9) Local resident, (Stoke Row, Well View)	<p>Object – Absolute madness and will not improve safety at all. Will in fact make the roads less safe and cause more accidents.</p> <p>With the horrible cobblestone footpath now removed and being replaced by a white lined asphalt path, Main Street has become more orderly with parking on one side of the road only and a clearly marked road and boundary. The white line restricts vehicle speed and we already have a "20 mph " zone without the need for a totally ridiculous village wide speed limit.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(10) Local resident, (Stoke row, Main Street)	Object – Too slow

	Travel change: No
(11) Local resident, (Stoke row, Stoke row road)	<p>Object – The village can be quite busy with cars and reducing the speed limit increases the risk of idiots overtaking and causing more problems. The traffic flow is absolutely fine, it is the parking that is the issue. So reducing the speed limit will not change anything other than causing more danger to pedestrians.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
(12) Member of public, (Woodcote, Reading Road)	<p>Object – While the decision-makers are obviously obsessed with setting blanket speed limits without listening, I am against the 20mph proposal for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Road conditions: The majority of the road sections, are in good condition with proper pedestrian footpaths. The village is in a rural area where most residents rely on bus and car, and the proposed blanket approach creates a large low-speed zone that takes people more time to get through. The village is on a route that connects A4074 and A4130 and the proposed speed limit creates a large low-speed area that take much longer to go through. The traffic through the village is not intensive. 2. The blanket 20mph approach is not scientific as claimed. The decision-makers simply took the news headline '20mph reduces collisions by xx%', while ignoring the fact that the speed restrictions in those trials were deployed in high-risk areas. In Oxfordshire, many of these low speed zones are being deployed in low-risk areas with no accident history, few residents, and good roads. 3. According to statistics data, only 3 out of 1000 people in Oxfordshire might die from traffic accidents over 80 years. The blanket 20mph approach means that the remaining 99.7% will need to slow down for them in the rest of their lives. 4. The proposal does not conform to the Department of Transport guidance in setting local speed limits 'only introduce 20mph limits and zones, in the right places, over time and with local support in urban areas and built-up village streets that are primarily residential, using the criteria in Urban speed limits' and '20mph schemes should be considered on a road-by-road basis based on the safety case to ensure local support, not as blanket measures. Particular consideration should be given to maintaining through routes for motorists.'

	<p>5. It is very likely that the claimed improvement of 20mph reflect the fact that a small number of high-risk road sections were covered, while the blanket approach without proper risk assessment simply impacts everywhere, including many low risk areas, which is inefficient.</p> <p>6. Air pollution and noise, if these issues really exist, should be addressed by technology such as the adoption of Electric Vehicles instead of blocking the roads.</p> <p>7. As a local resident in the area, I regularly visit the bakery in this village. I personally promise that I won't visit it again after this proposal is approved.</p> <p>Travel change: No</p>
<p>(13) As part of a group/organisation, (Oxfordshire Cycling Network)</p>	<p>Support – We support this speed limit reduction for Stoke Row based on growing evidence from Wales, London and other UK cities that 20mph limits result in a 20-30% reduction in road casualties across all users: pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, motorists and their passengers. This happens even with current low levels of enforcement, although we consider that better enforcement should also be applied. The scheme is aligned to ‘where the people are’ - where they live and are likely to be walking.</p> <p>We support Oxfordshire’s policy of 20mph limits with community support and schemes designed to be where the people are. Lower speeds also create a more friendly street environment for people to walk, wheel and cycle, encouraging healthy forms of transport that reduce road danger further, reduce traffic, reduce damage to the environment, and lead to healthier and happier lives.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes - cycle more</p>
<p>(14) Local resident, (Highmoor, Holly close)</p>	<p>Support – Lower speeds through rural communities make life safer for residents and visitors. Noise is reduced. Wildlife and pets are also safer. People are more likely to walk or cycle to shops and school.</p> <p>Travel change: Yes – walk/wheel more</p>
<p>(15) Member of public, (Sonning Common, Reades Lane)</p>	<p>Support – Road safety</p>

	Travel change: No
(16) Local resident, (Stoke Row, Main Street)	Support – Traffic in the village has increased in the last 10 years and far too many cars drive at speed long the road. Travel change: Yes - cycle more
(17) Local resident, (Stoke Row, Road running through Stoke Row)	Support – Traffic has grown significantly over the past 10 years. 30mph is too fast for this rural village, which has a long straight road, with a large number of walkers, horse riders and cyclists. Travel change: Yes - cycle more