

Divisions affected: *Grove & Wantage*

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

14 NOVEMBER 2024

WANTAGE: WANTAGE EASTERN LINK ROAD/KING ALFRED WAY – PROPOSED 30MPH & 40MPH SPEED LIMITS

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) **Approve the 30mph & 40mph speed limits on the ‘Wantage Eastern Link Road’ (King Alfred Way), as advertised.**

Executive Summary

1. This report presents responses to the statutory consultation on the proposals to introduce new speed limits on the new ‘Wantage Eastern Link Road’ bypass, with a 30mph speed limit from its junction with the A338 Grove Road / A417 Mably Way roundabout, eastwards for a distance of 65 metres (to cover the signalised crossing), and thereafter a 40mph speed limit eastwards for the rest of its length to its roundabout junction with the A417 Reading Road, as shown in **Annex 1**.

Financial Implications

2. The scheme comprises three sections. Sections one and two have been delivered and funded by the housing developer, St Modwen. Section three (middle section) has been constructed by Galliford Try on behalf of the County Council.
3. The middle section of the scheme has been funded through Housing Growth Deal funding, infrastructure grant funding from Homes England and through Section 106 contributions from developers.
4. The speed limit proposals (including consultation) for the scheme have been funded by St Modwen.

Legal Implications

5. 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

6. No implications in respect of equalities or inclusion have been identified in respect of the proposals.

Sustainability Implications

7. The proposals have been put forward for safety reasons due to the expected increase in highway use in the immediate vicinity.

Formal Consultation

8. A formal consultation was carried out between 18 September and 18 October 2024. A notice was published in the Oxfordshire Herald Series newspaper, and an email was 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, Vale of White Horse District Council, Wantage Town Council, Grove Parish Council, the local District Cllr's, and the local County Councillors representing the Grove & Wantage division.
9. Six responses were received via the online consultation survey during the course of the formal consultation, and these are summarised in the table below:

Proposal	Object	Partially support	Support	No objection	Total
30mph speed limit	3	-	1	2	6
40mph speed limit	1	-	4	1	6

10. Additionally, a further three emails were received, with Thames Valley Police raising concerns, and the 'Go Ahead' group (local bus operator) & Grove Parish Council being supportive of the proposals.
11. The full responses are shown at **Annex 2**, and copies of the original submissions are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Officer Response to Objections/Concerns

12. Thames Valley Police raised concerns, stating that they felt that compliance with the proposed speed limit would be a challenge. A perceived lack of

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police	<p>Concerns – Having recently attended a Road Safety Audit on this road I believe compliance with the proposed speed limit will be a challenge . Having walked the route there is no development on much of it I would suggest 50 to be more appropriate for the nature of the road . It was noted at the time how poor the speed limit signing was.</p> <p>Thames Valley Police welcome the opportunity to engage on plans for road safety improvement.</p> <p>Compliance with new 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. 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>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) Managing Director, (Go Ahead group)	<p>Support – We are supportive of the approach proposed here, and this is in line with previous communications regarding the proposed speed limit on WELR.</p>
(3) Grove Parish Council	<p>30mph speed limit – No objection Grove Parish Council has no objection to these limits, which seem fair and reasonable.</p> <p>40mph speed limit – No objection Grove Parish Council has no objections to these speed limits which seem fair and reasonable.</p>
(4) Local resident, (Wantage, Denchworth Road)	<p>30mph speed limit – Object I would prefer it to be 40 mph.</p> <p>40mph speed limit – Support I think this will be an acceptable speed for the road location.</p>
(5) Local resident, (Wantage, Upthorpe Drive)	<p>30mph speed limit – Object with 20 and 30 mph in wantage at the moment the link road should be a faster route so that through traffic dont cut through the market place A417 traffic potentially could still drive through the centre of the town in less time than it takes to skirt the town if there was a 30 mph limit on the link road. Also since there are pedestrian and cycleways that</p>

	<p>take this type of travel away from the road, there is limited reason for a 30 mph limit for safety concerns, as there are no houses that are directly off of the link road, but are off side roads in Kingsgrove.</p> <p>40mph speed limit – Support 40 mph would keep speeds down past the new development, but give a faster route around the town which through traffic could use. This seems appropriate for a road that is not within a urban area.</p>
(6) Local resident, (Wantage, Scantlebury Way)	<p>30mph speed limit – Object Due to the inherent safety of the road design and as a continuation of the a417</p> <p>40mph speed limit – Support Due to the inherent safety of the road design and as a continuation of the a417</p>
(7) Local resident, (East Hanney, Hunter Avenue)	<p>30mph speed limit – No objection It is a sensible speed limit for a road of this type. It also compliments the 20mph restrictions locally</p> <p>40mph speed limit – Object Traffic will inevitably exceed this speed limit</p>
(8) Rather not say, (unknown)	<p>30mph speed limit – Support very good</p> <p>40mph speed limit – Support very good</p>