

Divisions affected: *Thame & Chinnor*

## **DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT**

**14 NOVEMBER 2024**

### **TETSWORTH – 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 at Tetsworth as advertised.**

#### **Executive Summary**

1. At the Cabinet Member for Transport Management decisions meeting on 18 July, the Chair approved the introduction of a reduced length of 20mph limit at Tetsworth to that originally proposed, but deferred approval of the full length of 20mph speed limit as advertised. This was to allow for further engagement with the local County Council members, Tetsworth Parish Council and the Oxford Bus Company / Carousel Buses Ltd, primarily in response to the strong objections of the bus operator. The scope of the currently approved length of 20mph speed limit is 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 Tetsworth by making the roads safer and more attractive.

## **Further Engagement**

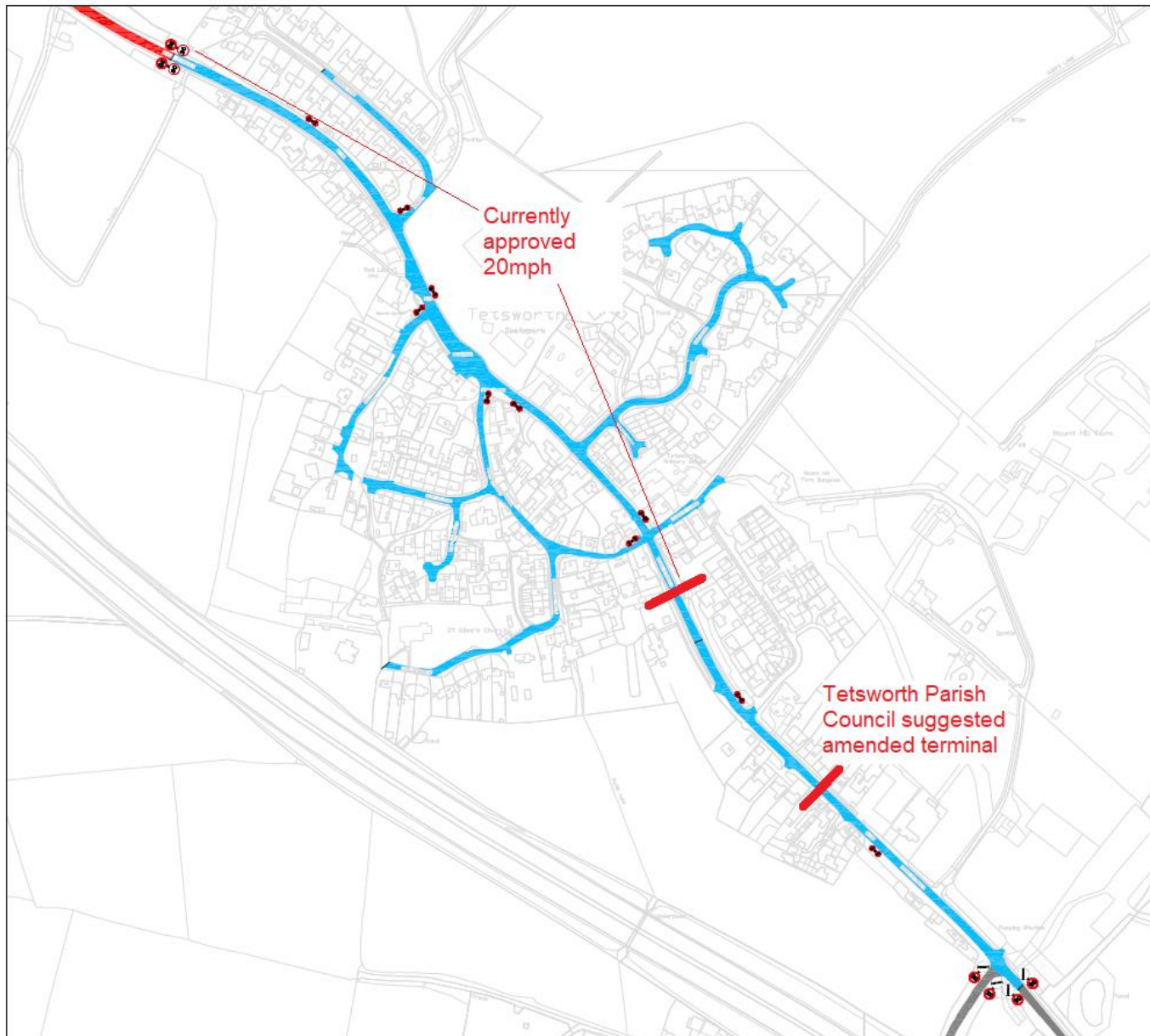
6. Additional engagement was undertaken with the local County Council members, Tetsworth Parish Council, and Oxford Bus Company/Carousel Buses Limited.
7. The County Cllr responsible for the Thame & Chinnor division expressed the view that the scheme should proceed as advertised.
8. Tetsworth Parish Council commented that they are prepared to concede a portion of the A40 at the eastern end of the village compared with the original proposal. The parish council does, however, consider that Carousel's proposal that the 20mph limit should start at the school speed warning sign by Mount Hill Farm would be too close to the crest of hill (where the High Street, The Mount and Judd's Lane meet) to provide the required increase in pedestrian safety there. The Council suggests that the new limit starts where the current 30mph vehicle-activated sign is located, just before the SSEN sub-station and before the curve at the start of the steeper part of the hill. In any event, it should start before the junction of Blackthorn Rise with the High Street.
9. Oxford Bus Company / Carousel Buses Limited expressed the view that the length of 20mph limit as approved at the decisions meeting on 18 July are still significantly more extensive than they consider to be either effective or justifiable, although welcomed what they consider as a modest improvement to the proposals as originally advertised. Their full response is given in **Annex 2**.

## **Officer Response to Further Engagement Responses**

10. The response of the local member is noted.
11. The suggestion of Tetsworth Parish Council for a reduced length of 20mph speed limit is also shown in **Annex 1** – this would leave an approximately 250m length of 30mph speed limit at the southeast of the village, broadly comparable to the extent of the 30mph speed limit proposed to remain at the northwest of the village.



Tetsworth 20mph



Legend	
Proposed 20	
Existing 30	
Existing NSL	
Not Public Highway	

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved
1.0	30.08.23	Proposal 1	CR		

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Tetsworth 20mph Scheme Overview

Drawing Status

Scale @ A3	Drawn by: CJR	Checked by: GJB	Approved by: GJB
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We have both had a good look and carefully considered the revised proposals. Naturally, we must recognise and welcome in principle that this is a bit less extensive. By a process of simple logic this will assist a little at the margins – that has to be acknowledged. But the effect will be de minimis. The proposals are still significantly more extensive than we consider to be either effective or justifiable.

We would point back to the logic set out in our original representations. The points we made strongly align with national guidance on setting local speed limits – these are set out in the formal Local Transport Note LTN01/13 which represents national policy, set within the statutory frameworks provided by the Network Management Duty in the 2004 Traffic Management Act. Furthermore, our view is grounded in the realities of the situation, which where Tetsworth and any other village is concerned, ultimately boils down to:

- Its it enforceable. The answer is, consistently, no.
- Is it credibly self-enforcing? Through most of the village, there is no evidence available that it will be, by virtue of the character of the road, and the wider environment of the village either side – as we made plain in some detail. Our logic is extremely transparent. Others might wish to disagree, but that logic on their part, is never transparent. If traffic is not slowed, consistently, the actual safety impact cannot be realised. The principal practical outcome then, is little more than “symbolic”.
- Will it continue to unduly slow down bus services. Obviously so. Again, as we have consistently pointed out, this may well be the only credibly predictable outcome.

The betterment against the original proposals will be slight. We highlighted the area on the eastern end of the village also, where for the reasons stated, retention of 30 would be appropriate and actually assist in slowing traffic as a buffer zone to 20 in the village core, making that more effective too, and more likely to be self-enforcing in the part of the village where we have accepted that there is a clear case for a reduction. That would be a still more compelling reason to take our suggested proposals forward, than the impact on bus operations per se.

Further, we again also need to point to a great many cases where the most extensive possible application of 20mph limits has been effected, and where the overall cumulative impact of this dwarfs the marginal improvement offered by this particular proposed adjustment. This includes other much larger settlements on the 275.

As a matter of principle, we have a wider even more fundamental concern that over the time that this policy has been implemented, there is no evident transparent or consistent logic or assessment protocol being used by officers, nor any evidence base. “Safety issues” are quoted, without substantiation. While a highly extensive blanket approach is most often used, there have been wide variances in how the policy has been applied. The latest proposals for Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor (while in one sense welcome) contrast starkly with most others. Who is making these judgments and on what basis? Tetsworth reflects broad issues that are much more essentially problematic, which we do not see that the Authority has taken sufficient

regard to, where bus services are concerned. Why has this proposal been reconsidered, while a much greater number where we have expressed far more substantive concerns, not been?

It would be churlish not to recognise and welcome that there has been some modest movement in this case. However, I regret that we cannot be more positive.