Division(s) affected: Rose Hill & Littlemore, Berinsfield & Garsington, Benson & Crowmarsh, Wallingford, Goring & Woodcote, and Watlington & Rotherfield

# DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

### **09 OCTOBER 2025**

# OXFORD TO CAVERSHAM: A4074 CORRIDOR - PROPOSED 40MPH & 50MPH SPEED LIMITS

### Report by Director of Environment and Highways

### RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) Approve the introduction of the following 40mph speed limits, as advertised.
  - i. A423 Southern Bypass (Oxford),
  - ii. A4142 Eastern Bypass (Oxford),
  - iii. A4074 (Oxford, Heyford Hill),
  - iv. A4074 (Benson to Crowmarsh),
  - v. Church Lane (Ipsden),
  - vi. A4074 (Ipsden to Woodcote),
  - vii. B471 Oxford Road (Woodcote), and
  - viii. A4074 (Cane End to Caversham).
- b) Approve the introduction of the following 50mph speed limits, as advertised:
  - i. A4074 (Nuneham Courtenay to Berinsfield),
  - ii. A4074 (Shillingford to Benson),
  - iii. A4074 (Benson to Crowmarsh),
  - iv. A4130 Wallingford Bypass,
  - v. A4074 (Wallingford to Ipsden),
  - vi. A4074 (Ipsden to Woodcote),
  - vii. Exlade Street (Checkendon),
  - viii. Main Street (Checkendon), and
    - ix. Reading Road (Woodcote).

## **Executive Summary**

1. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation on proposals to introduce new 40mph & 50mph speed limits on the A4074 between

the Heyford Hill roundabout at Oxford to the north and Caversham at the south, mostly replacing existing National Speed Limits the process, additionally, speed limits on roads adjacent to & along the A4074 corridor were proposed to be reduced, including 40mph speed limits on parts of the Eastern & Southern bypass at Oxford, Church Lane at Ipsden, the B471 Oxford Road at Woodcote, and new 50mph speed limits on the A4130 Wallingford bypass, Exlade Street & Main Street at Checkendon, and Reading Road at Woodcote – all as shown in **Annexes 1** to **10**.

- 2. The proposals have been put forward following investigations by Officers in liaison with local Councillors as part of the Councils 'Vision Zero' strategy to reducing fatal and severe injuries to road users, the Council proposes to reduce vehicle speeds to safer levels for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, motorcyclists, and all other motorists.
- 3. 'Vision Zero' focuses on a whole safe system approach that starts with a simple premise no one should be killed or seriously injured due to a road collision whichever mode of transport you are using, and the whole system approach encompasses the following five aspects: safer roads and roadside, safer vehicles, safer speeds, safer users, and a holistic post-collision response.

## **Sustainability Implications**

4. The proposals aim to reduce vehicle speeds to safer levels for all motorists & road users, specifically those considered to be more vulnerable, including pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, and motorcyclists.

# **Financial Implications**

5. Funding for consultation on the proposals (and implementation if approved) has been provided by the County Council's Vision Zero programme.

# **Legal Implications**

- The consultation that has been undertaken complies with the consultation requirements for the various elements as required by law including under the Highways Act 1980, the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and any other relevant legislation.
- 7. The scheme has been promoted by Oxfordshire County Council as the Highway Authority and Traffic Authority under the Highways Act 1980, and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

Comments checked by: Jennifer Crouch (Head of Law - Environmental) Jennifer.Crouch @oxfordshire.gov.uk

## **Equalities and Inclusion Implications**

8. No negative implications in respect of equalities or inclusion have been identified in respect of these proposals.

### **Formal Consultation**

- 9. Formal consultation was carried out between 21 May and 20 June 2025. A notice was published in the Oxfordshire Herald Series & Oxford Times newspapers, 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, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, relevant local City & District Cllrs, Sandford-on-Thames, Nuneham Courtenay, Baldons, Clifton Hampden, Berinsfield, Dorchester-on-Thames, Warborough & Shillingford, Benson, Crowmarsh, South Stoke, Woodcote, Checkendon, Kidmore End, and Mapledurham Parish Councils, Wallingford Town Council, and the local County Councillors representing the Rose Hill & Littlemore, Berinsfield & Garsington, Benson & Crowmarsh, Wallingford, Goring & Woodcote, and Watlington & Rotherfield divisions.
- 10. The parish council, and local Councillors (including County, District, Parish, Town) were also encouraged to use the consultation documents provided to publicise the proposals amongst local residents as necessary.
- 11. During the course of the formal consultation, 564 responses were received via the online survey, and these are summarised in the tables below:

Proposal	Object	Partially support	Support	No opinion /objection	Total
Oxford (Heyford Hill) speeds	323 (57%)	37 (7%)	141 (25%)	63 (11%)	564
Nuneham Courtenay to Berinsfield speeds	342 (61%)	34 (6%)	145 (26%)	43 (8%)	564
Berinsfield to Shillingford speeds	353 (63%)	33 (6%)	148 (26%)	30 (5%)	564
Shillingford to Benson speeds	340 (60%)	40 (7%)	150 (27%)	34 (6%)	564
Benson to Crowmarsh speeds	348 (62%)	37 (7%)	153 (27%)	26 (5%)	564
Wallingford (Bypass road) speeds	355 (63%)	32 (6%)	156 (28%)	21 (4%)	564
Wallingford to Ipsden speeds	365 (65%)	23 (4%)	150 (27%)	26 (5%)	564

Ipsden speeds	349 (62%)	25 (4%)	160 (28%)	30 (5%)	564
Ipsden to Woodcote speeds	369 (65%)	21 (4%)	146 (26%)	28 (5%)	564
Cane End to Caversham speeds	340 (60%)	39 (7%)	151 (27%)	34 (6%)	564

- 12. Additionally, a further nine emails were received directly with Thames Valley Police raising concerns & Thames Travel submitting a "strong" objection (which can be seen in full at **Annex 32**). The County Cllr representing the Benson & Crowmarsh division raised concerns regarding the potential level of enforcement, Berinsfield & Warborough Parish Council objected to the amendments proposed for their areas, whilst Kidmore End & Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Councils offered their support. Oxfordshire Liveable Streets submitted their support (albeit with some proposed amendments), whilst an Oxford resident raised concerns about the proposals at Heyford Hill & Nuneham Courtenay.
- 13. The full responses are shown in **Annex 31**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors. Any comments received that Officers identify as containing personal abuse and/or other personal information will be redacted as appropriate.

### Statutory consultees & key stakeholder responses:

- 14. Thames Valley Police expressed concerns on the proposals and noted that reducing speed limits without accompanying physical road changes may not achieve desired compliance or safety improvements. Their response also commended national guidance issued by the Department for Transport on setting local speed limits.
- 15. Thames Travel which operates the X40 bus service along the route expressed strong objections to the proposals on the grounds of additional journey times and potential impact on the resources required to maintain the current schedule, which has of August 2025 been increased to 3 buses per hour. However, their response also suggested mitigations that if progressed would enable them to withdraw their objections these comprise:
  - a) Accelerating delivery of the Crowmarsh Gifford Benson Lane Bus Gate and bus only right hand turn east of Wallingford, as identified in the Oxfordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan,
  - b) Accelerating delivery of northbound bus lanes along the Dorchester Bypass, as previously proposed by us as part of wider improvements to bus priority on this corridor, and
  - c) Conversion of the Reading Road junction with the A4074 at Woodcote into a compact roundabout of approx. 30m inscribed circle diameter.
- 16. The local member for the Benson and Crowmarsh division while expressing support for the proposals also commented that without enforcement their intended benefits would not be achieved.

- 17. Kidmore End Parish Council expressed support for the proposals within their parish area.
- 18. Dorchester Parish Council similarly supported the speed limit proposals and also commented on their support for the planned amendment to the lane markings on the Dorchester bypass being carried out later this year in conjunction with resurfacing works. Their response however also raised concerns over the levels of speed enforcement by Thames Valley Police and also sought better communications between the police and the parish council on enforcement priority and actions.
- 19. Berinsfield Parish Council objected to the proposed new limits on the grounds that in their view the current speed limits on the route are appropriate, and that lower speed limits would lead to increased journey times, particularly in respect of those travelling to and from work.
- 20. Warborough Parish Council strongly objected to the proposals on the grounds that no evidence was provided for their introduction and they would fail to address the problem of dangerous and anti-social riding by motorcyclists (with noise pollution being a particular concern).
- 21. Oxfordshire Liveable Streets expressed support for the proposals, but also requested consideration of extending the proposed 40mph limit on the Oxford Southern bypass westwards to help reduce noise for residents of nearby properties and similarly suggested extending the existing 40mph limit at Berinsfield northwards again to help reduce noise pollution for residents.

#### Public feedback overview

Support for Speed Limit Reductions:

22. Local residents expressing support for the proposals commented that in addition to improved safety, lower speed limits are seen as beneficial for the environment, as they can reduce fuel consumption and emissions.

Objections to Speed Limit Reductions:

- 23. A significant portion of local residents strongly oppose the proposed changes, arguing that current speed limits are adequate and that lowering limits will not necessarily improve safety, but would lead to significant penalties in increased journey times, impacting on those using a car for commuting (and especially for those combining their work journeys with school drop off / pick up for their children). Many believe reckless driving rather than speed limits causes accidents and fear that reduced limits may encourage dangerous overtaking and increase congestion, frustration, and journey times.
- 24. Several of the responses highlighted concerns that the proposals would not in any way address the problem of speeding motorcyclists, which are a major concern in respect of safety of other road users and noise pollution.

- 25. Other concerns include negative impacts on economic productivity, social mobility, and emergency services, as well as scepticism about enforcement effectiveness and the evidence supporting the proposals.
- 26. Many objectors call for better enforcement of existing limits, improved signage, road maintenance, and targeted safety measures such as traffic lights or roundabouts at hazardous junctions rather than blanket speed reductions.
- 27. Concerns about the consultation process include perceived lack of transparency, insufficient accident data, and ideological motivations behind the proposals

## Officer Response to Objections/Concerns

28. The concerns of Thames Valley Police over the application of the Department for Transport guidance are noted. The table below is an extract from <u>Setting</u> <u>local speed limits (GOV.UK)</u> and has been applied by officers to all of the sections of road for which speed limit changes are proposed:

	Table 2: speed limits for single carriageway roads with a predominant motor traffic flow function				
Speed limit (mph)	Where limit should apply				
60	Recommended for most high-quality strategic A and B roads with few bends, junctions or accesses.				
50	Should be considered for lower quality A and B roads that may have a relatively high number of bends, junctions or accesses. Can also be considered where mean speeds are below 50mph, so lower limit does not interfere with traffic flow.				
40	Should be considered where there are many bends, junctions or accesses, substantial development, a strong environmental or landscape reason, or where there are considerable numbers of vulnerable road users.				

29. Comments on compliance of the proposals with national guidance are set out in the table below, with officers considering that they are compliant, though noting that the Dorchester bypass (**Annex 3**) will be see a significant change in the line markings as part of programmed resurfacing works in September 2025 that hopefully will help address the current concerns over overtaking. Officers however still recommend approval of the proposed 50mph limit here rather than deferring a decision pending an assessment of the effect of the revised lining

Proposal	Officer comments in respect of compliance with DfT guidance
Oxford (Heyford Hill) 40mph <b>Annex 1</b>	The proposals cover a short section of the Oxford Ring Road and Sandford bypass dual carriageway. Although outside the scope of the above table, the proposals include the Heyford Hill roundabout which and the signalled junction of the A4074 with Mogridge Drive, both of which include signalled crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists. Mean speeds are currently c 40mph on all the length of the roads included in the proposals
Nuneham Courtenay to Berinsfield 50mph Annex 2	Officers judge this to be a lower quality A road, with many comparable roads in Oxfordshire already subject to a 50mph limit. Mean speeds are currently mostly at or below 50mph (with two sections only slightly higher).
Dorchester bypass 50mph - <b>Annex 3</b>	The horizontal alignment of the road does not comply with current standards due to the lack of clear overtaking / non overtaking sections.  Amendments to the lane markings are to be carried out in September 2025 as part of resurfacing works to address concerns over unsafe overtaking.  Current average speeds are c 52-54mph
Shillingford to Benson 50mph <b>Annex 4</b>	Officers judge this to be a lower quality A road, with many comparable roads in Oxfordshire already subject to a 50mph limit. Mean speeds are currently below 50mph. The route has a substandard width shared use footway / cycle track, and the proposed 50mph will help mitigate (though further improvements desirable).
Benson to Crowmarsh 40mph and 50mph Annex 5	The proposed 40mph section extends southwards by approximately 1.25km the existing 40mph speed limit at Benson adjacent to the shared use footway / cycle track including a pedestrian / cyclist crossing point which provides a key active travel link between Benson and Crowmarsh / Wallingford. Current average speeds show a spread between the low to high 40's. The length of the proposed 50mph is considered by officers to be a lower quality A road, with many comparable roads in Oxfordshire already subject to a 50mph limit. Mean speeds are currently mostly at or below 50mph (with two sections only slightly higher).
Wallingford Bypass 50mph <b>Annex 6</b>	Officers judge this to be a lower quality A road, with many comparable roads in Oxfordshire already subject to a 50mph limit. Mean speeds are currently below 50mph. The route includes 3 roundabouts and a level crossing for the heritage Cholsey – Wallingford railway.
Wallingford to Ipsden 50mph <b>Annex 7</b>	Officers judge this to be a lower quality A road, with many comparable roads in Oxfordshire already subject to a 50mph limit. Mean speeds are currently below 50mph.
Ipsden 40mph <b>Annex 8</b>	The proposed 40mph includes a staggered crossroads and several accesses including for commercial premises. The current average speeds are around the mid 40's. This proposal also includes the length of Church Lane leading east from the A4074 to the 20mph speed limit at Ipsden

Ipsden to Woodcote 50mph Annex 9	Officers judge this to be a lower quality A road, with many comparable roads in Oxfordshire already subject to a 50mph limit. Mean speeds are currently slightly above 50mph.
Cane End to Caversham	The proposed extension southwards of the existing 40mph limit at Cane End includes a series of difficult bends and accesses and junction several of
40mph <b>Annex 10</b>	which have poor visibility. Average speeds are mainly no more than the low 40's but there are some sections with average speeds at c 45mph.

- 30. Annex 32 provides the full response of Thames Travel in respect of their strong objections to the proposals if the council were not to accelerate the delivery of the three mitigation measures identified.
- 31. Observations of the current speeds on the X40 service (operated by the new buses which have a regulated top speed of 56mph) were carried out on 13 August 2025 on an off-peak service in each direction over the length of the route between Oxford Heyford Hill and Shepherds Road in Caversham, these points representing being the north and south end of the lengths of the A4074 subject to the above proposals (including also the length of the A4130 Wallingford bypass between Reading Road and Mongewell roundabouts which forms part of the route in the Oxford Reading direction).
  - a) Heyford Hill to Caversham estimate of additional journey time from observation of trip on 13/08/2025 (service timed at 10.24 at Heyford Hill, to 11.29 at Shepherds Road Caversham):

Proposal	Approx. length of section (miles) where bus exceeded proposed limit	Approx operational speed (where in excess of proposed limit)	Time taken seconds	Time taken at proposed speed limit
Oxford (Heyford Hill) 40mph	Nil	Nil		
Nuneham Courtenay to Berinsfield 50mph	0.7	55	45	50
Dorchester bypass 50mph	1.5	55	96	108
Shillingford to Benson 50mph	0.5	55	33	36
Benson to Crowmarsh 40mph and 50mph	0.2	50	14	18
Wallingford Bypass 50mph	0.5	55	33	36
Wallingford to Ipsden 50mph	0.5	55	33	36

Ipsden 40mph	0.3	55	20	27
Ipsden to Woodcote 50mph	3.3	55	216	237
Cane End to Caversham 40mph	2.1	45	168	189
Total			658	737

<sup>\*</sup> Estimated actual additional journey time c 79 seconds.

a) Caversham to Heyford Hill - estimate of additional journey time from observation of trip on 13/08/2025 (service timed at 11.54 at Caversham to 12.50 at Heyford Hill):

Proposal	Approximate length of section (miles) where bus exceeded proposed limit	Approximate operational speed (where in excess of proposed limit)	Time taken seconds	Time taken at proposed speed limit
Caversham to Cane End 40mph	2.1	43	176	189
Woodcote to Ipsden 50mph	0.5	53	34	36
Ipsden 40mph	0.3	50	22	27
Ipsden to Wallingford 50mph	0.5	53	34	36
Crowmarsh to Benson 40mph	0.2	43	17	18
Benson to Shillingford 50mph	Nil	Nil		
Dorchester Bypass 50mph	2	55	131	144
Berinsfield to Nuneham Courtenay	2.1	55	137	151
Oxford (Heyford Hill) 40mph	0.3	55	20	27
Total			571	628

<sup>\*</sup> Estimated actual additional journey time c 57 seconds.

32. Accepting that that the methodology applied is approximate (average speeds were charted on the recording software by distance from the start of each recording, with three separate recordings being taken for the sections of the route comprising Oxford to Wallingford, Wallingford to Woodcote and

Woodcote to Caversham) and that this was applied to only one journey in each direction, the estimated additional journey times are substantially lower than the estimate of 360-420 seconds cited in the Thames Travel response.

- 33. It is the judgement of Officers that these impacts while not negligible are sufficiently low that the speed limit proposals could be approved ahead of the three improvements (as detailed in paragraph 15 above) requested by Thames Travel without material impact to the X40 service.
- 34. The support of the local member for the Benson and Crowmarsh division, and by Dorchester and Kidmore End parish councils are noted, accepting also the comments on the role of police enforcement to deliver the full benefits of the proposals.
- 35. The objections of Berinsfield and Warborough parish council are noted but the proposals are considered to be consistent with national guidance and also with comparable routes in Oxfordshire, with reduced speed limits having demonstrable road safety benefits. The actual impacts on overall journey times are modest particularly at peak periods and noting Warborough Parish Council's observations on the risks posed by and to speeding motorcycles and their riders, while fully agreeing with the concerns expressed over dangerous and anti-social riding (particularly in respect of noise nuisance) the proportion of collisions involving motorcyclists on the A4074 (approximately 25% in the when looking at the latest 5-years) is only a little higher than the average of around 20% on Oxfordshire A class rural roads.
- 36. Accepting that the balance of the opinions received from members of the public are predominantly objections, the detailed responses for the most part raise generic concerns rather than ones focussed on the individual proposals.

# Paul Fermer Director of Environment and Highways

Annexes Annexes 1-10: Consultation plans

Annexes 11-20 (separate document): Average speed

plans

Annexes 21-30 (separate document): Reported injury

accident location plans

Annexes 31-32 (separate document): Consultation

responses & full Thames Travel response

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October 2025



















