

Division(s) affected: *Burford & Carterton West*

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT

16 JULY 2026

WIDFORD (nr SWINBROOK) – PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMIT

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) **Approve the introduction of a 20mph speed limit within Widford (near Swinbrook), as advertised.**

Executive Summary

1. This report presents comments received to a statutory consultation – and the subsequent response to objections from County Council Officers – on proposals to introduce a 20mph speed limit within Widford (near Swinbrook) replacing in full the existing 30mph speed limit in the process – as shown in **Annex 1**.
2. The proposals have been put forward for road safety reasons, following a request from the Parish council.
3. Oxfordshire County Council wants to make our built environments safer and more attractive places to walk and cycle. To enable this, 20mph speed restrictions are being used to help promote alternative modes of transport for local travel.
4. Streets are central to everyday life in Oxfordshire. They play a role in all transport journeys and are places where people shop, work and spend time. Improving the experience of being on Oxfordshire's streets will therefore improve people's local areas and their everyday lives. Improving streets to encourage active travel will also help to deliver further benefits for people in Oxfordshire. A wide range of people choosing to walk, and cycle will help to improve public health, reduce road noise, improve air quality and make local areas more relaxing. Furthermore, 20mph speed limits will help reduce casualty rates and improve road safety

Corporate Policies and Priorities

5. The proposals form part of the County Council's 20mph transformation programme, as approved at Cabinet.
6. Of the three priorities identified within the newly adopted 'Oxfordshire Strategic Plan 2025-2028' which are listed below, these proposals actively support priority nos.1 & 3:
 - (1) Greener Oxfordshire – *“We want our communities to enjoy clean air, access to green space, and safe and sustainable ways to move around. This means reducing traffic congestion and investing in public transport, cycling and walking; protecting our natural environment; and helping Oxfordshire respond and adapt to a changing climate.”*
 - (2) Fairer Oxfordshire – *“We want all our residents to benefit from the advantages our county has to offer. This means supporting a local economy that benefits everyone; assisting people who face challenges in finding work; making our services as easy to access as possible; and helping communities in need.”*
 - (3) Healthier Oxfordshire – *“We want all our residents to be happy, healthy and safe. This means helping children get the best start in life; creating opportunities for young people to reach their full potential; supporting older people to age well and stay independent for as long as possible; and encouraging everyone to make healthy choices.”*

Financial Implications

7. Funding for consultation on the proposals (and implementation if approved) has been provided by the County Council's Vision Zero programme.
8. Finance has completed a high-level review of this report. As no financial figures or costings were included, this sign off is limited to confirming that the narrative is reasonable based on the information provided. Service area Officers therefore take responsibility for confirming the funding arrangements, validating the financial position & underlying data independently from Finance.

Comments checked by:

Andrew Price – Interim Business Partnering Accountant

Andrew.Price@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

9. 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.

10. 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:

Nicole Olavesen – Solicitor (Regulatory).

Nicole.Olavesen@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

8. There are no negative staff implications – with the appraisal of the proposals, as well as the consultation process having been undertaken by Officers from the ‘Vision Zero’, and ‘TRO & Schemes’ teams as part of their regular day-to-day duties, with no additional or negative impact on capacity expected.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

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

Sustainability Implications

12. The proposals have been put forward for road safety reasons, and 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.

Risk Management

13. No potential significant health and safety or service provision risks have been identified in these proposals.

Formal Consultation

14. Formal consultation was carried out between 29 April and 29 May 2026. A notice was published in the Witney & West Oxfordshire Gazette 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, West Oxfordshire District Council, relevant local District Councillors, Swinbrook Parish Council, and the local County Councillor representing the Burford & Carterton West division.

15. During the course of the formal consultation, four responses from members of the public were received via the online survey, comprising of: two objections and two in support.
16. Additionally, responses by email were received from Thames Valley Police and Oxford Bus Company not objecting. The local County Cllr responsible for the Burford & Carterton West division also submitted a non-objection, on the proviso that the proposals were limited to the built-up residential area, whilst a local resident offered their support.
17. The Oxfordshire Cycling Network submitted a response via the online survey expressing support for the proposals.
18. The full responses are shown in **Annex 2**, 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.

Officer response to objections/concerns

19. The two objections received were from members of the public who were not residents of the village; both cited the lack of need and there being higher priorities for public expenditure.
20. The Council considers objections along the lines of proposals being unjustified, anti-car, a waste of money, not enforceable or pointless to not warrant consideration to make amendments to a proposal.

Paul Fermer Director of Environment and Highways

Annex(es): Annex 1: Consultation plan
 Annex 2: Consultation responses

Background papers: n/a
Other Documents: n/a

Contact Officer(s): Anthony Kirkwood (Team Leader – Vision Zero)
 Daron Mizen (Operational Manager – Highway Schemes)

July 2026

A. Email responses:

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(e1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	No objection
(e2) Head of Built Environment and Infrastructure, (Oxford Bus Company)	No objection – This deep rural area does not lie on any regular bus routes. I struggle greatly to understand what practical effect this will have, though, given the context.
(e3) Local County Cllr, (Burford & Carterton West division)	No objection – as long as the 20mph limit is limited to the built up residential area.
(e4) Local resident, (Swinbrook)	<p>Support – I write as a long standing resident of Swinbrook, who regularly drives through Widford, in support of the proposal to introduce a 20mph speed limit.</p> <p>For a number of reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The road is narrow, with few passing places 2. There are a large number of walkers who use the road, where the footpath runs out between Burford & Widford, and cars, even at relatively low speeds, can rpresent a significant danger. And this danger is exacerbated by the fact that the road is treelined & shaded, such that pedestrians can be hard to see, especially on sunny days. 3. We now have 20mph limits in Asthall, Swinbrook & Burford, and the introduction of a limit in Widford would thus be consistent with other villages etc in the neighbourhood

B. Online responses:

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(o1) Member of public, (Uffington, Green Lane)	<p>Object – This location does not justify a 20mph speed restriction. There is no record of any road accidents in the location. The environment is almost entirely rural and the road to Widford Barn is a very narrow, single track, dead end route only serving those properties. Nevertheless the restriction will require repeater signs to be enforceable according to Table 8.4 of the DfT Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 3. I cannot see how the cost of this can possibly be justified given other demands on Council budgets.</p>
(o2) Member of public, (Henley-on-Thames, Blandy Road)	<p>Object – 20mph speed limits are way too slow and extremely difficult to follow due to being so unnaturally slow. Oxfordshire County Council have a terrible approach to 20mph limits and do not follow their monitoring claims so will not reverse any 20mph that have failed and been set to low. 20mph limits should be assessed on accident history and road by road instead of blanket. They also ignore Oxfordshire residents feedback on a largely unpopular scheme which punishes the motorist. It means motorists spend more time looking at the speedometer instead of the road and leaves many drivers aggravated.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council respond to no feedback on 20mph schemes and should spend the money on reversing failed limits instead of installing yet more. The roads in Oxfordshire are dreadful with a shameful amount of potholes but instead the council ignore the public views and spend more money on lowering 30mph limits and national speed limits. Motorists generate huge amounts of money to the government through fuel duty and road tax. The 20mph limits are just another hidden tax on the driver through speed enforcement penalties and I'm not sure why Oxfordshire County Council want to criminalise their residents.</p>
(o3) Local resident, (Widford, Road through Widford)	<p>Support – I'm supporting because: 1) the highway through Widford is used daily by walkers, dog walkers, residents and young children; 2) The highway is narrow, without any form of walkway or footpath for pedestrians which means everyone on foot has to walk along the roac; 3) visibility is poor, with a blind turning onto the highway for visitors who park along the lane to the manor; 4) the highway is frequently used as an alternative to the A40, when it becomes very busy and unsafe; 5) sight lines from both Swinbrook and Burford directions are poor; 6) the majority of vehicles speed through Widford, putting residents and visitors at risk. The current 30mph limit is an excessive speed for the road conditions.</p>

<p>(o4) Local resident, (Swinbrook, Road running North from Swinbrook)</p>	<p>Support – This section of road is frequently used by walkers who are using the public footpath which runs from Widford Church to Burford. It is very difficult to drive into the lane from the direction of Widford Manor due to poor visibility.</p>
<p>(o5) Local group/organisation, (Oxfordshire Cycling Network)</p>	<p>Support – The proposal covers the small village of Widford between Burford and Swinbrook. This is on a route popular with people walking and cycling along the Windrush valley (I've been this way many times myself) and through Widford, the road is tight between buildings causing extra hazard. The speed reduction would be of significant value in reducing danger.</p> <p>20mph speed limits, both 'signage only' and (better) with supporting measures have been proven to reduce casualties and collisions. The 2025 UK meta-study 'Evaluating the safety and speed impacts of the 20mph speed limit in the UK: Evidence and insights' covered more than 20 studies and 260 effects and concluded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Crashes decrease by 26.45%, with a 21.6% reduction for schemes with signs only. * Casualties decrease by 22.9% for all schemes, compared to 10.9% for sign-only.