

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

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT

03 SEPTEMBER 2026

WESTWELL – 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 throughout Westwell (near Burford), 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 in Westwell (near Burford) replacing the existing 30mph speed limit within the village – as shown in **Annex 1**.
2. The proposals have been put forward for road safety reasons, following a request from Westwell Parish.
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 on 19 October 2021 – details of which can be found under item no.105/21 here:
<https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=6381>
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
11. The Council has had regard to its obligations under s85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 in exercising its functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty in England in that it must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.

Comments checked by:

Jennifer Crouch – Principal Solicitor (Regulatory)

Jennifer.Crouch@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

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

Sustainability Implications

13. 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

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

Formal Consultation

15. Formal consultation was carried out between 01 July and 31 July 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, Westwell Parish meeting, and the local County Councillor representing the Burford & Carterton West division.
16. During the course of the formal consultation, one response was received via the online survey, with a County Cllr (division unknown) submitting their support, citing the alignment with the County Councils 'Vision Zero' goals.
17. Additionally, a further three responses were received directly by email, with Thames Valley Police not objecting, the local County Cllr offering their support, and a member of the public objecting due to a number of factors.
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. It should be noted that Officers have considered all responses received during the consultation process. However, with regards to any objections that were along the lines of the proposals being anti-car, a waste of money, not enforceable or pointless, Officers' view is that these cannot be resolved through amendments to the proposals as put forward, but have set them out in the report for the Councillor to consider during the decision-making process.
20. The objection received from a member of the public raised concerns primarily focussing on the lack of justification for the proposal taking account of national guidance on setting local speed limits and the potential negative impact of the additional signing required as compared to the existing 30mph limit.
21. In response to these concerns, Officers consider the proposals to be consistent with the County Council's 20mph policy and in respect of the concerns over street clutter, while there will be some additional speed limit signs required

(including one additional set of speed terminals) their overall additional visual impact (taking into account the signing for the existing 30mph speed limit) will be modest.

22. Whilst the village of Westwell is not in the Cotswold area of outstanding natural beauty ('the Cotswold AONB'), it is near to the boundary, and so the exercise of the Council's functions to introduce a 20mph speed limit throughout Westwell may be argued to affect the nearby Cotswold AONB. However, it is considered that the proposals do not detract from the natural beauty of the Cotswold AONB and so are in accordance with the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area.

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)

September 2026

Drawing No. 0

- Proposed 20mph replacing existing 30mph speed limit
- Proposed 20mph replacing existing 60mph National speed limit

SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION		
IN ADDITION TO THE HAZARDS/RISKS NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE TYPES OF WORK DETAILED ON THIS DRAWING, NOTE THE FOLLOWING SIGNIFICANT RESIDUAL RISKS		
CONSTRUCTION	(ENTER 'NONE' IF APPLICABLE)	
MAINTENANCE/CLEANING	(ENTER 'NONE' IF APPLICABLE)	
USE	(ENTER 'NONE' IF APPLICABLE)	
DECOMMISSIONING/DEMOLITION	(ENTER 'NONE' IF APPLICABLE)	

Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved



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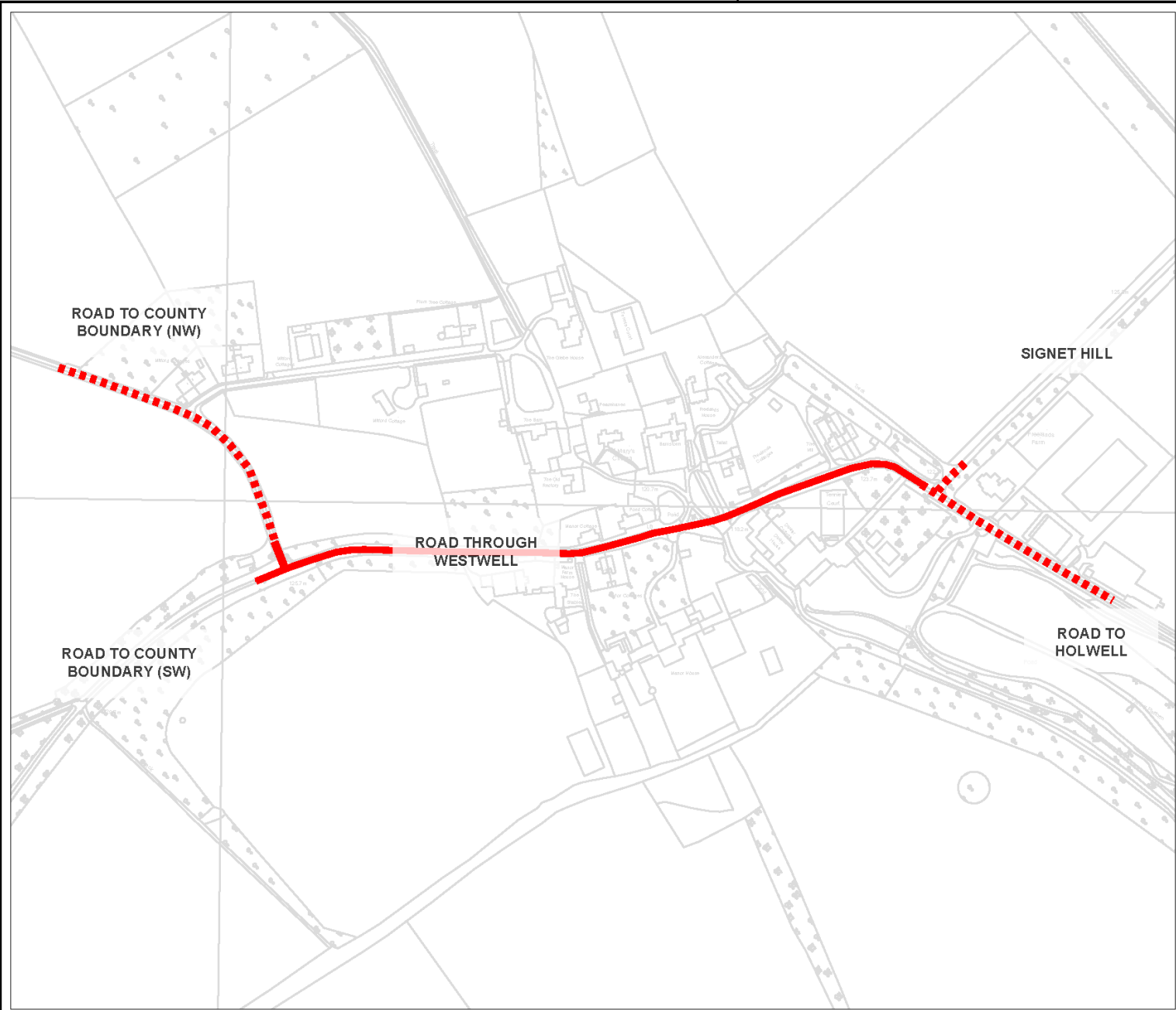
Project title
Westwell, Burford
Oxfordshire

Drawing title
Proposed 20mph Speed
Limit

Drawing Status

Scale @ A4	Drawn by	Checked by	Approved by
NTS	AC	CJM	
Date drawn	Date checked	Date approved	
10/06/2026	10/06/2026		

Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref.	Revision
Drawing No.	0



A. Email responses:

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(e1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	No objection
(e2) County Cllr, (Burford & Carterton West division)	Support
(e3) Member of public, (Bampton)	Object – cycle through Westwell twice a day on my way to my office and have done for years. I rarely meet a car and those I do are already travelling slowly enough to be safe. I know these roads at the speed and eye level of the very road user the scheme aims to protect. On that evidence – and on the Council's own criteria – the proposal is unnecessary, will not work, and will damage a protected landscape to no purpose. 1. It fails your own eligibility test. Your published policy admits a 20mph scheme only where it lies "within the built-up environment of the town or village where vulnerable road users and vehicles mix in a frequent and planned manner." Westwell is a dispersed rural parish. Vehicles and pedestrians do not mix here frequently, or in any planned way, because there is almost no traffic. Please confirm how Westwell qualifies. 2. You have shown no evidence. The Statement of Reasons cites "concerns raised by the parish" and stops there – no evidence, collision record, no casualty data, no speed survey. It is the same template you issue everywhere. Westwell has no history of crashes, let alone speed-related ones, and Vision Zero cannot eliminate casualties that are not happening. ● What were the specific concerns and who raised them and on what basis? ● What do the last five years of injury-collision data for the parish show? ● What is the mean speed survey for the affected roads? ● Has Westwell Parish Council formally resolved to support this scheme?

3. It contradicts national guidance. DfT Circular 01/2013 makes 30mph the norm in villages and reserves 20mph for built-up, primarily residential streets. It requires limits to be evidence-led and self-enforcing, achieving compliance "without an excessive reliance on enforcement." A signs-only 20 on open rural lanes meets none of these. I realise Oxfordshire has decided to set this advice aside, but the points it makes are still valid.

4. The reduced limit will not be obeyed. You propose to take a length of 60mph National speed limit road straight to 20mph without changing the road at all. Nothing about it will say "20" to a driver, so nothing will slow them down – and the guidance warns that exactly this kind of unsupported reduction widens the gap between the compliant and the rest, which raises risk rather than cutting it.

5. It will not deliver the safety benefit you claim. The DfT's own national study (Atkins, 2018) found signs-only 20mph limits cut average speeds by under 1mph (matched by Oxfordshire's own figures for the City of Oxford 20 and the imposition of the new village 20 limits) and produced insufficient evidence of any casualty reduction – and that they mostly went in where speeds were already low. So either Westwell's speeds are already low, and the limit is pointless, or they are not, and it will not bring them down. Your own programme now concedes that limits which do not work may be raised back to 30mph. Installing one you already expect to reverse is not a good use of public money.

6. It will urbanise a Cotswold parish. These lanes are unlit, so the limit needs terminal signs at every entrance and repeaters along their length, all re-located or lit – urban street furniture dropped into open countryside for no demonstrated reason. Westwell sits within the Cotswolds National Landscape, and under section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 – strengthened by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 to require you to seek to further its conservation and enhancement – the Council must weigh that. Signing a beautiful, empty parish against no evidenced need does not sit with that duty.

If you hold real evidence of a hazard at a specific spot, deal with it specifically – a temporary vehicle-activated sign and a proper survey – rather than blanketing the parish. A permanent Order should not be your opening move before you have even established a problem.

For these reasons I ask you to withdraw the Order.

B. Online responses:

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(o1) County Cllr, (Oxford, New Road)	Support – Extending 20mph has proven safety benefits and aligns with the County's Vision Zero goals. I support this plan..