

TITLE	Proposed Reduction to Speed Limits on Sections of B3349 Barkham Road, Bearwood Road and Sheerlands Road to Support Access and Walked Routes to New Bohunt School, Arborfield
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on 1 September 2016
WARDS	Arborfield, Barkham, Evendons and Finchampstead South
DIRECTOR	Heather Thwaites, Director for Environment
LEAD MEMBER	Malcolm Richards, Executive Member for Highways and Transport

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

- Reduction in vehicle speeds to support access to New Bohunt School.
- Improvements to road safety with potential to reduced frequency and severity of incidents.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive approve the making of the Wokingham Borough Council (Various Roads, Wokingham Borough) (30, 40, 50 mph speed limits) Order 2016 and the Director for Environment is instructed to inform those persons who objected accordingly.

The three routes where the speed limits are proposed to be reduced to 30mph are as follows:

- **B3349 Barkham Road** reducing the existing 40mph speed limit to 30mph for its entirety
- **Bearwood Road** reducing the existing 40mph speed limit to 30mph from the junction of Barkham Road to a point 100 metres north of The Lilacs
- **Sheerlands Road** reducing the existing 60mph speed limit to 30mph from the existing 30mph limit to a point 10 metres south of Bridleway 18

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Planning permission issued for the development of the New Bohunt School required the Council to make access improvements including ensuring walked routes are provided to the new school. An existing access assessment and speed survey review recommends that access to the new school would benefit from the reduction of speed limits on three sections of the road network in proximity of the new school where children may walk aside. To implement the speed reductions identified requires a Traffic Regulation Order, and this formal process requires any objections to be considered by the Council. This report considers all responses and objections received, with a clear recommendation to approve the Order.

1 Background

1.1 The new Bohunt School in Arborfield is programmed to open on 5th September 2016 with 100-150 pupils expected to start the new academic year.

1.2 Officers have undertaken a review of the speed of traffic compared to the current speed limits on sections of some of the routes which may be used by school children to walk to the new school. As a result of that review and assessment, it was determined that the speed limit on three sections of those routes should be reduced to 30mph. The review was undertaken in accordance with the Department for Transport's Circular 01/2013 "Setting local speed limits".

1.3 The three routes where the speed limits are proposed to be reduced to 30mph are listed below:

- **B3349 Barkham Road** reducing the existing 40mph speed limit to 30mph for its entirety
- **Bearwood Road** reducing the existing 40mph speed limit to 30mph from the junction of Barkham Road to a point 100 metres north of The Lilacs
- **Sheerlands Road** reducing the existing 60mph speed limit to 30mph from the existing 30mph limit to a point 10 metres south of Bridleway 18

Appendix A illustrates the three locations where speed limit reductions to 30pmh are being proposed by this single Order.

1.4 For a streamline and cost efficient process the Council proposes implementing these changes by a single Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), therefore they must be determined as a single decision. This formal process included advertising notice of the proposals in the Wokingham Weekender newspaper on 28 July 2016. Street notices informing road users of the proposed speed reductions were also erected along the routes at locations coterminous with existing speed limit terminal signs. Letters were sent to all properties fronting onto the sections of roads subject to the proposed changes and similar letters were sent to statutory consultees including the Police, Local Parish Councils and Local Ward Members. The press notice, site notices and letters all stated that any objections or comments to the proposals should be sent to the Council's Traffic Management Team no later than the 18 August 2016, which complies with the statutory 21day objection period set out in the regulations.

2 Analysis of Issues

2.1 In response to the consultation 43 responses were received in total. These included two from Local Ward Members, one from Wokingham Town Council, one from Barkham Parish Council and one from Finchampstead Parish Council. Full details of all responses received and officer comments to these are provided in Appendix B.

2.2 Analysis of responses received are shown in table 1 below:

Location	In support of speed limit reduction	Neutral / No Comment	Not specific to this TRO proposal	Objection to speed limit reduction	Total
B3349 Barkham Road	23	2	9	5	39
Bearwood Road	18	3	20	3	44
Sheerlands Road	10	5	6	0	21
Total	51	10	35	8	104

Table 1. Please note overall totals allow for responses to be broken down by each of the three sections of the TRO, therefore the overall number is greater than 43 responses. For example if a response objected to all three sections then this would be shown in the table as three objections. This provides a more accurate analysis of the responses received.

2.3 Five of the 43 responses contained eight objections and full details are provided in Appendix B items 1-5. The objections raised included the following: drivers are capable of driving at speeds in excess of 30mph safely; the lower speed will equate to longer journey times; the speed reductions are unnecessary; lower speeds and excessive vehicle braking are not environment friendly; lower speeds will lead to increased congestion; motorists will drive at speeds greater than the new speed limits of 30mph; the new school is too far away and finally motorists could become frustrated and drive recklessly. The Council has responded fully to five responses that contained eight specific objections and full details are provided in Appendix B.

2.4 Thames Valley Police have no objections to the three proposed speed limit reductions and will be responsible for their enforcement if implemented. See item 11 in Appendix B for full details.

2.5 Three Parish Councils of Arborfield & Newland, Barkham and Finchamstead plus Wokingham Town Council were consulted. The response from Barkham Parish Council stated they would like to see the extent of the proposed 30mph speed limit on Bearwood Road extended further north to Highlands Avenue. This will be picked up as a wider issue by the Project Manager outside of this TRO process. Wokingham Town Council and Finchamstead Parish Council were generally supportive of the proposals, and no response was received from Arborfield & Newland Parish Council. See items 8-10 of Appendix B for full details.

2.6 Two Local Ward Members responded. These responses did not object to the reduction of the speed limits to 30mph proposed by this TRO. The responses did however raise concern that the Council was not proposing to reduce speed limits to two further roads in the area, namely sections of the A327 Eversley Road and Langley Common Road also shown on drawing 001 in Appendix A. Officers undertook the same review process on these sections of the A327 Eversley Road and Langley Common Road again in accordance with the Department for Transport's Circular 01/2013 "Setting local speed limits". The outcome of this review concluded that it was not appropriate to reduce the speed limits on these sections. The Police have also stated they would not be supportive of reducing the speed limits on these two additional sections of road. This matter is

considered to fall outside the scope of this proposed TRO, and the issue is being progressed separately by the Project Manager who is responsible for delivering the walked routes and wider access improvements to the New Bohunt School. See items 6-7 of Appendix B for full details.

3 Conclusion

3.1 Officers have fully considered the issues raised and the objections received and these are detailed fully in Appendix B.

3.2 The responses received were overwhelmingly in support of implementing the TRO reducing the speed limit to 30mph on the three sections of road as proposed on Drawing 001 in Appendix A.

3.3 The review was carried in accordance with national requirements set by the Department for Transport and the proposals have the support of the Police.

3.4 It is recommended that the speed limit reductions on the three sections of roads is approved, and this would allow the Traffic Regulation Order to be sealed and the associated signage to be installed on site in time for the start of the new school term scheduled for the 5th September 2016.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£3,000	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	-	-	-
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	-	-	-

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

N/A

Cross-Council Implications

None

List of Background Papers

None

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