

Agenda Item IMD37

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REFERENCE IMD: IMD 2018/37

TITLE	Old Forest Road - Traffic Calming & 30mph Speed Limit Proposal
DECISION TO BE MADE BY	Executive Member for Highways and Transport - Anthony Pollock
DATE, MEETING ROOM and TIME	13 November 2018 SF1 at 12.00pm
WARD	Emmbrook; Winnersh;
DIRECTOR	Acting Director of Locality and Customer Services - Interim Sarah Hollamby

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Requests have been made by residents associations in Emmbrook and all local interested Ward Councillors to reduce to the speed limit and improve safety of all users of the route. This will increase journey time for those vehicles using the route, but will promote other routes to be used.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive Member for Highways and Transport:

1. Notes the contents of this report;
2. Agrees that the traffic calming and reduced speed limit be advertised in accordance with current legislative requirements and if no objections are made, change the speed limit and install traffic calming measures as shown in Appendix 1.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report outlines the responses following consultation with residents in the area of Emmbrook relating to reducing the speed limit to 30mph and installing traffic calming, and proposes that the scheme is advertised as proposed. It also considers impacts of deferring that decision until the NWDR has opened.

Background

As part of the installation of the North Wokingham Distributor Road it is thought that traffic will “swing” away from Old Forest Road, just after the Toutley Bridge, towards the motorway and then go through the allotments onto a new junction with Reading Road. When this is open it will take a lot of traffic off the section of Old Forest Road between the junction of Reading Road and where this new road moves off of the top section of Old Forest Road.

During the planning process a signalised junction was designed at the junction of Old Forest Road and Reading Road, but this was discounted and the developer agreed to use those funds to improve the local area.

Emmbrook Residents Association, Winnersh and Emmbrook Ward Councillors have requested WBC to reduce the speed limit along Old Forest Road prior to the NWDR being opened. When setting speed limits local authorities are required to following guidance provided by Department for Transport which states that speed limits should be evidence-led, self-explaining and seek to reinforce people’s assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. They should encourage self-compliance. Speed limits should be seen by drivers as the maximum rather than a target speed. Where the nature and character of a road does not support self-compliance then physical measures must be provided to encourage traffic to travel at the new speed limit.

Traffic surveys show good compliance with the current 40mph speed limit with average speeds recorded on the section of Old Forest Road between Commons Road and Toutley Road within the tolerances considered acceptable by the Police. Therefore the Police, as the only agency that have the authority to enforce speed limits, have informed us that they will only accept a reduced speed limit if it is accompanied by physical measures such as speed bumps or chicanes, otherwise they will object to the formal process. An objection from the police would stop this proposal from being implemented.

The cost of the introduction of traffic calming measures to be installed is around £48 – 50k and the subsequent Traffic Orders and signing is around £5-6k.

During the month of July 2018, WBC carried out a consultation with local residents in the Emmbrook area with a view to installing traffic calming on Old Forest Road to achieve a speed limit reduction to 30mph. A total of 789 letters were sent out to residents and we had a total of 176 responses.

Following the end of the consultation, there were 85 responses to keep the existing 40mph speed limit and 91 in favor to reduce to 30mph and install traffic calming. As this was exceptionally close, we applied further filters and removed multiple entries from the same properties. On applying this filtering it was also then flagged that some references did not correspond to a correct address, or the response was from a non-local and these were also discounted.

This resulted in a total of 64 responses in favor of keeping the existing arrangement and 68 responses to change to 30mph and install traffic calming.

Comments received over the telephone during the consultation were mainly along the lines of “why change it now?” and “why not wait until the road is opened and see what happens then?”

Consultation results:

40mph = 64

30mph = 68

Safety Record

Since October 2007, there have been 4 personal injury accidents recorded along Old Forest Road. Of these 3 were slight injuries and 1 was a serious injury. The serious injury related to an intoxicated driver and therefore does not show any issues with the road layout or speed. None of the 3 slight injuries had contributory factors relating to speed or the road layout.

Conclusions

As none of the injuries relate to speeding, it is un-necessary to reduce the speed limit based on safety records.

As there is no vast overall majority of support within the results for the changes, this implies that many residents are happy with the current arrangement and would prefer to wait for the opening of the NWDR before taking any action. The low response rate also shows that residents are not overly interested in having their say on the changes to the road.

Due to the costs involved and the speed compliance/safety record, it would be prudent to await the opening of the NWDR and this should be considered as a viable option.

However, the local residents association are keen to have these proposals in place prior to the opening of the NWDR and it is therefore proposed to continue with the consultation of the scheme to its formal stage.

It is therefore the recommendation to proceed with the proposals as shown in Appendix 1 to formal consultation stage.

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)	£56,000	Existing budgets would need to be realigned	Capital (S106)
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
N/A

Cross-Council Implications
N/A

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Corporate Services	Sarah Hollamby
Monitoring Officer	Andrew Moulton
Leader of the Council	Charlotte Haitham-Taylor

For Highways use only	
Town and Parish Councils	
Wokingham Town Council	None received
Winnersh Parish Council	None received
Local Ward Members	
Emmbrook	
Winnersh	

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
N/A

List of Background Papers
Appendix 1

Contact Sara Allman	Service Customer and Localities
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