

Agenda Item IMD5

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REFERENCE IMD: IMD 2019/05

TITLE	Old Forest Road - 30 mph Speed Limit Order - Objection report
DECISION TO BE MADE BY	Executive Member for Highways and Transport - Pauline Jorgensen
DATE, MEETING ROOM and TIME	22 nd March 2019 LGF2 at 10:30
WARD	Emmbrook; Winnersh;
DIRECTOR	Director of Locality and Customer Services - Sarah Hollamby

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Following consultation and the responses received thereto, it is proposed that the 30mph speed limit and associated traffic calming features are not installed at this time & that further investigation and surveys are carried out following the construction and opening of the NWDR.

This will benefit the community by ensuring that funding is not used on measures that will be unenforced and redirect funding to other projects within the local area.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive Member for Highways and Transport agree:

- 1) That the Traffic Order and associated calming are not installed at this time;
- 2) To allow the building of the NWDR and subsequently carry out further monitoring of the area with traffic surveys to consider if, at that time, a reduced speed limit would be practical;
- 3) That Officers will write to objectors informing them of this decision.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

To consider objections received relating to proposed 30mph speed limit and traffic calming measures and to agree not to progress this proposal at this time.

Background

Emmbrook Residents Association requested that WBC reduce the existing 40mph speed limit along Old Forest Road to 30mph, prior to the NWDR being opened. During the planning process for the NWDR a roundabout was proposed by developers at the junction of Old Forest Road and Reading Road, but this was later discounted due to the physical constraints present there.

As a result, the developer agreed to allow those funds intended for the roundabout to support measures that would improve the local area.

When setting speed limits local traffic authorities are required to follow guidance issued in 2013 by the Department for Transport (DfT) 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.

The DfT states that 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 showed a good level of compliance with the existing 40mph speed limit with average speeds recorded on the section of Old Forest Road between Commons Lane and Toutley Road registering within the tolerances considered acceptable by the Police. In addition, the very low injury collision record does not indicate a safety case for the reduction in speed limit.

As the only agency with authority to enforce speed limits, Thames Valley Police advised that they would only accept a reduced speed limit if it was accompanied by physical speed reducing measures, such as speed bumps or chicanes, to bring about much lower speeds. Without such measures, the Police advise they will have no alternative but to formally object to any proposal, in line with ACPO guidance and on the grounds of proportionality.

As a result of pressure from ward councilors, WBC carried out a consultation with local residents in the Emmbrook area in July 2018, with a view to installing traffic calming measures on Old Forest Road that would support a reduced speed limit reduction of 30mph, the result of which was to demonstrate a small majority of responses in support of the reduction with required measures.

A decision to progress to formal advertisement of the scheme was approved by the then Executive Member for Highways, Councillor Anthony Pollock on 13th November 2018. Formal consultation started on 13th December and formally ended on 10th January 2019, however further objections were accepted up to the end of 11th January 2019.

However, following advertisement of the formal 30mph speed limit order and plans of the measures proposed to support it, resulted in a number of objections from residents to the type and location of measures proposed to support the speed limit. Without support for these measures, the Police indicated they could not support the TRO for the speed limit and formally objected.

Analysis of Issues

Objections to the proposals have been received by local residents and from Thames Valley Police. These are reproduced in Appendix 1.

In such cases Wokingham Borough Council does not progress with Traffic Regulation Orders where a Police objection has been received, due to the likely absence of sufficient enforcement to make the measures effective.

Recommendation

In view of the objections received, it is recommended that;

- 1) the proposed Speed Limit Traffic Order and associated calming are not installed at this time;
- 2) to wait for the completion of the NWDR and then carry out further monitoring of the area with traffic/speed surveys to consider if, at that time, a reduced speed limit would be practical and alternative measures are feasible;
- 3) officers should write to all objectors informing them of this decision.

Justification

As part of the installation of the North Wokingham Distributor Road NWDR it is intended that the existing Old Forest Road alignment will “swing” northwards from its current position to form a new junction with the NWDR, east of the Toutley Bridge.

When the NWDR is open to traffic in 2021/2 it will carry most of the traffic currently using the section of Old Forest Road, between the junction of Reading Road and Toutley Road.

This will change the volume, character and speed of traffic using Old Forest Road and should enable alternative measures sought by resident groups to be considered.

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)	(£40,000)	Yes	Capital
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£Nil	Yes	
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£Nil	Yes	

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
None

Cross-Council Implications
N/A

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Corporate Services	No Comment
Monitoring Officer	No Comment
Leader of the Council	No Comment

For Highways use only	
Town and Parish Councils	
Winnersh Town Council	Supported introduction, but would like to see extents to include the railway bridge
Wokingham Town Council	None received
Local Ward Members	
Philip Mirfin	None received
Imogen Shepherd-Dubey	None received
Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey	None received
Ullakarin Clark	None received
Prue Bray	None received
Philip Houldsworth	None received

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
N/A

List of Background Papers
IMD 2018/37

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