

Agenda Item IMD9

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REFERENCE IMD: 2023/09

TITLE	Old Forest Road 30mph Speed limit Wokingham Borough Council (Old Forest Road, Winnersh and Wokingham) (Revocation and 30mph Speed Limit) Order 2023
DECISION TO BE MADE BY	Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways - Paul Fishwick
DATE, MEETING ROOM and TIME	12 May 2023 FF11 at 2.30pm
WARD	Emmbrook; Winnersh;
DIRECTOR / KEY OFFICER	Director, Place and Growth - Simon Dale

PURPOSE OF REPORT (Inc Strategic Outcomes)

To report the results of the statutory consultation for the above-named Traffic Regulation Order, which seeks to revoke part of the **Royal County of Berkshire (Restricted Roads and 40mph speed limit) (Winnersh and Wokingham) (No. 9) Order 1979** and to seek the decision of the Executive Member for Active Travel, Highways & Transport.

The Order seeks to introduce a 30mph speed limit by virtue of street lighting as per the notice advertised. The proposals are required to improve road user safety and improve traffic management to the benefit of all road users.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive Member for Active Travel, Highways and Transport:

- 1) Considers the correspondence received for the proposal and note no objections have been received;
- 2) Agrees to proceed with the making of the Amendment Order in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Local Authorities Traffic Order Procedures 1996; and
- 3) Instructs the Assistant Director for Highways & Transport to inform those who have responded to the consultation accordingly.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report considers all comments and correspondence that have been received on the proposal to reduce the speed limit of Old Forest Road from 30mph to 40mph as advertised through the Order. Having considered all the correspondence received, it is proposed that the scheme will be implemented and that relevant notices are now advertised in accordance with the Local Authority Traffic Order making procedures.

Background

Proposals to reduce the speed limit for Old Forest Road from 40mph to 30mph was originally investigated in 2019 following the construction of the North Wokingham Distributer Road (NWDR). At that time the proposal was also not supported by the police due to lack of physical measures to encourage drivers to reduce their speeds.

Automatic Traffic surveys have since been carried out in 2022 in response to requests from residents and members to re-consider a reduced speed limit for the road. The survey results indicated that the current average mean speeds and 85th percentile speeds conform to that of a 30mph road. The survey data has been discussed with the police and they have indicated that they have no objection to the reduction of the speed limit.

Response to TRO Consultation

The proposal has now been taken through to formal consultation. The statutory objection period started on 9th March 2023 and ended on 30th March 2023. A total of ten responses were received, eight expressed support for the scheme, one did not object and one was a comment that was not directly related to the proposal on Old Forest Road. All responses can be seen in appendix A.

Recommendation & Conclusion

It is recommended to proceed with the reduction of the speed limit on Old Forest Road and that the Wokingham Borough Council (Old Forest Road, Winnersh and Wokingham) (Revocation and 30mph Speed Limit) Order 2023 be approved for signing and sealing with subsequent implementation of the change in speed limit.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£1000	YES	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	NIL	N/A	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	NIL	N/A	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Costs incurred will be in relation to changing the signing.

Cross-Council Implications
Speed and traffic management across the Borough in response to resident and business needs contributes towards the Council's statutory duties for road safety management and ensures that the statutory requirements of the Road Traffic Act 1988, Highways Act 1980 and Traffic Management Act 2000 are met, whilst also contributing towards responsible asset, transportation and mobility management.

Public Sector Equality Duty
Please confirm that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken and if an equalities assessment has been completed or explain why an equalities assessment is not required.
EQIA Initial Impact Assessment has been completed and no impact or disproportionate impact has been identified.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Resources and Assets	No comment received
Monitoring Officer	No comment received
Leader of the Council	No comment received

For Highways use only	
Town and Parish Councils	
Wokingham Town Council	No further comments received
Winnersh Parish Council	No further comments received
Local Ward Members	
Paul Fishwick	Confirmation of support for the proposal
Rachel Bishop-Firth	No comment received
Morag Malvern	No comment received
Imogen Shepherd-Dubey	Confirmation of support for the proposal
Prue Bray	No comment received
Rachelle Shephard-Dubey	No comment received

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
N/A

List of Background Papers
None

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Appendix A – Responses.

OBJECTION, SUPPORT or COMMENT	DETAILS	OFFICERS COMMENT
NO Objection	<p>As previously stated TVP have no objections to the proposed speed limit change. I do however have some issues over the way the draft order is written. Section 3 states that the road shall be restricted for the purposes of section 83 of the act. I think this is for an order made under to sect 82(2) of the act . Our interpretation of the Act confirmed by RSS is that sect 82(2) actually applies to roads being made restricted roads that don't conform to restricted road status i.e. no system of street lighting. As Old Forest road does have a system of street lighting that does conform the legislation the order should state that road shall be restricted for the purposes of section 81 of the Act.</p> <p>This may sound pedantic but this simplifies enforcement and does not give any wiggle room for these specialist lawyers. For enforcement purposes an offence is committed under sect 81 or 84 of the Act.</p>	Comments Noted - Our Legal team will be revising this prior to the advertisement of the Notice of making to ensure it refers to the correct Section of the act.
COMMENT	<p>The pavements on this road are narrow and are used by many, including children walking to school. Pedestrians also cross this road to access the arboretum</p> <p>There are also several T-junctions and driveways. A safe systems approach would therefore suggest a 30mph speed limit would be suitable here https://www.brake.org.uk/how-we-help/raising-awareness/our-current-projects/news-and-blogs/speed-limits-based-on-safety</p>	Comments Noted
SUPPORT	As a resident of Emmbrook I am writing in support of the Council's proposal to reduce the speed limit on the whole of the Old Forest Road to 30mph, and agree with their reasons for doing so.	Comments Noted
SUPPORT	Letter from Winnersh Parish Council expressing support for the reduction of the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph.	Comments Noted

SUPPORT	The proposal highlights the need to “avoid danger to persons or other traffic using these roads or prevent the likelihood of such danger arising and to facilitate the passage of traffic”. My support is principally related to the protection of pedestrians who are required to cross this road for access to (or egress from) the Millennium Arboretum area, where access is directly onto the road without a pavement on that side. As the Millennium Arboretum is now directly connected to Emmbrook Meadows (the other side of the NWDR) by access under the new rail bridge, it is reasonable to expect an increased level of pedestrian traffic as this route becomes familiar with residents. 30mph would be consistent with the speed limit in similar situations (e.g. crossing to SANG on the NWDR). My support is also on the basis that residential properties front directly onto the road with relatively short drive-ways and some without pavements, where pedestrians (children in particular) are at a higher risk of being struck by a vehicle.	Comments Noted
SUPPORT	This 30 mph speed limit has my full support. It is something residents and ward members have wanted for a long time. Now that the NWDR is open to traffic, Old Forest Road is far less busy and is a less strategic route. Residents living along the road should not have to put up with traffic travelling at 40 mph any longer	Comments Noted
COMMENT	Since this road has opened it has meant we are no longer able to safely drive out of our road (skinner drive), it really has become a nightmare at rush hour. Not only that but our kids are all crossing this road in order to get to the local primary school and I really can't emphasise enough how dangerous and fast people are driving along this road. Near the Matthews Green Coop and new school this should be 20mph. It's crazy it's still higher.	Comment received are in relation to Queens Road/Toutley Road which are not the subject of this proposal.
SUPPORT	Good evening, I'm delighted to see that this has come to consultation and would like to add my support. This is something that residents have been asking for, for number of years.	Comments Noted
SUPPORT	I would like to support the proposal to reduce the speed limit on Old Forest Road to 30 mph. I live on Lowther Close and regularly use this stretch of road as a motorist, cyclist and pedestrian. The pavement is narrow and very close to traffic, so I think this would make it feel safer for everyone and help encourage active travel.	Comments Noted
SUPPORT	I would like to support the reduction from 40 mph to 30 mph local residents and Emmbrook residents association have been fighting for this for years.	Comments Noted

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