

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT – CLLR R TONGE

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SERVICES

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A3102 SANDRIDGE SPEED LIMIT REVIEW – REVISED PROPOSALS

Purpose of Report

1. To set out the findings of a further review of speed limits on the A3102 at Sandridge, Melksham in light of substantive changes and to recommend changes to the original review recommendations.

Background

2. In October 2009 DfT Circular 01/06 ‘Setting Local Speed Limits’ was adopted as the basis for the Council’s speed limit strategy. The Circular requested that all Highway Authorities complete an assessment of existing speed limits on their A and B class roads and implement any amendments. The purpose of the review was to ensure a nationally consistent approach to the setting of speed limits. It was anticipated that this would heighten public respect for speed limits, which in turn would lead to greater observance.
3. The review of Wiltshire’s A and B class roads was undertaken using the methodology set out in Circular 01/06 and its supporting documents; this involved a comprehensive data collection and analysis process. The initial results of the review were discussed extensively with the former Safety Camera Partnership prior to the final results being disseminated to Parish and Town Councils for comment.
4. The review recommended that the A3102, from the existing 30 mph limit at the Melksham boundary to the 30 mph limit at Sandridge, be reduced from the national speed limit of 60 mph to 50 mph.
5. Since the review was undertaken, substantive changes have taken place along this length of the A3102, with further changes due to occur in the near future. These changes are associated with new residential development and, as such, a further review of the speed limit recommendation is therefore considered justifiable.
6. The existing 30 mph limit through Sandridge, introduced in 2004, was established due to the presence of the Forest and Sandridge Primary School. It was considered appropriate to relax the criteria in use at that time in view of those exceptional circumstances. Since it is intended to relocate the school to the new development area to the east of Melksham, the opportunity has been taken to review this length of the A3102 against the revised speed limit criteria.

Main Considerations for the Council

7. See report attached at **Appendix A**.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

8. None.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

9. None.

Risk Assessment

10. There is no risk to the Council as a result of these proposals.

Financial Implications

11. Funding for the recommended changes will come from the Integrated Transport block budget and developer deposits.

Legal Implications

12. None.

Options Considered

13. As set out in the attached report (**Appendix A**).

Reason for Proposal

14. The introduction of 40 mph speed limits are considered to be appropriate and would also be consistent with the limit on the Distributor Road and provide a consistent approach to speed limits to the east of Melksham.

Proposal

15. That the following recommendations, set out in the report attached at **Appendix A** be adopted:
- (i) That between Melksham and Sandridge a 40 mph speed limit is recommended.
 - (ii) That at Sandridge Common the speed limit be raised to 40 mph once the relocation of the school has occurred.

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

None

TRAFFIC AND NETWORK MANAGEMENT

**A3102 Sandridge Speed Limit
Review**

April 2012

Document Control Sheet

Project Title: A3102 Sandridge speed limit review

Report Title: A3102 Sandridge speed limit review

Revision: A

Status: Issue

Date: April 2012

Record of issue

Issue	Status	Author	Date	Check	Date	Authorised	Date
A	Issue	DMT	April 2012	GTR	April 2012	GTR	April 2012

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1.0 Introduction and background

- 1.2 In October 2009 DfT Circular 01/06 'Setting Local Speed Limits' was adopted as the basis for the Council's speed limit strategy. The Circular requested that all Highway Authorities complete an assessment of existing speed limits on their A and B class roads and implement any amendments. The purpose of the review was to ensure a nationally consistent approach to the setting of speed limits. It was anticipated that this would heighten public respect for speed limits, which in turn would lead to greater observance.
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- 1.3 The review recommended that the A3102, from the existing 30 mph limit at the Melksham boundary to the 30 mph limit at Sandridge, be reduced from the national speed limit of 60 mph to 50 mph.
- 1.4 Since the review was undertaken, substantive changes have taken place along this length of the A3102, with further changes due to occur in the near future. These changes are associated with new residential development and, as such, a further review of the speed limit recommendation is therefore considered justifiable.
- 1.5 The existing 30 mph limit through Sandridge, introduced in 2004, was established due to the presence of the Forest and Sandridge Primary School. It was considered appropriate to relax the criteria in use at that time in view of those exceptional circumstances. Since it is intended to relocate the school to the new development area to the east of Melksham, the opportunity has been taken to review this length of the A3102 against the revised speed limit criteria.

2.0 Changes since the original review

- 2.1 Since the original review, a large roundabout has been constructed on the A3102 immediately prior to the commencement of the Sandridge 30 mph limit. This gives access to the Eastern Distributor Road that has been provided as part of the overall eastern expansion of Melksham. The Distributor Road will eventually form a through route to Spa Road and provide a bypass to the east of Melksham. A speed limit of 40 mph has been agreed for the full length of the Distributor Road.
- 2.2 In addition, a further housing development is proposed on the southern side of the A3102 nearer Melksham for which a short extension (91 metres) of the existing 30 mph limit has been agreed. This leaves a length of approximately 510 metres between Melksham and Sandridge currently subject to the national speed limit but which includes the new roundabout.

3.0 Data Collection

3.1 Existing vehicle speeds

Existing vehicle speeds were measured by following free flowing single vehicles along the A3102 in both directions and noting the speeds at which they travelled. Between Melksham and Sandridge driven speeds were noted to be in the range of 40 to 50mph, reducing at the roundabout. Through the Sandridge 30 mph limit the speeds were noted to be in the 35 to 45 mph range. In addition, data from a static metrocount within the Sandridge 30 mph limit has been obtained and this shows an 85%ile speed of 40.7 mph with an average speed of 33.5 mph.

3.2 Collision data

The Police collision data base shows that in the latest six year period there have been no recorded personal injury collisions between Melksham and Sandridge. Through the Sandridge 30 mph limit there have been two recorded personal injury collisions, both involving rear end shunts, with following vehicles failing to notice that the vehicle in front had slowed to pull out / turn right.

4.0 **Assessment**

4.1 The assessment of speed limits is undertaken against the descriptive criteria set out in DfT Circular 01/06 Setting Local speed Limits, together with Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/04 Village Speed Limits and Traffic Advisory Leaflet 2/06 Speed Assessment Framework.

4.2 The criteria for a 30 mph limit are based on the amount of frontage development with a requirement for 20 or more houses over a minimum length of 600 metres. This length may be reduced to 400 metres when the level of development density over this shorter length exceeds the 20 or more houses criterion and in exceptional circumstances a reduction to 300 metres is permissible. If there are fewer than 20 houses then the Highway Authority is able to make extra allowance for key buildings. The measurement of frontage development is based only on those houses that front onto the main road. It does not include groups of houses that have access to the main road from a side road. Frontage development density has to achieve an average of 3 houses per 100 metres throughout the length but particularly at the entrances to the limit. This ensures appropriate reinforcement of a village environment to the motorist.

4.3 The criteria for a 40 mph speed limit are '*High number of bends, junctions or accesses, substantial development, where there is a strong environmental or landscape reason, or where the road is used by considerable numbers of vulnerable road users. Villages where the criteria for a 30 mph limit are not met*'.

4.4 The criteria for a 50 mph speed limit are '*Lower quality roads which may have a relatively high number of bends, junctions or accesses. An accident rate higher than 35 per 100 million vehicle kilometres and/or mean speed already below 50 mph*'.

4.5 A3102 from Melksham to Sandridge

The development criteria for a 30 mph speed limit are not satisfied for this section of the A3102 as there are only two existing properties that can be considered to be frontage development. With a collision rate of zero and speeds between 40 and 50 mph this length of the A3102 falls within the 60 mph speed limit band of the DfT assessment graph.

4.6 However, a speed limit of this level is not considered appropriate in view of the short length of road in question and the presence of the roundabout. The option is therefore either a 40 mph or a 50 mph limit. It is anticipated that the extension of the 30 mph limit at the western end will result in a reduction of speeds on the length from the new 30 mph terminal point to the roundabout and that speeds are likely to move closer to 40 mph compared to the current recorded speeds. Taking this into account, the road geometry and the criteria set out above, it is considered that a 40 mph limit would be appropriate.

4.7 Sandridge

The number of frontage houses within the existing 30 mph limit is 13, which clearly falls below the minimum number of 20. In addition, approximately half of the existing limit does not meet the frontage density requirements. The recorded vehicle speeds and the results of the metrocount, indicate that the majority of motorists are not reading the road as a 30 mph environment. This is perhaps understandable given the alignment, the excellent forward visibility, and the lack of frontage development. In addition, Circular 01/06 states that '*for mean speeds to be acceptable, they should be no higher than the posted limit after it has been implemented*'. With a collision rate of 27 injury collisions per 100 million vehicle kilometres and a mean speed of 33.5 mph this places this length of the A3102 within the 50 mph speed limit band of the DfT assessment graph.

Paragraph 118 of Circular 01/06 advises that:

In situations where the criteria for a village are not met and there is a lesser degree of development, or where engineering measures are not practicable or cost effective to achieve a 30 mph limit, but a reduction from the national 60 mph speed limit is considered appropriate, traffic authorities should consider alternative lower limits of 40 or 50 mph.

However, paragraph 17 at Appendix E of Circular 01/06 sets out the following:

If the section does not meet the definition of Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/04 (DfT, 2004) for a village, but the level of development is at least half the density implied (over a minimum of 600 metres), a speed limit of 40 mph should be considered.

Taking these factors into account it is considered that a 40 mph limit would be appropriate.

- 4.8 The introduction of 40 mph speed limits would also be consistent with the limit on the Distributor Road and provide a consistent approach to speed limits to the east of Melksham.

5.0 Recommendations

That between Melksham and Sandridge a 40 mph speed limit is recommended.

That at Sandridge Common the speed limit be raised to 40 mph once the relocation of the school has occurred.