

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND WASTE –  
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**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT**

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**REFERENCE:** HTW-05-21

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## **ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984**

### **THE COUNTY OF WILTSHIRE (A350 TROWBRIDGE ROAD AND MAYS DRIVE, WESTBURY) (40 MPH SPEED LIMIT) ORDER 2020**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To consider no objections and one of support in connection with the proposed introduction of a 40 mph speed limit on the A350 Trowbridge Road (see **Appendix 2**).

#### **Relevance to the Council's Business Plan**

2. To encourage resilient communities by facilitating improved safety on the public highway for all users.

#### **Background**

3. Millbrook Roundabout was constructed as part of agreed Section 278 highway works to access housing development on land to the east of the A350 and north of Bitham Park. The application submitted to the Council bearing reference number 14/09262/OUT granted planning permission to carry out development which included proposed development of up to 300 dwellings; creation of the new roundabout access from Trowbridge Road (Millbrook); creation of a new emergency/cycle and pedestrian access from Coach Road, open space, drainage works and ancillary works. Prior to the construction of the new roundabout, the A350 followed a straight alignment from the bend north of the railway bridge to 'The Mead' Roundabout on the outskirts of Westbury. The 30 mph limit restriction commences just north of 'The Mead' Roundabout as now, but the section north of this is subject to the national speed limit (60 mph)
4. During the original agreement and approval of the detailed Section 278 works there was considered no need to reduce the speed limit through the new Millbrook Roundabout. However, subsequent observations with the roundabout complete and in operation has demonstrated problems with 'excess' speed in the vicinity of the A350 entries, leading to sharp braking and occasional over-run to the kerbed edges of the central island. Examination of accident data over the period from initial construction to December 2019 shows that there have been none involving personal injury. However, it is understood from members of the public that there have been some 'damage only' incidents to vehicles.

#### **Main Considerations for the Council**

5. No objections have been received to this speed limit proposal, but the letter of support from Westbury Town Council queries whether the 40 mph limit section should not be extended northwards to the railway bridge or possibly the bend beyond this for road safety reasons.

6. In determining the length of the new 40 mph section on the A350 Trowbridge Road, due regard has been made to Circular 01/2013 'Setting Local Speed Limits'. This Circular is used by the Council (Highways) to apply a consistent approach in determining whether a new speed limit is appropriate for a given location. Factors will include the nature of the road i.e. rural/urban, the amount of frontage development (particularly with direct access) and the existing highway safety record in terms of reported accidents. With respect to the latter, consideration is given to 'excess' speed being a common causation factor. Examination of collision data involving personal injury for the period 2014-2019 shows that there has been one serious incident just south of the new roundabout in April 2018, a slight injury incident near the railway bridge in May 2016, and two accidents at the junction/bend with Coach Road to the north of the bridge. These two accidents in October 2018 and November 2019 respectively were serious and fatal.
7. Notwithstanding the two accidents at the bend (Coach Road junction) Circular 01/2013 clearly states in paragraph 40 that "*Speed limits should not be used to attempt to solve the problem of isolated hazards, for example a single road junction or reduced forward visibility such as at a bend*". It also states in paragraph 39 that "*it may be appropriate to use a short length of 40 mph or 50 mph speed limit as a transition between a length of road subject to a national limit and another length on which a lower limit is in force, for example on the outskirts of villages or urban areas with adjoining intermittent development. However, the use of such transitional limits should be restricted to sections of road where immediate speed reduction would cause risks or is likely to be less effective*". The purpose of this 40 mph speed limit is to reduce excess driver speeds on approach to the new Millbrook Roundabout where this has been a reported issue, albeit the absence of any incident involving injury to date. It is not intended to address incidents at the bend further north, where the location is rural, has no frontage development and where a more effective measure would be a standard 'bend ahead' warning sign or vehicle actuated warning sign should this be deemed warranted.
8. The position of the outer 40/60 mph terminal signs north of the new roundabout is thus set by the required sight stopping distance to the give-way line for southbound drivers (40 mph), the minimum recommended distance for a given 'transitional' speed limit (300-400 metres) and also the new urban edge of Westbury with the recent and on-going development of land to the east of Trowbridge Road. There is no justification set by either Circular 01/2013 or the five-year accident record for extending it further north into the rural hinterland.

**Safeguarding Implications**

9. Not applicable.

**Public Health Implications**

10. Not applicable.

**Corporate Procurement Implications**

11. Not applicable.

**Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

12. None.

**Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

13. None.

### **Risk Assessment**

14. Not applicable.

### **Financial Implications**

15. The implementation of this new speed limit on the A350 through Millbrook Roundabout did not form part of the original works agreed in the s278 Agreement. However, the developer has agreed to install the new terminal signs required. The costs associated with the advertisement/processing of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) will need to be met by the Council, as there is no mechanism for recovering this from the developer in the Agreement. Furthermore, this TRO was not seen as necessary for development to proceed when the highway works were agreed.

### **Legal Implications**

16. There are none.

### **Options Considered**

17. To:
- (i) Implement the proposals as advertised.
  - (ii) Not implement the proposals.
  - (iii) Implement the proposals with amendments

### **Reason for Proposal**

18. The introduction of a 40 mph speed limit on the A350 Trowbridge Road to the north of The Mead Roundabout, Westbury, is to encourage and reduce approach speeds into the recently constructed Millbrook Roundabout serving new housing development on the east side of the A350. Since its construction there have been numerous reported instances of sharp braking due to 'excess' speed on both the northbound and southbound A350 approaches to this junction. This is caused in part by the offset nature of the roundabout, with some drivers failing to appreciate the sharpness of the deflection to the right on the northbound approach from Westbury, but equally the degree of offset to the left on the fast, straight, southbound approach. Mitigation works to date have included additional warning signage on the northbound A350 approach and installation of bollards to visually emphasise the 'kick-over' of the carriageway to the right in this direction. The introduction of a 40 mph speed limit is considered an essential part of the 'package' of highway safety measures necessary to combat 'excess' driver speeds into this roundabout, thus improving safety for all highway users.

### **Proposal**

19. That the proposal to introduce the 40 mph speed limit over the length of the A350 Trowbridge Road shown be implemented as advertised,

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

None