

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT, STREET SCENE AND FLOODING- HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT & COMMISSIONING

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REFERENCE: HTW-04-24

B3019 BRADFORD ROAD RUDLOE, CORSHAM, 40-MPH SPEED LIMIT

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the comments received following the formal advertisement of the Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) to introduce a 40-mph speed limit on the B3109 Bradford Road, Rudloe, Corsham and to recommend an appropriate way forward.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The proposed TRO meets two of the priorities in the Council's Business Plan:
 - Outcome 2 Resilient Society – communicate with communities in a way that promotes constructive discussion, tailored to the communities needs and developing better solutions to these. To empower communities and groups to act in their local area. This outcome has been met through the development of the proposals (to which this report relates) with members of the local community through the Corsham Area Board via the Corsham Local Highways & Footways Improvement Group (LHFIG hereafter) which is made up of elected members and officers from both Wiltshire Council and relevant Town and Parish Councils, as well as representatives of local interest groups.
 - Outcome 3 Thriving Economy – Deliver infrastructure to enable local communities to live, work and play locally, businesses to invest and everyone to take responsibility for the environment. Helping to build an efficient and effective transport network, including viable alternatives to the car. This outcome has been met through the proposed introduction of a lower speed limit that will address road safety concerns and help encourage active travel including cycling and walking opportunities.

Background

3. A request was submitted to the Corsham Local Highway Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) by Box Parish Council and Corsham Town Council for the speed limit to be assessed on the B3109 Bradford Road following concerns raised by local residents who wish to improve road safety. This was supported and the assessment funded through the LHFIG.
4. The Council's term consultants (Atkins) were commissioned to undertake a review of the speed limit on the B3109 and concluded that the criteria in Department for Transport Circular 01/13 "Setting Local Speed Limits" was satisfied for a 40-mph restriction from the junction of Leafy Lane to a location northeast of the junction into the Rudloe Estate. A copy of the assessment is available upon request.

5. A plan outlining the proposals is provided in **Appendix 1**.
6. A site meeting, attended by the Wiltshire Council Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport, Street Scene and Flooding, Wiltshire Council Director of Highways and residents, has taken place to enable the local community to express their opinions personally.
7. The subsequent recommendations contained within the review were considered by the LHFIG and implementation prioritised following consideration of the feedback given to the group by the Locally elected member and representative from the Parish Council.

Consultation

8. The proposed TRO alterations were consulted upon from 1 September to 25 September 2023. During this period 48 items of correspondence were received in response to the proposals.
9. Corsham Town Council and Box Parish Council have indicated their support of the proposal through the LHFIG meetings by giving a commitment to fund 25% of the cost of implementation (12.5% each).
10. Wiltshire Council Member, Cllr Ruth Hopkinson, has not directly commented on the proposals. Cllr Hopkinson has supported the proposal through the LHFIG.
11. The proposal is within Corsham Without Division. The Wiltshire Council Member for this division, Cllr Derek Walters, had previously outlined his desire for a 30-mph speed limit and has been clear that the assessment does not meet his aspiration. Cllr Walters did not formally comment on the proposals during the formal consultation period.
12. Wiltshire Police are a statutory consultee in the TRO process. No representations have been received.

Main Considerations for the Council

13. The Speed Limit Review has been undertaken in accordance with the guidance provided in Department for Transport Circular 01/13 Setting Local Speed Limits, and the recommendations made are considered acceptable by officers of the Council. It is understood and recognised that local aspirations for lower restrictions in speed limits are often desirable where communities feel vulnerable. However, the guidance is clear that there is a balance to be achieved between the environment experienced by the motorist, and those who utilise the highway in another way, for example pedestrians and cyclists.
14. For speed limits to be successful they must be self-enforcing; therefore, there is a need to ensure that the motorist is aware of the cognitive triggers that encourage lower levels of speed for the majority of road users. The introduction of restrictions which fail to achieve this will receive lower levels of respect and give rise to disregard of both the restriction in place and speed limits in general. This increases the requirements for greater levels of enforcement activity, either through Police enforcement, or Community Speed Watch. Ensuring consistency in the setting of speed limits is fundamental, and this can only be achieved through consistent interpretation of the full guidance provide with Circular 01/13.
15. A summary of the issues raised during the consultation period and officer comments are included in **Appendix 2**.

Substantive comments

16. The substantive comment received during the consultation period indicated that whilst there is an overall level of support for the proposed reduction of the speed limit to 40mph, many of the correspondents requested that the limit to be reduced further to 30mph due to the need to cross the B3109, the presence of the Primary School and the narrowness of the footways in its immediate vicinity.
17. These concerns were acknowledged as part of the review; however, it was not considered that the location met the criteria set out in DfT Guidance for a 30-mph limit. The B3109 is recorded as a main distributor road within the Wiltshire road hierarchy. To be considered suitable for a 30-mph restriction a minimum level of frontage housing development with direct access to the road is required. The environs of the area along Bradford Road are such that development is accessed from discrete junctions and therefore the frontage development criteria are not met. The review did make recommendations for additional engineering works to directly address the known pedestrian safety concerns and this accords with DfT guidance that engineering measures should be used to deal with isolated hazards and address the needs of vulnerable road users, where a lower speed limit is not justified.
18. In response to the identified concern about the narrow footways, this has been addressed through maintenance actions that have trimmed and cleared vegetation growth so that the full width of the footways is available to pedestrian users and future regrowth will be maintained. Further, Box Parish Council has agreed to take on the action to discuss with the school the potential relocation of the school boundary fence to allow the widening of the footway near the school's rear entrance on to the B3109.
19. Concern has also been raised by correspondents about the current uncontrolled crossing from Park Place to Toghill Crescent. This is being addressed through the Corsham LHFIG, who has made a submission for the funding of a new footway linking Park Place to the existing Toucan Crossing. If successful, pedestrians will be able to walk from Park Place to the crossing and on to the school, whilst eliminating the need to cross the B3109 within the retained 50-mph limit. A plan showing further details of this is included at **Appendix 3**.

Additional Local actions

20. It is considered that there are a number of additional actions that could be taken by the local community and the school, with the support of the Police, in support of the proposal. Through the Council's Taking Action on School Journeys initiative, it would be possible to provide an Advisory 20-mph restriction on the B3109 during the time that school children are prominent in the area. To secure the funding, the school will need to review and update their School Travel Plan (STP) and commit to provide supervision at the school side gate on the B3109. Use of the gate onto the B3109 is a decision the school has taken voluntarily and controlling its use is an important safety consideration. Support is available to review the School Travel Plan from Wiltshire Council. It is the Council's intention, at its own cost, to install the necessary infrastructure to support the Advisory 20-mph restriction as part of the works to lower the speed limit. However, the flashing wig wag signs indicating the Advisory 20-mph would only be installed once the STP is updated. If the school is able to update its STP in sufficient time it would be possible for the Advisory 20-mph to be in place concurrently with the new 40-mph limit.
21. Whilst the review has concluded that a 40-mph restriction is appropriate based upon the data collected, reinforcement of the reduction in the speed limit through the active use of Community Speed Watch and Speed Indicator Devices will help embed the change with the motoring public. Action to progress these options would rest with the Parish Council and local volunteers, with the support of the Police.

Safeguarding Considerations

22. There is no risk to the Council because of these proposals.

Public Health Implications

23. There are none with this proposal.

Corporate Procurement Implications

24. There are none in this proposal.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

25. The reduction of vehicle speeds is known to reduce vehicle emissions which can positively affect air quality and can assist with the authority's policy of seeking carbon neutrality.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

26. There are none in this scheme.

Risk Assessment

27. There is no risk to the Council arising from these proposals.

Financial Implications

28. The changes on the ground will be funded from the Corsham LHFigs allocation. Failure to proceed with the project may leave funding unallocated and subject to re-allocation to other projects.

Legal Implications

29. Changes to existing speed limit restrictions require amendments to the TRO. The process is governed by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and associated Procedural Regulations. Failure to adhere to the statutory processes could result in the restrictions being successfully challenged in the High Court.

Options Considered

30. To:

- (i) Implement proposals as advertised.
- (ii) Abandon the proposals and retain the 50-mph speed limit.

Reason for Proposals

31. The proposal is supported by the Corsham Area Board, Corsham Town Council and Box Parish Council.

32. The concerns raised in the consultation are understood; however, there are additional actions that can be undertaken at a local level to ensure that suitable awareness of the presence of pedestrians, in particular school children, to motorists is provided. It is strongly encouraged that the school seek to engage with the Council's Taking Action on School Journeys initiative to provide Advisory 20-mph restrictions during the time that school children are prominent in the area. The Parish Council and local residents are also encouraged to consider the use of Community Speedwatch and Speed Indicator Devices to reinforce the change of limit and help embed the change with the motoring public.

Proposals

33. That:

- (i) The proposal be implemented as advertised.
- (ii) The school and local community be encouraged to take local action to address their concerns, in particular an update of the School Travel Plan.
- (iii) The objectors be advised accordingly.

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

None