

DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, STREETSCENE AND BROADBAND – COUNCILLOR JOHN THOMSON

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SERVICE

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REFERENCE: HSB-32-14

**NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO 40 MPH SPEED LIMIT ZONE**

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the comments received following the formal consultation associated with the Traffic Regulation Orders

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. Outcome 2 of the Business Plan – People in Wiltshire work together to solve problems locally and participate in decision that affect them.

Outcome 3 of the Business Plan – Everyone in Wiltshire lives in a high quality environment.

Outcome 5 of the Business Plan – People in Wiltshire have healthy, active and high quality lives.

Outcome 6 of the Business Plan – People are as protected from harm as possible and feel safe.

Background

3. Following the development of the Highway Strategy for the New Forest National Park in 1989, the New Forest National Park Authority, in conjunction with Hampshire County Council, sought to implement a speed limit zone throughout the area of the New Forest within Hampshire. This was delivered in stages throughout the 1990's.
4. In 2010, Wiltshire Council was approached by the New Forest National Park Authority regarding the potential extension of the speed limit zone into the area of the New Forest which lies within Wiltshire. To discuss the issue further, and gain an understanding of the request, a meeting was held with representatives of the New Forest National Park Authority, Hampshire County Council and Wiltshire Council. During this initial meeting it was concluded that support could be given, provided there was no formal objection from the Police as the enforcement agency, and that the Department for Transport was willing to consider a further application for 'Special Authorisation' of the revised area as the associated Traffic Signs and Road Markings are not currently prescribed for use within the Traffic Signs Regulation and General Directions 2002.
5. Following initial consultation with the Police and the Department for Transport, both parties outlined they would not object to an application being submitted for consideration. Consequently, during 2011/12 a comprehensive proposal was developed around the existing speed restrictions, to enable a formal application for Special Authorisation from the Department for Transport. The application was submitted in September 2012. A plan outlining the extent of the proposal is included at **Appendix 1**.
6. Due to the number of changes being made within the Department for Transport organisation, following national policy changes, the Department for Transport was

unable to process the application in a timely manner, resulting in approval only being received in August 2014. In the intervening period whilst the application was being considered, discussions had continued to be held with its representatives, following which, sufficient confidence had been achieved of the application's success to allow for the formal consultation of the Traffic Regulation Orders associated with the changes to take place. These were formally consulted upon during June 2014.

7. In 2011, the New Forest National Park and South Downs National Park, in conjunction with the affected Local Authorities (including Wiltshire Council) successfully bid for funding from the Department for Transport's initial tranche of funds from the 'Local Sustainable Transport Fund' (LSTF) project. An allocation of £3.8 million was received to enable both National Parks to fulfil the following objectives:
 - (i) Improve key public transport services into the two national parks.
 - (ii) Making it easier to reach visitor attractions within the two national parks.
 - (iii) Promoting travel by cycle, bus and rail to and around the national parks.
 - (iv) Managing traffic effectively with the parks so that it does not detract from the visitor experience.
8. The successful bid for funding included a commitment to pursue the extension of the existing speed limit zone into the area of the national park within Wiltshire. The funding secured through this bid is time limited, with only those schemes implemented by the deadline of March 2015 being able to claim funds from the Department for Transport.
9. The formal consultation of the Traffic Regulation Orders was undertaken during the period 19 June 2014 to 14 July 2014. During this period 13 letters of comment were received, these included responses from Landford Parish Council, Whiteparish Parish Council, and from Mr Leo Randall, the elected member for the area. Of the responses received, 3 were in support of the proposal, 8 were objecting to elements / all of the proposal, and 2 were general comments. Details of those commenting on the proposal are given at **Appendix 2**.
10. Comments in support for the proposal were received from Whiteparish Parish Council and the New Forest National Park Authority. Landford Parish Council outlined its support for the principle of the scheme, but also took the opportunity to request a number of amendments to the restrictions. Mr Randall has also outlined his support for the proposal and the additional changes requested by Landford Parish Council.
11. Included within the submissions made by the public was a petition with 36 signatures from residents pursuing measures which seek to reduce vehicle speed on New Road, Landford.

Main Considerations for the Council

12. To consider the comments received during the formal advertisement of the Traffic Regulation Orders. Details of the comments received, along with the officer comments, are given at **Appendix 3**.

Substantive Objections

13. Whilst outlining the support for the principle of the proposal, Landford Parish Council has used this opportunity to outline its desire for a number of speed limits in the surrounding area to be altered. The locations outlined within their submission relate to areas subject to the 'Special Authorisation' given by the Department for Transport. The DfT has advised that any amendments will require further reconsideration on its behalf. Whilst it is considered that further consideration is unlikely to result in a decision to decline the revised application, it is unlikely to result in a decision being received before the deadline for expenditure of LSTF monies. In addition, changes to the already advertised Traffic Regulation Orders will require the authority to undertake further consultation, again adding to an additional delay in delivering the scheme.
14. It is acknowledged that a small number of the roads highlighted by the Parish Council for a reduced speed limit are considered technically achievable and appropriate. The Department for Transport has recently undertaken a consultation exercise aimed at reducing the complexity surrounding Traffic Signs and Road Markings, and the associated Traffic Regulation Orders. During this consultation exercise they outlined a number of changes, that should they be included in the published Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2015, will negate the need to seek 'Special Authorisation' for future alterations to the way speed limits are signed within the zone / New Forest. It is therefore considered that any further changes should be held back until the revised regulations are published and a full understanding of what is permissible is understood. If, as the consultation suggested, it is permissible, then it may be appropriate to pursue this through the Community Area Transport Group in due course. A copy of its submission, along with the Officer Comments, is included at **Appendix 4**.
15. A copy of a petition submitted to the local Member of Parliament has been appended to the comments of a resident of New Road and referenced within their objection to the proposal. The petition itself relates to the specific point of "Provide Speed Reduction Measures in New Road, Landford". The petition attracted 36 signatures, the majority of which are residents of properties on New Road, Landford.

Safeguarding Implications

16. It is not considered the proposal has any safeguarding implications.

Public Health Implications

17. The provision of facilities which assist in encouraging sustainable methods of travel is considered to be beneficial to health and wellbeing.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

18. The introduction of facilities which promote the use of sustainable methods of travel and reduce the dependency on vehicle travel, are considered beneficial to the environment.
19. The introduction of additional street furniture and road markings can be considered detrimental to the street scene and visual vista.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

20. There are none with this proposal.

Risk Assessment

21. There are none associated with this proposal.

Financial Implications

22. A financial allocation has been made within the Two National Parks Local Sustainable Transport Fund allocation to implement an extension of the zoned speed limit approach within Wiltshire. The funding available for this project is time limited and is only available to 31 March 2015. Failure to ensure implementation of the proposals will result in the project being unfunded and competing for funding from Wiltshire Council's 2015/16 Local Transport Plan Allocation

Legal Implications

23. There are none associated with this proposal.

Options Considered

24. To:

- (i) Implement the proposal as advertised.
- (ii) Seek approval from the Department for Transport for approval to amend the proposal and undertake a further period of formal consultation for amended Traffic Regulation Orders.
- (iii) Abandon the proposal.

Reason for Proposals

25. The scheme has been developed following a request from the New Forest National Park Authority, and included within their successful Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid, the funding for which time is limited.

26. The scheme seeks to improve consistency and understanding of speed restrictions within the New Forest National Park, failure to proceed with extending the zone risks achieving this objective.

Proposals

27. That:

- (i) The proposal be implemented as advertised.
- (ii) The objectors be informed accordingly.

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

None