



Report to Cabinet Member for Transportation

Decision to be taken on or after Monday 11 July 2005

Decision can normally be implemented at least 3 working days after decision has been signed.

Cabinet Member Report No. **T01.05**

Title: Proposed new and revised 30mph and 40mph speed restrictions, Central Chilterns Traffic Management Project Area (Speed Limit Review Area 2)

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Electoral Divisions: Pre May 2005 Aston Clinton and Weston Turville, Wendover, Chesham West, Chesham North, Missenden Riddings (Post May 2005 new electoral divisions: Aston Clinton, Wendover and Halton, Chiltern Ridges, Chesham North West, Great Missenden, Chess Valley, Chesham East.)

Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Community and Environment of Buckinghamshire

Summary

- 1 The Central Chilterns Traffic Management Project has carried out extensive public and formal consultation on proposals for new and revised speed limits within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 2 This report covers Area 2, which is the first of the 14 areas defined within County wide speed limit review, currently being undertaken.
- 3 Nationally the issue of speed limits is recognised as an emotive one, on which many people often have conflicting views, this report has considered the various views on the proposed speed limits, and has tried to strike an acceptable balance in reaching its conclusion.
- 4 This report proposes that the speed limits be implemented with minor changes as a result of the consultation. These changes are identified in this report, it is anticipated that subject to Cabinet member approval,

implementation will commence during July and August 2005, once the speed limit orders have been sealed and made legal.

- 5 Due to the special landscape qualities of the Chilterns AONB and the concern raised by local people over the introduction of speed limit signing, the project team has obtained authorisation from the Department for Transport (DfT) which will allow the use of on carriageway speed limit repeater signs for area 2 without the need for upright repeater signing, which would have intruded on the landscape.
- 6 Once implemented and after a suitable period of time (within 12 months) it is proposed to undertake further traffic speed and flow monitoring. A review will be undertaken of existing and new traffic data, and any public feedback. Once complete a post implementation report will be prepared on its findings, which will be presented to the Cabinet Member for Transportation for consideration.

Recommendation

1. **NOTE the comments received as a result of the consultation exercise for this scheme.**
2. **AGREE that the proposed new and revised speed restrictions be implemented as advertised in the schedule and plans with the suggested amendments.**
3. **AGREE that monitoring takes place to measure the effect of the new and revised speed restrictions. It is proposed that this shall take place within 12 months from completion of the implementation phase.**
4. **AGREE that following the monitoring, public consultation be undertaken to establish the perceived benefit of the introduction of the speed restrictions and to assist in the subsequent review.**
5. **AGREE that on completion of the monitoring and public consultation the results will be reported to the Cabinet Member, who will then consider if further action is required to make any appropriate changes.**
6. **AGREE that consultees be advised of the outcome of this key decision report and be informed of the proposed monitoring/public consultation and the subsequent report to the Cabinet Member for Transportation following implementation.**

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

- 1 The project was borne out of initial consultation undertaken by Hyder Consulting with stakeholders in an area of rural Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire in 1999. The Central Chilterns Traffic Management Project was established through the Local Transport Plan for 2001-2006, with the aim of identifying and implementing pilot measures, which address rural traffic and transport issues.

- 2 The area chosen encompasses approximately 10% of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and includes part of the County of Hertfordshire. The project area is bounded by a network of A and B roads, which connect the towns of Wendover, Great Missenden, Chesham, Berkhamsted and Tring.
- 3 The project has been established through a partnership of the County Councils of Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, the Countryside Agency, the Chilterns Conservation Board and Chiltern District Council. Buckinghamshire County Council took the lead role and hosted the project officer, who was appointed in May 2001 to take the project forward.
- 4 The Countryside Agency, who provided 50% of the funding for the project officer for the first three years, encourages projects to engage with the community in identifying the issues and seeking appropriate measures to address them.
- 5 As a result of extensive public consultation the project identified the inappropriate speed of traffic on rural roads as the main issue of concern to local residents. In order to address the speed issue, a scheme which proposes to introduce new speed limits and either revision or extension of existing speed limits has been developed. In July 2004 both formal and public consultation were undertaken based on the proposals contained within the schedules and plans. (See Appendices A to C and Background Papers)
- 6 Within the pilot area a hierarchical approach to the road network was proposed by the Hyder report and this approach has been further developed, where the C and unclassified roads have been tiered according to the speed/flow/collision data. Roads within the boundary of the A and B road network fell into one of three tiers and this hierarchical approach has been used as an aid, in determining the proposed speed limits. The only A road which has been reviewed as part of this projects is the section of the A416 through the village of Ashley Green between the existing 40mph speed limits. The remaining A and B roads bounding the project area within Buckinghamshire are being reviewed as part of the county wide speed limit review.
- 7 To engage the public a series of three local public consultation/participation events called "Have Your Say Days"(HYSD) took place in March 2002, these were promoted in a project newsletter (see Background Paper BP 5) distributed to approximately 2750 homes, Parish Councils, amenity and interest groups. Those who attended the HYSD were asked to respond to a number of questions and proposed measures including speed limits. The HYSD events attracted in excess of 200 visitors who completed a questionnaire, these were collated and reported on by Transport and Travel Research Ltd (TTR) in their report of May 2002. (It was noted in this report that the vast majority of respondents were over 45 years of age and therefore the needs and aspirations of younger people may have not been captured.)

Most respondents were car drivers, but a wider range of modes for leisure activities were apparent (walking, cycling & horse riding)

- 8 In response to speeding traffic the TTR report noted under “Speeding and Road Safety” that “A large proportion of the sample group (93%) thought that cars drive too fast in the area, this was backed up by a similarly large proportion of the group (80%) that thought the roads were unsafe.”
- 9 In response to options for solving the problems “reducing traffic speed was seen as the most important issue to address (over 80% agreeing action was needed).” It also indicated that “There was great demand (79%) for the incorporation of speed limits into settlement/village entry signs and similarly very little opposition to the idea.” There was also support for speed limit repeater signs being painted on the road surfaces, instead of using upright signage this option was supported by 59% of respondents. The full results of these events are contained in the HYS D Report of May 2002 by consultants TTR Ltd.
- 10 It should be noted that at a public meeting prior to the HYS D events it was strongly felt by many members of the public and representatives of Parish Councils and other groups that the entire area should be subject to a blanket 40mph speed limit, with 30mph in villages and 20mph on Quiet Lanes-similar in approach to that adopted by Hampshire County Council in the New Forest. Whilst the project would have supported investigating this blanket concept further, this approach was not acceptable to the County Council as it did not meet County Council speed limit policy at that time. It would have also set a precedent for other areas, whilst the County Council was formulating and implementing its new policy on speed limits. However the final approach proposed in this key decision report will reduce the existing speed limit on the higher trafficked routes through and between villages to a greater degree than the speed management strategy guidance. Hence it is proposed that further monitoring and consultations followed by a review post implementation, to gauge the effect of these speed limits is seen as key to determining the effectiveness of implemented measures.
- 11 Following the public feedback contained within the HYS D report and in discussion with Parish Councils some changes were made to the location of some of the proposed limits, the resultant speed limit plan and schedules were used in the formal and public consultation (see Background Paper BP 2). A simple map indicating the speed limit proposals were published in the project’s Autumn 2002 and a final plan in the Summer 2004 newsletter (see Background Paper BP 1), to inform residents of the then imminent formal and public consultation.
- 12 Whilst developing a hierarchical road network approach, a number of roads have been identified as potential Quiet Lanes. These lowly trafficked roads generally have lower speeds and low collision record. One of the difficulties faced by the project is where speed limits are proposed which are either adjacent to or abut Quiet Lanes. These Quiet Lanes are likely to remain as national speed limit because guidance on quiet lanes does not set mandatory

speed limits. This conflict is difficult to reconcile with the public and whilst the national speed limit will remain on many of these Quiet Lane routes, the actual traffic speeds are generally lower than the adjacent proposed speed limited routes, due to physical constraints of the potential Quiet Lanes.

- 13 It should be noted that the Department for Transport (DfT) have issued a consultation document on Quiet Lanes and Home Zones for Draft Regulations and Statutory Guidance for England. (The DfT consultation period closed in November of 2004) In essence once approved the regulations would allow Highway Authorities to designate Quiet Lanes, once designated the highway authority would be allowed to implement “use” and “speed orders”. However it would appear that “speed orders” would not be signed or enforceable. If 20mph “speed orders” were made the normal guidance would apply as it would to implementing a 20mph “speed limit”. This may require physical measures to reduce speeds to an acceptable level, and any physical measures are unlikely to be acceptable to residents or on environmental grounds on potential Quiet Lanes. However “speed limits” could be made but these would also require the same level of measures with the additional requirement for signing.
- 14 It should also be noted that an alternative Quiet Lane sign has also been included in the DfT consultation, which is similar to the alternative promoted by the project, and attracted over 80% support over the sign currently approved by DfT for use on Quiet Lane pilot projects. Whilst it does not have the advisory Max Speed 20mph as sought by us, it does provide drivers with improved information as to what to expect on a Quiet Lane. The County Council Traffic Management Systems and Parking Team have responded formally on the DfT consultation document, and the final guidance is expected to be approved and published some time in 2005.
- 15 Currently three areas are being considered as being designated as quiet lanes, and following workshops held in 2003 and 2004, formal and public consultation is being considered. The results of which will be presented in a formal report to the Cabinet Member for Transportation.
- 16 The consultation, development and subsequent Implementation of the proposed speed limits will meet many of the general aims and objectives of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Buckinghamshire 2001-2006. It will also meet many of the specific aims of the pilot project given in the LTP Volume 5 area strategy, these include:-
 - Reduce vehicle speeds
 - Guide or direct traffic flows
 - Reduce or restrict the growth in traffic volumes
 - Improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders
 - Maintain and enhance the rural character of roads
- 17 The proposed measures will also address a number of the Chilterns Conservation Boards, Management Plan, The Framework For Action 2002-2007 Chapter 13 Travel and Transport policies these include:-

- TR2 Promote the establishment and use of the road hierarchy to assist in ensuring inappropriate traffic does not use rural roads.
- TR3 Use traffic management measures to conserve sensitive areas by seeking to prevent the inappropriate use of particular roads by inappropriate traffic.
- TR4 Develop area based approaches to traffic management, integrating traffic and transport measures.
- TR6 Promote lower speed limits in selected areas and roads where this would be environmentally beneficial and confer safety benefits on users and local residents.
- TR7 Promote speed reduction in villages, including the possibility of introducing a speed limit of 30 mph in all villages.
- TR9 Develop new designs to ensure physical traffic calming methods in villages and along rural roads are environmentally sympathetic and respect local character.
- TR20 Promote appropriate standards of design in future highway and other transportation infrastructure schemes in order to mitigate their impact and so conserve the special quality of the AONB landscape.
- TR21 Promote high standards of management through the application of principles contained in the environmental guidelines for the management of roads in the Chilterns.
- TR22 Reduce roadside 'clutter' by rationalising signing where possible and ensure appropriate designs are used.

Formal and Public Consultation on Speed Limits

- 18 During the life of the project in addition to the HYSD events there has been a number of public and parish meetings, and three editions of the project newsletter have been published and distributed to all addresses in the area (See Background Papers BP 5).
- 19 In order to demonstrate the development of the proposed speed limits copies of the plan of the area, which were presented in the three Newsletters, are presented in Background Paper BP 1. To support these proposals a "Safer Roads In The Chilterns" leaflet encouraging slower speeds and containing road safety advice for more vulnerable road users, along with a car sticker and a poster designed by local school pupils were distributed at events and local libraries. (Examples of these are presented in Background Paper BP5)

- 20 Both formal and public consultation exercises were carried out concurrently between the 15th July 2004 and 13th August 2004 and was extended from the minimum 21 days to a period of 28 days, due to the summer holiday period.
- 21 Notices were posted on site and full details were placed in Libraries at Chesham, Great Missenden, Wendover, Aylesbury and at Beaconsfield Area Office and County Hall, Aylesbury.
- 22 The comments received as a result of the public and formal consultation have been précised and are contained in the following appendices:
- Appendix A Formal and Public Consultation responses and BCC comments
- Appendix B Formal and Public Consultation responses and BCC comments arranged in order according to road
- 23 Taking into consideration the public, Parish Councils and the Chilterns Conservation Boards feedback to reduce the impact of signage in the protected landscape of the Chilterns AONB. The project has sought and been granted special authorisation from the DfT, via Government Office South East (GOSE) to use speed limit repeater roundels applied to the carriageway, without the current requirement for the supporting upright repeater signage. (DfT Authorisation of Road Markings see Background Paper BP 4)
- 24 Without this authorisation the introduction of speed limits with the associated upright signage would have been unacceptable to many residents, Parish, Town and County Councils and The Chilterns Conservation Board.
- 25 The speed limit schedules and an area wide speed limit plan used in the formal and public consultation is shown in Background Paper BP 2.
- 26 In view of the comments received from the formal and public consultation on these proposals, it is recommended that the speed limit orders should be implemented as advertised with the amendments given in Appendix C.
- 27 The key amendments to the speed limits orders being an increase in the proposed speed limit along The Hale from 30mph to 40mph, and an extension of the proposed 30mph limit westwards through Chartridge.
- 28 An area wide speed limit and detailed location plans with the proposed amendments following consultation are shown in Background Paper BP 3.
- 29 It should be noted that by implementing these proposals, the County Council can address many of the concerns brought to its attention by local residents through the extensive consultation. Whilst at the same time not precluding further changes that might be necessary following post implementation monitoring, consultation and review and the submission of a post implementation report for information to the Cabinet Member for Transportation.

- 30 These proposals will also meet many of the aims of the County Councils, Local Transport Plan and the Conservation Boards, Management Plan given above in par 16 & 17.
- 31 From the outset of the project, it has been made clear to the public and our partners that the project is a pilot study and that implemented measures will be reviewed and changes made if necessary in light of post implementation monitoring, consultation and review.
- 32 Parish Councils have also expressed a keen interest in being involved in some form of consultation exercise with the public, possibly via parish newsletter or an event similar to the original "Have Your Say Days", to gain local feedback on implemented measures.

B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

- 33 Do Nothing:- This option would not address the concerns of the public, parish and town councils or address the aims of the Local Transport Plan or the Chilterns Conservation Boards Management Plan to reduce the speed of vehicles and improve road safety. However it would negate the need for additional and intrusive speed limit signage in the Chilterns AONB. However this inaction would be welcomed by those who have objections to the proposed limits and need for additional signage.
- 34 At the other extreme an area wide (blanket) speed limit could be introduced with a base line of a 40mph limit across the entire area, and addressing villages with 30mph and 20mph speed limits on Quiet Lanes. This option would to some degree be in line with the theme of the document "Development of a Rural Road Hierarchy for Speed Management" which stems from a commitment by the Government to consider the development of a rural road hierarchy for speed management purposes. Published by the Department for Transport on 21st January 2002.
- 35 Whilst adopting this approach would gain some level of support, this option is unlikely to gain the support of the Police and therefore enforcement would be unlikely. Under current regulations this option would require significant amounts signage at the speed limit change points on lowly trafficked rural roads and the application of on carriageway roundels on all roads. At the lower limit of 20mph other physical measures may be required. The impact of which is unlikely to be popular with many residents, parish and town councils and the Chilterns Conservation Board.
- 36 The Government Document "Development of a Rural Road Hierarchy for Speed Management" set out that: "Balance is a key word in this process, and that there is a requirement to balance the needs of all road users. This includes the needs of local residents, pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians with the needs of those wishing to travel as through traffic". It has been acknowledged by government that speed and speed limits are an emotive subject and with this background achieving a balanced approach that is agreeable to all is difficult, if not impossible.

- 37 The proposed speed limits in this report along with the approach to further post implementation monitoring, consultation and review will allow for changes to be made should they prove to be necessary and would appear to offer the most balanced approach on a subject on which, many people have strong and often conflicting views.

C. Resource implications

- 38 The estimated legal cost of processing the Traffic Regulation Order to completion is £11,490 (of this total approximately £5,745 has already been spent during on legal and advertising fees) providing the signing and lining necessary to give lawful effect to these restrictions is estimated at £39,000. These costs will be met from the Local Transport Plan allocated capital budget of £100,000 for the Central Chilterns scheme for 2005/2006.
- 39 Future traffic speed monitoring and public consultation is a one off cost after a year which is anticipated to be in the region of £6,000.
- 40 It is anticipated that these measures shall be implemented during July/August 2005 subject to the approval of this report.
- 41 It should be borne in mind that in the longer term there will be a modest ongoing maintenance cost associated with these measures, and it is anticipated that this will be met by the lining and signing budget of the Area Traffic Teams (North & South).

D. Legal implications

- 42 The Head of Legal and Democratic Services will be required to arrange for the Traffic Regulation Order to be sealed and brought into operation.

E. Property implications

- 43 No known implications.

F. Other implications/issues

- 44 If implemented it is anticipated that the proposed speed limits will have the effect of reducing traffic speeds, which in turn reduces collision risk and may encourage more vulnerable road users to walk, cycle and horse ride for local journeys and leisure. The proposed speed limits and the changes to directional signing may also lead to a small reduction in traffic volumes using the area as a through route.

G. Feedback from consultation and Local Member views

- 45 The comments received from the consultation are detailed in the attached appendices. From a total of 72 formal consultees contacted by letter, 9 responses were received. The public consultation generated 27 responses as

a result of newspaper advertisement, street notices and the locally distributed project newsletter. The comments have been reviewed and are listed in appendix A and B, as many of the responses included a number of reasons either in support or in rejection of the proposals, these comments have been précised.

46 In reviewing the comments of those who responded to the formal and public consultation the majority are in general support of lower speed limits, however a number have made comments mainly about the proposed location of the speed limit, expressed the wish to see lower speed limits than those proposed or expressed the view that they would like to see more Police enforcement, if the speed limits are introduced.

47 It should be noted that a number of respondents do not support the introduction of the speed limits, for various reasons given in their response to the consultation. Examples of these include:-

- Roads in the area have a low collision record
- Lower limits will cause bunching of traffic and increase the number of vehicles overtaking slower vehicles
- The introduction of limits on some roads could only serve to criminalise drivers.

48 The full summary of are contained within Appendix A and B

49 As an example of the consultation issues, a resident of Heath End has expressed concern that no lower speed limit is proposed for this settlement, with the result that further traffic monitoring has been undertaken at Heath End since the consultation. This showed that the 85%ile speed of traffic was less than 22mph and that there was a mean average of 132 vehicles passing through the settlement in any 24hr period. The road layout and the monitoring would suggest that slow speeds are self-enforcing. As the number of properties is low over a short section of road, and that there has been no recorded collisions it is proposed that no limit be introduced. It is suggested in this report that consideration be given to signs highlighting to drivers the settlement of Heath End, this could also contain text advising drivers to take extra care through the settlement.

H. Communication issues

50 Once this decision has been made all formal consultees and those who responded to the public consultation will be contacted by letter informing them of the outcome, and making them aware that once implemented we intend to carry out post implementation monitoring, consultation and review which will be reported back to the Cabinet Member for Transportation consideration.

I. Progress Monitoring

51 In order to establish the full effects and outcomes of the actions undertaken by the project following the decision it is proposed that:

- Post implementation monitoring of speed and traffic flows be carried out
- Following implementation, further public consultation be undertaken in partnership with parish councils and The Chilterns Conservation Board to establish the public's perceived effects of the implemented measures and other work undertaken by the project.

52 The actions arising from the decision and its outcomes meet with the primary function of the Traffic Management Systems and Parking team. The intended outcome is within the Business Plan for The Highways Network Management Service of "Ensuring the most appropriate use of the highway network to maintain safety, improve amenity and manage congestion to maximise the efficiency of the network". These actions will also contribute to the performance monitoring by increasing the number of rural communities with speed limits and contribute to an increase in the level of cycle use in the Chilterns AONB.

J. Review

53 A review will be undertaken following traffic monitoring and public consultation within a Period of between six months and 1 year from implementation, the results of this will be reported to the Cabinet Member for Transportation for information and review.

Background Papers

BP 1 Maps of project area showing hierarchy and proposed speed limit locations. As presented in Project Newsletter Spring and Autumn 2002 and Summer 2004

BP 2 Copy of speed limit schedules and area wide Speed limit plan as consulted upon July / August 2004

BP 3 Area Wide speed limit and detailed plans with amendments following consultation. (as proposed for implementation)

BP 4 Department for Transport Authorisation for on carriageway repeater speed limit roundels without the need for upright signage.

BP 5 General supporting information

- Project Newsletters for information Spring 2002 / Autumn2002 / Summer 2004
- Safer road in the Chilterns Leaflet
- Car Sticker to increase public awareness and encourage slower speeds
- Poster prepared by local school children to encourage slower speeds within the pilot area.
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The background papers are available for inspection please contact the contact officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

Bibliography

- Local Transport Plan for Buckinghamshire 2001-2006 (http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/transport_plan/index.stm) Available from Public Libraries and Transportation, County Hall, Aylesbury
- Chilterns Conservation Board, Management Plan The Framework for Action 2002-2007 (http://www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation/management_plan.html) Available from Public Libraries and Transportation, County Hall, Aylesbury
- Central Chilterns Traffic Management Project Phase1 Study Report Hyder August 1999 (available from Traffic Management and Parking Team, 10th Floor County Hall Aylesbury tel 01296 382013)
- Central Chilterns Traffic Management Project report on “Have Your Say Day Events” report by May 2002 (available from Traffic Management and Parking Team, 10th Floor County Hall Aylesbury tel 01296 382013)
- Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/04 “Village Speed Limits” Traffic Advisory Unit Department for Transport January 2004 (<http://www.dft.gov.uk> see Site Index and Traffic Advisory Leaflets)
- Development of a Rural Road Hierarchy for Speed Management Department for Transport Published: 21 January 2002 (see http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/page/dft_rdsafety_504681.hcsp)
- Buckinghamshire Speed Management Strategy (http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/traffic_management/speed_man_strategy.htm)

- Environmental guidelines for the Management of Roads in the Chilterns, Chilterns Conference 1997 (<http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/chiltern/chilt01.htm>)
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Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on Friday 8 July 2005. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 383610), Fax (to 01296 382538), or e-mail to cabinet@buckscc.gov.uk

CABINET MEMBER REPORT NO.

DECISION TAKEN:

I have taken into account any representations received concerning the contents of this report.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

DECISION NOT TAKEN:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Reason: _____

For Reference

Professional advice supporting the decision was provided by the following Officers

Name	Signed	Date
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