



North West Chilterns Community Board

Title:	A40 Studley Green Petition
Date:	30 September 2020
Author:	Louise McCann – TfB Contract Director
Contact officer:	Sue Brown – Network Safety Team Leader
Local members affected:	D Hayday, I McEnnis, N Teesdale, Z Ahmed, S Adoh, S Saddique, J Teesdale, M Davy, B Pearce

Summary

On 1 June 2020 a double fatal collision occurred on the A40 at Dashwood Hill.

As a result of this tragic incident a petition was received on 10 July 2020 asking:

‘The council to reduce the speed limit from national speed limit (60mph) to 40mph, extending the existing 40mph limit through Studley Green. There has been a recent double road traffic fatality and numerous others accidents on this particular stretch of road’

Transport for Buckinghamshire attended the location of the collision with the Thames Valley Police Traffic Management Officer, as is usual when any fatal collision that occurs on the Buckinghamshire road network. The purpose of this site visit was to determine if any highway factors were contributory to the collision. At this stage of the police investigation there are not considered to be any highway factors or defects that contributed to the collision.

The circumstances surrounding the collision are subject to a police investigation and as a result the Council is not aware of any further details.

Recommendation

- The speed limit along Oxford Road between West Wycombe and Studley Green is reduced to 50 mph (if supported at public consultation).
- Cyclist warning signs are installed at Dashwood Hill
- A feasibility into installing an on road advisory cycle lane for west bound cyclists be undertaken
- The existing narrow footway along Dashwood Hill be permanently closed

Background information:

DfT Road Safety Fund

In 2018 Buckinghamshire received funds from DfT to improve a 9.2km section of the A40, between Stokenchurch (junction M40) and West Wycombe (junction with A4010) which had been identified by them as one of the top 50 highest risk A routes in England with 10 killed or seriously injured (KSI) crashes in the 3 year period 2012-14, based on research by the Road Safety Foundation.

As a result of this funding safety improvements were installed along the route during 2018/19. These improvements included lining and signing, red high-friction surfacing, pedestrian improvements at the Pedestal roundabout and High Street, junction improvements at Chipps Hill and Marlow Road and a new footway on Old Dashwood Hill . A 40 mph speed limit was installed on Oxford Road to reduce the speed of traffic approaching the junction with Ibstone Road. However, no other speed limits were proposed as a result of this scheme.

Specifically on Dashwood Hill, solar studs were installed in the centre and along the edge of the carriageway, the lining was refreshed and the vegetation was cut back to improve visibility out of Chipps Hill and the vegetation along the footway was cut back.

Speed Limits

When implementing or reviewing speed limits local authorities must 'have regard' to guidance issued by the Department of Transport. This is to ensure that speed limits across the country are consistent and respected by road users. The national speed limit on single carriageway rural roads such as the A40 Oxford Road between West Wycombe and Studley Green is 60 mph.

With regards to lowering speed limits the guidance states that "Inappropriate speed, at levels below the legal limit but above those appropriate for the road at the time (for example, because of the weather conditions or because vulnerable road users are present), is a particular problem for rural roads" and continues: Speed limit changes are therefore unlikely to fully address this problem and should therefore be considered only as one part of rural safety management. Where collision and casualty rates are high, traffic authorities should first seek to understand the particular types of crashes taking place and their causes, to allow them to choose effective solutions to reduce the risk".

The county wide speed limit review which was carried out in 2007 enabled the 40 mph speed limit at Studley Green to be installed. There was also a proposal to reduce the A40 between West Wycombe and Studley Green from the national speed limit to 50 mph. However, this was not supported at public consultation and was therefore not progressed. Therefore, whilst this section of road does not meet the DfT criteria for a 40mph it may be appropriate to re-consider installing a 50 mph speed limit

Since the conclusion of the speed limit review, the Council no longer has direct funds for reducing speed limits. The exception to this is if it is proposed as part of a casualty reduction scheme.

Speed data

Speed Data was obtained at five locations along the A40 between 7th August 2020 and 13th August 2020. The mean average speed along the whole route travelling East was 51mph and 51.4mph travelling West.

A plan of locations can be found at Appendix B.

Collisions and Casualties

TfB's method of identifying sites for potential casualty reductions measures involves reviewing injury collisions which have occurred within the last 5 year period, in order to identify those sites and routes that have the highest collision rate and casualty severity. We look at routes across the whole of the county and rank these routes by the rate of collisions per KM that have resulted in a road user being killed or seriously Injured (KSI rate per KM).

We also carry out research to identify collision sites that have a history of 5 or more collisions (of any severity) within a 50m radius within the last 5 years. There are currently over 160 sites meeting this criterion across Buckinghamshire. There are no sites that currently meet these criteria along the length of road in question.

This policy has been adopted so that the detailed analysis of casualty data provided by Thames Valley Police can be closely investigated to ensure that safety schemes are designed to address the particular factors attributed to the recorded collisions.

On the section of A40 likely to be of most concern, as it generated this petition, is likely to be the section between the junction with Chipp's Hill to Beacons Bottom, where there have been a total of five injury collisions in the last 5 years 01/07/2015 to 30/06/2020.

Three of those collisions involved a pedal cyclist (1 x fatal, 1 x serious, 1 x slight), this includes the double fatal which occurred in June 2020. The location of the pedal cyclist collisions are spread throughout this section of road, with two occurring on the section which runs adjacent to Old Dashwood Hill and the third closer to the top of the hill near Beacons Bottom.

Consequently it may be appropriate to concentrate any potential remedial measures on protecting cyclists

Following investigations and site visits there are a number of options for potential safety improvement measures include:

- **Reducing the speed limit from West Wycombe to Studley Green to 50 mph**
- **Install cyclists warning signs on both approaches to Dashwood Hill**
- **Encouraging cyclists to use Old Dashwood Hill.**

The width of the carriageway at Dashwood Hill is 7m with an additional 1.1m of footway which is too narrow to install a dedicated cycle lane. One option is to encourage cyclists to use Old

Dashwood Hill instead of the main A40. This is more appropriate for cyclists travelling downhill from west to east. However, cyclists intending to travel uphill would need to cross the A40 to access old Dashwood Hill and then cross back again at the top of the hill to rejoin the A40 and there are no suitable crossing points. Therefore a feasibility study would need to be undertaken.

- **Install a west bound on road advisory cycle lane.** This will act as a visual reminder to drivers that cyclists may be present and also offer a degree of protection to riders travelling uphill. A feasibility study would need to be carried out to determine if this is achievable given the available road width. East bound cyclists will be directed along Old Dashwood Hill.
- **Permanent closure of footway at Dashwood Hill.** The existing footway is very narrow and in poor condition. Pedestrians are currently directed to use a route along Old Dashwood Hill where a new footway has been constructed (part way).
- **Remove the tree canopy on Dashwood Hill.** This would eliminate the shading effect but conversely it may also increase dazzle from the sun. Again this would be subject to feasibility.

Resource implications

The recommendations would be sourced from the TfB Network Safety Casualty Reduction budget 2021/22. Any further proposals or feasibility studies that arise will need to be funded locally via Parish Council/Community Board.

Legal implications

A public consultation would be required to be undertaken if the speed limit education was to be progressed.

Other implications/issues

None identified.

Feedback from consultation, Community Boards and Local Member views (if relevant)

Cllr Darren Hayday supports the petition.

Background Papers

Appendix A: Link to DfT Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-local-speed-limits>

Appendix B: Speed data
