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# **Individual Decision**

The attached report will be taken as an Individual Portfolio Member Decision on:

# Thursday, 20 September, 2012

Ref:	Title	Portfolio Member	Page No.
ID2470(a)	A4 Padworth - Proposed 50mph Speed Limit	Councillor Graham Jones	1 - 16



# Agenda Item 1.

# Individual Executive Member Decision

Title of Report:	A4 Padworth - Proposed 50mph Speed Limit	
Report to be considered by:	ndividual Executive Member Decision	
Date on which Decision is to be taken:	20 September 2012	
Forward Plan Ref:	ID 2470 (A)	
Purpose of Report:	To inform the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT & Customer Services of the revised proposal to introduce a 50mph speed limit following the meeting of OSMC.	
Recommended Action:	That the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT & Customer Services resolves to approve the recommendations as set out in Section 4 of this report.	
Reason for decision to be taken: Other options considered:	To enable the proposed speed limit to be introduced. N/A	
Key background documentation:	<ul> <li>Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission - 29 May 2012.</li> <li>Individual Decision (ID 2470) dated 26 April 2012.</li> <li>Email objection - 3rd February 2012.</li> <li>Minutes of the Speed Limit Review - 20th December 2010 and 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012.</li> <li>Individual Decision (ID 2144) – Speed Limit Review December 2010.</li> <li>Plan No. SLR/10/04/002B</li> </ul>	

Portfolio Member Details		
Name & Telephone No.:         Councillor Keith Chopping - (0118) 983 2057		
E-mail Address: kchopping@westberks.gov.uk		
Contact Officer Details		
Name:	Andrew Garratt	

Job Title: Prin	cipal Traffic & Road Safety Engineer
<b>Tel. No.:</b> 016	35 519491
E-mail Address: aga	ratt@westberks.gov.uk

#### Implications

Policy:	The consultation is in accordance with the Council's Consultation procedures.
Financial:	The introduction of the speed limit will be funded from the approved Capital Programme.
Personnel:	None arising from this report.
Legal/Procurement:	The Sealing of the Traffic Regulation Order will be undertaken by Legal Services.
Environmental:	A reduced speed limit will make a more pleasant and safer envirnoment for local residents.
Property:	None arising from this report.
Risk Management:	None arising from this report.
Equalities Impact Assessment:	EIA Stage 1 attached as Appendix A.

### Consultation Responses

#### Members:

Leader of Council:	Councillor Graham Jones To date no response has been received, however any comments will be verbally reported at the Individual Decision meeting.
Overview & Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman:	Councillor Brian Bedwell - Thank you for your amendments which I am pleased to accept.
Ward Members:	Councillor Irene Neill (Aldermaston Ward) - I still fully support the recommendation of the Speed Limit Task Group re this reduction of the speed limit.
	With regards to the OSMC minutes and the reasons for call in I would refer to number 8 which says that the incident involving an elderly man being pushed across the road was wholly exceptional I would point out that this elderly couple lived in one of the properties on the south side of the A4 and used the public bus service therefore this was probably not the only time they had crossed the road after getting off the bus on the south side of the road - sadly the incident meant it was the last time for this particular gentleman. I am not aware of any other elderly residents in wheel chairs but I am pretty sure there are parents using the bus service who will have to push their child across in a buggy. This new residential development (and further developments with planning permission) means that there will be more people needing to cross the road as the likeliehood is that some of these residents will not have their own transport. The local residents are also very unhappy that the lowering of the speed limit which they had anticipated may not now

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	of road lowerin and tha in the f than do Counci is actua am in s limit of Mollie I been re reporte	be happening and I support their des of road as safe as possible - I add the lowering of the speed limit may not re and that we may have to look at a sa- in the future, however it is better to a than do nothing. Councillor Keith Chopping (Beenhare is actually partly in my Ward and par- am in support of Beenham Parish Co- limit of 50 mph being introduced on Mollie Lock (Padworth Ward) - To da been received, however any comme reported at the Individual Decision m Councillor Geoff Mayes (Padworth V

If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:	
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or	$\square$
associated Task Groups within preceding six months	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	
Report is to note only	

#### **Supporting Information**

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 In August 2006 the Department for Transport (DfT) published Circular 01/2006 Setting Local Speed Limits, which superseded the guidance, set in 1993. As part of the new guidance all traffic authorities had to review the speed limits on all of their A and B classified roads in accordance with the new guidance.
- 1.2 The length of the A4 between the A340 roundabout at Aldermaston and the A340 roundabout at Theale was considered by the Speed Limit Review task group at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2010 when further traffic data was requested before making a recommendation. This length of A4 together with the additional data was reconsidered at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010 when it was recommended that the length of A4 between a point to the west of the A340 Aldermaston roundabout and east of its junction to Beenham be reduced to 50mph. This was approved by Individual Decision (ref ID 2144) on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011.
- 1.3 During the statutory consultation and advertisement of the speed limit proposal, which was undertaken between 12<sup>th</sup> January and 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012, one objection was received from a resident of Sulham. This objection was considered by Individual Decision (ID 2470) on 26 April 2012 when it was agreed to introduce the 50mph as advertised.

#### 2. Call in of Individual Decision.

- 2.1 The Decision was then 'called in' on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012 by five members (Councillors Richard Crumly, Dominic Boeck, Sheila Ellison, Roger Croft and John Horton) citing:
  - It will be unenforceable.
  - This is a main transport route and any reduction will limit the amount of throughput the channel can handle.
  - The reduction may have an adverse effect on commuters and other users getting to and from the M4.
  - The reduction may cause traffic to migrate elsewhere to less suitable roads.
  - The accident record does not justify a speed limit reduction.
  - Any perceived hazard at the junction of the dual carriageway with the Beenham Road can be curtailed by ensuring the traffic exiting Beenham can only turn left.
  - The accident record on this stretch of road is good.
  - There have been two accidents reported recently, neither of which should be used as a justification for reducing the speed limit and one of them was a wholly exceptional incident where an elderly man was being pushed across the road in a wheelchair.
  - We have driven to and fro along the road on many occasions and never seen a pedestrian seeking to cross at any time.
  - The stretch of dual carriageway, in particular, is quite inappropriate for a limit as low as 50 mph. The problem on our roads at the present time is congestion, not the speed of traffic. In fact, the high element of congestion tends to reduce the speed of traffic naturally.

2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) at its meeting on 29 May 2012 considered the reasons for the call in of the Individual Decision. An extract of the OSMC minutes relating to the speed limit are shown as Appendix B.

#### 3. Conclusion

- 3.1 When assessing a speed limit the Speed Limit Task Group consider a number of factors which include government guidance on setting speed limits, the recorded injury accident record, results of traffic surveys, public anxiety, the nature and character of the road. This section of the A4 at Padworth has been considered by the speed limit task group on two occasions when it was agreed that a 50mph speed limit was appropriate.
- 3.2 In the latest three year period, to the end of April 2012 there had been 10 recorded injury accidents within the length of the proposed speed limit, which have resulted in 1 fatal, 3 serious and 6 slight accidents.
- 3.3 The results of traffic surveys undertaken during May 2010 in the vicinity of Padworth Close (located at the western end of the dual carriageway) showed that the mean speed of westbound traffic was 41mph with an 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed of 47mph.
- 3.4 Circular 1/2006 Setting Local Speed Limits indicates that when assessing a 50mph speed limit on an A or B classified road the accident rate should be above the threshold of 35 injury accidents per 100 million vehicle kilometres and/or the mean speed already below 50mph. The accident rate is 38.7 injury accidents per 100 million vehicle kilometres, which is above the specified threshold and mean vehicle speeds are below 50mph.
- 3.5 Given the recorded injury accident record, the results of the traffic surveys and the recommendation of the speed limit task group it is considered that a 50mph speed limit is appropriate should be introduced. However given the comments at the OSMC and the concerns about the location of the start of the 50mph speed limit at the eastern end, it is recommended that the start of the 50mph be located approximately 140 metres to the west of its advertised location, thus reducing the extent of the new speed limit. This will ensure that the junction to Beenham and the entrances to the garage and residential properties are within the lower speed limit. This location is shown on Plan No SLR/10/04/002B.
- 3.6 The reasons for the call in and the revised proposals were considered by the Speed Limit Task Group at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012. The task group fully supported the revised proposal for introducing the 50mph speed limit.

#### 4. Recommendations

4.1 That the proposed speed limit is introduced with the start of the speed limit at the eastern end being located approximately 140 metres to the west of its advertised location as shown on Plan No SLR/10/04/002B (Appendix C).

#### Appendices

Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment – Stage 1 Appendix B – Extract of the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission held on 29 May 2012 when this item was discussed Appendix C – Plan No SLR/10/04/002B

## **Equality Impact Assessment – Stage One**

Name of item being assessed:	A4 Padworth – Proposed 50mph Speed Limit.
Version and release date of item (if applicable):	5 July 2012
Owner of item being assessed:	Andrew Garratt, Principal Traffic & Road Safety Engineer
Name of assessor:	Andrew Garratt
Date of assessment:	5 July 2012

#### 1. What are the main aims of the item?

The main aim of this item is to introduce a 50mph limit on the A4 through Padworth. This is in accordance with DfT Circular 01/2006 requesting that all authorities review the speed limits on all A and B class roads and seeks to improve road safety at this location.

# 2. Note which groups may be affected by the item, consider how they may be affected and what sources of information have been used to determine this. (Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation)

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this.
Local Residents	Improved road safety	Lower vehicle speeds in built up area.
Elderly Pedestrians	Improved road safety	Slower speeds will make safer environment.
Person with less mobility	Will feel safer when crossing the road.	Slower speeds will make safer environment.
Child pedestrians	Improved road safety	Slower vehicle speeds will give motorists more time to react to an unexpected situation.

#### Further comments relating to the item: N/a

3.	Result (please tick by double-clicking on relevant box and click on 'checked')
	High Relevance - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
	Medium Relevance - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
	Low Relevance - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
	No Relevance - This does not need to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment

For items requiring a Stage 2 equality impact assessment, begin the planning of this now, referring to the equality impact assessment guidance and Stage 2 template.

4. Identify next steps as appropriate:	
Stage Two required	
Owner of Stage Two assessment:	
Timescale for Stage Two assessment:	
Stage Two not required:	Not required

Name: Andrew Garratt

Date: 5 July 2012

# **EXTRACT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 29 MAY 2012

**Councillors Present**: Jeff Beck (Substitute) (In place of Brian Bedwell), Dominic Boeck, Jeff Brooks (Vice-Chairman), Virginia von Celsing, Marcus Franks, Dave Goff, Mike Johnston, David Rendel, Tony Vickers, Quentin Webb and Emma Webster

**Also Present:** John Ashworth (Corporate Director - Environment), Steve Broughton (Head of Culture & Environmental Protection), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Andrew Garratt (Principal Engineer (Traffic Management and Road Safety)), Chris Jones (Arts and Leisure Services Manager), Councillor David Betts (Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT & Corporate Services, Customer Services), Councillor Hilary Cole (Countryside, Environmental Protection, "Cleaner Greener", Culture), Councillor Richard Crumly, Councillor Carol Jackson-Doerge, David Lowe (Scrutiny & Partnerships Manager), Councillor Gwen Mason and Elaine Walker (Principal Policy Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Brian Bedwell

Councillor(s) Absent: Councillor David Holtby

#### PART I

#### 3. Item Called-In following an Individual Decision: A4 Bath Road, Padworth - proposed 50mph speed limit

The Commission considered a report concerning the Call In Item ID2470 – A4 Bath Road, Padworth – proposed 50mph speed limit which was approved by Individual Decision on 26 April 2012.

Councillor Brooks noted that although Councillor Dominic Boeck had signed the Call In, his ability to debate the issue as a member of the Commission had not been compromised.

#### (Note: 6:40pm - Councillor Virginia von Celsing joined the meeting)

Andrew Garratt summarised the background to this item, informing the Commission that in 2006 the national guidance for setting speed limits was altered. As a result, the Council undertook a review of the speed limits on all 'A' and 'B' roads, and concluded that this section of the A4 in Padworth should be considered as a candidate for a reduced speed limit. The proposal was considered by the Speed Limit Task Group consisting of two Officers, two Councillors and the Police, who requested further information before making their recommendation. Additional surveys were carried out along the section of road, and in December 2010, the Task Group recommended that a 50mph speed limit be set for the single carriageway section. During the consultation period, one objection was received.

Councillor David Betts clarified that several sections of the A4 had been reviewed by the Task Group, but that only this section had been identified for a reduction in the speed limit. He further advised that Beenham Parish Council had contacted him to express their support for the new speed limit.

In response to questions received from the Commission, Andrew Garratt was able to clarify that:

- There were a number of reasons for the recommendation to have been put forward. These included the changes to national guidelines, the number of accidents, the current mean speed of vehicles, and the nature of the development and junctions along the stretch of road;
- There were a number of businesses and residential developments in this location with traffic entering and exiting those sites;
- Over the last three years there had been 14 injury accidents, four of which had involved turning movements;
- There had been three survey locations each identifying different mean speeds, the highest of which was 42mph.

Councillor Brooks asked for clarification as to why a speed limit was required when the mean speed limit along the road was lower than the proposed limit. Andrew Garratt explained that the decision was not based solely on the mean speed of vehicles. The number of accidents was also considered and guidance indicated that a visible speed limit would highlight the need for greater caution.

Councillor Vickers asked whether speed had been a contributory factor in the accidents that had occurred. Andrew Garratt responded that it had been a factor in many of them especially where they involved a car moving at low speed when turning or preparing to turn onto or off the road being hit by a car travelling at speed.

The Commission considered the causes of two fatal accidents and were advised that one occurred in a location outside of the proposed speed limit, and one occurred near a roundabout where speed was unlikely to be a factor.

Councillor Rendel questioned whether it was possible to reach speeds exceeding 50mph when travelling eastwards as a roundabout on the section acted as a natural traffic calming measure. Andrew Garratt responded that it was relatively easy in current vehicles. Councillor Rendel was concerned that when travelling westwards from the dual carriageway section of road, that the speed limit would drop significantly from 70mph to 50mph.

Councillor Dave Goff asked if it would be possible to model whether a lower speed limit would have affected the accidents that had occurred. Andrew Garratt replied that it would be difficult to model, however it was known that drivers' reaction time was an important factor in accidents, and reducing the speed allowed more time to react thereby reducing the likelihood of an accident occurring. Andrew Garratt continued that 50mph speed limits had been introduced on the A340 towards Tidmarsh, and the A338 towards Great Shefford, and these had proven to be successful in reducing speed and accidents.

Councillor Mike Johnston expressed the view that as many accidents occurred when turning onto or off the road, a better solution would be to improve access and junctions. He continued that he did not expect there to be a significant improvement to the accident record by reducing the speed limit by 10mph. Andrew Garratt responded that there was evidence that a change of this order was effective.

Councillor Betts reminded the Commission that all of the facts had been carefully examined by the Speed Limit Task Group, and that these individuals were experts who took their role very seriously. The Task Group did not recommend changes to speed limits without good cause.

Councillor Quentin Webb considered that a slower and more constant stream of traffic would make it more difficult to turn onto the A4. Andrew Garratt did not expect this to be a problem and noted that the lower speed limit would make it easier and safer for drivers to match the speed of other traffic.

Councillor Marcus Franks asked how the accident record on this stretch of the A4 compared to the rest of the A4. Andrew Garratt responded that it was worse, with 14 accidents here and 30 in total between the A340 roundabouts. He noted that the A4 had a generally good accident record, but there were a greater number of junctions and turnings along this section than elsewhere. Andrew Garratt informed the Commission of a similar issue at a single junction near Kintbury which had been addressed successfully by the installation of a traffic island, however this would not be suitable in Padworth due to the number of turnings involved.

Councillor Vickers requested further information about the police's view of the proposed speed limit as they had not responded to the consultation. Andrew Garratt confirmed that the police were supportive of the proposed limit and, as part of the Speed Limit Task Group, had approved the recommendation, and that they did not routinely respond to consultations unless they had concerns.

Councillor Goff asked whether any other options had been considered. Andrew Garratt replied that other options would involve significant engineering works with their associated costs and disruption.

Councillor Brooks invited Andrew Garratt to respond to each of the ten reasons put forward for the Call In:

1	It will be unenforceable.	The speed limit would be signed in accordance with the regulations and have a supporting Traffic Regulation Order making it legal. The police would enforce all speed limits and this would be no exception.
2	This is a main transport route and any reduction will limit the amount of throughput the channel can handle.	As the mean speeds were lower than the speed limit, there would be no effect on capacity of the road.
3	The reduction may have an adverse effect on commuters and other users getting to and from the M4.	As there would be little change to the actual speed of road users, there would be no adverse effect on commuters.
4	The reduction may cause traffic to migrate elsewhere to less suitable roads.	Alternative routes would require a lengthy journey through villages such as Beenham and Bucklebury. It was considered unlikely that drivers would select this option to avoid a short stretch of the A4.
5	The accident record does not justify a speed limit reduction.	National guidelines were clear about when the number of accidents justified a certain speed limit. The proposal was in line with these guidelines.

6	Any perceived hazard at the junction of the dual carriageway with the Beenham Road can be curtailed by ensuring the traffic exiting Beenham can only turn left.	Altering the junction with the Beenham Road allowing only left turn out of the junction would result in drivers turning further up the A4 and potentially undertaking a U-turn on the dual carriageway section posing even greater danger than at present.
7	The accident record on this stretch of road is good.	The accident record had been discussed already.
8	There have been two accidents reported recently, neither of which should be used as a justification for reducing the speed limit and one of them was a wholly exceptional incident where an elderly man was being pushed across the road in a wheelchair.	The accident record had been discussed already.
9	We have driven to and fro along the road on many occasions and never seen a pedestrian seeking to cross at any time.	A new residential development has been constructed which will result in a greater number of pedestrians looking to cross the road. The two fatal accidents involved pedestrians.
10	The stretch of dual carriageway, in particular, is quite inappropriate for a limit as low as 50 mph. The problem on our roads at the present time is congestion, not the speed of traffic. In fact, the high element of congestion tends to reduce the speed of traffic naturally.	The proposed speed limit was in line with national guidance

Councillor Richard Crumly was invited to address the Commission and expand on his reasons for calling in the decision. Councillor Crumly advised that he believed:

- The decision was inappropriate and would like the Commission to recommend it be reviewed;
- The speed limit should remain unchanged, and this had been supported by a resident of Sulham who had provided a number of arguments for this;
- The roundabout on the A4 forced drivers to slow down or stop, acting as a natural speed break;
- The road was historically the main road between London and Bristol and was largely a wide, straight road suitable for higher speeds;
- He had never witnessed a pedestrian crossing the road at the point in question;
- That development along the road did not encourage pedestrians to cross, as where there were built up areas, there was nothing opposite;

- Neither of the fatal accidents referred to should be used to justify a speed limit, due to the other factors involved;
- It was inappropriate to reduce the speed limit on the dual carriageway section of road;
- Restricting movement from the junction with Beenham Road to allow left turns only would improve safety, as it had been seen to be effective elsewhere;
- That setting a speed limit in line with the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of mean speeds would be more appropriate as fewer drivers would be penalised, and these would be more serious offenders;

Councillor Crumly clarified his statement that the speed limit would be unenforceable by referring to the fact that the police did not comment on the consultation. In his opinion, he felt they might not have the enthusiasm to patrol the area, and might not have locations in which to set up speed detection vehicles;

Councillor Crumly concluded by asking the Commission not to rely solely on figures, but to use their experience of driving on the road to consider whether the reduced speed limit was required;

Councillor Vickers informed the Commission that he had undertaken an informal consultation on the issue amongst his contacts. The result had indicated overwhelming support for maintaining the existing speed limit.

Councillor Webb asked how emerging traffic would be prevented from turning right onto the A4 and where this could be implemented. Andrew Garratt responded that it would be achieved by installing or extending a central reservation which was an expensive option and would require consultation. Indications were that businesses along the road would object as it would affect their customers. He reminded the Commission that this method would affect turning in to properties as well as out.

Councillor Webster expressed the view that the Speed Limit Task Group had made an informed decision based on facts and their expert knowledge of the subject. Councillor Webster proposed that the Commission endorse the Individual Decision.

Councillor Rendel informed the Commission that although he had originally been in agreement with the decision, the discussion had raised issues which caused him to reconsider. He was particularly concerned about the introduction of a 50mph speed limit at the point that the dual carriageway became single carriageway as drivers would need to slow down in anticipation of the lower limit whilst still on the dual carriageway. He believed that this would be detrimental to drivers whose ability to overtake on this section of dual carriageway would be compromised.

Councillor Brooks concurred with this point, and noted that drivers would not have another opportunity to overtake a slow vehicle, and this might encourage drivers to risk overtaking on a single carriageway section.

Councillor Betts addressed the Commission and stated that he respected the group and would respect any decision reached, however he pointed out that the decision had been viewed by the Speed Limit Task Group twice, and had been through the ID process during which time it had been open to Member comments. Given the information that had been presented to him, he had been satisfied with the recommendation from the Task Group.

Councillor Webb proposed that the Commission recommend the decision be reconsidered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways. This was seconded by Councillor Goff. At the vote this was carried.

**RESOLVED that** the A4 Bath Road, Padworth, Proposed 50mph Speed Limit be referred back to the Portfolio Holder for Highways for reconsideration.

