

## Individual Decision

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<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>40mph Speed limit – A4 Bath Road, Thatcham</b>		
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	<b>Councillor Keith Chopping</b>	<b>on:</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> March 2006</b>
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	ID1126		

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### **Purpose of Report:**

To inform the Executive Member for Planning and Highways of the comments received during the statutory consultation on the proposed extension of the 30mph speed limit on the A4 Bath Road, Thatcham and to seek approval of officer recommendations.

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### **Recommended Action:**

That the Executive Member for Planning and Highways resolves to approve the recommendations as set out in this report.

### **Reason for decision to be taken:**

Extension of the speed limit was considered as part of Speed Limit Review 2005.

### **List of other options considered:**

Not to implement the proposed speed limit.

### **Key background documentation:**

- Criteria for speed limits.
- ID1019 report - Speed Limit Review 2005.
- Responses received during statutory consultation.
- Plan ref SLR-05-07-003.

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### **Contact Officer Details**

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## Supporting Information

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### 1 Background

- 1.1 The junction of the A4 Bath Road (also known as Benham Hill) and Henwick Lane is a traffic signal controlled junction towards the west of Thatcham. West of Henwick Lane the A4 is subject to a 40mph speed limit, whereas to the east it is restricted to 30mph. The signs, which indicate the change in speed limit, are currently located very close to the junction and are difficult for drivers to appreciate due to their attention being focussed on the traffic signals and the need to safely negotiate the junction. Drivers who do not see the signs when approaching from the west may be unaware that they have entered a 30mph speed limit and therefore drive at an inappropriate speed.
- 1.2 As part of the Speed Limit Review for 2005, the Task Group considered a request for a 30mph to be introduced on the A4 between its junctions with Henwick Lane and Lower Way. The Task Group agreed that this should be considered as part of the A4 Study. However it was agreed that the start of the 30mph speed limit at Henwick Lane should be located further west of the junction to improve visibility of the speed limit signs.

### 2 Results of statutory consultation

- 2.1 At the close of the statutory advertisement and consultation a total of three responses were received on the proposal to extend the 30mph speed limit by approximately 60 metres to the west. These responses are detailed below.
- 2.2 A response was received from Thames Valley Police supporting the proposal.
- 2.3 A response was received from Thatcham Town Council objecting to the proposal stating that "In the absence of evidence to support the proposal and in advance of the conclusions of the A4 traffic study, OBJECTION be raised to the proposed Order."
- 2.4 A response was received from a member of Thatcham Town Council, whom wished to make an objection as a private individual. The reasons for the objection include; extending the speed limit is not appropriate for the character of the road, there is a lack of evidence for the need to lower the speed limit and that this should be looked at as part of the wider A4 corridor study.

### 3 Response to the comments received during the statutory consultation

- 3.1 As part of the statutory advertisement and consultation procedure a statement of reasons is included within the advertised Notice and the draft Traffic Regulation Order. The proposal and statement of reasons within the Notice state "This order is necessary to improve safety at the junction of the A4 Bath Road (known locally as Benham Hill) and Henwick Lane by extending the existing 30 mph speed limit by approximately 60 metres and reducing the length of the existing 40 mph limit accordingly."
- 3.2 Should any person require further information about the proposal there is also contact name and telephone number of an officer in the Highways and Engineering Service Unit within the Notice.
- 3.3 Thatcham Town Council were advised of the reasons to extend the speed limit when they were sent a copy of the Notice and they did not seek any further clarification on the proposal.
- 3.4 The Task Group considered the implications of the A4 Study when considering the introduction of a 30mph speed limit on the A4 between its junctions with Henwick Lane and Lower Way. It was

considered that extending the 30mph west of Henwick Lane was necessary to improve the visibility and awareness of the speed limit signs without prejudicing the results of the A4 Study.

- 3.5 The character of the A4 west of Henwick Lane complies with the criteria for a 40mph whilst to the east complies with the criteria for a 30mph speed limit. Locating the start of the 30mph speed limit approximately 60 metres west of Henwick lane ensures that the speed limit signs are clearly visible and traffic speeds from the west are appropriate before negotiating the junction with Henwick Lane.

#### **4 Recommendations**

- 4.1 The proposal has been advertised in accordance with statutory procedures and sufficient information has been made available to all consultees as part of the advertisement and consultation process. It is also considered that locating the existing speed limit further west would ensure that drivers have a better chance of complying with the 30mph speed limit.
- 4.2 It is therefore recommended that the proposed 30mph speed limit be extended as advertised and that the respondents to the statutory consultation be informed accordingly.

#### **5 Appendices**

None.

#### **Implications**

<b>Policy:</b>	None arising from this report.
<b>Financial:</b>	The recommendations will be funded from the Council's Capital Programme.
<b>Personnel:</b>	None arising from this report.
<b>Legal:</b>	The speed limit traffic regulation order will require sealing by Legal and Electoral Services.
<b>Environmental:</b>	The proposed changes to the speed limits will improve road safety and therefore provide environmental benefits to local residents
<b>Equalities:</b>	None arising from this report.
<b>Partnering:</b>	None arising from this report.

#### **Consultation Responses**

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##### **Members:**

<b>Leader of Council:</b>	Councillor Graham Jones supports the recommendation as long as the ward members have no objection.
<b>Select Committee Chairmen:</b>	Councillor Quentin Webb has no objections to the proposal and supports Councillor Keith Woodhams with sign reposition if it is safe to do so.
<b>P&amp;L Committee Chairman (where appropriate):</b>	N/A

**Ward Members:** Councillor Keith Woodhams supports the recommendations as moving the speed limit signs further west would enable them to be clearly seen by drivers. No comments have been received from Councillor Jeff Brooks however any comments will be verbally reported at the Individual Decision process.

**Opposition Spokesperson:** Councillor Owen Jeffery is content with the recommended action providing that the ward members have no objection.

**Advisory Members:** N/A

**Local Stakeholders:** Have been consulted as part of the statutory consultation process.

**Officers Consulted:** Mark Cole and Mark Edwards.

**Trade Union:** N/A