

Individual Decision

Title of Report:	50mph Speed limit – A338, M4 to Great Shefford		
Report to be considered by:	Councillor Keith Chopping	on:	30th March 2006
Forward Plan Ref:	ID1135		

Purpose of Report:

To inform the Executive Member for Planning and Highways of the comment received during the statutory consultation on the introduction of a 50mph speed limit on the A338 between its junction with the M4 and Great Shefford and to seek approval of officer recommendations.

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:

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.
- Response received during statutory consultation.
- Plan ref SLR-05-19-002.

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Supporting Information

1 Background

- 1.1 The A338 is the main distributor road to the north of the M4 at Junction 14. The length of the A338 between Junction 14 and the existing 30mph speed limit at Great Shefford, is rural in nature and subject to the national speed limit. The B4000 forms an exaggerated staggered crossroads with the A338 and there is also an access to a farm along this two mile length. The A338 to the south of the M4 and the B4000 are similar in nature to this length of A338 and are both subject to 50mph speed limits.
- 1.2 During the latest three year period there have been nine recorded injury accidents on this length of road, resulting in one fatal, one serious and seven slight injuries being received.
- 1.3 As part of the Speed Limit Review for 2005, the Task Group considered a request to introduce a 50mph speed limit on the A338, between Junction 14 and the existing 30mph speed limit at Great Shefford. It was agreed that this should be considered as part of the A338 Road Safety Study as this would make it consistent with the A338 south of the M4 and the B4000.
- 1.4 The A338 Local Safety Study was published in February 2006 and recommended improvements to signs and road markings along this length of the A338. These improvements are programmed to be introduced during the 2006/07 financial year. The Study also recommended that a 50mph speed limit be introduced between the M4 and Greet Shefford.

2 Results of statutory consultation

- 2.1 At the close of the statutory advertisement and consultation period one response was received objecting to the proposal. The response was from a resident of East Garston whose comments are detailed below.
 - This section of the A338 is not comparable with the section between the M4 and Hungerford. The characteristics of this section of the road are mainly straight in nature and any existing hazards are clearly marked and easily identified.
 - That a reduction in the speed limit would reduce the overtaking opportunities on the lengths where it is safe to do so, which would result in a longer period to complete this manoeuvre and therefore increase the collision hazard.
 - That enforcement by the police would be almost impossible, as there are no safe locations on this length for enforcement to take place.
 - Expressed concerns that DfT guidelines on setting speed limits had not been observed and that setting inappropriate speed limits would reduce the overall effectiveness of the approach as a road safety measure.

3 Response to the comments received during the statutory consultation

- 3.1 It is considered by Officers that the road characteristics are similar in nature to the southern section of the A338 and that, whilst there are straight elements to the road, there are sufficient bends and hazards for a comparison to be made.

- 3.2 Whilst a reduction in the speed limit is likely to reduce traffic speeds, drivers should only carry out overtaking manoeuvres where it is safe to do so.
- 3.3 There is no requirement to provide safe static locations within a speed limit so that enforcement can be undertaken, as the police are able to enforce speed limits using detection equipment located within a travelling police vehicle.
- 3.4 The Task Group considered the nature of the road, speed limit criteria, results of the A338 Safety Study and the injury accident record before agreeing to the recommendation of a 50mph speed limit. DfT guidelines permit Local Authorities to introduce 50mph speed limits in circumstances where a reduction in speed may reduce accident statistics. It is considered that this proposed measure, in conjunction with the recommendations of the A338 Local Safety Study, will improve road safety on this section of road.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 It is recommended that the proposed 50mph speed limit be introduced as advertised and that the respondent to the statutory consultation be informed accordingly.

Appendices

None.

Implications

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

Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council:	Councillor Graham Jones supports the recommendation.
Select Committee Chairmen:	Councillor Quentin Webb supports the proposal, which will have a significant safety benefit.
P&L Committee Chairman (where appropriate):	N/A

Ward Members: Councillor Graham Jones supports the recommendation. No comments have been received from Councillor Gordon Lundie however any comments will be verbally reported at the Individual Decision process.

Opposition Spokesperson: Councillor Owen Jeffery is content with the recommended action providing 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