
Thatcham 20mph Speed Limit

Committee considering report:	Individual Executive Member Decisions
Date of Committee:	31 July 2026
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Stuart Gourley
Report Author:	Andy Alty
Forward Plan Ref:	ID4821

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways of the responses received during the statutory consultation on the introduction of 20mph speed limits in Thatcham and to seek approval of officer recommendations.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways approves the following actions:
- (a) The 20mph proposal for Thatcham is not progressed.
 - (b) Requests for individual speed limit changes to roads within Thatcham are encouraged and supported through the Local Ward members/Town Council.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	None resulting from the recommendations of this report. Should further 20mph requests be received this will be costed and included in future year's Network Management capital programme.
Human Resource:	None.
Legal:	None resulting from the recommendations of this report.
Risk Management:	None.

Property:	None.			
Policy:	None.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
Environmental Impact:		x		
Health Impact:		x		
ICT Impact:		x		None.
Digital Services Impact:		x		None.
Council Strategy Priorities:		x		
Core Business:		x		

Data Impact:		x		None.
Consultation and Engagement:	Local stakeholders and road users were consulted on the proposed speed limit by way of the statutory advertisement of a Traffic Order, including newspaper and publication on the Council's online Consultation and Engagement Hub, in October and November 2025. This report has been circulated to all affected ward members, the shadow portfolio holder and minority group leader.			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways of the outcome of the statutory consultation on the proposed introduction of 20mph speed limits on the majority of residential roads in Thatcham, and to seek approval of the recommended way forward.
- (a) The proposed 20mph scheme for Thatcham is not progressed.
 - (b) A mechanism is developed through which Ward Members and Thatcham Town Council can support future requests for individual speed limit reductions on roads where there is clear local support and the relevant criteria are met.
- 4.2 The consultation related to a proposal to reduce the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph on the majority of residential roads within Thatcham. Roads were selected using agreed criteria, excluding main distributor roads, strategic diversion routes, and roads that were not considered self-compliant for a 20mph limit.
- 4.3 A total of 1,124 responses were received during the statutory consultation, comprising 301 expressions of support, 772 objections, 49 neutral responses and 2 responses with no stated position. The objections have been analysed and the principal themes included concerns about cost, congestion, pollution, enforcement, the absence of supporting measures, and the view that a wider 20mph approach was not justified. Although the roads included in the proposal were assessed as suitable against the agreed criteria, the weight of public objection means it is recommended that the current proposal is not taken forward and that future road-specific requests are instead supported where there is clear local backing.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 One of the five priorities in the Council Strategy 2023-2027 is to 'build thriving communities with a strong local voice'. This priority commits to actions such as to work with local communities and partners to enhance our main towns and large villages. Part of this is to enable 20mph limits for residential streets where residents want them.

- 5.2 Speed limit changes are subject to a statutory consultation process. Where no objections are received, the speed limits are implemented and new signs are erected on-street, but where proposals attract statutory objections, these must be referred to the Executive Member for a decision as to how to proceed.
- 5.3 A statutory consultation on a proposal to introduce lower speed limits on the majority of residential roads in Thatcham was held during October and November 2025. Plans of the proposed speed limit reduction are included in Appendix C.
- 5.4 All existing roads in Thatcham were assessed for inclusion in this proposal using the following criteria as a way to select them.
- (a) If they were a main or local distributor road or part of a strategic network diversion route the road was not included.
 - (b) Roads that were not self-compliant in terms of supporting a 20mph speed limit were not included.
 - (c) Existing 20mph zones and traffic calmed roads were included along with all estate roads especially as a large majority of them had been designed and constructed over the last 20 years to be 20mph compliant.
- 5.5 The Council, as the Local Highway Authority, has powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to set the speed limits on the roads for which it is responsible. In order to be legally enforceable, speed limits require a legal Order to be made under Section 84 of the Act. The process of consulting on and making speed limit orders is set out in the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. The signing of speed limits is governed by the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016, and a Local Highway Authority is not permitted to erect speed limit signs unless a legal Order is in force
- 5.6 1,124 responses were received to the consultation, receiving 772 objections and this report summarises those objections and makes a recommendation to the Executive Member. These objections have been analysed, and common themes have been drawn from them with summary responses provided in the sections below. All individual consultation responses can be found in the excel sheet in Appendix B.

Background and responses to common themes raised in the statutory consultation

- 5.7 The 772 objections to this consultation have been analysed and eight common themes have been drawn out of the responses and comments have been made in response to each theme below.
- a) 209 objections mentioned concerns around the cost of the implementation. Within this theme some mentioned that the money should be spent on road repairs, increased waste collection and other service improvements.

Officer comment: Implementing the 20mph would have been funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy contributed from developments which cannot be used for maintenance activities.

- b) 137 objections raised concerns that lowering the speed to 20mph will lead to an increase in congestion across the network and lead to delays in journey times.

Officer comment: Research indicates that slower speeds encourage a smoother driving style with less stopping and starting which helps traffic to flow. Evidence from other 20mph areas shows that, over the longer term, slower speeds encourage more people to walk and cycle, easing congestion on the road.

- c) 115 objections raised concerns that lowering the speed limit to 20mph will lead to an increase in pollution.

Officer comment: Studies have not proven either a positive or negative effect on the environment: driving at 20mph causes some emissions to rise slightly and some to fall. Reduced acceleration and braking may help to reduce fuel consumption and associated emissions. Some environmental benefit from the change in speed limit is expected from helping to unlock the potential for walking or cycling short distances instead of driving.

- d) 92 objections mentioned that a blanket 20mph is not required and that part time limits outside schools and 20mph speed limits around parks, hospitals, shops and residential streets would be sufficient.

Officer comment: This is not a "blanket" restriction in the same way as was done in Wales, for example. All roads have been considered on their merits in line with an agreed criteria before being included in the proposal, with many of these streets being residential or including the trip generators mentioned in the objections.

- e) 64 objections highlighted that no collision analysis or speed survey data has been provided to support the need for implementation to improve road safety.

Officer comment: It is accepted that the proposed 20mph limits would not lead to a demonstrable reduction in collisions. The reduction in limits is based on policy supported by the administration's wishes to see more 20mph limits, rather than an objective need to improve safety based on historic collision figures.

- f) 62 objections mentioned that the current 30mph limits are not enforced and the police have stated they will not carry out any additional enforcement of 20mph limits.

Officer comment: The Police are supportive of improved road safety across West Berkshire and will continue to work with the Council to achieve this. It is recognised that speed management is an important element of this and the police will continue to enforce speed limits across the road network as appropriate. The new 20mph limit will rely on a shift in driver behaviour which will take time to embed. The Council is working with the Police to raise awareness of the new speed limits through road safety education and prevention activities.

- g) 27 objections raised that no additional measures such as vehicle activated signs, speed cameras or speed humps are being implemented to support the proposed speed reductions.

Officer comment: Large 20mph signs mark the entrance and exit of a 20mph area where the speed limit changes. These signs are supplemented by smaller repeater signs or road markings with speed limit roundels. The signage requirements for enforceable 20mph speed limits are set out in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016. Monitoring will be undertaken and where regular non-compliance with the speed limits is recorded, additional measures may be implemented where appropriate. It should also be noted that many of the roads proposed for a reduction to 20mph already have significant traffic calming in place.

- h) 26 objections mentioned that the council are implementing reduced speed limits so they can fine motorists to raise money.

Officer comment: The Council will not profit financially from the introduction of 20mph speed limits. Speeding fines are submitted to the UK Treasury and any 20mph fines issued by the Police will be treated in exactly the same way.

5.8 The following comments were also made, but these were all mentioned less than 25 times in the objection responses.

- (a) Inconsistencies in speed limits make it difficult for drivers to know what the speeds are, especially as no neighbouring towns and villages are 20mph.

Officer comment: 20mph limits are being considered across West Berkshire as part of a programme of work, there will be consistency when all areas within the council boundary have been looked at. This project aims to promote consistency, for example by reducing traffic calmed roads to 20mph. Most traffic calmed roads in Newbury are already 20mph (e.g. Eastfields, Westfields) but not in Thatcham (e.g. Henwick Lane, Northfield Road).

- (b) That the public do not want or support this and it is not part of any mandate.

Officer comment: The proposal is in line with the adopted Council Strategy.

- (c) More effort should be made on improving pedestrian crossings and stopping people parking on the pavements.

Officer comment: This is not within the scope of this project or consultation but has been noted by officers.

- (d) Would like Tull Way and Floral Way to also be included and reduced to 30mph.

Officer comment: This would have to be dealt with as a separate request.

5.9 The 301 responses supporting this consultation have been analysed and they have been summarised in Appendix D.

Proposals

5.10 In view of the above, and giving consideration to all responses, it is proposed that:

- (a) Although the roads selected for the proposed speed limit change are suitable, appropriate and meet the assessment criteria, the weight of public feeling means that it is recommended this proposal is not taken forward

6 Supporting Information

- 6.1 All consultation responses for all objections, notes of support, neutral positions and blank records can be found in the excel spreadsheet in Appendix D.
- 6.2 All personal information collected through the consultation has been removed from this document in compliance with GDPR.

7 Options for consideration

- 7.1 To proceed as advertised and go against the result of the consultation where overwhelming objection for this proposal was recorded.
- 7.2 To modify the proposal and select individual roads within this proposal that gained support and take them forward. As these roads already had support they wouldn't technically need to reconsult on them. However, due to the number of objections received overall during this consultation it would be advisable to reconsult.
- 7.3 To withdraw the proposal and take no further action on this proposal but develop a mechanism that allows Ward Members and Town Councils to support residents in their request for speed limit reductions on roads where there is a majority support for such a proposal and the road meets the required criteria.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 Having considered the outcome of the statutory consultation, including the significant level of objection to the proposal, it is concluded that the Thatcham 20mph scheme should not be progressed. While the roads identified were considered suitable against the assessment criteria, the weight of public feedback does not support implementation at this time. The recommended approach is therefore to withdraw the current proposal and instead develop a mechanism through which Ward Members and Thatcham Town Council can support future requests for individual speed limit reductions on roads where there is clear local support and the relevant criteria are met.

9 Appendices

Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix B – Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage One

Appendix C – Proposed Speed Limit Plans

Appendix D – Consultation Responses

Background Papers:

N/A

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☒ No: ☐

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 Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees or Task Groups within preceding six months ☐

Item is Urgent Key Decision ☐

Report is to note only ☐

Wards affected: Thatcham West, Thatcham North East, Thatcham Central and Thatcham Colthrop & Crookham.

Officer details:

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West Berkshire Council Equity Impact Assessment

TEMPLATE

March 2023

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Environment, Highways
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Reduction in speed limit on the Public Highway to 20mph for those roads shown in the plans in Appendix C.
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	N/A
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	N/A as the proposal does not bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community.
Completed By	Gareth Dowding
Authorised By	
Date of Assessment	1 st May 2026

Section 2: Detail of proposal

Context / Background Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.	One of the five priorities in the Council Strategy 2023-2027 is to 'build thriving communities with a strong local voice'. This priority commits to actions such as to work with local communities and partners to enhance our main towns and large villages. Part of this is to enable 20mph limits for residential streets where residents want them.
Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	Reduction in speed limit on the Public Highway to 20mph for those roads shown in the plans in Appendix C. Although the roads selected for the proposed speed limit change are suitable, appropriate and meet the assessment criteria, it is recommended that this proposal is not taken forward and the proposal is abandoned and no further work on this is undertaken.
Evidence / Intelligence	Consultation feedback from October and November 2025.

List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	In total, 1,124 responses were received to the consultation. There were 301 expressions of support for the proposals and 772 objections to the proposals. 49 respondents recorded a neutral position and 2 did not select a position.
Alternatives considered / rejected Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.	To proceed as advertised and go against the result of the consultation where overwhelming objection for this proposal was recorded. To modify the proposal and select individual roads within this proposal that gained support and take them forward.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	☒	☐	☐				
Disability	☒	☐	☐				
Gender Reassignment	☒	☐	☐				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	☒	☐	☐				
Pregnancy & Maternity	☒	☐	☐				
Race	☒	☐	☐				
Sex	☒	☐	☐				
Sexual Orientation	☒	☐	☐				
Religion or Belief	☒	☐	☐				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	☒	☐	☐				
Areas of deprivation	☒	☐	☐				
Displaced communities	☒	☐	☐				
Care experienced people	☒	☐	☐				
The Armed Forces Community	☒	☐	☐				

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	1 st May 2026
Person Responsible for Review	Gareth Dowding
Authorised By	

Please now forward this completed form to Pamela Voss, Equality and Diversity Officer (pamela.voss@westberks.gov.uk), for publication on the WBC website.

Appendix B

Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage One

The General Data Protection Regulations require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for certain projects that have a significant impact on the rights of data subjects.

Should you require additional guidance in completing this assessment, please refer to the Information Management Officer via dp@westberks.gov.uk

Directorate:	Environment
Service:	Highways
Team:	Traffic & Road Safety
Lead Officer:	Gareth Dowding
Title of Project/System:	Thatcham 20mph speed limit proposal
Date of Assessment:	1 st May 2026

Do you need to do a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)?

	Yes	No
Will you be processing SENSITIVE or “special category” personal data? <i>Note – sensitive personal data is described as “data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person’s sex life or sexual orientation”</i>	☐	☒
Will you be processing data on a large scale? <i>Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both</i>	☐	☒
Will your project or system have a “social media” dimension? <i>Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?</i>	☐	☒
Will any decisions be automated? <i>Note – does your system or process involve circumstances where an individual’s input is “scored” or assessed without intervention/review/checking by a human being? Will there be any “profiling” of data subjects?</i>	☐	☒

	Yes	No
Will your project/system involve CCTV or monitoring of an area accessible to the public?	☐	☒
Will you be using the data you collect to match or cross-reference against another existing set of data?	☐	☒
Will you be using any novel, or technologically advanced systems or processes?	☐	☒
Note – this could include biometrics, “internet of things” connectivity or anything that is currently not widely utilised		

If you answer “Yes” to any of the above, you will probably need to complete [Data Protection Impact Assessment - Stage Two](#). If you are unsure, please consult with the Information Management Officer before proceeding.

