
Hermitage and Cold Ash 20mph Speed Limit

Committee considering report:	Individual Executive Member Decisions
Date of Committee:	14 August 2026
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Stuart Gourley
Report Author:	Andy Alty
Forward Plan Ref:	ID 4822

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 to the majority of roads within Ashmore Green, Hermitage, Cold Ash, Bucklebury, Upper Bucklebury and Chapel Row, with 30mph and 40mph limits also being introduced to ensure speed limits are consistent throughout the settlements 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 Ashmore Green is not progressed and the scheme is abandoned.
 - (b) The 20mph proposal for Hermitage is not progressed and the scheme is abandoned.
 - (c) The 20mph proposal for Cold Ash is not progressed and the scheme is abandoned.
 - (d) The 20mph proposal for Bucklebury, Upper Bucklebury and Chapel Row is not progressed and the scheme is abandoned.
 - (e) The 30mph and 40mph proposals in some of the settlements is not progressed and the scheme is abandoned.
 - (f) 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:	Should the proposed speed limit change be implemented, the cost would be approximately £30,000.00. The scheme would be funded from an existing capital cost centre dedicated to speed limit changes as part of the 2026-27 Network Management Works Programme.			
Human Resource:	None.			
Legal:	If the speed limit is implemented, the Council will need to exercise its powers to make an Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. This Order would need to be sealed by Legal Services, however, before making the Orders the Council, as Highways Authority, must consider all objections made and which have not been withdrawn. All objections must be considered with an open mind and once assessed should be formally accepted or rejected. All objectors must be notified in writing of the decision on whether (a) the Orders are to be made as advertised, (b) are to be modified or (c) are to be abandoned. In circumstances where any substantial modifications are proposed to the Orders, the Council is required to inform those likely to be affected by such modifications and give the opportunity to make representations which must again be considered.			
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		It is unlikely that changing a speed limit will impact on inequality.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		It is unlikely that these proposed speed limit changes will impact on the environment, given that they apply to such a small proportion of the highway network. If the changes result in a change to actual vehicle speeds, there may be a change in vehicle emissions and road noise, but any changes are likely to be negligible, and it is considered disproportionate to carry out a detailed quantitative assessment.
Environmental Impact:		x		Lower speed limits and an associated perception of improvements in road safety may indirectly encourage an increase in active travel and an accompanying health benefit. However, the effect is likely to be negligible and it is considered disproportionate to carry out a detailed quantitative assessment.
Health Impact:		x		Lower speeds may encourage a greater use of active travel modes (walking and cycling).
ICT Impact:		x		None.
Digital Services Impact:		x		None.
Council Strategy Priorities:	x			This proposal is relevant to Council Strategy Priority no. 5, Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice, which seeks to enable 20mph speed limits for residential streets where residents want them.

Core Business:		x		Although contributing to the above Council Strategy Priority and the links to wider social and environmental objectives, the delivery of this type of project is not in itself a statutory service.
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 November and December 2025 and January 2026 This report has been circulated to all affected ward members, the shadow portfolio holder and minority group leader. Any further comments received prior to the date of the Individual Decision will be reported verbally.			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 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 the speed limit changes advertised as part of various speed limit reductions being implemented across West Berkshire and to seek approval of officer recommendations.
- 4.2 The speed limit changes consulted on were to reduce the majority of roads within Ashmore Green, Hermitage, Cold Ash, Bucklebury, Upper Bucklebury and Chapel Row to 20mph, with 30mph and 40mph limits also being introduced to ensure speed limits are consistent throughout the settlements.
- 4.3 In total, 1188 responses were received to the consultation with there being multiple responses stating the same view. The following table shows were respondents supported, opposed or expressed a neutral view for the proposals in each village. This report summarises the objections received and makes a recommendation to the Executive Member considering these objections.

	Ashmore Green	Bucklebury	Upper Bucklebury	Chapel Row	Cold Ash	Hermitage
Support	40	47	46	47	58	58
Neutral	3	3	4	3	1	6
Object	80	99	149	123	155	153
Total	135	165	215	191	238	244

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 throughout Ashmore Green, Hermitage, Cold Ash, Bucklebury, Upper Bucklebury and Chapel Row was held throughout the end of last year and the beginning of 2026. Plans of the proposed speed limit reduction are included in Appendix C.
- 5.4 Non-statutory engagement was undertaken with all ward members and Parish Councils in Hermitage, Cold Ash, Bucklebury, Upper Bucklebury and Chapel Row prior to this statutory consultation taking place. Within these sessions, the opportunity was given to provide feedback on the proposed networks. Overall, the proposals were largely well received. The feedback from these sessions was considered by officers at WBC and some amendments made to the proposed network prior to the statutory consultation taking place.
- 5.5 All existing roads in the above parishes 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.
- 5.6 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
- 5.7 1188 responses were received to the consultation, the majority being 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 D.

Background and responses to common themes raised in the statutory consultation

- 5.8 Thames Valley Police responded to this consultation as a statutory consultee. They didn't record a position on Ashmore Green, recorded a neutral position to the proposals for Bucklebury, Upper Bucklebury and Chapel Row and objected to the proposals for Hermitage and Cold Ash. They stated that the policy of Thames Valley Police is to use sound practical and realistic criteria set in the Department for Transport (DfT) Guidance [Circular Roads 1/2013 - Setting local speed limits](#) when responding to Highway Authorities in an effort to promote consistency. This guidance is also used by WBC and has been considered in the development of these proposals.
- 5.9 TVP are not opposed to lowering speed limits providing they are appropriate to the road environment and likely to have casualty reduction benefits. They stated that they have no policy to enforce based on arbitrary speed limits alone but will enforce based on threat of harm, risk and resourcing. 20mph limits are not excluded from this and will be enforced where appropriate. Setting local speed limits is clear that there should be no expectation on the police to provide additional enforcement beyond their routine activity, unless this has been explicitly agreed. TVP stated in their response that in this case it isn't and there are no additional resources available to support extra enforcement.
- 5.10 The 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. No comments were received that were prescriptive as objections to the reductions to the proposed 30mph or 40mph limits.

- a) 127 objections mentioned concerns around the cost of the implementation and that it is a waste of money. Within this theme, some mentioned that the money should be spent on implementing traffic calming, road repairs, increased waste collection and other service improvements.

Officer comment: There is an annual capital budget allocated to reviewing speed limits and implementing any resulting changes. The costs of this proposal will be funded from this budget which is separate from the road's maintenance, capital improvements budgets and budgets for other council service areas. The budget for this project as also previously been approved.

- b) 33 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) 17 objections raised concerns that lowering the speed limit to 20mph was bad for the environment and 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) 41 objections mentioned that a blanket 20mph is not required but that they would support the implementation of 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) 24 objections highlighted that no collision analysis or speed survey data was 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 driven by the administration's wishes to see more 20mph and lower speed limits, rather than an objective need to improve safety based on collision figures.

- f) 59 objections mentioned that the current 30mph limits are not enforced and that 20mph will also not be enforced by the Police, a number of these also mentioned that the only way would be to install safety cameras to ensure enforcement.

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) 6 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 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.

- h) 6 objections mentioned that by implementing 20mph speed limits there were too many speed limit changes, leading to driver confusion and frustration.

Officer comment: All proposed speed limits are being designed in line with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016, with minimum speed limit lengths being set and reductions happening across multiple settlements to ensure consistency for drivers.

5.11 The responses supporting this consultation have been analysed and are included within the summary in Appendix D

Proposals

5.12 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, this proposal is not taken forward and the proposal is abandoned and no further work on this is undertaken.

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. Due to some responses received being similar or the same views as others the lists are condensed to avoid making the appendices too large hence why the numbers received and stated are different.
- 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 To abandon this proposal and not to undertake any further work on this but to develop new ways for individual requests to be support by Ward members and Town Councils.

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

Corporate Board's recommendation

N/A

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: Ashmore Green, Hermitage, Cold Ash, Bucklebury, Upper Bucklebury and Chapel Row.

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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, 30mph and 40mph 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, 30mph and 40mph 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 January 2026.

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, 501 responses were received to the consultation. There majority of the responses objected to the proposals.
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:	20mph, 30mph and 40mph speed limits in Hermitage, Cold Ash, Bucklebury, Upper Bucklebury and Chapel Row
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? 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”	☐	☒
Will you be processing data on a large scale? Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both	☐	☒
Will your project or system have a “social media” dimension? Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?	☐	☒
Will any decisions be automated?	☐	☒

	Yes	No
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?		
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.