

POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 22 November 2021
Title: 20mph Speed Restrictions
Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk – Adam Clapton

Purpose of the Report

To resolve how Witney Town Council should accommodate requests for 20mph speed restrictions in Witney.

Background

Oxfordshire County Council resolved to change its approach to requests for 20mph speed restrictions in October to make streets safer, encourage residents to walk or cycle and reduce noise & pollution.

Measures supported will be from a simple change of speed signs to more complex solutions in areas that can range from a whole village or a single street.

Any requests from residents for 20mph speed limits will need to be supported by the Town Council and by the local county councillor.

Current Situation

The text below shows which areas are eligible and the full criteria and assessment details can be found on the Oxfordshire County Council website at:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/traffic/requesting-20mph>

The area of the proposed restriction should not have a speed limit that is greater than 40mph. It can be a whole village or town or just one street within the area.

It should be in an area with features that justify a lower speed limit to drivers, for example, an area which has:

- *evidence of traffic incidents or potential dangers*
- *visible homes, shops and businesses*
- *a school or a school route*
- *a cycling route*
- *a quiet lane designation.*

Or it should be an area which would benefit from more active travel such as cycling and walking, better air quality

The County Council has indicated it would like to work collaboratively in establishing 20mph restrictions within Witney (where a series of criteria are met) as the first pilot town-area in Oxfordshire. This could be a blanket introduction of 20mph speed limits for the whole town, certain zones or for separate areas, although the first two options would be more cost-effective. The County Council will only be paying for any new speed limit signs and road markings.

Should the Town Council be agreeable to a pilot scheme, a feasibility study will be undertaken by the County Council which would include an audit on the number of roads, signs and markings required. Further discussion would be required, and the Town Council may be invited to join a steering group on the project. Once any proposals are in place (during 2022), a public consultation would take place.

Indication has been given that there would be scope to reduce faster limits i.e., from 40mph to 30mph and on acceleration zones/approaches to lower limit areas.

Policies

WTC Active Travel Infrastructure Plan 2020 – 20mph

'20 mph blanket from all urban approaches to the town i.e., Cogges Hill Road, Woodstock Road, Burford Road at West Witney Sports and Social Club, Deer Park Road, Curbridge, Ducklington entrances into the town, to encompass all routes between residential estates and the town centre. A blanket 20 mph limit is easy to understand, advertise and provide signs for.'

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

The introduction of further 20mph speed restrictions would help reduce noise and air pollution and promote safer, active travel in Witney.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

The Town Council needs to consider the benefits and pitfalls of 20mph zones across the town for all residents and businesses. There may be a financial risk should any proposed measures lead to further financial outlay.

Consideration should also be given on the enforcement of such schemes in Witney – the Town Council can only support implementation and is not responsible for policing the speed limit.

Financial implications

- The County Council is likely to fund a change of signs and lines only, where appropriate.
- The County Council has limited funding remaining in the current fiscal year but is hoping to receive further funding for the initiative in 2022/23.

- If additional measures are required this would need to be funded by either the Town Council (or other funding source). There is no budget in the current fiscal year.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. How the Town Council approaches requests for 20mph speed restrictions to compliment Oxfordshire County Council's new approach. Should it deal with;
 - Individual requests on a case-by-case basis
 - Requests on a zonal basis
 - A blanket request for the whole town, and
2. That, requests or areas to be covered by the proposals are delegated to the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee to progress, and if in agreement,
3. That, Officers from Oxfordshire County Council be invited to the meeting of the Climate, Biodiversity Committee meeting on 14th December to discuss the project further.