

OFFICER DECISION REPORT - TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER

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OUTCOME OF TRO PROCESS

PREPARED BY: Traffic Management Team, Highways and Traffic Group

TITLE OF REPORT: 20mph Speed Limit, various roads in Bath

PROPOSAL: 20mph Speed Limit

SCHEME REF No: 20 – 005

REPORT AUTHOR: Kris Gardom

1. DELEGATION

The delegation to be exercised in this report is contained within **Section 4** of the Constitution under the **Delegation of Functions to Officers**, as follows:

Section A	The Chief Executive, Strategic Directors, Divisional Directors and Heads of Service have delegated power to take any decision falling within their area of responsibility....”
Section B	Without prejudice to the generality of this, Officers are authorised to: serve any notices and make, amend or revoke any orders falling within his/her area of responsibility.
Section D9	An Officer to whom a power, duty or function is delegated may nominate or authorise another Officer to exercise that power, duty or function, provided that Officer reports to or is responsible to the delegator.

For the purpose of this report, in June 2020, the Divisional Director Environmental Services delegated the power to make, amend or revoke any Orders to the Assistant Director, Highways & Transport.

2. LEGAL AUTHORITY

This proposal is made in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, which under Section 1 provides, generally, for Orders to be made for the following reasons, and in the case of this report specifically for the reason(s) shown below:

(a)	for avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other road or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising, or	X
(b)	for preventing damage to the road or to any building on or near the road, or	
(c)	for facilitating the passage on the road or any other road of any class of traffic (including pedestrians), or	X
(d)	for preventing the use of the road by vehicular traffic of a kind which, or its use by vehicular traffic in a manner which, is unsuitable having regard to the existing character of the road or adjoining property,	
(e)	(without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (d) above) for preserving the character of the road in a case where it is specially suitable for use by persons on horseback or on foot, or	

(f)	for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs, or	
(g)	for any of the purposes specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of section 87 of the Environment Act 1995 (air quality)	

3. **PROPOSAL**

To implement a 20mph Speed Limit along London Road, the Paragon, Cleveland Place, Bathwick Street, Sydney Place, Darlington Street, Beckford Road, North Road, Bathwick Hill, Widcombe Hill, Copseland, Prior Park Road and Ralph Allen Drive, Bath as denoted in red on the attached plans.

Whilst it is accepted that speed limit reduction alone will not lead to the significant increase in local journeys taken by walking and cycling that the council wants to achieve, it is one of a number of measures that, when combined with others, will be an important step towards this.

4. **BACKGROUND**

The Council is increasing its efforts to introduce traffic management measures which encourage greater walking and cycling for some journeys, particularly the commute to work. The impact of Covid-19 and social distancing restrictions has further emphasised the benefits that can be gained from increased walking and cycling, including those associated with air quality and health.

It is recognised that reduced vehicle speeds can be an influential factor in encouraging people to walk and cycle more often and can give them greater confidence to do so. Whilst vehicle speeds in London Road can sometimes be relatively low due to general activity and congestion, there are times during the day when vehicle speeds can be detrimental to the use of the road by pedestrians and cyclists.

It is considered, therefore, that the existing 30mph speed limit along London Road should be reduced to 20mph from Gloucester Road to Cleveland Place, continuing into London Street and The Paragon to George Street and across Cleveland Bridge throughout Bathwick Street, Sydney Place and Darlington Street. Aside from the potential benefits for pedestrians, cyclists and air quality, this course of action would also help to reduce street clutter, as the speed limit would then be contiguous with the existing 20mph speed limit on the side roads joining these main roads.

It is also proposed that the speed limits on the roads from the city centre towards the University of Bath are reduced from 30mph to 20mph to help encourage more people to walk, cycle or scooter.

5. **SOURCE OF FINANCE**

This proposal is being funded by the Transport Improvement Program (TIP)

6. **INFORMAL CONSULTATION REQUIREMENT**

Informal consultation was carried out with the Chief Constable, Ward Members and the Cabinet Members for Transport.

The responses to the informal consultation can be found in TRO reports numbers 1 and 2.

7. OBJECTIONS / COMMENTS RECEIVED (following the public advertisement of the proposal(s))

The objection / comments received have been summarised below with the technical responses in italics underneath each one.

London Road, the Paragon, Cleveland Place, Bathwick Street, Sydney Place, Darlington Street, Beckford Road, North Road, Bathwick Hill, Widcombe Hill, Copse Land, Prior Park Road and Ralph Allen Drive (20mph Speed Limit)

Objections – 47, Support – 75, Support in Part - 19

Objections (Mains points raised):

- 20mph is not an appropriate speed for these roads;
- It will not improve air quality or congestion;
- Motorists will not respect this speed limit;
- It will not improve road safety;
- Not a good use of resources;
- Insufficient consultation was undertaken;
- It will not encourage more people to cycle;
- People will avoid shopping in Bath damaging its economy;
- No reliable alternative means of public transport;
- Bath is too hilly to cycle;
- Has it been proven that the Bath University staff and students want to walk / cycle;
- Just another car hating measure.

The full consultation response spreadsheet is attached as appendix 1 to this report.

Response to these objections:

Strategy

The 20mph proposals are aligned with the Council's district-wide strategy to move away from the misconception that streets are just for cars, and to promote active travel in Bath and North East Somerset. This means making it safer and more convenient for people to take short journeys by walking, wheeling, or cycling. This strategy aims to help residents, businesses, and visitors to our area to live healthier lives, reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. Reduced vehicle speeds form part of this strategy and can be an influential factor in encouraging people to

walk, wheel and cycle more often, sometimes giving them greater confidence to do so.

Although the hilly nature of Bath may deter some people from cycling, e-bikes are becoming increasingly popular as the cost of this technology comes down. The current e-scooter trial may result in changes to national legislation which leads to such scooters becoming a more common form of transport. It's therefore important that our streets in built-up areas become better suited to enable and making people feel confident to cycle and use scooters.

Enforcement

The proposed speed limits have been shared with the police who have looked at how they would enforce these. They have advised that many of the roads covered by the proposals are already covered by existing speed enforcement operations. The police have requested that a designated police bay be provided on Widcombe Hill to assist with their enforcement and this will be provided regardless of whether these speed limit proposals go ahead.

Air quality

We are not aware of evidence that supports some of the concerns that introducing a 20mph limit on roads where there are hills reduces air quality.

A number of studies have been conducted into the effects that 20mph limits have on air pollution as a whole. Overall, a smoothing of driving style and cutting out of the acceleration phase from 20mph to 30mph is considered to be beneficial for emissions of harmful pollutants. Research into 20mph limits carried out for the Department for Transport by Atkins stated "20mph limits (signed only) have the potential to affect vehicle emissions and air quality, reduce CO₂ (greenhouse gas) emissions, and reduce noise levels, as a result of:

- a reduction in average speed and top percentile speeds;
- a smoother, more consistent driving speeds;
- a small-scale displacement of traffic; and
- mode shift away from car.

[\(Atkins, AECOM, Maher, M. \(2018\) 20mph Research Study, Process and Impact Evaluation Headline Report\)](#)

20mph limits do not, therefore, appear to worsen air quality and they may reduce road danger. They also support a shift to walking and cycling, generate less traffic noise and reduce community severance. In 20mph limits vehicles move more smoothly with fewer accelerations and decelerations.

In addition, the majority of the responses received to this consultation are in favour of the introduction of the proposed 20mph speed limits and it is therefore the recommendation of this report that the Order is sealed as advertised.

When responding to these proposals a number of requests were made to extend 20mph speed limits into other roads. It is not possible to include them at this stage of

the Traffic Regulation Order process but they will be considered as potential schemes in future year Transport Improvement Programmes.

Chief Constable:

I understand from the “Approval to Progress” document that the proposals are *“To implement a 20mph Speed Limit along London Road, the Paragon, Cleveland Place, Bathwick Street, Sydney Place, Darlington Street, Beckford Road, North Road, Bathwick Hill, Widcombe Hill, Copseland, Prior Park Road and Ralph Allen Drive, Bath as denoted in red on the attached plans. Whilst it is accepted that speed limit reduction alone will not lead to the significant increase in local journeys taken by walking and cycling that the council wants to achieve, it is one of a number of measures that, when combined with others, will be an important step towards this.”*

I would reiterate the comments from our previous response and draw your attention to our Force stance regarding the introduction of speed restrictions, which has been written to reflect the current speed environment. I copy this below for your information.

“Speed limits are only one element of speed management and local speed limits should not be set in isolation. They should be part of a package with other measures to manage speeds, which include engineering, visible interventions and landscaping standards that respect the needs of all road users and raise the driver’s awareness of their environment, together with education, driver information, training and publicity.

The police service has to ensure all resources are used effectively in responding to community priorities. Avon and Somerset Constabulary will support all appropriate speed limits, including 20mph roads, where;

The limit looks and feels like the limit, giving visiting motorists who wish to conform that chance; the desired outcome has to be speeds at the limit chosen so as to achieve safe roads for other and vulnerable users, not high speeds and high enforcement; the limit is self-enforcing (with reducing features) not requiring large scale enforcement; the limit is only introduced where mean speeds are already close to the limit to be imposed, (24mph in a 20mph limit) or with interventions that make the limit clear to visiting motorists; speeding problems identified in an area must have the engineering, site clarity and need re-assessed, not simply a call for more enforcement.

Enforcement will be considered in all clearly posted limits, given other priorities, and this will be by:

Targeted enforcement where there is deliberate offending and the limits are clear; Where limits are not clear (that is they don’t feel like or look like the limit or are on inappropriate roads), they will not be routinely enforced, only targeted where there is intelligence of obvious deliberate disregard which may result in increased threat, harm or risk to other road users.

Deliberate high harm offenders will always be targeted and prosecuted whereas enforcement against drivers who simply misread the road may not be appropriate.

None of the above should in anyway leave the impression that we will not enforce the law, As with all speed limits, and other enforcement work, we will use evidence to ensure that our resources are allocated in the most appropriate way using appropriate tactics. Enforcement of limits that do not comply with the above representations could lead to mistaken offending and could risk the loss of public support.

Enforcement cannot and must not take the place of proper engineering and or clear signing.”

Should the proposal reach Formal Consultation, we do not, as part of that consultation, check the accuracy or validity of what is being proposed but we do consider implications for road safety and enforcement. We always expect that:

- a) the powers being exercised are available to you as traffic authority, are valid and are appropriate for the proposals;
- b) the descriptions of the lengths of road, the road names, the road numbers and any directional descriptions are correct and accurate;
- c) where any proposals replace existing restrictions or prohibitions, that the previous orders are adequately revoked or varied;
- d) the mandatory traffic signs giving legal effect to the order will be fully TSRGD compliant, will give drivers adequate guidance and will be placed to accord to the descriptions in the order.

We will work on the assumption that, by submitting this TRO for consultation, you would also be confirming the above points and that subject to consultation process, the order will be made. Any enforcement action taken by the Police will be based on this and, should this transpire not to be the case, Avon & Somerset Constabulary will not accept any liability – financial or otherwise – arising as a result.

Ward Members:

Walcot:

Cllr Richard Samuel – No comment.

Cllr Tom Davies – I am happy to support these proposals.

Lambridge:

Cllr Joanna Wright – Very happy to support.

Cllr Rob Appleyard – No comment.

Bathwick:

Cllr Dr Yuktेशwar Kumar – "I will be delighted to support these proposals and instantly seek opinion of our residents on this. Life is precious. By reducing speed, if our roads become a bit safer for cyclists and pedestrians then I am completely in favour of these."

Cllr Manda Rigby – No comment.

Widcombe & Lyncombe:

Cllr Alison Born – No comment.

Cllr Winston Duguid – No comment.

Cabinet Member for Transport

Cllr Manda Rigby – Approved.

Cabinet Member for Climate & Sustainable Transport

Cllr Sarah Warren - I am happy to support the proposals.

8. RECOMMENDATION

That the Traffic Regulation Order is sealed as described below.



Signature:

Date: 23rd June 2021

Paul Garrod
Traffic Management & Network Manager

9. DECISION

As the Officer holding the above delegation, I have decided that the objections / comments be:

a)	not acceded to and the Order as advertised be sealed.	X
b)	acceded to in full and the proposal(s) withdrawn.	
c)	acceded to in part and the following adjustments, being of minor significance; be included in the Order to be sealed. <i>specify minor amendment to Order here:</i>	

In taking this decision, I confirm that due regard has been given to the Council's public sector equality duty, which requires it to consider and think about how its policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.

Signature: 

Date: ...23/06/21...

Chris Major
Director of Place Management