

Charlbury Town Council 20mph Programme

In October 2021, Oxfordshire County Council [OCC] announced that:

The county council is changing its approach and acceptance of 20mph restrictions which will enable a much greater coverage across Oxfordshire.

The proposal is aimed to:

- *make streets safer*
- *encourage residents to walk or cycle*
- *reduce noise and pollution.*

The initiative will not be compulsory and will need to be supported by the parish/town council and by the local county councillor.

This report sets out a proposal to bring forward Charlbury's response for this three-year initiative. With the potential for the 2024/25 financial year being the final year, and the need for Town Council precept allocation to fund measures including signage, the town's approach needs to be set out in time for the precepting process in late 2022. The County Council has requested that a detailed scheme be submitted by 31 October.

The Town Council's Approach: Proposal

We know from consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, engagement on the Community-Led Plan and elsewhere that reducing traffic speeds is a matter of great concern for very many people in the town. For this reason, the Town Council is committed to making our streets safer by action to reduce speeds and to taking proactive measures to facilitate and promote active travel, and is developing a holistic Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The extension of 20mph restrictions is proposed as one element of this holistic plan.

In line with the DfT Hierarchy of Road Users and the Town Council's commitment to addressing the needs of all road users, the proposed approach to 20mph speed limits in Charlbury is that to protect the safety of the more vulnerable road users (principally pedestrians and cyclists), 20mph should be the default within all of the town.

There may be exceptions and we will invite views on where speed limits on the approaches into Charlbury (except Ditchley Road and Banbury Hill, which became 20mph in 2019) should be changed. While it is sensible to listen to feedback before determining locations of the extent of 20mph limits, indicatively these could be:

- Forest Road: a point between the Station approach mini-roundabout and the rail overbridge
- Pound Hill/Spelsbury Road: just beyond the Watery Lane turn
- Woodstock Road: a point around the current 30mph reminder, NE of 'Thorneycroft', where the road narrows on the hill
- Fowler Road: the current 30mph delimiter should form the extent of the 20mph limit with the 30mph extended to the current location of the 'Welcome to Charlbury' sign [subject to agreement with OCC].

The Town Council is aware that while introducing 20mph zones on their own has been shown to result in average speed reductions of 1-2mph¹ and more significant reductions in road traffic accidents, these will need to be combined with physical measures to effectively reduce traffic speeds where these are regularly excessive.

There are clear synergies with the overarching Town Council objective of encouraging active travel. This may lead to requirements in terms of signage, line painting and/or additional speed reduction measures. There may be some funding available as part of the OCC 20mph programme for additional measures associated with 20mph limits in certain areas, such as the section of The Slade around Charlbury Primary School, although this can't be guaranteed. The ongoing work on the LCWIP will make recommendations more broadly.

The Council will consider at its regular August meeting a physical buildout on Banbury Hill, already precepted and consulted on by OCC in parallel to a recent TRO. As the LCWIP recommendations and other works emerge, there may be requests for physical measures elsewhere. With no known Section 106 [S106] revenue available, solutions will be reliant on Town Council precept funding as well as any funds provided by the County Council; public engagement and neighbour consultation will be necessary.

The data from the 2021 Charlbury Traffic Survey and from Community Speedwatch form essential background information for this.

Engagement Plan

It is important to remember that Oxfordshire County Council will conduct a full statutory consultation at which detailed changes can be proposed and examined. It is good practice to engage communities, and in particular to get feedback from those living on the approaches into Charlbury and other areas affected by through traffic that currently are subject to a 30mph limit.

With this in mind, it is proposed the Council publicises the intention to reduce speed limits and seeks feedback, with a brief survey to demonstrate the outcomes of this engagement. In particular, this should seek the views of residents at the edges of town about the relative merits of 20 and 30mph limits.

Should OCC officers indicate the availability of suitable funds, it would be appropriate to engage the school community with regard to road safety around The Slade/Crawborough junction. Discussions with OCC officers to identify potential funding will need to take place in parallel with this engagement.

Other considerations

Oxfordshire County Council has now indicated that it will pay for the TRO, signage, roundels and dragons' teeth markings at each terminal location. The costs of physical traffic calming measures (which would fall on the Town Council) are significantly greater and will be considered separately.

¹ See for example the evaluation carried out in [Edinburgh](#) following the 2015-18 roll-out of 20mph zones throughout the city centre and across most roads in the city. There are fewer evaluations of the impact of 20mph zones in areas of rural England.

OCC has highlighted priority areas for potential funding of which school access areas are most relevant to the Council.

Recommendations:

1. The TC agrees to take forward a 20mph proposal, indicating accordingly to Oxfordshire County Council, on the basis indicated in this paper, with a detailed proposal to be agreed at the Town Council's October meeting; in the interim
2. the TC engages the town on this approach and the proposed limits of the 20mph zone, producing appropriate material with Traffic Committee, Publications team and Clerk
3. The TC discusses with OCC officers the potential funding available for additional speed reduction measures around the Charlbury School area in particular.