

DECISION RECORD ¹

Subject: Traffic Regulation Orders

THE HERTFORDSHIRE (VARIOUS ROADS, ST ALBANS)(20 MPH ZONE) ORDER 2017

Staff Contact: Steve Dibben

Executive Member: Terry Douris

Tel: 01992 658330

Portfolio: Highways

1. Decision

To proceed with the implementation of the Traffic Regulation Order for *20mph zonal speed limit* restrictions for the entire lengths of Albany Gate, Albert Street, Alma Cut, Approach Road, Bardwell Road, Bardwell Court, Belmont Hill, Black Cut, Cornwall Road, Cottonmill Crescent, De Tany Court, Hart Road, Keyfield Terrace, Lower Paxton Road, Malthouse Court, Millers Rise, Old London Road, Pageant Road, Paxton Road, Pullman Court, Ramsbury Road, Riverside Road, Sopwell Lane, Thorpe Road, Vernons Close, Watsons Walk and Wetherall Mews; Cottonmill Lane is affected in part.

2. Reasons for the decision

The proposal is to implement a *20mph zonal speed limit* restriction to bring the posted speed limit down to a speed limit more in line with that which vehicles currently travel along the roads.

The county council's speed management strategy document sets out the guidance for setting speed limits in Hertfordshire. The criteria for 20 mph zones informs how key tests must be met to ensure such changes are appropriate. The proposal within 'The Hertfordshire (Various Roads, St Albans) (20mph zone) Order 2017' comply with this strategy.

Speed and volume counts taken confirm 20mph to be a satisfactory change and will not require either physical calming measures to be introduced or any police enforcement. The reduction of the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph is feasible and suitable for these lengths of roads. The formalisation of a lower speed limit will reinforce road safety and accessibility, as well as the amenity for pedestrians within the area.

Hertfordshire Constabulary were consulted at an early stage and did not raise any objection. Similarly, St Albans City & District Council supports a reduction in the speed limit.

Public consultation on the proposed change of speed limit was undertaken to establish the level of local support. Informal consultation with residents took place between 4th and 25th November 2016, when 1411 letters were hand-delivered to affected properties. In total 77 replies were received, 66 in support, 2 expressing no preference, and 9 objecting.

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Those in support commented how *rat-running* brought additional traffic into the area, so measures to control this traffic was appreciated; that posting a reduction in the speed limit would remind drivers to take more care in the residential area where pedestrians, including children, are more likely to be moving around; and that consideration should be given to increasing the zone to include neighbouring streets.

Those who did not express a preference had other concerns not related to the proposed measures.

The 9 objections suggested how promotion of a reduction in the speed limit would be a waste of public money because traffic speeds are already low; that the money promoting this scheme should have been spent on maintaining roads; that the area is not an injury accident hot-spot, that the reduced speed limit would not be enforced; and that the scheme would bring sign clutter to the conservation area.

The project sponsor and designer considered each response, noting the majority in support of the proposal. In response to the objections, the view was that whilst it is true that traffic speeds are relatively low (mean speed of 21.7mph), posting a lower speed limit should increase driver awareness of the need to watch their speed in what is a residential area; that 20mph limits are considered to be self-enforcing; that whilst there has been a number of injury accidents, the scheme does not specifically target these but through reducing the speed limit evidence suggests the frequency and severity of accidents should be less; that 20mph repeater signs will be required, however, through sign rationalisation there will not be a significant increase in signage; and that the funding allocated to this scheme is Discretionary, over which elected members make recommendations. Therefore, the objections did not identify any issues beyond those already foreseen and as such, in agreement with the local county councillors the proposals were taken to the next stage.

The Public Notice was advertised in the Herts Advertiser and posters were erected in each road advising of the county council's intention to proceed with a draft Traffic Regulation Order. Therefore, formal consultation with residents took place over the period 2nd to 23rd February 2017. This drew 72 responses. The police confirmed they had no objection to the scheme; 47 responses supported the measures; 17 objected and 5 made comments only.

The project sponsor and designer again considered each response, again noting the overall majority in support of the proposal. The majority of those objecting considered the scheme was unnecessary because there is not a speeding issue. This was followed by concerns that the money would be better spent elsewhere, sign clutter, and no existing accidents. Therefore, the reasons of objection did not identify any new issues beyond those received during informal consultation.

Officers wrote back to those objecting to the scheme to clarify the reasons for proposing the reduction in speed limit and responded to points raised, however, the objections remain. Therefore, all objections are deemed to stand unresolved.

The project sponsor and designer again reconsidered each response, including those in support and objecting, and recommend the reduced speed limit should be implemented for the benefit of the wider local community.

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County Councillors Chris White and Sandy Walkington were involved throughout the consultation and were made aware of the comments received in support and the reasons given by those objecting. Councillor White was of the view that the scheme should proceed because of overwhelming residents' support. Councillor Walkington agreed with the comments of Councillor White and was mindful of responses received requesting the scheme be extended to include neighbouring streets.

The reduction in speed limit from 30mph to 20mph is in accordance with the county council's Speed Management Strategy (SMS), and the proposed 20mph zone will be self-enforcing, without the need for Police enforcement or physical traffic calming features.

Traffic speeds are relatively low (mean speed of 21.7mph), posting a lower speed limit will increase driver awareness of the need to watch their speed in what is a residential area. Associated safety and environmental benefits will also be realised through a reduction in the speed limit. Vehicles parked on-street help to keep the average speeds to a level that complies with the SMS criteria for a 20mph zone.

73% of the consultation responses indicated clear support for the proposals, which confirms there is a local community mandate to proceed.

Having reviewed the reasons for the proposals and satisfied myself they are appropriate, the draft Traffic Regulation Order for *20mph zonal speed limit* restriction should be implemented as advertised.

3. **Alternative options considered and rejected** ²

None

4. **Consultation**

(a) **Comments of Executive Member** ^{3 4}

Consulted on 4th April 2017 and confirmed agreement for the proposed decision and scheme to proceed on 4th April 2017, with the comments:

'Noting the comments and approval of the local county councillors, I am content to let the scheme proceed'.

(b) **Comments of other consultees** ⁵

The proposals are supported by both local members Chris White and Sandy Walkington, who were kept informed throughout the consultation process. Councillor White confirmed on 29th March 2017 *'In view of the weight of numbers, I would like to proceed with the scheme'*. Councillor Walkington confirmed on 30th March 2017 *'I have read these carefully and agree with Chris that we should proceed, not least because some of the objections are on the lines of not enough streets being included'*.

Hertfordshire Constabulary raised no objections.

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5. **Following consultation with, and the concurrence of the Executive Member, I am proceeding with the proposed decision.**

Signed:

Title: Highway Locality Manager Mid Herts

Date: 4th April 2017

6. Copies of agreed document to:

- All consultees
- Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- hard copy (for public inspection) Assistant Head of Member Services - Room 211 County Hall.

¹ for guidance see Chief Legal Officer's note "Taking Decisions"

² details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the officer at the time the decision was made

³ record any conflict of interest declared by any Executive Member consulted. Also record any dispensations granted by the Council's Standards Committee

⁴ If the matter has general significance for the Council and/or is, or is likely to be, controversial, then the officer shall consult the appropriate Executive Member before proceeding. In some cases it will be necessary to consult more than one Executive Member, and in some cases the Leader of the Council will need to be consulted

⁵ If the matter has local significance, but no general significance for the Council and no controversial aspects, the officer shall consult or inform the local member in writing (or by e mail) and proceed. It is essential that all officers responsible for delivering services ensure that local members are kept well briefed on issues affecting their areas.