

**CONSIDER OBJECTIONS RECEIVED IN RELATION TO PROPOSED
SPEED LIMIT CHANGES ON A1123 RECTORY ROAD AND STATION
ROAD, BLUNTISHAM AND HIGH STREET, EARITH**

To: Assistant Director, Highways Service and the Local Member(s) representing electoral division below.

Meeting Date: 16th February 2018

From: Executive Director: Place & Economy

Electoral division(s): Somersham & Earith

Forward Plan ref: N/A **Key decision:** No

Purpose: To determine objections to the introduction of new and reduced speed limits on A1123 in Bluntisham and Earith

Recommendation:

- a) Reduce the existing 40mph speed limit to 30mph on A1123 Station Road and Rectory Road, Bluntisham, covering the main part of the village
- b) Retain the 40mph speed limit on A1123 Station Road to provide a buffer zone at the western end of the village
- c) Introduce a new 40mph speed limit on A1123 Rectory Road, Bluntisham, to provide a buffer zone at the eastern end of the village
- d) Introduce a 50mph speed limit on A1123 Rectory Road, Bluntisham and High Street, Earith, to cover the remaining length between Bluntisham and Earith
- e) Inform the objectors accordingly

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** Bluntisham and Earith are located to the east of St Ives in Huntingdonshire District (Appendix 1). The proposal is to reduce existing and introduce new speed limits on the A1123 mainly through Bluntisham, but also extending into Earith. This is a Local Highway Improvement (LHI) scheme, part-funded by both Bluntisham Parish Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.
- 1.2** Central Government has issued guidance to local Councils on setting local speed limits and the stated policy is that "a 30mph speed limit should be the norm in villages." Consequently, the proposed speed limits are entirely consistent with national and local policies to lower traffic speeds in rural communities. The proposed speed limits in Bluntisham are aimed at reducing traffic speeds generally and the revisions at the eastern end are to lower speeds in the vicinity of the planned pedestrian island.
- 1.3** It is proposed to introduce the following (Appendix 2) :-
- a) Reduce the existing 40mph speed limit to 30mph on A1123 Station Road and Rectory Road, Bluntisham, covering the main part of the village;
 - b) Retain the 40mph speed limit on A1123 Station Road to provide a buffer zone at the western end of the village;
 - c) Introduce a new 40mph speed limit on A1123 Rectory Road, Bluntisham, to provide a buffer zone at the eastern end of the village;
 - d) Introduce a 50mph speed limit on A1123 Rectory Road, Bluntisham and High Street, Earith, to cover the remaining length between Bluntisham and Earith.

2. TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER (TRO) PROCESS

- 2.1** The TRO procedure is a statutory process that requires the highway authority to advertise, in the local press and on-street, a public notice stating the proposal and the reasons for it. The advert invites the public to formally support or object to the proposals in writing within a minimum twenty one day notice period. There is also a requirement to consult with certain organisations, such as the emergency services, and others affected by the proposals.
- 2.2** The TRO was advertised in the Hunts Post on 29th November 2017 and the statutory consultation period ran until 22nd December 2017.
- 2.3** The statutory consultation resulted in five representations, mostly objecting to the published proposals. The main points raised in relation to the proposed speed limits have been summarised in the table in Appendix 3. The officer responses to the objections are also given in the table.

- 2.4** The proposals are supported by Bluntisham Parish Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, District Councillor Robin Carter and two residents of Bluntisham. Cambridgeshire Police have raised no objection to the proposal.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

The necessary staff resources and funding have been secured through LHI funding including a contribution from Bluntisham Parish Council.

4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

The statutory process for this proposal has been followed.

4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

The statutory consultees have been engaged including County and District Councillors, the Police and the Emergency Services.

Notices were placed in the local press and were also displayed on the road where it is proposed to implement the restrictions. The proposal was available to view in the Council's Highway office in Huntingdon and the reception area of Shire Hall.

4.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

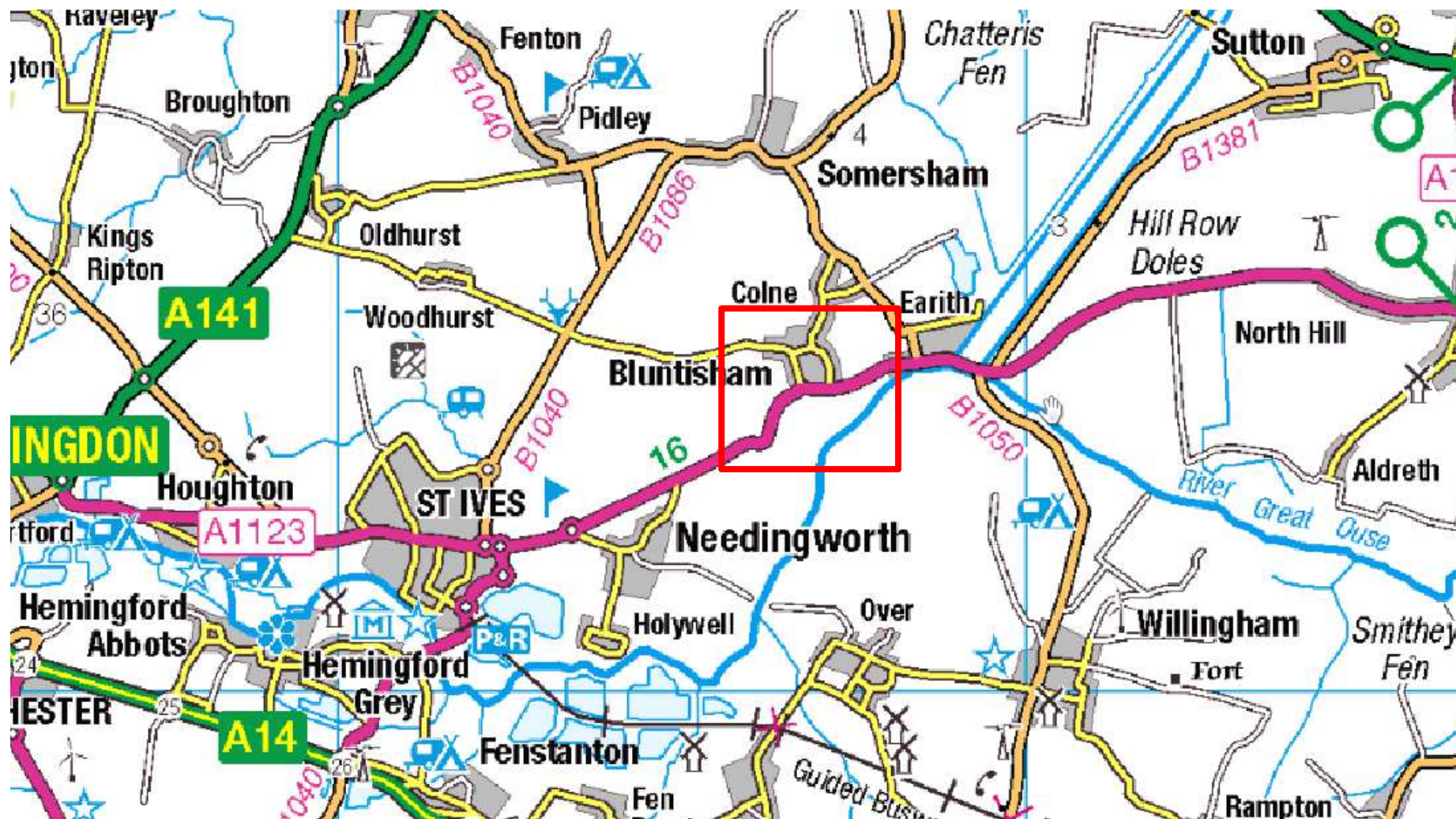
County Councillor Steve Criswell was consulted and no response was received.

4.6 Public Health Implications

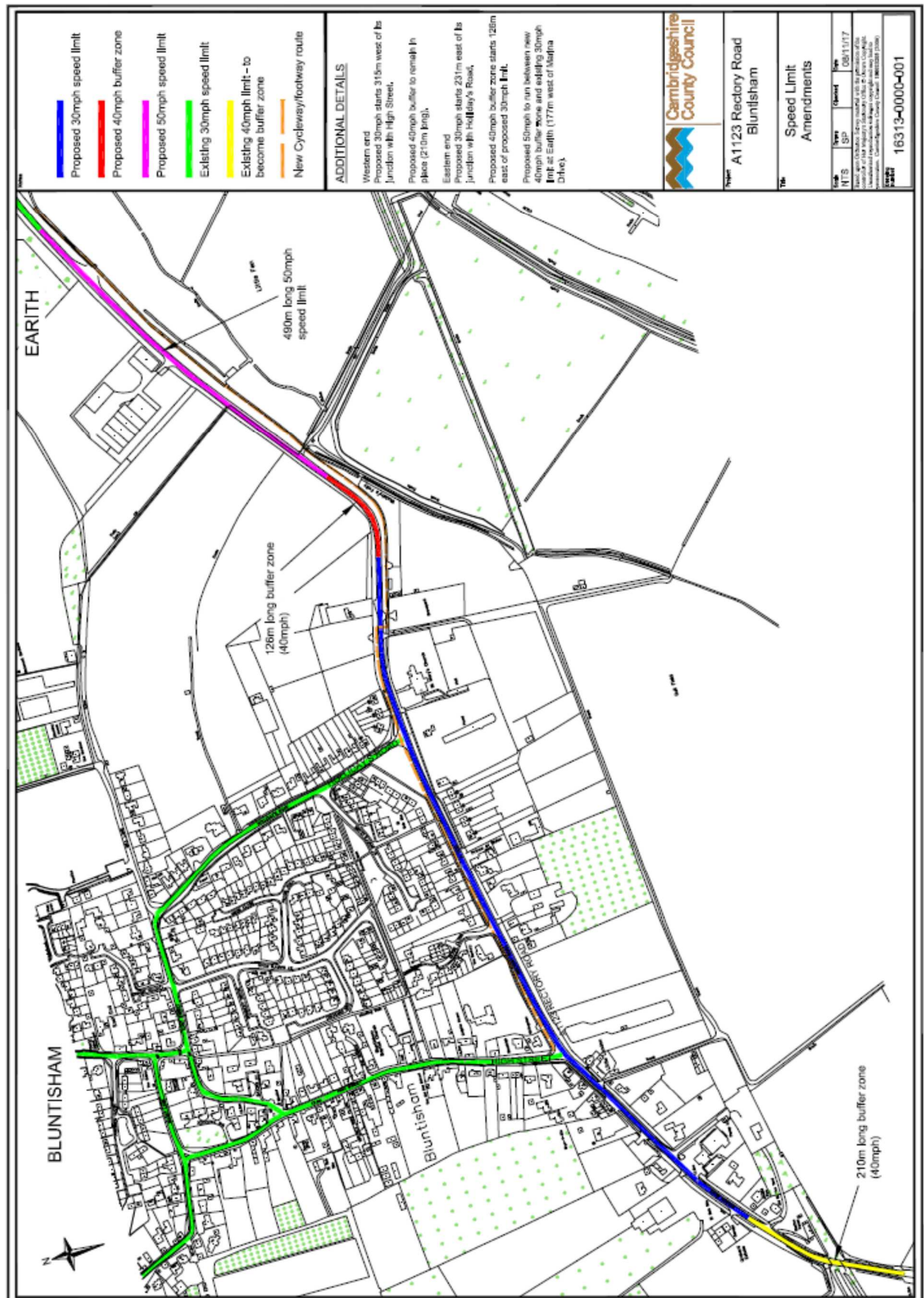
There are no significant implications within this category.

Source Documents	Location
Consultation responses Draft Traffic Regulation Order Written objections/representations	Vantage House Washingley Road Huntingdon PE29 6SR

Appendix 1 – Location of Bluntisham and Earith



Appendix 2 – Proposed Speed Limit Changes



Appendix 3		
No.	Summary of Objections/ Representations	Officer's Comments
1	The existing 40mph speed limit is well observed and there is no need to change it	If the majority of drivers are already travelling at or below 40mph, this would suggest that a 30mph speed limit will be reasonably well respected and not place a heavy enforcement burden on the police. Had existing speeds been higher, that would indicate that a 30mph speed limit would be unrealistically low and compliance would be poor.
2	There is no justification for reducing the speed limit on accident grounds	During the period from 2012 to 2017 there have been seven injury accidents on that length of the A1123 subject to the speed limit changes. Five of them occurred within the length of road that is proposed to be lowered to 30mph. Three of the collisions resulted in serious injuries and the remainder were categorised as slight injury collisions. From the details available it is not possible to directly attribute them to excessive speed and the proposed speed limit changes are not intended to address the causes of those collisions. However, generally speaking, lower speed limits are very likely to bring about an overall reduction in actual traffic speeds, which should result in fewer collisions of lesser severity. Hence, we would expect there to be road safety benefits to be gained by the imposition of the proposed speed limits.
3	The proposal will result in frequent speed limit changes over a short length of road, which will confuse and distract drivers	It is accepted that drivers on the A1123 will be presented with a different speed limit system than is currently the case, but each limit will be clearly signposted and there should be no confusion. In fact the main built-up area of Bluntisham will all be covered by a 30mph speed limit, which will remove the current 30/40mph changeover between the A1123 and the side roads, thereby simplifying that aspect. The 40mph speed limits are buffer limits and are intended to reduce rapid acceleration/ deceleration by drivers leaving and

		entering Bluntisham. The 50mph speed limit is to moderate speeds over what is a relatively short length of road between Bluntisham and Earith.
4	Several planning applications are expected to be submitted and access will be compromised by a 30mph limit	Any new developments are likely to bring about a slight increase in traffic volumes, but the impact on the speed of vehicles is likely to be negligible. Future planning applications were not a factor in influencing these speed limit proposals. That said, any significant increase in frontage development on the A1123, vehicle accesses and associated traffic movements would strengthen the case for a lower speed limit.
5	The proposal will allow cars to be parked on the A1123 which will create a road safety hazard	At present any vehicle parking overnight within the 40mph limit should have its parking lights on. Lights are not required in a 30mph limit providing the vehicle is parked on the side of the road in the direction of the traffic flow. Hence, in theory, a 30mph would allow cars to park at night on the A1123 without lights. However, in reality this is very unlikely to bring about a significant change in drivers' behaviour. The nature of the road and availability of off-road parking means that few cars are expected to be left on that road at night-time. In any event we would not be overly concerned, given the level of street lighting and reduced speed limit.