

Consideration of Representations and Objections to Proposed 20mph Speed Limit Zone in Huntingdon

To: Highways and Transport Committee

Meeting Date: 23 July 2024

From: Executive Director of Place and Sustainability

Electoral division(s): Huntingdon North & Hartford, Huntingdon West, and Godmanchester & Huntingdon South

Key decision: No

Executive Summary: A 20mph speed limit is proposed for most residential streets in Huntingdon. The purpose of this report is to consider representations and objections and other written representations received. The committee is asked to consider the implementation of the 20mph speed limit.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Consider the objections and other written representations received during the statutory public notice period for this scheme; and
- b) Approve the implementation of the 20mph speed limit as published.

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1. Creating a greener, fairer and more caring Cambridgeshire

- 1.1 This report relates to the Council's Ambition 2 – Travel across the county is safer and more environmentally sustainable. Evidence indicates that 20mph speed limits reduce the number and severity of collisions and can encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Huntingdon 20mph project is being funded as part of the Transforming Cities Fund Programme, approved by the Highways and Transport Committee in December 2022. The programme included an £800,000 allocation towards countywide speed reduction measures, which enabled several of the larger individual 20mph schemes, such as the Huntingdon scheme, to be funded from this source, rather than from funding already allocated for 20mph schemes by the Council. Applications for individual 20mph schemes already submitted by Huntingdon Town Council under the Local Highway Improvements scheme were incorporated into a town wide plan, including the roads initially proposed, and keeping some strategic roads at 30mph. An officer presented the proposed 20mph scheme to an extraordinary meeting of Huntingdon Town Council on 16 November 2023, where it was agreed that the scheme should progress to formal consultation.
- 2.2 In December 2022, the Highways and Transport Committee agreed to amend the Council's Speed Limit Policy to state that '20 mph zones must be introduced in clearly defined zones and area wide schemes are encouraged, rather than just on isolated roads or cul-de-sac' (Highways Operational Standards, April 2024).
- 2.3 20mph speed limits improve road safety and can have quality of life and community benefits, including encouraging healthier and more sustainable transport modes, such as walking and cycling. There may also be environmental benefits as driving slower at a steady pace can save fuel and reduce pollution.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1 The scheme involves the introduction of a 20mph speed limit on all residential streets within the built-up part of Huntingdon, except for a number of through-routes. These include the Ring Road, Stukeley Road, Ermine Street, Edison Bell Way, Brampton Road, Hartford Road, Sapley Road, Coneygeare Road and part of St. Peter's Road. Those roads that are predominantly industrial or commercial are also excluded from the 20mph limit.
- 3.2 Before introducing new speed limits, there is a statutory requirement for the Council to publish a notice of intention to inform interested parties. This process invites the public to formally object to or submit other representations on the proposals in writing within a minimum 21-day notice period. There is also a requirement to consult with certain organisations, such as the emergency services, and others affected by the proposals.
- 3.3 The notice was published in the Hunts Post on 17 January 2024 and the statutory consultation period ran until 8 February 2024. Notices were displayed on the street and additional information was available on the Council's website and in the local library. The

scheme drawing is attached at Appendix 1, and the public notice is attached at Appendix 2.

- 3.4 A total of 42 written representations were received, which included 26 objections (21 wholly objecting and 5 partly objecting), 15 offering support (8 wholly support and 7 partly support) and 1 neutral response. The full wording of these responses is attached at Appendix 5. A summary of the main points raised is included in the table in Appendix 3, alongside officer responses.
- 3.5 In addition, Cambridgeshire Police submitted a formal response, which is attached at Appendix 4. In summary, the main points raised by the traffic management officer are that Cambridgeshire Police understands and supports the overall strategy of implementing a 20mph speed limit in Huntingdon. However, it points out that there are a small number of roads within the proposal which are feeder routes, or by virtue of alignment and environment may suffer from issues relating to speed compliance, (e.g. St Peters Road, Swallowbush Road, California Road and Desborough Road).
- 3.6 The Council officer response to Cambridgeshire Police's comments is that their concerns about non-compliance in some roads are noted. Many of Huntingdon's main through-routes have been excluded from the 20mph limit, mostly for the reasons identified by Cambridgeshire Police. However, roads such as Swallowbush Road, California Road and Desborough Road are almost exclusively residential and/or contain schools. Therefore, those roads are included in the proposed 20mph limit. The residential part of St. Peter's Street would be included in the 20mph speed limit, but the industrial/commercial section would remain at 40mph.
- 3.7 A Delegated Decision meeting was held with local County Councillors on 18 March 2024. Councillor Sanderson and Councillor Wilson agreed that the 20mph speed limit should be implemented in their areas. Councillor King had reservations due to the number of residents in his area who had expressed concerns about the proposal.
- 3.8 Following the Delegated Decision meeting, it came to light there was an error in considering feedback received at the meeting. Several comments, both positive and negative, that had been received via a new online consultation portal were not included in the report to the meeting. In total, 34 responses were omitted. There were also issues around the delegated decision-making process. Therefore, to ensure a fair and safe decision, the decision has been referred to the Highways and Transport Committee.

4. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 It is acknowledged that opinions vary on 20mph speed limits. Some people strongly support them, whilst others are opposed. 20mph limits are widely used to encourage drivers to travel at lower speeds, particularly in residential areas where it is common for more vulnerable road users to be present. In addition, there are likely to be higher numbers of pedestrians and cyclists, who will feel safer and more confident if motorised vehicles are travelling at reduced speeds. 20mph speed limits represent a relatively cost-effective way to improve road safety and encourage more sustainable modes of transport. Consequently, it is recommended that the 20mph speed limit proposal for Huntingdon be implemented.
- 4.2 Subject to available funding, a review of the 20mph speed limit can be undertaken after an appropriate length of time following implementation, including a review of available

validated collision data.

5. Significant Implications

5.1 Finance Implications

This work is being funded from approved budgets. The works would be undertaken by the Council's nominated highway contractor under the terms of their current contract.

5.2 Legal Implications

The statutory and legal processes relating to the processing of traffic regulation and speed limit orders have been followed.

5.3 Risk Implications

There is some opposition to this proposal, so it is possible that if the Committee approves the scheme, a judicial review or other legal challenge might be made. This particular scheme commenced prior to recent government advice which encourages "a comprehensive and early consultation of all those who may be affected". It may be argued that the Council has not undertaken that depth and timing of public engagement.

If the Committee does not approve the scheme, there could be reputational damage should there be speed-related injury collisions in Huntingdon that might have been avoided or less severe had a 20mph speed limit been in operation.

5.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The officer-led scoring adopts a consistent approach, prioritising proposals countywide within existing budgets. Many of the schemes will improve road safety for vulnerable users such as the young, elderly and disability groups. The 20mph process empowers community groups to have an influence on setting speeds in their own communities and gives local people a real influence over bringing forward improvements that benefit them. The new approach to prioritisation and delivery has also been reviewed through the councils Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) process.

A completed Equality, Impact Assessment (EqIA) is attached at Appendix 6.

6. Source Documents

6.1 [Highway Operational Standards – 2023-2033](#)