
Meeting: Traffic Management Meeting

Date: 21 November 2013

Subject: Langford Road, Henlow – Consider Objection to Proposed 40mph Speed Limit

Report of: Jane Moakes, Assistant Director Environmental Services

Summary: This report seeks the approval of the Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services for the implementation of a new speed limit in Langford Road, Henlow following the receipt of an objection.

Contact Officer: Nick Chapman
nick.chapman@amey.co.uk

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Arlesey

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The proposal will improve road safety.

Financial:

The scheme is Council-funded and there is a budget of £45,000 available for the sites identified in this report and other potential locations if finance allows.

Legal:

None from this report

Risk Management:

None from this report

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None from this report

Equalities/Human Rights:

None from this report

Community Safety:

The proposal will improve road safety for all road users, including pedestrians, and residents

Sustainability:

A reduction in vehicle speeds will encourage lower vehicle emissions and encourage walking and cycling.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the proposals to introduce a 40mph speed limit in Langford Road, Henlow be implemented as published.

Background and Information

1. Bedfordshire Highways was instructed to implement 40mph speed limits at various locations. The intention is that the speed limit would be 'buffer zones' between the national speed limit and the existing 30mph speed limits covering the main built-up part of the villages.

Proposed 40mph speed limits were published for:-

- Langford Road, Henlow
- Langford Road, Langford
- Stondon Road, Shillington
- Bedford Road, Stondon (both north and south of village)
- Shillington Road, Stondon
- Vinegar Hill, Upper Caldecote

2. The proposals for the 40mph speed limits were formally advertised by public notice in September and October 2013. Consultations were carried out with the emergency services and other statutory bodies, relevant Parish Councils and Ward Members.

The only objection received was to the proposal for Langford Road, Henlow. No objections were received in relation to the other proposals, so these will be implemented as published.

3. One objection was received to the Langford Road, Henlow proposal and a representation was received from Langford Parish Council. Copies of the correspondence are included in Appendix C. The main points are summarised below:-
 - a) No evidence or logic in support of the proposal has been presented.
 - b) The 40mph speed limit is unlikely to be effective.
 - c) The new speed limit will be no more enforceable than the existing ones and therefore will contribute to the contempt held towards speed limits by many motorists.
 - d) The cost of the proposal will divert and delay funding for more effective means of speed reduction.

- e) Langford Parish Council's view is that the whole length between Langford and Biggleswade and Langford and Henlow should be covered by the 40mph speed limit.
4. Bedfordshire Police do not object to the proposals.

Responses and Conclusion

5. Bedfordshire Highways' response to the points above are as follows:-
- a) The proposals are part of a programme of speed limits requested by members of the public, Parish Councils and Elected Members. They are seen as a very cost-effective means of modifying driver behaviour and bringing about a reduction in vehicle speeds.
 - b) 40mph speed limit buffer zones are used as a transitional speed limit between the national speed limit (60mph for cars) and the 30mph speed limit covering the main built-up part of a town or village. They are intended to lower the speed of traffic entering settlements by encouraging a more gradual speed reduction rather than the heavy deceleration that often occurs when drivers are slowing from 60mph to 30mph. In the case of Langford Road, there is a fairly long straight from the main part of Henlow, which encourages relatively high vehicle speeds. The proposed 40mph speed limit will be effective in reducing those speeds prior to them entering the 30mph limit. For drivers leaving Langford the 40mph buffer will help reduce the temptation for drivers to accelerate well in advance of the national speed limit signs.
 - c) It is acknowledged that there is some non-compliance with the existing 30mph speed limit largely due to the fact that the road is open with very little roadside development and the road is fairly wide. In these circumstances, some drivers fail to see the need to lower their speed. It is hoped that the 40mph limit will help in this respect and it is most unlikely that it would have any negative effects.
 - d) The 40mph speed limit is a relatively low cost measure, particularly since it is being processed as part of a batch of speed limit proposals. It has no influence on funding for other speed reducing measures.
 - e) If the 40mph speed limits covered significant lengths of road between settlements with little or no roadside development it is very likely that drivers fail to understand the need for the speed limits. This would lead to poor compliance and a lack of respect for the speed limit system. In addition, the Police are likely to raise objections to what they would view as unrealistically low speed limits and the consequential enforcement burden.
6. It is considered that the speed limit proposal is reasonable and will not bring about any of the negative impacts suggested, so should be implemented as published.

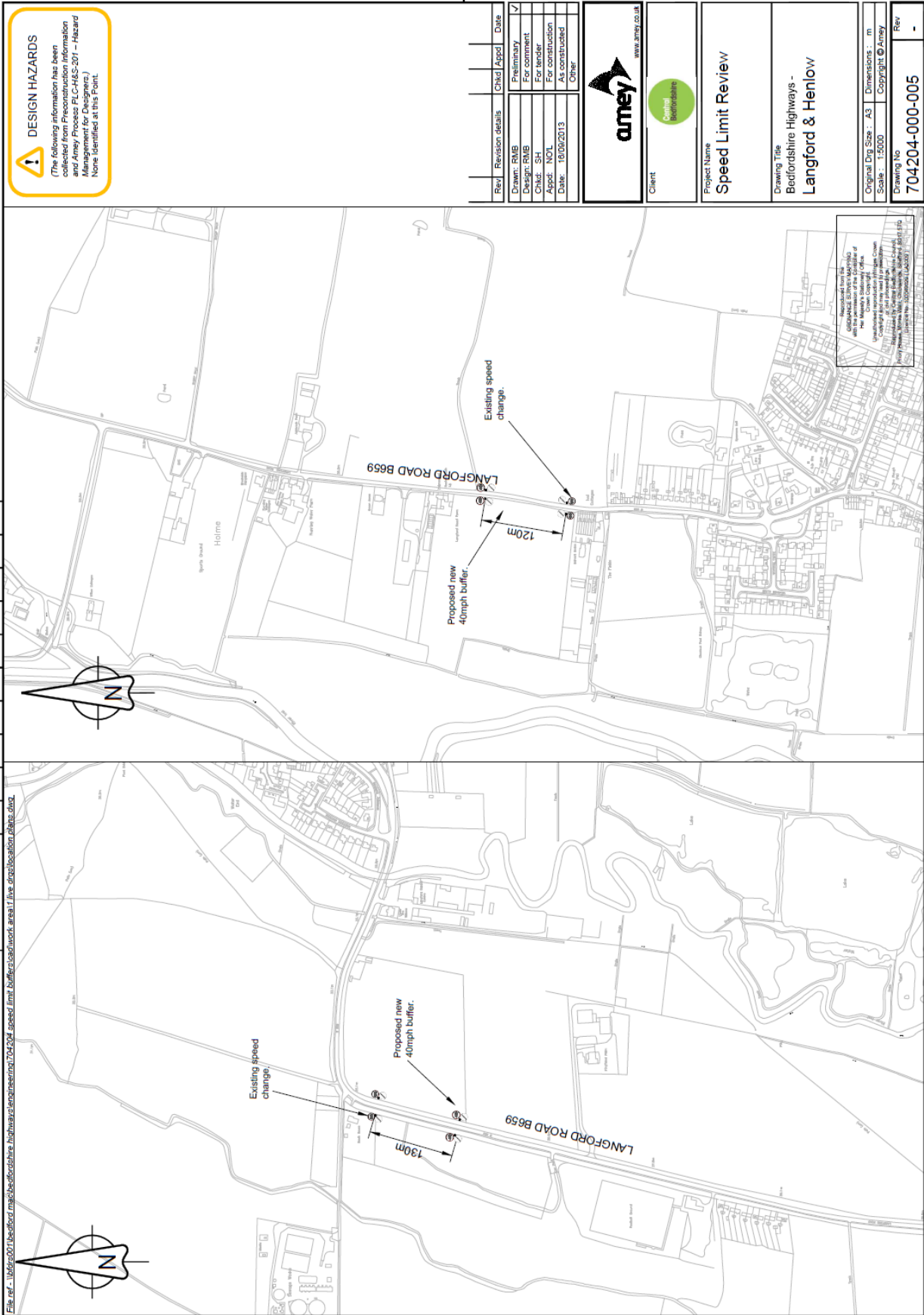
Appendices:

Appendix A – Drawing of Proposed 40mph Speed Limit

Appendix B – Public Notice of Proposals

Appendix C – Objection

Appendix A



DESIGN HAZARDS
 (The following information has been collected from Precast Information and Amey Process FLC-H&S-201 - Hazard Management for Designers.)
 None identified at this Point.

Rev	Revision details	Chkd	Appd	Date
	Drawn: RMB			Preliminary
	Design: RMB			For comment
	Chkd: SH			For tender
	Appd: NOL			For construction
	Date: 10/06/2013			As constructed
				Other



Client

Project Name
Speed Limit Review

Drawing Title
**Bedfordshire Highways -
 Langford & Henlow**

Original Dwg Size: A3	Dimensions: m
Scale: 1:5000	Copyright © Amey
Drawing No 704204-000-005	Rev -

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File ref.: \\fdm001\bedford\misc\bedfordshire_highways\engineering\704204\speed_limit_buffers\cad\work_area\17_line_dwg\locationplans.dwg

PUBLIC NOTICE

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PROPOSES TO INTRODUCE 40MPH SPEED LIMITS IN HENLOW, LANGFORD, SHILLINGTON, STONDON AND UPPER CALDECOTE

Reason for proposal: The proposed Order is considered necessary for preserving or improving the amenity of the area through which the roads run. The proposed 40mph speed limits are intended to act as "buffer limits" between the existing national speed limit and the 30mph speed limit in each village and should reduce the speed of vehicles entering the built-up areas.

Effect of the Order:

To introduce a 40mph Speed Limit on the following length of road in Henlow:-

1. Langford Road, from a point approximately 448 metres generally west of its westerly junction with Riverside Gardens extending in a southerly direction for a distance of approximately 130 metres.

To introduce a 40mph Speed Limit on the following length of road in Langford:-

1. Langford Road, from a point approximately 56 metres north of its junction with The Fields extending in a northerly direction for a distance of approximately 120 metres.

To introduce a 40mph Speed Limit on the following length of road in Shillington:-

1. Stondon Road, from a point approximately 19 metres east of its junction with the Rosehill Farm access road extending in a easterly direction for a distance of approximately 165 metres.

To introduce a 40mph Speed Limit on the following length of road in Stondon:-

1. Bedford Road, from a point approximately 135 metres north of the Hitchin Road/Station Road roundabout extending in a northerly direction for a distance of approximately 215 metres.
2. Bedford Road, from a point approximately 47 metres south of its junction with Boundary Close extending in a southerly direction for a distance of approximately 310 metres.
3. Shillington Road, from a point approximately 143 metres west of its junction with Fakeswell Lane extending in a westerly direction for a distance of approximately 193 metres.

To introduce a 40mph Speed Limit on the following length of road in Upper Caldecote:-

1. Vinegar Hill, from a point approximately 18 metres west of its junction with Pond Close extending in a westerly direction for a distance of approximately 160 metres.

Further Details may be examined during normal opening hours at Biggleswade Library, Chestnut Avenue, Biggleswade SG18 0LL and Shefford Library, 1 High Street, Shefford SG17 5DD, alternatively online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices. These details will be placed on deposit until 6 weeks after the Order is made or until it is decided not to continue with the proposal.

Objections should be sent in writing to the Transportation Manager, Bedfordshire Highways, Woodlands Annex, Manton Lane, Bedford MK41 7NU or e-mail centralbedsconsultation@amey.co.uk stating the grounds on which they are made by 22 October 2013.

Order Titles If made will be "Central Bedfordshire Council (40mph Speed Limit) (Langford Road, Henlow) Order 201**"; "Central Bedfordshire Council (40mph Speed Limit) (Langford Road, Langford) Order 201**"; "Central Bedfordshire Council (40mph Speed Limit) (Stondon Road, Shillington) Order 201**"; "Central Bedfordshire Council (40mph Speed Limits) (Bedford Road and Shillington Road, Stondon) Order 201**"; "Central Bedfordshire Council (40mph Speed Limit) (Vinegar Hill, Upper Caldecote) Order 201**";

Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Chicksands
Shefford SG1917 5TQ

Marcel Coiffait
Director of Community Services

27 September 2013

Appendix C

Re: Proposal to introduce 40 mph speed limit in Henlow and Langford

I wish to object to the proposed 40 mph "buffer zone" speed limits as proposed above.

I would firstly introduce myself. I have lived in Riverside Gardens, Langford for the last 28 years and throughout this time have been aware of the excessive speed of the majority of vehicles entering the village, particularly from the Henlow direction. In consequence, on 23rd July 1993 I wrote objecting to the then proposed de-regulation of the A6001 by Bedfordshire County Council and also made my neighbours aware of this proposal, which was subsequently withdrawn. Additionally, for the last 18 months I have been a member of the Langford Speedwatch group, which has regularly monitored traffic speeds of traffic crossing the river bridge outside Langford Garden Centre and also of traffic entering the village on the B659 from the Biggleswade direction. I therefore trust that it will be appreciated that my motives in opposing the proposed order are well-intentioned.

I note that Central Bedfordshire Council in proposing these orders states that they "should" reduce the speed of vehicles entering the built-up areas but presents no logic or argument in support of this supposition. When the Speedwatch team has operated on the river bridge between Riverside Gardens and the Garden Centre, we regularly record between 20 and 30 vehicles exceeding 34 mph in the course of an hour's watch. I have reviewed some 119 recorded instances over a six month period and can advise that over 46% of these related to vehicles leaving Langford in the Henlow direction. Additionally, a recent fairly major accident which occurred on the road between the garden centre and Baulk corner was a head-on collision between a Volvo estate car entering Langford and a motor cycle leaving the village going, to quote a neighbour, "like a bat out of hell". Clearly, as these speeding vehicles were travelling towards the proposed 40 mph buffer zone, it would have had no effect.

I think it is now appropriate to consider those vehicles entering Langford from the Henlow direction. The existing 30 mph speed limit begins just short of Baulk corner where there is also a 30 mph marking on the road surface. By the time vehicles reach the river bridge they have travelled some 400 metres in the 30 mph zone and have also passed the flashing 30 mph "slow down" sign located some 20 metres before the bridge. Additionally, when Speedwatch is active, yellow, red and black warning signs are erected on both sides of the road in advance of the equipment and team members are required to wear "high visibility" jackets. Despite these warnings extending in total some 420 metres through the 30 mph zone, we are still, as previously stated, recording 20 – 30 offenders per hour. I therefore cannot believe that the addition of a 40 mph buffer zone in advance of the current 30mph limit will have any beneficial effect.

Having discussed my reasoning at some length, I would express my objections to the proposed buffer zone on Langford Road, Henlow as follows:

- 1) No evidence or logic in support of the proposed limit has been presented.
- 2) Speedwatch figures indicate over 46% of speeding traffic is travelling outwards from the built-up area towards the buffer zone
- 3) Incoming traffic currently travels some 400 metre through the existing 30 mph limit prior to entering the built up area so the addition of a 40 mph buffer zone is unlikely to be effective
- 4) The new limit will be no more enforceable than that existing and, as such, will contribute towards the contempt held towards speed limits by many motorists
- 5) If, as I believe, the proposal is ineffective, it will both divert funding from and delay any more effective means of traffic speed reduction.

My personal opinion is that the only practical means of reducing the speed of traffic entering the village is by means of either speed "humps" or by the application of rumble strips at Baulk corner and on both sides of the river bridge. However, in the immediate term, I would suggest that sightline of the existing signs should be improved by pruning of trees etc and that the 30 mph sign in the road could be repainted. Such measures are also likely to be more effective at the northern end of the village.

Hoping you find these comments useful, I remain

Thank you for allowing Langford Parish Council longer to make their comment.
It is as follows

The Council's view remains that speed limits should be imposed on the whole length of road between Langford and Biggleswade and between Langford and Henlow. the proposed buffers could bring benefits provided that they are accompanied by speed roundels painted on the road surface and rumble strips.

The Parish Council may be prepared to contribute towards the cost of the roundels and the rumble strips.