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**Meeting:** Traffic Management Meeting  
**Date:** 2 June 2014  
**Subject:** Hitchin Road, Henlow – Consider Objection to Proposed 50mph Speed Limit  
**Report of:** Paul Mason, Head of Highways  
**Summary:** This report seeks the approval of the Executive Member for Community Services for the implementation of a new speed limit in Hitchin Road, Henlow following the receipt of an objection.

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**Contact Officer:** Nick Chapman  
[nick.chapman@amey.co.uk](mailto: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 50mph speed limit in Hitchin Road, Henlow be implemented as published.**

**Background and Information**

1. It is proposed to introduce several new speed limits at various locations in Central Bedfordshire, including Hitchin Road, Henlow. There is currently a 50mph covering the northern section of Hitchin Road between Henlow village and Henlow Camp. The proposal is to extend the 50mph speed limit southwards to the point where the 30mph speed limit for Henlow Camp starts. In addition, it is proposed to implement an advisory 40mph speed limit on the central section of this length of Hitchin Road. This is a recommended speed to drivers when passing through the area where most people live, but does not impose an enforceable 40mph limit.
2. The 50mph speed limit proposal was formally advertised by public notice in February and March 2014. Consultations were carried out with the emergency services and other statutory bodies, relevant Parish Councils and Ward Members.
3. An objection was received from Henlow Parish Council with two of the Ward Members having a similar view. Copies of the correspondence are included in Appendix C. The main points are summarised below:-
  - a) The proposal contains too many speed limit changes which would be confusing to drivers.
  - b) A 40mph buffer zone on the approach to the 30mph speed limit, which is located close to Derwent Lower School would be more appropriate and it is requested that the whole length of road be covered by a 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 proposal is for a 50mph statutory speed limit over the whole length of road between the two existing 30mph limits on the main built-up areas of Henlow village and Henlow Camp, so should not be unduly confusing to drivers. The advisory 40mph speed limit should be seen as more of a warning to drivers that they should consider moderating their speed whilst travelling through that part of Hitchin Road where most people live.

- b) The length of Hitchin Road over which the 50mph speed limit is proposed is only sparsely built-up with minimal frontage development. The southern section has open fields on both sides. It is felt that drivers would not understand the need for a 40mph limit and consequently compliance would be poor. When considering Government advice on the imposition of speed limits, a 50mph speed limit is more appropriate for this length of road. The existing 30mph speed limit outside Derwent Lower School covers the entire frontage of the school and its main entrance is located approximately 130 metres inside the existing 30mph limit. Hence, drivers have adequate time and distance to adjust their speed if a 50mph was implemented.
6. It is considered that the character of the road is more suited to a 50mph speed limit and would provide an adequate buffer zone on the approach to the school.
7. If the speed limit is approved the works are expected to take place within two to three months.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Public Notice of Proposals

Appendix B – Drawing of Proposals

Appendix D – Objections



# PUBLIC NOTICE

## **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PROPOSES TO EXTEND THE 50MPH SPEED LIMIT ON HITCHIN ROAD, HENLOW**

Reason for proposal: The proposed Order is considered necessary for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs. The proposal will result in the whole length of Hitchin Road being covered by a 50mph speed limit between the 30mph speed limits in Henlow village and Henlow Camp and should reduce the speed of vehicles entering the main built-up area and outside Derwent Lower School.

Effect of the Order:

### **To extend the 50mph Speed Limit on the following length of road in Henlow:-**

Hitchin Road, from a point approximately 248 metres south-west of its junction with Middlefield Lane extending in a south-westerly direction to a point approximately 202 metres north of its junction with Whittle Close.

Further Details may be examined during normal opening hours at Shefford Library, 1 High Street, Shefford MK45 1QJ or online at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices](http://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 Transportation Manager, Central Bedfordshire Highways, Woodlands Annex, Manton Lane, Bedford MK41 7NU or e-mail [centralbedsconsultation@amey.co.uk](mailto:centralbedsconsultation@amey.co.uk) stating the grounds on which they are made by 7 March 2014.

Order Title If made will be "Central Bedfordshire Council (50mph Speed Limit) (Hitchin Road, Henlow) Order 2014"

Central Bedfordshire Council  
Priory House  
Chicksands  
Shefford SG1917 5TQ

Marcel Coiffait  
Director of Community Services

14 February 2014



## Appendix C

Dear Gary – Thank you for your email regarding proposed speed limits. Our Councillors have discussed the information submitted and wish to object to the proposals for Hitchin Road B649. They feel the limits proposed along the whole length travelling south ranging from 50mph at A507, then 40mph, 50mph changing then to the 30mph at Derwent Lower School is totally wrong and confusing. HPC has for some time requested a buffer speed limit of 40mph before the 30mph at Derwent Lower School – your proposals do not include for this.

**The Parish Council would therefor strongly recommend, and urge you to implement, a 40 mph speed limit for the whole length of this road, from A507 to Derwent Lower School.**

Best regards – Henlow Parish Council

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Thank-you for your email about the proposed change to speed limits in Hitchin Rd Henlow. I am very pleased that CBC are considering doing something about reducing limits on these dangerous bends.

However I find it very hard to support this particular proposal which will result in 4 changes of speed limit in a one mile stretch from Henlow village to Henlow Camp. I think motorists will find this very confusing and I am sure it does not represent best practice.

Also this scheme gives us the opportunity to provide a 40 limit going into Henlow Camp where Derwent Lower School is situated just into the current 30 limit. Speeding is already a problem here and parents and residents will fail to understand why we will not have taken the opportunity to make this a 40 rather than 50 limit.

In summary I suggest that the whole stretch from The Crown , Henlow village to the existing 30 mph limit outside Derwent Lower School should be made 40 mph, reducing confusion and ensuring not only a safer road on the bends but also on the approach to Derwent Lower School.

Kind regards,

Richard Wenham

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I wholeheartedly support the proposal put forward by Cllr Wenham. I am also a school governor at Derwent Lower School which has an access onto the road just yards into the current 30 limit. It surely doesn't make sense to have a small stretch left unrestricted going straight into a 30.

Kind regards

Rita

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