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**Meeting:** Traffic Management Meeting  
**Date:** 28 February 2017  
**Subject:** Proposed 20 mph speed limit and raised zebra crossing – Billington Road, Leighton Buzzard  
**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 20mph speed limit and raised zebra crossing in Billington Road, Leighton Buzzard following the publication of proposals.

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**Contact Officer:** Steve Lakin  
[Steve.lakin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Steve.lakin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** Leighton Buzzard South  
**Function of:** Council

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

The proposal will fulfil the authority's obligations under the Leighton Buzzard Exemplar Scheme, improving road safety and promoting sustainable travel between the housing developments south of Leighton Buzzard and the town centre and railway station.

The scheme is referenced in the Leighton Buzzard Local Area Transport Plan and contributes toward the delivery of five Local Transport Plan Objectives:

- A: Increase the ease of access to employment by sustainable modes of transport
- B: Reduce the impact of commuting trips on local communities
- C: Increase the number of children travelling to school by sustainable modes
- F: Enable access to a range of leisure, cultural and tourism facilities for residents and visitors alike by a range of modes of transport
- J: Reduce the risk of people being killed or seriously injured.

### **Financial:**

The cost of the scheme, for which these works are a part, is estimated to be between £250,000 -300,000 and is being funded primarily from S106 contribution secured from the Sandhills and Grovebury Farm developments.

### **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 reduce traffic speeds and improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians using Billington Road. It will also improve the streetscape and enhance amenity for local residents.

**Sustainability:**

Implementation of the scheme is one of the measures designed to enable the delivery of the Southern Leighton Buzzard Development Travel Plan (SLB-TP).

The SLB-TP requires CBC and the developer to work in collaboration to encourage residents and visitors to the development site to travel by alternative modes of transport than the private car. It has the target of reducing by over 20% the expected level of demand for car journeys from and to the development site as compared to an alternative development of similar scale and location. TP measures are a major element of the strategy for mitigating the adverse impact of the development on local roads. The TP also has the aim of improving the vitality of the Town Centre by encouraging residents of SLB to use services/facilities in the town rather than driving to out of town retail centres.

A scheme of improvements to Billington Road, of which these proposals are a part, will create a safe and attractive corridor for people to walk and cycle between the development site and the town centre.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1. That the proposal to introduce a 20mph limit in Billington Road, Leighton Buzzard be implemented as published.**
- 2. That the proposal to introduce a raised table zebra crossing in Billington Road, Leighton Buzzard be implemented as published.**
- 3. That the impact of the proposed changes to Billington Road is monitored for a period of 2 years after the scheme's implementation.**

## **Background and Information**

1. The development to the south of Leighton Buzzard, consisting of the provision of approximately 1,500 dwellings, is located approximately one mile to the south of the town centre and to the immediate north of the A505 southern bypass.
2. In 2011-12, Central Bedfordshire Council and Arnold White Estates reached agreement on a range of Travel Plan measures that in combination would serve to make the development an 'exemplar' in its promotion and use of sustainable modes of transport. Through the successful implementation of the Travel Plan, both parties would work collaboratively to ensure that the potentially severe impacts of the development on the local road infrastructure would be mitigated. The parties agreed a target of achieving a mode shift for local journeys of over 20% when compared with other similar sites.
3. As part of the transport scheme associated with the development, Central Bedfordshire Council agreed to enhance Billington Road to provide an attractive access corridor linking the residential areas with the town centre.
4. To assist with the implementation of this scheme, Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) agreed to direct government grant funding towards achieving a sustainable transport system for the town. This was accompanied by developer S106 funding to help deliver CBCs proposals to reduce car dependency for residents of Leighton Buzzard; whilst also aiming to increase public transport patronage and promote walking and cycling throughout the town.
5. The delivery of a scheme to enhance the attractiveness of Billington Road as a sustainable transport corridor is part of CBCs obligations. The advertised proposals (see Appendix A and B) are integral to a wider scheme that includes resurfacing and surface treatments, traffic calming features, landscaping and enhanced street lighting.
6. The proposals were formally advertised by public notice in October 2016. Consultations were carried out with the emergency services and other statutory bodies, Leighton-Linslade Town Council and CBC Ward Members. The details of the proposals were published on the CBC website and advertised locally by the posting of site notices (see Appendix C).

## **Representations**

7. A total of two representations were received, reproduced at Appendix D. The correspondents raised the following points:

8. 20 mph speed limit

- i) That a 20mph speed limit should only be introduced where average vehicle speeds are below 24 mph, in accordance with police guidelines.
- ii) That by reducing vehicles speed to 20mph. there will be an adverse impact on fuel efficiency and levels of noxious emissions.
- iii) That a 20mph speed limit does not confer safety benefits for cyclists using the carriageway and for pedestrians crossing the road.
- iv) That without enforcement, the introduction of a 20mph limit would have no discernible effect on the speed of traffic which frequently exceeds the existing 30mph limit.

9. Raised table zebra crossing

- i) That there is already a 'fit-for-purpose' signal controlled crossing and that its replacement with a zebra crossing will encourage cyclists to use it without due regard to approaching traffic.
- ii) That the provision of raised features is injurious to vehicles and their occupants and causes higher levels of noxious emissions.
- iii) That cycling over raised tables/speed humps is unpleasant experience.

10. Other comments

- i) That to achieve speeds of or close to 20mph, a number of traffic calming features would be required along Billington Road. When determining the nature and positioning of appropriate features, consideration should be given to introducing mini-roundabouts at the junctions with The Maltings and Chaloner Court.
- ii) That to achieve the desired reduction in the number of vehicles, particularly HGVs using Billington Road as a cut through, clear and appropriate signage would be required.
- iii) That a 20mph speed limit can adversely affect road safety when applied arbitrarily. This is because setting a limit absolves drivers from responsibility for moderating their speed in response to the local environment. Where limits are set too low for the road environment, drivers tend to get frustrated and take more risks.
- iv) That speed measurement data should be made public.
- v) That the strategy of encouraging greater and community use of residential roads is inappropriate.
- vi) That the provision of traffic calming introduces a perverse incentive as it encourages travel to alternative centres for activities such as shopping.

## Responses / Conclusions

### 11. 20m mph speed limit

It has been a longstanding policy of the council to introduce 20 mph speed limits in residential areas. This policy has the support of both national and local cycling groups who argue strongly that lower speeds are a major determinant of the number of people walking and cycling.

The scheme that has been designed for Billington Road includes a range of traffic calming features that are designed to achieve average vehicle speeds below 24 mph. This will have the benefit of making the speed limit 'self-enforcing'.

It is expected that once the scheme is in place, up to a third of the traffic that currently uses Billington Road as a through route will transfer to Chartmoor Road. Assuming this outcome is achieved there will be a net positive benefit in respect of vehicle emissions.

### 12. Raised table zebra crossing

It has been policy within Leighton Buzzard to favour raised zebras when installing controlled crossings of roads with a 20mph speed limit.

The provision of a raised table zebra crossing at the location of the current Toucan Crossing introduces a feature designed to reduce average traffic speeds on this section of Billington Road.

All new / replacement crossings installed in Central Bedfordshire are subject to an approved Road Safety Audit process which considers environmental factors. Nationally, there is no definitive evidence to say which of the alternative forms of controlled crossings is inherently safer.

The design and ramping of the raised table will be to a standard that provides an acceptable ride quality for all types of vehicles, including buses and cycles. Recovered traffic signals can be stored and reused to refurbish existing installations, assuming the equipment is to an up-to-date standard.

### 13. Other concerns

The design for the Billington Road traffic calming scheme was determined through a process of public consultation held in 2011. Whilst the number of vertical features has been kept to a minimum, the combination of chicanes and surface treatments should encourage a significant proportion of through traffic to migrate to Chartmoor Road/ Grovebury Road.

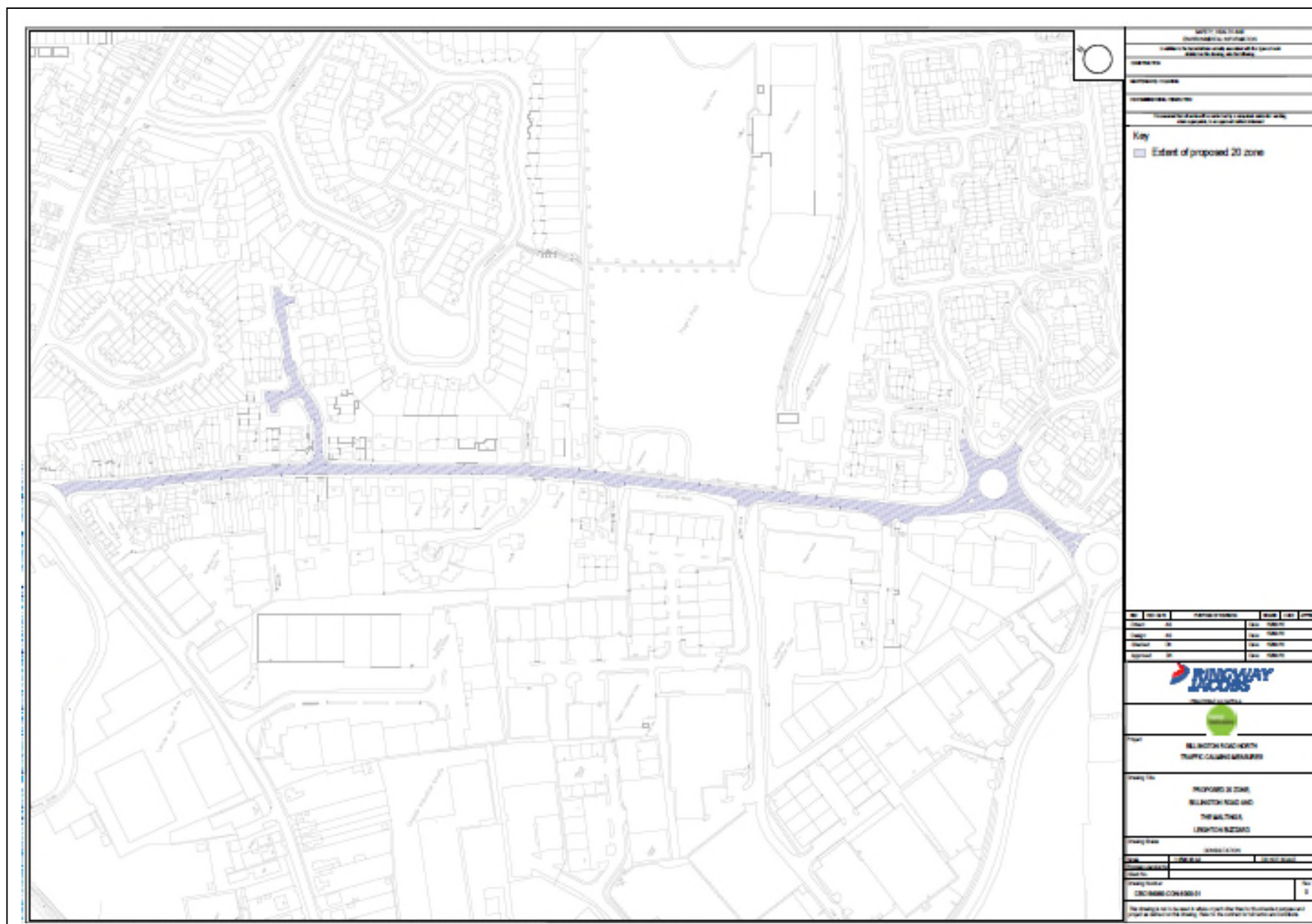
### 14. It is CBCs policy to review sections of roads where there is evidence that existing speed limits have poor compliance, especially where speed is shown to be a factor in reported collisions.

15. CBC often commissions the collection of traffic flow and speed data at the planning stage of road improvement schemes. It is not the council's policy to make this data public, partly because it is received in a format that is unsuitable for web publication.
16. CBC's approach to street design is detailed in Section 10 of its Design Guide, 'Movement and Streets'. This document is available to view online at <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/planning/design/info.aspx>. The design for Billington Road is in accord with Design Guide policies.

**Appendices:**

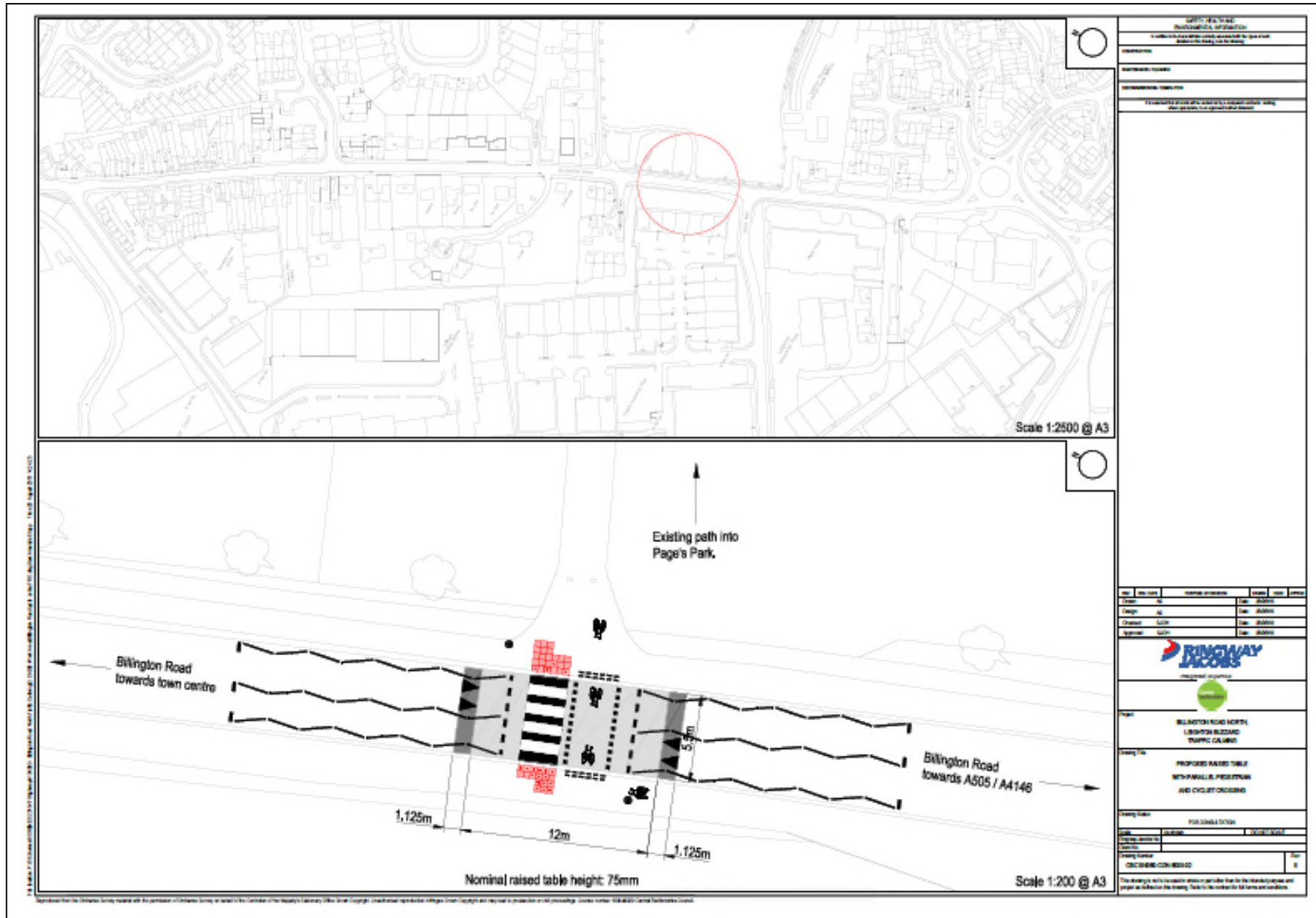
- Appendix A – 20mph speed limit extents – scheme drawing
- Appendix B – Raised table zebra crossing – scheme drawing
- Appendix C – Public notice of proposals - copy
- Appendix D – Public representations - copy

## Appendix A – 20mph extents



<p><b>WATKINS</b>          CONSULTING ENGINEERS          110-112 BRISTOL ROAD          BRISTOL, AVON, BS1 3BT</p>																										
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<p><b>PROJECT</b>          BELKIN ROAD NORTH          TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES</p>																										
<p><b>PROPOSED 20 ZONE</b>          BELKIN ROAD AND          THE WATKINS          LINCOLN ROAD</p>																										
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## Appendix B: Raised table zebra crossing design



<b>CLIENT'S TITLE</b> TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION TO BE USED FOR THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROAD CROSSING AND CYCLEWAY CROSSING	
<b>DATE</b> 15/03/2023	
<b>PROJECT NAME</b> BILINGTON ROAD NORTH LIGHTNING BLISSARD TRAFFIC CALMING	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b> BILINGTON ROAD NORTH, LIGHTNING BLISSARD, TRAFFIC CALMING	
<b>PROJECT NUMBER</b> 2023/001	

NO.	REV.	DESCRIPTION	DATE	BY	CHECKED
1	1	ISSUED FOR TENDER	15/03/2023	ABC	DEF
2	2	REVISED FOR COMMENTS	20/03/2023	ABC	DEF
3	3	REVISED FOR COMMENTS	25/03/2023	ABC	DEF
4	4	REVISED FOR COMMENTS	30/03/2023	ABC	DEF



<b>PROJECT NAME</b> BILINGTON ROAD NORTH LIGHTNING BLISSARD TRAFFIC CALMING	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b> BILINGTON ROAD NORTH, LIGHTNING BLISSARD, TRAFFIC CALMING	
<b>PROJECT NUMBER</b> 2023/001	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b> 15/03/2023	

<b>CLIENT'S NAME</b> RINGWAY JACOBS	
<b>CLIENT'S ADDRESS</b> 100 RINGWAY ROAD, BILINGTON, LEICESTERSHIRE, LE12 6JF	
<b>CLIENT'S PHONE</b> 01530 212345	
<b>CLIENT'S EMAIL</b> info@ringwayjacobs.co.uk	
<b>CLIENT'S WEBSITE</b> www.ringwayjacobs.co.uk	

This drawing is not to be used for any other purpose than for the intended purpose and project as defined in the drawing. It is not to be used for any other purpose.





# PUBLIC NOTICE

**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PROPOSES TO REPLACE  
THE EXISTING SIGNALISED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING WITH A RAISED TABLE  
INCORPORATING A PARALLEL PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST ZEBRA CROSSING  
IN BILLINGTON ROAD, LEIGHTON BUZZARD**

Notice is hereby given that Central Bedfordshire Council, in exercise of its powers under Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Section 90 A-I of the Highways Act 1980 and all other enabling powers, proposes to modify the pedestrian crossing located between the junctions of Oakridge Park and Eden Way in Billington Road, Leighton Buzzard. It is proposed to remove the existing signalised pedestrian crossing and install a raised table incorporating a parallel pedestrian and cyclist zebra crossing. These works are part of a scheme to reduce traffic speeds and improve pedestrian and cyclist facilities. The scheme will improve road safety for all road users.

**A Raised Parallel Pedestrian and Cyclist Zebra Crossing at a nominal height of 75mm and approximately 15 metres long, including ramps, extending across the full width of the road is proposed to be sited at the following location:-**

Billington Road, Leighton Buzzard at a point approximately midway between the junctions of Oakridge Park and Eden Way.

Further Details may be examined during normal office hours at the address shown below, viewed online at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices) or tel. 0300 300 5003.

Comments should be sent in writing to the Traffic Management team at the address below or e-mail [traffic.consultation@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:traffic.consultation@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) by 11 November 2016.

Central Bedfordshire Council  
Priory House  
Chicksands  
Shefford SG17 5TQ

Marcel Coiffait  
Director of Community Services

18 October 2016

# PUBLIC NOTICE



## **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PROPOSES TO INTRODUCE A 20MPH SPEED LIMIT ZONE IN BILLINGTON ROAD AND THE MALTINGS, LEIGHTON BUZZARD**

Reason for proposal: The speed limit is part of a road safety scheme and is being promoted in combination with other speed reducing measures, including a raised pedestrian/cyclist crossing.

Effect of the Order:

**To introduce a 20mph Speed Limit Zone on the following lengths of road in Leighton Buzzard:-**

1. Billington Road, from its junction with Grovebury Road extending in a southerly direction to its junction with Chartmoor Road.
2. The Maltings, for its full length.

Further Details may be examined during normal office hours at the address shown below, viewed online at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices) or tel. 0300 300 5003.

Comments should be sent in writing to the Traffic Management team at the address below or e-mail [traffic.consultation@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:traffic.consultation@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) by 11 November 2016. Any objections must state the grounds on which they are made.

Order Title If made will be "Central Bedfordshire Council (Lake Street and Billington Road Area, Leighton Buzzard) (20mph Speed Limit Zone) Order 2016\*\*"

Central Bedfordshire Council  
Priory House  
Chicksands  
Shefford SG17 5TQ

Marcel Coiffait  
Director of Community Services

18 October 2016

## Appendix D: Representations

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 31 October 2016 15:47  
To: Traffic Consultation  
Subject: 20 mph speed limit Billington Road, Leighton Buzzard

Whilst delighted with the news of a speed limit restriction, I feel more than one zebra and raised crossing is needed to calm traffic along Billington Road. Also mini roundabouts at the junctions of the Maltings and Chaloner Court may be feasible. I feel on this straight run of road motorists will still reach unacceptable speeds as is happening at the moment. Clear and adequate signage is required especially as large lorries use Billington Road as a short cut. Will any improvement be made to the footpaths?

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPad

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**From:** [REDACTED] [mailto:[REDACTED]]  
**Sent:** 01 November 2016 21:16  
**To:** Traffic Consultation  
**Subject:** Objection to Proposed 20mph speed limit and raised zebra crossing - Billington Road, Leighton Buzzard

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my objection to the following statutory notice.

**Proposed 20mph speed limit and raised zebra crossing - Billington Road, Leighton Buzzard**

My objection is for both the 20mph zone introduction and the removal of traffic lights and replacement with a dual use raised table. I live locally, and will have to go through this 20 zone for many journeys, which I do by car, bike and on foot.

I am all up for improving road safety, for all users, but this proposal is not the way forward.

Objections for the 20mph zone:

- The primary issue on Billington road is the road being used like a race track. These drivers are already ignoring the 30mph limit, and it is highly unlikely that a 20 sign will make any difference to how they drive. Enforcing the existing 30mph limit would genuinely improve the experience of using the road, rather than bringing everyone to a snails pace.

- Driving at 20mph increases the emissions of most cars, as well as reducing the MPG of the vehicle. I have confirmed this in my own vehicle. With greenhouse gases increasing, and a policy towards green transport, we should not be actioning a policy that is less green.

- Due to wide ignorance of 20mph zones (the 20mph limit in Husborne Crawley is a perfect example, especially at night), actually sticking to 20mph can be a scary experience in itself. The variance between cars breaking the limit, and those sticking to it does nothing to improve safety.

- Speed limit reductions (to 20mph) should only take place when the existing average speed is below 24mph. Most evenings, cars do appear to travel closer to 40mph along here. When driving myself, within the current limit, I do find myself to be one of the slowest vehicles on the road. What is the current average speed along here? (Excluding any traffic queuing at the give way) Judging by the sensor strips across the road recently, one did take place and the figures found here should be public.

- According to the council, one of the reasons for introducing a 20mph limit is to improve the experience of cyclists and pedestrians. Cycling through 20mph zones, in my experience, is one of the worst environments to cycle in, worse than national speed limit areas. Cars which do stick to 20mph overtake cyclists so slowly, that there is usually an oncoming car before they actually get past. Due to this, many drivers cut back in far too close, a situation that could have been avoided by keeping a sensible speed difference between cars and cyclists. This is even worse when narrowing of the road takes place at the same time as the speed reduction.

As a pedestrian, crossing the road takes longer, as traffic is approaching slowly. Crossing in 30mph zones is generally a much easier experience.

- By making pedestrians feel that the road is 20, therefore safe, many seem to forget common sense with crossing the road. Much of the "20's plenty" rhetoric is based around encouraging children to play in the road and to always feel safe. Billington road is certainly not somewhere to go and play football. Pages Park has good facilities for that.

- By forcing 20mph or less, drivers become forced to drive to their speedo rather than using their skill and judgement to drive to the road conditions. Since 30mph is suitable at most times, sticking to 20mph will not be natural and will require more concentration, taking drivers attention away from the road ahead. Some older cars cannot do 20mph on cruise control/speed limiting.

- Driving anywhere across Leighton Buzzard has become a chore thanks to the spread of 20mph (and raised tables), to the extent that driving to Milton Keynes via the A4146 is becoming a much more attractive option, one that often does not take much longer. Pushing shoppers out of county will slowly kill our town centre.

Objections to the raised table:

- There are already traffic lights installed at this point. The traffic lights provide a safe method of crossing, where pedestrians have priority as soon as the lights change. This prevents traffic from conflicting with pedestrians.

- Cycling over raised tables/speed humps is not a pleasant experience. The policy should help cyclists, rather than disadvantage them.

- We are currently in a period of uncertainty, council tax is increasing but income is not. Unnecessary council spending such as this should not happen. There is already a perfectly good set of lights here, which must have cost a fair bit to install, and would go to waste once removed. All this to actually downgrade the quality the crossing.

- Sharp angled bumps cause damage to vehicle suspension, even when taken at 20mph. The braking and accelerating the other side also increase emissions. Again, this is not green, which is against what this policy is aiming for.

- Are these traffic lights being reused elsewhere? If not, this is very wasteful of an asset.

- The raised table will almost certainly encourage some cyclists coming out of pages park to shoot out across the road without stopping, since the table will be at the same level as the pavement. Even with cars doing 20mph or less (if actually paying attention to the very low limit) , accidents such as this could still cause injury.

I hope this has provided a full understanding of my objections to the proposal.



Leighton Buzzard Resident