

**VILLAGE SPEED LIMIT PROGRAMME 2009/10
PROPOSED 30MPH SPEED LIMITS IN COUND AND UPPER COUND**

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Summary

This report considers an objection received to the proposed 30mph speed limits in Cound and Upper Cound.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to approve the making of a 30mph Speed Limit Order in Cound and Upper Cound.

Report

The Proposal

1. Shropshire Council's Village Speed Limits Policy was approved for implementation in October 2007 following widespread consultation with stakeholders and has been based on guidance contained within Department for Transport Circular 01/2006 – Setting Local Speed Limits.
2. The Policy provides a proactive approach by reviewing all of the villages in Shropshire, providing a priority ranking and offering a suitable speed limit to these communities that are achievable in terms of legal enforceability and budgetary constraints. A copy of the Village Speed Limit Policy is attached – see Appendix 3.
3. After identifying and prioritising countywide villages not currently subject to a 30mph speed limit, a 3 year programme for delivery was proposed for the 113 villages listed, with 55 proposed to be investigated and where appropriate implemented during 2009/10.
4. An informal consultation meeting was held on the 10th February 2009 with a representative from Cound Parish Council and Councillor Peter Nutting to discuss the average speeds recorded

in the village and to agree a proposal for an appropriate speed limit for the villages of Cound and Upper Cound. A representative from West Mercia Constabulary (Brian Williams) was informed of the meeting but was unable to attend. The average speeds recorded were 24.7 and 23.4mph respectively in the proposed 30mph limit in Upper Cound, which would fit the criteria for a signed 30mph limit under Shropshire Council's Village Speed Limit Policy.

5. Statutory consultation of the agreed proposals was carried out for a period of 21 days from 12th August to 2nd September 2009. A letter of objection was received to the implementation of the proposed 30mph speed limits in Cound and Upper Cound (Appendix 2).

Consideration of Objection

6. The objector feels that the consultation notice and schedule are poorly worded and imprecise and that the description of the highway sections could easily have been clarified with a map. The objector also feels that if the consultation is not designed to be easily understood by members of the public then it has failed and should not be considered to be valid.
7. The consultation notice and schedule for Traffic Orders are a legal document and are therefore written in the appropriate format. There is also a plan which accompanies all of the Traffic Orders advertised which shows the extent of the proposals and this is available on deposit at Shropshire Council premises, local to the relevant order, for the duration of the statutory advertisement period.
8. The second point of the objection is to a blanket order over several miles of highway in between settlements. The objector asks if speeds have been checked on all the roads and if the accident records have been compared. The objector also requests that the plan and schedule of reasons be made available on the internet.
9. Shropshire Council's Village Speed Limit Policy (Appendix 3) has been based on guidance contained within Department for Transport Circular 01/2006 – Setting Local Speed Limits. Circular 01/2006 expresses a statement of government policy that "where appropriate, a 30mph speed limit should be the norm in villages" and this is the basis for the Council's approach in compiling the Policy. The Circular continues by stating that the "underlying aim" of speed management policies should be to achieve a safe distribution of speeds that reflects the function of the road and the impacts on the local community. This should be achieved by "a mean speed appropriate to the prevailing

conditions, and all vehicles moving at speeds as close to the posted speed limit as possible”.

In accordance with Shropshire Council's Village Speed Limit Policy, an automatic traffic counter will measure speed over a full week at a location near the centre of the village and the mean speed will be calculated to determine the appropriate limit for the village in accordance with the intervention chart contained in the policy document.

10. The automatic traffic counter was laid in Upper Cound adjacent to properties 28 and 29 and recorded average speeds of 24.7 and 23.4mph respectively which indicates that a 30mph speed limit is appropriate and in line with the Policy. It was originally envisaged that the villages of Cound and Upper Cound were to have one 30mph speed limit proposed for both settlements however to avoid the negative effects of a “blanket” approach over the whole area, it was proposed by officers that the settlements be treated individually with a minimal length of 30mph restriction, in each village, to create maximum benefits.
11. With reference to comparing the accident records in the area, the Village Speed Limit Policy does not take accident history into consideration as it is intended to review all of the County villages where 30mph speed limit was not in place with a view to delivering a reduced speed limit where possible as paragraph 9 above. The accident records were however taken into consideration when prioritising the villages into the 3 year programme for delivery.
12. It is accepted that ideally the plan and statement of reasons for Traffic Orders for speed limits be made available on the internet and although this is not something that is currently carried out, it is something that we are working on doing in the future. Plans and statements of reasons however will be e-mailed or sent to members of the public on request.
13. The third point of the objection is based on the view that the proposed 30mph speed limits in Cound and Upper Cound will not receive enforcement by the Police. He also states that in his view the widespread placement of 30mph speed limits is irresponsible unless they are self enforcing as it gives a false sense of security for pedestrians and cyclists.
14. The West Mercia Constabulary response to the statutory consultation states that they have no objections to the proposals. The Department for Transport guidance states that the average speeds recorded after the introduction of a speed limit should be at or below the posted limit. In the case of Cound and Upper Cound, the current average vehicle speeds are 24.7 and 23.4mph respectively which indicates the proposed 30mph speed limits will be self enforcing as speeds are not

travelled at this limit currently and therefore should not require Police enforcement.

15. Circular 01/2006 advises that Traffic Authorities will wish to satisfy themselves that the benefits exceed the disbenefits before introducing or changing a speed limit. Appendix A of the Village Speed Limit Policy (See Appendix 3 to this report) refers to this advice and the findings for Cound and Upper Cound are as below -

- Accidents and casualty savings – the introduction of 30mph speed limits will reduce the likelihood and severity of an accident should it occur.
- Traffic flow and emissions – traffic volumes are likely to stay the same as journey times will not be greatly increased, however emissions will decrease with slower travelling vehicles which will be advantageous to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Average journey times are unlikely to increase as vehicles are already travelling at or below 30mph.
- Journey time reliability – this will be negligible as this is an area not subject to congestion.
- Environmental Impact – quality of life for residents will improve due to slower vehicle speeds and reduced noise pollution. Signage is kept to the minimum required to ensure the limit is legally enforceable.
- Level of public anxiety – no concerns have been received from other local residents regarding the proposals.
- Level of severance by fast moving vehicles – this proposed reduction in the speed limit would assist local residents and school children who have to cross the road to access the tennis courts and neighbours' properties. Conditions and facilities for vulnerable road users – a reduced speed limit will enhance road safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Cost of associated engineering or other physical measures and their maintenance – the costs of the engineering measures are kept to minimum signage requirements to enable legal enforcement.
- Cost of visual impact of signing and possible environmental impact of engineering or other physical measures – minimal environmental impact without red matting or yellow backed signs.
- Cost of enforcement – Cost of Police time will be reduced with the introduction of the lower speed limits as the number and severity of personal injury accidents on this length of road will be reduced. There will however be an increase in time for undertaking enforcement of the proposed new limits.

The Committee's remit and material considerations

16. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, this Committee is the body responsible for the consideration of objections to a Speed Limit Order and making the final decision as to whether to implement the Order or not.
17. In the circumstances therefore the Committee are asked to take into account the objection, the Policy itself and any material consideration prior to coming to their decision.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Plan showing extent of proposed 30mph limits in Cound and Upper Cound

Objection letter received

Shropshire Council Village Speed Limit Policy

Speed Management Strategy Committee Report (September 2007)

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The contents of the report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights Act.

Environmental Appraisal

The procedure for considering this application will have no environmental implications

Risk Management Appraisal

This Report deals with the processes to be followed to fulfil the Council's statutory duty. Risk management has been appraised as part of the consideration of this Report

Community / Consultations Appraisal

Both informal consultation and Statutory advertisement has been carried out. The objection received was in response to the Statutory advertisement.

Cabinet Member

Martin Taylor-Smith

Local Member

Claire Wild

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Plan of proposals

Appendix 2 – Email from the objector

Appendix 3 – Shropshire Council "Village Speed Limit Policy"