**OFFICER DECISION REPORT – TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER (TRO)**

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**APPROVAL TO PROGRESS (PUBLIC CONSULATION)**

PREPARED BY: Traffic Management Team, Highways and Traffic Group

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| **TITLE OF REPORT:** **PROPOSAL:** **SCHEME REF No:****REPORT AUTHOR:** | **A368 Speed Limit Route Review** **20mph, 30mph, and 40mph speed limits****24-020 / LC****Lewis Cox** |

**1. DELEGATION**

The delegation to be exercised in this report is contained within **Part 3**, **Section 4** of the Constitution under the **Delegation of Functions to Officers,** as follows:

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| **Section A** | The Chief Executive, Strategic Directors, Divisional Directors and Heads of Service have delegated power to take any decision falling within their area of responsibility….” |
| **Section B** | Without prejudice to the generality of this, Officers are authorised to:serve any notices and make, amend or revoke any orders falling within his/her area of responsibility. |
| **Section D9** | An Officer to whom a power, duty or function is delegated may nominate or authorise another Officer to exercise that power, duty or function, provided that Officer reports to or is responsible to the delegator. |

*For the purposes of this report, the Director of Place Management holds the delegated power to make, amend or revoke any Orders.*

**2. LEGAL AUTHORITY**

This proposal is made in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, which under Section 1 provides, generally, for Orders to be made for the following reasons, and in the case of this report specifically for the reason(s) shown below:

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| (a) | for avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other road or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising, or | X |
| (b) | for preventing damage to the road or to any building on or near the road, or |  |
| (c) | for facilitating the passage on the road or any other road of any class of traffic (including pedestrians), or | X |
| (d) | for preventing the use of the road by vehicular traffic of a kind which, or its use by vehicular traffic in a manner which, is unsuitable having regard to the existing character of the road or adjoining property, |  |
| (e) | (without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (d) above) for preserving the character of the road in a case where it is specially suitable for use by persons on horseback or on foot, or | X |
| (f) | for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs, or | X |
| (g) | for any of the purposes specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of section 87 of the Environment Act 1995 (air quality) |  |

**3. PROPOSAL**

To reduce the speed limits along sections of the A368 within Bath and North East Somerset (including a small section of North Somerset as agreed), from Marksbury though to Ubley, which includes the villages of Chelwood, Stowey, Bishop Sutton, and Compton Martin. The proposals include speed limits of 20, 30, and 40 miles per hour.

The proposals are shown on the attached drawings 1 to 6.

**4. BACKGROUND**

A number of road traffic collisions have occurred along the A368, and road safety concerns have been expressed by residents, Parish Councils, Ward Members, and the Police. As a result, a review of the existing speed limits along the route, from Marksbury to Ubley has been undertaken by the Traffic Management Team.

The Traffic Management Team will also review other signage along the route and remove / upgrade / improve where it is deemed necessary.

If the 20mph speed limit proposals are introduced and compliance with this becomes an issue it may be necessary to consider traffic calming measures along some sections of road in the future.

# 5. SOURCE OF FINANCE

2024/25 Transport Improvement Programme,

**6. CONSULTATION REQUIREMENT**

Theproposal requires informal consultation with the Chief Constable, Parish Councils, Ward Members, and the Cabinet Member for Highways.

PROPOSAL(S) APPROVED FOR INFORMAL CONSULTATION WITH THE CHIEF CONSTABLE, PARISH COUNCILS, AND WARD MEMBERS.

Paul Garrod Date: 6th June 2024

Traffic Management and Network Manager

6. INFORMAL CONSULTATION

**Cllr David Harding:** Thank you for your advance notice of the potential changes to the A368 speed limits through the Chew Valley Ward that are due to go to public consultation in the near future.

The changes you have proposed broadly reflect the multiple conversations and site visits we have had, and the views of many residents that have written to us, spoken to us casually or in meetings in the ward, and who have answered our surveys.

The reduction in speeds within the villages proposed and the standardisation of the speeds along the roads within villages will help improve road safety.

Crossing the A368 by foot or walking alongside it, even on a footpath (where they exist) in a number of the villages is a hazardous experience.

The proposed reductions in speed in a number of the side roads in the villages is also great to see given that many children play, cycle or walk in these areas and again reflects the feedback from many residents across the ward.

I believe as we have discussed, and I know the majority of the residents in these areas do too, that the junctions from Redlands Lane and Stowey Bottom would benefit from the A368 being 30mph at these points given the very difficult site lines when exiting from these lanes despite the added signage on the A368 promised.

Many thanks for your skills, local knowledge and professionalism during this process.

**Cllr Anna Box:** I support this review of speed changes within the Chew Valley Ward and feel it is a good start in tacking our dangerous roads. Throughout our campaign and continuing into our elected positions, we have heard time and time again about our residents wanting an improvement from the frightening speeding that people in the valley see every day. I thank the officers for taking on the feedback we have given them to improve this final plan, some from residents and some from our parish councils. I also support and appreciate the continuity of the speed limits between villages (40 mph), as many have commented on the confusing nature of this as it stands now. I would only wish that in the future, any properties being built on the edges of villages have access to the reduced speeds as well.

**Cllr Sam Ross:** I raised the plans with Chelwood Parish Council at their meeting on 31 May and received a positive response. I agree that the reduction to 20mph through the village will benefit all residents, especially when crossing the road to the hall.

As a user of the A368, all the measures will be an improvement, especially the reductions from 60/50 to 40mph. The only area which may present a challenge is along the hill exiting Compton Martin when heading away from Bath. This section requires a great deal of control to keep to 30mph and getting drivers to achieve 20mph may require active enforcement. However, I can see the benefit for the residents in that section if the reduced speed limit is achieved consistently.

**Avon and Somerset Police:** It is understood from the Informal Consultation Document provided that the proposal is “To reduce the speed limits along sections of the A368 within Bath and North East Somerset (including a small section of North Somerset as agreed), from Marksbury though to Ubley, which includes the villages of Chelwood, Stowey, Bishop Sutton, and Compton Martin. The proposals include speed limits of 20, 30, and 40 miles per hour.

The proposals are shown on the attached drawings 1 to 6.” And also, that “A number of road traffic collisions have occurred along the A368, and road safety concerns have been expressed by residents, Parish Councils, Ward Members, and the Police. As a result, a review of the existing speed limits along the route, from Marksbury to Ubley has been undertaken by the Traffic Management Team.

The Traffic Management Team will also review other signage along the route and remove / upgrade / improve where it is deemed necessary.

If the 20mph speed limit proposals are introduced and compliance with this becomes an issue it may be necessary to consider traffic calming measures along some sections of road in the future.”

The accompanying documentation to your email does not contain data regarding current speed compliance or collision data, please could this be provided.

The Traffic Management Unit is the only Unit within the Force which can respond to local authorities on Traffic Management matters on behalf of the Chief Constable. The Informal Consultation Document contains reference to the speed limit review as being due to road safety concerns which have been expressed by police, amongst others. However, the Traffic Management Unit is unaware of any prior informal communication/consultation, concern expressed or a request for an A368 speed limit review to B&NES from colleagues, please could you advise from where this request arose?

As previously discussed, we have a Force stance regarding the introduction of speed limits, which has been written to reflect the current speed environment. I copy this below for your information.

“Speed limits are only one element of speed management and local speed limits should not be set in isolation. They should be part of a package with other measures to manage speeds, which include engineering, visible interventions and landscaping standards that respect the needs of all road users and raise the driver’s awareness of their environment, together with education, driver information, training and publicity.

The police service has to ensure all resources are used effectively in responding to community priorities. Avon and Somerset Constabulary will support all appropriate speed limits, including 20mph roads, where;

The limit looks and feels like the limit, giving visiting motorists who wish to conform that chance; the desired outcome has to be speeds at the limit chosen so as to achieve safe roads for other and vulnerable users, not high speeds and high enforcement;

The limit is self-enforcing ( with reducing features) not requiring large scale enforcement;

The limit is only introduced where mean speeds are already close to the limit to be imposed, (24mph in a 20mph limit) or with interventions that make the limit clear to visiting motorists;

Speeding problems identified in an area must have the engineering, site clarity and need re-assessed, not simply a call for more enforcement.

Enforcement will be considered in all clearly posted limits, given other priorities, and this will be by:

Targeted enforcement where there is deliberate offending and the limits are clear; Where limits are not clear (that is they don’t feel like or look like the limit or are on inappropriate roads), they will not be routinely enforced, only targeted where there is intelligence of obvious deliberate disregard which may result in increased threat, harm or risk to other road users.

Deliberate high harm offenders will always be targeted and prosecuted whereas enforcement against drivers who simply misread the road may not be appropriate. None of the above should in anyway leave the impression that we will not enforce the law. As with all speed limits, and other enforcement work, we will use evidence to ensure that our resources are allocated in the most appropriate way using appropriate tactics.

Enforcement of limits that do not comply with the above representations could lead to mistaken offending and could risk the loss of public support. Enforcement cannot and must not take the place of proper engineering and or clear signing.”

We look forward to receiving the requested data in due course, to enable a fully informed response on behalf of the Chief Constable to the current informal consultation.

BANES Response: Information requested has been supplied in response via a separate email.

**Sutton Stowey Parish Council:** Whilst we agree with the concept of traffic calming measures along the A368 in an attempt to make the roads in our villages safer, this is a fast road providing a critical link between other arterial routes and is heavily used. We have misconceptions about the proposed measures which purely reduce unmanaged speed limits along this long stretch. The police have previously held that they do not support any regulation that cannot be practically enforced, because when the public become used to ignoring what are seen as unreasonable laws it becomes far easier to ignore more serious ones and twenty speed limit changes in such a short distance cannot be practically enforced on a regular basis. What other traffic calming measures have been considered that are self-policing? We have been advised that such measures would need to be complimented with street lighting which is in direct conflict with the Parish Councils directive concerning dark skies.

An assertion is made in the proposed TRO that one of the reasons for the introduction of these restrictions is the number road traffic collisions that have occurred along the A368. Statistics show that there have been very few serious road traffic collisions on the portion of the A368 covered by this proposal & that where speed was a factor in those collisions then at least one vehicle involved was travelling far in excess of the current speed limit, as such there is no reason to conclude that a lower base speed limit would have had any impact on the cause of the few collisions that have occurred, whilst negatively impacting of the other law abiding road users.

The number of signs that will be required to meet the legal requirements of indicating these many speed limit changes will very significantly urbanise these rural villages & roads significantly changing the character of the surroundings. It will also be extremely costly which would be considered excessive when B&NES are claiming 30 million pounds worth of savings in other key areas of services due to budget shortfalls.

Because pavements are rare & hedges to the roadside are commonplace along the proposed section of the A368 any sign will inevitably encroach into the narrow pavements where they do exist or into the carriageway where there are no pavements, potentially moving larger vehicles over the centre line to avoid hitting the signs, adding to the dangers caused by this proposal.

Introducing 20mph into Bishop Sutton because of the linear nature of the road, will most certainly require associated traffic calming measures, e.g.chicanes or speed humps as practiced in the village of Tunley. Again, the character of the road would not be preserved.

The Parish Council have purchased the Auto Speed Watch system to monitor the levels of speed through Bishop Sutton 24/7. This was to provide statistics from an independent source to substantiate whether the Parish Council should be taking further action or whether individual perception was providing misleading information.

There is also no evidence to substantiate limiting the speed limit from Bishop Sutton to the Chelwood Roundabout.

Comments re: Stowey Proposal

This is already a road that holds a weight limit restriction which is regularly abused, is not self-policed or policed, unless requested. How will a reduction in the speed limit help reduce the number of offending vehicles that regularly travel through this small village?

This proposal would be of no consequence and will introduce a proliferation of additional signage in a rural setting, urbanising it. This will have an adverse effect on the village scene and is not preserving the character of the road.

BANES Response: Information requested has been supplied in response via a separate email.

Cllr Manda Rigby CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS: No response received.

It is noted that Cllr Rigby is aware of the scheme and has discussed lengths of the speed limits and has had a good input into the final design of the scheme

**8. RECOMMENDATION**

As no significant objections and/or comments have been received following the informal consultation described above, the formal Traffic Regulation Order process (the public advertisement of the proposals) should be progressed.

Paul Garrod Date: 21st July 2024

Traffic Management & Network Manager

**9.** **DECISION**

As the officer holding the above delegation, I approve the progression of this Traffic Regulation Order.

In taking this decision, I confirm that due regard has been given to the Council’s public sector equality duty, which requires it to consider and think about how its policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.



Gary Peacock

Head of Service, Highway Delivery Date: 24th July 2024