

## **Recommendations from the Regulatory Committee on 19 October 2017**

### **Proposed Speed Limit Reduction C12, Charminster**

16 A report was considered by the Committee on a proposed reduction to the speed limit - from 50mph to 40 mph - on the C12 between Lower Burton and Charminster. Following consultation on the proposal, an objection had been received and the Committee was now being asked whether the proposed change to the speed limit should be implemented, as advertised.

The officers' presentation described what the proposal entailed and why it was necessary. The characteristics of the road were described and its relationship with the surrounding area. The steep descent over the southern section of the length, towards Lower Burton, was noted. The reduction in the speed limit was being proposed on road safety grounds and was designed to regulate or reduce the speed of traffic to be able to readily meet the conditions of the road in a managed way.

Given that the amount of traffic using this road had increased markedly over recent years due to the development at Charlton Down, that there were numerous accesses onto the C12 and that there had been many recorded injury collisions over that length, officers considered that reducing the limit as proposed would go a long way to minimising risk in the future.

Analysis of the speed survey data had indicated that a 40 mph limit would be reasonable and appropriate along that stretch of road. This proposal met the necessary speed limit policy criteria which the County Council had adopted

In response to the consultation exercise held, support had been received from the County Councillor for Three Valleys, West Dorset District Council, Charminster Parish Council and Dorset Police, with one objection to the proposal being received from Andrew Culley.

Public speaking then took place. Mr Culley considered that given that the mean vehicle speeds in the speed survey were below the limit being proposed; the new limit was unnecessary and could not be justified. He considered that there was no clear evidence to support what was being proposed and that Council resources could be put to better use. He said the Department for Transport (DfT) guidance was that speed limits should not be reduced where there was an engineering solution and a right turn lane would be the solution here. His view was that there was no basis for the reduction, which was contrary to DfT and the County Council's policy and that the officer's opinion on the benefit of this should not be supported.

Mark Simons, Chairman of Charminster Parish Council considered that the reduction would certainly benefit road safety given the use now being made of the road, its configuration and what limitations there were to visibility along the stretch, the number of accesses onto it and its accident record, there having been an accident in the last week. This would also enable traffic speeds to be more readily monitored. Concern had been expressed for some time at excessive speeds on this road and the reduction would allay much of that concern. The reduction in the limit was seen to be a key part of a package of measures supported by the Parish Council which was designed to manage traffic speeds.

Richard Coode considered the reduction to be necessary as a means of addressing excessive speed so that those manoeuvres which were necessary to

take place on the road could be undertaken safely and without undue risk. He felt that the reduction proposed would largely achieve this.

Clarification was provided by officers, in response to members questions, of how the speed survey data had been analysed and how it had been used as a basis for what was being proposed. Confirmation of how the speed limit policy had been applied in these circumstances was also provided.

Members considered that to have access to the accident statistics and how the speed survey data had been applied would benefit their understanding of the what they were being asked to consider and put matters into perspective. Given this, they asked that, when considering speed limit proposals in the future, this information should be made accessible to them. Particularly useful to them would be the accident data from the previous 5 year period so that trend comparisons could be made.

In this instance however, members considered that from what had been explained to them, what they had seen in the report and what they had heard at the meeting, they were able to recommend to Cabinet that the speed limit along this length of the C12 should be reduced to 40 mph. In their opinion, there was enough evidence to suggest that what was being proposed was largely in line with what was being experienced on the ground and there would be benefits to be gained from reducing the speed limit, in terms of improved road safety and in minimising what risks could arise.

Prior to this vote being taken, the Senior Solicitor had advised those members whom had arrived after the start of consideration of this matter to determine for themselves if they felt that they had received sufficient information on which to base their decision. If they felt this was not the case, they should not participate in the voting process. Members accepted this advice.

### **Recommended**

That having considered the objection received, the proposed reduction of the speed limit from 50 mph to 40mph on the C12 between Charminster and Lower Burton be approved.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

The proposal would regulate or reduce the speed of vehicles to a level which drivers can readily meet the general hazards which may be expected on this road. This would also fulfil the County Council's obligation to review speed limits in light of changes in DFT (Department for Transport) guidance "setting local speed limits".