

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Warwick Area Committee

Date of Committee 25 September 2007

Report Title A429 Stratford Road, Warwick - Proposed Speed Limit Changes

Summary A proposal to introduce lower speed limits on A429 Stratford Road, Warwick was publicly advertised. Objections were received asking for reductions beyond the advertised proposals. The report considers these and recommends that the speed limit changes are implemented as advertised.

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? Yes/No

Background Papers Objections to and support for the advertised speed limit changes proposals. Department for Transport Circular 01/2006 'Setting Local Speed Limits'.

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- *Details to be specified*

Other Committees

Local Member(s) Councillor R Randev – would prefer a further extension of the 30 mph to the Tournament Fields roundabout on Stratford Road and a 40 mph limit from the roundabout to Longbridge junction.
(With brief comments, if appropriate)

Other Elected Members

Cabinet Member
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)

Chief Executive

- Legal I Marriott – agreed.
- Finance
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils Warwick District Council – fully supportive of the advertised proposals.
- Health Authority West Midlands Ambulance Service – no objections.
- Police Warwickshire Police – no objections to the advertised proposals.
- Other Bodies/Individuals The Warwick Society – comments incorporated in the report.

FINAL DECISION **YES/NO** *(If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)*

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Warwick Area Committee - 25 September 2007

A429 Stratford Road, Warwick – Proposed Speed Limit Changes

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy

Recommendation

That the speed limit changes on A429 Stratford Road, Warwick are implemented as advertised.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A429 Stratford Road, Warwick leads south-westwards out of the town towards M40 Junction 15 (Longbridge). It is the main access into and out of the town from the south-west and carries high traffic flows.
- 1.2 A 40 mph speed limit on Stratford Road starts at the edge of the built-up area and continues towards the town centre. The road over which the 40 mph extends is residential in nature and is heavily used during weekday term-times by parents and pupils travelling to and from a nearby large secondary school, to other schools in the town and by commuters.
- 1.3 There are footways on both sides of the built-up length Stratford Road and many vehicular accesses to houses. There several side road junctions which lead to further residential areas. All these side roads have a 30 mph speed limit.
- 1.4 Beyond the end of the built-up area, land adjacent to Stratford Road is being developed. A new roundabout (the Tournament Fields roundabout) giving access into the development has already been built midway between the end of the built-up area and the motorway junction. A new 'T' junction is also to be constructed between the edge of the town and the Tournament Fields giving access to Aylesford school. On the opposite side from the new junction is an existing private access road to some Severn Trent works. Both the new and existing accesses will have right-turn lanes to assist turning manoeuvres.

2. The Speed Limit Proposals

- 2.1 The construction of the new 'T' junction referred to above with associated signs, road markings and turning traffic will introduce a speed-reducing element on the approach to the built-up part of Warwick. The existing 40 mph speed limit on

Stratford Road has been in place for many years. Road usage has changed since it was introduced and it is now considered that the 40 mph limit is not appropriate for this section of road. A proposal was, therefore, advertised to reduce the existing 40 mph limit on Stratford Road to 30 mph.

- 2.2 In conjunction with this, and to encourage a reduction in traffic speeds on the approach to the residential part of Warwick, it is proposed to introduce a 40 mph speed limit from the Tournament Fields roundabout to the extended 30 mph speed limit.
- 2.3 Midway between the Tournament Fields roundabout and the Longbridge junction is a sharp bend. On the Warwick side of the bend a small new residential development is under construction. Close to the motorway junction there are accesses off Stratford Road to two hotels. To encourage drivers to keep to an appropriate speed on this section of road, it is proposed to introduce a 50 mph speed limit.
- 2.4 Details of the advertised speed limit proposal are shown on the plan in **Appendix A**.
- 2.5 The Cabinet is due to consider a report for the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to approve a speed limit strategy. The Strategy would adopt the recommendations set out in the Department for Transport Circular 01/2006 'Setting Local Speed Limits' (DfT 01/2006).
- 2.6 Amongst the Key Points in the Introduction to the Circular are:-
 - (i) Speed limits should be evidence-led, self-explaining and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. They should encourage self-compliance and not be seen by drivers as being a target speed at which to drive in all circumstances.
 - (ii) Traffic authorities set 'local speed limits' in situations where local needs and considerations deem it desirable for drivers to adopt a speed which is different from the national speed limit. Local speed limits could be reduced or increased, depending upon the conditions and evidence.
- 2.7 The advertised speed limit proposals for Stratford Road, Warwick are broadly in accord with these Key Points and the recommendations in DfT 01/2006

3. Objections to the Speed Limit Proposals

- 3.1 Three objections, raising seven points, were received to the advertised proposals, two from individuals and one from Aylesford School.
- 3.2 The objections are detailed below with comments.

Objection Point One

- 3.3 The 30 mph speed limit should be extended to the Tournament Fields roundabout.

Response to Objection Point One

- 3.4 The Cabinet is due to consider a report from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to approve a Speed Limit Strategy. The Strategy would adopt the recommendations set out in the Department for Transport document Circular 01/2006 'Setting Local Speed Limits' (DfT 01/2006). The Circular suggests that mean traffic speeds should be taken into account when setting speed limits; mean traffic speeds show the potential for compliance with a speed limit.
- 3.5 The mean traffic speed on Stratford Road between the Tournament Fields roundabout and the start of the built-up area is 44 mph, showing that there would be a strong probability of a high level of non-compliance with a 30 mph speed limit.
- 3.6 If the 30 mph were to be extended to the Tournament Fields roundabout, drivers entering Warwick would travel along a 30 mph road with little to show the reason for the limit – there are no frontages and almost no accesses. There would be no incentive to reduce speed entering the built-up area and it is possible that traffic speeds would not significantly reduce on the length currently subject to the 40 mph limit and proposed for reduction to 30 mph.
- 3.7 The Police support the advertised proposal for a 40 mph limit on this section of road.

Objection Point Two

- 3.8 The main entrance to Aylesford School will soon be moved and pedestrian, cycle and vehicular traffic will cross Stratford Road at the new junction. The footpath and cycle path are on the opposite side of Stratford Road to the new access.
- 3.9 The new junction will include pedestrian refuges which will not be wide enough for cycles. Cyclists will have to cycle across Stratford Road to and from the cycle path on the opposite side of the road.

Response to Objection Point Two

- 3.10 Vehicular access to Aylesford school will be from the new access on Stratford Road. Pedestrian and cycle access to the school will remain available from the Warwick side as at present. Pedestrians and cyclists travelling to and from the school from this side will continue to use the normal entrance and are unlikely to transfer to a longer route via Stratford Road and the new access road.
- 3.11 The new refuges have been specifically designed to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians. They will be 2 metres wide transversely between the outer kerbing with additional space each side beyond the kerbing formed by hatched road markings.

Objection Point Three

- 3.12 From the Tournament Fields roundabout to Longbridge roundabout the speed limit should be 40 mph. Drivers will accept they are entering an area where restraint is required.

Response to Objection Point Three

- 3.13 For 40 mph speed limits DfT 01/2006 suggests that roads suitable for 40 mph are generally high quality suburban roads or those on the outskirts of urban areas where there is little development. Roads should have a good width and layout, parking and waiting restrictions in operation and buildings set back from the road.
- 3.14 A429 Stratford Road, Warwick over the section between Longbridge and the Tournament Fields roundabout is semi-rural in nature. There are no direct frontages and few accesses. There is a separate footway and cycleway alongside the carriageway.
- 3.15 The mean traffic speed midway between the sharp bend and the Tournament Fields roundabout is 38 mph. Whilst this would seem to indicate that a 40 mph limit could be enforceable, the general road layout and environment is such that a 40 mph limit would seem inappropriate to most drivers. The bend midway between the two roundabouts is a speed-limiting feature which helps to restrain excessive speed.
- 3.16 A 50 mph speed limit would be the first stage of a 'count-down' towards the town and accustom drivers to reducing speed where lower speeds are necessary.
- 3.17 DfT 01/2006 suggests that a 50 mph limit may be used on higher quality roads where there is little or no roadside development.

Objection Point Four

- 3.18 If the section between Longbridge and the Tournament Fields roundabout were to be 40 mph, drivers leaving Longbridge roundabout may be encouraged to use an alternative route if their destination is not actually in Warwick.

Response to Objection Point Four

- 3.19 Speed limits are imposed with regard to road conditions, not as a means of deterring drivers from using a road.

Objection Point Five

- 3.20 There is a 'mini-estate' hidden by the sharp bend.

Response to Objection Point Five

- 3.21 The 'mini-estate' access road is 130 metres from the apex of the bend and far enough away to ensure that a driver approaching from the Longbridge direction

would have sufficient time to reduce speed safely if observing a vehicle turning into or out of the access. A 40 mph speed limit would be unlikely to have a significant effect on traffic speeds this point.

Objection Point Six

- 3.22 Fewer road signs would be required for a 40 mph limit and would be less confusing for the public.

Response to Objection Point Six

- 3.23 The number of signs for a 50 mph limit would be almost the same as for a 40 mph limit. Repeater signs would be needed for either limit, the only addition being 40/50 mph signs at the change-over point.
- 3.24 The Tournament Fields roundabout, itself a speed-reducing feature, is a suitable point to change the 50 mph limit to 40 mph.

Objection Point Seven

- 3.25 The opportunity should be taken to introduce a 20 mph speed limit on West Street in Warwick.

Response to Objection Point Seven

- 3.26 This is not relevant to the proposals for Stratford Road and is more appropriate for consideration in any future traffic management proposals for Warwick town centre.

4. Other Comments Received about the Proposals

- 4.1 The Warwick Society welcomes the proposal to reduce the speed limits on the A429 Stratford Road as this will give safety benefits and make the route and thus the town centre slightly less attractive to through traffic. The Society suggests that short stretch of 50 mph limit is inappropriate with the bend and junction movements and should be 40 mph. There are also sustainability and air quality reasons for not permitting acceleration above 40 mph for this short distance following by braking at the roundabouts at each end. The Society would also like to see a 20 mph limit on West Street as recommended by the Town Centre Forum.
- 4.2 The matters of the 20 mph and 50 mph speed limits have been dealt with above.
- 4.3 Warwick District Council states it is 'fully supportive of the proposals'.
- 4.4 Newburgh Primary School 'welcomes and supports the proposal to reduce the speed limit for Stratford Road from 40 mph to 30 mph'.
- 4.5 The Police do not object to the advertised proposals.

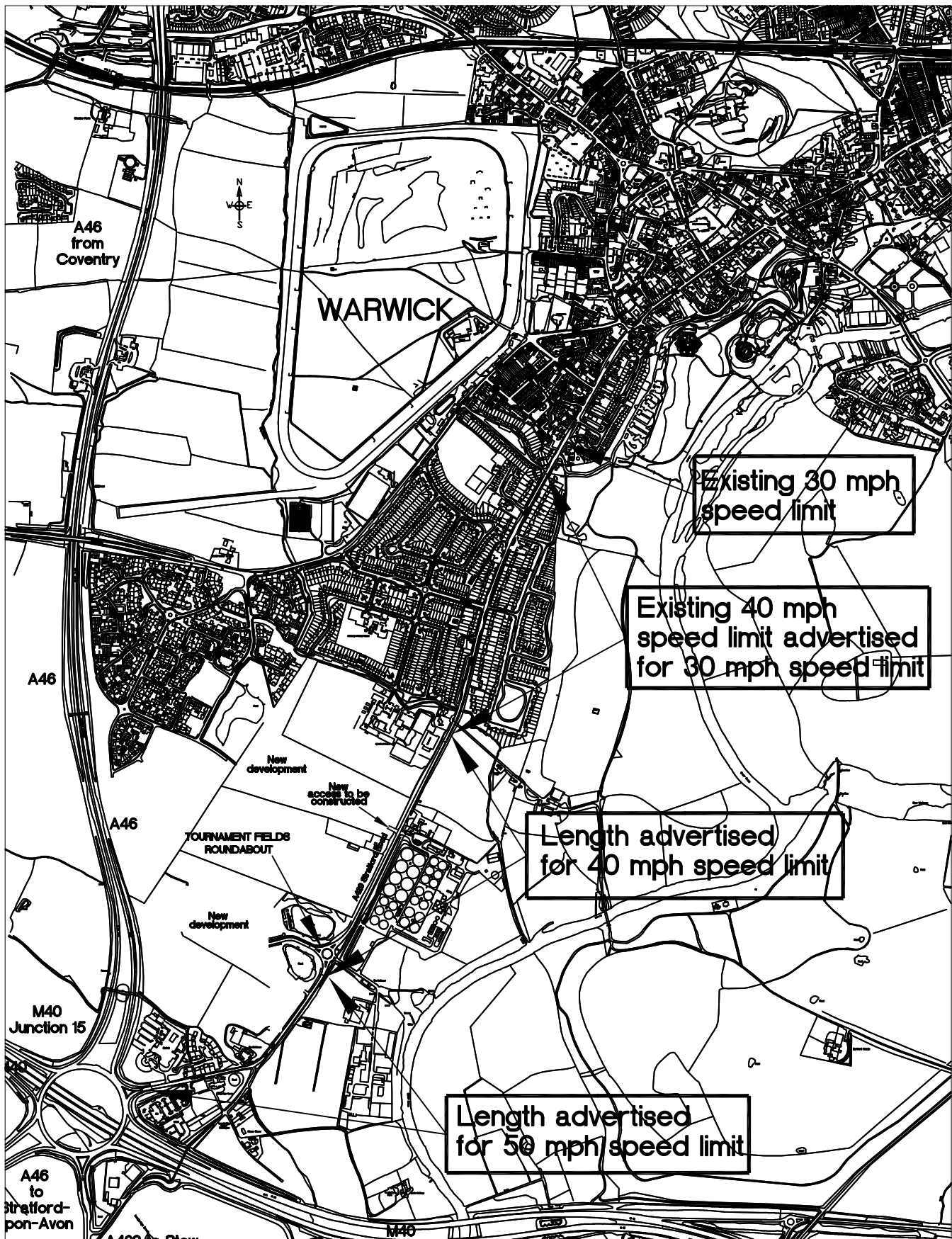
5. Summary

- 5.1 An unrealistically low speed limit is likely to be ineffective and lead to abuse of the limit. It would require significant enforcement and could result in substantial numbers of drivers continuing to travel at unacceptable speeds.
- 5.2 The section of A429 Stratford Road, Warwick from Longbridge to the start of the built-up area is not urban in appearance. There are two speed-reducing features along its length – the sharp bend near Longbridge and the Tournament Fields roundabout. Extending the 30 mph limit to the Tournament Fields roundabout and the 40 mph from the roundabout to Longbridge would introduce two inappropriate limits with consequent enforcement difficulties.
- 5.3 The advertised proposals for Stratford Road, Warwick provide progressively reducing speed limits on the approach to the built-up part of the road. Many drivers visiting Warwick will be using Stratford Road after having travelled on the motorway or trunk road network. A structured, steady reduction in the speed limits will be more readily accepted than a sudden drop to a lower limit, for which many drivers will not be able to see a reason.
- 5.4 There were no objections to the proposed reduction to 30 mph of the existing 40 mph on Stratford Road.
- 5.5 The advertised speed limit proposals for Stratford Road, Warwick are generally in line with those suggested in DfT 01/2006 which, if agreed by the Cabinet, would become the County Council speed limit policy.
- 5.6 It is, therefore, recommended that the speed limit proposals for Stratford Road, Warwick are implemented as advertised.

JOHN DEEGAN
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Warwick

11 September 2007

APPENDIX A OF AGENDA NO.



Not to scale

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Warwick Area Committee
25 September 2007
A429 Stratford Road, Warwick
Proposed speed limit changes

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