

New Road Build-Out

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide council members with information regarding the traffic calming build-out installation located on the New Road, Chiseldon between the junctions of Canney Close and Station Road.

This document has been produced by Chiseldon Parish Council based on the responses to questions sent to Swindon Borough Council by Chiseldon Parish Council.

In June 2016, Parish Councillors voted to review the scheme after six months post-installation as a result of negative feedback received from a number of residents.

The questions upon which councillors will be required to vote on are:

- Should the build-out be removed entirely?
- If not, should it be moved elsewhere on New Road?
- Should the Parish Council request the Highways Authority to revert the speed limit on New Road back to 40mph?

New Road

New Road forms part of the main thoroughfare through Chiseldon Village and it is a “B” classified road. The stretch of road between the A346 Marlborough Road and the Junction with May’s Lane is a relatively straight stretch of road with few junctions. There is housing on the northern side of the road only, with the southern side bordering on arable farmland in the main. No houses between the junction of Station Road and the Chiseldon House Hotel have driveways that enter onto the New Road and there are few points of interest to pedestrians near to the build-out on the southern side other than a rarely used public footpath. An entrance to the allotments and a footpath/cycleway are located at the eastern end of the road opposite the junction with Station Road.

Speed Limit

The speed limit was set at 40mph in 1992 by the then Wiltshire County Council. It was reduced to 30mph in 2012 as part of a wider Local Transport Plan Safety Scheme where the speed limit on the A346 was reduced from 50mph to 40mph and the width of the road reduced by traffic islands. The reduction in speed along New Road was at the time included in response to a request from the Parish Council as part of the Parish Council’s historic focus on reducing speed limits throughout the village to 20mph.

Accident History

While there have been reported accidents on New Road, the stretch between Station Road and May's Lane has historically had the fewest accidents.

Between 01/01/2015 and 31/01/2015 there were three reported accidents, all of low severity. None of these accidents could reasonably have been caused by or attributed to excessive speed. This information was made available by Swindon Borough Council from the data provided to them by Wiltshire police.

This was further corroborated using the Crash Map website (www.crashmap.co.uk). There is no indication that the road is an "accident blackspot".

Speed Compliance

Speed data for the road was obtained using a traffic survey monitor (rubber tubes across the road) in February 2014. Following concern from local residents and a request by the Parish Council, Swindon Borough Council conducted a further survey in June 2016 following the installation of the build out.

Speed is (generally) measured in two ways. The mean (average) speed and the 85th percentile (a speed at which the first 85% of drivers are travelling at or under if you sort the speeds in ascending order).

The 2014 figures indicated that there was a problem with compliance with the posted speed limit, with average speeds at 35.9mph. A summary of the findings is below:

Mean Average Speeds	2014 (mph)	2016 (mph)	Difference (mph)
West into Village	35.9	30.6	-5.3
East to A346	35.9	32.8	-3.1
Combined Average	35.9	31.6	-4.3
85th Percentile	41.4 to 43.1	36.2 to 39.6	

The average speed before the build-out was installed was 35.9mph and was reduced to 31.6mph following installation representing a 4.3mph reduction in speed. 85th percentile speeds have also reduced by a similar margin (although the percentage difference between the average and 85th percentile speeds have increased ever so slightly).

Speed compliance along this stretch of New Road was highlighted as an area of particular concern in consultation with the Borough Councillors, the Parish Council and the Community Speed Watch programme. The police were also involved in the Highway Authority's approach to the proposals for the speed management scheme.

Decision Criteria

The Highways Authority does not work to a set of hard or soft trigger points for speed reduction measures. The nature of any speed reduction measures would be based on the consideration of a number of factors including (but not exclusively) speeds, injury, accident history, traffic composition, road characteristics, deliverability, consultation feedback and budgets.

A number of measures were considered by the Highways Department at Swindon Borough Council for the scheme, however it was decided by Highways Officers that due to the straight flat nature of the road, a horizontal or vertical alignment change was needed; the result of which was the build-out being proposed.

Consultation and Pre-Installation Feedback

Swindon Borough Council wrote to residents in New Road and Canney Close to establish whether there was any support for the scheme. Three residents responded to the letter, two of which were against the scheme, one in support. A further item of correspondence against the scheme was received from a resident in Norris Close.

The information was then passed to the Parish Council who indicated support for the scheme in their meeting on 9th February 2015.

Swindon Borough Council has advised that residents were given an opportunity to view the plans and offer feedback prior to installation.

Location of Build-Out

The Highways Authority has advised that the build-out was positioned so as to influence driver speeds on the straight section of New Road at a location where drivers speeds could be influenced as they continue on into the village.

If it were located too far west, and the community benefit would be eroded; too far east and it would impact on the access road into Chiseldon Camp Service Station and the junction with the Station Road.

Build-out locations such as this are not typically modelled. The location is based on trained professional staff (internal and with consultancy support) visiting the site and taking into account any community and police feedback ultimately using their judgement of the situation.

Parish Councillor Paul Sunners challenged the location of the build-out in the early stages of planning as it was felt that it was too close to Canney Close. The project was put on hold for several months at which point new diagrams were provided; these suggested that the build-out had been moved sufficiently to clear the conflict with Canney Close.

Cost

The Rural Speed Management scheme cost £20,830.16. Removal of the build-out is estimated at between £4,000 and £6,000.

On several occasions, the Parish Council were advised that the build-out was being installed on a trial basis. This was checked with Highways Officers on 7th April 2016 and they responded with the statement “I am doubtful that there can have been any intention on our part (Officers) that this this build-out might be removed other than if it proved to be unsafe.”

Highways Authority Success Criteria

Swindon Borough Council have stated that they are happy with the reduction in speed along New Road which is a positive outcome, and therefore as the Highways Authority they would not propose to remove the build-out.

Post-Installation Feedback

Feedback following installation of the build-out has been, in all but in a minority of cases, almost entirely negative and has primarily emanated from residents in Canney Close and on New Road who live near the build-out.

The primary grievance is that the measure is located too close to the junction with Canney Close. Other feedback includes the following:

- Increased rat-running as residents use Butts Road and Station Road to avoid the build-out and the junction with the A346.
- Vehicles turning left out of Canney Close frequently turning into oncoming traffic that is still negotiating the build-out.
- Having to wait longer when turning left out of Canney Close as traffic in both directions needs to clear first.
- Westbound drivers almost “rear-ending” vehicles turning right into Canney Close as they do not realise that the car in front is attempting to turn right.
- Near-miss head-on collisions as drivers speed up to go around the build-out first.

Feedback has been constant and vocal since installation:

- More than 100 negative Facebook comments have been posted about the scheme.
- A petition with 119 signatures asking for removal of the build-out was received; the majority of respondents being located in Canney Close and New Road.
- Abuse received by the Parish Clerk about the scheme.

Video Footage

The Parish Council asked Swindon Borough Council to place temporary CCTV cameras at the site of the build-out to gather evidence in support of residents' concerns. Two members of the Parish Council watched around seven hours of the footage and established the following:

Issue	Number of times seen
Vehicles made to wait more than 20 seconds at the build-out	0
Where three or more vehicles come to a standstill	27
Vehicle too close to the rear of a vehicle turning right into Canney Close	1
A vehicle turning left out of Canney Close into conflicting traffic	1
"Playing Chicken"	3
Speeding up to get around the build-out	0

A further observation was that one vehicle was unduly delayed in leaving Canney Close on a left turn due to having to wait for traffic in both directions to clear.

Next Steps

Once the Full Parish Council has voted on the issue, the Clerk will inform Borough Councillors of the recommendations made requesting that the appropriate action to be taken.