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## **OLD FOREST ROAD TRAFFIC CALMING CONSULTATION**

As you may be aware, Wokingham Borough Council has received requests for a speed limit reduction from 40mph to 30mph along Old Forest Road (from the railway bridge near to the Emmbrook Sports and Social Club to its junction with Toutley Road) from both residents and the Emmbrook Residents Association.

The reduction in speed was planned to coincide with the opening of the North Wokingham Distributor Road (NWDR), when the majority of traffic will be diverted off Old Forest Road. However, the request we have received is to bring that speed reduction forward.

On the insistence of the police, the speed reduction would require the installation of physical speed reduction measures, such as speed humps, so that the reduction would be "self-policing". It also means that when the new NWDR is open these physical speed reduction devices will be redundant but will almost certainly stay in place as the cost of removal could be prohibitive. Please see the background information below for more detail on these points.

Before we proceed further with this request we would like to establish the views of all those potentially affected by this and are therefore inviting you and all other local residents to take part in a consultation on the proposal.

### **Background information:**

As part of the installation of the North Wokingham Distributor Road you should be aware that it will "swing" away from Old Forest Road, just after the Toutley Bridge, towards the motorway and then go through the allotments onto a new junction with Reading Road. When this is open it will take a lot of traffic off the section of Old Forest Road between the junction of Reading Road and where this new road moves off of the top section of Old Forest Road. The plan is that when this occurs the speed limit for that lower section will be changed to 30mph to reflect its "quieter" status.

When setting speed limits local authorities are required to following guidance provided by Department for Transport which states that 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. Speed limits should be seen by drivers as the maximum rather than a target speed. Where the nature and character of a road does not support self-compliance then physical measures must be provided to encourage traffic to travel at the new speed limit.

Recent traffic surveys show good compliance with the current 40mph speed limit with average speeds recorded on the second of Old Forest Road between Commons Lane and Toutley Road within the tolerances considered acceptable by the Police. Therefore the Police, as the only agency that have the authority to enforce speed limits, have informed us that they will only accept a reduced speed limit if it is accompanied by physical measures such as speed bumps or chicanes otherwise they will object to the formal process. An objection from the police would stop this proposal from being implemented.

As a result, if you support the reduced speed limit, please be aware that a reduction in the speed limit will include the introduction of physical changes to Old Forest Road to reduce traffic speeds. There is no possibility reducing the speed limit without introducing physical changes because the Police will formally object if the change is not support by these measures.

While the proposed traffic calming and reduced speed limit will not have a significant impact on the strategic highway network, there could be some impact on local roads, if drivers prefer to use them instead on Old Forest Road after changes are in place. It is not possible to accurately predict this impact because it is too localised to model accurately and will be very dependent on local knowledge and individual driver choice, but please be aware of the potential impact when registering your views through the survey.

**Taking part in the survey:**

Please visit [www.wokingham.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/consultations) to take part. You will need to enter either the reference code that is at the top of this letter or your address (road name and number) in order to complete the consultation. This is because we want to hear specifically from those directly affected and therefore need to limit those able to take part to the affected areas. We understand that more than one person in each household may want to take part and there is nothing to prevent this (simply enter the same code or address). However, we may investigate and discount multiple responses from the same location or code. The survey will be open until Friday June 28.

**What happens next:**

Wokingham Borough Council will consider the results of the survey and act accordingly. If local people support a speed limit reduction and the necessary physical changes (speed bumps or chicanes), these will be introduced. We have the funding required to do so but will need to go through a formal statutory Traffic Regulation Order process to make the change at which time specific details of the associate physical measures will be available.

Yours sincerely / faithfully,

Matthew Gould

Service manager traffic and road safety