

Our Ref: TRAF/7052  
Date: 18 September 2019

Dear ,

Thank you for your correspondence in relation to the proposal for amendments to the existing speed limits in Little Walden, your feedback is much appreciated.

By way of addressing the key points you have raised, I will break these down as below:

Firstly, the data collection method for our 7-day Automatic Traffic Count used as the basis for the speed survey results, has been undertaken through the placement of cables at the three locations identified by your analysis. Automatic traffic counts are undertaken using a pair of unmanned pneumatic tubes installed securely across the carriageway, one metre apart, recording air pulses to determine vehicle speed, class and volume. The results obtained are therefore an accurate representation of the traffic speeds during the 7-day period.

Regarding the speed survey data speeds within the village, one of our fundamental reasons for the proposed 30mph limit at this location is that it is in keeping with the guidance laid out in the Essex Speed management Strategy (ESMS) as opposed to that of a 40mph limit. The ESMS states that a 30mph speed limit 'should be the norm in villages', which is defined as being 11 or more properties within the extent of the limit. Going by this definition, it therefore would be inconsistent of us not to warrant the village of Little Walden a 30mph limit on this basis, while this rationale is used in setting this type of speed limit in so many other villages across Essex.

Whilst we appreciate your in depth analysis of the speed survey data and acknowledge the fact that a large element of determining speed limits is down to interpretation, the relevance to which speed vehicles travel at through Little Walden needs to be emphasised by the lack of a footway linking one end of the village to the other. Many residents are therefore having to traverse along the carriageway, currently set at a 40mph speed limit, in order to access local amenities such as The Crown Inn pub and the Church, which we are sure it can be agreed is not ideal.

We also acknowledge your references to the fact the majority of drivers are already adopting 'legal speeds' within the village (survey sites 1&2) between 30-40mph given the current posted limit of 40mph, but again it must be emphasised that drivers are not the

only road users at this location. The safety of pedestrians is paramount, according to statistics obtained by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, 'a pedestrian who is hit by a car travelling at between 30 mph and 40 mph is between 3.5 and 5.5 times more likely to be killed than if hit by a car travelling at below 30 mph'. A lower speed limit being posted may also play a part in making the residents feel safer, and increase driver awareness when driving through the village, particularly for those who may not be familiar with the area.

Looking at the data results for sites 1 & 2, again while this can be down to interpretation, the majority of vehicles for each of these locations are doing speeds of 35mph or under, highlighting the fact that drivers are doing speeds appropriate to their village environment as opposed to the posted limit of 40. Our intention with reducing the speed limit is not to criminalise a majority of drivers, however it is more to reduce average vehicle speeds so that they are more appropriate to the village environment (for both drivers and pedestrians) which is in accordance with our Speed Management Strategy. In some cases, seeing a higher speed limit can actually encourage drivers to increase their speed in locations which might not be suitable to the environment, such as on the bend. The narrow road widths throughout the village should also be kept in mind.

Based on the assumption that a 30mph limit is the most appropriate for the aforementioned environment, it would then follow suit that 40mph at the southern end of the village is the most appropriate buffer speed limit. It is not normally recommended to implement buffer speed limits where the transition between the limits requires a significant drop of driver speed to be compliant, such as from 50 to 30mph. This may encourage harsh braking upon entering the lower limit, which can cause difficulty for traffic coming from behind.

In addition to the buffer providing a gradual reduction in speed prior to the arrival in the populated sections of the village, it is also intended to address a pattern of injury collisions which have occurred to the south of the village. This is likely to be factored by the consistent narrow road widths, number of bends in the carriageway and in many locations, driver visibility splays being obscured by vegetation when passing oncoming traffic.

Taking into consideration all factors including the designation of Little Walden as a village, and the absence of pedestrian facilities, a 30mph speed limit is justified. Again it should be noted that our intentions are not to penalise drivers with our proposed speed limit reductions, we anticipate that if the proposal does go ahead then average driver speeds throughout and on approach to the village will be reduced to something which is more suitable for the drivers, residents, pedestrians and anyone else who may be affected such as cyclists.

I hope this answers any of your queries or concerns. If you would still like to object to this scheme, please confirm with us within two weeks of the date of this correspondence. If you do confirm, then a Cabinet Member Action report will be written and submitted to the Cabinet Member for Highways so that a final decision can be made on how to progress with the scheme. This report will include all objections and alternatives to the proposed scheme.

Kind Regards