

# A1152 – WILFORD BRIDGE ROAD, MELTON PROPOSED LOWER SPEED LIMIT

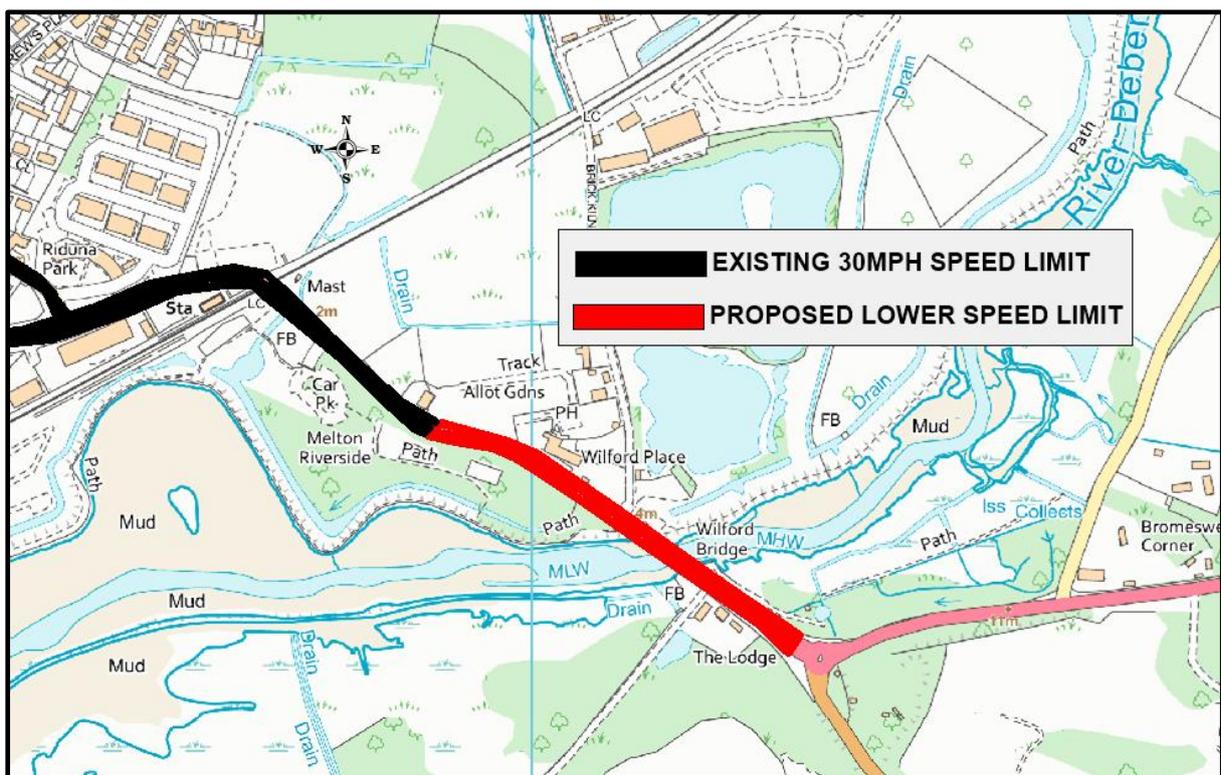
## Introduction

Melton Parish Council is seeking a reduced speed limit on Wilford Bridge Road from the current National Speed Limit. The reduced speed limit is supported by County Councillor Alexander Nicoll who covers Melton up to the bridge and County Councillor Andrew Reid who covers the remaining section. This report will consider the request against the criteria for a 30mph speed limit and a 40mph speed limit.

## Road Description

The A1152 is a semi-rural road which currently takes signed traffic from the A12 at Melton to Snape and Rendlesham, Sutton Hoo via B1083 and Orford via B1084. The section of the route to be investigated for a reduced speed limit commences at the current 30mph terminal signs at Melton to a point just west of its roundabout junction with B1083 to avoid lots of signing and lighting changes.

The extent of the proposed restriction is approximately 400 metres in length.



## Geometry of Road

The road consists of one private access, three bends and two junctions

Route	Accesses	Bends	Junctions
B1117	1	3	2

## Traffic Surveys

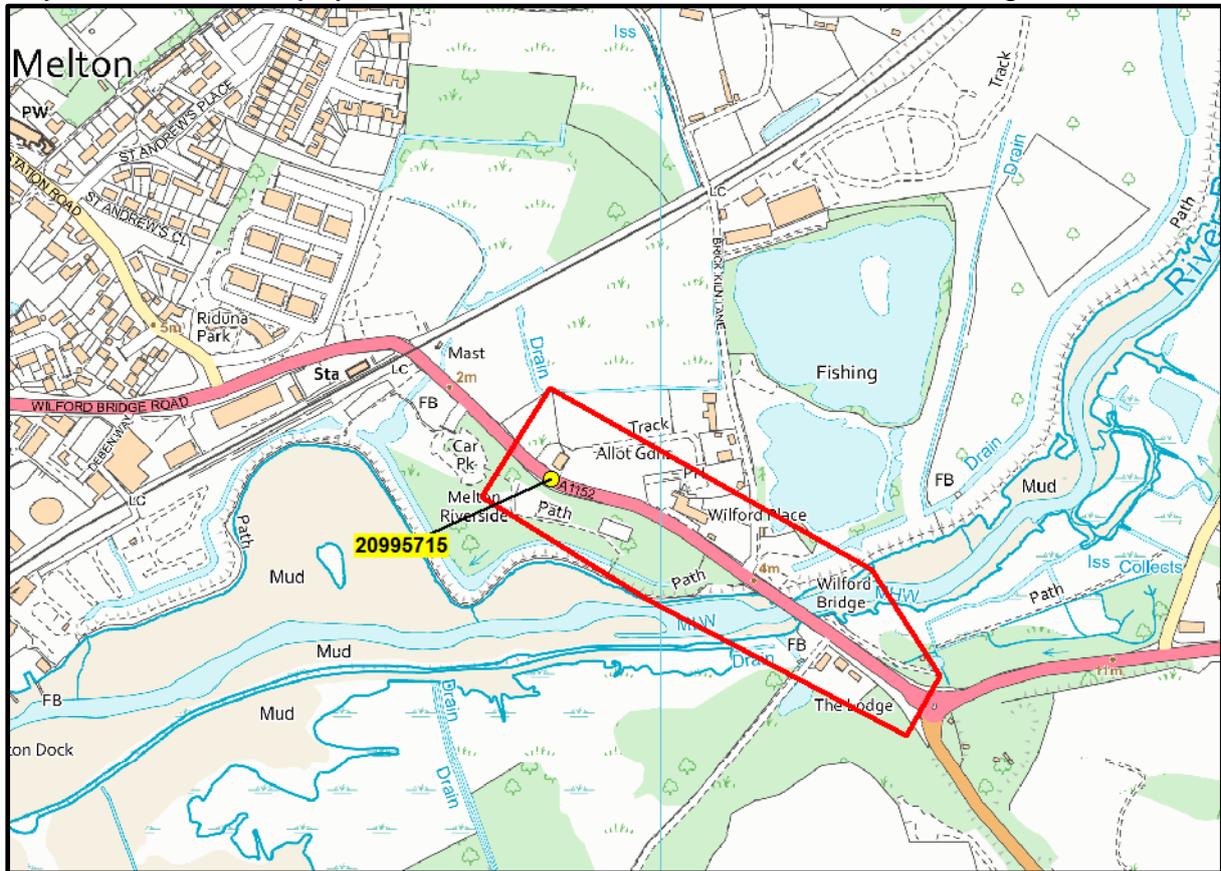
Traffic survey data was sought from the permanent Traffic Counter on Wilford Bridge Road. The data covered a 7-day period between Monday 16 May 2022 and Sunday 22 May 2022. Below is a table summarising the speeds and volumes of traffic reported.

	East Bound			West Bound		
	Volume	85 <sup>th</sup> percentile	Mean	Volume	85 <sup>th</sup> percentile	Mean
16 May 2022	7902	38	34	7732	38	34
17 May 2022	8126	38	34	8068	37	34
18 May 2022	8325	38	34	8179	38	34
19 May 2022	8148	38	34	8056	38	34
20 May 2022	8504	38	34	8257	38	34
21 May 2022	7338	39	34	7216	39	34
22 May 2022	6233	39	34	6404	38	34
5-day Average	8201	38	34	8058	38	34
7-day Average	7797	38	34	7702	38	34

Despite the section being subject to the National Speed Limit, the survey shows that drivers are already driving at a slower speed. It should be pointed out that the level crossing may have had an impact on the above speeds. Low cost speed reduction measures may be required so the visual clues are there for drivers to identify the correct speed if the 30mph speed limit is approved.

## Collision Data

Injury collisions were checked for the five-year period between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2022 and one injury collision was recorded within the section being considered.



**20995715** – On the 4 October 2020, vehicle 1, a car, travelling out of Melton, as the driver approached the speed limit signs, they have accelerated and lost control, colliding with vehicle 2, a car, travelling towards Melton. The driver and passenger of vehicle 2 sustained a slight injury. The driver of vehicle 1 tested positive for Alcohol.

### County Councillors Comments:

#### CLlr Alexander Nicoll

I maintain my support for the introduction of a 30mph limit for the section of highway coloured red in the report.

In terms of supporting my view I add the following comments:

- 1) Having a short stretch of national speed limit between an existing 30mph and a busy 3 leg roundabout, one arm of which quickly becomes a 40mph (heading towards Sutton Hoo) seems unnecessary and potentially dangerous in terms of mixed messages to drivers.
- 2) There are many HGVs using the route sometimes driving fast, and a 30mph limit would help keep traffic from speeding up however slightly when leaving

Melton station crossing. This type of traffic is predicted to increase further, along with other traffic, resulting from expansion at Bentwaters and Sizewell C.

- 3) The change in limit leaving Melton is near the entrance/exit to the pub and the limit should therefore not be subject to quite dramatic change (from 30mph all the way to national speed limit) and for a very short stretch.
- 4) A uniform 30mph between the roundabout and Melton will declutter as the national speed limit signs can be removed.
- 5) Whether we think they should or not an increasing number of Deben towpath walkers and cyclists seek to cross the road to carry on towards the fishing lakes and coffee caravan in the parking area to the left of the bridge and drivers will be better aware if the limit is a uniform 30mph.
- 6) Cars and increasingly over-sized vans and lorries attempt to rat run towards lower Ufford from the narrow road opening on to this stretch of road and once again these dangerous manoeuvres are made more so by unnecessary changes in the speed limit for all drivers.
- 7) An increase in the number of cyclists suggests that the national speed limit in this location is outdated and potentially dangerous.

### **Cllr Andrew Reid**

I have also read the report and agree with Alexander Nicoll that the section of road marked in red should be 30mph providing a consistent limit up to the roundabout.

### **Parish Council Comments:**

#### **Bromeswell**

We share the view of both Cllr Reid and Nicoll that the section marked in red should be 30mph.

This will not only provide a consistent speed limit up to the roundabout but will significantly improve the safety of cyclists and pedestrians using that stretch of the road, and who also currently have great difficulty trying to safely cross Wilford Bridge Road to follow the foot/cycle path that runs along the banks of the River Deben. With traffic currently able to drive up to 60mph along that stretch of road, it makes crossing that road extremely hazardous.

Whilst the speed of traffic will be slower at peak times of high volume, or when the railway crossing is closed, at times in-between the traffic does travel at speeds in excess of 40mph. Near misses go unreported, and a true picture of actual accident statistics is not available as not all are reported to the police. However, common sense will dictate that it is unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists of any age to attempt to cross such a busy stretch of road.

On Suffolk County Council Website, it states: "**Suffolk County Council is striving to make it safer, easier and more enjoyable for everyone to walk, cycle and wheel in and around the county, through a number of infrastructure schemes. The aim of these schemes is to foster long-term habits of active travel and reap the numerous associated benefits including for health, air quality, congestion, the local economy and road safety.**"

Bromeswell Parish Council therefore respectfully requests that due consideration is given to the significant safety reasons behind requesting a revision of the outdated, dangerous, national speed limit on this stretch and also Sutton Road from the roundabout, alongside the footpath.

## **Melton**

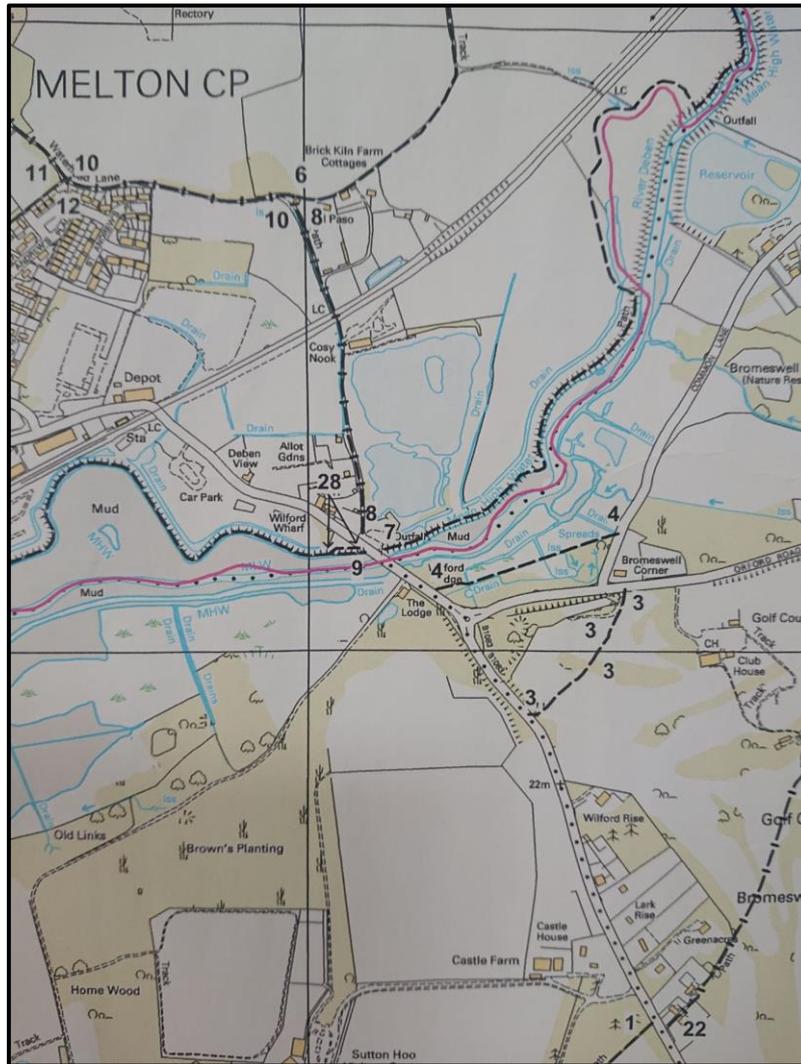
We share the view of Cllrs Reid and Nicoll that the section marked in red should be made 30mph. This reduction in the speed limit is about making it safer for all users including pedestrians and cyclists using the stretch of road and not just about avoiding road traffic accidents involving motor vehicles.

In 2022, the Highway Code was updated and introduced a new hierarchy of road users. The revision deems that the most vulnerable or at-risk users are pedestrians and cyclists and that they have a greater priority over cars and other motor vehicles.

We believe that by reducing the speed limit to 30mph this would help achieve a safer environment for our pedestrians and cyclists as well as for motor vehicles. This stretch of road is an extremely popular route for walkers and cyclists with five footpaths converging at the Wilford Bridge (see map below). Pedestrians often need to cross Wilford Bridge Road to continue their journey. The proposed Coastal Path which will also run along this stretch of Wilford Bridge Road will exacerbate the safety issues associated with walkers. It is also the main walking route to Sutton Hoo from Melton train station, a site of increasing popularity since the movie 'The Dig'. Attempting to walk alongside the road or cross over at the Wilford Bridge whilst vehicles are travelling at 60mph is very hazardous.

The Council feels that the mean speeds reported are likely to be skewed by the periods of time when traffic is stationary due to the railway barrier being closed and/or heavy volume of traffic. Vehicles will often be travelling in excess of these mean speeds.

The collisions reported are not a true reflection of the accidents that have occurred in this area because they only include those accidents reported to the police and where there was an injury. Councillors are aware of a number of accidents in recent years, having been involved or witnessed them themselves. There are no statistics available, so these accidents are not included in this report.



The update to the Highway Code is not reflected in this report or in the criteria being used to determine whether a 30mph or 40mph speed limit is appropriate. Suffolk County Council's website states '**[The] Council is striving to make it safer, easier and more enjoyable for everyone to walk, cycle and wheel in and around the county, through a number of infrastructure schemes**' but this has not been reflected in the current policy or criteria used to determine whether a reduced speed limit is appropriate.' We therefore feel the current suggestion that it is not necessary to reduce the speed limit is flawed.

Melton Parish Council would ask that their concerns are taken into account when deciding whether the speed limit should be reduced to 30mph for this section.

#### **Police Comments:**

As you are aware I will always turn to the existing policy in the first instance when responding to speed reports. As such I think it is fair to say that the argument for either limit is not conclusive.

The speed data report does suggest that there would be general compliance with the 40mph limit but not the 30mph which is always of interest for the Constabulary. Knowing the area, I would imagine that the sharp turn with level crossing at one end and a roundabout at the other provides a significant impact on speeds in general. If the justification for a reduced limit is to reduce the risk of collisions, then with the only one reported collision clearly down to circumstances not related to the speed limit then I think the failure of this location to meet that specific criterion is particular noteworthy. It would appear that traffic is already identifying an appropriate speed and the need therefore for a posted limit is not required.

### **Summary for Consideration (30mph)**

Suffolk Speed Limit Policy gives guidance on where speed limits less than the national levels should be considered. For a 30mph limit to be considered in a semi-urban location, the following should be considered, officer comments are inserted below;

- **A clear built-up area with almost continuous frontage development numerous facilities generating pedestrian/cycle activity - schools, shops, PH, play areas, etc**

*There is not continuous frontage development, however, there is a public house and a couple of properties. The public house is well frequented by cyclists. Officers are unsure if this is sufficient to meet the criterion.*

- **Collision History**

*There has only been one recorded injury accident within the section of the route being considered where a driver lost control of the vehicle and collided with another vehicle. Officers are unsure if this is sufficient to meet this criterion.*

- **Existing Traffic Speeds**

*With the mean speeds for vehicles being approximately 34mph and the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds at 38mph, it would suggest a possibility that there may be poor compliance with a 30mph speed limit. Low-cost speed reduction measures would be required to ensure speeds are reduced and so the visual clues are there for drivers to identify the correct speed.*

- **Numerous junctions and accesses**

*The current route currently consists of 4 accesses and only one junction. Officers are unsure if this criterion has been met.*

- **Significant pedestrian activity throughout the day**

*With numerous car parks by the river, the public house and nearby Sutton Hoo, officers believe that this criterion has been met.*

- **A normal minimum length for a new speed limit would be 600 metres**

*The length of the proposed extended 30mph speed limit is approximately 400m so this criterion is met as it is a proposed extension.*

### **Summary for Consideration (40mph)**

Suffolk Speed Limit Policy gives guidance on where speed limits less than the national levels should be considered. For a 40mph limit, the following criteria should be considered, with officer comments inserted below:

➤ **Settlement has shop(s), school(s), public house, filling station, etc.**

*There are no shops, schools, or a filling station along the section of road being considered. There is however a public house which is well used by visitors and cyclists. Officers are unsure if this is sufficient to meet this criterion.*

➤ **Significant development on both sides of road, but not necessarily continuous, with some development in depth, overall frontage exceeds 500m in length**

*There are eight properties located within the proposed 40mph speed limit. The cumulative frontage along the route does not exceed 500 metres in length so this criterion has not been met*

➤ **Collision history**

*There has only been one recorded injury accident within the section of the route being considered where a driver lost control of the vehicle and collided with another vehicle. Officers are unsure if this is sufficient to meet this criterion.*

➤ **Existing traffic speeds**

*With the mean speeds for vehicles being approximately 34mph and the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds at 38mph, it would suggest a possibility that there may be reasonable compliance with a 40mph speed limit. Officers believe this criterion has been met.*

➤ **Many junctions, bends and accesses**

*The current route currently consists of one bend, four accesses and only one junction. Officers are unsure if this criterion has been met.*

➤ **Some pedestrian/cycle activity throughout the day with possible peaks associated with schools or community facilities.**

*The A1152 is well used by pedestrians visiting the area and the public house. There are several car parks and footpaths for visitors to use and a footway to Sutton Hoo. Officers believe that this criterion has been met*

- **Some provision for pedestrian/cyclists or acknowledged need and possibly warning signs.**

*There are a few public footpaths in the area, and the route is well used by cyclists. There are currently no warning signs to advise drivers that cyclists may be on the road ahead. Despite this lack of signing, Officers believe that this criterion has been met.*

- **Lengths of road that more closely fit the conditions for a 50mph limit but where the standard of road/forward visibility is more appropriate to 40mph**

*This section of road proposed for the 40mph speed limit is currently at the national speed limit and could benefit from a reduction in the speed limit. Generally, it does not fully meet all the criterion for a 40mph speed limit, however, the number of bends and accesses means it is unlikely to meet the criterion for a 50mph speed limit. Officers do not believe that this criterion can be met.*

## **Conclusion**

Both the Local County Councillors and the Parish Council's support an extension of the 30mph speed limit rather than a 40mph speed limit. On the face of it, the mean speeds suggest that there would be poor compliance with a 30mph speed limit. Paragraph 21 of the Policy, however, states that there may be specific local circumstances where it would be beneficial to introduce lower speed limits which do not fully meet the relevant criteria. In this case it could be justified as Wilford Bridge Road appears to be a well-used local cycle route and the potential need for pedestrians to cross the carriageway.

Officers consider it is a finely balanced decision between accepting the Police view on the basis that it does not fully meet the criteria or approving the request 30mph speed limit extension based on paragraph 21 of the Policy to make the route safer. The speed limit would need to be backed by low-cost speed reduction measures to give drivers the clues to the appropriate speed.

As the traffic is already travelling below the 40mph speed limit the Police do not think the speed limit needs to change. This is not supported by the County Councillors or the Parish Council's.

## **Recommendation**

That the 30mph speed limit extension is approved for the A1152 Wilford Bridge Road based on Paragraph 21 of the Speed Limit Policy. Speed reduction measures may also be required to provide visual clues for drivers to identify the correct speed if this is approved.

# FORMAL DECISION OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER AND THE HEAD OF TRANSPORT POLICY

Councillor Richard Smith MVO and Graeme Mateer reviewed the report and made the decision set out below:

**Decision made:**

That the 30mph speed limit extension is approved for the A1152 Wilford Bridge Road based on Paragraph 21 of the Speed Limit Policy.

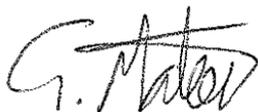
Signature of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development,  
Transport Strategy and Waste.



Date:

07/03/2023

Signature of the Head of Transport Policy



Date:

07/03/2023