

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Decision to maintain the current 40mph speed limit at Walford in Herefordshire
Date of decision:	11 th June 2025
Decision maker:	Head of Highways and Traffic
Authority for delegated decision:	Economy and Environment Scheme – Highways and Transport 75. To act on behalf of the council in respect of the legislation specified in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
Ward:	Kerne Bridge
Consultation:	An investigation process was undertaken from 29 th April 2024 to 9 th January 2025 whereby the feasibility for reducing the current 40mph speed limit following a request received from the Parish Council. ATC surveys were commissioned in July 2024 to obtain existing vehicle speeds along the B4234 which provides valuable data to assist the decision making for setting appropriate speed limits.
Decision made:	Following the investigation into a speed limit reduction, it is recommended that the current speed limit is not reduced to 30mph, for the reasons as set out below.
Reasons for decision:	<p>Following an assessment guided by the Department for Transport (DfT) Circular 01/13 on setting local speed limits, the decision has been made to retain the current 40 mph speed limit on the B4234 through Walford in Herefordshire. The key reasons for this decision include:</p> <p>While there are many properties in Walford, a significant number are set back from the carriageway in housing estates, reducing direct interaction with traffic flow. The existing 40 mph limit is appropriate for the roadside environment as per DfT Circular 01/13, which suggests that speed limits should reflect the road's character and surroundings. The proximity of schools also needs to be considered when conducting speed limit assessment. While Walford Nursery & Primary School is located on the B4234, a '20 when lights flash' restriction is in place to improve safety around the busy school drop-off and pick-up times. This targeted measure ensures the safety of schoolchildren at critical times without necessitating a blanket reduction to 30 mph throughout the entire area. It's a common and understandable thought that lowering a speed limit can only be a move for the better but speed limits that are set at inappropriate levels and / or over inappropriate lengths do have drawbacks such as increased incidents of overtaking, tailgating etc.</p> <p>A speed limit that drivers perceive as too low for the road conditions can undermine respect for the limit, potentially leading to increased non-compliance. By retaining the 40 mph limit, the speed limit remains credible and more likely to be adhered to by the majority of drivers. Good driver compliance with the current 40 mph limit has been demonstrated in the 7-day speed surveys carried out in July 2024. A plan showing the recorded 85th Percentile speeds can be viewed in appendix A. The existing speeds recorded also demonstrate that to achieve a 'self-regulating' 30 mph limit as recommended in DfT Circular 01/13, a significant change to the current environment would be required. The current 40 mph limit maintains a balance between safety and traffic flow. Circular 01/13 emphasises that setting speed limits too low for the conditions can lead to driver frustration,</p>

resulting in unsafe driving behaviours such as overtaking and tailgating. Maintaining the existing speed limit minimises these risks by setting realistic expectations for responsible drivers.

	Northbound	Southbound
ATC 1	44.1	43.1
ATC 2	37.3	33.5
ATC 3	38.3	39.7

A review of the collision history for this stretch of road shows one recorded collision in the past five years which resulted in personal injury. The causative factors behind this collision would not have been prevented by the implementation of a lower speed limit suggesting that the existing 40mph speed limit does not present a significant safety concern requiring intervention. This data indicates that the current speed limit and associated traffic management measures are sufficient for maintaining road safety and not requiring intervention.

In conclusion, the decision to maintain the 40 mph speed limit in Walford reflects the road's characteristics, the presence of protective measures around the school, and the consistency of speed data with the current limit. This approach ensures that the speed limit remains appropriate, credible, and aligned with national guidance, effectively managing both safety and traffic flow.



Appendix A.pdf



Appendix B.pdf

Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:

Equality duty

The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

The recommendations set out in this report are considered to be low impact with regards to equality. The proposals aim to improve road amenity and safety, thus paying regard to the council's duty according to the Equality Act 2010 as set out below.

section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

See Appendix B of this report for Equality Impacts and Needs Assessment (EINA).

Resource implications

None, due to the scheme not being progressed.

	<p>Legal implications There are no legal implications as a result of not making a Traffic Regulation Order.</p> <p>Risk management There are no risks associated with not progressing this scheme.</p>
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	To implement a reduction to the current 40mph speed limit to a 30mph speed limit at Walford – This is not recommended for a number of reasons outlined in detail in the ‘reasons for decision’ section of this report.
Details of any declarations of interest made:	None