

REPORT FOR DECISION

DECISION OF:	RAMSBOTTOM, TOTTINGTON AND NORTH MANOR TOWNSHIP FORUM
DATE:	17 November 2011
SUBJECT:	WATLING STREET, AFFETSIDIE 20 mph SPEED LIMIT
REPORT FROM:	LES WATTS, PRINCIPAL ENGINEER (TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & PROGRAMMES)
CONTACT OFFICER:	LES WATTS, PRINCIPAL ENGINEER (TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & PROGRAMMES)
TYPE OF DECISION:	OPERATIONAL
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS:	This paper is within the public domain
SUMMARY:	This report considers the responses received to an informal public consultation exercise regarding proposals to introduce a 20 mph Speed Limit on Watling Street, Affetside.
OPTIONS & RECOMMENDED OPTION	<p>Recommended Option:</p> <p>Request that the Executive Director (Environment and Development Services) supports the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit on Watling Street, Affetside along with the installation of entry features at the locations proposed.</p> <p>Other Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest modifications to the proposed scheme. • Suggest the withdrawal of the scheme.
IMPLICATIONS:	
Corporate Aims/Policy	Do the proposals accord with the Policy

Framework:	Framework? Yes
Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:	The estimated cost of relocating the northerly entry point and introducing entry measures is £2000. This and the costs of consultation and making the orders will be met from the highways revenue budget for traffic regulation orders.
Statement on impact on Resources:	As above.
Equality/Diversity implications:	No
Considered by Monitoring Officer:	The proposals accord with relevant Traffic legislation and regulations.
Wards Affected:	Tottington
Scrutiny Interest:	Environment & Economy

TRACKING/PROCESS

DIRECTOR:

Chief Executive/ Strategic Leadership Team	Executive Member/Chair	Ward Members	Partners
N/A	N/A	Tottington	N/A
Scrutiny Committee	Committee	Council	
N/A	N/A	N/A	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report advises local councillors of comments received in response to a recent informal consultation exercise regarding a proposed 20 mph Speed Limit on Watling Street, Affetside.

2.0 ISSUES

- 2.1 An experimental 20 mph speed limit order was introduced on Watling Street, Affetside on 7 January 2010. The experimental order is due to expire in August 2011 but approaches to the Council indicate that there is a local desire for the order to be made permanent.
- 2.2 Mean traffic speeds for an average weekday prior to the introduction of the experimental 20 mph speed limit were measured in September 2009 using a radar-activated automatic traffic counter and recorded as 26.8 mph (northbound) and 27.9 mph (southbound). Mean traffic speeds after the introduction of the 20 mph speed limit (in March 2010) were recorded as 25.3 mph (northbound) and 26.9 mph (southbound). Although lower than the pre-trial mean speeds, these speeds do not satisfy the criteria recommended by the Department for Transport for the operation of a 20 mph speed limit (i.e. mean speeds should be 24 mph or less).

- 2.3 At their meeting on 10 June 2009 and following a request to the Economy, Environment and Transport Scrutiny Commission from the Bury Rural Inequalities Forum, the Executive agreed in principle that entry features could be installed at either end of the village. Such measures should have the potential to further reduce speeds within the village itself and help to justify a 20 mph speed limit.
- 2.4 It is intended that the entry features should not only highlight the start of the 20 mph limit but also provide clear boundaries to the village environment in order to encourage greater compliance within the lower speed limit. Whilst the initial southerly entry point complies with this intention, the existing northerly limit does not. Consequently it is proposed that the northerly entry point to the 20 mph limit is relocated as shown on the enclosed plan. The section of Watling Street within the 20 mph speed limit is therefore reduced to a length of 435 metres in total.
- 2.5 Ongoing operations by the local Community Police to enforce the 20 mph speed limit and educate motorists passing through the village may well provide further complementary benefits regarding compliance.
- 2.6 Locations and details of the proposals are shown on the enclosed Plans Nos. TM6041 and TM6042.
- 2.7 The proposals were considered and endorsed by the Traffic Management Unit at their meeting on 31 March 2011. The 20 mph speed limit along the revised length of Watling Street would be introduced initially by means of a new experimental order which can subsequently be made permanent without a further consultation. Any objections received during the life of the experimental order and its effectiveness in reducing vehicle speeds to an acceptable level would be considered in deciding whether or not the order should be made permanent.

3.0 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Consultation packages were delivered to 57 No. frontage properties along Watling Street in April 2011. Each package contained details of the proposed scheme, a response form and an addressed pre-paid envelope. Details were published on the Council website and additional consultation packages were available on request.
- 3.2 Residents were informed that the outcome of the consultation exercise would be reported to local councillors prior to publication.
- 3.3 28 No. response forms were completed and returned which represent the views of 49% of those households consulted on Watling Street.
- 3.4 16 No. of the 28 No. respondents supported the proposed measures in full as detailed in the consultation documents. A further six respondents supported making the 20 mph speed limit permanent and the installation of entry features but did not agree with the amended length of the 20 mph speed limit. One respondent supported making the 20 mph speed limit permanent and agreed with the amended length of the 20 mph speed limit but did not support the installation of entry features. Two respondents supported making the 20 mph speed limit permanent but did not agree with the amended length of the 20 mph speed limit and did not support the installation of entry features.

- 3.5 Three residents did not support the scheme. They are of the opinion that the original 30 mph speed limit is appropriate for Watling Street and that the introduction of any traffic calming features is neither desirable nor necessary.
- 3.6 The degree of support for the various elements of the scheme are summarised as follows:

Element:	No Supportive	% Response
Making a 20 mph speed limit permanent	25	89%
Amended length of 20 mph speed limit	17	61%
Installation of entry features	22	79%

4.0 COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

- 4.1 The following comments were received from residents regarding the proposals:

COMMENT	RESPONSE
A number of residents have requested that other traffic calming measures are introduced to prevent acceleration between the two entry points. Suggestions include road humps/speed cushions, chicanes, vehicle-activated signs and additional "20 mph" carriageway markings. One resident suggested that an additional entry feature at the original northerly entry would act as a further deterrent to through traffic.	The Council is conscious that the introduction of additional traffic calming measures would help to maintain slower traffic speeds within Affetside but also that all such features are intrusive and will detract from the rural character of the village. There are limited funds available to introduce the proposed scheme and, as there are no clear casualty reduction benefits to be achieved, it would be difficult to justify any further measures at this time. It should also be noted that a number of residents have stated that they are totally against the introduction of other traffic calming measures and road humps in particular.
A number of residents have raised concerns that physical entry features are out of character with the rest of Affetside village.	See Paragraph 4.3 below.
Two residents have suggested that vehicle-activated signs would provide a suitable alternative solution to the proposed entry features.	The available traffic count data for the experimental 20 mph speed limit demonstrates that signing alone will not provide a sufficient deterrent to speeding traffic. The introduction of physical measures is expected to significantly improve compliance with the lower speed limit.
One resident expressed a preference for chicanes at the entry points with cobbles or buff-coloured imprint surfacing replacing the hatched areas on the	See Paragraphs 4.4 and 4.5 below.

approaches.	
One resident requested the omission of the "20 mph" carriageway markings in order to reduce the "urban" appearance of the entry features.	The visual intrusion of these markings is relatively small in comparison to the adjacent markings and there would be little gained by their omission. The markings help to emphasise the start of the 20 mph speed limit which is an established benefit usually employed as standard on all 20 mph schemes in the borough.
Residents requested further speed enforcement by the police at peak periods.	Greater Manchester Police will be informed of this request.
One resident asked whether speed cameras could be installed on Watling Street?	The Department for Transport specify that speed camera sites can only be introduced at locations with a recent history of serious injury collisions. There have not been sufficient recent collisions of this nature to satisfy this criteria. However, the local police have been able to carry out a degree of enforcement using laser guns.
Three residents expressed concern that the entry features will cause further congestion at peak periods. Two of these residents noted that there are already a limited number of passing places particularly at the northern end of Affetside.	An increase in congestion is an expected effect of the scheme which, whilst not desirable in itself, is important in reducing traffic speeds and deterring rat-running traffic. The proposed northerly entry feature has been located at an existing narrow point and will not compromise the existing passing places nearby. The southerly entry feature is located on a wider section of road where the lack of passing places is not an issue.
One resident pointed out that the length of Watling Street adjacent to the proposed northerly entry feature is prone to flooding in times of heavy rain.	Any flooding of the carriageway will have to be addressed accordingly. However, this should not compromise the effectiveness of the entry feature as any water on the road surface will encourage lower traffic speeds whenever it is present.
One resident suggested that original northerly entry point should be retained as the narrow length of road adjacent to Baxter Head Farm already acts as a traffic calming feature on this length of Watling Street.	It is appreciated that there is a degree of traffic calming inherent within the length of road referred to which will be of benefit to the adjacent properties. However, traffic speeds are able to recover on the section of Watling Street immediately to the south of this length. Further intervention to maintain lower speeds along this length cannot be justified at this time.
One resident asked whether there would be any priority signing at	There are no proposals for marking any priorities at this stage. Motorists would be expected to give way courteously as they

the entry points?	currently do when passing parked vehicles within the village.
One resident asked whether the entry points would restrict access to adjacent properties?	The entry points have been specifically located to avoid any possible obstruction to side-roads, access roads and gateways.
A number of residents made comments about the lengths of Watling Street to the north and south of the village where either 40 mph or national speed limits are in force.	Both of these lengths of Watling Street lie outside the Bury boundary and it is therefore inappropriate for these to be discussed within the context of this report.
One resident has suggested that the entry points should be located at the extreme ends of Watling Street.	Both locations in question lie within the boundaries of Bolton Council.

- 4.2 In addition to the above responses, a letter has been received from the Chair of the Bury Rural Inequalities Forum to support their campaign for the 20 mph speed limit and entry features. The letter indicates a preference for a chicane rather than a "pinch point" feature specifically at the southerly entry point and supports the use of cobbles or buff coloured imprint surfacing to replace the hatched areas on the approaches. The letter emphasises the desire that the entry features should be designed to be attractive to the eye and in keeping with the rural context and character of the village.
- 4.3 The Council appreciates that there is some concern regarding the appearance of the proposed entry features and that they will detract from the rural character of the village. However, the entry features must be obtrusive in order to be effective. There are no measures on Watling Street to curb traffic speeds in advance of the entry points and consequently these features must be clearly conspicuous or they will otherwise introduce a passive collision risk particularly to any motorists who may already be exceeding the 30 mph speed limit. For this reason the outermost approaches in particular will require a substantial length of hatched markings in white thermoplastic as shown on Plan No TM6042 in order to deter any potential collisions with the bollards. However, there will be some scope to keep the innermost approaches to a minimum length which is the most suitable compromise that can be incorporated.
- 4.4 Chicanes may well have the potential for greater control over vehicle speeds although this would be somewhat compromised in this case due to the requirement to accommodate the regular bus service along Watling Street. A chicane design would require the "built-out" areas to both sides of the carriageway to be wider than those in the proposed entry feature design and the carriageway markings on the approaches would therefore need to be longer. It is acknowledged that the availability of space to accommodate a chicane, particularly at the southern entry point, is not an issue. However, a chicane design would prove to be considerably more intrusive than the "pinch point" effect of the proposed entry features and consequently would exacerbate concerns about detracting from the rural character of the village as discussed above.

4.5 The 5.0 metre long strips of coloured surfacing at each entry point could be made more substantial using cobbles or buff-coloured imprint surfacing although the benefits would mainly be cosmetic and would require additional funding which is difficult to justify at this time. Extending the treated area to include the hatched approaches would be inappropriately expensive and could compromise the desired visual impact as discussed above (Paragraph 4.3). A cobbled surface would introduce an unnecessary maintenance liability and would consequently be especially difficult to recommend.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The responses received to the consultation exercise indicate that a clear majority of residents support the introduction of the proposed 20 mph speed limit on Watling Street, Affetside and the installation of the entry features as proposed. Whilst the relocation of the northerly entry point to the 20 mph length has not generated the same degree of support there were no particular issues raised to warrant reviewing the proposal which is a required element to encouraging compliance with the lower speed limit.

List of Background Papers:-

Returned response sheets.
Letter from the Chair of the Bury Rural Inequalities Forum dated 9 May 2011.

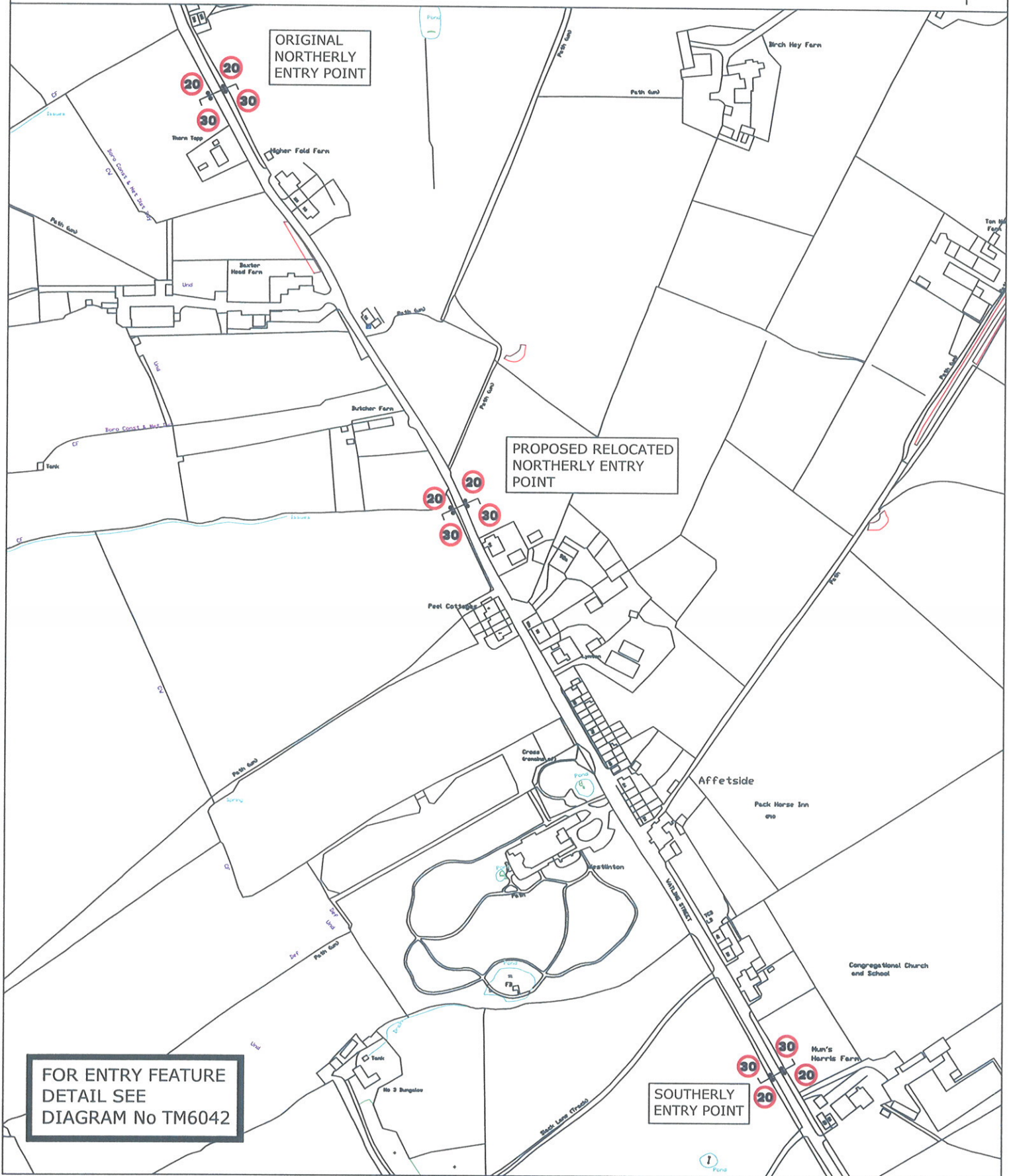
Enclosures:

Proposal Plans No's. TM6041 and TM6042.

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Watling Street, Affetside Revised Experimental 20mph Speed Limit



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PLAN TM6041
 DATE 11.04.11
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ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Operations Division
 Traffic & Road Safety Services

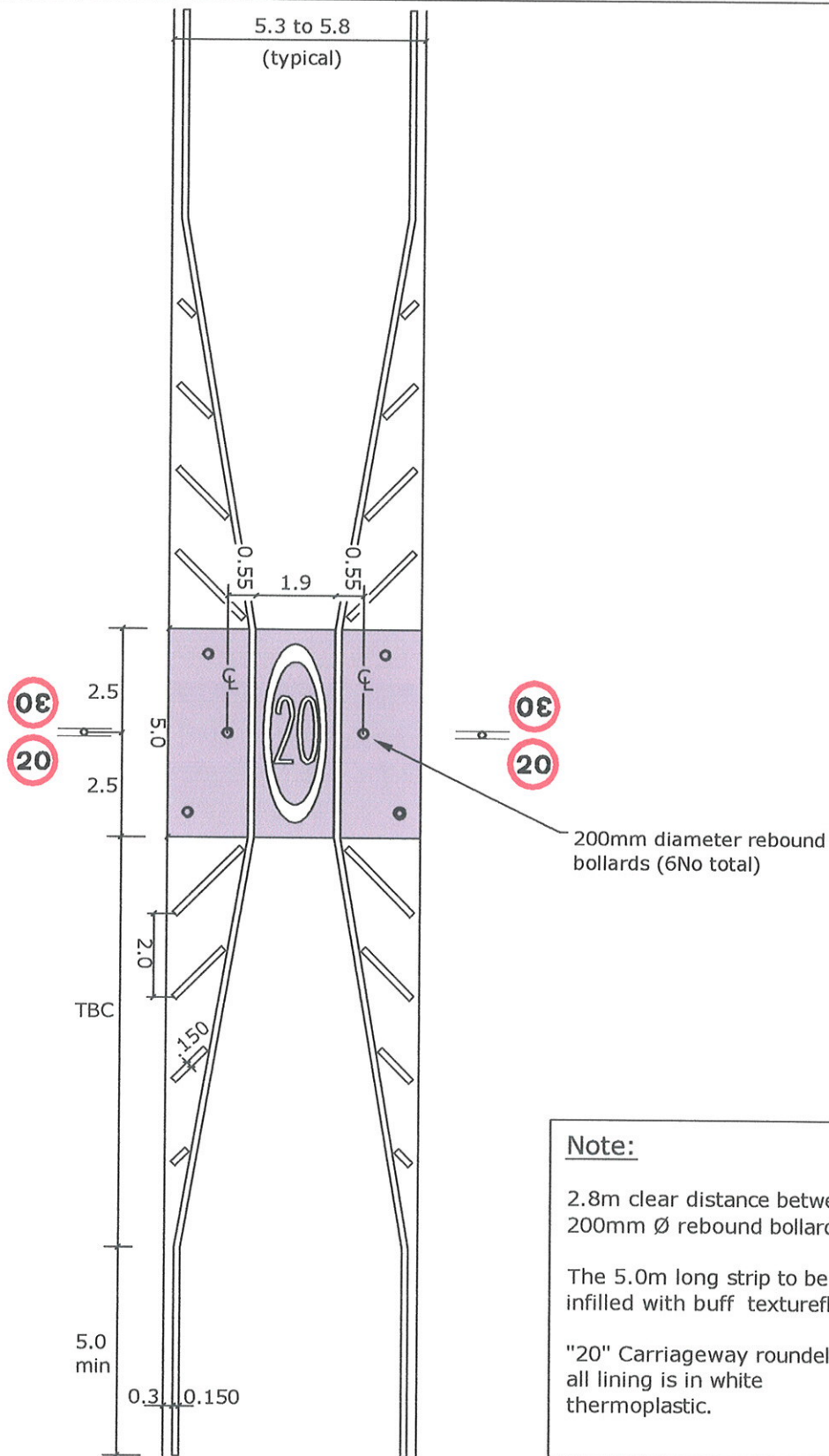
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Watling Street, Affetside

Proposed 20mph Entry Feature Detail



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PLAN TM6042

DATE 11.04.11

DRAWN M Thornley

SCALE NTS

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