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Dear Mrs. Frame,

Thank you for your correspondence relating to road safety issues on the B3024 Oakley Green Road.

I will break our response down into three sections:

Speed

The local highway authority are responsible for setting speed limits and should use national guidance, set by the Department for Transport, to ensure that speed limits are consistent and appropriate across the country. Thames Valley Police are not opposed to reducing speed limits providing they are appropriate to the road environment and have casualty reduction benefits. We take into account a number of factors including the current speed of traffic using the road, any engineering measures the highway authority suggest and the collision history.

When setting a speed limit the highway authority are required to consult with the police. We have not received any consultations for a reduced speed limit in Oakley Green Road from the local authority. Should this be proposed, it would be considered like any other speed limit consultation and in line with national guidance. I have set out some of the criteria we consider below for your information. This is not based on a detailed consultation as we have no record of receiving one.

Research shows that a signed only speed limit reduction will generally only result in a speed reduction of one to two miles per hour. Reducing a speed limit on a road that is not suitable may also bring about unintended consequences as some drivers will respect the reduced limit and others will not. For example, this can result in overtaking manoeuvres in inappropriate places. We believe that enforcement will never be a substitute for engineering measures that deter or discourage the opportunity to speed. Enforcement is usually limited in the time and area covered, whereas engineering measures are a permanent feature. This view is based on the national guidance and research. Where speeds are too high for the reduced limit we would therefore advocate the use of traffic calming measures to ensure the safety aims of the reduced limit are achieved.

The point I wish to emphasise is that reducing a speed limit by signage alone is unlikely to achieve compliance and the safety aims of the reduced limit will not be met. It also has the potential to criminalise otherwise safe drivers and introduce unintended consequences that may actually be detrimental to road safety.

Road Safety

Thames Valley Police takes road safety very seriously; we deal with all aspects of road traffic legislation from minor road traffic offences, criminality on the road network, collisions, and road deaths. We have many competing priorities which necessitates a risk-based approach to prioritising enforcement activity. Many of the high-risk roads in our force area are in the county of Berkshire; we believe it is right to use an evidenced-based approach to target our limited resources to areas of high risk and harm.

I have reviewed your message and the data available to us. The collision statistics for the B3024 Oakley Green Road indicate it is a comparatively low risk area. There have been three slight and one serious injury collision recorded in the last five-year period, from 1st September 2015 to 31st August 2020. This does not include a cluster of six collisions that occurred on the A308 at the junction with the B3024 where I note, from other correspondence I am copied into, junction improvements are planned. All of the collisions on Oakley Green Road are associated with turning movements, three at junctions and one at the entrance to a private driveway. None of these collisions involves heavy goods vehicles and excess speed is not listed as a contributory factor.

7.5t Weight Limit

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead consulted with Thames Valley Police about the 7.5t weight limit in July 2019. Weight limits implemented in this manner are difficult to enforce due to the exemptions contained within the Traffic Regulation Order. It involves a Police Officer following the potential offender through the entire length of the restriction before the vehicle can be stopped to prove the offence. According to our information, the signage in place does not consistently mark a clear end to the restriction, which makes it difficult for drivers to comply with and for authorities to enforce. In addition, Police have no powers to stop goods vehicles to inspect delivery notes, nor do the drivers have any obligation to show them or divulge their destination. There are many exceptions to the traffic regulation order, including delivery drivers, drivers servicing local works and others.

The weight limit is extensive, extending from the A330 Ascot Road east towards the outskirts of Windsor. Goods vehicles travelling south from Maidenhead to Ascot or Bracknell are displaced through the urban area of Windsor, passed a number of schools and into areas that are already saturated with traffic. The plans supplied by the local authority did not identify any preferred routes or signed diversions for drivers who are unfamiliar with the area to follow and there was no evidence that the highway authority had consulted with the Freight Transport and Road Hauliers Association.

Whilst we will never say we will not enforce road traffic restrictions we do have to prioritise our enforcement activity. Trading Standards are able to enforce weight limit restrictions, it may be worth contacting your local team to see what enforcement they can offer.

I will make contact with your neighbourhood policing team to see what support they can give you.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dave Edmond', written in a cursive style.

Dave Edmond
Traffic Management Officer