

Traffic Order Report:

Proposed 50mph Speed Limit; B4226 Speech House Road between Broadwell & Cinderford, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire.

Version 1 – July 2025

Revision	Description	Author
1	First Issue	WC

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Traffic Order Title:

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (50 MPH SPEED LIMIT) (B4226, SPEECH HOUSE ROAD) (VARIOUS PARISHES) (FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT) ORDER 2025

Case Officer: Will Cox, Senior Traffic Engineer, ADL Traffic & Highways Engineering Ltd.

Senior Case Officer: Hannah Bassett-Louis, TRO Manager, Gloucestershire County Council

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To provide background information on the proposed Traffic Order (TO) entitled above.
- 1.2. To provide details of representations made in relation to the TO. A copy of the representations received is included in the appendices at the end of this report.
- 1.3. To make a recommendation to the Traffic and Active Travel Manager on the way forward.

2. Recommendation

That, for the reasons given in this report and after consideration of the representations made, GCC now:

- Makes the order as advertised in May/June 2025.

3. Background and Purpose of the Scheme

- 3.1. This is a proposal to introduce the 50mph speed limit detailed in the schedule below:

Schedule - 50mph Speed Limit to be Introduced

Road Name & Number	Description
Speech House Road (B4226)	From a point 200m north-west of the centreline of its junction with Valley Road (B4227) to a point 283m north-east of the centreline of its junction with North Road (B4432).

- 3.2. The scheme is being proposed primarily to improve road safety and amenity for all highway users, including pedestrians and cyclists on the B4226 Speech House Road, where there is currently a national speed limit. There have been 31 personal injury collisions on this section of road in the last 5 years. This has been flagged up on the Gloucestershire County Council "Hotspot List" as a location that requires intervention. The proposed changes seek to reduce the number and severity of collisions that have occurred here.
- 3.3. Vehicle speed data gathered during the assessment was within the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guideline intervention level for a 50mph speed limit of 57mph.

4. Law and Policy

- 4.1. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 sets out the legal basis for making TOs. The proposal meets with Section 84 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 which allows GCC, as the Traffic Authority, to make a TO to prohibit:

(a) the driving of motor vehicles on that road at a speed exceeding that specified in the order.

- 4.2. Thorough consideration has been given to the factors set out in Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 in proposing this TO. This requires the local authority to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic (including pedestrians). In carrying out this exercise GCC must have regard to the:
- a) Desirability of securing and maintaining reasonable access to premises.
 - b) The effect on the amenities of any locality effected and (without prejudice to the generality of this paragraph) the importance of regulating and restricting the use of roads by heavy commercial vehicles, so as to preserve or improve the amenities of the areas through which the road(s) run.
 - c) The strategy prepared under Section 80 of the Environment Act 1995 (the national air quality strategy).
 - d) The importance of facilitating the passage of public service vehicles and of securing the safety and convenience of persons using or desiring to use such vehicles.
 - e) Any other matters appearing to the local authority to be relevant.
- 4.3. Any changes are made in accordance with the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. Under this procedure authorities are expected to consult local community groups and the Police together with other organisations listed where appropriate, such as the other emergency services and transport operators.
- 4.4. GCC is required to advertise the draft TO it intends to make, to allow a period for representations of support or objection to be submitted. After this consultation, GCC must consider any representations received and having done so, to either:
- a) Resolve to make a TO in the form originally intended and advertised; or
 - b) Modify the TO from the originally advertised and re-consult where necessary; or
 - c) Abandon the proposal altogether.
- 4.5. Significant modifications to the proposed TOs would need to be consulted on with those that maybe affected to provide further opportunity for representations to be made.
- 4.6. Traffic Authorities have the flexibility to implement restrictions that are appropriate for an individual road, reflecting safety and road user needs whilst taking into account all local considerations.

5. Traffic Data

- 5.1. Several site observations were made by the GCC Traffic Engineering Team & Case Officer when considering the speed limit proposals, prior to the TO process being started. Careful consideration was given to the design of the proposed speed limit in order to achieve the most appropriate scheme.
- 5.2. As part of the assessment of the proposed 50mph speed limit on B4226 Speech House Road, Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) surveys were undertaken in order to ascertain whether the proposed speed limits would be enforceable and complied with by drivers. The surveys demonstrated that the existing 85th percentile vehicle speeds were within the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guideline intervention level for a 50mph speed limit of 57mph. Speed survey data is shown in Appendix B.

5.3. Analysis of collision data from 1st January 2019 – 31st October 2024 (inclusive) showed 31 personal injury collisions having taken place within the investigation area. Detailed collision reports can be found in Appendix B.

6. Consultation on the proposed TO

6.1. Statutory consultation for this proposed TO scheme was undertaken between 14th February 2025 and 7th March 2025. A letter and plan were emailed to the Statutory Consultees and stakeholders explaining the proposals and the reasoning behind them. Consultees were able to respond via email or post.

6.2. Public consultation (Notice of Proposal) for this proposed TO scheme was undertaken between 21st May 2025 and 13th June 2025 with Notices placed on site, in the local newspaper (The Forester), on GCC's website and hard copies were placed on deposit at Shire Hall & Cinderford Library (see Appendices A & C). The representations made can be found in Appendix D.

7. Consultation Responses

7.1. The Statutory Consultees responded as follows:

Name	Comments
Cinderford & Ruspidge County Councillor	Supports the Proposal
Coleford County Councillor	Supports the Proposal but raised concerns that it will make a negligible difference to the accident profile at Broadwell crossroads
Blakeney & Bream County Councillor	Does not support the proposal but does not object. Says it ignores longstanding local calls for a 40mph limit across the Statutory Forest of Dean. They highlight that key stakeholders including Forestry England, the Verderers, Parish Councils and the District Council support a lower limit. They believe that 50mph does not significantly improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, or wildlife, and that the current proposal fails to address the broader need for safer, more inclusive forest roads.
Drybrook & Lydbrook County Councillor	No comments received
Forest of Dean District Council	No comments received
Freight Haulage Association	No comments received
Road Haulage Association	No comments received
Police	Support the Proposal, but requested additional engineering measures be considered, to promote lower speeds.
Coleford Town Council	Support the Proposal.
West Dean Parish Council	Object to the proposal in its current form as they believe the speed limit reduction would not effectively reduce collisions. Instead, they advocate for targeted improvements including road repairs and visibility enhancements at known black spots such as: Cannop crossroads; the S bends,

	and the Speech House junction before considering any speed limit changes.
Cinderford Town Council	Support the Proposal.
Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council	No comments received
Stagecoach	Offered no objections to the proposal.
Fire & Rescue	No comments received
Ambulance Service	No comments received
Parking Enforcement Team	No comments received
Local Highway Manager	Supports the Proposal

7.2. Responses received during the Public Consultation (Notice of Proposal):

17 responses were received. Of these, six expressed support for the proposal as advertised, while 11 supported the general principle of reducing the speed limit but suggested lowering it to 40mph and extending the proposal to cover additional areas within the Forest of Dean.

8. Details of Representations and Case Officer's Response

- 8.1. The representations received from the public that supported the principle of reducing the speed limit on Speech House Road but advocated for a 40mph limit, and an extension of the proposal to other areas within the Forest of Dean, focused on several key themes.

Firstly, many representees felt that the proposed 50mph speed limit did not go far enough. A 40mph speed limit was preferred primarily on safety grounds, due to the high risk of collisions with wildlife such as deer, wild boar, and amphibians. A lower speed was seen as giving drivers more time to react and avoid accidents. Comments also suggested that GCC should consider implementing a Forest-wide 40mph speed limit, similar to the approach taken in the New Forest.

Secondly, concerns were raised about the road's lack of pedestrian footways, its sharp bends, and the numerous access points, including forest tracks, car parks, and popular visitor destinations. The concerns stated that these make it hazardous for both drivers and vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders.

Thirdly, the presence of conservation efforts, particularly deer, wild boar and in particular amphibian migration patrols, was cited as further justification for a lower speed limit. Some respondents proposed seasonal speed reductions (e.g., 30mph during migration months) to better protect wildlife and the volunteers who support these efforts.

Overall, representees argued that the minimal time saved by travelling at 50mph compared with 40mph does not outweigh the increased risks to human safety, wildlife, and the overall experience of the Forest of Dean.

- 8.2. In response to representations requesting a 40mph speed limit and changes to the proposed extents, along with the objections raised by the Blakeney & Bream County Councillor and West Dean Parish Council, this section of the B4226 Speech House Road has been identified on Gloucestershire's 'Hotspot List' as a location requiring intervention. The proposed speed limit is in alignment with the DfT "setting local speed limits" guidance for a 50mph speed limit and forms part of a broader package of measures aimed at reducing accident rates. These include improvements to signage and road markings to better highlight hazards and support safer driving behaviour.

The proposed reduction in the speed limit to 50mph will have a positive impact on road safety. Vehicles travelling at 50mph can typically stop in around 53m, versus that of a vehicle travelling at 60mph, where the stopping distance is 73m. This should also go some way to mitigating the risk of collisions with road users (including vulnerable users) and with wild animals crossing the road.

Additionally, the Police have been consulted regarding a 40mph speed limit on the B4226 Speech House Road and have stated they could not support this, based on existing speed data for this location. However, they have stated that they would be in support of a 50mph speed limit, as proposed. All speed limits should be self-enforcing where possible, so as not to require the resource of the Police, as the enforcing body. The 50mph speed limit proposal aligns with this.

In response to comments surrounding seasonal restrictions, it is not possible to implement these type of speed limits, as these are not prescribed under DfT regulations and would also not provide consistent messaging on the speed limit, as well as requiring more resource from the police for enforcement.

GCC recognise there is a desire for a 40mph speed limit to be implemented in this location. As a result, a feasibility study has been commissioned to investigate a 40mph speed limit within the Statutory Forest of Dean. However, at this stage, the outcome of this feasibility study is not yet known. A period of post-implementation monitoring will be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of this scheme and inform potential future interventions

Therefore, for the package to be as successful as possible and to not delay this scheme, it is imperative that the speed limit reduction proceeds as originally proposed.

9. Equality Impact Assessment

- 9.1. GCC has had due regard to the 3 aims of the general equality duty under the Equalities Act 2010 in relation to the 9 groups (Age, Disability, Sex, Race, Gender reassignment, Marriage and Civil partnership, Pregnancy & Maternity, Religion and/or Belief and Sexual orientation, along with other groups (such as long term unemployed, socio-economical deprived groups, community cohesion, human rights)) with protected characteristics and its decision to make this TO permanent does not adversely affect any of the groups with those protected characteristics (please see Due Regard Statements in Appendix E).

10. Summary

- 10.1. This is a proposal to introduce the 50mph speed limit detailed in the schedule below:

Schedule - 50mph Speed Limit to be Introduced

Road Name & Number	Description
Speech House Road (B4226)	From a point 200m north-west of the centreline of its junction with Valley Road (B4227) to a point 283m north-east of the centreline of its junction with North Road (B4432).

- 10.2. The scheme is being proposed primarily to improve road safety and amenity for all highway users, including pedestrians and cyclists on the B4226 Speech House Road, where there is

currently a national speed limit. There have been 31 personal injury collisions on this section of road in the last 5 years. This has been flagged up on the Gloucestershire “Hotspot List” as a location that requires intervention. The proposed changes seek to reduce the number and severity of collisions that have occurred here.

- 10.3. Vehicle speed data gathered during the assessment was within the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guideline intervention level for a 50mph speed limit of 57mph.
- 10.4. Representations were received during the Notice of Proposal (Public Consultation) process from members of the public and statutory consultees with regards to the proposed restrictions.
- 10.5. All representations have been outlined and responded to within this report in Section 8 in alignment with GCC’s duty under the Local Authorities’ Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.
- 10.6. In considering the assessment under Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the proposed TO meets GCC’s obligations in that they would ensure the expeditious, convenient, and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic, manage their road network and to improve road safety.
- 10.7. Subsequent to the completion of the statutory and formal public consultation processes including providing responses to representations, there have been two significant developments with respect to speed limits in Gloucestershire. 1) Gloucestershire County Council has commenced a project called Community 20’s / Safer Roads which will provide a countywide review of speed limits in both lower speed (40mph and lower) and higher speed (greater than 40mph) locations. The Safer Roads element refers to higher speed roads (mostly in rural parishes) that are unsuitable for a 20mph limit, but where a lower speed limit would improve road safety; and 2) GCC have begun to use specialist software called Compass which provides much more expansive information on vehicle speeds with greater efficiency than was previously available.
- 10.8. This means that the Statutory Forest of Dean speed limits will be reviewed which will include the revisiting of the B4226 Speech House Road under the Safer Roads element of the project described in 10.7, to ascertain what speed limit would be most appropriate. The Compass software indicates that along the B4226 Speech House Road which follows a winding alignment for a significant length of the route there are vehicle speeds that generally suggest that 40mph may be appropriate. However, information available at the time of the statutory and formal public consultations suggested that a 50mph speed limit on the B4226 Speech House Road is appropriate and consequently feedback from the police supported this. To change the speed limit proposal at this stage would legally require repeating significant elements of the TO process, therefore significantly delaying any reduction in speed limit which would improve road safety and reduce the likelihood of collisions and their severity. Therefore, it is recommended that the 50mph speed limit should go ahead. Any new speed limit proposal for the B4226 Speech House Road and for the Statutory Forest of Dean (which is outside the scope of this TO), would require a new TO(s).

11. View of the Case Officer

- 11.1. This report demonstrates that the introduction of the proposed 50mph Speed Limit is consistent with DfT "Setting Local Speed Limits" National Guidance and has been fully consulted upon in accordance with GCC procedures and followed necessary statutory procedures, as set out in the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England & Wales) Regulations 1996.
- 11.2. 11 requests to reduce the speed limit to 40mph and make changes to the proposed extents of the speed limit were raised during the Notice of Proposal (Public Consultation) process. However, these requests fall outside the remit of this scheme for the reasons as set out in Sections 8, 10.7 and 10.8.
- 11.3. Two objections to the 50mph speed limit were raised during the Notice of Proposal (Public Consultation) process. However, for the reasons outlined in Sections 8, 10.7 and 10.8 it is considered that the proposal should progress on to be made as advertised.
- 11.4. The proposal (as shown in Appendix A) has been designed taking into account GCC's duties under Sections 84 and 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and with the Department for Transport criteria for the respective speed limits. The police have also offered their support for the proposal in terms of enforcement of the speed limit.
- 11.5. It is considered that the 50mph speed limit proposed meets GCC's objectives relying on the data held at the time of assessment and therefore, it would be beneficial that the TO be made as advertised in May/June 2025.
- 11.6. A review of the Statutory Forest of Dean speed limits will be undertaken as part of the Safer Roads project.

12. Recommendation by the Senior Case Officer

- 12.1. I am satisfied that the TO has been correctly advertised and consulted upon in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the procedures laid down in that Act.
- 12.2. The necessary statutory procedures as set out in the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England & Wales) Regulations 1996 have been followed, and guidance, including the DfT Setting Local Speed Limits Guidance and Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 have been considered.
- 12.3. Although two objections and several representations requesting a further reduction to a 40mph speed limit and the extent of the TO were received, I am satisfied that these have been duly considered and that a balance has been drawn between the objections, positive feedback and safety of all road users.
- 12.4. I am satisfied that the data available to GCC at the time of proposing this speed limit was reflective of a 50mph speed limit. I welcome the Statutory Forest of Dean speed limit review under the Safer Roads project but am satisfied that the reduction of the speed limit to 50mph is a step in the right direction to reduce casualties at this time.
- 12.5. I recommend that the TO is made permanent as originally advertised in May/June 2025, under delegated authority.

13. Decision by the Traffic and Active Travel Manager

13.1. I have considered the report, recommendations and whether to hold a Traffic Regulation Committee. I have also considered the representations that we received in relation to this matter in making my decision. I have decided that Gloucestershire County Council should:

- Make the TO as advertised in May/June 2025.
- Undertake a Statutory Forest of Dean speed limit review under the Safer Roads Project.

13.2 As a result of the above I give authorisation for the Assistant Director of Legal Services to act on my decision pursuant to delegations approved in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 and subsequent legislation.

Signed:



Nathaniel Davis – Traffic and Active Travel Manager

Date: 4th March 2026

Appendices

Appendix A – Proposal plans for Advertised TO

Appendix B – Traffic Data (Speed Survey & Accident History)

Appendix C – Draft Legal Documents for TO

Appendix D – Representations received during the Notice of Proposal Public Consultation

Appendix E – Statement of Due Regard