

**4 October 2010**

**Speed Limit Review on A & B Roads in Walsall**

**Ward(s)** Borough-wide

**Portfolios:** Councillor Ansell - Portfolio Holder for Transport

**Summary of report:**

Following the introduction of Department for Transport (DfT) Circular 01/2006: Setting Local Speed Limits, a duty was placed on all Highway Authorities to undertake a review of the existing speed limit on all A & B roads and implement any changes by 2011. This report sets out our approach to reviewing Walsall's existing speed limits and recommends any amendments required to improve the highway network.

**Background papers:**

None.

**Reason for scrutiny:**

To allow Members the opportunity to review the methodology used to assess the existing speed limits and to consider the proposals. Once finalised the proposals will be agreed by the Head of Service Engineering & Transportation in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transport.

**Resource and legal considerations:**

An £80,000 budget, allocated as part of the current approved Local Transport Plan 2010/11 Integrated Transport Block programme, has already been approved by Cabinet to support the delivery of part of the proposals identified. However, it will be necessary to seek additional funding through the next Local Transport Plan to complete the proposals identified.

Alterations to existing speed limits are subject to the satisfactory completion of a Traffic Regulation Order. As part of this process, it is necessary to undertake a formal consultation and where any objections are received, they will need to be successfully negotiated or ultimately determined by the Executive Director (Neighbourhoods) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transport.

**Citizen impact:**

Ensuring that speed limits across the highway network are both consistent and appropriate will reduce any confusion experienced by motorists travelling through the borough. Furthermore, the management of speed limits will result in reduced road casualties which will underpin our ongoing success in achieving the performance indicators NI47 & NI48 as well as reducing the number of slight collisions across the network. Finally, the proposals contribute towards an improved quality of life for local residents particularly those residing along high speed roads.

**Environmental impact:**

The speed limit review can deliver positive environmental impacts. Appropriate restraint in vehicle speeds can assist in managing traffic congestion and associated air pollution while delivering benefits in terms of community severance caused by fast moving traffic.

**Performance management:**

The principles of network management and road safety activities are defined in a range of legislation that also requires local authorities to report on the effectiveness of their progress in road safety via National and local casualty reduction targets, national indicators 47 and 48.

DfT Circular 1/06 also places a specific duty on Local Authorities to undertake and complete the review by 2011.

**Equality Implications:**

Road safety programmes are delivered for the benefit of all sections of the community as road accidents are not discriminatory. In addition, positive action is also undertaken to assist specific sections of the community where an identifiable need can be quantified.

**Consultation:**

Where a change to an existing speed limit is proposed a new Traffic Regulation Order will be required. Therefore, it will be necessary to undertake a formal consultation. The formal consultation requires a public notice to be placed on street along with consultation with a variety of key stakeholders including:

- Legal Services;
- West Midlands Fire Service;
- West Midlands Ambulance Service;
- Other adjacent Highway Authorities;
- West Midlands Police Authority;
- Transport Hauliers
- Residents
- Centro
- Public transport providers

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# **ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL SPEED LIMITS THROUGHOUT WALSALL**

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 This report seeks to explain the reasoning behind the need to undertake a speed limit review and sets out this Council's framework against which to assess speed limits in Walsall. The approach has been developed in consultation with council officers and external agencies and aims to secure a consistent approach throughout the Borough.
- 1.2 The 1997 White Paper, The Future of Transport, included a commitment to develop a speed management policy that would take account of the contribution of appropriate speeds to environmental and social objectives, as well as to road safety.
- 1.3 This resulted in New Directions in Speed Management (DETR, 2000a), a detailed review of speed management policies, which drew upon extensive speed-related research and evidence from the United Kingdom and around the world. The review concluded that a national framework was needed for determining speeds on all roads with limits that were rational, consistent, readily understood and appropriate for the circumstances. Traffic authorities therefore continue to have the flexibility to set local speed limits that are right for the individual road, reflecting local needs and taking account of all local considerations.
- 1.4 The outcomes from this work identified the need to provide a speed assessment framework particularly for the rural network along with the need to provide more clear and transparent decision making for the traffic authorities.

## **2 Introduction**

- 2.1 DfT Circular 01/2006: Setting Local Speed Limits was written in response to the outcomes from the Transport Act 2000 to provide further advice and guidance in setting both urban and rural speed limits.
- 2.2 The key objectives of the DfT Circular are:
  - to provide up-to-date and consistent advice to traffic authorities;
  - improved clarity which will aid greater consistency of speed limits both locally and nationally;
  - the setting of more appropriate local speed limits, including reduced or increased limits where conditions dictate;
  - local speed limits that better reflect the needs of all road users, not just motorised vehicles;
  - improved quality of life for local communities and a better balance between road safety, accessibility and environmental objectives, especially in rural communities;
  - improved recognition and understanding by road users of the risks involved on different types of road, the speed limits that apply, and the reasons why;

- improved respect for speed limits, and in turn improved self compliance;
- 2.3 The guidance also placed a duty on traffic authorities to review the speed limits on their A & B classified routes and implement changes by 2011. Furthermore, following on from this, it was also implied that ongoing consideration should be given to other routes applying the same method.

### **3 Our Approach**

- 3.1 The purpose of the speed review locally is to:
- a) provide a comprehensive and consistent approach to considering speed limits throughout Walsall;
  - b) review the Traffic Regulation Orders and associated signing to ensure compliance;
  - c) eliminate any ambiguities across the existing highway network;
  - d) to ensure that speed limits do not contribute towards the severance of communities;
- 3.2 In accordance with the guidance, we have studied collisions, severity and frequency, together with a survey of traffic speeds and flows. This information was been collated and reviewed to assess whether the existing speed limit is appropriate for the type of road and mix of use by different groups of road users. In addition to the survey data, we have also factored in local community concerns. A full list of the data gathered includes:
- traffic speeds
  - collisions: severity and frequency
  - traffic flows
  - link lengths
  - the environmental impact
  - the level of public anxiety
  - conditions and facilities for vulnerable road users
- 3.3 Following collation of the local data, accident rates for each link length were compared against the national average and deviations highlighted.
- 3.4 Where alterations in the network are required, the changes have been incorporated into existing schemes where possible or new schemes have been developed. Some of the proposals have been included within the current approved Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Block programme.
- 3.5 Walsall Council is the Traffic Authority for non-trunk roads within the borough and as such must approve and implement all speed limits across its highway network.
- 3.6 The mean speed is used as the appropriate threshold for establishing speed limits.
- 3.7 When applying speed limits the minimum recommended length is 600 metres. This can lead to roads, or stretches of road, that suffer from poor compliance with the existing speed limit. Where this happens and engineering and/or

education solutions have been unsuccessful, some form of enforcement may be necessary.

## **4 Application of the framework**

- 4.1 The summary of data and assessment can be found in Appendix A.
- 4.2 In line with the most influencing factors, the data has been sub-divided into four key areas, which are then scored. The four areas are existing mean speeds, collision rate, public anxiety and the facilities for Vulnerable Road Users.
- 4.3 Where mean speeds are significantly different (higher or lower) from the posted speed limit they score the maximum 20 points. The collision rate scores a maximum of 15 points for high and 10 points for medium. Where we have documented history of speed complaints or previous requests for changes to a speed limit it scores 10 points. Finally, where the facilities for Vulnerable Road Users are considered poor then a further 5 points can be scored. Therefore, the maximum score that any location can achieve is 50 points.
- 4.4 Where a location achieves a score of 30 points or more, it should be considered for further review. Based on the mean speed data a decision can be made as to whether the speed limit is appropriate or should be changed.
- 4.5 Where the mean speeds are 10% + 2mph greater than the posted speed limit then a review should be undertaken to assess if the speed limit should be increased. Where the mean speed data is 15% lower than the posted speed limit then a review should be undertaken to assess if the speed limit should be lowered. Where the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is greater than 10% + 6mph then a campaign of speed enforcement is recommended.
- 4.6 It should be noted that in accordance with Appendix B: Table 1 it is not considered appropriate to implement a 20mph speed limit on the strategic network.
- 4.7 The results of the assessment have identified the following locations that would benefit from additional enforcement to control speeds:
  - A34 Birmingham Road (Bell Road to Broadway)
  - B4154 Longwood Road
  - B4138 Thornhill Road

- 4.8 The results of the assessment have identified the following locations that would benefit from a reduction in the existing speed limit:
- A454 Wolverhampton Road (M6 J10 to Pleck Road)
  - B4151 Sutton Road
  - B4154 Bosty Lane (A454 to Barr Common Road)
  - B4154 Norton Road (Borough boundary to canal bridge)
- 4.9 The results of the assessment have identified the following locations that would benefit from an increase in the existing speed limit:
- B4484 Pinson Road (Sommerford Place to Moat Street)
- 4.10 The results of the assessment have identified the following locations as requiring further investigation or have recently benefitted from treatment:
- A41 Black Country New Road
  - A454 Little Aston Road (Leighswood to Branton Hill)
  - B4210 Bloxwich Road & High Street
  - B4154 Norton Road (canal bridge to Vicarage Road)
  - B4154 Beacon Road (Queslett Road to Old Hall Lane)
- 4.11 Plans illustrating the proposals are contained in Appendix C.

## **5 Conclusion**

- 5.1 Members are requested to receive and comment on the framework as set out within this report and to note the alterations to the speed limits as proposed in Section 4.
- 5.2 Once finalised, the proposals will be agreed by the Head of Service Engineering & Transportation in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transport in line with the Council's Scheme of Delegations.
- 5.3 The ongoing review of the remaining highway network in Walsall should be undertaken using this framework. This will ensure consistent application of speed limits throughout the borough.

## **6 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 A budget has been identified as part of the 2010/11 LTP Integrated Transport Block to support the implementation of the review. The approved budget will be used to prioritise the work along B4151 Sutton Road in conjunction with the Local Safety Scheme funding, deliver the speed reduction for B4154 Norton Road and to begin the upgrading of terminal signs at the gateways to the urban area.
- 6.2 Further funding will need to be identified as part of future LTP settlements to ensure the completion of the review and ongoing roll out across the borough.

- 6.3 Assuming that the resource levels within the Road Safety team remains consistent it will be possible to subsume the assessment and evaluation work within the existing workload.
- 6.4 There are no further financial implications contained within this policy.



## **Appendix A – Speed limit assessment: Summary**

## Appendix B – Typical speed limits by road function

Road Network & Speed Limit	Normal road Function	Calming Status
Residential Streets Normally 20 or 30 mph	Minor roads or cul-de-sac within residential areas.	Appropriate for all types of traffic calming measures on road safety or environment grounds (i.e. to deter through traffic). Roads hump/speed cushion schemes are normally promoted as low two-way vehicles flows reduce the effectiveness of other options (give way priority build-outs etc.)
Local Access Roads 30mph	Roads which provide direct access to most premises (residential and industrial).	In residential areas all types of traffic calming measures could be used. For industrial access road humps and other vertical deflections need to be considered carefully due to potential noise and environmental issues
Local Distributor Roads Normally 30mph	Mainly the key spine roads within residential and employment areas which provide links to the higher tiers of the road hierarchy.	All forms of traffic calming measures may be used however, concern should be given to the introduction of road humps on roads well used by commercial vehicles (see also note 1). On more prominent roads with high KSI collisions consideration may be given to safety cameras.
District Distributor Roads 30 or 40mph	Important routes, often classified as 'B' roads, which connect major residential and employment areas within the town. Such roads could also provide access onto the Strategic Highway Network.	Measures are normally required to restrict speeding or prevent overtaking. On most occasions traditional traffic management measures will be sufficient although narrowing's and central refuges may be considered. Safety cameras may be introduced on roads with high KSI collisions.
Strategic Highway Network 30/40/50 mph	Typically 'A' class roads which carry most long distance and heavy traffic, providing links from Walsall to other major centres in the region or the national motorway network.	Should not be traffic calmed, however, traditional traffic management techniques may be used to control traffic speed and prevent overtaking. Safety cameras may be considered on roads with high KSI collisions.
<p>Table 1: Appropriate traffic calming measures based on road hierarchy</p> <p><b>Note 1: Road humps and other vertical deflections are only permitted on roads with speed limits of 30mph or less</b></p>		

## Appendix C - Proposed locations for additional enforcement to control speed

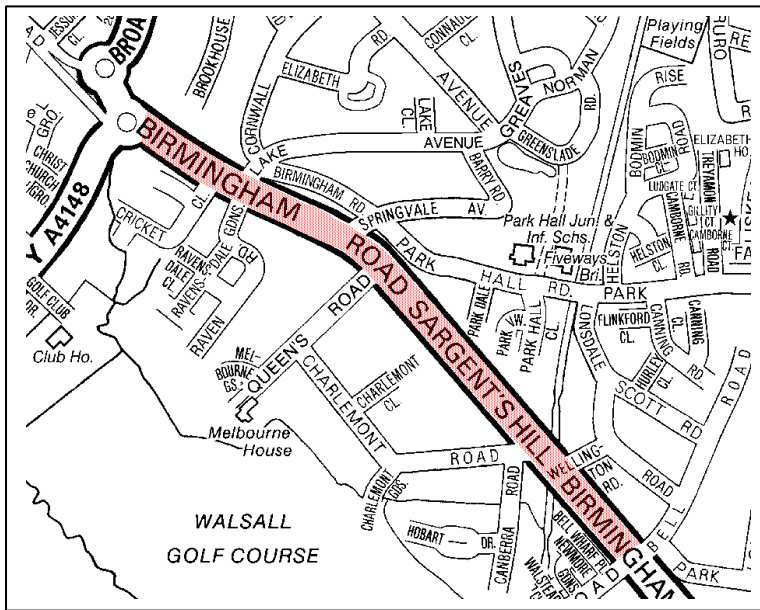


Fig 4.1a - A34 Birmingham Road (Bell Road to Broadway)

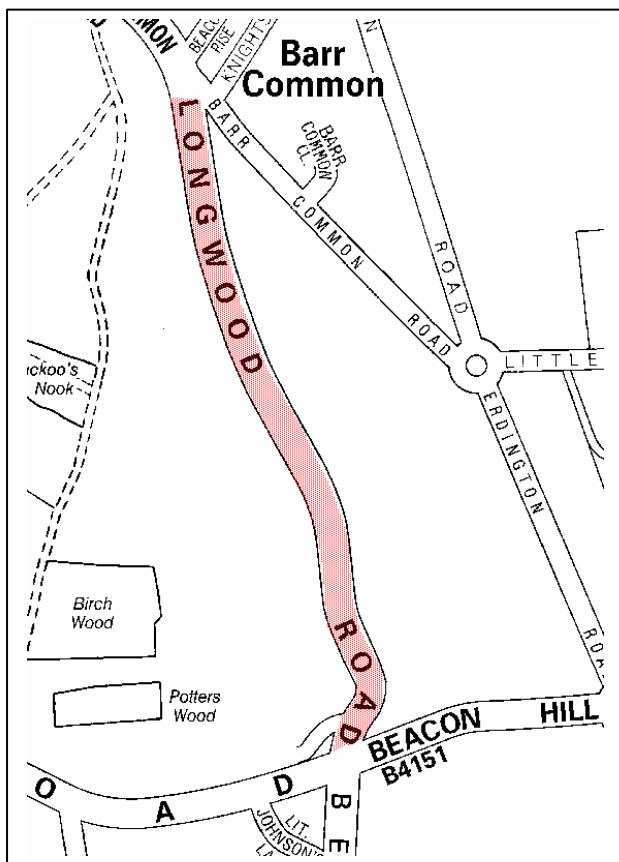


Fig 4.1b - B4154 Longwood Road

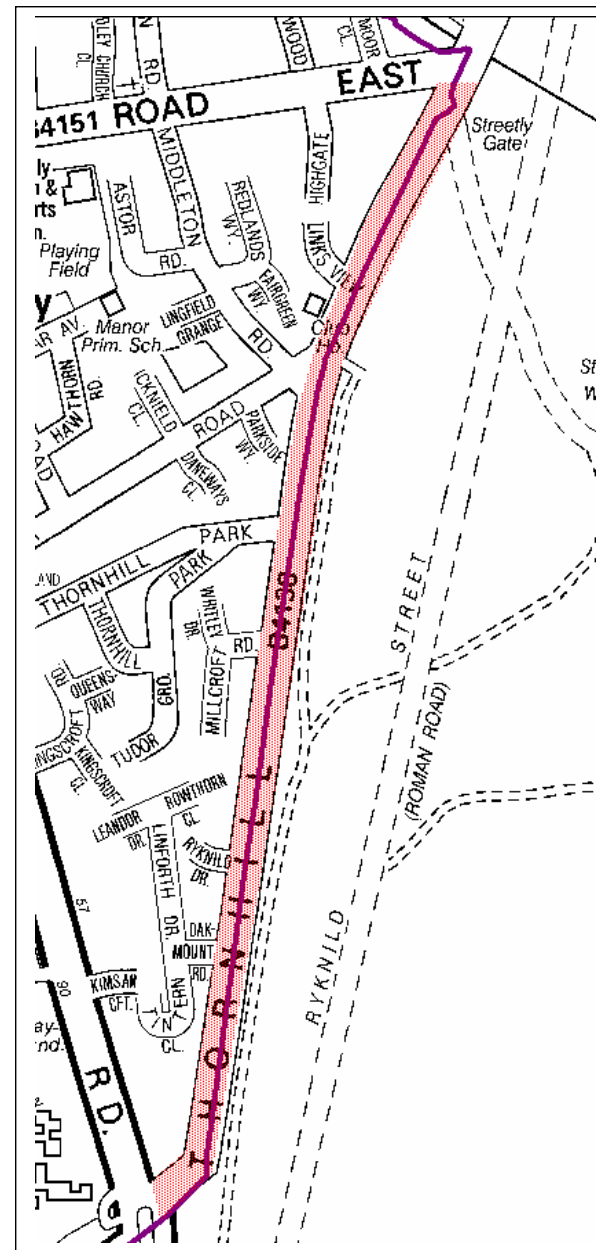


Fig 4.1c - B4138 Thornhill Road

## Appendix D - Proposed locations for speed reduction

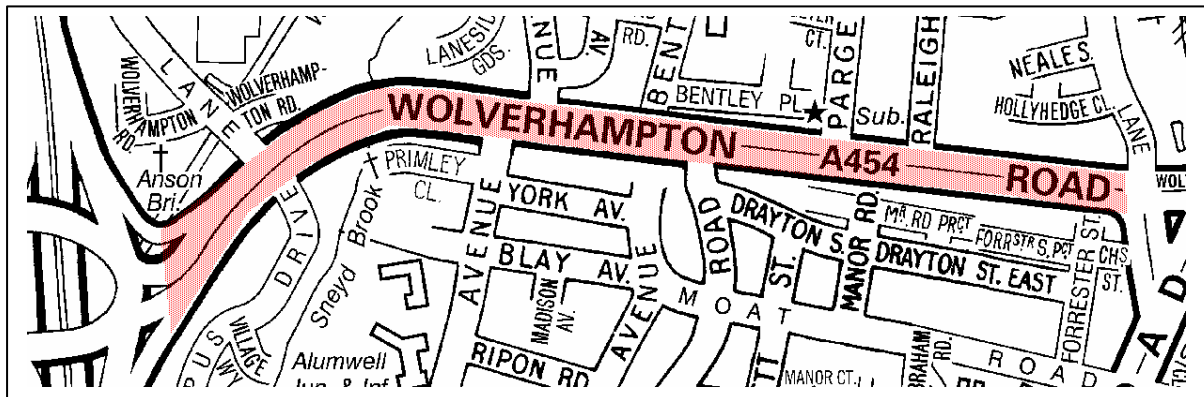


Fig 4.2a - A454 Wolverhampton Road (M6 J10 to Pleck Road)

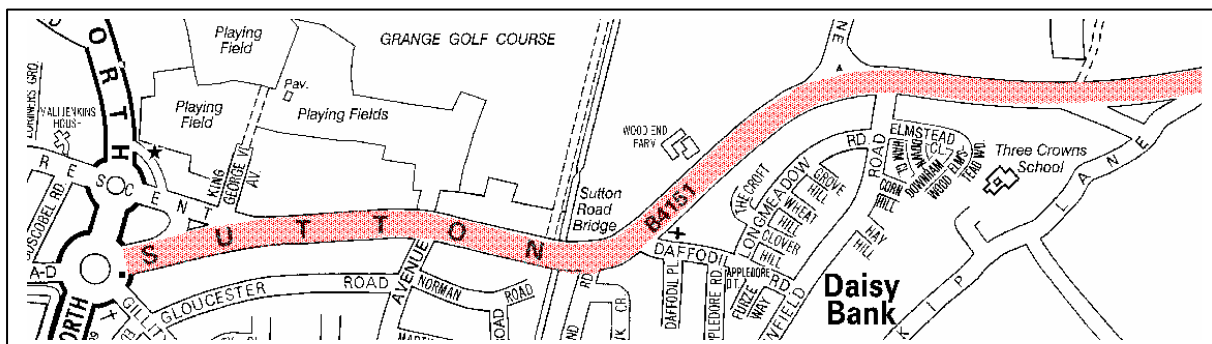


Fig 4.2b - B4151 Sutton Road

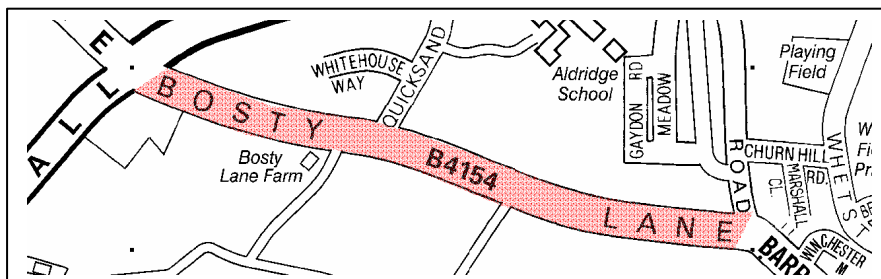


Fig 4.2c - B4154 Bosty Lane (A454 to Barr Common Road)

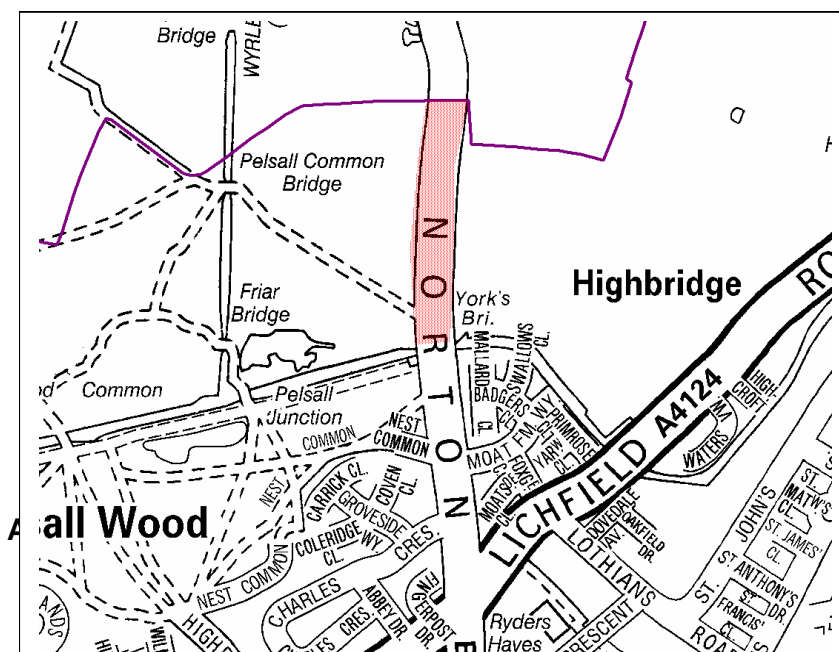


Fig 4.2d - B4154 Norton Road  
(Borough boundary to canal bridge)



The map shows the Birmingham Southern Railway route in red, starting from the top left and running diagonally towards the bottom right. The route passes through the Birchills area, which is labeled at the bottom. Key streets shown include High Street, Somerfield Street, Leam Road, and Beesley Road. Landmarks such as Birchills Canal, Reedswood Park, and the Birmingham Southern Railway station are marked. The map also shows various residential streets and local businesses.

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Fig 4.4d - B4154 Beacon Road  
(Queslett Road to Old Hall Lane)



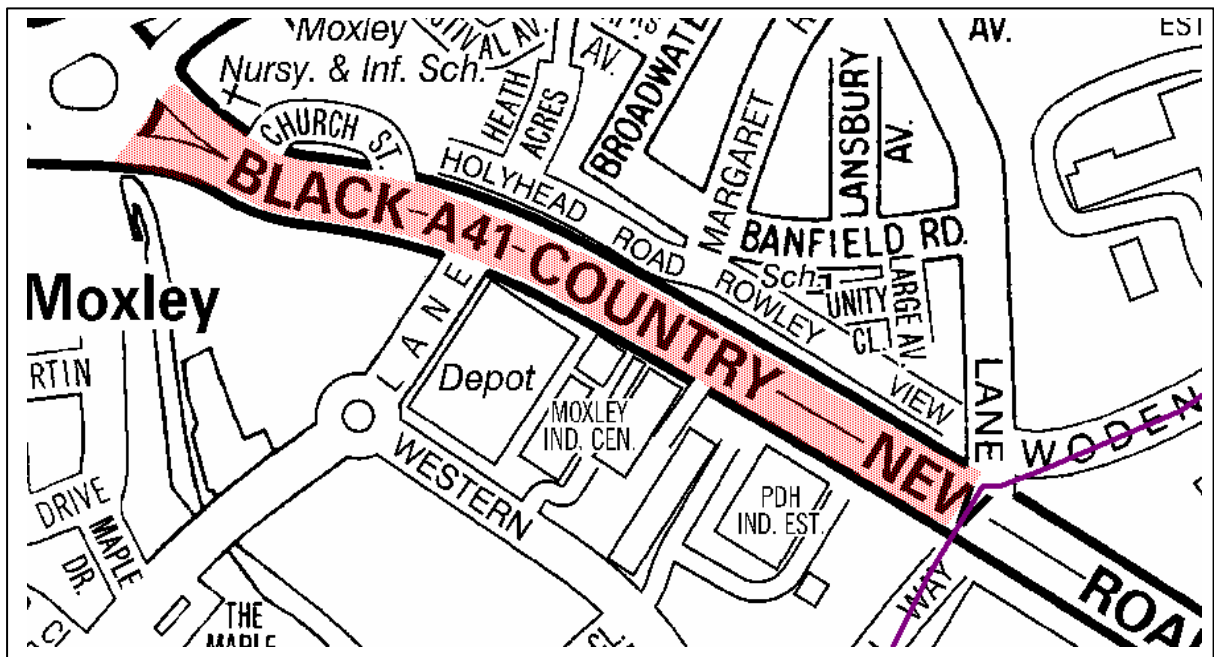


Fig 4.4e – A 41 Black Country New Road