

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 14 NOVEMBER 2019

WOODSTOCK A44 OXFORD ROAD – PROPOSED EXTENSION OF 30MPH SPEED LIMIT AND TOUCAN CROSSING

Report by Director for Community Operations (Interim)

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed extension of the 30mph speed limit and the installation of a toucan crossing (a signalled crossing for pedestrians and pedal cyclists) on the A44 Oxford Road, Woodstock as advertised.

Executive summary

2. Speed limits and the provision of pedestrian and cycle crossings are reviewed when there are changes to the road layout because of development, when requested by local councils because of road safety concerns and as part of the on-going monitoring of reports on road accidents. Specific proposals are assessed applying national guidance on speed limits and the provision of pedestrian and cycle crossings, and also the Oxfordshire County Council Walking Design and Cycling Design Standards.

Introduction

3. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation on a proposal to extend the 30mph speed limit and introduce a toucan crossing on the A44 Oxford Road at Woodstock adjacent to a new residential development at the south end of the town.

Background

4. The above proposal as shown at Annex 1 has been put forward because of the development of adjacent land for housing.

Consultation

5. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 3 October and 1 November 2019. A notice was placed in the Oxford Times newspaper and notices placed near the proposed crossing. An email was sent to statutory consultees including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, the West Oxfordshire District Council, Woodstock Town Council and the local County Councillor. Public notices were placed on site.

and letters also sent to approximately 20 properties in the immediate vicinity of the proposal.

6. Thirteen responses were received. Two objections (from Thames Valley Police and Begbroke Parish Council) and eleven from members of the public expressing support. The responses are recorded at Annex 2 with copies of the full responses available for inspection by County Councillors.

Response to objections and other comments

7. Thames Valley Police expressed an objection to the extension of the 30mph speed limit on the grounds that they did not consider it realistic taking account of the road environment even with the new junction and signalled crossing in place. In view of what they consider to be a high risk of abuse of the 30mph speed limit, the police have requested consideration of a 'buffer' 40mph speed limit in place of the current proposals. While acknowledging these concerns, the proposed length of extension of the existing 30mph speed limit is modest (approximately 150 metres) and is considered proportionate taking account of the new junction, signalled crossing and adjacent residential development which will change the road environment.
8. The objection from Begbroke Parish Council was primarily on the grounds that they consider the provision of a signalled pedestrian crossing at Begbroke, which has been a very long-standing request on the part of the parish council, to be a higher priority. Their response also noted concerns over crossing the A4095 at the A44/A4095 Bladon Roundabout (where there are currently only uncontrolled crossing points) and queries over the routes available to pedestrians, particularly for students attending the Marlborough School at Woodstock and also the provision of bus stops on the A44 Oxford Road adjacent to the development. The parish council also cited concerns over traffic delays caused by a signalled crossing.
9. In response to the above, while acknowledging the parish council's concerns over pedestrian safety at the A44 Begbroke Roundabout, the proposals are being funded and delivered by the residential development adjacent to the A44 Oxford Road at Woodstock to provide a safe route for pedestrians to the new bus stops on the A44 and also for pedestrians and cyclists continuing on the existing shared use footway/cycle track on the west side of the road. The proposals are considered proportionate taking account of the scale of the development and while the crossing will (as with any such crossing) introduce some delay to traffic, this is also considered proportionate to the benefits to the pedestrians (including the bus users walking to and from the crossing) and cyclists.
10. Wider plans for improvements are being developed for the A44 route which would have a particular emphasis on improving public transport and pedestrian and cycle provision, including at Begbroke.
11. The eleven responses from members of the public all expressed support for the proposals, although several requested consideration of further measures to improve the safety and amenity of pedestrians and cyclists, including

provision of a continuous footway on the east side of the A44 to link to the new residential development and also the widening of the existing footways including - on the west side - the shared use footway and cycle track.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

12. The proposals would help facilitate the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

13. Funding for the proposed measures will be provided by the developers of adjacent land

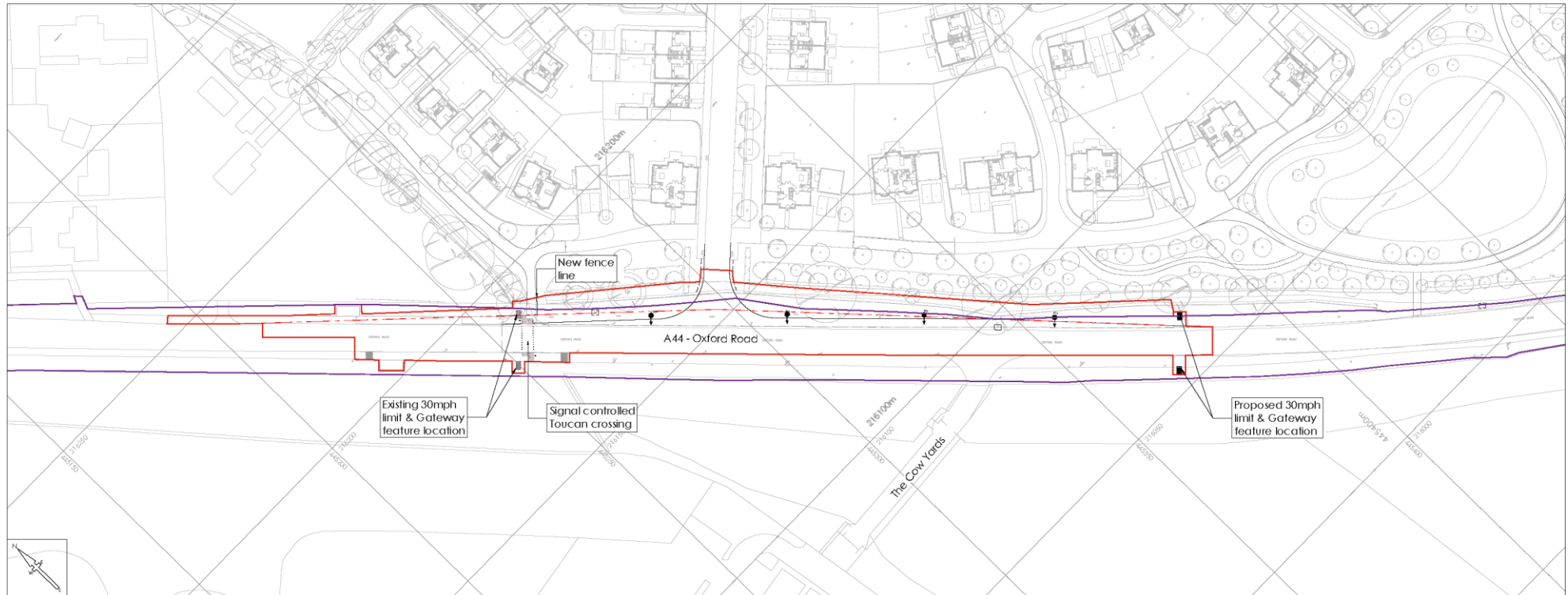
JASON RUSSELL

Director for Community Operations (Interim)

Background papers: Plan of proposed speed limit extension and toucan crossing
Consultation responses

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November 2019



	Extent of works area
	Extent of existing adopted highway

NOTES

1. All dimensions and levels are in metres unless otherwise noted
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P01	SNN	TST	Initial Issue	05/07/19
REV	DRAWN	CHECK	REVISION COMMENTS	ISSUE DATE
DRAWING TITLE TRO Plan				SHEET NO. 1
PROJECT Proposed Oxford Road Junction Works, Woodstock East, Woodstock, Oxon.				
CLIENT 				
SCALE @ A3 1:1000 @ A3			DESIGN TST	
PROJECT NUMBER ICS-2716	DATE July 19		DRAFTED SNN	
DRAWING NUMBER WSE-ICS-ORJ-00-DR-C-082	STATUS S4		APPROVED DJ	REVISION P01

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RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
<p>(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)</p>	<p>Object Thames Valley Police are not opposed to lowering speed limits providing they are appropriate to the road environment and likely to have casualty reduction benefits, this section of road has generally a good history. All aspects of the proposed speed limit are taken into account i.e. collision history, speed of existing traffic, road environment, enforcement, road character function with driver perception.</p> <p>The current speed of traffic is a reliable indicator of how acceptable a new speed limit would be hence the request for speed data. The recognized way of ascertaining the level of self-compliance is the 85th percentile speed. If the 85th percentile speed is 7mph or more over the proposed limit it is unlikely to be effective without other measures such as engineering or continual enforcement. The later would be a very low priority for Police in the circumstances given the history and location of a speed camera closer to the town.</p> <p>There is a proven link between road environment/character and drivers speed. Drivers must respect the need for a speed limit. If not accepted as realistic from our experience a limit will quickly be abused and be the source of constant demands for police action. Communities not privy to this response will thereafter be unhappy and dissatisfied with the residual situation which Police activity would never satisfy.</p> <p>The policy of Thames Valley Police is to use sound practical and realistic criteria (Circular Roads 1/2013) when responding to Highway Authorities in an effort to promote consistency and to reduce the burden of constant and unnecessary enforcement. The advice shown in Circular Roads 1/2013 states Speed Limits should not be used to attempt to solve the problem of isolated hazards, for example junctions or reduced forward visibility.</p> <p>It is important in our experience that Highway infrastructure although is determined with the ‘speed limit’ (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges), must ALSO consider in our view actual speed of traffic which would be the case here and likely significantly higher! The main line being considered will have no direct frontages onto the A44 just one isolated junction and therefore NOT change the character to drivers to any significant degree! Designs in junction visibility and pavement width for vulnerable users should be designed as such to</p>

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	<p>the traffic speed.</p> <p>Consideration to a 40mph buffer limit through this section even if slightly longer to accommodate a change would to us be closer to actual speeds and reflect driver acceptance with infrastructure design appropriately.</p> <p>Having considered the location specific criteria Thames Valley Police Object to the order.</p>
<p>(2) Begbroke Parish Council</p>	<p>Object - do not support this crossing as one at Begbroke would be a more important use of Section 106 funds. (No objections regarding speed limit extension apart from point 1 below):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Begbroke children still have to cross the A44 somewhere and they will all have to cross the A4095 at Bladon. (another crossing is planned at Langford Lane), ii. Improvements at the A4095 are necessary for all school children, pedestrians and cyclists crossing that road, iii. Will there be bus stop near this crossing for the S3/S7 /233 so children can alight and walk to the Marlborough? If not they will carry on to Woodstock and cross there, iv. There is no footpath leading directly to the Marlborough - nearest is 413/3 which goes through Cadogan Park, v. There is no path on the eastern side of the road leading to Woodstock, vi. It will impact on traffic flow which is extremely heavy early morning and late afternoon, vii. The funds should be allocated to a crossing in Begbroke instead, viii. The county council do not appear to have similar considerations for speed and safety issues for our residents as set out in these proposals. Or is it just for the new residents to use!
<p>(3) Local Resident, (Woodstock)</p>	<p>Support – Given the new residential development it is essential for safety. Even today, there are many times during the week when it is impossible to cross the A44 safely. The residential development will bring more traffic to the area; motor, cycle and pedestrian. In the light of that I hope the following are in the plan or can be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extension of a footpath on the eastern side of the A44 from Churchill Gate to the new crossing - Upgrade/widening of the footpath on the eastern side of the A44 between Churchill Gate and Princes Ride. This is very narrow and very frightening when a 40-tonne truck travelling at 40mph+ passes inches from your shoulder - Upgrade/widen the footpath/cycle path on the western side of the A44. There is frequently contention between pedestrians and cyclists on the section.

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	<p>I am also concerned with the expectation of more traffic, that exiting the new residential development, Churchill Gate and Princes Ride to travel north west (i.e. turn right) will become more dangerous. During recent Blenheim events, an increasing number of cars make u-turns at these points because they cannot turn directly into Blenheim at Hensington Gate. The effect is simply to add more danger as these cars now attempt to cross two lanes of traffic at a very busy time.</p>
<p>(4) Local Resident, (Woodstock)</p>	<p>Support - I live on Oxford Road and have noted the volume of traffic increase significantly during that time.</p> <p>Initially there was not even a pedestrian refuge near the entrance to Hensington Gate. Very considerable concerns were expressed at that time, but the local community was informed that nothing could be done until there was a fatality. Unfortunately, there was a fatality – a honeymooner who had been staying at The Bear. His death resulted in the refuge being built.</p> <p>All I can ask is that the proposals are carried through and the Toucan crossing installed as a priority. I am aware that the traffic that is already being generated by Ridge and Partners has already resulted in minor road traffic accidents.</p>
<p>(5) Local Resident, (Woodstock)</p>	<p>Support – Well done. We would also like another bus stop nearer to Churchill Gate.</p>
<p>(6) Local Resident, (Woodstock)</p>	<p>Support – We live on Oxford Road. Traffic has increased significantly since then; and the conversion of the Cowshed by Blenheim to a busy office has made the traffic along the section of the A44 to which this proposal relates even busier. There has, to our own knowledge, already been at least one accident since that conversion. The new development at Park View will only exacerbate the traffic issues, and I consider both the proposed Toucan crossing and the proposed extension of the 30mph limit to be very sensible, indeed necessary; and I hope very much that they will be implemented as soon as possible.</p>
<p>(7) Local Resident, (Woodstock)</p>	<p>Support – As a resident of Churchill Gate and a regular walker/cyclist this is long overdue in my opinion. A lot of drivers pick up speed after the camera and it is currently dangerous and can take a long time to get across the A44 near to my home.</p> <p>There is currently no footpath on the Churchill Gate side of the road - I presume one is planned to link the houses on</p>

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	<p>the new residential site and Churchill Gate to the crossing?</p> <p>Will there be cameras to help reinforce the limit people travel through that stretch of the A44?</p>
<p>(8) Local Resident, (Woodstock)</p>	<p>Support – I wholeheartedly support the proposal for the toucan crossing and 30 mph speed limit. It is long overdue in my opinion.</p> <p>As a regular walker and cyclist, crossing the road from my home to the footpath can be dangerous and sometimes takes as long as 10 minutes. There is currently no footpath on the Churchill Gate side of the road to link the crossing to the housing - is one planned?</p>
<p>(9) Local Resident, (Woodstock)</p>	<p>Support – As a potential resident at Park View with two young children, a toucan crossing and lower speed limit of 30mph would be essential in creating a safer environment for pedestrians and vehicle users. It will calm traffic upon entry into Woodstock, facilitate traffic turning in and out of the A44 into the new housing development. It will benefit and make crossing safer for residents of Woodstock and visitors by bus to Blenheim.</p>
<p>(10) Local Resident, (Woodstock)</p>	<p>Support – Fully support this, must be difficult to cross for the public right of way, southbound cars tend to speed up after the speed camera, and North bound often aren't at 30 for the start of the 30 zone. Especially important with the new housing.</p>
<p>(11) Local Resident, (Woodstock)</p>	<p>Support – The 30mph limit should be extended to the Bladon roundabout. there is no point in having less than 500 meters of 50 mph. Sudden acceleration and deceleration is dangerous.</p> <p>A similar crossing point is required at the bus stops adjacent to the palace gates.</p>
<p>(12) Local Resident, (Woodstock)</p>	<p>Support – I support the proposed Toucan crossing and 30 mph speed limit extension. Hopefully one of the byproducts of this will be a reduction of people speeding through the town, especially in the evenings.</p>

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(13) Resident, (Abingdon)	Support – No comments.
(14) Resident, (Begbroke)	<p>Support – I feel that it is absolutely essential to support suitable crossing points of A44 so that children may safely cycle to school.</p> <p>Additional severe problems exist at Begbroke with all members of community struggling to safely cross A44 (all bus users and those with daily needs to cross the road).</p> <p>Everyone must move towards provision of safe cycle routes for kids to get to Marlborough school from Begbroke and Yarnton and indeed Woodstock - not to mention adult work routes. We have some good cycle lanes which should be extended - has this been thought of in the new road alignment being considered in Woodstock? All side routes in Woodstock and Begbroke (and Yarnton?) should be 20mph.</p>