

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT – 25 MARCH 2010

BEECH CROFT ROAD, OXFORD – TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEME

Report by Head of Transport

Introduction

1. The Beech Croft Road Association (BCRA) has been involved in discussions with the County Council over a number of years on their concerns over the adverse impact of traffic and have developed, with the support of Sustrans, a major sustainable transport charity, a proposal (Annex 1) for a traffic calming scheme comprising innovative lower cost measures with the following aims:
 - to encourage traffic to travel at lower speeds to reduce the risk of accidents and to increase driver awareness of the likely presence of pedestrians (in particular children);
 - to enhance the appearance of the street for the benefit of residents.
2. While a traffic survey carried out by the County Council in 2005 showed quite modest flows and speeds and there have been no reported injury accidents in the most recent 10 years, the approach being suggested by BCRA is of interest as a potential means of achieving the benefits of a 'home zone' layout at a far lower cost than the County Council's own pilot 'home zone' schemes in Charlbury and Abingdon.
3. In view of this and the fact that the majority of the implementation cost would be met through a charitable grant obtained by BCRA, together with other fund raising by BCRA, the County Council has agreed (as with other examples of externally funded traffic calming schemes) to assist in the process of developing the scheme and - following a safety audit by County Council which identified no significant safety concerns – to carry out a consultation on the proposals.
4. It should be noted that some of the BCRA concerns over traffic and related matters are addressed by the following schemes:
 - Oxford 20mph speed limit on minor residential roads (implemented 01 September 2009) which includes Beech Croft Road
 - provision of side road entry treatments at each end of Beech Croft and Thorncliffe Roads, construction of which was approved by the former Transport Decisions Committee on 11 February 2010
 - Maintenance of footways – which in many places are in a poor state of repair – is currently scheduled for 2011/12.

5. This report details responses to the consultation on the BCRA traffic calming proposals, with officer comment, and seeks a decision on whether the current proposal should be approved for construction.

Consultation

6. Responses to the consultation carried out between mid January and mid February 2010 are summarised at Annex 2.
7. Responses from 20 households in Beech Croft Road were received, (around 40 % of all the households in the road). Of these 13 were unreservedly in support, 5 were supportive of some elements of the scheme but not of others and 3 opposed all or the majority of the proposals. Lady Nuffield Home also expressed opposition to the proposals.
8. Thames Valley Police have raised queries over the compliance of some aspects of the proposals with the current Traffic Calming Regulations, and both the Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and the Ambulance service have expressed concerns over the effect of the scheme on access for emergency vehicles. It is believed that relatively minor amendments can be made to address the concerns of Thames Valley police and a check has been made to confirm that access for emergency vehicles will not be materially affected.
9. Some expressions of concern have also been expressed by residents of Thorncliffe Road over the possibility of traffic diversion as a result of the scheme. The response of the Moreton Road Residents Association will be reported at the meeting.

How the project supports LTP2 objectives

10. This project aims to reduce the risk of accidents and improve the quality of the local street environment.

Financial Implications (including Revenue)

11. The anticipated costs of implementing the scheme, together with the sources of funding have been compiled by BCRA as shown at Annex 3. As will be seen, if implementation is approved, BCRA would be seeking a contribution of £1932 from the County Council's 2010/11 Transport Capital budget.
12. Ongoing maintenance costs are difficult to estimate reliably especially for an innovative scheme of this type, although concerns have been expressed that some of the features would be vulnerable to damage.

RECOMMENDATION

13. **The Cabinet Member for Transport is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) **approve implementation of the scheme and delegate authority to the Head of Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member**

for Transport, to discuss with BCRA any amendments to the current proposals to address concerns raised in the consultation prior to implementation of the scheme with the proviso that the financial contribution from the County Council towards the scheme does not exceed the amount stated in the BCRA budget;

- (b) delegate authority to the Head of Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, responsibility for monitoring the scheme (including an assessment of any transfer of traffic onto neighbouring residential roads) and, in the light of such monitoring to add, amend or remove traffic calming features as may be judged necessary.**

STEVE HOWELL
Head of Transport
Environment & Economy

Background papers: Consultation Documentation

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March 2010

Annex 1

BEECH CROFT ROAD PROPOSED DIY STREET PLAN DRAFT 10.3 23 MAY 2009 Refer to specification sheet for details of these DIY features
 Beech Croft Road, Summertown, Oxford OX2



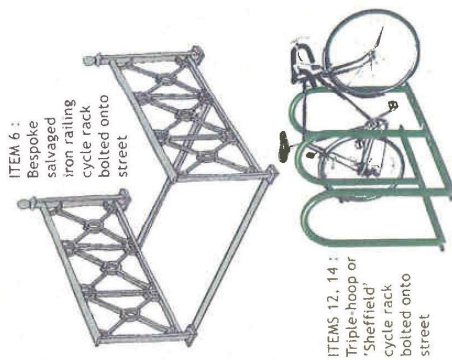
ITEMS 1, 3, 5, 11, 16, 18: Road paint pattern



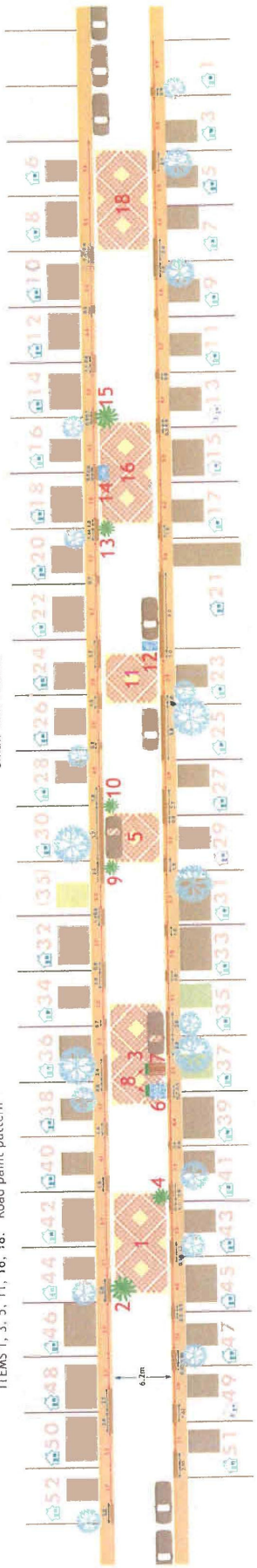
ITEMS 2, 15: Large Tree Planter
 ITEMS 4, 9, 10, 13 (alternate for 2 and 15): Small Tree Planter



ITEM 7: Standard wood picnic table
 ITEM 8: Trellis-back planters



ITEM 6: Bespoke salvaged iron railing cycle rack bolted onto street
 ITEMS 12, 14: Triple-hoop or 'Sheffield' cycle rack bolted onto street



BEECH CROFT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION (BCRA)
 SUSTRANS DIY STREETS PILOT SCHEME
 In consultation with the BCRA and the residents of Beech Croft Road
 Prepared by Ted Dewan, BCRA designer
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KEY: FEATURES

- EXISTING TREE
- PROPOSED SITE OF POTTED TREE
- PROPOSED SITE OF POTTED PLANTS
- PROPOSED SITE OF PICNIC TABLE
- EXISTING ON-STREET CAR PARKING
- PROPOSED ON-STREET CAR PARKING
- EXISTING ON-STREET BICYCLE PARKING
- PROPOSED ON-STREET BICYCLE PARKING
- STREET-PAINTING
- CONSTANT-USE OFF-STREET PARKING
- OCCASIONAL-USE OFF-STREET PARKING

Summary of responses to consultation

1. Residents etc of Beech Croft Road:

- 13 households (23 signatories) expressed unqualified support
- 3 households (6 signatories) expressed opposition to most or all of the aspects of the scheme
- 3 households (5 signatories) expressed support for some aspects of the scheme but were concerned over the proposed road painting
- 1 household (2 signatories) expressed concern over the proposed seat and trellis feature
- 1 household (1 signatory) expressed concern over difficulties of access to the driveway due to the proposed location of a planter
- Lady Nuffield Home expressed opposition to the scheme

2. Residents of Thorncliffe Road and Moreton Road:

Unlike Beech Croft Road, consultation letters were not sent to all households as from experience of other traffic calming schemes, the likelihood of the proposed scheme resulting in appreciable transfers of traffic to neighbouring roads was not judged to be high.

Nevertheless, the Moreton Road Residents Association has been asked for comments (which will be reported to this meeting following their meeting on 14 March). No residents' association as such exists in Thorncliffe Road but, at the suggestion of Councillor Fooks, contact was made with a resident of Thorncliffe Road who in turn contacted other residents. 6 responses were received - all of which on the one hand commended BCRA for their initiative in developing the calming proposals but at the same time expressed concern over the potential for traffic diversion suggesting that a more comprehensive treatment of these three side roads should be investigated.

Officer comment: taking account of the current traffic flows and experience of other calming schemes, it is judged unlikely that the relatively modest use of features in the carriageway (planters, cycle parking etc) would very appreciably increase the difficulty of making progress along the road over and above that caused by the current on-street parking, and therefore the risk of substantial amounts of traffic diverting onto neighbouring streets is not judged to be high.

It is accepted that the many of the residential streets between Woodstock and Banbury Roads carry through traffic causing concern to residents. Nevertheless traffic related problems in Thorncliffe, Beech Croft and Moreton Roads are still comparatively modest in relation to many other locations

3. County Councillors:

Councillor Jean Fooks - expressed support subject to the scheme being demonstrated to have the support of a large majority of the residents and the costs to the County Council being acceptable

Councillor John Goddard – commended BCRA for their initiative and expressed support in principle (on the same basis as expressed by Councillor Fooks)

4. Oxford City Council

The North Area Committee supported the proposals

5. Thames Valley Police

ERaised queries on technical aspects of the scheme in respect of compliance with the Traffic Calming Regulations and also expressed concerns that some of the features would be vulnerable to being hit, especially taking account of the current standard of street lighting.

Officer comment: it is believed that these can be addressed through amendments at the detailed design stage should the scheme in principle be approved for construction.

6. Ambulance Service

Expressed concerns over the potential for the scheme to impede access for their vehicles and also one specific comment on the proposed seat, which they judged to present a potential hazard to those pedestrians using it.

Officer comment: it is judged unlikely that the relatively modest use of features in the carriageway (planters, cycle parking etc) would very appreciably increase the difficulty of making progress along the road over and above that caused by the current on-street parking, although clearly maintaining access for emergency vehicles is a high priority.

7. Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service

Asked for confirmation that road widths would meet required minimum standards.

Officer comment: A vehicle tracking check has been made and the design meets the necessary standard.

Annex 3: Estimate of scheme costs prepared by Beech Croft Residents Association

EXPENDITURE	Est. cost	NOTES
1 x 'Victorian' architectural cycle rack, salvage materials & fabrication	£ 500	Fabrication management and design donated by resident
1 x Picnic table (including shipping & assembly)	£ 250	
2 x wood trough/trellis planters (including delivery)	£ 130	
4 x shrubs (including delivery)	£ 800	
2 x large planters (c. 1.5m diameter)	£ 1,200	
4 x medium planters (including delivery)	£ 1,800	This price depends on supplier offering special reduced deal
Compost/extra soil	£ 40	
Miscellaneous materials and fixings (e.g. platform wood, tools)	£ 200	
2 x 3-hoop cycle racks	£ 1,200	Design TBD, possibly involving DT department of Oxford High School
2 x 4m trees (e.g. flowering trees)	£ 1,000	Species and variety to be determined by Dr Barrie Juniper
Road painting (stencils, paint brushes, cleanup materials)	£ 1,000	Includes paint only--application by capable residents
Retro-reflective netting and tape	£ 1,000	Experimental materials to be considered alongside tape
Contingency (10% of total)	£ 912	
EXPENDITURE TOTAL	£ 10,032	
INCOME: FUNDING		
Esmee Fairburn Foundation Grant	£ 7,100	Secured
Further community fundraising	£ 1,000	Activities underway
INCOME TOTAL	£ 8,100	
CONTRIBUTION REQUESTED FROM OCC FOR DIY STREETS		
	£ 1,932	
VALUE OF IN-KIND DONATIONS AND VOLUNTARY ACTIVITY		
Design Victorian cycle rack, supply materials	£ 700	
Painting labour to install road painting	£ 2,000	
VALUE TOTAL BCRA INCOME FROM VOLUNTEERS AND IN-KIND	£ 2,700	