

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 26 MARCH 2020

EAST HANNEY – A338 – PROPOSED PUFFIN CROSSING

Report by Director for Infrastructure Delivery, Communities

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed introduction of a puffin crossing (a signalled crossing for pedestrians) on the A338 at East Hanney.

Executive summary

2. The provision for pedestrians is reviewed when there are changes to the road layout as a result of development, when requested by local councils as a result of road safety concerns and as part of the on-going monitoring of reports on road accidents. Specific proposals are assessed applying national regulations and guidance on the provision of pedestrian crossings and the Oxfordshire County Council Walking Design Standards.

Introduction

3. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation to introduce a puffin crossing on the A338 at East Hanney.

Background

4. The above proposals as shown at Annex 1 have been put forward as a result of calls from the parish council following numerous requests from parishioners. Residents from the new developments seek help accessing village facilities most of which lie on the opposite side of the busy A338.

Consultation

5. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 5 February and 6 March 2020. A notice was placed in the Oxfordshire Herald series newspaper and notices placed in the vicinity of the proposed crossing. An email was sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Vale of White Horse District Council, East Hanney Parish Council and the local County Councillor. Letters were sent directly to approximately 55 properties in the immediate vicinity, adjacent to the proposals.

6. Nineteen responses were received. One objection, sixteen (84%) expressions of support and two neither objecting nor supporting. 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 did not object to the proposal and neither did the Vale District Council.
8. East Hanney Parish Council support the proposal but made no detailed comments.
9. One objection was received from a local resident citing concerns that a signalled crossing would be less safe than an uncontrolled option, suggesting that children in particular who relied on the green pedestrian signal may be vulnerable if drivers failed to comply with a red signal. There were concerns over the proximity of side road junctions and potential increase in noise and air pollution from vehicles stopping then accelerating.
10. Expressions of support were received from fifteen parties including two local groups and thirteen members of the public.
11. Two supporters of the crossing queried (and a further actually objected to) the proposed footway widening with consequent grass verge and hedge loss to the north of the crossing and the forfeiture of its screening and noise reduction provision. There were also several concerns over the increase in lighting pollution.
12. The hedge removal will be required to meet visibility standards, especially critical with the open nature of the site and high prevailing vehicle speeds. The lighting improvements are also required to meet design standards although the design will be as sensitive as possible.
13. Suggestions were also made to review the signing for an adjacent business premise and remove a traffic island to improve visibility.
14. In the light of comments received it is proposed to implement the pedestrian crossing.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

15. The proposals would help facilitate the safe movement of pedestrians.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

16. Funding for the proposed measures has been provided by the developers of land adjacent to the proposal.

JASON RUSSELL
Interim Director of Infrastructure Delivery

Background papers: Plan of proposed puffin crossing
 Consultation responses

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March 2020

RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	No objection.
(2) East Hanney Parish Council	Support – No comments.
(3) Vale of White Horse District Council	No objection.
(4) Local Resident, (East Hanney)	<p>Object - If a crossing is needed it should have been part of the planning when ALL of these new houses were built on the other side of a busy A road. Why were the developers not required to include this in their plans from the beginning?</p> <p>It is more dangerous to put a crossing on the proposed site than to have people waiting for a gap in traffic to cross safely. There are junctions too close to the proposed crossing according to the usual rules applied when designing road safety features.</p> <p>Traffic control measures to reduce the speed of the traffic coming round a blind corner towards Anderson Place and coming into the village from the Marcham direction should be put in place before a crossing is installed. It is 30mph but very few vehicles slow down coming into the village and coming out of the village most speed up once past the speed camera at the cross roads. In my opinion it is safer to carefully cross a road waiting for a gap in the traffic than it is to teach children to trust that a green man means it is safe to cross. It also falls outside the rules of no street lighting in Hanney which keeps down light pollution and promotes the safety of wildlife.</p> <p>On a personal level, the noise of the traffic on the A338 is already too high, you will now be adding stationery traffic with engines running and polluting the air around us.</p> <p>The hedge you are proposing to cut down currently provides some barrier from the noise for the people in Ashfield</p>

	<p>Close, most of whom are elderly and the street lights and constantly changing traffic lights will be intrusive.</p> <p>There have been no accidents on this stretch of road without a crossing. What if you put in a crossing and someone gets hit by a speeding vehicle who didn't see them in time or by ploughing into unexpected stationary vehicles on a blind corner?</p>
(5) Local Group, (East Hanney)	Support - No comments.
(6) Local Group, (Hanney)	<p>Support - I strongly support this proposal. The crossing has been needed since the first new developments were built on the east side of the A 338 some 10 or more years ago, and it reflects badly on those in 'power' at the time that it wasn't pushed for then.</p> <p>The number of new developments continues to increase, without any sign of letting up, with the need becoming greater and greater. Forgive the old cliché but this really is a case of an accident waiting to happen.</p> <p>The only vague objection I've heard expressed is that this will increase the 'urbanisation of our sleepy little village'. East Hanney ceased to be that many years ago. It now has an extremely busy A road, on which the 30 mph speed limit is consistently ignored, running through it. When there are traffic problems on the A 34, which there frequently are, the already heavy traffic load increases dramatically. There are, currently, planning applications lodged for a further 90+ properties in East Hanney, with 2 other developments, totalling about 75 new homes nearing completion. Factor in the Fontana restaurant's large and intrusive floodlights, the industrial estate and the large Sovereign Housing premises, all on the east side of the main road, and it is clear that this part of East Hanney is 'urban' and will remain so. It needs a crossing urgently.</p>
(7) Local Resident, (Wantage)	<p>Support - I support the installation of a signalised crossing at this location, but I would like to raise an objection over the large area of verge that is shown on the map as being tarmaced over.</p> <p>East Hanney is a rural village and therefore large expanses of tarmac are out of place along what is currently a grass verge and hedge.</p> <p>Can the footway be widened only to a width that leaves a grass verge along the side of the road, as I also believe that without suitable prevention methods, such as wooden posts, the large area of tarmac will quickly be used as a car</p>

	<p>park whenever someone has a party nearby or a delivery van needs some where to pull up, this will then impact on the safety of the crossing.</p>
<p>(8) Local Resident, (Wantage)</p>	<p>Support - My children currently have to cross this road each morning in order to get to the school bus stop located opposite the Black Horse PH in the village. The visibility is often poor, and both the volume of traffic and the speed of vehicles make this an extremely dangerous place to cross. They have already had several near misses (one of my children has dyspraxia, and has poor spatial awareness), and I worry every morning that they have to cross this road. There are already been 3 large building developments completed on this side of the A338, another is in the process of being built, with planning submitted for a further 40+ houses on the Rosybee nursery site. The crossing would also benefit many of the residents in the main village who rely on the buses which pass through the village. Given all of the above I find it astonishing that no safe crossing has been installed before now.</p>
<p>(9) Local Resident, (East Hanney)</p>	<p>Support - The A338 is a busy and dangerous road and the ever increasing number of houses built to the East means that there is an ever increasing number of pedestrians wishing to cross - particularly children on the way to and from school. The provision of street lighting is essential. I fully support this overdue development.</p>
<p>(10) Local Resident, (East Hanney)</p>	<p>Support - For the amount of housing that has now been built on the other side of the A338 from the main village, it is vital that there is a crossing. Many houses have young children who walk to school each morning. Once children are at secondary and catching the bus, they are often walking to the bus stop without an adult. Crossing the A338 is difficult and an accident is inevitable unless action is taken. I whole-heartedly support a crossing to be built.</p>
<p>(11) Local Resident, (East Hanney)</p>	<p>Support - I am very much in favour of this proposal which combined with traffic calming measures will help to make the A338 safer for pedestrians, particularly those living in the new developments on the eastern side of the road.</p>
<p>(12) Local Resident, (East Hanney)</p>	<p>Support - This section of A338 is extremely fast and cars rarely slow down to 30mph and means children cannot safely cross the road.</p> <p>This new crossing will not only slow traffic down through the village but also make crossing the road much safer.</p> <p>My son walks home from school on his own and I am always scared that he is going to get knocked down and this</p>

	crossing will provide me with peace of mind.
(13) Local Resident, (East Hanney)	<p>Support - Minimal use of street lighting in keeping with the dark skies desires in the village.</p> <p>What would greatly improve road safety in this location would be the removal or repositioning of the Sovereign Vale entrance signs, which block visibility to the north when emerging from the small business estate in this area. Pulling out blind just before this crossing is not as good as it could or should be. Maybe somebody should have a word with Sovereign Vale.</p>
(14) Local Resident, (East Hanney)	<p>Support - This crossing is essential for the safety of children's travel to school. Traffic is not slowing down on this busy road, so risks have to be taken to cross the road. More and more houses will increase the number of people crossing this road. A crossing is required now.</p>
(15) Local Resident, (East Hanney)	<p>Support - I am generally in favour of a safer road crossing. I have minor concerns that the proposed site is not close enough to the bus stops and people will still cross the road further north, close to Ashfields Lane.</p> <p>I am also unclear as to the purpose of the proposed "hard standing". Is it to be incorporated into the widening of the footpath or is it for another purpose? As shown on the plan it looks like a car parking space and that would be wholly inappropriate.</p> <p>I would hope that the proposed lighting would be as discrete as possible and at as low an intensity as possible so as not to affect the nearby houses or the generally unlit nature of the village.</p>
(16) Local Resident, (East Hanney)	<p>Support - I'm in great favour of the puffin crossing this is a dangerous road to cross and I feel would slow traffic down, a calming system as well as this really does need to be put in place in 2009 I asked Thames valley police for a further speed camera but was refused as cars speed up to 57 mph along this stretch of road and this has been proven from our own speed awareness volunteers, so anything traffic road safety are happy to do I'm happy to support with more houses being built traffic calming and being able to get out of junctions would be a great help.</p>

<p>(17) Local Resident, (East Hanney)</p>	<p>Support - I support the installation of a Puffin pedestrian crossing at the proposed location. The A338 is a very busy road and the bend in the road next to the La Fontana restaurant restricts the field of view to the south, which is critical as vehicles heading north tend to escalate after passing the speed camera and as they exit the 30 MPH speed restriction. A pedestrian crossing will allow pedestrians to cross the A338 safely. The new housing developments off the Steventon road are likely to result in more pedestrians crossing the A338 to access East Hanney and the bus-stop for buses heading towards Abingdon and Oxford.</p> <p>If a Puffin crossing is installed, recommend the island in the middle of the A338 opposite the bus-stop next to the junction with Ashfields Lane is removed. When a bus heading towards Abingdon or Oxford stops at this bus-stop, the stationary bus totally blocks the north-bound lane. Vehicles behind the bus are forced to pass the stationary bus by driving on the wrong side of the traffic island. This is potentially dangerous and probably breaches the Highway Code. If a Puffin crossing is installed as proposed, the island will be largely redundant and should be removed, allowing vehicles to pass a stationary bus more safely. Pedestrians should be encouraged to use the Puffin crossing only.</p>
<p>(18) Local Resident, (East Hanney)</p>	<p>Support - wanted to take this opportunity to express our relief in this project moving forward, in light of the increased traffic flow along the A338 (and which my house backs directly onto).</p> <p>We also wanted to confirm if this type of crossing will impact and improve the excessive flow of traffic that runs along this road? We have noticed a significant increase in both traffic flow AND speed in the past few months, to the point where our (relatively new build) house actually shakes when large vehicles such as HGV's and construction vehicles pass at high speed behind our house. (We would invite you to visit our home, at your convenience, to witness this happening first-hand).</p> <p>Hopefully the installation of this new crossing will deter speeding vehicles and if not, will your department consider speed bumps before and after the crossing? There are already signs warning of a 30 mph limit on the road through East Hanney, but these are ignored and vehicles speed through continuously all day and night. This needs to be addressed before someone is seriously injured or killed on this road.</p>
<p>(19) Local Resident, (East Hanney)</p>	<p>Support - I just very quickly wanted to indicate my strong support for a crossing on the A338 at East Hanney. I'm not sure whether the proposed type or site of the crossing is the best option, but any crossing is better than none. I would personally have thought that it should be located as close as possible to the junction with the High St (i.e near La Fontana), but I expect there are reasons why the site further up the road has been chosen.</p>

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