

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 21 MAY 2020

OXFORD MORRELL AVENUE PROPOSED ZEBRA CROSSING

Report by Interim Director of Community Operations

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed introduction of a zebra crossing on Morrell Avenue, Oxford.

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 zebra crossing on Morrell Avenue, Oxford.

Background

4. The above proposal as shown at Annex 1 has been put forward by Oxford City Council

Consultation

5. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 27 February and 27 March 2020. A notice was placed in the Oxford Times 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, Oxford City Council and the local County Councillor. Letters were sent to approximately 100 properties in the immediate vicinity, adjacent to the proposals.
6. Fourteen responses were received to the consultation. 5 in support (36%), 6 objecting (43%), and 3 either raising concerns or not objecting (21%).
7. All comments are recorded at Annex 2 with copies of the full responses available for inspection by County Councillors.

Response to objections and other comments

8. Thames Valley Police have not objected to the proposal but noted that an adjustment needed to be made to the position of a road marking to ensure full compliance with national regulations on the layout of pedestrian crossings. That adjustment will be made.
9. Cyclox, a local group representing pedal cyclists in Oxford, while not objecting in principle to the crossing nevertheless objected to its design in respect of the width of the traffic lane (3.5 metres) on either side of the central island for the crossing, citing guidance issued by Transport for London in respect of lane widths, which recommends that lane widths of between 3.2m and 4.0m should be avoided to avoid ambiguity on whether there is sufficient space for motor vehicles to overtake a pedal cyclist. While noting this comment, specifically in the context of appropriate widths at pedestrian refuges and traffic islands, national guidance on designing for pedal cyclists issued by the Department for Transport does not flag the proposed 3.5m width as being hazardous and experience of a large number of pedestrian refuges etc. with similar lane widths as those proposed here does not show safety problems with this dimension.
10. Objections were received from five members of the public, together with an additional two responses from members of the public expressing concerns.
11. Two of the objections cited a concern that the proposed siting of the crossing was hazardous given its proximity to the roundabout and would be counter-productive in respect of safety and also that the crossing was not on the main desire line for pedestrians, particularly for pedestrians walking to and from Divinity Road. The other objections also raised concerns that the crossing was in the wrong location and that providing a crossing further down Morrell Avenue would be preferable, noting also significant concerns over the speed of many vehicles on Morrell Avenue.
12. In respect of the concerns over the safety of the crossing, particularly in relation to its proximity to the roundabout, its layout (as noted in the police comment) does comply with national guidance and there are examples in Oxfordshire of crossings similarly sited close to roundabouts which have good safety records. An independent road safety audit of the design has also been carried out.
13. While noting the concerns that the crossing is not on the main desire line for pedestrians and that a crossing elsewhere on Morrell Avenue is needed, the crossing has been designed by Oxford City Council in response to representations made by elected members based on their understanding of the needs of pedestrians in this area.
14. The concerns expressed over traffic speeds on Morrell Avenue are similarly noted but are beyond the scope of this specific project.

15. Expressions of support were received from five members of the public; one of these requested that the layout be amended to allow cyclists to also cross the road here. Noting the latter comment, dismounted cyclists will be able to use the crossing and, while not ruling out the future upgrading of the crossing to a parallel crossing for use by both pedestrians and cyclists (with linking shared use footways), this is beyond the scope of the current project.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

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

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

17. Funding for the proposed measures has been provided by Oxford City Council.

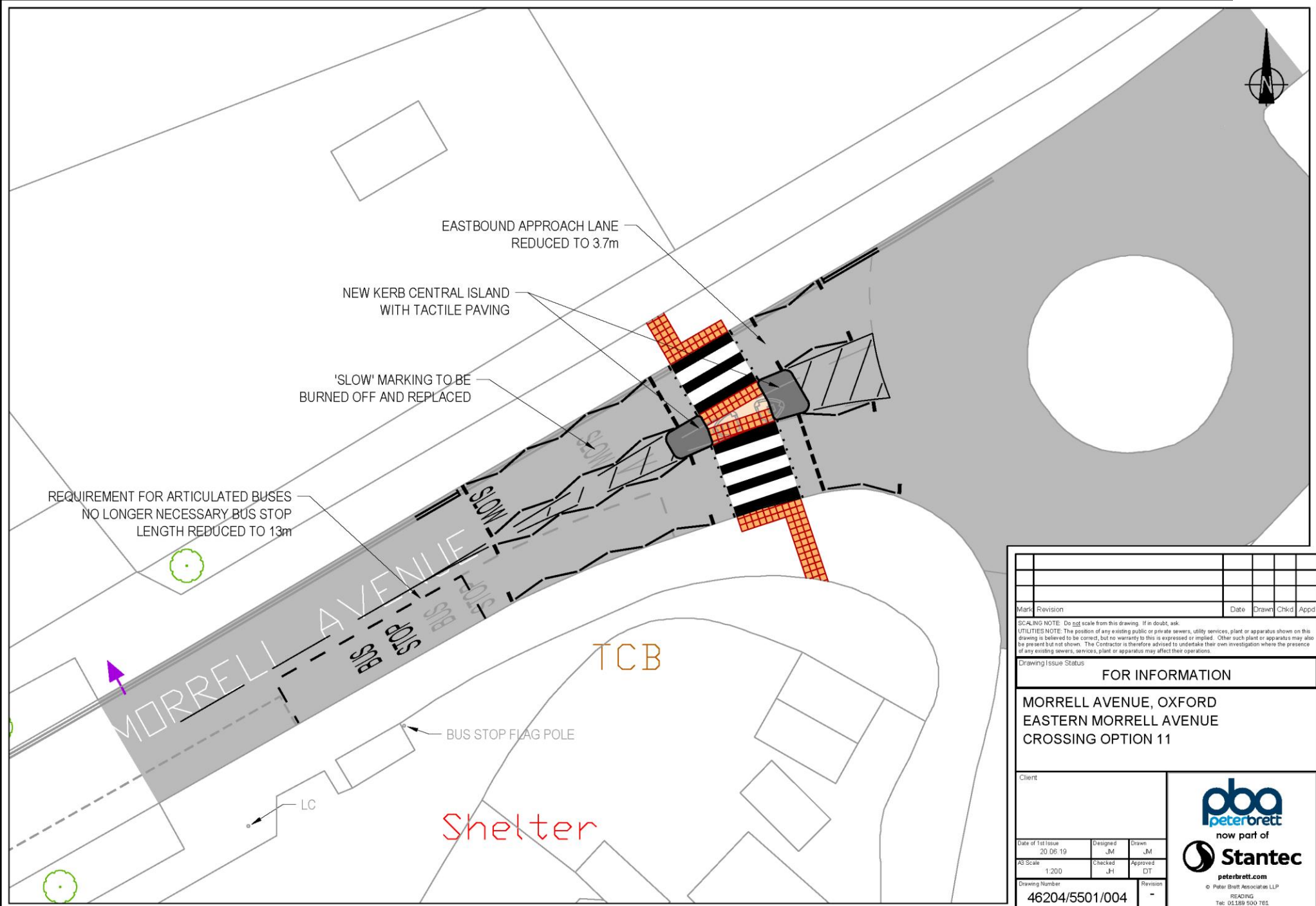
JASON RUSSELL

Interim Director of Community Operations

Background papers: Plan of proposed zebra crossing
 Consultation responses

Contact Officers: Hugh Potter 07766 998704

May 2020



REQUIREMENT FOR ARTICULATED BUSES
NO LONGER NECESSARY. BUS STOP
LENGTH REDUCED TO 13m

EASTBOUND APPROACH LANE
REDUCED TO 3.7m

NEW KERB CENTRAL ISLAND
WITH TACTILE PAVING

'SLOW' MARKING TO BE
BURNED OFF AND REPLACED

MORRELL AVENUE
BUS STOP

TCB

BUS STOP FLAG POLE

Shelter

LC


Mark	Revision	Date	Drawn	Chkd	Appd

SCALING NOTE: Do not scale from this drawing. If in doubt, ask.
 UTILITIES NOTE: The position of any existing public or private sewers, utility services, plant or apparatus shown on this drawing is believed to be correct, but no warranty to this is expressed or implied. Other such plant or apparatus may also be present but not shown. The Contractor is therefore advised to undertake their own investigation where the presence of any existing sewers, services, plant or apparatus may affect their operations.


Drawing Issue Status
FOR INFORMATION

MORRELL AVENUE, OXFORD
 EASTERN MORRELL AVENUE
 CROSSING OPTION 11

Client		
Date of 1st Issue	Designed	Drawn
20.06.19	JM	JM
A3 Scale	Checked	Approved
1:200	JH	DT
Drawing Number	Revision	
46204/5501/004	-	



now part of



© Peter Brett Associates LLP
 READING
 Tel: 01359 500 781

RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p>No objection – In principle I have no objection providing the necessary speed motoring has taken place and the result support such a crossing at this location.</p> <p>The design meets current standards. It appears from the drawing the SLOW marking is shown within the controlled area despite having been relocated. I do not believe the regulations permit this and ask that it is located outside.</p>
(2) Local Group, (Cyclox, Cycling UK)	<p>Object - I don't object to the crossing per se. I object to the design width on one side. The design width where traffic exits the roundabout is OK.</p> <p>I object to the width of the road narrowing for traffic entering the roundabout. A traffic island narrowing should be either so narrow that it is obvious that motor vehicles cannot over take a cycle in the narrowing, OR it should be so wide a motor vehicle can pass a cycle in the narrowing. In general this means narrowings NOT BETWEEN 3m and 4m in width. The narrowing in your design is 3.5m which can result in dangerous close passing of cycle users. This side needs to be made wider or narrower for the safety of cycle users. I doubt you can move the central island over due to swept path tracking from Divinity Road.</p> <p>This page from the London standard: "4.4.2 Traffic lane widths Where cyclists are using a lane (bus lanes or general traffic lanes), either Enough space needs to be provided for a motorised vehicle and a cyclist to pass one another comfortably (with 1 metre clearance in areas with a 20mph limit and 1.4 metres clearance where speeds are higher), or The lane should be so narrow that overtaking is not possible. The rule-of-thumb is to avoid situations where motorised vehicles and cyclists are expected to move together through a width between 3.2 metres and 4 metres. Where lane widths are between these two dimensions, there is uncertainty about space for overtaking and a high risk that other vehicles will seek to pass cyclists too closely thereby putting the more vulnerable road user at risk. This includes the typical lane width adopted in much UK practice of 3.65 metres. Use of this lane width should be avoided.</p>

CMDE12

	<p>A general comment. Looking at the worn path across the Warnford Lane central reservation, the pedestrian desire line at this point is across the end of the central reservation, as this lines up with the South Park entrance, and is used by Brookes and Cheney students daily.</p>
(3) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<p>Object – <i>No comments.</i></p>
(4) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<p>Object - The proposed crossing is not in the right place. The line of desire is to cross the road further up, in Warneford Lane. Take a look on satellite photos and you can clearly see that the central island there is almost grass-free as a result of the footfall. A safer crossing should be placed on this direct route between Divinity Road and the park's gate, where it's evident that people actually want and will use it.</p>
(5) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<p>Object - Having the crossing so close to the roundabout is dangerous as drivers coming around the corner may not realise it is there causing a hazard to people using the crossing. IF they have to brake suddenly to avoid pedestrians that is likely to cause collisions. Most people crossing the path to Brookes cross over higher up, across the central reservation in Warneford Lane as can be seen by the wear on the grass.. They are unlikely to double back to use a crossing.</p> <p>There is a perfectly suitable traffic island already on the site of the proposed crossing.</p> <p>The zebra crossing is supposed to address residents' concerns about speeding in Morrell Avenue. I am not convinced that a zebra crossing at the top of the hill will have any impact on traffic speed down the hill. The only way to slow traffic down is to install a speed camera - the current flashing 20 signs have no effect whatsoever.</p> <p>The decision to install a zebra crossing seems to be a political decision rather than one based on accident data. I think it will make accidents more likely than less and not address the main concern which is the speed of the traffic. If a pedestrian crossing is thought necessary then it should be one controlled by traffic lights. The current proposal seems to be a way of addressing residents' legitimate concerns on the cheap and not solving the underlying problem.</p>
(6) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<p>Object - I live on Morrell Avenue. I think the idea for a zebra crossing is a very good idea, but not in the proposed location. There is already a crossing place there, and the road really narrows there so crossing is not a problem. It would make much more sense to locate the crossing further down Morrell Avenue where the road is much wider and</p>

CMDE12

	<p>does not have any crossing places at all. There are two or three options. One is near the Stone Street bus stop, another is near the junction of East Avenue to enable people to cross the road on the way to or back from Tesco's on the Cowley Road. Another advantage of these two locations would be to slow down the speed of the traffic on Morrell Avenue, which is sometimes used at a rat run.</p> <p>I don't think the residents on the park side of Morrell Avenue have been consulted at all, I certainly didn't receive any information about it. Why were the opinions of the residents living on the Divinity Road side of Morrell Avenue considered more important? I even have a friend who lives in Tawney Street and she was consulted. I would be interested to hear other residents' opinions.</p>
<p>(7) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Object – It will be perilously situated between a busy, tight roundabout and the bus stop. This means that traffic will back up onto the roundabout which will be dangerous for drivers' cyclists and pedestrians alike. A bus stopped on on near the roundabout or at the crossing will block visibility for all concerned. Furthermore, pedestrians are more impulsive and less careful when approaching a zebra crossing and with buses and cars screeching to a halt for pedestrians there will be accidents on the roundabout.</p> <p>I live within moments of this zebra crossing and I am a pedestrian, a cyclist and a driver and therefore I am very familiar with the context of the proposed crossing. For the last 10 years I have crossed at the island on a daily basis to take my dog to South Park and have never had a problem of any kind in crossing the road, as traffic approaching from the roundabout is clearly visible, as is traffic coming up Morrell Avenue. This crossing is COMPLETELY redundant and unnecessary and I am certain more accidents will occur as a result.</p>
<p>(8) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Concerns – The only accidents there have been at the top of the avenue have involved cyclists, not pedestrians. In any event most pedestrians seem to take the shortest route to anywhere, and in this case that is straight across the grass from Warneford Lane into South Park - as evidenced by the worn path across that area.</p> <p>The real need in Morrell Avenue is for vehicles to slow down: it is not unusual to witness speeds upwards of 50mph. It is difficult for some people (elderly, those with children, the visually-impaired, etc) to cross the road to go to, say, Cowley Road or the school in Union Street, so measures should really be put in place further down the avenue.</p> <p>Any safety crossing needs to be installed further down the road.</p>

CMDE12

<p>(9) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Concerns - Looking at the plans it seems that its likely to cause some traffic hold ups being so close to the roundabout, can I suggest that a layby created for the bus stop ,there is ample room for it to be moved away from the proposed new crossing.</p>
<p>(10) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support – We are very much in favour of this since we have young children and there is no safe place to cross currently.</p>
<p>(11) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support – We live on the upper part of Morrell Avenue and are delighted that a crossing will be built as indicated on the back of your letter to residents.</p> <p>Despite the 20mph limit on the road, the traffic flow and speeds (particularly after the evening rush-hour), make crossing in this location hazardous (although the location is currently by far the safest point to cross - particularly at night). The significant flow to and through the top of South Park by pupils of Cheney School, Brookes students, local residents, dog-walkers, and families visiting the very successful play area, will all be able to cross with less hazard and more comfort if these proposals are speedily realised!</p>
<p>(12) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - Please could the design be amended to incorporate provision for cyclists to cross the road here so that they can access the Divinity Road/ Hill Top Road cycle route from the park?</p>
<p>(13) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support – Fully support.</p>
<p>(14) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support – <i>No comments.</i></p>