

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL – 19 July 2012

JACK STRAW'S LANE, OXFORD, TRAFFIC CALMING

Report by Interim Deputy Director of Environment and Economy (Highways & Transport)

Introduction

1. This report seeks approval from the Deputy Leader of the Council to implement a developer funded traffic calming scheme in Jack Straw's Lane between Marston and Headington in Oxford. This innovative "bicycle street" scheme is based on coloured road surfacing and aims to address local concerns about safety and traffic speeds and to encourage cycling.

Exempt Information

2. None

Background

3. Jack Straw's Lane is a minor road running east-west between Marston Road and Headley Way (close to the JR Hospital roundabout). It is an important link in the cycle route network between Headington and central Oxford. See Annex 1 for the site location. However, it is also used as a short cut to the hospital by cars and taxis. For some time concerns have been expressed by members of the public about the speed and volume of traffic and its impact on cyclists and pedestrians.
4. The road is included in the Oxford-wide 20mph speed limit Order and has had speed indicator devices installed, although a survey in 2010 showed an average speed of 28mph. It has two way 12 hour traffic flows of approximately 800 bicycles and 800 motor vehicles (mainly cars, taxis and light vans). In May 2012 a teenage cyclist was injured in a collision with a taxi but the only other recorded accident in the last five years was a collision between two cyclists.
5. The scheme would be funded using £70,000 of Section 106 money from local housing development that is provided specifically for traffic calming at this location. Oxfordshire County Council previously developed a scheme for cycle-friendly traffic calming in the form of speed cushions, but the majority of people responding to public consultation on this were opposed to the proposals. As a result, the county council researched alternative options and has now developed the current proposal in consultation with the residents' association.

6. In November 2011 the residents' association presented a petition to the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council asking for Jack Straw's Lane to be made access-only. This approach was rejected because access-only measures are difficult to enforce and the police have said that they lack the necessary resources for this and therefore the county council has, instead, proposed this current scheme. There would be before and after monitoring of traffic speed and volume in order to assess its effectiveness. The County Council's full response to the petition is set out at Annex 6.

Description

7. The proposed scheme is based on the example of a "bicycle street" from the Netherlands (Annex 2). This uses different types and colours of road surface to emphasise to motorists that Jack Straw's Lane is a key cycle route and to emphasise to both motorists and cyclists that it is also used by pedestrians in places where there is no useable footway.
8. This scheme would extend along Jack Straw's Lane from Doris Field Close in the west to Staunton Road in the east (Annex 3). Most of this length of road would have a buff coloured median strip marked on the road surface to separate two wide cycle lanes. The road would still be useable by motor vehicles, but the changes would encourage them to wait behind cyclists for a clear gap before overtaking - instead of squeezing past.
9. There would be a short middle section where the whole road would be surfaced in buff coloured material. There would also be signs to warn motorists and cyclists that people often walk in the road here because the footway is narrow and uneven with large trees.
10. At each end of the "bicycle street" there would be areas of buff surfacing. Where Staunton Road meets Headley Way there would be a raised surface entry treatment; this should slow turning traffic and make drivers more aware of cyclists and pedestrians crossing the mouth of Staunton Road here.
11. If approved, the work would be scheduled for November/December this year. Normal autumn/winter weather conditions should not present problems, although severe weather might cause delay.

Consultation

12. Consultation was carried out during the spring of 2012 with local councillors, key stakeholders and local residents (of Jack Straw's Lane, Doris Field Close and Staunton Road West).
13. The majority of those who responded were in favour of the scheme. Some expressed concern about particular aspects of the scheme and some had doubts about its effectiveness and suggested additional measures, while nevertheless supporting the scheme as a step in the right direction.

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14. Supporters include Oxford University, Cyclox, Oxford Pedestrians' Association and key members of Jack Straw's Lane Residents' Association. Oxfordshire Unlimited were broadly neutral on the proposal, as was the City Council Conservation Officer. Thames Valley Police have no objections.
15. The concerns and objections raised at consultation are summarised at Annex 4 and listed below. Copies of the full responses are contained in the background document "consultation responses".
16. As a result of consultation some changes and clarifications have been made that do not adversely affect the scheme. Officers consider that other suggestions should not be followed. The main points made are summarised in the following table, together with details of changes made in response to these or reasons for not making changes.

Main consultation comments	Response to these comments
Concern about the visual impact and clutter of signs and surfacing in this conservation area.	The number of signs originally proposed has been reviewed and reduced in number. The surfacing materials will be a more natural buff shade than it was possible to show in plan.
The scheme does not address the most dangerous section of road at bottom of Jack Straw's Lane.	There is on-street parking at bottom of Jack Straw's Lane and this is not compatible with the "bicycle street" concept. Conventional traffic calming incorporating the on-street parking here might be possible, but this was rejected in the previous consultation.
The scheme does not resolve problem of speeding motor vehicles and cyclists.	The central section will have 15mm up-stands at each end that may help to reinforce the visual measures encouraging motorists and cyclists to slow down.
An access-only or one-way restriction would be more effective.	An access-only restriction would (as the police advise) be difficult to enforce. One-way restrictions tend to lead to higher traffic speeds which could be threatening to contra-flow cyclists.

17. It is considered that further detailed consultation is not required. Officers will write to residents and others who responded to the consultation to notify them of the Deputy Leader's Delegated Decisions meeting and the approach being proposed.

Policy and Strategy

18. The scheme is consistent with three of the corporate plan's four objectives:
 - World class economy (through reduced congestion and access to workplaces)
 - Healthy and thriving communities (through more cycling and walking)
 - Enhancing the environment (also through more cycling and walking)
19. It also explicitly supports County Council policies on encouraging walking and cycling (a high priority for Oxford in LTP3), road safety and implementation of travel plans with schools, hospitals and universities and promotion of sustainable access to these often congested sites.

Equality and inclusion implications

20. This scheme benefits people who walk or cycle including those unable to drive for reasons of age, health or affordability. The middle section is designed to better protect people walking in the road where the footway (obstructed by mature trees) cannot be used by people in wheelchairs or with pushchairs. A Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA) is included at Annex 5.

Financial and Staff Implications

21. It is estimated that the cost of this scheme will be £70,000 funded entirely by developer contributions obtained through S106 agreements, which cannot be spent on anything else. The scheme is included in the county council's latest capital programme.
22. Final cost estimating, including changes arising from consultation, is yet to be completed so some uncertainty remains about the final scheme costs. Any changes will be managed in line with the corporate capital governance requirements and further approvals will be sought at the appropriate level.
23. Similar materials have lasted 15 years when used for bus lane and Jack Straw's Lane would not have this level of use by heavy vehicles. It is covered by the City Council's maintenance regime.

Legal implications and risks

24. The scheme has been through safety audit and, although the use of this type of road surfacing for these purposes is innovative for the UK, it is not considered dangerous. The signs will be conventional signs with which road users are familiar such as the "pedestrians in the road" triangular warning signs which help identify a potential hazard to motorists and cyclists.

RECOMMENDATION

25. **The Deputy Leader of the Council is RECOMMENDED to authorise the works described in this report and set out at Annex 3 to this report.**

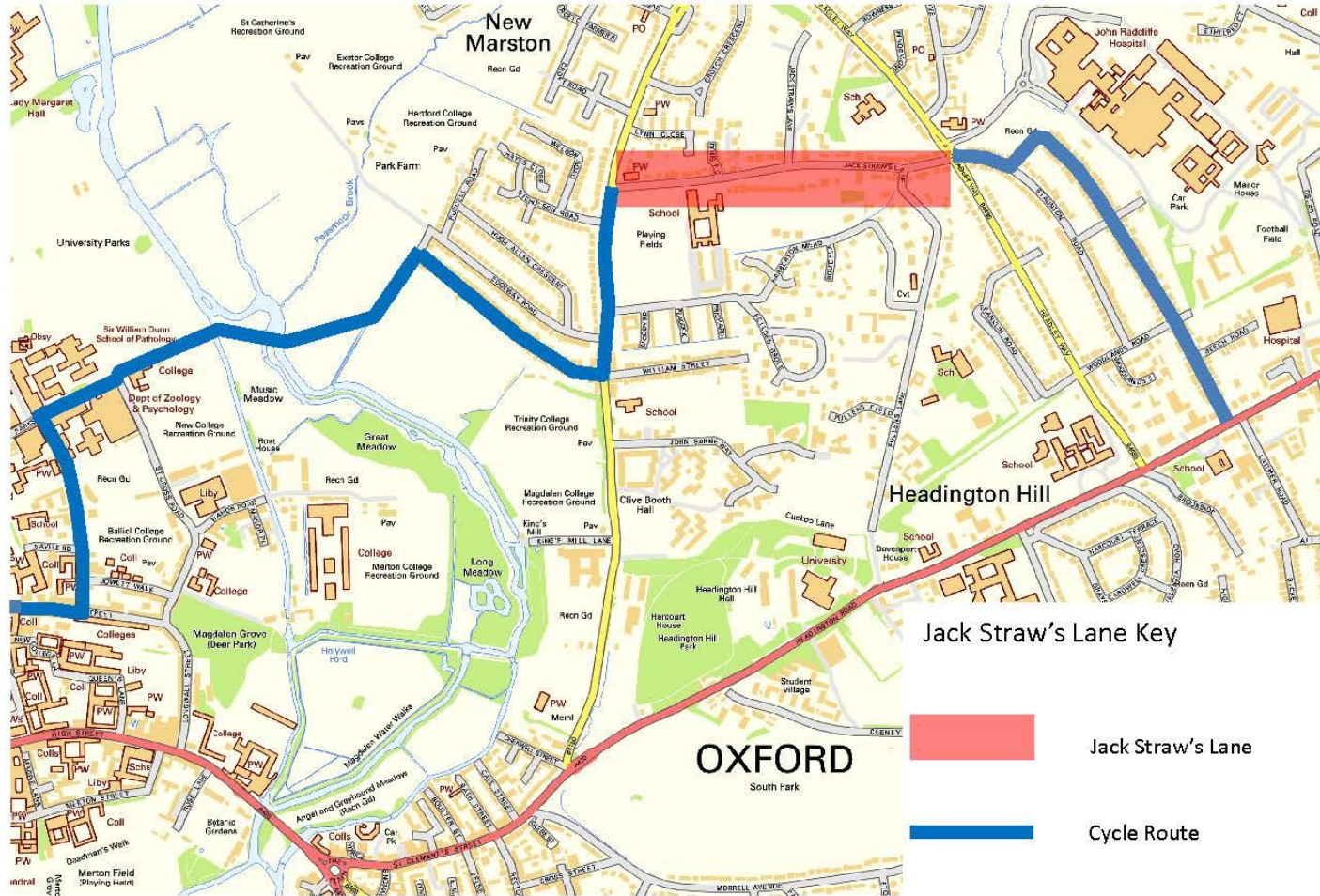
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Mark Kemp, Interim Deputy Director of Environment and Economy

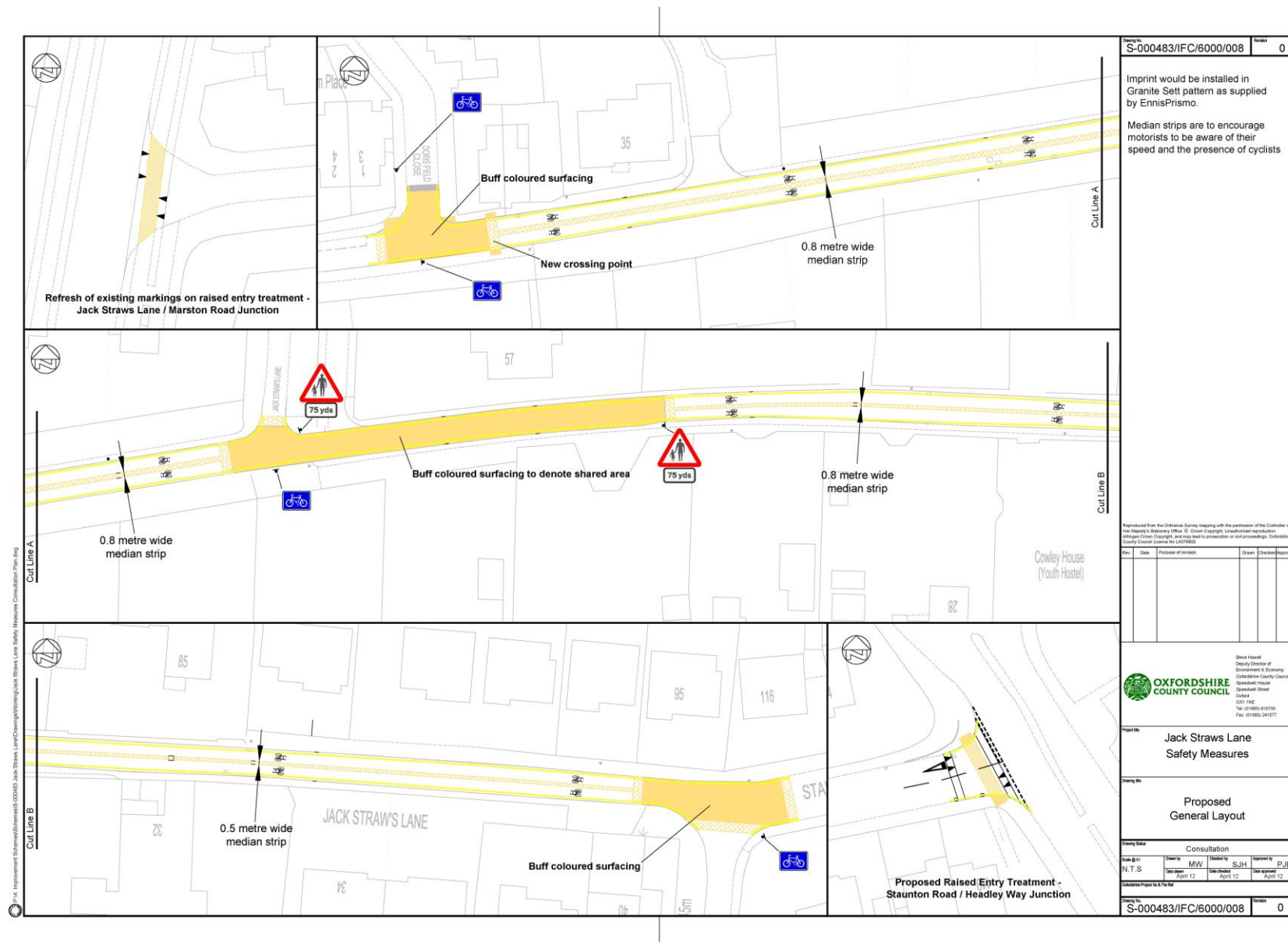
Background papers: Consultation responses

Contact Officer: Tracey Dow

July 2012







Drawing No: S-000483/IFC/6000/008
 Revision: 0

Imprint would be installed in Granite Set pattern as supplied by EnnisPrismo.
 Median strips are to encourage motorists to be aware of their speed and the presence of cyclists

Refresh of existing markings on raised entry treatment - Jack Straws Lane / Marston Road Junction

Buff coloured surfacing
 New crossing point
 0.8 metre wide median strip

Buff coloured surfacing to denote shared area
 75 yds
 0.8 metre wide median strip

Buff coloured surfacing
 0.5 metre wide median strip
 Proposed Raised Entry Treatment - Staunton Road / Headley Way Junction

Cowley House (Youth Hostel)

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Author

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OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Project title: Jack Straws Lane Safety Measures

Drawing title: Proposed General Layout

Drawing date: Consultation

Drawn by	Drawn by	Checked by	Approved by
N.T.S	MW	S.J.H	P.J.E

Date issued: April 12
 Date checked: April 12
 Date approved: April 12

Includes Paper to L 11a

Drawing No: S-000483/IFC/6000/008
 Revision: 0

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