

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL– 3 JANUARY 2013

TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES IN CRAWLEY

Report by Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Commercial)

Introduction

1. In response to requests from Crawley Parish Council it is proposed to introduce traffic calming in the form of two new kerbed build outs in the narrow stretch through the existing priority working section of Leafield Road north of the village. The aim of this scheme is to reduce vehicle speeds on the approaches to the priority system, thereby improving road safety for all users.
2. This report explains the reasons for the proposed scheme and summarises the results of a formal consultation.

Background

3. It is the contention of Crawley Parish Council that the village is used as a north and eastern bypass for Witney and is thus subjected to large volumes of traffic moving at excessive speed without an appreciation or perception of the dangers to other road users. This situation is most acute on Leafield Road at College Row where the carriageway is narrow and sinuous with poor visibility. There have been many minor collisions and incidents in this narrow section although damage only, with no reported injury accidents on record.
4. The Parish Council have been in discussion with the County and District Councils and local MP regarding this matter over a number of years and passive measures such as vehicle weight, vehicle width and speed restrictions have in the past not been approved, due to resourcing or enforcement issues. However, with the availability of funds through the Area Stewardship Fund the Parish Council has now sought approval for implementation of more direct physical measures and officers have worked with the Parish Council to develop a proposal for two physical build outs in Leafield Road (one at each end of the existing priority system) to act as traffic calming features. Annex 1 illustrates this scheme.

Consultation

5. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 28 September to 19 October 2012 and details of the scheme sent to all residents of Crawley and to Thames Valley Police. Fifteen responses were received, most in support of the proposals, which are summarised at Annex 2. Copies of the consultation responses are available for inspection in the Members' Resource Centre.

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6. Thames Valley Police do not support the scheme believing there to be a strong potential for it to increase collisions and felt that other options (including road widening or reversing the direction of priority-working system) should be examined. Officers have considered these matters very carefully but believe that the proposed build outs will provide a physical deterrent forcing traffic to slow considerably, if not stop, prior to proceeding in accordance with the priority signage. Changing the direction of the priority system has been investigated previously and dismissed on the grounds that it would give no significant safety benefit. Finally, the option of road widening is not realistic in the current financial climate.
7. Two residents have raised concerns that a physical build-out will cause problems for drivers (particularly those who are inexperienced) when there are poor driving conditions and also problems for larger vehicles passing through the village. They would prefer that the money was spent on creating a footway in this part of Leafield Road which would benefit pedestrians and emphasise the narrowness of the road. One resident recognises there is no complete solution to the current traffic problems. In response, officers consider that a number of these issues can be dealt with through careful design and implementation. Provision of a footway would still require a priority-working system to be put in place and the current scheme seeks to improve adherence to that which is already in place. Also if the road were narrowed and two vehicles needed to pass within the priority section one would need to mount the footway.
8. Several respondents raised concerns about vegetation growth reducing forward visibility and this matter is to be dealt with by the Parish Council. Other suggestions included extending the 30mph speed limit further north and it is considered that this should be included in a future programme when funding is available.

How the Project supports LTP3 Objectives

9. The provision of the traffic calming scheme will improve road safety at this location

Financial and Staff Implications

10. The cost of implementing this scheme is estimated to be approximately £17,000 which will be met from the County Council's Area Stewardship Fund along with contributions from Crawley Parish Council and Section 106 Developer Funding.

RECOMMENDATION

11. **The Deputy Leader of the Council is RECOMMENDED to authorise the implementation of the traffic calming measures in Leafield Road, Crawley as advertised.**

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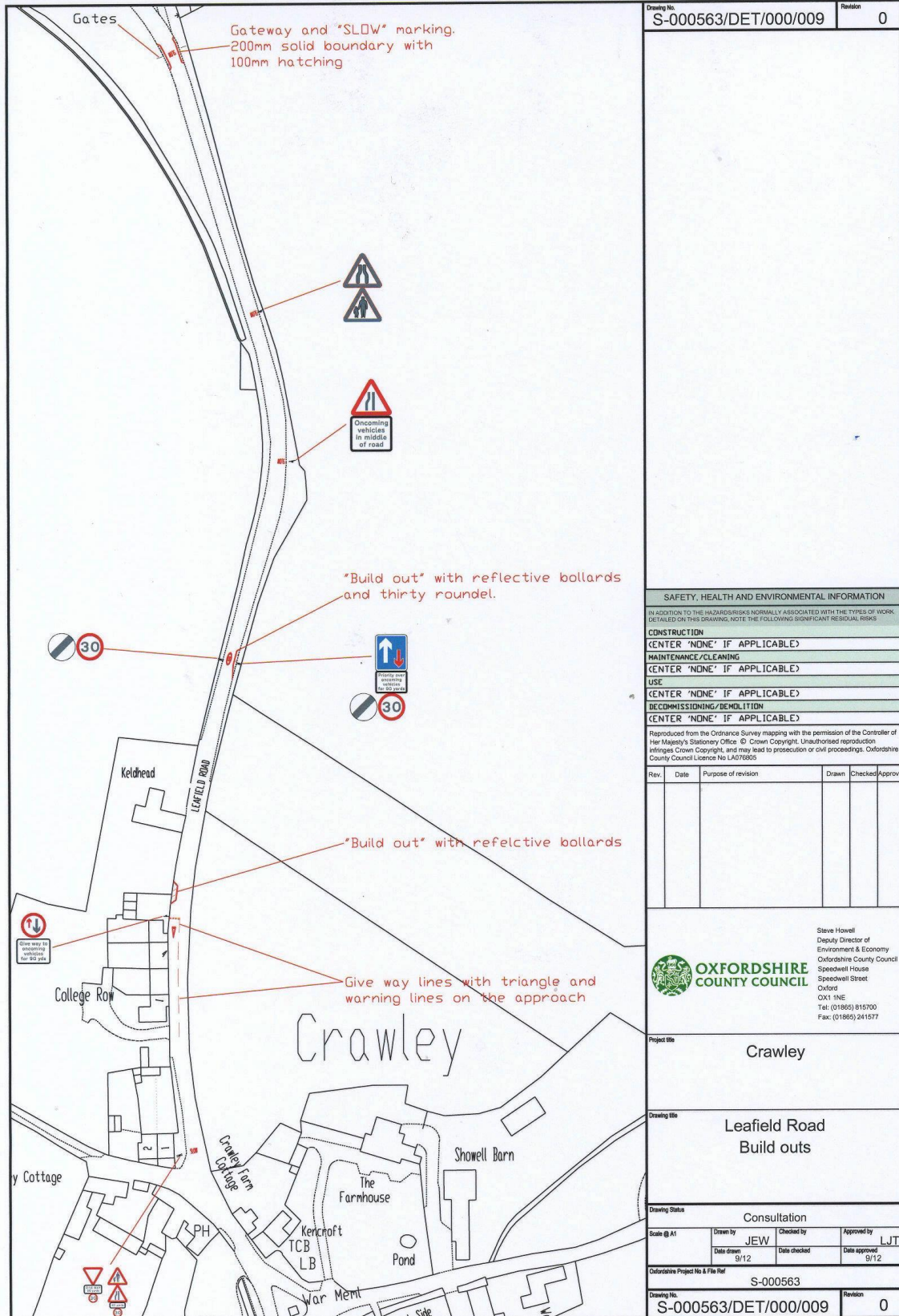
MARK KEMP

Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Commercial)

Background papers: Consultation responses

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SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

IN ADDITION TO THE HAZARD/RISKS NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE TYPES OF WORK DETAILED ON THIS DRAWING, NOTE THE FOLLOWING SIGNIFICANT RESIDUAL RISKS

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MAINTENANCE/CLEANING
 (ENTER "NONE" IF APPLICABLE)

USE
 (ENTER "NONE" IF APPLICABLE)

DECOMMISSIONING/DEMOLITION
 (ENTER "NONE" IF APPLICABLE)

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Traffic calming measures in Crawley

Summary of comments received during Consultation.

	Respondent	Support proposal	Comments	Officer Comments
1	Thames Valley Police (TVP)	No	<p>Due to the current road environment and layout TVP do not support the proposed measures, as we believe there is strong potential to increase road collisions at the features, where there is currently no previous history.</p> <p>TVP believe that other measures should be considered in order to improve safety, and reduce speeds to include removal of overhanging vegetation, which is clearly an issue with regards to forward visibility and increasing road width by removing part of the grass bank.</p> <p>TVP suggest changing the priority, so that inbound traffic should give way, especially as the road is downhill into the village.</p> <p>With the absence of a suitable footway we do not believe the proposed features in any way benefit the vulnerable user. As the road is currently used by all vehicle hierarchy there is little step off to benefit pedestrians within the current priority system.</p>	<p>With the features in place we would hope that speeds would reduce and therefore motorists would travel at a speed appropriate to avoid collisions both with other traffic and the build outs.</p> <p>The Parish Council have been asked to remove the verge side vegetation to improve visibility. This is essential where forward visibility is so crucial at this location. See "Officer comment notes" below for details of other measures.</p> <p>This was investigated in 2011 and the consensus was that the direction should be as it is now. Due to the overall length of the priority, no matter which way it works, there will inevitably be conflicts.</p> <p>Although the features do not specifically cater for pedestrians it is felt that the speed reduction potential of the build outs will benefit pedestrians overall who would otherwise have no protection of any kind at this time.</p> <p>The signing has been placed so as to be visible to approaching vehicles. At this location, the only suitable place is on the build out.</p>
2	Crawley resident	No	<p>At the top of Leafield Lane there is restricted carriageway around a blind bend on an adverse camber. The road is often slippery in wet or icy conditions and the addition of a concrete obstacle to these hazards may only increase the possibility of a serious accident or multiple accidents caused by a 'maverick' or inexperienced driver.</p> <p>Forward signing along Showell Lane with warning signs 100m before the speed limit sign indicating the approach of hazards might be as effective or even more effective in</p>	<p>Drivers should be travelling at a speed at which they can stop in the distance they can see in front of them. We cannot control the driver but we can erect suitable advance warning signs to highlight road features ahead.</p> <p>Providing signing too far away from a hazard is ineffective. Even over a short distance the message conveyed by a warning sign is quickly forgotten. The DfT Traffic Signs Manual Ch 4 "Warning Signs" sets out recommended siting</p>

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			<p>slowing traffic approaching the narrows from the top without the extra hazard of the proposed 'build out'.</p> <p>Large oncoming vehicles have been unable to pass queuing traffic but the current proposals will in no way alleviate this problem.</p> <p>Another existing problem is that drivers from either direction may fail to register or disregard traffic already in the narrows... No one wants a clutter of signage but essential information should be provided in an accessible form</p> <p>The inconsiderate, frustrated or 'maverick' motorist is just as likely to tear around the 'build outs', particularly, in quiet periods or in conditions of poor visibility as the frustrated motorist at present tears away from the current white line.</p> <p>I am concerned that the proposed scheme for Leafied Lane will not materially benefit road safety for anyone but it will adversely affect pedestrians and cyclists who will have to negotiate extra hazards and in so doing increase their own vulnerability. The lower build out would be an obstacle which would endanger pedestrians negotiating it. They would be left in the middle of the carriageway, with difficulty in regaining the side through queuing traffic.</p> <p>I think the money could be better spent by bringing out some of the existing kerbing slightly to create a walkway for pedestrians to the centre of the village and at the same time reducing the speed of traffic in both directions by emphasising the narrowness of the carriageway.</p> <p>I accept that there is no complete or ideal solution to present traffic problems and if, after due deliberation of the points I have raised the professionals in your</p>	<p>distances for warning signs.</p> <p>We will ensure that give way positions are situated where there is sufficient width.</p> <p>We will ensure that advance signing of the narrow section and priority working is adequate.</p> <p>Unfortunately no engineering measures will prevent drivers with such an attitude from driving in an inappropriate manner. Therefore there is a need to try to maximise forward visibility so the more reasonable driver is aware of a potentially hazardous situation.</p> <p>Pedestrians and cyclists will need to negotiate the build outs and therefore put themselves in the carriageway. At present they are already in the carriageway, with no calming features. The build outs will hopefully slow traffic thereby reducing the danger.</p> <p>This would still require the priority system through the narrow section and would increase the length over which it needed to operate and would exacerbate the problem with large vehicles passing.</p> <p>Noted. With funding limited and an on-going problem, there has to be compromise with implementation of an affordable, cost effective yet workable solution.</p>

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			<p>department decide that the present proposals are the best solution to the traffic problems of Leafield Lane I accept their decision and look forward to walking in greater safety to the middle of the village.</p>	
3	Crawley resident	No	<p>The parish council state (in the fourth paragraph of their consultative document) that the build outs “will provide an effective refuge for this group (i.e. pedestrians and cyclists). This is incorrect: Mr Wright (OCC) states ‘The build outs are not intended to be refuges. There is insufficient road width for this to be the case. At this time, the road is already narrow and the speed of vehicles often inappropriate therefore creating a danger to pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. The build outs are intended to have a slowing effect and thereby reduce the risk.</p> <p>Also in paragraph four they make the disturbing statement that the build outs ‘will increase the hazard of collision in poor weather’ – I assume that this is a staff error.</p> <p>Another obvious problem is the growth of blackberry bushes and flowers from the verge and road side walls on the inside of the bend.</p> <p>“If we examine the risks in the lane in front of College Row the major risk for vehicles is that because of the width of one or both they cannot pass. I fail to see how the build outs will reduce the number of such events, as the driver of a wide vehicle is unable to see another wide vehicle coming towards him in the narrows above Keld Head until he is in front of College Row.</p> <p>In the plan that there is no pavement in front of College Row.”</p> <p>Some reduction to uphill vehicle speed might be achieved by replacing the ‘Changed Priorities’ sign with ‘Queues ahead’. A similar</p>	<p>The build outs are not to be built as a refuge to harbour pedestrians or cyclists within the outline of the actual build out. They will however provide a degree of protection for those standing behind them from the flow of oncoming traffic. We believe this is the point the Parish Council were trying to make.</p> <p>Unfortunately the resident has misread the aforementioned paragraph which actually reads “Neither do the Parish Council believe that the build outs will increase the hazard of collision to road users in poor weather, this has not been the case where similar projects have been installed on two of the other three approaches to the village.”</p> <p>This has been raised with the Parish Council, with a request that the overgrowth be removed.</p> <p>The build outs are intended to highlight the presence of the priority system and reduce approach speeds. The upper build out is intended to direct vehicles to a point on the carriageway such that it makes them more visible earlier on the approach to the build out. With slower speeds and better forward visibility it is hoped to reduce the number of occasions when two vehicles may meet in the middle is reduced.</p> <p>The plan is a small scale Ordnance Survey extract and at that resolution the path is too narrow to show on the map. The existing pavement is to remain.</p> <p>There are already warning signs of narrow road and pedestrians in road. Without wishing to add more “sign</p>

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	Respondent	Support proposal	Comments	Officer Comments
			<p>one would also probably help just above the top bend. They work by appealing to the driver's self-interest.</p> <p>The 7.5t weight limit on the northern approaches to Crawley should be enforced more rigorously to keep large vehicles out of the village.</p> <p>I would like consideration to be given to spending the money on resetting the kerbstones from the top end of the footpath in front on College Row to at least the vehicular entrance at Keld Head and possibly almost to the upper build out location to give a carriage way width of about 3.5 metres, i.e. an extended build out without the bollards." "This would both make an obvious one way carriage way for motorists and a safe haven for pedestrians. Funding would be better spent here than kerbing the road edge further north. Only where the roadside wall is in danger of being undercut is it really needed.</p>	<p>clutter" we could reassess the most appropriate warning signs and perceived danger and sign the road accordingly.</p> <p>Agreed. Trading standards have been informed. However, there is an "except for access" exemption so delivery and service vehicles etc are permitted.</p> <p>This would still require the priority system through the narrow section. There is some merit in this suggestion in that it would provide a better facility for pedestrians. The draw-back is that should two vehicles meet head on in this section, one would have to reverse back and there is the potential that a vehicle would mount the new pavement in order to pass. With this suggestion and the top build out in place, it could have the benefit in that should two vehicles meet and have to pass side by side inside the extent of the priority, this manoeuvre would be restricted to the length between north of Keld Head and the upper build out. I believe this is further north of where this is currently happening and beyond the last houses of Leafield Lane.</p>
4	Crawley resident	Yes	<p>Supports the proposal.</p> <p>Would like to see the 30mph speed limit extended out to the village gateway to slow traffic before reaching the priority system.</p> <p>Would like to see the southern give way marking moved north to improve forward visibility of vehicles approaching from the north.</p>	<p>Agree that this should be taken forward when resources allow.</p> <p>This has been discussed at length in the past. The road is narrower at that point thus making it difficult for traffic to pass. The build outs should address the visibility issue.</p>
5	Crawley resident	Yes	<p>Supports the proposal.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
6	Crawley resident	Yes	<p>Supports the proposal.</p> <p>Would like to see the 30mph speed limit extended out to the village gateway to slow traffic before reaching the priority system.</p> <p>Would like to see weight and width</p>	<p>Agree that this should be taken forward when resources allow.</p> <p>Existing 7.5t restriction north of Crawley</p>

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	Respondent	Support proposal	Comments	Officer Comments
			restrictions imposed to deter large vehicles using this road.	on approaches. Need to maintain access for public service and delivery vehicles thus making a total restriction inoperable
7	Crawley resident	Yes	Supports the proposal.	Noted
8	Crawley resident	Yes	Further measures are needed to make it easier and safer for traffic to negotiate the narrow part of the road.	See "Officer comment notes" below for details of other measures.
9	Crawley resident	Yes	Supports the proposal. Would like to see the 30mph speed limit extended out to the village gateway to slow traffic before reaching the priority system.	Agreed that this should be taken forward when resources allow.
10	Crawley resident	Yes	Supports the proposal. Would like to see the 30mph speed limit extended out to the village gateway to slow traffic before reaching the priority system.	Agree that this should be taken forward when resources allow.
11	Crawley resident	Yes	Supports the proposal.	Noted.
12	Crawley resident	Yes	Supports the proposal.	Noted.
13	Crawley resident	Yes	Supports the proposal.	Noted.
14	Crawley resident	Yes	Supports the proposal.	Noted.
15	Crawley resident	Yes	Supports the proposal.	Noted