

Division(s): Benson and Cholsey

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 28 MARCH 2019
CHOLSEY – WALLINGFORD ROAD – PROPOSED TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

Report by Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed introduction of the traffic calming measures comprising four pairs of speed cushions on the Wallingford Road at Cholsey as advertised.

Executive summary

2. The provision of traffic calming measures 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 use of traffic calming measures.

Introduction

3. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation on a proposal to introduce four pairs of speed cushions on the Wallingford Road at Cholsey. The proposed speed cushions would be 1.6m wide, 75mm high and 3.7m long, and comply with national guidance as 'bus friendly' traffic calming measures.

Background

4. The above proposal as shown at Annex 1 has been put forward as a result of the development of land adjacent to the Wallingford Road at Cholsey.

Consultation

5. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 15 January and 15 February 2019. An email was sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, South Oxfordshire District Council, Cholsey Parish Council and the local County Councillor. Notices were also placed on site and letters sent to properties adjacent to the proposals.
6. Ten responses were received. 6 objections, 3 in support (albeit one with some concerns) and one not objecting. The responses are recorded at Annex 2.

Copies of the full responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Response to objections and other comments

7. Thames Valley Police expressed no objection to the proposals.
8. Objections were received from six members of the public, all residents of properties adjacent to the proposals. The grounds for the objections included strong concerns over noise and vibration as vehicles traverse the speed cushions, with several respondents noting the potential disruption to sleep for those with bedrooms facing the road, noting also that traffic levels increased quite early in the morning. Strong concerns were also expressed over increased engine emissions as vehicles slowed for the cushions and then accelerated after passing them, resulting in higher levels of pollutants harmful to health and the wider environment. Additionally, concerns were expressed over the difficulties the proposed cushions might cause for vehicles turning into and from driveways close to the cushions and the consequent increase in accident risk. Other concerns cited were that vehicles might choose to travel in the centre of the road to avoid the cushions and parts of the road were susceptible to flooding and that there could be a hazard to road users in these conditions due to the flood water obscuring the cushions. Alternative traffic calming measures were suggested that were considered preferable, including speed cameras, a 40mph speed limit before the village, 30mph limit, a mini roundabout and build-outs/chicanes.
9. In response to the above concerns it should be stressed that the proposals comprise 'bus friendly' speed cushions which will allow vehicles to travel along the road within the speed limit without adjusting their speeds, resulting, therefore, in no increase in vehicle emissions, and – from experience of similar schemes elsewhere - including nearby on the Wantage Road at Wallingford and The Street at Crowmarsh - minimal if any change in noise. Similarly, these nearby schemes – which have been in place since 2010 –do not appear to have resulted in any problems relating to the above concerns. While the cited issue of flooding is likely to be specific to this proposal, should flood water be high enough to cover the cushions, vehicles would very likely be travelling at such low speeds that this concern is unlikely to result in any material hazard.
10. The suggestions for alternative calming measures are noted. However, these would require detailed assessment and funding and it is doubtful if they could realistically be promoted, noting also that speed cameras – one of the alternative measures being suggested – are a matter for the police.
11. The three expressions of support are noted. In respect of the response requesting additional or stronger measures, it is accepted that a corollary of the proposed use of 'bus friendly' speed cushions is that the level of speed control afforded by the scheme will be comparatively modest, but it is not considered viable to introduce further measures in the context of the current funding available.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

12. The proposals would help facilitate the safe movement of traffic.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

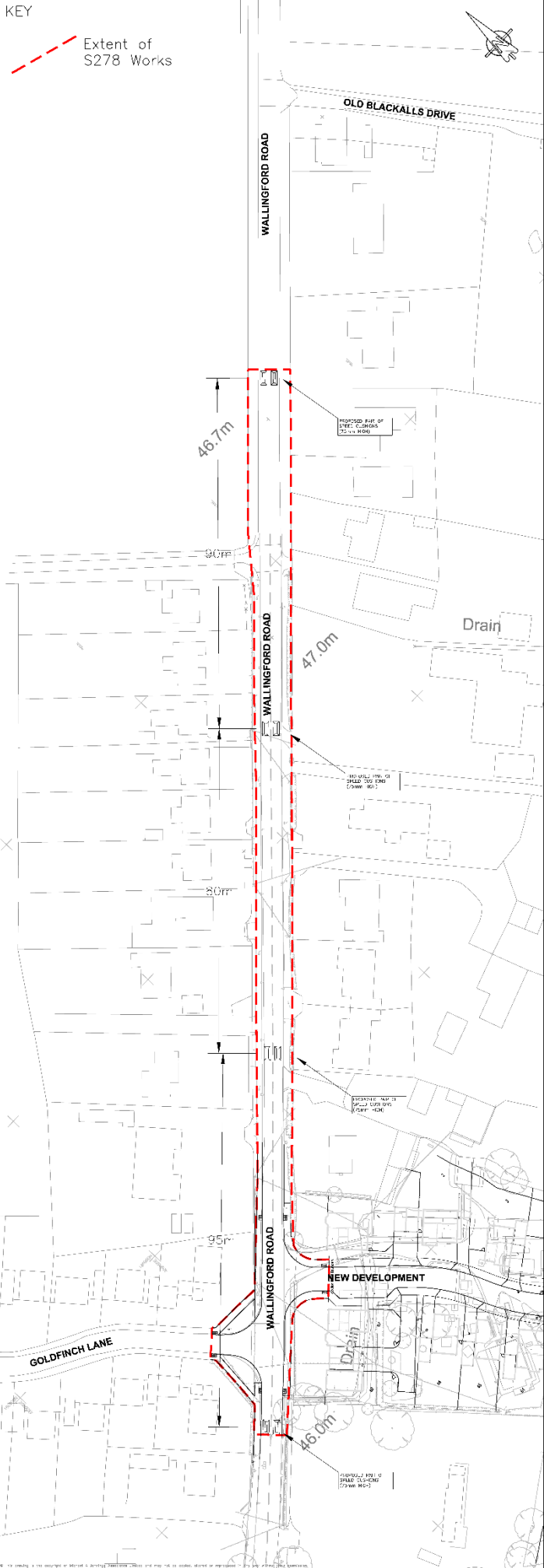
13. Funding for the proposed measures has been provided by the developers of land adjacent to the Wallingford Road at Cholsey.

OWEN JENKINS
Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Background papers: Plan of proposed traffic calming measures
 Consultation responses

Contact Officers: Hugh Potter 07766 998704

March 2019



FOR APPROVAL

REV. NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	INITIALS												
U	14.11.18	Extent of cushions amended to match street lighting extent	JS												
A	05.11.18	Traffic calming moved to existing street lighting locations	JS												
<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Client:</td> <td>Bellway</td> <td>MJA CONSULTING CIVIL & STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Project:</td> <td>Yew Tree Gardens Cholsey</td> <td>Ipsium Court, 24 The Quadrant, Abingdon Science Park, Oxon, OX14 3YS Tel: 01235 556173 Fax: 01235 523226</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Site:</td> <td>S278 Traffic Calming</td> <td>Scale: 1:500 Checked: AMc</td> <td>Code: Oc., 1B Drawn: JS Drawing No.: 5758:609 Rev: B</td> </tr> </table>				Client:	Bellway	MJA CONSULTING CIVIL & STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS		Project:	Yew Tree Gardens Cholsey	Ipsium Court, 24 The Quadrant, Abingdon Science Park, Oxon, OX14 3YS Tel: 01235 556173 Fax: 01235 523226		Site:	S278 Traffic Calming	Scale: 1:500 Checked: AMc	Code: Oc., 1B Drawn: JS Drawing No.: 5758:609 Rev: B
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Note:
Exact location of cushions and extents of saw cuts/surfacing to be agreed on site.

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RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	No objection – <i>No comment.</i>
(2) Local Resident, (Cholsey)	<p>Object –I have no objection to sensible traffic calming measures in Wallingford Road, however I strongly object to the current proposal on the following grounds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noise pollution: I am extremely concerned that a speed cushion proposed in front of our house will significantly increase in noise pollution and vibrations that will directly affect our sleep and quality of life. The Wallingford Road is busy at all times of day and night. People commuting to work by car are leaving the village from as early as 4:30 - 5am. 2. Increase in harmful emissions and air pollution: Research has shown that traffic calming measures of this kind can locally increase emissions from vehicles as they slow, brake and then accelerate navigating through the speed calming measures. This will also directly impact on the government objective to combat “Climate Change” by reducing CO2 emissions which I believe Oxfordshire County Council fully supports. Furthermore, the development which this measure is being introduced to serve will also be impacted, as the houses that have frontages to the Wallingford Road have smaller front gardens which will place them and the occupants closer to the speed cushions and potential deadly health hazards. <p>To be fair SODC planning did originally reject the planning applications with road safety as one of the grounds for rejection...so clearly it is the Planning Inspectors that are culpable and should be held accountable for such poor foresight and personally responsible for manslaughter if someone loses their life as a result of such an oversight.</p> <p>A more acceptable solution would be the introduction of a mini roundabout at the junction between Goldfinch Lane. Wallingford Road and the exit point to new the development at East End Farm, and will prove an even bigger advantage when the future extension to this development receives planning permission</p>
(3) Local Resident, (Cholsey)	Object –the speed cushions are very close to our property. The plan states that the exact positioning of the cushions will be agreed on site, which could result in them being even closer to the entrance/driveway of our property. Our driveway is extremely difficult and tight to manoeuvre in and out of, so we have to reverse in to enable us to drive out safely. The obstruction of a speed cushion would make it extremely difficult to carry out our reverse manoeuvres safely and swiftly.

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	<p>We are also worried about the noise and air pollution and vibrations due to the speed cushions. Our children's bedrooms are at the front of the house and there will be an obvious increase in these levels as vehicles negotiate the cushions which will result in interrupted sleep patterns and mean we cannot sleep with the windows open in the Summer months. One member of our household is diagnosed with asthma and any increase in air pollution is a huge concern.</p> <p>We are also concerned about a back-up of traffic stopping across our driveway due to vehicles either stopping or queuing to drive through the traffic calming, which will result in us not being able to enter or exit our property. Another concern is that slowing traffic could result in an accident with vehicles speeding out of the village. In our opinion some form of traffic calming needs to be further back towards the village, ideally before the bend on the Wallingford Road (unfortunately the plan does not show the bend - it shows the Wallingford Road as a straight road, which is not the case). Also, the planned traffic calming will not slow down motorbikes as they will be able to ride through the middle of the cushions, and also the road is prone to flooding – if motorists cannot see the cushions, accidents are bound to happen,</p> <p>We feel that the easiest way to reduce speed is by putting either a speed camera up or put a mini roundabout at the exit of Goldfinch Lane and Yew Tree Gardens or perhaps Rothwells Close. We are sure that motorists would take more notice of a speed camera or roundabout than speed cushions.</p>
(4) Local Resident, (Cholsey)	<p>Object – I am not in favour of the proposed speed cushions as I find that even when driving below the speed limit they produce an uncomfortable jolt which hurts my back. I'd prefer a speed camera- which would also provide revenue.</p>
(5) Local Resident, (Cholsey)	<p>Object – We have lived at on Wallingford Road for about 12 years and not seen or heard of accidents due to speed in the 30mph speed limits area. There have been some accidents but not speed related. The main problem is merging traffic from drives and parked cars, Cars with long bonnets are forced to creep out into the road are not seen by traffic on the main road especially at night, high fences and hedges reducing the line of sight. We have reduced the thickness and height of our hedge, but the telegraph pole creates a blind spot for us and our neighbour. In a recent speed and traffic survey conducted by the developer shows that the speed is not a major problem around Goldfinch Lane. The increases noise vibration pollution increased risk of accidents damage to cars and property are unacceptable for those who live in the traffic calming areas. The location of the 1st speed hump north of Goldfinch Lane is on a bus stop, and would prevent 4 houses backing into their drives. In Wallingford the speed humps are ignored by lorries, vans, 4x4 s, farm tractors, trailers and motor cycles. The same will happen here. I feel a better way to control speed would be to install a speed camera reducing noise pollution, vibration and congestion. No answer is perfect, but some consideration should be given to our quality of life.</p>

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<p>(6) Local Resident, (Cholsey)</p>	<p>Object – As a resident of Goldfinch Lane it has been a challenge getting out of our road safety before the new development and now it will be a lot worse. I feel that the speed cushions are not the answer. Drivers can avoid these as they can drive over them comfortably. I therefore suggest that the method used on the Reading to Wallingford road past the Cholsey Meadows would be a better option.</p>
<p>(7) Local Resident, (Cholsey)</p>	<p>Object – We would always welcome any deterrent to speeding but we are not convinced that speed cushions are an adequate means to provide such a deterrent. In most instances and particularly where there is only light traffic such as is usually found on Wallingford Road, drivers are able to alter course so as to straddle the cushions and, if speeding, without reducing speed because the track of many vehicles is wide enough for their wheels to pass over the edges of the cushions without hindrance. Cushions are thus, in our view, at best ineffective and at worst they can create potential danger as, if there is opposing traffic, drivers choosing to straddle them tend to move towards the centre of the road (i.e. Towards each other) as they approach the cushions, and this increases the potential for a collision. Cushions, we believe, are effective only if two vehicles approaching from opposite directions reach the vicinity of the cushions together and are thus unable to avoid them. We truly believe then that in many instances' cushions are a total waste of money. Our own observations clearly show, and traffic data you may have collected must surely corroborate, that vehicles entering Cholsey are much more prone to exceed the limit than those leaving and, moreover, do so for a considerable distance beyond the restriction signs. We believe this is partly due to the abrupt change in the speed limit which literally halves on the northern approach. For these reasons we would strongly urge you to consider either providing a 'buffer' area of 40mph speed limit prior to the 30mph area on the northern approach to Cholsey or installing full width 'road humps' which we believe would not be inordinately more expensive than cushions but would be far more effective in ensuring the speed limit is observed.</p>
<p>(8) Local Resident, (Cholsey)</p>	<p>Support (with concerns) – I am pleased that at last something is being done to slow down the traffic on the Wallingford Road as I risk my life every time I pull out of Old Blackalls Drive, however I do not think speed cushions will be enough, humps would be more appropriate. Or preferably a speed camera. I have complained about the speeding cars many times and it is only now when there are 67 new houses being built that the OCC has thought to slow down the traffic. I do hope that in addition there will be a zebra crossing from the new development on to the pavement by Goldfinch Lane for pedestrians coming from the new estate.</p>
<p>(9) Local Resident, (Cholsey)</p>	<p>Support – I am a resident on the Wallingford Road and welcome the Traffic Calming.</p>
<p>(10) Local Resident, (Cholsey)</p>	<p>Support – This is great news and won't come a moment too soon. Cars roar past on their way to Wallingford, or into Cholsey. It is a bit terrifying. Even the noise is upsetting.</p>