

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 16 JULY 2020
OXFORD – GODSTOW ROAD: PROPOSED TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

Report by Interim Director of Community Operations

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed introduction of speed cushions on Godstow Road as advertised.

Executive summary

2. 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 to introduce six pairs of speed cushions on Godstow Road at Wolvercote, Oxford.

Background

4. The above proposal as shown at Annex 1 have been put forward in conjunction with Oxford City Council who have undertaken to fund the project subject to approval being given to proceed with the scheme.

Consultation

5. Formal consultation was carried out between 4 June and 3 July 2020. A notice was published in the Oxford Times newspaper and an email sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, oxford City Council and local County Councillor. Letters were sent directly to approximately 80 properties in the immediate vicinity, and public notices also placed on site.
6. Seventeen responses were received. 5 objections 7 in support 4 raising concerns and Thames Valley Police not objecting. 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.
8. The City Councillor representing this ward supports the proposal.
9. Objections were received from five members of the public with a further four responses expressing concerns. The grounds for objection and concern included proposed use of speed cushions where parking routinely occurs, resulting in vehicles not being able to straddle the cushions as they would otherwise be able to do, resulting in potential danger and inconvenience and also adversely impacting on buses and emergency services. Other issues raised were the number, siting and spacing of the cushions, their effectiveness (particularly in respect of motorcycles), their appearance as an urbanising feature and the need for calming on this comparatively short stretch of the road with some respondents noting that other parts of the Godstow Road with speeding problems had not been included in the scheme.
10. Five expressions of support were received from members of the public, although some of these did raise concerns about the close spacing of the features and the omission of other parts of the road judged to have a speeding problem
11. Noting the above, the design of the scheme - including the number and siting of the proposed speed cushions - reflects the outcome of discussions with the local member Councillor Paul Buckley and residents. Placing of speed cushions on roads with parking is not uncommon and where parking does restrict the road width to one lane, vehicles will still be able to straddle the cushion as intended by their design.
12. At the time of writing this report a response had not been received from Oxford Bus Company. Any response will be reported verbally to the meeting

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

13. The proposals will help facilitate the safe movement of traffic.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

14. The proposed measures will be part funded by Oxford City Council and the Councillor Priority fund

Equalities Implications

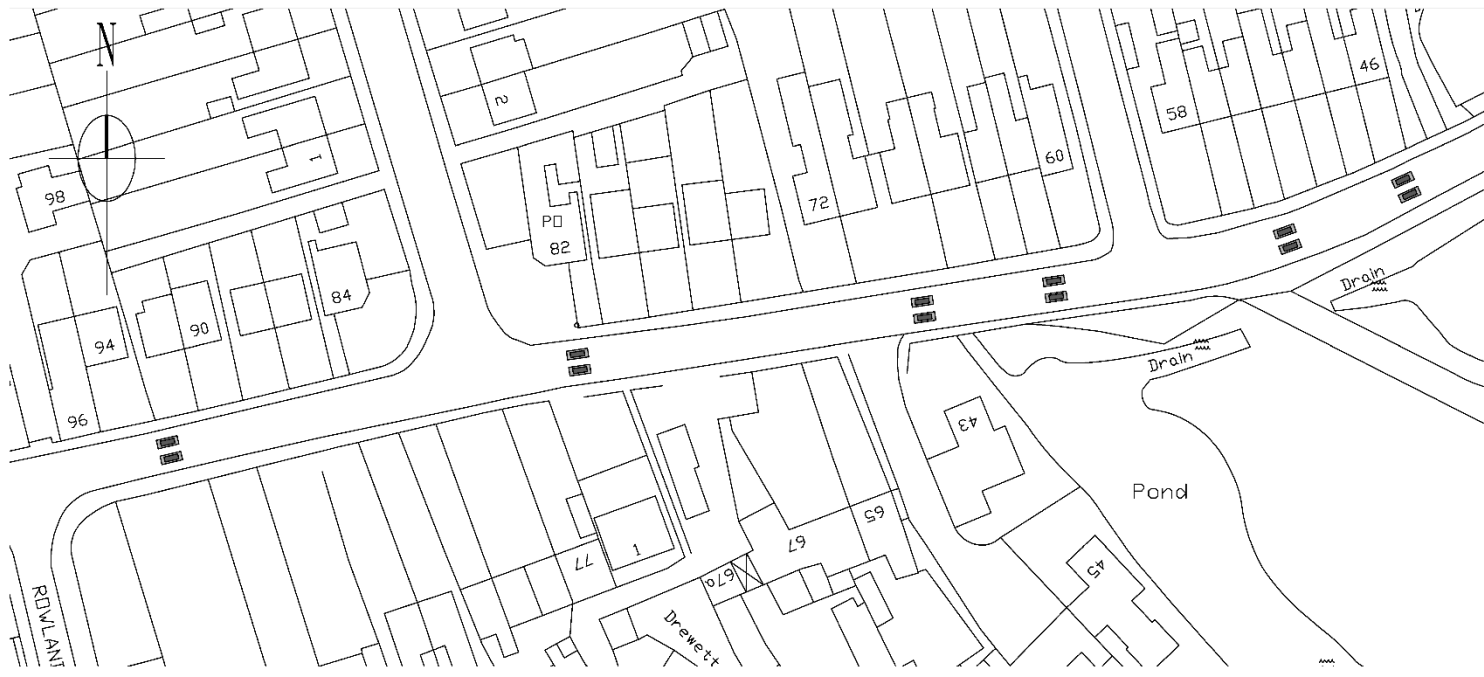
15. The proposals are considered not to have any implications in respect of equalities.

JASON RUSSELL
Interim Director of Community Operations

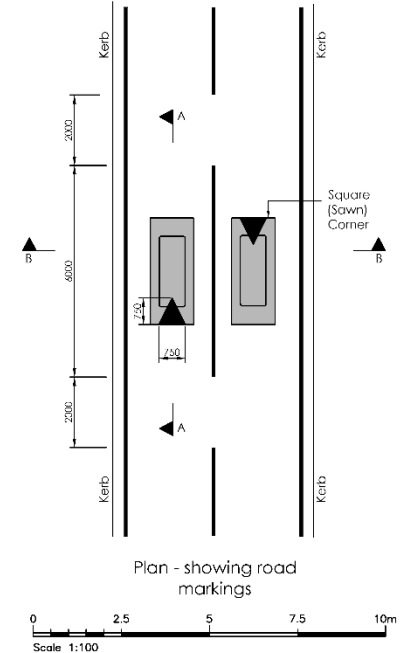
Background papers: Scheme Plan
 Consultation responses

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 Dave Tidball 07879 885448

July 2020



Location Plan
Showing Proposed Locations of Speed Cushions
Scale 1:500



REV.	DATE	DETAILS	BY
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40mm thick rolled asphalt surface course to BS EN 13108 - 4 Design Mixes. HIRA 35/14F surf 40/60 cls.

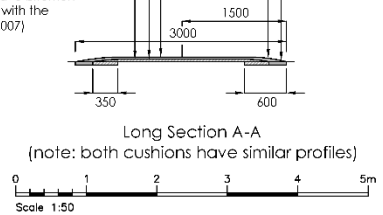
See Note 3 for regulating binder course material

Existing road and reduced surfaces to be tack coated with bitumen emulsion at the rate of 0.5-0.7 l/m²

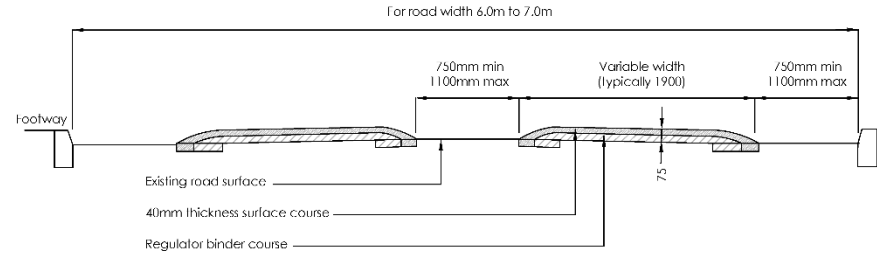
All vertical surfaces to have bitumen applied in accordance with the specification (PD 6691:2007)

Ramp to be slightly radiused

Existing surfacing to be cut and removed to 40mm depth as let-in joint



Scale 1:50



Scale 1:20

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PROJECT TITLE
 Godstow Road, Oxford

DRAWING TITLE
 Traffic Calming Plan

SCALE
 As Shown @ A2

STATUS
 Information

DRAWN BY
 J. Axford

DATE
 04/11/2019

CHECKED BY
 S. Hearn

DATE
 04/11/2019

AUTHORISED BY

DATE

DRAWING NUMBER/ SHEET NUMBER
BDC**/*******

REVISION

FILE PATH
 M:\Housing-Services\Property Services\PS Individual Staff Folders\J. Axford\Projects\Godstow Great Estates - Car Parking\Godstow Road\G2 WIP\MASTER AutoCAD BDC Title Blocks with Licence No.dwg

RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	No objection.
(2) Local City Cllr, (Wolvercote Ward)	Support – Thanks for your email about this consultation - which is welcome news.
(3) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<p>Object – No PAIRS of cushions are required. Parking areas on most of the south side of the road are absolutely necessary and permanently used because many village houses were built with no provision for car parking.</p> <p>TWO SINGLE cushions (not 6 + 6) are enough to remind drivers of the 20mph limit. Number II and Number V (preferably 30 m east of Elmthorpe Rd) would be quite enough.</p>
(4) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<p>Object - The major problem in the Godstow Rd is caused by rush hour commuters using it as a short cut to avoid the Pear Tree and Wolvercote roundabouts. The humps will hardly reduce this - some way must be found to discourage the use of the road as a rat run. The worst offenders are motorcycles, the source of most of the speeding and noise throughout the day. They will be able to avoid the humps by riding around them.</p> <p>The humps are unlikely to be popular with the bus company and the emergency services. They also have a reputation for damaging vehicle suspensions, however slowly they are traversed. I for one will not hesitate to seek professional advice if my car suffers suspension damage after the installation of these measures.</p> <p>This proposal should be dropped in favour of an alternative method of traffic calming - of which there are many.</p>
(5) Local Resident, (Oxford)	Object - I believe that the proposed traffic calming speed cushions will make the road more dangerous. They may look simple on paper, and putting cushions on both carriageways may seem like a good idea, but the reality of this

	<p>road is not how it appears on the plans.</p> <p>Cars are always parked either side of Godstow Road in the proposed area, with occasional gaps between. To get down Godstow Road, traffic almost always has to pull into areas where cars are not parked in order to let traffic come the other way before they can use the other side of the road to get by the parked cars. Thus cars and bikes regularly have to drive in the middle or other side of the road, not on the side of the road assigned to them.</p> <p>Adding speed cushions to this situation will mean that the parked cars will be parked partially on them, and the cars and bikes that are “overtaking” the parked cars will have to negotiate around the speed cushions while mixing with the other cars/bikes that are trying to use the road.</p> <p>I imagine cars swerving around speed bumps to try and avoid them, and getting in the way of oncoming cyclists. Cyclists will also be forced to go over the speed cushions in ways that they were not designed for, for instance having to ride along the side of them at a camber as they squeeze past the cars on the road.</p> <p>I live on Godstow Road, and I do not see a problem with speed on this road. What I do see is a lack of room for the mix of traffic, and I believe that speed cushions will make this worse.</p> <p>In summary, this is a busy road where drivers and cyclists always have to alternately drive on the other side of the road, and give way. Fitting a parked car, an overtaking car, and a cycle coming the other way is a tight fit. Adding speed cushions to this just complicates the mental planning that people have to do to negotiate this road safely. It'll be a confusing mess if the speed cushions are installed.</p>
<p>(6) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Object – I have lived on Godstow Road for a long time. Over the years we have had traffic lights on the canal/railway bridge, a pedestrian crossing near the junction of Rosamund Road, and some extensions to the double yellow lines around Roland Close and Home Close. mini roundabouts at Mere Road and Mill Road, and recently the imposing of a 20mph limit through the village. When assessing the merits of these 'improvements' it is very fair to say that they have affected very little change in the way traffic moves through the village.</p> <p>For example, were you to conduct a survey of residents asking where the 20mph limits start and end most would not fare too well. Were you to ask how many people actually made a point of using the pedestrian crossing most would say they crossed the road at the point they needed to. I have observed that some parents make a point of using the crossing when with younger children but not when they are on their own.</p> <p>The double yellow lines do keep important parts of the village roads clear for the majority of the time but during the</p>

	<p>recent spate of warm weather the double yellow lines were ignored in many parts of the village (when most needed they were ignored)</p> <p>The mini roundabouts do so often cause uncertainty when traffic approaches them and in very many cases vehicles drive through or over them and not around them. I am convinced that leaving the junctions as clearly marked junctions would have been the best solution. As a cyclist I always exercise the greatest of caution having had a number of close shaves at these roundabouts.</p> <p>The point of these examples is not to "have a moan", but to show that changing things within the village has not necessarily resulted in any improvement to the traffic behaviour, and people will just carry on as usual. Oxfordshire CC in common with many other CC's has a rather poor record when it comes to minor road maintenance. Far too often speed bumps, cushions, rumble strips, gateways, road signs, mini roundabouts and road markings are put in with available money, but the budget for maintenance is not sufficient and eventually we are left with a broken or worn out obstruction in the carriageway.</p> <p>If the installation cannot be properly maintained please don't install them in the first place. Please note that the vehicles parked along the roadside have always done a very effective job of restricting the flow and speed of traffic. And cost nothing to install or maintain.</p> <p>Given the increased noise, pollution and inconvenience such cushions would cause to the village and the very doubtful improvement to traffic calming gained, I would respectfully and earnestly recommend that the carriageway along the Godstow Road be left as it is</p>
<p>(7) Local Group, (Wolvercote Residents)</p>	<p>Concerns - When the original request was made for the speed controls on Godstow Road we originally asked for the speed cushions to continue up Godstow Road east of the railway bridge. On the plan that the Council supplied only 6 pairs of cushions were shown to the west of the railway bridge but none to the east of it. 4 pairs are shown very close together on the approach to the railway bridge. Is it possible to either add further cushions to the east side of the bridge or, if there are cost implications, could 2 pairs of those on the west of the bridge be repositioned on the east side of it. I have drawn up plans similar to the ones originally submitted, I am happy to forward this if you let me have a suitable email address to send them.</p>
<p>(8) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Concerns – Much as I appreciate that there is finally going to be some traffic calming on Godstow Road, I wanted to question the positioning. 6 pairs over such a short distance seems strange.</p>

	<p>My house lies at the end of the row to the east of Elmthorpe Road. Vehicles frequently accelerate hard past our house in order to hopefully catch the green light on the bridge. There is also a slight bend in the road that makes it difficult to see clearly from the north side of the road. This is bound to get worse as they accelerate hard, having been frustrated by the speed bumps.</p> <p>If one more set of bumps was added at the end of the row, e.g. opposite 46 Godstow Road, then this acceleration would take place in an area where there are no more houses.</p>
(9) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<p>Concerns – I am in favour of reducing traffic speed on the Godstow Road, but question whether this is the right scheme to achieve that. The fundamental design of speed cushions is to allow buses, ambulances and other large vehicles with wide wheel-bases to "straddle" the cushions so avoiding discomfort to passengers, damage to vehicles and noise. Cyclists can avoid the cushions by steering between the cushion and the kerb.</p> <p>But these advantages are lost when paired speed cushions are positioned where cars are frequently parked. This will apply to the majority of the cushions. In this respect the drawing submitted with the consultation is misleading as it does not show where cars are almost continuously parked. I am concerned that there will be discomfort to older or disabled passengers using the No 6 bus, and that potentially the Oxford bus company, foreseeing</p> <p>damage to its buses, may withdraw the service. There may well be increased noise as large vehicles, unable to straddle the cushions, cross them. There will be a danger to cyclists who will be unable to cycle between the cushion and the kerb, so forced to choose between mounting the cushion or cycling down the middle of the road between the cushions and exposed to traffic approaching in the opposite direction.</p> <p>These issues are all considered in a report produced by the government's Transport Research Laboratory. It may be the case that the unspoken intent is to remove the permitted parking where the cushions are to be located; that would be of great concern to many residents who have no alternative parking provision.</p>
(10) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<p>Concerns – I do not like traffic calming measures such as the speed cushions proposed; I think they are ugly, urbanising and I am not entirely convinced they result in the desired outcome. However, I am aware that they are popular within the village and so I do not object to them.</p> <p>I am also aware that you are likely to receive some requests to extend the speed calming measures the other side of the bridge, continuing up Godstow Road toward the Wolvercote Roundabout. I would object to this proposal; not least</p>

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	<p>I am concerned that it would push additional traffic onto Wolvercote Green and First Turn, roads on which there is a more direct relationship between people and the highway (than the northern section of Godstow Road) and additional vehicles would be disadvantageous.</p>
<p>(11) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - Traffic calming in Wolvercote is well overdue so greatly welcomed. It is a shame the Council or ODS or whoever did the survey and proposed the position of the speed ramps did not feel it necessary for the measures to continue further up Godstow road to Mere road. Cars and some vans do also speed down the eastern side of the bridge towards Wolvercote Green and Mere road. One additional pair between the Godstow bridge and Wolvercote Green and another pair between Wolvercote Green and Mere road would have a big additional impact but hopefully cost very little more. I hope the road lines, double yellows and bus stop markings can all be updated as many are nearly invisible.</p>
<p>(12) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - I think traffic calming along Godstow road is long overdue and much needed. However, I think 6 pairs of cushions might be excessive over such a short distance. A solar powered flashing light showing if people are driving too fast might also be useful .as in other villages.</p>
<p>(13) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - These traffic calming measures are long overdue and will improve safety through Lower Wolvercote. Godstow Road is used as a 'rat run' especially when the A34 is congested so steps to slow through traffic are welcomed</p>
<p>(14) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - As a pedestrian in that area before or after going for a walk on Port Meadow I have been concerned for some time about my safety in relation to traffic speeds there and thus welcome and support the proposal.</p>
<p>(15) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - I support traffic calming on Godstow Road but do not favour speed cushions as they allow vehicles steer between them and avoid slowing down. They are also scary for cyclists as approaching vehicles encroach into the oncoming lane to avoid the cushions.</p> <p>I would prefer to see sinusoidal humps being used, which slow vehicles but remain comfortable for all road users when taken at the correct speed (Lambeth council have some information about sinusoidal humps available online).</p>

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	<p>I would also prefer to see some cushions/humps to the east of those in the proposed plan, on both sides of the railway, to help reduce speeding for the lights on the railway bridge. A red-light enforcement camera at this location could raise a lot of revenue for the council.</p> <p>Additionally, I would like to see the volume of traffic using Godstow Road reduced, particularly as the papermill development is populated and people avoid public transport because of coronavirus. Godstow Road is used as a rat run by vehicles avoiding the A34 and becomes very busy when vehicles are directed to avoid the A34 by online mapping. One solution to this could be to place a modal filter on Godstow Road, either on Pixey Mead or on one of the bridges onto the mead. A further solution would be to remove the parking on Port Meadow at the bathing place (except for some space for blue badge holders) and building safe cycling infrastructure to encourage people to cycle to the bathing place rather than drive.</p>
<p>(16) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Support - I live in Godstow Road and can say I fully approve of these measures. The 20mph speed cameras are completely ignored, and a you know cars use the route from the A34 through Wytham and Wolvercote to avoid leaving the A34 at the Peartree junction.</p> <p>Many of the cars are clearly speeding, some really excessively (I would say at least 50mph on occasions) and if you wave to suggest they slow down by waving your arms, you are often met with abusive two fingers. Aggressive driving seems to be a human condition!</p>
<p>(17) Local Resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Object - I do think that the parking spaces, bus stops and pedestrian crossing should have been on the advertised plan, as without them the proposals are not truly representative of the road layout.</p> <p>While Godstow Road in Lower Wolvercote does need some protection from speedy and inconsiderate drivers, it needs more minor changes than proposed to achieve this.</p> <p>Before making alterations, it is essential to understand how the road works on a day to day basis.</p> <p>At present, the parked vehicles, bus stops and the pedestrian crossing do a great deal to keep the traffic relatively calm for most of the time.</p> <p>The real problems, and only when the road is relatively clear, are from vehicles and cycles travelling down from the bridge into Lower Wolvercote and from vehicles travelling from the eastern edge of the green and play area.</p> <p>The proposal for six double cushions is over the top for what is required and, in itself, could cause new difficulties, with cyclists and drivers weaving to avoid them or being distracted by them faced with oncoming traffic, vehicles exiting from Rowland Close, Rosamund Road, Elmthorpe Road or by buses leaving their stops.</p> <p>Where there is existing parking, surely there would not be proper space for double cushions as parked vehicles would have to straddle one of them.</p>

There is a problem at the junction of Godstow Road and Rosamund Road on the corner adjacent to the Post Box, where the Royal Mail van stops to collect post and delivery vehicles and customer cars. The planned cushions are too tight to the junction and they cannot be moved further east as they will be too close to the pedestrian crossing. There is not a need for them in this location if the cushions to the west of Rosamund Road help to reduce the speed to Rosamund Road.

The proposal to put cushions in the very frequently used bus stop on the north side and then across the road, where vehicles attempt to squeeze through when a bus is taking on passengers, makes little sense.

Having used the roads regularly over 30 years and having recently studied traffic flows and taken photographs of the length of Godstow Road covered by the proposals, my views are as follow.

I would agree with the set of double cushions as indicated between Rowland Close and Rosamund Road.

I do not believe that the set by Rosamund Rad are safe or sensible and are not needed.

The ones at the bus stop on the north side are not needed and that goes for the next set going east as this whole middle section is calmed by existing features already mentioned

The double set east of Elmthorpe Road and where there are double yellow lines by Wolvercote Common will help to re-affirm the calming nature of the road indicated by the double ones further east. However, these should be closer to the apex of the railway bridge to deter those who think they can dash down the incline at speed. Perhaps just east of the parking spaces or as a single cushion next to the start of the parking.

I believe that these changes would be far more effective and a darn sight cheaper than the proposed scheme in days when money is incredibly scarce.