

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT– 4 SEPTEMBER 2014

PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMIT AND BUILDOUT OXFORD CRESCENT, DIDCOT

Report by Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Commercial)

Introduction

1. This report considers objections to formal consultations on proposals to introduce a 20 mph speed limit along the length of Oxford Crescent in Didcot and a single kerb buildout with associated flat-top road hump.

Background

2. The proposals in this report have been developed with County Councillor Hards and the local community in response to the death of Freddie Perry in 2013 in a road traffic accident.
3. Oxford Crescent is a narrow residential road which runs parallel to Wantage Road and also provides access to Didcot Girls School. Some of the houses at the eastern end do not have a frontage directly on to the road. These houses and much of the rest of the street have a lane running to the rear which used to be the route by which coal was delivered to the houses. Despite this, a significant amount of parking occurs on the street and it is not uncommon for there to be a solid line of parked vehicles at the eastern end on the north side, plus parked vehicles half on the road and half on the verge on the opposite side. There is a triangular green area at the eastern end of Oxford Crescent which is used by local children for informal play. It is in this vicinity where the fatal accident occurred and where the buildout and traffic calming are proposed.

Consultation

4. In response to the accident several meetings have taken place with residents, officers and Councillor Hards to discuss options for addressing local concerns. Although vehicle speed was not considered a factor in the accident – and subsequent traffic surveys have shown that speeds are already low – there was general agreement that a 20mph limit should be established. In addition, some residents requested a buildout to make it easier for children crossing from the green area to be seen by approaching vehicles. Initial designs were not welcomed by many in the local community due to the reduction in available parking spaces, and so a revised design with a shorter buildout but with an associated flat-top hump was developed.

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5. Formal consultation on the proposals shown on the plans at Annex 1 (20 mph limit) and Annex 2 (buildout and traffic calming) was carried out between 27 June and 25 July 2014. A copy of the public notice and associated documents were deposited for public inspection at County Hall and Didcot Civic Centre. At the same time, the Council wrote to local residents and businesses affected by the proposed changes and public notices were displayed on site and in the Didcot Herald.
6. Sixteen responses were received and these are summarised at Annex 3 along with officer comments. Along with Councillor Hards, Didcot Town Council and Didcot Girls School support the proposals. Thames Valley Police do not object to the proposals. Among those residents who responded there is a range of views with three specifically objecting to the buildout and others expressing concern about the effects the buildout will have on parking along the road. None of the respondents specifically object to the proposed 20mph although some doubt whether it will have any effect.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

7. The cost of the proposed works described in this report will be met through Councillor Hards Locality Budget and contributions from the local community.

RECOMMENDATION

7. **The Cabinet Member for Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed 20 mph limit and the kerb buildout and associated traffic calming on Oxford Crescent, Didcot as advertised.**

MARK KEMP

Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Commercial)

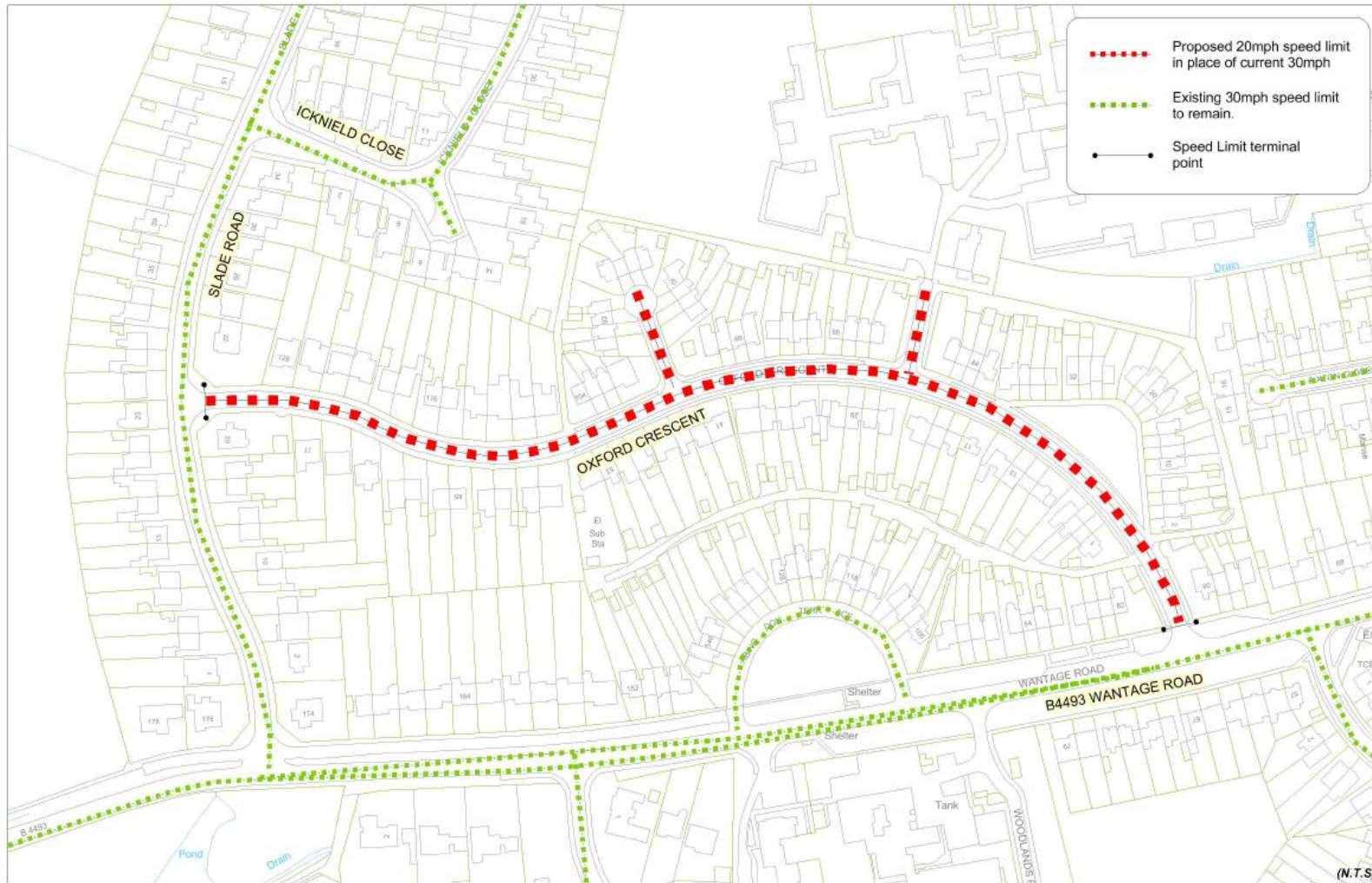
Background papers: Consultation documentation

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August 2014

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ANNEX 1



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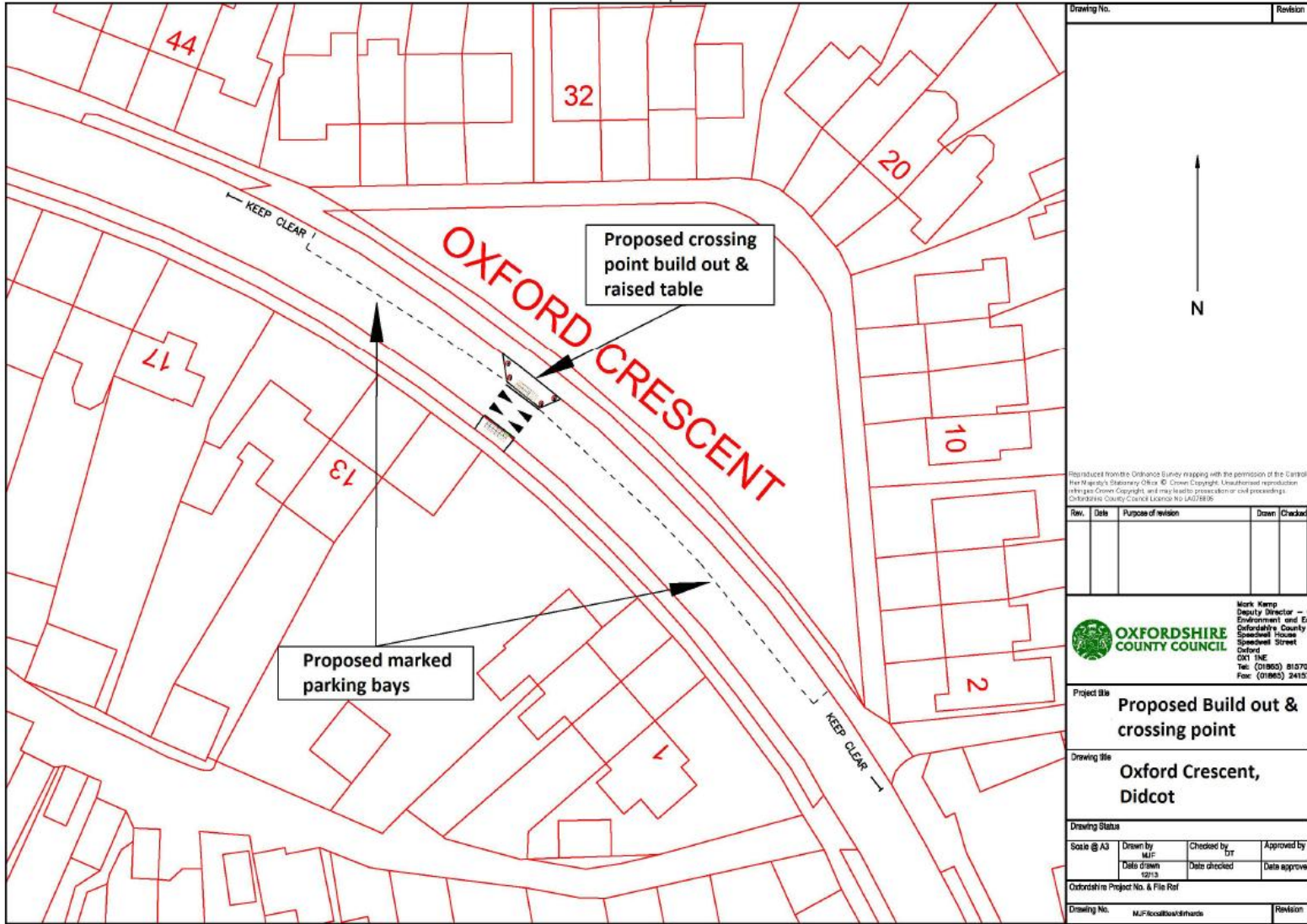
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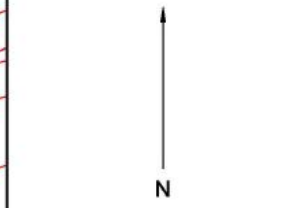
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ANNEX 2

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Drawing No.	Revision
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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked

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Proposed Build out & crossing point

Drawing title
Oxford Crescent,
Didcot

Drawing Status

Scale @ A3	Drawn by MJP	Checked by DT	Approved by
	Date drawn 12/13	Date checked	Date approve

Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref

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RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

RESPONDENT	COMMENT	RESPONSE
Cllr Nick Hards	<p>I am aware that the proposed build out and raised platform is controversial. Some residents are also opposed to the idea of a 20 mph limit although others are strongly supportive and quite a few homes are displaying “20 is Plenty” or similar signs.</p> <p>My understanding is that :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Most traffic on Oxford Crescent is compliant with a 20 mph limit most of the time and would be unaffected by the proposal; 2) Oxford Crescent is too narrow for speed cushions; 3) Raised platforms across the full width of the road would be problematic because of the closeness of some of the houses particularly on the south side of the road; 4) There are insufficient vehicle and pedestrian movements to merit a pedestrian crossing. <p>My conclusion is that a 20 mph limit is merited on this road and that some reinforcement by physical measures is required. Also there aren't many possible physical measures which could be taken to slow the traffic down.</p> <p>I support the proposals for the above reasons.</p>	Noted
Didcot Town Council	<p>The proposed 20mph speed limit and raised crossing point at Oxford Crescent in Didcot was considered by the Planning and Development Committee on 9th July 2014. The opinion of the Committee was that this was a positive move towards improving road safety in Didcot and they approve the proposed changes.</p>	Noted

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Thames Valley Police	Do not object to the proposals in principle but have concern that implementing a 20 mph speed limit without supporting measures will not achieve the desired aim.	Noted – the buildout and raised table are intended to provide some traffic calming
Didcot Girls School	The proposal has been discussed with the school's governors and there is full support for these proposals which will undoubtedly help to create a safer environment for local residents and the many young people who enter and exit the school site via Oxford Crescent each day.	Noted
Resident (Oxford Crescent)	Objects to the proposed build out and raised crossing point on Oxford Crescent as it will reduce the amount of parking available for residents and will thus cause concerns for personal safety if residents have to walk further between house and car. Is surprised that the build out is still being considered as there was an Oxford Crescent residents meeting and no-one wanted the build out because of the reduced parking. There was strong feeling against this. Does not object to the 20mph speed limit.	The buildout now proposed will only remove 1 - 2 cars which is not considered unreasonable given the likely day-to-day variability in parking demand.
Resident (Oxford Crescent)	Agrees that it is a good idea to take action to limit the speed of cars travelling along Oxford Crescent but thinks that changing the official speed limit needs to be accompanied by traffic calming measures in addition to that proposed The number of parked cars along the road create a 'build out' themselves without the need for the Council to construct one specially. If a designated crossing point is needed on Oxford Crescent then thinks it should be nearer to the school entrance. Suggests additional traffic calming in the area, including Slade Road/Brasenose Road	Noted The purpose of the buildout is to create a clear area on which pedestrians can stand whilst waiting to cross the road – this will mean that drivers will have a clearer view of pedestrians. The issue of traffic calming in other areas can be considered at a later date
Resident (Oxford Crescent)	Happy with the proposed 20mph limit. Fully understands the reasons behind the proposed build out and crossing point but believes that it will make things worse for the street as a whole; parking is already a very complicated issue here. Removing the parking	Noted The buildout now proposed will only remove 1 - 2 cars which is not considered unreasonable given the

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	space or possibly spaces, depending upon exactly how it is positioned, will just push the cars further up the road towards the school or the main road or on the banks the opposite side. They will have to park somewhere. This will then affect access for Ambulance/Fire engines/refuse collections/school etc.	likely day-to-day variability in parking demand.
Resident (unknown location)	Baffled as to why the proposals for Oxford Crescent have come forward. The road is usually fairly well filled with parked vehicles that deal with the traffic issues and the bump will go the way of the Broadway traffic calming and be totally ignored.	The reasons for the proposal are set out in the report
Residents (Oxford Crescent)	Have lived on the Crescent since 2010 and have had no concern to the speed of cars travelling down Oxford Crescent. This is partly down to the self imposed traffic calming measure of parked cars, particularly on the eastern end of Oxford Crescent. We realise this situation is not ideal, but would suggest that there be a better solution than the one proposed would be to create parking places on the grassed area which would take cars off the road. Realise that one of the reasons behind these proposals must be the accident that happened in September 2013 resulting in the tragic death of a ten year old boy. Have noted however that the reports concluded it was an accident and that the driver was travelling below 30 mph and most likely around 20 mph. Therefore, a speed limit of 20 mph would have had no bearing on that tragic accident and therefore there is no reason to change the limit	The buildout now proposed will only remove 1 - 2 cars which is not considered unreasonable given the likely day-to-day variability in parking demand. Regarding the suggestion of creating parking bays in the green area, there is insufficient funding available for this option to be progressed at this time
Resident (Oxford Crescent)	Support the proposal to reduce the speed and if possible the volume of traffic using Oxford Crescent in Didcot.	Noted
Residents (Oxford Crescent)	Fully support both the build out and speed limit reduction and look forward to seeing some progress made towards this as a priority.	Noted
Residents (Oxford	As long-term residents, support this proposal in principle but consider the scheme is incomplete and may not reduce speeding and road safety	Noted

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<p>Crescent)</p>	<p>sufficiently. Providing a crossing at the eastern end of the street will not reduce crossing errors particularly if it is still between parked vehicle bays. Will parking in this area be restricted to one side only? Due to the traffic flows and roads widths, believe that a traffic calming scheme for the whole street is required, particularly at the western end. Asks for consideration to be given to the severe visibility restrictions that exist at both ends of Oxford Crescent. The exit into Slade Road is extremely poor and to the Wantage Road can be very limiting at times.</p>	<p>The purpose of the buildout is to create a clear area on which pedestrians can stand whilst waiting to cross the road – this will mean that drivers will have a clearer view of pedestrians</p>
<p>Resident (Oxford Crescent)</p>	<p>A long-term (50+ years) resident of Oxford Crescent Does not object to the buildout but is unclear how it will make the road safer and is also concerned about where the displaced parking will move to.</p>	<p>The purpose of the buildout is to create a clear area on which pedestrians can stand whilst waiting to cross the road – this will mean that drivers will have a clearer view of pedestrians</p>
<p>Residents (Oxford Crescent)</p>	<p>Have lived here for many years Strongly object to the proposal to build a buildout in Oxford Crescent, but do support the introduction of a 20mph speed limit or even a 15mph limit to deal with speeding cars and careless drivers. Do not think the road would be any safer if the buildout were built and that the terribly sad accident would not have been prevented had the buildout been there. Don't feel that the buildout would get used. Children cross safely up and down the road all the time and the road is usually very quiet most of the time, quieter than other roads where pedestrians also have to cross from between parked cars all the time. Are very concerned that it would in fact probably make the road more dangerous by encouraging double parking as there are only just enough car parking spaces as it is and even to lose one parking space would have an impact.</p>	<p>The purpose of the buildout is to create a clear area on which pedestrians can stand whilst waiting to cross the road – this will mean that drivers will have a clearer view of pedestrians</p>
<p>Resident (Wantage Road)</p>	<p>Consider that the parking problem down this road was the cause for the accident. The number of cars parked down this road effectively makes the street a one way only road as there is no passing or pulling in places for</p>	<p>Regarding the suggestion of creating parking bays in the green area, there is insufficient funding available for this</p>

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	<p>about 300 metres making the motorists using the road drive towards the oncoming traffic, and it is on a sweeping bend. Wants the council to take part of the green area in front of the houses and make a proper parking area for the vehicles that now have to park on the road, as this would open the road to two way traffic and make the whole area much safer for motorists and pedestrians.</p> <p>Agrees that a 20 MPH speed limit would help, but only if people stick to it.</p>	<p>option to be progressed at this time.</p>
<p>Resident (Oxford Crescent)</p>	<p>Objects to the proposed build out but has no objection to a reduction in the speed limit to 20 mph although doesn't feel speed is a particular problem in Oxford Crescent and doesn't believe that it was a factor in the recent tragedy which has led to the current proposal.</p> <p>Currently the road is generally quite quiet during week day daytimes and then more busy in terms of parking in the evenings and at weekends. Cars generally park along one side of the street and traffic is therefore 'forced' down the other side. The proposed build out would surely cause traffic to have to move in and out of gaps more and this will cause congestion, and make it more chaotic and harder for children to see where traffic is coming from when trying to cross. Would also be concerned that the build out will take up at least one parking space, if not more, in an area that can at times already be overcrowded. Feels that the build out will cause more problems and will actually make the road more dangerous.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>The buildout now proposed will only remove 1 - 2 cars which is not considered unreasonable given the likely day-to-day variability in parking demand.</p>