

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 12 APRIL 2018
NORTH HINKSEY: B4044 WEST WAY – PROPOSED PUFFIN CROSSING

Report by Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Introduction

1. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation to introduce a new puffin crossing on the B4044 West Way to replace an existing staggered pelican crossing by the Elms Parade shopping centre.

Background

2. The above proposal has been put forward as part of a proposed redevelopment of Elms Parade shopping centre; a plan showing the proposal is provided at Annex 1.

Consultation

3. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 18 January and 16 February 2018. A public notice was placed in the Oxford Times newspaper and sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, the Vale of White Horse District Council, Oxford City Council, North Hinksey Parish Council and the local County Councillor. Street notices were also placed in the vicinity of the proposed puffin crossing and letters sent to approximately 40 adjacent properties.
4. Twenty-three responses were received during the course of the consultation. Ten objections (43%), seven in support (30%) and six neither objecting or supporting (26%). These responses are summarised at Annex 2. Copies of the full responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Response to objections and other comments

5. Thames Valley Police have not objected to the proposals.
6. County Councillor Judy Roberts supported the proposal with the proviso that the crossing operates as a 'straight through' crossing (as opposed to two separate crossings for the east and westbound traffic lanes), which is confirmed will be the case.
7. Councillor Roberts also expressed concerns over the comparatively narrow width of the footway on the north side of the road, especially taking account of

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the number of pedestrians at school journey times and the regular use of the footway by those using mobility scooters and buggies etc., noting also that at the location of the crossing planting in the adjacent gardens has been allowed to grow over the footway further narrowing its effective width. It is accepted that the footway between the Poplar Road and Elms Road junction is quite narrow (typically around 2.4 metres width) but it is not considered viable to widen this while also retaining the right turn lane provision to Poplar Road and the bus layby on the south side of the road. The overgrowth of vegetation from the adjacent gardens will, however, be investigated and the property owners requested to address this both to provide more space for pedestrians and to remove any risk of the signal heads being obscured.

8. A further concern raised by Councillor Roberts related to the speed of traffic, with a request being made for an advisory 20mph speed limit to apply at school journey times. Provision of such signing will be investigated subject to funding being identified.
9. North Hinksey Parish Council expressed neither support or objection to the proposal but raised similar concerns over the narrow width of the footway on the north side of the road and the overhanging vegetation and also queried the retention of the central island given that a 'straight through' crossing is to be provided, with the space gained being used to widen the footway on the north side. However, for the reasons given above it is not considered viable to do that.
10. Botley Primary School similarly expressed neither support or objection to the proposal with the proviso that the proposed provision is a 'straight through' crossing but also noted the broader concerns about the narrow width of the footway on the north side of the road.
11. The Vale of the White Horse District Council have not objected to the proposal.
12. Ten members of the public expressed objections to the proposal. The majority of those cited concerns about the narrow width of the footway on the north side of the road with additional concerns and observations including the potential additional traffic delays with a 'straight through' crossing due to the longer time traffic would be held on red to allow pedestrians to cross both the east and west bound traffic lanes, the proximity of the bus layby on the south side of the road, a concern that a toucan crossing should be provided to also cater for cyclists, traffic speeds in the vicinity and that the existing staggered layout was preferable and better catered for existing pedestrian crossing demands.
13. Six members of the public expressed support for the proposals with a further two expressing neither support or objection. However, most of those responding cited concerns about the width of the footway on the north side of the road, with concerns over the speed of traffic also being raised with some requesting that a 20mph speed limit be introduced.

14. In response to the additional matters being raised by members of the public, the impact of the crossing on traffic delays has been assessed, noting that crossings of this type are provided on appreciably busier roads with a similar width and that the design takes into account the proximity of the layby on the south side of the road. A toucan crossing is not considered appropriate at this location as such crossings are only provided where there is linking off carriageway cycle provision. That is not the case here.
15. The requests for a formal 20mph speed limit are noted and will be investigated as part of a wider project to improve this road.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

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

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

17. Funding for the proposed waiting restrictions has been provided from the developers of the Elms Parade shopping centre.

RECOMMENDATION

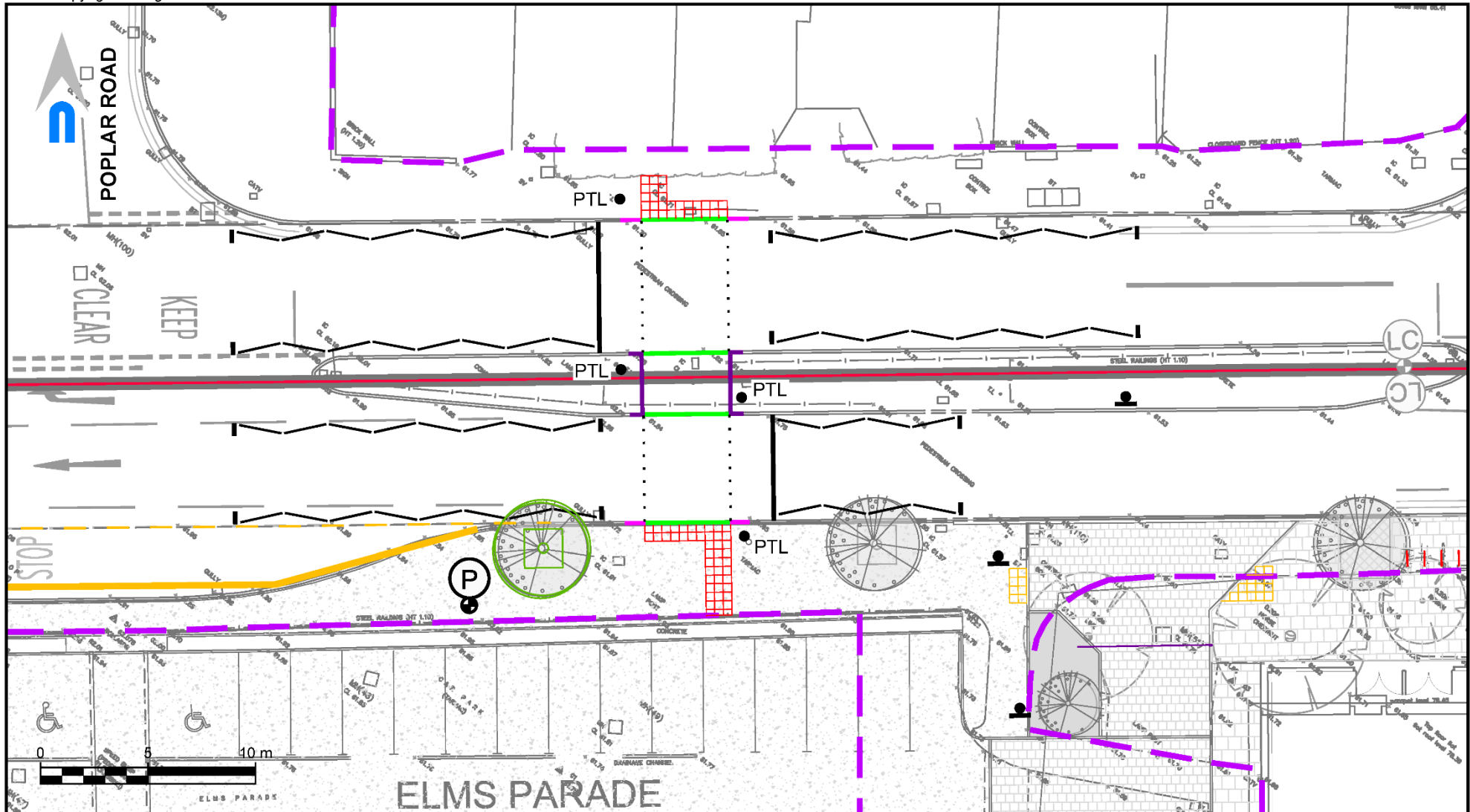
18. **The Cabinet Member for Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposal to introduce a new puffin crossing on the B4044 West Way to replace an existing staggered pelican crossing by the Elms Parade shopping centre as advertised.**

OWEN JENKINS
Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Background papers: Plan of proposed waiting restrictions
 Consultation responses

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April 2018



Client BOTLEY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY	Scale	1:250	Size	A4	Drawn	AS	Designed	DT										
	Project WEST WAY, BOTLEY, OXFORD	Drawing Status				Date												
		FOR INFORMATION				07.12.17												
Drawing title PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT TO SIGNALLED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING	Drawing No.				Rev.													
	SK153				-													
										Rev	Date	Description	Drn	Chk	App			

PLOT DATE: 07 December 2017 12:10:08

RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	No objection – no additional comments
(9) Cllr Judy Roberts, local member	Support - Overall this is a much needed replacement to the current sheep pen design but it must operate with both sides of the road stopped simultaneously so that it would be safe for children to run straight across as some will do. The pavement on the north side of West Way is too narrow. This pavement has to accommodate wheelchairs and mobility scooters; at peak times children spill into the road whilst waiting already. It would be beneficial if there was also a flashing school children speed restriction of 20 mph at the start and end of the school day. There is a plant placed in front of the PTL in the easterly direction, I think this is unwise as OCC highways maintenance budget is very small and it would be unsafe if the signal became obscured by plant growth in the future. As the County Councillor for this area I hope these concerns will be addressed.
(2) North Hinksey Parish Council	Neither - it is not possible for NHPC at this point in time to provide a detailed final response to the proposals, due to (a) the lack of clarification as to whether these proposals would be temporary or of a permanent nature, and (b) the lack of a legend for the proposed plans. However, Parish Councillors do wish to ensure that the following concerns are noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the height and overhanging from nearby hedges and the narrowness of the pavement at the crossing on the north side of West Way combining to cause problems for groups of people (particularly parents with schoolchildren and toddlers) gathered waiting to cross West Way, and also for other pedestrians wishing to pass them on the pavement, • queries as to whether the central reservation is to remain in place in the long term as indicated on these plans, as there appeared to be no benefit gained from retaining it given that this is intended as a single straight over crossing, whereas removing it could give more scope for widening the pavement.
(3) Vale of White Horse District Council	No objection – no additional comments
(4) Botley School	Neither - as the biggest user of the crossing, we have to ensure it is the best and safest option for all pedestrians. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We were pleased to see the “dog leg” central reservation removed from the plans as this was very hazardous at peak times, not adequate to safely contain the numbers crossing in one go at peak times. However, we do

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	<p>need to be reassured that the new crossing will allow all pedestrians time to cross the entire carriageway without needing to stop half way.</p> <p>2. We have had concerns about the tremendous speed the proximity of buses and taxi's using the bus lane to pedestrians, with huge potential for them being clipped by as vehicles speed passed impatiently, especially with the increase of queueing traffic on West Way. The pavement on the Elms Road side of the proposed crossing are very narrow, completely inadequate to safely accommodate the 450 children, their parents, with buggies, bikes and scooters, all arriving and leaving at the same time every day. We have already had one pupil knocked down at the current crossing, we do not want another.</p> <p>Myself and the Governors of Botley School need reassurance that the safety and wellbeing of pupils, their parents and staff will be at the centre of any decision-making process.</p>
(5) Local Resident, (unknown)	<p>Support - I remember using this crossing when I used to go to Primary School...! But I can see it would improve and speed crossing the road for the children and parents, plus make it safer because the green man will appear on the same side of road as you so will help children crossing the road, which can only be a good thing.</p>
(6) Local Resident, (Arthray Road, Botley)	<p>Support - I can understand why the crossing is being straightened. Hopefully it will mean that more people will actually use the crossing, as many people don't use the staggered part of the crossing and cross at either end of the current central section instead, which is dangerous especially when children are being taken this way. However - with a straight crossing it is essential that the traffic will stop in both directions at the same time and pedestrians given enough time to cross the full width of the road. Another key point, is that this is the perfect opportunity to widen the pavement on the side nearest Poplar Road; the pavement here is too narrow and already with the existing crossing, particularly at school pick up time, children are forced to stand right at the edge of the pavement with buses whizzing by, and people wanting not walk along the pavement can't easily get past the people waiting to cross. This is even more of a problem when people with mobility scooters, pushchairs and prams are added to the mix.</p>
(7) Local Resident, (unknown)	<p>Support – no comment</p>
(8) Local Resident, (unknown)	<p>Support - I agree with Cllr Hallett's two provisos; 1) that the pavement is too narrow for safety on the north side and 2) that a speed limit of 20mph should be enforced here to reduce the chances of serious collision.</p>
(10) Local Resident, (unknown)	<p>Object - The footpath on north side needs to be widened first, then a staggered crossing retained. It was made staggered for a reason, to stop children running across both lanes thinking the 2nd lane had stopped when in fact their lights were still on green. I think this was done following an accident in the 70's. If you stop both lanes together it will have to be for a longer period and this will cause unnecessary congestion.</p>

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(11) Local Resident, (Eynsham Road, Botley)	<p>Object - This is a very busy junction which needs to be carefully crafted. Currently the proposal doesn't allow room for the many school age children to wait before crossing the road. I propose the road is narrowed to slow traffic down - buses and cars all speed up when leaving Oxford which has caused many very serious crashes between vulnerable road users and motor vehicles.</p>
(12) Local Resident, (Sycamore Road, Botley)	<p>Object - As the local District Councillor and a parent of children at Botley school, I am fully supportive of the crossing being changed to one that goes straight across, without having to wait inside a 'pen' in the centre of the road. This will mean children only having to wait next to the traffic once, rather than twice when crossing, and increase visibility around the crossing. However I object to the design for this crossing because the pavement on the north side of West Way is too narrow, especially at busy times, like after school, there are dozens of children, students getting off the bus having returned from Bartholomew School and other people all waiting to cross, and also giving consideration to those using wheelchairs and mobility scooters etc.. They simply cannot fit on the pavement when the new crossing will be situated. The home owner just behind the crossing has a hedge which, when is due for a trim, restricts the space event further. It seems inefficient and short-sighted not to widen the pavement here whilst putting the new crossing in. The space between the two lanes of traffic could be reduced leaving room to widen the pavement. Or the road lay out could be adjusted in another way to ensure the pavement is wider at this point next to the crossing.</p> <p>The Liberal Democrat group on the Vale DC support my position outlined above and we would all like to see the pavement widened. I am happy to discuss over the phone or meet someone at the site to explain further my concerns and possible solutions.</p>
(13) Local Resident, (Eynsham Road, Botley)	<p>Object - The relocation of the pedestrian crossing is to allow the opening of an access to Church Way from West Way. This new access is limited to delivery vehicles to the centre making left-in turns only. I wish to make the following comments. <u>Location</u> - The location seems to be less suitable than the current location. It is close to the bus stop layby, and where the pavement narrows. This will reduce the available space for people waiting to cross. At the start and end of the school day, there are many parents, with small children, push chairs etc. I worry that there will be congestion and conflict between people at the bus stop and those waiting to cross. I worry that people may be too close to the edge of the pavement at the end of the lay by where the buses turn in. <u>Straight across</u> - The lights will be required to stop the traffic both ways, for the duration required for crossing the full width of the road, (rather than two phases to the central refuge as currently). This will create longer duration stops for the traffic, which may cause an issue at busy times. Traffic frequently backs up to the lights by Macdonald's.</p> <p><u>Trees</u> - Trees are proposed on the pavement, either side of the crossing, to replace those trees within the development site which have TPOs. This will reduce the useable width of the pavement, and may in the long term create problems</p>

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	with roots lifting the paving surface. They will also impede on the line of sight between the on-coming traffic and people on the pavement and the bus stop.
(14) Local Resident, (Crabtree Road, Botley)	Support - I think it would be a sensible idea to consider the width of the pavement on the Botley school/seacourt pub side of the road as it becomes very congested with school children during drop off & pick up. It is quite narrow with hedges encroaching.
(15) Local Resident, (unknown)	Object - I live next to this crossing and see no reason to change it. There have been accidents in the past but only because drivers have failed to stop at the lights or pedestrians haven't looked before crossing. The other Puffin crossings I've used are difficult as they don't give enough time to get across and also the signal to cross isn't easy to see. Lots of children and parents cross here during the school day and the staggered crossing means they are less likely to race out onto the road.
(16) Local Resident, (unknown)	Support - Please consider widening the pavement on the Elms Road side of the crossing. The pavement is currently too narrow for the volume of people (as well as pushchairs, mobility scooters and other wheeled items) that use it at school drop off and pick up times. I always ensure my son walks inside me, next to the hedge as I am terrified of the buses that whizz past very close to the pavement edge.
(17) Local Resident, (Stanley Close, Botley)	Object - The crossing design is not sufficient to safe guard children, parents and other pedestrians on the Elms Road side of West Way. This side should be made wider and OCC must enforce the home owners on this side to completely remove hedges which are faintly outlined on the plans. The overhang removes at least 70cm of pavement from the waiting area where other pedestrians need to go past. The traffic light posts themselves also take up space causing pedestrians to pass them on the road side when it is busy; again endangering all road and pavement users at these busy time. At 3:15-4:00 when it is very busy on the road and the crossing (pavement) buses fly past too fast and everyday narrowly missing people standing waiting for the lights to change. Buses should be forced to join the main traffic flow at this point and the pavement/waiting zone be widened.
(18) Local Resident, (Cumnor Rise Road, Oxford)	Object - the crossing is too close to the bus lay-by on the south side of West Way and there would be insufficient pavement space on either side of West Way to accommodate pedestrians waiting to cross. The proposed position would increase the danger to westbound cyclists. The lack of pavement space would be a major problem during school run times and rush hours more widely. On the south side, the proximity of the lay-by restricts space for those queuing to cross and other pedestrians would have to step into the roadway to get past. In addition, the submitted plan omits to show the large tree pits on either side of the crossing proposed in the developer's landscape scheme (P18/V0120/DIS, drwg 1085.01.004 Rev P1); these further restrict space. Also, long gaps between the Puffin crossing being on green, as might be expected on this strategic route, would increase the build-up of waiting pedestrians.
(19) Local Resident, (Haines Court, Marcham)	Neither - Whilst I agree to getting rid of the metal barriers, at least that stopped children from just rushing across the road. My main concern is the narrow pavement on the school side of the road. At school times there are several children (some with bikes and scooters) and adults (some with pushchairs and prams) crossing at the same time, as

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	<p>well as locals with mobility scooters. Those people not crossing have difficulty walking passed those waiting to cross especially where there are hedges from gardens overhanging the pavement. Although I know what a Puffin crossing is, does it give a loud sound when it is okay to cross the road? That is something lacking at the moment as partially sighted people don't know when it is safe to cross. I take and fetch my grandchild (soon to be two) to Botley Primary School and have found it very unsafe as it is at the moment in that the lights change all too quickly only allowing about 5 people to cross over before the lights change. Slow elderly people cannot be expected to rush across. I trust all these problems can be overcome if the crossing should change to a Puffin crossing and be moved nearer to Poplar Road.</p>
<p>(20) Local Resident, (Pinnocks Way)</p>	<p>Object - The plans will resolve nothing on the Elms Road side of the crossing. The crossing design is not sufficient to safe guard children, parents and other pedestrians on the Elms Road side of West Way. This side should be made wider and OCC must enforce the home owners to completely remove hedges which are faintly outlined on the plans. The overhang removes at least 70cm of pavement from the waiting area where other pedestrians need to go past. The traffic light posts themselves (PTL on the plan) also take up space causing pedestrians to pass them on the road side when it is busy; again endangering all road and pavement users at these busy times. Buses should be forced to join the main traffic flow at this point and the pavement/waiting zone be widened.</p>
<p>(21) Local Resident, (Sycamore Road, Oxford)</p>	<p>Neither - I have two main worries, First, this is the main crossing for pupils to get to school and back home again. At the rush hour, the pavement on the north side of West Way isn't wide enough to hold everyone safely. Crowds of people waiting to cross West Way mean others who are trying to pass by can sometimes be forced off the pavement into the street. There is no slack here; parents waiting on the pavement have been hit by bus mirrors. It's that close to traffic. Can the pavement be made wider, safer and more capacious here? Second, a 20mph limit would be helpful- HGVs, service vehicles, cars, cycles, pedestrians, parents pushing push chairs, wheelchair users and blind people are all sharing the road and pavement here. Plus this crosswalk is just as west bound buses reach the bus stop and pull in.</p>
<p>(22) Local Resident, (Montagu Road, Oxford)</p>	<p>Object - Whilst a puffin crossing may be an improvement from the existing pelican crossing; I would've expected a justification as to why a toucan crossing is not appropriate here to accompany the plans. This is an important crossing to school, between primarily shopping areas and residential areas of the Botley settlement. As such you should be planning for routes for all sustainable transport modes first. It is reasonable to expect large numbers of children to wish to cross the road here on bikes for example.</p>
<p>(23) Local Resident, (Hurst Rise, Botley)</p>	<p>Object - The majority of users of the crossing approach from the south side (Elms Rise), crossing the road to reach the GP surgery and primary school in Elms Road. For them the crossing is in the right place. But there is also a steady flow of pedestrians from the north side (Poplar, Hazel and Seacourt Roads), crossing the road to reach the shops. These include the residents of the older people's bungalows at the end of Seacourt Road, many of whom are slow walkers or in motorised wheel chairs. The traffic lights at the junction with Westminster Way mean that traffic coming from the City generally approaches the crossing at lowish speed whereas on the other side of the road traffic has had a steady run from Cumnor Hill and approaches faster. Could this make it harder to judge whether it's safe to cross when</p>

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	<p>the lights are about to change? A broad line painted back from the kerb and extended railings along the pavement should help, along with strongly reinforced road safety training and adult vigilance. Would it not be better to wait and see what all the claims on the West Way s106 amount to, esp re cycling safety and the probable need for a residents' parking scheme? We already have a pedestrian crossing, even if imperfect. On busy roads in the City pavements have been widened to overcome the danger of bunched up pedestrians balancing on the kerb waiting to cross the road. On the north side of West Way high hedges in the gardens to the west of the bus stop make it difficult for pedestrians to see oncoming traffic. A 20mph speed limit would be helpful and this would be an appropriate time for this to be introduced.</p>
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