

Submission re Item 5 Highfield/Old Road traffic scheme

Old Road

Intelligent traffic signal improvements are welcome as are the Toucan crossings

Residents generally support the Old Road scheme with one exception – the zebra crossing

- Responses were 3 in favour, 4 against, including TVP (p103)
- A number of residents have safety concerns about egress from their driveways which are adjacent to the proposed crossing in Old Road
- Given that there are few positive responses and that there is another fairly new crossing nearby, should this be pended for review on the grounds that the case for it has not been demonstrated, and that other proposed changes may obviate the need for this?
- If a good case can be made for the crossing, it could be incorporated within s106 agreements with the University in existing pre-app discussions as they plan to move more of their staff into the Old Road campus development
- I propose that the money saved should be used to augment the funding of improvements in the Highfield area which have been under discussion for a very long time, and specifically for the reduction in traffic speed in its residential streets which supports the county's overall transport strategy by creating improved conditions for pedestrians and cyclists

Highfield Area

The document sets out the recent consultations, but discussions on this have been on-going for twelve years in conjunction with Highfield Residents' Association

Windmill Road residents were not invited to take part in the second consultation but believe the case for improvements in traffic speed and volume through their area, coupled with accident data, is overwhelming

The response rate to the second consultation was 5.8% in contrast to the response rate of 18.7% to the previous controversial consultation, and I note the frequency with which the new scheme is labelled "watered down" by those who did respond to it. Many residents I have spoken to were so disappointed with the current proposals that they chose not to send in any comments at all as they felt the scheme no longer addressed their needs and that their voices have not been listened to.

- Residents in the Highfield area of Headington Ward have demonstrated a need for significant reduction in traffic speed through their area, and this has been borne out in the consultation
- A number of responses in this report have signalled the need for low cost

improvements that they think would help reduce traffic speed: these include painting the speed limit in large letters across the road surface, and by putting up notices at road entries to tell drivers they are entering a residential area

- The report notes that more people liked rather than disliked the pinch points along Lime Walk (p48 refers) yet these have been dropped from the scheme, presumably in response to funding pressures (para 14, p 41).
- Table 2 on page 51 of the report shows that there was greater support and less opposition for pinch points than there was for gateways; I would ask the Cabinet Member to give this further consideration, especially as there are repeated responses from the officers throughout Annex 6 to concerns raised by residents about safety issues and accidents re gateways – if 15% respondents think this is an issue, then I would respectfully suggest that they may have a point!
- At the open meeting of the Highfield Residents' Association, there was overwhelming support for traffic calming measures half way down the straight stretches of road in Lime Walk, i.e. half way between the All Saints/Lime Walk raised table junction and the Old Road/Lime Walk junction, and half way between the All Saints/Lime Walk raised table junction and the London Road/Lime Walk junction

Summary

I recognise that the County Council is obliged to reduce expenditure in the current economic situation we have been left with, and that it needs to prioritise several major projects in Oxford, namely Frideswide Square and the expansion of the Thornhill Park and Ride in order to address its objectives under the current LTP.

I note also that the improvements proposed by the Highfield scheme will not cost much more than £70K, around half of the sum that has been discussed previously with HRA with regard to the provision of an effective traffic management scheme.

In view of the demonstrated response from residents in Highfield that their no. 1 priority is the reduction of traffic speed, I would respectfully suggest the following:

1. That the Cabinet Member gives further consideration to dropping the idea of a zebra crossing near the existing one; if needed, then funding for this could be negotiated with the University as part of the ongoing pre-app discussions over developments at the Old Road Campus which will accommodate an increase in University employees
2. That the Cabinet Member considers viring the sum allocated for the zebra crossing in the Old Road scheme to the Highfield Scheme for further improvements to reduce traffic speed

3. That the Cabinet Member investigates the reason why the option for pinch points on Lime Walk was dropped, in view of the greater support given to this option than to the raised entry treatments, and to consider whether these could still be funded if the zebra crossing option is dropped or extra money can be found
4. That the Cabinet Member considers whether 20 mph markings can be painted on the road surface at entry points to the Highfield residential areas and that these road marking can be maintained by County Highways or by local residents
5. That the Cabinet Member considers whether signage can be erected at entry points to residential roads to inform drivers that they are entering a residential area
6. That the Cabinet Member considers whether staggered parking arrangements can be made (at relatively low cost) in Latimer Road and adjacent roads where possible as this too would address the need for speed reduction that has been demonstrated so clearly

Finally, I would ask the Cabinet Member if he could advise Highfield residents on sources of funding for which they could apply for 'softer' traffic calming measures similar to those introduced in Beech Croft Road, and alluded to by the author of the report in note 8 on p57.

Ruth Wilkinson
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21 March 2011