

Division(s) affected: *Bicester South*

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

17 JULY 2025

PROPOSED PARALLEL (PEDESTRIAN & PEDAL CYCLE) CROSSING – BLACKTHORN ROAD, AMBROSDEN

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) **Approve the introduction of a Parallel Crossing on Blackthorn Road in Ambrosden, as advertised.**

Executive Summary

1. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation on proposals to introduce a Parallel Crossing (combined pedestrian & cycle crossing) on Blackthorn Road approx. 55 metres east of its junction with Ploughley Road in Ambrosden, as shown in **Annex 2**.
2. The crossing will consist of a zebra crossing for pedestrian use only, with an adjacent parallel priority cycleway for pedal-cyclists.

Sustainability Implications

3. The proposals have been put forward to help improve road safety for more vulnerable road-users, and encourage journeys made by walking, wheeling and cycling.

Financial Implications

4. Funding for consultation on the proposals (and implementation if approved) has been provided by the developer.

Legal Implications

5. The consultation that has been undertaken complies with the consultation requirements for the various elements as required by law including under the Highways Act 1980, the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and any other relevant legislation.
6. The scheme has been promoted by Oxfordshire County Council as the Highway Authority and Traffic Authority under the Highways Act 1980, and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

Comments checked by:

Jennifer Crouch (Head of Law - Environmental)

Jennifer.Crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Equalities and Inclusion Implications

7. No negative implications in respect of equalities or inclusion have been identified in respect of these proposals.

Formal Consultation

8. Formal consultation was carried out between 10 April and 09 May 2025. A notice was published in the Bicester Advertiser newspaper, and an email was sent to statutory consultees & key-stakeholders, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Bus operators, countywide transport/access & disabled peoples user groups, Cherwell District Council, local District Cllrs, Ambrosden Parish Council, and the local County Councillor representing the then (since changed following 'Electoral Review 2023-25') Otmoor division.
9. Letters were sent directly to approximately 230 properties in the immediate vicinity, and public notices were also displayed on site adjacent to the proposals.
10. 24 responses were received via the online consultation survey during the course of the formal consultation, comprising of: four objections (17%), two partially supporting (8%), and 18 in support (75%).
11. Additionally, a further four emails were received directly – with Thames Valley Police not objecting, Ambrosden Parish Council supporting, one local resident objecting, and one offering their support.
12. The full responses are shown in **Annex 2**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors. Any comments received that Officers identify as containing personal abuse and/or other personal information will be redacted as appropriate.

Officer Response to Objections/Concerns

13. The funding (and implementation – if approved) of the proposals is being provided by the developer as part of the local planning obligations for the development north of Blackthorn Road. The parallel crossing adjoins a proposed shared footway and cycleway along the extent of Blackthorn Road to the proposed development by Mulberry Homes (from the Ploughly Road junction).
14. The location of the parallel crossing has been considered in line with pedestrian desire lines. The scheme (if approved) will follow Road Safety Audit procedures (in accordance with GG119) – and Officers note that there several responses in support.
15. The proposed widths will be in accordance with TSRGD, and the route is not anticipated to have large enough pedestrian flow rates to require the use of maximum crossing widths.
16. If approved, vegetation would be cut back as part of the works.
17. The objections relating to 20mph are concerned with potential lack of enforcement resulting in there being little point in reducing the limit. This however falls under the management of Thames Valley Police (who did not object), and will be determined by their day-to-day operational priorities.
18. The distribution of funds for employment to the school, and implementation of street lightings outside of Ambrosden (towards Bicester) is outside of the scope of this consultation.

Paul Fermer
Director of Environment and Highways

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| Annexes | Annex 1: Location plan Annex 2: Consultation plan Annex 3: Consultation responses |
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| Contact Officers: | Chloe Kirby (Senior Engineer – Regulatory Planning Enforcement) Julian Richardson (Lead Engineer – Regulatory Planning Enforcement) |
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July 2025

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1. DO NOT SCALE THIS DRAWING AND EXISTING WORKS
2. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL RELEVANT ARCHITECTS, PLANNERS AND SPECIALISTS DRAWINGS AND SPECIFICATIONS
3. ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETRES UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE. ALL LEVELS IN METRES UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
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5. THIS DRAWING IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING EXISTING INFORMATION:
TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY
AUGUST 2024 DATED 20/08/2024

KEY

- 1. 1:1000 1:1000 1:1000 1:1000 SITE BOUNDARY
- 2. 1:1000 1:1000 1:1000 1:1000 SITE BOUNDARY

THIS DRAWING IS SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND IS NOT TO BE USED FOR CONSTRUCTION UNTIL NOTED OTHERWISE

ALL SECTION 278 WORKS AND MATERIALS TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HIGHWAY AGENCY SPECIFICATION FOR HIGHWAYS

ALL WORKS ARE TO BE COMPLETED IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIGHWAYS ENGLAND SPECIFICATION

| SAFEC | 20/01/24 | UPDATED TO OXFCO COMMUNITIES | MM | MM |
|-------|----------|------------------------------|-------|---------|
| SAFEC | 20/01/24 | ISSUED FOR APPROVAL | MM | MM |
| SAFEC | 20/01/24 | ISSUED FOR INFORMATION | MM | MM |
| Task | Date | Revision Description | Drawn | Checked |

Client

MULBERRY HOMES

Project Title

AMBROSODEN, BICESTER

Description

S278 LOCATION PLAN

Revision

Stage 4 - Technical Design

| JPL No. | MLL0208 | Scale | 1:2000 @ A1 | Date | JUN 2024 |
|---------|---------|-------|-------------|------|----------|
| Project | Orig | Rev | Level | Type | Rev |
| 002836 | JPL | ZZ | ZZ | D | H 2300 |
| | | | | S4 | P03 |



CON RISK REGISTER

EXISTING GROUND / CROSS SITE SERVICES
LOCAL DRAINAGE AND WASTEWATER ALL EXISTING GROUND / CROSS SITE SERVICES PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF ANY WORKS

CLOSE PROXIMITY OF OVERHEAD CABLES
ALL NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS TO BE TAKEN TO AVOID INCIDENTS WHEN CHANGING

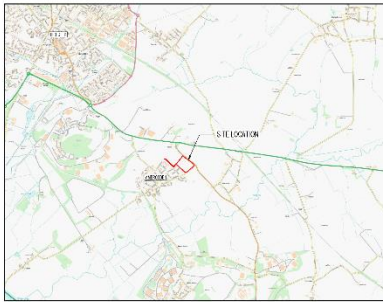
CLOSE PROXIMITY OF TREES AND BUILDINGS
ALL NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS TO BE TAKEN TO AVOID INCIDENTS WHEN CHANGING

CONTAMINATED GROUND CONDITIONS
ALL CONSTRUCTION WORKERS TO HAVE APPROPRIATE PPE AND WASHDOWN FACILITIES PROVIDED

ADJACENT HIGHWAY
CLOSE PROXIMITY OF HIGHWAY APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO BE IMPLEMENTED FOR SAFE ACCESS AND EGRESS ON SITE

EXISTING WATERCOURSE
CONTRACTOR TO ENSURE CONTAMINANTS DO NOT ENTER THE EXISTING WATERCOURSE AND TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS TO BE TAKEN IN CASE OF POLLUTION INCIDENT ALL CONSTRUCTION WORKERS TO HAVE APPROPRIATE PPE AND WASHDOWN

NEARBY LINE SCHOOL
CONTRACTOR TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS TO THE CONSTRUCTION AREA AND ANY OPEN excavations



EXTENDED LOCATION PLAN



1. DO NOT SCALE THIS DRAWING. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL VERIFY ALL DIMENSIONS AND EXISTING CONDITIONS ON SITE PRIOR TO COMMENCING THE WORKS.
2. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL RELEVANT ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS AND SPECIALISTS DRAWINGS AND SPECIFICATIONS.
3. ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETRES UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE. ALL LEVELS IN METRES UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
4. ANY DISCREPANCIES NOTED ON SITE ARE TO BE REPORTED TO THE ENGINEER IMMEDIATELY.

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|--------|----------|----------------------|-------|--------|
| S4-P01 | 13.12.24 | ISSUED FOR APPROVAL | MWh | MPW |
| Rev. | Date | Revision Description | Drawn | Auth'd |
| Client | | | | |

MULBERRY HOMES

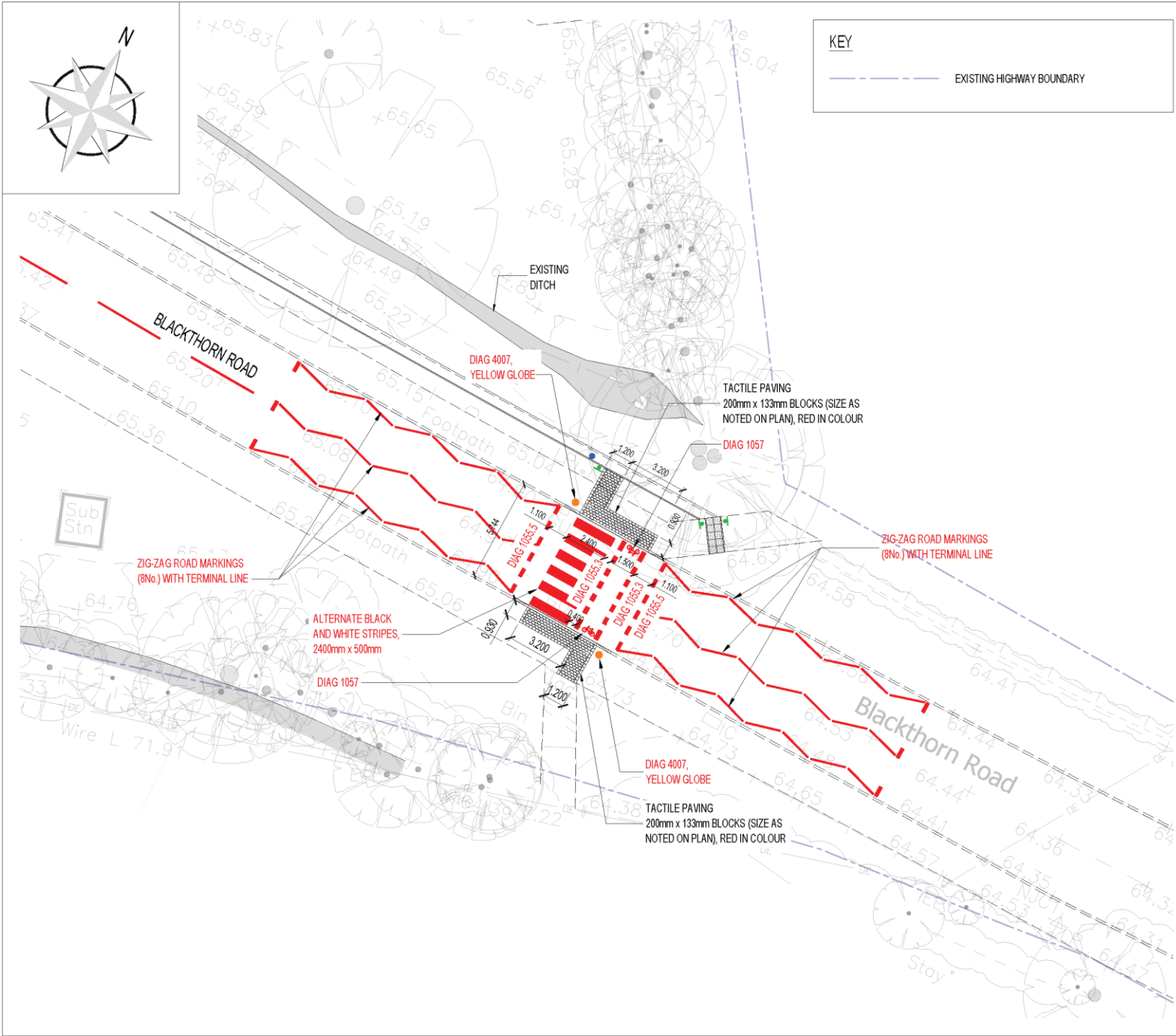
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| Project Title |
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AMBROSDEN,
BICESTER

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| Description |
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S278
TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER LAYOUT

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|----------------------------|-------|-------|--------------------|------|-------|-----------------|--------|----------|
| RIBA Stage | | | | | | | | |
| Stage 4 - Technical Design | | | | | | | | |
| JPL Ref. - MUL02836 | | | Scale - 1:200 @ A3 | | | Date - DEC 2024 | | |
| Project | Orig. | Func. | Splt. | Form | Disc. | Number | Status | Revision |
| MUL02836 | JPL | ZZ | ZZ | D | H | 2401 | S4 | P01 |



A. Email responses:

| RESPONDENT | COMMENTS |
|---|--|
| (e1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police) | No objection |
| (e2) Ambrosden Parish Council | <p>Support – The Parish Council considered the consultation for the Blackthorn Road crossing at the April meeting and supported the proposal. However, the comments don't really fit into the consultation questionnaire, so I hope you don't mind me responding here. The comments were that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the speed limit for the Blackthorn road would need adjustment; - a barrier on the pavement at the junction with Blackthorn Road and Ploughley Road would encourage the use of the crossing; - is the Blackthorn Road pavement designated as a cycle path?; - is the pavement / footway was suitable or wide enough for cyclists? |
| (e3) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Springfield Farm Estate) | <p>Object – I would not be in favour of this project as I feel it is unnecessary for the local area and on face value looks like another vanity project for the village and a waste of funds.</p> <p>The project notes makes reference to encouraging journeys on foot and by cycle but I fail to see how a zebra crossing achieves that in a village like Ambrosden.</p> <p>The village does have busy spells around school pick up and drop off times but other wise traffic is light and persons and bikes move freely around the village without the need to wait ages to cross a road. If highways wanted to encourage cycle journeys and ones on foot they should consider keeping street lights on and also installing some on the stretch of road outside Ambrosden towards Bicester. This is somewhat unsafe to ride a bike down or walk as a lone person because you can't see a thing. Lighting might well encourage those to walk or cycle to Bicester if they could see where they were going.</p> |

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| | <p>The location of this zebra crossing is outside of the school which appears to be why it's being proposed although the application does not state this. Whilst I see merit in this, this would only be for an hour a day at maximum. Otherwise the crossing is redundant and will never be in use. We are therefore looking at spending thousands on a crossing that 99% of in the day and indeed the year, will not be in use.</p> <p>Currently children cross safely with parents and there is slow moving traffic around there anyway due to who is using the roads. These are mainly parents making use of the car park to drop children. Parents who live outside of Ambrosden. The other point worth noting is that a crossing here could prove dangerous due to a knock on effect towards the main ploughley road. A combination of the pelican crossing on the ploughley road and the zebra crossing could, around peak times could create a bottle neck making it dangerous to road users. Keeping the traffic flowing in a safe manor is far more beneficial to everyone involved.</p> <p>Would a more suitable solution be to use funds to let the school use a lollipop man/lady to help children cross the road there. This would not need to be a permanent staff member but one already employed by the school on a rota basis. Langford village school a couple of miles away uses a lollipop lady outside and it works perfectly.</p> <p>Lastly, it's worth noting that the implementation of 20mph across Ambrosden has been a disaster as with most of the county. We have horrible signs poking out everywhere, signs that contradict flashing speed warnings and speed signs installed under the MOD. We are a small village and across it now we have 4 speed limits! It is poor planning with no common sense being displayed. We do not need more ill thought out traffic infrastructure in a small village. It would be nice to keep its rural feel.</p> <p>I hope that responses against planning are considered professionally and not looked down upon like what happened in a recent Bicester consultation on 20mph limits.</p> |
| (e4) Local resident, (Ambrosden) | <p>Support – I believe this would be a great addition to the village and I know the parish council had already discussed this with one of the developers due to build further down Blackthorn Road. This would greatly improve the road safety near the school and have the following comments to make.</p> <p>1) I would suggest that, to improve road safety on this road, the speed limit of 40mph on this road (a bit further up from this crossing) should be reduced to 30mph. This is to ensure drivers are ready to reduce their speed to 20mph where this becomes the limit. It would also reduce the impact on the junctions further along the road, especially with two new developments still to be built.</p> |

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| | <p>2) I would ask that an inspection takes place to ensure the path along Blackthorn Road and Ploughley Road is wide enough to cater for pedestrians and cyclist at the same time, and also to check that the paths along these roads are in good enough condition for cyclists, as well as pedestrians to use. Considering many primary school aged children will often have younger siblings, there may be lots of prams and push chairs along this path at the same time.</p> <p>3) I would ask if consideration could be given to the use of barriers to prevent pedestrians and cyclists walking or cycling straight across Blackthorn Road when they reach the junction, encouraging them instead to walk the few feet down to the crossing.</p> <p>4) I would also ask that OCC consider reinstating the left-turn from the A41 onto Ploughley Road. This would reduce the amount of traffic which would need to drive along Blackthorn Road to get to Ploughley Road, potentially heading back towards the A41 to access Willow Road, East and West Hawthorn Roads, Briar Furlong and the potential development for 120 houses on the outskirts of the village. Any traffic coming into the village from the Aylesbury direction currently has to turn right into Blackthorn Road, right into Ploughley Road (and past the school), then right into most of the roads named above. This causes lots of traffic crossing other lanes and, as we know, this traffic will only increase with the addition of another 250 homes in the village. Not to mention the addition homes yet to be built at Graven Hill and Wretchwick Green</p> |
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B. Online responses:

| RESPONDENT | COMMENTS |
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| (o1) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Springfields) | Object – The road is already 20mph and there is pedestrian crossing lights across the road. The hedgerow needs massively cutting back. |
| (o2) Local resident, (Ambrosden, West Hawthorn Road) | Object – No-one polices the crossings we have. On numerous occasions cars are, either travelling too fast to stop or think 20mph is a joke. Unfortunately needs a fatality to make Police act. |
| (o3) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Poppy Close) | <p>Object – Completely unnecessary. The village already has 20mph placed throughout in a unthought out way it does not need more road changes.</p> <p>Parents and children already safely cross the road here. I have been doing so with my children for the past 3 years. The proposal references cycle access. There is little to no cycle traffic here and certainly no argument for it crossing the road. Any cycle traffic is usually road bikers at the weekend who are cycling through so do not need a crossing. The proposed place in my opinion is also too close to the ploughly road but I would object to this unnecessary project. Lastly this just looks like another vanity project to appease a select few. Focus should be diverted to improving the roads so they are suitable to drive on as a cyclist, car and motorbike. A lot of roads in the surrounding area put road users at risk of accidents because of their neglect from authorities.</p> |
| (o4) Member of public, (Oxford, Sunderland Avenue) | Object – The consultation plan shows TSRGD 1055.3 with a width of 1.5m; the minimum width prescribed by TSRGD. However, why not be a bit more ambitious and go for the maximum widths allowed by TSRGD: 5m for the cycle crossing and 10m for the pedestrian crossing? TSRGD 1001.5. |
| (o5) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Park Rise) | Partially support – there are a lot of children that cross that road to and from school it needs a crossing |

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| (o6) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Merton Road) | Partially support – Crossing is a good idea but concerned that it's too close to the junction, moving it slightly up the road away from the junction would be safer. |
| (o7) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Chapel Drive) | Support – This is required to make the access to the school safer. I would wish to see a traffic table to slow traffic further |
| (o8) Local resident, (Ambrosden, East hawthorn Road) | Support – Many vehicles ignore the speed limit on that road, hopefully a crossing may slow them down |
| (o9) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Honeysuckle Way) | Support – I feel that a crossing at this point would be really beneficial given the proximity to the school, my only concern would be given the speed that some cars travel along this road would a traffic light controlled crossing be better and safer for all users as this would force cars to stop and give way, as witnessed on other zebra crossings some cars do not stop as needed |
| (o10) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Lavender Road) | Support – It's a very busy road with a 20mph limit but not respected. Most times walking to school the 30mph (should also be changed to the new limit) lights up for the offending drivers. There's poor visibility and always a task to cross the road to the school where most parents walk to drop/pick up the kids |
| (o11) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Marsh Road) | Support – Safety for school children |
| (o12) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Poppy Close) | Support – I think it is a good idea to increase safety on Blackthorn Road. Many drivers ignore the 20mph speed limit (and even appear to be exceeding 30mph) so any measures to slow them down, especially near the school, will improve the safety of our village. |
| (o13) Local resident, (Ambrosden, West Hawthorn Road) | Support – Any proposals to improve road safety in the village are most welcome |

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| (o14) Local resident, (Ambrosden, West Hawthorn Road) | <p>Support – Safe crossing for children right by the school.</p> <p>Make it a raised kerb crossing, like Long Crendon, as motorists arrive at the crossing from a blind corner (from Blackthorn) and from a junction (from Ambrosden), so there focus and attention is not completely on the crossing, but a raised kerb will remind motorists to be mindful and slow down prematurely anyway for the raised kerb, regardless of use or not by young children.</p> |
| (o15) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Ash Lane) | <p>Support – There are no safe places for children to cross at the moment. Cars still exceed the speed limit as it is. It's very dangerous to cross for anyone. I would welcome this.</p> |
| (o16) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Bluebell Road) | <p>Support – Despite the 20mph limit, traffic along Bblackthorn Road is still fast and this presents a danger especially to those crossing to the school</p> |
| (o17) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Chapel Drive) | <p>Support – For safety of parents and children at school times but for all residents at other times.</p> |
| (o18) Local resident, (Ambrosden, East Hawthorn Road) | <p>Support – Creating a safer place to cross the road.</p> |
| (o19) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Merton Road) | <p>Support – The crossing would enable a safe crossing particularly for children and families on a daily basis needing to access the school, and also to be able then cross further along ploughley road for bus stops and shops</p> |
| (o20) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Oak Lane) | <p>Support – Anything that makes a road safer for all users to cross is welcomed.</p> |
| (o21) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Ploughley) | <p>Support – For the safety of the children crossing to get to the primary school, older children and adults to cross for bus stops and bus services to secondary schools. Although the speed limit drops towards the junction to a 20 not all drivers follow this m. A crossing will help to reduce the speed and make driver more aware.</p> |

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| <p>(o22) Local resident, (Ambrosden, Springfields)</p> | <p>Support – This crossing is vital to the village to prevent a future accident. The village has grown hugely and still is. Children from the primary school and secondary school buses all have to cross here if they live on the Springfields or Blackthorn Meadows developments and we have at least two further developments with approval further along Blackthorn Road. With no school bus to the primary school, this is a key crossing for the children walking and cycling from Arncott. Despite the 20mph speed limit vehicles still fly around the bend into the village and they don't realise there is a school there until it's too late.</p> <p>The children need this crossing as much as the one across Ploughley road is needed. It is about time something is done here.</p> |
| <p>(o23) Local resident, (Bicester, Charlotte Avenue)</p> | <p>Support – Fully support efforts to make walking and cycling better. The details of this scheme are not clear. The weakness is likely that it connects to poor infrastructure on either side of the crossing which needs to be improved also.</p> |
| <p>(o24) Local resident, (Merton, Main Road)</p> | <p>Support – Safety of children and local people when crossing the road</p> |