

Road Safety Works in Adderbury – The Next Phase

The next set of road safety improvements for Adderbury is moving a step closer. Responses showed overwhelming support for the proposals outlined in the statutory consultation carried out by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Highways. Proposals were submitted for final OCC approval, which was granted by the Cabinet Member for the Environment on the 21st January. Designs will now be finalised, and a contractor procured and mobilised, with the aim of commencing work on site in late March.

The proposals are to install chicanes on the Berry Hill Road (BHR) and Milton Road (MR) approaches to the village, with adjustments to buffer zones to increase compliance with existing speed limits. Also proposed are some restrictions to parking near the school, to improve safety for residents and those on the school run. Taking a collaborative approach, the 'bell mouth' entrance to the community facilities will be also installed concurrently, reducing overall cost and subsequent disruption.

The road safety works have been commissioned by Adderbury Parish Council (APC), are jointly funded by APC and OCC, and will be procured and managed by OCC. Consultation feedback indicated a range of views on some aspects, so some quick explanations are offered below, particularly for those who haven't been close to the development of these proposals over the last two years.

Works to Berry Hill Road & Milton Road

Consultation Feedback

A very rough summary of the consultation feedback for the BHR and MR works is that there were 58 responses, of which 37 were expressly supportive, with 13 more raising concerns because the proposals didn't go far enough. 3 had no opinion on this part, and only 3 were strongly against – believing this to be a waste of time or counter-productive. In a couple of cases it was difficult to be sure of a clear view. So, with approximately 50 in favour and 3 against, the support for these works (or these works plus more) was over 90% - a very strong endorsement.

An interesting aspect that arose in the consultations was that of farm machinery. Designs have therefore been adjusted to make it easier for heavy machinery to pass through the chicanes – including combine harvesters. Some respondents suggested that heavy vehicles could have alternative routes to bypass BHR and MR if needed, and also that some of the increases in traffic levels were due to the new housing which had been facilitated by conversion of rural sites by developers.

Adjustments to Speed Limits

Buffer zones are an established means of reducing traffic speeds – adding a short stretch of 50mph or 40mph to give a staged transition from 60mph to 30mph. No buffer zone exists on MR, so one has been proposed – located to encompass the Ball Colegrave entrance, with the 30mph start adjusted slightly to maximise visibility & safety for those exiting the future sports and community facilities.

The proposal to extend the Oxford Road 40mph buffer zone a short stretch onto BHR is to improve visibility and thus increase compliance. The current signage immediately at the junction could easily be missed by those focussing on turning through traffic. By moving signs back from the junction a

short distance, motorists are much more likely to see them. The precise location was proposed by OCC Highways to maximise visibility, impact and compliance: relocating the speed change and also the gates to the chicanes, and siting them all under the first streetlamp. This has the added advantage of being at a point where housing is visible – compliance is more likely where motorists can see signage *and* a reason for it, as opposed to e.g. where there are fields on both sides.

One resident raised a valid concern about an increase to 40mph where no footway exists. In mitigation, traffic in both directions should be travelling well within the speed limit in such close proximity to the junction. There is also a wide verge on the eastbound side which many pedestrians already use. A future priority should be a footway here that would also be accessible to prams and wheelchair users.

Future Works

Noting the 13 responses that felt we should go further, it is important to clarify that the current works are just the latest phase and don't inhibit additional work in the future. Suggestions included a pedestrian crossing on Milton Road, a footway on Berry Hill Road, and further chicaning along both roads. The APC Environment Committee report from 2019 highlights most of these as options for future possible works –time and funds permitting. We note that volunteer resource from within the village to develop and commission proposals is a limiting factor.

Some suggestions such as 20mph zones are not feasible for the primary roads into the village – not least because the wide verges mean that they don't meet the required physical parameters. Other types of longitudinal narrowing and 'channelling' (as on Croughton Road in Aynho) would work well for BHR and MR, and OCC have agreed that as a first step towards that, they won't refresh the centreline markings. This will have some positives, regardless of further steps.

There have been proposals for further housing development along BHR and MR, but as most of these are outside the agreed settlement boundary it is uncertain whether or not these will ever be built. The current road safety proposals should be compatible with future developments, with any changes or additional measures dependent on location, and associated costs borne by developers.

Parking Restrictions on The Rise

Feedback on the parking restrictions near the school was much more limited, but what was received endorsed the proposals. There was a suggestion from one of the residents most affected by the proposals: to apply the parking restrictions, but only at school start and finish times. Proposals have therefore been adjusted to accommodate this very sensible amendment.

Thanks

Adderbury Parish Council Environment Committee would like to thank residents, businesses and Thames Valley Police for their strong support, and Oxfordshire County Council as 'owners' of the roads for improving, designing and implementing our proposals. We look forward to completing this next stage in improving safety for all of us.