**Traffic Group**

Notes of the meeting of the Traffic Group held on Thursday 1st November 2018 at 8.00p.m. in the Community Office, Old School Place.

Present: Tom Bindoff, David Cotterell, Terry Jackson, Vivien Martin, Richard Sibly, Jim Simmie, Sally Stewart. Gill Bindoff (notes)

The meeting was held to give an update on the Neighbourhood Plan and the proposed edge road, to re-visit proposals in the Watlington Traffic Management Plan and consider traffic mitigation measures included in the planning application for Site A (the site between Britwell Road and Cuxham Road, known locally as the Pig Field.)

**Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Board:**

1. Watlington Parish Council (WPC) has made new arrangements for the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan. The NP Forum and Coordination Group which developed the Plan up to the Referendum and adoption by SODC have been replaced by an Advisory Board. Unlike the Coordination Group, the Advisory Board includes community volunteers and WPC members.
2. In addition, members of the Coordination Group have been co-opted onto the WPC Planning Committee and Strategy Committee. This new structure is intended to enable the Plan to become integrated into WPC strategic planning policies and practice.
3. The working groups established by the Forum – including the Traffic Group - will now link with the Advisory Board but will otherwise continue as before.

**New signs on M40 at Junction 6:**

1. The WatNEXT group of local residents initiated the idea of signs at the motorway junction in 2014 and Peter Richardson has been in contact with Highways England since then trying to get suitable signs installed. The signs are intended to warn drivers of the weight restriction at Watlington and serve as a disincentive for HGVs to use the B4009 as a through route. The new signage has just been installed. It is hoped that they will be supported by enforcement by Thames Valley Police and OCC Trading Standards officers.

**Watlington Neighbourhood Plan:**

1. The Plan has now been adopted by SODC and is part of the local development plan. It has already been used to determine planning applications in the parish.
2. The Watlington Traffic Management Plan (TMP) is one of the documents produced as part of the Plan but it does not have any statutory weight – it is not regarded by SODC as a ‘Supplementary Planning Document’. It does, however, have significance and should provide the reference point for all traffic proposals in Watlington whether they are put forward by SODC, OCC or developers.

**The Edge Road:**

1. Progress is being made towards the provision of the edge road. There have been ongoing meetings between the developers, OCC and Homes England and SODC is taking a strategic approach to planning applications along the route of the new road. The delivery and funding for the road are being actively progressed but final decisions have yet to be made. OCC is preparing a business plan to bid for Growth Board funding for the sections of the edge road which will not be funded by developers. The Parish Council’s aim is to achieve construction of the road before housing development begins. OCC is looking at reaching legal agreements with the developers via S106 Agreements and the possible use of ‘Grampian Conditions’ which would require the road to be completed by the time that a fixed number of new homes have been constructed.
2. It is still possible that funding could be available from Homes England. The SODC decision about including Chalgrove Airfield as a strategic site in the Local Plan will be made in December. Homes England have stated that funding is available for the Watlington Edge Road if development of the airfield goes ahead.
3. There was some discussion about the nature of the edge road. As it will serve new development as well as taking some through traffic it could be planned as a ‘bypass’. However, that has not been the basis of the discussions with developers, SODC or OCC. Development of the sites allocated in the NP would be difficult if all new homes have to be on the town side of the road. However, some concerns remain within the Group about proposals to build new homes on either side of the road leading to through traffic travelling through the developments and possibly generating congestion and air pollution.
4. The existing 7.5t weight limit in the Watlington area will apply to the new road so there should be no HGVs using it as a through route. It should be used for required access only.
5. Design criteria have been agreed with OCC and form part of the planning application on Site A. These include a carriageway width of 6.75m with a minimum distance from the carriageway to the new homes of at least 10m. Verges and a 3m shared footpath/cycleway will be provided. There will be no driveway access directly onto the road.

**Traffic mitigation proposals:**

1. Proposals are coming forward from developers for schemes to mitigate the impact of the traffic generated by the new homes on their sites.
2. Some proposals are in line with the Watlington TMP but Watlington PC has not had an opportunity to discuss these with OCC. This is essential before final decisions are made.
3. Proposals included in the planning application for Site A were considered by the group:
4. The introduction of a 20mph limit in the town centre
5. Proposals for improvements around the Town Hall
6. Proposals for upgrading footpath/cycleway access from the site into the town centre
7. Proposals to change some parking spaces at the ‘T’ junction of Couching St and Brook St.
8. WPC has responded to the consultation on the planning application and has indicated that it does not support some of these proposals.
9. It was agreed that none of these proposals were aimed at the key proposals in the TMP to hold traffic back as it enters the town and to deter through traffic generally.
10. It was noted that Jason Sherwood (OCC) had said that it would be possible to trial chicances on the access roads to the town.

**Actions:**

1. It was agreed to support a 20mph limit throughout the residential areas of the town.
2. It was agreed to draw up a list of priority schemes to present to the Advisory Board and WPC.
3. It was agreed to meet on Saturday 3rd November to have a ‘walk about’ and look at proposed schemes ‘on the ground’ in order to assist decisions about priorities.

**Next meeting: this will be held on Monday 12th November in the Community Office at 8.00p.m.**

**Saturday 3rd November ‘ Walk About’:**

Present: Gill Bindoff, Tom Bindoff, David Cotterell, Keith Jackson, Richard Sibly, Sally Stewart.

The route began at the Town Hall and followed Shirburn Street and Shirburn Road to the Pyrton crossroads. It then followed to road to Pyrton village turning left into Pyrton Lane. At the junction with Cuxham Road it turned along Cuxham Rd to the roundabout and turned into the access road to the Watlington Industrial Estate. The route then returned along Cuxham Road to the alley linking with Britwell Road and ended at The Goggs.

**Recommendations are made to the Group as follows:**

1. The top priority is to achieve an improvement to safety for pedestrians on Britwell Road:
2. The pavement near The Goggs is too narrow. Possible solutions have been put forward but no improvement scheme has been agreed. It is urgent to agree a scheme with OCC so that it can be actioned by Archstone to mitigate the impact of traffic generated by the development of Site A.
3. Pedestrian crossing points are also needed on Britwell Road (i) to link the new development and Windmill Piece with the footpath to West Meadow/the Willow Ponds and to provide a crossing point from Britwell Road to Site A and Windmill Piece and (ii) to cross Britwell Road to access the alley to Cuxham Road and the footpath to the town centre.
4. A further crossing point is needed at Brook Street into Gorwell.
5. The introduction of a 20mph limit throughout the residential streets in the town should be put in place as soon as possible and be funded by the developers of Site A.
6. It is not enough to restrict the limit to the main route through the town. As in other rural settlements in Oxfordshire, it needs to cover the whole town.
7. The details of the 20mph zone need to be agreed with OCC but the proposal for the B4009/ Shirburn Road is to start the limit at the white gates with a 30mph limit put in place before the Pyrton crossroads.
8. The proposals in the TMP to hold traffic back as it enters the town need to be tested. Agreement with OCC is required to test the principle of the use of chicanes. If it is only possible to agree to test one location it should be on Shirburn Road with a chicane placed on the left by the white gate coming into the town. This would be similar to the chicane on the B4009 at Benson which slows traffic entering the village while enabling traffic leaving the village to proceed.
9. The junction of Pyrton Lane and Cuxham Road:
10. The proposals included in the planning application for Site A are supported. They should provide improved safety for pedestrians by widening footpaths and slowing traffic.
11. It was noted that WPC is already in discussion with local residents and OCC to provide traffic calming measures on Pyrton Lane itself.
12. In the long term, Pyrton Lane will be closed to through traffic and only used by residents, pedestrians and cyclists.
13. New provision for pedestrians and cyclists at Cuxham Road between Pyrton Lane and the roundabout – as proposed in the planning application for Site A. These proposals are to enable safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists from the development into the town centre:
14. Marlbrook side:
15. the proposal for a crossing near the existing roundabout is supported.
16. The proposals for improving the pavement are supported.
17. The proposal for the new bus stop is supported. N.B. is there a view on the need for a bus shelter at this location? There are no other shelters in the town.
18. Industrial estate side:
19. Proposals for a new footpath and cycleway are not supported. They are not needed at this location and would have a detrimental impact on the chalk stream, the green verge and the tree screening of the Industrial estate buildings which are adjacent to the Watlington Conservation Area. The proposed removal of trees is not supported.
20. The location of the proposed bus stop is not supported. It would be much more convenient for users to locate it closer to the roundabout.
21. There is no need to make off road provision for cyclists at this location.
22. If the bus stop is moved there is no need for a second crossing point nearer to Pyrton Lane.
23. Access road to the Industrial estate:
24. The proposal to provide an off road cycleway is not supported. Cyclists are much more likely to use the road. The cycle network will include Willow Close as well as Cuxham Road and Pyrton Lane.
25. The proposal to remove some trees is not supported and is not necessary.
26. The pavement area is only required to serve the new crossing point by the roundabout and a re-located bus stop.
27. Area around the Town Hall:
28. The full proposals in the planning application for Site A are not supported.
29. The proposal to ‘narrow’ Couching Street as it joins the High Street should be considered further.
30. The proposals to extend the ‘apron’ to the Town Hall on the Couching Street should be considered further and could be used to move the crossing point further away from the Town Hall. This could provide better visibility for the pedestrian crossing.
31. The junction of Couching Street and Brook Street:
32. The proposal to remove parking spaces is not supported. The priority is to implement other traffic management schemes and to test the principle of using chicanes to slow traffic as it enters the town.