

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 23 MARCH 2004 at 10.00 AM**

Agenda Item No.

**7**

**OXHEY VILLAGE GREEN ZONE PHASE 2 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEME**

Report of the Director of Environment

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Executive Member:                      Derrick Ashley

Local Member(s):                      Stephen Giles-Medhurst

**1. Purpose of report**

This item was requested for scrutiny by Councillor Roy Clements in his role as chairman of the Oxhey Transport Forum. Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst had also recently asked that the scheme be subject to independent review. The purpose is to scrutinise the construction of the second phase of the 20mph zone in Oxhey Village by Hertfordshire Highways between September 2003 and March 2004. The project caused significant concern among residents and Members. The aim of this scrutiny is to assist in identifying areas for improvement and to identify actions to ensure that problems encountered on this project do not occur again on similar work.

**2. Summary**

Councillor Roy Clements and other Members received several complaints from residents and members of the Oxhey Transport Forum on the construction of the second phase of the 20 mph zone in Oxhey Village. In addition the local member (Stephen Giles-Medhurst) raised his concerns at various levels within the Environment Department including questions in full Council about this scheme. Whilst actions have been taken through the life of the project to address these concerns as they arose, overall the performance of Hertfordshire Highways on the project has not been satisfactory. A full review of the scheme will be undertaken in April to ensure that full learning from poor performance is gained.

**3. Conclusion**

Having considered the information contained in the report, the Committee will need to decide how further scrutiny of this issue should be undertaken.

Possible scrutiny methods include:

- questioning Hertfordshire Highways officers (from all three partner organisations, if necessary) and Executive Member
- requesting a further report
- establishing a short-life focused Topic Group
- incorporating within the remit of the Hertfordshire Highways scrutiny Topic Group
- hearing evidence from relevant parties (including local residents)

## 4. Background

### 4.1 Description of Scheme

Work on the Oxhey Village Green Zone project started in 1999. It arose as a special element of the Oxhey Transport Plan which is, in itself, one of the urban area plans that sit within the S W Herts Area Plan.

The vision for the Oxhey Village Green Zone is one of a street environment dominated by people rather than the car. The aim is to improve the quality of life for local residents, creating an area that is a safer, cleaner and more attractive place to live and work in. At the same time it was felt necessary to enhance the distinctive character of the village.

At a consultation exercise held in 1999, residents were asked to express their views and identify the problem areas in the village. The biggest concerns highlighted were traffic speed, rat running, road safety and general maintenance improvements. A steering group, consisting of local residents, County and Borough Councillors, officers from Watford and Hertfordshire County Councils, Herts Police and representatives of the Oxhey Village Environmental Group, was formed in 1999 to address these concerns.

While the area-wide measures were being considered two pelican crossings were built on Pinner Road to provide a degree of speed reduction as well as improved pedestrian safety.

The group decided that a 20mph zone in all residential streets would tackle most of the problems. The implementation of the traffic calming measures was divided into four phases covering the entire village. The process of installing the traffic calming measures is well under way. Works on phase 1 have been completed and works on phase 2, which started in September 2003, are near completion. The work involved is as follows:

#### Phase 2 (near completion)

- Junction tables at Villiers Road/Chalk Hill and Field Road/King Edward Road.
- Flat topped humps and junction tables in the whole area.
- Improvements to pavement and installation of new benches and notice boards around Oxhey Village Green.
- Installation of bollards, benches and notice boards in the area.
- Footway improvements.

The extension of the 20mph zone will be complete in the forthcoming financial year. Preliminary work on the design of the measures has begun and will be discussed and developed in the Steering Group meetings. Residents in the affected streets will be invited to take part in a consultation exercise in the Spring.

A plan is included as Appendix A

## 4.2 Concerns

Construction of the second phase of the Green Zone in Oxhey Village was scheduled to take 10 weeks. It should have been completed in November 2003 but is still under way. There have been several areas of concern expressed by local residents and Members about the implementation of the project. These have included:

- poor performance of the Hertfordshire Highways project team;
- inadequate response by officers to questions and concerns;
- unacceptable delay to work on site - in some cases road humps were laid, taken up and then relaid close to their original position;
- road closures were excessive causing severe traffic problems and that these problems were exacerbated due to the work taking longer than originally envisaged;
- damage to grass on the village green;
- damage to footway caused by the Works Team;
- inadequate supervision of the Works Team;
- the working hours of the workforce;
- features left half-finished for unacceptable lengths of time;
- debris cleared from site too slowly;
- traffic humps constructed out of specification;
- temporary road markings not applied;
- disposal and reuse of existing materials (particularly granite kerbs) recovered in the work;
- failure to adhere to the contract specification in respect of the use of granite kerbing;
- inadequate information to residents, and
- poor communication between officers, Members, the Oxhey Village Green Zone steering group and local residents.

## 4.3 Actions

In order to address these issues the following actions have been taken:

- concern about site progress and workmanship has resulted in the local maintenance manager undertaking close personal supervision of the project to improve performance;
- information bulletins and posters for residents have been made available;
- a joint inspection between staff of Hertfordshire Highways and local councillors and residents took place;
- the reconstruction of humps to current specification, to enforce a lower speed limit and encourage smoother driving has been explained;
- the practice of Works Team site operatives starting and finishing the shift at their Kings Langley depot has been investigated and explained;
- Hertfordshire Highways has made several written apologies for the delay to the work and disruption caused;
- Hertfordshire Highways is in discussion with Watford Council and the local Oxhey Village Environment Group (OVEG) about regrading and replanting the grass on the village green;

- Hertfordshire Highways will be providing additional paving to allow OVEG to erect notice boards at the green; and
- granite kerbing has been used, where possible, in line with local wishes.

#### 4.4 Learning from Poor Performance

Whilst there has been learning throughout the project, this has not been consolidated. The scheme is not yet fully complete and so there has not been an opportunity to fully review the whole project. This review will be undertaken in April and may feed into any further scrutiny agreed at this meeting.

### 5. Access to Services

Pedestrian access to services is improved through the construction of raised carriageway tables at key road junctions. The introduction of a 20mph zone enforced by physical measures may reduce traffic passing through the village, particularly at peak times. Residents and local councillors are closely involved in the development of schemes in Oxhey Village through the Green Zone steering group and through wider consultation exercises.

### 6. Financial Implications

The cost of rectifying defective work has not been borne by the County Council. The overall cost of the scheme is currently estimated to be £140,000 compared to an original estimate of £121,000. This cost can be accommodated with available budgets.

### 5. Conclusion

Having considered the information contained in the report, the Committee will need to decide how further scrutiny of this issue should be undertaken.

Possible scrutiny methods include:

- questioning Hertfordshire Highways officers (from all three partner organisations, if necessary) and Executive Member;
- requesting a further report;
- establishing a short-life focused Topic Group;
- incorporating within the remit of the Hertfordshire Highways scrutiny Topic Group;
- hearing evidence from relevant parties (including local residents).