

Wittenhams warned of traffic chaos as 'earthquake' scheme moves the road!

Only one week for you to act!

Residents of Long and Little Wittenham are warned of extensive traffic chaos throughout 2020 unless current proposals to 'realign' the road are axed.

Residents will know that Vanderbilt Homes has permission to build up to 36 homes on the corner site at Fieldside and Didcot Road. But they could not meet the strict rules on safe entry to and from the site. So an application was made and granted, in principle, to 'lift the tarmac' and move the road 3 metres to the west.

This huge project will involve moving about 200m of road nearer homes on the western side of Didcot Road and relocating utility services such as gas, water, sewage and telecoms from under the verge which will ultimately become the new road surface. Traffic calming measures will be renewed and relocated.

The work will take 4-6 months with three-way traffic light control 24 hours a day. Although well out sight of the work **Little Wittenham** residents are likely to be affected as through traffic searches for an alternative route and finds it in the tight lanes from Sires Hill.

The detailed scheme has now been published and OCC is holding a public consultation and you are invited to comment.

'Our first task' said Steve Brown, parish councillor and retired highways engineer who is liaising with OCC 'is to ensure that if ever the detailed scheme is approved it is as good as it can be for the village and for through traffic. The scheme has many shortcomings:

- Street lighting is poor and the scheme does not include an upgrade
- Access for numbers 1 to 4 Didcot Road is severely compromised; vehicles towing caravans will be unable to get in or out of drives safely, due to the new traffic islands.
- Loss of the wide verge will lead to vehicles parking on the road within the 'calmed' area causing congestion with moving vehicles travelling down the centre of the road.
- The proposed cycle bypasses are similar to the existing ones which are not maintained and little used. This is probably because they are full of mud and litter which may present a puncture and a slip hazard.
- The vehicle activated speed sign will be useless unless it is relocated 100m from the new narrowing. The scheme does not specify its relocation.
- The work will also undermine the root systems of street trees. These trees are important visual features when entering the village from the south (i.e. Didcot). Loss of the trees would be contrary to the Neighbourhood Development Plan which requires the protection of the visual landscape.

Long Wittenham Parish Council is encouraging residents to write and object **before 14th February** ref:-

Didcot Road (Long Wittenham) - Proposed Zebra Crossing & Traffic Calming to jane.clark@oxfordshire.gov.uk

OR you can write to her at: Community Operations, Traffic and Road safety, OCC, County Hall, New Road Oxford OX1 1ND

Make it clear whether you are **objecting to** (or supporting) the scheme.

'But' said Steve 'the worst part of this whole scheme is that there is a perfectly viable and available alternative. The ditch across which the safety sight lines could pass is claimed by OCC and is earmarked in the NDP for access to the new Primary School and village hall, collectively known as the Village Hub'.

For almost a year the Parish Council and its chosen Hub developer, Thomas Homes, have been trying to resolve the ownership issue. Our second goal is to get OCC to transfer ownership of the ditch and so be able to grant sight lines to Vanderbilt Homes. **The road would not then have to be moved.**

For further information contact: steve.brown@longwittenham.com

It's up to you: shout and be heard or suffer in silence!