

Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council
Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council
Serving the Kibworth villages in south-Leicestershire since 1895



Traffic Management Issues in Kibworth
The need for re-appraisal

November 2018

Introduction

The Parish Councils of Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt are seeking a re-appraisal of traffic management arrangements in Kibworth and on the A6 through the Kibworth villages.

A succession of planning decisions allowing major housing developments on the boundaries of Kibworth which have no on-site amenities, coupled with the loss or lack of amenities elsewhere, such as post offices in nearby villages, and social change have led to a steady increase in road traffic through Kibworth, in the village centre and on the A6.

The conflict between vehicles and pedestrians is damaging the quality of village life and people's safety. With several hundred more homes and a business park still to be built, the situation will worsen.

The existing scheme of speed cushions, chicanes and parking bays was designed over fifteen years ago. In that time, vehicle ownership has increased as has online shopping (prompting more home deliveries), large 4x4 vehicles have become more popular and buses have also increased in size.

The Leicestershire Planning Obligations Policy (Draft)

The opening statement in the Leicestershire Planning Obligations Policy (Draft for consultation, October 2018) is an accurate reflection of the situation in Kibworth:

'The successful delivery of housing and economic growth is dependent, amongst other things, on an effective and efficient transport system. A poorly functioning system can stifle growth, for example, through the impacts of traffic congestion on journey time reliability for businesses and land for potential housing development that is inaccessible due to a lack of suitable highway connectivity.'

(Appendix 5, p47)

The document emphasises the need for a more sustainable and connected system which should include better public transport, footpaths and cycle routes.

Historical context

Village streets developed from earlier lanes and were largely able to cope with increasing number of motor vehicles until the late 1950s. From the 1960s, local planning policies reflected Governmental decisions which prioritised vehicles over pedestrians. The Smigielski Plan for Leicester shows how town planners foresaw a dramatic increase in road traffic and drew up radical plans in response. In Leicester's case, this would have involved demolishing most of the city's historic buildings and building eight-lane elevated highways. Although the pedestrianisation of the central shopping area was a positive outcome of the plan, the underlying principle was that of separation, putting vehicles first and relegating people to subways.

Bypasses tend to beget bypasses. By opening areas to development, they trigger a further increase in traffic and the consequent problems of congestion and speeding.

In Leicester, Charles Street, which was opened with pomp and ceremony in June 1932, was intended as a bypass for the clocktower area. In the 1970s, this was bypassed by the Central Ring (St Matthew's Way), which in time is likely to be bypassed by the proposed A46 expressway.

Proponents of the expressway speak of 'unlocking land for future housing and economic development' and 'development opportunities in terms of housing.' In other words, it will generate its own traffic locally as well as being a major spinal route from the north of England to the south.

In Kibworth, to enable vehicles to travel faster and unimpeded, the A6 was straightened near the cemetery, removing a bend and a gradient where there had been a fatal accident in the days of stage coaches.

The A6 between the two Main Street junctions, now within the AQMA, was a 'bypass' constructed in the 1850s. The trigger was the number of accidents caused by horse drawn coaches being driven at speed through the village centre.

The potential effect of an expressway to the north of Kibworth can be seen in the situation to the south. The A14 was designed as a link between the A1 and the M1. Its route through north Northamptonshire was intended to relieve congestion on the A427 between Market Harborough and Lutterworth (now the A4304). Yet serious accidents are a regular occurrence on the A14 between Kettering, Rothwell and Welford, and temporary speed cameras have been installed on the former route in Walcote.

A14 congestion also encourages a significant number of HGVs to use the A6 from Kettering to reach Leicester, thus travelling through Kibworth. There was a marked reduction in pollution levels in Kibworth when the A6 Desborough bypass was closed for seven months in 2017 for bridge repairs.

A6 Speed management

The construction of the Great Glen bypass was approved by Parliament in 1993. Southbound, it ends where Kibworth begins, traffic funnelled into a single carriageway winding through an old settlement, close to buildings in a conservation area, some over four hundred years old.

The Kibworth Parish Councils do not have a policy regarding a bypass, partly because of the factors outlined above. The route, the social and ecological effects of that route, and the cost in terms of further residential development need to be quantified first.

The pragmatic approach is to address the present rather than delay action until some undefined time in the future.

The methodology which influences decisions on road safety measures needs to be questioned. The ACPO measure of averaging the speed of vehicles over an entire day (0700-1900) is a case in point. Traffic congestion (as in the morning and evening peaks) reduces traffic speeds; conversely, motorists are more likely to speed when and where there is less traffic. The statistic provided by Leicestershire County Council of 85%tile speed of 34mph through Kibworth on the A6 is simply a generalisation.

Traffic speeds on the A6 between the Church Road junction and the recycling and household waste site, past the New Road and West Langton Road junctions are judged by most residents to be excessive. The difficulties encountered by motorists turning right out of New Road towards Market Harborough at peak times lead some to turn left and to use the layby opposite the cemetery to undertake a U-turn which leads to further delays.

Leicestershire County Council's policy regarding this section of the A6 has been confused. Thirty years ago, it recommended refusal of plans for a garden centre where the Nursery Business Park stands because of traffic concerns. It also objected to the Kibworth Joint

Recreation Committee's planning application for allotments on West Langton Road in 2013, again on traffic grounds. Yet it found no reason to object to the succession of major planning applications for large housebuilding projects since 2013 all of which have subsequently been approved.

The Kibworth Air Quality Action Plan 2019-2031 indicates that any redesign of junctions should not serve to restrict the steady flow of traffic which means that an overall enforceable speed limit is preferable to traffic lights and roundabouts.

Speed cushions

A re-assessment of the speed cushions in the village is necessary. This is a concept from an era when there were fewer cars and they were smaller. Speed cushions have a widely-varying effect on vehicles, reducing the speed of the smallest cars and those with low suspension to a crawl but having little effect on the growing number of large 4x4 vehicles. They do not moderate overall traffic speeds but encourage sharp braking and acceleration. They increase pollution without improving road safety. Vehicles frequently park on or near speed cushions forcing drivers to make awkward manoeuvres on the wrong side of the carriageway. Cushions also create noise which is a constant disturbance for those living nearby.

The speed cushions in Kibworth are not resilient to the physical stresses of modern traffic flow. Most are damaged or are loose, and several have been replaced in previous years. The cushion in Church Road near the railway bridge suffers heavy sideways stress due to buses avoiding overhanging hedges. One ramp in Fleckney Road has been missing for several months and the second ramp of this pair is permanently obscured by parked cars.

Similarly, some of the cushions in New Road cope with almost twice the number of vehicles because one carriageway (and cushion) is permanently blocked by parked cars. This creates a form of one-way system with vehicles often racing through the section at speed. A further consequence is that vehicles turning into New Road from Links Road face traffic approaching from both directions on the same carriageway.

Parking

Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council has long campaigned for the attendance of Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs).

No CEO is scheduled to patrol Kibworth on a regular basis. A FOI request by a resident revealed that between January 2017 and June 2018, CEOs undertook 768 shifts in Market Harborough but just two (2) in Kibworth.

A campaign on social media posting regular photographic evidence of dangerous parking finally resulted in a few *ad hoc* visits during the Summer, but this has since reduced.

The deployment of CEOs is heavily influenced by financial considerations favouring locations where the most tickets can be issued per shift. A report on attendance in Kibworth during August 2018 focussed on the ticket-issuing rate compared with Market Harborough rather than the number of safety issues resolved.

Disabled parking facilities in the village centre are inadequate. There is only one disabled parking bay in High Street. The School Road car park is too far from village amenities (such as the Post Office) for those with limited mobility, and the bay outside the Old School Surgery creates a chicane allowing vehicles including buses, to pass only in one direction at a time, and to queue back to the roundabout.

The Village Centre

The principal route for traffic through Kibworth Beauchamp (from Fleckney Road to the New Road junction with the A6) is largely residential and it is also the shopping and services hub. Although more than 1000 new homes have been built or approved for Kibworth in the past ten years, not a single shop or amenity has been included in any of the planning applications except for a small convenience store which may (or may not) be built in the Priory Business Park. This means a steadily increasing amount of traffic in the village centre where there is no space for additional parking.

The current housing developments are increasing the number of vehicles through the difficult junction of the Fleckney Road and Warwick Road, where several serious accidents have occurred, the most recent being on Friday 23rd November 2018.

Planning decisions have led to both schools in Kibworth expanding to capacity and having to accept children from similar new developments in Fleckney and elsewhere.

The current proposal by Manor Oak Homes to provide a plot of land for a new single-year intake primary school west of Warwick Road will not address these problems and would cause further traffic issues.

The decision to locate the present Kibworth Medical Centre south of the settlement, when all the new housing is to the north has further increased the amount of traffic having to pass through the village centre.

Signage

Some vehicle-activated signs on the A6 are not operating because they are obsolete and cannot be repaired. Many village signs are damaged, bent, falling apart or obscured by foliage. This visual impression of neglected, tired-looking broken signage sends the wrong message to drivers.

Public transport, pedestrian routes and cycling

The bus stops along Barnard's Way and Polwell Road are still temporary even though the X3 has operated through the estate for several years and the development is complete. This is not a positive encouragement to use public transport.

The newest housing developments are, effectively, cul-de-sacs which do not allow for buses. The opportunity to provide a through route between the David Wilson development off

Fleckney Road and the Miller Homes estate off Warwick Road was not considered despite requests by the Kibworth Parish Councils.

Several village centre roads are not wide enough for large vehicles to pass without mounting a pavement.

Children from the new developments attempting to walk to the Kibworth School in Smeeton Road must cross two of the busiest roads in the village, High Street (or Fleckney Road) and Smeeton Road, at peak times.

Recommendations and proposals

Finance and funding

1

As proposed in the Leicestershire Planning Obligations Draft consultative document, a reconsideration of developer contributions from the estates now under construction in Kibworth and elsewhere using Deeds of Variation, if necessary, to redirect funding.

2

Discussions with parish councils about contributing to the cost of implementing some of these proposals.

3

Consideration of attracting Fourth Sector finance by using Kibworth to trial new and innovative approaches to traffic management and pedestrian-friendly schemes.

Consultation

4

A transparent process of re-appraisal involving both Kibworth parish councils, Harborough District Council planning department, residents, businesses and amenities to include public meetings, displays in Kibworth Community Library and a proactive online website.

Timeframe and workflow

5

A meeting to be held, as soon as is reasonably possible, with LCC officers, the Kibworth parish councils and HDC ward councillors to identify measures which can be implemented in the shorter term, and to set out a plan, with timeframes and targets, for longer term projects.

6

Consideration to be given to inviting members of the Kibworth Neighbourhood Planning Group to be involved and to coordinate research and discussion, this work to feed in to a revision of the Kibworth Neighbourhood Plan.

A6 speed management

7

A realistic speed limit on the A6 south of the New Road junction. The present varying speed restrictions replaced with one speed throughout the entire Kibworth stretch enforced by self-funding average speed cameras.

8

A plan to be drawn up now for the further deployment of average speed cameras after the present trials, and discussions to begin now with parish councils and communities so that budgets can be planned.

Junction improvements

9

Any modifications to junctions on the A6 not to prejudice strategies to reduce pollution.

10

Redesign of the Church Road/Marsh Drive junction to provide improved sightlines for traffic emerging from Church Road, and carriageway realignment of Marsh Drive as proposed by Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council using the residue of s106 developer contributions from the Kibworth Pastures estate.

Village Centre traffic management and speed cushions

11

Consideration given to removing some or all speed cushions because of their contribution to pollution and noise, their ineffectiveness to moderate the speed of most modern vehicles and the need for constant repair and replacement.

12

Consideration to be given to creating a give-way or one-way system along a section of Fleckney Road between the Cricket Club and Rosebery Avenue, reducing the road to a single carriageway and widening the pavements.

13

Review again the signage and layout of the Warwick Road/Fleckney Road junction.

Parking

14

Regular CEO shifts in Kibworth deploying staff who live in the area (for the sake of financial and strategic efficiency) funded by revenue from parking charges in Market Harborough with an emphasis on safety, not financial revenue.

15

Implement a limited parking restriction on the parking bays in High Street to prevent all-day parking.

16

Enforce resident-only parking zones in Station Street (opposite the Old School surgery) and on some side streets.

17

Create more disabled parking bays in High Street and relocate the bays in Station Street. Add at least one disabled parking bay between the Convenience Store in High Street and the pedestrian crossing.

18

Increase the deployment of double yellow lines at intersections.

19

Re-design the layout of the School Road HDC-managed public car park to increase capacity.

20

Publicity and signage to encourage use of the car park off Barnard's Way, which has been resurfaced by the Kibworth Joint Recreation Committee using s106 funding, particularly for parents of primary school children.

21

A campaign to support businesses and amenities who encourage patrons to park considerately.

Signage

22

Repair, clean and/or replace 'gateway' signage to both Kibworth villages.

23

Consider signage indicating the entrance to Stuart Court off High Street. Delivery vehicles often cannot find this access using GPS.

24

Agree the location of, and establish, permanent bus stops on KB/1.

25

Provide additional signage at village gateways indicating that speed restrictions are in force and will be enforced. Use flower planters to reinforce respect by motorists for residents.

26

Undertake a review of all present road markings and signage, improving, cleaning and repainting as necessary, including the disabled parking bays in Station Street (near GP surgery) and High Street (near Fish & Chip shop).

27

Discuss whether the Parish Councils could undertake and fund some of the above.

Public transport, pedestrian routes and cycling

28

A co-ordinated and effective plan involving the developers and their show houses, to tell homeowners on the new estates now under construction about the availability of bus passes.

29

Replace the existing bus shelter in Church Road, opposite the parish church and provide bus shelters in other parts of the village including High Street near the Convenience Store and Fleckney Road.

30

Enforcement of parking restrictions at bus stops, particularly near the Convenience Store in High Street.

31

More pavements extending to areas where development is taking place specifically along Fleckney Road, funded by developer contributions.

32

Consider relocating existing bollards along High Street and Station Street to locations where they will be more effective in preventing pavement parking.

33

A pedestrian crossing in Smeeton Road near the Kibworth School to provide a safe pedestrian route for schoolchildren and the elderly who live in Morrison Court and the adjacent care home. A further pedestrian crossing in High Street near the Co-op.

Concluding summary

The Kibworth Parish Councils understand the exigencies of local government funding. Although on a much smaller scale, we also act with prudence and diligence in managing public money.

The intention of this document is not to demand actions that cannot be afforded.

Our aims are:

- To facilitate a positive dialogue between parish, district and county councillors and officers to address present and future traffic management issues.
- To identify low-cost actions which could mitigate some of the issues in the shorter term.
- To identify other funding sources for some capital projects (developer contributions reallocated, parish council reserves and the fourth sector).
- To engage fully with residents, listening, recording and responding to their views.
- To plan positively for the future.

This document has involved the focussed work and contributions of parish, district and county councillors, and parishioners, and is the result of research and consultation over many months. We ask that our work is respected and that the response of Leicestershire County Council is as we request in Proposal (5) above, namely:

A meeting to be held, *as soon as is reasonably possible*, with LCC officers, the Kibworth parish councils and HDC ward councillors to identify measures which can be implemented in the shorter term, and to set out a plan, with timeframes and targets, for longer term projects.

Document approved by resolution at the meeting of Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council held on Tuesday 27th November 2018

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