

Avon Dassett Parish Council

Project Business Case

Avon Dassett – Traffic Review – Safety Mirror

Updated: Monday, 30 January 2023

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Management Summary | This phase of the Traffic Review Project has been expanded to take into account items raised in The Avon Dassett Parish Plan and those raised by residents in respect of safety concerns. |
| Reason why: | <p>Avon Dassett Parish Plan which was approved in May 2022 identified issues which residents have raised, and which need addressing.</p> <p>These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a perceived increase in speeding• the lack of parking provision in the village is of increased concern when events are held in the village <p>In addition, the Parish Council is aware of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the possible need to relocate some of the road signs relating to speed restrictions• the possible erection of gates on the verges at the entrances to Avon Dassett• destruction of the verges by lorries and refuse collection vehicles• possible consideration for the reduction of the speed limit to 20mph• consider appropriate sites for mirrors to be installed to increase visibility for motorists and thus reduce the risk of road traffic accidents in the village <p>This business case will address the request from a local resident for safety mirrors to be provided in the area around the village playground to reduce the risk of road traffic accidents for vehicles accessing the main road from Lower End and Lower End Terrace.</p> |
| Options: | <p>There is the option to do nothing which will mean that the status quo is maintained and known issues will remain.</p> <p>Agree a plan of actions to address the known issues.</p> |
| Results/ benefits | Increased safety for motorists accessing the main road from Lower End and Lower End Terrace. |
| Permissions | <p>Formal permission / co-operation will be required from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warwickshire County Council Highways Department• The Local Police |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Timescale | Complete by 31 January 2023 |
| Estimated costs | Estimates will be obtained once the scope of the sub projects is agreed and permissions have been sought from the appropriate authority. |
| Risks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the required approvals cannot be obtained from the police and the local authority • funds cannot be made available |
| Overall appraisal | This project, if the required permissions can be obtained will contribute to increased safety from drivers in the village. |
| Summary of Final Position | <p>Avon Dassett Parish Council has approached Warwickshire County Council Highways who have refused permission to erect safety mirrors on highways land as to do so would be against their policy. A copy of the policy is attached in Appendix A.</p> <p>Under special circumstances application can be made to the Department of Transport and the criteria etc for such applications is attached in Appendix B. Having reviewed this document a number of the criteria for applying are not met so this is considered not to be an option.</p> <p>The last part of this document covers mirrors not on the highway but on private land. It is considered that this is also not a viable option as it is possible that the use of a mirror could be a contributory factor in the event of a road traffic accident and the Parish Council and the land owner could be liable.</p> <p>Having taken the actions above and received the advice and information contained in the appendices, it is recommended that this project is not progressed and the resident who requested a safety mirror is advised giving full reasons.</p> |

Road Safety – Further information

Concealed entrance signing and mirrors

What are concealed entrance signs and mirrors?

Concealed entrance signs warn road users that there is a minor junction ahead leading to a private property or business. However, there is no formal requirement to warn drivers of the presence of the junction of a private property or business with a public highway.

Mirrors are not permitted on the County's roads and are occasionally installed to aid access from a private property onto the public highway without the consent of the County Council or will be sited on private land.

Does Warwickshire County Council install or give permission for signing?

The County Council does not provide or give permission for the erection of 'Concealed Entrance' signs on the public highway. Such signs are not authorised under traffic signing Regulations issued by the Secretary of State for Transport. Whilst "Concealed Entrance" signs can be seen near private accesses, they will have been placed on private land with the consent of the landowner.

Why are such signs problematic?

If placed on the public highway, a 'Concealed Entrance' sign would be an obstruction on the highway which could make the person or organisation responsible for placing the sign liable in the event of an accident. If permitted, such a sign would create a high level of sign clutter due to the number of concealed entrances in Warwickshire.

Does Warwickshire County Council install or give permission for mirrors?

The County Council does not supply or give agreement to the erection of mirrors on public highways for which it is the highway authority. A mirror would be an obstruction on the highway which could make the person or organisation responsible for placing the mirror liable in the event of an accident.

Why are mirrors problematic?

Mirrors can give a distorted view of the road and a misleading impression of the speed of approaching vehicles. Convex mirrors will not give a clear view of smaller vehicles, such as motorcycles and pedal cycles. Flat mirrors have a very limited field of view.

Mirrors can cause drivers to feel a sense of security when entering a main road, to such an extent that due care may not be taken when completing the maneuver. Mirrors have been erected in various places but will normally have been placed on private property, clear of the public highway. However, many mirrors are installed illegally without the consent of the County Council, and may be subject to removal.

Appendix B

1) National Regulations – Safety Mirrors

- a) Mirrors are classified as a road traffic sign and as they are not prescribed in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD), their use on the highway is subject to special authorisation by the Department for Transport (DfT). Requests for special authorisation to enable the placement of a mirror on the highway are assessed by the DfT against stringent criteria.

2) Special Authorisation

- a) The DfT will only consider Traffic mirrors on public roads in rural and semi-rural areas where:
 - There is a collision history relating to a lack of visibility (the site would have to be discussed with the Police to establish any recorded incidents or collisions).
 - Visibility for vehicles emerging from the side road is severely restricted.
 - A visibility improvement scheme is not feasible.
 - Visibility cannot be improved by removing hedges, walls, trees or other obstacles.
 - The speed limit on the major road is above 30mph
- b) The DfT does not encourage mirrors on the highway, and this is clearly reinforced through the assessment criteria above. Special authorisation will only be considered for junctions in rural/semi-rural locations where visibility is restricted and where there is evidence of accidents related to poor visibility and high speed crossing traffic at locations where a mirror is being requested.
- c) The responsibility for deciding whether any road traffic sign or mirror is needed to maintain safety at a particular location rests with the local highway authority. If the authority is satisfied that the location meets the criteria set out by the DfT, is able to demonstrate that visibility cannot be improved by removal of any obstruction and is satisfied that the issues in paragraph 1.2 above would not override the benefits to road users then special authorisation would be considered by the DfT for the placement of a mirror on the highway.
- d) Special authorisations are normally granted by the DfT on an experimental basis for a period of 12 months. At the end of that period, the highway authority and police would be asked to provide details about:
 - The mirror's effectiveness in all weathers.
 - Any complaints from drivers that the mirror is confusing. (It has been found previously that the image a driver sees in the mirror can be distorted and can get the impression that an approaching vehicle is straight ahead when it is, in fact round a corner. Some mirrors are so large and convex that approaching drivers can see their own reflection).
 - Any report of difficulty by a driver in judging both the speed and distance of reflected vehicles.
 - Any problems with glare or sunlight.
 - Any report of damage by accident or vandalism.
 - Whether it has been necessary to clean the mirror.
- e) If a satisfactory response is received to the above questions the special authorisation

may be extended. The DfT retain the right to withdraw the authorisation by giving one month's notice should any unforeseen serious problems arise subsequently.

- f) The DfT set out that the use of mirrors be restricted to sites in rural and semi- rural areas as outlined in paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5 above. There are very many junctions in towns which have bad visibility and to embark on the installation of mirrors at these junctions would proliferate their use and prove impractical and ineffective.
- g) The basic requirement that there must be high speed crossing traffic would rarely apply at urban sites. Moreover, a mirror could prove to be counter-productive as a safety measure in urban areas because it could lead to an increase in speed of emerging vehicles by drivers relying too much on the mirror. There might also be a tendency for drivers to concentrate their attention on the mirror and ignore the immediate surroundings, e.g. pedestrians crossing in front of the vehicle. A careful assessment is essential in order that existing hazards are not increased by inducing drivers to take less care than they would normally.

3) Mirrors not on the Highway

- a) Mirrors may be sited off the highway on private land and that is a matter for the land owner and the person who places the mirror. Planning permission may be required and any applicant should be directed to the Council's Planning Department. Any applicants should be advised that when placing a highway mirror on private property consideration should be given to public liability implications and risk assessment in the event that the mirror is cited as a contributory factor in a road traffic accident.