

Division(s): Didcot East & Hagbourne; Hendreds and Harwell
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CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 16 JULY 2020

DIDCOT – LARCH DRIVE & DIAMOND DRIVE: PROPOSED BUS GATE

Report by Interim Director of Community Operations

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed bus gate at the point Larch Drive meets Diamond Drive.

Introduction

2. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation to provide the above bus gate. Currently a concrete barrier is provided at the point where the bus gate is proposed which prevents the passage of any motor vehicle.

Background

3. The introduction of a bus gate at the point Larch Drive meets Diamond Drive – as shown at Annex 1 – was included in the planning consent for the Great Western park residential development to remove the potential for ‘rat-running’ traffic to use these roads as a route between the Wantage road and Park Road.

Consultation

4. Formal consultation on the bus gate proposal was carried out between 20 May and 19 June 2020. A public notice was placed in the Didcot Herald newspaper and sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, South Oxfordshire District Council, Didcot Town Council and local County Councillors. Letters were also sent directly to 215 properties in the immediate vicinity and street notices placed on site.
5. Seventeen responses were received. 12 in support (70%), 2 objections (12%), 1 raising concerns and 2 not objecting. Copies of the responses are recorded at Annex 2 with full responses also available for inspection by County Councillors.

Response to objections and other comments

6. Thames Valley Police did not object but did ask if a road safety audit had been carried out in respect of the proximity of the proposed bus gate to the bend and also whether consideration was being given to parking restrictions in the vicinity of the bus gate to ensure that buses using the link were able to use travel through the gate.
7. It is confirmed that the proposed feature has been the subject of a safety assessment and it is considered that its siting close to the bend does not present a hazard given the character of the roads. Also the bend does serve to reduce speed and the bus gate will be signed. However, if approved, the operation of the bus gate will be monitored to see if waiting restrictions are required.
8. Didcot Town Council support the proposal and Harwell Parish Council did not object.
9. An objection was received from a member of the public on the grounds that there was no need for buses to serve the residential roads and that stops on the adjacent roads (the B4493 Wantage Road and Park Road) would be adequate and citing concerns over the nuisance and loss of privacy due to buses using the road. Should the bus gate be approved, the respondent requested that a condition be imposed on the bus operators that only single deck buses use the road, that give way markings be provided at the junctions and a 20mph speed limit introduced on Larch Drive.
10. Another member of the public objected on the grounds that further signing was needed to clearly show that this was not a through route for general traffic. The objection also requested that motorcycles were exempted from the restriction to avoid the nuisance of motorcyclists stopping and switching off their engines and then pushing their motorcycles through the restriction then re-starting them. This response also queried whether the proposed siting of the bus gate was in the best location, with a site further west suggested as an alternative.
11. Noting the above comments provision of a bus route and bus gate through the development has been a long-standing requirement established as part of the planning process for the residential development and it is anticipated that single deck buses will operate the route. The signing of the restriction – including the provision of advance signs and the need for any additional road markings will be reviewed. The suggestion that motorcycles are permitted to use the bus gate is not considered desirable on road safety or amenity grounds for residents.
12. It is acknowledged that it is unfortunate that the speed limit on Larch Drive remains at 30mph with the new roads within the Great Western Park development having a 20mph speed limit. Subject to funding being identified, it is hoped that this anomaly can be rectified.

13. Another member of the public expressed a concern over the obstruction caused by parked vehicles and requested consideration of waiting restrictions to address this.
14. Expressions of support were received from a further four members of the public but these responses also included concerns over the lack of advance signing of the no through road for motor vehicles other than buses, the need for waiting restrictions to address obstructive parking and for a 20mph speed limit on Larch Drive. A concern was also expressed over problems arising from the allocation of post codes in respect of delivery vehicles and visitors being unaware of the restriction in the immediate vicinity. While noting this issue it is outside the scope of this consultation.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

15. The proposals would help facilitate the safe movement of traffic including buses.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

16. Funding for the proposed measures will be met by the developers of Great Western Park

Equalities Implications

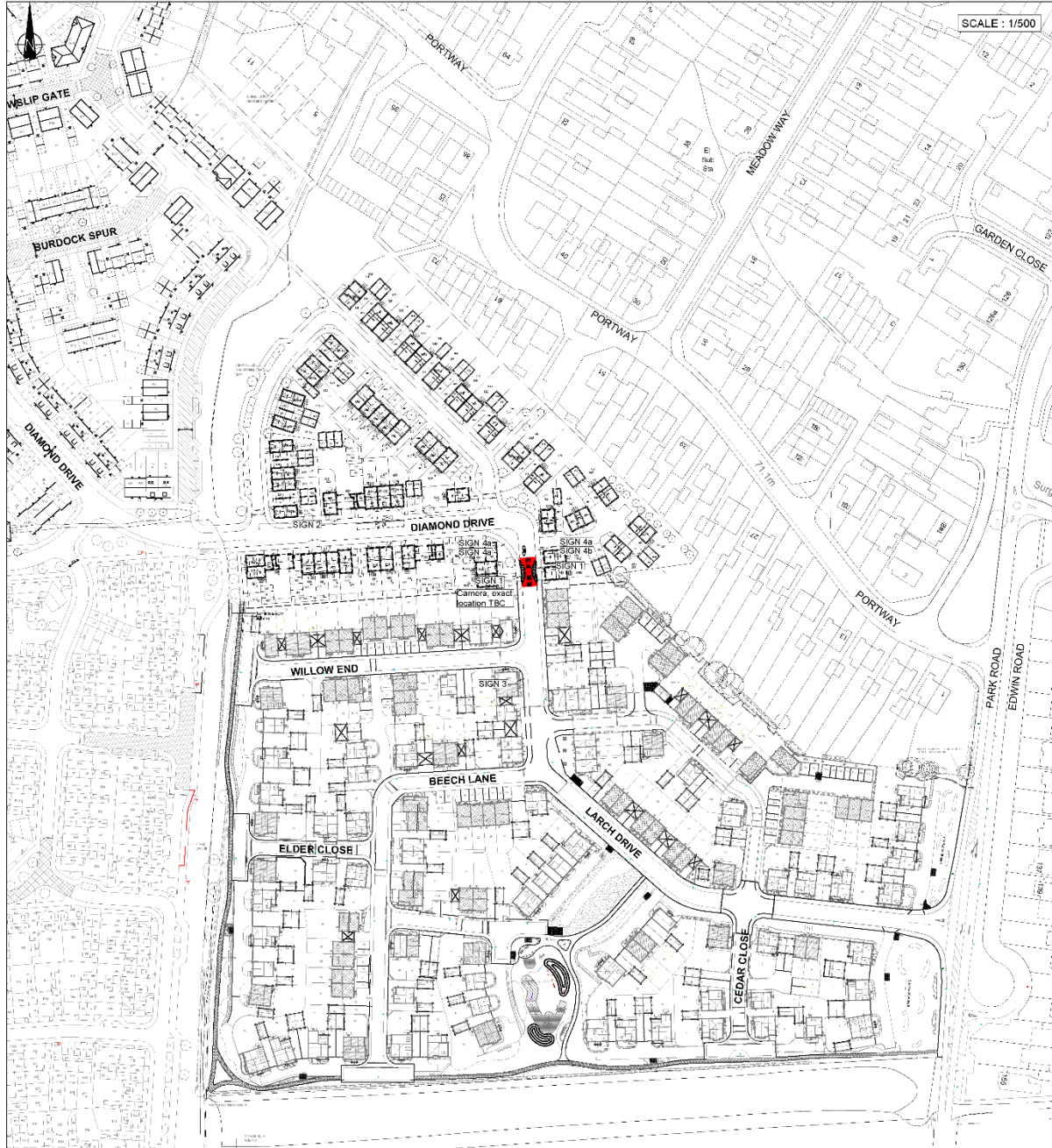
17. No equalities implications have been identified in respect of these proposals

JASON RUSSELL
Interim Director of Community Operations

Background papers: Consultation responses

Contact Officers: Hugh Potter 07766 998704
 Ryan Moore 07557 082568

July 2020



Raising bollard
in
operation



SIGN 1

TO BE ILLUMINATED



SIGN 2



SIGN 4a

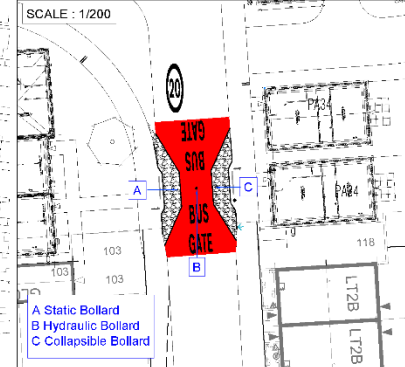


SIGN 4b



SIGN 3

- a. MOUNTING HEIGHT FOR LOWEST SIGN TO BE 2100MM ON ALL FOOTWAYS. SHOULD SIGNS BE LOCATED WITHIN A SECTION OF FOOTWAY / CYCLEWAY AS AGREED ON SITE. MOUNTING HEIGHT INCREASED TO 2400MM. PLEASE NOTE SHOULD THIS BE REQUIRED. POST LENGTH TO BE EXTENDED BY 300MM AND FOUNDATION WIDTH AND LENGTH INCREASED BY 100MM.
- b. SIGNS TO BE LOCATED AT BACK OF FOOTWAY / CYCLEWAYS.
- c. EXACT LOCATION OF ADVANCE SIGNAGE TO BE AGREED ON SITE TO ENSURE VISIBILITY IS NOT AFFECTED.



GENERAL NOTE

- 1. The drawings are for information only and are not to be used for construction without the approval of the Designer.
- 2. All dimensions are in millimeters unless otherwise stated.
- 3. All materials and finishes are to be as specified in the Bill of Materials.
- 4. All work is to be in accordance with the current British Standards.
- 5. The Designer is not responsible for any errors or omissions in the drawings.
- 6. The Designer is not responsible for any damage to existing structures or services.
- 7. The Designer is not responsible for any delays or cost overruns.
- 8. The Designer is not responsible for any legal or other liabilities.

BUS GATE DETAILS LEGEND

	Red Asphalt
	Concrete
	Grass
	Water

<p>1/10 Date issued: 28/08/2024</p> <p>1/11 Date issued: 28/08/2024</p> <p>1/12 Date issued: 28/08/2024</p> <p>1/13 Date issued: 28/08/2024</p> <p>1/14 Date issued: 28/08/2024</p> <p>1/15 Date issued: 28/08/2024</p> <p>1/16 Date issued: 28/08/2024</p> <p>1/17 Date issued: 28/08/2024</p> <p>1/18 Date issued: 28/08/2024</p> <p>1/19 Date issued: 28/08/2024</p> <p>1/20 Date issued: 28/08/2024</p>	<p>28/08/2024 DA</p> <p>28/08/2024 DA</p> <p>12/02/2024 TB</p> <p>Date: 28/08/2024</p> <p>By: DA</p>
<p>Drawing Status: PRELIMINARY</p> <p>Please note that this drawing may be used for construction purposes. It is not to be used for construction without the approval of the Designer.</p>	
<p>Client: Taylor Wimpey</p> <p>Project: Great Western Park, Didcot, Oxfordshire SN33A</p> <p>Title: Bus Gate Signing Plan</p>	
<p>ANNEX 1</p> <p>BANNERS GATE</p> <p>CIVIL, STRUCTURAL & ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN SERVICES</p> <p>15076-0101</p> <p>15076-0101</p> <p>15076-0101</p>	

RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p>No objection – In principle I do not object providing as confirmed the restriction is self-enforcing and must not be in any way reliant on police enforcement.</p> <p>I do have two concerns regarding the location. The feature is positioned immediately following a 90-degree bend with little forward visibility. Can you confirm if a Safety Audit has already been completed and does it confirm this location is suitable for this control measure.</p> <p>As shown in the photo there is a vehicle parked close to the feature. What measures will be included to prevent this should it become a future problem.</p>
(2) Didcot Town Council	<p>Support - welcomes this measure to improve safety and to ensure the residential area of GWP south does not become a 'rat-run'.</p>
(3) Harwell Parish Council	<p>No objection</p>
(4) Local Resident, (Didcot)	<p>Object - I am opposed to this as I do not feel that buses need to have access through here for the following reasons;</p> <p>-Safety : Larch Drive has many junctions which have no road markings; Children play outside and in the park directly by the road; cars are parked along the road; houses are not set back from the pavement.</p> <p>Larch Drive is simply not a road built for the movement of large vehicles, which is demonstrated daily by them coming along to try and gain access to other areas of GWP. They are then dangerously reversing around corners putting children, pedestrians and cars at risk.</p> <p>Many homes here do not have parking for more than one car which means there are cars parked here at all times. With buses coming through it will make parking more difficult, creating the need to potentially leave cars in places that will cause obstructions and limited visibility for other drivers and pedestrians.</p>

	<p>-Invasion of privacy/ security; Should double decker buses be coming down Larch Drive, there are issues with privacy as passengers will be able to see directly into homes and gardens, as there is only a pavements space between them. Bus stops will also invade privacy as homes here are not set back from the pavements meaning people waiting for buses will be standing outside homes for periods of time.</p> <p>I see no reason why buses cannot service these areas via Wantage Road and Park Road, which are bigger roads that have houses set well back from the road/pavement. All houses in this part of GWP are walkable to these larger roads within minutes.</p> <p>Should this bus gate be allowed to be put in place, I insist that a proposal is put into place to only allow single decker buses, road markings must be put it at all junctions on Larch Drive, a maximum speed of 20mph is imposed and bus stops must not be put outside homes along Larch Drive.</p>
<p>(5) Local Resident, (Didcot)</p>	<p>Object - 1. (This is only an observation) I think the bus gate might have more naturally been placed between BLUE BELL GATE and BOX TREE LANE. I don't feel it is appropriate to form an opinion on the location for this planned bus gate without a documented description of the rationale for its placement in preference to any other options. However, as presented I would have no 'objection' to either.</p> <p>2. (This is an OBJECTION to the road signage plans; they are insufficient) The plans also need to include the details of 'NO THROUGH ROAD' signage, and/or in addition to further signs, at least being placed by or before COWSLIP GATE. Probably also right at, and in the approaches to, the main junction with Didcot Road and the estate entry road. The signs on Didcot Road should show a red bar with a junction layout sign, and say "NO THROUGH ROAD" or "NO THROUGH ROAD TO COSCOTE", "ACCESS TO RESIDENTIAL ONLY" or similar. This should have been done already and is an omission not to have done so by now.</p> <p>This comment also applies to the approach to Larch Drive from Coscote into/out of Didcot and should read 'NO THROUGH ROAD TO DIAMOND DRIVE'.</p> <p>3. (This is an OBJECTION to making transit by mopeds/motorcycles unlawful) I comment that perhaps access for motorcycles through the bus gate is also, formally, allowed. This is not for any interest in motorcycles, but my understanding would be that if a motorcyclist were to stop before the gate, turn their motorcycle off, walk it through the gate, and start it back up, then this would be lawful. It would make an ass of the law to force a motorcyclist to do just that, when they could simply ride through, reducing noise and CO2 emissions compared with having to stop and</p>

	<p>restart their machine. It would also remove any possible confusion as to whether that is allowed, if it is properly allowed and duly signed. At the moment the few motorcyclists in the area are riding over the pavement, which is obviously illegal and potentially lethal. It is simpler not to give them that temptation. The probable motorcycle traffic volume is unlikely have any significant impact.</p> <p>4. (This is an observation) A comment on the process; it is confusing to have both District and County Councils all doing something different and running different consultations on the same thing. This really needs to be organised and you guys need to talk with each other. There has been a bewildering confusion over address renaming and postcode changes, poorly managed.</p>
(6) Local Resident, (Didcot)	<p>Concerns - I live in this area and what is concerning me is the parking.</p> <p>In the place where you want to place the bollard there is cars parked everyday All day or night and where the bus stops are is the same. So my concern is about parking as this road is narrow and when bus starts cars should not be allowed to park at least until box tree lane street starts or even further to diamond drive as the bus stops are there but there will be no space for the bus to stop due to parking on the street or side walk. If cars park in top of side walk like loads been doing there is no space for pedestrians to walk safely too.</p> <p>On the curve of diamond drive to larch drive As when bus passing , if cars parked there will be no space to pass another car if you want to access the home to the street what is changing name now to birch close.</p> <p>I can anticipate that If parking is not prohibitive in this area this will be a major concern and will be disruptive.</p>
(7) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<p>Support - <i>No comments.</i></p>
(8) Local Resident, (Didcot)	<p>Support - I strongly welcome this planning application. I do have some questions though:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the logic in having Diamond Drive as a 20mph limit but Larch Drive at 30mph? 2. Will Larch Drive become a double yellow line route? 3. Could the signs saying no through route for cars be moved to the entrance to the estate? As it stands currently lots of cars and vans come into the estate, make it to the bollards and then have to turn around. This is unnecessary extra traffic.

<p>(9) Local Resident, (Didcot)</p>	<p>Support - As an additional requirement.</p> <p>The requirement for single yellow road makings along the entire length of larch drive needs to be addressed as at the present the road consists of 2 almost blind bends along the proposed route and parking between the junctions of beech Lane and cedar cl / sycamore way at the southern section of larch drive at times would make it impossible for a bus to Travers safely.</p> <p>Also adjacent junctions would need to be considered as at present there is no junction markings to define priorities on any of the 5 junctions connecting to the main though road of larch drive and this again causes blind spots for exiting vehicles joining onto larch drive.</p>
<p>(10) Local Resident, (Didcot)</p>	<p>Support - I support the location of the proposed bus gate due to the following reasons:</p> <p>Reservation of my property with Taylor Wimpey Homes:</p> <p>I reserved my property (plot 851) built by Taylor Wimpey Homes at Brunel Rise on the Great Western Park development for which the address I was given at the time of legal completion was 46 Larch Drive, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 6DX. I reserved this property on the basis that I was shown detailed plans and drawings of the property I was buying and the surrounding area which showed the proposed bus gate and its location as per the Consultation Plan drawing on the online Consultation page website and I am in full agreement to its location as served by this notice to be exactly installed between the southern part of Diamond Drive and the northern part of Larch Drive a point 30 metres north of the junction with Willow End.</p> <p>The reservation process is a legal requirement which Taylor Wimpey's house buying process dictates and I based my decision at the time knowing that this is where the bus gate was planned to be installed which meant that no through way traffic would pass round the corner from Diamond Drive or come in through Larch Drive except for buses and pedal cycles as well as emergency vehicles and essential services. The proposed bus gate was also highlighted to me by my solicitor at the time of starting the formal house buying process in April 2019.</p> <p>Change of Street Name for 5 properties occupying Larch Drive:</p> <p>Following my legal completion data and soon after moving into my new home, I noticed that there were issues in receiving my post and delivery drivers and my friends and family who were unable to reach my address adequately.</p>

This was because the post code to my address was taking them to the other side of the bus gate (towards Willow End side) when this was entered onto the SAT NAV which meant that Royal Mail and delivery drivers were having to park their vans and lorries this side of the road and then having to walk up to my house which is located in a small cul-de-sac coming off Larch Drive to deliver post and goods and services for online orders to me. This is because there are three concrete blocks currently stopping vehicles from passing through on this road to get to my house because of where it situated which is inside the cul-de-sac just a few metres from where the bus gate is proposed to be installed. In addition, my friends and family can't get to me as the SAT NAV takes them to the other side of the bus gate also as opposed the other side of the road (Diamond Drive side) and therefore unable to enter into the cul-de-sac to come and see me meaning that they either have to park their car on the opposite side of the bus gate and walk up to my house or having to drive back out of the estate and come back in to the estate from Diamond Drive. I have taken photographs of the concrete blocks which are placed where the proposed bus gate is to be located so that you can visualize the extent of the issues people face when coming to deliver post or visitors coming to see me which I have sent as more detailed representations to Christian Mauz to his email address to further support why the bus gate now does need to be installed where it is proposed to be located.

For several months' for the people who do come and visit me I've ended up having to give them an alternative postcode like the Asda store which is situated on the estate and then them having to call me on my phone for me to give them directions on how to get to my house.

This was further escalated to South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) by one local resident who complained that Royal Mail and delivery drivers were parking outside their house (the other side of the bus gate towards Willow End) and leaving their vehicles outside their home to come and deliver post and parcels to the properties that are located in this quite little cul-de-sac. As a result, I and the surrounding home owners and occupiers of the 9 houses which the bus gate affects, were contacted by SODC Naming and Numbering department to ask our views and 3 potential options on how to combat the problems were highlighted to us. One of which was to have our street name changed and provide a new postcode. As a result, we all unanimously agreed to have a new street name, with a new address and post code given to us and a Public Consultation was undertaken by SODC. The outcome of this Public Consultation was that 5 of the 9 houses were given a new street name of Birch Close with a new house number and postcode which allows for Royal Mail and delivery drivers as well as visitors, to come to the right side of the estate and park their vehicles closer to our homes and deliver our post and goods and services with no problems and less confusion.

In support of my representations above, I have sent a separate email to Christian Mauz to his email address with photographs as evidence to show the layout of this part of the development where the proposed bus gate is to be installed, so that the above representations can be read in conjunction with this email to provide further clarity to the

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	<p>points I am making above and provides a street view of what is happening 'on the ground' and the layout of the road as it currently stands and will bring to life the problems we have experienced for several months since I have moved into my property.</p> <p>It has taken 7 months to resolve the ongoing issues myself and the other properties that are located in the small cul-de-sac have fought to change which has resulted in this part of the cul-de-sac having a new street name of Birch Close. The representations above and the supporting email and photographs are examples of the fact that I SUPPORT what is contained in this Public Consultation notice and I am therefore in AGREEMENT with the plans to install the bus gate shown as per the Consultation Plan and I wish for this to proceed as planned.</p>
(11) Local Resident, (Didcot)	<p>Support - <i>No comments.</i></p>
(12) Local Resident, (Didcot)	<p>Support - <i>No comments.</i></p>
(13) Local Resident, (Didcot)	<p>Support - We Fully support the proposed plan and were aware of this when we purchased the property. As any changes to the plan may affect access to our property we would not be happy.</p>
(14) Local Resident, (Didcot)	<p>Support - We fully support the decision of the Bollards being placed where proposed.</p> <p>When we bought the house one of the things that made a big difference was the fact that it was going to be only buses passing and the road will basically stop there and we will have a road clear and normal access to our house.</p> <p>We all now due to the issues you already know have changed the name of our road as was the more logical thing to do. All addresses are changed, plates with new street name are in place etc.</p> <p>It does not make any sense to be other way now. The plan should be followed since the beginning. Everyone when bought the houses knew this was the plan as Taylor Wimpey showed it, so it is not fair, practical or logical to change it. So as a household we fully support the bollard's to be place as the plan and we hope this is sorted as soon as possible.</p>

(15) Local Resident, (Didcot)	<p>Support - I would like to make the following points regarding the proposed Bus only gate. The plan includes signage to show a change in speed limit from 30 on Larch Drive to 20 on Diamond Drive. Rather than putting unnecessary additional signage at this point it would be better to reduce the speed limit at the entrance to Larch Drive to 20 for the whole of the Greenway estate in line with the neighbouring estate. Larch Drive has a play area for children and at either end of this section of the road there are bends where visibility is often restricted by vehicles parked on or near the corners.</p> <p>Additionally this section (by play area) of Larch Drive will need a yellow line on south side if a bus is going to be able to safely get passed as residents park outside their houses on the northern side of the road, and then visitors park on the south side turning this into a slalom track.</p> <p>Other than these comments I am supportive of the plans.</p>
(16) Resident, (Oxford)	<p>Support - <i>No comments.</i></p>
(17) Resident, (Oxford)	<p>Support - Easier to get around Didcot by bike with this.</p>