

Divisions affected: *University Parks, St Margarets*

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

14 NOVEMBER 2024

OXFORD: WOODSTOCK ROAD – PROPOSED PARALLEL CROSSINGS

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) **Approve the change of design from an approved zebra crossing to a parallel crossing with shared use facilities on Woodstock Road, Oxford.**

Executive Summary

1. This report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposals to construct a parallel crossing for people walking, wheeling, and cycling in place of the approved pedestrian zebra crossing on Woodstock Road, Oxford, 20 metres south of Bevington Road. The crossing will adhere to the Oxfordshire standard for parallel crossings, as shown in **Annex 1**.
2. The Woodstock Road improvement project started construction in summer 2024, and largely consists of making improvements for pedestrians and cyclists when crossing side road junctions and the Woodstock Road itself. A zebra crossing has previously been proposed (and approved) on the Woodstock Road between Bevington Road and Observatory Street. Following a review of the consultation feedback from stakeholders, road safety audit etc. it was decided a parallel crossing (a crossing for cyclists and pedestrians) would be more appropriate.
3. The new parallel crossing is designed for pedestrians and cyclists. Shared use provision with necessary signage will be provided on the footway either side of the parallel crossing, to ensure people cycling can easily connect to onwards destinations either along Bevington Road, Observatory Street or along Woodstock Road. These crossings have no larger impact on traffic than a pedestrian-only crossing, and create amenity value for cyclists and enhances the cycle network in the area.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

4. The Woodstock Road Sustainable Transport Improvements are consistent with and deliver on a number of the council's nine corporate priorities, including:
 - Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work
 - Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents
 - Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network
 - Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces
 - Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy
 - Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit
5. In July 2022, Oxfordshire County Council adopted its new Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) which sets a clear vision to deliver a net-zero transport system that enables Oxfordshire to thrive, protects the environment and makes the county a better place to live for all residents. Changing the crossing to accommodate cycling movements supports this vision.
6. To help deliver the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan vision, the adopted Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP) proposes actions to support a more sustainable and reliable transport system across the central Oxfordshire area, which this proposed change also supports.

Financial Implications

7. The crossing will be funded by the existing Woodstock Road, Housing and Growth Deal (HGD) funding. There are no significant change to project costs to implement a parallel crossing instead of a zebra.

Staff Implications & Risk Management

8. The project will proceed as previously instructed, and will require no additional staffing resource.
9. A risk register has been maintained, and will continue throughout the life of the project. The key risks will remain the same.

Legal Implications

10. No legal implications have been identified in respect of the proposals, with proposed changes to – in respect of traffic calming – governed by the Highways Act 1980 and other associated procedural regulations. Failure to adhere to these statutory processes could result in the proposals being challenged.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

11. The proposals will have a positive impact in creating a safer crossing point for people walking, wheeling and cycling.

Sustainability Implications

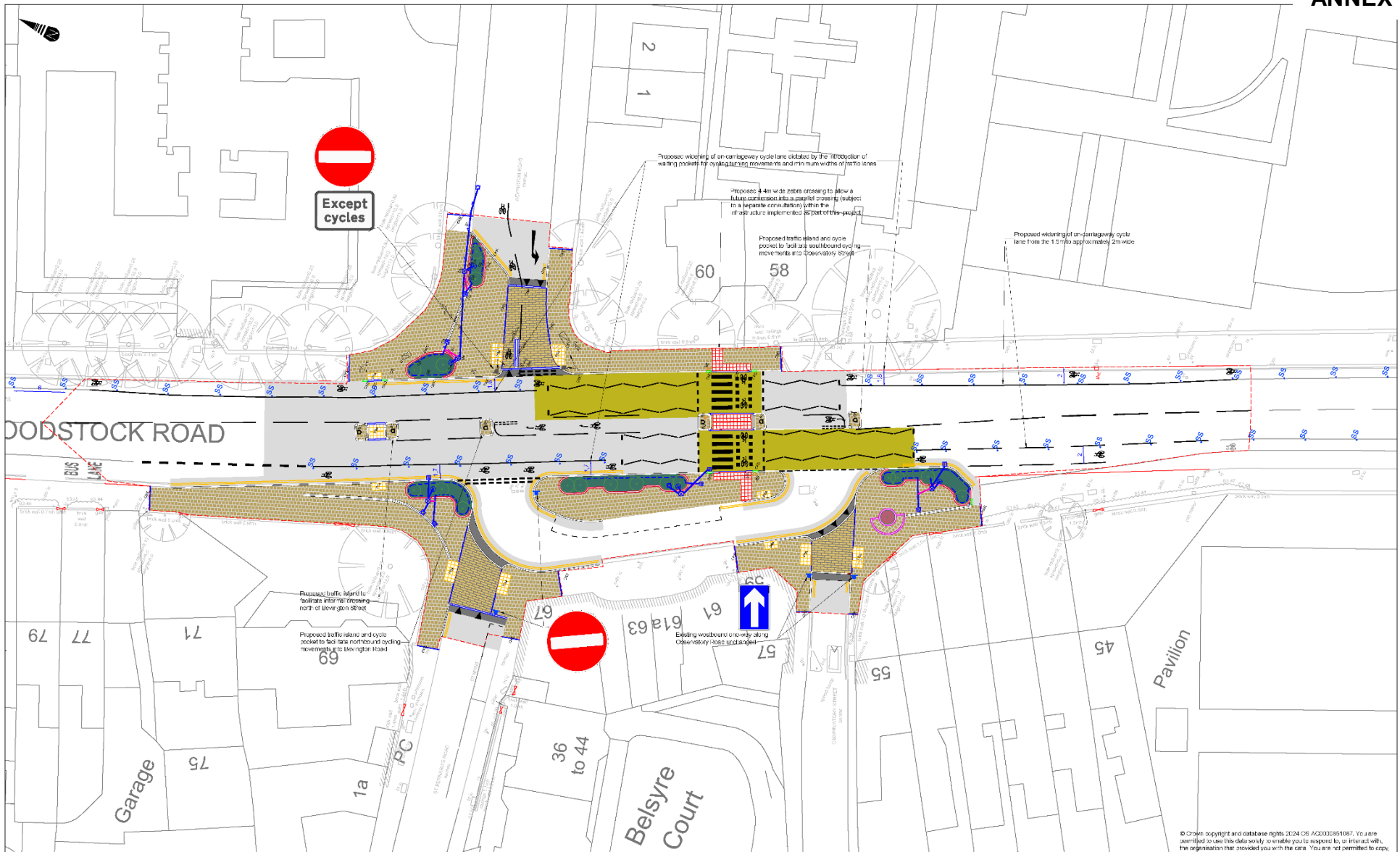
12. The proposals will help promote more sustainable, active travel for people in the immediate vicinity, specifically for those crossing from the Marston and Summertown areas to Jericho, the station and the west of the city.

Formal Consultation

13. A formal consultation was carried out between 26 September and 18 October 2024. An email was sent to statutory consultees & key-stakeholders, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Bus operators, countywide transport/access & disabled peoples user groups, Oxford City Council, the local City Cllr's, and the local County Councillors representing the University Parks & St Margarets divisions.
14. Letters were sent directly to approx. 90 properties in the immediate vicinity, and notices were also placed on site – adjacent to the proposed crossing location.
15. 17 responses were received via the online survey during the course of the formal consultation, comprising of: two objections (11%), two partially supporting (11%), 12 in support (70%), and one non-objection.
16. Additionally, a further four emails were received directly, with Thames Valley Police & Oxford Bus Company not-objecting, Oxfordshire Liveable Streets p[partially supporting, and the Walton Manor Residents Association objecting citing that they could see no tangible or substantive reasons offered for the proposed change.
17. The full responses are shown at **Annex 2**, and copies of the original submissions are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Officer Response to objections/concerns

18. One issue was raised around vehicle access, this will be resolved through direct discussion with the affected residents.
19. Another issue was raised over the previously agreed scheme, however this was addressed when approval was granted in July 2024.



LEGEND

Proposed boundary (within 15m group)	CRK - New propagation kerb (10m) - 100mm kerbs	Create sets on volume / 600mm	FD - Fluted (grooved) drainage channel
25m - Traffic island (15m - 15m)	CRK - New propagation kerb (10m) - 100mm kerbs	Asphalt ramp	FD - 150mm gully set out (15m)
75m - Traffic island (15m - 15m)	CRK - New propagation kerb (10m) - 100mm kerbs	Asphalt ramp	FD - 150mm gully set out (15m)
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16/08/2024	Final Issue	F3	FD	DA
Rev	Yes	Description	Rev	Client Ref
1				

Client: **OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Contract: **MILESTONE INFRASTRUCTURE**

Project: **Woodstock Road**

Document: **RSAs**

Sheet: **12 of 15**

Date: **16/08/2024**

Client Name: **A144 - Woodstock Road - Oxford Sustainable Transport Scheme**

Project Name: **General Arrangement RSAs**

Sheet: **12 of 15**

Rev	Yes	Description	Rev	Client Ref
1				

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For PFO Information

ANNEX 2

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	No objection – In line with previous consultation the Police have no objection to this change.
(2) Head of Built Environment and Infrastructure, (Oxford Bus Company)	<p>No objection – Officers will be aware that we were deeply involved in a co-production process on this corridor with a range of other stakeholders. While we had not seen proposals at this level of refinement at that stage, this process has successfully de-risked downstream activity in the design evolution up to this stage prior to implementation. This is very pleasing to note.</p> <p>We have examined these latest plans, and we have no objection.</p>
(3) County Cllr, (St Margarets division)	<p>Partially support – I have no objection to this proposal but note that southbound cyclists will also have a turning point in roadway to access Observatory Street. As the crossing is south of St Bernard's Road it will be useful for cyclists turning right if they are prepared to navigate the layby outside the shops rather than turn right from St Bernard's road. Is there any indication of the number of such cycle movements. The main use could be cyclists turning left from Bevington Road and wishing to cross to Observatory Street. I wonder whether the cycle crossing might be better placed further south for access to Green College and the ROQ roadway?</p>
4) Local group/organisation, (Walton Manor Residents Association)	<p>Object – The existing scheme makes provision for three traffic islands. They should all benefit cyclists and are indeed designed to do so according to the map. In addition to them there will also be a pedestrian crossing intended to help walkers wanting to cross the road to get to the shops and back etc. The text proposing the change to which this response relates talks rather grandly of the pedestrian crossing becoming a 'parallel crossing,' where seemingly pedestrians and cyclists will each have their own areas and hence (implicitly) won't wander into that part of the crossing which is not theirs. That's nonsense: people will cross where there is space to do so with some cyclists sticking to their area, some cyclists not knowing what they are supposed to do, and yet others just pushing in where they can.</p>

	<p>Further north along the Woodstock Road there is a simple set of pedestrian traffic lights at the junction with Staverton Road (with a similar set of lights at the Banbury Road end of Staverton Road). There is no parallel crossing at either end and pedestrians and cyclists seem to mingle amiably at this unified crossing</p> <p>It is not stated but perhaps it is hoped that cyclists will walk along the road to the 'parallel crossing' instead of using the other islands: fine if they do, but many will simply work out the quickest and closest way of getting to the side of Woodstock Road they want to reach, and aim for that – which in the overwhelming number of instances will mean the one of the three new islands. By way of illustration a cyclist wanting to cross from Bevington Road to the west side of the Woodstock Road in order to go north would use the nearest island. It is hard to work out why they would instead go south in order to go north!</p> <p>In short, cyclists are most likely to use the islands, which look like a good innovation, and most pedestrians will use the zebra crossing because they will feel safer on their own designated area.</p> <p>Since there are no tangible or substantive reasons offered for this change its purpose becomes little more than aspirational. That is not a reason for making it and the WMRA does not support it.</p>
(5) Local group/organisation, (Oxfordshire Liveable Streets)	<p>Partially support – While it should work ok for pedestrians, the proposed parallel crossing is poorly located for cycle use. Cycling access on the west side could be sorted out (though it looks like passing directly behind a car parking space, which may create risks), but on the east side it doesn't really work at all. People cycling south on Woodstock Rd will need to do abrupt turns onto the crossing off the cycle lane, or stop in the cycle lane to wait, with their intention to cross not at all clear to drivers. And people cycling eastwards across the parallel crossing will have no way to get to Bevington Rd except by cycling "contra-flow" on the footway.</p> <p>A better solution here would be to close the "half-exit" of Bevington Rd, keeping it as a cycle route, and to shift the parallel crossing to be in line with that. This diagram shows a possible layout, with cycle movements in green and car movements in brown. As well as providing straight-on approaches to the cycle crossing, the pedestrian crossing would be on the desire line for Bevington Rd.</p>
(6) Local resident, (Oxford, Woodstock Road)	<p>Object – It is not needed. I am not aware of any accident history at this location. A central refuge will suffice.</p>

<p>(7) Local resident, (Oxford, Woodstock Road)</p>	<p>Object – I live in the terrace opposite the entrance to St Anne's. From your consultation document I see that you plan to remove the only vehicular access that currently exists to our house. We need vehicular access to our house because we have a Pellet Boiler which needs to be fuelled ever so often. A big tanker arrives here in those cases, which blows the pellets into their pellet storage. If you put plants where you are currently proposing to put plants according to your plan, this will not be possible any more. I'm sure you don't care in the slightest if I can heat my house or not, but actually it took me a lot of effort to get this house renovated in an environmentally friendly way and get some vaguely environmentally-friendly heating option in, instead of the gas that was still being peddled to us. An airsource heatpump was not possible because of the neighbours.</p> <p>I just want to cry about your plans and the fact that you are just going ahead already even though we've said something before. I'm all for trees, for bikes (I myself cycle everywhere) and for improvement to cycling in this town, but it is really necessary for town planning to understand that occasional vehicular access to a building is generally needed for maintenance purposes. You apparently propose to cut off three buildings from vehicular access.</p>
<p>(8) Member of public, (Oxford, Great Clarendon Street)</p>	<p>Partially support – Parallel crossings are good, but not convinced this will be a high cycle traffic crossing point.</p>
<p>(9) Local resident, (Oxford, Acer Walk)</p>	<p>Support – Huge improvement over the existing traffic arrangements.</p>
<p>(10) Local resident, (Oxford, Bardwell)</p>	<p>Support – The current arrangements for pedestrian crossing are messy and misleading with multiple points of confusion. Making it clearer how to cross the road at this part of the Woodstock road and how priority is management would be a net benefit.</p> <p>I assume a similar argument applies for cyclists but as I have not tried to navigate this part of Woodstock Road recently I cannot comment.</p>
<p>(11) Local resident, (Oxford, Blandford Avenue)</p>	<p>Support – Please make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists. The area is so dominated by cars and the more land that can be repurposed for other uses, the better.</p>

<p>(12) Local resident, (Oxford, Butler Close)</p>	<p>Support – There are not many places to cross Woodstock Rd in this area. This would be especially useful for older residents and those with disabilities. I hope this is approved.</p>
<p>(13) Member of public, (Oxford, Gordon Woodward Way)</p>	<p>Support – I regularly come as a cyclist from the Science Park area, going towards Jericho, and have to cross Woodstock Road at this point, which can be fairly difficult because of (a) traffic/many cars and (b) cars not seeing me/expecting me when I come out of the small roads between Woodstock Road and Banbury Road.</p>
<p>(14) Local resident, (Oxford, Great Clarendon Street)</p>	<p>Support – This is a busy road, it needs a good crossing, and this seems well designed for safety.</p>
<p>(15) Local resident, (Oxford, Home Close)</p>	<p>Support – I support the proposals in general because they improve safety and amenity for pedestrians and cyclists. However there are a couple of details that seem to have been poorly designed or thought through. (1) The left turn for cyclists into Bevington Rd is very sharp, and will cause cycles to have to pull out into the car lane in order to make the turn. Please consider making this a significantly larger radius. (2) There are frequently cars parked badly in this area, and there is just a yellow line opposite the zebra crossing in front of the shops. This will get blocked by cars parking there. There needs to be some physical barrier or build-out to keep this space free, otherwise pedestrians and cycles will cross the zebra crossing and find their progress blocked by a badly parked car.</p>
<p>(16) Local resident, (Oxford, Leckford)</p>	<p>Support – We need more pedestrian crossings and lights that work in Oxford. It's very dangerous to be a pedestrian in this city</p>
<p>(17) Local resident, (Oxford, Linton Road)</p>	<p>Support – I am a cyclist living in North Oxford and any improvements to cycle safety for me and my family, including my 7 year old grand son, are welcome</p>
<p>(18) Local resident, (Oxford, Southmoor Road)</p>	<p>Support – I use this route to cross the city from bustling Jericho's cafes and shops towards Headington and East Oxford by bike. I can foresee that there will be greater use of electric bikes, scooters including mobility scooters in the years to come. So I think ensuring a wide and dedicated crossing here will be a good idea for the future and safeguard pedestrians somewhat.</p>

(19) Local resident, (Oxford, Sunderland Avenue)	Support – I support the parallel crossing but question why the zebra crossing cannot be made to the 10m max allowed by TSRGD. This should be the default width for all urban zebras.
(20) Local resident, (Oxford, Winchester Road)	<p>Support – I am in favour of improved infrastructure to support cycling and walking around this neighbourhood. My home, which I own, and where I live with my wife and two young children, is on Winchester Road. We try to cycle everywhere we go within the city, and mostly we succeed. But it is too often that we face angry drivers who try to intimidate us on the roads with impunity. This happened yesterday, when a taxi was annoyed that traffic had slowed to let us cross Banbury road, swerved into the bus lane and accelerated directly toward us, while staring at me. Infrastructure like that proposed protects families from such aggressive and ignorant drivers, and makes cycling with kids less stressful and hence more tenable.</p> <p>But I think that the location of the proposed crossing could be improved. It should be closer to the intersection with St. Bernards Road/Bevington Road, so that cyclists going east--west don't need to make such a wide jog up Woodstock. Also, I would like to mention that the Banbury crossing just north of North Parade Avenue should be redesigned. Many children cycle down North Parade and across Banbury in the mornings and there is lots of foot traffic in the afternoons and on weekends. The pavement along the west side of Banbury is too narrow, and presents a severe hazard with huge busses rushing past only centimetres from the curb. The crossing should be moved to align with the end of North Parade, or perhaps converted to a zebra crossing there with bike lane, like what is planned for Woodstock. Thanks for taking this into consideration.</p>
(21) Local resident, (Oxford, Canterbury Road)	No objection – Might as well give it a try - and feed back the survey outcomes publicly