

Divisions affected: *Hendreds & Harwell*

## **DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT**

**14 NOVEMBER 2024**

### **WESTERN VALLEY: B4493 DIDCOT ROAD / HARWELL LINK ROAD – PROPOSED PEGASUS & TOUCAN CROSSINGS**

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to:

Approve the following crossings, as advertised:

- a) Pegasus crossings on:
  - i. New Southern site access road, approx. 30 metres southeast of its roundabout junction with the B4493/Harwell Link Road,
  - ii. B4493 Didcot Road, approx. 30 metres west of its roundabout junction with the Harwell Link Road,
  - iii. New Northern site access road, approx. 70 metres north of the roundabout junction with the B4493/Harwell Link Road.
  
- b) Toucan crossing on the Harwell Link Road, located approx. 30 metres south of its roundabout junction with the B4493 Didcot Road

#### **Executive Summary**

2. This report presents responses to the statutory consultation on the proposals to construct a Toucan crossing (a signal-controlled crossing for use by both pedestrians and pedal cyclists) on the Harwell Link Road, and Pegasus crossings (a signal-controlled crossing with special consideration for horse riders) on the new Southern & Northern site access roads, and the B4493 Didcot Road, as shown in **Annex 1**.

#### **Financial Implications**

3. Funding for the proposals (including consultation) has been provided by the developers of the Valley Park development, Taylor Wimpey & Persimmon Homes.

## Legal Implications

4. 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.

Comments checked by: Jennifer Crouch, Head of Law (Environmental Team) – [Jennifer.Crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Jennifer.Crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## Equality and Inclusion Implications

5. No implications in respect of equalities or inclusion have been identified in respect of the proposals.

## Sustainability Implications

6. The proposals will help improve pedestrian, pedal cyclist & equestrian safety in the vicinity of the ‘Valley Park’ residential development.

## Formal Consultation

7. A formal consultation was carried out between 25 September and 25 October 2024. A notice was published in the Oxfordshire Herald Series newspaper, and 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, Vale of White Horse District Council, Didcot Town Council, Harwell, and Western Valley Parish Council, the local District Cllr’s, and the local County Councillors representing the Hendreds & Harwell, and the Didcot West divisions.
8. Letters were sent directly to approx. 10 properties in the immediate vicinity, and notices were also placed on site adjacent to the proposed crossing location.
9. Eight responses were received during the course of the formal consultation, and these are summarised in the table below:

Proposal	Object	Partially support	Support	No objection	Total
B4493 Didcot Road Pegasus	2	-	5	1	8
Southern access road Pegasus	2	-	5	1	8
Northern access road Pegasus	3	-	4	1	8

Harwell Link Road Toucan	4	-	2	2	8
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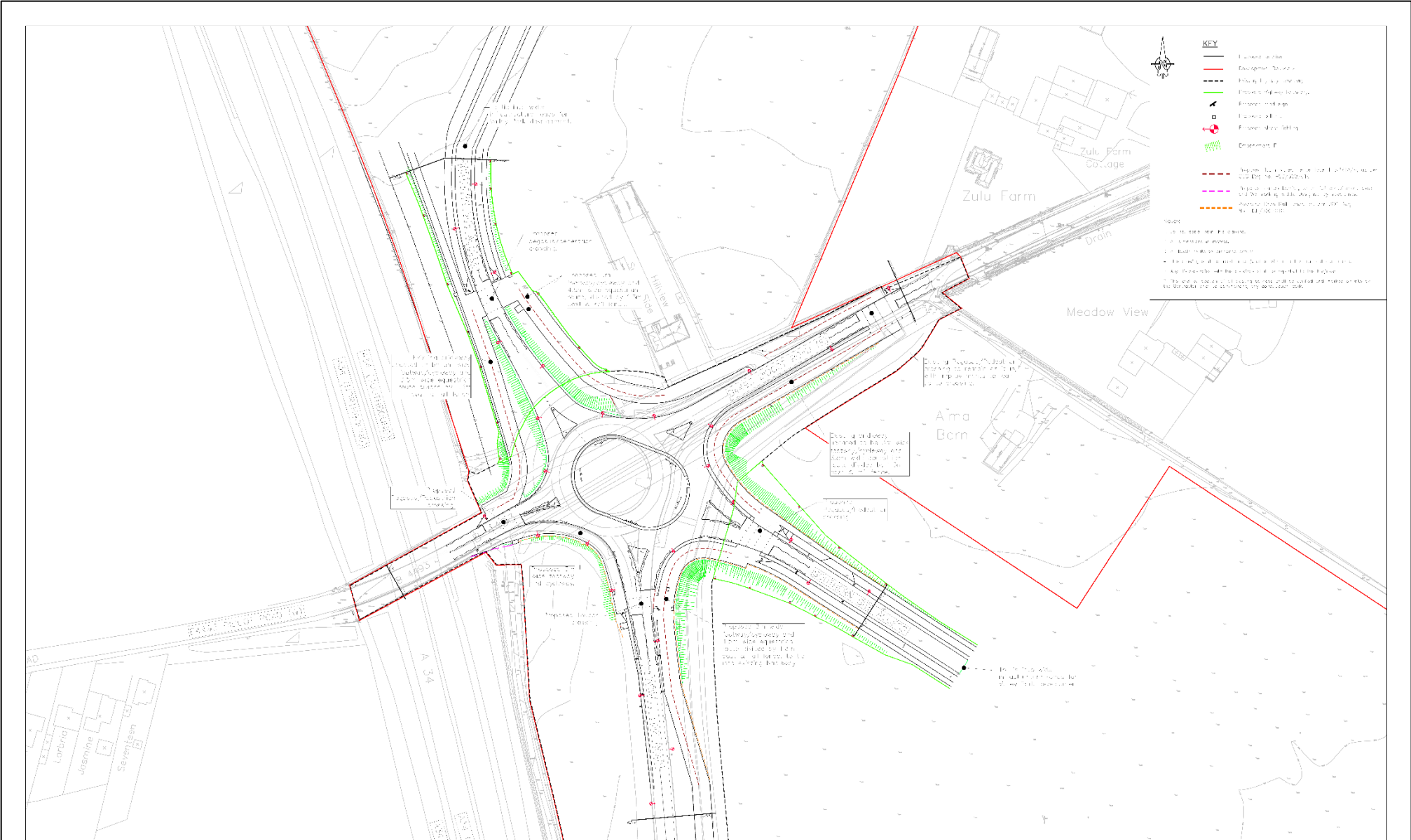
10. Additionally, Thames Valley Police submitted a non-objection.
11. The full responses are shown at **Annex 2**, and copies of the original submissions are available for inspection by County Councillors.

## **Officer Response to Objections/Concerns**

12. Objections were received on the proposed geometric changes to the roundabout design, stating this will bring in more traffic and increase the footfall of pedestrians and cyclists, which will in turn cause safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists (including those elderly) using the pedestrian crossings at the roundabout safely, and the danger of optimistic crime.
13. The revised roundabout design benefits from planning consent and is not part of the consultation being carried out, the proposed transport assessment completed at the planning stage demonstrated the requirement to improve capacity at this roundabout and to improve pedestrian, cyclist, and equestrian safety. The increased footfall will be because of housing development in the area, and this is why it is vital to ensure safe crossing facilities are provided for all Highway users. The new roundabout layout and crossing points will be lit and therefore reduces the chance of optimistic crime.
14. Concerns have been raised regarding increased noise and pollution, affecting local properties. A noise survey was carried out on the proposed changes at the planning and detailed design stages, and this shows no substantial increase in the noise generated by the works further to requirements set out in the land and compensations acts. The environmental impacts of the proposed works were established and agreed as part of the outline planning consent given for the Valley Park development.
15. One resident noted concerns with the drainage of surrounding land, whilst this is noted this does not affect the proposed works, the revised roundabout design and pedestrian crossings have been fully designed in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's drainage requirements.
16. It was noted in one response that the Pegasus crossing on the northern arm (into Valley Park) is off the pedestrian desire line. Pedestrian movements west to east and east to west on the northern side is set back from the carriageway, this is because of existing significant level differences which are unable to be overcome within the available Highway land and land owned by the developers. There is also a set distance that controlled crossings must be set back from un-signalised controlled roundabouts, because of the splitter island on this arm even without the level differences, the Pegasus crossing couldn't be located much closer to the roundabout than what is currently proposed.



RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
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<p>(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)</p>	<p><b>No objection</b> – The Police have no objection, and this includes the amendment to include one Toucan crossing.</p>
<p>(2) Western Valley Parish Council</p>	<p>B4493 Didcot Road Pegasus – <b>Support</b>  Southern access road Pegasus – <b>Support</b>  Northern access road Pegasus – <b>Support</b>  Western Valley Parish Council Supports this proposal.</p> <p>Harwell Link Road Toucan – <b>Support</b>  Western Valley Parish Council Supports this proposal.</p>
<p>(3) Local resident, (Didcot/Harwell, Didcot Road)</p>	<p>B4493 Didcot Road Pegasus – <b>Object</b>  Southern access road Pegasus – <b>Object</b>  Northern access road Pegasus – <b>Object</b></p> <p>I am writing to formally object to the proposed construction of a revised traffic circle and additional roads and the new Pegasus crossing at B4493 Didcot Road/Harwell Link road.</p> <p>I live at Hill View right next to the proposed changes. While I understand the intentions behind this project may include improving traffic flow and enhancing pedestrian safety, I believe it will significantly disrupt the safety and well-being of my family as well as my neighbour, as well as adversely affect our health due to increased noise and pollution. First and foremost, my primary concern lies with the safety implications for my family and my neighbours family as children and grand children often play around our houses.</p> <p>The introduction of a more complex traffic circle in an area that currently experiences minimal congestion is likely to attract more vehicular traffic, leading to an increased volume of cars, trucks, and buses. This influx will not only pose a danger to pedestrians but also increase the risk of accidents, especially for children and elderly residents who may be crossing the road.</p> <p>Traffic circles can create confusion among drivers, particularly those unfamiliar with navigating them. This can lead to erratic driving behaviors, including abrupt lane changes and sudden stops, heightening the potential for collisions. As a parent, I cannot overlook the increased risk this presents to my child as they navigate the area.</p>

Furthermore, the proposed Pegasus crossing—intended to facilitate safe passage for pedestrians and cyclists—will encourage more foot and bicycle traffic. While this might seem positive in theory, it raises concerns about overcrowding and potential conflicts between different modes of transportation. Opportunistic crime as a result of increased footfall is also a concern to me. Increased foot traffic in conjunction with heightened vehicle activity could create an environment where pedestrians feel unsafe, particularly during peak traffic times.

In addition to safety concerns, I must address the anticipated rise in noise and pollution that this construction will bring. My family has been managing asthma for some time, and we are acutely aware of the health risks associated with increased air pollution. The construction phase itself will generate significant noise and dust which will infiltrate my home, damage my vehicles and exacerbate my family's respiratory issues.

Once the project is completed, the likely increase in traffic volume will contribute to a continuous stream of noise from honking horns, revving engines, and the general din of vehicles, all of which can severely impact our quality of life. Moreover, the pollution generated by additional vehicles—especially diesel trucks and buses—will introduce harmful particulates into the air we breathe. Research shows that increased traffic congestion leads to higher emissions of nitrogen oxides and particulate matter, both of which are known to trigger asthma attacks and other respiratory conditions. For my family, who already faces challenges in managing asthma, this could mean more frequent health complications, increased medical expenses, and an overall decline in our well-being.

Finally, I urge the committee to consider alternative solutions that can improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety without compromising the health and safety of local residents.

In conclusion, I respectfully request that you reconsider the proposal for the revised traffic circle and Pegasus crossing. The potential risks to my family's safety and health are substantial and cannot be overlooked. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

I have already submitted an objection and unfortunately forgot to add my concern abouts water drainage. I will repaste my original objection after my thoughts on the water issue.

The fields around my home Hill View, are already incapable of draining the water. My home and that of my neighbours have also been almost flooded in the last 2 years. As I raise this with you on 17 October 2024, the recent heavy rains on 20 to 23 September flooded the fields around my home. They have not drained as yet almost 4 weeks later !! This has been brought to the attention of the council.

I fear that increased foundations and roads will not address these issues and that my home and vehicles are at risk if nothing is done to address the drainage issues.

	<p>Harwell Link Road Toucan – <b>Object</b> As above</p>
<p>(4) Local resident, (Great Western Park, Diamond Drive)</p>	<p>B4493 Didcot Road Pegasus – <b>Object</b> Southern access road Pegasus – <b>Object</b> Northern access road Pegasus – <b>Object</b> As a resident living near to it the sharp traffic increase, sound and air pollution and the potential for opportunistic crime with an easy getaway make this a no go for my family friends and I</p> <p>Harwell Link Road Toucan – <b>Object</b> As a resident living near to it the sharp traffic increase, sound and air pollution and the potential for opportunistic crime with an easy getaway make this a no go for my family friends and I</p>
<p>(5) Local resident, (Harwell, Reading Road)</p>	<p>B4493 Didcot Road Pegasus – <b>Support</b> Southern access road Pegasus – <b>Support</b> Northern access road Pegasus – <b>Object</b> I'm objecting to the northern site access road proposal as the crossing is too far from the junction for pedestrians. Good example of how inconvenient this is to pedestrians is to see how much journey time this adds to a pedestrian for the similarly provided crossing on the north side of the entrance to GWP</p> <p>Harwell Link Road Toucan – <b>Object</b> Supporting documentation does not give reasoning behind the need to turn this into a toucan crossing vs a zebra crossing. Why does this improve safety at the junction for pedestrians and why were vehicle calming measures dismissed making this the proposal?</p> <p>No indication as to the wait period between button presses is provided. This has a significant impact on the experience of using the crossing</p>
<p>(6) Local resident, (Harwell, Barberry Drive)</p>	<p>B4493 Didcot Road Pegasus – <b>Support</b> Southern access road Pegasus – <b>Support</b> Northern access road Pegasus – <b>Support</b></p>



	<p>Most robust form of crossing and still allows horseriders to have a safe method of crossing</p> <p>Harwell Link Road Toucan – <b>Object</b> Whole point of the link road was to alleviate traffic. Will only hold up</p>
(7) Local Cllr, (Didcot, Greenfinch Road)	<p>B4493 Didcot Road Pegasus – <b>Support</b> Southern access road Pegasus – <b>Support</b> Northern access road Pegasus – <b>Support</b> N/A</p> <p>Harwell Link Road Toucan – <b>Support</b> N/A</p>
(8) As part of a group/organisation, (Didcot area Equestrian Riding Centres & Liveries)	<p>B4493 Didcot Road Pegasus – <b>Support</b> Southern access road Pegasus – <b>Support</b> Northern access road Pegasus – <b>Support</b> Ensuring equestrian access is safe</p> <p>Harwell Link Road Toucan – <b>No objection</b> We welcome the opportunity for safer road crossings for equestrians wherever possible.</p>
(9) As part of a group/organisation, (BHS)	<p>B4493 Didcot Road Pegasus – <b>No objection</b> Southern access road Pegasus – <b>No objection</b> Northern access road Pegasus – <b>No objection</b> The BHS appreciates that the additional new roads on this roundabout will require safe crossing points for equestrians using the public bridleway. So therefore supports the provision of Pegasus crossings.</p> <p>I would just like to highlight that the fewer crossings points needed to be negotiated by equestrians, the easier and safer it is for them, as well as being financially cheaper. The anti-clockwise route would require equestrians to make 3 to 4 crossing attempts and the clockwise route would require 1 to 2 crossing attempts.</p>

	<p>It appears that the proposed plans seek to make the most from the available wider verge widths and existing crossing points. This may be the reasoning for the proposed longer route.</p>
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Harwell Link Road Toucan – **No opinion**

As above