

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT -15 MAY 2014

SCIENCE VALE: WINNAWAY CYCLE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**Report by Deputy Director of Environment & Economy
(Commercial)**

Introduction

1. This report details the results of a public consultation on the installation of a series of measures on the A417, Winnaway and A4185, to improve safety and access for walkers, cyclists and equestrians between the two halves of Harwell Parish. Some minor amendments have been made to the proposals in line with comments received and the report recommends that approval be granted to proceed to implementation. A set of reduced scale plans showing the location and layout of the proposed measures are attached at Annex 1.

Background

2. In 2013 Harwell Oxford Joint Venture submitted a bid to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Growing Places Fund and has been granted funding. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has been commissioned with a Memorandum of Understanding to deliver the scheme by March 2015. The bid was to fund a range of cycle improvement schemes within the Enterprise Zone and Science Vale area.
3. The routes for improvement were agreed between Bicycle User Groups and OCC Transport Planners, specialising in cycling. The Winnaway is seen as a key route for improvement and has been given priority for the funding. The brief requires a clean hard surface for cyclists travelling between Harwell Oxford Campus and Harwell village and improved crossing opportunities on the A4185 and A417.
4. The project has been split into three sections as detailed below.

A417 Junctions: The proposals aim to assist crossing the A417 and reduce traffic speeds in the vicinity. Works will include: Pedestrian/Cyclist refuge islands, a new mini roundabout at the junction between the A417 and B4493, widening and conversion of existing paths to shared-use, an enhanced gateway treatment and a 30mph vehicle activated sign.

5. *Winnaway Bridleway:* The proposals aim to formalise this route for use by cyclists and equestrians by dedication as a Bridleway. (The route is currently a Public Footpath, but has historically been used by cyclists and equestrians.) Proposals include widening and resurfacing the existing path for cyclists and

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walkers and it is expected that equestrians will use the grass verges or the stone track, as they prefer a softer surface.

6. *A4185 Shared-Use Path*: The proposals aim to assist crossing the A4185 by providing a link to the signalised crossing. The works will include a new shared-use path between the Winnaway and the existing Toucan Crossing/Sustrans Route 544.
7. The A417 and A4185 sections are within the Public Highway, but the Winnaway is privately owned. The dedication to Bridleway will need to be agreed with the adjacent residents/land owners. Early informal consultation established that the majority were in favour of the scheme, but three residents midway are against any improvements. This has necessitated the cycle path transferring from the east to the west side of the Winnaway for a short section.
8. The proposed scheme will contribute to:
 - Provide cycling commuters with a more direct and safer route to travel to Harwell Oxford Campus and the Enterprise Zone.
 - Provide leisure users with an improved facility and greater access to local amenities by sustainable modes of transport.
 - Increasing the numbers of people travelling sustainably with consequent benefits in terms of personal health.
 - Provision of a comprehensive cycle network in the area to enable access to employment, homes and services.
 - Reducing congestion and carbon levels.

Consultation

9. Public consultation on all three sections of the proposed scheme was undertaken between 10 February and 13 March 2014.
10. Consultation was carried out with Emergency Services, County, District & Parish Councillors, Local User Groups (including Cycling, Walking, Public Transport & Disability Groups) and all residents and landowners within the area of the scheme. Copies of the public notice were posted on street furniture within the vicinity of the proposed scheme.
11. 35 written responses have been received during the consultation process with 23 in favour, ten with general comments on the scheme and two objections. (There was originally a third objection, but after meeting and discussing the scheme in more detail the objection was withdrawn and replaced with support for the scheme.)
12. The responses commenting on the scheme were asking for more details which were supplied. Comments from the OCC Public Transport Team resulted in segregation of the shared-use path behind the bus stop on the A4185.
13. The objections received were based on:

- Opposition to changing the Winnaway from a Public Footpath to a Bridleway (lack of maintenance by OCC, obstruction of access for residents, only offering benefit to a selected part of the community).
 - Opposition to the shared-use paths and the position of the mini roundabout.
14. Thames Valley Police confirmed that they have no objections to the proposals.
15. Responses received in support of the scheme have been from Harwell Parish Council, the County Councillor, local residents, the local Bicycle User Group and members of the local community who regularly use the route for commuting and leisure. There have also been responses from cyclists who currently do not use the route but would like to in the future.

Officers Comment on Consultation Responses

16. The A417 and A4185 sections of this scheme are within the Public Highway, but the Winnaway is not. The land is not registered and OCC Legal team have stated that there is a presumed ownership up to the centre of the Way by the adjacent Landowners. A dedication to Bridleway will need to be agreed with all the residents/land owners on the side adjacent to the proposed Bridleway. Early informal consultation established that the majority are in favour of the scheme, but three residents midway are against any improvements. This has made it necessary to transfer the cycle path from the east to the west side of the Winnaway for a short section. (See drawings S-000579-FEA-000-038 and 039 for the layout in front of these properties and a photograph looking south, all within Annex 1). They have now formally objected to the Bridleway.
17. A summary of responses received along with officer comments is included at Annex 2 to this report. Copies of the consultation responses are available for inspection in the Members' Resource Centre.

How the Project Supports LTP3 Objectives

18. The project meets Local Transport Plan 3 objectives, especially:
- Improving accessibility to work, education and services
 - Securing infrastructure and services to support development
 - Developing and increasing cycling and walking for local journeys, recreation and health.

Equality and Inclusion

19. The scheme proposals are not considered to have the potential to affect people differently according to their gender, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation, age or disability.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

20. Staff resources from the Highways and Transport Service will be required to deliver the project.
21. Funding for the scheme is allocated from LEP Growing Places Fund for construction in financial year 2014/15.

RECOMMENDATION

22. **The Cabinet Member for Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposals as shown in Annex 1 to this report and to progress to detailed design and delivery in 2014/15.**

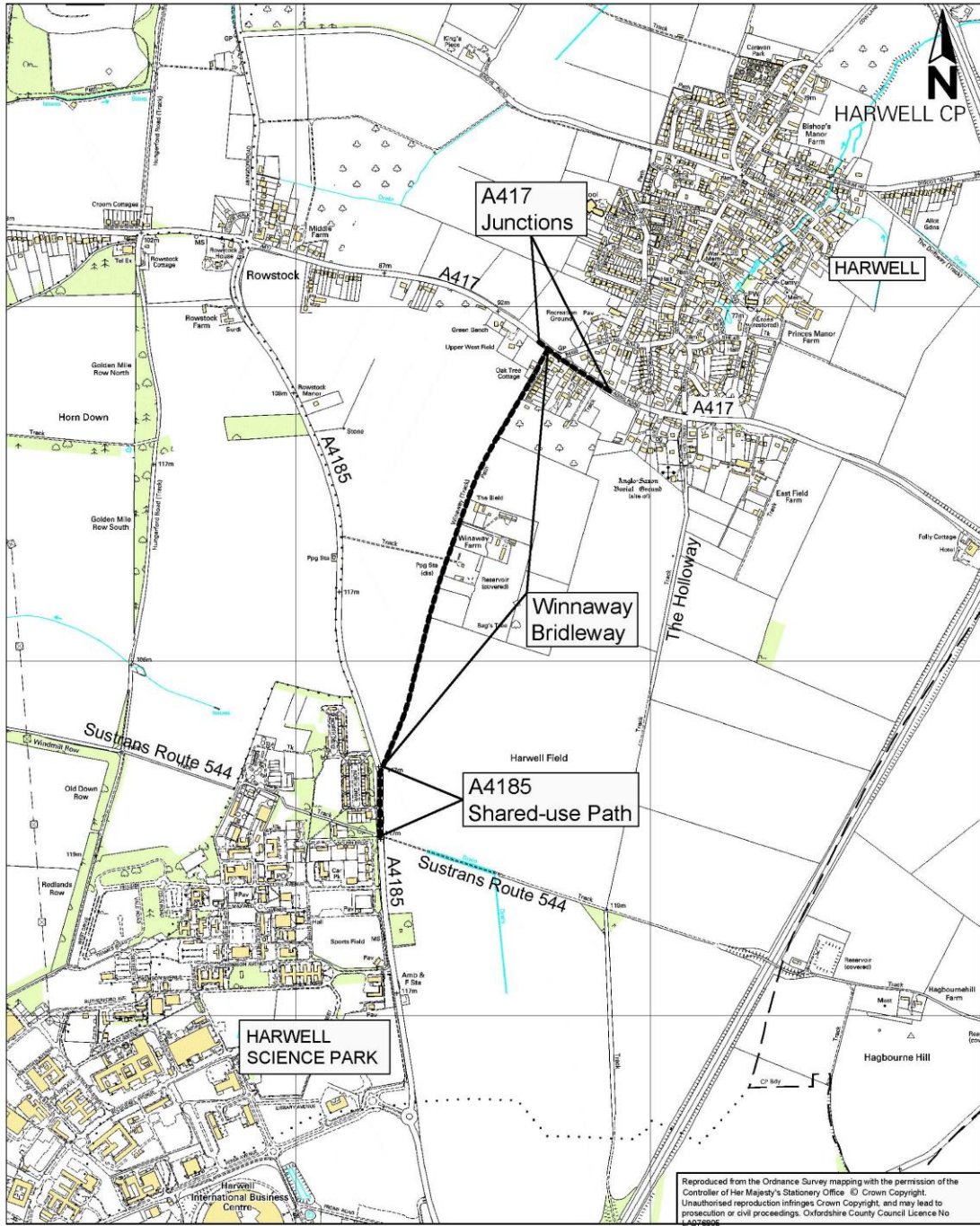
MARK KEMP

Deputy Director of Environment & Economy (Commercial)

Background papers: Consultation Documentation


Contact Officer: Jim Daughton

April 2014



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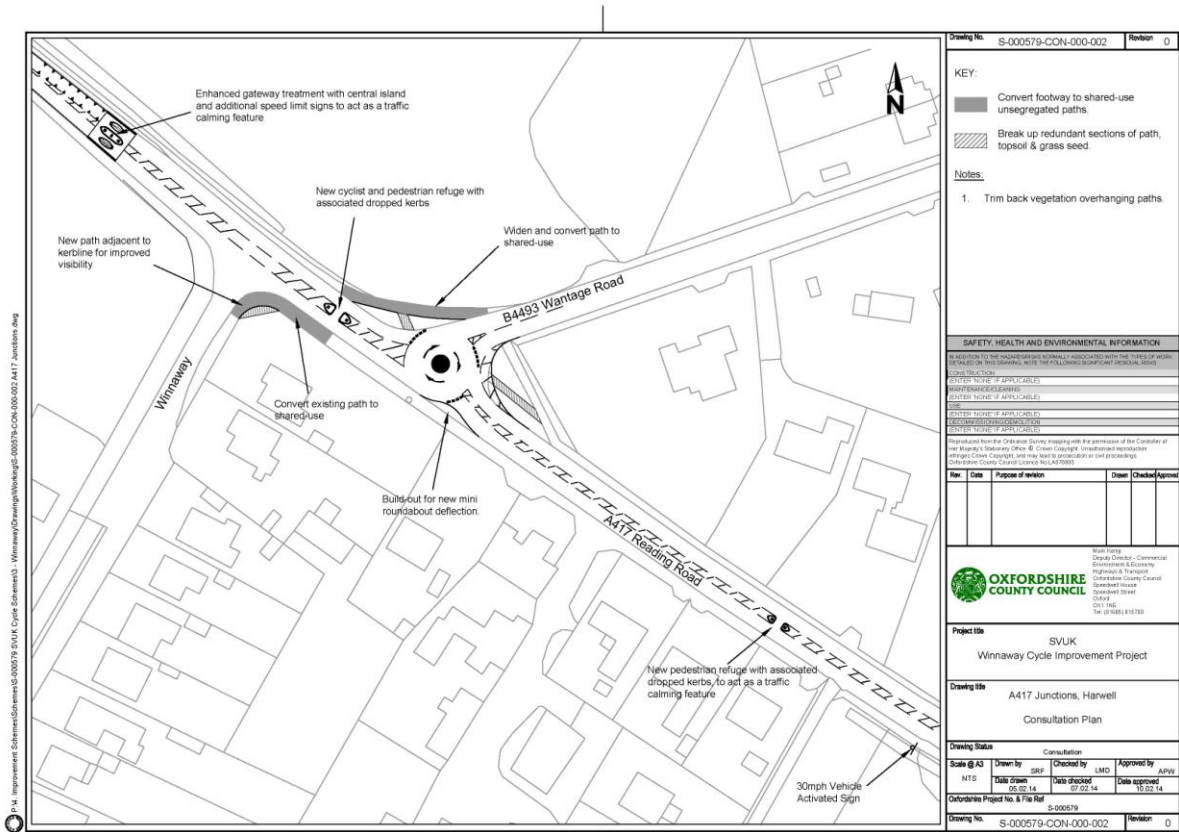
SVUK Winnaway Cycle Improvement Project					
Location Plan					
S-000579/CON/000/001				Rev. 0	
Drawn by:	Date:	Checked by:	Date:	Approved by:	Date:
SAC	25.11.13	LMD	05.02.14	APW	07.02.14



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

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Drawing No: S-000579-CON-000-002 Revision: 0

KEY:

- Convert footway to shared-use unsegregated paths.
- Break up redundant sections of path, topsoil & grass seed.

Notes:

- Trim back vegetation overhanging paths.

SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

IN ADDITION TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE TITLE OF WORKS SHOWN ON THIS DRAWING, NOTE THE FOLLOWING RELEVANT REGULATORY INFORMATION:

CONSTRUCTION: ENTER NONE IF APPLICABLE

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No.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Winnaway
 Deputy Director - Commercial Development & Economy
 Planning & Transport
 Oxfordshire County Council
 Council House
 Cowley Street
 OX11 1BE
 Tel: 01895 816100

Project title: SVUK
Winnaway Cycle Improvement Project

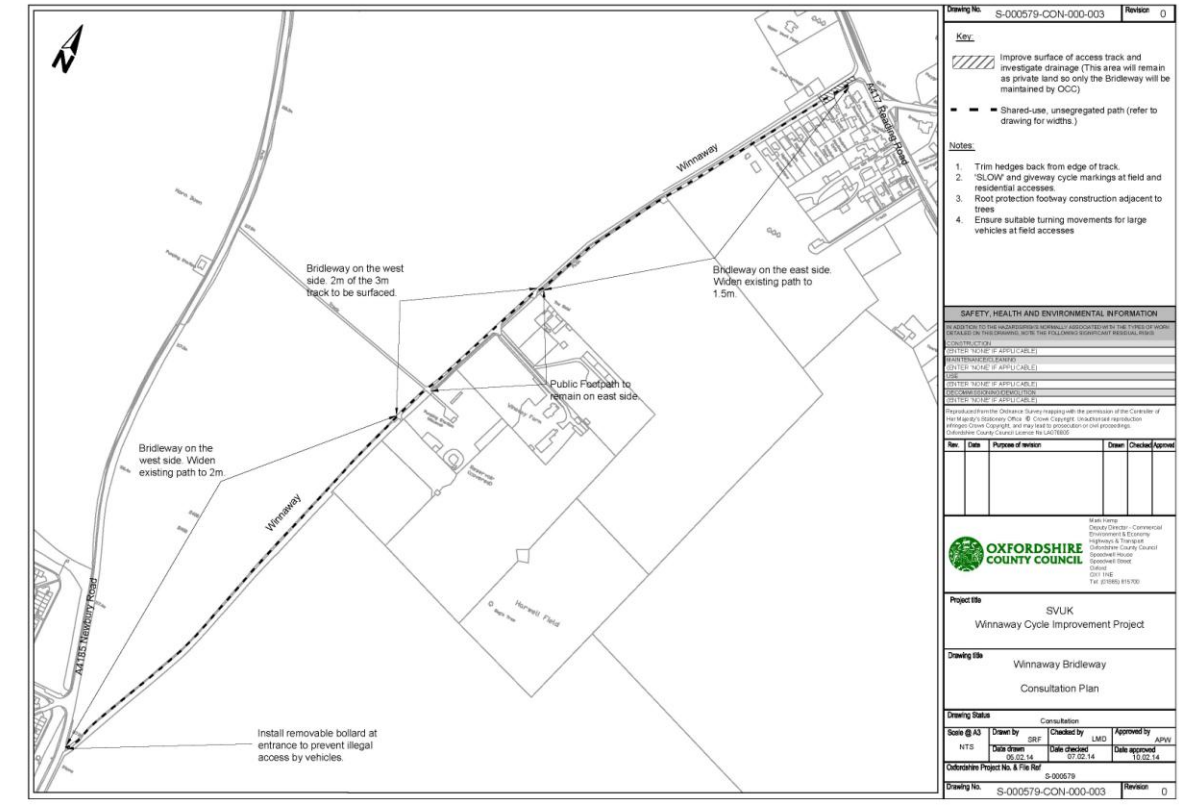
Drawing title: A17 Junctions, Harwell
Consultation Plan

Drawing Status: Consultation

Scale @ A3	Drawn by	SRF	Checked by	LMD	Approved by	APW
NTS	Date drawn	06.02.14	Date checked	07.02.14	Date approved	15.02.14

Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref: S-000579

Drawing No: S-000579-CON-000-002 Revision: 0



Drawing No: S-000579-CON-000-003 Revision: 0

Key:

- Improve surface of access track and investigate drainage (This area will remain as private land so only the Bridleway will be maintained by CCC)
- Shared-use, unsegregated path (refer to drawing for widths.)

Notes:

- Trim hedges back from edge of track.
- "SLOW" and gateway cycle markings at field and residential accesses.
- Root protection footway construction adjacent to trees.
- Ensure suitable turning movements for large vehicles at field accesses.

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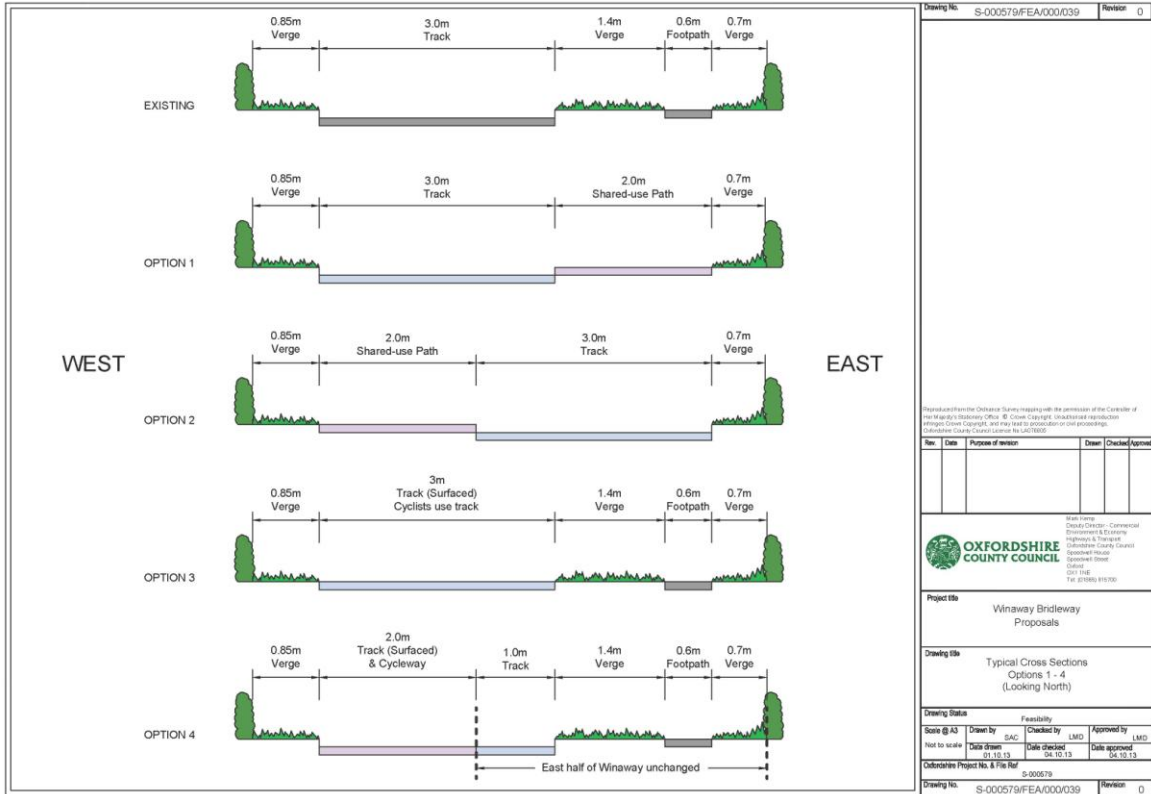
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NTS	Date drawn	06.02.14	Date checked	07.02.14	Date approved	15.02.14

Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref: S-000579

Drawing No: S-000579-CON-000-003 Revision: 0

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Summary of comments received during Consultation

Respondent	Support proposal	Comments	Officer Comments
Harwell PC	Y	In favour of the scheme, gives its full support and particularly welcomes improvements at each end of the Winnaway. Regrets that path has to deviate to the west midway.	There has been early and continual communication with the PC. The PC is aware that the three residents mid-way are against any improvements and moving the path to the west side for the section in front of their properties is the only solution.
OCC Area Steward	Y	Great Idea. Query size of refuge islands and turning movements	Confirm refuge size and that they have been positioned to allow suitable turning movements.
Winnaway Resident	Y	Pleased to hear about proposed improvements. Request additional design details.	Have agreed to provide further details when we have completed the detailed design.
Local Cycling Commuter	Y	I regularly cycle between Didcot & Harwell Campus & implementing these proposals would make it the safest route. It has my strongest support.	Support for the scheme noted.
Local Cyclist & Commuter	Y	Support this project which encourages car user to travel by bike instead. Intend to use once the path is improved.	Support for the scheme noted.
Local Resident & Walker	Y	Proposed improvements will be of great benefit. Rbt will help traffic flows and reduce speeds. A4185 path will increase safety immeasurably.	Support for the scheme noted.
3no. properties located mid-way along the Winnaway	N	Object to changing the Winnaway from a Public Footpath to a Bridleway. Three main points mentioned: lack of maintenance by OCC, obstruction of access for residents, only offering benefit to a selected	There have been various discussions and meetings with the residents prior to formal consultation. After hearing their concerns four different layout options were produced to find a mutually agreeable solution. Unfortunately they rejected all four and so we have proceeded

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Respondent	Support proposal	Comments	Officer Comments
		part of the community.	<p>with Option 4, where there is no construction on their half of the Winnaway (see drawings S-000579-FEA-000-038 and 039 in Annex 1). 2m of the 3m track will be surfaced and its use will have to be shared by cyclists and residents' vehicles. This option will improve visibility when the residents are turning out of their accesses.</p> <p>Once it becomes a Bridleway, OCC will maintain the path for pedestrian and cyclist use and will only maintain the track to a suitable level for equestrian use. Maintenance of the track to a level suitable for vehicles will remain with the private owners. Residents did not want cyclists to use a dedicated path in front of their accesses, so they now have to share a short stretch of the access track. This is a very short length and the likelihood of their access being obstructed is very low.</p> <p>This scheme is offering benefit to a wide spectrum of the community, including walkers, cyclists, equestrians and reduced traffic for road users. There are already a large number of cyclists using the route and this scheme will take them off of the track and onto a dedicated shared-use path, allowing for easier vehicle access for the three residents.</p>
Local Resident	Y	Strongly support proposals.	Support for the scheme noted.
Local Resident	Y	Fully supportive of proposed improvements. This was the missing link to a good off road route to Harwell Business Centre.	Support for the scheme noted.

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Respondent	Support proposal	Comments	Officer Comments
Local Resident and Leisure User	Y	Happy with the plan.	Originally objected to the shared-use paths. Objection was withdrawn after meeting on site on 11-03-14 to look at visibility and provide more details.
County Councillor	Y	A long awaited scheme.	Support for the scheme noted.
Local Resident & Cyclist	Y	I welcome this project. Winnaway is currently in poor condition and it's difficult to cross the A4185. Welcome improvements to A417, which will calm traffic and help pedestrians and cyclists cross. It's currently difficult to turn right out of Wantage Rd by car or bike, new roundabout will help this.	Support for the scheme noted.
Local Resident	Y	Excellent Idea.	Support for the scheme noted.
Local Resident & Commuter	Y	I strongly support all three aspects of the proposed scheme. I use the Winnaway to walk or cycle to Harwell Campus in good weather only due to the condition of the route, otherwise I use my car. I do not feel safe cycling the road route on A417 & A4185. These improvements will mean I can cycle/walk to work more frequently with associated health & environmental benefits.	Support for the scheme noted.
Local Resident	Y	Proposals look great. Will enhance & encourage cycling/walking in the area and will provide extra safety from Harwell Campus to	Support for the scheme noted.

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Respondent	Support proposal	Comments	Officer Comments
		Harwell Village. An excellent proposal, money well spent.	
Winnaway Resident	Y	Pleased that improvements are being made to the path. Happy with proposals. Concerned that it will encourage vehicles to use it as a short cut. Concerned that cyclists will speed down the path and be a danger to others.	The stone track adjacent to the path at the north end will remain unchanged and should not look any more inviting to motorists. There will be bollards at the south end to prevent unwanted access. The visibility for cyclists and pedestrians is generally very good along the route, so with the wider path there should be space to pass more safely.
Local Resident	Y	Fully support this project.	Support for the scheme noted.
Local Resident & Leisure Cyclist	Y	Looks really good. Should encourage people to cycle from Harwell/Didcot to Harwell Campus.	Support for the scheme noted.
Local Bicycle User Group	Y	Strongly support this project. Would like the cycle island on A417 to be wider. A section of the Winnaway path is prone to ponding, would like this addressed. Would like the right turn lane on the A4185 into the Winnaway to be retained.	Met with representatives of the group on 05-03-14. Will look at widening the cycle island during detailed design. We are aware of the path ponding issue and a solution will be included in the design. We will retain the right turn lane, subject to Safety Audit. Will keep the group informed during detailed design.
Local Cyclist, Commuting & Leisure	Y	This is an excellent project and I strongly support it. This is a key opportunity to enable cycling, make it safer and take traffic off the roads. Less keen on the mini roundabout proposed for A417, can't see how it would make cycling safer.	The mini roundabout has been introduced to improve cyclist right turns out of the B4493. To improve safety there will only be single lane entry to the roundabout with suitable deflection on approaches and additional speed reducing measures the A417.
General Respondent	Y	I support this plan. It will allow more people to feel comfortable commuting to and from the Science Park.	Support for the scheme noted.

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Respondent	Support proposal	Comments	Officer Comments
General Respondent	Y	I support this project.	Support for the scheme noted.
Local Resident & Leisure Cyclist	N	Happy with Winnaway & A4185 proposals but object to A417 proposals. Position of the mini roundabout: Should be moved further east along the A417 to slow traffic travelling from Rowstock into Harwell. Shared-use paths: Concerned about pedestrians sharing the path with cyclists, safety of cyclists returning to the carriageway and cyclists crossing the road to use the paths.	Meet with objector on 28-03-14 to discuss concerns. The mini roundabout is positioned for optimum visibility, vehicle approach deflection and to cater for turning movements of large farm vehicles. It is unlikely that we will be able to reposition it, but will look to during detailed design. We are proposing a number of measures to slow traffic on the approach from Rowstock, including the roundabout itself where vehicles will now have to give-way before turning. Shared-use paths have been shown to work well in locations with good visibility such as this. They are only short link sections so cycle speeds will not be high. These sections of shared-use path are being proposed for the less confident cyclists. There will be cycle give-way markings at the points where cyclists re-join the carriageway and sufficient visibility to do so safely. Traffic will also be travelling slower due to the mini roundabout and other traffic calming measures. If cyclists choose to cross the carriageway to use the shared-use paths, they will have to use the same caution in crossing as pedestrians would. Again, the slowed traffic will make this safer.
Local Resident	Y	Sounds like a splendid idea. From a walker, cyclist & runner.	Support for the scheme noted.
Harwell Oxford Campus	Y	Harwell Oxford welcomes proposals to improve the Winnaway as a cycle route. Growing group of	Support for the scheme noted.

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Respondent	Support proposal	Comments	Officer Comments
		<p>employees commute to the Campus by bicycle and we hope to see that increase. This surfaced off road route will provide a viable alternative to driving and a safer more usable cycle journey.</p>	