

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 31 MAY 2019

OXFORD: A40 AT RISINGHURST – PROPOSED CLOSURE OF CENTRAL RESERVE GAP AT JUNCTION WITH ACCESS TO FORMER NIELSENS SITE

Report by Director for Infrastructure Delivery, Communities

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed closure of the central reserve gap which currently permits the right turn to the A40 eastbound carriageway from the former Nielsen's office site on the south side of the A40, as advertised.

Executive summary

2. The former Nielsen's office site on the south side of the A40 is being redeveloped for residential use and it is considered advisable on road safety grounds as a result of the revised use of the land to close the existing gap in the central reserve that currently enables vehicles to turn right from the development site to the A40 eastbound carriageway as part of a planned major maintenance scheme in the summer of 2019.

Introduction

3. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation on a proposal to close the central reserve gap which currently permits the right turn to the A40 eastbound carriageway from the former Nielsen's office site on the south side of the A40.

Consultation

4. Formal consultation on the proposals as shown at Annex 1 was carried out between 21 March and 19 April 2019. A public notice was placed in the Oxford Times newspaper, and sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Local Bus Companies, Oxford City Council, Risinghurst & Sandhills Parish Council, Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council, local County and City Councillors.
5. Four responses were received. One objection from the local County Councillor, one expression of support (albeit with additional concerns) from the Parish Council and 2 responses not objecting. The responses are recorded at Annex 2 with copies of the full responses available for inspection by County Councillors.

Response to objections and other comments

6. Thames Valley Police expressed no objection to the proposals.
7. County Councillor Glynis Phillips, the local member, while supportive in principle of the proposal, nevertheless objected on the grounds that more work was needed to assess the impact of the impact of closing this gap on delays at the already very busy A40 Headington roundabout and that the scheme did not address the wider issues of safety on this part of the A40, in particular at the Collinwood Road junction, noting that a planned report on options here being prepared on behalf of the County Council had not yet been completed.
8. Risinghurst and Sandhills Parish Council, while supporting the proposal also expressed similar concerns to Councillor Phillips on the impact on traffic delays at the A40 Headington roundabout and also cited the risk of traffic using the residential roads at Risinghurst as a 'rat run' in the event of congestion on the A40 westbound carriageway. Noting the additional traffic from developments including the Nielsen site but also the major Barton Park residential development, the parish council suggested that the options report for the Collinwood Road junction should also include an assessment for fully signalling this junction to allow right turns to the A40 to be made from Collinwood Road.
9. The above objection and concerns are noted but it is considered that the proposed closure of the gap is still highly desirable on road safety grounds, as acknowledged in both the above responses and that the opportunity afforded by the planned major maintenance work scheme to carry out this work at much lower cost than if it was to be progressed at a later date as a separate scheme should not be missed.
10. The Oxford Bus Company responded expressing no objection to the proposal.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

11. The proposals would help facilitate the safe movement of traffic.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

12. Funding for the proposed measures will be met from the planned major maintenance scheme.

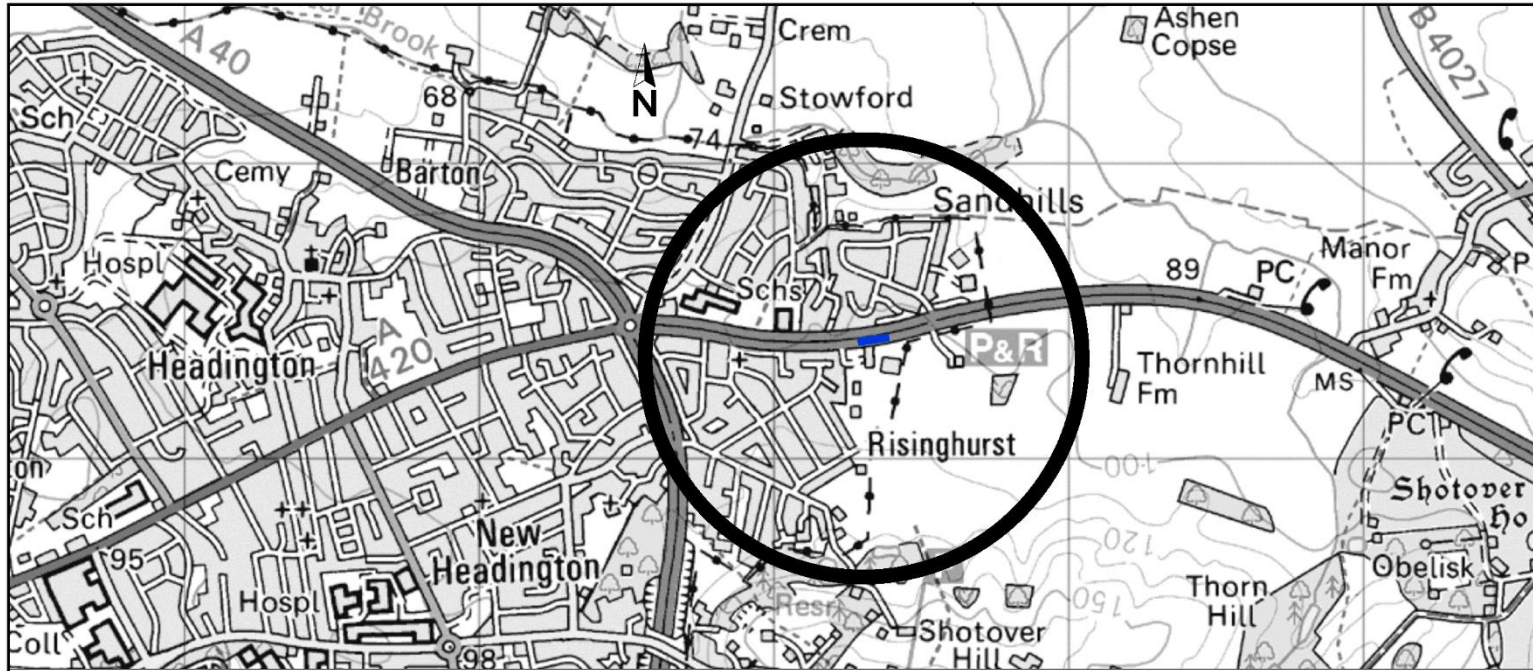
OWEN JENKINS

Director of Community Operations

Background papers: Plan of proposed closure of central reserve gap.
Consultation responses

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May 2019



Drawing No. S-000984-SKA-HGN-ZZ-DR-CH-0010-S2 Revision F0

Key

- Location of TRO (A40 Thornhill Park & Ride)
- Area of Carriageway to be closed

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved

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Project title
PRINCIPAL ROAD SCHEME 2019 - 20
A40 THORNHILL
OXFORD

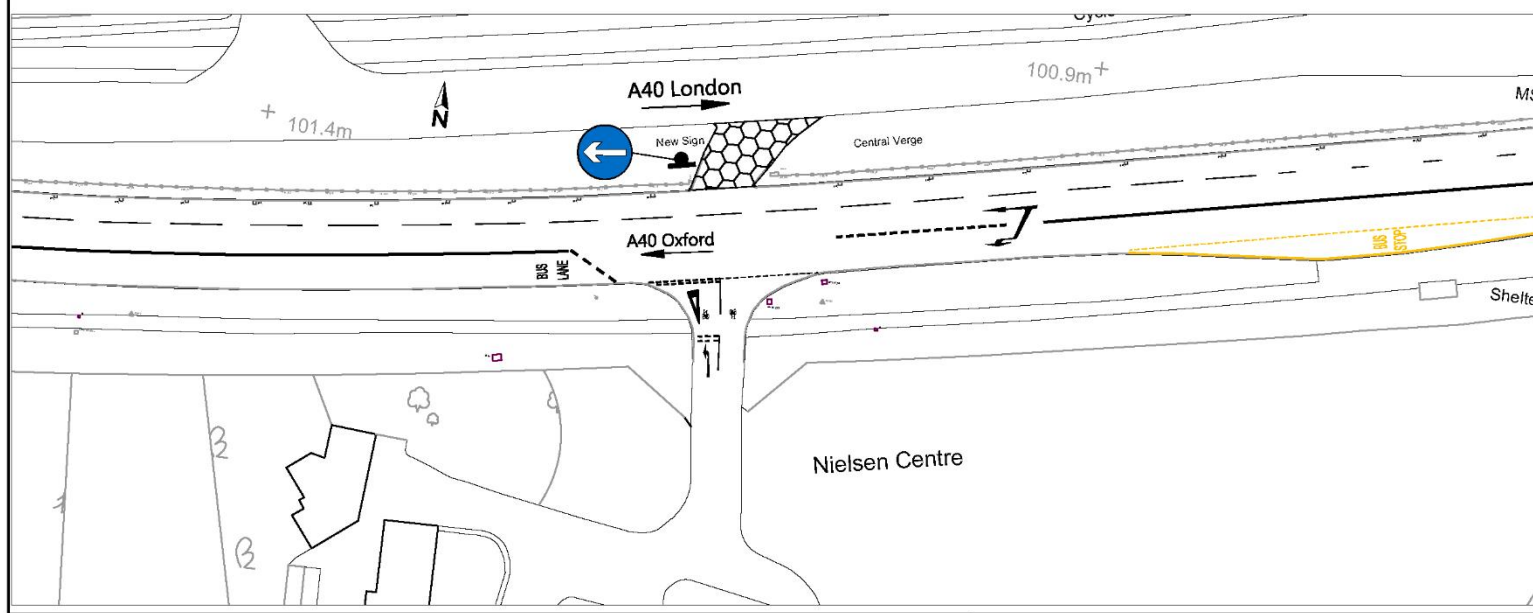
Drawing title
TRAFFIC ORDER
LOCATION PLAN
(No Turn Right from Nielsen Centre onto A40 Eastbound)

Drawing Status GATEWAY 1

Scale @ A3	Drawn by	Checked by	Approved by
N.T.S	SM	AMM	AMM
	Date drawn 25.02.19	Date checked 26.02.19	Date approved 26.02.19

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RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	No Objection
(2) Local County Councillor	<p>Object - I think more work needs to be done on all the issues affecting this stretch of road. I appreciate the approach looking at what can be done while this stretch of road is being resurfaced this summer. The safety reasons for introducing a 'no right turn' prohibition are based on the experience at the Collinwood Road junction on this same stretch of road and are justified with the current road configuration.</p> <p>However, I remain concerned about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) closing off the right turn reduces the number of exit and access points from this development with the potential for problems if this junction was closed for whatever reason. There is every reason to believe that there will be further planning applications for houses on the Neilson site. b) the safety of residents from Risinghurst & Barton crossing the A40 at the Collinwood Road junction is not addressed by this proposal c) this proposal increases the volume of traffic on the Green Road roundabout which the police advise is already the busiest roundabout in Oxfordshire. <p>The Skanska report on the options for the Collinwood Road junction crossing has not yet been produced (missing the end of March deadline) and this is an opportunity to look at all the issues on this stretch of road. There are road safety reasons for proposing this 'no right turn' and there are also road safety reasons for proposing other access routes for this site and road safety reasons for introducing a safe crossing at the bottom of Collinwood Road. Officers have to decide how to maximise road safety and manage traffic flow and minimise congestion.</p>
(3) Risinghurst & Sandhills Parish Council	<p>Support with Concerns - This large site has been sold and is due to see significant development for much needed homes for Oxford. Indeed, we understand that the old office buildings are being refurbished now and will be made into apartments and could house over 300 new residents; potentially this could equate to 600 extra vehicles. However, given the proximity to regular bus services, a cycle route into Headington and to Cowley many new</p>

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	<p>residents from this site may chose not to have cars, but many others will have no choice but to drive for work, school runs etc and will wish to turn right towards Wheatley, the M40 and London.</p> <p>We understand that this will not be a car free development and given the increased number of vehicle movements we feel it is a sensible proposal to close the gap to not allow right hand turns across the A40 for many vehicles.</p> <p>However, this will inevitably put a greater number of vehicles onto the A40 towards, through and around the very busy Green Road roundabout. An incident at this roundabout sees queues form back towards Cowley along the Eastern bypass, back through Headington (which often comes to a standstill making poor air quality), from the London direction and causes problems for residents trying to exit Barton estate and Risinghurst estate from Collinwood Road. With the greater volume of traffic, drivers will seek other routes, notably through residential roads. Risinghurst and Quarry residential roads are already congested at peak times. Given that the A40 gap opposite Collinwood Road junction has been closed we anticipate even higher numbers of 'rat runners' though the residential areas, many ignoring the 20mph speed limit.</p> <p>In addition, there will be increased private vehicle movement from the Barton Park estate which will have no choice but to drive through the Green Road roundabout thus adding to the already high volume of journeys.</p> <p>We understand that a feasibility study is being undertaken for a light controlled pedestrian crossing for the A40 near the Collinwood junction. We would like to suggest that given the increase in the number of vehicles from the Neilson site that a full traffic light junction with the function to allow vehicles to turn right towards London and the M40 be given serious consideration.</p> <p>As the local Parish Council, we support the permanent closure of the gap in the barrier on safety grounds but would urge the County Council to consider the longer-term implications for our residents and those yet to move into the Parish.</p>
(4) Oxford Bus Company	<p>No Objection - This does not affect our services, so we do not have any objection to the proposed order.</p>