

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 12 SEPTEMBER 2019**

### **BANBURY - BLOXHAM: A361 BANBURY ROAD – PROPOSED SHARED USE CYCLE TRACK**

**Report by Director of Community Operations, Communities**

#### **Recommendation**

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the conversion of the existing footway link on the western side of the A361 Banbury Road, between the junction with Chipperfield Park Road and Banbury (a distance of approx 2.5km) to a shared use pedestrian & cycle track and conversion of the existing pelican crossing on the A361 Banbury Road at Bloxham approximately 65 metres north of the Chipperfield Park Road junction to a toucan crossing (a crossing that can be used by pedestrians and cyclists) as advertised.

#### **Executive summary**

2. The provision of pedestrian and pedal cyclist infrastructure is reviewed when there are changes to the road layout as a result of development, when requested by local councils as a result of road safety concerns and as part of the on-going monitoring of reports of road accidents. Specific proposals are assessed applying national regulations and guidance on the provision of pedestrian crossings and the Oxfordshire County Council Walking Design Standards and Cycling Design Standards.

#### **Introduction**

3. The report presents responses received to a statutory consultation to improve and convert the above footway link on the A361 Banbury Road between Bloxham & Banbury to a shared use footway/cycle track and conversion of the existing signalled crossing for pedestrians at Bloxham approximately 65 metres north of the Chipperfield Park Road junction to a toucan crossing.

#### **Background**

4. The above proposal as shown at Annexes 1, 2 & 3 has been put forward as part of the wider traffic safety measures on the A361 funded by the Department for Transport. Although improving safety is the key objective, the scheme will also help to encourage cycle trips as an alternative to the use of private cars, thereby serving to help reduce congestion and encourage active and low-carbon travel.

## **Consultation**

5. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 18 July and 16 August 2019. A notice was placed in the Banbury Guardian newspaper and an email sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Cherwell District Council, Banbury Town Council, local Town and Parish Councils, the relevant local County Councillors and 5 nearby schools. Public notices were placed on site, and letters also sent directly to approximately 110 properties in the vicinity adjacent to the proposals.
6. Nine responses were received during the consultation period. 4 in support, 2 objecting and a further 3 raising concerns or not objecting. The responses are summarised at Annex 4 with copies of the full responses available for inspection by County Councillors.

## **Response to objections and other comments**

7. Thames Valley Police did not object to the proposal. Cherwell District Council also raised no objection, noting that a current planning application for land off Bloxham Grove Road included proposals for works at the A361/Bloxham Grove Road/Ells Lane junction that would need to be taken into account in the detailed design of the scheme. These responses are noted and it is confirmed that the designers of the scheme are fully aware of the development funded works.
8. The British Horse Society expressed an objection to the proposal citing concerns that the proposal would – unless equestrians were also permitted to use the proposed shared use cycle track and toucan crossing (with appropriate changes to the layout of the latter) – be detrimental to the safety and amenity of equestrians, noting that this general area had a significant number of horse riders and that improving provision for equestrians would also be a positive for local equestrian businesses. Two other responses were received on behalf of equestrians – one expressed as an objection - expressing similar concerns.
9. In response to the above representations and while accepting the desirability of providing for equestrians the proposals comprise improvements of existing pedestrian provision to permit the use by pedal cyclists and should not be detrimental to any current equestrian activity in the area, noting that on much of the route south of the Wykham Lane junction there is currently no usable verge between the existing footway and the highway boundary. The Department for Transport funding is limited and carrying out further measures – including the provision of a Pegasus signalled crossing – is not considered viable.
10. The Oxfordshire Cycling Network expressed overall support for the proposals noting that on a road of this character a shared use cycle track was appropriate, and that its proposed width appeared generally acceptable. A concern was though raised about the reduced width of the track between

Crouch Cottages and the newly constructed shared use cycle track at the south end of Banbury. Queries were also raised on the layout and signing and road markings where the track crossed side roads (in particular the junction with the Vantage Business Park) – with a request that priority be given to cyclists - together with a request that consideration be given to the provision of a grass verge between the carriageway and the cycle track to provide a safety buffer and reduce the risk of debris from the carriageway accumulating on the cycle track. The importance of the new surfacing being of good quality and adequate future maintenance was also stressed.

11. Noting the above response, the reduced width of the proposed shared use track north of Crouch Cottages is acknowledged as substandard but it is anticipated that planned development will provide in the reasonably near future a track of standard (3 metre) width. Given this, it seems appropriate to accept as a short-term measure converting the existing 1.2m width footway to shared use, rather than the alternative of having a gap in the cycle provision.
12. The comments on the detailed design of the junctions – including whether priority is given to cyclists – will be reviewed as part of the detailed design. It is, however, not considered viable taking account of the budget and highway space available to provide a verge between the carriageway and cycle track. The comments on the quality of the surfacing and its ongoing maintenance are noted.
13. Expressions of support were received from three members of the public including a resident of Crouch Cottages, who though expressed a concern that the detailing of the layout (including traffic signs and markings) of the cycle track at the vehicle access to the property made provision for vehicles to enter and leave the access safely. It is confirmed that this will be checked and assessed as part of the detailed design.

### **How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives**

14. The proposals would help facilitate the safe movement of pedal cyclists and pedestrians.

### **Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)**

15. Funding for the proposed measures has been provided by the Department for Transport grant for improving road safety on the A361 between Banbury and Chipping Norton.

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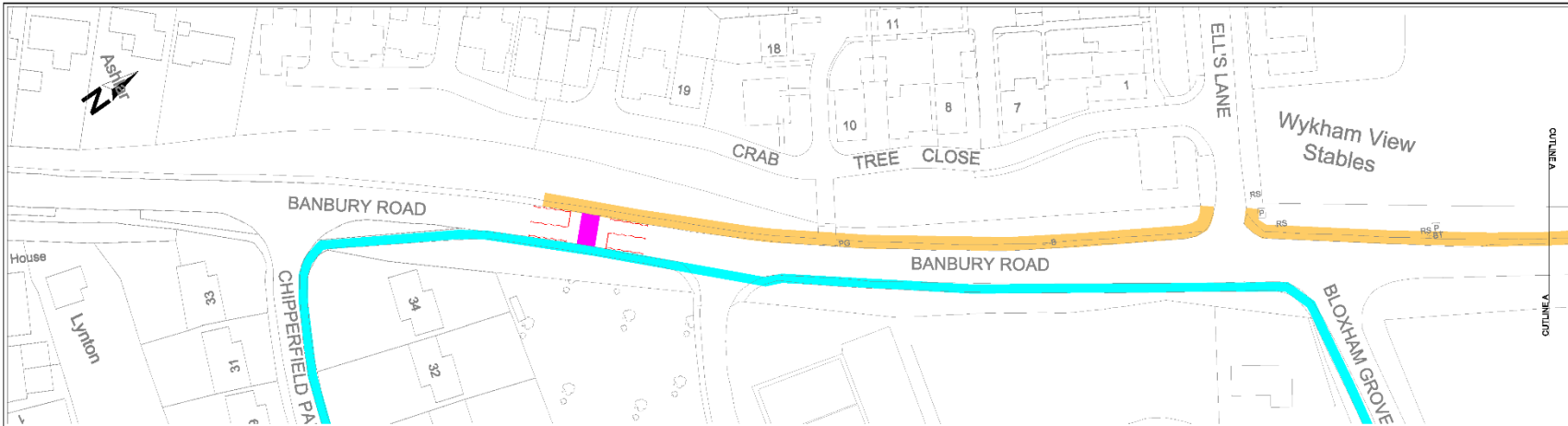
Director of Community Operations

Background papers: Plan of proposed shared use footway / cycle track  
Consultation responses

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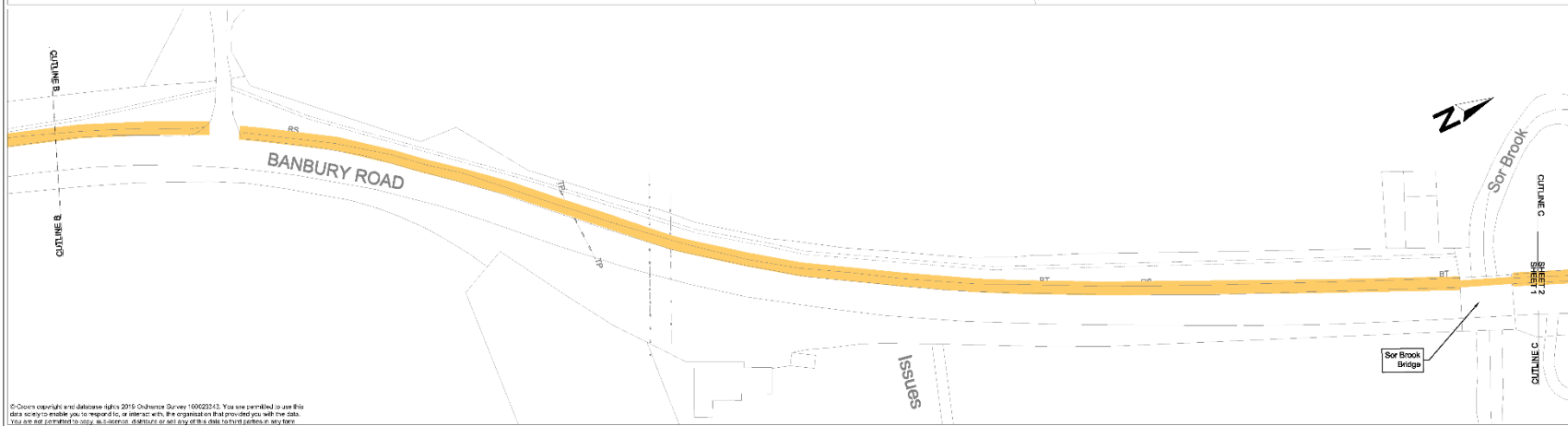
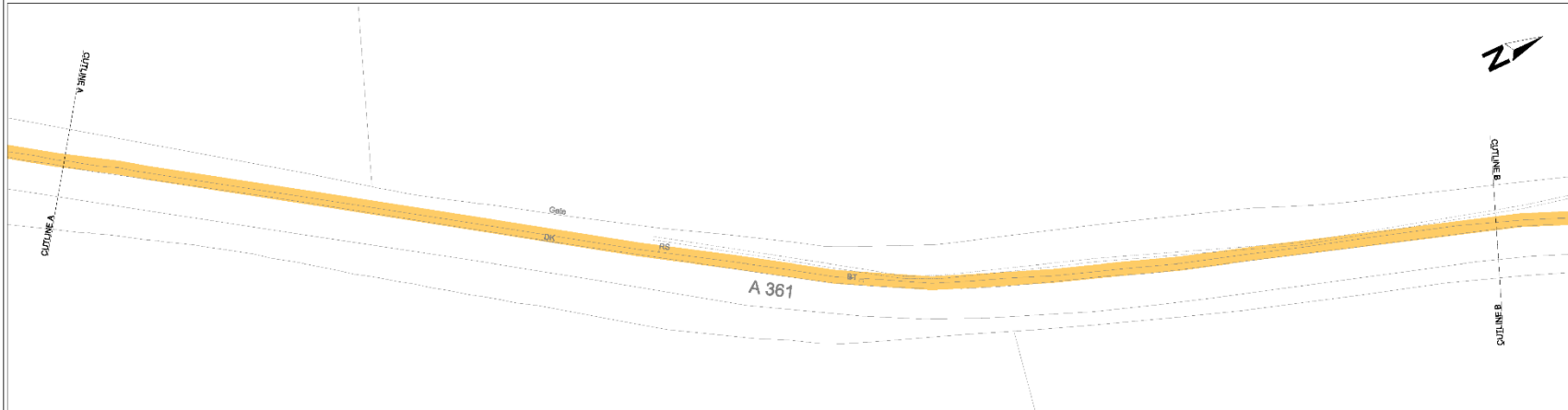
September 2019

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- Notes:
1. Do not scale from this drawing.
  2. Site verify all dimensions prior to construction.
  3. Report all discrepancies to the Drawing Originator immediately.
  4. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant documents and drawings.
  5. All measurements are in meters unless otherwise stated.
  6. The start point of the scheme is 50m north of Chipperfield Park Road for a distance of 2300m with an average width of 5.9m. The facility will reduce in width to 1.5m across Sor Brook bridge.

- KEY:
- Proposed Shared Footway and Cycle Facility
  - Proposed Signal Controlled Pedestrian and Cycle 'TOUGAN' Crossing
  - Proposed Zigzags at Crossing Facility
  - Existing Shared Pedestrian and Cycle Facility
  - Existing Footway 1.2m Wide to be Shared Use Pedestrian Cycle Facility



Rev	Date	Description	Dr	Crkd
1	17-07-19	Existing Shared Facility Added to Key	ELH	TAJ
0	12-07-19	Final Issue	HCP	TAJ

**SKANSKA**  
Working On Behalf Of

**OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Drawing Status: Consultation  
SAP Code: C.A100296.01

Project Name: A361 Safety Improvements - 395030 A361 QRA

**A361 Shared Footway Traffic Regulation Order (Sheet 1 of 3)**

Drawn by	Drawn on	Checked by	Approved by
HCP	11.07.19	TAJ	TAJ
ELH	12.07.19	TAJ	TAJ

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  5. All measurements are in meters unless otherwise stated.
  6. The start point of the scheme is 50m north of Crippenfield Park Rise for a distance of 200m with an average width of 3.0m. The facility will reduce in width to 1.5m across Sor Brook bridge.

- KEY:
- Proposed Shared Pedestrian and Cycle Facility
  - Proposed Signal Controlled Pedestrian and Cycle 'TOUCAN' Crossing
  - Proposed Zigzags at Crossing Facility
  - Existing Shared Pedestrian and Cycle Facility
  - Existing Footway 1.2m Wide to be Shared Use Pedestrian Cycle Facility

No	Date	Description	Dr	Crkd
1	17-07-19	Existing Shared Facility Added to Key	ELH	TAJ
0	12-02-19	Final Issue	HCP	TAJ



Drawing Status	Consultation	DWP Code	C.A100296.01
Project Name	A361 Safety Improvements - 395030 A361 QRA		

**A361 Shared Footway Traffic Regulation Order (Sheet 2 of 3)**

Scale	Drawn by	Checked by	Approved by
1:500	HCP	TAJ	TAJ
Drawn Date	11.07.19	Checked Date	12.07.19
Drawn Date	11.07.19	Approved Date	12.07.19

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RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p><b>No objection</b> – I have visited the location including at material school times where this area is busy with both Pedestrians and cyclists. Traffic is also heavy on the A361 with significant drop off/ pick up scenarios as you would expect.</p> <p>The measures will get well used although the shared use mixed traffic aspect could create some conflict between users as road safety discipline is sometimes poor from my observations.</p> <p>I think the area will benefit from improvements but should be monitored by the Highway Authority where segregated use IF the space was available could improve that aspect in the future.</p>
(2) Cherwell District Council	<p><b>No objection</b> - The District Council comments that changes to this part of the highway are also proposed under application 19/00617/ (construction of new school off of Bloxham Grove Road) that is currently being considered by the Council and that these would likely impact on the works proposed under this consultation.</p>
(3) Local Group, (British Horse Society)	<p><b>Object</b> – While the BHS supports in principle any scheme which provides safer access for vulnerable road users, we must OBJECT to this scheme as currently proposed. This is because, while providing safer access for pedestrians and cyclists, it makes no provision for equestrians who, though considered a minority, are equally vulnerable on roads (if not more so, owing to the involvement of the horse’s actions as well as those of the rider and other road users).</p> <p>Furthermore, if implemented as shown in the current plans, this scheme represents a significant additional hazard to local equestrians, who regularly use and cross the A361 in order to access the off-road network of bridleways, byways and minor roads in the Bloxham/Banbury area. This is because it will take away the verge that currently provides a refuge for ridden horses, pushing them out into the main highway where they will effectively be sandwiched between passing motor vehicles on one side and pedestrians and cyclists using the new route on the other. This is a major concern, since if a horse is spooked by a cyclist or pedestrian using the new route, it is likely to shy into the path of passing motor vehicles. Equally, if the horse is startled by vehicular traffic passing too fast and too close on the road (a common experience for</p>

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	<p>riders) there is a possibility that it will shy into the path of any cyclist or pedestrian on the shared-use cycle path.</p> <p>Notwithstanding our current concerns about this scheme, we recognise that this is an opportunity within the development currently taking place in the Banbury area to improve road safety for all vulnerable road users. We would therefore be prepared to WITHDRAW our objection if the new path could be made available to horse riders as well as pedestrians and cyclists, with Pegasus rather than Toucan controlled crossing points. If implemented we believe this would represent a major improvement to the safety for all traffic in the area, motorised as well as non-motorised.</p> <p>With regard to any concerns about the safety of horse-riders sharing paths with cyclists and pedestrians, we would point out that horse riders have always shared bridleways with pedestrians, and with cyclists since 1968 when the Countryside Act gave the public the right to ride bicycles on bridleways. And roads and byways have been shared by all three types of user since the bicycle was invented.</p> <p>Since the launch of the BHS's Horse Accidents website in 2010 the Society has received than 3,700 reports of road incidents involving horses; 315 horses have died and 43 people have lost their lives. This includes occupants of motor vehicles as well as equestrians. Research indicates that only around 10% of incidents are reported to the BHS. NHS Hospital Episodes statistics for 2016-17 recorded a total of 3,863 horse riders and carriage drivers in England and Wales admitted to hospital for 'animal-rider or occupant animal-drawn vehicle injured in transport accident). Thus, any scheme that helps to secure a safer, better-connected access network of equestrian routes is vitally important, in a very literal sense.</p> <p>We therefore hope that Oxfordshire County Council will revise this proposal to include provision for ridden horses and would be very happy to offer further information and advice, if required.</p>
<p>(4) Resident, (unknown)</p>	<p><b>Object</b> – This consultation plan has blatantly disregarded and discriminates against one other vulnerable user group - HORSE RIDERS.</p> <p>Bloxham and the surrounding area has a very active equestrian community that regularly use this section of the A361 yet they have been totally disregarded in this consultation plan.</p> <p>Horse riders (young and old) are finding Oxfordshire roads becoming increasingly more dangerous with heavier and faster traffic. Equestrians need to use these main roads to access the network of quieter roads and bridleways so it is very important that these vulnerable road users are included in any cycle/pedestrian shared paths.</p>

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	<p>As this is a busy road and there is an active horse-riding community it would also be advisable to convert the crossing to a Pegasus Crossing rather than a Toucan Crossing, this would allow horse riders to cross the road safely along with cyclists and pedestrians.</p> <p>Horse riding plays a huge part in local communities, not just for the health and wellbeing benefits but all to the local economy. If equestrians are not considered by Oxfordshire County Council in their off-road path plans then this activity quickly declines and local business and the community suffer from the loss.</p> <p>Equestrian ARE vulnerable road users and need to be considered in the same category as the vulnerable cyclists and pedestrians and not discriminated against.</p> <p>Please consider equestrians in this shared path consultation plan and also upgrading the Pelican Crossing to a Pegasus Crossing. It will be cheaper to include equestrians now at an early stage rather than having to make expensive changes later on.</p>
<p>(5) Local Resident, (Witney)</p>	<p><b>Concerns</b> – I applaud the planned conversion of the existing footway to the improved and extended to a “shared use” path with cycles.</p> <p>But this is very much a road that runs through countryside and in the local area are a lot of horse riders who, due to lack of sufficient off-road riding, are forced to take courses onto the busy highway. Riders in the Broughton area are very close to the A361.</p> <p>All new shared use tracks should include horse use. As a minority road user, we are as vulnerable, if not more so, than cyclists on the busy highways.</p> <p>I would urge you to consider making this proposed path wider and include horse riders - anything that gets horses away from fast moving traffic is so important and vastly reduces the accident risks.</p>
<p>(6) Local Group, (Oxfordshire Cycling Network)</p>	<p><b>Support</b> – Overall, we support the proposals, with a few comments below</p> <p>Bloxham to Banbury is only 3 miles, an ideal distance for cycling and Bloxham is a large village with over 3000 population. However, the A361 is not a pleasant place for people on bikes and the alternative is a substantial diversion. A good cycle route here would be a significant enabler for healthy active travel and we recommended this route as part of</p>

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our proposed Strategic Cycling Network for the county.

As you may know, we are not in general advocates of cycle routes shared with pedestrian facilities. However, in some cases they are appropriate. On a route like this where the pedestrian use is expected to be very low there is unlikely to be much conflict between people walking/running and cycling.

Crossing: We have no comments on the crossing, which looks appropriate.

Widths: We interpret the width of most of the scheme to be 3.0m (“The start point of the scheme is 50m north of Chipperfield Park Road for a distance of 2380m with an average width of 3.0m. The facility will reduce in width to 1.5m across Sor Brook bridge.”) 3.0m is a good width for the purpose.

Our main comment on the proposals is on the ‘green’ section. We object to the 1.2m width proposed for this section because we do not understand why this inadequate width is necessary when the rest of the scheme (and the plans to the North) is much better specified. To illustrate the difficulty of this width, one of my bikes has handlebars 760mm wide.

Junctions: At junctions, the priority should be to be safe and to enable continuous cycling. The plans do not have much detail about the design of the crossings.

For driveways and minor turn-offs, the cycle route should have priority across.

The entry to Vantage Business Park looks dangerous for cyclists heading north if they are not seen by motorists heading north and entering the business park. It is not easy for cyclists to look directly behind themselves. The track needs to pull in earlier, so it arrives at the junction more parallel, and/or the road needs a tighter entry radius, and/or a warning sign. Is the island wide enough for a reference cycle design vehicle (2.8m)?

Verge: Ideally, there would be a grass verge separating the cycle/pedestrian track from the main carriageway, for comfort and safety. This would also help capture debris – e.g. bits of gravel and glass – thrown up by cars onto the track. Is there a way to build in such a feature?

Surface: The quality of the surface is important for a longer distance cycle route. Many footpaths have ‘rippling’ surfaces that are unpleasant to ride. Please work with the contractors to ensure a fully smooth surface.

Signage: The route should be signed clearly to encourage use, particularly at Bloxham, the Banbury end and Vantage Business Park. In addition, it would be worth talking to Sustrans about whether NCN Route 5 should switch from its

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	<p>current route through Bodicote to this more direct route.</p> <p><u>Maintenance</u>: Vegetation should be cleared regularly so the track is not impeded or damaged.</p>
(7) Local Resident, (Bloxham)	<p><b>Support</b> – the proposal has my full support. I think it is an excellent plan.</p>
(8) Local Resident, (Banbury)	<p><b>Support</b> – While the proposals are supported there is a potential safety issue immediately outside 2 Crouch Cottages where there is a vehicular access for the property directly onto the Bloxham Road. If the proposal is to widen the cycle path from Bloxham up to the northern edge of the cottages there is a likelihood of increased cycle speed across the vehicular access especially given the vegetation growth that already obscures views along the road. Is it possible to reduce the width of the cycle access at the southern border of the cottages rather than the northern one (where the proposal is to retain the narrow footpath because of the existing ditch) or at least put some warning sign on the cycle path ("Give Way" or "Stop") or speed mitigation (rumble strips) for cyclists?</p>
(9) Local Resident, (Oxford)	<p><b>Support</b> – <i>no comments</i></p>