

Division(s): Bicester, Bicester South

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT – 2 June 2011

A41 BICESTER – CHESTERTON JUNCTION SLIP ROADS CLOSURE

Report by Deputy Director for Environment & Economy Highways & Transport

Introduction

1. Development is currently being undertaken to provide new roads and infrastructure to the South West of Bicester (see plan at Annex 1). The current time table is to complete the South West perimeter road and junctions and be open to traffic by the end of 2011.
2. A new roundabout junction is currently being constructed on the A41 to serve the new SW perimeter road and a new link eastwards will be provided to maintain access to local roads and villages and improve access to Wyevale Garden Centre. This arrangement will provide an all movement junction on to the A41 and replace the need for slip roads at the A41 Chesterton junction. These proposals were identified during the planning stage for the development and were approved by Cherwell District Council in 2008.
3. The location of the new roundabout is in very close proximity to the existing A41 Chesterton junction slip road entry (northbound) and is considered to be a traffic safety issue if it remains open to general traffic once the new roundabout is operational.
4. Slip road traffic will have difficulty merging safely as A41 traffic will be approaching in both lanes in order to negotiate the turning movement at the roundabout so reducing the ability to move out for a merging vehicle. This will create frustration and lead to slip road drivers forcing their way in to the traffic with resulting accidents.
5. Oxfordshire County Council as Highway Authority is promoting a permanent traffic regulation order to close the slip roads at the junction to general traffic once the main roundabout and associated links are in place.
6. Formal consultation on the proposed order has been undertaken and objections received. This report details the consultation process, identifies the grounds for objection and seeks a decision on how to proceed.

A41 Chesterton Junction – Formal Consultation

7. Formal consultation has been undertaken on the permanent traffic regulation order seeking closure of the slip roads to general traffic.

8. Consultation has been undertaken with local councils, local County Councillors, emergency services, statutory undertakers and local residents living near the junction. Notices were placed in local newspapers on two consecutive weeks and on site. The consultation period ran from 15 April to 13 May 2011.
9. Three letters of formal objection have been received from local residents. Copies of correspondence are available in the Members' Room.

Objections to Proposed Permanent Traffic Regulation Order

10. The grounds for objection are summarized as follows:
 - (a) Existing minor roads and junctions are unsuitable for level of re-routed traffic travelling to Chesterton once slip roads are closed.
 - (b) Excessive delay to vehicles wishing to join A41 at new roundabout. Heavy traffic flows through roundabout will make entry difficult to turn both north and south on A41 due to lack of gaps in circulatory traffic.
 - (c) Congestion will be created on the new link road due to conflict of movements at the minor roads junction. The traffic wishing to turn right to go to Chesterton would build up due to the volume and priority of traffic coming from the Garden Centre.
 - (d) Location of new roundabout is detrimental to property value due to light intrusion from illumination of roundabout and increased noise due to acceleration and deceleration of vehicles approaching and leaving roundabout.

Officer Comment

11. Countryside Properties has reported that the SW perimeter road and its junctions on the A41 and Middleton Stoney Road are expected to be open by the end of 2011. This will result in the turning movements at the new A41 roundabout being more balanced so creating sufficient gaps for vehicles emerging from the minor road link.
12. Road improvements have recently been completed (May 2011) to widen the existing road and junction when travelling to Chesterton. The route is now of a standard suitable to carry the level and type of traffic likely to use it. Local over-run areas are provided at the junction to allow larger vehicles to make the turn.
13. Impact on property values is a matter covered by the Land Compensation Act. Individuals should be informed to seek professional advice to see if they have grounds for a claim under this Act as a result of the road scheme.

Financial and Staff Implications

14. Funding to carry out the formal closure of the slip roads has been secured from Section 106 contributions. Implementation of the works will be carried

out either by the Highways & Transport Service contract or directly by the developer's contractor.

RECOMMENDATION

- 15. The Cabinet Member for Transport is RECOMMENDED to approve the making of the Oxfordshire County Council (Chesterton) (Prohibition of Motor Vehicles) Order 2011 as published.**

STEVE HOWELL

Deputy Director for Environment and Economy (Highways & Transport)

Background papers: Consultation documentation

Contact Officer: Mike Collins (Tel: 01865 815877)

May 2011