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OXFORDSHIRE DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 2 February 2023 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 10.30 am

Present: Councillor Duncan Enright

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item 1)

There were none.

2 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item 2)

There were none.

3 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 3)

Cllr Enright informed the meeting Peter Barnett and Danny Yee would address the meeting in relation to North Oxford Corridor – Kidlington Roundabout.

4 NORTH OXFORD CORRIDOR - KIDLINGTON ROUNDABOUT

(Agenda Item 4)

Peter Barnett read out his statement (*attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes*) by welcoming the proposed recommendations in the report and added that the Council should have acted faster and sooner on this matter.

Danny Yee addressed the meeting with a statement (*attached as Appendix 2 to these minutes*) by expressing his support for the recommendations in the report and welcoming additional measures that would have a net positive impact particularly in terms of reducing travel by private car and increasing use of walking, cycling and public transport.

Cllr Enright invited Aron Wisdom (Programme Lead) to respond to comments made in the statements and also to summarise the report and its rationale for officers' recommendations.

Aron Wisdom highlighted the following points in his response:

- This scheme formed part of the North Oxfordshire Corridor (NOC) road improvement projects funded by the Housing and Growth Deal. There was a significant growth expected across the Cherwell district with approximately 22,000 new homes planned by 2031. This scheme would

form part of the investment to create an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network which would be fit for the future.

Objections and challenges were made against the original plans by bus companies and cycle user groups. In addition, there were major concerns raised against the loss of trees. The main areas of concern from this original consultation round could be summarised into the following areas:

1. Lack of direct routes of facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, including crossing points;
2. More space provided to the motor vehicle at the expense of others;
3. Impact on buses, and
4. Loss of large trees and vegetation.

All of these and any additional concerns had been addressed by officers and included in the report.

- The scheme was fully funded through the Housing and Growth Deal with a requirement to commit spend by March 2023. The initial funding allocation of £6m had been reduced to £4m due to significant descoping of the project because of consultation. The estimated budget included all internal staff costs.

Cllr Enright thanked the speakers for their statements and Aron Wisdom for the response.

Cllr Enright felt that the scheme outlines and aims had improved due to co-productive work with the stakeholder and cognisant with local views. Cllr Enright felt that all of the concerns had been addressed by officers in the report.

The scheme offers improvements and easier access into Oxford city centre by sustainable modes by improving bus journey times, improved pedestrian and cycle connectivity whilst also supporting the ongoing housing and employment developments and expected economic growth. In addition, it would contribute to improved road safety and air quality.

A summary of improvements would be:

- Provide new dedicated bus lane on Bicester Road southbound, on the approach to Kidlington Roundabout;
- Create a new 3m wide cycleway and 2m wide pedestrian footway, segregated from the carriageway and one another, around the perimeter of the roundabout to connect to existing infrastructure. This would include a 0.5m buffer zone between the cycleway and carriageway wherever possible;
- Reduce the speed limits to 30mph on the roundabout and its approaches;
- Add new signalised crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists on Bicester Road, Oxford Road (south) and Frieze Way with detection loops;
- Rearranged vehicular egress at Stratfield B.

The Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy **AGREED** to:

- 1) Approve the speed limit changes as indicated in Annexes 1, 2, 3 and 9;
- 2) Approve the additional length of southbound bus lane on the Bicester Road on the approach to the Kidlington Roundabout as indicated in Annexes 4 and 5
- 3) Approve the improvement works on the Kidlington Roundabout including new and segregated pedestrian and cycle infrastructure and new Toucan crossing facilities on the Bicester Road, Oxford Road (A4165) and Frieze Way (A4260) arms as indicated in Annex 4, subject to completion of detailed design and associated road safety audits
- 4) Approve the redesign of the Stratfield Brake egress 'gain lane' to form a simple priority give-way junction and reallocate the road space to form a shared-use two-way cycle and pedestrian link with the proposed new Toucan crossing on Frieze Way as indicated in Annex 4 subject to completion of detailed design, discussions with lessees' and associated road safety audits.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

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Next week on Wednesday it will be one year since Ellen Moilanen was killed at the Parkway junction of the A4165. Two weeks later, on the 21st February 2022, a letter was delivered to Bill Cotton, copied to the council CEO, saying, and I quote; “There are some immediate actions that must be taken: making that stretch of road a 30mph speed limit.” Yet, here we are, nearly one year later; no speed limit reduction and only now a TRO being put forward for consideration by a cabinet member.

12 months! Why does it have to take so?

Is there a better way to do this? Did this TRO really have to be lumped in with the roundabout and the forthcoming urban developments? Could it have been expedited separately?

To me this looks like business as usual at the council. Yet, as highlighted in a report by the council’s own scrutiny committee to the cabinet meeting that approved the Vision Zero policy, and again I quote, “Equally, from both a member and officer side, Vision Zero means doing things differently to how they have been done previously. Longstanding assessments, judgements and processes must all be reconfigured to reflect the shift in approach.” Has this happened yet?

The 1996 TRO regulations require a minimum time of 21 days from publication and notification of proposals for the TRO to be made, and then the traffic signs can be installed. Realistically it will take some time longer; but one year?

Is this what Vision Zero looks like?

If the council is serious about Vision Zero, then the changes in culture and working practices need to happen and they need to happen quickly; experience from other organisations shows that these changes need to be led and driven from the very top of the organisation: by the CEO and the corporate director; to be driven and monitored down through the organisation, constantly and iteratively until the changes are well embedded. Barriers to these changes need to be removed.

So, many congratulations on the commitment to Vision Zero; a bold country-leading commitment. But to quote again from the letter to Bill Cotton: “with this news of yet another cycling fatality, and the historically slow rate of progress – we need you to act faster.”

Finally, active travel organisations such as Cyclox are here to help you. What does the council need from us to make Vision Zero possible?

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Danny Yee statement on 2nd February 2023

Please approve the proposals before you: they will greatly improve safety and accessibility for walking and cycling along the A4158 and at the Kidlington roundabout. The plans before you are much better than the ones from eight months ago, and I would like to thank the officers involved for involving active travel groups in a fruitful coproduction process.

One thing not in the plans is the signal timings for the crossings at the roundabout. We would like to see as a goal the Dutch target, where "an average waiting time of less than 15 seconds is good and one of more than 20 seconds is poor". Two-stage crossings for pedestrians may be inevitable, but smart signalling could be used to allow single-stage pedestrian movements if traffic permits. And early pickup loops could be used on some approaches to activate signals as cycles approach.

The lower speed limits are most welcome, but we would like to see a commitment to monitoring compliance with them. To quote another highways manual: "A 50km/hr - 30mph - speed limit is not credible on a 4-lane arterial road outside the built-up area." While this may become a built-up area, that will take time and may happen with developments that face away from these roads and won't change their feel. So measures such as rumble strips, lane narrowing on the approaches, etc. may be needed.

Even with speed limit compliance, in the longer-term, as more housing is built and the number of people walking and cycling increases, there will inevitably be unhappy compromises to be made between active travel delays, motor traffic delays, and road danger. So we urge the council to plan for underpasses when and if development opens up the space and funding that would be needed for them. That could be with development of a sports stadium at Stratfield Brake, or with a housing development to the east of the roundabout. Grade separation is the only way to make a junction like this genuinely accessible by primary school children, older adults, and people with disabilities.

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