

## **Divisions Affected - *Kidlington South***

### **CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY– Thursday 2 February 2023**

#### **A4260 / A4165 KIDLINGTON ROUNDABOUT NORTH OXFORDSHIRE CORRIDOR (NOC) IMPROVEMENT WORKS**

Report by Corporate Director, Environment and Place

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to**

- a) approve the speed limit changes as indicated in Annexes 1, 2, 3 and 9
- b) 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
- c) 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
- d) 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.

### **Executive Summary**

1. This scheme forms part of the North Oxfordshire Corridor (NOC) road improvement projects funded by the Housing and Growth Deal.
2. There is significant growth expected across the Cherwell district with approximately 22,000 new homes planned by 2031. This scheme forms part of the investment to create an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network, fit for the future.

3. 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 will contribute to improved road safety and air quality.
4. A summary of improvements is listed below:
  - 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 will 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 Brake and installation of active travel lane
  - Provide additional planting where possible.

## **Background**

5. In November 2017, the Growth Deal provided Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) with £150 million of funding for infrastructure. The objective of the Housing and Growth Deal is to deliver transport and social infrastructure to support new housing. Subject to approval by the Cabinet Member, it is expected to complete design and construction in 2023 and will support the ambition of building up to 100,000 new homes (as identified by the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014) across Oxfordshire between 2011 and 2031 to address the county's severe housing shortage and expected economic growth. This level of housing growth is consistent with the adopted Local Plans in Oxfordshire.
6. To prepare for sustainable transport growth a programme consisting of three road improvement projects were identified along the A44 (P1A); A4260 Frieze Way (P1B) and the A4165 Oxford Road / Bicester Road (P1D); which together are referred to as the North Oxford Corridor (NOC).
7. The improvements offered will allow for easier access into Oxford city centre and other destinations, improve bus journey times, improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity, and support the ongoing housing and employment developments and expected economic growth
8. In 2016 Atkins were commissioned to assess both the A44 from Bladon roundabout southwards and the A4260 through Kidlington in addition to assessing the parallel routes that join those two corridors with the aim of

improving sustainable connections while minimising congestion impacts. As part of this work, stakeholders were invited to take part in workshops at County Hall to set out their concerns and issues – these included local County, City and District Councillors, transit operators, cycle user groups, OCC officers and other interested parties.

9. Shortly after this study, The Local Plan Review announced sites for further work, this became part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.
10. Option assessments and studies were carried out along the A4165 from Kidlington Roundabout to Cutteslowe Roundabout with Kidlington Roundabout being taken forward with Housing and Growth Deal funding with a strictly defined geographic scope.
11. Briefing sessions were held with District, parish councillors and bus operators on the NOC schemes in November 2021. Comments received during this consultation period were reflected within the proposals. Information was shared including the proposed speed limit reduction. Relevant Cabinet Members were briefed in March 2022 with an additional meeting organised with the local County Councillor for the area (who is also the district and parish councillor) in April 2022.
12. The current proposal aims to promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport by encouraging use of public transport, cycling and walking and will directly contribute to The Fair Deal Alliance's priorities to take action to tackle the climate emergency and cut carbon emissions, prioritise the health and well-being of residents and invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network.

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

10. The Kidlington Roundabout scheme will help support many of the council's nine priorities, including:
  - Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work
  - Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire
  - Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents
  - Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network
  - Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces
  - Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy
  - Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit
11. In July 2022, Oxfordshire County Council adopted its new Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) which sets a clear vision to deliver a net-zero transport system that enables Oxfordshire to thrive, protects the environment and makes the county a better place to live for all residents. This includes ambitious targets to:

- replace or remove 1 in 4 car trips in Oxfordshire by 2030
  - deliver a net-zero transport network by 2040, and
  - have zero, or as close as possible, road fatalities or life-changing injuries by 2050.
12. To help deliver the LTCP vision, the recently adopted Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan proposes a set of 22 actions to support a more sustainable and reliable transport system across the central Oxfordshire area, including proposals for traffic filters which are required to address several challenges, including the need to:
- reduce exposure to air pollution and rapidly reduce carbon emissions from all transport related activities
  - reduce congestion and its negative impacts on bus services and economic productivity and vitality
  - encourage more sustainable development, making greater use of limited road space and prioritising public transport, walking and cycling
  - improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities
13. The Kidlington Roundabout Scheme will help support and address these challenges by providing enhanced bus priority, cycling and walking infrastructure on the edge of the city to encourage a shift to more sustainable and healthy modes of travel.

## **Financial Implications and staffing implications**

14. The scheme is fully funded through the Housing and Growth Deal with a requirement to commit spend by March 2023. The initial funding allocation of £6m was reduced to £4m due to significant descoping of the project as a result of consultation. The estimated budget includes all internal staff costs. The funding is made up of:

2020/21	£40,680 (Actual)
2021/22	£418,680 (Actual)
2022/23	£840,640 (Projected)
2023/24	£2,700,000 (including £800k contingency/risk)

Comments checked by:

Emma Percival, emma.percival@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Finance)

## **Legal Implications**

15. The proposals include the making of TROs in relation to reduced speed limits and the proposed new bus lane on the Bicester Road. These are made using

the powers set out in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 for local highway authorities to use for traffic regulation. Works on and in the vicinity of the highway will be carried out in accordance with the Highways Act 1980. There are no further legal implications.

Comments checked by:

Jennifer Crouch, Principal Solicitor

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

16. The project is likely to have a net positive impact for residents, including Protected Characteristic Groups. By creating improved conditions for buses, leading to reduced journey times by public transport, will disproportionately benefit those who currently use buses, including some disabled people and women (who are more likely to use public transport than men).
17. There are also likely to be benefits for those who cycle and walk due to the creation a safer and more accessible environment for people cycling and walking and has the potential to encourage people from all backgrounds to cycle. However, it should be noted that network-wide pedestrian and cycle infrastructure improvements are required to realise the full benefits.
18. Due to the reallocation of road space on the Bicester Road for a bus lane and additional signalised pedestrian crossings, there could be a slight inconvenience to drivers and those who rely on cars; e.g. older people. However, the Bicester Road arm of the junction is deemed to have additional capacity so is not expected to hinder general traffic to significant degree that would cause concern. The proposals are completely in line with adopted road hierarchy that prioritises pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

## **Sustainability Implications**

19. A Climate Impact Assessment for the Kidlington Roundabout project concluded the scheme will have a net positive impact particularly in terms of reducing travel by private car and increasing use of walking, cycling and public transport. As a result, there is expected to be a reduction in total annual CO2 emissions from road transport in the area.

## **Risk Management**

20. A risk register has been maintained and will continue to be maintained throughout the life of the project. The key risks at this stage include:
  - Any unknown utility diversions
  - Network Management issues and road space availability
  - Road safety considerations

- Scope creep and late changes to design
- Land access and agreement from third parties
- Asset and maintenance implications.

## Consultations

21. An initial round of formal consultation was carried out between 30 June 2022 to 12 August 2022. Letters were sent to 7,000 residents in the Kidlington area, a notice was published in the local newspaper and engagement with statutory consultees, including local members and councils, Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance Service, bus operators, Cyclox and other local user groups.
22. As the proposals included the loss of some large trees on the roundabout central island the consultation was extended by a further two weeks to allow for further possible responses.
23. Four hundred and three responses were received during the formal consultation, and these are summarised in the table below:

*Table 1 – August 2022 consultation response categories and concerns*

Admin Issue	1
Design	75
Design & Cycle safety	3
Design & Safety & Trees	15
Design & Trees	17
Design and Speed Limit	9
Future proofing	6
Future proofing & Safety	3
Future proofing & Speed limit	1
Future proofing, trees and safety	1
No reason given	2
Positive feedback	30
Property access	2
Request for documents and drawings	3
Safety	13
Safety & Design	78
Speed & Design & Trees	3
Speed Limit	16
Speed limit & Design	2
Speed limit & Trees	2
Traffic Lights	1
Trees	101
Trees and design issue	13
Trees and Speed	5

Trees and Traffic Lights	1
	<b>403</b>

24. Thames Valley Police had no objection to the proposals as originally proposed, and subsequently had no further comments on the revised plans.
25. 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.
26. The main areas of concern from this original consultation round can be summarised into the following areas:
  - (a) Lack of direct routes of facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, including crossing points (type and not on desire lines, compliance with LTN 1/20),
  - (b) More space provided to the motor vehicle at the expense of others,
  - (c) Impact on buses,
  - (d) Loss of large trees and vegetation.
27. This resulted in extensive discussions with the local members, bus companies and local user groups resulting in a refined scheme as shown in Annex 2. This included more direct and segregated footway and cycleway facilities and crossings, removal of the proposed short stretch of bus lane on the Oxford Road (north), removal of signals and additional traffic lanes on the roundabout gyratory itself. The amendments all contributed to much reduced impact on trees and vegetation.
28. Drawing on the objections, the plan was revised to address comments and a further round of formal consultation was undertaken on the revised proposals from 03 October to 31 October 2022.
29. Emails and letters were sent to residents that had raised concerns, a notice was published in the local newspaper and engagement with statutory consultees, including local members and councils, Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance Service, bus operators, Cyclox and other local user groups was carried out.
30. In total we received 62 responses from 1,030 visits to the consultation page of which 61% were in favour of the revised proposals with 10% expressing a dislike. See table below:

Table 2 - October 2022 consultation summary

Option	Response to layout for the improvement works on the A4260/A4165 Kidlington Roundabout	%
Like a lot	17	27
Like somewhat	34	55
Neither like nor dislike	5	8
Dislike	3	5
Significantly dislike	3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100</b>

31. Overall, the revised drawings were well received with respondents commenting positively on the increase and more direct shared use facilities with pedestrian/cyclists including signalised crossing on each arm. A summary of responses is provided in Annex 3. Note, not all respondents provided additional text other than confirming liking or disliking the proposals and this is reflected in the number of summarised comments.
32. Comments were received regarding the timings of the signalised crossings and although supporting the reduced speed limits concerns remained regarding approach speeds. Officers will consider these issues further through the detailed design phase including the Stage 2 Road Safety Audit.
33. Specific concerns were raised during the consultation regarding safety on exiting Stratfield Brake sports ground and the number of traffic lanes approaching the roundabout. This was also raised at Stage 1 Road Safety Audit. It was suggested that consideration be given to accommodating an active travel link. Officers will continue to investigate this during detailed design for inclusion by the introduction of ORCA 'wands' and associated materials as a low cost measure whilst providing the active travel benefits in lieu of potential development at Stratfield Brake such as the football stadium.
34. In their consultation response and in subsequent discussions, Kidlington Parish Council expressed a desire for an 'all movement junction' to access and egress the Stratfield Brake sports ground or a direct access to the sports ground from the Kidlington Roundabout. Officers note this desire but it remains out of scope for this project.
35. Concerns raised in initial consultation around substantial loss of trees have been addressed in the revised layout resulting in no tree removal being required. However, there is still a need for some minor vegetation trimming to maximise footway and cycleway widths. There is also some localised crown raising to trees to ensure the required headroom for facilities is achieved.

Bill Cotton  
Corporate Director for Environment and Place





