

Divisions affected: *Wolvercote and Summertown*

**CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT
25 JANUARY 2024**

**OXFORD: A4144 WOODSTOCK ROAD – PROPOSED SHARED USE
CYCLE TRACK**

Report by Corporate Director, Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet Member for Transport Management is **RECOMMENDED** to approve the conversion of the footway on the east side of the A4144 Woodstock Road between the A40 Wolvercote Roundabout and Blandford Avenue, to shared-use footway & cycle track as advertised.

Executive summary

2. This report presents responses to the proposals to convert the footway on the east side of the A4144 Woodstock Road between the A40 Wolvercote Roundabout and Blandford Avenue to a shared-use footway & cycle track, as shown in **Annex 1**.
3. The proposal would remove the existing gap in off-road cycle provision on the east side of the Woodstock Road between the existing provision at the A40 Wolvercote roundabout (linking to Sunderland Avenue) and south of Blandford Avenue to Squitchey Lane.

Financial Implications

4. Funding for the proposals (including consultation) has been provided by the County Council's Accessibility and Safety Programme, which will also fund their implementation if approved.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

5. No implications in respect of equalities or inclusion have been identified in respect of the proposals.

Sustainability Implications

6. The proposals would help facilitate cycling and the safe movement of pedal cyclists in the area.

Formal consultation

7. A formal consultation was carried out between 23 November and 22 December 2023. An email was sent to statutory consultees & key-stakeholders, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Bus operators, countywide transport/access & disabled peoples user groups, Oxford City Council, local City Cllr's, and the local County Councillor representing the Wolvercote and Summertown division.
8. A letter was also sent to approx. 30 properties in the area, and street notices were placed on site in the immediate vicinity.
9. Ten responses were received during the course of the formal consultation, comprising of: four objections, three raising concerns, and three in support.
10. Additionally, Thames Valley Police submitted a non-objection.
11. The full responses are shown at **Annex 2**, and copies of the original submissions are available for inspection by County Councillors.

Summary of consultation responses

12. Thames Valley Police raised no objection to the proposals.
13. Oxfordshire Unlimited, a local group representing the needs of road users with mobility impairments, expressed support for the proposal but also commended a review of the allocation of the lane marking on the northern section of the Woodstock Road on its approach to the A40 Wolvercote roundabout. Their specific suggestion is relocate the start of the southbound bus lane by approximately 50 metres and extend southwards the length of the two lane northbound approach to the A40 Wolvercote roundabout, thereby increasing the number of northbound vehicles which can enter the roundabout at each signal cycle, to the benefit of motor traffic including drivers with mobility issues
14. Oxford Pedestrians Association sent two responses – both objections - stating that in their view the proposal is contrary to pedestrians and wheelchair users being at the top of the Road Users' Hierarchy, and would further discourage walking and wheeling on this already hostile corner, and would increase tensions between cyclists and pedestrians at a time when we are working to build bridges between non-motorised transport modes. Their response also stated their view that the footway is far too narrow at this point to be shared-use (OxPA holds that to encourage walking and wheeling as forms of urban

transport space needs to be allowed that gives two wheelchair users room to pass one another in safety and dignity). Additionally, they expressed the view that creating shared space on what is currently a pavement plays into the (largely unconscious) bias towards fitting every other transport mode around private cars, which get the middle of the road with the best view and in the best condition.

15. Cyclox, a local group representing pedal cyclists in Oxford, expressed concerns over the proposals, including concerns about the lack of co-production on the scheme and level of detail supplied in the consultation plan. In respect of the proposals themselves, their response noted the proposals do not meet the guidance in the national design guidance on cycle provision (Local Transport Note 1/20) including in respect that some of the route is under 3m width and lacks a buffer space between the edge of the cycle track and carriageway, but also acknowledged that cyclists will make use of the space in any case to avoid being on the carriageway. In view of this their response also included a suggestion for an amendment to the marking of the proposed cycle track where the available width is below three metres. Additionally, it was requested that the cycle track continue across the Blandford Avenue junction, and that the junction radii to be tightened to reduce the speed of vehicles turning to and from the side road. Their response also made reference to the possible relocation of the bus stop in the context of possible changes to the bus lane that are though separate from this proposal.
16. Two objections and one concern were received from members of the public, citing concerns over safety for both pedestrians and cyclists, compliance with current design criteria and the specific hazards due to the number of driveways adjacent to the proposal.
17. Three expressions of support were received from members of the public.

Officer response to objections/concerns

18. The proposal will address a current gap in the provision for cyclists on the east side of the Woodstock Road between the A40 Wolvercote roundabout and the Blandford Avenue junction. The typical dimensions available for pedestrians and cyclists will match (in respect of its width and presence of driveways etc.) the existing provision on both the east and west sides of the road which was originally provided in 1993 and which has served as a well-used amenity of particular benefit to less confident cyclists. If approved, as part of the scheme cutting back of vegetation that has encroached onto and over the highway will be carried out, noting that adjacent landowners also have a duty to ensure that vegetation within their land does not obstruct the highway.
19. While very much acknowledging that national design guidance on cycle provision (Local Transport Note 1/20) states that shared use cycle tracks of this type are not the preferred approach to providing new cycle infrastructure, this guidance nevertheless acknowledges that where other types of provision may not be viable, shared use cycle tracks can be of value. In putting forward the

proposals, officers have taken account of the significant constraints applying to the Woodstock Road as a key route for buses and active travel and consider that at present the scope for providing other forms of cycle provision is not likely to be viable at least in the shorter term, and that as a relatively low cost scheme , the current proposal is appropriate and will support the Council's transport objectives notwithstanding the recognised departures from current standards.

20. The suggestion made by Cyclox for a shared pedestrian / cycle space to be provided in place of a white line segregated provision as currently shown (excepting at the bus stop) is noted and will be investigated taking account of the improvement to the available width following the vegetation clearance works referred to above. It is also agreed that the provision of a continuous cycle track across Blandford Avenue with cycle priority is desirable and although outside the scope of the current scheme, will be investigated as part of wider works as described below.
21. The suggestion for relocating the southbound bus lane and extending the two-lane northbound approach to the Wolvercote roundabout is acknowledged. The potential for improvements to northbound bus journey times and reliability are noted however the proposals however sit outside of the scope of this immediate project. It should however be noted that the county council has identified funding to review both bus lane and wider active travel provision on the Woodstock Road, an identified complementary measure for the planned traffic filter trial. The proposal has been shared with the project team developing this piece of work for consideration.
22. Taking the above into account officers consider that the current proposal will be of both immediate benefit and complementary of any subsequent proposals which emerge from the separately funded project to deliver active travel and bus priority improvements to Woodstock Road, and that as a low-cost scheme there is no risk of appreciable abortive expenditure should any future scheme lead to amendments to its detailed layout.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes Annex 1: Consultation plan
 Annex 2: Consultation responses

Contact Officers: Anthony Kirkwood (Team Leader – Vision Zero)

January 2024



- Notes
- Pedestrian side of segregated cycle facility
 - Cycle side of segregated cycle facility
 - Shared Pedestrian/Cycle facility not segregated by white line

The appropriate tactile paving to be provided at either end of each segregated pedestrian/cycle facility and at side road crossings.

Do not scale this drawing

Rev	Description	By	Date	Chk'd	Auth

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Client

Project
**Oxford A4144 Woodstock Rd
 Shared Use Cycle Track
 A40-Blandford Ave
 2023**

Title
Consultation Plan

Scale 1:500	Drawn By SMA	Checked By	Approved By
Drawing Number	Date 07.08.23	Date	Date

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	No objection
(2) Local group/organisation, (Cyclox)	<p>Concerns – 1. We would like to mention that there was no coproduction with this scheme which we find very disappointing. The plans provided with it are poor quality, and in particular don't show the widths of the proposed cycle track or whether the cycle track will be separated from the footway by a half-height kerb or just by a painted line.</p> <p>2. Our own measurements suggest sections of the current footway are well under three metres wide. This does not allow for adequate (LTN 1/201 compliant) separated foot and cycle paths. In practice a space of this width will be used as shared space regardless of how it is marked -- people will want to cycle away from the motor traffic, so will use the "pedestrian" space, and people wanting to walk side-by-side will use the "cycle" space. It is better to mark this as shared space. Note also that with 30mph traffic, LTN 1/20 requires a 0.5 metre buffer between the carriageway and any a cycle track.</p> <p>3. The southbound bus stop shown on the plan is likely to have to be moved to the south, since without a separate bus lane buses stopping there will back traffic up into the roundabout.</p> <p>4. The cycle track needs to be continuous across the Blandford Avenue side entry, with clear priority. And the turning radii there should be tightened, to reduce vehicle speeds. Otherwise people cycling will be at risk from traffic turning in, potentially at 30mph given the large current radii -- whether they take a gamble and cross at speed or come to a stop and then have to get across from a standing start.</p>
(3) Local group/organisation, (Unlimited Oxfordshire)	<p>Concerns – It seems very sensible.</p> <p>However, before implementing it, consideration needs to be given to a measure that would greatly reduce traffic congestion in Woodstock Road.</p>

	<p>The bus stop outside Nos 392 and 394 Woodstock Road should be moved about 50 metres to the south. The southbound bus lane should start about 50 metres further south than it does at present. That would affect the positioning of the tactile paving and the markings in the currently proposed scheme.</p> <p>The two-lane northbound approach to the Wolvercote Roundabout entry could then be extended by about 50 metres. That would increase the number of cars that could queue side-by side in the two lanes by 7, ie from 6 as at present to 13.</p> <p>At present, when the traffic lights for the entry to the roundabout turn to green, cars enter the roundabout two abreast for, at the most, the first six cars in each lane. For the majority of the green time, the cars enter the roundabout one at a time. Often, when the queue in the offside lane becomes seven cars long, there are only 3 or 4 cars in the nearside lane, and no more can get past the offside lane queue to take up the vacant space in the nearside lane. When that happens, only the first 3 or 4 in each lane enter the roundabout two abreast. Then, in the remainder of the green period, 9 or 10 enter in single file. That is a terrible waste of capacity!</p> <p>Long queues of traffic are frustrating for all of us, but much more so for disabled people. For their comfort, journey times need to be kept as short as possible.</p> <p>With my proposal, a few southbound buses might be delayed for a minute in the morning peak period, however many more northbound buses would each save several minutes in the evening peak period.</p> <p>Please could you pass this on to your appropriate colleagues for consideration. I hope that, in due course, they will be able to tell us at Unlimited Oxfordshire whether my proposal can be implemented. And if not, why not.</p>
<p>(4) Local group/organisation, (Oxford Pedestrians Association)</p>	<p>Object – It flies in the face of the policy of putting pedestrians and wheelchair users at the top of the Road Users' Hierarchy, and further discourages walking and wheeling on this already hostile corner, which needs motorised traffic calming rather than catering to..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal would increase tensions between cyclists and pedestrians at a time when we are working to build bridges between non-motorised transport modes. • The pavement is far too narrow at this point to be shared-use (OxPA holds that to encourage walking and wheeling as forms of urban transport space needs to be allowed that gives two wheelchair users room to pass one another in safety and dignity).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating shared space on what is currently a pavement plays into the (largely unconscious) bias towards fitting every other transport mode around private cars, which get the middle of the road with the best view and in the best condition. • We have been told that this will be a temporary solution. This is not what our experience tells us. No pavement cycle lane in Oxford has yet been reversed. (The lights that hold every road user up at the top of George St were said to be temporary and under review when they were put in - against OxPA advice - around 20 years ago.) • The road is wide enough at this point for a bus gate and a cycle lane if other motorised traffic was not being pandered to.
(5) Local group/organisation, (Oxford Pedestrians Association)	Object – Oxford Pedestrians Association is AGAINST narrowing footways to under 2m - this deters pedestrians and wheelchair users, and encourages cyclists to cycle on footways.
(6) Local resident, (Oxford, Stratfield Road)	<p>Object – There is insufficient width for separate cycle track and footway. LTN 1/20 wants 2m for a cycle track (with 1.5m acceptable at pinch points) and a 0.5m buffer from 30mph motor traffic. Regardless of the designation of the space, people cycling will use the full width available (including the pedestrian area) to avoid cycling right next to motor traffic, and to overtake one another, while people walking will use the cycle space if they want to walk two abreast. It is better - especially for the visually impaired - to mark the space to reflect how it will actually be used.</p> <p>The cycle (or the foot-cycle) path needs to be continuous across the Blandford Avenue side entry. The crossings should remain level, with motor traffic forced to slow down by having to negotiate steep ramps, and the corners on the entry should be tightened to further slow motor traffic.</p>
(7) Local resident, (Oxford, Catherine Street)	Object – Something again that should be stopped
(8) Local resident, (Oxford, Woodstock Road)	Concerns – It is already extremely hazardous for residents of houses on the East side of the Woodstock road in the effected area to drive safely out of our driveways and cross the pavement to access the road because of cyclists speeding along the path without looking for cars as they leave front driveways. Surrounding fences, gateposts, street signs and streetlights, the high level of some boundary embankments and the angle at which driveways exit out onto the pavement means the driveways are totally obscured from view and it almost impossible for drivers to see cyclists

	<p>who are on the path close to the property boundaries whilst it is just about possible to see road users who are in the bus lane or the southbound carriageway in time to avoid hitting them.</p> <p>Even without a marked cycle path cyclists do not look out for emerging vehicles and many become extremely aggressive and offensive if they have to stop, slow down or swerve in order to avoid cars that they have not taken care to avoid. If cyclists are to be encouraged to remain on the pavement (for reasons that I entirely understand) then driveway exits need to be visibly marked on the pavement to indicate a break/gap in the cycle path and right of way so that cyclists slow down and stop to check for exiting vehicles at each driveway. Mirrors should also be installed by the highways authority as part of these changes to enable residents/drivers to check for cyclists approaching at high speed. If not taken into consideration, this proposal will not only fail in its aim to improve cycle safety but it may actually make it worse.</p>
(9) Local resident, (Oxford, Catherine Street)	Support – the area is heavily used by cars, cyclists and pedestrians. It is very important to try and maintain all groups safe
(10) Local resident, (Oxford, Catherine Street)	Support – I support the proposals, but still think the county council should build the improved cycle lane the whole way down Woodstock Road. These plans unfortunately appeared to have been halted, but would make cycling here a lot more pleasant and safer
(11) Member of public, (Grove, Main Street)	Support – Good quality active travel provision is essential to achieve modal change in local journeys. This means separated use carriageways which are safe, direct and uninterrupted. This proposal achieves this well.