

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 27 JUNE 2019

DIDCOT: B4493 WANTAGE ROAD ROUNDABOUT JUNCTION WITH FOXHALL ROAD – PROPOSED SHARED USE CYCLE TRACK

Report by Director for Community Operations

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve the conversion of the existing footway link between the north side of the B4493 Wantage Road and the west side of the B4493 Foxhall Road to a shared use footway/cycle track as advertised.

Executive summary

2. Proposals for cycle lanes and tracks on the B4493 Wantage Road at Didcot were approved at the Cabinet Member for Environment Decisions meeting on 10 May 2018 but with a request that measures be considered and investigated which would help ameliorate concerns regarding safety at the roundabout located at the eastern end (Georgetown roundabout) for both cyclists and cars. Proposals for the latter have now been prepared and comprise the improvement of the existing footway link between north side of the B4493 Wantage Road and the west side of the B4493 Foxhall Road to a shared use footway/cycle track as advertised.

Introduction

3. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation to improve and convert the above footway links on the north west quadrant of the roundabout to a shared use footway/cycle track.

Background

4. The above proposal as shown at Annexes 1 & 2 has been put forward as part of wider plans to improve safety and amenity for cyclists along the B4493 at Didcot and, if approved, would be funded by the Great Western Park residential development. The proposal is integral to the goal of encouraging cycle trips as an alternative to the use of private cars, including for residents of the new development, thereby serving to help reduce congestion in the town and encourage active and low-carbon travel.

Consultation

5. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 10 April and 10 May 2019. An email was sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, South Oxfordshire District Council, Didcot Town Council and the local County Councillor. Public notices were placed on site and letters also sent directly to approximately 35 properties in the immediate vicinity of the proposals.
6. Twenty responses were received. 5 (25%) in support, 1 (5%) supporting but with concerns, 12 (60%) objecting and a further 2 (10%) neither supporting/objecting or raising concerns. The responses are summarised at Annex 3 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 proposals.
8. Didcot Town Council expressed support in principle but raised concerns over restricted visibility due to vegetation and parked cars on Glyn Avenue.
9. The objections and concerns - including from local cycling groups – were primarily on the grounds of the lack of need, noting that there is an alternative and shorter route that could be used by many cyclists travelling from the west of the town to and from Foxhall Road, safety concerns in relation to the width of the cycle track, visibility being masked by hedges forming the boundary to private property and also by parked cars and a concern regarding the potential for risk of conflict between pedestrians and cyclists at the front of a specific property. Some respondents requested additional or alternative measures including the conversion of the existing zebra crossing on Foxhall Road just north of the roundabout to a combined parallel crossing for cyclists and pedestrians and the provision of a refuge island to assist cyclists making the right turn from Foxhall Road onto the proposed cycle track. Additionally, a request was made that cyclists should be given priority when crossing Glyn Avenue by providing a raised crossing and to widen the track at some locations.
10. Five expressions of support and two responses expressing neither support or objection were received, with some of these nevertheless raising concerns or requests for further measures to assist cyclists.
11. Noting the concerns about the need for the scheme, it is accepted that many cyclists will continue to use alternative shorter routes for some journeys but the proposal will, nevertheless, improve the safety and amenity for some cycle trips in the area, noting that is intended to only be used by cyclists travelling from Wantage Road into Foxhall Road, rather than the reverse movement.
12. An independent road safety assessment of the proposal has been carried out and it is proposed to cut back the hedges adjacent to the highway boundary to

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ensure adequate visibility but otherwise no additional works were identified for the scheme to operate with acceptable safety. The suggestions for further improvements are noted but there are currently no funds to progress these.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

13. The proposals would help facilitate the safe movement of traffic.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

14. Funding for the proposed measures has been provided by a residential development in the vicinity.

OWEN JENKINS

Director for Community Operations

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

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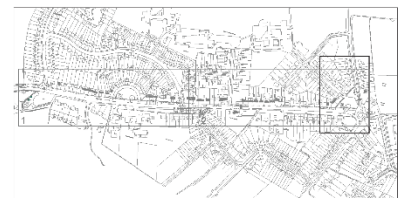
October 2019



- Key**
- Proposed Cycle Route
 - Advisory Cycle Lane across junctions
 - Verge
 - Footpath
 - Proposed Cully
 - Existing Back Cully/Cy
 - Board Boundary Paving - Raised Tubs
 - Solar/Jc. uni-directional road studs

White Lining Schedule

LINE	REFERENCE MARK	GRP	WDT	DESCRIPTION
W1	1003	625	200	Flow Way Markings
W2	603	600	150	Edge marking gap between 1003/1004/1005
W3	603	600	150	Edge marking gap between 1003/1004/1005
W4	603	600	150	Edge marking gap between 1003/1004/1005
W5	603	600	150	Edge marking gap between 1003/1004/1005
W6	603	600	150	Edge marking gap between 1003/1004/1005
W7	603	600	150	Edge marking gap between 1003/1004/1005
W8	603	600	150	Edge marking gap between 1003/1004/1005
W9	603	600	150	Edge marking gap between 1003/1004/1005
W10	603	600	150	Edge marking gap between 1003/1004/1005



Signs



S2



S3



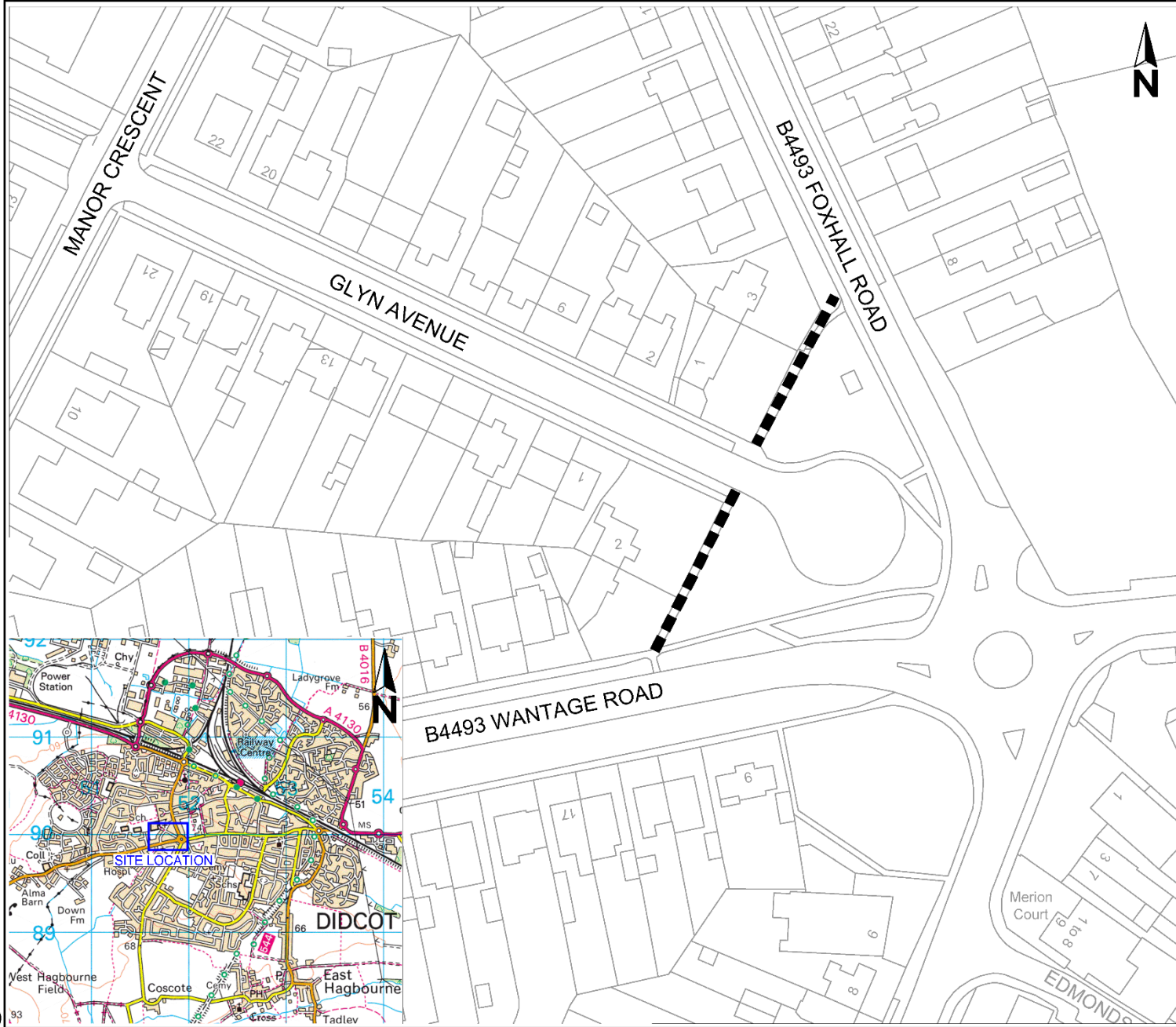
S4



S5

177	T000113	Approved by the BSA Committee	1/18
REV. NO.	DATE	APPROVED BY	REV. NO.
<p>Taylor Wimpey plc MJA CONSULTING CIVIL & STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS</p>			
<p>Isosium Court, 24 The Quadrant Abingdon Science Park, Oxon OX4 4 9YJ Tel: 01235 555173 Fax: 01235 529228</p>			
Project	Wantage Road Foxhall Road	Scale	1:2500
Date	12/01/19	Drawn	JKS
Drawn	JKS	Checked	JKS
Issue No.	5571:626	Rev.	P2

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Drawing No. Revision 0

Key
 ■■■■ Proposed Shared-Use Cycle Track - Existing footpath to be widened to 3 metres.

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Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved

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Project title
PROPOSED SHARED-USE CYCLE TRACK

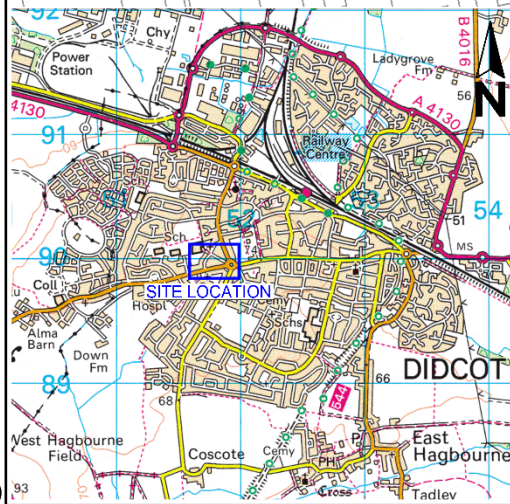
Drawing title
**DIDCOT
 BETWEEN B4493 WANTAGE ROAD
 AND B4493 FOXHALL ROAD**

Drawing Status

Scale @ A3	Drawn by	JaC	Checked by	Approved by
N.T.S.	Date drawn	04/19	Date checked	Date approved

Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref

Drawing No. Revision 0



RESPONDENT	SUMMARISED COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	No objection
(2) Didcot Town Council	Support with concerns - Didcot Town Council supports the proposed shared-use cycle track in principle. The main areas of concern are over trees lowering visibility as cyclists join Foxhall Road and parked cars doing the same as bikes cross Glyn Avenue. Didcot Town Council asks that appropriate measures be put in place to reduce the risk of accidents in these areas.
(3) Local Group, (Harwell)	<p>Object - Whilst HarBUG (Harwell Campus Bicycle Users Group) support the building of cycle infrastructure in Didcot we feel that this particular proposal will not achieve satisfactory results for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any cyclists wishing to turn left at Foxhall Roundabout will already have turned left down Manor Crescent to avoid the roundabout and take the shortest route. Manor Crescent also provides a link to Lydalls Close and Lydalls Road to Didcot Parkway, this route should be improved to provide a direct Didcot Parkway to Harwell Campus route (taking the Girl's School in route). - Many cyclists would like to continue down the Broadway but avoid the roundabout so a shared use path to connect to the pedestrian crossing would be a more useful proposition, changing the pedestrian crossing to a 'Tiger' crossing. This would also meet the aims of the Didcot Garden Town project to create a cycle route down the full length of the Broadway. <p>HarBUG feel that the limited funds available for cycle infrastructure could be better focussed for the Foxhall Roundabout and would advocate a change of design to allow cyclists a safe crossing to continue down the Broadway and improve Manor Crescent and it's junction with Wantage Road and Foxhall Road to Lydalls Close.</p>

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<p>(4) Local Resident, (Didcot)</p>	<p>Object - on the ground of health and safety and money saving aspect. The proposed path is actually not used by bikes at the moment. Cyclist from Wantage Road going down to Foxhall Road are probably using Manor Cress as a short cut. The path will not bring any advantages to there. Cyclist going uphill from Foxhall Road to Wantage Road will have to cross the road. This is probably more dangerous than going around the roundabout. Cyclists in the morning are usually young boys in direction of the boy school via the Glyn avenue. The path will not bring any advantages. In case, you still decide to put the cycle path in Foxhall road, a set of trees and a small building is actually blocking the view. Cars will not be able to see oncoming cyclists. In that case, a crossing will have to be implemented. Foxhall road has already two crossings (one with traffic lights and the other a zebra crossing) within a short distance of each other. This is not a suitable proposition to have multiple crossing so close to each other. To summarise, the cycle path is not going to bring any additional value to the community and is actually dangerous in the design. This is going to increase the risk of accidents. Thanks for considering my opinion.</p>
<p>(5) Local Resident, (Didcot)</p>	<p>Object - What a waste of money. You would be far better to continue the planned Wantage Road cycle scheme through the roundabout, rather than diverting cyclists away from the roundabout. Cyclists who want to cut the corner and avoid the roundabout will use Manor Crescent. How does this scheme help cyclists coming up Foxhall Road towards Wantage Road? If anything, it makes matters worse for them, as motorists approaching the roundabout along Wantage Road will have seen cyclists peeling off along this new bypass path and won't be expecting to see cyclists on the roundabout coming from their left.</p> <p>Cyclists generally want to cycle on the road, or on a proper separate off-road cycle path, not some dreadful hybrid of the two, constantly giving way to other vehicles and side roads. You don't make it safer or more convenient by putting random bits of green road surface down in the easy places, then giving up whenever it meets a junction. I'm sure if you looked at the approach of the Netherlands to encouraging cycling, you would see much better ways to do this.</p>
<p>(6) Local Resident, (Didcot)</p>	<p>Object - In my opinion, a waste of time, effort and more importantly, money. That's hardly a cycle track but a mere cut-through. If you want to make things better for residents a much larger cycle network around the town would be very welcome. All this proposed work will not make any real difference to safety as it's too little.</p>
<p>(7) Local Resident, (Didcot)</p>	<p>Object - I walk my dog along this route on a daily basis. The junction of the footpath and the cut-through at Wantage Road is obscured by large, privately owned hedges I assume. If a cyclist is coming from the Foxhall Road direction, they will have difficulty seeing if the footpath is clear. As it stands, I or my dog currently "bump" into people 2-3 times a week</p>

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	<p>with people going in the opposite direction. In order to provide a better view for cyclists, you would have to put the cycle section on the side furthest from the hedge in order to provide anything resembling a clear view.</p> <p>How are you going to ensure that the footpath junction at the Wantage Road end is safe for both pedestrians, animals and cyclists?</p> <p>To this end, how will you improve visibility so people can see whether another user is heading their way from around the corner?</p> <p>How will you ensure people stay in their lanes to ensure no corner cutting with possible accidents?</p> <p>How will you limit cyclists speed?</p> <p>How will you ensure that cyclists will stop and check clearance at the junction at Wantage Road to allow pedestrians to continue down the road safely? Cyclists already cycling along the main footpath of Wantage Road on the same side and are not always mindful of pedestrian users of the footpath.</p> <p>How will you ensure that the hedges bordering the current footpath remain cutback/maintained so the footpath is not reduced?</p> <p>If you are removing the current stand of trees, will you be replacing the planting with other appropriate planting?</p> <p>If you can address the safety issues raised, then I would be more likely to support the proposal.</p>
<p>(8) Local Resident, (Wantage)</p>	<p>Object - What does this proposal offer that isn't already provided by the adjacent Manor Crescent?</p> <p>It's a cycle path to nowhere. Please stop wasting 'our' money on these useless gestures just so that you can say you're investing in sustainable transport.</p>
<p>(9) Local Resident, (Didcot)</p>	<p>Object - This seems completely unnecessary and not at all practical. It is only of use to cyclists travelling in one direction and there are already quieter alternatives to this. Cyclists would have to leave the road and then join again at a tight busy spot. It is safer to stay on the road.</p>

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	<p>Money would be better spent put towards better and more useful cycling infrastructure. A single short section is of no help at all.</p>
<p>(10) Local Resident, (Didcot)</p>	<p>Object - My front gate would go straight out onto the proposed track and we have had near misses from bikes with the grandchildren , also the amount of bikes that we have now probably doesn't warrant the money you are prepared to pay for the track it could be better used repairing Glyn Avenue and getting the lorries and cars removed from the turning circle so that the rubbish bins are emptied on a regular basis.</p>
<p>(11) Local Resident, (Harwell)</p>	<p>Object - I cycle this daily from Harwell to Didcot Train station, I see no value at all in this improvement, and if implement unlikely to use it.</p> <p>Money better spent on improving the quality of the roads.</p>
<p>(12) Local Resident, (Didcot)</p>	<p>Object - There is no point making this short section a cycle path. It does not connect anything to anywhere. Cyclists are safer on the road using the roundabout correctly.</p> <p>From a safety point if view, the vegetation would need to be cleared on the Foxhall road side to prevent a blind corner and pedestrians being run down by cyclists</p> <p>.</p>
<p>(13) Email Response, (unknown)</p>	<p>Object - I cycle through Didcot every day while commuting to work. I am familiar with the Foxhall Road roundabouts – both ends – and use them regularly. I object to the planned shared use path bypassing the roundabout at the south end of Foxhall Road on the grounds that it is unnecessary, and the funding could be used for more worthwhile road and cycling infrastructure projects.</p> <p>As a cyclist, there are many times I see cycling infrastructure which has been installed, I can only think with good intentions, which either provides no benefit to the cyclist, or places them in a more dangerous position than they would be in using the road. The proposed path would, I believe, fall into this category. Assuming that cycling will be allowed in both directions, there are two situations where the path could be used:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cyclist on Wantage road heading east, turning left onto Foxhall road

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2. Cyclist on Foxhall road heading south, turning right onto Wantage road

In situation 1, the cyclist would be presented with the option of using either the path or the roundabout. Since this is a simple left turn on the roundabout, the path would provide no increase in safety or ease of use. One left turn at the roundabout will be easier than first turning across the pavement onto the path, and then making a second left turn off the path onto Foxhall Road.

In situation 2, using the path would require the cyclist to make 2 right turns across the opposite traffic lane. This is more dangerous than the single right turn at the roundabout, and also less convenient – at the roundabout, the cyclist would only need to give way to traffic from the Harwell direction, and would have right of way over traffic from the Broadway. With a right turn from the path, the cyclist would first have to give way to northbound traffic on Foxhall Road, and then have to give way to traffic from both directions on Wantage road. Since the path will not be a major junction, drivers around the cyclist will be less likely to notice them waiting to make the right turn onto the path, which would require them to sit in the middle of the road. This places the cyclist in unnecessary danger – the safest and most convenient route will still be the roundabout.

In both of these situations, the proposed path will provide no benefit, either for safety or convenience, over using the existing roundabout. Using the path could even be more dangerous in the case of situation 2. I would expect, if the proposed path is built, that it will see very little use. Certainly, I would not use it for making the turn in either direction, since I like to avoid placing myself in dangerous situations unnecessarily while I am cycling.

In addition to being of no use to cyclists, building this path would feed into the anti-cyclist narrative which appears in comments against cycling infrastructure projects. When drivers see money spent on cycling infrastructure, and then see cyclists still using the road, it encourages the idea that all cycling infrastructure investment is a waste of money, since the cyclists will just use the road anyway – a view which is invariably expressed by online commenters whenever a cycling infrastructure proposal is made.

There are other places around Didcot which could certainly benefit from being upgraded to shared use paths. For example, the pavement on the A4130 between the Milton road roundabout and the end of the NCR5 path round back of the power station would provide a much-needed link between Basil Hill road and the NCR5 to Sutton Courtney. It sees little use by pedestrians so could probably be made shared use without even being widened.

To conclude, the proposed path would, in my opinion, represent the worst of what cycling infrastructure can be – piecemeal projects which don't link together in a useful or well-planned way. Instead, The Council should focus on developing a long term, connected, planned network of shared use pavements, cycle lanes and off-road paths which

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	<p>provides a safe way of making journeys by bicycle. In the meantime, work should be focused on repairing defects such as potholes which present a serious danger to cyclists as well as other road users, on the roads and cycle paths around the county.</p>
<p>(14) Local Resident, (Didcot)</p>	<p>Object – No comment</p>
<p>(15) Local Resident, (Harwell)</p>	<p>Support - First the positives, the path is a reasonable width! It's nice to see OCC using the recommended width from the cycling design guidance rather than simply the minimum.</p> <p>Sadly there are several negatives as well: Why is OCC incapable of providing pedestrian and cyclist priority over even the most unused road? You've managed to create a shared use path of <50m long that has a give way across a rarely used turning circle! This was the main reason the initial plans for cycling facilities on Wantage road were slated and it appears no lessons have been learned. Put a raised table on the road and give peds/cyclists priority as per the Council's road user hierarchy.</p> <p>How are cyclists heading towards the Roundabout on Foxhall Rd supposed to access this path? A right turn on a busy road with car drivers who don't expect the manoeuvre? A traffic island on Foxhall Rd to provide protection for turning cyclists would improve matters here (this situation is similar to the turn onto the Winnaway from the A4185 - the turn isn't expected by motorists, so even a signalling cyclist has to watch that the car behind doesn't overtake as they are turning).</p> <p>This proposal also ignores all the other arms of Foxhall - why put this in place rather than deal with the roundabout as a whole? Cyclists approaching the roundabout from all other arms are just left to deal with it. Will this proposal weaken the case for improvements to the other arms?</p>
<p>(16) Local Group, (Abingdon)</p>	<p>Support - We support this additional shared-use link, which provides a way to avoid the busy roundabout for some routes.</p> <p>However, we note that this may not be the ideal route for most cyclists. If they are travelling between Harwell or Southwest Didcot and the station they may minimise travel on Foxhall Road by turning down Manor Crescent and then Lydalls Close/Lydalls Road. Any improvements on that corridor would be greatly appreciated.</p>

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	<p>Detailed design points, working from North to South:</p> <p>A painted cycle sign in the Foxhall Road carriageway southbound just before the turn may help cyclists turning right into the new link.</p> <p>The use of a protected exit on to Foxhall Road is excellent.</p> <p>If the upgraded width can be extended to 3.5m, that can make it easier for cyclists to pass two pedestrians walking side-by-side (according to Patrick Lingwood, OCC).</p> <p>At the Wantage Road end, the narrowing of the shared route is odd. If there is a cyclist coming South on the upgraded path, waiting to head West and one coming East wanting to turn North that could be a problem. Better to keep the full 3-3.5m width?</p> <p>Also the Cambridge kerbs on both sides should be fully dropped to allow the cyclist heading South then West to cross the road and join the stepped route on the other side.</p>
(17) Local Resident, (Didcot)	<p>Support - I am a resident of Wantage Road and I cycle to work, doing a left turn on this roundabout every morning (from Wantage Road onto Foxhall Road). While it is by no means the worst junction I encounter, generally any alterations which reduce the need for me (as a cyclist) to interact with roundabouts is generally welcome. Approximately 90% of the near misses I've experienced have been caused by drivers entering roundabouts and not seeing the cyclist already on the roundabout (usually despite good visibility).</p>
(18) Local Resident, (Abingdon)	<p>Support - No comment</p>
(19) Local Group, (Oxford)	<p>Support - Suggest widening the shared path to a minimum 3.5m or 4m depending on available space in the verge. This should help future proof for higher volumes after new housing is built and make the path more comfortable for users.</p>
(20) Local Resident, (Didcot)	<p>Neither - This cycle path is right outside my house, and whilst I fully endorse cycling infrastructure and encouraging cycling/walking rather than car. Please can you clarify the following points-:</p>

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Disused children crossing warning sign, next to the telegraph pole. What will happen to this?-Relocation of telegraph pole requires movement of telephone cable to my property and possibly electrics. Will this cause much disruption?
-3M width for the shared use cycle track is too large and will be disproportionately large compared to the rest of the cycle path along Wantage road, making it look unsightly. This should be reduced to fit better with the environment.-Final point (Important!) Whilst being pro-cycling I don't understand the point of this cycle path? As it is not joining up to anything on Foxhall road so provides no net benefit to people. More to the point if a cyclist travelling east wanted to connect with Foxhall road they would just cycle down Manor Crescent instead and link up that way. Money on this scheme would be much better spent extending the cycle link into the centre of Didcot along Broadway and introducing traffic calming measures (slowing down cars) near the roundabout with functioning speed camera's, to make it safer for people to cycle |
|--|--|