

SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING

SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Cycle City Ambition - The Plain

I. PROPOSAL

The scheme aims to encourage greater levels of cycling by addressing one of the key barriers/perceptive deterrents to increased cycling into and out of Oxford city centre. It would be on the basis that the preferred option is keeping cyclists on the carriageway and making it safer for them by reducing road space tightening geometry of The Plain roundabout junction.

The proposal retains the roundabout, incorporating features aimed to enhance the pedestrian and cycle environment, reducing entry and exit speeds and vehicles, and improving the safety (and perception of safety at the roundabout).

What else did you consider and reject? Why was this considered the better option?

As discussed above, the scheme aims to keep cyclists on the carriageway and making the junction more welcoming to cyclists by reducing the road space, tightening the geometry and widths of the entry and exit arms onto the roundabout, promoting slower traffic speeds and thus making it safer for cyclists.

The only other broad option that has been considered, but rejected, was to keep cyclists off the carriageway and promote shared use footways/cycleways. This was rejected because of the likely negative impact on pedestrians and other vulnerable users, such as the elderly, young children and those with disabilities currently use the footways. This option is also constrained by the limited space available on parts of the footway, as well as the need to preserve and where possible enhance the historic character/features on The Plain.

A full design evaluation and assessment was undertaken as part of the preliminary design. This concluded that the preferred proposal performed the best against the assessment criteria which were based on the overlying scheme objectives and key design constraints. In all the preferred option best achieves the scheme objectives to increase the level of cycling and modifying the junction to promote slower traffic speeds and increase road safety.

What consultation/research evidence have you used to inform this proposal (public, stakeholder, customer, etc.)?

The project team held stakeholder engagement meetings on 7 and 8 October 2013 to introduce the project to local stakeholders and provide them with an opportunity to convey their comments/views on needs and operational requirements that the scheme needs to consider. These meetings were attended by transport groups (e.g.

cycling interest groups, bus operators and pedestrian associations), local district and county councillors and businesses and education establishments with frontages onto the junction (e.g. Sainsbury's and Magdalen College School). Feedback received from these sessions and follow-up correspondence has helped to inform and steer the preliminary design.

Further stakeholder consultation is programmed to take place on the preferred scheme in January 2014.

How developed is the proposal?

The proposal builds upon a draft scheme design and concept which was submitted to the Department for Transport in April 2013. The project is in the preliminary design stage which is expected to be largely completed by early December 2013. Further stakeholder consultation is the next stage in the programme.

II. IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL ON SERVICE USERS AND THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Rural Communities

The impact of the project will be negligible to those living in rural communities throughout the county. The project aims to keep delays to traffic to an absolute minimum, including delays to rural bus services that travel through the junction. The scheme design takes into account the need for school coaches to drop-off and pick up pupils at the High Street arm on the junction, many of which originate from rural areas of the county.

Local Communities

No specific impact is anticipated. The scheme design takes into account the operational needs and requirements of local business frontages and education establishments in the vicinity of The Plain. There is a risk that changes to the geometry of the junction and modification to the approaches could increase traffic delays which in turn could disadvantage bus users and exacerbate localised negative environmental impacts associated with congestion, such as poor air quality and noise.

There will be some inconvenience to the local community and local businesses during the implementation/construction phase of the project.

Areas of Deprivation

No specific impact anticipated.

Older People

No specific impact anticipated. The scheme is likely to deliver some benefit to elderly pedestrians through improving the pedestrian amenity around the junction, including the extension of footway space and the narrowing of the junction's entry and exit arms, making it easier to cross the road.

Children & Young Adults

No specific impact anticipated.

Disabilities

No specific impact anticipated. The scheme is likely to deliver some benefit to those with disabilities through improving the pedestrian amenity around the junction, including the extension of footway space and the narrowing of the junction's entry and exit arms, making it easier to cross the road.

Race

No specific impact anticipated.

Religion & Belief

No specific impact anticipated.

Sex

No specific impact anticipated.

Gender Reassignment

No specific impact anticipated.

Sexual Orientation

No specific impact anticipated.

Pregnancy & Maternity

No specific impact anticipated.

Marriage & Civil Partnership

No specific impact anticipated.

What actions will be taken to mitigate these risks?

In order to minimise the risk and potential negative impacts of the scheme, the project team has engaged with local stakeholders, businesses and transport groups to understand and consider the views and needs of key users of The Plain. Key stakeholders included:

- Cyclist groups (Cyclox and Cycling Touring Club);
- Pedestrian groups (Oxford Pedestrian Association);
- Bus operators;
- Age and Disability groups (OXTRAG); and
- Business frontages, schools and colleges in the vicinity of the junction.

This engagement provided an opportunity for those involved to help shape the design so as to best accommodate local needs and the needs of cyclists and other users of the junction. The feedback received from stakeholders has been used to inform the preliminary design work.

A VISSIM micro-simulation model has been used as part of the preliminary design work to test the emerging proposal. This examines the likely future operation of the

junction, including impacts to traffic flow and delay. This test takes into account key design considerations and constraints, including keeping traffic delay to a minimum. Information and data received from the VISSIM analysis has been used to inform and determine the optimum scheme design.

The project team will work with the appointed principal contractor to minimise any disruption during the construction/implementation phase of the project. The construction phases had been programmed around the Christmas Embargo (2014) to reduce disruption during the holiday period. This includes providing sufficient notice of the impending works to local businesses and stakeholders.

Impact on providers (local SMEs and voluntary, community & faith sector)

No other specific impacts to those already discussed above.

What actions will be taken to mitigate this risk?

Please see above

Impact of the proposal on other council services

The choice of surfacing materials and road lining to be used in the scheme may have an impact on future maintenance revenue budget.

What actions will be taken to mitigate this risk?

None, the scheme design takes into account build-ability and maintainability as key constraints. The selection of materials and lining arrangements will be determined as part of the detailed design with full liaison with the relevant teams across the council.

Impact of the proposal on staff

No specific risks are anticipated

What actions will be taken to mitigate this risk?

None.

Capital implications of proposed change

Scheme is funded by Department for Transport and locally held city and county council

