#### **CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT - 24 JULY 2014**

# FRIDESWIDE SQUARE, OXFORD – TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS ENABLING WORKS

#### Report by Deputy Director of Environment & Economy (Commercial)

#### Introduction

- 1. The county council has been planning to transform Frideswide Square from a busy highway junction into a well-managed entry point to the city in keeping with Oxford. In March 2011, the Cabinet Member for Transport approved two options for further design work and consultation. This was followed by The Cabinet approving the progression of the "Boulevard" option to detailed design and implementation in March 2012.
- 2. The approved capital programme for 2014/15 to 2016/17 includes a total budget of £5.478m for Frideswide Square. Delivery within this budget requires review through a value engineering process, and the project team are already engaged in significant early contractor involvement.
- 3. This report focuses on the identified enabling works and the results of formal consultation on the required amendments to traffic regulation orders (TROs) and conversion of footways that has recently been completed.

## Project purpose: regeneration and growth

- 4. Frideswide Square provides a vital link between the major road routes into Oxford and is, therefore, of strategic importance in Oxfordshire's road network, handling tens of thousands of car, bus, cycle and pedestrian journeys every day as well as being the gateway to the area for rail passengers. In particular, it is one of the key bottlenecks preventing reliable journey times for people commuting into Oxford from outside the city.
- 5. Oxford rail station is one of the fastest growing stations in the country, with 50% growth in passenger numbers since 2003. An estimated 6.6 million people passed through the station in 2012/13. Frideswide Square is the main point of arrival and departure for people using the station and, therefore, has an increasingly important transport and public realm function.

### **Project History**

6. In March 2011, the Cabinet Member for Transport approved a design approach for Frideswide Square with no traffic signals, drawing heavily on

- "shared space" principles including compact roundabouts, greatly reduced carriageway areas, courtesy crossings, and landscaping.
- 7. In March 2012, the Cabinet approved the "Boulevard" version as the preferred option and approved progression to further design work and consultation. In order to supplement the main design for the square itself, enabling works to some of the approaches to Frideswide Square have been identified as being necessary. A reduced scale plan showing the general layout of all current proposals are attached at Annex 1.

#### Background

- 8. Design work on the project has now been progressed in that additional works are recommended on the adjacent road network covering Becket Street and Osney Lane to the south and the junction of Worcester Street/Hythe Bridge Street/George Street to the east. This will help the overall project in terms of safety, traffic flows, queuing and delays and further traffic modelling has been completed to support this. These works will also increase the availability of alternative routes and temporary traffic management during the construction phase. Reduced scale plans of the proposals are attached to this report at Annex 2 and Annex 3.
- 9. The additional (enabling) works include opening up the northern end of Becket Street to two-way traffic, introduction of a mini-roundabout at the junction of Osney Lane and Hollybush Row and re-opening the four way junction at Worcester Street/Hythe Bridge Street/George Street. These proposals require amendments to TROs to remove/relocate residents and short term parking, allow additional vehicular movements and convert areas of footway to shared use.
- 10. It is considered that to progress the improvement scheme to the main Square, the enabling works should be undertaken in advance. The current Capital Programme includes the construction of the enabling works September 2014 to December 2014 followed by the public realm improvements to the main square from February 2015.
- 11. This report details the results of the formal public consultation on the amendments to the TROs necessary for the enabling works.
- 12. With reference to the works to the main Square, the detailed design is ongoing and a detailed landscaping scheme is being developed taking into account stakeholder comments, budgetary constraints and other factors such as utilities under the road.

#### Stakeholder consultation

13. Discussions with stakeholders recommenced in late April 2014 which coincided with the informal consultation on the TRO amendments required for the enabling works. Meetings were held with many of the stakeholders resulting in some commenting on the proposed changes to parking on Becket

Street and the proposed shared use footway areas on the junction of Worcester Street/George Street etc. The main discussion points however were with respect to the details of the proposals on the main Square, details of which are still being designed and considered.

- 14. Stakeholder groups representing people with disabilities have raised concerns about the proposed shared use areas at the Worcester Street/George Street/Hythe Bridge Street junction and the potential delays to pedestrians at this new four-way signalised junction. Comments were also made regarding the proposed loading bay on Becket Street and how this will be defined to the visually impaired including how much footway width will be available when it is in use.
- 15. Stakeholder discussions, including workshops, on the design and materials for the main works to the Square will continue during the detailed design phase.

#### **Informal Consultation**

- 16. Informal consultation on the proposed enabling works was undertaken between 23 April and 09 May 2014. Consultation was carried out with emergency services, County and City councillors, local user groups (including cycling, walking, public transport and disability groups) and residents, businesses and landowners within the area covered by the enabling works.
- 17. A total of 6 written responses were received during the informal consultation process from residents of Rowland Hill Court (off Osney Lane) and businesses that front onto Frideswide Square. All of the responses had concerns over the proposals including the removal of and relocation of the resident and short stay parking places, additional and speed of traffic using Becket Street and Osney Lane, adverse effect on traffic noise and congestion, disabled parking, visitors parking, refuse collections and catering for deliveries and loading.
- 18. As a result of these comments, some amendments to the proposals for the distribution of parking spaces were made prior to commencing the formal consultation process.

#### **Formal Consultation**

- 19. Formal consultation was undertaken between 10 June and 04 July 2014 and carried out with the same groups set out in paragraph 15. In addition, copies of the public notices appeared in the local press and were posted on street furniture within the area of the proposed scheme.
- 20. 16 responses have been received in response to the consultation and these are summarised, along with officer comments at Annex 4.
- 21. During the period of formal consultation a site meeting was held, on request, with the local councillor and some local businesses to go over the scheme details. Attendees of the meeting still had concerns over the proposals and

they were encouraged to confirm their concerns back to us in writing for inclusion in this report. One such response has been received.

- 22. Objections to the TROs were generally based on;
  - Additional traffic leading to potential increase in noise, pollution, excessive speed which in turn results in poorer road safety and quality of life.
  - Reduced levels of on street parking for both resident permit holders and visitors and the fact that those spaces retained are further away than where people want/need them.
  - Disabled parking spaces have not been catered for.
  - Lack of delivery/loading spaces to cater for the businesses on Frideswide Square.
  - Lack of enforcement of the existing loading bay restrictions.
  - Lack of consideration given to refuse collections.
  - Not enough consideration given to improvements for pedestrians and cyclists.
  - Becket Street and Osney Lane are not suitable for large vehicles including buses.
  - Lack of regular communication with stakeholders.
  - Pedestrian desire lines are not catered for at the proposed Worcester Street junction and will incur delays.
  - Shared use pavement areas at Worcester Street junction are generally not considered wide enough and will put pedestrians and cyclists in direct conflict.
- 23. Copies of all the consultation responses are available for inspection in the Members' Resource Centre.

#### Officer Comments

- 24. Annex 4 summarises the correspondence received but officer comments in response to the objections above include;
  - The existing 20mph speed limit for the area is to remain in place and the geometric layout of the proposals is aimed at keeping vehicle speeds below that speed, ideally 12-15mph. Even at quieter times, the road layout will make it difficult to drive any faster than this. Every attempt has been made to distribute available space between resident permits and short stay parking. There is no 'net loss' in the provision of resident permit spaces.
  - There is no proposal to provide bays specifically for disabled parking.
    However, blue badge holders can park in residents parking spaces for
    an unlimited time. Some additional residents spaces are available in St
    Thomas Street west of Hollybush Row. As part of the design refinement
    the possibility of adding some provision for blue badge holders in
    Becket Street and/or Hollybush Row will be investigated. Any
    additional provision would need to be separately advertised.

- The proposals include for the provision of two loading bays, one to the northern end of Becket Street and one the north end of Hollybush Row. These will replace the one that currently exists within Frideswide Square.
- Enforcement is a key part of the proposals and those responsible continue to be involved as part of the project team.
- No design works were undertaken on the project between January and December 2013 hence there were limited communications with stakeholders during that period. Communication channels were reopened in April 2014 with the informal consultation on the enabling works, as described above.
- Improvements for pedestrians and cyclists are being considered as part
  of these proposals including e.g. improvements to the zebra crossing
  on Hollybush Row and a cycle bypass at the proposed miniroundabout.
- 25. The conversion of footway areas to unsegregated shared use at the Worcester Street junction has generated most responses. In response, officers recommend that approval to the conversions be granted but their physical implementation on the ground should be deferred until such a facility is considered required following monitoring of the junction after its construction. This would mean that the signalised junction would incorporate pedestrian phase elements only at initial installation.
- 26. A communications plan for the project is being prepared as a matter of urgency. This will be aimed at regular communication with stakeholders, including residents and businesses, informing of work schedules, progress, key messages etc.

## **Equality and Inclusion**

27. The project team will continue to develop the design of these enabling works and the public realm scheme for the main Square to address as many of the concerns of people with disabilities as possible. The usability of the new layouts for people with mobility and visual impairments will need to be monitored carefully once complete and adjustments made in light of experience where necessary. Part of the project contingencies will be set aside to deal with any changes (including, but not limited to, changes to assist people with mobility or visual impairments) post completion. No major changes will be made until at least one year has passed after the full completion of the scheme. This allows sufficient time for all road users to adjust to the new layout and for monitoring to be carried out.

## Financial and staff implications (including Revenue)

28. The approved capital programme by the council includes Frideswide Square as one of the major integrated transport schemes. The total budget for the scheme (including costs incurred to date) is £5.478m.

- 29. Detailed design work is continuing with an aim to start construction of the enabling works in September 2014. Works to the main Square are intended to commence from February 2015 (subject to co-ordination with other major works in and around the city), with completion in December 2015.
- 30. The timetable is challenging and will require considerable staff resources between now and December 2015. The Highways & Transport service is able to draw in additional resources through its contract with Skanska and this is expected to be sufficient to deliver the required work.

#### RECOMMENDATION

- 31. The Cabinet Member for Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve:
  - (a) the making of the Traffic Regulation Order amendments for Becket Street, Osney Lane, St Thomas Street and Woodbine Place, as advertised and shown in Annex 2 to this report;
  - (b) the conversion of footway areas to shared use at the Worcester Street/George Street/Hythe Bridge Street junction, shown in Annex 3 to this report but not its implementation at this time. Monitoring should be undertaken with a view to implementing later should the need arise;
  - (c) progression to implementation of the enabling works subject to any specific matters on the detailed design being resolved (including whether any specific provision for blue badge parking can be made in Becket Street and/or Hollybush Row) in consultation with the Deputy Director of Environment & Economy (Commercial) and the Cabinet Member for Environment.

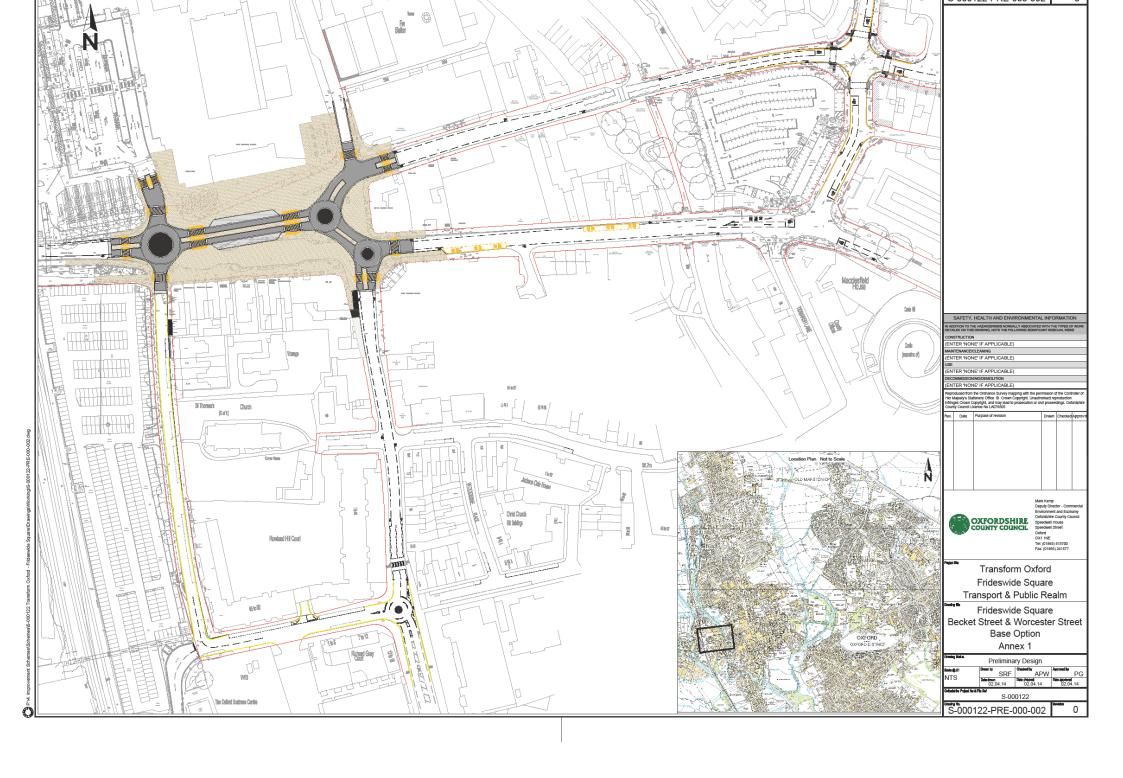
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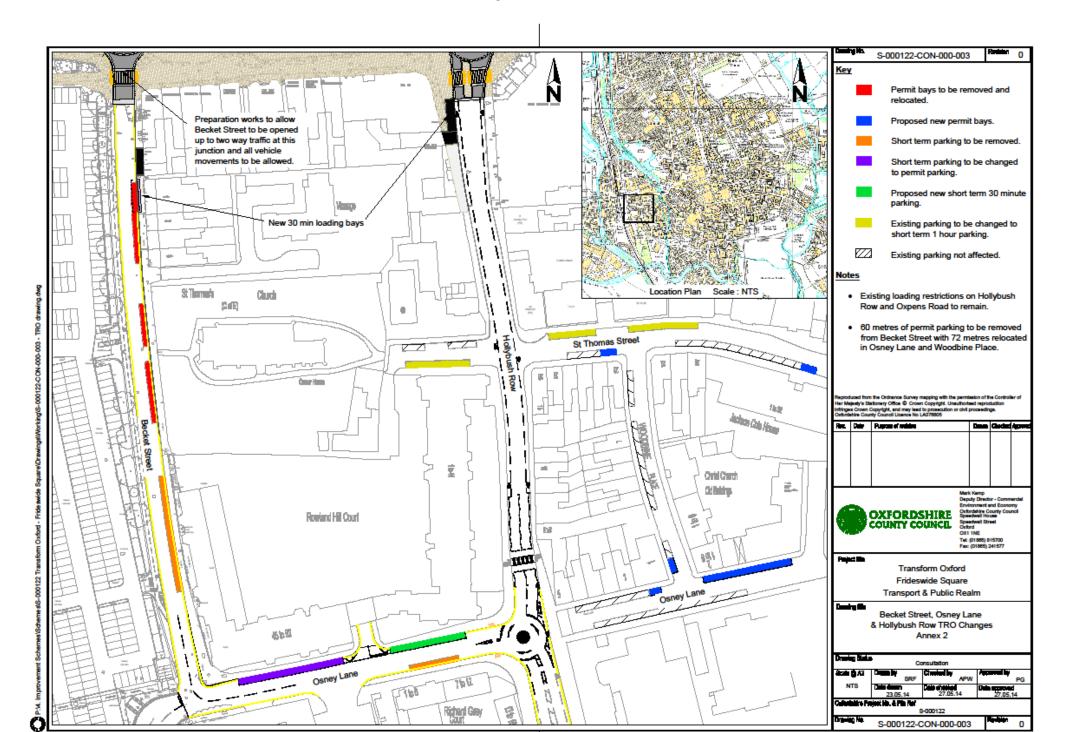
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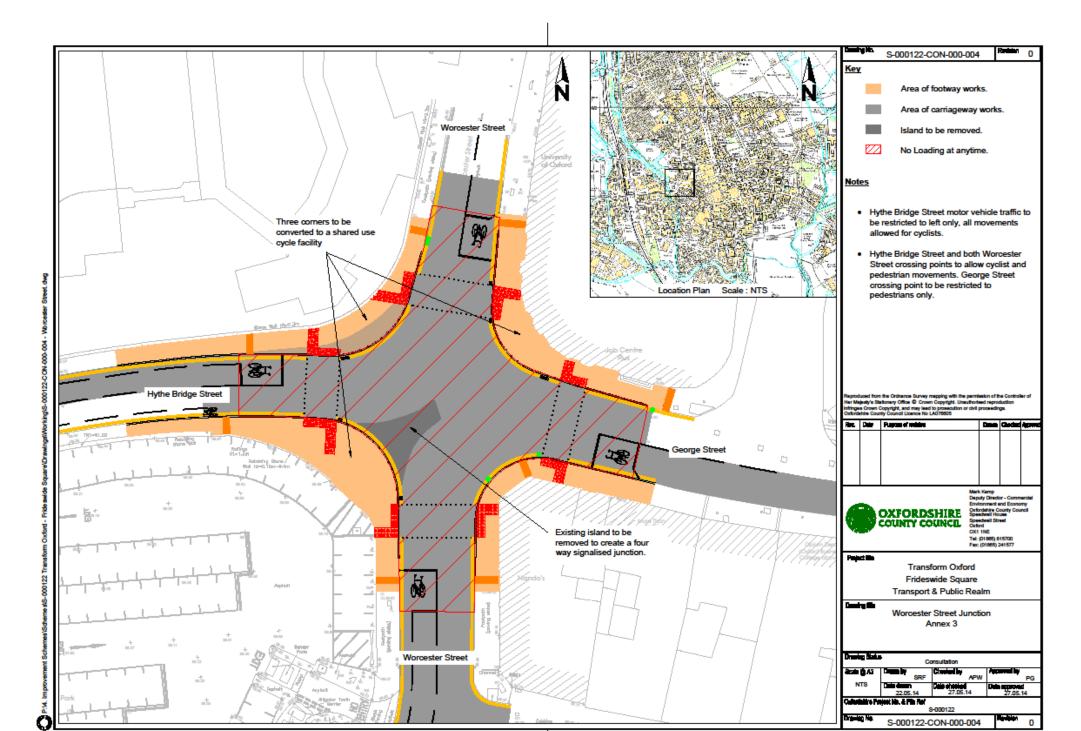
Background papers: Consultation documentation

Contact Officer: Jim Daughton

July 2014







# Summary of comments received during Consultation

Respondent	Support proposal	Comments	Officer Comments
Cllr John Howson	Y	Raised issue of improved signing of pedestrian routes. Need to encourage more use of the existing pelican crossing on Hythe Bridge Street by pedestrians travelling from the station.	A signing strategy, both for vehicular traffic and pedestrians etc, will be developed and included in the final scheme.
Local resident	N	Concerned that the new four-way signalised junction would mean that pedestrians had to cross more than one carriageway in order to get from Hythe Bridge Street to George street and vice versa. Perceived delays to pedestrians.	Proposed junction is aimed at providing users with more options of routes available. The phasing of the new signals will mean there will be an 'all red' phase for traffic meaning pedestrians can cross 'all' arms at one time minimising delays. The implemented scheme will continue to be monitored on completion. Any adjustments identified as necessary can be made in the future.
OXTRAG	N	Concerned re. proposals to convert the small, narrow areas of footway at Worcester Street junction to shared use. Perceived delays to pedestrians at the new four-way signalised junction.	The proposal for shared use footways was aimed at providing users with route options and includes widening the footway on the north west side of the junction to make cyclists and pedestrians sharing space more comfortable. However, this is a common concern so it is recommended that these areas are not implemented at this stage and that signals are installed as pedestrian only at implementation and

Respondent	Support	Comments	Officer Comments
·	proposal		
			monitoring undertaken.
Guidedogs Association	N	Requested details of how the shared use areas will be highlighted. Asked to ensure that the push button boxes to the crossings all had the rotating tactile cone installed. Concerned over the half on carriageway, half on footway loading bays in that they need to be distinguished by the visually impaired.	As above comment. Push button units will be fitted with the rotating cone to assist the visually impaired. Further considerations are to be given to the loading bay demarcation prior to implementation.
OxPA	N	Cannot approve proposals which will sacrifice small adjacent residential streets to increased traffic flows which would also worsen an already unsatisfying experience for pedestrians. Would welcome a reduction in traffic flow. Other concerns as follows; i) how long a period will pedestrians have to wait to cross at the new signalised junction, ii) how will enforcement of the traffic restrictions on George Street be undertaken, iii) do not understand the need for shared use areas, iv) reduction in air quality, v) crossings are off desire lines making them less convenient.	i) Phasing of the signals will be set to minimise delays and disruption to all users and will also be monitored thereafter with adjustments made if necessary, ii) enforcement is key and those responsible for it have been and will continue to be involved as part of the project team, iii) The proposal for shared use footways was aimed at providing users with route options and includes widening the footway on the north west side of the junction to make cyclists and pedestrians sharing space more comfortable. However, this is a common concern so it is recommended that these areas are not implemented at this stage and that signals are installed as pedestrian only at implementation and monitoring undertaken, iv) traffic will increase in Becket Street and Osney Lane and so it is expected that air quality

Respondent	Support	Comments	Officer Comments
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			will worsen there. However, there will be correspondingly less traffic in Frideswide Square and Hollybush Row as a result. And in any case, the full benefits of the Frideswide Square project are unlikely to be realised if some traffic was not re-routed along Becket Street and Osney Lane. In the longer term, as part of the Oxpens redevelopment, Becket Street is proposed to be continued straight on south through the site, to re-join Oxpens Road further to the south and east. In this scenario, Osney lane will become a minor side street and so volumes of traffic there will be less than they are even now. This will have a correspondingly positive impact on air quality. v) the intention is to offer as many options for crossing as possible throughout the area covered by the proposals.
Oxford City Council	Y	Supportive in principle but would like assurance on some details. i) Warning signing etc is required on approaches to the new mini roundabout at Osney Lane/Hollybush Row to ensure driver awareness of pedestrians and cyclists ii) consideration should be given to improving conditions for pedestrians adjacent to	i) (iii) & (v)Details of signing will be confirmed prior to implementation including cycle signage. ii) Detailed design of the proposals for Becket St/Osney Lane will consider if anything can be added to calm traffic as it takes the sharp corner near the footbridge. iv) The proposal for shared use footways

Respondent	Support	Comments	Officer Comments
	proposal		
		the footbridge at the corner of Becket Street and Osney Lane, iii) inclusion of adequate cycle signing through the Square, iv) does not support shared use footways at the signalised junction. Consideration should be given to providing cycle bypasses (to permit left turn only cycling) at the junction where space permits, v) there is a need for a clear, easily understood signing strategy, vi) assurance required that the traffic modelling confirms that the junction will work and especially that it will not cause additional delays to buses.	was aimed at providing users with route options and includes widening the footway on the north west side of the junction to make cyclists and pedestrians sharing space more comfortable. However, this is a common concern so it is recommended that these areas are not implemented at this stage and that signals are installed as pedestrian only at implementation and monitoring undertaken. vi) Traffic modelling is currently predicting that there will be significant journey time savings for buses compared to the routes they currently use in and approaching the square
Cllr Susanna Pressel	Y	Concerns raised regarding the speed of vehicular traffic in the area and the proposals may result in them being increased further. Would rather see additional safe on-carriageway cycle facilities rather than the shared use footway areas proposed.	The existing 20mph speed limit for the area is to remain in place and the geometric layout of the proposals is aimed at keeping vehicle speeds below that speed, ideally 12-15mph. Even at quieter times, the road layout will make it difficult to drive any faster than this. It is recommended that shared use areas are not implemented at this stage.
Resident, Rowland Hill Court (X2)	N	Strongly objects to the proposal for changes on Becket Street and Osney Lane on the grounds of i) has an environmental impact assessment been undertaken, i.e. noise, pollution etc, ii) the tight	i) Traffic will increase in Becket Street and Osney Lane and so it is expected that air and noise quality will worsen there. However, there will be correspondingly less traffic in Frideswide

Respondent	Support	Comments	Officer Comments
	proposal	bend to the corner of Becket Street and Osney Lane is unsuitable for large volumes of traffic, including lorries and buses, iii) are there plans for any traffic calming measures, iv) safety of pedestrians crossing Becket Street from the adjacent footbridge, v) impact on visibility of parked cars when exiting RHC, vi) no-one lives on the Square so why move traffic to a more populated area, vii) removing free visitors parking is unfair plus re- distributing to provide residents permit spaces (to which they are not allowed) is insulting.	Square and Hollybush Row as a result. The full benefits of the Frideswide Square project are unlikely to be realised if some traffic was not re-routed along Becket Street and Osney Lane. In the longer term, as part of the Oxpens redevelopment, Becket Street is proposed to be continued straight on south through the site, to re-join Oxpens Road further to the south and east. In this scenario, Osney Lane will become a minor side street and so volumes of traffic there will be less than they are even now. This will have a correspondingly positive impact on air and noise quality.  (ii) and (iv) Detailed design of the proposals for Becket Street/Osney Lane will consider if anything can be added to calm traffic as it takes the sharp corner near the footbridge. Officers do not consider the current proposals to be unsafe – but will see if they can be further improved.  (iii) traffic calming is not considered to be necessary at this stage. However, the scheme will of course be moinitored post implementation. Part of the project contingencies will be set aside to deal with any changes post completion

Respondent	Support	Comments	Officer Comments
	proposal		
	proposal		(v) Both Becket Street and Osney Lane fall within the current 20mph speed limit and this will remain. It is proposed to move the give-way line on exit from RHC forward to the limits of the on street parking thus improving visibility. (vi) many thousands of people walk through the square on a daily basis and are currently exposed to very poor air quality. The proposals are predicted to keep traffic flowing much better and therefore improving air quality for these pedestrians and other users of the square. (vii) Available space for on street parking has been allocated as fairly as practicable, within the constraints of available road space, between short stay and residents
Low Carbon South Oxford Transport Group	Y	Broadly support 4 way traffic signal junction but wish to see 'all red phase' for pedestrians to cross all arms at any one time. Object to the shared use footway areas. Would recommend monitoring after installation with adjustments if necessary. Safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists need to be considered at the corner of Becket Street and Osney Lane. Cycle measures are required at the proposed mini roundabout.	with permits.  An 'all red' phase will be part of the phasing for the new junction arrangement. Shared use areas will not be implemented at this time. Monitoring of the whole range of measures implemented will be undertaken post completion. Cycle lanes and a cycle bypass facility have been included to the new miniroundabout.

Respondent	Support proposal	Comments	Officer Comments
Resident, Hythe Bridge Street	N	Objections include i) 4 way signals will incur delays to all users, ii) safe crossings for pedestrians are required, iii) increased congestion,	(i) Phasing of the signals will be set to minimise delays and disruption to all users and will also be monitored thereafter with adjustments made if necessary, ii) an 'all red' to traffic phase will be included to assist pedestrians and maximise desire lines, (iii) traffic modelling is predicting that overall congestion in the square and on its approaches will largely improve.
Road User	N	Proposals will increase the danger for pedestrians and cyclists and they mainly seem to be aimed at improving the free flow of motorised vehicles.	Scheme is aimed at providing improvements for all road users but within the constraints of the existing limits of the highway. The cycle facility to the west side of Becket Street is not being removed. Cycle lanes and a cycle bypass have been included on the approach to the mini roundabout. Post completion, the performance of the scheme will be closely monitored and adjustments made if any one mode of transport is being inappropriately over-provided for.

Respondent	Support	Comments	Officer Comments
Respondent	Support proposal	Comments	Officer Comments
Business on Park End Street	Z	No consideration has been afforded to businesses, and residents, in the vicinity. Lack of residents parking, loading/unloading facilities, no disabled parking. What happens when a large vehicle breaks down at the railway bridge or blocks road while using loading bay? How will refuse vehicles serve the area. No public consultation has been undertaken and no communication on timescales. Daily schedule of works is required along with regular updates.	Available space for on street parking has been allocated as fairly as practicable, within the constraints of available road space, between short stay and residents with permits. Two new loading bays are being proposed to replace the one that currently exists. As part of the design refinement the possibility of adding some provision for blue badge holders in Becket Street and/or Hollybush Row will be investigated. This is the second round of consultation since April 2014. A communications plan for the project is being prepared as a matter of urgency. This will be aimed at regular communication with stakeholders, including residents and businesses, informing of work schedules, progress, key messages etc. Although the finer details of where refuse collections will take place is to be determined, it is envisaged that this will continue as it does at present with such vehicles using the bus bays. In addition, refuse vehicles will also be able to stop on Hollybush Row and Becket Street as at present.  (i) 20 mph speed limit is
Becket Street	14	speed of vehicles, ii) Cars that will be accessing the	to remain. Speeds on Becket Street post
		station car park from  Botley will queue back to	construction can be monitored and remedial
		Dolley will queue back to	monitored and remedial

Respondent	Support	Comments	Officer Comments
	proposal		
		the Square and cause delays, iii) lack of residents parking including disabled spaces, iv) behaviour of the pizza businesses with respect to non - compliance with loading restrictions etc, v) refuse collections, vi) safety of crossing point at the footbridge on Becket Street, vii) need to be kept more informed of proceedings.	action taken if there proves to be a high level of non-compliance of the speed limit. (ii) traffic modelling does not suggest this queuing will be a problem. However, it can be monitored, (iii) available space for on street parking has been allocated as fairly as practicable, within the constraints of available road space, between short stay and residents with permits. As part of the design refinement the possibility of adding some provision for blue badge holders in Becket Street and/or Hollybush Row will be investigated. (iv) enforcement of parking restrictions will continue to be undertaken. It is hoped that the proposals are simpler to enforce than at the current time. (v) accomodating refuse collections is a requirement of the design. Final details are being considered. (vi) Detailed design of the proposals for Becket Street/Osney Lane will consider if anything can be added to calm traffic as it takes the sharp corner near the footbridge. (vii) A communications plan for the project is being prepared as a matter of urgency. This will be aimed at regular communication with stakeholders, including residents and

Respondent	Support proposal	Comments	Officer Comments
	ргорозаг		businesses, informing of work schedules, progress, key messages etc.
CTC	Y	Considered that the proposals had given thought to helping cyclists at the Worcester Street junction. Shared use areas will help those less comfortable of using the road. Requested more detail of delineation of start/end of sections, delays to some bus services due to new signals junction, potential for a vehicle in the new loading bay on Hollybush Row to cause a pinch point to that approach, arrangements for pizza business as they often park in an obstructive manner to cyclists.	The proposal for shared use footways was aimed at providing users with route options and includes widening the footway on the north west side of the junction to make cyclists and pedestrians sharing space more comfortable. However, this is a common concern so it is recommended that these areas are not implemented at this stage and that signals are installed as pedestrian only at implementation and monitoring undertaken. Modelling shows there is an overall improvement in journey times across the network, both for buses and general traffic. Enforcement of parking and loading restrictions will continue to be undertaken.
Resident, Abbey Walk	N	Objects to removal of 'no entry' from Botley road to Becket Street as safety at the sharp corner of Becket Street and Osney Lane is already an issue along with speed of vehicles and safety of	Detailed design of the proposals for Becket Street/Osney Lane will consider if anything can be added to calm traffic as it takes the sharp corner near the footbridge, including
		pedestrians.	additional signage.