PLANNING & REGULATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Monday, 8 March 2021 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 4.25 pm

Present:

Voting Members:	Councillor Jeannette Matelot – in the Chair Councillor Stefan Gawrysiak (Deputy Chairman) Councillor Ted Fenton Councillor Mrs Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor Councillor Pete Handley Councillor Damian Haywood Councillor Bob Johnston Councillor Judy Roberts Councillor John Sanders Councillor Richard Webber Councillor Mike Fox-Davies (In place of Councillor Dan Sames) Councillor Liam Walker (In place of Councillor Alan Thompson) Councillor Richard Webber
Other Members in Attendance:	Councillor Charles Mathew (for Agenda Item 7)

Officers:

Whole of meeting	G. Warrington & D. Mytton (Law & Governance); D. Periam (Strategic Infrastructure & Planning)
Part of meeting	
Agenda Item	**Officer Attending**
7	E. Catcheside (Strategic Infrastructure & Planning); N. Mottram & H Brieth (Environment & Heritage)

The Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, and decided as set out below. Except as insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

1/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

Apology for Absence	*Temporary Appointment*
Councillor Dan Sames Councillor Alan Thompson	Councillor Mike Fox-Davies Councillor Liam Walker

2/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE OPPOSITE

(Agenda No. 2)

6 – Serving of the Prohibition Order for the Review of the Mineral Planning Permission (ROMP) at Thrupp Farm and Thrupp Lane, Radley

Councillor Johnston advised that he was acquainted with Andrew Coker one of the speakers to this item and also a member of Radley parish Council. With regard to the former he did not consider his acquaintanceship with Mr Coker prejudiced his ability to consider this item and on the latter he was not representing Radley Parish Council. Therefore he intended participating in the debate and any voting thereon.

3/21 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2020 were approved.

4/21 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda No. 4)

Speaker	*Item*
Andrew Coker Richard Dudding Nick Dunn	) 6. Review of the Mineral Planning) Permission (ROMP) at Thrupp) Lane & Thrupp Farm, Radley
Dan Levy Charlie Maynard Nick Relph Councillor Charles Mathew Owen Jenkins Matt Stopforth	)) 7. Construction of a Park & Ride) Car Park on land west of Cuckoo) Lane and adjacent to the A40) Eynsham))

5/21 SERVING OF THE PROHIBITION ORDER FOR THE REVIEW OF THE MINERAL PLANNING PERMISSION (ROMP) AT THRUPP FARM AND THRUPP LANE, RADLEY.

(Agenda No. 6)

The Committee considered a report (PN6) providing an update on progress with regard to the work on the application and Environmental Statement for the review of conditions for the ROMP permission areas DD1 and DD2. The report also provided an update on progress with planning application no. MW.0075/20 for a processing plant, conveyor and Bailey Bridge for the removal of mineral extracted from part of the ROMP permission areas DD1 and DD2 and also noted that a further update would be made to the Planning & Regulation Committee on 19 July 2021.

Officers presented the report.

Andrew Coker addressed the Committee both as local resident and on behalf of other families living at Thrupp and the owner of the nearby lake off Barton Lane, Steve Clarkson.

He asked the Committee to note some corrections namely that on the maps provided to the Committee the area of the proposed gravel extraction included woodland in his ownership and Mr Clarkson's land and lake. There was no gravel there as it that had already been removed and from their records that had been extracted in 1994. Therefore, it wasn't 21 years since extraction had ceased but 27. That same date should be given for the extraction next to former lakes H and I, known locally as the Orchard Lake with gravelling ceasing in this area nearly 30 years ago.

Confusion and shifting time scales had been a characteristic of this planning blight. Whilst huge interest had been shown at times in extracting the gravel, none, apart from that in 1994, had been done and it had been a tactic to keep things ticking over whilst other sites were used. The extraction at Sutton Wick kept being extended and then, when it looked like coming to an end, the Nyatt Field became a live issue again and residents had lived with that blight. Tuckwell plan to submit a ROMP application and EIA in spring-summer 2022 but what is there to stop that timescale slipping progressively, as every past timescale seemed to have done. He asked the Committee to hold the interested companies to a strict timetable and make them abide by it.

He also asked that the company make a full disclosure of their plans as their piecemeal approach merely led to further confusion. Residents wished to know when extraction was planned to take place, how they intended to do that, what measures would be taken to protect them from noise and dust pollution and most importantly how long this was going to take and what would happen thereafter.

He pointed out that this year the Nyatt Field had flooded twice and higher than before with water in the field for over 4 weeks. If there had been an extraction hole, the water would still be there, needing to be pumped out, an extremely noisy operation for those of us living here.

A large area of woodland next to the River Thames had been removed since the Committee had met in September last year. Supposedly because it was diseased but he felt it more likely to have been in preparation for the extraction. The large timber lorries carry an enormous amount of mud from the Nyatt field onto the Sustrans pathway making it impossible for people to get through without becoming filthy. This is very disrespectful to the thousands who enjoy this walk and should be addressed by the owners of the land and their agents.

If this extraction was to take place then it needed to be in accordance with environmental best practice and with this Committee holding the companies to account at every turn.

Richard Dudding spoke on behalf of Radley Parish Council who believed that the Committee should decide now to proceed with a prohibition order for the area north of the disused railway. If that meant the order for the wider ROMP area would not be pursued, then they would, very reluctantly, need to accept that.

There remained a good case for an order for the wider area but county officers did not seem convinced and decisive new evidence was unlikely to emerge by July. Current surveys would drag on bit by bit and the Tuckwells planning application for processing could not sensibly be decided ahead of decisions on extraction of the minerals to be processed.

Rather than put things off until the July meeting the parish council believed it would be better to face these realities now and act on the one thing where the facts were clear cut namely a prohibition order for the area north of the disused railway.

The parish council could see no legal reason to prevent an order being made for part only of the ROMP area. The area was easily delineated with no complicated overlaps and was treated separately by the applicants as it fell outside their agreement. It was not covered by the current environmental surveys and was unaffected by the Tuckwells application for processing.

Most importantly the legal tests for a prohibition order for this area were clearly met:

- No mineral extraction had taken place here since 1979.
- The applicants agreed that the reserves were exhausted.
- They had made no proposal for future minerals use.

If a prohibition order was not made for this area the current minerals permissions would prevent it being restored until 2043.

So deciding now to proceed with this area, but not for the whole ROMP area, would provide greater certainty for all concerned.

For the whole ROMP area:

- it would help the Radley Lakes Trust and Parish Council with their masterplan for nature conservation and quiet recreation.

- it would help the minerals operators plan ahead commercially.
- provide a framework for considering how these objectives could best be reconciled through dialogue.

For the area north of the railway:

- it would enable OCC to get ahead with restoration requirements
- the District Council to decide on appropriate future land uses.

The Parish Council urged the Committee to decide accordingly.

Responding to Councillor Johnston Mr Dudding agreed that this needed to be resolved in order to provide a clear plan ahead.

Nick Dunn spoke on behalf of H Tuckwell and Sons. Since the September Planning Committee Tuckwells had made further significant financial investments of 10s of thousands of pounds in the ROMP Area as detailed in the Committee report. They would continue to make further significant investments over the coming 12 months, to have the ROMP Application submitted, as is common in the Environmental Impact Assessment process and were of the view that the information as submitted provided sufficient evidence of a genuine intention to extract minerals and that the Prohibition Order should, therefore, be quashed. They considered a clear timetable for work had been produced with clarity regarding operations at Sutton Wick and Radley.

They had been disappointed with the officer recommendations which only created more ongoing uncertainty and costs for both Oxfordshire County Council and Tuckwells. The officer recommendations were also flawed because the ROMP Area was not reliant on the grant of the Thrupp Lane Plant Application, as the mineral could feasibly be processed elsewhere, if the Plant Application was not granted. This was already the case with the current Planning Permissions for this area. It would, therefore, not be pertinent to consider pursing the Prohibition Order on the land to the north of the railway line.

Tuckwells were again respectfully requesting that this ongoing uncertainty was ended and that an evidence-based decision was made to quash the Prohibition Order today rather than delaying a decision. Finally, having reviewed the representations from local residents and groups they considered these to be, in principle, the same as those rejected by the Inspector in 2014 as being irrelevant and not based on evidence.

Responding to Councillor Johnston Mr Dunn advised that the significant investment made by the company represented a genuine intention to work the material and, with regard to alleged slips in the timetables for work, emphasised that this was not an exact science and work programmes could slow down for various reasons.

Councillor Johnston advised that these issues had been ongoing since he had first been elected to the council in 1982. In his opinion the work undertaken had been minimal and he had no confidence that any timetable put forward by the company would be adhered to. He moved, with Councillor Gawrysiak seconding, that the officer recommendations as set out in the report be approved.

The motion was put to the Committee and RESOLVED (unanimously) that:

(a) the Planning & Regulation Committee's previous conclusion from its meeting on 9 September 2019 (Minute 39/19) that mineral working on the Radley ROMP site had permanently ceased and that the duty to serve a Prohibition Order should not be rescinded but that the service of that Prohibition Order be held in abeyance pending:

i) the progression and determination of application no. MW.0075/20 for processing plant, a conveyor and a Bailey Bridge for the removal of mineral extracted from part of the ROMP permission areas DD1 and DD2; and

ii) H. Tuckwell and Sons Ltd providing an update, accompanied by documentary evidence, on progress with regard to the work on the application and Environmental Statement for the review of conditions for the ROMP permission areas DD1 and DD2 to the meeting of the Planning and Regulation Committee on 19th July 2021;

(a) officers be instructed to investigate whether it was possible to serve a partial Prohibition Order should it be concluded that mineral working had permanently ceased over part but not all of the ROMP permission areas DD1 and DD2.

6/21 CONSTRUCTION OF A PARK & RIDE CAR PARK PROVIDING 850 CAR PARKING SPACES, CYCLE SPACES, MOTORCYCLE SPACES, ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS, BUS SHELTERS, LANDSCAPING, EXTERNAL LIGHTING, PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, TOILETS, SEATING, FENCING, HABITAT CREATION, DRAINAGE FEATURES, NEW ACCESS FROM CUCKOO LANE, NEW ROUNDABOUT WITH ACCESS ONTO A40, AN EASTBOUND BUS LANE APPROXIMATELY 6.5KM IN LENGTH FROM THE PARK & RIDE SITE TO THE A40 BRIDGE OVER THE DUKE'S CUT CANAL, TWO SECTIONS OF WESTBOUND BUS LANE (EACH APPROXIMATELY 500M IN LENGTH), NEW SHARED USE FOOTWAY/CYCLEWAY, WIDENING OF CASSINGTON NEW BRIDGE, JUNCTION IMPROVEMENTS, NEW CROSSINGS, NEW FOOTBRIDGE ALONGSIDE CASSINGTON HALT BRIDGE, AND ASSOCIATED WORKS ON LAND WEST OF CUCKOO LANE AND ADJACENT TO THE A40, EYNSHAM, WEST OXFORDSHIRE OX29 4PU - APPLICATION R3.0057/19
(Agenda No. 7)

The Committee considered (PN7) a report setting an application for the construction of a Park & Ride car park on land West of Cuckoo Lane and adjacent to the A40, Eynsham.

Officers presented the report together with an update detailing a notification from the National Planning Case Work Unit at the Ministry for Housing, Communities and local Government that a request had been received to have the application called in for determination by the Secretary of State. The case officer at the Unit had advised that they would be unlikely make a decision on whether to call in the application until a

decision had been made at local level and so officer advice to the Committee was to proceed with consideration of the application in the normal way.

Officers then responded to questions from:

Councillor Walker - access onto Cuckoo Lane and whether that would be one or two way would be a matter for the applicants to respond to. With regard to Horsemere Lane feasibility work was under way to determine the signal timing and layout of the junction at Cassington and would be taken into account as part of the closure of Horsemere Lane but the intention was that Horsemere lane would close.

Consensus was that it should be two-way.

Councillor Johnston – as the application was for works connected with the park and ride site and A40 the question whether or not this proposal compromised the future provision of a railway line between Witney and Oxford might be a matter for the applicants to respond to.

Councillor Handley – the application has been submitted with the expectation that it be determined as expeditiously as possible.

Dan Levy spoke as both a West Oxfordshire District Councillor for Eynsham Ward and also as the District Cycling Champion. Like most people, he encouraged use of public transport,and appreciated the thinking behind this scheme and while there were good things included in the plans he did not believe it should be approved.

The Park & Ride, dualling, bus lanes, etc, were designed pre-pandemic with no certainty what the levels of travelling and commuting into, for example, Oxford would be when things returned to some sort of normality. The original modelling of traffic flows had been widely criticized because of a failure to accurately determine where cars were heading beyond Wolvercote. However, even if it had been impeccable, it was certainly now outdated and it seemed unwise to use it as a basis for such a massive scheme.

Also, modelling had looked at A40 traffic rather than including the effect on other roads, such as the B4049, from traffic going to the Park and Ride nor the effect on traffic heading west on the A40, which was substantially worse than east.

The County Council had agreed a motion, brought by Councillor Mathew, to explore the transport options within the A40 corridor which might include a railway and the railway minister had suggested that such a scheme was worth exploring so surely it would be wise to consider the implications of railway provision for traffic and also whether a station ought to be part of the site plans.

He then highlighted some areas he considered required further work.

The plan included the closure of Horsemere Lane in Cassington. The County Council had promised residents of Cassington that the Eynsham Road/A40 junction would be redesigned to cope with the increased left-turning traffic. This had not been done.

The Eynsham Roundabout had not been designed to allow safe cycling from the south to join the promised cycle track along Lower Road to Hanborough Station. This would be a key crossing place for people coming to and from the Salt Cross new village. The roundabout ought to be reviewed.

The finalised entry arrangements to Salt Cross and West of Eynsham developments, neither of which yet had planning permission, hadn't been built into the plan. The amount of traffic generated by the new development was likely to be large and ought to be designed into the Park and Ride and bus lanes.

The crossing points between Eynsham and Salt Cross would be vital to the success of the new village. There would be lots of pedestrians, many of them going to school who would either have long waits to get across or the traffic on the A40 was going to be delayed. Again, when this was pointed out, it was considered irrelevant to the "discrete" P&R scheme. It was not.

Therefore, he suggested it was premature to approve this scheme and unless it was revised to be in complete coordination with the housing developments along the route, it wasn't a complete scheme. If more active travel and more bus travel was what was required then considerably more work was needed on the design.

Charlie Maynard for the Witney Oxford Transport Group advised that Carterton, Witney and Eynsham and surrounding villages represented one of the largest populations in the country not connected to the rail network. The poor transport links in the district generated many negatives including reduced access to employment and education; deterring employers from locating locally; slow, stressful and unpredictable journeys and increased pollution. The Group believed that a rail line would help West Oxfordshire and the county as whole to prosper by providing a fast corridor along which people could rapidly and sustainably move, providing West Oxfordshire residents far greater access to job and education opportunities.

The Witney Oxford Transport Group had submitted an application to the Department for Transport's Restoring Your Railways Ideas Fund on March 5th for a £50,000 grant to fund a feasibility study and would likely learn either in May or June whether that had been successful. The goal of such a feasibility study would be a Strategic Outline Business Case being completed in the third quarter of this year which would put us in a much better position to quantify and discuss the pros and cons of the project.

County and the District Councils had passed motions supportive of the rail feasibility study last November and this January with support for the bid also coming from Witney Town Council, Carterton Town Council, Eynsham Parish Council, the Lord Mayor of Oxford, the Station Commander of RAF Brize Norton, Oxford University and Grosvenor, the developer of the Eynsham Garden Village as well as expected support from England's Economic Heartland and OxLEP.

From conversations with Grosvenor, we understand that a corridor running parallel to and just north of the A40 had been set aside for future transport links and so the future park & ride station at Eynsham was the logical location for a future Eynsham

rail station, serving the existing village as well as the two future developments as a multi-modal transport hub.

He asked what actions were being taken at County level with regard to these issues and for serious consideration to be given to how a rail line could be accommodated into the plans in front of the Committee today. Recognising that the lead time on building railway lines was long a request to safeguard a route could be made now and that, in itself, would have a material potential impact on the project.

Councillor Gawrysiak asked Mr Maynard to clarify whether he supported the scheme in principle and whether the scheme compromised the rail route.

Mr Maynard replied that the plan did not take into account the rail route issue and it was logical for that to be done now in order to achieve a fast and sustainable transport option.

Nick Relph for Eynsham Parish Council advised that they considered this project a short term operational sticking plaster that would not fix the strategic problem of the A40 traffic flow (or lack of flow) at this pinch point on the network. The genesis of this project had been the potential availability of Central Government funds to improve public transport provision whereas this scheme had been designed purely to make use of such funding rather than investigate the optimal transport solution for the A40 from first principles including the option of reinstating a rail link. It was in the Parish Council's view and others, a short term, poorly designed, budget driven project that appeared to ignore all the surrounding impacts and challenges facing West Oxfordshire and the operation of the A40, going both East to Oxford, the M40 and beyond and West to the M5. The project did not demonstrate joined-up thinking in terms of local and regional transport policy and the Parish Council questioned the ability of Oxfordshire County Council to adequately challenge its own proposals when many of the issues raised during consultation including from within OCC itself had been ignored.

The County Council's Biodiversity Assessment showed it would be unable to achieve its aim of a 5% net gain in biodiversity (currently stated at -7.69 habitat units and 7.95 hedgerow units) and when both Government and OCC had declared a climate emergency this should be enough to call the project into question. To either fail to redesign the scheme or to pay Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment to offset this loss anywhere other than Cassington and Eynsham was unacceptable.

The vegetation loss associated with the development would have a significant adverse effect in landscape character and views at a local level in the short and medium-term. The Parish Council were also extremely concerned about the impact of noise, lighting and atmospheric pollution on existing and proposed nearby settlements with further negative impacts on air quality being located close to the A40 that is often close to being illegal in terms of exceeding existing air quality regulation standards.

Currently traffic slowed and queued from when the dual carriageway merged into single carriageway at Barnard Gate with traffic then trickling to the traffic lights and roundabout at Eynsham then completely backed up at the Cassington traffic lights.

The result was daily queues and congestion from Barnard Gate to Wolvercote on the western edge of Oxford where a major roundabout with traffic lights presented yet another obstacle and to that mix this project intended to add one, possibly two more roundabouts and three additional sets of traffic lights between West Eynsham and the Wolvercote roundabout. Currently some 32,000 cars passed Barnard Gate, West of Eynsham daily and the West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan had called for 15,500 new homes by 2031 (3200 of them in Eynsham) and around 10,000 of those would directly access the A40.

It was impossible to support a project that, at best, would remove 850 cars from this mix, save those drivers 9 minutes to Oxford City Centre (OCC data) but at a cost of around £37 million in total. They did not believe that the business case stacked up. The Parish Council were also concerned about the lack of an overall strategic plan for the Salt Cross Garden Village and the West Eynsham Development area in terms of flooding and biodiversity. In addition, the loss of public amenity around Eynsham would be significant particularly if OCC approved gravel extraction to the east of the village. There were also particular concerns about the impact on Eynsham Millennium Wood adjacent to the proposed Park and Ride.

The Parish Council had major issues with respect to the design of the Park and Ride roundabout with no fourth arm to the developments in West Eynsham and no consideration appearing to be given to a pedestrian and cycle friendly “Dutch” design. They considered that the application did not support social, economic or environmental objectives that constitute sustainable development and, therefore, was contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and policies of West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan and Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan and for the reasons given Eynsham Parish Council had written to the Secretary of State for Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government asking that he call in the proposal for determination.

The Committee support officer then reported two statements from:

Hugh Thomas, Chair of Cassington Parish Council.

“In 2019 the County Council’s Cabinet Member for Environmentat deferred a decision to close Horsemere Lane to allow mitigation work at the Cassington Lights to be considered. Cassington had 3 means of access and the closure of Horsemere Lane would have reduced that to 2 and given that in the morning rush upwards of 500 vehicles used Horsemere Lane that would have increased volumes on other roads. In the morning access from Cassington on to the A40 was very busy so the possibility of taking more traffic would make leaving Cassington by this main access very time consuming.

The Parish Council, with its County Councillor Charles Mathew, requested that consideration be given to putting a slip road onto the A40 east together with changes to the lights. Changes to the lights would mean introducing a left filter on to the A40 east which would coordinate with the right filter on the access into Cassington on the A40 west. This would have utilised a time when traffic from Cassington going A40 would have been sat waiting to access the A40 both west and east. These proposals

have time and time again been put forward but neither proposal has been considered or reason given for not being included in the planning document.

That was completely unacceptable and confirmed that the consultation process was flawed. The Parish Council would be submitting further comment on the application by the date shown on the application but were still trying to understand how a decision was being taken on whether to go ahead before that date and would be recording its disapproval of the whole application. The scheme would do nothing to alleviate the volumes of traffic using the A40 and they believe that other options should be examined not least the railway option and it was time for a wider plan."

Goldfield Estates Ltd and Pandora Properties Ltd (Jansons Property)

"Jansons control an 8ha area of land known as Derrymerrye Farm and the Long Barn on Old Witney Road in Eynsham. The land, in the majority, formed part of the West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (SDA) allocated for development within Policy EW2 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan and was, therefore, directly affected by the proposed Park & Ride scheme.

Jansons supported the principle of the proposed Park & Ride which would provide an important and sustainable transport hub for journeys to and from Oxford City alleviating the congestion issues currently experienced on the A40. Jansons had discussed with both the applicant, highways authority and district officers the need to design development at Eynsham comprehensively, especially in light of the WYG West Eynsham SDA Access Strategy report which identified that adding a fourth arm to the proposed Park & Ride roundabout represented the preferred access strategy for the SDA and would not cause any material delay or queuing at the junction. Therefore, Jansons welcomed the revised proposals submitted in November 2020 which addressed earlier concerns, in particular, the consideration of the fourth arm to the SDA as part of the revised proposal, which demonstrated that access to the SDA would not be prejudiced.

Jansons encouraged members to approve the revised plans to allow delivery of the proposals expediently but to ensure that development at Eynsham was comprehensively designed, and safe and secure access to the Park & Ride was provided for all users, requested that the following planning conditions be attached to any consent:

Should development at West Eynsham SDA receive planning permission before commencement of the Park & Ride, an internal layout review should be undertaken prior to commencement of the Park & Ride development to allow consideration for pedestrian and cycle routes and linkages between the proposed fourth arm of the Park & Ride roundabout and the proposed Park & Ride bus stops and facilities, including cycle parking.

Prior to signing off the detail design of the Park & Ride roundabout, confirmation should be provided to the Director of Highways and Transport Operations that any changes made to the design of the Park & Ride roundabout did not prejudice the delivery of a fourth arm to the West Eynsham SDA."

County Councillor Charles Mathew expressed his disappointment at the lack of communication and consultation over the last six months. The A40 carried some 32,000 vehicles a day and was consistently a long queue in normal times from Curbridge to Wolvercote. This included some 40-50 per cent of through vehicles to Headington and East to London from Wales, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire and would also account for new and planned expansion there. He had major concerns over Oxfordshire County Council being judge and jury on this application and owning all the land as well. This did not make residents comfortable nor the project transparent especially as proper consideration to alternative options had been lacking and the mention in the agenda to many belies the facts and talks conflict of interest. Recently a significant consultation on this scheme was announced on February 25 running through to April 3 so how this Committee could be asked to make a decision prior to the completion of that consultation period was wrong and should not happen in the interests of democracy.

The loss of 19 per cent of trees and 56 per cent of hedges was not acceptable and he asked for a thick belt of trees round the whole Park and Ride site to alleviate this deficit and deaden the noise for local residents in Cassington and Eynsham.

Lighting at the site was a concern in a residential area and he presumed that Dark Skies would be practised. Similarly, arrangements covering working at night were not explicit.

More than twelve barriers/obstructions including traffic lights, roundabouts and crossings to flow were planned along 3 and a half miles of the A40 between Wolvercote and the Park and Ride.

An estimated biodiversity loss of 19.91 habitat units was a devastation to the local environment and compensation must be made to the local area/sources (like the Nature Recovery Network at Eynsham) and directions given to the brokers like TOE to ensure that happened.

Train space must be given for future use, as outlined by the Witney to Oxford Transport Group. Current measures were by admission short term and long term thinking was needed to ensure value for money. Clearly the Park and Ride provision for 850 vehicles scarcely dented the daily figure of 32,000 and he was sceptical as to the viability and effectiveness of this project.

The future of Horsemere Lane was first discussed in January 2015 and Cassington Parish Council conducted a survey, which overwhelmingly supported the closure of this Restricted Byway not open to motorised traffic, which had become a rat run often in both directions illegally. As highlighted by the Chairman of Cassington Parish Council a decision on that had been deferred until the matter of a slip road at the Cassington Lights had been discussed, in order to avoid further build-up of traffic. Despite persistent requests to advance that nothing had been heard until last Thursday when an email had been received that the existing arrangement was satisfactory. That had taken eighteen months and the matter remained extant.

He asked that a decision be deferred to allow the applicant and the Cassington and Eynsham Parish Councils to hold further discussions on these plans and for

fortnightly meetings, as had happened with the Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabout project, during the construction to iron out any concerns between local residents and the developers/applicants.

Owen Jenkins for the applicants outlined the detail of the scheme for the construction of an 850 space park and side site and bus lane eastbound towards Oxford together with two sections of westbound bus lane, junction improvements, upgrading of pedestrian and cycling facilities, widening of Cassington New bridge and a new footbridge at Cassington Halt. The demands on the A40 were well documented with demand exceeding capacity in certain areas with up to 32,000 vehicles per day between Witney and Eynsham leading to congestion and increasing journey times for all road users including bus services. That pressure would increase significantly as a result of plans for housing development of 10,000 houses along the A40 corridor. There was a real and clear need for this scheme, which would also complement other schemes planned for the A40, in order to reduce journey times and congestion, support economic growth in Eynsham and encourage active travel by increasing walking, cycling and public transport provision. Revised proposals submitted in 2020 had included greater flood risk mitigation measures, increased connectivity for bus travel, pedestrian and cycle access and biodiversity enhancement and landscaping modifications. He accepted that it would not solve all the issues but it would start to address capacity issues and he urged that the application be approved without delay so that residents were able to see its benefits.

Matt Stopforth added that it was a comprehensive and robust application and following consultation with stakeholders the design had evolved in response to the comments received. He emphasised that it was crucial to help address congestion problems and support investment and growth.

They then responded to questions from:

Councillor Johnston - did the scheme preclude or impinge on a railway option?

Owen Jenkins – he did not believe that it did nor should it prevent any future investment in a rail route. The A40 was a strategic road and the improvements outlined here related to its status as such and did not prevent future investment in rail infrastructure.

Councillor Gawrysiak – in view of the figures quoted in various presentations of 32,000 vehicles wasn’t 850 spaces just a sticking plaster and what was the lead time for a railway option?

Owen Jenkins – the figure of 32,000 was correct but with a further 10,000 new homes proposed along the route from various developments they were trying to prevent extra vehicles which would tip the balance from a congested route to an overly congested route. He reiterated this was not the full solution but it would help and with further upgrades on this route this application was the first step. Regarding the lead in time for a rail option he was unable to give a precise timeline for that but it would likely be many years whereas this scheme would be up and running in the short term adding that these two things should not be seen as exclusive and not a choice between one or the other.

Councillor Handley – why not wait until the Autumn and review all options together?

Owen Jenkins – I cannot comment on the West Oxfordshire Local Plan issues but it would be beneficial to get this infrastructure in line with or even before planned housing development to be there to help relieve the pressure that would bring. We are trying to get the infrastructure in place in advance of some of the developments to relieve the pressure.

Councillor Fenton – as the consultation didn't end until mid-April why was it before Committee now?

David Periam clarified that the consultation currently running to April 3 referred to additional environmental information mainly related to arboriculture and under EIA regulations I took the view that that needed to be publicised. It was not expected that that would bring forward any major material consequences responses and what Committee had in front of it now addressed the major issues.
Councillor Sanders – were any other sites proposed to help promote alternative modes of transport through Active Travel?

Owen Jenkins – there was nothing else at the planning stage for another park and ride to the west of Oxford although there were proposals for significant improvements for cycling and pedestrian facilities. The bus lanes would make bus use more attractive.

Responding to Councillor Gawrysiak Emily Catcheside confirmed there would be a loss of trees along the A40 to facilitate the bus lane but the applicant was proposing to retain wherever possible and undertake some replanting but there was likely to be a loss overall. Further detail would be required on that. Lighting provision would be secured through condition for the park and ride site and roundabouts and no lighting was proposed along the A40. Light spill would be included within the site with provision to include proposals for dimming and switching off at night.

Councillor Walker as a West Oxfordshire resident supported the scheme as part of a long-term plan. He had been sceptical in the past and while accepting it was not the perfect solution felt the onus had changed and it was a good opportunity to undertake the scheme now. Rail provision would take some years to realise.

Councillor Fenton took a similar line and while the scheme was not perfect it was a start and if we waited until everything was perfect we would not make any progress at all. He was pleased that this project did not prevent other schemes such as the rail option although he remained concerned about biodiversity issues and was pleased that there were mitigation plans for replanting to offset losses. Getting cars off roads was a good thing and he saw this a step in the right direction.

Questioning the timing of this application and with so much of this application undecided Councillor Handley moved that Application R3.0057.19 be deferred. Councillor Haywood seconding.

Responding to the Chairman David Mytton clarified to members that the Committee could defer for a specific reason and for a specific period say to the next meeting but not reasonably for longer.

Mr Periam added that this application needed to be considered on its merits and if it was to be deferred it should only be for one meeting and if refused specific reasons would be required. It should not be deferred pending the committee's consideration of a further planning application which may contain some elements of the same development, which the applicant had advised may be submitted in the autumn of 2021 which would be unlikely therefore, in his opinion, to be reported to the committee for determination until sometime in 2022.

Responding to Councillor Haywood Emily Catcheside clarified that the Secretary of State would not normally make a decision on whether or not to call this in until a decision had been made locally.

Having regard to that advice Councillor Haywood withdrew as seconder of Councillor Handley's motion. There was no other seconder and so the motion fell.

Councillor Fenton then moved with Councillor Walker seconding that Application R3.0057.19 be approved.

Councillor Gawrysiak accepted that while not perfect it represented a step in the right direction and so with tree provision and lighting conditioned he supported the motion.

Councillor Haywood considered the rail link of paramount importance and his concern was that provision for that could be prejudiced or delayed because of this provision so could not support the motion.

The motion was then put to the Committee and **RESOLVED** (by 11 votes to 1 with one abstention) that subject to the satisfaction of the Assistant Director of Strategic Infrastructure and Planning in consultation with the Committee Chairman and Deputy Chairman that following the end of the current consultation period no new material considerations had arisen that planning permission for R3.0057/19 be approved subject to conditions to be determined by the Assistant Director of Strategic Infrastructure and Planning, to include those set out in Annex 1 to the report PN7.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing .....