

## Frequently Asked Questions

**This document will be updated throughout the consultation to include new frequently asked questions as we receive them.**

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### **What are you asking me to comment on and why?**

We are now sharing with you the latest scheme designs and asking for your comments, so we can consider them in later stages of design. We welcome all relevant comments on any aspects of the scheme designs, hence the open-ended questions on the feedback form.

In order to meet the funding terms set by Government we have to soon move into the next stage of scheme design, therefore if we do not consult now it will be too late to incorporate comments into the schemes. This consultation follows a previous consultation and public exhibition in November 2018. The principle of the schemes and land safeguarding for them has also formed part of the consultation processes associated with the adopted Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan 2015-2031, the adopted Vale of White Horse District Council's Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and Part 2, and the submitted for examination South Oxfordshire District Council's Local Plan 2011-2034.

### **Why is the consultation only happening online?**

As a result of Government restrictions on social distancing in response to COVID-19, it was unfortunately not possible to hold the five public exhibitions that were scheduled for the last two weeks of March 2020. Due to the very tight timescales imposed by Government with respect to the terms of the funding ([via the Housing Infrastructure Fund](#)), it was necessary to continue with an online consultation in order to avoid delay to the project programme. When the planning application for the schemes is submitted, statutory consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the applicable planning legislation. There will also be ongoing liaison with key stakeholders and statutory bodies as the schemes progress as well as further non-statutory public consultations / exhibitions.

### **In light of the COVID-19 related restrictions on social distancing, what have you done to ensure local people can respond to the consultation?**

This consultation was originally planned to last 4 weeks, which is usual for a non-statutory consultation such as this, but this duration was extended to 6 weeks to allow people more time to respond.

We are going above and beyond the usual steps taken in a non-statutory consultation; we are doing everything we can to reach as many people as we can in this unprecedented time, including:

- Sending letters to over 22,000 residences in the area
- Using an innovative virtual exhibition room with live chat function (we are the first council in the world to use this particular platform)
- Including phone numbers on all correspondence for people to call
- Directly contacting landowners with whom we have already been dealing
- Newspaper adverts in print (published each week during the consultation period)
- Newspaper adverts online (throughout the consultation period)
- Radio adverts (throughout the consultation period)
- OCC Facebook (17,800 people 'like' the OCC Facebook page)
- OCC Twitter (42,000 followers)
- OCC website
- Directly contacting OCC Councillors
- Directly contacting District Councillors

- Directly contacting Parish Councils
- Directly contacting major employment sites and asking them to disseminate to staff
- Sending printed versions of the materials to those who request them due to lack of internet access
- Extending the consultation – the usual period would be 3-4 weeks whereas this was for 6 weeks

### **How are you reaching people without access to the internet?**

According to the [Office for National Statistics](#), 93% of households had access to internet in 2019, therefore the vast majority of people should be able to access the online consultation. However, we want to ensure everyone has the opportunity to be involved so we are also trying to reach people without internet, whilst adhering to Government's instructions regarding COVID-19:

- We are sending letters to over 22,000 residential properties in the area, which includes a telephone number for people to call
- Letters have been sent to all landowners with whom we have been in previous contact regarding land access for surveys
- Radio adverts about the consultation, including a telephone number for people to call
- Printed newspaper adverts, including a telephone number for people to call
- Parish Councils have been informed of the consultation and provided a telephone number to call

### **What major changes have you made since the last consultation?**

In response to your feedback from the [previous consultation](#) in November 2018, Clifton Hampden Bypass has been re-aligned further from residences in the north of the village. The Didcot to Culham River Crossing has also been moved further west from residential properties in Appleford village. Following further transport modelling work, which forecasts the anticipated growth in traffic in future years, the link road through the Former Didcot A Power Station site is proposed to connect into the existing A4130 approximately 100 metres north of the Purchas Road/A4130/Hawksworth roundabout, whereas previously it was proposed to connect directly into the existing roundabout. The drawings now show more developed high-quality pedestrian and cycle facilities with varying types of road crossings.

### **Where is the money coming from?**

The cost of these schemes is £234 million. £218 million of this comes from the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund and the rest has been secured through developer obligations in the area. Although the funding for the transport improvements has been announced, Oxfordshire County Council is currently in the final stages of negotiating the details of the funding agreement with Government.

### **Why are we building this infrastructure?**

We are proposing to build new roads and improve existing roads because the highway network was not designed to cope with modern traffic levels. The housing and employment growth allocated in the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#) and proposed in the submitted [South Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2011-2034](#) requires a significant upgrade to the current network in order to help facilitate this growth.

As part of these improvements, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is encouraging the use of sustainable travel modes through the provision of high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure. Future work on these schemes will also include examining how they connect to existing Public Rights of Way and other pedestrian and cycle routes in the area, including the National Cycle Network 5 route.

**How is the land being obtained for these schemes?**

OCC will primarily be attempting to obtain the land required through negotiation. However, should this not prove possible, OCC may be required to use its Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers to acquire the land necessary to deliver the infrastructure.

**How will this affect Golden Balls Roundabout and Nuneham Courtenay and why are there no proposals for these locations?**

Through the Housing and Growth Deal, funding is available to investigate future changes to the Golden Balls Roundabout. Study work undertaken on this junction will also need to take into account the impact of traffic through Nuneham Courtenay on the A4074 and also align with [transport proposals in Oxford](#).

The funding announced by Government for the schemes being consulting on (£218 million) was as a result of a competitive bidding process against many other councils across the country. The £218 million is amongst the highest sums awarded (see the full list of 33 [here](#)). Including any other schemes as part of this package could have significantly reduced the chance of a successful bid. Additionally, there are currently no schemes designed for Golden Balls Roundabout and Nuneham Courtenay, so it would not have been possible to have included them in a bid where it is required that schemes are shown with robust costs.

**How will this affect Appleford?**

The Didcot to Culham River Crossing will alleviate some of the traffic passing through Appleford as it will provide a more direct alternative route across the River Thames and to Didcot. OCC will liaise with the parish council and local community in Appleford throughout scheme development.

**Will this fix all the traffic issues in the area?**

The network will still have a lot of traffic flowing through it due to existing traffic and expected growth, but it will flow a lot more smoothly as a number of pinch points will be removed, significantly reducing congestion.

**Will construction traffic cause traffic disruption in Didcot?**

There will be some disruption during construction but, through the implementation of a Construction Traffic Management Plan, this disruption will be minimised. The construction of the four schemes will also be carefully phased in order to avoid, where possible, works taking place simultaneously in multiple locations on the existing highway network.

**Is the Northern Perimeter Road Phase 3 (NPR3) scheme part of this project?**

No, NPR3 has been partially held up by progress on these schemes as it was necessary to establish how they would best fit with each other. Now that preferred alignments for these schemes have been identified, it will be possible to progress further design work on the NPR3 scheme. At present, the proposals for this scheme include a roundabout at the A4130/B4016 junction, a new road down to A4130 (roughly along the line of the boundary of the golf course), and a new roundabout on A4130 to the east of the Hadden Hill Retail Park / Tesco roundabout

**Are the schemes safe?**

A Road Safety Audit (RSA) Stage 1 has been carried out on every aspect of the schemes in their present stage of design. Where appropriate, recommendations from the RSA report will be incorporated into the next stage of scheme design. Further RSAs will be undertaken as necessary throughout the development of the schemes.

### **What about the impact on wildlife and the environment?**

The impact on the environment, wildlife, and ecology will be investigated through an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to ensure any impacts are properly mitigated or avoided where possible in accordance with the applicable legislation. The EIA will also include, amongst other chapters, an Air Quality Impact Assessment and Noise Impact Assessment. As part of the landscaping strategy there is the potential for planting alongside some sections of the schemes. This will be investigated as work on the schemes continues.

### **Where will bus stops be located?**

Proposed locations for bus stops have been identified on some parts of the schemes. The locations of other bus stops will be identified during the next stage of design through liaison with bus operators and other stakeholders.

### **What are the speed limits of these schemes?**

The speed limits are proposed as follows:

- A4130 Widening: 40mph
- Science Bridge: 30mph
- Didcot to Culham River Crossing: 50mph
- Clifton Hampden Bypass: 60mph

### **Why are the pedestrian and cycle crossings different across the schemes?**

The type of each pedestrian and cycle crossing depends on the nature of the environment, the anticipated usage, and proposed speed limit in each location. For example, the crossings on the A4130 are signal controlled (traffic lights), staggered toucan (pedestrians and cyclists) crossings due to the proposed speed limit (40mph) and the width of the road, whereas the crossings over most of the side roads onto the A4130 are proposed to be raised parallel crossings (zebra crossings that cyclists can also legally use) as these roads will have a lower speed limit (see Glossary section for further info on terminology). The next stages of design will further consider the appropriateness of each type of crossing, taking into account the comments received as part of this consultation and further Road Safety Audits.

### **Why does the 'Next Steps' section say that the planning application will be submitted in Winter 2021 and the CPO submission in Spring 2021?**

The 'Next Steps' section is in chronological order. 'Winter 2021' refers to the early months of 2021, not the end of it.

### **Why is there a t-junction rather than a roundabout where the existing A4130 meets the new A4130?**

One of the key aims of these infrastructure schemes is to provide a strategic route for traffic to travel around the periphery of Didcot and to encourage traffic to use the Science Bridge route, which is intended to form a new section of the A4130. This will reduce traffic movements at the Mendip Heights and Milton Road roundabouts, which are already very congested. One of the main ways this can be achieved is to discourage traffic from using the existing A4130 between the Mendip Heights and Purchas Road roundabouts by creating a priority t-junction instead of a roundabout where the existing A4130 meets the new A4130, thus giving priority to the peripheral route. The roundabout at the Collett access to the Southmead Industrial Estate will still remain and so provides easier access for HGV movements eastwards.

## Glossary of terms

**Hard Strip:** an extension of the road surface alongside a carriageway, typically only required on faster roads and normally delineated by a painted white line.

**Parallel Crossing:** a type of 'uncontrolled' pedestrian and cycle crossing, i.e. without requirement to press a button to activate a green signal. This is similar to a Zebra crossing but is designed to allow both pedestrians and cyclists to use it (unlike a Zebra, which is for pedestrians only). In most locations these will be raised to make it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to use.

**Toucan Crossing:** a type of 'controlled' crossing, i.e. with the requirement to press a button and to wait for a green signal indicating that it is safe to cross. These are designed for use by both pedestrians and cyclists, whereas Puffin and Pelican crossings are for pedestrians only. In some locations, where the roads are wide, these will need to be staggered so that pedestrians and cyclists will be required to cross in two stages.

**Reinforced/over runnable area for abnormal loads:** this applies to two junctions on the link road through the former Didcot A power station site, which forms part of the Science Bridge scheme. This is to accommodate very long heavy goods vehicles that are occasionally required to transport equipment to and from the Didcot B power station site. These vehicles are accompanied by special safety escorts and usually take place at night to minimise disruption to the highway network.

**Scheduled Ancient Monument:** an archaeological site of national importance. These have special protections and any impacts on them must be minimised or mitigated in accordance with the relevant legislation.

**Segregation Strip:** a 'gap' that physically separates a footway or cycleway and the carriageway for safety purposes. This may be a paved or grass surface. Unlike a Hard Strip, a Segregation Strip is typically at the same level as the pedestrian/cycling provision, rather than at the same level as the carriageway.

**Swale:** a shallow trough running parallel to a carriageway for drainage purposes. These are typically covered in grass and are sometimes planted with reeds.