



SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Planning Committee

5 November 2020

Agenda Item Number	Page	Title
12	(Pages 1 - 9)	Additional supplementary information for application 20/01830/F – Proposed Roundabout access to Graven Hill and Wretchwick Green, London Road, Bicester.

If you need any further information about the meeting please contact Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk, 01295 221591

Oxfordshire County Council response Application 20/01830/F - Proposed Roundabout access to Graven Hill and Wretchwich Green, London Road, Bicester

Thank you for your email and the attached report.

We agree that the existing pedestrian and cycle facilities on the A41 between the proposed roundabout and Rodney House roundabout, outside the red line of this planning application, are not compliant with LTN 1/20, and we do consider that it would be highly desirable for them to be upgraded. This will be considered as part of the forthcoming A41 corridor study, referred to in my note of yesterday.

However, we do not see that it is necessary for them to be upgraded as a result of the proposed roundabout. The current speed limit of the road is 50mph - we are not proposing an increase in the speed limit. The roundabout itself will not increase the likelihood of accidents to pedestrians and cyclists using the existing facilities beyond the extent of the roundabout scheme.

The report quotes from the guidance, that it should be 'applied to all changes associated with highway improvements,...'. It has been applied in the design of the roundabout, but it does not follow that it needs to be applied, as part of this planning application, to make changes to the surrounding highway network which will remain unchanged as a result of the proposals. The LTN 1/20 Guidance does not mandate immediate changes to existing infrastructure in the vicinity of improvements or changes - that would be completely unworkable and unaffordable. It will, though, be used to guide the future review of the A41 corridor.


The report also quotes paragraph 14.1.4, which says 'the requirements should include the provision of new cycle routes connecting to and through development and enhancing the provision for cycling when making alterations to links and junctions on existing highways.'. The Graven Hill masterplan will provide direct cycle and pedestrian routes for residents and employees through the development up to Rodney House roundabout. There should be no need for residents and employees to go out onto the A41 at Pioneer Roundabout to walk or cycle northwest along the A41. This was clearly recognised in the outline permission for Graven Hill, as improvements to the facilities were not secured, even though a new roundabout junction was part of the proposals at the time. The proposed roundabout does not change this situation and it would be hard to argue that improving the existing ped/cycle facilities all the way between Rodney House and Pioneer Roundabout was required to make the development acceptable in planning terms. Further, the proposed alteration to the junction (Pioneer Roundabout) would enhance provision for cyclists to cross the A41 at the new crossings at the roundabout.

Under the heading 'Risks Associated with High Speed Design', it is stated 'the county council requires a 50mph design speed for the junction and area of the A41 to the Rodney House Roundabout'. I should point out that the proposals do not include redesigning the whole of the link - it already has a 50mph limit.

Under the heading 'Assessment', the report says of the council's aspirations to improve the cycle/ped facilities as part of the future A41 corridor improvements 'However, such an aspiration provides no reassurance that LTN 1/20 compliant provision will be provided', and recommends a planning condition or obligation to remedy this. However, for the reasons stated above, I question whether this could be considered compliant with CIL Regulation 122.

Below are my specific comments on the technical appendix:

- Geometry of the roundabout - this is covered in my note of yesterday. The geometry of the proposals is that of a normal roundabout, as set out in CD116.
- Speed limit through the roundabout - this is covered in my note of yesterday.
- Width of refuge islands - the proposed width is considered adequate and this is not picked up in the safety audit as a problem.
- The verge buffer is in places subject to physical constraints, and I acknowledge that it is below the desirable minimum of 2m for 50mph. As stated in my note of yesterday, OCC will be consulting on a 40mph limit for this stretch of the A41, and once the side roads are connected, will consider a change to 30mph at the roundabout itself, as this would be in line with DfT Guidance.
- The proposed toucan crossing on the south-east arm is acknowledged to be well off the desire line. For cyclists this will add only a few seconds delay. Its position is dictated by the width of the road and constraints of the highway boundary beyond Graven Hill's frontage.
- The informal crossing over the stub of the roundabout is considered acceptable because there will be no traffic movements for pedestrians and cyclists to cross while it is still a stub. A future crossing would be provided by Wretchwick Green, as it would need to be located beyond the existing highway boundary. Provision of a continuous kerbed ped/cycle route here would be abortive work.
- The set back of push buttons is a matter that can be considered as part of the detailed design.
- Two stage toucan crossings can be set up so that when the first button is pressed it automatically triggers the second stage to be called after a suitable interval, thereby minimising the delay to pedestrians and cyclists. The new crossings would be designed this way.
- Lane widths - the roundabout will carry high volumes of HGV traffic and therefore lane widths need to be wide enough to ensure vehicles do not encroach on other lanes, risking side swipe accidents. The lane widths are no wider than they need to be, but this can be checked at detailed design stage.
- Speed limit strategy for the A41 - this is covered in my note of yesterday.
- Wider island on north-west arm of the A41 - this has been considered and taking into account the required width of verges and paths, it isn't possible to widen it.
- The southeastern A41 approach is proposed as three lanes - this is needed to provide sufficient capacity, in particular for the future South Eastern Perimeter Route, which will take traffic out of Bicester.

Technical Note		 <p>CITY INFINITY</p> <p>Designing for active urban travel</p>
Project	A41 / Pioneer Roundabout	
For	Paul Troop	
Organisation	Bicesters Bike Users' Group	
Date	4/11/2020	
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Introduction

City Infinity has been commissioned by Bicester Bike Users' Group to review the current design for a roundabout on the A41 at Pioneer Road which is being promoted through a planning application lodged with Cherwell District Council under reference 20/01830/F – *Proposed Roundabout Access To Graven Hill And Wretchwick Green London Road Bicester.*

Summary

The current proposal has a design speed of 50mph and is accessed via the A41 which will also keep its current speed of 50mph. Such speeds can create significant safety risks to pedestrians and cyclists. Local Transport Note 1/20 “Cycle Infrastructure Design” (LTN1/20) strongly recommends that off-carriageway provision for pedestrians and cyclists be provided. The proposal makes such provision at the roundabout, but the existing provision on the A41 between the proposed roundabout and Bicester (Rodney House Roundabout) is substandard and does not accord with LTN1/20.

We would suggest that the proposals do not go far enough to meet the requirements of LTN1/20 and that upgrading the pedestrian and cycle facilities alongside the A41 carriageway between this roundabout and the Rodney House Roundabout should be required as a planning condition or agreement.

Background

The location of the proposed roundabout is some 1.5km south-east of Bicester Village at Pioneer Road, which is currently a major/ minor T-junction. The roundabout is being promoted as part of enabling works for significant development projects on both sides of the A41.

Planning and Design Considerations

LTN1/20 provides a great deal of advice in providing for cycling as well as making reference to walking where the two modes interact. At the start of the guidance, the following statement is made under Paragraph 1.3 in terms of its application, which is directly applicable to the current proposals:

“The guidance should be applied to all changes associated with highway improvements, new highway construction and new or improved cycle facilities, including those on other rights of way such as bridleways and routes within public open space.”

Chapter 14 of the guidance sets out how cycling infrastructure should be improved through the development process, In particular, paragraph 14.1.2 states:

“Appropriate cycle facilities should be provided within all new and improved highways in accordance with the guidance contained in this document, regardless of whether the scheme is on a designated cycle route, unless there are clearly-defined and suitable alternatives.”

Beyond Section 14, the guidance sets out detailed information on the level of provision and protection required. For a 50mph design speed, this means kerb protected cycle tracks with decent width buffers from traffic and the proposals do not go far enough in this regard, especially along the western side of the proposals.

Paragraph 14.1.4 also gives advice on the wider context of how development should respond to the improvement of cycling networks:

“The requirements should include the provision of new cycle routes connecting to and through developments and enhancing the provision for cycling when making alterations to links and junctions on existing highways. It will not usually be acceptable to maintain an existing poor level of service when undertaking highway improvement schemes.”

Paragraph 14.3.12 states:

“Cycling facilities should be regarded as an essential component of the site access and any off-site highway improvements that may be necessary. Developments that do not adequately make provision for cycling in their transport proposals should not be approved. This may include some off-site improvements along existing highways that serve the development.”

Risks Associated with High Speed Design

The generality of the roundabout design is one with multi-lane approaches and exits, a wide circulatory area and geometry which invites high entry, circulation and exit speeds with a layout designed to maximise the flow of motor traffic.

We understand that as highway authority, the county council requires a 50mph design speed for the junction and area of the A41 to the Rodney House Roundabout. With a high-speed design approach, careful consideration and protection of those walking and cycling in the vicinity of the roundabout should carry significant weight. The risks should be managed by providing appropriate crossing facilities with footways and cycle tracks given appropriate buffered protection from motor traffic.

Assessment

The proposals only consider the immediate area of the roundabout and not how the cycle routes connect to the development and wider cycling provision in the area. The county council, as highway authority, has aspirations to improve the existing shared-use path along the western side of the A41. However, such an aspiration provides no reassurance that LTN1/20 compliant provision will be provided. It would be preferable for this to be secured through a planning condition or agreement. This would positively contribute to improving local walking and cycling connectivity and safety, especially with significant development coming forward and meet the aims of Policy SLE4 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2031 (Improved Transport and Connections).

The Appendix to this Technical Note sets out more detail on specific safety and accessibility matters which should be reviewed in developing the design beyond the planning stage and as such could be secured as a condition to a planning consent to ensure matters are appropriately reviewed at detailed design stage.

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City Infinity

APPENDIX – TECHNICAL COMMENTS AND POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

Proposed layout

The general arrangement for the roundabout is shown on Waterman's drawing reference WIE11386/A41/03/001/A03. In brief, the roundabout is proposed to have four arms, with two on the existing A41, one for Pioneer Road and a stub to the north-east for future development. The roundabout has two traffic lanes and each arm has two lane approaches (with the south-east A41 arm having three). The A41 and stub arms have two-lane exits with Pioneer Road having a one-lane exit. The roads beyond the roundabout are all single-carriageway.

The Pioneer Road and north-west arms of the roundabout each have two-stage toucan crossings arranged in line across each road, set back around 20m from the outside edge of the roundabout. The south-east arm has a single stage toucan crossing some 70m from the outside edge of the roundabout. The stub on the north-east side of the roundabout has uncontrolled crossing points within 5m of the outside edge of the roundabout.

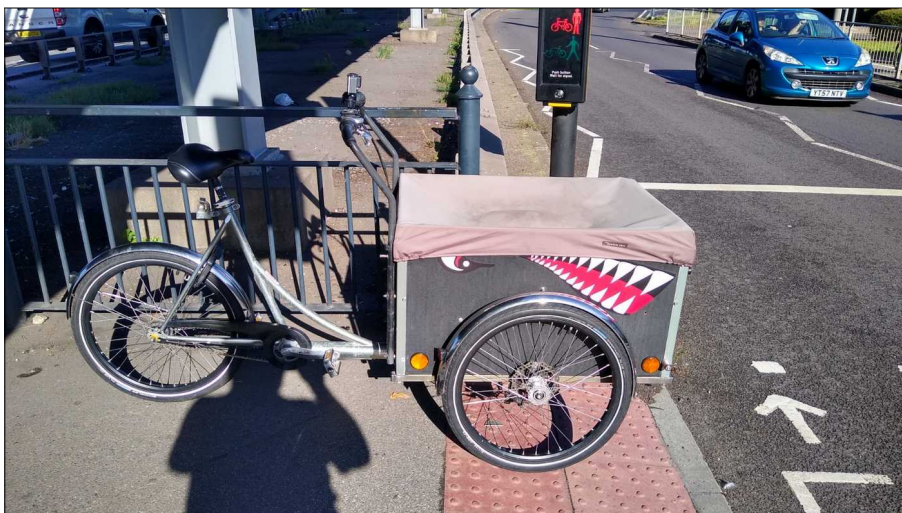
There is a footway and cycleway proposed on the west side of Pioneer Road and the A41 (we assume separated by a raised delineator), with shared-use paths elsewhere. There are verge buffers between the cycle tracks and carriageway of varying widths.

Issues with proposed layout

There are issues with the proposals in terms of walking and cycling provision as follows;

- The geometry of the roundabout is likely to enable excessive entry, circulatory and exit speeds by drivers which may impact on the safety of people walking and cycling in terms of approach speed at the crossing points and loss of control incidents.
- We understand that the speed limit through the roundabout is to be 50mph on the A41 arms with the other two arms being 30mph. Department for Transport Circular 01/2013, *Setting Local Speed Limits*, suggests that the speed limit of the majority of the arms should persist or the lower where there an equal division (Paragraph 41) – this suggests that 30mph should be the selected speed here.
- The width of the refuge island on the Pioneer Road arm is less than 5m which constrains waiting space and buffering from general traffic.
- The width of the refuge island on the north-western arm of the A41 is 5.1m which may leave people feeling exposed to general traffic.
- The verge buffer to the cycle track on the north-west arm of the A41 appears to be around 1m in width. In Local Transport Note 1/20 *Cycle Infrastructure Design*, the desirable minimum width for a 50mph situation is 2m (Table 6.1).

- The position the toucan crossing on the south-east arm of the A41 is significantly beyond the desire line for people wishing to cross from east side of Pioneer Road to the future development site to the north-east. Regardless of the toucan crossing, people will cross on the desire line at a risky location.
- The uncontrolled crossing point on the stub arm will be intimidating and difficult to cross if this remains the arrangement in either the permanent state or during an interim construction stage. The exit speeds from the roundabout are likely to be high and crossing the entry lanes are likely to be difficult where one lane moves at a different speed or rate to the other.
- The use of toucan crossings necessitates push-buttons to register crossing demand. The standard set back of the push buttons from the carriageway (depending on design speed) means that some cycle users will struggle to reach the push buttons, especially those using non-standard or adapted cycles (Photograph 1).
- Two-stage toucan crossings require users to use push-buttons twice and they can potentially have excessive waits in the centre of busy/ fast moving general traffic which can be intimidating in use.



Photograph 1 – A seated rider cannot reach the toucan push button.

Potential changes to proposed layout

A number of changes could be made to the layout to improve it for walking and cycling, subject to review by the designers with input from their specialist traffic signals and safety advisors.

- The lane widths approaching, circulating and leaving the roundabout could be narrowed to help reduce driver speed, subject to the composition of traffic classes and detailed design.
- It would be desirable to review the speed limit strategy for the A41. The current proposal is for the 50mph speed limit to remain, but the roundabout at London Road/ Neunkirchen Way some 750m to the north-east has a 40mph speed limit. A 40mph speed limit through the proposed roundabout and this part of the A41 would allow tighter geometry and lane widths and provide consistency for drivers.
- Narrower traffic lanes on the Pioneer Road arm would provide additional refuge width and in general, there is sufficient space within the scheme boundary to accommodate a wider island.
- There appears to be enough space within the scheme boundary to accommodate a wider island on the north-west arm of the A41.
- The verge buffer to the cycle track on the north-west arm of the A41 should be at least 2m in width if the 50mph speed limit is to persist. A 40mph limit would allow the existing 1m to remain in accordance with LTN1/20, although wider buffers are always desirable from a user point of view (and notwithstanding the 2013 DfT Circular).
- The toucan crossing on the south-east arm of the A41 should be brought to around 20m from the outside edge of the roundabout to usefully accommodate the desire line. There appears to be space within the scheme boundary, although the approach on the south-eastern arm of the A41 could be reduced to two lanes which would be more consistent with the overall design.
- The uncontrolled crossing point on the stub arm should not be built in its current form. A suitability buffered shared-use path instead of the stub would be an appropriate interim use until proposals are brought forward for development to the north-east, probably including a further signalised crossing around 20m from the outside edge of the roundabout.
- The position of the toucan crossing push buttons should be reviewed against the requirements of users of non-standard and adapted cycles. Section 5.4 of LTN1/20 sets out more advice on cycle sizes, including a “design cycle”. With decent verge buffer depths, it might be desirable to provide a third push button position set back

from the usual push button positions to the left and right of the toucan crossings (Figure 1) to aid such users.

- Consideration should be given to linking the demands of each half of each toucan crossing so that once a demand is registered on one side of the road, the second crossing demand can be automatically registered a few second after an invitation to cross for the first crossing is displayed.
- As a general principle, we would also recommend that the design is subject to an independent road safety audit by professionals experienced in the design and assessment of roads such as those in the proposal incorporating walking & cycling.

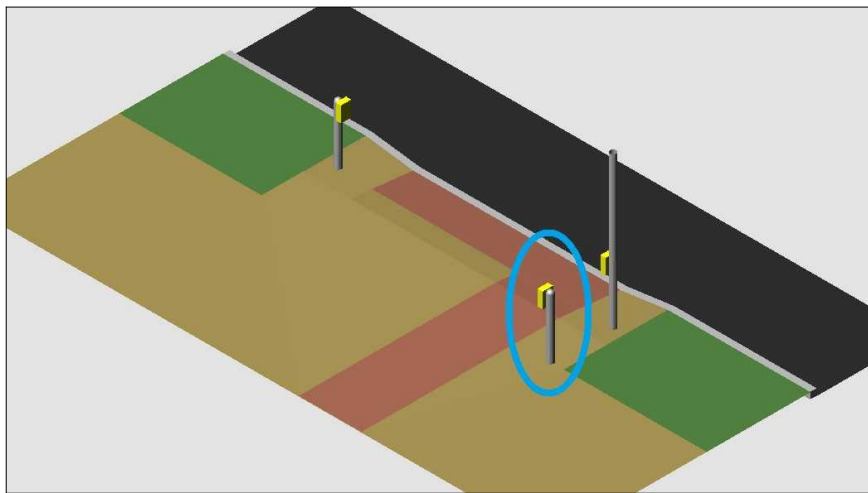


Figure 1 – A third, set back, toucan push button (circled blue)

Version – Final V1.0
