

Bicester Bike Users Group

Himley Village Planning Application Objections Application No: 21/02339/REM

1 September 2021

Version 1.0

I. INTRODUCTION

- Bicester Bike Users' Group strongly objects to this planning application as submitted because it does not comply with current standards and will not facilitate OCC and CDC's ambitious targets for increasing walking and cycling. However, modest changes to the design should address these objections.
- 2. The applicant should be commended for its aspirations to encourage walking and cycling within the new development, and to access the development. However, as has previously been pointed out by Oxfordshire County Council ('OCC') Highways, the current design does not comply with current standards, in particular the OCC Cycle Design Standards (2017), the OCC Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Bicester (2020) 'Bicester LCWIP', or the Department for Transport's Local Transport Note 1/20 (2020) 'LTN 1/20'. We note with some concern that none of these documents are referred to by the applicant, and presumably neither OCC Highways or CDC Planning departments drew the applicant's attention to these documents at

the pre-planning stage. This may be an issue to highlight within OCC and CDC so as to assist applicants and expedite the planning process.

- 3. There also has been no engagement with the local cycle organisation, Bicester Bike Users' Group, as recommended by LTN 1/20 (10.4.17). We remain keen and happy to engage with the applicant to assist in ensuring that the design is compliant with current standards.
- 4. In summary, there are three key areas where the proposed design is deficient. These are:
 - 4.1. Access to the development is not compliant with current active travel standards. Continuous, segregated paths, with horizontal separation from the Middleton Stoney Road should be provided along the frontage of the site, to the Middleton Stoney Road roundabout, and safe and convenient crossings such as parallel crossings should be provided across the roundabout;
 - 4.2. Within the development, the shared cycle and pedestrian paths are not compliant with current standards. Segregated paths with horizontal segregation, including cycle paths with priority crossing of minor roads should be provided along the primary and secondary routes.
 - 4.3. The permeability for pedestrians and cyclists within the development are poor in certain areas. Additional links should be provided to enable pedestrian and cycle movement between areas currently cut off by cul-de-sacs, and additional links should be provided along key routes, such as to and from the Middleton Stoney Road westbound.

II. ACCESS

- 5. Given the location of the development, the applicant rightly recognises that the site ought to be used for pedestrian and cycle access. However, the current access arrangements do not comply with current standards. Segregated pedestrian and cycle facilities with horizontal separation from the highway should be provided along the Middleton Stoney Road in order to connect the development with Bicester Town and envisaged active travel routes via the Middleton Stoney Road roundabout, as currently being developed by OCC.
- 6. LTN 1/20 now emphasises the importance of safe and convenient cycle access to the development along existing highways:
 - 'Cycling facilities should be regarded as an essential component of the site access and any <u>off-site highway improvements</u> 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 <u>off-site improvements along existing highways that serve the development</u>.' (Emphasis added, LTN 1/20, 14.3.12).
- 7. LTN 1/20 requires that schemes for cycle traffic to connect to new developments will be delivered as part of those new developments (14.1.1 to 14.1.4).
- 8. The Bicester LCWIP sets ambitious targets for cycling in Bicester. Policy BCW 1 requires OCC to plan for at least a tripling of cycling and a doubling of walking trips within Bicester in the next 10 years. Policy BCW 3 requires that the walking and cycling network is prioritised in transport and road plans. Policy BCW4 requires OCC and CDC to improve the cycling and walking network by s.106 and s.278 works. The Bicester LCWIP is deemed a material consideration in the approval of new developments.

- 9. LTN 1/20 confirms that main roads are usually the road where people most fear the danger from motor vehicles (4.2.5). On busy and fast roads, most people will not be prepared to cycle on the carriageway, so they will not cycle at all, or some may unlawfully use the footway (4.4.1). On busy strategic roads where significant reduction in traffic speeds and volumes is not appropriate, dedicated and protected space for cycling must be provided (4.2.11).
- 10. LTN 1/20 sets out the requirements for cyclists to use the carriageway. No cyclist is expected to share the carriageway with motor vehicles at any speed greater than 30mph (7.2.4), and even sharing the carriageway at that speed will discourage many users and almost all vulnerable users such as children, the elderly, and those with disabilities.
- of shared path with no horizontal separation from the carriageway. This falls woefully short of the current standards required for access to new developments. At a minimum, the design should provide segregated provision with horizontal separation along the frontage of the development along the Middleton Stoney Road to the roundabout, and active travel friendly crossings such as parallel crossings across the Middleton Stoney Road roundabout to connect with active travel provision currently being installed by OCC.

III. PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE PATHS WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT

12. The applicant should be commended for its recognition of the need for high quality walking and cycle provision within the development. At present this consists of shared pedestrian and cycle paths along the primary and secondary roads. Unfortunately, this practice has been proven to be very problematic for walking and cycling, and is not longer recommended by guidance. It may be that this aspect of the design is an artefact of an earlier planning submission. Nonetheless, the design needs to be revised so as to comply with current standards. In particular, segregated pedestrian and cycle paths should be provided that have horizontal separation from the carriageway. In addition, the cycle paths would require priority over the minor roads so that cyclists are not required to stop and give way at every road or access point.

- 13. Shared use facilities can create particular difficulties for visually impaired and other disabled people. Interactions between people moving at different speeds can be perceived to be unsafe and inaccessible, particularly by vulnerable pedestrians. This leads to unnecessary tensions between pedestrians and cyclists. It also negatively affects comfort and directness and may amount to a breach of the public sector equality duty contained in the Equality Act 2010. The DFT now strongly advises against shared use footways (LTN 1/20, 1.6.1, 6.5.4 & 9.4.1). The OCC Cycle Design Standards also require segregation (2.1.3 & 2.2.8).
- 14. The DFT requires that at crossings and junctions, cyclists should not share the space with pedestrians, but should be provided with a separate, parallel, route (DFT 2020, 1.6.1). The local, Oxfordshire, county guidance also requires that off-carriageway facilities for pedestrians and cyclists should be fully segregated (OCC 2017, 2.1.3, 2.2.8, and 3.4.6).
- 15. Horizontal separation or buffers is another key aspect of good active travel design. Horizontal separation is desirable for safety and comfort. See table 6-1 of LTN 1/20 and the OCC Cycle Design Standards (3.2.7).
- 16. Priority for cycles over minor roads and crossings is also required by current standards. The underlying rationale for this is

that each instance where a cyclist is required to stop or give way costs the equivalent energy of cycling an additional 100m (CROW, 2016 p.133). This requirement is now enshrined in the domestic design standards of LTN 1/20 (Fig 1.1). See also the OCC Cycle Design Standards (2017, 2.2.5, 2.2.8), and the Bicester LCWIP (pp. 20 & 30).

17. The current design provides only for shared space, with no horizontal separation, and no priority for cyclists over minor roads. To comply with current standards, the applicant would need to redesign the paths alongside the primary and secondary roads to segregate pedestrians and cyclists, to provide horizontal separation from the carriageway, and to provide cycle priority over minor roads and access points.

IV. ACTIVE TRAVEL PERMIABILITY

18. In some of the applicants supporting documents, reference is made to design principles that encourage walking and cycling. Examples include permeability so that it is possible to travel more directly on foot or by bike than by motor vehicle. However, in practice, much of the development embodies dated design choices with limited permeability for active travel. For instance, there are a number of cul-de-sacs without pedestrian or cycle routes or direct links along obvious desire lines. Examples include the culde-sacs to the west of the development, and access between the west of development and the Middleton Stoney Road for residents and visitors travelling to or from the west. As designed, this will encourage motor vehicle use and discourage walking and cycling. Incorporation of additional paths to open up these isolated areas would considerably enhance the opportunities for active travel within the development.

٧. **REFERENCES**

CROW Design Manual for Bicycle Traffic 2016

Department for Transport. 2020. Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design. The Stationery Office.
Oxfordshire County Council. 2017. 'Oxfordshire Cycling Design

Standards'.

Oxfordshire County Council.

———. 2020. 'Bicester Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan'.