



Chapter 2

SITE AND SETTING

2 Site and Setting

Preface

There have been no amendments to the Site boundaries since the submission of the 2021 ES and they remain in the current uses and form. This ES chapter has been slightly updated for greater context, notably in relation to the 'Future Development' section at the end of the chapter.

It is not considered that any significant changes have occurred on the Site or to its surrounding context since submission of the 2021 ES. However, where any topic-specific changes to the baseline scenario has occurred, these are described in the respective technical Chapters of this ES.

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This chapter provides a brief description of the Site and its surrounding areas, including key features, designations and key sensitive receptor locations that may be affected by the Development. A full description of the baseline conditions relevant to the technical assessments is provided in each technical chapter (i.e. Chapters 7 to 15), with updates to the 2021 ES baseline assessed where required.

2.2 Site Context

Location and Extent

- 2.2.1 The Site, comprising two parcels of agricultural land, is located in Oxfordshire, wholly within the administrative boundary of Cherwell District Council (CDC). It is situated approximately 6.5km north west of Bicester and 1.2km north east of Ardley, at Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid Reference (NGR) SP 54512 29039 (Western Site) and SP 55017 28706 (Eastern Site). A site location plan is shown in Figure 1.1 and the application boundaries, Eastern Site and Western Site (including the Enabling Works), are shown in Figure 2.1a and 2.1b respectively. These are unchanged from the 2021 ES. Collectively, the two parcels of land cover an area of approximately 66.63 hectares (ha).

Site Description

- 2.2.2 The Site comprises agricultural land, currently in use for arable farming. The fields have narrow tree belts around some of their perimeters and hedgerows are present along the majority of Site boundaries and within the Site itself. The Site also comprises bare ground around the perimeters of the Site, a derelict farm building in the centre of the Western Site, a waterbody (small pond) within the north portion of the Eastern Site, dry ditches, scrub and tall ruderal vegetation, and scattered trees along Site perimeters and within hedgerows.
- 2.2.3 The Eastern Site is the smaller of the two parcels of land and extends to approximately 23.18ha. It is bounded by the B4100 to the north; agricultural land to the east; a deciduous tree belt (designated as Priority Habitat) that acts as a buffer to Cherwell Valley service station complex (comprised of a petrol station, Travelodge hotel and parking) to the south;

and the A43 to the west. The topography falls gently from north west to south east, from a height of 116mAOD to 109mAOD.

- 2.2.4 The Western Site extends to approximately 43.45ha and is bounded by the B4100 (a single carriageway road which runs between Bicester and Banbury) to the north, the A43 (linking the M40 and the M1 at Northampton) to the east, the M40 to the south and agricultural land to the west; this neighbouring field includes an area of hardstanding adjacent to the south west corner of the Site. One farm building, used for storage, is located in the centre of this Western Site. Three residential properties are located adjacent to, but outwith, the north east corner of the Western Site (including Baynard House), bounded by the A43 and B4100 on other sides. Access to these properties is from the B4100. An overhead power line crosses the Western Site, running a north east – south west trajectory. The topography of the Western Site falls gently from the north west corner towards the south east, from a height of 128m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) to 111mAOD.
- 2.2.5 Aside from an extent of the B4100 to the B4100/A4 roundabout, the Enabling Works boundary (the 'Enabling Works site') is wholly located within the Western Site boundary and is illustrated on Figure 2.1b.

Figure 2.1: Site Boundary Plan



- Western Site Boundary and Enabling Works Site Boundary
- Eastern Site Boundary



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Site Boundary Plan

Figure 2.1a: Planning Application Site Boundary – Eastern Site

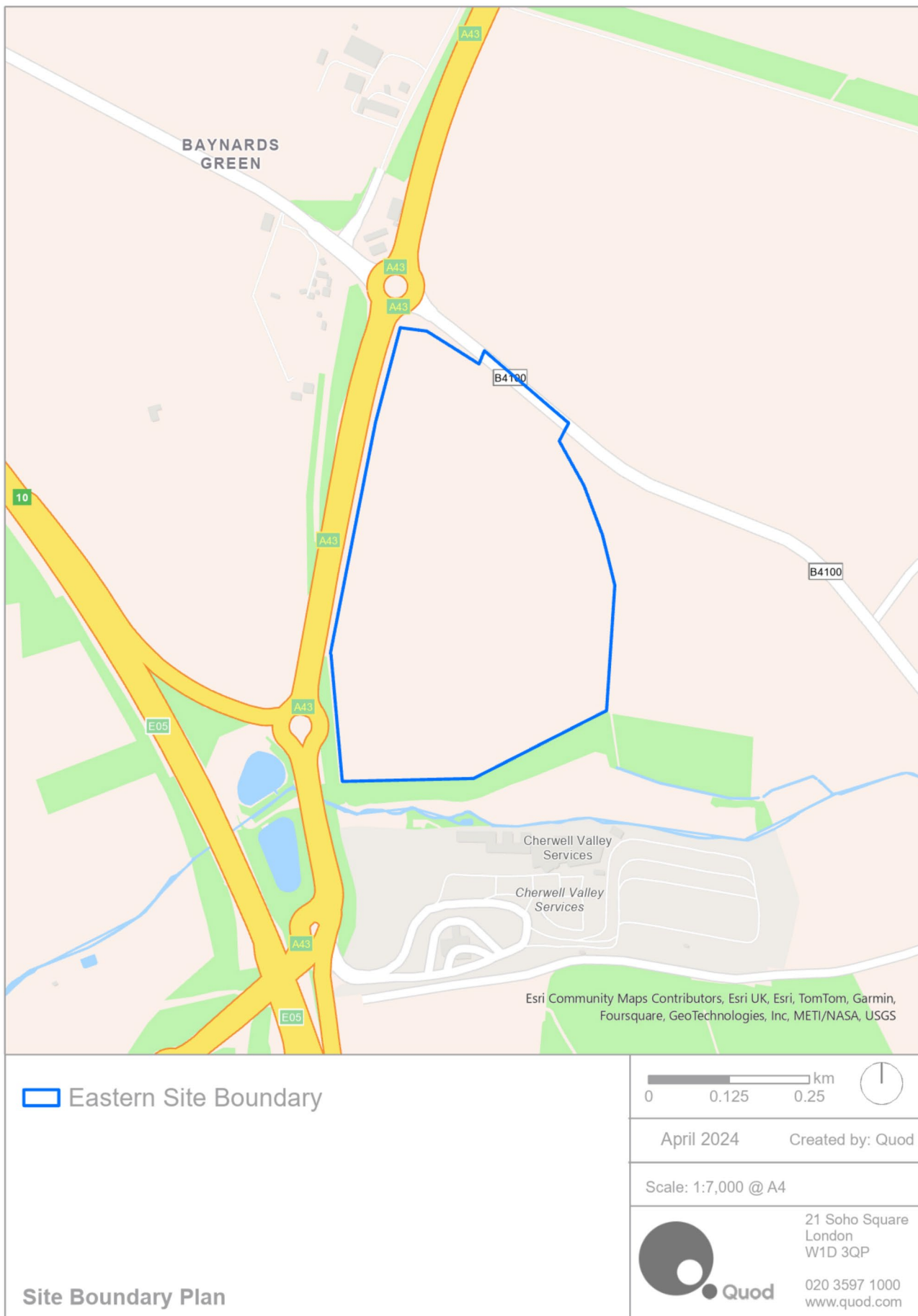


Figure 2.1b: Planning Application Site Boundary – Western Site (including Enabling Works)



Site History

- 2.2.6 The Site currently and historically has been in agricultural use. No previous development or other uses are known to have occurred on the Site.

Land Uses

- 2.2.7 The Site is located in an area which is dominated by agricultural land, with sparsely located residential and commercial development. Baynard House, Baynard Barn, The Cottages and associated outbuildings, and Medkre are located in close proximity to the north east corner of the Western Site. These houses are the only residential receptors in the vicinity (i.e. a 500m radius) of the Site.
- 2.2.8 The nearest settlement is Fewcott, approximately 750m south west of the Site boundary beyond the M40. Fritwell is located approximately 1.2km to the west. The Moto Cherwell Valley motorway services and the Travelodge Bicester Cherwell Valley within the service station are located within 100m of the southern boundary of the Eastern Site, and an Esso service station (Baynards Green Service Station) is located approx. 100m north of the Site boundary on the A43/B4100 roundabout junction. Baynards Green Farm, now converted to a commercial estate, is located immediately beyond the Esso service station; this contains a Grade II listed barn.

Transport and Access

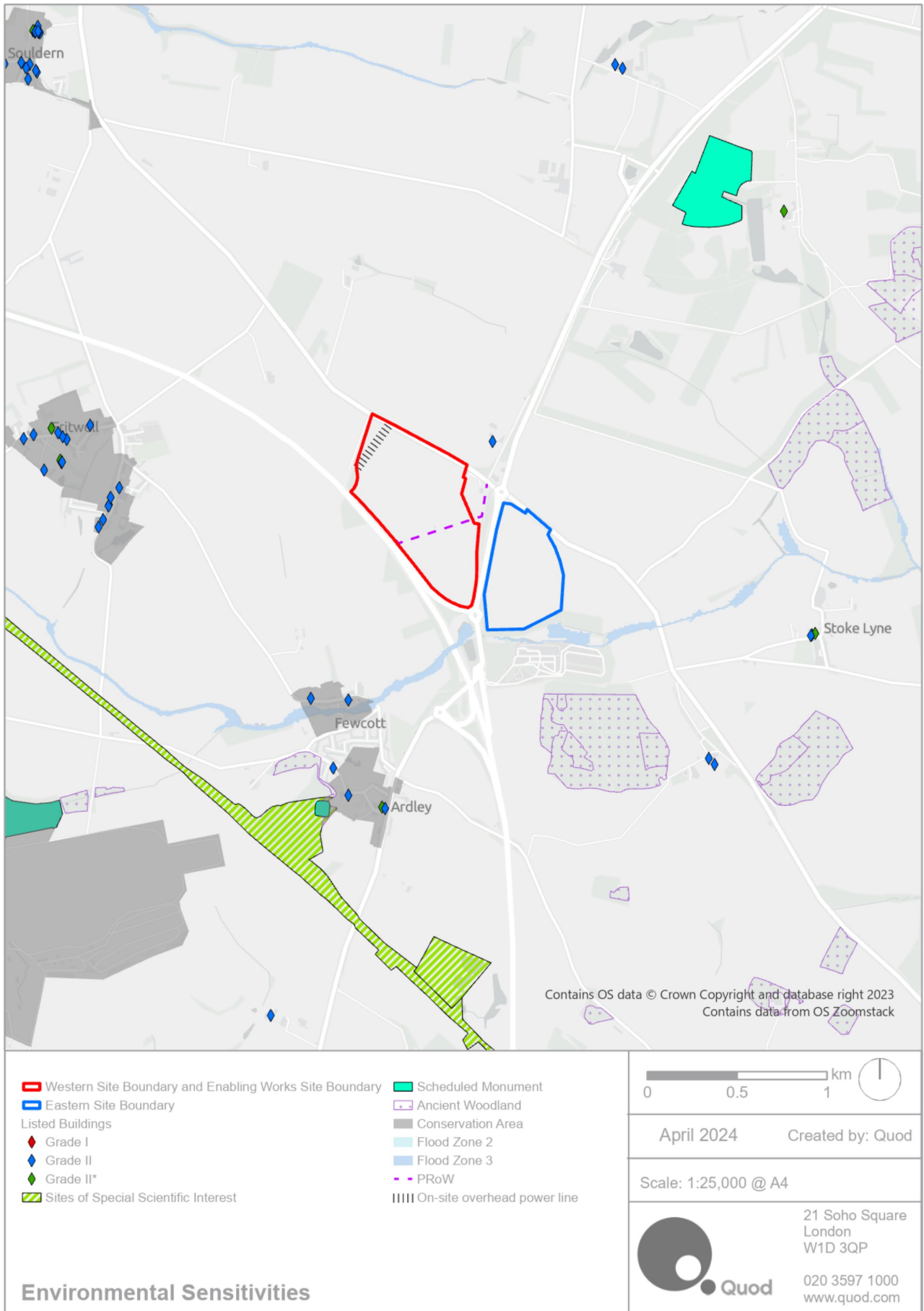
- 2.2.9 Vehicular and pedestrian access to both the Eastern and Western Site is currently gained via the B4100 on the northern Site boundary. The B4100 connects to the A43 at a roundabout adjacent to the north of the Site boundary.
- 2.2.10 Two Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) extend along the eastern and western boundaries of the Western Site (refs. 367/28/10 and 109/2/40). These are linked by a PRoW that extends south westerly across the Western Site (ref. 105/5/10).

Site and Surrounding Sensitivities

- 2.2.11 Figure 2.2 identifies the key environmental sensitivities within and close to the Site.
- 2.2.12 The Site is not located within a 'sensitive area' (as defined in Part 1 of the EIA Regulations) (i.e. a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Park, National Landscape, World Heritage Site (WHS), Scheduled Monument or European Site¹) and is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory designations for nature conservation or heritage.

¹ As defined by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Figure 2.2: Environmental Sensitivities Map



Archaeology, Built Heritage and Townscape

- 2.2.13 The Site is not located within or in proximity to a Conservation Area and there are no listed or (non-statutory) locally listed buildings onsite. The closest listed structure is the Grade II barn at Baynards Green Farm ('Barn at SP 5487 2940') located approximately 200m north of the Site boundary. Two other built heritage assets are located within 1km of the Site boundary: Grade II Manor Farmhouse and Fewcott Farmhouse, located approximately 800 and 900m south of the Site boundary respectively. Fewcott Conservation Area and Ardley Conservation Area are located approximately 800m south west from the Site boundary, at the closest point. Fritwell Conservation Area is located approximately 1.2km west of the Site boundary.
- 2.2.14 No World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments or Historic Battlefield sites have been identified either within the Site itself, or within 1km of the Site, on the National Heritage List. Tusmore Park, a Scheduled Monument, is approximately 1km north east of the Site and Ardley Wood moated ringwork Scheduled Monument is situated approximately 1.4km to the south west of the Site.
- 2.2.15 The Site is not located within or in the vicinity of any statutorily designated or locally (non-statutorily) designated views.
- 2.2.16 The Site is not located in an Area of Archaeological Potential. However, due to the undeveloped, greenfield nature of the Site, there is potential for survival of archaeological remains. Consultation was therefore undertaken with the Council Archaeologist and a Written Scheme of Investigation was agreed for the Site for further investigation. Further details are provided within the Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) (see Appendix 11.1).

Biodiversity

- 2.2.17 There are no National Sites Network ecologically designated sites within 10km of the Site (e.g. Ramsar, Special Area of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs)) and there are no statutory or non-statutory ecological designations within a 1km radius of the Site. The Site does not fall within the boundaries of any Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Natural Nature Reserves (NNR) or Local Nature Reserves (LNR).
- 2.2.18 The closest sites with statutory designations for nature conservation are the Ardley Cutting and Quarry SSSI and the Ardley Trackways SSSI, situated approximately 1.3km south west and 1.8km south of the Site respectively. The SSSI is designated for approximately 6km along a section of the Chiltern Main Line railway, extending over the M40 to the south of the Site. Six non-statutory sites are present within 2km of the Site including one Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire (BBO) Wildlife Trust reserve and five Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), with the closest, Stoke Wood LWS, located 0.34km south of the Eastern Site boundary. A pocket of Ancient Woodland is located within Stoke Wood LWS.
- 2.2.19 The Western Site boundary is well-vegetated with native hedgerows and interspersed trees. The Eastern Site boundary comprises a native hedgerow field boundary with the southern boundary marked by a large tree belt, separating the Site from Cherwell Valley Services.

Air Quality

- 2.2.20 The Site is not located within or in the vicinity of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), the nearest of which is located in Bicester, approximately 6.5km south east of the Site. This AQMA was declared for exceedances of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) objective. Ardley Energy from Waste (EfW) Plant and the Ardley Landfill Site are located approximately 2.2km south of the Site.

Water Resources and Flood Risk

- 2.2.21 Based on the Environment Agency flood maps, the Site is shown to be located entirely within a Flood Zone 1, meaning the Site is subject to a low risk of fluvial flooding (i.e. less than 1 in 1000-year annual probability). The majority of the Site is subject to a very low risk of flooding from surface water, although a localised area of land within the southern corner of the Western Site is subject to a medium risk of flooding from surface water. The Site is not subject to a risk of flooding from reservoirs.

Future Development

- 2.2.22 There are five proposed developments that are being considered with regard to their cumulative effects. Further details on these cumulative schemes is provided in Chapter 3: EIA Methodology and Appendix 3.5.
- 2.2.23 In addition the off-site highway network between M40 J10 and A43/B4100 Baynards Green roundabout had been identified for improvement with funding secured by the Oxford County Council (OCC) Growth Fund. The funding was significantly reduced in late 2022, and now comprises localised improvements to A43 Padbury roundabout, where the M40 southbound off-slip meets the A43. The scheme proposals are reflected within the traffic modelling provided on behalf of OCC and National Highways.
- 2.2.24 The A4095/B4100 junction to the south of the Site benefits from planning consent to replace the existing roundabout with a signalised crossroads. Funding for the scheme is understood to be secured and OCC have been advised that works are due to commence early - mid 2024. The scheme proposals are reflected within the traffic modelling provided on behalf of OCC.