

The Hurlstone Partnership

PROPOSED REGULARISATION OF WROXTON MOTOCROSS TRACK,
WROXTON, OXFORDSHIRE OX15 6EU

Transport Statement

February 2021

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Transportation Planning, Highway Design and Environmental Assessment

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Wroxton Motocross track (WMX) is located approximately 7.25 km northwest of Banbury, 1.9 km northeast of Shenington and 1.25 km south-southwest of Hornton. The site, which has operated for approximately 40 years, is run and managed by Banbury Motocross Club, primarily for club events. However, the facility also hosts one or two National events per year.
- 1.2 The events can operate over a single day or a weekend. The site provides camping facilities, which allow some riders to arrive before practice, stay overnight, complete their racing, then leave. This is attractive to riders who may use the weekend as a family outing and also for riders travelling from further afield to race at the track.
- 1.3 In August 2020, the owner of the applied for a Certificate of Lawful Use to allow its use for 24 days per year; 10 more than is permitted under the rights granted through the General Development Procedure Order (GDPO). The application was refused because the track had been recently extended and encroached into the neighbouring field. As such, the application area failed to qualify for the Certificate of Lawful use, as it had not been used for the required period. There was no dispute that the majority of the site had been used for the requisite period to qualify.
- 1.4 As a result, it was decided that planning permission be sought for the existing facility in order to regularise its use in its current form. Midwest Planning Ltd was instructed to prepare and submit the planning application on behalf of the landowner.
- 1.5 In response to pre-application enquiries, the Local Authority, Cherwell District Council, requested a Transport Assessment be provided as part of the formal application. As the Council was being pressurised to take Enforcement Action against the landowner, the timescale for preparing the application was limited.
- 1.6 The Hurlstone Partnership Limited was instructed to undertake a review of the highway impact of the proposed development. Due to travel restrictions resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic, it was not possible to undertake traffic surveys, as the travel restrictions imposed by lockdown have curtailed normal travel activities. Also, no events are being held at the track at present.
- 1.7 Notwithstanding this, as the site has been operating for a number of years, it is possible to assess the impact of the development by reference to evidence gained over a period of time.
- 1.8 As part of the review, a site visit was undertaken on Thursday 18th February 2021 in order to review the site access arrangement and local highway network. Collision data has also been reviewed to establish the safety performance of the road network. Information

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regarding the events held at WMX has been sourced from Banbury Motocross Club and other documents associated with the recent application.

- 1.9 The remainder of this report details the findings of the review and confirms that the continued use of WMX should not lead to highway impacts that are sufficient to justify the refusal of planning permission.

2 EXISTING SITUATION

- 2.1 WMX is served via a gateway with a 4.75m clear opening span, which is set back 4.75m from the near edge of the adjoining carriageway, as illustrated in the photograph below:



- 2.2 The bellmouth of the access extends approximately 17m along the west side of the carriageway on the outside of a gradual right-hand bend (when travelling north to south). The access track itself is surfaced in a mix of compacted stone / asphalt road-planings. When entering the site, the access track follows a left-hand bend and increases to a surfaced width of approximately 5.5m. Beyond the bend the track straightens for approximately 55m before entering a right-hand bend leading to a further straight, which is around 3 to 3.5m wide and extending approximately 180m to a slight, right-hand kink before continuing straight-ahead to the access and parking field, around 280m distant.
- 2.3 The distance between the public highway and the gateway at the access to the south-eastern parking / camping area is approximately 560m.
- 2.4 Once inside the site, through the parking area gateway, visitors may continue ahead, then bear left around the edge of the track to the south-west parking / camping area. Its north-western boundary is approximately 280m distant. Alternatively, visitors may turn right into

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the south-eastern parking / camping area. Its eastern boundary is approximately 175m distant.

- 2.5 Visibility at the site access was measured on site using traffic cones and a road wheel. From a 2.4m set-back along the access centreline from the near carriageway edge (i.e. the X distance), the view to the left (north) extended approximately 93.0m to the near edge, 87.5m to the centreline, 84.5m to the centreline of the far (oncoming) traffic lane and 79.0m to the far edge of the carriageway. The limiting feature to the left (north) is the boundary hedge on the opposite side of the road, due to its curved alignment (see photograph below).



- 2.6 The comparable visibility splay to the right (southeast) from the same position at the access extended approximately 100.5m to the near edge, 97.5m to the centreline of the near (oncoming) traffic lane, 94.7m to the centreline and 84.5m to the far edge of the carriageway. Again, the limiting feature to the southeast visibility splay was the hedgerow on the opposite side of the road, due to its curved alignment (see photograph overleaf).

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- 2.7 As can be seen from the photographs, the road in the vicinity of the access descends in a northerly direction. Given the alignment of the carriageway and its width, it is unlikely that vehicles would be overtaking at speed on the approaches to the access. When taking the gradients into account, the visibility splays towards oncoming traffic from the access provide for 85th percentile speeds in wet weather conditions of approximately 50 mph from both directions based on Manual for Streets Parameters (1.5 second perception / reaction time and 0.45g deceleration corrected for gradients of 5.9% up from the north and 5.2% down from the southeast).
- 2.8 Whilst this falls below the national speed limit of 60 mph for single carriageway routes, observations of vehicle speeds during the site visit revealed speeds were significantly lower than both the national and 50 mph identified above.
- 2.9 Observations also indicate that traffic flows are low, with only a few vehicles passing during a period of approximately 3 hours on site, during which a group of three young equestrians riding side-by-side across the full width of the carriageway, several cyclists and a couple of pedestrians were observed at different times.
- 2.10 In the vicinity of the access, the main carriageway width is approximately 4.5m. However, opposite and to the southeast (right) of the access, there is an additional 2m of verge over-run area to assist large vehicles when turning to / from the gateway. This had been surfaced historically at the Council's request by the landowner. As the photograph overleaf illustrates, the area is over-run by agricultural vehicles using the access to the land adjoining WMX, as confirmed by the bar-tread tyre marks.

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- 2.11 It is understood that almost all traffic travelling to / from the site does so via the southeast, which provides expedient access to the A422 Stratford Road, approximately 0.76 km distant. During the site visit, the alternative route via the north, through Hornton was also reviewed, which also provides a connection to the A422 via a 4.7km route along the narrower roads. However, whilst the northern route connects to the A422 approximately 3.5km to the north of the southern route connection, it is quicker and a shorter distance to reach the same point via the southern option.
- 2.12 When leaving the site in a southeast direction, the road follows a gradual left hand bend before straightening on its approach to a priority T junction on the right (south) side, approximately 265m southeast of the site access. There was evidence of some verge over-running on the bend and beyond, but it was noted that a field gateway was in use by agricultural vehicles on the east side of the carriageway and that bar-tread marks were within the verge area, as illustrated in the photographs overleaf:

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- 2.13 Beyond the junction the road narrows and follows a straight alignment as it descends when continuing east-southeast towards Wroxton.
- 2.14 The bellmouth of minor arm the junction on the right extends approximately 23.3m along the south side of the priority route running between Hornton and Wroxton, which passes

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the site access. The minor arm is controlled by Give Way markings and an associated road sign. Opposing traffic lanes on the minor arm are separated by an intermittent central line which extends 59.5m from the priority route, at which point the minor arm has reduced in width to 4.3m.

- 2.15 Visibility at the junction is very good, extending approximately 190m to the near edge, 181m to the centreline and 178m to the far edge to the left (northwest) as illustrated below:



- 2.16 The comparable visibility to the east-southeast extended approximately 325m across the full carriageway width, as illustrated overleaf:

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2.17

Having turned right into the minor arm to continue towards the A422, road users enter a straight link between the two junctions, which extends approximately 0.5 km and has a width varying between 4.3m and 4.5m for most of its length. There are areas of localised widening within the verges, which primarily coincide with accesses to land and property, distributed along the route. There is also localised widening at a bridge, approximately 150 along the road when traveling towards the A422, providing an 8m width:



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- 2.18 The carriageway itself is around 4.5m wide between approximately 228m and 255m along the route, where there is localised widening across the verge to facilitate two accesses to properties, which increases the effective highway width to circa 7.7m:



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2.19 There is some limited widening to approximately 5m at a gateway 410m along the route:



2.20 Further widening to 4.8m is introduced approximately 470m along the route, near the driveway to a property, which is maintained over the remaining distance on the approach to the A422 junction bellmouth:



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2.21 The bellmouth of the A422 junction extends approximately 21m along the north side of the carriageway and is also controlled by Give Way markings and signage. Again, the opposing traffic lanes are divided by an intermittent central line extending 59.5m from the priority route, by which time the carriageway width had reduced to 4.5m.

2.22 Visibility from the 2.4m X distance is good in both directions along the A422 Stratford Road, which is 7.3m wide. To the northwest (right), the carriageway is straight for approximately 300m:



2.23 To the southeast (left) the route follows a gradual right-hand bend, through which the hedgerow on the opposite side is set back to achieve the desirable visibility provision:

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- 2.24 The junction forms a slightly offset (4.3m centreline to centreline) left-right crossroads between the minor arm approaches.

3 EXISTING TRAFFIC FLOWS

- 3.1 As described in the Introduction, due to the Council's requirement for application documents within a specific time-frame, which coincides with Covid 19 lockdown restrictions which prevent normal travel patterns and motocross races at the track, it has not been possible to record traffic data.
- 3.2 Notwithstanding this, Banbury Motocross Club, which operates and manages the track has confirmed the typical numbers of visitors during Club and National level events at WMX.
- 3.3 A typical event is held on Sunday, with an average rider entry of 160 – 200, who compete in different classes during the day. In many cases a rider plus their immediate family / support crew arrive on Saturday to camp for the weekend. This allows social interaction with other riders etc. and allows the rider to be rested ahead of the practice and racing on Sunday. However, some local riders will not camp overnight, arriving and departing on the race day, which is normally a Sunday or Bank Holiday Monday.
- 3.4 Under normal circumstances Banbury Motocross Club advises via its website and social media feeds, that gates open at 15:00 on Saturday for those wishing to camp overnight. The majority of campers arrive between 17:00 and 20:00.

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- 3.5 Typically, around 40% of people will camp over the Saturday night, but this can increase to as much as 60% in the summer months. There may be 180 – 220 people camping when allowing for family, friends and riders.
- 3.6 The remaining riders and spectators arrive on race day between 07:00 – 09:00, as the events start at 09:00.
- 3.7 Seven groups of riders run through their daily time-table. Each group has a practice session, then the races progress throughout the day until each group has completed 3 races, with each of their races lasting 10 – 15 minutes.
- 3.8 The last race for group 1 normally starts around 15:00. When riders have finished their respective group's races, they will pack up and leave.
- 3.9 Many of the spectators are friends / family of the riders, but other spectators do visit and typically stay for a couple of hours, typically around the lunchtime period. During a Club event, there may be around 600 – 800 people on site over the course of race day, travelling in 250 – 350 vehicles.
- 3.10 The vehicles used by people travelling to / from WMX can include motorcycles cars, and vans, some of which tow caravans, and motorhomes, which are either purpose-built or van-conversions.
- 3.11 The majority of people arrive via the southern route described previously. On the odd occasion a new visitor may arrive via the north if they are not familiar with the area, but they invariably leave via the southern route unless they live very locally.
- 3.12 The National level events are larger and happen once or twice a year. These can attract up to a maximum of 320 riders and attract a higher number of spectators, resulting in around 1300 – 1500 people on site during race days. As with the Club level events, people arrive over an extended period, with a higher proportion of camping overnight due to the increased distances some riders travel to attend the National events and the fact that the races take place over 2 days. A National event can attract around 400 – 600 vehicles, depending upon how many people travel together in each one. As the visitors tend to travel in groups, it is normal for there to be 3 or 4 people per car / motorhome.
- 3.13 The National events follow a similar format to the Club events in terms of practice and racing, but due to the additional day, campers start arriving on a Friday evening unless the final day of racing is on a Bank Holiday Monday. As with the Club events, riders complete their group races and leave.
- 3.14 Due to the format of the events, it is apparent that the arrivals and departures are generally directional (either in at the start or out towards the ends of weekend) and the timing of traffic movements are spread over several hours (and days in terms of inbound trips).

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4 HIGHWAY CAPACITY

- 4.1 In order to consider the ability of the local road network to accommodate the traffic activities reference has been made to TA 79/99 "Traffic Capacity of Urban Roads". Whilst the local roads are not urban, due to the restrictions imposed by parked vehicles, some routes effectively become single track lanes with passing places between the parked vehicles.
- 4.2 Table 2 within TA79/99, identifies the hourly capacity of various types of route, which are expressed in terms of the busiest single direction of flow based on a 60/40 directional split. Therefore, to obtain the combined two-direction total hourly flow the figures identified in Table 2 should be multiplied by 1.667.
- 4.3 Within Table 2 a 6.1m wide UAP4 road has a one way capacity of 750 movements, which corresponds with a total 2 way flow of 1250 movements. A UAP4 route is described in Table 1 of the document as a busy high street carrying predominantly local traffic with frontage activity including loading and unloading with a 30 mph speed limit, unlimited access to houses shops and businesses, unrestricted parking and loading, frequent at-grade pedestrian crossings and bus stops at the kerbside.
- 4.4 Based on the potential for disruption due to pedestrian crossings, on street parking, bus stops etc. it is clear that the busy high street would work as a single track road in places, where vehicles travelling in opposite directions would have to give way to one another. By deducting a minimum of 2.5m for an HGV parked at the roadside to load / unload, the residual width for moving two-way traffic would be 3.6m, which is narrower than any of the roads local to WMX on the main access route.
- 4.5 Table 4 of TA79/99 confirms reductions of 225 vehicles per hour are appropriate for HGV contents of 20 – 25% and 150 for HGV contents of 15 – 20%. It is therefore apparent that when identifying an hourly flow of 1250 movements on a busy high street, up to 186 of the movements (14.9% of 1250) could be anticipated to be HGVs before any correction is required to its design capacity.
- 4.6 Given the majority of traffic movements associated with WMX would be travelling in the same direction at any given time (either in or out at the earlier or later part of the events respectively), they would not conflict with each other.
- 4.7 Based on the busier National event even if all 600 movements occurred within an hour, it is apparent that a similar flow of traffic unrelated to the event could be accommodated, even if it all travelled in the opposite direction.
- 4.8 As indicated in Figure 7.1 of Manual for Streets, a width of 4.1m is sufficient to allow two cars to pass, whilst 4.8m can accommodate a car passing an HGV and 5.5m can accommodate 2 HGVs passing.

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4.9 When taking into account the width of the roads in the vicinity of WMX, it is only where a larger vehicle is encountered that one vehicle would have to give way to another.

4.10 Taking the foregoing into account, together with the local road geometry, which provides localised widening in places to allow larger vehicles to pass, it is concluded that highway capacity should not be a determinative issue in this case.

5 HIGHWAY SAFETY

5.1 A review of collision data on the Crashmap website reveals that there have been no recorded personal injury accidents recorded on the local road network in the vicinity of the site access or along the southern route to / from the A422, including its junctions, for the most recent 5 year period available (2015 – 2019 inclusive).

5.2 There was only one recorded personal injury accident within the study are. This was classified as serious and occurred approximately 440m from the site, access along the northern route, at the double bend in the dip, where the road crosses above a watercourse. The accident occurred on Monday 10th August 2015 when a motorcyclist collided with a car travelling in the opposite direction. It is understood that the 10th August 2015 was not a day when an event was being held at WMX.

5.3 In the event there is a particular characteristic of the local highway network that significantly compromises safety, it is common to find a number of incidents in the locality that share similar characteristics. The review revealed that a single incident had been recorded, on the route not generally used by traffic travelling to / from WMX.

5.4 It is known that WMX has operated for many years, and that concerns have been raised by Hornton Parish Council, which suggested *"What was once a small track for local enthusiasts has, through alarming commercial expansion, become the motocross equivalent of Silverstone. It's increasingly hired out to big clubs, major events and top riders..."*¹.

5.5 Notwithstanding these concerns, it is apparent that the site access and local road network has safely accommodated the traffic movements associated with recent activities and events within the preferred 5 year timescale of collision data review.

5.6 As a result, when taking into account the evidence based approach advocated in Manual for Streets 2, it is concluded that the impact of the activities of WMX on highway safety is acceptable, as road users are apparently and demonstrably capable of safely interacting with each other on the local road network.

¹ Banbury Guardian Article 22 October 2020

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6 POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) imposes the following tests in terms of transport matters. The latest version of The Framework was published in June 2019. Under the heading '*Considering development proposals*', paragraph 108 of The Framework states:

"In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;*
- b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and*
- c) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.*

6.2 Paragraph 109 continues: *"Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe."*

6.3 A severe impact is a high threshold to breach. In circumstances where the site access currently serves the same activities as are proposed to continue, and where the access accommodates that use with no evidence of adverse safety impacts on a route with sufficient capacity to accommodate the cumulative traffic flows with the development in place, it would be difficult to conclude that the proposal would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety or a severe residual cumulative impact on the road network.

6.4 Having considered the foregoing it can only reasonably concluded that in terms of highway and transport impact, the continuation of events at WMX, as proposed should not be prevented or refused on highway grounds.

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7 SUMMARY

- 7.1 Wroxton Motocross track (WMX) is located approximately 7.25 km northwest of Banbury, 1.9 km northeast of Shenington and 1.25 km south-southwest of Hornton. The site, which has operated for approximately 40 years, is run and managed by Banbury Motocross Club, primarily for club events. However, the facility also hosts one or two National events per year.
- 7.2 Club events are typically a single day, whereas National events normally have two race days over a single weekend.
- 7.3 Some riders and spectators arrive the day before competition and make use of the camping opportunities at the site, to make a social event out of the race meetings.
- 7.4 Following an unsuccessful application for a Certificate of Lawful Use to allow the track to be used 24 days per year, which is 10 more than is permitted under the rights granted through the General Development Procedure Order, it was decided that planning permission be sought for the existing facility in order to regularise its use in its current form. Midwest Planning Ltd was instructed to prepare and submit the planning application on behalf of the landowner.
- 7.5 In its pre-application response the Local Authority, Cherwell District Council, requested a Transport Assessment be provided as part of the formal application.
- 7.6 The Hurlstone Partnership Limited was instructed to undertake a review of the highway impact of the proposed development within the relatively limited time-frame set by the Council for submission.
- 7.7 Due to travel restrictions resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic, it was not possible to undertake traffic surveys, as the travel restrictions imposed by lockdown have curtailed normal travel activities. Also, no events are being held at the track at present.
- 7.8 Notwithstanding this, as the site has been operating for a number of years, it is possible to assess the impact of the development by reference to evidence gained over a period of time.
- 7.9 As part of the review, a site visit was undertaken to review the site access arrangement and local highway network. Collision data has also been reviewed to establish the safety performance of the road network together with information regarding the events held at the site by Banbury Motocross Club.

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- 7.10 The review revealed that the existing road network has a good safety record and sufficient capacity to accommodate the development traffic, as confirmed by reference to relevant design guidance.
- 7.11 Visibility at the site access and neighbouring junctions was reviewed and found to be acceptable, based on observed traffic activities and speeds during the site visit.
- 7.12 This conclusion is supported by the lack of recorded personal injury accidents on the access route over the preferred latest 5 year period for reviewing collision data, and the evidence-based approach advocated in design guidance.
- 7.13 The findings of the review were considered in the context of National Planning Policy.
- 7.14 In circumstances where the site access currently serves the same activities as are proposed to continue, and where the access accommodates that use with no evidence of adverse safety impacts on a route with sufficient capacity to accommodate the cumulative traffic flows with the development in place, it would be difficult to conclude that the proposal would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety or a severe residual cumulative impact on the road network.
- 7.15 Having considered the foregoing it can only reasonably concluded that in terms of highway and transport impact, the continuation of events at WMX, as proposed should not be prevented or refused on highway grounds.