



BICESTERBUG

B i c e s t e r B i k e U s e r s G r o u p

Submissions on proposed housing in NW Bicester

21/01630/OUT

22 June 2021

Version 2.0

UPDATES to version 1.1:

Summary

We welcome the improvements that the applicant has made and the effort invested to address the active travel issues with the original application. However we also note that certain inaccuracies and omissions mean that the application is not up the standard that would be expected.

General points

Although effort has been made in specific areas (further details below) general principles have not been applied.

Cohesion, Directness, Safety, Comfort and Attractiveness

The cycling routes are broken up by every junction, whereas LTN 1.20 and OCC guidelines recommend priority at junctions and the imminent Highway Code changes will cement this, the infrastructure must reflect that.

Specific responses to TN003

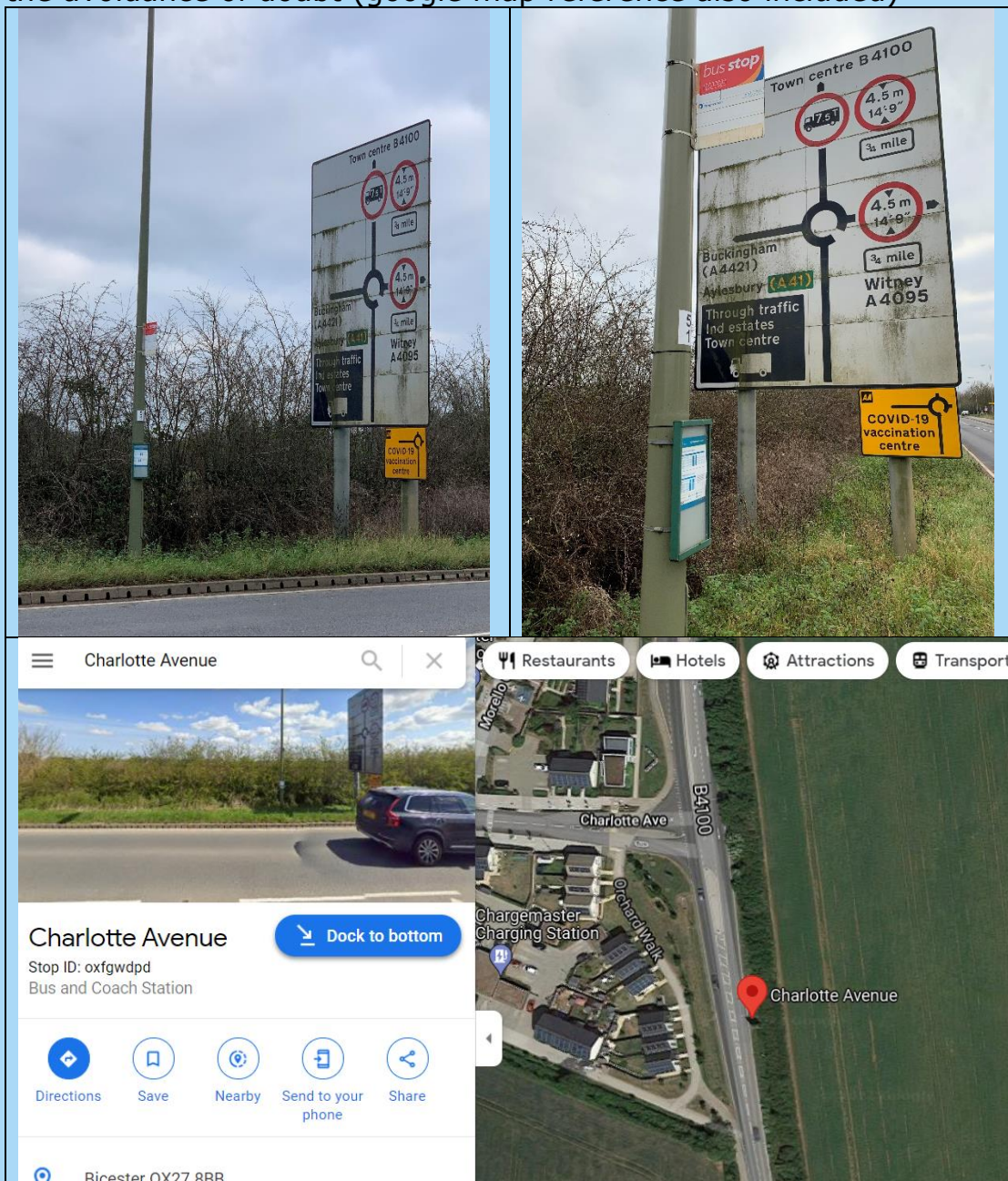
Further to the recognition that there not a continuous cyclepath from Elmsbrook to Bicester North station (as stated in 3.6.7 and 3.6.8) the implication that because most of the route is in existence that it is therefore a viable option for all bike users is not supported. A cycle path is only as good as its weakest link. Furthermore the cycle route to Bicester North indicated on Figure 3.3 is incorrect as it shows access from the North side of the station where there is no access of any kind.

We welcome the contributions to the local cycling and walking infrastructure, although on the basis of the costs of other schemes recently completed in Bicester this amount is at the lower end of what is needed and must not be compromised.

The signalised crossing described in 3.7 and presented in drawing 4600-1100-T-004 - D is welcome although we would request that the crossing and the paths leading to it are made to accommodate cycling as well as pedestrian access.

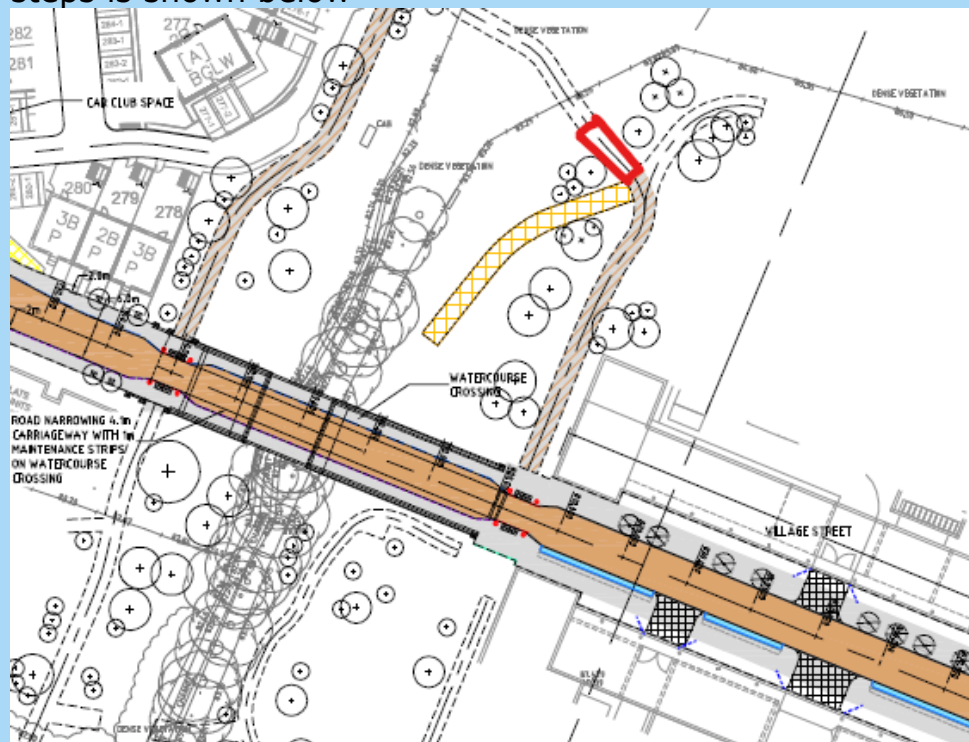
The bridge described in in 3.8.3 and attachment 6 is welcomed as a joint foot/pedestrian bridge. No indicative minimum width is given. We expect this to be delivered in accordance with LTN1/20 minimum widths.

Section 5.7 is still incorrect in asserting that there is no bus stop on the eastern side of the B4100 the photograph below is included for the avoidance of doubt (google map reference also included)



Technical Note Spine Road assessment

We welcome the conclusions that with the increased traffic flows the potential of the bridge to be a bottleneck and barrier to active travel (in turn driving up vehicle numbers still further) and that a solution needs to be found. We also note that in Item 4.2.8 it is asserted that the alternative to the spine road bridge via the foot bridge to the north is suitable for active travel. This is currently not the case due to the steps which make the route unsuitable for all users and would be inaccessible to bike users unable to dismount and carry a bicycle, such as the elderly, young and mobility impaired. The location of the steps is shown below



Option 1 comments: The proposed solution in 4.3.9 to provide a shared path on the northern side of the road and pedestrian only on the southern side is not acceptable as this would require bike users to swap side of the road to continue their journey along the southern side (the side on which all cycling and pedestrian flow currently enters Elmsbrook). Full active travel access should be available on both sides. Since this bridge is already a bottle neck (as highlighted in the ECO analysis) the required space could be made available along the length of the bridge without impacting the already restricted flow of traffic.

Option 2/3 comments: It is not clear what is being proposed other than general vehicular traffic restrictions which BicesterBUG would in principle support if implemented in such a way to provide safe and appealing active travel alternatives.

Option 4 comments: The extended use of shared space on the spine road would be a suitable measure in conjunction with reduced traffic volumes. The road design currently, from the bridge, past the school and northwards is devoid of speed bumps/ junction table tops and other measures to indicate and enforce the residential, slow speed nature of the road.

The VTP analysis focusses heavily on the bottleneck of the southern bridge. We would contend that additional measures would be suitable to be implemented to ensure that fully inclusive cycling and walking access is provided. These include, but are not restricted to, shared path priority at junctions, raised tables at junctions to restrict speed. In short the road must be brought into the status of 'bike boulevard' as referenced in both LTN1/20 and the Oxfordshire Cycling Guidelines.

5.3.3 responds to our previous comment on cycle storage and makes reference to the comments in the original application to cycle parking. We made the distinction in our original comment between cycle parking (the provision of locations on street or communal to lock a bike) and cycle storage which is under cover, on site of properties often inside to provide safe secure storage of bikes. We look forward to the further applications outlining how suitable cycle storage for the homes will be provided, as distinct from communal cycle parking. The reference we made to Elmsbrook was explicitly used to alert the applicant and local authority of the mistakes of the past where cycle storage was provided but is unfit for purpose.

REFERENCES

EcoBicester Planning Standards

https://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/publicnet/other_sites/EcoBicester/standards.html

Cherwell Design Guide SPD (2017)

Oxfordshire County Council (2020), Local Walking and Cycling Plan for Bicester

Department for Transport (2020), Local Transport Note 1/20