



# BICESTERBUG

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## **Submissions on proposed Drive-Thru Outlet**

**21/02286/F**

**3 August 2021**

Version 1.1

### 1. SUMMARY

BicesterBUG objects to the proposal in its current form. The provision for active travel is insufficient and only token effort has been given to enabling customers to access and use the site without a vehicle. In particular, pedestrian and cycle friendly crossings to the development over the arms of the roundabout should be provided. These could include parallel crossings which are economical and demand-sensitive. Parallel crossings could be provided on all arms to create a so-called 'Dutch' roundabout. Segregated paths should be provided on all desire lines to the development that comply with Department for Transport Local Transport Note ('LTN') 1/20.

We note the incongruity of a vehicle centred drive thru coffee outlet being proposed in Bicester when the Council has declared a climate emergency, ambitious targets for active travel and while traffic issues are increasing. This context makes the provision of high-quality walking and cycling access more, not less, important in this case to ensure high walking and cycling customer numbers.

Further engagement by BicesterBUG with the developers and planning authority would be appreciated to enable the plans to develop as recommended under LTN1/20.

### 2. COMMENTS

The current designs do not make it easy for pedestrians or cyclists to access the proposed development. Access will be particularly difficult for vulnerable users such as the elderly and disabled due to the uncontrolled crossings and narrow shared paths. Active travel friendly crossings over the arms of the roundabout such as parallel crossings

need to be provided to enable access. A 'Dutch' style roundabout with crossings over each arm of the roundabout should be considered. In addition, the roadside paths that link to the development are woefully inadequate, do not comply with current standards, and need to be constructed in accordance with LTN 1/20.

## 2.1 Pedestrian and Cycle Routes and Facilities

New cycling and walking infrastructure should comply with the LTN 1/20 Standards, including measures such as segregated off-road cycle paths and priority for cycle tracks over minor roads. None of these are proposed at present. The plans should also be compliant with the 2020 OCC Local Walking and Cycling Plan ('LCWIP') for Bicester, which the applicant makes no reference to.

There is currently only one tolerable crossing over the Skimmingdish Lane, which is well away from the desire line and not well situated to benefit this development. It also requires most users to cross other arms of the roundabout where there are uncontrolled crossings. Most visitors are in fact likely to approach from the opposite direction, the industrial estate. Here there are a large number of units including educational facilities that are occupied during the day. Visitors to the proposed development would want to cross via the A4421 arm where there is presently only an uncontrolled crossing. In the absence of such provision, it is likely that visitors within a few hundred metres of the proposed development will choose to drive to access it, thereby choking the roads.

As confirmed by LTN 1/20, uncontrolled crossings will discourage the overwhelming majority of users (Table 10-2). There are uncontrolled crossings over the Launton Road arm; the A4421 arm; and the entrance to the care home. In order to provide access, at a bare minimum there needs to be active travel friendly crossings over the arms of the roundabout such as parallel crossings. Ideally, crossings should be provided over all arms to create a so-called 'Dutch' roundabout. This would provide a cost-effective and demand-sensitive means of access that would cause little or no delay to existing motor vehicles using the roundabout. It would also reduce unnecessary traffic.

In addition, there are currently only very narrow, shared, paths in the vicinity, and these are incomplete. In order to provide access, all paths should be upgraded to segregated provision, and paths should be provided along all the desire lines to enable pedestrian and cycle access from all areas of Bicester.

The applicant's Travel Plan suggest in Figure 1B that cycle access should be via the 'pedestrian access' or via the road, both of which

would not be LTN1/20 compliant and put cyclists in conflict with pedestrians or force them onto a potentially busy road. Cyclists should be provided with a safe, segregated access point.

The bike parking is both insufficient and in an inconvenient place, it has been located on the other side of the car park, almost as far from the building as possible rather than directly adjacent as would be most convenient. Providing 6 spaces, which are also not suitable for non-standard bicycles (adapted, trikes, cargo bikes), is insufficient, this has already been seen at other such outlets in Bicester where, despite poor cycle access, customers and staff arrive by bike. A larger number of secure cycle spaces, which also would accommodate a diversity of cycles, should be provided.

## 2.2 Aspirations for Active Travel

Given the inadequate design, the proposal is inadequate to permit the attainment of the policy goal of a 200% increase (tripling) of cycling and a 50% increase in walking as committed to in the Oxfordshire County Council ('OCC') LCWIP Bicester 2020.

In order to achieve these aspirations, a more ambitious plan for walking and cycling is to be expected. The design would benefit from the input of a designer with experience of riding in urban environments and skills in active travel infrastructure, as per Summary Principle 20 of LTN 1/20 'All designers of cycle schemes must experience the roads as a cyclist.' Furthermore, there has been no engagement with cyclists or vulnerable users as required by LTN 1/20 (10.4.17). This would have highlighted the problems with the design.

It is now a key requirement that active travel access to a development is now a key criterion in planning terms. The Department for Transport 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.' (LTN 1/20, 14.3.12). As such, the applicant should provide a contribution towards upgrading the pedestrian and cycle routes into Bicester town.

### 3. REFERENCES

EcoBicester Planning Standards

[https://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/publicnet/other\\_sites/EcoBicester/standards.html](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