



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

[21/04275/OUT](#)

21 February 2022

Version 2.0

Summary

We welcome the aspirations of the application and some of the detail that has been put forward. In particular, the proposed Development principle 6 is welcome in that it commits to:

- Cycling and walking to be first choice of transport
- Employ principles of filtered permeability and walkable neighbourhoods.
- Integrate with existing developments

Nonetheless we believe that there remains a gap between aspiration and reality. This document sets out the areas where we feel improvement is necessary to make active travel feasible and first choice. In summary:

- It is not clear that segregated cycle and pedestrian paths will be provided.
- The proposed signalised junction is a problematic legacy design that would benefit from being redesigned as a 'simultaneous green' style junction.
- There is insufficient filtered permeability
- Access to the countryside is currently precluded. A short stretch of shared path is required to prevent car dependency for leisure purposes.
- Access to the town centre by foot and bike is currently poor and contributions need to be made to improve these.
- Details of the mobility hub are vague and need to be particularised.
- Thought needs to be given to provision of cycle parking and to the balance of car parking and development density.
- The public transport offering needs to be improved.

Segregated Provision

The repeated use of “pedestrian/cycle way” may be unintentional, but is problematic. Shared provision is not recommended by Local Transport Note ‘LTN’ 1/20, but the implication in the application is that shared use will be the default. Given the LTN1/20 guidance and the implementation of separated pedestrian and cycle paths as the default elsewhere in Bicester (eg the new Banbury Road Junction) then we would expect segregated paths to be explicitly specified. In particular, pedestrian and cycle paths should be segregated, with horizontal separation (buffers) from motor vehicle traffic, with priority across minor junctions.

Proposed Signalised Junction

The proposed signalised crossing (File Ref 20300_SK_T_001(P3).pdf, Drawing Reference 20300 No 001) shows a legacy design that would not be suitable as an active travel junction. The shared path access routes and double stage signalised crossings are not in keeping with the level of ease of movement required.

A more straightforward Dutch style ‘simultaneous Green’ junction, as recently implemented at various locations in Walthamstow, London would be a much better solution. See for example:

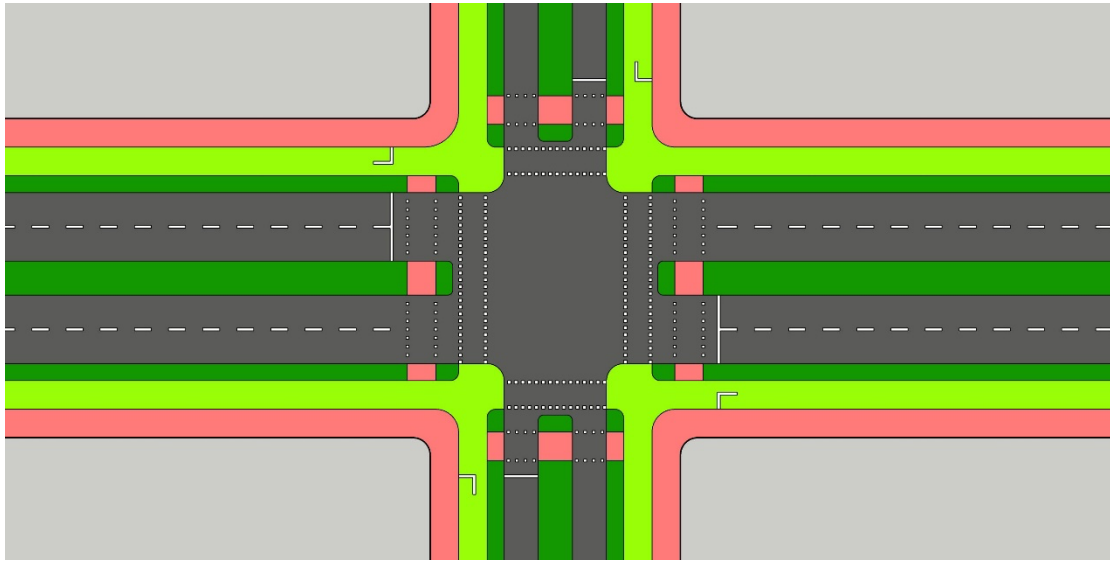
<https://youtu.be/yd1ivPt09q0> (Netherlands)

https://twitter.com/healthy_hill/status/1481982970684743680?s=20 (Walthamstow, UK)

This is a more economical version of the Manchester ‘cyclops’ style junction, with a higher traffic flow capacity.

Key points for the ‘simultaneous green’ are that there is a single phase for walking and cycling where all traffic flows are held, followed by two motor vehicle phases. Capacity can be adapted as appropriate depending on need by interposing the simultaneous green between each motor vehicle phase, or skipping it entirely if there is no demand. Cyclists remain on the paths closest to the traffic at all times.

A schematic is shown on the following page. The design can be scaled with any number of lanes of traffic.



Schematic 'simultaneous green' signalised crossing design and Bucknell Road connection (dark green = verge, salmon = cycle path, light green = footpath)

The proposed cycling and walking connection using what is the current Bucknell Road is a welcome addition. It is worth noting that the cycle provision on Bucknell Road south of the indicated crossing is poor and well below current standards (<1m wide painted cycle paths for some sections) and the pavements are narrow. For the connection in the drawing to be usable to access Bicester facilities then Bucknell Road needs also be improved and brought up to LTN1/20 standards with segregated provision, buffers, and priority.

Filtered Permeability

Filtered permeability is not systematically integrated into the existing plans, with the notable exception of the Bucknell Road connection. Links that prioritise pedestrian, cycle, and public transport movement over private cars need to be provided, for example to connect to the Elmsbrook exemplar site and the Firethorn development site.

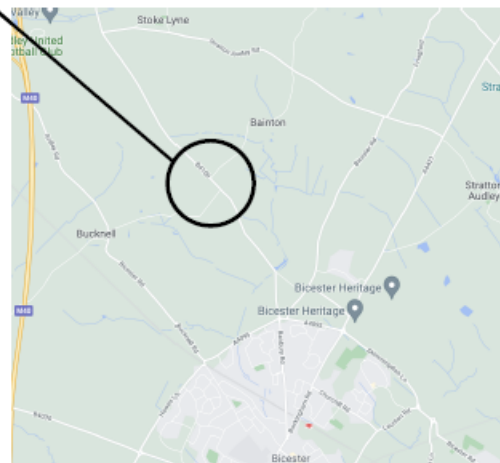
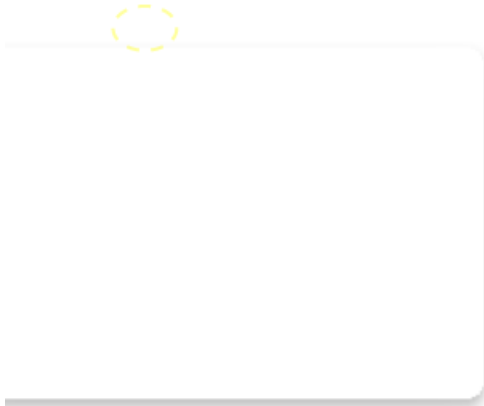
Access to the Countryside for Residents

Modest improvements should be made to enable safe access to the countryside on foot and bicycle, so as to reduce car dependency and encourage these forms of leisure activities. In particular, there is a 200m stretch of the B4100 that would preclude safe access to the Bainton Road and some of the attractive local villages because walkers and cyclists would not be willing to navigate that section due

to high motor vehicle speeds and flows. Currently people cycling would have to travel along, and then wait in the road waiting to turn right when going between Bucknell and Bainton. A contribution towards providing a shared path on one side of that stretch would be necessary to render the present development acceptable in planning terms.

The applicant's review of traffic incidents confirms the risks at this point, showing that cyclists have made up a disproportionate number of the injured parties despite being only a relatively small proportion of the users. This is clear evidence of the need to further improvements to the local transport network in order to make it fit for purpose to cater for cyclists of all ages and abilities, and in particular to enable cyclists to access the countryside.

The linking point is shown below:



Access to Bicester Town Centre

Active travel routes to the proposed development should also be improved, as per LTN 1/20, which now emphasises the importance of safe and convenient cycle access to the development:

'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.' (Emphasis added, LTN 1/20, 14.3.12).

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).

Significant improvements need to be made to allow inhabitants of and visitors to the proposed development to connect with the town centre. A walking and cycling connection on the north side of the railway between the southern corner of the proposed development and Bicester North railway station (along the Bicester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan proposed route BR6) would be essential.

Other connections to the centre are poor. For example, the Banbury Road paths are deteriorating and discontinuous (particularly around Bure Park) and the Churchill Road has no relevant safe cycle provision. The southern ends of the Banbury and Buckingham roads are crucial connections, yet have no safe cycle provision. The mini roundabout between the Banbury and Buckingham Roads is a disaster, with no safe or legal means of travelling by bike to North Street and the town centre. Contributions to improving these links would be needed to facilitate connections to the town centre.

Mobility Hub

Section 4.6 relating to the proposed Mobility Hub contains weak language currently as to what 'could' happen. Given the admirable aspirations of the development we would expect more concrete plans even at this stage. The lack of mentioned bike parking (for all types of bike, such as cargo bikes and non-standard bikes), bike hire or e-cargo mobility options is disappointing and should be included.

Cycle Parking

Provision of facilities such as on street bike parking, should be provided in keeping with the Travel plan targets rather than monitoring and increasing if demand builds. The existence of good infrastructure generates demand, waiting for demand to overwhelm insufficient infrastructure will hinder the active travel aims of the development.

Car Parking

To encourage active travel, though needs to be given to the balance between excessive parking and development density. Given sufficient density, it becomes possible to provide local facilities within walking and cycling distance such that excessive parking is not required.

Other

Although not within the current remit of BicesterBUG, the public transport assessment, as another form of sustainable transport which can reduce traffic volumes, is of importance. The conclusions in 5.7 that the current Bus service is sufficient is based on both incomplete information and incorrect assumptions. Firstly the bus services run only limited periods of the day and therefore cannot cater to early morning or mid evening journeys. As is mentioned Sunday is also not covered. Additionally, the journey times to other destinations within Bicester such as the Tesco Superstore or Graven Hill (location of the recently approved Super Surgery) is not given and would be long due to the need to use two bus services.

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