



NW Bicester Masterplan Transport and Access Workshop

Wednesday 25th September 2013

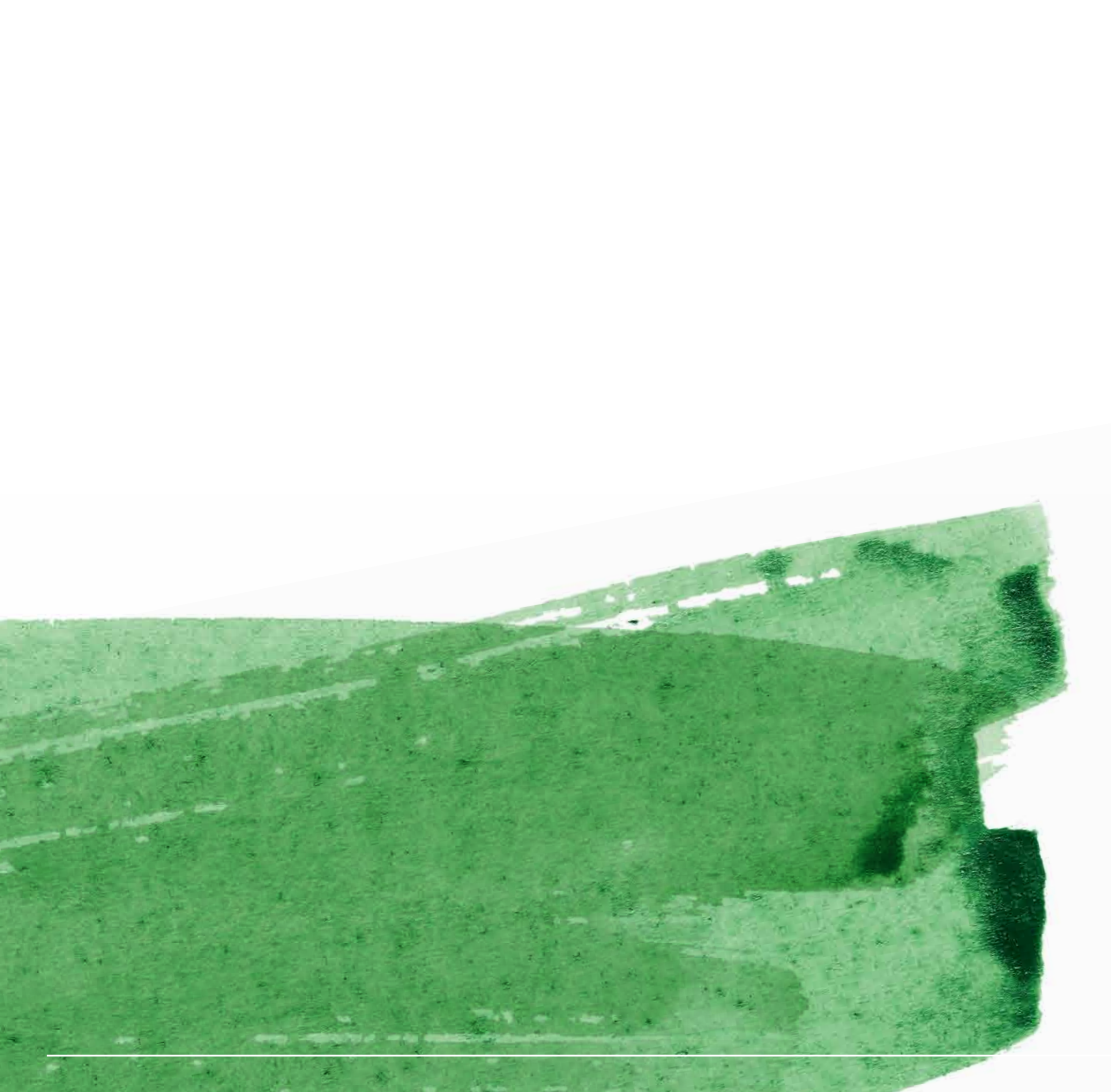
2pm – 5pm

The Littlebury Hotel, Bicester

north
west
bicester

azdominion 

THINKING ABOUT TOMORROW



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1. Introduction

This report summarises the transport and access workshop that was held on Wednesday 25 September 2013 at the Littlebury Hotel in Bicester. The workshop was organised by A2Dominion in order to continue the initial stakeholder engagement related to North West Bicester (NW Bicester), to aid and inform preparation of the comprehensive masterplan being developed for the site.

The focus of the event, which followed two previous workshops held in April and July 2013, was to encourage discussion and invite feedback from stakeholders regarding potential options for access, transport and movement.

The comments and outcomes from the workshop will also enable A2Dominion, the Council and consultant team to further shape the proposals for NW Bicester. This includes preparation of preferred masterplan options along with considering further opportunities to hold additional events prior to wider public consultation later this year.

2. Workshop Format

The overall facilitator of the event was Henry Cleary, OBE, previously Deputy Director of Housing and Growth at the Department for Communities and Local Government and who has a good knowledge of the project from this previous role. The event was attended by 35 representatives including consultant team members and stakeholders, drawn from political, community, business and voluntary organisations in and around Bicester. Participants were welcomed and provided with initial introductions from Gerry Walker of A2Dominion and Henry Cleary. This was followed by feedback being presented on the findings from the 22 July workshop relating to the key topics of housing numbers, green infrastructure, schools and community hubs and employment.

Philip Harker of Hyder Consulting formally introduced the workshop and provided an overview on previous discussions held on access and transport, and the progress and work undertaken following the July workshop.

The workshop consisted of 3 access and connection themed sessions as detailed below. Participants were seated at 2 tables with a 10 minute presentation given on each topic by A2Dominion's consultant team followed by 20 minute round table discussions and a 5 minute feedback session so that three main outcomes from each table could be captured, relayed to all participants and recorded on a flip chart. This format enabled each of the 3 topics to be discussed in turn with facilitators on each table reporting back during the 5 minute feedback session. Each table had two facilitators including an A2Dominion and Hyder Consulting representative. Appendix A in this report contains the workshop agenda and Appendix B the attendee list.

The event was concluded with Henry Cleary thanking people for their time and input followed by Iain Painting of Barton Willmore updating attendees on the next steps. The appendices at the back of this report contain the workshop agenda, summary of table discussions as recorded on the flipcharts (by topic/table) and the attendance list including the names of the facilitators, A2Dominion and consultant team.

3. Feedback

This section highlights the key points raised by participants at each table as recorded on flipcharts and relayed by each table facilitator. Appendix C at the end of this report contains the feedback notes on the flipcharts taken at each table and so provides a breakdown of the overall discussions.

Part 1 - Walking and cycling connections

Key outcomes following discussion around this question are detailed below.

- Segregation of cycle & pedestrian routes from vehicular routes
- Linkages utilising existing routes but also ensure they go across and around Bicester
- Market / brand new safe cycle routes and upgrades to wider town and new community e.g. paint green

- Must facilitate walking/cycling routes to future employment sites in town
- Bike storage at home needs to be secure and safe/lit parking at end of journeys needs to be provided
- High quality maintenance strategy in place to keep routes lit and in safe/attractive condition. Local Government partners need to work together to ensure this
- Need to consider access to secondary schools – don't have OCC approach yet, but assumptions to BCC and Cooper should be made
- Underpass more accessible to all than bridge – but needs detail to ensure safety
- Routes need to go where people want to go
- Upgrade the footpath that runs alongside the railway and ensure that its better maintained – however there's not a huge amount of natural surveillance so may need alternative route at night
- Safety of routes in terms of lighting, crossing points and widths of routes
- Ensure linkages have scope to link into future transport initiatives
- People will always find their own short-cuts so there will always be tertiary routes that we haven't included
- It's difficult to establish all routes without knowing the web of Masterplan destinations/content
- BTC recommended that cycle routes were discussed with them

Part 2 - Bus connections

Key outcomes following discussion around these questions are detailed below.

- Consider traffic engineering as well as provisions of new buses/routes with active enforcement and regulations (e.g. bus preference signalling or bus priority lanes) - key to making bus travel quicker and more attractive than car. This applies to existing

routes in the town as well as the proposed new development area

- Routes to stop on route to town centre from NW Bicester to allow people to access existing neighbourhood facilities and form social connections
- Would electric buses make it more attractive? Balance cost/equality (size vs. frequency)
- Although focus should be on Bicester Town station its still important to provide routes to Bicester North Station at peak times
- Middleton Stoney Rd. – might be better choice of routes for buses for traffic engineering, links to employment and hospitals
- East/west bus connection on site is very important – especially people in NW Bicester wanting to access SW employment site
- 15 plus minutes is too long
- Buses should run on a loop in both directions – however is this realistic in terms of resource implications, more staff, more vehicles etc
- Key destinations – there is a need to consider areas of employment, education, leisure etc. and how accessible
- Travel time no longer than 10 minutes
- Frequency – 10 minutes during peak time (15 min RTPI)
- Bi-directional and on 1 loop
- Integration with other services
- Operational time of buses

Part 3 - Highways connections

Key outcomes following discussion around these questions are detailed on the next page.

- Happy in principle with option 2. (not a dissatisfying option to create a new Boulevard)
- By realigning Howes Lane effectively remove section of NWB ring road. Aware that this could cause people to travel an alternative route, or make decision to travel more slowly

- Impact on Bucknell village (happy for traffic not to go through)
- Need more ideas of what land with closure of existing Howes Lane could be used for
- Against OCC strategic ring road
- Howes Lane and Lords Lane are currently a barrier between new and existing community
- Welcome diversion of Bucknell Road
- Disregarded options 3 & 4
- Opinions divided over options 1 & 2
- Demonstrate benefits of remaining options
- Welcome diversion of Bucknell Road

- Well signed and marketed – clear signage, branded routes between NW Bicester and the town centre and well publicised; and
- High quality – all weather surface, well lit and maintained as adopted routes by the local authority.

The revised document concentrates on planning for the main connections between NW Bicester and the town centre, whilst recognising that there are a range of other local connections that will be used to other facilities and services, specifically employment sites, schools and local shopping facilities. The main connections are identified to focus investment whilst recognising that there are many examples of local routes, particularly for pedestrians, which will be well used through the residential areas.

4. Overall Conclusions

Following the NW Bicester key Stakeholders workshop on transport and access held on 25th September, the lead consultant for the transport topic, Janice Hughes, has reviewed the points raised and taken the findings back to the Transport Workstream for wider discussion. The statements below set out the considered responses to the points raised, providing clarity as to how these matters are being progressed as part of the masterplan process and preferred options to move forward with to consultations in early December.

Part 1 Walking and Cycling Connections

The discussion pointed to the need to set out clearly the principles for the walking and cycling routes and consider a range of destinations. A revised walking and cycling strategy has been produced and will be made available to stakeholders in late November. Specifically, a strategy section sets out the ideal requirements for the primary and secondary connections as:

- Accessible and integrated – giving an integrated network of routes, connecting to key destinations, direct routes, providing secure and sheltered cycle parking;
- Safe – routes having natural surveillance, safe crossings and segregated from traffic;

Part 2 Bus Connections

The discussion regarding the provision of bus connections for NW Bicester focussed on a number of areas: the need to give buses priority and minimise journey times from the development to key destinations; the importance of having a service which connects the different parts of NW Bicester as well as to the town; and the need to consider how services integrate with other routes and connect to a wider range of key destinations. With regards to journey times, there was discussion that a service needs to offer less than a 15 minute journey to the town centre. The journey time will depend on the origin of the journey within NW Bicester and decisions by bus operators will also influence this. It is considered difficult to be prescriptive about a maximum time but it is recognised that the key issue is for the service to be attractive in comparison to using a car, taking account of journey time with cost and convenience.

By way of response, the transport team has revisited the bus options and provided a revised paper to the Transport Workstream group (comprising A2Dominion with officers of Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council, Hyder consultants and BioRegional). The paper considers a wider range of destinations and assesses the impact of a service which always provides a connection between parts of the site. The paper puts forward a preferred option using

Bucknell Road to and from the town centre, with a loop through the west and east sides of the railway using a general traffic underpass and a new Howes Lane to the north of the existing route (which gives potential to create a boulevard with development to the south, better integrated with the existing residential areas). At the feedback session there were some comments that Middleton Stoney Road offers a better route. This might still be used depending on future bus operator requirements, but it is considered on balance that Bucknell Road offers a route with less conflict with general traffic and potential to improve priority where it joins the town centre. A route using Middleton Stoney Road relies on arriving via Kings End, which is a particularly congested part of the road network.

The next step is for the paper to be discussed and agreed within Oxfordshire County Council to determine the way forward.

With respect to providing bus priority, a number of bus only links have been incorporated in key locations within the emerging masterplan and there are on-going discussions in the workstream regarding the possibilities for bus priority within the town centre.

Part 3 Highway Connections

Following the presentation of the range of highway access options, Option 2 was most favoured involving a new route for Howes Lane and a new railway under-pass to the north of the Avonbury Business Park. As part of this option, it is suggested that Bucknell Road (north of Lord's Lane) is diverted through the development. The reason for this is to reduce the attractiveness of Bucknell Road towards Bucknell village for through traffic, whilst maintaining access for Bucknell residents.

The option has been incorporated into the emerging masterplan and topographical surveys are underway to enable preliminary design work to commence on the option so it can be tested for feasibility and consultations with Network Rail can be undertaken.

A further consultation event took place with the residents and businesses living in the immediate vicinity of Howes Lane on Saturday 9 November at the West Bicester Community Centre to seek feedback on the proposed access and

transport plans and understand the views of those most affected and what they'd like to see become of the existing Howes Lane if it gets realigned.

There was discussion in the session of an Oxfordshire County Council strategic network option involving a ring road around the NW Bicester site, as one option being considered at present to address traffic issues for the whole town. Oxfordshire County Council are undertaking traffic modelling work to see if this is an option to be taken forward, which will be reported during December 2013.



Appendix A - North West Bicester Masterplan Transport and Access Workshop - Agenda

1.45 - Arrival (teas and coffees)

2.00 - Welcome/Introductions

- Feedback on findings from 22 July workshop and matters to be tested through 'Preferred Options' and consultations.

2.10 - Topic 1 - Housing Numbers - Iain Painting

2.18 - Topic 2- Green Infrastructure - Gary Young

2.26 - Topic 3 - Schools and Community Hubs - Gary Young

2.34 - Topic 4 - Employment - Chris Green

2.45 - Introduction - Philip Harker

- On where we got to last time on access and transport, and what we've done since the July workshop.

2.50 - Part One - Walking and cycling connections

3.20 - Break

3.30 - Part Two - Bus connections

4.00 - Part Three - Highway connections

4.45 - Conclusions & next steps

5.00 - Close

Appendix B - Transport and Access Workshop, 25 September 2013 - Attendees

Ben Jackson	Bicester Chamber of Commerce - SDB
Janice Hughes	Hyder
Philip Harker	Hyder
Iain Painting	Barton Willmore
Gerry Walker	A2Dominion
Louise Caves	A2Dominion
Alex Wilson	Barton Willmore
Jenny Barker	Cherwell District Council
Azul Strong	Cherwell District Council
Gary Young	Farrells
Chris Green	SQW
Steve Houkes	Remarkable Group
Councillor Ian Hudspeth	Oxfordshire County Council
Councillor Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council
Councillor Lynn Pratt	Cherwell District Council
Councillor Jolanta Lis	Bicester Town Council
Councillor Dan Blakey	Bucknell Parish Council
Councillor Michael Gibbard	Cherwell District Council
Councillor Richard Mould	Bicester Town Council
Councillor Derek Hedges	Bucknell Parish Council
John Broad	CPRE
Craig Rossington	Oxfordshire County Council
Rev Robert Jackson	
Jacqui Cox	Oxfordshire County Council
Sue Mackrell	Bicester Town Council
Mike Buckmaster	BPRA
Councillor Les Sibley	Cherwell District Council
Alastair McChesney	Homes and Communities Agency
Trudi Lee	
Jason Slaymaker	Bicester Youth Council
David Taylor	Oxfordshire County Council

Additional attendees on the day included Councillor James Porter (Bicester Town Council), Placi O'Neill-Espejo (Bicester Vision), Lois Partridge (Oxfordshire County Council) and Andy Bowe (Cherwell District Council).

Part 1 - Walking and cycling connections

Table 1	Table 2
Market / brand new safe cycle routes and upgrades to wider town and new community e.g. paint green	Segregation of cycle & pedestrian routes from vehicular routes
Must facilitate walking/cycling routes to future employment sites in town	Safety of routes in terms of lighting, crossing points and widths of routes
Bike storage at home needs to be secure and safe/lit parking at end of journeys needs to be provided	Linkages utilising existing routes but also ensure they go across and around Bicester
High quality maintenance strategy in place to keep routes lit and in safe/attractive condition. Local Government partners need to work together to ensure this	Ensure linkages have scope to link into future transport initiatives
Need to consider access to secondary schools – don't have OCC approach yet, but assumptions to BCC and Cooper should be made	
Underpass more accessible to all than bridge – but needs detail to ensure safety	
Segregation of cycle & pedestrian routes from vehicular routes	
Routes need to go where people want to go	
Upgrade the footpath that runs alongside the railway and ensure that its better maintained – however there's not a huge amount of natural surveillance so may need alternative route at night	

Other points of discussion to note:

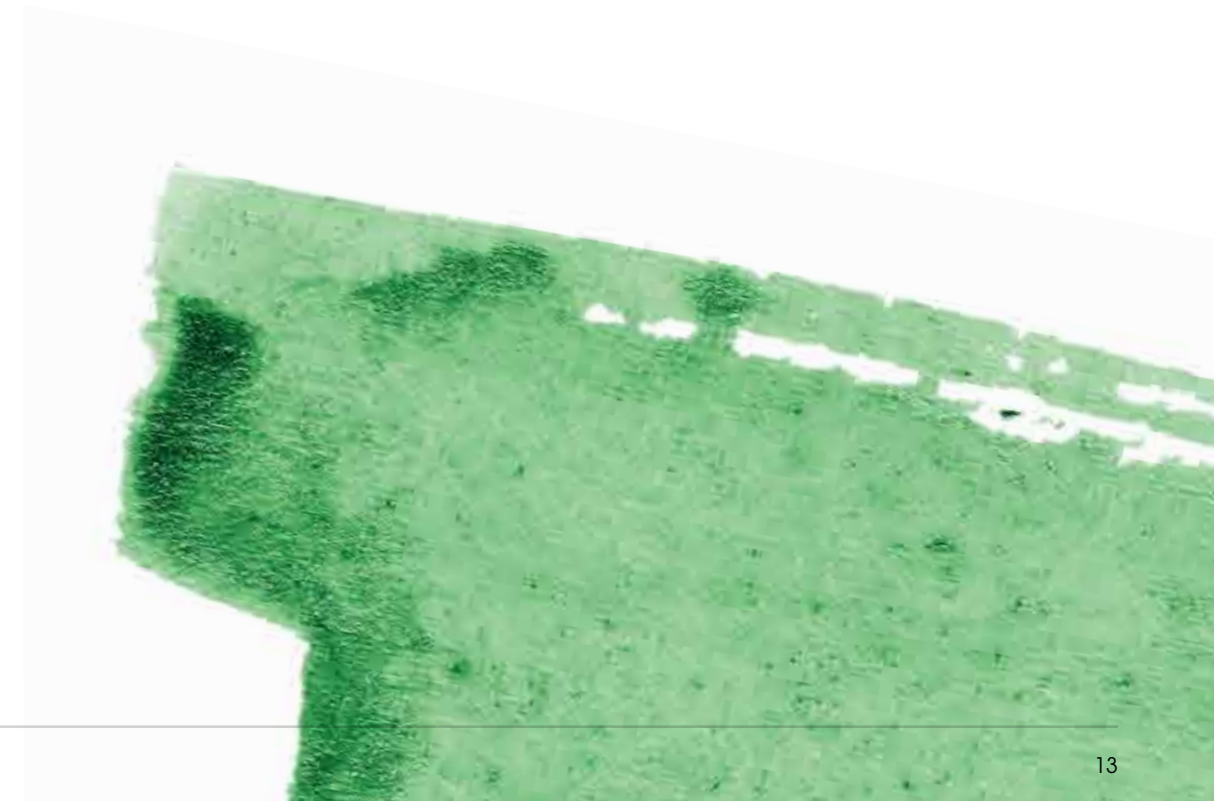
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Buses should run on a loop in both directions – however is this realistic in terms of resource implications, more staff, more vehicles etc	

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Happy in principle with option 2. (not a dis-satisfying option to create a new Boulevard)	Welcome diversion of Bucknell Road
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A2Dominion, Godstow Court, 5 West Way, Oxford, OX2 0GE