



**A40 Access to Witney
Highways Improvements Scheme
Planning Statement**

For **Oxfordshire County Council**



March 2022

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 Stantec UK Ltd. ('Stantec') is instructed by Oxfordshire County Council ('OCC' or 'the Applicant') to prepare this Planning Statement in support of a full planning application for a road junction improvement scheme at the A40/B4022 Shores Green junction known as the A40 Access to Witney project ('the Proposed Development'), which forms part of the A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor Project ('the HIF2 Project').

1.1.2 The Proposed Development comprises:

“the construction of two new west-facing slip roads at the Shores Green junction of the A40; an off-slip to allow eastbound vehicles to exit the A40 on to the B4022 towards Witney and an on-slip to allow westbound vehicles to enter the A40 from the B4022 at this junction.”

1.1.3 The Proposed Development involves the following works:

- the construction of a new off-slip road to allow eastbound vehicles to exit the A40 on to the B4022 towards Witney;
- the construction an on-slip to allow westbound vehicles to enter the A40 from the B4022 at this junction; and
- the removal of two existing lay-bys which are located to the west of the A40 overbridge.

1.1.4 The Proposed Development is a direct response to alleviating the long standing and problematic congestion issues associated with the A40, long accepted as one of the largest traffic issues in Oxfordshire. The Proposed Development has been developed to address following key challenges:

- Allow the Witney area to develop in accordance with local planning policy, and facilitate strategic housing developments in the north and east Witney areas;
- Improve access to the A40 and the wider strategic road network without having to travel through Witney town centre;
- Reduce future traffic flows in Witney's Bridge Street area;
- Reduce the level of air pollution within the town centre;
- Provide a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists; and
- Support the vitality, viability, performance and attractiveness of the town centre.

1.1.5 This Planning Statement describes the application site and the Proposed Development and explains the strategic policy context and how the scheme accords with relevant national and local planning policies.

1.1.6 The Planning Statement should be read alongside other supporting documents and drawings which have been prepared in support of the planning application, as set out later in this Section.

1.1.7 This planning application is submitted to OCC as the determining County Planning Authority ('CPA') under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The

application is a Regulation 3 application as defined by the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 meaning that OCC is both the Applicant and determining authority.

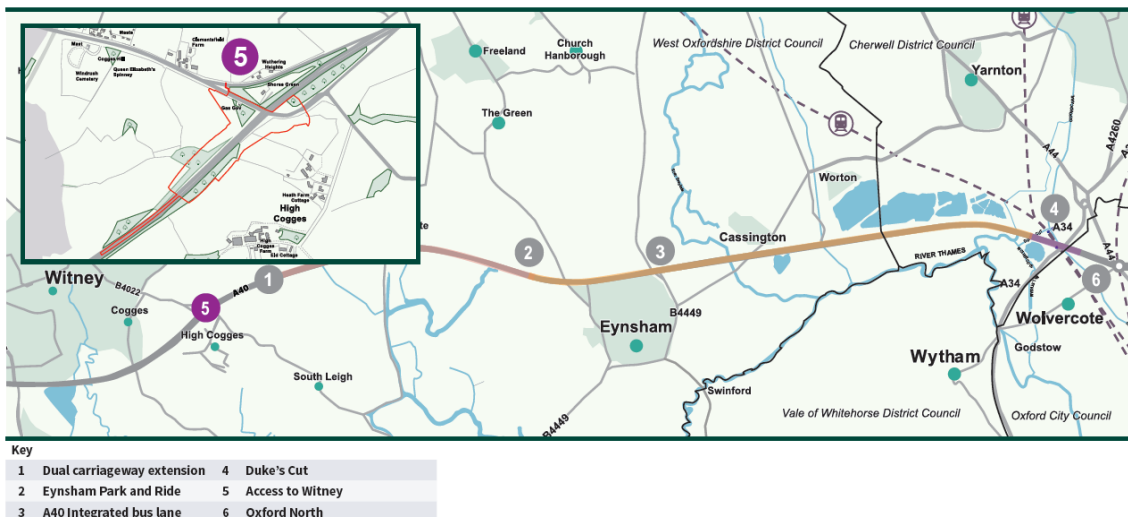
1.2 Project Background

- 1.2.1 The Proposed Development forms part of the wider HIF2 Project being progressed by OCC, which comprises a series of strategic infrastructure works along the A40, a major east-west route across the south of the West Oxfordshire district. The A40 carries a mix of local, regional, and longer-distance traffic, some travelling to/from the M40 and the A34 and forms the primary route between Oxford and Cheltenham as well as being part of the long-distance route between London and south-west Wales.
- 1.2.2 The A40 corridor west of Oxford is a heavily congested route. Given the longstanding congestion issues and the need to deliver enhanced infrastructure provision to support planned growth, OCC's current Local Transport Plan, Connecting Oxfordshire ('LTP4') is clear that a series of highways improvements is required along the A40 corridor to improve access between towns in West Oxfordshire and Oxford.
- 1.2.3 The HIF2 Project forms a key component of the wider A40 Improvement Programme (the 'Programme') which is a comprehensive package of six transportation improvement schemes covering a 10.8km stretch of the A40 between Eynsham and Witney in Oxfordshire, which aims to:
- Support major new housing and employment allocations in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan ('WOLP') and unlock growth in line with Housing Infrastructure Fund ('HIF') conditions, through the provision of enhanced active and bus travel facilities;
 - Provide greater travel choice for people walking, cycling, and travelling by public transport along the A40 corridor to encourage greater use of sustainable transport options;
 - Improve public transport accessibility and connectivity to employment sites, services, and other facilities;
 - Facilitate faster and more reliable journeys for people travelling by bus along the A40;
 - Ensure that the Proposed Development does not increase journey times for private vehicles (i.e., non-bus users) using the A40; and
 - Reduce carbon emissions and other harmful pollutants associated with travel; and
 - Facilitate safer travel for all A40 users.
- 1.2.4 The six schemes encompassed by the Programme are summarised below.
- **Scheme 1 – Dualling:** Dualling of an approximately 3.2km long section of the A40 between Hill Farm Junction at Witney and the proposed Park and Ride at Eynsham with associated junctions and property accesses, as well as an upgrade to the shared path on the northern verge of the carriageway;
 - **Scheme 2 – Eynsham Park and Ride:** A new 850-space park and Ride located on the A40 eastbound at Eynsham, together with a new roundabout, eastbound bus lane, westbound bus priority measures and cycle lanes on the A40 ('Eynsham P&R').

- **Scheme 3 – Integrated Bus Lanes:** Installation of an approximately 6.5km long section of joint eastbound and westbound bus lane between the proposed Park and Ride at Eynsham and Duke’s Cut with associated junction alterations and improvements, as well as improvements to the shared paths alongside the carriageway;
- **Scheme 4 – Duke’s Cut:** Capacity and connectivity improvements over the four structures at Duke’s Cut (Earl’s Culvert, Duke’s Cut Canal Bridge, Wolvercote Canal Bridge and Wolvercote Railway Bridge) to enable the bus lane(s) to be extended over the bridges, as well as a shared path link to the National Cycle Network (NCN) 5 at Duke’s Cut Cottages;
- **Scheme 5 – A40 Access to Witney:** The addition of westbound slip roads at the A40/B4022 Shores Green junction to improve access to Witney;
- **Scheme 6 – A40 Oxford North:** The proposals include new bus, cycle and pedestrian routes between Wolvercote roundabout and the A34 flyover.

1.2.5 The current planning application and this Planning Statement relates to the Scheme 5 (A40 Access to Witney). **Figure 1.1** below indicates the broad location of Scheme 5 in the context of the wider Programme/the A40 Corridor.

Figure 1.1 – A40 Hf2 Project



1.2.6 Currently there are two east-facing slip roads that enable westbound traffic to exit the A40 onto the B4022 into Witney and eastbound traffic to leave Witney at that junction, join the existing A40 and travel towards Oxford. However, any eastbound traffic on the A40 looking to reach areas within east Witney, such as the suburb of Cogges, must exit the A40 early at the Ducklington junction west of the site and travel through Witney town centre. Furthermore, residents in Cogges looking to travel westbound have to drive through the Witney town centre to get on the A40 at Ducklington junction.

1.2.7 The Proposed Development provides an alternative route between the A40 and destinations to the north-east and east of the town, allowing this traffic to bypass the town centre routes by using the A40 and A4095 Jubilee Way in both directions. The scheme will therefore help to reduce traffic flows in the centre of Witney, especially in the AQMA covering Bridge Street and its surroundings. The scheme is an important element of the Witney Transport Strategy and

will support the planned growth identified in the WOLP and as anticipated by the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal ('HGD').

1.2.8 The principal benefits of the Proposed Development are considered to be:

- Improved access to the A40 from northeast Witney and increased efficiency of public transport routes in accordance with objective CO11 of the WOLP and Policy WIT4 of the LTP4 (Volume 8, part 2);
- Enabling the delivery of planned housing growth at Witney to meet West Oxfordshire's housing need as set out the WOLP (Policy WIT1). Specifically, to be able to complete all of the circa 450 dwellings planned within the East Witney Strategic Development Area ('SDA');
- The reduction of congestion in central Witney and associated improvements to air quality within the Witney Air Quality Management Area ('AQMA') in accordance with objective CO16 of the WOLP; and
- Improving the safety of pedestrian routes and cycle lanes supporting active travel linkages along the B4022 as well as enabling future linkages with development within the SDA in accordance with objective CO11 of the WOLP.

1.3 Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA')

1.3.1 Taking into account the scale of the Proposed Development, the location of the site, the potential for significant environmental effects and the potential for cumulative effects when considered together with other schemes being developed in close proximity, the Applicant chose to undertake an EIA and to submit an Environmental Statement ('ES') to accompany the planning application, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

1.4 Application Documents and Drawings

1.4.1 The planning application comprises the documents set out in **Table 1.1**, in line with the national and locally adopted validation requirements, as agreed with officers during pre-application discussions.

Table 1.1 – Application Documents

Document Title	Prepared by
Application Form and Certificate	Stantec
Planning Statement	Stantec
Design and Access Statement	Stantec
Statement of Community Involvement	Stantec
Environmental Statement Volume I: Main Report, which comprises the following chapters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapter 1: Introduction; - Chapter 2: EIA Methodology; - Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution; - Chapter 4: The Proposed Development; - Chapter 5: Air Quality; - Chapter 6: Biodiversity; - Chapter 7: Climate; - Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage; - Chapter 9: Geology and Soils; - Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual; - Chapter 11: Material Assets and Waste; - Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration; - Chapter 13: Population and Human Health; - Chapter 14: Road Drainage and the Water Environment; - Chapter 15: Traffic and Transport. - Chapter 16: Cumulative Effects; and - Chapter 17: Residual Effects and Mitigation. 	AECOM
Environmental Statement Volume II: Technical Appendices, which comprise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appendix 1-A: Statement of Competence - Appendix 2-A: EIA Scoping Report - Appendix 2-B: EIA Scoping Opinion - Appendix 2-C: EIA Scoping Opinion Responses - Appendix 5-A: ADMS-Roads Model Conditions - Appendix 5-B: Local Air Quality Assessment Results - Appendix 6-A: Desk Study Report - Appendix 6-B: Phase 1 Habitat Survey - Appendix 6-C: Great Crested Newt Survey Report - Appendix 6-D: Bat Survey Report - Appendix 6-E: Hazel Dormouse Survey Report - Appendix 6-F: Ornithological Survey Report - Appendix 6-G: Barn Owl Survey Report (Redacted Version) 	AECOM

Document Title	Prepared by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appendix 6-H: Badger Survey Report (Redacted Version) - Appendix 6-I: Aquatic Ecology Survey Report - Appendix 6-J: Air Quality and Ecology Report - Appendix 6-K: Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) - Appendix 6-L: Biodiversity Net Gain Report - Appendix 8-A: Known Heritage Assets - Appendix 8-B: Heritage Desk-based Assessment - Appendix 9-A: Correspondence with Oxfordshire Geological Trust - Appendix 9-B: Preliminary Sources Study Report (PSSR) - Appendix 10-A: Relevant Policy to Landscape and Visual Matters - Appendix 10-B: Relevant Extracts from Published Studies and Supporting Documents - Appendix 10-C: Viewpoint Descriptions - Appendix 10-D: Likely Landscape Effects - Appendix 10-E: Likely Visual Effects - Appendix 10-F: Arboricultural Impact Assessment - Appendix 11-A: Waste Minimisation Statement - Appendix 11-B: Outline Site Waste Management Plan - Appendix 13-A: Agricultural Circumstances Report (Redacted Version) - Appendix 14-A: Drainage Strategy - Appendix 14-B: Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) - Appendix 14-C: Surface Water Quality Monitoring Results - Appendix 14-D: Water Framework Directive Assessment - Appendix 14-E: Road Runoff and Spillage Risk Assessment - Appendix 16-A: Cumulative Long and Short List - Appendix 17-A: Schedule of Environmental Commitments 	
Environmental Statement Volume III: Non-Technical Summary	AECOM
Transport Assessment	AECOM
Sustainability Statement	AECOM

1.4.2 The planning application also include the following drawings and plan, as set out in **Table 1.2**.

Table 1.2 – Application Drawings and Plans

Drawing	Reference
Site Location Plan	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-HW-000006
General Arrangement Plan (Sheet 1 of 3)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-HW-000109
General Arrangement Plan (Sheet 2 of 3)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-HW-000110
General Arrangement Plan (Sheet 3 of 3)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-HW-000111
Long Sections (Sheet 1 of 1)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-HW-000121
Cross Sections (Sheet 1 of 8)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-HW-000122
Cross Sections (Sheet 2 of 8)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-HW-000123
Cross Sections (Sheet 3 of 8)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-HW-000124
Cross Sections (Sheet 4 of 8)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-HW-000125
Cross Sections (Sheet 5 of 8)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-HW-000126
Cross Sections (Sheet 6 of 8)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-HW-000127
Cross Sections (Sheet 7 of 8)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-HW-000128
Cross Sections (Sheet 8 of 8)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-HW-000129
Street Lighting (Sheet 1 of 1)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-LE-1303
Street Contour (Sheet 1 of 1)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-LE-1311
Landscaping Strategy (Sheet 1 of 3)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-LV-000001
Landscaping Strategy (Sheet 2 of 3)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-LV-000002
Landscaping Strategy (Sheet 3 of 3)	60611611-ACM-XX-XX-DR-LV-000003

1.5 Pre-Application Engagement

- 1.5.1 The Applicant recognises the importance of effective and meaningful pre-application engagement and has invested considerable time and resources to encourage active involvement by the community and a wide range of stakeholders. The application proposals have been developed in a consultative and iterative manner informed by various phases of engagement with a wide range of stakeholders and the wider community.
- 1.5.2 As detailed within the SCI which accompanies this planning application, the scheme proposals have been developed in close dialogue with a range of key stakeholders and through extensive and considered engagement with the wider community. It represents an important strategic infrastructure scheme for the County, incorporating a mix of active travel, public transport, and highway improvements, underpinned by Government funding.

1.6 Structure of this Statement

1.6.1 The remainder of this Planning Statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2 details the project background, including the existing transport issues along the A40, the need for the Proposed Development and the options that have been considered.
- Section 3 describes the Application Site context, including statutory designations and protected features;
- Section 4 summarises the pre-application engagement that has taken place;
- Section 5 details the Proposed Development;
- Section 6 summarises the planning policy context and other material considerations relevant to the determination of the planning application;
- Section 7 assesses the Proposed Development against planning policy and other material considerations; and
- Section 8 presents the conclusions on the planning balance exercise.

2 Background and Context

2.1 Transport Context

- 2.1.1 The A40 forms the major east-west route across the south of the West Oxfordshire district. It forms the primary route between Oxford and Cheltenham as well as being part of the long-distance route between London and south-west Wales. The A40 carries a mix of local, regional and longer-distance traffic, some travelling to/from M40 and the A34.
- 2.1.2 The A40 forms the most direct transport link between Oxford and Witney although there are less suitable and attractive alternatives using A4095/A44 and B4449/B4044; the A4095/A44 also forms an informal route for bypassing the A40 and Oxford and accessing the M40 for longer distance traffic; some vehicle traffic between Carterton and Oxford also travels via Bampton (B4449/A415) to the A420 to avoid the A40.
- 2.1.3 Historic data show that, on an average weekday, up to 32,000 vehicles travel along the A40 Witney to Eynsham section in both directions with around 2,000 vehicles using this in both directions during the morning and evening peak hours (AM peak 08:00-09:00 and PM peak 17:00-18:00).
- 2.1.4 The A40 west of Oxford is a heavily constrained route. This impacts on the ability of local businesses to achieve growth and makes a less desirable place for new businesses to locate. Bus services are vulnerable to delay because of congestion on the A40 adjacent to Witney and Eynsham and approaching Oxford on the A40.
- 2.1.5 East of Witney, the traffic flow along the A40 exceeds the capacity of the road on a regular basis during peak flow periods. This causes severe congestion at peak times, with low journey speeds and high journey time unpredictability. This problem has been longstanding. Proposals to improve the route in the 1970s and 1990s had not been progressed due to lack of available funding, which has meant there has been no investment in transport infrastructure capacity on this A40 section for 50 years. The A40 was subsequently de-trunked and therefore removed from the National Roads portfolio and reverting to be part of OCC's highway responsibilities.
- 2.1.6 In terms of journey times between the A40/B4022 Shores Green Junction at Witney and the Wolvercote Roundabout, the surveyed journey times (ANPR Survey February 2020) demonstrate that congestion during the peak hours almost doubles the journey times in both directions. Further detail relating to journey times can be found within the submitted Transport Assessment.
- 2.1.7 Journey time unreliability has affected peak hours for many years, but the extent of peak spreading and redistribution of traffic to less suitable alternative routes has reached conditions that can be interpreted as 'severe' (as set out in National Planning Policy Framework).

2.2 The A40 Improvements Programme

- 2.2.1 The Proposed Development is one of a series of measures promoted by OCC to address the existing problems experienced by users of the A40 and to facilitate the planned growth along the A40.
- 2.2.2 OCC is investing in six major improvement schemes along the A40 between Witney and Oxford, known collectively as the 'A40 Improvements Programme', details of which are provided in Table 2.1, below.

Table 2.1 – The A40 Improvements Programme

Scheme 1	Dual Carriageway Extension	<i>OCC Planning Application Reference R3.0151/21</i> Dualling of an approximately 3.2km long section of the A40 between Hill Farm Junction at Witney and the proposed P & R at Eynsham with associated junctions and property accesses, as well as an upgrade to the active travel shared path on the northern verge of the carriageway
Scheme 2	Eynsham P & R (P&R)	<i>OCC Planning Application Reference R3.0057/19</i> A new 850-space P & R (P&R) located on the A40 at Eynsham. Planning permission was granted for the P&R in March 2021 with construction due to commence in Summer 2022 and with anticipated opening in late 2024. The planning application also included the eastbound bus lanes between the P&R and Duke's Cut, and sections of westbound bus lane and walk/cycle routes, which are now incorporated into HIF2 Project. The reason for their inclusion in the P&R planning application was that these elements in conjunction with the P&R, had secured Local Growth Fund (LGF) funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) as a package of improvements prior to OCC securing HIF funding for the additional infrastructure measures along the A40.
Scheme 3	Integrated Bus Lanes	<i>OCC Planning Application Reference R3.0151/21</i> Installation of an approximately 6.5km long section of joint eastbound and westbound bus lane between the proposed P & R at Eynsham and Duke's Cut with associated junction alterations and improvements, as well as improvements to the active travel shared paths alongside the carriageway.
Scheme 4	Duke's Cut	<i>OCC Planning Application Reference R3.0151/21</i> Capacity and connectivity improvements over the four existing structures at Duke's Cut (Earl's Culvert, Duke's Cut Canal Bridge, Wolvercote Canal Bridge and Wolvercote Railway Bridge) to enable the bus lane(s) to be extended over the bridges, as well as an active travel shared path link to the National Cycle Network (NCN) 5 at Duke's Cut Cottages ('Duke's Cut').
Scheme 5	Access to Witney	Installation of addition westbound slip roads at the A40/B4022 Shores Green junction to improve access to Witney, allowing traffic from northeast Witney to travel west on the A40 toward Burford without travelling through the town centre.
Scheme 6	A40 Oxford North	An upgrade of the A40 between the A34 overbridge including upgrade to Wolvercote roundabout with a new eastbound bus lane, dedicated cycle lanes and widened footpaths. A single traffic lane will remain in both directions. Controlled crossings and lighting improvements, as well as a new signalised junction to allow access in and out of the development will be provided. The speed limit will be decreased from the national speed limit to 30mph, due to new housing development in the area.

- 2.2.3 The Proposed Development comprises the Scheme 5, A40 Access to Witney, which is being progressed by OCC and is being funded by Housing Growth Deal funds and developer S106 contributions.
- 2.2.4 Other elements of the A40 Improvements Programme are subject of separate planning applications / funding agreements. Notably, schemes 1, 3 and 4, which comprises the A40 Smart Corridor scheme is subject of a live planning application which was validated by the CPA in December 2021 (OCC Ref: R3.0151/21).

2.3 The Need for the Proposed Development

- 2.3.1 The Proposed Development is needed to manage congestion through the provision of additional highway capacity, support the delivery of planned housing and employment growth in the WOLP and facilitate safer travel for all users of the A40.

National Infrastructure Strategy (2020)

- 2.3.2 The National Infrastructure Strategy (2020) ('NIS') emphasises that high-quality infrastructure underpins the economy – 'Transport, digital, energy and utility networks are vital for jobs, businesses and economic growth...' It emphasises that infrastructure is long term, but that infrastructure investment has an important short-term role to help support jobs and stimulate the economy. The NIS sets out how the government proposes to address long term issues that have held back UK infrastructure, including 'stop start' public investment, insufficient funding for regions outside London, slow adoption of new technology and project delivery impacted by delays and cost overruns. The NIS describes how the government will:
- Boost growth and productivity across the whole of the UK, levelling up and strengthening the Union;
 - Put the UK on the path to meeting its net zero omissions target by 2050;
 - Support private investment;
 - Accelerate and improve delivery.
- 2.3.3 The NIS emphasises that infrastructure investment will have a key role to play in the COVID-19 pandemic recovery both by maintaining jobs in the short term and creating the conditions for long term sustainable growth.
- 2.3.4 The Proposed Development supports the delivery of the East Witney SDA (discussed further below).

Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015-2031

- 2.3.5 OCC's current Local Transport Plan, Connecting Oxfordshire ('LTP4') was published in 2015 and updated in 2016. LTP4, Volume 1 identifies the A40 road corridor west of Oxford as a heavily constrained route. Paragraph 74 states:

"The A40 is a single carriageway Primary Route. It carries a daily flow of between 23,000 and 30,000 vehicles per day - well above the road's link capacity. This is exacerbated by junction capacity issues at Eynsham/Cassington and Wolvercote. This results in congestion on the route for much of the day, including at weekends. During school term times the average journey speed on the A40 between Cassington and Wolvercote in the morning peak is 17 mph, while on the worst days it can be as low as 10 mph."

2.3.6 The Proposed Development meets the aspirations of the Witney Area Strategy set out in LTP4 Volume 8 specifically Policy WIT1 which states that OCC will secure the delivery of west-facing slip roads at A40 Shores Green. LTP4, Volume 8, Policy WIT2 sets out a series of further improvements can be realised to initiate greater opportunity for travel by sustainable advises that following the opening of the Shores Green slip roads.

West Oxfordshire Local Plan

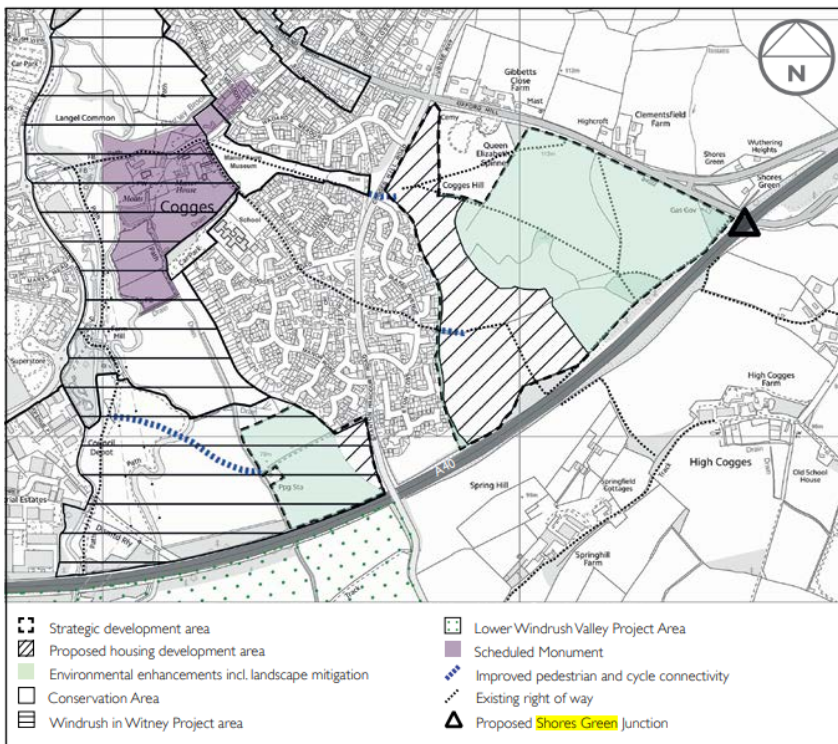
2.3.7 The West Oxfordshire Local Plan ('WOLP') identifies congestion on the A40 as a major constraint to inward investment and recognises that improvements to the A40 are key to enable the delivery of housing and employment growth aspirations envisioned in the area, in line with the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.

2.3.8 The WOLP allocates approximately 10,000 homes and around 64 ha of employment land within proximity of the A40 corridor, including 4,702 homes in the Witney sub-area. The Proposed Development will support the delivery of the East Witney SDA, which is allocated for the development of 450 homes under Policy WIT1. Policy WIT1 advises that development of the East Witney SDA is:

“to be phased in accordance with the timing of provision of supporting infrastructure and facilities including the essential improvements to the Shore’s Green junction onto the A40 and related highway measures.”

2.3.9 A plan of the proposed East Witney SDA, as extracted from WOLP Figure 9.2c is provided as **Figure 2.1** below

Figure 2.1 – East Witney SDA Plan Extract



Source: WODC, WOLP

2.3.10 The Proposed Development will support this growth and promote sustainable travel in order to enable the housing proposed within the WOLP to come forward.

2.3.11 In respect of strategic context and need, WOLP Policy WIT6 sets out the Witney Sub-Area Strategy, and the proposals to support the development of the area, including:

*“continuing to work with Oxfordshire County Council and landowners/developers to deliver improvements to key highway infrastructure to reduce traffic and pollution in the historic core and to improve the general flow of traffic and access to primary transport routes, with priority on delivering the A40/Downs Road junction (all traffic movements), **Shore’s Green junction (west facing slip roads)** the West End Link and Northern Distributor Road and other supporting highway improvement measures.” **[Our emphasis]***

2.4 Considered Options

2.4.1 The Proposed Development has evolved through an iterative consultation process between the Applicant team and key consultees as detailed in the SCI, DAS and ES, which accompanies this planning application.

2.4.2 A range of alternative options to the Proposed Development were considered throughout the design process to ensure that the final proposals represent the optimum opportunity to achieve the following defined nine scheme objectives, as set out in the TAG Options Appraisal Report (OAR)¹:

- Reduce future traffic flows into the Bridge Street area.
- Improve accessibility to/ from key destinations, and the resilience of the transport network to maintain journey time reliability.
- Reduce the level of air pollution within the AQMA.
- Provide a safe, secure and attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists in Witney including easier access to and within the town centre.
- Enable modal shift by improving public transport and the quality of service, reliability, or capacity.
- Improve access to the A40 and the wider strategic road network, such as the A34 and M40, without having to travel through the town centre.
- Support the vitality, viability, performance and attractiveness of the town centre.
- Allow the town to develop in accordance with the current Local Plan, and in particular deliver housing developments in north and east Witney and in the strategic development areas.
- Make best use of existing infrastructure assets.

2.4.3 The optioneering² methodology and assessment framework for the Proposed Development was developed in line with the Department for Transport (‘DfT’) Transport Appraisal Process and Early Assessment and Sifting Tool (‘EAST’) Guidance.

¹ Which can be found on OCC’s Access to Witney website here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/roadworks/future-transport-projects/a40-improvements/a40-access-witney>

² Consideration of various alternatives and options to find the best or preferred option.

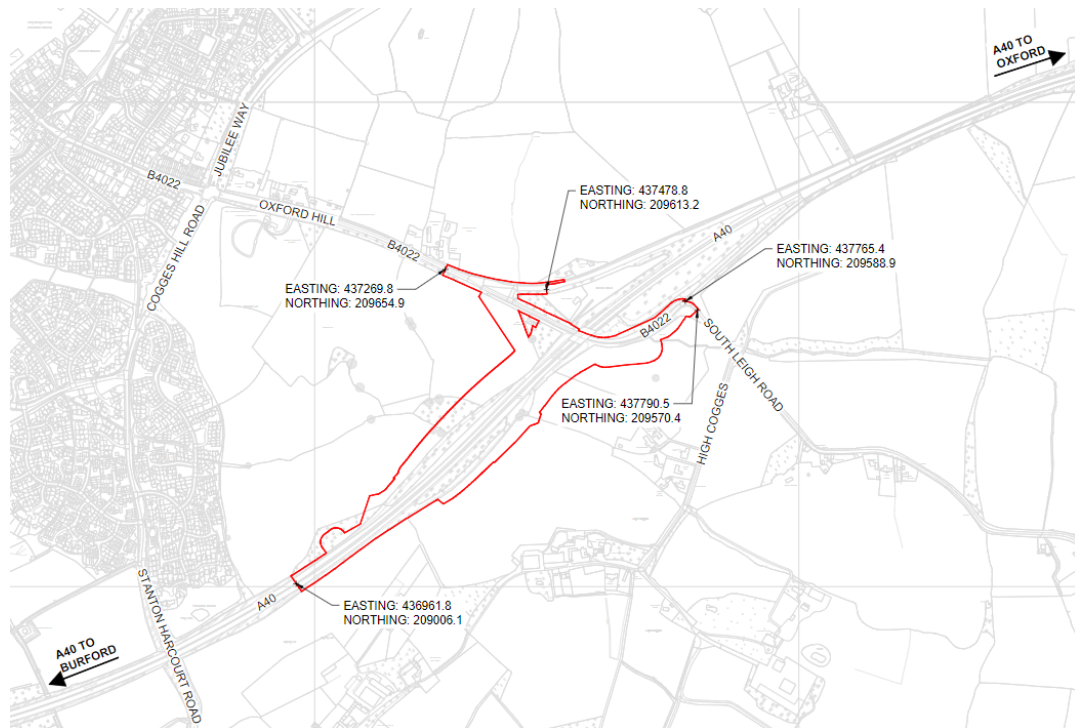
- 2.4.4 A long list of 33 options, comprising: upgraded junctions, new road links, public transport improvements, active travel interventions, and parking management was derived based on:
- The assessment of current and forecast travel patterns, development, and growth, and challenges.
 - Previous and current proposals from the relevant local authorities and stakeholders.
 - Workshops with OCC officers; and
 - Professional judgement based on experience elsewhere and within Oxfordshire to provide a comprehensive list of options.
- 2.4.5 Options were refined through a WebTAG compliant OAR Stage 1 and Stage 2 scoring and sifting process, assessed against the following initial sift criteria:
- Objectives: comparing the long list against the nine Access to Witney objectives.
 - Affordability: concentrates on the likely financial affordability of an option (its funding arrangements).
 - Deliverability: concentrates on the dependency of the option and interface risk in relation to other projects, timescale of delivery during design phase, contractual complexity and risks.
 - Acceptability: considers stakeholder acceptability of an option including public acceptability, local authorities, delivery partners, statutory bodies, landowners and utility companies.
 - Feasibility: considers practical feasibility of an option in terms of engineering and complexity.
- 2.4.6 An appraisal was undertaken using EAST Guidance and an Options Appraisal Framework to consider the relative benefits and disbenefits for options to assist in decision-making. Through this process, five shortlisted highway options were identified, which all focused on the existing Shores Green junction:
- Option 2A: West facing slip roads to provide access to/from the A40 at Shores Green - Conventional Arrangement
 - Option 2B: West facing slip roads to provide access to/from the A40 at Shores Green - Alternative Arrangement 1 (D-Link/Roundabout for On-Slip)
 - Option 2C: West facing slip roads to provide access to/from A40 at Shores Green – Alternative Arrangement 2 (D-Links On and Off-Slip)
 - Option 17: At-grade roundabout at Shores Green – option A.1
 - Option 17a: At-grade roundabout at Shores Green – option A.2
- 2.4.7 Option 2A, which proposed the construction of west facing slip roads to provide access to/from the A40 at Shores Green, was selected as the preferred option for more detailed assessment and refinement as part of a preliminary design stage. Options 2B, 2C, 17 and 17a were removed from the sifting process at this stage as these options did not perform as well as Option 2A as detailed in the OAR.

3 Site and Surroundings

3.1 Application Site Location

- 3.1.1 The application site comprises approximately 10.7 ha of land located along the A40 dual carriageway at the existing Shores Green junction onto the B4022, which is to the east of Witney at grid reference SP376096. The location of the site is illustrated at **Figure 3.1**.

Figure 3.1 Site Location



- 3.1.2 The site is located within the administrative boundary of West Oxfordshire District Council ('WODC') and sits approximately 600m from the south-east edge of Witney along the A40.
- 3.1.3 The site is dominated by plantation woodland (the existing vegetated roadside bank of the A40), a small area of dense scrub, and part of a copse in a corner of the adjacent arable field to the north. The wider site is dominated by arable farmland, with hedgerows and several small copses of plantation woodland. A small drainage ditch, which flows into the Chil Brook river, flows through the site from the north to south east corner.
- 3.1.4 There are no listed buildings located within the application site and the site is not located within a Conservation Area. No Scheduled Monuments are located within the site boundary.

3.2 Surrounding Area

- 3.2.1 The wider surrounding area consists of further arable farmland with hedgerows, several further small copses of plantation woodland and the A40 itself.
- 3.2.2 There are a number of residential properties in proximity to the application site, including properties in Cogges and five other residential clusters within 500m of the Site.
- 3.2.3 This surrounding land west of the application site is allocated for the development of 450 new homes as part of the East Witney SDA under Policy WIT1 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan

(‘WOLP’) 2031. A planning application for the development of up to 495 dwellings and a new Community Hub together with associated open space and green infrastructure at the site described as ‘Land South East of Oxford Hill, Witney’ is pending determination at the time of writing at March 2022 (WODC ref: 20/02654/OUT).

3.3 Designations and Protected Features

Ecology Designations

- 3.3.1 There are no Special Area of Conservation (‘SAC’), Special Protection Areas (‘SPA’) or Ramsar sites located within 2km of the site.
- 3.3.2 There is one internationally designated site within 10km of the site. The Oxford Meadows SAC is located 8.2km to the east of the site. Oxford Meadows is designated as a SAC due to the presence of Annex I habitat (hay meadows), and Annex II species (creeping marshwort, *Apium repens*). Cothill Fen SAC is located approximately 9.2km to the south east of the site.
- 3.3.3 There is one Site of Special Scientific Interest (‘SSSI’) located within 2km of the site. The Ducklington Mead SSSI is located approximately 1.6km to the south west of the site. Ducklington Mead SSSI is an agriculturally unimproved meadow situated between two arms of the River Windrush in an area otherwise dominated by improved pasture and arable land.
- 3.3.4 There are six non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site, which include three Conservation Target Areas (‘CTA’) and three Local Wildlife Sites (‘LWS’). The closest of these is the Lower Windrush Valley CTA, located 300m to the south east within the wider site. This CTA is characterised by a mosaic of water-filled gravel pits and riverside meadowland and is designated to ensure that resources for habitat management, restoration and creation are targeted in this area.

Heritage Designations

- 3.3.5 Two Scheduled Monuments are located within 2km of the site. Both monuments are situated within the town of Witney west of the Proposed Development. The monuments include the remains of a medieval moated manor, priory, settlement, and associated features, Cogges (National Heritage List for England (NHLE) ref. 1016269), located approximately 900m west of the Proposed Development and Bishop of Winchester’s Palace, (NHLE ref. 1018654), located approximately 1.5km west of the Proposed Development.
- 3.3.6 There are no World Heritage Sites, Conservation Areas or registered battlefields within 2km of the Proposed Development. A registered park and garden, Eynsham Hall, is located approximately 1.4km north east of the site.
- 3.3.7 Two Grade II listed buildings are located within 500m of the Proposed Development, which are:
- Ladymead Cottage approximately 140m south east; and
 - A cottage (9 & 10, High Cogges), a farmhouse (High Cogges Farmhouse), and a granary, which are all associated with High Cogges Farm approximately 260m south east.

Landscape Designations

- 3.3.8 The site is not located within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The boundary of the Cotswolds AONB is located approximately 4km north west of the site.

Drainage and Flood Risk

- 3.3.9 The Proposed Development sits in Flood Zone 1. The nearest Flood Zone 2 and 3 areas are located approximately 1km to the west and south of the site, along the Windrush River and its tributaries, and 2.3km to the east of the site along the Chil Brook River.

4 Pre-application Engagement

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The Proposed Development follow extensive pre-application engagement with stakeholders and the community. This section provides a summary of the pre-application engagement that has taken place.
- 4.1.2 The SCI, DAS and ES provide further details of the pre-application engagement that has been undertaken, the feedback received and how the design of the Proposed Development has evolved following this feedback.

4.2 Overview of Stakeholder Engagement

- 4.2.1 The Applicant recognises that the NPPF places significant importance on pre-application consultation and has invested considerable time and resources to encourage meaningful involvement in the pre-application engagement / consultation process. The Proposed Development has been developed in a consultative and iterative manner informed by various phases of engagement/consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. The five main phases of engagement/consultation are as follows:
- EIA Scoping;
 - CPA Pre-application Engagement;
 - Online Public Engagement;
 - Targeted Stakeholder Engagement; and
 - Technical Consultation.

4.3 EIA Scoping Consultation

- 4.3.1 Following consideration of the EIA Regulations and the relevant thresholds the Applicant has undertaken an EIA of the Proposed Development. The Applicant submitted a request for an EIA Scoping Opinion to OCC in May 2021, to determine the environmental factors that required consideration and assessment as part of the EIA. (ref: R3.0079/21). A copy of the EIA Scoping Report can be found at ES Volume II, Appendix 2-A.
- 4.3.2 OCC issued its final EIA Scoping Opinion on 1 July 2021 and the Scoping Opinion has informed the contents and assessment within the ES. A copy of the EIA Scoping Opinion can be found at ES Volume II, Appendix 2-B.
- 4.3.3 The Project team has endeavoured to engage with relevant statutory and technical consultees throughout the pre-application phase of the Project.

4.4 Pre-application Engagement with OCC as County Planning Authority Online

- 4.4.1 Throughout the design process there has been frequent engagement with the CPA and other statutory stakeholders. These discussions have included the following:
- The key planning considerations to be addressed in the planning application
 - Validation requirements for the planning application

- The pre-application engagement strategy
- The design of the Proposed Development

4.5 Online Public Engagement

- 4.5.1 The Project team established an 'A40 Improvements' webpage on OCC's website which provided an overview of the six schemes that form the A40 Improvement Programme. This webpage provided access to a dedicated A40 Access to Witney webpage, virtual exhibition and frequently asked questions webpage.
- 4.5.2 The virtual exhibition was live from 5 May – 7 June 2021 and provided the opportunity for participants to complete a feedback form online via the OCC consultation portal. A dedicated email address was also set up to provide the opportunity for comments and questions to be submitted to the Project team.
- 4.5.3 The Project team also held two live webinar events hosted via Microsoft Teams to give participants the opportunity to ask questions to members of the team directly. This aimed to recreate as far as possible a traditional 'in-person' public exhibition whilst complying with the Government's Covid-19 guidelines.
- 4.5.4 The SCI provides further details of the pre-application engagement that has been undertaken, the feedback received and how the design of the Proposed Development has evolved following this feedback.

4.6 Targeted Stakeholder Engagement

- 4.6.1 In October 2021, key stakeholders were invited to attend an online Stakeholder Briefing session with the Project team³. As explained in more details within the SCI, four organisations briefing sessions were held with the following organisations:
- Windrush Bike Project
 - Thames Valley Police
 - Road Haulage Association
 - Stagecoach

4.7 Technical Consultation

- 4.7.1 There has been frequent consultation between the Project team and various technical officers within OCC and other statutory stakeholders, including the following organisations:
- OCC Traffic & Road Safety
 - OCC Lighting
 - OCC Drainage /LEAD Local Flood Authority
 - OCC Archaeology
 - WODC Environment

³ The term 'key stakeholders' refers primarily to organisations that are likely to be affected directly or indirectly by the outcomes of the Proposed Development.

- Oxfordshire Geological Trust
- Balfour Beatty
- Environment Agency
- Thames Water

4.7.2 The SCI provides further details of the pre-application engagement that has been undertaken and how the design of the Proposed Development has evolved following this feedback.

5 Proposed Development

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 This planning application is made for:

“The construction of two new west-facing slip roads at the Shores Green junction of the A40; an off-slip to allow eastbound vehicles to exit the A40 on to the B4022 towards Witney and an on-slip to allow westbound vehicles to enter the A40 from the B4022 at this junction.”

5.1.2 The Proposed Development comprises:

- the construction of a new off-slip road to allow eastbound vehicles to exit the A40 on to the B4022 towards Witney;
- the construction an on-slip to allow westbound vehicles to enter the A40 from the B4022 at this junction; and
- the removal of two existing lay-bys which are located to the west of the A40 overbridge.

5.1.3 The Proposed Development forms part of OCC’s wider investment strategy for the A40 between Witney and Duke’s Cut, which aims to improve travel times and journey reliability along the A40 corridor, support housing development, stimulate economic growth, improve safety, and reduce environmental impacts such as noise and air pollution.

5.1.4 While the Proposed Development is part of the wider investment strategy for the A40, the Proposed Development is a standalone project with no interdependencies with other projects included in the wider investment strategy for the A40.

5.1.5 The Proposed Development will deliver new west-facing slip roads at the A40/B4022 Shores Green junction in order to address the current arrangement, which does not allow traffic to join and leave the A40 to travel west towards/from Burford. The consequences of the current arrangement are:

- Residents in the East and North East of Witney can only access the town centre via Oxford Hill and Bridge Street;
- Residents wishing to access the A4095 can only do so via Bridge Street and Woodstock Road;
- Traffic looking to enter to access locations in the north and east of Witney from westward along the A40 are forced to leave the A40 early and then travel through Witney to reach their destination;
- Traffic seeking to leave Witney westward is forced to travel through Witney and exit using Burford Road, or otherwise, via Bridge Street to access the Ducklington Lane Junction;
- New development at Witney would likely exacerbate these patterns.

5.1.6 The Proposed Development aims to reduce congestion and associated air quality and noise impacts in the centre of Witney by introducing new west-facing slip roads at the A40 and B4022 junction to offer alternative routes for traffic in the Witney area. The improvement programme is considered necessary to mitigate the transport impact arising from the WOLP

housing development along the A40 corridor and encourage greater use of sustainable and active modes of transports for trips along the corridor.

- 5.1.7 The Proposed Development seeks to integrate the needs of all users into the design, to provide an attractive and viable alternative for faster and more reliable access into Oxford, and to address safety issues by improving access points and junctions along the A40.
- 5.1.8 The Proposed Development seeks to encourage greater levels of active travel for both existing and future residents and employees along the route by providing enhanced accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists both along the A40 off-slip and B4022.

5.2 Design and Layout

- 5.2.1 As explained in greater detail in the DAS which accompanies this planning application, the design proposes a merge and diverge on the A40 mainline, which has been designed to complement the existing on-slip roads. The new junctions will be grade separated, to compliment in line with the existing east-facing slips, with the slip roads providing a west-facing link between the B4022 with the A40. OCC will be responsible for the maintenance of the slip roads and the B4022.
- 5.2.2 DMRB guidance has been used to determine the type of merge and diverge layouts of the proposed development. Figure 3.12a in DMRB CD 122 has been used to determine the proposed west-facing merge layout type whereas CD 122 Figure 3.26a has been used to establish the proposed west-facing diverge layout type. Both the merge and diverge slip roads are proposed to be a single lane wide with the diverge slip road flaring into two lanes at the approach to the junction.
- 5.2.3 The existing A40 overbridge will be retained. It is proposed that traffic exiting and entering the slip roads from the A40 will be controlled via the addition of two new signalised junctions approximately 100m apart. The west-facing off-slip layout is proposed to be contained within 80m of the A40 overbridge. The proposed layout will retain the single lane entries and exits on to the B4022 but multi-lane entries on the off-slip.
- 5.2.4 Signal controlled junctions have been proposed at the connection point of the proposed slip roads with B4022. The scheme design also proposes a complaint footpath/cycle shared use facility commencing from the junction of B4022 with South Leigh and connecting to the existing facilities on B4022/existing A40 on-slip. The alignment of the slip roads will also result in the realignment of Public Rights of Way ('PRoW').
- 5.2.5 New and improved footway and cycleway is proposed along with new signal-controlled crossings at strategic points and desire lines along the route. Shared use facilities have been proposed in the design which will commence from the junction of B4022/South Leigh/existing A40 off-slip and will extend to connect to the existing shared use facilities on B4022/existing A40 on-slip.
- 5.2.6 Due to safety reasons, the provision of the two new west-facing slip roads necessitates the removal of two existing lay-bys which are located to the west of the A40 overbridge. These lay-bys will not be replaced as part of this application.

5.2.7 The design proposes a maintenance lay-by located immediately to the east of the proposed A40 on-slip. The lay-by will be collectively used to carry out maintenance activities on the proposed drainage attenuation pond and the traffic signal controller.

5.3 Drainage Design

5.3.1 The existing drainage regime for the Proposed Development comprises:

- For the B4022, gullies which collect surface water from the carriageway and discharge at an unrestricted rate into a series of highway ditches or culverts under the highway. These ditches and culverts discharge into watercourses local to the site which ultimately discharge south towards the River Thames. The current drainage system is in a poor condition due to a lack of maintenance.
- For the A40 to the south west of the B4022, French drains (with intermediate catchpit gullies) which also ultimately discharge unrestricted to the south towards the River Thames.

5.3.2 The proposed drainage strategy, which has been discussed in a series of meetings with the Lead Local Flood Authority, has been designed so that surface water draining onto the B4022 from the proposed slip roads will be attenuated via attenuation basins prior to discharge to the existing watercourse, Limb Brook. Runoff from the slip road onto the A40 (the proposed off-slip in this case due to a highpoint midway) in addition to the existing A40 runoff will also be attenuated through the use of an attenuation basin prior to discharge into the existing A40 drainage network.

5.3.3 The proposed drainage system for the scheme will ensure that discharge rates are not increased above the existing rates even with an increase in impermeable area. The new drainage system will also provide increased attenuation of flows, increased biodiversity and improved water quality over the existing system.

5.3.4 The drainage design proposes the use of over the edge drainage utilising filter drains to convey storm runoff from the proposed slip roads to two balancing ponds located to the east of the new on-slip road and south of the B4022, and one balancing pond located to the south west of the proposed off-slip.

5.3.5 Further details on drainage design are available in the ES Volume II, Appendix 14-A Drainage Strategy.

5.4 Landscaping design and biodiversity net gain

5.4.1 Impact upon mature trees have been sought to be avoided where possible but five are affected by the revised embankment profile for the proposed slip roads. One large mature tree near to the Gas Governor has been avoided by modifying the 2D alignment. In addition, construction techniques will be used to avoid the root protection area.

5.4.2 The Proposed Development has a target of achieving 10% biodiversity net gain. While the landscaping design has sought to maximise the space available within the site boundary, further enhancements have been required in order to achieve the 10% biodiversity net gain target. As such, an agreement for the principle of off-site enhancements at the Foxburrow

Wood ecological restoration site in north Witney has been agreed with Wychwood Forest Trust.

- 5.4.3 Further details of the biodiversity net gain calculations and areas of off-site enhancements are provided in ES Volume II, Appendix 6-13: Biodiversity Net Gain Calculations.
- 5.4.4 Further details of the landscaping proposals are contained in the Landscaping Scheme which accompanies the planning application.

5.5 Lighting design

- 5.5.1 Land use surrounding the Proposed Development is predominately agricultural, consisting of pasture and individual farm buildings. There is currently no lighting along the B4022, including under the A40 over bridge. There is also no lighting along the east facing slip roads at the shores green junction, or on the A40 overbridge itself. With the introduction of the new slip roads, and a combined footway and cycle way on either side of the B4022 under the A40 overbridge, new lighting will be required.
- 5.5.2 The proposed lighting design generally consists of columns located in the verge at the back of the path where possible with new LED luminaires. Columns have been positioned in a single sided arrangement on the southside of the carriageway to avoiding conflicts with the cycleway and footpath.
- 5.5.3 The lighting design has been undertaken in accordance with the British Standards; BS5489-1:2020, BSEN 13201 and Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) guidance document PLG02.
- 5.5.4 All lighting will confirm to OCC standards and will be LED lighting. The LED colour temperature will be restricted to 3000k (often called 'warm white') with dimming applied overnight.
- 5.5.5 Further details of the lighting design are contained in the Lighting Scheme which accompanies the planning application.

5.6 Signage

- 5.6.1 Due to the highway changes new directional signage will be required. A signing strategy will be developed for the directional signage, the details of which are proposed to be secured via planning condition.
- 5.6.2 Highway signage will comply with DfT regulations and guidance. This will include (but not limited to):
 - Speed limit signage (regulatory signage)
 - Bus lane signage (regulatory and warning signage)
 - Warning signage
 - Clearway and parking signage
 - Prohibited movements
 - Directional signage

5.6.3 There will be a requirement for some temporary signage. Under the Traffic Signs Regulations 10, such signage is permitted for three months after the commissioning of the change.

5.6.4 All signs will be erected on steel or similar posts in accordance with the traffic signs regulations.

5.7 Construction

5.7.1 Site clearance, enabling and construction works for the proposed development are expected to start in Autumn 2022 with an estimated overall duration of up to 41 weeks.

5.7.2 Environmental impacts associated with the construction phase of the works would be mitigated via control measures set out within a Construction Environmental Management Plan ('CEMP'), which will include the construction mitigation measures recommended in the ES to mitigate potentially significant environmental effects as well as ensure other environmental good practice measures are implemented. The CEMP will contain a series of specific environmental method statements or management plans, such as a Construction Traffic Management Plan.

5.7.3 The construction activities will be considerable. The general sequence of highways works is envisaged as follows:

- Complete service diversions;
- Install deep drainage;
- Install gullies;
- Install ducting and associated infrastructure;
- Install kerbs and edgings;
- Final trim to stone in readiness for pavement laying;
- Lay base and binder course;
- Set all ironworks to final level including gullies;
- Lay surface course;
- Install road markings and high friction surfacing if required; and
- Commission traffic signals where applicable. Traffic signs, traffic signals, street lighting, vehicle restraint and bus stop where applicable.

5.7.4 Further details of delivery, construction compounds and welfare facilities can be found in the ES, which has been prepared in support of the planning application.

6 Relevant Planning Policy

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 In accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, development control decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.1.2 Whilst the application is submitted to OCC as the determining CPA under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the application site lies within the administrative area of West Oxfordshire District Council ('WODC').
- 6.1.3 This section details the Development Plan documents of relevance to the proposals, as well as other material considerations and emerging planning policy and guidance.

6.2 Adopted Development Plan

- 6.2.1 The Development Plan documents relevant to the Proposed Development are detailed below. The key policies of relevance are assessed in Section 7 of this Planning Statement under several policy themes, and a detailed table outlining each relevant policy is contained in Appendix A.

West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2018)

- 6.2.2 The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 ('WOLP') was formally adopted on 27 September 2018. The WOLP sets out a vision of the District in 2031 and provides an overarching framework to guide and deliver that vision.

South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan (2019)

- 6.2.3 The South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan ('SLNP') was made on 8 January 2019, and forms part of the Development Plan for the South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan area. The SLNP sets out additional policies in relation to the Neighbourhood Area to support the WOLP. A key issue identified in the SLNP relates to traffic and transport and how to mitigate the amount of traffic passing through the Parish. However, it is noted that the main issue related to traffic and transport is on the A40 which is outside the remit of the SLNP.

Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy (2017)

- 6.2.4 The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy ('OMWLP') was adopted in 2017. It sets out the vision, objectives, spatial planning strategy and policies for meeting development requirements for the supply of minerals and the management of waste in Oxfordshire over the period to 2031.

6.3 Material Considerations

- 6.3.1 There are several other documents that are considered material to the determination of this planning application. These documents are listed below.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 6.3.2 The latest iteration of the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') was revised in July 2021 to set out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied.
- 6.3.3 The NPPF advises that 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. NPPF goes on to say that all developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.
- 6.3.4 The key sections of the NPPF of relevance to the Proposed Development include:
- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development;
 - Section 4 – Decision-making;
 - Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy;
 - Section 8 – Promoting health and safe communities;
 - Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport;
 - Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places;
 - Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
 - Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; and
 - Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 6.3.5 The online national planning guidance resource – the Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG'), which provides additional context and clarity to the NPPF – was launched by the Government on 6 March 2014 and has been updated on numerous occasions since.
- 6.3.6 The key sections of the PPG considered of relevance to the Proposed Development include:
- Air Quality
 - Natural Environment
 - Light Pollution
 - Noise

National Infrastructure Strategy (November 2020)

- 6.3.7 The National Infrastructure Strategy ('NIS') was published on 25 November 2020 and sets out the government's plans to improve the quality of the UK's infrastructure, to help level up the country, strengthen the Union, and put the UK on the path to net zero emissions by 2050.

Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015-2031 (published 2015, updated 2016)

- 6.3.8 Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan ('LTP4') sets out OCC's policy and strategy for developing the transport system in Oxfordshire to 2031. LTP4 was agreed by OCC in 2015

and updated in 2016 to strengthen the emphasis on improving air quality and making better provision for walking and cycling.

- 6.3.9 LTP4 has four key transport goals, concerning supporting job/housing growth and economic vitality; reducing emissions; protecting or improving the environment and quality of life levels and to improve public health, air quality, safety and wellbeing.

Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (2017)

- 6.3.10 The Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy ('OxIS') provides a strategic framework for Oxfordshire authorities to establish future infrastructure investment priorities alongside potential delivery and funding opportunities and will support the Draft Oxfordshire Plan 2050 ('DOP'). Its aim is to set out the priority strategic infrastructure investment needed to support sustainable, clean, healthy and inclusive growth across Oxfordshire, and has been developed to take account of wider policy and strategic priorities, including those set out in the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision (2021).

Oxfordshire 2020 Climate Action Framework (2020)

- 6.3.11 In 2019, OCC passed a motion to declare a 'Climate Emergency' that requires urgent action. Subsequently, OCC produced a 2020 Climate Action Framework (CAF), which sets out how OCC will tackle the climate crisis through internal transformation and enabling a zero carbon Oxfordshire. The CAF aims to make electric and active travel the new normal and to reduce emissions by 50% by 2030 to achieve zero emissions by 2050. The CAF sets out that through their local transport planning role OCC will:

- Increase walking and cycling;
- Enable safe, convenient electric public transport across and between towns; and
- Increasingly deprioritise journeys by single occupancy private car.

- 6.3.12 The CAF goes on to set out OCC's plans for transport and connectivity which include to:

- Support a zero-carbon ambition;
- Implement post COVID schemes to support active travel; and
- Develop and implement local cycling and walking infrastructure plans.

Oxfordshire Strategic Vision (2021)

- 6.3.13 The Oxfordshire Growth Board has developed a Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire to help create an agreed set of long-term, strategic economic, infrastructure and environmental priorities designed to deliver the outcomes that local people want and will feed into the preparation of the Draft Oxfordshire Plan 2050 ('DOP').

Oxfordshire Street Design Guide (2021)

- 6.3.14 The Oxfordshire Street Design Guide sets out OCC's expectations in respect of development aspirations and standards in order to achieve a vision for Oxfordshire to be a *"A place where streets, through integrated and quality design, lead to a greater economic and social well-being and improved health for its residents, creating an environment for healthy lifestyles, sustainable travel and a zero carbon economy"*.

West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD (2016)

6.3.15 The West Oxfordshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document ('SPD') provides advice and information which builds upon national and local planning policies contained primarily in the NPPF and in the WOLP.

6.4 Witney Transport Strategy (2016)

6.4.1 The Witney Transport Strategy was developed to support Main Modifications to the draft WOLP published in November 2016. The strategy considers transport implications for Witney as a result of the development of approximately 4,400 new homes.

7 Planning Assessment

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Having regard to the planning policy context and pre-application engagement with OCC's Development Management Team, the main planning matters relating to the proposals are:

- Principle of Development;
- Highways and Accessibility;
- Design;
- Air Quality;
- Landscape and Visual;
- Historic Environment;
- Noise;
- Biodiversity;
- Flood Risk and Road Drainage
- Geology;
- Sustainability.

7.1.2 The Proposed Development is assessed against these key planning matters below.

7.2 Principle of Development

7.2.1 The Proposed Development will deliver new west-facing slip roads at the A40/B4022 Shores Green junction in order to address the current arrangement, which currently does not allow traffic to join and leave the A40 to travel west towards/from Burford.

7.2.2 The Proposed Development forms part of OCC's wider investment strategy for the A40 between Witney and Duke's Cut, which aims to improve travel times and journey reliability along the A40 corridor, support housing development, stimulate economic growth, improve safety, and reduce environmental impacts such as noise and air pollution.

7.2.3 The Proposed Development supports the WOLP objective to provide at least 15,950 homes in the period 2011-2031 of which approximately 10,000 homes are allocated on sites along the A40 corridor focused on Witney, Eynsham and Carterton.

7.2.4 Crucially, WOLP Policy WIT1 ('East Witney Strategic Development Area') sets out the framework for land to the east of Witney to accommodate a sustainable community including about 450 homes. This land is located immediately west of the site of the Proposed Development and the Proposed Development will help unlock this strategic development area, facilitating the delivery of new homes in the area.

7.2.5 The Proposed Development supports the policy's aim for development to be phased in accordance with the timing of provision of supporting infrastructure and facilities including the essential improvements to the Shores Green junction onto the A40 and related highway measures.

7.2.6 In respect of strategic context and need, WOLP Policy WIT6 which sets out the Witney Sub-Area Strategy, including working with OCC and landowners/developers to deliver

improvements to key highway infrastructure to reduce traffic and pollution in the historic core and to improve the general flow of traffic and access to primary transport routes, with priority on delivering schemes which includes the Proposed Development of west facing slip roads at Shores Green junction.

- 7.2.7 WOLP Policy T2 ('Highway Improvement Schemes') and supporting paragraph 7.35 also identifies the provision of west facing slip roads at the Shores Green junction onto the A40 to the east of Witney as necessary to support planned growth at Witney.
- 7.2.8 The principle of the Proposed Development is also supported by LTP4, Volume 8, Policy WIT1 which states that OCC will secure the delivery of west-facing slip roads at A40 Shores Green. Policy WIT2 sets out a series of further improvements that can be realised to initiate greater opportunity for travel by sustainable advises that following the opening of the Shores Green slip roads.
- 7.2.9 The Proposed Development therefore supports the following key objectives of LTP4:
- Improve travel times and journey reliability along the A40 corridor, particularly between Witney and Oxford;
 - Stimulate economic growth, in line with the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan;
 - Improve safety and reduce environmental impacts such as air pollution and noise along the A40 corridor;
 - To support jobs and housing growth and economic vitality; and
 - To protect, and where possible enhance Oxfordshire's environment and improve quality of life.
- 7.2.10 The Proposed Development is considered as a priority initiative which will reduce traffic flows and associated adverse impacts in the Bridge Street area and reduce air pollution in the Witney Air Quality Management Area to below the target set by legislation.
- 7.2.11 Overall, it is clear that the principle of the Proposed Development has been firmly established. The Proposed Development complies with the overall objectives, policies of the adopted development plan, including the WOLP, as well as other important material planning considerations including LTP4.

7.3 Highways and Accessibility

- 7.3.1 NPPF paragraph 104 advises that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that, amongst other reequipments, the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed.
- 7.3.2 NPPF paragraph 110 goes on to state that in assessing 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..."*
- 7.3.3 WOLP Policy T2 ('Highway Improvement Schemes') which identifies 'Shores Green Slip Roads' as one of six strategic highway infrastructure schemes which will be safeguarded as

part of allocated urban extensions, as is LTP4 Policy 01 which aims to ensure that Oxfordshire's transport network supports sustainable economic and housing growth in the county, whilst where possible, enhancing the environment and supporting health and wellbeing of residents.

- 7.3.4 The Proposed Development is designed to significantly improve the A40/B4022 Shores Green interchange to facilitate all movements at a grade separated junction. A Transport Assessment (TA) has been prepared in support of the planning application which demonstrates that the Proposed Development will provide an alternative route between the A40 and destinations to the east of the town, allowing this traffic to bypass the urban area by using the A40 and Jubilee Way in preference to town centre routes. Full consideration of transport policy and strategy is contained within the supporting TA.
- 7.3.5 The Proposed Development will have a positive impact on active travel. This includes pedestrians and cyclists, through the provision of new and improved Non-Motorised User ('NMU') facilities.
- 7.3.6 Wherever possible within physical constraints, new pedestrian and cycle infrastructure is aligned with the latest Cycle infrastructure Design Guidelines (LTN 1/20) and is aimed at ensuring strong promotion of active travel use and the provision of good quality and safe facilities. Pathways have been designed to ensure:
- pathway gradients and horizontal alignment are within recommended guidelines to enable access for all;
 - adequate, safe, signalised crossing on the B4022 by the A40/eastbound on-slip to support local connectivity by active travel; and
 - priority to active travel is afforded where possible to do so safely and within current highway design requirements, for the B4022.
- 7.3.7 A 3m wide shared use pathway is proposed parallel to the proposed A40 eastbound off-slip on the western side of the carriageway and provides a connection between the B4022 and PRow 410/41/30. The shared pathway will be separated from the carriageway by an embankment providing a safe route for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 7.3.8 In addition, a Toucan crossing is proposed to connect the shared use pathway to the west of the proposed A40 eastbound off-slip to a 3m wide shared use pathway that is proposed along the northern side of the B4022 between the A40 westbound on-slip and the proposed A40 eastbound on-slip. A Toucan crossing is proposed where the shared use pathway on the northern side of the B4022 ends to the east to provide a connection to the proposed shared use pathway on the southern side of the B4022 to the west of the A40 westbound on-slip. This will provide a pedestrian and cycle route to South Leigh Road and improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity and safety in the area.
- 7.3.9 A new 2m wide PRow is proposed parallel to the proposed westbound on-slip to the west of the carriageway. The PRow will be separated from the carriageway by a grass area to provide safe route for NMUs. This route will provide a connection between the B4022 and PRow 353/31/10, therefore improving pedestrian and cycle connectivity.
- 7.3.10 The existing bus stop located on the southern side of the B4022 to the west of South Leigh Road will remain in the same position and new bus stop kerbing with an upstand of 140mm

- will be provided as part of the Proposed Development to allow easier access to board the bus.
- 7.3.11 As part of the scheme, two existing lay-bys will be removed. The existing A40 Shores Green eastbound lay-by is located immediately to the west of the proposed A40 eastbound off-slip and conflicts with the need to provide Advance Warning Signs for the off-slip. This lay-by will also be removed as part of the scheme and no direct replacement is proposed.
- 7.3.12 There are existing A40 eastbound and westbound lay-bys at Ducklington, approximately 1.45km to the west of Shores Green, which will be retained. Furthermore, as part of the A40 Smart Corridor scheme, two new lay-bys are proposed to the east of Shores Green, within the proposed dualling section. The removal of the Shores Green lay-bys will result in the distance between the retained lay-bys at Ducklington and the new lay-bys proposed as part of the A40 Smart Corridor scheme of 3.5km (westbound) and 3.65km (eastbound). DMRB standard CD 169 'The design of lay-bys, maintenance hardstandings, rest areas, service areas and observation platforms' recommends a minimum spacing of 2.5km between lay-bys, although this is advisory and not a statutory or legislative requirement.
- 7.3.13 OCC has undertaken a wider review of lay-bys along the A40 corridor, including surveys of lay-by usage. The conclusion to the OCC review was that the proposed relocation of some lay-by space along the A40, including the changes related to the A40 SC and A40 Access to Witney schemes, will not have a significant impact on drivers' opportunities to take a break. The new lay-bys will also be designed to a higher standard than the existing.
- 7.3.14 ES Chapter 15 (Transport) also presents the findings of an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on traffic and transportation. The assessment considers both the impacts during construction and operation of the Proposed Development. Whilst, as with any highways improvements scheme, there will be a short-term minor adverse (not significant) effect on driver stress and delay. During the operational period, the Proposed Development is forecast to have a range of adverse and beneficial effects on driver stress and delay and bus users.
- 7.3.15 The Proposed Development will provide an alternative route between the A40 and destinations to the east of Witney, allowing traffic to bypass the urban area by using the A40, B4022 and Jubilee Way in preference to town centre routes. This will result in general reductions in town centre traffic.
- 7.3.16 In summary, it is clear that the Proposed Development will provide additional highways network capacity for future growth in the area and support the development of strategic development proposal in the area, including the East Witney SDA, by providing greater accessibility to the A40, in line with WOLP Policies OS1, OS2 and OS5 and LTP4 Policy 01.
- 7.3.17 The proposals demonstrate safe access and an acceptable degree of impact on the local highway network in line with WOLP Policy T2. The proposals will also maximise opportunities for walking and cycling through the creation of a pedestrian/cyclist crossing for the signal option to the east of the proposed on-slip, in line with WOLP Policies T1 and T3.
- 7.3.18 As such, it is considered that the proposals accord with relevant planning policies in respect of highways and accessibility matters.

7.4 Design

- 7.4.1 NPPF paragraph 126, 130 and 132 relate to design, encouraging developments to improve places through effective design, good layouts, and effective landscaping. WOLP Policy OS4 ('High Quality Design') sets out the requirement for new development to be of high quality design, whilst SLNP Policy SLD2 ('Design') states the need for high quality design that has regard to the principles within the West Oxfordshire Design Guide.
- 7.4.2 A DAS which has been prepared and submitted alongside the Planning Application demonstrates how the proposed scheme responds to the relevant design policy and guidance context. The DAS explains the context and justification for any unavoidable deviation from design standards and demonstrates how the Proposed Development has evolved to reach the design objectives.
- 7.4.3 The Proposed Development has been carefully designed to deliver identified scheme objectives. It represents essential infrastructure that will support the delivery of housing and employment growth in West Oxfordshire and will deliver wide reaching benefits to users of the A40 along with improved facilities for walking and cycling will increase the attractiveness of the route for non-car users.
- 7.4.4 The Proposed Development is the result of a comprehensive and iterative engagement strategy that has actively encouraged views from a range of stakeholders, landowners, and the wider community. It is considered that the proposed design is of high quality and respect the historic, architectural and landscape character of the locality, responding to the principles set out within relevant planning policies and guidance.

7.5 Air Quality

- 7.5.1 NPPF Paragraph 174 states that development should help to improve local environmental conditions such as air quality.
- 7.5.2 WOLP Policy OS3 ('Prudent Use of Natural Resources') states the need for achieving improvements in air quality, whilst Policy EH8 ('Environmental Protection') identifies air quality as an issue that requires attention in terms of providing a high standard of protection for health, environmental quality and amenity.
- 7.5.3 SNLP Policy SLT1 ('Traffic Management') considers the impact of traffic in terms of its potential impact upon the environment.
- 7.5.4 ES Chapter 5 ('Air Quality') identifies that the Proposed Development has the potential to affect air quality in the following ways:
- By causing changes in vehicle activity (flows, speeds and composition) as a result of the Proposed Development in proximity to air quality sensitive receptors; and
 - By causing changes in the separation distances between road sources of emissions and air quality sensitive receptors.
- 7.5.5 ES Chapter 5 concludes that the Proposed Development is forecast to reduce traffic flow through Witney town centre thereby leading to benefits for air pollution. Furthermore, the assessment has found that there are no residual or likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development in terms of air quality.

7.5.6 The road improvements will reduce reliance on the private car and encouraging the use of public transport, as well as improving access to the range of services and facilities in central Witney. It is therefore considered that the proposals are in line with relevant planning policies relating to air quality.

7.6 Landscape and Visual

7.6.1 NPPF Paragraph 130 requires development to function well and add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and setting.

7.6.2 WOLP Policy EH2 ('Landscape Character') requires that development avoid causing pollution, especially noise and light, which has an adverse impact upon landscape character. Policy EH4 ('Public Realm and Green Infrastructure') states that new development should avoid the loss and fragmentation of the existing green infrastructure network.

7.6.3 SNLP Policy SLE1 ('Countryside and Landscape') requires that proposals should in particular conserve and where possible enhance the intrinsic character and beauty of the landscape. Policy SLE2 ('Countryside Access') requires that development should protect and enhance public rights of way for the benefit of user experience of the intrinsic beauty and character of the countryside.

7.6.4 ES Chapter 10 (LVIA) presents the findings of an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual receptors of the site and surrounding 1.5km study area. ES Chapter 10 includes baseline descriptions of published and site-specific landscape character, alongside a review of visual receptors that informed the selection of seventeen representative viewpoints, within the study area.

7.6.5 An assessment of likely effects on landscape character and visual receptors during the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development was undertaken, including details of proposed mitigation, which includes the following elements:

- New hedgerow, tree and woodland planting adjacent to the new road network to provide increased softening and screening of views in comparison to the existing hedgerows;
- Retention of vegetation along the elevated embankment to the east of the B4022 underpass; which provides screening to moving traffic visible in views from the southeast;
- New areas of species rich grassland, including marsh and wet grassland around attenuation ponds and ditches, to enhance biodiversity and amenity value, particularly where the baseline comprises species-poor arable or pastoral farmland;
- Creation of a new section of PRoW (footpath) 353/31/10, linking the existing crossing of the A40 to the B4022, thus providing increasing amenity value by way of a continuous recreational route that avoids the dangerous crossing of the dual carriageway;
- Provision of an enhanced multi-user route along the line of existing PRoW 410/41/30 and 410/41/40, thus increasing accessibility and amenity value for residents wishing to access the countryside from the eastern edge of Witney; and
- Use of the lowest possible output LED luminaires on road lighting columns, with minimal light spill and which will also be dimmed to 75% output between the hours of 00:00 and 06:00 to mitigate potential light intrusion.

- 7.6.6 ES Chapter 10 (LVIA) has identified a number of neighbouring development schemes that, due to their proximity to the Proposed Development, have potential to increase fragmentation of habitats or loss of characteristic elements within the wider landscape. However, the chapter concludes that the absence of significant residual effects on landscape character beyond those predicted for the construction stage would indicate that significant cumulative landscape effects are not expected during the operational stage.
- 7.6.7 Although views of both the operational scheme and other developments may be possible from a single viewpoint or in succession (e.g. when travelling along the A40), the limited scale of this scheme, the distance between the neighbouring, and the fact that a highways scheme may not be considered comparable to other development such as solar farms or housing, means that it is not expected that significant cumulative visual effects will arise from the scheme.
- 7.6.8 Overall, it is considered that the landscape proposals are compliant with WOLP Policies EH2 and EH4, and is in accordance with relevant policies set out SLNP.

7.7 Historic Environment

- 7.7.1 NPPF Paragraph 194 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.
- 7.7.2 Paragraph 202 goes on to explain that in instances where development would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal to provide a balanced judgement.
- 7.7.3 WOLP Core Objective CO14 establishes a commitment to conserve and enhance the character and significance of West Oxfordshire's high quality natural, historic and cultural environment. Policy EH9 ('Historic Environment') states that proposals should conserve/enhance West Oxfordshire's historic environment.
- 7.7.4 There are no listed buildings located within the site boundary and the site is not located within a Conservation Area. No Scheduled Monuments are located within the site. There are no World Heritage Sites, Conservation Areas or registered battlefields within 2km of the Proposed Development. A registered park and garden, Eynsham Hall, is located approximately 1.4km north east of the site. Two Grade II listed buildings are located within 500m of the Proposed Development.
- 7.7.5 There are a total of 56 heritage assets within 1km of the Proposed Development site, including 18 designated assets (including listed buildings, a scheduled monument and conservation area) and 38 non-designated assets, recorded on the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER).
- 7.7.6 ES Chapter 8 (Cultural Heritage) presents the findings of an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on buried archaeology and built heritage assets within the site and surrounding area, taking into account their significance and contribution to local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- 7.7.7 ES Chapter 8 concludes that, when considering the mixed species woodland planting which is included as part of the design and will form screening between the junction and the building,

the magnitude of impact of the Proposed Development on the setting of Grade II Listed Ladymead Cottage approximately 140m south east; and will be negligible.

- 7.7.8 Overall, ES Chapter 8 (Cultural Heritage) concludes that there are no likely significant effects caused by the Proposed Development. It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development is compliant with relevant planning policies, including WOLP Policies EH9, EH14, EH15 and EH16.

7.8 Noise

- 7.8.1 WOLP Policy EH2 ('Landscape Character') emphasises the need to avoid causing noise pollution to existing landscape character. Policy EH8 ('Environmental Protection') identifies noise as an issue in terms of providing a high standard of protection for health, environmental quality and amenity.
- 7.8.2 ES Chapter 12 (Noise and Vibration) presents the findings of an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on noise and vibration. The assessment identifies that there is the potential for some properties close to the Proposed Development to experience significant effects from construction noise, especially if evening/weekend and/or night-time works are required. Best practical means will however be applied to minimise construction noise levels as far as reasonably practicable.
- 7.8.3 The Proposed Development is expected to result in some changes in traffic distribution across the local area, around both Witney and north of Eynsham. This is predicted to lead to increases in road traffic noise on the B4022, between the A40 and Cogges Hill Road / Jubilee Way, Jubilee Way, Common Road in North Leigh and the westbound off-slip of the A40, south of Witney near Ducklington Lake. Conversely, reductions in road traffic noise are predicted on South Leigh Road in High Cogges, New Yatt Road in Witney and Wroslyn Road, Cuckoo Lane and Lower Road north of Eynsham.
- 7.8.4 ES Chapter 12 (Noise and Vibration) concludes that, with the exception of residential properties adjacent to the B4022 between the A40 and Cogges Hill Road / Jubilee Way, where existing traffic noise levels are already high, none of these changes are expected to lead to likely significant adverse environmental effects.
- 7.8.5 The scheme will therefore pose no risk a deterioration in quality of life for residents due to noise, in accordance with the LTP4. The Proposed Development is also in accordance with WOLP Policies EH2 and EH8.

7.9 Biodiversity

- 7.9.1 NPPF Paragraph 174 states the need for planning decisions to minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity.
- WOLP Policy EH3 ('Biodiversity and Geodiversity') states that biodiversity shall be protected and enhanced to achieve an overall net gain in biodiversity and minimise impacts on geodiversity. The Oxfordshire Street Design Guide also states the need to enhance biodiversity and as a minimum and lead to no net loss of habitat.
- 7.9.2 An assessment of relevant ecological features (i.e. designated sites, habitats, species, or ecosystems) has been conducted as part of the EIA, with a series of mitigation measures

proposed for during construction and implementation in the proposed development once it is complete.

- 7.9.3 ES Chapter 6 (Biodiversity) has identified mitigation and monitoring measures for both the construction and operational phase of the proposed development. This includes measures for roosting bats and hazel dormouse. Other species such as great crested newts, birds, reptiles, otters, and water voles have been scoped out after initial appraisals and are not considered further within the baseline assessment.
- 7.9.4 Mitigation and monitoring measures during construction include:
- The design of the proposed development will incorporate a network of retained and newly created habitats. This will include carefully designed planting to maintain habitat connectivity for bats and hazel dormouse; and
 - Where trees assessed to have moderate and low suitability to support roosting bats are to be removed, a precautionary method of felling under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist is recommended to avoid potential impacts on roosting bats.
- 7.9.5 Mitigation and monitoring measures during operation include:
- The reinstated and newly created habitats will maintain connectivity for bats, badgers, and dormouse. These newly created habitats contribute to the biodiversity net gain;
 - An ecologist will undertake a walkover survey of the site during years 1, 3, 5 and 10 post construction to monitor the habitats and provide feedback on the success of habitat creation; and
 - The operational lighting strategy for the proposed development will aim to reduce the light spill to avoid potential adverse impacts on habitat corridors.
- 7.9.6 There are no invasive non-native species present within the boundary of the proposed development. Therefore best practice biosecurity measures, such as those detailed within CIRIA Manual C679 will be implemented throughout construction of the Proposed Development.
- 7.9.7 The landscape design for the Proposed Development has sought to maximise the amount of planting within the site boundary, in order to achieve the 10% net gain target some enhancements outside the site boundary are required. As such, an agreement for the principle of off-site enhancements at the Foxburrow Wood ecological restoration site in north Witney has been agreed with Wychwood Forest Trust.
- 7.9.8 It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development is in line with relevant planning policies in respect of biodiversity, including WOLP Policies EH2 and EH3.

7.10 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 7.10.1 WOLP Policy OS3 ('Prudent use of natural resources') includes the need to minimise the risk of flooding and make use of appropriate sustainable drainage systems.
- 7.10.2 The West Oxfordshire Design Guide (2016) contains a detailed analysis of both natural and man-made aspects of the District and detailed design advice. The Design Guide includes guidance on inclusion of SuDS in developments and reduction of flooding.

- 7.10.3 The Drainage Strategy (ES Volume II, Appendix 14-A) demonstrates that the allowable runoff rates for the site have been assessed in accordance with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) guidance and have been restricted to equivalent existing discharge rates per catchment with a 40% reduction. Where catchments constitute wholly new impermeable areas, greenfield rates have been applied.
- 7.10.4 The proposed drainage system will provide new SuDS features (such as filter drains, ditches and attenuation basins) bringing some environmental benefits over the existing system including improving treatment of flows and water quality. The planted nature of the attenuation basins will also provide increased biodiversity. The proposed development has been designed to accommodate a 1 in 100-year flood event with a climate change allowance of 40% added.
- 7.10.5 As part of ES Volume I, Chapter 14: Road Drainage and the Water Environment, the Highways England Water Resources Assessment Tool ('HEWRAT') quantitative assessment for routine road runoff to surface waterbodies and groundwater has been completed. It has predicted an overall negligible impact on Limb Brook based on treatment of highway runoff being provided by the proposed drainage system and no significant changes to the risk for the wider A40 road catchments. For Hardwick Brook, there is an overall minor adverse impact predicted due to a small increase in the risk from dissolved metals despite new treatment being provided in the form of filter drains and a wet pond (east bound off slip only) for new slip roads. As Limb and Hardwick Brook are both water bodies of high importance for water quality, this results in a slight adverse effect (not significant).
- 7.10.6 A spillage risk assessment was also undertaken for the do-something scenario which predicts the risk of a road traffic accident resulting in a serious pollution incident. Overall a negligible impact is predicted for outfalls to the Limb Brook and Hardwick Brook (both high importance for water quality) resulting in slight adverse effects (not significant).
- 7.10.7 Water quality monitoring will be undertaken by the Principal Contractor as part of the CEMP to protect the water environment from adverse effects during construction.
- 7.10.8 Therefore, it is considered that the Proposed Development is compliant with WOLP Policies EH7, EH8 and OS3 as well as the West Oxfordshire Design Guide (2016).

7.11 Geology

- 7.11.1 NPPF Paragraph 174 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, setting out a number of measures including preventing unacceptable levels of soil pollution and mitigating against contaminated or unstable land.
- 7.11.2 WOLP Policy EH8 ('Environmental Protection') identifies land contamination as a consideration in providing a high standard of protection for health, environmental quality and amenity.
- 7.11.3 ES Chapter 9 ('Geology and Soils') presents the findings of an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on geology and soils, which includes the potential for the Proposed Development to mobilise land contamination and affect human health, surface water and groundwater, as well as the effects on soil resources and agricultural land.

- 7.11.4 The assessment considers effects on bedrock geology and superficial deposits, including geological designations and sensitive or valuable non-designated features; effects on soil resources; effects on agricultural land; and effects from contamination on human health, surface water and groundwater.
- 7.11.5 No additional mitigation and monitoring are considered to be required for addressing contaminated land at the site. However, a limited number of shallow soil samples will be collected from geotechnical boreholes and trial pits for confirmatory testing. The results of the testing will allow the assessment to be updated, and recommendation made as to any environmental mitigation measures to be employed as standard to minimise impacts during the construction works.
- 7.11.6 A number of environmental mitigation measures are expected to be employed as standard to minimise impacts to both human health and controlled waters from contaminated land as well as impact to soil resources including agricultural land, during the construction phase.
- 7.11.7 Following the implementation of these mitigation measures, the remaining potential impacts include loss of agricultural land, which is unavoidable given the nature of the scheme.
- 7.11.8 ES Chapter 9 (Geology and Soils) concludes that the Proposed Development would have likely significant adverse residual effects upon agricultural land due to the proportion of permanent land take required for construction. However, a number of essential mitigation measures have been identified to reduce, remediate or compensate likely significant adverse environmental effects.
- 7.11.9 Therefore, following the implementation of mitigation measures (embedded, essential mitigation and additional measures), it is anticipated that all effects during construction will be reduced so that the residual effects are neutral to slight adverse.
- 7.11.10 Furthermore, the Proposed Development will use materials that are chemically and geotechnically suitable for use, such that land contamination risks from inappropriate use of construction materials would be negligible.
- 7.11.11 It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development complies with relevant planning policies, including WOLP Policy EH8.

7.12 Sustainability

- 7.12.1 Paragraph 152 of the NPPF (2021) sets out the goal of transitioning to a low carbon future, contributing to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- 7.12.2 WOLP Policy OS4 ('High quality design') states that proposals should demonstrate resilience to future climate change, particularly increasing temperatures and flood risk, and water conservation. Policy T1 (Sustainable Transport) states that all new development will be designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
- 7.12.3 LTP4 Policy 17 identifies the need to provide new or improved infrastructure and reduces the need to travel and supports walking, cycling and public transport. Policy 23 states that OCC will work to reduce the emissions footprint of transport assets and operation where economically viable, taking into account energy consumption and the use of recycled materials.

- 7.12.4 A Sustainability Statement has been prepared and submitted alongside the application, which captures the environmental and sustainability commitments made as part of the design, alongside additional measures identified as part of the EIA. The Sustainability Statement confirms that the Climate sustainability principle has informed the design of the proposed development and will be used to inform the detailed design and construction stages.
- 7.12.5 ES Chapter 7 (Climate) also presents the findings of an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the climate. The assessment notes that there will be unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions resulting from both the construction and operation of the Proposed Development as materials, energy and fuel use, and transport would be required. An assessment of the magnitude and significance of these emissions has deemed them to be not significant.
- 7.12.6 The assessment concludes that climate change vulnerability has been assessed as not significant during construction and operational stages; in consideration of the measures already proposed no additional mitigation measures are proposed.
- 7.12.7 The proposals will reduce congestion and impacts in the centre of Witney by introducing west-facing slip roads at the A40 and B4022 junction to offer alternative routes for traffic in the Witney area in line with WOLP Policies OS4 and EH4. The proposals will also maximise opportunities for walking and cycling through the creation of a pedestrian/cyclist crossing for the signal option to the east of the proposed on-slip, in line with WOLP Policy T1.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1.1 Stantec is instructed by OCC ('The Applicant') to submit a planning application for a road junction improvement scheme at the A40/B4022 Shores Green junction known as the A40 Access to Witney project, which forms part of the A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor Project
- 8.1.2 The Proposed Development comprises:
- “the construction of two new west-facing slip roads at the Shores Green junction of the A40; an off-slip to allow eastbound vehicles to exit the A40 on to the B4022 towards Witney and an on-slip to allow westbound vehicles to enter the A40 from the B4022 at this junction.”*
- 8.1.3 The Proposed Development involves the following works:
- the construction of a new off-slip road to allow eastbound vehicles to exit the A40 on to the B4022 towards Witney;
 - the construction an on-slip to allow westbound vehicles to enter the A40 from the B4022 at this junction; and
 - the removal of two existing lay-bys which are located to the west of the A40 overbridge.
- 8.1.4 The Proposed Development is a direct response to alleviating the long standing and problematic congestion issues associated with the A40, long accepted as one of the largest traffic issues in Oxfordshire. The Proposed Development will reduce traffic flows and associated adverse impacts in the Bridge Street area and reduce air pollution in the Witney Air Quality Management Area to below the target set by legislation.
- 8.1.5 The improvement programme is considered necessary to mitigate the transport impact arising from the strategic development proposals contained within the WOLP and encourage greater use of sustainable and active modes of transports for trips along the A40 corridor.
- 8.1.6 The Proposed Development has been carefully deigned to deliver identified scheme objectives and represents essential infrastructure that will support the delivery of housing and employment growth in West Oxfordshire. The Proposed Development represents essential infrastructure that will support the delivery of housing and employment growth in West Oxfordshire and will deliver wide reaching benefits to users of the A40 along with improved facilities for walking and cycling will increase the attractiveness of the route for non-car users.
- 8.1.7 Overall, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with local planning policies including those contained within the WOLP and other material considerations including the NPPF and LTP4.
- 8.1.8 The benefits of the Proposed Development, as set out throughout this Statement, are considered to outweigh any limited adverse environmental impacts. Any impacts identified have been reduced and addressed through mitigation.
- 8.1.9 Overall, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with local planning policies and other material considerations including the NPPF and it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted without delay.

Appendix A Policy Schedule

Document and policy reference	Summary of relevant policy text
Principle of Development	
West Oxfordshire Local Plan	
Policy OS1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development)	Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
Policy OS2 (Locating development in the right places)	<p>All development should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be supported by all necessary infrastructure including that which is needed to enable access to superfast broadband.
WIT1 (East Witney SDA)	<p>Land to the east of Witney to accommodate a sustainable, integrated community that forms a positive addition to Witney, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) about 450 homes with a balanced and appropriate mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, including affordable housing. This will include c.30 homes on land adjacent to Stanton Harcourt Road (subject to landscape impact and flood risk) and c. 420 homes on land at Cogges Triangle (subject to landscape impact and surface water run-off). b) comprehensive development to be led by an agreed masterplan. c) development to be phased in accordance with the timing of provision of supporting infrastructure and facilities including the essential improvements to the Shore's Green junction onto the A40 and related highway measures. d) the provision of other supporting transport infrastructure, including mitigating the impact of traffic associated with the development; the provision of appropriate financial contributions towards LTP4 transport schemes; provision of appropriate public transport (services and infrastructure) serving the site; and provision of a comprehensive network for pedestrians and cyclists with good connectivity provided to adjoining areas, including a particular emphasis on improving the linkages across the Windrush Valley into the town centre consistent with the aims and objectives of the Windrush in Witney Project and to Hanborough Station. e) the provision of appropriate landscaping measures to mitigate the potential impact of development and associated infrastructure. f) the provision of appropriate financial contributions towards primary and secondary education capacity enhancements.

Document and policy reference	Summary of relevant policy text
	<p>g) biodiversity, landscape and public access enhancements within the Lower Windrush Valley including arrangements for future maintenance.</p> <p>h) provision of appropriate green infrastructure including allotments.</p> <p>i) appropriate measures to mitigate traffic noise.</p> <p>j) the conservation, and enhancement where possible, of the setting of the Cogges Scheduled Monument and the Witney and Cogges Conservation Area.</p> <p>k) the investigation, recording and safeguarding of the known and potential archaeological significance of the Area prior to any development taking place. The results of the investigation and recording should inform the final layout of the development and be deposited in a public archive.</p> <p>l) appropriate measures to mitigate flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage methods to ensure that post-development surface water run-off rates are attenuated to achieve a reduction in greenfield run-off rates. The sustainable drainage systems should be designed to provide a biodiversity enhancement.</p> <p>m) connection to the mains sewerage network which includes infrastructure upgrades where required including any necessary phasing arrangements.</p> <p>n) demonstrate the use of renewable energy, sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings. o) the developer will be required to set aside 5% of the developable plots for those wishing to undertake custom/self-build.</p>
Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 4	
Key Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve travel times and journey reliability along the A40 corridor, particularly between Witney and Oxford; ▪ Stimulate economic growth, in line with the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan; ▪ Improve safety and reduce environmental impacts such as air pollution and noise along the A40 corridor; ▪ To support jobs and housing growth and economic vitality; and ▪ To protect, and where possible enhance Oxfordshire’s environment and improve quality of life.
Design and Layout	
West Oxfordshire Local Plan	
WIT1 (East Witney SDA)	<p>Land to the east of Witney to accommodate a sustainable, integrated community that forms a positive addition to Witney, including:</p> <p>a) about 450 homes with a balanced and appropriate mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, including affordable housing. This will include c.30 homes on land adjacent to Stanton Harcourt Road (subject to</p>

Document and policy reference	Summary of relevant policy text
	<p>landscape impact and flood risk) and c. 420 homes on land at Cogges Triangle (subject to landscape impact and surface water run-off).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) comprehensive development to be led by an agreed masterplan. c) development to be phased in accordance with the timing of provision of supporting infrastructure and facilities including the essential improvements to the Shore's Green junction onto the A40 and related highway measures. d) the provision of other supporting transport infrastructure, including mitigating the impact of traffic associated with the development; the provision of appropriate financial contributions towards LTP4 transport schemes; provision of appropriate public transport (services and infrastructure) serving the site; and provision of a comprehensive network for pedestrians and cyclists with good connectivity provided to adjoining areas, including a particular emphasis on improving the linkages across the Windrush Valley into the town centre consistent with the aims and objectives of the Windrush in Witney Project and to Hanborough Station. e) the provision of appropriate landscaping measures to mitigate the potential impact of development and associated infrastructure. f) the provision of appropriate financial contributions towards primary and secondary education capacity enhancements. g) biodiversity, landscape and public access enhancements within the Lower Windrush Valley including arrangements for future maintenance. h) provision of appropriate green infrastructure including allotments. i) appropriate measures to mitigate traffic noise. j) the conservation, and enhancement where possible, of the setting of the Cogges Scheduled Monument and the Witney and Cogges Conservation Area. k) the investigation, recording and safeguarding of the known and potential archaeological significance of the Area prior to any development taking place. The results of the investigation and recording should inform the final layout of the development and be deposited in a public archive. l) appropriate measures to mitigate flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage methods to ensure that post-development surface water run-off rates are attenuated to achieve a reduction in greenfield run-off rates. The sustainable drainage systems should be designed to provide a biodiversity enhancement. m) connection to the mains sewerage network which includes infrastructure upgrades where required including any necessary phasing arrangements.

Document and policy reference	Summary of relevant policy text
	<p>n) demonstrate the use of renewable energy, sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings. o) the developer will be required to set aside 5% of the developable plots for those wishing to undertake custom/self-build.</p>
Policy OS4 (High Quality Design)	<p>High design quality is central to the strategy for West Oxfordshire. New development should respect the historic, architectural and landscape character of the locality, contribute to local distinctiveness and, where possible, enhance the character and quality of the surroundings and should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ demonstrate high quality, inclusive and sustainable design with the provision of a safe, pleasant, convenient and interesting environment where the quality of the public realm is enhanced and the likelihood of crime and fear of crime is reduced; ▪ not harm the use or enjoyment of land and buildings nearby including living conditions in residential properties; ▪ demonstrate resilience to future climate change, particularly increasing temperatures and flood risk, and the use of water conservation and management measures; ▪ conserve or enhance areas, buildings and features of historic, architectural and environmental significance, including both designated and non-designated heritage assets and habitats of biodiversity value; ▪ enhance local green infrastructure and its biodiversity, including the provision of attractive, safe and convenient amenity open space commensurate with the scale and type of development, with play space where appropriate.
Policy T2 (Highway Improvement Schemes)	<p>All development will be required to demonstrate safe access and an acceptable degree of impact on the local highway network. The Shores Green Slip Roads, Witney scheme is identified one of six strategic highway infrastructure schemes which will be safeguarded as part of allocated urban extensions.</p>
Policy T3 (Public transport, walking and cycling)	<p>All new development will be located and designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport.</p>
South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan	
SLD2 (Design)	<p>New development should demonstrate high quality and sustainable design which respects and enhances the historic, architectural and landscape character and quality of the surroundings having regard to the design principles set out in the accompanying text and in the West Oxfordshire Design Guide.</p>
Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 4	
Policy 07	<p>Oxfordshire County Council will work with operators and other partners to enhance the network of high quality, integrated public transport services, interchanges, and supporting infrastructure, and will support the development of quality Bus Partnerships and Rail Partnerships, where appropriate</p>
Policy 19	<p>Oxfordshire County Council will encourage the use of modes of travel associated with healthy and active lifestyles.</p>

Document and policy reference	Summary of relevant policy text
Policy 20	Oxfordshire County Council will carry out targeted safety improvements on walking and cycling routes to school, to encourage active travel and reduce pressure on school bus transport.
Policy 26	Oxfordshire County Council will aim to record, protect, maintain and improve the public rights of way network so that users are able to understand and enjoy their rights in a safe and responsible way.
Policy 34	<p>Oxfordshire County Council will require the layout and design of new developments to proactively encourage walking and cycling, especially for local trips, and allow developments to be served by frequent, reliable and efficient public transport. The policy states that to do this, they will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensure that developers promote cycling and walking for journeys associated with the new development, including through the provision of effective travel plans; ▪ require that all infrastructure associated with the developments is provided to appropriate design standards and to appropriate timescales; and ▪ set local routeing agreements where appropriate to protect environmentally sensitive locations from traffic generated by new developments.
Oxfordshire Street Design Guide	
Objective	Prioritise sustainable and active travel to help reduce congestion - Design streets and places in a way that reduces car use while promoting sustainable active travel modes to help combat the climate emergency. This means creating streets that are linked, well connected, safe and attractive for walking and cycling
Air Quality	
West Oxfordshire Local Plan	
OS1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development)	Achieving sustainable development for West Oxfordshire is likely to mean reducing reliance on the private car and encouraging the use of public transport.
OS3 (Prudent use of natural resources)	minimising waste and making adequate provision for the re-use and recycling of waste; and causing no deterioration and, where possible, achieving improvements in water or air quality
Policy T1 (Sustainable Transport)	Priority will be given to locating new development in areas with convenient access to a good range of services and facilities and where the need to travel by private car can be minimised, due to opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport, particularly where this would help to reduce traffic congestion on the routes around Oxford and the Air Quality Management Areas at Witney and Chipping Norton

Document and policy reference	Summary of relevant policy text
Policy T4 (Parking Provision)	The Council will work with partners to provide, maintain and manage an appropriate amount of off-street public car parking, particularly to support our town and village centres and to address issues of congestion and air quality
Policy EH3 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity)	Requiring a Habitats Regulations Assessment to be undertaken of any development proposal that is likely to have a significant adverse effect, either alone or in combination, on the Oxford Meadows SAC, particularly in relation to air quality and nitrogen oxide emissions and deposition
Policy EH8 (Environmental Protection)	Proposals which are likely to cause pollution or result in exposure to pollution will only be permitted if measures can be implemented to minimise risk to a level that provides a high standard of protection for health, environmental quality and amenity. The following issues require attention: air quality, contaminated land, artificial light, noise, water resources and waste.
South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan	
Policy SLT1 (Traffic Management)	Any proposals which would result in a significant increase in the volume of traffic on roads in the Plan area will be assessed in terms of their potential impact upon the environment and amenities of the Parish. Where necessary, the Parish Council will work with West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to identify any appropriate traffic management measures that will serve to mitigate the negative impacts of additional traffic generation
Landscape and Visual	
West Oxfordshire Local Plan	
Policy EH2 (Landscape Character)	Proposed Development should avoid causing pollution, especially noise and light, which has an adverse impact upon landscape character and should incorporate measures to maintain or improve the existing level of tranquillity and dark-sky quality, reversing existing pollution where possible. The policy further states that Special attention and protection will be given to the landscape and biodiversity of the Lower Windrush Valley Project, the Windrush in Witney Project Area and the Wychwood Project Area
Policy EH4 (Public realm and green infrastructure)	New development should: avoid the loss and fragmentation of the existing green infrastructure network and provide opportunities for walking and cycling connecting settlements to the countryside.
Policy EN13 (Historic landscape character)	<p>In determining applications that affect the historic character of the landscape or townscape, particular attention will be paid to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the age, distinctiveness, rarity, sensitivity and capacity of the particular historic landscape or townscape characteristics affected ▪ the extent to which key historic features resonant of the area's character, such as hedgerows, watercourses and woodland, will be retained or replicated

Document and policy reference	Summary of relevant policy text
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the degree to which the form and layout of the development will respect and build on the preexisting historic character (including e.g. street and building layouts) the degree to which the form, scale, massing, density, height, layout, landscaping, use, alignment and external appearance of the development conserves or enhances the special historic character of its surroundings
West Oxfordshire Local Plan	
Policy SLE1 (Countryside and Landscape)	Proposals should in particular conserve and where possible enhance the intrinsic character and beauty of the landscape, including trees, hedges, woodland; rural landscape and the visual setting of the settlements; the setting of landmark buildings; tranquillity and the perception of remoteness; darks skies; historic droeways and public rights of way; and historic landscape patterns and enclosures
Policy SLE2 (Countryside Access)	Development should protect and enhance public rights of way for the benefit of user experience of the intrinsic beauty and character of the countryside.
Policy SLE3 (Existing and Proposed Green Corridors)	New development is expected to conserve and where possible enhance their multi-functional role.
Policy SLE6 (Heritage Assets)	Recognises the contribution of new development to local distinctiveness and sense of place of such features
Historic Environment	
West Oxfordshire Local Plan	
Core Objective CO14	Establishes a commitment to conserve and enhance the character and significance of West Oxfordshire’s high quality natural, historic and cultural environment recognising and promoting their wider contribution to people’s quality of life and social and economic well-being both within the District and beyond.
Policy EH9 (Historic Environment)	All development proposals should conserve and/or enhance the special character, appearance and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire’s historic environment, including the significance of the District’s heritage assets, in a manner appropriate to their historic character and significance and in a viable use that is consistent with their conservation
Policy EH14 (Registered historic parks and gardens)	Proposals that would affect, directly or indirectly, the significance of a Historic Park or Garden on Historic England’s Register of Historic Parks and Gardens will be permitted where the proposals conserve or enhance those features integral to the special character, design or appearance of the Historic Park and Garden, and ensure that development does not detract from the special historic interest, enjoyment, layout, design, character, appearance, or setting of the garden, including key views within, into, and out of the Historic Park or Garden

Document and policy reference	Summary of relevant policy text
Policy EH15 (Scheduled monuments and other nationally important archaeological remains)	Proposals for development that would affect, directly or indirectly, the significance of Scheduled Monuments or non-scheduled archaeological remains of demonstrably equal significance will be permitted where the proposals would conserve or enhance the significance of the Monument or remains, including the contribution to that significance of the setting of the Monument or remains. Nationally important archaeological remains (whether scheduled or demonstrably of equivalent significance) should be preserved in situ.
Policy EH16 (Non-designated heritage assets)	When considering proposals that would affect, directly or indirectly, non-listed buildings, non-scheduled, non-nationally important archaeological remains, or non-Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, as such assets are also irreplaceable; the presumption will be in favour of the avoidance of harm or loss. A balanced judgement will be made having regard to this presumption, the significance of the heritage asset, the scale of any harm or loss, and the benefits of the development
West Oxfordshire Local Plan	
Policy SLE6 (Heritage Assets)	Highlights the importance of conserving and enhancing designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting within the parish. This includes 'taking into account their significance and contribution to local distinctiveness and sense of place in accordance with national legislation, policy and guidance for the historic environment'.
Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 4	
Policy 01	Oxfordshire County Council will work to ensure that the transport network supports sustainable economic and housing growth in the county, whilst protecting and where possible enhancing its environmental and heritage assets
Noise	
West Oxfordshire Local Plan	
Policy EH2 (Landscape Character)	Proposed Development should avoid causing pollution, especially noise and light, which has an adverse impact upon landscape character and should incorporate measures to maintain or improve the existing level of tranquillity and dark-sky quality, reversing existing pollution where possible
Policy EH8 (Environmental Protection)	Proposals which are likely to cause pollution or result in exposure to pollution will only be permitted if measures can be implemented to minimise risk to a level that provides a high standard of protection for health, environmental quality and amenity. The following issues require attention: air quality, contaminated land, artificial light, noise, water resources and waste.
South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan	

Document and policy reference	Summary of relevant policy text
Policy SLT1 (Countryside and Landscape)	Where necessary, the Parish Council will work with West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to identify any appropriate traffic management measures that will serve to mitigate the negative impacts [including noise] of additional traffic generation
Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 4	
Paragraph 52	Growing road traffic levels risk a deterioration in quality of life for many residents, for example due to noise
Biodiversity	
West Oxfordshire Local Plan	
Policy EH2 (Landscape Character)	Special attention and protection will be given to the landscape and biodiversity of the Lower Windrush Valley Project, the Windrush in Witney Project Area and the Wychwood Project Area.
Policy EH3 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity)	Biodiversity shall be protected and enhanced to achieve an overall net gain in biodiversity and minimise impacts on geodiversity, including by: ensuring development works towards achieving the aims and objectives of the CTAs and Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs); all major and minor applications demonstrating a net gain in biodiversity where possible and all development incorporating biodiversity enhancement features
Oxfordshire Street Design Guide (2016)	
Additional Objective	Use land efficiently whilst respecting the existing landscape character, enhances biodiversity and as a minimum, leads to no net loss of habitat.
Flood Risk and Drainage	
West Oxfordshire Local Plan	
Policy EH7 (Flood Risk)	Flood risk will be managed using the sequential, risk-based approach, set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, of avoiding flood risk to people and property where possible and managing any residual risk (taking account of the impacts of climate change)". Specifically for SuDs, the policy states that in assessing proposals for development, sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) to manage run-off and support improvements in water quality and pressures on sewer infrastructure will be integrated into the site design, maximising their habitat value and ensuring their long term maintenance.
Policy EH8 (Environmental Protection)	Proposals which are likely to cause pollution or result in exposure to sources of pollution or risk to safety, will only be permitted if measures can be implemented to minimise pollution and risk to a level that provides a high standard of protection for health, environmental quality and amenity... Proposals for development will only be acceptable provided there is no adverse impact on water bodies and groundwater resources, in terms of their quantity, quality and important ecological features.

Document and policy reference	Summary of relevant policy text
Policy OS3 (Prudent use of natural resources)	Need to minimise the risk of flooding; make use of appropriate sustainable drainage systems; use recycled and energy efficient materials; and minimise waste and make adequate provision for the re-use and recycling of waste.
Policy OS4 (High quality design)	Proposals should demonstrate resilience to future climate change, particularly increasing temperatures and flood risk, and water conservation.
The West Oxfordshire Design Guide (2016)	
Design Guide 13 – Biodiversity & Protected Species	Watercourses – including ditches, streams and rivers – together with lakes, ponds, support a wide range of wildlife. Water Voles and amphibians (most notably the great crested newt) are protected by law, so if your application affects a watercourse, body of water or surrounding habitat, you should first contact the Species Officer at English Nature, or the County Ecologist. Reducing flood risk, by increasing infiltration and therefore slowing run-off into watercourses.
Geology	
West Oxfordshire Local Plan	
Policy EH8 (Environmental Protection)	Proposals which are likely to cause pollution or result in exposure to pollution will only be permitted if measures can be implemented to minimise risk to a level that provides a high standard of protection for health, environmental quality and amenity. The following issues require attention: air quality, contaminated land, artificial light, noise, water resources and waste.
Sustainability	
West Oxfordshire Local Plan	
Policy OS4 (High quality design)	Proposals should demonstrate resilience to future climate change, particularly increasing temperatures and flood risk, and water conservation.
Policy T1 (Sustainable Transport)	All new development will be designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Proposals for new developments that have significant transport implications either in themselves or in combination with other proposals will be required to include a Transport Assessment (TA), and a travel plan, in accordance with County Council requirements.
Policy T2 (Highway Improvement Schemes)	All development will be required to demonstrate safe access and an acceptable degree on the local highway network. Development proposals that are likely to generate significant volumes of traffic, shall be supported by a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan. Where necessary to mitigate the impact of development and support planned growth, contributions will be sought from new development towards new and/or enhanced highway infrastructure either directly as part of the development or in the form of an appropriate financial contribution.

Document and policy reference	Summary of relevant policy text
Policy EH8 (Environmental Protection)	Proposals which are likely to cause pollution or result in exposure to pollution will only be permitted if measures can be implemented to minimise risk to a level that provides a high standard of protection for health, environmental quality and amenity. The following issues require attention: air quality, contaminated land, artificial light, noise, water resources and waste.
Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 4	
Policy 17	Oxfordshire County Council will seek to ensure through cooperation with the districts and city councils, that the location of development makes the best use of existing and planned infrastructure, provides new or improved infrastructure and reduces the need to travel and supports walking, cycling and public transport
Policy 23	Oxfordshire County Council will work to reduce the emissions footprint of transport assets and operation where economically viable, taking into account energy consumption and the use of recycled materials
Movement and Accessibility	
West Oxfordshire Local Plan	
CO1	Enable new development, services and facilities of an appropriate scale and type in locations which will help improve the quality of life of local communities and where the need to travel, particularly by car, can be minimised.
CO7	To support sustainable economic growth which adds value to the local economy.
CO11	Maximise the opportunity for walking, cycling and use of public transport.
CO15	Contribute to reducing the causes and adverse impacts of climate change.
CO16	Enable improvements in water and air quality.
Policy OS1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development)	Presumption in favour of sustainable development – tackling congestion on key routes including the A40 and improving air quality.
Policy OS2 (Locating development in the right places)	Locating development in the right places.

Document and policy reference	Summary of relevant policy text
Policy OS5 (Supporting Infrastructure)	Supporting infrastructure – facilities and services that are needed to support future growth, including public transport.
Policy E6 (Town centres)	The Council will enhance the attractiveness of all town centres by addressing issues of publicity, security, parking and accessibility.
Policy T1 (Sustainable Transport)	All new development will be designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Proposals for new developments that have significant transport implications either in themselves or in combination with other proposals will be required to include a Transport Assessment (TA), and a travel plan, in accordance with County Council requirements.
Policy T2 (Highway Improvement Schemes)	All development will be required to demonstrate safe access and an acceptable degree of impact on the local highway network. The Shores Green Slip Roads, Witney scheme is identified one of six strategic highway infrastructure schemes which will be safeguarded as part of allocated urban extensions
Policy T3 (Public transport, walking and cycling)	All new development will be located and designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport
Witney Transport Strategy	<p>The Witney Transport Strategy was developed to support Main Modifications to the draft West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2031 published in November 2016 that has seen the proposed level of development around the District increase. The strategy considers Witney with potential impact of 4,400 additional residential development suggested. The strategy investigates proposed impact using Oxfordshire Strategic Model to assess effect on the existing highway network in the Witney catchment area.</p> <p>The study indicate that proposed development would have a large impact on the highway network. In order to mitigate the detrimental impact of proposed development on the highway network, two possible sustainable solutions have been developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Option One proposes implementation of a partial gyratory system operating in a clockwise direction using a combination of the B4022 West End/A4095 Bridge Street and A4095 Mill Street plus the new WEL2 link incorporating retention of two-way flows. ▪ Option Two proposes full closure of Bridge Street to general traffic (with potential to retain access for public transport vehicles) and continued accommodation of two-way traffic flows along the B4022 West End, A4095 Mill Street and new WEL2 link.

Document and policy reference	Summary of relevant policy text
	The results of each option indicate that implementation of either proposal would be likely to have a significant beneficial impact on traffic conditions and associated air quality issues along
Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 4	
Goal 1	Support jobs and housing growth and economic vitality
Goal 2	Reduce emissions, enhance air quality and support transition to a low carbon economy
Goal 3	Protect, and where possible enhance Oxfordshire's environment and improve the quality of life, including public health, air quality, safety and individual wellbeing.
Policy 01	Oxfordshire County Council will work to ensure that the transport network supports sustainable economic and housing growth in the county, whilst protecting and where possible enhancing its environmental and heritage assets, and supporting the health and wellbeing of its residents
Policy 03	Oxfordshire County Council will support measures and innovation that make more efficient use of transport network capacity by reducing the proportion of single occupancy car journeys and encouraging a greater proportion of journeys to be made on foot, by bicycle, and/or by public transport.
Policy 07	Work with operators and partners to enhance the network of high quality, integrated public transport services, interchanges and supporting infrastructure.
Policy 17	Oxfordshire County Council will seek to ensure through cooperation with the districts and city councils, that the location of development makes the best use of existing and planned infrastructure, provides new or improved infrastructure and reduces the need to travel and supports walking, cycling and public transport
Policy 24	Seek to avoid negative environmental impacts of transport and where possible provide environmental improvements.
Policy 28	Consult from an early stage in the development of schemes.
Policy 33	Seek external funding to support the delivery of transport infrastructure priorities as outlined in the Strategic Economic Plan and Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy.



Design with
community
in mind