

To: Lydia Herbert

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This is the response of Eynsham Parish Council.

A40 EYNESHAM PARK & RIDE AND BUS LANE SCHEME CONSULTATION

1. Are you supportive of the principle of improved public transport on this stretch of the A40?

Yes.

2. What best describes your opinion of the latest proposals?

Eynsham Parish Council can support neither proposal.

3. Please provide any comment you have on the design of A40 Park & Ride and Bus Lane, such as the design of the Park & Ride site, bus lane, foot/cycleway or pedestrian crossings.

The Travel Patterns figures (p1) differ from the widely questioned figures used in the Investing in the A40 consultation. While the current ones are sourced from the 2011 census, they are only for bus, car and van commuters from south west Oxfordshire commuting eastwards or within Oxfordshire itself. This excludes all other traffic in both directions along the A40, such as westbound commuters, and through traffic and commercial lorries which form a substantial part of the traffic problems. Not even the basic traffic volume figures relied on are presented. This does not give a true picture of A40 use.

The proposed design of the A40 takes no consideration of either the requirements of the emerging Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan or the expansion set out in the draft West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2031. The latter includes (at 9.5.32) a strategic urban extension to the west of Eynsham of around 1,000 homes. This also says, 'To the north of the A40 near Eynsham, land has been identified as having the potential to create a new Garden Village of around 2,200 homes (with further scope for expansion in the longer term).'

The Garden Village will require access to the A40 via Cuckoo Lane and Lower Road and possibly direct access on to the north side of the A40. Any urban extension to the west off Eynsham will require a new access road to the south of the A40. Aside from widening the approaches of the Eynsham roundabout, the design proposals, including the siting of the park & ride roundabout, make no allowance for the impact of the thousands of extra vehicle journeys a day this development will generate.

Eynsham Parish Council does not support the proposed park & ride. The Investing in the A40 consultation responses (see Response Report) have been ignored. The proposed park & ride received little support, especially a site at Eynsham. Those who did favour a park & ride considered it should be further to the west, such as Witney, as a better location. This is the preferred option of the Parish Council. If a park & ride is intended to serve commuters to Oxford from Witney and Carterton it makes little sense to site it half-way along their journey. A site closer to where the commute starts would reduce traffic along the Witney to Eynsham A40 route as well.

A pay park & ride would also exacerbate the existing problem in Eynsham of commuters parking for free in village streets and taking the S1 to Oxford. This problem has already increased since OCC withdrew bus subsidies and the 18 bus ceased running.

One of the concerns of the Investing in the A40 consultees was the speeding up of traffic flows on the A40. However, the current proposals result in an additional roundabout, four controlled pedestrian and horse crossings, the retention of the Witney Road and Cassington traffic signals and a reduction in the speed limit to 50mph.

From the limited information in the consultation document, it would seem that not all of the A40 within this area is to, or needs to be 50mph. This would, in any case, be ignored by most A40 drivers. As the only areas where this seems necessary is when there is a shared bus route, the most effective method of speed reduction would be to adjust limit bus speeds to 50mph on those stretches.

The retention of the no right turn junction at Witney Road will exacerbate the existing problem of requiring eastbound traffic to rat run through village streets to access the Eynsham roundabout. The OCC Cabinet's 21 July 2015 Capital Governance Approval Document (at p220) says 'On-going concern about the junctions onto A40 in the Eynsham area, particularly the traffic signals at Witney Road, indicated that there may be benefits for all traffic if these were re-designed.' This has been ignored.

If the purpose of the dedicated eastbound bus lane and signal controlled bus gates is to increase the flow of commuter buses, in-lane bus stops would be counter-productive, forcing all bus traffic to travel at the speed of the most crowded bus.

The Parish Council objects to Option 4 for the footway/cycleway on the north. This is contrary to the recommendation of most cycle users and cycle groups. If the design cannot sustain north and south lanes as at present, the Parish Council's preferred option would be Option 5, with the cycleway to the south:

- a) Most cyclists come from Eynsham and areas to the south of the A40 and go to Oxford, also on the south, so do not need to cross the A40. A minority, from Witney and Cassington, only need to cross once. Option 5 would require most to cross the A40 twice.

- b) It would also increase journey times for all users. Based on an average journey time from Eynsham Roundabout to Wolvercote Roundabout of 20-22 minutes at an average commuter speed (10-12mph) the time lost with Option 4 would be 15-20%. This includes having to use controlled crossings, which would also delay motor traffic on the A40.
- c) A cycle route only on the north would increase the danger in the hours of darkness. The majority of cyclists, like motor vehicles, are eastbound in the mornings and westbound in the evenings. In the winter months, westbound cyclists on the north side would be facing, and relatively close to, the eastbound vehicular traffic. This can cause increased risk from the dazzle effect from headlamps. Bright lights fitted on cycles can also cause confusion for oncoming eastbound drivers (for whom the cycle headlamps would be immediately to the left on their outside). See DfT Shared Use Routes for Pedestrians and Cyclists, TSO 2012.
- d) With a south cycleway under Option 5, the majority of cyclists will be heading the same way as the motor traffic in the hours of evening darkness. In the morning, even in the shortest days there is reasonable daylight by the key commuting hours of 8-9am so eastbound cyclists facing the oncoming westbound motor traffic, and the motor traffic, would not have problems due to headlamps.
- e) The increased danger and journey times with Option 4 would act as a deterrent to cyclists using this route, contrary to OCC policy for encouraging cycle use and DfT guidelines for the provision of cycle routes.

The consultation document refers to several Public Rights of Way to the south of the A40 which emerge into it or cross over it, namely 152/5 (between Eynsham Roundabout and Cassington Junction), 152/2 (to the east of the south side lay-by) and access to 229/12 at the south side by the bridge over Duke's Cut/railway lines. It is stated that the 'PRoWs are less well utilised, and through consultation with OCC, no further crossings are deemed necessary'. No data on pedestrian use is provided to support this.

- a) In fact, these PRoWs together with the south footway/cycleway see considerable use, particularly in summer months, as part of circular routes for walkers, joggers and other groups (including local Guide and Scout groups on day/night hikes). Removing the footway/cycleway on the south side of the A40 through Option 4 would make these routes almost inaccessible except for dangerous uncontrolled crossings of the A40.
- b) There are a number of boat moorings on the Duke's Cut which are occupied year-round and the south footway is used by residents to access the convenience shop facilities and public transport at Wolvercote Roundabout. Option 4 would require residents to make a long detour bridging the Duke's Cut, the Oxford Canal and Godstow Road.
- c) The 'Field Manoeuvres' music festival has taken place in early September in the fields south of the A40 at Cassington and to the east of Marlborough Pool for the last

few years and is planned to continue in the future. Removing the south footway will completely prevent pedestrian access to the site, requiring festival visitors to make uncontrolled crossings of the A40 in order to access the facilities in Cassington.

- d) More generally, there are several other areas to the south of the A40 for which pedestrian access would be compromised if the south side footway is removed, including, but not limited to:
 - i) The registered common land which is part of Yarnton Mead (currently accessed via a pedestrian gate on the south side footway at SP478107 opposite the southern end of FP 420/21. The southern footpath is not a PRow, but the popularity of the route with walkers/joggers is amply shown by the large information board on the SSSI which has been installed at the location. This access also allows walkers to use FP 420/18 and the north bank of the Thames
 - ii) Marlborough Pool, used by many anglers from the ODAA. The removal of the south side footway requires anyone wishing to go to the site on foot from the north of Eynsham or points adjacent to cross the A40 twice.

It is stated (at p4) that the majority of services are situated within the southern verge. In which case a south footway/cycleway would have a lesser impact, as shown on the appraisal table (p6).

Also, Option 4 would not minimise the potential impacts on the SAC, (p5) as it would place the heavy lorry traffic closer to the Site. Option 5 would provide the buffer of the footway/cycleway.

The consultation document makes allowance (p14) for a 'proposed possible alignment for A40/A44 link and junction'. A north footway/cycleway would require a controlled junction and a further delay for cyclists and motorists. Option 5 would not require this.

With regard to the 'Bridge Constraint Solution' (p8) the Parish Council agrees that Option 2 is preferred as being the safer and not causing delay.

Eynsham Parish Council is disappointed that the County Council (OCC) have only provided a 15 page document for consultation on this major, and expensive, project, which is nothing more than the posters used in its public presentations. No supplementary documents have been made available to consultees on the OCC consultation website to justify or explain the basis for the conclusions drawn in the final document and to allow consultees to make informed comments. It is queried whether this meets OCC's own key principles of consultation, which requires OCC to 'keep an open mind and run consultations in an open and honest way' and 'be clear about what we are consulting on and what we will do with the findings'.