



**Oxfordshire
Highways**

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Cogges Link Road Design and Access Statement

B0834600/Doc/PA/DAS July 2008

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Oxfordshire Highways
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Design and Access Statement

Document No : B0834600/Doc/PA/DAS

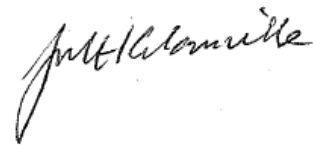
Revision No : 01

Date : July 2008

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Contents

		Page
1	Introduction	3
2	Design	6
2.1	Site Appraisal	6
2.2	Use	7
2.3	Scope	8
2.4	Layout	8
2.5	Scale	10
2.6	Landscaping	12
2.7	Appearance	12
2.8	Sustainability	13
3	Access	14
3.1	Policy Approach	14
3.2	Consultation	14
3.3	How Access will be Achieved	14

1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The town of Witney lies west of Oxford close to the A40 east west trunk road. It straddles the River Windrush but has few vehicular crossings of the river. The principal crossing is Bridge Street which is currently used by around 30,000 vehicles per day. The lack of alternative routes is a major factor in traffic congestion in the town, in particular on Bridge Street and within the Conservation Area (CA). The area of Bridge Street was designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in March 2005 by West Oxfordshire District Council.
- 1.1.2 Oxfordshire Highways is proposing to build a new town distributor road known as the Cogges Link Road. It would connect Witan Way (south of Witney town centre) to the B4022 at Oxford Hill at the junction with Jubilee Way (on the eastern outskirts of the town), extending around the south and east of Cogges (see figure 2). The road aims to relieve the congested town centre road network, especially Bridge Street, which is the only town centre river crossing. Bridge Street is a narrow road with complex, low capacity junctions and is one of the main radial routes into and out of the town. Relieving this route of traffic would also bring benefits to public transport services such as the Oxford to Witney Premium Bus Route, thereby improving journey times and increasing reliability. In order to maximize the benefits from Cogges Link, it is proposed that complementary measures and environmental improvements in the town centre would also be undertaken once the link road is open to traffic.
- 1.1.3 The proposal for Cogges Link Road has been under consideration for many years and after consultation exercises and consideration at Local Plan Inquiries, was granted planning permission in 1997. Assembling the required finance delayed the start and permission lapsed in 2002. A further planning application was submitted in 2004 but this was withdrawn pending the outcome of an Inquiry into the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, where issues were raised about the scheme as a part of the planned highway network. These issues have now been resolved and a new planning application is being submitted.
- 1.1.4 Cogges Link Road has been planned along with other transport infrastructure measures, which could further reduce town centre traffic. These measures aim to meet the needs of the town arising from recent and planned future development. In particular, the North East Witney housing estate (comprising 1,200 dwellings) and its associated distributor road, Jubilee Way, were planned in conjunction with the Cogges Link Road. The northern end of Cogges Link Road would be situated opposite Jubilee Way, at the existing signal-controlled crossroads on Oxford Hill. Cogges Link and Jubilee Way together would fulfil a town distributor road function and meet the objective of taking traffic away from Bridge Street, the conservation area and the town centre generally.
- 1.1.5 Oxfordshire Highways have sought to minimise the impacts of the scheme and have carried out reviews of the previously consented scheme. These have identified environmentally beneficial modifications that have been included in the scheme now submitted for planning permission (Section 1.2).
- 1.1.6 A full list of the scheme Drawings & figures referred to in this report are found in section 1.3.

1.2 The Cogges Link Road Proposal

- 1.2.1 The 1.1 mile (1.8km) long road would be a single lane two-way road with a 40mph (70kph) speed limit. The carriageway would be 7.3m wide throughout the length, with local widening at junctions. There would be a 3m wide footway and cycleway on the north side between Witan Way and the Stanton Harcourt Road, linking to Cogges.
- 1.2.2 South of Oxford Hill, a new junction would be constructed with Cogges Hill Road to give access into Cogges. The road would continue south around Cogges, before passing under Stanton Harcourt Road, where a new bridge would be constructed. The majority of this length would be in cutting and the excavated material would be used for the embankment across the floodplain and a noise bund between the new road and Cogges. The slopes of Cogges Hill would be re-graded where they meet the cutting and planting would be undertaken to mitigate any landscape, visual and ecological impacts. The line of the road would go through the play area south of Cogges, so a replacement area would be provided to the north of Blakes Avenue. The play equipment would be resited on the remaining section of the original play area.
- 1.2.3 From the new bridge at Stanton Harcourt Road, the road crosses the floodplain to meet the existing roundabout at the junction of Witan Way and Station Lane. This section of the road would be constructed on an embankment, which rises to a crest approximately 4.5m above existing ground level between the two branches of the River Windrush. An embankment of this height is required in order to provide sufficient headroom, at the two river bridges, for walkers to be able to use the footpath and access the country park either side of the proposed road. New planting would be provided within and adjacent to the highway (subject to landowner's agreement) to reduce the landscape and visual impact of the embankment when viewed from Cogges and the country park. The two river bridges would each be single span, which would allow views under them and for water to pass through, even under flood conditions.
- 1.2.4 A detailed flood study has determined that the embankment will only marginally impact on the Environment Agency's Windrush storm flood plain. Flood compensation will be provide within the footprint of the scheme. Passageways, tunnels and shelves within culverts would be constructed to enable animals to find their way through the embankment and fencing would be used to prevent them from attempting to cross the road. As compensation for public land lost under the footprint of the road, an area of land to the east of the Windrush would become part of the country park, with a new car park accessed from the Cogges Link Road. This would be linked to the existing park with a new footbridge over the river. An off-carriageway cycleway would be provided along the north side of the road, between Witan Way and Stanton Harcourt Road, which would link into Cogges.
- 1.2.5 Street lighting would only be used at the junctions at each end of the road, minimising the visual intrusion of the road, in darkness and during the day. Low level lighting of the combined cycle way/footway between Cogges and Witan Way could be considered if suitable vandal proof lighting can be located.
- 1.2.6 Rain water falling on the road would be stored and released into watercourses

Oxfordshire Highways

Cogges Link Road

Design and Access Statement

at no greater rate than current flows off the existing agricultural land. Storage lagoons would attenuate flows, filter the water before it was discharged and would also provide additional wildlife habitats.

- 1.2.7 The road would be surfaced with lower noise generating material and maximum use would be made of recycled materials in the road construction.
- 1.2.8 It is expected that, should all the relevant permissions be given, pre-works and environmental mitigation would begin in October 2009, prior to the main works that would be completed in March 2012.

1.3 Scheme Drawings and Figures

- 1.3.1 Details of the scheme design are shown in the following drawings, which have been submitted as part of this application, and which should be referred to by the reader:

Drawings

B0834600/Dwg/CLR/01	Location Plan
B0834600/Dwg/CLR/02	Scheme Plan with Planning Application Boundary
B0834600/Dwg/CLR/03	Scheme Plan
B0834600/Dwg/CLR/04	Longitudinal Section
B0834600/Dwg/CLR/05	West Windrush Overbridge
B0834600/Dwg/CLR/06	East Windrush Overbridge
B0834600/Dwg/CLR/07	Stanton Harcourt Road Underbridge General Arrangement
B0834600/Dwg/CLR/08	Typical Sections
B0834600/Dwg/CLR/09	Witan Way / Cogges Link Junction
B0834600/Dwg/CLR/10	Oxford Hill / Cogges Link Junction
B0834600/Dwg/CLR/11	Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Proposals
B0834600/Dwg/CLR/15	Land Requirements
B0834600/Dwg/CLR/16	Land Reference Plan
Illustrative Drawings for Information Only	
B0834600/Dwg/CLR/12	Play Area at Eton Close
B0834600/Dwg/CLR/13	Replacement Public Open Space
B0834600/Dwg/CLR/14	Lake and Meadows Country Park (drawing in three parts)

List of Figures

1	Location Plan
2	The Submitted Scheme
3	Alternative Route (Shores Green)
4	Cycle and Pedestrian Accidents in and Around Witney
5	Car Accidents in and Around Witney
6	The Submitted Scheme Drainage Proposals
7	The Submitted Scheme Long Section
8	Typical Sections
9	West Windrush Overbridge General Arrangement
10	East Windrush Overbridge General Arrangement

11	Stanton Harcourt Road Underbridge General Arrangement
12	Traffic
13	West Oxfordshire Local Plan Planning Constraints
14	Other Rural Designations and Planning Constraints
15	Geology
16	Topography
17	Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Proposals
18	Landscape Character
19	Visual Impact
20	Ecology
21	Cultural Heritage Sites
22	Lakes and Meadows Country Park
23	Existing Public Open Space
24	Replacement Public Open Space
25	Property Noise Levels
26	Air Quality

2 Design

2.1 Site Appraisal

2.1.1 The area south and east of Witney overlies extensive river gravel deposits and its character has been heavily modified by mineral extraction. The River Windrush flows from northwest to south around Witney town centre. The Windrush is a tributary of the Thames and forms part of the Upper Thames Tributaries catchment covering approximately 27,200 hectares of the Thames Valley and surrounding higher ground. There is little woodland, although native hedgerows line some fields and willows and tall poplars mark the line of the river. Land use within the study area is predominantly rough pasture, which is low lying and flat. Agricultural land classification reveals that much of the land within the study area is “best and most versatile” agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a). Fields are generally small and irregular in shape. Witney Lake and Meadows Country Park, owned by Witney Town Council, lies between the two arms of the Windrush east of the town centre. Public footpaths cross agricultural land east of Cogges and follow the line of the river in places.

2.1.2 Local development comprises the residential areas of Cogges and Witney to the north and west of the scheme, with a large industrial area to the south west of the scheme, south of Witney. Major linear infrastructure is evident throughout the area, with the A40 to the south and lines of electricity pylons to the east.

2.1.3 A large proportion of the area west of Cogges and the Stanton Harcourt Road is part of the historic floodplain of the River Windrush. This is generally low lying, below 80m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), and is based on the alluvium of the floodplain and associated river terraces. To the west, beyond the floodplain, the town of Witney lies on a low ridge of just over 80m AOD. To the east of Cogges

Oxfordshire Highways

Cogges Link Road

Design and Access Statement

and Stanton Harcourt Road the land rises in an easterly direction to a ridge running approximately north-south at just over 105m AOD. This higher ground continues south of the A40 in a south-westerly direction, dropping to around 90m AOD in the vicinity of Springhill Farm.

- 2.1.4 The vegetation of the study area is generally influenced by the differing topography and land use of the areas either side of Cogges and Stanton Harcourt Road. The river channels are lined with riverside trees and scrub, and there are several small blocks of woodland to the west near Witan Way and just south of Cogges Manor. Some intermittent scrub and woodland is also to be found adjacent to the Station Lane Industrial Estate. The agricultural land on the river terraces, on the east side of the floodplain, is divided by substantial unmanaged hedgerows and bounded to the south side by a large linear woodland belt adjacent to the A40. The A40 embankments have intermittent tree and shrub cover. To the east of Cogges low managed hedgerows in varying condition, with intermittent hedgerow trees, divide the fields. Some larger groups of trees occur towards the top of the ridge, such as Cogges Wood. There are substantial hedgerows between the farmland and Cogges Hill Road and Oxford Hill. New tree planting has been undertaken within the cemetery boundary south of Oxford Hill.

2.2 Use

- 2.2.1 Cogges Link Road forms a critical part of the Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan highway network for Witney and has been planned for many years in conjunction with other schemes (refer to paragraph 1.1.4). It aims to relieve the congested town centre road network, especially Bridge Street, as well as meet the needs of the town arising from development.
- 2.2.2 The Oxfordshire Structure Plan sets out the framework for provision of motorised travel networks in Policy T6, however no schemes are specifically referenced. It notes that it is the role of the Local Transport Plan to identify network improvement schemes, and that land required for such schemes shall be safeguarded in the relevant Local Plan. In paragraph 4.24 however, the Structure Plan does note the Cogges Link Road as one of two major schemes that are expected to be programmed over the period 2006-2011.
- 2.2.3 Policy T4 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan safeguards land for a number of highways schemes, one of which is the Cogges Link Road. It is also noted (Paragraph 9.33) that the Cogges Link Road is one of two road proposals from the 1997 Local Plan which have yet to be built, and comments that without an additional river crossing in Witney there is little opportunity to improve conditions in the Bridge Street area.
- 2.2.4 In its section on specific strategies for West Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire County Council's second Local Transport Plan (2006-11) proposes the Cogges Link Road as a solution to three main problems: congestion, air quality and a poor street environment. It is noted that the new relief road would remove traffic from the town centre and Bridge Street in particular, and should enable traffic management measures to be undertaken to reduce or slow traffic in the historic town centre streets, improving the environmental quality of the central area especially for shoppers and visitors. Cogges Link Road supports the LTP objectives by:

Oxfordshire Highways

Cogges Link Road

Design and Access Statement

- (a) **Tackling congestion** – the scheme would reduce traffic in the town centre improving it for public transport.
- (b) **Delivering accessibility** – the reduction of traffic in the town centre would allow the installation of a range of complementary measures which would improve access. Public transport would also have less congested access to the town centre.
- (c) **Safer Roads** –traffic modelling demonstrates that the implementation of the Cogges Link Road would result in fewer accidents. The town centre would be a safer place and a more pleasant environment for pedestrians.
- (d) **Better Air Quality** - by reducing traffic in the town centre the Cogges Link Road would improve the air quality, a priority in the designated AQMA.
- (e) **Improving Street Environment** –reducing traffic in the town centre would allow complementary measures to go ahead, improving the street environment for the residents of Witney

2.2.5 As well as vehicular traffic Cogges Link Road will also provide new facilities for cyclists and pedestrians creating a new link between the existing facilities in Cogges and Witan Way.

2.3 Scope

2.3.1 The Cogges Link Road would have a total length of 1.1 miles (1.8km), extending around the outside of the Cogges development from Witan Way to Oxford Hill. Alternatives considered historically have looked at different lengths and locations for the road, including a shorter route extending only to the Stanton Harcourt Road.

2.3.2 The scheme as proposed today is considered to be the optimum for the location, as it provides a complete link around Cogges, and particularly as it connects to Jubilee Way, providing a complete distributor road on the east side of the town. It also provides the best solution to the congestion problems of Witney, with the greatest reduction in traffic in the town centre and Bridge Street areas.

2.4 Layout

2.4.1 In accordance with PPS1, Policy G2 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and Policy BE2 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, the Cogges Link Road is considered to incorporate a high quality and appropriate layout, as described below.

2.4.2 The layout of the road has been dictated by the following physical features and the standards set out in the Highways Agency 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges'.

- Existing Highway Network
- The Branches of the river Windrush
- Cogges Estate
- Location and Level of Stanton Harcourt Road as it crosses the A40
- The topography of Cogges Hill

Oxfordshire Highways

Cogges Link Road

Design and Access Statement

Horizontal Alignment

- 2.4.3 At either end, Cogges Link Road has been fixed at the location of the existing junctions on Witan Way and Oxford Hill.
- 2.4.4 The route of the road where it crosses the river Windrush has been chosen to limit the impact to the river corridor.
- 2.4.5 At Stanton Harcourt Road the road passes close to the A40 to take advantage of the height of the approach embankment to the bridge over the A40.
- 2.4.6 To the east of Cogges the route has been chosen to minimise the impact on the adjacent properties without moving too far up the hillside. Cogges Link will join Oxford Hill, forming a cross roads with Jubilee Way and acting as an extension of the north east distributor road. This alignment has been further fixed by the creation of the Windrush Cemetery.

Vertical Alignment

- 2.4.7 The existing carriageway levels on Witan Way and Oxford Hill determine the levels of the road at either end of the Cogges Link Road.
- 2.4.8 The height of the road embankments at the river crossing is controlled by the need to provide bridges with sufficient clearance for pedestrians and maintenance access over the River Windrush channels. The vertical profile over the two river bridges may be lowered as part of the detailed design.
- 2.4.9 Where the road crosses the watercourse near the pumping station south of Cogges, the height of the road needs to allow for a suitable culvert to allow the watercourse to flow through. This has the added benefit of using the natural low point to create the surface water storage lagoon.
- 2.4.10 The alignment is further fixed by the requirements of the bridge under Stanton Harcourt Road.
- 2.4.11 East of Cogges the height of the road is a bit more flexible, but has been designed to sit slightly within the hill to reduce the impact on the landscape and adjacent housing estate. An exercise has been undertaken to adjust the levels of the road to balance the material excavated with material required for noise bunds and embankment construction and reduce the material taken to tip off site.

Flood Provisions

- 2.4.12 The flood compensation and highway drainage design are being undertaken to meet the requirements of PPS25. Conditional approval from the Environment Agency will be required for flood compensation measures. Additional measures may be required by the EA to provide betterment provisions as part of the detailed design within the planning envelope.

Private Means of Access

- 2.4.13 In general, private accesses have been positioned close to those they replace,

Oxfordshire Highways

Cogges Link Road

Design and Access Statement

unless safety issues dictate otherwise. New accesses have primarily been positioned in the safest location commensurate with their primary function.

- 2.4.14 The private means of access to the pumping station off Stanton Harcourt Road would be re-aligned to accommodate the proposed cycleway/footway connection to the Cogges Link Road.
- 2.4.15 An access to the southern section of the country park between the main branches of the River Windrush would be provided along the line of the diverted footpath No. 15 (Witney). Access to the pumping station and country park would be maintained at all times during the construction of the works.
- 2.4.16 New private means of access A-F would be provided at the following locations to allow access to parcels of land isolated by the Cogges Link Road – see Figure CLR03:
- A) Access to OS parcel No. 0004 south of the Cogges Link Road between the branches of the River Windrush. This would be used for access for maintenance of the bridges over the Windrush and management of the country park.
 - B) Access to land south of the Link, east of the river Windrush. This would also be used for access for maintenance of the East Windrush Overbridge, and would incorporate a small car park to provide access to the country park extension area.
 - C) Access for maintenance of the surface water lagoons.
 - D) Access for agricultural purposes (access to be deleted in the event that planning permission is granted for development of land identified in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan)
 - E) Access to land at Cogges Hill immediately to the north of Footpath No. 41 (Witney) for agricultural purposes.
 - F) Access to land to the east of the Link to land at Cogges Hill immediately to the south of where Footpath No. 8 (Witney) is to be diverted. For agricultural purposes and new access to Windrush Cemetery.

2.5 Scale

- 2.5.1 In line with policy G2 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and Policy BE2 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, the Cogges Link Road is considered to be of a scale appropriate to its surroundings, fitting with and being in proportion to the scale of the existing highway network.
- 2.5.2 The Cogges Link Road starting from Witan Way would be a 7.3m wide, single lane, two-way carriageway, built up on an embankment over the floodplain. Between Witan Way and Stanton Harcourt Road the south side of the carriageway would consist of a 3.5m wide grass verge and to the north an unsegregated footway and cycleway. The section to the east of Stanton Harcourt Road would also be a 7.3m wide single lane, two-way carriageway bounded with 3.5m wide verges on either side. However the verge on the inside of the curve between Ch 1000 to Ch 1480 has been widened to 5.5m to provide the appropriate forward visibility.
- 2.5.3 To the east of the Witan Way roundabout, the topography of the river Windrush floodplain is such that the road would ascend steadily on embankment to a proposed bridge over the western branch of the river Windrush. The road would

Oxfordshire Highways

Cogges Link Road

Design and Access Statement

continue on embankment, until it reaches a second proposed bridge over the eastern branch of the river, from where it would gradually descend to the lowest point on the route beneath a new bridge carrying the Stanton Harcourt Road located immediately to the north of the existing bridge over the A40. Cogges Link Road would continue to run parallel to the A40 in an easterly direction before heading northwards around the southeast of Cogges, where the carriageway would climb continuously in a combination of natural and false cut towards the junction at Oxford Hill.

Earthworks

- 2.5.4 Across the flood plain, embankments have been kept to the lowest height compatible with the requirements of the Environment Agency and bridge design. The highway boundary fence line would be at the bottom of the embankments. The gradients of the embankment would be generally 1:4 to soften the impact on the landscape. The embankment to the south side of the road between the two branches of the Windrush will decrease to 1:10 in line with the vehicle access ramp.
- 2.5.5 To the east of Cogges the Cogges Link Road would mostly be in cutting thus minimising noise and landscape and visual impact. The creation of earth bunds on the west side of this section of the scheme would further screen the road from the residential area and reduce the noise generated by traffic. The gradients of the cutting slopes would again be generally 1:4 to soften visual and landscape impacts. The gradients of the earth bunds will be determined once the detailed earthworks balance has been assessed.
- 2.5.6 Typical sections showing these features are included in Figure CLR08
- 2.5.7 The earthworks quantities generally balance with unsuitable material leaving site. Changes to this situation may occur following new ground investigations that are to be undertaken as part of the detailed design. This could also require changes to verge widths and cut/fill slopes. It remains an aim to keep waste leaving site to a minimum.

Structures

- 2.5.8 Two bridges would be constructed to carry Cogges Link Road over the east and west branches of the River Windrush. The bridge over the east branch would be located over a natural bend of the existing river, whilst the bridge over the west branch would be located over a diversion of the watercourse.
- 2.5.9 Both bridges would be single span structures, comprising 26m spans over the main river channels, with sufficient headroom to enable pedestrians and small maintenance vehicles to pass beneath. The bridges would have a minimum of 1m high aluminium parapets.
- 2.5.10 To enable Cogges Link Road to pass beneath the existing Stanton Harcourt Road the construction of a single underbridge would be required immediately to the north of the existing bridge over the A40. The reinforced concrete deck, would have a span of 14.8m.
- 2.5.11 A box section concrete culvert, with an integrated animal shelf would carry the

road over Farm Mill Side Channel.

2.6 Landscaping

2.6.7 The landscape mitigation measures included as part of Cogges Link Road have been developed in conjunction with the engineering design and environmental assessment processes. They are considered to provide a high quality of mitigation that helps the development fit in with existing features, in accordance with Policy CC12 of the draft South East Plan; Policies G2 and EN1 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and Policy BE2 of the West Oxfordshire District Local Plan. The Windrush in Witney Project landscape policies (L01, L02, L03) state that any new development and subsequent land management practices must integrate with the landscape character of the area. Specific landscape measures include the following:

- Use of appropriate earthworks and cutting slopes to visually screen Cogges Link Road and integrate it into the undulating landscape east of Cogges;
- Proposed planting on embankments and cuttings to soften artificial landform and provide additional visual screening and biodiversity linkage;
- Design of the water treatment lagoon to be modeled to appear as natural as possible within space and engineering constraints;
- Planting around the water storage lagoon to integrate into surrounding landscape;
- The feasibility of increasing the extent of undergrounding of the existing overhead electrical cables is under consideration.
- Provision of new public open space, adjacent to Cogges Hill Road, to accommodate an informal playing area to replace the play area to the south part, which would be lost with the implementation of this scheme;
- Redesign of existing public open space south of Eton Close to accommodate a playground area and provide additional screening with earthworks and tree planting.

2.7 Appearance

2.7.1 PPS1, Policy CC12 of the Draft South East Plan and Policy BE2 of the West Oxfordshire District Local Plan promote the need for good design to create a high quality environment. The Cogges Link Road achieves this through sympathetic vertical and horizontal alignment design (within engineering and safety constraints), and comprehensive environmental mitigation measures, including landscape and ecological design based on current best practice and suited to local resources as appropriate. The bridge and embankment heights across the floodplain are governed by the need to allow vehicular and pedestrian access under the bridges. In consequence it is not possible to completely disguise the engineering features of the scheme within the floodplain landscape. However, the embankment slopes have been designed to relatively shallow slopes of 1:4 to soften the engineered appearance of the embankment. On and off site planting of native trees and shrubs indigenous to the area would partially disguise the embankment and reflect existing trees lining the river channels except where it crosses the country park. Here the embankment is to be open to reflect the open pasture character of the country park. To the east of Cogges, relatively shallow cutting slopes, together with new native hedgerow

planting would help to integrate the scheme as far as practicable with the existing landscape of sloping topography and small to medium hedged field pattern.

2.8 Sustainability

- 2.8.1 Good design is an important part of achieving sustainability in new developments. In accordance with PPS1 and Policies CC1 and CC12 of the Draft South East Plan, the need for sustainability has been incorporated into all stages of the design process.
- 2.8.2 In accordance with PPS1, Policies CC4, EN1 and NRM1 of the Draft South East Plan and Policy G6 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan the use of recycled and secondary materials will be promoted during construction and as much excavated material as possible will be reused as part of the landscaping scheme. The design also incorporates drainage proposals in line with the principles of sustainable urban drainage, with the use of a storage lagoon to attenuate surface water run-off.
- 2.8.3 In line with PPS9, Policy NRM4 of the Draft South East Plan, Policy E1 of RPG9 and Policy EN2 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan, there will be no impact on any sites designated for their biodiversity importance, although there is potential for impacts on protected species. Extensive mitigation and enhancement measures have been incorporated into the scheme design, to ensure that there is no net negative impact on the ecological resource.
- 2.8.4 PPG15, PPG16 and Policies EN4 and EN6 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan require the protection of historic landscapes, including listed buildings, parks and gardens and archaeological remains. There are only considered to be minor or indirect impacts on listed buildings and a watching brief would be used to protect buried archaeology. The scheme design and resultant change in distribution of traffic through the town are considered to have a positive impact on the historic core of Witney, the Conservation Area and the Air Quality Management Area.
- 2.8.5 In accordance with PPS13, Policies T1 and T4 of RPG9; Policies G2, T1 and T5 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and Policy T2 and Witney Proposal 12 in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, a dedicated footpath and cycleway has been incorporated into the scheme design, extending from the Witan Way roundabout to Stanton Harcourt Road, and providing access to Cogges. This will improve travel choice, encourage walking and cycling, improve access to Cogges and help to reduce the need to travel by motorised vehicle.
- 2.8.6 The scheme itself is not expected to induce a significant amount of traffic, however in line with Policy T8 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan, mitigation to deal with impacts resulting from the redistribution of traffic has been included into the scheme design. This includes measures such as a noise bund east of Cogges and visual screening by vegetation.

3 Access

3.1 Policy Approach

3.1.1 The Cogges Link Road has taken account of relevant policies and plans pertaining to the area which set out the need for fostering social inclusion and providing access for all groups of people, particularly disabled people. Policy S1 of the Draft South East Plan is concerned with social inclusion, while Policy T1 in RPG9; Policy T1 in the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and Policy BE2 in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, emphasise the importance of new developments being accessible for everyone. This includes people with disabilities and all vulnerable road users. The Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan aims to increase the number of controlled pedestrian crossings which are fully accessible to disabled people.

3.2 Consultation

- 3.2.1 A public exhibition is proposed to be held on three dates in October 2008 (9th, 10th & 11th) to publicise the scheme and ask for comments and feedback.
- 3.2.2 A number of consultations have been carried out with Witney Town Council with regard to access to and within the country park. Where necessary further discussions would take place during the detailed design phase in relation to this issue and access arrangements for the other public open space areas.

3.3 How access will be achieved

- 3.3.1 The scheme incorporates a new combined footway/cycleway between Witan Way and Stanton Harcourt Road, with a minimum width 3.0m. This will be connected to the existing footway and cycle network through Cogges along Stanton Harcourt Road. The connectivity between existing and proposed facilities will be resolved as part of the detailed design. (Figure 1)
- 3.3.2 Where the scheme crosses public footpaths, appropriate lengths of footway and safe crossing points will be provided.
- 3.3.3 Access to the countryside (particularly the Country Park) will be improved in line with Policy C4 of the Draft South East Plan and Policy R2 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan. A new car park will be provided for the country park, and a new area of land will be dedicated as country park to replace the land lost under the road embankment, all improving public access. The continuity of footpaths will be maintained, although some diversions will be required, and a new footpath and footbridge will link the country park extension to the existing area.
- 3.3.4 All paths will have a maximum gradient of 7%. with rest platforms provided at approximately 30m intervals.
- 3.3.5 Consideration will be given to ensuring that all accesses will be suitable for use by disabled people in accordance with published plans. Where necessary, this will extend to improving existing facilities where they join the proposed scheme. It is anticipated that this will comprise of work to improve footways and include

Oxfordshire Highways
Cogges Link Road
Design and Access Statement

additional drop and flush kerbs at designated crossing points and incorporate appropriate tactile paving as recommended in guidance documentation.

- 3.3.6 Links to key facilities such as access to shops, schools, health centres etc. will be improved. The new road and pedestrian/cycle facilities is also expected to save time in accessing such facilities.