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Cogges Link Road Plans and Policies

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Executive Summary

This document assesses how well the scheme complies with national, regional and local planning policy guidance

The scheme generally complies with policies on transport, supporting economic development, improving the quality of town centres, promoting sustainable transport and air quality.

It has some adverse affects on policies relating to ecology, landscape and the water environment; however mitigation measures incorporated as part of the scheme reduce the impacts as far as possible.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The planning system provides society with a way of controlling how we use land, what we build and where we build it. Local and national government bodies prepare and adopt development plans, consisting of proposals - maps and written policies - to show where and in what quantity various types of development will be permitted. They also administer a development control system to make sure that proposed development conforms to the plan.
- 1.1.2 This report indicates only those planning policies and programmes that are relevant to or would be directly affected or potentially affected by the Cogges Link Road (CLR). Each policy is quoted (in italics with supporting information where applicable) together with the impact and mitigation where appropriate; otherwise a general comment has been made.
- 1.1.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning decisions are taken in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The 'development plan' for an area consists of the latest adopted versions of regional planning guidance, the county-level Structure Plan (if adopted before the regional guidance), and the Local Plans and Local Development Documents prepared at District Council level. 'Other material considerations' might include statements of government policy and a range of other national, regional or local documents, although the weight to be given to these documents will vary according to their source, the extent to which the public have been involved in their preparation, and whether they are 'draft' or 'final' documents.
- 1.1.4 The planning policies assessed within this document are:
- National Planning Policy, provided by Planning Policy Guidance Statements and Notes;
 - Regional Planning Guidance, provided by RPG 9 and the Draft South East Plan; and
 - Local Planning Guidance, provided by the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.
- 1.1.5 Although not a statutory planning document, the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan has also been assessed as it is a key programme in terms of setting out future transport provision in the County.

2 National Planning Policy Context

2.1.1 Planning Policy Guidance Statements and Notes form a systematic body of general policy guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (and its predecessors) on a range of national planning topics. They lay down the national policies on which complementary geographically specific guidance - currently Regional Planning Guidance, County Structure Plans, Local Plans and new Local Development Frameworks - must be based. While individual planning decisions, taken by Planning Authorities or by the Secretary of State or one of her Inspectors will normally be grounded in such local guidance, the PPSs / PPGs provide the broader policy background which must be taken into account alongside the more local documents.

2.2 **PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005, ODPM)**

2.2.1 PPS1 sets out the Government's overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. It details the high level policy objectives for planning, and sets a framework for specific policies, which are set out in the thematic Planning Policy Statements. PPS1 complements those documents but is not a substitute for the detailed guidance in those PPSs. In particular, the way in which sustainable development objectives should be approached in detail in specific policy areas will be covered as appropriate in the relevant thematic PPS.

2.2.2 PPS1 contains five broad objectives, based around the four sustainable development aims set out by the (now superseded) 'A Better Quality of Life – A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK', to ensure that planning facilitates and promotes sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development. The five objectives are:

- Making suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environmental objectives to improve people's quality of life;
- Contributing to sustainable economic development;
- Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside and existing communities;
- Ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design and the efficient use of resources;
- Ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community.

2.3 **PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2005, ODPM)**

2.3.1 This PPS sets out the Government's national policies on sustainable

2.3.2 PPS7 sets out six key principles for sustainable development that should be applied in combination with all the policies within the PPS. Policies are split under the headings:

- Sustainable Rural Communities, Economic Development and Services:
The PPS provides for the facilitation and promotion of sustainable patterns of development and sustainable communities in rural areas.
- The Countryside:
Promotes recognition, maintenance and enhancement of the environmental, economic and social value of the countryside.
- Agriculture, Farm Diversification, Equine-Related Activities and Forestry:
Recognises the roles of agriculture in the maintenance and management of the countryside and most of our valued landscapes, and supports certain development proposals. The presence of best and most versatile agricultural land should be taken into account alongside other sustainability issues.
- Tourism and Leisure:
Recognises that tourism and leisure activities are vital to many rural economies and should be supported provided are appropriately controlled and subject to assessment in terms of sustainable development objectives.

2.4 **PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (ODPM, 2005)**

2.4.1 This sets out the Government's national policies for the conservation of biodiversity and geodiversity. In the context of the PPS, biodiversity is the variety of life in all its forms as discussed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and geological conservation relates to sites that are designated for their geological and/or geomorphological importance. The guidance determines the hierarchy of important sites of interest and sets of guidelines for species protection.

2.4.2 The PPS sets out the Government's objectives as set out in *Working with the Grain of Nature: a biodiversity strategy for England*. These are:

- To promote sustainable development;
- To conserve, enhance and restore the diversity of England's wildlife and geology;
- To contribute to rural renewal and urban renaissance.

2.5 **PPG13 - Transport: (2001, DETR)**

2.5.1 PPG13 seeks to provide a safe, efficient and integrated transport system by integrating transport and planning at the national, regional, strategic and local level. It promotes sustainable transport choices, both for people and freight, and

promotes accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling. It aims to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, however it recognises that the car will continue to have an important part to play and for some journeys, particularly in rural areas, it will remain the only real option for travel.

Annex C (Transport Infrastructure) of PPG13

2.5.2 Annex C states that care must be taken to avoid or minimise the environmental impact of any new transport infrastructure projects, or improvements to existing infrastructure. There is a requirement for certain types of project to be subject to EIA before development consent is granted. For some transport proposals, such as major roads, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required in every case.

2.6 PPG15 - Planning and the Historic Environment (1994, DoE)

2.6.1 PPG15 explains the role of the planning system in achieving sustainable development objectives through the protection of historic buildings, conservation areas and other elements of the historic environment. The guidance stresses the need to protect and conserve the nations' built and natural assets. It acknowledges the need to reconcile the demand for economic growth with the requirement to protect the natural and historic environment.

2.7 PPG16 - Archaeology and Planning (1990, DoE)

2.7.1 PPG16 advises on how to preserve and record archaeological remains in the urban and rural environment, including the weight to be given to them in planning decisions and the use of planning conditions. It also suggests that remains have important economic value, as they are generators of tourism, leisure and education resources. The statutory frameworks for protecting remains are outlined and the development control procedure is clearly identified. The development plan is seen as a key element in retaining, preserving and protecting these assets. A key objective is to promote positive planning and management to bring about sensible solutions to the treatment of sites with archaeological remains and reduce the areas of potential conflict between development and preservation.

2.8 PPG17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002, ODPM)

2.8.1 Open spaces, sport and recreation all contribute to people's quality of life. Well-designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are therefore fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives. PPG17 sets out a framework to ensure that there is effective planning for open space, sport and recreation. It emphasises that rights of way are an important recreational facility that local authorities should protect and

enhance. Local authorities should seek to provide better facilities for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders.

2.9 PPS23 - Planning and Pollution Control (2004, ODPM)

2.9.1 PPS23 advises on a number of issues that affect the relationship between planning and pollution control, including the redevelopment of contaminated sites. The importance of re-using previously developed sites is recognised, as is the opportunity for dealing with any threat to human health posed by contamination through the re-development process. Polluting activities that are necessary for society and the economy should be sited and planned, and subject to planning conditions, to ensure that their adverse effects are minimised and contained to within acceptable limits. Opportunities should be taken wherever possible to use the development process to assist and encourage the remediation of land already affected by contamination.

2.10 PPG24 - Planning and Noise (1994, DoE)

2.10.1 PPG24 sets a framework to prevent noise-sensitive developments being affected by activities that create noise. It gives guidance to Local Authorities on the use of their planning powers to minimise the adverse impact of noise. The guidance advises on the most appropriate methods of noise mitigation, and also highlights the need to consider future generations, as operations expand or change, to prevent nuisance being created in the future.

2.11 PPS25 – Development and Flood Risk (2006, DCLG)

2.11.1 PPS25 seeks to ensure that any new development is safe and not exposed unnecessarily to flooding, particularly in the context of probable future climate change. It aims to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas at highest risk. Flood risk assessments and partnership with the Environment Agency is promoted. Where new development is, exceptionally, necessary in such areas, policy aims to make it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reducing flood risk overall. Integral to the guidance's philosophy is the protection of flood plains to be used for their natural purposes, to continue to function effectively, and be protected from inappropriate development.

2.12 Conclusion

2.12.1 The purpose of PPSs and PPGs is to explain statutory provisions and provide guidance to local authorities and others on planning policy and the operation of the planning system. They also explain the relationship between planning policies and other policies which have an important bearing on issues of

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development and land use. Development plan policies must reflect the objectives of national planning guidance, unless there is are specific and publicly-justified local reasons for doing otherwise. For this reason, it is considered that the objectives of PPSs and PPGs are reflected in the detailed policies of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and the West Oxfordshire Local Plan. Therefore, the specific impact of the scheme on these objectives is reflected in the assessment provided below.

3 Regional Planning Policy Context

3.1 **RPG 9 - Regional Planning Guidance for the South East Region (2001)**

- 3.1.1 RPGs provide regional strategic planning guidance on issues that are not of a national scale but at the same time cannot be addressed by an individual authority. Their primary purpose is to provide a regional framework for the preparation of local authority development plans. They also provide the spatial framework for other policies and plans, including Local Transport Plans.
- 3.1.2 RPG 9 provides the regional planning framework for the South East for the period up to 2016. This document identifies priorities and strategies for economic development and an improved transport network whilst seeking to ensure a high quality environment and the sustainable use of environmental resources.
- 3.1.3 Policy Q1 states that *“urban areas should be the focus for new development and for redevelopment.”* Policy Q2, states that *“the quality of life in urban areas, including suburban areas, should be raised through significant improvement to the urban environment, making urban areas more attractive places in which to live, work, shop, spend leisure time and invest, thus helping to counter trends to more dispersed patterns of residence and travel.”*
- 3.1.4 Chapter 9 of Regional Planning Guidance for the South East sets out the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). It was incorporated into the RPG in 2004. The objectives of the RTS are based on promoting a sustainable transport system but include developing road links that improve inter and intra regional connectivity. Policy T1 sets out the overall approach to transport for development plans. It states that management policies should seek to encourage development that is located and designed to reduce average journey lengths and that investment should facilitate urban renewal and urban renaissance as a means of achieving more sustainable patterns of development.

Comments

- 3.1.5 The proposed link road is considered to contribute to meeting all of the relevant RPG key development principles. The development would provide a positive addition to the highway network and will improve the infrastructure required to enable the continuing development of Witney.

3.2 **A Clear Vision for the South East: The South East Plan Core Document (Draft) (2006, SEERA)**

- 3.2.1 The South East England Regional Assembly has prepared a revised Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East, called the South East Plan, covering the

period to 2026. The Assembly completed an extensive public consultation on the Draft South East Plan in 2005, and the full Plan, including the sub-regional policy framework, was submitted for Government approval on 31st March 2006. The Draft Plan was the subject of Public Examination until the end of March 2007 and the Inspector's report was published on 29 August 2007. Once approved by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, it will completely replace the 2001/2004 version of RPG9, and will be part of the development plan.

- 3.2.2 A key cross-cutting policy of the Draft Plan (CC2) relates to climate change. The Plan states that "*Mitigation, through reducing greenhouse gas emissions, will primarily be addressed through greater resources efficiency including reducing the need to travel and ensuring good accessibility to public and other sustainable modes of transport*".
- 3.2.3 Policy CC8a details the importance of Urban Focus and Urban Renaissance, concentrating new development in urban areas, to foster accessibility to employment, housing, retail and other services, and avoid unnecessary travel, while BE7 looks at management of the historic environment.
- 3.2.4 Section D4 updates the 2004 Regional Transport Strategy. It promotes management and investment of the transport infrastructure, in a very similar way to the current Policy T1.
- 3.2.5 Section E7 looks at specific policies for the Central Oxfordshire Region. Under Transport, it notes that country towns, including Witney, need local road and junction improvements to cater for recent and ongoing housing growth. Policy CO6: Transport, states that "*Oxfordshire County Council will promote the effective management and development of transport networks in Central Oxfordshire. This will be done in order to meet both strategic and local access requirements while reducing the need to travel, in particular by car or lorry*".

Comments

- 3.2.6 The proposed link road is considered to contribute to meeting all of the relevant South East Plan key development principles. The development would provide a positive addition to the highway network and will improve the infrastructure required to enable the continuing development of Witney.

4 Other Development Plan Documents

4.1.1 The local components of the development plan relevant to Witney comprise:

- The Adopted Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016; and
- The Adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011.

4.2 Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016, Adopted 2005

4.2.1 The Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016, adopted in October 2005, sets out the strategic planning for the county. It provides the strategic framework in which national and regional policy is applied to the local level and is the mechanism through which future housing and employment development is distributed. The Structure Plan also sets out the need for strategically important infrastructure such as transport schemes. The Structure Plan will remain in force until the adoption of new regional planning guidance (The South East Plan), at which point it will cease to be part of the development plan.

Policy G1: General Strategy

4.2.2 *The general strategy is to provide a framework for development to sustain economic prosperity, meet housing and other requirements and guide the investment decisions of a range of organisations for the period to 2016 in ways which will:*

a) deliver the level of development required to meet the objectives of this Plan while protecting and enhancing the environment, character and natural resources of the county;

b) concentrate development in locations where:

i. a reasonable range of services and community facilities exist or can be provided; and

ii. the need to travel, particularly by private car, can be reduced and walking, cycling and the use of public transport can be encouraged;

c) make the best use of previously developed land and buildings within urban areas to reduce the need for the development of greenfield sites, while not permitting development on important open spaces.

4.2.3 *The larger urban areas will be the main focus for development.*

4.2.4 *In smaller towns and villages development will be of an appropriate scale and type to meet the social and economic needs of local communities.*

4.2.5 **Comments:** The development of Witney is an approved policy. An overall increase in demand on the town's road network would necessitate a link road to

relieve town centre congestion.

Policy G2: Improving the Design and Quality of Development

4.2.6 *All development should:*

a) be of a scale and type appropriate to the site and its surroundings, and not cause harm to the character and amenities of the area;

b) incorporate a high quality of layout, design and landscaping;

c) be designed so as to reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of walking, cycling and public transport and telecommunications as alternatives to the car.

4.2.7 *Development which would have an unacceptable impact on the environment because of its nature, scale, location or cumulative effects will not be permitted.*

4.2.8 **Comments:** New pedestrian and cycle links would be provided as part of the proposals together with full landscape design to mitigate the effect of the new road.

Policy G6: Energy and Resource Conservation

4.2.9 *All new developments should incorporate best practice in energy efficiency and resource conservation, in particular through passive solar design, small scale renewable energy, providing high levels of insulation, water conservation measures and by minimising the use of construction materials, maximising use of recycled and secondary materials in place of primary aggregates and minimising production of waste.*

4.2.10 *New developments should make adequate provision to facilitate storage, re-use, recycling and composting of waste.*

4.2.11 **Comment:** The design of CLR has a near cut and fill balance in relation to earthworks. Use of recycled materials would be encouraged where appropriate.

Policy T1: Sustainable Travel

4.2.12 *Transport measures and development proposals should give emphasis to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and balance these against ease of traffic movement, thereby improving travel choice and reducing dependence on private motorised travel. Suitable provision should be made for servicing, for the needs of disabled people and for promotion of safety.*

4.2.13 **Comments:** The provision of the new road would relieve traffic congestion in the town centre and create opportunities for providing enhanced pedestrian areas. New cycle way and footway links between Cogges and Witan Way are a benefit

for pedestrians and cyclists.

Policy T3: Public Transport

4.2.14 *Increased use of public transport will be sought through the encouragement and promotion of convenient, reliable, secure and high standard public transport services and through improved integration between different modes of transport and improved interchange facilities.*

4.2.15 **Comments:** No specific provision would be made for public transport. However any reduction in traffic would reduce public transport journey times.

Policy T5: Networks for Pedestrians and Cyclists

4.2.16 *Networks of routes for pedestrians and cyclists will be promoted and developed particularly within and linking to urban areas, so as to improve access to facilities and widen travel choice.*

4.2.17 *Local plans will define comprehensive pedestrian and cycle routes and will promote improvements.*

4.2.18 **Comments:** The reduction of traffic in Bridge Street and the town centre would improve the environment and create opportunities for providing enhanced pedestrian areas. New footway links between Cogges and Witan Way would be a benefit for pedestrians.

4.2.19 The proposed cycleway link between Witan Way and Oxford Hill would be a benefit to cyclists and link up with the cycling facilities along Oxford Hill and Jubilee Way.

Policy T6: Networks for Motorised Travel

4.2.20 *The County Council will promote and support a comprehensive strategy for the safe and convenient carriage of people and freight by road, rail or special track. The County Council in partnership with transport infrastructure providers, the operators of public transport services and other agencies will in particular promote the development and management of the following principal transport hubs, corridors and projects related to the Plan's overall development strategy and its regional context, to meet both strategic and key local movement requirements:*

- *transport measures in and around the City of Oxford to support its role as a regional transport hub;*
- *the corridor between Oxford and Bicester;*
- *the corridor between Oxford and Witney;*

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- *the corridor between Oxford and Didcot;*
- *the corridor between Grove/Wantage and Didcot; and*
- *the development within the county of the East-West rail link.*

4.2.21 *The principal transport corridors, the rail and trunk route networks and other projects referred to are defined in the Key Diagram.*

4.2.22 *The Local Transport Plan will:*

- *identify the manner in which the road and rail network and the operation of the premium bus network and other key public transport services will combine to provide an enhanced quality of travel to support the spatial development strategy of the Structure Plan;*
- *assign roads in the county together with any special track to a hierarchy of networks supporting the spatial strategy of this Plan and identify their function at each level of the hierarchy;*
- *identify network improvement schemes; and*
- *identify the potential for integration between networks both for people and freight.*

4.2.23 *Development proposals that would have a significant adverse affect on the safe and efficient function of a network will not be permitted.*

4.2.24 *Land required for network development or improvement schemes will be safeguarded in the local plans/local development frameworks.*

4.2.25 *Para 4.24: Two major schemes are expected to be programmed in the period 2006-2011. Witney Cogges Link Road is to be funded substantially from developer contributions, but it is anticipated that if there is a shortfall this could be met with LTP funds...*

4.2.26 **Comments:** CLR will help to fulfil this Policy.

Policy EN1: Landscape Character

4.2.27 *Local planning authorities will ensure that proposals for development contribute to the protection, maintenance and, where possible, enhancement of Oxfordshire's landscape character, and in particular the natural beauty of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to reflect their national importance. Development will be permitted only if it does not unacceptably damage the local landscape.*

4.2.28 **Impact:** The proposals would not affect any Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but they would affect areas of High Landscape Value and local distinctive landscape. The landscape assessment addresses the impact on local landscape character.

4.2.29 **Mitigation:** A scheme of landscape mitigation would partially mitigate landscape impacts.

Policy EN2: Biodiversity

4.2.30 *The following sites of at least national importance will be protected from damaging development:*

- *Special Areas of Conservation;*
- *National Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest; and*
- *Sites which support specially protected species.*

4.2.31 *On other sites of acknowledged nature conservation importance development will be permitted only if there is an overriding need or if damage to the ecological interest can be prevented by the use of conditions or planning obligations. In determining proposals for development local planning authorities will seek environmental measures and promote the use of conditions and management agreements to help protect, manage and expand the biodiversity resource of the county, in particular priority habitats and species.*

4.2.32 **Impact:** CLR would affect habitat of a number of protected species, including: dormouse, grass snake, otter, water voles and kingfishers.

4.2.33 **Mitigation:** Mitigation measures would be comprehensive and discussed in detail with Defra and Natural England. Licences would be sought as appropriate.

Policy EN3: Agricultural Land Quality and Soil

4.2.34 *Development on the best and most versatile agricultural land shall have a regard to the quality and productiveness of such land alongside other sustainability considerations. Where significant development of agricultural land is unavoidable, areas of poorer quality land shall be used in preference to that of a higher quality, except where this would be inconsistent with other sustainability considerations. Where undeveloped agricultural land is to be developed, any adverse effects on the environment shall be minimised.*

4.2.35 **Impact:** Approximately one hectare of best and most versatile agricultural land would be lost.

4.2.36 **Mitigation:** Loss of land cannot be fully compensated for within the scheme, however, new accesses would be provided for land severed by the scheme.

Policy EN4: Historic and Cultural Heritage

4.2.37 *The fabric and setting of listed buildings including Blenheim Palace and Park, a World Heritage Site, will be preserved and the character or appearance of conservation areas and their settings will be preserved or enhanced. Other*

elements of the historic environment, including historic parks and gardens, battlefields and historic landscapes will also be protected from harmful development.

4.2.38 **Impact:** The conservation area along Witan Way and areas of archaeological potential would be affected by the proposals. Some trees would be lost from the conservation area along Witan Way.

4.2.39 **Mitigation:** The proposal would allow traffic management to be developed to improve the quality of the environment within the Conservation Area.

EN6: Archaeology

4.2.40 *There will be a presumption in favour of preserving in situ nationally and internationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings. Development affecting other archaeological remains should include measures to secure their preservation in situ or where this is not feasible, their recording or removal to another site.*

4.2.41 **Impact:** Areas of archaeological potential would be affected by the proposals.

4.2.42 **Mitigation:** Field investigations would be undertaken prior to construction.

EN8: Water Quality

4.2.43 *Development that will lead to unacceptable deterioration in water quality will not be permitted.*

4.2.44 **Impact:** The scheme would generate surface water runoff in times of rainfall, discharging ultimately to local watercourses.

4.2.45 **Mitigation:** The CLR drainage scheme would include measures to intercept pollution. The proposals include a storage lagoon and swale to filter water and collect silts prior to discharging into the adjacent watercourses.

Policy EN9: Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage

4.2.46 *Development in undeveloped areas at high risk from flooding or in the functional floodplain will not be permitted. A flood risk assessment will be required for proposals for development except where there is little or no flood risk. Proposals for redevelopment of existing buildings and their curtilage within areas of high flood risk should aim to improve conditions locally and not worsen flood risk elsewhere.*

4.2.47 *New development should not lead to an increase in run-off, which would exacerbate flood risk elsewhere. The use of sustainable drainage systems to*

regulate run-off will be required as part of development proposals.

4.2.48 **Impact:** The floodplain would be adversely affected by the proposals.

4.2.49 **Mitigation:** Floodplain compensation would be provided as mitigation, and the method will be agreed with the Environment Agency. Attenuation would be provided by means of storage lagoons, swales and ditches and oversized pipes with flow controls.

Policy EN10: Water Resources and Waste Water Infrastructure

4.2.50 *Development will be permitted only where adequate water resources and waste water infrastructure for the development already exist or can readily be provided without risk to existing abstractions, water quality, the water environment or nature conservation.*

4.2.51 **Impact:** The scheme would generate surface water runoff in times of rainfall, discharging ultimately to local watercourses.

4.2.52 **Mitigation:** The CLR drainage scheme would include measures to intercept pollution. The proposals include a storage lagoon and swale to filter water and collect silts prior to discharging into the adjacent watercourses.

Policy R1: Countryside Recreation

4.2.53 *The local planning authorities will encourage optimum use to be made of existing countryside recreation facilities and resources. Opportunities to create new outdoor facilities which are appropriate in scale and sensitive to a rural location will be supported.*

4.2.54 **Impact:** The proposals would reduce the area of the Witney Lakes and Meadows Country Park. A number of public footpaths would be severed.

4.2.55 **Mitigation:** Links to the severed portions of the country park would be provided. Severed footpaths would be diverted, with crossings provided as appropriate.

Policy R2: Access to the Countryside and Rights of Way Network

4.2.56 *The local planning authorities will seek to increase and improve access to the countryside. The existing network of public rights of way, including routes in the towns, will be maintained and improved. Development which would damage the rights of way network will be resisted.*

4.2.57 **Comments:** Existing public rights of way would be retained, however some minor diversions are proposed to utilise safe crossing points and follow the path of the river diversion.

4.3 **Adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011**

4.3.1 The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 was adopted in June 2006 and sets out the local policies and proposals for development and land use in West Oxfordshire, including measures for the improvement of the natural and built environment and management of traffic. It is also the basis for coordinating future development with the provision of essential infrastructure and services.

4.3.2 The West Oxfordshire LDF comprises a portfolio of planning documents and is currently being prepared. This will ultimately replace the Local Plan however no draft documents are yet available for consideration.

4.3.3 The policies referred to in this section have been taken from the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Policy Check List. There are subtle differences in the text between the actual policies and the policies listed in the check list however the reasoning is the same.

POLICY BE1 - Environmental and Community Infrastructure.

4.3.4 *Development will not be permitted unless appropriate supporting transport, service and community infrastructure is available or will be provided and appropriate provision has been made to safeguard the local environment. Contributions will be sought from developers and/or landowners in accordance with Government advice.*

4.3.5 **Comments:** Part of the funding of the proposal is linked to local development.

POLICY BE2 - General Development Standards

4.3.6 *New development should respect and, where possible, improve the character and quality of its surroundings and provide a safe, pleasant, convenient and interesting environment.*

4.3.7 *Proposals for new buildings and land uses should clearly demonstrate how they will relate satisfactorily to the site and its surroundings, incorporating a landscape scheme and incidental open space as appropriate.*

4.3.8 *A landscape scheme accompanying detailed proposals for development should show, as appropriate, hard and soft landscaping, existing and proposed underground services, a phasing programme for implementation and subsequent maintenance arrangements.*

4.3.9 *Quality of Development and Impact upon the Area:*

a) the proposal is well-designed and respects the existing scale, pattern and character of the surrounding area;

- b) new buildings or extensions to existing buildings are designed to respect or enhance the form, siting, scale, massing and external materials and colours of adjoining buildings, with local building traditions reflected as appropriate;*
- c) the proposal creates or retains a satisfactory environment for people living in or visiting the area, including people with disabilities;*
- d) existing features of importance in the local environment are protected and/or enhanced;*
- e) the landscape surrounding and providing a setting for existing towns and villages is not adversely affected;*
- f) in the open countryside, any appropriate development will be easily assimilated into the landscape and wherever possible, be sited close to an existing group of buildings.*

4.3.10 *Crime:*

- g) good design has been used to help reduce the opportunities for crime.*

4.3.11 *Energy and Resources:*

- h) regard has been given to:*
 - i. principles of energy and resource conservation:*
 - ii. provision for sorting and storage facilities to facilitate recycling of waste.*

4.3.12 **Comments:** The environmental design of the scheme has been developed according to the current best practice and guidance.

POLICY BE4 Open space within and adjoining settlements

4.3.13 *Proposals for development within or adjoining the built-up area should not result in the loss or erosion of:*

- a) an open area which makes an important contribution to:*
 - i. the distinctiveness of a settlement; and/or*
 - ii. the visual amenity or character of the locality;*
- b) a facility of benefit to local residents;*
- c) an area of nature conservation value;*
- d) common land or a village green.*

4.3.14 *When assessing any proposals for development which could affect existing open space, consideration will be given to the opportunity to:*

- i) remedy deficiencies in provision, and*
- ii) exchange the use of one site for another to substitute for any loss of open space.*

4.3.15 **Impact:** An existing open space area south of Cogges would be lost. There would be impacts on areas of nature conservation value.

4.3.16 **Mitigation:** The existing open space lost as a result of the scheme would be replaced with new open space of equivalent area and quality including an area suitable for organised games. A comprehensive scheme of mitigation is proposed to minimise the impacts on areas of nature conservation value.

POLICY BE5 - Conservation Areas

4.3.17 *The special architectural, historic and environmental character or appearance of the Conservation Areas will be preserved or enhanced. Every effort will be made to ensure that this character or appearance is not eroded by the introduction of unsympathetic development proposals either within or affecting the setting of the designated area.*

4.3.18 **Impact:** The conservation area along Witan Way would be affected by the proposals. Some trees would be lost from the conservation area along Witan Way.

4.3.19 **Mitigation:** The proposal would allow traffic management to be developed to improve the quality of the environment within the Conservation Area.

POLICY BE8 - Development affecting the Setting of a Listed Building

4.3.20 *Development should not detract from the setting of a listed building.*

4.3.21 **Comments:** The scheme would not affect any listed buildings.

POLICY BE12 Archaeological Monuments

4.3.22 *Development proposals that adversely affect the site or setting of nationally important archaeological monuments and monuments of local importance, whether scheduled or not, will not be permitted.*

4.3.23 **Comments:** The scheme would not affect any archaeological monuments.

POLICY BE13 - Archaeological Assessments

4.3.24 *Prior to determining applications affecting sites and areas of archaeological potential, applicants may be required to provide an archaeological assessment and/or field evaluation to determine:*

a) the significance, character and importance of any archaeological monument or remain and

b) the likely impact of the proposed development on such features

c) the level of mitigation required to suitably protect the archaeological resource through preservation in situ or preservation by record including excavation, post excavation analysis and publication.

- 4.3.25 **Comments:** An archaeological assessment and field evaluation would be carried out prior to construction, and appropriate measures taken to deal with any finds.

POLICY BE18 - Pollution

- 4.3.26 *Planning permission will not be permitted for development which could give rise to unacceptable levels of pollution, unless adequate mitigation measures are provided to ensure that any discharge or emissions will not cause harm to users of land, including the effects on health and the natural environment.*

- 4.3.27 **Impact:** There is the potential for the generation of pollution during both the construction and operation phases of the scheme.

- 4.3.28 **Mitigation:** Pollution will be minimised as far as possible through use of best practice during construction and adherence to the Environment Agency's Pollution Prevention Guidelines.

POLICY BE19 - Noise

- 4.3.29 *Planning permission will not be granted for:*

- a) housing and other noise sensitive development if the occupants would experience significant noise disturbance from existing or proposed development;*
b) development including the use of land, if because of the noise it will create, the occupants of housing and other noise sensitive development would be exposed to significant noise disturbance, unless there is an overriding need for the proposal which cannot be met elsewhere.

- 4.3.30 **Impact:** CLR would have an adverse impact of noise on properties fronting the scheme at Cogges.

- 4.3.31 **Mitigation:** East of Cogges the design of the road would be in cutting with a noise bund to screen the road from Cogges and reduce the effect of noise. The adverse noise impacts of the scheme have been assessed and would be mitigated where required

POLICY BE21 - Light Pollution

- 4.3.32 *The installation of external lighting and proposals for remote rural buildings will only be permitted where all of the following criteria are satisfied:*

- a) the means of lighting is appropriate, unobtrusively sited and would not result in excessive levels of light;*

- b) elevations of buildings, particularly roofs, are designed to limit light spill;*
- c) the proposal would not have a detrimental effect on the amenity of surrounding occupiers;*
- d) the proposal would not have a significant adverse impact on the character of a town or village and its setting or of the wider countryside;*
- e) the proposal will not be detrimental to an area of nature conservation interest.*

4.3.33 **Impact:** Some lighting will be necessary as part of the scheme.

4.3.34 **Comments:** Lighting would be limited to the junctions at either end using flat glass controlled beam lamp units.

POLICY NE1 - Safeguarding the Countryside

4.3.35 *Proposals for development in the countryside should maintain or enhance the value of the countryside for its own sake: its beauty, its local character and distinctiveness, the diversity of its natural resources, and its ecological, agricultural, cultural and outdoor recreational values.*

4.3.36 **Impact:** The scheme would have a local adverse impact on the countryside.

4.3.37 **Mitigation:** Adverse impacts of the scheme would be mitigated as far as is practicable by sensitive design of earthworks profile and the implementation of a comprehensive landscape planting scheme.

POLICY NE2 - Countryside around Witney and Carterton

4.3.38 *Only the following types of development are considered appropriate within the strategic gaps/buffer areas defined on the Proposals Map:*

- a) buildings for agriculture or forestry that cannot be accommodated elsewhere;*
- b) recreational and community uses of an open nature appropriate to the countryside;*
- c) minor alterations and additions to existing buildings; and*
- d) the conversion of appropriate existing buildings.*

4.3.39 *Development in the strategic gaps/buffer areas which would harm the rural character of an area or lead to the undesirable sprawl of a settlement will not be permitted.*

4.3.40 **Comments:** The scheme would not affect these areas.

POLICY NE3 - Local Landscape Character

4.3.41 *Development will not be permitted if it would harm the local landscape character*

of the District. Proposals should respect and, where possible, enhance the intrinsic character, quality and distinctive features of the individual landscape types.

4.3.42 *NB. When considering proposals the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment, the Lower Windrush Valley Project Report and the Windrush in Witney Project Report will be taken into account where appropriate.*

4.3.43 **Impacts:** The scheme is in the Local Plan nevertheless it will have significant impact on the local landscape

4.3.44 **Comments:** Mitigation, including landscaping and replanting are proposed to help the road fit in with the surroundings.

POLICY NE6 - Retention of Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

4.3.45 *Planning permission will not be granted for proposals that would result in the loss of trees, woodlands or hedgerows, or their settings, which are important for their visual, historic, or biodiversity value. Removal will only be allowed where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development would enhance the landscape quality and nature conservation value of the area.*

4.3.46 **Impact:** The scheme would result in the loss of trees and hedgerows.

4.3.47 **Mitigation:** The design incorporates comprehensive landscape and ecological mitigation proposals designed to more than compensate for, as far as practicable, the losses arising from the scheme.

POLICY NE7 - The Water Environment

4.3.48 *Development should not have an adverse impact on the water environment. Initiatives which seek to restore or enhance the natural elements of this environment will be supported.*

4.3.49 **Comments:** The drainage design of the scheme has been developed in accordance with current best practice guidance. Comprehensive mitigation designs for the new river channel would be agreed with the Environment Agency.

POLICY NE8 - Flood Risk

4.3.50 *New development or intensification of existing development will not be permitted within areas at risk from flooding which is likely to:*

- i. impede the flow of water;*
- ii. result in the net loss of flood plain storage;*

iii. increase the flood risk elsewhere.

4.3.51 *Within areas at risk of flooding an appropriate Flood Risk assessment must be undertaken when preparing development proposals.*

4.3.52 **Impact:** The scheme would result in the loss of some floodplain storage capacity.

4.3.53 **Mitigation:** The flood storage compensation arrangements will be agreed with the Environment Agency prior to construction, and involve the provision of an equivalent volume of flood storage elsewhere in the local floodplain if required.

POLICY NE9 - Surface Water

4.3.54 *New development or intensification of existing development will not be permitted where the additional surface water run-off would result in adverse impacts such as an increased risk of flooding, river channel instability or damage to habitats, unless appropriate attenuation and pollution control measures are provided.*

4.3.55 **Impact:** CLR would increase both the rate of surface water run off and the risk of pollution within the adjacent watercourses

4.3.56 **Mitigation:** The surface water runoff would be collected in a positive drainage system incorporating pollution interceptors. Attenuation would be provided by means of storage lagoon, swale, ditches and oversized pipes with outflows restricted to levels agreed with the Environment Agency.

POLICY NE11 - Water Quality

4.3.57 *Development should not have an adverse impact on the quality of surface or ground water supplies and resources.*

4.3.58 **Comments:** There would be no adverse effects on water supplies or resources.

POLICY NE13 - Biodiversity Conservation

4.3.59 *In determining planning applications, the Council will seek to safeguard, maintain and enhance priority habitats and species within the District. Development proposals should include measures to mitigate any effects upon features of nature conservation value, including where appropriate the provision of compensatory habitats or management.*

4.3.60 **Impacts:** There is the potential for negative impacts on important habitats and species.

4.3.61 **Mitigation:** Comprehensive mitigation of biodiversity impacts has been developed as part of the scheme.

POLICY NE14 - Sites of Nature Conservation or Geological Importance

- 4.3.62 *Development that is likely to adversely affect a Special Area of Conservation, National Nature Reserve or Site of Special Scientific Interest will not be permitted. On locally designated sites of nature conservation importance, development that would damage biodiversity or geological interest will not be permitted unless the importance of the development outweighs the local value of the site and the loss can be mitigated.*
- 4.3.63 *NB This policy also applies to Candidate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), proposed Special Protected Area (SPA) sites and proposed Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); such sites are afforded the same protection as those which are designated.*
- 4.3.64 **Comments:** No such sites would be affected.

POLICY NE15 - Protected Species

- 4.3.65 *Development that would have an adverse effect on a site supporting a specially protected species will not be permitted unless damage to the ecological interest can be prevented through compliance with conditions or planning obligations.*
- 4.3.66 **Impact:** The scheme would impact on habitat supporting several protected species; Dormouse, water vole, otter, grass snake, and kingfisher.
- 4.3.67 **Mitigation:** Effects on protected species would be mitigated in accordance with current legislation and guidance, by a combination of means including dry walkways and culverts, dormouse bridges, creation of new habitats and appropriate planning and timing of construction operations.

POLICY T1 - Traffic Generation

- 4.3.68 *Proposals which would generate significant levels of traffic will not be permitted in locations where travel by means other than the private car is not a realistic alternative.*
- 4.3.69 **Comments:** The proposed scheme is not anticipated to generate significant traffic growth on its own account.

POLICY T2 - Pedestrian and Cycle Facilities

- 4.3.70 *Measures will be sought to protect, improve and extend facilities for cyclists and pedestrians, and particularly to extend the cycle and pedestrian route networks within and between settlements, within and through new development areas and through the countryside generally.*
- 4.3.71 **Comments:** The scheme would provide a new cycle and pedestrian link from

central Witney towards Stanton Harcourt and Oxford Hill.

POLICY T3 - Public Transport Infrastructure

4.3.72 *Measures which will protect and improve the number, frequency and quality of bus and rail services in West Oxfordshire, and which will improve facilities for users of public transport, will be permitted.*

4.3.73 **Comments:** CLR would not directly impact this policy. However, reduced congestion in the town centre should improve reliability of the public transport services using the commercial centre.

POLICY T4 - Major highway schemes

4.3.74 *Land will be safeguarded for the following highway schemes, as shown on the Proposals Map and Inset Maps:*

- *Witney - Cogges Link*
- *Witney - West End Link (northern section)*
- *Witney - A40 Downs Road Junction.*
- *Carterton A40 Access Road (section between Minster Road and Curbridge Road, Brize Norton)*
- *Sutton Bypass (B4449)*

4.3.75 **Comments:** This scheme is one of the major highway schemes in this policy.

POLICY T5 - Interchange Facilities

4.3.76 *Public transport interchange facilities will be permitted.*

4.3.77 **Comments:** Not applicable to this scheme.

POLICY T6 - Traffic Management

4.3.78 *Traffic management schemes will be sought which:*

a) promote and give priority to the safe and convenient movement of pedestrians and cyclists, particularly on roads with significant or potentially significant pedestrian and cycle flows:

b) promote safe and convenient movement of buses, particularly on routes into town centres, within town centres and on radial routes;

c) reduce traffic conflicts, the potential for accidents and alleviate congestion;

d) reduce environmental damage caused by traffic.

4.3.79 **Comments:** The proposal would reduce traffic and facilitate opportunities for

traffic management schemes in central Witney to further improve the town centre environment. A segregated pedestrian and cycling facility would be provided as part of the scheme.

POLICY TLC5 - Existing Outdoor Recreational Space

4.3.80 *Development proposals should not result in the loss of existing recreational open space (including school playing fields, allotments and amenity areas) unless:*

a) the development is for buildings and/or facilities ancillary to, or enhancing, the amenity or recreational value of the open space; or

b) alternative provision of at least equivalent suitability and accessibility, particularly by foot, is made; or

c) there is clear evidence that now, and in the future, the land will no longer be needed for its current purpose or for recreational uses by the wider community.

4.3.81 **Impact:** The scheme would result in the loss of public open space and adverse effects on the country park.

4.3.82 **Mitigation:** Public open space lost as a result of the scheme would be replaced with an equivalent area, including an area suitable for the playing of organised games.

POLICY TLC8 - Public Rights of Way

4.3.83 *The existing public rights of way network will be safeguarded and, where appropriate, improved access to the countryside will be sought, with additional public rights of way for walkers, horseriders and cyclists.*

4.3.84 **Impact:** A number of public footpaths would be severed by the scheme.

4.3.85 **Mitigation:** The severed footpaths would be diverted, with road crossings provided as appropriate.

Witney Proposal 7 - Cogges, Witney

4.3.86 *The land between the eastern section of the Cogges Link Road and the Cogges housing area is allocated for open space (3.0 hectares), and housing (1.4 hectares). The release of the land for housing and open space will be dependent on securing the development of the Cogges Link Road as shown on the Witney Inset Map.*

4.3.87 **Comments:** The Local Plan safeguards land required for the CLR

Proposal 12 - Traffic Management in the Central Core and Fringe Central Area

4.3.88 *Measures to give increased priority to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport will be promoted in Witney Central Area in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council:*

a) proposals within the central area of the town will include pedestrian priority areas, traffic calming and comprehensive traffic and parking management. Measures to discourage non-essential traffic movements through the town centre, slow the speeds of residual traffic and improve the environment and highway safety (i.e. in Church Green, Market Square, High Street (South), Langdale Gate and Corn Street).

b) proposals within and on the fringe of the central area will include traffic management and traffic calming measures that will reduce traffic speeds and improve highway safety (i.e. in High Street Central and North, Bridge Street, West End, Welch Way (East), Hailey Road, Farmers Close, Woodgreen and Narrow Hill).

4.3.89 **Comments:** This scheme is fundamental to the development of this policy. Removal of traffic from central Witney will enable opportunities to improve facilities for pedestrian, cyclists and public transport.

5 Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan (2006-2011)

5.1.1 Local Transport Plans are documents that address a wide range of issues surrounding transport and related issues in the local area. The second Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) covers a five-year period from April 2006 - March 2011 and sets out a vision for transport in Oxfordshire. It focuses on five priority areas:

- Tackling congestion;
- Delivering accessibility;
- Safer roads;
- Better air quality;
- Improving the street environment.

5.2 General Proposals

Congestion Action 1 and Air Quality Action 1:

5.2.1 *Make public transport faster, more reliable and more user-friendly*

5.2.2 **Comments:** CLR would not directly impact on this policy. However, reduced congestion in the town centre should improve reliability of the public transport services using the commercial centre.

Congestion Action 2 and Air Quality Action 2:

5.2.3 *Manage, develop and maintain the county's road network to reduce the impact of bottlenecks (including road works) and make better use of existing road capacity to improve the flow of traffic*

5.2.4 **Comment:** CLR supports this objective through better distribution of traffic and helping to solve the problem of the bottleneck on Bridge Street.

Congestion Action 3, Air Quality Action 3 and Street Environment Action 3:

5.2.5 *Make walking and cycling safer and more convenient*

5.2.6 **Comments:** The provision of safe walking and cycling facilities within the CLR would encourage additional non-motorised trips between Cogges and Witney.

Road Safety Action 1:

5.2.7 *Improve the design and layout of the highway where necessary to address known safety problems*

5.2.8 **Comments:** CLR would facilitate a reduction in the predicted number of accidents within Witney.

Road Safety Action 4:

5.2.9 *Ensure that new development is planned in such a way as to prevent road safety problems being created.*

5.2.10 **Comments:** CLR would facilitate a reduction in the predicted number of accidents within Witney.

Air Quality Action 8:

5.2.11 *Provide alternative routes for traffic to avoid areas of poor air quality*

5.2.12 **Comment:** CLR would improve air quality in the town centre by drawing traffic away.

Air Quality Action 9:

5.2.13 *Ensure that new development is planned in such a way as to minimise negative impacts on local air quality*

5.2.14 **Comments:** The pollution impacts of the scheme have been fully assessed and stated in this environmental statement. Mitigation including compliance with Pollution Prevention Guidelines will be employed.

Street Environment Action 1:

5.2.15 *Improve the design and layout of streets with poor quality environment, using high quality materials and street furniture wherever possible.*

5.2.16 **Comment:** Reduction in traffic in the historic town centre and conservation area could facilitate and encourage investment in improvements to the streets.

Street Environment Action 2:

5.2.17 *Restrict vehicles from areas with a poor street environment*

5.2.18 **Comment:** Implementation of CLR may allow pedestrianisation of parts of the historic town centre, creating local enhancements.

Street Environment Action 6:

5.2.19 *Provide alternative routes for traffic to avoid streets with a poor environment*

5.2.20 **Comment:** CLR would perform this function, removing traffic from areas which currently have a relatively poor environment, creating a substantial benefit.

5.3 Specific Strategies for West Oxfordshire

Problem: Congestion

5.3.1 *The main access point into the town centre from the north and east, Bridge Street carries over 25,000 vehicles per day. Bridge Street's congestion is continuous throughout the day, but is at its worst during both the morning and evening peak. Bus services that are delayed by this congestion include:*

- *Services between Oxford and Witney (22 buses per hour)*
- *Services between Carterton and Oxford (6 buses per hour)*

5.3.2 *Three mini-roundabouts in under a kilometre also add to the congestion problems faced on this stretch of road.*

Proposed solutions

Scheme	Cost	Expected Completion	Details and expected impact on problem
<i>Bridge Street Area measures</i>	<i>£521,000</i>	<i>2009/10</i>	<i>Measures to encourage traffic to use Cogges Link and not Bridge Street and provide enhanced facilities for buses.</i>
<i>Cogges Link</i>	<i>£15,792,000</i>	<i>2010/11</i>	<i>New relief road to remove traffic from the town centre and Bridge Street in particular. The scheme is expected to reduce congestion significantly and also improve air quality.</i>

5.3.3 **Comments:** CLR is an integral part of the solution to the traffic problems in Witney.

Problem: Air Quality

5.3.4 *Detailed monitoring and modelling of air quality at these locations has concluded that there are 2 locations in the district where national air quality objectives are exceeded. One of these is Bridge Street in Witney.*

Proposed solutions

5.3.5 *Where pollutant concentrations exceed national objective levels, local authorities*

are required to declare an Air Quality Management Area covering the affected streets. Authorities must then develop an Air Quality Action Plan which sets out how they intend to reduce concentrations of the pollutants concerned to meet national air quality objectives. The national objective for the annual mean concentration of nitrogen dioxide is likely to be exceeded in Bridge Street in Witney, and Horsefair in Chipping Norton. Air Quality Management Areas were declared for both in 2005, and Air Quality Action Plans for both are being developed jointly by the County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council, in the context of the County Council's wider transport strategies.

5.3.6 In Witney, one specific scheme that is already in the Council's LTP programme and is very likely to be part of the Action Plan for Witney is the Cogges Link road, details of which are included in the table below.

Scheme	Cost	Expected Completion	Details and expected impact on problem
Chipping Norton Town Centre Measures	£473,000	2007/08	Measures to improve air quality in Chipping Norton as part of the emerging Air Quality Action Plan.
Bridge Street Area measures - Witney	£521,000	2009/10	Measures to encourage traffic to use Cogges Link and not Bridge Street.
Cogges Link - Witney	£15,792,000	2010/11	New relief road to remove traffic from the town centre and Bridge Street in particular. The scheme is expected to improve air quality significantly and also reduce congestion.

5.3.7 **Comment:** CLR is noted as an integral part of reducing the air quality problems in Witney.

Problem: Street Environment

5.3.8 The central area of Witney is an area of outstanding environmental quality which has expanded considerably in recent years to meet the increasing demands from the growth of the town without losing the strong local architectural traditions. The High Street is still dominated by traffic, impairing both the attractiveness of the town centre and its economic and commercial vitality.

Proposed solutions

5.3.9 The road proposals for the Cogges Link Road and West End Link should enable

traffic management measures to be undertaken which can reduce or slow traffic on the historic town centre streets, improving the environmental quality of the central area especially for shoppers and visitors.

Scheme	Cost	Expected Completion	Details and expected impact on problem
<i>Bridge Street Area measures</i>	<i>£521,000</i>	<i>2009/10</i>	<i>Measures to encourage traffic to use Cogges Link and not Bridge Street – will reinforce the benefits outlined above.</i>
<i>Cogges Link</i>	<i>£15,792,000</i>	<i>2010/11</i>	<i>New relief road to remove traffic from the town centre and Bridge Street in particular. As well as improving air quality and reducing congestion, this scheme will significantly improve the street environment in Bridge Street and the town centre.</i>

5.3.10 **Comment:** CLR is an integral part of the strategy to improve the street environment in Witney.

Core Target 3: Condition of Unclassified Roads

5.3.11 *Objective: To reduce the proportion of unclassified roads on which structural maintenance is required*

5.3.12 *Target: To reduce the proportion of unclassified roads on which structural maintenance is required to 6.2% by 2010/11*

5.3.13 **Comments:** CLR would not impact on this policy, although the provision of the new route would better enable improvements within the town centre particularly Bridge Street.

Core Target 5: Road Casualties – Killed or Seriously Injured

5.3.14 *Objective: To reduce the number of fatalities or seriously injured casualties on Oxfordshire roads*

5.3.15 *Target: To reduce the number of fatalities and seriously injured casualties to 245 by 2010*

5.3.16 **Comments:** CLR would facilitate a reduction in the predicted number of accidents within Witney.

Core Target 6: Child Casualties

5.3.17 *Objective: To reduce the number of child casualties on Oxfordshire roads*

5.3.18 *Target: To reduce the number of child casualties to 20 by 2010*

5.3.19 **Comments:** CLR would facilitate a reduction in the predicted number of accidents within Witney, some of which would have affected children.

Core Target 7: Slight Casualties

5.3.20 *Objective: To reduce the number of slight casualties on Oxfordshire roads*

5.3.21 *Target: To reduce the number of slight casualties by 10% to 2223 by 2010*

5.3.22 **Comments:** CLR would facilitate a reduction in the predicted number of accidents within Witney.

Core Target 9: Bus Satisfaction

5.3.23 *Objective: To increase the proportion of the local population satisfied with the quality of bus services*

5.3.24 *Target: To increase the proportion to 55% by 2009/10*

5.3.25 **Comments:** CLR would not directly impact on this policy. However, reduced congestion in the town centre should improve reliability of the public transport services using the commercial centre.

Core Target 10: Total Area-Wide Road Mileage

5.3.26 *Objective: To limit the growth in overall traffic levels on Oxfordshire roads*
Target: To have no more than 12.2 million vehicle kilometres per day travelled on Oxfordshire's roads in 2010

5.3.27 **Comments:** The proposed scheme is not anticipated to generate above average traffic growth.

Core Target 11: Index of Cycling Levels

5.3.28 *Objective: To maintain current levels of cycling across the county* *Target: To maintain current levels of cycling on the monitored network to 2010/11*

5.3.29 **Comments:** The provision of safe cycling facilities within the CLR would encourage additional cycling trips between Cogges and Witney.

Core Target 16: Bus Punctuality (non-frequent services)

5.3.30 *Objective: To improve the punctuality, both at start of route and at intermediate points, of non-frequent bus services (i.e. services with a service interval greater than 10 minutes).*

5.3.31 *Target: To improve the percentage of buses starting their journey not more than one minute early or 5 minutes late to 90% by 2012/13, and the percentage passing intermediate points not more than one minute early or five minutes late to 90% by 2014/15.*

5.3.32 **Comments:** CLR would not directly impact on this policy however reduced congestion in the town centre should improve reliability of the public transport services using the commercial centre.

Core Target 17: Bus Punctuality (frequent services)

5.3.33 *Objective: To reduce the excess waiting time for frequent bus services (i.e. buses with a service interval 10 minutes or less)*

5.3.34 *Target: To maintain excess waiting time at or below 1.25 minutes.*

5.3.35 **Comments:** CLR would not directly impact on this policy however reduced congestion in the town centre should improve reliability of the public transport services using the commercial centre.

Local Indicator 1: Congestion

5.3.36 *Objective: To reduce levels of congestion in Oxfordshire, either generally across the county or on specific selected routes or corridors*

5.3.37 **Comments:** CLR would reduce levels of traffic and congestion in the town centre, and particularly across Bridge Street.

Local Indicator 2: Road Safety – Pedestrian Casualties

5.3.38 *Objective: To reduce the numbers of pedestrian casualties on Oxfordshire's roads.*

5.3.39 **Comments:** CLR would facilitate a reduction in the predicted number of accidents within Witney.

Local Indicator 3: Road Safety – Cyclist Casualties

5.3.40 *Objective: To reduce the number of cyclist casualties on Oxfordshire's roads*

- 5.3.41 **Comments:** Reduction in traffic in Witney town centre, and provision of safe cycling facilities between Witney and Cogges would reduce the number of cycle accidents.

Local Indicator 4: Road Safety – Powered Two-Wheeler Casualties

- 5.3.42 *Objective: To reduce the numbers of powered two wheeler user casualties on Oxfordshire's roads*

- 5.3.43 **Comments:** CLR would facilitate a reduction in the predicted number of accidents within Witney.

Local Indicator 8: Accessibility – Pedestrian Crossings with Facilities for Disabled People

- 5.3.44 *Objective: To increase the number of controlled pedestrian crossings which are fully accessible to disabled persons.*

- 5.3.45 **Comments:** Crossing points will be in accordance with the Disability Circulars, and could include measures such as drop kerbs and tactile paving.

Local Indicator 10: Streetscapes – Quality of the Street Environment

- 5.3.46 *Objective: To improve the perception of the condition and quality of the street environment in the county's main towns.*

- 5.3.47 **Comments:** Removal of traffic from the town centre would improve the street environment and quality of the conservation area.

6 The Windrush In Witney Project

- 6.1.1 The Windrush in Witney project has been set up by West Oxfordshire District Council, to provide guidance on the management of the River Windrush as it flows through Witney. Key aims are to protect and enhance this area's special landscape, character, ecological, cultural and recreational value.
- 6.1.2 *NCO1: Encourage the protection, restoration and enhancement of unimproved neutral grassland, through, for example, the establishment of a conservation grazing project for the study area.*
- 6.1.3 **Comment:** The scheme involves the transfer of an area of land to Country Park to be managed as floodplain grassland and woodland.
- 6.1.4 *NCO2: Encourage the protection, restoration and enhancement of wetland habitat and the river corridor.*
- 6.1.5 **Impact:** The scheme would result in the loss of an area of wetland and there would be two crossings of the river.
- 6.1.6 **Mitigation:** A replacement area of wetland habitat including reedbeds and wetland scrapes will be created, while mitigation measures will ensure no detriment to the river corridor.
- 6.1.7 *NCO3: Encourage continuing survey work. Eg. Ecological surveys should be undertaken as an integral part of planning applications.*
- 6.1.8 **Comment:** Extensive ecological surveys have been undertaken as part of this environmental assessment.
- 6.1.9 *NCO4: Safeguard priority habitats and species in accordance with relevant Biodiversity Action Plans, Habitat Action Plans and Species Action Plans by, for instance, improving the habitats for otters and water voles.*
- 6.1.10 **Comment:** Selected thinning of the canopy along the river is proposed, to diversify the bankside vegetation, enhancing the habitat for water voles. An otter underpass with accompanying mammal fencing will be provided.
- 6.1.11 *LO1: Ensure that any new development integrates with the landscape character of the study area.*
- 6.1.12 **Impacts:** The scheme is in the Local Plan nevertheless it will have significant impact on the local landscape.

- 6.1.13 **Comments:** Mitigation, including landscaping and replanting are proposed to help the road fit in with the surroundings.
- 6.1.14 *LO2: Encourage land management practices that are in keeping with the landscape character.*
- 6.1.15 **Comment:** It is proposed to transfer an area of land into the country park, to be managed as floodplain, grassland and woodland.
- 6.1.16 *LO3: Ensure that new planting is in character with the landscape type. Eg. District Council will provide guidance on suitable species.*
- 6.1.17 **Comment:** The District Council will be consulted on the planting proposals
- 6.1.18 *LO4: Encourage the appropriate screening of poor views/features.*
- 6.1.19 **Impacts:** There would be views over the new road from the country park.
- 6.1.20 **Mitigation:** A scheme of landscape mitigation would partially mitigate landscape impacts.
- 6.1.21 *LO5: Encourage the management of existing riverside willows and planting new willows where appropriate.*
- 6.1.22 **Comment:** No riverside willows will be lost as part of the scheme.
- 6.1.23 *LO6: Encourage management of tree screen and veteran trees along Witan Way. This provides a valuable buffer between the road and the river.*
- 6.1.24 **Comment:** There will be some loss of vegetation in this area, which cannot fully be compensated for.
- 6.1.25 *LO7: Encourage protection, awareness and management of historic features. E.g. The area contains pill boxes, fish ponds, drystone walls, park railings and the Old Bathing Place.*
- 6.1.26 **Comments:** An archaeological assessment and field evaluation would be carried out prior to construction, and appropriate measures taken to deal with any finds.
- 6.1.27 *LO8: Encourage the removal of inappropriate urban detractors. Eg. Overhead powerlines detract from the rural character of the area.*
- 6.1.28 **Impact:** The new road would be a new urban influence on the area

- 6.1.29 **Mitigation:** The design incorporates comprehensive landscape mitigation proposals designed to minimize views over the scheme.
- 6.1.30 *PA1: Improve quality of existing public access provision within the study area. Eg. Improve the standard of maintenance along footpaths and repair stiles, bridges and kissing gates.*
- 6.1.31 **Comment:** As part of the scheme, a new car park is proposed for the Country Park – this would improve access to the area.