



Proposed New A415 Thames River Crossing Public Exhibition



To be held at the Rose Revived Public House in Newbridge on:
Thursday, Friday and Saturday 26th to 28th November 2009

Thursday 2:00pm to 9:00pm

Friday 10:30am to 9:00pm

Saturday 10:30am to 4:30pm

All Exhibition materials available at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/newbridge

Closing date for public comments is 24th December 2009

The Consultation Process

The exhibition presents Oxfordshire County Council's proposals for providing a new crossing to carry the A415 across the River Thames. You can ask questions and tell us what you think. This leaflet is designed to be read as you go around the exhibition and provides information about the display panels and other material available.

If you are unable to attend the exhibition please refer to our website at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/newbridge where the exhibition material can also be viewed.

We Want to Hear from You

When you've looked at the proposals please complete the feedback questionnaire at the back of this leaflet and post it in the box provided at the exhibition while the information is still fresh in your mind. If you are unable to do that, you can take the form away and return it to us at the freepost address at the back of this leaflet. Alternatively you can go to our website at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/newbridge where you will find the display panels, other background information and an on-line feedback questionnaire.

If you would like more information please speak to a member of staff at the exhibition or you can call us later on 01865 810448.

The consultation closes on 24th December 2009 so it is important that you return your completed questionnaire to us by this date.

What Happens Next?

We do value your opinion and all comments will be carefully analysed. A report will then go to Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Committee for Transport on 20 April 2010 together with any recommendations for changes to these proposals.

Please be aware that once a decision on the scheme has been reached this does not automatically mean a crossing would be built. Funding would need to be identified and further consultation carried out as part of the formal planning process. It is anticipated that construction of this crossing would not start until at least 2014 or 2015.

If you have any questions please send them to:

**Newbridge Consultation
Oxfordshire County Council
Speedwell House
Speedwell Street
Oxford
OX1 1NE**

or

E-mail: newbridge@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Alternative formats of this publication can be made available on request. These include other languages, large print, Braille, audio cassette, computer disk or e-mail

Introduction

The A415 crosses the River Thames over Newbridge, a 13th century six span masonry Gothic arch bridge that is thought to be the oldest complete and original bridge crossing the River Thames today. The load carrying capacity of this bridge has been assessed structurally and found to be very low. Newbridge cannot be reconstructed or easily strengthened given its historic value, the significance of which has been recognised and statutorily protected by being designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

As an interim measure we have imposed an 18 tonne structural weight limit and are closely monitoring the condition and any movements in the bridge. Any further significant movement in the bridge detected may require the immediate imposition of a lower weight restriction, 7.5 tonnes, 3 tonnes or even complete closure of the road. It is inevitable that Newbridge will continue to deteriorate due to the actions of vehicle loading, vibration, accidental impacts with the parapets, long vehicles grounding and the weather.

A study has been carried out to determine whether Newbridge could be strengthened to enable it to continue to safely and reliably carry traffic for the foreseeable future. The conclusion of this study is that there are no strengthening options available that would both ensure Newbridge's structural adequacy and appropriately conserve its historic fabric.

A further study has been carried out looking at all routes crossing the River Thames in the vicinity of the A415 west of Oxford to establish what the effect of severely restricting the types of vehicles that can use Newbridge would be. We have concluded from this study that to maintain transport links for public and private services, to protect adjacent river crossing routes from unacceptable increases in traffic and to preserve social and economic prosperity, the A415's Thames crossing should ideally have no weight limit or, at the very least, should be adequate to reliably carry vehicles up to at least 18 tonnes in weight for the long term.

In light of these studies we believe the only viable option available is to construct a new A415 Thames crossing. The details of the proposed new Thames river bridge, linking roads and type of junctions at each end are now being developed and where there are choices which still comply with the technical, legal and safety requirements your opinions are being sought. Other general comments or queries are also welcomed.

Benefits of the Proposals

- The proposals will help maintain social and economic prosperity by ensuring that the A415 can remain open.
- A new Thames crossing would help ensure that the A415 could reliably carry all its traffic into the long term, avoid the need for any A415 traffic to divert onto much longer or less suitable routes and avoid the detrimental impacts this additional traffic would have on the communities along these alternative routes.
- Providing a new Thames crossing will allow Newbridge to be closed to A415 traffic and would therefore prevent this historic structure from sustaining any damage from road traffic.
- The new Thames bridge will be designed to reliably carry all classes of vehicles and will have parapets that provide better protection to motorists should an accident occur.
- With the amount of traffic greatly reduced or completely removed from Newbridge it will be much safer for equestrians, cyclists, Thames Path users and all other pedestrians to cross the river here.

Selection of a Preferred Route Corridor & Assessment of the Environmental Impact of the Preferred Route

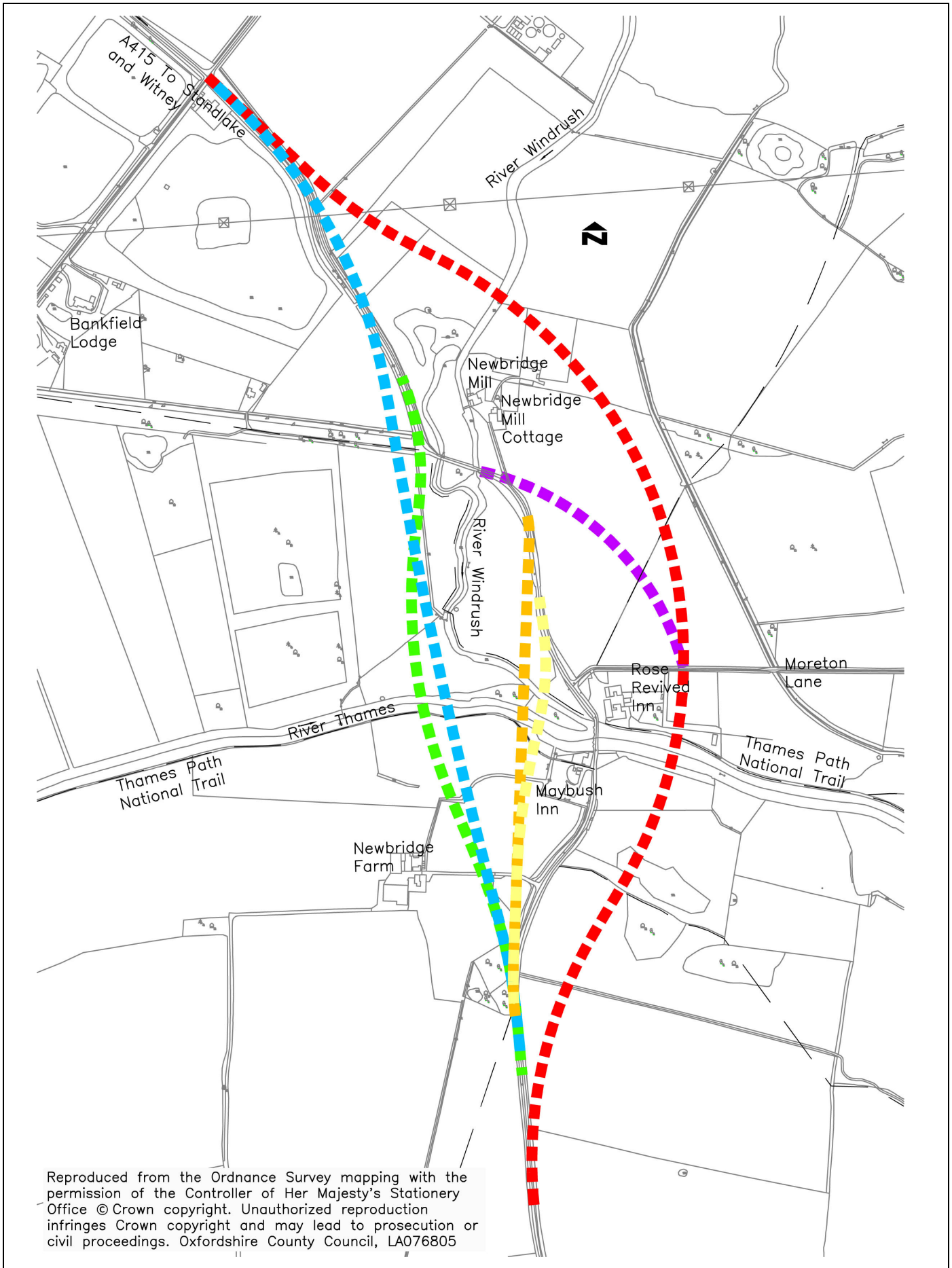
The initial work considered where a new crossing route could be located to have least environmental impact. This study (called Stage 1) is published on the Oxfordshire Highways website and some local residents and parishes have already provided feedback.

The Stage 1 study compared the relative merits of six alternative route corridors. These comprised two eastern, two western and two central route options. The environmental impact of each corridor was assessed in relation to the following areas of interest. These were scored and ranked as shown below.

Areas of Interest Considered	Route Corridors					
	Red	Red / Purple	Orange	Yellow	Blue	Green
	East		Central		West	
Traffic Appraisal	3	6	4	4	2	1
Policies & Plans	6	5	4	3	2	1
Air Quality	2	4	5	6	3	1
Noise & Vibration	2	5	4	6	1	2
Geology & Soil	6	3	3	1	5	2
Archaeology & Cultural Heritage	3	4	5	6	2	1
Ecology & Nature Conservation	6	3	5	4	2	1
Landscape, Visual & Townscape	6	5	3	4	2	1
Agriculture	6	4	2	1	5	3
Road Drainage & the Water Environment	6	5	4	3	2	1
Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians & Community Effect	6	5	4	3	2	1
Vehicle Travellers	3	6	4	4	1	2
Score*	55	55	47	45	29	17
Ranking (From 1 to 5, with 1 most preferred)	5	5	4	3	2	1

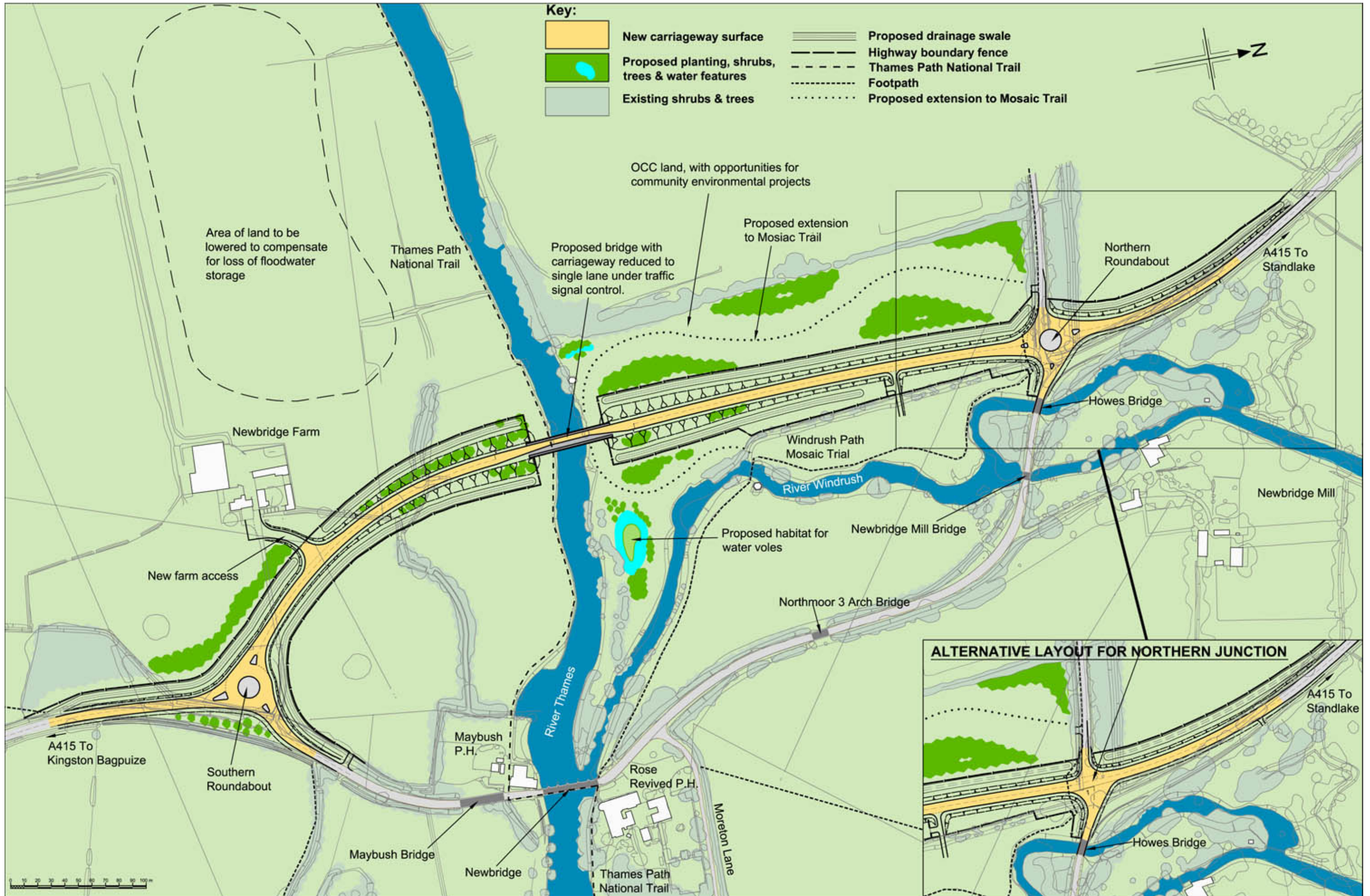
Note: * The score number represents the cumulative value of the rankings given at the end of each chapter covering each individual area of interest in the Stage 1 Report (and its addendum report). A high number represents a higher cumulative impact for that route corridor. Conversely a low score equates to a lower cumulative impact.

As the Green Corridor scores significantly lower than any other it will have significantly less environmental impact than any of the other corridors considered and is therefore our preferred solution. We have since undertaken some preliminary design of the route based on the green corridor and now wish to seek your views regarding these preliminary proposals at this public exhibition.



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Stage 1 Study Route Corridor Options Considered



Proposed New Thames River Crossing & Linking Roads (based on the green route corridor and showing northern junction options)

Artistic Impressions of the View from Newbridge of the Proposed New A415 Thames Crossing with Close-Up Views of the Alternative Bridge Options



Beam Bridge - Total scheme cost £6.97m



Arch Bridge – Total scheme cost £8.12m

Proposed New Thames Bridge

Two main bridge design options have been chosen after consideration was given to a number of alternative designs:

- **Beam Bridge** - is a three span design with a relatively thin constant depth deck with metal post and rail parapets. This would be constructed from reinforced concrete, with precast pre-stressed concrete beams and have a plain concrete finish.
- **Arch Bridge** - is a more traditional looking three arch bridge with solid parapets. This would be constructed from reinforced concrete and precast concrete arch sections. The underside of the arches would have a plain concrete finish. The elevations, piers and parapets could also be plain concrete or could be coloured and/or patterned concrete to appear like stonework. Alternatively the elevations, piers and parapets could be faced in natural stone.

We estimate that the arch bridge would cost approximately £1 million pounds more to construct than the beam bridge option and this has been reflected in the total scheme costs shown opposite.

We have already carried out some preliminary flood modelling, following Environment Agency guidelines and using their recommended flood modelling data. We are satisfied that the scheme can be designed to have a negligible effect on maximum flood levels. The scheme will also be designed to ensure that properties that already flood at lower flood levels will not be adversely affected.

Both bridge options would require the new road to be built on embankment which would rise to a maximum height of approximately 3.5 metres above existing ground level. An indicative overall scheme cost for each bridge option is shown. These estimates are fully inclusive of all consultants' fees, the planning process, land and construction costs but are subject to change depending on the final scheme details.

Land

Oxfordshire County Council owns land to the north of the River Thames on which part of the proposed route would sit. The County Council would seek to acquire the remaining land either through negotiation or compulsory purchase.

Windrush Mosaic Trail

The northern linking road will cross the Windrush Mosaic Trail. To avoid walkers having to cross this new road it is proposed to provide an additional section to the Mosaic Trail which passes under the new Thames river crossing and alongside the western side of the new road. The new path would cross a large open field where there could be opportunities for new community environmental projects to be implemented.

The Thames Path National Trail

The Thames Path follows the River Thames from its source in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds to the Thames Barrier in London and crosses the river at Newbridge. Removing A415 traffic from the existing bridge would make walking over Newbridge a safer and more enjoyable experience.

English Heritage

English Heritage advises the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport regarding any work affecting a Scheduled Ancient Monument and they were therefore consulted at an early stage of the scheme development.

English Heritage have already indicated that they consider the provision of a new Thames River crossing approximately 250m upstream of Newbridge would not be detrimental to the setting of Newbridge. English Heritage have also indicated that they consider that construction of a new crossing would be preferable to carrying out any strengthening work that would have a detrimental impact on the historic fabric of Newbridge.

Measure to Reduce Change in Traffic Flows on the A415

We have already received feedback from some local residents who are concerned that the proposed scheme would reduce traffic delays on the A415 and therefore lead to an increase in traffic flows past their homes by attracting additional traffic onto the A415. The proposals therefore include road narrowing and traffic signal control of the A415 at the new Thames crossing to help maintain traffic delays similar to the Newbridge's existing signal arrangement. This measure alone cannot compensate for the delays due to the bends and second set of signals at the Windrush bridges to the north of the Thames near Newbridge Mill so further traffic growth mitigation measures will also be considered. Though the new road is to be narrowed at the bridge, prudence dictates that the bridge structure itself should be built wide enough to accommodate two lanes of traffic so that it would not be an obstacle to any future A415 improvement schemes.

Thank you for taking the time to review the proposals. Please tell us what you think by completing and returning the following questionnaire.

Your completed questionnaire can either be posted in the box provided on your way out or posted to the address below.

FREEPOST OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

(No further address required)

Please note that no stamp is required and that your completed questionnaires should reach us by 24th December 2009.

Alternatively you can complete an on-line questionnaire at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/newbridge

All the comments we receive will be read and considered carefully. Please note that decisions on this scheme will depend on a range of factors, not just the outcomes of this consultation. Examples of other factors include financial constraints, technical constraints and our overall transport strategy. This means that the views expressed in this consultation, whilst very important, may not be the deciding factor.

Proposed New A415 Thames River Crossing Public Exhibition Questionnaire

We would be grateful if having viewed the information either at the exhibition or online you could complete this short questionnaire to give us your views about the proposals. Please tick the appropriate box and add any comments you may have in the box overleaf.

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	No preference	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
A new A415 river crossing is needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The new crossing should be based on the green route corridor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. How do you rate the appearance of each proposed bridge option for this upper Thames location?

	Very good	Good	No preference	Bad	Very bad
Beam bridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arch bridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have any comments/suggestions regarding the design of the proposed bridge please write them in the box overleaf.

3. The arch bridge will cost at least £1Million more to construct than the beam bridge option. Do you think that it is worth spending this extra money?

Yes No Don't know

4. We propose closing the existing bridge to all motor vehicles once a new crossing is opened. Do you support this measure?

Yes No Don't know

5. We are proposing that the road over the new Thames bridge would be single lane controlled by traffic signals to discourage an increase in traffic on the A415. Do you support this proposal?

Yes No Don't know

If you have any suggestions of what other traffic measures could be introduced along the A415 to discourage additional traffic and/or to improve conditions for your community please write them in the box overleaf.

6. At the northern end of the proposed crossing (Standlake side) do you have a preference for the roundabout or the alternative junction layout shown?

Roundabout Alternative junction No preference

7. Do you support the proposal for providing an additional length of path to the Windrush Mosaic Trail?

Yes No No preference

If you have any suggestions for community/environmental projects on the Oxfordshire County Council land shown on the plan, please write them in the box overleaf.

8. Overall to what extent are you in favour of Oxfordshire County Council's proposals for enabling the A415 to remain open by constructing a new Thames river crossing?

Strongly in
favour

Support

No preference

Against

Strongly against

Any other comments (Please continue on a separate sheet of paper if required.)

About you

It would be helpful if you could provide some information about yourself so that we can check how the effects of our proposals impact on communities along the A415 and on the alternative Thames crossing routes.

Benefit from reduced
journey time on A415.

Suffer if traffic increases on
adjacent Thames crossing
routes.

Suffer if traffic increases
on the A415.

How many times do you cross Newbridge each week?

Home postcode

Business/Work postcode

If you are completing this questionnaire on behalf of a parish council, group, organisation, school, or business please enter their name below and explain how these proposals might affect your group in the box above

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PLEASE DETACH AND POST THIS FORM IN THE BOX PROVIDED ON YOUR WAY OUT.

or post it to reach us by 24 December

to:

FREEPOST OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

(No further address required)

or you can complete an on-line questionnaire at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/newbridge