

## Thames River Crossings West of Oxford

### Role of A415

Alternative Thames crossings in the area west of Oxford have deficiencies in strength and/or geometry and most of their routes pass through small communities. This makes them unsuitable to take any significant increases in general traffic volumes and particularly unsuitable for additional HGV traffic.

The A415 which crosses the Thames at Newbridge is an important road linking Witney and Abingdon, two important market towns and respectively the District towns of West Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. To the south the A415 connects with the A34 and A420, providing strong trading links with Berkshire and the South Coast ports on the one hand and Swindon and M4 corridor on the other. It also connects with important growth areas in Wantage and Grove via the A338. To the north it connects to A40 and hence to the Cotswolds, Mid Wales and the West Midlands. The A415 performs an important strategic function which must be retained and includes carrying all normal goods vehicles.

The consequences of closing the A415 at Newbridge would impact on social and economic interaction. The connectivity of the road network in west Oxfordshire would be reduced. Public transport links between Witney and Abingdon would have to be diverted via Oxford. Accessibility for those without private transport and for communities along the A415 would be reduced. There would be serious implications for all the other river crossings, which could be expected to have increased traffic flows as a result. Many of the settlements in the area would have increased traffic flows passing through them as drivers found their way to alternative river crossings (although Standlake/Brightampton would probably have decreased flows).

Permanently lowering the weight limit on Newbridge any further would have similar unacceptable impacts: on public transport viability along the A415 corridor, on the communities, roads and bridges on the other local alternative Thames crossing routes, as these are themselves generally unsuitable to carry additional HGV traffic, on hauliers, local services and deliveries and consequently the financial and commercial viability of the area served by the A415.

Given that we don't believe we can/should strengthen Newbridge (see panel 3) and that we believe the A415 should ideally not be restricted any further, we have concluded that the only viable option available to us is to construct a new A415 Thames crossing.

### Impact of Proposals on the A415

The traffic effects of providing a new A415 road crossing of the Thames west of Newbridge are set out in the tables below.

A new route to the west would be shorter and straighter than the existing A415, so even if we restrict the use of the new crossing with traffic signals, some additional traffic would be attracted onto the A415 from other routes. This needs to be seen in both the context of year on year increasing traffic flows nationally and local congestion on the A40/A34 which is the most desirable alternative route. Based on the central Oxfordshire Traffic Model the expected traffic flows on the A415 at Newbridge are as follows:

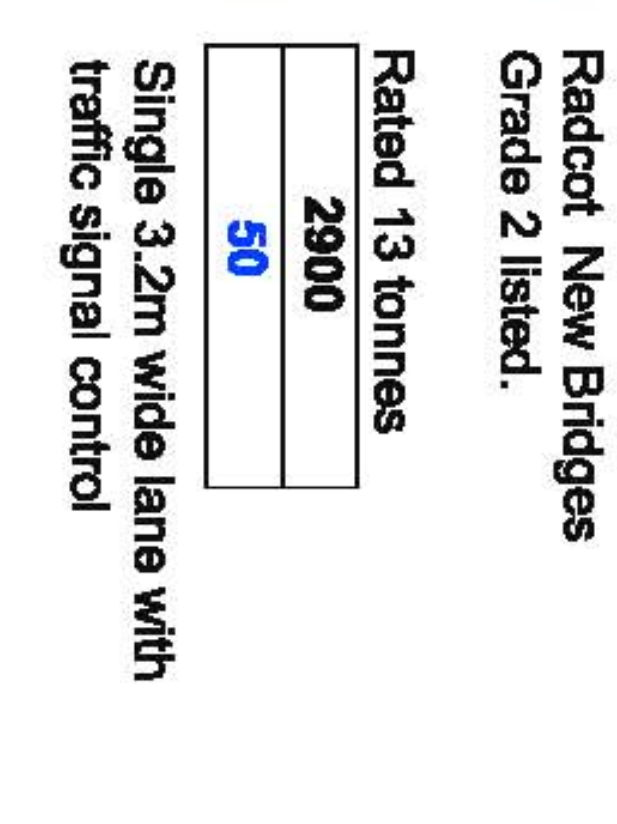
Traffic Flow (no. veh.)	am Peak	pm Peak	All Day (24 hour)
Existing	1084	1019	9828
With new signalled crossing	1157	1084	10440
With new crossing (without traffic signals)	1209	1175	11146
<b>Average Time Saving (Seconds)</b>	<b>am Peak</b>	<b>pm Peak</b>	<b>pm Peak</b>
With new signalled crossing	45	19	7
With new crossing (without traffic signals)	58	40	20
			68

The above represents a predicted change in traffic flow with the proposed signalled River Thames crossing of approximately one additional vehicle every minute on average in peak hours, with a lower increase out of these periods. Without the traffic signals this represents approximately 2 to 3 extra vehicles per minute in peak hours and again a lower increase outside peak periods. It is considered that the slight increase in traffic flows with the proposals would not be noticeable to most people.

**Radcot Bridges**  
Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade 1 listed.  
Rated 44 tonnes  
2900  
50  
Single 3.8m wide lane with traffic signal control



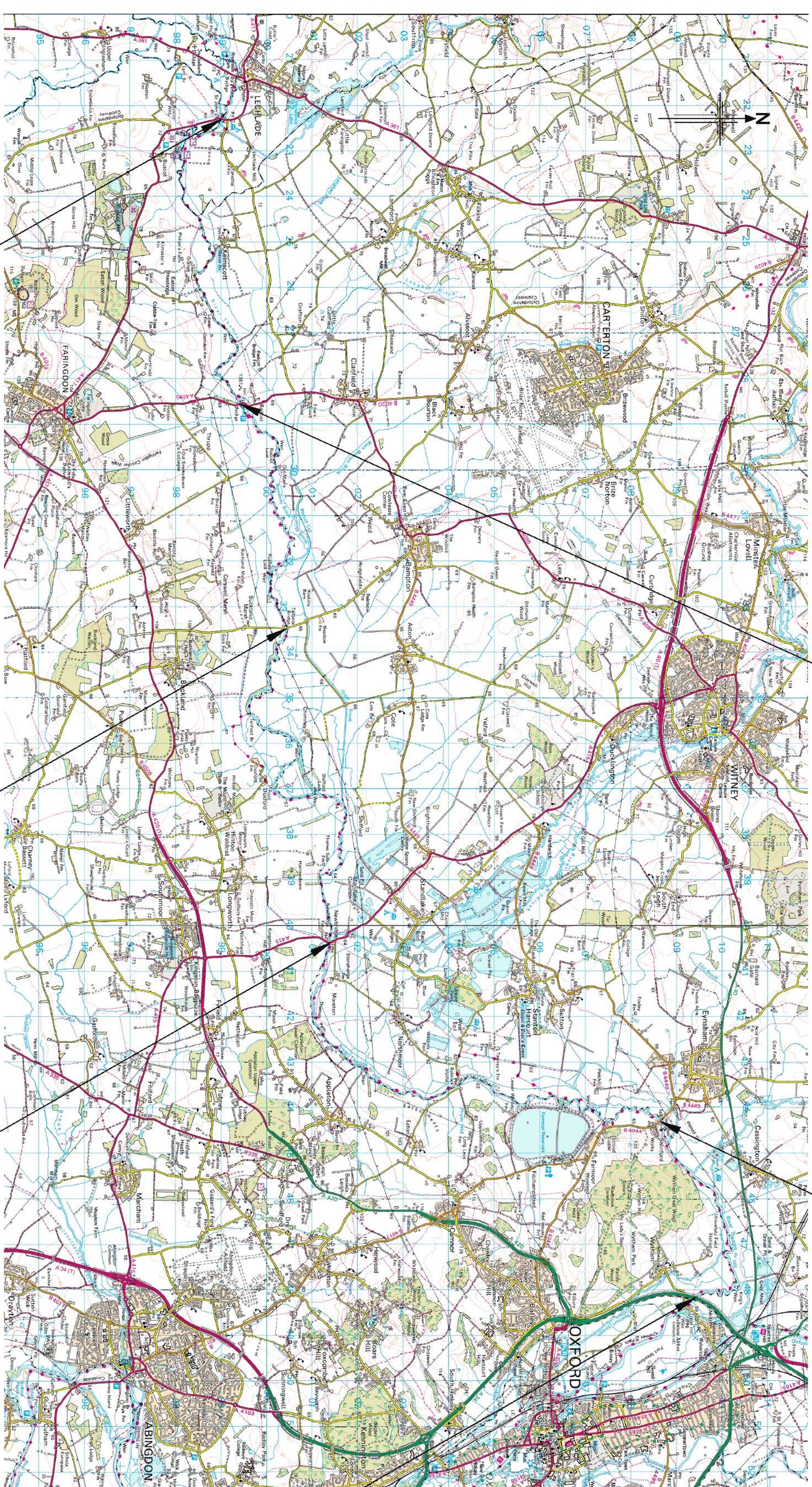
**Radcot New Bridges**  
Grade 2 listed.  
Rated 13 tonnes  
2900  
50  
Single 3.2m wide lane with traffic signal control



**Swindon Toll Bridge**  
Grade 2 listed (Private Ownership).  
Rated 44 tonnes  
11100  
300  
4.9m wide 2 lane



**Key**  
Rated "no." - Assessed load carrying capacity  
Traffic Count Data  
11000 - Total number of vehicles per 24 hours  
300 - Vehicles more than 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight (7700-1900)



**Thames Wytham Bridge**  
A34 Trunk Road (Highways Agency)



Rated 44 tonnes  
70,000  
7000

**Newbridge**  
Scheduled Ancient Monument  
Grade 1 listed (part) Grade 2 listed (part)

Rated zero tonnes, but monitoring with 18 tonnes weight restriction  
Before 18 tonne weight limit was introduced  
After 18 tonne weight limit was introduced  
8700  
500  
350  
Single 4.7m wide lane with traffic signal control



**St Johns Bridge**  
Grade 2 listed (Gloucestershire County Council)  
Rated 44 tonnes  
3100  
200  
6.2m wide 2 lane



**Tadpole Bridge**  
Grade 2 listed  
Rated 44 tonnes  
3500  
200  
Single 4.7m wide lane with traffic signal control



# Role of A415 and Impact of Proposals