

Hearing statement

Matter 9 – Transport and movement and supporting infrastructure. (Policies OS5. T1, T2, T3, T4)

No, there has not been a robust assessment and it has not been evidenced that the proposal would not cause adverse impact on transport and infrastructure.

Eynsham's roads are already at breaking point:

“Congestion on the A40 between Witney and Oxford causes daily misery for commuters and restricts the economic growth of this vital dynamic area. It is essential that a complete solution to this problem is found. The £35 million for the public transport solution is welcome, but what steps will the Government take to provide funding for a complete solution to the congestion on that busy road?”

Robert Courts, MP speaking in the House of Commons on 30 March 2017

Any plans adding vehicle movements into this area would clearly exacerbate an existing crisis.

Andrew Jones, Transport Minister, is quoted as saying earlier this year:

“Roads play a significant part in everyday life linking people with jobs and businesses with customers, which is why this government is investing record amounts improving and maintaining highways across the country to help motorists.

The funding we have allocated today is focused on relieving congestion and providing important upgrades to ensure our roads are fit for the future – helping to build an economy that works for everyone.”

There are 2 issues in the WODC plan for Eynsham that are in direct contradiction to the Minister's vision:

i) National policy limits on pollution have not been taken into account by the Minister's statement.

Evidence collated by Oxfordshire CPRE at the Wolvercote roundabout in 2016 has shown that pollution levels already regularly exceed European limits for health and

safety standards (see separate appendix “NO2 results”). Any proposal to add traffic movements would obviously exacerbate an already dangerous situation.

Bringing a park and ride to Eynsham and adding an extra lane would similarly increase pollution in the danger zone. Additionally, the Swinford toll bridge is a notorious congestion hotspot at rush hour. Any additional traffic attracted to the Eynsham area would have a knock-on negative effect here too.

ii) Despite the fine talk of residential development next to employment space, there is no evidence that new residents would be employed in the newly built commercial zone.

For one thing there is no study/evidence for this. Even if this was a stipulation for new residents, this is not enforceable unless new home owners were vetted to ensure they fulfilled the criteria. Once purchased the houses might also be resold on the open market.

Indeed, we can see from the example of Lighthorne Heath development in Warwickshire – where planners and developers used the usual rhetoric of “walkable neighbourhoods which are self-contained and sustainable” – that even though sustainable transport is available, the residents have preferred to access the M40 at junction 4 in order to drive somewhere else to work.

Sworn evidence from Peter Headicar on a study undertaken in Oxfordshire, <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200304/ldselect/ldwesnor/evd/4110407.htm> (para 2468), shows that:

“... occupants of the new estates travelled 50 per cent further than the people in the established housing areas. In other words, using existing residents as the basis of anticipating the amount of car travel that is going to come about from the new development would grossly under-estimate the amount of car travel.”

The proposed “improvements” to the A40 are unsustainable and unviable for the following reasons:

i) An assumption has been made that a vast proportion of traffic on the A40 is headed for the city centre, and would therefore be alleviated by a park and ride scheme.

However, those of us who regularly use this road can easily observe that most traffic reaching the Wolvercote road roundabout either occupies the left lane in order to turn towards the A34, or the middle lane to continue east on the ring road. By far the least number of cars, even at rush hour, occupy the right hand lane towards the city centre. We therefore challenge the underlying assumption that the park and ride would service people working in the city.

ii) In the first instance, the only plan is to widen the A40 west to east. This is unviable because, due to the canal at Dukes Cut, the lane would have to end far short of the Wolvercote roundabout and then any bus would simply join the existing carriageway and contribute to the bottleneck of traffic. On the return journey, there would be no advantage to having used the park and ride because commuters would simply be on a bus in the east/west lane along with all other traffic. There would therefore be no incentive to use the park and ride in either direction.

In addition, given that people would have to pay to use the park and ride, commuters would be incentivised to find free parking in the existing village. This would obviously lead to competition for space and might eventually lead to a local residents parking scheme. This would change the character of the village and adversely impact local business, which relies on easy parking in and around the centre.

iii) In the longer term there has been a suggestion of creating a west / east bus lane. However, this would need to be built over an existing flood plain which would require enormous mitigation funding. Additionally, there are existing bridges which would have to be expanded. There is currently no indication of where the funding for this infrastructure could come from and no time-frame for the build. Given these two facts, it would seem madness to go ahead and build a proposed enormous development without a clear direction for transport infrastructure.

Given the prohibitive limitations on widening the A40, planners might be tempted to alleviate congestion via the B4044 at Swinford toll bridge. However, OCC's own study has already rejected this possibility as unviable. (See appendix ii, taken from

the “Oxfordshire County Council A40 Science Transit Stage 2 Option Assessment Report (OAR) February 2017”.)

It is worth mentioning that the proposed plan makes much of an iconic bridge across the A40 to link the two settlements. We would argue that Eynsham already has an iconic bridge (Swinford toll bridge), which is a heritage asset. Any future plan that involved altering the bridge or its setting would very likely be thrown out on heritage grounds. Eynsham does not need two iconic bridges.

Appendices

i) Air Quality survey for Wolvercote roundabout area “NO2 results”), Supported by Friends of Earth. See separate document attached.

ii) link to full document:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/roadsandtransport/transportpoliciesandplans/OptionAssessment.pdf>

6.1.5. Measures considered for the B4044 include removing the toll from Swinford Toll Bridge, a bus lane on the approach to the Toll Bridge and a cycle track from the Toll Bridge to Dean Court, Botley. It was considered unlikely that any or all of these improvements would provide sufficient additional capacity or reduce demand to the extent that a larger scheme was no longer required.

On behalf of EPIC (Eynsham Planning Improvement Campaign), Nigel Pearce and Sandy Hellig

N02 results

Methodology :

4 weeks of No2 exposure - Tubes hung at 2 metre height on lamp posts, clipped on using cable ties.

Each tube has a bar code which relates to a logged number identifying the tube's position. The numbers on the report relates to the site numbers on the map.

the area affected/ exposed to the NO2 inside the tube is the multiplied out. There results are expressed in the column $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$

The tubes were hung on the 19th February 2015

The tubes were taken down at the end of the 4 weeks, capped and sent by special delivery for analysis at Gradko laboratory.

Received at the lab on the 23/3/15

DATE SAMPLES RECEIVED		23/03/2015						
JOB NUMBER		Northern Gateway						
Location	Sample Number	Exposure Data			Time (hr.)	$\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ *	TOTAL	
		Date On	Date Off	ppb *			$\mu\text{g NO}_2$	
1	493859	19/02/2015	20/03/2015	701.20	57.85	30.19	2.95	
2	493860	19/02/2015	20/03/2015	701.25	30.14	15.73	1.54	
3	493861	19/02/2015	20/03/2015	700.97	38.62	20.15	1.97	
4	493862	19/02/2015	20/03/2015	700.75	55.01	28.71	2.80	
5	493839	19/02/2015	20/03/2015	700.58	41.16	21.48	2.10	
6	493840	19/02/2015	20/03/2015	700.53	58.82	30.70	2.99	
7	493841	19/02/2015	20/03/2015	700.25	34.94	18.24	1.78	
8	493842	19/02/2015	20/03/2015	699.58	47.67	24.88	2.42	
9	493843	19/02/2015	20/03/2015	699.50	33.84	17.66	1.72	
10	493844	19/02/2015	20/03/2015	698.75	28.85	15.06	1.47	
11	493845	19/02/2015	20/03/2015	698.42	34.73	18.13	1.76	

for further info see attached doc

J01601R Community Environment Associates NO2



to see map in larger detail attached doc : **No2 test.jpg** numbers in red correlate to numbers on the Gradko table above and document **J01601R Community Environment Associates NO2**

Conclusion: the permitted yearly mean for No2 exposure over a 24 hr period is $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

From our tests we can see that in several places the results are exceeding this limit.

Legislation dictates that a development can not worsen pollution . Clearly the increase in traffic the Northern Gateway will worsen pollution which is already at a critical level at a place that already suffers from pollution

“Because Oxford is effectively in a bowl we get air pollution hanging here, so for that reason we have to take extra measures.”

<http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/10335029>. Councils must unite to tackle air pollution /?ref=nt

It is worth noting the following

- Due to time pressure (to get the results to the hearing) one week of our readings were taken during the half term period and this will have lowered the mean .
- * Also consider that in summer the levels will go up due to photochemistry
<http://bit.ly/1HWC1Ga>

- Summer episodes take place when the weather is hot and sunny and wind speeds are low. High concentrations of ozone are created (by the chemical reactions described in Box 1) and in turn convert more NO into NO₂ in areas where high NO emissions are produced, for example, at roadsides.