

Harwell Link Road - HarBUG Response to Development Proposals



The proposed Harwell Link Road development directly affects existing, major cycle-commuter routes between Didcot and Harwell Campus. Please refer to appended map below.

(Please see also separate HarBUG response to the Hagbourne Hill Consultation.)

Analysis:

- The new Link Road will help cyclists by removing through-traffic from Harwell Village. The B4493 road through Harwell village is already one of the most important cycle routes from Didcot to Harwell Campus (refer to map). Together with the already-authorized Winnaway upgrade, the improved conditions for cyclists in Harwell Village are likely to further increase cyclist numbers.
- However, these same cyclists will be affected by the major new roundabout on B4493 at the North end of new Link Road. Furthermore, it is anticipated that overall traffic volumes will increase on the existing B4493 (Wantage Road) into Didcot – at least until the Link Road is extended all the way down to the proposed Science Bridge. Cyclists on existing B4493 have already been disadvantaged by the very poorly-designed cycle infrastructure installed as part of the Great Western Park development.

Specific issues:

- HarBUG notes previous plans to discourage through-traffic from going into Harwell Village by explicit signposting and traffic-calming. As part of this, space for cycling should be actively prioritised in the village.
- The roundabout design at the North-end of the new Link Road must account for the large and increasing number of ON-road cyclists making east-west journeys along the existing B4493 Didcot Road. The geometry of the new roundabout should be designed to slow down drivers. Importantly, traffic approaching the roundabout from the south needs to be 'managed' to safely give-way to westbound ON-road cyclists. Off-road parallel shared-use footways are not suitable for cycling at this junction. This could be an ideal location to trial Oxfordshire's first 'Dutch-style' roundabout, with an outer cycle-lane. These have been trialled by the Transport Research Laboratory.
- The drawing as issued does not appear to allow for future 4th northern arm of roundabout for northward continuation of Link Road.
- The increased traffic levels on B4493 into Didcot may tempt planners to install further cycle-infrastructure along this road. Unfortunately, some very poorly-designed infrastructure has already been recently installed here. Please note that the ubiquitous use of shared-use footways is generally not acceptable on key cycle routes. Please see links below to DfT guidelines and good practice.

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- The Bridleway section (northern-end) of the shared-use path alongside new road appears to be designed to a high standard - it is segregated and screened from main road. It is disappointing that the southern (non-Bridleway) section of this path reverts to a ubiquitous shared-use footway design. Please see links below to official guidance.

Comment:

HarBUG notes the statement in the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan which commits to the development of 'Continental Standard' cycling infrastructure in the Science Vale.

HarBUG would expect application of the Department for Transport's own guidelines contained in Local Transport Note 2/08:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3808/ltn-2-08.pdf

In particular, this explains that inadequate design at junctions is a far more significant issue for cyclists than, for example, the ubiquitous 'tick-box' provision of shared-use footways.

HarBUG also strongly recommends the use of CycleNation's 'Making Space for Cycling' document:

<http://www.makingspaceforcycling.org/>

These guidelines need to be fully implemented as a minimum before making any claims for 'continental-standard' cycle infrastructure.

Guy Wilkin

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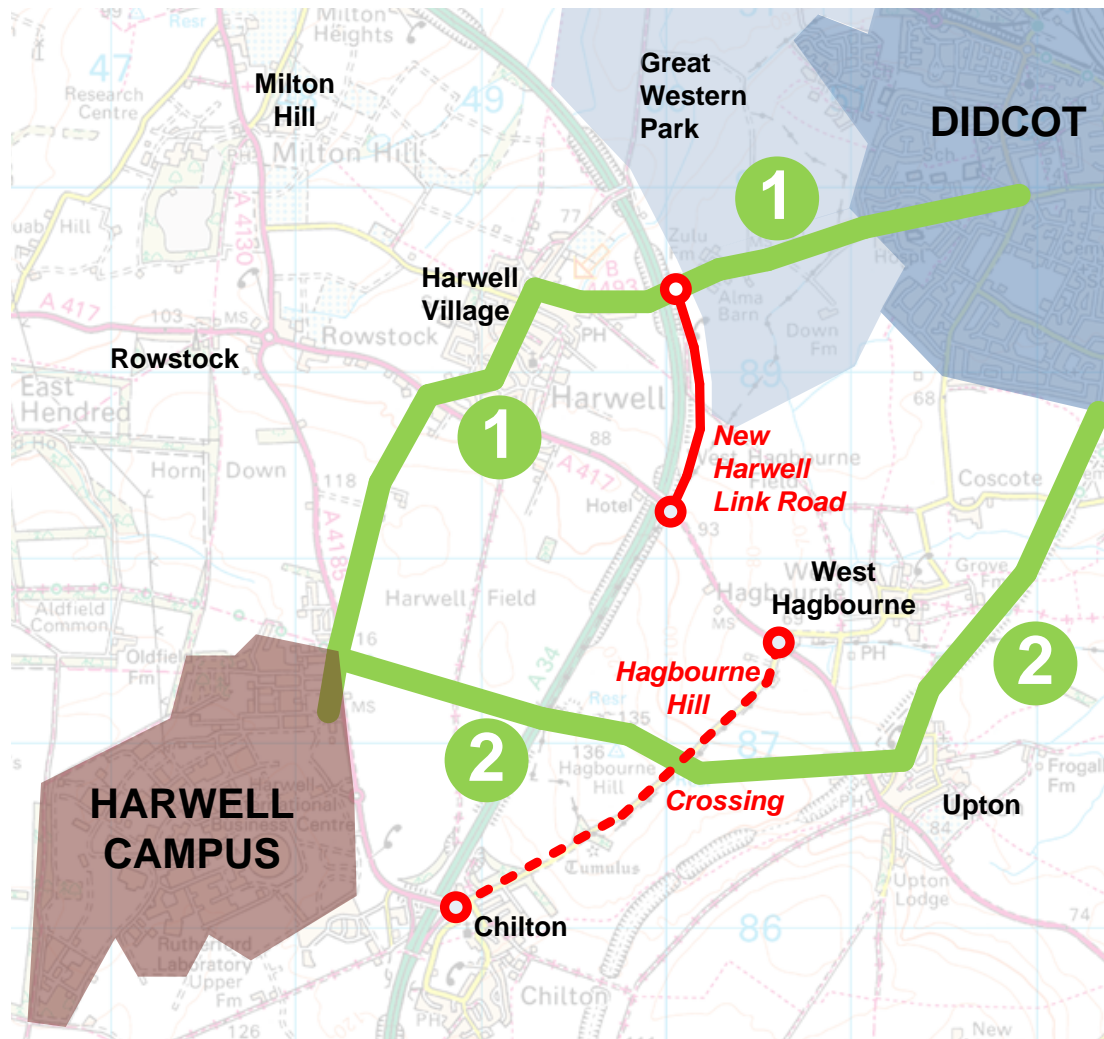
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Appendix /...

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Appendix

Effect of Proposed Developments on Existing Main Cycle-Commuter Routes



-  Relevant Main Cycle Commuter Routes:
-  1 Didcot to Harwell Campus via Winnaway
-  2 Didcot to Harwell Campus via Route 544
-  Proposed New & Improved Roads