Harwell Campus Bicycle Users Group,
The Pavilion,
Rutherford Avenue,
Harwell Campus,
Didcot, OX11 0DF.
12th January 2021.

Planning application consultation - P14/V2873/O, Valley Park Didcot.

Dear Sir,

Harwell Campus Bicycle Users Group (HarBUG) represents cyclists who commute to the Harwell Campus from the Science Vale area.

HarBUG objects to the planning application P14/V2873/O and specifically the design of highway accessibility.

B4493 Southern Site Access Proposed Roundabout
Drawing no. 10219-HL-61-100-004, rev C

Despite previous objections about the roundabout, the current proposed design has not significantly changed from previous versions: 10219-HL-61, rev E.

Our objections are summed up as follows:

- The incorrect design standard has been used for the design.
  The roundabout has been designed to conform to the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). DMRB is the Highways England standard for the design of motorways and trunk roads. None of the roads connecting to the roundabout are trunk roads and the design of the roundabout should take reflect that other modes of travel will be using the junction, not just motorised vehicles.

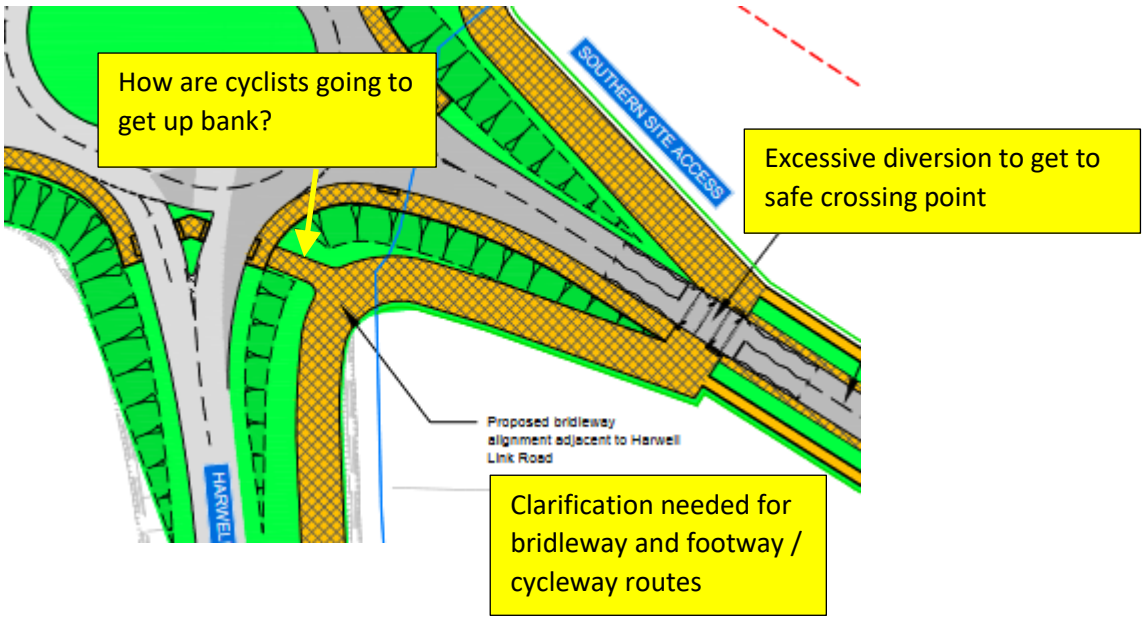
  We note that the table detailing compliance with DMRB has been removed on the latest drawing revision, the geometry of the roundabout remains the same and hence DMRB compliant.

- The design does not take into account existing use of the B4493.
  The B4494 has been designated as a premium cycle route by the County Council to allow cycle commuting to the Harwell Campus from Didcot and Didcot Parkway as well as for students from Harwell village to Didcot schools. The roundabout design is not suitable for any cyclist in any direction.

- The design requires cyclists and pedestrians to make excessive diversions down the roundabout arms to access safe crossing points.

- There is no detail about the ramp needed for cyclists to get up the bank to cross the Harwell Link arm.

- The refuges on the Southern Site Access Road and Harwell Link Road are not wide enough for cyclists to cross safely.
- Confusion over bridleway and footway / cycleway proposals.
  There is an existing bridleway along the Harwell Valley Link Road crossing the B4493 and continuing north. This bridleway is separate to the shared cycle / pedestrian path. The proposed roundabout design drawing does not make it clear how the bridleway is different to the proposed footway and cycleway. The notes on the drawing only refer to a bridleway which is confusing and we cannot make a definitive comment on the design without clarification.



It is clear that large fast roundabout designs have an adverse effect on active travel, discouraging walking and cycling. In Didcot the Foxhall Roundbout on Station Road and the Power Station Roundabout are good examples of how poor design reduces cycling and walking whilst encouraging car use.

The proposed Valley Park 'mega' roundabout would contravene the policies of the Government, County Council and District Council in trying to design for and encourage active travel.

Businesses at the Harwell Campus have also expressed reservations at the design of the roundabout which would make it difficult for them to achieve their own sustainable travel targets and the requirements of their transport plans agreed as part of their planning applications.

HarBUG believes that the roundabout should be redesigned with a focus on all travel modes, recognising that active travel has equal weighting with motorised travel. A compact roundabout design would be more appropriate or a 'Dutch' style roundabout, recently introduced into the UK in Cambridge.

Harwell Link Road Junction Location Access
Drawing no. 10219-HL-62-100-004, rev C.

The cycleway along the link road should have priority over the access road for this type of junction.

A4130 Western Access Signalised Junction
Drawing no. 10219-HL-16-100-003, rev B.

The refuge in the centre of the access road at the junction, does not appear to be wide enough for safe use by cyclists. It is not large enough to accommodate more than one cycle or a pedestrian and cyclist. Is the pedestrian / cycle crossing point controlled by signals?

The drawing only shows a footway into the development, is a cycleway being provided?

Regards

Kevin Wilkinson
HarBUG Chair