

**LITTLE MILTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN
BACKGROUND EVIDENCE STUDIES
PART 7**

ROADS & TRANSPORT

July 2017

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Notes:

1. Reference is made to a number of forecasts of future traffic volumes in this paper. Many of those forecasts rely on prior assumptions which may, or may not, be correct. Thus all figures quoted as forecasts, whilst presented in good faith, should be treated as subject to margins of error.
2. Traffic flows through Little Milton are influenced by many external factors over which we have little or no control. Therefore in the management of traffic, a Neighbourhood Development Plan has a part to play but the scope of what can be covered by the Plan is limited.

INTRODUCTION

The Little Milton Village Plan 2014 placed the highest priorities on reducing:

1. The number of HGVs passing through the village
2. The overall volume of traffic, particularly at peak hours
3. The speed of traffic in the village

Some measures which have previously been proposed by Little Milton Parish Council to the Highways Authority (Oxfordshire County Council) such as HGV weight limits¹, 20mph zones, etc are not within the scope of a Neighbourhood Development Plan. However they may be identified as aspirations. Such measures cannot be implemented without the involvement of the Highways Authority.

Studies² have shown that development already planned for South Oxfordshire is likely to lead to a 30% increase in peak hour traffic in Little Milton by 2033.

The possibility of new strategic settlements also being developed as a significant contribution to meeting South Oxfordshire's housing need has raised new concerns about the potential impact on traffic volumes through the village.

In addition, certain strategic road developments may also impact on the parish. Two proposals are of particular note:

1. New Thames crossing at Long Wittenham/Culham
2. Oxford – Cambridge Expressway

STRATEGIC SETTLEMENT SITES

Three of the potential sites, namely Chalgrove Airfield, Harrington (J7 of M40) and Grenoble Road were the subject of traffic flow forecasts conducted in summer and autumn 2016^{3 4} which showed significant (up to 30%) increases in traffic through the village within the time scale of this Neighbourhood Development Plan. These figures are not absolute but based on the best assumptions at the time.

The Chalgrove Airfield option has, in particular, been the subject of detailed study. The government agency responsible for managing any development on the airfield site – the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) – has stated⁵:

HCA's package of infrastructure improvements could include... a package of road improvements and new provision at Watlington, Benson, Stadhampton and Little Milton. This will also play an important role in tackling heavy goods vehicle traffic that already causes major problems in these villages.

However at the time of writing this paper, the situation is very fluid, nothing has been decided and there is no guarantee that mitigation measures will extend to all the listed locations.

¹ A329 THROUGH LITTLE MILTON – UNSUITABILITY AS HGV THROUGH ROUTE - Little Milton Parish Council Sep 2013

² AECOM traffic studies for HCA – as reported at 8 Dec 2016 Workshop Little Milton Parish Council/HCA

³ *Chalgrove Movement and Transport Infrastructure - Approach and Overview July 2016 – Urban Engineering Studio*

⁴ CHALGROVE AIRFIELD DEVELOPMENT - FUTURE TRAFFIC FLOWS. Little Milton Parish Council Nov 2016

⁵ HCA Newsletter No2 – Oct 2016

At an inaugural workshop held 31 Oct 2016, the traffic concerns and context in Little Milton were described as follows⁶:

The Village

- *Lies 3 miles south of Junction 7 of the M40*
- *Comprises 200 houses, population circa 500*
- *The A329 runs through the centre of the village which includes a conservation area that has large number of listed buildings.*
- *There are two key pinch points that prevent HGV's from passing. Minor collisions are frequent*
- *The village has a primary school, pre-school, a pub, village hall, community shop/post office and a parish church*

Problems

- *Narrow pavements or no pavements*
- *In 2006 an OCC traffic survey showed 11500 transport movements both way on the A329 in the centre of the village***
- *Haseley Road links the A329 with the B480 and is used as a rat run from Chalgrove to the A329 and onwards to Junction 7. The road is a narrow single track in places and there are no pavements. There is also a 7.5 tonne weight limit on the road except for access*
- *The extension of the M40 in 1972 meant a re-classification of a B road to an A road. This resulted in increased traffic and HGV's ever since and increasing.*
- *The road through the village is totally unsuitable for HGV's due to the narrowness and pinch points.*
- *All the traffic poses a danger to any pedestrians and cyclists*
- *Any increase in traffic would exacerbate the problems*
- *Joining the main A329 safely from the Haseley Road, Gold Street or other side roads in the village can be a major problem during rush hours.*
- *The village is car dependant*
- *There will be no public transport after 2 December 2016*
- *There is light cycle traffic although at weekends the A329 has a larger number of organised cyclists*
- *The school attracts a high proportion of parents with cars who park in Gold Street. There are no safe walking routes to school as parents avoid the A329 and have to be very careful on the Haseley Road.*
- *Parking is generally not an issue except at the junction of the Haseley Road and A329 as well as school parking in Gold Street*
- *The numbers in the HCA assessment assume all traffic is going south on M40.*

(** More recent data from Nov 2013⁷, which measured traffic south of the village only, and therefore did not include traffic either joining or leaving via the Haseley Road, showed a weekday average of 8207 vehicles per day.)

The Parish Council has been closely involved with traffic issues in the village for many years. In the view of the Parish Council, this summary of the traffic situation in Little Milton is equally relevant whichever new strategic settlement option is eventually chosen.

⁶ Strategic Corridor Workshop Event The Lambert Hotel, Ashton Rowant, Watlington 31 October 2016
Summary Note of Discussion

⁷ OCC Highways Traffic Survey south of Little Milton Nov 2013

Comparative data⁸ shows how daily traffic flows on the A329 compare with other key roads in the area:

Road	Location	Average daily traffic flow 2015
A329	Just south of Milton Common	9000
A418	Tiddington	12700
B480	Chiselhampton	5900
A329	Newington	2800
A4074	Newnham Courtenay	16100
B4009	Lewknor	9400

After a low point in 2013, traffic on the A329 rose steadily over the 2 years to 2015⁹ and then stabilised in 2016:

Year	Annual Average Daily Traffic
2009	8400
2010	8200
2011	8400
2012	8200
2013	8100
2014	8800
2015	9100
2016	9000

Traffic in 2015 & 2016 was 7.1% higher than 2009 and 20% higher than the low point in 2013.

⁸ OCC Annual Average Daily Traffic Flows to 2015

⁹ OCC Annual Average Daily Traffic Flows to 2015 at CP26 just south of Milton Common

Other comparative studies¹⁰ indicate that, even without a new strategic settlement in the area, traffic will increase in Little Milton:

	2016 Baseline	2031 projection
AM peak flow (vehicles per hour)	1277	1425
PM peak flow (vehicles per hour)	1223	1494

Since the above work was completed, the strategic settlement policy went through a further iteration, the outcome of which was published in SODC's *Local Plan 2033 2nd Preferred Options March 2017*. The Plan now proposes strategic development at Chalgrove Airfield (~3000 houses), Culham (~3500) and Berinsfield (~2100).

Modelling of various scenarios has been undertaken by OCC and the outcomes published in *South Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan Evaluation of Transport Impacts: Stage 1 - Development Scenarios - Oxfordshire County Council 16 March 2017*. Within this work, Scenario 5 most closely matches what the final strategic settlement policy is expected to be. There are other supporting documents¹¹¹²¹³ which need to be studied in conjunction with the *Evaluation of Transport Impacts*

Traffic modelling will evolve as scenarios become clearer.

STRATEGIC ROAD DEVELOPMENTS

See also: Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan 4 Sep 2015 (updated 2016)

New Thames crossing at Long Wittenham/Culham

This plan has been long in the process of gestation at both county and district level but is now seen as a vital component of both the Science Vale project (Harwell-Culham axis) and the development of Didcot as a Garden Town.

The new road and river crossing are a vital element of Didcot's development as a 'Garden Town', as announced in December 2015: 'Garden Town' status will help with the delivery of 15,000 houses and 20,000 high-tech jobs in the Didcot area, and it is expected that more funding will become available to help deliver the infrastructure required as a result of the planned growth in and around the town and in the wider Science Vale area¹⁴.

The proposed crossing would link up with a further scheme proposed from Culham Science Centre towards Oxford (A4074), effectively a north-western Clifton Hampden bypass.

OCC Highways have advised¹⁵ that the wider transport impacts have been considered as part of the evidence for the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 1 and are being assessed as part of the

10 Strategic Corridor Workshop Event The Lambert Hotel, Ashton Rowant, Watlington 31 October 2016 - Slides

11 Developing the Evidence Base for the South Oxfordshire Sustainable Transport Study – Steer Davies Gleave – March 2017

12 Technical note: Project: South Oxfordshire District Evaluation of Transport Impact - Network and Model Performance Review Oct 2016

13 SODC Transport Topic Paper March 2017

14 Didcot to Culham – new Thames River Crossing. Proposed Scheme – Oxfordshire County Council Feb 2016

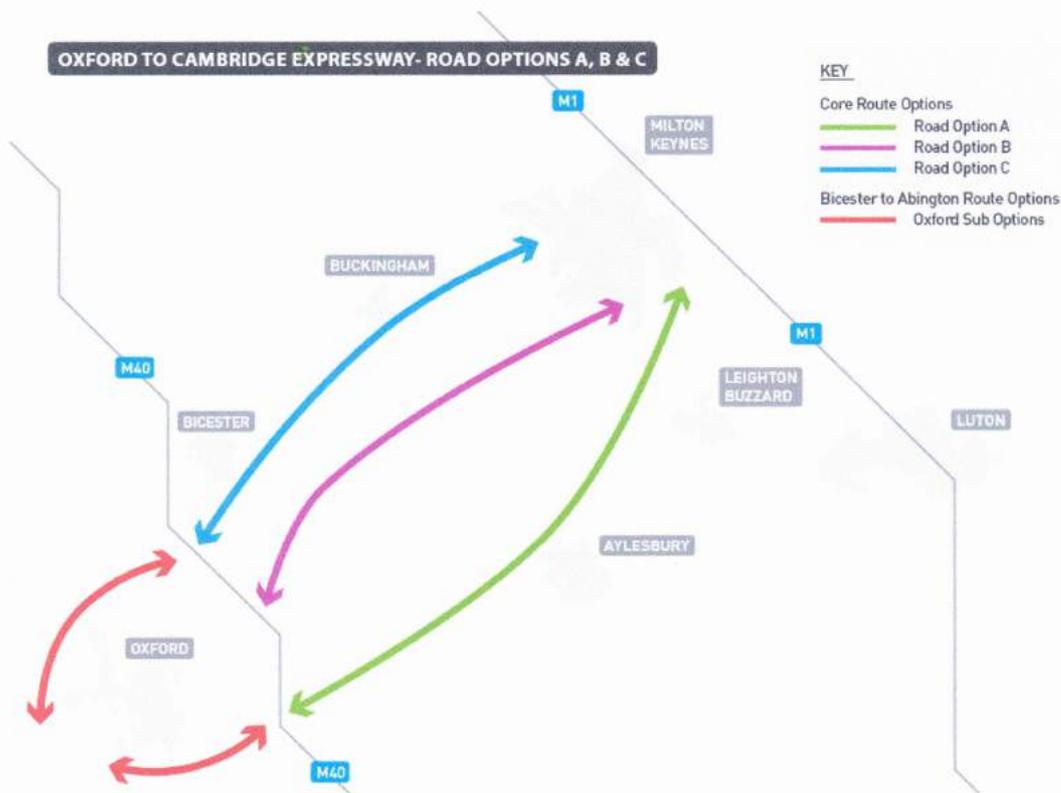
15 OCC Highways response to draft Roads paper 10 Feb 2017

evidence base for SODC's emerging Local Plan. This includes an assessment of different pieces of infrastructure to mitigate the impact of additional traffic on the network. This work is ongoing. The scheme itself will involve further analysis¹⁶.

Oxford – Cambridge Expressway

This plan has also been long in the process of gestation, this time at national and county level. However a report¹⁷ published in 2016 made the case for a new strategic east-west expressway linking Oxford, Milton Keynes and Cambridge.

Although entitled 'Oxford-Cambridge', the proposals also include solutions to the chronic traffic problems on the A34 south of Oxford and include new routes around Oxford from the south. Although only conceptual, the following map¹⁸ shows possible options:



More recent studies¹⁹ indicate slightly more detailed route possibilities with one option coming off the A34 north of Abingdon and then running south and east of Oxford to join or cross the M40.

OCC will liaise and work with Highways England as further work is undertaken on the scheme²⁰.

16 Meeting Little Milton Parish Council & OCC Infrastructure planners 18 July 2017

17 Oxford to Cambridge expressway strategic study: interim report Department for Transport 18 August 2016

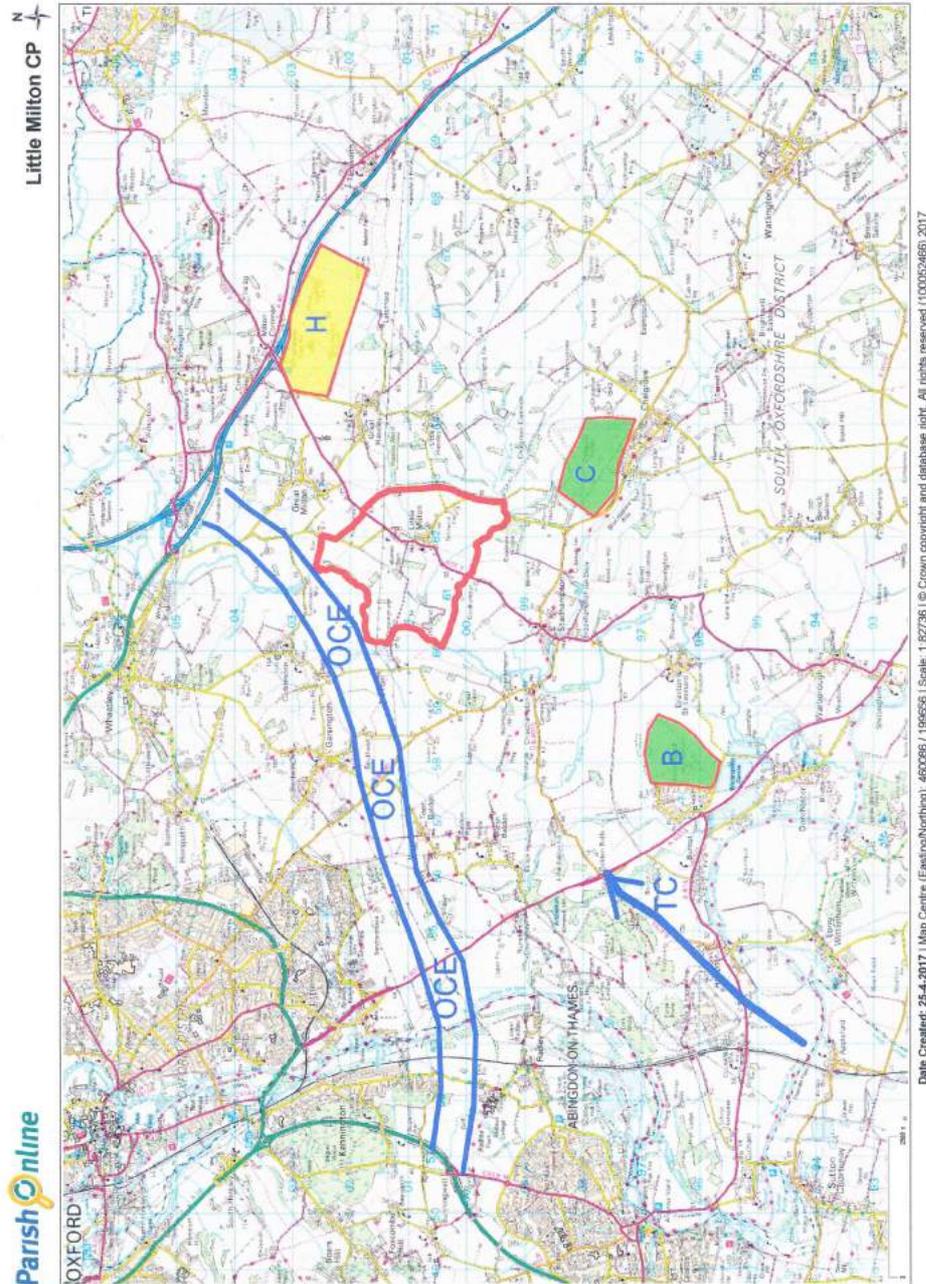
18 Press release - Study shows Oxford to Cambridge Expressway improvements could boost the economy – Dept for Transport 18 Aug 2016

19 Oxford to Cambridge Expressway Strategic Study Stage 3 report Nov 2016

20 OCC Highways response to draft Roads paper 10 Feb 2017

Potential Impact on Little Milton Parish

The following map shows that either or both of the above proposals could impact on the parish of Little Milton.



- Red = Little Milton Parish
- TC = New Thames Crossing north-going route
- OCE = Oxford-Cambridge Expressway Sub-Option Possible Route
- B = Site of proposed strategic development at Berinsfield
- C = Site of proposed strategic development at Chalgrove
- H = Site of possible development at Harrington

This map shows clearly:

1. The potential for traffic to use the New Thames Crossing as a route not only to Oxford along the A4074 but also north-east via Chiselhampton and Stadhampton to J7 of the M40 and onwards.
2. If the southern Oxford sub-option is selected for the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway, then a route close to, or possibly through, the western portion of Little Milton Parish is a possibility

Neither of these developments is likely to be completed before 2027²¹.

BYPASS

A bypass to route the A329 west of the village has been considered many times over the years. In the Village Survey 2013, 49% of respondents were in favour of a bypass, 51% against. Little consideration has been given to a bypass route east of the village as the western option has always been considered the most practicable. Any route to the west of the village would run entirely across Green Belt land.

What the eventual solutions to traffic in Little Milton might be currently depends on a number of unknowns. However it seems prudent to consider the possibility of a bypass within the next 15 years and, if shown to be necessary and supported by sufficient evidence, to ensure that the most likely route for such a bypass is safeguarded from development. This approach has been proposed by SODC in the emerging Local Plan where a number of potential routes for bypasses have been suggested for safeguarding.²²

The triggers for consideration by OCC of a bypass for Little Milton²³ would be:

- Capacity
- Air Quality

It is important to consider the aim of a bypass. The objectives must be to mitigate the problem which has triggered the need for a bypass in the first place. Thus the objectives are to not only reduce traffic running through the heart of the village but also to reduce noise, vibration, dust and air pollution in the built-up area of the village. To this end, an edge street ie. a road which runs around the edge of the built-up area as has been proposed for some local villages, would not be considered to meet these objectives in Little Milton.

In order to determine which potential bypass route or routes, if any, should be safeguarded, the impact of each potential strategic development on traffic flows through the village has been assessed as follows:

21 Meeting OCC Highways and Little Milton Parish Council Dec 2016

22 SODC Local Plan 2033 2nd Preferred Options March 2017 Appendix 5

23 Meeting Little Milton Parish Council & OCC Infrastructure Planners 18 July 2017

Strategic Development	Impacted Village Roads	Level of impact
Chalgrove Airfield	Rofford Lane/Haseley Road plus A329	High
Berinsfield	A329	Low
Culham	A329	Low
Grenoble Road	A329	Low
Harrington	A329	Medium-High
Thames Bridge at Culham	A329	Unknown
Oxford-Cambridge Expressway	A329	Unknown

However, which of the above developments will actually go ahead and in what time scales is currently unknown. The development with the greatest impact on Little Milton would almost certainly be Chalgrove Airfield. It is also the most complex in terms of deciding if a bypass would be required and, if so, where. The full impact of a Chalgrove Airfield development on traffic flows cannot be determined until it is known what the strategic road plan would be for the whole area within 5-10 miles of the site.

Similar considerations apply to all other development options, although it is the A329 which is likely to carry the greatest impact.

At present, it is considered that there is insufficient evidence to justify safeguarding a specific route for a bypass.

AIR QUALITY

Little Milton has been the subject of air quality monitoring since 2013.

See <http://www.oxfordshire.air-quality.info/>

The annualised reading for 2013 was 34.5 NO₂ ug/m³ and 2014 was 37.5. The limit is 40. Note this is an annualised limit, averaged over the year.

Local resident Brian Stacey (who works in air quality monitoring) did some calculations at the school in 2013 and found that the levels reached 40 near the school fencing next to the road.

Claire Spendley, Air Quality Officer, at SODC has advised:

All readings across the county are lower for 2015, because of the weather, and although the figures for 2016 cannot be reported until the end of the year, when they are annualised, the levels have risen again during the last year. She has advised that with our estimated increase in volume of traffic of 45 percent²⁴ (if Chalgrove Development goes ahead) we should ask for air quality modelling.

She has also advised that what will affect the levels will be stationary traffic queuing along the Haseley Road at the junction with A329 and stationary traffic at peak times.

EU limits for NO₂²⁵ are:

Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	200 µg/m ³	1 hour	
	40 µg/m ³	1 year	Average over one year

INPUT TO NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Development which is already happening in the district will add to traffic on the parish roads. The possibility of new strategic settlements brings with it the risk of a further significant increase in traffic volumes through the parish. The two major improvements to the strategic road infrastructure outlined above may also bring more traffic but that traffic may be routed along a new road which may lie within the parish boundary or outside it. Thus the ultimate impact on the parish could be a combination of:

1. Improvements to existing roads
2. A bypass round the village as an adjunct to the existing roads
3. A new strategic road running through the parish, which nevertheless takes traffic out of the village
4. A new strategic road outside the parish, which nevertheless takes traffic out of the village and the parish

The delivery of large infrastructure projects such as a bypass around the village would be very expensive and may require multiple Compulsory Purchase Orders. There may also be environmental and historical concerns²⁶.

What the eventual outcomes might be will evolve over time. Discussions held in 2016 and 2017²⁷²⁸²⁹ indicated that the solutions which might emerge for Little Milton are very dependent on the eventual route chosen for Oxford-Cambridge Expressway and the configuration of junctions with more local roads along that route. The Expressway could ultimately take a lot of traffic off the A329. Solutions for Little Milton which might be offered if the Chalgrove Airfield development goes ahead are also closely linked to the Expressway route decisions.

If the solution for the Expressway which is eventually chosen will not have the effect of taking traffic off the A329, then the discussions in 2016 and 2017 indicated that a bypass round the village may ultimately be the necessary solution. Sympathetic routing of such a bypass, with as little environmental impact as possible, would be an objective.

A Neighbourhood Development Plan cannot, in isolation, draw up policies initiating road improvements, a bypass or new strategic roads. However any combination of these options would, nevertheless, represent development within the NDP area. Such development, whilst hopefully providing improved travel links, would have environmental impacts. Mitigation of any adverse impact is what is needed. SODC Local Plan 2033 2nd Proposed Options (March 2017) draft policy TRANS1 states on that one of the aims of the transport strategy is to:

25 European Commission/Environment/Air/Air Quality

26 OCC Highways response to draft Roads paper 10 Feb 2017

27 Meeting Oxfordshire County Council Highways Dept and Little Milton Parish Council representatives 7 Dec 2016

28 Meeting HCA & consultants and Little Milton Parish Council representatives 8 Dec 2016

29 Meeting Little Milton Parish Council & OCC Infrastructure Planners 18 July 2017

Ensure that the impacts of new development on the strategic and local road network, including the A34 and M40, are adequately mitigated

National policy³⁰ states:

Developers must ensure adequate environmental information is provided at all stages of the planning process to satisfy the local planning authority and any other consenting authorities that the environmental impacts have been appropriately considered, that measures have been included within the proposals as required by relevant policies or otherwise, as fully as is reasonably possible, and to enable all residual impacts to be taken into account by the local planning authority in the development consent process.

Transport assessment undertaken by the promoter of the development should be comprehensive enough to establish the likely environmental impacts, including air quality, light pollution and noise, and to identify the measures to mitigate these impacts. This will enable local authorities to fulfil their remit of considering appropriate environmental impact assessment of development.

Any major road development requires an Environmental Impact Assessment³¹. Of particular concern is a road development which, in itself is not big enough to require an EIA, but nevertheless would have a significant impact at parish or village level.

The village ultimately wishes to achieve the following³²:

1. Significant reduction in the number of HGVs passing through the parish
2. Significant reduction in the volume of non-HGV traffic passing through the village
3. Reduction in the speed of traffic in the village
4. Reduction in the noise, vibration, damage to property, dust and air pollution causes by traffic

In addition, it should be an aim to ensure that the environmental impact of any significant road projects is assessed and appropriate steps taken to mitigate any impact.

The objectives of setting any policies regarding planning proposals for road improvements or new roads should be:

- to support measures designed to reduce the overall volume of traffic and in particular reduce the volume of HGV traffic passing through the village
- to support measures to move traffic off the current village roads and route that traffic by alternative routes outside the village
- to minimise the environmental impact of any road improvement scheme or new roads and to mitigate any adverse environmental impact
- to ensure that air quality in the village does not exceed statutory limits
- to preserve as much as possible the character of the village and the landscape which surrounds it

In seeking solutions, there are some possibilities which are not favoured³³:

1. Traffic calming measures within the village which would result in traffic stopping and starting, slowing and accelerating, or queuing. The aim is that traffic, once in the village, should flow relatively freely at a moderate pace.

30 DfT Circular 02/2013 paras 47-48

31 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011

32 Little Milton Village Plan 2014

33 Meeting HCA & consultants and Little Milton Parish Council representatives 8 Dec 2016

2. An edge street as opposed to a bypass. An edge street just moves the traffic problem from the centreline of the village to, as the name implies, the edge of the village, and from the front of houses to their back gardens. This would not achieve the above objectives.

Planning Applications for Road Improvements and New Roads

There is a common misconception that road improvements and new road schemes do not require planning consent. It is true that many road improvements are carried out as permitted development as they lie within the boundaries of land controlled by the Highways Authority and new roads are often considered as part of a housing or commercial development scheme. However road improvements outside the boundaries of land controlled by the Highways Authority do require planning consent. Similarly, new road schemes which stand alone and do not form part of a wider development also require their own planning consent. Recent local examples include applications by OCC for highways improvements to Hagbourne Hill³⁴ and the development of the Harwell Link Road³⁵.

Conclusions

Policies set in the Neighbourhood Development Plan can only apply to land use within our parish. Should any strategic developments be proposed outside our parish which may have an effect on the volume or nature of traffic on our roads, we cannot set policies which would govern such development.

The Parish Council would support road development proposals within the parish if they demonstrate:

- that the net effect will be to reduce traffic volumes, particularly HGVs, within the village
- that the net benefit will be a reduction in the levels of traffic noise, vibration, pollution and damage to property throughout the village
- that the benefits of such proposals will outweigh the environmental impact and that appropriate and proportionate measures to mitigate the environmental impact have been included in the proposals
- that objective air quality modelling has been carried out in advance of the submission and that the modelling indicates that air quality in the parish will remain within statutory limits

34 Vale of White Horse Planning Application P15/V0250/LDP

35 South Oxfordshire District Council Planning Application P14/S3617/CM