



Didcot Garden Town HIF 1

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Oxfordshire County Council

Project number: 60632497

October 2021

8. Conclusions and recommendations

8.1 Conclusions

7.1.1 The Scheme is essential for the economic and social prosperity of Science Vale UK, in addition to the new Enterprise Zone. Whilst the HIF1 programme is based on future growth, the HIF1 infrastructure will also help to ameliorate the issues resulting from historic housing and employment growth in the area. The scheme will address several local housing issues, directly unlocking 11,711 new homes and supporting the delivery of more than 17,000 new homes in total in the Didcot Garden Town area. The scheme will result in beneficial impacts which can be shared by communities across Oxfordshire, including those from protected characteristic groups. Some of the main benefits include:

- Improved connectivity and accessibility;
- Improved safety, especially for children, older people, those with mobility restrictions and for vulnerable groups using active travel, such as pedestrians and cyclists;
- Increased opportunities for active travel;
- Employment opportunities during the construction of the Scheme, especially for young people, armed forces/ex-military personnel, individuals from BAME backgrounds, disabled people and those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- Supporting new employment and housing growth in the area.

7.1.2 However, the assessment also identifies some adverse impacts for groups with protected characteristics, mostly during the construction stage including:

- Increased noise, vibration and dust from construction related activities;
- Increases in annual mean NO₂ concentrations in some areas within the study area³³; and
- Disruption to Public rights of Way (PRoW) including diversions and closures during construction and operation.

8.2 Recommendations

7.2.1 Several actions have been proposed in **Table 6-1** to mitigate against the effects of adverse impacts as well as enhance the beneficial effects of the construction and operational phases of the Scheme. The implementation of these actions should support OCC in paying due regard to the Public Sector equality Duty (PSED) in the design and delivery of the Scheme. A summary of these recommendations is provided in the following paragraphs.

7.2.2 A Construction Management Plan and Construction Environmental Management Plan are to be developed for the Scheme. These should consider:

- Security and safety aspects for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders during construction;

³³ It is worth noting that while this scheme will lead to an increase in NO₂ concentrations, this will be below guidelines.

- Noise mitigation measures – to identify any specific issues where receptors could be more vulnerable and appropriate mitigation to address this (i.e affecting children, older people, people with dementia);
 - Air quality mitigation measures during construction;
 - Bus stop relocations– audit to ensure accessibility remains for passengers; and
 - Adequate PRoW diversions and associated accessible information regarding diversions.
- 7.2.3 **Inclusive design standards** (DMRB) for footpaths and PRoW or design of rest stops should be used where departures from guidance for example as a result of ProW diversions for high gradients.
- 7.2.4 **Road safety audits** should be undertaken to ensure safe routes and crossings for all user, especially in the provision of new crossing points.
- 7.2.5 A **local procurement policy** should be developed by the Council and the Contractor for the Scheme to ensure that construction recruitment is inclusive and that benefits of new employment opportunities are received across the local community including for those with protected characteristics. Construction employment opportunities should be advertised through local job centres and partnership opportunities developed with local employers such as ACE Training (construction related apprenticeships) or with any of OCC partners for employment support such as Activate Learning, Mencap and SOFEA.³⁴ Contractors and the supply chain should also adhere to national or local schemes to promote employment amongst under-represented equality groups, e.g. Disability Confident Employer.
- 7.2.6 A **school engagement plan** should be developed by the Council and Contractor to engage with local schools such as St Blaise Primary School and Clifton Hampden C of E Primary School to³⁵:
- Raise awareness and education as to the dangers of playing on construction sites and discourage children from entering construction areas;
 - Undertake STEM based activities with children and young people; and
 - Deliver cycle safety training (including experience on new routes once operational for safer travel).
- 7.2.7 **Inclusive cycling opportunities** should be promoted by considering the needs in design of cycling infrastructure for those using cargo bikes and adapted bikes. This includes width of cycle lane, accessible control barriers and parking. Refer to Wheels for Wellbeing for guidance on inclusive design.
- 7.2.8 **Engagement with bus passengers** on the location of new and temporary bus stops and detailed design with regards to shelter, lighting, raised kerbs, information and access to footpaths/cycleways. This should consider the use of DfT guidance for inclusive mobility.
- 7.2.9 **Ongoing and inclusive engagement** with relevant stakeholder groups should be undertaken, including in the most appropriate methods for different groups with protected characteristics.

³⁴ Available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/social-and-health-care/oxfordshire-employment>

³⁵ This is not an exhaustive list, and engagement with other primary and secondary schools should be explored.

7.2.11 At a future stage, OCC should also **develop community and business travel plans** for new and existing housing and employment sites in the area to promote and encourage use of sustainable transport. This could include:

- Adult Cycle training (including on new routes);
- Journey planning;
- Cycle hire schemes;
- Safe and secure cycle parking at key location and bus stops for integrated transport connectivity; and
- Private funding for cycle links to existing employers e.g. Asda.

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