

Planning inquiry 20 February 2024

CORRIDOR BETWEEN THE A34 MILTON INTERCHANGE AND THE B4015 NORTH OF CLIFTON HAMPDEN

Bee House, Eastern Avenue, Milton, 20 February 2024

I am speaking as a parish councillor on behalf of Burcot and Clifton Hampden Parish Council to register our continuing opposition to this scheme in its present form. We appreciate that we are low down the pecking order when it comes to determining the outcome of this inquiry, but we also believe that local residents often have more understanding of the impact of planning changes than professional planners, engineers and others. Whilst we support the principle of a Clifton Hampden bypass, we oppose the current proposal. Our views have partially been incorporated into the single response from the Neighbouring Parish Councils' Joint Committee, but there are some specific points we would like to emphasise:

- 1) It will result in serious damage to the washed over Green Belt status of our parish, with destruction of more than 130 mature trees, 27 copses and significant damage to hedgerows in the parish.
- 2) The road will result in major atmospheric and noise pollution to properties close to the proposed route. The Environmental Statement (ES) suggests that the "loss of tranquillity" as a result of the Clifton Hampden by-pass will purportedly be reduced over a period of 15 years from "Large adverse" to "Slight adverse". We do not accept this statement and believe that once gone, tranquillity will be impossible to restore, even with low noise surfaces on the new road and the noise barriers. As suggested by the Environmental Protection Officer, we also support the notion that a condition be applied requiring that a Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan be submitted and approved in writing prior to the start of the development.
- 3) The creation of a 3m-high noise barrier along part of the by-pass is not a good solution from the standpoint of villagers. First, we believe that it will only limit noise and not prevent it. Second, the barrier itself, unless hidden behind substantial tree and shrub covering, will be unsightly. Either way, villagers will lose the vistas towards Nuneham Park and the fields and trees in that direction. In terms of noise pollution, the ES suggests only 11 properties are likely to be seriously affected. However, with the possible construction of another 14 properties on the former allotments at Clifton Hampden, these should all be added to the total, as they will all back on to the new road. No mitigation has been offered other than the noise barrier. We believe that there should also be further consultation on the precise design, colour and location of the proposed noise barrier, as suggested by the Conservation Officer.
- 4) More mitigation is needed to offset the predicted damage to the natural environment surrounding B&CH if the by-pass goes ahead. The felling of so many trees will result in the

loss of habitat for many birds, insects and mammals and the destruction of at least one badger sett. It will also break out substantial habitats into a patchwork of disconnected areas. Bats are likely to be seriously affected, despite plans for 'hop-overs'. The construction of the road and its subsequent heavy use is likely to severely disrupt, if not destroy, the foraging and migration routes of local mammals, including badgers, hedgehogs and several species of deer.

- 5) In terms of mitigation, we believe the proposals in the scheme are inadequate. As noted by the **Landscape Officer** in her report, there are many areas of unusable land which could be planted, but which have not been included as such. Screening of the road from the village of Clifton Hampden is vital to reduce noise and to compensate for the loss of views into the surrounding countryside. She says:
"The landscape plans still do not include sufficient information to enable a proper understanding of the scheme, such as embankments and cuttings, and vegetation".
The Forestry Officer adds:
"The preliminary landscape masterplans submitted still do not show the level of detail required to be able to scrutinise the mitigation planting in detail. Considering the extensive tree removal proposed for this application, very considerable amounts of tree planting will be required. This is essential to ensure that the scheme delivers a net increase in canopy cover to address environmental issues such as climate change and carbon sequestration, as well as the landscape and amenity benefits required to be achieved for this project."
- 6) Provision for pedestrians and cyclists should be improved. It is very piecemeal at the moment and unlikely to be attractive to many users. In anticipation of development of the new Culham, it is likely that cycle traffic between the new town and Clifton Hampden will increase. There should be segregated foot and cycleways and controlled crossings linking CH and the new Culham town. Based on the plans shown on the OCC website, the offside eastbound lane from the Culham roundabout stops at the western-most access to the village. This should be merged at the roundabout exit and then followed by a distinct right-turn harbourage for traffic bound for CH.
- 7) The bypass lane at the Culham roundabout looks dangerous. It would be safer for all traffic to run through the roundabout rather than the short and shallow merge shown.
- 8) Existing footpaths into open countryside from the village of CH and from Croft Cottages will be disrupted. It will no longer be possible to walk directly from CH into the countryside. Instead, villagers will have to cross a very busy road.
- 9) We are unclear about the implications of the bypass for the Oxford Road leading from the bypass south to the A415. As things stand, it is likely to become a short-cut for traffic seeking to avoid the Golden Balls roundabout – in both directions. This could result in an actual increase in traffic through the parish. We believe that signage at this junction should discourage through traffic, perhaps 'for village access', '20mph' and/or 'restricted bridge ahead'. Currently, the corner tapers of this junction are very generous: if tighter, heavy goods vehicles and articulated lorries would be discouraged from turning south to Clifton Hampden. We are puzzled that your plans show the traffic lights at Clifton Hampden are likely to be over-stretched both before and after the bypass.

- 10) The proposed new road has rightly been characterised as a 'Road to Nowhere'. We believe that its northern terminus at the Golden Balls roundabout is likely to become a choke-point for the whole scheme, with consequent impacts on our parish. The high volumes of traffic being delivered to Golden Balls roundabout will find it difficult to travel on along the A4074 through Nuneham Courtenay, with its 20mph speed limit. If the by-pass goes ahead, we would also wish to see serious traffic-calming measures on the A415 through Burcot, including its possible downgrading to a B road, with cycle paths and speed bumps on the road between Clifton Hampden and the Berinsfield roundabout.
- 11) Light pollution is likely to severely affect B&CH. An area within the Green Belt that is presently largely unaffected by artificial lighting will be subject to light from the large roundabouts just outside the village and from constant traffic movements along the new road. This has consequences for both wildlife and for residents of the parish.
- 12) In recent weeks serious flooding due to high rainfall and run-off from fields has been a major problem in both Clifton Hampden and Burcot with a number of homes being inundated. Changing weather patterns mean that such events will likely occur more often. We see no sign that planners have factored in the impact of higher rainfall into their plans.

Yours, etc.