

Your ref:

Our ref: 39289/Oxford/SS

03 January 2019

S40(2)

S40(2)

Growth & Place  
Oxfordshire County Council  
County Hall  
New Road  
Oxford  
OX1 1ND

By email and post

Dear S40(2)

**RE: HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND (HIF) BID FOR THE WEST OXFORDSHIRE A40 SMART CORRIDOR**

I write on behalf of Grosvenor Developments Ltd as promoters of the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village (OCGV) in support of the above bid and the prioritisation of this project across the County.

The HIF bid represents a good opportunity to secure further investment and support the planned growth in housing and employment in West Oxfordshire, as identified in the adopted Local Plan and to support further growth beyond the Local Plan period, as envisaged by the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

We particularly welcome that the proposals included in the HIF bid would deliver further investment that would improve provision for cycling and bus travel, to provide sustainable travel options for existing and future residents and employees.

Additional investment in the A40 corridor backed by central Government would help to support the delivery of sustainable economic growth and improve the confidence for further investments to be made.

We support the overall package of measures that have been identified and look forward to a successful outcome to the bid.

Should you require any assistance in the bid process please do not hesitate to let us know.

Yours sincerely

S40(2)

S40(2)

For and on behalf of  
**PETER BRETT ASSOCIATES LLP**

3<sup>rd</sup> January 2018

S40(2)

S40(2)

County Hall  
New Road  
Oxford  
OX1 1ND

Dear S40(2)

**Re: 'HIF' Bid for improved Infrastructure for the West Oxfordshire A40 Smart Corridor**

I would like to express the unreserved support of the Berkeley Group for Oxfordshire County Council's submission to the Housing Infrastructure Fund for improving the A40 corridor. We welcome the proposals to widen critical sections of the A40 and, in particular, the improvements to more sustainable modes of transport, such as new bus lanes, together with cycle and walking paths.

Investment in infrastructure is vital not only to relieve current rush-hour congestion for existing residents, but also to cater for the considerable planned growth within West Oxfordshire. Oxford is, and will always be, a hub of innovation, education and a considerable draw. To sustain this and accommodate the proposed level of future growth within the region, further investment in the road network is essential. Without it, congestion along this over-utilised arterial route will be exacerbated and this would have a negative impact on West Oxfordshire's prosperity.

Over the coming year, the Berkeley Group intends to invest considerable time and resources in bringing forward the development of a significant proportion of the 1000 homes allocated within the West Eynsham SDA. We are prepared to make this commitment in part thanks to the proposed improvements to the A40, including the 'Park and Ride' facility being supported by the Local Growth Fund. The connectivity of Eynsham to Oxford and beyond through sustainable modes of transport is fundamental to our proposals.

Our development at West Eynsham will improve housing choice within the region, support jobs and the thriving local community. Eynsham already has several high-value knowledge businesses located within the town who will benefit from improvements to roads and housing. Hopefully, more will be attracted in the future should this 'HIF' bid be successful.

We believe that the case for improving the A40 Smart Corridor is compelling and directly enables the provision of significant numbers of new homes. We are delighted to have been invited to support the County Council's bid.

Berkeley Strategic Land Limited, Berkeley House, 19 Portsmouth Road, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1JG

Tel: 01932 584 598

[www.berkeleygroup.co.uk](http://www.berkeleygroup.co.uk)

Registered No. 2264097

Cont...

All the very best,

Yours

S40(2)



S40(2)





# Defence Infrastructure Organisation

Ref: BZN/T&CP/Comms/OCC-A40-Ltr

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Base Support Wing Headquarters  
RAF Brize Norton  
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Local Transport Strategy  
Environment & Economy,  
Oxfordshire County Council  
Speedwell House, Speedwell Street, Oxford OX11NE

Email: S40(2) @oxfordshire.gov.uk

20 October 2015

Dear S40(2)

## INVESTING IN THE A40 CONSULTATION

Thank you for the invitation to attend the above event in September this year, we welcome the opportunity to input to the consultation and will also complete your online response form.

As you will be aware RAF Brize Norton is a core MOD site and it is envisaged that it will remain so for the foreseeable future. As such having reliable and predictable transport routes onto the site is an important feature to support and sustain its use.

It is recognised that congestion on the A40 towards and away from Oxford to Witney is a significant local issue. There are a variety of access routes onto RAF Brize Norton for both general and heavy good vehicles. Measures to improve the reliability, sustainability and length of journeys by addressing congestion on the A40 towards and from Oxford would be welcome.

We suggest that it would be better to clearly relate the consultation to stated objectives and outcomes. We understand the objectives are those set out in the Councils draft A40 baseline report<sup>1</sup>, which we welcome, but this isn't explicit in the consultation. We also suggest that the extent to which the options included in the consultation are expected to meet those objectives is considered by referring to the evidence base.

From the RAF Brize Norton perspective, options that can be delivered in the short-medium term to improve reliability of journey times would be most welcome. For that reason, the proposed A40 bus lane, perhaps including provision of a "Tidal Flows" approach, would appear to be the most immediately deliverable option, as well as being the lowest cost. Then, also for the reason of being most likely to receive funding, the Guided Busway appears to deliver the next best option, but that should only be pursued in addition to the Bus Lane as deliverability in the short-medium term would appear to be the main issue.

All the longer-term options would also deliver similar improvements. So as well as the bus lane, we'd suggest more strategic options should be considered for future delivery. These include sustainable transport links further West to major employment areas. These would appear to supplement the planned East-West rail link improvement that will be in place in 2019 thereby linking centres like Swindon and Milton Keynes via the Oxfordshire county towns. We noted that not all options include a dedicated link to the A34 and new Oxford (Parkway) Rail Station which would appear to be a key element of any proposed solution if it is to deliver improved reliability of journey times.

We wonder whether there is more scope to co-ordinate works to ensure that over the delivery period disruption to existing users is minimised. We would suggest that should also be a consideration of the planning of new links, and maintaining capacity throughout the development period to be a key consideration in the planning of developments.

We would highlight that the consultation did not appear to include consideration of a number of related issues:

- the need to ensure that this strategic route is not blocked by flooding;
- the use of the former rail line, if not used for one of the options (for example a strategic cycle network to major employment / housing areas);
- links to the existing rail stations – the bus service to Long Hanborough is infrequent and not co-ordinated with train times (we note that this is an aim of the Witney Integrated Transport Strategy, but have not seen an action plan for its implementation); and
- the approach to transport provision in the evenings and night-times (as you will be aware many users of RAF Brize Norton travel outside the main peak periods).
- the identified existing capacity issues at Eynsham and Cassington<sup>ii</sup>.

We have included a number of detailed observations on the consultation and supporting documentation below.

We trust that these comments are of assistance, and would welcome hearing the conclusions of the consultation.

If you have any questions arising from this response please contact me on S40(2) in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,

S40(2)

S40(2)

S40(2)

Copy to:

Oxford City Council Planning

West Oxfordshire District Planning

S40(2), S40(2) Planning OCC

BZN / DIO

### **Detailed comments on the consultation:**

As stated above, we were interested to see the range of options being considered. But note that not all include a dedicated link to the A34 and new north Oxford (Parkway) Evergreen 3 and East-West Rail Station which would appear to be a key element of any proposed solution if it is to deliver improved reliability of journey times. It would seem appropriate to co-ordinate any proposals with those for the Northern Gateway (as shown in the Area Action Plan adopted by the City Council in July 2015). We welcome the statement to that effect in the Council's A40 baseline report, but suggest that it should be more explicit in the strategy being proposed.

All the options would appear to deliver improvements to the local transport capacity. We note the implied wish to balance that aspect against sustainability objectives. We welcome the fact that the analysis of these options is "supported by an evidence based assessment of journey patterns" but note that evidence was not made available for wide public scrutiny during the consultation.

We also suggest that the baseline report is at risk of including some "endogenous" arguments, such as average accident rates given the low traffic speeds, such matters need to be removed from analysis of options. Similarly, the conclusions reached from projected housing and job growth are not clear and the evidence base for the approaches on land use policies included in the baseline document has not been provided.

We also note that the Council's A40 baseline report includes an option<sup>iii</sup> of a "Tidal Flow Bus Lane" and states "might have better results" so it is not clear why that was later excluded from the consultation. We would be interested to see the evidence weighed against the stated objectives of the scheme. Anecdotal, it would appear that traffic is consistently heavier in such a tidal flow pattern to and from Oxford during the working day, so we wonder if it was correct to exclude that option. Those anecdotal observations don't appear to be contradicted by the Council's own evidence in its A40 baseline report. Again these appear to show the Tidal Flow nature of the traffic – morning eastbound, evening westbound. The Council's Oxfordshire Strategic Model also appears to show this as continuing into the longer term with double the demand relating to the Witney to Oxford commuting than is shown in the reverse direction. Again the model appears to include endogenous matters which we'd suggest need to be addressed such as higher bus usage predicted on more reliable and quicker routes.

Similarly, the Council's baseline report considers a range of subsidiary options such as new cycle / pedestrian routes, options around the Toll bridge which again aren't included in the consultation, but it is not clear why. As discussed, we'd suggest that information on the delivery timescales for each option should inform the assessment. Thank you for providing some broad estimates of delivery timescales separate to the consultation documents<sup>iv</sup>. Those support the conclusions included within this response. The relationship between those matters and availability of provisionally allocated growth deal funding is also unclear.

### **Responses made online (also attached):**

Q1: Variety of forms of transport used.

Q2: OX183LX.

Q3: All options strongly supported.

Q4: Bus Lane, then Guided Busway in the longer-term.

Q5: See letter.

Q6: See letter.

Q7: As above.

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<sup>i</sup> The Council's draft A40 baseline report states: The objectives for improving the A40 are suggested as:  
To improve travel times and/or journey reliability between Witney/Carterton and Oxford  
To reduce carbon emissions and other pollutants associated with travel  
To stimulate economic growth within Oxford, West Oxfordshire and the Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine  
To encourage safer travel between Witney/Carterton and Oxford

<sup>ii</sup> As identified in the County Council's draft report: A40 Witney – Oxford Corridor Route Strategy, Baseline Statement, September 2014 - Executive Summary.

<sup>iii</sup> The Council's A40 baseline report suggested the following 7 strategy options should be tested with the Oxfordshire Strategic Model in the first instance:

1. Bus lane (includes new bus routes)
  - a. With A40 corridor Park & Ride
  - b. Bus link from Frieze Way to Northern Bypass Road
  - c. a & b
2. Guided busway along line of old rail line
  - a. Route along A40
  - b. With A40 corridor Park & Ride
  - c. Busway link from Frieze Way to Northern Bypass Road
3. Heavy rail re-opening, predominantly on old line, new route south of Witney Bypass
  - a. Single track operation
  - b. Double track operation
  - c. Extensions to Cowley, Oxford Parkway
4. Tram/train operation mostly on separate track, on-street operation in Witney
  - a. Extensions to Cowley, Oxford Parkway
  - b. Tram operation only (i.e. no shared track with rail)
5. Dual carriageway (Witney/Eynsham/Wolvercote)
  - a. Complete Oxford northern relief road (or tunnel)
  - b. Increased North Oxford P&R capacity
  - c. With A40 Park & Ride
6. Tidal Flow Lane (Cassington – Wolvercote)
  - a. Complete Oxford northern relief road (or tunnel)
  - b. Increased North Oxford P&R capacity
  - c. With improvement to Eynsham Roundabout
  - d. Restrict use to buses/coaches (with A40 P&R)
  - e. Restrict use to buses/coaches and HGVs
7. Inbound traffic lane (Cassington – Wolvercote) + Outbound traffic lane (Eynsham – Witney)
  - a. Complete Oxford northern relief road (or tunnel)
  - b. Increased North Oxford P&R capacity
  - c. With improvement to Eynsham Roundabout
  - d. Restrict use to HOV and HGVs

<sup>iv</sup> OCC email 19/10 10:25, included the following broad estimates:

- The bus lane concept would take the shortest time to design and deliver with an estimate of 5-7years.
- The dual carriageway concept is estimated to take a little longer than this in the range of 7-10years to design and build.
- The other three concepts: guided bus, tram and train each have their own complexities, and likely to take at least 10years+ to design and construct.



# Defence Infrastructure Organisation

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Ref: Oxon/A40/March19

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19 March 2019

Dear S40(2)

## **A40 & HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND**

Further to your letter of 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019 on the above matter, you requested input by tomorrow in respect of the A40 as an access route for MOD sites to feed into the County Council's bid for the Housing Infrastructure Fund.

As you will be aware RAF Brize Norton; which is a major employer in the County and will remain a core site for the foreseeable future, is located close to the A40 in West Oxfordshire adjacent to Carterton. RAF Brize Norton is the UK's largest RAF station and provides rapid global mobility in support of UK overseas operations and exercises, as well as air to air refuelling support for fast jet aircraft.

As you will be aware, DIO, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Defence has input to the County Council's consultations on the future of the A40 and more recently in response to the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 to seek to ensure that the plans take account of the need to maintain access to support operational needs.



We trust that the above response is of assistance. If you have any questions arising, please contact me on S40(2) in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,

S40(2)

S40(2)

S40(2)

12<sup>th</sup> March 2019

S40(2)

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Dear S40(2)

**A40 Smart Corridor: Witney-Eynsham Dual Carriageway; A40 Eastbound Bus Priority at Duke's Cut and A40 Westbound Bus Lanes**

**Stagecoach in Oxfordshire Support**

We have been working with you and a wide range of colleagues within the County Council over several years to move proposals forward to deliver comprehensive approach to addressing the existing capacity deficit on the A40 between West Oxfordshire and across the northern edge of the City of Oxford. We wish to lend our full support to this vitally important project, unlocking very substantial economic and social benefits for existing residents, businesses and visitors, and also, at least as important, ensuring that the development needs of the City and District can be sustainably delivered without unacceptable impacts.

A bus-based "Rapid Transit" link between Eynsham and Oxford's Northern Gateway at Wolvercote, forms a key component of a wider strategy to improve the efficiency and capacity of the A40 between West Oxfordshire and Thornhill, East of Oxford. The overarching rationale for the scheme is to consolidate as many local trip demands as possible currently using the A40 between Carterton and Witney and Oxford City destinations onto faster, more reliable and more frequent direct bus services. The Phase 1 Scheme, (A40 Science Transit) which is to be funded through a Local Growth fund allocation, and being separately progressed, provides a major Park and Ride (P+R) facility at Eynsham and the bulk of the eastbound bus lanes between that site and the Oxford Northern Gateway, at Wolvercote. It also includes short sections of westbound bus lane on the approach to key junctions.

While the Phase 1 scheme represents a very welcome short-term initiative to address the most immediate problems, it is clear that the corridor demands much broader interventions. This Phase 2 project (A40 Smart Corridor) in effect serves to complete the capacity improvements needed to allow the route between the two largest settlements within West Oxfordshire, to function safely and reliably while accommodating both existing levels of demand, and accommodate very substantial levels of housing and employment growth committed through the West Oxfordshire Local Plan over the period to 2031, which also includes the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village at Eynsham. This

includes an agreed contribution to meeting unmet requirements for housing that cannot be accommodated within the City. The Local Plan already anticipates that two substantial strategic allocations at Oxfordshire Cotswold Garden Village, and West of Eynsham, will meet a proportion of that need from 2021 onwards. Stagecoach believes that it is likely that an early review of the Plan will require further new homes to be identified in the A40 corridor to meet needs beyond that point.

We recognise alongside other stakeholders that housing need is acute, and long-standing. We are aware that the housing trajectory in the WODC Local Plan is ambitious, and delivery is already underway at scale and at pace, not least West of Witney and East of Carterton. It is expected that the Eynsham and Witney strategic sites will need to commence as soon as possible after 2021 to meet the trajectory requirements.

Stagecoach is far from the only party that considers that it is essential that the transport infrastructure identified by both the Planning Authority and the County Highways Authority to support the sustainable delivery of the Local Plan development strategy, and set out in the current Infrastructure Delivery Plan, is brought forward such that it synchronises as far as possible with this trajectory. We made this plain in comprehensive duly-made representation to the Local Plan. That is because the A40 corridor simply does not offer *any* capacity headroom to accommodate short-term growth, without very seriously aggravating already-severe delay, resilience and safety problems over extended periods. We believe that both data and our own experiences operating the length of the corridor, well demonstrate that current traffic conditions are unacceptably severe for much of the day in both eastbound and westbound directions.

Without improvements, development will lead to an even greater overcapacity on the road and increase the severity of the congestion that all users of the road, including our passengers already suffer from. Peak bus journey times between Witney and Oxford could increase by a further 15 minutes. This would present an existential threat to the longer-term operation of bus services on the A40 corridor.

Stagecoach carries over 2.2m passenger journeys annually on the A40 corridor as a whole. This number continues to steadily grow, despite the considerable operational challenges we face providing a reliable service, and steadily extending journey times. In 1996 we were able to offer peak journeys between Carterton and Central Oxford taking just under an hour. Today, our 0723 service S2 journey from Carterton arrives in Central Oxford at 0857, assuming it is running on time: well over 90 minutes.

It is important not merely to ensure that this does not further extend as a result of additional trip demands on the corridor, but that it is reduced to levels that can allow us to present a greatly more attractive choice to both existing and future residents of West Oxfordshire, wherever they live along the corridor, and indeed across a wider hinterland. Mode shift is essential to containing demand on both the A40 corridor downstream of Wolvercote, and the wider road network; not least within the City of Oxford where increasing vehicular capacity is clearly neither practical nor desirable.

As one of the most significant and probably the most intense corporate user of this corridor, Stagecoach is extremely well-placed to confirm that both junction and link capacity on the A40 between Witney and Wolvercote is exceeded for much of the day, including at certain times on peak weekends. Quite apart from the severe impacts of this on queue-related delay, it is regularly the

cause of “flow breakdown” conditions West of Eynsham, that are most pronounced in the evening peak westbound. The unpredictability and severity of these delays are, by their nature, even harder to anticipate in our scheduling. Such conditions are extremely rarely experienced on highways off the national Strategic Road Network, and this underlines the severity of the capacity constraints presented by the corridor.

We therefore go on to describe below in more detail the reasons why we unequivocally welcome the specific measures set out in your proposals.

### **1. Interventions East of Eynsham**

It has long been anticipated that bus lanes would be provided on the A40 in both directions between Wolvercote and the P+R site, tying in to existing bus priority within the City and further measures being proposed as part of the Oxford Transport Strategy.

We naturally are extremely keen to put the full weight of the company’s support behind the proposals now at detailed design stage for Phase 2 of the overall scheme, which, we expect to deliver the full range of benefits that seamless bus priority will offer, in both directions, between Wolvercote and Eynsham.

The Phase 2 project includes:

- Completion of the “missing link” in the eastbound bus lanes across the Duke’s Cut bridges that carry the A40 over the railway, canal and river, creating a seamless bus lane from the Park and Ride site west of Eynsham to be delivered by Phase 1 and incorporating developer-funded measures within the City on the approach to Wolvercote. The savings in journey times for the much higher volumes of passengers we anticipate carrying on this stretch arising from the Phase 1 project, will be substantial. The perceived benefits and wider attractiveness of this in establishing a “Bus Rapid Transit” style of operation in the perception of travellers on the corridor, will be substantially greater still.
- Westbound continuous bus lanes from west of the Duke’s Cut, to the point that the Phase 1 scheme provides priority on approach to Cassington lights. The bus lanes will then continue as part of phase 2 beyond the light to the point that they pick up the Phase 1 lanes on the approach to Eynsham. In so doing, a complementary seamless Bus Rapid Transit corridor is provided to the strategic Park and Ride at Eynsham. At the same time, there will be no loss of existing capacity for general traffic, which is important for many reasons and not least, given the wider longer-distance function of the A40.

We are of the view that the journey time savings for westbound buses in the afternoon peak between Wolvercote and Eynsham will be at least 15 minutes, reflecting the current difference in scheduled journey time between off-peak and peak journeys. Our own data, provided from on-board telematics on each bus, suggests that morning peak journey times are quite often 15 minutes and regularly in excess of 20 minutes longer than the equivalent run undertaken in free-flowing traffic conditions. We would point to our current public S2 timetable, where on school days in the morning peak we allow 24 minutes between Eynsham (Evenlode PH) and Woodstock Road (South Parade). Off-peak we allow only 11 minutes: a 13 minute difference. Returning from South Parade to

the Evenlode, in the evening peak Monday-Friday we allow 30 minutes against a 12 minute off-peak allowance.

Not only that we would stress the equally great benefits arising from reliable and predictable journeys on the stretch of road between Eynsham and Wolvercote. We would point to the existing service S2 timetable where the busiest 0647 and 0717 departures from Carterton allows an extra 10 minutes running time during school term between Eynsham (Evenlode PH) and Woodstock Road (South Parade). This is regularly insufficient. Our data regularly shows that buses are delayed by over 20 minutes against free-flowing conditions, and the standard deviation above and below the mean journey time on several journeys exceeds 6 minutes. This level of variation on specific journeys clearly demonstrates that, practically speaking, it is impossible to run a schedule reasonably reliably without bus lane priority measures.

The delivery of Phase 2 of the works between these points will comprehensively address the great majority of the root causes of bus journey time delay and unreliability on this stretch of the A40. We will no longer be at the mercy of circumstances, where sheer volume of traffic and minor incidents regularly cause long and highly unpredictable delays. The result will be greatly faster, more reliable journeys by bus at the busiest times of day, when demands for local journeys on the corridor are at their highest. Motorists sat in queuing traffic will be able to see the relative speeds of the bus on the adjacent bus lanes, underlining very powerfully the reasons to switch mode.

## **2. *Interventions between Witney and Eynsham***

The principal part of the project involves the dualling of the current road from the eastern terminus of the current dual carriageway section of the A40 (Witney Bypass), to the new roundabout access for the Park and Ride at Eynsham. This addresses the root issue of delay on this section which arises from link capacity being exceeded at times of peak flow. It will also add further journey time savings for traffic as the speed limit will be increased, though the direct benefit of this to journey times for bus users is more muted.

Superficially it might appear that this element is of little or much lesser value to public transport operators and users than the other measures. We would wish to stress that this is far from being the case. The lack of capacity on this stretch severely hinders efficient and reliable bus operations in its own right. It is likely the problems here are largely masked by other current problems and constraints on the corridor, and these will tend to be exposed as other improvements are made. We consider that this part of the scheme is an essential and integral part of the strategy for the corridor. Without it, the full benefits of the Phase 1 scheme will not be realisable. In addition it is certain that additional demands on the corridor arising from current and committed housing delivery will lead to rapid escalation of delays to bus services on this key section of road, which is used by all the main bus services between West Oxfordshire and the City. The S1 route, which links Witney and Eynsham via the B4044 to the City and Station, is an especially important one which will not directly benefit from the Phase 1 project and sections of Phase 2 east of Eynsham on the A40, but nevertheless requires the implementation of the Phase 2 dualling. It must be remembered that we anticipate continuing to operate this route up to every 15 minutes after the A40 bus lanes and Park and Ride opens in 2021, and this alone will account for nearly 300 one-way seats per hour in the corridor.

The attractiveness of all the bus services in the corridor today and in the future depends on the dualling scheme being brought forward. The Park and Ride is a key component of the strategy, and the added capacity will naturally ease flows of traffic to be intercepted by that facility and thus lead to a much more attractive generalised journey time for journeys changing mode at that point. Notwithstanding this important benefit, maximising the bus mode share from further west, closer to the true trip origins in Witney and Carterton and beyond, is an equally important part of the strategy, reducing carbon emissions, as well as pressure of traffic volumes within Witney (where there are separate significant problems with local highways capacity: for example at Bridge Street); and at all points downstream on the A40, making the most efficient use of existing and planned capacity upgrades. This will be highly relevant to ensuring that the Local Plan housing quantum to 2031 can be delivered, as well as any continuation of the housing trajectory into the longer term.

As pointed out above, over the last 20 years or so, over 30 minutes has needed to be added to the peak one-way journey on the S2 route. The completion of the Bus Rapid Transit proposals east of Eynsham will no doubt claw back perhaps 15-18 minutes of typically delay, for which we schedule. To revert to reliable operation of the service at pre-1996 scheduled journey times, as we must to achieve then mode shift the strategy requires, demands the additional delays encountered west of Eynsham are tackled in this manner. We estimate about 8-11 minutes of time savings on the busiest peak journeys would be added to the benefits accruing from the phase 1 project. The remaining savings would arise from locally funded work on the A44/A4260 corridors within the City, and measures taken to alleviate congestion within Witney.

### **3. *Our Proposals for the Corridor***

By creating the conditions for buses to flow freely along the bulk of the corridor, the greatly increased attractiveness of the bus as a choice will be further enhanced by our own investments in improving the frequency of service, and range of destinations offered within the city. As you know, we have indicated to the County Council and agreed the following as a projected service level at the point that the Phase 1 scheme opens in full:

- 1) 6 buses per hour in the morning peak between the P+R and Oxford City Centre (while retaining a regular frequency on the existing S1 route via Farmoor to Oxford). This compares with a half-hourly service on the equivalent S2 route offered today.
- 2) A service running up to 4 buses per hour between Eynsham and Headington/Oxford Eastern Arc (John Radcliffe Hospital) throughout the day, with a regular service running through from Witney, providing an entirely new direct public transport link into this part of the City, where a large number of jobs are already concentrated, providing convenient and highly competitive bus journey options where none currently exists today. Here, we should stress that the investment in Oxford Science Transit Phase 1 will work in synergy with recent investments at Wolvercote/Cuttleslowe funded under the NPIF Pinch Points programme in 2014-5; and the County's £11.5m Access to Headington scheme which is addressing current congestion in and around the JRH/Headington area. The combination of these schemes is of great significance in creating the condition necessary to provide regular reliable bus services on this new route.

In addition, we are to invest in an entirely new fleet of higher-capacity, double deck luxury vehicles to a specification that will surpass that already offered by our existing premium "Gold" brand on the

S1 and S2 routes. To support this, we plan to replace our existing outdated and space-constrained operating centre in Witney with an entirely new depot. Both represent very substantial capital expenditure commitments on our part.

We would also point out that this is only likely to represent a starting point for a longer-term investment that follows the longer-term evolution of bus patronage growth in the A40 corridor after 2021. We believe that there is compelling evidence to suggest that long-term uplifts in bus passenger volumes will be achieved and sustained. This will in all probability require further investments in buses to progressively uplift frequency and capacity of services.

We have very good grounds to believe that demand will arise to support longer-term additional service enhancements.

- The S1 and S2 have consistently demonstrated steady growth over many years, despite limited background demographic growth and steadily-extending scheduled journey times over the last 15 years. The scheme can thus be expected to catalyse a rapid stimulation of organic growth by mode shift from cars, both using the Park and Ride and using convenient boarding points within Witney and Carterton.
- Simultaneously, after many years of muted housing growth in West Oxfordshire, delivery on the allocations in the recently adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan to 2031 has already begun. Sites including Land West of Witney are delivering completions at scale and at pace. A greatly elevated mode share for bus from these developments can be expected, as they will be directly served by regular bus services taking full advantage of the Phase 1 A40 infrastructure.
- Added to this, and no less important, a broader stimulation effect can be expected from across West Oxfordshire, taking advantage of the Park and Ride, and the high level of bus service offered there.
- Finally, the adopted Local Plan is taking forward the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village of up to 2,200 dwellings sited adjoining the Park and Ride site and which will be directly accessible by walking and cycling as well as by car. This development is expressly intended to help meet housing needs arising within the City of Oxford, that cannot be accommodated within it. Delivery is anticipated to commence in 2021, just after the scheme opens.

Our confidence arises in no way from unevidenced speculation. Every single inter-urban bus rapid transit scheme delivered in the UK since 2000 has greatly exceeded initial passenger forecasts and estimates. This includes the Gosport-Fareham Busway, the Leigh Guided Busway, and the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway.

Stagecoach is the main operator using the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway (CGB), running between St Ives and Cambridge Northern Fringe. The geographic and economic context it is highly analogous to the A40 Science Transit Scheme, linking outlying satellite towns to the vibrant economic centre of Cambridge. Two Park and Rides have been provided en-route each offering about 500 spaces, at St Ives and at Longstanton. Longstanton is about the same distance from the edge of Cambridge at Orchard Park, as is Eynsham from Wolvercote. Like Eynsham, it is the focus of a major new settlement on Garden Town principles (“Northstowe”), the first phase of which delivering 1500 dwellings is underway achieving first occupations in 2017 directly adjacent to the Longstanton P+R.

The market town of St Ives is about the same distance from Cambridge as is Witney from Oxford, while Huntingdon shares a geographic relations broadly analogous to Carterton, though it is a great deal larger and has its own economic hinterland.

The CGB launched services in August 2011. Stagecoach commenced with a 10-minute frequency of service from St Ives and Longstanton split between two routes on an alternating basis (A and B), one of which (A) continued to the regional general hospital at Addenbrookes every 20 minutes. By 2017, this had increased to a schedule offering at least 12 departures each weekday peak hour: a 5-minute frequency from St Ives and Longstanton P+R sites. West of St Ives, the services fan out to provide regular seamless public transport links originating not only in St Ives and Huntingdon, but in a diverse number of much smaller settlements such as Somersham, Godmanchester and Brampton. At Longstanton P+R, morning peak buses were regularly arriving full despite this intense level of service. Consequently our local business has added additional short journeys to ensure all users have seats. Approaching 8 years after the scheme opened, patronage continues to grow steadily. Not least this is because current housing delivery at St Ives and Northstowe adjoining the CGB services is witnessing exceptionally high bus mode shares, and prospective residents are making decisions to move to these sites informed by the availability of the service.

Bus use in the Huntingdon-St Ives-Central Cambridge corridor has more than trebled since the Bus Rapid Transit scheme opened, while we understand peak traffic growth in the parallel A14 corridor has been relatively muted.

#### **4. Concluding Comments**

It is obvious that there is simply no effective means of providing for more vehicular traffic between West Oxfordshire and Oxford. If housing and economic growth in the corridor is to be delivered without exceptionally severe impact on the efficiency, safety and resilience of the corridor, then the consolidation of trips onto high-frequency, high-capacity mass transit is the only practical solution. The A40 Smart Corridor, is a critical set of interventions following on from Phase 1, to facilitate just this outcome. As we discuss above, we believe that the scheme will replicate the success of previous similar projects to secure at the very least, the benefits set out in the County Council's Business Case, and in due course, much more.

We therefore fully endorse and unreservedly commend the scheme. We trust that this project will be considered well worthy of the application of national government funding to ensure that it can be expeditiously delivered at the earliest possible point after 2021. We appreciate your efforts and those of the team, to get the project to this important milestone, and we wish you every success in progressing the project to delivery once funding is secured from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government through Homes England, under the Housing Infrastructure Fund.

Yours sincerely

S40(2)

S40(2)



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WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

S40(2)

S40(2)

Oxfordshire County Council  
County Hall  
Oxford  
OX1 1ND

Our Ref: GH/MS

15 March 2019

Dear S40(2)

**West Oxfordshire Support for improved infrastructure for the West Oxfordshire A40 Smart Corridor**

I write in support for the A40 Smart Corridor HIF bid and for the A40 Science Transit LGF project.

Thank you for the opportunity to support these important projects. I am happy to support both the HIF bid and the A40 Science Transit LGF project on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council for the reasons that I set out below.

As you are aware, my Council has recently adopted an ambitious Local Plan, which plans for nearly 15,950 dwellings up to 2031, a substantial number of which are intended to help provide for Oxford City's unmet housing need. Most of the planned development in West Oxfordshire is located along the A40 corridor, which serves the central part of the District including the major settlements of Witney, Carterton and Eynsham, and provides a strategic connection to Oxford.

The Local Plan outlines the current transport problems along the A40 and the long-term strategy to improve access between West Oxfordshire and Oxford. Congestion on the A40 is a serious barrier to housing supply growth and also constrains West Oxfordshire's economic development. The Local Plan recognises that the east bound bus lane and park & ride provides a first stage of improvements to be followed by other elements of the strategy such as the westbound bus lane and dualling of the A40 between Witney and Eynsham.

In combination the A40 Science Transit LGF project and the A40 Smart Corridor bid are fully consistent with the approach adopted in the Local Plan. They would deliver significant benefits in supporting the delivery of new homes in the District and in addressing the existing severe traffic congestion. I believe that they would play key roles in helping West Oxfordshire deliver the ambitious step change in housing that we are planning.

Included in the Local Plan is the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village, which is part of the Government's Garden Village programme. This includes a proposed Science Park which is emerging as a strategic economic development opportunity through the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy. The Garden Village concept itself originated in response to the opportunities opened up by the A40 Science Transit LGF project.

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The proposed park & ride will create an important transport hub which will anchor the Garden Village and Science Park. This is consistent with the Government's Garden Communities prospectus which calls for integrated, forward looking and accessible transport options that support economic prosperity and wellbeing for residents. The prospectus states that this should include the promotion of public transport, walking, and cycling so that settlements are easy to navigate, and facilitate simple and sustainable access to jobs, education, and services.

The key housing sites that would be supported by the two projects are:

- Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village (2,200 homes by 2031 to meet Oxford's needs)
- West Eynsham Sustainable Urban Extension (1,000 homes by 2031, of which 550 contribute towards Oxford's needs)
- North Witney (1,400 homes by 2031)
- East Witney (450 homes by 2031)

Detailed planning policy documents and planning applications are currently in preparation for these strategic sites. It appears to me that without certainty over the funding and delivery of the proposed transport improvements West Oxfordshire District Council would need to either refuse planning applications for these strategic sites, or impose appropriate Grampian conditions preventing the start of development until the infrastructure is delivered. This approach reflects the potential impacts of the developments on the already severely congested A40 and is consistent with Local Plan policy. It would however severely compromise West Oxfordshire's ambition to meet its challenging housing targets and to contribute to the delivery of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.

The proposed improvements will also benefit and the support the operation of RAF Brize Norton in Carterton, which is the United Kingdom's key defence air transport hub, as it is home to the RAF's Strategic and Tactical Air Transport as well as to other important units. The Station is the largest RAF Station with approximately 5,800 Service Personnel, 1,200 contractors and 300 civilian staff. The Carterton location is also seen as a key economic development opportunity site by the emerging Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy.

I hope that this helps. Please let me know if I can support your work in any other way.

Yours sincerely

S40(2)

S40(2)