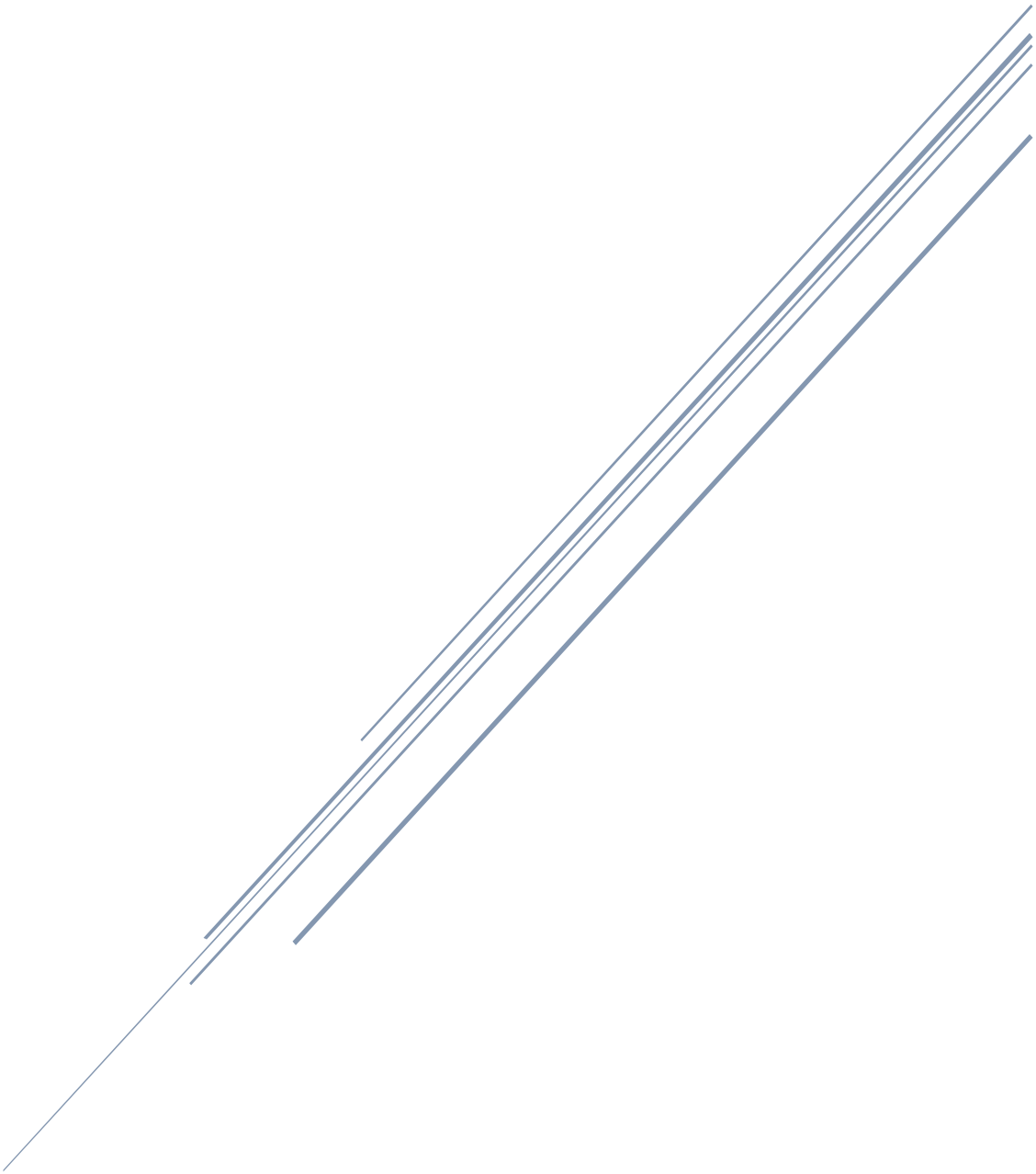
NORTH WITNEY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Challenges and Interventions

(Version 2 – May 2024)



Witney Infrastructure Neighbourhood Group

May 2024

Document issue details.

Witney Infrastructure Neighbourhood Group (WING)

Version	Date	Details	Written	Reviewed	Approved	Status
1	03/05/2024	Draft	Mark McCappin	Sheena Derry		For approval
2	07/05/2024	Final	Mark McCappin	Sheena Derry	Heather Northam	For issue
3	Version 3 will be issued following consultation					Not yet started

Version 2

Issued as a response to planning application 24/00482/OUT and as a consultation document with local councils that support WING.

Executive Summary

As Witney has expanded over the last 40 or 50 years, elements of the road infrastructure have been gradually added, funded by the developers of major housing schemes. The final parts of the perimeter road system around the town that remain to be constructed are the West End Link, the Northern Distributor Road, and the west-facing slip roads on and off the A40 at Shores Green. In the Local Plan 2031, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) recognised that congestion and air pollution in the Bridge Street area of Witney will be made worse by the additional traffic that will be generated by housing developments in the Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) at North Witney and East Witney. To mitigate this problem, the Local Plan requires the completion of Witney's perimeter roads and specifies that this infrastructure improvement must be funded by developers.

This is the background to consideration of current proposals for the housing development in North Witney. Residents in the area are concerned that the developer will limit the scale of infrastructure elements of their proposed scheme and that consequently the community in Witney and the surrounding district will suffer. To address these concerns, Witney Infrastructure Neighbourhood Group (WING) has been established. WING has representatives from ten local councils that contain and surround North Witney SDA. We believe that we can collate local opinion to find the 'best fit' that meets the expectations of our community. WING is therefore able to make a strong case that, if North Witney housing goes ahead, the associated infrastructure improvements are well thought out and fully delivered.

A range of stakeholders and decision makers have responsibility for managing Witney's infrastructure. This includes OCC, West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), Witney Town Council (WTC), and the Environment Agency (EA), together with any developers. No single body has overall control, so the challenge is to ensure that all infrastructure improvements contribute to a coordinated solution. Undoing or reworking the contribution of any stakeholder must be avoided.

To achieve this, WING has set out four main challenges. These are to ensure:

- **Construction of the West End Link (WEL)**
- **Construction of Northern Distributor Road (NDR)**
- **Flood Prevention Measures through the Windrush Valley**
- **Community infrastructure as part of the North Witney housing scheme**

Flood prevention has been included because WING considers the history of flooding in Witney is evidence of an infrastructure problem. It was not a requirement of the OCC Local Plan to tackle this issue, but we believe there is an opportunity to reduce flood risk by constructing the WEL as an embankment/dam that can retain water in the flood plain above Witney. WING's position is that the North Witney developer must contribute to this approach.

On 9th April 2024 WING submitted an initial objection to North Witney Land Consortium's application for outline planning permission for a residential-led mixed-use development in North Witney SDA (WODC Planning reference 24/00482/OUT). We consider this application fails to make adequate provision for our challenges and we gave an undertaking to provide substantiation and explanation of our case. This report has been written primarily to satisfy this undertaking.

We also intend to use the report for consultation with the ten local councils who support the WING initiative. We will obtain feedback and written confirmation of the opinions from these parish and town councils that will be included in the next version of the report that is issued. WING will use this as a mandate to consult and liaise with the stakeholders to influence decisions that are reached in the best interests of the wider community around Witney.

WING Report **Proposals for North Witney Housing Development Challenges and Interventions**

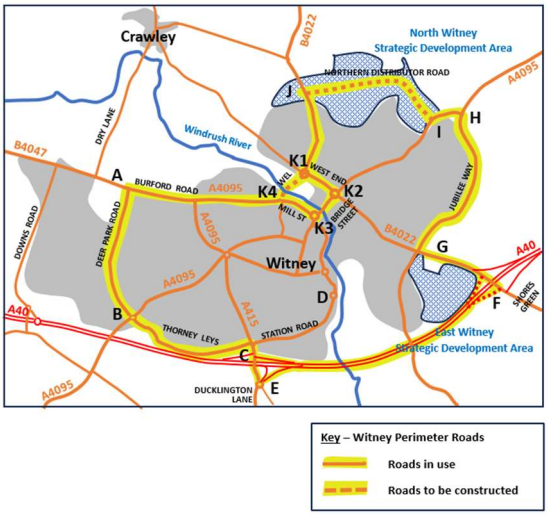
Executive Summary

Contents

Appendices

Background

The construction of housing developments at North Witney and East Witney will complete an expansion of the town that was planned some 40 or 50 years ago. When growth and expansion in Oxford created the need for towns like Bicester, Witney, Eynsham and Carterton to make allowance for significant additional housing, the planners in Witney developed a long-term strategy that included perimeter roads around the town, funded by the major housing developments. As each housing project proceeded, another section of perimeter road was added. This approach eased the traffic flow around Witney and reduced movements through the centre of town. The only elements of the perimeter roads that remain to be constructed are the West End Link, the Northern Distributor Road, and the west-facing slip roads onto the A40 at Shores Green.



Windrush Infrastructure Neighbourhood Group (WING)

WING was established to coordinate the responses of local parishes around Witney to the proposals and options for housing development in the North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA). WING has representatives from parishes (shaded green on the map) that are mostly, but not wholly, on the north of the Windrush and are badly affected by limited access into Witney over the single river crossing in Bridge Street.

The Local Plan 2031 includes 1400 houses in the North Witney SDA. The area already suffers from congestion and air pollution, and the Local Plan recognises that this would be made worse by the increase in population and traffic arising from North Witney housing. It requires that infrastructure improvements must be built and that these are to be funded by the SDA developer.

If North Witney housing goes ahead, WING believes it is vital that the associated infrastructure improvements are well thought out and fully delivered. We will contribute to decision making to make sure this happens. It is important that the best use is made of available funding to improve local infrastructure.

At the time of writing, an outline planning application has been submitted by North Witney Land Consortium for a residential-led mixed-use development in North Witney SDA (WODC Planning reference 24/00482/OUT). WING has already submitted an outline objection to this that lists our challenges to the application in broad terms and gives an undertaking to provide a report explaining our objections in more detail. This document has been written primarily to satisfy this undertaking.

We will also use the document for consultation with the ten local parishes that support WING and seek their written confirmation of agreement with the report findings. These feedback comments and any amendments arising from them will be incorporated into a final version of the WING report that we can present as fully representative of local opinion. Although the initial version of our report has been prepared by representatives

from all ten parishes that surround North Witney SDA, the inclusion of local parish feedback in our final version will give us a stronger mandate to influence the content of any proposal that is given permission to proceed.

WING's Challenges

Our challenges are to ensure:

- **Construction of the West End Link (WEL)**
- **Construction of Northern Distributor Road (NDR)**
- **Flood Prevention Measures through the Windrush Valley**
- **Community infrastructure as part of the North Witney housing scheme**

The detailed case for each of the WING challenges is set out in Appendices 1-4.

Each challenge will be addressed by several stakeholders. They will have overlapping responsibilities affecting other challenges. We have therefore assembled a list of stakeholders and matched relevant stakeholders with each challenge to generate a list of the issues that we would like to discuss with each organisation. The outcome of this approach is shown in Appendix 5.

Appendix 1 – Construction of the WEL

The provision of a second river crossing in Witney has been included in policy development for some years. Details of the potential location and layout of the WEL are illustrated in the appendix and have been included in West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 and other policy documents. Decision makers will include a range of teams within WODC and OCC.

The developer has chosen to omit the WEL in their application for outline planning permission and the case for proceeding in this way is examined. WING's conclusion is that the impacts of building 1400 houses without a second river crossing will include increased congestion, increased air pollution, missed opportunities to prevent flooding, and missed opportunities to improve active travel.

The OCC options report for the road layout in the Bridge Street area recommends:

- Clockwise flow around West End, Bridge Street, Mill Street and WEL with some additional lanes.
- Additional northbound bus lane in Bridge Street.
- Additional southbound lane over the WEL for all traffic.
- Cycle lanes and pedestrian footpaths on all sides of the area.

WING takes the position that the WEL must be a prerequisite of the development going ahead. This might take the form of a planning condition or a reason for refusal of the plans in their current form.

OCC has undertaken to act as Project Manager for the construction of the WEL together with road layout and junction alterations for central Witney. The Project Management Team at OCC has also accepted that they will need to consider flood prevention as part of the options for construction of the WEL. The issue of flood control is addressed more fully in Appendix 3 of this report. It is unclear what funding for the WEL will be expected from the developer if planning permission is granted to proceed with North Witney housing. WING will seek clarity on this.

Appendix 2 – Construction of the NDR

The developer's proposals for the NDR, as set out in the Transport Assessment section of his planning application, are quoted for reference. WING considers that these proposals are inadequate and lists specific shortcomings as follows:

- The proposed road geometry does not match the standard of other perimeter roads around Witney and will fail to provide the free-flowing route that will be needed for residential and through traffic.
- Access to Witney along New Yatt Road would be restricted under the developer's proposals. WING disputes whether these proposals will satisfy local needs and requests OCC to carry out an independent assessment of possible options.
- Provision for HGV routing in the developer's proposals conflicts with the current approaches that are being developed by OCC for Witney and the Windrush Valley area. In particular, the introduction of a point weight restriction in Bridge Street would conflict with OCC policy as decided after the rejection of a similar restriction on the A361 through Burford.

WING's conclusion is that the planning application should be rejected and that further options need to be developed.

Appendix 3 – Flood prevention measures through the Windrush valley

WING believes that Witney's flooding problems should be addressed as part of the infrastructure improvements associated with the North Witney SDA development. Although construction of the WEL will tackle the congestion and air pollution issues that are recognised in the Local Plan, the WEL could also provide a control mechanism for flow in the Windrush. Flood control is not considered in the Local Plan as an infrastructure improvement to be funded by SDA development and WING sees this as an omission that could be corrected without adding to overall costs.

The WEL could be constructed as an earth dam that would retain flood water in the flood plain on the upstream edge of Witney. The dam would have a restricted opening to reduce the flow of water into the town, providing flood control in a severe weather event. The river channel under the bridge in Bridge Street acts as a pinch point for the river flow and water currently collects above Bridge Street in the basin within West End, Bridge Street and Mill Street. This basin is filled not only by the flow in the Windrush but also by surface water from the 750mm diameter drain under Hailey Road. WING has identified a series of interventions that would manage the flow in the Hailey Road Drain. More detailed proposals for building the WEL as an earth dam and for controlling the Hailey Road drain are set out in Appendix 3.

Permission to construct a river crossing over a main river is granted by the Environment Agency (EA). The EA's response to any application will always start from the position that a structure over a river must not adversely affect the flow and must not cause flooding. A proposal for an open viaduct structure with wide spans and minimal piers would meet this requirement, but such a structure across a river valley would be a heavily engineered and expensive solution. OCC have recently used £25m as a broad cost estimate for this structure. If the alternative approach was adopted using an earth dam, there would be a significant saving. However, EA approval is needed before this alternative can be fully investigated and costed.

WING urges EA, OCC and WODC to consider a scheme that would use the WEL as the centrepiece in a new system of flood control through the Windrush Valley. There are few opportunities to secure capital funding for such schemes and, if this chance is allowed to pass by, there may not be another for many years. Without better flood control, Witney will continue to flood during severe weather events. WING will press for delivery of a flood management plan along the full length of the Windrush Valley through Witney.

Appendix 4 – Community Infrastructure as part of the North Witney housing scheme

'Community infrastructure' is defined as being the elements within a planned development in addition to housing that will support the day-to-day life of its residents. These include for play and social activities as well as healthcare, shops, and schools. The wider term 'infrastructure' is generally taken to include major structural elements such as roads, bridges, and flood defences but these elements also contribute to 'community infrastructure'. There is a potential overlap that must not be missed.

The North Witney development will lie entirely within Hailey Parish. New residents will be welcomed into the Hailey community and allowance has been made in the Hailey Neighbourhood Plan for both existing and anticipated residents within the parish. Comparison is made between desired facilities that are listed in Hailey's plan with those proposed by the developer. Where discrepancies occur, the case for the provision of community infrastructure as required by the Hailey Neighbourhood Plan is explained and justified. Major shortfalls in the developer's proposals include:

- The need of a separate community centre and not an allowance for community use within the local centre that is proposed.
- Adequate provision for anticipated growth in school facilities.
- A stand-alone health centre with GP surgery and pharmacy.

Hailey PC believes that a full review of community infrastructure proposals will have to be negotiated with the WODC Planners and the developer to reach some agreement. WING supports this position and will maintain active opposition to any planning application that does not fully deliver the infrastructure that we believe is necessary.

Interventions to address WING's Challenges

The way forward that WING intends to adopt is set out in Appendix 5. For each of the challenges that we have presented, WING has considered the series of actions needed and the organisations and decision makers involved. Where there are potential synergies, such as with the WEL for traffic, air pollution, and flood management, WING believes these should be fully investigated. An integrated solution could save time and money and provide the best overall scheme.

By listing the interventions in this way, we believe that we have set an agenda for liaison with stakeholders.

Liaison actions and timeline

WING will contact the key Stakeholders in Appendix 5 to discuss the resolution of our challenges. We will make this liaison positive and constructive to assist in finding the best solutions for the whole area around Witney. There are two key decisions that will affect the timing of any development.

1. Will flood control be a fundamental element of North Witney development?
2. Will planning permission for North Witney housing be withheld for any proposal that fails to commit to construction of the infrastructure improvements that are included in the Local Plan?

On Point 1, to decide if the WEL could be constructed as an earth dam (that could retain flood water in the flood plain upstream of Witney), a series of steps will be needed.

- The EA would have to agree to this approach in principle.
- The EA would have to provide an updated hydraulic model of the flow in the Windrush that could be used for analysis of options.

- The findings in the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment that was carried out for WODC by Wallingford HydroSolutions Ltd in March 2015 would have to be expanded to include the options for an earth/dam solution and to confirm whether this proposed solution would provide adequate protection from flooding.
- The EA would have to confirm their approval for the adoption of this approach.
- A full environmental impact assessment would be needed.
- Ground investigation would be required to confirm if the earthworks material to build an earth dam could be sourced from the flood plain.
- Detailed design and costing for the earth dam option would be required.

Only when these steps have been completed could OCC decide on proceeding with the construction of the WEL as an embankment/dam. The timing of this decision will delay OCC's next decision on choice of option for the Bridge Street area of Witney. Current options assume the existence of the WEL, but final design and construction cannot commence until the form of construction of the WEL is fixed.

On Point 2, withholding planning approval for an application that does not fully deliver the infrastructure improvements that are specified in the Local Plan would require decisions on whether:

- infrastructure improvements will be undertaken by OCC as major schemes with funding contributions from the SDA developer, or
- the developer is to be required to undertake the construction.

The resolution of these major decisions will take considerable time to complete and could delay the start of housing construction by several years.

Conclusions

The response from WING in this document focuses on the necessity to provide infrastructure improvements in Witney if planning permission is given to housing development in North Witney SDA. We have not taken a position in favour or in opposition to housing development. Opinions from parishioners and councillors in WING range from those who are opposed to any further housing to those who accept that North Witney housing is likely to go ahead but who want to ensure that measures are taken to deal with congestion, air pollution and flooding in the town, and provide adequate community infrastructure.

WING will challenge any attempt to proceed with housing without a guarantee that the associated infrastructure improvements are delivered in full.

Decisions that are taken now will affect Witney and the area around it for generations to come. As things stand, Witney suffers from:

- 80% of the planned perimeter road system with just a single bridge over the Windrush,
- severe traffic congestion and delay affecting central areas and through traffic,
- air pollution that creates a health hazard for residents and visitors and that has been passively managed since the establishment of the Air Quality Management Area in 2005. (Pollution levels have been monitored since 2005 and WODC has produced annual reports.)
- a risk of flooding with severe flooding occurring in 2007 and 2020.

These problems could be mitigated by grasping the opportunity to complete and improve the infrastructure in Bridge Street and North Witney. WING believes it is essential to do this, but we are aware of the difficulty in coordinating the actions of a wide range of stakeholders to deliver the whole plan.

- OCC will need to project manage the design and construction of road improvements in the Bridge Street area of Witney,
- WODC and EA will take the lead in flood management and the possibility to use the WEL to control flooding, and
- the housing developer will have to contribute to the construction of the WEL and NDR (either through funding to an OCC scheme or as part of their own construction).

Failure to deliver any of these elements will compromise the success of the plan and therein lies the challenge.

This report is being submitted to WODC Planning to supplement WING's first objection to planning application 24/00482/OUT, lodged with WODC on 9th April 2024. In our first submission, we set out our main objection headings and undertook to submit reports to detail our concerns and challenges. This second submission fulfils that undertaking.

WING will also use this report to complete consultation with the ten local councils who support our campaign. We will invite each council to provide written responses to our findings. Responses, and any amendments, will then be included in a final version of the WING report. Although WING's membership is made up of one or two representatives from each council, we believe that adding the consultation responses to our report will strengthen the evidence of local support and give us a strong mandate to meet with stakeholders and influence their decisions. Our intention is to contribute positively to finding and delivering the best possible outcome for the Witney community.

Appendix 1

Construction of the West End Link

WING Appendix 1 Construction of the West End Link (WEL)

Is the West End Link Needed?

The North Witney development's 1400 or so new houses will generate a significant increase in road traffic. This is likely to increase congestion and worsen air quality in all directions around the development, particularly on the route to and from Witney, which is already slow moving at peak times and is an Air Quality Management Area with pollution levels exceeding target limits.

The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, policy WIT2 [1], contains a section on the creation of a road across the meadow and river from the junction of Hailey Road, West End and Crawley Road to the Jacobs Mill end of Woodford Way.

1.1 Overview and Background to the Question of the West End Link (WEL).

There is only one river crossing for motor vehicles in the parish of Witney; Bridge Street.

A second crossing has been talked about in policy papers for some years, with the land it would need kept relatively clear and partially in the possession of Oxfordshire County Council already.

The red box on this map (from OpenStreetMap.org) shows a straight line connecting Hailey Road to Mill Street, that would be the approximate route of any WEL.

This proposed road has been mentioned in West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 documents [1], [2], Infrastructure Delivery Plans [3] and alluded to in Oxfordshire County Council Highways documents [4], frequently in association with discussion papers and policies about the North Witney Strategic Development Area and its long-anticipated 1400 new houses.

OCC Policies outline that the expected order of road building should be Downs Road A40 junction, Shores Green and then they state that the WEL and NDR are expected to follow when the North Witney development is built [5], [6].

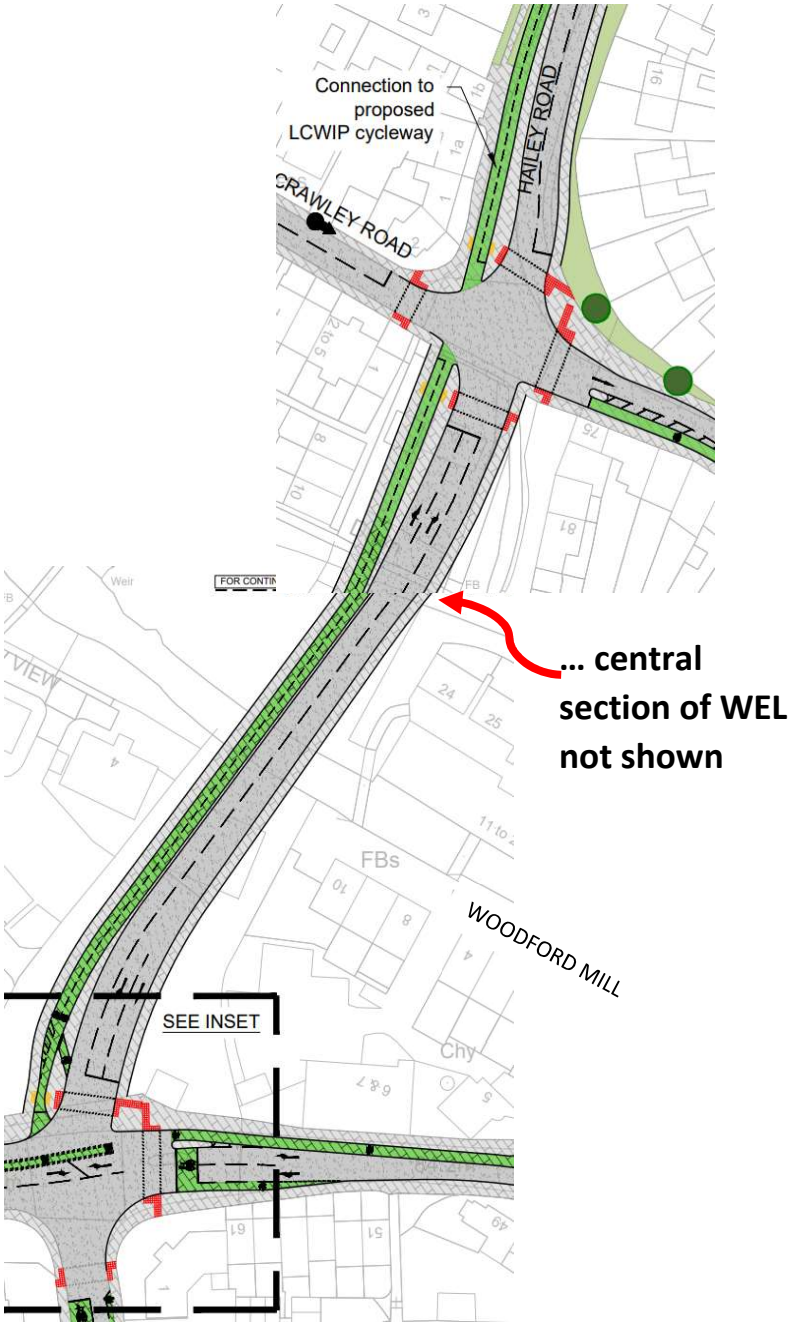


Image Source pp 2 and 4 Appendix D – Bridge Street Option 4.1 Concept Design [7]

Image Source https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:New_and_Old_at_Witney_Mill_-_geograph.org.uk_-_2908525.jpg This image, a few years old, shows the Jacobs Mill development and the land in the foreground kept clear for the WEL.

Image Source – Google Street View, Woodford Way/A4095 junction, showing the green gates which enclose land reserved for the WEL. Jacobs Mill is just to the right of the image.

1.2 Decision makers and Statutory Consultees

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) is the Planning Authority that will determine the outcome of the North Witney planning application.

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is a statutory consultee on Highways planning matters. OCC will also recommend planning conditions and draft and undertake legal contracts such as Section 106 (S106) or Section 278 (S278) agreements with the developers to fund and provide highways infrastructure.

OCC also has an Active Travel department with expertise in infrastructure design standards to enable improvements to walking and cycling routes on existing streets and to ensure good provision in new developments. It is important that this department is involved with Highways planning responses at the key moments in the consideration process.

WODC will abide by the policies in its current Local Plan. OCC has a range of highways and transport policy documents and design standards. Hailey Parish has a Neighbourhood Plan [8]. Witney has a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan [9], 2021's Access to Witney Report [6] and a forthcoming Witney Area Transport Plan.

1.3 Proceeding without the WEL

The 2031 Access to Witney report modelled the WEL as a bypass to Bridge Street, as well as the Shores Green slip roads, and concluded that traffic on Bridge Steet would be better with than without it.

The developers applying to build the North Witney housing estate have omitted the WEL, citing Oxfordshire's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022-2050 [4], which discourages the construction of new roads unless necessary.

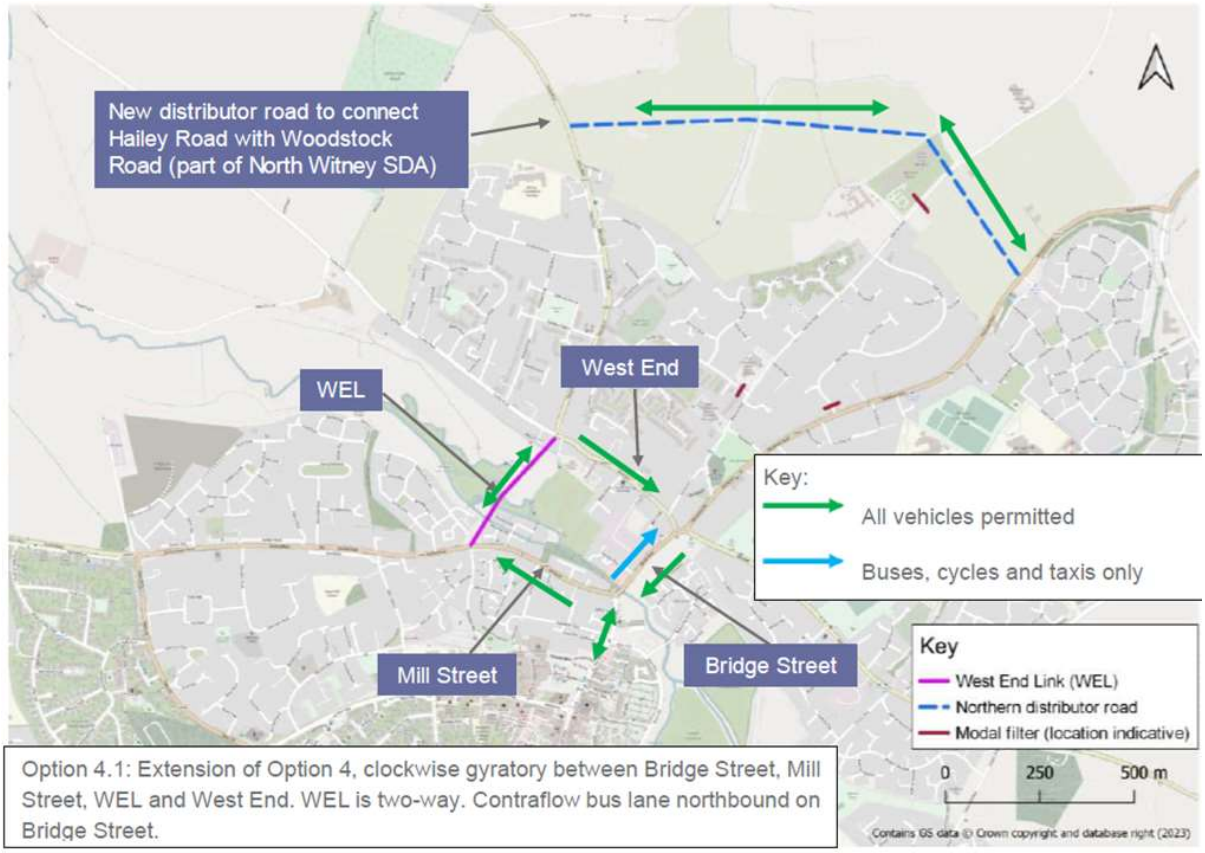
The impacts of building 1400 houses *without* a second river crossing are likely to include:

- Increased congestion on West End, Bridge Street, Woodstock Road and Newlands into and out of Witney.
- Increased NO_2 levels and concomitant particulate pollution on Bridge Street, the Air Quality Management Area which has an Air Quality Action Plan [10], [11], that cites the WEL as part of the measures expected to bring Bridge Street air quality up and NO_2 levels down to compliance with national objectives.
- A missed opportunity to dovetail flood mitigation measures at the river.
- A missed opportunity to improve walking and cycling routes to connect residents to Witney.

The documents cited in this appendix suggest these impacts, and local residents are expressing these same concerns [12].

1.4 The Bridge Street Options Report 2023

A report published in late 2023 recommends the WEL [7].



Source: Bridge Street Areas Trasport Options Appraisal, 2023 [7].

Oxfordshire County Council, with a funding contribution from West Oxfordshire District Council, commissioned an options report for alleviating traffic on Bridge Street [7]. The models and options assumed Shores Green slip roads were in place and assumed some sort of Northern Distributor Road through or around the North Witney Development. The consultants took the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022-2050 into account.

The report recommended a clockwise one-way, gyratory, system from Hailey Road via West End, Bridge Street and Mill Street and a 2-way West End Link connecting Hailey Road to Woodford Way. Features include:

- a bus lane on Bridge Street in the direction from Witney town centre towards Newlands, against the flow of traffic from West End.
- segregated cycle lanes against the one-way motor traffic lanes on West End and Mill Street (contraflow cyclists would use the bus lane on Bridge Street).
- segregated cycle lanes in both directions on the WEL.
- signalised junctions to replace mini roundabouts.

Other Oxfordshire market towns already have gyratory systems to manage traffic and congestion. This one would arguably incorporate more modern features for sustainable travel options alongside car routes.

1.5 Concluding Comments

At the time of writing, this Options Report is not the adopted policy of OCC's highways department. No position has yet been announced.

In an update to Witney Traffic Advisory Committee in September 2023, the County team wrote [13]:

"Bridge Street Area Options Appraisal Report (stage: Investigation/ feasibility). Officers have finalised the Bridge Street/West End Link Options Assessment report from consultants Pell Frischmann. This work includes the transport impact across the area of the Local Plan housing allocations at North Witney and East Witney and reviews the merit of the proposed West End Link Road given the adoption of the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan policy document in 2022. Engagement and publication of the report is now being planned for after the Witney High Street and Market Square public realm engagement concludes in October [2023][1]. Initially this will involve Local Members before widening to other stakeholders including WODC, and the North Witney Strategic Development site among others. Following the engagement, the county will confirm its position through the forthcoming Witney Area Travel Plan, a subsidiary document to the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, which will be subject to public consultation in its own right."

The planning application for North Witney has been submitted before OCC's position was decided. Their position will likely emerge during the consideration period for the application.

Consultation on options for central Witney has now started, and OCC gave a briefing to WODC, WTC and PC (Hailey and Crawley) Councillors on 18 January 2024. Content from this briefing has been used by WING in the preparation of this appendix. At the time of writing (May 2024) the wider consultation by OCC to the public has not yet taken place.

WING takes the position that the WEL must be a prerequisite of the development going ahead. This might take the form of a planning condition or a reason for refusal of the plans in their current form.

References

[1] "WODC Local Plan 2031, Witney Sub Area pages, p151 and Policy WIT2, p154 and WIT6 p165.," [Online]. Available: https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/pxvnq5j3/witney-sub-area.pdf .

[2] "WODC Local Plan 2031 Annual Monitoring Report 2021-23, One mention of WEL, Table 26 Identified Highway Infrastructure Schemes, p58, saying it is associated with North Witney SDA.," January 2024. [Online]. Available: https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/sgeeixem/2021-to-2023-local-plan-annual-monitoring-report-january-2024.pdf.

[3] "West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016 Update, p13 and p61 say West End Link is needed.," [Online]. Available: https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-major-projects/appendix12west-oxfordshire-infrastructure-delivery_planextracts.pdf . [Accessed March 2024].

[1] Text in square brackets is added for clarity.

[4] "Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, 2022-2050, Oxfordshire, p147-148, Policies WIT2, WIT3, WIT6," 2022. [Online]. Available: https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-connecting-oxfordshire/LocalTransportandConnectivityPlan.pdf. [Accessed March 2024].

[5] "WODC Local Plan 2031 Transport and Movement Policy Section, phasing commentary p93, Policy T2, p97," [Online]. Available: https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/udpd3l0j/7-transport-and-movement.pdf. [Accessed March 2024].

[6] "Access to Witney- TAG Options Appraisal Report (Shores Green recommendation report)," July 2021. [Online]. Available: https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-major-projects/atw_tag_options_appraisal_report.pdf. [Accessed 2024 March].

[7] "Bridge Street Area Transport Options Appraisal – stakeholder consultation site.," 2024. [Online]. Available: https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/witney-bridge-street-oar .

[8] "Hailey Neighbourhood Plan, 2015- 2031, Referendum Version V9, July 2019, commentary on WODC Policy WIT2 in the North Witney SDA.," [Online]. Available: https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/flmhngyh/hailey-neighbourhood-plan.pdf . [Accessed March 2024].

[9] "Witney LCWIP, p57 action refs 5, 6, 89," [Online]. Available: https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/witney-lcwip. [Accessed March 2024].

[10] "Witney Air Quality Action Plan 2023-2028 - Draft.," 2023. [Online]. Available: https://yourvoice.westoxon.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/aqap-chipping-norton-and-witney/3. [Accessed March 2024].

[11] "The latest West Oxfordshire Air Quality Reports," [Online]. Available: https://www.oxonair.uk/policies-and-reports/west-oxfordshire. [Accessed March 2024].

[12] "New 1,250-home development in Witney dubbed 'carmageddon'," 21 March 2024. [Online]. Available: https://www.cotswoldjournal.co.uk/news/24200126.new-1-250-home-development-witney-dubbed-carmageddon/. [Accessed March 2024].

[13] "Oxfordshire County Council Infrastructure Locality Team Update - to Witney TAC," September 2023. [Online]. Available: https://democracy.witney-tc.gov.uk/documents/s11900/2023.09%20OCC%20Update%20to%20Witney%20TAC%20-%20final.pdf. [Accessed March 2024].

Appendix 2

Construction of the Northern Distributor Road

WING Appendix 2 Construction of the Northern Distributor Road

2.1 Proposals for Northern Distributor Road (NDR)

The developer's proposals, in their submission for outline planning permission (WODC Planning ref 24/00482/OUT), contain indications for the NDR. These form part of the Transport Assessment for North Witney, prepared by Jubb for The North Witney Land Consortium dated December 2023.

Within this document, proposals for the NDR are shown in;

- Section 5 – Development Proposals
- Appendix N: Proposed Traffic Model Scope Technical Note

Extract from Transport Assessment Section 5 – Development Proposals

5.4 Site Access

5.4.1 Access on Hailey Road and Woodstock Road would be achieved through the introduction of innovative Dutch roundabouts. These Dutch roundabouts serve to prioritise movements for cyclists around the junction through the provision of priority cycle lanes across each arm which vehicles are required to give way to. In addition, zebra crossings are also provided on each arm in advance of the entries to provide priority for pedestrians. The proposed new junctions therefore serve to facilitate walking and cycling movements first and foremost, in accordance with D&P principles.

5.4.2 It is proposed that the Hailey Road access will take the form of a four-arm roundabout with the western access tying in with the Land West of Hailey Road proposals, eastern arm providing access to the development proposals and North and South arms providing connection for Hailey Road. In addition, the Woodstock Road access provides a link to the proposals from the western side with the northern and southern arms providing connection for Woodstock Road, and the eastern side providing connection to Harvest Way.

5.4.3 Furthermore, a vehicle connection, by way of a standard priority junction, will also be provided to the existing rural lane of New Yatt Road to the north. Moreover, to the south a pedestrian and cycling only connection will be provided to New Yatt Road allowing for active travel linkage with the North of Witney that provides onward connection to the town centre. It is understood that the stopping up of New Yatt Road (for vehicles) to the south of the site is proposed by the LHA and therefore this access strategy would not preclude this.

5.5 Internal Road Network

5.5.1 In accordance with the Local Plan allocation the proposals will also include a linking transport corridor (i.e. the NDR) connecting from the western access on Hailey Road to the eastern side of the proposals where it will also link with the New Yatt Road and Woodstock Road access.

5.5.2 It is proposed that the NDR encompass a segregated cycleway and footpath on both sides of this link. This would encompass a 2m footway on both sides which would link in with the pedestrian connection on the various site accesses that would connect with the NDR. Furthermore, a 2m cycleway will also be provided on both [sides][2] which will provide sufficient width for eastbound cyclists (i.e. on the northern side) and westbound cyclists (i.e. on the southern side).

5.5.3 A 6.8m carriageway road width is provided across the NDR link. This width strikes a balance between ensuring efficient movement of buses whilst ensuring that road space is not increased to levels that would encourage car use.

[2] Text in square brackets has been added for clarity.

5.5.4 It is proposed that the internal road network will include 20mph speed designation in consideration of existing speeds set within Witney. This speed designation will provide a suitable low speed environment that will serve to further facilitate safe active travel movements and is therefore in accordance with the D&P approach.

5.5.5 It is proposed that the street network of the site, including connecting roads linking with the NDR, also be designed in accordance with MfS [Manual for Streets][3] principles. In this regard streets will be designed in consideration of the aforementioned user hierarchy and will be designed in consideration of active travel users first and foremost with appropriate geometries that serve to slow vehicle speeds and provide space for these users.

Extract from Transport Assessment Appendix N

This appendix contained an earlier report by Jubb for L&Q Estates dated June 2022

4.0 Proposed Access

4.1 Whilst designs for the NDR have yet to be finalised it is proposed that this road would be developed to Manual for Streets standards and will include a 30mph speed limit to ensure that the link provides a street function. It is proposed that a roundabout access be provided either [end] of the NDR where it connects with the Hailey Road and at the A4095. The roundabout access onto Hailey Road would also facilitate access to the Land West of Hailey Road proposals (i.e. Zone 5604) via an additional arm connecting with the western side of this roundabout. These proposals should be considered in relation to the coding assumptions of the NDR and site access roundabouts within the A40 CHM Model.

4.2 A connection will also be provided to New Yatt Road which will link with the NDR from the north. However, it is assumed that south of the NDR (i.e. towards Witney) access from within the site will be downgraded to a pedestrian and cyclist only connection. On this basis a New Yatt Road connection should not be included in the A40 CHM model between the site and the existing northern edge of the Witney urban area.

2.2 WING comments on Developer's Proposals

WING's expectation for the design of the NDR is that it should be part of Witney's perimeter road system with road geometry comparable to other perimeter roads (such as Deer Park Road, Thorney Leys, Jubilee Way). We believe that these roads have two functions; to provide free-flowing routes that will facilitate easy access in and out of the estate and to provide routes that are suitable for through-traffic including HGVs.

The developer has failed to meet these requirements and has used the Transport User Hierarchy from Oxfordshire County Council's (OCCs) Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) dated July 2022 as justification to provide only for pedestrian and cycle use and to discourage use by cars and HGVs. WING contends that this is an incorrect application of the LTCP hierarchy, and that full provision must be made for the volume and type of traffic that will need to use the NDR.

WING also challenges the proposal to introduce Dutch roundabouts. This would be entirely different to other local roads and would cause confusion. We believe that this proposal must be overturned.

The roundabout access at the A4095 appears to be opposite Harvest Way, the entrance into Madely Park. This design would require traffic that wished to access the A4095 at the junction with Jubilee Way to negotiate two intersections. WING would request that OCC Highways Dept. conducts research to establish if this is the best

[3] Text in square brackets has been added for clarity.

solution for traffic to exit the development or should consideration be given to changing the route of the NDR such that it joins the A4095/Jubilee Way at one junction that is controlled by either traffic lights or roundabout.

The developer's proposals for the New Yatt Road indicate that vehicular access in a southerly direction towards Witney would stop at the NDR. If this proposal were to be allowed, WING would request that, at the start of construction, the New Yatt Road be permanently closed between a barrier just east of Merryfield Farm and a second barrier just south of Heath Holm, New Yatt. The section of the New Yatt Road from the barrier at Merryfield Farm to the barrier at Heath Holm New Yatt should be made into a non-vehicular, pedestrian/cycle/bridleway route.

This would mean that domestic, commercial, and agricultural vehicles from Merryfield Farm would exit the farm on the New Yatt Road in the direction of Woodgreen and would then travel on the Northern Distributor Road to reach either the A4095 or the B4022.

Should Merryfield Farm need agricultural access to fields on the pedestrian portion of the New Yatt Road they could be granted access through the barrier.

WING would also request that this section of the New Yatt Road is pedestrianised for safety reasons to prevent traffic from entering the pedestrianised area from New Yatt.

If Home Farm or Heath Holm or other farms in New Yatt needed agricultural access to fields on the pedestrian portion of the New Yatt Road, access could be provided through the second barrier just south of Heath Holm.

2.3 Management of HGVs

The developer proposes to restrict larger vehicles from using Bridge Street with the introduction of a 7.5t weight restriction on the only road in Witney that crosses the Windrush river. Together with the proposal not to construct the WEL, these proposals would inflict long diversion routes for HGVs to negotiate. These proposals directly conflict with current OCC policy for HGV movements and should be rejected.

A precedent has already been established for the introduction of weight restrictions on A-roads through towns in Oxfordshire. The outcome of an experimental TRO on the A361 through the centre of Burford to stop HGV movement through their town was that the Order to overcome Burford's problem merely moved the problem to other communities, often on much less appropriate roads. OCC Cabinet therefore rejected the scheme and have set up working groups to develop alternative regional solutions. The Windrush Valley HGV Steering Group is currently considering solutions for the area that includes Witney. The options under consideration would not align with the North Witney developer's approach.

Similarly, OCC proposals for the Bridge Street area of Witney assume the continued use of Bridge Street for HGV movements. OCC's preferred option for the centre of Witney also assumes that the WEL will be constructed and would be used by HGVs. Again, the developer's proposals conflict with these OCC recommendations.

There is an apparent contradiction in the developer's proposals for HGV use of the NDR. In Transport Assessment para 5.5.3, the developer proposes a 6.8m width for the NDR that "strikes a balance between ensuring efficient movement of buses whilst ensuring that road space is not increased to levels that would encourage car use". If cars are being discouraged, how difficult will it be for HGVs to use the NDR? And yet in para 5.8.1, the developer suggests that their proposal to introduce a weight limit on Bridge Street "would be facilitated by the introduction of the NDR". The developer also shows the NDR as part of their diversion route for HGVs that are blocked by his proposed weight limit.

WING's opinion remains that the NDR will be part of the perimeter road system around Witney and that it must be wide enough to cater for HGV use.

2.4 Conclusions

Regarding the NDR, WING would request that OCC conducts its own traffic and junction design option studies of all the main links on the NDR. The results of these studies would then be used as consultation documents to assess which option would be preferred by Witney residents and those residents in the surrounding villages and hamlets such as North Leigh, New Yatt, Ramsden, Poffley End and Delly End who will be adversely affected by construction traffic and additional traffic arising from the North Witney development.

Regarding HGV movement, WING objects strongly to the developer's proposals and considers these to be sufficient reason for rejection of outline planning permission.

Appendix 3

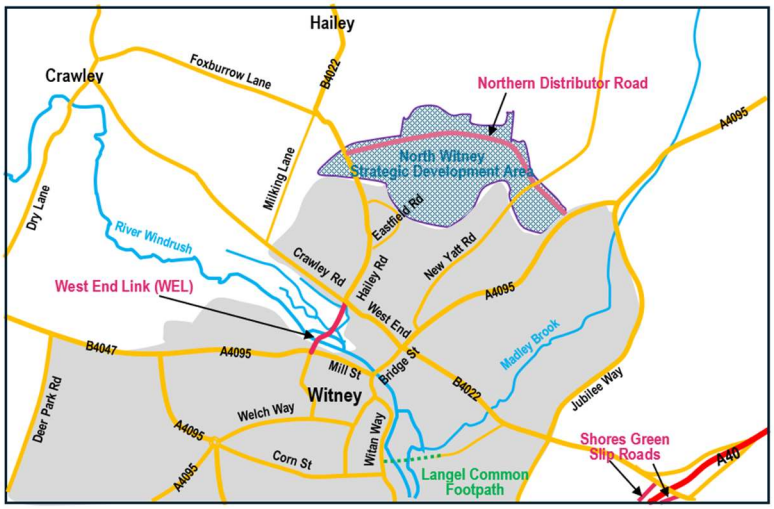
Flood Prevention Measures through the Windrush Valley

WING, Appendix 3 — Flood prevention measures through the Windrush valley

3.1 Overview of flood problems in Witney

Restrictions in the river channel at points through the town cause flooding during periods of severe weather. The key pinch point is the bridge in Bridge Street and the worst flooding occurs in the area immediately upstream of this bridge. The problem is worsened by another restriction downstream of Bridge Street where a public footpath crosses the river at Langel Common. Water is retained by the footpath embankment, flooding the section upstream, and hampering the flow through the bridge.

The Local Plan recognises the need to improve infrastructure in the town to deal with traffic congestion and air pollution in the Bridge Steet area of Witney. However, the Plan fails to include measures to reduce flood risk. It places a requirement on the developers of North Witney and East Witney Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) to fund construction of the West End Link, Northern Distributor Road, and Shores Green slip roads. These infrastructure improvements will reduce congestion and air pollution but the opportunity to address flooding was missed.



WING believes that the WEL could cater for this omission. An embankment/dam instead of a multi-span viaduct would offer flood control without increasing the overall cost.

Witney will continue to flood from time to time unless changes are made to management of the river flow.

3.2 Flooding responsibility

The Environment Agency carries prime responsibility for flood control in major rivers like the Windrush. Their agreement would be the starting point in any scheme for new flood controls. However, there is also a responsibility for management of local flooding at County, District and Town levels. No single body has overall control. WING will therefore have to consult with a series of organisations and decision makers. Our approach to this is detailed in the main section of this report.

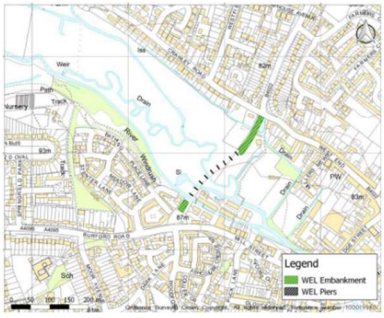
3.3 Reference documents

To produce this report, we have referred specifically to the following documents:

- Witney Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) produced for WODC by WHS Wallingford HydroSolutions Ltd, issued on 20 March 2015 Witney SFRA 2015
- WODC December 2020 Flood Report, issued January 2022 WODC Witney Flood Report 2020
- Crawley PC Report, issued in October 2023 Crawley Report on Witney Flood Control

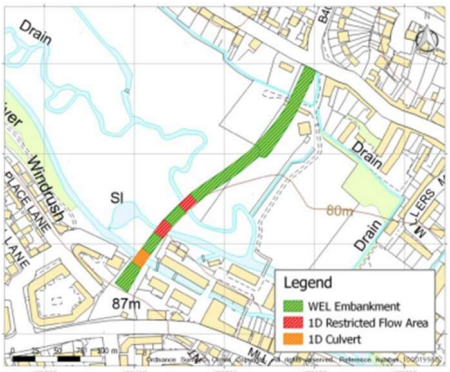
3.4 Construction of the WEL

The Environment Agency's first response to any application to construct a bridge over a river is normally to place a condition that the structure must not adversely affect the flow. For this reason, the first option that was considered in the Level 2 SFRA was for an open structure – a ten span viaduct with abutments at each end and nine piers – that stretched right across the flood plain. The hydraulic model analysis for this option showed that predicted flood levels for the 1 in 100-year flood were not altered if this form of construction was chosen.



The Level 2 SFRA assessed two other options. The first provided single span bridges over the three river channels in this section of the valley. Between these bridges the WEL would be constructed on an embankment. The hydraulic modelling demonstrated that this option would also satisfy the condition of avoiding interference with the flow in the river. The 1 in 100-year flood levels stayed the same.

The final option was for a full embankment with restricted openings that would match the size of the opening under the bridge in Bridge Street. There was an intention to keep the flow balanced – matching what came in with what could go out. However, the size of the restricted openings did not consider two additional flows into the area between the WEL and Bridge Street. These were the Hailey Road Drain and a ditch behind properties in Crawley Road that links to Hailey Road Drain. Because of these omissions, more water could flow into the risk area than could escape and the analysis showed that the area between the WEL and Bridge Street still flooded.



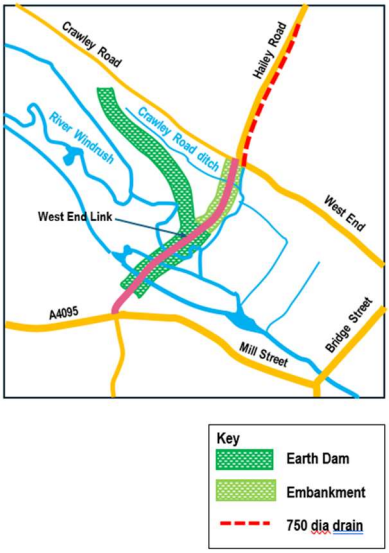
This last option demonstrated that water could be retained upstream of the WEL but identified a problem with the Crawley Road ditch. There is a low bank between this ditch and the flood plain. As the flood plain fills, water will quickly overtop this bank, flow into the ditch and on into the Hailey Road drain. This will add to the flood between the WEL and Bridge Street. In effect, the Crawley Road ditch acts as an outfall from the flood plain which limits the volume that can be retained upstream of the WEL.

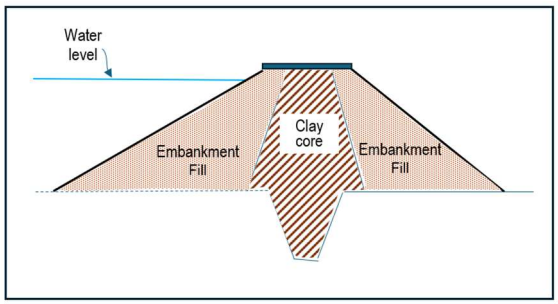
The Level 2 SFRA conclusions recognised that further options were possible and stated that "there would be merit in investigating the viability of other more engineered flood alleviation solutions". WING would strongly support this approach and suggest that an option would be to:

- Include the flow in the Hailey Road drain as part of the volume entering the flood risk area and restrict the openings for the Windrush river channels accordingly. The intended balance of total volume flowing in with the maximum volume that can pass out under the bridge in Bridge Street could then be achieved.

  and

- Overcome the problem with the Crawley Road ditch by changing the shape of the embankment/dam. The northern end of the dam could be brought round to higher ground to the west of the Crawley Road ditch. This would separate the ditch from the river and allow more water to be retained in the flood plain.





In the diagram above, the earth dam is shown as a dark green shaded strip. Typically, an earth dam is comprised of a clay central core supported by embankment fill. The clay prevents seepage through the dam and extends down in a trench to prevent seepage under the dam. It is possible that the material for construction could be sourced from the flood plain although a full ground investigation will be needed to confirm this. If suitable earthworks materials are found, there are significant benefits:

- Using site-won material avoids the need to import large tonnages of earth and clay in road vehicles. There would be no impact on local traffic and no dirt on Witney's roads.
- The cost of an embankment solution would be significantly less than the alternative highly engineered 10-span viaduct solution.
- The capacity of the flood plain is increased by the volume of excavated material used to build the dam.

3.5 Flood management strategy and plan

The strategy that runs through our flood control recommendations is to consider interventions in sequence. For each issue we question:

- First, is this flooding caused by another problem downstream and, if so, will downstream measures be sufficient to clear the issue?

- Second, what local measures could be taken to rectify the issue?

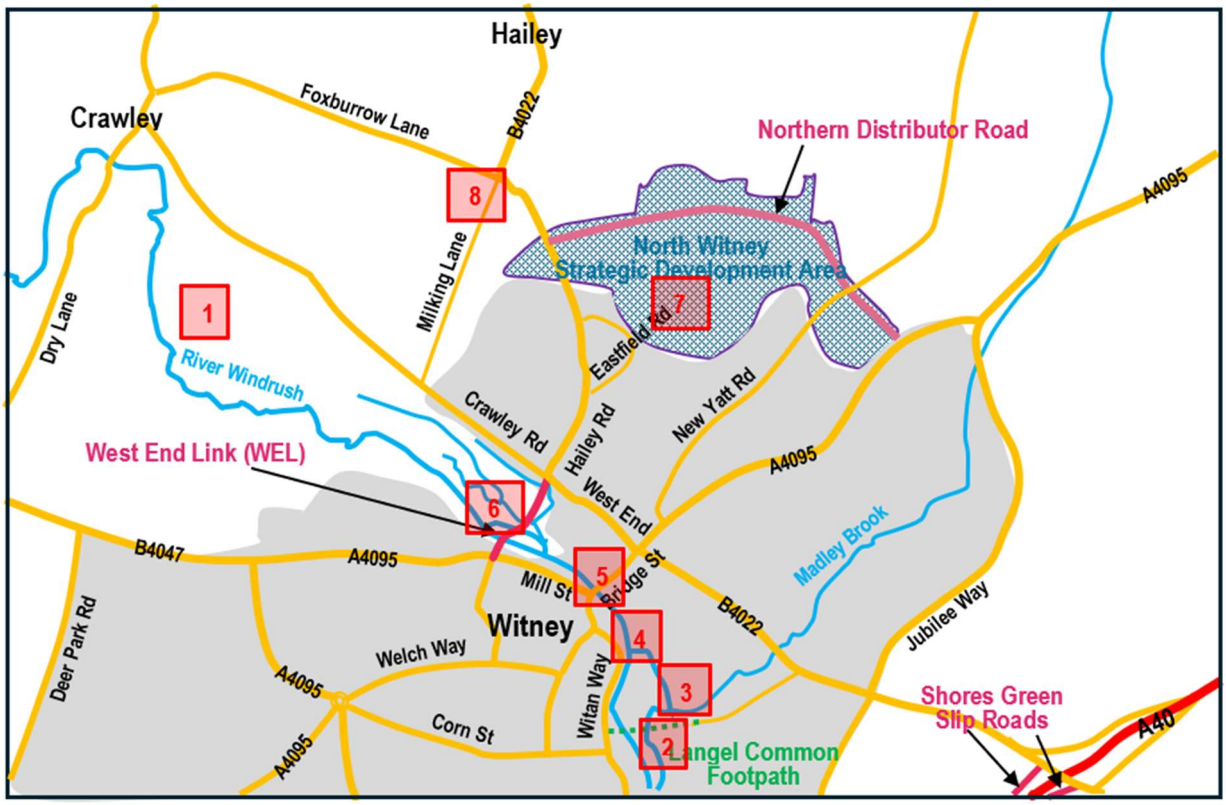
- Third, if steps one and two are not sufficient, what more could be done upstream to reduce the volume or the rate of flow so that flooding does not occur?

For every issue, our recommendations will begin at the downstream end and work progressively upstream.

Strategy for Flood Control centred on Bridge Street

To apply our flood management strategy for the Windrush Valley through Witney (where the key pinch point is the bridge in Bridge Street), our flood management plan considers:

- what interventions can be taken to clear blockages downstream of the bridge,
- what can be done at the bridge to maximise the flow capacity, and
- what interventions can be introduced upstream of the bridge to reduce the flow volume or to retain water that can subsequently be allowed to proceed at a reduced rate.



Intervention Number	Description	Outcome/Comment
Intervention affecting all the Windrush valley. (This description is taken from the WODC December 2020 Flood Report)		
1	Update the 2014 model with updated level information, especially downstream of the Aquarius Bridge through to the footpath at Langel Common. Include main tributaries through Witney.	WING understands that the Environment Agency is currently working on a complete review of its hydraulic model. The output from this would provide a better model on which to base flood predictions.

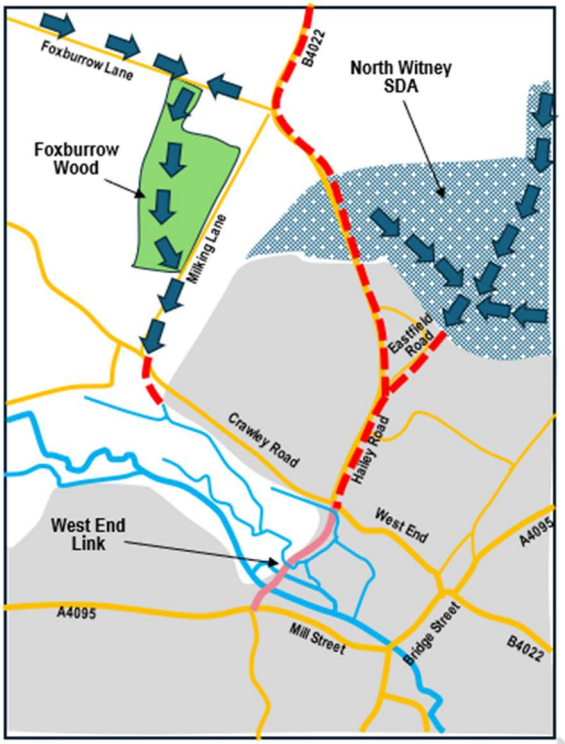
Intervention Number	Description	Outcome/Comment
Interventions downstream of Bridge Street (These descriptions are taken from the WODC December 2020 Flood Report)		
2	Look at improving flows through Langel Common footpath to ensure flood plain connectivity is improved during all flood events.	A combination of raising the footpath level (to ensure the footpath does not flood) and increasing the number and size of the culverts through the footpath embankment (to stop water from backing up towards Bridge Street) would resolve this problem.
3	Investigate if the perimeter ditch of the Aquarius site can be modified/ diverted to increase flow capacity.	
4	Investigate if the river could be modified to increase flow capacity during severe conditions, especially between New Bridge Street through to the footpath in Langel Common.	
Interventions at Bridge Street		
5	Dredge the river channel at Bridge Street bridge to maximise the flow capacity.	We understand that Witney Town Council has awarded a contract for this work to be done. Works are due to start in July 2024.
Interventions upstream of Bridge Street		
6	Retain Windrush flood water in the flood plain by constructing the WEL on an earth dam. Water flow through the dam can be controlled by restricted openings in the dam.	This intervention is intended to allow the central basin area within Bridge Street, Mill Street, West End Link and West End to remain free from flooding. The flows entering this basin area are: • River Windrush millstream through Woodford Mills (Wier levels in the mill should be set to allow the maximum flow without overflowing the channel.) • River Windrush channel at the low point in the flood plain (The river flow from the flood plain will be controlled by setting the width of the opening through the earth dam as defined by hydraulic modelling.) • Hailey Road drain (Measures to limit this flow are set out in interventions 7 and 8.) These combined entry-flows must not exceed the capacity that can exit the basin through Bridge Street bridge.

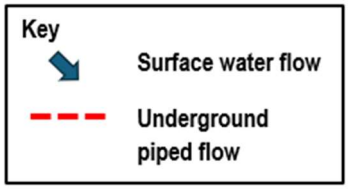
Intervention Number	Description	Outcome/Comment
7	Attenuation ponds in North Witney housing development.	Interventions 7 and 8 both deal with controlling the outfall from the Hailey Road drain into the flood risk basin above Bridge Street. Intervention measures are set out in the table below following the same strategy that we are using throughout this report.
8	Diversion of the surface water flow from Hailey village. Diverted route along Milking Lane and then in open streams and ponds through Foxburrow Wood to reach outfall into the Windrush in the flood plain upstream of the WEL.	

Strategy for Flood Control centred on Hailey Road Drain

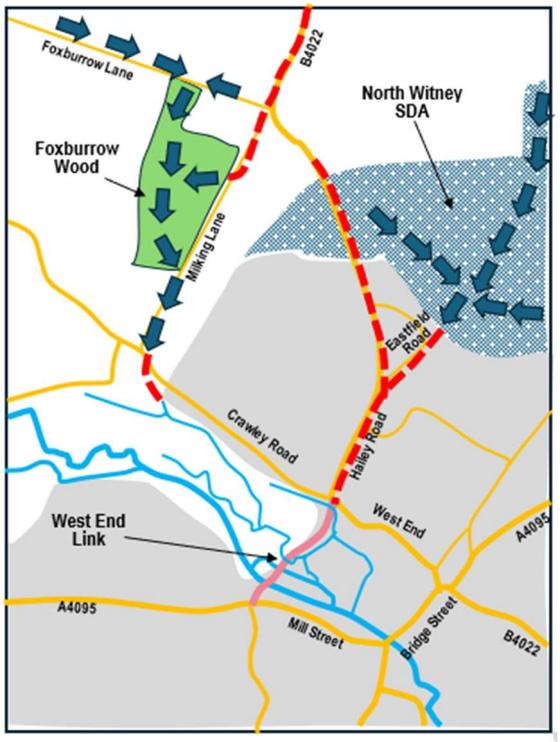
The 750mm diameter drain from the junction of Eastfield Road with Hailey Road down to the outfall into the basin area above Bridge Street is the focus for this table. Currently this length of piped drain becomes overloaded in periods of severe rainfall and overflows from the manholes onto the road surface. The outfall from the drain into the basin is also restricted because the basin is in flood. Consequently, more water backs up in the drain. The roundabout at the bottom of Hailey Road becomes flooded and impassable.

Current arrangement





Proposed arrangement



Intervention Number	Description	Outcome/Comment
Interventions downstream of Hailey Road Drain		
HR1	Clear the obstructions and flooding issues downstream of Hailey Road to ensure there is a clear outfall into the basin.	This target should be achieved through completion of the Bridge Street interventions 1-6 as listed in the table above.
Interventions at Hailey Road Drain		
HR2	Consider measures to increase the capacity of the drain.	A complete reconstruction of this drain would be expensive and extremely disruptive. WING's proposal is that this action could not be justified.
Interventions upstream of Hailey Road Drain		
HR3 (linked to Bridge St Intervention No.7)	Reduce the peak flow entering the Hailey Road drain from North Witney housing area by constructing attenuation ponds in the development area.	A series of small attenuation ponds is indicated in the developer's proposals for North Witney housing. Although these may be adequate to limit the flow rate from the housing development into the existing piped drainage system and prevent an increase in flow, these proposals will not overcome the current flooding problems in the Hailey Road drain. Providing fewer, larger ponds to increase capacity would reduce flood risks for Witney. The current drainage arrangement floods during severe weather events. An element of improvement is therefore essential.
HR4 (linked to Bridge St Intervention No.8)	Reduce the total flow through the Hailey Road drain.	This target can be achieved by diverting the surface water drainage from Hailey village and redirecting it along Milking Lane and through Foxburrow Wood. The current piped drain that runs along the B4022 from Hailey Village to the Hailey Road Roundabout would be divided into two sections. The first section, from Hailey as far as Foxburrow Lane, would continue into Milking Lane, through Foxburrow Wood and then to an outfall in the Windrush flood plain upstream of the WEL. Within the Wood, new streams and ponds can be created to slow the flow rate, increase biodiversity, and improve the water quality using reed beds at the entrance to each pond. This is a project that the wood owners (Wychwood Forest Trust) are keen to deliver. The second section of the drain would start downstream of Foxburrow Lane and join the Hailey Road Drain at the end of Eastfield Road. Although this intervention at first appears to be minor, it will take out a considerable proportion of the flow that currently uses the Hailey Road drain and is an important part of the overall strategy.

3.6 Concluding comments

WING believes that the approach outlined will improve, if not cure, the flooding problems in Witney. If concern remains, when the measures within Witney have been delivered, additional actions could be taken to reduce the risks still further (flood retention in areas upstream of Crawley and Minster Lovell).

Appendix 4

Community Infrastructure

4.1 Community Infrastructure - definition

Within this document, WING has chosen to use the term 'Community Infrastructure' to describe the elements within the planned development, in addition to housing, that support the day-to-day life of its residents. This covers a broad range of facilities such as a Community Centre, play areas, open spaces, parks and green spaces, cultural and sports facilities, allotments, healthcare facilities, shops and schools.

Community Infrastructure is not defined or identified as a discrete strategy, objective, or policy in any West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) or Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) plans or reports. The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is equally deficient.

The wider term 'Infrastructure' is generally accepted to include major structural elements such as roads, bridges, and flood defences. In the context of our reports on North Witney SDA proposals, WING has commented on the specific infrastructure elements of West End Link (WEL), Northern Distributor Road (NDR) and Flood Defence in separate appendices. These major infrastructure elements provide the framework around which Witney's communities can be built, but they also are part of the Community Infrastructure of North Witney. The WEL and NDR will facilitate access for North Witney residents from their homes to local facilities, work, and schools. They also form an essential element of the highways in the district that cater for visitors and through traffic. There is therefore and overlap between major infrastructure and community infrastructure needs. This issue is considered in more detail in section 4.4 below.

4.2 Combining North Witney and Hailey Parish's needs.

North Witney will become part of Hailey, with access to Hailey Village Hall, play park, recreation ground and pump track, the rugby club, school and public house, and other Hailey businesses.

The development straddles Hailey and Witney, in walking distance of both, and new residents will lean heavily on Witney town centre as a service centre. They will also make use of expanded Hailey facilities and Madely Park Hall and shops as additional local centres.

The Hailey-Neighbourhood-Plan (1) contains policies for the needs of the pre-existing parts of Hailey and for this anticipated development. WING parishes support Hailey and its Neighbourhood Plan and ask that the Plan is adhered to.

Comparison of the main aspects that are included in the Hailey Neighbourhood Plan with the aspects that are proposed by the North Witney Land Consortium show significant differences.

Hailey Neighbourhood Plan (HNP)	North Witney outline proposals
• Community centre • Sports centre • Playing pitch provision • Play area provision for children and adults • Allotments • Health Care facilities • Burial ground provision • Upgrade of Public Rights of Way connecting Hailey to the development • Dark Night skies	• A new 2 form entry (FE) Primary School (Use Class F1); • A Local Centre with up to 400 m^2 of community facilities, co-working, mobility hub and retail facilities (Use Class E and F2); • Maintained and enhanced access to the existing Public Rights of Way; • Provision of community allotments and Local Areas of Play; • New vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access to the Site from New Yatt Road and Hailey Road with connections to

	the existing Public Rights of Way Network; • Appropriate SuDS infrastructure basins and attenuation ponds; • Enhanced green infrastructure, including open green space and landscaping to assimilate the development within the wider landscape and create a soft edge to the development.

WING would welcome the opportunity to liaise with WODC Planning and the developer to refine the community infrastructure elements of any revised application that the developer is considering. However, the content of the initial submission for outline planning permission does not satisfy Hailey Parish Council and WING remains as an objector at this stage.

Without a community infrastructure policy, there is a risk that the developer will provide token levels of infrastructure that produce sterile, soulless, and characterless developments. As a consequence, residents of North Witney would have to travel into Witney to access any type of community facilities, contributing further to the existing traffic congestion in Witney.

The NPPF overall strategy is to support strong, vibrant, and healthy communities, by "… fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being". (2)

For a successful community to develop, residents need transport, proximity to places of work, and the provision of facilities for education, shopping, health care, sports and play areas, green spaces, and places to meet. Places for the community to connect and socialise need to be planned and provided.

4.3 Adequacy of elements within the proposed development.

4.3.1 The "Local Centre".

4.3.1.1 Developer's proposal (3).

The Local Centre that the developer proposes (para 3.14) would "include up to 400 m^2 of floorspace to contain a range of uses and services falling within Use Classes E and F2. A broad indication of potential uses for the Local Centre is as follows:

- Retail and Commercial floorspace
- Community Use, including potential space for healthcare uses
- Co-working hub
- Mobility hub
- Residential uses (located above the non-residential uses)."

It is considered reasonable to assume that 50% will come forward as Class E Retail Use" (4).

4.3.1.2 The "Community Centre" included in the HNP.

The HNP (1) identified the following facility needs:

Community Centre

- main activity and assembly space
- entrance foyer
- equipment and furniture store
- kitchen
- toilets, including facilities for disabled people
- changing provision
- cleaner's store
- an office
- changing or dressing rooms and showers
- licensed bar
- permanent stage
- meeting or club rooms available for hire
- grass pitch changing rooms
- fitness training room
- community health facilities
- daytime centre for the elderly
- shops / post office
- parking facilities.

HNP Policy CF1 States (pdf p39): "As there will be a new on-site primary school (2FE including nursery) on a 2.2ha site, it is recommended that school assembly / community centre/ sports halls, playing pitches, changing facilities and car parking facilities are shared wherever possible. The King's School should also be invited to share in this proposed integration of facilities."

However – this interpretation of shared amenities has been proven problematic in recent local developments of this scale, such as Windrush Place, and in historic developments that did not secure a community centre and only have a school, such as Cogges. Cogges must use the Blake School as a polling station as there is no other community building in the area.

A hireable indoor space for community activities is a necessity. It should have large and flexible hall space, the functionality to operate as a café and bar, a kitchen, and smaller break-out spaces.

It is essential to provide indoor places to visit for older members of the community, or people who feel isolated from those around them. Studies show that almost a fifth of the population often or always feel lonely.

Youth clubs, Scouting-style groups and other sports and activity clubs enable young people to make friends and learn new skills. They give the younger generation a healthy outlet for their energy, and encourage constructive (rather than anti-social) behaviours, thereby nurturing positive character attributes and skills.

Exercise, sports and dance classes enhance adults' wellbeing and cement community cohesion. Spaces for interest clubs and societies are also needed in a healthy community.

Family and friends can really connect with one another when taking part in an activity together. It's also a great way to meet other families within the community.

The community centre should be community-owned by the parish council, to ensure fair access and upkeep funded by the precept.

It should have green energy supply (heat pump plus solar), excellent insulation and natural light, electric car charging, ample cycle racks and excellent connectivity via safely lit paths to the rest of the development.

4.3.1.3 Comparison of proposals for Local or Community Centres.

The Outline Planning Application proposes to "co-locate" the "Local Centre" with the primary school. This aligns with HNP in terms of combining amenities where possible, but other developments (such as Windrush Place, Curbridge/Witney) have demonstrated problems when the school is the only venue available to a community – adult and senior citizen groups cannot hold daytime meetings and even activities outside of school time are at the mercy of school availability and the inflexibility of the space. WING stresses that the community centre must be stand-alone. An adequate facility needs to be bigger than 400 m^2.

The main problem here is that very few of the infrastructure proposals in the planning application are quantified – this will presumably come with the full application. What quantification there is leaves cause for concern; 400 m^2 has been identified as the area for the 'Local Centre' but half of this area will be allocated to retail outlets leaving a totally inadequate 200m^2 for all other uses.

To put this into context, the plans for a replacement Village Hall in Hailey (including changing facilities and a badminton-sized hall) require a building of 785 m^2. Equivalent recently constructed Community Centres in Charlbury and Burford are substantially larger than the Hailey proposal. Both towns have populations significantly smaller than the North Witney estimates.

The nearest Community Centre is in the middle of Madley Park on the east side of Woodstock Road, or in the centre of Witney, usually a car journey away for evening activities or for the less mobile.

4.3.2 School

WING welcomes the proposal for a 2-form entry school on the new development but also draws attention to HNP **Section 7** and **Policy ED1** (pdf p20)**,** in favour of expansion of Hailey School's facilities. Evidence from the 2024 school places allocations at the new Windrush Place school shows that children living on that estate did not get places in that school. It is likely that Hailey Primary will need to expand, and that OCC will require developer contributions to meet that need.

4.3.3 Healthcare

The HNP says in Policy CF6 (pdf p41):
"Development of North Witney community facilities should consider the inclusion of an NHS surgery/ Health Centre, preferably integrated into the Community Centre."

However, with Witney's wider expansion and the closure of Deer Park Medical Centre adding to NHS GP pressure, integration may no longer be appropriate in 2024. It is more likely that a separate, stand-alone healthcare facility will be needed following the example of the combined GP Surgery and Pharmacy that has been built as part of a recent development in Long Hanborough.

"Healthcare uses" tagged on to a busy community centre will not meet the area's existing needs together with those the new development brings; neither could the commercial proportion of the developer's proposed "local centre" accommodate an adequate healthcare facility. Witney's three GP surgeries already serve 40k residents made up from Witney's residents and many from surrounding villages. This development, coupled with existing demand, will support its own GP surgery. WING holds the position that a completely new surgery must be built.

4.3.4 Other Community Infrastructure needs.

The HNP makes a case for a series of other community infrastructure elements that Hailey Parish would like to include in the North Witney development.

- Playing pitches
- Play area provision
- Allotment provision
- Burial ground provision
- Dark night skies

The application mentions some of these but does not quantify. WING would seek to discuss the provision of these elements as part of our liaison with WODC Planning and the developer.

4.4 Overlap between major infrastructure and community infrastructure needs.

In the opening section of this appendix, the potential for overlap was outlined. To explain this more fully, it is easiest to consider two specific examples:

- The NDR is an essential element of the major infrastructure for highways that is to be provided as part of North Witney SDA. It is also part of the highway network within the development making it a community infrastructure element as well. The NDR will therefore have to cater for a high volume of traffic including a proportion of HGVs as well as providing the access routes in and out of the development for residents. To meet both requirements, the NDR cannot simply be an estate road inside a housing development. It must be part of the perimeter road system around Witney with comparable specification to existing perimeter roads such as Jubilee Way and Deer Park Road. It cannot have any on-street parking or properties that face onto the road. Access to all properties must be from the smaller roads within the development.

- The provision of attenuation ponds forming part of the flood control system is outlined in Appendix 3. As such they are major infrastructure elements, but they will be sited within the development and close to houses and play areas where they will be seen as community infrastructure elements. Many local residents, attending presentations by the developer to explain the likely content of the development, raised concerns about the safety of these ponds. To address these concerns the ponds must be fenced off to restrict access by children.

An attenuation pond in a recently constructed housing development near the Long Hanborough station provides a good example.

This pond is planted as a reed bed and serves two functions – cleaning water that flows through it, and retaining a volume of water during flood conditions that will subsequently flow more slowly into the river.

These overlaps, and others that will arise, must be considered to find solutions that match major and community infrastructure needs. In this report, WING has chosen to deal with the major infrastructure elements in Appendices 1-3 and to use Appendix 4 to deal with elements that clearly form part of community infrastructure. But care will be needed to ensure that potential overlaps are not overlooked.

4.5 Conclusions

It is apparent from the outline planning application that the developer has placed significant reliance on existing facilities in Witney. However, as far back as 2016, in the Local Plan 2031 [7] WODC were warning that Witney services and facilities were under increasing pressure. Since then, Burford Road (260 houses), Downs Road (257 houses), West Witney (1,000 houses) have been or are close to completion with token levels of infrastructure, thus exacerbating the situation.

WING's recommendations in this report aim to alleviate many of the problems associated with the planning application with the overall aim of providing facilities to enable a stand-alone, strong, vibrant, and healthy community to develop.

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Appendix 5

Stakeholder Liaison

WING, Appendix 5 Challenges and Interventions

Stakeholder Communication Strategy

Table 1 – Challenges with interventions that identify Stakeholders.

Challenge	Goal of Intervention	Potential Interventions	Reference	Stakeholders
Construction of West End Link (WEL)	WEL to be a major part of the road layout options for Witney	Consider the shortlist of layout options produced by OCC Project Planning Team and confirm support for their preferred option.	WEL01	OCC WODC WTC
	Choose the best form of construction for the WEL	Review the case for and against a viaduct structure	WEL02	OCC EA
		Review the case for and against an earth dam	WEL03	OCC EA WOMAFG
	Maximise the use of the WEL to add to community infrastructure	Provision of pedestrian routes and cycle tracks that will contribute to active living targets in the Local Plan.	WEL04	OCC WODC
		Improvement in bus services using bus lanes to encourage greater use of public transport.	WEL05	OCC WODC
		Benefits in reduction of traffic congestion and air pollution.	WEL06	OCC WODC
		Consider the potential for tree and shrub planting within Witney.	WEL07	WODC WTC
	WEL must form part of the Witney Perimeter Road system	Reinforce the need to complete the perimeter roads around Witney (WEL, NDR and Shores Green slip-roads are the only outstanding elements)	WEL08	OCC WODC

Challenge	Goal of Intervention	Potential Interventions	Reference	Stakeholders
Construction of Northern Distributor Road (NDR)	Construct the NDR to complete the planned perimeter roads around Witney	Form of construction and layout of NDR to align with other distributor roads (Thorney Leys, Deer Park Rd and Jubilee Way)	NDR01	OCC WODC
		Ensure access between neighbouring communities and Witney town centre is maintained	NDR02	OCC WODC
		Urge OCC to complete options studies for • NDR alignment and road geometry • Junction design at both ends of the NDR	NDR03	OCC
Flood Prevention Measures through the Windrush Valley	A fully comprehensive hydraulic model on which to base flood predictions is required	Update 2014 Hydraulic flood model ensuring all main tributaries through Witney are included.	FLD01	EA OCC WODC
	Reduce flood risk Downstream Bridge street	Look at improving flows through Langel Common footpath to ensure flood plain connectivity is improved during all flood events.	FLD02	EA WODC OCC
		Investigate if the perimeter ditch of the Aquarius site can be modified/ diverted to increase flow capacity.	FLD03	EA OCC WODC
		Investigate if the river could be modified to increase flow capacity during severe conditions, especially between New Bridge Street through to the footpath in Langel Common.	FLD04	EA OCC WODC

Challenge	Goal of Intervention	Potential Interventions	Reference	Stakeholders
		Dredge the river channel at Bridge Street bridge to maximise the flow capacity.	FLD05	WODC EA
	Reduce flood risk Upstream Bridge Street	Retain Windrush flood water in the flood plain by constructing the WEL on an earth dam.	FLD06	OCC WODC EA
		Divert surface water flow from Hailey village via Milking Lane and then in open streams and ponds through Foxburrow Wood to reach outfall into the Windrush in the flood plain upstream of the WEL.	FLD07	EA WODC OCC WFT
		Ensure the inclusion of attenuation ponds in North Witney housing development.	FLD08	WODC OCC EA
Community Infrastructure provided from the North Witney Housing Scheme	Ensure that community infrastructure proposed in the North Witney housing development fully meets the needs of the community	Ensure there are suitable community facilities where people can meet up and socialise	COM01	WODC OCC
		Ensure there are adequate sports pitches and supporting changing facilities	COM02	WODC OCC
		Investigate the suitability for locating proper burial grounds	COM03	WODC OCC

Table 2- Stakeholders

Stakeholder Acronym	Stakeholder Full title
EA	Environment Agency
OCC	Oxfordshire County Council
WFT	Wychwood Forest Trust
WODC	West Oxfordshire District Council
WOMAFG	West Oxfordshire Multi Agency Flood Group
WTC	Witney Town Council