

CHALGROVE AIRFIELD OFF SITE INFRASTRUCTURE

CUXHAM

This note has been prepared by Carter Jonas on behalf of Homes England following the meeting with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and residents of Cuxham village held on 9 August 2018. The meeting involved a short introductory presentation by New Masterplanning, a walkover of possible route alignments and a subsequent workshop and discussion regarding each of the route options. The meeting was attended by Jason Sherwood (JS), Michael Deadman (MD) and Harry Davis (HD) (all OCC), Andy Ward (AW) and Hans van Bommel (HvB) (both New Masterplanning), Chris Carter (CC) and Carl Slater (CS) (both AECOM), Lindsey Richards (LR) and Gareth Adam (GA) (both Homes England) and Max Goode (MG) (Carter Jonas). A total of 14 Cuxham residents attended the workshop.

The meeting was held in order to discuss the proposed infrastructure improvements that may be required were the strategic residential development at Chalgrove Airfield to be delivered by Homes England. This meeting focussed on the route alignment options to provide mitigation to the settlement of Cuxham and in particular alleviate any potential impacts as a result of the increased volume of traffic on the B480 through the centre of the village. Four route options, and variations thereof, were discussed at the workshop, and during the course of the day, two of these were discounted from further technical work and further options were discussed.

Due to the nature of the route alignment walkover, it was not possible to pick up all individual points raised during the walkover, and instead a general overview of the events of this part of the meeting has been provided.

Presentation

Ian Goldsmith (IG) (Chair of Cuxham with Easington Parish Meeting) introduced the meeting and thanked those for attending. IG stated that the purpose of the meeting was to ensure that the mitigation proposed helped Cuxham in the future, and whilst the residents were interested in helping provide the best mitigation for Cuxham, there remained an in principle objection to the proposed strategic development at Chalgrove Airfield. IG stated that the outcomes of the meeting would be presented to the full parish following the meeting. AW presented the four route alignment options that were to be walked as part of the meeting:

- Yellow Option – South gyratory;
- Red Option – Improvements to village centre;
- Green Option (Previously presented Edge Road) – North Route A – South of hill; and
- Orange Option (Previously suggested by Village residents) – North Route B – North of hill.

[The four route alignment options outlined above are shown on the enclosed plan (ref: 140_DI_08.0). In addition, several variations of these routes were discussed as part of the workshop and these are shown on the enclosed plan (ref: 140_DA_05.1)]

AW explained that the route options were at an early stage of development and had not been studied in depth and for that reason had not been shared in advance of the workshop. JS explained that whilst OCC were in attendance they would not provide definitive positions on route options and were there to provide advice and support to all parties. AW then provided context to Cuxham village, outlining the constraints to development in the area such as the Cuxham Conservation Area, the numerous listed buildings within the village, flood zone and how the route alignments proposed had avoided these constraints where possible.

Route Walkthrough

South Gyratory – Yellow Route

AW explained that this option had been a suggestion from a resident of Cuxham at the recent public consultation event for the proposed strategic development at Chalgrove Airfield. After a short discussion amongst the attendees about safety and practicality it was agreed that this option would be discounted. OCC agreed with this position.

Improvements to Village Centre – Red Route

CC explained that the mitigation through the village centre would primarily involve some traffic management mitigation and where possible, road widening and footpath creation. Some queries were raised regarding HGV movements and farm vehicle movements and it was confirmed that this would be confirmed and designed into the proposals. Detailed discussion took place around many of the potential measures along the route. In summary, a level of footway provision would be possible towards the edges of the village, but physical constraints meant that it would not be possible to provide increased footway in the centre of the village.

North Route A – South of Hill – Green Route

The attendees walked to the village green at the west of the village and AW explained North Route A. It was explained that this route alignment was a variation of the route which was presented at the previous meeting with residents. It was noted that the residents had raised significant concerns with the “green option”, primarily due to the proximity of the route to the rear of properties. IG asked whether compulsory purchase orders (CPO) were an option to deliver this route alignment. LR explained that this was a possibility on any of the route alignment options and once an alignment was finalised, Homes England would begin private negotiations with the relevant landowners, and that if a private agreement could not be reached Homes England would use their CPO powers to acquire land. At this stage, a number of attendees walked to the approximate proposed route alignment so that distances could be demonstrated from the remaining attendees. Following this, all the attendees congregated on the approximate route alignment behind the house furthest west. AW explained that this was where the route alignment would meet the existing B480 alignment and confirmed that this location was within the Cuxham Conservation Area and an area of flood risk and as a result a raised section of road would be provided. Following concern raised about the proximity to the existing houses, the attendees continued to walk north along a track to the edge of the Conservation Area which was identified by a small area of woodland. After discussion about the merits of moving the route alignment to this area (outside the Conservation Area and behind the natural screening of the woodland) it was agreed that this would be more acceptable to the residents of Cuxham, and they would like to see any ‘edge road’ option re-join the existing B480 alignment in this general location.

The attendees then walked the general route alignment eastwards across the field and up the hill to the north of the village. At the eastern end of the route, AW/CS explained that some element of ‘cutting’ into the hill would be required as part of the route alignment and HD agreed and explained that the gradient would need to be established. JS commented that his initial view was that the contours of this element of the alignments would be unsuitable but further work should be undertaken to establish the gradients which could be achieved. CS/CC will undertake an analysis of the gradients which could be achieved and discuss with OCC. It was noted that the Pink variation of the route would address a significant number of the residents’ concerns regarding proximity to the village. It was also considered by AECOM and OCC that the route alignment would remain an attractive alternative to the existing B480 and would therefore achieve the benefit of diverting traffic away from the village.

Given concerns with the gradients on the Pink route, a Blue option was considered which would avoid the gradient issues, skirt contours on the southern slope of the hill, and take traffic further from the existing gardens than the previously proposed Green route. This did not fully address residents’ concerns regarding proximity of the road to gardens. A further “tangerine” option was suggested by some residents, which moved the tie-in with the B480 further to the east and passed to the rear of the Sewage Treatment Works.

North Route B – North of Hill – Orange Route

Due to the distances involved, the full route of the orange alignment option was not walked in its entirety, but the alignment shared with the green route were discussed as part of the discussion of the green route. As with the green route the alignments at either end of the proposals required further work, with specific regard at the western end re-joining the B480 behind the woodland, and at the eastern end following further work to establish the gradients of the hill. AECOM and OCC both shared concerns regarding the effectiveness of this route in taking traffic away from the village as it was significantly longer and less direct than the B480 route.

Workshop

IG thanked all for undertaking the walkover and an overview was presented by AW. AW explained that there appeared to be logic at the western extent of the route options in realigning to the north of the conservation area behind the woodland and CS agreed that there benefits to this approach. It was confirmed that the red route mitigation and the yellow route alignment had been discounted and the remaining time in the workshop would be working up options similar to the green and orange routes.

CS explained that feasibility analysis of the pink route would be required due to the gradients involved, and a cost benefit analysis of the two routes (pink and blue) would be undertaken and this would be undertaken by costing out the 'ideal' realistic scenario. IG requested that once a decision was made, the decision making assessment be shared with the residents of Cuxham. AW explained that the views to and from the road are key to the success to the route alignment and that making the route look natural through the planting of trees and hedges would help screen the route from the existing village and beyond.

HD advised that either route alignment to the north of the village would likely have a speed restriction of 40mph. CS advised that further mitigation could be provided when building the road to ensure that any potential impacts were minimised further, such as the use of 'whisper asphalt' and providing a lowered surface.

AW explained that although there were some positives with the Pink and Blue routes, further investigative work would need to be undertaken to ensure that the gradient would be acceptable at the eastern point of the route option. JS advised that upon reviewing the gradients on a plan, they may not be as severe as initially thought, but this should be confirmed. CC advised that he considered the orange route to be too long for use as a successful 'edge road' and as a result, it would not sufficiently encourage road users over the existing route through Cuxham. IG stated that he understood the reasoning and requested that some brief points be provided in order to support communicating this to the village.

It was decided that further route options would be explored and discussed in a follow-up workshop to be arranged by Homes England. In advance of the next workshop, sections and visuals would be prepared which would demonstrate the relationship between the route options and the existing settlement. IG asked if a route directly from Chalgrove to the M40 had been examined by Homes England, and CC confirmed that it had, and drew the potential route on a plan. CC explained, supported by OCC, that providing such a route would be likely to draw additional traffic into and through the area and would be counter-productive to the aim of reducing traffic in Cuxham. JS confirmed that a junction on the M40 at that location would not be supported by OCC and that the delays associated with any works to the M40 would not be acceptable to any party. An alternative was suggested by residents asking if an option could be explored that linked Chalgrove directly with the A40 through to the M40 and IG asked what the justification was for discounting this. CC explained that it was likely that there would be a greater risk of traffic through the village as a result and IG asked that some points were provided on this to communicate the thought process to residents.

Anne Voss (AV) (Cuxham resident) advised that the most northerly route (orange route) would be supported by the village and the other alignment options would not. Rob Voss (RV) (Cuxham resident) suggested that a list of pro's and con's be provided for each route alignment for the Parish meeting and Clive Sherwood (CSh) (Cuxham resident) requested that each of the routes be measured to establish the length of each. Miles Balfour (MB) requested that as part of the assessment into each option, the cost to deliver each was provided.

CC confirmed that as part of the due diligence of each route alignment option, appropriate environmental studies would be undertaken, including archaeology and confirmed that as part of the strategic development at Chalgrove, an improved public transport offering would be provided as part of the proposals and AW stated that was an important element as current trends indicate that private car uses, particularly for the 18-34 age group is decreasing. CC set out the proposed public transport offer should Chalgrove come forward for residential development and a question was asked whether there would be potential to link this offering to Junction 6 of the M40.

Blair MacDonald (BM) (Cuxham Resident) requested clarification over the landscaping mitigation features, including the 'landscape bund'. CS made clear that landscape mitigation features had not been finalised and that the 'landscape bund' was just an example of potential mitigation, but it was agreed that examples of 'landscaping bunds' as part of highway schemes would be provided by CS in advance of the next workshop. Following discussion over other successful highways works, and road realignments, it was agreed that as part of the next workshop there may be possibility to show examples of these works. These would be identified in advance as a 'case study' example of noise impacts and the mitigation provided. JS confirmed that as part of the planning application, noise surveys would be required providing a baseline position and the mitigation proposed.

Meeting closed.

Actions from Meeting

- AECOM to undertake an analysis of the gradients which could be achieved on the eastern part of the alignment options;
- AECOM to prepare a 'cost/benefit' analysis of the Pink and Blue routes;
- AECOM to provide a summary of reasons for Orange route not being suitable;
- Homes England to arrange second workshop;
- New Masterplanning to prepare visuals and sections of routes in advance of the next workshop;
- AECOM to provide a summary of reasons for direct link to M40 not being progressed;
- AECOM to share the costs of each alignment option in the next workshop;
- AECOM to provide examples of highways landscaping bunds in advance of the next workshop;
- AECOM to identify similar noise mitigation strategies for highways works and share in advance of the next workshop.