

OXFORD TO CAMBRIDGE EXPRESSWAY – RIGHTS OF WAY STANDARDS

The council seeks to agree early standards with Highways England to achieve these project objectives for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and carriage drivers on the rights of way network and discuss strategic network improvements. We would also like to confirm legal realignments will be covered within powers granted to build the Expressway.

Standards: the applicant should to provide segregated bridge or underpass crossings for all public rights of way. Nevertheless, it is appreciated some rights of way run parallel or very close and amalgamating two into one is accepted, not least due to landscape and visual impacts of multiple bridges. Path diversions onto roadside verges should be the exception, unless it is an obvious solution. In these circumstances we would expect adoptable standard footway / cycleway surfaces to be installed in the verge, segregated as far as possible from vehicular traffic, for the public to make their onward connections.

We would expect rights of way crossings to be accessible for users with off-road push chairs, mobility scooters and wheelchairs. Nevertheless, it is appreciated 'DDA' standard (Equality Act 2010) bridges have long ramps which could have a detrimental visual impacts on the rural landscape urban areas, so the council has in the past (e.g. HS2) suggested 1:12 ramps. In addition, standards should include:

- 1) stiles to be replaced with British Standard (BS 5709: 2018) gates
- 2) new gates only where agricultural stock control is required;
- 3) bitumen surfaces across bridges and approach ramps; and
- 4) shared space between users and agricultural traffic across bridge space;

For open access and registered common land, where the Expressway consumes or severs the land, we would expect greater than like-for-like replacement.

Strategic network improvements: the council would also seek Highways England to undertake an assessment of existing non-motorised routes and seek potential strategic improvements to the walking, cycling, horse riding and carriage driving network. This would include upgrading the status of footpaths to bridleways or restricted byways where gaps in the network can be achieved by compulsory purchase of land along the road corridor or close by. For example, bridleways and restricted byways provide multi-user links and could connect alongside or close to the Expressway corridor connecting between settlements and the train stations of East West Rail within attractive, traffic-free environments. An existing example is the Waddesdon Greenway between Aylesbury Vale Parkway train station and Waddesdon village. There are proposals to extend this route to Calvert, Claydon House and Steeple Claydon where an East West Rail station is proposed. A cycleway could, for example, connect between all proposed East West Rail stations. Sustrans promote the National Cycle Network Route 51 within the Expressway corridor, e.g. Bicester - Steeple Claydon - Winslow - Milton Keynes - Cambridge and the Expressway project could compliment that network with additional routes or by providing network surface upgrades.

Legal realignments

Any diversion of a public right of way requires a legal process to delete one right and create a new one, usually under Section 119 Highways Act 1980 or Section 257 TCPA 1990. The council would seek any path realignment to be achieved through powers granted to construct the Expressway, involving red lines that include all land over which rights of way need to be diverted. This might include a much wider area than the corridor itself to achieve wider improvements to upgrade footpaths to bridleways, or desire lines from field boundaries that might be several hundred metres away from the road itself towards new bridges. Moreover, these powers can also be used to divert routes across new bridges. The council would not expect to be burdened with processing diversions or upgrades using power granted under Highways Act 1980 or TCPA Act 1990.