

**THE OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (DIDCOT GARDEN TOWN
HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE – A4130 IMPROVEMENT (MILTON GATE
TO COLLETT ROUNDABOUT), A4197 DIDCOT TO CULHAM LINK ROAD,
AND A415 CLIFTON HAMPDEN BYPASS) COMPULSORY PURCHASE
ORDER 2022**

**THE OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (DIDCOT TO CULHAM THAMES
BRIDGE) SCHEME 2022**

**THE OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (DIDCOT GARDEN TOWN
HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE – A4130 IMPROVEMENT (MILTON GATE
TO COLLETT ROUNDABOUT), A4197 DIDCOT TO CULHAM LINK ROAD,
AND A415 CLIFTON HAMPDEN BYPASS) (SIDE ROADS) ORDER 2022**

AND

**THE CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION BY OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY
COUNCIL FOR THE DUALLING OF THE A4130 CARRIAGEWAY,
CONSTRUCTION OF THE DIDCOT SCIENCE BRIDGE, ROAD BRIDGE
OVER THE APPLEFORD RAILWAY SIDINGS AND ROAD BRIDGE OVER
THE RIVER THAMES, AND ASSOCIATED WORKS BETWEEN THE A34
MILTON INTERCHANGE AND THE B4015 NORTH OF CLIFTON HAMPDEN,
OXFORDSHIRE (APPLICATION NO: R3.0138/21)**

PLANNING INSPECTORATE REFERENCE:

APP/U3100/V/23/3326625 and NATTRAN/SE/HAO/286 (DPI/U3100/23/12)

**Proof of evidence of
CHRIS LANDSBURGH
(Climate Change)**

1 INTRODUCTION AND QUALIFICATIONS

- 1.1 I, Chris Landsburgh, am a Technical Director within the Climate and ESG Practice at AECOM. I joined in 2021 as a Chartered Environmentalist and Fellow of IEMA, am a Chartered Engineer with the ICE, and have over 10 years' experience in environmental assessment and management of Infrastructure projects.
- 1.2 I have a Masters (MSc Eng) in Civil Engineering and a Bachelors Degree (BSc Hons) in Environmental Management and Planning, and I am currently fulfilling a Doctorate. I refer to my CV for further information [Appendix CL2.1].
- 1.3 I joined AECOM following the submission of the Planning Application, and following my review of the documents, I have concluded that the assessment presented therein has been conducted in accordance with the requirements of relevant policy and guidance at the time of the assessment. Where new policy and guidance requirements may have since emerged, I have updated the position in this proof of evidence.

Scope of Evidence

- 1.4 This proof of evidence has been prepared for the purposes of outlining the Climate Change impacts and mitigation in place relating to:
- The called-in Planning Application by Oxfordshire County Council for the dualling of the A4130 carriageway, construction of the Didcot Science Bridge, road bridge over the Appleford Railway Sidings and road bridge over the River Thames, and associated works between the A34 Milton Interchange and the B4015 north of Clifton Hampden, Oxfordshire (Application No: R3.0138/21) (the **Planning Application**);
 - The Oxfordshire County Council (Didcot Garden Town Highways Infrastructure – A4130 Improvement (Milton to Collett Roundabout), A4197 Didcot to Culham Link Road, and A415 Clifton Hampden Bypass) Compulsory Purchase Order 2022 (the **CPO**);
 - The Oxfordshire County Council (Didcot to Culham Thames Bridge) Scheme 2022 (the **Bridge Scheme**); and
 - The Oxfordshire County Council (Didcot Garden Town Highways Infrastructure– A4130 Improvement (Milton to Collett Roundabout), A4197 Didcot to Culham Link Road, and A415 Clifton Hampden Bypass) (Side Roads) Order 2022 (the **SRO**) (the CPO, Bridge Scheme and SRO taken together are referred to as the **Orders**).
- 1.5 The Planning Application was submitted, and the Orders were made to facilitate the delivery of the Access to Didcot Garden Town Highway Improvements (the **Scheme**), which consists of a highway scheme approximately 11km in length, including converting 1.8km of single carriageway to dual carriageway, 6.8km of new single carriageway and approximately 20km of new and/or improved off-carriageway cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. Connections into the existing public rights of way network will also be provided. The Scheme also includes three over bridges.
- 1.6 The Orders were made by Oxfordshire County Council as Acquiring Authority (the **Acquiring Authority**) on 21 December 2022 and submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport on 26 January 2023.
- 1.7 The Planning Application was submitted by Oxfordshire County Council in its capacity as Applicant (the **Applicant**) on 4 October 2021 and called in by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for his determination on 25 July 2023.

- 1.8 The Planning Application and the Orders are now due to be considered by an Inspector, Lesley Coffey, at conjoined Public Inquiries scheduled to open on 20 February 2024. This proof of evidence has been prepared in connection with those Inquiries.
- 1.9 The purpose of my evidence is to explain the climate impact assessments of the Scheme that have been undertaken and to respond to concerns raised about the climate impacts of the Scheme. In the Inspector's note dated 13 November 2023, issued after the second Pre-Inquiry Meeting (**PIM**) states at paragraph 16(b) that the following matter was identified as being potentially relevant: "*The effect of the proposal's carbon impact and contribution to climate change*". This proof of evidence addresses that issue.
- 1.10 My proof of evidence should be read in conjunction with other separate but interrelated proofs of evidence submitted on behalf of the Applicant and Acquiring Authority, including:
- Strategic Need and Benefits, Highway Issues, Scheme Selection and Alternatives, prepared by Aron Wisdom of Oxfordshire County Council;
 - Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, prepared by John Disley of Oxfordshire County Council;
 - Technical Traffic and Highways Engineering – A4130 Widening and Didcot Science Bridge, prepared by Andrew Blanchard of AECOM;
 - Technical Traffic and Highways Engineering - Culham River Crossing and Clifton Hampden Bypass, prepared by Karl Chan of AECOM;
 - Traffic Modelling, prepared by Claudia Currie of AtkinsRéalis;
 - Environmental Impact Assessment, prepared by Alex Maddox of AECOM;
 - Noise and Vibration, prepared by Andrew Pagett of AECOM;
 - Air Quality, prepared by Anna Savage of AECOM;
 - Landscape and Visual Impact, prepared by Jane Ash of AECOM;
 - Planning, prepared by Bernard Greep of Stantec;
 - Negotiations and Acquisition prepared by Steven Moon of Gateley Hamer; and
 - Compulsory Purchase Justification prepared by Timothy Mann of Oxfordshire County Council.
- 1.11 I confirm that the evidence that I have prepared concerning the Inquiries is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institutions, the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), and I can confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

2 CLIMATE CHANGE ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Scheme

- 2.1 Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are a mandatory requirement for certain developments in the United Kingdom. This requirement stems from the European Council Directive on Environmental Assessment (EC Directive 85/337/EEC), originally adopted in 1985, subsequently amended, and integrated into UK law.
- 2.2 The EIA for this Scheme has been undertaken in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the 'EIA Regulations'). The EIA undertaken for the Scheme has followed the over-arching EIA process of screening, scoping, and an iterative design and assessment. These steps are explained within Mr Maddox's Proof of Evidence.
- 2.3 The scope of an EIA is comprehensive and includes a robust assessment of the potential environmental impacts of a project. This includes evaluating the project's contribution to Climate Change and developing strategies for both mitigation and adaptation.
- 2.4 The legal framework for EIAs in the UK is further reinforced by the Climate Change Act 2008, amended by subsequent legislation, which sets legally binding emissions reduction targets, including achieving 'net zero' emissions by 2050.
- 2.5 The **Environmental Statement** for the Scheme, prepared under these regulations, includes a detailed chapter on climate impacts, assessing the Scheme's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions during construction and operational phases and its resilience to Climate Change. Supporting this, the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) LA114 [Appendix CL2.6] provides guidelines for assessing the vulnerability of infrastructure projects to Climate Change, focusing on the effects of greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing resilience, and is recognised nationally as best practice.

Legislative & Policy Framework

- 2.6 The greenhouse gas (**GHG**) assessment presented in Chapter 15, Climate [CD A.15], was undertaken in line with the following policy and guidance:
 - Highways England DMRB Guidance LA 114: Climate for assessing climate in sustainability and environmental appraisal [Appendix CL2.5];
 - European Commission Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Environmental Impact Assessment [Appendix CL2.7];
 - European Commission Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report;
 - European Commission Guidance for the Calculation of Land Carbon Stocks provides a methodology for calculating carbon stocks from land use [Appendix CL2.8];
 - The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) provides GHG emission factors for UK-based organisations¹ [Appendix CL2.9];
 - The British Standards Institution (BSI) BS EN ISO 14064-1:2019 and 14064-2:2019 specifications for organisational-level and project-level guidance for the quantification and reporting of GHG emissions and removals;

¹ BEIS is now known as the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). However, the factors used for the assessment presented in the ES were produced when the department was still known as BEIS.

- The World Resources Institute (WRI) and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) GHG Protocol provides overarching guidance on developing GHG inventories and reporting standards [Appendix CL2.10];
 - The University of Bath Inventory of Carbon & Energy (ICE) database has been used to source appropriate carbon factors to estimate the embodied carbon of materials used for the construction of the Scheme. The ICE database uses some material property data from the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE);
 - BSI (2016). PAS 2080:2016 Carbon Management in Infrastructure [Appendix CL2.11];
 - Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to Assessing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Evaluating their Significance, 2017 [Appendix CL2.13];
 - IEMA, Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to: Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation, 2015 [Appendix CL2.15]; and
- 2.7 I also refer to the Planning Policy proof of evidence produced by Bernard Greep, where Mr Greep concludes that the Scheme “*is in conformity with the development plan and the NPPF, both of which have due regard to the Climate Change Act 2008*” (see paragraph 7.1.7, point b).
- 2.8 Since the GHG and Climate Change Resilience (CCR) assessments presented in Chapter 15 of the Environmental Statement [CD A.15] were undertaken, some key policies and guidance documents that informed the assessment methodologies have been updated. The main changes resulting from these updates and their associated impact on the assessments and their outcomes are detailed in Appendix CL2.2 below.
- 2.9 Despite the evolving regulatory landscape, the methodologies and findings of the Scheme's EIA remain valid and in line with current standards.

Assessment Methodology

- 2.10 The Climate Change assessment work for the Scheme, detailed in Chapter 15 of the Environmental Statement [CD A.15], included an analysis focusing on the impact of the Scheme on the climate - the GHG assessment - and also the impact of projected climate change on the Scheme itself - the CCR assessment.

GHG assessment

- 2.11 The GHG assessment considered the Scheme's potential effects on the climate over its lifetime. This involved a lifecycle GHG impact assessment, examining GHG emissions arising from the Scheme during construction and operation.
- 2.12 The Scheme was assessed against the 4th, 5th and 6th UK national carbon budgets, which are aligned with the UK's net zero carbon targets (as underpinned by the Climate Change Act 2008). The use of national carbon budgets for the assessment of carbon emissions is in line with a requirement outlined in the latest DMRB Guidance LA114 (2021) [Appendix CL2.6]. Paragraph 3.18 of this guidance states: “*An assessment of project GHG emissions against UK government or Overseeing Organisation carbon budgets shall be undertaken*”.
- 2.13 Comparison against UK national carbon budgets has also been confirmed as a lawful approach through the High Court decision in R (Boswell) v SS for Transport [2023] EWHC 1710. Paragraph 6 (point v) states: “*Recent caselaw confirms that, on the basis of current policy and law, it is permissible for a decision maker to look at the scale of carbon emissions relative to a national target. The proposition that the impact of carbon*

emissions is not limited to a geographical boundary is a scientific assessment to which the Court should afford respect.”

CCR assessment

- 2.14 The CCR assessment identified potential impacts on the Scheme as a result of future changes in climate. The potential impacts were based on the UK Climate Projection 2018 (**UKCP18**) data, using the high emissions scenario to present a reasonable worst-case scenario for projected changes to precipitation, temperature and extreme weather events.
- 2.15 Two further documents were developed to support the EIA for the Scheme:
- Reg 25 Appendix K [CD B.2] - Climate Change Position Statement: It outlines measures within the Scheme to reduce climate effects, details on minimising climate impacts, operational phase mitigation, landscape and ecology mitigation, flood risk assessments, and vulnerability to Climate Change.
 - Reg 25 Appendix L [CD B.2] - Climate Impact Assessment: This assessment includes details on building and energy use, transport and connectivity, promoting resilient local smart energy systems, LED street lighting, biodiversity net gain, and resilience to flooding and extreme weather events.
- 2.16 The Climate Change Position Statement (Reg 25 Appendix K) further detailed the Climate Change mitigation measures. Here, it is evident that climate was a key component considered during the design phase. The construction phase focuses on reducing embodied carbon emissions, using renewable or low/zero carbon energy sources, managing material resource use, and employing local construction staff to minimise commuting emissions. During the operational phase, measures included implementing energy-efficient lighting (**LED**) and promoting low or carbon-neutral transport forms like segregated/shared cycle/footway.

Design Mitigation & Enhancement Measures

- 2.17 Mitigation measures have been embedded into the Scheme design to minimise the effects of carbon emissions and to provide climate change resilience.
- 2.18 GHG mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design of the Scheme. These include design enhancements, more efficient construction processes, and a focus on reuse of materials and waste reduction. These mitigation measures are secured through their inclusion in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (**CEMP**), which will be secured via planning condition, and the Site Waste Management Plan (**SWMP**), which will be included within the CEMP. GHG mitigation measures during construction include energy-efficient road lighting design and encouraging low-carbon forms of transport through the construction of the additional shared cycleway/ footway.
- 2.19 The Scheme also prioritised resilience to Climate Change, particularly in flood risk management, by incorporating comprehensive flood risk assessments and design features to withstand severe Climate Change scenarios.

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

- 2.20 At the time of assessment, Construction emissions of 154,840 tCO₂e were calculated for the Scheme, with the majority of these (129,180 tCO₂e) being embodied carbon emissions associated with the extraction and production of construction materials used (as presented in Table 1, which is a replication of Table 15.16 of the ES [CD A.15, Chapter 15]).

Table 1: GHG emissions breakdown by construction activity, as presented in Table 15.16 of the ES

Reporting category	Emissions (tCO ₂ e) (approximate)	% construction emissions ²
Land clearance (loss of carbon sink)	4,720	3
Embodied carbon in raw materials	129,180	83
Fuel used on site	11,540	7
Worker travel	1,210	1
Transport of construction materials and waste	4,440	3
Disposal of construction waste	3,750	2
Total	154,840	100

2.21 To calculate the operational impact of GHG emissions, GHG emissions for the Do-Something (DS) scenario were subtracted from the Do-Minimum (DM) scenario. This is presented in Table 2, which is a replication of Table 15.17 of the ES.

2.22 The ES concluded that “with the Scheme in operation, GHG emissions are estimated to be approximately 1,074 tCO₂e lower than without the Scheme” for the opening year. For the design year (2034), GHG emissions with the Scheme were estimated to be 1,226 tCO₂e lower than without the Scheme.

Table 2: Comparison of road user emissions – DM vs DS scenarios, as presented in Table 15.17 of the ES

Reporting category	Year of Scheme opening (2025) (tCO ₂ e)	Design year (2034) (tCO ₂ e)
Do-minimum (DM)	107,635	122,852
Do-something (DS)	106,561	121,626
Variation (DS-DM)	-1,074	-1,226

2.23 GHG emissions associated with the construction and operation of the Scheme were compared in the ES to the carbon budgets within which the relevant GHG emissions were expected to occur. This comparison was presented in Table 15.15 of the ES, with the relevant assessment data replicated in Table 3 below.

² Sum of percentages reported may not equate to 100% due to rounding.

Table 3: Scheme emissions compared to UK national carbon budgets, as presented in the ES

Carbon budget	Years	UK carbon budget (tCO _{2e})	Construction (tCO _{2e})	Operation (tCO _{2e}) ³	Total (tCO _{2e})	% of carbon budget
4 th carbon budget	2023 - 2027	1,950,000,000	154,842	-4,601	150,241	0.00770%
5 th carbon budget	2028 - 2032	1,765,000,000	-	-5,752	-5,752	-0.00033%
6 th carbon budget	2033 - 2037	965,000,000	-	-5,752	-5,752	-0.00060%

2.24 In addition to comparison against the UK national carbon budgets, paragraph 15.4.23 of the ES [CD A.15, Chapter 15] states:

"The GHG impact of the Scheme should also be put into the wider context of the UK Strategic Road Network (SRN). The length of the Scheme represents less than 0.1% of the 4,500-mile UK SRN (DfT 2021) (Ref 15.25). Therefore, although it is important that the relative GHG impact of the Scheme is considered so that mitigation measures can be integrated into the Scheme, the overall impact is expected to be minimal when considered in the national context."

2.25 As outlined in section 15.12 of the ES [CD A.15, Chapter 15], the GHG assessment concluded that GHG effects during the Scheme construction phase are determined to be minor adverse (not significant). Scheme operation is estimated to reduce GHG emissions compared to the baseline scenario – thus, the Scheme is predicted to have a minor beneficial effect on GHG emissions during the operational phase (not significant).

2.26 The Climate Change Resilience assessment presented in the Environmental Statement concluded that Climate Change has no significant residual effects on the Scheme due to the mitigation features integrated into the Scheme design.

Policy updates since the assessment was undertaken for the Environmental Statement

2.27 Acknowledging the dynamic nature of climate and environmental policy, recent policy and guidance published since the ES was produced have been reviewed. This review, which is presented in Appendix CL2.2, considers the following policy and guidance updates:

- National Planning Policy Framework (**NPPF**) (2023) and Planning Practice Guidance (**PPG**) (2023)
- Decarbonising Transport Plan (2021) [Appendix CL2.19]
- National Policy Statement for National Networks (**NPSNN**) (Draft 2023) [Appendix CL2.20]
- Road Investment Strategy 2 (2020–2025) [Appendix CL2.21]
- National Infrastructure Strategy (2020) [Appendix CL2.22]

³ Please note, negative numbers reported here represent reductions in emissions as a result of the DS scenario.

- Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022 – 2050 [CD G.4]
- Vale of White Horse District Council Climate Action Plan 2022-2024 (2022) [Appendix CL2.23]
- Climate Action Plan for South Oxfordshire District Council 2022-2024 [Appendix CL2.25]
- Pathways to zero carbon Oxfordshire (Pazco) [Appendix CL2.26]
- Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (Stage 1 Report, 2021) [Appendix CL2.27]
- Oxfordshire Climate Action Framework (2020) [Appendix CL2.28]
- COP28 – UNECE
- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) LA 114 (2021) [Appendix CL2.6]
- IEMA (2022) GHG Assessment Guidance [Appendix CL2.14]
- IEMA (2020) Climate Change Adaptation Practitioner Guidance [Appendix CL2.16]
- National Highways – Project Control Framework (PCF) (2022) Carbon Management update [Appendix CL2.29]
- Climate Change Committee - Progress Report to Parliament [Appendix CL2.17]
- Climate Change Committee – Seventh Carbon Budget [Appendix CL2.30]

2.28 Notably, the review has reiterated the Scheme's compliance with the established standards and methodologies. In particular, alignment to DMRB LA114 [Appendix CL2.6], the framework for assessing climate impacts, including GHG emissions, affirms the Applicant's alignment with the field's most relevant, authoritative and legally binding standards. I conclude that these policy and guidance updates do not have a material impact on the assessment outcomes presented in Chapter 15 of the ES [CD A.15].

Contextualising the Scheme within the UK's Net Zero Ambitions

2.29 A critical aspect of the UK's approach to achieving Net Zero is the differentiated contribution expected from various sectors. The Applicant's approach is rooted in this understanding – that the contribution of individual schemes should be evaluated in the context of their cumulative impact towards national targets. This perspective aligns with the requirements of DMRB and existing legislative frameworks.

2.30 Emphasising this, Note 1 of LA114 [Appendix CL2.6] clarifies that the impact of a single road project is unlikely to be significant enough to jeopardize the Government's ability to meet its carbon reduction plan targets. This perspective is pivotal in understanding the Applicant's approach – it is not the isolation of the Scheme's impact that is crucial, but its role and contribution within the larger tapestry of national carbon reduction efforts for which this scheme impacts positively come Scheme Operation.

Conclusion

2.31 In conclusion, the climate change assessment work for the Scheme demonstrated a commitment to minimising its environmental impact and enhancing resilience against climate change throughout the Scheme's life.

2.32 The two assessments presented in Chapter 15 of the Environmental Statement [CD A.15] (GHG and CCR) assessed the impacts of the Scheme on the climate and projected future

climate change on the Scheme. These assessments were undertaken in line with relevant policy, guidance, and best practice.

- 2.33 The strategies and measures implemented across construction and operational phases, alongside broader planning contexts, were aimed at reducing climate impacts, enhancing resilience, and aligning with broader environmental and sustainability goals. The conclusions from these assessments underscore the Scheme's alignment with existing standards for Climate Change.
- 2.34 The GHG and CCR assessments concluded that, following the implementation of identified mitigation measures, the Scheme would have no significant residual effects on the climate or Government's ability to meet its climate change target or budgets. In fact, during operation, there will be a minor beneficial impact on the climate due to a reduction in GHG emissions during operation.
- 2.35 Following a review of updates to key policies and guidance since the assessment presented within the ES was undertaken, I consider there to be no material change to the assessment outcome.

3 RESPONSE TO CONCERNS ABOUT CLIMATE IMPACT

- 3.1 This section responds to concerns raised in Representations to the Planning Application and by Objectors to the Orders for the Scheme, where they relate to Climate Change. As many objectors raised similar concerns regarding the assessment in Chapter 15, Climate of the ES [CD A.15], I have summarised the key submission themes, highlighting specific objections raised by individual objectors. I have then responded to each key submission theme once to avoid repetition within this proof of evidence.

Responses to key submission themes

- 3.2 The key concerns raised across the various representations and objections are summarised here, followed by my response to each.

Alignment to the Climate Change Committee's June 2023 Progress Report to Parliament [Appendix CL2.17]

- 3.3 The Statement of Case for POETS (Nov 2023) [CD L.7] (pg. 4) states that "*the greatest weight in terms of decision-taking by a Government Minister on this application is the Climate Change Act 2008. That is statute which therefore Government and its Ministers are bound in law to follow. Although it is not a Government Department or Agency, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) was established by Parliament to monitor and recommend to Government progress on the aims and implementation of the 2008 Act. POETS will show that the CCC now recommends more urgent act on by Government (including local government) to take more a proactive role in pursuing policies and act on in furtherance of combatting climate change.*"
- 3.4 Adrian Wear (3 Oct 2023) [CD N.22] (pg. 2) also referenced the recommendation to Government by the CCC [Appendix CL2.17] to take further action (for example that "*new roads should not increase car capacity*")
- 3.5 Cllr Charlie Hicks (25 Oct 2023) [CD N.30] (pg. 2) suggests this project goes against the advice laid out by CCC. Mr Hicks summarises the UK government's CCC 2023 Progress Report to Parliament [Appendix CL2.17] as saying:
- *Measures to reduce car use are important for UK transport decarbonisation*
 - *The government is not making good progress in this area*
 - *Therefore, the UK CCC recommends a series of actions to get the UK back on track for surface transport decarbonisation*

- 3.6 Other objectors that raised concerns with the alignment of the Scheme with the CCC's recommendations include Ian Plamer (30 Sep 2023) [CD N.14] (pg. 1) and Cllr Sarah James (Oct 2023) [CD N.15] (pg. 2). Ms James specifically references the CCC's recommendation R2023-148 ("*Conduct a systematic review of current and future road-building projects to assess their consistency with the Government's environmental goals*").

Response to concerns

- 3.7 I acknowledge the findings within the Climate Change Committee's Progress Report to Parliament [Appendix CL2.17] and am aware of the recent 7th Carbon Budget Call for Evidence [Appendix CL2.30] (closed on 16 January 2024).
- 3.8 I highlight that the scheme has been conducted in alignment with the Climate Change Act 2008 requirements and has been set out within Chapter 15, Climate of the ES [CD A.15]. The GHG assessment presented in Chapter 15, Climate, was undertaken per the relevant policy and guidance outlined in Section 2.

- 3.9 Further, the Scheme has been assessed against the 4th, 5th and 6th carbon budgets, which are aligned to the UK's net zero carbon targets (as underpinned by the Climate Change Act 2008). The GHG assessment concludes that the GHG effects during the construction phase are minor adverse (not significant).
- 3.10 Scheme operation is estimated to reduce GHG emissions compared to the 'without the Scheme' scenario – thus, the Scheme is predicted to have a minor beneficial effect on GHG emissions during the operational phase (not significant).
- 3.11 The Scheme will encourage active travel through the inclusion of footways and cycleways. Also, a commitment has been made since the publication of the ES that all the proposed traffic signals (junctions and crossings) across the Scheme will be designed and implemented with an Urban Traffic Control (UTC) based bus priority system. This system has the ability to encourage modal shifts by prioritising public transport over other modes, such as private cars.
- 3.12 It is noted that the purpose of the EIA is to assess the Scheme against existing policy as well as sector-specific guidance. It does need to be understood, however, that the Climate Change Committee's June 2023 Report to Parliament [Appendix CL2.17] is advice to Government, but does not itself represent Government or other policy.
- 3.13 Furthermore, in October 2023 the Government responded to the recommendations outlined in the Climate Change Committee's June 2023 Report to Parliament [Appendix CL2.17]. In this response, the Government has indicated that it supports motorists and seeks to "*improve the experience of driving and services provided for motorists*" (see Annex A: R2023-148).
- 3.14 The Government also stated that it is "*committed to ensuring that transport plays its part in decarbonising the economy and protecting the environment*" (see Annex A: R2023-148) but suggested that it is through the Roads Investment Strategy 3 (RIS3) that it will ensure alignment to its legally binding net zero obligations.
- 3.15 Within this context it is clearly the primary responsibility of Government to ensure that its carbon reduction target and budgets will be met. This was underlined and reinforced by the Government's Infrastructure Carbon Review (2013) document, wherein it underlined that infrastructure schemes have less influence over end-user emissions than capital and operational emissions. Chart 1.A in section 1.1 of the Infrastructure Carbon Review states: "*The infrastructure industry has control over capital and operational carbon emissions that are associated with the construction, operation and maintenance of infrastructure assets*". However, in relation to end-user emissions, it states: "*The infrastructure industry can influence end-user carbon emissions, but typically action is required by others to reduce them*".
- 3.16 This will be achieved, in large part, by non-planning measures, rather than through individual road schemes. The Transport Decarbonisation Plan outlines such measures that the Government will implement to decarbonise the transport sector as a whole, including the following 6 priorities:
1. **Accelerating modal shift to public and active transport**
 2. **Decarbonisation of road vehicles**, such as the phasing out of new petrol and diesel cars
 3. **Decarbonising how we get our goods**, through innovative fuels, zero or low emissions technologies and new industrial opportunities
 4. **Place-based solutions**, by empowering communities to develop local zero carbon networks

5. ***UK as a hub for green transport, technology, and innovation***

6. ***Reducing carbon in a global economy***, by reducing emissions from aviation and shipping

- 3.17 In its response to the Climate Change Committee report, the Government also states, “As set out in the *Transport Decarbonisation Plan* [Appendix CL2.19], *the Government will continue to adapt and take further action if needed to decarbonise transport*” (see Annex A: R2023-148). Therefore, The Government has committed to further decarbonising the transport sector if it falls out of alignment with their net zero commitments for any reason.

Recommendation to follow the Welsh Government Review

- 3.18 Friends of the Earth Oxford (Jan 2023) [CD E.67] (pg. 4) and Cllr Charlie Hicks [CD N.30] point to the Climate Change Committee report recommendation that the UK follows Wales in undertaking a roads review. Cllr Charlie Hicks suggests this would conclude that, on the basis that it significantly increases road capacity for cars, the Scheme is unlikely to meet the criteria for Net Zero.

Response to concerns

- 3.19 Although there is no legal or policy requirement to apply the Welsh Government roads review criteria to schemes in England, a technical note has been produced (see Appendix CL2.3), applying the four Future Road Building tests to the Scheme. The technical note concludes that the Scheme aligns with the Welsh Road Tests, showcasing its commitment to sustainable development, safety, climate resilience, and improved connectivity.

Alignment to local and national policy

- 3.20 Numerous stakeholders raised concerns in relation to alignment with key national and local policies. Generally, these objections can be summarised as alleged misalignment with the following policies:
- Paris Agreement and the UK's legally binding carbon budgets
 - Local transport policies in relation to commitments made to reduce cars while increasing public transport use and modes of active travel.
 - Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport Connectivity Plan (**LTCP**) [CD G.4], particularly in relation to Policy 27.
 - National Planning Policy Framework (**NPPF**) in relation to climate change mitigation requirements.
- 3.21 The specific objections raised in relation to these policies are outlined below, followed by my response to them.
- 3.22 Cllr Sarah James (Oct 2023) [CD N.15] (pg. 2) argues that the Scheme is old and outdated and creates severe issues for emissions reduction targets and the LTCP that targets significant reductions in private car road trips.
- 3.23 Frances Reid (3rd Oct 2023) [CD N.20] (pg. 1) states, "*This plan needs a major rethink to bring it up to date and in line with the Climate Change rules.*"
- 3.24 Jerome Pearce and Tiffany Cameron (8 Sep 2023) [CD N.2] (pg.1) state, "*We need an integrated infrastructure and transport solutions that are fit for the future and takes into account the commitments this government has made to addressing the climate emergency we ALL face.*"

- 3.25 Oxfordshire Roads Action Alliance (ORAA) (4 Oct 2023) [CD N.26] argues that the Scheme is incompatible with carbon reduction targets and climate policies (CCC & County & District Council climate emergency declarations and policies). It argues that the Scheme will undermine national legally binding national targets for CO₂ reduction and that the development contradicts the LTCP [CD G.4].
- 3.26 Victoria Shepherd (3 Oct 2023) [CD N.23] (issue no. 11) points out that Oxfordshire County Council is committed to a zero carbon future. Ms Shepherd suggests forward-thinking developments should not rely on new car and HGV routes, that existing rail services should be improved, with a bespoke cycleway built alongside the railway, and that there should be a shift towards greener, more affordable and reliable public transport.
- 3.27 Catherine Small (8 Sep 2023) [CD N.1] (pg. 1, issue 1) argues that making car journeys easier into Oxford is contrary to Oxfordshire County Council's environmental goals. Ms Small highlights that the proposed changes to the road infrastructure need to be assessed in parallel with the UK's current climate goals.
- 3.28 Daniel Scharf (29 Sep 2023) [CD N.12] (paragraphs 3.03 and 4.03) states that the extent to which the Scheme is consistent with the area's development plan must be balanced with carbon budgets and targets. Mr Scharf concludes that he would find it "*surprising*" if the secretary of state gave the Scheme precedence over "*low carbon ways of maintaining accessibility across the local area and region*".
- 3.29 Ian Palmer (30 Sep 2023) [CD N.14] (pg. 1) argues that the Scheme does not align with the policies adopted by the Oxfordshire County Council and the District Councils on Climate Change.
- 3.30 In paragraph 7.7 of its Statement of Case for the called-in Planning Application, East Hendred Parish Council (EHPC) (17th Oct 2023) [CD L.9] states they are "*concerned as to how [local] Sustainable Transport Strategies will be delivered within the next 10 years, when the largest percentage of the Housing Infrastructure Fund is allocated to encouraging the use of the private car through four road schemes.*" EHPC is also concerned about high levels of carbon emissions due to car use, as well as "*a city environment dominated by the car, which discourages some people from walking and cycling and makes our public spaces less attractive*" (see Executive Summary)
- 3.31 Appleford Parish Council objection letter (20 March 2023) – Objection to Orders [CD J.11] argues that the Scheme fails to minimise CO₂ emissions and is incompatible with national climate policies and obligations enshrined in law.
- In Section 1, they argue that "*it is misleading to claim that a major road building project such as HIF1 costing £296m will have a minimal effect on the climate.*"
 - In section 3, they argue that "*the scheme fails to contribute to Climate Change mitigation (NPPF para 157) and the Climate Position Statements does not meet the requirements of LTCP (policy 27).*"
 - In section 4 (pg. 6), they argue that "*this car-centric road proposal and lack of public transport is incompatible with climate policies and therefore is not in the public interest.*"
- 3.32 Friends of the Earth Oxford (Jan 2023) [CD E.67] (pg.3) argue that the Scheme's emissions should be compared against local carbon budgets in line with LTCP [CD G.4]

policy 27 [CD G.4], rather than the national carbon budgets that the Scheme is assessed against. They quote the Tyndall Centre⁴ as a reputable source for such budgets.

- 3.33 Friends of the Earth Oxford also argue the Scheme will make it hard for district councils to meet their carbon reduction targets, which include cycling and public transport targets. They state, *"The experience of other successful European cities suggests measures that both discourage car use and encourage sustainable transport modes will be needed to engender a shift away from car use."*
- 3.34 Adrian Wear (3 Oct 2023) [CD N.22] (pg. 1 & 2) compares the Scheme's operational emissions with OCC annual emissions and argues that the construction phases will use ~8% of Oxfordshire's remaining transport carbon budget under the Paris Agreement. He also raises concerns regarding alignment with the LTCP [CD G.4] (e.g., moving to a more sustainable transport system).
- 3.35 Neighbouring Parish Council Joint Committee (NPCJC) [CD J.25] (pg. 1) claims that: *"Building a road scheme of this nature linked to a major highway route (A34) runs counter to the climate policies of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and the two district councils (SODC & Vale of White Horse). This will release 154,000 tonnes of CO₂ (OCC estimate) plus 15,000 tonnes of CO₂ per annum from operations. This is not compatible with the County's climate policies, nor can these CO₂ emission levels be held to be in any way in the public interest."*
- 3.36 The NPCJC also argues that the Scheme conflicts with NPPF requirements concerning climate mitigation.

Response to concerns

- 3.37 The GHG assessment presented in Chapter 15, Climate [CD A.15], was undertaken in line with relevant policy and guidance (as outlined in Section 2 of my proof of evidence) and assesses the Scheme against the 4th, 5th and 6th carbon budgets, which are aligned to the UK's net zero carbon targets (as underpinned by the Climate Change Act 2008 [Appendix CL2.4]). The GHG assessment is aligned with BS EN 17472 [Appendix CL2.18] lifecycle stages and is in line with LTCP [CD G.4] policy 27.
- 3.38 The GHG assessment concludes that the GHG effects during the construction phase are minor adverse (not significant). Scheme operation is estimated to reduce GHG emissions compared to the without the Scheme scenario – thus, the Scheme is predicted to have a minor beneficial effect on GHG emissions during the operational phase (not significant).
- 3.39 A review of updates to relevant policy and guidance since the publication of the ES has been conducted, as presented in Appendix CL2.2. This review concludes that such updates to policy and guidance do not have a material impact on the outcomes of the assessment presented in Chapter 15, Climate of the ES [CD A.15].
- 3.40 In line with the NPPF requirements in relation to climate change mitigation (paragraphs 157 to 159) and the LTCP [CD G.4] policy 27, embedded GHG mitigation measures for the Scheme are outlined in Chapter 15, Climate [CD A.15]. Also, the Applicant has committed to submit, approve, and implement a carbon management plan, in line with PAS 2080 [Appendix CL2.12], to provide further details on emissions and include details of how whole life carbon emissions will be reduced.
- 3.41 The Scheme will encourage active travel through the inclusion of footways and cycleways. Also, a commitment has been made since the publication of the ES that all

⁴ Carbon budgets for each local authority were produced by the Tyndall Centre and are available from the Tyndall Carbon Budget Tool. These local budgets were developed by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at the University of Manchester.

the proposed traffic signals (junctions and crossings) across the Scheme will be designed and implemented with an Urban Traffic Control (UTC) based bus priority system. This system has the ability to encourage modal shifts by prioritising public transport over other modes, such as private cars.

- 3.42 Assessment against local carbon budgets (as per LTCP policy 27), such as those developed by the Tyndall Centre, is not considered appropriate in this context. It is important to note that these local carbon budgets have no status in law or policy. In *BAANCC v Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities* [2023] EWHC 171(Admin), a challenge to the Inspectors' decision on the expansion of Bristol Airport where an objector argued that GHG emissions should be judged against Tyndall Centre local carbon budget for North Somerset Council area, the High Court stated (para 171):

"Applying these principles, I am in no doubt that the Panel did not act irrationally in giving the issue of local carbon budgets no weight, on the ground that such budgets have no basis either in law or in policy. They plainly have no basis in law. Contrary to [Counsel for the Claimant]'s submission, the fact that they have no basis in policy is significant, given that, in the planning field, we are concerned with decision-making which is intensely concerned with matters of policy."

- 3.43 The hyper-localised data used to develop local carbon budgets is not an appropriate comparator for the GHG assessment due to the cross-boundary nature of much of the GHG data used for the GHG assessment presented in the ES. For example, the carbon budget suggested for Oxfordshire is confined to the local administrative area of Oxfordshire and does not account for wider emissions outside the local boundary of the project.
- 3.44 Mr Adrian Wear [CD N.22] argues that construction of the Scheme will use ~8% of Oxfordshire's remaining transport carbon budget, but this is also not an appropriate comparison. The transport budget for Oxfordshire represents the quantity of emissions allocated to the transport sector to allow Oxfordshire County Council to meet its carbon reduction targets. However, the vast majority of construction emissions associated with the Scheme would not fall into the transport sector and should not be compared to this carbon budget. When reviewing sectoral budgets concerning the Scheme, it should be noted that multiple sectors contribute to the overall GHG emissions of a project such as the Scheme; for example, Energy, Transport, Industrial and Waste.
- 3.45 The use of national carbon budgets for the assessment of carbon emissions has been confirmed as a lawful approach through the High Court decision in *R (Boswell) v SS for Transport* [2023] EWHC 1710. Paragraph 6 (point v) states:
- "Recent case law confirms that, on the basis of current policy and law, it is permissible for a decision maker to look at the scale of carbon emissions relative to a national target. The proposition that the impact of carbon emissions is not limited to a geographical boundary is a scientific assessment to which the Court should afford respect."*
- 3.46 There is no legislated requirement to test a scheme against local, regional or sectoral budgets, and there are no suitable budgets to compare against. Legally binding carbon budgets are set at a national level.
- 3.47 Furthermore, the GHG assessment concluded that there would be a beneficial GHG impact from the Scheme during operation due to efficiencies of traffic flow. Therefore, if Oxfordshire's Carbon Budget was relevant (which it is not in this context), operational emissions would have a beneficial impact against the budget during operation.
- 3.48 In his Planning Policy proof of evidence, Bernard Greep concludes that *"the Scheme is in conformity with the development plan"*. (see paragraph 7.1.7.

Scope of the GHG assessment

- 3.49 The scope of the GHG assessment was discussed within some of the submissions received, stating the assessment should fully account for the Scheme's upfront emissions and operational emissions.
- 3.50 For example, Daniel Scharf (29 Sep 2023) [CD N.12] (paragraph 1.8) argues that greater planning weight should be given to the Scheme's embodied carbon impacts over the identified emission savings associated with operational carbon in the medium and long term.
- 3.51 Mr Scharf states that the Scheme's embodied carbon will have a greater climate impact than emissions mitigated by less congestion, of which he considers future congestion to be ever-increasingly comprised of low-carbon and/or neutral tailpipes.
- 3.52 Mr Scharf reports that they are yet to see an "*adequate or reliable assessment of these fundamental matters*" (linked to future congestion/ operational emissions) (e.g., based impacts of lower speeds, changes to vehicle technology, ownership patterns, automation, modal-shift, and working patterns).

Response to concerns

- 3.53 The GHG assessment presented in Chapter 15, Climate [CD A.15] was undertaken in line with relevant policy and guidance (as outlined in Section 2 of my proof of evidence). The GHG assessment includes GHG emissions across the whole lifecycle of the Scheme, including the Scheme's embodied carbon impacts and operational impacts, in line with BS EN 17472 [Appendix CL2.18] lifecycle stages.

Concerns in relation to the modelling of road user emissions

- 3.54 Many of the submissions raised concerns about the road user emissions model, which suggests a reduction in GHG emissions. The concerns raised could be categorised into the following categories:
- The transport modelling did not adequately account for potential induced demand as a result of the Scheme.
 - The reduced congestion model was not accurate, particularly in the future, as a result of potential induced demand.
 - Impacts on the modelling as a result of the Covid pandemic and Brexit.
- 3.55 For example, Friends of the Earth Oxford (Jan 2023) [CD E.67] (pg.3 & 4) argue that the transport modelling that feeds into the GHG assessment is flawed for the following reasons:

"[The GHG assessment has] assumed, with agreement from OCC, that traffic and emissions growth will be the same whether or not the Scheme is built. This is not a credible assumption: adding new road capacity leads to extra traffic, known as 'induced demand'. This is a significant source of emissions; we estimate that it could be around 2.3x larger than the emissions from constructing the Scheme. Therefore, AECOM has significantly underestimated the Scheme's emissions."

"[The GHG assessment has] assumed that people will travel the same amount regardless of the level of congestion. In fact, people travel less when there is high congestion and more when there is lower congestion. This means they overestimate the level of congestion without the Scheme and overestimate the improvement in congestion with the Scheme. Therefore, they overestimate the potential carbon savings from reduced congestion."

- 3.56 In section 4, Friends of the Earth Oxford presents its own GHG modelling, attempting to account for the alleged flaws outlined above.
- 3.57 Adrian Wear (3 Oct 2023) [CD N.22] (pg. 1 & 2) argues that the Scheme will not reduce car journeys and that induced demand has not been considered in the transport model. Mr Wear states that past road schemes have shown induced demand increases emissions by 13,000 tons of CO₂ (which is the same as OCC annual emissions).
- 3.58 In regard to operational emissions, Cllr Sarah James (Oct 2023) [CD N.15] (pg. 1) argues that *"operational carbon emissions are apparently cut by HIF1... but that only works if there is no induced traffic demand, and there is no evidence presented here as to why that would, in fact be true"*.
- 3.59 Oxfordshire Roads Action Alliance (ORAA) (4 Oct 2023) [CD N.26] states that relief from traffic congestion will, at best be very short-lived and in the long-term, congestion will be worse.
- 3.60 Appleford Parish Council objection letter (20 March 2023) – Objection to Orders [CD J.11] states that *"The Atkins 'review' does not tackle the most important weak point in the Aecom estimates of carbon impacts. This is because the traffic forecasts assume that the same amount of traffic will arise in the 'with scheme' case as the 'without' case, called the 'do-minimum'. It also implies that the number of walking, cycling and public transport trips will be the same in the two cases. This omits a well-established feature of travel choices, namely that if the traffic conditions are bad, some of the traffic will be deterred, diverted or suppressed; and if the traffic conditions are improved, some additional traffic will be induced or generated."*
- 3.61 They argue the effect of the above is *"to exaggerate the travel time benefits of the scheme and underestimate the additional carbon emitted."*

Response to concerns

- 3.62 Claudia Currie's Traffic Modelling Proof of Evidence [CC01] directly addresses induced demand in paragraphs 5.2 to 5.11 and finds *"In summary, the required modelling tests have been carried out and have shown that 'induced traffic' for this Scheme is not evident and is therefore not a cause for concern."*
- 3.63 Claudia Currie also addresses the impacts of Covid and Brexit on traffic modelling in CC01 in paragraphs 5.31 to 5.40 and finds *"Therefore, there are no additional modelling tests that need to be carried out for traffic level changes as a direct result of Brexit and/or COVID as there is no long-term lasting effects that need to be considered. There has been no evidence that traffic flows on the highways have seen a significant long-term suppression in volume."*
- 3.64 Therefore, I consider that the GHG assessment presented in Chapter 15 of the ES [CD A.15] remains robust with regard to the transport modelling undertaken.

Further concerns (not included in the key objection themes)

Adrian Wear (3 Oct 2023) [CD N.22]

- 3.65 Mr. Wear states no alternatives or consideration has been given to railway, public transport, active travel, etc.

Response to concern

- 3.66 Please refer to Aron Wisdom's Proof of Evidence, where the alleged lack of alternatives is discussed.

- 3.67 The Scheme will encourage active travel through the inclusion of footways and cycleways. Also, as outlined above, a commitment has been made since the publication of the ES that all the proposed traffic signals (junctions and crossings) across the Scheme will be designed and implemented with an Urban Traffic Control (UTC) based bus priority system. This system has the ability to encourage modal shifts by prioritising public transport over other modes, such as private cars.

Cllr Sarah James (Oct 2023) [CD N.15] (pg. 1)

- 3.68 Ms. James notes that the term "embedded" makes it sound as though the emissions are safely locked away, but those emissions do all happen in the manufacture of the materials used to build the road.

Response to concern

- 3.69 The term 'embedded carbon', which is also known as 'embodied carbon', is an industry term that refers to the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with energy consumption and chemical processes released during the extraction, transport and/or manufacture of construction materials or products.

Basis for Proposed Refusal

Oxfordshire County Council Planning and Committee Basis for Refusal

- 3.70 Oxfordshire County Council's Planning & Regulation (**P&R**) Committee, at its meeting on 17 and 18 July 2023, had considered an officer report which recommended approval of the Planning Application. P&R disagreed with the officer's recommendation and sought to resolve to refuse the Planning Application on 18 July 2023; however, the Planning Application was called in for the determination of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, so the Planning Application remains undetermined. In the deliberations and subsequent minutes [CD F.2], P&R referred to a number of reasons why they were opposed to the Planning Application at that time (July 2023).

- 3.71 Of relevance to Climate Change was reason 1:

Reason 1 – The Climate Change Committee's June 2023 Report to Parliament had not been properly taken into account in the application.

- 3.72 Specifically, as outlined in the Oxfordshire County Council Statement of Case of the Local Planning Authority (**LPA**) [CD L.2] (paragraph 2.21),

"The issue identified by the LPA at its July committee meeting was in relation to how the proposed building of a new road would be able to positively contribute towards local and national targets for Climate Change both in its construction and then subsequent operations. In particular, the LPA was concerned whether the proposals had incorporated sufficient provision to promote the most sustainable modes of travel over the use of the private car. This was considered sufficient by the LPA to resolve to refuse the application on the issue of carbon impact and contribution to Climate Change."

- 3.73 The LPA goes on to say (paragraph 2.22):

"However, the LPA upon further consideration, acknowledge that the walking and cycling components of the application are exemplary for a scheme of this nature and will provide almost uninterrupted and segregated provision through the entire length of the development. The LPA recognise that this is a significant benefit of the proposal that will help reduce the reliance on the use of the private car for future developments in the area."

- 3.74 Overall, the P&R Committee considered that, subject to the Applicant's commitments, it would put evidence to the Inquiry that it was committed to conditions being attached to

any planning permission granted to secure a Carbon Management Plan and to promote a modal shift by seeking to deliver a scheme of bus priority measures to be in place when the Scheme was opened. On this basis, the P&R Committee considered that a clear improvement would have been secured following the July committee meeting.

- 3.75 On 27 September 2023, the P&R Committee carried out a named vote on not maintaining a concern that the Climate Change Committee's (CCC's) June 2023 Report to Parliament [Appendix CL2.17] had not been properly considered in the Planning Application and accepting the recommendation in the officer's report. Nine councillors voted for the motion to not maintain this concern, while one councillor abstained.
- 3.76 The P&R Committee considered that *“further work would be needed through the inquiry process by the applicant to ensure that the proposed conditions would ultimately be deliverable and achieve the required outcomes, but the principle of what had been proposed was considered to be positive. The Committee considered that with the proposed new conditions, along with the walking and cycling measures already included and commitment that the Area Strategy Travel Plan was being brought forward at pace, the reason for refusal 1 was capable of being addressed through the Inquiry.”*
- 3.77 Therefore, the P&R Committee would not pursue reason for refusal 1 at the Inquiry, subject to confirming to the Inspector that any planning permission granted should be subject to a condition to deliver a bus priority scheme and also to a condition requiring the submission, approval and implementation of a Carbon Management Plan to provide further details on emissions and include details of how whole life carbon emissions will be reduced and consider opportunities to reduce emissions associated with the construction phase.
- 3.78 This Carbon Management Plan should be required to be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of construction, should remain in place during construction, and should be updated as needed during that period.

Conclusion

- 3.79 My conclusion is that the Representations to the called-in Planning Application and the Objections to the Orders that have been raised in relation to Climate are without merit, do not give rise to any reason not to make the Orders as sought and do not give any reason to refuse the grant of planning permission.

4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The following summary and conclusion section has been produced to summarise the content of this proof of evidence for Climate and to outline the key conclusions reached.

Climate Change Assessment Overview

- 4.2 I have outlined the legislative and policy landscape and how the climate assessments align with relevant requirements. I have provided a brief overview of the assessment methodology adopted for the greenhouse gas (GHG) and Climate Change Resilience (CCR) assessments, as well as the key mitigation and enhancement measures implemented in the Scheme in relation to each.
- 4.3 A summary of the likely significant effects of each assessment is provided, as presented in Chapter 15 of the ES [CD A.15]. My conclusion is that there will be no significant residual effects on the climate or the Scheme after implementing identified mitigation measures. In fact, during operation, there will be a minor beneficial impact on the climate as a result of a reduction in GHG emissions during operation.
- 4.4 Key policy and guidance updates published since the ES was produced have then been outlined; refer to Appendix CL2.2 for the full review detailing the key changes and any impact on the assessment presented in Chapter 15 of the ES [CD A.15].
- 4.5 It is my conclusion that the outcomes of the assessment, as presented in Chapter 15 of the ES, remain true and that the updates to policy and guidance documents since the ES do not have a material impact on the outcomes of the assessment.

Response to Concerns about Climate Impact

- 4.6 I have responded to the Representations to the called-in Planning Application and the Objections to the Orders, where several parties have referenced alleged deficiencies in the assessment presented in Chapter 15 of the ES [CD A.15].
- 4.7 This section also responds to Objections received concerning climate. As many of the Objections received raised similar concerns in relation to climate, the key concerns raised across the Objections received are summarised, followed by a response to each of these key themes.
- 4.8 The key themes summarised and responded to within this section are:
- Alignment to the Climate Change Committee's June 2023 Progress Report to Parliament [Appendix CL2.17];
 - Recommendation for Oxfordshire County Council to follow the Welsh Government Review;
 - Alignment to local and national policy;
 - Concerns around the scope of the GHG assessment; and
 - Concerns in relation to the modelling of road user emissions.
- 4.9 Following a summary of the objections from Rule 6 parties, call-in representations and Objections to Orders for each of these key themes, I have provided an overarching response.
- 4.10 The concerns raised by the Objectors regarding the Scheme have been addressed systematically. The Applicant conducted a thorough and fit-for-purpose assessment at the time of the Scheme's submission, adhering to the prevailing legal and environmental

standards. This assessment remains valid and robust, reflecting the Applicant's commitment to fulfilling its legal obligations.

- 4.11 The basis for the proposed refusal by the LPA's P&R Committee at its meeting on July 17 and 18 2023 is also outlined. However, the concerns raised by P&R Committee have since been resolved (see pg. 2 of the Oxfordshire County Council Statement of Case of the Local Planning Authority [CD L.2]) on the basis that the LPA would like to see that any planning permission granted should be subject to a condition to deliver a bus priority scheme.
- 4.12 Further, there is also a condition requiring the submission, approval and implementation of a Carbon Management Plan to provide further details on emissions, including how whole life carbon emissions will be reduced and considering opportunities to reduce emissions associated with the construction phase.

Appendix CL2.2: Review of Updates to Policy and Guidance

- 4.13 Appendix CL2.2 provides a Review of updates to Policy and Guidance since the ES was produced. I conclude that the Scheme demonstrates alignment with the UK's current environmental policies, and that the updates to policy and guidance since the ES do not have a material impact on the outcomes of the assessment presented in Chapter 15 of the ES [A.15].

Appendix CL2.3: Climate Review of The Climate Change Committee's June 2023 Report and Welsh Assembly Criteria

- 4.14 Appendix CL2.3 provides a review of the Welsh Government Roads Review assessment criteria, and the impact that applying these criteria would have if applied to the Scheme. This section concludes that the Scheme has proactively incorporated mechanisms for reducing carbon emissions, embedding climate change resilience and promoting sustainable transport methods. This includes encouraging zero-emission vehicles, enhanced cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, and a comprehensive focus on the electrification of transport. These initiatives meet and exceed Welsh Future Roads Building Test criteria and align with the CCC's vision for a sustainable transport future.

Overall Conclusion of this Proof of Evidence

- 4.15 Overall, it is my professional view that a comprehensive analysis underpins the Applicant's case. The methodologies employed, the alignment with legal and environmental standards, and the adaptability in integrating new information and insights all contribute to the validity of the Applicant's findings.
- 4.16 The Representations and Objections, while valuable in ensuring a thorough scrutiny of the Scheme's impacts, do not, upon detailed examination, provide substantial grounds to challenge the Orders' legitimacy or justify the refusal of planning permission.
- 4.17 I consider that the Representations Objections made about the Climate Change assessment of the proposed Scheme have been appropriately addressed.
- 4.18 My conclusion is that the Applicant's case should be preferred and that the Representations and Objections based on Climate are without merit and do not give rise to any reason not to make the Orders as sought, and do not give any reason to refuse planning permission.

5 STATEMENT OF TRUTH AND DECLARATION

- 5.1 I confirm that, insofar as the facts stated in my proof evidence are within my knowledge, I have made clear what they are and believe them to be true and that the opinion I have expressed represents my accurate and complete professional opinion.
- 5.2 I confirm that my proof of evidence includes all facts that I regard as being relevant to the opinions that I have expressed and that attention to drawn to any matter which would affect the validity of those opinions.
- 5.3 I confirm that my duty to the Inquiry as an expert witness overrides any duty to those instructing or paying me, and I have understood this duty and complied with it in giving my evidence impartially and objectively, and I will continue to comply with that duty as required.
- 5.4 I confirm that, in preparing this proof of evidence, I have assumed that same duty that would apply to me when giving my expert opinion in a court of law under oath or affirmation. I confirm that this duty overrides any duty to those instructing or paying me, and I have understood this duty and complied with it in giving my evidence impartially and objectively, and I will continue to comply with that duty as required.
- 5.5 I confirm that I have no conflicts of interest other than those already disclosed in this proof of evidence.

CHRIS LANDSBURGH

30 January 2024