

Supplement to Proof of Evidence by C J Hancock on behalf of Neighbouring Parish Councils -Joint committee

on Noise (topic 6), Air Quality (topic 7), Design (topic 9)

HIF1 - DIDCOT TO CULHAM RIVER CROSSING

ALTERNATIVE ROAD ALIGNMENT AND BRIDGE AT APPLEFORD SIDINGS

1 Appleford’s concerns expressed during consultation exercise 2020-2022

With specific reference to the Appleford Sidings Road Bridge

In April 2020 Appleford Parish Council (APC) responded to the consultation exercise launched by OCC on the alternative alignments of a proposed HIF1 road. The scheme was presented as a decision between various provisional locations for a road from Didcot to the A415 (Figure 1). The chosen location lay in a corridor between Sutton Courtenay and Appleford. This was further illustrated in a sketch “indicative plan (Figure 2, portion south of Appleford). For public use this plan failed to indicate the extent of the intrusion of the scheme to dwellings in Appleford, i.e. an elevated road, bridging rail sidings.

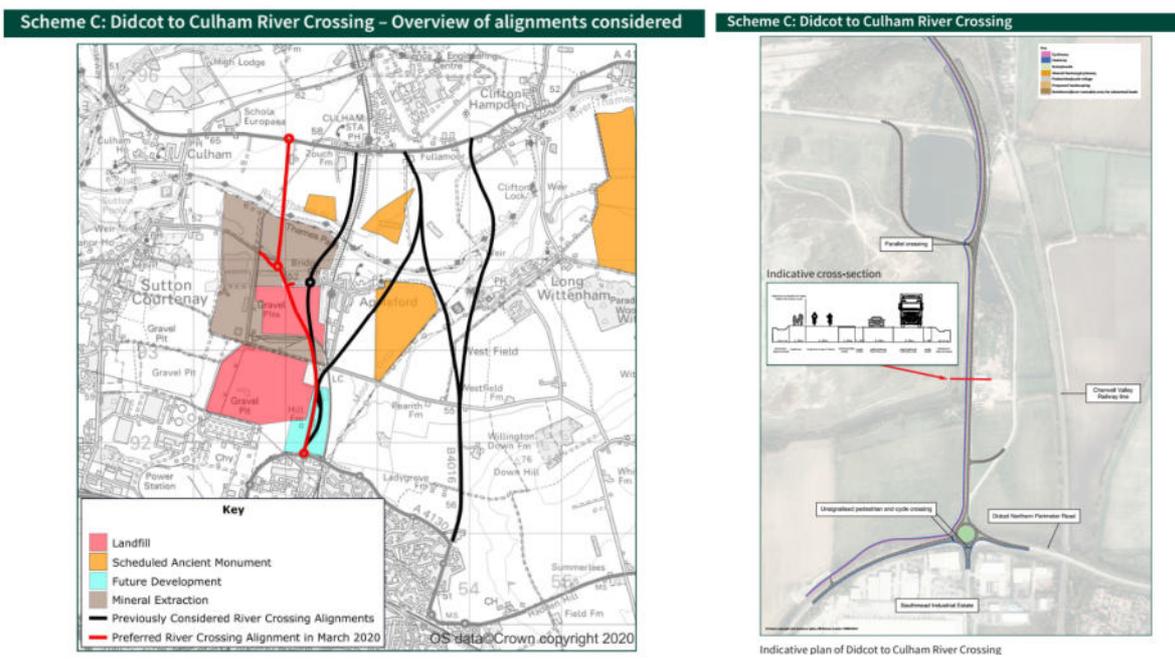


Figure 1. OCC’s diagram of alternative routes for the HIF1 road

Figure 2. OCC sketch of section of road running south of Appleford

Responses to the April consultation on the Didcot to Culham river crossing, where specific issues were raised, indicated a dominant objection to the scheme¹ equal to 54% of responses..

¹ Page 46 Report to Cabinet 21 July 2020 Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund from Director of Growth and Economy

APC objections were:

- Source of traffic noise and air pollution from a road elevated above roof level and within 70-90 metres of dwellings would be excessive.
- This will be exacerbated by diverted HGV traffic between the A34, east Oxford and the M40.
- Road embankments and bridge will be a major visual intrusion to dwellings in Appleford.
- Loss of woodland immediately north of Appleford level crossing, currently proving a screen to industrial activity and a habitat close to Appleford.
- The road will sever the direct connection between Appleford and Sutton Courtenay on the B4016.

For “impacted parish councils” and others, OCC were to undertake “further engagement” to address the issues raised.²

APC anticipated that the follow-on consultation/design phase would examine alignment options within the general corridor to establish the best route, taking local impacts on adjacent communities into account.

APC arranged 5 consultation meeting with OCC officers between 24 September 2020 and 14 April 2021. Throughout this period APC sought action from OCC to assess the road impact and consider alternative alignments of the route.

- In November 2020 APC submitted to OCC the conclusion of a survey of Appleford residents to reinforce the concerns that the elevated road will be a source of noise, air pollution and visual intrusion.
- On 5th January 2021 APC submitted a position paper³ to OCC seeking its reasonable concerns to be addressed on road noise pollution and the evident risk that the road bridge over rail tracks will also amplify rail noise towards overlooking dwelling in Appleford.
- Letter writing from Appleford residents to OCC Councillors and presentations to Council meetings on the road alignment in February, May, November 2021, June 2022.
- On 16th July 2021 APC submitted a petition to OCC signed by 92% of all households in Appleford, requesting a realignment of the elevated road to the viable alternative crossing of Appleford sidings 200m further away from Appleford dwellings.⁴
- In October 2021 the Neighbouring Parish Councils formed a-Joint Committee to represent the views of adjacent parish councils affected by the HIF1 scheme.

It became clear from successive meetings that OCC had pre-determined a single route for the HIF1 scheme and were not prepared to examine the detailed noise, and pollution implications on Appleford and were not prepared to consider alternative realignments to mitigate the impacts. APC suggested several alternative alignments for this section of the road which were summarily rejected⁵ At the meeting of 21 January 2021 an OCC officer confirmed that they would not consider alternative alignments due to constraints of timing to scheme completion for the funding and by the overall budget.

Questions posed to OCC in March 2021

from Mr Gregory O’Broin (APC) to Councillor Yvonne Constance

² Para 35 Report to Cabinet 21 July 2020 Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund from Director of Growth and Economy.

³ Appleford on Thames position paper 5 January 2021

⁴ Appleford on Thames Petition report 16 July 2021

⁵ Oxfordshire County Council Response to Appleford Parish Councils Position Paper 19-03-2021

Question

“When OCC Cabinet approved Scheme C (Didcot to Culham River crossing) in July 2020 was it aware of the following impediments to the road alignment The absence of any investigation of the degree of damage to Appleford residents (& their wellbeing), from noise, air quality, & visual impact caused by elevating the road above adjacent roof levels?”

Answer

“High level assessments are conducted to define the preferred options which consider a whole multitude of factors. The detailed assessment of noise, air quality and visual impact is undertaken as part of a planning application. It is not possible or feasible to conduct detailed analysis on all options considered. Detailed mitigation requirements, including noise and visual screening, are determined through the Environmental Impact Assessment process as part of the planning application.”

2 Problems of the alignment at Appleford sidings

In the absence of illustrations from OCC to explain the relationship of the proposed road to Appleford, the APC prepared illustrations to inform residents. Figure 3 shows the embankment and road bridge required to cross the private, industrial rail siding at Appleford. At the selected position for the road to cross over the sidings track road and rail intersect at an acute angle. To resolve this difficulty OCC propose a concrete tube following the track with the road sitting diagonally on the tube. This construction lies within 70m of the nearest dwellings in Appleford. It should be noted that these dwellings are designated by DEFRA as a Noise Action Plan Important Area due to existing adverse main line rail noise. adverse main line rail noise.



Figure 3 OCC HIF1 road proposal adjacent to Appleford

Figure 4 shows the bridge assembly, indicating that this incurs the risk of several sources of noise:

- Road traffic noise over the bridge
- Train noise from goods wagons shunting on the sidings under the bridge
- Reflected sound from the concrete tunnel and concrete embankment walls from shunting wagons and passing main line trains
- Vibration within the bridge structure

This has the potential to create a hostile noise environment, that will add to the noise distress already experienced due to industrial activity at Appleford Sidings.



Figure 4 View of the bridge over Appleford siding viewed from adjacent dwelling in Appleford.

3 Options for Alternative road alignments at Appleford sidings

3.1 The Bridge -Figure 5 & 9

As potential mitigation to these problems APC have proposed a viable alternative to the position of the road bridge crossing Appleford Sidings. Figure 5 shows a sidings bridge crossing positioned 175m to the west of OCC's bridge position. This presents several advantages.

- The road is further away from dwellings in Appleford, attenuating traffic noise, and air pollution
- The offset space created may be used for landscape mounding to provide a noise barrier east of the road, and planting to offer a visual screen.
- The screen of the tree belt along the western edge of the mainline rail could be retained
- The bridge structure crosses perpendicular to the sidings rail tracks which produces a shorter overall span, and a much simpler and less expensive construction than the HIF1 skewed bridge, angled to the rail track.

The immediate surroundings of a bridge in this position are shown in figures 9 & 10.

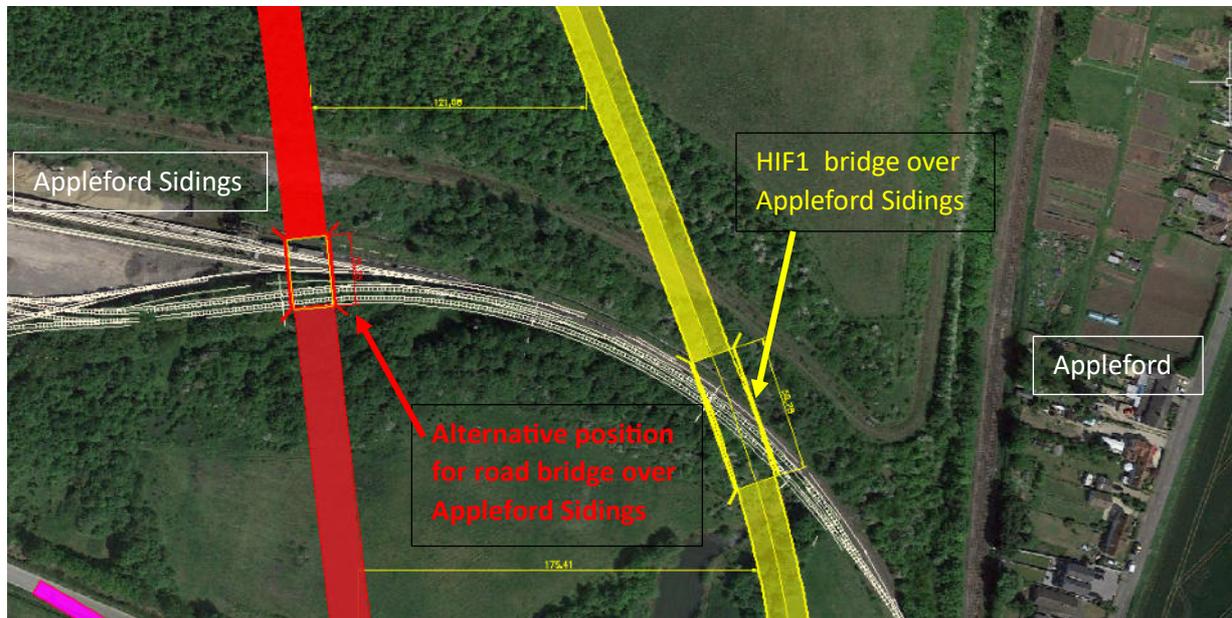


Figure 5 Alternative position of bridge crossing Appleford sidings

3.2 Approach road to the bridge - Figure 6

APC contend that a modified alignment of the road approaching Appleford sidings could be achieved with significant benefits to Appleford and the scheme. Figure 6 shows this alignment. This follows the proposed position of the HIF1 branch road (for HGV access to industrial sites) running around the south and west of a drainage pond. This branch is shown on the scheme detail reproduced at Figure 7. The modified alignment continues this branch for a further 250m to meet the alternative bridge position. Benefits include;

- Approximately 400m of HIF1 road is no longer required.
- The road is kept further away from dwellings in Appleford, reducing noise impact
- There is no conflict with the drainage pond and landfill since the modification adopts the HIF1 branch alignment to south and west of the pond.
- The alignment uses road radiuses already exhibited in the HIF1 scheme.

Further alternative road alignments to meet a repositioned bridge have been previously suggested to OCC by APC. Figure 8 shows an alternative route crossing the corner of the drainage pond to achieve minimum curvature in the road alignment. Both alignments provide viable routes. The choice is a balance between the engineering elements of the length of embanked approach to the bridge and navigating the route in respect of the pond and landfill.

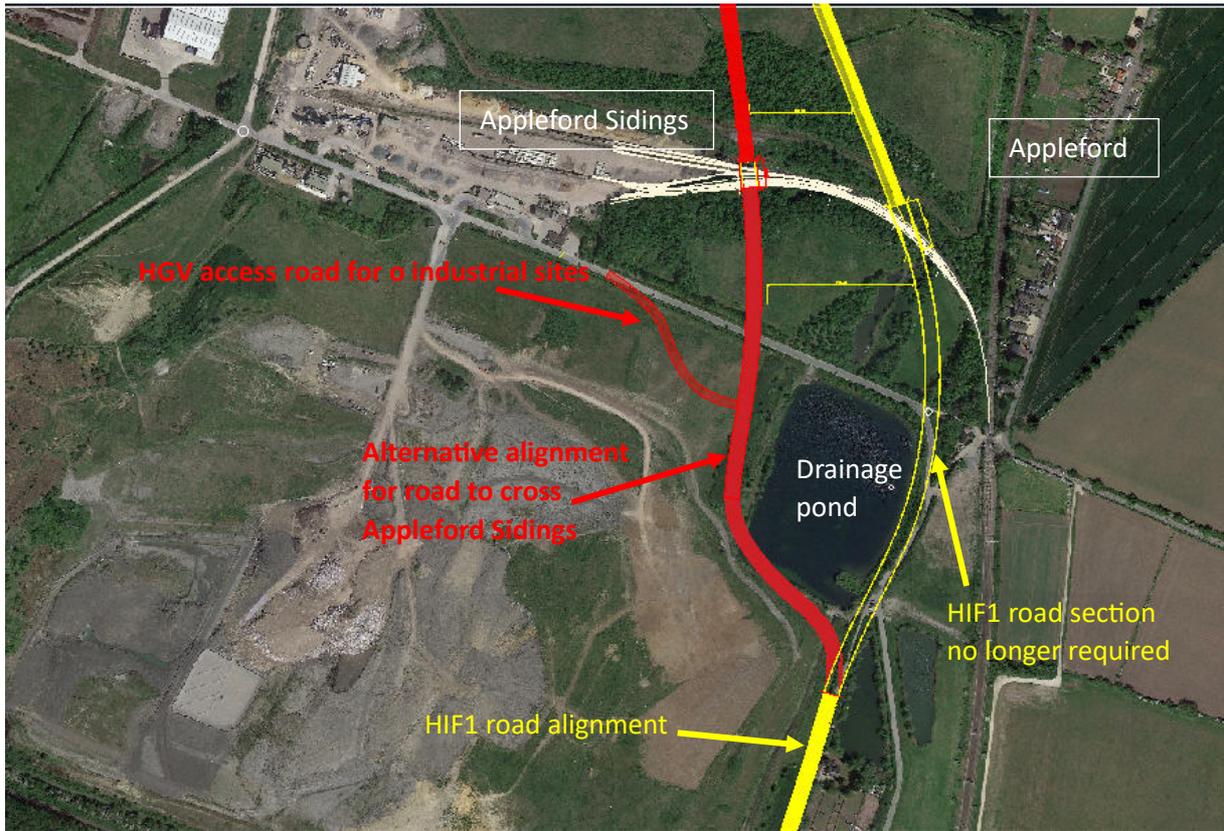


Figure 6 Alternative road position approaching the repositioned bridge crossing Appleford Sidings

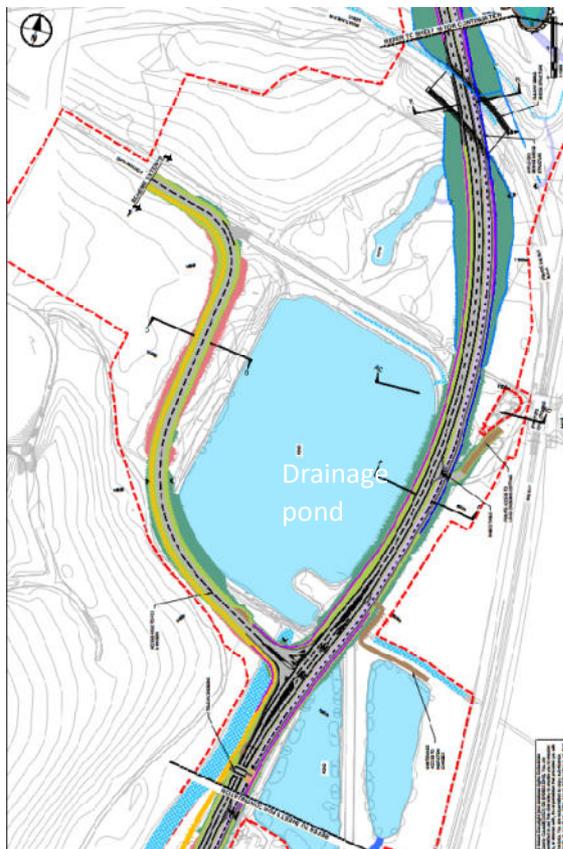


Figure 7 HIF1 proposed Road alignment south of Appleford Sidings. Showing branch road around perimeter of drainage pond.

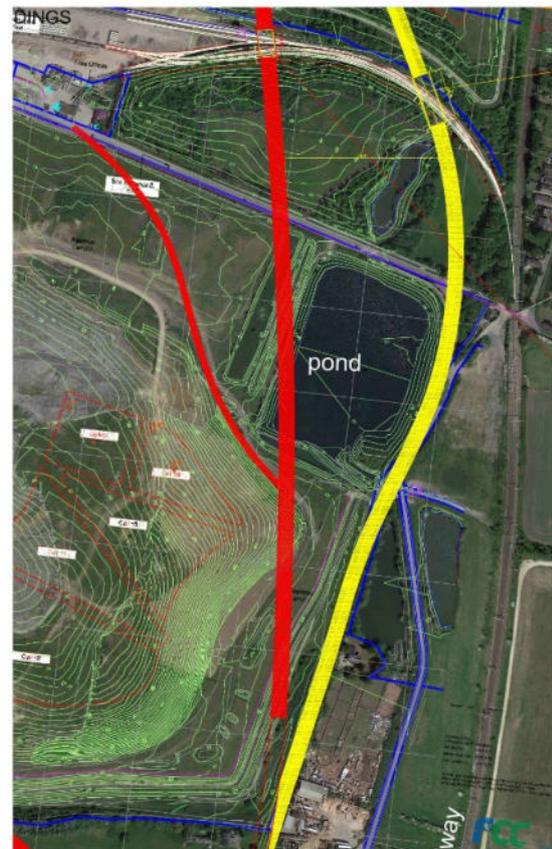


Figure 8 Second alternative alignment of the road approaching a repositioned bridge over Appleford Sidings.



Figure 9. View of the tracks at Appleford Sidings showing the position of an alternative bridge crossing over the tracks.



Figure 10. View of the immediate surroundings of the alternative bridge position.

Footnotes

Footnote 1 Page 46 Report to Cabinet 21 July 2020 Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund from Director of Growth and Economy

Didcot to Culham River Crossing	Support / Positive	Object / Negative	Suggestion / Consideration	Question
General (no specific reasoning)	136	1	0	0
Traffic Impacts	81	44	9	4
Environmental / Archaeological / Historical	15	62	38	13
Autonomous Vehicles / Pods	0	1	2	0
Cycle Infrastructure - Scheme Design (including crossings)	35	8	36	9
Pedestrian Infrastructure - Scheme Design (including crossings)	16	3	20	5
Highway Design (including speed limits, weight restrictions, junctions, roundabouts)	22	51	80	23
Bus Infrastructure (including bus lanes, bus stops, bus services)	0	0	8	1
Onward cycling connections	1	5	20	6
Impact on other villages / towns / junctions	22	42	14	3
Safety	5	7	4	1
Construction	0	1	4	1
Public Rights of Way	0	1	7	0
Economic	0	0	1	0
Other	1	15	30	6
Total	334	241	273	72

Footnote 2: Para 35 Report to Cabinet 21 July 2020 Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund from Director of Growth and Economy.

*“Responses to many of these objections and queries are provided in the Frequently Asked Questions document, which can be found in the consultation materials within **Annex 2**. The responses to the consultation are set out in the spreadsheet and PDF embedded in **Annex 3**. In many cases, such as with local stakeholders, impacted landowners, parish councils, and other organisations, further engagement will be undertaken, where appropriate, to address the issues raised directly with the respondents.”*

Footnote 3 Appleford on Thames position paper 5 January 2021 (Extract)

3.7 ROAD BRIDGE - CONCLUSION

Appleford considers that it will not be possible to resolve the difficulties of taking a road over Appleford sidings whilst protecting Appleford from visual intrusion, traffic noise, light pollution and harmful particulates.

Appleford requires that this section of the road be re-positioned at ground level. While this will require some revised design, it will have the immediate benefits in terms of cost savings and reduction of worst effects of noise, and pollution health risks for residents.

Footnote 4 Appleford on Thames Petition report 16 July 2021 (Extract)

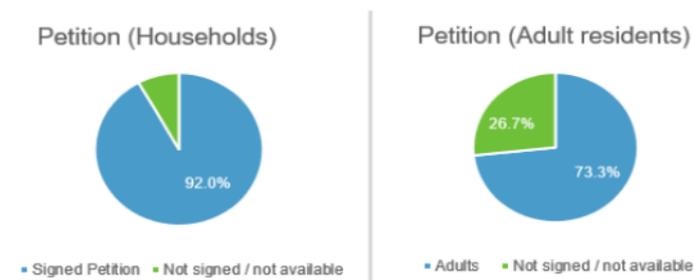
VILLAGE PETITION & RESULTS

Concerned that its voice is not being heard and valid concerns are not being listened to, Appleford now 'Petitions' OCC (& the Vale of White Horse DC on planning) to: -

Re-design and amend the elevated road and flyover bridge section to provide adequate separation (200m-250m) from Appleford residences.

Respect the wishes of residences to move the short section of carriageway & demonstrate that effective measures will be taken along its entire length to mitigate the damage that an elevated road will cause the environment and the health and well being of the local community.

Recommend rejection of any planning application for Scheme C where the elevated road is less than 200m from Appleford dwellings to protect the health & wellbeing of residents.



92% of village households signed the petition in support.

73% of residents signed the Petition. Four people said they were not interested.

Appleford residents through this petition, **request an immediate reassessment of the alignment of this section of the road** for the need to protect the health and future wellbeing of the people of Appleford to be recognised.

Footnote 5 Oxfordshire County Council Response to Appleford Parish Councils Position Paper 19-03-2021 (extract)

1.0 - Executive Summary

1.1 - Appleford Parish Council (APC) has requested the alignment for the Didcot to Culham River Crossing, part of the Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund Scheme (HIF1) be moved further west from the village, as set out in the APC Position Paper 7th January 2021. APC supports the proposed HIF1 road and river crossing but would like the bridge over the rail sidings to be reviewed.

1.2 - After numerous and extensive periods of consultation with the local community and stakeholders, Cabinet resolved to approve the HIF1 preferred alignments on 21st July 2020. No representations were made at the Cabinet meeting.

1.3 - Officers have reviewed various options in response to the APC Position Paper and for reasons of land-use, topography, transport planning, environmental and cost constraints, the current and approved alignment, with mitigation, still offers the best option for the new road and bridges between Didcot and Culham.