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By email only

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31<sup>st</sup> May 2023

Dear Emily

**REFERENCE NO: R3.0138/21**

**PROPOSAL: The dualling of the A4130 carriageway (A4130 Widening) from the Milton Gate Junction eastwards, including the construction of three roundabouts;**

- A road bridge over the Great Western Mainline (Didcot Science Bridge) and realignment of the A4130 north east of the proposed road bridge including the relocation of a lagoon;
- Construction of a new road between Didcot and Culham (Didcot to Culham River Crossing) including the construction of three roundabouts, a road bridge over the Appleford railway sidings and road bridge over the River Thames;
- Construction of a new road between the B4015 and A415 (Clifton Hampden bypass), including the provision of one roundabout and associated junctions; and
- Controlled crossings, footways and cycleways, landscaping, lighting, noise barriers and sustainable drainage systems. at A linear site comprising a corridor between the A34 Milton Interchange and the B4015 north of Clifton Hampden including part of the A4130 east of the A34 Milton Interchange, land between Didcot and the former Didcot A Power Station and the Great Western Mainline, land to the north of Didcot where it crosses a private railway sidings and the River Thames to the west of Appleford-on-Thames before joining the A415 west of Culham Station, land to the south of Culham Science Centre through to a connection with the B4015 north of Clifton Hampden

We note the submission of further Information in relation to the above planning application. We have the following comments on behalf of the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust. As a wildlife conservation focused organisation, our comments refer specifically to impacts on species and their habitats which may occur as a result of the proposed development.

BBOWT notes the submission of further information in relation to this application but we maintain our objection on the following grounds:



- 1. The proposed development raises serious concerns about the negative impact on breeding and wintering birds across the whole scheme including disturbance during construction and operation and accidental mortality from collision with vehicles.**

We have not found any further information in relation to this concern. We therefore stand by point 1 of our responses dated 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022 which are appended to this response.

- 2. The proposed development raises serious concerns about the negative impact on the final scheme proposed for the Hanson restoration area at Bridge Farm, Sutton Courtenay including:**
  - a) Impact on priority habitat**
  - b) Impact on birds and other wildlife**
  - c) Impact on the nature reserve for the visiting public**

We have not found any further information in relation to this concern. We therefore stand by point 2 of our responses dated 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022 which are appended to this response.

### **3. Biodiversity Net Gain assessment**

We note that the changes that have been made to the Biodiversity Net Gain assessment in relation to the Hanson Restoration Area.

The applicant's revised Biodiversity Net Gain assessment indicates that 532 urban trees are to be planted and these have been assumed to be 'Medium' sized urban trees in 'Moderate' condition taking 29 years to reach the target condition and delivering 61 habitat units.

To qualify as Medium size in the Urban Street tree part of the metric then there has to be reasonable certainty of the tree being 30cm in diameter (e.g. 94.2cm in girth) at 30 years after planting.

The new Defra 4.0 User Guide states:

*"8.3.13. Size classes for newly planted trees should be classified by a projected size relevant to the project timeframe.*

- most newly planted street trees should be categorised as 'small'*
- evidence is required to justify the input of larger size classes"*

We therefore consider it would be reasonable to suggest that the 532 individual trees should be categorised as 'small' within the metric or evidence should be provided to justify the use of 'medium' size in this instance.

If the authority was to decide that this scheme should go ahead, we would suggest that the applicant should provide an additional nature reserve of appropriate size and quality in order to compensate for the loss of priority habitat and potential impact on priority habitat and priority species, particularly in the Hanson Restoration Area (see our previous responses – sections 1 and 2) which will result from the proposed scheme.

We hope that these comments are useful. Please do not hesitate to get in touch should you wish to discuss any of the matters raised.

Yours sincerely

Nicky Warden

Public Affairs and Planning Officer

**Appendix 1 BBOWT response to R3 013821 Didcot Road Scheme FINAL dated 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

**Appendix 2 BBOWT 2<sup>nd</sup> response to R3 013821 Didcot Road Scheme final dated 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022**