



DCO Submission

Planning Statement

Appendix 3: Passenger Rail Station Note

Document 5.4C

On behalf of  
Oxfordshire Railfreight Limited

Prepared by Oxalis Planning  
March 2026

# THE INTERACTION BETWEEN OXFORDSHIRE STRATEGIC RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE (OxSRFI) AND A POTENTIAL NEW PASSENGER STATION AT ARDLEY (IN ITS FORMER LOCATION)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Background to OxSRFI proposals

- 1.1 This note has been prepared on behalf of Oxfordshire Railfreight Limited (**Applicant**) to accompany the Development Consent Order (**DCO**) application for its Oxfordshire Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (**OxSRFI**) proposals. Details of the OxSRFI proposals are set out in the application documents including the Environmental Statement and the Planning Statement. Where reference in this Statement is made to the Main Site, this refers to the area to be occupied by the rail terminal, the rail served warehousing and the Central Hub.
- 1.2 The OxSRFI proposals provide significant infrastructure investment, including improving the accessibility of the Main Site through public transport, pedestrian and cycle improvements. A public transport strategy has been developed which provides for a combination of diverted and new bus services. This focuses on bus services to and from Bicester, connecting to Bicester rail stations and bus station for travel to and from wider destinations, and bus service connections to Heyford Park. The strategy incorporates flexibility to explore further bus service route destinations, for example Banbury. Implementation of the public transport strategy will ensure that the Main Site is well served by public transport and provides employees at OxSRFI with opportunities for non-car-based modes of transport. Details of the approach to sustainable travel is set out in the Sustainable Transport Strategy (ES Appendix 3.1).

### Purpose of this note

- 1.3 In progressing its OxSRFI proposals, the Applicant recognises that OxSRFI is within proximity of the former Ardley Station, which was closed in 1963<sup>1</sup>. The railway industry (Department for Transport, Network Rail, Chiltern Railways) is not actively promoting the reinstatement of a station in the Ardley area. Oxfordshire County Council's recently-published 2040 Rail Vision has noted that a station at Ardley could be reinstated by the end of the next decade "if feasible"<sup>2</sup> but has not identified how this would be funded, or whether the proposals have in-principle support from the railway industry. Further, there are proposals for a New Town at Upper Heyford which includes proposals to explore the potential for a new passenger station. Within this context, whilst we are not aware of any formal technical work having been commissioned in line with Network Rail or DfT guidance to test the viability of a new station proposal, the Applicant has given consideration to the potential for proposals to be advanced by other parties for the delivery of a new passenger station.
- 1.4 The purpose of this note is to demonstrate that the OxSRFI proposal would not prejudice the delivery of a passenger station at Ardley in its former location. The note also identifies works forming part of OxSRFI that may assist proposals for a new passenger station being brought forward by other parties.

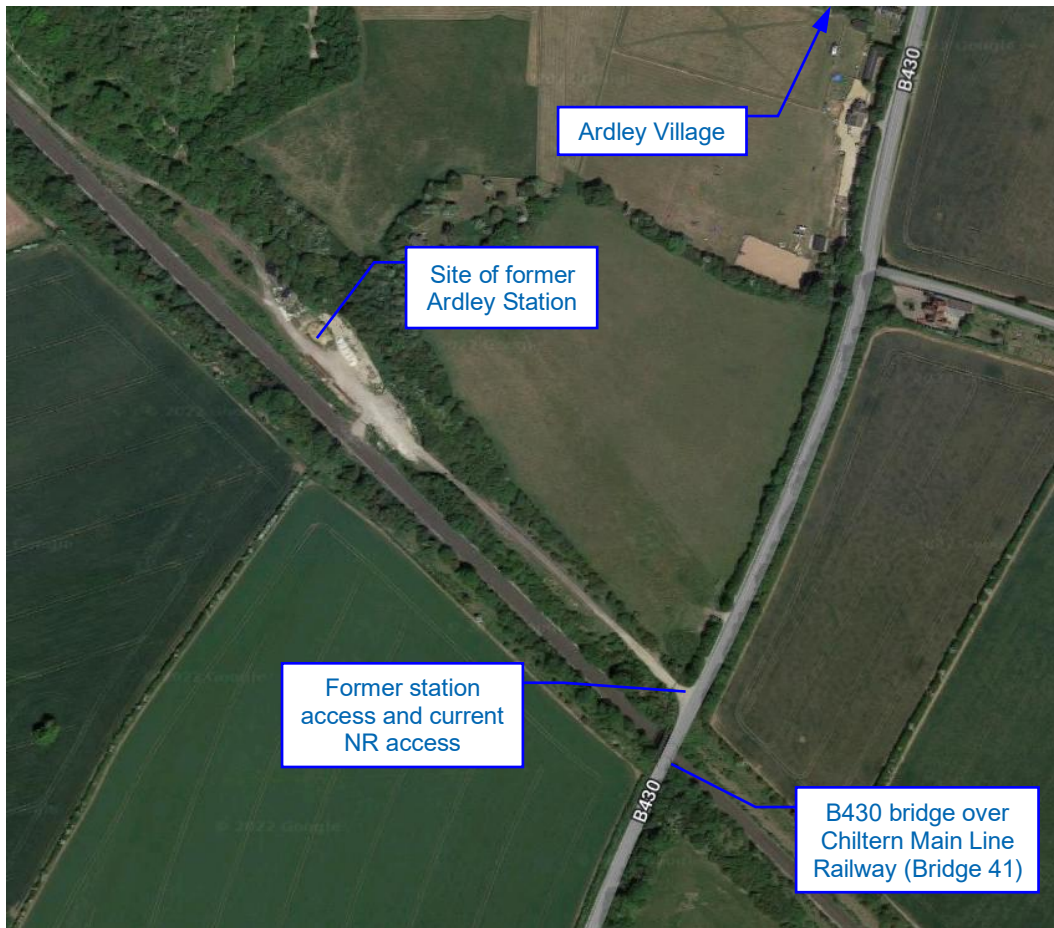
## 2. POTENTIAL ARDLEY STATION LOCATION

- 2.1 The former Ardley Station was located on the Chiltern Main Line, just to the west of where the B430 (formerly the A43 prior to opening of the M40) crosses the railway (ELR: **NJA3**). The location is shown in **Figure 1** below.

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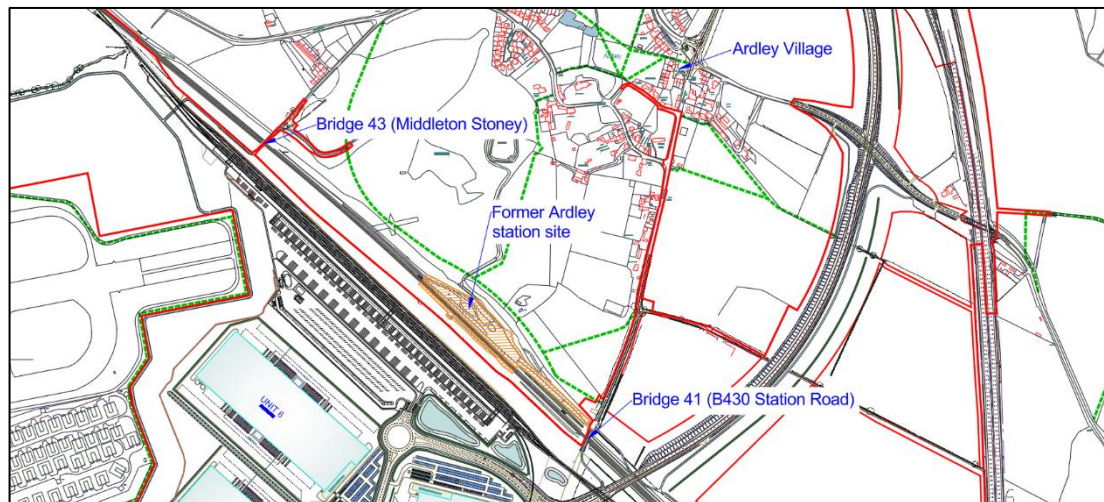
<sup>1</sup> Bicester local history website ([www.blhs.org.uk](http://www.blhs.org.uk))

<sup>2</sup> Appendix A page 67, third bullet point



**Figure 1:** Location of former Ardley Station

- 2.2 For the purpose of this note, it is assumed that the potential location for a new passenger station is the same as the former Ardley Station location (**Ardley Station Site**).
- 2.3 For the avoidance of doubt, the Ardley Station Site falls outwith the Order Limits associated with the OxSRFI. The extent of the Order Limits within proximity of the Ardley Station Site is shown on **Figure 2** below. Accordingly, the Ardley Station Site is unaffected by the OxSRFI proposals.



**Figure 2:** Order Limits (in red) in the vicinity of the Ardley Station Site

### 3. ASSESSMENT OF RAIL RELATED ISSUES

3.1 This section of the note considers rail related issues associated with the development of a new passenger station on the former Ardley Station Site.

#### Network location and proximity to existing stations

It is assumed that the main station entrance would, as previously, be on the opposite side of the Chiltern Main Line to the OxSRFI, using the former station highway access from the B430 adjacent to the Station Road overbridge (Bridge 41), as well as pedestrian and cycle access via Bridge 43.

3.2 The proposed OxSRFI connections into the Chiltern Main Line are as follows:<sup>3</sup>

- Southern connection ELR NAJ3 12 miles 24 chains;
- Northern connection ELR NAJ3 14 miles 8 chains.

#### Existing site physical and topographical considerations

3.3 The Chiltern Main Line is a two-track railway which runs through the entire length between the proposed northern and southern OxSRFI main line connections on a constant rising gradient south east to north west at 1 in 562.

3.4 The former Ardley Station Site is located alongside the main line which is in cutting and previously accommodated four running lines at this point, with two loop lines for the northbound and southbound station platforms respectively and two through lines for other north and southbound trains passing the site (**Figure 3** below). The former Ardley Station buildings and sidings for local goods were situated to the north of the main line with the cutting widened out to create a bowl. It is considered that sufficient space is likely to exist at this location to accommodate the facilities for a small stopping station, including new station platforms (for trains formed of up to 12 coaches or 240m length), buildings, bus interchange and car parking spaces.



**Figure 3:** Photo of the former Ardley station and footbridge (former Bridge 42), taken from the western platform facing south towards the B430 overbridge (Bridge 41)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> References to "ELR" relate to Network Rail Engineers Line References for the respective main line routes, expressed as three-letter acronyms with the locations shown in miles and chains

<sup>4</sup> Photo sourced from James Bentley Archive

3.5 There is an existing public right of way at Bucknells Farm level crossing (ELR NAJ3 12 miles 27 chains) south east of the Ardley Station Site which could be a constraint on a new station. As explained below this is proposed to be diverted onto an overbridge as part of the OxSRFI development and would not therefore provide a constraint to provision of a new passenger rail station.

**OxSRFI physical and topographical considerations**

3.6 The OxSRFI Main Site is located to the south west side of the Chiltern Main Line.

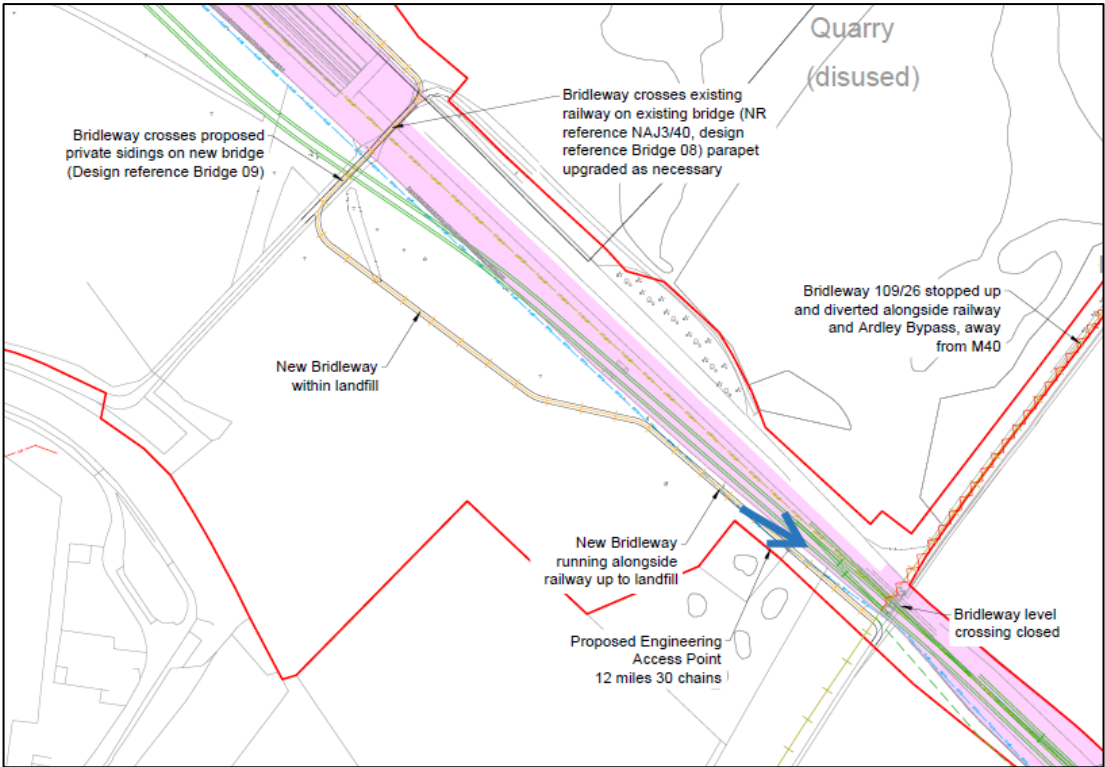
3.7 The Rail infrastructure includes:

- (i) The main line connections;
- (ii) Rail chords to/from the rail freight interchange sidings;
- (iii) The rail freight interchange itself;
- (iv) Passive provision clearances for future provision of electrification.

3.8 New bridge spans will be provided over the internal rail chord linking the rail freight interchange with the southern main line connection.

3.9 As the rail freight interchange needs to be level, this will require the rail chords between the main line connections to be graded. This in turn will require significant earthworks along the full length of the south west Network Rail boundary. However, most of these will be set back away from the main line boundary itself.

3.10 As above, it is proposed to remove the existing at-grade foot crossing at Bucknells Farm, which will be diverted onto an existing adjacent bridge no. 40 (**Figure 4** below).



**Figure 4:** Proposed closure of Bucknells Farm level crossing and alternative bridleway route

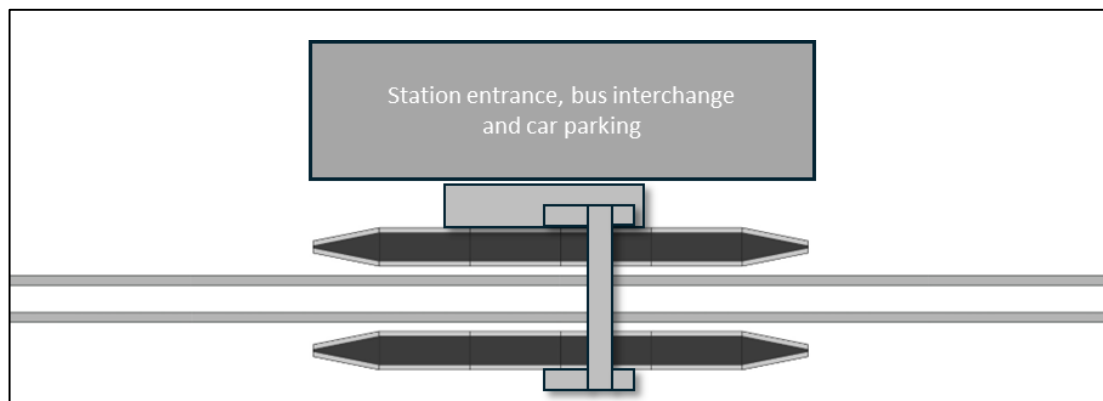
- 3.11 Highway works within the vicinity of the former Ardley Station Site which form part of the OxSRFI proposals are set out in Section [4] below.

**OxSRFI measures which could assist with the delivery of a potential new passenger station by a third party**

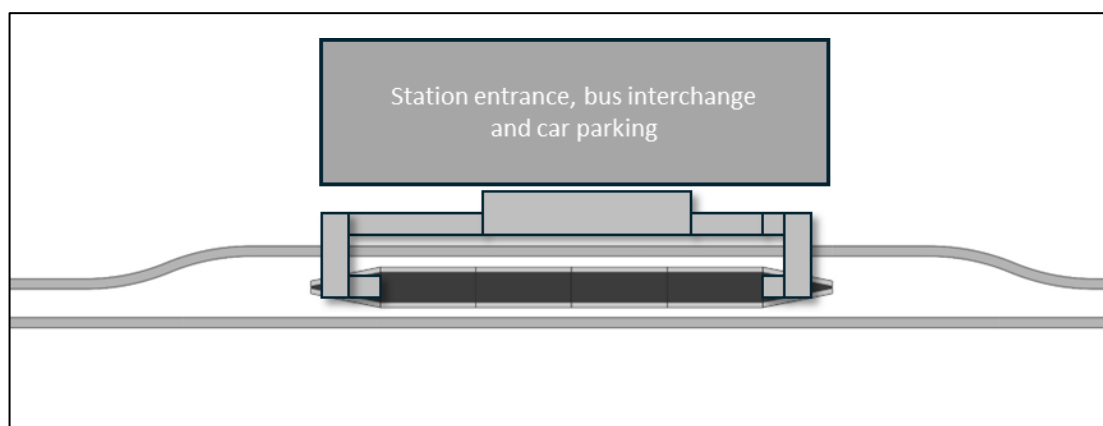
- 3.12 The footprint of the former Ardley Station Site, including the former station platforms on either side of the main line and the former station building and highway access on the northern side of the main line, would fall outside of the Order Limits. Accordingly, it would not be affected by any physical works associated with OxSRFI.
- 3.13 The siting of the OxSRFI northern and southern main line connections and signals would be sufficiently far apart to allow a new station on the former Ardley Station Site to be sited between the two. Signalling forming part of the OxSRFI proposals will increase the capacity on the Chiltern Main Line between Aynho Junction and Bicester North and could also potentially be used to control passenger trains serving a new station on the former Ardley Station Site. This could reduce the investment in new signalling otherwise required to facilitate a new station, should a third party want to look at this option in the future.

**Physical works understood to be required to create a new passenger station**

- 3.14 As the Chiltern Main Line is a two-track railway a new station facility replicating the role of other local stations would require two platform faces. This could be achieved by providing a new platform face to the outside of each main line (**Figure 5**) or via an island platform situated between both lines (**Figure 6**) accessed by stairs and lifts.



**Figure 5:** Twin platform illustrative station layout (schematic, not to scale)



**Figure 6:** Island platform illustrative station layout (schematic, not to scale)



- 3.19 New signal infrastructure works would require to be delivered to facilitate the operation of a new station. The delivery of signalling infrastructure forming part of the OxSRFI proposals would permit greater numbers of train paths on the section of the main line between Banbury and Bicester, and assist with the regulation of trains serving a new passenger station (as these could be held by signals inside of the two OxSRFI main line connections). Delivery of the OxSRFI proposals would thereby reduce the complexity and costs associated with signalling scheme changes needed to facilitate a new passenger station.

#### 4. ASSESSMENT OF HIGHWAYS RELATED ISSUES

- 4.1 This section of the note considers highways related issues associated with the development of a new passenger station on the former Ardley Station Site.

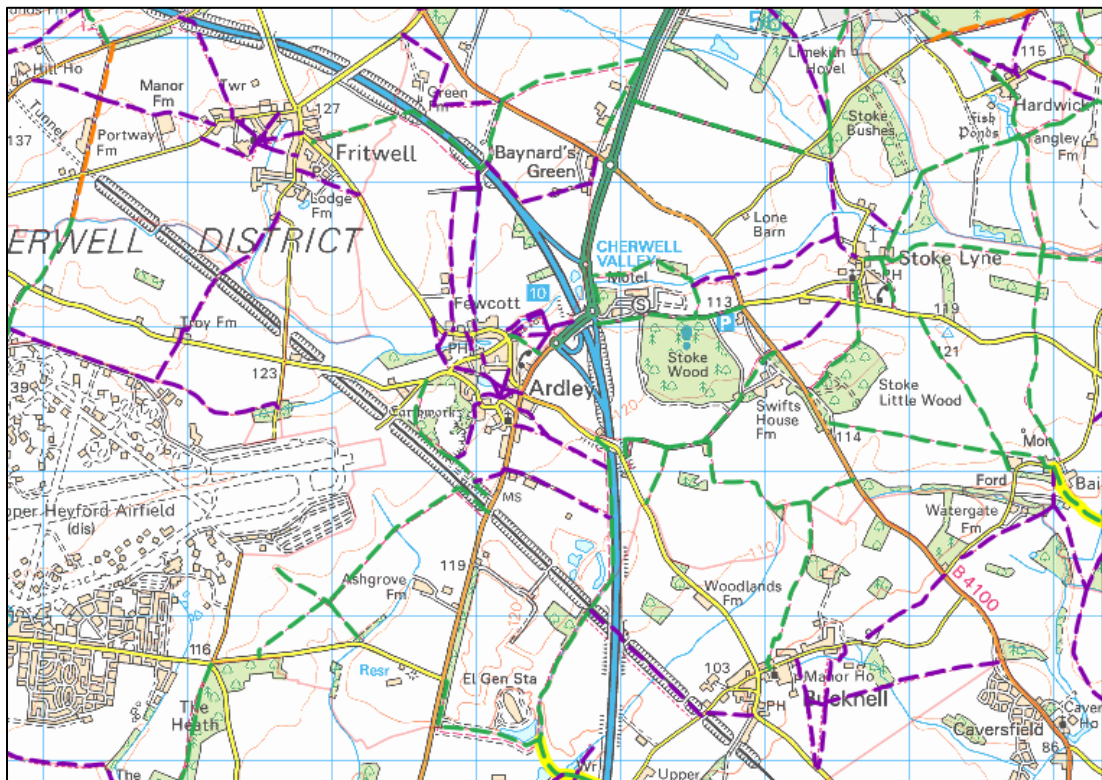
##### Existing vehicle access

- 4.2 Vehicle access to the former Ardley Station was taken from the B430, just north of the railway overbridge. The same access to the former Ardley Station Site is currently used by Network Rail to access the main line for track maintenance purposes. The location is shown in **Figure 1**.

The existing Network Rail access has very limited visibility onto the B430. This is principally due to the narrowing of the B430 where it crosses the railway, and the location of the bridge parapets. Alterations to the point of access or signalisation would be required to accommodate a suitable access.

##### Existing pedestrian and cycle access

There are no existing pedestrian or cycle facilities serving the former Ardley Station Site. There are existing public rights of way (PRoW) in the form of footpaths and bridleways that cross through the adjoining fields as shown in **Figure 8** below. However, there are no facilities over the B430 railway overbridge and the route through Ardley Wood is of poor quality.



**Figure 8:** Extract from Oxfordshire County Council PRoW map showing footpaths

- 4.3 The existing routes would not be suitable for use by most pedestrians and cyclists wishing to access a station from, for example, Ardley or Heyford Park.

#### **OxSRFI scheme proposals and the benefit to any future new station**

- 4.4 The OxSRFI scheme proposals incorporate the following works in the vicinity of the existing Network Rail access to the Ardley Station Site:

- Construction of the B430 Ardley Bypass to remove B430 through traffic from Ardley, with construction of a new bridge over the railway around 160m east of the existing B430 bridge;
- Providing a new roundabout south of the railway line on the B430 to provide access into the OxSRFI development;
- Downgrading of the current B430 between Ardley and the new roundabout which would provide:
  - To the south of the Network Rail (former station) access a shared use cycle track which connects to the OxSRFI access roundabout; and
  - To the north of the Network Rail (former station) access and up to the southern edge of Ardley village, a suitable route for cyclists and horse-riders as well as maintaining access to properties.

#### **Effect on vehicular access to the former Ardley Station Site**

- 4.5 With the above changes in place, vehicular access to the Ardley Station Site will be via Ardley Village, which will retain connections to Fritwell, Bucknell and to M40 J10.
- 4.6 Anyone seeking vehicular access to the former Ardley Station Site from the south would need to use the new B430 Ardley Bypass and then travel south through Ardley to the Ardley Station Site.
- 4.7 The physical changes to the road layout, with the current B430 south of the Network Rail access becoming a shared use cycle track, would mean that the visibility issues identified for the existing access are no longer relevant as vehicles on the B430 will be using the new Ardley Bypass.

#### **Effects on access for pedestrians and cyclists**

- 4.8 The OxSRFI scheme includes a comprehensive network of new and diverted facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. The following improvements (see **Figure 9** below which is extracted from the Access and Rights of Way Plans) will be directly beneficial to future pedestrian and cyclist access to the Ardley Station Site should a new passenger station be opened in the future:
- The link along the former B430 into Ardley which will be downgraded (between points 21 to 28 on Figure 9 below) as described above;
  - The footway/cycleway link south of the Network Rail access to the new OxSRFI access roundabout (between points 21 and 22 on Figure 9 below) which will continue to or towards:
    - Heyford Park;
    - Middleton Stoney; and
    - The western edge of Bicester.



## 5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The railway industry (Department for Transport, Network Rail, Chiltern Railways) is not actively promoting the reinstatement of a station in the Ardley area. Oxfordshire County Council's recently-published 2040 Rail Vision has noted that a station at Ardley could be reinstated by the end of the next decade "if feasible"<sup>7</sup> but has not identified how this would be funded, or whether the proposals have in-principle support from the railway industry.
- 5.2 Nevertheless, in progressing its OxSRFI scheme proposals, the Applicant has assessed whether the OxSRFI scheme would prejudice the delivery of a new passenger station if it were brought forward by others in the future. An assumption has been made that the location for a new passenger station would be the former Ardley Station Site, the location for the original Ardley Station until its closure in 1963.
- 5.3 The Ardley Station Site sits outwith the Order Limits and is unaffected by the OxSRFI scheme proposals. The Applicant has however considered some of the rail and highways issues that may be relevant to progression of proposals for a new passenger station by other parties.
- 5.4 In terms of rail related issues, the assessment carried out on behalf the Applicant has concluded that, in principle, there is no obstacle to constructing a passenger station based on initial consideration of engineering and topographical issues and the likely scope of the station facility. The siting of the OxSRFI northern and southern main line connections and signals would be sufficiently far apart to allow a new station at Ardley to be sited between the two. Furthermore, the delivery of signalling infrastructure forming part of the OxSRFI proposals would assist with the operation of a new passenger station and reduce the scope and likely costs associated with signalling scheme changes to facilitate a new passenger station.
- 5.5 In terms of highways and accessibility related issues, the OxSRFI scheme will deliver a number of potential benefits. In particular, improvements proposed as part of OxSRFI to pedestrian and cycle links and to public transport services, will greatly improve accessibility to a potential new passenger station at Ardley. The existing vehicular access from the B430 to the Ardley Station Site is substandard and is not considered suitable for access to a new passenger station. The OxSRFI proposals, through moving through traffic from the B430 to the proposed Ardley Bypass will substantially resolve the key issue relating to access from the B430 to the Ardley Station and help to address the potential access constraints, with all vehicle traffic (including bus services) accessing the station site via the B430 from Ardley.
- 5.6 It is considered therefore, that the OxSRFI proposals do not prejudice proposals being advanced by any other parties for the delivery of a new passenger station at Ardley. Moreover, the OxSRFI proposals will deliver rail and accessibility improvements which could help facilitate such proposals.

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<sup>7</sup> Appendix A page 67, third bullet point

**Appendix A - OxRAIL 2040:Plan for Rail, Oxfordshire County Council, November 2025**