



Address to Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Item: Citizens' Assembly

25 June 2025 – Robin Tucker, Co-Chair, CoHSAT

The Citizens' Assembly was a huge contrast to the soundbites and misinformation that too often cloud the transport debate in Oxfordshire.

The 34 participants had the benefit of 45 hours over six weeks to listen consider and most important ... deliberate evidence from over 30 experts and other witnesses, 1350 times as long as my time today.

Let's pull three things from the results:

1. Informed citizens are hugely in favour of public and active transport, and they described the 'virtuous' circle of charging and restricting motor traffic and using the funds and the space to improve bus, cycle and walking routes almost exactly as Luke Marion did last week.
2. They weren't unanimous. Even the most popular recommendation, to improve Park and Rides, got 97% support meaning one of the 34 didn't support it. You'll always have objectors even to best thought-out schemes that work for the most people.
3. Communications. They want you to sell the vision, say why and explain the options. Your response, which describes travel websites and wayfinding only starts to tackle the third of those and is not nearly enough.

Now, you can't put the whole county through a 45-hour programme with Tim Schwanen and 30 experts. But there was a point in the process where this cross-section of the Oxfordshire population grasped that if you keep adding cars to roads, things grind to a halt – so obvious in so many of our towns; but if you turn that round, subtracting cars and creating a multimodal system that is well-funded and works, then things work better for everyone.

What you now need to do is distil that process, take it to the county, and engage people in designing the future system that makes the shift for their towns and areas.