

Divisions Affected - All

CABINET

21 February 2023

Response to Oxford University's Citizens' Jury recommendations relating to transport, health and climate change in Oxford

Report by Corporate Director Environment & Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
 - (a) approve the council's response to the recommendations resulting from the Citizens' Jury;
 - (b) support the development of a policy on the future use of juries and their place within the council's decision-making process, as resolved by the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Executive Summary

2. Over several weekends in June and July 2022, Oxford University convened a Citizens' Jury called Street Voice to explore issues related to transport, health and climate change in Oxford. Oxfordshire County Council agreed to formally receive a report of the jury recommendations and consider these through its democratic process.
3. Following deliberations, the 16 jurors agreed 41 priority recommendations, by consensus, in response to the core question 'How can we travel where we need to in Oxford in a way that's good for health and the climate?' and three sub questions:
 - What do people who live in, work in or visit Oxford need so that they can move around safely and easily?
 - How are people's travel needs best balanced with the need to promote health and fairness and tackle climate change?
 - What can Oxfordshire County Council do to help achieve these aims?
4. The council's transport policy team has carefully considered each priority recommendation in the context of the local transport and connectivity plan and

its underlying policies, the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan and existing and planned schemes of work arising from the previous Local Transport Plan 4, 'Connecting Oxfordshire'.

5. Overall, the council has been able to respond positively to 25 of the 41 priority recommendations, 18 of which are already being actioned and seven are actively under consideration. A further five priority recommendations have been identified as possible for the council to consider in due course.
6. Unfortunately, eleven of the priority recommendations from the jury are not feasible for the council to progress. This is primarily because the budget is not available or it is outside the sphere of influence of the local authority.
7. Oxford University's report with the Citizens' Jury recommendations is set out in Annex 1. The council's response to the recommendations is in Annex 2.

Background

8. In November 2021 a group of researchers from Oxford University approached the county council to discuss their aspiration to undertake a deliberative engagement activity (Citizens' Jury) to explore urban transport and health matters within Oxford City.
9. The project was called Street Voice - A Citizens' Jury on Transport, Climate Change and Health in Oxford. The University identified Headington as their preferred locality as an area clearly with the city but not part of a pre-existing low traffic neighbourhood (LTN) pilot scheme.
10. The scope of the research was not the consideration of specific transport policies, schemes or LTNs but rather a wide exploration of transport planning, climate and health issues and the interdependencies between them. The jurors were tasked with one core question and three sub questions:

Core question:

How can we travel where we need to in Oxford in a way that's good for health and the climate.

Sub questions:

- What do people who live in, work in or visit Oxford need so that they can move around safely and easily?
 - How are people's travel needs best balanced with the need to promote health and fairness and tackle climate change?
 - What can Oxfordshire County Council do to help achieve these aims?
11. Oxfordshire County Council officers worked with the research team to enable the jury to take place. This included providing technical specialists to act as a witness for the jury on matters relating to the role of local government in terms of budgets and decision making and the process of transport planning.

12. The selection of the 16 jury members from the Headington area was wholly undertaken by the University research team and officers did not participate in the design of the research or the deliberations of the jury.
13. Political Group Leaders were briefed (prior to the commencement of the research) and there was cross-party representation on the advisory group that oversaw the design and development of the jury (including the divisional member). To ensure the objectivity of the research and any subsequent decision making, no elected members participated in the deliberations of the jury or attended the sessions.
14. The Citizens' Jury was convened over several weekends in June and July 2022. A full report has been prepared by Oxford University, as set out in Annex 1 to this report: Street Voice, Citizens' Jury report on transport, health and climate change in Oxford.
15. On 19 July 2022 Cabinet received an early update on the Citizens' Jury, recommended that the report was received by Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and recorded its thanks to participants who took part in the jury.
16. On 30 September 2022, Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the Citizens' Jury report and a presentation from report authors Dr Alison Chisholm, Qualitative Researcher at the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, and Dr Juliet Carpenter, Research Fellow at Kellogg College, accompanied by members of the citizens' jury. The committee resolved (1) that the information be noted, and the members of the Citizen's Jury be thanked for the work carried out; and (2) that Cabinet be asked to adopt a clear policy on the future use of juries and their place within the council's decision-making process.

Recommendations from the jury

17. Overall, the jury developed 157 recommendations following four days of deliberations, with 41 of these receiving consensus across the group as 'priority recommendations' for the council.
18. In putting forward the recommendations, the jurors recognised that:
 - Some of the recommendations concern actions that Oxfordshire County Council itself could take, while others would require the council to collaborate with, or influence, other agencies or levels of government.
 - The council's financial resources are limited and acknowledged that not everything on the long list of proposals could necessarily be implemented.
 - The jury were not given information to inform an economic analysis of trade-offs, which could have helped them to prioritise different proposals within a defined budget.

19. The full set of priority recommendations, grouped under three main headers: 1) public transport, 2) active travel and 3) private vehicles, motorised transport and congestion are set out in Annex 1 to this report: Street Voice, Citizens' Jury report on transport, health and climate change in Oxford prepared by the University of Oxford.

Council response and next steps

20. All priority recommendations from the jury have been considered carefully by the council's transport policy team. This is in the context of the recently adopted Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and its underlying policies and supporting strategies, the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan and existing and planned schemes of work arising from the previous Local Transport Plan 4, 'Connecting Oxfordshire'.
21. Annex 2 to this report sets out the council's response to each priority recommendation, classifying each into one of four categories, the role of the council in taking it forward, the area of the council responsible and details of progress already made.
22. Overall, the council has been able to respond positively to 25 of the 41 priority recommendations, 18 of which are already being actioned and seven are actively under consideration. A further five priority recommendations have been identified as possible for the council to consider in due course.
23. Unfortunately, eleven of the priority recommendations from the jury are not feasible for the council to progress. Primarily because the level of funding / budget required is not available and/or would be very significant, or it is outside of the sphere of influence of the local authority.

Future use of deliberative methodologies

24. The use of a citizens' jury for engaging residents on a key policy area was a first for the council. It reflects the ambitions of the council, as set out in its consultation and engagement strategy 2022 – 2025, to explore new methodologies and tools.
25. Reflecting on the feedback from the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, whilst the Citizens' Jury has proved useful to the council, it is a very resource-intensive and expensive engagement methodology to employ.
26. The recommendation is therefore that it should be used prudently by the council – a maximum of one exercise per year – and only when a policy agenda and democratic cycle lends itself to such approach.
27. Should the council choose to use this methodology again, it is recommended that the resolution of the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and

Scrutiny Committee is upheld and that officers within the Communications, Strategy and Insight service develop a clear policy on the future use of juries and their place within the council's decision-making process.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

28. The proposal to develop a clear policy on the future use of juries supports the council's strategic objective of supporting a vibrant and participatory local democracy and enhancing opportunities for residents to have their say in service development.

Financial Implications

29. There are no specific budgetary implications arising from this report. Where specific Citizens' Jury recommendations are upheld, budget implications will be considered or will already have been considered related to specific planned pieces of work.

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Legal Implications

30. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

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Staff Implications

31. There are no new or additional staff implications arising from this report.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

32. There are no specific equality implications arising from this report. Equality and inclusion impacts were core to the research questions considered within the deliberations of the Citizens' Jury. Where specific Citizens' Jury recommendations are upheld, equalities impact assessments will be completed or will already have been completed related to specific planned pieces of work.

Sustainability Implications

33. There are no specific sustainability implications arising from this report. Sustainability, health and environmental impacts were core to the research and, where specific Citizens' Jury recommendations are upheld, sustainability implications will be considered or will already have been considered related to specific planned pieces of work.

Risk Management

34. As Oxfordshire County Council is not the commissioner or conductor of the Citizens' Jury, research risks associated with the project are held by Oxford University.
35. Reputation risks associated with the consideration of this paper at Cabinet have been carefully considered and will be mitigated against by communications, marketing and engagement service working closely with directorate colleagues and Oxford University, as appropriate.

Bill Cotton

Corporate Director for Environment and Place

Annex 1: Street Voice, Citizens' Jury report on transport, health and climate change in Oxford prepared by the University of Oxford.

Annex 2: Council's response to the Citizens' Jury recommendations.

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