OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Cabinet
Tuesday, 21 June 2022

ADDENDA

4. Questions from County Councillors (Pages 1 - 4)

Questions and responses attached

19. Petitions and Public Address (Pages 5 - 6)

List of speakers attached

13. Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) (Pages 7 - 54)

The report from the Transport Policy Development Working Group is attached.

15. National Bus Strategy - Enhanced Partnership (Pages 55 - 62)

Corrected Annex 4 attached

On page 5, under the heading "Capital and revenue scheme summaries" and sub-heading "New rural bus projects":

New Cherwell Valley service: should read
"- linking to Kidlington/Oxford Parkway, serving Kirtlington, Bletchingdon and Hampton Poyle (and potentially Lower Heyford, Tackley, Steeple Aston and Weston-on-the-Green, dependent on final service design). There would be integration with premium interurban bus and rail services at Oxford Parkway for onward connections to Oxford city centre."

20. Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 63 - 64)

Updates attached

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CABINET – 21 JUNE 2022

ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Questions	Cabinet Member
1. COUNCILLOR FREDDIE VAN MIERLO Streetlights around Cuxham Road roundabout, industrial estate and Willow close in Watlington have not been working for 9 months. SSE had been contracted to fix the lights on 06/04/2022 but have failed to do so, despite requests by myself and officers to do so. Will the cabinet member for highways write to SSE to urgently rectify the issue?	**COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT** We echo your concerns with this issue and as you will appreciate that as SSE own this network, we have to rely on the timescales they present. However, we have contacted them again and pushed for them to confirm when the work will be carried out and that they endeavour to prioritise this work.
2. COUNCILLOR SALLY POVOLOTSKY The Household Support Fund, how much is being requested from government to support our most vulnerable, and increasingly vulnerable families and individuals in the county, what agencies are we working with and how is this funding being distributed into our society given the funding has to be committed between April 2022 and September 2022? Also what % of increase does this council project will need additional help, and how will be resource that assistance, throughout our services and the wider community initiatives that are being	**COUNCILLOR CALUM MILLER, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE** Residents in Oxfordshire, as across the UK, are facing a cost of living emergency. As food, fuel and transport costs rise well beyond the planned increases in welfare payments and the proposed increases in wages the Council does expect many households to be increasingly affected. As an example, many households are now struggling with the costs of fuel and power – which together account for a higher proportion of family spending in low income households. Extrapolating from national data (The rising cost of living and its impact on individuals in Great Britain - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)), and adjusting for Oxfordshire's levels of deprivation, we estimate that 24,000 adults in Oxfordshire would state that they are behind on payments for gas and electricity. The scale of the challenge is beyond the means of the Council so we will continue to press for a more ambitious and sustained

created by the week and lifelines to their local residents.	response from national government. For now, direct support from government is limited and time-bound. Taking account of this, the Council has can play a role in directing our support to the most economically vulnerable in our communities. Government determines the allocation of Household Support Fund (HSF) to each upper tier local authority. Oxfordshire will receive £3.4m in the second round (approximately £5 per resident). The previous round of £3.4m (October 2021-March 2022) was 100% utilised. For the second round, we will continue our approach of funding free school meal equivalent support in school holiday periods through schools, colleges and early years provides. This works alongside the delegation of funds for emergency welfare schemes delivered through the city and district council in partnership with the voluntary and community sector. FSM support was funded for May half term and the City and District schemes will formally relaunch in mid-June. In developing plans we have engaged with county-wide and local advisory services and the wider voluntary and community sector. In addition to HSF, Council agreed £500,000 of annual revenue funding for emergency welfare support for 2022/23-2025/26. In response to the cost of living emergency we are focussing our limited funding on where we can make the most difference to the most vulnerable through two schemes. Firstly, plans are well underway for a rapid expansion of the Better Housing Better Health scheme (BHBH). BHBH works with the most at risk households to identify energy and cost saving measures that can improve quality of life and help mitigate the impact of energy price rises. Phone consultations will increase from 400 to 2700 during the year and home visits to the most vulnerable from 200 to 500 reaching in total approximately 10% of fuel poor households. The BHBH steering group are building relationships with key partners who serve residents who are likely to be in fuel poverty, such as the Agnes Smith Centre in Blackbird Leys and Citizens Advice. BHBH are training frontline staff about fuel poverty and promoting the BHBH service. The provider of the service is an expert in the field of fuel poverty and is able

Questions	Cabinet Member
	to triage the offer of home visits and use data to ensure we are reaching those who are most likely to be in need. Secondly, we have agreed to support the critical debt and money advice teams from our partners at Citizens Advice with a grant of £210,000 to maintain capacity through 2022/23. Details of these schemes will be fully announced in the coming weeks as details are finalised with the providers. In addition working in partnership with the Oxfordshire Community Foundation, Community First Oxfordshire, Good Food Oxfordshire and OCVA, the Council has used one off grant funding to provide a further round of community resilience grants which will support grass-roots organisations who play a critical role in supporting the most vulnerable remain sustainable into the winter period. £300,000 will support projects across the county. The deadline for applications closed on Thursday 16 June and will be reviewed by a cross-sector grants panel. As part of this grants round, the VCS led a number of workshops to expand access to the scheme.
3. COUNCILLOR FREDDIE VAN MIERLO The Watlington Relief Road is an important piece of local infrastructure that, when delivered, will relieve heavy traffic through the centre of the historic market town, which can then be remodelled to prioritise local business and people. Concerns have been expressed by some that the route would see an increase in HGV traffic. Can the cabinet member confirm that the Watlington Relief Road will fall within the existing area weight restrictions around Watlington	**COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY** OCC can confirm that the Watlington Relief Road scheme has no plans to amend or alter the current weight restriction that is currently enforced around Watlington. The Watlington Relief Road will remain within the existing area weight restriction band which is currently 7.5 tonnes.

Questions	Cabinet Member
thereby preventing through traffic of HGVs, and confirm that there are no plans to change the weight restrictions around Watlington?	
4. COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON How long do you anticipate the 'pause' in the Woodstock Road corridor scheme will last?	**COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY** The Woodstock Road scheme has been paused to take into consideration the Oxford Core Transport Schemes proposals (traffic filters, workplace parking levy and expanded zero emission zone), which would impact traffic levels on the radial routes into the city including Woodstock Road. The Core Transport Schemes are currently being developed prior to consultation later this year. If approved and implemented, then a plan for the next phase will be developed, which will include consideration of Woodstock Road. The responses from the consultation on the Woodstock Road scheme and the input from co-production will be used as a basis for continuing the design of the route. Unfortunately, this may be outside of the Housing and Growth Deal funding window, but alternative funding will be found.

CABINET – 21 June 2022

ITEM 5 – PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

Public Address

The following requests to address the meeting have been agreed by the Chair**.**

Item	**Speakers**
10. Report from the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Jane Hanna
11. SEND top-up funding for schools	Carole Thomson
13. Local Transport and Connectivity Plan	Cllr Charlie Hicks Chris Hancock Graham Smith John Center Deborah Glass Woodin Danny Yee
14. Vision Zero	Alison Hill Peter Barnett Danny Yee Cllr Dan Levy
15. National Bus Strategy – Enhanced Partnership	Danny Yee
17. HIF1 Grant Determination Agreement	Greg O'Broin Richard Harding Cllr Robin Bennett Cllr Charlie Hicks Cllr Ian Middleton

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REPORT OF THE TRANSPORT POLICY DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP – COMMISSIONED BY THE PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Cllr Kieron Mallon
Chair of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee
June 2022

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Working Group recommends Cabinet to consider recommendations 1 to 16 and 18 to 28 of the Transport Policy Development Working Group (see Annex 1) and agree to provide a response for inclusion with the Council report on 12 July 2022.

CONSIDERING THE REPORT

2. This report refers to the Cabinet the report and recommendations of the Transport Policy Development Working Group as agreed by the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 15 June 2022.

3. Under part 3.2 of the Constitution of the Council, the Cabinet shall, in finalising proposals comprising part of the policy framework for submission to the Council for consideration, take into account any recommendations from the relevant scrutiny committee. In submitting their proposals to the Council, the Cabinet will provide its response to the recommendations of the relevant scrutiny committee. In considering the matter, the Council shall have before it the Cabinet's proposals and any report from the relevant scrutiny committee.

Next steps:

4. When the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan is referred to the 12 July meeting of full Council for adoption, the relevant item should include the report of the Transport Policy Development Working Group and a response from the Cabinet to the Working Group's recommendations, including how the Cabinet has taken them into account in finalising the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.

5. On 16 November 2022, the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee shall consider the Cabinet response to the recommendations of the Working Group in accordance with part 6.2, 13(f), of the Constitution of the Council.

Annex: Report of the Transport Policy Working Group

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CONCLUSIONS

The Working Group concludes that —

Conclusion 1: The varying geography and land use density of Oxfordshire means that the potential for active travel to reduce road journeys varies across the county. However, new technology such as e-bikes present increase the potential of active travel and will increasingly do so as costs for consumers decrease over time.

Conclusion 2: Learning from the Netherlands indicates there four key enablers to increasing bike travel:

i. a commitment from the local authority to increasing it;
ii. delivering a comprehensive cycle network which meets the different needs of rural and urban areas;
iii. managing traffic flows; and
iv. building a cycling culture,

and that the comprehensiveness of active travel networks is of greatest importance.

Conclusion 3: according to UK research, all of the following objectives should be met to significantly increase cycling:

- Affordability: people can afford bikes and perceive them as good value for money and more economical than other transport options.
- Awareness: people are aware of the benefits of cycling and are familiar with available cycling initiatives and opportunities.
- Infrastructure and functionality: people feel safe cycling and can access the equipment and infrastructure that meets their needs and makes cycling convenient.
- Habits and friction: it is not overly effortful to cycle and establish cycling habits. It is easy for people to try it out and see if they like it.
- Skills and confidence: people have the skills and confidence to try out cycling and to cycle regularly.
- Desirability: people are sufficiently motivated to try cycling, and see themselves as cyclists.

Conclusion 4: There is a concern that there is a misalignment between the target for modal shift to active travel and the ambitions to cut car journeys across the county, and that there is a disconnect between the council's

ambitions for active travel as outlined in LTCP 5 and its prioritisation within the organisation and in the preparation of funding bids.

Conclusion 5: The role of spatial planning and land-use (i.e. how close are shops and local amenities to housing) is a key determinant of whether someone can move around using active travel in their daily life.

Conclusion 6: Hosting the Cycle County Active Travel Conference in 2023 presents an opportunity for the council to be an exemplar of good practice to the rest of the country, should adequate progress be made by then.

Conclusion 7: Actual and perceived road safety, inadequate secure bike storage and a lack of comprehensive, high-quality, dedicated cycle paths are the primary disincentives to bike travel in Oxfordshire.

Conclusion 8: A preference for delivering a comprehensive cycle network over a quality one does not legitimise dangerous or substandard infrastructure on any route, which is completely avoidable.

Conclusion 9: The council's commitment to Vision Zero is commendable and welcome but requires a culture shift within the transport service and amongst stakeholders and progress towards this shift requires the commitment of resource.

Conclusion 10: Support and opinion regarding low traffic neighbourhoods and other transport schemes varies amongst disabled residents, and broad consultation is therefore important.

Conclusion 11: Disabled people do not currently feel listened to by the council or as though it is sensitive to their travel needs, and it is important the council address this.

Conclusion 12: Oxford City Council's Inclusive Transport and Movement Focus Group has undertaken valuable work to understand the needs and lived experience of disabled people and presents a model which is welcomed by stakeholder groups.

Conclusion 13: Residents can find it easier to engage with consultations which are about specific projects or illustrate how policy will manifest in practice, rather than solely about abstract, high-level policy.

Conclusion 14: The largest barrier to increasing bus patronage is journey times, which are often increased by urban congestion, which is particularly exacerbated by single-occupancy car use. There is a tension between journey times and the comprehensiveness of routes in relation to increasing bus patronage.

Conclusion 15: Private car use is likely to be self-perpetuating, as car journeys increase congestion, which slows bus journeys, which in turn discourages residents from travelling by bus. Single-occupancy car journeys

are particularly inefficient and have a disproportionately high impact on congestion per person per mile travelled. In order for the council to reduce car journeys, it needs better data to understand existing travel patterns to ensure that alternative modes are viable for residents.

Conclusion 16: Bus journey times in Oxford impact journey times across the county due to its central location within the county. Previously, an increase in bus journey times of 10 per cent in the city resulted in a commensurate reduction in patronage across the county. Nevertheless, not all communities are Oxford centric and thus require comprehensive and timely bus services into their urban focal points.

Conclusion 17: Small, low-cost capital projects – such as good quality, well-located bus stops and highly targeted traffic-flow and prioritisation interventions – can have significant impacts on bus patronage.

Conclusion 18: There is a perception that rail operators are focused on consolidating networks and increasing the efficiency of existing services, rather than expanding services.

Conclusion 19: Car-dependent housing developments can lead to significant car-based congestion, while transit-oriented developments present significant opportunities to increase public transport use when located in urban areas or near transport hubs or strategic public transport services, or where adequate funding is obtained from developers for such purposes.

Conclusion 20: Private car use remains the primary mode of transport for many residents, particularly those living in rural areas which lack comprehensive and frequent public transport services or where the geography is not suited to active travel. Multi-modal travel and mobility hubs present an opportunity to reduce car journeys but will be ineffective if public transport stations and mobility hubs are not accessible to residents for whom it would be impractical to use active travel or public transport to access them.

Conclusion 21: While there is limited scope to avoid the transportation of goods, there is greater opportunity to shift and improve how goods are transported. The LTCP lacks clear targets to shift and improve the transportation of freight and a firm commitment to restricting heavy freight to strategic roads.

Conclusion 22: The council and industry are both unaware of all the weight restrictions on roads in and around Oxfordshire and it can be challenging to enforce existing weight restrictions.

Conclusion 23: The council and freight industry's objectives are in conflict. There are a number of tensions between the views and interests of residents, the economy and industry which LTCP needs to balance sensitively.

Conclusion 24: Expert evidence received by the Working Group is that the council's existing traffic modelling inputs and assumptions do not reflect the

LTCP targets to reduce car use nor the current operating picture, for example the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit on travel patterns. However, certain modelling input and assumptions can be required to access government funding.

Conclusion 25: The council currently lacks comprehensive data on existing travel patterns or demand for travel and goods, which makes defining transport policy outcomes and evaluating the impact of policy challenging.

Conclusion 26: There is not yet a clear link between the transport policy evidence base and the policies being put forward in the LTCP and how they align with the headline targets in the LTCP.

Conclusion 27: Resource and capacity are likely to present barriers to the achievement of the council's transport objectives.

Conclusion 28: The council suffers from not having an overarching transport strategy document for Oxfordshire which ties together all factors relevant to transport.

Conclusion 29: Shifting transport behaviours can mean a large disruption to people's lives and provoke significant public backlash. It therefore requires public buy-in to be successful. Recently, the importance of communication and engagement to deliver modal shift and avoid backlash has been overlooked in transport projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to implement the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Active travel and public transport teams be resourced and prioritised within the organisation to a level that reflects the LTCP transport hierarchy; and transport teams work in collaborated manner which reflects the LTCP ambition for an integrated transport network.

Recommendation 2: The council accord greater importance to the requirements of local transport routes pertaining to active travel, particularly applying Local Transport Note 1/20, and make them central to relevant applications for future funding.

Recommendation 3: The council ensure that its responses as a transport consultee to planning applications from local planning authorities include consideration of proposals from the perspective of improving and enabling active travel, including adherence to Local Transport Note 1/20, rather than simply the marginal effect on motor transport.

Recommendation 4: The county council work more closely with the city and the district councils to deliver 20-minute neighbourhoods so that walking and cycling is the natural first choice.

Recommendation 5: The council review the Local Authority Active Travel Toolkit and adopt relevant elements of it within the Active Travel Strategy.

Recommendation 6: The council make adequate provision in its revenue budget for the maintenance required for active travel infrastructure to remain relevant and in line with best practice.

Recommendation 7: Cabinet Members and relevant officers, before making decisions or bid submissions on active transport infrastructure projects, personally acquaint themselves with what it is like to travel on the route in question.

Recommendation 8: That Cabinet Members and senior officer development of first-hand awareness of active travel impacts be adopted as a stage of project delivery, and the ongoing impacts on outcomes of taking this step are monitored.

Recommendation 9: The county council assume responsibility for running Oxford City Council's Inclusive Transport and Movement Focus group and provide adequate resource for that purpose, with a view to enabling and embedding its input on policy and scheme design and review across the county.

Recommendation 10: That relevant Cabinet Members immediately begin regularly attending meetings of the Inclusive Transport and Movement Focus Group.

Recommendation 11: Alongside the LTCP, the council publish a summary of the elements of the LTCP intended to address the needs of disabled residents.

Recommendation 12: The council ensure that within the transport service area there is specialist knowledge of best practice in respect of inclusive transport, including potentially through the hiring of dedicated officers.

Recommendation 13: To improve public transport connectivity, the council advocate for the construction of new train stations on existing lines and seek funding from non-public sources which stand to benefit from such improved connectivity, such as through land value capture.

Recommendation 14: The council work with partners to audit and map all weight-restricted areas and enforcement measures and ensure that weight-restricted areas are adequately signposted and thus enforceable; and then make the locations of weight restrictions readily available to industry and stakeholders. After having done so, the council work with communities to introduce area-based environmental weight restrictions, other enforceable interventions, and appropriate HGV routes which protect areas adversely impacted by HGVs; and work with partners to robustly enforce restrictions.

Recommendation 15: The LTCP freight and logistics strategy explore and promote the introduction of consolidation centres to enable last-mile deliveries to be undertaken using fewer road vehicles and low-carbon alternatives.

Recommendation 16: The council approach the restriction of HGV through-traffic to strategic roads through area-based strategies which reflect the needs and concerns of communities and align with a county-wide freight and logistics strategy. There is pressing need for an area strategy in the Windrush Valley area following the findings and removal of the experimental weight restriction at Burford.

Recommendation 18: The council review its transport modelling practices and provide a response to the evidence collected by the Transport Working Group, including in respect of additional car journeys induced by the creation of additional road capacity, and its challenge: that modelling inputs and assumptions which better reflect current travel patterns and the LTCP's transport targets should be used to inform policy and funding bids.

Recommendation 19: The council do more – including establishing focus groups in relation to geographic areas and journey demand types – to understand which (particularly single-occupancy) car journeys are avoidable and the alternatives which are viable for residents, to help develop focused policies that successfully enable modal shift.

Recommendation 20: Both within the transport service and at organisation level, the council review its relationship with data collection and usage to ensure that policy and decision-making are underpinned by robust and reliable evidence, have achievable outcomes, can be evaluated, and that lessons are learnt from projects to enable continual improvement.

Recommendation 21: The LTCP and associated strategies prioritise achievable initiatives which are expected to deliver the greatest benefits in the shortest periods of time; and work with stakeholders in establishing achievability.

Recommendation 22: The priority actions of the LTCP and associated policies and strategies should include:

- reducing car-based urban congestion, particularly from single-occupancy vehicles, in order to improve bus journey times and thus bus patronage;
- initiatives which increase the proportion of journeys undertaken using active travel;
- measures to address capacity and congestion, particularly at peak times;
- developing multi-modal transport hubs; and
- trialling low-carbon freight options for local and last-mile journeys.

Recommendation 23: The council should develop an Oxfordshire-wide transport strategy, taking a system-leadership role across Oxfordshire

transport, land-use and place-shaping that considers all transport stakeholders, policies, projects and data.

Recommendation 24: The council deliver public and active travel alternatives to car journeys based on reliable evidence of their ability to deliver modal shifts; and interventions to reduce private vehicle journeys be accompanied by such viable, evidence-based, sustainable, integrated, and inclusive travel alternatives.

Recommendation 25: The council proactively and comprehensively canvass the views of businesses in respect of its transport policy.

Recommendation 26: the council communicate the benefits of modal shifts and the public transport available to residents to nudge them to choose the most appropriate transport modes for their journeys.

Recommendation 27: The council invest in transport-specific communication and engagement support for future projects that aim to achieve modal shift.

Recommendation 28: The council put the need to avoid, shift and improve car journeys and increase active travel and public transport connectivity at the heart of its strategic planning policy; and apply the principle of 20-minute neighbourhoods to its strategic planning policy and place-shaping.

The Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to implement the following recommendation:

Recommendation 17: The Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee seek briefings on how the freight industry operates and manages safety in relation to other road users.

Executive Summary

1. The council is developing a new local transport plan, Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, a draft of which was consulted on between January and March 2022. The Transport Policy Development Working Group was established to consider transport policy development in Oxfordshire and provide oversight of policy development and consultation.

2. Oxfordshire County Council is currently developing Oxfordshire's fifth local transport plan, to be called 'Local Transport and Connectivity Plan' (LTCP).

3. The LTCP is being designed to support the council's Strategic Plan. The LTCP vision is for an inclusive, safe and net-zero transport system which supports wellbeing and socioeconomic outcomes.

4. The Working Group focused on five themes related to the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan during its inquiry – active travel, the travel needs of disabled residents, public transport, freight and logistics, and highways expansion – by considering reports and hearing oral evidence.

5. The Working Group agreed 29 conclusions and makes 28 recommendations in respect of transport policy development in Oxfordshire.

The Working Group's Inquiry

1. At its meeting of 24 November 2021, the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee established the Transport Policy Development Working Group to review transport policy development in Oxfordshire and provide oversight of current and emerging transport policy development and consultation.

2. The following members were appointed to the Working Group:
   - Cllr Hicks – Chair
   - Cllr Dan Levy – Deputy Chair
   - Cllr Judy Roberts
   - Cllr Yvonne Constance OBE
   - Cllr Brad Baines
   - Cllr Kieron Mallon

3. At its first meeting, on 11 February 2022, the Working Group elected Councillor Hicks as its Chair and Cllr Dan Levy as its Deputy Chair and developed a project plan.

4. The Working Group held four evidence sessions:

   7 March 2022

   The Working Group received an overview of the Local Transport Connectivity Plan 5 (LTCP) and associated transport policies and strategies and heard oral evidence from council officers and the following expert witnesses:
   - Professor Phil Goodwin, Emeritus Professor of Transport Policy, University of London
   - Professor John Whitelegg, Visiting Professor, School of the Built Environment, Liverpool John Moores University
   - Peter Cushing, Director of Midland Metro Alliance

   18 May 2022

   The Working Group received a report on the proposed LTCP policies to develop the public transport network and services to reduce car use and heard oral evidence from council officers and the following stakeholders/experts:
   - Nick Small, Head of Strategic Development and Built Environment, Stagecoach West
   - Luke Marion, Oxford Bus Company and Thames Travel, acting Managing Director

   The Working Group also received a report on the proposed LTCP freight and logistics strategy and heard oral evidence from council officers and the following stakeholders/experts:
   - Chris Ashley, Road Haulage Association
   - Heidi Skinner, Logistics UK

23 May 2022

The Working Group received a report in respect of how the LTCP and associated policies were designed to support the travel needs of disabled residents and heard oral evidence from council officers and the following expert/stakeholder witnesses:

- David Deriaz, Oxfordshire Transport and Access Group
- Ted Maxwell, Lead for the Inclusive Transport & Movement Focus Group, Oxford City Council

The Working Group also received a report on the proposed LTCP policies and actions to develop walking and cycling networks and heard oral evidence from council officers and,

- Dr Alison Hill, Chair of Cyclox.

Oxfordshire's Fifth Local Transport Plan

5. A local transport plan is a statutory document issued under section 108(3) of the Transport Act 2000 and is part of Oxfordshire County Council's policy framework. The 2000 Act requires that local transport authorities produce a plan which contains their policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within their areas. 'Transport' is that required to meet the needs of persons living or working in, visiting, or travelling through, the authority's area and that required for the transportation of freight.

6. The current local transport plan for Oxfordshire, Local Transport Plan 4, was published in 2016. The development of Oxfordshire's fifth local transport plan, to be termed Local Transport and Connectivity Plan ('LTCP' herein) to better reflect the council's strategy for digital infrastructure and better connectivity across the whole county, was initiated under the previous administration and resumed by the Fair Deal Alliance after the May 2021 election.

7. The council consulted on a topic paper in March 2020 and on a vision document in February 2021. Between January and March 2022, the council consulted on the draft LTCP the reports received by the Working Group in May 2022 included the findings of that consultation and the changes being considered as a result.

Key aspects of LTCP

8. The LTCP is described as being key to delivering the following priorities in the council's Strategic Plan 2022-2025:

- Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of the council's work
- Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents
- Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network.

9. The key challenges the LTCP is to address are:

- Decarbonisation

- Private car use
- Housing and economic growth
- Transport and digital connectivity
- Rural areas
- Inclusivity

10. The overarching LTCP vision for transport in Oxfordshire is:

Our Local Transport and Connectivity Plan vision is for an inclusive and safe net-zero Oxfordshire transport system that enables all parts of the county to thrive.

It will tackle inequality, be better for health, wellbeing and social inclusivity and have zero road fatalities or life-changing injuries. It will also enhance our natural and historic environment and enable the county to be one of the world's leading innovation economies.

Our plan sets out to achieve this by reducing the need to travel and private car use through making walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice.

11. The council has identified six key themes – areas it is seeking to transform through implementing the vision:

Intended outcome for environment
Sustainable communities that are resilient to climate change, enhance the natural environment, improve biodiversity and are supported by our net-zero transport network.

Intended outcome for health
Improved health and wellbeing and reduced health inequalities enabled through active and healthy lifestyles, improved road safety and inclusive communities.

Intended outcome for healthy place shaping
Sustainable, well designed, thriving communities where healthy behaviours are the norm and which provide a sense of belonging, identity and community.

Intended outcome for productivity
A world leading business base that is sustainable, has created new jobs, products and careers for all communities and is supported by an effective, net-zero transport network.

Intended outcome for connectivity
Communities are digitally connected, innovative technologies are supported and there is improved connectivity and mobility, across the county, enabling greater choice and seamless interchange between sustainable modes.

Intended outcome for inclusivity

Barriers to access are removed and all communities are supported by our inclusive transport system to play a full role in society and have independence, choice and control.

12. The headline targets in relation to the vision and key themes of LTCP are set out below.

By 2030:

- Replace or remove 1 out of every 4 current car trips in Oxfordshire
- Increase the number of cycle trips in Oxfordshire from 600,000 to 1 million cycle trips per week
- Reduce road fatalities or life changing injuries by 50%

By 2040:

- Deliver a net-zero transport network
- Replace or remove an additional 1 out of 3 car trips in Oxfordshire

By 2050:

- Deliver a transport network that contributes to a climate positive future.
- Have zero, or as close as possible, road fatalities or life-changing injuries

13. The key ways in which the council is proposing to achieve its LTCP targets are:

- Improved traffic management
- Promoting walking and cycling
- Investing in strategic public transport networks and the provision of better and quicker bus and rail services
- Improving multi-modal travel, including the development of mobility hubs
- Improving road safety
- Improving digital connectivity
- Supporting transport innovations that help make walking, cycling, public and shared transport more attractive.

14. LTCP policies are grouped according to policy focus areas:

- Walking and cycling
- Healthy place shaping
- Road safety
- Digital connectivity
- Public transport
- Environment, carbon and air quality
- Network, parking and congestion management
- Innovation
- Data
- Freight and logistics
- Regional connectivity
- Local connectivity

15. The draft LTCP includes a hierarchy of road users (Policy 1) which sets the direction for the rest of the LTCP by outlining the order in which the council is to prioritise different modes of transport in policy development and scheme design:

- Walking (including running, mobility aids, wheelchairs and mobility scooters)
- Cycling and riding (bicycles, non-standard cycles, e-bikes, cargo bikes, e-scooters and horse riding)
- Public transport (bus, scheduled coach, rail and taxis)
- Motorcycles
- Shared vehicles (car clubs and carpooling)
- Other motorised modes (cars, vans and lorries)

16. The Working Group heard that the hierarchy for travel and approach to travel demand management in LTCP are based on the principals of avoid, shift, then improve set out in the Pathways to a zero carbon Oxfordshire (PaZCO) report:

Switching to electric is an example of 'Improve', while telecommuting can be a way to 'Avoid' travel. A 'shift' to local, active travel can help increase footfall on local high streets and ease congestion as well as improving health. [1]

Active Travel

Cycling

17. Whilst active travel does include more than just cycling, given the adequacy of existing cycling provision relative to walking, and the commitment required, financially and otherwise, to improve it, the primary focus of the Group's work was on cycling.

18. The percentage of residents cycling in Oxfordshire is higher than the national average. Currently 12 per cent of residents cycle three times per week compared to the national average of 5 per cent. However, when Oxford is removed, the countywide average falls to 8 per cent. In total, 300k cycle trips are made within Oxford each year, and 300k throughout the remainder of the county. This difference is a function of a number of factors. Oxford is the largest urban centre in the county, meaning more journeys can be made over a shorter distance. Demographically, its population is younger, including many students without cars. It also has the benefit of being relatively flat. These all contribute to Oxford's strong relative cycling culture.

19. It is important to recognise that these factors will continue to exert an influence throughout the time horizons of the LTCP and Active Travel Strategy. As such, both the LTCP and Active Travel Strategy are predicated on varying levels of contribution for Oxford and the outlying areas of the county: the aim is to get Oxford to reach 450k journeys per annum, with the rest of the county, given its lower initial base, increasing to 550k. Oxford's significantly higher base makes equal percentage increases far more challenging, but its inherent advantages mean it is expected to remain an outsized contributor to the number of cycle journeys relative to other areas. On the other hand, outside the City the lower base is felt to allow a greater proportional increase. The development of technology, particularly e bikes, which are of benefit to those who may be older,

[1] Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford, 'Pathways to a zero carbon Oxfordshire' (2021)

wish to travel further, or face hilly terrain, is expected to underpin this development as costs reduce and e-bike ownership becomes more widespread.

Conclusion 1: *The varying geography and land use density of Oxfordshire means that the potential for active travel to reduce road journeys varies across the county. However, new technology such as e-bikes present increase the potential of active travel and will increasingly do so as costs for consumers decrease over time.*

What needs to be done?

20. Although active travel has multiple benefits, making positive contributions towards physical and mental health, supporting low-cost travel, and making neighbourhoods more pleasant environments, the primary policy driver is to reduce transport-related carbon emissions.

21. The world leader in normalising active travel, particularly bike journeys, is the Netherlands. Nationally around 27 per cent of all trips are by cycle, evenly spread across genders and all age groups, including 0-11 and over 75 year olds, with the exception of 12-17 year olds who make 55 per cent of trips by cycle. Around 24 per cent of Dutch people cycle every day. The Dutch own 22.5 million bikes, with 84% of the population owning a bike. There are around 35,000 km of cycle lanes and off-road cycle paths in total and 55,000 km of cycle streets where cars and cycles share.

22. The Dutch have been promoting cycling and managing car use since the 1970s, which as in Oxford is one of the main reasons for its high cycling levels. Learning from their experience indicates that there are four key enablers to normalising active travel – primarily council leadership, to undertake traffic management, parking control and speed reduction measures, combined with creating comprehensive cycle networks, thereby embedding cycling as a cultural norm. Dutch and European research can be found in many documents including the “Dutch Bicycle Masterplan” and “Cycling Cities: European Experience”.

23. An important learning point from the Dutch experience, particularly in the context of delivering such an ambition with finite resources, is that when choices have to be made between comprehensiveness and quality of cycle network, a comprehensive network is more important. Whilst in the consultation on the LTCP all proposed policies had over 80 per cent support, this information adds particular weight to the support of the public regarding the importance of developing greenways, which provide cycle access away from the highway network. These act as safe and important interconnectors to the rest of the network and are therefore a key element of an active travel-supporting policy environment.

Conclusion 2*: Learning from the Netherlands indicates there four key enablers to increasing bike travel:*

i. a commitment from the local authority to increasing it;

ii. delivering a comprehensive cycle network which meets the different needs of rural and urban areas;
iii. managing traffic flows; and
iv. building a cycling culture,
and that the comprehensiveness of active travel networks is of greatest importance.

24. Behavioural research undertaken on the behalf of the Department for Transport identified the following barriers to increasing cycling, and identified related objectives (see conclusion 3) which may significantly increase cycling if all are met:

- Affordability
- Awareness
- Infrastructure and functionality
- Habits and friction
- Skills and confidence
- Desirability[2]

Conclusion 3: *according to UK research, all of the following objectives should be met to significantly increase cycling:*

- *Affordability: people can afford bikes and perceive them as good value for money and more economical than other transport options.*
- *Awareness: people are aware of the benefits of cycling and are familiar with available cycling initiatives and opportunities.*
- *Infrastructure and functionality: people feel safe cycling and can access the equipment and infrastructure that meets their needs and makes cycling convenient.*
- *Habits and friction: it is not overly effortful to cycle and establish cycling habits. It is easy for people to try it out and see if they like it.*
- *Skills and confidence: people have the skills and confidence to try out cycling and to cycle regularly.*
- *Desirability: people are sufficiently motivated to try cycling, and see themselves as cyclists.*

Commitment

25. Seen from one perspective, the council's aim to increase cycle journeys to 1 million per year by 2030 is ambitious. This represents an overall increase within the next eight years of two thirds. The target for Oxford city, if reached, would bring cycling usage to rates to that of Cambridge, but unseen in Oxford since before mass ownership of private cars, to the rates of the 1940s. From another perspective, however, it is an inadequate response given the scale of the challenge. Early estimates based on traffic flow data suggest that in the

[2] Department for Transport, 'A Moment of Change: Increasing Cycling Uptake' (December 2020)

region of 75 million annual car journeys need to be removed from Oxfordshire roads in order to deliver the LTCP's ambition of a net-zero transport network by 2050. The promotion and development of active travel must necessarily form a key element of this modal shift, but the scale of the two targets is not aligned. Indeed, it is the view of the Working Group that at present the Active Travel Hub within the council, being comprised of three officers, is insufficiently resourced to deliver the current targets, let alone those which might correlate more closely with the scale of the journey-reduction across the county.

26. The Working Group notes that the council has successfully committed to delivering ambitious transport projects, such as the Zero Emissions Zone, Eynsham Park and Ride and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. In doing so, the Working Group was informed, it has earned credibility with the Department for Transport, improving its standing for future applications for funding. This is very much welcome, but at the same time it is also notable that active travel is an ancillary beneficiary to these schemes, not its core focus. It is agreed that other schemes, for instance the Quickways and Quietways schemes, which have also been delivered recently, are more active travel-focused. Nevertheless, the balance seems to provide an indication that active travel is of lesser priority than those areas which were prioritised. The Working Group considers this to be a mistake, and that the present restructuring of the Environment and Place directorate which is underway is an opportunity to give parity of priority to Active Travel in terms of resourcing, strategic importance and seeking external funding. Public transport should also be similarly promoted in order to achieve the aims of the LTCP.

Conclusion 4: *There is a concern that there is a misalignment between the target for modal shift to active travel and the ambitions to cut car journeys across the county, and that there is a disconnect between the council's ambitions for active travel as outlined in LTCP 5 and its prioritisation within the organisation and in the preparation of funding bids.*

Recommendation 1: *Active travel and public transport teams be resourced and prioritised within the organisation to a level that reflects the LTCP transport hierarchy; and transport teams work in collaborated manner which reflects the LTCP ambition for an integrated transport network.*

27. It is necessary to point out that increased budgetary provision is a long way, however, from being the only element in delivering cycle-friendly infrastructure, important as it may be. The way that the council translates that financial commitment to relevant infrastructure is also fundamental. The view of the Group is that, at a high level, there is a disconnect between the council's ambitions around active travel, and the degree to which its requirements are incorporated into wider schemes. The Group would like to see the council's proposals accord with the good practice in Local Transport Note 1/20 which, at present, the Group feels it falls short of doing.

Recommendation 2: *The council accord greater importance to the requirements of local transport routes pertaining to active travel, particularly applying Local Transport Note 1/20, and make them central to relevant applications for future funding.*

Delivering a comprehensive network

28. In light of the importance of the comprehensiveness of the active travel network, the Group explored some of the challenges and opportunities that exist. Clearly, one of the biggest is that active travel infrastructure must integrate with other, existing and planned, infrastructure. However, within a two-tier local authority structure such as Oxfordshire, responsibilities around Planning and Highways vest with different authorities making coordination more challenging.

29. This challenge lies at different levels. At the more straightforward level, tier-two authorities have responsibilities for deciding the vast majority of individual planning applications. The county council is not, therefore, involved in the decision-making process for these applications. Instead, its views are sought as a statutory consultee due to its status as the Highway authority. Evidently, this gives the council a limited power to influence planning decisions. Limited power, however, is not the same as no power and it is the view of the Group that the limitation on the council's power makes it all the more important that the involvement it does have is as impactful as possible.

30. At present, it is the view of the Group that the council's current approach does not exert the maximum influence it could towards developing, via planned developments, more active travel. The reason for this is the focus in consultation responses on the marginal effect on motor transport. Awareness of the impact of a development on motor traffic is, of course, pertinent to making an informed decision on the merits of a planning application. However, so too are considerations as to the adequacy, for example, of bike parking provision. Indeed, the two issues are liable to be linked; a lack of bike parking may induce additional demand for motor journeys, for example.

31. Central government has produced comprehensive guidance on good practice over cycling infrastructure, the main report of which runs to approximately 170 pages. To support active travel, good practice must be incorporated into new developments as much as possible. The report, Local Transport Note 1/20, provides sufficiently granular detail to equip officers responding to consultations with the knowledge to query and challenge elements of designs which do not conform to good practice. The need to bring about modal shift must necessarily also mean a shift in the council's approach to responding to planning applications. The Group's view is that it is both possible and desirable that it should do so, and that active travel must become a key plank in future responses.

Recommendation 3: *The council ensure that its responses as a transport consultee to planning applications from local planning authorities include consideration of proposals from the perspective of improving and enabling*

active travel, including adherence to Local Transport Note 1/20, rather than simply the marginal effect on motor transport.

32. An additional benefit to focusing on active travel within the council's responses to planning applications is the cumulative impact amongst both officers and members in Planning authorities of active travel issues. Consistently raising the topic will, over time, shape perspectives of the primary Planning decision-makers. This is of relevance to the second level of challenge.

33. Tier-two authorities not only are responsible for determining planning applications but also have a responsibility for setting the rules against which applications will be judged in the form of a Local Plan. Councils must ensure that their proposals are justified and evidenced, as adjudged by a Local Planning Inspector, meaning Planning authorities are not at complete liberty to do as they wish. Nevertheless, there is reason to presume that there is capacity at the margins to see greater support for active travel within the county's Local Plans the more it is raised and the more possibilities are espoused. This is an important role for the county council to be playing.

34. Whilst Local Plans involve the setting of standards, energy efficiency, for example, or the proportion of social housing required in a development, another crucial function is spatial planning, and the identification of those areas suitable for future development or regeneration. The reason why this is relevant to discussions of active travel is that active travel can be planned-in at a strategic level, but equally it can be planned-out. The location of a development in relation to other key locations – for instance, centres of employment, schools, shops, and recreation - has a strong influence on the mode of travel individuals tend towards. Distance, however, is not the only factor. Accessibility is equally important. Amenities may be proximate to the site of a development, but if they are on the other side of a busy dual carriageway, for instance, the most convenient way to access them is still likely to be by car.

35. This issue, and its contribution to congestion, climate change and ill-health, has been recognised and, in places, addressed. The '20-minute neighbourhood' concept has been adopted and implemented in a number of places around the world. The aim is ensure that a resident can access all the places they frequent in their day to day life within a 20 minute walk, the time research indicates is the maximum time most individuals are willing to consider walking over other forms of transport. Achieving this is challenging but has a wide breadth of benefits. Economic benefits are perhaps the most straightforward to track. The Living Streets organisation has suggested that improvements to access can increase footfall in local businesses by up to 40 per cent.[3] Likewise, estate agents Savills estimate that areas which have undergone thoughtful and considered placemaking can see land values increase by 25 per cent.[4] These figures alone are fairly compelling, even

[3] Living Streets, 'The Pedestrian Pound' (2018)
[4] Savills UK 'Spotlight: Development – The Value of Placemaking' (2016)

before the other economic, as well as social, environmental and health benefits are considered. The Group strongly supports the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods and is gladdened that the council has committed to work with district and city councils to deliver them in the LTCP.

36. The Group would underline the importance and necessity of collaboration. In a guide for local authorities on 20-minute neighbourhoods the Town and Country Planning Association states the following: "The creation of a 20-minute neighbourhood is a multi-faceted process. While there are many examples in England of local authorities putting individual elements of the concept into place, few draw all the elements together.'[5] Prerequisites for delivering such neighbourhoods are identified as including 'strong, inspiring leadership' and 'partnership and advocacy'. The council has undertaken to work with tier-two councils locally, but the partnerships required to deliver true 20-minute neighbourhoods extend beyond that. Coordination between different tiers of councils is necessary, but with the NHS, education providers, community organisations and businesses is vital also and this is where the Group sees the council in being able to bring the greatest value. Given that it already has working relationships with all the aforementioned parties, it is in a strong position to facilitate (as well as contribute) towards the development of 20-minute neighbourhoods throughout the county, and the Group would like to see it do so.

37. The Group does recognise that there is considerable uncertainty around the future shape of the Planning system in the future, with strong signals from central government of changes, but uncertainty as to the likely nature of those changes. Nevertheless, that uncertainty is perhaps all the more reason to pursue joint working between the council and local Planning authorities to deliver policies which will increase active travel whilst the agency to do so still exists.

Conclusion 5: *The role of spatial planning and land-use (i.e. how close are shops and local amenities to housing) is a key determinant of whether someone can move around using active travel in their daily life.*

Recommendation 4: *The county council work more closely with the city and the district councils to deliver 20-minute neighbourhoods so that walking and cycling is the natural first choice.*

38. A further source of useful information provided to the Group was the Department of Transport's recently released Local Authority Active Travel Toolkit. The Toolkit covers four ways in which local authorities can promote active travel. The first, the promotion of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) is already underway by the council. However, there is scope for additional work by the council in the other three: the development of a travel demand management plan, more activity around planning beyond what has been discussed above, and developing a behaviour

[5] Town and Country Planning Association, '20-Minute Neighbourhoods' (March 2021)

change plan for active travel. The Group has not had sufficient time to go through in detail to pick out the elements should be taken forward. However, it is supportive of the broad areas of focus, and suggests that the council would benefit from reviewing the Toolkit and adopting relevant elements within its Active Travel Strategy.

Recommendation 5: *The council review the Local Authority Active Travel Toolkit and adopt relevant elements of it within the Active Travel Strategy.*

39. One issue raised by the Group was that of maintenance. It is very easy when discussing the financing of infrastructure to focus on the capital outlay. After all, that is where the biggest single sums are seen. However, if the council wishes to develop a comprehensive network, that extension will also entail ongoing revenue costs to maintain them. This is important because individuals undertaking active travel have less protection; they are exposed to the outside. Consequently, to the standard of maintenance required to ensure a bike path or footpath remains open is higher. The users are more sensitive to changes in the level of maintenance; a bike path which has nettles, or a footpath with brambles encroaching, is less likely to be used than a road with overgrown verges or hedges. This is a point that the council must understand and accept in its budget setting. If it invests large capital sums in developing a comprehensive network but does not maintain it adequately, usage of the network is liable to fall dramatically, and the value for money of the initial investment to be severely impaired.

Recommendation 6: *The council make adequate provision in its revenue budget for the maintenance required for active travel infrastructure to remain relevant and in line with best practice.*

40. Whilst the Group did, of course, spend time reviewing the challenges around developing a comprehensive active travel infrastructure, it should not be overlooked that there are also opportunities. As said in the introduction to this section, Oxfordshire (and Oxford in particular) has a strong base to develop active travel. In 2023, the council will be hosting the Cycle County Active Travel conference. Proceeding with ambitious plans atop of the existing strong foundation would put the council in a position to show itself to be an exemplar to other areas, and that is a target to which the council should be aiming.

Conclusion 6: *Hosting the Cycle County Active Travel Conference in 2023 presents an opportunity for the council to be an exemplar of good practice to the rest of the country, should adequate progress be made by then.*

Safety and Other Barriers to Cycling

41. One of the crucial questions posed by the Working Group to its external witness concerned the barriers to increased rates of cycling. From the external evidence provided by Cyclox, road safety - both actual and perceived – is the primary barrier to individuals undertaking more journeys by bike. Segregation of cycle traffic from motor traffic is the most effective way of achieving this, particularly at junctions which are the site of most serious accidents. However,

speed and congestion management also contribute towards greater cycle safety. It was suggested by Cyclox that the current tendency to create painted cycle lanes is not effective at promoting a sense of safety, and are therefore ineffective. Painted cycle lanes are also subject to being used for parking by motor vehicles, forcing users onto the road. The suggestion received by the Working Group is that all highways improvement projects should also include a meaningful and effective cycle-improvement element.

42. If cycling is to grow at the required rate, another blocker to be addressed must be greater, and more secure, cycle parking. In 2019/20, the ONS data suggests that Oxford had the second highest rate of bike theft in the country. This has a disincentivising effect on people's willingness to use their bikes; the feedback by a recent project from Cyclox to provide individuals with bikes was that over one in five had stopped cycling previously because their bike was stolen.[6] Locating secure bike storage around transport hubs in particular must be an important step in enabling multi-modal journeys; if a person decides not to ride their bike to the bus stop because there is nowhere to park their bike, the likelihood is that it is not only the bike ride which is replaced with a car journey, but also the bus journey also.

43. Conversely, the very high proportion of pupils cycling to school where there is safe access and adequate parking, including at Cherwell School, demonstrates that cycling can become very popular and the preferred transport mode.

Conclusion 7: *Actual and perceived road safety, inadequate secure bike storage and a lack of comprehensive, high-quality, dedicated cycle paths are the primary disincentives to bike travel in Oxfordshire.*

44. The point was made above that road improvement schemes should always include a cycling improvement element at the same time. Whilst welcome, this would not necessarily deliver safer cycling infrastructure without additional measures. The reason for this is that it is exceptionally difficult to assess the suitability of cycling infrastructure from paper plans. Very small real-world things, such as the placement of drains or manhole covers, road indentation and potholes, or the natural collection of mud or stones can alter the natural area of the road cyclists will tend to occupy, and adjust the risk profile accordingly. Likewise, the angle at which traffic filters onto a road is a significant determinant of how safe that stretch of road feels, but is difficult to judge solely on the basis of plans. The same is true of elevation; hills are an impediment to lines of site and reduce the reaction time drivers have to see cyclists. At the same time, traffic speed cannot be assumed to be following the speed limit for the area. If a section of road prone to excess speed also is used by many HGVs, for example, the road will feel significantly more dangerous in reality than on paper. As such, the Working Group recommends that first-hand knowledge of the road conditions is a prerequisite for making

[6] Cherwell, 'Oxford has second biggest bicycle theft rate in UK: numbers and effects' (June 2021)

informed decisions on how to deliver safety-improving infrastructure, and that therefore Cabinet Members and relevant officers, as part of their decision-making process around cycling infrastructure, should acquaint themselves with what it is like to travel on that route. Indeed, such a step would have benefits beyond active travel-specific projects; many projects, even if not primarily active travel oriented, will have an impact on active travel and would also benefit from being informed consideration of the impacts on cycling and walking.

Recommendation 7: *Cabinet Members and relevant officers, before making decisions or bid submissions on active transport infrastructure projects, personally acquaint themselves with what it is like to travel on the route in question.*

45. A key theme of the work of the Group has been to identify ways in which good practice can be embedded, and to cultivate continual improvement through monitoring and learning from previous projects. The recommendation above is an example of good practice. However, it is easy for this good practice to get lost over time unless it is incorporated into project-planning processes. Doing so, creating a project stage at which relevant decision-makers are prompted to get first-hand awareness of the implications for active travel would realise the Group's ambitions on both fronts. Not only would it embed this good practice within ordinary working practices, but it would provide a useful avenue for monitoring the impact on satisfaction levels arising from doing so.

Recommendation 8: *That Cabinet Members and senior officer development of first-hand awareness of active travel impacts be adopted as a stage of project delivery, and the ongoing impacts on outcomes of taking this step are monitored.*

46. An overall point of discussion is required at this point to address the tension between the Working Group's contention that delivering a comprehensive network is preferable to a high quality one, and the discussion above. The Working Group wishes to stand by its original point that a comprehensive network is fundamental to improving take-up of cycling. However, as part of that the council will be making investments in cycling infrastructure. The point the Working Group wishes to make is that within the priority accorded to it, substandard, or even dangerous, cycle infrastructure is not acceptable and can, with good planning, be avoided and the council must ensure that it is.

Conclusion 8: *A preference for delivering a comprehensive cycle network over a quality one does not legitimise dangerous or substandard infrastructure on any route, which is completely avoidable.*

47. Vision Zero is a policy approach to road safety, which adopts as a fundamental principle the view that road safety and the avoidance of fatalities must form the baseline for road use, and not be treated as one of a number of competing priorities. Following consultation on the LTCP, the council has

undertaken to adopt this approach, news welcomed by both the Working Group and its external witness.

48. It is important, however, to recognise how fundamentally different an approach this is to what has preceded it, and to understand what it will mean in practice. Making safety the central priority will mean that, at times, other considerations will necessarily be deprioritised. The biggest contributor to road accidents is excess speed, meaning measures will have to be taken to do so. This could mean reducing speed limits, increasing enforcement of existing speed limits, or even putting in road furniture to force drivers to slow down. All such measures involve challenging entrenched driver behaviour, which is unlikely to be popular. Much effort in communications to justify the measures being implemented will be necessary to overcome both resistance to change, and the underlying use of a traditional cost-benefit approach to safety. Equally, from both a member and officer side, Vision Zero means doing things differently to how they have been done previously. Longstanding assessments, judgements and processes must all be reconfigured to reflect the shift in approach. This is not something which is done easily, and will require resource both to implement the change, but also to monitor its effectiveness to ensure that the improved road safety is indeed being brought about. Whilst the Working Group welcomes the adoption of this policy, it does note the challenge in translating this into meaningful improvements, and recognises that this cannot be achieved without the commitment of additional resource.

Conclusion 9: *The council's commitment to Vision Zero is commendable and welcome but requires a culture shift within the transport service and amongst stakeholders and progress towards this shift requires the commitment of resource.*

The Travel Needs of Disabled Residents

49. Disability in Oxfordshire is common; approximately one in five individuals in the county have a disability,[7] making a fair and equitable plan for all residents absolutely key. As part of the consultation on the LTCP, multiple disability groups were engaged for comment, including the Inclusive Transport and Movement Focus Group, Oxfordshire Transport and Access Group, and Unlimited Oxfordshire. Feedback received included concern over targets to reduce car use and the implications for those unable to walk or cycle, and representation on particular projects to ensure the voices of disabled users were heard. In the future, the council would need to improve this engagement, from policy development all the way through to implementation. In the present, however, the LTCP would need to be revisited to ensure that inclusivity and access was a key thread.

[7] There are estimated to be 131,400 people with a disability in Oxfordshire, 19% of the population. Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2021

Hearing disabled voices

50. A point that is perhaps obvious, but one which is necessary to make when discussing disability and transport issues, is that there is not a single voice of disabled residents. Being so widespread, disabled residents differ from one another in geography, their use of and the degree to which they rely on transport, their financial means, and the nature of their disability, as well as many other factors. Given this diversity, it should not come as a surprise that there is an equal diversity of opinion across disabled groups on transport matters. For instance, the Working Group heard the feedback from David Deriaz, from Oxfordshire Transport and Access Group, who was unsupportive of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods on the basis that they lengthened journeys for those for whom medically journeys are painful or inconvenient, that longer journeys are more expensive (especially by taxi), and that the attendant congestion makes it more difficult for carers and healthcare professionals to meet disabled people in their homes in a timely manner. On the other hand, feedback to Group members from partially sighted residents indicated that the vast reduction in traffic volumes made crossing roads far simpler, and wheelchair users welcome the ability to use the road safely rather than have to try and navigate pavements with numerous obstacles, such as parked cars and bins, obstructing the route.[8]

51. It is important, therefore, to recognise that disabled residents are not a bloc, who speak with one voice on transport (or any other issues), but within that grouping there are a multiplicity of views and experiences. True engagement with disabled residents requires not that the voice of disabled residents is heard, but their many and varied voices. The Group commends the LTCP consultation on ensuring that pan-disability groups were consulted.

Conclusion 10: *Support and opinion regarding low traffic neighbourhoods and other transport schemes varies amongst disabled residents, and broad consultation is therefore important.*

52. Notwithstanding the above, feedback provided to the Group by Ted Maxwell, Oxford City Council officer responsible for convening the Inclusive Movement and Travel Focus Group, suggested that there is a common view shared by many disabled individuals that they are not being sufficiently listened to, or that the council is being sensitive to their travel needs. This was a view shared by presenting officers also, who recognised that the recent positive engagement over the LTCP needed to be built on and extended further in the future. The Group concurs with this assessment.

Conclusion 10: *Disabled people do not currently feel listened to by the council or as though it is sensitive to their travel needs, and it is important the council address this.*

[8] A good, publicly-available resource on the topic of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods is the Transport for All, Pave the Way report, which illustrates the complexities, the multiple layers of interactions, and the diversity of experience disabled people have when interacting with the same transport policy. Transport for All, 'Pave the Way' (January 2021)

Focus groups: a successful model

53. Since its inception in May 2020, Oxford City Council's Inclusive Transport and Movement Focus Group will, by June 2022, have met 25 times. Membership and participation within the Focus Group is broad-based and not fixed, but encompasses those who represent others with disability and/or those with lived experience. Its remit traverses high-level strategies, such as the LTCP, all the way through to inputting on specific local projects and has made meaningful interventions on behalf of those with limited mobility across both levels. The involvement of the Focus Group has, for instance, led to unusually high levels of support for a scheme in Broad Street in Oxford, despite the scheme having been delivered in a far shorter time frame than usual. At the more strategic level, the Focus Group has improved equalities impact assessments around the Core Transport Schemes proposals (previously Connecting Oxfordshire). These are just two of a number of possible examples of its impact and improvement to outcomes.

54. The Group notes that there are certain groups for whom the council's overall strategic transport aim, to reduce the number of motor journeys undertaken, impacts more than others. These include people with disability and mobility issues, but also place-based organisations such as businesses or places of worship, and those who must drive as part of their job. Feedback from members about the Inclusive Transport and Movement Focus Group indicates that it is valued by participants, but as referenced above, the much lower levels of disability and mobility-related complaints on schemes where the Focus Group has been involved shows a broad and positive impact on a diverse, but particularly impacted group. This is a potential model for working with other cohorts and communities who are to be affected by the LTCP and transport policy more generally.

Conclusion 12: *Oxford City Council's Inclusive Transport and Movement Focus Group has undertaken valuable work to understand the needs and lived experience of disabled people and presents a model which is welcomed by stakeholder groups.*

55. Highly positive as the work of the Focus Group has been, it is clear from the report received that it is not without its challenges and, as a consequence, is not operating at its full potential. The Group would wish to see this potential realised.

56. The first key weakness identified is that whilst the Focus Group is able to input into different schemes and policies, this is because of the proactive intervention of staff at both the county and city councils. It is not mainstreamed into the processes of the county council, which is particularly relevant given its status as the Highway authority. What is meant by this is that there is no automatic governance process which involves the Focus Group on relevant activity, no 'institutional instinct' to do so. Likewise, feedback is provided (and acted upon) but there is no formal process for doing so. It relies on the efforts of officers to go over and above their responsibilities, rather than being incorporated into expected activity of relevant staff. It is necessary that within

its governance, the council formally builds in consultation and engagement with the Focus Group.

57. A second issue is that the work of the Inclusive Transport and Movement Focus Group is presently facilitated by officers at the city council, and in addition to their existing duties. Being driven by the city council with few spare resources means it must necessarily focus on Oxford. At present, there are no parallel conversations about inclusive transport elsewhere in the County, yet in order to realise the potential of this scheme for all local residents, such an extension is necessary. As the Highways authority with responsibility for the entirety of Oxfordshire, the council is clearly most appropriately placed to facilitate a county-wide approach. It is clear from representations made to the Group, that the city council is more interested in outcomes of the group than ownership of it, and have stated that they would be happy for the county council to take on leadership and facilitation of the Focus Group, whilst continuing actively to contribute. The Group's view is that, given the track-record of outcomes to date, the support of the city council to do so, the sense of it being owned by the Highways authority, and the potential to extend the benefits County-wide, that the council should adopt responsibility for the Inclusive Transport and Movement Focus Group, resourcing it sufficiently to run it with a county-wide remit. Further, resourcing it sufficiently would enable another aspect of its function to be realised. At present, limits on capacity mean that consultation and engagement tends only to focus on what is new and upcoming, rather than reviewing and addressing issues with existing projects and infrastructure. This is a significant yet under-considered area of focus, and addressing it would go a long way to extending the impact of the Focus Group.

Recommendation 9: *The county council assume responsibility for running Oxford City Council's Inclusive Transport and Movement Focus group and provide adequate resource for that purpose, with a view to enabling and embedding its input on policy and scheme design and review across the county.*

58. A third area which was suggested might yield improvements in the outcomes of the Focus Group was the idea that relevant Cabinet Members attend the meetings. The rationale for this links with a number of the issues raised previously: namely, the lack of confidence by members of the disabled community that the council listens to their needs, and the need to mainstream inclusivity in transport policy. The discussion on mainstreaming above focused on officer-level decisions, but in a member-led council political awareness and priority are of as much importance as officer-level processes and structures. The Group was assured that members of the Focus Group certainly felt this way, and that regular Cabinet member attendance would provide much increased confidence that the council is indeed treating this issue with the importance it merits. As such, the Group supports the suggestion for ongoing engagement by relevant Cabinet members to commence promptly.

Recommendation 10: *That relevant Cabinet Members immediately begin regularly attending meetings of the Inclusive Transport and Movement Focus Group.*

Listening and Responding

59. One important issue the Group wishes to highlight from its evidence gathering is the importance at communicating, consulting and engaging with people in terms they feel comfortable and confident in putting their views forward. The evidence provided by David Deriaz, Deputy Chair of Oxfordshire Transport and Access Group, was informative not only in its content but in illustrating how different the approach can be between those who work on policy on a regular basis, and members of the general public. There was a significant difference in approach, with member questions tending to be policy-driven and high level, and responses being made by the only non-member or local authority employee being grounded by reference to specific proposals and projects. This was an important reminder for the Working Group, and an issue which may be present elsewhere within the council. As such, it bears highlighting that the way the council consults and engages with members of the public must be accessible if they are to share their knowledge and opinions. For many residents, this is likely to be easier when they are presented with concrete project proposals, rather than more abstract policy concepts.

Conclusion 13: *Residents can find it easier to engage with consultations which are about specific projects or illustrate how policy will manifest in practice, rather than solely about abstract, high-level policy.*

60. Another aspect to the issue of the council's proposals being accessible to the public is the ease with which they can draw out the information they seek from a policy document. The Group understands that the LTCP document has been drafted with inclusivity being incorporated and embedded throughout the document. This is a legitimate approach, and the Group supports the intention underpinning it, namely not to 'other' disabled people by treating them differently. A consequence of this, however, is that those wanting to find out more on this topic are presented with a dense document, and it is difficult to see what specific measures the council has taken to enable and improve inclusive travel within the LTCP. The promotion of inclusive travel does require specific interventions which are separate from those relevant to the rest of the general public, and it is the view of the Group that individuals who to whom these measures are of relevance should easily be able to know what they are. As such, in like manner to the summary document provided around the council's promotion of active travel, the council provides a summary to highlight the specific measures it has taken to address the needs of disabled residents.

Recommendation 11: *Alongside the LTCP, the council publish a summary of the elements of the LTCP intended to address the needs of disabled residents.*

61. Much of the discussion by the Group focused on governance, and ways of developing proposals for policy and programmes with disabled residents rather than dictating it to them. This is right, for this is an area in which the council could improve, and it is important. Delivering good governance alone, however, whilst important, is not sufficient to deliver good outcomes for disabled residents. Practically, projects cannot be delivered via focus group. Much of what is delivered comes down to the lengthy list of decisions made by officers throughout a project. The awareness, level of knowledge and commitment to delivery within council staff, therefore, is also crucial in delivering an inclusive transport system. The Group recognised this, and devoted discussion to the best approach.

62. Ultimately, advising officers and Group members were of a similar opinion. It is vital that responsibility for delivering an inclusive transport system falls on every employee, not the responsibility of 'someone else'. Nevertheless, it can also be the case that when something is everybody's responsibility, it becomes nobody's. Furthermore, a generalist approach puts a lower ceiling, relatively, on the organisation's knowledge and ability to address complex issues. As such, specialist staff resource within the organisation, with the ability to understand and see best practice applied, is also required. The degree of specialism required to raise the council's ceiling is this regard means that it may be necessary to hire dedicated officers to undertake this role.

Recommendation 12: *The council ensure that within the transport service area there is specialist knowledge of best practice in respect of inclusive transport, including potentially through the hiring of dedicated officers.*

Public Transport

63. It was reported to the Working Group that increasing the number of journeys undertaken via public transport is essential to delivering the LTCP vision by reducing the number of private car journeys and delivering air quality improvements.

64. In the LTCP, walking, cycling and public transport are viewed as parts of one connected system, rather than competing modes, providing opportunities to enable multi-modal journeys and improve connectivity across the county. It was reported that public transport must be combined with active travel to provide a viable alternative to private vehicles.

65. Public transport policies in the LTCP averaged 75 per cent strong or partial support amongst public consultation responses and the council is to make a number of changes to LTCP policies in light of those findings – those changes are reflected where LTCP policy is summarised below.

66. When the Working Group heard evidence in respect of LTCP public transport strategies, it noted an absence of quantitative targets for modal shift and robust data on travel demand to inform policy making. Officers were working to develop such targets.

Buses

67. Buses are the main mode of public transport in England and Oxfordshire. The draft LTCP describes effective and efficient bus networks as vital for the financial, environmental and social wellbeing of Oxfordshire's communities – particularly Oxford and Banbury where significant portions of residents do not own cars.

68. Bus patronage in Oxfordshire has increased overall since 2009 and, in 2019, the county had the highest rate of bus use out of the shire counties, which has resulted in a relatively stable and comprehensive urban and inter-urban bus network. However, in recent years patronage has declined – by 6 per cent overall and by 9 per cent per resident between 2013/14 and the beginning of 2020, in line with national trends.

69. Bus patronage further decreased during the pandemic and has subsequently struggled to recover. In May 2022, patronage was around 75-80 per cent of pre-pandemic levels. Recovery has been particularly weak amongst pensioners, likely due to perceptions of risk in relation to public transport. Park and ride use has also recovered less than general bus patronage.

70. Officers told the Working Group that the council's longer-term aspiration is to create an environment where people choose public or active travel by default.

71. Under the bus strategy to be developed under the LTCP, the council is to,

    a. *Work in partnership with bus operators, District and City councils to maintain a commercially sustainable and comprehensive network of services which is accessible to as many residents as possible.*

    b. *Explore opportunities to accelerate the transition to a zero-emission bus fleet, building on work completed for the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme.*

    c. *Seek to make the bus a natural first choice through development of infrastructure and network management measures which give priority over the private car and improve journey speeds.*

    d. *Set challenging targets for improving bus use, customer satisfaction and bus journey times and review them regularly.*

    e. *Ensure that all new strategic development is designed for bus access and provides suitable funding for high quality services and infrastructure.*

    f. *Work with operators to improve the provision of bus information and multi-operator ticket schemes.*

    g. *Work with operators to explore measures to improve affordability.*

h. *Ensure bus services are accessible and support community transport to address unmet local transport needs (further information in community transport policy).*

i. *Work to improve personal security on public transport including taking account of recommendations from the Transport Champions for Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls.*

j. *Work to improve bus services in rural areas including consideration of flexible services where relevant.*

72. In relation to park and ride, the council is to,

a. *Continue to support the development of Park and Ride and future bus rapid transit in the county, on a case by case basis and subject to careful consideration.*

b. *Work with partners and Stakeholders on a more detailed review of Park and Ride in order to establish an updated strategy that accounts for the impacts of COVID-19 and considers potential new approaches.*

73. The Working Group heard that the key determinant of bus patronage on existing routes is journey times, which are largely exacerbated by urban congestion. It is well established that single-occupancy car journeys are particularly problematic in respect of congestion, as well as emissions. Due to Oxford's centrality and connectedness to the rest of the county, bus journey times in the city have significant impacts on journey times across the county. Previously, when journey times increased by 10 per cent in Oxford, bus patronage decreased by the same amount. However, there are also significant pockets of congestion in market towns which significantly impact bus journey times and patronage; and noncomprehensive bus routes are a further barrier to increasing bus use in rural communities and market towns.

74. The Working Group heard that demand factors, such as the decline of the town centre, also impacted on bus patronage, but that the council lacks data on journey demand.

Conclusion 14: *The largest barrier to increasing bus patronage is journey times, which are often increased by urban congestion, which is particularly exacerbated by single-occupancy car use. There is a tension between journey times and the comprehensiveness of routes in relation to increasing bus patronage.*

Conclusion 15: *Private car use is likely to be self-perpetuating, as car journeys increase congestion, which slows bus journeys, which in turn discourages residents from travelling by bus. Single-occupancy car journeys are particularly inefficient and have a disproportionately high impact on congestion per person per mile travelled. In order for the council to reduce car journeys, it needs better data to understand existing travel patterns to ensure that alternative modes are viable for residents.*

Conclusion 16: *Bus journey times in Oxford impact journey times across the county due to its central location within the county. Previously, an increase in bus journey times of 10 per cent in the city resulted in a commensurate reduction in patronage across the county. Nevertheless, not all communities are Oxford centric and thus require comprehensive and timely bus services into their urban focal points.*

75. Increased bus patronage can be achieved through measures which prioritise buses on roads, alleviate congestion and improve the relevance of services. Bus operators highlighted that such measures do not necessarily need to be large and expensive; small but highly targeted interventions – better located, quality bus stops for example – can also have significant benefits. During discussions, Members and officers highlighted the need to prioritise the interventions which could have the biggest impacts in the shortest periods of time and were most cost effective in light of constrained budgets.

76. The council has received indicative grant funding of up to £12.7 million for its Bus Service Improvement Plan. Recognising the need to increase bus patronage and the impact of bus journey times in Oxford on the rest of the county, the council has already been working to give buses greater priority in Oxford through the introduction of traffic filters, bus prioritisation and additional investment under the Oxford Core Schemes.

77. The council has received £32.8 million from the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas scheme to introduce electric buses in and around Oxfordshire. Oxfordshire bus operators have committed to invest in the electrification of their fleets should the council succeed in decreasing journey times in Oxford by 10 per cent.

Conclusion 17: *Small, low-cost capital projects – such as good quality, well-located bus stops and highly targeted traffic-flow and prioritisation interventions – can have significant impacts on bus patronage.*

Rail

78. In Oxfordshire, rail patronage increased by 26 per cent between 2015/16 and 2020/21, and 197 per cent since 1997. Following the pandemic, while leisure and weekend use has recovered, peak-time commuting by rail, the revenue from which operators depend on, is struggling to recover.

79. Officers urged pragmatism and realism in respect of rail but told the Working Group that there is significant opportunity to increase the role of rail in transport.

80. The council is to use the existing Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study[9] and Oxfordshire Connect project to develop a rail strategy which identifies potential future rail projects and priorities across and through Oxfordshire. The Rail Corridor Study identified the need for a 70 per cent increase in services as

[9] Network Rail, 'Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study' (June 2021)

well as improved calling patterns and service coverage by 2028. The Study's proposals include:

- Extending the majority of passenger services through Oxfordshire, rather than them terminating at, Oxford station
- Better connectivity and additional capacity for areas where high growth in population and employment is expected
- Provision of new direct services to Bristol and Swindon
- Strengthening connections with Birmingham, Worcester and the south coast to support Oxfordshire's economic growth.

81. The Working Group highlighted the need for better rail connectivity beyond that proposed in the Rail Corridor Study through the introduction of new lines and further stations to serve communities without rail services but heard that it would be challenging to further expand rail services without new and significant developments as rail operators have limited appetite for growth and are focused on consolidating existing networks and improving efficiency and satisfaction. Officers also told the Working Group that delivering the Rail Corridor Study would give funders, such as the Department for Transport, confidence to provide funding for further rail improvement.

Conclusion 18: *There is a perception that rail operators are focused on consolidating networks and increasing the efficiency of existing services, rather than expanding services.*

Recommendation 13: *To improve public transport connectivity, the council advocate for the construction of new train stations on existing lines and seek funding from non-public sources which stand to benefit from such improved connectivity, such as through land value capture*.

Accessing and connecting public transport

82. Cutting across the Working Group's inquiry was the opportunity to shift journeys from private cars by improving access to public transport when planning housing developments.

Housing

83. The Working Group discussed with witnesses the importance of spatial planning and either locating housing developments near public transport or using section 106 (Town and Country Planning Act 1990) agreements or the Community Infrastructure Levy to connect developments with public transport. It heard that the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 would be consistent with the LTCP and the council was working with planning authorities so that transport is used as a key factor in housing planning – the Working Group makes recommendations relating to strategic planning policy at the end of this report.

Conclusion 19: *Car-dependent housing developments can lead to significant car-based congestion, while transit-oriented developments present significant*

opportunities to increase public transport use when located in urban areas or near transport hubs or strategic public transport services, or where adequate funding is obtained from developers for such purposes.

Multi-modal travel

84. Many residents already combine multiple modes of travel during journeys and improving the integration and accessibility of public transport and active travel can improve the convenience, efficiency and economy of public transport.

85. Under the LTCP, in respect of multi-modal travel, the council intends to,

a. *Consider multi-modal travel as a central option for transport planning and planning for new developments to achieve greater integration of the transport system.*

b. *Seek to improve physical access and interchange facilities as well continuing to monitor and explore opportunities for [Mobility as a Service] with partners.*

c. *Undertake assessments of the facilities for people walking and cycling at stops and stations on our core public transport corridors, so that we can identify opportunities for improvements in more detail.*

d. *Work with stakeholders, including the rail and bus industry, to improve access to railway stations on foot, by cycle and bus.*

e. *Work with stakeholders as part of our bus enhanced partnership to improve real-time information and multi-operator ticketing.*

f. *Investigate opportunities to improve promotion and education of travel choices including travel planning with major employers;*

86. The LTCP also proposes the introduction of mobility hubs which connect public transport services with other services and modes. A further opportunity here is to co-locate services in support of the LTCP 20-minute neighbourhood policy. The council intends to,

a. *Support the development of mobility hubs in a range of locations and sizes in order to improve interchange opportunities, connectivity and accessibility […]*

b. *Carefully consider the following matters when developing plans for any new mobility hubs:*
   - *The identification and safeguarding of suitable land.*
   - *The character and needs of the local area.*
   - *The proximity of proposals to strategic rail, bus and active travel networks.*
   - *The potential to achieve more walking and cycling, including the need for suitable cycle parking.*
   - *The ability to develop and improve existing assets or facilities such as stations, bus stopping areas or Park and Rides.*

- *The potential to tie in with high quality digital and renewable energy networks.*
- *The opportunity to provide complementary facilities and services such as flexible workspaces, shops and refreshment options.*

c. *Encourage developers to design mobility hubs into development where appropriate.*

87. The Working Group considers there to be a balance between reducing car journeys and increasing public and multi-modal travel and making mobility hubs and public transport stations truly accessible, particularly for rural communities without comprehensive public transport networks or geography suited to active travel.

Conclusion 20: *Private car use remains the primary mode of transport for many residents, particularly those living in rural areas which lack comprehensive and frequent public transport services or where the geography is not suited to active travel. Multi-modal travel and mobility hubs present an opportunity to reduce car journeys but will be ineffective if public transport stations and mobility hubs are not accessible to residents for whom it would be impractical to use active travel or public transport to access them.*

Freight and Logistics

88. The UK freight system transported 154 billion tonnes of goods in 2019, supporting almost £400 billion in manufacturing sales and 140 million tonnes of exports. Since 2009, the total amount of goods moved in the UK has increased by 23 per cent.

89. Road freight accounts for approximately 35 per cent of road transport carbon emissions, contributes significantly to congestion and adversely impacts the environment. Light goods vehicle (LGV) traffic has increased by over 67 per cent in the last twenty years and currently accounts for 15 per cent of all road traffic, while heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) account for 5 per cent. The Department for Transport expects LGV traffic to increase by 23 to 108 per cent by 2050 and HGV traffic by 5 to 12 per cent.

90. Local challenges in relation to freight are:
- *Resilience and congestion issues on the A34 which is an important road for movement between the Midlands and southern ports.*
- *Inappropriate vehicles and levels of freight movement through towns.*
- *Road safety issues, particularly with people cycling.*
- *Contribution to local air quality issues.*
- *Last mile delivery, particularly in Oxford.*
- *Construction and logistics movements associated with the large number of housing development sites.*
- *The strong rural economy in Oxfordshire which is often away from the 'A' road network.*
- *Capacity of rail network through Oxfordshire for freight movement.*

91. Key considerations in relation to freight and logistics policy are:
- *Complexity of the freight system – Much is beyond the county council's control and requires regional, national or international guidance.*
- *Need for goods - Need to facilitate the efficient movement of goods to support residents and businesses.*
- *Amount of goods transported - There is a significant amount of goods that need to be moved each day, the majority are moved by road.*
- *Modal shift – Volume of goods means one mode cannot be solely relied on and significant modal shift will take time.*
- *Market forces - Freight and logistics are part of the private sector and most companies already operate in the most cost effective way, limiting our ability to deliver some solutions.*
- *Impacts on businesses and consumers - Actions need to consider potential impacts on local businesses.*

92. On 14 December 2021, the Council resolved,

to base the new Freight and logistics strategy for Oxfordshire on the principle of "avoid-switch-improve".

Working with local firms, the Road Haulage Association and neighboring authorities, the Council will establish a Regional Network of well-service[d] HGV through routes, and bring in measures to assist or encourage:

1. Communities to report HGV restriction infringements;

2. Thames Valley Police to take appropriate action against persistent offenders;

3. Technology and haulage companies to reflect the Strategy within their GPS systems;

4. Delivery firms to switch increasingly to hybrid or electric vehicles; and

5. The installation of appropriate and enforceable 20mph speed limits, together with physical highways restraints, in the areas worst affected.

93. On 5 January 2022, the Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy revoked an experimental weight restriction in Burford and agreed that officers would consider the costs and benefits of introducing area-wide weight restrictions for Oxfordshire in developing a freight strategy, after the scheme found that simply introducing a weight restriction order in the town may have caused significant and undesirable displacement of HGV traffic. That decision was subsequently affirmed by Cabinet after being called in by the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

94. The draft LTCP proposed a freight and logistics strategy is based on the following principles:
- *Appropriate movement* [85% support at consultation]
- *Efficient movement* [78% support at consultation]

- *Zero-tailpipe emission, zero-carbon movement* [75% support at consultation]
- *Reducing local air pollutants* [78% support at consultation]
- *Safe movement* [82% support at consultation]
- *Monitoring movement* [86% support at consultation]
- *Partnership working* [86% support at consultation].

95. Following consultation, a number changes are to be made to the proposed freight and logistics strategy: it is to be restructured around 'long distance', 'local' and 'last mile' to recognise that different modes and solutions are required for different journey types; a proposed process for deciding environmental weight restrictions is to be removed as a county-wide area-based weight restriction solution is to be explored; future funding and resource for evidence gathering, development and delivery of an area weight restriction programme has been committed; and revisions to the appropriate HGV route map are to be made.

    - In respect of long-distance movement, the council's priority is to shift road to rail.

    - In respect of local movement, the council's priority is to encourage HGVs to use the most appropriate routes, improve safety and encourage uptake of zero-emissions vehicles. The council is to promote an HGV route map, conduct a county-wide area-based weight restriction study, provide funding to deliver area weight restrictions and measures to improve enforcement.

    - In respect of last-mile movement, the council's priority is to reduce the number of LGVs in towns and encourage the uptake of zero-emissions vehicles, primarily through encouraging freight consolidation and mode shift to cycle freight.

96. When the Working Group heard evidence on the topic, the freight and logistics strategy was described as challenging and requiring close collaboration with industry from a strategic, county-wide perspective. As a demand-led service, there is little scope to avoid the movement of freight. However, the council has not yet set specific targets for the more-achievable shifting and improving of freight as it lacks sufficient data on demand for goods and freight movement in Oxfordshire. Similarly, while the LTCP freight and logistics strategy includes 'appropriate movement' as a key principle and actions to explore opportunities to better manage freight traffic, it lacks a firm commitment to restricting heavy freight to the strategic roads suited to such traffic, which is a priority for residents of towns and villages as elaborated below.

    Conclusion 21: *While there is limited scope to avoid the transportation of goods, there is greater opportunity to shift and improve how goods are transported. The LTCP freight and logistics strategy lacks clear targets to shift and improve the transportation of freight and a firm commitment to restricting heavy freight to strategic roads.*

Managing HGV traffic

97. A key issue for many residents living in towns and villages is HGVs passing through their communities, causing disruption and adverse environmental impacts, such as by reducing local air quality and degrading buildings adjacent to highways. Further, HGVs pose a threat to vulnerable road users, having been involved in recent high-profile incidents in Oxfordshire. HGVs also account for five per cent of the UK's domestic carbon emissions.

98. At present, the council and industry do not know the locations of all existing weight-restricted locations, many are not well enforced and even those that are well enforced are nevertheless frequently breached. The Working Group heard that around half of reported breaches of weight restrictions were upheld due to HGVs legitimately accessing those areas, although it was possible in some cases that deliveries could have been completed by smaller vehicles.

Conclusion 22: *The council and industry are both unaware of all the weight restrictions on roads in and around Oxfordshire and it can be challenging to enforce existing weight restrictions.*

99. At consultation, 91 per cent of respondents supported the establishment of area-based weight restrictions, the council seeking to influence the location and design of new developments so that there is appropriate freight access, and asking developers to prepare construction logistics plans for major sites.

100. Due to their significant impact on communities, the Working Group supports the introduction of area-based weight restrictions and other enforceable measures to restrict HGVs to strategic roads wherever possible, considering reducing their environmental impacts on residential areas to outweigh potentially increased costs and overall emissions. By introducing enforceable restrictions which move HGVs onto strategic roads, the council will not only address the concerns of residents but also encourage the shift to lighter vehicles for local journeys and last-mile deliveries and to rail for long-distance freight.

Recommendation 14: *The council work with partners to audit and map all weight-restricted areas and enforcement measures and ensure that weight-restricted areas are adequately signposted and thus enforceable; and then make the locations of weight restrictions readily available to industry and stakeholders. After having done so, the council work with communities to introduce area-based environmental weight restrictions, other enforceable interventions, and appropriate HGV routes which protect areas adversely impacted by HGVs; and work with partners to robustly enforce restrictions.*

Consolidation centres

101. Under the LTCP freight and logistics strategy, the council proposes to undertake a consolidation centre feasibility study.

102. Consolidation centres are operations which receive multiple small deliveries and convert them into fewer deliveries for a specific area, presenting an

opportunity for zero-emissions vehicles and cargo bikes to be used for last-mile deliveries. The Working Group heard that many freight and logistics companies are consolidation centres in themselves and thus did not recognise the need for multi-operator consolidation centres. However, the Working Group considers that consolidation can offer significant benefits to Oxfordshire residents by reducing freight traffic in residential areas and enabling the switch to low- or zero-carbon last mile delivery. This is evidenced by the Bristol Freight Consolidation Centre, which achieved up a reduction in freight traffic into versus out of the consolidation centre of up to 70 to 80 per cent – resulting in a reduction of over 11 tonnes of carbon dioxide and 358kg of nitrogen oxides.

Recommendation 15: *The LTCP freight and logistics strategy explore and promote the introduction of consolidation centres to enable last-mile deliveries to be undertaken using fewer road vehicles and low-carbon alternatives.*

A regional approach

103. The experimental weight restriction in Burford shows that weight restrictions which focus on narrow localities may be at risk of displacing HGV traffic into neighbouring communities. The council's ambition must be to introduce strategies for all areas of the county which, through enforceable interventions, direct heavy freight traffic away from towns and villages in a manner which ensures communities are effectively serviced by freight companies and not inequitably impacted by policy.

Recommendation 16: *The council approach the restriction of HGV through-traffic to strategic roads through area-based strategies which reflect the needs and concerns of communities and align with a county-wide freight and logistics strategy. There is pressing need for an area strategy in the Windrush Valley area following the findings and removal of the experimental weight restriction at Burford*.

Engaging with industry

104. There are obvious tensions between consumers' and businesses' desire for the cheap and fast delivery of goods and residents concerns in respect of the climate, environment and road safety. Further, there are tensions between some of the solutions to environmental and safety issues related to HVGs and climate concerns.

105. When the Working Group met with industry stakeholders, it found that they were not wholly receptive to the concerns of residents in relation to freight – prioritising the efficiency of their services over environmental impacts and not agreeing that the introduction of the Direct Vision Standard in Oxfordshire would be beneficial in light of the significant threat HGVs pose to more-vulnerable road users[10] (although, the Road Haulage Association is keen to engage with Vision Zero). Both of the trade associations with which the Working Group met offered to provide members with briefings on the

[10] Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety, 'What Kills Most on the Roads?' (December 2020)

operations of the freight industry and management of safety in the road haulage sector.

Conclusion 23: *The council and freight industry's objectives are in conflict. There are a number of tensions between the views and interests of residents, the economy and industry which LTCP needs to balance sensitively.*

Recommendation 17: *The Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee seek briefings on how the freight industry operates and manages safety in relation to other road users.*

Highways Expansion

106. The Housing Infrastructure Fund is a government capital grant programme to help deliver new homes in England.

107. The Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund programme ('HIF1') is to fund highways schemes to unlock the delivery of new, and support further, housing developments in the Didcot Garden Town Area, support jobs in the Science Vale UK, reduce congestion and prevent undue pressure on neighbouring strategic roads. The proposals involve some walking and cycling infrastructure.

108. At its first evidence session, in the context of the council's LTCP ambitions to remove one in four car journeys by 2030 and one in three by 2040, the Working Group heard evidence from sustainable transport experts in relation to the traffic forecasts informing HIF1 and the impact of increased road capacity on the number of car journeys undertaken. It is noteworthy that the Housing Infrastructure Fund was designed approximately a decade ago and launched approximately five years ago and had certain requirements in respect of the modelling used in preparing funding bids.

109. Professor Phil Goodwin made a written submission on the HIF1 traffic forecasts (Annex 1) and told the Working Group that,
- The existing modelling and information underpinning the HIF1 is now unreliable given the shifts in our operating environment, particularly covid-19 and Brexit
- Congestion will not reduce as much as is intended and it will not reduce for as long as is desired
- Young people are driving less and less and this is important for future planning.

110. Professor John Whitelegg told the Working Group that,
- Implementing road (car) infrastructure and then trying to adapt it, to make it greener or more sustainable won't work; people won't make the change to their transport behaviours.

- That in many projects, sustainability measures are promised ahead of time and then don't happen in reality due to budget constraints.

- Transport should be viewed in an integrated way.

- A pause (on Grant Determination Agreement and Compulsory Purchase Orders) and a review of all available options should be considered. This would involve returning to Government to request funding be spent on a different project to meet the same objective and look into ways to raise one's own funds (as per Herefordshire / Manchester).

- That looking into alternative funding routes is of huge importance.

- That reducing car use requires an integrated approach; specifically looking at multiple things at once (e.g. including car parking capacity).

- That citizens assemblies are asking for this new sustainable approach to transport.

Conclusion 24: *Expert evidence received by the Working Group is that the council's existing traffic modelling inputs and assumptions do not reflect the LTCP targets to reduce car use nor the current operating picture, for example the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit on travel patterns. However, certain modelling input and assumptions can be required to access government funding.*

Recommendation 18: *The council review its transport modelling practices and provide a response to the evidence collected by the Transport Working Group, including in respect of additional car journeys induced by the creation of additional road capacity, and its challenge: that modelling inputs and assumptions which better reflect current travel patterns and the LTCP's transport targets should be used to inform policy and funding bids.*

Cross-Cutting Issues

111. The Working Group has arrived at a number of cross-cutting conclusions and recommendations based on its work.

Evidence and data

112. Throughout its inquiry, the Working Group found there to be insufficient evidence underpinning LTCP targets and policies, particularly in relation to travel demand by mode and purpose and the demand for goods, and that council witnesses were unable to quantify or evidence the contribution policies and strategies would make towards realising the LTCP vision and targets. Further, the Working Group was concerned by the relevance of modelling inputs and assumptions used to inform policy and funding bids recently.

Conclusion 25: *The council currently lacks comprehensive data on existing travel patterns or demand for travel and goods, which makes defining transport policy outcomes and evaluating the impact of policy challenging.*

Conclusion 26: *There is not yet a clear link between the transport policy evidence base and the policies being put forward in the LTCP and how they align with the headline targets in the LTCP.*

Recommendation 19: *The council do more – including establishing focus groups in relation to geographic areas and journey demand types – to understand which (particularly single-occupancy) car journeys are avoidable and the alternatives which are viable for residents, to help develop focused policies that successfully enable modal shift.*

Recommendation 20: *Both within the transport service and at organisation level, the council review its relationship with data collection and usage to ensure that policy and decision-making are underpinned by robust and reliable evidence, have achievable outcomes, can be evaluated, and that lessons are learnt from projects to enable continual improvement.*

Limitations and prioritisation

113. It is clear that the LTCP is a highly ambitious vision that is to be brought forward in stages and that it will require the commitment of significant resource to be successful. In the context of significant resource constraints, prioritisation is essential. On the basis of the evidence it received, the Working Group considers the initiatives set out in recommendation 22 to be likely to contribute significantly towards meeting the vision and targets in the LTCP.

Conclusion 27: *Resource and capacity are likely to present barriers to the achievement of the council's transport objectives.*

Recommendation 21: *The LTCP and associated strategies prioritise achievable initiatives which are expected to deliver the greatest benefits in the shortest periods of time; and work with stakeholders in establishing achievability.*

Recommendation 22: *The priority actions of the LTCP and associated policies and strategies should include:*

- *reducing car-based urban congestion, particularly from single-occupancy vehicles, in order to improve bus journey times and thus bus patronage;*
- *initiatives which increase the proportion of journeys undertaken using active travel;*
- *measures to address capacity and congestion, particularly at peak times;*
- *developing multi-modal transport hubs; and*
- *trialling low-carbon freight options for local and last-mile journeys.*

Coherence

114. The LTCP is a document to frame and inform the development of a numerous strategies and policies, including a range of area-, demand-type- and mode-specific transport strategies. However, it lacks a county-wide strategic

document which provides a clear and comprehensive summary of Oxfordshire's spatial transport network and approach to strategic, integrated transport, spatial-planning and land-use, which is important for both understanding the current situation and for future planning.

Conclusion 28: *The council suffers from not having an overarching transport strategy document for Oxfordshire which ties together all factors relevant to transport.*

Recommendation 23: *The council should develop an Oxfordshire-wide transport strategy, taking a system-leadership role across Oxfordshire transport, land-use and place-shaping that considers all transport stakeholders, policies, projects and data.*

Viable alternatives

115. Witnesses highlighted to the Working Group that LTCP vision and headline targets will only be realised if genuinely viable alternatives to private car travel are in place at the same time initiatives to reduce private car journeys are implemented.

Recommendation 24: *The council deliver public and active travel alternatives to car journeys based on reliable evidence of their ability to deliver modal shifts; and interventions to reduce private vehicle journeys be accompanied by such viable, evidence-based, sustainable, integrated, and inclusive travel alternatives.*

Communication and engagement

116. Recent trials of low-traffic neighbourhoods show that the policies of the LTCP will have a significant impact on our communities and may not be welcomed by everyone. Effective stakeholder engagement will be key to the successful implementation of the LTCP.

Conclusion 29: *Shifting transport behaviours can mean a large disruption to people's lives and provoke significant public backlash. It therefore requires public buy-in to be successful. Recently, the importance of communication and engagement to deliver modal shift and avoid backlash has been overlooked in transport projects.*

Recommendation 25: *The council proactively and comprehensively canvass the views of businesses in respect of its transport policy.*

117. Further, beyond the provision of viable low-carbon transport alternatives, the Working Group considers that effective communication with residents in respect of the benefits of modal shift and the public transport offering in their areas to be vital to shifting journeys from cars to public transport.

Recommendation 26: *the council communicate the benefits of modal shifts and the public transport available to residents to nudge them to choose the most appropriate transport modes for their journeys.*

Recommendation 27: *The council invest in transport-specific communication and engagement support for future projects that aim to achieve modal shift.*

Strategic planning

118. The Working Group heard in multiple contexts that the production of a new strategic planning policy, Oxfordshire 2050, provides an opportunity for future planning requirements to be informed by the vision and targets of the LTCP.

Recommendation 28: *The council put the need to avoid, shift and improve car journeys and increase active travel and public transport connectivity at the heart of its strategic planning policy; and apply the principle of 20-minute neighbourhoods to its strategic planning policy and place-shaping.*

Councillor Charlie Hicks
Chairman of the Transport Policy Development Working Group

Contact Officer:	Ben Awkal, interim Scrutiny Officer ben.awkal@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Annexes:	Annex 1 – Outline Comments on HIF Forecasts and Appraisal, Prof. Phil Goodwin

June 2022

Outline Comments on HIF Forecasts and Appraisal

Professor Phil Goodwin[1], BSc (Econ), PhD (Civil Engineering), FCILT, FIHT

Introduction

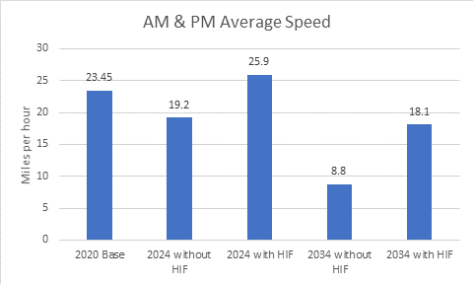
Cllr Charlie Hicks, Chair of the Transport Scrutiny Working Group and Climate Scrutiny Working Group, Oxfordshire County Council, asked me to comment on the treatment of forecasts of traffic, including induced traffic, which are used to support compulsory land purchase for the construction of HIF road projects. These are part of County's housing and other development plans. He provided me with an email chain between himself and the Head of Infrastructure Delivery, Ms Hannah Battye, and links to various published summary material about the proposals, which I have read, but I have not studied the voluminous earlier work about the development proposals themselves, and do not have a view about these.

The main relevant material is contained in an email from Ms Battye dated 17.2.2022, which embodies earlier correspondence. The extracts below are taken from that email.

Background

Oxfordshire County Council has worked up, over some years, a proposal for additional housing, employment and related development in Didcot and neighboring areas. This would increase the number of people living and working in the area, and therefore the volume of traffic. Calculations suggest HIF proposed road schemes would allow the development to go ahead while reducing congestion and carbon emissions.

Traffic Forecasts



The main forecasts cited by Ms Battye are made by the Consultancy Systra using a model called the Didcot Paramics Microsimulation model, owned by OCC.

At face value, they show that without the road schemes, average peak speeds on the relevant part of the network would reduce as a result of the development, from 23.45 mph in 2020, to 19.2 mph in 2024 and a further decline to 8.8 mph in 2034. However, if the HIF schemes are implemented speeds would rise to 25.9 mph in 2024. But then they would fall back to 18.1 mph in 2034 even if the HIF schemes are implemented. This speed is not only less than in 2024, but is even less than the 2020 base figure.

Therefore it seems that the forecast relief from congestion of the HIF schemes is expected to be very short lived. I do not know if there is an implied further set of road schemes that is planned for the early 2030s.

[1] See personal statement at end.

The Paramics model, as I understand it, is essentially a comparison of two cases: both with the development in place, which produces a given total number and location of journeys, but one figure with and one without the road schemes.

Traffic forecasts from 2020 to 2024 and 2034 must clearly be influenced by many other factors than the development and the roads – assumptions about demographics, the state of the economy, the level of car ownership, the cost of fuel, the cost and quality of public transport, policy on traffic management, speed limits, the proportion of vehicles of different types, progress on active travel, and any additional traffic that would be induced by the presence of the road improvements themselves. If I have understood correctly, the Paramics model has itself not been used to make forecasts of all these factors, and indeed does not have the functionality to do so. Rather it has looked at the effects only of the traffic generated by the proposed developments themselves.

But in that case, therefore, the actual forecasts of traffic due to all these other factors have not come from the Paramics model, which seems to be overlaid (I think) on forecasts produced earlier using the Oxfordshire Strategic Model (OSM) which does have the functions to calculated the effects of some of these other factors. I am familiar with the nature of this Model, but have not seen a report of its earlier calculations.

The issue of concern is that I believe this work must have been carried out during the period when the dominant general traffic forecasts were informed by the DfT's 2015 or 2018 National Traffic Forecasts. These were made before the onset of (a) Brexit, (b) Covid19, and the radically increased recognition of (c) the effects of climate change and (d) the importance of policies to combat it, both nationally and in Oxfordshire. It is my view that these four factors radically change the forecasts of traffic which would now be appropriate. Therefore even if the Paramics simulation is correct on the basis of these earlier forecasts, it would not necessarily be accurately representing the relevant current base level, or the factors leading to change. The assessment of the impact of the HIF schemes cannot be more accurate than the assessment of the base level of demand and the factors operating on it.

Induced Traffic

Induced traffic is defined as the additional traffic which results from the provision of additional road capacity which reduces travel times. It may be thought of as the equivalent of the extra traffic which results from reduced journey costs. Both are also influenced by convenience, comfort and other conditions, as well as the availability and attractiveness of other modes of travel. The induced traffic will be made up of the net effect of additional trips or greater frequency of trips, transfer from other modes, increased journey length from more distant origins or to more distant destinations, changes in routes chosen, and will have different effects depending on location, time and season. Where road provision changes land use patterns, this can also be treated as induced traffic.

The only response included in the Paramics modelling is the choice of route travelled, for the two cases with and without the schemes, but both taking the development as given[2]. It is very

[2] Note that the roads schemes are described as a necessary condition of the development, which means that strictly the traffic speed forecasts for the case with the development but without the road schemes could not actually occur. Sometimes this causes considerable misunderstandings.

widely experienced that the provision of additional road capacity does in fact change behaviour in the ways described, and such induced traffic is therefore likely to occur. This means that there will be additional traffic due to other people using the road system. It is also clear that the Paramics model does not have the facility to make such calculations, and has not tried to do so. My understanding is that there is no claim that such induced traffic will not exist. Rather, the suggestion by Ms Battye is that it is unlikely to be big enough to make any difference:

> "for any 'induced demand' to have a negative impact on HIF results (make the speed lower than 2024 without HIF), the induced trips would have to be approximately at least the same as the number of trips from ten years of housing and employment growth"

Note that a 'negative impacts' is defined, in the brackets, as making the speed in 2024 with the roads lower than the speed without the roads. It is established in traffic science that it is possible for such a big effect to occur, but in the short run it is thought to be rare. However, even in the short run I do not think that this is the correct comparison. Induced traffic has a negative impact on the HIF results even if it is say half the number of trips (or even just 10% of the number of trips) from the housing and employment growth. In these cases the speeds will be lower than calculated, and the benefits therefore less[3]. This would be revealed when any consideration is made bringing the normal criteria for value for money for road schemes into consideration of the special criteria of value for money of development.

In the longer run, there is a further effect. The question is whether the combined effect of the development and the roads results in a more car dependent life style, a dynamic process which tends to reduce the quality of public transport, and location of facilities, triggering a sort of vicious circle in which the end result is indeed worse for all. This is not inevitable – it would depend, for example, on parking policies, density, provision of facilities like shops, frequency of buses, access to rail services, cycling and pavement standards, schools, doctors etc. But then the traffic forecasts would need to be different depending on the outcome of all these decisions. It is difficult to see how this would be done using the Paramics model, which implicitly will be assuming particular details of development whether or not they have yet been defined.

Taking account of induced traffic will have the effect of further reducing the predicted benefits of both reduction in congestion and reduction in CO2. (That is, they will be worse than the current forecasts for 2034 'with' the schemes). This will reduce the value for money of the schemes and increase the climate damage caused even if the amount of induced traffic is smaller than the amount of increased traffic from the development. I am not aware that there has yet been any calculation of value for money, but that will may be scrutinised in any Inquiry or Public Examination.

Other considerations.

The effect of speed on carbon emissions is different for an individual vehicle travelling at those speeds (which I think the graphs refer to), compared with a stream of traffic whose average speed varies (which the traffic forecasts refer to). Also, low speeds have entirely different effects if they are in stop-start conditions due to heavy congestion, or if they are a smooth lower speed due to reduced speed limits and managed traffic flows which, hopefully, is what can be implied in the future. Slower speeds are in general inefficient for vehicle

[3] At a technical level, the relationship between speed and traffic flow is not linear, especially in congested conditions, so I'm not sure I understand the 'at least the same as…' rule of thumb.

which have been designed to be able to travel must faster than the deign speed (or speed limt) or the road. I note that there is currently much more consideration of the effect of different designs of development can have on traffic conditions, for example if housing design is on the basis of multiple car ownership, or reduced car use by provision and accessibility to local services and attractions, and good alternative facilities for walking, cycling and pubic transport. These are of course, quite rightly, a priority for the Council, but it is not clear how the forecasting methodology allows such policies to have any effect on the traffic.

What to do?

Oxfordshire is not alone in being faced with this problem, which is not uncommon in Local Government when a large proposal inherited from a previous administration has to be assessed (a) following a change in the political complexion of the County, and (b) in the middle of a very substantial change in Government objectives and appraisals, due primarily (though not only) to climate change.

I think the current experience in Wales may be helpful to Oxfordshire. Faced by a large number of 'inherited' road schemes whose appraisals had been carried out at a time of different traffic forecasts and different policy priorities, the Welsh Government has announced a pause in further progress on those schemes, and set up an Independent Commission of well qualified people to reconsider each one to assess its contribution to the Government's wider policy objectives. Their approach derives from similar thinking to the UK Treasury revision last year of its 'Green Book' of the general rules of appraisal. So far one scheme has been formally abandoned, and another I think will be modified. I don't prejudge the overall outcome, but what is clear is that existing or modified schemes which go ahead, will do so with a much greater confidence that they are well thought through and consistent with objectives.

Personal Statement

I have experience in the assessment of traffic forecasts, the calculation of induced traffic from road schemes, and similar matters. I am Senior Fellow of the Foundation for Integrated Transport, and Emeritus Professor of Transport Policy at University College London and the University of the West of England. I was formerly Director of the Oxford University Transport Studies Unit (1979-1995) and a resident of Oxford during that time. I have been an advisor to the Department for Transport on traffic forecasting and road appraisal methods for 40 years, and currently, including being co-author of the official SACTRA report on Induced Traffic in 1994, and reports on suppressed or 'disappearing' traffic and forecasts. I am also currently advising the Welsh Government on its new road appraisal methodology. I have appeared as an expert witness in a number of planning enquiries particularly Public Examination of road schemes.

I am conscious that I have not had the opportunity to read all the documentation and technical reports that surely exist even if not all published, on all the background to the Oxfordshire Transport Strategy, the development proposals and the technical modelling reports, as I would expect to do in a proper professional study. Therefore my conclusions are necessarily provisional. I built my career in Oxford during the late 1970s to mid 1990s, with good working relationships with both City and County at that time, and have a great affection for the region. These comments are offered pro bono publico.

Phil Goodwin 28.02.2022

OXFORDSHIRE BSIP:
SUMMARY OF THE BSIP PROGRAMME AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Purpose

The purpose of this note is to provide a high-level summary of Oxfordshire County Council's plan for investing in buses, being funded through BSIP.

Background

In October 2021, the Council adopted its Bus Service Improvement Plan. This set out a programme of investment in capital infrastructure projects and the purchase of new vehicles, and funding for revenue support for new and expanded buses. This included funding that was bid for through the BSIP, the separate ZEBRA funding bid for zero emissions buses in Oxford (that was successful), Section 106 funding, and the Council's own resources. The total BSIP funding bid for was £53.424m.

In April 2022, the Council received a letter from the Department for Transport setting out its indicative allocation of BSIP funding to Oxfordshire and the conditions attached to the funding. This indicatively allocated £12.705m to Oxfordshire, about 24% of its total BSIP funding request. This funding has been allocated as so:

	Revenue	**Capital**
Indicative DfT allocation	£3,961,893	£8,743,028

In light of this funding settlement, the Council undertook a prioritisation exercise with Cabinet members and bus operators to identify a prioritised list of schemes to fund through BSIP. This included rescoping some projects to fit a revised funding allocation. This process also took account of the DfT's stated preferences for investing in bus priority infrastructure, revised and discounted fares, and new and innovative services.

Summary of the programme of EP-related works

BSIP Scheme Reference	Scheme Name	Source of funding	Funding Secured				Unconfirmed post-2024/25 ongoing costs (per year)
			2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total	
Capital Schemes							
C1	Traffic Filters, Oxford	BSIP		£3.4m		£3.4m	None
		Other (non-OCC capital)	£0.4m			£0.4m	
C2	Countywide Traffic Signal Upgrades	BSIP	£0.093m	£0.575m	£0.575m	£1.243m	None
C5	Cherwell Street Bus Lane, Banbury	BSIP		£1.3m	£1m	£2.3m	None
		Section 106	£0.05m	£0.45m		£0.5m	None
C12	Real time information	BSIP	£0.05m	£0.8m	£0.75m	£1.6m	No capital costs
		Other (non-OCC capital)	£0.15m			£0.15m	
R1	Rural bus project *Capital cost of purchase of vehicles to run the services*	BSIP	£0.2m			£0.2m	No capital costs
None	Bus Journey Time Reliability Fund	OCC	£1m	£1m	£1m	£3m	£1m
Revenue schemes							

BSIP Scheme Reference	Scheme Name	Source of funding	Funding Secured				Unconfirmed post-2024/25 ongoing costs (per year)
			2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total	
R1	New rural bus services *C. North Downs – linking to Didcot and Harwell Campus* *D. Cherwell Valley - linking to Bicester*	BSIP		£0.25m	£0.25m	£0.5m	£0.3m
R2	New Cross-border Services *Newbury-Harwell-Didcot/Oxford*[1] *Bicester-Brackley*	BSIP	£0.041m	£0.245m	£0.245m	£0.531m	£0.27m
		Other (non-OCC revenue)	£0.025m	£0.069m	£0.059m	£0.153m	
R3	SBSF Services retained	BSIP	£0.228m	£0.261m	£0.266m	£0.755m	£0.27m
R4	Youth Fares	BSIP	£0.305m	£0.611m	£0.611m	£1.527m	£0m[2]
R6	OCC Additional Staffing	BSIP	£0.161m	£0.161m	£0.161m	£0.483m	£0.161m
R9	Journey planning	BSIP	£0.025m	£0.075m		£0.1m	None
Totals (Capital and Revenue):			£2.728m	£9.197m	£4.917m	£16.872m	£2.001m

[1] To be part-funded by West Berkshire
[2] Assumed that commercial revenue risk will be borne by bus operators

Capital scheme summaries

Traffic Filters, Oxford

As part of the Oxford ZEBRA bid, a series of 'Traffic Filters' are proposed at strategic points across Oxford that are intended to restrict movement by general traffic except by buses and other permitted vehicles. These 'Traffic Filters' would be similar to the current successful Oxford City Centre bus gates, which constrain general traffic through the use of camera technology, backed by the appropriate enforcement legislation, signage and penalties for infringement. It is proposed that traffic filters will be installed on Thames Street, Hythe Bridge Street, St Clements, St Cross Road, and Hollow Way. Initial consultations took place in 2019/20, and further public consultation is planned for summer 2022.

Countywide Traffic Signals Upgrade

This will be a rolling programme of upgrades to the existing capability of traffic signals across Oxfordshire, which already have Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) capability. These upgrades will initially focus on upgrading signals on the premium bus routes in Oxford and the major towns in Oxfordshire. As the programme progresses, this will then be rolled to signal locations along the interurban premium bus route corridors.

The intention is, as a minimum, to insert modules can be inserted into each signal installation (junctions and the various types of pedestrian/cycle crossing), and these can then be configured to detect approaching buses through an interface with the AVL (Automatic Vehicle Location) component of Oxfordshire's Real Time Information system. The traffic light sequence at each signal installation can then be progressed more quickly to offer the oncoming bus a green light, or a green signal can be extended to allow an approaching bus to pass. Opportunities to develop a more enhance smart signal capability will also be investigated as part of this work.

Cherwell Street Bus Lane, Banbury

This scheme constitutes an extension of the existing bus lane on George Street from the current George Street / Cherwell Street Junction, to the Cherwell Street / Bridge Street junction, a distance of 155 metres. Combined with the existing bus lane on George Street, this will give a length of bus lane of 305 metres. The scheme is also likely require reconfiguration of traffic islands between George Street and Bridge Street. This scheme is part of a package of infrastructure in Banbury that will significantly improve local bus services in the town. The most notable is access improvements to Banbury Station along Tramway Road (£4.56 million), when combined with this scheme, will improve bus journey times from the town centre to the east of the town.

The provision of a section of bus lane and reconfigured traffic islands between the George Street and Bridge Street junctions, would save around 2 minutes (one sequence of the signals) for buses approaching the Town Centre on the following routes: B5, B9, S4, 488 (10 buses per hour) as well as on services operated by Johnsons and Community operators. A reconfiguration of the signals would also save around 2 minutes per bus for outbound journeys on the same routes, plus the B3 to Bodicote, the B9 to the Gateway Centre and the 500 to Brackley (so a total of 16 buses per hour) plus Johnsons and Community operators

Real time information

The proposal is to deliver a rolling programme of enhancements to the at-stop real time information and supporting software capability. This will consist of a mixture of signs and totem poles at 230 bus stops, with stops along the premium bus routes in Oxford and the major towns being prioritised, along with real time infrastructure at key hubs to be served by the new rural bus projects in the North Downs and Cherwell Valley.

Additionally, an upgrade to the 'Oxontime' system is proposed. This will provide a functionality that will tell users at the roadside when a bus is cancelled. Furthermore, any other network updates to be displayed, which would improve the customer experience. This data is already supplied by operators to the County server, but the system is not currently configured to display such essential information.

Capital and revenue scheme summaries

New rural bus projects

Two semi-flexible new bus routes would be created in the more rural parts of Oxfordshire that experience the highest levels of transport deprivation and poor accessibility in the county. Two new buses would be purchased by the Council, and initially these vehicles would be maintained and operated by the Council's in-house fleet service.

New North Downs service – linking to Didcot and Harwell Campus. This could link the rural villages of North Moreton, South Moreton, Aston Tirrold, East Hagbourne, West Hagbourne, Blewbury, Upton and Chilton. There will be integration with Premium interurban bus services in Didcot and Harwell, as well as train services at Didcot Parkway.

New Cherwell Valley service - linking to Kidlington/Oxford Parkway, serving Kirtlington, Bletchingdon and Hampton Poyle (and potentially Lower Heyford, Tackley, Steeple Aston and Weston-on-the-Green, dependent on final service design). There would be integration with premium interurban bus and rail services at Oxford Parkway for onward connections to Oxford city centre.

Revenue scheme summaries

Youth fares

Extending the existing City youth fare discount offer (currently offered by the Oxford Bus Company using their ID card scheme) and expanding it to all operators, meaning anyone aged under 19 years old has a £1 flat fare for travel within the city. This reduces inequalities, as young people without a card or who travel on other services currently pay half fare.

In addition, across Oxfordshire, we would extend the existing levels of young persons discount currently offered to those aged 16 and under (outside of the city) to those aged under 19, making thousands more people eligible for lower bus fares.

Newbury – Harwell – Didcot / Oxford service

This service would link West Berkshire and Oxfordshire. Historically there was an hourly Newbury to Oxford bus service along then A34, but in more recent times, this service was split into several sections and finally the Harwell Campus to Newbury section of route was lost. Between Newbury and Harwell, current public transport options require catching two trains and a bus. This scheme will initially seek to operate a new service between Newbury and Harwell. Subject to further funding and the commercial success of the route, options to extend the service to Didcot or Oxford will be explored.

This scheme would provide access to employment sites, especially at Harwell, in both directions, as well as providing an hourly all-purpose daytime bus service.

Bicester – Brackley service

New bus service 505 started around 2 years ago, funded by section 106 contributions in Brackley. The BSIP process offers an opportunity to restart this essential bus link and to tie it in with plans for a refreshed hourly bus service from Brackley to Northampton and with the existing s5 Bicester to Oxford bus service.

SBSF Projects

Thirteen Oxfordshire bus services were created, or amended, in September 2020, using £588,000 from the DfT's Supported Bus Services Fund. These services have now operated for the full year of the DfT scheme, and more funds have been found internally within OCC to extend their operation until March 2022.

This funding will see the continuation of the following services. Options are being explored to retain an additional 5 SBSF funded services through Section 106 funding.

46: Cowley Templar's Square to Wheatley ASDA via Horspath, Littleworth, Wheatley Village. Third party funding is being used to extend this service to Great Milton and Oxford city centre and improve the hours of operation.

63: Southmoor to Oxford via Longworth, Appleton, and Cumnor

Journey Planning

It is proposed to procure the services of a Journey Planning company to conduct research at Oxfordshire's leading employers. as a means of understanding the home-to-work travel patterns at these companies From this, a package of bespoke interventions will be designed by local bus companies, with the aim of increasing the proportion of people travelling by bus.

Additional OCC Resource

3 additional posts at OCC will be created to deliver the improvements contained in the BSIP and other priority public transport projects.

- Lead Officer (Infrastructure Delivery). Required to co-ordinate the delivery of infrastructure projects proposed in the BSIP. This requires specialist programme management skills.

- Lead Officer (Network Management). Required to co-ordinate and deliver improvements to Countywide Traffic Signals and Real Time Information Improvements. Both require specialist technical skills and knowledge of network management systems and processes.

- Lead Officer (Service Improvements). Required to co-ordinate the delivery of service improvements proposed in the BSIP, including co-ordination with bus operators, developers and neighbouring authorities. This requires specialist skills and domain knowledge.

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CABINET – 21 June 2022

ITEM 19 – FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

Members are asked to note the following changes to the Forward Plan:

Amendments to items in the present Plan

Portfolio	Topic (Ref)/Decision	Present Timing	Change
Climate Change Delivery & Environment Cabinet	**Climate and Natural Environment Policy Statement** (Ref: 2022/028) Agree a new Climate and Natural Environment Policy Statement.	19 July 2022	Deferred to 15 November 2022
Travel & Development Strategy Cabinet	**A40 Access to Witney - Compulsory Purchase Order and Side Road Orders** (Ref: 2022/012) To seek approval of the Statement of Reasons and Orders Plans and approval to make the Compulsory Purchase and Side Road Orders.	19 July 2022	Amended to be Part Exempt (Annex)
Travel & Development Strategy *Cabinet*	**Didcot Garden Town HIF1 - Compulsory Purchase and Side Road Orders** (Ref: 2021/134) To seek approval of the Statement of Reasons and Orders Plans and approval to make the Compulsory Purchase and Side Road Orders.	19 July 2022	Amended to be Part Exempt (Annex)

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