

OXFORDSHIRE PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Wednesday, 16 November 2022 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 2.05 pm

Present:

Councillor Kieron Mallon – in the Chair

Councillors:

Charlie Hicks
Brad Baines
Arash Fatemian

Ted Fenton
Judy Roberts
Freddie van Mierlo

Richard Webber

The Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

17/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Sally Povolotsky

18/22 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 3)

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 June and 7 October 2022 were approved as a correct record

19/22 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 4)

Mr Patrick Davey representing residents of the West-East Roads in Walton Manor, addressed the Committee. He said that residents were concerned about the effects of the Hythe Bridge St Bus Gate and the inner ring road/South Walton St ZEZ which would result in traffic displacement onto roads in their area. He suggested that a key test of any traffic measure was that it reduced traffic. He suggested that:-

- All change should benefit all residents. Changes which simply move traffic, so some benefit at others' expense, are not acceptable.
- Any change should reduce vehicle traffic and pollution in all areas and create safe walking and cycling in all areas.

- Changes should reduce traffic on residential roads over main trunk roads: no scheme should displace traffic into residential roads

In general, this meant that:

- Changes to the status quo should not be taken lightly as traffic flows along historic patterns for good reasons.
- The broader consequences of any plan must be properly investigated and modelled. Data is required before and after changes. The council must act if problems come to light.
- And when it comes to the council's proposed measures these same principles mean that:
 - Bus gates must not displace or cage traffic in residential roads which are not equipped to take more traffic.
 - ZEZs must be introduced wholesale, not piecemeal, to prevent traffic displacement. No-one should benefit at the expense of others.

additional plans form Jericho/Walton Manor - a traffic filter in north Walton St outside Walton St cycles. This is a measure that has almost universal support in Walton Manor. It is a key measure to distribute traffic equitably and reduce car journeys overall.

Second, if the current plans are put on hold because of railway bridge work, we suggest trialling a city-wide congestion charge. This has many advantages over the current scheme and would again assuage our fears.

The Chair thanked Mr Davey and asked that his address be sent to all Cabinet members

20/22 CABINET RESPONSES TO TRAVEL RELATED COMMITTEE SCRUTINY REPORTS

(Agenda Item 5)

The Committee had before it a report setting out the Cabinet's responses to recommendations regarding the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and the relationship between parking availability and private car use.

A member suggested that, as the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 had been withdrawn, it would be appropriate to ask the Cabinet to revisit recommendation 22 in the report "the council should develop an

Oxfordshire1-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.

RESOLVED to

- 1) note the Cabinet's responses to their recommendations and observations and, where stated, to agree to return to specific issues in the future through the forward plan.
- 2) refer the recommendation 22 back to the Cabinet and ask for it to be reconsidered

21/22 CENTRAL OXFORDSHIRE TRAVEL PLAN

(Agenda Item 6)

(Councillor Duncan Enright, Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy and Councillor Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Highway Management, attended the meeting for this and item 22 below)

The Committee had before it a report providing the Committee with information about the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP) prior to it being submitted to Cabinet on the 29 November 2022.

The COTP sat within 'part 2' of the local transport plan process. Along with other plans for certain area and specific corridors, the COTP sets out how policies within Part 1 of the LTCP will be applied across specific geographic areas, in this case the central Oxfordshire area.

Part 1 of the local transport plan (the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan) was considered by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2022, prior to adoption at full council in July 2022.

Analysis of the public consultation on the COTP (undertaken between August and October 2022) identifies a number of amendments to the COTP

The Chair introduced the report and welcomed a number of speakers who had been invited to address the Committee.

Councillor Andrew Gant, Cabinet member for Highway Management, presented the report and explained the background to the preparation and revisions to the COTP.

Robin Tucker, representing the Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel, spoke in support of the COTP. He referred to the traffic congestion levels in Oxford which had returned since the pandemic and said that the measures set out in the COTP had gained the support of residents and the business community. He suggested that a number of improvements were required:-

- Reduction in the number of passes
- Avoid universal pass and exemption gaming bureaucracy
- Personal travel planning
- Hythe Bridge Street – motor free
- Longwall/St. Cross Street Bus Gate
- Vans only for legitimate businesses

Mr Tucker then answered a number of questions.

Emily Scaysbrook, Oxford Business Action Group, addressed the Committee. She made the following points:

- that the proposed traffic filters would increase emissions and traffic congestion on the ring road and main arterial roads into Oxford.
- traffic would continue to access Oxford through alternative routes
- Any experimental schemes should be properly monitored and evaluated
- The schemes, if not successful, had the potential to cause irreparable damage to businesses in the city
- Businesses were struggling in the current economic climate and the Council had not completed an economic impact assessment of the proposals
- The scheme was not transparent and easy to understand
- A congestion charge should be considered initially, at least during rush hour periods

Richard Parnham, Reconnecting Oxford, addressed the Committee. He made the following points about the COTP proposals:-

- There had been a poor response rate to consultation
- Need to identify a starting baseline year for evaluating traffic volumes
- The proposed ZEZ did not target main sources pollution
- Workplace parking levy would only affect a small proportion of users
- Proposals were not hitting the right targets

Zahura Plummer, Oxfordshire Liveable Streets, addressed the Committee and made the following points:-

- Importance of creating beautiful cities for people to visit and shop
- Winners of the proposed scheme were people who need to go to work and walkers and cyclists
- School streets system was not effective – too many permits were available
- Universal passes were not effective
- Traffic filters created a propensity for exemption gaming
- Schemes need to be clearly understood

Carolyn Ploszynski, Head of Economic Development, Oxford City Council addressed the Committee. She explained the joint work done between the

County Council and the City Council on the COTP and made the following points:

- Interventions were needed to deliver the Local Plan and address the traffic congestion issues in Oxford
- Impact on businesses and communities and environment in Oxford will worsen if nothing is done
- There was no viable alternative to the proposals
- There was a need to encourage modal shift from private car use
- Improve infrastructure of the city
- A unified transport strategy was needed for Central Oxfordshire

Alison Chisholm and Juliet Carpenter, Oxford University, addressed the Committee on the recommendations of the Citizens Jury held in Headington, Barton and Wood Farm. The jury had focused on the health and climate implications of travel in Oxford. She explained how the agreed actions from the jury aligned with the objectives of the COTP.

Professor Tim Schwarnen, University of Oxford, addressed the Committee. He made the following points:

- Restrictive policies were essential to achieve targets in the LTCP
- A workplace parking levy could create resources to fund Council objectives
- More attention should be given to goods and transport
- Improvements were needed to communication and framing of policies
- More emphasis should be given to fairness and consultation

Members then asked a number of questions of the speakers and discussed the issues raised in the Cabinet report.

During discussion the following points were made:

- The Council should adopt a set of targets to assess whether the measures to be introduced in the COTP were achieving the objectives of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan
- Public access should be provided to this information
- The impact on access to Oxford in terms of visitor footfall and spend should be considered
- There should be a full Economic Impact Assessment and the effect on businesses in the current economic climate should be considered
- In view of the good practice adopted by Waltham Forest LBC, the Council should work with the City Council to implement customer surveys on modes of transport
- There should be consistency in terms of hierarchy of road users and that the impact on the bus network should not be an overriding consideration in comparison with the needs of other road users
- Issues concerning freight and logistics should be aligned with the COTP
- Implementation of the workplace parking levy should be prioritised

- The Council should be more proactive in publicising the benefits of the COTP

RESOLVED to recommend the Cabinet that the Council:-

- a) develops a set of targets for modal shift for the COTP which correlate with the LTCP's modal shift targets
- b) publishes its measures and targets for the COTP, and levels below which different levels of intervention will be triggered in the proposed COTP plans if the project is not working. The Council should clarify where this performance will be reported to.
- c) taking on good practice from Waltham Forest LBC, the Council partners with Oxford City Council to undertake customer surveys relating to the modes of transport used to access shops, and the average spend per mode, and that this work informs a forthcoming Economic Impact Assessment of the COTP proposals.
- d) does not accept the recommended text concerning the feedback around 'wider commitment to/ a better balance on 20mph speed limits'
- e) ensures the COTP and Freight and Logistics Strategy are aligned with one another throughout implementation
- f) works to accelerate the implementation of the workplace parking levy
- g) gives greater emphases in its communications on narratives of success arising from the COTP

22/22 TRAFFIC FILTERS

(Agenda Item 7)

The Committee had before it a report on the amended proposals for Traffic filters following consultation. Oxfordshire County Council aimed to reduce unnecessary journeys by private vehicles., This would help deliver an affordable, sustainable and inclusive transport system that enabled the county to thrive whilst protecting the environment and making Oxfordshire a better place to live for all residents.

Traffic filters were an important tool to achieve this in Oxford and have been part of Oxford's transport strategy since 2015, including the recently adopted Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. They were subject to public consultation in 2019.

Councillor Andrew Gant, Cabinet member for Highway Management, introduced the report.

The Committee considered the amendments to the Traffic filters scheme and agreed a number of recommendations.

RESOLVED to recommend the Cabinet that the Council:

- a) develops models of the impacts of its pass scheme, and that a review of pass availability based on monitoring is undertaken within 3 months
- b) reviews the number of residential passes made available, with a view to pursuing greater traffic reduction
- c) implements the policy that universal passes should be made available only to Oxfordshire residents
- d) consults with the Street Voice Citizens' Jury members on the optimal design of traffic filter passes
- e) undertakes a representative polling exercise on the proposals alongside the ETRO consultation
- f) adopts a default position that vans are not allowed to use traffic filters, and that it develops a definition which creates exceptions for legitimate business use
- g) provides a clear definition to the term 'car club' in order to prevent gaming
- h) publishes the advice and reasoning on which the recommendation to delay the start date of the trial is based
- i) does not accept the recommendations in Annex 4 concerning changes to the timing for filters on Hythe Bridge Street and Hollow Way/Marston Ferry Road and continues with the timings proposed in the consultation
- j) removes 'until 2024' from its recommendation to delay the start date for the trial in Annex 4
- k) reviews the impact of proposals with a view to improving the ease of egress for users of Redbridge Park and Ride
- l) undertakes work around Personal Travel Planning alongside the Traffic Filters proposals

23/22 REVIEW OF THE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 4

(Agenda Item 8)

The Committee had before it a report providing information about the findings of the review of the Local Transport Plan 4. This was produced in response to the recommendation made by the Committee at the 15 June meeting.

The Head of Transport Policy presented the report.

Following discussion it was -

RESOLVED to

- 1) note the report
- 2) recommend the Cabinet that the Council:

- a) develops SMART KPIs to monitor the progress of LTCP 5 in meeting its objectives.
- b) applies the lessons learnt from its review of LTCP 4, in particular in relation to OXIS, the development of Environment and Place KPIs, and capital budget programmes

24/22 CABINET RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CARBON REDUCTION TARGETS WORKING GROUP

(Agenda Item 9)

RESOLVED to note the Cabinet’s responses to their recommendations on Carbon Reduction Targets and, where stated, to agree to return to specific issues in the future through the forward plan.

25/22 THE COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN AND THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

(Agenda Item 10)

The Committee reviewed its work programme for 2022/23.

Members expressed concern about the current difficulties regarding the recruitment and retention of staff to resource the Council’s scrutiny function. The Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer explained the current position regarding recruitment to the Scrutiny team. He was asked to report the Committee’s concerns to the Human Resources department.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) approve the Committee’s work programme for 2022/23
- 2) A briefing to be organised to discuss Environment and Place KPI development for 23/24 around January

..... in the Chair

Date of signing