

Key Messages in Transport

1. Work on the **Oxfordshire 2050 Plan**, alongside that on the **Fifth Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP5)**, will be critical to ensuring that the objectives of **OGB's Strategic Vision** are served by the spatial distribution of future development being geared to reducing the need to travel and promoting the use of sustainable modes, with policies for transport investment and management being aligned accordingly.

The planned development of the **Garden Village at Eynsham** coupled with the Park and Ride scheme and segregated bus and cycle lanes along the A40 into Oxford is a contemporary example of this. However, there are concerns regarding the full deliverability of such aspirations in this case, since active travel on more local journeys between the Garden Village and Eynsham seems to be discouraged under current plans.

The issue of promoting **active travel** is particularly important where new developments are concerned, since they provide an opportunity, with the added potential of developer funding contributions, to make a major contribution in terms of connectivity, as compared with the inevitable constraints posed by existing developments/townscapes. It is also clear that active travel has very different connotations for the urban population, compared with those for residents in rural areas. With appropriate provision at Public Transport stops the range for bus users can be significantly extended by using a bike.

More generally, there appear to be **inconsistencies and/or overlaps between a number of demand management initiatives** (Connecting Oxford, Zero Emissions Zone, LTNs) without clear overarching strategic focus.

2. More attention could usefully be given to ensuring that, once LTCP5 has been finalised, staff resources within the County Council can be directed to research and preparatory work on projects to implement the Plan. This would then allow the **identification of sources of funding for projects and the speedy preparation of applications for central government funding**, which typically come with short deadlines. We would welcome your thoughts on this and would be happy to work with you and officers to develop such a process, using the expertise of our members¹.
3. As a general principle we seek to base our response to project consultations, etc., on **evidence of estimated impacts** but are dependent on the County Council for this. We therefore welcome the developments in transport modelling being undertaken by officers. We have established a constructive dialogue on the subject and will be particularly keen to learn how the central policy issue of behavioural change is incorporated in this work.
4. We are concerned that the Council have the necessary **capacity to promote and integrate public transport** across the spectrum of modes (bus and rail, in particular), as implied by our concept of a multi-modal Oxfordshire "Metro". In this context, we would welcome the designation of a **"Champion" for public transport integration** (analogous to the one promoting Active Travel), who could cover both rail and bus services, the latter in the context of the enhanced role of the County under the new National Bus Strategy.

¹ Nick Falk might be able to help with this

5. Specific issues that we would like to raise include:
- i. Whether the new administration intends to take forward the particular **proposals, under the rubric “Connecting Oxford”**, as advanced previously (i.e., traffic filters plus Eastern Arc Workplace Parking Levy). Alternatively, are they minded to step back and **review an appropriate package of demand management measures for the city more generally**, given the relationship between these specific proposals and other initiatives, notably the (full, green zone) **ZEZ**? The latter will have a major impact on traffic volumes in and around the central area, but is not even acknowledged as a 'supporting scheme' to Connecting Oxford. **We would like to see evidence of the projected impact of both schemes** (individually and together) and for forthcoming public consultation to be framed accordingly in the form of an *overall strategy*.
 - ii. The [bus] rapid transit (BRT) network proposed in LTP4, characterised by 'a high level of priority up to full segregation' is quoted as a supporting scheme to the Connecting Oxford proposals. However, our recent discussions with CC officers on the Woodstock and Banbury Road improvements have highlighted the fact that at best there is **only road width for either a bus lane or a segregated cycle lane**. In the interests of promoting active travel², the latter would be desirable, but it would mean rescinding the current bus lanes and forgoing the BRT concept. Is this an acceptable stance? It is a big step but is relevant to the demand management debate in that a key corollary would be for measures needing to be designed to reduce traffic volumes on the radial roads to the level that buses could operate unimpeded within the general traffic flow.
 - iii. Although the Council has over recent years shown an increasing readiness to promote **active travel** (e.g. LCWIP, LTNs), some of the proposals put forward (e.g. Quickways) do not seem to reflect latest thinking, nor do they constitute mechanisms for achieving genuine active travel, particularly for those potential cyclists unwilling to ride 'in traffic'. To what extent should the Council be ready to endorse an aspiration to achieve a level of trip rate by bicycle similar to that of the Netherlands? Even the German trip rate by cycling is four or five times that of the UK.
 - iv. The recent Oxford Rail Corridor Study (ORCS) makes recommendations for investment to enable enhanced frequency and connectivity of services between seven 'hub' stations together with the reintroduction of passenger services to the Cowley Branch. These enhancements are welcome but leave open the question of access to the stations and travel between places which are unserved. Rather than pursue **development of the rail network** in a stand-alone fashion OCS believes it should be incorporated within the broader concept of an 'Oxford Metro'. This would consist of rail and principal bus services plus **purpose-built hubs** to provide facilities for interchange between them and for access modes – the combination providing a 'whole journey' offer for sustainable travel. The forthcoming **Bus Service Improvement Plan** to be prepared as part of the National Bus Strategy provides an early opportunity to begin to reconfigure and rebrand the county's services in this unified manner.

OCS is also heavily involved in the **planning of specific developments** within the City boundaries, including work on the West End and Osney Mead Master Plan, Oxford Station Development, and Broad Street pedestrianisation. County input here is critical, given the overlapping nature of responsibilities affecting all these issues and the need for a consistent and coherent movement strategy linking the various areas of the City.

² See *Lib Dem manifesto*