

## CoHSAT conference 25th February 2020 - Oxford's Future Travel - Workshop summaries

The inaugural CoHSAT conference aimed to discuss the impacts of the forthcoming Local Transport and Connectivity Plan on different road users. A summary of the discussion that took place in the conference breakout workshops is presented below.

### 1. Connecting rural areas

**Facilitators: Brenda Boardman and Graham Smith**

1. Rural transport generally:
  - a. The objective is that it is never necessary to get into a car as there is always an alternative choice of transport mode.
  - b. There should be an inter-connected transport strategy, with all modes integrated. These include cycling, walking, buses, trains, park and rides and cars.
  - c. Multi-modal travel should be designed for.
  - d. To aid this integration, there should be adequate, safe, secure parking for bikes where people switch mode – increasingly important for expensive electric bikes.
  - e. We believe the full strategy needs to be settled, before the short stretches (first 8 miles) of Greenways can be confirmed.
2. Greenways
  - a. We strongly support Greenways, but the expectation is that they are 'green' ways: usually attractive, new routes away from roads.
  - b. The aim is to get more people cycling. This will only happen if the vast majority of greenways are completely separate from cars. Where this is not possible, in a few places they can be a segregated stretch beside a road or part of the adjacent footpath, but these are definitely the exception, not the rule.
  - c. The Greenways should be available for use throughout the year and safe (ie lit, wide enough, good surface)
  - d. The criteria for selecting the routes of the Greenways needs to be fully discussed. For instance, is the main objective to provide
    - i. A safe cycle route to school. With schools like Bartholomew in Eynsham, the lack of buses and cycle-routes means that the only safe transport is by car.
    - ii. A coherent, comprehensive cycle network. At present there are some obvious gaps in cycle paths, e.g. linking Charlbury and Chipping Norton, or accessing Thame.
    - iii. A network that is not just be radial into Oxford, but includes orbital 'necklaces' linking towns and cities.
3. Rural bus connections
  - a. More, not less, services running frequently, 7 days a week, during the day and the evening.
  - b. A reliable service, with a known timetable that is kept to.
  - c. Even the existing routes are often not the best, they should be planned better.
  - d. Demand-responsive options would be good, so they run when and where needed.
4. New roads and connectivity

- a. There is a presumption against new roads, as they are the old answer and create demand, when we need to reduce car use. This includes no new dual carriageways nor road widening – no extra tarmac.
- b. Instead, we expect to see a reduction in tarmac, as roads are narrowed, because cars are squeezed out.

## 2. Towards zero emissions

**Facilitators: Chris Church, Andy Chivers and Keith Frayn**

Any transport strategy for the city and county should combine the goals of achieving net zero carbon and reducing air pollution to absolutely safe levels.

The strategy needs to show clearly how it links to and supports other plans and aspects of county-wide moves to zero emissions.

1. Free buses. We felt that the county's bus services should be free, particularly those coming into Oxford from the Park and Rides. There needs to be a strong financial incentive to encourage car drivers to change behaviour. At the moment with four people in a car it would be more expensive to catch the bus than park in Westgate. Free bus services, funded in the same way as other public services should be a clear and stated goal. In the short term the Park and Ride system should offer free bus services from the parking areas as a strong financial incentive to encourage car drivers to use these.
2. The Zero Emission Zone should only allow zero emission vehicles. We felt that it was misleading to describe the red zone as zero emission when any driver could pay the charge and drive all day in the zone. There should be a simple blanket ban on entering the zone between at least 7am and 7pm (some felt it should be up to 10pm). One disabled member of our group emphasised that for her driving was the only option and with New Inn Hall St providing the closest disabled parking spaces to Queen St it is understandable to allow blue badge holders. We felt that the current loading ban in New Inn Hall St was not adequately enforced and given the plan for 'hand held' ANPR machines we didn't think that was likely to improve with the ZEZ. Current white van deliveries were likely to continue unchanged, with drivers taking a risk and paying the fine when caught. Our recommendation would be for fixed cameras which would catch all unauthorised vehicles. Meanwhile, help should be offered to shop managers to improve their systems.
3. New developments should be connected with existing railway and cycle routes. How this is to be done this must be clearly set out in all planning applications for new housing and business developments. We felt that the current system encourages car commuting for work and school runs because the developments have not been designed to support cheap and reliable alternatives to car driving. This should be an absolute planning requirement and all new developments should only provide a maximum of one car parking space per two homes.

## 3. Managing urban movement

**Facilitators: Alison Hill & Simon Pratt**

1. Active and Healthy Travel: LCWIPs (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans)
  - a) Good to see an ambitious comprehensive plan for walking and cycling in Oxford, with a funding package of £300 million needed
  - b) High quality infrastructure is needed on main roads, with cyclists segregated from traffic and from pedestrians
  - c) Design for the nervous cyclist, to encourage much greater levels of cycling

- d) Separation from traffic is vital in rural areas, including traffic filters
- e) Learn from Waltham Forest's Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and start implementing these as soon as possible, for instance in the Florence Park area, Walton Street.

Post conference note: Oxford LCWIP was published on 9 March (item 9)

<https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MID=5605#AI21437>

## 2. Traffic Congestion Management / Connecting Oxford

- a) Strong support for "Connecting Oxford Plus" with additional traffic restrictions on St Clement's Street and Warneford Lane. This is a once in a generation opportunity to change travel in the city and it's important to ensure that there are no knock-on effects from city centre restrictions
- b) Some support for congestion charging in addition to (or instead of) Workplace Parking Levy
- c) Extend Workplace Parking Levy to cover the whole of Oxford (supported by the University and other employers)
- d) Improve bus services across Oxford and surrounding area, not just in the Eastern Arc
- e) Make public transport cool through the provision of a comprehensive bus network that is cheap and includes new and frequent routes. Everyone in the City should be within 10 mins walk of a bus stop.
- f) Better integration between trains, buses and cycles
- g) Freight consolidation and cargo bikes need to be actively encouraged
- h) Introduce a 20mph speed limit on all roads within the ring road. For greater safety, especially of cyclists and pedestrians
- i) More information needed on background, modelling and evidence base for stakeholders to formulate a considered response

## 3. Parking, restrictions and park & ride

- a) Progressively reduce number of on-street parking spaces in the city centre
- b) Progressively reduce number of off-street parking spaces in the city centre
- c) Remove parking from Broad Street and St Giles
- d) Control pavement parking in residential areas
- e) Extend Controlled Parking Zones to whole of Oxford
- f) Remove parking spaces on main roads to allow space for cycle lanes e.g. Iffley Road
- g) Make employers take responsibility for staff travel to work (e.g. in New York this had a big impact on investment in public transport)
- h) Work with employers to reduce the number of private parking spaces across Oxford
- i) Reduce fares on Park&Ride buses so it is cheaper than on-street parking

## 4. Neighbourhoods

**Facilitators: Deborah Glass-Woodin and Scott Urban**

The group discussed the concept of a 'low-traffic neighbourhood' (LTN). By way of background, the group discussed the key ingredients of LTNs (sometimes called 'liveable neighbourhoods'), the centrepiece being the 'modal filter': A physical barrier that stops through-traffic of cars, but not bikes, pushchairs, wheelchairs, scooters, people, etc. No destination in an LTN is accessible to cars, nothing in that respect changes. The only change is that, due to the filters, cars cannot use the neighbourhood to bypass the traffic arteries meant to handle through traffic. Another ingredient of LTNs is to use as many filters as necessary to prevent and preclude any 'rat runs' that might be created when blocking current rat runs.

The group discussed how the LTN fits into current Oxon county council policy: Connecting Oxford and LCWIP.

1. LTNs and 'Connecting Oxford'. The group felt that LTNs should be progressed in the context of Connecting Oxford. While the ambition is to enable a switch to active and healthy travel and liveable streets, the way that happens will differ according to how Connecting Oxford is implemented. In its current form (with 5 bus gates), it will make the LTN concept imperative in much of East Oxford and Headington. In a "Ghent" version (with 7 bus gates), the focus for LTNs becomes Headington Quarry.
2. Local participation. It was felt that there should be more agency and more power afforded to the local people (e.g. at the ward or neighbourhood level) to participate (rather than just be consulted) in creating low traffic neighbourhoods – rather than a top down imposed model which seems to be what happened in Jericho. This will also help alleviate concerns by those who want to campaign for an LTN but have extremely little time -- they want to know such campaigning will not just go into a void with the highways authority.
3. More ambition! It was agreed that the councils should have an explicit ambition of reducing car ownership and should spell out what means they will be taking to achieve this.

We spoke at length about the Jericho experimental LTN, which is ostensibly Oxfordshire's first LTN. It became clear that the residents don't necessarily think of it as an LTN, as there are absolutely no bells nor whistles in terms of placemaking (e.g. parklets, stylish filters, etc) nor cycling hangers nor ideas about how to circulate traffic differently.

## 5. Public transport

**Facilitators: Neville Scrivener and Robin Tucker, with additional thanks to Dave Harrison**

The group were universally keen to increase the availability and use of public transport. We discussed a number of ways to do this:

1. Affordability
  - a. Price was seen as a major barrier to public transport.
  - b. Many thought that the ideal solution was for public transport to be free, and some quoted the example of Luxembourg where this is so.
  - c. Some thought the existing free travel for older people to groups with low financial resources: students, apprentices, unemployed – this could help social inclusion and help them to become economically productive.
  - d. Others were concerned that 'free' may be impractical or have undesirable side-effects (e.g. replacing walking with short bus rides) so fare reductions may be better.

## 2. Seamless journeys

- a. Public transport journeys should be as easy as possible, this starts with having interchanges in the right locations with easy walking and wheelchair access. A Hub and Spoke pattern of services could help this.
- b. Public transport routes should also be integrated with each other, with the aim of making travel and in particular connections quick and easy. Good real-time information when connecting, including signs and on mobile phones is crucial
- c. Seamless ticketing is important. In Oxfordshire we have some integrated ticketing, but there are limits (e.g. Night Buses, trains not included)

## 3. Reliability

- a. Linked to the above, reliability of Public Transport is a common concern. In fact it may not be bad and perhaps information (real-time and aggregated) would help. Reliability was seen as more important than frequency if the service was at a good level.
- b. The Planning system was noted as a crucial enable or blocker – some new developments made providing a good bus service very difficult

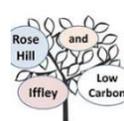
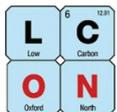
## 4. Behaviour change

- a. Increasing use of public transport was recognised as a behaviour change challenge.
- b. Some people were perceived as reluctant to use public transport and the reasons for this should be understood and addressed. Encouraging senior staff in organisations to use public transport (if they do not already) would help them see the needs of junior staff.
- c. Some would be service issues (location, reliability as above), but some would be psychological issues (status, dislike of sharing space) which would be harder to address.
- d. School travel should adopt public transport and discourage private vehicles in particular, to help form behaviour patterns for later life.

## About CoHSAT

The Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel (CoHSAT) is a group of voluntary and campaigning organisations working across Oxfordshire to create attractive, accessible and people-friendly streets. We will do this by encouraging efficient, active, low carbon and sustainable travel, which will reduce traffic, air pollution and noise, and enable healthy and thriving communities.

The 10 CoHSAT members are: Low Carbon Oxford North, Low Carbon West Oxford, Pedal and Post, Oxford Friends of the Earth, Oxford Pedestrians Association, Oxford Civic Society, CycloX, Rose Hill and Iffley Low Carbon, Oxfordshire Liveable Streets and Oxfordshire Cycling Network.



For further information on the conference and other CoHSAT activities see <http://www.cohsat.org.uk>. Email us at [CoHSATOxon@gmail.com](mailto:CoHSATOxon@gmail.com).