

To: City Executive Board

Date: 27 April 2015

Report of: Executive Director for City Regeneration and Housing

Title of Report: Response to Oxfordshire Transport Strategy

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To advise the City Executive Board of the response of the City Council to the County Council's Draft Oxford Transport Strategy and Local Transport Plan 4

Key decision: No

Executive lead member: Cllr John Tanner, Board Member for Cleaner, Greener Oxford, Climate Change and Transport

Policy Framework: A vibrant and sustainable economy
Strong and active communities
Cleaner Greener Oxford

Recommendation: That the City Executive Board note the response of the City Council to the County Council's Draft Oxford Transport Strategy and Local Transport Plan 4

Background

1. Oxfordshire County Council published their draft Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) on 5th February, which includes a section 'Oxford Transport Strategy' (OTS) which sets out the proposed strategy to 2031. The draft LTP4 and OTS were subject to an 8 week consultation period which ended on 2nd April. The documentation is available at the County Council website at

https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/CO_LTP4/consultationHomehttps://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/CO_LTP4/consultationHome

2. The OTS and wider transport strategy are critical for Oxford's future success and growth. The City Council commissioned consultants Alan Baxter Limited to work with the Council to review the draft OTS/LTP4 and prepare a comprehensive response on behalf of the City Council. The consultant's brief included addressing the following points:
 - effectively address Oxford's transport challenges;
 - ensure that the transport proposals adopt best practice and experience across all transport modes in managing capacity and resources, assets and investment;
 - identify potential public and private sector funding options;
 - support the sustainable growth of Oxford and its economy;
 - ensure that Oxford's environment and quality of life is respected and enhanced within an historic centre, and
 - support the City Council's policy of promoting a cleaner, greener and healthier Oxford.

3. In preparing the response the consultants undertook two Member workshop sessions (all members were invited) to ensure that a broad range of views contributed to the response. They also met with County Council officers and their consultants, and reviewed the technical background evidence provided by the County Council.

4. The City Council's response was submitted on the deadline date, and in accordance with the Council's executive procedures. The consultation period was short in the context of the strategic issues under consideration. The Council's response was submitted in draft to enable further discussion after the consultation deadline, before finalising the document.

5. A copy of the draft submission is published on the City Council's website at:

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Library/Documents/Planning/Oxford%20Transport%20Strategy%20Consultation%20Response%20-%20April%202015.pdf>

A hard copy is available to Members on request.

6. In summary, the response made the following key points:
 - The transport requirements for the city were reviewed in the light of the major pressures for employment, housing and population growth, and the submission highlighted the need for investment in sustainable transport (mass transit, train, bus, cycling and walking) to replace car use.
 - The submission identified comparable transport best practice on the Continent and in the UK to demonstrate the solutions which have already been successfully implemented elsewhere and are applicable to Oxford;
 - The strategy needs to establish and apply a clear hierarchy of transport modes and priorities, in the following order: walking, cycling, public transport, and car.
 - Comprehensive walking and cycling strategies need to be developed, to create a fine grained network for walking and cycling throughout the city

linked with a high level of public transport penetration. There remains an urgent need to implement existing cycling and walking projects.

- A mass transit solution needs to be developed for the city, including considering options for bus rapid transit, electric bus and trams, with services on the principal radial and orbital routes, such as the Eastern Arc. However, routes along crowded roads, such as Cowley Road and London Road, or across Southfield golf course and the Lye Valley, are not acceptable. There needs to be a focus on a balanced transport strategy for the Headington hospitals and Oxford business parks. The proposed bus tunnels are not an appropriate or affordable solution, and would have an unacceptable impact on the city's environment and built heritage.
 - There is a continuing need for high quality bus provision, extending bus priority and dedicated bus routes. A review of bus management is required to increase the capacity of the services. The proposals for expanded and additional bus stations should be considered further.
 - Rail travel is important. The redevelopment of the railway station and the establishment of a passenger service on the Cowley branch line are priorities for the city.
 - The parking study for the city centre needs to be implemented. The evidence shows that the city will need to retain and, where possible, extend, the existing Park and Ride operations, and consider additional new facilities.
 - The strategy should include improvements to the Ring Road, including new driver information systems. But car movements across the city should be restricted and road space re-allocated to sustainable transport modes to provide world class facilities for cyclists and pedestrians. A workplace parking levy to fund transport investment in the city needs to be considered, but congestion charging is not practical or desirable.
 - The Council strongly endorse the principle of a zero emission zone in Oxford, and this needs to work with the City's Air Quality Action Plan.
7. City Council officers will be meeting County colleagues to discuss the issues in the draft submission. We will also be consulting the Local Enterprise Partnership which is required to be closely involved in the development of funding priorities for transport through the Government's Local Growth Fund. It is anticipated that there will be a continuing dialogue as the projects in the draft OTS will require further review and development. The City Council's submission will remain in draft until full Council has been advised.

Legal Issues

8. There are no legal issues identified.

Financial Issues

9. This report has no financial proposals.

Environmental Impact

10. The draft submission's proposals would deliver positive environmental impacts. This includes benefits for air quality and climate change objectives arising from walking, cycling and public transport use.

Level of Risk

11. This report does include a risk assessment as the City Council's submission is a consultation response and does not carry risk.

Equalities Impact

The draft submission's proposals would have indirect positive impacts with more active travel options becoming available, particularly for those in areas of deprivation in Oxford, in terms of access to high quality public transport, and also in terms of improvements to air quality which may be of particular benefit to those with respiratory conditions.

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List of background papers: None