



Oxfordshire Local Transport & Connectivity Plan 5 - Vision Consultation, March 2021 - NNGO response

Need Not Greed Oxfordshire (NNGO) is a coalition of 36 groups from across the county, together representing thousands of community members. Our campaign is committed to:

- A restoration of planning principles, with a proper balancing of economic, environmental and social considerations,
- Local democracy, with planning control in the hands of locally elected and accountable representatives; and
- Environment and rural sustainability, ensuring that our landscape, nature and rural communities are at the heart of decision-making.

5. Vision in context

Have we identified the right strategies and policy developments in Oxfordshire?

If not, what other strategies and policy developments in Oxfordshire should we take into account as we develop the LTCP in more detail?

Government's 25 Year Environment Plan

Oxfordshire's emerging Nature Recovery Network incl. draft map & policies - see <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/biodiversity/oxfordshires-nature-recovery-network/>

6. *The challenge*

Have we identified the right key transport and connectivity challenges for Oxfordshire?

Yes, plus others (see below)

What other key challenges should we consider as we develop the LTCP in more detail?

The Biodiversity emergency, which is also now being formally recognised by local authorities

Pressure from top-down imposition of growth strategies eg OxCam Arc

Impacts of Covid on home working / increased deliveries

Parking policy / shared car ownership models

The location of the hospitals close to Oxford, in Headington, and the need to keep them accessible to an increasing and aging population, where people needing to travel because they are unwell may find it difficult to use public transport (and may not have Blue Badges).

The Universities' growth strategies which are very Oxford focused but could in fact be developed in satellites elsewhere.

Lack of a means by which to have local influence over improvements which are required to the rail network

7. *Engagement activity*

Based on our analysis of the engagement activity do you think that we have identified the key points?

If not, what is missing or needs changing?

- **Water / canal transport**
- **Aviation**
- **Tourism**

8. Evidence base analysis

Have we identified the key right evidence to inform the LTCP? What other evidence should we review as we develop the LTCP in more detail?

The summary in the Vision document fails to reflect the importance of rail, although this is referenced in the baseline report.

The Plan needs to be inclusive, not exclusive. For example, under the heading of “road safety” only two forms of transport are suggested, equine and motorcycles, whereas road safety is required for all forms of mobility.

Regional connectivity fails to mention aviation even though we have Oxford Airport within the County. Canal and river traffic crosses the County boundary but there is nothing on how they connect to infrastructure or relate to tourism.

9. Draft vision

Following analysis of the engagement activity and evidence we have developed the following draft vision.

“Our Local Transport Plan Vision is for a net-zero Oxfordshire Transport system that enables the county to thrive as one of the world’s leading innovation economies, whilst supporting clean growth, protecting our rich and varied natural and historic environment and being better for health and wellbeing, social inclusivity and education.

Our Plan sets out to achieve this by reducing the need to travel, securing high quality gigabit connectivity, and by discouraging unnecessary individual private vehicle use through making active travel, public and shared transport the natural first choice.”

Do you agree with our draft vision?

NO

Do you have any further comments on the vision, particularly if you disagree and have views on how it can be improved?

Oxfordshire residents have yet to be asked whether their vision for the county is that it becomes one of the world’s ‘leading innovation economies’ and it is not clear what is envisaged by ‘clean growth’.

NNGO is calling for an open and honest conversation with local residents about the levels of growth being proposed, the impacts these would have, and the difficult choices to be made.

The Vision should certainly include a reference to the need to protect and support Oxfordshire’s rural character and settlements.

Any growth that produces more ‘out commuting’ should be resisted.

10. Our evidence base work has identified that 61% of Oxfordshire is rural in nature. In the context of the proposed vision, how do you think our approach to improving connectivity in rural areas should differ to more urban areas?

NNGO is concerned about the Oxford centric nature of most transport planning in the county and supports the need for a dedicated rural strategy in relation to transport and connectivity.

The strategy will need to try to offset the huge damage caused by the loss of the bus subsidies over the last few years.

Reliance on developers to support public transport is always limited both in scale and timespan of those subsidies being in place. Spatial planning should ideally be used as a mechanism to prevent the need for travel, focusing on the co-location of employment and homes. Where this proves to be impossible it is essential that active travel and public transport are the key mechanisms used to address the travel needs of the community. Such development schemes and public transport schemes need to form part of an over-arching countywide bus strategy. The incorporation of “demand responsive travel” approaches should form a core aspect of an overall bus strategy.

Creative approaches, potentially using the voluntary sector and or local town and parish councils, should be encouraged.

11. Key Themes

Do you think we have identified the right key themes and policy focus areas for the LTCP?

Re the statistic regarding the increase in vehicle miles driven - Does this mean that the existing vehicles have increased their mileage or, as is more likely, that the mileage driven by all vehicles has been caused by more vehicles from more housing that shows an increase? With the plans for a further 100,000 homes, total vehicle mileage will obviously increase on the existing inadequate road infrastructure. Another obvious result of more growth is that traffic speeds will continue to reduce as congestion, that is one major cause of air pollution, increases proportionately.

The statement that “Freight” movement has increased is an obvious result of adding more and more employment and housing and this will be exacerbated with the growth plans. Increasing the number of storage and distribution sites around the County by their very nature increase inward and outward transport and should be limited.

12. One the key areas identified as needing careful consideration based on the engagement feedback is the future of Park and Ride. How do you think we should develop Park and Rides in order to support the vision and key themes?

NNGO believes that the current proposals to open new remote Park and Rides, potentially closing or repurposing the existing sites is fundamentally flawed. The evidence base for the current proposals was always extremely limited and lacked any detailed rigour. We believe that post COVID-19 a comprehensive review of the P&R strategy is required. This is compounded by the current government intentions to fund ambitious schemes to promote active travel.

We believe that the current Oxford City park-and-ride locations, improved with prioritised direct access from the existing ring-road, need to become major transport hubs that focus primarily on active travel into the city of Oxford. This approach should also, where possible be used for other market towns in the county with strategically located parking facilities that then encourage the use of active travel methods into the respective town centres / areas of employment. In this context active travel should include strategies and facilities to promote and prioritise walking, cycling and electric scooter use/hire. Existing egress from and layout of these sites should prioritise active modes of travel and not motor-vehicle traffic. Routes from sites should be direct, uninterrupted, and fundamentally safe for all users including children.

Whilst NNGO believes that prioritising affordable rural public transport is a key element in catering for travel demand, it is acknowledged that private motor-vehicle will remain the choice of many (economically fortunate) individuals. The combination of individual travel to a point close enough within the relatively tight confines of the city within the ring-road to allow the use of prioritised active travel mechanisms into the city centre seems an obvious strategy that the County should develop and adopt. This approach has specific merit for the Seacourt and Redbridge P&R sites for the city centre given their close proximity to Carfax.

As a consequence of this approach the current intention to create multiple greenfield Green Belt sites (with its consequential loss of valuable farmland and Green Belt status) remote from both the journey point of origin and arrival is clearly flawed and should be removed from future plans.

NNGO is not convinced by the prospect of ‘mini’ park and rides. Facilitating links to public transport interchanges is welcome in principle, but in practise this risks leading to a series of car parks in the countryside. Prioritising a reduction in the need to travel with improvements to rural broadband and 5G and measures to promote active transport (walking/cycling) to bus stops on the major radial bus routes is a more sustainable solution.

13. Achieving the Vision

Do you think the proposed measurables are suitable for monitoring the LTCP?

YES

Are there any other measurables you would like considered in the plan?

YES.

Landscape & visual impacts

Light pollution

Noise pollution

Impacts on heritage assets

'Transport deserts' - number of rural communities with/without public transport and level of service, number of rural mobility hubs

Protection of designated land, including our three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Oxford Green Belt

Carbon footprint, incl. any new infrastructure

The accident rates and road safety need to cover all forms of mobility and not just motorcycles as the only transport shown in detail

Tracking the mode of journeys to school, which the County Council has opportunity to influence.

Transport options that allow access to important services (eg hospitals) or work for disabled people.

14. Do you have any further comments on the vision document?

Decisions on funding/investment should reflect the sustainable travel hierarchy, putting reduction of need to travel first, then active travel, then public transport. In light of this we would not expect current practice, of major infrastructure funding focusing almost exclusively on building road capacity to support new growth, to continue. This has not been evident in the implementation of LTCP4 but spending and execution must in future be brought in line with the agreed vision.

Priority should always be given to considering if/how we can maintain and adapt existing infrastructure to suit future requirements, rather than new

projects that might suit the political agenda but could be costly in terms of both money and carbon.

Connectivity should include efficient timetables between forms of public transport such that a single ticket system is introduced that allows efficient changes of for example rail to bus with minimum waiting times.

The more detailed plan will need to include requirement for the safe and secure storage of bicycles, e-bikes and motorcycles and safety gear at good locations, with electric charging facilities, to promote active and congestion reducing transport systems.



Planning for Real **NEED** not Speculator **GREED** in Oxfordshire

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