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working locally and nationally to  
protect and enhance a beautiful,  
thriving countryside for everyone to  
value and enjoy

## **CPRE Oxfordshire Response to ‘Improving Transport on the A40 corridor’ consultation, December 2018**

The Oxfordshire Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) works to protect rural England, its countryside, villages and market towns, and to shape its future positively.

### **OVERVIEW**

After attending the public exhibition of proposals from the Oxfordshire County Council’s consultants, we are forced to conclude that the engineering of the scheme is flawed and as proposed will only make movement along this corridor worse and should be opposed.

CPRE Oxfordshire is fully supportive of improving public transport wherever possible to limit the increase in traffic demand from new development, to aid the local economy and to reduce air pollution. There is agreement with the principle of using bus lanes particularly in the short to medium term.

**Our key objection to the proposed scheme is to the apparent reduction in highway capacity at Eynsham.**

**We also believe it is entirely premature to be dismissing light rail options, and that a more far-sighted and collaborative approach to this is required.**

### **SPECIFIC COMMENTS**

1. Sustainable development should involve the co-location of housing and jobs. We object in principle to a bus lane that seeks to provide for more commuting into Oxford, driven by a decision to accommodate Oxford’s ‘unmet need’ for housing.

(Evidence related to the emerging Oxford Local Plan suggests that Oxford’s ‘need’ is well below that presented as part of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan process. It is CPRE’s belief that Oxford could accommodate most, if not all, of its current need by prioritising land for housing, rather than employment, and building at appropriate densities.)

2. We are concerned about the environmental consequences of not accommodating the significant increase in traffic east of Witney that has occurred in recent decades affecting the A4095, B4044 and A415 villages. In this context, *if* a Park & Ride is required, we would suggest that Witney might be a more appropriate location, intercepting traffic at an earlier point. (If communities are planned properly, with co-location of employment and housing, and adequate provision of high quality public transport, then Park & Rides should not be necessary.)

### 3. Reduction in road capacity at Eynsham

There is a necessity to retain the overall A40 capacity as the major lifeline for the comparatively depressed economy of West Oxfordshire relative to the sub-region.

The consultants' representatives at the public consultation were under the impression that road width could be reduced with no effect on capacity.

Having consulted the DfT / Highways England 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges - Vol 5 Annex D', the authoritative reference, the effect of reducing the present 9.3m wide single carriageway (WSC) to 7.3 m will reduce the Congestion Reference Flow (CRF) by some 30%. This is the measure of flow at which queuing can be expected in peak periods.

The typical average daily flow for a principal road of the present standard is 30,300 vehicles per day (29,400 vpd for a trunk road). Observed flows on this WSC are quoted as 28,000 to 30,000 indicating that the methodology is reliable and has been tested against assumptions about the present traffic characteristics. In the peak hour at present this indicates approximately 820 cars vehicles per hour are heading into Oxford (56% of the total flow).

The proposed 7.3m general traffic provision from West of Eynsham to East of Cassington has an estimated CRF of only 23,000 - a reduction of over 7,000 vehicles a day. **The consequence of this capacity reduction is that in the peak hour, users of approximately 400 vehicles an hour, roughly half of all car traffic and carrying some 520 people into Oxford, will not be accommodated and will need to divert to public transport - another eight buses per hour - or (as is more likely) to alternative routes/rat-runs.**

The justification for the scheme is to improve transport along the corridor, particularly travel demand generated by the proposed dormitory suburb north of Eynsham village. Major expansion planned at Witney will also generate commercial and service traffic that can only be served by road. The proposed 1,000 space car park could only accommodate a proportion of this new demand if the present road capacity is maintained.

It is accepted that the capacity of the three controlled junctions need to be enhanced to match the capacity of the carriageway. The Cassington and Witney Road Eynsham signals and Eynsham roundabout have increased queueing. Detailed proposals were illustrated for the Eynsham roundabout but it is not possible to comment on the electronic bus priority management and carriageway layout that will be needed if buses and general traffic are to pass through the traffic signals.

4. The attitude to segregated public transport is poor. We particularly deplore the statement that use of the old Witney railway track is no longer being considered for light rail now known as tram/ train. The shared running of trams on heavy rail, street and separate track is up and running at Sheffield - Rotherham, experience that can be built upon. Dismissal on the grounds that only two trams an hour could be accommodated is ridiculous and only refers to an earlier study of capacity for branch line reinstatement with the existing Cotswold line restraints. Off line a single track can carry frequent service using inexpensive short passing places.

We note the Government's recent publication of a Community Rail Strategy: DfT report published 16/11/18 Community Rail Strategy  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rail-minister-backs-life-changing-community-rail-projects>

This appears to us to represent an opportunity for interested parties in Oxfordshire to collaborate and push for appropriate investment. Without such combined action, it seems likely that this area could miss out and we will continue with out of date road-based solutions (such as they are).

Yours sincerely

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