**Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 4 – Summer 2014**

**Harwell Campus Bicycle Users Group Response**

Q1. Do you feel we have correctly identified the most important transport challenges that need to be addressed?

*The assumption that car ownership will continue to rise should be revised. Evidence shows that young people are not buying or wanting to buy a car. During the lifetime of LTP4, to 2031, this trend will become apparent and should be planned for. Moreover this is an opportunity to achieve a modal change and not 'force' people to buy a car due to the lack of good quality alternative transport schemes.*

Q2.What do you think is the best way to reduce the need to travel?

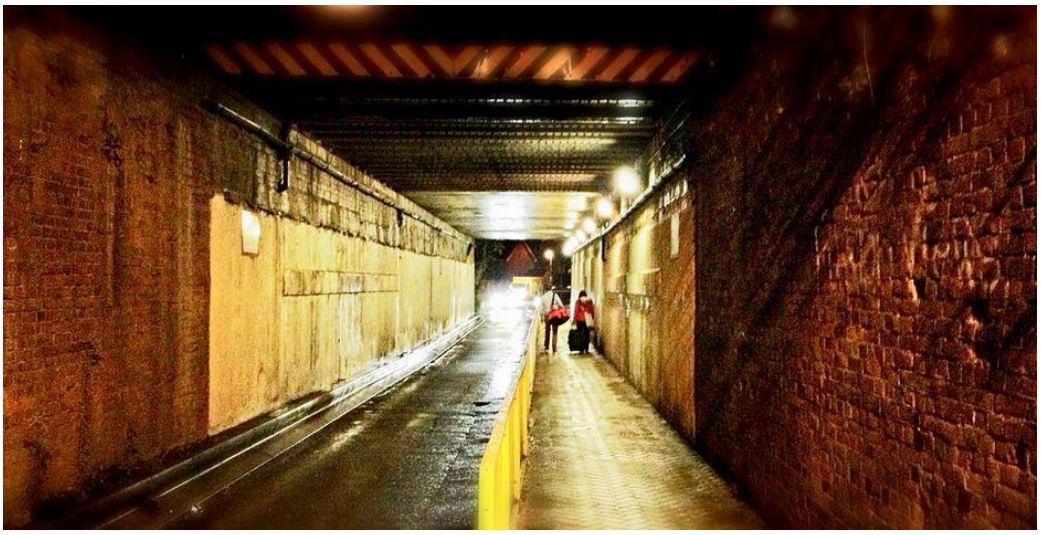
*From a Science Vale point of view, this question is largely irrelevant. It has been decided that housing will be concentrated in Didcot and Wantage / Grove, whilst jobs will be created at the Harwell Campus, Milton Park and Culham Science Centre (all of which are outside of the towns). A more appropriate question would be, 'What is the best way to minimise the need to travel by modes that have a negative impact?'*

*Introduce a programme to actively encourage school pupils and students to walk or cycle from nursery level through to university. This would need to be backed up with safe cycling and walking infrastructure to schools and colleges. A benefit from this would be that there would less school traffic on the roads at peak hours. All new schools and colleges should have clear safe cycling and walking routes to the catchment area.*

Q3.Please tell us your ideas for making the best use of the existing transport network.

*Walking and cycling are currently not attractive to a lot of people because the infrastructure is designed to cater for the needs of motor vehicles and other modes are fitted around this need. If the goal is to encourage people to use public transport, cycle or walk then a shift in thinking is required, so that these methods are considered before catering for motor vehicles. If car driving continues to be the most convenient option, there will never be any incentive to change transport modes.*
*A good way to use the existing transport network is to introduce schemes that make cycling and walking more convenient and faster than driving. An example of this would be the Cow Lane Tunnel in Didcot. The tunnel does not meet the needs of anybody but is particular inconvenient and unattractive to cyclists and pedestrians. Converting it to pedestrian/cycling only tunnel would make these modes the most convenient and in most cases the quickest way to get to and from Didcot town. Motor vehicles would use the relief road to access the town, which would be a small inconvenience, especially since Cow Lane tunnel is already one way.*

*Cow lane Tunnel - Uninviting for Pedestrians and Cyclists*



Q4.How could travel around Oxfordshire be made easier for you?

*Good quality cycle infrastructure integrated with rail and any future county mass transit system.*
*Cycle infrastructure designed and built to the standards seen in the Netherlands and Denmark:*

- *Segregated from motor traffic and pedestrians e.g. the three network principle.*
- *Priority over traffic from side roads joining the main carriageway.*
- *No 'Cycle Dismount' signs and merge cycle lanes back onto the carriageway i.e. no 90 degree turns to Give Way marking.*
- *Secure cycle parking.*
- *Clearly signed direct, convenient and fast routes.*

Q5.What do you think are the best ways to meet the travel needs of people who do not have access to a car, e.g. younger, older and disabled people?

*Cycling is a very inclusive mode of transport, even more so with the introduction of electric bikes. There are very few needs required to accommodate younger, older and disabled people in cycling. Any good measures to improve cycle infrastructure will benefit everybody.*

Q6. Where in Oxfordshire do you think future development would best be located to help reduce transport problems?

*Development should be concentrated where reliance on the use of motor vehicles can be minimised.*

Q7. When trying to reduce journey times and improve journey time reliability what types of journey should be prioritised?

*As previously stated, if driving is made more attractive and convenient, there will be no shift away from it and would increase. In urban areas cycling and walking should be prioritised ahead of motor traffic with dedicated routes in between key destinations. Also routes between urban areas and external key destinations e.g. employment areas.*

Q8. What do you think would make public transport more attractive to people who don't normally use it?

*Reliability and cost are the main priorities. Bus services are at the mercy of the road network. Rail or light rail / tram are more popular because of the reliability of the service and ease of use.*
*Easy and seamless changes from one type of transport to another e.g. cycle to rail are needed. Facilities like cycle hubs with secure parking, cycle maintenance and cycle hire will make integration at transport interchanges more convenient.*
*More integration with different types of public transport e.g. providing a cycle carriage on trains or in future, trams / monorail.*
*At Didcot Parkway the new forecourt development has provided a large increase in the number of cycle parking spaces and almost immediately they are full. This shows if good facilities are provided they will be used.*

Q9. The need for goods and materials to be transported as population grows. How should the transport strategy address the negative impacts of freight transport on people's lives and the environment?

*If planning for a 'mass transit' system then some trains / trams could be freight only, delivering goods into the city and town centres directly from a freight consolidation hub.*

Q10. What are the best ways to reduce Carbon emissions from transport in Oxfordshire?

*Careful thought needs to be taken when proposing to incentivise people to use low emission vehicles. Low emission vehicles do not cut congestion which is one of the main problems with private motor vehicle use.*
*Lessons should be learned from the case of diesel engines which attracted lower fuel taxes as they were considered less polluting than petrol engines. Evidence then showed the opposite was the case and many cities are now considering banning or charging for the use of diesel vehicles. This scenario may be repeated for electric vehicles as most generation of electricity involves Carbon emissions and charges may be levied, in the future, on the use of these vehicles or other low emission vehicles.*
*The best way to reduce Carbon emissions from transport is a shift away from motor vehicles to cycling, walking and public transport.*

Q11. What are the best ways to encourage more people to walk?

*Safe, direct and convenient routes with clearly separate cycling and pedestrian paths.*

Q12. What are the best ways to encourage more people to cycle?

1. *Training – A lot of people are not confident to cycle on roads and need training to give them the skills to ride safely in traffic. Bikeability is a good scheme but a more flexible scheme would be better for teaching adults who can already drive and ride a bike.*
2. *Well planned and designed cycle infrastructure – A lot of cycle infrastructure appears to be built at the whim of developers who need to tick a 'sustainable transport provision' box rather than provide anything useful. The county should be a lot more pro-active in the provision of cycle infrastructure, having a master plan for each area and tell the developers what they need to provide. Cycle infrastructure design should be bold and up to date with best practice.*
3. *Direct, convenient, fast and safe cycle routes – Most cycle infrastructure, in the UK, meet none of these criteria, although when they do they are well used by cyclists.*
4. *Information & Signage – Most people don't know where cycle routes are, where they go to or facilities available. Cycling demonstration towns have some good ideas for information and signage e.g. Gemstone Ways in Aylesbury.*
   *All new houses built should have a local sustainable transport booklet on the doormat when new homeowners arrive followed by a visit from a travel choices person to discuss their options.*
5. *Encouraging women to cycle – The majority of cyclists are male and any new cycles bought are, by default, set up for male riders. Information, training, changing facilities and events should be available to encourage more women to cycle.*

Q13. Do you agree with the draft high level goals and objectives for LTP4?

*The third goal should be to; reduce and/or actively minimise the impacts of transport on human health and the environment, including reducing Carbon emissions. Just stating 'to manage' is non-committal and not really a goal.*

*The second goal should state that the goal is; to facilitate <u>social</u> inclusion and sustainable access to transport. To restrict the goal to jobs and services is to narrow and does not reflect the full use of transport e.g. going to see friends or sports and social clubs / events.*

*Objective 2 – Should this also include an objective to reduce reliance on key busy trunk routes like the A34, M40 and A40 for access to jobs and services?*

*Objective 5 – This objective should be more carefully worded. If the focus is to reduce overall journey time and reliability for motorists this would reduce the effectiveness of other transport options and would lead to a spiral of increase in car journeys followed by a reduction in journey time reliability and increase in journey times requiring even more (large) costs for roads. There should be priorities with this objective so that public transport, cycling and walking are considered first followed by other motor vehicle measures such as car sharing, high occupancy lanes etc.*

*Objective 7 – As stated in the third goal this should be to reduce or actively minimise the impacts of transport…. Not just 'manage'.*

Q14. Is there anything which the goals and objectives do not adequately cover?

*No*

Q15. How could money be raised to install mass transit schemes?

*A local transport bond could be offered to raise money for the schemes? Make it easy for everybody to buy e.g. operate similar to premium bonds with a regular cash prize and easily obtained e.g. sold at newsagents etc. In addition for larger investments and for business's bond certificates could be issued with annual dividend payments. Could investments in transport bonds be tax deductible and prizes tax free?*

**Case Studies**

1. Hovenring, Eindhoven, The Netherlands.

Hovenring is a suspended cycle path over a busy junction in Eindhoven in The Netherlands. It was built to separate cycle traffic from motor traffic as the main junction was changed from a roundabout to traffic light controlled junction. Interestingly the design was commissioned to be in keeping with the ambitions of Brainport technology region, similar to the Science Vale and the Oxfordshire Arc.

An Oxfordshire Application – Power Station Roundabout, Didcot

The Power Station Roundabout has always been a major factor cited as why people don't cycle from Didcot to Milton Park, despite a good cycle path that runs from the roundabout along the railway to Milton Park. With the re-development of the power station site and the expansion of Didcot westwards, this area along with Manor Bridge needs to be opened up to all cyclists and pedestrians.

Why not a similar 'Hovenring style' cycle & pedestrian path above the Power Station Roundabout? Combine this with a new cycle pedestrian bridge from Milton Heights over the A4130 and railway to connect directly to the new Hovenring style' junction. Even continue the suspended 'sky path' along Basil Hill Road to connect with Foxhall Bridge to create a level, high quality route from Didcot Parkway and Didcot Centre. The natural gradient of the land and the railway bridges will minimise the amount of ramps needed to get above the carriageway.

Benefits:

- Direct level 'off road' route from Didcot Parkway to Milton Park.
- Create a cycle and pedestrian route from Didcot Great Western Park and the future Vauxhall Barracks re-development to Milton Park (none exists at the moment).
- Create a cycle and pedestrian route to the new Power Station development from all parts of Didcot.

- Re-route Sustrans national route 5 via the suspended cycle path rather than its current route through Southmead Industrial Estate.
- Access to Southmead Industrial Estate for cyclists and pedestrians from Didcot Great Western Park and the future Vauxhall Barracks re-development, also better access from the rest of Didcot.

It is clear that this type of infrastructure project will directly support economic growth and inward investment. It provides access to three employment areas for cyclists where either none exists or provision is poor from new and existing housing and Didcot Parkway. Although the Science Bridge may provide some relief to the Power Station Roundabout, this will be mitigated by the extra traffic created by the Didcot North East development and the Power Station development, as well as continuing development of Great Western Park and Valley Park.

2. ‘Dutch Style’ Cycle Friendly Roundabouts

The Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) has been researching ‘Dutch style’ roundabouts which have an outer circle roundabout for cyclists. The cyclists on the outer cycle have priority over traffic coming onto and off the roundabout. This type of design has been successfully used in The Netherlands and two junctions in London are being converted. Roundabouts are the most risky junctions for cyclists, so a design like this keeps motor traffic and cycle flowing safely.

Oxfordshire Applications – Harwell Relief Road and Wantage Eastern Bypass

This type of roundabout could be successfully introduced on the Didcot end of the proposed Harwell Relief Road (B4493) and at the roundabouts on both ends of the Wantage Eastern Bypass, there will be a need for cycle crossings at these locations regardless.

The advantages of using this type of roundabout at these places are:

- They are new roundabouts so all traffic will need to get used to them. This is a good opportunity to introduce a new junction design.
- The roundabouts are in places where the traffic will get progressively busier as development continues. The roundabouts will start with modest flows of traffic.
- All the roundabouts have existing or new cycle routes, which similarly will get progressively busier with cycles as development continues.
- Temporary speed restrictions could be introduced, initially, to allow traffic to get used to this type of roundabout.

Introducing ‘Dutch Style’ junctions at these points would have an economic benefit by improving cycling routes to the Harwell Campus (and Milton Park from Wantage and Grove) whilst keeping other traffic flowing. It could also encourage inward investment as it shows innovate infrastructure investment and future planning.