

The Quality of Public Realm for Residents and Visitors

Short Briefing Paper on Improving Transport

This briefing paper has been prepared following a meeting and discussion with Peter Mann, Assistant Head of Transport, Oxfordshire County Council.

1. Overview

Transport should be seen as an overarching and cross cutting issue as it impacts on many of the issues identified in the City's Sustainable Community Strategy

There are three key focus points when considering how to improve transport:

- Accessibility – enabling people to get to where they need to go
- Reducing impact on the public realm – physical presence of cars/buses/coaches/bicycles etc
- Impact on the Economy (e.g. access to shops, access to key locations of work, parking availability)

2. Initiatives currently under way in the City

- Transform Oxford – phase one reduces buses in Queen St; phase two focuses on Magdalen and George St; later phase focuses on Broad St and this needs wider partnership funding to meet the aspirations of the Broad St Plan (and Frideswide Square)
- New Inn Hall St – repaving as a primary pedestrian route in the City following development of Bonn Square
- County Council subsidised bus services linking Thornhill and Water Eaton park and rides to the Hospitals (acknowledged that bus links in the eastern arc of the city need to improve – S'town, Headington, Cowley, Hospitals and Science Park)
- Brookes Bus (funded by Oxford Brookes University) contract moving to Oxford Bus Company in July with lower emission buses being used
- Quality Partnership Scheme likely to be introduced in 2010 that enables joint working with the 2 main bus companies in the city (e.g. joint ticketing) that will result in reduction in bus numbers but same service levels for passengers and income levels for operators. Positive impact on emissions here as well.
- Introduction of 20mph speed limit across the city (safety and pedestrian benefit and responding to ground swell of opinion to reduce impact of cars in residential areas)
- Introduction of extended controlled parking zones in East Oxford (reducing number of cars per dwelling ratio)

3. Who are the key players?

- Oxfordshire County Council – Transport strategy, roads, Transform Oxford, on street parking, park and ride
- Oxford City Council – Land owner, Planning policy (cars/parking), off street parking
- Bus Companies – Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach (plus smaller operators e.g. Thames Travel, RH)
- Coach Operators – independents bringing tourist coaches into the city
- Cyclists and cyclist pressure groups – e.g. CYCLOX
- Pedestrians and pedestrian pressure groups – e.g. Oxford Pedestrian Association
- Others - Car Drivers, Local Businesses, Users of services – e.g. Bus passengers

4. What are the gaps and where might the OSP add value

- Relocation of the coach park and well managed drop-off and pick-up locations in the city centre
Issues are:
 - Current site and links to West End project
 - Usage is seasonal and driver behaviours is difficult to manage
 - Move coach park to location further out of city (e.g. Redbridge)
 - Identify and manage appropriate drop-ff and pick-up points in the City
 - Overall coach management
 - Links to signage and information at drop-off points
- Broad Street Development and Frideswide Square
 - Take a view on the Broad Street Plan (partners included City, County, OPT) and Frideswide Square
- Off road facilities for cyclists
 - Could they be improved?
 - Managing the conflict for cyclists of “shortest and quickest (main roads) vs. off road (frequently longer)”

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