**COWLEY AREA TRANSPORT GROUP**

Our view of the Cambridge-Oxford Expressway proposals:

1. The Government has paused the development of a motorway between Cambridge and Oxford, comprising re-developed existing roads and junctions near Cambridge and new road construction near Oxford. This proposal is accompanied by warehousing proposals and 1 million homes by 2050;
2. The Expressway serves no purpose. The Travel to Work Areas for Cambridge, Oxford and Milton Keynes all show that nearly all traffic movements in the Cambridge-Oxford Arc are within these three areas – not across the Arc;
3. The environmental consequences of the Expressway are hugely damaging due to the scale of associated developments which are promised: a large increase in warehousing and in greenfield housing estates. No attempt has been made to assess the brownfield sites available in the Arc, no overall strategic environmental assessment has been done, no known explanation of where water to serve the scale of housing and other developments has been provided. The government has yet to address the need of local councils for broad financial support for them to rebuild after the Coronavirus crisis. Large-scale infrastructure like trunk road building is not a priority compared to retaining local services;
4. For Oxford, regardless of whether a northerly or southerly route for the Expressway is chosen, a massive increase in traffic entering the Oxford City Region is to be expected. Air pollution is a serious problem in Oxford already, as is particulate pollution from tyre abrasion, brake pad erosion and dust from roads. Oxford needs targets for road traffic reduction on all routes into the City, and targets to reduce car journeys starting and ending within the Ring Road. Policies to achieve this do not appear in the early outlines of the next Oxfordshire Transport and Local Connectivity Plan;
5. The consequences of overinflated housing targets include massive transport problems. One million homes in the Cambridge-Oxford Arc and another 1 million around the fringe of London in Essex and Kent are planned. Very low cost housing, near employment centres, higher density housing close to workplaces for those who cannot work online are what is needed. We need to remove car parking in urban centres to reduce air pollution, increase active travel (Cycling-Walking) and increase very low cost homes (primarily social housing) near jobs on the vacated car parking sites. We can also build around car park edges, adding apartments in layers above surface car parks to any height deemed appropriate for the context. Local Plans should be altered to designate all public and private car parks as potential housing sites to help meet actual housing demand. We should never build on greenfield sites at the periphery of urban areas or worst still further away from employment centres. This will just increase movements of vehicles;
6. We support the principle of the East West Railway project to re-establish the rail link for direct services between Cambridge and Oxford. Similarly, we want disused rail lines to be reopened to give people more choices for making longer distance non-car journeys;
7. The restoration of bus services cut as a result of cuts in rural bus subsidies can help in reducing car traffic;
8. The combination of the Coronavirus recession plus the risk of a hard Brexit means we are in what may be a protracted economic crisis. Proposals for large-scale infrastructure should generally be cancelled bearing in mind their low value to local council areas and negative greenhouse gas emissions implications. With more online working, it is difficult to see how large-scale road infrastructure will ever be needed anywhere. The Expressway need not be built; homes are still needed, after a decades long period of neglect, in the very low cost category near to where work is available. This means homes for purchase, for private landlords or property speculators are not and cannot become priorities. We need our limited construction workforce concentrated upon best use of the existing built environment and made better use of car parks.

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