To: letters pages, Oxford Times

From: Hazel and Steve Dawe, Cowley Area Transport Group – [www.catg.org.uk](http://www.catg.org.uk)

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Dear Editor,

Oxford City Council is consulting on a City Centre Action Plan with a deadline of 19th January 2022. Its consultation document can be found at: <https://consultation.oxford.gov.uk/regeneration-economy/oxford-city-centre-action-plan/supporting_documents/211115_Oxford_CCAP_Report_FINAL_CONSULTATION%20DRAFT_LR.pdf>

We have found some problems with the City Council’s ideas. First, throughout the whole area it is proposed that a very large expansion of commercial activity should take place, with the City playing a role in giving planning permission, and possibly funds, to facilitate this. We reject this basic idea. The City Centre’s existing businesses would benefit if the entire area were targeted for a massive increase in very low-cost housing, using the existing built environment for a regeneration based upon sustainable retrofitting, where possible. New residents will spend money in local businesses and sustain them into the future. There is also a contradiction in the City’s documentation between assuming people will continue working at home and proposing to add additional office space in this area. Apart from the City’s own Housing company, housing associations and local housing groups should be involved in a partnership for long-term non-market housing in the City Centre.

A Climate-changed City needs very strong emphasis on pedestrianisation to cut traffic, and add trees for shade and fountains for cooling. Pedestrianisation, with improved and marked cycle tracks, is the only way to radically cut all emissions from vehicles, both exhaust emissions and toxic particulate matter from brakes and tyres. We believe the long-term goal should be pedestrianisation and pedestrian-priority becoming dominant between the existing City Centre and the rail station. The City Council must know that research shows both pedestrians and cyclists spend more money per head than car drivers so a much larger pedestrianised and more populated Centre is good for creating a sustainable economy throughout this area.

Yours sincerely,

Hazel and Steve Dawe

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