

12th October 2022

Submitted via email to: centraloxontravelplan@oxfordshire.gov.uk

To whom it may concern,

Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan Consultation (October 2022)

Please accept this letter as the consultation response to the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (hereafter 'the Plan') consultation submitted on behalf of the [Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce](#) (TVCC) – one of the largest accredited Chambers in the UK and the only accredited Chamber of Commerce for the Thames Valley (TV) and our membership.

We have taken the opportunity to review the plan and have consulted with selected members including the President of the Oxfordshire Chamber, our [Local Chamber Advisory Group](#) (LCAG) in Oxfordshire and specialists with a specific interest and knowledge of transportation issues. Our response is not only drawn from this engagement, but also that of our own evidence base and previous consultation responses referenced, where relevant, below, and available [HERE](#).

TVCC Policy Framework (in support of the Plan)

The Plan, as part of the wider Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, is largely in alignment with the strategy policy priorities outlined in the 2022 [Business Manifesto](#) (BM). In BM is prepared in consultation with our membership and sets-out the priorities we will focus on. It has three main priorities, including the following:

- **Helping secure investment in resilient infrastructure, utility, and sustainable networks:**
Promoting the need for investment to deliver resilient digital & transportation networks across the TV that will support the region's future sustainable economic growth, showcase innovation & green technologies, and which support our move to a net-zero economy.

The priorities are framed by six core themes that inform, influence, and shape our vision and wider programme of work and events across the region and at the local level (see below) including efforts to build momentum around the sustainability and climate change agenda amongst our business community¹ and the [decarbonisation of transport](#).

At the local level, the [Oxfordshire LCAG](#) has developed and published a [local policy priority statement](#)², which, again, is prepared, in consultation with its members and key stakeholders. It summarises the priorities this LCAG is focused working alongside those of the BM. These include:

1 See our work programme around the business-led [Sustainability Working Group](#)

2 The 2023 Business Manifesto and LPPS are currently being prepared and will be published before the end of 2022.

- Support appropriate local transport initiatives that strengthen confidence in travelling by public transport (see Heathrow below) and lead to its sustained recovery and reviewing the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.
- Support proposals that strengthen public transport connections to Heathrow airport.
- Promote the sectors where Oxfordshire has evidential strengths and locations that support foreign direct investment (FDI), support new investors to deliver sustained levels of activity that secures higher volumes and value FDI projects³.
- Maintain our long-term commitment for the third River Thames crossing⁴.

Further, and with specific reference to recent and substantive consultation responses made by TVCC to related Oxfordshire plans and strategy documents, we invite you to consider comments made:

- [Oxford Economic Strategy](#)
- [Oxfordshire Plan 2050](#)

We invite your review of the above as context to the following comments on the Plan consultation.

Consultation Response

We commend the collective efforts and hard work of the Oxfordshire authorities to progress the Plan, we consider it a real step in the right direction towards helping:

- Deliver a net-zero carbon transport system, serving to build a local economy centred around sustainability principles, social purpose, and of course, net-zero.
- Create safer transport by aiming to reduce road fatalities or life-changing injuries by 2050.
- Reduce congestion by reducing 1 in 4 car trips by 2030, along with efforts to strengthen confidence in travelling by public transport.

Whilst we are not proposing to comment on specific questions, we do wish to make the following broad comments on the Plan and its strategic approach:

- Consider incorporating the set of 22 actions within the Plan as part of an integrated transport system. There seem to be lots of initiatives, without the clarification as to how they work together, how they will be implemented or prioritised.
- The eight suggested outcomes of the Plan currently seem to lack a strategic framework against which they can be measured and prioritised. Consider categorising the outcomes, e.g., economic, environmental, social, etc.
- Initiatives need to be timely and logically sequenced – i.e., Parking (Actions 3-7), as well as traffic filters – should be sensitive to the needs of business as well as individuals. Alternative provision and incentives should be provided in line with, if not before these actions and initiatives are implemented, in order to facilitate the desired outcomes.
- The Avoid/Shift/Improve approach – the same logic applies as above. We suggest that “Improve” should often be a precursor to “Shift” and “Avoid”, to provide reference to and/or examples of suitable alternatives / support, to then enable to Avoid and Shift.
- Apart from measuring and monitoring a set of indicators, consider measuring strategic outcomes, e.g., jobs created/retained, inward investment attracted, social outcomes etc.
- We encourage you to ensure the Plan is not insular. It may be strengthened by a greater acknowledgement and reflection on the fact that economic geographies do cut across the Oxfordshire boundary. Consider if the Plan is either underselling, or omitting, the impact of

³ See: <https://www.thamesvalley.co.uk/>

⁴ A priority within the Reading & Wokingham LCAG LPPS.

some of the proposed schemes, on a cross-boundary and national scale, which may weaken the wider Plan aims and objectives and the case for support?

- In addition to the Third River Thames crossing, we encourage the strengthening of messages around connectivity and public transport links to London Heathrow, including stronger support for the timely delivery of the [Western Rail Link to London Heathrow](#) project.
- By way of background with provide further details behind 'why' in our submissions to England's Economic Heartland [Draft Transport Strategy](#) and the Transport for the SouthEast (TfSE): [A Strategic Investment Plan for the South East](#) consultation responses.

We welcome the opportunity to be updated on the progress of the consultation and invited to be actively involved in the future development and implementation phases of the Plan. We look forward to your active engagement with TVCC and most particularly the Oxfordshire LCAG.

Our kind regards and thanks for the opportunity to contribute.

Yours faithfully,



Paul Britton
Chief Executive
Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group



Phil Southall
Local President
Oxfordshire Chamber of Commerce

About the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce

The TVCC is one of the largest accredited Chambers within the UK and the only accredited Chamber of Commerce for the TV region. TVCC is a proven centre of excellence for trade and inward investment services.

Representing over 4,000 companies in membership, with an economy estimated in size to be more than £83,848m (2015), it is home to over 115,000 businesses, including: 11 of the world's top 15 tech companies; the No.1 University in the world (Oxford); once again, the two highest performing cities (Oxford and Reading) according to PwC; the second largest trading city in the UK (Slough); the most productive city per capita (Slough) (Centre for Cities) and the No.1 region, outside of London, for attracting inward investment. In addition, the TVCC credits a range of impressive statistics:

- 295,000 combined number of staff employed by members
- 5000+ number of active trade customers
- £1,692,474,094 – the value of international trade enabled in 2018
- Average 150 new trade customers each year
- 178 countries trading with our customers
- 83 sectors represented by members and international trade customers
- Consistently one of the UK's most attractive locations for attracting inward investment
- 65% of international companies setting up or expanding in the TV have been supported by TVCC.