

OCC LTCP 5 Public Engagement Q&A exercise/consultation

‘Oxfordshire Transport – Looking out to 2050’

Fyfield and Tubney Parish Council

Responses April 2020

1.Active and Healthy travel – cycle streets

Q. Can we make cycling safer through cycle streets? What else could we do to make cycling more attractive to everyone across the county? What might make you cycle more often, and for different types of journey.

In 2018, Fyfield and Tubney Parish Council carried out a whole parish engagement survey, relating to safe crossings on the A420. The overwhelming response to this was that we all need **vastly improved road safety** in order to connect routes to make cycling a viable transport option. Fast, hugely over-congested, un-crossable main roads such as the A420 (East West) act to block access to all other links (eg North South). Associated noise and pollution just increase the perception of cycling ANYWHERE and for any reason, to work, to the bus stop, for health and well being, to tackle pollution, as thoroughly unpleasant and highly dangerous.

Measures to improve health and safety, combine and link: Install Safe crossings at useful, regular intervals along all these roads. Introduce effective road and traffic management to protect local users from current priority given to freight/commercial: double white lining, weight and ‘frequency of use’ restrictions applied to all freight/commercial. Quieten road surfaces.

To promote cycling as part of commuter networks : provide basic cycle parks at all bus stops. Install plenty of effective awareness-raising signage to alert road users to the existence of whole communities carrying out their lives alongside these roads, daily negotiating the dangerous downsides of outdated policies prioritising flow and speed.

3. Active and Healthy Travel – LCWIPs (Local Cycling Walking and Infrastructure Plans)

Q. Where else should have an LCWIP? What Improvements would you like to see to your cycling or walking network? How can cycling and walking be made safer and more attractive for all?

These should be extended to connect towns and cities to each other.

Also please see our response to your Q1 above. Over all top priority needs to be given to vastly improved road safety through effective traffic management and re-prioritisation of main road usage from commercial goods transport convenience to promoting local and individual well being and healthy living, making cycling and walking viable as normal commuting options.

4. Active and Healthy Travel – Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

Q. What do you think the benefits of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods could be for your community? How do you think they could be best introduced? What objections do you think there might be and how could they be mitigated?

Extend LTN principles to villages used by rat runners trying to avoid build-ups on main routes at peak times. For example: Fyfield on the A420, used to bypass the queue at the roundabout due west. There is one road running through the village, without pavements. Verges are degraded and cyclists and pedestrians fear for their lives as cars try to overtake each other and anyone trying to cycle or walk to bus stops. Treated as a challenge by drivers trying to make the short cut worth their while, they drive as on a race track with sharp blind bends, ultimately ending up forming their own queue at the other end of the village just to face the same impossibility of getting onto the A420 due to the speed and constant flow of HGVs and West East traffic! Hence the roundabout.

The above is only one example, we have other rat runs including Abingdon Road in Tubney. The A420 runs right through the parish and splits it in two. We would welcome the whole parish being a Low Traffic Neighbourhood and to achieve this, the whole philosophy of the use of the A420 needs complete review.

Engage police (install police signage and cameras) and local council to restrict use to one way (counter to the main rat run) at peak hours (7.20-9am) except for locals.

5. Active and Healthy travel: SHIFT Sustainable Healthy Integrated Functional Travel

Q. Do you agree with our approach to progressing the SHIFT proposal? What types of measures do you think would help you to combine walking, cycling and public transport to make your daily journeys? Which locations should be a priority for any SHIFT network ?

YES, we agree with your approach to progressing SHIFT by ‘improving journeys combining public transport with walking and cycling,....breaking down physical barriers and improving physical and mental health by reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality... and improving road safety for all road users.’

For example in rural areas, where a heavily congested main road acts as a barrier to accessing the rest of the road and bus network, reduce congestion (limit commercial use by weight and times restrictions), provide safe crossings, lay-bys for all bus stops, shelter and cycle parks.

9. Bus Strategy

Q. Could you do more of your journeys by bus if something changed? If so, what? Are there other areas that would help make the bus network better for you, given our current constraints? What else could our bus strategy consider? Most bus routes go in and out of Oxford. Would you use the buses to go to other places, instead of Oxford, if it were possible/easier?

According to our Fyfield and Tubney Parish Council parishioner engagement survey on safe crossings and bus use, the answer to your first question is an emphatic YES.

According to OCC's CONNECTING OXFORD– Improving Connectivity/Reducing congestion/Tackling pollution, the city and **county** councils have been “very successful in securing funding of **over £80million** for a better faster and more comprehensive transport network, a complete, high quality, spacious walking and cycling network and reclaiming some of the road space currently used for vehicles to provide more space for **buses, pedestrians and cyclists**. This needs to extend county -wide. See also F&T PC responses to your earlier sections and questions here for our recommendations.

The use of bus for travel is limited to destinations East to Oxford and West to Swindon. Whilst a very good service patronage of the S6 is hampered by the danger and difficulty presented by crossing the A420 to access the service. There is no North - South bus service at all to destinations such as Abingdon without either walking a mile to Kingston Bagpuize or travelling there by S6 bus (both requiring crossing the A420).

12. Climate Emergency and Transport

Q. What could you do, and the Council/s realistically support you to do, to help you make a long term change to a much less polluting/carbon emitting mode of transport?

We agree with your overall approach to this so we would support your general strategy to visibly encourage and provide for happy walking and cycling and the development and use of safe, non-polluting good quality public transport.

Winning hearts and minds of tax-payers (parishioners) will need a considerable transformative push, financial commitment and new ways of thinking e.g cross-disciplinary policy making, strategising, fund sharing and distribution.

In practical terms, multiple trans-national, town and country availability of Electric Charging Points would be key to supporting all less polluting travel choices.

The A420 is the greatest source of pollution in the Parish. There are a number of properties that lie within a few metres of this road which cannot escape its dangerous impact either inside or outside. Those laying further away still suffer from the dust and particle invasion, not to mention the 24 hour noise and light pollution.

The limited public transport available suffers from the detractions highlighted in section 9 above.

13. Air Quality

Q. What more could you do about air pollution where you live or work? In what ways could we get the message across more strongly, when pollution is an invisible issue and easily ignored?

Fyfield and Tubney Parish Council have already (January 2019) arranged for South and Vale DC to install NO2 monitoring tubes, the analysis of which (due now) will inform us of the degree of the problem caused by the A420 and ensuing action to be taken. You state that the problem of “pollution is an invisible issue and easily ignored.” We do not agree with this. According to our survey, most respondents expressed their concerns for their own and their families’ health, living so close to such a highly congested road.

Awareness raising :

....for individuals: The Council to lead by example. BE VISIBLE. Be seen to be investing tax payers money in all measures that protect and prioritise the needs of walkers, cyclists and bus users from ALL dangerous effects of congested and inadequately managed main roads.

....for companies that rely on ‘just in time’ transportation and deliveries and over use of inappropriate routes; de-incentivise, re calibrate the balance of costs and benefits by imposing and enforcing weight restriction and time limited use of roads to favour and enhance local and multi-mode transport networks. This should lead to said companies warehousing and applying more considerate scheduling of goods deliveries for the benefit other road users and negotiators over purchasers and company profits. There will be objections.

Please also see item 12 above regarding pollution.

14. Green Infrastructure

Q. What do you like most/least about existing transport and connectivity green infrastructure in the county? What sort of green infrastructure benefits would you particularly like to see and where? Are there any particularly important routes that you think could be identified as strategic green routes for additional investment?

Parishioners of Fyfield and Tubney value their rural environment. Sadly what they like least are the bad effects of the congested main road that cuts across this countryside and effectively bars them from accessing walks and cycle routes south of the road Firstly we would like to see the benefits of vastly improved maintenance and upkeep of *existing* pathways and infrastructure along all main roads. For example, the A420, excepting some small annual gestures to a small grass verge near one of the bus stops and some unhelpful signage, has been sadly neglected for years, as have all the settlements along its flanks.

We would like to see 1.Effective litter picking and cleaning signage: eg. holding Biffa to terms of contracts. 2. HGV speed and frequency properly controlled, to reduce road kill, installing signage that alerts drivers to animals (as well as people!) crossing. Coming home from work and finding the road entirely covered in deer blood and bone reminded us that two people had been killed on the same spot only a month earlier. Very traumatic.

18. Transport Corridor Connectivity

Q. What approaches to managing transport and movement should be developed on major roads such as the A420? What changes do you think would be realistic and effective? What would encourage you to switch to using the bus on the major routes through the county _ A40, A44, A420 < A4074? If you live near or on a major transport corridor what would you like to see changed?

Fyfield and Tubney Parish Council carried out our own public engagement/consultation exercise in Summer 2018 in response to parishioners' concerns about risks and frequent fatalities on the A420 and the lack of safe crossings for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users. This was in the form of a detailed questionnaire to every household in the parish. 82% of respondents said they'd use the bus more and 84% said they'd walk and cycle to local shops and facilities if safe crossings were installed and all traffic and congestion was reduced and better managed.

Realistic suggestions included: Lay-by's and shelters for all bus-stops, set back from the roadside, single file traffic (double white lining) at reduced speed, weight and time of travel restriction for all commercial traffic, particularly HGVs.

The Parish Council presented these findings and copies of the survey with summary to OCC, District and County Councillors and MPs, and have since lobbied OCC head of operations to effect change. We endorse your approach and suggestions for 'what could be changed'.

We also show below a summary of issues and some very real changes that should be investigated.

The A420 has developed over many years with traffic volumes, including HGVs, increasing continually at all times of the day and night. There are certain parts that go through residential areas, for example at Besselsleigh, Tubney Church and Fyfield crossing. The traffic volumes through these areas, in particular, cause many delays and pose a significant safety risk to pedestrians, bus users and local residents in their vehicles. In addition, the traffic volumes, particularly HGVs, cause vibration damage to adjoining properties and residents suffer from 24 hour noise, light and exhaust pollution. It is not possible to escape from the constant and damaging intrusion from the road and the ever growing deterioration in quality of life. The problem of excess and heavy traffic is exacerbated by three specific issues in Tubney (by the church and speed camera). It should be noted this is a residential area with gardens directly bordering the carriageway of the road and drives leading directly on to it:

- This section of the road was raised by approximately 1.5m above the level of the surrounding houses and gardens, in the past, thereby forming an embankment which serves to magnify the road noise greatly.
- The road was recently "resurfaced" using a top dressing method which in itself magnifies the road noise above other types of better quality substantial surfacing.
- There are manhole covers on the Eastbound side of the road through this section, located at intervals of between 50 and 100 m. These are below the surface of the road and form part of the side of the carriageway. When a vehicle travels through

these there is a hammering vibration that shakes properties and produces a “thunder clap” at each manhole cover.

In no way can such damaging effects be even mildly considered acceptable, indeed they are intolerable. They would not be allowed to continue for any length of time if generated by an individual or a business, so such effects being generated by the A420 should be considered and treated in the same manner as intolerable and to be addressed and resolved in a timely manner.

Currently, the only improvement proposals for the A420, along with ongoing and future housing developments, will purely serve to increase traffic volumes along the route and compound the problems in the residential areas mentioned above. All of the proposals seem focused on easing entry and exit on the A420 and not on the traffic volumes and the ability of the road to cope with the traffic volumes. The proposals have not taken account of the fact that the road runs through residential areas and has developed from a basic road with low traffic volumes to a key through route, with high car and HGV usage, without any significant upgrade work resulting in motorway volumes of vehicles, and driving behaviour, on a rural road.

The A420 needs a strategic review of the demands made on it and its capability in handling them. It appears there are two options available to deal with this mismatch in road specification and the demands put on it.

- A. Accept the road is not up to carrying the volumes and type of traffic using it and that it runs right through residential area and therefore align its specification to suit, in a manner appropriate to the areas through which it runs and bisects. This would involve reduction in speed limits, introduction of traffic calming measures, improved pedestrian and cycle crossings, better access to buses, restriction on allowable vehicle weights and quiet road surfaces.
- B. Upgrade the specification of the road to align with the current and anticipated future traffic levels accepting that a road carrying such traffic volumes and weight being routed through residential, built up areas is totally inappropriate on grounds of health, safety, air pollution, noise pollution, vibration and the serious intrusion into the lives of those living in these areas. This would require converting the road into dual carriageway throughout its length and diverting away from the built up areas though which it currently runs. It is understood that dualling the A420 is not a desired option but something is required given the traffic volumes. As a minimum, diversion away from built areas should be investigated.

A few long and short term measures are suggested below aligning with the options in A and B above. These suggestions have been made with particular reference to the stretch of the A420 running through Fyfield and Tubney Parish (between the two sections of dual carriageway at Kingston Bagpuize and Tubney Woods respectively) but are equally applicable elsewhere on the route.

Short Term (Option A above)

1. Tubney, by the Church

- 1.1. Speed limit reduction
- 1.2. Plan for ongoing maintenance /cleaning of existing signage
- 1.3. “Village Gates” at either end of stretch
- 1.4. Vehicle activated signs warning of vehicles turning/pedestrians crossing
- 1.5. Re-surface with “quiet” surface
- 1.6. Traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing
- 1.7. Attend to sunken manhole covers

2. Tubney, Abingdon Road

- 2.1. Speed limit reduction
- 2.2. Improved pedestrian crossing, central refuge
- 2.3. Footpath from bus stop linking to underpass footpath
- 2.4. Re-surface with “quiet” surface
- 2.5. Traffic light controlled junction for vehicles and pedestrians

3. Fyfield

- 3.1. Speed limit reduction from 50mph on single carriageway
- 3.2. Speed limit reduction on dual carriageway approach to Fyfield from the West
- 3.3. Better signage warning road users of hazards
- 3.4. Re-surface with “quiet” surface
- 3.5. Improved pedestrian crossing, central refuge
- 3.6. Improved right turning into Fyfield from A420 Westbound, central refuge
- 3.7. Traffic light controlled junction for vehicles and pedestrians

4. Whole stretch between the roundabouts at Tubney Woods and Kingston Bagpuize

- 4.1. Compare official records of accidents for comparison with data already known/put together locally
- 4.2. Solid double white ‘no overtaking lines’
- 4.3. Speed cameras at each end of the stretch
- 4.4. Average speed cameras

Long Term (Option B above)

- Strategic review of road capacity, noise, pollution and safety
- Diversion of road away from built up areas, (Tubney Church and Fyfield) particularly where properties directly border the road
- Dual road from Oxford to Swindon perhaps with the caveat described above
- Look into other noise reduction options

21. Local Community Action on Transport

“New OCC funding commitment of £3 million for local road safety, accessibility, including new pedestrian crossings, improved junctions and better bus stop facilities.”

Q. What can you do for your community to make it a better/nicer/safer place to live? What type of small interventions would you see as a priority for funding? How might other organisations support you?

What would you find useful? Can we frame the issue in a way that will help you as a resident to engage and come up with your own sustainable solutions for your community?

Are there current schemes that need help expanding to benefit more of the community?

As representatives of the whole community, Fyfield and Tubney Parish Council have prioritised parishioners’ chief concerns, namely health and safety. Hence our efforts to gather evidence and engage with District and County Councils to help us with the serious ever-present risks presented by the A420 in its current state (See your paper ‘Transport Corridor Connectivity’ re A420). Sadly, another death at Xmas 2019 of a 26year old member of the community, crossing the road after a visit to Southmoor shop on foot, prompted us again to commit fulltime to the problem of the A420.

Various teams of residents and parish council members have also tackled and cleared huge amounts of litter on public pathways, neglected by Biffa who are under contract to do the job.

Our current plan for 2020/21 is to explore engaging in consultation again with the whole community with a view to producing a Neighbourhood Plan (and access allocated proportion of CIL) that isn’t solely driven and dominated by fear of harm from the A420. We have no village hall or play area and, with a growing number of young families moving into our villages, must address the need for new community facilities. However we cannot identify areas for multiple housing.

23. Network Management and Coordination

“Traffic Management Act 2004. Council Duty to reduce and manage congestion and to collaborate effectively with other traffic authorities to achieve this”

Q. How do you think Network Management should balance the transport needs of the County as a whole (and indeed the wider region) with those of local communities? What do you like about these proposals or think needs to change?

Historically, or at least since 1960's roads and county transport policies have been dominated by maintaining flow for all and latterly prioritising commercial traffic over local. Your proposals for redressing this balance to favour sustainable transport modes and reduce risk to life and health is very much welcomed.

Suggestions: Address current commercial dependency on **'just in time'** trading which effectively 'warehouses' stock on the road. For example offer grants for re-furbishing old warehouse buildings/new build and schedule deliveries to **"out of peak time"** but in a way to avoid disturbance to properties adjacent to the road.

Additionally, to look at mechanisms to reduce the level of HGV traffic on the A420:

- What could be sent by rail?
- Are there specific routes that are more appropriate for HGVs, use of which could be made mandatory.

24. Highways Asset Management Plan

Does Oxfordshire's Asset Management approach sound like a good idea to you? Do you think it would be a good solution to ensuring the transport network is maintained?

Yes, planning ahead with clear goals (as in this your paper) sounds like a good idea, particularly in respect of funding allocation, making the most of what there is. In addition, multi-agency collaborative working (e.g with Environment Agency), sharing funding and strategy across the region could help support this approach.

25. Freight Strategy

Q. Do you have any ideas about how to move and manage freight through and within Oxfordshire? How do you think improvements could be made?

Redress the balance between smaller vehicle and HGVs road use. Introduce time and frequency constraints to avoid peak hours.

Additionally, please see item 23 above.

Fyfield and Tubney Parish Council