

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL



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John Disley
OCC
Speedwell House
Speedwell Street
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OX1 1NE

March 24th 2015

Re: LTP4 Consultation

Dear Sir

At a meeting of Bicester Town Council (BTC) held on March 23rd 2015, LTP4 was discussed.

They had been expecting officers from OCC to attend the meeting to talk specifically about the SE Link Road, but the officers cancelled due to purdah. Bicester Town Council was very disappointed that the officers failed to attend, and feel that this has contributed to them not being able to fully comment on the plan.

The plan is out of date, confusing, contradictory and conflicts with other important strategic document, eg the Draft Local plan and the Bicester Masterplan. The maps are out date, as are other matters mentioned in the plan.

Bicester Town Council **strongly requests** that OCC consider extending the consultation period until after the Local Plan Inspectors report has been issued, since this will materially affect decisions to be made in the transport plan for Bicester and the wider area. Bicester Town Council also strongly requests that the visit from officers is rescheduled for as soon as possible to further inform the debate.

In the meantime, Bicester Town Council offers the following comments as a first and interim response:

- The solution to the London Road level crossing issue has yet to be resolved. No solutions are as yet offered and it is imperative that one is found. BTC cannot formally respond the plan until some answers are provided. Investment and rejuvenation is required to the south of the town centre, but this cannot happen until decisions are made about London Road. The station is referred to as Bicester Town, but has been renamed by Chiltern Railways to Bicester Village (very much against public opinion) and there will need to be investment in renewed signage.

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- There is no mention of the Howes Lane realignment proposals in the plan..
- The recent announcement regarding Garden Town status will have an effect on the opportunities for traffic mitigation in and around the area. The situation in Bicester is changing fast and has overtaken the information in the plan documents. A designated officer at Cherwell District Council is working on the up to date and current situation and OCC officers would be well advised to make sure that they are fully engaged with.
- It is clear that the strategy is an overarching one that is designed to support growth, both economically and of housing. However, a ring road, rather than containing development within it will only serve to encourage development on the outer edge.
- BTC welcomes the study to remove the chicanes on the Banbury and Buckingham Roads.
- BTC questions the promotion of cycling to the extreme that cars are prevented from accessing the usual routes in and out of town. Also, the prioritisation of bus lanes could inconvenience other road users.
- It is pleasing that the plan recognises that traffic in Bicester is increasing.
- There is a shortage of information in the plan around details of the following;
 - The crossings planned for Charbridge Way, London Road and Graven Hill
 - What are the improvements planned for Boundary Way.
- BTC supports the development of Graven Hill as a freight interchange.
- There is no mention of bus routes to local hospitals, ie The Horton in Banbury and the John Radcliffe etc in Oxford.
- BTC would encourage the development of a single train station for Bicester instead of the current two stations.
- Bicester is an Eco Town, soon to have Garden Town status, but this plan seems to erode at the already depleting green space in and around the town.

Finally, I would like to reiterate Bicester Town Council's strong request that this consultation is delayed until after the Inspectors report on the Local Plan.

Yours sincerely

Sue Mackrell
Chief Officer
Bicester Town Council