



Council

Monday 16 December 2019

Agenda Item 10, Motions

Motion Proposer: Councillor Sean Woodcock

Motion Seconder: To be advised

Topic: Oxford to Cambridge Expressway

Motion

"Council notes the continued uncertainty faced by communities in Cherwell the proposed corridor for the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway.

This Council regrets this opaque process - with the decision made by Highways England – with little input from local people.

This council remains wholly unclear what the final route will be, let alone how the Expressway might help reduce the congestion on local roads including junction 9 of the M40.

This council believes that interface between the proposed Expressway and the new East-West Rail is also key. We welcome the commitment to plan for and invest in major infrastructure to support housing and economic growth in Oxfordshire, but we want to see the development of integrated transport systems and the prioritisation of clean, green and public transport.

These principles need to be central in determining the final detailed route. However, this Council remains concerned at the environmental damage proposed by this Expressway for obscure economic gain. In light of the Council's recently declared Climate Emergency, therefore, this council retains a sceptical Outlook on the endeavour as a whole.

This council demands at a minimum that any proposals are up for meaningful public consultation conducted by Highways England.

In addition, the Leader of council should not endorse any proposals for an Expressway given this council's concerns over the lack of clarity and environmental impact without further reference to council.

Throughout must be emphasised that any proposal which goes ahead should not contradict the council's commitment to the environment. There also needs to be integration with public transport.

Council regrets the lack of clarity from government on its proposals which contributes to considerable uncertainty both about how the Expressway is intended to deliver benefit, and about the possible impact on homes, lives, the environment, amenities and facilities especially in our area.

In particular, Council notes with regret that:

1. It is unclear what the word "Expressway" means in this context
2. Insufficient work has been done on the potential of enhanced rail links to deliver better outcomes for passengers, freight, and sustainable economic growth
3. Actual and proposed consultation is inadequate
4. It is unclear which of a range of possible justifications for the Expressway, which potentially contradict each other, are being used, including:
 - a) A 'strategic route' to carry freight traffic from the west and south to the east.
 - b) A route to make commuting between Oxford/Milton Keynes/Bedford/Cambridge easier and quicker.
 - c) A road that will enable significant housing growth of 1,000,000 extra houses along its length.
 - d) Relieving traffic.

Council therefore resolves to oppose the Expressway as it is currently proposed, to continue to press national government for more investment in sustainable transport, and to ask the Department for Transport to urgently clarify its proposals around the Expressway."

For information: The Constitution sets out that no Motion to rescind or vary an agreed Motion can be considered within a 6 month period unless signatures or email from a recognised source from 8 councillors is received. The Director Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer has received 8 signatures and therefore confirms that the motion is valid.