POETS
Planning Oxfordshire's Environment and Transport Sustainably

OxBus 2040: Plan for Bus

Consultation Response by Planning Oxfordshire's Environment and Transport Sustainably (POETS)

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POETS (Planning Oxfordshire's Environment and Transport Sustainably) is a group of senior planning, environment and transport professionals and academics focussed primarily on planning and transport in Oxfordshire.

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OxBus 2040: Plan for Bus – Consultation Response

1. POETS welcome the scale and ambition of the vision set out in this plan, and in particular the recognition of the need to work collaboratively with operators and other organisations across the county in its delivery.

2. Successfully achieving the objectives and vision is however dependant on some key issues. First of these is the impending reorganisation of local government and establishment of a mayoral authority which is expected to assume responsibility for transport matters. These have the potential to render most existing working relationships obsolete, undermining collaboration and threatening timely achievement of the vision. It will require a strong focus and determination to ensure delivery of the Plan.

3. The second major area of risk is financial, but the establishment of a comprehensive and powerful Plan could fundamentally assist in achieving the support of the new mayoral authority when it is prioritising its policies and budgets.

4. Perhaps the greatest risk to fully achieving the vision, and the 250% growth in bus patronage at its heart, lies in the need to tackle congestion on Oxfordshire's roads. Despite the LTCP targets for dramatic reductions in traffic, there is little evidence to date that these are credible. While restraint measures are being pursued within Oxford city, there is no sign of similar approaches elsewhere in the county. On the contrary, schemes that will increase capacity for vehicles – thereby undermining the potential for increasing bus patronage - such as HIF1 around Didcot and the new A34 Lodge Hill slip roads, are being implemented across the county. Unless this is addressed as a matter of urgency, there is little prospect of many of the commendable proposals set out in the Plan being achieved.