Summary: Bioabundance Response to LCTP5

In its vision for transport and connectivity, Oxfordshire County Council must prioritise **net-zero carbon in transport by 2050** to tackle the Climate Change emergency. All other themes and policy areas stem from that overarching goal.

Decarbonising transport does not mean replacing private motor vehicles with electric cars. It means a global shift from car dependency towards sustainable modes of travel. Given the very long lead times for new railways, we have to build a major network of buses and transform our road network to accommodate buses and active modes of travel.

The transport strategy needs to integrate two sustainable transport systems:
1. the regional network comprises railway and bus services for longer commuting or leisure journeys (mass transit);
2. a local hierarchical network of sustainable travel modes (bus, cycling and walking) that connect settlements to each other and into the regional 'mass-transit' network. This integrated sustainable transport system is required as much for cities such as Oxford as it is for rural areas.

The vision also should make sustainable transport and digital connectivity the starting point in planning new communities. It is counterproductive to locate a 'quantum of housing' where provision of sustainable transport links is not viable. All new settlements must be in cycling or walking distance of *existing* rail/bus service.

For the vision to be realised, we need to rethink the way that we use the road network because at the moment it only provides connectivity for cars and trucks. That is as true for the Oxford ring road as it is for rural single-track roads. They all have to be upgraded to promote sustainable transport.

Rural roads must be made safe and navigable by e-buses, cyclists and pedestrians to the point that driving a car becomes inconvenient. Oxford has to be viewed as 'greater Oxford' and its ring road as a major artery: it needs a strategic bus network with dedicated lanes and links via local bus and cycle from the ring road to radial roads into the city.

The challenge will be to fund the transformation of the county's road network so that we can reap the benefits of a sustainable transport revolution: rail, bus and active travel can become the natural alternative to private cars. Less traffic and lower speeds can improve safety not just for humans walking and cycling on our roads but for animals crossing them.

In short, the vision must prioritise the 2050 deadline for net-zero carbon in the transport system. The policy must deliver the digital connectivity and sustainable transport links which are crucial for climate change mitigation. Finally, through transport decarbonisation, we can reverse decades of damage to natural capital and grow bioabundance across Oxfordshire.

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