

Stanford in the Vale Parish Council

Clerk: Mike Dew, 9 Glebe Road, Stanford in the Vale, SN7 8NB

Chairman: Peter Lewis, 1 Church Green, Stanford in the Vale, SN7 8LQ



Supported Transport Consultation – Oxfordshire County Council

Science Vale is due to see the creation of thousands of jobs, and in line with this, thousands of new homes across the County are proposed, with several hundred already underway. Despite the fact that car ownership figures within the district suggest that this will have a significant impact on the numbers of cars using Oxfordshire's roads, the main arterial routes see limited infrastructure improvements. Indeed, for the Western Vale area there have been very few/no significant infrastructure improvements proposed despite the vast numbers of dwellings to be accommodated at Southmoor, Faringdon, Shrivenham & Stanford in the Vale. OCC's consultation on the A420 improvements suggests that the current "strategy" is to do nothing to improve the road, despite the fact that it will be at (or exceed) capacity within the near future.

Whilst we acknowledge that Oxfordshire County Council faces increasing budgetary challenges, and that there is a need to find savings across the board, the Council must improve the cohesiveness of its services:

- Approximately two years ago, at a Public Enquiry into a proposed (now approved) housing development in Stanford in the Vale, OCC insisted that a S106 contribution would be sufficient to secure the enhancements of the existing public transport services. During subsequent discussions with your transport team, we were lead to understand that the sum requested under this S106 agreement was not considered sufficient to provide the enhancements suggested and that they are therefore unlikely to be realised. Yet, we are now courted with the threat of reducing, or even abandoning the limited public transport service that is provided to our residents in this rural area.
- Stanford in the Vale Primary School sits within the "Catchment Area" for King Alfred's School in Wantage, yet OCC will only guarantee to provide school bus transport to Faringdon School, as it is physically closer. Whilst we accept the logic, there is a necessity to align catchment areas with the same principals if any of these schemes are to be successful.

Crucial to your current consultation is the fact that a number of secondary school pupils use the current service bus provision in order to travel to school in Wantage, due to the mis-match between catchment areas and supported bus services.

Putting all of this together, the public transport connections linking Stanford in the Vale, to the market towns of Faringdon and Wantage and the onward connections to Oxford & Swindon are considered to be vital, if we are indeed to encourage the use of public transport and help (in any way) to reduce the number of vehicles on the road. Furthermore, the operators should be tasked with timetabling the services, so as to provide optimal connections with connecting/onward services as possible (i.e. to minimise waiting times between connecting services).

We would suggest that OCC requires a fully costed model for the provision of each service, and that substantial sums must be acquired through S106 or CIL (as appropriate) to support these services for the medium term. Furthermore, looking at the sums involved to "support" private firms to provide these services, perhaps it would prove to be better value for OCC to run these as public services through direct employment and lease schemes, rather than the current model.