

- 4.13 Oxford's Park and Ride has been a notable success in transferring car travellers to bus for the final part of their journey. It has allowed more people to travel to the centre of Oxford with no traffic increase on the radial routes and has allowed the redevelopment of valuable land formerly used for car parking. The Transport Networks Review has found that there may be other opportunities for more remote park and ride, particularly related to the principal transport corridors (see Key Diagram) and to the relief of congestion. Such schemes will be investigated in more detail and supported where appropriate. Land may be required for park and ride schemes where these form part of a wider area transport strategy.

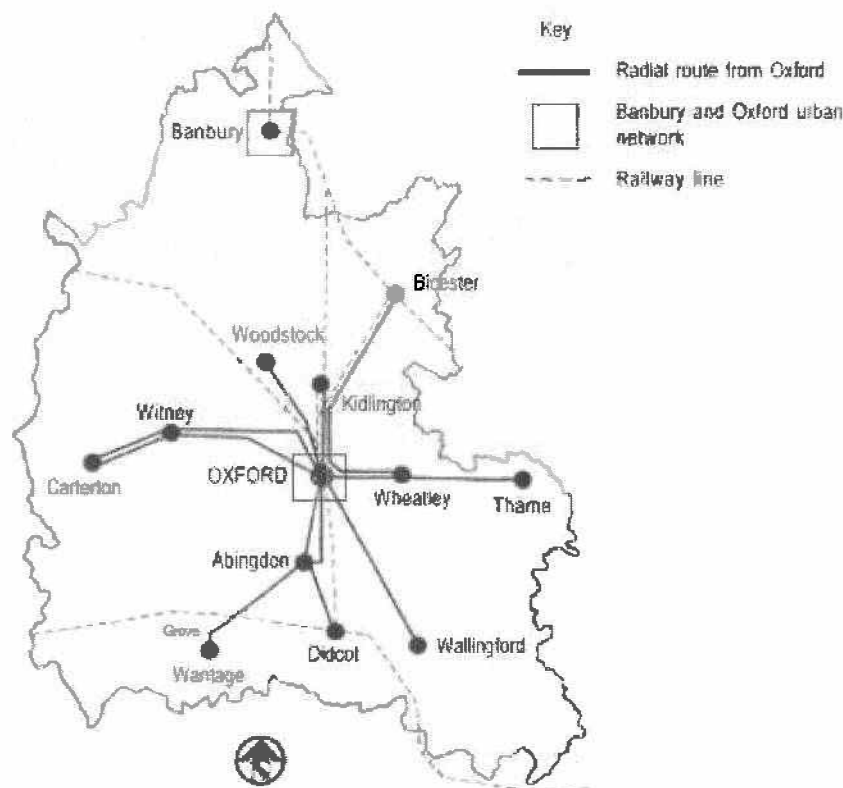


Public transport

- T3 Increased use of public transport will be sought through the encouragement and promotion of convenient, reliable, secure and high standard public transport services and through improved integration between different modes of transport and improved interchange facilities.**
- 4.14 The County Council will seek improvements to the quality, comfort, reliability and extent of rail and bus services so as to improve the attraction of public transport, improve choice and help to reduce future congestion by reducing the need to travel by private car. The County Council aims through measures in the new LTP to achieve a growth of 2% per year in use of bus services within the county. Currently the opportunities to improve the rail services are limited on most of Oxfordshire's routes by infrastructure capacity. The County Council will continue to press the rail industry to make improvements to rail infrastructure and services. High amongst the Council's aspirations are development of the East-West rail link, expansion or relocation of Oxford Station, a multi-modal interchange at Didcot Parkway, improvement to hourly frequency on the Cotswold Line and reopening of stations at Kidlington and Grove. Progress on such projects will involve consultation and agreement with the rail authorities.

- 4.15 The County Council adopted a Premium Routes strategy in 2002 (see Figure 4.1) on which commercially viable bus services (after any necessary 'pump-priming') will run at a frequency of at least four buses per hour. The network will be further refined, prioritised and developed during the new LTP period. Priority systems will be required to overcome congestion particularly at junctions and on junction approaches. Traffic management, and in some cases road widening or special track, will be required to provide a priority route. Operators will offer improvements in the quality of service, providing new easy access buses with low emission engines. Improvements to ticketing arrangements, waiting areas, interchange between services and information systems will be introduced to improve comfort and convenience.

Figure 4.1 Premium Bus Network (adopted in 2002)



- 4.16 The County Council is preparing a Bus Strategy within the new LTP which builds upon the past success of Oxfordshire in enabling and encouraging growth in bus use. It describes how the Council creates the conditions in which commercial bus services can thrive, whilst including provision for subsidy to supplement the commercial network where this provides best value for money. In some rural areas where a conventional bus service may not be viable, the strategy will encourage alternatives to conventional bus services e.g. demand responsive services, community transport etc. The strategy identifies a hierarchy of services: 'Premium Routes' (see paragraph 4.15); 'Hourly Services'; and 'Feeder Services'. 'Hourly Services' will run at least hourly to all settlements of over 1,000 population. Whilst some will no doubt require subsidy, the viability of the network will be improved through access and facilities at town centres and principal stops. 'Feeder Services' will be provided in a variety of ways to serve the lightly populated areas off main routes. It is recognised that most feeder services will require subsidies.

Freight

- T4 The carriage of freight by rail, pipeline or other means rather than road will be encouraged. The impact of freight operations on people and the environment will be reduced through partnership arrangements between the County Council and operators.**

Freight distribution centres will be permitted only if located with good access to the freight networks and in or adjoining a major settlement.

- 4.17 The amount of heavy goods traffic using the road network should be reduced by transfer to other modes wherever this is feasible and environmentally advantageous. Assessment of major development proposals should include consideration of opportunities to reduce the impact of heavy goods traffic. For example, this will usually be an important consideration for minerals and waste (chapters 11 and 12). Although Oxfordshire's rail network is limited in its extent and capacity, it plays an important part in moving passengers and freight. Continued use of rail for freight movement will be encouraged and where appropriate rail use should be increased.
- 4.18 Opportunities to use pipeline, conveyor and waterway should be considered. Oxfordshire's waterways, though probably no longer suitable for significant long distance movement of goods, may provide a cost effective alternative to the road network for some short-haul high volume movements.
- 4.19 Freight distribution operations should aim to reduce overall the volume of freight traffic, particularly on the parts of the networks where the greatest environmental disadvantage is caused. Freight distribution centres will need to be carefully located and not in the open countryside.

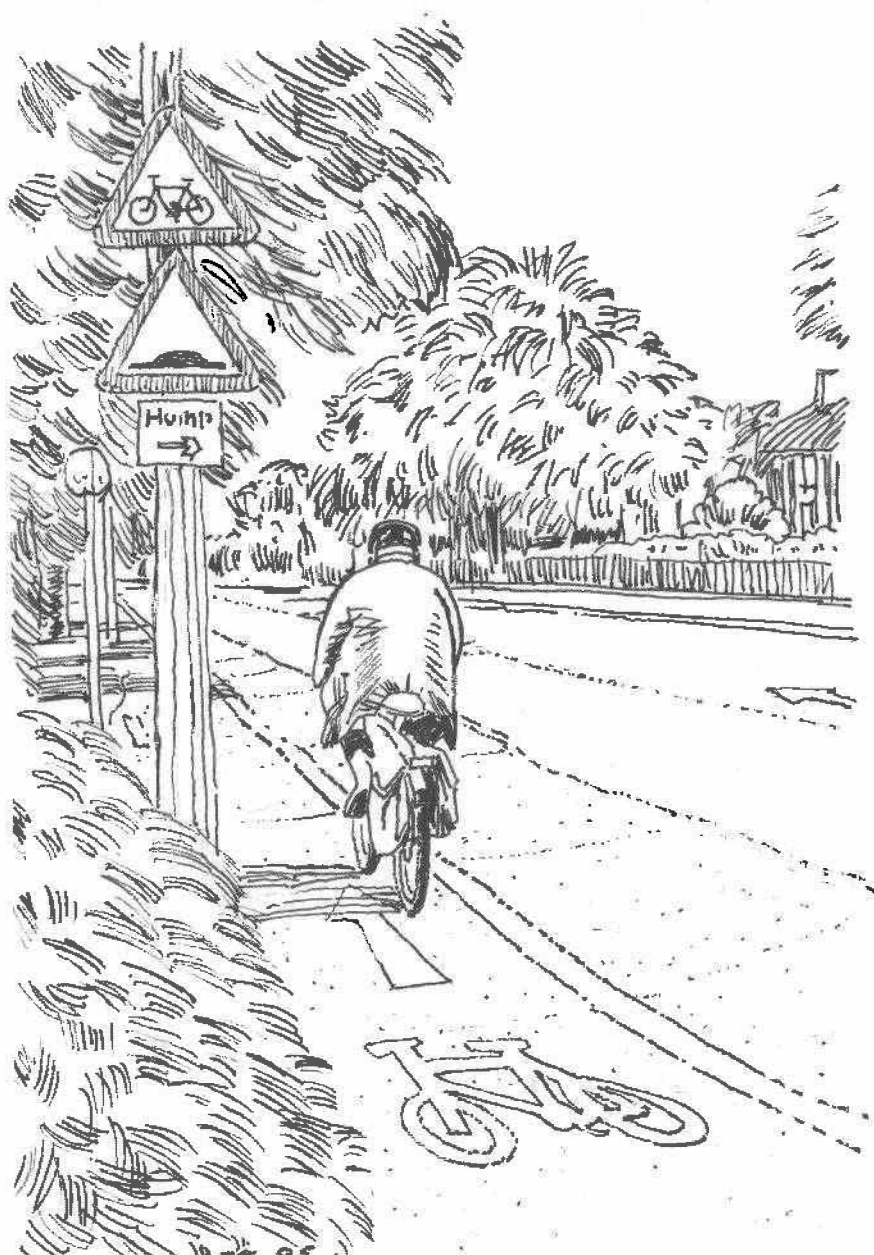
Networks for pedestrians and cyclists

- T5 Networks of routes for pedestrians and cyclists will be promoted and developed particularly within and linking to urban areas, so as to improve access to facilities and widen travel choice.**

Local plans will define comprehensive pedestrian and cycle routes and will promote improvements.

- 4.20 Walking and cycling are the most energy efficient and least polluting means of travel and can provide a practical and healthy alternative to car travel, particularly for short distance trips. Where destinations are concentrated in a small area, such as in a town centre, the benefits resulting from schemes giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists are most obvious. Consideration should be given to providing separate space for pedestrians and cyclists. Encouraging walking and cycling over a wider area by providing a network of good quality routes with priority measures can extend the benefits of reduced pollution, increased safety and improvement to the environment.

- 4.21 The County Council has adopted a Walking Strategy¹⁵ and a Cycling Strategy¹⁶. These strategies aim to increase the proportion of travel in the county on foot and by bicycle by making these modes more attractive through improvements to infrastructure, safety and security. Local plans should define comprehensive walking and cycling networks and provide policy support for their development. The networks should support the wider transport strategy for the area and should be based on good routes serving the town centres, schools, other key sites and routes into the urban areas, also taking into account the national networks and recreational routes. The Walking and Cycling Strategies will be revised to ensure that they are consistent with the new LTP (2006-2011).



¹⁵ Oxfordshire Walking Strategy, Oxfordshire County Council, August 2001.

¹⁶ Oxfordshire Cycling Strategy, Oxfordshire County Council, August 2001.

Networks for motorised travel

T6 The County Council will promote and support a comprehensive strategy for the safe and convenient carriage of people and freight by road, rail or special track.

The County Council in partnership with transport infrastructure providers, the operators of public transport services and other agencies will in particular promote the development and management of the following principal transport hubs, corridors and projects related to the Plan's overall development strategy and its regional context, to meet both strategic and key local movement requirements:

- transport measures in and around the City of Oxford to support its role as a regional transport hub;
- the corridor between Oxford and Bicester;
- the corridor between Oxford and Witney;
- the corridor between Oxford and Didcot;
- the corridor between Grove/Wantage and Didcot; and
- the development within the county of the East-West rail link.

The principal transport corridors, the rail and trunk route networks and other projects referred to are defined in the Key Diagram.

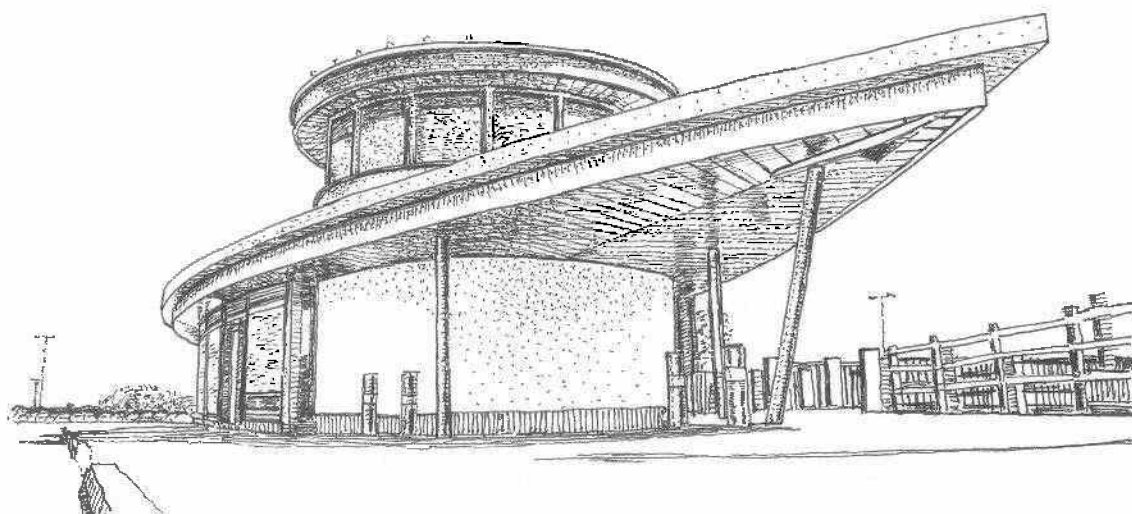
The Local Transport Plan will:

- identify the manner in which the road and rail network and the operation of the premium bus network and other key public transport services will combine to provide an enhanced quality of travel to support the spatial development strategy of the Structure Plan;
- assign roads in the county together with any special track to a hierarchy of networks supporting the spatial strategy of this Plan and identify their function at each level of the hierarchy;
- identify network improvement schemes; and
- identify the potential for integration between networks both for people and freight.

Development proposals that would have a significant adverse affect on the safe and efficient function of a network will not be permitted.

Land required for network development or improvement schemes will be safeguarded in the local plans/local development frameworks.

- 4.22 The way in which the motorised networks will be managed and developed to accommodate the county's travel demands should support the Plan's development strategy and take into account the other policies. This means recognising the importance of the principal transport corridors in providing access to the main development areas for both strategic and local movement. The corridors will provide links between Oxford and the main towns and between Wantage/Grove and Didcot, including provision to serve major employment sites at Harwell, Milton Park and Culham. Reducing congestion and improving accessibility (including increasing the attraction of public transport) will be a high priority. The new LTP defines the Central Oxfordshire Transport Area within which transport measures will address the worst congestion problems on the main routes in and around Oxford and make public transport faster, more reliable and more welcoming. The East-West rail link is an established regional scheme that would directly support the regional spokes identified in the Regional Transport Strategy linking Oxford with Swindon and Milton Keynes and has the potential to support the principal transport corridors linking Oxford with Bicester, Didcot and Wantage/Grove.



- 4.23 The County Council being responsible for the highway network, apart from the trunk routes, will be a major player in the process of seeking to coordinate transport operators and those responsible for other networks in the County. Much of the detailed strategy will be worked out through the preparation of the Local Transport Plan, which will include consultations with other transport authorities. The County Council has adopted or is preparing transport strategies for the main urban areas of the county (see para. 4.10). Outside these areas the Council's countywide Transport Networks Review study has investigated the effects of growing traffic on the County's transport networks. The study concludes that the most effective way to meet transport objectives and avoid a slide into extreme congestion and accessibility problems in the future is a strategy based on a combination of highway and public transport improvement alongside measures to influence travel behaviour. The County Council has adopted the findings of the Transport Networks Review as the basis of the long-term Transport Strategy for the County.

- 4.24 Through the process of preparing the Local Transport Plan the County Council will adopt a countywide transport strategy for public transport, freight and road traffic, including a revised road network hierarchy, indicating the roles for elements of the network in supporting public transport, heavy goods vehicle movement and general traffic. The LTP will also include a revised programme for major schemes covering a period to 2021. Land required for these will be protected in the local plans and local development frameworks. Previously approved schemes not included in the programme will be abandoned. This means that all the schemes that were listed as the Council's approved local highway schemes in paragraphs 6.50 to 6.52 of the explanatory memorandum for the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2011 will have been either completed, included within the long-term network strategy of the full LTP or abandoned. Two major schemes are expected to be programmed in the period 2006-2011. Witney Cogges Link Road is to be funded substantially from developer contributions, but it is anticipated that if there is a shortfall this could be met with LTP funds. The Marcham Bypass will be the first part of the wider improvement of the A415 between Witney and Abingdon (agreed by the Council following identification of this route through Transport Networks Review work). Timing of the bypass in this period is dependent on funding through the Regional Transport Prioritisation Process.
- 4.25 In defining the principal transport corridors the policy implicitly recognises the significance of the north-south corridor which serves several of the main economic and development areas of the county. The corridor includes the Oxford to Didcot and Bicester rail lines, parts of the Premium Bus Network, the A34 trunk route and some other roads. The A34 Multi-Modal Study is the responsibility of SEERA and is currently not programmed. The County Council is continuing to press for a proper study of future transport requirements to be done. The Study will need to take into account both strategic and local movements in the corridor and other studies relevant to the area so as to find practical ways of resolving the growth of problems arising on the corridor.

Service areas

- T7 The frequency of service areas on the major highway network will be limited. New service areas or extensions will be permitted only if they are of a high standard and where there is a transport need for improved roadside services.**
- 4.26 A proliferation of roadside services would damage the countryside and, because they would be unlikely to attract private investment in the more expensive facilities needed for heavy lorries, would not be in the best interest of the road user. The policy seeks to limit environmental intrusion, reduce access onto major roads and encourage developers to make higher standards of provision on a limited number of well-appointed sites. The County Council considers that the motorway service areas (including an overnight lorry park) located at junction 10 (Ardley) and at junction 8, provide all the motorway service areas needed in Oxfordshire.