

1. Our Ambitions

Oxfordshire in context

- 1.1 Oxfordshire is a vibrant county in the heart of England where a thriving economy blends successfully with a high quality environment. Oxford is famous the world over as a seat of learning but today the county's fame stretches beyond academic excellence to the pivotal role it plays in international publishing, bio-technology, car manufacture and motor sport. The county has consistently low unemployment and is one of Europe's most prosperous areas.
- 1.2 Although Oxfordshire has a highly qualified workforce and unemployment is low, there are pockets of higher unemployment that coincides with areas of low skills. It has an above average proportion of higher and intermediate managerial/administrative/professionals yet average earnings for full-time workers are lower than those for the South East as a whole.
- 1.3 Over three quarters of firms employ less than ten people, although a third of all employees in Oxfordshire work for the 1% of organisations with over 200 employees: Oxford has the greatest number of large employers; West Oxfordshire the least.
- 1.4 The standard of health in Oxfordshire is generally good; life expectancy is higher than the average for the Thames Valley and England as a whole. Violent crime and burglary levels are both substantially below the national average. Although generally prosperous, there are areas in Oxfordshire among the most deprived in the country.
- 1.5 House prices in Oxfordshire are among the most expensive in the country. House prices are highest in parts of South Oxfordshire, and lowest in the towns of Banbury, Bicester, Didcot and Witney.
- 1.6 Oxfordshire is south east England's most rural county with over two-thirds of its area devoted to agriculture and almost 75% of the county designated as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Area of High Landscape Value or Green Belt.

the Oxford Ring Road; on the rail corridor through Oxford; and on routes in and around our main towns. This Plan aims to tackle these problems, in the context of delivering local economic growth.

- 1.17 As part of all this, opportunities will be taken to develop a low carbon economy and innovative solutions through promotion of high quality public transport (including smartcard ticketing), provision for low emission / electric vehicles (including charging points). This will be complemented by considering travel behaviour, targeting personalised travel planning, promoting and incentivising car sharing and working with key partners such as local businesses on travel planning.
- 1.18 At the same time, we will continue to maintain and enhance our core business – maintaining the road network, supporting rural Oxfordshire through funding local bus and other services and continuing to reduce casualties on our roads.

Developing our Objectives

- 1.19 It is important to establish at an early stage the appropriate level to set a plan's objectives. For the Local Transport Plan the objectives need to be at a lower level than those set for the County Council as a whole or for cross-cutting documents such as the Sustainable Community Strategy. However the objectives of the Local Transport Plan should not be set so low that they define particular schemes or types of scheme.
- 1.20 An objective is a statement of an overall aim of any plan or strategy. Objectives should serve two main purposes: they should allow a long term aspirational vision to be set and strategies to be developed and they act as a way of deciding whether individual schemes should be included in the programme.

National and Regional Goals

- 1.21 The government has laid out five goals which local authorities are expected to consider as over-arching priorities for their Local Transport Plans. The five goals are:
- * to support national economic competitiveness and growth, by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks;
 - * to reduce transport's emissions of carbon dioxide and

other greenhouse gases, with the desired outcome of tackling climate change;

- * to contribute to better safety, security and health and longer life expectancy by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport, and by promoting travel modes that are beneficial to health;
- * to promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society; and
- * to improve the quality of life for transport users and non-transport users, and to promote a healthy natural environment.

1.24 In the White Paper "Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon" (January 2011) the government states that its priority for local transport is to:

"Encourage sustainable local travel and economic growth by making public transport, cycling and walking more attractive and effective, promoting lower carbon transport and tackling local road congestion."

County Goals

1.25 The Oxfordshire Corporate Plan 2008-2012 describes the challenge across the county in four cross-cutting themes:

- * world class economy;
- * environment and climate change;
- * healthy & thriving communities; and
- * better public services.

The Plan also sets out the council's key aims as being to deliver low taxes, real choice and value for money in all that the council does.

1.26 The themes of the Corporate Plan are echoed in the county's Sustainable Community Strategy "*Oxfordshire 2030*", produced by the Oxfordshire Partnership, which sets out its strategic objectives as:

- * world class economy;
- * healthy and thriving communities;
- * environment and climate change; and
- * reducing inequalities and breaking the cycle of

deprivation.

1.27 The Strategy also states that:

“We must consider the social, economic and environmental impacts of our work, and ensure the resources and capacity needed to deliver change exists and are sustainable. We must also ensure that we meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

Local Transport Goals

1.28 For the Local Transport Plan there needs to be a synthesis of these national and local goals to identify the local transport goals from which the plan's objectives, schemes and targets can be developed.

1.29 There is clearly a large area of agreement between the concerns expressed at each of the three levels. However improving transport can only act on some of the wider issues discussed and even here there are limits to what local transport improvements could be expected to achieve.

1.30 Taking all these factors into account, four local transport goals were identified:

- * to support the local economy and the growth and competitiveness of the county;
- * to make it easier to get around the county and improve access to jobs and services for all by offering real choice;
- * to reduce the impact of transport on the environment and help tackle climate change; and
- * to promote healthy, safe and sustainable travel.

Developing the Plan

1.31 Following the setting of the transport goals, the next stage in the process of developing LTP3 was to set objectives. A set of draft objectives was developed. These objectives were put out to stakeholder consultation and were considered by a series of specially convened public focus groups.

1.32 It was acknowledged at an early stage in the Plan's development that needs and priorities vary across the county; this has resulted in

an approach which breaks the county down into four types of settlement. These are:

- * Oxford;
- * larger towns (Abingdon-on-Thames, Banbury, Bicester, Science Vale UK and Witney);
- * smaller towns (Carterton, Chipping Norton, Faringdon, Henley-on-Thames, Kidlington, Thame and Wallingford); and
- * rural Oxfordshire.

Science Vale UK encompasses the towns of Didcot, Wantage and Grove, and the employment centres of Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, Milton Park and Culham Science Centre.

1.33 The set of objectives were subject to public consultation following which the priority to be given to each objective in each settlement type was as shown in the table below:

	Oxford	Larger Towns	Smaller Towns	Rural Oxfordshire
Improve the condition of local roads, footways and cycleways, including resilience to climate change	Medium	Medium	High	High
Reduce congestion	High	High	High	Low
Reduce casualties and the dangers associated with travel	Low	Low	Low	Medium
Improve accessibility to work, education and services	Low	Low	Medium	High
Secure infrastructure and services to support development	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Reduce carbon emissions from transport	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Improve air quality, reduce other environmental impacts and enhance the street environment	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
Develop and increase the use of high quality, welcoming public transport	High	High	Medium	Medium
Develop and increase cycling and walking for local journeys, recreation and health	High	High	High	High

-
- 1.34 Congestion, air quality and carbon reduction tend to have more priority the larger the settlement while maintenance, casualty reduction and accessibility have more priority on smaller settlements and rural areas. Promoting cycling, walking and public transport tend to have a similar level of priority across the county.
- 1.35 Following agreement on the objectives for the plan a series of policies was developed to guide future decision making. Following public consultation a final set of policies was agreed and these form the basis for chapters 3-12 of this Plan.
- 1.36 To guide the development of local area strategies a series of different investment scenarios was developed. The impacts of these scenarios were tested using a specially developed model, *intra-sim*, which was used to predict the impact of different levels of investment on a wide range of subjects (such as carbon emission, road safety, congestion). A public consultation was held on the different scenarios for each settlement type and the local area strategies which form the Implementation Plan of this LTP (chapters 13-27) were developed based upon the preferred scenarios.
- 1.37 A draft Plan was the subject of public consultation during October 2010-January 2011. A total of 676 comments were received on this. The final Plan has been developed taking on board these comments, where appropriate, together with amendments needed to take account of events that have occurred since the draft was published (such as the Comprehensive Spending Review and Local Transport White Paper).

The Local Investment Plan

- 1.38 The Oxfordshire *Local Investment Plan* (LIP) has been prepared by the Oxfordshire Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP) and sets out a shared vision and priorities for delivering housing growth, economic development, regeneration, and infrastructure; in other words 'sustainable place making'.
- 1.39 The LIP outlines and integrates the plans of a number of agencies to deliver housing and economic growth and associated strategic infrastructure to 2030 including the five Local Development Frameworks, the Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy '*Oxfordshire 2030*' and the five District Sustainable Community Strategies.

1.40 The LIP responds to the opportunities and challenges in housing growth and economic development in Oxfordshire. The LIP has four overall strategic objectives:

- * deliver new housing, including affordable homes;
- * support economic growth;
- * achieve regeneration and tackle deprivation; and
- * contribute to meeting strategic infrastructure needs.

1.41 The LIP focuses mainly on a five-year county-wide development programme of priority schemes. From the five-year development programme a shortlist of the 17 housing schemes and 36 strategic infrastructure schemes has been identified as the top priorities. Taken together these 17 housing schemes could deliver over 17,000 new homes.

1.42 Of the infrastructure schemes the following strategic transport schemes were identified in the LIP as being necessary to support development in the short term:

- * Access to Oxford
- * Chiltern Railways Evergreen 3 Project
- * East-West Rail (western section)
- * Banbury priority north-south vehicular corridor
- * Bicester park and ride
- * M40 Junction 9 improvements
- * SW Bicester perimeter road
- * Transport improvements at and around Bicester
- * Didcot Northern Perimeter Road Phase 3
- * Cow Lane underpass, Didcot
- * Didcot Parkway station interchange
- * Didcot Parkway (Foxhall Car Park and pedestrian improvements)
- * Accessing Science Vale UK transport package
- * Thornhill park and ride, Oxford
- * Grove & Wantage railway station
- * Cogges Link Road and Witney town centre enhancement
- * Cotswold Line re-doubling
- * A40 Downs Road junction, Witney
- * Transport schemes identified through LTP3 process 2011 to 2030

-
- 1.43 This list will need to be kept under review as the LTP develops. It is likely that the Access to Oxford scheme will be implemented as a number of separate schemes while other schemes will require the action of a number of organisations. The presence of a scheme on the LIP priority list does not imply that funding has been allocated, or even that that schemes will have priority for funding; all Oxfordshire County Council schemes will need to be further justified in terms of the cost effectiveness in meeting the objectives of the Plan.
- 1.44 It is the intention of Oxfordshire County Council that this Plan will be a "live" document that will be open to regular review and amendment. The implementation programme will be rolled forward on an annual basis and changes to the policy and local strategy chapters will be amended as and when this is considered necessary.

Oxfordshire Growth Arc

- 1.45 The Oxfordshire Growth Arc comprises three priority areas of economic growth, enterprise and housing development in Oxfordshire over the next twenty years. This is an evolution of the County's growth strategy into one that is business and economy led, aligned with aims of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. It has Oxford at the centre of a functionally interdependent City region, complemented by significant economic expansion at Bicester to the north and the Science Vale UK area to the south. The Growth Arc has a particular emphasis on the hi-tech, high skill science-based and research & development sectors that will be the engine of future growth in the UK. A brief overview of the three development areas and the significant growth which is forecast demonstrates this:

Oxford – a world class centre of education, research and innovation with major employment development proposed in the West End of the city, its 'eastern arc' and at the 'northern gateway' of the city – a total of 10,000 jobs planned.

Bicester – a dynamic, fast growing urban centre with significant proposed business growth, focused on quality employment (15-20,000 jobs), supported by retail and housing development (including an eco-town proposal), that could see a doubling of population to 60,000 by the 2030s;

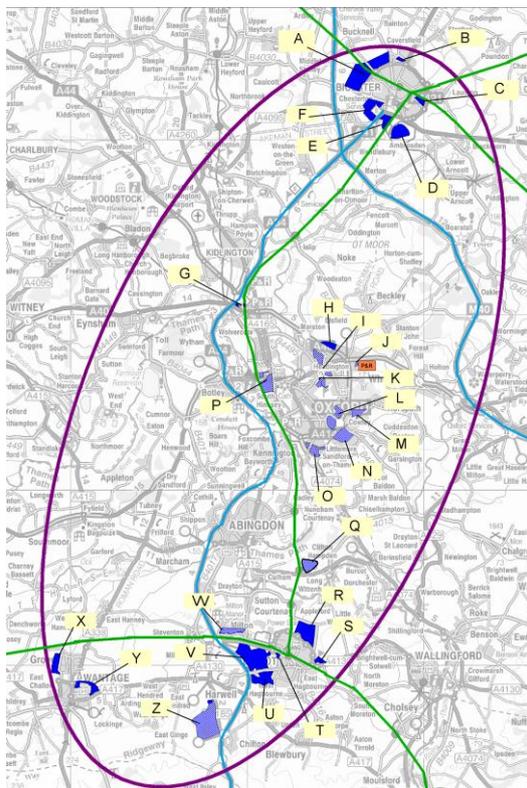
Science Vale UK – an area of national science and innovation including major business parks / research centres at Harwell, Milton

Park and Culham, part of which is designated as an Enterprise Zone. Up to 12,000 jobs (and 13,000 homes, principally at Didcot and Wantage/Grove) are to be provided.

1.46 The purpose of this strategy is to:

- * Establish a framework to coordinate and promote the connectivity of the growth arc which is critical to its economic success and prosperity.
- * Create a high quality, integrated transport and communications network that attracts businesses to invest in the area, leading to jobs and growth.
- * Set the context and direction for individual movement strategies for the three main areas within the growth arc.

1.47 The plan below shows the connectivity and strong relationship between these settlements, underlining the importance of the A34 and strategic rail corridors to Oxfordshire in maintaining and improving high quality links for business.



- A – NW Bicester ecotown (5,000 dwellings + 5,000 jobs)
- B – RAF Bicester (190 dwellings)
- C – Gavray Drive (500 dwellings)
- D – MOD Graven Hill (1,650 dwellings + 2,200 jobs)
- E – Bicester Business Park (up to 3,000 jobs)
- F – SW Bicester (1,600 dwellings)
- G – Northern Gateway (up to 3,700 jobs + 200 dwellings)
- H – Barton (800-1000 dwellings)
- I – Headington Hospitals (improving service delivery and creating employment)
- J – Nielsen House (employment development)
- K – Oxford University Old Road (up to 200 jobs)
- L – Oxford Business Park (employment development)
- M – BMW Plant (creating additional employment)
- N – Blackbird Leys (750-1000 dwellings)
- O – Oxford Science Park (creating additional employment)
- P – West End (mixed development, up to 6,000 jobs +850 dwellings)
- Q – Culham Science Centre (1,000 additional jobs)
- R – NE Didcot (2,000 dwellings)
- S – Ladygrove East (700 dwellings)
- T – Orchard Centre Redevelopment Stage 2 (retail + up to 300 dwellings)
- U – Didcot West (3,300 dwellings)
- V – Didcot Valley Park (2,150 dwellings)
- W – Milton Park (5,400 additional jobs)
- X – Grove Airfield (2,500 dwellings)
- Y – NE Wantage (1,500 dwellings)
- Z – Harwell SIC (6,650 additional jobs + 400 dwellings)

Movement Strategy for the Growth Arc

1.48 The movement strategy for the Oxfordshire Growth Arc is to focus on the strategic network to strengthen connectivity and provide high quality access, in particular:

- * To international and national destinations – particularly by rail, the M40 and A34 – to Heathrow, the south coast ports and other international gateways and the Midlands, as well as major cities and development areas (such as the Thames Valley, Milton Keynes and other development areas in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc).
- * Within the growth arc – connecting Bicester, Oxford, Didcot and Wantage/Grove – better linking housing and employment, with a larger share of trips being made by high quality public transport, including innovative new services.

1.49 To achieve these aims, the strategy will promote the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Investment Plan priorities for investment in transport schemes. We will do this by:

- * Using the devolution of funding decisions for major schemes to Local Transport Bodies (LTB) to deliver economic growth. The LEP's priorities will play an important role in future decisions, within an approach to scheme prioritisation which meets business needs whilst retaining democratic accountability for decisions.
- * Enhancing the capacity and reliability of the M40 and A34 by working with the Highways Agency to upgrade congested junctions and links, and manage the network better. Priorities include delivering stage 2 of the M40 Junction 9 upgrade and the A34 between Chilton and the M40, benefiting the whole Growth Arc area.
- * Reducing congestion on local roads to and within the Arc including the Oxford ring road and approaches, east-west links in Science Vale UK, and the A41 at Bicester, through targeted scheme delivery, intelligent management and promoting choice.
- * Increasing opportunities for rail travel to and within Oxfordshire by working with Network Rail and train operators to target investment based on the Delivery Plan

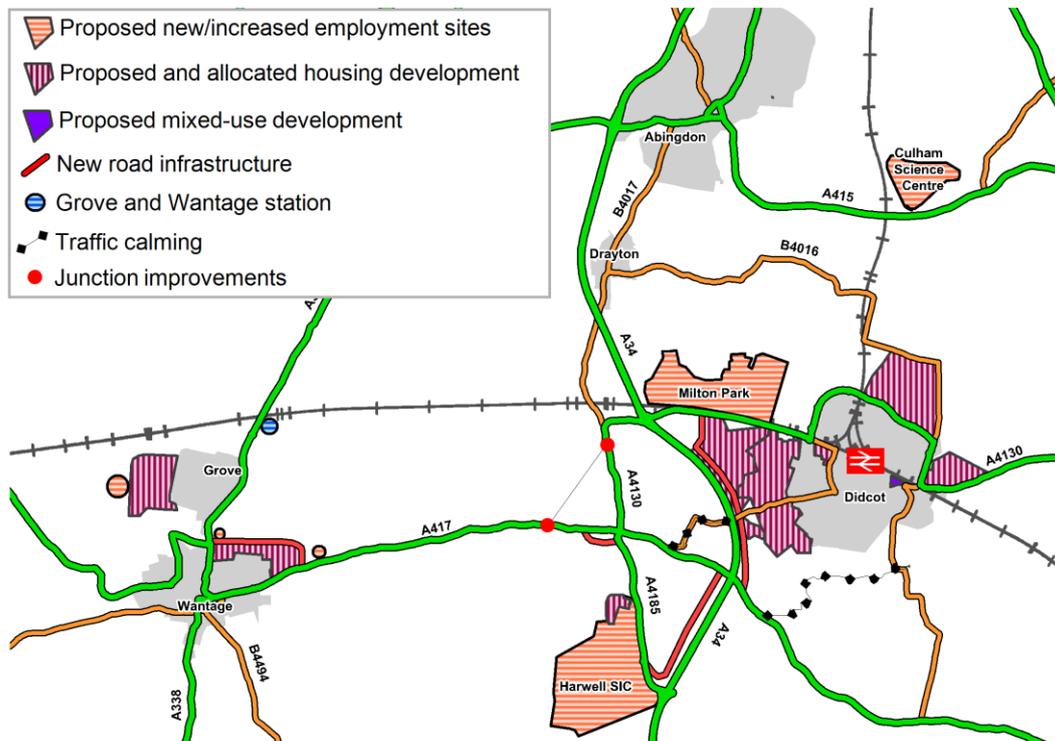
in the Council's Rail Strategy. Priority schemes include East West Rail, the Chiltern Rail link to London Marylebone via Bicester, through services from Oxford to Didcot and Swindon, and major improvements to Oxford and Didcot Parkway stations.

- * Developing a high-quality bus network by working with operators, in particular linking residential and employment sites, connections into rail hubs and new / extended park & ride provision. A new Bus Strategy for Oxfordshire, to be developed for adoption in Autumn 2012, will set this out.
- * Creating additional local innovative funding mechanisms to deliver infrastructure to support economic growth and enterprise under the guidance of the LEP, as national formula based funding allocations alone will not meet the needs of the Growth Arc.

1.50 The key opportunities, challenges and priorities are set out below for each of the three main growth and development areas:

Science Vale UK

Significant catchment area, providing high-end R&D jobs. Enterprise zone status award to parts of two major business parks at Harwell and Milton Park.



Good Rail links to London, Heathrow, Bristol, Oxford and the Midlands but quality of bus service provision requires a step change.

Access to the A34 is an attraction for business due to its connectivity to the motorway network and key national destinations, but access between settlements within SVUK (Didcot, Harwell, Wantage/Grove, Culham), especially for east-west movement, can be a barrier.

The aim is to improve connections between new housing and employment opportunities in the area, predominantly focussing on east-west movement. To be achieved by:

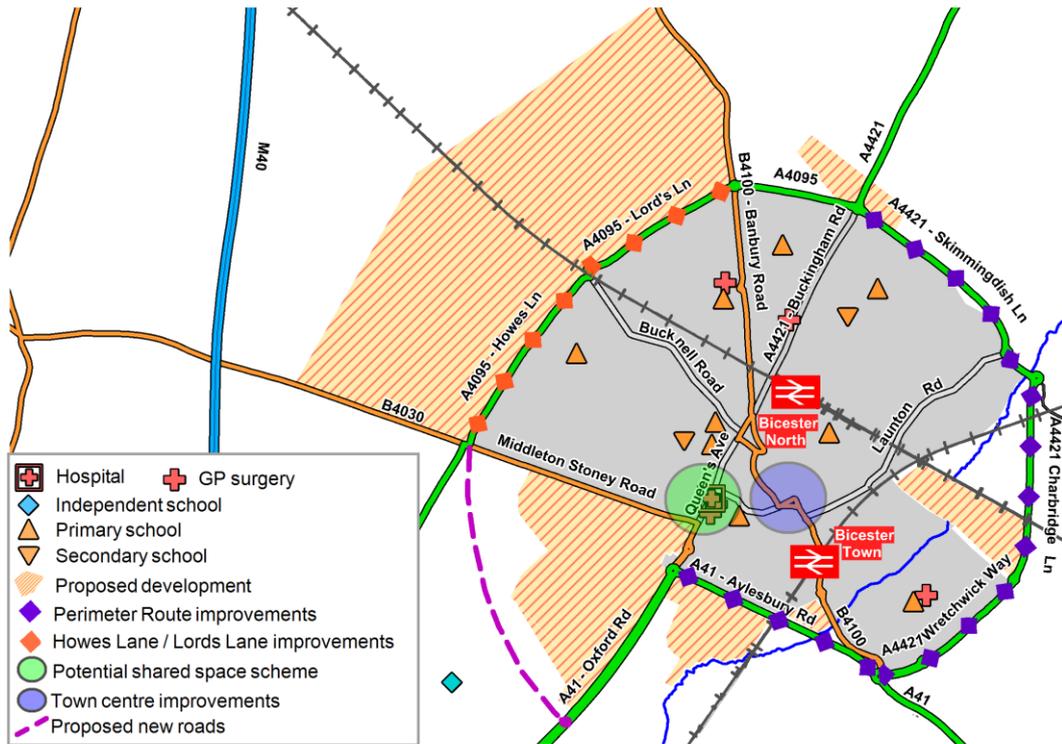
- * Further improving rail access through East West Rail and development of Didcot Parkway station, to take pressure off the A34, and developing a business case for a new station at Grove/Wantage in the context of a new rail service and other stations in partnership with neighbouring authorities.
- * Develop a high quality commercial network of bus services linking homes, workplaces and key services and facilities, including rail stations, with better integration of modes to provide a comprehensive and usable network.
- * New and improved roads to reduce congestion / improve journey times and reliability and provide better local business connectivity.

Bicester

Significant business and residential development will lead to a step change in the size, function and importance of Bicester – 3,000 jobs are proposed for Bicester Business Park alone, a comprehensive redevelopment of the town centre is underway and consolidation of military activity is enabling the redevelopment of the MOD's Graven Hill site.

Bicester has unprecedented connectivity for a settlement of this type – close to the M40 (J9), at a rail “crossroads” of two major strategic routes and with good strategic bus links to central Oxford and elsewhere.

Infrastructure needs to keep pace with and enable development – an overall masterplan for the area has been jointly developed by the county and district councils to help deliver this.



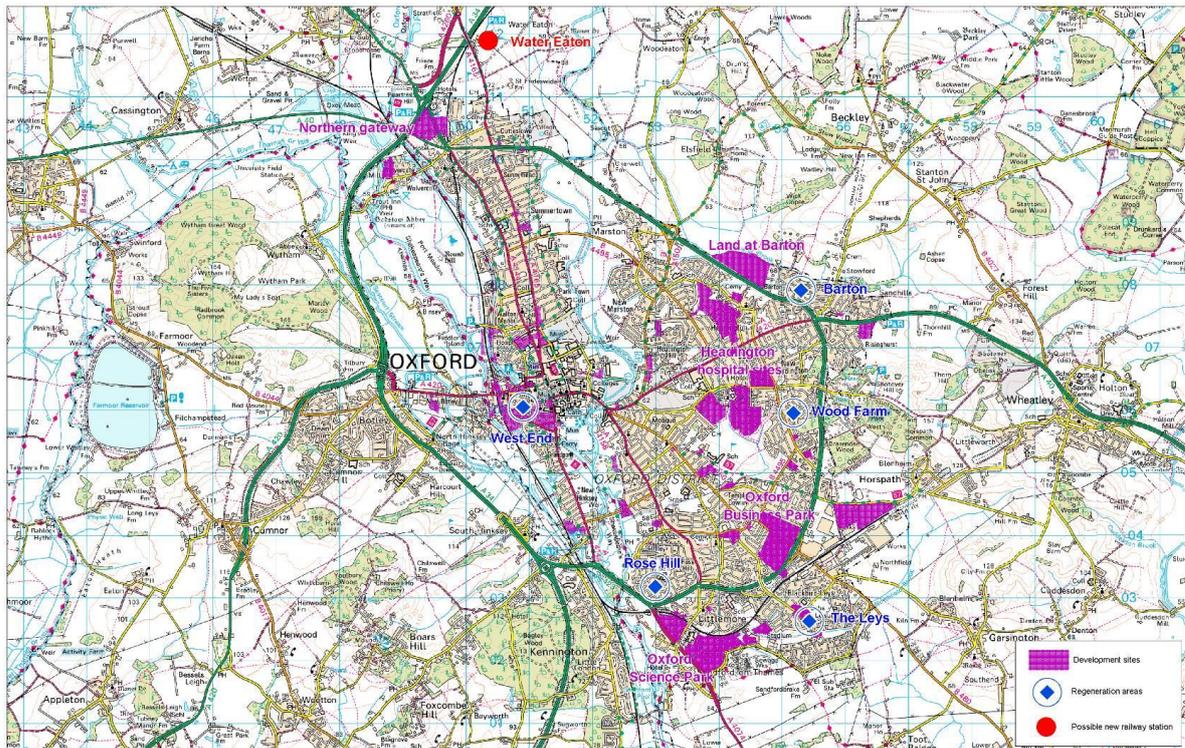
The aim is to drive Bicester forward for the next 20 years, during which time it is predicted to become the county's largest town. This is to be achieved by:

- * Unlocking growth through delivery of key infrastructure as part of a strategic traffic network solution, for example stage 2 of the M40 J9 upgrade is required to enable Bicester Business Park to be fully developed.
- * Developing and securing funding for future proposals – for example upgrading the Eastern Perimeter Road and developing a Park & Ride facility.
- * Sustainable growth through development and implementation of connections to enhanced rail network and promote bus travel.

Oxford

Significant major development proposals – the West End of the City (which includes the proposed major expansion of the Westgate shopping centre bringing 6,000 jobs and an enhanced retail offer), the Eastern Arc (including the BMW Plant, major hospital and university research sites in Headington and up to 1,000 new homes at Barton) and the Northern Gateway (new employment and residential development).

High quality bus access will continue to be at the very heart of an integrated transport approach to enabling this development agenda – it makes Oxford work, alongside Park & Ride which is first choice for car access to the city. The profile and importance of rail access needs to match this. Opportunities for significant public realm enhancement as well as a better integrated transport offer, which will help boost the tourist economy.



The aim is to restore Oxford's prominence as a first class regional destination for retail, tourism and leisure as well as business access. Priorities to deliver this will include:

- * Refreshing and updating the Oxford Transport Strategy, in context of Westgate and other proposed central area development, to set out a new vision and focus for city centre access and movement over the next twenty years.
- * Ensuring the Oxford Rail Station development is progressed in a co-ordinated manner – reflecting its position as a major gateway to the City, to cater for growth and to deliver a first class facility and passenger offer.
- * Working on a more business and employment led approach by developing transport proposals for the Eastern Arc and citywide measures including potential freight consolidation.

Beyond the Arc

- 1.51 Although the Growth Arc will be the major focus for development and investment in Oxfordshire, there will also be significant economic, housing and military development at other locations including Banbury and Witney/Carterton, requiring strategy development and investment planning.
- 1.52 In addition, development and delivery of transport infrastructure at strategic locations within the Arc, for example at Oxford's northern gateway, will benefit the whole County, as well as facilitating growth and development in the immediate area.
- 1.53 The Local Transport Plan and Local Investment Plan for Oxfordshire will provide a comprehensive picture of the transport and other infrastructure (eg high speed broadband) required meeting all of Oxfordshire's aspirations, and providing the basis for prioritisation and decision making.

Financial context

- 1.54 The challenging financial and funding position means that there is a greater than ever need to be clear about our priorities for investment, which means a focus on:
- * Maintaining our highway asset. A "whole life" approach means that investment can be made that reduces our long term costs as well as providing a higher quality road network;
 - * Delivering growth & infrastructure, and the schemes/measures needed to make this work;
 - * Supporting local community needs, for example by providing locally managed funds to deliver local schemes;
 - * Finding lower cost solutions, including encouraging different ways of making local journeys and making best use of what we have;
 - * Securing partnership and 'match' funding to secure best value for money and benefit from public spending.
- 1.55 In developing this Local Transport Plan the County Council has sought to provide a transport system that will support the local economy while protecting and enhancing the local environment. It has also had to take into account factors at the national and local level.