

TRANSPORT

INTRODUCTION AND PLANNING CONTEXT

- 5.1 Transport and land use planning are inextricably linked as there is a direct relationship between the use of land and the need for movement to and from that use. The policies and proposals of the Local Plan must therefore always have regard to the transport needs and demands arising from land use proposals.
- 5.2 The aims of the Local Plan (as set out in Chapter 2) include aim 3: 'to reduce the need to travel and the harmful effects of traffic on people and the environment'. In order to achieve this aim the Council will encourage people to transfer to more environmentally friendly modes of transport by improving facilities for walking, cycling and public transport. It will support traffic management measures to alleviate traffic congestion and improve safety and the environment and will seek to resist development that would give rise to excessive or inappropriate traffic.

Structure of this Chapter

- 5.3 This chapter follows a structure which is designed to be broadly consistent with the strategy set out in Chapter 3. For the main settlements policies are put forward for:
- i) integrated transport and land use studies (this includes Didcot and the transport implications of the town's proposed western development for the Vale);
 - ii) cycling and walking, including pedestrian and cycle networks; and
 - iii) car parking.

Other sections concentrate on

- i) public transport;
 - ii) new transport related initiatives such as home zones;
 - iii) the requirement for transport assessments and travel plans to address the impact of new developments;
 - iv) improving the highway network, including proposals for the Marcham bypass; and
 - v) lorries and roadside services
- 5.4 It is inevitable that there will be overlap with policies in other chapters and appropriate cross-referencing is included in the supporting text to aid understanding of interrelated issues.

5.5 In developing the policies for this Local Plan the Council has taken full account of planning advice from central government, regional planning guidance, policies in the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Oxfordshire as well as the results of the consultation carried out in association with the publication of the Local Plan Issues Report in August 2000. These are considered briefly below.

Planning Guidance from Central Government

5.6 The past increase and forecast growth in road traffic is viewed by the government as unsustainable in terms of its impact on climate change, the natural environment, the economy, and the health and well-being of local communities. National and regional planning guidance now recognise how future transport requirements must be developed in a sustainable way and be fully integrated with land use planning to meet economic, social and environmental objectives.

5.7 Government planning policy guidance on transport is set out principally in Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: *Transport* (PPG13). This provides advice on how local authorities should integrate land use and transport, particularly through the development plan process. Its key objectives are to:

- i) promote more sustainable transport choices for people and the moving of freight;
- ii) promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling; and
- iii) reduce the need to travel, especially by car.

5.8 PPG13 aims to achieve these objectives by ensuring that major development is focused in locations that are well served by a range of transport modes and that local facilities should be provided close to the communities they serve to minimise the demand for travel and to encourage walking and cycling. It also acknowledges that parking policies can influence significantly the demand for travel by car.

5.9 The government's transport objectives are reflected in a range of other planning policy guidance documents and, where relevant, these have been referred to and taken into account in other chapters of this Plan.

Regional Policy Background

5.10 Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) was published in March 2001 and defines the regional policy framework for a range of land use, planning and transportation issues that need to be considered by local authorities in their development plans and local transport plans. The guidance is generally consistent with government policy but because it pre-dates the final version of PPG13 it envisages that early reviews will be required for a number of subjects covered, including the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS).

The Oxfordshire Structure Plan

5.11 The general policies of the Structure Plan reflect the integrated approach required by both national and regional planning guidance. They include:

- i) favouring locations for development 'where the need for travel, particularly by private car, can be reduced, walking and cycling and the use of public transport can be encouraged and a reasonable range of services and community facilities can be provided';
- ii) concentrating developments which generate a lot of journeys in locations which are or can be well served by public transport; and
- iii) advocating development which is designed so as to reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of walking, cycling, public transport and telecommunications as alternatives to the car.

The Local Transport Plan for Oxfordshire

5.12 The delivery of government-integrated transport policy is carried out primarily through local transport plans which are the responsibility of county councils as highway authorities.

5.13 Oxfordshire County Council has adopted its provisional *Local Transport Plan for Oxfordshire (2006-2011)*, setting out proposals and programmes for expenditure on transport over the next five years. Its ambition is that:

- Help the economy grow as fast as possible with a real choice of access to jobs, homes, leisure and services and in a way that does not prejudice the future of our environment;
- Give all of us – throughout our lives – the opportunity to enjoy effective teaching and learning;
- Safeguard our communities and maintain our rural character;
- Help our disadvantaged residents to live fulfilling and independent lives;
- Keep improving our services by listening to users' views; and
- Make Oxfordshire – its city, towns, villages and countryside – welcoming, safe and exceptional places to live, work, learn and visit.

The objectives of the plan are:

- Tackling congestion
- Delivering accessibility
- Safer roads
- Better air quality
- Improving the Street environment

Everything in the plan is directed towards meeting these objectives, and ultimately the success of the plan will be judged in terms of how well these objectives have been met.

- 5.14 The LTP is intended to deliver this ambition and to provide an integrated approach to transport and land use and many of its measures will relate to the development proposals contained in development plans. Most of the transport proposals in the LTP will be implemented by the County Council, but district councils can contribute significantly to the transport agenda. In setting the framework for planning decisions affecting land use, this Local Plan has an important role to play. For example, by concentrating development at the Vale's main settlements, the Local Plan can encourage greater use of public transport services and walking and cycling as alternatives to the private car. Its policies can also secure transport improvements through their use in the development control process.

Local Consultation

- 5.15 The Local Plan Issues Report, published in August 2000, sought the views of local people on a number of transport matters. The consultation responses showed overwhelming public support for the continued development of cycle and pedestrian networks in the main towns, with a wealth of ideas for improving these networks. There was also support for the concept of businesses being required to produce and implement travel plans in association with proposed new developments. Concerns were expressed at the possibility of applying lower parking standards in new developments in or close to town centres. The views expressed on the Issues Report have been taken into account in framing many of the policies and proposals which follow.

POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

Integrated Transport and Land Use Studies

- 5.16 The District Council is working with the County Council and Abingdon Town Council on the implementation of the Abingdon Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy. It is also working with the County and South Oxfordshire District Councils on the preparation of a similar strategy for Didcot and is hoping to participate in a study at Wantage and Grove, leading to an integrated strategy for that area. These strategies will all be delivered primarily through the Local Transport Plan but inevitably the proposals and measures they contain will need to integrate with and influence the nature of development brought forward as a result of the policies in this Local Plan.

Abingdon Integrated Transport Study and Strategy

- 5.17 The Abingdon Integrated Transport and Land Use Study was commissioned in 1997 by Oxfordshire County Council, the Vale of White Horse District Council and Abingdon Town Council. The councils recognised the need to tackle Abingdon's growing traffic problems, particularly in the historic town centre and during peak hours, and to encourage the use of other forms of transport rather than the car. It was clear that if traffic growth continued and no action was taken these problems would worsen and become more widespread.
- 5.18 The strategy which emerged from the study has been endorsed in principle by all three councils and recommends a range of measures that will be put in place over the next five years with recognition that additional measures will be needed in the longer term. These will involve:
- i) changes to the road system including
 - making Stratton Way two-way
 - narrowing Stert Street and High Street to one lane
 - putting in traffic signals at the Drayton Road/Spring Road junction;
 - ii) improvements to public transport, such as
 - finding an appropriate central location for a bus interchange
 - additional bus services and new and improved bus stop facilities;
 - iii) better cycle and pedestrian facilities, to include
 - provision of an off-road footway and cycle track along Audlett Drive and Twelve Acre Drive
 - creation of a better and safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the town by, for example, widening town centre pavements and providing additional pedestrian and cycle routes and crossings;
 - iv) traffic management to discourage traffic from travelling through neighbouring villages;
 - v) a review of parking within the town, including on-street, off-street and commuter parking.

In the medium to longer term additional public transport measures such as additional park and ride sites, an extension of the Oxford Guided Transit Express (GTE) system to Abingdon and a bus lane on the A34 might be considered.

- 5.19 The County Council's submitted Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 and its Capital Programme includes specific funding for the implementation of the Abingdon Integrated Transport Study and Strategy over the years ahead.
- 5.20 The earlier stages of the Abingdon transport study showed that there is considerable local support for new river crossings and the possible introduction of south facing slip roads at the A34 Lodge Hill interchange and/or new slip roads onto the A34 at Drayton. The approved strategy acknowledges that new river crossings for Abingdon could only be implemented in the long term, well beyond the period covered by this Local Plan. The County Council will be carrying out a comprehensive feasibility study into new river crossings for Abingdon after it has completed a countywide *Transport Network Review* which will establish the long-term role of the A415 between Witney and Berinsfield. With regard to slip roads onto the A34, the County Council is continuing its dialogue with the Highways Agency in advance of an A34 scoping study. The Local Plan therefore can include no specific proposals for additional river crossings or A34 slip roads at this stage. Nevertheless the District Council considers a new river crossing to be a desirable long-term objective in the interests of securing the maximum environmental benefits for the town, particularly its historic centre.

Wantage and Grove Area Strategic Transport Study

- 5.21 The Local Transport Plan has identified Wantage and Grove as the next area of the Vale where a comprehensive integrated transport and land use study will be carried out to produce a strategy for improving the local transport network.
- 5.22 The County Council has agreed to establish a Wantage and Grove Area Strategic Transport study which will consider the transport issues arising from the planned growth in the Wantage and Grove area and the connections from Grove and Wantage in their wider context, including the expected job growth at Didcot, Milton Park, the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus and the planned housing expansion at Didcot. The major transport issues raised by these developments are also under consideration in phase two of the Didcot Integrated Transport Study.
- 5.23 Grove and Wantage will not be able to absorb the additional traffic generated by the strategic housing site west of Grove without significant improvements in the highway network. It has been a long held objective of the District Council and Wantage Town Council that Wantage should have a relief road for the traffic which causes problems throughout the town, particularly in the historic town centre. These problems are likely to worsen in the future as a result of increasing levels of car ownership, the new development at Grove and the redevelopment of sites in Wantage. Relieving the town of through traffic would provide the opportunity to improve and enhance the town centre and improve its vitality and viability, help retain higher order retail and service facilities and enhance the tourism potential. For these reasons, the Council will pursue its vision of a Wantage relief road scheme and seek contributions towards its provision.

- 5.24 The phasing and timing of a relief road scheme will be determined through the Wantage and Grove Area Strategic Transport Study. In accordance with policies DC8 and TR1, the Council will seek appropriate contributions towards a relief road scheme from new developments within the Wantage and Grove area. The development will also be required to fund the construction of a new road from the strategic housing site west of Grove to join the A338 north of Grove to be started early in the second phase of development and completed before any more than 1500 dwellings in total have been built on the site.

POLICY TR1

CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE SOUGHT FROM DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GROVE AND WANTAGE AREA TOWARDS A WANTAGE RELIEF ROAD SCHEME

Didcot Integrated Transport and Land Use Study

- 5.25 The proposed western development at Didcot (part of which is located within the Vale) will have significant transport implications for the surrounding area. In 2001 Colin Buchanan and Partners were commissioned jointly by the County Council, this Council and the South Oxfordshire District Council to assess all the transport issues at, or in the vicinity of, Didcot. The assessment was necessary in order to provide a sound basis for advice on transport matters of relevance to the preparation of the local plans in the two districts, including advice on the transport requirements relating to major development sites in the Didcot area. Prior to the Buchanan study, it had already been made clear by the Highways Agency and the County Council that off-site road and other improvements to the transport network would be necessary at the Milton Heights A34 interchange to serve proposed new developments in the vicinity, including the Milton Heights Service Facilities, Milton Park, the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus and the housing development west of Didcot. The Buchanan report was produced in February 2002 and provided the technical context for later work on the integrated transport strategy for Didcot.
- 5.26 The decision to undertake the integrated transport strategy for Didcot was taken in 2002 and the County Council, in association with this Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Didcot Town and Parish Councils in the area, commissioned the Halcrow Group to progress the study. Work on the development of a strategy started in September 2002. The study area included the major employment sites at Milton Park, Culham Science Park and Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, together with the surrounding 21 parishes. In addition to drawing on the findings of the Buchanan study, it had regard to the influences outside the study area, including the various studies on the A34 trunk road and the Oxfordshire Transport Network Review. Phase 1 of the transport strategy was approved by the County Council in April 2004. It identified a large number of relatively small schemes in both Didcot and the surrounding villages which focused on improving road safety,

protecting various routes from an increase in traffic, encouraging walking and cycling and promoting the use of public transport. Implementation started on the initial phase of projects in 2004/2005.

5.27 Phase 2 of the transport strategy has the objective of developing a package of more major schemes for the Didcot Area in the context of the planned levels of growth for the area. This includes the housing development at Great Western Park, the employment growth expected at Milton Park and the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus and the major new housing development at Grove insofar as it will impact on roads in the Didcot area. The provisional Phase 2 strategy was approved by the County Council in October 2004 and is based on a package of measures which would improve traffic flows at key junctions throughout the area and provide an alternative for some of the east/west movements at the Milton Interchange (A34/A4130). The resulting reduction of congestion at this Interchange would benefit both traffic accessing and leaving the A34. In respect of traffic travelling south and exiting the A34 during peak hours, queues frequently back up the slip road, onto the main carriageway, which is a major safety issue. The measures proposed in the provisional phase 2 strategy include:

- Improvement to a number of key junctions
- A new road between the A4130 and B4493 through or around the new Great Western Park development
- Alternative routes for a Harwell bypass between the B4493 and A417
- A route from the A417 providing either a Harwell southern bypass or a link to the A4185 which will improve access to the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus
- Initiatives to reduce the reliance on car borne travel.

5.28 Detailed technical work is currently progressing on developing the provisional strategy. The strategy will also need to be appraised against the output from the stage 1 Wantage and Grove Strategic Transport Study which has recently been completed. The scale and nature of the improvements to the transport network at the Milton Heights A34 Interchange to serve proposed new development in the vicinity will need to be discussed with the highway authority. Account will need to be taken of the recommendations of the Didcot Phase 2 Strategy Study. Access to the service area and land south of Milton Park will be required to be taken from the A4130.

Implications of the Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategies for New Development

5.29 The three integrated transport and land use strategies described above will be implemented during and beyond the period of this Local Plan. The Council is concerned to ensure that, where appropriate, new development in and around these towns should make provision for or contribute to the implementation of such measures. These are likely to include all significant commercial and housing developments. Policy TR2 below establishes this principle. Where necessary,

planning obligations will be sought to secure the funding or provision of specific measures in accordance with the advice in Government Circular 05/2005 and the relevant integrated transport and land use strategy.

POLICY TR2

PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD BE LIKELY TO INCREASE TRAFFIC WILL BE REQUIRED TO INCLUDE PROVISION OF SPECIFIC MEASURES DESIGNED TO DELIVER MORE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT CHOICES FOR PEOPLE AND/OR THE MOVING OF FREIGHT AND TO PROMOTE ACCESS TO JOBS, SHOPPING AND LEISURE FACILITIES WHILST REDUCING THE NEED TO TRAVEL, ESPECIALLY BY CAR. SUCH MEASURES WILL INCLUDE THE PROVISION AND/OR IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT, WALKING OR CYCLING FACILITIES, NEW HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE, AND SPECIFIC MEASURES DETAILED IN THE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGIES.

POLICY TR3

DEVELOPMENTS WHICH WOULD BE LIKELY TO INCREASE CONGESTION OR SAFETY RISKS IN THE VICINITY OF THE A34 MILTON INTERCHANGE WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IF NECESSARY IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TRANSPORT NETWORK ARE SECURED. THIS WILL INCLUDE AMONG OTHERS THE DEVELOPERS OF:

- i) THE LAND IDENTIFIED FOR BUSINESS PROVISION AT MILTON PARK (POLICY E5);**
- ii) THE LAND IDENTIFIED FOR SERVICE FACILITIES AT MILTON HEIGHTS (POLICY TR10);**
- iii) THE LAND IDENTIFIED FOR BUSINESS PROVISION AT THE HARWELL SCIENCE AND INNOVATION CAMPUS (POLICY E7);**
- iv) DIDCOT WEST MAJOR DEVELOPMENT AREA (POLICY H7); AND**
- v) LAND IDENTIFIED AS A LARGE CAMPUS STYLE SITE AT MILTON HILL BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY CENTRE (POLICY E12).**

Cycling and Walking

- 5.30 For short local journeys, as well as for recreation, many people walk or cycle. Good footpaths and cycleways, where they exist, tend to be discontinuous. Vehicular traffic is often heavy and fast-moving, which can make roads unsafe and unpleasant for cyclists to use. Efforts should be made to establish not just a few links here and there, valuable as they may be, but comprehensive networks of safe and attractive routes for pedestrians and cyclists. Where cyclists are concerned, these routes may involve shared road use, on-road cycle lanes, shared cycle and

pedestrian routes or cycle-only links depending on considerations such as the speed and flow of vehicular traffic and personal safety. Traffic calming can be used to emphasise that in certain areas (for example in shopping centres or near sports fields and schools) the pedestrian and cyclist have priority.

The Vale's Main Settlements and Didcot

- 5.31 The creation of complete networks of routes for pedestrians and cyclists is most likely to happen in areas of new development where measures can be planned comprehensively from the start. The District Council as local planning authority has tried to use such opportunities. In much of Grove, for example, and in north Abingdon, continuous routes have been created linking residential areas with schools, shops and recreation areas. In more established built-up areas, however, it can be much more difficult to create new footpaths and cycle links where none exist at present and it may take a longer time to build a comprehensive network.
- 5.32 The District Council worked closely with the County Council to develop proposals for a network of walking and cycling routes for Abingdon, Botley, Faringdon, Wantage and Grove and these were included on the proposals map of the previously adopted Local Plan. In Abingdon the network has been developed further in co-operation with the County and Town Councils as part of the Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy referred to earlier. Similar networks are likely to evolve from the work on the Wantage and Grove and Didcot studies.
- 5.33 Oxfordshire County Council has recently adopted and published its cycling and walking strategies which recognise that the main opportunities for developing networks of safe and convenient walking and cycling routes are in the main towns. The *Oxfordshire Cycling Strategy* contains the cycle network proposals for Abingdon and it is also the intention to review and draw up network proposals for Wantage and Grove and Faringdon. The *Oxfordshire Walking Strategy* recommends the early identification of a core pedestrian network for Abingdon to link major attractors and generators of pedestrian journeys. The District Council has expressed its support for these strategies and will work with the County Council to protect, provide or improve the networks for Abingdon, Botley, Faringdon, Grove, Wantage and Didcot and the links to surrounding villages.
- 5.34 When considering development proposals the District Council will wish to ensure that they include safe and convenient facilities for cyclists and pedestrians within the development sites, such as secure and covered cycle parking. Where appropriate, it will also seek to negotiate off-site extensions and improvements to the cycle and pedestrian networks. The Council will encourage the provision of pedestrian and cycle routes in new developments in the context of policy DC5. This may involve the establishment of off-road routes or the provision of on-highway measures such as cycle lanes, crossings and directional signs. Extensions to the cycle network on Marcham Road and Colwell Drive, Abingdon, have been funded in this way. The extent to which development proposals may be

reasonably expected to contribute to the funding and implementation of such off-site works will be considered in the context of policies DC8, TR2, TR3 and TR9 and on the advice of Oxfordshire County Council.

The National Cycle Network

- 5.35 A national cycle network is being developed by Sustrans, a national sustainable transport charity which works on practical projects to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport in order to reduce motor traffic and its adverse effects. Sustrans works in partnership with local authorities, the Countryside Agency, the Department for Transport, wildlife, environmental and local amenity groups and landowners. The National Cycle Network is a 6,500 mile national framework which will provide safe and attractive cycle routes on which cycling can flourish. It was the first national project to be chosen to mark the new millennium and £42 million (over four years) was awarded from the National Lottery towards the first 2500 miles of the network known as millennium routes. One of the millennium routes runs from Inverness to Dover and the section between Oxford and Reading passes through Abingdon. The District Council welcomed and supported the implementation of this section of the route which was completed in July 2001. Where possible the Council will seek to improve access to the millennium route and to the National Cycle Network.

POLICY TR4

THE NEEDS OF PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN DETERMINING PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND IN THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF HIGHWAY AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEMES BY SEEKING THE PROVISION OF SAFE AND CONVENIENT FACILITIES AND SECURE AND COVERED CYCLE PARKING.

POLICY TR5

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH INHIBITS THE USE OF ANY PART OF THE EXISTING FOOTPATH OR CYCLE NETWORK OR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE NETWORKS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSAL MAP FOR ABINGDON, BOTLEY, FARINGDON, GROVE AND WANTAGE UNLESS A SAFE DIRECT AND CONVENIENT ALTERNATIVE CAN BE PROVIDED.

Car Parking

- 5.36 The Local Plan is mainly concerned with off-street parking, which is an important land use, closely linked with general transport policy within towns. On-street car parking is the responsibility of the County Council, while the District Council is responsible for off-street car parking. In Abingdon an on-street parking scheme is

administered by Abingdon Town Council on behalf of the County Council and has helped to alleviate parking problems in the town centre.

- 5.37 The District Council has demonstrated its commitment to high quality public car parking and has a programme in place for the refurbishment of most of its main off-street car parks. Improvement schemes have already been carried out at Rye Farm, Abbey Close and West St Helen Street, Abingdon, Southampton Street, Faringdon and Chapel Way and Church Way, Botley. These schemes have focused not only on the operational needs of the car parks, but have also sought to enhance their appearance and image. Investment has also been made to improve the operation of Abingdon's multi-storey car park.

Public Car Parking in the Main Settlements

- 5.38 The ready availability of car parking plays a crucial role in supporting the prosperity of the district's town centres. As car ownership and use rises, and if edge-of-town car-served shopping is not to increase (often at locations outside the Vale, but within reach of its residents), it will be vital that the Vale's town centres continue to offer adequate car parking within a balanced transport framework to meet the growing needs and expectations of local communities. Nevertheless, the problems associated with the provision of additional town centre car parking must be recognised. In well-established built-up areas, there are often environmental constraints on the expansion of parking. There may be land availability and cost issues to resolve. There may also be constraints arising from the physical capacity of the highway system to deal with more traffic.
- 5.39 In the light of the obvious capacity problems of the local town road networks, town centre parking also needs to be seen as an important element in any transport strategy. Parking policy increasingly will form an integral part of a wider transport policy framework and for this reason the Council, as local planning authority, will seek to maintain a co-ordinating role in, and to influence the management of, all major car parks available for public use in Abingdon, Botley, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage.
- 5.40 In the face of increasing demand and to ensure that in the town centres of Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage the correct balance is maintained between the provision of short-stay shopper parking spaces and long-stay commuter spaces, it will be essential to prevent the loss of existing public and private car parking space. Similarly at the neighbourhood centres at Botley and Grove and local centres at Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage, all of which provide valuable shopping facilities conveniently serving the surrounding residential areas, it will be important to maintain available parking space. The Council will therefore seek to resist the loss of car parking facilities available to the public at these town and local centres unless it can be convinced that the vitality and viability of the centres will not be harmed. This principle is confirmed in policy TR6 below.

- 5.41 One way of responding to increased demand is to use existing car parking spaces more effectively. Car parks closest to shops can be used to achieve a high turnover of shoppers' cars by the use of pricing and time controls. Long-stay car parking for commuters wishing to park all day, for example, can be located further from the town centre. Ideally this should be at the periphery of the town centre, where pricing can make their use attractive. The District Council already operates this kind of management in Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage. It is likely that most future additional car parking provision will be in the long-stay category in order to free up further valuable town centre spaces and because suitable sites are most likely to be found at the periphery of town centres or on the edge of town. It will be important to ensure that adequate public long-stay spaces are available to reduce the likelihood of increased parking in residential areas close to the centres. On-street parking controls, such as residents' parking schemes may well be necessary in such areas.
- 5.42 The **Abingdon** Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy referred to earlier recommends a review of parking policy in the town with the aim of increasing the number of short-stay car parking opportunities for shoppers and visitors. The necessary long-stay car parking will need to be accommodated at the available edge of town public car parks such as Rye Farm. The strategy also recommends monitoring to establish the extent of any encroachment of long-stay commuter parking into the residential areas around the town centre. If long-stay commuter parking is identified as a problem in these areas the strategy recommends that subject to public consultation residents' parking schemes should be considered.
- 5.43 In November 2000 the Council commissioned consultants TPK Consulting to undertake a study of parking in **Wantage**. The purpose of the study was to assess the current and future parking situation in the town and develop a parking strategy that is consistent with local and national planning guidance. The study concluded that there is currently an overall balance in parking supply and demand with very little reserve at times of peak demand.
- 5.44 The parking study was carried out in the context of proposals for new retail development at Limborough Road which were granted planning permission in 1996. This planning permission has now been superseded by proposals for the erection of a Sainsbury foodstore, seven comparison shop units and six retail warehouse units with a combined floorspace of 11,223 square metres. The proposals also include a link road and roundabout from the A338 and new private car parking with a consequential loss of 70 public spaces. Planning permission was granted for this scheme in February 2002. A revised application was granted planning permission in March 2006 which provided for a new Sainsbury foodstore, 7 small shops with 24 flats over and 5 large retail warehouses including approximately 650 private parking spaces.
- 5.45 The reduction in publicly controlled car parking space at Limborough Road makes the Council's policy of reducing long-stay parking in the town centre more difficult

to achieve. Accurate conclusions on how overall parking supply and demand will configure once the Limborough Road development is completed are difficult to reach. This is because parking habits may change, there may be linked journeys, more people may cycle, travel by public transport or the Wantage retail catchment may expand. However, the Council is predicting that a shortfall in long-stay parking will occur. The Limborough Road development will also involve the loss of the existing coach and lorry parking and the District Council is currently investigating the need for a replacement. The Council recognises that the resolution of these problems will need to be addressed having regard to the impending redevelopment of the Limborough Road area and in the context of the proposed transport study. Until such time, the Local Plan continues to identify the former canal basin, shown in the earlier adopted Local Plan, as a site suitable for additional public car parking. However, in 2006 planning permission was granted for 59 dwellings on the former canal basin.

- 5.46 In Faringdon the Council maintains separate long-stay and short-stay public car parking. The refurbished car park in Southampton Street is managed as a short-stay car park for visitors and shoppers. Although very busy it has sufficient turnover to meet existing and expected demand. Long-stay parking is provided at Gloucester Street where, based on current usage, some reserve capacity exists.
- 5.47 More effective use could be made of on-street car parking in Faringdon and as part of the scheme for environmental improvements in the Market Place, the parking on the east side of the Market Place is now formally controlled as short-stay.

POLICY TR6

WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRES OF ABINGDON, WANTAGE AND FARINGDON AND THE EXISTING LOCAL CENTRES AT ABINGDON, BOTLEY, FARINGDON, GROVE AND WANTAGE, THE LOSS OF PUBLIC CAR PARKING, PARTICULARLY FOR SHORT STAYS, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED IF IT WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF THESE CENTRES. AT WANTAGE, THE WHARF AREA AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP WILL BE SAFEGUARDED AS AN AREA SUITABLE FOR ADDITIONAL PUBLIC CAR PARKING.

Public Transport

- 5.48 Good public transport is vital, not only to serve those residents who do not have access to a car but also as part of an overall strategy aimed at reducing the need to travel by car and thereby reducing congestion, pollution and the other harmful effects caused by increased traffic.
- 5.49 Buses are likely to remain the main public transport service in the Vale for the foreseeable future. Although the inter-city railway line from Paddington to Swindon runs through the District, there are at present no stations on this line in

the Vale (although moves are under way to re-open the station north of Grove – see below). On the Didcot to Oxford line, only Radley and Appleford have stations within the Vale: both are unstaffed halts. The stations at Oxford, Didcot and Swindon, all outside the district, serve as the main gateways to the wider railway network for local residents.

- 5.50 The District Council's involvement in the provision or management of bus or rail services is limited. A variety of private operators run services within a commercial framework, with the County Council giving financial support to some non-commercial bus services. The Council has helped to support local initiatives, such as the Stanford-in-the-Vale and Faringdon community buses, and it operates a concessionary fare scheme for elderly and some categories of disabled residents. However, the Council's main role is as a partner organisation in the preparation of the integrated transport strategies and the Local Transport Plan referred to earlier.
- 5.51 For the foreseeable future it seems likely that greater use of public transport, especially in the rural areas, will be difficult to stimulate due to a range of factors such as increasing car ownership and rising bus operating costs. Nevertheless, the availability of some form of public transport service will continue to be crucial for the significant proportion of the population which has no alternative means of transport. Where the withdrawal of conventional services is unavoidable, low-cost alternatives need to be explored, such as further community bus projects similar to that centred on the village of Stanford-in-the-Vale. This scheme has been in operation since 1982, when it was established to operate a limited service for the villages of Charney Bassett, Denchworth, Goosey, Hatford, Shellingford and Stanford-in-the-Vale. The project has its own minibus, bought with grants from the District and County Councils and supported by on-going grants from the County Council. The District Council would welcome further schemes where local interest and management skills are brought together.
- 5.52 The influence the District Council can exert on the use of public transport through the Local Plan is largely indirect but nevertheless important. It can be summarised as follows:
- by concentrating development, services and facilities at the most accessible locations in the district (principally the main settlements), the Plan can promote the greater use and enhancement of public transport services;
 - through the development control process the local plan policies can help to ensure that developments have public transport friendly layouts and designs and are focused on existing planned public transport corridors including the premium routes referred to below. Development which could prejudice potential improvements to public transport or which would block the long-term creation of an integrated transport policy can also be resisted;

- the Plan can ensure that appropriate developer contributions are sought where new development is permitted to support the County Council's public transport initiatives across the Vale and to support the integrated transport strategies for Abingdon, Wantage and Grove, and Didcot.

Bus Services

- 5.53 The Local Transport Plan sets out the County Council's strategy for supporting future services. As part of a process of improvement the County Council has decided to establish a hierarchy of routes in Oxfordshire. At the top of the hierarchy will be Premium Routes consisting of a network of high frequency and high quality services. The network will include bus priority measures, for example bus lanes and improvements at the bus stops along the routes. These routes will link with lower frequency bus, rail and other public transport services at various points around the county. The network will also include a series of key interchanges, where high quality passenger waiting facilities will be combined with appropriate highway measures. A *Premium Routes and Interchanges Study* was completed by consultants in April 2001. The County Council subsequently endorsed a broad ten-year programme of schemes and measures necessary to bring the network to the required standard. One of the main routes covered by the network will be from Wantage and Grove (via Abingdon and A34) to Oxford.

Rail Services – Grove Station

- 5.54 Between 1875 and 1947 a remarkable steam tramway ran from Wantage town centre to the main line station at Wantage Road, Grove, some 3.2km (2 miles) away. The Wantage Road main line station was closed down in 1964, and there have been no stopping trains serving Wantage and Grove since. It has been a long-term aspiration of the County and District Councils to see the re-opening of the rail station at Grove. The County Council is committed to the development of the station although concedes that the absence of a suitable train service to serve the rail station means that the proposal does not at present have rail industry support. Further feasibility work will be needed to obtain the backing required. A planning application was submitted in 2005. Where possible, the County Council will be seeking developer contributions towards this project as part of the future transport strategy for this area, and also contributions from the rail industry. All parties involved in the promotion of the new station at Grove will need to follow the guidance entitled "New Stations: A Guide for Promoters" issued by the Strategic Rail Authority.
- 5.55 The District Council continues to support the re-opening of the station at Grove, although it will be concerned to ensure that the station area maintains high standards in terms of access, safety and environment. (The present access close to The Volunteer pub presents potential traffic hazards in relation to the existing railway bridge and is clearly inadequate).

POLICY TR7

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL NOT PERMIT DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD BE CONSIDERED LIKELY TO PREJUDICE THE RE-OPENING OF THE WANTAGE ROAD STATION, GROVE, ON THE SITE IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, AND WILL WORK WITH OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ON PROPOSALS FOR ITS RE-OPENING.

Public Transport Interchange Facilities

- 5.56 The District Council considers that if people are to be persuaded to use their cars less, alternatives to the car need to be encouraged and the necessary infrastructure put in place. The Council will therefore support proposals which improve public transport facilities in order to reduce reliance on car-based travel. Of particular importance are transport interchanges.
- 5.57 Many journeys will involve some form of change between different modes of transport, such as walking to a bus stop, or changing from car to bus at a park and ride site. Interchanges can help to improve the level of integration between types of transport, and ensure that connections can be made efficiently and conveniently. They are crucial to most journeys, since a bad interchange can negate the benefits of a good bus or rail service or a direct cycle route.
- 5.58 The Council will support well designed proposals for interchange facilities between different modes of transport such as car, bus, rail, taxis, cycling and walking. These should provide easier access to public transport and better connections between different forms of transport whilst at the same time having regard to the need to safeguard the character and environment of the area in which they are proposed to be located. The Council will work with the County Council, as highway authority, who have identified the crucial role of interchanges in the Local Transport Plan, and with public transport operators, to identify and implement suitable sites for public transport interchanges. The proposed Grove Station for example will be a proposal which will need to incorporate good links with buses and the local cycle and pedestrian networks.
- 5.59 Proposals for Transport Interchanges will be considered in the light of other policies in the local plan including policies in Chapter 3 relating to development in the Green Belt and Chapter 4 General Policies for Development.
- 5.60 As set out in PPG 2, proposals for park and ride facilities may be acceptable in the Green Belt in exceptional circumstances. All alternative options will have to have been evaluated and any proposals should not conflict with the principles set out in Policy GS3.

POLICY TR8

PROPOSALS WHICH PROVIDE IMPROVED PUBLIC TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE FACILITIES AND THEREBY ASSIST IN REDUCING THE RELIANCE ON CAR-BASED TRAVEL WILL BE PERMITTED.

New Transportation Initiatives

Rural Traffic – 'CountryWays'

- 5.61 The impacts of increased traffic on rural communities can be great. To manage these impacts, the County Council has developed the 'CountryWays' initiative. The aim of CountryWays is to develop new and innovative ways to comprehensively manage the traffic problems facing many parts of our rural road network. The problems can include speeding vehicles, heavy goods vehicles on inappropriate routes, lack of safe routes for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians and the sheer volume of traffic. The County Council recognises that each area will have its own combination of problems and therefore considers it essential to tailor the response to local conditions. Importantly the CountryWays scheme focuses on close consultation and liaison with the local community and will include the development of the projects through community-led 'design days', where issues and solutions can be developed jointly with local people.
- 5.62 A pilot scheme in the area of the Vale around Uffington has been completed in partnership with the District Council, parish councils and the Countryside Agency.
- 5.63 The County Council will continue to develop this and other pilot schemes throughout the life of the LTP and using this experience aims to develop guidance for the general development of Country Ways.

Home Zones

- 5.64 Home zones are residential streets designed so that vehicular traffic speeds are reduced and car access is limited and the road space is shared between cars, cyclists and pedestrians. The home zone concept not only helps to make streets safer but also improves the quality of the street environment through initiatives such as landscaping. The aim is to change the way streets are used, making them places for people, not just for traffic.
- 5.65 Home zones can be introduced into existing residential areas where the local community supports the initiative. The County Council was successful in the Government's *Home Zones Challenge* and has secured £400,000 for a scheme in Saxton Road, Abingdon. The aim of this scheme was to redesign the road to improve safety (especially for children) and the environment, reduce crime, manage the street's parking and encourage more cycling and walking. Consultants were appointed to manage the project and worked closely with the local community to develop the scheme which was completed in 2005. The District

Council supported this initiative and will support the County Council investigating the possibility of introducing home zone measures in other parts of the Vale.

- 5.66 Oxfordshire County Council has produced guidelines to encourage house builders to develop new housing sites as home zones. *Home Zone Characteristics for New Housing* was produced in conjunction with the Vale and other district councils in Oxfordshire. In appropriate circumstances the District Council will support and encourage the creation of home zones in new residential developments.

Transport Assessments and Travel Plans In Association with Major Development

- 5.67 Government policy and the local plan strategy seek to reduce the need to travel by car and promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and the movement of freight. For this approach to be successful it will be necessary to ensure not only that the traffic movements arising from a proposed development can be accommodated on the wider highway network without any adverse environmental impacts but that the development includes, where appropriate, practical measures to encourage alternative modes of travel including cycling, walking and public transport.
- 5.68 PPG13: *Transport* proposes that local authorities should require the submission of transport assessments (TAs) to accompany planning applications for developments which will have significant transport implications. The coverage and detail of TAs should reflect the scale of development and the extent of the transport implications. TAs should consider travel generated by the development in terms of the movement of residents, staff and all visitors to and from the site and should also carefully consider freight movement. TAs should also consider the impact of the development on the trunk road network. For large-scale proposals with more significant transport implications, the assessment should illustrate accessibility to the site by all modes and the likely modal split of journeys to and from the site. It should also give details of proposed measures to include access by public transport, walking and cycling, to reduce the need for parking and to secure highway improvements. Prospective developers should hold early discussions with the District Council and the County Council as highway authority in order to clarify whether proposals are likely to be acceptable in transport terms and to assess the requirement for and content of a TA including the requirement for a travel plan. Thresholds identified in PPG13 advise when a TA will be required. There may be instances where a TA will be required for development below the threshold in PPG13, particularly where development will generate further traffic on a saturated network.
- 5.69 Where appropriate a travel plan may also be required in association with a proposed development. The travel plan should stem from the TA and include measurable targets and arrangements for monitoring the effectiveness of the approach being pursued. Travel plans are dealt with by the County Council under its *Better Ways to Work* initiative and it has recently published a guide to carrying

out a site audit for use in preparing travel plans. They aim to encourage staff and visitors to choose alternatives to single occupancy car use and reduce the need to travel to work or during work. A travel plan will only be a requirement in certain circumstances but major non-residential development which would have a significant effect on transport patterns in the area is likely to be required to have a plan in place before the development commences. The content and commencement date of any travel plan should be agreed with the County Council and District Council prior to the commencement of development. The existence of a travel plan will not however be taken as justification for development which is unsuitable on other grounds.

POLICY TR9

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH HAVE SIGNIFICANT TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THEY ARE ACCOMPANIED BY A TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT IDENTIFYING THE TRANSPORT IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSAL, AND WHERE THOSE IMPACTS ARE ADEQUATELY MITIGATED. A TRAVEL PLAN WILL BE REQUIRED WHERE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS ARE LIKELY TO GENERATE SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF TRAFFIC.

Improving the Highway Network

- 5.70 As noted earlier, while the District Council has the duty to prepare the Local Plan, it is the County Council which is generally responsible for the maintenance and improvement of the highway network (apart from trunk roads which currently are the responsibility of central government). Ideas and policies relating to road improvements and traffic management can therefore be effective only in the context of good co-operation and consultation between the responsible authorities.
- 5.71 The Oxfordshire Structure Plan (2011) identified the A420, the A34 and the Oxford ring road as part of the county's major through-route network. The policy on all other roads in the Vale is to restrict improvement schemes to those which will resolve severe accident or environmental problems, cater for minerals traffic or support new development. Any such schemes for improvement to the highway network should be so designed that there is no transfer of traffic to unsuitable routes and that road schemes do not prejudice the overall strategy of growth restraint in Oxfordshire by triggering further demands for development.

Marcham Bypass

- 5.72 The Local Transport Plan includes an aspiration for a Marcham bypass (A415). Oxfordshire County Council held a public exhibition in March 1995 to illustrate the options for the bypass. The District Council was consulted on these options and strongly supported the principle of a southern bypass, recommending that consideration should be given to moving the route further away from the village.

The District Council was a consultee on the County Council's planning application to construct the bypass in 1997. While again strongly supporting the principle of a southern route the District Council confirmed its view that consideration should be given to moving the route further south.

- 5.73 The County Council decided not to progress the 1997 scheme and has since proposed a new alignment further south of the village than previously shown. A public consultation exercise held in the village in May 2001 revealed overwhelming support for the revised route. The District Council remains committed to the bypass but has reserved its right to comment on the details of the scheme as a consultee on the future planning application. In 2005 the scheme failed to be included in the regional funding allocation in the 2008-11 period.

A34 Multi-Modal Study

- 5.74 There are growing problems of congestion on the A34, particularly around Oxford and at many of the interchanges along its length. In 2003 GOSE and SEERA jointly commissioned a 'scoping study' to review the key issues affecting the A34 Corridor and examine the case for a further study and the appropriate scale of that study. The scoping study took a long term strategic view and recommended the need for focused localised studies around South Hampshire and Oxford. The Highways Agency also commissioned an A34 route management study. The resulting draft strategy sets out a 10 year plan for the management and operation of the A34 and provides some short term solutions for making better use of existing capacity and increasing safety. The Department of Transport have made it clear that rather than pressing ahead with further study work in the A34 Corridor now, they consider it would be better for regional partners to consider how the Corridor's potential needs rate against other projects that people are hoping will find a place in the programme over the next few years. This is disappointing, but the County and District Councils will continue to press that local transport needs are taken into account when any decisions are made given that the A34 clearly serves a local as well as national function providing the main access link between major settlements and employment centres.

Lorries and Roadside Services

- 5.75 The Oxfordshire Structure Plan opposes the proliferation of roadside facilities for lorries and other road users on main through routes. Policy T14 in the Structure Plan (2011) seeks to limit environmental intrusion, reduce access on to major roads and encourage developers to provide higher standards of provision on a limited number of well-appointed sites by restricting the number of sites. The District Council shares these concerns in respect of the A34 and A420 within this Local Plan area. Policy T7 in the Structure Plan to 2016 addresses this issue.

- 5.76 The previous adopted Local Plan indicated that in the Council's view, the need for services facilities for the A420 had been met by the schemes which have been permitted and implemented at Buckland and Park Road, Faringdon. This remains the Council's position and it will oppose further sites, or extensions beyond the boundaries of existing sites, along the A420.
- 5.77 At Milton Heights, however the Council continues the allocation of land for additional service facilities to meet the needs of the A34 corridor within the Vale. The site is around 9.2 hectares (23 acres), situated to the south-east of the Milton Heights A34 interchange. Limited facilities are already available at this site including a petrol filling station, Travelodge with restaurant and a fast food outlet. The site is physically well contained by the A34 and the Milton Heights interchange to the west and the A4130 Didcot to Milton Heights link road to the north. The eastern boundary is well defined by trees and hedgerows, as is the boundary that extends along part of the frontage with the A4130. The range of facilities likely to be required in the future includes car, lorry, coach and abnormal load parking, an expanded fuel operation, a breakdown and recovery service, toilet facilities, additional picnic and children's play areas, as well as those appropriate to a major trunk road service area.
- 5.78 The land adjoins the main western approach to Didcot. It is essential for development of the site to be designed and landscaped to the highest standard. The District Council will accept a phased approach to the development of the land, but will require a comprehensive scheme to be prepared for the whole site. Access to the site will be required to be taken from the A4130 but substantial off-site road improvements are certain to be required to service an improved facility. Measures to improve the visual appearance of the site (in particular from the A4130 Didcot to Milton Heights link road) will also be required.

POLICY TR10

THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL SERVICE FACILITIES (INCLUDING FACILITIES FOR REFUELLING, CAR AND LORRY PARKING, TOILETS, REFRESHMENT FACILITIES AND PICNIC AREAS) ALONG THE TRUNK ROADS A420 AND A34 WILL NOT BE PERMITTED OTHER THAN WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE FOLLOWING SITES IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AT:

- i) **MILTON HEIGHTS;**
- ii) **BUCKLAND; AND**
- iii) **PARK ROAD, FARINGDON.**