



7. Transport and movement

Charlbury

## **Our transport related objectives include:**

- CO1 Enable new development, services and facilities of an appropriate scale and type in locations which will help improve the quality of life of local communities and where the need to travel, particularly by car, can be minimised
- CO10 Ensure that land is not released for new development until the supporting infrastructure and facilities are secured.
- CO11 Maximise the opportunity for walking, cycling and use of public transport.
- CO13 Plan for enhanced access to services and facilities without unacceptably impacting upon the character and resources of West Oxfordshire.
- CO15 Contribute to reducing the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.
- CO16 Enable improvements in water and air quality.
- CO17 Minimise the use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions.

**7.1** Transport is a key issue for West Oxfordshire. Although there are opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport, as a rural area, there is a general reliance on private vehicles with around 80% of commuting journeys being made by car.

**7.2** This high level of car use has a number of direct effects including traffic congestion in some locations, which in turn contributes towards poor air quality as well as affecting climate change more generally.

**7.3** Indirectly, a high percentage of car use also affects health, with increasing rates of obesity in Oxfordshire partly attributed to declining levels of activity. Active forms of travel such as walking and cycling, including as part of a journey, have an important role to play in reversing this trend.

**7.4** In this section of the plan we set out how we will address the transport needs associated with new development whilst seeking to encourage less car use, recognising that as a predominantly rural area, the private car will remain the dominant form of transport in West Oxfordshire, and as such, improvements to the highway network will be needed.

**7.5** The following issues are addressed in turn.

- Location, design and mix of new development;
- Improvements to the highway network;
- Public transport including bus and rail;
- Active travel (walking and cycling); and
- Parking provision

### **Location, design and mix of new development**

**7.6** Where new development is located, how it is designed and what different uses it includes can all have a direct influence on people's travel choices.

#### Location

**7.7** Whilst we cannot eliminate the need to travel by car, locating development in places where public transport can be easily accessed and walking and cycling is a realistic and safe option can at least help to reduce people's propensity to drive.

**7.8** In recognition of this, national policy encourages local authorities to promote patterns of development which facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport. More specifically, local plans should ensure that developments which generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised.

- 7.9 This has been a key consideration in the development of the overall plan strategy (see Policy OS2) which seeks to focus a significant proportion of future growth at Witney, Carterton Chipping Norton and the Eynsham area, where there are already good opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport and the potential to make further improvements.
- 7.10 In accordance with the overall strategy, we will as a priority seek to locate new development, particularly major development, in areas that benefit from convenient access to a range of services and facilities and where the need to travel, particularly by private car is minimised.
- 7.11 Where appropriate, developments will be required to monitor the levels of travel by all modes and encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport through the use of a Travel Plan. We will also require developments that have significant transport implications either in themselves or with other proposals to include a Transport Assessment (TA).
- 7.12 It is important however to recognise that West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural District and that it will not be possible to locate all development where convenient access to public transport, walking and cycling opportunities can be achieved. This situation is acknowledged in national policy which recognises that the opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas and that different policy approaches may be required.
- 7.13 For example other approaches in more isolated rural locations such as the provision of superfast broadband and the promotion of more flexible, home working can play a positive role in helping to reduce the need to travel including by car.

## Design

- 7.14 In addition to location, the design of new development also has an important role to play in influencing travel patterns. We have outlined above how superfast broadband can promote home working and other examples of how good design can help include:
- accommodating the efficient delivery of goods and supplies;
  - giving priority to pedestrian and cycle movements;
  - providing access to high quality public transport facilities;
  - creating safe and secure layouts which minimise conflict between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians and enable access for public transport services;
  - incorporating facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles; and;
  - considering the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.
- 7.15 We will therefore seek design solutions that maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport as well as home working through measures such as superfast broadband.
- Mix of uses
- 7.16 Mixed-use developments can have a number of advantages. As well as contributing to the vitality and viability of an area, developments that incorporate a mix of different uses can also help to reduce the need to travel. For example a mix of housing, employment, retail and leisure is likely to have a number of benefits.
- 7.17 Those living in the new houses for example may be able to work or choose to shop in the same location and those visiting the development may be able to benefit from a single, linked trip e.g. going shopping and then to the cinema, rather than having to travel to two separate places.

7.18 We will therefore support in principle, the provision of mixed-use developments. Typically this is likely to be on larger development schemes at the main towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton although the principle of mixed-use development will be supported in other accessible and sustainable locations.

7.19 In particular it is envisaged that the proposed new garden village to the north of the A40 near Eynsham will be a comprehensive, mixed-use development that includes not only a significant proportion of new homes but also new business space, transport hub, community facilities including education as well as open space and leisure. The provision of this mix of different uses will help to promote a strong degree of 'self-containment' ensuring that residents of the new village are less dependent on travelling to other locations to fulfil their needs. The location of the new business space next to a new transport hub, which will include Park and Ride facilities, will enable it to play a strategic role in enhancing the 'self-containment' of the District as a whole.

## **POLICY T1:**

### **Sustainable transport**

Priority will be given to locating new development in areas with convenient access to a good range of services and facilities and where the need to travel by private car can be minimised, due to opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport, particularly where this would help to reduce traffic congestion on the routes around Oxford and the Air Quality Management Areas at Witney and Chipping Norton.

In addition to this;

- All new development will be designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport, ensure the safe movement of vehicles and minimise the impact of parked and moving vehicles on local residents, business and the environment
- To promote increased home working and telecommuting, all new residential and commercial developments will be required to make provision for superfast broadband.
- Mixed-use developments will be supported in principle in accessible, sustainable locations subject to compliance with other relevant local plan policies.

Proposals for new developments that have significant transport implications either in themselves or in combination with other proposals will be required to include a Transport Assessment (TA), and a travel plan, in accordance with County Council requirements.

### **Improvements to the highway network**

7.20 As a largely rural district with a high percentage of car use, the highway network plays a key role in West Oxfordshire and notwithstanding the various measures outlined above, as the private car is likely to remain the dominant form of transport over the plan period, we need to consider what improvements to the highway network are needed.

- 7.21 The main routes within the District include the A40 Cheltenham to Oxford, the A44 through Woodstock and Chipping Norton, the A361 Swindon to Banbury and the A4260 from Banbury through the eastern part of the District.
- 7.22 The provision of a good, reliable highway network has a number of benefits including the provision of convenient access to jobs, services and facilities and the potential to unlock and support economic growth.
- 7.23 Under this Local Plan the importance of the highway network will continue to be recognised with necessary improvements being identified and safeguarded as appropriate. This will include ‘strategic’ and ‘non-strategic’ highway schemes needed to support the level and distribution of growth set out in the plan. These will need to be considered alongside the provision of other essential supporting infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the development. Many of these schemes are already included in Oxfordshire County Council’s Local Transport Plan (LTP).

#### A40

- 7.24 The A40 is the main east-west transport route with congestion on the section between Witney and Oxford being amongst the most severe transport problems in Oxfordshire and acting as a potential constraint to economic and housing growth. The County Council is committed to a long-term strategy to improve access between West Oxfordshire and Oxford (and other destinations beyond Oxford). The major cause of the congestion is the limited capacity at the Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabouts (outside the District) which Oxfordshire County Council are currently improving, however the overall capacity of the road itself and the capacity of the traffic lights and junctions at Eynsham and Cassington (inside the District) are also contributory factors.
- 7.25 Importantly the problems on the A40 lead to the displacement of traffic onto other routes as drivers seek an alternative. This increases the number of cars using the A4095 through Long Hanborough and Bladon (to the detriment of those communities) and in turn, vehicle numbers on the A44 Woodstock Road into Oxford. Displacement of traffic onto the B4044 is also a problem. Further development in the District will put additional pressure on these highly trafficked routes.
- 7.26 The problems with the A40 are long established and in light of this, Oxfordshire County Council has secured significant funding to undertake the A40 Oxford Science Transit Phase 2 project – a central element of the Oxfordshire Growth Deal which will bring together local, national and private funding to focus on four key priority areas identified in the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership’s (LEP) Strategic Economic Plan<sup>25</sup> including improved connectivity.
- 7.27 Under the first two rounds of the Local Growth Fund, the Oxfordshire LEP has secured a total of £118.4m funding from central Government with £9.2m of new funding for 2015/16 and £53.7m for 2016/17 to 2021. Additionally, £35m has been secured to deliver measures to expand the integrated public transport system along the Oxfordshire knowledge spine to deliver major enhancements to the A40 between Oxford and Witney. This project will deliver the preliminary stage of the longer term A40 strategy.

<sup>25</sup> [www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk](http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk)

- 7.28 Oxfordshire County Council prepared a baseline study looking at current conditions on the A40 in 2015 and since then have begun to consider a package of measures to help alleviate congestion on the A40. To tackle congestion in the short to medium term, the County Council is seeking to deliver a new park and ride site of 1,000 spaces to the north of the A40 near Eynsham together with the provision of a new eastbound bus lane along the A40. The scheme will deliver a series of improvements to the A40 between Cuckoo Lane at Eynsham and Duke's Cut canal bridge near Wolvercote seeking to reduce congestion and Oxford-bound car trips. Scheme designs are currently being worked up and will be consulted on in late 2016. The proposed A40-A44 link road will provide a new strategic linkage from the A40 corridor to the A34 and M40.
- 7.29 Oxfordshire County Council is also in the process of looking at longer-term solutions to the A40 itself and held a consultation in autumn 2015 called 'Investing in the A40'. Views were sought on a number of concepts for a long term strategy for tackling the existing and future congestion issues on the A40 corridor – in particular between Witney and Oxford. The options included an A40 bus lane (west-bound) a guided busway, additional dualling of the A40, a Witney to Oxford train service and a Witney to Oxford tram.
- 7.30 The results of the consultation and recommendations for taking the project forward were considered in May 2016 and it was agreed that the west bound bus lane would be taken forward together with additional dualling of the A40 between Witney and Eynsham. The anticipated cost of these improvements is £55m and there is no current funding available.
- 7.31 In light of the potential 'funding gap', where appropriate, we will seek contributions from new development towards solutions to the A40 and also the A44 congestion problems on the approaches to Oxford.

## Witney

- 7.32 At Witney, traffic congestion has long been a serious concern with an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) having been designated at Bridge Street. Other areas suffering from congestion include the Ducklington Lane junction with Station Lane and Thorney Leys and Witan Way although improvements were made to the former in 2014 to help improve traffic flow.
- 7.33 Witney's congestion problems are in large part due to there being only one crossing point across the River Windrush at Bridge Street which acts as a bottleneck to traffic travelling east – west across the town. A previous scheme known as the Cogges Link Road (CLR) which would have provided a second river crossing was abandoned following a failed compulsory purchase order.
- 7.34 As the District's main town and a key focus for growth under this local plan, it is essential that future development at Witney is supported by appropriate and timely investment in new and enhanced highway infrastructure. We have identified a number of 'strategic' and 'non-strategic' highway improvement schemes needed to support the Local Plan.
- 7.35 In addition to the improvements to the Ducklington Lane junction which have already been completed, the following strategic highway schemes have been identified as being necessary to support the quantum and distribution of planned housing and employment growth at Witney:
- **Downs Road junction** – the provision of a new 'all movements' junction onto the A40 at Downs' Road to the west of Witney. This will be delivered as part of the committed urban extension to the west of Witney (north Curbridge).

- **Shores Green Slip Roads:** the provision of west facing slip roads at the Shore's Green junction onto the A40 to the east of Witney. Delivery will be facilitated by the proposed East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) – see Policy WIT1 and will be accompanied by proposed improvements to Bridge Street.
  - **West End Link:** the provision of a new road link between Woodford Way and West End creating a second river crossing for Witney. Delivery will be facilitated by the proposed North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) – see Policy WIT2.
  - **Northern Distributor Road:** the provision of a new road link between Hailey Road and Woodstock Road via New Yatt Road. This will be delivered as part of the proposed North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) – see Policy WIT2.
- 7.36 LTP4 envisages that these schemes will come forward sequentially with the Ducklington Lane improvements happening first (now completed) followed by the A40/Downs Road junction followed by the Shores Green Slip Road scheme and associated improvements at Bridge Street. Whilst not specified in LTP4, the inference is that the West End Link and Northern Distributor Road would follow on from these other strategic highway improvements. Whilst these schemes cannot be expected to eliminate traffic congestion in Witney, they will help to mitigate the impacts of the developments that are proposed to deliver them and as a combined package of measures, will have a number of wider benefits that justify them being safeguarded and taken forward through the Local Plan.
- 7.37 The Downs Road junction will have a number of demonstrable benefits not least the fact that the large number of businesses located on the western side of Witney will be able to access the A40 directly instead of using Deer Park Road and Thorney Leys. New residents of the committed urban extension to the west of Witney will also be able to conveniently access the town centre via the A40 should they wish to.
- 7.38 The Shores Green Slip Roads scheme will allow those living in the east and north east areas of Witney to access the town centre from the south by using the A40 instead of travelling along Oxford Hill and Bridge Street. Similarly, a proportion of drivers wishing to access the A4095 will be able to do so via Jubilee Way rather than via Bridge Street and Woodstock Road.
- 7.39 The West End Link and northern distributor road are needed to enable the proposed development of land to the north of Witney. Without these measures in place the development would be likely to have an unacceptable transport impact. Transport modelling also suggests these new links will have a number of wider benefits to Witney.
- 7.40 These four strategic highway schemes will therefore be safeguarded through this local plan and delivered through the development schemes identified. A number of potential 'non-strategic' improvements are also likely to be needed in and around the central area of Witney to help facilitate the movement of vehicles including buses through the town.
- 7.41 The Council's IDP identifies a number of potential improvements and the District Council will continue to work in partnership with the County Council to bring these and other schemes forward as necessary.

## Carterton

7.42 At Carterton, although the road network is not congested, there is no 'A' road access to the town from the A40 or the A361 and it remains an aspiration of the District and County Councils to deliver improved access to the town and RAF Brize Norton from the strategic road network. LTP4 identifies improved access to the A40 as a key objective. This is seen as critically important to unlocking the town's economic potential and helping to provide a better balance of housing and job opportunities in order to reduce levels of out-commuting. It will also facilitate the movement of vehicles to and from RAF Brize Norton.

7.43 The County Council have undertaken a number of studies to help inform the most appropriate way forward and have prioritised the B4477 Brize Norton Road for upgrading to A-road standard which will also include the provision of a premium cycle route together with associated complementary measures. It is estimated that this will cost in the region of £3.9m and will be delivered through a combination of funding including developer contributions. The proposals are required due to cumulative growth. The addition of west facing slip roads to the A40 has been identified as a key part of this project in LTP4 to help serve operations at RAF Brize Norton future employment growth and is likely to cost in the region of £7.2m. Strategic highway infrastructure projects for Carterton are therefore:

- **B4477 Brize Norton upgrade** - upgrading of the B4477 Brize Norton Road to A-road standard including the provision of a premium cycle route and associated complementary measures. Funding will be sought from developments as appropriate.
- **A40 West Facing Slip Roads** - the promotion of west facing slip roads at the junction of the A40/B4477 Minster Lovell junction to serve operations at RAF Brize Norton, and future employment growth. Funding will be sought from developments as appropriate.

7.44 It has been previously suggested that a new link road could also be provided from the B4477 Brize Norton Road to the Witney Road which would take a proportion of vehicular trips away from the northern part of Brize Norton village. The County Council has concluded that in light of the priority being given to the B4477 upgrade to A-road standard, at the present time this link is not needed as it would encourage trips along the Witney Road instead.

7.45 Elsewhere in Carterton, the committed development of 250 homes to the north west of Carterton will deliver a new link road from Shilton Road to Elmhurst Way. It is anticipated that this development will be complete within 5-years.

## Chipping Norton

7.46 Chipping Norton sits astride the crossing of the A44 and A361, with the heavily used lorry route to and from the Evesham area passing through the Town Centre. As a result, an Air Quality Management Area has been designated on Horsefair and Banbury Road, which could act as a constraint to new development if unresolved. An Action Plan was approved in 2008 containing a range of measures aimed at improving air quality, primarily through reduction of HGV movements. We will continue to work with the County Council to deliver these objectives (see Section 9).

7.47 In recognition of the need to reduce the movement of vehicles in general and HGVs in particular through Chipping Norton, a key component of the East Chipping Norton (Tank Farm) Strategic Development Area (SDA) is the proposed delivery of an eastern link road which it is envisaged will connect the Burford Road/Charlbury Road to London Road and onto the Banbury Road to the north. As this link road is essential to the delivery of the SDA, the indicative route will be safeguarded through this Local Plan.

7.48 Recent transport evidence commissioned by the County Council suggests that the provision of an eastern link road for Chipping Norton would not only help to mitigate the traffic impact of the additional housing at Tank Farm but would also have benefits for through traffic compared to a smaller development effectively served by a cul de sac arrangement. Furthermore, coupled with appropriate HGV restrictions on key sections it might be possible to reduce the volume of HGVs running along the High Street thereby having a potential air quality benefit for this part of the AQMA (although displacement of traffic elsewhere will require further consideration). The provision of this strategic road link is therefore a prerequisite of the proposed SDA which has been increased in size from the original draft proposal (see Section 9). Other complementary measures to mitigate the impact of development on the Town Centre and surrounding area will also be sought such as new and improved signage, junction improvements, traffic and speed management and air quality measures. Strategic highway infrastructure projects for Chipping Norton are therefore:

- **Eastern Link Road:** provision of a new eastern link road for the Town connecting the A44 Banbury Road with the B4026/A361 via the A44 London Road and associated complementary measures. To be delivered as part of the proposed East Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area (SDA) – see Policy CN1.

## Eynsham

- 7.49 Proposed strategic growth to the west and north of Eynsham (see Section 9) has the potential to deliver not only a large number of new homes to meet identified needs but also provides the opportunity to deliver a number of strategic highway improvements. Whilst the proposals are at a relatively early stage it is anticipated that land to the west of Eynsham, in being brought forward as a comprehensive, strategic urban extension to the village has the potential to deliver a new western spine road connecting the A40 to the B4449 to the south of Eynsham. Subject to appropriate design and traffic management/signage this could potentially help to reduce the amount of unnecessary ‘through-traffic’ in Eynsham.
- 7.50 To the north of Eynsham, the scale of the proposed new garden village settlement is such that it offers the potential to deliver a number of strategic highway improvements. This will include the provision of a new 1,000 space park and ride site being delivered as part of the Science Transit project (see ‘Public Transport’).
- 7.51 As the garden village proposal is at a very early stage, other potential strategic improvements have not yet been determined in detail but are likely to include a new road connection with the A40, potentially linking with the proposed western spine road and thereby allowing easy access to the B4449 to the south.
- 7.52 A new main road is also likely to be provided through the garden village site connecting the A40 with Cuckoo Lane and Lower Road to the east thereby allowing greater journey choice and facilitating easier access to Hanborough Railway Station. The proposed development also provides the opportunity to create an iconic ‘feature bridge’ across the A40 connecting the new village with Eynsham to the south. This will allow existing and new residents and employees convenient access between the two areas and into open countryside beyond.

7.53 Essential strategic highway improvements will be identified in more detail through the proposed Area Action Plan (AAP) process (See Section 9). This will include consideration of improvements in the wider area including for example the Swinford Toll Bridge to reduce congestion at peak times; possible measures, such as automation, will require partnership working with the bridge owner. Strategic highway projects for Eynsham are therefore:

- **Western Spine Road:** provision of a new western spine road connecting the A40 and the B4449. To be delivered as part of the West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (SDA) – see Policy EW2.
- **Park and Ride:** provision of a 1,000 space park and ride site on land north of the A40 supported by the provision of bus priority measures.
- **Other potential improvements:** to be identified in more detail through the AAP process including a potential northern link road connecting the A40 with Cuckoo Lane and Lower Road, A40 crossing/bridge and potential highway improvements in the wider area.

#### Other areas

7.54 Elsewhere, the District is largely served by a rural road network which in some instances has limited capacity for a significant increase in traffic. Particular constraints are the narrow highways through the centre of settlements, the limited number of river crossings and the capacity of the bridges at these crossings, many of which are single vehicle width with traffic light controls.

7.55 This is especially so over the River Thames on the southern boundary of the District, where the road crossings are mainly historic bridges of single vehicle width. One of these, on the A415 at Newbridge, is a Scheduled Monument, is deteriorating and is the subject of a weight restriction order. The bridge provides a vitally important transport link to the southern parts of Oxfordshire and any future operational problems would have a significant impact. There is also congestion at the crossing of the River Windrush at Burford as well as the aforementioned problems along the A4095 around Long Hanborough and Bladon.

7.56 We will continue to work in partnership with the County Council to identify and deliver highway improvements that are needed to mitigate and support the level and distribution of growth planned for these rural sub-areas through the Local Plan.

7.57 Where appropriate and necessary, the District Council will seek provision towards enhanced highway infrastructure from new developments, either directly or through an appropriate financial contribution.

7.58 In general terms, as technologies develop, the role alternative fuels will play in both public transport and private vehicles such as hybrid, electric, and other types of low emission vehicles, is likely to increase nationally. Such changes in how transport is fuelled, is likely to have positive effects on the environment. Locally, these may be witnessed within the air quality management areas in Chipping Norton and Witney.

## **POLICY T2: Highway Improvement Schemes**

All development will be required to demonstrate safe access and an acceptable degree of impact on the local highway network.

Development proposals that are likely to generate significant amounts of traffic, shall be supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) and a Travel Plan.

Where necessary to mitigate the impact of development and support planned growth, contributions will be sought from new development towards new and/or enhanced highway infrastructure either directly as part of the development or in the form of an appropriate financial contribution.

The following strategic highway infrastructure schemes are proposed to be safeguarded and delivered as part of the committed and allocated urban extensions identified in this Local Plan:

- Downs Road junction, Witney
- Shores Green Slip Roads, Witney
- West End Link Road, Witney
- Northern Distributor Road, Witney
- Eastern Link Road, Chipping Norton
- Western Spine Road, Eynsham

The Council will identify and safeguard necessary strategic highway improvements associated with the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village through the Area Action Plan (AAP) process.

The Council will continue to support the provision of A-road access to Carterton via the B4477 together with the provision of west facing slip roads at the junction of the A40 and B4477. Contributions will be sought from new development as appropriate.

The Council will continue to work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council in relation to securing improvements to the A40 between Witney and Oxford. This will include the provision of an eastbound bus lane in conjunction with the proposed park and ride at Eynsham to help address congestion in the short to medium term, together with longer term improvements including the provision of a westbound bus lane from Oxford to Eynsham and dualling of the A40 between Witney and Eynsham.

Contributions will be sought from new development and other potential sources of funding as appropriate.

In addition, the Council will work in partnership with the County Council to deliver other 'non-strategic' highway improvements necessary to support the quantum and distribution of growth identified in the Local Plan with contributions to be sought from new development as appropriate.

## Public transport

- 7.59 Improvements to public transport including bus and rail services have a key role to play in encouraging fewer car journeys. If bus and rail can be convenient, frequent, reliable and reasonably priced, people are more likely to make a conscious effort to leave their car at home and catch a bus or train instead.
- 7.60 Whilst the Local Plan has no influence over the price of public transport it can influence how convenient it is to use, how frequently it runs and to some extent how reliable it is.

### Bus services

- 7.61 Parts of West Oxfordshire are well-served by bus services including premium routes between Carterton, Witney, Eynsham and Oxford and between Chipping Norton, Woodstock and Oxford. However, journey times can be unreliable because of congestion within Witney, at Eynsham and approaching Oxford.
- 7.62 Providing high quality, frequent bus services as well as good waiting facilities and up to date service information is critical to encouraging greater passenger use by making public transport an attractive travel choice.
- 7.63 Discussions have been held with Oxfordshire County Council and the main bus operators through the preparation of the Local Plan and IDP and a number of potential enhancements to bus services and facilities within West Oxfordshire have been identified. These include improvements to bus stops to install real time information and improved waiting and boarding facilities, improved bus journey times and increased frequencies of services.

- 7.64 As highlighted above, the County Council have identified a need for a remote park and ride at Eynsham. It is anticipated that the park and ride site will be delivered in conjunction with the improvements that are proposed to the A40 as part of the Oxfordshire science transit project, part of which is focused on tackling the current traffic problems between Eynsham and the Wolvercote roundabout on the edge of Oxford. The new park and ride site will have 1,000 parking spaces and will form an integral part of the proposed garden village north of the A40 near Eynsham providing fast and frequent bus services into Oxford.

- 7.65 These and other potential public transport improvement schemes are identified in the IDP. We will continue to work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and the bus operators to secure new and improved bus services and facilities in West Oxfordshire. In particular, we will ensure that where necessary, new development is supported by improvements to bus services and facilities either provided directly as part of the development or through an appropriate financial contribution. The need to enhance bus service provision wherever possible is particularly acute in light of the decision to cut a number of bus service subsidies in July 2016.

### Rail services

- 7.66 West Oxfordshire is reasonably well-served by passenger rail services although not at the main towns. There are two mainline railways shown on the Key Diagram, the Cotswolds and Malvern line and the Oxford/Birmingham line, the former having benefited from the redoubling of 20 miles of track between Charlbury and Evesham, which included new platforms at Charlbury and Ascott under Wychwood.

- 7.67 There is one passenger station on the Oxford/Birmingham line at Tackley and seven on the Cotswolds and Malvern line including Hanborough, Combe, Finstock, Charlbury, Ascott under Wychwood, Shipton under Wychwood and Kingham. The largest stations used by most passengers and served by the greatest number of train services are Charlbury, Kingham, Hanborough and Tackley. Car parking capacity is an important consideration for a number of stations.
- 7.68 Passenger growth on the Cotswold line has been significant with exceptional growth at Hanborough (up 239%) and at the busiest station on the line at Charlbury (up 30%)<sup>26</sup>. LTP4 highlights the fact that there is significant demand and yet further passenger growth is being suppressed by train capacity and poor access to some rural stations. There is potential for further growth with the introduction of an hourly service in December 2018. New trains will bring increased capacity with additional seating and will also achieve faster journey times, with some services from Hanborough reaching London Paddington in 63 minutes.
- 7.69 LTP4 identifies a strategic aspiration to develop Hanborough Station as a transport hub to help reduce congestion on the A40 as part of an overall package of public transport measures. To fulfil its potential, the station will require a larger car park, footbridge and new platform so any trains extended from Oxford can terminate and turnaround. To fully realise the potential of the railway, further redoubling will be required at the eastern and western ends of the line, between Wolvercote Junction and Hanborough, and from west of Evesham towards Pershore. This would allow up to three trains per hour to Hanborough and/or Charlbury and two trains per hour between London and Worcester, with a journey time under two hours.
- 7.70 In light of the proposed improvements to Hanborough Station a key element of the proposed garden village to the north of Eynsham will be the provision of improved connectivity between the new settlement and the station particularly by bus and cycle. This is addressed in more detail in Section 9.
- 7.71 Notably, none of the three main towns (Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton) are directly served by rail although there are bus links to Kingham station from Chipping Norton and to Long Hanborough from Witney.
- 7.72 In addition to the improvements outlined above, Oxfordshire County Council's LTP4 identifies a number of other potential improvements to rail services within West Oxfordshire. The District Council will continue to work in partnership with the County Council and rail providers to further investigate the potential delivery of the various schemes and aspirations that have been identified.
- 7.73 It is important not to consider rail and bus services separately because in some instances it may be possible to deliver an integrated approach with seamless transition from one journey which may be by train onto the next which may be by bus. Making it easier to access public transport by bike or on foot is also important.

#### Community transport

- 7.74 Community transport schemes are vital for people who do not have access to a car and are unable to use public transport, walk or cycle to their destination, usually due to disability, age-related frailty, or mobility problems. There are a number of community transport schemes in West Oxfordshire including a dial-a-ride scheme, community buses and volunteer car schemes as well as the Oxfordshire Comet, a bookable transport service for those who can't access suitable public transport. These receive advice and practical support from Community First Oxfordshire.

<sup>26</sup> Source: LTP4 Volume 3: Rail Strategy

7.75 We will continue to work in partnership with ORCC, Oxfordshire County Council and the other District Councils in order to develop the community transport sector in West Oxfordshire, to increase capacity and improve the coverage of the district.

Active travel (walking and cycling)

7.76 Alongside improvements to public transport, enabling more active forms of travel including walking and cycling is essential to reducing car use. It also has the added benefit of encouraging more healthy lifestyles and helping to tackle health concerns including rising rates of obesity.

7.77 The provision of high quality, well-designed and maintained pedestrian and cycle facilities as well as the provision of information such as clear signage is critical to encouraging more walking and cycling. The planning system has a key role to play in this regard by ensuring that new development is supported by appropriate levels of investment in new and enhanced pedestrian and cycle infrastructure. LTP4 includes an active and healthy travel strategy focusing on cycling and walking as well as door to door integrated multi-modal journeys.

7.78 At present, West Oxfordshire is reasonably well-served in terms of walking and cycling facilities, although most of these linkages are focused on the main towns of Witney and Carterton including in particular routes installed as part of the Madley Park and Shilton Park developments. Cross-town cycle routes can however suffer from poor signage as well as having some gaps in provision.

7.79 Outside the main towns and rural service centres although there are a number of national cycle network routes running through the District, most pedestrian and cycle opportunities involve the use of 'quiet roads' rather than dedicated pedestrian and cycle links. Increased traffic levels on these quiet roads may prevent vulnerable road users from accessing these routes safely.

7.80 In discussion with Oxfordshire County Council, we have identified a number of improvements to pedestrian and cycle infrastructure needed to accommodate future growth in the District. These include the provision of additional footways and cycle paths and improvements to existing routes, with a particular focus on improving accessibility to key locations. Greater use of public transport can be encouraged (through provision of walking and cycling routes to bus stops and cycle parking at bus stops).

7.81 The County Council have also identified the potential provision of a new cycleway between Carterton and Witney, as well as a number of specific improvements in Witney and the need for improved cycle parking at key destinations and employment sites in Witney, Carterton, Chipping Norton, Eynsham and Woodstock.

7.82 We will continue to work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, developers and other relevant partners to deliver attractive, new and enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes and facilities within the District including through new development.

## **POLICY T3:**

### **Public transport, walking and cycling**

All new development will be located and designed to maximise opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

Where opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport are more limited, other measures will be sought to help reduce car use as appropriate (e.g. measures to promote home working or the opportunity for linked trips e.g. through mixed-use development).

New development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of new and/or enhanced public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure to help encourage modal shift and promote healthier lifestyles with particular regard to be given to safe and convenient routes to school.

Development that fails to make adequate provision of measures to encourage the use of non-car modes of transport will not be favourably considered.

West Oxfordshire District Council will continue to work in partnership with the highway authority, developers, local councils, bus and rail operators and other voluntary and community sector organisations, to:

- Increase the use of bus, rail and community transport through the provision of improved services, facilities and information including specific schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan (Connecting Oxfordshire) and IDP; and
- Provide safe and convenient travel within and between the network of towns and villages in West Oxfordshire, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users, users of public and community transport including specific schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan and IDP.

## **Parking provision**

- 7.83 The amount of parking provided can also have a direct impact on people's travel choices and the District Council can influence the amount of parking available in two ways. Firstly we can determine how much parking is provided as part of new development such as housing, shops and offices.
- 7.84 In this regard we will determine the level of provision in accordance with the residential, non-residential and cycle parking standards adopted by Oxfordshire County Council as highway authority. The residential parking standards are based on the provision of an 'optimum' number of spaces rather than a 'maximum' or 'minimum' and are based on the provision of a mix of allocated and unallocated spaces.
- 7.85 We can also influence parking through our approach towards the provision of off-street parking. National planning policy suggests that local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure, including appropriate provision for motorcycles. In addition to the quality and cost of parking provision, we can influence the amount of parking available.
- 7.86 With regard to off-street public car parking, there are 16 car parks in West Oxfordshire and the Council's long standing position has been not to charge for parking to maintain the attractiveness of local centres. Car parking is managed through time restrictions, the effectiveness of which is kept under review. Sufficient and convenient parking provision can make a significant contribution to the continued viability of our town centres and main employment areas.
- 7.87 In Chipping Norton public car parking spaces in the town centre are insufficient to meet current needs and in Witney although public car parking spaces in the town centre are considered adequate to meet current needs, the Woolgate and Woodford Way car parks operate at a high level of usage.

7.88 Car parking is also under pressure in popular tourist towns such as Burford and Woodstock particularly at weekends and there is a need to continue to review car and coach parking arrangements to ensure available spaces are efficiently used and provide additional car parking where capacity is being exceeded. The Council is preparing a parking strategy that will help to inform future decisions about the quantum and distribution of parking needed within the District.

7.89 We will continue to monitor car parking requirements and parking management whilst promoting alternative means of travel. We will also seek improvements and capacity increases to public parking as appropriate including through new development.

**POLICY T4 :**  
**Parking provision**

The Council will work with partners to provide, maintain and manage an appropriate amount of off-street public car parking, particularly to support our town and village centres and to address issues of congestion and air quality.

Parking in new developments will be provided in accordance with the County Council's adopted parking standards and should be sufficient to meet increasing levels of car ownership.

Proposals for new off street public car parking areas will be supported in accessible locations where they would help to ensure the continued vitality and viability of town centres, where they would support visitor and tourist facilities and attractions or where the local environment is being seriously damaged by on-street parking and alternative parking provision is essential.

Development proposals which significantly increase car parking demand will be expected to make appropriate public car parking provision or equivalent financial contributions.