Oxfordshire
Local Transport Plan
2011 -2030
April 2011
Transport in Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire is a vibrant county in the heart of England where a thriving economy blends successfully with a high quality environment. Oxfordshire is the most rural county in south east England but can boast having a pivotal role in world leading scientific and energy research, international publishing, bio-technology, car manufacture and motor sport industries. It has a highly qualified workforce, low unemployment, good standards of health and life expectancy and low levels of crime. Although generally prosperous, there are areas in Oxfordshire which are among the most deprived in the country.

Oxfordshire has a well developed network of major roads, railways and high quality bus services. However, there are several critical pinch points – on the A34 Trunk Road, especially between Didcot and M40; on the A40 between Witney and Headington; around the Oxford Ring Road; on the rail corridor through Oxford; and on routes in and around our main towns. This Plan aims to tackle these problems, in the
context of delivering local economic growth.

Oxfordshire has significant plans for future economic and housing growth: major housing development is planned in Science Vale at Grove/Wantage & Didcot; at Bicester (Eco Town) and Oxford; employment is proposed at Bicester, Oxford northern gateway and in Science Vale (at Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, Milton Park and Culham). There will also be significant development at other locations including Banbury, Carterton and Witney.

The major challenge is to secure the infrastructure and services required to support this growth. An essential part of this is the transport investment required for strategic road and rail networks, which includes:

- Strategic rail, linking Science Vale, Oxford and Bicester to the national & international network – in particular supporting the delivery of the east west rail and Chiltern Railways Evergreen 3 projects together with a major upgrade to Oxford and Didcot stations and electrification of Great Western railway

- Highway schemes to enable development at Science Vale, Bicester and Oxford

- Expansion and enhancement of our high quality bus network with new services, expansion of Park & Ride, targeted bus priority and low carbon hybrid vehicles operating on main corridors under a groundbreaking quality partnership

- Development of strategic cycle networks to support clusters of development, e.g. at Science Vale, including hubs at key locations and hire facilities

- Targeted local transport schemes to support growth & the economy, for example at Witney (the Cogges Link Road and A40/Downs Road junction) and Banbury (capacity enhancements on the north-south route)

As part of all this, opportunities will be taken to develop a low carbon economy and innovative solutions through promotion of high quality public transport, provision for low emission / electric vehicles. This will be complemented by considering ways to modify travel behaviour, including targeted
personalised travel planning, promoting and incentivising car sharing and working with key local partners on travel planning.

At the same time, we will continue to maintain and enhance our core activities – maintaining the road network, supporting rural Oxfordshire through funding local bus and other services and continuing to reduce casualties on our roads.

The current challenging financial and funding position means that there is a greater than ever need to be clear about our priorities for investment. This means a focus on:

* Maintaining our highway asset
* Delivering growth & the infrastructure needed to make this work
* Supporting local community needs
* Finding lower cost solutions and making best use of what we have
* Securing partnership and ‘match’ funding to secure best value for money from public spending
Our goals for transport aim to make Oxfordshire attractive for existing residents and businesses as well as for new development. This can only be achieved through close working with local communities and businesses to find realistic solutions to help respond to the transport impacts of their activities.

A set of 9 objectives will form the basis for our actions in delivering this Plan:

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

Each of these objectives has been rated as high, medium or low priority for different parts of the county. We will use these priorities as the basis for assessing individual schemes and developing our implementation programme for the Plan.

We have developed a series of general policies to guide the future development of transport over the course of the Plan together with more specific policies for each of the 9 objectives.

Our general policies for transport in Oxfordshire are as follows:

**Policy G1** Oxfordshire County Council will seek to implement this Local Transport Plan as and when funding becomes available, including seeking funding from local communities, developers and other external sources.
Policy G2  Oxfordshire County Council will give a higher priority to expenditure on maintaining existing transport assets than to improvements to the network in the early years of the Plan.

Policy G3  Oxfordshire County Council will work to ensure that the transport network can meet the requirements of the county’s world class economy, whilst protecting the environment and the amenity of Oxfordshire residents.

Policy G4  Oxfordshire County Council will seek, as a priority, external funding to deliver:

* improvements to the transport network to develop access to Oxford from other towns and regions;
* transport improvements within and around Eco-Bicester.

Policy G5  Oxfordshire County Council will support sustainable, healthy and inclusive modes of travel and promote changes in travel behaviour to these modes.

Policy G6  Oxfordshire County Council will take into account the location, best use of space and the potential need to prioritise particular movements or users when designing schemes.

Policy G7  Oxfordshire County Council will consult from an early stage in the development of schemes and initiatives so that the needs of all groups, including disabled people, are considered and, where appropriate, acted upon.
Objective 1
Improve the condition of local roads, footways and cycleways, including resilience to climate change

Our core priority for highway maintenance is to deliver a safe, serviceable and sustainable network, taking into account the need to contribute to the wider objectives of asset management, integrated transport, corporate policy and continuous improvement. Maintaining our assets will be our priority, at least for the first few years of the Plan.

Policy HM1 Oxfordshire County Council will use a whole life approach for determining and delivering its highway maintenance programme.

Policy HM2 Oxfordshire County Council will seek to develop a programme of community-led, low-cost highway maintenance schemes.

Policy HM3 Oxfordshire County Council will use best practice in developing sustainable drainage systems for roads and other transport assets.

Our Strategy for highway maintenance will include:
* Maintaining roads to minimise long-term costs
* Setting service standards related to the importance of routes in the county’s road hierarchy
* The development of networks that are resilient to the impact of climate change

The range of maintenance activities that will be covered by these policies will include:
* Carriageway structural maintenance and reconstruction
* Footway schemes
* Surface Dressing Treatments
* General structural maintenance and smaller schemes
* Bridge maintenance
* Routine operations (including gully emptying, verge
clearance etc)
* Village maintenance
* Road markings and signs
* Seasonal maintenance
* Electrical maintenance
* Drainage Improvements

The majority of our funds for highway maintenance will be allocated using a system based on:
* Carriageway and footway condition surveys
* Skid resistance surveys
* Wet skid accident records
* Place in the network hierarchy
* Importance of route in bus network
* Accident claims
* On-site inspections
* Effectiveness of treatment

Hotter, drier summers are likely to lead to heat damage of road surfaces (melting roads) and cracking due to shrinking subsoil. They can also increase flood risk because dry, hard packed soil is less able to absorb water when higher intensity rainfall occurs.

Measures to mitigate the effects of severe weather events can include the specification of more resilient assets and materials, or higher capacity drainage solutions where they are likely to be more susceptible to the effects of extreme weather events or climate change.

For new developments, we will investigate sustainable draining systems before any other solutions are considered - these reduce run-off and increase water storage and can significantly contribute to controlling flood risk. We will prepare and review flood risk and in high risk areas undertake flood risk assessment and develop management plans.

We are committed to keeping a network of network of major roads free from ice to minimise the risk of accidents and ensure smooth traffic flows.
Tackling Congestion

Objective 2
Reduce congestion

Our central concern is to increase the efficiency of the county's transport system by reducing congestion to improve the economy and relieve environmental problems.

Policy TC1 Oxfordshire County Council will manage demand, co-ordinate and, where appropriate, improve the county's road network to reduce congestion and minimise disruption and delays to the travelling public.

Policy TC2 Oxfordshire County Council will work with major traffic generators to enable sustainable travel and efficient car use for journeys to employment, health, shopping and education in order to reduce congestion.

Policy TC3 Oxfordshire County Council will ensure that travel information is timely, accurate and easily accessible in a range of appropriate formats.

Policy TC4 Oxfordshire County Council will manage the parking under its control to reduce congestion.

Policy TC5 Oxfordshire County Council will identify suitable and unsuitable routes for freight movement, balancing the needs of businesses with protection of the local environment and maintaining the highway network.

Congestion occurs when the demands placed on a part of the transport network exceed the ability of the network to deal with it effectively. It can be reduced by either increasing the capacity or reducing demand.

In developing schemes to reduce congestion then the range
of possible solutions will be looked at in the priority order listed below:

1st. Encourage walking, cycling and public transport use
2nd. Manage the network more effectively
3rd. Capacity improvements, for example at junctions
4th. Road widening
5th. New link roads or bypasses

We will be seeking to make the most efficient use of current road space through ensuring that roads and junctions are operating as efficiently and effectively as possible and will be tackling congestion by seeking to implement a range of measures, including:

* Co-ordinated network management
* Better information to travellers
* Incident management of roadworks and events
* Targeted network improvements
* Coherent parking policies
* Clear routes for freight traffic
* Traffic reduction

We are building on our relationships with both the Highways Agency and the freight industry to assist us in agreeing suitable freight and diversion routes to help remove lorry trips from unsuitable rural roads and villages.

As well as the measures to increase the effective capacity of the network, congestion can also be dealt with by moves to reduce the demand that is placed upon it. Traffic reduction measures could be:

* improving facilities for or encouraging use of modes that place fewer demands on the road network
* working without the need to travel
* encouraging car sharing

We will update our county lorry routeing map to cover all the main roads in the county and bring it into line with neighbouring areas. When completed this lorry map will be used when considering whether weight limits are suitable for any road.
Road Safety

Objective 3
Reduce casualties and the dangers associated with travel

Road safety continues to be a core priority both nationally and locally reflecting the very high human and others costs of road accidents, valued at over £200 million per year in Oxfordshire.

Policy RS1  Oxfordshire County Council will develop an updated road safety strategy to reduce the number of road accident casualties, once the national strategic framework for road safety has been announced, focusing on high risk locations and groups and promoting responsible use of the road and driver behaviour.

Policy RS2  Oxfordshire County Council will seek to reduce the casualty rate of motorcyclists by working closely with interested groups to encourage more responsible motorcycling.

We have made significant improvements in road safety on Oxfordshire’s roads in recent years. Over a thousand fewer casualties were reported in 2009 than had been the case 10 years previously while child casualties have more than halved in this time. Maintaining this improvement will be a major challenge for this Local Transport Plan.

Drivers comprise the largest category of road-user casualties. The long term trend has stabilised to some extent, in part due to a recent decrease in the number of casualties from the highest risk age group (17 to 24 year olds). In recent years there has been very little change in the number of older car drivers involved in accidents, even though there are more (and older) senior-citizen drivers.

Over the long-term both adult and child pedestrian casualties have decreased. Cyclist injuries are also decreasing, mainly...
due to the reduction of close to 60 percent in child cyclist injuries since 1999.

Concerns over poor road safety have a major adverse impact on the quality of life and feature highly in the list of community safety concerns in the rural areas in the county.

Our strategy for reducing road accident casualties will include:

- Understanding road safety problems
- Making travel safer for children
- Tackling high risk behaviour and actions
- Developing a safer road environment
- Promoting safer speeds

The accident history of all roads in the county is carefully monitored to identify problem sites and routes which may be addressed by road safety engineering measures such as improving skid resistance or improving road alignment. The Council has a duty to introduce remedial measures to address accident problems where this is practical and cost effective. It is likely that the majority of accident remedial works will be maintenance works to keep the highway in a safe condition.

Encouraging safe behaviour for children is a high priority but needs to be carried out in a way that does not discourage more walking and cycling. Education and training also have a role and are more likely to be successful if they are targeted either at specific groups of people or deals with specific types of behaviour.

We have played a major role in promoting slower speed limits, with 50mph limits now introduced on many rural roads, 30mph limits in most of the county's villages and a 20mph zone covering Oxford city centre and most of the city's residential roads. The results of the Oxford scheme will be evaluated before a decision is made on whether this should be introduced elsewhere. In the longer term we would want to see a general reduction in speed limits on rural roads to 50mph.
Improving Accessibility

Objective 4
Improve accessibility to work, education and services

We want to allow people to access the services they need; to help reduce social exclusion and develop the county’s economy.

Policy AX1  Oxfordshire County Council will publish and keep up to date a separate Bus Services Funding Strategy, and develop and manage the Concessionary Fares Scheme in Oxfordshire.

Policy AX2  Oxfordshire County Council will work with partners and particular sections of the community to identify how access by public transport to employment and services, particularly healthcare and education, can be improved.

Policy AX3  Oxfordshire County Council will support the use of community transport and dial-a-ride services and encourage the use of taxis and private hire vehicles to meet local accessibility needs, including those of disabled people.

Policy AX4  Oxfordshire County Council will continue to allow the use of bus lanes by taxis and private hire vehicles.

Policy AX5  Oxfordshire County Council will manage the parking under its control to take into account the specific accessibility needs of local areas, including those of disabled people.

Policy AX6  Oxfordshire County Council will encourage the growing and inclusive use of the county’s waterways, and support appropriate opportunities for developing
transport on the waterways network.

A consistent policy of promoting public transport over the past 40 years has created a culture of bus use in Oxfordshire which is second to none among English shire counties. Continuing promotion of bus use will be essential to meet the council’s objectives over the next two decades.

The amount of support for non-commercial services is limited by the funding that is available to us. In the short term we will be looking to see how the funding available can be used most effectively to provide for people’s access needs within very tight financial limits. This could be through support for conventional buses or for other types of service, such as community transport or dial a ride. If opportunities arise to join up with parallel transport services - such as those which operate for education, social services or health services - then these will be welcomed if they deliver a more integrated and effective service.

As the population of Oxfordshire ages, so the proportion of people with some kind of disability is also projected to increase. The move towards enabling more disabled and older people to live independently rather than in residential care homes will also strengthen the case for ensuring an inclusive transport system. We will follow two important principles on all schemes: that consultation with disabled people and their representatives should take place at the earliest opportunity; and that we should secure high level disability awareness training for all appropriate staff.

Taxis and private hire vehicles are licensed by the district councils but we will manage on street parking to reduce ongoing problems with demand for taxi rank spaces.

The direct use of waterways for mainstream transport activities is, and is likely to remain, limited. However, the towpaths which run alongside the waterways can play an important role in the overall rights of way network for the area and can act as attractive alternatives to motorised travel.
Supporting Development

Objective 5
Secure infrastructure and services to support development

Our core priority is to ensure that a strategic, countywide approach is taken to planning new developments and the infrastructure required to support them. This is so that new developments contribute to the social and economic wellbeing of the county without creating environmental problems.

Policy SD1 Oxfordshire County Council will seek to ensure that:
- the location and layout of new developments minimise the need for travel and can be served by high quality public transport, cycling and walking facilities;
- developers promote sustainable travel for all journeys associated with new development, especially those to work and education, and;
- the traffic from new development can be accommodated safely and efficiently on the transport network.

Policy SD2 Oxfordshire County Council will:
- secure contributions from new developments towards improvements for all modes of transport. This can be financial contributions or direct works for the mitigation of adverse transport impacts in the immediate locality and/or wider area improvements;
- ensure that all infrastructure associated with the developments is provided to appropriate design standards;
- set local routeing agreements to protect environmentally sensitive
locations from traffic generated by new developments, and;
  o normally seek commuted sums towards the long term operation and maintenance of facilities, services and infrastructure.

Oxfordshire County Council will support the development of air travel services and facilities which contribute to the economic development of the county unless they have unacceptable transport or environmental impacts or discourage making the best use of existing capacity.

The amount of new development across the county will have a major impact on the local transport network. To ensure new development does not cause problems for the transport network will require working with partners, particularly the district councils, through the preparation of local development frameworks as well as on planning applications.

During the plan period we will work in partnership with the district councils to ensure that new development:

  * is located in accordance with the relevant spatial policies
  * has a minimal adverse impact on the existing highway network by providing appropriate highway mitigation works
  * contributes to improvements to the transport network and services, either for better management of existing infrastructure and services or for the provision of new facilities
  * has a travel plan covering, amongst other things, proposals for lower traffic generation and the promotion of more sustainable travel modes
  * is designed to encourage and support the increased use of sustainable means of transport
  * does not impose undue stress on ongoing maintenance revenue costs
  * complies with current regional, national and local policy guidance, is designed to modern
contemporary design standards, and built to the council’s specifications

Our position with regard to air travel is:

* that future air travel growth should be concentrated at more established major airports with the best use of their current site and runway capacity
* to support the use of more sustainable surface transport modes to access to airports
* to ensure that effective measures are in place to minimise any noise nuisance from aviation activities
* to encourage aviation operators to reduce airborne pollutants, including carbon
* that we expect the Ministry of Defence to fund any highway improvements that may be required to accommodate their increased activity
Carbon Reduction

Objective 6
Reduce carbon emissions from transport

Our central concern for carbon reduction is principally focused on encouraging trips to either not be made, or to be made in ways which use less carbon.

Policy CBR1  Oxfordshire County Council will work with local communities and employers to promote sustainable travel for journeys to work, education, health and other facilities.

Policy CBR2  Oxfordshire County Council will promote the use of low carbon forms of transport and associated infrastructure.

Policy CBR3  Oxfordshire County Council will work to reduce the carbon footprint of its operation of the transport network.

The UK Climate Impacts Programme’s prediction is that Oxfordshire’s temperature increase by 2050 is unlikely to be less than one to two degrees. One of the main conclusions of the Stern Report on the economic impacts of climate change is that the benefits of strong, early action on climate change considerably outweigh the costs.

The major actions on reducing carbon emissions are likely to be taken at the national and international level. This chapter considers the smaller contribution that can be achieved through local actions.

Our strategy for carbon reduction includes:

- encouraging low and non-carbon generating travel
- the continued promotion and development of travel planning
- support or encourage low and zero carbon vehicles
Walking and cycling are low carbon forms of transport and encouraging these trips will contribute to reducing the carbon emissions from transport in Oxfordshire. Public transport use is also usually less carbon intensive than private vehicle travel, particularly when dealing with large flows along particular travel corridors.

There are also initiatives which could be used to reduce the carbon emissions from travel by cutting the overall amount of travel such as telecommuting, car clubs and car sharing.

Travel planning will continue to be used to encourage people to change their travel habits to ones which cause fewer environmental problems. Our focus initially will be to meet the statutory requirement for travel plans to be prepared for new housing and commercial developments and continuing to work with schools to reduce problems associated with their travel. It will be important to use these techniques more widely in the future - this will include working to develop plans at workplaces, in local areas or with individuals.

Traffic management can help to reduce carbon emissions by promoting smoother traffic flow and reducing excessive speeds which use more carbon. We will investigate means to promote ecological driving techniques.

Electric vehicles have an advantage in that they are effectively zero emission at point of use, meaning that they can bring local air quality as well as carbon reduction benefits. As opportunities arise we will work with our partners to promote electric vehicle use and identify suitable locations for public charging points, for example at park and ride sites and in other car parking areas.

We will continue to work with bus operators and hauliers to encourage them to reduce the carbon emissions from their vehicles by the use of newer, more fuel efficient and lower carbon emitting vehicles and forms of operation, including delivering the Bus Qualifying Agreement and progressing the Low Emission Zone in Oxford city centre.
Reducing Environmental Impact

Objective 7
Improve air quality, reduce other environmental impacts and enhance the street environment

Our core objective for the environment is to ensure that transport contributes to improvements in the attractiveness and environmental quality of the county and that this is taken into account in decisions on growth and development.

Policy RE1 Oxfordshire County Council will work to reduce the environmental impact of its operation of the transport network and promote the use of less environmentally damaging forms of transport, particularly in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Conservation Areas.

Policy RE2 Oxfordshire County Council will ensure that the operation of the transport network balances the protection of the local environment with efficient and effective access for freight and distribution.

Policy RE3 Oxfordshire County Council will work with partners to improve public spaces and de-clutter the street environment.

Policy RE4 Oxfordshire County Council will take into account the needs of vulnerable users, including people with disabilities, in the design of public realm improvement schemes.

Our strategy for meeting these objectives includes:

- Developing air quality action plans and low emission strategies, in conjunction with district councils, where air quality problems have been identified
- Implementing strategies to deal with noise, vibration and other impacts
- Working with industry and local communities to deal with problems caused by inappropriate lorry traffic
* Developing and implementing local strategies to improve the public realm, especially in town centres
* Developing and implementing local strategies to deal with the impacts of transport on the environment, particularly on landscape and biodiversity

Air quality problems are generally the result of a mix of factors including the level and mix of traffic, the layout of adjacent streets and the management of traffic. We will work with district councils to develop action plans, including specific local solutions, where air quality problems have been identified and implement them as resources allow.

Traffic noise is a complex mix of the number and types of vehicles on the road, their speed, the nature of the road surface and other factors. Where traffic noise is deemed excessive then action can be considered either to reduce the generation or to block its transmission.

Traffic vibration is almost exclusively caused by heavy vehicles. Research indicates that vibrations from road traffic are unlikely to cause new structural but may possibly make existing problems worse.

Light pollution from street lighting has become a major issue in recent years, particularly in rural areas. In response to this, and as a means of reducing the carbon footprint from the operation of our highways, we will investigate opportunities to remove or reduce existing lighting schemes and are taking forward a project to switch some of the county's streetlights to part-night operation.

A key challenge in all communities is how to deal with vehicle movement and how it impacts on other users of the public realm. There can be conflicts between providing the elements of a high quality street environment and public realm and providing car parking.

Dealing with lorry traffic is a balance between ensuring that there is the necessary access that the economy requires and protecting local communities from the adverse impact of lorries in their communities. We will look to develop a network of routes suitable for lorries to use and investigate methods to discourage use of less suitable routes.
Public Transport

Objective 8
To develop and increase the use of high quality, welcoming public transport

Our main ambition is to extend Oxfordshire's successful public transport model for journeys into the centre of Oxford to other parts of the county, including new developments, to provide more of the county with a real choice of attractive, frequent and welcoming public transport.

Policy PT1 Oxfordshire County Council will define a three-tier hierarchy of services, consisting of:

- **Premium Routes** - operating at “turn up and go” frequencies;
- **Hourly Plus** - operating at frequencies of at least once an hour during weekdays; and
- **Local** - to help meet local accessibility needs.

Policy PT2 Oxfordshire County Council will help create the conditions for welcoming, effective and successful commercial bus services by working with operators and other partners to:

i. improve the reliability of bus services and reduce journey times, especially on Premium Route services;

ii. publish up to date, comprehensive public transport information that is publicly available in a range of appropriate formats;

iii. improve ticketing (including smartcard ticketing) to make travel easier and reduce boarding times;

iv. encourage the use of buses that meet standards for low emissions, particularly those passing through
designated Air Quality Management Areas; and

v. encourage social inclusion by ensuring that services use low floor buses, have drivers that are trained in customer care and disability awareness, and that wheelchair users have priority access to designated spaces on vehicles.

Policy PT3 Oxfordshire County Council will support and promote the development of high quality public transport interchanges and infrastructure in appropriate locations.

Policy PT4 Oxfordshire County Council will support proposals for strategic enhancement of the existing Oxfordshire rail network, and will work with the rail industry to facilitate these, providing they do not have unacceptable impacts on the county’s rights of way networks, cultural heritage or natural environment.

Policy PT5 Oxfordshire County Council will work with the rail industry and other partners to deliver new or improved stations, new rail services and greater integration of rail and buses.

Policy PT6 Oxfordshire County Council will only support the High Speed 2 rail proposals if their local economic benefits outweigh the environmental impact on the county.

Policy PT7 Oxfordshire County Council will support the development of Quality Bus Partnerships and Rail Partnerships, where appropriate.

Our strategy for increasing public transport use includes:

* Providing infrastructure to allow attractive and reliable bus services, including park and ride, to run throughout the county
* Working with bus companies to improve the experience of bus travel
* Encouraging the development of rail services

We will help to achieve the commercial viability of bus services by:
* Tackling congestion and delay points along the major bus routes
* Ensuring bus services come as close as possible to major destinations
* Providing good information on the services available and facilities at bus stops

We are working with the two main operators to develop a *Bus Qualifying Agreement* for the specification and operation of bus services, focusing on the main radial routes into Oxford city centre. The aim of the Agreement is to bring bus user and environmental benefits by securing a service pattern which would include:
* a substantial reduction in the number of buses
* the introduction of shared ticketing with smartcard ticketing technology
* the replacement of buses used on these services by new low emission vehicles

The qualifying agreement is expected to become finalised and operational in the summer of 2011.

The provision of high-quality infrastructure is fundamentally important to the successful operation of bus and coach services in Oxfordshire. Reliable and welcoming public transport services can only be operated through an arrangement where vehicles operate congestion-free and use high-quality stops where travellers can wait in comfort knowing their service will arrive on time.

Our long term ambition at all Park & Ride sites is to have attractive terminal buildings with waiting and other facilities, high levels of security, easy access to the road network, and good design of walking routes from parking to bus stop areas, alongside high quality facilities for cyclists and electric vehicles.

A strategy of investment in a network of high-frequency,
commercially self-sustaining bus routes, was adopted in 2003. This work is mostly complete but significant new developments are planned in some parts of Oxfordshire where routes will require appropriate bus stop infrastructure, and eventual inclusion in the Premium Route bus network.

We will maintain an Information Strategy for Bus Services setting out requirements on the provision of information and clarifying responsibilities for costs. We will improve the operation of our real time information system - already one of the best performing systems in the UK - and develop other means of spreading public transport information in the future.

We will work with operators to develop improved ticketing schemes to improve the attractiveness and ease of use of public transport and speed up boarding in congested locations, including the development of smartcard ticketing.

We will support the operation of specialist bus services such as those run by education establishments and employment sites, and will look for opportunities to combine these with local bus services in appropriate cases.

We will need to be flexible so that we can grasp opportunities for improving rail services as they arise in franchise agreements and rail-industry planning. These will include:

* Improving regional and inter-regional rail links, for example the East West Rail project
* Improving access to rail stations, particularly by low carbon modes
* Supporting improved rail links to international gateways
* New stations and services to serve growth areas, such as Science Vale UK
* Better access for all users, including disabled people
* Improve and expand station car parking
* Station interchanges, including facilities for better buses and co-ordinated timetables
Walking, Cycling and Rights of Way

Objective 9
Develop and increase cycling and walking for local journeys, recreation and health

Walking and cycling have the lowest carbon footprint of any transport choice. They have few adverse environmental impacts and also contribute to improving health. While not suitable for all journeys, our core objective is to create the conditions where a greater proportion of trips are made on foot or by bicycle.

Policy CW1 Oxfordshire County Council will seek to improve facilities to encourage greater levels of walking and cycling.

Policy CW2 Oxfordshire County Council will work with interested groups and local communities to promote greater levels of responsible walking and cycling.

Policy CW3 Oxfordshire County Council will take into account the needs of all users, including people with disabilities, in the design of cycling or pedestrian facilities.

Policy CW4 Oxfordshire County Council will protect and maintain public rights of way and natural areas so that all users are able to understand and enjoy their rights in a responsible way.

Policy CW5 Oxfordshire County Council will seek opportunities for network improvements and initiatives to better meet the needs of walkers, cyclists, and horse riders, including people with disabilities, for local journeys, recreation, and health.

To encourage more walking it is necessary to consider all aspects of the pedestrian environment, including the
pavement surface, amount and location of street furniture, pedestrian signing, and crossings of main and side roads.

We will also consider the following when developing schemes to encourage more walking:

* Improvements to walking facilities
* Traffic calming measures
* Pedestrianisation schemes
* Developing new pedestrian routes

Our strategy for cyclists is a combination of providing appropriate facilities suitable for experienced and less confident cyclists, managing roads to make them more cycle friendly and developing programmes of education and training both for cyclists and other road users.

Our approach to develop cycle networks will include the following:

* Developing new cycle links and improving existing routes
* Improving traffic management for cyclists
* Providing more and better quality cycle parking
* Promoting cycling for shorter trips
* Converting some footpaths to allow cycle use
* Linking new developments with destinations
* Ensuring travel plans encourage more cycling

For both walking and cycling improvements our approach will be to conduct audits of existing infrastructure as part of the development of the local area strategies and include the findings in local implementation programmes.

A well-maintained and connected public rights of way and accessible green space network offers huge potential for residents and visitors to enjoy all of the county. There is a need to ensure that access to these routes and areas is maintained and that safe and attractive links are provided where rights of way have become severed or difficult to use because of traffic on major roads.
Area Strategies

The 9 objectives outlined above hold true for the whole of Oxfordshire but we recognise that, because the issues are different, we need different types of strategy for different parts of the county.

For each settlement type (Oxford, Larger towns, small towns, rural areas) a number of possible strategies, known as investment scenarios, were developed.

Following public consultation a preferred option was chosen for each settlement type (with a special scenario being defined for Bicester because of the eco-town development).

Taking the preferred scenario a strategy was developed to put it into practice into each of the county’s main towns, bearing in mind the particular problems and needs in each local area, and the opportunities and threats posed by development in each area.

Oxford

Oxford has a resident population of more than 150,000. There are around 40,000 students and the city also welcomes almost 9 million tourists each year. Oxford’s attractiveness brings great benefits, but also puts pressure on the city’s transport system.

Congestion grew during the latter part of the 20th century but the Oxford Transport Strategy addressed this by restricting car access to the city centre and promoting alternative modes. Oxford has an outer ring road, although the northern bypass is also part of the A40 primary route and the western bypass is also part of the A34 trunk road.

Oxford is well served by frequent, high quality local bus services on the main radial routes into the city centre and including the five park and ride sites (which can accommodate more than 5,000 cars).

The city has high levels of cycling but there are opportunities to improve and expand the city’s cycle route network and
increase cycling levels further.

Oxford has frequent train connections to London Paddington and cross-country services to the south coast, Midlands and north of England, as well as more limited services to Worcester, Hereford and Bicester. The city also benefits from frequent coach services to London and the main airports.

**Challenges**

Oxford has a very high ratio of jobs to working age population, leading to high levels of in-commuting. Further housing is proposed to address this imbalance but environmental constraints mean that development will mainly be in the “Eastern Arc” - the outer wards in east and south east Oxford adjoining the ring road – and in the West End of the city centre. However, both areas are also likely to experience employment growth too, including a new Westgate shopping centre. Additional demand for travel in future will therefore be focused strongly on destinations in the city centre and the Eastern Arc.

Traffic flows into the city centre have been maintained at roughly the same levels as in 2000, when they dropped significantly after the implementation of the Oxford Transport Strategy. However, there is still considerable congestion on some of the main approaches to the city centre, particularly the routes leading into Frideswide Square. Two of the park and ride sites are regularly full and two others are approaching their capacity. Planned and possible developments in the city are likely to have a significant impact on the operation of the road network - there is expected to be particular pressure on the ring road, especially at Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabouts and on the A34.

The Eastern Arc will face even greater challenges. It already experiences high levels of car commuting, with extensive workplace parking provision and limited public transport and cycle route alternatives making car travel the obvious choice for many people. Peak time car travel to the Eastern Arc is a major contributor to congestion at many of Oxford's traffic hotspots, in particular at junctions around the B4495 (which links Summertown, Headington and Cowley) and at many of the ring road junctions.
Without a strategy to reduce or prevent the increase in traffic in Oxford and on its approaches, congestion will become increasingly severe, damaging the economy. The environment will also suffer, as will people’s quality of life. There are already 8 hotspots of poor air quality and a citywide air quality management area has been declared.

**Strategy**

**Rail** - Access to Oxford by rail will be encouraged by significantly improving and expanding Oxford station and enhancing bus, walking and cycling links to it to provide to enhance new service arising from the Chiltern Railways Evergreen 3 project and East-West Rail.

**Bus** - Better bus services and facilities to encourage people to choose public transport over car travel including further bus priority measures on the routes into the city, coupled with smartcard ticketing arrangements, better information and waiting facilities; at the same time the environmental impact of buses and coaches on the city centre will be reduced.

In the Eastern Arc local bus services will be improved through traffic management and bus priority schemes. We will work towards delivering fast and reliable, high quality public transport leading to a rapid transit system serving major employment and housing areas and park and ride sites.

**Park and ride** - Increased capacity is required for city centre journeys by park and ride and for new park and ride services to the Eastern Arc - a new system of scaled charges will help manage demand; there is also a need to ensure good access to the park and ride sites, and to extend facilities for cyclists and for new markets, such as electric vehicles.

**Cycling** - Further development of the city’s cycling network will encourage more people to cycle, particularly for journeys to work and education. In the city centre we will provide more, better managed cycle parking as well as improved radial and cross city centre cycle routes. For the Eastern Arc, traffic free orbital routes will be created to serve key destinations, including stops/stations on the proposed rapid transit route.

**Walking** - the pedestrian environment will be improved to
encourage people to walk further as part of their journey. Pedestrian routes between the station, city centre and science area will be improved. In the Eastern Arc high quality walking routes will be developed to serve key destinations, including stops/stations on the proposed rapid transit route.

Traffic management - Traffic will be managed to minimise congestion where it is most harmful such as in the city centre, other areas of poor air quality, bus routes and strategic routes. This will include the re-design of Frideswide Square to provide a more effective and attractive “gateway” to the city centre and measures to reduce traffic in the university science area. Parking controls and other demand management tools will be considered to help encourage the use of non-car modes. In the longer term we will work with the City Council to encourage the redevelopment of workplace car parks (particularly in the city centre and Eastern Arc) for housing, employment or other uses.

Lower emissions - A city centre Low Emission Zone is proposed to be implemented, aimed at encouraging the use of lower emission buses and other heavy vehicles initially and all traffic in the longer term. Emission controls covering the rest of the city will also be pursued to tackle air pollution problems in the suburbs and on the ring road. The introduction of electrical charging points will be facilitated and traffic routeing will be improved to reduce emissions in streets with the most residents and pedestrians.

Behavioural change - Travel planning work will target schools, large employers and clusters of small and medium-sized employers to reduce car travel. There will be tailored social marketing of sustainable travel including working with the health sector to stress the health benefits of active modes.
Abingdon

Abingdon is a historic market town located 7 miles to the south of Oxford. It is the largest town in the Vale of White Horse district with a population of 32,000. The town is located to the south of the Oxford Green Belt and is bounded by the A34 trunk road to the west and the River Thames to the south and east. Town centre improvements were implemented between 2006 and 2010 and have helped to reduce the levels of pollution in the town centre, although they still exceed the national air quality objective level.

Challenges

Congestion in peak hours is present on most of the main routes into the town centre, primarily affecting east-west movements along the A415 and on Drayton Road from the south. An Air Quality Management Area was declared in 2006 covering several streets in the town centre, and has since been extended along Marcham Road.

The town's layout, including the location of main employment, residential and shopping areas, can be a barrier to more walking. While there have been improvements to facilities for cyclists in recent years there are still some areas which lack connected, legible routes from residential to employment areas.

There are excellent bus services to Oxford and good facilities for walking and cycling in places, but significant areas of the town do not have good alternatives to the car.

There are strong local desires to build an all movement junction on to the A34 at Lodge Hill to enable movements from the north of the town and for a second River Thames crossing for the town to relieve traffic congestion in the town centre. Given that there is not a substantial amount of growth planned in Abingdon to 2026 neither central government nor significant developer funding is likely to be available. Traffic modelling has shown there would be limited benefits to town centre traffic levels from the Lodge Hill scheme together with increased traffic on other parts of the road network.
Strategy

Public transport - Abingdon has no direct access to the rail network with local services available from the nearby Radley and Culham stations and national services from Oxford and Didcot stations. Frequent bus services run from Abingdon to Oxford. We will work with the local bus companies to improve and develop bus services to areas such as Drayton Road, Wootton Road and Northcourt Road in order to increase accessibility from the town to key facilities, including education and employment. We will also promote Radley as the rail connection for Abingdon and improve bus and cycle links between the two.

Walking - We will improve facilities for all pedestrians across the town through developing good, clear routes from residential areas to the town centre and other services and facilities around the town. We will also improve connections from the town to the rights of way network.

Cycling - We will provide appropriate infrastructure, including cycle parking at key destinations, upgraded routes linking key destinations and National Cycle Network Route 5 with supporting publicity and information.

Behavioural Change and Traffic Management – We will encourage schools, businesses and organisations to reduce car trips or make them more efficient, and to use more efficient and lower emission vehicles as they become available. We will also improve and increase public awareness of the infrastructure available for walking, cycling and public transport in and around Abingdon and discourage car use in inappropriate locations by physical constraints such as traffic calming and parking restrictions.

This Area Strategy replaces the Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy (AbITS, 2001). Planning obligation contributions secured to mitigate the impacts of development towards AbITS will be able to be used on the LTP3 Abingdon Area Strategy and be in accordance with the planning obligations.
Banbury

Banbury is the second largest settlement in Oxfordshire with a population of nearly 43,000. The town has a strong retail offer along with a range of leisure and tourism facilities and serves a large rural hinterland that includes parts of Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.

Banbury has direct access to the strategic motorway network and good transport links to major A-roads, as well as having a mainline rail station with links to Oxford, London, Birmingham and the North. Nearly two thirds of workers in Banbury travel less than 10km to work. Relatively few people commute by car; over 15% of workers walk to work compared with 10.2% in the county but only 4% cycle to work.

Challenges

The key routes in the town centre suffer from heavy congestion, particularly those for north-south movement. Further development in Banbury is likely to increase its attractiveness and may worsen problems on the edges of the town, such as at M40 Junction 11.

Cherwell District Council is likely to announce Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in 2010/11 in Banbury along Hennef Way and along Oxford Road, South Bar, Horse Fair, Warwick Road, Bloxham Road – further monitoring & modelling will help define a precise area.

Banbury’s main employment areas are concentrated in the town centre and north east; the railway station is also located just east of the town centre. The canal, railway and A4260 Windsor Street all create severance between the town centre and these important locations. Access for pedestrians and cyclists is particularly poor, with narrow footways and busy roads to negotiate and no obvious links between the town centre, the station and the employment and residential areas to the east of the railway.

Although various bus routes serve the town centre, including some of Premium Route standard, the east and north east are not well served. Better non car access to the east and north east is therefore a key challenge in Banbury.
Strategy

The town strategy aims to deliver transport improvements with a focus on reducing congestion, bus service improvements, walking and cycling. Key elements of the strategy will be:

Highway infrastructure and traffic management – We will encourage use of the strategic network, discourage use of undesirable routes and investigate the potential for junction redesign to reduce congestion. New road links will be considered where the required capacity cannot be realised. These schemes will only be likely to be delivered in association with development of such scale that would be able to wholly or mostly fund the road.

Buses – We will deliver an information system and infrastructure improvements at Banbury bus station, develop new bus routes and links in town centre and improve bus services and facilities between residential and employment areas.

Rail – We will work with partners to have the station forecourt
redesigned with improved walking and cycling access and secure cycle parking, potentially creating a cycle hub.

**Walking & Cycling** – We will improve the pedestrian environment in Banbury, in the town centre and to/within residential and employment areas. We will also develop a high quality cycle network with new and improved links to key destinations, including better connections to the rights of way network.

**Behaviour change** – We will work with employers to produce and implement workplace travel plans, exploring the potential for developing car clubs and promoting car sharing in Banbury.

This Area Strategy replaces the Banbury Integrated Transport & Land Use Study (BITLUS) (2000). Planning obligation contributions secured to mitigate the impacts of development towards BITLUS will be able to be used on the LTP3 Banbury Area Strategy and be in accordance with the planning obligations.

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**Bicester**

In 2009, Bicester was designated as one of four national “eco town” locations. With this comes the requirement to deliver sustainable development to exemplar standards. This has acted as the catalyst for the Eco Bicester One Shared Vision. The Vision is for the whole of the town and underpins this Transport Strategy for Bicester.

The eco town provides the opportunity to reposition Bicester as a place where new communities are built to high environmental standards and where people across the town enjoy more sustainable lifestyles such as first rate public transport and zero-carbon technology.

Bicester is the second largest town in Cherwell district with a population in 2001 of 29,000. It is located 12 miles from Oxford, 21 miles from Banbury and 24 miles from Milton Keynes. It has rail links from its two stations to Oxford, London Marylebone, High Wycombe and Birmingham.
Bicester has seen considerable growth in the last few decades influenced by its location on the strategic road network close to junction 9 of the M40, where the A34 meets the A41. It is also close to junction 10 with the A43 which connects the M40 and M1. This growth is expected to continue through this Plan's lifetime. Much of the future growth in this area will be at North West Bicester, which has been identified as an eco town location, with plans for a sustainable development of 5,000 homes by 2030.

Bicester’s population is predicted to rise to 33,000 by 2016, 40,000 by 2026 and 50,000 by 2034. There is a recognised need to attract more jobs to the town to address the significant imbalance between homes and jobs in Bicester - currently over 60% of residents leave the town to work.

**Challenges**

The overriding challenge is to develop an effective eco town at northwest Bicester and to achieve Eco Bicester objectives for the whole town where sustainable living, including travel choices, becomes a reality. This will involve achieving a life/work balance at northwest Bicester to meet containment targets, achieving a high level of sustainable transport use from the new development. It will also be important to use the measures being implemented in northwest Bicester to trigger a change in travel behaviour across the whole town and ensure that the highway network functions with the remaining car trips.

Bicester currently has congestion problems, especially on the A41 and on the B4030 outside Bicester Village Retail Park; this occurs on weekdays but visitors to Bicester Village cause the worst congestion at weekends or on Bank Holidays. This in turn can lead to inappropriate route choices (rat running) by frustrated drivers, for example through Chesterton. Congestion also occurs at M40 junction 9, the Bucknell Road railway bridge and on the main north-south route through the town.

Cherwell District Council is likely to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2010/2011 on Kings End and Queens Avenue, possibly extending to Field Street/North Street.
Bus station facilities in Bicester town centre are being redeveloped with new bus bays to be provided on Manorsfield Road, adjacent to the new retail centre.

Bicester has two rail stations: Bicester North has frequent services between London Marylebone and Birmingham; Bicester Town currently has a limited service to Oxford.

The Chilterns Railways’ Evergreen 3 proposals will include significant improvements at Bicester Town to cater for the introduction of services to London from Oxford - this requires the construction of a new chord between the two lines as they cross in the town. The East West Rail proposals would also serve Bicester Town and so link Bicester with Oxford and Science vale to the south and Milton Keynes to the east.

Bicester has many walking and cycling routes (although not a complete network) and the town’s layout can be difficult to navigate especially for visitors.
Strategy

Behaviour Change – We will promote behaviour change through the Bicester Travel Behaviour Project, working with employers that have high car trip rates to understand current travel patterns, and looking for opportunities to change travel to work patterns. We will also continue to work with the schools to update their school travel plans.

Walking & Cycling – We will create and improve pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the town, promote the public realm enhancements to the Market Square and improve the street environment for pedestrians and cyclists at key destinations and employment sites. There is a good range of public rights of way that connect Bicester to the surrounding countryside, but the network is disjointed in many places where paths meet the road network.

Buses – A rapid bus route is proposed between the development site at northwest Bicester and the town centre, bringing Bicester area bus stops up to Premium Route standard. We will also deliver bus infrastructure and priority to improve bus reliability on the A41 corridor and create a park and ride facility adjacent to the A41 (subject to demand assessment). Other aims include investigation of new electric/hybrid vehicles on key routes such as the exemplar site at northwest Bicester and securing developer contributions to enhance the routeing and frequencies of local bus services.

Low Emission Vehicles – We will introduce charging points for electric vehicles in the town through the “Plugged in Places” project, including routes where electric buses run. We will also work with local organisations to encourage the use of lower carbon emission vehicles.

Rail – We will work closely with Chiltern Railways and other partners to ensure that travel by foot, bike, bus, and car share are the main means of accessing rail in Bicester. Use of sustainable travel options for journeys with an origin within Bicester is to be significant so that car travel to the stations is kept to a minimum. We will support the upgrade of Bicester Town station, working with the East West Rail consortium to provide a new link to
Milton Keynes and Bedford (and direct services to Didcot Parkway and Reading).

We will also ensure delivery of high quality public transport from the development at northwest Bicester to Bicester North and Bicester Town stations, including better cycle routes and improved cycle parking, plus the development of a bus interchange at Bicester Town.

Highway Infrastructure and Traffic Management – We will work with the developers of North West Bicester to promote integration with the existing town, incorporating Eco Bicester principles to promote safer, more sustainable and healthier modes of travel. This will include reducing the attractiveness of Howes Lane and Lords Lane for through traffic and investigating improvements to the Eastern Perimeter route to provide through traffic with a viable and attractive alternative to the central corridor.

We will also work with the developers of South West Bicester to ensure delivery of the South-West Bicester Perimeter Road and with the Highways Agency to ensure delivery of improvements to M40 Junction 9 and investigate the need to improve M40 Junction 10 and its approaches. We will deliver the second phase of Roman Road improvements to complete reconstruction of the road from the new A41 roundabout link to the turn to the Chesterton over bridge. We will also conduct a traffic signage review on the strategic road network particularly from A41, A4095 and A4421 of signage to Bicester to remove clutter and ensure the routeing is correct.

This Area Strategy replaces the Bicester Integrated Transport & Land Use Study (BicITLUS) (2000). Planning obligation contributions secured to mitigate the impacts of development towards BicITLUS will be able to be used on the LTP3 Bicester Area Strategy and be in accordance with the planning obligations.
Science Vale UK

The Science Vale UK area encompasses the settlements of Didcot, Wantage and Grove, and the employment centres of Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, Milton Park and Culham Science Centre. Science Vale UK is the national science and innovation location and includes a world class concentration of cutting edge research that is unrivalled anywhere in the UK. Alongside this are science and business parks with a wide range of businesses successful in commercialising new technology across a wide range of sectors.

Didcot is a large town with a population of approximately 28,000 residents located 17 miles south of Oxford and 19 miles northwest of Reading. The Parkway rail station has frequent links to Oxford, London, the West Country and South Wales as well as connections to further afield. Road connections to the nearby A34 are also good. Housing development has been rapid since the 1980s and the town will continue to increase in size to a possible population of 45,000 by 2026.

Wantage is an historic market town, the second largest settlement in the Vale of White Horse district (population approximately 10,000) and a shopping and service centre for the central part of the Vale. It is located 18 miles south west of Oxford and 18 miles east of Swindon. Grove is a large village a mile north of Wantage with a population of approximately 8,000. Major housing development took place in the 1960s but without the provision of the range and quality of services a settlement of this size would normally expect.

The success of Science Vale UK is due in part to its advantageous location with good accessibility to all parts of the UK and international links via the south east airports. The A34 provides north-south connections to the national road network and the A417 provides east-west links between Didcot and Wantage & Grove and the major employment sites.

Premium Route bus services are already provided on a commercial basis between Wantage, Grove, Abingdon and Oxford; and between Didcot, Abingdon and Oxford. Bus services between Didcot, Wantage, Grove and the
employment sites are less frequent, but provide essential links between residential areas and the major employment sites in Science Vale UK.

Didcot Parkway station, the Orchard Shopping Centre and Wantage Market Place are key locations for interchange between bus services and other modes. Didcot Parkway is currently being reconstructed to a much higher standard; there are opportunities to improve facilities at Wantage; we consider it vital that through bus facilities are retained at the Orchard Centre as the centre expands in the future.

Challenges

There are significant pressures on the road network and these are likely to increase. The Science Vale UK area is heavily reliant on the A34 to provide access between housing and employment and, as demand on the A34 has steadily increased, local traffic has increasingly found alternative routes through the local road network. Key junctions on the road network within Science Vale UK are already operating at or close to capacity.
A key challenge is the proposed major growth of jobs and homes within Science Vale - up to 14,000 homes and 13,000 jobs could be provided over the next 15 years.

The lack of well signed and joined up pedestrian routes within the towns and villages (particularly between residential areas and key facilities, amenities and the surrounding countryside) is a significant problem. The same applies to cycle routes and infrastructure in many parts of Science Vale UK, limiting the scope for modal shift from car travel, particularly for commuting.

**Strategy**

The key aim of the strategy for Science Vale UK is to make the area more self-contained by providing the services they need within the area and making east-west movement across the area easier. The main elements of the transport strategy for Science Vale UK include:

**Highway Infrastructure** – There are several strategic highway schemes (Harwell Strategic Link Road, Harwell Field Link Road, Rowstock Western Link Road, improvements to Featherbed Lane junctions, Wantage Eastern Link Road). Other significant proposals include a new link road north of Grove in association with development at the airfield and Didcot Northern Perimeter Road – Phase 3. We will also assess improvements to Cow Lane tunnel and capacity improvements at the Jubilee Way roundabout in Didcot.

**Public Transport** – We will work with the local bus companies and developers to improve the frequency and attractiveness of the existing Premium Route and strategic east-west bus services between Wantage, Grove and Didcot. We will work with the rail industry to extend Didcot Parkway car park and provide a fully accessible pedestrian link to the station interchange. We will seek the introduction of new rail station(s) at Grove and/or Milton Park and of East West Rail services at Didcot Parkway.

**Walking & cycling** – We will improve walking and cycling networks within Wantage, Grove and Didcot and develop the identified strategic cycle schemes between these settlements and the major employment sites. We will also improve
connections to rural rights of way, schools and other key destinations and provide safe and secure cycle parking within the town centres and at key local services.

**Behavioural Change** – We will identify the businesses that generate high trip rates and traffic and work with them to develop and implement workplace travel plans. This will involve exploring current travel to work modes and travel opportunities with a particular focus on reducing car use and promoting walking and cycling.

The strategic highway schemes are only likely to be realised if they are successful in attracting substantial contributions from developments in the area and major scheme funding support from the government. New railway stations at Grove and/or Milton Park would require support from the rail industry.

**Witney**

Witney is the largest town in West Oxfordshire. It has seen significant growth over the past 30 years and now has a population of approximately 25,000. It is located 13.5 miles west of Oxford, just off the A40 between Oxford and Cheltenham. It has good links by car and bus to other major towns, but is not on the rail network. Witney is the most sustainable location for housing in the district.

**Challenges**

Bridge Street in the centre of Witney has an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) declared. Over 10,000 vehicles a day use Bridge Street - the only river crossing for vehicles in the town - resulting in serious congestion, the main cause of annual mean levels of nitrogen dioxide exceeding the national objective level in some parts of the town.

Despite an extensive pedestrian network, some of the most convenient routes for pedestrians and cyclists are not clear, particularly through residential areas. Within Witney high
levels of traffic and on-street parking can deter pedestrians and cyclists.

There is scope to increase accessibility to buses by the development of new or existing routes that would make bus travel a more attractive transport choice from all parts of the town. Journey time reliability between Oxford and Witney is very variable; this is caused by significant congestion on the A40 between Witney and Oxford and within Witney itself.

**Strategy**

**Highway Infrastructure and Traffic Management** – The county, district and town councils all support the provision of a second river crossing in the town to reduce traffic levels and improve air quality by providing the Cogges Link Road between Witney Way and Oxford Hill. A new junction on the A40 at Downs Road will be facilitated by development at North Curbridge, the preferred direction of further growth for the town, to further improve access to the town. In addition to this we will investigate the need for additional schemes such as West End Link Road Stage 2. Significant contributions from developers are available for the construction of the Cogges Link Road; the other schemes will progress if significant development likely to provide funding for them comes forward.

**Walking and cycling** – It is important to improve existing walking and cycling facilities (including signage) and to develop and promote new routes. In some instances Witney’s urban foot and cycle paths do not link particularly well with rights of way and rural footpaths. There are some good cycle routes in existence but there are some gaps in infrastructure, particularly linking to nearby settlements.

We will create formal walking routes to key facilities from residential areas by providing signage and improved crossing points, with better connections to the rights of way network. We will also support development in the town centre to improve conditions for pedestrians with better surfaces and crossings. We will enhance facilities for cyclists and provide additional cycle infrastructure; this will include investigating the case for a new Witney-Carterton cycle route.
Public Transport – We will improve walking and cycling routes to existing bus stops and provide cycle stands and new shelters at bus stops. We will also investigate a park & ride site at Eynsham and develop new or existing bus routes to make bus travel a more attractive transport choice from all parts of the town, including a possible Railbus link to Hanborough station from the main residential areas of Witney.

Behavioural Change – We will identify employers and schools with high car trip rates that are contributing to traffic problems in the area and then work with them to produce and implement travel plans.

This Area Strategy replaces the Witney Integrated Transport & Land Use Study (WITLUS) (2003). Planning obligation contributions secured to mitigate the impacts of development towards WITLUS will be able to be used on the LTP3 Witney Area Strategy and be in accordance with the planning obligations.

Carterton
Carterton is the second largest town in West Oxfordshire with a population of 16,000. It is located 7 miles from Witney, 18 miles from Oxford and 20 miles from Swindon. Carterton grew rapidly following the development of RAF Brize Norton. The Ministry of Defence seeks to strengthen the strategic importance of RAF Brize Norton and significant increases in both military operations and personnel are expected. Carterton has been identified as a high priority area due to the development at RAF Brize Norton and Carterton.

The main routes into Carterton from the strategic road network are the B4477 and B4020 from the A40. There is a good bus service from Carterton to Oxford via Witney, but more limited bus connections to surrounding villages. There is no direct rail access to the town. The town’s network of walking routes needs improvement. The width of some footways and their surface treatment are not attractive for pedestrians to use and urban paths do not link particularly well with rights of way and rural footpaths. There are limited cycle routes and cycle infrastructure.
Strategy
Highway infrastructure and traffic management - examine the options available to better connect Carterton to the strategic transport network; identify the transport implications of expansion at RAF Brize Norton and conduct a traffic signage review on the strategic road network.

Public Transport - work with partners to improve the frequency and attractiveness of local bus services; provide high quality bus stops on the Witney-Carterton route; investigate options to enhance the Witney to Swindon bus route to a commercial service; provide good walking and cycling routes to existing bus stops and provide cycle stands at bus stops, where appropriate.

Walking and Cycling - improve facilities for pedestrians through widening, providing dropped kerbs and improved crossing points; develop schemes to provide a high quality cycle network; publicising and promoting routes.

Chipping Norton
Chipping Norton is a historic market town with a population of 5,700 which lies on the A44 approximately 20 miles north west of Oxford. Surrounded by an extensive rural hinterland and being relatively remote from larger towns, Chipping Norton acts as a service centre for up to 40 local villages, including parts of Warwickshire and Gloucestershire.

There are hourly bus services to Oxford, Witney and Banbury, and a 2 hourly service to Stratford-upon-Avon. Chipping Norton does not have a railway station but there is a dedicated railbus to Kingham Station. There is a good range of public rights of way that connect the town to its surrounding countryside and settlements.

Chipping Norton lies on the A44, a heavily used lorry route to and from the Evesham area, and the A361. The constrained nature of the route through the town has led to an Air Quality Management Area being designated along the A44 through the town.
**Strategy**

**Traffic management** – deliver HGV relief to the town centre of Chipping Norton; encourage use of low emission vehicles as technology advances; conduct a review of traffic signage review to remove clutter and ensure the routeing is correct; investigate further network management improvements.

**Public transport** – work with partners to improve the attractiveness and frequency of bus services to Oxford and Banbury; provide real-time information, improve bus stops and provide new stops; enhance the Kingham *Railbus* service.

**Walking & cycling** - identify potential schemes to improve pedestrian legibility, way finding and permeability; develop potential schemes which could provide a high quality cycle network; improve connections to the rights of way network; identify locations for cycle parking, including bus stops.

**Faringdon**

Faringdon is a market town in the Vale of White Horse with a population of approximately 6,000. It is situated 19 miles southwest of Oxford and 13 miles northeast of Swindon. The A420 (which is mainly single carriageway with limited stretches of dual carriageway) is situated to the south and east of Faringdon and provides good links to other towns.

The road network in the town centre is narrow and can easily become congested with on-street parking and/or the presence of large vehicles.

Faringdon has good bus links to Oxford, Swindon and Wantage and minor services to local villages; there is no rail station. There is a good range of public rights of way that connect Faringdon to the surrounding countryside.

There are poor footways and cycling connections linking the residential areas of the town to key facilities and amenities. There are a number of footways that narrow and would benefit
Strategy

Traffic management - consider traffic calming measures to reduce speeds; investigate improvements to Park Road roundabout; review the signage within Cornmarket to aid movement for all modes.

Public transport - improve manoeuvrability for buses in the town centre; work with bus operators to improve the existing Swindon-Oxford bus services and services to other surrounding areas.

Cycling and Walking - improve wayfinding by creating formal walking routes to key facilities; develop a high quality cycle network; publicise and promote walking and cycling routes (e.g. Regional Cycle Route 40); improve connections to the rights of way network.

Henley-on-Thames

Henley-on-Thames is an historic town on the River Thames within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It lies 24 miles southeast of Oxford, 9 miles northeast of Reading and 12 miles southwest of High Wycombe. It has a population of 11,000. The town has a good selection of services and facilities and experiences commuting from surrounding villages to access them.

The road network suffers from high levels of traffic which have to pass through the town centre on the A4155 or A4130. An Air Quality Management Area was declared in 2002 in the town centre. Town centre traffic schemes have helped reduced the levels of pollution, but they still exceed the national air quality objective level. The town has a rail station with some direct trains to London and regular services to Oxford, Reading and London via the main line at Twyford. There are hourly buses to Wallingford, for connections to Oxford and half hourly buses to Reading and High Wycombe. There are good but limited walking and cycling routes.
**Strategy**

**Traffic Management** - encourage the use of lower emissions vehicles; improve signage within the town; investigate parking and loading restrictions; investigate traffic management measures.

**Walking and cycling** - improve facilities for all through developing good clear routes around the town; develop a high quality cycle network to make sure urban links join up with rights of way; additional cycle parking locations.

**Public transport** – work towards increased services to Reading and High Wycombe; new bus stops and laybys; improved bus stops; increased promotion of “Regatta Line” (railway line to Twyford).

This strategy replaces the Henley Integrated Transport Strategy (HenITS) 2004/2005. Planning obligation contributions secured to mitigate the impacts of development, towards HenITS, will be able to be used on the LTP3 Henley-on-Thames Area Strategy.

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**Kidlington**

Kidlington is a large village situated on the main Oxford to Banbury Road (A4160/A4165) and is 5 miles north of Oxford and 7.5 miles south west of Bicester. Together with the adjoining village of Gosford it has a population of around 17,500. Kidlington is home to some major employers, including the headquarters of the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Thames Valley Police, St. John Ambulance, and publishing company Elsevier UK office. London Oxford airport is also just to the north of the village.

Shops and services are predominantly concentrated in the centre of the village. In addition to shops and offices within the main part of the village, Kidlington has an expanding office and commercial area along Langford Lane to the north of the village. The Langford Locks area has a thriving business community that attracts businesses from all industry sectors; the whole area employs nearly 4000 workers. Opposite is Langford Business Parks and Oxford Motor Park.
The A4260 runs through the middle of Kidlington, with the A34 and A44 close by. Bicester Road junction towards the A34 is likely to be declared an Air Quality Management Area in the near future and all major junctions along the A4260 regularly suffer from delays during peak times.

Kidlington is very well served by buses linking it with a frequent service to Oxford city centre. Access from some villages and other parts of Oxford is less good, and there are poor interchange arrangements for rail. However, there are opportunities for good links with rail at the proposed Water Eaton station south of the village.

National Cycle Route 51 starts in Oxford and heads towards Bicester, routeing through Oxfordshire villages including Kidlington. There is a good range of public rights of way that connect Kidlington to the surrounding countryside.

There are gaps in the network of walking and cycling routes and inadequate footway width and surface, as well as pedestrian safety, are key issues. The heavy through traffic and a large amount of buses restricts cycling along the major north-south route of Oxford/Banbury Road by. Cycling infrastructure across many areas of Kidlington could also be improved.

**Strategy**

**Public Transport** – develop a direct rapid bus link from Kidlington and/or Water Eaton Station to serve Oxford’s Eastern Arc; improve bus services to and from London Oxford Airport; extend the Banbury Road bus lane towards the Bicester Road signals, should the need arise; investigate options for improving journey time reliability for bus services using Bicester Road (C43); promote opportunities to travel by bus between Kidlington, Oxford and the new Water Eaton station, including smarter ticketing; install cycle racks at appropriate bus stops.

**Traffic management** – work with Chiltern Railways to maximise sustainable travel to the proposed Water Eaton Station, thus minimising potential congestion; review the need for further traffic management measures once the new station
is operational; conduct a traffic signage review on the road network particularly from the A44, A40 and A34 of signage to Kidlington to remove clutter and ensure the routing is correct; encourage the use of low emission vehicles as technology advances come forward.

**Walking & Cycling** - improve the pedestrian environment in Kidlington; support schemes for wider footways and pedestrian crossings; promote opportunities for walking and cycling from Kidlington to the new Water Eaton station; develop schemes which will provide a high quality cycle network, including improved links to the business parks and London Oxford Airport; join up the walking and cycling network to public rights of way so that routes for commuting and recreation are improved; increase cycle parking; investigate cycle and pedestrian crossings on Bicester Road and Garden City and an Exeter Hall cycle route.

### Thame

Thame is a market town with a population of around 10,000, located 10 miles southwest of Aylesbury and 15 miles east of Oxford. It is situated north of the M40; the A418 to the and west east and the A329 to the south of the town provide road links to the strategic road network.

Thame’s nearest rail station is at Haddenham & Thame Parkway which is located around 2.5 miles from Thame in Buckinghamshire. There is a good range of public rights of way that connect Thame to the surrounding countryside. There is a good bus service through Thame to Oxford and Aylesbury and an hourly service to High Wycombe. Infrequent services run from Thame to the nearby villages. The Phoenix Trail provides a walking and cycling route to Princes Risborough which forms part of the National Cycle Route 57.

### Strategy

**Public Transport** - improve the accessibility of bus services in Thame by providing new stop locations, pedestrian crossings and safe walking routes; improve the frequency and
attractiveness of the bus services to Oxford, Aylesbury and High Wycombe; explore opportunities to better coordinate rail/bus connections at Thame & Haddenham Parkway.

**Traffic Management** - develop and implement a car parking strategy for on and off street car parks; investigate the introduction of one-way traffic northbound on Nelson Street; conduct a signage review of Thame town centre, bypass & strategic road network, in order to route strategic through traffic via the bypass and route town centre traffic on the most appropriate route.

**Walking & Cycling** – improve pedestrian facilities; explore new and improved crossing points in town centre to identify where road space can be re-allocated as pedestrian space; improve way finding by creating formal walking routes to key facilities; investigate route and funding potential for improved cycle access to Haddenham & Thame Parkway Station in Bucks; develop schemes which will provide a high quality cycle network; join up the cycling network across the wider area using public rights of way.

**Wallingford**

Wallingford is a market town on the River Thames with a population of around 8,000. It is located 13 miles south of Oxford and 14 miles northwest of Reading close to both the Wessex Downs and Chiltern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There is a concentration of shops and services within the town centre, and significant employment at the Hithercroft Industrial Estate.

Wallingford bypass was completed in 1993 and relieves Wallingford town centre of through-traffic by encouraging traffic to remain on the A4130 and A4074 rather than travel through the town. However, in 2006 South Oxfordshire District Council declared an Air Quality Management Area within Wallingford, centred on the Lamb Crossroads. Traffic, especially queueing traffic at Lamb Crossroads and crossing Wallingford Bridge, has been identified as the main cause of the air pollution within the town.

The pedestrian environment within Wallingford town centre is considered poor compared to the attractive setting and
architecture of the town. The narrow footways often inhibit walking through conflict between pedestrian space and road space. Across Wallingford there are limited dedicated cycle routes and cycle infrastructure, particularly within the town centre, but also to access key local facilities and employment areas. A high quantity of on-street parking also inhibits cycling.

Wallingford does not have a rail station. However, Cholsey Station is only around 3 miles from the centre of Wallingford and is accessible by bus, cycling and private car. The station is on the main Oxford to Reading line with trains in both directions every 30 minutes.

Currently the Market Place is home to the town centre bus stops. There are half hourly services to Oxford and Reading and hourly services to Didcot and Henley-on-Thames. There is a good range of public rights of way that connect Wallingford to the surrounding countryside. However, there is no attractive link, or adequate signage, from the town centre to the River Thames or Thames Path.

**Strategy**

**Traffic Management** - ensure through-traffic is directed on the A4130/A4074 bypass by reviewing signage; conduct a review of signage on the entrances to the town, to ensure key destinations are signed for traffic to take the most appropriate route; work in conjunction with the district council to review and implement a joined up car parking strategy for all the town's car parks; ensure that car park signs are clear and direct to the most appropriate car park; improve the balance between pedestrians, cyclists and traffic in the town centre to enhance the street environment; investigate traffic calming measures throughout north Wallingford to control vehicle movements in town centre.

**Walking and Cycling** - conduct a study into options to improve the pedestrian environment in Wallingford and in particular at Lamb crossroads, the Market Place, St Martins Street, St Mary’s Street and St Leonard’s Square; examine the options to provide a clear pedestrian link between the Thames Path and the town centre; develop schemes which will provide a high quality cycle network; construct a cycle route between
Chosley and Wallingford providing the cost can be met by developer contributions; conduct a feasibility study into options of providing cycle routes between the town centre and the Hithercroft Industrial Estate, along with the surrounding areas including Didcot; increase cycle parking; improve signage and links to rural rights of way footpaths and bridleways.

Public Transport - improve quality of bus stop infrastructure and information at the Market Place bus stops; work with bus operators to upgrade the Oxford - Reading bus services to at least 4 buses per hour; work with bus operators to link Wallingford to Didcot with a half hourly service; improve bus services to other surrounding areas; ensure good bus access at all times to Market Street; improve walking and cycling infrastructure to access public transport.

Rural Areas

Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural county – the least densely populated in the south east. Rural Oxfordshire encompasses a wide variety of different settings from the high Cotswolds to the Vale of White Horse, from isolated hamlets to small towns. Around 80% of the county is managed for agriculture and the county includes three extensive areas of outstanding natural beauty, four national nature reserves and 109 sites of special scientific interest.

There are many small communities in rural Oxfordshire. Of the 308 parishes with a population below 10,000 people, three quarters have fewer than 1,000 residents. Rural areas also cover a number of large villages and smaller towns (including settlements such as Bampton, Berinsfield, Burford, Charlbury, Chinnor, Eynsham, Goring, Sonning Common, Watlington, Wheatley and Woodstock) which provide some local services although the range of retail and other services in villages and small towns, like these, has declined in recent years.
Rural areas are disproportionately affected by increases in fuel and transport costs. Businesses and services in rural areas benefit from low congestion, but face increasing access problems and increasing running costs. There are social, economic and environmental pressures which have and will continue to affect and change life in rural communities in Oxfordshire and worsen the isolation of vulnerable groups.

We recognise that there are smaller settlements with transport issues and that where these problems are of sufficient concern then tailored solutions will need to be identified. General transport issues include:

* high levels of through-traffic on narrow rural roads (particularly on A and B roads);
* high levels of lorry traffic on unsuitable rural roads, which causes negative environmental impacts such as vibration, noise and visual intrusion;
* limited parking availability and/or inappropriate parking;
* limited access to bus services; and
* poor provision for pedestrians, with limited connectivity to public rights of way and some areas of countryside.

We have appointed an Area Steward for each district to understand local views on transport and become a point of contact between us and local communities. Area Stewards are developing detailed knowledge of transport issues in rural communities and will continue to liaise with local partners and interest groups regarding transport improvements. We will consider and support viable community-led proposals that are consistent with wider transport policy, help to improve access to services and tackle common rural transport issues, such as local congestion.

**Strategy**

**Roads** - We have no plans for major highway improvements in the rural parts of the county over the life of this Plan. We do currently "protect" the lines of two rural bypasses, Marcham Bypass and Sutton Bypass, but only on the basis that these may be necessary to allow development in adjacent areas and we would expect them to be funded in large part by those developments. Proposals for the change in the status of roads, either in terms of its place in the road hierarchy would need to be justified in terms of meeting our overall LTP3
objectives in a cost-effective way and without causing problems on other routes. We will generally not look on environmental weight limits as a suitable permanent solution to local problems, such as high levels of lorry traffic. Freight advisory routes can sometimes provide a more appropriate, pro-active solution to problems caused by freight on rural roads and will be implemented where appropriate.

We will continue to support reductions in the speed limit on single carriageway rural roads from 60 to 50mph, and the introduction of 20mph zones in settlements, should the experience of 20mph speed limits in Oxford indicate that this is worthwhile. Locally led and funded solutions for mitigating problems caused by high levels of through traffic may be appropriate in some cases.

**Buses** - Oxfordshire has a very good rural bus network county and we would wish this to continue. Our aspiration for rural buses is for improved services on key routes between towns and to retain a basic county bus network in other areas. New remote park and ride sites may provide a model for commercially viable rural bus services. We need to explore other ways public subsidised rural bus services can be delivered in more financially viable ways. Community-led approaches may have an increasing role in improving accessibility in rural communities. There is a need for better marketing and promotion to enable best use of them to be made. Better bus stops will be rolled out across the county as resources allow and we would welcome working with local communities to provide better bus shelters or other facilities.

**Rail** – Access to passenger rail services is uneven across the county, but where rail lines do exist they offer the chance to access services without adding to problems on rural roads. During the period covered by this Plan we would wish to see improved rail services as a result of the Evergreen 3 and East West Rail proposals, and also improved services on the Cotswold Line. The main focus of our work will be to improve access to rail stations including greater integration between bus and rail services. The exact schemes appropriate for each station will depend on the stations location and locality, in particular the condition and standard of local roads but, where appropriate, we will consider: better parking to increase
the attractiveness of stations, better walking and cycling links to stations from nearby villages.

Walking & Cycling - We will look to improve connections from villages to the rights of way network, where this is justified by actual or potential use. We will also look to improve connections between villages, and from villages to nearby towns, where this is justified by actual or potential use. This could involve converting footpaths to allow for use by cycles or the creation of new routes. If resources allow we will develop rural cycle routes. These would take the form of signed routes on less busy roads, usually connected to the National Cycle Network or other existing cycle routes. In appropriate cases we will consider converting rights of way to cycle use. Activities to encourage walking, cycling and public transport, such as information provision, cycle training and travel planning will be used in rural areas.

Inter-urban Corridors

Oxfordshire’s key inter-urban corridors carry a mixture of trip ‘types’, longer-distance trips as well as shorter ones between local settlements. Journey types in a corridor can therefore be categorised as:

* long journeys use the corridor or part of the corridor for part of a longer trip;

* inter-settlement journeys are those between two key settlements or employment areas located on a transport link (road or rail) within the corridor; and

* local journeys using a major transport corridor for part of a short journey.

There are eight key inter-urban corridors within the county each with its own strategy to help tackle problems and challenges that have been identified, as follows:

Oxford-Banbury corridor - reduce congestion at Cutteslowe Roundabout; better manage traffic on approaches to Oxford; improve access to Water Eaton Park & Ride; support the proposed Water Eaton rail station; increase bus priority;
investigate cycle and pedestrian routes along the corridor. **Oxford-Bicester corridor** - better manage traffic volumes on A34; investigate options for park and ride from Bicester and bus priority; support proposals for improvement of M40 Junction 9; support proposals for Evergreen 3 and East West rail improvements.

**Oxford-Wheatley-Thame-Aylesbury corridor** – provide an attractive alternative to car travel along this corridor; provide increased capacity at Thornhill Park & Ride and eastbound bus priority at Thornhill; improvements to public transport services in Oxford’s ‘Eastern Arc’ will help to make bus travel in this corridor more attractive by improving connecting bus services onward to other areas of the city.

**Oxford-Wallingford-Henley/Reading corridor** - improve traffic management on Oxford southern bypass; increased capacity at Kennington and Heyford Hill roundabouts; encourage use of local bus services and improving public transport infrastructure.

**Oxford-Abingdon-Didcot-Newbury corridor** – work with Highways Agency to better manage traffic on the A34 and implement improvements to flow at Hinksey Hill interchange; encourage people to make journeys by alternative modes; explore opportunities to deliver Park & Ride sites at locations more remote from Oxford, particularly to relieve pressure on the A34; support upgrading the route between the south coast and West Midlands to accommodate larger freight containers; support East West Rail and Great Western electrification.

**Oxford-Grove-Wantage-Faringdon-Swindon corridor** - better manage traffic on A420; support proposals for new rail station at Grove with attractive service to Oxford; work to improve attractiveness of bus services to Oxford from Wantage and Swindon, including better bus stops and crossing points at appropriate locations.

**Oxford-Eynsham-Witney-Carterton corridor** – reduce congestion at Wolvercote Roundabout; investigate Park & Ride at Eynsham, bus priority on approach to Swindford toll bridge and additional capacity on A40; local cycle links from Carterton to Witney and Eynsham to Oxford (via Botley).

**Oxford-Woodstock-Chipping Norton corridor** - reduce congestion and investigate bus priority on approach to Oxford; improve bus stops to premium route standards; improve access to Cotswold Line stations.
This document is a summary of the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2030. More details of the policies and strategies are included in the full document which can be found at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ltp.

It is intended that the Plan and programme will be reviewed and updated annually.

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