



To: Members of the Cabinet

Notice of a Meeting of the Cabinet

Tuesday, 23 May 2023 at 2.00 pm

Rooms 1&2 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

If you wish to view proceedings online, please click on this [Live Stream Link](#).

Martin Reeves
Chief Executive

May 2023

Committee Officer: Chris Reynolds

Tel: 07542 029441; E-Mail: chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Membership

Councillors

Liz Leffman	Leader of the Council
Liz Brighthouse OBE	Deputy Leader of the Council
Glynis Phillips	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Dr Pete Sudbury	Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery & Environment
Tim Bearder	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
Duncan Enright	Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy
Calum Miller	Cabinet Member for Finance
Jenny Hannaby	Cabinet Member for Community Services and Safety
Mark Lygo	Cabinet Member for Public Health & Equality
Andrew Gant	Cabinet Member for Highway Management

The Agenda is attached. Decisions taken at the meeting will become effective at the end of the working day on unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee. Copies of this Notice, Agenda and supporting papers are circulated to all Members of the County Council.

Date of next meeting: 20 June 2023



AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

- guidance note below

3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 12)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2023 (**CA3**) and to receive information arising from them.

4. Questions from County Councillors

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am two working days before the meeting, ask a question on any matter in respect of the Cabinet's delegated powers.

The number of questions which may be asked by any councillor at any one meeting is limited to two (or one question with notice and a supplementary question at the meeting) and the time for questions will be limited to 30 minutes in total. As with questions at Council, any questions which remain unanswered at the end of this item will receive a written response.

Questions submitted prior to the agenda being despatched are shown below and will be the subject of a response from the appropriate Cabinet Member or such other councillor or officer as is determined by the Cabinet Member, and shall not be the subject of further debate at this meeting. Questions received after the despatch of the agenda, but before the deadline, will be shown on the Schedule of Addenda circulated at the meeting, together with any written response which is available at that time.

5. Petitions and Public Address

Members of the public who wish to speak at this meeting can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection.

To facilitate 'hybrid' meetings we are asking that requests to speak or present a petition are submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting i.e., 9am on <<DATE>>. Requests to speak should be sent to colm.o'caomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk

If you are speaking 'virtually', you may submit a written statement of your presentation to ensure that your views are taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be

provided no later than 9am 2 working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

6. Cabinet response to report from People Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Home to School Transport Policy Working Group (Pages 13 - 24)

Report by the Corporate Director for Children's Services and the Corporate Director for Environment and Place

In February 2022 the authority set up a Home to School Transport Working Group to review OCC's School Transport policies and to make recommendations to People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee received that report on 30 March 2023 and they in turn provided a report for Cabinet's consideration on 18 April 2023. This report considers in detail each recommendation

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is recommended to approve the approaches presented in paragraph 7 of the report.

7. Reports from Scrutiny Committees (Pages 25 - 30)

Cabinet will receive the following Scrutiny report:-

- Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Future of Retail and the High Street

8. Financial Management Report 2023/24 (Pages 31 - 40)

Cabinet Member: Finance

Forward Plan Ref: 2023/050

Contact: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy, Kathy.Wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Finance (**CA8**)

To note and seek agreement of the report and any recommendations.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

- a) agree the virements in Annex 1a and supplementary estimate request in Annex 1c and note the virements in Annex 1b.**
- b) note the additional one-off funding of £5.0m in 2023/24, notified since the budget was agreed by Council on 14 February 2023.**
- c) noting the inflation and demand pressures contributing to the forecast overspend of £14.4m set out in the Business Management & Monitoring Report to Cabinet in March 2023, agree to top up general balances to the 2023/24 risk assessed level of £30.2m depending on the year end position for 2022/23.**
- d) agree to transfer the remaining additional funding expected for 2023/24 to the corporate contingency budget.**

- e) agree the update to High Needs DSG budgets following the Education and Skills Funding Agency's approval of the transfer of £2.3m funding from the Schools Block to High Needs.

9. Proposal From OUFC to OCC As Landowner: Arrangements for engagement (Pages 41 - 68)

Cabinet Member: Finance

Forward Plan Ref: 2023/081

Contact: Susannah Wintersgill, Director Strategy, Insight & Communications,
susannah.wintersgill@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development & Resources (CA9).

Paper setting out final arrangements for engagement.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

- (a) **Note the progress set out in the report below.**
- (b) **Note the feedback from the stakeholder meetings held during April and May (annex 1).**
- (c) **Amend the seven strategic priorities following stakeholder feedback as set out in paragraph 16 below.**
- (d) **Agree the approach to the second phase of public engagement as set out in annex 2.**

10. Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy (Pages 69 - 150)

Cabinet Members: Travel & Development Strategy; Climate Change Delivery & Environment; Highway Management

Forward Plan Ref: 2023/051

Contacts: Joe Kay, Strategic Transport Lead, joseph.kay@oxfordshire.gov.uk; Katharine Eveleigh, Health Improvement Practitioner, katharine.eveleigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Corporate Director Environment & Place (CA10).

To seek approval of the OCC Air Quality Strategy.

Cabinet are RECOMMENDED to

Approve the Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy and Route Map for launch on Clean Air Day (15th June 2023).

11. Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Pages 151 - 160)

Cabinet Member: Climate Change Delivery & Environment
Forward Plan Ref: 2023/049
Contact: Beccy Micklem, Principal Biodiversity Officer,
beccy.micklem@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Corporate Director Environment & Place (**CA11**).

To approve Oxfordshire County Council's acceptance of its appointment as Responsible Authority for the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, subject to the associated funding being considered by officers as sufficient and the Regulations and Guidance implementable and approve the Governance Structure for the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

- a) note Oxfordshire County Council's anticipated appointment as Responsible Authority for the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- b) approve the Governance Structure for the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

12. Appointments 2023/2024 (Pages 161 - 172)

Cabinet Member: Leader
Forward Plan Ref: 2022/221
Contact: Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer, 07393 001096

Report by Director of Law & Governance (**CA12**).

To consider member appointments to a variety of bodies which in different ways support the discharge of the Council's Executive functions.

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to agree the appointments to the bodies set out in the Annex to this report.

13. Capital Programme Approvals - May 2023 (Pages 173 - 178)

Cabinet Member: Finance
Forward Plan Ref: 2023/005
Contact: Belinda Dimmock-Smith, Capital Programme Manager,
belinda.dimmocksmith@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Finance (**CA13**).

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) **approve the revised budget provision of £11.2m for Wantage Eastern Link Road (Section 3).**

- b) approve the addition £2.7m road safety works in the vicinity of RAF Barford St John and RAF Croughton to the capital programme.
- c) approve the addition of £4.0m of the £5.0m pipeline funding agreed in February 2023 to the capital programme to support the Vision Zero Delivery Programme.
- d) approve the revised budget provision of £23.1m for the delivery of the new secondary school at Grove Airfield.
- e) approve the revised budget provision of £9.3m for the completion of works at Blessed George Napier School, Banbury.
- f) approve the addition of £0.8m to the programme to create an Energy Efficiency Recycling Fund for Oxfordshire County Council Maintained Schools.

14. Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 179 - 184)

Cabinet Member: All

Contact Officer: Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer Tel: 07393 001096

The Cabinet Procedure Rules provide that the business of each meeting at the Cabinet is to include “updating of the Forward Plan and proposals for business to be conducted at the following meeting”. Items from the Forward Plan for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet appear in the Schedule at **CA 14**. This includes any updated information relating to the business for those meetings that has already been identified for inclusion in the next Forward Plan update.

The Schedule is for noting, but Cabinet Members may also wish to take this opportunity to identify any further changes they would wish to be incorporated in the next Forward Plan update.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.

EXEMPT ITEM

In the event that any Member or Officer wishes to discuss the information set out in Annex B to Agenda Item 15, the Cabinet will be invited to resolve to exclude the public for the consideration of the Annex by passing a resolution in relation in the following terms:

"that the public be excluded during the consideration of Annex B since it is likely that if they were present during that discussion there would be a disclosure of "exempt" information as described in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and specified below the item in the Agenda".

NOTE: The report does not contain exempt information and is available to the public.

THE ANNEX TO THE ITEM NAMED HAS NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC AND SHOULD BE REGARDED AS ‘CONFIDENTIAL’ BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS ENTITLED TO RECEIVE THEM.

15. A40 Access to Witney - Compulsory Purchase Order (Pages 185 - 370)

Cabinet Member: Travel & Development Strategy

Forward Plan Ref: 2022/012

Contact: Abdul Waraich, Project Manager,

abdul.wairaich@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Corporate Director Environment & Place (CA15).

NB Annex A is published as a Supplementary Document due to its size.

To seek approval of the Statement of Reason and Orders, subject to delegation to officers and to make the Statutory Orders.

The information in this case is exempt in that it falls within the following prescribed categories:

2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

and since it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Annex B containing exempt information under the above paragraph is attached.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) **Confirm that the acquisition of the land identified on the map attached to this report (Annex B) ("the Order Map") being the map accompanying The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure – A40 Access to Witney) Compulsory Purchase Order 2023 ("the CPO") is necessary for highway purposes;**
- b) **Approve the CPO, the Order Map, The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure – A40 Access to Witney) (Side Roads) Order 2023 ("the SRO"), the plan accompanying the SRO ("SRO Plan") all substantially in the form annexed to this report but to delegate to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure following consultation with the Director of Law & Governance, authority to modify them as necessary;**
- c) **Authorise the Director of Law & Governance to make The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure – A40 Access to Witney) Compulsory Purchase Order 2023 pursuant to Sections 239, 240, 246 and 260 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended) and Part II and III of Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 to the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 for the purpose of acquiring the land and interests shown on the Order Map and described in the Schedule to the CPO (or such lesser area of land should this in his opinion be appropriate) to facilitate the improvement of the A40 by the construction of two new west facing slip roads and other necessary related highway improvement works and mitigation on such land and to affix the Common Seal of the Council to the CPO and to the Order Map;**

- d) Authorise the Director of Law & Governance to make The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure – A40 Access to Witney) (Side Roads) Order 2023 pursuant to Section 14 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended) to enable the stopping up of highways and the alteration and improvement of existing highways, and giving authority to the acquisition of necessary land pursuant to the CPO and to affix the Common Seal of the Council to the SRO and to the SRO Plan;**
- e) Authorise the Director of Law & Governance to remove from the CPO any plot (or interest therein) no longer required to be acquired compulsorily, to amend the interests scheduled in the CPO (if so advised) and to request that the Secretary of State makes any modifications to the CPO prior to confirmation as may be appropriate;**
- f) Approve the draft Joint Statement of Reasons (Annex A) for the CPO and the SRO, substantially in the form annexed to this report, but to Authorise the Director of Law & Governance to amend and finalise the draft Joint Statement of Reasons as necessary prior to its submission to the Secretary of State;**
- g) Authorise the Director of Law & Governance to advertise the making of the CPO and the SRO and to submit the CPO and SRO to the Secretary of State for Transport for confirmation, together with authorising the Director of Law & Governance to take all other relevant action thereon to promote the confirmation and/or publication of the CPO and the SRO;**
- h) In the event that any Public Inquiry is convened to consider objections to the CPO and/or SRO and/or planning application (by way of a call-in decision), to authorise the Director of Law & Governance, in consultation with the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to prepare and submit such evidence as is necessary in support of the CPO and/or SRO and/or planning application, including enlisting the assistance of outside consultants, legal advisors and Counsel to assist in the preparation and presentation of such evidence.**
- i) As soon as the CPO and the SRO have been confirmed and become operative, to authorise the Director of Law & Governance to comply with all associated requirements in respect of personal, site and press notices of confirmation and to make, seal and give notice of a General Vesting Declaration (or declarations where more than one is required) under the Compulsory Purchase (Vesting Declarations) Act 1981 and/or to serve Notices to Treat and Notice of Entry in respect of those properties to be acquired compulsorily;**
- j) Authorise the Director of Transport and Infrastructure in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance to negotiate terms with interested parties for the purchase by agreement or payment of compensation in accordance with the Compensation Code in respect of any interests or rights in or over any land included in the CPO and, where appropriate, to agree terms for relocation;**

- k) Authorise the Director of Property in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance to complete the acquisition of such interests or rights and execute their legal transfer to the Council;**
- l) In the event that compensation for the acquisition of land cannot be agreed between the relevant parties, to authorise the Director of Law & Governance to make a reference to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) for determination of such compensation together with such other questions as may be necessary to determine, including the engagement of appropriate external legal advisors and surveyors and other experts, as required;**
- m) In the event that any question of compensation in relation to the acquisition of land is made by way of a reference to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) (whether by the claimant or the Council), to authorise the Director of Law & Governance to take all necessary steps in relation thereto, including advising on the appropriate uses and compensation payable and issuing the appropriate certificates;**
- n) Be notified of the Statutory Blight regime that requires the Council to respond to claims for Statutory Blight pursuant to Part V, Chapter II and Schedule 13 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended);**
- o) In respect of Statutory Blight, delegate authority to the Director for Property Services and the Director of Law & Governance to agree appropriate terms in accordance with statutory provisions; and**
- p) Underwrite the Scheme costs up to a figure of £6.638m and to forward fund any unsecured and/or conditional developer contributions to the Scheme (as may be secured through planning obligations pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)) up to this underwritten sum, as may be necessary in order to enable the Scheme to have certainty of funding and so as not to create any untimely delay in Scheme delivery.**

Councillors declaring interests

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed 'Declarations of Interest' or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your employment; sponsorship (i.e. payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member 'must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself' and that 'you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned'.

Members Code – Other registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your other registerable interests then you must declare an interest. You must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

Other registrable interests include:

- a) Any unpaid directorships

- b) Any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority.
- c) Any body (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.

Members Code – Non-registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under other registrable interests, then you must declare the interest.

In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:

Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

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CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 18 April 2023 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.30pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair
Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Glynis Phillips
Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury
Councillor Tim Bearder
Councillor Duncan Enright
Councillor Calum Miller
Councillor Mark Lygo
Councillor Andrew Gant

Other Members in

Attendance: Councillors David Bartholomew, Donna Ford, John Howson
Dan Levy and Nigel Simpson

Officers:

Whole of meeting:

Martin Reeves, Chief Executive, Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance, Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer, Kevin Gordon, Director of Children's Services, Claire Taylor Director of Customers, Organisational Development and Resources, Chris Reynolds, Committee Officer.

The Cabinet considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting, and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda, reports and schedule, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

47/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hannaby.

48/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

49/23 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record.

50/23 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

See Annex.

51/23 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

5 Petition – “Save our bus seats”

Annalisa Miller

6 Reports from Scrutiny Committees – Home to School Transport Policy Working Group

Grant Cawte
Peter Walker
Katrina Randon
Sarah Obinna
Cllr John Howson

52/23 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 6)

On behalf of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Tom Hudson, Principal Scrutiny Officer introduced the report “Cost of Living Performance”, which summarised the Committee’s consideration of the interventions in place and in development to support those facing challenges with the cost of living and comparing them with LGA advice on the role that Councils should play in this area. He referred to the recommendation regarding regular liaison with Locality meetings on cost-of-living activity.

Councillor Nigel Simpson, Chair of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, introduced the report “Transitions to Adult Social Care” which summarised the Committee’s consideration of Oxfordshire’s approach to supporting young people through their transition into adult services. He referred to the recommendation regarding the potential opportunities for Section 106 capital funding for housing needs.

Councillor Simpson also introduced the report “Children and Adult Social Care Workforce” which summarised the Committee’s consideration of the

children and adults' social care workforce (both internal and external), recruitment and retention challenges and opportunities. He referred to the recommendations the Council introduces a Council-wide staff retention strategy and to develop a partnership approach to key-worker housing with the District Councils.

Councillor Andy Graham, Chair of the Home to School Transport Working Group, introduced the report from the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee which summarised the Working Group's findings from its review of the Home to School Transport Policy. He gave details of the various factors which had led to the 9 recommendations in the report. Councillor Simpson, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee confirmed that the recommendations had been carried with cross-party support.

Councillor Liz Brighthouse, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services responded to the report and thanked Councillor Graham and the members of the Working Group for their work which had led to the recommendations. She made the following points:

- The Council had been provided with information about the alternative bus provision in a number of schools
- There had been considerable work on mitigation in response to the reduced numbers of spare seats in some schools
- The Council would continue to support the spare seats policy
- A report on the policy would be brought to the Cabinet meeting in May

During discussion members made the following points:

- The provision of public transport was an important element of the Council's environmental strategy to tackle the impact of climate change and all possible steps should be taken to reduce the number of car journeys and mitigate the loss of spare seats in some areas of the County
- Parents attending the meeting were encouraged to hold discussions with the Director of Children's Services regarding the concerns expressed at the meeting

Cabinet will respond to the four Scrutiny Committee reports in due course.

53/23 PROPOSAL FROM OXFORD UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB TO OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AS LANDOWNER: UPDATE

(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet had before it a report which provided an update on progress with negotiations with Oxford United Football Club on the future use of Council-owned land and timetable for provision of a new stadium.

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, introduced the report and explained the progress that had been made with stakeholder engagement on the proposals as detailed in the report.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Phillips, seconded by Councillor Miller and agreed.

RESOLVED to note :-

- a) the progress set out in the report**
- b) that the “likely case” timetable set out in appendix 1 remains the probable timeframe for decision making.**

54/23 ERP OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE - A PROGRAMME FOR TRANSFORMING THE COUNCIL'S ENTERPRISE BUSINESS SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet had before it a report presenting an outline business case to transform finance, procurement, HR and payroll services and systems within the authority. These services were currently delivered in partnership with Hampshire County Council.

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services introduced the report and explained the reasons for transferring the services to an in-house model which would better meet the Council's needs going forward.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- The importance of involving staff at all levels in the organisation in the transformation process
- The process should be conducted through a sequential approach to ensure sustainability and that the financial, capability and delivery aspects of the project were given adequate consideration

Councillor Phillips proposed the recommendations, Councillor Sudbury seconded and they were approved.

RESOLVED to:-

- a) approve the development of detailed requirements and a full business case to review delivery options for corporate support services and underpinning technology including human resources, finance, payroll and procurement in order to deliver services more efficiently, modernise business processes and upgrade current IT systems.**
- b) approve funding of £1.57m for programme resources to prepare requirements for a transformation and potential procurement**

process. This funding will be drawn from the council's transformation reserve.

- c) note that a further Cabinet decision to commit capital funding and progress to the next stage will be required in due course, which will be based on a full business case.

55/23 DELEGATED POWERS REPORT FOR JANUARY TO MARCH 2023

(Agenda Item. 9)

RESOLVED to note the executive decision taken under the specific powers and functions delegated under the terms of Part 7.1 (Scheme of Delegation to Officers) of the Council's Constitution – Paragraph 6.3(c)(i). It is not for Scrutiny call-in

56/23 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 10)

The Cabinet considered a list of items (CA10) for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet.

RESOLVED to:

- a) note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.
- b) add the decision on the Home to School Transport Policy to the Forward Plan for the Cabinet meeting in May 2023
- c) note that the Portfolios listed for the non-key decision on Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy should be the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Equalities and the Cabinet member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment

.....in the Chair

Date of signing

CABINET – 18 APRIL 2023**ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

Questions	Cabinet Member
<p>1. COUNCILLOR DAN LEVY</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member for Travel Development and Strategy please give an update on the plans for the HIF2 A40 project, given the extended delay since the project was paused for review? Can he also assure us that prior to any plans being presented to Cabinet they will be shared with active travel advocates to ensure they give safe and direct cycling facilities on the main route to Oxford from the west, and with the councillors for the divisions directly affected?</p> <p><u>SUPPLEMENTARY</u></p> <p>Will the Cabinet member ensure that a full consultation takes place with stakeholders and not merely a briefing?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>The HIF2 A40 scheme remains paused and under review for the time being. The project team is aiming to present to Cabinet in June, its recommendations following the review. A sequence of activities, including briefings with the key stakeholders, are to be scheduled in due course.</p> <p><u>ANSWER</u></p> <p>The briefing will be the first stage of the process and there will be full consultation with all stakeholders as the scheme progresses.</p>

Questions	Cabinet Member
<p>2. COUNCILLOR NATHAN LEY</p> <p>I was recently only just made aware of an event having taken place in my back yard, a production of Godspell by Oxfordshire Youth Music Theatre. We all acknowledge and appreciate the crucial role that musical theatre (and the creative arts more widely) can play in developing essential skills and confidence in our young people, and that therefore as a Council and Councillors we should do everything we can to ensure that we support these groups to thrive. Can the cabinet member assure me that in future any events from OCC's Music Service: (A) are widely publicised within the Council and to local Councillors (so that people need not rely on last minute word of mouth), (B) are given external promotion they need in order to attract the audience they deserve, and (C) are encouraged and empowered to have daytime performances so that other children and young people can attend, ensuring that it continues to inspire more young people?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR JENNY HANNABY, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SAFETY</p> <p>Thank you Cllr Ley for your question and for your words of support for the work of OCCs Music Service and in particular Oxfordshire Youth Music Theatre (OYMT), an important aspect of the Service. The Music Service works closely with the Council's comms team, and has engaged in social media campaigns, flashmob performances and produced publicity materials for OYMT. The Music Service is currently further developing its comms strategy, and in conjunction with Council colleagues in Comms and ICT has developed a new Music Hub website, which hosts events listings and promotions. Oxfordshire Music Hub Oxfordshire We will of course ensure that Cllrs are kept informed in advance too.</p> <p>The Service is open to performances during the school day – there was a highly successful Youth Orchestra day at the Sheldonian in January which was attended by over 1400 school pupils . and whilst this does involve releasing pupils from school etc, it is certainly a consideration going forward, and one which will be raised for future planning with the appropriate school consent</p>

Questions	Cabinet Member
<p>3. COUNCILLOR IAN MIDDLETON</p> <p>The report to Cabinet on OUFC proposals states in paragraph 13</p> <p>“OUFC have continued to undertake their own stakeholder engagement.”</p> <p>Then in Paragraph 20 it again says :</p> <p>“OUFC is undertaking their own engagement activities to help shape their own planning”</p> <p>As the local member, I’m unaware of any further engagement activities being carried out by the club since the revised proposals were brought to the cabinet in January. Given that there still appears to be very little substance to these proposals, it’s unclear as to what any such engagement could be based on.</p> <p>As the report states that there has apparently been further engagement undertaken by the club surrounding the revised proposals, could I please be provided with details of what it was based on, when it was done, what form it took, who it involved and what has been the result so far?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR GLYNIS PHILLIPS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES</p> <p>OUFC are responsible for undertaking community engagement for their scheme and it is important to draw a distinction between the work the club are undertaking as the scheme promoters and the stakeholder engagement we are undertaking to listen to local views.</p> <p>With regards to OUFC we expect them to undertake community engagement as part of the development of the scheme proposal, as would be the case for any major development of this kind. OUFC have told us they have identified six groups of stakeholders: Local Residents, Fans, Local Sports Groups, National Sports Bodies, Locally Elected Representatives, Community and Economic Groups and that they are engaging with these groups. We expect them set out the engagement work they have undertaken as part of the information they submit to us and highlight how this engagement has supported the development of the scheme.</p>

Questions	Cabinet Member
<p>4. COUNCILLOR IAN MIDDLETON</p> <p>A recent letter has been sent by OCC to ‘stakeholders’ including local councillors in my division inviting them to a meeting during April to discuss the proposals from OUFC.</p> <p>It says :</p> <p>“Discussions will focus on your early views on the extent to which OUFC’s emerging plans meet the key strategic priorities set out below.”</p> <p>Yet the report to cabinet states in paragraph 17 :</p> <p>“At this stage no additional technical information has been provided by OUFC regarding the details of the scheme, as such the stakeholder meetings are designed to capture early views as to how OUFC’s emerging plans meet the council’s seven strategic priorities”</p> <p>If there are no details of the scheme available, how exactly are stakeholders going to be able to provide any relevant or applicable views, early or otherwise, as to how it will or will not meet our priorities?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR GLYNIS PHILLIPS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES</p> <p>The Cabinet report considered in March 2023 sets out our approach to public engagement. We are approaching our engagement in two phases. The first phase is formative discussions with stakeholders to listen to views, concerns and aspirations, taking place in April and May. clearly, These are focused on the location and general principles regarding a stadium. The second phase will take place after OUFC have published further detailed information about the proposals for their scheme. The timeframe is dependent on OUFC providing us with sufficient information and we have committed to a period of six weeks for this to take place. Our engagement and communications strategy has been published alongside timetables for decision making. We are committed to open stakeholder engagement and welcome approaches from any community group, we are keen to meet with people and hear their views.</p>

Questions	Cabinet Member
<p>5. COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON</p> <p>Is the Cabinet Member content with the arrangements for the less mobile bus passengers and local residents following the closure of the Botley Road?</p>	<p>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FR HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Yes. In addition to the support provided by marshals on the site, Network Rail has also commissioned additional support for the less mobile via Oxfordshire County Council, Fleet Services. The Service is now signed as Botley Road Flyer.</p> <p>This will operate as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An accessible vehicle with capacity for 12 seats and 1 wheelchair. - Operate the vehicle as an open door service at designated bus stops, signage at stops will be Botley Road Flyer - The bus signage will be BOTLEY ROAD FLYER - Network Rail (and their contractor Kier) will contact users and will organise and take responsibility for passengers knowing the bus stops and route. - The timetable will be Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays: 4 runs a day, at 10.00, 11.00 , 12.00 ,13.00. - The route will be: Botley Road, Seacourt P&R, A34, Wolvercote Roundabout, Woodstock Road, Jericho, Walton Street, Frideswide Square , Abingdon Road, Redbridge P&R, A34, Botley Road. - KIER and Network Rail will overview the service and can ask for alterations.

Questions	Cabinet Member
<p><u>SUPPLEMENTARY</u></p> <p>Will you be holding further discussions with the bus companies on the need to improve services for these passengers and prevent the stacking of buses inhibiting the safe use of pelican crossings by pedestrians? Would you also seek improvements to the bus stop facilities at Osney Island?</p>	<p>For local residents, access to the City Centre is maintained for pedestrians and cyclists with vehicles wanting access diverted via the A34 North and South to Woodstock or Abingdon Roads.</p> <p>Oxford City based Members were updated on the arrangements at a series of briefing sessions run by Network Rail and supported by Officers from the County Council over recent weeks, as well as a specific briefing on arrangements on 6 April 2023 which the Member attended.</p> <p><u>ANSWER</u></p> <p>Yes, the measures introduced are being monitored and further discussions would be held with the bus companies on the points raised by Cllr Howson.</p>

Divisions Affected – ALL

**CABINET
23 MAY 2023
HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT REPORT**

Report by Kevin Gordon, Director for Children's Services,
Bill Cotton, Corporate Director for Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet is recommended to approve the approaches presented in paragraph 7.

Executive Summary

2. The provision of Home to School Transport for eligible children is a statutory duty for local authorities. The Council determines its policy that applies to providing home to school transport for children of compulsory school age and also its Post 16 transport policy statement that applies to young people of sixth form age.
3. In February 2022 the authority set up a Home to School Transport Working Group to review OCC's School Transport policies and to make recommendations to People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee received that report on 30 March 2023 and they in turn provided a report for Cabinet's consideration on 18 April 2023, ([Public Pack](#))[Agenda Document for Cabinet, 18/04/2023 14:00 \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](#) pages 43 – 64. This report considers in detail each recommendation.

Introduction

4. On 17 February 2022, the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee established a working group with the following terms of reference
 - (a) to consider the Home to School Transport Policy and the options for any changes to the policy;
 - (b) to consider the impact on carbon emissions;
 - (c) to consider the equalities implications; and
 - (d) to agree a report and recommendations to the Cabinet for submission to the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee for endorsement.
5. The result of an extensive piece of work over a series of meetings was a report received by Cabinet on 18 April that makes 9 recommendations as detailed by the Working Group and 2 further recommendations that arose during the Scrutiny Committee's discussion of the topic.
6. Annex A below details each of the recommendations. Each recommendation receives a comment based on the topics Finance/Costs, Legality, Carbon Impact and Deliverability.
7. The recommendations are as follows;

Recommendation 1: The Council engage with schools regarding whether there are circumstances in which they would consider providing home to school transport for pupils entitled under the Home to School Transport policy.	Accepted
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Recommendation 2: Home to School Transport only be provided for post-16 students at the beginning and end of a school day where that delivers financial efficiency.	Accepted
Amendment 2B: Budgets to remain the same for travel to after school clubs (ASC) and respite care, with the Service ensuring that budgets are not overspent.	Accepted
Recommendation 3: The Council pilot adjusting a small number of Home to School Transport routes to fill as many unfilled spare seats as practicable.	Accepted
Recommendation 4: The Council's Home to School Transport Policy be amended so that spare seat prices are commensurate with the cost of providing them, including through the introduction of further price bands which better align with the costs of different routes.	Policy change, Members decision
Amendment 4B: That a moratorium on changes to the Spare Seats Scheme is set up swiftly to allow time for the Council to address outstanding issues.	Not accepted
Recommendation 5: The Council reassess Home to School Transport entitlement when a child begins to receive the majority of their tuition at a different site of a split-site school to that in relation to which their transport entitlement was originally assessed. The entitlement to be re-evaluated when they move to the second site or at the start of their tuition, taking both sites into consideration and planning accordingly.	Accepted subject to legal advice
Recommendation 6: The Council look at possible exceptions and transitional arrangements to provide spare seats to children if a new school has become the nearest available, but one or more siblings attend the previously nearest school.	Part Accepted
Recommendation 7: That walking route safety assessments are regularly and consistently reassessed where circumstances may have changed, ensuring councillors are consulted (i.e. at localities meetings) and that data on assessments is made publicly available. Route safety assessments should also consider both short and long term weather conditions.	Partial acceptance
Recommendation 8: The Council to explore investing to save in supporting independent travel by increasing the budget, exploring delivery models and recruiting more independent travel trainers.	Accepted
Recommendation 9: Feedback from transport eligibility appeals to be used to improve digital capabilities (communications, guidance and data collection) and to improve outcomes.	Accepted

Financial Implications

8. The Budget for the Home to School Transport service is £29.8m for 2023/24 including an increase of £3.5m (13.3% increase) to address both increased demand and escalating cost pressures.
9. Review of the period since COVID shows an underlying volatility in the Home to School Transport service which has suffered an overspend of £1.7m in the year just ended, 2022/23. This was despite an increase in the budget of £2.2m from 2021/22.
10. While the MTFP forecast anticipates that the volatility in the market will begin to show signs of settling by 2024/25 it is too early to give a confident view that the underlying pressures in the Home to School Transport sector will follow this expectation. The service is monitoring activity and spend very closely to ensure that the investment of an additional £5.7m in budget provision (£2.2m

(9.1%) for 2022/23 and £3.5m (13.3%) for 2023/24) has completely addressed the pressures. The recommendations present potential opportunity to further mitigate against the pressures.

11. In this respect, the clarification of policy and proposed changes to practice set out in the recommendations highlight some opportunities to stabilise and possibly generate cost savings. They also highlight flag up some potential additional costs. The table below provides a summary of the indicative savings and costs together with a preliminary view of the potential financial risk in terms of realisability.

12. While the table highlights a potential indicative saving of over £1m the financial implications of introducing a 'full cost' charge set out in recommendation 4 present a high risk in terms of realisability given:

- i. The scale of potential increase (c43%) risks reduction in numbers and income
- ii. Unintended consequence of a full-cost to price spiral

Recommendation	Cost / (Saving) £'m	Financial Implication and Potential Risk (RAG)
Recommendation 1: Transport for pupils entitled.		
Recommendation 2: Transport post-16 students at start and end of day.	-£0.325	Based on efficiencies across 4 colleges
Amendment 2B: Budgets remain for after school clubs & respite care		
Recommendation 3: Pilot to fill as many unfilled spare seats as practicable.		
Recommendation 4: Set spare seat prices based on the 'full cost'	-£0.800	High risk of loss of income given potential scale of increase and likelihood of significant reduction in numbers
Amendment 4B: Moratorium on Spare Seats to address outstanding issues.	£0.360	High risk of additional cost
Recommendation 5: Reassess entitlement for students at different site of a split-site school		Some additional cost TBC
Recommendation 6: Spare seat exception / transition where a new school is nearest available		Some additional cost TBC
Recommendation 7: Walking route safety assessments	-£0.325	Based on potential of 10 current routes made safer to walk
Recommendation 8: Explore invest to save for independent travel		Invest to Save - £0.3m. Potential saving TBC
Recommendation 9: Feedback of eligibility appeals to improve digital capabilities and improve outcomes.		
Total	-£1.090	

Comments checked by:

Danny Doherty, Interim Finance Business Partner,
danny.doherty@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

13. Each of the recommendations which are set out in paragraph 7 of the report have been considered for legal implications, which are summarised accordingly in the tables shown in Annex A.

Comments checked by:

Richard Hodby, Solicitor, Richard.hodby@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Equality & Inclusion Implications

14. The service responses to each recommendation to the provision of the home to school transport services, where they have been accepted, will develop the existing provision which meets all equality and inclusion requirements. Recommendation 4 requires a full review of current policy and if taken forward will require a statutory consultation. A full equality impact of the proposals will be carried out at that point.

Sustainability Implications

15. The changes in provision where the recommendations have been accepted do not have an impact for sustainability.

Risk Management

16. The changes in provision where the recommendations have been accepted have low risks and will be managed as part of ongoing, business as usual risk assessments that apply for all home to school transport provision.

Contact Officer: Martin Goff, Head of Access to Learning,
martin.goff@oxfordshire.gov.uk

May 2023

Annex A

Recommendation 1: The Council engage with schools regarding whether there are circumstances in which they would consider providing home to school transport for pupils entitled under the Home to School Transport policy.

	Impact Domain	Comments
1	Financial savings/costs	Some school run transport is in use. This has merit and will be possible in some cases and maybe cheaper than contracted transport. Impossible to predict savings but there might be a benefit in beginning a programme to develop schemes of this sort
2	Fit with Legal and national guidelines	Yes
3	Potential / predicted carbon impact	None saved unless school run contracts enabled more pupils to travel together in which case there will be a positive carbon impact.
4	Deliverability and timescales	Needs an at least 18-month lead time and will need additional resource to develop the programme. Before any launch a review of possible schemes would be required as well as a 'toe in the water' to assess likely school interest.

Conclusion and response: recommendation accepted, school run transport can be cost effective and has benefits for children and families. Directors of E&P and CS to identify if resources can be diverted in 23/24 or alternatively form a growth bid for 24/25 to grow this provision.

Recommendation 2: Home to School Transport only be provided for post-16 students at the beginning and end of a school day where that delivers financial efficiency.

	Impact Domain	Comments					
1	Financial savings/costs	This does create efficiencies. OCC have begun working with Activate and looked for efficiencies if students timetable 'match' transport schedules.					
			Current provision (routes)	Potential provision (routes)	Current cost year	Potential costs	Savings per year
		Oxford City College	9	5	£372,083	£187,480	£184,246
		Abingdon College	5	5	£238,602	£173,934	£64,668

		Witney College	6	6	£179,588	£126,730	£52,858	
		Banbury College	3	3	£115,900	£92,416	£23,484	
						Total	£325,256	
		The table indicates maximum savings across the four Activate locations. Not all will be possible as not all students will be able to share even though their geographical locations suggest they could travel together.						
2	Fit with Legal and national guidelines	Yes, but is routinely challenged by settings and parents as students with SEN are usually supervised during any waiting times.						
3	Potential / predicted carbon impact	Should increase grouped transport arrangements and so have a positive carbon impact. A 'pilot' is proposed with Activate in September.						
4	Deliverability and timescales	It can be in place for September 2023 and rolled out as appropriate in future.						

Conclusion and response: recommendation accepted in full. Work is currently taking place with Activate.

Amendment 2B; Budgets to remain the same for travel to after school clubs (ASC) and respite care, with the Service ensuring that budgets are not overspent.

	Impact Domain	Comments
1	Financial savings/costs	None. This budget area has been overspending its £75k allocation. There is now a new process for determining eligibility and that will lead to better oversight and management of the budget.
2	Fit with Legal and national guidelines	No legal obligation for free travel to/from after school clubs or respite care but this is provided to supplement support packages and transport is provided to those families that could not access ASCs without OCC transport.
3	Potential / predicted carbon impact	None
4	Deliverability and timescales	Immediate - The Children with Disabilities Team now have oversight of the application of eligibility decisions to ensure equity and alignment with other packages of support the council is providing to children with disabilities.

Conclusion and response: recommendation accepted.

Recommendation 3: The Council pilot adjusting a small number of Home to School Transport routes to fill as many unfilled spare seats as practicable.

	Impact Domain	Comments
1	Financial savings/costs	<p>It would need a clear 'policy framework' to provide parameters and priorities if rolled out further around the County. Typical considerations would be;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. maximum route variation by distance/time? II. prioritise applicants based on something similar to spare seats scheme but recognise geographic group efficiencies and give low priority when a child can use an easily accessible public transport route. III. Consideration and allowance to increase the size of the vehicle in certain circumstances <p>Some concerns about 'fairness', and how to access those beyond currently using the spare seat scheme who would be just as entitled.</p> <p>A Pilot would probably work but is it scalable without challenge and financial risk.</p> <p>This will lead to additional costs if introduced with the current spare seat charges. The cost to purchase a seat is at least £6 per day. The spare seat charge recoups £4.20 per day.</p>
2	Fit with Legal and national guidelines	Yes, the authority would need to change policy and could create this type of service using discretionary powers.
3	Potential / predicted carbon impact	More grouped contracted transport so carbon savings can be made by comparing to parent journeys.
4	Deliverability and timescales	If policy issues can be overcome and there is operator capacity then possible for September 23.

Conclusion and response: recommendation accepted if workable policy framework developed. Suggested Pilot consists of two contracts where a vehicle's route can be changed and extended to enable children to purchase spare seats and maximise use of spare capacity.

Recommendation 4: The Council's Home to School Transport Policy be amended so that spare seat prices are commensurate with the cost of providing them, including through the introduction of further price bands which better align with the costs of different routes

	Impact Domain	Comments
1	Financial savings/costs	A detailed piece of work utilising current costs indicates that the two tier of charges would increase to £1663 and £870 respectively. 'Full cost recovery' relies on all pupils travelling and paying, if numbers drop off the price should go up. The impact on the HtST budget could be significant if all families using spare seats still purchased the more expensive seats. The income could increase from £0.5m to £1.3m
2	Fit with Legal and national guidelines	Yes
3	Potential / predicted carbon impact	None
4	Deliverability and timescales	September 24 following required policy changes

Conclusion and response: recommendation needs to be considered by Members and if approved will need to be subject to consultation and decision making processes. Charges for spare seats went up by 10% in 23/24, Members may want to consider introducing accelerated incremental rises over the next three years which provide a balance between fuller cost recovery and the pressure on family income through the cost of living crisis. As costs of seats rises it will be necessary to introduce a more sophisticated banding system.

Amendment 4B: That a moratorium on changes to the Spare Seats Scheme is set up swiftly to allow time for the Council to address outstanding issues.

	Impact Domain	Comments
1	Financial savings/costs	The modelling indicates that a moratorium that resulted in spare seats being reinstated for September on affected routes would lead to an overall additional cost to the Council of £360k when taking account of the cost of contracting the buses that were due to be taken off routes. The £360k is a net figure after taking account of the income received from selling spare seats on these routes. There are also likely to be challenges from parents whose spare seats have ceased in previous years, to receive equitable treatment of any extra costs incurred by them in not being able to access spare seats.

2	Fit with Legal and national guidelines	To introduce this moratorium the policy would need to be updated to allow this discretionary provision. It would involve the LA running routes with no eligible children which is more like a public bus service. There are anticipated legal issues around subsidy control.
3	Potential / predicted carbon impact	1yr carbon impact will be dependant on the mitigation measures 5yr Impact likely to be significant as more parents chose to send their children to a school further away from home address as the spare seat scheme is guaranteed
4	Deliverability and timescales	The intention is clearly we have something in place for September 23, that may be challenging and would need to overcome legal difficulties

Conclusion and response: the reduction in spare seats has impacted 235 children. In the case of the main six schools the Transport Team have provided mitigations in four cases so that families have an alternative option for purchasing their child's home to school journey. Intensive work is underway to ensure a solution can be found in the remaining two cases. This recommendation is not approved.

Recommendation 5: The Council reassess Home to School Transport entitlement when a child begins to receive the majority of their tuition at a different site of a split-site school to that in relation to which their transport entitlement was originally assessed. The entitlement to be re-evaluated when they move to the second site or at the start of their tuition, taking both sites into consideration and planning accordingly.

	Impact Domain	Comments
1	Financial savings/costs	OCC only has two split site schools where HTST is provided. This change would lead to some additional transport eligibility with some additional costs.
2	Fit with Legal and national guidelines	This would need to be checked, careful assessment of the current and proposed approach to measuring the home to school route is needed
3	Potential / predicted carbon impact	Some small amounts of additional transport could be needed which will increase carbon impact.
4	Deliverability and timescales	Sep-24 to be able to changes transport policy although impact involves only 2 schools

Conclusion and response: agreement in principle, there are some further legal issues being worked through to ensure the Council is legally compliant if introducing this change.

Recommendation 6: The Council look at possible exceptions and transitional arrangements to provide spare seats to children if a new school has become the nearest available, but one or more siblings attend the previously nearest school.

	Impact Domain	Comments
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1	Financial savings/costs	Some additional transport eligibility would arise but difficult to gauge the cost if siblings only transport were to arise following the building of a new school.
2	Fit with Legal and national guidelines	This would be additional, discretionary provision and may be very difficult to introduce with equity and fairness.
3	Potential / predicted carbon impact	Some small amounts of additional transport over time.
4	Deliverability and timescales	September 2024 if policy changes are possible.

Conclusion and response: part accepted for secondary schools only as this is the group the recommendation is aimed at. This can only apply from its introduction going forward and cannot be applied retrospectively. In the event of a new secondary school opening Council will commit to considering the implementation of this policy change however the impact on pupil place planning and the feasibility of the new school is likely to be a key consideration.

Recommendation 7: That walking route safety assessments are regularly and consistently reassessed where circumstances may have changed, ensuring councillors are consulted (i.e. at localities meetings) and that data on assessments is made publicly available. Route safety assessments should also consider both short and long term weather conditions.

	Impact Domain	Comments
1	Financial savings/costs	<p>Currently safe to routes are assessed on a limited ad hoc basis, moving to a more regular annual or bi-annual basis would cost approximately £35k for 1FTE if this could be successfully recruited to which is doubtful, if not consultancy support would need to be procured as is likely to be in the order of £800per assessment</p> <p>Costs may increase if previously safe routes are assessed as unsafe, but if a route goes from unsafe to safe costs would decrease.</p> <p>It is not clear how many currently safe routes could be assessed as unsafe but there are about 10 routes where they may move from unsafe to safe, subject to any appeal, and could potentially generate savings of up to £325k.</p>

2	Fit with Legal and national guidelines	There is a clear national legal and policy framework provided by the Road Safety GB manual. It should be noted this guidance and our assessment assesses if the route is safe for young children accompanied, as necessary, by an adult. There is no guideline for considering weather, the GB road safety element covers 'availability' of routes which the assessor must take into account when coming to an overall decision
3	Potential / predicted carbon impact	When a previously unsafe route becomes safe in principle children can now walk, and do walk, to and from school. When a previously safe route becomes unsafe contracted transport would be introduced. The carbon impact measure would relate to the change in the mode of travel measured against use of parental cars.
4	Deliverability and timescales	The move away from using the Road Safety GB published guidance would take until at least September 2024 to develop an alternative assessment method

Conclusion: accept the premise of regular and consistent reassessment but not the bespoke guidance

Recommendation 8: The Council to explore investing to save in supporting independent travel by increasing the budget, exploring delivery models and recruiting more independent travel trainers.

	Impact Domain	Comments												
1	Financial savings/costs	<p>Funding is being provided of £300k for two years to deliver more ITT. Savings from a scheme that is delivering independent travellers is difficult to calculate but in their lifetime transport support from OCC can be reduced. The proposal is to target the following numbers of travellers;</p> <table><tr><th>Year</th><th>Number of projected trainees</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>16*</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>25</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>30</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>30</td></tr></table> <p>The average cost per passenger journey for SEN transport currently stands at £78 per student per day which equates to £13,300 per academic year so there are savings that may</p>	Year	Number of projected trainees	1	16*	2	20	3	25	4	30	5	30
Year	Number of projected trainees													
1	16*													
2	20													
3	25													
4	30													
5	30													

		be realised. However, each case would need to be assessed as reducing by one travelled child may not reduce the number of vehicles being used.
2	Fit with Legal and national guidelines	Yes
3	Potential / predicted carbon impact	For each ITT pupil you could be reducing the carbon cost of a vehicle. However, the pupils that can travel independently are often on grouped transport and therefore the impact may be carbon neutral.
4	Deliverability and timescales	Budget has been made available in 23/24, the Business case is prepared for moving from the current model to the new better resourced ITT programme copying Best Practice.

Conclusion and response: accept

Recommendation 9: Feedback from transport eligibility appeals to be used to improve digital capabilities (communications, guidance and data collection) and to improve outcomes.

	Impact Domain	Comments
1	Financial savings/costs	None.
2	Fit with Legal and national guidelines	Yes
3	Potential / predicted carbon impact 1yr, 5 yr	None
4	Deliverability and timescales	From existing resources as part of the Council's digital presence programme.

Conclusion and response: accept

REPORT OF THE PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: SCRUTINY OF FUTURE OF RETAIL AND THE HIGH STREET

Cllr Kieron Mallon
Chair of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee
March 2023

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
 - a) Agree to respond to the recommendations contained in the body of this report, and
 - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND

2. In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee hereby requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and its recommendations.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

3. At its meeting on 25 January 2023, the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered presentations from the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) and from the Banbury Business Improvement District (Banbury BID) on trading trends in the high street and how best to boost local economies and create new job opportunities in the county.
4. The Committee received the input of Bill Cotton, Corporate Director for Environment and Place, Rachel Wileman, Director of Planning, Environment and Climate Change, Nigel Tipple, Chief Executive of OxLEP and Jasmine Gilhooly, BID Strategist at Banbury BID. The Committee would like to thank everyone, especially external contributors, for sharing their time and expertise with the Committee.

SUMMARY

5. The Chair introduced the discussion on this item. He referred to the introduction of a number of the Council's environmental policies across the County and how it was an appropriate time to consider the impact of these on the retail sector and town centres.
6. Nigel Tipple, Chief Executive of the LEP, gave a presentation on Oxfordshire Economy: Town Centres and High Streets covering the following issues:
 - Impact of the COVID pandemic on town centres, working at home and footfall
 - Programme for enabling spaces for shops, cultural venues and other working facilities
 - Visitor economy data – comparison with 2019
 - Refresh of Oxfordshire Economic Plan
 - Growth hub grants and business support
 - Support footfall back to business and high streets
 - Information on public transport and access
 - Work with art and cultural partners to encourage more art installation and events
 - Partnerships and action for each location
7. Jasmine Gilhooly, gave a presentation on Love Your Town: Shopping in Banbury and covered the following issues:
 - Proportion of local business rates allocated to town regeneration
 - Role of the local community
 - Shop window dressing competition
 - Local businesses – quality and experience
 - A video clip promoting Banbury as a place for new independent businesses
8. During discussion, members made the following comments:
 - The business community needed to improve the way in which it promoted economic activity in towns
 - Place design is critically important in the regeneration of town centres
 - There is scope to review park and ride car park fees and impact on footfall in town centres
 - Moving health provision such as physiotherapy and occupational health to the high street would have benefits
 - Concern about investment in improved infrastructure in cycling without evidence that this would increase cycle usage in town centres
 - Need to consider the impact of social media on promotion of local businesses
 - Improved data on predictions of footfall resulting from traffic controls would be beneficial

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. The Committee discussed how businesses and the local economy are impacted by a wide range of factors (for example, the availability of public transport, traffic

flows, ease of parking, etc.). The Committee considered the importance of fully analysing the potential impact of major policy changes on local businesses to ensure that policies or new projects do not have an unforeseen negative impact on businesses and the local economy. As part of this it will be important to consider how policies and projects might impact accessibility by residents and other customers, for example by reducing parking available or increasing travel times for out-of-town visitors, potentially having a negative effect on footfall and business revenue in local areas. Extensive engagement with local stakeholders, including businesses, should be undertaken whenever considering major changes to ensure that these will have a positive impact on the local community and economy.

Recommendation: That the Council's policies that may impact on local economy and accessibility are considered as part of the process leading to major policy changes (including by engaging with businesses and considering the sustainability of measures).

10. The Committee considered the importance of ensuring high streets, town and city centres are attractive destinations for customers, particularly in the context of a modern economy where online shopping is part of the norm and increasingly consumers go to the high street for 'experiences' rather than just retail. This further reinforces the importance of designing and regenerating town/city centres and high streets to be attractive destinations in their own right and places where customers want to spend time. Oxfordshire County Council as a key partner in economic development should ensure that it contributes to place-shaping discussions with colleagues in the District Councils to help ensure the long-term sustainability and success of local high streets.

Recommendation: That the Council influences place-shaping in partnership with District Councils and other relevant organisations.

11. The Committee considered how initiatives by the County Council are often successful in improving services for residents. More, however, could be done to promote and communicate these benefits clearly in plain and accessible language. The Committee agreed that it would be helpful to ensure that the positive outcomes of major schemes are clearly communicated to the public in plain language to highlight what has been delivered (for example, highlighting how a scheme has cut travelling times for residents by X minutes).

Recommendation: That the Council takes steps to ensure that the benefits of policies and projects are communicated in plain and accessible language.

NEXT STEPS

12. The Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee will review the published Cabinet response to this report and its recommendations at the meeting of the Committee after Cabinet's response in accordance with part 6.2, 13(f), of the Constitution of the Council.

13. The Committee does not anticipate looking at the future of retail and the high street again within the current civic year.

Contact Officer: Marco Dias, Interim Scrutiny Officer
marco.dias@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested¹ and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so.

This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.

Issue: Future of Retail and the High Street

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Duncan Enright, Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy

Date response requested:² 23 May 2023

Response to report:

Enter text here.

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
That the Council's policies that may impact on local economy and accessibility are considered as part of the process leading to major policy changes (including by engaging with businesses and considering the sustainability of measures).		

¹ Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

² Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received⁹

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

That the Council influences place-shaping in partnership with District Councils and other relevant organisations.		
That the Council takes steps to ensure that the benefits of policies and projects are communicated in plain and accessible language.		

CABINET – 23 MAY 2023

FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT April 2023

Report by the Director of Finance

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

- a) agree the virements in Annex 1a and supplementary estimate request in Annex 1c and note the virements in Annex 1b.
- b) note the additional one-off funding of £5.0m in 2023/24, notified since the budget was agreed by Council on 14 February 2023.
- c) noting the inflation and demand pressures contributing to the forecast overspend of £14.4m set out in the Business Management & Monitoring Report to Cabinet in March 2023, agree to top up general balances to the 2023/24 risk assessed level of £30.2m depending on the year end position for 2022/23.
- d) agree to transfer the remaining additional funding expected for 2023/24 to the corporate contingency budget.
- e) agree the update to High Needs DSG budgets following the Education and Skills Funding Agency's approval of the transfer of £2.3m funding from the Schools Block to High Needs.

Executive Summary

2. The budget for 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26 was agreed by Council on 14 February 2023. £57m new funding to meet inflationary and demand pressures is included as part of the budget for 2023/24 along with £30.0m budget reductions. While the budget for 2024/25 is currently balanced to the anticipated funding, there are on-going risks around pay and other inflation. Looking further ahead there is a budget deficit of £6.8m in 2025/26 that will need to be managed in the context of reductions to funding announced in the Government's Autumn Statement.
3. The report to Council noted that where estimates had been made in relation to funding for 2023/24 due to confirmation of sums not being available, for example the Public Health Grant and Business Rates forecasts, any variations from the estimates would be reported through the Business Management and Monitoring Reports for 2023/24.
4. This report sets out updates to funding notified since the budget was agreed as well as other changes and risks which will need to be managed in 2023/24 and in the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Introduction

5. This is the first financial monitoring update for the 2023/24 financial year. The report sets out updates to funding and the anticipated impact of inflation notified since the budget was agreed as well as risks that will need to be managed during the year.
6. It also includes an update on funding for the Early Intervention programme which is part of the 2023/24 budget for High Needs.
7. Annexes are attached as follows:

Annex 1a	Virements to approve
Annex 1b	Virements to note
Annex 1c	Supplementary Estimate request

Funding Updates

Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus

8. £14.1m one – off council tax surpluses notified by the district councils in late 2022 has been built into the agreed budget for 2023/24. Further updates received after the budget was published increased the total surplus by £0.9m to £15.0m.

Business Rates and Business Rate Collection Fund Surplus

9. The agreed budget for 2023/24 includes estimated Business Rates funding of £93.1m. The total is made up of estimated funding of £36.0m relating to the business rates local share, £42.7m Business Rates Top – Up grant and £14.4m estimated grant funding to offset the impact of business rates reliefs and indexation.
10. The actual funding for 2023/24 and surplus for 2022/23 notified by the district councils and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) since the budget was agreed is as follows:

	Agreed Budget for 2023/24 £m	Updated £m	Change £m
Business Rates Local Share	36.0	36.0	0.0
Business Rates Top-Up Grant	42.7	40.0	-2.7
Section 31 Business Rates Reliefs	14.4	19.1	4.7
Collection Fund Surplus (+) /Deficit (-) for 2022/23	0.0	2.1	2.1
Total	93.1	97.2	4.1

11. The reduction in the Top-Up grant reflects the impact of the 2023 revaluation adjustment made by the government. This adjustment is intended to neutralise, as far as practicable, the effects of the revaluation.

12. Section 31 Business Rates reliefs are higher than estimated as they include £4.3m funding for business rates income lost as a result of Business Rates Leisure & Hospitality reliefs for 2023/24 which were announced in the Autumn Statement. It was not possible to estimate the effect of these reliefs or the collection fund surplus until the districts provided updates early in 2023.
13. The total of additional one-off council tax surplus and business rates funding is £5.0m.

General Balances & Contingency

14. The Business Management & Monitoring Report to Cabinet on 21 March 2023 set out that the forecast overspend of £14.4m, which reflects inflationary and demand pressures during the year, had increased by £1.8m compared to the position assumed when the budget was agreed. The final overspend for the year will need to be met from the council's balances.
15. The budget for 2023/24 includes a £6.8m contribution to top up balances to the £30.2m risk assessed level for 2023/24 after taking account of an assumed overspend of £12.6m. If the final variation is higher than that a further contribution will be required to top balances up to the risk assessed level for 2023/24.
16. It is proposed that the balance after taking into account the sum required to top – up balances to the risk assessed level for 2023/24 is added to the corporate contingency budget. This will be used to help to mitigate risks in 2023/24 or to support the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Government Grant Updates

Public Health Grant

17. The Public Health ringfenced grant for 2023/24 was announced on 15 March 2023. Nationally funding has increased by 3.3% compared to 2022/23. Oxfordshire will receive £33.6m for 2023/24. This is £1.0m higher than the estimated grant funding included in the budget agreed in February 2023 which assumed the grant continued at the same level as in 2022/23 ahead of notification of the 2023/24 grant. Annex 1b includes virements to increase both the grant and expenditure budgets to match the grant notified.

Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Grant

18. £0.6m un-ringfenced grant funding for activity related to substance misuse treatment and recovery was notified in early 2023. Annex 1a includes a request to approve a virement to add the equivalent expenditure budget to Public Health.

Household Support Fund

19. The Autumn Statement confirmed that the Household Support Fund would continue for a further 12 months.
20. £842m has been made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need and to help with global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living via the Household Support Fund.

21. The council's share was confirmed as £6.7m in late February 2023. The use of this funding, which has been added to the budget, was agreed by [Cabinet](#) in March 2023.

Extended Rights for Home to School Travel Grant

22. Confirmation of £0.809m un-ringfenced grant funding to support home to school travel was received in late February 2023. Annex 1a includes a request to approve a virement to add the £0.531m increase in the expenditure budget compared to the £0.278m assumed in the agreed budget to Children's Services. As noted in the Business Management & Monitoring Report to Cabinet in March, home to school transport continues to be a high risk area in terms of budget variance and is contributing to the forecast overspend for Children's Services in 2022/23. The expectation is that this funding will need to be used to support on-going risks and pressures in 2023/24.

Inflation

Pay Inflation

23. The agreed budget includes funding for an estimated pay award equivalent to 4.5%.
24. The claim lodged by UNISON, GMB and Unite on 30 January 2023 included a request to increase pay by RPI (10.70%) + 2.0% on all pay points.
25. On 23 February 2023, national employers responded with the following offer:
- With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of £1,925 (pro rata for part-time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive.
 - With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of 3.88 per cent on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer.
26. After taking account of the number of staff on different pay points the pay offer equates to an overall estimated increase equivalent to 5.5%, 1.0% more than budgeted at a cost of £2.7m per annum. All three unions have rejected this offer. UNISON has announced a ballot for industrial action, whilst GMB and Unite members will be consulted on the basis of a recommendation that the offer be rejected. An increase to the existing offer equivalent to 1% overall is estimated to cost around £2.6m on-going and would need to be met from contingency.
27. The National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services has agreed an increase of 5.0% to firefighter pay effective from 1 July 2023. The additional unbudgeted 0.5% will be met from contingency at an estimated cost of £0.2m per annum.

Forecast Inflation

28. The Government's Autumn Statement set out that the OBR forecast for CPI inflation in 2023/24 was 7.4%. The OBR forecast for 2023/24 reduced to 6.1% in the Budget

Statement but this is not expected to have a significant impact on costs incurred by the council during the year.

Budget Management in 2023/24

29. The budget for 2023/24 includes £38m new funding for inflation as well as £19m for demand and other pressures. Taking account of both planned and new changes the budget for Children's Services has increased by £18.5m, and Adult Services by £14.0m compared to 2022/23.
30. As noted in the Business Management & Monitoring Reports action is continuing to be taken to manage demand for Children's Social Care and Adult Services are continuing to work with partners to support people to live well in their community, remaining fit and healthy for as long as possible. This action, combined with the increase in the budget should help to ensure that expenditure can be managed within the available funding in 2023/24. The intention is that the increase to corporate contingency will also help to mitigate risks.
31. As well as increases for inflation and demand new budget reductions of £30.0m are also built into budgets for 2023/24. The last monitoring report to Cabinet in March noted that 67% of savings built into 2022/23 budgets were expected to be achieved or assessed as amber. The final position will be set out in the report to Cabinet on 20 June 2023. It is really important that both existing planned savings and new budget reductions are achieved in 2023/24 so these will need to be monitored closely as the year progresses.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG): Funding for High Needs

32. On 24 January 2023 Cabinet were asked to support an investment to support Early Intervention in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to help families and children and to consider two options a) that the requested £2.3m transfer from the DSG schools block could be used to fund SEND Early Intervention or b) that if the transfer request were unsuccessful, that cabinet would agree increasing the High Needs Block deficit by £2.3m in order to implement the Early Intervention programme.
33. The disapplication request was approved by the Education and Skills Funding Agency in February 2023 so this funding will be used to support the planned expenditure on Early Intervention in 2023/24.
34. Since we did not yet have the outcome of the request for a disapplication in January 2023 the High Needs Block deficit was reported to be £20.6m for 2023/24 as a contingency for the transfer request being declined. As the transfer request was approved, this contingency can be removed and the budgeted deficit can be recorded as £18.3m.
35. The £2.3m will be treated as ringfenced funding for Early Intervention along with the £1.0m grant funding from the Department for Education following the successful Delivering Better Value grant application to implement year 1 of the Early Intervention Programme for Children and Young People with SEND.

36. Updates on the forecast deficit will be included in the Business Management & Monitoring Reports for 2023/24.

Virements & Supplementary Estimate

37. Annex 1a sets out proposed virements to add funding relating to un-ringfenced grants to Public Health and Children's Services.

38. Annex 1c sets out a proposed supplementary estimate for £0.180m to fund staffing costs needed to support development of the One - Fleet approach to the council's vehicles.

Financial Implications

39. This report includes an update on the budget agreed by Council in February 2023 and sets out both increases to funding and expenditure. The on-going impact of the 2023/24 pay award will need to be considered through the Budget & Business Planning Process for 2024/25. Strong financial management and oversight will be required to ensure that services are managed within budgets for 2023/24.

Comments checked by: Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance

Legal Implications

40. The Council's constitution at Part 3.2 (Budget and Policy Framework) sets out the obligations and responsibilities of both the Cabinet and the Full Council in approving, adopting and implementing the council's budget and policy framework.

41. The Council has a fiduciary duty to council taxpayers, which means it must consider the prudent use of resources, including control of expenditure, financial prudence in the short and long term and the need to act in good faith in relation to compliance with statutory duties and exercising statutory powers. The report sets out the updated finance position for the Council as part of its fiduciary duty to implement budgetary controls and monitoring.

Comments checked by: Paul Grant, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

LORNA BAXTER	
Director of Finance	

Contact Officers: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy

Business Management Report**Position to the end of April 2023 - New Year Virements 2023/24****CABINET IS RECOMMENDED TO APPROVE THE VIREMENTS AS DETAILED BELOW:**

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000
CD	May	Jan	Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Grant (un-ringfenced)	PH1	Public Health Functions	P	635	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	P	0	-635
CD	May	April	Extended Rights to Free Travel Grant (un-ringfenced)	EP3-3	Supported Transport	T	531	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	0	-531
Grand Total							1,166	-1,166

Business Management Report**Position to the end of April 2023 - New Year Virements 2023/24****CABINET IS RECOMMENDED TO NOTE THE VIREMENTS AS DETAILED BELOW:**

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000
CD	May	Jan	Funding for additional commissioning for social care as a result of the impact of COVID-19	COD6-5	Procurement	P	64	0
				SCS1-6	Other Funding (Adults)	P	-64	0
			Delivery of Electric Vehicle policy and strategy	COD4	IT, Innovation & Digital	P	16	0
				EP2-2	Climate Change	P	-16	0
			Domestic Abuse Duty Grant	PH1	Public Health Functions	P	23	0
				VSMMSGT	Strategic Measures	P	0	-23
			Pay Award for 2022/23 - Children's Correction	CEF1-5	Learner Engagement	P	-11	0
				CEF1-3	Learning & School Improvement	P	-14	0
				CEF4-3	Non Delegated Schools	P	9	0
				VSMMSGT	Strategic Measures	P	16	0
			Pay Award for 2022/23 - CCCS Corrections	COD8	Law & Governance	P	-5	0
				COD3	Communications, Strategy & Insight	P	-6	0
				COD1	Corporate Services	P	-52	0
				COD5	Culture & Customer Experience	P	88	0
				COD2	HR & Organisational Development	P	-6	0
				COD4	ICT & Digital	P	-6	0
				COD6	Finance & Procurement	P	-16	0
				COD7	Property & Community Facilities Mgt	P	-6	0
				VSMMSGT	Strategic Measures	P	11	0
		Feb	Activity transfer from E&P to Customer Service Centre as part of transformation.	COD5	Culture & Customer Experience	P	57	0
		EP3		Highways & Operations	P	-57	0	
		Mar	Reverse School Admissions to Customer Service Centre (permanent virement 2022-23)	CEF4-4	Schools Support Service Recharges	P	46	0
				COD5	Culture & Customer Experience	P	-46	0
			Reverse Property virement to CS traded budget for Centralised Digital Postage project (2022-23)	CEF1-3	Learning & School Improvement	P	8	0
		April	Chief Executive budget - match funding for small innovation bids	COD7	Property & Community Facilities Mgt	P	-8	0
				COD1	Corporate Services	T	20	0
				VSMMSGT	Strategic Measures	T	-20	0
AS	May	Jan	Budget tidies ahead of New Year Budget Sign Off	SCS1-3	Provider & Support Services	P	-2	0
				SCS1-7&8	Adult Social Care (ASC) Recharges	P	-4	0
				SCS1-9	ASC Staffing & Infrastructure	P	3	0
				SCS2	Commissioning	P	4	0
			Reallocate staffing budget to reflect movement of posts.	BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	-36	36
				SCS1-1B	Live Well Pool Contribution	P	-36	0
				SCS1-9	ASC Staffing & Infrastructure	P	36	0
		Feb	Price Uplift 22/23 Budget reallocation	SCS1-1A	Age Well Pool Contribution	P	3	0
				SCS1-1B	Live Well Pool Contribution	P	86	0
				SCS1-6	Other Funding	P	-89	0

Business Management Report**Position to the end of April 2023 - New Year Virements 2023/24****CABINET IS RECOMMENDED TO NOTE THE VIREMENTS AS DETAILED BELOW:**

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000	
AS	May	Mar	Price Uplift 22/23 Budget reallocation	SCS1-1A	Age Well Pool Contribution	P	50	0	
				SCS1-1B	Live Well Pool Contribution	P	89	0	
				SCS1-6	Other Funding	P	-139	0	
			Remove income budget (service agreement ended)	SCS1-9	ASC Staffing & Infrastructure	P	-60	60	
			Remove recharge budget no longer required	SCS1-3	Provider & Support Services	P	-1	54	
		April	Budget tidy	SCS1-9	ASC Staffing & Infrastructure	P	-54	0	
				SCS2	Commissioning	P	-1	0	
PH&CS	May	Jan	PH budget reallocation	PH1 & 2	Public Health Functions	P	749	0	
				PH4	Grant Income	P	0	-749	
	May	Mar	PH budget reallocation	PH3	Public Health Recharge	P	-58	0	
				PH4	Grant Income	P	0	58	
			PH grant update	PH1 & 2	Public Health Functions	P	314	0	
				PH4	Grant Income	P	0	-314	
CS	May	Jan	Budget tidy	CEF3-1	Corporate Parenting	P	47	-47	
			Early Intervention Funding	CEF1-2	SEND Service	P	1,000	-1,000	
			Update Schools DSG for Sec of State decision	CEF1-2	SEND Service	P	2,383	-2,383	
				CEF4-1	Delegated Budgets	P	-2,843	2,843	
				CEF4-3	Non-Delegated Schools Costs	P	-43	43	
			Budget Tidy ATV Adoption 2023/24	CEFATV	Adopt Thames Valley	P	259	-259	
			Budget tidy permanance support 2023/24	CEFATV	Adopt Thames Valley	P	49	-49	
			Permanence support 23/24	CEFATV	Adopt Thames Valley	P	209	-209	
			Special Schools Funding 2023-24	CEF1-2	SEND Service	P	908	-908	
				CEF4-1	Delegated Budgets	P	-908	908	
				Feb	adult facing services: Saving - 24CS1 Recode	CEF2-1	Management & Central Costs	P	185
		CEF3-2	Safeguarding			P	-185	0	
		Mar	CYPF Admin: Saving - 24CS25 Recode			CEF2-1	Management & Central Costs	P	75
					CEF5-1	Management & Admin	P	-75	0
			School Improvement de-delegation budget	CEF1-3	Learning & School Improvement	P	238	-238	
CC&CS	May	Feb	Central office cost centres to other FM cost centres	COD7	Property & Community Facilities Mgt	P	2	-2	
		April	Close cost centre: Huntercombe Prison Library	COD5	Culture & Customer Experience	P	-59	59	
			One – off contributions from the Budget Priorities reserve agreed as part of the 2023/24 budget approved in February 2023.	COD5	Culture & Customer Experience	T	220	0	
				COD7	Property, Investment & FM	T	500	0	
				EP1-1	Transport Policy	T	600	0	
				EP3-1	Highway Maintenance	T	1,000	0	
				VSMMSGT	Strategic Measures	T	-2,320	0	
			Household Support Fund grant	COD9	Delivery & Partnership Management	P	6,700	-6,700	
Grand Total							8,819	-8,819	

Business Management Report
Supplementary Estimate Request

CABINET IS RECOMMENDED TO APPROVE THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE REQUEST

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet meeting	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000
CCCS	May	Staffing costs to support development of One - Fleet approach to the council's vehicles	CDA1-2	One - Fleet Team	T	180

Divisions Affected – ALL

**CABINET
23 May 2023**

**PROPOSAL FROM OXFORD UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB TO
OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AS LANDOWNER**

Stakeholder Engagement

Report by the Chief Executive

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
 - (a) Note the progress set out in the report below.
 - (b) Note the feedback from the stakeholder meetings held during April and May 2023 (annex 1).
 - (c) Amend the seven strategic priorities following stakeholder feedback as set out in paragraph 16 below.
 - (d) Agree the approach to the second phase of public engagement as set out in annex 2.

Executive Summary

2. In January 2023 the Cabinet agreed to begin negotiations on commercial head of terms for the use of a parcel of land known as 'Land to East of Frieze Way / South of Kidlington Roundabout or the triangle' for the development of a new stadium for Oxford United Football Club (OUFC). At the time of writing this report officer-led negotiations for non-binding heads of terms are progressing.
3. Cabinet notes that heads of terms are non-binding and that any final decision is subject to the scheme addressing the set of seven strategic priorities as set out by Cabinet in previous meetings.
4. On 21 March 2023 the Cabinet endorsed a Memorandum of Understanding between Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and OUFC. The Cabinet agreed a stakeholder engagement and communications strategy and three timetables as routes (optimistic, likely, and elongated) to a final decision regarding the land. At the Cabinet meeting on 18 April 2023, it was confirmed that the optimistic

timeframe would not be met and the likely timeframe (ie a Cabinet decision planned for 19 September 2023) remained on track.

Background

5. This report follows those received by Cabinet on 18 January 2022, 5 March 2022, 24 January 2023, 21 March 2023 and 18 April 2023 (all available on the Oxfordshire County Council website). It provides an update on work underway and sets out feedback from stakeholder meetings held to date and the plans for the second phase of public engagement.
6. OUFC approached OCC in late 2021 with a proposal to develop Stratfield Brake playing fields and 'the triangle' for a scheme including a new home stadium and enabling commercial development. In January 2021 the Cabinet resolved to undertake a public engagement exercise to understand local views and set out a series of strategic priorities that any scheme should address prior to a final decision being made.
7. Following the public engagement activity, the Cabinet meeting held on 15 March 2022 agreed that officers would conduct discussions with OUFC to deepen their understanding of the detailed proposals being made and to consider their compatibility with the strategic priorities and that OUFC should provide information to OCC setting out how their proposals would address these strategic priorities.
8. OUFC have chosen to utilise the design process set out by the Royal Institute of British Architects (the RIBA plan of work) and, on 10 November 2022, officers received a response from OUFC in the form of the RIBA stage 0 report. It should be noted that this report has been undertaken in relation to a wider proposal encompassing a land parcel including the Stratfield Brake playing fields. OUFC published their final stage 0 report on their website in December 2022.
9. Following a series of clarifications and stakeholder meetings and a consideration of the proposals, the Cabinet met on 24 January 2023 and resolved to enter into negotiations for non-binding heads of terms for the use of 'the triangle' for a new stadium rather than the original proposal that included Stratfield Brake playing fields. This decision was undertaken recognising the scope, scale and complexity of the original proposal was subject to a series of challenges both in terms of deliverability and the extent to which the strategic priorities would be addressed.
10. OUFC have continued to undertake their own stakeholder engagement.

Progress Update

11. A dedicated page has been published on the county council's website: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/stadium. This includes an overview of the discussions, the proposed timeline, definition of roles, and links to Cabinet papers and news stories. It aims to provide a one-stop shop for all stadium-related information.

12. Officers have progressed negotiations on non-binding heads of terms with OUFC. These heads of terms relate to the value of the land if utilised for a stadium and ensuring that any financial or commercial arrangements meet the relevant legislative criteria for the county council. These heads of terms are non-binding and remain subject to contract and the final decision by Cabinet in September with regards to the use of the 'triangle'. Until a final decision regarding the use of the land has been made by Cabinet, these heads of terms remain commercially confidential.
13. During April and May, officers have been working with an independent facilitator to undertake stakeholder meetings exploring early views regarding the use of the land at the triangle and the potential impact of any new stadium. OCC would like to thank all those stakeholders who have taken part in these discussions. Annex 1 sets out thematic feedback from these meetings to date.
14. An update briefing by OUFC took place for county councillors on 17 April 2023 in the format of a presentation by the club followed by questions and answers. A video of OUFC's presentation has been published on their YouTube site; a set of written Q&As are available on the county council's website.
15. Following stakeholder feedback, Cabinet is recommended to amend the seven strategic priorities as set out below (underlined text has been added following feedback from stakeholders), drawing attention to the importance of inclusivity and accessibility, clarifying the requirements with regards to nature recovery, biodiversity, and public access:
 - maintaining a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington and protecting and enhancing the surrounding environment including biodiversity, connecting habitats, and supporting nature recovery
 - improving public access to high-quality nature and green spaces
 - enhancing inclusive facilities for local sports groups and on-going financial support
 - significantly improving the infrastructure connectivity in this location, improving public transport to reduce the need for car travel in so far as possible, and to improve sustainable transport through increased walking, cycling and rail use
 - developing local employment opportunities in Oxfordshire
 - increasing education and innovation through the provision of an accessible sports centre of excellence and facilities linked to elite sport, community sport, health and wellbeing
 - supporting the council's net zero carbon emissions pledge through highly sustainable development.

Proposed Next Steps

16. The next steps for this work are focused on i) publication of information from OUFC, with more detail about the proposed scheme and how it addresses the council's seven priorities set out in paragraph 16, and ii) the second and final phase of OCC public engagement as set out in annex 2.
17. Subject to the receipt of information from the club, the council's public engagement is planned to commence on 5 June at 10am and finish on 23 July at midnight.
18. Following completion of the public engagement, OCC officers will review the feedback, seek further clarifications and information from OUFC as required, and draft a recommendation for Cabinet's consideration in September 2023.

Financial Implications

19. Financial implications associated with the engagement and communications strategy include officer time, the use of independent advisors, and the production and distribution of communication materials. This will be resourced through existing departmental budgets and supplemented by reserves, if necessary. The estimated impact for both phases of engagement is approximately £75,000.

Comments checked by:

Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance and S151, lorna.baxter@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

20. It should be noted that this report relates to Oxfordshire County Council as landowner, and not in its role as statutory consultee to a planning application. Any potential stadium development would be subject to the usual planning process and Oxfordshire County Council will undertake its role as a statutory consultee with regards to relevant matters as part of that process.

Comments checked by:

Richard Hodby, Solicitor, Legal Services richard.hodby@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Equality and Inclusion Implications

21. No further equality or inclusion implications have been identified in addition to those noted in previous reports relating to this matter. The publication of a timeframe to decision making and commitment to a period of at least six weeks for feedback seeks to enable as wide as participation as possible.

Sustainability Implications

22. Whilst there are no specific sustainability implications arising from this report, it should be noted that any scheme proposal by OUFC must support OCC's net zero carbon emissions pledge through highly sustainable development aspirations and overall net zero emissions targets; that any proposal must seek to enforce less reliance on cars and improve sustainable transport through increased walking, cycling, and rail use, and that any proposal must achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain.

Risk Management

23. The county council will identify and mitigate financial risks associated with the potential development of a stadium on its land. The council will take appropriate legal and financial advice to develop the mitigations. Currently this advice is being sought.
24. Professional fees will need to be incurred before it is clear whether the transaction can proceed. The liability for these fees must rest with OUFC and not the county council. Whilst the county council will always act in good faith, if ultimately it was unhappy with the proposals in the professional reports, the county council must retain the right to refuse to proceed with the transaction without being liable for OUFC's costs.
25. For the avoidance of doubt, the county council will not be willing to enter into a conditional agreement for lease or freehold sale before the professional reports are obtained which might tie it to proceed with the transaction despite being unhappy with the proposals in the professional reports.
26. The timeframe set out in this report (ie an anticipated Cabinet decision on 19 September 2023) is entirely dependent on OUFC providing adequate information setting out how the council's strategic priorities will be addressed as part of the scheme proposals.

Consultation and engagement

27. The county council undertook a significant public engagement exercise in January and February 2022. Lasting four weeks, with specific local targeting, this exercise was open to all and explored the strategic priorities identified in this report. It related to proposals from OUFC covering both the playing fields at Stratfield Brake and the land known as the 'triangle' and described as land to the east of Frieze Way / south of Kidlington roundabout.
28. During April and May 2023, OCC held independently facilitated discussions with stakeholders to listen to early views with regards to the scheme. Whilst detailed plans from OUFC were not yet available, the council was keen to hear formative views from stakeholders on opportunities and concerns with regards to the

principle of a stadium on 'the triangle'. A summary of the feedback received from stakeholders to date is included in Annex 1.

29. A second phase of public engagement is due to take place in June and July 2023. Annex 2 sets out the plans for the next phase of engagement, which is in line with the engagement and communication strategy adopted by Cabinet in March 2023.
30. If a decision were made by Cabinet to make available the land to OUFC for the development of a stadium, formal consultation would take place as part of the statutory planning process in due course. It is important to stress that the county council cannot replace or undermine the statutory consultation process that will be undertaken by Cherwell District Council as the local planning authority.
31. The county council is aware that OUFC, as the scheme promotor, is undertaking pre-application engagement with community stakeholders and the planning authority; OCC welcomes this work.

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

paul.grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk

SUSANNAH WINTERSGILL: DIRECTOR COMMUNICATIONS, STRATEGY, AND INSIGHT.

Annex:	Annex 1: Stakeholder engagement feedback report Annex 2: Engagement and communications strategy
Background papers:	None
Other Documents:	This report follows those received by Cabinet on 18 January 2022, 15 March 2022, 24 January 2023, 21 March 2023 and 18 April 2023 - all published on the county council website www.oxfordshire.gov.uk
Contact Officers:	Vic Kurzeja, Director of Property Services vic.kurzeja@oxfordshire.gov.uk

May 2023

Annex 1

**Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford
United Football Club land negotiations**

Phase one – Stakeholder engagement

Interim feedback report

Covering period Thursday 13 April – Wednesday 3 May 2023

Phase one – Stakeholder engagement

Contents	Page numbers
1. Overview	3
2. Stakeholder meetings	4-10
3. All member briefing and questions and answer session	10-11
Annex A: Pre-meeting presentation from stakeholder meetings	11-15
Annex B: In-meeting presentation from stakeholder meetings	15-17

1. Overview

- 1.1 Phase one of the council's stakeholder engagement activity to help inform future decision making on its land negotiations with Oxford United Football Club (OUFC) began on Thursday 13 April 2023 and will end on Friday 19 May 2023.
- 1.2 To date, the council has convened seven stakeholder meetings. A briefing meeting and question and answer session for county councillors with OUFC has also been held.
- 1.3 A further five stakeholder meetings have been scheduled and a briefing for local district councillors is also being planned. The latter has been delayed due to the recent district council elections and is likely to be held after phase one has ended.
- 1.4 This table sets out the schedule of meetings for phase one:

Date and time	Stakeholder
Thursday 13 April	Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP)
Monday 17 April	Briefing and question and answer session by OUFC for county councillors
Thursday 20 April	Woodland Trust & WonderWood Oxfordshire
Friday 21 April	Local sports clubs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kidlington Youth Football Club - Gosford All Black Rugby Club - Kidlington Cricket Club - Kidlington Running Club
Monday 24 April	Oxford United Supporters Panel
Thursday 27 April	Experience Oxfordshire
Wednesday 3 May	Harbord Road Residents' Association
Wednesday 3 May	OXVOX - an independent supporters' group for OUFC

Tuesday 9 May	Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum and the Summertown & St Margaret's Neighbourhood Forum
Wednesday 17 May	Layla Moran MP
Friday 19 May	Friends of Stratfield Brake and the Triangle
Date TBC	District councillors - we are in discussions with district councillors about meeting dates post-election
Date TBC	Kidlington Parish Council - we are in discussions with Kidlington Parish Council to meet after their Parish Poll on 10 May.

- 1.5 This report includes feedback from meetings and events held up to 3 May 2023. It will be updated to incorporate feedback from all stakeholder meetings as part of the Cabinet report for 19 September 2023.
- 1.6 Please note that during phase one of the council's engagement process, all conversations are formative. The meetings proceeded on the mutual understanding that detailed information from the club is not yet available and that no decisions about the use of the land have been made.
- 1.7 A second phase of stakeholder and public engagement will take place once the club's proposals have been developed and the impacts are clearly identified. This engagement is due to take place between 10am on 5 June and midnight on 23 July, subject to sufficient information from OUFC being made available.

2. Stakeholder meetings

- 2.1 The objective of the first phase of stakeholder engagement meetings was set to provide a listening platform for key stakeholders to share early formative views with the council regarding the use of the land at the Triangle and the potential impact of any new stadium.
- 2.2 In total, the council has organised 12 stakeholder meetings. The participant list has been derived from a list of community stakeholders and groups that the council has been in dialogue with since it started its non-binding negotiations with OUFC, with a small number of new stakeholders added following feedback.
- 2.3 Key community stakeholders and groups were sent invitations directly, with most taking up the offer. The meetings are being held either in person or online, according to the preference of the stakeholders. Each meeting is scheduled to last between 1 – 1.5 hours. Council representatives have met

with some community stakeholders and groups individually, others collectively where it is acknowledged there is a common interest (e.g., sports groups).

- 2.4 In advance of the meetings, all groups receive the same materials, including a pre-reading presentation (see Annex A). An independent chair from the Consultation Institute facilitates the meetings and notes are formally logged by a council officer.
- 2.5 A senior council officer and a Cabinet member attend in listening capacity to hear feedback first hand. During the meetings, the council's senior officer presented a brief presentation (Annex B) reiterating some of the key information in the pre-reading materials.
- 2.6 Each meeting is structured around the questions set out below and takes account of the seven strategic priorities set out by the council for the use of the land, which are as follows:
 - Maintain a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington.
 - Improve access to nature and green spaces.
 - Enhance facilities for local sports groups and on-going financial support.
 - Significantly improve the infrastructure connectivity in this location, improving public transport to reduce the need for car travel in as far as possible, and improving sustainable transport through increased walking, cycling and rail use.
 - Develop local employment opportunities in Oxfordshire.
 - Increase education and innovation through the provision of a sports centre of excellence and facilities linked to elite sport, community sport, health, and wellbeing.
 - Support the county council's net zero carbon emissions pledge through highly sustainable development.
- 2.7 Questions to guide discussions at the meeting:
 1. *What are your initial views and thoughts about the use of the land at the triangle and the potential impact of any new stadium?*
 - a. *What did you think when you first heard about it? Good / bad - why?*
 - b. *Any immediate concerns?*
 2. *Considering these seven key strategic priorities, are any more or less important to your group/organisation?*
 - a. *Why do you say that?*
 - b. *What are your concerns?*
 - c. *What are the benefits / drawbacks?*
 3. *Are there any other factors you would like the council to consider?*

4. *This is the first phase of engagement, with further stakeholder and public engagement taking place in June and July. Is there anyone else you think we should be talking to?*

5. *Any other final comments? Thank and close.*

Emerging findings

2.8 The following emerging findings summarise the main themes raised by stakeholders during meetings held between 13 April and 3 May. Some are views from single stakeholders, whilst others are shared by several or multiple stakeholders.

1. What are your initial views and thoughts about the use of the land at the triangle and the potential impact of any new stadium?

Location

- Triangle site doesn't seem to be an appropriate shape – the piece of land seems an awkward shape that would not be big enough for the club's current plans.
- How would a triangular piece of land work for people to come in and out – how will all parts of the land be used?
- Size of the stadium underestimates capability to house multiple facilities and large amounts of people.
- Great location in terms of transport links.
- Triangle location makes grounds more accessible for people from the north of the county.
- This location represents the football team as a county football team, as opposed to an Oxford City team. This location is more accessible for the whole county.
- Provides opportunity for people to explore Oxford city as part of a match day.
- Could be a landmark for Oxford – something to be proud of.
- Kassam Stadium grounds are difficult to find, triangle location is more accessible.
- Current location (Kassam Stadium) is difficult to reach for people outside of Oxford.

Transport and parking

- Concern expressed about the connectivity between Oxford city centre and the new stadium – how will this impact roads that are already congested?
- More information needed from OUFC about improved infrastructure and what that will look like in terms of facilitating public transport.
- Need further information from OUFC about the proposed bridge over Banbury Road – what are the benefits of this bridge?

- The impact of the proposed stadium on this site and increased public transport links will take over the green belt.
- How will parking be managed in the area?
- Will the stadium grounds be used for car parking and what impact will this have on local car parks?
- Will the high use of the park and ride on match days prevent shoppers or other visitors accessing the centre of the city? This could cause a decline in business for retailers unrelated to the stadium.
- Current public transport system is already strained – facilities and services need to be enhanced.
- Parking and traffic seen as a concern. Parking on grass verges/inconsiderate parking in surrounding areas was highlighted as something that will need controlling and enforcement from OUFC.
- If fans have to use public transport, it will reduce congestion and carbon emissions.
- Questions were raised about the catchment area of OUFC supporters and whether postcode data had been shared / analysed. Whilst public transport might assist supporters travel from further afield, it was questioned how people from Kidlington would travel to the site and what access and infrastructure would be in place for residents of Kidlington.
- Train and bus - opportunity for the stadium to be more accessible by public transport is very exciting.
- Travelling via public transport builds up community – you catch the train all together and it builds morale between the fans. Builds an experience even outside of the game – more of a social experience.
- People with disabilities are limited by the current travel arrangements at the Kassam stadium. The opportunity to arrive by public transport at the new stadium would provide greater accessibility.

Biodiversity and environmental impact

- The land should be prioritised to manage wildlife and nature.
- Plans need to show how woodland and the natural environment will be impacted.
- What is the club's recovery strategy for nature on the site?
- What will the footfall be? How will that impact existing nature on the site?
- The ancient woodland inventory and tree inventory has only 20% of cases reported. The site as is could potentially be hosting ancient woodland. An Ancient Woodland Inventory survey should be undertaken.
- What ecological surveys have been made on the site so far?
- Site is a host to underground mammal activity – this wildlife needs to be protected.
- All willow is mixed age class, all the wood in the Triangle is currently positively contributing to the environment.

- The site contributes to carbon sequestration (where carbon is stored in the natural environment) - developing on the site will cause further harmful effects to climate change.
- What will be the impacts on nature from the stadium? What is the mitigation proposed for light, noise pollution etc?
- The land should not be considered as available for lease or rent as it is already in use - the green belt should remain.
- Oxfordshire is rapidly losing countryside to development - this is changing the character of the place in a negative way.
- Site needs to show how it will integrate green corridors and access to green spaces.
- Design of the new stadium should be structured around green community spaces.
- There is the potential for solar panels to power the stadium during match/event days and provide power back into the local grid.
- Area needs access to energy infrastructure – grid distribution or plugging points for solar energy.
- The stadium needs to demonstrate a net zero building and incorporate use of eco technology to create a positive impact. Can it generate more power than it uses?
- OUFC need to demonstrate statistics in terms of ecological benefits.

Facilities and community value

- New facilities should provide greater opportunities for disabled people to actively participate in the football experience.
- Site should be considered more than just a sports facility; it should present as a multi-use facility.
- Plans should strike a balance between stadium and community facilities with a wider social impact.
- Venue should be utilised seven days a week, not just for matches.
- Suggested uses for the stadium include teaching and education, use by local sports clubs including neighbouring schools, event space, local hospitality vendors, hotels, leisure, and community access – health and education facilities.
- Stadium should mostly be used as a space to benefit the local community.
- Establish an asset that is embedded in the community, working with schools and communities.
- The stadium should be used as an opportunity for the benefit of Oxfordshire as a whole.
- The development of this site is about more than just football, it's about legacy and investing in communities.
- The current facilities are used in different ways by each sports club. The use of new land provides opportunity for better facilities for the sports groups.

- Sports teams want to know that OUFC will provide support and fair access to the sports fields, as they are currently limited in their access.
- The stadium needs to have appropriate changing facilities, particularly with the growth of female football / youth football (multi-sex facilities).
- A quality pavilion and associated facilities would increase opportunities for post-match social events. There can be 600+ people on site at any one time.
- There needs to be space for sports to co-exist, particularly as playing seasons overlap and participation in sport continues to grow.
- With an influx of people on match days, some female runners had expressed safety concerns - particularly for solo female runners.
- Wider health and wellbeing approach – establish useable green spaces and accessible exercise opportunities for locals.
- OUFC need to establish links to local NHS Integrated Care Board.
- We need to use this as an opportunity to promote healthy lifestyles. How do we create the services to enable healthy living?
- We need a health and wellbeing approach to the onsite food stalls – providing a variety of healthy options.

Design

- Materials used to make the stadium need to be eco led, with solar panels, so that it produces more energy than it uses.
- Where does the design structure physically sit within the site?
- Needs to be a net zero building.
- Design should be structured around green community spaces.

Economic impact and employment

- Good for tourism experience and for an entire day out - should be used to showcase the venues Oxfordshire has to offer.
- Development of the triangle is seen as an enabler for investment and helps improve access to sports provision which is seen to be poor in Kidlington.
- Establish employment opportunities through the multi-use facility approach.
- Installing commercial kitchens on site and using them as a training programme for the food vendors could provide opportunity for local trainees for sporting events.
- The stadium will provide economic benefit to Kidlington, with more people shopping and staying in the area.
- Existing jobs at the Kassam Stadium should be sustained and protected at the new site.
- The possibility of accommodation on or near this site would elevate the brand and the place.

2. Considering the council's seven key strategic priorities, are any more or less important to your group/organisation?

- All seven priorities were considered important by all groups, although the importance ascribed to each priority varied by stakeholder group.
- It was noted there would be a need for the club to make further investment in diversity and inclusion initiatives.

3. Are there any other factors you would like the council to consider?

- Need to see more detailed plans from OUFC to better understand how the council's priorities will be addressed.
- The images used need to place OUFC's proposals in context, for example by highlighting future housing development.
- The council's initial engagement exercise (January-February 2022) was criticised for being open to all, with responses from football fans far exceeding those of residents.
- Future engagement needs to be widely publicised to local communities, with household leaflet drops.

4. This is the first phase of engagement, with further stakeholder and public engagement taking place in June and July. Who else do you think we should be talking to?

- Each group provided a suggested list of additional stakeholders. The council will contact these groups as part of the second phase of stakeholder engagement.

5. Any other final comments? Thank and close.

- Each group offered thanks for the opportunity to share their views with the council.


3. All member briefing

- 3.1 A briefing meeting for county councillors and question and answer session with OUFC took place on 17 April.
- 3.2 The representatives from OUFC were chief executive Tim Williams, director of development Jon Clarke, and head of strategy Niall McWilliams.
- 3.3 The themes covered in the questions from councillors included:
- Diversity and inclusion
 - Biodiversity
 - Transport


- Employment opportunities
- Contingency plans
- Commercial considerations
- Community facilities and investment


3.4 A [YouTube video of OUFC's presentation](#) is available on OUFC's website. A set of written questions and answers is available on the [county council's dedicated webpage](#).

Appendix A: Pre-meeting presentation from stakeholder meetings




Discussions with Oxford United FC about the potential use of council-owned land for a new stadium





Background

- Oxford United Football Club (OUFC) approached Oxfordshire County Council in late 2021 with a proposal to lease council -owned land near Kidlington to develop a new home stadium.
- In January 2021 the council's Cabinet resolved to undertake a public engagement exercise to understand local views and set out a series of strategic priorities that any scheme should address prior to a final decision being made.
- A council-led public engagement exercise was undertaken in January and February 2022. It received over 3,700 responses, with the list of objectives proposed by the council generally thought to be good and exhaustive. The [full report is available here](#).
- In March 2022 Cabinet agreed that officers should enter discussions with OUFC to deepen their understanding of the detailed proposals being made and consider their compatibility with the council's strategic priorities.
- OUFC published their RIBA stage 0 report in December 2022. Following consideration of the proposals, Cabinet agreed in January 2023 to enter into non -binding negotiations for a new stadium. The negotiations are currently in train.





The land

- The land, known as 'the Triangle', is located east of Frieze Way and south of the Kidlington roundabout.
- It is approximately 5 hectares in size and is situated in the green belt.
- A site at Stratfield Brake in Kidlington had initially been proposed by the club, but it was recognised there were challenges associated with it.
- Officers subsequently identified the Triangle as an alternative location and the council's Cabinet has confirmed that negotiations are about this site.
- The Triangle is close to Oxford Parkway railway station and the park and ride at Water Eaton.
- It is currently let to a single leaseholder and there is no public access.



Addressing the council's strategic priorities

For OUFC to receive agreement to lease or buy the Triangle site from the council, the club's proposal must address seven strategic priorities set out by the council for the use of the land:

1. Maintain a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington
2. Improve access to nature and green spaces
3. Enhance facilities for local sports groups and ongoing financial support
4. Significantly improve the infrastructure connectivity in this location, improving public transport to reduce the need for car travel in so far as possible, and improve sustainable transport through increased walking, cycling and rail use
5. Develop local employment opportunities in Oxfordshire
6. Increase education and innovation through the provision of a sports centre of excellence and facilities linked to elite sport, community sport, health and wellbeing
7. Support the county council's net zero carbon emissions pledge through highly sustainable development.





The decision about the land

- A decision on whether OUFC can lease or buy the land at the Triangle will be taken in public at a Cabinet meeting.
- This is expected to be in September 2023.
- For a final decision about the development of the proposed stadium, the football club would need to submit a planning application to Cherwell District Council as the local planning authority. It would then go through a full planning process involving public consultation.



Stakeholder and public engagement

- Before making a final decision, the council has committed to seeking the views of a wide range of stakeholders, including local residents.
- During April and May the council is holding independently facilitated meetings with stakeholders to listen to people's views about the potential for a stadium.
- Once OUFC has published their scheme proposals and information relating to how the council's strategic priorities will be addressed, a six-week public engagement exercise will take place.
- The engagement exercise will be open to everyone. It is likely that it will take place between 5 June and 23 July 2023.
- It is important that our engagement activities allow a wide cross-section of views to be captured. However, we recognise that the proposals have a greater impact on local residents and communities and so we will carry out targeted promotion in this area.
- OUFC are undertaking their own community engagement activities.





Next steps and estimated timetable

23 May	Cabinet meeting setting out the final arrangements for public engagement and feedback from stakeholder engagement undertaken to date
5 June	Publication of OUFC final information regarding the proposed stadium
5 June - 23 July	Council undertakes public engagement on whether OUFC's scheme addresses the seven strategic priorities
19 September	Cabinet meeting at which a decision will be taken on the use of the land




Further information

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/stadium


A webpage providing background information, definitions, timeline, links to cabinet papers and news stories.



Appendix B: In-meeting presentation from stakeholder meetings



Oxfordshire United stadium land negotiations





Site maps









Addressing the council's strategic priorities

For OUFC to receive agreement to lease or buy the Triangle site from the council, the club's proposal must address seven strategic priorities set out by the council for the use of the land:

1. Maintain a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington
2. Improve access to nature and green spaces
3. Enhance facilities for local sports groups and ongoing financial support
4. Significantly improve the infrastructure connectivity in this location, improving public transport to reduce the need for car travel in so far as possible, and improve sustainable transport through increased walking, cycling and rail use
5. Develop local employment opportunities in Oxfordshire
6. Increase education and innovation through the provision of a sports centre of excellence and facilities linked to elite sport, community sport, health and wellbeing
7. Support the county council's net zero carbon emissions pledge through highly sustainable development.



Next steps and estimated timetable



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Annex 2

Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford United Football Club land negotiations: updated engagement and communications strategy

Introduction

This strategy sets out how Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) will inform and engage a wide range of stakeholders and members of the public as it continues with negotiations with Oxford United Football Club (OUFC) about the potential use of the land at 'the triangle' for a new stadium.

Council-led engagement activity will focus on the extent to which stakeholders are satisfied that OUFC's proposals meet the council's strategic priorities for the use of the land so as to bring benefit to our communities in Oxfordshire.

On 19 September 2023 Cabinet is due to decide whether or not to lease or sell the land to OUFC for the development of a stadium. Feedback from the stakeholder and public engagement activity will be considered, alongside other supporting information, as part of the decision-making process.

OUFC's proposal for the stadium would then need to go through a full democratic planning process by the local planning authority Cherwell District Council. This would include a statutory public consultation process.

Background

Following a decision by Cabinet on 24 January 2023, Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford United Football Club have entered into negotiations on outline legal and commercial terms for council-owned land, which could be used for the development of a new football stadium. The land in question is located east of Frieze Way and south of Kidlington roundabout and is known as 'the triangle'. It is situated in the green belt.

For OUFC to receive agreement from the council to lease or buy the triangle site, their proposal must address the seven strategic priorities set out by the council for the use of the land, which are listed below. It must also meet objectives around managing financial risk and obtaining best value for the taxpayer from any transaction.

The seven strategic priorities are:

- Maintain a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington
- Improve access to nature and green spaces
- Enhance facilities for local sports groups and on-going financial support
- Significantly improve the infrastructure connectivity in this location, improving public transport to reduce the need for car travel in so far as possible, and to improve sustainable transport through increased walking, cycling and rail use
- Develop local employment opportunities in Oxfordshire

- Increase education and innovation through the provision of a sports centre of excellence and facilities linked to elite sport, community sport, health and wellbeing
- Support the county council's net zero carbon emissions pledge through highly sustainable development.

During the negotiation period, Cabinet has asked officers to identify opportunities to meaningfully engage with stakeholders as OUFC's proposals are developed and impacts clearly identified. This engagement will focus on the extent to which stakeholders are satisfied that OUFC's proposals meet the council's strategic priorities set out above.

The county council is aware that OUFC, as the scheme promotor, has been undertaking pre-application engagement work with community stakeholders and the planning authority. This activity is entirely separate to the council's engagement activity.

Objectives of stakeholder engagement

We aim to be as open and transparent in our communications and engagement activity as possible so that stakeholders feel they have been given the opportunity to share their views. We also need to shape the engagement activity carefully so that it does not risk prejudicing any future planning process.

The objectives of this plan are to:

1. Keep stakeholders, residents and fans informed about key milestones and the latest developments in this process.
2. Inform stakeholders, residents and fans of the distinct and separate roles of the three organisations in this process (Oxford United Football Club, Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council) to enable engagement with each organisation in the right context.
3. Provide meaningful and visible opportunities for a wide range of stakeholders, including local residents, Oxfordshire residents and OUFC fans, to provide structured feedback on OUFC's proposals, within the parameters set out by the county council as the landowner.

Audiences

The main audiences for the county council's engagement and/or communications activity include:

- Local communities, in close proximity to the triangle including Cutteslowe, Kidlington, Sunnymead and Wolvercote
- Local democratic representatives, including parish councils, district councillors, county councillors, and local MPs
- Local residents' associations and local residents' forums
- Chief executive officers of Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council and West Oxfordshire District Council
- Current leaseholder of the Triangle and adjacent leaseholders
- Local sports clubs including Kidlington Youth Football Club, Gosford All Blacks Rugby Club, Kidlington Cricket Club and Kidlington Running Club
- Friends of Stratfield Brake and the Triangle

- OUFC supporters including Oxford United Supporters Panel and OXVOX - an independent supporters' group for OUFC
- Other local community organisations and groups and local interest groups including, accessibility, equality, and diversity, environmental, religious, schools and voluntary and community and youth groups
- Local and strategic representatives of the Oxfordshire's business community, including Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Experience Oxfordshire
- Wider Oxfordshire residents, commuters from outside of the county and visitors

This list is not exclusive, and we are continuing to welcome approaches from other organisations that would like to be involved and recommendations from groups and organisations we are meeting. During the first phase of stakeholder engagement in April and May 2023, the council was provided with a suggested list of additional stakeholders. We will review this list and engage with groups and organisations as part of the second phase of stakeholder engagement.

Activity

Communications

We will provide stakeholders, residents and fans with access to timely, easily accessible, and factual information using council-owned and other digital channels (website, social media), issuing media releases, sending letters and emails to key stakeholders.

To support phase 2 of our engagement plan (described below), we will also add a letter drop, supplying packaged content for editors of community-led printed and digital media, targeted social media advertising, digital and radio advertising and a poster campaign to our communications mix.

Key to our communications approach is a dedicated page on the county council website (www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/stadium). This page includes definitions, timeline, repository/links to cabinet papers and other documentation, contact information, and signposting to other sites. It aims to provide a one-stop shop for stadium-related information.

Stakeholder engagement

Opportunities for stakeholders to share their views has been divided into two phases, which are set out below. Each phase has a different focus.

Phase 1 (April and May): Targeted stakeholder engagement

- Designed to provide a listening platform for targeted groups of stakeholders to share early formative views on opportunities and concerns with regards to the principle of the stadium on 'the triangle' site.
- Engagement has taken the form of face-to-face meetings or virtual meetings, led by an independent chair, attended in listening capacity by a senior officer and Cabinet member. All meetings are formally noted.
- We have reviewed and expanded our stakeholder list, which includes individuals and organisations that we have kept informed throughout this process.

- Up until 3 May, we have held seven meetings, with a further five meetings scheduled.
- A briefing meeting for local district councillors is also being planned, which was delayed due to the recent district council elections.
- A briefing meeting and question and answer session for county councillors with OUFC has also been held.

Phase 2 (5 June to 23 July): Wider stakeholder and public engagement

- Designed to enable members of public and stakeholders to assess the extent to which information released by the club (their proposals) address the seven priorities set out by the council for the use of its land and to capture structured feedback.
- The activity will take two forms:
 - primary engagement through a small number of roadshow-styled 'listening' events (public exhibitions) that are open to everyone.
 - an open engagement where anyone can share feedback using an online response form; email and letters will also be accepted.
- We will also hold a small number of targeted stakeholder meetings to include any stakeholders we were unable to meet in phase one.
- To support phase two of engagement, we have asked OUFC to provide visual and written material setting out how they believe their proposals address the council's strategic priorities. This is designed to provide context to which people can respond.
- For phase two, we will commission an external provider to design, deliver and report on both the listening events and the open engagement exercise to provide independence.

Provisional timetable for phase 2

5 June 2023 (10am)	Public engagement starts
From week commencing 19 June	Stakeholder meetings
Weeks commencing: 19 June 26 June 3 July 10 July	Roadshow style listening events (Kidlington, Cutteslowe, Wolvercote, Oxford city centre). Venues and dates are to be confirmed.
23 July 2023 (midnight)	Public engagement exercise closes
19 September 2023	Cabinet meeting at which a decision is due to be taken on the use of the land. A report on the engagement undertaken in phase 1 and phase 2 will be included in the cabinet papers.

Divisions Affected - All**Cabinet – 23 May 2023****Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy****Report by Corporate Director for Environment and Place and
Director for Public Health****RECOMMENDATION**

1. **Cabinet are RECOMMENDED to**
 - a) **Approve the Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy and Route Map for launch on Clean Air Day (15th June 2023).**

Executive Summary

2. This report provides Cabinet with an overview of the Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy. It summarises the background to the strategy, development process and content of the strategy. It is recommended that the final strategy (annex 1) and route map (annex 2) are approved by cabinet.

Background

3. A person at rest takes about 16 breaths per minute, this means we breathe about 960 breaths an hour and over 8.4 million breaths a year. A person who lives to 80 will take about 672 million breaths in a lifetime. The quality of the air we breathe is therefore everyone's business, and it is a fundamental building block to good health.
4. Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. Long term exposure to air pollution in England is equivalent to between 26,000 and 38,000 deaths per year. The true public health burden is likely to be even higher. In Oxfordshire, it was estimated that air pollution's effect on mortality was equivalent to 320 early deaths at typical ages in 2021.
5. This strategy is a call to action for the Council to make improving air quality a key objective of our work; individually and collectively we can and must take steps so that our residents are able to breathe safely.
6. Air pollution is a mix of particles and gases of both natural and human origin. These air pollutants are emitted from a range of sources including agriculture,

transport, industry and domestic heating. Currently, there is no clear evidence of a safe level of exposure.

7. The Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report 2022 focuses on air pollution. The report highlights that we can and should go further to reduce air pollution – and it is technically possible to do so. The report includes a number of recommendations including the need for local action to improve air quality and highlights that local authorities are central in the response to air pollution.
8. In [June 2022](#) the county council demonstrated its commitment to addressing the air pollution crisis by signing a letter to the UK Environment Secretary George Eustice asking the government to bring forward the UK's PM_{2.5} target to 2030, in line with the World Health Organisation's interim guideline.
9. Locally, the air quality context is complex, with a range of partner organisations each responsible for different elements of air quality. In Oxfordshire, the district and city councils have a legal duty to monitor air quality, however many others including the county council now have a duty to contribute to an action plan to reduce those levels. Under the Environment Act 2021 the county council have new legal responsibilities to actively support district and city council air quality work.
10. The county council through its crosscutting work on climate action, transport, development, waste, public health and innovation has already implemented many actions that will help to tackle poor air quality, and more are due to be delivered in the coming years. However, air quality improvements are often a by-product of this work rather than being a priority or driver.
11. The strategy aims to demonstrate Oxfordshire County Council's commitment to addressing the air pollution crisis by seeking to meet the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines on deadly air pollution by 2030. It is crucial that we do so as there is no safe limit of air pollution.
12. The strategy's vision is to **accelerate the improvement in Oxfordshire's air quality to reduce the health and environmental impacts of dirty air, so ensuring that all residents can breathe safely.**
13. The strategy objectives are to:
 - Work in partnership to support the work to improve air quality undertaken by the district and city councils.
 - Work with air quality partners to maintain a downward air pollution trajectory and develop population exposure targets.
 - Deliver the Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy Route Map.
14. The strategy outlines the approach that we will be taking to realise this vision and objectives. This is a high-level approach that will help to guide future work on air quality in the county and the actions we will be taking. The approach is grouped into three areas:
 - **Reduce** – Reduce emissions of air pollution
 - **Extend** – Extend distance from pollution sources

- **Protect** – Protect those most at risk
15. The strategy is supported by a route map that sets out what work we are already doing and the actions we will take in the short term. The actions are all related to functions directly within Oxfordshire County Council's control. This will help to better define the county council's role and support joint working with our partners. The route map is structured according to our strategic approach and identifies those actions that we will be taking to reduce, extend and protect against air pollution. Within this, we have grouped the actions into key areas that are either local drivers or enablers of air quality.
 16. We have grouped the actions in this way to reflect the diverse range of issues and work being conducted within the broader reduce, extend, protect framework. We have identified the work already underway and actions we will be taking in each section. We have included partnership working and monitoring as their own sections due to their cross cutting impacts on all work.
 17. We recognise that there are a number of actions in the strategy which are a mixture of existing work and new work. To help guide delivery, we have therefore identified 5 priority actions for the next year. The priority actions are all related to new work that we will seek to deliver in the next year. We have identified one priority action for each section and will review our priority actions annually. The priority actions identified are action numbers 1, 26, 33, 36 and 43.
 18. The strategy is viewed as a first step towards improving county council work on air quality and raising awareness of air quality. Moving forward a more comprehensive countywide strategy will be required with support from a range of stakeholders to provide a coordinated approach to improving air quality. It is hoped that the OCC Air Quality Strategy will serve as a starting point and platform for enabling a countywide strategy.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

19. The county council's strategic plan, 2022-25, sets out a vision to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county. The OCC Air Quality Strategy will help to deliver all aspects of this vision.
20. The OCC Air Quality Strategy builds on the 9 strategic priorities of the county council and will be key to delivering the following three:
 - Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire
 - Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents
 - Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential
21. The OCC Air Quality Strategy will help to make Oxfordshire greener, fairer and healthier due the significant impacts air pollution has on the health of Oxfordshire residents and the natural environment.

22. The OCC Air Quality Strategy will help to tackle inequalities due to air quality's impact on older and younger people, pregnant women and those with existing health problems. These residents are particularly susceptible to the impacts of air pollution. There is also a complex association between air pollution exposure, area level deprivation and ethnicity. The actions proposed to tackle the sources of air pollution will therefore improve the health of these residents and create a more equal society.
23. Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. The OCC Air Quality Strategy will therefore be central to prioritising the health and wellbeing of residents.
24. The OCC Air Quality Strategy will also help to create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential. Children and particularly susceptible to the health impacts of air pollution. Raising awareness of air pollution and taking steps to address the sources of air pollution will therefore help to improve air quality across the county and reduce health impacts on children.

Financial Implications

25. The OCC Air Quality Strategy has been produced by staff from the Public Health Environment and Place directorates, and hence covered by the staffing budget in these areas.
26. The route map identifies 45 actions related to county council work on air quality. These include work that is already underway to support air quality, existing work that can be expanded and new work.
27. Actions related to existing work will be delivered through business as usual work and existing funding. The majority of new work can be delivered with no additional funding as the actions are related to partnership work and engagement with air quality partners.
28. The actions matrix (annex 3) identifies that approximately £200,000 is required in total for the 5 new actions (tabled below), to deliver the full ambition of the strategy and a further £50,000 for additional officer resource (1 FTE for 1 year) to oversee and coordinate delivery of the strategy.
29. Officers are investigating potential external funding sources such as the Integrated Care Board and Defra grants that could support further work or securing additional officer resource. Modelling and evidence base development work (part of action 45) valued at £70,000 and funded through the Public Health reserve (£60,000) and the Local Transport Authority Capacity Grant (£10,000), will be conducted in 2023/24 and this will help to inform future bids.
30. It is proposed that any further funding to help realise the strategy ambition, accelerate delivery or secure additional officer resource, that cannot be externally funded and deemed a priority would be considered as part of a future budget strategy process.

Action	Cost	Explanation
28 - Work in partnership and use an intelligence led approach to enforcement in relation to improving air quality.	£5,000	Support trading standards staff time or a campaign regarding domestic wood burning.
33 - Develop and test the use of a local air quality impact assessment tool as part of health impact assessments.	£30,000	Develop local evidence based tool so that robust and practical air quality assessments can be made as part of Health Impact Assessments.
36 - Create an air quality communication plan, linking it with the work of the district and city councils and other air quality partners.	£5,000	Support communications campaign and associated materials.
41 - Secure funding to allow the continuation of existing air quality monitoring projects.	£60,000	Allow continuation of current project funded monitoring work conducted by the Innovation Hub to improve local understanding of air quality.
45 - Work with air quality partners to carry out population exposure modelling and develop local population exposure targets for PM2.5 and NOx.	£100,000	Modelling needed to improve understanding of air quality, inform development of local targets and the work required to reach target milestones.

Comments checked by:

Rob Finlayson, Finance Business Partner (Environment & Place),
rob.finlayson@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Finance)

Legal Implications

31. The OCC Air Quality Strategy is not a statutory document and there are no legal requirements to produce or consult upon it. However, production of the strategy will help the county council to fulfil its legal responsibility to actively support district and city council air quality work, as required under the Environment Act 1995 and the Environment Act 2021.

Comments checked by:

Jennifer Crouch, Principal Solicitor (Environment Team),
Jennifer.Crouch@Oxfordshire.gov.uk (Legal)

Staff Implications

32. Development of the OCC Air Quality Strategy has been undertaken by officer resource in the Infrastructure Strategy and Policy Team and the Healthy Place

Shaping team, with input from officers across the Environment and Place and Public Health directorates.

33. Once approved, delivery of the OCC Air Quality Strategy and action plan will be undertaken by officers from across the Environment and Place and Public Health directorates. Delivery of individual actions will primarily be covered by existing work or resources. However, as highlighted previously, additional officer resource (1 FTE for 1 year) will be required to deliver the strategy's full ambition and some actions will require further resource or reprioritisation of time.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

34. To ensure that we have assessed equalities implications in a fair and thorough manner an Equalities Impact Assessment was conducted (annex 4). This has ensured that any equality matters have been identified and acted upon during development of the OCC Air Quality Strategy.

Sustainability Implications

35. A Climate Impact Assessment has been undertaken (annex 5) to ensure that matters with climate implications are identified and where required acted upon during development of the OCC Air Quality Strategy.
36. The OCC Air Quality Strategy will help to build on and be supported by the county council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and Climate Action Framework. Air quality and climate action are closely linked due to the relationship between fossil fuels and air pollution. Similarly, transport is a key driver of air pollution and so delivery of the LTCP will be key to improving air quality.

Risk Management

37. A risk register has been kept during development of the OCC Air Quality Strategy. Key risks associated with the strategy moving forward have been summarised below.

38. *Risk:* The actions in the strategy are not implemented

Mitigation: The OCC Air Quality Strategy has been developed with input from a range of council teams, partners and external stakeholders. We will continue to work with these partners and stakeholders to ensure the strategy is implemented. Many of the actions are also related to ongoing council work and will be delivered through these existing programmes. Annual review by the Health Protection Forum will help to ensure the strategy is being implemented and identify areas where further work is required.

39. *Risk:* The strategy does not deliver its intended outcomes.

Mitigation: The OCC Air Quality Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis, this will include consideration of whether the intended outcomes are being delivered. The strategy seeks to improve the monitoring of air quality which will help to understand whether the strategy is delivering its intended outcomes.

Consultations

40. The OCC Air Quality Strategy has been developed with input and feedback from OCC teams and key external stakeholders. The strategy was developed in a two stage process with stakeholder engagement at both stages to help inform and refine the strategy's content.
41. Stage 1 included initial engagement conversations with a range of OCC officers from the Environment and Place and Public Health directorates as well as targeted external stakeholders. The external stakeholders engaged with were:
 - District and City Council Air Quality officers
 - Friends of the Earth
 - Oxford Brookes University
 - University of Oxford
 - Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & West Berkshire Integrated Care Board
42. As part of the stage 2 stakeholder engagement a workshop was held in February 2023. The workshop included representatives from key OCC teams, the district and city councils and academic partners. The draft strategy was also shared with all stakeholders for feedback.
43. The relevant cabinet members have also been engaged with through the respective portfolio holder briefings in December 2022 and March 2023 / April 2023.
44. There has not been any external communications with the general public about the OCC Air Quality Strategy. It is proposed that the strategy is launched on Clean Air Day (June 15th) alongside the new countywide air quality website. It is proposed that this launch would be supported by the OCC communications team.
45. An Air Quality "Bite Size" report from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment team [has been produced](#) to help support the messaging around the strategy.
46. Air quality is a technically complex area. To promote action we plan to produce a simplified one page explanation of what we want, where we are going and what we need others to do. A call for action will be developed for staff and a separate one for residents.

Bill Cotton, Corporate Director for Environment and Place
Ansaf Azhar, Director for Public Health

Annex: **Annex 1:** Draft OCC Air Quality Strategy
 Annex 2: Draft OCC Air Quality Strategy Route Map
 Annex 3: Actions matrix

Annex 4: Equalities Impact Assessment

Annex 5: Climate Impact Assessment

Background papers: Nil

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May 2023

Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy 2023-2030

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Version	Date	Changes
V1	December 2022	
V2	January 2023	Reduced technical information and added local drivers section
V3	January 2023	Incorporated officer feedback
V4	February 2023	Incorporated officer and stakeholder feedback, separate route map created and strategic approach added.
V5	February 2023	Incorporated officer feedback.
V6	March 2023	Incorporated stakeholder and DLT feedback, renamed action plan to route map and amended objectives
V7	March 2023	Vision and objectives amended following portfolio holder feedback and aims removed.
V8	April 2023	Foreword amended following SLT feedback
V9	May 2023	Introduction, foreword and figure 3 amended following Informal Cabinet feedback.

Contents

Introduction	5
Context.....	7
Policy context	7
Air pollution.....	7
Oxfordshire's air quality	11
Vision and objectives	15
Strategic approach	17
Route map.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Monitoring, learning and implementation	19

Foreword

Air quality has been improving across Oxfordshire in recent decades. However, levels remain unacceptably high in many areas and it is the largest environmental risk to residents' health. It is critical that we work to improve air quality to deliver the council's priorities, particularly prioritising the health and wellbeing of residents.

We have already taken some bold steps to clean up the air in Oxfordshire. In June 2022, we were 1 of the 21 local authorities that signed a letter to the UK Environment Secretary George Eustice asking the government to bring forward the UK's PM_{2.5} target to 2030, in line with the World Health Organisation's interim guideline.

We are now demonstrating our commitment to addressing the air pollution crisis by seeking to meet the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines on deadly air pollution by 2030. It is crucial that we meet the WHO's guidelines as there is no safe limit of air pollution and concentrations above the WHO guideline are deadly.

Our vision is to accelerate the improvement in Oxfordshire's air quality to reduce the health and environmental impacts of dirty air, so ensuring that all residents can breathe safely.

This strategy outlines the approach we will take to improve air quality and is supported by a more detailed short term route map. It represents a call to action for the Council to make improving air quality a key objective of our work; individually and collectively we can and must take steps so that our residents are able to breathe safely.

Councillor Liz Leffman
Leader of Oxfordshire County Council



Introduction

A person at rest takes about 16 breaths per minute, this means we breathe about 960 breaths an hour and over 8.4 million breaths a year. A person who lives to 80 will take about 672 million breaths in a lifetime. The quality of the air we breathe is therefore everyone's business, and it is a fundamental building block to good health.

Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. Long term exposure to air pollution in England is equivalent to between 26,000 and 38,000 deaths per year¹. The true public health burden is likely to be even higher. For comparison, in the UK COVID-19 caused 70,000 deaths per year and in 2021 there were 9,641 deaths related to alcohol-specific causes². In Oxfordshire, it was estimated that air pollution's effect on mortality was equivalent to 320 early deaths at typical ages in 2021³.

Air pollution is a mix of particles and gases of both natural and human origin. These pollutants are emitted from a range of sources including agriculture, transport, industry, waste and domestic heating. Currently, there is no evidence of a safe level of exposure.

Air pollution has reduced significantly since the 1950s and air quality is good across most of Oxfordshire. Whilst there have been long-term reductions in the main air pollutants, recent trends show that there is still work to be done and some sectors and some geographic areas still suffer from poor air quality.

Awareness of poor air quality has increased in recent years in part due to high profile coroner rulings. In December 2020 a coroner ruled that air pollution was a cause of death of 9 year old Ella Kissi-Debrah in London in 2013⁴. In November 2022 a coroner found that 2 year old Awab Ishak died because of poor indoor air quality from mould⁵. These cases demonstrate the urgent need to address poor air quality and the growing legal recognition of the impacts of poor air quality on health.

Locally, the air quality context is complex. Oxfordshire is a relatively rural county with 40% of the population living in smaller towns and villages⁶. However, the county also contains some large urban centres including the city of Oxford.

Therefore, depending on where you are in the County, air pollution may be the result of different sources. This leads to the need to implement air quality measures that address each local context. For example, in urban centres, traffic and domestic combustion are the sectors that more strongly contribute to particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide emissions, whilst in rural areas it is important also to look at the contributions of agriculture and industry, as important sources of air pollution.

¹ Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2022: air pollution

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/alcohol-specificdeathsintheuk/2021registrations>

³ Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2023

⁴ <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Ella-Kissi-Debrah-2021-0113-1.pdf>

⁵ https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Awab-Ishak-Prevention-of-future-deaths-report-2022-0365_Published.pdf

⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/annualmidyearpopulationestimates/mid2017>

The air quality context is also complex because there are a range of partner organisations each responsible for different elements of air quality. The district and city councils have a statutory air quality duty, however many others including the county council have a responsibility to support and contribute to air quality work.

The county council through its crosscutting work has already implemented many actions that will help to tackle poor air quality. However, we recognise that there is scope to do more. This strategy is a first step towards improving work on air quality and raising awareness of air quality. It sets out our vision for air quality and a strategic approach to guide future work.

The strategy is supported by a route map that sets out what work we are already doing and the internal actions we will take in the short term. Moving forward a more comprehensive countywide strategy will be required with support from a range of stakeholders to truly deliver better air quality for all. We hope that this strategy will serve as a starting point and platform for enabling a countywide strategy.

Context

This chapter provides more information about air quality in Oxfordshire. This is essential for helping us to understand what the problem is, why it needs to be addressed and how Oxfordshire County Council can take action. This chapter provides a summary of key information.

Policy context

Air quality policy begins at the international level. The Gothenburg Protocol is the key international directive. The protocol was first adopted in 1999 and sets emissions ceilings levels for various pollutants.

International regulations are implemented at the EU and national level through several directives. The UK has air quality laws originating from EU legislation in domestic legislation.

In addition, the UK has a number of unique acts and regulations. The Environment Act (1995) sets out the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) process which requires local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas.

The Environment Act (2021) makes amendments to the LAQM process and gives greater powers to Local Authorities. It includes new legal responsibilities for county councils to actively support district and city council air quality work and sets legally binding air quality targets for PM_{2.5}.

The Environment Act also sets a new population exposure reduction target. The target is for a 35% reduction in population exposure by 2040 compared to a base year of 2018. This is an important move away from just using concentrations and will help to ensure that health benefits across the whole population are maximised.

At the local level there are a number of key strategies that provide further additional context for improving air quality. Some of these fulfil national requirements such as Air Quality Action Plans produced by the district and city councils. Others are unique to Oxfordshire such as the county council's Climate Action Framework adopted in 2020 and Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) adopted in 2022.

The county council's strategic plan sets out a vision to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county. This strategy will help to deliver all aspects of this vision. The strategy also builds on the strategic priorities of the county council and will be key to delivering the following three:

- Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire
- Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents
- Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential

Air pollution

Air pollution is a mix of particles and gases of both natural and human origin. The main components of air pollution are particulate matter (PM), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂),

sulphur dioxide (SO₂), ammonia (NH₃), non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOCs) and ozone (O₃)⁷.

Particulate matter is classified according to size, either as PM₁₀ which are particles of less than 10µm (micrometres) diameter or PM_{2.5} which are particles of less than 2.5µm diameter. There is most evidence for health harms associated with PM_{2.5}.

These air pollutants are emitted from a range of sources including agriculture, transport, industry and domestic heating, including solid fuel burning. Currently, there is no clear evidence of a safe level of exposure.

Air pollution is divided into two different types which we have defined below:

- Outdoor air pollution – Air pollution that we breathe when outdoors such as emissions from transport, domestic heating, industry and natural sources.
- Indoor air pollution – Air pollution that we breathe when inside buildings such as your home, transport environment or workplace⁸. This includes outdoor pollutants that have entered the indoor environment and indoor sources such as mould, cooking, heating, household products and fuel burning appliances⁹.

⁷ UK government: Clean Air Strategy 2019

⁸ <https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/indoor-air-pollution/about-indoor-air-pollution#:~:text=Indoor%20air%20pollution%20is%20dust,of%20heart%20disease%20and%20stroke.>

⁹ https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cat09/2211011000_15062022_Indoor_Air_Quality_Report_Final.pdf

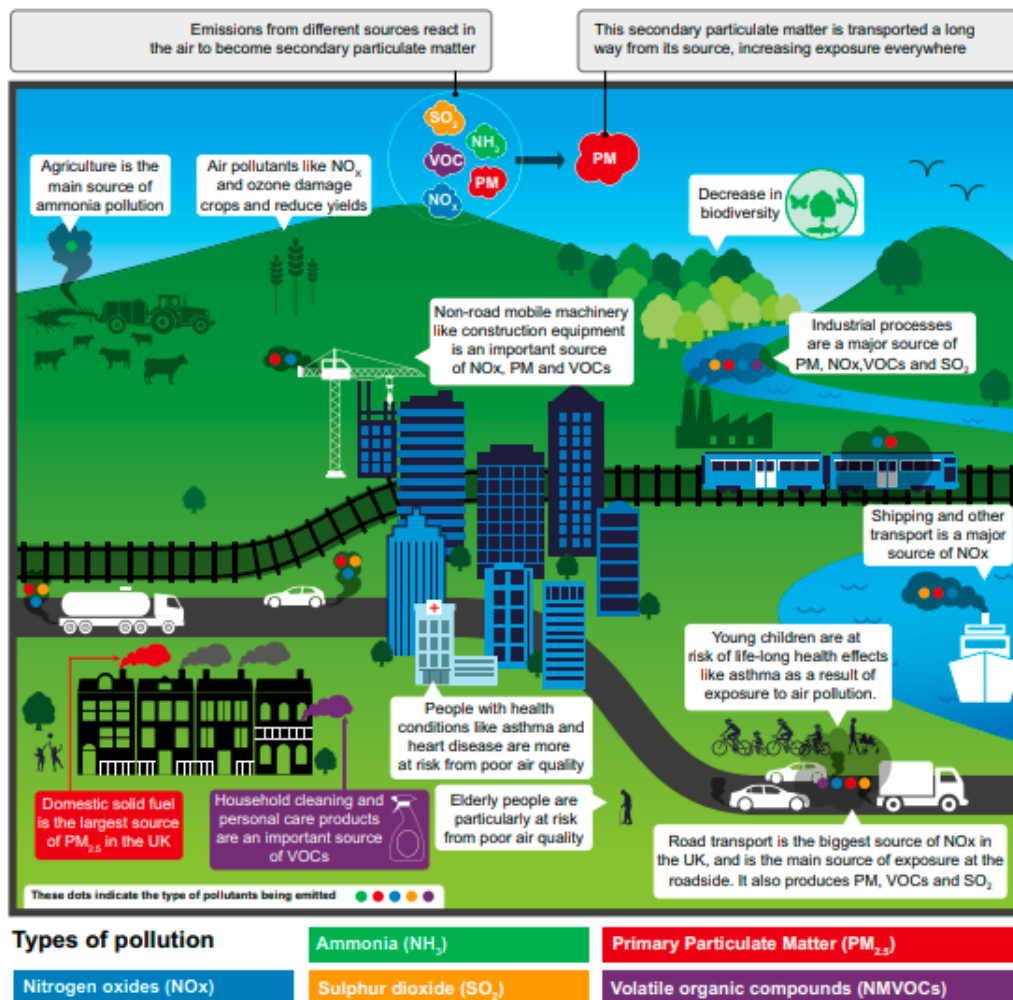


Figure 1 – Sources of air pollutants in the UK¹⁰

Air pollution trends

Air pollution has reduced significantly since the 1950s. Emissions of most outdoor air pollutants are at the lowest they have been since measurements began. Historic trends in the UK for each pollutant can be found on the UK government website [here](#).

Whilst there have been long-term reductions in the main air pollutants, recent trends show there is still work to be done. Over the last 10 years, ammonia emissions have remained largely the same and the rate of particulate matter reductions has reduced.

Indoor air quality has also been a growing area of focus. As outdoor air pollution falls, indoor air pollution becomes a greater proportion of the problem. However, the path to improvement is not as clear as for outdoors, and further research will be needed¹¹.

Health impacts of air pollution

The health impact of long term exposure to air pollution in England is estimated to be equivalent to between 26,000 and 38,000 deaths per year¹². Most of this health impact is attributable to long-term PM_{2.5} exposure.

¹⁰ UK government: Clean Air Strategy 2019

¹¹ Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2022: air pollution

¹² Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2022: air pollution

In addition, long-term exposure to air pollution can cause chronic conditions and has negative effects on physical and mental health throughout the course of our lives. The health effects linked to air pollution are summarised on figure 2 below.

The health impacts of air pollution are also not equal. Some population groups are particularly susceptible to the health impacts of air pollution. These groups include children, pregnant women, people in lower socio-economic groups and people from a non-white ethnic background.

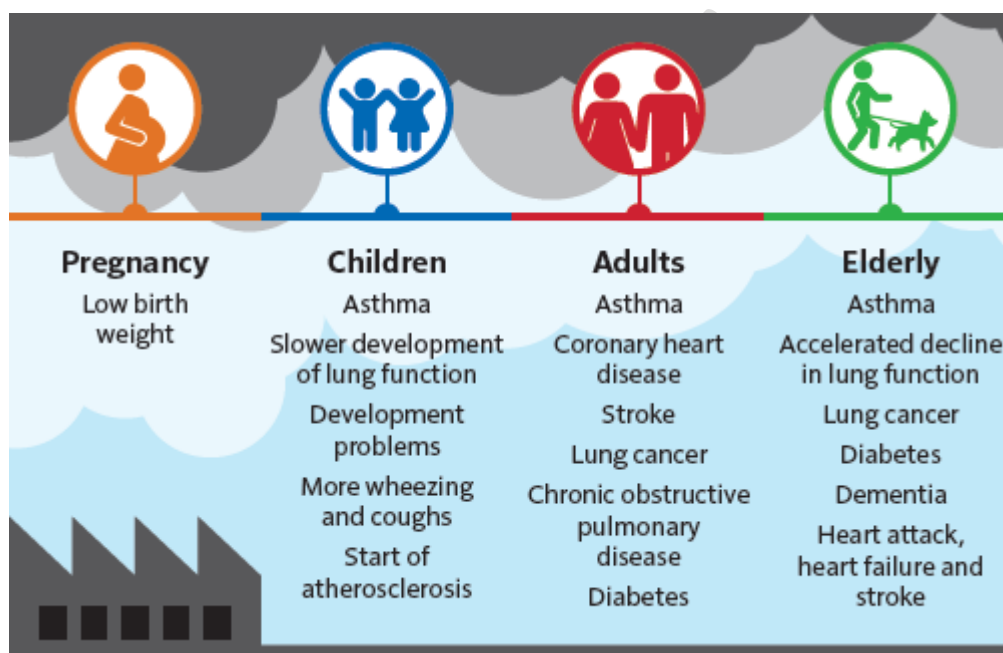


Figure 2 – Health effects of air pollution throughout life¹³

World Health Organisation guidelines

As well as the legally binding air quality legislation covered previously, there is also international guidance developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The WHO health-based guidelines provide guidance on thresholds and limits for key air pollutants that pose health risks. These reflect the scientific evidence base for health harms and were updated in 2021¹⁴.

These are only guidelines and are not legally binding unless a country chooses to adopt them into its own legislation. The WHO guideline levels for different air pollutants are shown below, along with comparison to the UK legal target values.

Pollutant	Averaging time	UK legal target value	WHO guideline
PM _{2.5} µg/m ³	Annual	10 (by 2040)	5
	24-hour	N/A	15
PM ₁₀ µg/m ³	Annual	40	15
	24-hour	50	45
O ₃ µg/m ³	Peak season	N/A	60

¹³ Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2022: air pollution

¹⁴ <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/345329>

	8-hour	100	100
	Annual	40	10
NO ₂ µg/m ³	Hourly	200 (not to be exceeded more than 18 times per year)	200
	24-hour	N/A	25
SO ₂ µg/m ³	24-hour	125	40
CO mg/m ³	24-hour	10	4

Environmental Impacts of air pollution

Air pollution also has negative effects on the environment. Nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter can reduce crop yield and plant growth efficiency. Similarly, sulphur dioxide emissions can cause acidification of soil and acid rain.

Wildlife is also negatively affected by air pollution. Animals can develop health problems when exposed to high levels of pollutants including reproductive failure and birth effects. The impacts of air pollution on water can impact fishes and their productivity potential.

Air pollution and climate change

Air pollution and climate change are closely linked but it is important to recognise there is a difference between the two issues and their potential solutions. Climate change is the large-scale, long-term shift in the planet's weather patterns and average temperatures. Climate change is primarily caused by the release of greenhouse gases, namely carbon dioxide, into the atmosphere by humans.

Many interventions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions also improve air quality. Particularly positive for air quality are those decarbonisation actions that lead to the replacement of combustion systems with non-combustion alternatives¹⁵.

However, it is important to recognise that there are differences and potential conflicts. Carbon dioxide is one of the primary greenhouse gases, but it is not considered an air pollutant. Decarbonisation work will largely have positive impacts for air quality but not in every case and there may be air pollutants that require different solutions.

Air quality duties in Oxfordshire

In Oxfordshire, the district and city councils are required to monitor air quality within their respective areas. Where air quality objectives are not being met, they must identify and declare Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). Once declared, they must develop Air Quality Action Plans (AQAP) and produce annual air quality status reports (ASR) for Defra. Information, ASRs, AQAPs and data about Oxfordshire's air quality can be found on the Oxfordshire Air Quality [website](#).

In addition, the district and city councils respond to planning applications to mitigate and address any adverse impacts on local air quality, review and create air quality planning policies, review air quality assessments and produce air quality guidance.

¹⁵ Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2022: air pollution

This strategy seeks to support the work done by district and city councils and help them to fulfil their statutory air quality responsibilities. It sets out a strategic approach to help guide and coordinate future county council work.

Oxfordshire air quality trends

Monitoring results generally show that NO₂ levels have been decreasing across the county over the last 5 years. Oxfordshire currently has 13 designated AQMAs, the last AQMA to be declared was in 2015. These are all in relation to exceedances of the legal limit for annual average NO₂. Emissions from transport are the primary contributor to all 13 AQMAs. In 2021, 11 AQMAs were in compliance with the UK's annual target value of 40 µg/m³ for NO₂ but none meet the WHO guidance annual value of 10 µg/m³.

PM is only regularly monitored by Oxford City Council in Oxfordshire. The annual average levels of PM_{2.5} measured in 2021 were 7 µg/m³. This is well within compliance with the UK's annual target value of 25 µg/m³ but does not meet the WHO guidance annual value of 5 µg/m³. Local research has also found levels in some areas of Oxford City are consistently above 7 µg/m³ demonstrating there are differences within the city¹⁶.

Oxford City Council's most recent source apportionment study found that domestic combustion is by far the largest contributor to particulate matter emissions in Oxford, contributing approximately 66% of PM_{2.5} emissions. Road transport only accounts for approximately 10% of total local emissions of particulate matter¹⁷.

An indicative overview of air quality across Oxfordshire is shown on the map below. This map combines modelled air pollution data from Defra (NO₂, PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀) to create a composite air quality 'score'. The most polluted square is given a value of 1.0, and all the other squares are assigned a value relative to that. It is important to note that this data is an estimation using modelling. Modelled data helps to provide a wider assessment of the state of air quality as we do not have monitors in all locations across the county.

¹⁶ Paper currently under review

¹⁷ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7320/oxford_source_apportionment_study

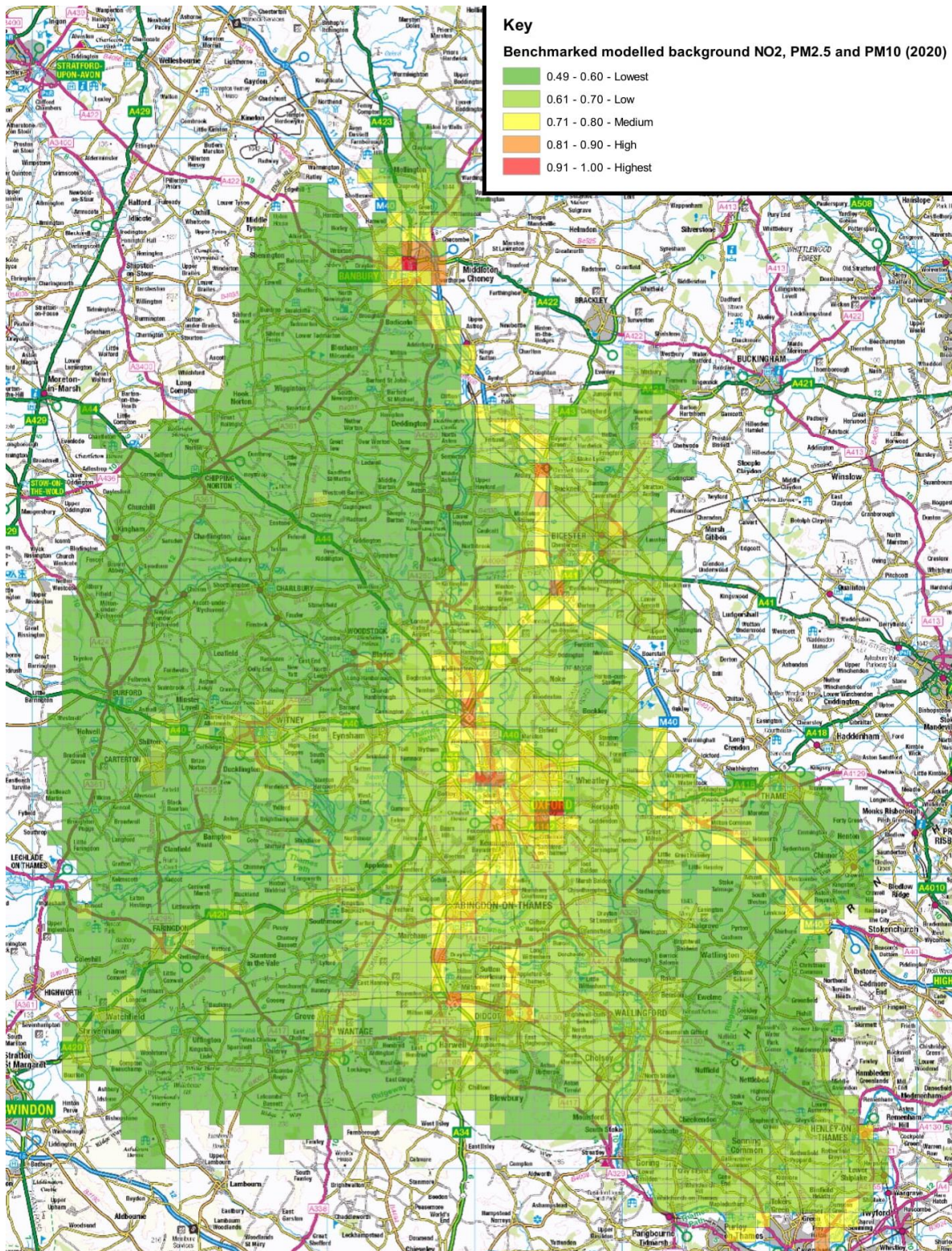


Figure 3 – Oxfordshire modelled air pollution data from Defra (NO₂, PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀) and composite air quality 'score', 2020

Oxfordshire health impacts

In Oxfordshire, it was estimated that air pollution's effect on mortality was equivalent to 320 early deaths at typical ages in 2021¹⁸. For context, there are approximately 5,500 deaths per year in Oxfordshire¹⁹.

As of 2021, the Public Health Outcomes Framework indicator Fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution for Oxfordshire was 5.5%. Applying this fraction to the Oxfordshire age standardised mortality rate for people aged under 75, gives an estimated standardised mortality rate attributable to PM_{2.5} per 100,000 of 14.7 in Oxfordshire. Figure 4 below shows how this mortality rate compares with other rates for the population aged under 75²⁰.

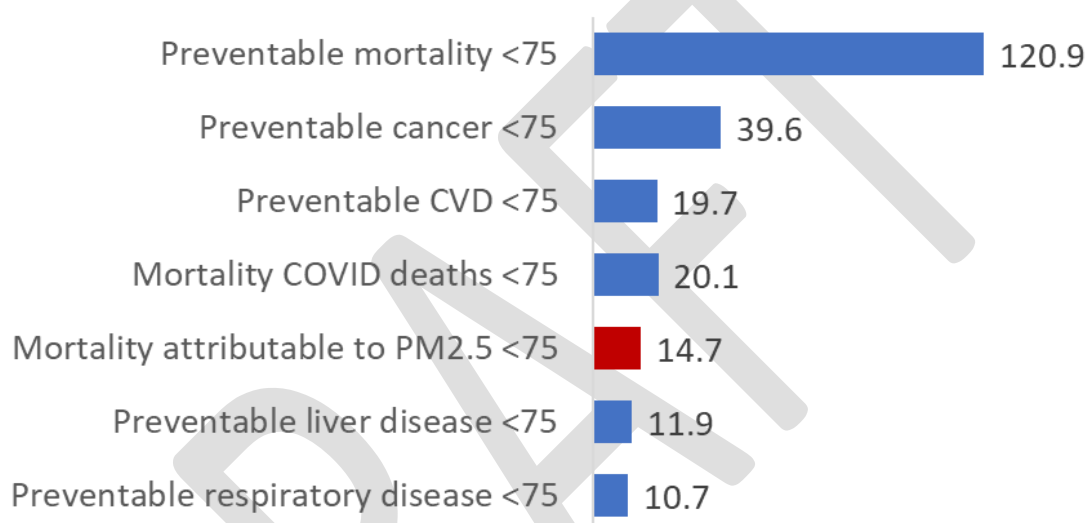


Figure 4 – Oxfordshire age standardised mortality rate per 100,000

Furthermore, over 2,300 years of healthy life (DALYs) were lost due to air pollution in 2019. These were mainly attributed to cardiovascular diseases and chronic respiratory diseases²¹.

Whilst the health impacts of air pollution in Oxfordshire have decreased since 1990, the improvements have stalled since 2014 highlighting that there remains significant work to do and health benefits to be gained.

¹⁸ Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2023

¹⁹ Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2023

²⁰ Uses method set out in [Air Quality Briefing for Directors of Public Health March 2017](#)

²¹ Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2023

Vision and objectives

The intent and purpose of this work is to identify the impacts the county council can have on air quality, both positive and negative, and to support the work done by the district and city councils to improve air quality and help them to fulfil their statutory air quality responsibilities.

Through improving communication around air quality, we can work better together, internally and with external partners. The county council not only delivers services and interventions but also can act as a leader to improve air quality.

We have developed an aspirational vision for air quality in Oxfordshire. It outlines what we are working towards, sets the scale of change required and will help to ensure consistency between short term route maps. It will require us to work in partnership with the district and city councils and other stakeholders to deliver this ambition.

In support of the vision, we have identified our objectives. These are the specific areas that we are seeking to address. These inform the internal actions that we will be taking to work towards delivery of the vision.

Vision

“Our vision is to accelerate the improvement in Oxfordshire’s air quality to reduce the health and environmental impacts of dirty air, so ensuring that all residents can breathe safely.”

Objectives

- Work in partnership to support the work to improve air quality undertaken by the district and city councils. We will work with air quality partners to:
 - Inform an evidence-based approach to air quality actions by increasing our understanding of the state of air quality in Oxfordshire and the impact of measures to improve air quality.
 - Identify and prioritise action in locations which are particularly vulnerable to air pollution impacts.
 - Raise public awareness of air quality and indoor air pollution, the impacts on health and personal protection measures recommended in order to promote sustainable behaviour change.
- Work with air quality partners to maintain a downward air pollution trajectory and develop population exposure targets. We will work with air quality partners to:
 - Reduce annual mean PM_{2.5} concentration to 5 µg/m³ or less by 2030.
 - Reduce emissions of Nitrogen oxides (NO_x) by 73% by 2030 relative to 2005 levels.
 - Work towards air quality that meets the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines by 2030.
 - Conduct population exposure modelling and develop quantified local population exposure targets for PM_{2.5} and NO_x.
- Deliver the Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy Route Map. We will work to:

- Support the ongoing delivery of work linked to air quality and increase consideration of air quality in decision making.
- Provide a more coordinated approach to supporting action to improve air quality.
- Work with partners to secure funding to deliver new projects on air quality.

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Strategic approach

This chapter outlines the strategic approach that we will be taking to realise the vision and objectives. This is a high-level approach that will help to guide future work on air quality in the county and the actions we will be taking. It will be supported by more detailed route maps which are introduced in the next chapter.

The approach that we will be taking to improve air quality is grouped into three areas which are listed below in order of priority²²:

Reduce – Reduce emissions of indoor and outdoor air pollution

We will first work to reduce or remove the source of air pollutants. This will reduce the level of air pollution and improve residents' health, especially the most vulnerable. Reducing emissions from road transport is a key area of focus that we can help to deliver as the highway authority. Reducing emissions will be enabled through delivery of the LTCP including actions such as:

- Measures to reduce demand for vehicle use.
- Measures to promote sustainable and active travel.
- Traffic management measures to reduce congestion and vehicle idling.

Extend – Extend distance from pollution sources

Where it is not possible to reduce emissions, we will work to extend the distance between emission sources and human receptors. Pollutant concentration is highest close to the emissions source but decreases with distance. Increasing the distance therefore helps to reduce the pollutant concentration at the point of exposure. Extending distance from pollution sources will be enabled through actions such as:

- Reprioritisation of road space to sustainable and active travel.
- Traffic, congestion and demand management measures to help keep vehicle traffic away from residential areas.
- Working with our district and city councils on spatial planning to encourage residential, education or leisure facilities to be situated away from major roads.

Protect – Protect those most at risk

Finally, we will work to protect the most vulnerable residents. Children, pregnant women, the elderly and those with existing health conditions are most vulnerable to the negative health impacts of air pollution. We will therefore work to protect these groups when it is not possible to reduce emissions or extend the distance from them. Protecting those most at risk will be enabled through actions such as:

- Communicating information about high air pollution days and indoor air pollution.
- Partnership working with stakeholders such as the local NHS on joint campaigns.
- Conducting behaviour change work with schools and influencing the design of transport schemes near school sites and location of care homes.
- Provide energy efficiency advice and retrofit programmes for those in fuel poverty, including indoor air pollution as a consideration.

²² http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/3069/1/Ferranti_etal_2019_FirstStepsAQ.pdf

Route map

This strategy is supported by a route map which is published as a separate supporting document. The route map outlines the internal actions we will be taking in the short to medium term to deliver the strategy.

The route map has been published as a separate document so that it can be reviewed and updated without requiring any changes to this strategy. Our vision and strategic approach will remain the same, however the work we are conducting, and actions required will change over time.

The actions are all related to functions directly within Oxfordshire County Council's control. This is a first step to improving our work on air quality and meet the requirements for county councils set out in the Environment Act 2021. Moving forward, joint working and shared actions will be required with a range of stakeholders to truly deliver our vision for air quality.

The route map is structured according to our strategic approach and identifies those actions that we will be taking to reduce, extend and protect against air pollution. Within this, we have grouped the actions into key areas that are either local drivers or enablers of air quality.

We have grouped the actions in this way to reflect the diverse range of issues and work being conducted within the broader reduce, extend, protect framework. We have identified the work already underway and actions we will be taking in each section. We have included partnership working and monitoring as their own sections due to their cross cutting impacts on all work.

Monitoring, learning and implementation

This strategy outlines the importance of air quality to human health and the urgent need for action to tackle poor air quality in Oxfordshire. It also outlines the role the county council can play in tackling air pollution and a strategic approach for improving air quality. The strategy is supported by our route map that outlines the work we are already doing and the internal actions we will take to improve our work in the short term.

This strategy has been approved by the county council's cabinet to provide visibility and transparency about the actions we will be taking. Moving forward, we will use the Oxfordshire Health Protection Forum to provide oversight and accountability for the strategy and the actions in it.

The forum will be used to monitor progress on an annual basis. It is also planned that public reporting of progress on the actions is linked to the annual Clean Air Day, to help raise awareness of air quality.

The Health Protection Forum is chaired by the director of public health from the county council and includes representatives from the NHS and Public Health England. The forum helps to ensure that the local authority and local partners are implementing preventative strategies to tackle key threats to the local population.

The forum reports into the Health Improvement Board, which in turn reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board. It is therefore well placed to inform all of the health governance structures in the county and raise the profile of air quality. The Place Programme Partnership and/or Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee may also wish to review the progress and outcomes of the strategy.

As part of the annual review, progress made on delivering the route map will be reviewed. The route map is short term and so there will be an opportunity for it to be updated or a new route map developed to reflect changing work and progress made on delivering the overall vision.

The route map includes sections on partnership working and monitoring as these will be key to delivering the vision throughout the strategy's duration. As these actions are delivered, they will help us to continually improve our monitoring, learning and implementation process.

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Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy Route Map 2023- 2026

June 2023

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Contents

Introduction	4
Action summary table	6
Partnership working	9
Reduce	13
Council emissions	13
Transport	15
Planning	19
Waste	20
Domestic heating	21
Extend	24
Transport	24
Planning	24
Protect	26
Behaviour change	26
Planning	28
Domestic heating	28
Monitoring	29

Introduction

This route map has been published in support of Oxfordshire County Council's Air Quality Strategy. This is the first supporting route map and covers the period 2023-2026. This route map outlines the specific internal actions we will be taking in the next 3 years to work towards delivery of the overarching vision and objectives for air quality. The vision and objectives identified in the strategy are included below.

Vision

“Our vision is to accelerate the improvement in Oxfordshire’s air quality to reduce the health and environmental impacts of dirty air, so ensuring that all residents can breathe safely.”

Objectives

- Work in partnership to support the work to improve air quality undertaken by the district and city councils. We will work with air quality partners to:
 - Inform an evidence-based approach to air quality actions by increasing our understanding of the state of air quality in Oxfordshire and the impact of measures to improve air quality.
 - Identify and prioritise action in locations which are particularly vulnerable to air pollution impacts.
 - Raise public awareness of air quality and indoor air pollution, the impacts on health and personal protection measures recommended in order to promote sustainable behaviour change.
- Work with air quality partners to maintain a downward air pollution trajectory and develop population exposure targets. We will work with air quality partners to:
 - Reduce annual mean PM_{2.5} concentration to 5 µg/m³ or less by 2030.
 - Reduce emissions of Nitrogen oxides (NO_x) by 73% by 2030 relative to 2005 levels.
 - Work towards air quality that meets the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines by 2030.
 - Conduct population exposure modelling and develop quantified local population exposure targets for PM_{2.5} and NO_x.
- Deliver the Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy Route Map. We will work to:
 - Support the ongoing delivery of work linked to air quality and increase consideration of air quality in decision making.
 - Provide a more coordinated approach to supporting action to improve air quality.
 - Work with partners to secure funding to deliver new projects on air quality.

Strategic approach

To make the vision and objectives achievable, the strategy outlines a strategic approach. This is a high-level approach that will help to guide future work on air quality in the county and the actions we will be taking. The approach that we will be taking to improve air quality is grouped into three areas:

- **Reduce** – Reduce emissions of air pollution

- **Extend** – Extend distance from pollution sources
- **Protect** – Protect those most at risk

Actions

The actions in the following chapters are what we will be doing in the short to medium term to deliver the strategy. The actions are all related to functions directly within Oxfordshire County Council's control. This a first step to improving our work on air quality and to better define the county council's role. Moving forward, joint working and shared actions will be required with a range of stakeholders, particularly the district and city councils, to truly deliver our vision for air quality.

This route map is structured according to our strategic approach and identifies those actions that we will be taking to reduce, extend and protect. We have included partnership working and monitoring as separate sections due to their cross-cutting impact on all of our work.

For each action we have defined what success will look like, including who is responsible for an action and a proposed timeframe for completion. This will be used to report progress to the Oxfordshire Health Protection Forum.

Within the chapters, we have grouped the actions into six key areas that are either local drivers or enablers of air quality. We have grouped the actions in this way to reflect the diverse range of issues and work being conducted within the broader reduce, extend, protect framework. We have identified the work already underway and actions we will be taking in each section. The local drivers and enablers identified are:

- Transport
- Council emissions
- Behaviour change
- Planning
- Waste
- Domestic heating

We recognise that there are a number of actions in the strategy which are a mixture of existing work and new work. To help guide delivery, we have therefore identified 5 priority actions for the first year (2023-24).

Action summary table

Action	Action wording	Work status
	Partnership working	
1	Secure wider Oxfordshire County Council staff engagement with the Air Quality partnership group by Winter 2023 to actively support the development, updating and implementation of the district and city councils' air quality action plans and other appropriate projects (as per our legal responsibilities set out under the Environment Act 2021).	New
2	Engage with the local NHS system to assess the feasibility of conducting joint work about impacts, costs, health burden and solutions related to poor air quality.	Expansion of work
3	Continue to support air quality research projects with academic partners and seek to secure funding for future projects, particularly in rural areas.	Expansion of work
4	Identify opportunities to engage with the agricultural sector and raise awareness of air pollution.	New
5	Engage with the CAG network and raise awareness of air quality.	New
6	Continue to work with and lobby National Highways for measures to improve air quality on the strategic road network.	Expansion of work
7	Provide an annual opportunity for those with an interest and responsibility for air quality to share with others the lessons learned from their respective projects and initiatives.	New
8	Develop and agree an Oxfordshire wide Air Quality Strategy by Spring 2026.	New
	Reduce	
	<i>Council Emissions</i>	
9	Deliver the actions identified in the Carbon Management Plan to reduce emissions from our buildings, highway assets, fleet, and staff business travel.	Existing work
10	Expand the use of zero tailpipe emission and hybrid vehicles within the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service fleet and continue to deliver fire prevention and protection work.	Existing work
	<i>Transport</i>	
11	Support delivery of the LTCP, ensuring consideration of air quality in new highway schemes and potential trade-offs with decarbonisation where relevant.	Expansion of work
12	Promote active travel to school and work with air quality partners to monitor air quality at pilot school sites.	Existing work
13	Test the use of real time data to promote behaviour change with a specific focus on school gates.	Expansion of work
14	Work in partnership with our bus operators to deliver measures that encourage bus usage.	Existing work
15	Work with bus operators to update and expand the Oxford bus low emission zone, deliver the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme and explore opportunities to build on this work and accelerate the transition to a zero-emission bus fleet across the county.	Existing work
16	Work with bus operators to introduce measures to reduce exposure to dangerous air pollution concentrations in bus stations.	New
17	Continue to support the development and delivery of rail improvements in Oxfordshire.	Existing work
18	Lobby for electrification of railways in Oxfordshire and measures to reduce exposure to dangerous air pollution concentrations in train stations.	New
19	Identify whether the train operators have a policy on idling in stations, how much idling in stations there is of diesel trains and if operators have done an air quality assessment of the impacts.	New

20	Deliver projects to encourage the uptake of zero tailpipe emission vehicles and work in association with our district and city councils to deliver the OEVIS.	Existing work
21	Deliver parking controls, traffic reduction schemes and congestion management measures to reduce private car use and improve local air quality.	Existing work
22	Undertake Network management as part of an integrated approach to promote traffic flow and reduce idling traffic particularly in locations where there are groups vulnerable to poor air quality.	Existing work
23	Utilise evidence to investigate the relationships between congestion, air quality and noise to identify what measures and innovative transport solutions could be introduced to minimise the impact of congestion on the environment and quality of life.	Existing work
	<i>Planning</i>	
24	Consider and where possible enhance references to air quality in the new Minerals and Waste Local Plan.	New
	<i>Waste</i>	
25	Work to reduce air pollution from waste disposal including development of the circular economy strategy.	Existing work
	<i>Domestic heating</i>	
26	Support joint behaviour campaigns about domestic wood burning with the district and city councils and other air quality partners.	New
27	Investigate conducting targeted work about domestic wood burning for vulnerable residents with air quality partners.	New
28	Work in partnership and use an intelligence led approach to enforcement in relation to improving air quality.	Expansion of work
29	Support projects that seek to drive the mass adoption of heat pumps.	Existing work
30	Work with local partners to deliver the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy and supporting projects.	Existing work
	Extend	
	<i>Transport</i>	
31	Work with a range of data sources to understand the air quality impacts of LTNs and take action to mitigate any negative impacts identified.	Expansion of work
	<i>Planning</i>	
32	Ensure air quality impacts are included as a consideration in county council planning consultation responses including in Health Impact Assessments of strategic developments and major infrastructure schemes, particularly where this is related to county council functions such as transport.	Existing work
33	Develop and test the use of a local air quality impact assessment tool as part of health impact assessments.	New
	Protect	
	<i>Behaviour change</i>	
34	Support walking and cycling schemes with community activation measures.	Existing work
35	Conduct travel planning work with schools, businesses and employers, that will support air quality improvements.	Existing work
36	Create an air quality communication plan, linking it with the work of the district and city councils and other air quality partners.	New
37	Continue to make the link between the benefits of carbon reduction and air pollution and raise awareness of carbon reduction interventions which may worsen air quality, including during development and delivery of PaZCO action plans.	Expansion of work
38	Use health and social care data to identify vulnerable communities that need to be prioritised.	New
	<i>Planning</i>	

39	Ensure air quality is included as a potential health impact when conducting HIAs on major transport schemes or plans and any adverse impacts on local air quality are effectively mitigated.	Existing work
	<i>Domestic heating</i>	
40	Continue work to provide energy efficiency advice and bid to retrofit programmes to support those in fuel poverty. Include reference to the benefits of improving indoor and outdoor air pollution as a result of a move away from fossil fuels.	Expansion of work
	Monitoring	
41	Secure funding to allow the continuation of existing air quality monitoring projects.	Expansion of work
42	Secure funding for new air quality monitoring projects and the utilisation of data and insights from existing research.	Expansion of work
43	Work with our Air Quality Partners to understand current monitoring in Oxfordshire and develop a joined up, integrated approach to local air quality monitoring.	New
44	Utilise the Oxfordshire Air Quality website to share data with the city and district councils.	New
45	Work with air quality partners to carry out population exposure modelling and develop local population exposure targets for PM _{2.5} and NO _x .	New

Priority actions

We recognise that there are a number of actions in the strategy which are a mixture of existing work and new work. To help guide delivery, we have therefore identified 5 priority actions for the next year (2023-24). The priority actions are all related to new work that we will seek to deliver in the next year. We have identified one priority action for each section and will review our priority actions annually. Our priority actions for the next year are shown in the table below.

Section	Priority Action	Action wording	Definition of success
Partnership working	1	Secure wider Oxfordshire County Council staff engagement with the Air Quality partnership group by Winter 2023 to actively support the development, updating and implementation of the district and city councils' air quality action plans and other appropriate projects (as per our legal responsibilities set out under the Environment Act 2021).	5 OCC officers attend District air quality meetings.
Reduce	26	Support joint behaviour campaigns about domestic wood burning with the district and city councils and other air quality partners.	Wood burning campaign developed and run.
Extend	33	Develop and test the use of a local air quality impact assessment tool as part of health impact assessments.	Tool developed which enables evaluation of air quality impacts.
Protect	36	Create an air quality communication plan, linking it with the work of the district and city councils and other air quality partners.	A communication plan is produced and shared with air quality partners.
Monitoring	43	Work with our Air Quality Partners to understand current monitoring in Oxfordshire and develop a joined up, integrated approach to local air quality monitoring.	Create map of current monitors and share OCC data on Oxfordshire Air Quality website.

Partnership working

We have included partnership working as the first section as it is essential to delivering our objectives and supporting the work done by the district and city councils. Partnership working is central to meeting our responsibilities as an air quality partner¹ and helping the district and city councils to fulfil their statutory air quality responsibilities.

We champion partnership working because we recognise the value and benefits of cultivating good working relationships with a range of air quality partners such as our district and city councils, surrounding local authorities and statutory bodies such as the NHS. In terms of air quality, partnership working with a range of stakeholders will be essential to truly deliver better air quality for all.

District and city councils

The district and city councils have the responsibility to monitor air quality, produce and update action plans in Oxfordshire. The county council is a key air quality partner and contributor to the contents and updates of these plans. Partnership working is therefore essential to improve air quality in Oxfordshire.

We are currently jointly working on several projects including the development of an improved air quality website using funding from Defra. The website seeks to communicate more engagingly with the public, particularly those at risk of poor health.

Public Health officers currently attend monthly meetings with district air quality officers to support a health focus on air quality work and transport officers provide input to district council air quality action plans due to the strong links between transport and air pollution in the county.

However, we recognise that there is scope to improve this partnership working, particularly around the development and update of air quality action plans and other appropriate projects.

Action 1 – Secure wider Oxfordshire County Council staff engagement with the Air Quality partnership group by Winter 2023 to actively support the development, updating and implementation of the district and city councils' air quality action plans and other appropriate projects (as per our legal responsibilities set out under the Environment Act 2021).

NHS

The county council's Public Health team has operational links with NHS primary care services, the two NHS Trusts and the Integrated Care System. We also have connections with the NHS through the Health and Wellbeing Board and associated strategy.

Through these connections with the NHS we can raise awareness of the role air quality plays in the health of the Oxfordshire population. We can also identify opportunities

¹ As set out in the Environment Act 2021

for joint projects and make resources available to clinicians to help those with existing respiratory or cardiovascular conditions.

We also have connections with the Oxfordshire Health Foundation Trust community respiratory team. The team works with patients who have uncontrolled respiratory conditions, which air quality can make worse. Local information about poor air pollution and access to publicity campaigns could support these vulnerable residents to better manage their health.

This partnership working can therefore help to reduce the impact of poor air quality on residents' health and use of NHS and we will seek to increase the support offered to the NHS in this area.

Action 2 – Engage with the local NHS system to assess the feasibility of conducting joint work about impacts, costs, health burden and solutions related to poor air quality.

Research and innovation

Air quality is well researched and with two universities in Oxford and other academic links with the University of Birmingham, there is much local research interest. There is an opportunity to utilise these research assets to improve our understanding of air quality in Oxfordshire.

We are already working with academic partners from the University of Birmingham and University of Oxford on the [TRANSITION clean air network](#) and [OxAria](#) air quality research project which uses high resolution sensors across Oxford. TRANSITION has also funded a number of impact focused projects with research undertaken within Oxford leading to academic and policy [publications](#).

The county council's Public Health department are also developing ambitions to be a research centre and there is interest in undertaking research related to the wider determinants of health.

We will further explore opportunities for research projects with academic partners, including opportunities to address research gaps. Much academic research is based on urban air pollution and there is a gap around rural air pollution and rural interventions. As Oxfordshire is mostly a rural county, we believe there is an opportunity to address this gap.

Citizen science may also be a valuable tool for securing engagement with and support for the policy interventions needed to deliver our vision for air quality. Citizen science is scientific research conducted with participation from the public, for example engaging schools in personal air pollution exposure monitoring. We can work with universities to help facilitate this engagement.

Action 3 – Continue to support air quality research projects with academic partners and seek to secure funding for future projects, particularly in rural areas.

Agriculture

Agriculture is the largest source of ammonia emissions in the UK. It is responsible for over 87% of all UK ammonia emissions. Ammonia has negative effects on

ecosystems, but also leads to the creation of secondary PM_{2.5} which can have an effect on health over wide areas².

Ammonia emissions have changed very little over the last 20 years, in contrast to all other major outdoor pollutants. Using existing technologies some countries have demonstrated it is possible to significantly reduce ammonia emissions and agriculture's contribution to air pollution.

As Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural county and has a significant agricultural sector, there is scope to better develop our understanding of agriculture's local contribution and raise awareness about the links to air quality.

Action 4 – Identify opportunities to engage with the agricultural sector and raise awareness of air pollution.

Community Action Groups

Community Action Groups (CAG) Oxfordshire consists of over 100 groups across Oxfordshire who are at the forefront of community-led climate change action. The network was started in 2001 and is the largest of its kind in the UK. The CAG network run over 4,000 events per year, attended by around 80,000 local residents.

The groups organise events and projects to take action on issues including waste, transport, food, energy, biodiversity and social justice. Many of these projects will contribute towards improving air quality such as car clubs and community energy projects which will help to reduce emission of air pollutants.

There is an opportunity to increase awareness of air quality and improve partnership working with the CAG network in support of this strategy. This will help to improve engagement with local communities and help to facilitate peer to peer communications about air quality.

Action 5 – Engage with the CAG network and raise awareness of air quality.

National highways

Whilst the county council are the highway authority in Oxfordshire, we are not in direct control of a significant amount of the traffic through Oxfordshire that travels on the Strategic Road Network (SRN). National Highways are responsible for managing the A34 and M40 which carry a significant proportion of traffic in Oxfordshire.

How traffic is managed on these routes, particularly in areas where there are air quality concerns such as Botley near the A34 and Banbury near the M40, is therefore important. It is also important to consider how traffic is routed from the SRN onto local roads.

We will therefore work with National Highways as an air quality partner, to continue to look at mitigating the air quality impact of this traffic. There are a number of measures already in place or being trialled elsewhere in the country that can help to manage air

² Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2022: air pollution

quality impacts from the SRN such as speed limits or better enforcement of existing speed limits.

Action 6 – Continue to work with and lobby National Highways for measures to improve air quality on the strategic road network.

Learning and partnership working

As outlined in this section, there are a range of partners working on different elements of tackling air quality. To ensure a joined up and effective body of work, sharing the learning from these initiatives will be important to deliver our vision for air quality.

In order to deliver our vision, a more comprehensive countywide strategy will also be required with engagement and support from all of the local air quality partners outlined in this section. We propose to use this strategy as a starting point and platform for enabling the development of a countywide strategy.

Action 7 – Provide an annual opportunity for those with an interest and responsibility for air quality to share with others the lessons learned from their respective projects and initiatives.

Action 8 – Develop and agree an Oxfordshire wide Air Quality Strategy by Spring 2026.

Reduce

This chapter covers the first part of our strategic approach which is work to reduce or remove the source of air pollutants. This will reduce air pollution and improve residents' health. Reducing emissions from road transport is a key area of focus that we can help to deliver. There are also other ways in which we can help to reduce emissions such as reducing our own council emissions.

Council emissions

The county council directly contributes to air pollution through our fleet vehicles, staff travel, highway assets and estate. We also contract or procure services in a range of areas. These providers contribute to air pollution through factors such as the vehicles used.

We recognise that everybody needs to play their part to transition to net-zero emissions and improve air quality. It is possible to influence and minimise these council emissions through our internal policies and processes.

Much of our current work on reducing council emissions has been conducted from a climate action perspective. Although it is focused on decarbonisation, many of the interventions will also improve air quality due to the focus on reducing the use of fossil fuels. However, we recognise that moving forward a more dedicated focus on air pollution is required to identify any trade-offs, mitigating measures required and those actions that offer the most benefit for both climate change and air quality.

Oxfordshire County Council Carbon Management Plan

In 2020, we published our [Climate Action Framework](#), setting out how we are going to reduce our emissions, transform into a climate active organization and play our part in Oxfordshire's transition to net zero. As part of this, we committed to reaching net-zero carbon emissions in our estate and operations by 2030.

To build on this commitment, we published a [Carbon Management Plan](#) in May 2022. The Carbon Management Plan sets out the approach to reducing the emissions from our buildings, highway assets (streetlighting, traffic signals and signage), fleet, and staff business travel.

Delivery of the Carbon Management Plan will help to reduce our use of fossil fuels and contribution to air pollution. Some of the actions we are taking as part of the plan are summarised in the following sections.

Action 9 – Deliver the actions identified in the Carbon Management Plan to reduce emissions from our buildings, highway assets, fleet, and staff business travel.

Estates

Our buildings decarbonisation strategy is based on seven principles that are outlined in the Carbon Management Plan. The plan also includes the planned actions we will be taking to transition our buildings to net-zero. Current actions we are taking to reduce emissions from our buildings include:

- Publishing our property strategy to enable estate rationalization and enhanced investment to reduce carbon emissions.
- Replacing the lights in our buildings with energy-efficient LEDs. This has reduced the energy used for lighting by around 70%.
- Installing solar panels on a number of our buildings.
- Buying green electricity for our estate and highways assets.

Fleet and staff travel

Our fleet includes approximately 382 vehicles³. Our approach to fleet decarbonisation will prioritise avoidance of emissions by rationalising the fleet, encouraging sharing of resources, and replacing fossil fuels with zero tailpipe emission alternatives. In order to do this we are taking a number of actions including:

- Putting in place the 'One Fleet' system to rationalise fleet usage and support the development of a fleet replacement plan.
- Adopting an 'electric by default' policy that stipulates where operationally feasible all new vehicle acquisitions are zero tailpipe emission by default.
- Installing electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across our estate. We are aiming to electrify all cars and vans by 2028.

The decarbonisation approach for staff business travel prioritises avoiding travel by meeting online when possible. For essential journeys, staff are encouraged to walk or cycle whenever possible. Electric bikes and folding bikes are being trialled as part of our revamped pool bike scheme. For longer journeys staff are encouraged to use public transport. If a journey can't be done by other means, staff are encouraged to use our pool EVs.

Contracts and procurement

We spend over £500m a year with contractors and suppliers to deliver critical services for residents. In order to generate additional economic, social or environmental benefits from our activity we have created a social value policy.

The policy encourages suppliers to commit to providing additional social value that will benefit local communities. Our policy uses the National Social Value Measurement Framework to set out social value themes, outcomes and measures that can be objectively assessed. Reducing air pollution is one of the outcomes included in the framework and is therefore a priority our suppliers can deliver against.

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

The Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service are also looking to expand the use of zero-tailpipe emission and hybrid vehicles within their fleet. This has included a study on how to run a fleet of zero tailpipe emission fire engines. The research was conducted by engineering firm ULEMCo in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council⁴.

The study concluded that battery electric fire engines would meet emergency response times and water pumping requirements using a combination of stored energy in batteries and onboard hydrogen fuel storage. We have now secured funding to build and trial a hydrogen fire engine with a group of private sector partners led by ULEMCo.

³ 2018/19 data, adjusted to know changes in 2020

⁴ <https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/new-hydrogen-fire-engine/>

The Fire and Rescue Service also conduct prevention and protection work in our public education and regulatory enforcement role. This work seeks to reduce the incidence and severity of fire in both homes and other buildings, which has knock-on positive implications for air quality.

Action 10 – Expand the use of zero tailpipe emission and hybrid vehicles within the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service fleet and continue to deliver fire prevention and protection work.

Transport

Transport is the largest source NO₂ emissions in Oxfordshire and also contributes to PM emissions. As the highway authority, Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for a range of management functions that can help to reduce these emissions and improve air quality.

Local Transport and Connectivity Plan

The [Local Transport and Connectivity Plan](#) (LTCP) was adopted by the county council in July 2022. The LTCP outlines a clear vision to deliver a net-zero Oxfordshire transport and travel system that enables the county to thrive whilst protecting the environment and making Oxfordshire a better place to live for all residents.

We plan to achieve this by reducing the need to travel, discouraging individual private vehicle journeys and making walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice. The policies included in the LTCP are the tools that we believe are necessary to achieve this.

Many of the LTCP policies will also help to improve air quality due to the focus on reducing private car use and encouraging active travel. Delivery of the LTCP will therefore be a critical step in delivering the aspirations of this strategy.

Action 11 – Support delivery of the LTCP, ensuring consideration of air quality in new highway schemes and potential trade-offs with decarbonisation where relevant.

Walking and cycling

Encouraging increased levels of walking and cycling is a central part of the LTCP. More people choosing to walk and cycle will be a key part of reducing private car usage and improving air quality. The LTCP and the supporting [Active Travel Strategy](#) outline the majority of the actions that we will be taking to encourage walking and cycling.

However, in addition there are some specific projects where we are incorporating air quality, e.g. in action to promote active travel to school such as school streets (a timed road closure that restricts access for motor vehicles at school drop-off and pick-up times.)

This work with schools may help to improve air quality at the school gate by reducing traffic near the school and encouraging families to walk. Air pollution data has been measured at some trial sites.

There is an opportunity to expand monitoring work and test the use of real time data, particularly at the school gate. It is hoped that the use of real time data will help families to better understand air quality near schools and encourage behaviour change.

Action 12 – Promote active travel to school and work with air quality partners to monitor air quality at pilot school sites.

Action 13 – Test the use of real time data to promote behaviour change with a specific focus on school gates.

Bus

Encouraging increased bus usage is a key part of the LTCP. More people using the bus will help to reduce the number of private car trips and improve air quality. We are therefore working to encourage bus usage in a number of ways. This includes our work to give buses greater priority in Oxford through the introduction of traffic filters, support to maintain services and reduced park and ride fares. We have also received up to £12.7 million from the governments national bus strategy fund which will be used to deliver measures in our [Bus Service Improvement Plan](#).

Action 14 – Work in partnership with our bus operators to deliver measures that encourage bus usage.

Buses are a smaller source of pollutants than cars, but they also contribute to air pollution. In Oxford buses account for approximately 32% of road transport NOx emissions compared to 37% from cars⁵. There are also locations in Oxford where buses contribute up to 50% of road transport NOx emissions⁶.

We are therefore working to reduce emissions from buses themselves. In 2014, the city and county councils introduced a bus low emission zone (LEZ), requiring all buses in Oxford city centre to meet the Euro V standard for NOx. We are working with the bus operators to update and expand the low emission zone.

As part of our work to expand the bus low emissions zone, a fleet of electric buses will be introduced in Oxford and the surrounding area during 2023 and 2024. This has been enabled with £32.8 million from the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme. We will explore opportunities to build on this work with the bus operators and accelerate the transition to a zero-emission bus fleet across the county.

There may also be local situations where people are exposed to dangerous levels of air pollution in bus stations such as in enclosed stations or where vehicles are left idling. We will work with bus operators to understand and introduce measures to address this issue.

Action 15 – Work with bus operators to update and expand the Oxford bus low emission zone, deliver the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme and explore opportunities to build on this work and accelerate the transition to a zero-emission bus fleet across the county.

⁵ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/7320/oxford_source_apportionment_study

⁶ https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/roadsandtransport/OCC_ZEBRA_Business_Case_Main_Report_Final_REDACTED.pdf

Action 16 – Work with bus operators to introduce measures to reduce exposure to dangerous air pollution concentrations in bus stations.

Rail

Encouraging increased rail usage will also help to improve air quality by reducing private car usage. Opportunities to enhance rail usage in Oxfordshire have been identified through the [Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study](#) and Oxfordshire Connect projects. We will use these projects to guide our approach to rail and priorities for rail investment in Oxfordshire.

Action 17 – Continue to support the development and delivery of rail improvements in Oxfordshire.

Rail also contributes to air pollution, particularly near or within train stations. Air pollution from railways has been falling and contributes a relatively small amount to overall NOx and PM2.5 emissions. However, as with buses, there remain risks that people are exposed to dangerous air pollution concentrations at the local scale such as in enclosed train stations, particularly where diesel trains are left running⁷.

There continue to be diesel trains in operation in Oxfordshire. Not all of the Great Western mainline is electrified, notably Oxford to Didcot Parkway. The infrastructure planned for the East West Rail link from Oxford to Cambridge, is also not planned to be electrified.

We will continue to lobby air quality partners for the decarbonisation of the rail network in Oxfordshire, including electrification. We will also lobby air quality partners to reduce exposure to dangerous air pollution concentrations at train stations by introducing measures such as reducing the amount of time diesel trains are left running.

Action 18 – Lobby for electrification of railways in Oxfordshire and measures to reduce exposure to dangerous air pollution concentrations in train stations.

Action 19 – Identify whether the train operators have a policy on idling in stations, how much idling in stations there is of diesel trains and if operators have done an air quality assessment of the impacts.

Zero tailpipe emission vehicles

Cars are the largest source of NOx emissions in Oxfordshire and contribute significantly to air pollution. Whilst we are aiming to reduce car usage and make walking, cycling, public and shared transport to be the natural first choice for journeys, we recognise that cars will still be a part of Oxfordshire's transport system.

It is therefore crucial that we encourage cars to be zero tailpipe emission to reduce air pollution. A zero emission vehicle (ZEV) is defined as one which emits 0g of carbon dioxide from the tailpipe per kilometre travelled and typically refers to Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs). Whilst ZEVs do not have any tailpipe emissions, they will still produce particulate matter emissions from brake and tyre wear.

⁷ Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2022: air pollution

Our LTCP includes strong policies that seek to promote ZEVs before internal combustion engine vehicles. A number of these policies are already being delivered.

The first policy to promote zero-emission vehicles is investigating the use of Clean Air Zones (CAZs) and Zero Emission Zones (ZEZs). These are areas where vehicles with higher tailpipe pollutant emissions (CAZ) or all vehicles except those with zero tailpipe emissions (ZEZ) are restricted or charged for access.

A ZEZ for Oxford was proposed in 2015 as part of our fourth Local Transport Plan. A ZEZ Pilot started in February 2022 covering several streets in Oxford City Centre. It is planned to have a wider ZEZ in place covering most of Oxford city centre.

Comprehensive, accessible and efficient charging and fuelling infrastructure is also essential in enabling the rapid adoption of ZEVs. Therefore, along with our partners in the district and city councils, we have developed and adopted the [Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy](#) (OEVIS), which sets out 17 policies and associated key actions for the short term (2020-2025). At the time of writing in 2020, it was estimated that the equivalent of 1,636 further 3-7kW public charge points could be required to meet potential demand by 2025. We have delivered a number of notable projects from the strategy including the [Park and Charge](#) project.

Action 20 – Deliver projects to encourage the uptake of zero tailpipe emission vehicles and work in association with our district and city councils to deliver the OEVIS.

Parking and congestion management

Oxfordshire County Council as the highway authority is responsible for a range of management functions. This includes working to manage congestion, and on-street parking.

These functions will play a role in helping to deliver our LTCP and encouraging the use of walking, cycling, public and shared transport. As outlined previously, this will also be key to improving air quality. Details of our full approach to parking and congestion management can be found in the LTCP and supporting strategies. There are several policies that are of particular relevance to air quality and so have been highlighted in this strategy.

As part of our approach to parking management we will take measures to reduce and restrict car parking availability. This will contribute to reduced reliance on private cars and improved air quality. The removal of car parking spaces will also help to free up space for greenery or seating. We are already taking action to control on-street parking in Oxford through the introduction of Controlled Parking Zones.

We are also planning to investigate demand management measures, where appropriate. Demand management measures seek to actively discourage private car use such as traffic reduction schemes, traffic filters or congestion charging. We are planning to deliver several demand management schemes, including traffic filters, a workplace parking levy and ZEZ as part of the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan.

Demand management schemes would make private car use less attractive and will therefore reduce private car use and improve air quality.

Action 21 – Deliver parking controls, traffic reduction schemes and congestion management measures to reduce private car use and improve local air quality.

Network management

The Traffic Management Act (2004) places a duty on the council as highways authority to reduce and manage congestion and to collaborate effectively with other traffic authorities to achieve this. We are also responsible for ensuring a co-ordinated approach to maintaining public safety through approval of all works on the public highway. These responsibilities are known as our Network Management Duty.

The core purpose of network management is to tackle congestion and ensure the safe, free-flowing movement of traffic, people and freight across the Oxfordshire road network. However, it also has the potential to influence travel choices by prioritising public transport, walking and cycling.

Network management can help to improve air quality by supporting the uptake of sustainable transport modes, reducing congestion and idling traffic and deterring use of inappropriate roads such as those in air quality management areas.

Our approach to network management is outlined in our [Network Management Plan 2023-2028](#) that was approved by cabinet in February 2023. The plan sets out that we will use evidence to investigate the relationships between congestion, air quality and noise to identify what measures and innovative transport solutions could be introduced to minimise the impact of congestion on the environment and quality of life. Air quality is also identified as a performance management indicator.

Action 22 – Undertake Network management as part of an integrated approach to promote traffic flow and reduce idling traffic particularly in locations where there are groups vulnerable to poor air quality.

Action 23 – Utilise evidence to investigate the relationships between congestion, air quality and noise to identify what measures and innovative transport solutions could be introduced to minimise the impact of congestion on the environment and quality of life.

Planning

Planning is both the responsibility of the city and district councils and ourselves. The city and district councils are responsible for local planning functions such as the provision of new housing, employment and leisure, whilst the county council have the statutory planning function for Minerals and Waste and our own developments such as schools and roads.

The responsibilities are undertaken through both determining planning applications and preparing Local Plans to guide future development. The city and districts each prepare their own Local Plan and we prepare the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan. Together the plans form the Development Plan for Oxfordshire against which all planning applications are determined.

Minerals and Waste Local Plan

The county council are the minerals and waste planning authority in Oxfordshire. We are responsible for producing the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and for determining all Minerals and Waste planning applications. Our adopted [Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy](#) was adopted in 2017.

The Core Strategy sets out the vision, objectives and policies for meeting development requirements for the supply of minerals and the management of waste in Oxfordshire over the period to 2031. It provides a policy framework for identifying sites for new minerals and waste developments and for making decisions on planning applications.

Air quality is currently included within the Core Strategy. Policy C5 outlines that proposals for minerals and waste development will demonstrate that they will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the local environment or human health, including from air quality. Conformity with this policy is assessed within the determination of each Minerals and Waste planning application.

The county council are now working to prepare a new Minerals and Waste Plan, which upon adoption will replace the current Core Strategy. We will ensure air quality is included within the new plan to reduce emissions from minerals and waste sites.

Action 24 – Consider and where possible enhance references to air quality in the new Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

Waste

The county council are also responsible for the disposal of household waste collected across the county. Waste disposal primarily contributes to air pollution through car trips to household waste recycling centres and vehicles used to transport waste.

We are encouraging Oxfordshire residents to avoid producing waste in the first place by reusing and reducing what they buy and repairing what they already have. We have a waste wizard tool and are developing a circular economy strategy to assist with this. This will help to reduce the number of car trips to household waste recycling centres and the associated air pollution.

There are currently few ZEVs for the movement of waste. Technology is further behind in the heavy goods vehicle sector and there is less certainty about when alternative fuels will be adopted at scale. We will therefore continue to monitor technological developments in the sector, including the potential for hydrogen vehicles. In the meantime, many of our waste contracts already specify use of the most recent emission standards for diesel vehicles (Euro 6).

There is also some air pollution associated with landfills which emit methane gas. Methane is relatively non-toxic and poses little direct harm to human health however it does pose notable environmental concerns as a greenhouse gas, and it contributes to the formation of ozone⁸.

⁸ Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2022: air pollution

We have reduced the amount of waste we send to landfill to under 3% and manage landfill gas where appropriate to reduce the emissions of methane to air. Where residual waste is produced, we have the Ardley energy recovery facility (ERF) which burns residual waste to produce electricity. The ERF has technology to capture and control pollutants and is subject to very strict regulations and monitoring.

Action 25 – Work to reduce air pollution from waste disposal including development of the circular economy strategy.

Domestic heating

The heating of buildings presents an important source of indoor and outdoor air pollution. There are various forms of domestic heating that contribute to air pollution including the burning solid fuel. Residential and small scale combustion is the largest source of PM_{2.5} in the UK (43%) and second largest source of sulphur dioxide (25%). Domestic combustion accounts for around 19% of NO_x emissions in Oxford⁹.

There is a substantial difference between the least and most polluting methods of domestic heating. Solid fuels are by far the most polluting method of domestic heating, and wood burning has increased in popularity over recent years. This has been further compounded by high energy costs and has the potential to worsen local air quality¹⁰.

By reducing the amount of fossil fuels burnt through better energy efficiency or a move to more sustainable fuels air quality can improve. As with council emissions, much of the county councils work in this area has been driven by climate objectives but air quality improvements are a co-benefit to many of the solutions.

Domestic wood burning

As highlighted previously residential and small scale combustion is the largest source of PM_{2.5} in the UK and a large proportion of this comes from wood burning. Domestic wood burning has negative impacts on both indoor and outdoor air pollution. Currently the county council do not do any direct work to address domestic wood burning.

There are existing government regulations¹¹ that allow the district and city councils to declare smoke control areas. These are areas where there's a limit on how much smoke can be released from a chimney and only authorised fuel can be burnt. It is possible for penalties or fines to be issued where chimneys are releasing too much smoke or to people burning unauthorised fuel. There are a number of smoke control areas across the county.

In order to reduce domestic wood burning we will support joint campaigns with the district and city councils and other air quality partners. We will also investigate conducting targeted work for vulnerable residents with air quality partners. For example, working with the NHS to target residents with existing respiratory conditions.

⁹ [Oxford Source Apportionment Study | Oxford City Council](#), 2020

¹⁰ Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2022: air pollution

¹¹ The Clean Air Act 1993 and the Environment Act 2021

Action 26 – Support joint campaigns about domestic wood burning with the district and city councils and other air quality partners.

Action 27 – Investigate conducting targeted work about domestic wood burning for vulnerable residents with air quality partners.

Trading Standards

The county council is responsible for enforcing over 200 pieces of legislation through our trading standards function. Some of the legislation that we can enforce supports improved air quality, particularly in relation to domestic heating.

The Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) regulations set a minimum energy efficiency level for domestic private rented properties. Trading Standards have worked in partnership with the district and city councils to delegate these powers to Private Sector Housing Teams.

We can also enforce the Domestic Solid Fuels Standards (2020) which aims to improve air quality by ensuring wood burnt for domestic use meets certain standards such as carrying the “Ready to Burn” branding¹².

Action 28 – Work in partnership and use an intelligence led approach to enforcement in relation to improving air quality.

Heat pump programmes

Many homes in the UK are reliant on gas boilers for heating. The combustion process in gas boilers is a source of NO_x emissions and when gas boilers are not working properly, they can emit harmful carbon monoxide.

Gas boilers are also a source of carbon emissions and are being phased out in new homes from 2025. Therefore, there has been ongoing work to identify alternative solutions. Heat pumps are one solution that is being explored. Heat pumps capture heat from outside and move it into the home using electricity.

We are involved with two heat pump ready programmes that seek to move heat pumps to being a known and trusted technology to drive mass adoption. The programmes are conducting separate projects in Oxford and Cherwell, funded by the government.

Action 29 – Conduct projects that seek to drive the mass adoption of heat pumps.

Oxfordshire Energy Strategy

The Oxfordshire Energy strategy was produced by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) in 2021. It sets out an ambitious framework to enable the county to be at the forefront of energy innovation to foster clean growth.

One key project we are involved with to support delivery of the strategy's outcomes is Project Local Energy Oxfordshire (LEO). Project LEO is a cross-sector collaborative project that is trialling a range of local energy solutions.

¹² https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cat09/1901291307_Ready_to_Burn_Web.pdf

All of the trials being conducted as part of Project LEO will help to improve air quality by accelerating our transition to a zero-carbon energy system. The project includes a heat pump trial in Deddington which will help to progress work on domestic heating.

Action 30 – Work with local partners to deliver the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy and supporting projects.

Extend

Where it is not possible to reduce emissions, we will work to extend the distance between emission sources and human receptors. Pollutant concentration is highest close to the emissions source but decreases with distance. Increasing the distance therefore helps to reduce the pollutant concentration at the point of exposure.

Transport

The majority of our transport work focuses on reducing and removing air pollution emission sources. However, some of our transport work also helps to extend the distance between residents and the sources of air pollution, whilst contributing to reducing emissions from private cars.

During May 2022, we introduced the trial of three low traffic neighbourhoods (LTN) in East Oxford. LTNs are residential areas where through motor traffic is prevented, whilst still allowing access for people walking and cycling. LTNs create walking and cycle friendly streets and help to improve air quality by reducing through car traffic. They also help to reduce residents' exposure to high levels of air pollution by extending the distance between where people live and high levels of car traffic.

We are monitoring air quality in the East Oxford LTNs using diffusion tubes, which measure the levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in the air. We are also monitoring air quality on boundary routes to assess whether there are any air quality impacts due to the displacement of traffic. We intend to compare 2022 air quality data with 2021 data to assess the impacts of the LTN trials.

Action 31 – Work with a range of data sources to understand the air quality impacts of LTNs and take action to mitigate any negative impacts identified.

Planning

The city and districts each prepare their own Local Plan which guide future development proposals. The location of new developments is important to encourage both the reduction of air pollution and extend the distance between new housing, business, education or leisure facilities and sources of air pollution such as major roads.

Air quality is included as a consideration in local plans with specialist input provided by the relevant district and city council environmental protection teams. The district and city councils have also produced air quality guidance for developers to support local plans and air quality impact assessments may be required for some planning applications.

The county council work closely with the district and city councils to help inform the contents of the local plans and consider alignment across the county. We are also a statutory consultee and able to formally respond to district and city council local plans and their major planning applications.

Through this process we are able to highlight concerns in a range of areas including air quality as part of our health impact assessments of strategic sites and major

highways schemes, particularly where this is related to county council functions such as transport. We will ensure air quality impacts are included as a consideration in county council planning consultation responses. Whilst specialist input is provided by the relevant district and city council teams, we believe there is value in highlighting air quality concerns to reinforce and raise the profile of air quality and its impact on health.

In order to assist with responses to planning applications, we are also well placed to lead the development of a local air quality impact assessment tool which can be used when assessing the health impacts of schemes. A similar tool has been developed in the West Midlands to evaluate the health and economic impacts of current and future air quality scenarios¹³.

We are proposing to develop the assessment tool so that robust and practical air quality assessments can be made, particularly around developments at strategic sites. We will make the tool available to a range of stakeholders such as our district and city councils for countywide usage.

Action 32 – Ensure air quality impacts are included as a consideration in county council planning consultation responses including in Health Impact Assessments of strategic developments and major infrastructure schemes, particularly where this is related to county council functions such as transport.

Action 33 – Develop and test the use of a local air quality impact assessment tool as part of health impact assessments.

¹³ <https://wm-air.org.uk/project/health/>

Protect

Finally, we will work to protect the most vulnerable residents. Children, pregnant women, the elderly and those with existing health conditions are most vulnerable to the negative health impacts of air pollution. We will therefore work to protect these groups when it is not possible to reduce emissions or extend the distance from them.

Behaviour change

In order to reduce emissions and improve air quality, widespread behaviour change will be required in a range of areas. We have outlined some of the actions we are taking to enable this behaviour change. However, these have largely been focused on infrastructure. We recognise that just providing infrastructure is not enough and other supporting actions will be needed.

Community activation

Community activation is the process of enabling people to obtain the health and wellbeing benefits of assets in their local community. It aims to enable people to make healthy decisions. It particularly focuses on working with local community groups to engage residents who may experience greater barriers to enjoying a healthy lifestyle.

Community activation involves co-production of initiatives with local community groups. This engagement can identify common barriers to healthy behaviours and develop local solutions such as free bike repairs for low income families, family based cycle training or guided walks and walking buddy schemes.

The LTCP outlines that we will ensure cycling and walking schemes are supported by community activation measures and promotional programmes. This will enable the whole community to benefit from improvements and help to improve air quality in all parts of the county.

Action 34 – Support walking and cycling schemes with community activation measures.

Travel planning

Our travel plan team work with housing developers and schools to create plans that encourage active and sustainable travel. Similarly, we are seeking to work with employers and businesses in the county to improve promotion and education of travel choices.

This work helps to encourage behaviour change that will improve air quality as well as working to remove existing barriers such as lack of understanding or training. One example of the measures we have implemented with schools and their benefits, school streets, has been covered previously in this strategy.

Action 35 – Conduct travel planning work with schools, businesses and employers, that will support air quality improvements.

Publicity and communication

Awareness and understanding of air pollution is also important to encourage behaviour change and generate buy-in from stakeholders across the county. This strategy is a first step to raise awareness and understanding of air quality in Oxfordshire.

There is further publicity and communication that the county council can conduct moving forward. This could include utilising our social media channels and working with air quality partners such as the NHS on joint campaigns. Communications could include information about vehicle idling, health impacts, indoor air pollution and days with high levels of air pollution to help protect our most vulnerable residents. There is also an opportunity to increase references to air quality in our press releases.

Action 36 – Create an air quality communication plan, linking it with the work of the district and city councils and other air quality partners.

Decarbonisation

In recognition of climate change, all Oxfordshire authorities have declared a climate emergency. Following our declaration, Oxfordshire County Council adopted a Climate Action Framework and with partners commissioned the [Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire](#) (PaZCO) which sets out a transition plan for net zero in Oxfordshire. We have also signed up to the [UK 100](#) net-zero pledge.

As highlighted previously, many of the interventions required to reduce carbon emissions will also help to improve air quality. Therefore, there is an opportunity to combine behaviour change work and communications.

It is also important to raise awareness of potential areas of conflict, for example the use of bio-mass boilers can emit NO₂, PM and SO₂ and replacing cars like for like with BEVs risks increasing the production of PM_{2.5} from tyre and brake wear. Combining this work and improving communication will help to ensure residents are protected from any unintended negative consequences of decarbonisation work.

Action 37 – Continue to make the link between the benefits of carbon reduction and air pollution and raise awareness of carbon reduction interventions which may worsen air quality, including during development and delivery of PaZCO action plans.

Health and social care data

We already have a large amount of data about vulnerable residents from our Adult and Housing Services team. This includes data about care homes, elderly residents and those with existing health conditions. These residents are the most vulnerable to the negative health impacts of air pollution and should be a priority to protect.

We will work with our Adult and Housing Services team to utilise their data about vulnerable residents and potential hospitalisations due to air pollution. This understanding can then be used to target communications about air quality and target geographical areas with air quality interventions.

Action 38 – Use health and social care data to identify vulnerable communities that need to be prioritised for protection.

Planning

As part of the planning process, Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) are used to identify the health impacts of a plan or project. They also produce recommendations for decision makers and stakeholders which aim to maximise a proposal's positive health effects and minimise its negative health effects, while maintaining a focus on addressing health inequalities.

As part of the LTCP, we will expand the use of HIAs to include all major transport schemes or plans. This process will include consideration of air quality as a potential health impact and will therefore help to protect residents.

Action 39 – Ensure air quality is included as a potential health impact when conducting HIAs on major transport schemes or plans and any adverse impacts on local air quality are effectively mitigated.

Domestic heating

As well as our work to reduce emissions from domestic heating, we are also working to protect vulnerable residents. Fuel poverty is caused by three key factors: the cost of fuel, the energy efficiency of the home and income of the household. It is defined as a household being unable to affordably heat their home.

Single parents, families with young people and older people are more likely to experience fuel poverty. Many of these groups are also the most vulnerable to the negative health impacts of air pollution. In addition, homes which are privately rented tend to have some of the poorest energy efficiency. The percentage of homes who are fuel poor is greater in rural areas, compared to urban areas.

Fuel poverty may be caused by poorly insulated homes or inefficient heating systems. Fuel poverty can lead to homes being inadequately heated increasing the risk of indoor air pollution from damp and mould. Households without mains gas are more likely to be in fuel poverty and may use alternative heating methods such as burning solid fuel which negatively impact both indoor and outdoor air pollution¹⁴.

Whilst the fuel poverty rate is low in Oxfordshire, about 11% in 2019, more fossil fuels may be unnecessarily burnt in these homes. It is also likely to be increasing due to high energy costs and the cost of living crisis declared in October 2022.

The county council are working in partnership with the district and city councils to provide advice and support to any Oxfordshire resident to help tackle fuel poverty as well as improve the energy efficiency of home. An advice service "Better Housing Better Health" provides free telephone support and is piloting home visits for more vulnerable tenants. The service supports around 600 residents each year. We have also delivered Green Homes Grant and Sustainable Warmth Fund projects.

Action 40 – Continue work to provide energy efficiency advice and bid to retrofit programmes to support those in fuel poverty. Include reference to the benefits of improving indoor and outdoor air pollution as a result of a move away from fossil fuels.

¹⁴ Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2022: air pollution

Monitoring

Monitoring of air quality is primarily undertaken by the city and district councils who are required to monitor air quality and produce annual air quality status reports. This monitoring work provides valuable insight and underpins the majority of our understanding about air quality in the county.

Moving forward, the city and district councils will continue to conduct the majority of air quality monitoring in the county. However, there are opportunities for the county council to support this work and better integrate air quality monitoring into our work.

We are currently exploring funding opportunities for air quality work and will continue to explore these. Additional funding to expand air quality monitoring will help us to support the existing district council work and improve local understanding of air quality. It may also enable us to start addressing research gaps such as rural air quality monitoring and develop a countywide real time air quality monitoring network. Funding is also required to continue some of our existing air quality monitoring projects such as [NEVFMA](#).

Action 41 – Secure funding to allow the continuation of existing air quality monitoring projects.

Action 42 – Secure funding for new air quality monitoring projects and the utilisation of data and insights from existing research.

We are also working to integrate air quality monitoring into our existing monitoring and evaluation work. For example, we are beginning to monitor the impact of active travel projects on air quality. There is an opportunity, to expand this work and work with our air quality partners to develop a joined up, integrated approach to local air quality monitoring.

We are also looking at opportunities to standardise different air quality monitoring techniques and datasets that we have access to, such as those from different kinds of sensors, so that we have comparable data. We will engage with the city and district councils on this work to agree the relevant technical standards.

With all monitoring work, we will utilise the [Oxfordshire Air Quality website](#) to share and store data with the city and district councils so that it can be used to support their statutory monitoring requirements and inform development of their air quality plans.

Action 43 – Work with our Air Quality Partners to develop a joined up, integrated approach to local air quality monitoring. This monitoring will adhere to best practice and British standards to collect the most accurate and robust data possible.

Action 44 – Utilise the Oxfordshire Air Quality website to share data with the city and district councils.

Whilst air pollution concentrations are accurately measured in certain locations, there is currently a gap in understanding about the general population's exposure to air pollution. We will therefore work with our air quality partners to conduct modelling of

population exposure across Oxfordshire. This will help us to better understand health impacts on the whole population and develop quantified local population exposure targets for PM_{2.5} and NO_x.

Action 45 – Work with air quality partners to carry out population exposure modelling and develop local population exposure targets for PM_{2.5} and NO_x.

Continuous learning and feedback

We welcome any comments on this document and invite County Council colleagues to let us know if we haven't included your air quality related work. Please e-mail healthyplaceshaping@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Driver / enabler	Action	Action wording	New / Existing / Expansion	When	Cost estimate	Staff Time (hours per year)	Stakeholders	Definition of success
Partnership working								
Partnership working	1	Secure wider Oxfordshire County Council staff engagement with the Air Quality partnership group by Winter 2023 to actively support the development, updating and implementation of the district and city councils' air quality action plans and other appropriate projects (as per our legal responsibilities set out under the Environment Act 2021).	New	Summer 2023	0.00	182	OCC staff, district and city councils	5 OCC officers attend Distinct AQ meetings.
Partnership working	2	Engage with the local NHS system to assess the feasibility of conducting joint work about impacts, costs, health burden and solutions related to poor air quality.	Expansion	Annual update	0.00	24	NHS, Primary Care, OH, OUH, ICB	At least three emails sent to NHS colleagues with information about air quality.
Partnership working	3	Continue to support air quality research projects with academic partners and seek to secure funding for future projects, particularly in rural areas.	Expansion	Annual update	0.00	88.8	Academic partners	Attend 3 meetings with academics on research. Maintain ongoing air quality research projects. Secure funding for a rural air quality research project
Partnership working	4	Identify opportunities to engage with the agricultural sector and raise awareness of air pollution.	New	Winter 2023	0.00	42	Agricultural sector	Identify potential contact and meet to discuss opportunities/issues.
Partnership working	5	Engage with the CAG network and raise awareness of air quality.	New	Winter 2023	0.00	24	CAG network	Engage with CAG network with promotional material/information about air quality.
Partnership working	6	Continue to work with and lobby National Highways for measures to improve air quality on the strategic road network.	Expansion	Annual update	0.00	42	National Highways	Attend national highways liaison meetings and raise air quality in consultation responses
Partnership working	7	Provide an annual opportunity for those with an interest and responsibility for air quality to share with others the lessons learned from their respective projects and initiatives.	New	Spring 2024	0.00	84	Air quality partners	Hold one half day workshop with officers to share best practice.
Partnership working	8	Develop and agree an Oxfordshire wide Air Quality Strategy by Spring 2026.	New	Spring 2025 update	0.00	384.8	District and city councils	Produce a document, host conversations and workshop.
Reduce								
Council Emissions								
Council Emissions	9	Deliver the actions identified in the Carbon Management Plan to reduce emissions from our buildings, highway assets, fleet, and staff business travel.	Existing	Annual update	0.00	BAU	OCC staff	Actions completed. Capture the amount of reduction in first year.
Council Emissions	10	Expand the use of zero tailpipe emission and hybrid vehicles within the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service fleet and continue to deliver fire prevention and protection work.	Existing	Annual update	0.00	182	CSS fire vehicles	Trial of new non-carbon fire engine. Expansion of Non-Carbon vehicles.
Transport								
Transport	11	Support delivery of the LTCP, ensuring consideration of air quality in new highway schemes and potential trade-offs with decarbonisation where relevant.	Expansion	Annual update	0.00	12	OCC staff	Reduction in LTCP air quality KPIs

[illegible]

Waste	25	Work to reduce air pollution from waste disposal including development of the circular economy strategy.	Existing	2024	0.00	BAU		Air pollution mentioned in circular economy strategy. A list of possible actions shared and included in SDPs.
Domestic heating								
Domestic heating	26	Support joint behaviour campaigns about domestic wood burning with the district and city councils and other air quality partners.	New	Annual update	0.00	24	District and city councils	Wood burning campaign developed and run.
Domestic heating	27	Investigate conducting targeted work about domestic wood burning for vulnerable residents with air quality partners.	New	Annual update	0.00	24	NHS, Primary Care, OH, OUH, ICB	At least three emails sent to NHS colleagues to investigate feasibility of a project.
Domestic Heating	28	Work in partnership and use an intelligence led approach to enforcement in relation to improving air quality.	Expansion	Annual update	5,000.00	42	Trading standards	Report back on whether TS system tracks number of complaints about "illegal" wood selling
Domestic Heating	29	Support projects that seek to drive the mass adoption of heat pumps.	Existing	Annual update	0.00	BAU	Energy partners	Staffing and capacity remains the same or increases from 2022 Increase in number of heat pumps in Oxfordshire and quantify pollution saved
Domestic Heating	30	Work with local partners to deliver the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy and supporting projects.	Existing	Annual update	0.00	BAU	Energy partners	Staffing and capacity remains the same or increases from 2022 Completion of delivery of outcomes identified in the Energy strategy
Extend								
Transport								
Transport	31	Work with a range of data sources to understand the air quality impacts of LTNs and take action to mitigate any negative impacts identified.	Expansion	2024	0.00	44.4		Produce a report which quantifies air pollution levels.
Planning								
Planning	32	Ensure air quality impacts are included as a consideration in county council planning consultation responses including in Health Impact Assessments of strategic developments and major infrastructure schemes, particularly where this is related to county council functions such as transport.	Existing	Annual update	0.00	182		An audit carried out of 10 schemes has 8 which include reference to air pollution.
Planning	33	Develop and test the use of a local air quality impact assessment tool as part of health impact assessments.	New	Annual update	30,000.00	88.8	Academic partners	Tool developed which enables evaluation of the health and economic impacts of policy decisions / schemes
Protect								
Behaviour change								
Behaviour change	34	Support walking and cycling schemes with community activation measures.	Existing	Annual update	0.00	BAU	Public	Schemes are operational. Efforts made to quantify reduction in air pollution
Behaviour change	35	Conduct travel planning work with schools, businesses and employers, that will support air quality improvements.	Existing	Annual update	0.00	BAU	Schools, businesses and employers	Staffing and funding is maintained at 2022 levels. Quantify pollution savings of any schemes implemented

Behaviour change	36	Create an air quality communication plan, linking it with the work of the district and city councils and other air quality partners.	New	Autumn 2023	5,000.00	88.8	Comms	A communication plan is produced and shared, which includes one internal AQ campaign (Oxford City's Comfort Heaters campaign) and External campaign.
Behaviour change	37	Continue to make the link between the benefits of carbon reduction and air pollution and raise awareness of carbon reduction interventions which may worsen air quality, including during development and delivery of PaZCO action plans.	Expansion	Annual update	0.00	156		Produce a report reviewing where PaZCO does not align with air pollution.
Behaviour change	38	Use health and social care data to identify vulnerable communities that need to be prioritised for protection.	New	Annual update	0.00	156	Adult and housing services	Map created overlaying health and social care and air quality data.
Planning								
Planning	39	Ensure air quality is included as a potential health impact when conducting HIAs on major transport schemes or plans and any adverse impacts on local air quality are effectively mitigated.	Existing	Autumn 2023	0.00	BAU		Audit of 10 HIAs to see if AQ is included and what mitigations proposed.
Domestic heating								
Planning	40	Continue work to provide energy efficiency advice and bid to retrofit programmes to support those in fuel poverty. Include reference to the benefits of improving indoor and outdoor air pollution as a result of a move away from fossil fuels.	Expansion	Annual update	0.00	104		Promotional literature and material includes references to air pollution.
Monitoring								
Monitoring	41	Secure funding to allow the continuation of existing air quality monitoring projects.	Expansion	Spring 2024	60,000.00	42		Secure £30,000 a year.
Monitoring	42	Secure funding for new air quality monitoring projects and the utilisation of data and insights from existing research.	Expansion	Spring 2024	0.00	42		Secure £100,000 worth of funding.
Monitoring	43	Work with our Air Quality Partners to understand current monitoring in Oxfordshire and develop a joined up, integrated approach to local air quality monitoring	New	Annual update	0.00	42		Create map of current monitors and share OCC data on AQ website.
Monitoring	44	Utilise the Oxfordshire Air Quality website to share data with the city and district councils.	New	Autumn 2023	0.00	21		OCC data is on the website
Monitoring	45	Work with air quality partners to carry out population exposure modelling and develop local population exposure targets for PM2.5 and NOx.	New	Annual update	100,000.00	42		Modelling completed and population exposure targets developed for PM2.5 and NOx
Total					200,000.00	2335		



Oxfordshire County Council

Equalities Impact Assessment

Air Quality Strategy

May 2023

Contents

Section 1: Summary details	3
Section 2: Detail of proposal.....	4
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics	6
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts.....	11
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts.....	13
Section 4: Review	14

Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Environment and Place, Transport and Infrastructure Public Health, Healthy Place Shaping
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	New policy document
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	The OCC air quality strategy outlines what the County Councils vision for air quality is and how the County Council will work towards achieving the vision. Possible impacts include reduced emissions due to the linkages between air quality and climate action and improved public health due to air quality improvements.
Completed By	Joe Kay / Kate Eveleigh
Authorised By	Lauren Rushen
Date of Assessment	10/2/23

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. Locally, the air quality context is complex, with a range of partner organisations each responsible for different elements of air quality. The county council through its crosscutting work on climate action, transport, development, waste and economy has already implemented many actions that will help to tackle poor air quality, and more are due to be delivered in the coming years.</p> <p>However, we recognise there is scope to do more. The air quality strategy is a first step towards improving OCC work on air quality and raising awareness of air quality. It is supported by a route map that sets out what work we are already doing and the actions we will take in the next 3 years.</p> <p>The actions are all related to functions directly within Oxfordshire County Council's control. This will help to better define the county council's role and develop relationships with our partners. Moving forward a more comprehensive countywide strategy will be required with support from a range of stakeholders to truly deliver better air quality for all. It is hoped that the OCC air quality strategy will serve as a starting point and platform for enabling a countywide strategy.</p>
<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>The intent and purpose of this work is to identify the impacts the county council has on air quality, both positive and negative. Through improving communication around air quality, we can work better together, internally and with external partners. The county council not only delivers services and interventions but also acts as a leader to improve air quality.</p> <p>The strategy proposes an ambitious vision for air quality in Oxfordshire. The vision outlines what we are working towards, sets the scale of change required and will help to ensure consistency between future short term route maps. It will also require us to work in partnership with other stakeholders to deliver this ambition.</p> <p>In support of the vision, the strategy identifies a set of objectives and a strategic approach to guide work on air quality. The strategy is then supported by a route map that identifies the work already underway and actions we will be taking to deliver our vision and objectives.</p>

<p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	<p>There is a large amount of evidence about air quality that has been used to inform the strategy. These sources are quoted throughout the strategy and route map. In addition, there is Oxfordshire specific data that has also been analysed. Internal and external stakeholders were also engaged with during development of the strategy to refine its content. This included a workshop with OCC officers and district and city officers in February 2023.</p>
<p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>Many of the actions are linked to existing council work and so alternatives were not considered. For new actions and the vision, several proposals were considered and were refined through the officer workshop.</p> <p>A do nothing approach was not considered appropriate for a range of reasons. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. • Work to improve air quality aligns with delivery of Oxfordshire County Councils priorities. • Long term exposure to air pollution causes ill health and death.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The strategy will help to improve air quality in the county, benefitting older and younger residents.</p> <p>Older and younger people are particularly susceptible to the impacts of poor air quality. In children this includes asthma and slower development of lung function. In the elderly, this includes lung cancer and dementia.</p> <p>The strategy will therefore help to improve the health and wellbeing of different age groups and raise awareness of air pollutions impact on different age groups.</p>		Delivery by a range of stakeholders.	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum.

Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The strategy will help to improve air quality in the county, benefitting disabled residents.</p> <p>Air pollution can exacerbate existing health conditions and people with existing health conditions are more susceptible to the negative impacts of air pollution.</p> <p>The strategy will therefore help to improve the health and wellbeing of disabled residents and raise awareness of air pollutions impact.</p>		Delivery by a range of stakeholders.	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum.
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Pregnancy & Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The strategy will help to improve air quality in the county, benefitting pregnant women.</p> <p>Pregnant women are particularly susceptible to the impacts of poor air quality and air pollution can cause low birth weight.</p> <p>The strategy will therefore help to improve the health and wellbeing of pregnant women and raise awareness of air pollutions impact on pregnancy.</p>		Delivery by a range of stakeholders.	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum.
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Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The strategy will help to improve air quality in the county, benefitting residents from a non-white ethnic background.</p> <p>There is a complex association between air pollution exposure, area level deprivation and ethnicity.</p> <p>Analysis in London found that communities with higher levels of deprivation, or a higher proportion of people from a non-white ethnic background, were more likely to be exposed to higher levels of air pollution.</p> <p>The strategy will therefore help to improve the health and wellbeing of residents from a non-white ethnic background and raise awareness of the association between ethnicity and air pollution exposure.</p>		Delivery by a range of stakeholders.	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum.
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The strategy will help to improve air quality in the county, including in rural communities.</p> <p>Much academic research is based on urban air pollution and there is a gap around rural air pollution. As Oxfordshire is mostly a rural county, we believe there is an opportunity to address this gap.</p> <p>The strategy therefore includes an action to engage with and support air quality research and citizen science engagement, particularly in rural areas.</p>		Delivery by a range of stakeholders.	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum.
Armed Forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Areas of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The strategy will help to improve air quality in the county, benefitting residents in areas of deprivation.</p>		Delivery by a range of stakeholders.	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum.

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (* Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
				<p>Areas of high deprivation are often more polluted due to higher levels of traffic or industrial activities.</p> <p>People in lower socio-economic groups are more likely to have pre-existing health conditions earlier in life. Air pollution may add to the burden of poor health.</p> <p>Studies show increased health risks associated with exposure to air pollution among those living in areas of higher socio-economic deprivation.</p> <p>The strategy will therefore help to improve the health and wellbeing of residents in areas of deprivation and raise awareness of the association between deprivation and air quality.</p>			

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The strategy will help to improve council work on tackling air quality. This will have a positive impact on staff who will experience less exposure to air pollution and improved health.</p> <p>It will also help to raise staff awareness of air pollution and the actions that can be taken.</p>		Delivery by a range of stakeholders.	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum.
Other Council Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improving air quality will help to benefit residents health and wellbeing. This will have positive impacts on other services such as public health.		Delivery by a range of stakeholders.	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum.
Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Social Value ¹	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

¹ If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

Section 4: Review

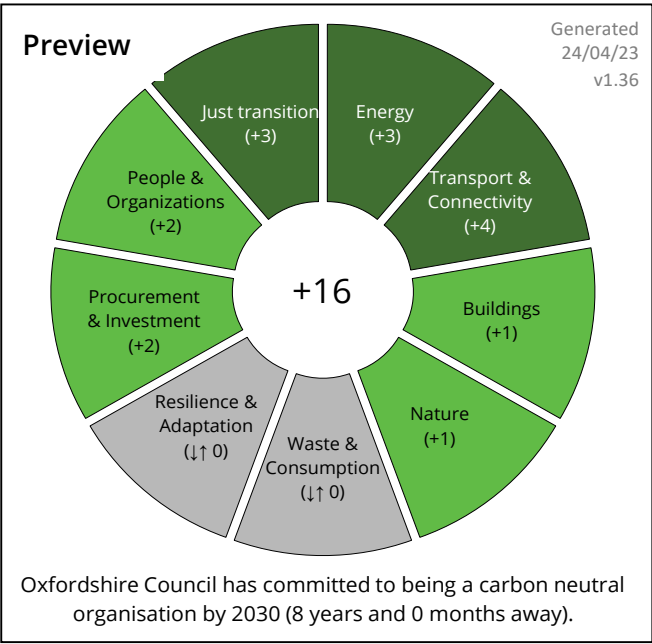
Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	June 2024
Person Responsible for Review	Joe Kay, Strategic Transport Lead Kate Eveleigh, Health Improvement Practitioner
Authorised By	Lauren Rushen

Climate Impact Assessment

Summary

Directorate and Service Area	Environment and place, Transport and Infrastructure Public Health, Healthy Place Shaping
What is being assessed	Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	New policy document
Summary of assessment	<p>The OCC air quality strategy outlines what the County Councils vision for air quality is and how the County Council will work towards achieving the vision.</p> <p>Possible impacts include reduced emissions due to the linkages between air quality and climate action and improved public health due to air quality improvements.</p>
Completed by	Joe Kay
Climate action sign off by	Tammy Marrett
Director sign off by	
Assessment date	44967



Detail of proposal

Context / Background	<p>Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. Locally, the air quality context is complex, with a range of partner organisations each responsible for different elements of air quality. The county council through its crosscutting work on climate action, transport, development, waste and innovation has already implemented many actions that will help to tackle poor air quality, and more are due to be delivered in the coming years.</p> <p>The air quality strategy is a first step towards improving OCC work on air quality and raising awareness of air</p>
Proposal	<p>The strategy proposes an ambitious vision for air quality in Oxfordshire. In support of the vision, the strategy identifies objectives and a strategic approach to guide future work. The strategy is then supported by a route map that identifies the work already underway and actions we will be taking to deliver our vision and objectives.</p> <p>The strategy has been developed with input from key OCC teams. Moving forward, annual review and monitoring of the strategy and action plan will be conducted via the Health Protection Forum. Public Health and Transport Policy officers will coordinate this review and liaise with the relevant OCC teams to capture progress made and any changes to actions.</p>
Evidence / Intelligence	<p>There is a large amount of evidence about air quality that has been used to inform the strategy. These sources are quoted throughout the strategy and route map. In addition, there is Oxfordshire specific data that has also been analysed. Internal and external stakeholders were also engaged with during development of the strategy to refine its content. This included a workshop with OCC officers and district and city officers in February 2023.</p> <p>Air quality is monitored by the district and city councils in Oxfordshire and so close partnership working will be required and the strategy reviewed in the context of these updates. An annual workshop is planned to be held for all air quality stakeholders to ensure all partners are kept updated.</p>
Alternatives considered / rejected	<p>Many of the actions are linked to existing council work and so alternatives were not considered. For new actions and the vision, several proposals were considered and were refined through the officer workshop.</p> <p>A do nothing approach was not considered appropriate for a range of reasons. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. • Work to improve air quality aligns with delivery of Oxfordshire County Councils priorities. • Long term exposure to air pollution causes ill health and death.

Category	Impact criteria	Score (-3 to +3)	Description of impact	Actions or mitigations to reduce negative impacts	Action owner	Timeline and monitoring arrangements
Energy	Increases energy efficiency	1	The strategy promotes and supports ongoing OCC work to improve energy efficiency in its own buildings and residents homes due to the links between heating and air pollution.		Delivery by a range of stakeholders	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum
Energy	Promotes a switch to low-carbon or renewable energy	1	The strategy promotes and supports ongoing OCC work to switch to low-carbon and renewable energy due to the links between energy and air pollution.		Delivery by a range of stakeholders	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum
Energy	Promotes resilient, local, smart energy systems	1	The strategy promotes and supports ongoing OCC work to improve energy systems due to the links between energy and air pollution.		Delivery by a range of stakeholders	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum
Transport & Connectivity	Reduces need to travel and/or the need for private car ownership	1	The strategy promotes and supports ongoing OCC work to deliver the LTCP and reduce private car use.		Delivery by a range of stakeholders	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum
Transport & Connectivity	Supports active travel	1	The strategy promotes and supports ongoing OCC work to support active travel.		Delivery by a range of stakeholders	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum
Transport & Connectivity	Increases use of public transport	1	The strategy promotes and supports ongoing OCC work to increase public transport use.		Delivery by a range of stakeholders	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum
Transport & Connectivity	Accelerates electrification of transport	1	The strategy promotes and supports ongoing OCC work to accelerate the electrification of transport.		Delivery by a range of stakeholders	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum
Buildings	Promotes net zero new builds and developments	0	Not applicable			
Buildings	Accelerates retrofitting of existing buildings	1	The strategy promotes and supports ongoing OCC work to retrofit buildings due to the links between energy, heating and air pollution.		Delivery by a range of stakeholders	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum

Nature	Protects, restores or enhances biodiversity, landscape and ecosystems	Improving air quality will have 1 positive impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems.	Delivery by a range of stakeholders	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum
Nature	Develops blue and green infrastructure	0 Not applicable		
Nature	Improves access to nature and green spaces	0 Not applicable		
Waste & Consumption	Reduces overall consumption	0 Not applicable		
Waste & Consumption	Supports waste prevention and drive reuse and recycling	0 Not applicable		
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience to flooding	0 Not applicable		
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience to other extreme weather events (e.g., storms, cold snaps, heatwaves, droughts)	0 Not applicable		
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience of council services, communities, energy systems, transport infrastructure and/or supply chains	0 Not applicable		
Procurement & Investment	Procurement practices prioritise low-carbon options, circular economy and sustainability	The strategy promotes and supports ongoing OCC work to develop a circular economy strategy and prioritise low carbon procurement practices which will also deliver air quality benefits. 1 Any investment to deliver the actions in the strategy will also deliver climate action benefits due to the links between air quality and climate action.	Delivery by a range of stakeholders	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum
Procurement & Investment	Investment being considered supports climate action/ is consistent with path to net zero	1	Delivery by a range of stakeholders	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum
People & Organizations	Drives behavioural change to address the climate and ecological emergency	1 Delivery of the actions in the strategy will also deliver climate action benefits due to the links between air quality and climate action.	Delivery by a range of stakeholders	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum
People & Organizations	Drives organizational and systemic change to address the climate and ecological emergency	1 Work to deliver the actions in the strategy will also deliver climate action benefits due to the links between air quality and climate action.	Delivery by a range of stakeholders	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum
Just transition	Promotes green innovation and job creation	0 Not applicable		
Just transition	Promotes health and wellbeing	The strategy promotes and supports ongoing OCC work to deliver air quality improvements. This will deliver improvements to residents health and wellbeing 1	Delivery by a range of stakeholders	Annual review via the Health Protection Forum

Just transition

Reduces poverty and inequality

Improving air quality and delivering the actions in the strategy will help to tackle inequality. Residents in more deprived areas are likely to be more effected by poor air quality.

Delivery by a range of stakeholders
Annual review via the Health Protection Forum

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Divisions Affected - All**CABINET****10/05/23****OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY****Report by Bill Cotton, Corporate Director, Environment & Place****RECOMMENDATION****1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

- Note Oxfordshire County Council's anticipated appointment as Responsible Authority for the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Approve the Governance Structure for the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Executive Summary

2. The Environment Act 2021 introduced a requirement to produce Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). LNRS will be spatial strategies that establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery and provide wider environmental benefits.
3. The County of Oxfordshire has been identified as a geographical area for a LNRS, and Oxfordshire County Council accepted a nomination from the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to be the provisional Responsible Authority to lead production of the Oxfordshire LNRS in March 2022. The Council expect to be formally appointed Responsible Authority in May 2023.
4. As Responsible Authority, Oxfordshire County Council will be required under the Environment Act 2021 to prepare and publish the LNRS, and to review and republish it every 3-10 years in accordance with The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023. As Responsible Authority the Council will receive £238,000 over two years to fund work on the LNRS.
5. Taking on the role of Responsible Authority for the Oxfordshire LNRS will enable the Council to take forward our key principle of nature recovery as set out in the Climate and Natural Environment Policy Statement and support the corporate policy to preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces. The LNRS will be key in identifying wider benefits of nature recovery, such as climate

mitigation and adaptation, and therefore aligns closely with the Council's corporate priorities for action to address the climate emergency and tackling inequalities.

6. Approval is sought for the governance structure for the LNRS, through a steering group which is group within the Local Nature Partnership, chaired by Oxfordshire County Council as Responsible Authority. This structure enables collaborative working with a wide range of stakeholders whilst ensuring final decision-making responsibility sits with the Responsible Authority.

Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

7. The Environment Act 2021 introduced a requirement to produce Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). LNRS will be an England-wide system of spatial strategies that establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery and provide wider environmental benefits. They will agree priorities for nature's recovery, map the most valuable existing habitat for nature, and map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals.
8. In March 2022 the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) identified that the county of Oxfordshire is an appropriate geographical area on which to prepare a LNRS. 48 geographical areas have been identified across England.
9. The production of an Oxfordshire LNRS provides a key opportunity to agree shared priorities for nature recovery across a wide range of stakeholders in Oxfordshire. The county has a strong background in collaborative working between nature conservation partners, and in spatial prioritisation of priorities through the identification of Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) and more recently the draft Nature Recovery Network, produced to inform OP2050. The LNRS will provide a critical framework for delivery of environmental aspects of the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision, particularly guiding principle 4.
10. There are a range of ways that LNRS will be delivered both by Oxfordshire County Council and partners. LNRS are intended to provide a focus for off-site biodiversity net gain (BNG) from development as well as having a broader role in the land use planning system as a source of evidence for preparation of Local Plans. LNRS will also support the delivery of wider environmental objectives, for example by mapping opportunities to use 'nature-based solutions' to problems such as flooding, climate change adaptation or poor water quality. It has been indicated that LNRS will be used to identify and prioritise activities eligible for funding under future agri-environment schemes.
11. The Environment Act strengthens the existing duty on all public authorities to conserve biodiversity and includes a specific requirement for all public authorities to 'have regard' to LNRS, and a duty for some public bodies to report every 5 years on what action they have taken.

12. The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 were published on 23/03/23 and came into force on 13/04/23. It is understood that letters of appointment of Responsible Authorities will be received in May 2023. It is likely that production of an LNRS will take around 18 months – 2 years, although DEFRA have not set a deadline for LNRS production.

Oxfordshire County Council as Responsible Authority

13. The DEFRA Secretary of State will formally appoint a “responsible authority” (RA) to lead production of each LNRS from the list of potential public bodies set out in clause 101 of the Environment Act 2021. Responsible Authorities will be public bodies that have a strong knowledge of the local area and established democratic mandates, ensuring the necessary legitimacy and status to lead a collaborative process with other local partner organisations.
14. In March 2022 DEFRA nominated Oxfordshire County Council as the provisional Responsible Authority for the LNRS for Oxfordshire. Oxfordshire County Council informally accepted this nomination; this was a non-binding agreement made at DEFRA Officer level on the understanding that DEFRA had yet to confirm what funding will be available and local authorities within Oxfordshire had yet to formally consider and agree which body would become the responsible authority. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) gave their endorsement for Oxfordshire County Council to continue in the Responsible Authority role in November.
15. Oxfordshire County Council’s Climate and Natural Environment Policy Statement established the Oxfordshire Environmental Principles, including Objective 3: Protect, restore, enhance and create new nature areas and natural capital assets. The LNRS will be a key strategy in applying this principle and the paper recognises the need for Oxfordshire County Council to take a leading role in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The LNRS will support the corporate policy to preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces. By identifying wider benefits of nature recovery, such as climate mitigation and adaptation, the LNRS will align closely with the Council’s corporate priorities for action to address the climate emergency and tackling inequalities.
16. As Responsible Authority Oxfordshire County Council will be required to ensure the LNRS is compliant with requirements of the Environment Act 2021 and The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023.
17. The Environment Act indicates that the responsible authority is to prepare and publish the LNRS, and that the strategy is to be reviewed and republished from time to time.
18. The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 sets out procedure to be followed in the preparation, publication, review and republication of LNRS. The Regulations include:

- The creation of ‘supporting authorities’ and how they should work with the Responsible Authority. RAs must ‘take reasonable steps to involve’ supporting authorities, ‘have regard’ to their opinions, share information with them and seek their agreement before consultation and publication. In Oxfordshire the supporting authorities are the District and City Councils and Natural England.
 - Requirements for wider engagement, including the need for public consultation
 - The new power for RAs to request information on Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites from other planning authorities
 - A process for dispute resolution should RAs and supporting authorities develop different opinions on what should be included in the LNRS
 - A requirement to publish the LNRS and provide it to Defra in a format that allows LNRS to be compiled nationally.
 - Rules for review and publication of the LNRS every 3-10 years as determined by the SoS.
19. Statutory Guidance was also published on 23/03/23 to which RAs must ‘have regard’. Features include:
- A step-by-step process for RAs to take when preparing LNRS
 - A definition of ‘areas of particular importance for biodiversity’
 - The need to consider other plans and strategies
 - How LNRS should identify local opportunities to contribute to national environmental objectives
 - A strong steer that LNRSs should be deliverable on the ground and that stakeholder engagement, particularly with landowners, will be important to develop realistic proposals.

Governance structure for production of the Oxfordshire LNRS

20. Consideration has been given to the structure and governance for production of the Oxfordshire LNRS, and how this will relate and interact with the Local Nature Partnership.
21. A LNRS steering group has been formed which is a Local Nature Partnership group led by Oxfordshire County Council as provisional Responsible Authority. This approach is aligned to the governance arrangements of most of the LNRS DEFRA pilot areas. It will help ensure the LNRS is produced in a collaborative way. The LNRS will be subject to usual County Council cabinet reporting and approval processes.
22. The purpose of the Steering Group is to provide oversight of, and advice on, the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Oxfordshire to

ensure the production of an effective LNRS which reflects the shared ambitions of stakeholders and meets statutory requirements. Final decision-making powers sit with the Responsible Authority.

23. The steering group is formed of one officer representative for each of the following:
 - Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership
 - Oxfordshire County Council
 - Districts (Supporting Authorities)
 - eNGOs
 - Natural England (Supporting Authority)
 - Forestry Commission
 - Environment Agency
 - The farming community
 - Designated landscapes
 - Comms & engagement/community groups
24. It is envisaged that a broader group of stakeholders will feed into, and take forward different technical aspects of, the LNRS through a series of focussed working groups and other existing LNP groups.
25. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership has given its support to this governance arrangement.
26. The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 establishes Supporting Authorities, in Oxfordshire these are the District and City Councils and Natural England. They should be involved in production of the LNRS and must be consulted on, and have powers to object to, a pre-consultation draft and final version of the LNRS. Ultimate dispute resolution sits with the Secretary of State. Early discussions have taken place with Environment Officers in the District and City Councils around ensuring Supporting Authorities are aware of their role, fully engaged from an early stage and can input through Working Groups and Stakeholder engagement events. The Districts and City are represented on the Steering Group by the Climate and Biodiversity Team Leader at South and Vale District Councils.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

This proposal supports all the nine priorities set out in the Corporate Plan and gives particular emphasis to the following strategic priorities:

1. Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work
2. Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire
3. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents
6. Improve access to nature and green spaces
8. Play our part in a vibrant local democracy

9. Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.

The proposal also supports Oxfordshire's Environmental Principles, as set out in Council's Climate and Natural Environment Policy Statement.

Financial Implications

27. DEFRA verbally confirmed on 2 May 2023 that funding of £238,000 would accompany the appointment of the Council as Responsible Authority. This is in addition to £48,500 already received from DEFRA as seed funding.
28. The funding amount is intended to cover the cost of the new burden introduced by the legislation and has been calculated by DEFRA using a formula considering the number of Supporting Authorities and number of agricultural businesses within the LNRS area.
29. The DEFRA funding will be received as two grants under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, one (£127,000) soon after appointment as Responsible Authority, and the second (£111,000) at the start of the financial year 2024/25.
30. These funds are considered adequate by officers to cover the cost of LNRS production, which would include recruitment of an FTE post at Grade 12 to project manage the work, as well as fulfilling the requirements set out in the Regulations and Guidance for stakeholder engagement, mapping, public consultation and publication of the LNRS. Any costs that exceed the grant will be funded through existing budgets

Comments checked by:
Rob Finlayson
Finance BP (Environment & Place)
rob.finlayson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

31. As Responsible Authority Oxfordshire County Council will be required to ensure the LNRS is compliant with requirements of the Environment Act 2021 and The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 as well as any relevant policy or guidance issued by the government.
32. The Environment Act indicates that the responsible authority is to prepare and publish the LNRS, and that the strategy is to be reviewed and republished from time to time.
33. The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 set out the procedure to be followed in the preparation, publication, review and republication of LNRS.

34. Under Section 40(A) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 the Council must have regard to the LNRS in considering action it can take with regard its duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Comments checked by:

Jennifer Crouch
Principal Solicitor Environmental
Jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

35. Recruitment is underway for a Local Nature Recovery Strategy Project Manager (Grade 12, Fixed term for 2 years) who will lead on the production of the LNRS, this post will be fully funded from the Defra Section 31 grants. This role will be supported by the Principal Biodiversity Officer, who will also provide ecological input into the strategy.
36. Input from across a range of Council Services will be sought through an internal working group, particularly from Communications, Planning, Countryside Operations, Flooding, Climate, GIS Solutions and Data Intelligence. Additional costs to these service areas in taking forward areas of work to inform the LNRS could be covered by the Defra Section 31 grant. The grant funding would allow us to commission consultancies or partner organisations to support particular areas of work in producing the LNRS.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

37. The production of the LNRS is intended to be collaborative across a wide range of stakeholders, it will be screened against equality and inclusion considerations at an early stage, and likely subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

Sustainability Implications

38. The LNRS will have positive sustainability implications relating directly to nature recovery, and through identifying wider environmental benefits will also have other sustainability benefits particularly relating to climate adaptation through nature-based solutions. The LNRS will help the Council meet its climate and ecological commitments.

Risk Management

39. Opportunities: the role of Responsible Authority provides a key opportunity for OCC to demonstrate a proactive approach to our ecological commitments in the Corporate Plan, Oxfordshire Strategic Vision and OCC's Climate and Natural

Environment Policy paper, as well our Duty under the NERC Act. It provides the opportunity for the Council to ensure our communities are engaged in local nature recovery and that the LNRS delivers a range of wider environmental benefits.

40. Risks: There is a risk that the Council will not have sufficient staff resource to produce the LNRS, it would therefore fail to deliver against the requirements of a Responsible Authority as defined by the Environment Act 2021 and Regulations. The Section 31 Grant from Defra ensures we have sufficient funding to cover a LNRS Project Manager post for 2 years, and recruitment is already underway. Should the recruitment be unsuccessful, Defra have not introduced a time limit to spending of the Section 31 Grant and publication of the LNRS, so there is scope to readvertise. This would result in a delay to starting work on the LNRS, which could lead to a loss of trust and enthusiasm from stakeholders and partners, many of whom are keen that the work progresses quickly, particularly following delays at central government level in rolling-out LNRS. Since the guidance requires a collaborative approach to LNRS production, it is important that the trust and enthusiasm of partners is maintained.
41. The Supporting Authorities (District/City and Natural England) have powers to object to a pre-consultation draft and final version of the LNRS. Should this scenario arise there are potential increased resourcing requirements around dispute resolution, as well as reputational risk for the Council. To mitigate this risk, early engagement has already taken place with Supporting Authorities at an officer level to discuss the approach to ensuring Supporting Authorities are aware of their role, fully engaged from an early stage and can input through Working Groups and Stakeholder engagement events. It is also worth noting that the Districts, City and County Council have worked with partners successfully on similar areas of work in the past (for example, the Conservation Target Areas).
42. The role of Responsible Authority only requires the Council to prepare and publish the LNRS. There is a risk that in doing so we raise the expectations of stakeholders and communities around our role in delivery. Whilst the Council will play a role in delivery of the LNRS (and has a legal duty to have regard to it), as set out above there are a range of mechanisms through which an LNRS is likely to be delivered (including planning and biodiversity net gain, nature-based solutions and agri-environment). To mitigate this risk clear communications will be required around the collaborative approach to both preparation and delivery of the LNRS.

Rachel Wileman, Director Planning Environment and Climate Change

Annex: Nil

Background papers: Nil

Other Documents: Climate and Natural Environment Policy Paper [aebhdfh
\(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://aebhdfh.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Contact Officer: Beccy Micklem, Principal Biodiversity Officer, Environment and Heritage Team, Environment and Circular Economy.
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May 2023

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Divisions: N/A

CABINET – 23 MAY 2023

APPOINTMENTS 2023/24

Report by Director of Law & Governance

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to agree the appointments to the bodies set out in the Annex to this report.

Introduction

1. The report asks the Cabinet to consider member appointments to a variety of bodies which in different ways support the discharge of the Council's executive functions. The report reflects the basis on which appointments to the respective bodies have been made in the past and, subject to any adjustments that may be considered appropriate, invites the Cabinet to agree arrangements for filling the councillor places on those bodies.
2. The schedule only refers to those appointments which are the direct responsibility of Cabinet to make. There are other outside body appointments that are the responsibility of the Remuneration Committee or local processes as appropriate.

Joint Committees

3. These are formal bodies set up to exercise statutory functions jointly with other authorities. Members of joint committees exercising executive functions must be members of the Cabinet.

The current joint committees are listed in **Section 1** of the Annex to this report.

Appointments to sub groups of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership

4. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership (a 'Joint Committee' formerly the Oxfordshire Growth Board) was established to:
 - Coordinate local efforts to manage economic, housing and infrastructure development in a way that is inclusive and maximises local social and environmental benefits;
 - Support the development of local planning policy that meets the UK Government's stated aim of net zero carbon by 2050, and contributes towards biodiversity gain whilst embracing the changes needed for a low carbon world; and,
 - Seek to secure funding in the pursuit of these aims and oversee the delivery of related work programmes delegated to it by the Joint

Committee's constituent local authority members.

Future Oxfordshire Partnership Advisory Sub Groups

5. The Terms of Reference establish advisory sub groups to the Partnership to oversee programmes to oversee specific work programmes or broader thematic areas as required, to monitor progress against the key milestones and make recommendations to the Partnership on decisions required. It is expected that the sub groups will normally meet on a quarterly basis.
6. The advisory sub groups are made up of elected member representatives from each of the constituent councils appointed by the Leader of that council and other representatives as agreed by members of the Partnership Joint Committee. The Chair of the sub-groups will be appointed by the Partnership and normally drawn from the voting membership of the Partnership acting as an independent Chair.

Local Statutory Bodies

8. The County Council is required to set up and run a number of local bodies in connection with certain of its statutory functions, typically with other organisations. County Council representation is not generally limited to Cabinet Members.

The current local statutory bodies are listed in **Section 2** of the Annex to this report.

Strategic Partnerships

9. This category comprises Partnerships which the Cabinet has designated as 'strategic' and whose membership Cabinet has agreed should be linked to the role of Cabinet Member/s and not to individually named members. An exception in the past has been the representative on the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership being the representative of the County Council on the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel.

The current strategic partnerships are listed in **Section 3** of the Annex to this report. Three new appointments have been added since last year:

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership Board

Standing Advisory Bodies

10. This category comprises bodies which have been set up on a permanent basis in connection with particular functions. They do not possess executive powers but provide a forum for discussion and liaison. County Council representation is not limited to Cabinet Members.

The current standing advisory bodies are listed in **Section 4** of the Annex to this report.

Informal Member/Officer Working Groups

11. This is a diverse group of informal bodies set up from time to time to assist with the discharge of the responsibilities of the Cabinet. There is a wide variety of form and purpose, from purely internal management tools to inter-authority forums for overseeing issues of common interest. Members and officers share an equal status on these bodies, which are not subject to the access to information rules applying to formal committees and subcommittees; however, some are open to the public and may allow public address at their meetings.
12. These bodies cannot exercise executive functions themselves but provide available forum for discussion of issues outside the formal decision-making processes. Thus, where voting on such groups is permitted this can only be on the basis of an indicative view and cannot in any way bind the body responsible for the ultimate decision.
13. Guardians for Us (Corporate Parenting Panel) was previously listed in this category. For the municipal year 2023/24 Council is recommended to make this group a formal constituted Council Committee with political balance reporting to Cabinet.

The informal member / officer working groups are listed in **Section 5** of the Annex to this report.

Strategic Outside Bodies

13. The Cabinet is responsible for appointments to those outside bodies which it has identified as 'strategic' and which have been endorsed as such by the Council.

The strategic outside bodies are listed in **Section 6** of the Annex to this report.

Member Champions

14. Cabinet may appoint Member Champions under Part 1.2 of the Constitution.

Financial Implications

15. There are no financial implications for this report.

Comments checked by:

Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance lorna.baxter@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

16. Appointments/nominations to outside bodies are made in accordance with

the Council's Constitution There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:

Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance
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ANITA BRADLEY

Director of Law & Governance

Annex: Appointments Schedule 2023/24

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer, Tel 07393 001096

May 2023

APPOINTMENTS SCHEDULE 2023/24

ANNEX

Joint Committees

<i>Joint Committee</i>	Frequency of meetings (FOM)	Places	Appointees for 2023
Thames Valley Fire Control Service		2	Glynis Phillips, Jenny Hannaby
Traffic Penalty Tribunal - Outside London Adjudication Committee	quarterly	1	Andrew Gant
Future Oxfordshire Partnership	8 per annum	1	Liz Leffman (Sub Liz Brighthouse)
FOP Housing Advisory Group	7 per annum	1	Pete Sudbury (Sub Liz Brighthouse)
FOP Infrastructure Advisory Group	7 per annum	1	Liz Leffman (Sub Liz Brighthouse)
FOP Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Group (proposed to be renamed 'FOP Planning Advisory Group')	monthly	1	Duncan Enright (Sub Andrew Gant)
FOP Environment Advisory Group	6 per annum	1	Pete Sudbury (Sub Andrew Gant)
Thames Valley Collaboration Group		1	Jenny Hannaby
Didcot Garden Town Board	quarterly	1	Liz Leffman

Local Statutory Bodies

Statutory Body	Frequency of meeting	Places	Basis of Member Appointment	Lib Dem/Green All	Con Ind All	Lab & Co-op
Adoption & Permanency Panels & Fostering Panels			On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance see below:			
	3 per month	3	Adoption & Permanency	Sally Povolotsky	Kevin Bulmer	Susanna Pressel
	2 per month (occasionally)	2	Fostering	Bethia Thomas	Kevin Bulmer	
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)	3 per year	3	On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance	Bob Johnston	Nigel Simpson	Imade Edosomwan

SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership	FOM	Appointees
Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership Board	TBD	Leader of the Council Substitute: Cabinet Member for Public Health & Equality
Thematic Partnerships:		
Health & Wellbeing Board	3 per annum	Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members responsible for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Children's & Family Services
Children's Trust Board	3 per annum	Cabinet Members with responsibility for Children & Family Services, Education, Cultural Services and Adult Social Care
Health Improvement Partnership Board	3 per annum	Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Health.
Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership	3 per annum	Leader of the Council
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust		Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust		Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services
Oxford Strategic Partnership	4 per annum	Councillor Glynis Phillips
Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance	4 per annum	Cabinet Member with responsibility for local communities
Oxfordshire Environmental Partnership	4 per annum	Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment
Milestone Strategic Partnership Board	Annually	Cabinet Member for Highway Management and Leader
Viridor Strategic Partnership Board	Occasionally	Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment

Standing Advisory Bodies

Body	FOM	Places	Basis of Member Appointment	Lib Dem/Green All	Con Ind All	Lab & Co-op
Music House Committee / Music Education Hub (Partnership) for Oxfordshire	3 per annum	3	On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance	Dan Levy	Michael Waine	Glynis Phillips
Schools Organisation Stakeholder Group	quarterly	5 1 observer (with no voting rights)	Non-executive County Council Members On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance Cabinet Member with responsibility for Education	Kate Gregory Bob Johnston	Michael Waine Juliette Ash	Charlie Hicks

Informal Member/Officer Working Groups

Working Group	FOM	Places	Basis of Appointment	Lib Dem/Green All	Cons Ind All	Lab & Co- op
West End Steering Group	as required	2	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy	Liz Leffman Duncan Enright		

SECTION 6

Strategic Outside Body	FOM	OCC Entitlement	Appointees for 2022/23
County Councils Network (CCN)	Council - 2 per annum Executive – 3 per annum Annual conference	4 county councillors – in past this has been Leader/Deputy leader	Liz Leffman, Liz Brighthouse Calum Miller, Mark Lygo
Local Government Association (LGA)	General Assembly -1 per annum		Liz Leffman (C.V), Liz Brighthouse, Pete Sudbury, Duncan Enright
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils	as required	1	Sally Polvolotsky
Oxfordshire Care Partnership Board	as required	1	Tim Bearder
Oxfordshire Countryside Access Forum	2/3 per annum	1	Andrew Coles
Community First Oxfordshire (formerly Oxfordshire Rural Community Council)	as required	1	Ian Middleton

Member Champions

(NEW) Public Transport: Kate Gregory

(NEW) Future Generations: TBC

Active Travel and Cycling: Dan Levy

Mental Health & Loneliness: Charlie Hicks

Military: The Leader of the Council (or such other Person as nominated) acts as Armed Forces Champion on behalf of the county, then each military base has a champion who acts as a point of contact:

Felix Bloomfield – RAF Benson

Donna Ford – Bicester Garrison

Nick Leverton – RAF Brize Norton

Ian Snowdon – Vauxhall Barracks

Bethia Thomas – Defence Academy Shrivenham

Richard Webber – Abingdon Station

Cabinet Advisory Groups: these are so far as possible appointed according to political balance but take account of the need for geographical spread and member knowledge:

Minerals and Waste Cabinet Advisory Group: 7 members (Chair: Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment)

Councillors Pete Sudbury, Bob Johnston, Richard Webber, George Reynolds, Yvonne Constance, Ted Fenton, Geoff Saul.

Observer: Andrew Gant

HIF1 Cabinet Advisory Group (Housing Infrastructure Fund): 6 Members (Chair: Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy)

Councillors Brad Baines, Robin Bennett, Jane Murphy, Sally Povolotsky, Ian Snowdon, Richard Webber

Observers: Councillors Pete Sudbury, Andrew Gant

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CABINET – 23 MAY 2023

CAPITAL PROGRAMME APPROVALS – MAY 2023

Report by the Director of Finance

Recommendations

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:
 - a) approve the revised budget provision of £11.2m for Wantage Eastern Link Road (Section 3).
 - b) approve the addition £2.7m road safety works in the vicinity of RAF Barford St John and RAF Croughton to the capital programme.
 - c) approve the addition of £4.0m of the £5.0m pipeline funding agreed in February 2023 to the capital programme to support the Vision Zero Delivery Programme.
 - d) approve the revised budget provision of £23.1m for the delivery of the new secondary school at Grove Airfield.
 - e) approve the revised budget provision of £9.3m for the completion of works at Blessed George Napier School, Banbury.
 - f) approve the addition of £0.8m to the programme to create an Energy Efficiency Recycling Fund for Oxfordshire County Council Maintained Schools.

Executive Summary

2. The Capital Programme was approved by Council in February 2023. This report sets out change requests requiring Cabinet approval that will be incorporated into the agreed programme and included in the next update to the Capital Programme in July 2023.

Introduction

3. The Capital Programme sets out how the Council will use Capital expenditure to deliver the Council's priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan 2022-25. The Capital Programme is updated quarterly and fully refreshed annually as part of the Budget and Business Planning Process to ensure that it remains aligned to the latest priorities, reflects the latest cost projections and profile for delivery, and incorporates the current funding position.
4. On occasion, time critical variations to the Capital programme are recommended to Cabinet. This report sets out a change request to school projects that are part of the agreed Pupil Place Plan (including new schools and expansion) as well as an update to the Wantage Eastern Link Road scheme that is part of the Major Infrastructure Programme. It also requests

that funding for Vision Zero agreed as part of the capital pipeline¹ in February 2023 is now added to the firm programme so that work can proceed.

Major Infrastructure

5. The Wantage Eastern Link Road scheme will deliver a strategic link road between the A338 to the north of Wantage and the A417 to the east of Wantage. The County Council is responsible for delivering the middle section of the scheme, which is expected to open in Summer 2024.
6. £9.1m funding for the scheme is included in the capital programme agreed in February 2023. After taking account of updates to the cost of the project including increased provision for risk and contingency the total budget is proposed to be increased to £11.2m. The increase to the scheme cost will be met from Section 106 contributions towards the scheme which are now expected to total £8.2m. The increase reflects index-linked growth of these contributions compared to previous assumptions and additional contributions secured to support the design and delivery of the scheme.

Highways Asset Management Plan

Road Safety Scheme: RAF Barford St John & RAF Croughton

7. Following the United States Visiting Forces (USVF) Road Safety Review undertaken by the Safer Roads Foundation on behalf of the Department for Transport, the council has been awarded £2.7m grant funding from the Department of Transport through the Safer Roads Fund programme to support a package of road safety works in the vicinity of RAF Barford St John & RAF Croughton.

Vision Zero

8. The county council has committed to improve road safety through Vision Zero both within a public statement by the leader and adoption of a vision statement and programme approach. This includes an ambition of zero fatalities and life changing injuries from road traffic collisions by 2050: with an interim target of 25% reduction by 2026 and 50% reduction by 2030 across Oxfordshire.
9. The capital programme pipeline agreed in February 2023 included funding of £5.0m for Vision Zero. The outline Vision Zero Delivery Programme set out below will utilise £4.0m of the available funding and is made up of five specific programmes which will have specific schemes developed and implemented over the next three years.

¹ As set out in the Capital & Investment Strategy **pipeline capital schemes** support the council's priorities, have an agreed need, a confirmed alignment with the council's capital prioritisation framework and a basic mandate. These were agreed to be priority schemes, with agreed funding, but were subject to further development and an approved initial business case before they were added to the firm programme.

Programme	Scope & Focus	Allocation
Cycle Safety & Connectivity	<p>To improve the safety and attractiveness of the cycle network across Oxfordshire, both on and off-highway routes. This will cover improvements to existing infrastructure as well as potential creation of new.</p> <p>Scheme identification will be through a review of our cycle network utilising information such as that within LCWIPs, local knowledge and safety data available.</p>	£0.8m
Corridor/Strategic Road Safety Improvements	<p>To help address known safety concerns along key strategic corridors within Oxford.</p> <p>Schemes will be identified through road safety data, post collision reviews, and information and work completed in preparation of LTCP corridor strategies.</p>	£1.2m
Junction incident hot spots (cluster sites)	<p>To improve existing junction/s that have a history of incidents that a change in design could help to mitigate.</p> <p>Scheme/s will be identified through road safety data and post collision reviews.</p>	£1.0m
Speed Management Programme	<p>To identify initiatives in collaboration with Thames Valley Police to support adherence to speed limits.</p> <p>Initiatives may include pilots around average speed enforcement in particular and as a last resort traffic management measure.</p> <p>Focus to be shaped through road safety data and police intelligence. This should include working with and data from local speedwatch groups.</p>	£0.4m

Programme	Scope & Focus	Allocation
Safer Routes to School	<p>This is investment in making walking routes to schools safer and more attractive. Links to the schools' streets programme and issues identified in Home to School safer walking route assessments.</p> <p>Priority will be given to locations that are likely to provide the biggest benefit to the largest number of children.</p>	£0.6m

Pupil Places Plan

Grove Airfield – Secondary School

10. A new 600-place secondary school, including a 25 place Specially Resourced Provision (SRP) to support pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs in line with the Councils SEND Sufficiency of Places Strategy. The new school is being directly delivered by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and is being wholly funded from Section 106 contributions. Subject to the delivery programme for the new housing on the airfield development, the new secondary school facility is currently expected to be operational for use from September 2025.
11. After taking account inflation included in revised estimates of the funding that the Education and Skills Funding Agency advise is required to build the school the overall cost is now expected to be £23.1m including £0.1m administration costs that the council expects to incur. The total scheme cost has increased by £1.5m compared to the February 2023 capital programme and will be fully funded by Section 106 Contributions.

Blessed George Napier School

12. Blessed George Napier (BGN) School is an academy in Banbury providing secondary school education for students aged 11-19. The school is managed by The Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust.
13. The council needed additional secondary school places at BGN, to serve the adjacent Wykham Park strategic housing development, and the wider demand for secondary school places in Banbury and therefore it was agreed to expand BGN by 2 forms-of-entry from 5fe to 7fe.
14. A full business case for £7.4m was approved in June 2021 and the Trust is delivering the project. In August 2022, the contractor went into administration. Through direct orders to sub-contractors, BGN managed to complete internal works needed to the existing building and some works to the new teaching blocks. However, because the remaining work needs to be retendered the total project budget has increased from £7.4m to £9.3m. The increase is directly related to the need for another contractor to take on and complete part finished buildings and inflationary pressures.

15. The additional £1.8m is expected to be funded from £0.8m additional Section 106 funding (including indexation). The remaining £1.0m will be met from basic need contingency funding held by the council.

Property

Energy Efficiency Recycling Fund for OCC Maintained Schools

16. Through the Climate Action Framework, the council has committed to prioritizing action on climate change across the council and achieving net-zero emissions from the Councils corporate estate by 2030. The Council has also committed to reducing emissions from all of its areas of influence, including supporting maintained schools to reduce their emissions in line with the government's 2050 net zero targets.
17. The Energy Efficiency Recycling Fund will provide OCC maintained schools with a low-cost loan to finance implementation of energy efficiency measures at their school to enable carbon and energy use reductions. The fund will initially be available for two measures (solar PV and LED lighting), with the intention to further expand the scheme to additional energy efficiency measures once the scheme is established. The payback period will be set to reflect the ability to repay using anticipated savings to be made as a result of these energy efficiency measures
18. £0.8m funding from the Investment Pump Priming Reserve to set up the scheme was agreed as part of the budget in February 2023 and the scheme was included in the capital pipeline. It is now proposed to add this scheme to the firm programme so that this can progress.

Financial Implications

19. Where funding is not available in the capital programme pipeline agreed in February 2023 the updates to scheme costs set out in this report will be funded by additional Section 106 contributions or existing funding for Basic Needs so the overall programme remains fully funded.
20. If Section 106 contributions are not received within the planned timeframe it may be necessary for the Council to temporarily fund capital expenditure through Prudential Borrowing. The Council has a Prudential Borrowing reserve to help manage the revenue impact of additional prudential borrowing.

Comments checked by:
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance

Staff Implications

21. There are no staffing implications arising directly from the report.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

22. There are no equality and inclusion implications arising directly from this report.

Legal Implications

23. In year changes to the capital programme must be approved by Cabinet in accordance with Financial Regulation and in particular paragraph 5.1.1(iv) permitting Cabinet to agree resource inclusion into the capital programme via a periodic Capital Report to Cabinet, based on the recommendation of the Strategic Capital Board (chaired by the section 151 officer). Comments checked by:

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

LORNA BAXTER

Director of Finance

Background papers: none

Contact Officers:

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy

May 2023

Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 23 May 2023**FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS**

Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision

CABINET MEETING***20 JUNE 2023******KEY DECISIONS***

Topic/Decision	Portfolio/Ref
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HIF2 A40 Programme Revised Strategy Approve revised scheme for A40 Programme. 	Cabinet, 2023/001 - Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supply Chain Emissions Policy Policy on the council's position on reducing carbon emissions as a result of its procurement activity. 	Cabinet, 2023/079 - Cabinet Member for Finance, Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery & Environment

NON-KEY DECISIONS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Management & Monitoring Report - February / March 2023: Annual Report and Provisional Revenue Outturn 2022/23 To note and seek agreement of the report. 	Cabinet, 2022/220 - Cabinet Member for Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lane Rental Scheme for Oxfordshire Position update and steer for reporting and decision making. 	Cabinet, 2023/048
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provisional Capital Outturn 2022/23 To note the performance against the capital programme for 2021/22 as set out in the report. 	Cabinet, 2022/251 - Cabinet Member for Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transport Hub Strategy The Local Transport & Connectivity Plan transport hub policy (policy 23) outlined the proposal to develop a network of transport hubs across the county. Following adoption of the 	Cabinet, 2023/078 - Cabinet Member for Travel &

LTCP, the Transport Hub Strategy has been developed to build on the high-level considerations in the policy and provide more detail about how we plan to develop transport hubs across Oxfordshire.	Development Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workforce Report and Staffing Data - Quarter 4 - January-March 2023 Quarterly staffing report providing details of key people numbers and analysis of main changes since the previous report. 	Cabinet, 2022/252 - Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

CABINET MEMBER MEETINGS

CABINET MEMBER: CLIMATE CHANGE DELIVERY & ENVIRONMENT- CLLR DR PETE SUDBURY

22 JUNE 2023

NON-KEY DECISIONS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Authority Monitoring Report 2020 As part of the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Officers have produced the Minerals and Waste Authority Monitoring Report which monitors: i) the implementation of the Minerals and Waste Development Scheme in 2020, and ii) the extent to which local plan policies were achieved during the calendar year of 2020. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery & Environment, 2023/104
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CABINET MEMBER: HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT - CLLR ANDREW GANT

22 JUNE 2023

NON-KEY DECISIONS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bourtons (Banbury) - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers To determine the implementation of new speed limits following consideration of public consultation responses. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/118
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chipping Norton: residential development off A361 Banbury Road : proposed 20mph speed limit 	Delegated Decisions by

Traffic scheme to facilitate approved development.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/109
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cropredy - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/083
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Crowmarsh Gifford - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers To determine the implementation of new speed limits following consideration of public consultation responses. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/117
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drayton (Abingdon) - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/089
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enstone: Chapel Lane - proposed one-way restriction Traffic scheme to facilitate safe operation of local road network. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/114
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Epwell - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/084
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grove: residential development at Grove Airfield proposed 20mph speed limit and one-way traffic order Traffic scheme to facilitate approved development. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/107
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hanwell - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/085
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kennington - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member

To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses.	for Highway Management, 2023/090
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marcham - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/091
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mollington - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/086
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oxford: A420 St Clements - Headington Hill - proposed experimental bus lane Measure to address delays to buses. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/112
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oxford: Cowley Area Low traffic neighbourhoods - proposed amendments to traffic restrictions and use of ANPR enforcement cameras A decision is required on proposed amendments to the vehicles permitted to pass through the traffic filter on Littlemore Road, and the use of ANPR enforcement equipment at the traffic filters on Littlemore Road, Littlehay Road and Crescent Road. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/125
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oxford: Oxford North development - proposed 20mph speed limit Traffic scheme to facilitate approved development. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/106
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oxford: St Lukes Road - proposed amendment to parking places Minor traffic scheme to facilitate approved development. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/111
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shipton on Cherwell / Kidlington: A4095 North East of A44 Bladon Roundabout: proposed 40mph speed limit Traffic scheme to facilitate approved development. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/110

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ South & Vale of White Horse Various locations - proposed Disabled Persons Parking Places (new provision & removals) To consider any objections arising from the formal Statutory consultation. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/116
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ South Hinksey - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/092
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wallingford / Cholsey; A4130 Bosley Way - proposed prohibition of right turns at New Barn Farm access Traffic scheme to facilitate safe operation of approved development. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/105
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wantage: A417 Reading Road : proposed extension of permanent 40mph speed limit Traffic scheme to facilitate approved development. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/108
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wardington - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/087
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wootton (Abingdon) - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/093
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wroxton & Balcote - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2023/088

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Divisions Affected – Eynsham, Witney (North and East)

CABINET

May 2023

A40 ACCESS TO WITNEY

COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER AND SIDE ROADS ORDER

Report by Corporate Director Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) Confirm that the acquisition of the land identified on the map attached to this report (Annex B) (“the Order Map”) being the map accompanying The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure – A40 Access to Witney) Compulsory Purchase Order 2023 (“the CPO”) is necessary for highway purposes;
- b) Approve the CPO, the Order Map, The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure – A40 Access to Witney) (Side Roads) Order 2023 (“the SRO”), the plan accompanying the SRO (“SRO Plan”) all substantially in the form annexed to this report but to delegate to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure following consultation with the Director of Law & Governance, authority to modify them as necessary;
- c) Authorise the Director of Law & Governance to make The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure – A40 Access to Witney) Compulsory Purchase Order 2023 pursuant to Sections 239, 240, 246 and 260 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended) and Part II and III of Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 to the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 for the purpose of acquiring the land and interests shown on the Order Map and described in the Schedule to the CPO (or such lesser area of land should this in his opinion be appropriate) to facilitate the improvement of the A40 by the construction of two new west facing slip roads and other necessary related highway improvement works and mitigation on such land and to affix the Common Seal of the Council to the CPO and to the Order Map;
- d) Authorise the Director of Law & Governance to make The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure – A40 Access to Witney) (Side Roads) Order 2023 pursuant to Section 14 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended) to enable the stopping up of highways and the alteration and improvement of existing highways, and giving authority to the acquisition of necessary land pursuant to the CPO and to affix the Common Seal of the Council to the SRO and to the SRO Plan;

- e) Authorise the Director of Law & Governance to remove from the CPO any plot (or interest therein) no longer required to be acquired compulsorily, to amend the interests scheduled in the CPO (if so advised) and to request that the Secretary of State makes any modifications to the CPO prior to confirmation as may be appropriate;
- f) Approve the draft Joint Statement of Reasons (Annex A) for the CPO and the SRO, substantially in the form annexed to this report, but to Authorise the Director of Law & Governance to amend and finalise the draft Joint Statement of Reasons as necessary prior to its submission to the Secretary of State;
- g) Authorise the Director of Law & Governance to advertise the making of the CPO and the SRO and to submit the CPO and SRO to the Secretary of State for Transport for confirmation, together with authorising the Director of Law & Governance to take all other relevant action thereon to promote the confirmation and/or publication of the CPO and the SRO;
- h) In the event that any Public Inquiry is convened to consider objections to the CPO and/or SRO and/or planning application (by way of a call-in decision), to authorise the Director of Law & Governance, in consultation with the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to prepare and submit such evidence as is necessary in support of the CPO and/or SRO and/or planning application, including enlisting the assistance of outside consultants, legal advisors and Counsel to assist in the preparation and presentation of such evidence.
- i) As soon as the CPO and the SRO have been confirmed and become operative, to authorise the Director of Law & Governance to comply with all associated requirements in respect of personal, site and press notices of confirmation and to make, seal and give notice of a General Vesting Declaration (or declarations where more than one is required) under the Compulsory Purchase (Vesting Declarations) Act 1981 and/or to serve Notices to Treat and Notice of Entry in respect of those properties to be acquired compulsorily;
- j) Authorise the Director of Transport and Infrastructure in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance to negotiate terms with interested parties for the purchase by agreement or payment of compensation in accordance with the Compensation Code in respect of any interests or rights in or over any land included in the CPO and, where appropriate, to agree terms for relocation;
- k) Authorise the Director of Property in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance to complete the acquisition of such interests or rights and execute their legal transfer to the Council;
- l) In the event that compensation for the acquisition of land cannot be agreed between the relevant parties, to authorise the Director of Law & Governance to make a reference to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber)

for determination of such compensation together with such other questions as may be necessary to determine, including the engagement of appropriate external legal advisors and surveyors and other experts, as required; In the event that any question of compensation in relation to the acquisition of land is made by way of a reference to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) (whether by the claimant or the Council), to authorise the Director of Law & Governance to take all necessary steps in relation thereto, including advising on the appropriate uses and compensation payable and issuing the appropriate certificates;

- m) Be notified of the Statutory Blight regime that requires the Council to respond to claims for Statutory Blight pursuant to Part V, Chapter II and Schedule 13 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended);**
- n) In respect of Statutory Blight, delegate authority to the Director for Property Services in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance to agree appropriate terms in accordance with statutory provisions; and**
- o) Underwrite the Scheme costs up to a figure of £6.638m and to forward fund any unsecured and/or conditional developer contributions to the Scheme (as may be secured through planning obligations pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and County Planning Act 1990 (as amended)) up to this underwritten sum, as may be necessary in order to enable the Scheme to have certainty of funding and so as not to create any untimely delay in Scheme delivery.**

Executive Summary

1. The Access to Witney Scheme will provide new west-facing slip roads onto the A40 at Shores Green and new walking and cycling facilities on the B4022 and alongside the A40. The Scheme will reduce traffic flow, reduce traffic delays and improve air quality within Witney town centre, improve connectivity, enhance active travel provision and safety, and support residential and economic development in Witney.
2. Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) 2022-2050 (adopted on 12th July 2022) provides the latest transport policy context for the Access to Witney junction improvement proposed at A40/B4022 Shores Green. LTCP sets out the target for a net-zero transport network by 2040 and outlines the policies which will help to achieve this, focusing on reducing the need to travel, reducing journeys by car and the promotion of walking, cycling, public and shared transport.
3. With forecasts for over 85,000 new jobs and 100,000 new homes by 2031, LTCP recognises the challenges this growth will have on the transport network, in particular the challenge in enabling people to make journeys, whilst avoiding damage to the economy caused by severe congestion, as well as protecting the environment. LTCP also recognises there are cases where road schemes may

be required and will deliver improvements, including where access is needed to new developments.

4. A set of area and route strategies were published in support of the previous LTP4, including an area strategy for Witney. These are being reviewed and updated. The LTP4 Witney Area Transport Strategy (WATS) set the following transport objectives for the town:
 - Establish a transport network that supports future growth and attracts economic investment by improving access to the strategic transport networks and managing through traffic.
 - Mitigate the local environmental impact of increased travel by addressing congestion, and poor air quality through improving opportunities for people to travel on foot, by cycle, and/or public transport.
 - Support town centre vitality, by providing a local transport network that enables easy access to services by sustainable means
5. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2031) identified the Access to Witney strategic highway improvement Scheme as being necessary to support the quantum and distribution of planned housing and employment growth at Witney (the Scheme was denoted as an 'Improved (All Movements) Shores Green Junction'). This improvement Scheme was in addition to the improvements to the Ducklington Lane junction and the new roundabout on the A40 at Downs Road, which have been completed in 2014 and 2018 respectively.
6. The Scheme proposes the installation of west-facing slip roads at the A40/B4022 Shores Green Junction. An off-slip road on the A40 eastbound carriageway (towards Oxford) and an on slip on the A40 westbound carriageway (towards Burford). The new slip roads will connect with the existing B4022 road via signalised junctions.
7. The development proposal to construct two new west facing slip roads requires additional land adjacent to the highway boundary on the A40 and for related highway improvement works to be acquired through CPO powers.
8. The Scheme will provide new walking and cycling facilities on the B4022 and alongside the A40 that will improve provision for active travel between South Leigh, High Cogges and Witney.
9. Existing Public Rights of Way located to north-west of the development area will be stopped up and a integral Footway of the improved A40 provided, running along the length of the proposed off slip to connect with existing onward public rights of way. A new A40 integral unbound Footway will also be provided running along the length of the proposed on-slip, to connect with an existing onward public right of way.
10. Constructing the slip roads as well as altering and improving other highways, including existing Public Rights of Way, require CPO powers and a Side Roads Order.

11. On 20th July 2021, Cabinet approved the preferred scheme and the 'in-principle' use of statutory powers, and preparation of the Compulsory Purchase Order and Side Roads Order.
12. Housing and Growth Deal funding is providing £17m towards the estimated £25m Scheme cost. The grant funding will need to be spent by March 2025, as detailed in the funding agreement with HM Government. £1,387m of funding has been secured from a developer contribution relating to the Burford Road scheme and is held in Oxfordshire County Council's bank. The remaining £6,638m of the Scheme costs will be forward funded by Oxfordshire County Council if and until such time as developer contributions have enabled such monies to be recouped. Should such developer contributions not be recouped, or should there be a shortfall in the monies received by way of developer contributions, the County Council may seek to investigate additional public funding but noting at all times that the County Council is liable for these Scheme costs should alternative funding not be found. Refer to paragraphs 85 to 96 for further details.

Exempt Information

13. Annex B contains exempt information. The information in this case is exempt in that it falls within the following prescribed categories:

2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

and since it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Background

A40 Access to Witney Project

14. Proposals to improve access to Witney commenced in 2014 with improvements to the A40/ Ducklington Lane junction and continued in 2018 with the opening of the new roundabout on the A40 at Downs Road to serve the new Windrush Place development.
15. Improvements are now proposed at A40/B4022 Shores Green Junction. The existing arrangement at the junction only provides east-facing slip roads onto and off the A40. This only allows traffic from the B4022, and communities located in east and north-east Witney, to access the A40 toward Oxford. It is not possible to join the A40 from the B4022 and travel west towards Burford, or to leave the A40 from the west at this junction towards Witney.
16. The Scheme will provide west-facing slip roads onto the A40 at Shores Green. This will reduce the need for traffic from east and north-east Witney to route along Bridge Street and through the town by providing an alternative means of access to the west of Witney via the B4022 and A40. It will also allow those using the A4095 and travelling further west on the A40 or south on the A415 and A4095 to access the A40 at the A40/B4022 Shores Green junction rather than at the A40/ Ducklington Lane junction (via the town centre).
17. The Scheme will provide new walking and cycling facilities on the B4022 and alongside the A40 that will improve provision for active travel between South Leigh, High Cogges and Witney.
18. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan (WOLP) 2031 identifies a number of strategic highway schemes which are “*necessary to support the quantum and distribution of planned housing and employment growth at Witney*” including the Shores Green Slip Roads Scheme. It notes that delivery of Shores Green Slip Roads will be facilitated by the proposed East Witney Strategic Development Area (EWSDA), as outlined in Policy WIT1. It will also support delivery of the North Witney Strategic Development Area (NWSDA), as outlined in Policy WIT2.
19. The plan recognised that the Scheme will help mitigate the potential traffic impact of the developments on A4095 Bridge Street and the town centre, and provide improved accessibility to the retail, industrial and employment centres in south and west Witney and to the A40. It will thereby help reduce traffic and improve air quality in Witney Town Centre.

Need for the Scheme - Economic, Environmental, Health and Social Benefits

20. A detailed rationale behind the need for the Scheme was set out within the report to Cabinet in July 2021 (2021/052), is described in Sections 3 and 5 of the Joint Statement of Reasons (Annex A) and is outlined in paragraphs 20 to 36.

Supporting Growth

21. The relatively high incomes in West Oxfordshire are dwarfed by the cost of housing, with average house prices some 28% higher than the average in England, although lower than the average for Oxfordshire as a whole. As a result, there is significant demand for new homes in Witney.
22. Witney is a key focus for housing growth under the current West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2031), which was adopted in 2018. Witney has doubled in population over the last 30 years and much of its growth has taken place in extensions to the north, west and east of the town.
23. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan proposes delivery of around 15,950 new homes by 2031 and is underpinned by a general presumption in favour of sustainable development. There are limited opportunities for housing within the existing built-up area of Witney and, as such, there is a need to develop on the fringes of the town. Local Plan growth proposals comprise 4,702 new homes in the Witney sub area by 2031.
24. In this context, the Local Plan identified two strategic development areas (SDA) in Witney. One SDA is to the north of Witney (with land currently allocated for 1,400 homes) and the second SDA is to the east of Witney (with land currently allocated for 450 homes).
25. A range of development and transport scenarios were modelled in support of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2031) to determine how future development in the town and a range of transport schemes would affect traffic flows. This traffic modelling indicated that proposed Local Plan development would lead to significant congestion issues on Bridge Street without additional highways and transport interventions.
26. The two schemes which showed the greatest potential to reduce congestion were the construction of west-facing slip roads at Shores Green and a new “West End Link”, which provides a second crossing of the River Windrush east of Bridge Street.
27. As a result, the West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2031) identifies the Access to Witney highway improvement Scheme as being necessary to support the quantum and distribution of planned housing and employment growth at Witney.

Environmental

28. Traffic congestion is a serious and recognised concern in Witney, and an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been designated at Bridge Street. The main areas of congestion in the existing peak periods are the links around the Bridge Street area, B4022/A4095 junction and on both sides of the River Windrush.
29. The A4095 Bridge Street currently carries an average of around 26,000 vehicles/day. High levels of traffic flow, delays and congestion lead to social and

economic costs to the local area. This is as a result of increased journey times (including for bus passengers), increased driver frustration and poor journey time reliability.

30. The high volumes of traffic on the A4095 Bridge Street and associated congestion have an adverse impact on the quality of the streetscape and environment at Bridge Street itself and in Witney's historic Town Centre, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. High traffic levels and congestion has led to Bridge Street, Woodgreen and Mill Street being declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).
31. Despite measured levels of NO₂ being less than the national limit in 2020 and 2021 (reflecting lower traffic levels during the Covid-19 pandemic), as reported in the West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) 2022 Air Quality Status Report, WODC expects that levels will rise back and exceed the national limit again in the future (as traffic levels return to pre-pandemic levels and as a result of planned new development in the area).
32. The provision of west-facing slip roads at Shores Green will reduce the need for traffic to route along Bridge Street, helping improve air quality in the AQMA. A reduction of traffic on Bridge Street and through the town centre will also make walking and cycling more attractive, enabling a shift from private car to more sustainable transport options, further helping to improve the air quality within the AQMA. It will also support the County Council's ambitions to develop and deliver schemes in Witney town centre that re-allocate road space and promote more walking, cycling and bus use.
33. The Scheme will provide facilities that will improve provision for active travel between South Leigh, High Cogges and Witney supporting planning and transport policy objectives for a modal shift away from car use towards more walking and cycling, reducing overall emissions and supporting the climate agenda.
34. A reduction of traffic and congestion in the town centre will reduce delays and provide greater reliability for bus services helping encourage more bus use.
35. The Scheme design has been informed by a detailed Environmental Assessment as set out within the Environmental Statement submitted in support of the planning application. This includes consideration of air quality, noise and vibration, climate change, flood risk, heritage, biodiversity and landscape among many other key topic areas.
36. The Scheme will result in some significant positive environmental effects. These include the delivery of biodiversity net gain and reducing environmental air pollution in Witney Town Centre.
37. Given the scale of the Scheme it will inevitably have some beneficial and some adverse environmental effects, particularly in the immediate local area around the scheme. The environmental assessments reported likely significant adverse environmental effects during the construction and operational phases of the

proposed development in relation to Geology and Soils, Landscape and Visual and Noise. A comprehensive package of mitigation measures are proposed in the Environmental Statement to minimise adverse effects as far as reasonably possible.

Health

38. The Scheme will enable individual and collective health and wellbeing benefits by providing safer and better walking and cycle facilities and improved connectivity between South Leigh / High Cogges and Witney town centre (via Cogges) and to the proposed segregated cyclist and pedestrian use cycle track along the A40 towards Oxford. This will promote more walking and cycling delivering health and wellbeing benefits.
39. The improvements to air quality provided by the Scheme in Witney Town Centre within the AQMA will provide positive health benefits for residents and users of the town centre.

Social

40. Delivering an enhanced and safer highway network which reduces congestion will result in a reduction in accidents and severance for all road users, particularly for those walking and cycling within the town centre. The Scheme will improve highway safety for all road users by delivering at-grade signal-controlled crossings for pedestrians and cyclists at the new junction and integral A40 Footways, leading to existing rights of way connections, to and from the B4022.

The Benefits of the Scheme

Scheme Objectives

41. The three key objectives for the Scheme are as follows:

Objective 1 - Support the delivery of planned housing growth in Witney as set out the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031;
Objective 2 - Reduce congestion and improve air quality in central Witney, including on Bridge Street and in the Air Quality Management Area; and
Objective 3 - Improve access to the A40 from east and north-east Witney.
42. Section 5 in the Joint Statement of Reasons (Annex A) describes how the Scheme addresses these objectives and its benefits. These are also outlined in paragraphs 40 to 46 below.
43. The proposed Scheme will help to promote growth and deliver the new development sites (up to 4,702 new homes as stated in within the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031) in the Witney area. The Scheme has been deemed to be critical in facilitating the delivery of up to 1,850 new homes in

Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) in Witney, meeting a need for new housing, including affordable homes for West Oxfordshire, as identified in Oxfordshire's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (April 2014). The delivery of 450 new homes proposed as part of the East Witney SDA is dependent on the intervention of the Scheme. The implementation of the Scheme also supports up to 1,400 new homes that form the North Witney SDA.

44. The Scheme will improve access to the A40 from north and north-east Witney and provide an alternative route across the town reducing the need for both local and strategic traffic to route through Witney's historic town centre.
45. Traffic modelling forecasts that the Scheme will reduce traffic volumes and delays in the town centre. As a result, the Scheme is forecast to improve air quality in the Bridge Street AQMA. This will improve public health and wellbeing. The Scheme will also create more opportunities to promote and deliver active travel measures, traffic reduction and calming features and streetscape enhancements in Witney Town Centre.
46. Local roads such as South Leigh Road (to the south east of Witney), Dry Lane (to the north of Witney) and the route between Minster Lovell and Crawley are also predicted by traffic modelling to see decreases in traffic flow in the AM and PM peak hours.
47. Whilst no increases in traffic flow through South Leigh are predicted in the traffic model under typical traffic conditions, the County Council recognises and understands the concerns that have been raised by South Leigh and High Cogges Parish Council that the new slip roads introduced by Scheme may result in additional traffic 'rat-running' along the C16886 South Leigh Road, Chapel Road and Station Road in the future, particularly when incidents on the A40 eastbound towards Oxford result in long traffic delays to the east of the proposed Scheme. As a result, the County Council is committed to monitoring the impacts of the Scheme on the wider road network (including on the C16886) and will work the Parish Council and local communities to discuss and develop potential mitigation measures, should they be required.
48. The Scheme will provide faster and more reliable journey times for bus passengers in Witney. Bus passengers will also benefit from a more accessible bus stop with enhanced and safer pedestrian access routes. This will promote more public transport use in the area.
49. The Scheme will provide safer walking and cycling facilities through the area, providing improved connections between South Leigh, High Cogges and Witney as well as enabling linkages with development within the EWSDA in accordance with objective CO11 of the WOLP. This will promote more walking and cycling in the area, improving public health and wellbeing, reducing emissions of harmful pollutants and greenhouse gases.
50. The Scheme will improve highway safety for all road users by delivering at-grade pedestrian controlled crossings at the junctions between the new slip-

roads and the B4022 and a new shared use path for cyclist and pedestrians alongside the B4022.

Summary

51. As described in the preceding paragraphs 43 to 47 the Scheme meets the Scheme objectives by:
- delivering critical transport infrastructure required to support delivery of new homes in Witney
 - providing new road network connectivity at Shores Green that will improve access to the A40 from north and north-east Witney
 - providing an alternative route for traffic to cross the town and access the A40 thereby reducing the need for both local and strategic traffic to route through Witney's historic town centre. It is forecast this will reduce traffic volumes and delays in the town centre and help improve air quality in the Bridge Street AQMA.

Explanation of Statutory Powers

52. The Council is the Local Highways Authority (the "LHA") for the area in which the Order Land is situated. By virtue of Sections 239, 240, 246 and 260 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended) and Part II and III of Schedule 2, and Schedule 3, to the Acquisition of Land Act 1981, the Council has the power to acquire compulsorily any land in its area for highway purposes.
53. The Guidance published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in (July 2019) ("the Guidance") provides guidance on the use of compulsory purchase powers. In accordance with the Guidance, the purpose for which an authority seeks to acquire land will determine the statutory power under which compulsory purchase is sought. The Guidance advises that acquiring authorities should look to use *'the most specific power available for the purpose in mind, and only use a general power where unavoidable'*. The Council relies on the provisions of Part XII of the Highways Act 1980, which provide the specific powers in respect of the compulsory acquisition of land for highway purposes.
54. The Council has been seeking to negotiate the acquisition of all the legal interests in the land required for the construction of the Scheme by agreement. The Council does, however, need to utilise its powers under the Highways Act 1980 (as amended) and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 because it considers that it may not be possible to agree terms for the acquisition of all the remaining interests in the land required to facilitate construction of the Scheme. In accordance with the Guidance, the Council is therefore using its powers to compulsorily acquire the remaining interests as a matter of last resort, with efforts to acquire interests by private treaty continuing in parallel with this process right up to confirmation and implementation of the CPO.

55. Having regard to the nature of the proposals and the advice set out in the Guidance, Cabinet is advised that the powers available to it under Sections 239, 240, 246 and 260 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended) and Part II and III of Schedule 2, and Schedule 3, to the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 are the most appropriate powers to use in order to achieve its objectives for this part of Oxfordshire.
56. Sections 239 and 240 are concerned with the general powers of highway authorities to acquire land for the construction and improvement of highways, for the improvement or development of frontages to a highway or land adjoining thereto, and for use of land in connection with the construction or improvement of a highway or the carrying out of other works authorised by a Side Roads Order under Section 14 of the 1980 Act. Section 246 provides a power to acquire land for mitigating the adverse effects of the existence or use of a highway constructed or improved on its surroundings. Section 260 relates to the clearance of title to land already acquired by the highway authority for highway purposes.
57. The powers in the 1980 Act enable the Acquiring Authority to acquire land compulsorily for the following purposes of the Scheme:
- the improvement of the A40 Principal Road, from a point on the south west side of the A40 overbridge crossing of the B4022, at South Leigh, south westwards for a distance of approximately 775 metres, and incorporating the construction of a new eastbound exit slip road, from a point on the existing A40 approximately 520 metres south west of the A40 overbridge crossing of the B4022, north eastwards to its junction with the B4022, and a new westbound entry slip road, from its junction with the B4022, south westwards to its junction with the A40, at a point approximately 280 metres south west of the A40 overbridge crossing of the B4022;
 - the construction of a highway and the improvement of highways in pursuance of The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure – A40 Access to Witney) (Side Roads) Order 2023;
 - the carrying out of works on watercourses, in connection with the construction and improvement of highways as aforesaid;
 - the improvement or development of frontages to the above-mentioned new and existing highways or of the land adjoining or adjacent thereto;
 - the use by the acquiring authority in connection with the construction and improvement of highways as aforesaid; and
 - mitigating the adverse effect which the existence or use of the highways to be constructed improved will have on the surroundings thereof.
58. The CPO also incorporates the Mining Code contained in Parts II and III of Schedule 2 to the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 and applied by Section 3 of that

Act. By virtue of these provisions, the CPO does not seek to compulsorily acquire mineral interests in the Order Land. Incorporation of the Mining Code within an order, thereby engaging Parts II and III of Schedule 2 to the Acquisition of Land Act 1981, provides for the exclusion of mineral right acquisition from the CPO, avoiding sterilisation of the minerals whilst providing a degree of protection for the Acquiring Authority and allowing the Scheme to be taken forward. By incorporating the Mining Code, the Acquiring Authority can take steps to prevent the working of minerals within a specified distance of the surface, provided compensation is paid.

59. The SRO will authorise the stopping-up, alteration and improvement of existing highways and the CPO will include land that is required to enable the works authorised by the SRO to be carried out and associated Scheme works. The SRO gives authority to certain of the CPO acquisition purposes as being in pursuance of the SRO and the CPO cannot, therefore, be made without the SRO having first been made (i.e., sealed, executed and dated by the Council), though this will happen immediately consecutively.
60. A recommendation to this report seeks delegation to officers to amend the Orders and supporting documentation, prior to their making. These amendments will generally be limited to technical clarifications throughout the Joint Statement of Reasons, together with the detail of the Orders themselves and other supporting documentation appended to it, noting that no additional land or land interests will be included in excess of the total of the those defined in the CPO before Members for approval. This ability to modify is required to ensure that the Orders are accurate in advance of them being made following Cabinet approval.

Location and Description of the Scheme and its land and the Side Roads Order

61. Details of the land interests to be acquired are set out in the Schedule to the CPO and are shown shaded in pink on the Order Map.
62. The Scheme Land is located within the boundaries of the West Oxfordshire District to the south of Witney town centre.
63. The Side Roads Order can be described as follows: a statutory order which authorises a highway authority to make alterations to highways affected by a Classified Road Scheme (the A40 improvement Scheme and its new slip roads). The Access to Witney Scheme Side Roads Order will authorise the stopping up of lengths of highways, public rights of way, and the improvement of highways to facilitate the Scheme. The Side Roads Order will complement the CPO and is to provide authority to the works that the County Council considers are needed to deliver the Scheme.
64. The Joint Statement of Reasons accompanying the CPO and the Side Roads Order contains a more detailed analysis of the Side Roads Order provisions (Section 10 of the Statement of Reasons).

Planning Policy Considerations

65. In making the Orders, the Council must have regard to national policy, the development plan and other relevant local policy and guidance, together with any other material considerations as required by Sections 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and 70(2) of the 1990 Act.
66. Key material planning policy considerations for the Access to Witney Scheme include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (adopted) and South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan.
67. The proposals are in accordance with development plan policies regarding sustainable development, supporting delivery of housing growth in Witney, transport, rights of way, air quality, landscape, biodiversity, flooding and the historic environment. There would be residual permanent significant noise impacts which render the development to not be entirely in accordance with development plan policy with regard to noise. However, it is considered that this is substantially outweighed by the wider overall benefits of the development.
68. Overall, the social, economic and health benefits of the Scheme in terms of unlocking housing delivery, improving accessibility and movement in the area, as well as and reducing environmental air pollution substantially outweigh the limited adverse effects on noise. It is therefore considered that, taking the Development Plan as a whole, there is strong support in favour of the grant of planning permission. The decision on planning permission is awaited but it is expected that planning permission will be in place by Q3 2023 and, as such, it is not considered that there will be a planning impediment to the Scheme.
69. A detailed analysis and consideration of the planning and transport policy context can be found in the Joint Statement of Reasons, attached at Annex A.
70. The Secretary of State for Transport adopts the practice of not confirming any Compulsory Purchase Order and related Side Roads Order until such time as planning permission for the Scheme has been granted.

Planning - Current Position

71. A Scoping report, which sets out in detail the proposed approach to the requisite EIA was submitted to the LPA on 1 June 2021 (R3.0079/21) with a formal response issued on 4 June 2021.
72. A planning application for the Scheme was validated by Oxfordshire County Council as the determining authority on 1 April 2022 under application reference R3.0039/22. A request for Regulation 25 was made following queries around requirements for Biodiversity, Landscape and visual impacts (including

arboriculture) and Climate. All queries to date have been clarified and responded to, with public consultation now closed as of 3 January 2023.

73. Positive discussion has been held with the County Planning Authority throughout the application determination period. The planning application was due to be determined at Planning and Regulation Committee on 17 April 2023, however, the item was deferred owing to concerns received from South Leigh and High Cogges Parish Council in relation to the scheme design and environmental impacts. The Applicant has continued its dialogue with South Leigh and High Cogges Parish Council and it is now expected that the application will be determined at Planning and Regulation Committee in June 2023.

Legal Implications - The Compelling Case in the Public Interest

Appropriateness of Powers

74. The Scheme is a highways scheme and, as such, the Council has statutory powers available for the compulsory acquisition of land to facilitate the Scheme in Part XII of the Highways Act, which are considered to be the most appropriate powers under which to exercise the Council's powers of compulsory acquisition.

Need for Compulsory Acquisition

75. The Council has made and will continue to make every effort to acquire all necessary interests in land required to deliver the Scheme (and will continue to do so in parallel to the compulsory purchase process) but it recognises that it may not be possible to agree terms for the acquisition of all the remaining interests. The acquisition of all relevant interests is necessary to enable the delivery of the Scheme.

Public Interest Test

76. The Guidance advises that a compulsory purchase order should only be made where there is a compelling case in the public interest. Members should satisfy themselves in approving this report that this requirement is satisfied. Officers consider that the benefits summarised in this report and in the Joint Statement of Reasons provide a compelling case in the public interest, which justifies the compulsory acquisition of the Order Land.

Statutory Blight

77. In progressing the Scheme, the Council could be required to deal with issues of Statutory Blight pursuant to Part VI, Chapter II and Schedule 13 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). Statutory Blight affects those properties that are 'on-line' of the Scheme and their purchase (or part thereof) is required for the Scheme. A process for dealing with Statutory Blight notices is essential to ensure effective management of the Scheme and this has been established. Officers will manage the process and, with legal advice provided

by already appointed specialist solicitors, will liaise with land and property owners with the aim of reaching an agreement for acquisition where the statutory criteria have been met.

78. Statutory Blight is a consequence of legislative 'triggers', one being the approval by the Council of the preferred route. As Cabinet has already approved this in July 2021, the Council became liable for members of the public submitting a Statutory Blight claim in relation to any qualifying land interest and subject to meeting the statutory requirements for eligibility.
79. The Council, in accordance with its legal obligations, has examined the potential for receiving statutory blight claims from affected property owners and occupiers whose land is to be acquired by virtue of the Scheme. The Council has considered the impacts of the Scheme upon the remaining land holdings of such land interests and has concluded that none are impacted to the extent that their remaining holdings are rendered untenable/unviable, which might give rise to any successful Statutory Blight notice. This does not, however, negate the ability of a party to submit a Statutory Blight Notice, and the resultant obligation upon the Council to consider and respond to the same in line with the statutory criteria and, as such, Cabinet Members are informed about the process and a resolution is sought to allow for this process to be followed. A successful Statutory Blight notice results in the property being acquired as if it was pursuant to a compulsory purchase order and so there are heads of claim that parties will be entitled to outside of the market value of the property itself.
80. Wider impacts of the Scheme on business and residential property that is off-line of the Scheme will be dealt with under Part 1 of the Land and Compensation Act 1973 ('Part 1 Claims'). A Part 1 claim can be applied for one year and one day following the Scheme being opened to the public and covers claims relating to noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, artificial lighting and discharge of water or other substances as a result of the use of the Scheme.
81. These legal implications have been reviewed by TLT LLP as the Council's appointed legal advisors.

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Consideration of Human Rights

82. The following articles of the Convention are relevant to the determination as to whether the Order should be made:
 - i) Article 1 of the First Protocol protects the right of everyone to peaceful enjoyment of possessions. No one can be deprived of their possessions except in the public interest and subject to the relevant national and international laws. Any interference with possessions must be proportionate and, in determining whether a particular measure is

proportionate, a fair balance must be struck between the public benefit sought and the interference with the rights in question;

- ii) Article 6 entitles those affected by the powers sought in the Order to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal;
 - iii) Article 8 protects the right of the individual to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence. A public authority cannot interfere with these interests unless such interference is in accordance with the law and is necessary in the interests of, inter alia, national security, public safety or the economic wellbeing of the country.
83. The Guidance explains that a Compulsory Purchase Order should only be made where there is “a compelling case in the public interest”. The Guidance makes it clear that an acquiring authority should be sure that the purposes for which it is making a Compulsory Purchase Order sufficiently justify interfering with the human rights of those with an interest in the land affected. In making this assessment, an acquiring authority should have regard, in particular, to the provisions of Article 1 of the First Protocol and Article 6 of the Convention and, in the case of a dwelling, Article 8 of the Convention. These are summarised and considered in detail in the Joint Statement of Reasons.
84. In considering the justification for the CPO, careful consideration has been given by officers to the balance to be struck between the effect of acquisition on individual rights and the wider public interest in the delivery of the highway improvement Scheme. The compulsory acquisition of land and rights is required in order to deliver the Scheme. Interference with Convention rights is considered to be proportionate and justified in order to secure the construction of the Scheme and its associated benefits.

Financial Implications

Scheme Costs and Funding

85. In order to confirm a compulsory purchase order, the Secretary of State must be satisfied that the Acquiring Authority for the Scheme has available to it all relevant resources to enable delivery, that is, that the necessary funding can be provided and the Scheme is financially viable.
86. The total estimated final cost (EFC) of the Scheme is **£25.025m** inclusive of anticipated land acquisition costs. The risk associated with scheme delivery is captured within the EFC total. The project risks are identified and reviewed regularly along with a quantitative risk analysis being undertaken which provides total estimated costs of the risk. The risk of inflation is captured as a risk item within the overall risk allocation. Inflation is calculated using the Building Cost Information Services (BCIS) inflation index. The BCIS index is updated on a monthly basis and the figures in the budget reviewed on a monthly basis to understand any additional risk or opportunities. The current total risk allocation for the project is **£4.678m**.

87. The Scheme will be funded via a mixture of Housing and Growth Deal Funding and Section 106 planning obligation funding as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Funding Summary

Source	
Housing and Growth Deal	£17.00m
Section 106 Developer Contributions	£8.025m
Total	£25.025m

88. The Scheme has been allocated funding of **£17.00 million** as part of the Housing & Growth Deal (HGD) capital programme to support the delivery of new homes proposed in the Witney area in the WOLP, including at the East Witney SDA and North Witney SDA. The original HGD funding was allocated spanning a five-year period from 2018/19 up to 31 March 2023. The grant provider, Homes England, agreed a further two-year extension to the HGD programme for monies to be used until March 2025. As a result, the £17m HGD funding for AtW will be available until the 31 March 2025.
89. The remaining **£8.025m** funding will be provided by Section 106 developer contributions. Section 106 contributions are either secured or unsecured. Unsecured S106 contributions are currently still in negotiation. The unsecured s106 contributions will be underwritten and forward funded by the Council. There is no guarantee of recovery of non-secure Section 106 contributions.
90. A financial contribution of **£1.387m** has already been secured towards the Scheme by way of a S106 planning obligation from a development of 250 homes on land at Burford Road, Witney (14/1215/P/OP).
91. The East Witney SDA has been requested to contribute funding of up to **£6.638m** toward the Scheme as part of the negotiations between OCC, WODC and the developer. The negotiations are ongoing and the S106 agreement will contain triggers for the funding toward the Access to Witney scheme over a period of time and will need to be signed by all parties to the agreement to offer certainty around this element of funding for the Access to Witney Scheme. The North Witney SDA will also be requested to contribute funding toward the Scheme, although negotiations have not yet commenced. There is no guarantee that the full s106 developer contribution required will be secured.
92. As the availability of these S106 monies is not yet secured and will be conditional on the commencement of the development to which the S106 agreement(s) relate, the Acquiring Authority will underwrite and forward fund the **£6.638m**.
93. Forward Funding is a mechanism whereby the Acquiring Authority would be liable for money spent on the Scheme for a period of time, with recovery measures in place for this money to be recouped from S106 contributions at a later date, or secured from alternative public funding grants.

94. Should such developer contributions not be recouped, or should there be a shortfall in the monies received by way of developer contributions, the County Council may seek to investigate additional public funding but noting at all times that the County Council is liable for these Scheme costs should alternative funding not be found. The Acquiring Authority is therefore requested to underwrite the full cost of any outstanding funding and to forward fund these monies, should developer Section 106 monies or alternative public funding not be secured.
96. The current spend profile indicates that the total of the Housing and Growth Deal funding would be drawn down in full first, with the additional S106 financial contributions to the Scheme backloaded to the latter stages of delivery. Therefore, any Council spend on any additional contributions is anticipated to commence in 2025.

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Equality & Inclusion Implications

97. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), to which the County Council is also subject, places additional obligations on public sector bodies to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Recognising and complying with these higher standards is required to discharge the PSED. In particular, steps must be taken to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share that characteristic.
98. The equalities implications of the Access to Witney Scheme have been assessed robustly through the option assessment and design development stages of the Scheme and in reaching the preferred option. These equalities implications have been considered in line with the Equality Act 2010 through the completion of an Equality and Climate Impact Assessment (EqCIA), contained as an Annex to the Joint Statement of Reasons.
99. Conclusions from the EqCIA indicate that due regard has been had in considering design principles from an equality perspective, and that measures have been included within the proposals to mitigate against potential differential impacts, which may be experienced by some protected characteristic groups.
100. The EqCIA recommends the Acquiring Authority, through Scheme finalisation, ensures that designs are fully inclusive and attractive for everyone, specifically listing information provision, materials use, public realm design, lighting and seating as key areas. The Acquiring Authority is fully aligned and in agreement with these recommendations. The EqCIA assessment approach will continue throughout the Scheme's life cycle and post-delivery, in order to ensure every opportunity to positively promote equality is taken.

Sustainability Implications

101. The Scheme will help to reduce traffic flows and alleviate congestion in the centre of Witney, especially in the AQMA (Air Quality Management Area) covering Bridge Street and its surroundings.
102. By providing safer walking and cycling connections and conditions the Scheme will promote more walking and cycling in the area, improving public health and wellbeing, reducing emissions of harmful pollutants and greenhouse gases.
103. The Scheme will reduce traffic and delays in Witney providing faster and more reliable journey times for bus passengers and encouraging greater use of this sustainable mode.
104. The benefits of the Scheme would be further enhanced by the public transport and active travel benefits that the wider A40 corridor investment programme is intended to deliver, should they also come forward.
105. The delivery of the Scheme and other planned transport investment on the A40 corridor, will form a core part of the promotion of more sustainable forms of travel for the new developments planned for the West Oxfordshire area. This will be teamed with promotional activities to achieve the cultural shift required.
106. The Scheme design has also been developed to offset any bio-diversity net loss and provision of improved environment and habitat for wildlife, providing a 10% net gain in biodiversity as a direct result of its implementation. It will include sustainable drainage systems and provide improved access to wildlife sites.

Risk Management

107. Key risks to Scheme delivery and their relevant mitigation and management were discussed in detail within the report to July 2021 Cabinet as listed within the background papers. A detailed risk register is being maintained.
108. These risks, particularly those relating to property acquisition, are still relevant and are being mitigated by the progress that has been made in relation to land purchase and the potential to CPO if necessary.
109. The risks will be managed and monitored on an on-going basis as part of the overall governance of the project.

Consultations

110. A series of public consultations have been undertaken over the course of the Scheme development, notably (but not restricted to) engagement events in May/June 2021. Formal responses will be considered through the statutory consultation associated with the planning application process.
111. The Consultation Response Report was included within the report to Cabinet in July 2021, now listed as a background paper.
112. A detailed consideration of the consultation undertaken to inform the Scheme can be found in the Joint Statement of Reasons, attached at Annex A.

Bill Cotton
Corporate Director for Environment and Place

Annexes:

Annex A – Draft Joint Statement of Reasons
Annex B – Draft CPO, draft order map, draft SRO and draft SRO plan

Background papers: Cabinet report – July 2021 – FP 2021/052: A40 Access to
Witney – Preferred Option and In Principle Use of
Statutory Powers

Contact Officer: Olu Solola, Programme Lead

May 2023

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Joint Statement of Reasons

Highways Act 1980

Acquisition of Land Act 1981

The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure - A40 Access to Witney) Compulsory Purchase Order 2023

The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure – A40 Access to Witney) Side Roads Order 2023

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. STATUTORY POWERS UNDER WHICH THE ORDER IS MADE	9
3. LOCAL AREA CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND.....	12
4. SCHEME DESCRIPTION	38
5. NEED FOR THE SCHEME.....	42
6. ALTERNATIVE SCHEME OPTIONS	59
7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT.....	72
8. PLANNING POLICY AND CURRENT PLANNING STATUS	78
9. THE ORDER LAND.....	86
10. SIDE ROADS ORDER (SRO).....	90
11. DELIVERABILITY AND VIABILITY	94
12. HUMAN RIGHTS AND PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY.....	98
13. COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER JUSTIFICATION	102
14. RELATED ORDERS, CONSENTS AND SPECIAL CATEGORY LAND	107
15. STATUS OF THIS STATEMENT	109
16. INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS AND CONTACT DETAILS.....	111

APPENDICES

Appendix 1:	Site Plan
Appendix 2:	Scheme General Arrangement Drawings
Appendix 3:	Cabinet Resolution to Make Orders and Officer Decision Notice
Appendix 4:	Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Agreement and Delivery Plan
Appendix 5:	West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 – Main Relevant Policies & Supporting Text
Appendix 6:	Witney Local Walking and Cycling Implementation Plan (March 2023)
Appendix 7:	Access to Witney Transport Assessment (TA)
Appendix 8:	West Oxfordshire DC 2022 Air Quality Annual Status Report
Appendix 9:	A40 Access to Witney Lay-by Review Report
Appendix 10:	A40 Highway Model Forecasting Report for Access to Witney TA
Appendix 11:	Environmental Statement Volume I Chapter 5: Air Quality
Appendix 12:	West Oxfordshire Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan
Appendix 13:	Equality and Climate Impact Assessment (ECIA) Report
Appendix 14:	Environmental Statement (ES) Vol I Chapter 7 Climate Change
Appendix 15:	ES Vol II, Appendix 17-A: Schedule of Environmental Commitments
Appendix 16:	Cogges Link Road Inspector's Report
Appendix 17:	ES Vol I Alternatives and Design Evolution
Appendix 18:	Option Assessment Report (OAR)
Appendix 19:	Statement of Community Involvement
Appendix 20:	Cabinet Approval of Preferred Scheme (Papers & Cabinet Resolution)
Appendix 21:	Access to Witney Planning Statement
Appendix 22:	Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP)

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1:	West Oxfordshire District
Figure 3.2:	Witney's proposed Strategic Development Areas
Figure 3.3:	East Witney Strategic Development Area
Figure 3.4:	North Witney Strategic Development Area
Figure 3.5:	Main roads serving West Oxfordshire and Witney
Figure 3.6:	Road network - Witney
Figure 3.7:	7-Day Annual Average Daily Traffic Flows (AADT) in the Witney Area
Figure 3.8:	Aerial View of A4095 Bridge Street, Witney Town Centre
Figure 3.9:	View of A4095, Bridge St looking NE from its junction with Mill St
Figure 3.10:	View of A4095, Bridge St looking NE mid-way along its length
Figure 3.11:	View of A4095, Bridge St looking SW from junction with B4022 West End
Figure 3.12:	Typical traffic conditions in Witney – AM Peak
Figure 3.13:	Typical traffic conditions in Witney – PM Peak
Figure 3.14:	Buses serving Oxford-Witney-Carterton
Figure 3.15:	Witney East - Public Rights of Way
Figure 3.16:	Existing and proposed cycling network in Witney (2023 Adopted Local Walking & Cycling Infrastructure Plan)
Figure 3.17:	Proposed cycling network improvements – Witney East (2023 Adopted Local Walking & Cycling Infrastructure Plan)
Figure 3.18:	Personal Injury Collisions in East Witney (Jan 2016 to Oct 2021)
Figure 3.19:	Witney central area showing Bridge Street AQMA
Figure 3.20:	A40 Corridor Improvements - Investment Programme Projects
Figure 5.1:	Forecast routing of traffic using proposed A40 Eastbound Off-slip (2031 AM Peak)
Figure 5.2:	Forecast routing of traffic using proposed A40 Westbound On-slip (2031 PM Peak)
Figure 5.3:	Forecast traffic flow changes across Witney (‘with scheme’ vs ‘without scheme’) (2031 AM Peak)

- Figure 5.4: Forecast traffic flow changes across Witney
(‘with scheme’ vs ‘without scheme’) (2031 PM Peak)
- Figure 5.5: Journey time routes assessed in the Strategic Traffic Model
- Figure 6.1: Summary of option assessment process
- Figure 6.2: Indicative plan showing Option 2A-E
- Figure 6.3: Indicative plan showing Option 2A-F
- Figure 6.4: Indicative plan showing Option 2A-G

LIST OF TABLES

- Table 2.1: Strategic Development Areas in Witney
- Table 2.2: ONS Census (2011) Place of Work and Travel Data for Witney
- Table 2.3: Witney Bus Routes and Service Levels (weekday timetable)
- Table 2.4: Total Number of Collisions, Severity & Vulnerable Road Users
- Table 2.5: Bridge Street AQMA - Annual mean NO₂ monitoring results (µgm-3)
- Table 5.1: Forecast Impact on Vehicular Journey Times in Witney
(2031 AM and PM Peak)
- Table 5.2: Annual Mean NO₂ concentrations in key areas
(Base and 2024 Forecast)
- Table 6.1: Summary of Stage 2 Assessment Framework and Option Scoring
- Table 6.2: Refined Option Assessment Table for Options 2AE, 2A-F and 2A-G
- Table 11.1: Funding Summary

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The subject matter of this statement of reasons

1.1.1. This is the Joint Statement of Reasons (the "Statement") of Oxfordshire County Council (the "Acquiring Authority") to support the making of the following statutory orders:

- The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure - A40 Access to Witney) Compulsory Purchase Order 2023 (the "CPO").
- The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure – A40 Access to Witney) (Side Roads) Order 2023 ("the SRO").

1.1.2. For the purposes of this Statement the CPO and SRO are together referred to as "the Orders".

1.1.3. In preparing this Statement, the Acquiring Authority has endeavoured to provide sufficient information so that its reasons for making the Orders can be properly understood.

1.1.4. This Statement has been prepared in accordance with the following documents:

- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities "Guidance on Compulsory Purchase and the Crichel Down Rules" (July 2019) ("the Guidance").
- Department for Transport Circular 1/97 "Highways Act 1980: Orders Under Section 14 of the Highways Act 1980 and Opposed Orders Under Section 124 of that Act" (June 1997); and
- Department for Transport Circular 2/97 "Notes on the Preparation, Drafting and Submission of Compulsory Purchase Orders for Highway Schemes and Car Parks for which the Secretary of State for Transport is the Confirming Authority" (June 1997).

1.1.5. The Orders have been made to enable the delivery of improvements to the existing A40 Principal Road, the B4022 and the C16886 South Leigh Road at its junction with the B4022, at Shores Green, Witney at their location of the junction of the A40 with the B4022 and is a scheme known as the A40 Access to Witney Scheme (the "Scheme").

1.1.6. The location of the Scheme is shown in the Site Plan at **Appendix 1**. The Scheme will construct two new west-facing slip roads at the Shores Green junction of the A40; a new eastbound exit slip road from the A40 to a new junction with the B4022 and a new westbound entry slip road onto the A40 from a new junction with the B4022. The Scheme will provide new walking and cycling facilities on the B4022 and alongside the A40 that will improve provision for active travel. The full detail of the Scheme is described in Section 4 of this and can be seen on the General Arrangement (GA) drawings at **Appendix 2**.

- 1.1.7. The Acquiring Authority considers the Scheme to be a County priority as it will provide a new means of accessing the A40 to and from the west, and relieve pressure on the existing local highway network within Witney. Currently, vehicles travelling from Witney must use adjoining junctions of the A40 to make this connection, which puts pressure onto very constrained routes within the centre of Witney. This has particular impacts on the bridge crossing in the town over the River Windrush, which is also the only route through the centre of Witney, with the impacts of this convergence currently adversely affecting the Witney area as a result of traffic congestion and associated adverse environmental impacts in the town centre, particularly local air quality.
- 1.1.8. Planned growth in population and employment in Witney and its surrounds will add to the pressure on the transport network, particularly new housing proposed at the East Witney Strategic Development Area (450 new homes) and North Witney Strategic Development Area (1,400 new homes) allocated in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 - see **Section 3**. The access routes created by the Scheme will provide the connectivity and road network resilience needed to support the town by reducing vehicular traffic and traffic delays in its centre as a result of using other distributional routes within the town centre. This will improve air quality and reduce the adverse impact of traffic on the environment, public health and streetscene in the historic Witney town centre. Alongside this, the provision of improved active travel infrastructure will also enhance connections from South Leigh and High Cogges across the A40 into Witney by cycle and on foot.
- 1.1.9. Overall, the Scheme will reduce traffic flow, reduce traffic delays and improve air quality within Witney town centre, improve connectivity, enhance active travel provision and safety, and support residential and economic development in Witney. These benefits substantially outweigh the limited local adverse effects on landscape and noise. The need for the Scheme is detailed further in **Section 5**.
- 1.1.10. The Scheme design has been informed by a detailed Environmental Assessment (as set out within the Environmental Statement) and Transport Assessment submitted in support of the planning application.
- 1.1.11. The full extent of land to be acquired ("the Order Land") is set out in greater detail in **Section 9** of this Statement and identified on the map accompanying the CPO (the "Order Map"). The land required for the entirety of the Scheme covers an area of land adjacent to the A40 highway in both directions (i.e., eastbound and westbound) to the west of the B4022, and a small parcel of land north of the eastbound A40 to accommodate a drainage attenuation facility. This is referred to throughout this Statement as the Site and is identified on the Scheme General Arrangement Drawings shown at **Appendix 2**.
- 1.1.12. The Acquiring Authority has been making significant efforts to acquire the land required for delivery of the Scheme by private treaty agreement but, whilst doing this, has retained in reserve the ability to utilise compulsory purchase powers. Such approach is wholly in accordance with national guidance on

compulsory acquisition. Given the passage of time and the need to facilitate the Scheme coming forward, it has now become apparent that the CPO must be progressed in parallel with ongoing negotiations, and subsequently submitted for confirmation to the Secretary of State for Transport ("the Secretary of State"), in order to enable the delivery of the Scheme.

- 1.1.13. On [date xxxx], the Cabinet of the Acquiring Authority resolved to make the Orders, reserving to officers delegated powers to refine the Orders and their respective associated ancillary documents prior to their making. The resolution of Cabinet is shown in **Appendix 3**. [The Acquiring Authority by way of an Officer's Decision Notice [dated xxxx] [also at **Appendix 3**] approved the final form of the SRO, SRO plan, the CPO, the Order Map and the Statement of Reasons.
- 1.1.14. In reaching the decision to make the Orders, the Acquiring Authority has had full regard to the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights and is satisfied that any interference with rights is reasonable and proportionate. Human rights issues are dealt with in detail in **Section 12** of this Statement.
- 1.1.15. Department for Transport Circular 2/97 provides guidance on compulsory purchase orders for highway Schemes and states that the Secretary of State will not generally be minded to confirm a compulsory purchase order until planning permission for the Scheme, to which the order relates, has been granted. The planning application for the Scheme was validated by Oxfordshire County Council as the determining authority on 1 April 2022 under application reference R3.0039/22. Positive discussions have been held with the County Planning Authority throughout the application determination period and it is anticipated that permission will be granted in Q2 2023. Further details are provided in **Section 8**.
- 1.1.16. The Acquiring Authority is satisfied that the implementation of the Scheme requires the acquisition of the land, as set out in the CPO, Order Map and Order Schedule. The Acquiring Authority has made the Orders to facilitate the implementation of the Scheme.
- 1.1.17. The Side Roads Order (SRO) is a statutory order authorising the highway authority to make alterations to roads or other highways (including public rights of way) affected by a Classified Road Scheme where stopping up, diverting, improvement of existing highways, or new connections are needed, as defined by Section 14 of the Highways Act 1980. The SRO is required in order to facilitate the delivery of the Scheme and the details of the SRO are set out in **Section 10** of this Statement.
- 1.1.18. In summary, this Statement:
 - Identifies the statutory powers under which the Orders are made (**Section 2**),
 - Sets out the local area context and background to the Scheme (**Section 3**),
 - Provides details of the site and a description of the Scheme (**Section 4**),

- Provides an overview of the need for the Scheme and its benefits (**Section 5**),
- Sets out the alternatives to the Scheme that have been considered (**Section 6**),
- Describes the consultation and public engagement activities undertaken to inform the Scheme (**Section 7**),
- Describes the how the scheme is compliant with planning policy and the current planning status of the Scheme (**Section 8**),
- Describes the Order Land (**Section 9**),
- Explains the provisions of the SRO (**Section 10**),
- Sets out how the Scheme is to be financed and timescales for implementation (**Section 11**),
- Deals with Human Rights issues (**Section 12**),
- Describes the case for the CPO together with details of negotiations with landowners (**Section 13**),
- Sets out the Related Orders and Special Category Land (**Section 14**), and
- Sets out the Status of the Statement of Reasons (**Section 15**)
- Sets out the arrangements for the inspection of documents and contact details for further information (**Section 16**).

2. STATUTORY POWERS UNDER WHICH THE ORDER IS MADE

2.1. Statutory Powers

- 2.1.1. The Guidance published in July 2019 by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities provides advice in connection with the use of compulsory purchase powers.
- 2.1.2. In accordance with the Guidance, the purpose for which an authority seeks to acquire land will determine the statutory powers under which compulsory purchase is sought. Paragraph 11 advises that acquiring authorities should look to use 'the most specific power available for the purpose in mind, and only use a general power when a specific power is not available.'
- 2.1.3. The Acquiring Authority has sought, and continues to seek, to negotiate the acquisition of the legal interests in the Site required for the proposed Scheme by agreement; however, a substantial part of the Site is still within private ownership and negotiations have not to date secured the acquisition of all necessary interests on a voluntary basis.
- 2.1.4. The Acquiring Authority is, therefore, utilising its powers under Sections 239, 240, 246 and 260 of the Highways Act 1980 (the "1980 Act"), Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 to the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 ("the 1981 Act"), and Section 3 of the 1981 Act, for the acquisition of all of the remaining interests in the Order Land, required to facilitate the Scheme.
- 2.1.5. Sections 239 and 240 are concerned with the general powers of highway authorities to acquire land for the construction and improvement of highways, for the improvement or development of frontages to a highway or land adjoining thereto, and for use of land in connection with the construction or improvement of a highway or the carrying out of other works authorised by a Side Roads Order under Section 14 of the 1980 Act. Section 246 provides a power to acquire land for mitigating the adverse effects of the existence or use of a highway constructed or improved on its surroundings. Section 260 relates to the clearance of title to land already acquired by the highway authority for highway purposes.
- 2.1.6. The powers in the 1980 Act enable the Acquiring Authority to acquire land compulsorily for the following purposes of the Scheme:
- (1) the improvement of the A40 Principal Road, from a point on the south west side of the A40 overbridge crossing of the B4022, at South Leigh, south westwards for a distance of approximately 775 metres, and incorporating the construction of a new eastbound exit slip road, from a point on the existing A40 approximately 520 metres south west of the A40 overbridge crossing of the B4022, north eastwards to its junction with the B4022, and a new westbound entry slip road, from its junction with the B4022, south westwards to its junction with the

A40, at a point approximately 280 metres south west of the A40 overbridge crossing of the B4022;

- (2) the improvement of highways in pursuance of The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure – A40 Access to Witney) (Side Roads) Order 2023;
- (3) the carrying out of works on watercourses, in connection with the improvement of highways as aforesaid;
- (4) the improvement or development of frontages to the above-mentioned new and existing highways or of the land adjoining or adjacent thereto;
- (5) the use by the acquiring authority in connection with the improvement of highways as aforesaid; and
- (6) mitigating the adverse effect which the existence or use of the highways to be improved will have on the surroundings thereof.

2.1.7. In accordance with paragraph 2 of the Guidance, the Acquiring Authority is proposing to use compulsory purchase powers to acquire the remaining interests only where efforts to acquire the land by private treaty are not successful. Efforts to acquire interests by private treaty will continue in parallel alongside the compulsory purchase process.

2.1.8. Having regard to the nature of the Scheme and the advice set out in the Guidance, the Acquiring Authority is satisfied that the powers available to it under the 1980 Act are the most appropriate powers to use in order to achieve its objectives.

2.2. The Mining Code

2.2.1. The CPO also incorporates the Mining Code contained in Parts II and III of Schedule 2 to the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 and applied by Section 3 of that Act. By virtue of these provisions, the CPO does not seek to compulsorily acquire mineral interests in the Order Land.

2.2.2. Paragraphs 201 and 202 of the Guidance states that the Mining Code should not be incorporated automatically or indiscriminately, as this may lead to the sterilisation of minerals, including coal reserves. Acquiring authorities are asked to consider the matter carefully before including the Mining Code, having regard to the existence of statutory rights of compensation or whether repair might provide an adequate remedy in the event of damage to land, buildings or works occasioned by mining subsidence.

2.2.3. Incorporation of the Mining Code within an order, thereby engaging Parts II and III of Schedule 2 to the Acquisition of Land Act 1981, provides for the exclusion of mineral right acquisition from the CPO, avoiding sterilisation of the minerals whilst providing a degree of protection for the Acquiring Authority and allowing the Scheme to be taken forward. By incorporating the Mining

Code, the Acquiring Authority can take steps to prevent the working of minerals within a specified distance of the surface, provided compensation is paid.

- 2.2.4. The Acquiring Authority has taken full account of the Guidance in preparing the CPO and considers that in the circumstances of this case, where compensation and repair of damage would not be adequate in view of the public use and nature of the Scheme, together with the potential traffic implications and disruption that might occur if the mines and minerals within the Order Land were to be worked and such damage were to occur, it is appropriate to incorporate the Mining Code.

3. LOCAL AREA CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

3.1. Introduction

- 3.1.1. This section provides an overview of the local geographic context, allocated housing and employment sites, and existing transport infrastructure. It highlights the key transport challenges, which has led to the need for the Scheme as detailed further in **Section 5**.

3.2. Geographic Context

- 3.2.1. West Oxfordshire is one of five districts of the County of Oxfordshire, located to the west of Oxford City. The West Oxfordshire district boundary is shown by the darker line in Figure 1. The other four district areas of South Oxfordshire, City of Oxford, Vale of White Horse and Cherwell within the County of Oxfordshire are also shown in **Figure 3.1**.

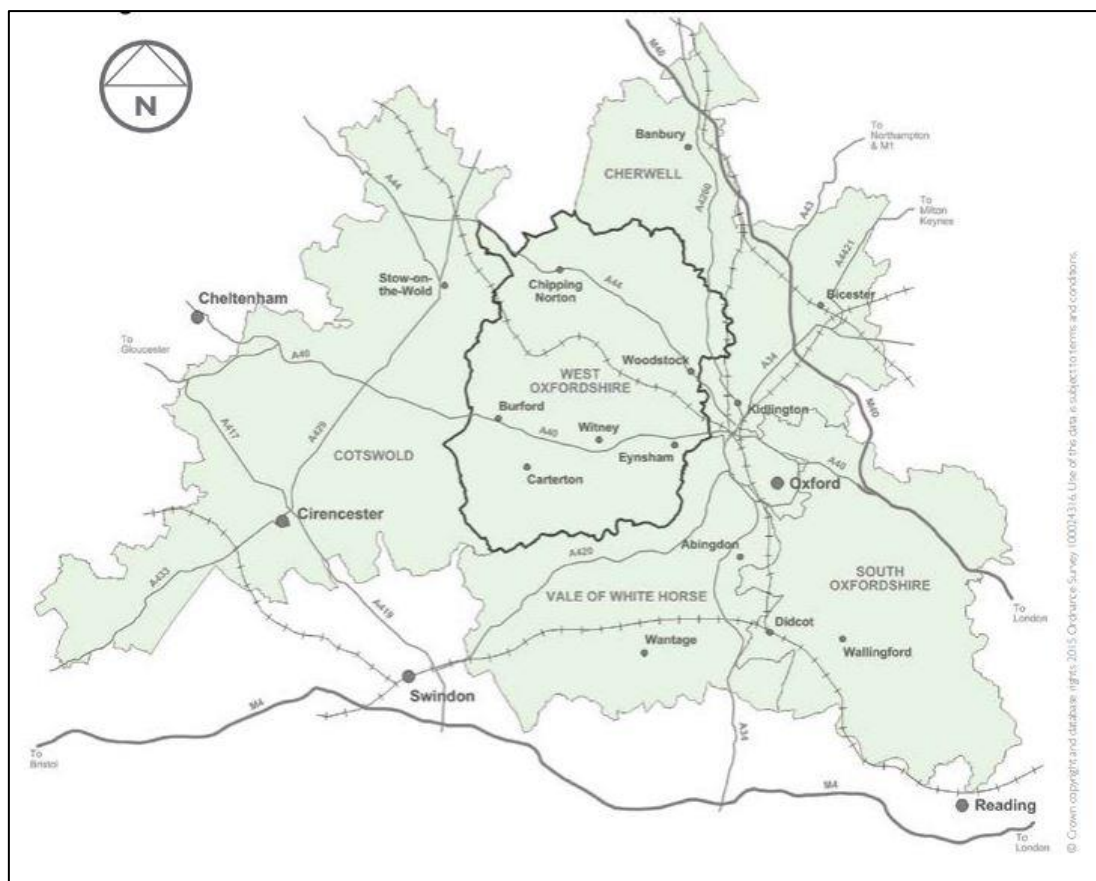


Figure 3.1: West Oxfordshire District (From West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031- Adopted September 2018)

- 3.2.2. Overall, West Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural district and with a population density of 1.5 people per hectare, it is the second most sparsely populated of 67 local authorities in South East England. Statistics drawn from available information contained within the 2021 Office for National Statistics

(ONS) Census reported that the population of West Oxfordshire is 114,200, with 48,000 households in the district. 2011 ONS Census data showed that the population was 104,800 and there were 43,200 households in West Oxfordshire. This, therefore, highlights that the population and number of households has grown by 9% and 11% respectively over this 10-year period.

- 3.2.3. West Oxfordshire is a relatively affluent district, with weekly pay some 8% above the average for England, a well-educated workforce (47.5% with qualifications at NVQ4 and above) and a high proportion of the workforce in employment. The ratio of jobs to population is 0.86, highlighting the need for some commuting out of the District to access jobs, but Oxfordshire as a whole has a job density of 1.0, indicating the potential for residents to find employment opportunities within the County. There are also relatively high levels of car ownership, with the most recent available data from the 2021 ONS Census for West Oxfordshire showing that only 11.5% of households did not have a car or van (compared to 17% in the South East and 23.5% in England), and 49% of households had 2 or more cars or vans (compared to 42% in the South East and 35% in England).
- 3.2.4. There are around 130 separate towns, villages and hamlets scattered across the District. Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton are the three main towns in the district. Witney is the largest town in West Oxfordshire and located approximately 12 miles to the west of Oxford City. It is a relatively compact town, with a developed area spanning less than 5km east to west, and 3km north to south.
- 3.2.5. Witney is a historic town, which dates back to medieval times, and is located around the crossing of the River Windrush. Its population has grown substantially since the 1950s and particularly in the 1980s and 1990s. The population of Witney increased from 6,554 in 1951 to 19,041 in 1991. The 2011 ONS Census recorded that Witney had a population of 27,522 with over 10,000 households, and the town is the most densely populated area in West Oxfordshire.
- 3.2.6. There are almost 15,000 jobs (approaching a third of the total in West Oxfordshire District) engaged in wide ranging employment, including jobs in high technology, manufacturing and engineering firms, and the town provides West Oxfordshire's main services and facilities, including retail, health care and leisure.

3.3. Housing Growth

- 3.3.1. There is a significant need and demand for housing across Oxfordshire and the realisation of the region's economic potential relies on accelerated housing delivery. The relationship between economic growth and housing delivery was explicit within the 2017 Housing Growth Deal Outline Agreement and Delivery Plan included at **Appendix 4**, whereby Government devolved £215m funding to the Oxfordshire Growth Board (now named Future Oxfordshire Partnership and made up of Oxfordshire County Council, the five district Councils and the Oxfordshire Local Economic Partnership (OxLEP) to support the delivery of 100,000 homes by 2031 across Oxfordshire.

- 3.3.2. Of the £215m, £150m was allocated to transport investment which the Government and Oxfordshire County Council recognise as being a fundamental enabler of housing and employment across a number of key locations and sites, some of which have been identified in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.
- 3.3.3. As part of the 2017 Housing Growth Deal, the five District authorities in Oxfordshire and the County Council made a commitment to the delivery of 100,000 new homes by 2031. The allocated growth across the County has been set out within the five district Local Plans of West Oxfordshire, Oxford City, Cherwell, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.
- 3.3.4. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (adopted in September 2018) ('WOLP'), [key policies and supporting text provided at **Appendix 5**] sets out the vision for the District in 2031 and provides an overarching framework to guide and deliver that vision. The Local Plan covers the 20-year period from 2011- 2031.
- 3.3.5. The WOLP emphasises that the provision of new housing is a critically important issue for West Oxfordshire. New housing is vital to economic growth and as an attractive and well-located place, people want to live in West Oxfordshire. However, the plan recognises that growth needs to be effectively managed in order to prevent significant change to the intrinsic character of the District.
- 3.3.6. In accordance with the overall Local Plan strategy (Policy OS2) a significant proportion of new housing will be provided at the district's three main towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. This strategy was tested extensively through the Local Plan consultation and sustainability appraisal and is considered to represent the most appropriate and sustainable strategy for West Oxfordshire.
- 3.3.7. Policy H1 of the Local plan identifies a provision for at least 15,950 new homes in West Oxfordshire. Witney has been identified in the WOLP as a key area for growth and delivery of around 4,702 new homes by 2031.
- 3.3.8. Witney's historic nature is reflected in the large number of listed buildings and heritage sites, which are largely located in the town centre. Whilst Witney is a desirable place to live and work, with natural and historic attractions, there are limited opportunities for growth in the historic centre, and there are both built environment and physical constraints in terms of adding further transport capacity.
- 3.3.9. As a result, growth has tended to occur on the fringes of Witney, away from the more sensitive river environment. This does pose a challenge, however, particularly for residents in east and north-east Witney, as the main commercial, retail and employment centres (excluding the town centre) are in the west and south-west of the town, requiring cross town trips to be made through the town centre.

- 3.3.10. The Local Plan identifies a number of Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) with larger housing allocations, which are considered to represent the most sustainable locations for strategic-scale housing growth within the District. Two of these areas are identified within the Witney sub-area, being East Witney (450 homes) and another at North Witney (1,400 homes) (see **Table 3.1** and **Figures 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4** below for details).

Name	No. of Units	Local Authority	Current Ownership
North Witney SDA	1,400	West Oxfordshire	Meridian Strategic Land Ltd (promoter) Taylor Wimpey, Gallagher Estates, Vanderbilt Strategic LTD.
East Witney SDA	450	West Oxfordshire	The Mawle Trust represented by Carter Jonas

Table 3.1: Strategic Development Areas in Witney

- 3.3.11. The housing allocations at these two SDAs are then put in context in WOLP Policy WIT6 (Witney sub-area strategy), which sets out the basis of WODC's overall spatial approach in this sub-area.

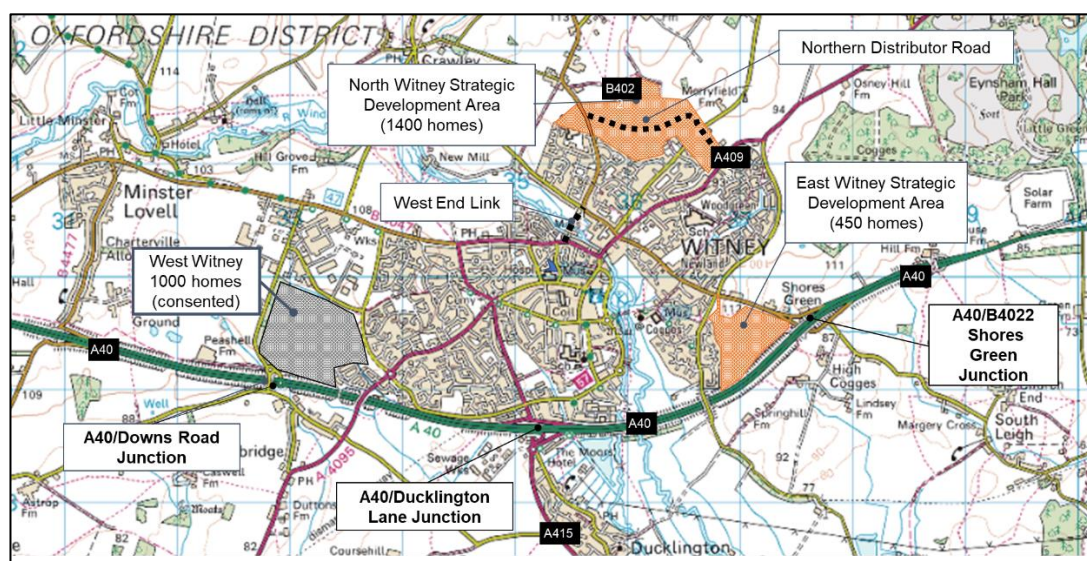


Figure 3.2: Witney Strategic Development Areas proposed in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan

3.4. East Witney SDA

- 3.4.1. The East Witney SDA (EWSDA) has been identified by Policy WIT1 in the WOLP as an area for future growth, with a strategic allocation of a minimum of 450 new homes. This is made up of a small parcel of land served off Stanton Harcourt Road, which will provide a development of approximately 30 dwellings, with the remaining 420 homes provided on land known as Cogges Triangle, immediately to the north of the A40 and west of the B4022. EWSDA is shown in **Figure 3.3** below.

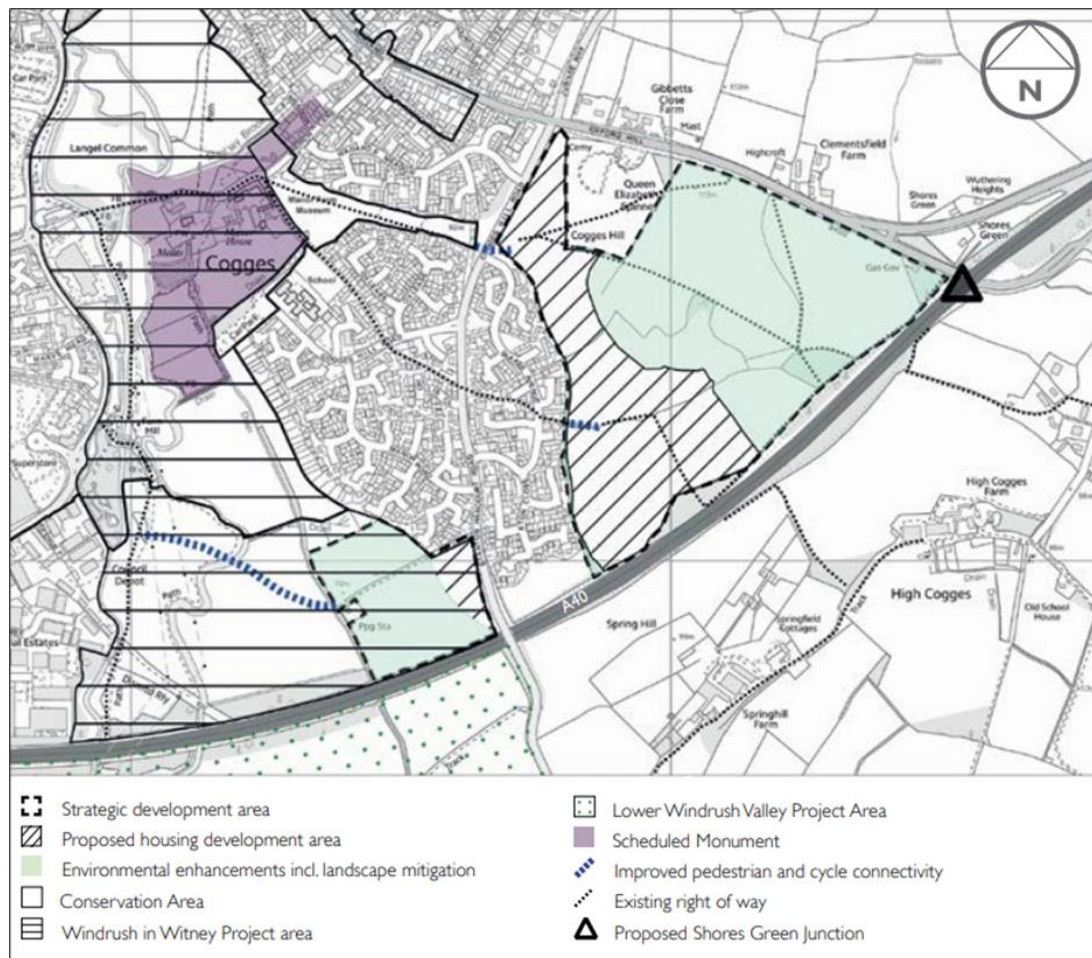


Figure 3.3: West Oxfordshire Local Plan – East Witney Strategic Development Area

3.4.2. An outline planning application (20/02654/OUT) has been submitted for 450 homes, associated green infrastructure and open space. This application was validated on 2 September 2020 and is awaiting determination.

3.5. North Witney SDA

3.5.1. Policy WIT2 in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan allocates the North Witney SDA (NWSDA) as a location for development. The NWSDA is located to the north of the A40 corridor and to the north of the existing Witney urban area. The extent of the developable area is shown indicatively in **Figure 3.4** below.

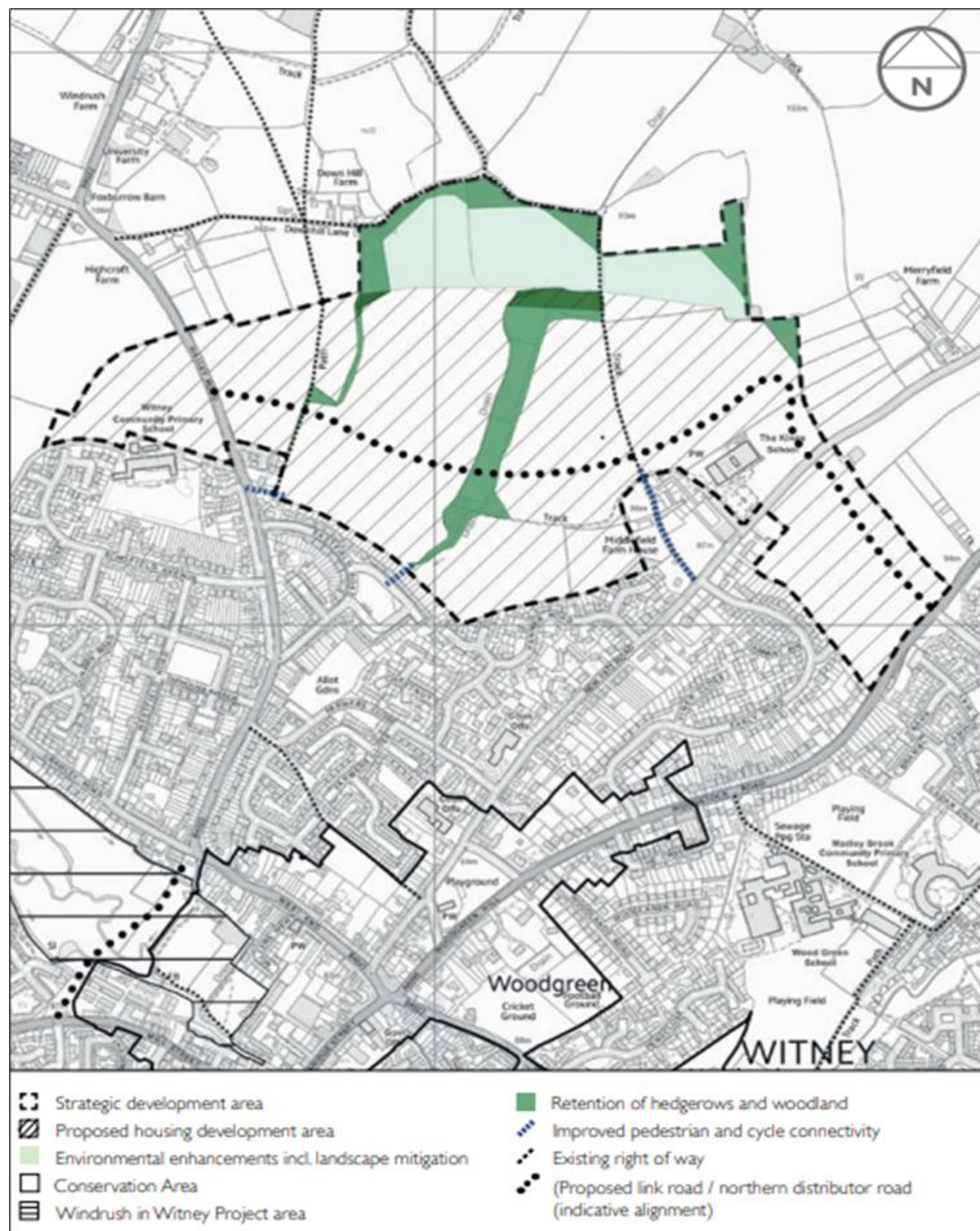


Figure 3.4: West Oxfordshire Local Plan - North Witney Strategic Development Area

- 3.5.2. The Local Plan indicates that the proposed site allocation comprises of three separate parcels of land; a larger area of land between Hailer Road and New Yatt Road (c49ha); a parcel between New Yatt Road and Woodstock Road (c7ha); and a smaller parcel of land west of Hailey Road (c4ha). It is anticipated that across the allocation as a whole, around 1,400 homes could be provided. The Local plan identifies Hailey Road as being capable of accommodating approximately 100 new homes, the land between Hailey Road and New Yatt Road approximately 1,100 homes, and the land between New Yatt Road and Woodstock Road approximately 200 homes.

- 3.5.3. An outline planning application (14/01671/OUT) was submitted in November 2014 to seek permission for 200 homes on the land between New Yatt Road and Woodstock Road. A full planning application (19/03317/FUL) was submitted in December 2019, to seek permission for 110 dwellings on the land west of Hailey Road. Both of these planning applications are still under consideration by the Local Planning Authority (West Oxfordshire District Council).
- 3.5.4. The WOLP recognises (para 7.35) that as Witney is a key focus area for growth, it is essential that further development is supported by appropriate investment in new and improved infrastructure. A number of strategic highway improvement schemes are proposed in the WOLP to mitigate the impact of planned housing and business growth in Witney and to provide a significant improvement to the flow of vehicles in and around the town. These include:
- **A40/Downs Road junction** – the provision of a new ‘all movements’ junction onto the A40 at Downs Road to the west of Witney (*completed in 2018*)
 - **A40/Shores Green Slip Roads (Access to Witney Scheme)** - the provision of west facing slip roads at the Shores Green junction onto the A40 to the east of Witney.
 - **West End Link Road (WEL)** – the provision of a new road link between Woodford Way and West End creating a second river crossing for Witney.
 - **Northern Distributor Road** – the provision of a new road link between Hailey Road and Woodstock Road via New Yatt Road.

3.6. Existing Travel Patterns, Transport Network and Conditions

- 3.6.1. Data from the ONS Census (2011)¹ as presented in **Table 3.2**, indicates that the workplaces of two thirds (65%) of Witney residents are not within Witney and the main means of travel to work is closely related to this. Of the three quarters of residents driving to work - 6,865 people or 74% - work outside Witney. In addition, nearly 90% of those using the bus and 97% of those using rail are travelling to workplaces outside of Witney. This emphasises the pressure on the road network, particularly onto the strategic highway network at peak hours.

¹ 2021 ONS Census travel data has not been referred to as it was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic. This significantly impacted on working arrangements and travel patterns and use of the travel data is not considered appropriate

Mode (travel to work)	Place of work		Total	%
	Within Witney	Outside Witney		
Rail	3	94	97	1%
Bus	74	636	710	6%
Car	2,291	6,865	9,156	73%
Bicycle	491	219	710	6%
On foot	1,462	246	1,708	14%
Other method of travel to work	32	117	149	1%
Total	4,353	8,177	12,530	
%	35%	65%		100%

Table 3.2: ONS Census (2011) Place of Work and Travel Data for Witney

- 3.6.2. The 6% of residents using bus as their main mode to work will depend on suitable bus service provision and journey time reliability to use this sustainable mode. A fifth of residents use Active Travel as their main mode to work, with 6% of Witney residents cycling to work and 14% walking to work. This is slightly higher than the walking and cycling percentages for West Oxfordshire as a whole (5% bicycle and 12% pedestrian) and for England (3% bicycle and 12% pedestrian). The importance of providing good, safe active travel infrastructure in the local area is emphasised with 70% of those cycling and 85% accessing places of work within Witney.

Witney - Local Road Network

- 3.6.3. The main roads serving West Oxfordshire are shown in **Figure 3.5**. The A-roads serving Witney and surrounding areas are:
- A40: East-west primary highway route (London-Oxford-Gloucester-South Wales-Fishguard), acting as a southern by-pass to Witney.
 - A415: Runs into Witney from Berinsfield (south east of Abingdon) and approaches Witney from the south east.
 - A4095: Runs north east-south west through Witney, en route between north Bicester and Faringdon.

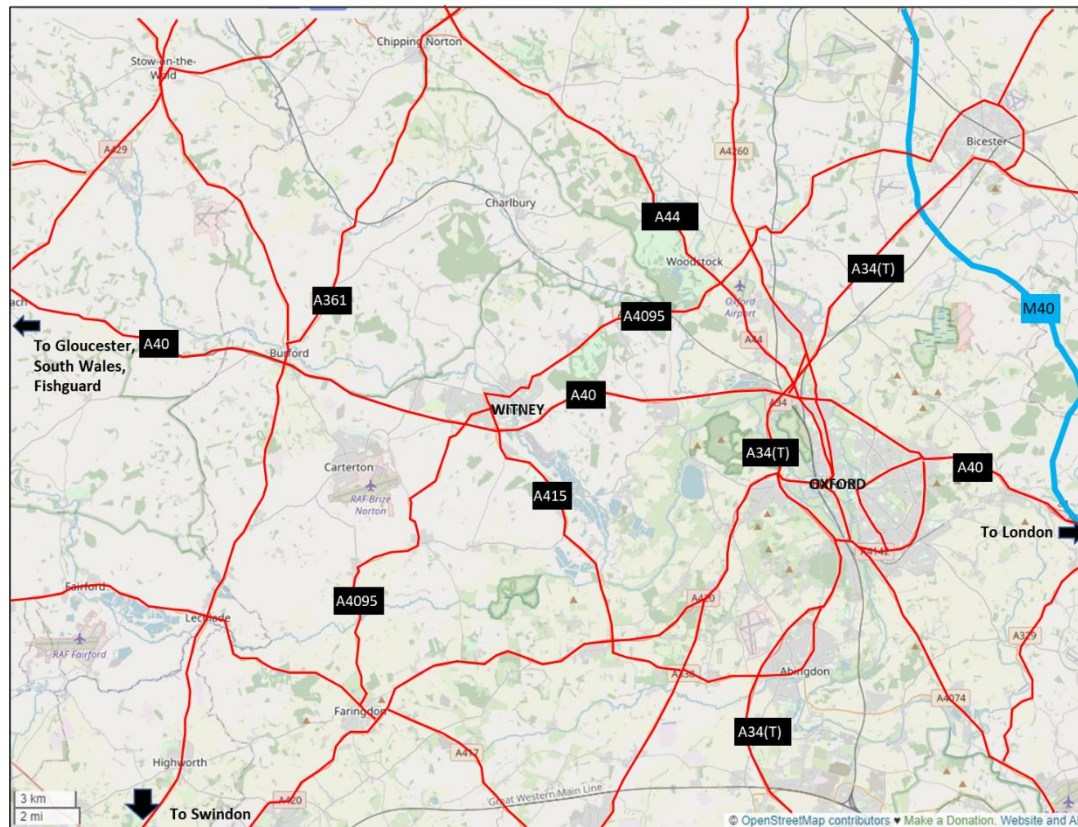


Figure 3.5: Main roads serving West Oxfordshire and Witney

- 3.6.4. The A40 was part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) until it was de-trunked on 1 June 2003. The A40 is a primary route that provides Witney with a southern by-pass, built in the mid-1970s; prior to that, the A40 route ran straight through Witney town centre. The A40 is a key route for residents in West Oxford district to travel in and out of Oxford (or beyond) to the east, or westwards towards Cheltenham and Gloucester. The A40 is a designated through route for the movement of road freight.
- 3.6.5. **Figure 3.6** provides an overview of the road network in the local area immediately around Witney, highlighting both A and B classified roads. East-west movements across Witney are constrained by the need to cross the River Windrush and the limited availability of crossing points. These are limited to Bridge Street in central Witney; Dry Lane in Crawley village, 2.5km to the north west of the town centre; and on the A40, 1.7km to the south of the town centre. Bridge Street, which is a particular traffic bottleneck for vehicle movements across Witney, and these alternative river crossings are highlighted in **Figure 3.6**. As a result, the main crossing point for east-west movements is currently via Bridge Street in Witney Town Centre.

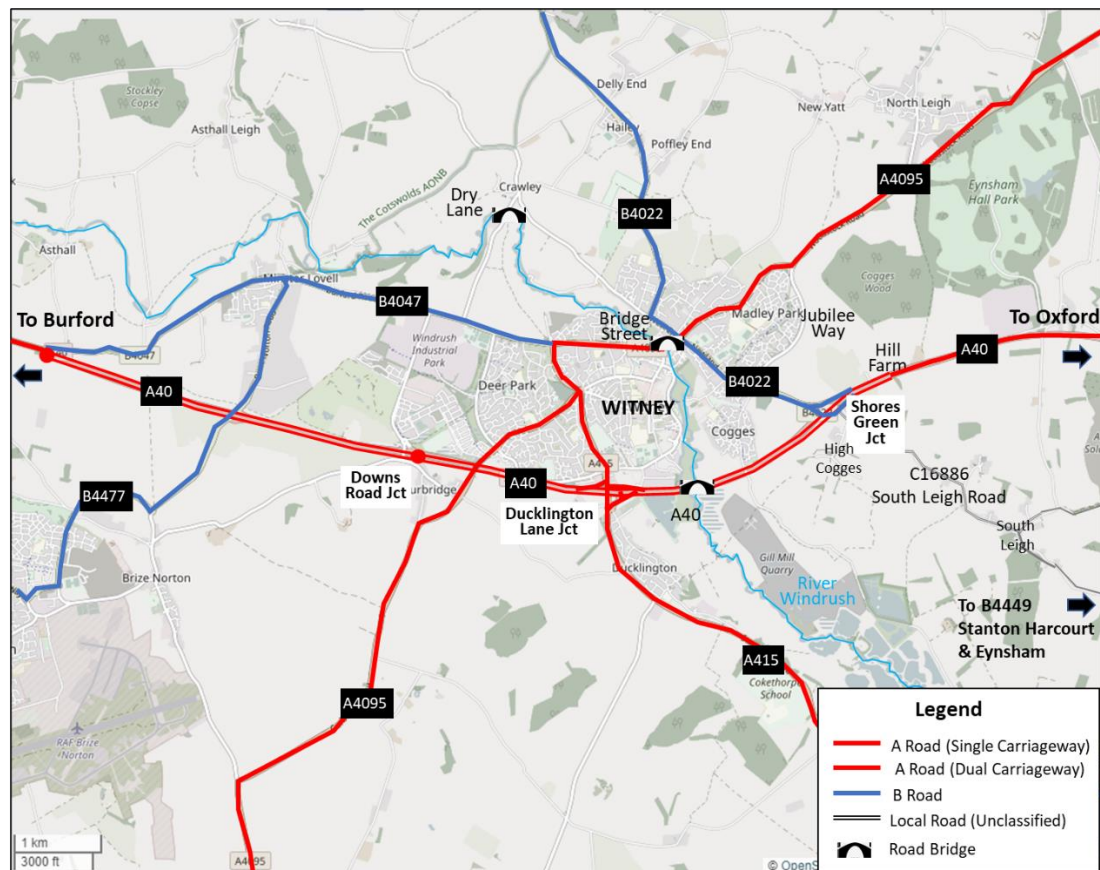


Figure 3.6: Witney – local area road network

- 3.6.6. Likewise, north-south movements across Witney also mostly require traffic to route via Witney town centre, exacerbating the traffic and air quality problems at Bridge Street. A key factor in this is the lack of west-facing slips at the A40 Shores Green interchange, which would otherwise enable through traffic to/from the A415 and A4095 in the south to use a route via the A40 and B4022 to cross the River Windrush and continue on the A4095, avoiding having to use Bridge Street.
- 3.6.7. The A40 is a dual carriageway between the A40/B4047 roundabout in the east and Hill Farm, 1.6km east of the Shores Green interchange. The A40 is single carriageway west of the A40/B4477 roundabout and east of Hill Farm, until the A40 Wolvercote Roundabout (0.7km east of the A34 flyover of the A34), where the A40 becomes a dual carriageway as part of Oxford's northern by-pass. The A415 and A4095 are single carriageway A class roads. They both provide local inter-urban links and carry significantly less traffic than the A40.
- 3.6.8. The A40 forms the most direct transport link between Witney and Oxford although there are also alternative routes using the A4095/A44 and the B4449/B4044. The A4095/A44 forms a route for bypassing the A40 and Oxford and accessing the M40 for longer distance traffic. Also, some vehicles travelling between Carterton and Oxford take the route via Bampton on the B4449/A415 to the A420 to avoid the A40. Traffic using the A4095/A44 travels through Witney Town Centre.

3.6.9. Junctions on the A40 south of Witney are also highlighted in Figure 3.6 above. From west to east:

- The A40/Downs Road roundabout opened in 2019 and delivered as part of the committed urban extension to west of Witney. It provides an all-movements link to/from west Witney.
- The A40/A415 Duckington Lane interchange provides a grade-separated all movements junction that was provided as part of the original A40 Witney southern bypass scheme. Improvements were made to the junction in 2014.
- The A40/B4022 Shores Green interchange provides a restricted access grade separated junction with the B4022 linking directly onto the A40 east and providing east-facing access (or slip-roads) only onto the A40 i.e., to/from the Oxford direction. The junction also provides an interchange between the B4022 and the C16886 South Leigh Road and acts a key access point to High Cogges and South Leigh villages located to the South of Witney. This interchange was built as part of the original A40 Witney southern bypass scheme.

3.6.10. South-west of Witney town centre, the A4095 Curbridge Road crosses the A40 on a bridge, with no direct connection between the two.

3.6.11. There are two B-class roads that serve Witney itself. The B4022 links to/from the A361 between Chipping Norton and Banbury to the north of Witney, from/to the A40 Shores Green interchange to the east of Witney (where the east-facing slips allow for traffic movement to/from Oxford). The B4047 Burford Road links between its junction with the A4095 Tower Hill/Burford Road junction in Witney through to a roundabout junction with the A40 6km west of Witney. Both are single carriageway B class roads.

3.6.12. The C16886 South Leigh Road which extends south from the A40/B4022 Shores Green Interchange provides access to the villages of High Cogges and South Leigh. South Leigh Road/Chapel Road/Station Road also provides a route for traffic from the Witney area heading to Stanton Harcourt, Eynsham and the Swinford Toll Bridge via the B4449 and onward to the A420/A34. It is also used as an alternative route or 'rat run' when the A40 route is congested or subject long delays due to an incident. It is a largely single-track rural road with no footways and pedestrians and cyclist using the same space as cars. It has no lighting. South Leigh and High Cogges Parish Council have long standing concerns regarding the inappropriate volume, speeds and type of traffic (HGVs) using this route and its impact on the character of the villages and parish. A 20mph zone was introduced along the route in April 2023.

3.6.13. **Figure 3.7** highlights the 7 day two-way Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes on the A40, A415, A4095, B4022 and on some other local roads in Witney Town Centre. Flows are given both pre and post COVID-19 pandemic years. This highlights the high volumes of two-way traffic using Bridge Street - 26,500 vehicles per day.

3.6.14. Following the COVID-19 pandemic traffic flow levels nationally and across Oxfordshire have been returning to pre-pandemic levels. **Figure 3.7** shows

that in 2022 AADT volumes across the Witney road network were still slightly below pre-pandemic levels. On Bridge Street two-way AADT were observed at 25,500 vehicles a day in 2022.

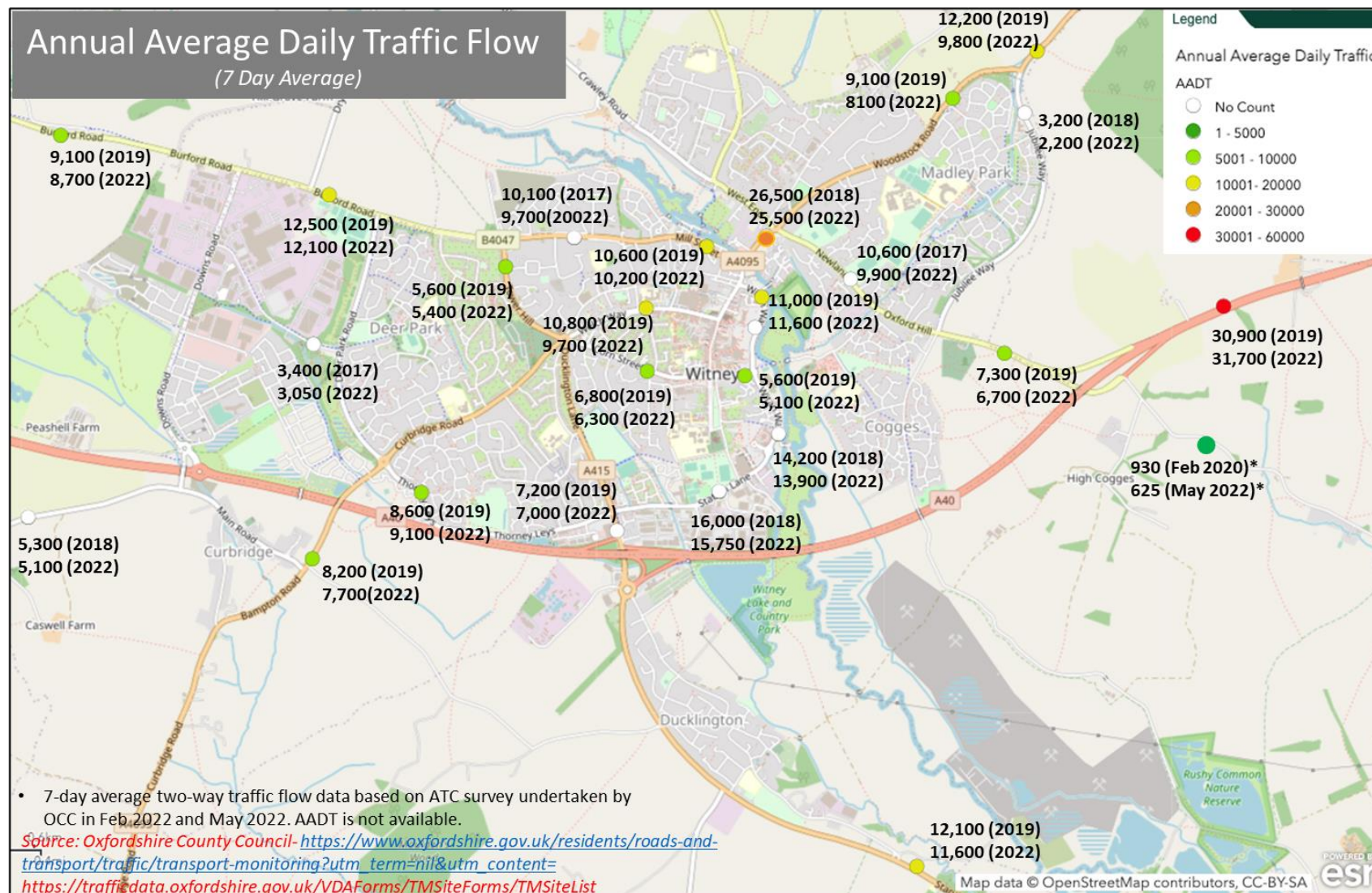


Figure 3.7: Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) flows in the Witney Area

Witney Town Centre – A4095, Bridge Street Bottleneck and Congestion

- 3.6.15. Restrictions in Witney's road network – the limited places to cross the River Windrush and the lack of west-facing slip roads at the A40 Shores Green Interchange – lead to high volumes of traffic to and from east and north-east Witney and longer distance traffic routing through Witney Town Centre and using the A4095, Bridge Street. The location of Bridge Street is highlighted in **Figure 3.8** below.
- 3.6.16. As described above a high volume of traffic - around 26,000 vehicles per day - use Bridge Street in both directions. Around 3% of traffic are Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).
- 3.6.17. Bridge Street is a single carriageway road to the north of Witney High Street. As shown in **Figure 3.8**, it bridges over the River Windrush towards its southern end, where a mini roundabout provides a junction with High Street and the A4095 Mill Street. At the northern end of Bridge Street is a double mini roundabout, providing junctions with the B4022 West End and with the B4022 Newland/A4095 Woodgreen Hill. Some roundabout approaches have a short length of marking out into two lanes, including both ends of Bridge Street. Despite this, the roundabouts provide limited traffic capacity.

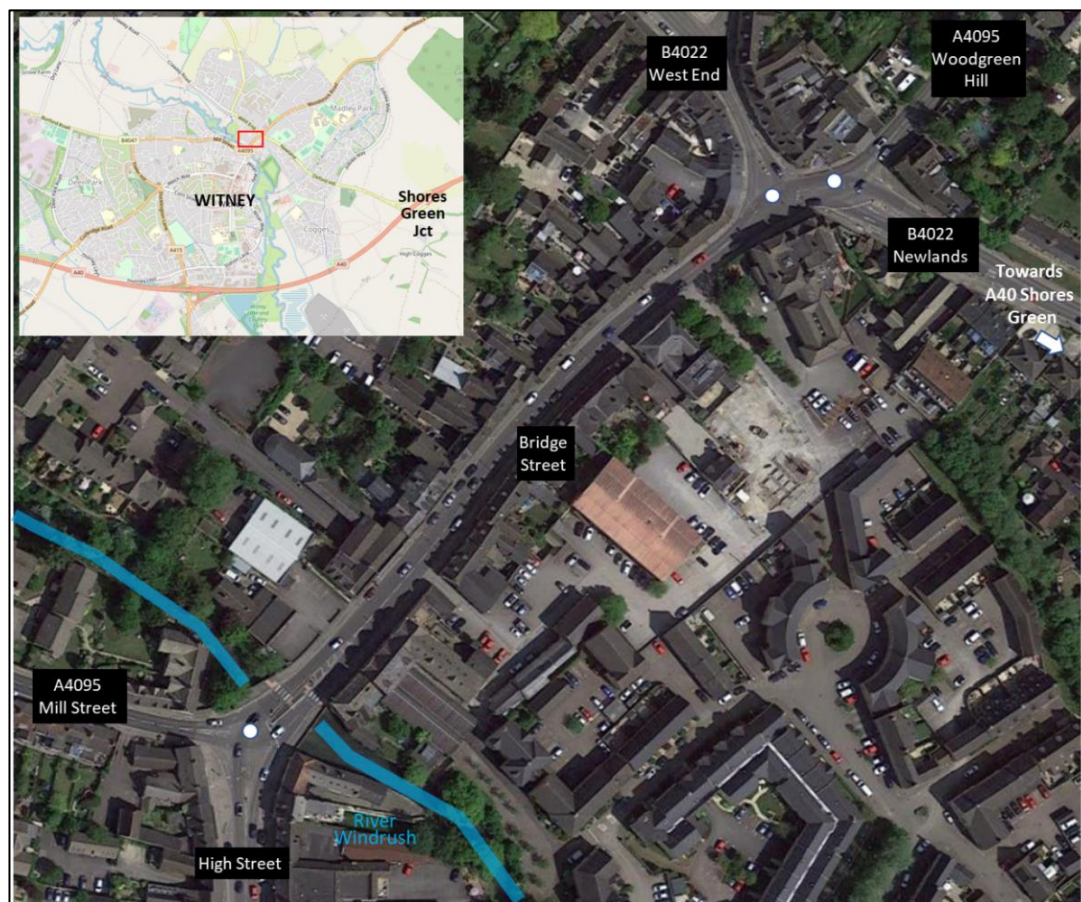


Figure 3.8: Aerial View of A4095 Bridge Street, Witney Town Centre (Source: Google Maps)

- 3.6.18. Bridge Street is lined by mainly residential properties. There are also a small number of retail and commercial premises along its length. There is some on-street parking along some sections. The footway width varies along its length but there are some very narrow sections towards its northern end. It is a popular pedestrian and cycle route into the town centre from the north and east of Witney.
- 3.6.19. **Figure 3.9** provides a view of Bridge Street looking north-east from its junction with High Street/Mill Street. **Figure 3.10** provides a view of Bridge Street looking north-east from a point mid-way along its length. **Figure 3.11** is a view of Bridge Street looking south-west from its junction with the B4022 West End.



Figure 3.9: View of A4095, Bridge Street looking north-east from its junction with Mill Street (Source: Google Maps)



Figure 3.10: View of A4095, Bridge Street looking north east mid-way along its length (Source: Google Maps)



Figure 3.11: View of A4095, Bridge Street looking south-west from its junction with the B4022 West End (Source: Google Maps)

3.6.20. At various times, including during the morning and evening peak periods, traffic delays and queues at Bridge Street spill into the wider road network – both within and beyond the town centre – extending west along the A4095 Woodgreen, north and south along the B4022 West End, east along A4095 Mill Lane and south along High Street and Witan Way. This is shown visually in **Figures 3.12 and 3.13**, which present typical AM and PM peak traffic conditions across the town.

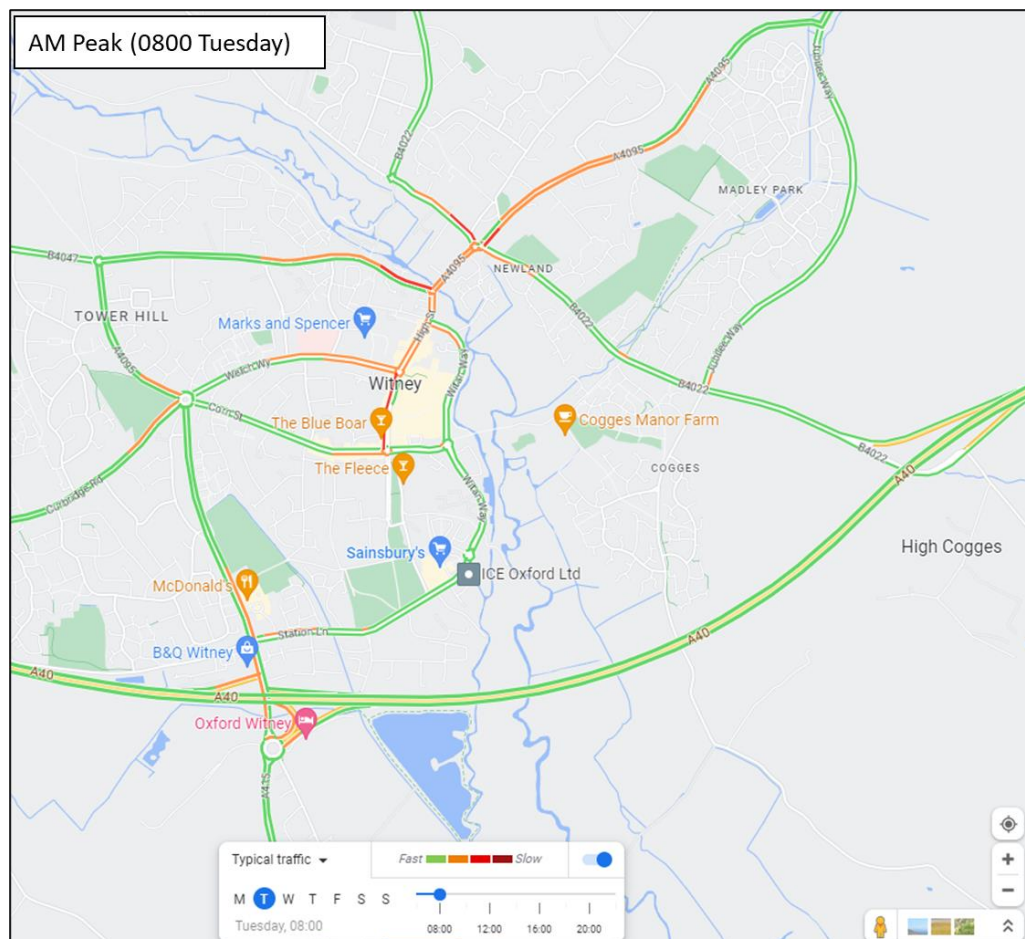


Figure 3.12: Typical traffic conditions in Witney – AM Peak (Source: Google Maps)

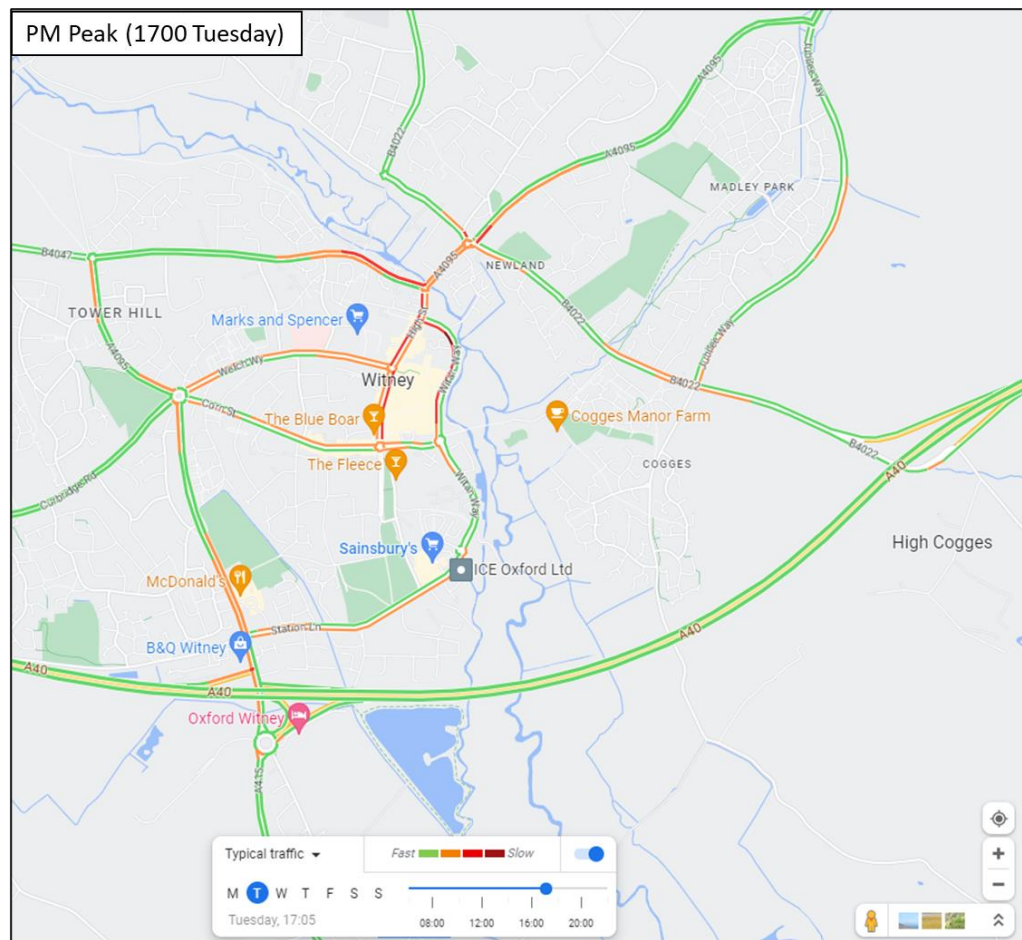


Figure 3.13: Typical traffic conditions in Witney – PM Peak (Source: Google Maps)

- 3.6.21. The high volumes of traffic on A4095, Bridge Street and associated congestion have an adverse impact on the quality of the streetscape and environment at Bridge Street itself and in Witney's historic Town Centre. High traffic levels and congestion has led to it being declared an Air Quality Management Area for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) – a designation that is described in more detail below in **Section 3.7**.

Public Transport Services

- 3.6.22. There are no rail services directly serving Witney. The nearest railway station is Hanborough, some 9.5 km north-east of Witney. Hanborough is served by Great Western Railway (GWR) London Paddington-Reading-Oxford-Worcester services, which run roughly hourly in each direction. Much of the Oxford-Worcester line is single track, including at Hanborough station. Hanborough is the first station after Oxford, travelling towards Worcester. Oxford station has a much wider range of train services, including:

- more trains to Reading and Paddington
- trains through Banbury to Birmingham
- services via Bicester and the Chiltern Line to London Marylebone
- services to Swindon towards Bristol, the west country and South Wales

- 3.6.23. Witney used to be served by a branch line that ran from Oxford to Fairford but passenger services ceased in 1962.

3.6.24. Witney is served by a number of local bus services. Stagecoach, who have an operating base in Witney, operate 6 services between Oxford, Eynsham, Witney and Carterton as shown in **Figure 3.14** (as of March 2023).

3.6.25. Service S1 provides the main service into Oxford (via Farmoor and Oxford Station). Service S2 provides a link to Cheltenham every 2 hours and an hourly link into Oxford via Summertown. Service H2 provides an hourly link to the John Radcliffe Hospital and the Headington Campus; Service S7 provides a link from Witney via the A4095, Long Hanborough and Woodstock to Oxford. Service 233 provides a half hourly 'cross-country' link between Burford and Woodstock, which stops near Hanborough Station. Service 234 provides a link between Witney and Burford.

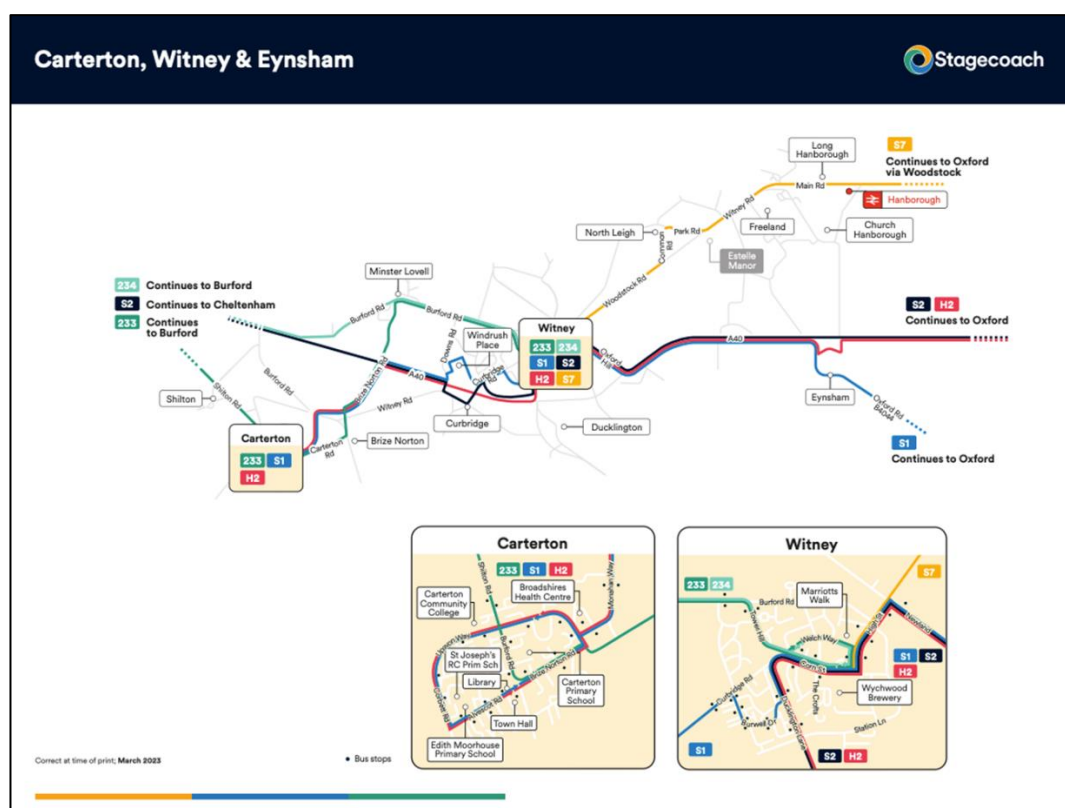


Figure 3.14: Witney Bus Services - Oxford, Witney and Carterton (Stagecoach, March 2023)

3.6.26. Other bus service operators include West Oxfordshire Community Transport, and Pulham Coaches. Details of all the bus services, including routes and service levels, are shown in **Table 3.3**.

Service	Route (Operator)	AM 0800-0900	Off- Peak	PM 1700-1800
S1	Carterton- Witney – Eynsham -Farmoor -Oxford (Stagecoach)	5	32	5
S2	Cheltenham – Curbridge – Witney – Summertown - Oxford (Stagecoach)	2	10	2
S7	Oxford – Woodstock - Long Hanbrough - Witney (Stagecoach)	2	26	2

H2	Headington - John Radcliffe Hospital – Eynsham – Witney-Carterton (Stagecoach)	1	12	1
233	Burford -Witney (Stagecoach)	1	8	1
234	Witney-Burford (Stagecoach)	1	8	1
X9	Witney-Charlbury-Chipping Norton(Pulham Coaches)	1	12	1
213	Witney Town Centre (West Oxfordshire Community Transport)	1	8	1
214	Witney Town Centre (West Oxfordshire Community Transport)	1	8	1

Table 3.3: Witney Bus Routes and Service Levels (weekday timetable)

Source: Bustimes.org (March 2023)

3.6.27. There are no bus priority measures at present in and around Witney and, as a result, buses run with other traffic and experience the same congestion and delays as other road vehicles using the road network in Witney Town Centre. Bus services between Witney and Oxford run via Bridge Street and experience the same congestion and delay described in paragraphs 3.6.20 to 3.6.21 above. These delays, which vary across the day, increase bus journey times and have a negative impact on service reliability and resilience. This makes bus travel less attractive, especially to people who currently use their car for equivalent journeys.

Walking and Cycling

3.6.28. Witney and its surrounding area has a network of primarily public footpaths, with some public bridleways and limited connections available for cycling via pedestrian and cyclist shared use cycle tracks or on-carriageway cycle lanes. **Figure 3.15** shows current public rights of way in the East Witney area in the vicinity of the Scheme.

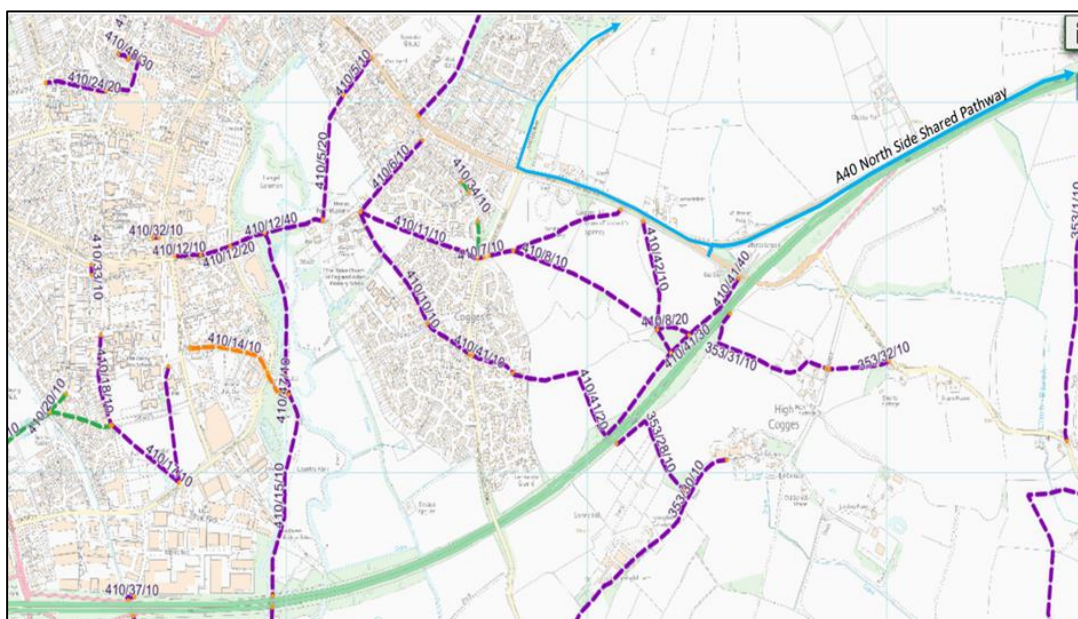


Figure 3.15: Witney East Existing Public Rights of Way

- 3.6.29. The compact nature of the town implies that a wide range of trips can be satisfied within a short distance, thereby offering the potential for residents to walk or cycle for many journeys. However, at present, available routes for cycling do not represent a comprehensive network and a lack of segregated cycle lanes through Witney Town Centre and the congested traffic conditions are likely to act as a disincentive to people who might otherwise consider cycling for their local journeys.
- 3.6.30. There is a need to improve existing facilities and provide a connected, cohesive network to encourage and support many more cycle trips for shorter journeys to the town centre. There is also lack of safe, well connected cycling routes between Witney and the nearby surrounding settlements, including Minster Lovell, Curbridge, Ducklington, South Leigh, North Leigh and Hanborough.
- 3.6.31. The County Council has recognised the importance of delivering an integrated programme of cycle network improvements in Witney and has prepared, consulted on and adopted the town's first Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (Witney LCWIP, Adopted March 2023) (LCWIP) (**Appendix 6**) to enable a shift towards active travel and assist in easing traffic congestion, avoiding a further deterioration of the environment and urban realm in Witney, improving physical activity and achieving major health benefits. Consultation on the draft Witney LCWIP closed in January 2023, with formal County Council adoption in March 2023. **Figure 3.16** shows the existing and proposed Cycle Network in Witney as set out in the adopted Witney LCWIP.

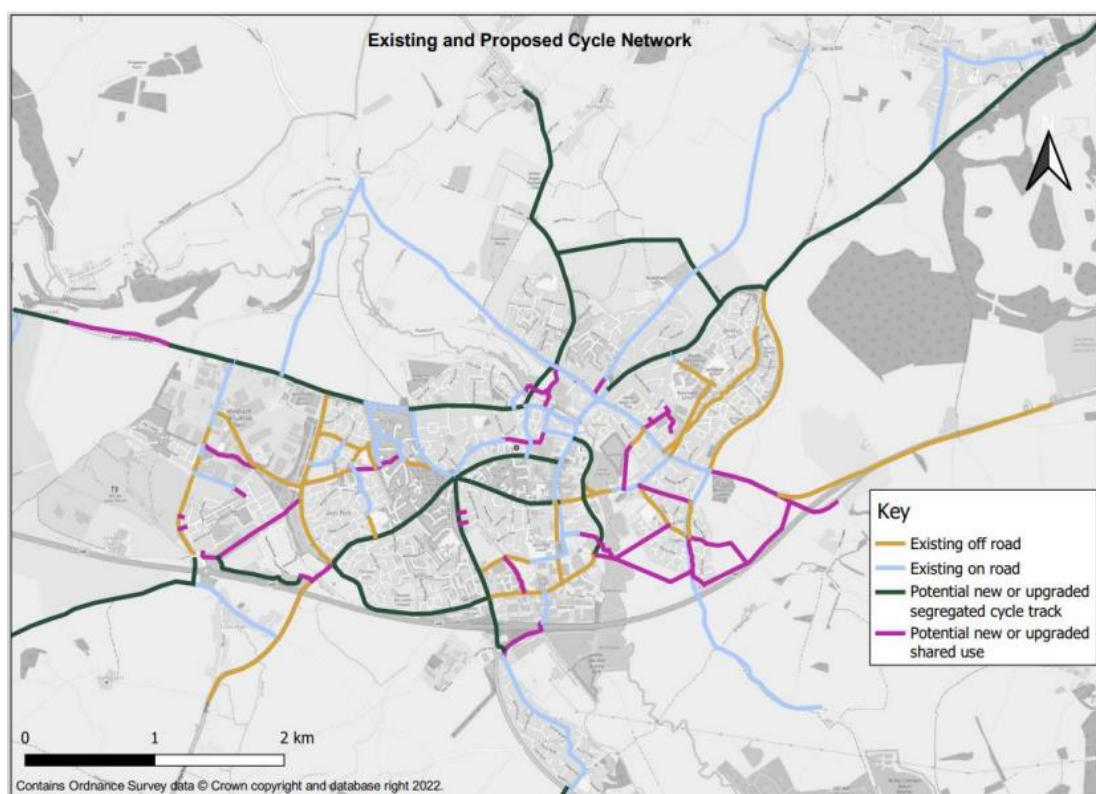


Figure 3.16: Existing and proposed Cycle Network in Witney - in Witney Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) - Adopted, March 2023)

3.6.32. **Figure 3.17** shows the proposed improvements contained in the adopted LCWIP specifically for the east Witney area. Of specific importance to the Scheme, is the recommendation of a new cycle track (with a right of way on foot) linking the B4022 Oxford Hill Road close to the proposed A40 eastbound off slip via a new crossing of the River Windrush (Location 21 in Figure 3.17) to connect Witney town centre (see links 19, 26 and 27 in Figure 3.17. Future delivery of this shared use cycle track will require a future upgrade of the new integral footway that is proposed as part of the Scheme that runs to the north-west of the new A40 westbound.

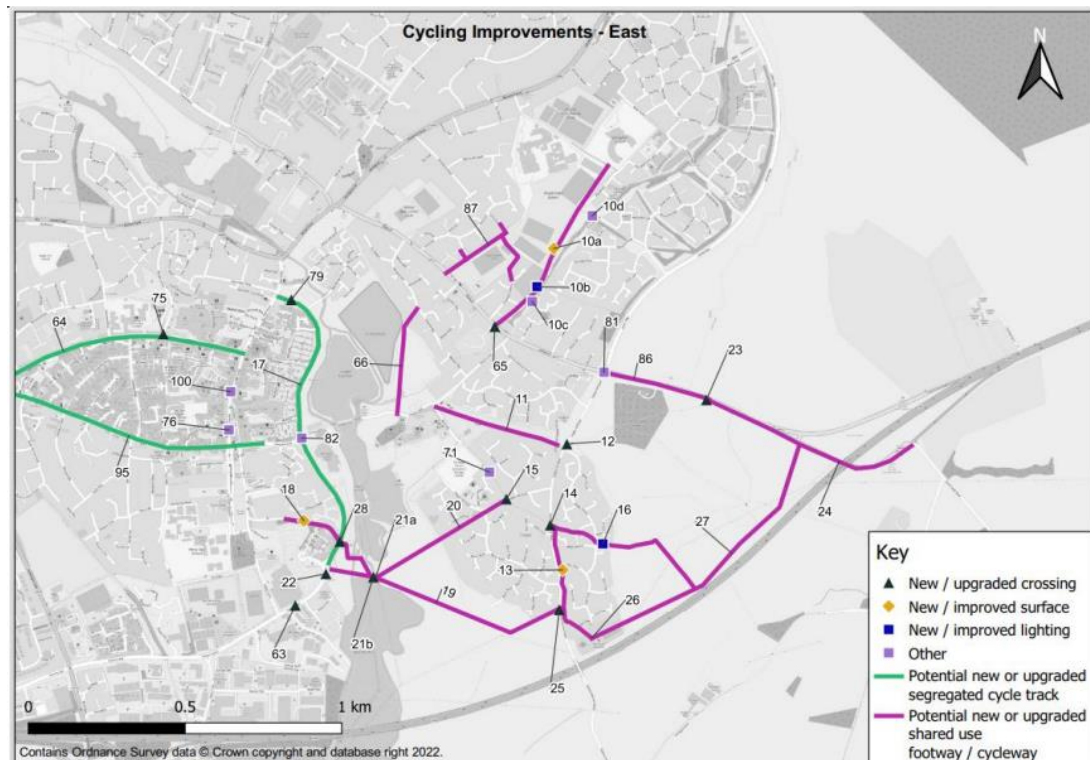


Figure 3.17: Proposed Cycling Network Improvements in East Witney in Witney Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) – adopted, March 2023)

Road Safety

3.6.33. Personal injury collision (PIC) data for East Witney for the 5-year period from January 2016 to October 2021 is shown in **Figure 3.18** below.

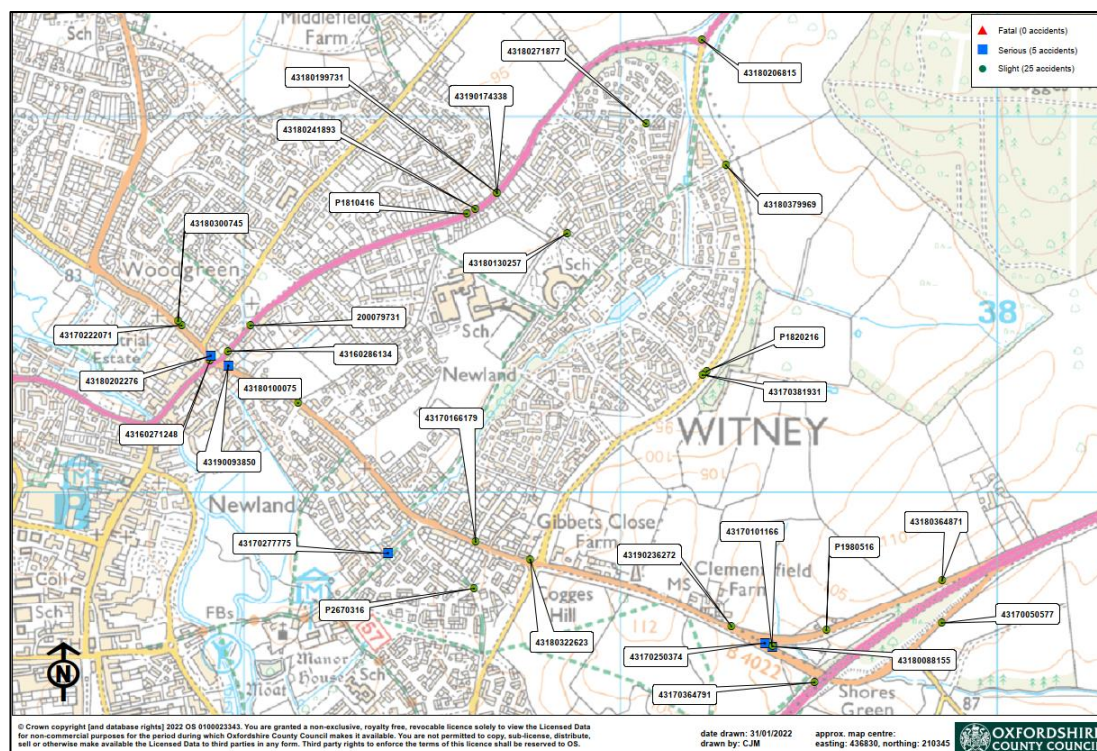


Figure 3.18: Personal Injury Collisions in East Witney – January 2016 to October 2021

3.6.34. During this period, there were a total of 29 collisions recorded within the area shown, of which five resulted in serious injury and 24 in slight injury severity. **Table 3.4** provides a breakdown by severity and highlights how many collisions involved vulnerable road users (VRUs) for 2016 to 2021. There were no fatalities recorded. One incident has been removed from this analysis due to ‘impairment by alcohol’ being identified as a contributory factor.

Severity	Total Collisions		Collisions involving Vulnerable Road Users		
	Total	Percentage	Pedestrians	Cyclists	M/C
Fatal	0	0%	0	0	0
Serious	5	17%	0	3	2
Slight	24	83%	1	8	0
Total	29	100%	1	11	2

Table 3.4: Total Number of Collisions, Severity and Number Involving Vulnerable Road Users

3.6.35. Collisions occurring near the Scheme were infrequent, with four collisions that occurred near the proposed new signalised junctions on the B4022. A more detailed analysis of cause of collisions is described in the Scheme Transport Assessment included in **Appendix 7** of this Statement.

3.7. Air Quality in Witney Town Centre

3.7.1. Section 82(2) of the Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to review current and potential future air quality in their area. Reviews need to include “an assessment to be made of whether air quality standards and objectives are being met”. WODC has identified exceedances for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in and around Bridge Street in Witney compared with the national air quality

objectives (the national limit for NO₂ to protect health is an annual mean concentration of 40 µg/m³).

- 3.7.2. The District Council has therefore declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) at Bridge Street, Woodgreen and Mill Street – one of just two in the district as a whole. Further information on the AQMA is provided in WODC Air Quality Annual Report attached as **Appendix 8**. The identified cause of this exceedance in NO₂ concentrations is the level of road traffic.
- 3.7.3. The inset map in **Figure 3.19** below highlights the extent of the AQMA at Bridge Street, Woodgreen and Mill Street. Despite measured levels of NO₂ being less than the national limit in 2020 and 2021 (reflecting lower traffic levels during the Covid-19 pandemic) as reported in the Council's 2022 report, WODC expects that levels will rise back and exceed the national limit again in the future as traffic levels increase.

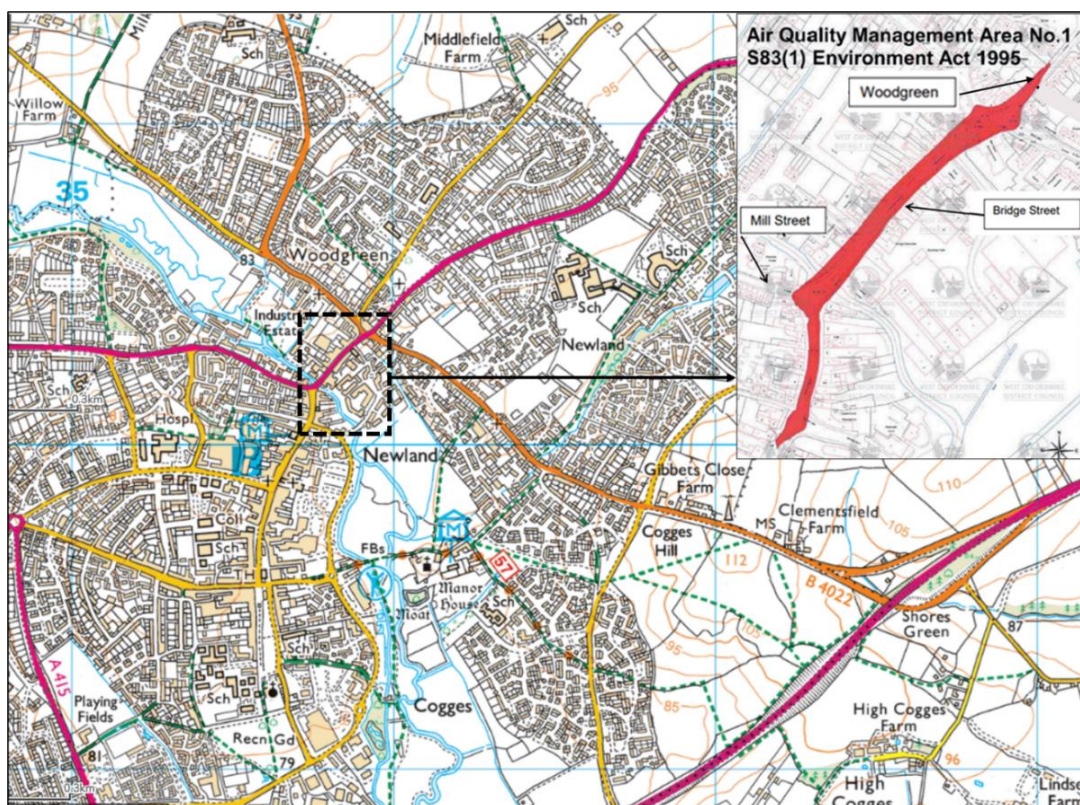


Figure 3.19: Witney Central Showing Bridge Street Air Quality Management Area

- 3.7.4. For air quality monitoring purposes, WODC uses non-automatic roadside diffusion tubes at six individual monitoring points within the Witney AQMA. **Table 3.5** provides a table of monitoring results from the roadside diffusion tube sites presenting the annual mean concentration of NO₂ from 2017 to 2021. Exceedances of the NO₂ annual mean objective of 40µg/m³ are shown in bold. This is data extracted from Table A.2 in Appendix A of the 2022 WODC Air Quality Annual Report attached as **Appendix 8**.

Diffusion Tube ID	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
NAS1 – 25 Bridge St, Witney	49.9	48.2	44.8	36.8	37.6
NAS2 - 10 Bridge St, Witney	40.6	40.5	37.1	27.5	31.8
NAS3 - 20 Bridge St, Witney	43.9	41.8	41.9	32.2	35.1
NAS4 – 9 Mill St, Witney	34.4	31.9	33.9	26.2	26.9
NAS5 – 4A West End, Witney	33.9	35.5	33.1	25.9	28.4
NAS6 – Woodgreen Hill, Witney	33.9	34.4	35.5	26.6	29.9
NAS7 - Newland, Witney	35.8	34.5	34.3	27.0	28.0

Table 3.5: Bridge Street AQMA - Annual mean NO₂ monitoring results (µgm-3)

- 3.7.5. Air quality in Witney Town Centre is particularly dependent on the level of traffic moving through it. Any transport intervention or infrastructure that helps to manage and reduce traffic - and the associated adverse air quality impacts in the declared Witney AQMA at Bridge Street - is to be welcomed. This is particularly the case given the predicted increases in vehicular traffic that have been forecast as a result of the allocated local plan developments in north and east Witney.

3.8 The A40 Improvement Programme

- 3.8.1 Oxfordshire County Council has developed the A40 Corridor Strategy with the following objectives:

- supporting jobs, housing growth and economic vitality;
- reducing transport emissions and meeting the county's obligations to the government;
- protecting, and where possible, enhancing Oxfordshire's environment and improving quality of life; and
- improving public health, air quality, safety and individual wellbeing.

- 3.8.2 To support realisation of these strategic objectives the A40 Corridor Investment Programme has been developed as illustrated in **Figure 3.20**. This comprises a number of highway, bus and active mode infrastructure improvement schemes on the A40 between Witney and Oxford. This infrastructure improvement programme will be supported by improvements to bus services along the A40 corridor between Oxford, Eynsham, Witney and Carterton.

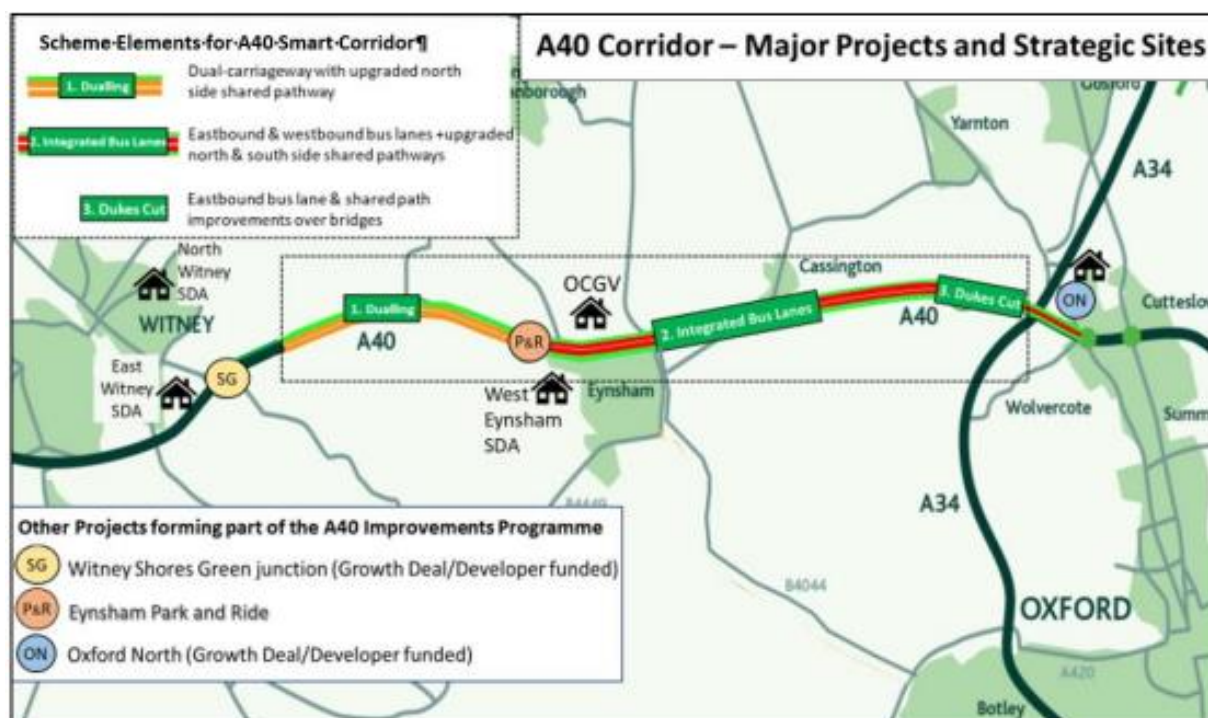


Figure 3.20: A40 Corridor Improvement Projects

3.8.3 The Access to Witney Scheme forms part of this A40 improvement investment programme – a comprehensive package of transportation improvements to a 10.8km stretch between Witney and Wolvercote roundabout. The corridor improvements are to be implemented through several separate planning applications. The benefits of the Scheme would be further enhanced by the public transport and active travel benefits that the wider A40 corridor investment programme is intended to deliver, should they come forward.

3.8.4 The A40 Improvements Programme currently includes the following three additional elements:

- A40 Smart Corridor scheme planning application (Reference R3.0151/21) was submitted for in December 2021 and the consultation ended in February 2022. This application comprises three different elements:
 - Element 1: dualling of an approximately 3.2km long section of the A40 between Hill Farm Junction at Witney and the proposed Park and Ride site at Eynsham, with associated junctions and property accesses, as well as an upgrade to the shared path on the northern verge of the carriageway (also referred to as ‘the A40 Dualling’);
 - Element 2: installation of an approximately 6.5km long section of eastbound and westbound bus lanes between the proposed Park and Ride at Eynsham and Duke’s Cut with associated junction alterations and improvements, as well as improvements to the shared paths alongside the carriageway (also referred to as ‘the A40 Integrated Bus Lanes’ (IBL)); and

— Element 3: capacity and connectivity improvements over the four structures at Duke's Cut (Earl's Culvert, Duke's Cut Canal Bridge, Wolvercote Canal Bridge and Wolvercote Railway Bridge) to enable the bus lane(s) to be extended over the bridges, as well as a shared path link to the National Cycle Network (NCN) 5 at Duke's Cut Cottages (also referred to as 'the A40 Duke's Cut').

An increase in construction costs due to inflation means that an issue has arisen in relation to funding of this scheme; as such the Council is currently reviewing the optimum means of delivering the various elements identified.

- Eynsham Park & Ride (Planning Application Reference R3.0057/19), a new 850-space Park and Ride (P&R) facility located on the A40 at Eynsham. Planning permission was granted for the Park & Ride in March 2021. The planning application also included the eastbound bus lanes between the Park & Ride and Duke's Cut, and sections of westbound bus lane and walk/cycle routes, which are now incorporated into Element 2 of the A40 Scheme.
- A40 Oxford North improvements comprising completion of the eastbound bus lanes between Duke's Cut and Wolvercote Roundabout and walking and cycling improvements. This is a committed scheme with funding secure from developers of Oxford North and Oxfordshire Growth Deal funding.

4. SCHEME DESCRIPTION

4.1 The Scheme: Access to Witney Shores Green Junction

4.1.1 The layout of the Scheme is shown in the General Arrangement drawings (**Appendix 2**). The Scheme comprises the following core elements at and around the A40/B4022 Shores Green junction, which are further described below:

(1) The improvement of the A40 Principal Road from a point on the south west side of the A40 overbridge crossing of the B4022, at South Leigh, south westwards for a distance of approximately 775 metres, and incorporating:

- (a) The construction of a new eastbound exit slip road, from a point on the existing A40 approximately 520 metres south-west of the A40 overbridge crossing of the B4022, north eastwards to its junction with the B4022;
- (b) The construction of a new westbound entry slip road, from its junction with the B4022, south westwards to its junction with the A40, at a point approximately 280 metres south west of the A40 overbridge crossing of the B4022,

these two new slip roads forming a grade separated junction, providing new eastbound exit to and westbound entry from the B4022, to and from Witney, to complement the existing eastbound access and exit from the A40 on the north east side of the existing junction;

- (c) The provision of an integral footway of the A40 on the north-west side of the new eastbound exit slip road. This new footway will replace Footpaths 410/41/40, 41/41/30 and a length of 410/41/20 (Witney) which presently run on the north-west side of the A40 boundary and which are to be stopped up where they fall within the improved/widened A40. The new integral footway will be provided to retain connections from the B4022 to remaining lengths of Footpaths 410/41/20, 410/42/20 and 410/8/20 (Witney). The new integral footway will be 3m in width to allow it to be converted to a shared use cycle track in the future in line with aspirations set out in the Witney Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP) adopted in March 2023. The new integral footway will reconnect with Footpath 410/41/20 (Witney), at the new A40 boundary just to the north-east of the new attenuation pond.

Lengths of a further two footpaths, Footpath 410/8/20 (Witney) and Footpath 410/42/20 (Witney) which extend north westwards off this south westwards running route, will also be stopped up, up to the point at which they will junction the new Footway;

- (d) The provision of an integral footway of the A40 on the south-east side of the new westbound entry slip road. This new footway will replace

a length of Footpath 353/31/10 (South Leigh), which presently runs on the south-east side of the A40 boundary and which is to be stopped up where it falls within the improved/widened A40. The new integral footway will be provided to retain a connection from the B4022 south westwards to the remaining length of Footpath 353/31/10 (South Leigh) at a point where it takes its generally eastwards turn heading towards the High Cogges road. The new integral footway will have an unbound surface;

- (e) Removal of two existing lay-bys which are located to the south-west of the A40 overbridge of the B4022 at the Shores Green Junction; and
 - (f) Provision of a new eastbound carriageway integral highway drainage attenuation pond and maintenance access lay-by, just south-west of where Footpath 410/41/20 (Witney) extends north westwards off the A40;
- (2) Improvement of the B4022, from a point in the west at its junction with the private access to The Barn House at Clementsfield Farm, eastwards to its junction with the C16886 South Leigh Road, and of the C16886 at its junction with the B4022. Such improvements incorporating –
- (a) The upgrading of the B4022 southern footway, and C16886 South Leigh Road western footway at its junction with the B4022, from that junction westwards, to a point on the east side of the proposed A40 westbound entry slip road off the B4022, to a cyclist and pedestrian shared use integral cycle track with a right of way on foot;
 - (b) The provision on the northern side of the B4022 and around the eastern side of the two-way spur of the B4022 of a new cyclist and pedestrian shared use integral cycle track with a right of way on foot;
 - (c) A new pedestrian and cyclist crossing point of the B4022, at the westerly termination point of the southern cycle track on the B4022 mentioned in (a) above, and the easterly termination point of the northern cycle track on the B4022 mentioned in (b) above;
 - (d) A new pedestrian and cyclist crossing point of the B4022, just west of where the new A40 eastbound exit slip road will junction with the B4022, providing a crossing point from and to the new integral cycle track on the northern side of the B4022, mentioned in (b) above, to and from the new integral Footway that will be situated within the improved A40 on the north west side of the new A40 eastbound exit slip road;
 - (e) Provision of two highway drainage attenuation ponds and a maintenance access lay-by on the southern side of the B4022, to the west of its junction with the C16886 South Leigh Road,
 - (f) Improvements to the existing bus layby and bus stop on what is to become the southern integral cycle track with a right of way on foot

of the B4022 near the junction with the C18886 South Leigh Road;
and

- (g) Resurfacing works, new road markings and signage at the newly formed junction.

- 4.1.2 The existing A40 overbridge at Shores Green will be retained. There will be no change to the existing layout of the B4022 east-facing entry road onto the A40 westbound. The proposed layout will keep the existing B4022 east-facing entry and exit roads onto the A40 as single traffic lanes.
- 4.1.3 Traffic exiting and entering the new west facing slip roads close to the overbridge will be controlled by two new signalised 'T' junctions, approximately 100m apart. The proposed layout will keep the existing east-facing slips as single lane entry and exit to/from the B4022. This will also be the case for the new A40 westbound entry slip road. Two lanes will be provided on the approach to the signalised T-junction with the B4022 at the end of the new A40 eastbound exit slip road. Guidance in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) has been used to determine the suitable type of merge and diverge layouts required on the new slip roads.
- 4.1.4 The proposed west-facing slip roads will be subject to a 70 mph (national) speed limit, consistent with the speed limit of the A40 itself at the Shores Green junction. The B4022, within the Scheme extents, will be subject to a 40mph speed limit.

Site Plan – Existing Constraints

- 4.1.5 The site plan included at **Appendix 1** identifies some of the main constraints and features in the immediate scheme area including:
- Residential properties at High Cogges and adjacent to the B4022
 - Existing category 'A' trees
 - SGN Gas Governor
 - Culverts, drainage ditches and Lymbrook watercourse
 - Overhead High Voltage Cables
 - Thames Water Utilities
 - Public Rights of Way
- 4.1.6 Currently, there are two A40 laybys, one on the A40 westbound carriageway and one of the A40 eastbound carriageway, which are located to the south west of the A40 overbridge of the B4022 at Shores Green. These will be removed as part of the Scheme. This is necessary due to the proposed A40 entry and exit slip roads impacting the existing laybys, as the merge conflicts with the layby location.
- 4.1.7 A layby assessment study has concluded that there will be no adverse impact from removing the two laybys. The A40 Access to Witney Lay-by Review Report appears at **Appendix 9**. As key stakeholders, Thames Valley Police (TVP) and the Road Haulage Association have been consulted on this and no

concerns were raised. No direct replacement of these laybys is therefore proposed.

- 4.1.8 Constructing the Scheme will result in removal of a small number of trees. To mitigate removal of the identified trees, an outline landscape scheme has been submitted alongside the Scheme's planning application, which accompanies the Environmental Statement (ES).

4.2 *Summary*

- 4.2.1 The Scheme Description provided in the section above, supported by the General Arrangement drawings of the Scheme [**Appendix 2**], describe in detail the proposed technical scope of works that make up the Scheme.

5. NEED FOR THE SCHEME

5.1. Scheme Objectives

5.1.1 The main objectives for the Scheme are as follows:

Objective 1 - Support the delivery of planned housing growth in Witney as set out the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031;

Objective 2 - Reduce congestion and improve air quality in Witney Town Centre, including in the Bridge Street Air Quality Management Area; and

Objective 3 - Improve access to the A40 from east and north-east Witney.

5.1.2 This section sets out how the Scheme addresses those objectives, why the scheme is needed and how it helps address the existing and future challenges and issues faced in the Witney area as described in Section 3 and presents the key benefits and impacts of the Scheme. In summary, the Scheme is needed to:

- Support delivery of new housing (including affordable homes) in Witney
- Improve access to the A40 for traffic to east and north-east Witney and reduce the need for traffic to route through Witney town centre
- Reduce traffic volumes on Bridge Street to help enable delivery of measures to promote sustainable and active travel in Witney Town Centre
- Reduce traffic delays and improve journey times for vehicular traffic, including buses, in Witney
- Improve air quality in the Witney Air Quality Management Area
- Improve access to public transport, faster bus journey times and more reliable buses
- Provide safer active travel connections and facilities through the Scheme area
- Public health benefits through improved air quality in Witney Town centre and better active travel facilities

5.2 Supporting Delivery of New Housing in Witney

5.2.1 There is a significant need and demand for housing (including affordable homes) across Oxfordshire. The WOLP emphasises that the provision of new housing is a critically important issue for West Oxfordshire. New housing is vital to economic growth and as an attractive and well-located place, people want to live in West Oxfordshire.

5.2.2 In accordance with the overall Local Plan strategy (Policy OS2) a significant proportion of new housing will be provided at the District's three main towns of Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton. Policy H1 of the Local plan

identifies a provision for at least 15,950 new homes in West Oxfordshire. Witney has been identified in the WOLP as a key area for growth and delivery of around 4,702 new homes by 2031.

- 5.2.3 The Scheme will support residential development in West Oxfordshire by delivering infrastructure that has been deemed to be ‘critical’ in the Local Plan, to help mitigate the impact of new residential development sites, as endorsed in Local Plan Policies (WIT1 and WIT2). The strategic housing sites identified in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan (adopted 2018 (WOLP)) that are supported by the Scheme (9.2.33), include East Witney SDA (EWSDA) and North Witney SDA (NWSDA).
- 5.2.4 Critically, the Scheme will allow traffic to and from these strategic housing sites to access the A40 primary route and travel both east and west without having to take a route via Bridge Street thereby helping to reduce traffic and pollution in the historic core of the Town Centre.
- 5.2.5 WOLP (Paragraph 7.35) identifies a number of strategic highway schemes which are “necessary to support the quantum and distribution of planned housing and employment growth at Witney”. The identified schemes include:

Shores Green Slip Roads: the provision of west facing slip roads at the Shores Green junction onto the A40 to the east of Witney. Delivery will be facilitated by the proposed East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) – see Policy WIT1 and will be accompanied by proposed improvements to Bridge Street.

- 5.2.6 WOLP Policy WIT1 (‘East Witney Strategic Development Area’) sets out the framework for land to the east of Witney to accommodate a community including about 450 homes at East Witney Strategic Development Area (‘EWSDA’). The EWSDA is located immediately west of the site, and the Scheme will help unlock this strategic development area, facilitating the delivery of new homes in the area. With reference to the Scheme, Policy WIT1, part C advises that development of the EWSDA is:

“To be phased in accordance with the timing of provision of supporting infrastructure and facilities including the essential improvements to the Shore’s Green junction onto the A40 and related highway measures.”

- 5.2.7 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), produced as evidence in support of the Main Modifications to the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, identified the Scheme (referred to as the Shores Green Slip Roads (SGSR) as being critical and specifically a pre-requisite of development at East Witney and also highlights the importance of SGSR for NWSDA delivery [Appendix 12].
- 5.2.8 A financial contribution towards the Scheme has already been secured from another housing development north of Burford Road in Witney. Financial contributions will also be required from both East Witney SDA and North Witney SDA towards the Scheme, as part of a wider strategic transport infrastructure fund/package for Witney.

5.3. *Improving Access to East and North-East Witney and Removing the Need for Traffic to Route Through Witney Town Centre*

- 5.3.1. Witney's congestion problems are in large part due to there being only one main vehicular crossing point in Witney Town Centre across the River Windrush at Bridge Street, which acts as a bottleneck to traffic travelling east – west across the town. For residents in the north and east of Witney wishing to travel to Witney town centre, the employment areas to the west of town, and the westbound A40, routing via Bridge Street is currently their only feasible option. Similarly, drivers using the A4095 and wishing to head west on the A40 or south on the A415 or A4095 must route through Witney Town Centre via Bridge Street.
- 5.3.2. By providing west-facing slip roads onto the A40 at Shores Green, the Scheme will reduce the need for traffic from east and north-east Witney to route along Bridge Street by providing an alternative means of access to the west of Witney via the B4022 and A40. It will also allow those using the A4095 and travelling further west on the A40 or south on the A415 and A4095 to access the A40 at the A40/B4022 Shores Green junction rather than at the A40/Ducklington Lane junction (via the town centre).
- 5.3.3. To assess the forecast impact of the Scheme strategic traffic modelling has been undertaken to compare the performance of the road network with and without the Scheme in place. This has been based on a predicted future year (2031) traffic scenario, which includes base traffic growth and all planned development included in the WODC Local Plan upto 2031.
- 5.3.4. Some of the main findings from that strategic traffic modelling are provided below. A fuller analysis of the predicted effects of the Scheme on traffic routing and flows across the Witney area is presented in Section 8 of the Transport Assessment provided at **Appendix 7** and in the Strategic Traffic Model Forecasting Report provided at **Appendix 10**.
- 5.3.5. The strategic traffic modelling forecasts that the introduction of the west facing slips onto the A40 is successful in opening up access to east and north-east Witney and providing an attractive alternative route for cross town traffic that avoids the town centre. **Figures 21 and 22** are strategic model plots showing the predicted origins and destinations of traffic using the new eastbound off-slip road and westbound on-slip road that forms part of the Scheme.
- 5.3.6. **Figure 5.1** shows the vehicle trips forecast to use the new east-bound off slip at Shores Green in the 2031 AM peak (a 'select link analysis') – taking account of the origins and destinations of those trips and the routes they are most likely to take according to the traffic model. The amount of traffic is shown by the width of the green lines. **Figure 5.1** illustrates that traffic predicted to use the A40 eastbound off-slip at Shores Green originates from the A40 west, west Witney, the A415 south and A4095 south and will mainly be heading for east and north Witney and the A4095 north. Importantly, this will include trips that would otherwise be expected to route through Witney town centre and Bridge Street.
- 5.3.7. **Figure 5.2** illustrates that traffic forecast to use the new A40 westbound on slip will mainly originate in east and north-east Witney and from the A4095 and

will mainly be headed for the A40 west, west Witney and the A415 south. Again, this illustrates that the Scheme is forecast to divert trips away from Witney town centre and provide better access and connectivity for north and east Witney.

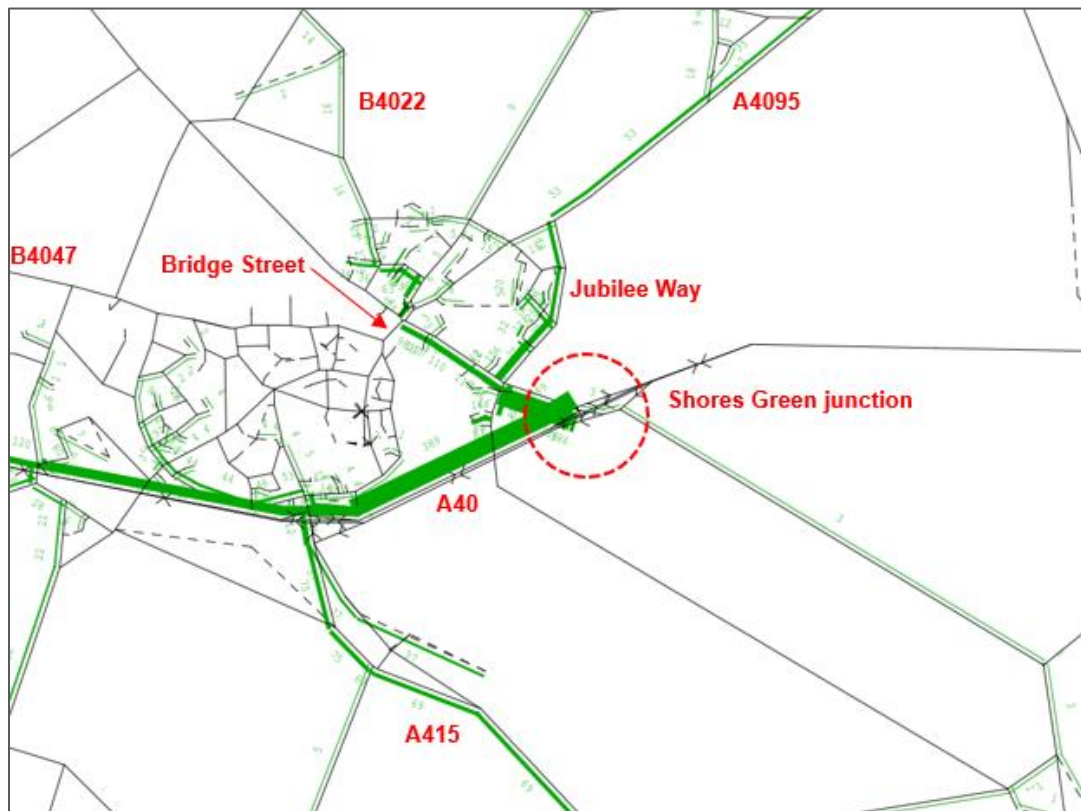


Figure 5.1: Forecast routing of traffic using proposed A40 Eastbound Off-slip (2031 AM Peak)

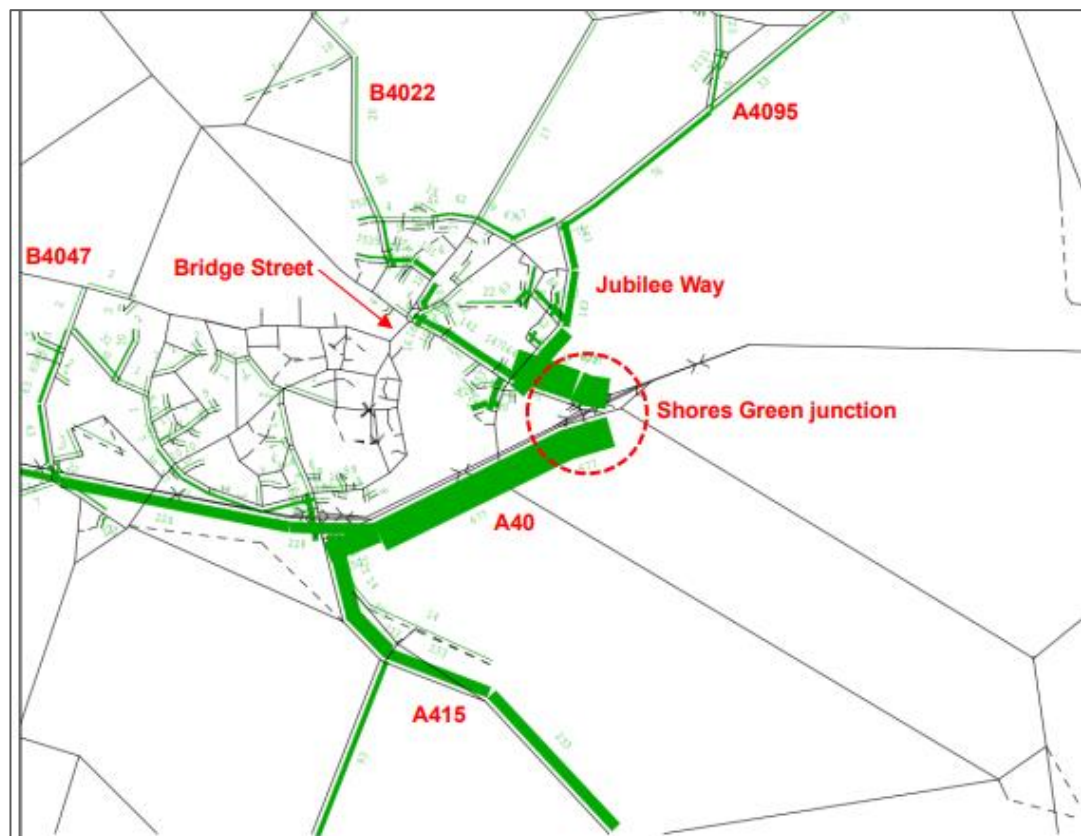


Figure 5.2: Forecast routing of traffic using proposed A40 Westbound On-slip (2031 PM Peak)

5.3.8. Providing the Scheme and opening up an alternative route to access the A40 will enable the Council to also:

- Re-designate the A4095 via Jubilee Way, Oxford Hill, A40, Ducklington Lane and Thorney Leys so through traffic travels around the edge of the town rather than through it.
- Implement schemes to deter through traffic from using Bridge Street and the Woodstock Road, and to encourage through traffic to use the re-designated A4095. (WIT2).
- Implement schemes to improve the streetscape and environment in Witney town centre and encourage greater use of sustainable and active travel modes.

5.3.9. Removing through traffic from the town centre and providing an alternative route for traffic to access the A40 will also improve the resilience of the road network when incidents and congestion occur and when streetworks take place.

5.4. Network Impacts - Reducing Traffic on Bridge Street and in Witney Town Centre

5.4.1 As described in Section 3, restrictions in Witney's road network – the limited places to cross the River Windrush and the lack of west-facing slip roads at the A40 Shores Green Interchange – lead to a great deal of traffic routing through Witney Town Centre using Bridge Street.

5.4.2 The traffic levels and associated congestion have an adverse impact on the quality of the streetscape and environment at Bridge Street and in Witney Town Centre. High traffic levels and congestion has led to it being declared an Air Quality Management Area for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). This has an adverse impact on the environment in the town centre, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

5.4.3 The Scheme will help reduce the need for traffic to route through the town centre and is forecast to reduce traffic volumes. The strategic traffic model forecasts the impact of the Scheme on traffic flows across Witney. **Figure 5.3** are plots from the strategic traffic model which show the predicted differences in modelled traffic flow between the 'with Scheme' and 'without Scheme' scenarios in the 2031 AM peak. **Figure 5.4** provides the equivalent plot for the 2031 PM peak. The width of the green lines indicates the size of predicted net increases in two-way traffic flow with the Scheme. The width of the blue lines shows predicted net decreases in traffic flow with the Scheme.

5.4.4 **Figures 5.3 and 5.4** shows how the Scheme is forecast to reduce town centre traffic, particularly on Bridge Street, which will reduce traffic delays, ease congestion, reduce traffic emissions and improve air quality.

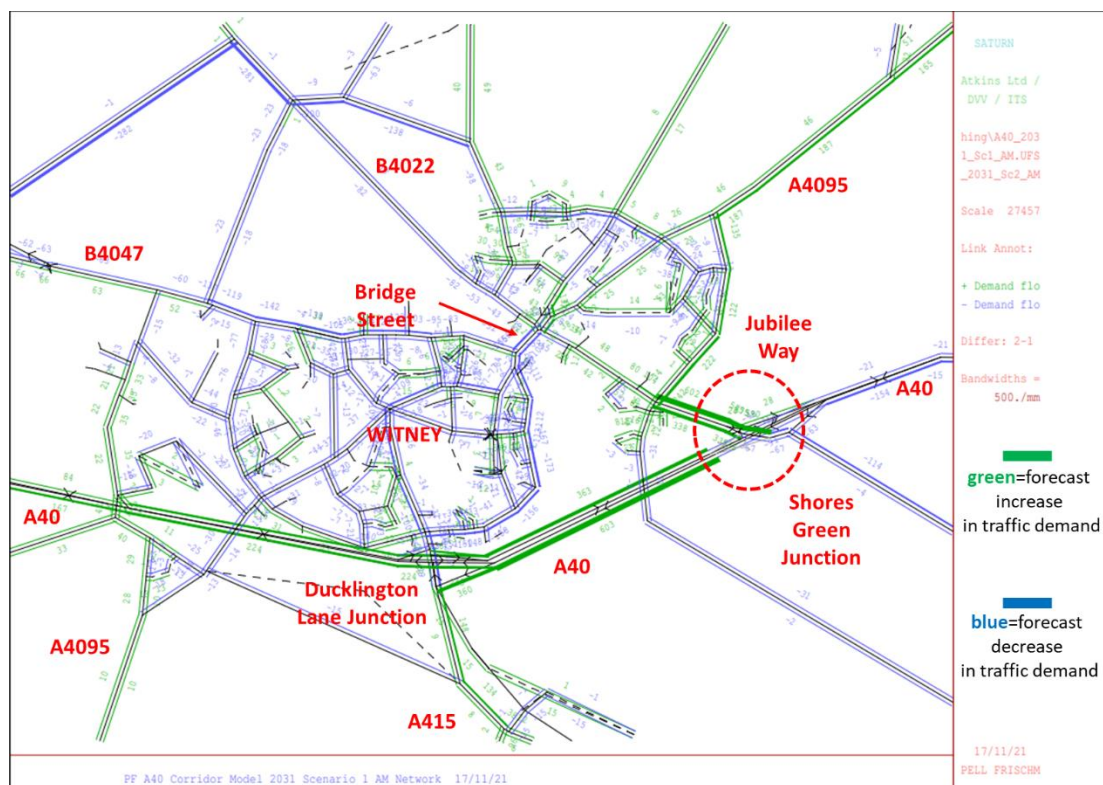


Figure 5.3: Forecast traffic flow changes ('with scheme' vs 'without scheme') in 2031 AM Peak

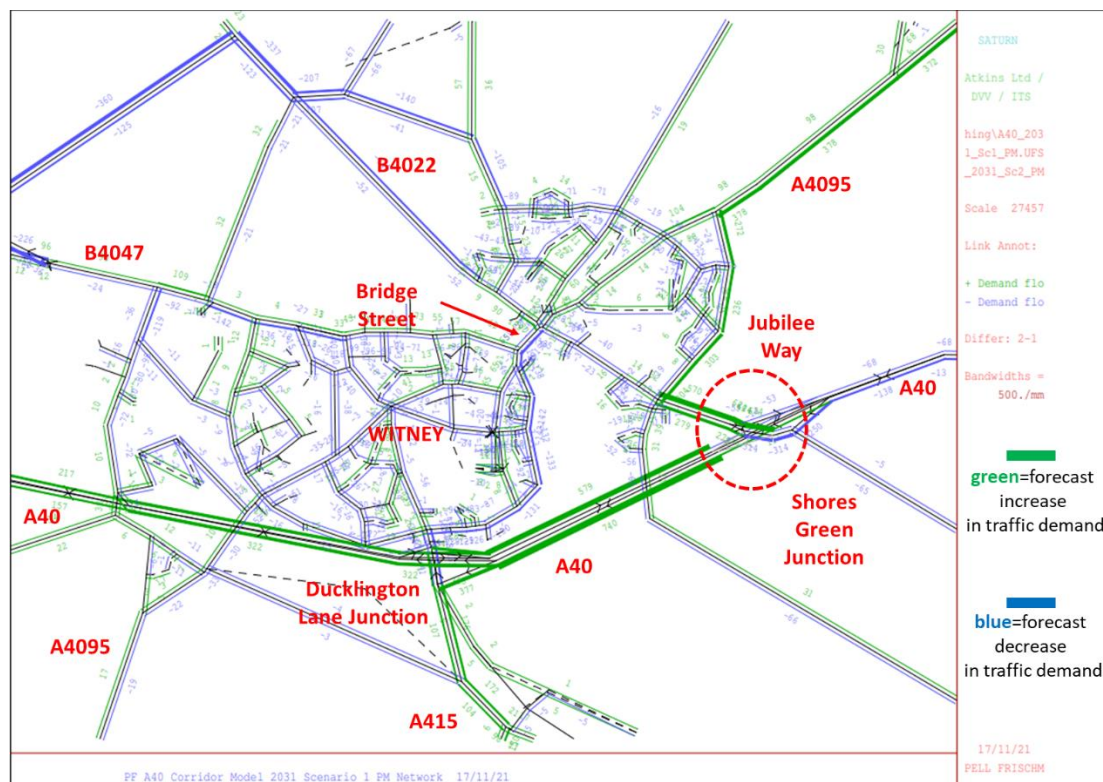


Figure 5.4: Forecast traffic flow changes ('with scheme' vs 'without scheme') in 2031 PM Peak

5.4.5 Providing and alternative cross town route and reducing traffic in the town centre will also support the County Council's ambitions to develop and deliver

schemes in Witney town centre that re-allocate road space and promote more walking, cycling and bus use.

- 5.4.6 In the AM peak the model forecasts reductions in traffic flows in the town centre on Bridge Street, High Street, Witan Way, Welch Way and on the A40 to the east of Shores Green; and traffic increases forecast on the A40 west of Shores Green, the B4022 Oxford Hill, Jubilee Way and the A4095 to the north-east of Witney. The strategic modelling forecasts that the Scheme will reduce two-way traffic demand on Bridge Street by around 7% to 12% in the AM peak hour (0800 to 0900).
- 5.4.7 Predicted traffic patterns for the PM peak are very similar to those for the AM peak, with forecast reductions in traffic in the Town Centre on Bridge Street and Witan Way and increases forecast on the A40 west of Shores Green, B4022 Oxford Hill and the A4095 north-east of Witney. The Scheme is forecast to reduce two-way traffic demand on Bridge Street by around 12% to 13% in the PM peak hour (1700 to 1800). Forecast reductions in the Inter-Peak hours are around 14% to 17%.

Wider Network Impacts

- 5.4.8 **Figures 5.3 and 5.4** also show how the Scheme is forecast to impact on traffic flows across the wider area. Local roads such as South Leigh Road (to the south east of Witney), Dry Lane (to the north of Witney) and the route between Minster Lovell and Crawley are predicted to see decreases in traffic flow in the AM and PM peak hours.
- 5.4.9 Whilst no increases in traffic flow through South Leigh are predicted in the traffic model, the County Council recognises and understands the concerns raised by South Leigh and High Cogges Parish Council that the new slip roads introduced by Scheme may result in additional traffic ‘rat-running’ along the C16886 South Leigh Road, Chapel Road and Station Road in the future. As a result, the County Council is committed to monitoring the impacts of the Scheme on the wider road network (including on the C16886) both during construction and once the Scheme is operational, and will work with South Leigh and High Cogges Parish Council and local communities to discuss and develop potential mitigation measures, should they be required.

5.5 Improving Journey Times and Reducing Traffic Delays and Congestion

- 5.5.1 Traffic delays and congestion in Witney Town Centre arise as a result of the limited river crossing points in Witney Town Centre and the traffic bottleneck created at Bridge Street. The Scheme is forecast to reduce journey times for vehicular traffic, including buses, across the town.
- 5.5.2 The strategic modelling forecasts also gives an indication of the likely impact of the Scheme on average travel times on routes across the town. The routes assessed are shown in **Figure 5.5**.

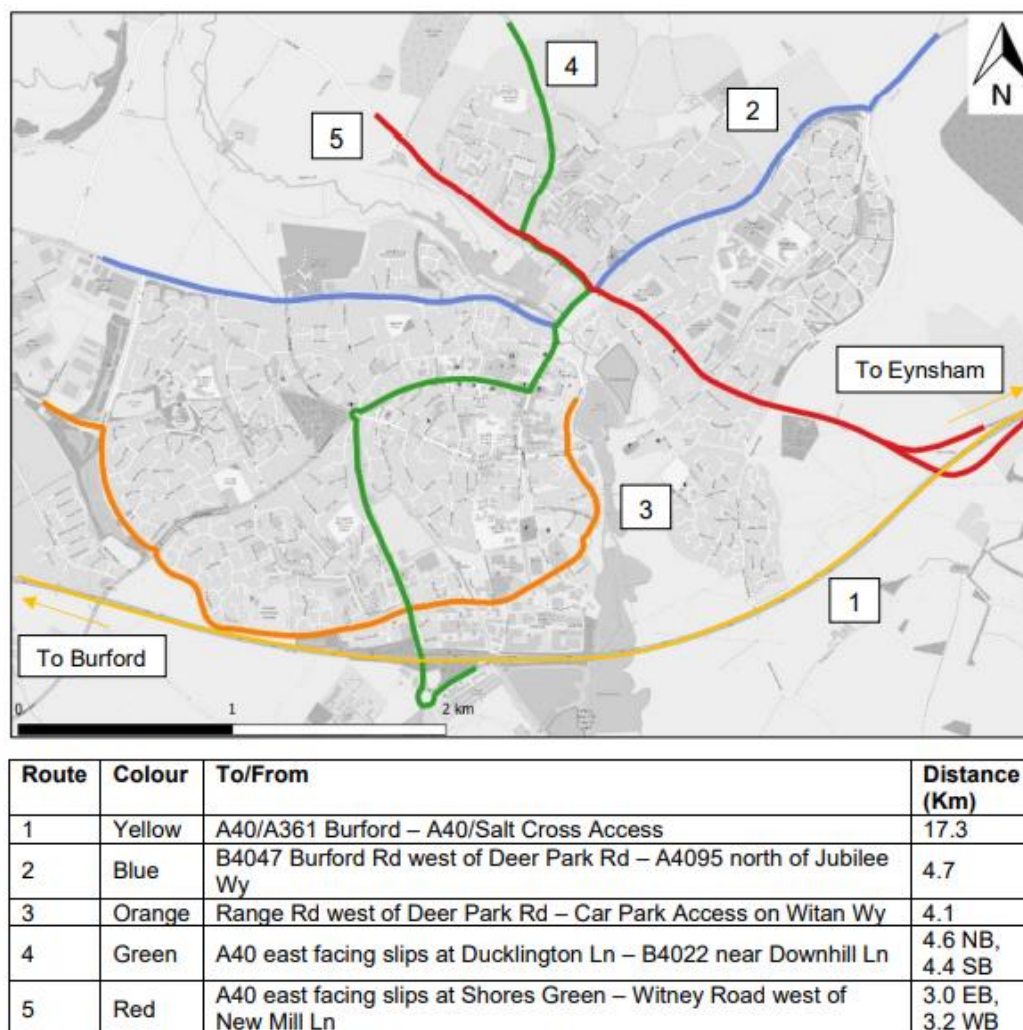


Figure 5.5: Journey Time Routes Modelled in Strategic Traffic Model

- 5.5.3 A comparison of the forecast journey times on these routes in the AM and PM peaks in 2031 in both a 'With Scheme' and a 'Without Scheme' scenario is given in **Table 5.1**. This shows that the introduction of the Scheme generally improves journey times through Witney in response to the reduction in vehicles within the town compared to the 'Without Scheme' scenario.
- 5.5.4 The westbound red route in the PM peak sees increases in travel times, with increased traffic on the B4022 accessing Witney from the A40 Shores Green junction. This leads to more delay westbound into the B4022 Oxford Hill/Jubilee junction. Further detail on the journey time analysis can be found in Section 6 of the Strategic Traffic Model Forecasting Report provided at **Appendix 10**.

Route	Direction	AM			PM		
		2031 Without Scheme	2031 With Scheme	Difference	2031 Without Scheme	2031 With Scheme	Difference
Yellow	EB	726	724	-2	702	701	-1
Yellow	WB	690	687	-3	743	725	-18
Blue	EB	607	533	-74	795	689	-106
Blue	WB	798	662	-136	597	534	-63
Orange	EB	462	461	-1	456	452	-4
Orange	WB	454	448	-6	492	483	-9
Green	NB	754	672	-82	985	871	-114
Green	SB	895	761	-134	734	661	-73
Red	EB	598	479	-117	368	370	2
Red	WB	626	592	-34	458	637	179

Table 5.1: Forecast Impact on Witney Vehicular Journey Times (2031 Am and PM Peak)

5.6. Improving Air Quality in the Witney Town Centre Air Quality Management Area

- 5.6.1 The District Council has declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Witney Town Centre at Bridge Street, Woodgreen and Mill Street. The identified cause of this exceedance in NO₂ is the level of road traffic. The strategic traffic modelling forecast described in section 5.4 above, highlights that the Scheme will result in reductions in traffic flows within the town centre, including in the AQMA area covering Bridge Street which will help to improve local air quality.
- 5.6.2 The local air quality modelling and assessment completed as part of the Environmental Statement (submitted as part of the planning application for the Scheme), predicts that within the Witney AQMA annual mean NO₂ concentrations will be reduced. The number of receptors predicted to exceed the annual mean objective decreases from 23 in the 2024 'Without Scheme' scenario to 12 in the 2024 'With Scheme' Scenario.
- 5.6.3 Outside of the AQMA, there are no predicted exceedances of the annual mean NO₂ objective at any of the selected receptors in the 'With Scheme' Scenario.
- 5.6.4 A summary of the local air quality modelling results at selected public exposure receptors in key areas is provided **Table 5.2: AQ Summary Table** (March 2022) below. The overall conclusion of the local air quality assessment of the Scheme is that there will be beneficial air quality impacts within the Witney AQMA and that no significant effects at other public exposure receptors.

Area	Receptor ID	2018 Base NO ₂ (µg/m ³)	LTT _{E6} 2024 DM NO ₂ (µg/m ³)	LTT _{E6} 2024 DS NO ₂ (µg/m ³)	LTT _{E6} 2024 NO ₂ Change (µg/m ³)
Witney (Bridge Street)	W10	52.9	44.9	42.3	-2.6
Witney (Mill Street)	W1	37.9	37.2	30.5	-6.8
Witney (High Street)	W2	40.8	35.6	33.8	-1.8
Witney (Woodgreen Hill)	W15	37.9	33.0	32.7	-0.4
Oxford Hill	R26	17.9	20.5	26.8	+6.3
Eynsham	R1	21.0	24.1	20.8	-3.3
Long Harborough	R6	19.3	18.8	20.2	+1.4
Burwell Fields	R52	20.8	19.1	19.6	+0.5
Ducklington	R18	15.8	13.8	13.9	+0.1

Note: Numbers in bold exceed the annual mean AQS objective of 40µg/m³

Table 5.2: Selected Results of Annual Mean NO₂ concentrations in key areas (Base and 2024 Forecast)

5.6.5 Further detail on local air quality and the impact of the scheme is included in **Appendix 11: Environmental Statement Volume I Chapter 5: Air Quality**].

5.6.6 In addition to the direct local air quality benefits arising in the town centre as a result of the Scheme, the improved walking and cycling infrastructure delivered as part of the Scheme will also help encourage less car use and further help reduce vehicular emissions in the local area.

5.6.7 The Council is also committed to working in partnership with Stagecoach to ensure that all buses operating from Witney to the Eynsham Park & Ride site will be very low emission (Euro VI specification). All buses on the current S1 and S2 bus services, making up the majority of Witney's operations, are already Euro VI compliant.

5.7. Improving Public Transport – Accessibility, Connectivity and Reliability

5.7.1 As described in **Sections 5.4** and **5.5** above the Scheme is forecast to reduce traffic on Bridge Street and generally improve journey times in Witney. This will improve bus journey times, operational resilience and timetable reliability for buses across Witney. The reductions in traffic in the town centre would also result in there being scope for the provision of enhanced bus infrastructure which could help promote bus services.

5.7.2 The existing bus stop and layby located on the southern side of the B4022 to the west of C16886 South Leigh Road will remain in the same position but will be improved with new bus stop kerbing (with an upstand of 140mm) to allow easier access to board the bus. The Scheme will also provide a new shared path on the B4022 and a signalised crossing of the B4022, just west of where the new A40 eastbound exit slip road will junction with the B4022, providing safer and higher quality connectivity for people using this bus stop.

5.7.3 The location of bus stops on the existing eastbound B4022 on-slip to the A40 will remain unchanged.

5.8. *Improving Active Travel - Connectivity and Safety*

- 5.8.1 As described in **Sections 5.4 and 5.5** above the Scheme is forecast to reduce traffic on Bridge Street and in Witney town centre. This will improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists in the town centre, reducing conflict with vehicular traffic and also providing greater scope for the Council to provide road space for segregated cycle lanes and other facilities in the town centre that will promote more active travel.
- 5.8.2 Directly, the Scheme will provide facilities that will improve provision for active travel between South Leigh, High Cogges and Witney, safeguard for future strategic connections for cycling and walking between Witney centre and the A40 corridor, as well as enabling future linkages with development within the EWSDA in accordance with objective CO11 of the WOLP. This will support planning and transport policy objectives for a modal shift away from car use towards more walking and cycling, reducing overall emissions and supporting the climate agenda.
- 5.8.3 The Scheme will improve highway safety for all road users by delivering at-grade pedestrian controlled crossings at the junctions between the new slip roads and the B4022 and a new shared use path for cyclist and pedestrians alongside the B4022 carriageway.
- 5.8.4 At present, there is no shared pedestrian and cyclist use integral cycle track within the B4022 from its junction with the C16886 South Leigh Road generally westwards to its junction with the B4022 proceeding to A40 eastbound. That length of the B4022 is presently served by a narrow southern footway and adjacent grassed verge on the south side of its carriageway, with the footway being wider at its eastern end only and the junction of the South Leigh Road where the bus stop/layby is located on the B4022. As a result existing provision for pedestrians wanting to walk east-west alongside the B4022 to and from Witney is poor. At present cyclists have no facilities and must use the main carriageway.
- 5.8.5 The Scheme will provide a new shared pedestrian and cyclist use integral cycle track, on the north side of the B4022 carriageway, from a point just east and opposite of where the new A40 westbound entry slip road from the B4022 will be provided at the new junction and which will extend generally westwards and around the eastern side of the B4022 spur connection located to the south of the property 'The Paddock'. From this end point of this length of cycle track, pedestrians and cyclists will cross the B4022, to join the existing shared pedestrian and cyclist use integral cycle track on its northern side to continue their journey either westwards towards Witney or eastwards onto the A40 eastbound integral cycle track.
- 5.8.6 From the junction of the B4022 with the C16886 South Leigh Road, westwards to the eastern side of the new A40 westbound entry slip road off the B4022, the southern footway of the B4022 will be converted to a shared pedestrian and cyclist use integral cycle track. At the westerly end point of this length of cycle track, one of two new signal controlled pedestrian crossings on the B4022 will be installed and which will provide a safe crossing facility taking pedestrian and cyclist users across the B4022 to join its new integral cycle

track on the north side of its carriageway and to continue their journey on that track to Witney town centre and across the town, or to join the A40 eastbound cycle track. Pedestrians will also be able to connect to a new length of integral footway of the improved B4022 and length of new Footway of the improved A40, running south westwards off the B4022 cycle track and down the eastern side of the new A40 westbound entry slip road, to join up with Footpath 353/1/10 (South Leigh), offering an off road pedestrian route between the B4022 and the High Cogges Road at High Cogges.

- 5.8.7 The second pedestrian and cyclist crossing point of the B4022, just west of where the new A40 eastbound exit slip road will junction with the B4022, will provide a crossing point from and to the new integral Cycle Track on the northern side of the B4022, to and from the new integral Footway that will be situated on the north west side of the new A40 eastbound exit slip road;
- 5.8.8 The construction of the A40 eastbound exit slip road within the A40 improvement will require the stopping up of the whole of Footpaths 410/41/40, 41/41/30 and a length of 410/41/20 (Witney) which presently run on the north west side of the A40 boundary. These Footpaths will be replaced by a new integral Footway situated on the north-west side of the new A40 eastbound exit slip road. The new Footway will be provided to retain connections from the B4022 to Footpaths 410/41/20, 410/42/20 and 410/8/20 (Witney).
- 5.8.9 The new integral Footway will be 3m in width to allow it to be converted to a shared use cycle track in the future in line with aspirations set out in the Witney Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP) adopted in March 2023. The new integral Footway will reconnect with Footpath 41/41/20 (Witney), at the new A40 boundary just to the north-east of the new attenuation pond
- 5.8.10 The need to safeguard this route for improved active travel and cycle connections for local and wider strategic links is a clear priority in the adopted Witney LCWIP [**Appendix 6**]. The consultation draft plan was available for stakeholder consultation from Sept 2022 and was adopted in March 2023. **Figure 3.16** above illustrates the important future Witney and A40 corridor wider area active travel network connections, and provides an indication of possible new and upgraded route links that will form the basis of Witney's first LWCIP. At this stage, the route alignments are indicative.

5.9. Health and Wellbeing Benefits

- 5.9.1 The Scheme will enable individual and collective health and wellbeing benefits by providing safer walking and cycle facilities and improved connectivity between South Leigh / High Cogges and Witney town centre (via Cogges) and to the proposed segregated cyclist and pedestrian use cycle track along the A40 towards Oxford. This will promote more walking and cycling delivering health and wellbeing benefits
- 5.9.2 The improvements to air quality provided by the Scheme in Witney Town Centre within the AQMA will provide positive health benefits for residents and users of the town centre.

5.10. Increasing Biodiversity

- 5.10.1 Biodiversity considers all the variety of life forms i.e., plants and animals found in an area; in this instance the area would be the locality of the Scheme. A Biodiversity survey has been undertaken to understand the number of plants and animals in the area prior to the Scheme being built to inform the Biodiversity Assessment. This has identified a baseline of data identifying the number of different animals and plants, to which the Scheme is then responsible for maintaining and also increasing by 10%.
- 5.10.2 Habitat creation proposed off-site as part of the Scheme, together with the on-site habitat creation would result in an overall Biodiversity Net Gain. A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been submitted as part of the planning application, which demonstrates the Scheme's ability to achieve 10% net gain against the baseline
- 5.10.3 The existing Shores Green junction has existing trees and hedgerows in close proximity to the junction. Some vegetation removal is necessary to deliver the Scheme. The outline landscaping design has sought to maximise new landscaping within the Scheme boundary.

5.11. Climate Impact

- 5.11.1 An Equality Climate Impact Assessment (EqCIA), has been undertaken in accordance with the spreadsheet tool approved by the Acquiring Authority [**Appendix 13**]. The assessment outcome gave the Scheme an overall positive score, built predominately around the following strengths:
- Transport & Connectivity - the Scheme will support improved active travel facilities and facilitate more walking, cycling and increased use of public transport, and
 - Nature - the Scheme will achieve 10% biodiversity net gain, provide sustainable drainage systems and improve access to wildlife sites.
- 5.11.2 As part of the Environmental Statement submitted as part of the Scheme planning application (Environmental Statement Volume I Chapter 7 Climate Change is provided at **Appendix 14**), a climate change impact assessment was undertaken, which assessed the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions during construction and operation of the Scheme, as well as the Scheme's vulnerability to climate change.
- 5.11.3 This assessment identified that based on the maximum parameters and build out of the Scheme, the total Green House Gas (GHG) emissions related to construction activity are calculated to be in the order of 2,208 tonnes CO_{2e}, of which 43% are associated with embodied carbon in construction materials. The Principal Contractor's Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will set out monitoring to be undertaken during the construction stage to ensure that the mitigation measures embedded in the design are appropriately implemented to reduce carbon emissions where possible.

5.11.4 Average annual Green House Gas (GHG) emissions with the operation of the Scheme are estimated to be 524 tonnes CO_{2e} lower than without the Scheme. The calculated reduction in GHG emissions is due to a reduction in traffic congestion and journey times in the area resulting from the improvements at the junction.

5.11.5 Overall, the assessment concluded that the Scheme would not have significant adverse effects on the climate during construction and once operational.

5.12. Environmental Assessment, Residual Effects and Mitigation

5.12.1 The Scheme design has been informed by a detailed Environmental Assessment as set out within the Environmental Statement submitted in support of the planning application (discussed further in Section 8 below). This includes consideration of air quality, noise and vibration, traffic and travel, climate change, flood risk, heritage, biodiversity and landscape, among many other key topic areas.

5.12.2 The Assessment identified that the Scheme will result in some positive environmental effects, including the delivery of biodiversity net gain, reducing environmental air pollution in Witney Town Centre, and population and human health benefits arising from improved active travel facilities delivered as part of the Scheme.

5.12.3 Given the scale of the Scheme, it will inevitably have both some beneficial and some adverse environmental effects, particularly in the immediate local area around the Scheme. The assessments reported likely significant adverse environmental effects during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development in relation to Geology and Soils, Landscape and Visual and Noise which are outlined below and described in more detail in the Environmental Statement.

Geology and Soils

5.12.4 Moderate adverse impacts are expected, as proposed development would result in a permanent and temporary loss of Agricultural Land (Grade 3b).

Landscape and Visual

5.12.5 Moderate adverse landscape and visual impacts are forecast during construction as there will be excavation of fields, vegetation clearance, removal of a number of trees and sections of hedgerow, new areas of plantation and construction activity that would be seen from two local visual receptors.

5.12.6 There will be moderate adverse visual effects during operation of the Scheme, as the additional two slip roads and improvements to the B4022 junction would be visible from one local visual receptor. The primary mitigation measures that form part of the Scheme design are: new hedgerow and tree planting adjacent to the new road network; retention of vegetation along the elevated embankment to the east of the B4022 underpass; enhancement of woodland along the lines of the existing pruned hybrid poplar trees along the south side of the A40, to increase screening from High Cogges; new woodland screening

alongside hedgerow trees, to provide screening to the view from residential properties including The Paddocks, Meadow View and Ladymead Cottage; new areas of species rich greassland around attenuation ponds; and the use of lowest possible output LED luminaires on road lighting columns (dimmed to 75% output between the hours of 00:00 and 06:00 to mitigate light intrusion).

Operational Noise

- 5.12.7 As a result of forecast increases in traffic on the B4022 between the A40 and Jubilee Way, significant adverse residual noise effects are expected for Windrush Cemetry and seven properties adjacent to the B4022 between the A40 and Jubilee Way. The residual significant operational traffic noise effects arise as a result of increases in traffic noise of around 1.0-1.5 decibels (dB) at locations to high absolute levels of road traffic noise. Although some of these properties meet the threshold for noise insulation under the Noise Insulation Regulations 1975 (as amended 1988), namely 68 dB LA10, 18h, none are expected to qualify for noise insulation due to the traffic on the proposed development itself not making an effective contribution to their overall noise level, which is one of the conditions set out in the Regulations.
- 5.12.8 A range of mitigation measures in relation to these properties have been considered (low noise surfacing, noise barriers, lowering the speed limit) and also discussed with the Environmental Health Officer (EHO). However, no practical mitigation has been identified in the Environmental Statement for the predicted permanent significant adverse effects on the properties mentioned above. This is because the EHO has confirmed that there are no practical mitigation measures that would assist to reduce the impact of noise levels on adjacent properties at this location.

Construction Noise

- 5.12.9 There is also potential for significant adverse noise impacts from the construction works, particularly at properties situated close to the Scheme. These properties (and their approximate distance from the Scheme boundary) include The Paddock, situated between the A40 mainline and the existing B4022 on-slip and properties immediately north of the existing B4022 on-slip, properties on High Cogges to the south of the Proposed Development (150m) and properties on the existing B4022 into Witney (200m). Construction noise would be reduced as much as possible through measures to be proposed in a Noise and Vibration Management Plan, which it is proposed would form part of the overall Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Environmental Statement Mitigation Measures

- 5.12.10 A comprehensive package of mitigation measures is proposed in the Environmental Statement to minimise adverse effects as far as reasonably possible and the residual effects are not considered to be unacceptable. Where possible, mitigation has been incorporated into the Scheme as part of the iterative design process (i.e. embedded mitigation). Where major or moderate adverse effects are predicted after this mitigation has been taken into account, additional mitigation measures are identified to avoid, further mitigate or remedy those effects. The full list of all mitigation measures can be

found in Environmental Statement Volume II, Appendix 17-A: Schedule of Environmental Commitments which is attached as **Appendix 15**.

5.13. Health and Wellbeing Benefits

5.13.1 The Scheme will enable individual and collective health and wellbeing benefits by providing safer walking and cycle facilities and improved connectivity between South Leigh / High Cogges and Witney town centre (via Cogges) and to the proposed segregated cyclist and pedestrian use cycle track along the A40 towards Oxford. This will promote more walking and cycling, delivering health and wellbeing benefits.

5.13.2 The improvements to air quality provided by the Scheme in the AQMA within Witney Town Centre will provide positive health benefits for residents and users of the town centre.

5.14. Summary

5.14.1 The Scheme has been demonstrated to meet the Scheme objectives of improving access to the A40 from east and north-east Witney thereby supporting the delivery of planned housing growth in Witney and reducing congestion and improving air quality in Witney Town Centre. Evidence has been provided in the section above of the expected performance of the Scheme against these objectives and further detail is provided within the Access to Witney Transport Assessment [**Appendix 7**], Strategic Traffic Model Forecasting Report [**Appendix 10**] and the Environmental Statement that supported the scheme Planning Application, including Chapter 5 Air Quality [**Appendix 11**].

5.14.2 The compelling case in the public interest for the Scheme arises from the following benefits being delivered:

- Supporting the delivery of planned new homes (including affordable housing) in Witney as set out the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (Objective 1).
- Improving access to the A40 from north and north-east Witney and reducing the need for traffic travel through the town centre by providing an alternative route across the town via the B4022 and A40 (Objective 3).
- Reducing traffic volumes and traffic delays within the town centre, which will help to improve air quality within the town centre (including the Bridge Street AQMA) and improve public health and wellbeing (Objective 2).
- Providing safer walking and cycling facilities through the area providing improved connections between South Leigh, High Cogges and Witney as well as enabling linkages with development within the EWSDA. This will promote more walking and cycling in the area, reducing car use, improving public health and wellbeing and reducing emissions of harmful pollutants and greenhouse gases (Objective 2).

- Providing faster and more reliable journey times for road users, including bus passengers in Witney. This will promote more public transport use in the area reducing car use, improving public health and wellbeing and reducing emissions of harmful pollutants and greenhouse gases (Objective 2).
- Providing bus passengers with a more accessible bus stop with enhanced and safer pedestrian access routes. This will promote more public transport use (Objective 2).

5.14.3 Overall, the overwhelming social, economic and health benefits of the Scheme in terms of unlocking housing delivery, improving accessibility and movement in the area, as well as reducing environmental air pollution in Witney Town Centre substantially outweigh the limited local adverse environmental effects on landscape and noise.

6. ALTERNATIVE SCHEME OPTIONS

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This section of the report sets out the alternatives to the Scheme that have been considered and the work the Council has completed to assess them. However, in setting out the Scheme alternatives it is important firstly to recognise the history of an alternative proposal that was intended to address the same challenges for Witney, which was originally considered and taken forward through the planning application and compulsory purchase order and side roads order procedures, but ultimately did not progress as the Secretary of State for Transport did not confirm the Orders. This is considered significant as it has contributed to the decision to develop options for the Scheme and subsequently led to the Scheme being developed and progressed.

6 Previous Road Network Upgrade Proposal: Cogges Link Road Scheme

- 6.2.1 Oxfordshire County Council previously developed proposals for the Cogges Link Road (CLR) scheme, which would have connected Witan Way to the south of the town centre to the Oxford Hill junction with Jubilee Way on the eastern outskirts of the town. The CLR scheme would have run to the south-east of the Cogges residential area, and formed a second river crossing over the River Windrush.
- 6.2.2 The CLR scheme was designed to improve traffic flow, reduce town centre congestion and enhance road network connections by providing a second river crossing and linking to new developments. The CLR scheme obtained planning permission and the Council subsequently made and submitted a Compulsory Purchase Order and Side Roads Order to the Secretary of State for Transport for confirmation, to enable delivery of the scheme in 2010.
- 6.2.3 A Public Inquiry to consider the CPO and SRO made by the Council was held in 2011. The Inspector recommended to the Secretary of State for Transport that the Orders were not confirmed. The Secretary of State for Transport took this decision and the Orders were not confirmed.
- 6.2.4 The Inspector's report to the Secretary of State [**Appendix 16**] was clear in its support of the need for the re-routing of traffic from the Bridge Street and the central Witney area. However, at the Public Inquiry, the Inspector considered evidence from the Council and others on the relative merits of the Cogges Link Road and a Shores Green Slip Road Scheme (SGSR) that provided west facing on and off slips from the B4022 to the A40.
- 6.2.5 Based on the evidence presented to the Public Inquiry at that time, the Inspector concluded that:
- there remains a clear need for the re-routing of traffic from the Bridge Street area
 - the SGSR was a reasonable alternative to the CLR

- on traffic grounds and overall the SGSR would be a better scheme than the CLR
- The SGSR would achieve the aims of the CLR on practical and policy grounds

6.3 Option Assessment Work Leading to the Selection of the Proposed Scheme

- 6.3.1 Following the Cogges Link Road decision in 2012, optioneering to identify and assess potential solutions to meet the challenges in the Witney area was revisited in 2019 and 2020. An option assessment study was commissioned by the Council and the study report is presented in the Access to Witney TAG Options Assessment Report at **Appendix 18**.

Study Methodology and Objectives

The option assessment study used a methodology and assessment framework for the Proposed Development that was developed in line with the Department for Transport (DfT) Transport Appraisal Process and Early Assessment and Sifting Tool (EAST) Guidance (in July 2021). A 3 stage process was used as set out in **Figure 6.1**

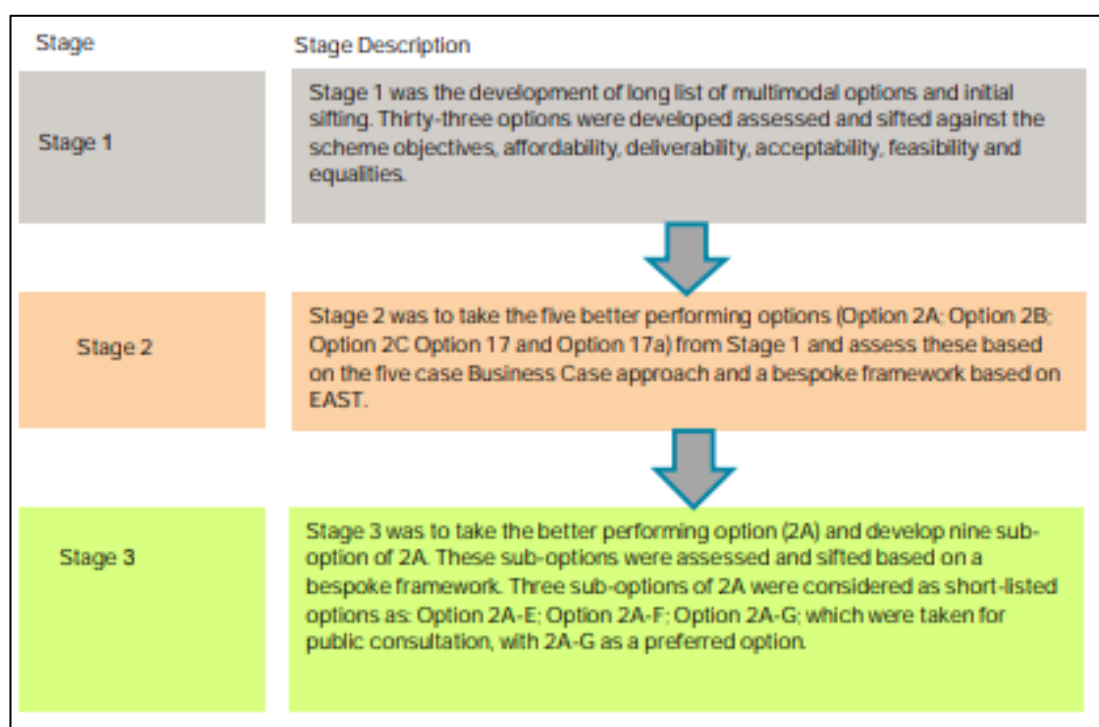


Figure 6.1: Summary of Option Assessment Process

- 6.3.2 The study report describes the three main objectives of the Witney Area Transport Strategy as set out in the Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4):

Objective 1: Establish a transport network that supports future growth and attracts economic investment by improving access to the strategic transport networks and managing through traffic.

Objective 2: Mitigate the local environmental impact of increased travel by addressing congestion, and poor air quality through improving opportunities for people to travel on foot, by cycle, and/or public transport, including Door to Door integrated travel (e.g. walking or cycling with bus/rail).

Objective 3: Support town centre vitality, by providing a local transport network that enables easy access to services by sustainable means.

6.3.3 Following a review of the challenges faced in Witney and, in light of the need for intervention to address them (both for Witney and the planned developments by reference to the goals and objectives set out in the LTP4, WODC Local Plan, and Witney Area Transport Strategy), a set of localised objectives specific to the option assessment study were created.

1. Reduce future traffic flows in the Bridge Street area (*supports Objective 1*).
2. Improve accessibility to/ from key destinations, and the resilience of the transport network to maintain journey time reliability (*supports Objectives 1 & 3*).
3. Reduce the level of air pollution within the AQMA (*supports Objective 2*).
4. Provide a safe, secure and attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists in Witney including easier access to and within the town centre (*Supports Objectives 1, 2 and 3 via increasing sustainable travel choice*).
5. Enable modal shift by improving sustainable transport solutions (*Supports Objectives 1, 2 and 3 via increasing sustainable travel choice*).
6. Improve access to the A40 and the wider strategic road network, such as the A34 and M40, without having to travel through the town centre (*Supports Objectives 1, 2 & 3*).
7. Support the vitality, viability, performance and attractiveness of the town centre (*Supports Objectives 1 & 2*).
8. Allow the town to develop in accordance with the current Local Plan, and in particular deliver housing developments in north and east Witney and in the strategic development areas (*Supports Objective 1*).
9. Make best use of existing infrastructure assets (*Supports Objectives 1, 2 & 3, potentially avoiding major new infrastructure development*).

Stage 1 - Long List of Options and Initial Sifting

6.3.4 The area challenges and study objectives were used to help generate a long list of options focused on the Witney study area that covered all modes – highway, public transport and active mode interventions. A total of 33 options comprising: upgraded junctions, new road links, public transport

improvements, active travel interventions, and parking management was identified based on:

- The assessment of current and forecast travel patterns, development, and growth, and challenges,
- Previous and current proposals from the relevant local authorities and stakeholders,
- Workshops with Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council officers, and
- Professional judgement based on experience elsewhere and within Oxfordshire to provide a comprehensive list of options.

6.3.5 These options were assessed in an initial OAR Stage 1 scoring and sifting process, against the following criteria:

- **Objectives:** comparing the long list against the nine Access to Witney study objectives.
- **Affordability:** concentrating on the likely financial affordability of an option (its funding arrangements).
- **Deliverability:** concentrating on the dependency of the option and interface risk in relation to other projects, timescale of delivery during design phase, contractual complexity and risks.
- **Acceptability:** considering stakeholder acceptability of an option including public acceptability, local authorities, delivery partners, statutory bodies, landowners and utility companies.
- **Feasibility:** considering practical feasibility of an option in terms of engineering and complexity.

6.3.6 The scoring of the long-list of options is presented in Appendix C of the Access to Witney TAG Options Assessment Report [**Appendix 18**]. Through this process, five highway options were shortlisted, which all focused on the existing A40/B4022 Shores Green junction:

- **Option 2A:** West facing slip roads to provide access to/from the A40 at Shores Green - Conventional Arrangement.
- **Option 2B:** West facing slip roads to provide access to/from the A40 at Shores Green - Alternative Arrangement 1 (D-Link off slip /roundabout for On-Slip).
- **Option 2C:** West facing slip roads to provide access to/from A40 at Shores Green – Alternative Arrangement 2 (D-Links on and off-slips).
- **Option 17:** At-grade roundabout at Shores Green – option A1.
- **Option 17A:** At-grade roundabout at Shores Green – option A2.

6.3.7 Engagement with planning officers at West Oxfordshire Council was undertaken during this stage of the assessment to:

- provide information on local planning policy aspirations;
- ensure that the study captured a good understanding of existing issues and challenges in Witney;
- input into the study objectives and assessment framework; and
- help develop a comprehensive long-list of options and to inform their sifting.

Stage 2 – Assessment of the Shortlist

6.3.8 This stage involved a more detailed assessment of the 5 short-listed options than Stage 1, broadening the scope to consider key aspects of the strategic, economic, management, financial and commercial cases of each option. This was broadly based on EAST, but adapted to suit the local context, key success criteria and key locally specific issues at Shores Green.

6.3.9 The assessment framework used and the scoring of the 5 short-listed options, as summarised in **Table 6.1** and presented in more detail in Section 6 and Appendix D of the Option Assessment Report [**Appendix 18**]. Environmental Statement Volume I Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution also provides further details of the alternatives considered [**Appendix 17**].

6.3.10 Overall, the assessment at this stage concluded that the implementation of grade separated west facing slip roads would provide the preferred option. Of these grade separated options, Option 2A performed the best in the scoring framework against the strategic, economic, managerial and financial cases. Option 2A also performed better than Options 2B and 2C, as the latter options would require significant land take and/or departures from standard compared to Option 2A.

6.3.11 Option 2A demonstrated various strong benefits in the assessment, including in reducing traffic at Bridge Street, improving journey times and reliability, and associated positive impacts regarding improved air quality in the Witney Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

6.3.12 Regarding Options 17 and 17A, these would require the removal of the current grade separated B4022 east facing access roads onto the A40 and the introduction of an at grade roundabout. Whilst this may have an advantage in terms of reduced land take (for Option 17), the traffic modelling of this option indicated that the junction would perform worse than the slip roads, creating significant delays and queues for traffic on the B4022 side road and for traffic on the A40. This was forecast to be likely to discourage use of this junction and increase the use of routes through Witney town centre, undermining the strategic case, the study objectives and the economic case for the scheme.

6.3.13 Option 17 would introduce more conflict points between vehicles (with safety implications), there would still be a number of departures from standard and require some land take. It was also forecast to result in more disruption during

construction than Option 2A due to its online nature and longer expected construction period (due to likely required construction methods. As a result these options scored worse than and were discounted.

Options	Total score	RANK	STRATEGIC					ECONOMIC												MANAGERIAL	FINANCIAL	COMMERCIAL
			Fit with study objectives	Scale of Impact	Fit with wider objectives	Key uncertainties	Degree of consensus over outcomes	Economic Growth Impact	Carbon Emissions	Social & Distributional	Equalities	Safety	Local Access	Air Quality	Noise	Trees, Biodiversity	Wellbeing	Health & Active Modes	Expected VFM	(implementation time, public acceptability, feasibility, deliverability, compliance with strs , risks)	(affordability , cost, cost risk)	(flexibility , land take requirement)
2A	105	1	4	4	5	2	3	5	2	4	4	3	3	4	2	1	4	4	4	24	17	6
2B	95	2	4	4	5	2	3	4	1	4	4	1	3	4	2	2	3	4	4	21	16	4
2C	91	3	4	4	5	2	3	4	1	4	4	1	3	4	2	3	3	4	4	17	16	3
17	76	4	3	3	2	3	3	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	3	1	1	3	3	19	16	7
17A	71	5	3	3	2	2	3	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	3	1	1	3	3	17	15	5

Table 6.1: Summary of Stage 2 Assessment Framework and Option Scoring

Stage 3: Preferred Option Identification and Refinement

- 6.3.14 Stage 3 of the option assessment process focused on a refinement of the West Facing Slip Roads scheme Option 2A, including further modelling, design, road safety audit, preliminary ecological assessment and public consultation.
- 6.3.15 Nine sub-options representing slightly different configurations of Option 2A were identified (2A-A to 2A-I). Each sub-option had different combinations of slip-road alignments and junction types (roundabouts, traffic signals) at the top of the proposed new slip roads. These are shown and considered in further detail of Section 7 of the Option Assessment Report [**Appendix 18**].
- 6.3.16 These were identified in order to optimise the design of Option 2A and minimise its local impacts as much as possible. Of these nine sub-options, six were immediately discounted due to road safety concerns, land take requirements (2A-A, 2A-B, 2A-C, 2 A-D) and also due to inadequate modelled capacity results (2A-H and 2A-I).
- 6.3.17 Three sub-options (2A-E, 2A-F and 2A-G) were carried forward for further assessment and public consultation. Each option is described in the following paragraphs.
- 6.3.18 **Option 2A-E** - included west facing slip roads at Shores Green with an un-signalised dumbbell roundabout arrangement at the top of the slips [see **Figure 6.1**]. The roundabout junction between the west facing off-slip and the B4022 was proposed to be located between an existing Gas Governor and the A40 overbridge, in order to prevent the requirement to realign the existing B4022 link onto the A40 eastbound. This option was considered for further assessment due to the likelihood of less landtake and overall cost compared to the other sub-options. Junction traffic modelling was undertaken, which showed that it performed within capacity.

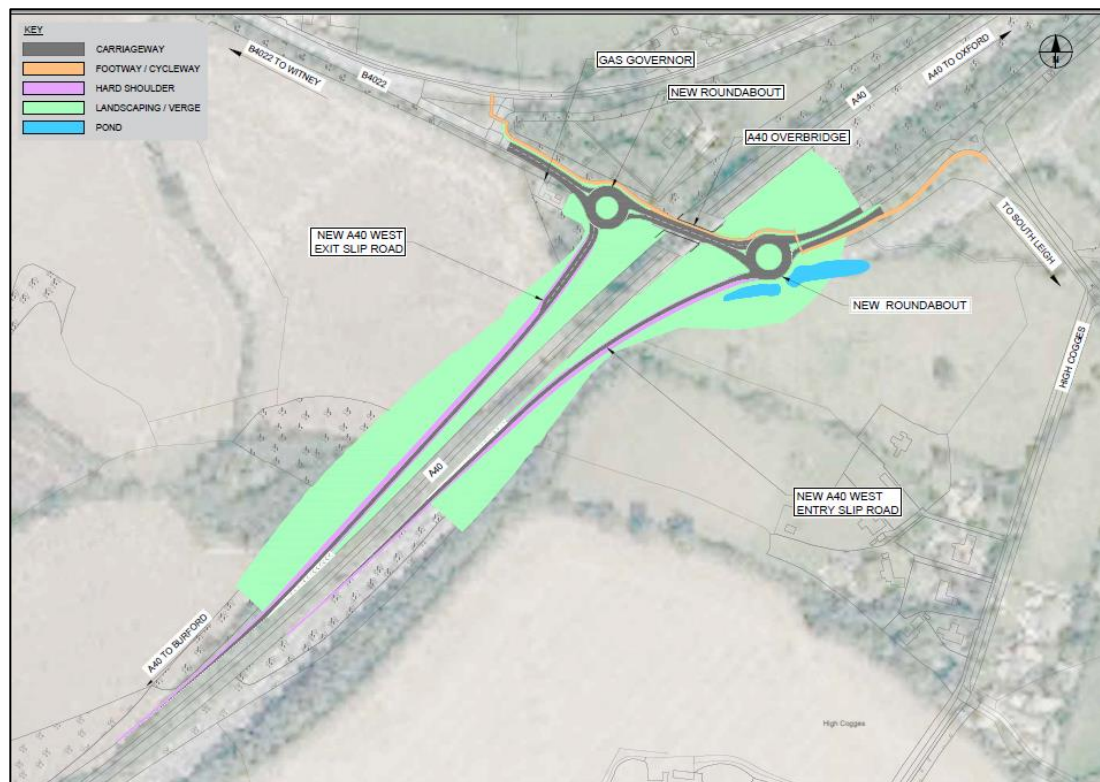


Figure 6.1: Indicative plan showing Option 2A-E

- 6.3.19 **Option 2A-F** - included west facing slip roads at Shores Green with unsignalised dumbbell roundabout arrangement at the top of the slips - see **Figure 6.2** The roundabout junction between the west facing off-slip and the B4022 was proposed to be located to the north-west of the existing Gas Governor. This would require the B4022 to be realigned. This option was considered for further assessment as junction traffic modelling suggested that it performed within capacity and it did not require residential landtake (although it did require arable land take).

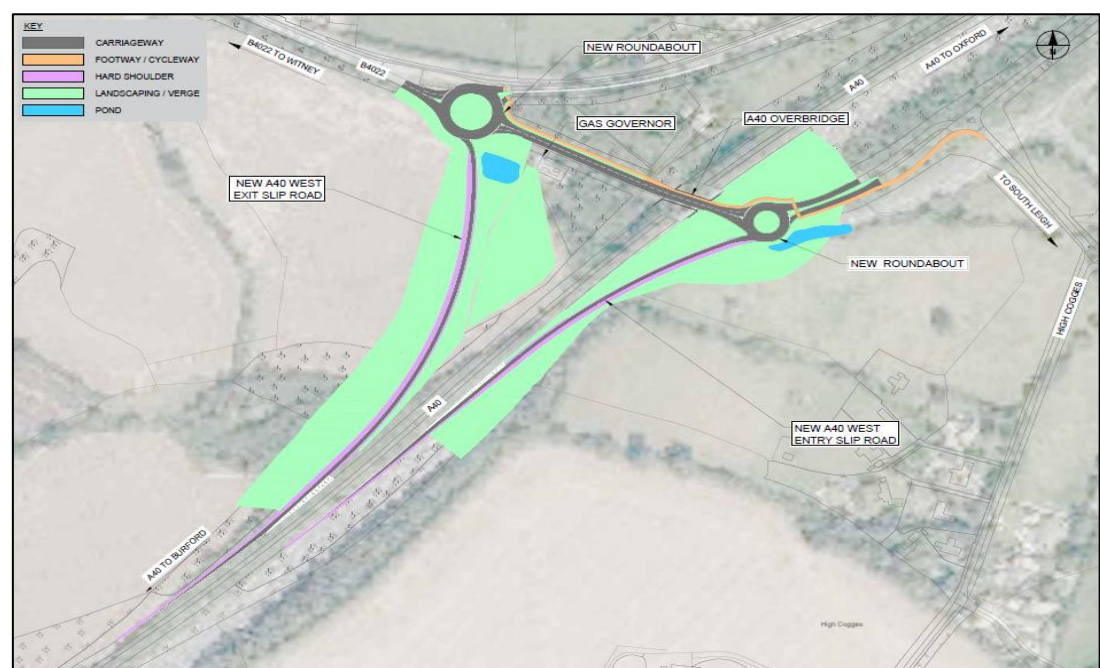


Figure 6.2: Indicative plan showing Option 2A-F

- 6.3.20 **Option 2A-G** - included west facing slip roads at Shores Green with a signalised T-junction arrangement at the top of each of the proposed new slip roads - see **Figure 6.3**. The junctions would include controlled cyclist/pedestrian crossings. The west facing off-slip layout and the junction was proposed to be located between the Gas Governor and the A40 overbridge. This option was considered for further assessment due to the likelihood of reduced landtake and cost compared to the other sub-options. Junction traffic modelling was undertaken, which showed that it performed within capacity.

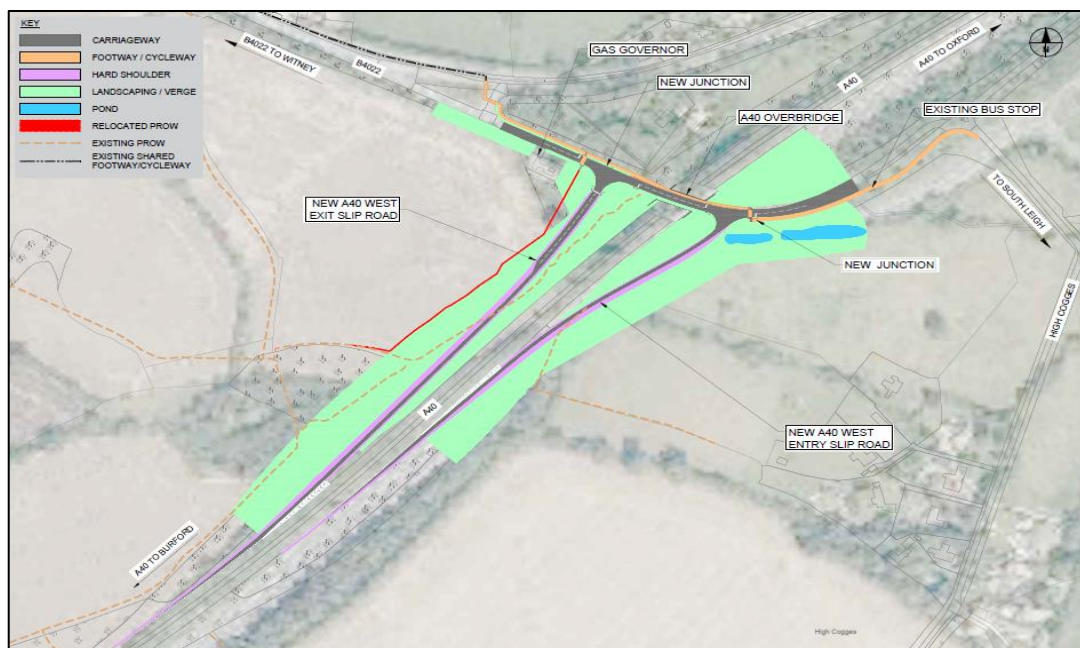


Figure 6.3: Indicative plan showing Option 2A-G

- 6.3.21 At this stage the impacts of the three sub-options (2A-G, 2A-E and 2A-F) were assessed against a more refined assessment framework considering impact on local access, provision for non-motorised users, biodiversity and ecological impact, land take and traffic performance. The outcome of this assessment is summarised in **Table 6.2** below and presented in more detail in Chapter 3 of the Environmental Statement [**Appendix 17**]. On the basis of the technical assessment undertaken, Option 2A-G was identified as the preferred option.

<i>Option / Impact</i>	<i>Option 2A-E</i>	<i>Option 2A-F</i>	<i>Option 2A-G</i>
Access	Improved access to the A40 for the residents of north and east Witney and support for proposed local plan strategic sites in north and east Witney.	Improved access to the A40 for the residents of north and east Witney and support for proposed local plan strategic sites in north and east Witney.	Improved access to the A40 for the residents of north and east Witney and support for proposed local plan strategic sites in north and east Witney.
NMU (Non-Motorised Users)_	An improved NMU route is provided connecting the existing shared footway north of the B4022 to the existing footway/bus stop east of the A40 overbridge.	An improved NMU route is provided connecting the existing shared footway north of the B4022 to the existing footway/bus stop east of the A40 overbridge.	An improved NMU route is provided connecting the existing shared footway north of the B4022 to the existing footway/bus stop east of the A40 overbridge.
Biodiversity	<p>Risk of some mature trees being impacted by the eastbound diverge embankment. The embankment is a typical 1 in 3 gradient. The extent of the impact can be managed using reinforced embankments to limit the overall footprint.</p> <p>Hedgerows and open ditches impacted to the north and south of the A40 corridor. A network of open ditches is present in the land take; there may be peak flood levels to consider.</p> <p>The eastbound diverge passes through densely vegetated area immediately adjacent to the B4022.</p> <p>Utilities diversions or relocations expected at both roundabouts.</p>	<p>Some mature trees may be impacted by the eastbound diverge embankment. The embankment is a typical 1 in 3 gradient. The extent of the impact can be managed using reinforced embankments to limit the overall footprint.</p> <p>Hedgerows and open ditches impacted to the north and south of the A40 corridor. A network of open ditches is present in the land take; there may be peak flood levels to consider.</p> <p>Some utility diversions expected at both roundabout locations.</p>	<p>Risk of some mature trees being impacted by the eastbound diverge embankment. The embankment is a typical 1 in 3 gradient. The extent of the impact can be managed using reinforced embankments to limit the overall footprint.</p> <p>Hedgerows and open ditches impacted to the north and south of the A40 corridor. A network of open ditches is present in the land take; there may be peak flood levels to consider.</p> <p>The eastbound diverge passes through densely vegetated area immediately adjacent to the B4022.</p> <p>Utilities diversions or relocations expected at both roundabouts.</p>
Footprint	The compact layout minimises the scheme footprint and visual impact.	A large section of arable land is separated by the eastbound diverge. Any existing habitat may become isolated. Due to embankments and visibility requirements, the overall footprint is significant which will have a negative visual impact.	Due to the signal arrangement, the junction footprint can be reduced compared to Option 2A-E which has a similar layout, therefore reducing the visual impact.
Reaction to traffic flows	Roundabout junction layout cannot react efficiently to the change in traffic	Roundabout junction layout cannot react efficiently to the change in traffic	Signal junction layout can react efficiently to the change in traffic providing better network control.

Table 6.2: Refined Assessment Table for Options 2AE, 2A-F and 2A-G

6.3.22 All of the three sub-options (2A-G, 2A-E and 2A-F) were also presented at public consultation on the proposed scheme, which took place in May 2021. Overall, delivery of a west-facing slip road at the A40/B4022 Shores Green Junction (option 2A option) was supported by the respondents, who generally agreed it would help reduce congestion and improve air quality. The consultation asked:

- (1) If respondents agree that west-facing slip roads at the A40/B4022 Shores Green Junction will help reduce congestion and improve air quality in central Witney?

To this: – 59% supported the statement that west-facing slip roads at the A40/B4022 scheme will help to reduce congestion and improve air quality in central Witney, whilst an additional 13% partially supported this scheme

- (2) If respondents agree that new footways and cycle paths (as part of 2A) can help more people choose walking and cycling for local journeys in the area?

To this: – 38% agreed that new footways and cycle path will help more people to choose walking and cycling for local journeys in the area, whilst an additional 36% partially agreed

- (3) For an overall view of the respondents on the proposal to install west-facing slip roads at the A40/B4022 Shores Green Junction.

To this: – 69% supported west-facing slip roads at the A40/B4022 Shores Green Junction scheme, whilst 18% had concerns about the scheme

6.3.23 In responses to the public consultation, sub-option 2A-G received slightly higher support from respondents than 2A-E and 2A-F. Analysis of the responses determined that:

- 54% supported sub-option 2A-G, whilst 33% had concerns about the Scheme.
- 49% supported sub-option 2A-E/F, whilst 31% had concerns about the Scheme.

6.3.24 Further detail on the public consultation responses is provided in Section 7 of this Statement and the Statement of Community Involvement [**Appendix 19**], which accompanied the planning application. The OAR report was completed in July 2021, informed by the results of the May 2021 public engagement, and recommending option 2A-G as the preferred option.

6.3.25 In July 2021, Cabinet was presented with the findings of the option assessment work and recommendations. Cabinet resolved the approval of the preferred Access to Witney Scheme - Option 2A-G. The Cabinet Paper and Resolution is provided at **Appendix 20**.

6.4 Summary

6.4.1 The Council has completed a thorough, detailed and inclusive assessment of potential options based around Department for Transport, Transport Analysis Guidance. The option assessment process was undertaken in 3 stages. In stage 1 a long-list of potential options were assessed against the study

objectives and range of strategic, economic, managerial, financial and commercial criteria to inform the selection of 5 short-listed options.

- 6.4.2 Stage 2 involved a more detailed assessment of the 5 short-listed options, broadening the scope to consider key aspects of the strategic, economic, management, financial and commercial cases of each option. This was broadly based on EAST, but adapted to suit the local context, key success criteria and key locally specific issues at Shores Green. Overall, the assessment at this stage concluded that the implementation of grade separated west facing slip roads would provide the preferred option and demonstrated strong benefits, including in reducing traffic at Bridge Street, improving journey times and reliability, and associated positive impacts regarding improved air quality in the Witney Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).
- 6.4.3 Stage 3 of the option assessment process focused on a refinement of the West Facing Slip Roads scheme Option 2A. Nine sub-options representing slightly different configurations of Option 2A were identified and assessed considering impact on road safety, local access, provision for non-motorised users, biodiversity and ecological impact, land take and traffic performance. This resulted in 3 options being presented in a public consultation exercise.
- 6.4.4 Following the public consultation exercise, stage 3 of the option assessment was finalised and the OAR report was completed in July 2021, informed by the results of the May 2021 public engagement, and recommending option 2A-G as the preferred option. The preferred option was approved at Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet in July 2021.

7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

7.1 *Introduction*

7.1.1. The Acquiring Authority has consulted with the public and stakeholders extensively throughout the development of the Scheme. The main areas of stakeholder engagement and public consultation that have taken place prior to the submission of the planning application for the Scheme are set out in this Section. Further information can be found in the Access to Witney Statement of Community Engagement **[Appendix 19]**.

7.1.2. The main phases of engagement and consultation discussed in this Section are summarised as follows:

- Option Assessment
- Landowner Engagement
- Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') Scoping and Technical Consultation
- Local Planning Authority ('LPA') Pre-application Engagement
- Targeted Stakeholder Engagement
- Online Public Engagement

7.2 *Option Assessment*

7.2.1 During the option assessment study, regular engagement with planning officers at West Oxfordshire District Council was undertaken to:

- provide information on local planning policy aspirations;
- ensure that the study captured a good understanding of existing issues and challenges in Witney;
- input into the study objectives and assessment framework; and
- help develop a comprehensive long-list of options and to inform their sifting.

7.3. *Landowner Engagement*

7.3.1 Landowner engagement has been ongoing since early 2020, seeking land acquisitions by negotiation. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of land ownership and occupation, the Council's appointed land referencing agents, Gateley Hamer, wrote to landowners between March - July 2021 with a questionnaire about their landholding and land interests.

7.3.2 Discussions have been held with landowners regarding access to land, and engagement in relation to land access is ongoing with these landowners. Most

landowners are represented and are aware of the land acquisition proposed, and negotiations will continue in order to seek private acquisition of the rights and interests in land required for delivery of the Scheme. For further information see **Section 13.5**.

7.4. EIA Scoping and Technical Consultation (May – June 2021)

7.4.1 An EIA Scoping Report was submitted by the Acquiring Authority to the LPA in May 2021. In order to agree the scope and content of the relevant desk-based assessments, consultation was undertaken between the various scheme promoter technical teams and statutory consultees. The following individuals/organisations were consulted by the LPA, and their feedback was included as part of an EIA Scoping Opinion, which was issued by the LPA on 1 July 2021:

- West Oxfordshire District Council – Environmental Protection
- Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Public Health
- OCC Transport Development Control
- OCC Biodiversity
- OCC Archaeology
- OCC Archaeological Services
- OCC Landscape
- OCC Rights of Way
- OCC Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)
- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- South Leigh Parish Council
- Witney Town Council
- Councillor Enright (Witney North & East)

7.4.2 Following the receipt of the EIA Scoping Opinion, proactive engagement with statutory bodies, such as OCC Transport Development Control and the LLFA, has continued to take place in order to inform the scheme design and technical assessment work that has provided evidence to support the planning application for the Scheme.

7.5. Local Planning Authority Pre-Application Engagement (June – December 2021)

7.5.1 In advance of the submission of the application for planning consent, the Acquiring Authority obtained formal pre-application advice from the LPA

during July 2021 to March 2022. This includes two virtual pre-application meetings which were held in July and December 2022.

- 7.5.2 Advice received included comments in relation to policy compliance, the proposed scheme design, and the required scope of planning application documentation.

7.6. Online Public Consultation and Ongoing Engagement (May – June 2021)

- 7.6.1 The Acquiring Authority undertook a four week online public engagement exercise for the A40 Access to Witney Scheme between 10 May and 7 June 2021 (inclusive), which ran in parallel with the engagement in relation to the A40 HIF2 scheme. The purpose of this exercise was to encourage active involvement by the community and a wide range of stakeholders and to ensure that local feedback was obtained in relation to the preferred scheme proposals.

- 7.6.2 The virtual public exhibition presented information on the proposed preferred Scheme, some background regarding the need for the Scheme, and its predicted benefits. At the exhibition, all three of the shortlisted sub-options of the preferred scheme were presented for comment and feedback was sought from the public and stakeholders. The virtual public exhibition can be accessed via the dedicated A40 Access to Witney website:

<https://virtual.engage.stantec.com/accesstowitney>

- 7.6.3 The virtual exhibition presented information on the background to the Scheme, its benefits, the preferred scheme, shortlisted options, discounted options, environmental considerations, and also provided the opportunity for participants to complete a feedback form online via the OCC consultation portal. A dedicated email address was also set up to provide the opportunity for comments and questions to be submitted to the project team.

- 7.6.4 The Council also held two live online webinar events hosted via Microsoft Teams to give participants the opportunity to ask questions to members of the team directly. This aimed to recreate as far as possible a traditional 'in-person' public exhibition while complying with the Government's Covid-19 guidelines.

- 7.6.5 A dedicated 'A40 Improvements' webpage was also established which provided an overview of the six A40 Improvement schemes including a dedicated 'A40 Access to Witney' webpage:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/roadworks/future-transport-projects/a40-improvements/a40-access-witney>

- 7.6.6 The following measures were put in place by the Acquiring Authority to ensure that participants without access to the internet or those who experienced issues with accessing materials online had the opportunity to view and comment on the proposals:

- Paper copies of exhibition boards delivered to four local libraries for public display (Eynsham, Burford, Carterton and Witney).
- The press release received coverage in the print edition of 'Oxford Mail'.
- The advertisement included a telephone number to request printed copies of the online exhibition boards and feedback form.
- A Word version of the online feedback form was emailed out to stakeholders on request for completion offline.
- A PDF copy of the online exhibition boards was emailed out to stakeholders on request to print the information at home.

Public Exhibition Feedback Obtained

- 7.6.7 The online feedback form offered respondents the opportunity to offer views in relation to the preferred option scheme design. 39 feedback form responses were received via the consultation exercise. There were a further 15 queries and responses submitted via email.
- 7.6.8 Overall, there was majority support for the preferred scheme design from respondents (54% selected 'Strong Support' or 'Support'). 10% of respondents were 'Neutral', whilst 33% of the respondents expressed 'Concern' for the proposals. The remainder selected 'Don't Know'. The most popular positive comments were those stating that improvements are overdue (mentioned in 9/30 comments) and stating support for the principle of reducing traffic in the town centre (mentioned in 5/30 comments).
- 7.6.9 For those who did not support the proposals, the most common concerns were that the proposals will be too expensive (mentioned in 2/30 comments); traffic lights at junctions will increase levels of traffic (mentioned in 2/30 comments); and the proposals may lead to increased car use by making road travel more efficient (mentioned in 2/30 comments).
- 7.6.10 The Council also received responses from key stakeholders, which are summarised below:
- **West Oxfordshire District Council** – The Council strongly supports the principle of the proposal and the timely progress being made by the County Council in taking the project forward. Having reviewed the preferred scheme, the District Council is strongly supportive.
 - **South Leigh and High Cogges Parish Council (SLHCPC)** – Concerned that the Scheme as proposed will: cause traffic to rat running through the village, lead to increased light, noise and emissions pollution for residents; lead to an increased risk of flooding; and loss of biodiversity. SLHCPC has also highlighted that parishioners have raised concerns about pedestrian and cycle access through the proposed Shores Green interchange towards Oxford Hill.
 - **Witney Town Council** – supportive of the proposal.

- **The Mawle Trustees and the Trustees of the Northfield Life Interest Settlement** – The Trustees own the land that comprises the East Witney Strategic Development Area. This includes the area of land required to deliver the A40 Shores Green ‘off-slip’ proposed development. The Trustees welcome the County Council’s ‘Preferred Option’, which includes a simple T-Junction ‘off-slip’. Also welcomed are the proposed improvements to foot and cycle connectivity to the A40 itself.
- **Walker Family** – Landowners of some of the land required to construct the proposed on-slip to the A40. Object to Preferred Option 2A - the scoring system used to appraise the alternatives “are flawed”. Preference for Option 17 (at-grade roundabout at Shores Green), which is “simpler, greener and cheaper”.

7.7. Targeted Stakeholder Engagement (October – November 2021)

7.7.1 In October 2021, selected stakeholders were invited to attend an online Stakeholder Briefing session with the project team. As detailed in the Statement of Community Involvement [**Appendix 19**], four key stakeholders responded to our request to participate in an online Stakeholder Briefing session:

- **Windrush Bike Project** – welcomed walking and cycling connection proposed to proposed EWSDA.
- **Thames Valley Police** – no objection to loss of existing laybys.
- **Road Haulage Association** - no objection to loss of existing laybys.
- **Stagecoach** – satisfied the Scheme would not result in significant delays to bus journey times.

7.8. Design Refinements

7.8.1 Following the public engagement exercise held in May – June 2021, further discussion with key stakeholders and specialist input from other disciplines was obtained. The preferred option was further refined and an updated design was produced. The design refinements comprise:

- Modifications made to the horizontal design for visibility requirements, lane widths and shared use provision.
- The horizontal and vertical alignments of the B4022 were modified to provide a more compliant layout. The existing non-compliant layout of the B4022 has been modified to re-align the main carriageway to provide improved radii and to also maximise the potential sight stopping distance achievable.
- The existing B4022 junction with the existing A40 on-slip road was modified following swept path analysis that indicated several locations where larger vehicles over run the verge or footway. With the proposed shared use pedestrian cycle path using this junction, the alignment was modified to permit larger vehicles to use the junction without over-running the revised layout.

- There is a level difference between the existing A40 and the proposed diverge layout where the off-slip road rises and this increases to around 2m in height. Due to the width between the two carriageways at this point, it has been necessary to provide a small retaining structure to permit this design layout. Without the retaining structure, a larger land acquisition footprint would be required along a significant length of the diverge layout.
- The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) advised that there is an existing flooding risk to the west of the proposed scheme layout, and they would object to the Scheme should it exacerbate this issue. The proposed off slip road vertical alignment would result in that part of the off-slip road falling towards the A40 westwards and the remaining descending towards the B4022 junction. The area falling towards to A40 westwards will require mitigation to ensure the surface flow is controlled and does not exacerbate the existing situation. As such, a small attenuation pond has been designed to control this flow, located alongside the existing eastbound layby around 230m from the start of the nosing of the proposed Off-Slip Road. The layby is proposed to be converted into a smaller maintenance only layby.

7.9. Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement during Planning Application Determination Period (April 2022 Onwards)

- 7.9.1 On 1 April 2022, a planning application for the Scheme was submitted by Oxfordshire County Council (the Applicant) and validated by Local Planning Authority (Oxfordshire County Council as the determining authority) (See Section 8). Since that time, the Acquiring Authority has continued to engage with the LPA and planning application consultees in relation to comments and queries raised regarding the Scheme.
- 7.9.2 There has also been ongoing engagement with technical officers at West Oxfordshire Council and Oxfordshire County Council, Councillors at Oxfordshire County Council, and representatives of South Leigh and High Cogges Parish Council regarding the status of the Scheme and issues related to its design and impacts.

7.10. Summary

- 7.10.1 Throughout the evolution of the Scheme, the Acquiring Authority has both consulted widely and extensively, and has been responsive to the information gathered during the consultation process, which has shaped and informed the Scheme design.
- 7.10.2 The design of the Scheme has undergone an iterative process, whereby analysis of technical modelling, assessments and responses to public consultation on different design options were interpreted and refinements incrementally made to the design to the Scheme to reach the optimum design solution.

8. PLANNING POLICY AND CURRENT PLANNING STATUS

8.1. Introduction

- 8.1.1 In making the Orders, the Acquiring Authority has had regard to the national and local planning policy context and other material planning considerations. This section describes the planning background and planning policy context and includes a summary of Scheme compliance when considered against the relevant planning policy context and other material considerations. A full planning assessment of the Scheme is contained within the Planning Statement **[Appendix 21]**.

8.2. Planning Policy Context

- 8.2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, together with Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, provides that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.2.2 The Scheme is located within Oxfordshire County and passes through the administrative boundary of West Oxfordshire District Council. However, the planning application has been submitted to Oxfordshire County Council as the determining Local Planning Authority (LPA) for Highways Schemes promoted by Highway Authorities under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The application is a Regulation 3 application as defined by the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.
- 8.2.3 Section 6 of the Planning Statement **[Appendix 21]** - Relevant Planning Policy (including Appendix A Policy Schedule) - sets out the policies relevant to the Scheme. The Development Plan for the Scheme comprises the following documents:
- West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (2018) ('WOLP')
 - South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan (2019)
 - Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy (adopted 2017)
- 8.2.4 Other material considerations include:
- National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (2021)
 - National Planning Practice Guidance ('NPPG')
 - Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015-2031 ('LTP4') (published 2015, updated 2016)

- Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (2022) ('LTCP')
- Equality Impact Assessment ('EqIA')
- National Infrastructure Strategy ('NIS') (2020)
- Oxfordshire 2020 Climate Action Framework ('CAF') (2020)
- Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy ('OxIS') (2017)
- Oxfordshire's Strategic Vision for Long-Term Sustainable Development (2021)
- Oxfordshire Street Design Guide (2021)
- West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD (2016)
- Witney Transport Strategy (2016)

8.3. Key Planning Policies and Material Considerations of Relevance to the Scheme

- 8.3.1 Under the heading titled 'Promoting Sustainable Transport', NPPF paragraph 105 advises that "Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health."
- 8.3.2 The Scheme seeks to encourage greater levels of active travel by providing enhanced facilities and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists both along the A40 off-slip and B4022. The Scheme has also been designed to reduce traffic volumes, congestion and emissions, and improve air quality in Witney Town Centre.
- 8.3.3 The WOLP identifies congestion on the A40 as a major constraint to inward investment and recognises that improvements to the A40 are key to enable the delivery of housing and employment growth aspirations envisioned in the area.
- 8.3.4 The Scheme forms part of OCC's wider investment programme for the A40 between Witney and Duke's Cut, which aims to improve travel times and journey reliability along the A40 corridor, support housing development, stimulate economic growth, improve safety, and reduce environmental impacts such as air pollution.
- 8.3.5 WOLP Policy H1 identifies the need for the provision of at least 15,950 new homes to be delivered during the 2021-2031 plan period to meet West Oxfordshire's identified housing needs, as well as accommodating a proportion of the unmet housing needs arising in Oxford City. In accordance with the overall strategy set out in WOLP Policy OS2, WOLP Policy H1 identifies an anticipated delivery of 4,702 homes in the Witney sub-area.
- 8.3.6 WOLP Paragraph 7.35 identifies a number of strategic highway schemes which are *"identified as being necessary to support the quantum and*

distribution of planned housing and employment growth at Witney". The identified schemes include:

Shores Green Slip Roads: *the provision of west facing slip roads at the Shore's Green junction onto the A40 to the east of Witney. Delivery will be facilitated by the proposed East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) – see Policy WIT1 and will be accompanied by proposed improvements to Bridge Street.*

- 8.3.7 WOLP Policy WIT1 ('East Witney Strategic Development Area') sets out the framework for land to the east of Witney to accommodate a community including about 450 homes at East Witney Strategic Development Area ('EWSDA'). The EWSDA is located immediately west of the site, and the Scheme will help unlock this strategic development area, facilitating the delivery of new homes in the area. With reference to the Scheme, Policy WIT1, part C advises that development of the EWSDA is:

"To be phased in accordance with the timing of provision of supporting infrastructure and facilities including the essential improvements to the Shore's Green junction onto the A40 and related highway measures."

- 8.3.8 The Scheme supports the policy aim for development to be phased in accordance with the 'essential improvements' required to the Shores Green junction and related highway measures.

- 8.3.9 In respect of strategic context and need, WOLP Policy WIT6 sets out the Witney Sub-Area Strategy, and the proposals to support the development of the area, including:

*"Continuing to work with Oxfordshire County Council and landowners/developers to deliver improvements to key highway infrastructure to reduce traffic and pollution in the historic core and to improve the general flow of traffic and access to primary transport routes, with priority on delivering the A40/Downs Road junction (all traffic movements), **Shore's Green junction (west facing slip roads)**, the West End Link and Northern Distributor Road and other supporting highway improvement measures." [Our emphasis]*

- 8.3.10 The Scheme is also supported by WOLP Policy T2, which states that West Oxfordshire District Council will continue to work in partnership with the County Council to secure improvements between Witney and Oxford. The 'Shores Green Slip Roads, Witney' scheme is specifically identified as a strategic highway infrastructure scheme proposed to be safeguarded and delivered as part of the committed and allocated urban extensions identified within the WOLP.

- 8.3.11 The Scheme is also supported by the LTP4, which identifies the A40 road corridor west of Oxford as a heavily constrained route and that a series of highways improvements is required along the A40 corridor to improve access between towns in West Oxfordshire and Oxford. LTP4, Volume 8 Part II provides the Witney Area Transport Strategy which includes 4 policies:

Policy WIT1 *“to establish a transport network that supports future growth and attracts economic investment at Witney we will work closely with the District Council, developers and local partners to improve access to the strategic transport networks and manage through traffic”.*

Policy WIT3 *“we will work with West Oxfordshire District Council to safeguard land for future transport infrastructure, to support Local Plan growth”.*

Policy WIT5 *“the County Council will improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists focusing on enhancing links between homes, schools, employment and the town centre”.*

Policy WIT7 *“to mitigate the cumulative impact of development across the Witney area and implement the transport measures identified in the Witney area strategy”*

8.3.12 As part of these policies, several Witney-based transport options were included in the Witney Area Strategy in order to support future growth and attract economic investment.

- West-facing slip roads at A40 Shores Green junction and improvements to the B4022 Oxford Hill junction with Jubilee Way and Cogges Hill Road to be delivered by housing development at East Witney. (WIT1)
- Re-designating the A4095 via Jubilee Way, Oxford Hill, A40, Ducklington Lane and Thorney Leys so through traffic travels around the edge of the town rather than through it. (WIT2)
- Implementing schemes to deter through traffic from using Bridge Street and the Woodstock Road, and encourage through traffic to use the re-designated A4095. (WIT2)
- Improving the environment in the town centre by reducing congestion and enhancing the Air Quality Management and Conservation Areas. (WIT2)
- Discouraging undesirable routing of traffic by improving directional signs. (WIT2)
- Protecting the line of the Shores Green Slip Roads and promoting its safeguarding in the Local Plan. (WIT3)

8.3.13 In July 2022, the County Council adopted a new Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (‘LTCP’) **[Appendix 22]** for the county. LTCP sets out the target for a net-zero transport network by 2040 and outlines the policies which will help to achieve this, focusing on reducing the need to travel, reducing journeys by car and the promotion of walking, cycling, public and shared transport. Of particular relevance to the scheme are:

Policy2 – Ensure all new developments have safe and attractive walking and cycling connections to the site include a connected attractive

network for when people are walking and cycling within the development and that the internal routes connect easily and conveniently to community facilities and the local cycle and walking network.

Policy 18c - Seek to make the bus a natural first choice through development of infrastructure and network management measures which give priority over the private car and improve journey speeds

Policy 30 - Work to deliver a transport network that achieves and where possible exceeds government and local biodiversity net gain targets.

Policy 31 - Balance the needs of all network users, whilst promoting and prioritising walking, cycling and public transport at every opportunity.

Policy 36 – Only consider road capacity schemes after all other options have been explored

Policy 49 - Develop and deliver measures to encourage use of the most appropriate routes for HGVs

- 8.3.14 LTCP recognises there are cases where road schemes may be required and will deliver improvements. This includes where access is needed to new developments or where the existing road is unsafe. It notes that the Council will require careful modelling for major road schemes to ensure that the likely effects on the wider network are fully understood.
- 8.3.15 Appendix 1 of LTCP contains a review of the LTP4 area strategies including for Witney. In respect of Policy WIT1, the 2022 update notes:
- “A40 Shores Green West Facing Slips - Growth Deal Scheme Years 2 to 5. During 2021 the preferred option was identified and consulted upon.”*
- 8.3.16 SLNP Policy SLT1 states that any proposals which would result in a significant increase in the volume of traffic on roads in the Plan area will be assessed in terms of their potential impact upon the environment and amenities of the Parish. Where necessary, the Parish Council will work with West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to identify any appropriate traffic management measures that will serve to mitigate the negative impacts of additional traffic generation.
- 8.3.17 The County Council is committed to monitoring the impacts of the scheme on the wider road network both during construction and during the operational stage and will work with South Leigh and High Cogges Parish Council and communities to discuss and develop potential mitigation measures in case of any rat-running that might occur through the village in the future.
- 8.3.18 SLNP Policy SLE1 states that proposals for development should respect and safeguard the intrinsic character and beauty of the landscape features within the South Leigh and High Cogges, including its tranquility and perception of remoteness.

- 8.3.19 The Scheme is deemed essential to supporting the delivery of housing growth in Witney providing improved access to planned strategic development sites proposed in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2031) in East and North Witney and to helping mitigate their impacts on the road network and promoting greater use of sustainable and active travel modes in the area.
- 8.3.20 By providing a new access route across Witney that avoids Bridge Street, the Scheme will deliver wider benefits to users of the road network across Witney and, in particular, in Witney Town Centre. This will enable the Council to improve the streetscape and provide improved facilities for walking, and buses in Witney Town Centre that will increase their attractiveness and promote greater use of these sustainable modes.
- 8.3.21 The Scheme is considered as a priority initiative, which will reduce traffic flows and associated adverse impacts in the Bridge Street area and reduce air pollution in the Witney Air Quality Management Area.
- 8.3.22 The Scheme seeks to encourage greater levels of active travel for both existing and future residents and employees along the route by providing enhanced facilities and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists both along the A40 off-slip and B4022.
- 8.3.23 The Scheme design has been informed by a detailed Environmental Assessment as set out within the Environmental Statement submitted in support of the planning application (discussed further below). This includes consideration of air quality, noise and vibration, climate change, flood risk, heritage, biodiversity and landscape among many other key topic areas.
- 8.3.24 The Scheme will result in some significant positive environmental effects. These include the delivery of biodiversity net gain and reducing environmental air pollution in Witney Town Centre.
- 8.3.25 The Scheme will inevitably have some significant adverse environmental effects, given the scale of development that is proposed. However, comprehensive packages of mitigation are proposed as described in the Environmental Statement (**Appendix 15**) to minimise adverse effects as far as reasonably possible and the residual effects are not considered to be unacceptable.

8.4. Current Planning Status

- 8.4.1 On 1 April 2022, a planning application for the Scheme was submitted by Oxfordshire County Council (the Applicant) and validated by the Local Planning Authority (Oxfordshire County Council as the determining authority) for the following development, under application reference R3.00039/22. This seeks permission for the following:

“The construction of two new west-facing slip roads at the Shores Green junction of the A40; an off-slip to allow eastbound vehicles to exit the A40 on to the B4022 towards Witney and an on-slip to allow westbound vehicles to enter the A40 from the B4022 at this junction. Two existing

lay-bys to the west of the A40 overbridge will be removed to accommodate the construction of the slip roads”

8.4.2 The planning application is supported by an Environmental Statement in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. The scope of the EIA was agreed with the County Council, as the LPA, through the submission of a Scoping Report in May 2021 and subsequent issue of a Scoping Opinion by the LPA in June 2021. The following technical matters are assessed within the Environmental Statement:

- Air Quality
- Biodiversity
- Climate Change
- Cultural Heritage
- Geology and Soils
- Landscape and Visual
- Material Assets and Waste
- Noise and Vibration
- Population and Human Health
- Road Drainage and the Water Environment
- Traffic and Transport

8.4.3 A suite of further documents was also submitted with the planning application including:

- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Transport Assessment
- Sustainability Assessment

8.4.4 On 25 August 2022, the LPA submitted an information request under Regulation 25 of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations 2017 to the planning application for the Scheme. The LPA requested further information in relation to:

- Biodiversity
- Landscape (including arboriculture)
- Climate

8.4.5 On 31 October 2022, a formal response to the Regulation 25 request was provided to the LPA. The response also included amendments to the Scheme

design, which evolved as a result of further technical work undertaken. On 1 December 2022, the supplementary information and scheme revisions were published for formal consultation, which ended on 3 January 2023.

- 8.4.6 A range of responses have been received, none of which raise any technical concerns in respect of the Scheme. Notably, the LPA instructed Atkins to undertake an independent review of the acceptability of the Scheme in relation to arboriculture, climate change, and agriculture and soils. The review recommends no objection to the planning application subject to planning conditions securing appropriate mitigation.
- 8.4.7 Positive dialogue has been held between the Applicant and the LPA throughout the application determination period. During the course of preparing its committee report ahead of determination by the County Council's Planning and Regulation Committee, the LPA has requested further information in relation to potential options for noise mitigation given that the Environmental Statement chapter relating to noise identifies 'significant adverse' noise effects at seven residential properties and Windrush Cemetery, next to the B4022 between the application site and Jubilee Way. The Applicant's team has liaised with Publica Group, the agency operating on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council Environmental Health who is in agreement that there does not seem to be a practical and cost-effective way of reducing the noise levels.
- 8.4.8 The planning application was due to be determined at Planning and Regulation Committee on 17 April 2023, however, the item was deferred owing to concerns received from South Leigh and High Cogges Parish Council in relation to the Scheme design and environmental impacts. The Applicant has continued its dialogue with South Leigh and High Cogges Parish Council and it is now expected that the application will be determined at Planning and Regulation Committee on 5 June 2023.
- 8.4.9 Taking into account the policy support for the Scheme, the significant benefits of the Scheme are considered to outweigh any limited adverse environmental impacts. It is for that reason that we see no reason why planning permission will not be forthcoming for the Scheme.

8.5 Summary

- 8.5.1 On the overall balance, the overwhelming social, economic and health benefits of the Scheme in terms of unlocking housing delivery, improving accessibility and movement in the area, as well as reducing environmental air pollution substantially outweigh the limited adverse effects on landscape and noise.
- 8.5.2 It is therefore considered that, taking the Development Plan as a whole, the Scheme complies with the Development Plan and points strongly in favour of the grant of planning permission. The decision on planning permission is awaited but it is expected that planning permission will be in place by Q2 2023 and, as such, the Acquiring Authority does not consider that there will be a planning impediment to the Scheme.

9. THE ORDER LAND

9.1. Order Land and Acquisition

- 9.1.1. In preparing the CPO, the Acquiring Authority has, through its appointed land agent, Gateley Hamer, undertaken diligent enquiry in order to identify all persons with an interest in the land that is required for the Scheme.
- 9.1.2. An initial desktop referencing exercise was undertaken to ensure that all registered interests in the land and property required were identified, resulting in the production of a land ownership schedule and a land ownership map.
- 9.1.3. This included obtaining the relevant HM Land Registry information, which has been (and will continue to be) regularly refreshed to make sure that all of the information is as up to date as possible. Gateley Hamer also undertook all other necessary and relevant searches and enquiries to establish principal ownerships and note any third-party mortgages, unilateral notices and/or rights and restrictions, including carrying out relevant Companies House checks and postcode searches.
- 9.1.4. The Acquiring Authority and Gateley Hamer then used the information above to issue Statutory Requests for Information pursuant to Section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The first batch of requisitions were issued on 25 March 2022, with newly identified parties issued in February 2023. The Acquiring Authority received a response rate of 23% to these requisitions. Whilst the Acquiring Authority and Gateley Hamer recognise this low response rate, multiple attempts to chase for responses were undertaken.
- 9.1.5. The only unknown owners /unregistered land is within the highway boundary of the A40 Principal Road over the south westernmost length, which is covered by the Scheme CPO and a length and part width of the B4022 running eastwards from the access to 'The Barn House' at Clementsfield Farm to the western part of the frontage of the residential property 'Shores Green'. Unregistered site notices were erected on or near to these lands.
- 9.1.6. The information collected throughout the process outlined above has been collated and analysed by Gateley Hamer to produce the required documentation to inform the compulsory purchase process and ensure that the Acquiring Authority has discharged its duty to exercise diligent enquiry to ascertain all interests in the Order Land.
- 9.1.7. The Order Land has a total area of approximately 10.71ha. This comprises of:
- 8.98 ha for which the title of land is required, this includes 4.83ha of land of existing public highways, for the A40, B4022, and C16886 South Leigh Road at its junction with the B4022, permanent highways improvement works , for mitigation of adverse effects of the proposed improved highways works upon their surroundings and for improvement and development of frontages to the improved

highways (landscaping and drainage outside the new highways boundaries)

- 1.73ha for which the title of land is required for use in connection with the construction of the Scheme works (working space and a works compound) and could be available to return to landowners under the Crichel Down rules, if compulsory purchase occurred and the land was surplus to the requirements of the Scheme post-construction. The Acquiring Authority would hope it might otherwise achieve licensed use of these lands, by agreement with landowners, rather than exercise compulsory purchase powers.

9.1.8. The Order Land is composed of agricultural land, woodland and existing public highways land, including roads (the A40 Principal Road, the B4022 and the C16886 South Leigh Road at its junction with the B4022) and public Footpaths. The plots over which title is required are set out below:

9.1.8.1 Eileen Norah Mawle, James Edward Mawle and Stephen Francis Mawle – Plots 1/2a, 1/2b, 1/2c, 1/2d, 1/2e, 1/2f and 1/2g

These plots comprise of 26,566 sqm of woodland and grassland, agricultural fields, and the whole of public Footpaths 410/41/30 and 410/41/40 (Witney) and lengths of Footpaths 410/41/20, 410/42/20 and 410/8/20 (Witney), as lie on the north-west side of the A40 Principal Road.

One of these plots, Plot 1/2f and which is intended for use as operational working space for the Scheme including a works compound, leaves a strip of land in the Mawles' ownership, immediately abutting the south west boundary of the Gas Governor site which lies to the south of the B4022.

The Council hopes that such land which it requires for working space might be agreed by its owners for its licenced use by the Council, rather than the Council exercising compulsory purchase powers.

However, if the landowners will not agree licenced use and the Council is compelled to use compulsory purchase powers on such land, then it will either grant a right of access across this land once acquired to the retained area of land abutting the Gas Governor site, and to other of the Mawles' retained land, from the access off the B4022, or in relation to the retained land abutting the Gas Governor site consider acquisition of that land as part of negotiations.

The Mawles' retained land will in any of these circumstances which might arise, have a private means of access to it off the B4022.

9.1.8.2 National Highways Limited – Plots 1/3b, 1/3c and 1/3d

These plots comprise of 13,092 sqm of land carrying the public highway of the B4022, comprising carriageway, southern footway and grassed and tree planted verges, including bus shelter, as extends generally east south-eastwards, then north eastwards, from the junction of the private access to The Barn House at Clementsfield Farm to the junction of the C16886 South Leigh Road, at Shores Green.

9.1.8.3 Susan Caroline Morrish – Plots 1/4a and 1/4b

These plots comprise of 5,390 sqm of agricultural land of High Cogges Farm, lying immediately to the south east of the A40 Principal Road and a length of public Footpath 353/31/10 (Witney).

9.1.8.4 Oxfordshire County Council – Plots 1/3a, 1/6a and 1/6b

These plots comprise of 35,292 sqm of land carrying the public highway of the A40 Principal Road and integral woodland and shrubland verges and cutting embankments (Plot 1/3a), and areas of land of the B4022 comprising integral hedgerow and grassland verge and of parts of pedestrian/cyclist use cycle tracks, running eastwards from the access to The Barn House at Clementsfield Farm to mid-frontage of the residential property 'Shores Green'.

Plot 1/3a, 34,547 sqm of the land carrying a part width and length of the A40 Principal Road, remains registered to National Highways Limited, as successor in title to the Secretary of State for Transport, with HM Land Registry.

This land is of the Detrunked A40, which was subject of Detrunking under 'The A40 Trunk Road (Wolvercote Roundabout Oxford to the Oxfordshire/Gloucestershire County Boundary) (Detrunking) Order 2003, which came into force on 1 June 2003.

Under Section 265(7) and 265(3)(a) of the Highways Act 1980, such land as was vested in the former highway authority, namely the Secretary of State for Transport, for their functions in relation to the highway, the then A40 Trunk Road, transferred to Oxfordshire County Council with the Detrunked highway as of the operative date of 1 June 2003 of the Detrunking Order.

The Acquiring Authority will be seeking to have this land registered to it, following dialogue with National Highways Limited.

9.1.8.5 John William Kearns and Anne Kearns – Plots 1/7a, 1/7b, 1/8 and 1/10

These plots comprise of 3,076 sqm of registered agricultural land (Plots 1/7a and 1/7b) lying to the south east of the A40 Principal Road and to the west and north west of a cluster of residential properties situated on the High Cogges Road, High Cogges and 113 sqm of two strip plots of land (Plots 1/8 and 1/10) which lie immediately to the north west of the former land and abutting the south east boundary of the A40 Principal Road and which are claimed ownership by the Kearns.

9.1.8.6 Jeremy Michael Walker, Paula June Walker and Roger Jeremy Michael Walker – Plot 1/11a and 1/11b

These plots comprise of 9,686 sqm of agricultural land and lengths of drainage ditches, lying to the south east of the A40 Principal Road, to the south and south west of the B4022 and to the north and north west of a cluster of residential properties situated on the High Cogges Road, High Cogges.

9.1.8.7 Unknown/Unregistered – Plots – 1/1, 1/5, 1/9 and 1/12

- **1/1**, 10,660 sqm of a part width and length of the A40 Principal Road, lying to the south west of the B4022 and to the north west of Springhill Farm, High Cogges. This land was brought into use by the Secretary of State for Transport for the Witney Bypass, constructed in the mid-1970s. If purchase of the land was completed at that time by the Secretary of State for Transport, then the land would now rest in the ownership of Oxfordshire County Council, as passed to it with the Detrunked A40. But as the land remains unregistered, it is included in the CPO to authorise its acquisition as may be necessary.
 - **1/5**, 2,963 sqm of part widths of the B4022 and the B4022 Oxford Hill, as extends generally eastwards from the private access to The Barn House at Clementsfield Farm to western part of the frontage of the residential property 'Shores Green'
 - **1/9**, 116 sqm of a eastern part width of the A40 Principal Road, comprising carriageway and grassed and tree planted verge, lying to the south west of the B4022 and to the north west of a cluster of residential properties on the High Cogges road, High Cogges
- and
- **1/11**, 201 sqm of a south western part width of the C16886 South Leigh Road, at its junction with the B4022.

10. SIDE ROADS ORDER (SRO)

10.1. SRO Overview

10.1.1 The Council has made the Side Roads Order ("SRO") under Section 14 of the Highways Act 1980, in relation to the Classified Road works of the A40 Principal Road. The full title of the SRO published under the Highways Act 1980 is The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure - A40 Access to Witney) (Side Roads) Order 2023.

10.1.2 Those Classified Road works comprise the improvement, by widening and other works, of the A40 from a point on the south west side of the A40 overbridge crossing of the B4022, at South Leigh, south westwards for a distance of approximately 775 metres, and incorporating the construction of a new eastbound exit slip road, from a point on the existing A40 approximately 520 metres south west of the A40 overbridge crossing of the B4022, north eastwards to its junction with the B4022 and a new westbound entry slip road, from its junction with the B4022, south westwards to its junction with the A40, at a point approximately 280 metres south west of the A40 overbridge crossing of the B4022.

10.1.3 The Classified Road works will also incorporate -

- an integral Footway for pedestrians, running along the top of the north west cutting slope of its eastbound exit slip road, connecting to Footpath 410/41/20 (Witney) at a point at the new A40 boundary just to the north east of the new attenuation pond (on the opposite side of the A40 to Footpath 353/28/10 (South Leigh)). The integral Footway provision will allow for pedestrian connections with the existing Footpaths network on the north west side of the A40 and with the B4022. The new Footway will be 3m in width to allow it to be converted to a shared use Cycle Track in the future in line with Council aspirations set out in the Witney Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP) – adopted in March 2023.
- an integral Footway for pedestrians, running along the top of the south east cutting slope of its westbound entry slip road, connecting to the integral Cycle Track with a right of way on foot on the southern side of the B4022 and Footpath 353/31/10 (South Leigh) to the south west.

10.1.4 The SRO, if confirmed, will authorise the Council, in relation to the aforementioned A40 Classified Road works, to stop up existing highways affected by the Scheme and to improve other highways as a consequence of the Classified Road works.

10.1.5 The SRO Plan shows the extent to which it is necessary to carry out works to existing highways and stopping up of existing highways in relation to the A40 Classified Road works.

10.2. The Need for Side Roads Alterations

10.2.1 The proposed alterations to existing highways that would be affected by the Scheme are detailed in the Schedule to the SRO and shown diagrammatically on the Side Roads Order Plan.

10.2.2 The SRO and the necessary changes to the highways affected by the SRO are an integral part of the Scheme, the details of which are set out below.

10.3. Highways to be Stopped Up

10.3.1 On the north-west side of the A40:

- Footpaths 410/41/30 and 410/41/40 (Witney) will be stopped up in their entirety, as well as lengths of Footpaths 410/41/20, 410/42/20, and 410/8/20 (Witney), all where they fall within the extent of the extended highway boundary of the A40 Classified Road works, on the north-west side of the existing A40.

Alternative Route. The integral Footway of the improved A40 described in paragraph 10.1.3 (a) above, will provide the alternative route for these stopped up Footpaths. The length of the Footway is slightly shorter than the cumulative lengths of Footpaths to be stopped up and runs on a relatively similar south west to north east orientation between Footpath 410/41/20 (Witney) and the B4022, but set back at the top of the cutting slope of the proposed A40 eastbound exit slip road. The Council considers this integral Footway of the A40 will provide a reasonably convenient alternative route for pedestrian users of the stopped up Footpaths.

10.3.2 On the south-east side of the A40:

- A length of Footpath 353/31/10 (South Leigh) will be stopped up, where it falls within the extent of the extended highway boundary of the A40 Classified Road works, on the south-east side of the existing A40.

Alternative Route. The integral Footway of the improved A40 described in paragraph 10.1.3 (b) above, will provide the alternative route for this stopped up length of Footpath. The length of the Footway is of a similar length of the combined route of the length of Footpath on the north west side of the A40 from the B4022 which pedestrians would use to then cross the A40 to join this Footpath at its A40 connection, together with its stopped up length. The Council considers this integral Footway of the A40 will provide a reasonably convenient alternative route for pedestrian users of the stopped up Footpath.

10.4. Highways to be Improved

- 10.5.1. Lengths of Footpaths 410/42/20 and 410/8/20 (Witney) will be improved to provide a tie in, and an appropriate means of crossing of a drainage ditch, to connect with the A40 integral Footway, on its north west side, taking pedestrians to continue their journey on that Footway to connect with the B4022 to the north east, and Footpath 410/41/20 (Witney) to the south west.
- 10.5.2. The B4022 will be improved to provide a length of integral Cycle Track, for cyclist and pedestrian use, on its southern side, between the C16886 South Leigh Road and the east side of the new westbound entry slip road, where there will be a new crossing point provided onto the north side of the B4022. A new integral Footway of the improved A40 running on the east side of the new westbound entry slip road and leading south westwards off the improved B4022 and its integral Cycle Track, will provide a pedestrian connection between the B4022 and Footpath 353/31/10 (South Leigh) on the east side of the new westbound entry slip road.
- 10.5.3. A new integral Cycle Track will continue on the northern side of the B4022 from the crossing point westwards and around the eastern side of the B4022 two way spur road and local access merge lane, where a further crossing point will be provided onto the existing integral Cycle Track on its northern side, taking cyclists and pedestrians on their journey on that Cycle Track connection either eastwards towards the segregated Cycle Track of the A40 eastbound or westwards along the B4022 to the Cogges Hill Road/Jubilee Way junction and localities including Cogges, Newland, and Witney.
- 10.5.4. A further crossing point will be provided on the B4022, just west of where the new A40 eastbound exit slip road will junction with the B4022, providing a connection between the Cycle Track on the northern side of the B4022 and the new integral Footway that will be situated on the north west side of the new A40 eastbound exit slip road and taking users to Footpath connections on the north west side of the A40 Principal Road.
- 10.5.5. The B4022 two-way spur will be improved on its eastern side, to make for better movement of larger vehicles exiting from the service lane which runs on the southern side of the B4022 opposite the residential property 'Shores Green' and which accommodates access vehicles from frontage residential properties and agricultural holdings lying along the road and which have use of the lane to travel along the B4022, as well as access to join the A40 eastbound to travel to Oxford.
- 10.5.6. Resurfacing of the B4022 and new road markings would be undertaken throughout across the new junction and up to its new slip roads and other local highway connection of the C16886 South Leigh Road.

Side Roads Order Summary

- 10.5.7. The SRO is made in relation to the A40 Classified Road which is to be improved under the Scheme.

- 10.5.8. The Council is satisfied that where highways, Footpaths, are to be stopped up, their stopping up is necessary as a consequence of the Scheme, that other reasonably convenient routes for those highways will be provided within the improved A40 Classified Road works before the relevant highway is stopped up, allowing the Secretary of State for Transport to satisfy himself on that matter under Section 14(6) of the Highways Act 1980.

11. DELIVERABILITY AND VIABILITY

11.1. Scheme Cost and Funding

- 11.1.1. Paragraph 14 of the Guidance sets out considerations that will inform the Secretary of State's deliberations when determining whether or not to confirm a Compulsory Purchase Order. In this context the Guidance indicates that information should be provided regarding the sources and timing of funding available for delivery of the Scheme.
- 11.1.2. The total estimated final cost (EFC) of the Scheme is **£25.025m** inclusive of anticipated land acquisition costs. The risk associated with scheme delivery is captured within the EFC total. The project risks are identified and reviewed regularly along with a quantitative risk analysis being undertaken which provides total estimated cost of the risk. The risk of inflation is captured as a risk item within the overall risk allocation. Inflation is calculated using the Building Cost Information Services (BCIS) inflation index. The BCIS index is updated on a monthly basis and the figures in the budget reviewed on a monthly basis to understand any additional risk or opportunities. The current total risk allocation for the project is **£4.678m**.
- 11.1.3. The Scheme will be funded via a mixture of Housing and Growth Deal Funding and Section 106 planning obligation funding as shown in **Table 11.1**.

Table 11.1 – Funding Summary

Source	
Housing and Growth Deal	£17.000m
Section 106 Developer Contributions	£8.025m
Total	£25.025m

- 11.1.4. The Housing & Growth Deal (HGD) is a committed funding agreement between Government (Homes England) and the local authorities in the Oxfordshire area – further details regarding the Housing and Growth Deal are provided in Section 11.2 below and **Appendix 4**. The Scheme has been allocated funding of **£17.0m** as part of the HGD capital programme to support the delivery of new homes proposed in the Witney area in the WOLP, including at the East Witney SDA and North Witney SDA.)
- 11.1.5. The remaining **£8.025m** funding will be provided by Section 106 (S106) developer contributions. S106 contributions are either secured or unsecured. Unsecured S106 contributions are currently still in negotiation. The unsecured S106 contributions will be underwritten and forward funded by the Acquiring Authority.
- 11.1.6. A financial contribution of **£1.387m** has already been secured and paid to Oxfordshire County Council towards the Scheme by way of a S106 planning obligation from a development of 270 homes on land at Burford Road, Witney (14/1215/P/OP).

- 11.1.7. The East Witney SDA has been requested to contribute the funding of **£6.638m** toward the Scheme as part of the negotiations between OCC, WODC and the developer. The negotiations are ongoing and the S106 agreement will contain triggers for the funding toward the Access to Witney scheme over a period of time and will need to be signed by all parties to the agreement to offer certainty of funding for the Access to Witney Scheme. The North Witney SDA will also be requested to contribute funding toward the scheme, although negotiations have not yet commenced.
- 11.1.8. As the availability of these S106 monies is not yet secured and will be conditional on the commencement of the development to which the S106 agreement(s) relate, the Acquiring Authority has resolved to underwrite and forward fund the **£6.638m**.
- 11.1.9. Forward Funding is a mechanism whereby the Acquiring Authority would be liable for money spent on the Scheme for a period of time, with recovery measures in place for this money to be recouped from S106 contributions at a later date, or secured from alternative public funding grants.
- 11.1.10. A Property Cost Estimate (PCE) was commissioned from Gateley Hamer Limited to determine the cost of land acquisition. This estimate has informed the Acquiring Authority in its assessment of deliverability of the Scheme. This sum is included in the EFC of **£25.025m** identified above.
- 11.1.11. The Acquiring Authority, in accordance with its legal obligations, has examined the potential for receiving statutory blight claims from affected property owners and occupiers whose land is to be acquired under the Scheme CPO. The Council has considered the impact of the Scheme upon the remaining land holdings of such land interests and has concluded that none are impacted to the extent that their remaining holdings are rendered untenable/unviable which might give rise to any successful statutory blight claim.

11.2. Housing and Growth Deal Funding

- 11.2.1. The HGD (approved by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in March 2018) is a committed funding agreement between Government (Homes England) and the local authorities in the Oxfordshire area (Cherwell District Council; Oxford City Council; Oxfordshire County Council; South Oxfordshire District Council; Vale of White Horse District Council; West Oxfordshire District Council) and the Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP). The deal provided upto £215m funding in total including £150m for infrastructure to support the delivery of 100,000 new homes across the County by 2031.
- 11.2.2. In accordance with the Delivery Plan, attached at **Appendix 4**, a £150m Infrastructure Fund and Infrastructure Delivery Programme has been established. The Infrastructure Fund is being used to fund infrastructure schemes that unlock and accelerate housing and growth across Oxfordshire in line with the priorities determined by the Oxfordshire Growth Board (now

Future Oxfordshire Partnership) and subject to consideration of relevant policies in Local Plans, the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan and any necessary consents, including planning permission.

- 11.2.3. Oxfordshire County Council is the lead partner for the Infrastructure Delivery Programme. The current programme comprises a range of infrastructure schemes covering road, rail, bus, cycle routes and footpaths, as well as schools. All schemes were identified at the outset of the programme as capable of supporting and accelerating housing delivery. Schemes may be either fully or part funded from the grant.
- 11.2.4. The Scheme has been allocated £17.0m funding from the HGD infrastructure delivery programme to support the delivery of new homes proposed in the Witney area in the WOLP, including at the East Witney SDA and North Witney SDA. This is an increase from the original funding of £5.9m approved at Cabinet on 18 October 2022.
- 11.2.5. The original HGD funding was allocated to the Oxfordshire local authorities and OxLEP spanning a five-year period from 2018/19 up to 31 March 2023. The grant provider, Homes England, agreed a further two-year extension to the HGD programme for monies to be used until March 2025.

11.3. Timescales for Implementation

- 11.3.1 A planning application has been submitted for the Scheme, which has been validated and is awaiting determination. It is considered that the Scheme complies with the Development Plan and points strongly in favour of the grant of planning permission. The decision on planning permission is awaited but it is expected that planning permission will be in place by Q2 2023 and, as such, the Acquiring Authority does not consider that there will be a planning impediment to the Scheme.
- 11.3.2 The Acquiring Authority will continue to negotiate as far as reasonably possible with all parties with an interest in the Order Land, but would hope to be in a position that remaining land and property rights have been acquired (or the terms of the acquisitions agreed and progressing through detailed legal agreements) via negotiation prior to the end of November 2023.
- 11.3.3 The Acquiring Authority anticipates that should the compulsory purchase process result in a local Public Inquiry, this would be heard in or around early 2024.
- 11.3.4 In the event that the Orders are confirmed by the Secretary of State, this would result in possession of the land being taken by Q2 2024, allowing the construction works to commence on Site in Q3 2024, with a forecasted 12 month programme to completion, in Q3 2025.

11.3.5 In the event that a local Public Inquiry is not required, the Acquiring Authority would seek to commence works on Site at the earliest possible time following confirmation of the Orders, noting the statutory periods for implementation and acknowledging the need to procure the construction contract.

11.4. Summary

11.4.1. The Acquiring Authority is satisfied that, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Guidance, the Scheme has available all relevant resources to enable delivery, the necessary funding can be provided and, as set out above, it is financially viable.

11.4.2. If the Orders are confirmed, development of the Scheme will be brought forward on the Order Land and the Site at the earliest opportunity. The target completion for delivering the Scheme is 12 months from commencement of development.

12. HUMAN RIGHTS AND PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

12.1 Human Rights Duty

12.1.1 The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporated into domestic law the European Convention on Human Rights ("the Convention"). The Convention includes provisions in the form of Articles, the aim of which is to protect the rights of the individual.

12.1.2 The following articles of the Convention are relevant to the determination as to whether the CPO should be confirmed:

12.1.2.1 Article 1 of the First Protocol protects the right of everyone to peaceful enjoyment of possessions. No one can be deprived of their possessions except in the public interest and subject to the relevant national and international laws. Any interference with possessions must be proportionate and, in determining whether a particular measure is proportionate, a fair balance must be struck between the public benefit sought and the interference with the rights in question;

12.1.2.2 Article 6 entitles those affected by the powers sought in the CPO to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal;

12.1.2.3 Article 8 protects the right of the individual to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence. A public authority cannot interfere with these interests unless such interference is in accordance with the law and is necessary in the interests of, inter alia, national security, public safety or the economic wellbeing of the country.

12.1.3 The CPO has the potential to infringe the human rights of persons who own property in the Order Land. Such infringement is authorised by law provided that the statutory procedures for obtaining the CPO are followed, that there is a compelling case in the public interest for the CPO and that intervention with the Convention right is proportionate to the legitimate aim served.

12.1.4 The European Court of Human Rights has recognised in the context of Article 1 of the First Protocol that "regard must be had to the fair balance that has to be struck between the competing interests of the individual and the community as a whole".

12.1.5 The Scheme has been designed to minimise interference with the peaceful enjoyment of a person's possessions under Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act. Article 1 of the First Protocol provides for the peaceful enjoyment of possessions and provides that no one shall be deprived of

possessions except in the public interest and as provided by law. The CPO will strike a fair balance between the private loss of property and the public interest. In light of the social, environmental and economic benefits that will result from the Scheme, it is considered that there is a compelling case in the public interest for the use of compulsory purchase powers and that the resulting interference with private property rights is both in accordance with national law and proportionate. Compensation will be available under the Compensation Code to those with a legitimate claim arising from the exercise of compulsory purchase powers.

- 12.1.6 Article 6 of the Convention provides that everyone shall be entitled to a fair and public hearing in the determination of his civil rights and obligations. The Council considers that the statutory procedures which give rise to the right to object and provide for judicial review are sufficient to ensure compliance with the requirements of this Article.
- 12.1.7 In promoting the CPO, the Acquiring Authority has complied with all relevant legislation and regulations. The Scheme has been extensively publicised (as detailed within the Statement of Community Involvement (March 2022) [**Appendix 19: Statement of Community Involvement**], and consultation has taken place with the communities and parties that will be affected by the CPO.
- 12.1.8 All those affected by the CPO will be notified, will have the right to make representations and/or objections to the Secretary of State, and to be heard at a Local Public Inquiry. It has been held that the statutory processes and associated right for those affected to pursue remedies in the High Court where relevant, are compliant with Article 6.
- 12.1.9 The Acquiring Authority considers that such interferences with Article 8, as may occur should the CPO be confirmed, are in accordance with the law and are necessary in a democratic society in that they would be in pursuit of a legitimate aim, namely the economic well-being of the country and/or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others, and are proportionate, having regard to the public interest that the Scheme will bring, which will benefit the well-being of the area.
- 12.1.10 Although there is no obligation on the Acquiring Authority to establish that there are no less intrusive means available, the Order Land has been kept to the minimum necessary to construct the road and provide the associated mitigation measures.
- 12.1.11 Those directly affected by the CPO will also be entitled to compensation, which will be payable in accordance with the compulsory purchase Compensation Code. This will be assessed on the basis of the market value of the property interest acquired, disturbance and statutory loss payment. The reasonable surveying and legal fees incurred by those affected will also be paid by the Acquiring Authority.

12.1.12 Both public and private interests are to be taken into account in the exercise of the Acquiring Authority's powers and duties. Similarly, any interference with Article 8 rights must be "necessary in a democratic society", i.e. proportionate.

12.1.13 The public interest can only be safeguarded by the acquisition of this land and such acquisition would not place a disproportionate burden on the affected landowners.

12.1.14 In pursuing this CPO, the Acquiring Authority has carefully considered the balance to be struck between the effect of acquisition on individual rights and the wider public interest in the Scheme construction.

12.1.15 Interference with Convention rights is considered by the Acquiring Authority to be justified in order to secure the economic regeneration, environmental and public benefits which the Scheme will bring.

12.2 Public Sector Equality Duty

12.2.1 The Acquiring Authority is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty contained within section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This obliges the Acquiring Authority, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act,
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

12.2.2 The Acquiring Authority has had due regard to those objectives throughout the option assessment and decision-making process. An Equalities Impact Assessment formed part of the option assessment study and can be found in Appendix E of the Option Assessment Report [**Appendix 18**]. The long list of options put forward as a part of the optioneering process were subject to an initial high-level screening assessment to determine the potential impacts that each option may have on the Protected Characteristic Groups (PCGs) as defined in the Equality Act. The further assessment of short-listed options also considered equality impacts as one of the criteria within the assessment of economic impacts within the overall 5 cases option assessment framework.

12.2.3 The Acquiring Authority also commissioned a formal Equalities and Climate Impact Assessment (EqCIA) in March 2022 [**Appendix 13**], which identifies the potential impacts of the Scheme upon those with protected characteristics and to consider any mitigating actions to reduce or remove potential negative impacts. The EqCIA also undertook an assessment of the impact of the Scheme on the Council's aims to be carbon neutral by 2030, and to enable the county's transition to a zero-carbon future – see section 5.7.

12.2.4 Conclusions from the EqCIA indicate that due regard has been had in considering design principles from an equality perspective, and that measures have been included within the proposals to mitigate against potential differential impacts, which may be experienced by some protected characteristic groups.

12.2.5 The EqCIA recommends the Acquiring Authority, through Scheme finalisation, ensures that designs are fully inclusive and attractive for everyone, specifically listing information provision, materials use, public realm design, lighting and seating as key areas. The Acquiring Authority is fully aligned and in agreement with these recommendations. The EqCIA assessment approach will continue throughout the Scheme's life cycle and post-delivery, in order to ensure every opportunity to positively promote equality is taken.

12.3 Conclusion

12.3.1 The Acquiring Authority considers that there is a compelling case in the public interest whereby the public benefit of the Scheme will outweigh any private loss. Interference with rights under the European Convention on Human Rights is considered to be justified, in order to secure the benefits that the Scheme will bring.

12.3.2 The use of compulsory purchase powers is both necessary and proportionate, and there is a compelling case in the public interest for the making and confirmation of the CPO. Given the qualified nature of the rights affected and the public interest in delivering the Scheme, the CPO does not constitute an unlawful interference with individual property rights. The compulsory purchase process enables objections to be submitted and a Local Public Inquiry to be held to consider those objections.

12.3.3 The parties directly affected by the CPO will be entitled to compensation in accordance with the Compensation Code, which is the collective term used for the principles set out in the Land Compensation Act 1961, the Compulsory Purchase Act 1965, the Land Compensation Act 1973, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 1991 and the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This is supplemented by case law relating to compensation for compulsory acquisition, and the more recent provisions relating to compulsory purchase contained in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.

13. COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER JUSTIFICATION

13.1 Appropriateness of Powers

- 13.1.1 The Acquiring Authority is satisfied that the Scheme is within the scope of the compulsory purchase powers as set out in Sections 239, 240, 246, and 260 of the 1980 Act, being a highway infrastructure scheme.

13.2 The Public Interest Test

- 13.2.1 Paragraph 2 of the CPO Guidance advises that a Compulsory Purchase Order should only be made where there is a compelling case in the public interest. The Acquiring Authority is fully satisfied that this requirement is met and that this has been demonstrated within this Statement of Reasons. The compelling case in the public interest for the Scheme includes the following matters, as discussed under **Section 5** on the need for the Scheme:

- Supporting the delivery of planned housing growth in Witney as set out in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.
- Improving access to the A40 from north and north-east Witney and reducing the need for traffic travel through the town centre by providing an alternative route across the town via the B4022 and A40.
- Reducing traffic volumes and delays within the town centre and helping to improve air quality within the Bridge Street AQMA.
- Providing safer walking and cycling connections and conditions to support policy requirements to increase local travel by walking and cycling.
- The Scheme has been designed, following an extensive option assessment study, stakeholder engagement and public consultation, to best meet a series of appropriate Scheme objectives and which takes no more land than is necessary as described in **Section 6**.
- There is a need to secure the land and rights in a timely manner, which cannot be guaranteed by merely pursuing private treaty agreement.

- 13.2.2 The Scheme will provide many benefits to the public, which are described in Section 5 and summarised in the following paragraphs.

- 13.2.3 The Scheme has been deemed to be critical in facilitating the delivery of up to 1,850 new homes in Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) designated in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, meeting a need for new housing, including affordable homes for West Oxfordshire, as identified in Oxfordshire's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (April 2014). The delivery of 450 new homes proposed as part of the East Witney SDA is dependent on the intervention of the Scheme. The implementation of the Scheme also supports up to 1,400 new homes that form the North Witney SDA.

- 13.2.4 The Scheme will improve access to the A40 from north and north-east Witney and provide an alternative route across the town reducing the need for both local and strategic traffic to route through Witney's historic town centre. As a result the Scheme will reduce traffic volumes and delays in the town centre helping to improve air quality in the Bridge Street AQMA and improve public health and wellbeing. It will also create more opportunities to promote and deliver active travel measures, traffic reduction and calming features and streetscape enhancements in Witney Town Centre.
- 13.2.5 The Scheme will provide faster and more reliable journey times for bus passengers in Witney. Bus passengers will also benefit from a more accessible bus stop with enhanced and safer pedestrian access routes.
- 13.2.6 The Scheme will provide safer walking and cycling facilities through the area proving improved connections between South Leigh, High Cogges and Witney as well as enabling linkages with development within the EWSDA in accordance with objective CO11 of the WOLP. This will promote more walking and cycling in the area, improving public health and wellbeing, reducing emissions of harmful pollutants and greenhouse gases.
- 13.3 *Need for the Order Land*
- 13.3.1 The Acquiring Authority, as Highway Authority, is already the owner of the freehold interest in a small number of plots, and its interests in those plots are included in the CPO under the provisions of section 260 of the 1980 Act.
- 13.3.2 The Acquiring Authority's approach is only to acquire land compulsorily where it is strictly needed to assure successful delivery of the Scheme in accordance with best engineering and environmental practices.
- 13.3.3 The Acquiring Authority has given careful consideration to the reasons as to why all of the Order Land is necessary and has described this further in **Section 9** of this Statement. All freehold owners, lessees and occupiers affected by the CPO have been invited to enter into discussions with a view to agreeing appropriate terms for acquisition of the land required. The Acquiring Authority has a very clear idea how it will use the land it intends to acquire and has the necessary resources to acquire the land and interests needed for the Scheme.

13.4 Attempts to Acquire by Agreement

- 13.4.1 The Acquiring Authority is seeking to acquire the Order Land, wherever possible, by means of agreement rather than by compulsory purchase and has sought to discuss/negotiate with owners and occupiers to achieve this end. It has fully considered the Guidance, which relates to the justification for a Compulsory Purchase Order, to determine whether there is a compelling case in the public interest to compulsorily acquire and use land for the purposes of the Scheme. It is considered that a compelling case exists here.
- 13.4.2 All known owners and occupiers with an interest in land have been approached to ask if they would be prepared to enter into negotiations with the Acquiring Authority for the purchase of their respective interests. Detailed negotiations are taking place with a number of known landowners and occupiers. However, the Acquiring Authority has concluded that acquisition by agreement is unlikely to occur in all cases or, in any event, within sufficient time to ensure that the programme for the construction of the Scheme is met. There is land required which is in unknown ownership, which the Acquiring Authority will be unable to secure by agreement and will need the authority of the CPO to acquire.
- 13.4.3 Discussions will continue with known owners of relevant interests in an endeavour to secure them by agreement, wherever possible, with a view to limiting the number of interests which need to be acquired compulsorily. The approach adopted by the Acquiring Authority is in accordance with the policy advice and recognised good practice.
- 13.4.4 Where the Acquiring Authority has been unable to reach agreement with landowners and occupiers it will offer alternative dispute resolution to enable agreement on compensation to be reached.
- 13.4.5 The CPO will be made to secure the outstanding interests required to enable implementation of the Scheme, necessary to achieve the Acquiring Authority's objectives for the area.

13.5 Negotiations with Affected Landowners

- 13.5.1 The Acquiring Authority, together with its representatives at Gateley Hamer, has been engaging with landowners since September 2020. This has included negotiations for access to land to undertake environmental and ecology surveys and discussions regarding the mitigation of the impacts that the Scheme will have upon their property. This has then led to discussions regarding the terms for the acquisition of land in accordance with paragraph 16 of the Guidance.
- 13.5.2 Gateley Hamer has been in contact with all impacted parties in the Scheme, via emails, phone calls, and in person and virtual meetings. The majority of these impacted parties are willing to work with the Acquiring Authority to

enable the acquisition of the necessary land to facilitate the delivery of the Scheme.

13.5.3 Negotiations with impacted landowners are ongoing and will continue to progress throughout the entirety of the compulsory purchase process, right up until the point of implementation of powers, should the Secretary of State see fit to confirm the Orders.

13.5.4 In relation to Susan Morrish, John and Anne Kearns, and Jeremy, Paul and Rodger Walker, the Council has undertaken the following actions:

13.5.4.1 Initial meetings with the respective landowners took place in March 2021, which outlined the Scheme proposals and options appraisals, whereby feedback on these options and their impacts upon their land and property was taken on board;

13.5.4.2 Gateley Hamer were in regular correspondence with the landowners to agree access to their land for environmental surveys required to inform the planning application;

13.5.4.3 Further meetings were held over the course of the design and planning of the Scheme, looking at the mitigation of impacts and providing Scheme updates. Once the land requirements of the preferred Scheme were known, this was then shown and discussed with the landowners;

13.5.4.4 Following this, Gateley Hamer sent out an offer to purchase letter to each of the landowners in December 2022 detailing the amount of land the Acquiring Authority wished to purchase;

13.5.4.5 In March 2023, onsite meetings took place with each landowner to negotiate the offer letters;

13.5.4.6 Gateley Hamer will continue to progress negotiations with the landowners until an agreement can be reached on which Heads of Terms can be circulated. Whilst detailed design is being considered, the Acquiring Authority will endeavour to correspond with the landowner to understand and agree mitigation and landscaping requirements.

13.5.5 In relation to Eileen, James and Stephen Mawle, and initial meeting took place in March 2021, which outlined the Scheme proposals and options appraisals whereby feedback on these options and their impacts upon their land and property was taken on board. Gateley Hamer were in regular correspondence with the landowner to agree access to their land for environmental surveys required to inform the planning application. Through the continued discussions, both parties are of the understanding that this land will be transferred within a Section 106 agreement; however, as this agreement has not been secured, the County Council needs to continue to progress the CPO with the inclusion of this land, with the clear intention that the parties will

continue to seek to resolve this without recourse to the use of statutory powers.

13.6 Conclusion

- 13.6.1 As set out within this section, the Acquiring Authority considers it has demonstrated that there is a compelling case in the public interest whereby the public benefit will outweigh any private loss. Interference with rights under the European Convention on Human Rights (as further set out in Section 12) is considered to be justified, in order to secure the benefits that the Scheme will bring.
- 13.6.2 It is, therefore, considered that the use of compulsory purchase powers is both necessary and proportionate, and that there is a compelling case in the public interest for the making and confirmation of the CPO. It is considered that the CPO does not constitute any unlawful interference with individual property rights. The compulsory purchase process enables objections to be submitted and a Local Public Inquiry to be held to consider those objections.
- 13.6.3 The parties directly affected by the CPO will be entitled to compensation in accordance with the Compensation Code, which is the collective term used for the principles set out in the Land Compensation Act 1961, the Compulsory Purchase Act 1965, the Land Compensation Act 1973, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 1991 and the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This is supplemented by case law relating to compensation for compulsory acquisition, and the more recent provisions relating to compulsory purchase contained in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.
- 13.6.4 All of the Order Land is required in order to deliver the Scheme, and there is no certainty that the necessary land and interests in known ownership can be assembled by agreement within a reasonable period or, where such interests have already been acquired, there is no certainty as to the existence of third party rights that could threaten delivery of the Scheme. Furthermore, certain of the Order Land is in unknown ownership and for which the CPO will be necessary to secure its acquisition. As such, the CPO is necessary to deliver the Scheme, although efforts to acquire all known interests by negotiation will continue in parallel, both up to the confirmation of the CPO, should the Secretary of State for Transport confirm it, and also post confirmation, prior to its implementation.

14. RELATED ORDERS, CONSENTS AND SPECIAL CATEGORY LAND

14.1. Planning Application

14.1.1. As described in **Section 8** of this document, the planning application for the Scheme was validated by OCC as the determining planning authority on 1 April 2022 under application reference R3.0039/22.

14.1.2. Positive discussions have been held with the County Planning Authority throughout the application determination period and it is anticipated that permission will be granted in Q2 2023.

14.2. Traffic Regulation Orders

14.2.1. Traffic Regulation Orders will be required to introduce new, and amend existing, speed limits, to prohibit or restrict parking and waiting of vehicles, and to prohibit or restrict the loading and unloading of vehicles. The Traffic Regulation Orders are in the process of being drafted and are not considered an impediment to the delivery of the Scheme.

14.3. Land Drainage Consent

14.3.1. A Land Drainage Consent application pursuant to the Land Drainage Act 1991 will be submitted post planning application determination. The Acquiring Authority considers that there is no reason that the necessary consent would not be granted.

14.4. Ecology Licences

14.4.1. Ecology licence applications have not been submitted as part of the EIA. It is anticipated that licence applications will be required during detailed design prior to construction stage start. The Acquiring Authority considers that there is no reason that the necessary licences would not be granted.

14.5. Special Category and Statutory Undertaker's Land

14.5.1. The Order Land contains no land which is classified as Public Open Space, Common land, Allotments, or Consecrated Ground (including ecclesiastical or burial ground). None of the Order Land is owned by the National Trust.

14.5.2. The Order Land includes no land which has been acquired by statutory undertakers for the purposes of their undertaking.

14.5.3. Statutory undertakers do however have equipment located in the highways subject of the Scheme works. The Acquiring Authority is currently in discussions with several Statutory undertakers in relation to identified diversions. These include:

- BT Openreach – following engagement regarding the proposed scheme design it has been agreed that no diversion is required;
- Scottish & Southern Energy (SSE) – following engagement regarding the proposed scheme design it has been identified that there is a requirement to divert 11KW and 32KW cables; and
- Southern Gas Networks (SGN) - following engagement regarding the proposed scheme design it has been identified that there is a requirement to divert a gas main in the area. Detailed designs for the diversion are now submitted to the Acquiring Authority for progression; and Southern Gas Network (SGN), where negotiations have progressed to detail design stage.

14.5.4. In accordance with the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, discussions have taken place with all statutory undertakers to determine if they are affected by the Scheme and, if so, to confirm the necessary measures that will be required where their operational apparatus situated within the highways will be impacted. Bearing this in mind, and in consideration of the ongoing negotiations with the relevant statutory undertakers, it is considered that satisfactory agreement will be reached with any affected statutory undertaker regarding any necessary diversions of utility apparatus.

15. STATUS OF THIS STATEMENT

15.1.1 This Statement of Reasons has been prepared for the purposes of making the Orders associated with the Scheme. It is not intended to discharge the Acquiring Authority's requirement to produce, nor is it to be taken as, its Statement of Case in the event that the Secretary of State for Transport should call a Public Inquiry to be held to consider any objections received to the Orders.

15.1.2 The Acquiring Authority reserves the right to expand or otherwise modify this Statement in the event of a Public Inquiry into the Orders being held and will produce such Statement of Case, as may be required, under the appropriate rules and at the appropriate time indicated under 'The Highways (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 1994 (S.I. 1994 No.3263)' and 'The Compulsory Purchase (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 2007 (S.I. 2007 No.3617).

List of Documents in the Event of an Inquiry

15.1.3 The following is a list of documents the Acquiring Authority may wish to refer to in the event of a Public Inquiry. This is not an exhaustive list and the Acquiring Authority may refer to further documents at any Public Inquiry:

- The Oxfordshire County Council (A40 Access to Witney) Compulsory Purchase Order 2023 – Order, Schedule and Order Map
- The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure – A40 Access to Witney) (Side Roads) Order 2023 – Order, Schedule and Order Plan
- Joint Statement of Reason for the CPO and the SRO
- Site Plan
- Scheme General Arrangement Drawings
- Cabinet Resolution to approve the Preferred Scheme Option (July 2021)
- Cabinet Resolution to make the CPO and SRO [Date to be Inserted]
- Officer Decision Notice to make Orders
- Oxfordshire Growth Deal Funding Agreement and Delivery Plan (2018)
- West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (adopted September 2018) ('WOLP')
- Witney Local Walking and Cycling Implementation Plan (LCWIP) - Adopted (March 2023)
- Access to Witney Transport Assessment (March 2022)
- West Oxfordshire District Council's Air Quality Annual Status Report (July 2022)

- A40 Access to Witney Lay-by Review Report (December 2021)
- A40 Highway Model Forecasting Report for Access to Witney Transport Assessment (April 2022)
- Access to Witney Environmental Statement (March 2022)
- WOLP Infrastructure Delivery Plan (July 2015)
- Equality and Climate Impact Assessment (ECIA) Report (May 2022)
- Cogges Link Road Inspector's Report (January 2012)
- Option Assessment Report (OAR) (July 2021)
- Access to Witney -Statement of Community Involvement (March 2022)
- Access to Witney - Planning Statement (March 2022)
- Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) (July 2022)

16. INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS AND CONTACT DETAILS

16.1. *Contact Details and Documents*

16.1.1. The following documents are available for public inspection during normal opening hours at the following locations:

- Oxfordshire County Council, County Hall, Oxford OX1 1DJ (Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.; and Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.); and
- Witney Library, Welch Way, Witney OX28 6JH (Monday – 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.; Tuesday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.; Wednesday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.; Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Sunday – Closed). (Note: The library opening hours maybe subject to change – the latest opening hours can be found at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-culture/libraries/find-library/witney-library>)

16.1.2. The documents are:

- the CPO and Order Schedule,
- the Order Map,
- the SRO and SRO Schedule,
- the SRO Plan,
- this Statement of Reasons,
- the appendices to this Statement of Reasons, and
- General Arrangement Drawing(s)

16.1.3. The documents can also be viewed on the Acquiring Authority's website at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/a40programme/a40-access-witney>

16.1.4. Interested parties affected by the Orders who wish to discuss matters with the Acquiring Authority should contact Gareth Slocombe, Access to Witney - Senior Project Manager, by one of the following means:

- 16.1.4.1. By telephone: [01865 792422];
- 16.1.4.2. By email: Gareth.Slocombe@oxfordshire.gov.uk;
- 16.1.4.3. By post: to Oxfordshire County Council, County Hall, Oxford, OX1 1DJ marked for the attention of Gareth Slocombe.

16.1.5. Owners and occupiers of properties affected by the Orders who wish to progress discussions for the acquisition of their interest should contact Jessica Bere, Associate, Gateley Hamer Limited on 020 7653 1714 or via email at Jessica.Bere@gateleyhamer.com.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Site Plan

Appendix 2: Scheme General Arrangement Drawings

Appendix 3: Cabinet Resolution to Make Orders and Officer Decision Notice

Appendix 4: Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Agreement and Delivery Plan

Appendix 5: West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 Main Relevant Policies & Supporting Text

Appendix 6: Witney Local Walking and Cycling Implementation Plan (LCWIP) – Adopted March 2023

Appendix 7: Access to Witney Transport Assessment

Appendix 8: West Oxfordshire District Council's 2022 Air Quality Annual Status Report

Appendix 9: A40 Access to Witney Lay-by Review Report

Appendix 10: A40 Highway Model Forecasting Report for Access to Witney Transport Assessment

Appendix 11: Environmental Statement Volume I Chapter 5: Air Quality

Appendix 12: WOLP Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Appendix 13: Equality and Climate Impact Assessment (ECIA) Report

Appendix 14: Environmental Statement Volume I Chapter 7 Climate Change

Appendix 15: Environmental Statement Volume II, Appendix 17-A: Schedule of Environmental Commitments

Appendix 16: Cogges Link Road Inspector's Report

Appendix 17: Environmental Statement Volume I Alternatives and Design Evolution

Appendix 18: Option Assessment Report (OAR)

Appendix 19: Statement of Community Involvement

Appendix 20: Cabinet Approval of Preferred Scheme (Papers and Cabinet Resolution)

Appendix 21: Planning Statement

Appendix 22: Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP)

By virtue of paragraph(s) 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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