16. Bicester

16.1 In 2009, Bicester was designated as one of four "eco-town" locations. With this comes the requirement to deliver sustainable development to exemplar standards. This has acted as the catalyst for the Eco Bicester Vision described later in the Goals & Objectives section. The Vision for transport and movement is for the whole of the town, underpinning this Transport Strategy for Bicester.

16.2 The overriding challenge for Bicester is to develop an effective eco-town at north west Bicester and to achieve Eco-Bicester objectives for the overall town, where sustainable living, including sustainable travel choices, becomes the reality. This involves the challenge to achieve the live/work balance at north west Bicester to meet containment targets; achieve a high level of mode switch from the new development; use the measures being implemented in north west Bicester to trigger a change in the travel behaviour of people who already live and/or work in Bicester; and getting the highway network to function with the remaining additional car trips.

16.3 Bicester is the second largest town in Cherwell district, located 12 miles from Oxford, 21 miles from Banbury and 24 miles from Milton Keynes. It has excellent transport links via the A34 and the nearby M40, and has rail links from its two stations to Oxford, London Marylebone, High Wycombe and Birmingham. The town is both a garrison and commuter town with a military logistics, storage and distribution and manufacturing base. It is now one of the fastest growing towns in Oxfordshire, with large amounts of housing development in and around the town. Much of the future growth in this area will be at North West Bicester, which has been identified as an eco town location, with plans for a sustainable development of 5,000 homes by 2030. The 2001 census recorded Bicester's population at 28,705. It is predicted to rise to 32,620 by 2016 and up to approximately 40,000 by 2026.

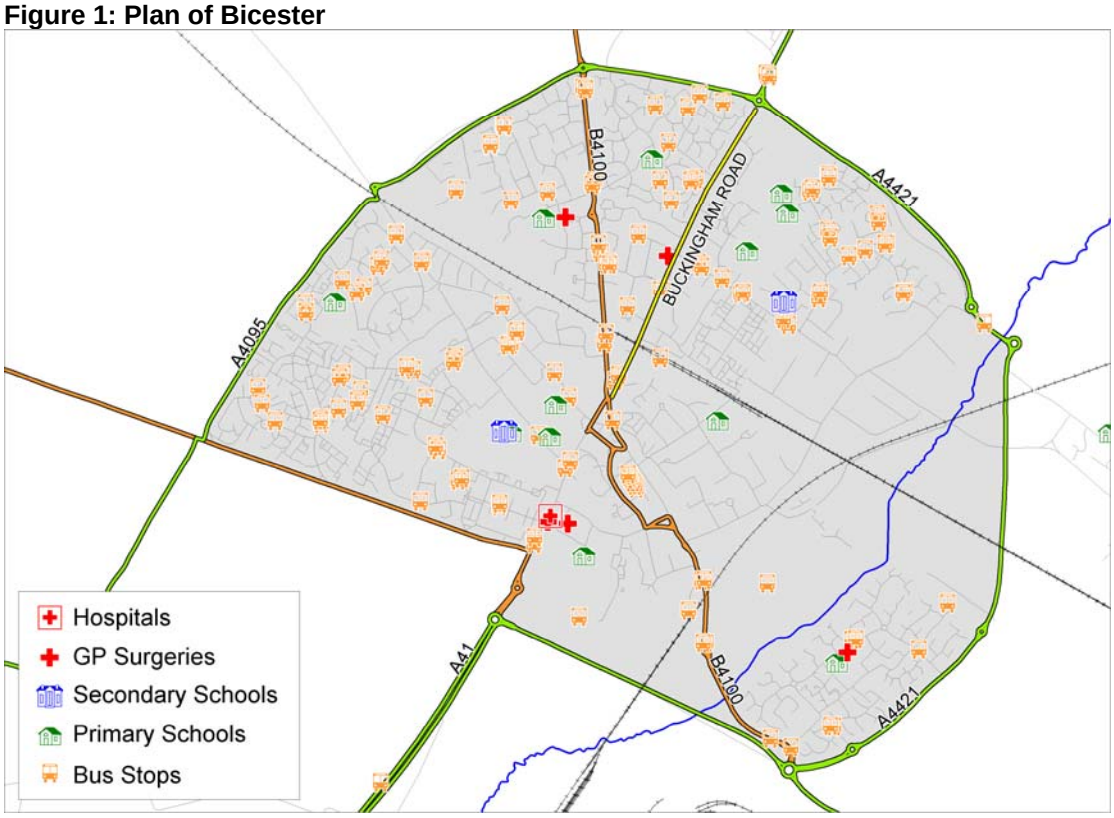
16.4 Bicester serves a rural hinterland that includes Fringford, Caversfield, the Astons & Heyfords, Launton, Ambrosden, Chesterton and Otmoor, as well as parts of rural Aylesbury Vale. This significantly rural area is bisected by the railway, M40 and A41, and includes some popular commuter villages. Bicester itself is home to an outlet shopping village which is extremely popular with visitors from all around the world.

Transport in Bicester

16.5 Substantial transport work has been undertaken for Bicester in recent years. The first Bicester Integrated Transport and Land Use Study

(BicITLUS1) was completed in 2000 to inform Cherwell District Council's current non-statutory Local Plan and guide the development of Bicester up until 2011. A range of schemes have been delivered during this period including pedestrian and cycle schemes and measures to encourage through traffic - particularly HGVs - to use more appropriate routes via the peripheral road rather than through the centre of Bicester.

Figure 1: Plan of Bicester



16.6 More recently, this work has been revisited to inform the District Council's Local Development Framework (LDF). This work provided guidance on the best locations (in transport terms) for further housing, employment and retail development up until 2026. It sets out what transport infrastructure is required in order to support this growth as well as the existing needs of the town. This work was complete in 2009 but was not adopted because of the pending eco-town decision and so subsequent work supersedes this.

16.7 Bicester's growth has been influenced by its location on the strategic road network close to junction 9 of the M40, where the A34 meets the A41. It is also close to junction 10 with the A43 which connects the M40 and M1. Improvements at junction 9 of the M40 are being progressed by the Highways Agency and Oxfordshire County Council.

16.8 Bicester suffers with a weekday congestion problem especially on the B4030 outside Bicester Village Retail Park and on the A41. Because

of the nature of Bicester Village's business, the worst traffic congestion is often at weekends or on Bank Holidays. This congestion can further create inappropriate route choices by frustrated drivers, for example through Chesterton. The problems at Bicester Village contribute to the queueing on the M40 junction 9. There is also a congestion bottleneck at the Bucknell Road railway bridge as traffic uses this route to/from Upper Heyford and to access junction 10 of the M40.

16.9 There is a significant imbalance between homes and jobs in Bicester, meaning out-commuting is a particular problem with over 60% of residents leaving the town to work (National Census, 2001). This presents a specific transport problem.

16.10 Bicester has two railway stations: Bicester North with direct rail links to London and Birmingham, and Bicester Town which provides services to Oxford. Chiltern Rail plans to redevelop Bicester Town station and increase capacity between Bicester and Oxford as part of its Evergreen 3 project to provide two trains per hour in each direction. Journey times between Bicester and Oxford will be reduced to just 14 minutes (compared to 26 minutes at present) and will continue to London. This will enable a more sustainable alternative to car travel and reduce congestion on the A34 and M40 trunk roads. In the longer term, the East West Rail project seeks to promote a new, direct regional rail link between Oxford, Bicester, Milton Keynes and East Anglia.

16.11 Currently there is a bus station in Bicester town centre at Bure Place. This will be redeveloped as part of the town centre redevelopment which will see bus bays provided on Manorsfield Road, plus the addition of two new roundabouts to enable turning. There is a Premium Route bus service between Oxford and Bicester (Stagecoach route S5), plus various inter-urban services.

16.12 Bicester has many walking and cycling routes, many of which were enhanced or provided through the BicITLUS work. An audit has recently taken place throughout the whole of the town to assess the condition of the existing routes and recommend any improvements as well as propose new routes to key destinations. Delivery of this would give Bicester a high standard of infrastructure for walking and cycling.

16.13 There is a good range of public rights of way that connect Bicester to the surrounding countryside. However the network is disjointed in many places where paths meet the road network. Selected improved management, road crossings and traffic-free links could help enable more people to access the countryside on foot, cycle or horseback.

16.14 The majority of pupils at both primary and secondary schools walk to school, with a high number that cycle to school. All parts of Bicester

are currently within a 15 minute cycle ride of the town centre, and are "in the zone" for cycling to schools. All of Bicester's schools have a School Travel Plan.

16.15 In general, Bicester's deprivation issues relate to education, skills and training, and crime. In the rural areas surrounding Bicester, overall levels of deprivation are generally low, although part of Launton falls into the 60% most deprived nationally for access to housing and services, and therefore, needs to be considered when looking at access to services and travel by sustainable modes.

Goals & Objectives

16.16 Bicester is one of five priorities for the Closer to Communities: Localities agenda. The Closer to Communities project seeks to develop and improve locality working across the council and works closely in partnership with organisations to deliver better services and value for money for local people.

16.17 A transport vision was developed at part of the recent LDF transport evidence work which promoted the use of sustainable travel in order for the local community to access health services, education, employment, retail, sports and leisure opportunities.

16.18 More detailed transport objectives will be developed for Eco-Bicester, leading on from the Vision work that Cherwell District Council has drawn up. Oxfordshire County Council will lead this work as Highway and Transport authority, with close liaison with key partners including the District Council plus transport planning consultants acting on behalf of the developers for North West Bicester, to ensure a consistent approach to travel and transport around the town is applied.

16.19 Bicester is classified as a large town within the Local Transport Plan, and has three top priorities identified, described below. On top of this, to reflect its eco town status, enhanced levels of investment will be required to deliver improvements to bus, cycling and behavioural change elements, over and above that to levied in other large Oxfordshire towns.

Reducing Congestion

16.20 Bicester has highway constraints such as traffic congestion in the town centre and at King's End/A41. Work is being undertaken to improve capacity at junction 9 of the M40, but there are other locations such as the Bucknell Road/Howes Lane junction within the town which also suffer from capacity/congestion issues.

16.21 Cherwell District Council is likely to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2010/2011 on Kings End & Queens Avenue possibly extending to Field Street/North Street and so schemes to reduce congestion or ones that encourage more appropriate routeing, with promotion of travel by sustainable modes will play a key role in addressing this.

16.22 Schemes which comprise either services, infrastructure or better information to encourage greater use of walking, cycling or public transport for all or part of the journey; measures such as improving junction designs, route closures to all or certain vehicle types and new roads should be considered to help mitigate existing congestion and prevent further congestion from occurring.

Increasing the quality and use of public transport

16.23 Bicester town centre is well served by public transport particularly by regular bus services to Oxford. However, parts of Bicester have poor accessibility to public transport, and development of new or existing routes, would make bus travel a more attractive transport choice from all parts of the town.

Increasing cycling and walking for local journeys, recreation and health

16.24 Walking is the most popular mode of transport for short journeys at 24% in Bicester (2007 Household Surveys) and is an essential component of all other journeys. Cycling is an extremely flexible, enjoyable, healthy and relatively inexpensive mode of travel and has a pivotal role in creating a sustainable economy. Making town centres attractive for cyclists and pedestrians can enhance the experience and create vitality in an area, for example through the Bicester Market Square and town centre redevelopment plans.

16.25 Bicester has fairly flat terrain which makes walking and cycling an ideal mode of transport for some journeys such as those to schools, work and local services. The aim is to improve conditions throughout the town for pedestrians and cyclists by reviewing the current facilities and developing new amenities to encourage travel by these modes within the town. This could include new shared use facilities, improved signage, road crossings and cycle parking, in conjunction with promoting the health and environmental benefits of walking and cycling.

16.26 The Bicester Travel Behaviour Demonstrator project will enhance the attractiveness of walking, cycling and public transport around the town and promote opportunities for doing so for journey to work, leisure and health purposes. This will include enhancing routes to transport interchanges such as the bus and rail stations for journeys outside of Bicester. This will be developed further in conjunction with the NW Bicester Transport Assessment work.

Housing & Employment Pressures

16.27 It is essential that this transport strategy for Bicester aligns with key partner objectives for the town. It is imperative that Oxfordshire County Council works with Cherwell District and Bicester Town Councils but also with private sector representatives to achieve the vision for the town over the coming 20 – 30 years.

16.28 By 2026, Cherwell's economic vision for Bicester recognises that it will have grown significantly to become an important economic centre in its own right within the Central Oxfordshire sub-region and on the Oxford-Cambridge arc. It will have become a more attractive place to live and work and will be significantly more self-sustaining both economically and socially. Bicester will have established itself as a location for higher-technology businesses building on its relationship with Oxford. Its economy will have become more knowledge based and the town's importance as a centre for retail and leisure will have increased. Securing and delivering key transport infrastructure alongside this will be crucial to meeting shared objectives.

16.29 Cherwell District Council's (CDC's) draft Core Strategy (2011 – 2026) aims to deliver 3,000 new homes at North West Bicester within the plan period, with 5,000 by 2034. This will incorporate new primary and secondary schools, open space, community and leisure facilities as well as new land for business. 5,000 new jobs will also be provided for Bicester, re-dressing the current imbalance with so many residents who out-commute to work. Contributions towards transport and highway schemes and behaviour initiatives in this strategy will also be secured from new developments, including the development at North West Bicester.

16.30 Additional developments include: the town centre redevelopment, 1585 dwellings at SW Bicester, 500 dwellings at Gavray Drive, Bicester Business Park and other minor applications across the town. Additionally 700 dwellings will be developed nearby at Upper Heyford,

Problems and Challenges

Walking and the public realm

16.31 Despite an extensive pedestrian network, the town's layout can be difficult to navigate especially for visitors. This can sometimes have the negative effect of making car travel more attractive, instead of encouraging trips on foot.

16.32 There is a lack of joined up, full/complete network of walking routes. There is also limited signing of pedestrian routes from residential

areas, to local services, schools, employment areas and the village centre.

16.33 The terrain of Bicester is regarded as relatively flat. Therefore, opportunities exist to significantly improve infrastructure for walking and cycling to enable access to local services, and to public transport.

16.34 Adequate footway width and surface, as well as pedestrian safety are also key issues. There are areas of the town with busy traffic but no formal crossing points.

16.35 In some parts of Bicester urban footways do not link particularly well with rights of way and rural footpaths. Maintaining and improving links where public rights of way meet urban footways and highways could help to enable more people to feel confident in using alternatives to the private car for local journeys and recreation.

Cycling

16.36 Cycling infrastructure across many areas of Bicester could be improved and promotion of both cycling and walking routes may increase the use of these as alternatives to the private car.

16.37 Although cyclists can use bridleways, restricted byways and byways (along with horse riders) these often do no connect safely with roads that are safe to use.

16.38 There is limited publicity of cycling routes from residential areas, to local services, employment areas and the town centre. However, all parts of Bicester are currently within a 15 minute cycle ride of the town centre.

16.39 Cycle parking at key destinations within the town centre is considered poor.

Buses

16.40 The Bicester to Oxford inter-urban service operates every 20 minutes, (every 15 minutes in the peak), and runs seven days a week. Buses run as late as 0220 from Oxford at the weekend. The service is operated with high-specification double deck vehicles with wi-fi connectivity. Many stops along the route have been enhanced to ‘Premium Route’ standards with some locations having real-time information. This service will be further enhanced through agreement with the South West Bicester developers.

16.41 A significant inter-regional service operates from Oxford to Cambridge via Bicester and Milton Keynes. This is an express coach service, operating non-stop between Oxford and Bicester every 30 minutes seven days a week.

16.42 There are approximately nine bus services a day (Monday to Saturday) to Aylesbury and Buckingham. Heyfordian operate an hourly service to Oxford through Upper Heyford and other villages, while Grayline and Heyfordian provide the local services around the town, which run approximately every 30 minutes. There are also some services to Banbury.

16.43 There is rather limited bus access to local employment centres, such as around Launton Road.

Park and Ride

16.44 Park and Ride is an established technique for improving environmental conditions in congested urban centres, by providing an opportunity for car users to transfer to public transport at certain strategic locations on the edge of an urban area. This strategy has been successfully utilised on the key approaches to Oxford, but these sites are now approaching capacity.

16.45 The concept of 'remote park and ride' sites has been successfully implemented elsewhere, and it's considered that a site on the South West side of Bicester, adjacent to the high-frequency and high quality inter-urban bus services, could be a suitable location for car users to transfer to the bus for journeys into Oxford.

16.46 This location would also provide an opportunity for motorists to transfer to the bus for journeys into Bicester, not only into the town centre but also to Bicester Village, which experiences extreme peaks of parking demand.

16.47 A potential site has already been found for a Park and Ride facility, and this has been secured through negotiations with the developers of 'South West Bicester'.

Rail

16.48 Bicester has two stations with Chiltern Railways running daily services - up to four an hour - from London Marylebone to Bicester North station, with journey times between 49 and 75 minutes. There is a Taxi Bus which runs every 15 minutes from Bicester North to Bicester Village. Also, Chiltern Railways runs daily services, up to two an hour, from Birmingham Moor Street to Bicester North station, with journey times between 68 and 90 minutes. First Great Western runs services Mondays to Saturdays from Oxford to Bicester Town station, which is just a short walk from Bicester Village and the town centre. Journey time is around 25 minutes and operates at 70 minute intervals.

16.49 In addition to the improved services that will be delivered as part of the Evergreen 3 project already described, changes to Bicester Town

Station will also take place. This will involve delivery of a new bus drop-off point on the London Road, additional car parking pedestrian and cycle links in the vicinity of the station including to neighbouring Bicester Village and a pedestrian footbridge over the railway line. Cycle parking will also be provided onsite, along with a taxi rank next to the station building, to be accessed via Station Approach.

16.50 A new chord is also proposed as part of the Evergreen 3 project, to connect the railway line between Bicester and Oxford to the Birmingham to London main line by means of a short length of new railway at Gavray Junction.

16.51 In line with Eco-Bicester objectives, the strategy for accessing the rail stations is to work closely with Chiltern Railways and other partners to ensure that travel by foot, bike, bus, and car share is the first choice of travel within Bicester so that congestion and pollution can be minimised. Use of sustainable travel options for journeys with an origin within Bicester is to be significant so that car travel to the stations is kept to a minimum.

16.52 In the longer term, the East West Rail project seeks to promote a new, direct regional rail link between Oxford, Bicester, Milton Keynes and East Anglia.

Behaviour Change

16.53 Behaviour change seeks to promote travel by healthy and sustainable modes and reduce trips by car for journey to employment, health, shopping and education. Where trips are made by car, other behaviour change initiatives such as car sharing can be deployed. Because of the congestion problems through Bicester and on the approaches to it, and the scope for promoting a reduction in car use, behavioural change has an integral role to play in achieving this and in achieving the Eco-Bicester vision.

16.54 Working with local major employers in Bicester will be key to delivering behavioural change. Much can be learnt and adapted from travel behaviour and travel planning initiatives already developed at Bicester schools, such as cycle training, promotion of walking from areas within 15 minutes from school and Walk 2 School Week.

16.55 Bicester has a high percentage of out commuting; of those travelling to work by car from Bicester, only 27% stay within the town, leaving the remaining 73% to travel elsewhere. The predominant mode of transport in Bicester is by car and accounts for 64% of all trips in Bicester; of these 49% are made as a car driver and 15% as a car passenger. Walking accounts for 24% of all trips throughout the day with cycling accounting for only 3% (2007 Household Surveys).

Low Emission Vehicles

16.56 The shared vision for Eco-Bicester includes the objective to achieve a significant increase in travel by means other than the car across the town but recognises that where cars are used, encouraging use of low carbon vehicles, including electric vehicles, is more desirable. This will require supporting infrastructure, such as electric charging points for cars and buses. Including this in the strategy also will contribute towards reducing carbon dioxide levels in Bicester; particularly relevant in an AQMA is declared. A range of funding sources will be investigated to deliver this element of the transport strategy, such as the Green Bus Fund mentioned previously and the Plugged in Places project.

Highways and Traffic

16.57 In addition to the network congestion issues already outlined, the long-standing transport objective for Bicester is to promote the use of peripheral routes for through trips, and to avoid unnecessary routeing via the central corridor of Queens Avenue/Buckingham Road. The approximate distances of the route options available vary considerably, illustrating that by far and away the shortest route is through the centre. With the eco-town in place, initial testing shows that travelling along the central route is the shortest and quickest route. This is because, even with the South West Bicester link road, the construction of the eco-town and potential down-grading of Howes Lane/Lords Lane to integrate the new development with existing Bicester, there are journey time increases on this south western route. By 2034, travelling by car via the eastern by-pass takes a similar amount of time to the south western route.

16.58 Work has already begun to further assess the preferred route for north-south through traffic in Bicester, and identify the key issues to be resolved to encourage the use of this preferred route. To decrease the attractiveness of the central route to through traffic, issues such as continuing to allow good access to town centre facilities, maintaining direct and attractive bus services with reliable journey times and considering the impact of any measures implemented on rat-running along residential streets, need to be borne in mind. This will need to be worked up with the developers of North West Bicester.

A Transport Strategy for Bicester

16.59 The overall town strategy aims to deliver transport improvements to Bicester aligns with the objectives and scenarios for Eco Bicester with a focus on walking, cycling, bus service improvements and reducing congestion around the town and promoting the use of low emission vehicles as they become available.

16.60 The strategy will look at how to initiate and influence travel behaviour, in particular by encouraging people to make fewer trips by car and replacing these with trips made by foot, bike or bus. Promotion of sustainable travel brings about wider benefits, such as healthy lifestyles, improved quality of life and also can have both local economic and environmental benefits.

16.61 The strategy will look at highway and traffic management measures that can be used to improve the road network and will also look at how to reduce unnecessary road traffic and associated pollution through an increase in the use of sustainable modes of travel.

16.62 In line with the planned housing and economic development for the town, improvements to the cycling and walking networks and bus services will be delivered. At the same time, requirements will also be looked at for specific highway improvements such as South West Bicester relief road as well as other road improvement schemes.

Walking & the Pedestrian Environment

Improve facilities for pedestrians, including disabled people, across Bicester by implementing the recent audit of current footways. The audit identifies schemes to improve legibility, way finding and permeability to key facilities from residential areas, and between key facilities by providing signage and improved crossing points. It also identifies where footways can be improved through widening, providing dropped kerbs, and new or improved crossing points.
Work with Cherwell District Council and developers to ensure new developments are designed to promote permeability on foot both within the site and to link with the existing settlement
Ensure urban footways join up with rights of way and rural footpaths.

16.63 When resources or opportunities allow this is to be achieved by:

* Implementing the audit of current footways to improve pedestrian routes throughout the town.
* Physical improvements to walking and cycling routes to key destinations with the Travel Behaviour Demonstrator Project. The focus will be on five priority routes:
  - Bicester Links: Bicester Village to the town centre
  - Bicester North Station to the town centre
  - The Cooper School to the town centre
  - The exemplar site to the town centre (via Banbury Road)
  - East Bicester to the town centre (via Bicester Town Station)

* Publicising and promoting walking routes by producing, in conjunction with information on cycling, maps, literature and route planners, both in written print and on the internet.
* Supporting the redevelopment of the town centre to provide excellent access to facilities for pedestrians, improved surfaces and pedestrian crossings.
* Promoting the public realm enhancements to the Market Square.
* Continuing to work with schools to promote walking.
* Investigating the need for pedestrian crossings.
* Improving connections to the rights of way network particularly where urban footways meet rural rights of way though new footpaths and signage to provide footpaths throughout the town and into the countryside.

Cycling

Develop a series of joined up cycle paths to link residential areas with the town centre and key local facilities.
Develop safe and secure cycle parking within the town centre and at key destinations.
Promote cycle routes, across the wider community, as well as continuing the work in schools.
Improve the town centre, including designs which provide excellent facilities for cyclists such as cycleways, toucan crossings and cycle parking, where necessary.
Work with Cherwell District Council and developers to ensure new developments are designed to promote permeability by bike both within the site and to link with the existing settlement.
Improve connections to the rights of way network particularly where urban cycleways meet rural rights of way.

16.64 When resources or opportunities allow this is to be achieved by:

* Implementing the audit of current cycle provision, with a particular focus to improve accessibility to key destinations; including the development at North West Bicester and employment sites.
* Physical improvements to cycling and walking routes to key destinations with the Travel Behaviour Demonstrator Project. The focus will be on five priority routes, as described in the walking section.
* Publicising and promoting cycling routes by producing, in conjunction with information on walking, maps, literature and route planners, which are made available both in written print and on the internet.

* Making street environment improvements for pedestrians and cyclists (cycle racks) at key destinations and employment sites.
* Supporting the public realm enhancements to the Market Square.
* Continuing to work with schools to promote cycling.
* Providing cycle parking at key locations.
* Providing cycle access to north east Bicester schools.
* Joining up the riding network across the wider area using public rights of way so that routes for commuting and recreation are improved.

Buses

Provide an excellent public transport connection between the eco development at NW Bicester, the town centre and Bicester Town Station.
Ensure that new developments are located and designed to encourage the use of the bus, with particular attention to minimising walking distances to bus stops on the strategic inter-urban routes. Seek contributions for new bus stops and associated infrastructure which are created to serve new development or developments which are an intensification of current use or change of use.
Ensure the provision of good quality and informative bus information at bus stops and local centres.
Improve the walking and cycling links from residential and employment areas to bus stops.
Enhance bus stop infrastructure and provision in the town.
Provide alternatives to private car travel by providing electric/hybrid buses to key destinations in Bicester.

16.65 When resources or opportunities allow this is to be achieved by:

* Delivering a rapid bus route between the development site at NW Bicester and the town centre. This is likely to include investigation of bus lanes and filter lanes for buses on key town centre approaches, for example along St Johns Street on to Queens Avenue.
* Bringing Bicester area bus stops up to Premium Route standard, with improvements at around 50 different locations.
* Delivering improvements to bus infrastructure and bus priority to enable bus reliability on the A41 corridor to/from junction 9 via Queens Avenue.
* Working with local bus companies and partners to deliver improvements through the Bicester Travel Behaviour Project. Schemes could include:

* Existing bus service enhancements on local routes to a frequency of every 15 minutes
* Branding and publicity – new bus livery, plus new maps and timetables
* Integrated ticketing – introduce a 'Bicester Travelcard' zone, offering unlimited travel on local buses for £1
* Provision of cycle stands at bus stops where physically possible
* Provision of timetables at all bus stops and where available appropriate Real Time Information, including information via the Internet. New technologies will be exploited, including IBIS and Smartphone applications.
* Offering "Bus try it out days" to promote bus travel locally.
* Securing developer contributions to enhance the routeing and frequencies of local bus services, for example in line with forthcoming new developments at locations such as Gavray Drive. Developers in surrounding settlements such as Arncott, Ambrosden, Launton and Upper Heyford will be expected to contribute to the provision of enhanced bus services into Bicester Town Centre.
* Investigation of new electric/hybrid vehicles to be used on key routes such as the exemplar site at NW Bicester, (and then the site as a whole), through schemes such as the Green Bus Fund.
* Continuing to work with the bus companies to support inter-urban bus routes where they travel through Bicester, e.g. Oxford to Milton Keynes, for example by improving bus stop facilities at Caversfield.
* Working with bus operators, the managers of the town centre bus hub in Manorsfield Road and with other stakeholders to provide excellent information about bus services in the Bicester area.

Park and Ride

Complete demand assessment work for a remote Park and Ride facility and report on findings.

16.66 When resources or opportunities allow this is to be achieved by:

* Should the demand assessment prove a need, create a Park and Ride facility, adjacent to the A41, and to the south of the South West Bicester development.
* Assessing the requirement for related bus priority infrastructure on the A41, and on approaches to it.

Rail

Support the delivery of Chiltern's Evergreen 3 project.
Support the delivery of the East West Rail project.
Implement the wider eco-Bicester principles in all rail strategy and development work.
Improve access by sustainable modes to both stations.
Work with the rail industry to improve rail capacity and the passenger experience at Bicester stations.
Work with other private sector partners, such as Bicester Village, to promote travel by rail for trips with a destination in Bicester, that otherwise may be made by private car.

16.67 When resources or opportunities allow this is to be achieved by:

- Supporting the upgrade of Bicester Town Station, as part of the improvements proposed by Chiltern Railways' Evergreen 3 proposals
- Working with the East West Rail consortium to provide a new link to Milton Keynes and Bedford, and possibly direct link to Didcot Parkway (all offering onward connections)
- Ensuring delivery of high quality public transport from NW Bicester eco-town to Bicester North and Bicester Town stations.
- Investigating and delivering better cycle routes to both stations.
- Improving cycle parking at Bicester North and at Bicester Town.
- Introducing bus facilities at Bicester Town.
- Improving station-to-station connectivity by bus, foot, or bike, and with town centre.
- Introducing a Plusbus scheme including both stations.
- Introducing a CarShare scheme via Oxfordshirecarshare.com.
- Delivering real-time bus information for buses.
- Developing Station Travel Plans for both stations.

Behaviour Change

To work with organisations and businesses to develop and implement travel plans targeted at the areas which have the greatest problem. To provide suitable information (marketing and promotion) and platforms (such as car share, 'in the zone') to reduce the reliance and inefficient use of cars.
To ensure developers of new sites in Bicester undertake detailed Transport Assessments and implement travel plans for the residents, employees and users of their sites.

16.68 When resources or opportunities allow this is to be achieved by:

* Promoting behaviour change through the Bicester Travel Behaviour Project. This project aims to increase the number of people walking, cycling and using public transport instead of the car.
* Continuing to work with the primary and secondary schools in Bicester to update their existing school travel plan, to monitor travel to school modes and travel opportunities and concerns for students travelling to school. Particular attention should be paid to reducing car use, increasing road safety education, and training and publicity, including cycle training.
* Approaching employers with high trip rates by car and then work with those employers to produce and enforce a workplace travel plan to understand current travel patterns, travel opportunities and concerns for employees travelling to work. A particular focus will be to reduce car use and promote walking, cycling and bus use.
* Conducting a feasibility study into the potential for car sharing to schools and/or places of employment from Bicester, particularly in conjunction with any larger employers, in order to cut down single car journeys by commuters and/or school runs.
* Promoting car sharing in the Bicester area.
* Working with Cherwell District Council to reduce car use.

Low Emission Vehicles

Encourage use of low emission vehicles as technology advances come forward with the aim to reduce average CO_2 emissions in passenger vehicles and HGVs across Oxfordshire to 130 g/km by 2030 and improve air quality levels in Bicester.

16.69 When resources or opportunities allow this is to be achieved by:

* Working with local organisations to encourage the use of lower carbon emission vehicles, and investigate options for incentivising lower carbon emission private vehicles.
* Facilitating the introduction of charging points for electric vehicles in the town through the Plugged in Places project, including on routes where electric buses run.

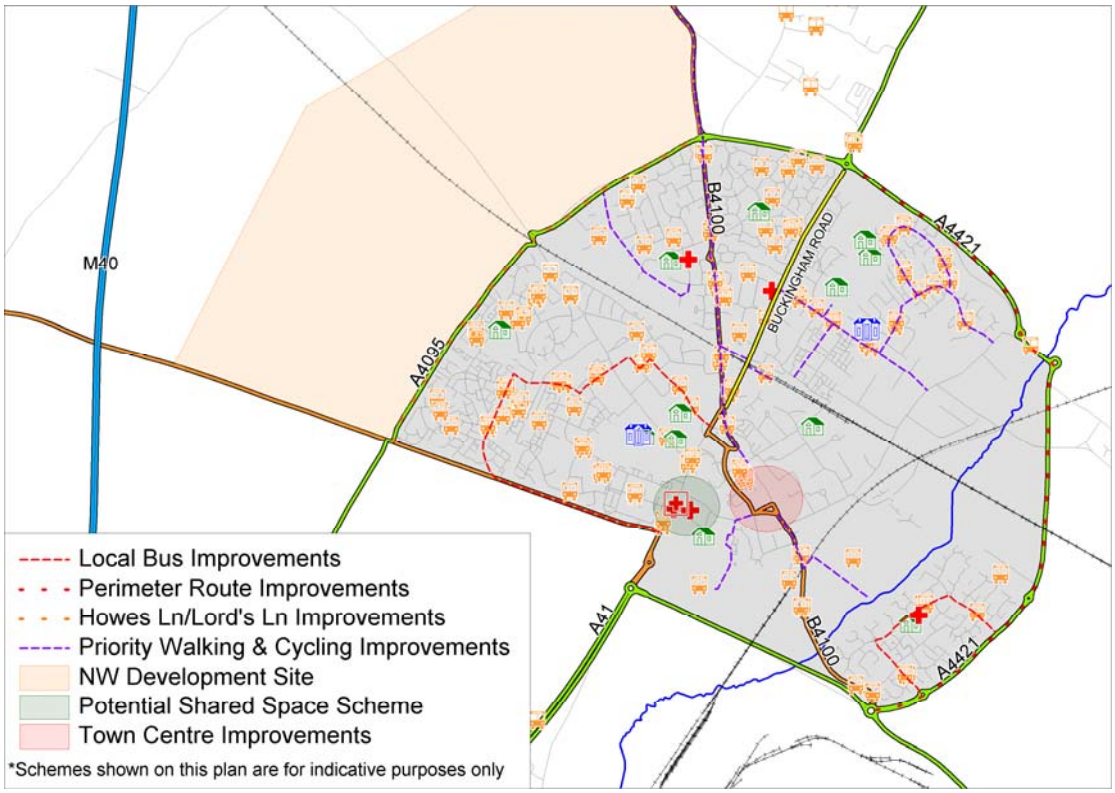
Highway Infrastructure and Traffic Management

Discourage traffic flow through the centre of Bicester on the B4100 Banbury Road and Buckingham Road, and encourage vehicles to use the eastern perimeter road..
Make best use of existing road space through careful planning, working with partners and utilisation of technology.
Discourage private car trips in and around Bicester where alternative modes of travel are provided as well as improving existing and providing new infrastructure, in line with Eco-Bicester principles.
Work with the private sector and District/Town council partners to resolve existing congestion issues.

16.70 When resources or opportunities allow this is to be achieved by:

* Working with the Highways Agency to ensure delivery of improvements to M40 Junction 9
* Investigating the need to improve M40 Junction 10 and its approaches from Bicester
* Working with the developers of North West Bicester to downgrade Howes Lane and Lord's Lane to promote integration and permeability with existing Bicester, incorporating Eco-Bicester principles to promote safer, sustainable and healthy modes of travel to and from the site.
* Investigating improvements to the Eastern Perimeter route to provide through traffic with a viable and attractive alternative to the central corridor.
* Working with the developers of South West Bicester to ensure delivery of the South West Bicester perimeter road
* Delivering the second phase of Roman Road improvements to complete reconstruction of the road from the new A41 roundabout link to the turn to the Chesterton over bridge. Full reconstruction of the carriageway from

the southern entrance of the Garden Centre to the new link to the A41 roundabout will be completed in Autumn 2010.

* Promoting the highway and public realm improvements to Bicester Market Square
* Investigating the benefits of a Central Bicester shared space environment to create a pedestrian/cycle friendly area to deter through trips, in conjunction with improvements to promote use of the Eastern Perimeter route for through traffic.
* Utilising technologies to collect information about how the Oxfordshire road network is operating in order to manage the network by identifying and resolving both short and long-term problems. This information could also be used to provide the public and businesses with up to date travel information.
* Conducting a traffic signage review on the strategic road network particularly from A41, A4095 and A4421 of signage to Bicester to remove clutter and ensure the routeing is correct.

16.71 **Figure 2: Bicester Transport Infrastructure Schemes**