24. Kidlington

24.1 Kidlington is a large village and civil parish between the River Cherwell and the Oxford Canal. It is situated on the main Oxford to Banbury road (A4165) and is 5 miles (8km) north of Oxford and 7.5 miles (12km) south west of Bicester.

24.2 The 2001 Census recorded Kidlington's population at 14,945. Today, Kidlington and Gosford's population is approximately 17,500 and has a claim to be the second largest village in England.

24.3 Kidlington has a modern shopping centre, library, large village hall, market and many modern dwellings.

24.4 In addition to shops and offices within the main part of the village, Kidlington has an expanding office and commercial area along Langford Lane to the north of the village. The Langford Locks area has a thriving business community that attracts businesses from all industry sectors; the whole area employs nearly 4000 workers. Opposite is Langford Business Parks and Oxford Motor Park.

24.5 Kidlington is home to other major employers, including the headquarters of the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Thames Valley Police, St. John Ambulance, and publishing company Elsevier which has its UK head office here. Oxford Airport, renamed London Oxford Airport in 2009, is also in Kidlington. Campsfield House, one of ten Immigration Detention Centres run for the UK government, is also there.

24.6 Kidlington has four primary schools and one secondary; Gosford Hill School. On the same campus is a community education centre, providing a wide range of courses.

24.7 Kidlington has good sports facilities. As well as recreation and sports areas managed by the Parish Council and Kidlington Recreation Trust, there is a Sports Complex on the Gosford Hill School campus and a modern Sports Pavilion with associated pitches at Stratfield Brake.

Transport in Kidlington

24.8 Spatially, the village's built up area extends along the Oxford Road and is within walking distance from all residential areas in the village. Key services such as two GP surgeries, the primary schools and a secondary school are distributed either on or close to Oxford Road and therefore are served by premium bus routes.

24.9 Shops and services in Kidlington are predominantly concentrated in the centre of the village. There is also a leisure centre to the south of

the village on Oxford Road.

24.10 Kidlington is very well served by buses linking it with a frequent service to Oxford City Centre. Access from some villages and from some other parts of Oxford is not so good, and there are poor interchange arrangements for rail. However, there could be good opportunities for links with rail at the proposed new Water Eaton station.

24.11 Two bus companies provide a very high frequency bus service to Oxford, with up to 24 services per hour for much of the day, and eight buses per hour during the evening, with some buses as late as 0300 at the weekend. There are also some local services to surrounding villages.

24.12 The A4260 runs through the middle of Kidlington, with the A34 and A44 close by.

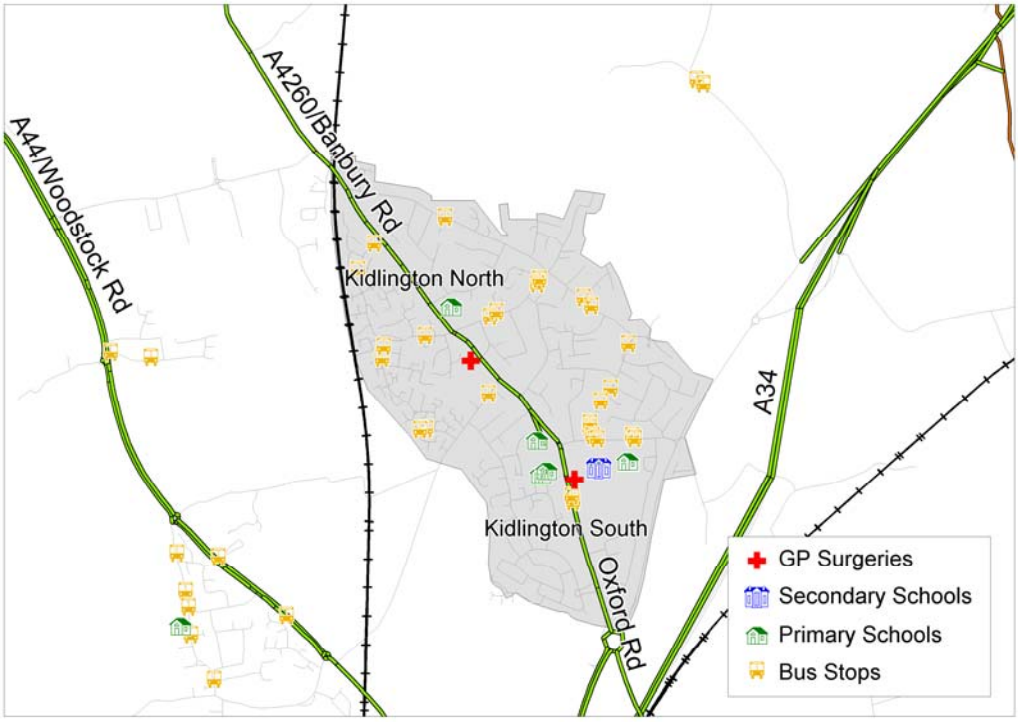

Figure 1: Plan of Kidlington

24.13 National Cycle Route 51 starts in Oxford and heads towards Bicester, routing through Oxfordshire villages including Kidlington. From Bicester the route goes along traffic free paths to Milton Keynes and Sandy, Bedfordshire. When completed, 'The University Way' is to end at Cambridge.

24.14 There is a good range of public rights of way that connect Kidlington 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.

24.15 On average 53% of school pupils walk to school and 25% drive. 17% of pupils at Gosford Hill School catch the bus to school. All schools in Kidlington have a school travel plan.

Problems and Challenges

Walking

24.16 Kidlington topographically is flat, therefore, making walking and cycling an ideal mode of transport for some journeys such as those to the schools, work and local services.

24.17 There is a lack of joined up, full/complete network of walking (and cycling) routes. There is also limited publicity of pedestrian (and cycling) routes from residential areas, to local services, schools, employment areas and the village centre.

24.18 Adequate footway width and surface, as well as pedestrian safety are also key issues. There are areas of the village with busy traffic but no marked crossings.

24.19 Access to education within Kidlington is good. The distribution of the primary schools and one secondary in Kidlington ensures the majority of dwellings are within walking distance. However, pedestrian routes to the schools from most parts of the village involve crossing busy roads, some without pedestrian crossings.

24.20 In some instances Kidlington's urban foot and cycle paths 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

24.21 Cycling in Kidlington is restricted along the major North-South route of Oxford/Banbury Road by heavy through traffic and a relatively large amount of buses. There are also no cycle lanes provided along this route. Effectively, key destinations in the village located along the through road are inaccessible for local cyclists. Alternative routes through residential areas do not allow cyclists to move freely as the street layout proves to be difficult to read and is disjointed.

24.22 Despite National Cycle Route 51 passing through the village there is a limited cycle network connection with surrounding settlements.

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

24.24 Cycling infrastructure across many areas of Kidlington could be improved and promotion of both walking and cycling routes may increase the use of these as alternatives to the private car. All parts of Kidlington are 'in the zone' for cycling and walking, for instance, are within a 20 minute cycling or walking distance from the village centre.

Buses

24.25 The core bus network around Kidlington reflects its growth over the years, with the core frequent service from Oxford City Centre branching into three variants to serve the Grovelands, Evans Lane and Lyne Road areas. At peak times, this pattern of service extends to serve London Oxford Airport. There is only a very limited off peak service. Supplementary services from surrounding villages need financial support to maintain operation.

24.26 The premium bus routes main purpose is to link Kidlington to Oxford; due to Kidlington's limited population, local services are unlikely to become commercially viable in the near future.

Behavioural Change

24.27 69% of residents of Kidlington drive to work with 7% walking, 6% cycling and 4% of residents get the bus. The high percentage of residents driving to work could be due to the distance people travel; with 28% of residents travelling 10-20km. However, these highly unsustainable levels of commuting combined with few people cycling and walking, indicate the need for a behavioural change in the village and supporting infrastructure.

Roads and Traffic

24.28 Inter-urban Networks: Transport Network Review (TNR) 2004 identified that a number of the problems in Cherwell are part of the Access to Oxford problems. More minor roads need to be protected from excess traffic, especially where traffic is using these roads to bypass congestion locations on the major road network.

24.29 Kidlington does not have a bypass and through traffic from Oxford to Banbury is required to go via the village centre. As the A34 and A40 towards Bicester and Witney often get congested, through traffic is using the roads in Kidlington to bypass congestion locations on the major road network. Bicester Road junction towards the A34 is likely

to be declared an AQMA in 2010/2011 and all major junctions along the A4260 regularly suffer from delays during peak traffic times.

24.30 Expectedly, accidents are concentrated on the busier roads, especially the A4260 Oxford Road/Banbury Road. While the A4260 Kidlington roundabout is the principal accident cluster site, currently no remedial works are planned given that the accident types are varied and overall numbers are only slightly above what might be expected taking account of the vehicle flows, although as part of the county speed limit review the speed limit on the roundabout is due to be reduced to 40mph. The A44 / Langford Lane junction is also a current accident problem site, but again (taking account of the detailed circumstances of the accidents etc.) no works – other than a planned extension northwards of the 50mph limit to include the junction also as part of the recent speed limit review, are currently planned.

Transport Strategy

Overview

24.31 Cherwell District Council's Draft Core Strategy identifies limited growth for Kidlington; however, due to development outside the village and Kidlington's proximity to major amenities, minor roads in Kidlington need protection from excess traffic, especially where traffic is using these roads to bypass congestion locations on the major road network. Topographically, Kidlington is flat; therefore better facilities for pedestrians and cyclists will encourage cycling and walking, which will have a more positive effect on the air quality in the area.

Walking and the Pedestrian Environment

To improve facilities for all pedestrians (including disabled people) across Kidlington through developing good clear routes from residential areas to the village centre and other services and facilities around the village, along with making sure urban links join up with rights of way.

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

* Improving the pedestrian environment in Kidlington. An audit process will identify areas where footways can be improved through widening, resurfacing, providing dropped kerbs, and new or improved crossing points, building up a work programme which will contribute to greater containment and thus support their vitality and economic success; including the business parks and London Oxford Airport.

* 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 Cherwell District Council's principle that Kidlington Village Centre is the vibrant heart of the village and will support schemes which provide excellent facilities for pedestrians, in particular wider footways and 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 village and into the countryside.
* Promoting the opportunity for walking from Kidlington to the railway station at Water Eaton.
* Investigate the need for a crossing on Bicester Road near Gosford Farm.
* Investigate the need for a pedestrian and cycle crossing on the A4260 in the vicinity of Thames Valley Police Headquarters.
* Investigate the need to upgrade the Oxford Canal towpath stretch through Kidlington.
* Investigate the need for an A4260 pedestrian and cycle crossing at Garden City.

Cycling

To develop a series of joined up cycle paths to link residential areas with the village centre and to key local facilities on the southern edge of the village.

To develop safe and secure cycle parking within the village centre and at key local services.

To promote cycle routes, across the wider community, as well as continuing to work with schools.

To improve the village centre, including designs which provide excellent facilities for cyclists such as cycleways, toucan crossings and cycle parking, where necessary.

To improve connections to the rights of way network particularly where urban cycleways meet rural rights of way.

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

* Improving facilities for cyclists by conducting an audit of any existing cycleways, well used routes and locations of cycle parking across Kidlington. This data will be used to develop schemes which will provide a high quality cycle network. Measures will also involve the provision of additional cycle infrastructure such as cycle lanes/cycle paths, advanced stops lines, and cycle parking where appropriate, with a particular focus to improve accessibility to key destinations; including the business parks and London Oxford Airport.
* Joining up the riding network across the wider area using public rights of way so that routes for commuting and recreation are improved.
* 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 cyclists (cycle racks) and pedestrians at key destinations and employment sites.
* Promoting opportunities to cycle from Kidlington to the railway station at Water Eaton.
* Investigating the Exeter Hall cycle link.
* Investigating improving cycling and walking links to the Langford Lane area and shopping facilities in the centre of Kidlington.

Public Transport

To maintain a high frequency quality bus service at a sufficient frequency to catch the number of users wishing to travel by bus between Kidlington and Oxford, and when implemented, to the new railway station at Water Eaton.

To ensure the core Premium Route bus services to/from Oxford maintains reliable with quick journey times, through the implementation and use of appropriate bus priority measures.

To make sure 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.

To facilitate the provision of good quality bus information at bus stops and local centres.

To encourage the use of the bus through implementation of new stops and associated infrastructure (including crossings, cycle racks, etc) when the need arises, and maintaining Premium route stop standards along the premium routes.

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

* Working with the bus companies and with London Oxford Airport, including
associated businesses, to improve the level of service to and from the Airport.
* The installation of cycle racks at main bus stops where space permits.
* Extension of the Banbury Road bus lane (towards the Bicester Road signals) should the need arise.
* Implementation of a bus lane on Bicester Road (C43) using additional land rather than just existing highway.
* Promoting opportunities to travel by bus between Kidlington and the railway station at Water Eaton.

24.35 In terms of rail, the key issues to investigate are:

* Through-ticketing on high–frequency bus services to Water Eaton Parkway, by extending the existing Oxford Plusbus zone to include the station.

* Investigate the growth of London Oxford Airport and need for a bus link to the rail network (probably via Water Eaton or Long Hanborough stations).

Behavioural 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.

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

* Continuing to work with the schools in Kidlington with the highest trip rates to update their existing schools travel plan, to explore current transport to school modes and travel opportunities and concerns for students travelling to school. A particular focus on reducing car use, increasing road safety education, training and publicity including cycle training will be made.

* Approaching employers with high trip rates by car and then working with those employers to produce and enforce a workplace travel plan to explore current transport to work modes and travel opportunities and concerns for employees travelling to work. A particular focus will be made on reducing car use and promoting walking and cycling by exploring the provision of cycle parking facilities etc.

* Conducting a feasibility study into the potential for car sharing to schools and/or places of employment from Kidlington, particularly in conjunction with any larger employers, in order to cut down single car journeys by commuters and/or school runs.

Traffic Management

To discourage through traffic in Kidlington where an alternative, major road network is provided, therefore, to increase the village's safety and decrease pollution.

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

* Working with Cherwell District Council to reduce car use.
* Encouraging the use of Low Emission vehicles as technology advances come forward. With the aim to reduce average CO_2 emissions in passenger vehicles and HGV's across Oxfordshire to 130 g/km by 2030 and improve air quality levels in Kidlington.
* Utilising the 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.
* Reviewing road safety incidents and conducting speed surveys at sites of concern, particularly at the entrances to Kidlington, on the A4260 through the centre of the village and on the Bicester Road. Consider remedial road safety measures such as installing Vehicle Active Signage; build outs or lining/surface measures to address speeding.
* Conducting a traffic signage review on the strategic road network particularly from the A44, A40 and A34 of signage to Kidlington to remove clutter and ensure the routing is correct.