19. Carterton

19.1 Carterton is the second largest town in West Oxfordshire with a population of 16,000. It is located 7 miles from Witney, 18 miles from Oxford and 20 miles from Swindon. Carterton began as a market gardening village in the early 1900s and grew rapidly after 1935 following the development of RAF Brize Norton. Further significant growth continued after World War II, and the new Shilton Park housing estate to the North East of the town was added from 2000.

19.2 The role of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) within Carterton is very strong with many local people associated with RAF Brize Norton. The MOD seeks to strengthen the strategic importance of RAF Brize Norton, as the largest RAF base in the country and significant increases in both military operations and personnel are expected over the life of LTP3 due to the closure of RAF Lyneham in Wiltshire. Oxfordshire County Council is in close liaison with the MOD to understand, and manage the transport implications the changes will bring to the Carterton area.

19.3 Carterton town centre, primary schools, secondary school and health centres are accessible from all areas of the town within a 20-30 minute walk. All parts of Carterton are within a 15 minute cycle ride of the town centre. All of Carterton's schools have a School Travel Plan.

19.4 The County Council has been working towards a focus on localities through its 'closer to communities' project. The Council is looking to engage more actively with the public about service provision in localities and promote the benefits of community led-planning. One service area is transport. Carterton has been identified as one of 6 high priority areas due to the on-going development at RAF Brize Norton and Carterton.

Transport in Carterton

19.5 The Carterton road network within the town is not congested and serves the town well. The main route into Carterton from the strategic road network is from the A40 via the B4477, although this junction at Minster Lovell only has Oxford bound access and the B4020 provides the most direct route from Carterton to access the A40 westbound. Carterton does not have a ring road but the B4020/B4477 acts as a bypass to the west of the town. Alternative access to the town is along unclassified roads. Due to the relatively rural location of Carterton there is limited through traffic, although through traffic is encouraged to use the B4020/B4477 Upavon Way instead of the town centre route.

19.6 The bus services to Oxford via Witney (Stagecoach routes S1 and S2), run a combined service of approximately 4 buses an hour during the day from Monday to Saturday and 2 buses an hour evenings and Sundays. Buses run as late as 0040 from Oxford seven nights a week, and until 0315 on Saturday and Sunday evenings. The service is operated with new high-specification double-deck vehicles with wi-fi connectivity. Bus stops along the route have been enhanced to the County Council's 'Premium Routes' standard, with new pole, flag and information cases, improved kerbing and in some locations, electronic real-time information, although the frequency of bus services does not yet meet the 'Premium Routes' standard of 4 buses per hour per service.

19.7 An hourly weekday local bus service is provided, with financial support, to the Shilton Park residential area and the villages of Alvescot, Clanfield, Bampton and Aston. There are six financially-supported buses on the Stagecoach 64 service per weekday to Swindon, through Lechlade and Highworth. An infrequent service to Burford operates only one day per week.

19.8 There is a good range of public rights of way that connect Carterton 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.

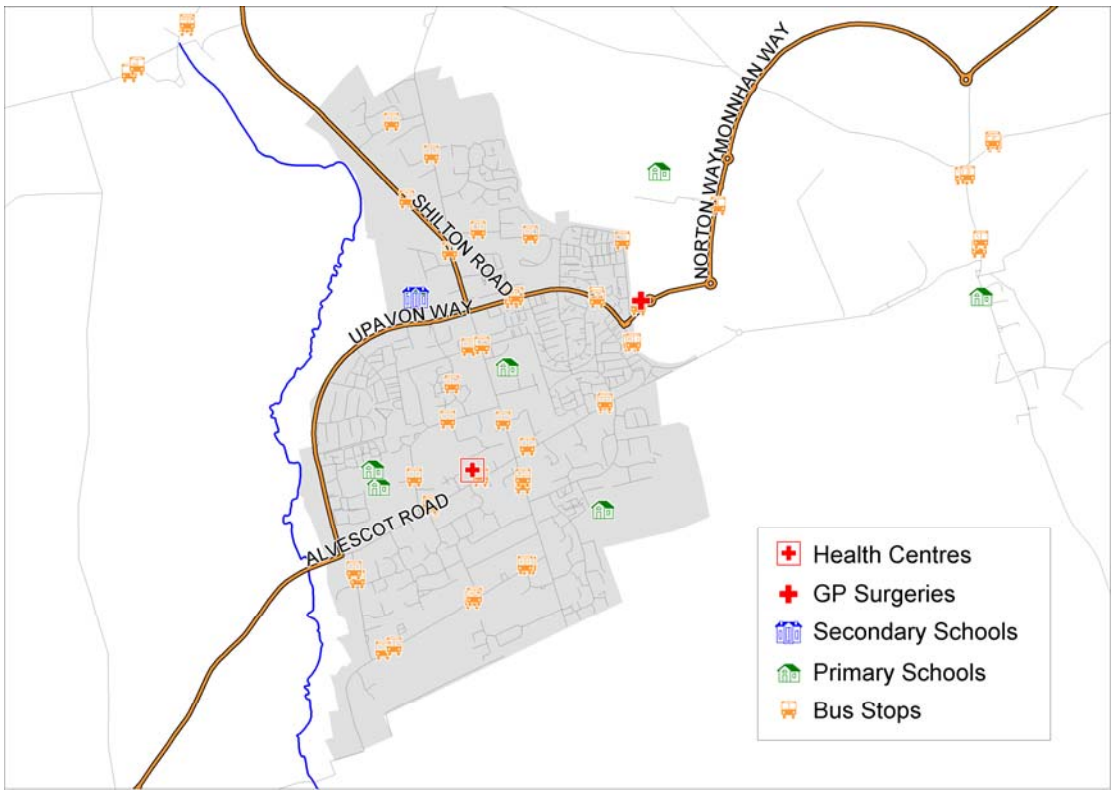

Figure 1: Carterton Plan of Town

Problems and Challenges

Walking

19.9 The network of walking routes from the residential areas, to local services, schools, employment areas and the town centre is incomplete. Particularly within the residential areas there are limited short cuts available and it can be difficult for pedestrians to identify and follow walking routes.

19.10 The width of some footways in Carterton and their surface treatment are not attractive for pedestrians to use, and urban paths do not link particularly well with rights of way and rural footpaths. 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

19.11 Shilton Park has very good cycle infrastructure including cycle paths, signage and cycle parking. Unfortunately the infrastructure across other areas of Carterton does not meet the high standard of Shilton Park.

19.12 Within Carterton there are limited dedicated cycle routes and cycle infrastructure, particularly within the town centre but also to access key local facilities from residential areas. Cycle parking at key destinations within the town is also considered poor.

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

19.14 Publicity (signs & maps) of cycle routes from residential areas to local services, schools, employment areas and the town centre is limited.

Buses

19.15 There is a regular bus service from Carterton, operating from early until late, seven days per week, which passes Oxford rail station. There is also a less frequent bus service from Carterton to Swindon, passing near to the rail station, where services are available to South Wales, Bristol and the South West.

19.16 The frequency of the bus service to Witney and Oxford is moderately good, it does not reach the desired ‘Premium Route’ level of four buses per hour, per route. There are insufficient buses allocated to the S2 route to provide a credible level of peak hour service to both Oxford (fast via the A40 Witney southern bypass) and into Witney via Minster Lovell.

19.17 As Carterton grows it will be difficult to ensure that new developments are located within walking distance of either the S1 or S2 bus routes to Witney and Oxford. This is particularly true of any significant new development to the north of Carterton.

19.18 The strategic public transport links to the south (Swindon, Faringdon & Wantage), west (Cirencester) and north (Burford) are considered poor. Whilst there are aspirations for Carterton to be better connected by public transport to Swindon, and Cheltenham in particular, such service enhancements need to be commercially viable in the longer term.

19.19 Carterton has no direct access to rail services; the nearest stations are at Shipton, Ascott-under-Wychwood and Hanborough, there are no direct bus services from Carterton to these stations. There are no plans or commitments for any form of rail to extend to Carterton.

Behavioural Choice

19.20 Carterton has scope for changing travel behaviour for both local and wider trips.

19.21 The walking and cycling sections detail the problems with those networks which, although not impossible, will make it harder to achieve significant behaviour change for local trips.

19.22 Access to education is considered good. The distribution of five primary schools across Carterton ensures all dwellings are within walking distance of a school. The secondary school is located to the north west of the town centre, and the majority of pupils walk or cycle to school.

19.23 Public transport limits the choice of post 16 education mainly to Witney and Oxford. Journeys to Swindon, Burford and Abingdon by public transport are achievable but journey times would be greater than those to Witney or Oxford. There is a dedicated school bus to Burford School from Carterton which extends the choice of both pre and post 16 education.

19.24 Access to employment opportunities by walking, cycling and public transport are more challenging, although all employment with the town centre is accessible from all areas of the town by sustainable modes. RAF Brize Norton is a key employment site and easily accessible on foot or cycle, as are the Carterton South Industrial Estate, West Oxfordshire Industrial Park and Ventura Park. Bus services provide moderately good access to employment in Witney, and Oxford, although provision is limited toward Swindon.

Roads and traffic

19.25 Carterton is served by B-classified roads, namely the B4020 and B4477, which means Carterton is not signed widely across the region on road signage.

19.26 Military road freight travelling to and from RAF Brize Norton including wide and long loads is not uncommon, and the routeing of these is an important factor in the design of new road infrastructure.

Transport Strategy

19.27 The town strategy aims to deliver transport improvements to Carterton with a focus on walking, cycling and bus service improvements around the town.

19.28 The strategy will also look at how to 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 also brings about wider benefits, such as healthy lifestyles, improved quality of life and also can have both local economic and environmental benefits. This section discusses the transport related problems and issues for Carterton, followed by the strategy to address these.

19.29 Carterton has not previously had a specific transport strategy so we will develop detailed strategies for the town, over the LTP3 plan period, will need to be developed and updated as investigations into what is required, and where is undertaken by this council. This process will also be refined as development proposals in the Core Strategy are clarified.

Walking and Pedestrian environment

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

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

* Conducting an audit of current footways. The audit will identify schemes to improve legibility, way finding and permeability by creating formal walking routes to key facilities from residential areas, and between key facilities by providing signage and improved crossing points. It will also identify where footways can be improved through widening, providing dropped kerbs,

and new or improved crossing points. This will help build up a work programme to deliver these improvements where they are most needed.

* Publicising and promoting walking routes from residential areas to key services and facilities by producing, maps, literature, and route planners, both in written print and on the internet.
* 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.
* Supporting the redevelopment of the town centre to provide excellent access to facilities for pedestrians, in particular areas of pedestrianisation (where appropriate), wider footways and pedestrian crossings.
* Supporting the redevelopment of Ministry of Defence housing stock within Carterton to provide excellent pedestrian access throughout the redeveloped site and clear pedestrian links to facilities across the town.

Cycling

To ensure that the best cycle routes from residential areas to local services, schools, employment areas and the town centre is publicised. To provide a suitable number of good quality cycle stands at the key destinations and appropriate infrastructure where required along the route.

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

* Conducting an audit of existing cycle ways, well-used routes and locations of cycle parking across Carterton. 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.
* Investigating the feasibility of providing a cycle way on Alvescot Road and Brize Norton Road with the aim of providing a cycle way from the residential areas to the town centre and RAF Brize Norton main gate.
* Investigating options for providing a Carterton to Witney Cycle way. An interurban cycle route is an aspiration in order to provide safe mode choice for commuters between Carterton and Witney and as a leisure route.
* 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, walking, maps, literature and route planners, both in written print and on the internet.

Public Transport

To work with local bus companies, developers and other partners to improve the frequency and attractiveness of the current Stagecoach S1 and S2 services to Witney and Oxford.

To provide regular good quality bus stops and associated infrastructure within Carterton on the premium route, including real-time information where appropriate.

To work with local bus companies, developers and other partners to improve and develop bus services on certain other routes to increase the accessibility of Carterton to/from other key locations particularly towards the west and north, such as Swindon, and Cheltenham. Retainment of the existing local bus service to villages in the area is important.

To 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.

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

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

* Good walking and cycling routes to existing bus stops, including appropriate crossing facilities.
* Provision of cycle stands at bus stops where physically possible.
* Provision of new stop locations at new development locations
* Public transport information is to be provided to the Military base through their on site “information hub”
* Encouraging the use of buses by improving marketing and by providing passenger information through on street equipment, website and mobile phones.
* To work with the bus companies to enhance the stagecoach 64 service (Witney to Swindon) with the aim of making it into a commercial service and fitting the service with the real-time information system.
* Promote the use of Hanborough rail station as a means of accessing the rail network (if improvements are made to car parking and bus services at the station).

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 on and inefficient use of cars.

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

* Continuing to work with Carterton schools, targeting and prioritising those which contribute the greatest traffic in the area. These have been identified as Carterton Primary School, St John the Evangelist CofE Primary School and Gateway Primary School. Update the existing School Travel Plans and work with the school to ensure actions are carried through. Explore current transport and travel opportunities and concerns for students travelling to school with a focus on reducing car use, increasing road safety education, training and publicity including cycle training.
* Identifying employers with high trip rates by car and then work with those employers to produce and enforce a workplace travel plan. The plan should particularly focus on reducing car use by initiating and exploring car-share schemes, working at home policies, promoting walking and cycling by exploring the provision of cycle parking and changing facilities
* Investigating the potential for car clubs or car sharing in the Carterton area, in conjunction with larger employers such as RAF Brize Norton, in order to cut single occupancy car journeys, particularly by commuters and on the school run.

Highway Infrastructure and Demand Management

To make best use of existing road space through careful planning, working with partners and utilisation of technology.

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

* Continuing to work with RAF Brize Norton to establish the implications of Programme Future Brize on the existing transport network to ensure new infrastructure is provided to mitigate against the expansion.

* Undertaking feasibility work to examine the options available to serve Carterton by the strategic network including the issues that non-direct access to the strategic network presents to the community. This is likely to involve assessments of the existing B4477 and B4020 to identify the scope for upgrading to 'A' road classification.
* When applicable use technology 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 with the network. This information could also be used to provide the public and businesses with up to date travel information.
* Reviewing road safety incidents and conduct speed surveys at sites of concern, particularly at the entrances to Carterton. Consider remedial road safety measures such as installing Vehicle Activated Signage, build outs or lining/surface measures to address speeding.
* Examining the impact of replacing existing traditional traffic calming humps on Burford Road and Brize Norton Road, with speed cushions or chicanes, in order to remove physical impediment for emergency vehicles and cyclists.
* Conducting a traffic signage review on the strategic road network particularly from A361, and A420 of signage to Carterton and RAF Brize Norton to remove clutter and ensure the routing is correct.