

CONNECTING OXFORDSHIRE

Local Transport Plan 2015 – 2031 Summary

October 2015



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

Foreword and Introduction

Oxfordshire is a prosperous and vibrant county, combining a successful, thriving economy with a high quality environment. It is the most rural county in southeast England, and yet is a world leader in areas including scientific and energy research, international publishing, bio-technology, car manufacture and motor sport industries.

Current forecasts are for over 85,000 new jobs and 100,000 new homes in the county by 2031. Major development areas identified include Science Vale and Oxford, while Bicester has recently been awarded 'Garden Town' status. Together, this growth will have a significant impact on our transport network, with an ever increasing number of people and goods needing to use it. Given the existing pressures on the network and the scale of growth we are anticipating, we cannot rely on small, short-term solutions; more radical solutions are required to transform transport in Oxfordshire for its people and growing economy over the next twenty years and beyond.

Connecting Oxfordshire is our new Local Transport Plan (LTP) setting out our proposed transport solutions for the county up to 2031, with ambitions beyond that in some cases. It has been informed by public feedback received in response to a series of public meetings and two public consultations in summer 2014 and spring 2015, as well as detailed discussions with a wide range of stakeholders.

During this LTP period we have a huge challenge to enable people to make the journeys they need to as the population grows, and avoid damage to the economy caused by severe congestion, as well as to protect the environment. So there needs to be a significant shift away from dependence on private cars, towards more people using forms of transport that use less road capacity and damage the environment less – where possible walking, cycling, or using public transport. Our aim is to make this happen by transforming travel by these means, supported by innovation. Our strategy seeks to make this more possible and more attractive, for more people, particularly on our busiest routes.

We need to make these other forms of transport equally if not more attractive than using the car, for the majority of people. This is not going to be easy: it requires us to consider some radical solutions as well as smaller-scale improvements, which I believe will make a huge positive impact on people's lives and provide a firm, future-proofed foundation for economic growth and prosperity for Oxfordshire's residents.

The purpose of this brochure is to outline the key messages within Connecting Oxfordshire in a clear and concise way, enabling the reader to quickly get an overview of the strategy and how it fits into the council's policies and strategies and where to find additional information.



Councillor Ian Hudspeth

Leader, Oxfordshire County Council

1 Strategic Context

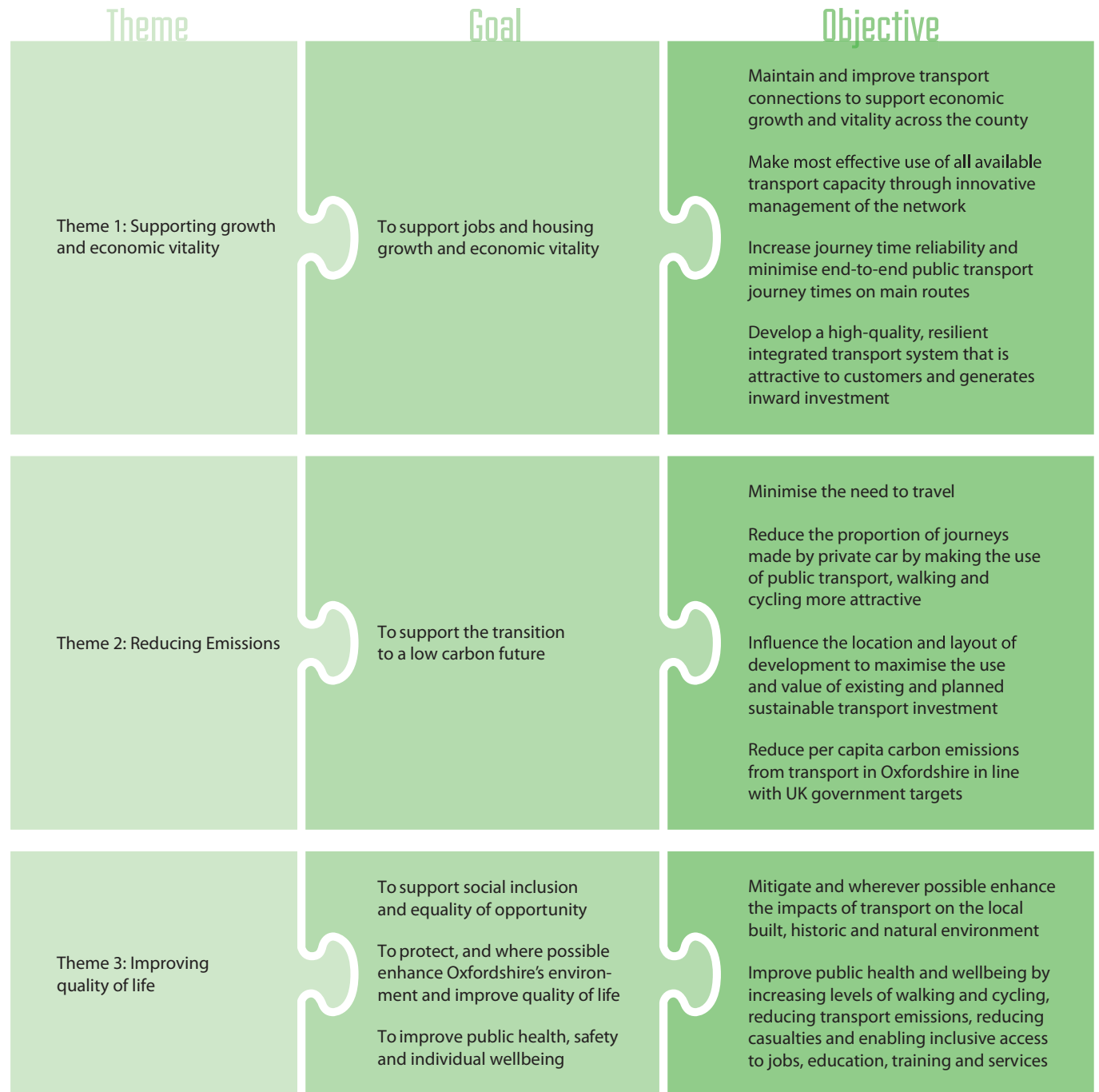
- 1.1 Connecting Oxfordshire is Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP4), setting out the strategy and policies for developing the county's transport system between 2015 and 2031. It has been developed with input from Oxfordshire's district councils, businesses, MPs, stakeholder groups and through public consultation.

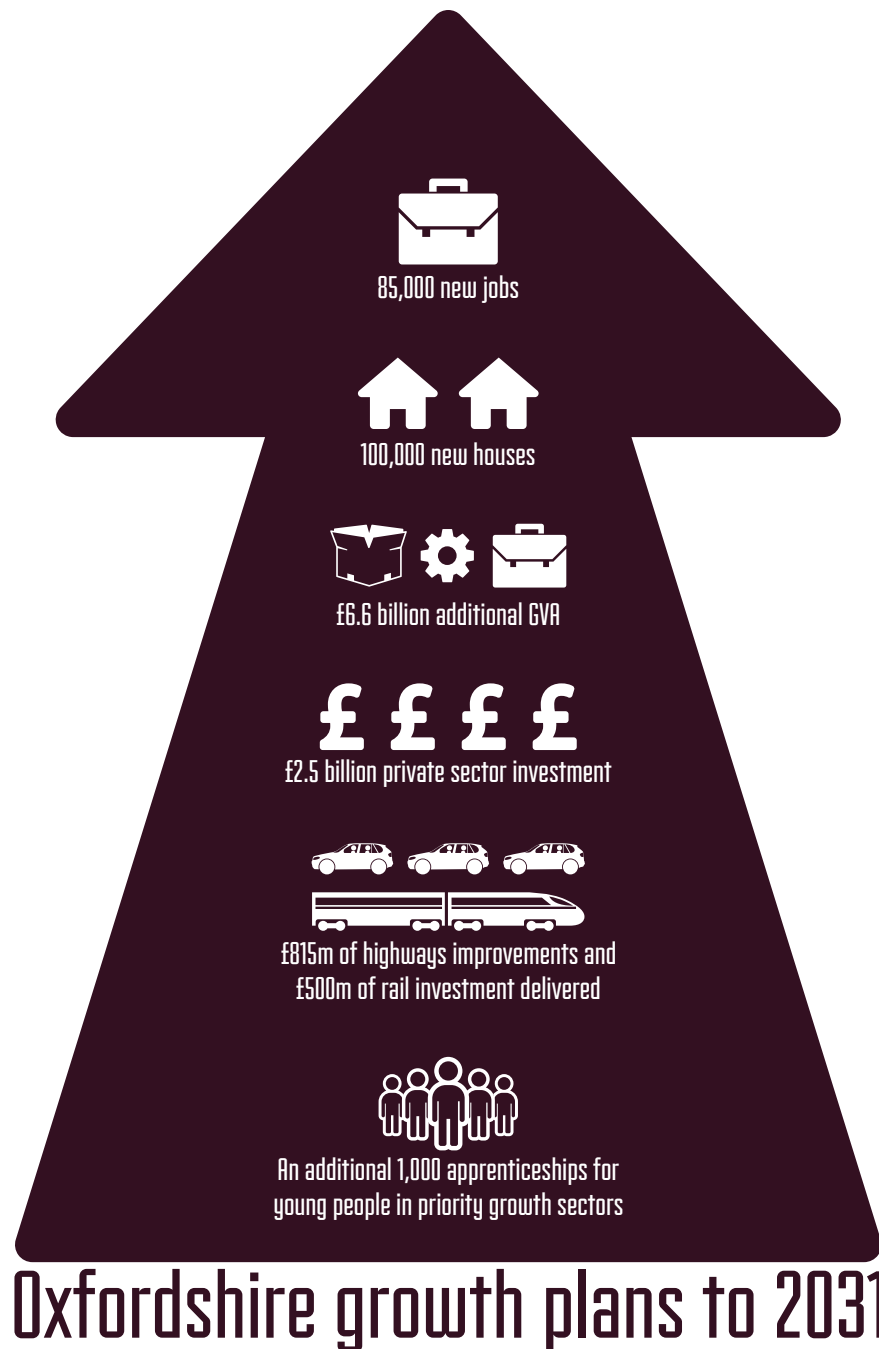
Connecting Oxfordshire: Goals and objectives

- 1.2 Connecting Oxfordshire has three key themes which support its five over-arching transport goals and ten more specific objectives to achieve these, as shown to the right.
- 1.3 Each of Connecting Oxfordshire's goals have been devised to contribute to achieving the council's key objectives with a focus on supporting growth whilst protecting public health and the environment .

Economy and population

- 1.4 As the growth plans diagram on the following page shows, the scale of growth and development planned for Oxfordshire over the next 15+ years is substantial, with tens of thousands of new jobs coming and homes needed. It is vital that we have a clear strategy for supporting growth, including new infrastructure such as transport which is properly planned alongside it.
- 1.5 To achieve this, we will need to develop many of the schemes in this Plan further, so that we are in the strongest possible position to bid for and secure the funding to build them.





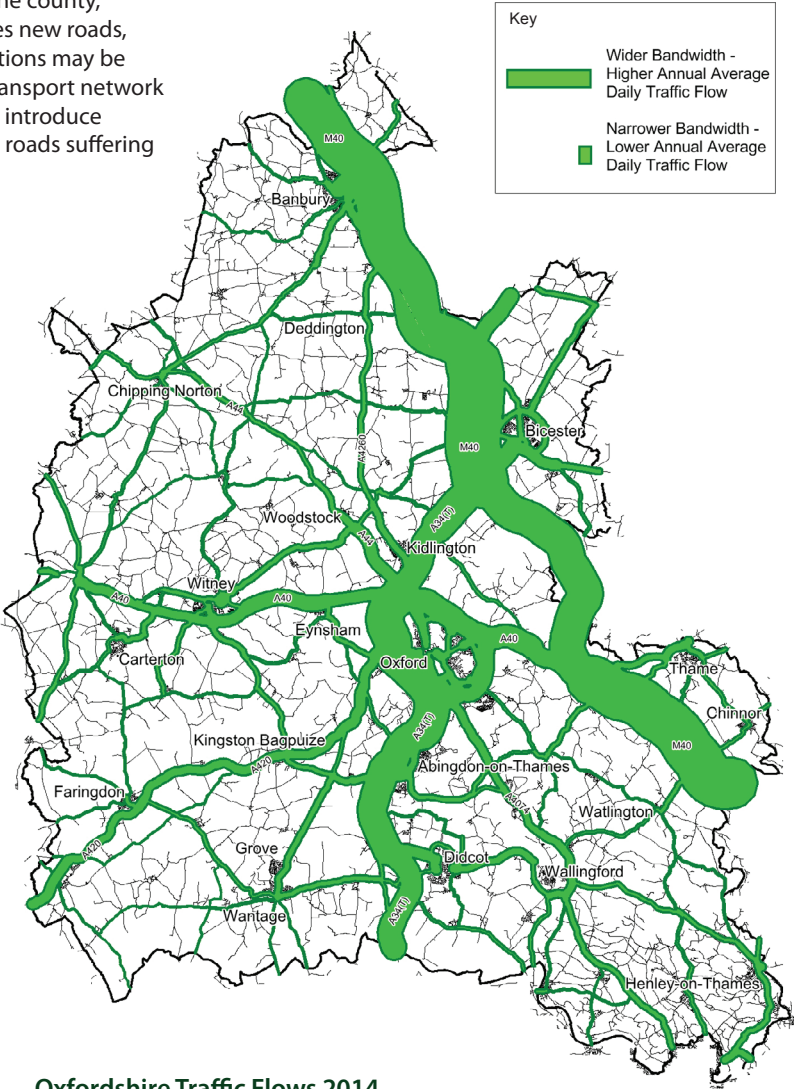
Transport challenges

- 1.6 Oxfordshire's transport network faces a number of challenges over the coming years which will be exacerbated by the forecast population and economic growth. More than a third (35%) of the county's jobs are based in Oxford. As an internationally renowned university city, a major tourist destination and an important business centre, particularly for science-based industries, it attracts high numbers of people. Due to the high number of jobs and the shortage and cost of housing in the city there is a net influx of commuters into Oxford. The majority of the county's hospital services are located in the city which also increases the number of journeys on the city's road network.
- 1.7 In Oxford, two thirds (67%) of households own a car. Half (50%) of journeys to central Oxford are by bus. However, over half of the city's jobs are in the more outlying areas to the east of the city, which are less accessible by public transport. Outside Oxford, car ownership and usage is high, with almost 90% of households owning a car. A high proportion of journeys outside Oxford are made by car, including a high proportion of short trips within the county's towns.
- 1.8 In planning for growth, Connecting Oxfordshire seeks to address existing problems. It includes a number of schemes which are particularly aimed at reducing congestion where it is damaging the economy or hindering economic growth. Looking ahead to the future, Connecting Oxfordshire seeks to address the worsening existing transport problems due to the high level of housing and economic growth expected in the county.

2 Connecting Oxfordshire - Supporting Growth and Economic Vitality

Providing an efficient highway network

- 2.1 Congestion affects Oxfordshire’s strategic road network and is also a problem throughout much of the county, particularly in areas of growth. In some cases new roads, or improvements to existing roads and junctions may be required to ensure a reliable and effective transport network in the county. We will work with partners to introduce enhancements to road capacity on strategic roads suffering from congestion and delays.



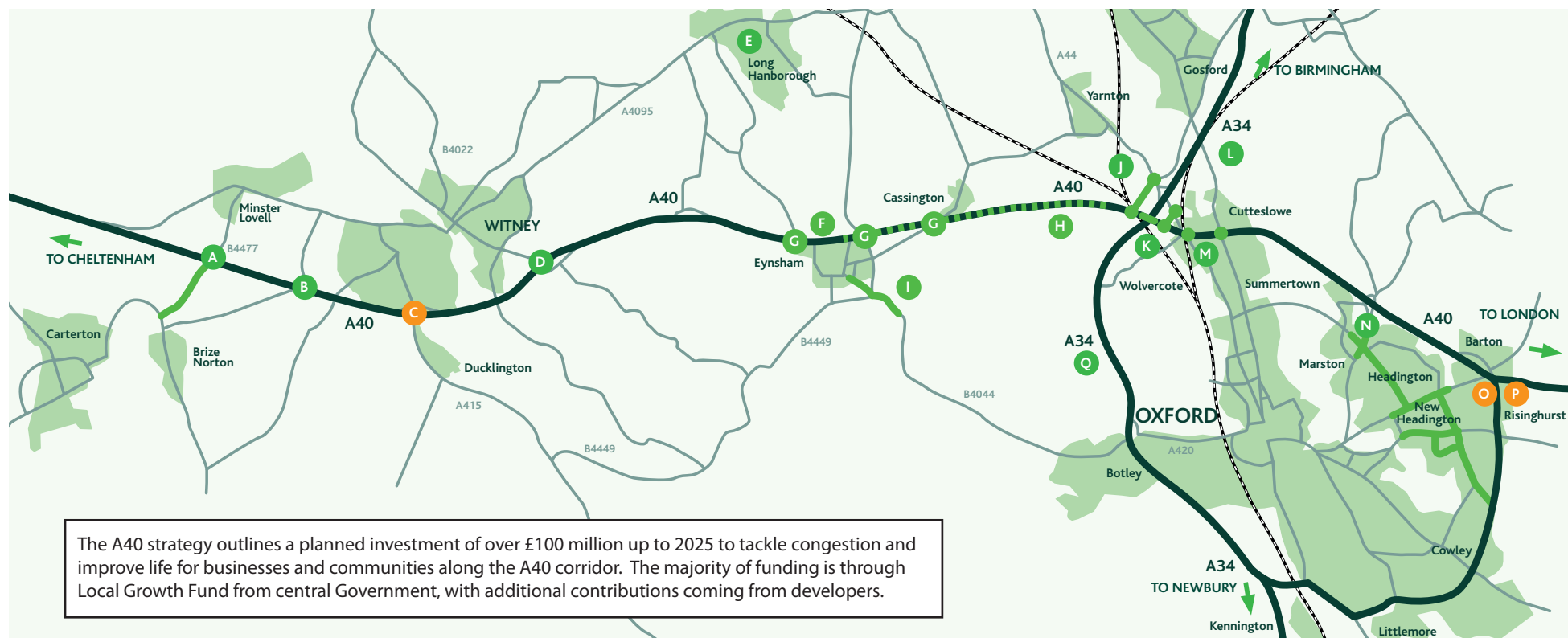
- 2.2 Area Strategies have been developed where significant growth in housing and/or employment is planned. They set out a clear approach for transport to guide decision makers and alleviate the impact of the predicted growth. We are working with our partners to develop route strategies which consider the transport impact on smaller settlements and key junctions. The county’s strategies are outlined below.

| | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Area Strategies | Oxford Area Strategy |
| | Science Vale Area Strategy |
| | Bicester Area Strategy |
| | Banbury Area Strategy |
| | Witney Area Strategy |
| Route strategies | Carterton Area Strategy |
| | A40 |
| | A34 |
| | A420 |

- 2.3 In many communities where there is less planned growth affecting transport demand and less of an impact on planned strategic transport networks, Neighbourhood Plans are being developed. These plans will set out priorities for transport in keeping with our area and route strategies and the complementary freight, cycling, rail and bus strategies.
- 2.4 Keeping Oxfordshire’s road and transport infrastructure in good condition is important for the county’s economy. We will maintain transport infrastructure to minimise long-term costs and target new investment, publishing our policy on prioritisation of maintenance activity in the Highways Asset Management Plan.

2.5 The route strategy for the A40 is outlined in the case study below.

CASE STUDY – INVESTING IN THE A40



- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| A. Access improvements to Carterton (B4477 and A40 at Minster Lovell) | G. A40 Junction Improvements (Eynsham and Cassington) | N. Access improvements to hospitals in Headington |
| B. New access to Witney (Downs Road) | H. New A40 Bus Lane | O. New bus priority measures at Headington Roundabout |
| C. Junction capacity and safety improvements in Witney (Duckington Lane and Station Lane) | I. New bus priority scheme at the Swinford Toll Bridge | P. Expansion of Thornhill Park & Ride and bus priority and cycle improvements on A40/London Road |
| D. Access improvements to Witney (Shore's Green) | J. New A40-A44 Strategic Link Road | Q. A34 Improvements (Peartree and Botley interchanges and improved driver information). |
| E. Hanborough Station interchange and passenger facilities improvements | K. New development accesses at Northern Gateway Site Link Road and A40/A44 Junctions | |
| F. New A40 Park & Ride (location to be determined) | L. New Oxford Parkway Station | |
| | M. Junction improvements at Cutteslowe & Wolvercote Roundabouts | |

planned | complete

Freight strategy

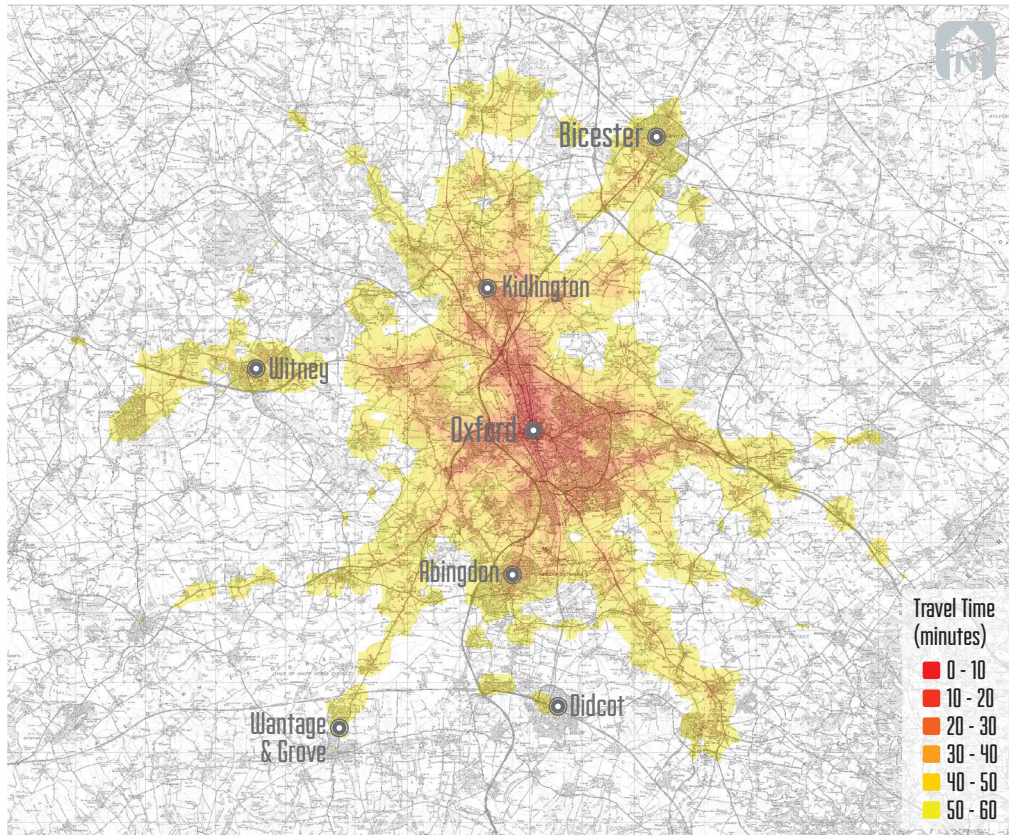
- 2.6 Our freight strategy aims to improve the transport of freight within and through Oxfordshire, ensuring it is made using suitable routes and with minimal environmental impact, while reducing the impact of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) on communities. It also states our intent to support initiatives to increase the proportion of freight carried by rail.

Increasing use of public transport

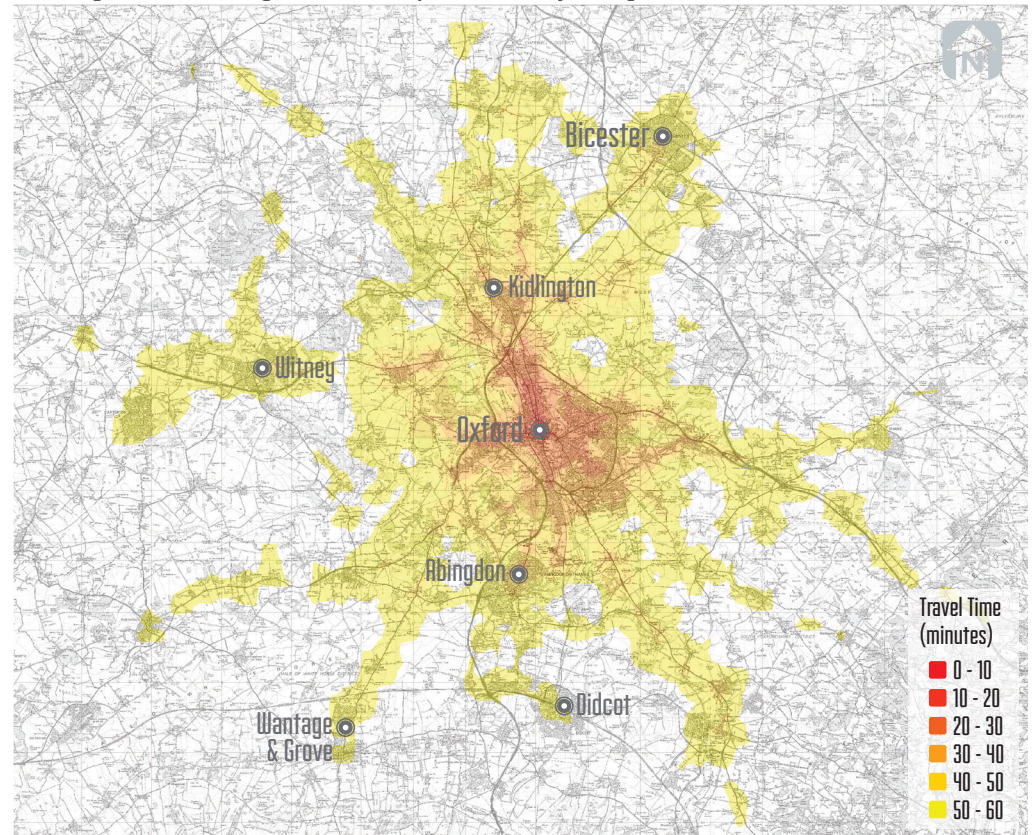
- 2.7 It is essential to encourage a reduction in sole-occupancy car journeys whilst increasing the number of journeys made by public transport, as well as on foot and by bicycle. Public transport must be attractive enough to offer an alternative to the private car on journeys across Oxfordshire. To achieve this it needs to be very high quality, easy to use and offer seamless integration on journeys involving different types of transport.

- 2.8 The plans below show current journey times by public transport into Oxford City Centre and how much further you can travel by public transport within a certain time, if journey times are made quicker by 10%.

Existing situation



Existing situation with general 10% improvement in journey times



Journey times by public transport to Oxford City Centre

Science Transit System

- 2.11 Our Science Transit Strategy defines our high-level vision and outlines the roadmap for the development of better integrated, high-quality mobility systems across Oxfordshire.
- 2.12 In some cases, making public transport more attractive will not be sufficient to meet demand and the introduction of a workplace parking levy or other demand management scheme may be necessary alongside walking, cycling and public transport improvements.

Innovation in transport



Promoting innovation

Oxfordshire Living Laboratory

Intelligent mobility



Optimised movement of people irrespective of mode

Key infrastructure improvements



Improving junctions, priority and interchanges

Key route and service enhancement



New and improved public transport routes

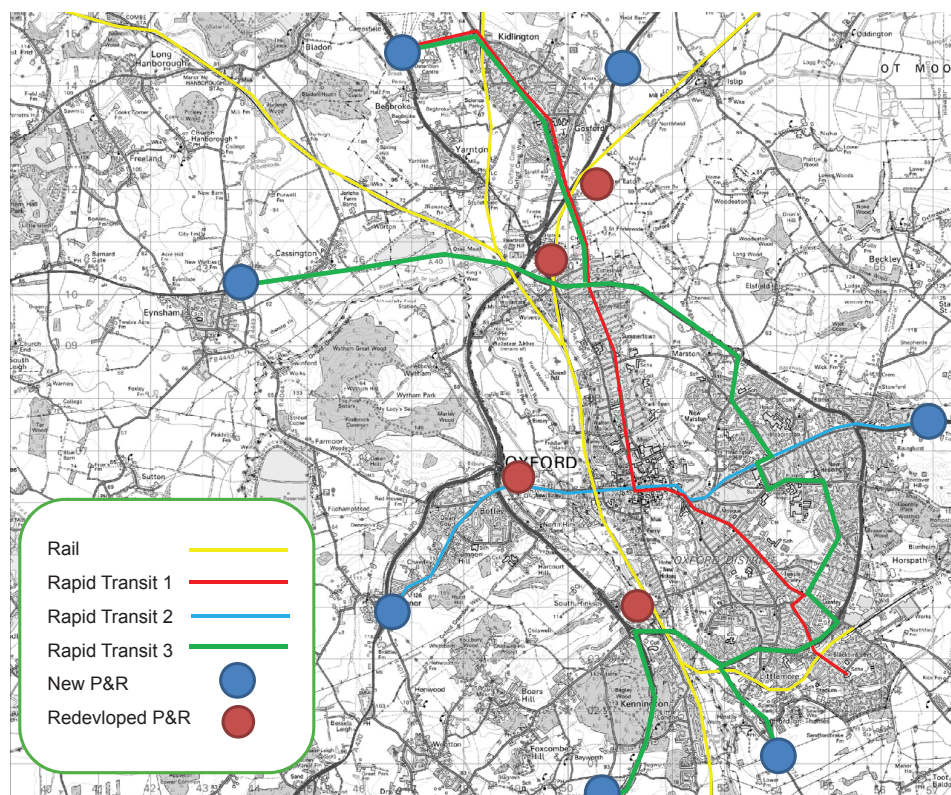
Multiple lead deliverers and project partners – consortium approach to project delivery and funding

- 2.13 The following case studies illustrate ways in which we will make public transport more attractive and encourage people to use it instead of travelling by car.

CASE STUDY – PARK & RIDE

Oxford's Park & Ride sites have been incredibly successful in reducing traffic in the city centre and supporting the city's economic growth by providing an easy and attractive option for visitors entering the city. However, there are already delays at all approaches to the ring road, with particular hotspots located to the west (A420, A40), north-west (A44) and south (A34, A4074) during the morning peak period.

Future housing and employment growth within Oxfordshire is set to further exacerbate congestion on the corridors that feed into the city. In order to reduce congestion on the approaches to Oxford, it will be necessary to update and expand Oxford's Park & Ride system, and 'intercept' more car trips further away from the city. Six new outer Park & Ride sites, each with 1,000+ car parking spaces are proposed, plus a further expansion of the existing Thornhill site, linked to rapid transit and premium bus routes serving the major employment and housing growth areas of the city centre, North Oxford and the Eastern Arc.



The county council will commission a study to look at this in more detail to identify:

- the location of the new sites;
- what infrastructure will be required to make these sites attractive;
- what role do the existing sites play;
- what the phasing should be for the new sites.

CASE STUDY WORKPLACE PARKING LEVY

In some cases, making public transport more attractive will not be enough to persuade people not to use the car and some form of demand management, such as a workplace parking levy or other constraints, will be required, particularly in Oxford city centre. Such a levy would also raise funds which could be spent on improving the transport network.

The Oxford Transport Strategy sets out proposals for the introduction of a Workplace Parking Levy, as part of a package including public transport, walking and cycling improvements, as well as restrictions on more through routes in the city. The use of this tool would need to be combined with a pricing strategy for park and ride charges that incentivise their use over parking within the city, as well as further expansion of controlled parking zones to prevent commuters from parking in residential streets.



Strategic land use and transport planning

- 2.14 If people work close to where they live, their commuting journeys will be shorter. Through the planning process we will influence the location of development to minimise the need for car travel and promote walking and cycling. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) we will work closely with our district and city councils and neighbouring local authorities to ensure housing is located close to employment and good public transport wherever possible, new developments have good transport links and are designed to enable people to get around easily on foot, by bike or by public transport.
- 2.15 We are required by law to be consulted on the transport implications of all new planning applications. We will require all planning applications for developments over a certain size to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment, setting out the likely impact of the development on transport networks, and any proposed mitigation by the developer. We will require developers to submit a Travel Plan, setting out how targets for the number of trips associated with the development will be achieved. Details of our requirements are set out in our Transport Assessment and Travel Plan Policy Document.
- 2.16 In developing area strategies we will review walking networks and focus infrastructure improvements on routes with the greatest potential for increasing the numbers of people walking. We will focus on improvements that make routes safe for all users and will also improve the pedestrian environment. We will follow the principles set out by the Department for Transport Guidance to ensure that walking routes are accessible by people with disabilities. When improving walking routes in urban areas with high footfall we will sign the routes and will provide accurate information on walking via the Oxfordshire Journey Planner.
- 2.17 The Oxfordshire Cycling Strategy and the individual area cycling strategies which have been developed or are under development, set out how we will increase cycling levels within Oxfordshire's towns as well as in new developments. The strategy shows the importance which is given to cycling as one of the main modes of travelling by considering it at an early stage in all policy decisions, new projects, maintenance schemes and developments.

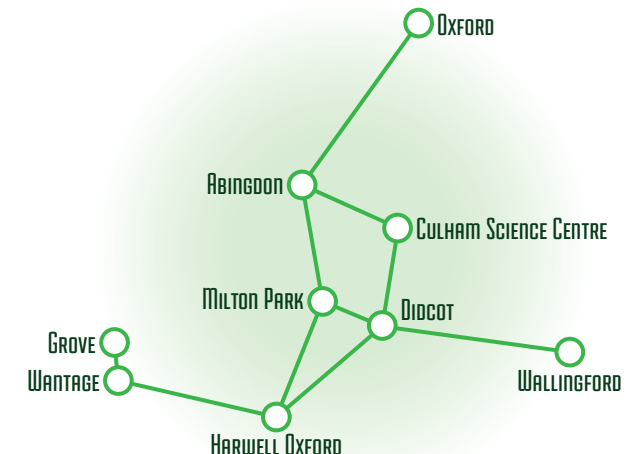


- 2.18 One of the key aims of the strategy is to create a network of branded cycle routes across the county and to develop connected cycling networks for the larger towns. Route development will be prioritised based on where there is most potential for cycling to replace car journeys. Integrating cycling with public transport is also an important goal of the strategy, by providing safe and secure cycle parking at rail stations as well as at key bus stops.
- 2.19 There is significant continued growth in the Science Vale, particularly the Enterprise Zone. Substantial strategic transport and infrastructure schemes are being developed to support this growth. The strategy focuses on three core components:
- Major new and improved road infrastructure
 - A cycling strategy
 - A public transport strategy
- 2.20 The cycling strategy component for Science Vale is outlined in the following case study.

CASE STUDY SCIENCE VALE CYCLING STRATEGY

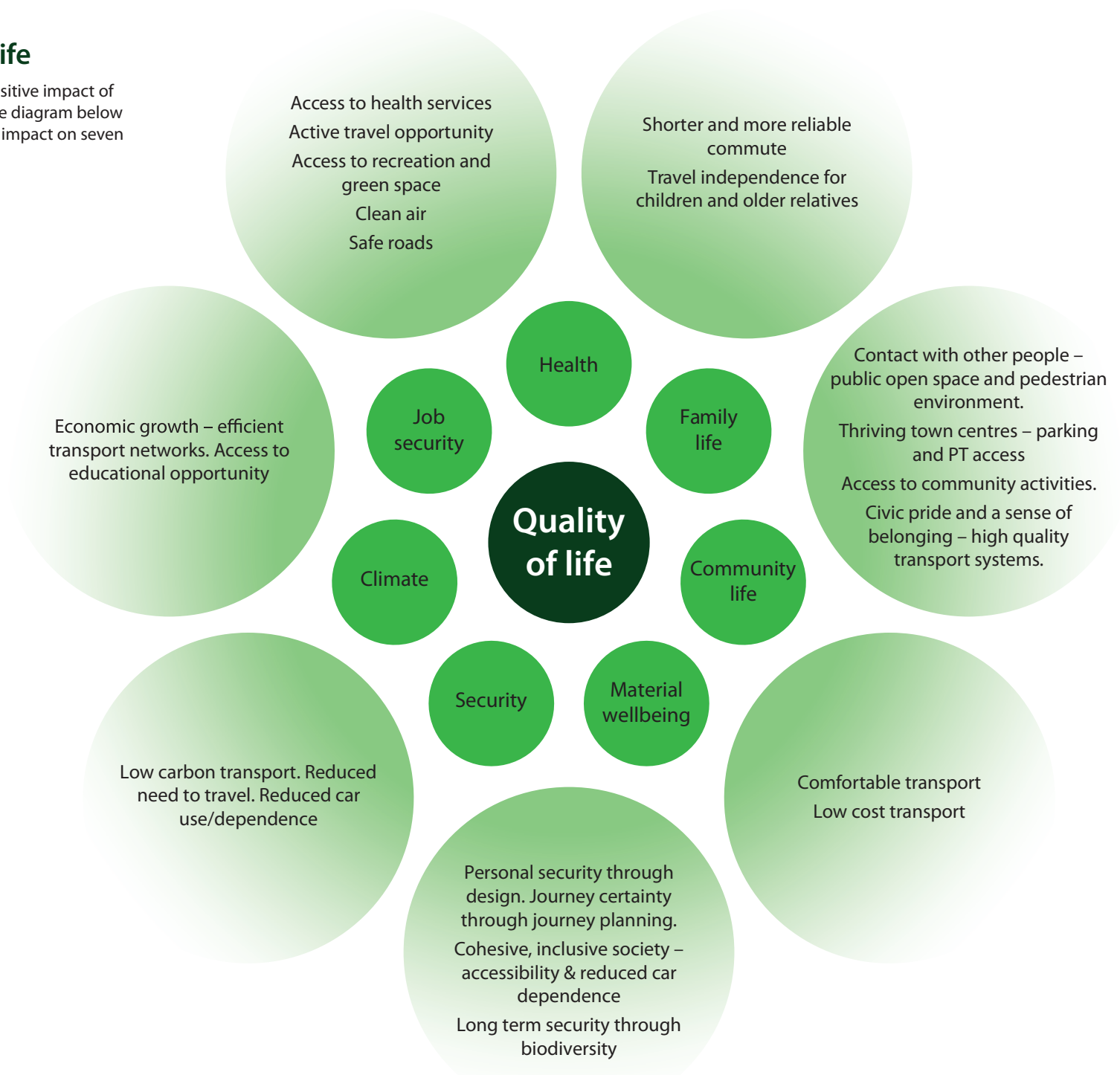
The proposed network of cycle routes in Science Vale will connect the large employment sites to the nearby towns, which are areas of employment and housing growth.

A study will be carried out to identify the best route alignment along each corridor. The routes will be high quality, direct and well signed. The routes are likely to be a mix of predominantly segregated and off-road paths. The overall aim is to provide a high quality route, comparable to that found in European cycling countries such as Denmark and The Netherlands.



3 Improving Quality of Life

- 3.1 The council aims to increase the net positive impact of transport on people's quality of life. The diagram below shows the ways in which transport can impact on seven factors of quality of life.



Improving health and wellbeing

- 3.2 Transport can play an important part in contributing to improvements in public health and wellbeing, particularly in four key areas:
- Encouraging physical activity;
 - Promoting independence for older and disabled people;
 - Improving air quality; and
 - Improving road safety.
- 3.3 Low levels of physical activity and increasing obesity are a huge concern nationally. Oxfordshire is relatively healthy compared to the average for England, however, there are health inequalities in areas of deprivation, particularly in some urban areas. Preventing chronic disease through tackling obesity is a key priority of Oxfordshire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 3.4 For many people, the easiest way to build exercise into their daily routine is through walking or cycling for local journeys. The Council is responsible for management and maintenance of an extensive network of public rights of way which provide opportunities for people to take outdoor exercise as a leisure activity. The Rights of Way Management Plan sets out our plans for developing this network.



- 3.5 To reduce the pressure on transport networks as the population grows, and minimise emissions and other environmental damage from transport we will encourage residents and visitors to travel sustainably as well as supporting the use of more sustainable public and private vehicles. Our strategy to reduce carbon and other emissions involves:
- Minimising the need to travel;
 - Encouraging active travel; and
 - Increasing the usage of zero and low emission vehicles.
- 3.6 The case study below outlines the proposed approach to improve the health of Bicester's residents by encouraging walking and cycling.

CASE STUDY – IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN BICESTER

The One Shared Vision for Bicester was the product of a fundamental rethink on how Bicester should develop in the future. One of its aims was to encourage walking and cycling as the first transport choice locally. From this has emerged a sustainable transport strategy, with an ambition to create a network of infrastructure and services that make it both easy and attractive to travel by sustainable means. An audit of the existing cycling network has been carried out and helped to develop proposals which:

- Complete existing routes and link up key locations within the town
- Campaigns to encourage an increase in the uptake of walking and cycling.

Bicester's largely flat topography and compact size makes it ideal for cycling. Both on and off-road solutions are being considered to provide a network for all cyclists.

These proposals will work alongside further investment in Bicester's peripheral routes to focus motorised vehicles away from the central corridor, unless access is required to the town centre.



Improving air quality and reducing emissions

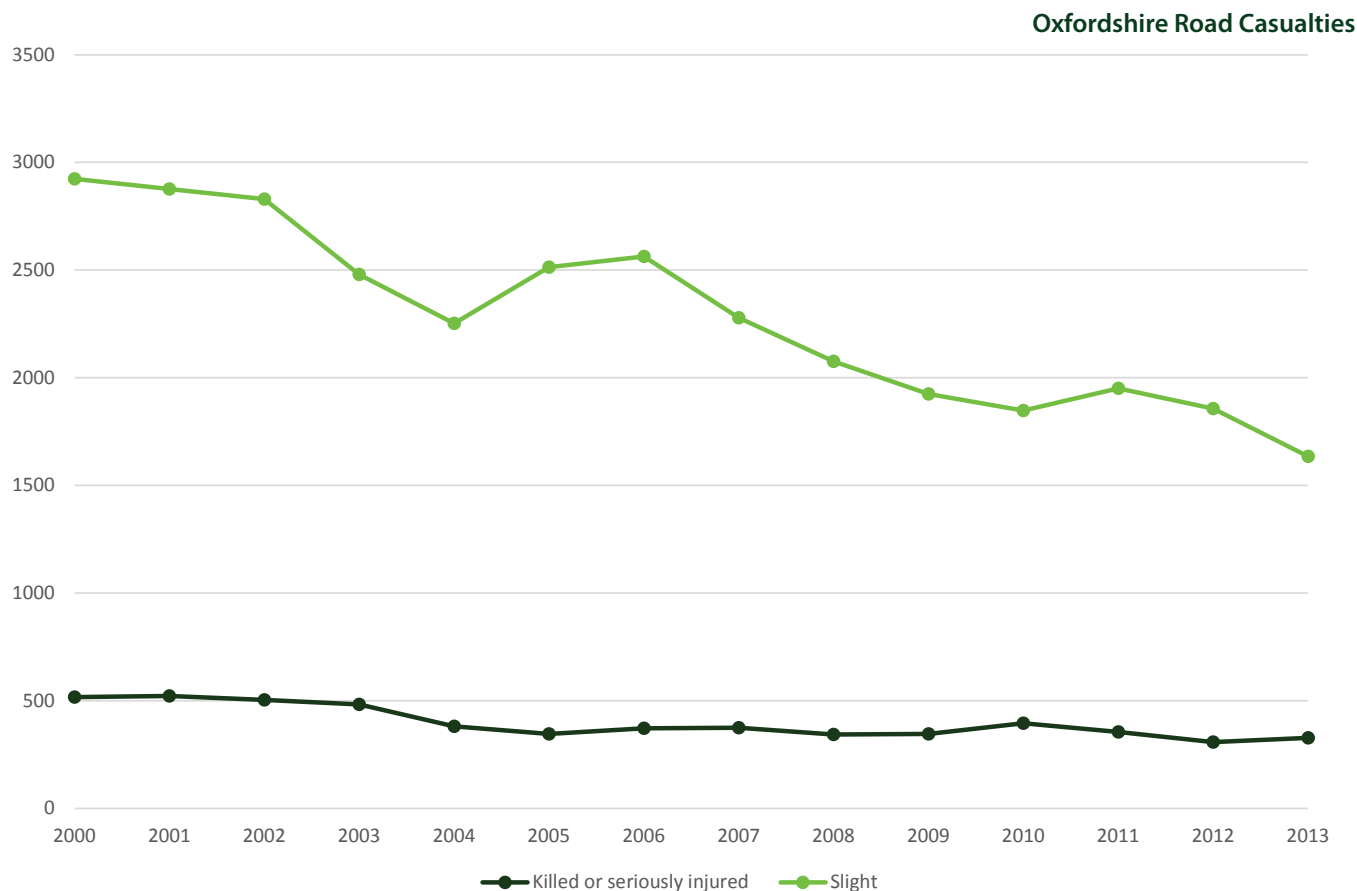
- 3.7 The protection of our environment is important for human health. To ensure that the environmental impacts of Connecting Oxfordshire are fully considered a Strategic Environmental Assessment has been carried out. The findings of the assessment are contained in the Environmental Report which forms part of Connecting Oxfordshire.
- 3.8 The Council will promote the use of zero and low emission forms of transport such as electric vehicles where appropriate. Through our Science Transit Strategy we will work to develop and introduce low emission vehicle technology. We are currently supporting trials of electric buses and will support further pilots where appropriate, working with business and research institutions.

Promoting independence for older and disabled people

- 3.9 We are committed to ensuring that our transport systems themselves are as inclusive as possible and will also work closely with public transport operators to ensure that vehicles and infrastructure are fully accessible. It is our policy to carry out a Vulnerable Road User Audit on the design of all new schemes to fully understand the impacts upon older and disabled people. The County Council also has a Social Inclusion Strategy, which highlights the importance of improving transport links.

Improving road safety

- 3.10 The figure below shows that since 2005 there has been a general downward trend in people killed and seriously injured (KSI) on Oxfordshire's roads and footways. However, in contrast pedal cycle and motorcyclist casualties are disproportionately high compared to other road users.
- 3.11 The strategy for improving road safety by preventing casualties is set out in the Oxfordshire Community Risk Management Plan. The main aims of the plan involve maintaining transport infrastructure and analysing casualty reports to understand trends and target improvements to road infrastructure or Safety Education programmes accordingly.



4 Delivering Connecting Oxfordshire

Policy and funding

- 4.1 Connecting Oxfordshire will be delivered through a series of strategies and plans, as outlined in the diagram below.

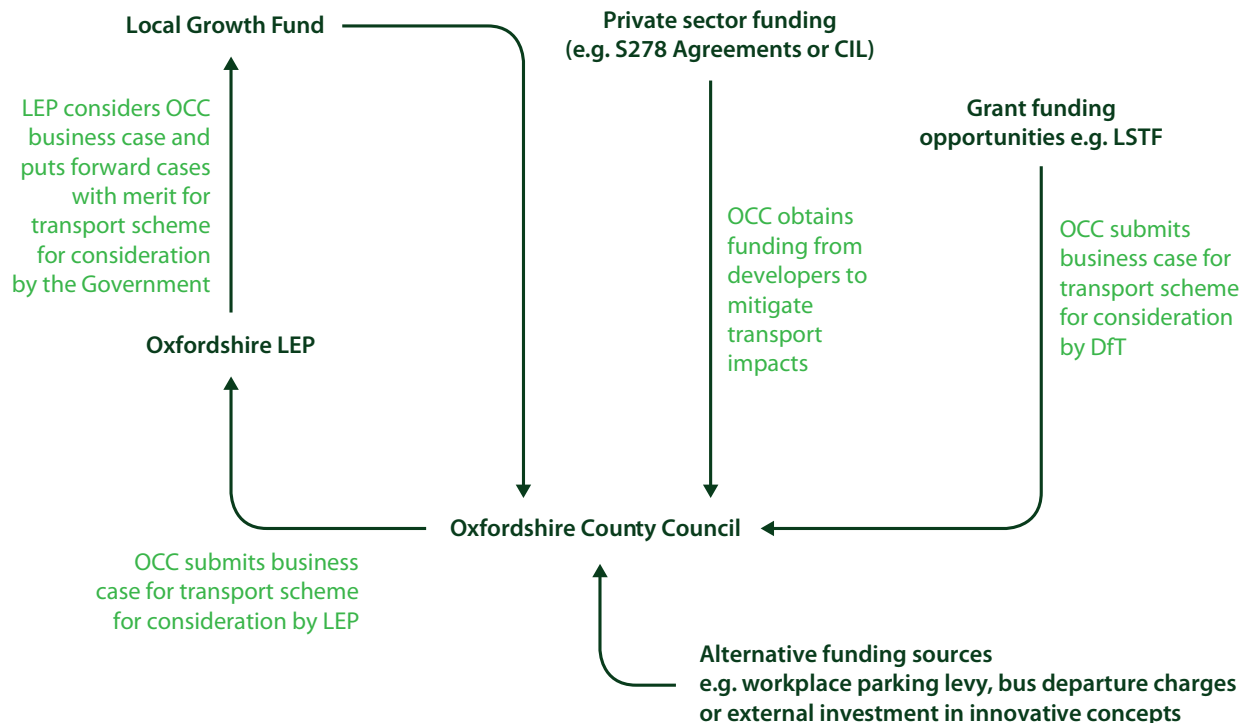


- 4.2 Funding is essential to the delivery of Connecting Oxfordshire. Capital funding for local transport projects is received through the Local Growth Fund (LGF). Sole responsibility for deciding on priorities for investment and submitting bids to the LGF lies with the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). Councils are required to prepare a business case seeking funding for each transport scheme and are dependent on the LEP selecting it for submission. Submissions are considered alongside non-transport schemes and schemes from other LEPs across the country. It is therefore necessary to prepare strong business cases that demonstrate how transport schemes contribute towards economic growth.



- 4.3 From time to time, specific grant funding opportunities arise, such as the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) and we will continue to apply for similar funding whenever available.
- 4.4 Private sector funding through planning obligations can play a key part in funding our transport strategy. Developers either contribute towards improvements to alleviate the transport impacts of a development or carry out works themselves under S278 Agreements with the Council. The system for obtaining contributions is likely to change as districts are now able to impose a 'Community Infrastructure Levy' (CIL). The County Council will input into the CIL process by agreeing priorities for local transport which will then be used to set the level of the CIL in each district.
- 4.5 The figure opposite illustrates how transport improvements in Oxfordshire are funded.
- 4.6 We will work in partnership with district and city councils and the LEP to develop a prioritised programme of capital transport schemes. In addition, where applicable, we will also work strategically with other counties or local authorities to secure and develop additional funding opportunities.

TRANSPORT FUNDING



Influencing development

- 4.7 Much of what we want to achieve depends on how we can influence development through strategic planning and decisions relating to development proposals. District councils are responsible for preparing a Local Plan which, together with any Neighbourhood Plans, form the development plan for an area. These plans set out the opportunities for development and outline what will be permitted, and where. The County Council provides transport input and advice and works with district councils to set priorities for strategic transport infrastructure.
- 4.8 Our aim is that most new development in Oxfordshire will be located where it can be served by existing high quality public transport services and close to our main transport hubs and interchanges. Where the existing public transport network is inadequate developers are required to secure services in agreement with us, or to provide funding for them until services reach a point where they are commercially viable and can operate without subsidy.



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