

Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015-2031

A40 & A420 Route Strategies

**CONNECTING
OXFORDSHIRE**



A40 Route Strategy

Role/function of A40 as a principal route

1. The A40 is an important through route linking Gloucestershire and South Wales with London via M40. It is also critical in linking West Oxfordshire - particularly Witney and Carterton - to the Knowledge Spine through connections to the A44 and A34.

A40 route within Oxfordshire

2. Witney and Carterton are the two largest towns in West Oxfordshire. They have both seen considerable growth over the last 30 years and this is expected to continue in the future. The A40 forms the main route between both of these towns and Oxford; this is used by most of the bus routes as well as general traffic. Neither Witney nor Carterton have a direct rail connection; their nearest stations are at Hanborough or Oxford.
3. The A40 is a single carriageway Primary Route. It carries a daily flow of between 23,000 and 30,000 vehicles per day - well above the road's link capacity. This is exacerbated by junction capacity issues at Eynsham/Cassington and Wolvercote. This results in congestion on the route for much of the day, including at weekends. During school term times the average journey speed on the A40 between Cassington and Wolvercote in the morning peak is 17 mph, while on the worst days it can be as low as 10 mph.
4. The current bus services have achieved a notable success in attracting people who are travelling from Witney and Carterton to Oxford city centre, but there is still considerable scope for increasing bus use in journeys to the rest of the city.

Growth Context - Oxfordshire growth, West Oxfordshire Local Plan, Oxford City

5. The A40 strategies are being developed alongside the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan. Growth proposals from the WODC Pre-submission Draft Local Plan 2011-2031 (March 2015) comprise provision of at least 10,500 homes between 2011 and 2031. The majority of new homes will be provided in the Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton sub-areas.

6. The proposed indicative distribution of housing is as follows:

West Oxfordshire sub-area	Proposed number of dwellings
Witney sub-area	3,700
Carterton sub-area	2,600
Chipping Norton sub-area	1,800
Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area	1,600

Burford – Charlbury sub area	800
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7. Following the Examination in Public (EiP) of West Oxfordshire's Local Plan in 2015 the District are considering options to increasing the level of housing growth, as recommended by the Inspector. These proposals will be considered within the context of transport schemes for the A40.
8. Following the publication of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which identified a need for 28,000 new homes for Oxford within the period 2011-31, the Oxfordshire councils have agreed a working assumption of 15,000 homes as the scale of Oxford's unmet need to be planned outside the city. This will need to be taken into account in emerging and future Local Plans, and from a transport perspective, is likely to place further travel demands on the A40 and north Oxford junctions in particular.

Strategies

9. These strategies focus on the stretch of the A40 to the west of Oxford running between Carterton and Wolvercote. For many users of the A40 this section forms just part of their journey, nonetheless the part where they experience significant delay.
10. Two strategies are outlined below for the A40. The first, A40 Science Transit 2, will deliver a package of schemes providing short term relief to the A40 by 2021. These improvements are unlikely to wholly resolve the current capacity issues on A40 let alone deal with the impact of future developments in West Oxfordshire and Oxford city. Therefore a long term strategy for improving the A40 is currently being developed.

A40 Science Transit 2 Scheme – Short Term Strategy

11. In the short term we have been provisionally awarded £35 million from the Government's Local Growth Fund for public transport improvements in the A40 corridor for delivery between 2019 and 2021.
12. The purpose of this proposal is to provide a congestion free route into Oxford from the west for public transport. In turn this provision, and associated improvements in public transport service provision, will encourage a transfer of trips from private transport to bus thereby reducing overall congestion levels on the A40 for all vehicles. Together these measures will prevent or reduce congestion and pollution increasing on the A40 travelling alongside Oxford Meadows.

13. In developing the strategy the proposed scheme package comprises:

POLICY A40 - We will improve access between towns in West Oxfordshire, and Oxford, including the new employment site at Oxford's 'Northern Gateway' by utilising the Local Growth Fund to deliver public transport improvements in the A40 corridor.

The proposed scheme includes:

- **An eastbound bus lane** between Eynsham roundabout and the Duke's Cut, Wolvercote;
- **Westbound bus priority** on the approaches to Cassington traffic signals and Eynsham roundabout;
- **A Park and Ride car park** on the A40 corridor at a location to be determined through the county council's Park & Ride study, due to be published in spring 2016;
- **Junction improvements along the A40 corridor** between Witney bypass and Eynsham roundabout, including bus priority on the approach to Swinford Tollbridge;

In implementing this scheme the current Witney to Oxford cycle route will be retained and will be developed into a part of the Oxfordshire Cycle Premium Route network.

Alignment with other A40 and rail schemes

14. The County Council has secured City Deal funding to improve Wolvercote roundabout and Cutteslowe roundabouts in north Oxford (to be completed winter 2016). Some funding has also been secured for a new link road between the A40 and A44, which will provide improved access from west Oxfordshire to the A44 & A34, avoiding Wolvercote roundabout. Planning and design work is being progressed before consultation and a future planning application is submitted. Further funding will also need to be secured.

15. Development at Northern Gateway will require major transport infrastructure improvements, including improvements to the A40, A44 and Peartree interchange. These proposals will need to fit with the A40 strategy and help to deliver it.

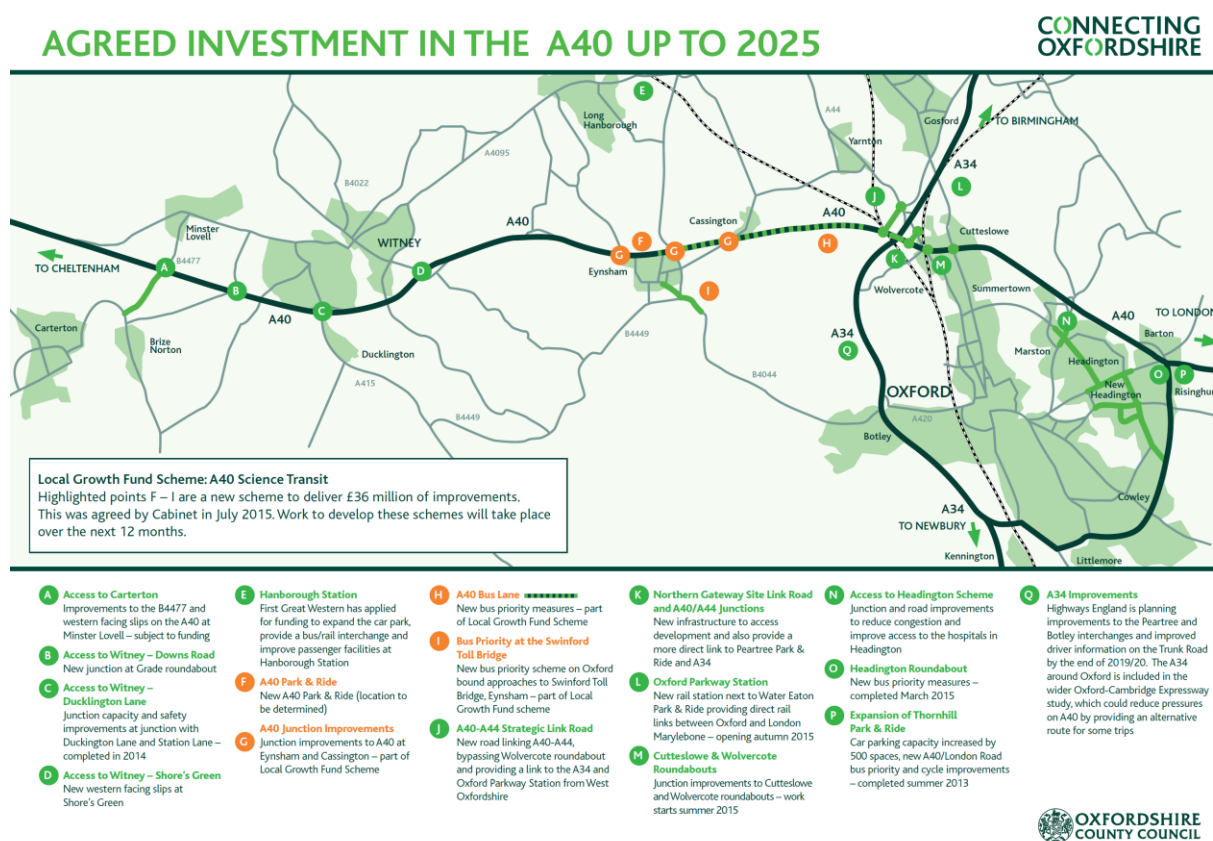
16. In addition to these schemes for the A40 corridor, we will seek the completion of the Cotswold Line redoubling and the development of Hanborough station into a local interchange and Park & Rail facility, with additional platform and parking.

Table 1: A40 Science Transit 2: Project Delivery Timetable & Procurement Plan

Activity	Start Date	Finish Date	Milestone/decision point & scheduled technical gateways
<i>Feasibility & Preliminary Design</i>	<i>01/10/15</i>	<i>31/06/16</i>	<i>Approval of stage 1 Business Case</i>
<i>Land Acquisition</i>	<i>01/09/16</i>	<i>30/09/17</i>	
<i>Detailed Design</i>	<i>01/09/16</i>	<i>30/09/17</i>	
<i>WebTAG assessment</i>	<i>01/09/16</i>	<i>31/08/17</i>	<i>DfT Business Case</i>
<i>Planning Application</i>	<i>01/10/17</i>	<i>30/04/17</i>	<i>If required</i>
<i>DfT Funding Approval</i>	<i>01/09/17</i>	<i>31/12/17</i>	
<i>Procurement</i>	<i>01/01/18</i>	<i>30/03/18</i>	<i>Approval of stage 2 Business Case</i>
<i>Construction</i>	<i>01/09/18</i>	<i>31/09/20</i>	

Extract from Initial Business Case (Stage 0b Commit to Investigate), 2015

Figure 1: A40 Science Transit 2 Map



Investing in the A40 - Long Term Strategy

17. In July 2015, Oxfordshire County Council’s Cabinet agreed the **A40 Science Transit 2 Scheme** a major infrastructure project for public transport improvements to be made along the A40 from Eynsham to Wolvercote. This was largely funded through the Local Growth Fund in order to provide congestion relief in the short to medium term. This £40m project, in addition to the other investments across the length of the A40 corridor, set the stage for a much larger undertaking to tackle congestion in the long term.

18. Oxfordshire County Council is committed to finding a long-term strategy to tackle current and projected congestion on the A40.

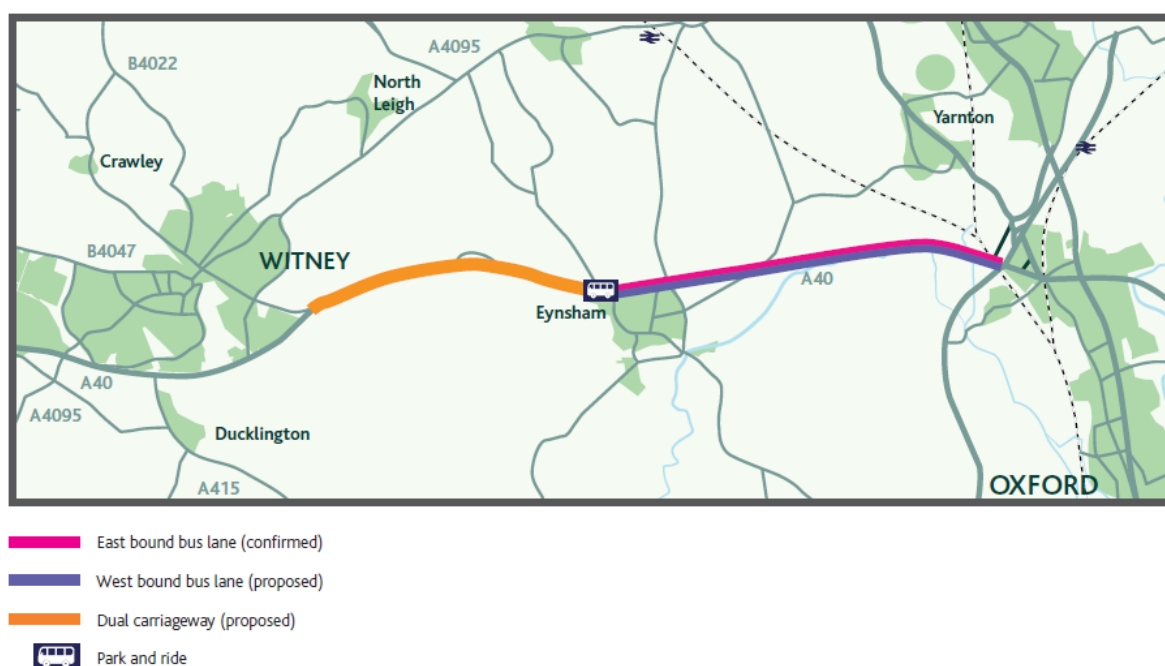
19. In developing a long term strategy for improving the A40 the following objectives have been identified:

- Improve travel times and journey reliability along the A40 corridor, particularly between Witney and Oxford,
- Stimulate economic growth, in line with the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan,
- Improve safety and reduce environmental impacts such as air pollution and noise along the A40 corridor.

20. The long term strategy for the A40 takes a combination approach which includes both increased road capacity as well as improvements to the public transport offer. The Council has committed to investigate in detail a combined scheme for further feasibility comprising a package of measures:

- i) a dual-carriageway from Witney to a park and ride at Eynsham
- ii) bus lanes in both directions along the A40 from a park and ride at Eynsham to the Duke's Cut canal bridge approaching Wolvercote roundabout
- iii) provision of high quality cycleways along the length of the route.

Figure 2: Investing in the A40 corridor long term strategy



References

[WODC Local Plan 2031 \(March 2015\)](#)

<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/residents/planning-building/planning-policy/local-development-framework/local-plan-2031-examination/>

A420 Route Strategy

Purpose of this strategy

This chapter aims to set out a non-exhaustive list of short to medium term improvements along the A420. This document will be updated as the needs of the A420 and surrounding areas are further understood. It should be noted that Oxfordshire County Council does not have any capital funding to spend on these improvements; schemes will only be possible through development in the surrounding areas and successful Central Government funding bids.

The Local Context

Role/function of A420 as a principal route

1. The A420 is the principal and only direct route between Swindon and Oxford. It is an important strategic link in the Oxfordshire hierarchy, and a primary route which the Council expects to be of a standard to allow for free passage of current (20,000 vehicles per day) and expected future traffic for the majority of the traffic day. It should therefore operate with minimal congestion in order to avoid rat running on minor roads.

A420 route within Oxfordshire

1. In addition to providing a direct route to Oxford city centre from Swindon, the A420 serves the many settlements along the corridor including, for example Shrivenham, Watchfield, Faringdon, Kingston Bagpuize and Cumnor. At peak times, certain points operate over capacity resulting in congestion, particularly at the northern end near Botley. Although lorries are advised to use the M4 and A34, locals report 'significant and growing' HGV usage of the route for through as well as local journeys. Up-to-date traffic surveys have been commissioned to quantify this.
3. The A420 is also a Premium bus route corridor, and is served by a highly successful commercial bus route with a frequency of up to three buses per hour Monday to Saturday, plus evening and half hourly Sunday services. Usage of the service has doubled over the last 5 years: this significant growth has resulted in increased service frequency and plans for further upgrades. At times of congestion, buses are subject to the same delays as all other vehicles.

Growth Context - Oxfordshire growth, Vale of White Horse Local Plan, Swindon Local Plan and Eastern Villages

4. This Strategy will take account of and evaluate the likely individual and cumulative effect on the capacity of and operational effect on the A420 of planned growth in Swindon Borough and the Vale of White Horse District. The cumulative effect will be quantified using the county council's strategic traffic model, the results of which are published as part of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan evidence base titled "Evaluation of Transport Impacts".
5. Any planning application for development in Swindon Borough or the Vale of White Horse District that will generate significant amounts of movement shall be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment that takes into account the planned growth in both authorities and the proper accommodation of its traffic consequences on the network.
6. The Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 aims to make provisions for growth of 23,000 new jobs and at least 20,560 new homes by 2031. It lists 21 strategic site allocations: six of these are along the A420, as shown on the plan at the end of this chapter. These housing figures include the allocation for the Vale arising from the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, although as yet they do not take into account any unmet need arising from neighbouring authorities. This will be assessed in the future but as there are a number of methods for addressing this, no timescale can be put on it at present.
7. Swindon Borough Council's Local Plan (2026) identifies an area called 'Eastern Villages' with an allocation of around 8,000 new homes plus employment land on the eastern edge of the town, adjacent to the Oxfordshire boundary and the A420. A joint A420 Working Group including Swindon Borough Council has been set up, to understand and plan for the transport impacts on Oxfordshire and infrastructure requirements arising from this development.
8. The Council will continue to work with partners and stakeholders on this Group to develop and deliver a strategy for the A420 corridor, including Vale of White Horse District Council, Swindon Borough Council, Western Vale Villages consortium, Town and Parish Councils, the police and businesses, such as the Watchfield Defence Academy.

Transport Aims

9. To have a strategic highway and public transport corridor capable of moving a significant number of people along it whilst maintaining suitable access to and from the A420 from communities along the route, both for vehicular access to the A420 and pedestrian or cycle access to bus stops for the Premium bus route. This will be achieved by:

- Improved junctions on the A420 to improve access to main settlements including Faringdon and Shrivenham, focusing on where new Local Plan development is proposed and existing 'priority' junctions require upgrading. Critical junctions within Oxfordshire on the A420 for evaluation in the Route Strategy will include the following:
 - o A new access onto the A420 at/near Highworth Road in the vicinity of the Shrivenham strategic site to be funded and delivered by the development sites
 - o and the A420/B4508 roundabout at Watchfield, to be funded and delivered by the development sites.
 - o A new roundabout at the A420 junction with Coxwell Road. This upgrade is partially funded by developers of nearby strategic sites.
 - o A420 / A417 Park Road, Faringdon – in particular increased capacity on the approach from Faringdon
 - o Additional junctions may be identified through transport modelling work.
- Enhancement of the A420 Premium bus route, focusing on enhancing service frequency to four buses per hour in each direction, improved bus stops (including changing on-carriageway stops to bus stop laybys where feasible), better walk/cycle connections and crossing provision, cycle parking and high quality waiting/shelter provision (including real time passenger information) and, where appropriate, parking provision at selected bus stops. The accompanying Active & Healthy Travel strategy provides guidance on Door to Door travel (e.g. walking or cycling in combination with bus/rail) and emphasises the importance of good quality cycle parking at popular bus stops as well as safe, direct routes to the stops
- Improved access and increased capacity of the A420 and associated junctions on the approach to Swindon, including White Hart Junction, Gablecross Roundabout, Police Station access, Old Vicarage Lane, new Eastern access to Rowborough and new/existing access to the Eastern Villages development area south of the A420, as identified in the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Deal package of schemes.
- Improved access into Oxford, including approaches to the A420/A34 interchange at Botley, to be developed as part of the Oxford Transport Strategy, including a new A420 corridor Park & Ride site at Cumnor and improvements to Botley Interchange by Highways England.
- Reviewing and managing the impact on the surrounding road network, including parallel roads to quantify the likelihood of rat running being caused by proposed and allocated development traffic and identifying effective measures to combat this. Potential mitigation measures required to reduce the impact of through traffic on these include local traffic calming and traffic/speed management measures, to be agreed with the relevant local communities. Oxfordshire County Council will request that planning applicants consult local communities and bring

forward measures with their application for development, subject to funding.

Routes to be evaluated include:

- B4508 east of Shrivenham
- B4000 south of Shrivenham
- B4507 Swindon – Wantage

Baseline Information

8. Traffic accident data for 2009 to 2014 shows there were 157 accidents along the A420 between Botley and the county boundary. Of these, 5% were fatal, 22% serious and 73% slight. They led to 251 casualties: 4% fatal, 17% serious and 80% slight. 146 (93%) of the accidents were motor vehicle only. The forecast increase in traffic flows could increase the number of accidents along the route. Automatic traffic counter data along the route for the period 2009 to 2014 shows a 4.4% increase in vehicle numbers travelling towards Oxford, and a 2.5% increase in vehicle numbers travelling towards Swindon.
9. Traffic modelling data for forecast year 2030 (base year 2007) shows that:
 - The eastbound route will be over capacity in the AM peak period at Botley Interchange, Fyfield, Buckland, Faringdon.
 - The eastbound route will be over capacity in the PM peak period at Botley Interchange
 - The westbound route will be over capacity in the PM peak period at Fyfield and Buckland
 - Many other sections of the route will be near capacity in both the AM and PM peak periods

Strategy

10. A major upgrade of the A420 corridor is not proposed for the current LTP period. Any significant scheme (such as further dualling of all or part of the route) would attract more traffic and be likely to encourage further sites on this corridor to be identified for development. However there is a need to balance this approach with allowing for the significant transport impact arising from planned development, particularly in terms of providing appropriate route/junction improvements, enabling access onto and off the A420 from local communities and preventing rat-running.
11. The Strategy is based upon 3 main proposals:

<p><u>A420 Proposal 1</u></p> <p>Ensure the A420 continues to perform a strategic function operating as a principal road moving people quickly and</p>	<p>A420 1.1 Promoting improvements to Botley Interchange as part of Highways England’s A34 Route Strategy</p>
	<p>A420 1.2 Ensuring junction designs continue to support the main east-west general traffic and bus flow, with a</p>

efficiently between Swindon and Oxford by:	consistent approach to junction type
	A420 1.3 Reviewing speed limits to ensure that changes in limit are at the most appropriate locations
	A420 1.4 Identifying opportunities for bus priority as required
	A420 1.5 Working with partners and agencies to ensure the A420 is resilient to issues such as flooding, ensuring that the network can continue to operate
	A420 1.6 Work with Swindon Borough Council on cross-border issues
<u>A420 Proposal 2</u> Maintain suitable access from settlements along the A420 ensuring:	A420 2.1 Safe and timely movement onto and off the A420 by ensuring new and enhanced junctions enable local access and egress along the route (as described in the tables and map at end of this chapter)
	A420 2.2 Safe access to and from bus stops along the A420
	A420 2.3 High quality bus stop facilities, including cycle parking at key locations
<u>A420 Proposal 3</u> Safeguard and maintain the ability to deliver strategic pieces of infrastructure if required in the future due to significant additional development. For the A420 corridor these include:	A420 3.1 Safeguard land for a new access onto A420 at/near Highworth Road in the vicinity of the Shrivenham strategic site. Continue to safeguard land at the Townsend Road junction with the A420 (Local Plan reference E17)
	A420 3.2 Safeguard the Coxwell Road junction (E18).

Safeguarding

- To achieve proposal 3, we will support the Vale of the White Horse District Council in safeguarding land for transport schemes in areas where it is possible that significant development may occur in the future, including that which is more likely to take place beyond the period of this Plan.

Funding

- Funding to deliver the strategy will primarily need to be secured via Developer Contributions, which will either be sought through Section 106 agreements or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) when it is introduced by the District Council. It may also be appropriate for development to directly deliver proposed strategy schemes. We will secure strategic transport infrastructure contributions from all new development based on the contribution rate per dwelling or per m² for non-residential developments, based on the total cost

(tbc) of the transport package. Due to the large scale of growth we will also seek central Government funding where possible.

14. Contributions would also be sought from major residential and other development sites towards the strategic bus service identified in the A420 strategy, including funding service enhancements until they become commercially viable and bus stop infrastructure. Other residential sites would make a contribution based on the estimated cost of an improved commercially viable service across the western Vale area, divided proportionally by the amount of planned growth to give a cost per development site.
15. Developments are also required to provide modern bus stop infrastructure including shelters and Real Time Information, and high quality access to the bus network, usually secured through section 106 or section 278 agreements.
16. The Strategic Transport Contribution does not include direct mitigation measures, which will be sought separately. These schemes are delivered by developers when specific mitigation measures are solely linked to enabling that development. This is as opposed to the county council pooling funds for schemes to mitigate the impact of more than one development proposal.

Timescales

17. The schemes and projects described in this chapter will be implemented at different stages of the Plan period, as outlined in the table below. The most likely source of funding will be to secure these improvements through the planning application process for housing and other development sites. Some schemes have already been secured or are the subject of discussion as part of current applications. Others can only come forward in line with development yet to enter into this process. Some schemes will be the responsibility of delivery partners, such as Highways England. Timescales are influenced by a number of different factors, including when development applications come forward and when other funding opportunities are available. The timeframes for delivery will be monitored and updated if necessary in conjunction with the future Local Transport Plan updates. A study is currently underway to prioritise the schemes below, which are being assessed against a range of policy and deliverability objectives. The tables will be updated once this is completed.

Proposed Junction schemes

18. The following schemes are for upgrades to existing junctions or completely new junctions and will be requested through the planning application process, to mitigate the impact of development along the A420:

Project/Scheme	Timescale period
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Secure a new junction (roundabout) at Highworth Road, Shrivenham in proximity to the Strategic Site allocation for 500 dwellings.	Exact timing dependent upon application and planning permission: 2015-2020.
Investigate upgrading of the T-junction at the Little Coxwell/Fernham Road on the A420 junction to a roundabout or other upgrade to improve access, safety and the vision through this junction	To be determined
Investigate upgrading of the A420 / A417 Park Road junction, Faringdon	To be determined
Review the Buckland Road/A420 junction, to include assessment of the junction splay and right-turn lane on the A420.	To be determined
Investigate improvements to signage at the Pine Woods Road/Charney Road junction, Southmoor, on the A420.	To be determined

Proposed new/upgraded crossings

24. The following proposed schemes are to ensure communities are accessible by sustainable travel, and movement across the A420 between towns and villages located on it or nearby can be undertaken safely. As above, they will be requested through the planning application process to mitigate the impact of development along the A420:

Project/Scheme	Timescale period
Secure a crossing on the A420 to link Kingston Bagpuize with Fyfield.	Exact timing dependent upon application and planning permission: 2015-2020
Improve connections to the subway under the A420 near Fyfield, for use by pedestrians and cyclists to link Kingston Bagpuize to Cumnor via Fyfield and Appleton.	To be determined
Investigate a new crossing on the A420 at the Little Coxwell/Fernham Road junction.	To be determined

Proposed Speed Limit changes and safety improvements

Project/Scheme	Timescale period
On the A420, investigate speed limit changes on the Faringdon 'bypass' between Little Coxwell and Littleworth - reduce from 60mph.	To be determined
Investigate speed limit changes on B4507 through Ashbury Village – reduce to 20mph.	To be determined
Investigate speed limit changes on B4507 Ashbury to Wantage – reduce from 60mph.	To be determined
Investigate speed limit changes on B4508 Watchfield to Pusey Common Wood – reduce from 50mph.	To be determined
Investigate speed limit reduction on B4000.	To be determined

Public Transport

Project/Scheme	Timescale period
Investigate providing car park(s) for bus users in Shrivenham to enable an alternative to public on-street parking.	Exact timing dependent upon application and planning permission: 2015-2020
Provide secure cycle parking at well used bus stops and also consider shelters to encourage more journeys by sustainable modes.	To be determined
Review footway access, pedestrian signage and hard-standing facilities at bus stops on the A420.	To be determined
Improved frequency of Premium Bus Route service (number 66) between Swindon and Oxford and consider cycle parking at popular stops to enable Door to Door sustainable travel (see Active & Healthy Travel Strategy)	On-going
Take account of new Oxford outer Park & Ride site proposal on the A420 corridor, in the vicinity of Cumnor which is being progressed through the Oxford Transport Strategy Park & Ride study	To be determined

Measures to improve safety and deter rat-running through local communities

Project/Scheme	Timescale period
Investigate deterring rat running through Great Coxwell by replacing “Village Only” sign with a “No Right Turn” sign and accompanying Traffic Regulation Order at B4019 junction with The Hollow	Exact timing dependent upon option feasibility: 2015-2020.
At Bourton, investigate traffic calming measures on the Bishopstone entrance to the village and on the Avenue Road entrance.	To be determined
At Bourton, investigate the feasibility of installing traffic lights on the railway bridge at Lower Bourton. This is a narrow bridge and would improve safety.	To be determined

Delivery Partner Schemes

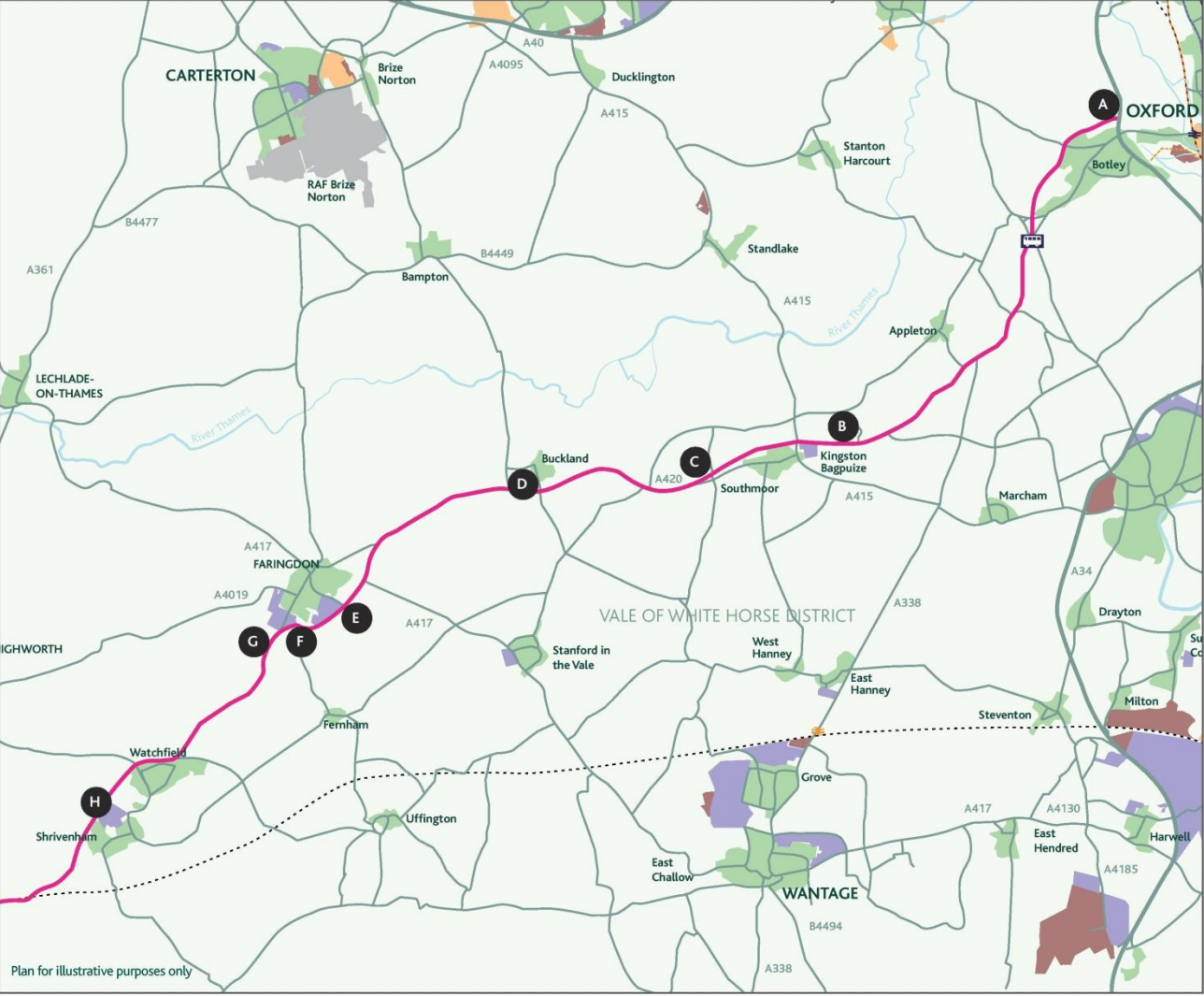
Project/Scheme	Timescale period
Highways England improvements at Botley Interchange.	Exact timing dependent upon option feasibility: 2015-2020.

References

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership <http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/cms/>
 Vale of White Horse draft new Local Plan 2031 (published November 2014)
<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/new-local-plan-2031>
 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2027 (adopted December 2012)
<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy>
 Oxfordshire Growth Board - <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-local-transport-board-0>
 Swindon Local Plan <http://ww1.swindon.gov.uk/ep/ep-planning/planningpolicy/ep-planning-localdev/Pages/ep-planning-localdev-localplan.aspx>

A420 Figure 1:

Indicative plan of transport infrastructure and proposed growth along the A420 corridor



Schemes to be investigated (map is not exhaustive)

- A** Botley Interchange and approaches
- B** Kingston Bagpuize to Fyfield crossings and subway
- C** Pine Woods Road/Charney Road
- D** Buckland Road
- E** Park Road
- F** Fernham Road
- G** Coxwell Road junction
- H** Shrivenham junction

Key

- Local Plan residential areas
- Local Plan mixed use areas comprising residential and employment
- Existing commercial/employment areas
- Existing settlement
- RAF Brize Norton
- PR Proposed Park and Ride
- A420
- - - Railway
- Rail Station
- Proposed Rail Station

