
15. Banbury Area Strategy

The Local Context

- 15.1 Banbury is a thriving historic market town and serves as retail, commercial and employment centre for a wide catchment. Located 25 miles north of Oxford, it is the largest town in the Cherwell district with a population of around 45,000. It has a diverse economy which is focused on manufacturing, logistics and distribution, and services. The historic Banbury Cross, together with the Oxford Canal and Castle Quay Shopping Centre, make for great leisure and retail attractions.
- 15.2 The aim in Banbury is to strengthen the town centre by boosting its vitality and quality through regeneration and strengthening commercial and retail activities, while safeguarding its historical character.
- 15.3 The *Cherwell Local Plan* anticipates that the town will continue to grow and become a larger and more important economic and social focus for its residents, businesses and surrounding area. By 2031 the town is planned to have up to 4,000 new homes. It will establish a more diverse economy and new employment areas. The *Banbury Masterplan* aspires to raise the quality and rejuvenate parts of the town centre with a focus on developing shopping, leisure and night time economy activities.
- 15.4 The *Masterplan* promotes the expansion of the town centre through a new retail development on the junction of Calthorpe Street and Marlborough Road, as well as an extension of the Castle Quay Shopping Centre, which will include more leisure, dining and entertainment uses. In addition, the plan sets out proposals for residential and office developments, including Bolton Road and the revival of the area linking St Mary's Church to the town centre.
- 15.5 The Canalside proposal represents a major opportunity to revitalise a substantial area close to the town centre, improve linkages to the railway station and integrate the Oxford canal as a historical industrial asset, with new commercial, retail and 950 residential premises.
- 15.6 Away from the town centre, there is to be a new strategic employment site west of the M40. The layout of the area enables a high degree of mixing with existing employment development, while the proximity of the M40 provides an opportunity for attracting inward investment from businesses specialising in storage and distribution, services and manufacturing. Attracting mixed employment use will increase the diversity, vitality and resilience of Banbury's local economy. This will be complemented by the further delivery of up to 4,000 new homes at strategic sites on the fringes of Banbury as outlined in the *Local Plan*.

Transport Strategy Aims

- 15.7 This strategy supports the *Local Plan*, the emerging *Banbury Masterplan* and future *Canalside* and *Spiceball Masterplans* by setting out the required transport improvements to tackle the challenges identified in the 2013 *Banbury Movement Study*. This will allow Banbury to prosper and accommodate the further economic growth and residential development that is proposed up to 2031, as well as promoting the regeneration of the town centre while preserving Banbury's historical charm.
- 15.8 This strategy identifies a series of improvements to increase the overall capacity of transport networks and systems within the locality, enabling them to accommodate the additional trips generated by development; to adapt to their cumulative impact and to mitigate the local environmental impact of increased travel. Where schemes are needed to mitigate one particular development, the developer will be expected to either construct or provide funding for the scheme; where a scheme is required due to the impact of more than one development, each developer will be expected to make a contribution proportional to the scale of their impact. Additional funding may also be sought via the Local Transport Board to the Local Growth Fund and other sources.
- 15.9 Oxfordshire County Council is working towards a strategic transport contribution rate for developer funding, which will be adopted in a future update of this strategy.
- 15.10 We will:
- Strengthen Banbury's position on the strategic road and rail network and promote it as a transport interchange, connecting homes and businesses to Oxford, Science Vale and business centres like London and Birmingham;
 - Deliver transport schemes which make the best use of existing highway capacity and reduce congestion through historically sensitive areas of the town;
 - Develop alternative north-south corridors to connect to the M40;
 - Review car parking in the town;
 - Enhance the town's bus, cycling and walking networks and facilities to ensure good links between residential areas and key employment, leisure and retail destinations. .

BAN1 – we will seek opportunities to deliver transport schemes which will boost the vitality and raise the quality of the town centre, as well as protect the historically sensitive areas through:

- **Strengthening Banbury's position on the railway network through revitalising the railway station and improving access to it by foot, cycle and bus.** We will work with our strategic partners to

develop Banbury Station as a transport interchange and take advantage of the opportunities created by the Government's plans to electrify the rail line which will provide a catalyst for economic growth and will result in increased passenger demand. This is likely to involve re-designing the station forecourt to create an interchange that will feature a taxi rank, better cycle facilities, such as cycle storage, and more pedestrian space, with improved public realm giving a sense of arrival. We will improve walking, cycling and public transport links to the station in order to meet future demand and to better connect the station to the town.

- **Developing the Cherwell Street 'Eastern Corridor' as the preferred north-south route through the town.** This will include improvements to the Bridge Street / Cherwell Street, Swan Close Road / Cherwell Street and Bloxham Road (A361) / South Bar Street junctions. This will be delivered in conjunction with the town centre redevelopment and Canalside development, with the aim to relieve congestion through sensitive areas and improve the area's environment.

Improvements to the Bridge Street junction, together with supporting public realm enhancements, will enhance connectivity of the railway station with the town centre, and accommodate trips associated with development in the area.

- **Developing Bankside as an alternative north-south route,** including enhancements to the Bankside / Hightown Road and Bankside / Oxford Road junctions. This will be progressed and funded as part of the Bankside development, with the aim of reducing congestion through the historical centre of the town.
- **Additional capacity at the South Bar Street / Bloxham Road (A361) junction.** This is required to accommodate the additional trips associated with residential and employment growth within the town and nearby settlements. It will further promote the Cherwell Street 'Eastern Corridor' as the preferred north-south route through the town.
- **Rejuvenating the existing, or possibly deliver a new relocated bus station.** The town centre regeneration offers a great opportunity to replace the existing bus station to allow for the expansion of the Castle Quay retail centre. We will investigate a new bus station facility on the George Street car park, including linkage with the town centre. This will support the above 'Eastern Corridor' improvements by moving a number of bus movements onto the less congested George Street junction, resulting in greater journey time reliability for buses. It will also provide more bus stops to handle the future increase in buses
- **Improving traffic circulation in the town centre,** including bus routeing and junction enhancements, combined with new signage.

This is required in order to facilitate the town centre redevelopment, in particular the mixed use development in the north-east quarter of the town centre.

- **Reorganise and improve the distribution of car parks in the town**, including the provision of multi-storey parking off Calthorpe Street to be delivered as part of the planned redevelopment in the town centre. This will help to manage traffic movement and influence route choice.
- **Providing multi-storey car parks to serve Banbury Rail Station** in order to accommodate the increased rail commuting and passenger demand associated with the future growth in Banbury and the surrounding areas. This is being wholly funded and delivered by the principal rail operator.
- **Reviewing the highway signage on routes into the town centre** to sign north-south through-traffic away from sensitive areas of the town centre and promote appropriate route choices at key decision making junctions, especially on Oxford Road A4260.

15.11 Completion of the above transport schemes will be fundamental in supporting Canalside and the regeneration of Banbury town centre. The schemes will also help towards protecting the town's historical features and enhancing the environment, particularly in sensitive areas such as Banbury Cross which is expected to become an Air Quality Management Area.

15.12 Improving connectivity to the strategic transport network by removing bottlenecks on junctions and developing alternative north-south routes through the town, as well as investing in bridging the gaps in the town's walking, cycling and bus network will ensure effective access between homes, jobs and leisure and retail opportunities. This will boost the attractiveness of Banbury as a place to live, work and establish business ventures. Figure 2 shows the proposed bus network enhancement.

BAN2 – We will strengthen connections between key residential and employment sites and the strategic transport network, including the M40 by:

- **Increasing capacity along the Hennef Way (A422) – M40 route**, including modifications to the Ermont Way, Cherwell Street and Southam Road junctions. This will help to facilitate employment generation to the east of the town, including the additional 500 jobs expected with the expansion of the industrial area to the west of the M40, by improving access to the motorway network, via the M40.
- **Increasing the capacity of junctions along Warwick Road (B4100)**, including the roundabout junctions with A422 Ruscote

Avenue and Orchard Way. This is required to accommodate the additional trips associated with proposed residential developments to the West of Bretch Hill and North of Hanwell Fields.

BAN3 – we will work closely with Cherwell District Council and other strategic partners, including developers, to improve sustainable transport links and infrastructure between key development sites and the town centre by:

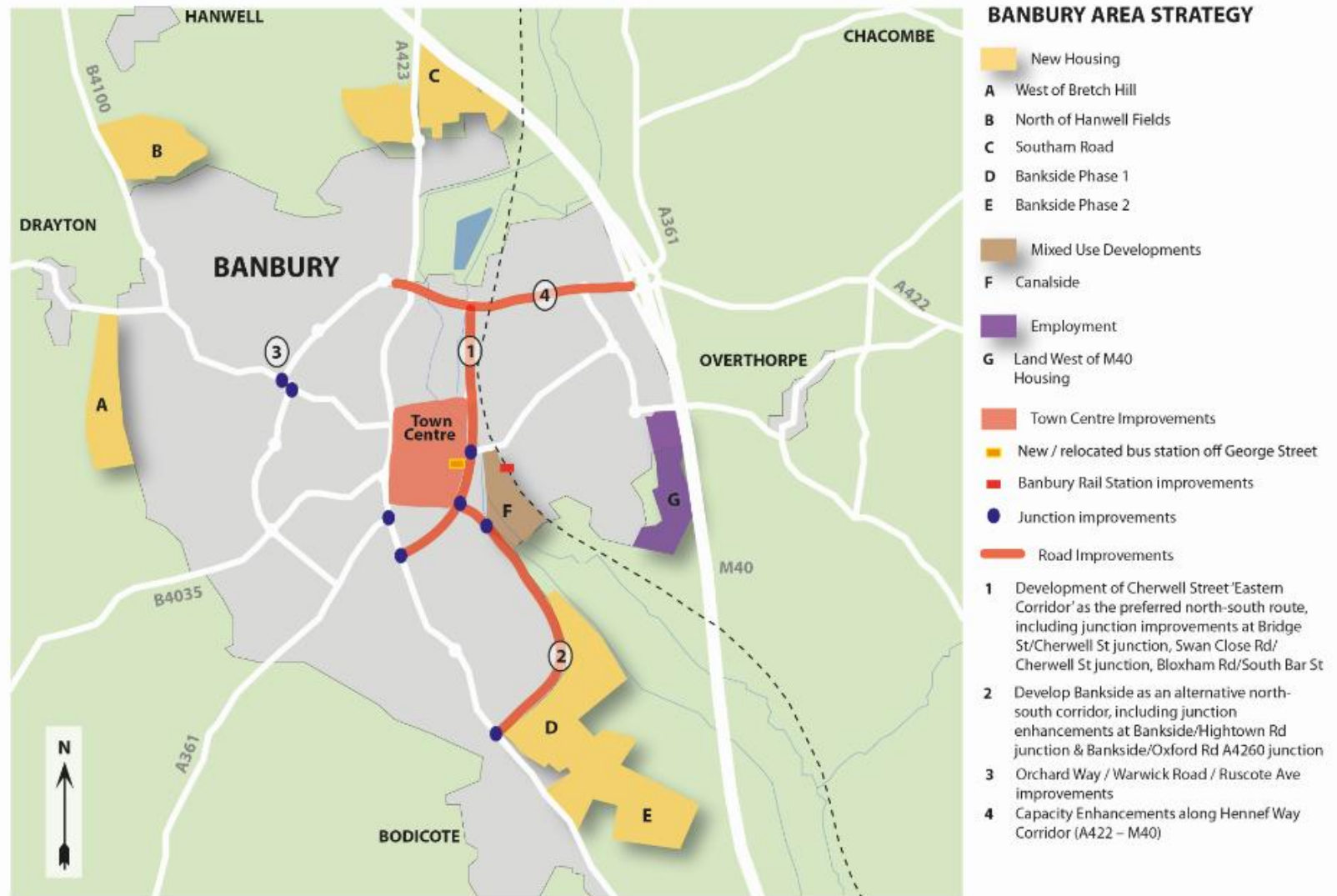
- **Developing the town’s bus network, including local services and inter-urban services from Deddington and Bloxham**, through enhancing existing bus services or providing new ones to ensure that an appropriate level of public transport service is provided to effectively connect residential developments with employment centres, with the long term aim of services reaching full commercial viability. This is critical in providing an attractive alternative to private car trips and will be funded by developer contributions. Bus priority at key congestion pinch points will be considered within key projects in the town, in particular the north-south corridor and the bus station relocation. This will complement the above bus service enhancements by enabling faster, more reliable bus journeys.
- **Working with public transport operators to ensure the public has access to high quality public transport infrastructure and passenger information.**
- **Improving facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and working to fill in gaps in the walking and cycling network, including Public Rights of Way.** This is required in order to reduce the proportion of journeys made by car in the town, so that the network can cope with the trips generated from planned development. This will promote healthy and active transport, as well as complement Cherwell District Council’s emerging Air Quality Strategy.

15.13 This Area Strategy replaces the Banbury Integrated Transport and Land Use Study – 2000 (BITLUS). Planning obligation contributions, secured in order to mitigate the impacts of development, towards BITLUS will be able to be used to deliver the proposals in this strategy and be in accordance with the planning obligations.

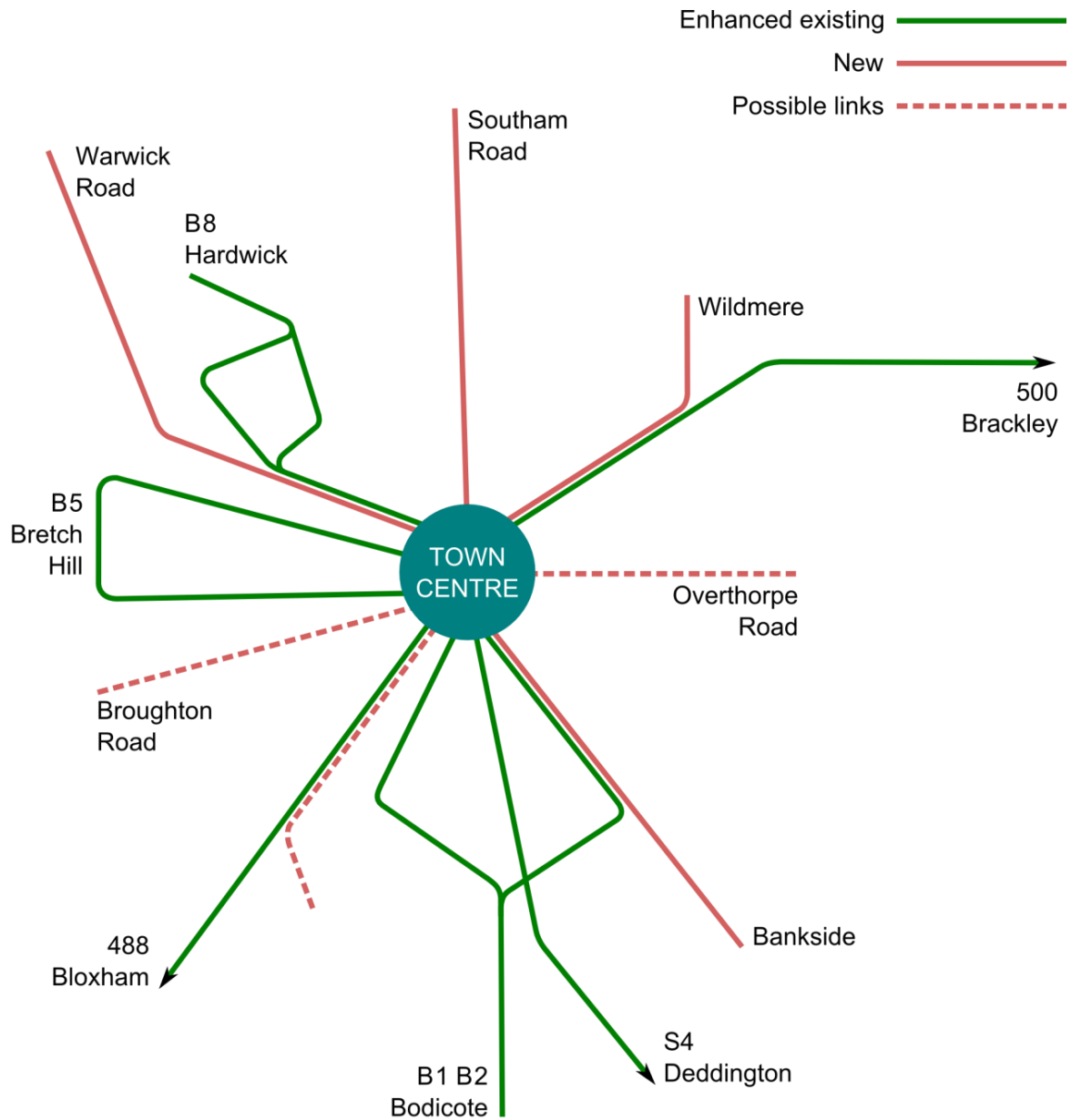
15.14 A comprehensive list of transport schemes proposed for Banbury can be found on the Oxfordshire County Council website (Link to web page from which Cabinet Paper can be downloaded).

Maps and Plans

15.15 Figure 1 below shows the key pieces of transport infrastructure required to deliver the proposed growth and investment in the area.



15.16 Figure 2 shows the proposed public transport network.



Note – this plan does not show certain lower frequency bus services

Not to scale

References

Cherwell Local Plan (submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for formal Examination on 31st January 2014). – <http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=9803>

Banbury Masterplan – http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/media/pdf/2/k/Banbury_Masterplan_Stakeholder_Workshop__130213.pdf

Banbury Movement Study – http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/media/pdf/3/g/Banbury_Movement_Study_February_2013_Part_1_of_2.pdf