

Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015-2031

Oxfordshire Freight Strategy

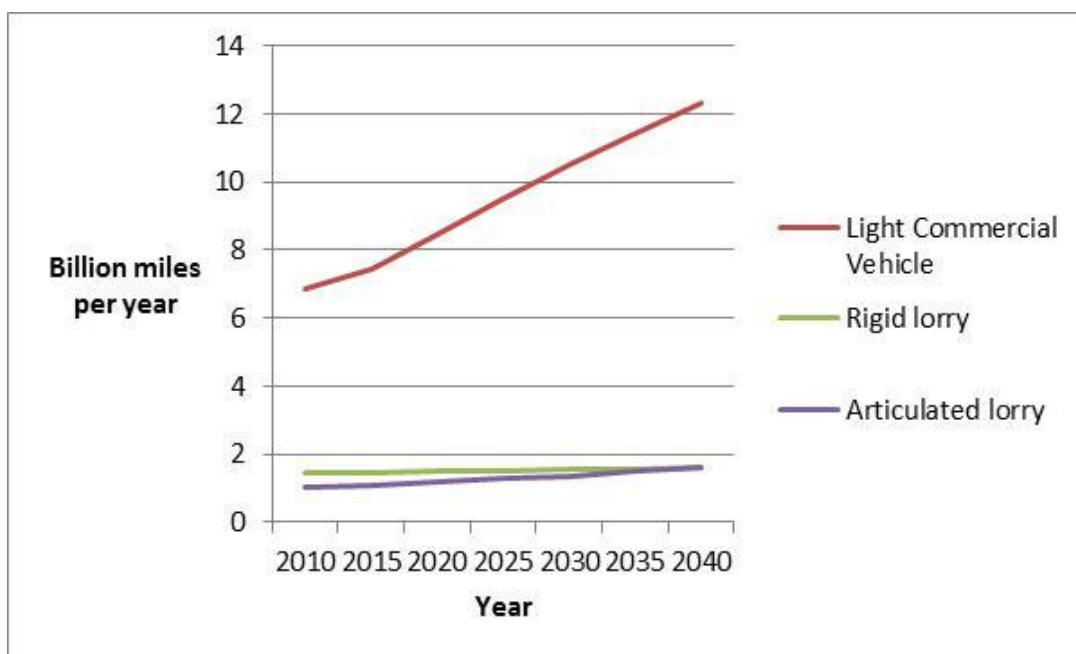
**CONNECTING
OXFORDSHIRE**



Oxfordshire Freight Strategy

Introduction

1. We rely on an efficient and reliable freight network for our daily lives, to bring food to our supermarkets, parcels to our doors and link our manufacturers with their suppliers. We need to enable reliable freight transport between businesses, their supply chains and their customers and so make Oxfordshire an attractive location for business and employment.
2. The nature and volume of freight traffic is likely to change substantially over the period of this strategy. All of the Department for Transport's forecast scenarios for south-east England involve a substantial road traffic increase for light commercial vehicles and articulated lorries in proportion to present (see Figure 1). Freight traffic growth from our Strategic Economic Plan, with its aim to promote high tech industry, is likely to reflect and even exceed this pattern of growth in light commercial vehicles.



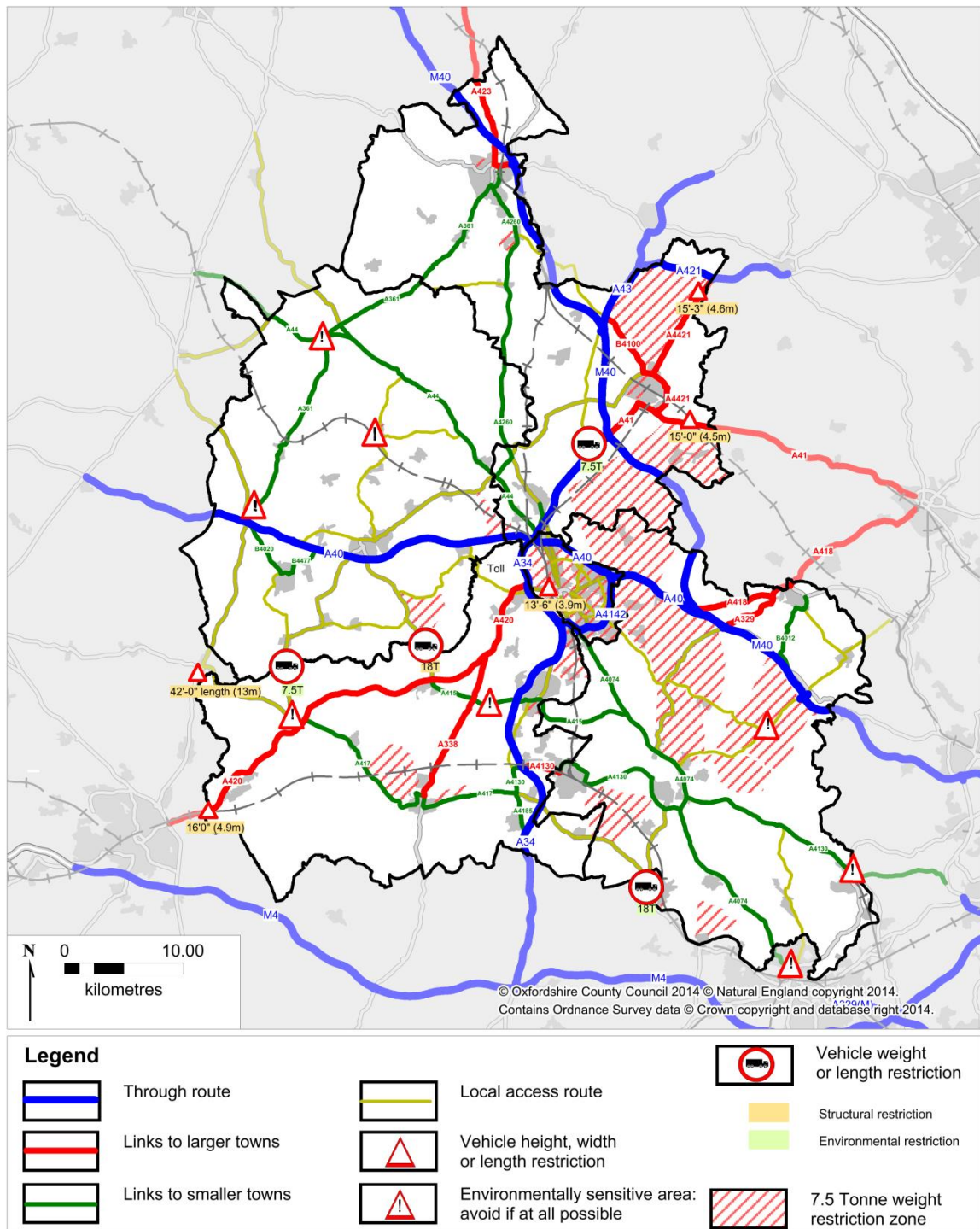
Freight Strategy Figure 1: Forecast growth in freight on all types of roads in south-east England excluding London, billion miles per year (source: Department for Transport Road Traffic Forecast 2015 – extrapolated trend)

3. To provide for this we need to make more efficient use of transport networks and systems across all modes of transport, including use of the rail network. However, the majority of freight movements in our predominantly rural county will continue to be by road. It is essential that we make use of our road network as efficient as possible, with larger goods vehicles using the strategic road network in preference to minor roads, encouraged by measures to reduce journey times and increase journey time reliability on these important major routes.
4. Freight vehicles can have negative effects on congestion, road safety, air quality and the wider environment. These depend very much on time and particularly place, with lorries negotiating narrow streets through villages and market towns generating numerous complaints from local residents. This can also impact on other modes of transport that LTP4

is seeking to encourage, for example delays to buses particularly from on-street loading and the risks to cyclists and pedestrians from large lorries which can deter use of these active modes of transport.

5. However, it is not a simple trade-off between economic benefits and environmental costs. A safe and attractive environment where people and goods can move around freely is a vital component of the county's economic offer as a place to live, work and visit. This is what our freight strategy aims to deliver for Oxfordshire.
6. The Department for Transport has published the estimated external cost per lorry mile of using different categories of road.¹ These vary from 82 pence for A class roads to 235 pence for other (lower classification) roads. This reflects various environmental costs but the critical factor is infrastructure, where the costs are 7 pence for motorways, 24 pence for A roads and 171 pence for other roads. This illustrates the economic and environmental benefits of keeping lorries on the strategic road network as far as possible.
7. Oxfordshire County Council is currently reviewing cycling and HGVs in order to understand how cyclist casualties can be reduced. The group currently includes members of the Oxfordshire Cycling Network, Cyclox and an HGV representative.

¹ *Freight mode shift benefit values technical report: an update*, DfT, 2014



Freight Strategy Figure 2: Oxfordshire lorry route map

Key Principles

8. We will base our freight strategy on the following six principles:
 - a. **Understand** patterns of freight movements including time, origin and destination, as well as any problems encountered by operators and their customers and those experienced by local communities and other road users. Surveys may be required to improve our evidence base in an area where data is currently limited and will be undertaken when resources allow.
 - b. **Inform** freight operators of the best routes to use and routes and locations which should be avoided where possible. We will take advantage of new technology and best practice to help manage freight movements, notably through our recent adoption of Freight Gateway. This system uses local authority data to provide the National freight Journey Planner and also feeds into lorry specific satnav and commercial logistics software, to get our preferred lorry routes and environmentally sensitive locations to a wider audience in the road haulage industry.
 - c. **Encourage** use of the strategic road network by traffic management measures, working with Highways England on the A34. This could include better provision of high quality rest facilities, coupled with the removal of sub-standard laybys where these can adversely affect road safety and congestion. This also means using the opportunity presented by investment in rail in Oxfordshire to shift freight from road to rail in support of our Route Based Strategies in the county.
 - d. **Deter** use of inappropriate minor roads and movements through towns and villages and other environmentally sensitive areas, except where this is essential for local access. This also helps to minimise damage by lorries to road surfaces and bridges. We will set out our policy on the introduction of further environmental weight limits in Oxfordshire and on their enforcement.
 - e. **Manage** freight and logistics in partnership with public sector organisations and businesses to achieve maximum efficiency and reduce waste by eliminating unnecessary trips. This might involve consolidation of items from diverse origins, combining them for onward delivery to the same destination, possibly including the use of smaller or low emission vehicles in sensitive environments such as urban centres with poor air quality.
 - f. **Plan** the location of new employment sites and any related transport infrastructure so that these can function well, with efficient freight access to and from the strategic transport network without adverse impacts on local communities, road users and the environment.

These principles are developed further below.

Understand patterns of freight movements

9. We will improve our understanding of freight transport, the needs of freight operators and their customers as well as the impacts on local communities. This may involve surveys

where resources permit but also knowledge gained from the national freight journey planner, the development of Construction Logistics Plans and Delivery and Servicing Plans.

Inform freight operators of the best routes to use and those to avoid

10. There has been growing public and political concern in recent years about the number of lorries passing through towns and villages in Oxfordshire. In 2012 the Oxfordshire lorry routes map was updated to show both recommended routes and restricted locations. However, few drivers and freight operators use individual local authority maps such as these so the impact on route choice is limited.
11. Oxfordshire County Council has therefore signed up to the National Freight Journey Planner offered by the specialist mapping data consultancy PIE. This is an opportunity get our lorry route data to a wider audience. Drivers and companies are more likely to use the national Freight Gateway journey planner product than individual local authority maps such as Oxfordshire's.
12. Freight Gateway allows an operator to enter details of a particular vehicle (size, weight, etc.) and routes it accordingly. Freight Gateway shows the user the location of restrictions so that it is clear why a particular route is being recommended. It will incorporate all the details of our restrictions and recommended routes. Features include a lorry watch link to allow local people to report breaches of weight restrictions and detailed local mapping.
13. This data is also made available to other portals and to logistics companies with their own software to inform how they plan their activities. It also feeds in to certain lorry-specific satnav products.

Encourage use of the strategic road network and of rail freight

14. The rationale for our Route Based Strategies for the A34, A40 and A420 is to encourage lorries and through traffic to stay on the strategic route network as much as possible. There are various traffic management measures that can help to achieve this objective. For example, removing laybys from main roads can help because large vehicles pulling out slowly onto a road with fast traffic can be a safety hazard as well as a significant cause of congestion. It is important to note that, while major development is concentrated in areas well served by the strategic route network, this can lead to increased congestion on the routes we want lorries to use.
15. Rest areas for lorry drivers are an important element in an efficient freight network. Proper facilities with security, refreshments, washing and toilets also cater better for drivers in terms of health and safety. They also help to avoid inappropriate use of laybys and parking on-road, which can cause obstruction and serious environmental problems to local residents. Unfortunately, in recent years the smaller service stations have withdrawn from catering for

HGVs, leaving only motorway service areas and a few lorry parks. Motorways and trunk roads are better served including Oxford services at M40 junction 8, Cherwell Valley services at M40/A43 junction 10 and Chieveley services (outside Oxfordshire) at M4/A34 junction 13. However, the Road Haulage Association (RHA) and Freight Transport Association (FTA) have identified a need for additional capacity at a site or sites close to the Oxford ring road.

16. Significant volumes of rail freight pass through Oxfordshire, particularly between the port of Southampton and the Midlands and North of England. A recent project to increase the loading gauge, enabling larger containers, has removed thousands of HGVs from the A34. Other rail freight includes aggregates, waste, MOD supplies and finished cars. It is heavy and bulky items like these for which rail is most competitive, and we will support the provision of appropriately sited rail freight facilities, subject to funding being available and having regard to the impacts on local communities and on the road and passenger rail networks.

Deter use of inappropriate minor roads through towns and villages

17. The county council will consider environmental weight restrictions across the County, particularly areas which are subject to significant levels of HGV traffic, prioritising the towns of Burford, Chipping Norton and Henley-on-Thames. However, the county council is very unlikely to have any funding available for this in the coming years so any schemes would need to be funded through development and/or by local communities, businesses and town/parish councils.
18. Our policy on new environmental weight limits is that it would first be necessary to establish that a particular location has a problem in terms of environmental and economic impacts as reflected in congestion, air quality, road danger and public concern. It would then be necessary to identify the share of HGV traffic that does not constitute local access based on origin and destination surveys and other data, as well as analysis of alternative routes. Consideration of weight limits would also need to have reference to the road hierarchy set out earlier in this Local Transport Plan.
19. In the case of Chipping Norton, a scheme to change the status of the A44 would be required before a new environmental weight limit could be considered. In line with policies 4 and 29 of the Local Transport Plan, taking note of Table 2 of the LTP, we will seek to remove the primary route status on the A44 between Oxford and Moreton-in Marsh. This would open opportunities to reduce HGV movements through Chipping Norton and address the air quality problems. However, as with weight limits, this would need to be funded through development and/or the local community, businesses and the town council.
20. In Oxford we will review signing on the ring road to ensure that lorries are directed to their destinations within the city by the most appropriate routes. It is sensible to co-ordinate this with work to develop the cycle network to try to reduce the danger that lorries pose to cyclists.
21. Neighbourhood Weight Watch is an existing scheme using volunteers, often in partnership with parish and town councils, to report lorries contravening weight and other restrictions. We will integrate this scheme with the LorryWatch on line reporting facility that is part of

Freight Gateway. It can supplement the limited resources available for enforcement (Thames Valley Police and OCC Trading Standards). Trading Standards have a separate policy for prioritising the enforcement of the various weight limits in Oxfordshire in the most appropriate and effective way.

Manage freight and logistics to achieve maximum efficiency

We will engage with freight and logistics operators and other stakeholders, reflecting our resource levels and prioritising practical solutions to problems raised.

22. The County and City Councils have discussed with local stakeholders the possibility of freight consolidation and trans-shipment to reduce the negative impacts of goods vehicles in the city. These include congestion, poor air quality resulting from (diesel) emissions, and accidents, particularly involving cyclists and pedestrians.
23. Freight consolidation means combining loads from various sources to one or a number of closely located destinations. It is a technique already practised by large retailers with sophisticated logistics operations and it reduces the number of separate goods vehicle journeys and total goods vehicle mileage. Trans-shipment means switching to smaller, sometimes electric delivery vehicles for the “final mile”. In Oxford there are two areas that could benefit from freight consolidation - the city centre and the Headington area including the hospitals and University sites.
24. Other options include Construction Logistics Plans (for major developments while under construction) and Delivery & Servicing Plans (for existing and newly completed developments). These are like travel plans and help businesses to organise their deliveries and collections to reduce lorry trips but also to bring efficiency savings. They can be linked to the use of approved operators under a Freight Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS) with standards for safe and environmentally friendly operation.

Plan the location of new employment sites and any related transport infrastructure

25. We will influence the location and design of new development, particularly employment sites and any related transport infrastructure so that these can function well, with efficient freight access to and from the strategic transport network without adverse impacts on local communities, other road users and the environment. We will work closely with local planning authorities within the National Planning Policy Framework.
26. We will ask developers of major sites to prepare Construction Logistics Plans to minimise the impact of the large scale residential and business development planned for Oxfordshire, as well as Delivery and Servicing Plans to ensure that businesses make ongoing arrangements for sustainable freight and logistics.
27. We will take careful account of the need for an efficient and sustainable freight network as we look to refine Infrastructure Development Plans as part of emerging Local Plans. We will seek developer contributions to mitigate the impact of freight traffic on the environment and on the local and strategic road network.