

Overview

Chapter 1 - Vision and Objectives

This chapter introduces the Local Transport Plan. It sets out a broad vision for Oxfordshire that the effective implementation of the LTP will help to deliver, and sets out the objectives that the plan seeks to achieve in order to deliver that vision. This chapter also outlines the Council's longer-term local transport strategy.

Chapter 2 - Transport in the Wider Context

This chapter expands on the broad vision for Oxfordshire set out in the first chapter. It explains how transport - through the Local Transport Plan - will help to support a range of other economic, social and environmental plans at the local, regional and national level. It also explains the close linkages between Oxfordshire's LTP and other local, regional and national transport strategies.

Chapter 3 - Local Transport Plan Objectives

This chapter explains in more detail why achieving the LTP Objectives is important for Oxfordshire and sets out in broad terms the County Council's approach to achieving these Objectives.

Chapter 4 - Supporting Strategies

This chapter sets out the Council's specific strategies for improving conditions for particular types of journey or tackling particular transport problems. These expand on the broad actions outlined in Chapter 3 and form the basis for the programmes of schemes that will be set out in the following chapters.

Chapter 5 - Identifying Priorities for Action

This chapter sets out how the County Council has prioritised the implementation of the strategies outlined in Chapter 4. The Council's priorities for action are underpinned by a systematic and thorough analysis of transport problems and challenges in Oxfordshire.

This analysis and the priorities that have emerged from it, together with the strategies identified in chapter 3, form the basis of chapters 6 to 11, with the details of schemes and how they are to be managed and monitored comprising Chapter 12 and 13.

Chapter 6 – Central Oxfordshire Transport Area

Recognising the importance of the central Oxfordshire sub-region and the particular contribution that addressing transport problems in this part of the county will make to achieving the LTP Objectives, this chapter outlines a coherent approach for the Central Oxfordshire Transport Area.

Drawing on the problem analysis outlined in Chapter 5, this chapter outlines the transport problems facing the Central Oxfordshire area, and identifies how the strategies identified in Chapter 4 will be implemented in response to these problems.

Chapters 7 to 11 - District Chapters

Drawing on the problem analysis outlined in chapter 5, these chapters outline the transport problems facing each of Oxfordshire's districts, and identify how the strategies identified in Chapter 4 will be implemented in each district in response to the most severe problems.

Chapter 12 – Highway Maintenance

This chapter explains how the County Council will manage its transport networks effectively to maximise the value of past and future investment.

Chapter 12 - Targets and Implementation Programme

In this chapter, specific performance targets are set based on careful analysis of the County's transport problems and current travel patterns, and in line with the resources likely to be available to the council for delivering transport improvements. A five-year implementation programme designed to meet these targets and contribute towards achieving the Local Transport Plan Objectives is outlined.

Indicators which will enable the County Council to monitor the effectiveness of its investment in transport in achieving the LTP Objectives are also set out.

Annex A - Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Annex contains a summary of the conclusions of the pre-scheme Environmental Report which has informed the assessment of schemes in this Plan.

Annex B – Framework Accessibility Strategy

This Annex contains a report of the assessment carried to date to identify and quantify accessibility problems across Oxfordshire.

Chapter 1

Vision & Long Term Strategy

Vision:

Oxfordshire will be a county with a prosperous economy, attractive environment and inclusive society

This Plan sets out the second five year programme of a Long-term Transport Strategy for Oxfordshire which builds on the progress made through Oxfordshire County Council's first Local Transport Plan towards achieving this vision and improving the quality of life in Oxfordshire.

To ensure transport contributes as effectively as possible to achieving these wider economic, social and environmental objectives it is important to use resources wisely and to focus them on our highest priorities.

Oxfordshire's Long-Term Transport Objectives

In strategic transport-planning terms, the 5-year programme of this Local Transport Plan covers a relatively short period of time. It is therefore essential that this Local Transport Plan is set in the context of longer term transport objectives and ambitions for improvement.

Oxfordshire County Council's Long-Term Transport Strategy represents the Council's aims and objectives for the development and use of the transport network in Oxfordshire. The Long-Term Transport Strategy does not seek to identify particular problems or measures but rather sets out in general terms what the County Council will seek to achieve and a broad approach to making this happen.

Aim

The County Council has a long-term aim for improving transport in the county:

To improve access to jobs and services, particularly for those most in need, in ways which are both safe and sustainable

To realise this aim the County Council has developed a series of long-term objectives:

- > To manage the county's system of transport networks in support of a strong local and regional economy

- > To improve access to services, particularly for those without access to a car
- > To improve the safety of travel
- > To minimise the impact of travel on the environment.

These objectives need to be taken into account when decisions are made both for short-term management of the network and long term investment decisions.

The County Council originally developed a vision for transport as part of its first Local Transport Plan. This Strategy takes forward the vision and as part of developing the Strategy a set of key transport objectives have been agreed.

Oxfordshire's Long-Term Transport Strategy

Policy Context

This Strategy has been developed through the completion of the Transport Networks Review Study undertaken between 2002 and 2004. The objectives of the Study were to develop a long term strategy for the County which supports national, regional and local objectives (as detailed in Chapter 2). In particular the Strategy seeks to address emerging spatial planning policies and therefore has a time horizon of 2026 to complement the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East.

The Strategy has been developed to understand existing network provision and future transport requirements in relation to:

- > Proposed locations for housing growth in Oxfordshire and neighbouring authorities;
- > Locations for potential major employment growth;
- > Oxford's further growth as a regional hub (being a key destination for employment, healthcare, leisure, tourism and shopping);
- > Existing demand for travel and future changes likely over time;
- > Key constraints on the transport networks now and in the future; and
- > Understanding stakeholder and public issues and aspirations through a variety of methods of consultation and participation.

Key Transport Issues

As part of the development of the Strategy, a multi-modal transport model was developed to assess the likely demand for travel in the longer term. This took account of national and local policies and trends including development proposals emerging in the draft South East Plan. The table below shows the overall growth in trips by mode between 2000 and 2011 forecast by the model.

Key fact:

If nothing is done, the number of trips in the county could increase by over 25% by 2011 and almost 40% by 2021 from a 2000 base.

<i>Mode of Transport</i>	<i>Growth 2000 - 2011</i>
Rail	22%
Bus	No change
Private Vehicle	26%
Light Goods Vehicle	29%
Other Goods Vehicle	31%
Overall	26%

Growth in all traffic nationally to 2011 is expected to be 18% thus demonstrating that Oxfordshire's traffic growth of over 25% is expected to be well above the national average. This is partly as a result of higher than average population growth and goods vehicle forecasts. A comparison of average hour traffic flows across the County line and in/out of towns in the County has shown that:

- > Traffic flows across the county boundary increase by 20% in the north, 26% in the south, 36% in the east and 28% in the west; and
- > Traffic flows across the town 'screenlines' increase by 20% at Banbury, 24% at Bicester, 30% at Chipping Norton, 22% at Oxford; 28% at Thame and 29% at Wantage.

The predicted increases in traffic vary considerably by location and Map ??? shows the key congestion bottlenecks in Oxfordshire as well as volume to capacity ratios predicted for 2011 and 2021 and the percentage flow increases. This confirms a picture of increasing congestion across the network. In general, those routes that are currently closest to capacity experience lower than average percentage increases, due to their limited scope for accommodating additional traffic. If a 'do minimum' approach is adopted it is expected that this will lead to large percentage increases on alternative routes, including a number of B-class and unclassified roads. In many of these cases the existing flow levels are low, and there would be capacity available to absorb the increases, but clearly there could be consequences in terms of safety and environmental impacts.

The model estimates that the increase in bus passengers for non-local bus journeys (i.e. excluding trips within towns) would be at 6% between 2000 and 2011 and 10% between 2000 and 2021. The model also predicted a 32% increase in rail passengers to 2011 and 92% to 2021. While these estimates were not constrained by potential levels of overcrowding the forecasts clearly have implications for future capacity requirements.

The overall impact of these changes, if they occurred, would be:

- > Severe congestion on major routes causing unreliable journey times, increased delays and diversion of traffic onto more minor routes - such congestion would also add to bus journey times and increase the costs of moving goods to and through the county;
- > Lengthening of traffic "peak" hours;
- > Increased levels of noise, vibration and townscape/landscape impact, especially on more minor routes, with a potentially significant quality of life impact;
- > Overcrowding on railways unless there is more seating capacity is provided through the use of longer trains, in the short term, and the provision of extra track capacity in the longer term; and
- > Travelling by foot or by cycle would be likely to be less popular due to increased traffic flows.

The scale of the problems identified means that Oxfordshire recognises that there is a need for a clearly defined longer term strategy. The following sections set out the Strategy.

The Strategy

In developing this Strategy, it is clear that the car is and will continue to be the predominant mode of travel, therefore the County Council want to make car travel easier by tackling key congestion 'hotspots' and in much of Oxfordshire this will be by road improvements (including road maintenance). However, there are some areas where the car will never be able to cater for the high volumes in constrained areas and it is essential therefore to make other choices attractive, both absolute and relative to the car. Also in all areas of Oxfordshire the County Council needs to cater for the significant minority who do not have car access so they are able to reach services and employment. This Strategy is therefore a balanced package to achieve all of these things. It is aimed at tackling problems and the solutions will vary according to the prevailing circumstances. Therefore, the study found that in order to address the objectives, the Strategy would need to provide a combination of highway and public transport improvements alongside a package of measures to influence travel behaviour.

Roads and Routeing

The Strategy recommends the following with regards to determining the need for road and routeing improvements:

- > The primary focus for road improvements should be where it addresses environmental impacts of traffic, in particular where major routes pass through villages and affect overall quality of life. The whole A- and B-road network in the County has been examined in order to assess the 'baseline' situation in this respect;
- > A range of traffic management measures is to be considered to deal with identified problems before considering new roads or increasing capacity on the existing network;
- > Where traffic management measures are not sufficient to address problems, consideration can be given to improvements such as bypass schemes. The case for these has been prioritised in terms of the scale of environmental problems arising (e.g. in terms of route layout and proximity to buildings), levels of congestion, numbers of HGVs and predicted traffic increases in future. In addition, any wider impacts that an improvement may cause have been identified, so that routes are considered as a whole. The environmental implications of building a relief scheme have also been taken into account;

- > It is not recommended to provide route improvements (such as bypasses or widening) for capacity reasons alone. However, where severe capacity problems exist at certain 'bottleneck' locations, improvement measures have been considered (again taking account of potential wider impacts), with the aim of ensuring that benefits for public transport are 'locked in'.

Public Transport

Public transport improvements are at the heart of the Long-term Transport Strategy. The promotion of the bus network as a whole is key to the overall Strategy including the need to achieve high overall standards of vehicles, and information as well as bus priority measures. As part of the bus network proposals, a focus will also be placed on providing good links to rail stations in parts of the County where these are lacking, thus helping to widen access to the rail network. The aim has been to ensure that all significant towns in Oxfordshire are served by public transport.

Under the current regulatory system it is difficult for the County Council to take full control over these issues, but particularly in the more rural areas the County Council will seek quality contract-type arrangements. In relation to the commercial services, it will be necessary to reach agreements with operators, and again the County Council will seek to achieve this on a formal basis as far as is practical. The Strategy elements relating to public transport are summarised below:

Promotion of a Premium Routes network (services with at least a 15 minute frequency) which includes:

- > Promoting high quality public transport on the most heavily traveled corridors in the County;
- > Giving priority to buses at locations where congestion is experienced;
- > Within Oxford, giving further consideration to achieving stronger priority between the Park & Ride sites and central Oxford; and
- > Considering Remote Park and Ride sites to serve key travel movements.

A 'second tier' (frequency 30 - 60 minutes) and 'feeder' services which would be defined by considering:

- > Direct journeys by bus off the premium routes network (rather than requiring users to change services). Having a denser network of direct routes should also enable feeder services to have more extensive coverage;
- > Improvements to the network where there would be strong accessibility and social inclusion benefits in providing an enhanced public transport network, particularly in the more rural areas; and

- > Locations for rural bus hubs, where passengers would come and change onto another bus or simply to access services in that town or village.

In terms of rail, the focus of the strategy is to continue working with the rail authorities to seek improvements. The County's main priorities are:

- > Implementation of 'East-West Rail' (from Oxford to Milton Keynes);
- > Improvements to the Cotswold Line, focusing initially on the principal stations; and
- > Maintaining existing service levels.

Influencing Travel Behaviour

Measures aimed at influencing travel habits will form an important part of the overall strategy. In addition the emerging accessibility audit seeks to identify where improvements can be made for people to access key services. One of the potential outcomes of this Strategy may be the identification of non-transport solutions which could influence travel behaviour (such as increasing local facilities).

The Strategy recommends the following:

- > Use of Intelligent Transport Systems;
- > Parking controls and pricing mechanisms;
- > Encourage car sharing through travel plans, car clubs, provision of highway measures to give priority to car sharing vehicles and park and share facilities;
- > More co-ordination between development planning and transport planning, to ensure that infrastructure requirements are planned for in advance of proposed development;
- > Encourage further introduction and promotion of travel plans for employment developments and schools;
- > More 'joined-up thinking' internally in terms of the impact of decisions by the County Council and others on transport, for example covering areas such as education and healthcare provision. This is likely to be one of the most important ways to try to address the underlying trend of increasing demand for travel. A key tool will be the preparation of a "sustainability audit" of all the County Council's policies in terms of transport impacts;
- > More partnership working externally, in areas where the County Council does not have direct control itself, such as healthcare, achieving consensus on policy decisions that impact on transport, may again be difficult, but it is important to take steps to try to influence key decisions; and
- > Better provision of information for all sustainable modes of travel to assist in encouraging more sustainable travel choices.

Local Transport Plan Objectives

Consultation carried out during the development of this Plan has confirmed that the four priority areas, agreed between the Government and Local Government Association, for transport (congestion, accessibility, road safety and air quality) are the right ones for Oxfordshire and are consistent with the County Council's Long-term Transport Strategy. In addition, we have identified the improvement of the street environment, as a further priority to improve the quality of life for all.

These priorities will be at the heart of the County Council's transport strategy for the next five years. The objectives for this Plan are therefore:

> Tackling Congestion

Traffic jams cause delays which cost people and businesses time and money; congestion can result in poor air quality and often makes bus services less reliable.

> Delivering Accessibility

Accessing jobs and services is fundamental to a good quality of life. The availability of public transport and good walking and cycling routes is essential to minimising the risk of social exclusion, particularly for people without access to a car.

> Safer Roads

In 2004, 33 people were killed and over 300 seriously injured as a result of road accidents in Oxfordshire. Nationally, road accidents are the single biggest killer of school age children. Safer roads are therefore essential in helping to safeguard our communities.

> Better Air Quality

Although the quality of Oxfordshire's air is generally very good, there are some locations where traffic related air pollution exceeds recommended levels. Targeted action to address air quality problems will therefore improve overall health for those affected.

> Improving the Street Environment

Streets that are dominated by traffic or poorly designed can be unpleasant to spend time in, particularly for pedestrians. A high-quality street environment, on the other hand, can add to the vitality of a street, attracting visitors, boosting business and creating a pleasant public space for people to relax in and enjoy.

Ensuring Consistency

Oxfordshire County Council has taken a number of steps to ensure consistency between this Local Transport Plan and the Long-Term Strategy.

Objectives

The LTP Objectives and Long-Term Transport Strategy Objectives are clearly closely linked:

Long-Term Objectives	Related LTP Objectives
> To manage the county's system of transport networks in support of a strong local and regional economy	> Tackling Congestion > Delivering Accessibility > Better Air Quality > Improving the Street Environment
> To improve access to services, particularly for those without access to a car	> Delivering Accessibility
> To improve the safety of travel	> Safer Roads
> To minimise the impact of travel on the environment	> Better Air Quality > Improving the Street Environment