

TRANSPORT IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE – 20 JULY 2006**PUBLIC TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME****Report by Head of Transport****Introduction**

1. The County Council's Local Transport Plan investment programme contains funding for the roll-out of Real Time Information and the upgrade of bus stops across the Premium Route Network. Funding has also been allocated for expansion of traffic signal bus priority and some significant bus priority schemes such as in Eynsham and Kidlington. An annual Public Transport Development report will be produced to enable the programme to be agreed and reviewed in response to changes in funding and other circumstances.
2. In January 2006 the Cabinet approved a report detailing priorities for investment in the County Council's (ACIS) Real Time Information system during 2006/07 and a revised project resource appraisal covering the whole LTP2 period. Given the close synergies between the RTI project and the Premium Routes programme, it is suggested that implementation of the roll-out of the RTI system is reviewed alongside other Premium Route measures. A consolidated summary of plans for 2006/07 is, therefore, provided as part of this report. The background to the Premium Route strategy is set out at Annex 1.

Background

3. An outline Premium Routes programme was included in the County Council's Local Transport Plan 2 submission to Government for the period 2006/07-2010/11 and is contained within the County Council's Bus Strategy. Following further consultation with the principal bus operators in April 2006, a set of investment priorities was agreed for the financial year 2006/07, focusing, amongst other things, on routes in East Oxford. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to concentrate resources and initiatives on a particular route or routes, thus creating a flagship project in which the bus companies and County Council could work together to achieve measurable improvements in service quality and performance.
4. The rate at which the Premium Route programme can be delivered is linked to the availability of resources, both in terms of capital, revenue and staff and also to the consultative process. The order in which Premium Route projects are tackled is a function of an agreed understanding with bus operators about the relative scale of problems on each route and the willingness of both the Council and operators to commit resources to tackling the problem. The order of delivery of the Premium Routes programme is also linked to the delivery programme of other LTP-funded projects (primarily Network Development, Oxford Transport Strategy, e.g. London Road corridor and the programme for the other Towns) and to major new developments, which are expected to make major financial contributions towards the cost of Premium Route infrastructure and to the cost of a more frequent service, as appropriate.
5. A Core Partnership Agreement for the Development of Quality Bus Services in Oxfordshire was recently signed by the County Council, The Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach in Oxfordshire. Underlying the Core Agreement will be individual Quality Partnerships for each corridor incorporating a Route Action Plan to include targets for bus journey times, journey time variability, punctuality and bus patronage. The concept of an East Oxford Bus Quality Partnership provides a clear focus for Public Transport Development investment plans to deliver such improvements through active traffic/parking management and bus priority measures, along with upgrades to bus stop and shelter infrastructure and information.

6. Pump-priming funding is also being allocated to boost the frequency of some services with a view to them becoming commercial “turn up and go” operations in future years. Support is currently being allocated to the Water Eaton Park & Ride (service 500), Wallingford to Oxford (X39) and Bodicote (B1 and B2). A further report on pump-priming will be submitted later in the year.

Progress on Delivery of Premium Bus Route Improvements

7. Considerable progress was achieved during 2005/06 and this is detailed at Annex 3. Premium Bus Routes Network report to the Executive on 8 July 2003 included a list of Premium Routes sections for inclusion in the Capital Programme, separated into recommended ‘early’, ‘medium term’ or ‘longer-term’ implementation. This indicative programme was revised for the purposes of the County Council's recent LTP submission, and for inclusion in its formal Bus Strategy (Annex 4).
8. The programme reflects the revised LTP emphasis on tackling congestion on the A34, A40 and the Oxford outer ring road. The re-modelling of Green Road roundabout (2006/7) is seen as the precursor to a programme to tackle congestion through Headington along the London Road. Similarly, measures to reduce delays at Cutteslowe and Wolvercote roundabouts will need to precede work along the Banbury and Woodstock Road corridors. Bicester-Oxford Premium Route proposals will build on work already programmed in Kidlington (as well as Cutteslowe/Wolvercote) to deliver a more reliable service on this important corridor.
9. In addition, a series of complementary Public Transport Development projects will need to be delivered to ensure that the County Council achieves its bus patronage targets while ensuring that bus stops are upgraded to Disability Discrimination Act and 'Inclusive Mobility' standards and further assisting the operators in meeting bus punctuality and journey time targets. Given funding constraints, such projects will in the next few years, largely focus on a package of traffic management and infrastructure measures rather than be reliant on implementation of major engineering schemes or longer term projects.
10. The principal bus operators continue to support the delivery of the Premium Bus Routes programme as part of the Quality Partnership framework although it is recognised that operators may wish to negotiate with the County Council on the prioritisation of schemes on an ongoing basis. Wherever possible therefore, it is intended to agree with operators a shared list of priorities at the beginning of each financial year, and for route specific quality partnerships to be agreed in accordance with the Core Partnership agreement.
11. A programme for 2006/07 has been agreed with the principal bus operators and, subject to Committee endorsement, it is now the intention to deliver a package of improvements for services in the East Oxford area to encompass bus priority measures, enhanced traffic management, bus stop upgrades and real time information provision. Stagecoach route 10, and the Oxford Bus Company route 15 were identified as routes which had the potential for significant reliability and overall journey time improvements.
12. Both routes serve a number of hospital, university and employment sites (including JR Hospital). The programme for Routes 10 and 15 will therefore complement the opening of the Osler Road bus link to/from JR Hospital, service enhancements in the HAMATS area and the implementation of controlled parking zones (CPZ's).
13. A particular cause of delays in these routes is parking, both legal and illegal. Buses often have to wait for other vehicles before passing parked cars or to move through busy junctions. Particular problems have been identified on Hollow Way and Windmill Road. The East Oxford project may, therefore, encompass introducing new clearways or amending existing clearways, controlled parking zones, creation of off-street parking, through to improved enforcement or making existing regulations more readily enforceable. In addition, improved bus stop infrastructure, real-time information displays and bus priority measures are also planned.
14. The County Council and bus operators have agreed significantly reduced target journey times

for round trips of 90 minutes for service 10 (Stagecoach) and 40 minutes for service 15 (Oxford Bus Company), thus allowing for more reliable operation on existing services and providing scope for service enhancements within existing vehicle allocations.

15. In addition to this scheme, a series of real-time information and bus stop improvements are planned to support the growth of bus patronage on Woodstock Road, Oxford and in the Abingdon area to complement the delivery of Town Centre improvements (AbITS).
16. The ACIS real-time information system also facilitates the roll-out of traffic signal priority measures for Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) fitted buses. A limited budget is available to improve bus priority yet further on East Oxford and Kidlington routes although this is somewhat dependent upon the rate at which bus operators are able to equip their fleets. In addition to the existing website facility www.oxontime.com, it is the intention to make available to the public an SMS texting service through which the public can access both real-time and scheduled departure information for 800 bus stops in Oxfordshire.

How the project supports LTP2 objectives

17. County Council policies are generally supportive of public transport in Oxfordshire, as a means of delivering personal mobility in the context of policies to maintain a high-quality physical environment. The Premium Routes programme contributes to the meeting of LTP2 objectives covering Congestion, Air Quality and Street Environment by making Public Transport faster, more reliable and attractive to use, thus assisting the public in making better informed travel choices. Active management of the County's road network, including parking, together with new, cleaner buses will also help to improve air quality.
18. Of particular note is the LTP Core Target to increase bus boardings to 37.5 million per year by 2010/11 (equating to approximately 12% net patronage growth over 5 years) and a Core Target to increase the proportion of the local population satisfied with the quality of bus services (to 55% by 2009/10). The implementation of Premium Route measures including bus priority, rollout of the Real Time (Bus) Information system and bus lane enforcement are seen as key. In addition, network management and traffic signal control actions are considered necessary to ensure that the County Council meets its Core Targets for Bus Punctuality.

Financial Implications (including Revenue)

19. The capital programme for 2006/07 is appended at Annex 5. The allocation for Public Transport Development in the 2006/7 capital programme is approximately £1m and supplemented by Section 106 contributions.
20. As reported to this Committee in the report on Premium Bus Routes (1st September 2005), the phasing and content of the Premium Route programme has been changing over time. In particular, projects to improve facilities for buses along the London Road and in Banbury Road (Summertown centre) have been allocated to the OTS (Oxford Transport Strategy) programme area and are being taken forward in addition to the expenditure shown at Annex 5.

Staff Implications

21. Delivery of this programme will be achieved within existing staff resources, supported as required by consultants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

22. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) **note the progress made on delivering improvements on designated Premium Route sections during 2005/06;**

- (b) note the programme identified within LTP2 and the County Council's Bus Strategy;**
- (c) endorse the approach of identifying shared investment priorities with the bus operators and establishing Quality Partnerships on each corridor with Route Action Plans in accordance with the Core Quality Bus Partnership;**
- (d) endorse the proposed Public Transport Development programme for 2006/07.**

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Background papers: Nil

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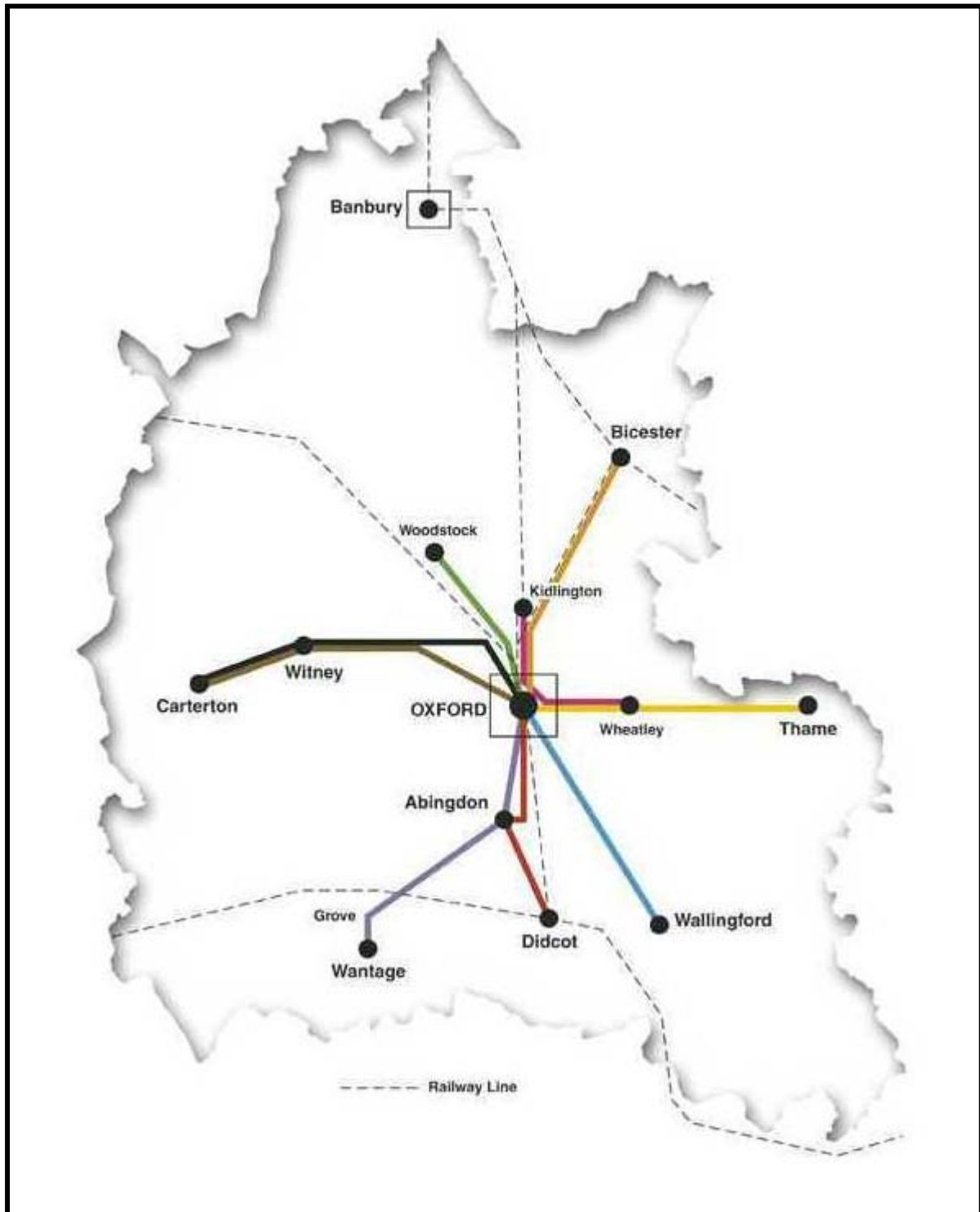
July 2006

Oxfordshire County Council

Premium Routes Strategy

1. The Premium Routes concept is to deliver a significant growth in bus patronage through focus on a limited number of bus transport corridors with the greatest potential for modal shift from car to bus. The potential for such a shift was identified in the 'Premium Routes and Interchanges Study' which was completed by Colin Buchanan and Partners and approved by the former Public Transport Sub-Committee in Spring 2001.
2. The Premium Routes study report identified a core network of high frequency routes that could be commercially self-sustaining, given some capital investment to provide bus priority measures and quality stop infrastructure. Providing the conditions where bus operators can operate commercially has the additional benefit of reducing the proportion of the bus network which requires revenue support. The network is illustrated at Annex 2.
3. A capital estimate of £12.6 million to implement the full Premium Route programme was included within the Transport Capital Programme 2003/04 to 2005/06 reported to Executive on 15 April 2003. A target date of 2012 had been suggested by the original Buchanan study.
4. However, the 'Oxfordshire Transport Networks Review' (TNR) report, which set out a long-term strategy for the County's strategic transport networks suggested a more realistic target of 2021 to implement the Premium Routes network in its entirety. The TNR conclusions of a provisional 15 year capital programme for highway and public transport improvements along major corridors as a means of tackling congestion and decreased accessibility were accepted by the Executive on 21 September 2004.

Premium Route network



Public Transport Development Scheme Improvements Financial Year 2005/06

1. During 2005/06, infrastructure schemes were delivered as summarized below:
2. In Kennington most of the existing speed humps which caused a disproportionate amount of discomfort to bus passengers, were replaced with speed cushions following a public consultation exercise and option evaluation. The changed calming environment will facilitate the deployment of low-floor buses on the route, thus making the route more accessible to the mobility impaired and to parents with buggies. A series of shelter enhancements were also made with Real Time Information (RTI) displays installed at two sites.
3. In Bretch Hill (Banbury) a large number of speed humps with steep ramps were re-profiled to prevent low-floor buses "grounding" on the humps enabling local residents to benefit from easy access buses. This solution effectively addressed both Road Safety and Public Transport objectives. In addition, traffic calming chicanes in Bankside were also changed to allow the introduction of new low-floor buses on services B1 and B2. In addition, new bus stop infrastructure was introduced in Bretch Hill to improve bus service publicity and the environment for waiting passengers.
4. In Kidlington, over 80 stops were upgraded with accessible bus stop measures such as raised kerbs and repaved waiting areas and links to footways. The bus stop provides the first physical interface with public transport and it is essential that the Premium Routes network has high quality stop infrastructure to encourage people to use the bus. Ensuring a bus can stop adjacent to a kerb of adequate height is fundamentally important to facilitating level boarding by the mobility impaired, the elderly and frail and those with buggies. Increasing kerb heights at bus stops helps to ensure 'level boarding' for such users. Such improvements help to facilitate access to employment and recreational facilities on this busy corridor. Additional facilities such as litter bins and new shelters have also been provided.
5. Under amended Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions legislation (2002), the government encourages local authorities to establish clearways preferably at all bus stops, at least in urban areas, to ensure that all buses will be able to draw up to the kerb at all times. Such clearways could be implemented, without first having to make a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) designating the bus stop/stand as a clearway, although this Council has adopted a policy of informal consultation with frontagers – and consideration by this Committee when appropriate – before they are introduced. Consequently, a number of bus stop clearways were established in Castle Street and George Street in Oxford during 2005/06 and a budget identified in the LTP2 programme, to continue this.
6. Following award of a contract to a leading UK supplier, integrated high-quality bus stop pole & flag infrastructure were installed at over 200 sites in Kidlington, Kennington, Banbury and on main radials within Oxford. Specific investment was targeted to support the pump-priming of the X39 route between Oxford and Wallingford, together with accessibility improvements and delivery of solar powered shelters. New infrastructure has enabled the County Council and bus operators (working in partnership) to reduce street clutter and to improve the supply of timetable information to bus passengers. The upgrade and provision of high quality stop infrastructure is central to the Premium Routes concept.
7. Whilst the County Council now holds a supply, install and maintain contract for basic bus stop infrastructure, a similar tendering exercise for advertising-funded bus shelters has not been successful as no tenders were submitted. Nevertheless a number of new shelters have been installed as part of other schemes (in Kennington, Banbury and in Kidlington for example). The provision of high quality shelters is considered to be integral to the Premium Routes concept and to the roll-out of the RTI system and there will be financial implications for the Council to ensure a Premium Routes standard of quality. The strategy for procuring new shelters is currently being actively reviewed

8. In addition, the Council has introduced bus priority measures and is planning further improvements in Kidlington and Eynsham. It is also working up preliminary concepts on some other routes. Within Oxford city, schemes are being promoted within the Oxford Transport Strategy framework and similar progress is being made in some of the other Towns:
9. In Kidlington two bus priority measures have been introduced following consideration by TIC and public consultation. These schemes involved the conversion of the Yarnton Road/Oxford Road junction to traffic signal control and the linking of traffic signals along Oxford Road with Selective Vehicle Detection for buses (delivered through the ACIS Real Time Information System). An evaluation exercise is now being undertaken to understand how these measures have impacted upon bus journey times and service reliability. Design of a nearside bus lane on the southbound approach to Kidlington Roundabout is also being finalised following consultation, with construction planned during 2006/07.
10. Congestion on the approaches to and through the village of Eynsham can significantly affect bus journey times and reliability and on 20 January 2005 the Transport Implementation Committee recommended that detailed designs for bus priority options be prepared following public consultation. These options have now been identified as providing a bus lane on the approach to the B4044/B4449 roundabout, to provide peak-period traffic signals on the roundabout and to provide a bus lane on the approach to Swinford Toll Bridge from Eynsham. Design has been continuing and the cost-effectiveness of such a scheme in delivering significant bus journey time improvements is currently being analysed, along with other options for the route.

Premium Routes – Programme 2006-2011 including summary of Issues, Proposals and Timetable**ANNEX 4**

Section	Main Issues	Constraints	Proposal	Year				
				2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
A. Kidlington to Cutteslowe	Delays at Kidlington roundabout	Access to Sainsbury's	Provide Bus Lane	X				
B Redbridge to Abingdon via Kennington	(Replacement of humps with cushions complete; stop upgrade to be completed later)							
C Redbridge to Abingdon via A34	Congestion/ delays on A34	Highways Agency	Study and design				X	X
D Gosford to Bicester via A34/ A41	Congestion/delays on A34/ A41	Highways Agency / Bicester SW development	Work up proposal with HA and developers				X	X
E Bicester Town Centre	Inadequate bus station	Bure Place development	Work with developer		X	X		
F Oxford to Barton via London Road	Congestion/delays through Headington	Capacity of junctions Public consultation	Study and implementation	X	X	X	X	X
G Witney-Botley via Farmoor	Delays at Swinford toll bridge Delays through Witney	Highway boundaries Parking and Capacity of junctions	Design and Implement Bus Lane Bridge Street measures	X	X		X	X
H Oxford-Blackbird Leys via Cowley Road	Congestion at Cowley Centre	Capacity of junctions	Investigate potential					X
I Oxford-Cutteslowe via Banbury Road	Congestion through Summertown Congestion approaching Cutteslowe Roundabout	Public consultation Public consultation and Highway Boundaries	Reconfigure highway Design and Implementation of Improvement Scheme		X		X	X
J Oxford-JR Hospital via Marston Road	Delays approaching London Rd	Capacity of London Rd jct.	Inbound bus lane, design and implement.	X	X	X		
	Delays at Cherwell Drive	Capacity of junctions	Investigate potential	X				
K Oxford-Wood Farm via Morrell Avenue	Delays through junctions	Capacity of junctions	Investigate potential			X		
M Oxford to Rose Hill via Iffley Road	Parking	Public consultation	Investigate potential					X

Section	Main Issues	Constraints	Proposal	Year				
N Oxford to Wolvercote via Woodstock Road	Delays northbound evening approaching Wolvercote roundabout	Public consultations and Highway boundaries	Design of improvement scheme					X
O Wolvercote to Witney via A40	Congestion along A40	Capacity of A40	Study Design and implementation	X			X	X
P Banbury to Bankside	Poor frequency	Pump Priming funding	Increased service 5/05	X	X	X	X	
Q Banbury to Hardwick	Poor frequency	Pump Priming funding	Increased service					X
R Summertown – Headington – Cowley	Delays through Summertown, Headington and Cowley Poor frequency on northern section	Junction capacity Revenue funding	Investigate potential Seek developer contribution			X		
S Witney to Carterton	(Stop upgrade and RTI only)							

Premium Routes commencing after 2011

Section	Main Issues	Constraints	Proposal
T Oxford to Redbridge via Abingdon Road	Delays – inbound morning, outbound evening	Blocking back from Westgate and Ring Road	Study
U Oxford to Botley via Botley Road	Delays – inbound morning, outbound evening	Capacity of junctions	Study
V Thornhill to Thame	Poor frequency	Revenue funding	Frequency enhancement
W Wolvercote to Woodstock	Inbound delays	Capacity of Pear Tree interchange	Investigate potential
X Abingdon to Wantage	Inbound delays to Abingdon Poor frequency	Capacity of Marcham Rd Revenue funding	Investigate potential Seek developer contribution
Y Abingdon to Didcot	Inbound delays to Abingdon Alternative routes Poor frequency	Capacity of Drayton Rd and Ock St Revenue funding	Investigate potential Define the route Seek developer contribution

Capital Expenditure and Financing – Table 1**Public Transport Development Programme - Projected Expenditure in 2006/07 by Type**

Measure	Projected Exp 2006/07
	£1000s
Bus Shelter Grant Scheme	26
Bus Stop Clearways & Improvements	205
Traffic Signal Bus Priority	26
Kidlington Premium Route	381
Eynsham Premium Route	137
Real Time Information System	250
Bus Shelters, Kidlington	10
Total Projected Exp	1035

of Measure

Funded By:

SCE	915
Other*	120
Total Funding 2006/07	1035

* additional Section 106 monies are also potentially available to fund a number of additional infrastructure improvements – for example over £100,000 arising out of developments in the Kidlington area and £126,000 for bus stop infrastructure improvements in and around Oxford Business Park.

Similar developer contributions may be made available during 2006/07 to fund feasibility work for bus priority improvements in Abingdon (Drayton Road) and for stop upgrades in Bicester.

In addition, public transport infrastructure requirements for Oxford and ITS towns such as Witney, Wantage and Bicester have been identified in the event of other developer contributions being made available to fund resulting capital costs.

Capital Expenditure and Financing – Table 2

Public Transport Development Programme – Proposed Expenditure in 2006/07 by Location

Premium Route Section	Transport Capital Programme Scheme 2006/07	Bus Priority/Traffic Management (incl. design)	Stop Infrastructure & RTI	Total
A. Kidlington to Cutteslowe	Kidlington Premium Route	356	25	381
B. Redbridge to Abingdon via Kennington	Bus Stop Clearways & Imps		15	15
C. Redbridge to Abingdon via Kennington	Bus Stop Clearways & Imps		15	15
G. Witney-Botley via Farmoor	Eynsham Premium Route	137		137
*K. Oxford-Wood Farm via Morrell Avenue	East Oxford Bus Route Improvement Scheme	69	41	110
N. Oxford to Wolvercote via Woodstock Road	Bus Stop Clearways & Imps		16	16
*R. Summertown – Headington - Cowley	East Oxford Bus Route Improvement Scheme	74	41	115
RTI (other than within East Oxford Route Improvement Scheme) includes SMS, John Radcliffe Hospital, Abingdon and other locations.	General expansion		190	190
Bus Shelters (inc. Grant Scheme)	Bus Shelters, Kidlington	26	10	36
Oxford City Centre	Bus Stop Clearways & Imps		20	20
Totals		662	373	1035

*Measures in sections K and R constitute the East Oxford Bus Route Improvement scheme referred to elsewhere in the report.