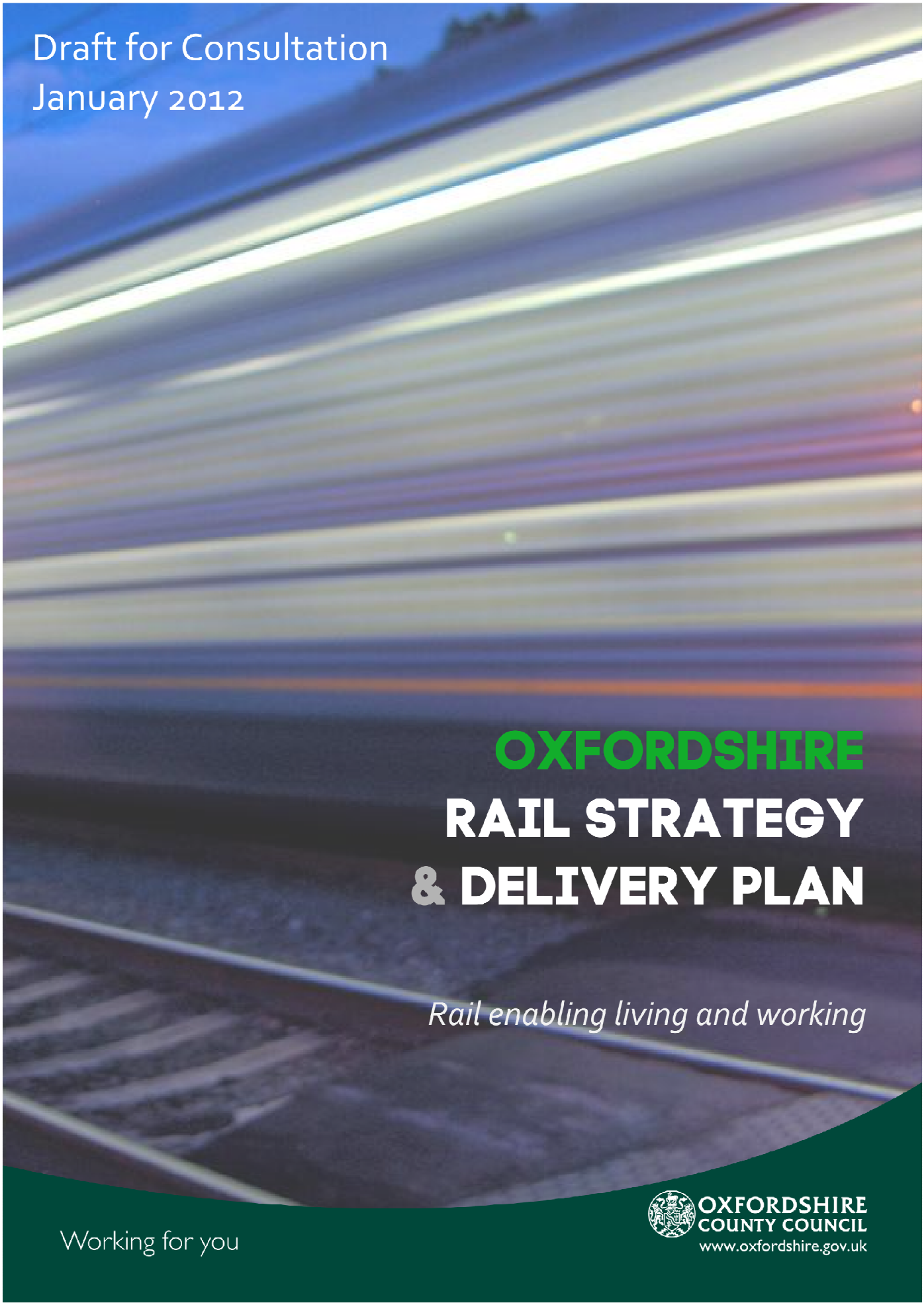


Draft for Consultation
January 2012

OXFORDSHIRE RAIL STRATEGY & DELIVERY PLAN

Rail enabling living and working

Working for you

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

CONTENTS

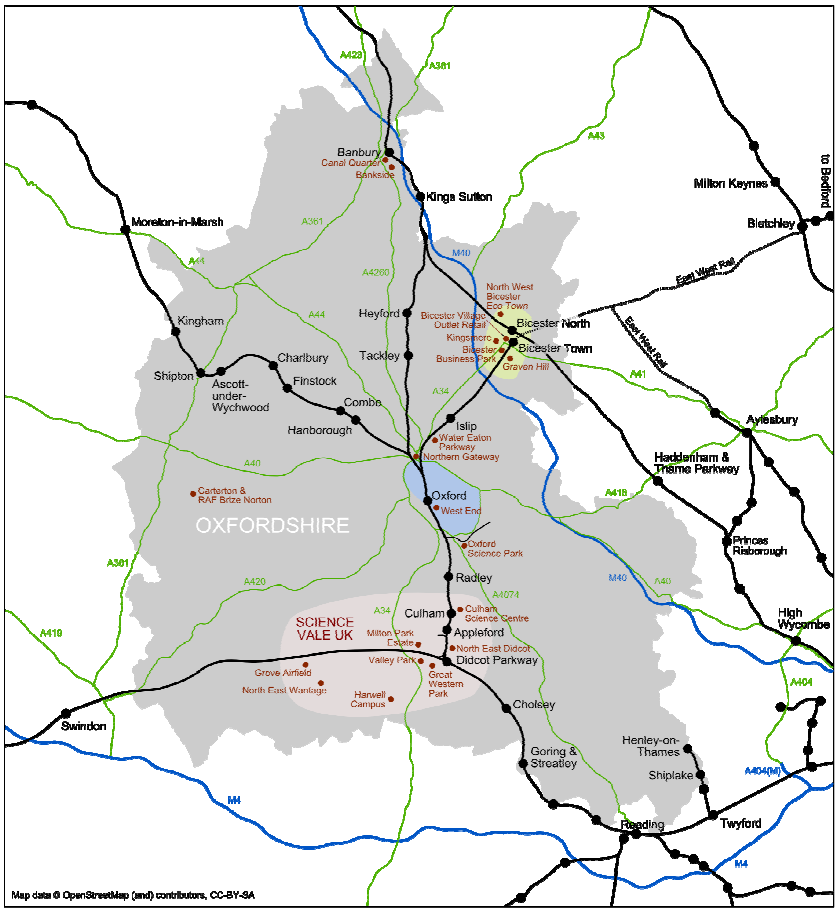
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Railways are an integral part of the transport network in Oxfordshire. For passengers, the railway is an efficient means of transport for travelling to work, business meetings and for leisure days out. For businesses, the railway is part of a national logistics network which allows goods to be moved long distances without delays due to congestion on our roads.

Without railways in Oxfordshire, we would likely see many more cars and lorries on our road network. In this respect, railways also play an integral role in reducing congestion and carbon emissions.

We have worked with the Department for Transport, Network Rail and train companies in recent years to promote and develop the local rail network. Nationally, there has been a 40% rise in passenger journeys and 60% more freight is now carried on the national rail network compared with 10 years ago. In Oxfordshire, there has been an increase of 41% in passenger journeys in just seven years!

With significant economic and population growth, and with forecast increases in demand for travel, there has never been a more important time to develop a long term Rail Strategy for Oxfordshire, to cover the period up to 2034, and help structure future dialogue with the rail industry.



The Rail Strategy sets out how investment will play a key role in supporting Oxfordshire's economic development and the opportunity for the railway to establish itself as part of the backbone of Oxfordshire's transport network, linking the key settlements in the Oxfordshire 'Growth Arc' - Science Vale UK, Oxford and Bicester - where up to 30,000 new jobs and 27,000 new homes are expected over the next twenty years. Rail is a genuine alternative to the A34 and other strategic corridors for local and national journeys from the 'Arc'.

Whilst there are local benefits, the railway is very much a national resource and with it will come opportunities for improved connectivity with neighbouring growth areas and the key international gateways. Oxfordshire can be at the heart of the network.

The proposed **vision** for the strategy is: "*to develop a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient rail network that meets the access and mobility needs of residents, businesses and visitors; and supports the development of the county's economy*."

The specific **purposes** of the strategy include:

- Explaining how a safe, efficient and easily accessible rail network will help to deliver economic priorities for the county; in particular the creation of new jobs;
- Setting out a coherent, evidence-based and realistic set of investments that the County Council (and its partners) would like the rail industry to help us plan and deliver;
- Identifying rail as an integral part of county, regional and national transport networks by providing a choice of alternatives to road for passenger and freight movements.

There are calls for improved passenger facilities and new stations, faster journey times and new freight facilities. The Rail Strategy will give a clear view on investment priorities and help inform scheme promoters where they are likely to receive political support from Oxfordshire County Council.

There are projects that are either being delivered (committed) within the next 2-3 years or are being planned, and others that could be developed to enhance the County's national (and international) rail connectivity. These include:

- **Didcot Parkway Station Interchange** – a local authority funded project to redevelop the forecourt and car parks to create a modern high-quality transport hub for Didcot and Science Vale UK. Due for completion by 2013.
- **Oxford Station** – a commitment to deliver a major station redevelopment by 2018 to resolve what will be the major constraint on the rail network in the Thames Valley once the £850 million redevelopment at Reading is complete. Work is underway to agree a masterplan for the station that will increase passenger and freight capacity, improve passenger facilities and create a multi-modal interchange and access to the city centre and Oxford West End through Frideswide Square. These works are intrinsically linked to the industry's plans for electrification and resignalling.
- **East West Rail** – finalising the business case, service pattern and funding package (including 'local contributions') so that the project can be included in the Government's funding settlement for 2014-2019. Work is being led by the East West Rail Consortium, working with the Department for Transport.

- **Evergreen 3** – working with Chiltern Railways to ensure the requirements of the Transport & Works Act are met, especially at key locations such as Water Eaton and Bicester Town;
- **Accessing Science Vale UK** – including the potential for Grove & Wantage station, linked to a wider corridor approach from Bicester/Oxford via Grove/Wantage to Swindon/Bristol - a business case needs to clearly demonstrate how it would support growth and economic development. Also important is Culham station and access to the Science Centre and the further development of Didcot Parkway as a rail hub.
- **Electrification/Intercity Express Programme (IEP)** – understand scope and phasing and assist delivery of associated highway works, implications of a mixed fleet of electric / bi-mode trains on service patterns;
- **CrossRail and Western Access to Heathrow** – exploiting the benefits of Crossrail in facilitating access to Heathrow which is critical to Oxfordshire's economic success, and ensuring the optimal service pattern for revised local services, with the possibility of new connectivity with Gatwick.
- **High Speed 2** – review the project once a decision is announced by Government, bearing in mind concerns about the business case and high cost of developing the proposal, and, should the project proceed, reconsider the impact on Oxfordshire given a clear preference for the route consulted upon because it is shorter and has less impact on the county.

In delivering this Strategy, there are a number of strategic considerations and implications for the Council.

We will need to work closely with the Oxfordshire City Region Local Enterprise Partnership to highlight and promote rail projects which can stimulate and support growth, and with the rail industry and other partners to assess which projects offer the best value for money.

There is a need for better spatial integration between the Rail Strategy and future land use developments. The business case for future rail projects may be dependent on rethinking some current land use plans.

We acknowledge there is limited capacity on the rail network, and will seek improvements whilst taking a pragmatic view on optimising use of the network, particularly on the choice between lightly-used stations and the need to shift more freight from road to rail.

We will work with local planning authorities to achieve a strategic, planned approach to the rail network. This will involve identifying key rail hubs and interchange points and their role in supporting local communities, and how they ought to be accessed, and also facilitating rail freight enhancements and new freight terminals, for example, at Graven Hill in Bicester and the Cowley branch line.

We will seek to develop rail services and stations to link the main areas in the Oxfordshire 'Growth Arc', making rail (as part of a wider high quality public transport network, including bus links) a genuine alternative for car trips.

The output will be a prioritised, deliverable programme of investment in rail projects over the next 20 years, ensuring we maximise opportunities and outcomes for the rail network through franchise renewals and Network Rail business planning.

This strategy will require investment by the public and private sectors, coming from both the rail industry and a wider variety of transport and non-transport sources. It is likely we will need to 'pool' resources and finances with our partners so much-needed projects are brought forward and more likely to happen. In this way, projects can address a number of aspirations from each partner, with all partners have a stake in their successful delivery.

Subject to available funding, we will consider investing in station enhancements and new services. We will look to the industry to provide funding and we will lend our support to bids from programmes, such as the *Station Commercial Projects Facility*, *National Station Improvement Programme* or *Access for All*. Where appropriate we will submit bids to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, and will look for backing from the industry. We will endeavour to secure private sector contributions towards rail from developments within the 'Growth Arc'.

I am therefore very pleased to present to you this draft for consultation of the Rail Strategy for Oxfordshire, to review how our railways work now and how we would like them to work in the future.

Councillor Rodney Rose

Cabinet Member for Transport

January 2012

PREFACE

The County Council is not responsible for specifying or funding the railways and it does not have any statutory obligation to do so. Nor do we have direct involvement in timetables or the setting of fares.

Under the Transport Act 1985, the County Council is required to: *"…secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose", and "…to formulate from time to time general policies as to the descriptions of services they propose to secure..*" - Paragraph 63(1) (a) and (b)

We therefore have an important role in influencing our partners within the rail industry, and must work with them in a proactive partnership to plan, fund and deliver local and strategic improvements in the rail network.

Consequently, this document has been prepared to influence the decisions of the major players within the rail industry; most notably:

- **The Department for Transport (DfT)** – decide on the level of service and the award of passenger service franchises; the allocation of rolling stock between train companies; and is ultimately responsible for decisions on investment;
- **Network Rail (NwR)** – leads industry planning; agrees timetables and directs service recovery; has responsibility for operating and maintaining the track, signalling, level crossings, bridges and tunnels, and for network performance;
- **Train Operating Companies (TOCs)** – operate the service specified by DfT, and any additional 'commercial' services and manage the day-to-day operation of the stations;
- **Freight Operators (FOs) –** private companies who provide rail freight services to customers who wish to move their goods by rail.
- **The Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) –** the independent governmental organisation whose role is to protect the rights of investors, customers and ensure the Government receives value for money for its investment; Responsible for safety and costs.

The strategy will also outline what Oxfordshire County Council can do to:

- **Provide more convenient and sustainable access** to the rail network through better integration with other travel modes – car, motorcycle, bus, cycle and walk;
- **Integrate rail investment with long term decisions** on land use planning and economic development; and
- **Promote use and protect the financial viability of the rail network** through travel planning, information provision and marketing / promotion.

This strategy covers both passenger services and freight.

CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

Background

"…it seems that the age of the train is returning to Oxfordshire – even in these difficult economic times." (Oxford Times, 1st December 2011).

With significant economic growth and forecast increases in demand for travel, there has never been a more important time for Oxfordshire to develop a long term rail strategy.

Rail as a means of travel is a success story. The UK rail network is now carrying increasing numbers of people – 57% more since the mid 1990s alone. In Oxfordshire, there were nearly 13 million journeys travelling to / from the county in 2009-10; an increase of 41% in just seven years. Many more millions of people travel through the county on longer distance services to the West Country, Wales, the Midlands and the north of England.

Long term growth in demand for rail travel by both passengers and freight is set to continue. In part this is because many people are now considering rail as a viable and pleasant alternative to travelling on our increasingly congested road network. It also reflects the fact that there has already been substantial investment in various rail projects in recent years. The Evergreen 1 and 2 projects on the Chiltern Main Line, upgrades to the Southampton-West Midlands freight route and the recent redoubling of 20 miles of the Cotswold Line demonstrate that there is already a clear commitment to improving the network, and with East-West Rail identified as a Government priority this is set to continue.

However this success is now starting to cause problems. Many peak time trains – particularly on routes to London – are becoming crowded so that it is increasingly difficult to get a seat. At various locations, including some in Oxfordshire, the physical extent of the network means that it is now very difficult to increase the number or length of trains without major investment. In contrast, at certain times of the day some trains are relatively under-used which means that they are not generating enough revenue though fares.

There are also many different demands from customers. Longer distance passengers want services to be as fast as possible by minimising the number of stops. Local communities want to see more stops at their particular station – before having as fast a journey as possible thereafter. There is an increasing demand for freight traffic as the operational and environmental advantages of rail become more apparent to people who need to move their goods about. Balancing these demands is a challenge; and as the network becomes more crowded with a mix of services the potential for delays and cancellations, as a result of something going wrong, increase.

There is also a need to reduce the costs of operating, maintaining and investing in the railway network. Sir Roy McNulty's report *Realising the Potential of GB Rail* sets an ambitious target of reducing overall costs by between 20-30%. The existing gap between the costs of the rail network and revenue received from fares is around £4.3 billion. Whilst the focus of government is on reducing this deficit, in part through fare increases, there is

an imperative both to make better use of the existing network and invest in targeted improvement projects that will deliver high benefits to passengers.

Introduction

This document sets out Oxfordshire County Council's draft strategy for development of the railway network to 2034 within the county and to/from adjacent areas. The end year of 2034 is significant because it covers the next four 5-year "Control Periods"; the planning and investment windows that are used by Network Rail. The current Control Period (known as CP4) ends in 2014.

There are a number of specific purposes of the strategy:

- **Explaining how a safe, efficient and accessible rail network will help to deliver wider economic policy priorities for the county and the wider sub-region; in particular the creation of new jobs.**
- **Presenting a coherent, evidence-based and realistic set of investments that the County Council (and partners, including neighbouring local authorities) would like the rail industry to help us plan and deliver**.
- **Forming a key part of county and sub-regional sustainable integrated transport network by providing real choice of alternatives to road for passenger and freight movements.**
- **Making local communities and stakeholders aware of how they can contribute to rail network development (thereby meeting the "localism" agenda).**

Question 1: Do these purposes address the key issues for rail services in the county and beyond?

The Case for Rail in Oxfordshire

There are a number of road corridors where traffic congestion is already a serious problem; and there are rail corridors that already provide (or could potentially provide) an efficient and sustainable alternative. As a mode of travel, rail has a number of important advantages for commuters, business travellers and the movement of goods:

- The ability to move large number of people in a relatively small space compared with single-occupancy private cars; thereby helping to reduce congestion in our crowded island.
- Relatively better performance in terms of carbon emissions per passenger kilometre; travelling by rail is on average three to four times less CO_2 intensive compared to road or air transport.
- Over longer distances the relative speed of conventional intercity services speeds up journey times.
- Passengers can either work or just relax on a train, as the driving is done for them.

- Rail has an excellent safety record; even compared with UK roads.
- An alternative to heavy goods vehicles for freight movements; reducing pressure on the road network.

Table 1.1 summarises major rail and road corridors; and outlines where there currently are limited or no direct rail services.

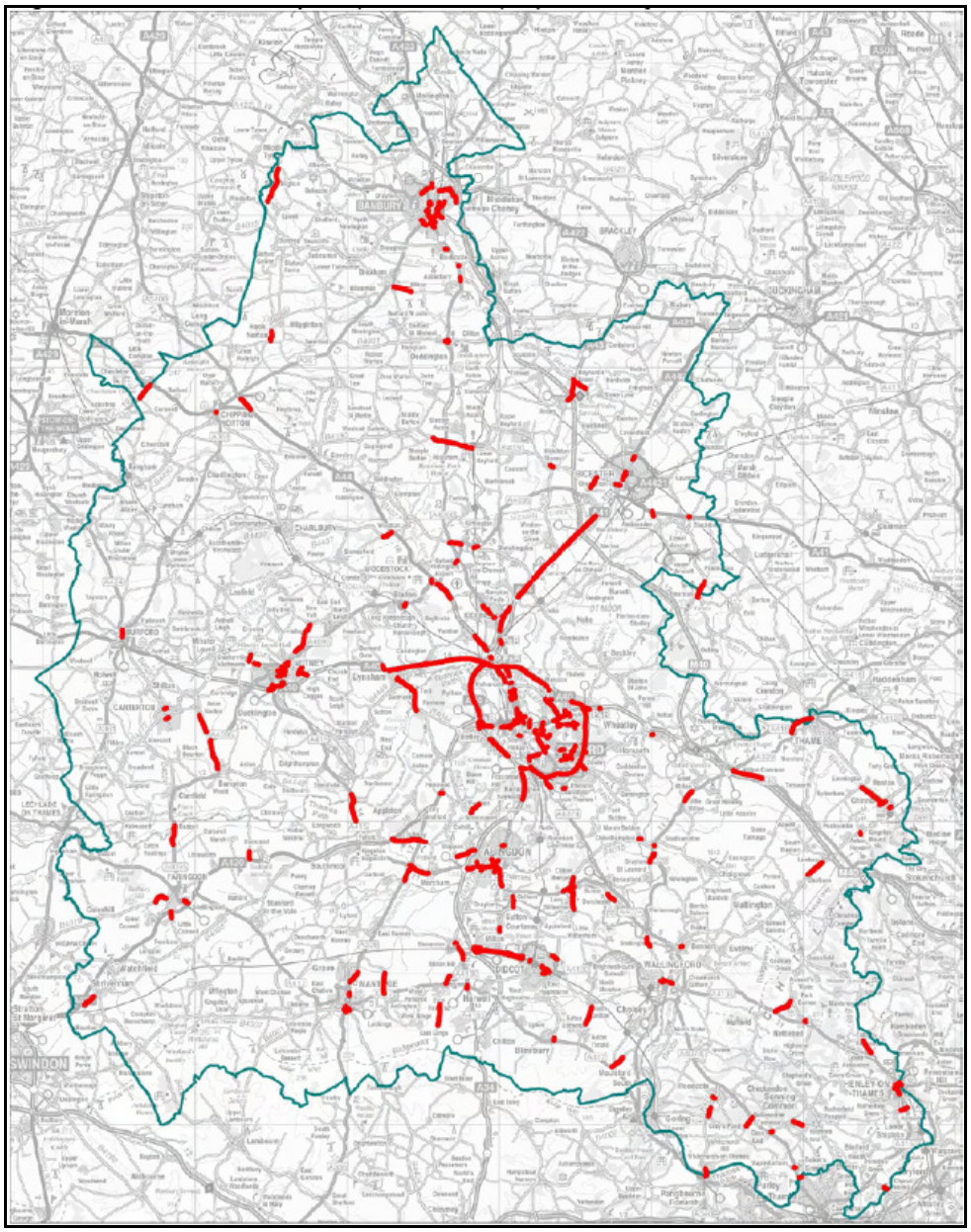
Table 1.1: Major Road and Rail Corridors

Rail Corridor	Parallel Roads
Oxford – Didcot Parkway – Reading - London	A34 / M4
Oxford – Bicester Town – High Wycombe – London *(no direct service)*	A34 / A40 / M40
Reading – Didcot Parkway – Oxford – Bicester Town – Bletchley – Milton Keynes / Bedford *(no passenger service east of Bicester Town)*	A34 / A4421 / A421
Bicester Town – Oxford – Culham – Didcot Parkway *(no direct service from Bicester Town, south of Oxford)*	A34
Oxford – Didcot Parkway – Swindon – Bath Spa - Bristol *(no direct service from Oxford, west of Didcot Parkway)*	A34 / A420 / M4
Banbury – Bicester North – High Wycombe – London	M40
Oxford – Banbury – Leamington Spa – Stratford-upon-Avon *(no direct service from Oxford, north of Banbury)*	A34 / M40 / A46
Oxford – North Cotswolds – Worcester - Hereford	A44
Henley-on-Thames – London *(direct service peak hours only)*	A404 / M4

Question 2: On which road corridors do you think that better rail services could make a real difference to both travel choice and congestion?

Figure 1.1 shows current congestion hot spots:

Figure 1.1: Peak Hour Congestion Hot Spots in Oxfordshire



There are traffic congestion issues on:

- A34/A41 between Oxford and Bicester (including M40 Junction 9);
- A34 approaching Oxford from Abingdon;
- Oxford Ring Road (including sections of the A40);
- A40 approaches to Oxford from Witney and the west;
- Didcot to A34 Milton Interchange; and
- Within market towns of Banbury, Bicester, Witney and Abingdon.

Question 3: Where do you think are the key road corridors where rail services could be further developed and improved?

Rail and the Economy

An expanded rail network will contribute to developing sustainable long term economic growth in Oxfordshire. The Oxfordshire City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is developing a coherent programme of measures to support future needs of business; with transport a key component.

Ambitious plans for future development, including 30,000 new jobs in Bicester-Science Vale "**Growth Arc**" will be based on:

- Bio-technology / medical research;
- Scientific research and development;
- Space research;
- High technology engineering; and
- Green technologies.

The UK Government designated Science Vale UK an Enterprise Zone in August 2011:

Box 2.1: Science Vale UK Enterprise Zone

- Two sites covering 92 hectares;
- Green technology, advanced materials and engineering, space and other high value R&D (e.g. medical technologies, bio-technologies and cryogenics);
- 200 businesses and between 6,250 - 10,500 jobs by April 2015.

Creation of new jobs will lead an increase in travel demand; putting more pressure on the already congested highway network. Rail can provide an attractive alternative if services are fast, frequent, reliable and have enough seating capacity.

Rail and the Local Transport Strategy

Rail is an integral part of the County Council's long term transport strategy; as set out in the Local Transport Plan (LTP). Table 1.2 outlines how rail will contribute to LTP objectives; Table 1.3 the specific LTP policies relating to rail.

Table 1.2: Contribution of Rail to LTP Goals

LTP Goal	Contribution of Rail
Support the local economy and the growth and competitiveness of the county	Enables people to access major employment areas and urban centres for work, education and shopping
Make it easier to get around the county and improve access to jobs and services for all by offering real choice	Enables expansion of job markets and service needs for people who do not have access to a car and for people who prefer not to drive

Reduce the impact of transport on the environment and help tackle climate change	Provides a serious alternative to the car for medium / longer distance journeys in particular; with rail having lower carbon emissions per passenger kilometre
Promote healthy, safe and sustainable travel	Rail has an excellent safety record; and can be part of a healthy journey that includes a walking or cycling leg

Table 1.3: LTP Policies Relevant to Rail

Policy Number	Description
Policy PT4	Oxfordshire County Council will support proposals for strategic enhancement of the existing Oxfordshire rail network, and will work with the rail industry to facilitate these, providing they do not have unacceptable impacts on the county's rights of way networks, cultural heritage or natural environment.
Policy PT5	Oxfordshire County Council will work with the rail industry and other partners to deliver new or improved stations, new rail services and greater integration of rail and buses.
Policy PT6	Oxfordshire County Council will only support the High Speed 2 rail proposals if their local economic benefits outweigh the environmental impact on the county.
Policy PT7	Oxfordshire County Council will support the development of Quality Bus Partnerships and Rail Partnerships, where appropriate.

The LTP notes that demand for rail travel on routes to/from Oxfordshire is forecast to increase significantly:

- Peak arrivals into Reading to increase by 31% by 2026 (DfT forecast, May 2007).
- Long distance services from Bristol to London (which serve Didcot Parkway) will exceed seating capacity by as much as 18% (DfT forecast, May 2007).
- Up to 42% increase in arrivals at London Paddington by 2019 (Network Rail *Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy*, March 2010).

The LTP concludes:

"It is evident that significant interventions will be needed to achieve a reliable railway with the capacity to support housing and economic growth in Oxfordshire, such as train lengthening, additional services and alterations to track and signalling."

A number of challenges for the rail network are then outlined. These include economic and population growth, capacity of the road and rail network (i.e. congestion), switching freight from road to rail, climate change and the environment, connectivity with regional centres and international gateways, and accessibility to train services. This last point embraces getting to the station, service frequency, and interchange between modes of transport.

Table 1.4 shows the opportunities for rail:

Table 1.4: Opportunities for Rail

Opportunity	Strategy Summary
Improving regional and inter-regional rail links	Support, and where appropriate will promotion of proposals for new rail services that increase accessibility to the rail network for existing and potential passengers
Supporting improved rail links to international gateways	Better rail links to Heathrow and Gatwick served by direct trains to make Oxfordshire internationally accessible
New stations and services to serve growth areas, such as Science Vale UK	Potential of new services and changes to existing services to be investigated at Didcot Parkway and Grove & Wantage
Better access for disabled people	When funding work at railway stations we will take account of best practice guidance on accessible trains and stations wherever possible
Improve and expand station car parking	A review of car parking is required at all stations, possibly as part of the station travel plan initiative. Where investment is made to improve provision the opportunity exists to secure an ongoing revenue income for Oxfordshire County Council from parking charges. We will encourage and support the provision of adequate car parking capacity, alongside other measures, as this can reduce the need for unnecessary car journeys
Station interchanges	The provision of high quality interchange between rail and other transport modes is a crucial part of encouraging people to use sustainable modes of travel for their journeys

Question 4: Are there other opportunities for rail in Oxfordshire?

Investments in the Rail Industry

There are already a number of **investment opportunities** presented by developments within the rail industry:

- Committed or priority major projects:
  - **Electrification:** London Paddington, Didcot Parkway and Oxford.
  - The 2nd phase of **Evergreen 3:** Oxford-Bicester-High Wycombe-London Marylebone.
  - **East-West Rail:** Reading-Didcot-Oxford-Milton Keynes-Bedford.
- National Stations Improvement Programme.
- Station Commercial Projects Facility

- New Great Western passenger franchise – Greater Western – is currently being re-tendered with a projected start date of April 2013 for a period of up to 15 years to 2028.
- The Department for Transport (DfT) High Level Output Specification (HLOS) and Statement of Funds Available (SoFA) for the 2014-19 Control Period (which is referred to as CP5); by the summer of 2012.
- Network Rail will be publishing its Business Plan – explaining its investment priorities for CP5.

This strategy will make the case for additional infrastructure and service investments that we believe will:

- Help to deliver economic growth via housing development, town centre regeneration, job creation and tourism;
- Deliver excellent rail services for the people of Oxfordshire, businesses and visitors to the county – promoting greater travel choice;
- Tackle problems of congestion and air pollution on the highway network; and
- Improve performance and connectivity of the UK rail network (of which Oxfordshire is an integral part).

Our Vision

The draft rail strategy vision is:

"To develop a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient rail network that meets the access and mobility needs of residents, businesses and visitors; and supports the development of Oxfordshire's economy."

Question 5: Do you agree with this vision for the rail network?

The needs of passengers and freight customers will be at the heart of turning this vision into a reality; so that investments in rail meet the criteria of people, purpose and place:

Box 2.2: People, Purpose and Place

- **People:** Who will benefit from the proposed investment? These benefits could be either direct (as passengers) or indirect (e.g. businesses through job creation).
- **Purpose:** What types of journeys will the investment seek to improve? How will these journeys serve wider purposes such as economic development / job creation?
- **Place:** Which geographic areas are most important for rail service development? What is the contribution to wider "place-based" policy objectives?

Structure and Content

This strategy covers:

- The "operational rail network" itself (i.e. within land that is owned and managed by the various organisations that make up the rail industry);
- Access to the rail network from the public highway and trip generators / attractors such as housing, employment, education, retail etc.; and
- Travel planning, marketing and promotion of rail services.

Operational Rail Network

This strategy will be developed and delivered in partnership with various organisations that collectively make up what we term the "rail industry".

Box 2.3: Key Rail Industry Players

1. Department for Transport (DfT) – sets rail policy, provides funding, lets service franchises and monitors performance.

2. Network Rail (NwR) – owns the physical infrastructure (such as track, signalling, bridges and stations) and invests DfT funding in improvement projects.

3. Train Operating Companies (TOCs) – run passenger services (either via franchise or "open access") and manages stations.

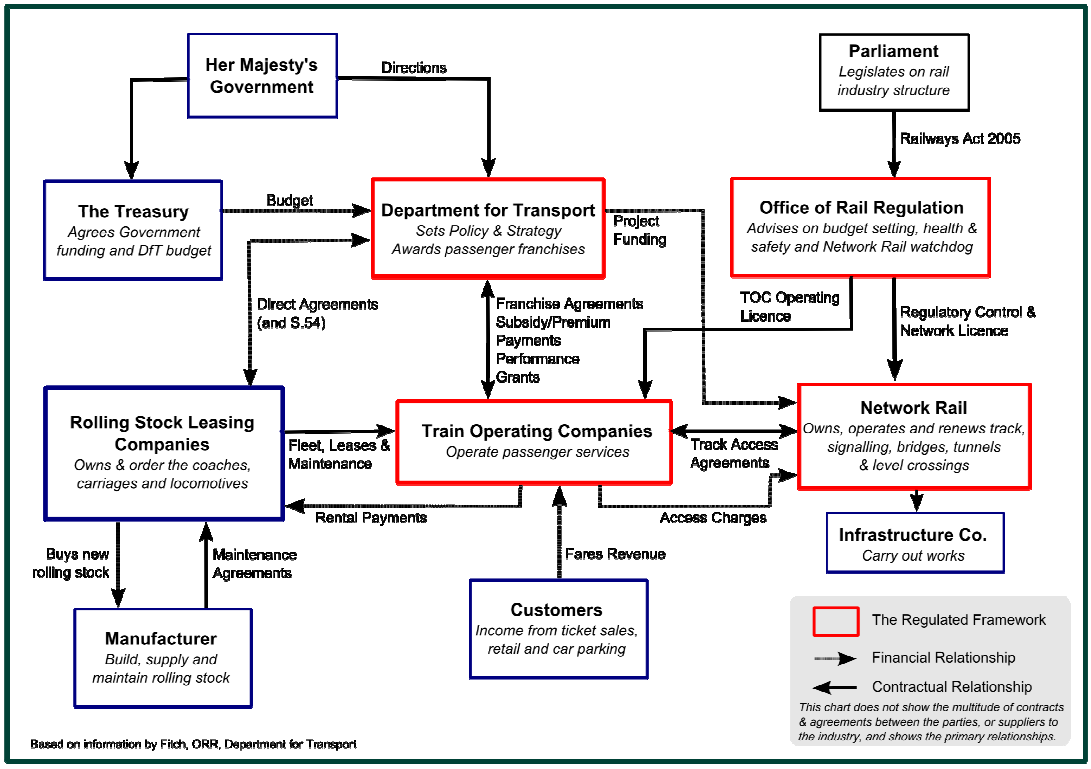
4. Freight Operators (FOs) – run freight service (subject to available capacity) on an "open access" basis.

5. Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) – monitors the work and business planning of Network Rail.

6. Rolling Stock Operating Companies (ROSCOs) – own the trains which are then leased to the TOCs.

Figure 2.2 presents a simplified structure showing the links between these key players.

Figure 2.2: Structure of the Rail Industry



For the operational rail network, this strategy aims to:

- **Suggest important higher level outcomes:** such as improvements to accessibility, greater choice of travel modes, reductions in traffic congestion etc.); and
- **Convert these outcomes to a range of outputs:** such as increases in passenger seat capacity, more rail freight opportunities, faster passenger journeys, new stations, better reliability of services, improved passenger facilities / information, new services etc.
- **Identify a range of projects:** that could deliver the outcomes and outputs.

There are often tensions between different outputs. For example, new railway stations and services are often requested as a means of improving access to the rail network. However these improvements can potentially:

- **Reduce journey speeds** – by increasing the number of stops on existing services;
- **Compromise line capacity** – by increasing the mix between faster and slower services; and
- **Affect reliability** – by reducing spare capacity if things go wrong.

The strategy aims to outline the potential costs and benefits of various service options: and prioritise service patterns and capital investment that will deliver optimal benefits to the greatest number of people. This is an essential element of **value for money**.

Question 6: ***What should be the balance of priorities between investment in new services and improvement in speed / reliability of existing services?***

Access Improvements

Access improvements to rail stations include:

- Bus services and bus priority measures on approaches to stations;
- Bus interchange facilities at, or near to, the station;
- Adequate car parking capacity;
- New or improved walking / cycling routes (including within the station lease area, such as forecourts and approach roads)
- New or improved secure cycle parking; and
- Improved directional signing for car drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

The County Council has a successful track record of jointly funding and implementing these kinds of interventions in partnership with the Train Operating Companies since 2005.

As the highway authority, the County Council can sometimes take a leading role through the Local Transport Plan (LTP), but there is still a need to work with a range of external partners including:

- Network Rail / Train Operating Companies – who manage the stations and car parks;
- Highways Agency – where access from a trunk road / motorway is involved;
- District Councils - as the local planning authorities;
- Local communities – represented by Parish / Town Councils / Station Groups);
- Bus and taxi operators – who use the station;
- Businesses – especially those located at, or near to, stations;
- Passenger representative groups; and
- Landowners – whose land may be required for improvements
- Developers – who may benefit from and be able to fund rail investment.

Travel Planning, Marketing and Promotion

The provision of a train service should not be taken for granted and will only be viable in the longer term if it is well used and collectively the services generate enough revenue to cover the cost of operating them. It is therefore vitally important that people know about the journey opportunities available by train and have easy access to information so they can make an informed decision before travelling.

The Train Operating Companies produce detailed timetables twice a year but do not have the resources to produce bespoke information for every local community on their network. There is a role for the County Council to promote local rail services as part of its LTP goal of encouraging the use of high quality public transport,

This strategy sets out the steps that will be taken to promote local rail services and provide accurate, up-to-date travel planning. These include:

- Travel guides and/or mini timetables for the 'named' lines;
- Public transport information posters at every station;
- Online information; and
- Station Travel Plans.

Strategy Delivery

The role of the County Council and our partners is to provide support to the rail industry to deliver a range of prioritised projects including:

- Physical infrastructure work to the track, stations and structures;
- Improvements to communication equipment (such as signalling, in-cab radio and customer information systems);
- Service enhancements via the provision of additional rail vehicles and/or connecting feeder buses; and
- Measures such as community engagement, better information, integrated ticketing, marketing and travel planning.

Project prioritisation will be in four categories:

Box 2.4: Prioritisation Categories Explained

1. Short Term Priority Projects

- Small and medium sized projects that can be constructed within the next three years from available funding sources – in particular to improve access from the highway.
- Larger projects that should secure a firm commitment to be funded so that planning, design and construction work can be progressed and delivered by the end of Control Period 5 (2019).

In many cases, the County Council is already participating in these projects; and is therefore very keen to progress further work as soon as possible (once funding has been approved).

2. Medium Term Development Projects

- Major rail projects that could be programmed for funding before 2019 but constructed in Control Period 6 (2019-2024).
- Small and medium sized projects that can support and build on the short term priority projects (thereby delivering further incremental improvements).
- Projects improving access from the highway which are larger / more expensive and with longer timescales for delivery.

The County Council and other partners will need to agree priorities for further feasibility, planning and design work.

3. Longer Term Development Projects

- Major rail projects that could only be delivered in Control Periods 7 and 8 (between 2024 and 2034).
- Major public transport and highway improvements which provide a step change in access to the rail network.

There may be some initial feasibility work that could be progressed.

4. Aspirations and Projects for Further Investigation

- Key movement and access issues which might benefit from a rail-based solution.
- Long term major land use development proposals requiring a transport strategy which includes a rail element.
- Any solutions likely to be in the long term – i.e. after 2030.

The key challenge here will be to assess evidence that rail can provide at least part of a solution to identified problems.

Question 7: ***Do you agree with these four prioritisation categories?***

CHAPTER 2: RAIL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Oxfordshire is already a key hub in local, UK and international business and transport networks. Its location in the centre of the country means that there are passenger rail links in almost all directions to adjacent areas including London, parts of the South East, the Midlands, the North East, the West Country, Wales and the North West.

The Southampton to West Midlands "W10" gauge enhancement project was completed in 2011 and enables larger deep sea containers to travel by rail, switching freight from road to rail along the A34 corridor. With each train equal to 40-50 lorry movements, this will see a further 50,000 lorries per year taken off this congested route.

However the rail network does not provide direct links that are of comparable quality to the roads; in particular to:

- Milton Keynes / South East Midlands;
- North and west Buckinghamshire (Aylesbury and High Wycombe);
- East Anglia; and
- International gateways such as Heathrow and Gatwick airports (although good coach links are available but only from Oxford).

Figure 2.1: Oxfordshire in the Wider Geographic Context

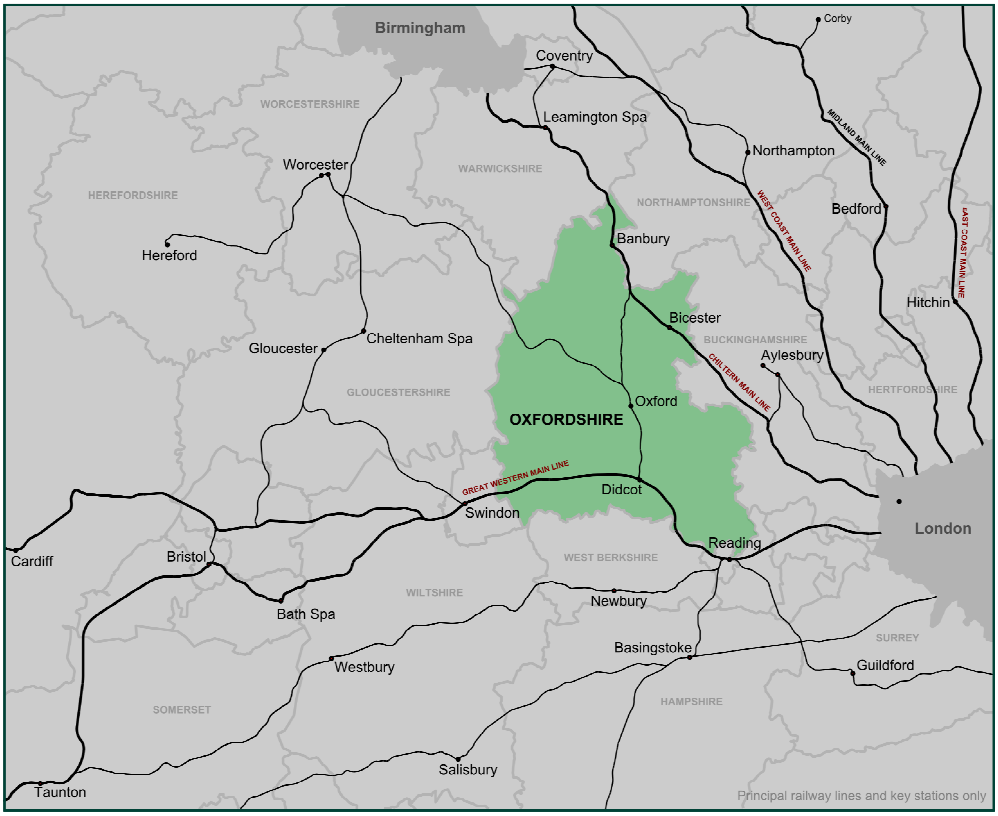
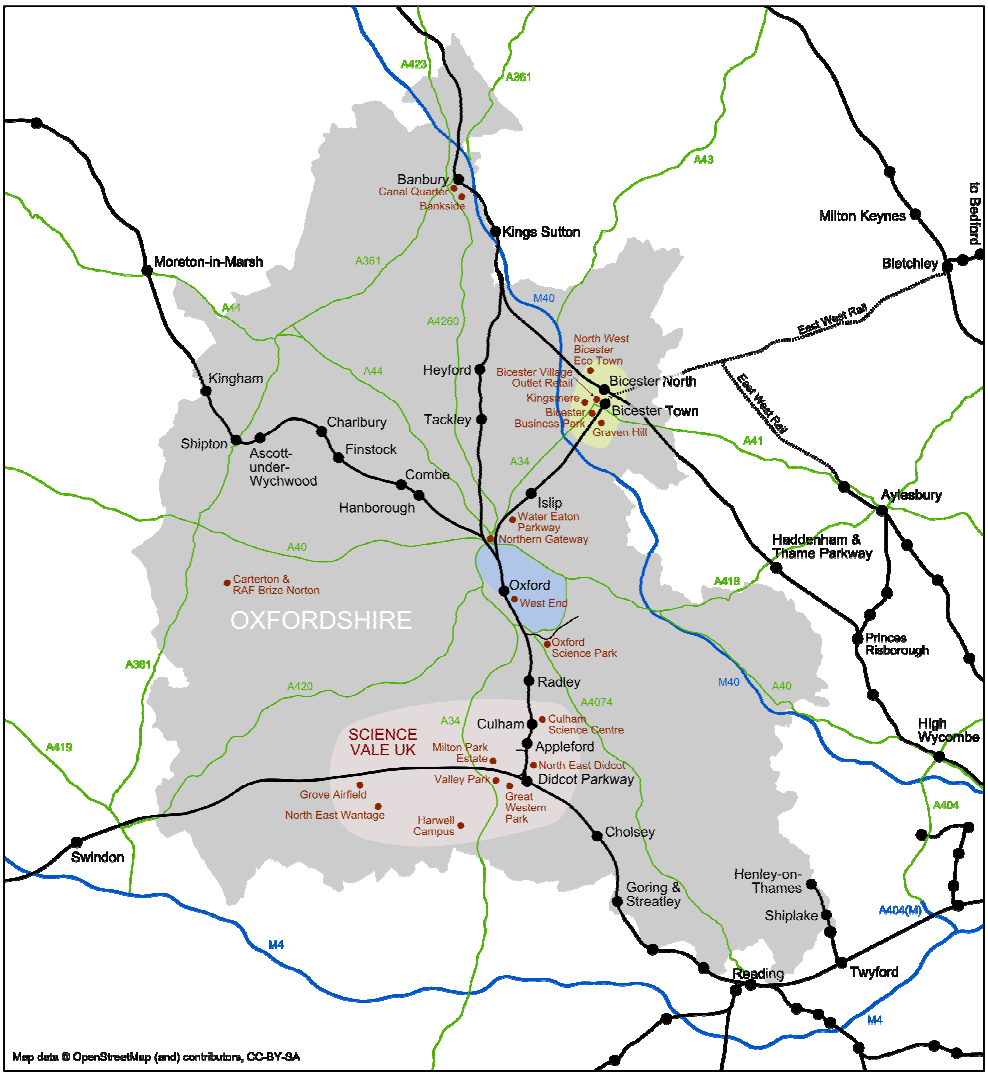


Figure 2.2 outlines the connectivity by rail and road and the county's growth areas.

Figure 2.2: Oxfordshire's Strategic Transport Network



Question 8: ***What should the priorities be for increasing links between Oxfordshire and other parts of the UK?***

The Role of Transport and Rail in Economic Development

Introduction

Rail infrastructure and service improvements support economic performance:

- Enabling business to locate closer together and work in clusters – known as "agglomeration";
- Reorganising or rationalisating production, distribution and land use patterns;
- Increasing labour market catchment areas and the pool of available workers for existing and future jobs;

- Reducing the costs of the transport element of production, and thereby boosting competitiveness;
- Stimulating inward investment by making Oxfordshire an easy place to access and move around;
- Unlocking inaccessible sites for development; and
- Triggering a virtuous circle of economic growth; which in turn stimulates further growth.

The Oxfordshire City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) aims to further develop the county as the economic powerhouse of the UK through:

- Encouraging **inward investment** from private sector firms;
- Developing **education and skills** of local people;
- Promoting **leading edge research and development**; and
- Facilitating **knowledge transfer and co-operation** between companies, academic institutions and the public sector.

Businesses need the right conditions and infrastructure in order to invest and grow. OCC and the LEP are therefore developing a Strategic Infrastructure Framework (SIF) which will:

- Assess and prioritise infrastructure projects based on value for money and delivery of key economic growth objectives;
- Provide a framework which encourages and facilitates the co-ordination of investment decisions and programmes across the various agencies;
- Provide clarity on the most appropriate funding streams for particular investments; and
- Set out and address key project delivery issues.

Rail will have a vital role to play in SIF; especially where there are plans for new job-generating developments. This strategy will set out the key investment priorities that could become part of the SIF.

Whilst Oxfordshire has a strong economic base, there are a number of challenges:

- Economic output (measured by Gross Value Added per head) is only average compared with competitors in the UK and abroad;
- Skills shortages and a high number of 16-25 year olds without the necessary skills for a high value economy;
- Over reliance on public sector employers;
- A lower proportion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) than the national average.

The rail network will enable choice of mobility and access for both passengers and goods; thereby reducing the pressure on the road network and reducing economically damaging congestion.

Question 9: ***What should be the key priorities for improving the rail network in order to benefit business and job creation?***

Key Economic Drivers, Developments and Places

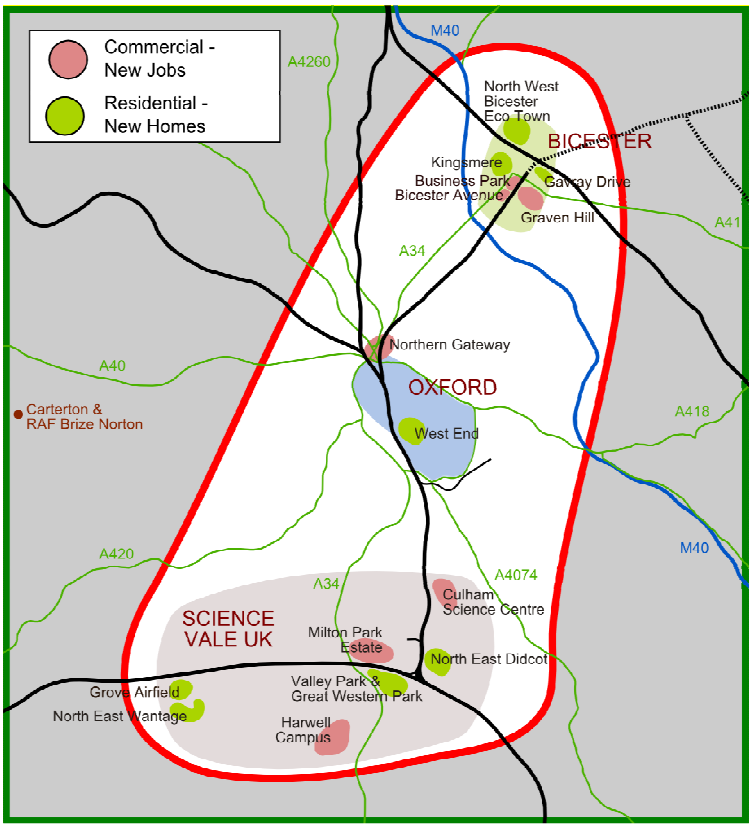
Introduction

The number and location of new jobs will increase commuting and business travel which, if all made by car, will lead to significant increases in traffic congestion. Much of the proposed economic growth and housing development will be concentrated within the **"Growth Arc"** of Bicester - Oxford – Science Vale UK (see Figure 2.3). Table 2.1 and Figure 2.3).

Table 2.1 – Summary of Growth Arc Development Plans (to 2026)

Area	Additional Housing		New Jobs	
	Number	% Increase	Number	% Increase
Oxford	8,000	10	10,000	7
Bicester	5,500	64	6,000	32
Science Vale UK	13,000	18	12,000	60
Total	**26,500**	**-**	**28,000**	**-**

Figure 2.3 – The "Growth Arc"



In order to maintain and enhance the high quality of life in the county, it is vital that our urban areas accommodate new development in a way that makes them better places to live, work and play.

Oxford

Oxford currently has a permanent resident population of more than 150,000. In addition to this there are 40,000 students and over 9 million visitors a year. The "Eastern Arc" is home to key employment sites, including three regional hospitals (the John Radcliffe Hospital, the Churchill Hospital and the Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital), and campuses of Oxford Brookes University and the University of Oxford. Whilst the Eastern Arc will see significant employment and economic growth over the next decade, the area is not well connected to the existing rail network which runs through the west of the city.

Oxford has a high ratio of jobs to working-age population, leading to high levels of in-commuting; further housing is proposed to help address the imbalance. However, more employment growth is to occur, predominantly in the Eastern Arc and in the West End of the city centre, including a redeveloped Westgate shopping centre, which altogether will create up to 6,000 new jobs.

Oxford city centre will continue to be a major trip attractor for employment, shopping and higher-end leisure services. The regeneration of the West End of Oxford city centre will be achieved without any increase in public parking. It will be heavily reliant on access by other modes, especially park and ride and rail (as the station is nearby). Frideswide Square, together with the Oxford railway station forecourt, provides one of the most important public transport interchange points in the city, both for transfer between rail and bus and between different bus routes.

Box 2.1: Key Opportunities for Rail in Oxford

1. Improve connectivity for tourists, business travellers, commuters and shoppers between Oxford and major destinations including:
    - Bicester – High Wycombe – London Marylebone (Evergreen 3);
    - Swindon and the West of England / Wales;
    - Bicester – Milton Keynes – Bedford (East-West Rail); and
    - Banbury – Leamington Spa – Stratford-upon-Avon.
2. Development of master plan for Oxford railway station; so that capacity for inter-city, local and terminating services can be enhanced to meet forecast demand.
3. Improve public transport and cycling links between the Eastern Arc and the railway station.
4. Re-development of Frideswide Square and improvement to multi-modal interchange outside Oxford station.
5. Integration of railway station access into West End redevelopment.
6. Potential for rail freight movements from sites adjacent to the Cowley branch line.

Bicester

Bicester currently has a population of around 29,000 (12,500 households), but is one of the fastest growing towns in the county, with large amounts of planned housing and employment development.

In 2009, Bicester was designated as one of four national "eco-town" locations; which will mean a development of 5,000 homes and the creation of 5,000 new jobs by 2034. Other proposed employment growth and housing development will deliver an additional 4,000 new homes and 5,000 jobs.

There is a significant imbalance between homes and jobs - currently over 60% of residents leave the town for work; with 15% of these outgoing trips to Oxford.

Bicester Village Retail Outlet is a very popular tourist destination for over four million visitors a year, and is the most popular destination outside London for visitors from China and Japan. Whilst many shoppers already travel by train, its popularity does place severe strain on the local transport network during weekday peak periods, as well as weekends and bank holidays. This congestion impacts on the wider strategic network, with queuing problems on the A34, A41 and at M40 Junction 9.

Box 2.2: Key Opportunities for Rail in Bicester

1. Improvement of connectivity for business travellers, commuters and shoppers between Bicester Town station and major destinations including:
    - Oxford – Didcot Parkway – Reading and London Paddington.
    - High Wycombe – London Marylebone (Evergreen 3); and
    - Milton Keynes – Bedford (East-West Rail).
2. Additional bus and cycle facilities, and more car parking, at Bicester Town station to accommodate future demand from new services;
3. Improvement of bus, walking and cycling links between the proposed eco-town and the two Bicester stations, including a link between them;
4. Development of bus, walking and cycling links to the Bicester stations from other proposed developments, such as South West Bicester; and Graven Hill.
5. Potential for rail freight facility on former MOD land at Graven Hill.

Science Vale UK

Science Vale UK encompasses the settlements of Didcot, Wantage and Grove and three main employment, research and business centres at Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, Milton Park and Culham Science Centre. The area became an Enterprise Zone in August 2011, and will have substantial private investment over the next 20 years to further develop a world-class science-based research and development capability.

The three sites between them already support over 13,000 jobs and have been identified as a focus for this future investment and growth, with a proposed £1 billion of investment at Harwell alone. Together these three sites will create over 12,000 additional jobs by 2026.

Didcot has a population of around 23,000 (10,000 households) and committed or proposed housing developments are expected to bring up to 8,500 new dwellings by 2026. Didcot Parkway station is Science Vale's key gateway to the strategic rail network with frequent links to Oxford, London, Bristol and South Wales.

Wantage and Grove are two adjacent settlements with a combined population of 17,500 (5,700 households). This will rise significantly with the proposed development of 2,500 dwellings on the former Grove Airfield site to the west of the village and 1,500 homes at northeast Wantage. There are a number of key employers in Wantage / Grove, including Grove Technology Park and Williams Formula 1. However, there is currently a large proportion of out-commuting to Swindon, Oxford, Reading and London. The Great Western Main Line passes just to the north of Grove.

Although not directly within the Science Vale, the town of Abingdon (population 37,000) is an important source of out-commuting trips; the nearest railway station is three miles distant at Radley on the line between Oxford and Didcot Parkway, and the two are connected by a regular bus service.

Box 2.3: Key Opportunities for Rail in Science Vale UK

1. Improved public transport connectivity between the main employment sites and Didcot Parkway, Radley and Culham stations.
2. Development of walking and cycling links between the main employment sites and Didcot Parkway and Culham stations, as part of a wider Science Vale UK network
3. Improved connectivity with international gateways at Birmingham International and Heathrow Airports; and
4. Opening a railway station at Grove & Wantage as a new railhead for Science Vale UK – both for in-commuting and out-commuting.

Banbury

Banbury is a market town in the far north of the county and provides employment and services for a wide rural hinterland. Areas of land east and west of the railway station to the east of the town centre have been in need of regeneration for some years.

Banbury's location on the Chiltern Main Line means that it is an attractive location for both trips to London and the West Midlands; where services are fast and relatively frequent. Banbury is also an interchange point between services from the Chilterns and services to/from Oxford, the South and the North of England

The Cherwell District Council Local Development Framework (LDF) draft Core Strategy has identified the need for around 1,500 houses for the town; with another 700 or so in the adjacent rural hinterland.

Box 2.4: Key Opportunities for Rail in Banbury

1. Enhancement of services from Banbury to Bicester North, London Marylebone and to Birmingham and Oxford;
2. Re-design the station forecourt to provide for through buses to/from the Bankside development, and taxi, cycling and pedestrian facilities;
3. Consolidation of station car parking, and additional parking capacity;
4. Improvement of the walking routes from the rail station to the bus station and town centre;
5. Development of a cycle hub at the rail station and cycle hire scheme at locations around the town.
6. Improvement of platform passenger waiting facilities within the station.

Henley-on-Thames

Henley (population 10,600) is a provider of local jobs, services and retail opportunities; as well as a commuter railhead to Reading, Oxford and London. The town's main streets suffer from traffic congestion; partly as a result of the single crossing of the river. The South Oxfordshire District Council LDF has identified the need for around 400 new homes.

Box 2.5: Key Opportunities for Rail in Henley-on-Thames

1. Investigate opportunity for additional through services to London Paddington and Reading – ensure by Crossrail/Electrification;
2. Introduce a half hourly shuttle service throughout the day;
3. Improved pedestrian links to Thames Path and River & Rowing Museum as a means of stimulating more leisure tourism;
4. Promotion of through ticketing for ramblers with Marlow-Bourne End branch line; and
5. Investigate establishment of a Community Rail Partnership for the line.

North Cotswolds

Whilst the principal settlements of the Oxfordshire Cotswolds – Long Hanborough, Charlbury and Kingham - are not sizeable in population terms, their stations serve a wider catchment of smaller villages. However the area is growing in popularity as a tourist destination and is seen as a desirable place to live for commuting trips towards Oxford, London and the Midlands. Development is fairly constrained because of the very attractive natural environment.

There are larger towns – Woodstock, Witney and Chipping Norton – which are potential sources of travel for the rail network. The Cotswolds Line Railbus, for example, connects Chipping Norton with the railway at Kingham.

The Cotswolds & Malverns line has recently benefited from re-instating 20 miles of track between Charlbury and Evesham. This included new platforms at Charlbury and Ascott-under-Wychwood. The immediate benefit will be an improvement in reliability by removal of the long single-track sections where only one train at a time could run. Better reliability will also benefit other services in the Thames Valley. The redoubling allows up to four trains an hour (in both directions), instead of the current two and will eventually reduce overall journey times.

Box 2.6: Key Opportunities for Rail in the North Cotswolds

1. Introduction of a regular clockface service made up of a mix of fast and stopping services between London, Oxford, Moreton-in-Marsh and Worcester.
2. Boost tourism by encouraging overseas visitors in London to visit and stay in the area through marketing and promotional activities;
3. Improve public transport, walking and cycling links to the stations – including new Railbus links to Burford and Witney, footpaths, signage and secure cycle parking.
4. Enhancement of car parking facilities at Hanborough and Charlbury to satisfy current demand and as a means of attracting custom from towns without a railway station.
5. Further promotion of walks / cycle rides from and between the railway stations.

Thame

Thame is a market town with a population of 11,000. The South Oxfordshire District Council LDF has identified the need for around 530 houses and about two hectares of land for employment growth. There are relatively high levels of out-commuting from the town (56% of working residents at the time of the 2001 census).

The nearest railway station is Haddenham and Thame Parkway which is located two miles to the north east of the town (and just over the county border in Buckinghamshire). There are regular services to London Marylebone, Bicester North and Banbury – with some trains extended to Stratford-upon-Avon. Public transport connections with Thame itself are provided by Bus 280 (running between Oxford-Aylesbury) which runs every 20 minutes in the weekday daytime.

Box 2.7: Key Opportunities for Rail in Thame

1. Introduce new rail link to Oxford as part of Evergreen 3 (Oxford-London Marylebone);
2. Improve bus connectivity between the residential areas of Thame and the railway station through provision of feeder buses timed to connect with trains to/from London (and eventually to/from Oxford)
3. Provide additional late-afternoon peak departures on Bus 280 to enable passengers returning from London to reach Aylesbury and Thame.

Witney

Witney is a market town 27,000 people. Development plans include 1,500 new houses; and expansion of employment opportunities through the retention and modernisation of existing sites, development of remaining available employment land and the provision of further employment land.

Witney lost its station and train services in the 1960s. The nearest railway station is now at Hanborough, around six miles north east of the town along the A4095. Public transport connections are provided by the hourly bus 242 between Witney, Long Hanborough and Woodstock but they are not timed to connect with trains.

Box 2.8: Key Opportunities for Rail in Witney

1. Improve bus connectivity between Witney and Hanborough station – either through service changes to route 242 or consideration of a dedicated rail feeder service.
2. Investigate long term re-instatement of rail link to Oxford and Carterton as part of improving national connectivity to RAF Brize Norton.

Carterton

Carterton is the second largest town in West Oxfordshire with a population of about 16,000. Its rapid growth has been associated with nearby RAF Brize Norton, now the country's only air transport and air refuelling base for the military. Development plans for Carterton include 1,600 new homes.

There is no railway station within ten miles of the town, with the nearest station being Ascott-under-Wychwood (9.8 miles away) having a very limited service. However there are half-hourly bus services to Witney and Oxford.

Box 2.9: Key Opportunities for Rail in Carterton

1. Investigate long term re-instatement of rail link to Witney and Oxford as part of improving national connectivity to RAF Brize Norton.
2. Consider provision of a dedicated rail feeder bus service to Hanborough station (travel to Oxford and London).

Question 10: ***Are there any other opportunities for better rail services that you feel should be part of the strategy?***

CHAPTER 3: BASELINE AND CURRENT CHALLENGES

Introduction

This chapter summarises the baseline situation; the key challenges both now and moving forward into the future.

The baseline situation describes where the rail network is now. It is important to establish some key facts, such as:

- How many people use the network; and where they travel from and to?
- The current pattern of services – for both fast / stopping passenger trains and freight – and the connectivity within Oxfordshire and to other parts of the UK.
- How the network is currently performing in terms of key indicators including passenger satisfaction, reliability, punctuality, journey speeds etc.
- Access issues and facilities at railway stations.

Key Facts on Rail in Oxfordshire

Service Patterns

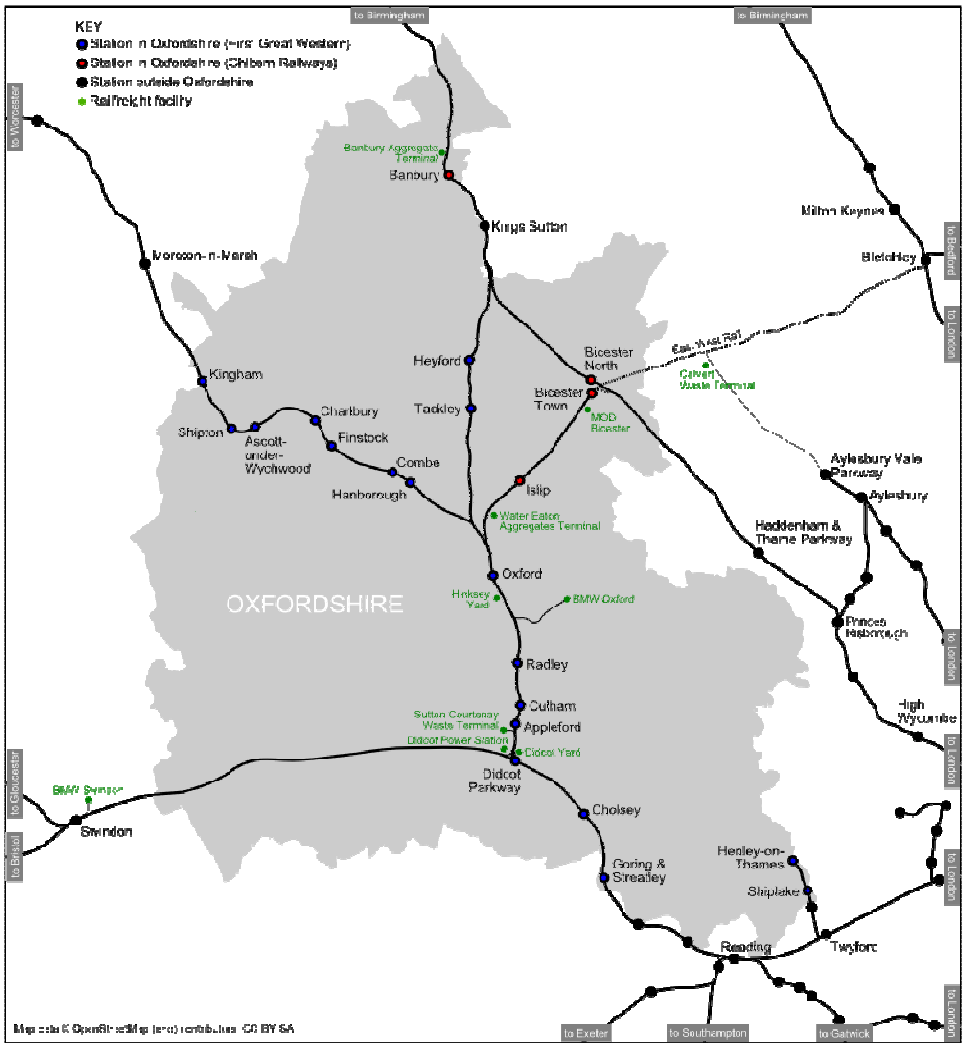
The current existing rail network in the county is made up of:

- Five **mainline higher speed** railway services:
    - London Paddington - Reading – Didcot Parkway – Swindon - Bristol / South Wales / Cheltenham.
    - London Paddington - Reading – Didcot Parkway – Oxford.
    - Reading – Oxford – Banbury - Birmingham New Street – Newcastle.
    - Bournemouth – Reading – Oxford – Banbury – Birmingham New Street - Manchester Piccadilly
    - London Marylebone – Bicester North – Banbury – Birmingham Snow Hill.
- Five **local semi-fast and stopping** services:
    - London Paddington - Reading - Didcot Parkway - Oxford (stopping at intermediate stations).
    - London Paddington – Oxford – North Cotswolds – Worcester – Hereford (stopping at intermediate stations west of Oxford).
    - Oxford - Bicester Town.
    - Oxford – Banbury (stopping at intermediate stations, with peak through services to/from London Paddington).

- Henley-on-Thames – Twyford (with peak through services to London Paddington).

- 22 passenger railway stations; with other stations in adjacent local authority areas also providing services to Oxfordshire residents.

Figure 3.1 – The Oxfordshire Rail Network



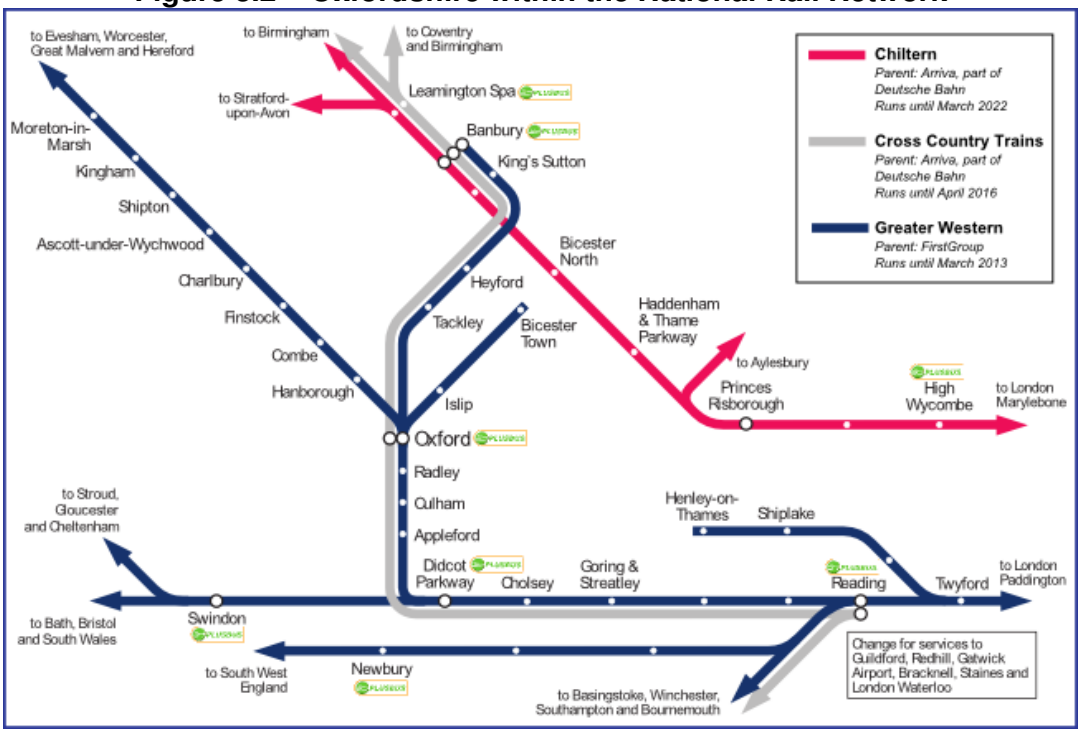
- Four freight-only lines:
  - Kennington Junction to Cowley;
  - Bicester Town to Calvert (*not in regular use*);
  - Appleford to Sutton Courteney;
  - Graven Hill.
- Rail freight facilities:
  - Didcot Yard;
  - Hinksey Yard (infrastructure);

- BMW Oxford (car manufacturing);
- Bicester (MOD);
- Banbury and Water Eaton (aggregates);
- Sutton Courteney (waste);
- Didcot Power Station (coal)

- Three franchises that run passenger services are:
  - **Greater Western** (services from London Paddington via Reading);
  - **Chiltern** (services from London Marylebone); and
  - **Cross Country** (services from the South Coast and Reading).

Figure 3.2 shows the current rail passenger franchises in Oxfordshire

Figure 3.2 – Oxfordshire within the National Rail Network



The financial year 2009/10 is the latest for which information is available for rail usage:

- **Total number of passenger entries and exits at stations:** 12.822 million.
- **Total number of interchanges:** 0.664 million (mainly at Oxford and Didcot Parkway).
- **The five busiest stations (Oxford, Didcot Parkway, Banbury, Bicester North and Henley-on-Thames):** account for 89% of passenger entries and exits.
- **Since 2002/03:** Total rail usage at Oxfordshire stations has increased by 41%.

Table 3.1 shows the entries / exits at the 22 stations in 2009/10 compared with 2002/03

Table 3.1 – Railway Station Usage - Oxfordshire Stations

	Station	2002/03	2009/10	% Change
1	Oxford	3,648,550	5,427,286	+49
2	Didcot Parkway	2,036,685	2,524,260	+24
3	Banbury	920,602	1,706,264	+85
4	Bicester North	596,326	1,126,838	+89
5	Henley-on-Thames	566,266	609,410	+8
6	Goring and Streatley	355,405	374,298	+5
7	Charlbury	229,000	231,582	+1
8	Cholsey	214,381	185,970	-13
9	Kingham	121,318	137,944	+14
10	Bicester Town	52,198	104,788	+101
11	Hanborough	69,997	104,050	+49
12	Radley	55,824	74,820	+34
13	Shiplake	95,651	74,604	-22
14	Culham	35,185	55,226	+57
15	Islip	18,624	23,722	+27
16	Heyford	27,876	23,496	+16
17	Tackley	18,195	20,250	+11
18	Appleford	7,157	9,086	+27
19	Shipton	5,057	2,890	-43
20	Ascott-under-Wychwood	2,050	2,264	+10
21	Combe	1,548	1,836	+19
22	Finstock	1,799	1,458	-19
	Total	**9,079,694**	**12,822,342**	**+41**

Source: Office of the Rail Regulator LENNON Published Data – the figures (for un-staffed stations in particular) may be an under-estimate where fares are not collected.

The table shows that **rail in Oxfordshire is a significant success story**. The large percentage growth at some of the busiest stations reflects increases in service frequency and connectivity that have taken place in the last few years:

- Chiltern Railways and Cross Country have been particularly successful in developing services which explains the growth at stations like Bicester North, Banbury and Oxford.
- Improvements by First Great Western are also reflected in patronage increases at Didcot Parkway, Culham and Oxford.
- Service enhancements and marketing on the line between Oxford and Bicester funded by the County Council saw passenger numbers jump 74% to an all-time high in just one year!

The figures clearly show that if services are improved and are seen as giving good value for money and at times when they are needed, people will use them.

There are also a number of other railway stations which, whilst not located in Oxfordshire, serve residents of the county. Table 3.2 summarises the change in passenger numbers at these stations – although it should be remembered that only a proportion of users will live in Oxfordshire.

Table 3.2: Railway Station Usage - Non-Oxfordshire Stations

Station	2002/03	2009/10	% Change
Haddenham and Thame Parkway	379,970	559,770	+47
Tilehurst	387,422	441,548	+14
Pangbourne	344,056	391,026	+14
Kings Sutton	39,745	39,994	+1
Total	**1,151,993**	**1,432,338**	**+24**

Source: Office of the Rail Regulator LENNON Published Data – the figures (for un-staffed stations in particular) may be an under-estimate where fares are not collected.

The strong passenger growth at Haddenham and Thame Parkway again reflects service improvements introduced by Chiltern Railways, and ease of reaching the station by car.

Service Frequencies

Table 3.3 shows an overall summary of weekday service frequencies from Oxfordshire stations; and the major destinations served:

Table 3.3: Quantum of Services at Oxfordshire Stations

Station(s)	Major Destinations Served by Direct Trains
Over 250 trains per day	
Oxford	London Paddington, Didcot Parkway, Banbury, Reading, Slough, Birmingham New Street, Manchester Piccadilly, Southampton, Newcastle
Didcot Parkway	London Paddington, Reading, Slough, Swindon, Bristol Parkway / Temple Meads, Cheltenham Spa, South Wales
150 to 200 trains per day	
Banbury	London Marylebone, Oxford, Bicester North, Reading, Birmingham Snow Hill, Manchester Piccadilly, Southampton and Newcastle
100 to 150 trains per day	
Bicester North	London Marylebone, Banbury, Birmingham Snow Hill
50 to 100 trains per day	
Henley-on-Thames, Shiplake	Twyford, *limited direct service to Reading and London Paddington*
Radley, Cholsey, Goring & Streatley	Oxford, Reading, Slough, London Paddington
Haddenham and Thame Parkway	London Marylebone, Banbury, Bicester North, Birmingham Snow Hill
30 to 50 trains per day	
Kingham, Charlbury, Hanborough	Oxford, Reading, Slough, London Paddington, Worcester Shrub Hill / Foregate Street, Hereford
Culham, Appleford	Oxford, Reading, Slough, London Paddington
20 to 30 trains per day	
Heyford, Tackley	Oxford, Banbury, *limited direct service to Reading, Didcot Parkway and London Paddington*
10 to 20 trains per day	
Bicester Town, Islip	Oxford
5 to 10 trains per day	
Shipton	Oxford, Worcester Shrub Hill, *limited direct service to London Paddington*
Fewer than 5 trains per day	
Ascott-under-Wychwood, Combe, Finstock	Oxford, Worcester Shrub Hill

Connectivity

The term "connectivity" describes the ability to reach other parts of the United Kingdom from Oxfordshire by direct rail services. Table 3.3 summarises connectivity from the four largest rail-connected settlements in the county:

Table 3.3: Summary of Connectivity from Major Oxfordshire Railheads

Destination (outside of Oxfordshire)	Connectivity Summary				
	Oxford	Didcot Parkway	Banbury	Bicester North	Bicester Town
Reading, Slough and London Paddington	✓✓	✓✓	✓	×	×
High Wycombe and London Marylebone	×	×	✓✓	✓✓	×
Birmingham New Street	✓✓	×	✓✓	×	×
Birmingham Snow Hill	×	×	✓✓	✓✓	×
Swindon, Bristol and South Wales	×	✓✓	×	×	×
Exeter and South West	×	✓	×	×	×
Cheltenham / Gloucester	×	✓	×	×	×
Evesham / Worcester	✓	✓	×	×	×
Birmingham International Airport	✓	x	✓	x	x
Heathrow and Gatwick Airports	×	×	×	×	×

Key: ✓✓ = Frequent direct services (at least two per hour; weekday)

✓ = Limited direct service (one per hour or less; weekday)

× = No direct service

Whilst connections to London, Reading and Birmingham are relatively good, east-west connections are not as comprehensive.

Passenger Satisfaction

Table 3.4 shows the percentage of people rating services as either "good" or "satisfactory" – from the most recent Passenger Focus *National Passenger Survey*. The results are for the whole franchise area and not just those within Oxfordshire. Nevertheless they provide an indication of how passengers view existing services and priorities for improvement.

Table 3.4: Summary of Passenger Satisfaction

Performance Measure	Chiltern	First Great Western	Cross Country
Value for money for the price of your ticket	48	49	53
Punctuality	88	77	84
Sufficient room for passengers to sit / stand	74	69	70
Overall satisfaction with stations	85	74	77
How well train company dealt with delays	46	43	49
Length of time journey was scheduled to take (speed)	83	84	84
Connections with other forms of public transport	74	72	77
Station facilities and services	62	53	63
Frequency of trains on that route	82	76	80
Availability of staff	38	50	66
Connections with other train services	70	73	79
Facilities for car parking	67	58	53
Overall Satisfaction	**88**	**82**	**85**

Source: Passenger Focus Survey, Spring 2011

There are relatively high levels of satisfaction with the "moving" aspect of rail services such as journey speed, frequency and punctuality. Facilities for car parking score less well than connections between trains or with other forms of public transport. Station facilities and services also score somewhat lower; and availability of staff is seen as a key issue. The relatively low satisfaction levels with value for money for the price of the ticket may reflect general levels of concern about fares policy.

CHAPTER 4: NETWORK ASPIRATIONS

Introduction

In order for the rail network to build on its recent success, this chapter sets out policies and standards for strategic aspirations for development of the network. These aspirations will:

- Clearly set out the purpose of our rail aspirations and how they will help deliver jobs, housing growth and sustainable development.
- Help to gain a shared understanding and agreement with rail industry delivery partners, other public sector organisations and wider stakeholders.
- Ensure that there is consistency of planning and investment decisions between rail, LTP and wider land use planning functions.
- Provide passengers and freight operators with a compelling vision about what could be achieved if we all work together.
- Recognise the constraints imposed by levels of funding and rail industry operations; and establish a firm basis for making decisions on prioritisation based on value for money.

This section therefore sets out the overall policy standards that the County Council wishes to see adopted across the rail network in Oxfordshire.

Passenger Growth Forecasts

The DfT's *Thames Valley Regional Planning Assessment* (RPA), published in 2007, set out a range of passenger growth forecasts (un-constrained by crowding):

Table 4.1 – Forecast Growth in Passenger Demand at Three Busiest Stations

Destination	2006/16 (% Growth)		2006/26 (% Growth)	
	PDFH*	High Growth	PDFH	High Growth
London Paddington	25	35	49	59
London Marylebone	12	22	34	45
Reading	15	19	31	35

Source: Thames Valley Regional Planning Assessment, Department for Transport

** Passenger Demand Forecasting Handbook – the standard rail industry tool.*

The RPA states if the 2007 levels of seat capacity remain in 2016, there will still be spare seat capacity on morning peak time services arriving into Didcot Parkway from Oxford. However, services from Swindon would be full by the time they arrive at Didcot Parkway.

However, given there has been a 41% increase in passenger growth in just seven years, the County Council wishes to see the RPA forecast reviewed and revalidated based on current housing and job creation plans.

Medium / Longer Term Rail Industry Investment Plans

Network Rail has published a series of Route Utilisation Strategies (RUSs) which set out strategic direction of the railway based on a systematic analysis of future requirements of the network. They seek to balance capacity, passenger and freight demand, operational performance and cost whilst addressing the requirements of taxpayers and stakeholders.

Great Western RUS (March 2010)

The Great Western RUS primarily focuses on the 10 years to 2019; but has also considered the implications of growth in demand over the next 30 years in the context of the Government's 2007 White Paper *Delivering a Sustainable Railway*.

Table 4.2 outlines committed RUS schemes and recommendations which are either:

- Located within Oxfordshire; or
- Having impacts of services to / from Oxfordshire.

Table 4.2: Great Western RUS Schemes and Recommendations

Scheme Type	Scheme Name
Committed (Implemented or under construction)	Oxford Up and Down Goods Loops
	Reading station redevelopment
	Cotswold Line Redoubling between Charlbury and Evesham.
	Southampton to West Coast Gauge Enhancement
	Crossrail
Committed (Funding identified but yet to start construction)	Great Western Main Line Electrification and Resignalling (including Didcot Parkway and Oxford)
	Evergreen 3: Oxford – Bicester – London Marylebone
	Intercity Express Programme: New trains
	European Rail Traffic Management System: signalling
	Oxford station: South facing bay platform
Recommendations	Bournemouth to Manchester Piccadilly train lengthening
	Extend the Newcastle to Reading service to Southampton every two hours
	Improve capacity and performance through infrastructure schemes at Oxford

The line between Didcot Parkway and Oxford is constrained in capacity terms due to the number of services and mix of different types of passenger services and freight. Stopping at the three intermediate stations takes up valuable track capacity. As well as being an important route for long distance services linking the South with the Midlands and North, the completion of gauge enhancement works on the Southampton to West Coast Main Line is stimulating significant growth (potentially up to six additional trains per day) in freight, particularly for deep sea container traffic.

The RUS suggests a number of potential capacity enhancements which could address these issues:

- A dynamic **passing loop at Appleford** to enable faster trains to overtake stopping services;
- Restoration of a **four track railway** between Kennington Junction (south of Oxford) and Wolvercot junction (north of Oxford); and
- **Re-modelling of Oxford station** to separate terminating trains from through services.

The number of committed and likely enhancements, including Electrification, Evergreen 3 and East-West Rail, now provide a huge opportunity to develop an integrated master plan for accessing Oxford station – a key public transport "regional hub".

Therefore the County Council strongly supports the need to develop enhanced capacity for both passenger and freight services in the Didcot -Oxford corridor.

West Midlands and Chilterns RUS (May 2011)

There are a number of committed and implemented schemes for the current Control Period (to 2014):

- **Evergreen 3:** A £274m investment to modernise the Chiltern route, comprising two parts – a faster journey time between London and Birmingham, and a new service from Oxford to London Marylebone:
    - **Chiltern Main Line:** Line speed increased to 100mph south of Aynho Junction (excluding Princes Risborough-High Wycombe section at 80mph); realigned track at Bicester, Princes Risborough, Neasden, Northolt and South Ruislip.
    - **Oxford to London Marylebone:** New tracks Oxford-Bicester including a new chord and new stations at Water Eaton Parkway and Bicester Town.
- **Aynho Junction:** Linespeed increase from 60mph to 90mph to Banbury.
- **Car Park Capacity increases:** Banbury (+220 spaces); Bicester North (+160 spaces); Haddenham & Thame Parkway (+240 spaces).
- **Banbury Re-signalling:** This will include re-modelling work to enable reduced headways to London Marylebone and more flexible service patterns.

There are additional schemes that could be included within future Control Periods:

- Improvements in journey times between Oxford and Birmingham;
- Infill Electrification of the London Marylebone to Birmingham Snow Hill route;
- Reopening the line between Honeybourne and Stratford-upon-Avon would create a new link from the Cotswolds & Malverns Line, and generate new tourism potential in the Oxfordshire Cotswolds. It is identified as an aspiration in the West Midlands and Chiltern RUS.

The County Council strongly supports aspirations to further improve journey times, and increase seating capacity on the Chiltern Main Line through Banbury, Bicester North and Haddenham & Thame Parkway.

Freight RUS (March 2007) and Strategic Freight Network (September 2009)

The Freight RUS covers the whole of the UK. The route between Southampton Port and the West Coast Main Line via Reading and Oxford is identified as the main route for deep sea container traffic from Southampton; and has seen growing use in recent years.

The DfT's Strategic Rail Freight Network (SFN) aims to optimise the performance of the UK's intensively utilised mixed-traffic rail freight network; enabling the efficient operation of more, longer and selectively larger freight trains. The SRN proposes a number of strategic interventions:

- Optimise freight trunk routeings to minimise passenger/freight conflicts – including use of the East-West Rail corridor between Oxford and Milton Keynes;
- Make the network available 24-hours a day, all year round;
- Eliminate pinch points; and
- Upgrade network capability.

Following completion of the Southampton to West Midlands 'W10' gauge improvements, the RUS predicts six additional trains per day by 2014/15. It identifies conflicts between freight paths and empty stock movements (from terminating trains) in the Oxford area.

In terms of potential projects in CP5, there is a proposal to divert deep sea container trains towards Southampton via the West Coast Main Line to Bletchley and then to Bicester and Oxford. The proposal for East-West Rail makes provision for an hourly freight path and the two projects are therefore compatible.

As part of the redevelopment of Reading station, a new viaduct will be built to the west of the station enabling freight trains on the relief lines to travel below the main line tracks. This will remove the main bottleneck on the route between Southampton and the West Coast Main line; and will improve the performance of main line passenger services.

OCC fully supports moves to improve capacity and terminal facilities for rail freight operations.

Rail Franchising Policy

The County Council supports the principle of franchises as the basis for providing long-term stability for passengers whilst encouraging the train operators to improve services and facilities. We recognise the need for the franchise holders to make a financial return on their investment.

The County Council welcomes the DfT's revised franchising policy and supports the introduction of longer franchises, of at least ten years, as these should encourage the franchise holder to invest in stations and services and receive an appropriate return. However, there should also be clear performance and investment targets with regular reviews and break points if the targets are not met.

In the last few years of a franchise, there is less incentive for the franchise holder to invest in new services or facilities due to the limited time remaining to recoup their investment. The County Council would like to see the Department for Transport or Network Rail underwrite the residual value in instances like this, in order to guarantee payback and encourage investment towards the end of a franchise.

The franchise system can also be complemented by provision for "open access" operators if they can provide new services to different destinations, and the County Council welcomes further provision of direct services at Oxfordshire stations. However, the Department for Transport and Office of Rail Regulation must ensure that an open access operator does not reduce the attractiveness or value of a franchise or reduce the number of train paths available for other, perhaps more frequent, services that better support economic growth in the county.

The County Council will be an active participant in the franchise consultation process, and welcomes the opportunity to have a direct influence on the franchise specification before it is issued to bidders; to meet each bidder; and provide feedback to the Department for Transport.

This strategy will become the County Council's initial input into the franchising process.

Passenger Service Levels

The County Council wishes to see selective enhancement of passenger service levels in order to:

- Provide greater seat capacity to reduce current and future over-crowding;
- Provide more choice for passengers in terms of times of travel and range of destinations;
- Encourage greater overall use of rail at the expense of the private car; and
- Generate additional revenue for the rail system as a whole.

The County Council therefore wishes to see the following train service levels as the minimum across the county:

For local "stopping" services:

- Minimum frequency of hourly from all stations, except the four Cotswold Halts (Monday – Sunday);
- At least two direct trains per hour in each direction from all stations on routes serving London between 07:00 and 09:00 for commuters, with corresponding return journeys between 17:00 and 19:00.
- First arrivals in London before 06:00 (Monday – Saturday) and 08:00 (Sunday). All services to begin by 06:00 (Monday – Saturday).
- Last trains no earlier than 01:00 from London termini.
- All routes should enable arrivals at Banbury, Bicester, Didcot and Oxford between 07:30 and 09:30 for commuters, with corresponding return journeys between 16:30 and 18:30;
- Clockface timetable to be maintained throughout the day, except for peak period services.
- Appropriate mix of semi-fast and all-stations services.
- Peak hour through services to London termini to be maintained from all branch line stations.

For "Intercity" high speed services:

- Incoming services should enable arrivals at Oxfordshire stations from all main line routes between 08:00 and 10:00 for business travel, with corresponding return journeys between 16:00 and 19:00.
- Outgoing services should provide departures from Oxfordshire stations to all main line destinations between 06:00 and 09:00.
- Services provided to a wide range of destinations throughout the day, including weekends, with more seasonal direct services to the far south west of England.
- Hourly services throughout the day from Kingham, Charlbury and Hanborough on the Cotswolds & Malverns Line.

For "inter-regional" services

- All inter-regional trains should continue to call at Oxford.
- Inter-regional trains to/from the Midlands should also call at either, or both of, Banbury and Didcot Parkway.
- Incoming services should, as a minimum, provide arrivals at all three stations in Oxfordshire between 08:00 and 10:00 for business travel, with corresponding return journeys between 16:00 and 19:00.

Train Service Performance

Journey Speeds

For the larger stations, the County Council wishes to see journey speeds maintained at current levels in the short term. In the medium to longer term, we wish to see speeds reduced so that there is greater competitive advantage over private car; specifically between:

- Bicester Town – Oxford – Didcot Parkway.
- Oxford – Didcot Parkway – Reading – London Paddington.
- Oxford – Banbury – Birmingham New Street.
- Banbury and Bicester North – London Marylebone and Birmingham Snow Hill.
- Didcot Parkway – Swindon – Bristol.

Punctuality and Reliability

Punctuality and reliability is measured by the Public Performance Measure (PPM) – the percentage of trains that run within five minutes (for local services) or ten minutes (for longer distance services) of their published arrival timetable at their destination.

The benchmark PPM targets (in 2011) are as follows:

- **Greater Western:**
    - **Thames Valley local services:** 92.0%
    - **Longer distance services:** 90.0%
- **Chiltern:** 93.75%
- **Cross Country:** 88.7%

The County Council supports greater efforts to improve the punctuality and reliability of services through measures such as:

- **Re-signalling** – to reduce the minimum headways between trains.
- **Removal of pinch points** – single track sections where only one train at a time can run.
- **Track capacity** – more opportunities to separate express and stopping services through four tracking or passing loops.
- **Rolling stock** – newer trains with enhanced acceleration.

Fares and Ticketing

Tickets are the first major interface between passengers and the rail network, and rail fare rises are one of the most emotive transport issues for passengers and customers rightly want to feel they get value for money. For many years, the policy of various Governments has focused on shifting the funding of the UK railways from the taxpayer to the passenger.

Government support for the industry has dropped sharply over the past five years, falling from £6.31bn in 2006-07 to 5.2bn in 2008-09 and £3.96bn in 2010-11[1]. The consequence of lower taxpayer support for UK railways is that passengers are now paying more of the annual cost of running the network, which now stands at around £10.5bn. Some £6.5bn comes from passenger fares, and £4bn from the taxpayer.

Since 2004, regulated fares, which account for almost half of all rail journeys and include season tickets and Off Peak return tickets on long distance trips, have risen according to a Government-set formula of the Retail Price Index (RPI) + 1%. Following the 2010 election, the Government announced it was intending to change the formula to RPI + 3% between 2012 and 2014, with the extra revenue would help pay for more trains, better stations and faster services. This includes more carriages to deal with overcrowding and major capital projects such as electrification to Oxford.

The County Council would like the fares formula assessed each year in light of the prevailing economic climate, and cost of running the railway. Following the McNulty report on rail value for money, we urge the industry to find ways of reducing the running costs as soon as possible.

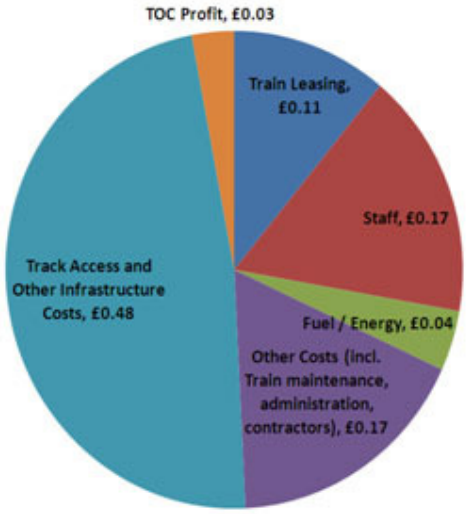
How do rail fares compare with other key consumer cost increases

Product / service	2010/11 % increase
Energy bills[1]	21%
Car commuting costs[2]	21%
Global food prices[3]	19%
Car insurance costs[4]	14.4%
Owning and running a car[5]	14%
Fuel costs[6]	12.4%
UK rail fares	**5.9%**
Rents – England and Wales[7]	4.1%

[1] uSwitch.com (September 2011).
[2] Green Flag (November 2011).
[3] World Bank Global Food Price Index (September 2011)
[4] RAC Annual Cost of Motoring Index (November 2011)
[5] RAC Annual Cost of Motoring Index (November 2011)
[6] RAC Annual Cost of Motoring Index (November 2011)
[7] LSL Property Services (October 2011)

[1] According to figures from the Office of Rail Regulation

Where every £1 of the rail fares goes



Source: Association of Train Operating Companies, 2011

Historically, fares within the former Network South East area have been set at a lower level than long-distance fares. This results in a big pricing differential at the boundary of the old area, for journeys of comparable length, such as between Didcot Parkway and Swindon and Didcot Parkway to Oxford. The County Council would like to see a review of fares policy with the intention of easing out these differences and those that occur at the shoulders of the peak period. This will encourage passengers to make their journey from the most appropriate station rather than chase the cheapest fare, or avoid using the train at all, and travel at a time which could make better use of available seating capacity.

Tickets should also be inter-operable across different modes of travel – train and bus – and also between different operators between the same points, for example between London and Oxford on Chiltern Railways or Great Western, with limited restrictions.

The Plusbus scheme enables passengers to buy an "add-on" to their train ticket which can be used on bus services within the participating area; therefore removing the need to buy a separate ticket. Plusbus schemes currently operate in Oxford, Didcot and Banbury; and the County Council would like to see schemes extended to other principal towns, including Bicester, Thame and Henley-on-Thames. An all-modes ticket for use on buses and trains in the Oxfordshire Cotswolds would also be welcomed.

The County Council would like to see train operators to adopt innovative approaches to fares and ticketing schemes, within the limits of franchise agreements. These include:

- Special contra-peak fares to make better use of spare capacity, and promotions for flexible business travel.
- The introduction of "carnet" tickets from local stations for travel into Oxford when infrequent travel does not justify a season ticket.
- Participation in ticketing schemes such as Plusbus or Local Travelcards.
- Season ticket options for school or college travel.

- Wide availability of ticket sales from other outlets, such as local shops or business parks, or through the internet.
- Greater use of new technologies, such as mobile ticketing (m-ticket) and print at home,

The County Council will expect all local train operators in the county to participate fully in the development and operation of smartcard ticketing schemes and associated marketing. The introduction of an ITSO compatible scheme at stations within Oxfordshire would be welcomed.

The County Council will not support changes in the opening hours of existing station ticket offices where they reduce the availability of staffing; and will encourage Train Operating Companies to consult widely on any such proposal, and investigate all options with the community before a decision is made.

Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) have been introduced at many stations as a way of providing ticketing facilities at unstaffed stations; but they can suffer from vandalism and crime. As a result many do not now accept cash payment and tickets can only be purchased with a credit/debit card only. This is a barrier to travel for many people including the young. The County Council would like to see the rail industry tackle this problem and for all TVMs to offer the full range of payment options.

Stations

Railway stations are the "shop window" of the rail network and can provide a very good (or bad) first impression for existing and future passengers. High quality facilities significantly enhance the overall passenger experience and provide good value for money.

The County Council has been investing in local stations for a number of years and has developed a set of standards for railway stations that are broadly based on the *Better Rail Stations* report commissioned by the Department for Transport.

We will introduce a **Quality Rail Partnership** with the rail industry to identify, prioritise, fund and deliver station improvements.

Access / Interchange at Stations

In the larger towns and for very local journeys, rail users will be encouraged to use sustainable transport modes for access to stations, principally bus, taxi, cycling and walking. Specific access improvements that we will work towards will include:

- Conveniently located bus / taxi pick and set down facilities outside the station;
- Secure cycle parking with adequate capacity to meet demand;
- Direct and safe pedestrian and cycle routes to adjacent residential areas and businesses;
- Rail stations are sign-posted from national trails and cycle networks; and
- New initiatives, such as folding bike hire at stations.

Many of the issues will be identified through the programme of transport strategies and parish plans that cover the towns and villages in the county.

For people with mobility impairments, access to stations increases travel opportunities and independent living. The County Council will take account of the Equality Act 2010, and if involved in works at a station will, whenever reasonable, ensure they are carried out in compliance with DfT's *Accessible Train Station Design for Disabled People: A Code of Practice*.

Car Access and Parking

Provision of suitable car park capacity enhances the attractiveness of the rail service and that in itself influences modal choice for the principal element of the journey. This is particularly true in rural areas where public transport alternatives are more limited.

It is important that adequate car parking is provided, and that it is reviewed regularly to ensure that it matches demand and expectations of station users. A report for Passenger Focus *Getting to the Station* concluded that insufficient parking spaces at stations led to twice the number of car journeys as passengers unable to park were taken to and from the station.

There needs to be a dialogue between the TOC and the County Council in each case, to ensure that capacity and charging policies do not adversely affect traffic and parking in residential areas.

The County Council would like to see a more flexible approach to car parking provision, especially within franchise agreements. Whilst the number of parking spaces is regulated the number of bus stops, taxi stands or cycle spaces are not. The Network Modifications (Closures) Regime in the Railways Act 2005 is a lengthy process and makes it difficult to reduce parking in favour of more sustainable modes, even where they are the best option.

Opportunities to replace parking spaces by bus interchanges or other sustainable transport provision should be allowed and encouraged where this will not have a negative impact on the overall numbers of passengers accessing the station, such as at Oxford where high frequency bus services and the cycle network offer real alternatives. Car drivers will be offered a convenient choice to drive to a station where adequate parking and convenient access from the highway can be offered. Proposed new railway stations such as Water Eaton Parkway aim to expand this level of choice.

The County Council will support initiatives that make car travel more sustainable, such as the provision of electric vehicle charging points at the busiest stations, and promotion of the Oxfordshire Carshare scheme to encourage multiple occupancy of private cars.

Station Travel Plans

A Station Travel Plan (STP) brings together all the stakeholders with an interest in, and responsibility for, rail stations; to develop an integrated action plan with clear common objectives and a coordinated approach to delivering and funding key projects.

OCC will seek to establish STPs at the busiest stations as a means of co-ordinating and adding value to existing investment projects:

- **Oxford** – as part of access improvements in Frideswide Square, urban regeneration in the West End, improvements to passenger facilities and an operational master plan to improve capacity for passenger and freight services.
- **Didcot Parkway** – as part of redevelopment of the station forecourt which provides for sustainable modes and (walking/cycling/bus) and improved interchange facilities..
- **Bicester North and Town** – as part of the Evergreen 3 Implementation Agreement and support for East-West Rail) and initiatives to improve links with the proposed "eco-town" and other major employment and residential developments.
- Proposed **Water Eaton Parkway** station – as part of the Evergreen 3 Implementation Agreement.

The County Council has some expertise in developing travel plans having successfully introduced them at many schools in the county.

Safety and Personal Security

Safety on the railways is already very good, and high levels of safety and personal security are vital for all users, but especially for people who may be less confident and feel more vulnerable. Stations and trains should provide a welcoming and visible environment which delivers a sense of personal security for all passengers.

The County Council welcomed the re-opening of a British Transport Police office at Oxford station and we will work with BTP to improve perceived and actual security at stations in the county.

The County Council would like to see an appropriate and visible staff presence at stations and on trains, particularly on evening services to deter anti-social behaviour.

Help points should be maintained in good working order and available at all times, and be easy to find on all platforms. Calls for assistance should be answered promptly. CCTV should be provided at stations and in car parks, and adequate lighting and visibility should be provided on routes to stations.

Passenger Information

Accurate, timely and easy to understand passenger information is important as a means of:

- Enabling people to plan their journeys around their needs;
- Letting passengers know when services are disrupted; and
- Managing incidents by providing alternative means of travel.

It is particularly important that information is also comprehensive and covers all services – rail, bus and taxi.

The County Council already has an Information Strategy for bus operators, and is looking to establish an **Information Partnership** for all public transport providers in the county to cover:

- Provision of printed service information in a variety of formats to be distributed by members of the Partnership, and through a network of established outlets;
- Electronic real-time information for journey planning including "smart phone" applications.
- Increasing the use of the internet and mobile phones for information and product purchase (such as tickets).
- Development of integrated ticketing schemes and products to stimulate growth in patronage of bus and rail services.
- A stronger emphasis on strategic and tactical marketing for both the bus and rail networks, again to increase patronage.

We therefore expect TOCs to take an active role in development of the Partnership and the products and services it offers.

Customer Expectations

Evidence from Passenger Focus surveys, presented in Chapter 3, has emphasised the importance of the "end to end" journey experience of using the railway, including:

- Arrival at the station car park or bus stop;
- Buying the ticket;
- Movement through the station to the platform;
- Waiting on the platform;
- The train service (frequency, reliability, punctuality, seat availability and journey time);
- Moving through the destination station; and
- Leaving the station for the final destination.

Research into train service expectations carried out by Chiltern Railways identified the top commuter priorities, after safety, as being:

- A seat;
- A punctual train;
- A quick journey time without too many intermediate stops;
- A reasonable and predictable interval between departures, so if they miss their usual train home they know what the next choice is.

The County Council believes the aspirations set out above will help to deliver increased levels of customer satisfaction; especially where existing performance is viewed as poor. We strongly believe that customers and their representative groups should play a strong role in future service planning and identification of beneficial improvements.

Freight customers expect the timely delivery of their goods without the delays caused by traffic congestion on the road network. In the past freight trains were often seen as a nuisance and delayed to allow passenger trains to pass in front, but both are equally important to the UK economy, and often the value of the freight can be higher. Freight that is being transported overseas must arrive at the port within a time slot for loading onto the ship, which also has a booked departure time. Freight is often a time sensitive delivery.

Station Adoption and Community Rail

The County Council has been successfully working with community groups since 2005, and has helped to get several station adoption groups started. These much-welcomed groups bring local people together and give them an opportunity to develop and have an input in their station and make it an attractive community asset. Activities are varied but they help to raise awareness of rail and the train services, thereby increasing their use. This initiative fits well with the localism agenda.

A community rail line is a local railway which is specially supported by local organisations. In Oxfordshire, there is potential to develop a Community Rail Partnership for the Henley-on-Thames Branch Line, bringing together the local community, local businesses, local government and the railway to develop the potential for commuting and tourism.

Freight

The County Council supports the transfer of more freight from road to rail, and this strategy will give appropriate emphasis to freight capacity in ongoing discussions related to making best use of capacity on the rail network in Oxfordshire.

The movement of deep sea containers by rail through the county helps reduce the number of lorry movements on the road network. The A34 is the main road between Southampton Port and the Midlands but around Oxford it is also part of the ring road around the city, and this creates a mix of short local trips and long distance strategic trips. Anything that can be done to reduce traffic volumes will have a positive impact on growth and sustainability in Oxfordshire.

The County Council will work with industry partners and the District Councils to identify key locations for potential rail freight terminals in Oxfordshire, where they are feasible and can satisfy local planning policies. We welcome the guidance setting out Government policy on Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges that was published in late-2011.

The County Council will work with existing businesses using rail, such as BMW at Oxford and Swindon, the Ministry of Defence at Bicester, and RWE npower at Didcot, to explore how capacity and facilities can be improved to allow more goods to be transported by rail.

Safeguarding Land for Future Schemes

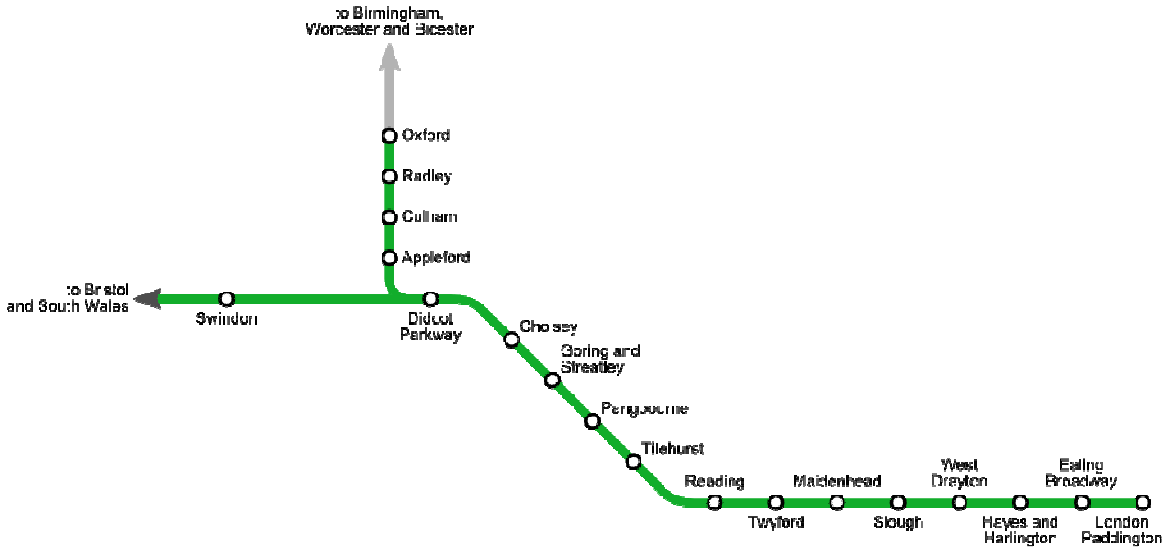
There are a number of disused railway corridors that may have potential for reinstatement for freight or passenger traffic during, or beyond, the timeframe of this Strategy. Therefore

the County Council will, if consulted by the local planning authority, oppose development which would breach and prejudice any site where there is a realistic prospect of services being re-instated in the longer term. In accordance with Planning Policy Guidance 13 the County Council will aim to safeguard the following corridors:

- Kennington – Cowley (in use);
- Princes Risborough – Chinnor (preserved railway);
- Cholsey – Wallingford (preserved railway);
- Yarnton – Carterton (disused); and
- Radley – Abingdon (disused).

CHAPTER 5: LINE OF ROUTE ISSUES AND ASPIRATIONS

Great Western Main Line



Current Operations

There is a mix of 125mph higher speed services and 90mph outer suburban services as well as slower local stopping services. Between Reading and Oxford the line is also used by Cross Country trains between the South Coast and the Midlands. Freight is also a big user of the line, with deep sea containers from Southampton, coal and aggregates forming the majority of trains. Infrastructure trains supply engineering works across the South of England from the Network Rail facility at Hinksey, south of Oxford.

There are four tracks between London and Didcot Parkway and then two tracks continue to Swindon and two head north to Oxford. The timetable often exceeds 80% of available capacity for most of the day.

Key Priorities

The key priorities on the Great Western Main Line are:

- Extra track capacity between Reading and London Paddington;
- More seating capacity to satisfy demand now and in the future;
- Resolve the bottleneck at Oxford for passenger and freight trains;
- Increase availability of train paths through Oxfordshire;
- Station crowding from new services at Oxford station;
- No lesser connectivity after the introduction of Crossrail;

Aspirations

(a) Strategic Infrastructure

- Electrification of the line to Didcot Parkway and Oxford by 2016, and west to Bristol and South Wales by 2017;
- Additional platforms and track at Oxford station to improve performance, capacity and provide operational flexibility;
- Third bi-directional track at Didcot North to help reduce congestion between Didcot-Oxford – needed with IEP and any extra passenger trains;
- Increase line speeds between Didcot East and Didcot North for services that are routed through the station;
- New station at Grove & Wantage, if proved to be viable, to serve Science Vale UK.

(b) Service Levels

The introduction of electric/bi-mode IEP trains from 2016 is an opportunity to look at the timetable. Whilst an initial service specification was produced by DfT for procurement purposes, the detail has not been made available to the County Council and therefore we welcome the opportunity of discussing further our local requirements.

As a minimum, the County Council wishes to see four main line trains per hour call at Didcot Parkway, providing links with Bristol (2), South Wales (1) and Cheltenham (1).

The County Council would like to see a through service between Oxford, Guildford and Gatwick Airport, if Crossrail is extended to Reading following electrification, enabling a good interchange with outer suburban services.

We would like to see Cross Country trains calling at Didcot Parkway and Oxford.

There should be a mix of services from Oxford, with 'fast' services to Reading and London Paddington, as well as 'local' services serving intermediate stations as far as Reading.

We strongly support the introduction of East-West Rail services to Reading, calling at key intermediate stations, including Culham and Didcot Parkway.

The County Council would support a review of stopping patterns between Didcot and Oxford to ensure available paths are optimised, and that services are tailored to better meet existing and potential demand, around a need to also provide for freight growth.

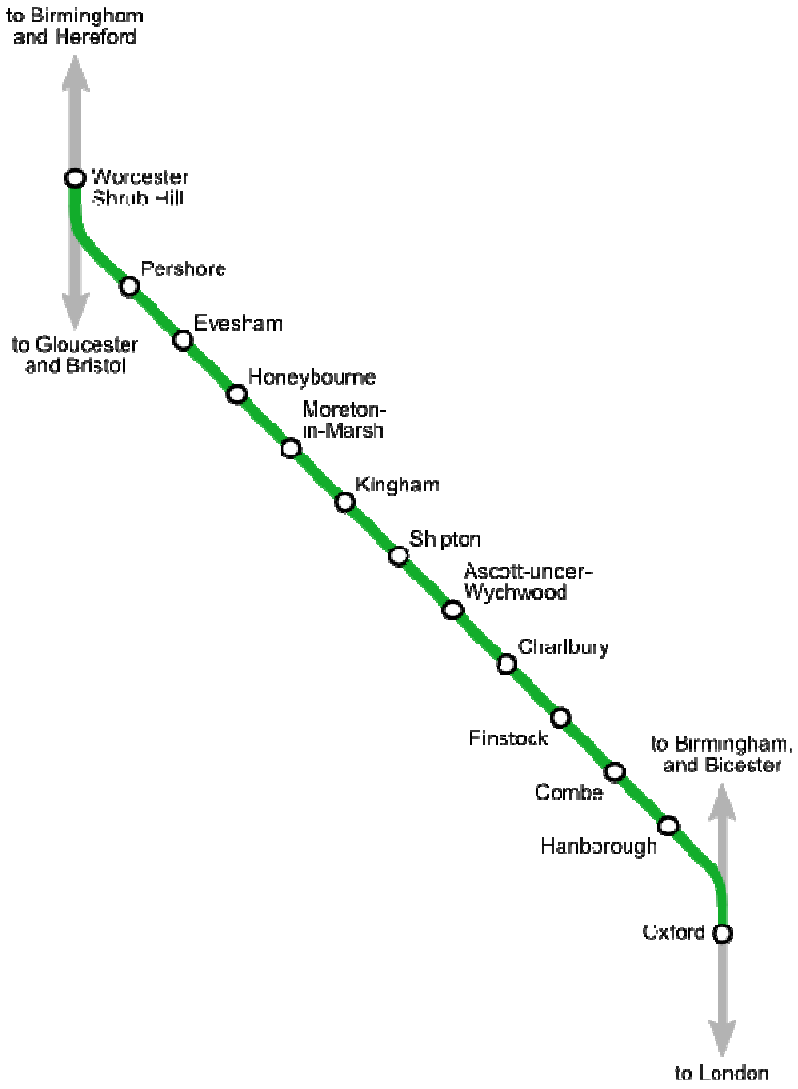
(c) Stations

	Issues and Aspirations
Goring & Streatley	Improve accessibility to all platforms; Extend ticket office opening hours to full-day.

Cholsey	Redevelop forecourt to make it better for pedestrians and cyclists; Improve car parking provision; Extend ticket office opening hours to full-day.
Didcot Parkway	Larger concourse, with more circulating space, new retail units and toilet facilities; Improve capacity and security of Foxhall car park; More passenger waiting facilities – platforms and concourse; Extend of customer information system to all parts of the station.
Appleford	Improve pedestrian access over road bridge; Cycle wheeling channels;
Culham	Provision of a car parking; Footpath into Culham Science Centre, with a new accessible footbridge.
Radley	Improve car parking provision; Accessible ramps on the footbridge to improve access for disabled people; Additional waiting facilities on both platforms.
Oxford	Reconfigure station layout (i.e. concourse and footbridge) to deal with increased footfall; Redevelop forecourt to encourage by walking, cycling and bus – review car parking provision; Improve lighting around the station with clear and concise signage; Master plan long term vision for redeveloping the station to provide operational and network benefits, and gateway to Oxford West End.

Question 11: ***Have we got the right priorities and aspirations for the Great Western Main Line through Oxfordshire?***

Cotswolds & Malverns Line



Current Operations

There is a mix of fast or semi-fast services and slower local stopping services. Most trains have historically called at most stations, although the Oxfordshire halts have a much more limited service, with some having only one train in each direction on weekdays. Until 2011 single track and signalling constrained the timetable and had an impact on reliability but 20 miles of track have since been redoubled along with new signalling.

Key Priorities

The key priorities on the Cotswolds & Malverns Line are:

- Improve and maintain reliability of at least 93% PPM;
- Reduce journey times from the furthest stations;
- Develop and introduce services that meet the needs of all communities;

Aspirations

(a) Strategic Infrastructure

- Four-track between Oxford Station and Wolvercot Junction to provide flexibility;
- Redouble the remaining single-track section between Charlbury and Wolvercot Junction;
- Platform extensions at Charlbury and Hanborough to accommodate longer trains;
- Reopen the line from Honeybourne to Stratford-upon-Avon, if considered viable to do so and a service is identified.

(b) Service Levels

A review of the service pattern should be carried out once the operational experience post-redoubling has been assessed. There is a need to speed up journey times from stations west of Worcester, whilst still providing an acceptable frequency of service at the other stations.

In Oxfordshire, all trains should call at Kingham (for connecting Railbus to Chipping Norton), and at Charlbury. All trains should call at Hanborough during peak hours, and at least once each hour during the daytime, with the off-peak service formed by 'local' services to / from Charlbury.

The timetable should be clockface with departures at the same minutes past each hour to assist with integration between train and bus, and all trains should continue to Didcot Parkway, Reading and London Paddington.

There should be a train every two hours at Shipton and Ascott-under-Wychwood, that serves residents of the Wychwoods, and we will support the provision of a connecting Railbus to the tourist destinations of Burford and the Cotswold Wildlife Park.

The smallest stations, at Combe and Finstock, should have three trains each weekday at times that make them convenient for commuting and shopping.

Weekend services should have adequate seat capacity to match demand, particularly on Sunday afternoons and evenings, and leisure travel should be encouraged.

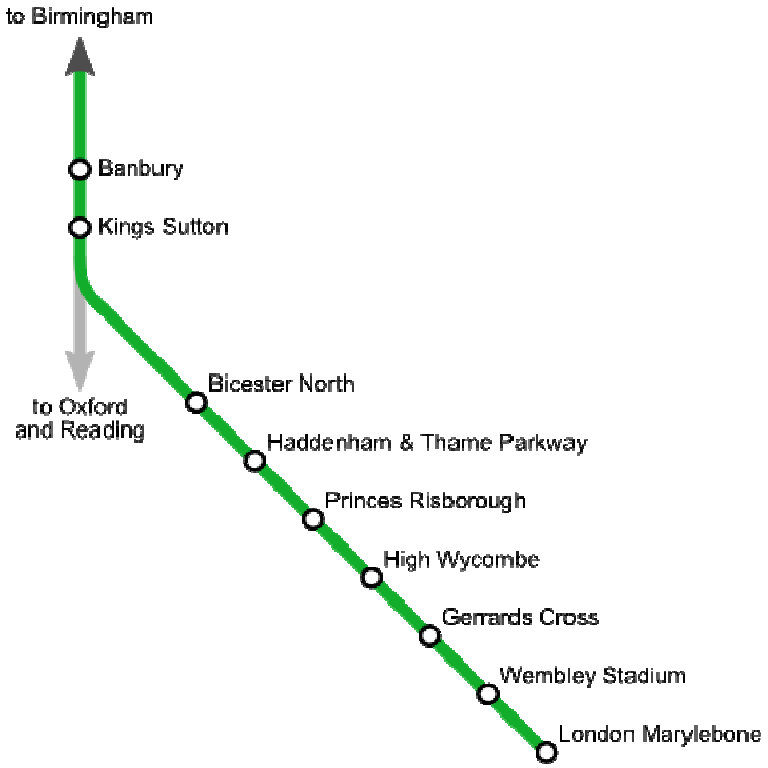
(c) Stations

	Issues and Aspirations
Hanborough	Improve provision of car parking; Café/refreshment facility; Bus interchange – if a Railbus is introduced.
Combe	Maintain facilities at the station.

Finstock	Maintain facilities at the station.
Charlbury	Improve provision of car parking, including extra cycle parking; Improve station facilities - accessible toilets, retail unit (café/coffee bar); Extend ticket office opening hours to full-day.
Ascott-under-Wychwood	*Note: the station was rebuilt in 2011.* Provision of cycle parking; Bus interchange - if a Railbus is introduced.
Shipton	Provision of car parking along north side approach road; Footbridge to provide direct access between platforms – avoiding trespass and busy yard.
Kingham	Renew footbridge with a fully accessible bridge to improve access for disabled people; Renew / enlarge waiting room on eastbound platform; Extend ticket office opening hours to full-day.

Question 12: ***Have we got the right priorities and aspirations for the Cotswolds & Malverns Line through Oxfordshire?***

Chiltern Main Line



Current Operations

The Chiltern Main Line has undergone a complete transformation since privatisation in 1996. The once single track, secondary route is now a double-track 100mph main line railway linking the West Midlands with London. Mainline services are primarily operated using 3 or 4-car diesel trains but locomotive-hauled coaches are used on some peak time journeys. Between Aynho and Banbury, the line is shared with Cross Country and First Great Western trains to / from Oxford.

Generally, there are two trains each hour between London and Birmingham, with a third train going to Stratford-upon-Avon every other hour. In September 2011, a new Main Line timetable was introduced but this caused a dramatic drop in reliability requiring remedial action to reduce the number of park hour trains to a more manageable level.

There are two Cross Country trains each hour between Oxford and Birmingham, and First Great Western run local services as far as Banbury about every two hours.

Key Priorities

The key priorities on the Chiltern Main Line are:

- Improve, and maintain, reliability and performance of at least 93.75% PPM, as required by the franchise agreement;
- Integration of Oxford-London Marylebone train service with no detrimental impact on existing main line services;

- Provision of adequate seat capacity to eliminate standing in excess of 20 minutes on all services from Oxfordshire.

Aspirations

(a) Strategic Infrastructure

- New connecting line at Bicester to facilitate new service to Oxford;
- Infill Electrification between London Marylebone and Birmingham Snow Hill to give a diversionary route, and potential for new electric services;
- Remodelling of Banbury station to provide greater flexibility and capacity for freight;
- Platform extensions to accommodate longer trains necessary to meet demand;
- Additional platform capacity at London Marylebone;

(b) Service Levels

There should be at least one 'fast' service in each hour from Banbury and Bicester North to London Marylebone, with a second 'semi-fast' service serving some of the intermediate stations. There should also be two trains each hour from both of these stations to Birmingham Snow Hill, calling at Leamington Spa, Warwick and Solihull. The ability to travel between the two Oxfordshire stations should be maintained and allow for commuting in both directions.

All trains between Oxford and London Marylebone should call at Haddenham & Thame Parkway and at High Wycombe to improve their connectivity with Oxford. The service level at Bicester North station should be maintained at its winter 2011 level after the introduction of the new Oxford service. This will help make Bicester an exemplar of sustainability, with people using the station nearest their home or work.

Services to Stratford-upon-Avon should also be provided, with a good connection at Banbury with services to / from Oxford.

The timetable should be easy to understand with consistent stopping patterns and clockface departure times throughout the day, except for some peak enhancement.

The County Council supports the diversion of Oxford-Newcastle Cross Country services via Coventry as this will improve connectivity between Oxfordshire and Birmingham International and ease overcrowding on existing services.

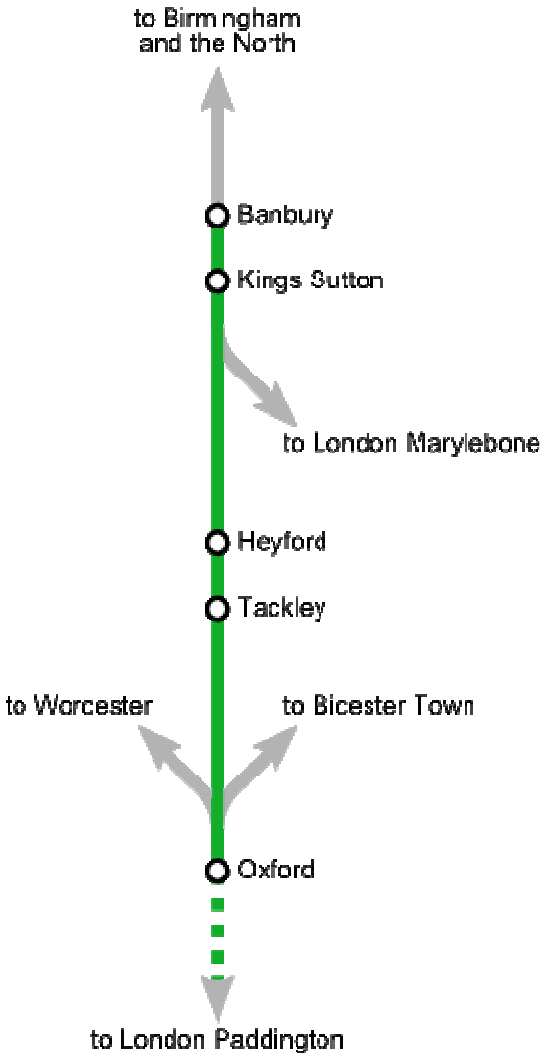
(c) Stations

	Issues and Aspirations
Haddenham & Thame Parkway (not in Oxfordshire but used by residents)	Better bus service(s) to Thame;

Bicester North	Remodel station forecourt to enable high quality cross-town public transport, linking the proposed NW Bicester eco-town, town centre, Bicester Town station, Bicester Village and Business Park with the station.
Banbury	Improve provision of car parking – consolidate into new car park(s); Provide direct access to station building from east of the railway; Redevelop station forecourt to provide for through bus services, more pedestrian and cyclists space and taxis; Improved passenger facilities on platforms.

Question 12: ***Have we got the right priorities and aspirations for the Chiltern Main Line through Oxfordshire?***

Cherwell Valley ('Oxford Canal Line')



Current Operations

The Oxford Canal Line is actually a section of the strategically important line between the South Coast and the Midlands. The local train service provides ten trains per day at the intermediate stations, at approximately two hourly intervals but has to fit in around higher speed Cross Country services and the increasing number of freight trains carrying deep sea containers to/from the Port of Southampton.

Key Priorities

The key priorities on the Cherwell Valley Line are:

- Reduce headways and create additional capacity through resignalling;
- Improve journey time between Oxford and Birmingham New Street;
- Develop local passenger service to meet the needs of communities;

Aspirations

(a) Strategic Infrastructure

- Renew Wolvercot Junction with higher speed turnouts and the ability for parallel movements;
- Remodel Banbury station to provide flexibility and capacity for freight;

(b) Service Levels

There should be a local passenger service every two hours as the intermediate stations are well located for communities in North Oxfordshire and the Oxford Canal. Extending some services beyond Banbury to Stratford-upon-Avon would the tourist link with the Thames Valley that was lost in 2006. This would be welcomed.

A Sunday service has proven to be commercially viable during the summer and has encouraged people to visit and stay in the area which has boosted the local economy. The County Council would like to see the service provided throughout the year.

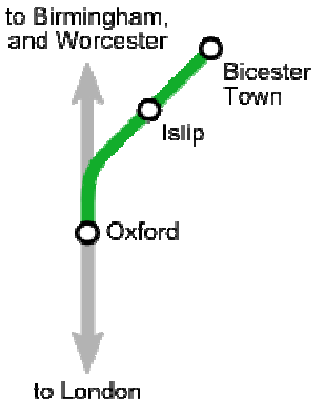
We would welcome proposals to improve connectivity with Birmingham International Airport, by diverting all Cross Country trains via Coventry, potentially reducing crowding on that route.

(c) Stations

	Issues and Aspirations
Tackley	Southbound platform is only accessible by foot crossing – is there an alternative? Provide waiting shelter on northbound platform; Establish a Station Adoption Group.
Heyford	Improve access with ramps on the footbridge – links with Oxford Canal towpath; Introduce CCTV to car park and platforms; Install lighting on footpath leading to station from Lower Heyford village; Improve footpath between station and the crossroads at Steeple Aston.

Question 13: ***Have we got the right priorities and aspirations for the Cherwell Valley Line through Oxfordshire?***

Bicester Branch Line ('Bicester Link')



Current Operations

The Bicester-Oxford line is a single track branch line that was reopened by the County Council and British Rail in 1987. There is one intermediate station, at Islip. Currently there is a limited, but well-used service. The franchise requires only seven trains on Mondays to Saturdays only, but the County Council financially supports a higher level of service, and a Sunday service, using monies secured under Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act. The line will become a main line railway after updating as part of Chiltern Railways' Evergreen 3.

Key Priorities

The key priorities on the Bicester Branch Line are:

- Introduction of Evergreen 3 (Oxford to London Marylebone services) by 2014;
- Introduction of East-West Rail services to Milton Keynes and Bedford from 2017;
- Safeguarding for future Electrification;
- Provide W10 gauge clearance for freight;
- Develop Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at Graven Hill (Bicester).

Aspirations

(a) Strategic Infrastructure

- New track and signalling required by Evergreen 3 and East-West Rail, delivered in a co-ordinated and cost effective way;
- Provide new sidings and access arrangement at MOD Bicester;
- A new Water Eaton Parkway station;
- Bicester Town and Islip stations rebuilt to ensure facilities provide for all new services and allow interchange between all modes.

(b) Service Levels

The County Council strongly supports the enhancement of services from Bicester to Oxford. We aspire for a service level of 4 trains per hour at regular 15-minute intervals throughout the day, with two trains per hour to/from London Marylebone, and two trains per hour to/from Milton Keynes/Bedford.

The service level at Islip should be two-hourly throughout the day, comprising a mix of services to London Marylebone and Milton Keynes/Bedford.

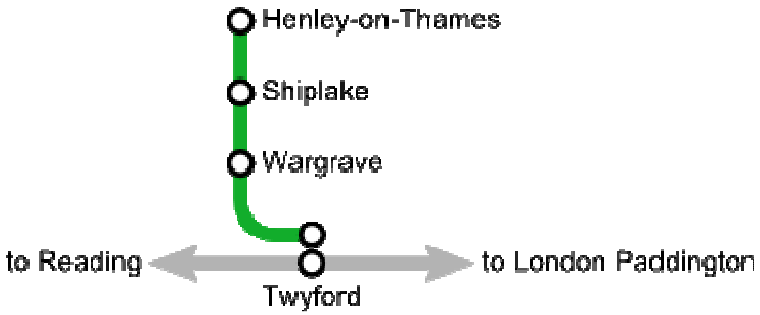
We require a peak service from Bicester Town and Islip, in both directions, with trains timed to allow arrivals in Bicester and Oxford between 0800-0900, with corresponding departures between 1730 and 1830.

(c) Stations

	Issues and Aspirations
Water Eaton Parkway (proposed)	*Implement stations works as specified in the Implementation Agreement agreed between the County Council and Chiltern Railways.*
Islip	*This station will be rebuilt as part of EG3 and East-West Rail projects.* Security – CCTV to be implemented
Bicester Town	*Implement stations works as specified in the Implementation Agreement agreed between the County Council and Chiltern Railways.*

Question 14: ***Have we got the right priorities and aspirations for the Bicester Branch Line?***

Henley-on-Thames Branch Line ('Regatta Line')



Current Operations

The branch line is operated as a shuttle service between Twyford and Henley-on-Thames with a train every 45-60 minutes in each direction using one diesel multiple unit. However on weekdays, there are two through trains to London Paddington in the morning peak, and three return journeys in the afternoon peak.

An enhanced service is provided during the five days of the Henley Royal Regatta by omitting some calls at the intermediate stations and double-crewing the trains to allow a faster turnaround at the termini. The County Council introduced the Regatta Line brand in 2008.

Key Priorities

The key priorities on the Henley-on-Thames Branch Line are:

- Improve frequency and journey times;
- Retain peak hour services to London Paddington after Crossrail and Electrification;
- Ensure shuttle services connect at Twyford with services to Reading and to London Paddington;
- Establish a Community Rail Partnership to boost tourism use and local economy.

Aspirations

(a) Strategic Infrastructure

- Improve line speed over Shiplake Viaduct (River Thames);
- Upgrade Shiplake Level Crossing with full width barriers and increase line speed;
- Improve route availability from RA4 to RA6 to allow higher axle load locomotives, and facilitate excursions and railtours;
- Extend Electrification toThames Valley branches.

(b) Service Levels

The County Council would welcome a service of two trains each hour at Henley-on-Thames, with the intermediate stations having one train each hour. An improved half hourly service will offer better connections provided at Twyford with services to/from London Paddington. We would welcome an investigation into the possibility of through services to Reading.

(c) Stations

	Issues and Aspirations
Shiplake	Introduce parking charges that are comparable with Henley-on-Thames station to discourage non-local users; Introduce CCTV to improve security (funded by the parking charge);
Henley-on-Thames	Ticket Office to open weekday afternoons and weekends - station is otherwise unstaffed; Better signage between station, town centre and the Thames Path.

Question 15: ***Have we got the right priorities and aspirations for the Henley-on-Thames Branch Line?***

CHAPTER 6: STRATEGIC PROJECTS

East-West Rail

To be inserted into pre-consultation document

Project Evergreen 3

Evergreen 3 is a Chiltern Railways franchise commitment and represents a £274 million investment to modernise the Chiltern route, comprising two parts – a faster journey time between London and Birmingham, and a new service from Oxford to London Marylebone.

Improvements to the **Chiltern Main Line** included an increased line speed of 100 mph south of Aynho Junction (excluding the Princes Risborough-High Wycombe section) and realigned track and new southbound platform at Bicester North. A new timetable was introduced in September 2011 with faster journey times from Banbury (reduced by 15 minutes to an average 52 minutes) and Bicester (just 45 minute) to London Marylebone.

The second part of the project is a new half hourly **London Marylebone to Oxford** service which is made possible by construction of a new south to west connecting line to connect the Chiltern Main Line and the proposed East-West Rail line where they cross in Bicester.

The works involve upgrading the railway between Bicester and Oxford, with single and double track suitable for 100 mph trains, and a five-minute planning headway suitable for future East-West Rail services, a rebuilt and enlarged station at Bicester Town, a platform extension at Islip, a new parkway station at the existing Water Eaton Park & Ride, and two new platforms at Oxford station.

A Transport & Works Act Order was submitted in 2010 and a public inquiry held in early 2011. The Inspector had recommended refusal due to the existence of bats within the Wolvercot Tunnel, but the Secretary of State has said she would over-rule the Inspector if mitigation measures could be agreed with Natural England. Permission is expected to be granted in early 2012.

Chiltern Railways will complete design work during 2012, with construction taking place in 2013 so that services can commence by May 2014.

The County Council strongly supports implementation of the Evergreen 3 project and will offer assistance to Chiltern Railways to ensure it is delivered efficiently.

Oxford Station

Oxford station has been identified by Network Rail as being a significant constraint on the network and is **our top priority for improvement**. Once the £850 million redevelopment

of Reading station is complete, this will become the biggest single capacity bottleneck in the Thames Valley and a major barrier to rail and economic growth.

Network Rail completed an upgrade to the two goods loops north of the station in 2008, and this gave some operating flexibility with the ability for parallel train movements that hitherto were not possible.

The *Great Western RUS* identifies the biggest issue as the lack of through platforms, and terminating trains that take several minutes to vacate the platform once passengers have alighted. The current layout also necessitates empty stock movements having to cross at the north end of the station between arrival and departure, which again restricts flexibility of operation.

It is apparent that between 2014 and 2019 further infrastructure will be required to achieve robust performance and adequate capacity as there are significant limitations in capacity within the station area and the approaches into and out of the station which are the cause of poor performance. It is predicted that the number of peak services using the station is close to the maximum that can be accommodated, before any additional passenger or freight growth.

Options to add more capacity include the south bay platform and transfer deck developed by Network Rail and Oxfordshire County Council, and a more comprehensive scheme that would result in four through-platforms north of Botley Road. The latter scheme would involve demolition of many of the existing station buildings and possibly other nearby buildings outside the station footprint.

The County Council strongly supports the major redevelopment of Oxford station, and will continue to work with Network Rail and other partners to bring this about.

The platforms are orientated for passenger activity at the south end of the station, and they lack appropriate passenger facilities. In the future there will be much greater activity at the north end of the station, with Chiltern Railways Evergreen 3 and East-West Rail. This may lead to crowding and safety concerns on the platforms. Further development is needed to identify the optimum solution for the station layout.

Resolving the problems at Oxford station will bring major benefits for Oxford's West End regeneration, Oxford and Oxfordshire more widely, in addition to strategic benefits for long distance passenger and freight services passing through Oxford.

Work is underway to agree a masterplan for the station that will increase capacity, improve passenger facilities and create a multi-modal interchange with access to the city centre and Oxford West End through Frideswide Square. Given the availability of public transport alternatives, **the County Council would like to see greater access by sustainable modes (bus, walking and cycling), with a limit on car parking in favour of edge of city 'parkway' stations.**

Any redevelopment will intrinsically be linked to the industry's plans for electrification and resignalling. **The County Council wants to ensure that all schemes take account of each other, particularly when locating new infrastructure, and would like to see the establishment of a Project Board to oversee all projects at the station**

Didcot Parkway Station Interchange

The County Council is leading the redevelopment of the station forecourt to create a multi-modal transport interchange. Funding of £5.6 million has been committed by the County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council.

When completed, the station will be a high quality gateway to Science Vale UK, and able to handle increases in demand for travel that will arise from significant new housing and job creation.

The project is complex in nature. There are numerous external partners, with Network Rail and First Great Western, and the station has to remain open throughout. The existence of signalling cables has meant very careful planning to ensure that the construction period of 15 months is problem-free.

The project involves reconstructing, removal or diversion of underground utilities, including electricity and drainage, and demolition of redundant buildings. Other work involves an upgraded electricity supply, CCTV, lighting, retaining walls and landscaping. The key aim is to segregate each mode of transport to reduce conflicts and congestion. This will create extra space for pedestrians, cyclists, buses and taxis. There will be improved access for disabled people and motorcyclists, and a new car park will be created.

The scheme is due for completion by 2013.

Access to Science Vale UK

Science Vale UK was designated an Enterprise Zone in 2011, and will have substantial private investment over the next 20 years to further develop a world-class science-based research and development capability. It is already the location of internationally renowned companies and significant business and employment sites.

To ensure the area maintains its attractiveness as a place to do business and fulfils its potential it must have excellent transport links. The County Council supports moves that will bring improved rail access to Science Vale UK, including existing stations at Culham and Didcot Parkway, and a potential new station at Grove & Wantage.

Culham is an important commuter station, primarily for the adjacent Science Centre, and there is potential to improve the train service at the busiest times, and at regular intervals during the daytime. A masterplan for the expansion of the Science Centre recognises the role the railway can play in encouraging sustainable access.

The County Council welcomes improvements in the frequency of trains throughout the day, linked to development of station facilities, such as a car park and footpath into the Culham Science Centre.

The major railhead within Science Vale UK is at **Didcot Parkway**, and the County Council has been investing in better passenger facilities jointly with First Great Western since 2006 and have worked together to identify further improvements to be funded by DfT's *National Stations Improvement Programme* (NSIP). The County Council is also redeveloping the station forecourt to create a £5.6 million transport interchange, in partnership with South Oxfordshire District Council. Work is due to start in spring 2012.

Improved connectivity is important for economic and business growth, and the County Council would like to see:

- **More Main Line services** calling at the station - four trains in each hour to Bristol (1 via Bath Spa and 1 via Bristol Parkway), Cardiff (1) and Cheltenham (1); and
- **Reintroduction of Cross Country services** to give businesses direct access to Birmingham International Airport and the North of England – the need to change trains at Oxford is a major deterrent considering the proximity of the motorway network.

The County Council has had an aspiration for a **new station at Grove & Wantage** since around 2000, and has secured outline planning consent. Following the loss of the Oxford-Bristol train service in 2003 achieving the station became a longer term goal.
With subsequent changes in spatial planning and plans for extensive new housing in the area, as well as the strategic importance of Science Vale UK, the time is right to look again at the potential for Grove & Wantage station.

The franchise renewal in 2013 may provide an opportunity to seek an appropriate train service – possibly releasing capacity on longer distance services by encouraging local travel between Swindon and Didcot to be made on 'local' services. It is important to consider the station and train service in the context of a wider corridor approach between Bicester/Oxford and Swindon/Bristol, and a business case needs to clearly demonstrate how they would support growth and economic development.

The County Council will work in partnership with neighbouring local authorities and the rail industry to investigate the viability of a new station at Grove & Wantage, and an appropriate 'local' train service to serve the station.

Electrification

In November 2010, the Government announced the electrification of the Great Western Main Line as far as Didcot, Oxford and Newbury, and this was followed by a second announcement in March 2011 which extended the works west of Didcot to Bristol and Cardiff. At the same time the existing signalling will be renewed to ensure it is compatible with the new overhead power equipment.

Electrification presents huge opportunities -

- It is **better for the environment** as electric trains are more reliable and emit 20% less CO per passenger than diesel trains, even allowing for electricity generation. They are quieter and virtually silent when waiting at stations;

- The new fleet of trains will have **more seats** and **journey time savings** can be made; and

- **Cutting costs** as electric trains are around 16% **cheaper to operate**, are lighter causing less wear and tear, and they require less maintenance.

There are 22 road bridges that require parapet works to protect people from reaching the 25kV AC overhead power lines. **The County Council strongly supports electrification and will help facilitate delivery by assisting with associated highway works.**

There are also likely to be alterations to the sidings north of Oxford station so they can handle a mix of electric and diesel trains.

It is important for the County Council to have ongoing dialogue with Network Rail during the planning stages, which are already underway, to ensure that infrastructure (such as sub-stations, transformers, feeder stations and masts) is not located where it could jeopardise or make it difficult to achieve future projects. Specifically, this is a key issue at Oxford station and around the proposed site for a Grove & Wantage station.

When completed, most of the existing two and three carriage Turbo diesel trains will be cascaded to services around Bristol and Devon & Cornwall. A small fleet will be retained to operate branch line services, such as those to Henley-on-Thames.

They will be replaced by 100mph four carriage Class 319 trains that are being cascaded from Thameslink (which will receive new trains as part of the ongoing £6 billion upgrade of that route). Although they will be 30 years old by the time they arrive in Oxfordshire they are expected to get an internal refurbishment before re-entering service.

Intercity Express Programme (IEP)

Following completion of electrification along the Great Western Main Line, a new fleet of 49 Intercity Express trains will be introduced onto services between London Paddington, Oxford, Bristol and South Wales.

The fleet will comprise 308 vehicles and a mix of five or eight carriage bi-mode (electric and diesel) sets and eight carriage electric sets. The bi-mode variant is intended to be used on services that need to run through onto non-electrified routes, and can be connected together to form 10-carriage trains at the busiest times.

In 2009, the Government announced that Agility Trains, led by Hitachi, had been awarded the contract. Just before the 2010 General Election a review was carried out into the value for money of the contract, and it was not until 2011 that a much-reduced order was placed.

The IEP train is not tried and tested; there are no long-distance high speed intercity bi-mode trains operating anywhere in the world, and the 26 metre carriages are new to the United Kingdom. These are both risks to a successful introduction.

IEP trains are lighter and more fuel efficient than existing HSTs which should allow for faster journey times. However, the bi-mode sets have to carry around a weighty diesel generator to power the 3 under floor electric motors, and there are concerns over the amount of power and acceleration these trains will be able to achieve, particularly when there are frequent stations stops, such as along the Cotswolds & Malvern Line.

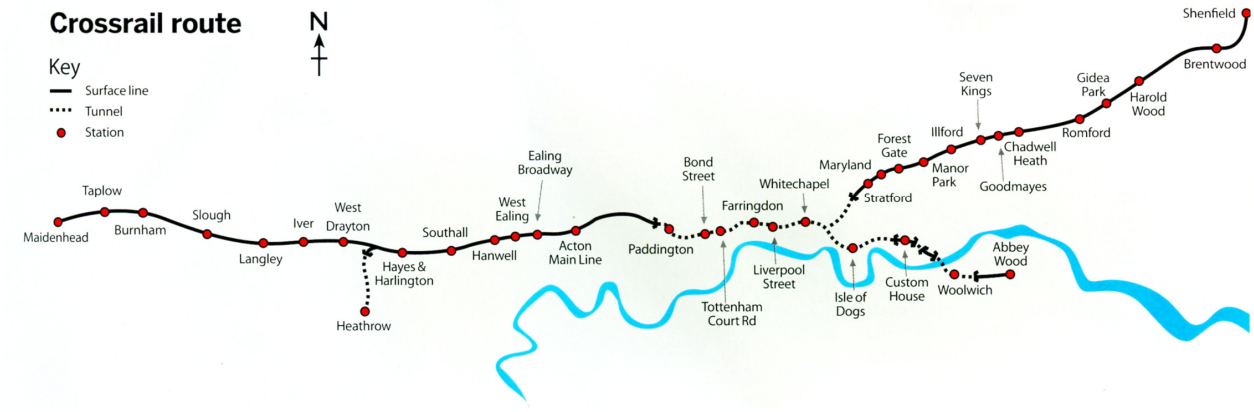
It is envisaged that fast services will utilise a 5-car electric IEP, with 339 commuter seats, and services to Worcester/Hereford will use 5-car bi-mode sets, with seating for 279 (558 for a 10-carriage train) - this compares with 550 seats on the existing HSTs.

For the latter, the changeover between overhead electric power and the on-board diesel generator will take place at Oxford. It is not known whether this can occur ‘on the move’ or whether the train must be stationery, which may create problems with platform occupancy at Oxford.

The County Council will need to understand how service patterns will change as a result of IEP introduction, and the operating characteristics of the new trains in the context of station capacity and redevelopment. The first trains are expected to enter service in 2018.

Crossrail

Crossrail is currently Europe's biggest engineering project and will transform travel across London when it opens in 2018. The network will connect 37 stations, including Heathrow Airport and Maidenhead in the west with Canary Wharf, Abbey Wood and Shenfield in the east, but the effects on existing train services will extend far beyond the capital.



Although the cost of Crossrail is almost £15 billion it is expected to deliver substantial economic benefits to London and the South-East, and contribute £42 billion to the UK economy. Construction work has started on the central section to build the new tunnels and stations, with preliminary work taking place elsewhere.

Each train will accommodate up to 1,500 passengers and around 200 million passengers are expected to use Crossrail each year. The timetable for Crossrail services has not yet been finalised but during the weekday morning peak, it is assumed there will be 10 trains per hour into central London from the Great Western Main Line - four trains starting from Maidenhead, four trains from Heathrow Airport and two trains from West Drayton, with a further 14 trains starting at Paddington. Slightly fewer of trains would operate against the flow, and a similar pattern, albeit in reverse, would operate in the afternoon peak time.

This level of service means that Crossrail will have almost exclusive use of the relief lines and will be a mix of stopping patterns to minimise journey times from outer stations and allow limited capacity for non-Crossrail services on the Great Western Main Line.

The majority of First Great Western services that start east of Reading in the morning peak, including the three through trains from Henley-on-Thames, would be replaced by Crossrail. Most First Great Western outer suburban services that start west of Reading would be amended to operate non-stop between Reading and Paddington, presumably using the main lines, whilst any residual services will call at principal stations using the relief lines shared with Crossrail.

It is unclear what the pattern of service will be between Reading and Maidenhead, and whether that is appropriate to meet the demand from stations such as Twyford, and the

Henley-on-Thames branch line, and also whether cross-Reading journeys to intermediate stations will still be possible.

For Oxfordshire, Crossrail brings potential new journey opportunities but also some concern about the continuation of existing services. The County Council will use all reasonable endeavours to protect existing commuter services.

There is uncertainty about local services east of Reading. In a worst case scenario the existing through services from Henley-on-Thames would be withdrawn, with passengers then required to change trains at Twyford, and again at Maidenhead onto Crossrail.

If Crossrail is extended to Reading it would guarantee four trains an hour at peak times and could then allow one of the existing stopping services from Oxford to be diverted to Gatwick Airport, thereby providing new connectivity with the Brighton Main Line avoiding the need to travel across London.

The County Council therefore supports the extension of Crossrail to Reading from the outset, and its role as an outer interchange for the Thames Valley.

Banbury Station Redevelopment

Although Banbury station is considered to be fit for purpose it does not provide an attractive or welcoming gateway to the town centre or a practical transport interchange.

There are problems with traffic congestion at the Station Approach / Bridge Street junction which hampers access to the station and its car parks at peak times, and the dispersed car parking is inconvenient.

There is dislocation between the rail and bus stations, which is compounded by the busy roads that have to be crossed by pedestrians in between.

To assist bus, car and taxi access a proposal has existed for several years to create a new through route between Bridge Street and Tramway Road but this has not yet secured any funding.

Broader proposals to provide an integrated rail and bus interchange on the forecourt, with better facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and taxis, and facilities for through and terminating bus services have also been discussed for some time.

The County Council will continue to work with its partners Cherwell District Council and Chiltern Railways to develop and agree proposals to improve the station area as part of the Canalside redevelopment.

Chiltern Railways, as the station operator, has recently increased the number of parking spaces, but has also proposed new decked car parks to consolidate parking on the east and west sides of the station, including a new pedestrian footbridge so the station can be reached from the east side.

The County Council welcomes the consolidation of car parking, and direct access to the east side of the railway.

High Speed 2

To be inserted into pre-consultation document

Western Access to Heathrow

To be inserted into pre-consultation document

Oxford Eastern Arc

To be inserted into pre-consultation document

Carterton Rail Link

To be inserted into pre-consultation document

Freight Facility Improvements

To be inserted into pre-consultation document

CHAPTER 7: FUNDING AND DELIVERY OF THE STRATEGY

Introduction

This strategy will require investment by the public and private sectors, coming from both the rail industry and a wider variety of transport and non-transport sources. The latter are particularly important given that the objective of the strategy is to deliver job creation and housing growth.

For many projects, it will be necessary to 'pool' resources and secure investment from a number of sources. In this way, projects will be able to address a number of aspirations from each partner and are more likely to come to fruition. We have previously delivered projects where contributions from one partner have been "matched by others" and all partners have a stake in successful delivery.

Partnership funding may also be able to deliver wider outcomes that would not otherwise be possible if organisations worked alone and in "silos". As an example, our aspiration for Oxford railway station includes track capacity, passenger facilities, multi-modal access, town planning, links to the city centre and integration with adjacent regeneration areas.

The purpose of this section is therefore to outline the main funding sources. **However the identification of potential funding does not necessarily mean the County Council will decide to pursue it**. Decisions will be made collectively in partnership with our other stakeholders.

We recognise in the current economic climate that there are many pressures on funding, and close working with partners will be needed to ensure that money is targeted where it can deliver the right results within a realistic investment strategy that can enable strategic funding decisions to be made.

Rail Industry Funding Sources

High Level Output Specification (HLOS)

The DfT has the legal responsibility to set out the rail services and projects that it wants the rail industry to deliver over the next five-year Control Period (2014-19). A supporting Statement of Funds Available (SoFA) then sets out the finance that can be used to deliver the HLOS specification. The DfT will publish the HLOS and SoFA for public consultation in summer 2012.

The DfT will then release Government funding to Network Rail once the latter's Business Plan has been approved by the Office for Rail Regulation, which is due to take place in early 2013.

HLOS is therefore a huge opportunity for the County Council and partners to make the case for additional investment. The East-West Rail project has recently been identified as a potential project that could be funded in this way, and work is ongoing to validate the business case and specification. Other projects, such as the redevelopment of Oxford Station, capacity improvements between Didcot Parkway and Wolvercot Junction, and a direct service from Oxford to Bristol, might also be funded though this source if proven to be viable.

Station Commercial Project Fund (SCPF)

The £100m station commercial project facility is an initiative developed by the Department for Transport in partnership with Network Rail, Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) and the ORR. It is available for capital expenditure projects generating additional income and increase the value of a franchise to the Government. This includes extra car parking with charges, new retail units at stations and revenue protection (e.g. ticket gates).

Projects must provide a financial return over and above project costs and be completed by 31st March 2014. In Oxfordshire, the car park extensions at Radley and Charlbury stations received funding in the first tranche of funding. A number of bids were also submitted for the second tranche but were unsuccessful. The fund is administered on behalf of the DfT by Network Rail, and works are delivered by the train operating companies.

National Stations Improvement Programme (NSIP)

In 2007 the DfT launched a £150m programme aimed at delivering noticeable and lasting improvements in the station environment for the benefit of passengers. The projects have tended to focus on passenger facilities, waiting areas, signage, lifts and footbridges and security. NSIP is again administered by Network Rail and runs until 2014 with over 150 stations included in the programme nationally.

The only station included in Oxfordshire is at Didcot Parkway, where the modernisation of the concourse and ticket hall were identified as being complimentary to the redevelopment of the forecourt. The works are due to be carried out by First Great Western during 2012.

Commercial Investment by Franchises

Rail industry partners, in particular the train operators, are able to invest their own money in projects which they feel will generate a financial return within the term of their franchise.

These projects are therefore funded by the private sector with no need for public subsidy. Chiltern Railway's currently have the only long 20-year franchise and their Evergreen 3 project is funded this way as they will receive adequate payback on their investment.

FirstGroup has also invested its own funding in acquiring rolling stock directly, and carrying out refurbishment to their existing trains as part of their franchise. Often the DfT agrees to underwrite any loss or guarantees a buy-back arrangement where the franchise is short.

More risky is investment in new services as they take some time to generate demand and tend to have high operating costs. The introduction of longer franchises should incentivise the train operators to make more private investments in the future, and the County Council will need to identify and discuss potential projects with franchise bidders and train operators.
If there is available network capacity, non-franchised "open access" passenger operators are able to introduce services if they believe there is a strong enough demand and a good business case. Freight operators work on a purely commercial basis and are able to work with their customers to develop freight flows if there is the available capacity at the right time.

Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs)

Community Rail Partnerships are local communities, individuals and organisations who take on a significant role in the development and running of their local rail services and stations; in partnership with the Train Operating Companies and Network Rail. CRPs generally cover lines with speeds less than 75mph and with little or no freight traffic.

Research by the independent Rail Consultancy Group has concluded that:

- There are around 4,000 volunteers involved in community rail around Britain; and
- They contribute over 1.2 million hours of work, bringing around £27 million of extra value to the rail industry.

Research by Transport Regeneration Ltd suggests that CRPs could generate substantial benefits with every £1 invested in a CRP bringing around £4.60 in benefits.

Another form of community involvement is station adoption, and the County Council has been very active in supporting 'Friends of …' groups at a number of local stations where fund raising and business support has helped regenerate the station and create a sense of local pride.

The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) is the umbrella organisation for community rail partnerships.

The County Council is particularly interested to explore whether a CRP would be possible for the Henley-on-Thames branch line, marketed as the Regatta Line, in order to boost tourism and visitors.

Rail Quality Partnerships (RQPs)

Responsibilities for the provision of rail services and for the rail network are split between various organisations; with various stakeholder objectives, timescales, and budgets.

An RQP is an opportunity for the County Council, the rail industry and other stakeholders to work together to plan and deliver further improvements to services and station facilities. This can be achieved by pooling resources in order to secure value for money both for the partners and existing and potential passengers.

The County Council will look to establish a countywide RQP with its rail industry partners.

Wider Funding Sources

Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011-2030

The LTP features a five year programme of investment across all transport modes; with the money allocated from a variety of sources including the Department for Transport (DfT), the County Council's own capital resources and developer contributions. There are a number of other schemes and area packages which will make a direct and positive contribution to improving multi-modal rail access, including:

- Frideswide Square, Oxford (as part of a broader project to upgrade the station, facilities and access);
- Science Vale Transport Package, including new highway links, cycling and public transport networks; and
- A countywide allocation for integrated transport schemes to supplement developer contributions.

Major Transport Schemes

The DfT had previously provided ring-fenced funding for major transport schemes over £5 million on receipt of a detailed value for money business case. Whilst there is no money for new projects until at least 2016, local authorities can start the process of business case preparation. However the DfT is still considering whether to channel future major scheme funding through consortia of Local Enterprise Partnerships. Future funding for rail-related schemes is likely to be channelled through the LEP Local Investment Plan, underpinning the importance of working with them to identify potential projects.

Developer Contributions

Section 106 Contributions: The traditional method of securing developer contributions is Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Planning obligations (or "Section 106 Agreements") are negotiated, usually as part of a planning application, between local authorities (County and District) and the developer, and are intended to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. Obligations can also be secured through unilateral undertakings by developers, and must be:

- Relevant to planning;
- Necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms;
- Directly related to the proposed development;
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development; and
- Reasonable in all other respects.

Planning obligations cannot be used solely to resolve existing deficiencies in infrastructure provision; or to secure contributions to the achievement of wider planning objectives that are not necessary to allow consent to be given for a particular development.

In development areas (such as Bicester and Science Vale UK), Section 106 Agreements are likely to form an important part in delivering supporting transport infrastructure, which may include routes to railway stations. Indeed, in Bicester, we are already using Section 106 Agreements to fund enhanced train services on the Oxford-Bicester branch line that deliver people sustainably to a major retail outlet.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): CIL allows planning authorities in England and Wales to charge a discretionary levy on new development; to raise funds for local or sub-regional infrastructure to support the development of the area. CIL is calculated using a formula that takes an average cost distributed across a number of developments; which enables contributions to fund infrastructure in an area, rather than to support the specific development that is seeking planning permission.

The applicability of CIL to rail projects will require close joint working between the County Council and any District Council that decides to introduce a charge.

Locally Retained Business Rates (LRBR)

In July 2011 the Government launched a consultation into local retention of business rates from April 2013.

The key change would see district councils and unitary authorities retain responsibility for the billing and collection of business rates. But instead of contributing all business rates into the central pool and receiving Formula Grant some business rates would be retained

locally. The baseline level of funding for each authority would be set so that at the start of the system, funding would be equivalent to that under the current system. From then on funding would rise or fall depending on the size of the business rates base in the area.

County councils would receive a share of business rates revenues from the districts in their area (and a top up from other areas if relevant), rather than receiving Formula Grant. The baseline level of funding would be set, and subsequently rise or fall, in the same way as billing authorities.

Any use of LRBR funding for rail would need to demonstrate benefits to the business community; and the County Council will need to work closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership to decide whether this source of funding is appropriate for rail projects.

Supplementary Business Rates (SBR)

Under the Business Rates Supplement Act 2009 local authorities are permitted to levy an additional Supplementary Business Rate of up to two pence in the pound, in order to raise revenue for local projects.

From 2010 county councils and unitary authorities will be able to levy the rate on any business within their jurisdiction. Properties liable for business rates but with a rateable value of less than £50,000 will be exempt from SBR. The revenue generated from SBR will be locally raised and retained and can only be used on economic development, such as infrastructure. Under the prudential borrowing system, local authorities would be able to raise finance and pay it back using SBR.

Any use of SBR funding for rail would need to demonstrate benefits to the business community; and the County Council will need to work closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership to decide whether this source of funding is appropriate for rail projects.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) works on the basis that a project in a specific area results in an overall increase in the council's tax base, which in turn increases the potential revenue generated from taxation i.e. the "tax increment". If there is any shortfall in funding for the project, credit may be raised on expected increased tax yield.

TIF will allow local authorities to borrow against predicted growth in locally raised business rates, and the borrowing can then be used to fund key infrastructure and other capital projects. TIF might be suitable funding for projects which enable economic development and therefore help to generate the additional business rates.

At present the government is introducing primary legislation to enable TIF schemes to be introduced. The County Council will monitor progress but would only pursue such funding if it were clear that the benefits would substantially outweigh any risks.

New Homes Bonus

The New Homes Bonus commenced in April 2011, and will match fund the additional council tax raised for new homes and empty properties brought back into use, with an additional amount for affordable homes, for the following six years.

The Department for Communities and Local Government has set aside £200m in 2011/12 and £250m for each of the following three years. The additional revenue for each authority would depend on the levels of Council Tax and new housing planned.

The bonus may not yield large sums of money; but may provide a useful supplement as part of a wider funding package in development areas.

Land Value Capture

An innovative way to fund public transport is through Land Value Capture. LVC aims to recover the capital cost of investment in transport infrastructure by capturing some or all of the resultant increase in land values gained by land developers as a direct result of the investment. This could be particularly relevant around new stations.

Betterment tax is a levy to cover the cost of investment which raises the land value at no cost to the developer/owner. Betterment tax is directed towards the beneficiaries of any increased accessibility, reduced congestion and pollution, and lower transport costs that can be achieved due to public transport investment. It has several advantages, the most noteworthy being that it shifts the burden of infrastructure finance from the public to the properties that directly receive the benefit.

Three potential mechanisms for betterment tax are:

- A uniform land tax, paid annually without discrimination;
- A tax on income generated from the sale of land and buildings at appropriate tax rates, providing tax deductibility for the value of improvements;
- Capturing the difference between the unimproved value of the land at its current use and its unimproved value following the investment.

Air Rights

Air rights are another form of value capture that involves granting development rights above, or below, a railway station that will then generate an increment in land value.

Seeking the "air rights" to build over an existing shopping centre, rail station or transport corridor is something property developers have already become adept at in London's key business districts; the railway stations at Liverpool Street and Charing Cross both boast office complexes built over their platforms.

Proposals for redeveloping other city centre rail stations are based on selling the air rights to build shops or offices as part of the scheme, as these then increase land value to the benefit of both the public and private sectors.

Delivery

The County Council is not ultimately responsible for the planning and delivery of major rail investment schemes; and instead must work closely with the rail industry and with wider stakeholders to identify and prioritise value for money projects that deliver both user and (if possible) wider economic benefits.

This strategy will support the county council's LTP delivery programme whilst also actively contributing to future developments within the rail industry, including:

- Re-franchising of Great Western (commencing 2013);
- Subsequent re-franchising of Cross Country (2016) and Chiltern (2022);
- Strategic projects which are already partly or full funded; and
- Capital investment though HLOS for future Control Periods.

Our Rail Development Officer will lead delivery of the programme; supported by a range of officers across transport, planning and economic development functions; with the LEP having a particularly important role.

Working with communities is seen as particularly important in order to ensure that rail stations and services are further developed as valuable community assets as part of the localism and Big Society agendas. Joint working to integrate rail into wider development plans through the District Council Local Development Frameworks will be particularly critical so there is a realistic expectation about what rail can deliver, and an understanding of how development, spatial planning and rail proposals can support each other.

We will set up a Rail Programme Board that will co-ordinate all activity around the various investment projects - with specific emphasis on:

- Identification of passenger demand and value for money;

- Contribution to identified problems and wider policy objectives;
- Option identification;
- Operational feasibility;
- Design;
- Stakeholder consultation; and
- Business Case Development and Funding.

Where investment proposals and ideas have 'in-principle' support from the rail industry, we will work with partners to identify suitable revenue budgets to progress any feasibility and technical work. Whilst in some cases this expenditure will be at the promoter's risk, and could be speculative, it is necessary to determine whether a specific proposal is viable and worthy of further development.

The County Council has been a supporter of East-West Rail since 1995, and considerable sums have been spent by the local authority consortium to prove the viability of the project and gain the support needed to see the scheme delivered. The recent announcement by the Government to back East-West Rail and provide funding shows their is merit in taking a pro-active approach. It is important that projects are in a suitable state of readiness and can be advanced when funding becomes available.

CHAPTER 8: PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Risk Factors

The delivery of this Rail Strategy relies heavily on the rail industry, and is therefore subject to funding available to the Department for Transport, Network Rail and the train operating companies. Aspirations set out in this plan are those of Oxfordshire County Council and therefore do not necessarily correspond with the rail industry's own priorities.

Schemes being developed and delivered by the County Council are also limited by the authority's level of funding available.

Programme for Updating

This Rail Strategy will be updated in response to any significant changes in the rail industry that have a direct affect on Oxfordshire, and in any event no later than April 2017.

Reporting Progress

Progress in delivering the strategy will be reported through the Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Report.

Equal Opportunities

The key equal opportunity issues relating to the Rail Strategy are those of physical access to and on stations, and problems about fear of crime. Both of these issues are addressed through the station standards and consequent aspirations for improvements set out in this document.

Environmental Impact

The County Council promotes rail travel as it has lower air pollutant emissions than car travel. The Rail Strategy promotes sustainable transport as the means of access to the station.

It is recognised that any new rail construction will have a direct impact on the local environment, and that construction traffic can have a detrimental impact on residents

CHAPTER 9: CONSULTATION

Stakeholder Consultation

Consultees are requested to comment on this draft Rail Strategy for Oxfordshire which has been endorsed for consultation by the Council's Cabinet.

We welcome views on the proposals for development of the rail network in Oxfordshire in the period up to 2034. Throughout the document we have highlighted **key consultation questions** in **yellow**, and we would particularly value your views on these.

Action following consultation

Following the consultation period, the County Council will consider responses, undertake any further analysis as necessary and, if appropriate, make revisions to the Strategy.

The County Council will produce a summary of the outcome of the consultation process and will publish this online in April 2012, and in the same month the Council's Cabinet will be asked to adopt the Rail Strategy.

Invitations to consultees

A list of bodies formally consulted is set out in Appendix 3.

Other rail user groups and members of the general public may wish to respond, and are welcome to do so. When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation.

The County Council will process personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

It should be noted that submissions will not in general receive an individual response.

How to respond

We would very much like to receive comments and feedback from anyone with an interest in the future development of the county's rail network.

Details about the consultation can be found at http://myconsultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk

You can let us have your views in two ways:

i) **ONLINE** – by completing the online questionnaire; or

ii) **BY POST** – by downloading and printing the questionnaire.

Responses to this consultation should be sent to:

Rail Strategy Consultation
Oxfordshire County Council
Transport Policy & Strategy (ASa)
3rd Floor, Speedwell House
Speedwell Street
OXFORD OX1 1NE

The deadline for receipt of comments is Friday 16th March 2012 - earlier replies will be very welcome.

CHAPTER 10: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

We want to make reading this draft strategy as easy as possible. Therefore are a number of terms which are used throughout this document:

- **Connectivity** – Describes the range of rail services from a particular station to other stations.
- **Control Period** – The five year time slices within which Network Rail programmes its investment. We are currently in Control Period 4 (2009-14). Future Control Periods are from 2014-19, 2019-24 etc.
- **Franchise** – The right of a private company to provide passenger rail services for a number of years; with the Department for Transport managing the process.
- **Infrastructure** – Physical assets including railway tracks / stations / freight depots, communications equipment (such as signalling) and access to stations via the highway.
- **Path** -
- **PPM** -
- **Services** – The running of trains, stations and freight terminals.
- **Rail industry** – The collective term for a number of organisations (see Chapter 1) who have direct investment, regulatory and operational responsibility for the rail network.

To be inserted into pre-consultation document

Appendix 1: Station facilities and standards

The 22 stations in Oxfordshire are listed in the following table, along with summary details about their current passenger facilities.

Station	Cat	2009/10 Station Usage	Car Parking	Induction Loop	Secure Station Status	Toilets	Seating and Catering	Public address	Customer information screens	Ticket Office opening hours
Appleford	F2	9,086	X	X	✓	X	Waiting shelter	✓	✓ WebCIS	Unstaffed
Ascott-under-Wychwood	F2	2,264	✓	X	✓	X	Shelter	✓	✓ Web	Unstaffed
Banbury	C1	2,048,682	✓	X	?	✓	Waiting room & shelter Catering Available	✓	✓ CIS	0545-2015 (MF) 0635-1915 (Sat) 0810-1740 (Su)
Bicester North	D	1,126,838	✓	X	?	✓ Not Accessible	Waiting shelter	✓	✓ CIS	0550-1915 (MF) 0635-1800 (Sat) 0840-1610 (Su)
Bicester Town	F1	104,788	✓	X	✓	X	Waiting shelter	✓	✓ WebCIS	Unstaffed
Charlbury	E	231,582	✓	✓	✓	✓ Not Accessible	Waiting room	✓	✓ CIS	0555-1220 (MF) 0605-1235 (Sat)

Station	Cat	2009/10 Station Usage	Car Parking	Induction Loop	Secure Station Status	Toilets	Seating and Catering	Public address	Customer information screens	Ticket Office opening hours
Cholsey	E	185,970	✓	✓	✓	✓ Not Accessible	Waiting room	✓	✓ CIS	0630-1300 (MF) 0630-1200 (Sat)
Combe	F2	1,836	X	X	✓	X	Seats	✓	✓ WebCIS	Unstaffed
Culham	F1	55,226	X	X	✓	X	Shelter	✓	✓ WebCIS	Unstaffed
Didcot Parkway	B	2,686,338	✓	✓	✓	✓ Accessible	Waiting room Catering available	✓	✓ CIS	0600-1940 (MF) 0630-1940 (Sat) 0800-1940 (Su)
Finstock	F2	1,458	X	X	✓	X	Shelter	✓	✓ WebCIS	Unstaffed
Goring & Streatley	E	374,298	✓	✓	✓	✓ Not Accessible	Waiting room	✓	✓ CIS	0630-1300 (MF) 0630-1200 (Sat)
Hanborough	F2	104,050	✓	X	✓	X	Shelter	✓	✓ WebCIS	Unstaffed
Henley-on-Thames	E	609,410	✓	✓	✓	X	Seats. Catering available	✓	✓ WebCIS	0600-1300 (MF) 0700-1300 (Sat)
Heyford	F2	23,496	✓	X	✓	X	Shelter	✓	✓ WebCIS	Unstaffed
Islip	F2	23,722	✓	X	✓	X	Shelter	✓	✓ WebCIS	Unstaffed

Station	Cat	2009/10 Station Usage	Car Parking	Induction Loop	Secure Station Status	Toilets	Seating and Catering	Public address	Customer information screens	Ticket Office opening hours
Kingham	E	137,944	✓	X	✓	X	Waiting room. Catering available	✓	✓ CIS	0550-1230 (MF) 0550-1230 (Sat)
Oxford	B	5,586,615	✓	✓	✓	✓ Accessible	Waiting room. Catering available	✓	✓ CIS	0545-2000 (MF) 0730-2000 (Sat) 0715-2000 (Su)
Radley	F1	74,820	✓	X	✓	X	Shelter	✓	✓ WebCIS	Unstaffed
Shiplake	F2	74,604	✓	X	✓	X	Shelter	✓	✓ WebCIS	Unstaffed
Shipton	F2	2,890	X	X	✓	X	Shelter	✓	✓ WebCIS	Unstaffed
Tackley	F2	20,250	X	X	✓	X	Shelter (South Platform)	✓	✓ WebCIS	Unstaffed

Station Categorisation

Since privatisation in 1997, Britain's 2,535 stations have been divided into six categories with almost half of them falling into the unstaffed 'F' group, which actually account for only 2% of daily rail journeys. Only two thirds of customers are satisfied with Britain's stations[ii].

The following table shows the number of stations in Oxfordshire within each of these categories, and the qualifying criteria.

[ii] National Passenger Survey Spring 2009

Category	No. of Stations	Type of Station	Criteria per annum
A	0	National Hub	More than 2m trips; and over £20 million revenue
B	2	Regional Interchange	More than 2m trips; and over £20 million revenue
C1	1	Important Feeder - mainline	500,000 to 2m trips; and between £2 and £20 million revenue
C2	0	Important Feeder - suburban	500,000 to 2m trips; and between £2 and £20 million revenue
D	1	Medium Staffed	250,000 to 500,000 trips; and between £1 and £2 million revenue
E	5	Small Staffed	Up to 250,000 trips; and between £1 and £2 million revenue
F1	3	Small Un-staffed - Basic+Plus	100,000 to 250,000 trips; and less than £1 million revenue
F2	10	Small Un-staffed - Basic	Below 100,000 trips; and less than £1 million revenue

Minimum Standards

We have used the *Better Rail Stations* study to develop detailed minimum station standards for each station category and would like to see these made a mandatory requirement in all future franchise specifications, and we encourage train operating companies to achieve at least an 80% station satisfaction score by 2016.

We would also like to see each station reviewed every five years to ensure it remains in the most appropriate category. Stations are the shop window of the rail network and must be maintained to a consistently high standard to meet passengers' expectations and to handle the forecast growth in passenger numbers over the next two decades, safely and efficiently.

Minimum Standards for Accessibility	Station Category						
	B	C1	C2	D	E	F1	F2
Street direction signs							
• Station signed to & from main road(s), pedestrian and cycle routes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Station signs							
• Totem Pole with National Rail symbol and station name	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Illuminated Totem Pole and comprehensive external station signing	✓	✓	✓				
• Station signing in Brunel alphabet with use of pictograms	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Car Parking							
• Small station parking area (<10 spaces)						✓	✓
• Designated station car park with adequate number of spaces	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
• Premium 'pre-bookable' guaranteed parking	✓	✓	✓				
• Electric vehicle charging points	✓						
Bus information							
• Bus timetables displayed in or near station entrance (where practical)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Plusbus multi-modal ticketing scheme for seamless travel	✓	✓	✓				
• Bus interchange on or near forecourt	✓						
Cycle Parking							
• Minimum of 4 cycle racks (capacity 8 cycles)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Secure cycle spaces (undercover) for 5% of car park capacity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
• Staffed Cycle Hub/secure cycle spaces with storage for 15% of car park capacity	✓						
Taxis							
• If no taxi rank, phone number(s) prominently displayed					✓	✓	✓
• A well-signed taxi rank, located outside station if possible	✓	✓	✓	✓			
• Provision of 'accessible taxis' as part of any retail agreement	✓	✓					
Access for All							
• Lowered kerbs from road(s) to station threshold	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Step-free access to each platform by 2016	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
• Full access from main entrance to all platforms, including lifts/escalators, by 2020	✓	✓					
• Wheelchair train ramps (if station is staffed and accessible)	✓	✓	✓	✓			
• Tactile paving along all platform edges with scheduled services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Station Travel Plan	✓	✓					

Minimum Standards for Information	Station Category						
	B	C1	C2	D	E	F1	F2
Train Running information							
• Visual indicator(s) showing real-time information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Additional summary screens and audible announcements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
• Inclusion of bus departure information on CIS screens	✓						
Help Point							
• On all platforms with scheduled services; with Emergency and Information buttons	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
• An additional staffed help desk facility (available 0700-1900)	✓						
Timetables							
• Simplified summary poster for Community Rail lines						✓	✓
• Poster with all current train services and advance notification of engineering work	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Local information							
• Street map & useful information (e.g. bus/taxi phone numbers)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Standard information							
• Mandatory rail industry core information including 'contact' details/opening times	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Minimum Standards for Facilities	Station Category						
	B	C1	C2	D	E	F1	F2
Ticket Office							
• Open at peak times (0600-1000 and 1600-1900) with opening hours displayed					✓		
• Open daily between 0600-1900 with opening hours clearly displayed		✓	✓	✓			
• Open daily from first to last train	✓						
Ticket machine							
• At least one adjacent to station/platform entrance (unless derogation)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
• Additional machines necessary to avoid queues greater than 5 minutes	✓	✓	✓				
Ticket gates							
• Operational and staffed for most of the day, every day	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Waiting Areas							
• Waiting shelter on each platform with a scheduled service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Waiting room(s) on well used platforms	✓	✓	✓	✓			
• Waiting room(s) available for use from first to last train	✓	✓					
• Canopies along at least 50% of the busiest platforms	✓						

Seating							
• Minimum of 6 seats (2 benches) on each platform with a scheduled service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Additional 6 seats (4 benches) on each platform with a scheduled service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
• Plentiful seating with 50% under cover (canopy/shelter/waiting room)	✓	✓	✓				
Platform/Dispatch Staff							
• Staff available at peak times (0600-1000 and 1600-1900)					✓		
• Visible staff presence between 0600 and1900	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
• Visible staff presence from first to last train	✓	✓					
Toilets							
• Appropriate for demand, smart & regularly cleaned to high standard	✓	✓	✓	✓			
• Open throughout the day and checked/cleaned at least every 2 hours	✓	✓	✓				
• Available for use from first to until last train and checked/cleaned hourly	✓						
Catering							
• 24 hour vending machines for hot/cold drinks and confectionary/snacks	✓	✓	✓	✓			
• At least one catering outlet open between 0600-1700 each day	✓	✓	✓				
• A wider range of outlets, with at least one catering outlet staying open until 2100	✓						
Retailing							
• Choice of outlets (e.g. newsagent, ATM, food store, convenience store, gift shop)	✓	✓					
Lighting							
• Adequate lighting in car parks, on forecourts and platforms, including footpaths	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Clock							
• On each platform with scheduled service (may form part of the CIS)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Luggage trolleys							
• Good supply with system to re-balance regularly	✓	✓					
CCTV							
• Coverage of platforms, cycle parking and car park entrance(s)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Minimum Standards for Environment	Station Category						
	B	C1	C2	D	E	F1	F2
Cleaning • Station is regularly cleaned and litter bins are provided. • Additional cleaning throughout the daytime with litter bins emptied daily.	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓	✓	✓
Maintenance • Repairs are carried out promptly and station is kept well painted	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Appearance • Station approaches look smart, and buildings are used or demolished	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Secure Stations Status	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Park Mark Safer Parking Accreditation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Although each station will need to be assessed individually, these are the minimum standards which the County Council consider to be acceptable and those it would like to see considered at each of the stations. We have worked with train operating companies in the past to provide funding for station enhancements, and to make joint bids for funding, and we will do so in the future, subject to our available funding.

To address a backlog investment in stations, the County Council will support an extension to the current five year funding for both *Access for All* and the *National Stations Improvement Programme* (NSIP) beyond 2014, if that should be proposed by the Government as part of the High Level Output Specification for 2014-2019.

Any extended NSIP funding should include a one-off programme to remove redundant station buildings, and upgrading remaining station facilities at the Category 'C' to 'F' stations so they are progressively brought up to minimum standards. It should be the intention to make all 'A' to 'D' stations fully accessible by 2020.

Appendix 2: Delivery Plan

To be inserted into pre-consultation document

Appendix 3: List of invited consultees

1. Arriva the Shires
2. Association of Train Operating Companies
3. Bicester Vision Partnership
4. BMW
5. British Transport Police
6. Buckinghamshire County Council
7. Cherwell District Council
8. Cherwell Rail Users Group
9. Chiltern Railways
10. Colas Rail
11. Cotswold Line Promotion Group
12. Cross Country Trains
13. DB Schenker
14. Department for Transport
15. Defence Infrastructure Organisation (MOD)
16. Direct Rail Services
17. East West Rail Consortium
18. First Greater Western
19. Freighliner Group
20. Friends of Heyford Station
21. Friends of Radley Station
22. Freight Operators
23. Freight Transport Association
24. GB Railfreight
25. Gloucestershire County Council
26. Members of Parliament (within Oxfordshire)
27. Network Rail
28. Northamptonshire County Council
29. Oxford Bus Company
30. Oxford City Council
31. Oxford Strategic Partnership
32. Oxford-Bicester Rail Action Group
33. Oxfordshire City Region Local Enterprise Partnership
34. Oxfordshire Unlimited
35. Parish/Town Council Transport Representatives
36. Passenger Focus
37. Rail Freight Group
38. Railfuture Thames Valley
39. Reading Borough Council
40. RWE npower
41. Science Vale UK Partnership
42. South Oxfordshire District Council
43. Stagecoach in Oxfordshire
44. Thames Travel
45. Travelwatch SouthWest
46. Vale of White Horse District Council
47. Warwickshire County Council
48. West Berkshire Council
49. West Oxfordshire District Council
50. Wiltshire Council