



Oxfordshire County Council

Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)

OxRAIL 2040: Plan for Rail

October 2025

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Environment and Place Directorate, National and Regional Team
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	OxRAIL 2040: Plan for Rail
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	New daughter document to the adopted Local Transport and Connectivity Plan
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	<p>OxRAIL 2040: Plan for Rail (referred to as the Plan) is a daughter document to our adopted Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, The Plan outlines a clear vision to deliver an enhanced and zero-carbon rail system in the County that is integrated with other transport modes and which enables the county to thrive whilst, protecting the environment and making Oxfordshire a better place to live for all residents and visitors. It plans to achieve this by increasing the attractiveness and convenience of rail travel and better integrating it with walking, cycling, other public transport in particular.</p> <p>Possible impacts of the Plan include improved accessibility benefitting older, disabled and young residents. It will also help to improve connectivity for rural areas and create a more balanced transport system benefitting residents, businesses and visitors throughout the County including those in areas of deprivation.</p> <p>Impacts also include benefits for other council services, such as improved health, increased social mobility and economic opportunities and by making a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions from transport by changing the way residents and visitors travel and by supporting a transfer of freight from road to the rail network</p>
Completed By	Bryan Evans

Authorised By	
Date of Assessment	October 2025

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>Local Transport Plans are statutory documents, required under the Transport Act 2008. Ours is called the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP).</p> <p>Our current LTCP was adopted in 2022 and outlines our long-term vision for transport in the county and the policies required to deliver this. The LTCP vision and policies are being used to influence and inform how we manage transport and the types of schemes we implement.</p> <p>The LTCP outlines a clear vision to deliver a zero-carbon Oxfordshire transport system that enables the county to thrive whilst, protecting the environment and making Oxfordshire a better place to live for all residents. It plans to achieve this by reducing the need to travel, discouraging unnecessary individual private vehicles and making walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice. Policies have been identified in the following key categories in order to achieve this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking and cycling • Healthy place shaping • Road safety • Digital connectivity • Public transport • Air and environmental quality • Network and congestion management • Innovation • Data • Freight • Regional connectivity
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local connectivity <p>The LTCP sets out a policy that we will publish a separate rail strategy that builds on projects previous studies and projects and that identifies potential future rail projects and opportunities across and through Oxfordshire. It states that implementation of the rail strategy will help to improve capacity and connectivity between our major employment hubs, providing a step change in rail travel options. These improvements will encourage rail use by making services more attractive and increasing access to them. Increased rail use will reduce the number of private vehicle journeys, contributing to delivery of our vision and delivering the associated benefits. Improving rail connectivity, including local connectivity arising from projects such as the Cowley Branch Line, will also increase access to jobs, education and training. It can therefore help to tackle inequality in the county and improve opportunities for local people. The OxRAIL 2040: Plan for Rail (the Plan) is our response to that LTCP policy.</p>
<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>OxRAIL 2040: Plan for Rail (the Plan), sets out Oxfordshire County Council's bold ambitions for the future of rail in Oxfordshire. The Plan has been developed to support the over-arching aims and ambitions of our adopted Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and describes a vision for rail in Oxfordshire being a central part of an integrated, accessible and sustainable transport system that enables all parts of the County to thrive. It also recognises the imminent and on-going changes in the structures of local government, devolution and the rail industry and the opportunities and challenges this may create.</p> <p>The improved connectivity the Plan would deliver will help improve quality of life, support new housing and jobs and drive nationally significant economic growth and productivity.</p> <p>The Plan focuses on three key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving connectivity and enhancing infrastructure – defining the services, infrastructure and operational changes required. • Climate action – setting out how rail can achieve net zero and adapt to a changing climate. • Rail as place shaper – highlighting the role of stations and rail in shaping inclusive, connected communities <p>The OxRail 2040 Plan for Rail (the Plan) vision is:</p>

for our railway to be a central part of a world-class integrated, accessible and sustainable transport system that enables all parts of the county to thrive and:

- ensures that Oxfordshire retains its position of significance within our regional and national economy.*
- enables significant growth and development, supporting new housing and job creation.*
- ensures that Oxfordshire's thriving communities can fully participate in our economy and in society.*
- contributes to the protection and enhancement of our natural and historic environment and meets our climate goals.*

The Plan identifies key outcomes we need from our railway. These include: *'Be safe and inclusive, to ensure that all of our residents can participate in our economy and our society.'*

The Plan supports the Council's response to addressing the following key challenges:

- Decarbonisation – Delivering a zero-carbon transport system is a critical part of contributing to UK targets and addressing climate change.
- The private car – Increasing private car use is having negative impacts on human health and the environment.
- Future growth – Proposals for over 85,000 new jobs and 100,000 new homes in the county will have a significant impact on our transport network.
- Connectivity – There is a need to improve connectivity by all modes, particularly along certain corridors.
- Wider challenges – Transport is also critical to addressing wider challenges, notably public health, inequalities, air quality, safety and climate action.

The Plan will be subject to annual monitoring and progress reporting. We will monitor performance against a set of rail specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), linked to the LTCP framework. These will provide a detailed picture of progress while supporting delivery of the LTCP's headline targets.

Key measures will include:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction – drawing on survey data to measure passenger perceptions of service quality, frequency and value. • Access to stations – progress in active travel links, bus integration, accessibility improvements and first/last mile connectivity. The KPIs will provide the detail needed to measure progress, highlight successes and identify areas requiring further work. As part of the review process, we will also assess the effectiveness of the KPIs themselves and consider additional ways of monitoring and evaluating outcomes. <p>The KPIs will provide the detail needed to measure progress, highlight successes and identify areas requiring further work. As part of the review process the effectiveness of the KPIs themselves will be assessed and additional ways of monitoring and evaluating outcomes will be considered.</p>
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Evidence / Intelligence List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	<p>The Plan is supported by a technical evidence base (TEB) that has informed the development of the Plan including the actions to be taken, the measures and schemes to be implemented and the partnership working and potential funding mechanisms required for its delivery. The TEB was included in documents provided in the public consultation and includes case studies of good practice and proposed interventions that support equalities aims. Many of these case studies and proposals are included in the Plan. The TEB includes information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of rail in Oxfordshire including supporting economic and housing growth • Rail in Oxfordshire today • Improving connectivity and enhancing infrastructure • Climate action • Rail as Placemaker and enabler of local and social mobility • Integration with walking, cycling and other public transport services Policy context • Air quality and health • Freight
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	<p>We have engaged with a range of organisations as we have developed the Plan. These include Network Rail, all three companies operating passenger trains in Oxfordshire, bus operating companies, Oxford City Council and all district Councils in Oxfordshire, teams and services within Oxfordshire County Council. This engagement has helped us understand different groups needs and aspirations and to refine the proposals in the Plan for consultation. A non-statutory public consultation on the Plan ran from 3rd September to 1st October 2025. It is planned that the Plan will be adopted by our Cabinet by the end of 2025.</p> <p>Activities undertaken during the public consultation period include briefings with: all Oxfordshire MPs, the County's County Councillors through Locality Meetings and an all-Councillors briefing, business groups, transport user groups including the Oxfordshire IMPACT (disability) group and a recall of the Oxfordshire Citizens' Assembly.</p> <p>Responses to the consultation included highlighting the need for improved access to the railway network for disabled people. The Plan proposes measures and interventions to improve access to the railway for disabled people and for people with other protected characteristics as set out in this EqIA.</p>
<p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>A do-nothing approach was not considered appropriate as it would be contrary to the policy requirement of our adopted LTCP.</p>

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Plan includes actions and proposals that will improve accessibility, benefitting older and younger residents.</p> <p>The Plan sets out that we will lead in promoting inclusive travel education, especially for young people, older residents and those unfamiliar with public transport. Partnering with schools, colleges, community organisations and health providers, we will develop programmes that build travel confidence, digital journey literacy and personal safety awareness.</p>			Annual monitoring of the Plan

Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Plan includes measures that will improve accessibility, benefitting disabled residents. These include:</p> <p>a) improving access to and at railway stations for those with disabilities, both visible and non-visible,</p> <p>b) working with, and supporting groups such as the Oxfordshire Community Rail Partnership and schools in build understanding and confidence in how to travel by rail, particularly for the young and disadvantaged groups</p> <p>c) working with and supporting the rail industry in the design and procurement of new and much more accessible rolling stock</p> <p>d) engaging with people with lived experience of disabled travel to ensure equality and diversity issues are appropriately considered – an example of this is our engagement with the Oxfordshire IMPACT group and the Oxfordshire Citizens' Assembly during the public consultation into the Plan.</p> <p>e) establishing an Oxfordshire Rail Station Accessibility Requirements</p>			Annual review and monitoring of the Plan.
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				Document to support those developing and designing proposals for our stations f) the Plan proposes that accessible toilets, calm zones and sensory wayfinding are provided at Banbury, Oxford and Didcot stations.			
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Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whilst the Plan does not set out specific measures and intervention in relation to Gender Reassignment in nevertheless sets out that a truly inclusive railway must work for every resident in Oxfordshire. It will launch the Oxfordshire Stations Action Plan (OSAP) that will drive innovation and champion inclusive, future-ready design. Through the station action plans, every Oxfordshire station will support the aim of ensuring the rail network is integrated, accessible and welcoming for all.			
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The railway network will, as existing, be available equally to people who are married or in civil partnerships.			
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Through the station action plans, every Oxfordshire station will support the aim of ensuring the rail network is			

				integrated, accessible and welcoming for all. The Plan proposes that the regional gateway stations of Banbury, Oxford and Didcot will have changing places, accessible toilets, seating, tactile surfaces, and family-friendly spaces and facilities.			
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Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Whilst the Plan does not set out specific measures and intervention in relation to Race in nevertheless sets out that a truly inclusive railway must work for every resident in Oxfordshire. It will launch the Oxfordshire Stations Action Plan (OSAP) that will drive innovation and champion inclusive, future-ready design. Through the station action plans, every Oxfordshire station will support the aim of ensuring the rail network is integrated, accessible and welcoming for all.</p> <p>The Plan proposes seamless travel planning across modes with a single journey planning app and clear cross-modal interchange information available on vehicles (buses and trains) at interchanges.</p> <p>The railway network will, as existing, be available equally to all regardless of race.</p>			Annual review and monitoring of the Plan.
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Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The railway network will, as existing, be available equally to all regardless of sex.			Annual review and monitoring of LTCP.
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whilst the Plan does not set out specific measures and intervention in relation to Sexual Orientation it nevertheless sets out that a truly inclusive railway must work for every resident in Oxfordshire. It will launch the Oxfordshire Stations Action Plan (OSAP) that will drive innovation and champion inclusive, future-ready design. Through the station action plans, every Oxfordshire station will support the aim of ensuring the rail network is integrated, accessible and welcoming for all. The railway network will, as existing, be available equally to all regardless of sexual orientation.			
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whilst the Plan does not set out specific measures and intervention in relation to Race it nevertheless sets out that a truly inclusive railway must work for every resident in Oxfordshire. It will launch the Oxfordshire Stations Action			

				<p>Plan (OSAP) that will drive innovation and champion inclusive, future-ready design. Through the station action plans, every Oxfordshire station will support the aim of ensuring the rail network is integrated, accessible and welcoming for all.</p> <p>The railway network will, as existing, be available equally to all regardless of religion or belief.</p>			
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Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Plan includes specific consideration for rural communities and includes policies that will improve connectivity.</p> <p>Key proposals that will help to achieve this are summarised below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing proposals for new railway stations in rural areas such as Ardley and Wantage/Grove • Increased in train frequencies including at rural stations • Improving public transport accessibility in West Oxfordshire • Development of an integrated transport system through the 'Oxfordshire Metro' 			

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Armed Forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Plan proposes a route to improve public transport access to Carterton next to a major Ministry of Defence site at Brize Norton.			
Carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	By supporting a switch from private motor vehicle to rail the Plan will help reduce highway congestion easing necessary car travel by carers.			
Areas of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Plan will benefit areas of deprivation by increasing accessibility to services and jobs.			

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Other Council Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Plan will increase accessibility throughout the County thereby supporting delivery of Council services			
Providers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Plan will increase accessibility throughout the County thereby supporting delivery of Council services			
Social Value ¹	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Plan bring social value benefits of increasing accessibility to jobs and services, making journeys quicker and more reliable and reducing local air pollution to improve the health and wellbeing of Oxford's communities. These effects are likely to have a net positive impact on the Oxfordshire's residents, including Protected Characteristic Groups.			

¹ If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	November 2026 (as part of the annual review of the Plan following its adoption in November 2025)
Person Responsible for Review	Pete Brunskill, Rail Development Lead
Authorised By	