

Transport topic paper

This topic addresses: Walking and cycling, public transport incl. train station and branch line, commuting and housing / jobs balance, tourist buses and electrical vehicle charging points.

SA Objective: 8. To reduce **traffic and associated air pollution** by improving travel choice, shortening journeys and reducing the need to travel by car/ lorry.

SEA Theme: Air and climatic Factors.

Introduction

This topic paper focuses on Oxford's transport system. It provides a context for considering this subject by providing a brief summary of the relevant national and local plans, policies and programmes that currently exist and will influence change in the future. There is a section on the current situation which includes some key information about existing and emerging strategies. As part of an assessment of the current situation some of the key challenges and future trends that are likely to impact on the transport system are identified. The next section explores what would happen without a plan and the potential difficulties that the city would face in terms of transport and connectivity. The final section puts forward some ideas for discussion to suggest what the emerging Plan could do to in terms of meeting the objectives of both existing and emerging policies and strategies.

Plans Policies and Programmes

National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance

The NPPF makes it clear (para 102) that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making. It states (para 104) that planning policies should minimise the number and lengths of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities; and that development proposals and planning policies should be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities, other transport infrastructure providers and operators and neighbouring councils.

Para 104 of the NPPF also indicates that planning policies should provide for high quality walking and cycling networks and supporting facilities e.g. cycle parking (drawing on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans). In terms of parking, reference is made to parking standards (paras 105-106), indicating that policies should take into account the availability and opportunities for public transport.

Regional Policy and Strategy

England's Economic Heartland (EEH), the subnational transport body stretching from Swindon in the west to Cambridge in the east published its Transport Strategy¹ in February 2021. Although a non-statutory document, this strategy sets out a policy framework designed to deliver the EEH's ambition to support sustainable growth and improve quality of life and well-being through a world-class, decarbonised transport system which harnesses the region's global expertise in technology and innovation to unlock new opportunities for residents and businesses, in a way that benefits the UK as a whole. Informed by a programme of technical work, taken forward in collaboration with partners within the Heartland and Government, the strategy is guided by four key principles:

- Achieving net zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050, with an ambition to reach this by 2040;
- Improving quality of life and wellbeing through a safe and inclusive transport system accessible to all which emphasises sustainable and active travel;
- Supporting the regional economy by connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities; and
- Ensuring the Heartland works for the UK by enabling the efficient movement of people and goods through the region and to/from international gateways, in a way which lessens its environmental impact.

The strategy identifies a pipeline of 'infrastructure opportunities' with priorities for regional connectivity investment to be assessed in more detail through connectivity studies. Ten studies are planned in total, with work commencing on the first two studies, Oxford – Milton Keynes² and Peterborough – Northampton - Oxford³ in April 2021. A further planned connectivity study covers Swindon – Didcot – Oxford but timescales for this are currently unknown and are dependent on both funding and resourcing.

Local Transport Plan 4 and Local Transport and Connectivity Plan

Known locally as "Connecting Oxfordshire", the present version of the Local Transport Plan (LTP)⁴ was adopted in 2015 and sets out Oxfordshire County Council's (as Local Highway Authority) policies and strategies for developing the transport system in Oxfordshire to 2031. The plan was updated in 2016 in order to strengthen the emphasis on improving air quality and make better provision for walking and cycling.

Work is now progressing on the development of the next LTP for Oxfordshire, to be called a Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), to better reflect the strategy both for digital infrastructure and for connecting the whole county. This plan will have a time horizon to 2050 and is being developed in two stages, the first stage being the development of a vision document and the second

¹ <https://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/transport/our-strategy/>

² <https://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/our-work/connectivity-studies/oxford-milton-keynes/>

³ <https://www.englandseconomicheartland.com/our-work/connectivity-studies/peterborough-northampton-oxford/>

⁴ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-connecting-oxfordshire/ConnectingOxfordshireLocalTransportPlan2015-2031SummaryOctober2015.pdf>

the development of the full LTCP. The vision document went out to consultation in February/March 2021. The full LTCP is expected to go out to consultation later this year.

There are three main reasons why the LTCP is being developed:

- i. To reflect new priorities: including on climate action, air quality, and healthy place shaping;
- ii. To reflect new funding (including Oxfordshire Housing & Growth Deal, Housing Infrastructure Fund, Oxfordshire Garden Town/Village initiatives); and,
- iii. To reflect new ideas and strategies (including the Oxford Zero Emission Zone, Connecting Oxford proposals, Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study, Energy Strategy, Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and the Zero-Carbon Economy proposals.

Oxford Transport Strategy, Countywide and Corridor Strategies

The Oxford Transport Strategy⁵ (OTS) is part of the LTP4 and is aimed at improving access and making Oxford a better place to live, work and visit, by reducing congestion, improving public transport and making Oxford more cycle and pedestrian friendly. The strategy was developed to correspond to crucial challenges for transport in the city, including the growing and changing economy, changes in the city's population and demographics, changes in travel patterns, the need for more housing, access and public realm in the city centre and challenges for the urban environment and air quality.

The OTS includes a number of city wide measures and key projects. Whilst some have been implemented, for example the reallocation of road space on Botley Road and improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure, there remain a number of measures and projects that are either still under consideration or incomplete for example the Connecting Oxford proposals which seek to improve connectivity, reduce congestion and tackle pollution.

There are also a number of countywide and corridor strategies contained within LTP4 which are relevant to Oxford including a Bus Strategy, Rail Strategy, Active Healthy Travel Strategy, Freight Strategy, A40 route strategy and A420 route strategy.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)

LCWIPs are a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements at a local level and have emerged following publication of the Central Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy⁶ in April 2017.

The Oxford LCWIP⁷ was adopted by Oxfordshire County Council in March 2020 and supports existing and emerging County Council policies (LTP4 Active and Healthy Travel Strategy⁸ and LTCP) alongside adopted Local Plan policies for Oxford to become a 'world class cycling city' with an "outstanding

⁵ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-connecting-oxfordshire/ConnectingOxfordshireLocalTransportPlan2015-2031SummaryOctober2015.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy>

⁷ https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-connecting-oxfordshire/OXFORDLCWIPv200101_0.pdf

⁸ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/active-and-healthy-travel>

public realm for walking and cycling”. The LCWIP was prepared following input from a number of stakeholders including Cyclox and the Oxford Pedestrians Association (OxPA), and sets out a series of measures and programmes to achieve a transformational change in levels of cycling and the attractiveness of walking within the city as well as supporting climate change targets.

The LCWIP sets out 8 pillars of change (or priority infrastructure measures) fundamental to achieving a step change in cycling and walking in Oxford in terms of infrastructure. These include low traffic neighbourhoods, workplace levy charge, traffic restriction points and public realm improvements. The first low traffic neighbourhoods were implemented in the Temple Cowley⁹, Church Cowley¹⁰ and Florence Park¹¹ areas of the city in March 2021. Whilst there are no specific targets for improving overall walking levels, the LCWIP supports measures to provide appropriate infrastructure for those with mobility issues, children and older people.

Oxfordshire Plan 2050

The Oxfordshire Local Planning Authorities (including Oxford City Council), working together through the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, are working towards the development of a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP), known as the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, which will set out strategic policies for the county to 2050. An initial consultation was launched on the Plan in February 2019 and a further consultation is being launched in the Summer of 2021. The summer 2021 consultation will show how the Oxfordshire Plan will aim to consider transport impacts.

The Oxfordshire Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in September 2022. It will be important to ensure that the Oxfordshire Plan and the Oxford Local Plan 2040 work closely together; there will be many common themes and objectives and much shared evidence behind the two plans.

Corporate Plan

The aims of Oxford City Council’s Strategy 2020-24 are to enable an inclusive economy, deliver more affordable housing, support thriving communities and pursue a zero carbon Oxford. To help to enable an inclusive economy the City Council intends to work with Oxfordshire County Council to implement Connecting Oxford and improve bus and cycle routes into and around the city, better connecting the key employment sites. Within the city centre the aim is to create more accessible public space and reprioritise road space for pedestrians, cyclists and buses. In the City Centre’s West End the aim is to undertake infrastructure improvements to create more sustainable transport and movement routes in the area, including a new Oxford Rail Station, with increased capacity to provide greater connectivity nationally and locally. Improvements to rail capacity include securing commitment to the opening of the Cowley Branch line to passengers (further information available below under the Oxford Rail Capacity (ORC) section). To help pursue a Zero Carbon Oxford, the Council seeks to create a citywide

⁹ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-connecting-oxfordshire/TempleCowley.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-connecting-oxfordshire/ChurchCowley.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-connecting-oxfordshire/FlorencePark.pdf>

network of electric vehicle charging points to encourage the take-up of electric vehicles, and to implement a Zero Emission Zone in the city centre to improve air quality and encourage further take up of ultralow emission vehicles.

Housing and Infrastructure Fund (HIF)

In February 2018, the Government awarded 5 Oxfordshire schemes Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) Marginal Viability funding for new infrastructure that will unlock new homes in areas of greatest housing demand. Three of these schemes are located within Oxford City and are now under contract for delivery:

- Blackbird Leys District Centre (£6,300,000);
- Oxford North (Northern Gateway) – (£10,000,000)
- Osney Mead Innovation Quarter (£6,100,000)

The funding will help provide affordable housing to residents, helping to address housing shortages within the city and also bring forward projects that will boost the city's knowledge economy.

Oxfordshire County Council has secured HIF Forward funding for 2 significant packages of transport schemes which will be delivered over the next 3 years. One of these is the A40 Smart Corridor (£102m) which includes a new bus lane between Eynsham and Oxford.

Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal

Oxfordshire's County, District and City Councils signed a Housing and Growth Deal with Central Government in November 2017 to facilitate a major step change in the delivery of new homes in the county. The Deal allocates £215m of funding to Oxfordshire, of which £60m is for affordable housing and £150m is for infrastructure improvements. A programme¹² for the infrastructure funding has since been agreed, with significant match funding for schemes also allocated, including from developer funding. Within Oxford City, this will fund technical work for the Connecting Oxford Business Case, which includes development of options including the Workplace Parking Levy (see further info below), bus improvements, walking and cycling improvements and traffic filters. Contributions are also being put towards city-wide cycle and pedestrian access and safety improvements; feasibility work to widen the Botley Road railway bridge and widen the road beneath it to support the Oxford Station redevelopment; improvements to the Botley Road, Banbury and Woodstock Road corridors aiming to improve journey times; bus routes and facilities for both walkers and cyclists; complementary development work to support the reopening of the Cowley Branch Line; a new pedestrian and cycle bridge between Oxpens and Osney Mead and the Environment Agency's planned Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme (OFAS).

¹² <https://www.oxfordshiregrowthboard.org/housing-and-growth-deal-infrastructure/>

Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study 2020

The Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study¹³ is jointly funded by the Department for Transport, Oxfordshire Growth Board and other partners. It focuses on the movement of people and goods across the rail network in Oxfordshire, with particular emphasis on how rail can support growth and development across the County and the wider region and inform strategic decisions. The study identifies a number of strategic capacity requirements on the rail network as well as a need for better connectivity between key rail hubs within the County. For Oxford City, the introduction of East-West rail services from Milton Keynes/ Bletchley to Oxford and onwards to Didcot by 2024 requires improvements to the capacity and upgrades at Oxford Rail Station. Further service enhancements by 2028 are identified to enable new passenger services via the Cowley Branch line to London with two new stations on the Branch Line. The study also identified a need for increases in freight path availability particularly between Didcot and Oxford, including 4- tracking of the rail line between Oxford Station and Radley.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Strategy

The Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy 2020-2025 (OEVIS), adopted by Oxfordshire County Council in March 2021 sets out policies and plans to support the transition to zero emission road transport. This will help Oxfordshire to achieve net zero carbon, reduce air pollution, and deliver key transport initiatives such as the Oxford Zero Emission Zone. The strategy is among the first of its kind in the UK and has been a collaborative piece of work between the County and five district councils of Oxfordshire. It is proposed that all six collaborating Councils will adopt the strategy, although at the time of drafting this paper a date for adoption by Oxford City Council is still to be confirmed.

Of the 17 OEVIS policies, those of most relevance to policy makers are Policy EVI7 and Policy EVI8:

- Policy EVI 7: The Councils will seek to include statements & policies supportive of EV charging infrastructure and, where appropriate, references to the Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy in their planning standards and guidance;
- Policy EVI 8: The Councils will benchmark nationally, and between themselves, each seeking to set minimum standards for the quantity of EV charging to be provided in developments in their planning requirements.

Oxford City has taken a leading role in the adoption of electric vehicles and a number of EV charge points have been installed across the city as part of the 'Go Ultra Low Oxford' project¹⁴. The upcoming Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) pilot in Oxford City, scheduled for August 2021, may help to stimulate additional uptake of electric vehicles, not just within the zone, but also across the county, from where journeys into the zone may originate.

Oxford Local Plan 2036

The Oxford Local Plan 2036 aims to reduce carbon emissions, encourage the use of sustainable transport modes and make the best use of land. Section 7 contains strong policies to help realise this strategy. Policy M1 seeks to promote sustainable transport choices by prioritising walking, cycling and

¹³ <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Oxfordshire-Rail-Corridor-Study-.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.goultralowoxford.org/>

public transport. Policy M2 seeks the submission of Transport Assessments/Statements and Travel Plans from development proposals that will have significant transport implications, with the intension of reducing car travel and encouraging the use of sustainable transport.

Policy M3 requires new residential development to be car free in Controlled Parking Zones and no increases in parking provision and ideally a reduction, in all other areas. For non-residential developments the policy aspirations are to keep parking levels to an operational minimum, with a shift towards more sustainable travel modes. A low standard for car parking provision means that a greater proportion of scarce land can be used for providing homes, and also avoids issues of parking creating poor urban design. Reduced car parking, and therefore car ownership and car trips, is likely to reduce air pollution and noise levels. Fewer cars using the roads improves the attraction of walking, cycling, and spending time in the public realm.

Policy M4 seeks the provision of electric charging points in new developments and Policy M5 addresses cycle parking provision.

Oxford Climate Emergency

On 28 January 2019, a motion was unanimously passed by Oxford City Council declaring a climate emergency in Oxford. The motion called on the government at Westminster to provide the necessary powers and resources to make local action on climate change easier; called for review and recommendations on revisions to the council's Carbon Management Plan – including the setting of an earlier carbon neutral target and improved governance structure for monitoring; and set out intentions to continue to work with council partners to deliver widespread carbon reductions. Fundamentally, it stresses the importance and critical status of the current environmental situation – both globally and locally.

Current Situation / Issues

In terms of walking, Oxford is among the top ten local authorities in England¹⁵. Oxford is internationally famous for its high levels of cycling, being the 2nd highest authority in the UK after Cambridge¹⁶. However, the LCWIP identifies that cycling conditions, provision and routes are often very poor. The cycling section of the plan sets targets to increase both commuter cycling and all cycling trips in Oxford by 50% by 2031.

Currently, the largest mode of transport is still private cars or vans, making up 50% of the overall share. The strategic road network around Oxford is primarily served by the A34, A40, A420, and the ring road. Within Oxford, key arterial routes accommodate large amounts of vehicular traffic; sharing these with strategic bus routes – including the Abingdon, Banbury, Botley, and Woodstock roads.

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/906698/walking-and-cycling-statistics-england-2019.pdf

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/906698/walking-and-cycling-statistics-england-2019.pdf

The breakdown of commuter travel into (including from within) Oxford¹⁷ is shown on figure 2 below. This data is from the 2011 Census and therefore would not reflect the physical and policy changes made to Oxford’s transport network over the last decade. It also won’t reflect the impact of Covid-19 on movement in the city. From this data, rail and bus make up a minority of trips, totalling just over 20% of trips, while cycling and walking make up around 28%. Oxford’s breakdown of mode share between the various methods of travelling to work are shown on Figure 1 below. This compares to the national and county modes as shown on Figure 2. From this data, Oxford has a much a higher share of people commuting to work on foot and by bicycle or bus. Consequently, the percentage of people travelling to work by train, or by car or van is much lower than national averages.

Figure 1: Main modes of travel to work for Oxford (2011 Census)

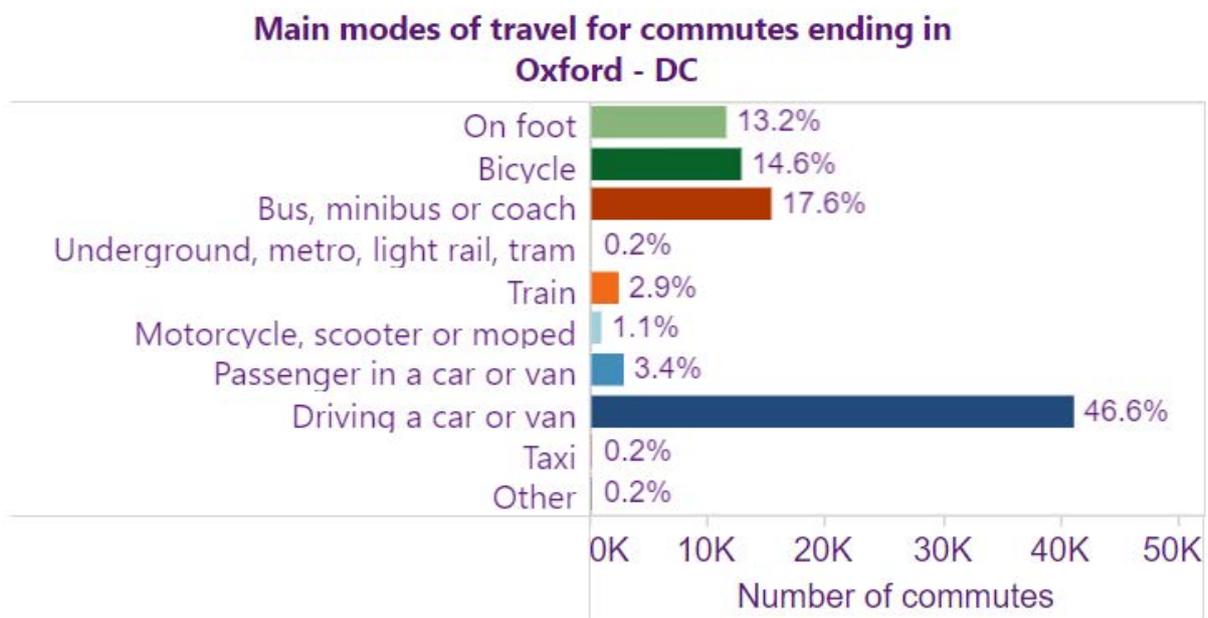
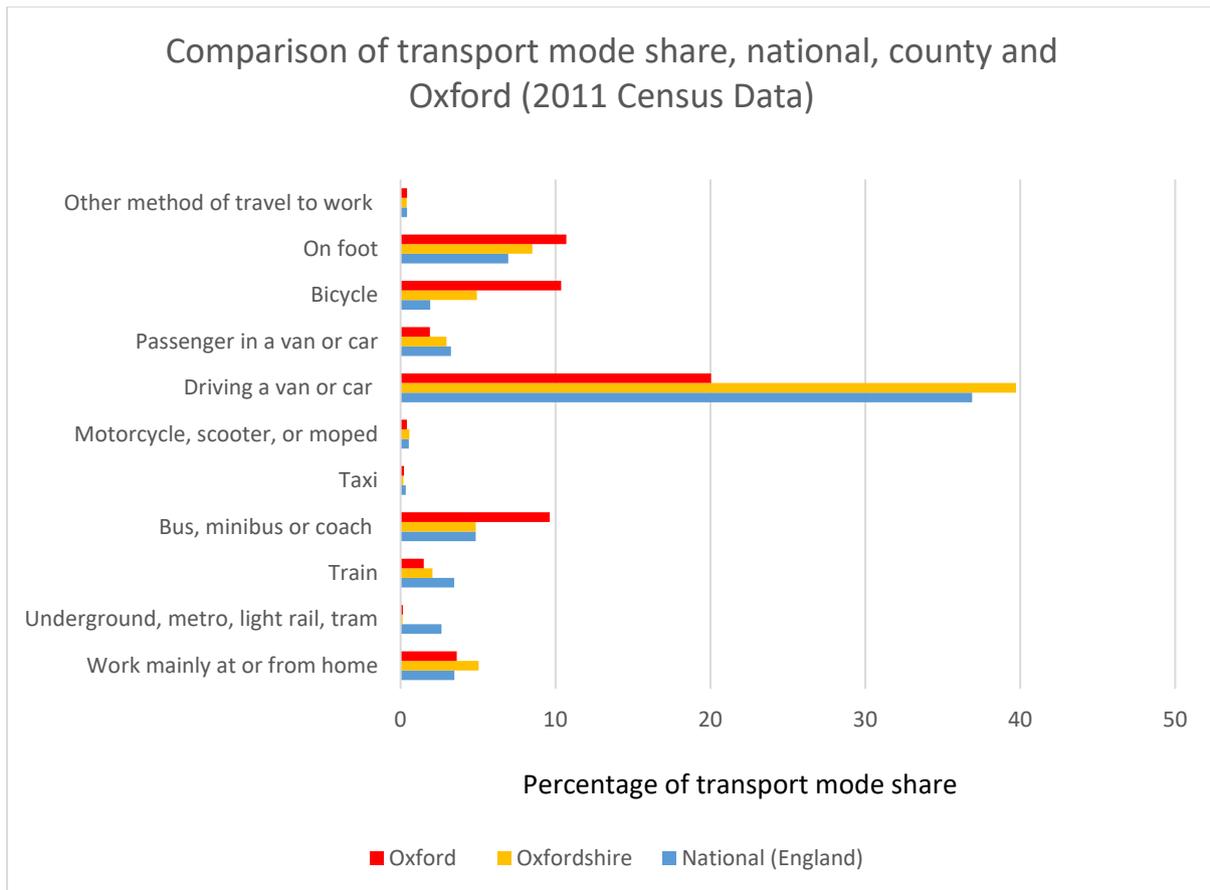


Figure 2: Main modes of travel to work for England, Oxfordshire and Oxford (2011 Census)

¹⁷ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20130/transport/498/transport_statistics



The 2011 Census figures show that the highest relative ratios of private motorised transport trips - compared to those made by sustainable modes for travelling to work - are in Cowley, Littlemore, and North Oxford. The proportion of car journeys made varies depending on the part of Oxford that is the end destination. Figure 3 shows that the Eastern Arc (an area that includes Headington, Cowley, and Littlemore) attracts more car journeys, and a higher proportion of car journeys, than the city centre or North Oxford. The number of trips by private motorised transport into workplaces in the city centre or North Oxford declined from Census 2001 to Census 2011. This reduction in numbers was exceeded by the increase in this type of travel to the Eastern Arc. However, the percentage change in those accessing the Eastern Arc to work by bus was the largest percentage increase.

Figure 3: Mode share of commuter travel to three employment areas in Oxford at the time of the 2001 and 2011 censuses¹⁸

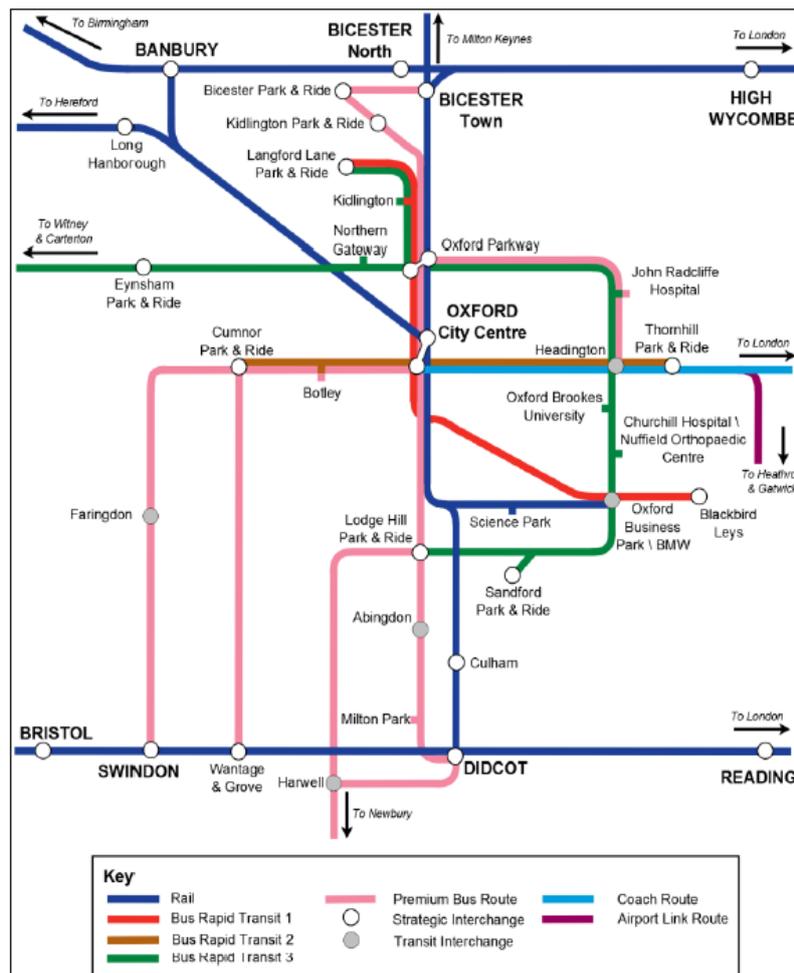
Area	Private motorised vehicle			Mass transit			Walking & cycling		
	2001	2011	% Change	2001	2011	% Change	2001	2011	% Change
City Centre	14,663	12,126	-17	11,627	11,955	3	9,944	12,254	23
Eastern Arc	24,087	27,362	14	3,211	5,062	58	7,611	10,856	43
North Oxford	3,533	3,143	-11	986	1,040	5	1,294	1,423	10
Total	42,283	42,631	1	15,824	18,057	14	18,849	24,533	30

Large parts of the city are already covered by Controlled Parking Zones. Where these have been implemented they have been extremely successful in removing commuter parking.

¹⁸ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/area-strategies>

Oxford's Transport Network is interconnected with the wider Oxfordshire network. A series of bus routes connects Oxfordshire's principal towns and settlements (such as Abingdon, Banbury, Bicester, Didcot, Kidlington, Thame, Wantage, and Witney). Banbury, Bicester, and Didcot, as well as a number of smaller villages are also connected to Oxford via the railway network. Together, the bus and railway network provide opportunities for commuter traffic from neighbouring authorities to access the city by sustainable modes as shown in Figure 4. National Cycle Routes 5 and 57 also provide access to the National Cycle Network, with connections to Bicester, Didcot, Kidlington and Thame; as well as a number of smaller villages on these routes.

Figure 4: Oxfordshire's proposed transport network (Oxfordshire County Council¹⁹)



Transport Demand Management (Connecting Oxford)

Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council are developing a package of transport measures to manage transport demand in Oxford, including further access restrictions across the city, a city centre zero emission zone, and a workplace parking levy – in order to deliver a series of objectives, including:

¹⁹ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/about-council/Oxfordshire2050.pdf>

- Congestion-free public transport routes across the city, consistent with those routes identified in the Oxford Transport Strategy
- Segregated cycle route provision on key routes throughout the city consistent with those routes identified in the Oxford Transport Strategy
- Excellent air quality
- A quality public realm and pedestrian environment that supports city centre and district centre vitality

The measures, known as Connecting Oxford, are required because levels of traffic congestion on many parts of the city's road network are such that they prevent the achievement of the above objectives, and there is insufficient physical space to overcome these problems through simple engineering efforts such as increased capacity or basic bus priority measures.

In Autumn 2019 the Councils undertook a public consultation on Connecting Oxford's proposals, with both Councils cabinets approving to proceed with its implementation in January 2020. The implementation has been put on hold due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Workplace Parking Levy (WPL)

As part of the work being done exploring transport demand management options, Oxfordshire County Council is currently considering the feasibility of introducing a Workplace Parking Levy in Oxford. A similar scheme has already been implemented in Nottingham which has helped to fund extensions to their tram network, supported expansion of bus services to major employment areas, and helped fund the upgrade of Nottingham rail station. A WPL in Oxford would help to gain control over the use of the car for travel to work and would help fund transportation improvements including bus rapid transit and additional Park & Ride capacity. Whilst the Oxford Transport Strategy currently only proposes a levy for the Eastern arc, future iterations could consider covering the whole city, with the possibility of having differential rates across the city, for example, a premium rate in the city centre, and rates elsewhere which are dependent on the level of accessibility by other sustainable modes of travel.

Zero Emission Zone

The Oxford Transport Strategy sets out the aspiration for a Zero Emission Zone in Oxford to be introduced in the period 2020-2035. The City Council and County Council have a jointly coordinated and representative steering group established to develop, interrogate, and manage investigative, feasibility, and implementation work related to a Zero Emission Zone in Oxford. The steering group is examining and managing a range of options on how such a zone can be implemented in Oxford in the period from 2020-2035. The use of electric vans, buses, and cars are some of the ways to achieve zero emission travel. Cycling and walking are naturally emission free and help avoid air pollution. Work is currently on-going on this project and a trial of the ZEZ is expected to launch in August 2021.

Motor Vehicle Parking

In a compact city like Oxford where there are many competing demands on space, it is important to consider whether using large areas of land for parking of vehicles is appropriate. Vehicle parking is

usually an inefficient use of land in itself. However, there will be those who need to drive or who drive to access certain areas at certain times and for particular types of trips. The needs of people to access services and potential impacts on local centres if there is not enough parking must be balanced against the negative effects of car traffic generation.

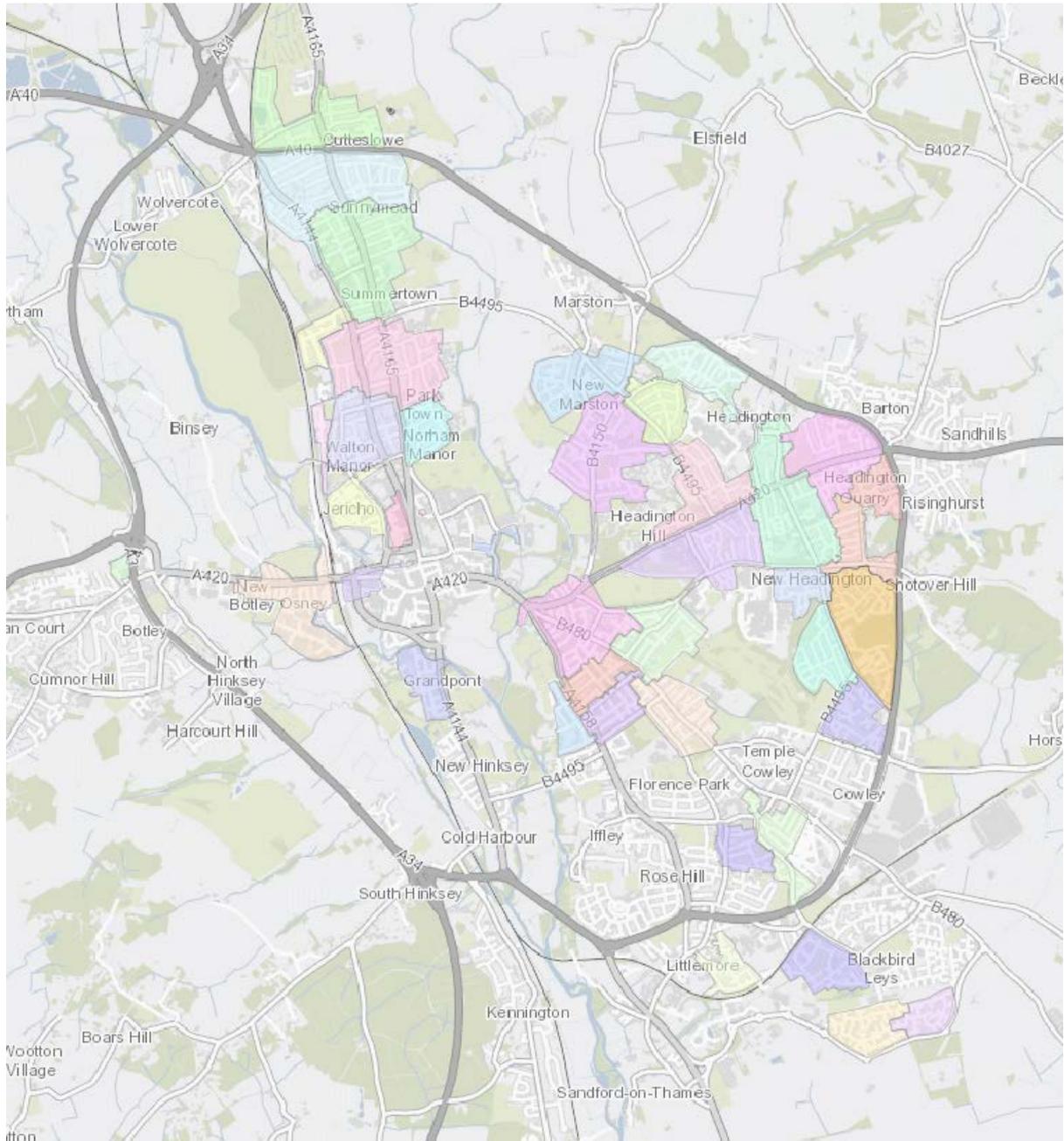
Public Car Parking in City and District Centres - With regards to public parking provision, the current Local Plan's strategy is that in the city centre, levels of public parking will be maintained at approximately the same levels, with a discouragement of arrivals during network peaks. Meanwhile, within district centres it is to maintain roughly current levels of public parking.

Residential Parking - The current Oxford Local Plan 2036 permits only low levels of residential parking for new residential developments. The majority of the city has an excellent existing level of public transport provision, as well as good connectivity by walking and cycling, therefore, in certain circumstances, Policy M3 of the Local Plan requires residential developments to be "car free"; that is they will have no general parking spaces provided for residents. Policy M3 allows for some parking however, for example for disabled and visitors, ensuring there are not negative consequences for accessibility for the elderly, disabled and vulnerable groups.

Controlled Parking Zones - Many areas of Oxford are covered by controlled parking zones (CPZ), as shown on the map in Figure 5 below. A CPZ is an area where parking is only permitted in designated parking bays, and the rest of the kerbside space is restricted by yellow lines. Residents, their visitors, and local businesses can park in designated bays when displaying a relevant parking permit for that zone. In CPZs, new developments with little private parking are less likely to have a negative impact on surrounding areas, as parking cannot be displaced to the street.

Further expansion of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) is currently being rolled out by Oxfordshire County Council, and Oxford City Council supports these measures and efforts to ensure that increases in residential population and/or in visitors do not bring about increases in the number of vehicles parked in an area, and that any increases in parking are not simply displaced to neighbouring streets. Large parts of the city are already covered by CPZs and where these have been implemented they have been extremely successful in removing commuter parking. Over time it is likely that the majority of streets in the city will be covered by parking restrictions.

Figure 5: Controlled parking zones in Oxford (2021 Oxfordshire County Council)



Impact of Covid-19 / Brexit

The impact of Covid-19 is yet to be fully understood. However, there appears to be a permanent move toward working for home for some workers for large parts of the working week. This is likely to affect office-based employers whose workers can work remotely, while manufacturing and service based employees are more likely to need to continue to commute into Oxford.

Furthermore, street space is likely to be under increasing pressure for social activities and the need for some businesses (particularly bars and restaurants) to use as outdoor areas. Balancing the need for covid-secure travel and creating safe spaces will be a challenge the new local plan could address.

The current local plan was written prior to the pandemic and as such does not address the changes in commuting patterns or the changing pressures on land use that they have brought about.

What would happen without our plan?

Without a new Local Plan, the policies within the current Local Plan 2036 would remain in place until 2036 or until they become otherwise out of date. These policies should help deliver a continued trend toward increased use of sustainable modes of transport within Oxford. The residential car parking policies should help reduce car ownership on new builds, with an aspiration for achieving car free development in as many areas of Oxford as possible. Other policies seek to safeguard land for the potential reopening of the Cowley Branch line for passenger services and support the redevelopment of Oxford Rail station. There is however a risk that the existing policies are not flexible enough to respond to changing pressures on land uses brought about through longer term changes in commuting patterns as a result of the Covid pandemic.

Both Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council are preparing detailed measures for implementing the current LTP; Connecting Oxford. This will include new bus routes to increase access to the Eastern Arc, the introduction of a workplace parking levy, and a zero emission zone in the city centre. These will be reflected in, and developed alongside, other proposals in the emerging LTCP5 for Oxfordshire and subsequent area based strategy for Oxford. The City Council intends to work closely with Oxfordshire County Council whilst they prepare this strategy. Without a new Local Plan, these measures will still come forward, but as noted above, the existing policies may not evolve/ be developed further to ensure that the issues affecting Oxford are addressed.

What could our plan do to meet the objectives of plans, policies, and programmes?

We will need to consider through the preparation of the new plan whether the current transport and parking policies within the Oxford Local Plan are fit for the longer-term future. We would need to assess what impact Covid-19 and any economic impacts of Brexit may have on how people get around Oxford and Oxfordshire, and what competing demands there may be for space.

The Oxford Local Plan 2040 will need to work in tandem with the emerging transport strategies for Oxford to help shape and implement their proposals including those that the County Council as Local Highway Authority are leading on. It will need to help address the transport sector's contribution to climate change in Oxford by creating policies that encourage travel by sustainable modes, such as walking, cycling, and public transport. It may also need to continue the current local plan's approach to discouraging transport by unsustainable modes of transport such as the private car, while managing the transition to autonomous and electric vehicles, and encouraging the development of smart city technologies within Oxford.

The new Local Plan will need to account for existing initiatives such as Connecting Oxford, the Workplace Parking Levy, and the Zero Emission Zone. It will need to consider accommodating the

needs of new and emerging modes of transport such as: e-cargo bikes, sustainable freight transport, micro-mobility, and e-scooters.

Conclusion

Economic: The introduction of the Workplace Parking Levy will generate funds for the City Council which can be invested in the transport sector to further improve the city. In addition, the improved connection between the city and surrounding settlements via rail and bus is likely to attract more visitors boosting the economy.

Social: Reduced congestion in the city and cleaner streets will encourage more people to commute by walking or cycling. This will hopefully build feelings of social cohesion within communities. The Corporate Plan strives to achieve a zero carbon Oxford for all residents and communities. Accessibility for everyone will be improved leading to more opportunities for all of Oxford's residents.

Environmental: Environmentally, supporting sustainable forms of transport and the creation of the zero emission zone will help to reduce many forms of pollution, but especially air pollution. Such strategies are also an important part of the longer term plan to become carbon neutral and combat climate change. The benefits will also extend to reducing air pollution from transport, which is not only harmful to people's health, but is also constraining development opportunities because of its impact upon the habitat and species of the Oxford Meadow Special Area of Conservation.

Sustainability/Plan issues

- Although Oxford is known for its high levels of walking, cycling and public transport use, Oxford's roads are still congested, with high levels of commuting by car and correspondingly poor air quality.
- The improvement of renewable transport provision and the restriction of cars in the city centre will help to achieve a zero carbon Oxford.
- The improvement to cycling and walking infrastructure must be inclusive and the benefits shared by all of Oxford's residents.
- Improved transport connections between the city and surrounding areas will improve the integration of settlements throughout Oxfordshire.
- The restriction on car use in the city must be supported via a strong and affordable public transport infrastructure network.