

## **Rail projects in the Oxford area**

1. Council officers are compiling information from a variety of sources to better understand the rail projects which affect Oxford and which potentially have implications for Council services and/or regulatory functions. This information is presented in good faith as our current understanding of the situation.
2. The main rail line passing through Oxford City forms part of the Didcot to Chester Line (DCL), which links Oxford Station to the Great Western Main Line (GWML) running west from Didcot. Oxford Station is used for the overnight stabling of diesel trains using the DCL, at Oxford Sidings, just north of the Station. The Oxford-Bicester line branches off from the DCL further north of the Station, between Port Meadow and Godstow
3. There are currently 32 rail development projects in the Thames valley. The principal schemes affecting Oxford are as follows

### **1. CHILTERN “EVERGREEN 3” SCHEME**

#### **What is it?**

4. The Transport & Works Act Order 2012 (The Order) and deemed Planning Permission govern how the Chiltern Railway Company Ltd (Chiltern Railways) may develop their proposals (the Scheme) for the Oxford to Bicester line. The Scheme connects the London Marylebone to Birmingham Moor Street line with the existing route between Oxford and Bicester Town. The track between Oxford and Bicester is being upgraded; the three stations along the route - Bicester Town, Islip and Oxford - will be upgraded; and a new station will be built at Water Eaton Parkway. Oxford Station will be enlarged by the construction of 2 new platforms on the east side of the site (former parcels depot). The new Water Eaton Parkway Station (CDC area) will be built adjacent to the existing bus park and ride site, east of the Banbury Road. There will be an interchange with buses to Kidlington, the City Centre and the Radcliffe Hospital. Related road transport and infrastructure developments are likely to follow as part of the County Council Local Transport Plan Eastern Arc Strategy.

#### **When does it take place?**

5. Originally proposed for 2011 the Scheme was held up by a Planning Inquiry in 2011 and 2012. The latest estimate is for passenger services from the new station at Water Eaton to and from London Marylebone to commence mid-2015. The existing passenger services between Bicester Town and Oxford are to be suspended from February 2014, with a replacement bus service being put in place. Works in North Oxford, between the Oxford City boundary and Oxford North Junction, including those at Wolvercote Tunnel, are programmed to take place in spring 2015. The construction programme for works from Oxford North Junction to Oxford Station has yet to be confirmed, but these are due to be completed by March 2016. This works programme will be influenced by the wider Oxford Station improvement work which is a separate project, still at the development stage.

## **2. OXFORD STATION REDEVELOPMENT**

### **What is it?**

6. A commitment to deliver a major station redevelopment by 2018 to remove what is seen as the main constraint on the Thames Valley rail network once Reading Station has been redeveloped. A joint development scheme involving Network Rail, Oxfordshire County Council and other development partners would create a new platform on part of the station's long-stay car park south of the Botley Road. This would allow trains to arrive and depart from the same track, reducing the need for empty trains to be shunted around the station and incoming trains to be kept waiting outside the station for a platform to become available. A covered footbridge over Botley Road would link the new platform with the station building. The redevelopment would also facilitate creation of two new platforms, to be built on the site of the disused parcels depot, to cater for trains introduced through the Evergreen 3 Scheme. Road works to widen the Botley Road would also be needed.

### **When does it take place?**

7. Since early last year, the City and County Councils, Network Rail and first Great western (who currently manage the station) have been working together to draw up a Master plan for the Station and the surrounding area. Planning and design consultants AEDAS launched design options for the redevelopment just before Christmas. The redevelopment should be in place by 2018.

## **3. EAST-WEST RAIL PROJECT**

### **What is it?**

8. East West Rail (EWR) is a separate scheme to re-establish a rail link between Cambridge and Oxford to improve rail services between East Anglia, Central and Southern England with enhanced connections to national mainline rail services. The Western Section, which includes Oxford, is being developed first. The Oxford to Water Eaton part of the Chiltern Rail scheme is relevant to EWR.

### **When does it take place?**

9. The following key targets have been published:
  - Autumn 2015 - Chiltern Railways London Marylebone - Oxford Parkway
  - Spring 2016 - Extension of Chiltern services from Oxford Parkway to Oxford
  - December 2017- EWR Services Oxford / Aylesbury - Bletchley - Bedford / Milton Keynes

However, recent notification from the EWR Consortium to affected LPAs suggests that the Bicester to Milton Keynes element is subject to delay.

#### **4. FREIGHT LENGTHENING PROJECT**

##### **What is it?**

10. According to Network Rail the Oxford freight train lengthening project (FTL) will provide the capacity for 775m-long freight trains - which are 50% longer than existing trains - to travel from Southampton to the Midlands and the North; each train path provided is estimated to result in 60 fewer HGV movements on the highways between Southampton and the West Midlands on the A34. The main task is the replacement of a passing line on the west side of the current track to avoid delays to passenger trains caused by slower moving freight trains.

##### **When does it take place?**

11. Engineering works have been in progress for several months. The majority of the construction work for the FTL project will be completed by June 2014 with the new infrastructure commissioned for use in 2015. The remaining stages are as follows:

- Construction of a new freight passing loop between just North of Trap Ground Allotments and just North of Godstow Road Overbridge: weekend of 8/9 February
- Diversion of the existing ditch on the west side of the existing railway for 400m between Trap Ground Allotments and north of Oxford Station. This will require sheet piling at some stages: January to April 2014
- Movement of Material to and from site utilizing train haulage during Saturday Night possession (January – June 2014)
- Installation of a new footbridge at Aristotle Lane to enhance safe access to and reinstate a walking route that is reaching the end of its design life (June 2014)
- Linking in of new freight passing loop from just North of Trap Ground Allotments to existing rail infrastructure to the North of Oxford Station (Summer 2014)

#### **5. ELECTRIFICATION**

##### **What is it?**

12. Electric trains have 20% more seats compared to diesel trains. Journey time savings can be made due to the superior braking systems, especially in urban areas where there are frequent stops. Electric trains emit around 20-35% less carbon than diesel trains and there are zero emissions at the point of use. They are also quieter and virtually silent when waiting at stations.

13. As part of its national Great Western Electrification Project Network Rail propose to install Overhead Line Electrification (OLE) equipment on the main line from north of Oxford Station running south to its link with the Great Western Main Line at Didcot, along with necessary associated equipment. This will also require works to create sufficient clearance for the trains and OLE to pass underneath. The Scheme will not require any changes to the

arrangement of the railway lines. NR have commissioned a series of EIAs specific to LA areas, including Oxford City Council

14. In addition to this Scheme Network Rail have stated a desire to electrify track north of Oxford as part of the Southampton to Birmingham programme. This would include track forming part of the EWR project

**When does it take place?**

15. The original timetable was as follows:
  - a. Provision of the OLE by 2016
  - b. Works to create sufficient clearance for the trains and OLE to pass underneath:
    - i. Hinksey Lake Footbridge rebuilding: May 2013 for 4 months.
    - ii. Oxford Footbridge rebuilding: March 2013 for 3 months
  - c. Construction and Operation of a Switching Station east of Oxford Sidings: January 2015 for 11 months.
  - d. Vegetation clearance along the entire route of the Scheme: on-going to link with OLE construction
16. Elements of this programme have been delayed. As LPA Oxford City have refused permission for Hinksey Lake Footbridge on grounds of access.

**6. HINKSEY SIDINGS**

17. Hinksey Sidings activity was at one time extensive and prolonged. Its current use is short term and sporadic, there being no plans to reinstate its former use for storage of large volumes of rail ballast.

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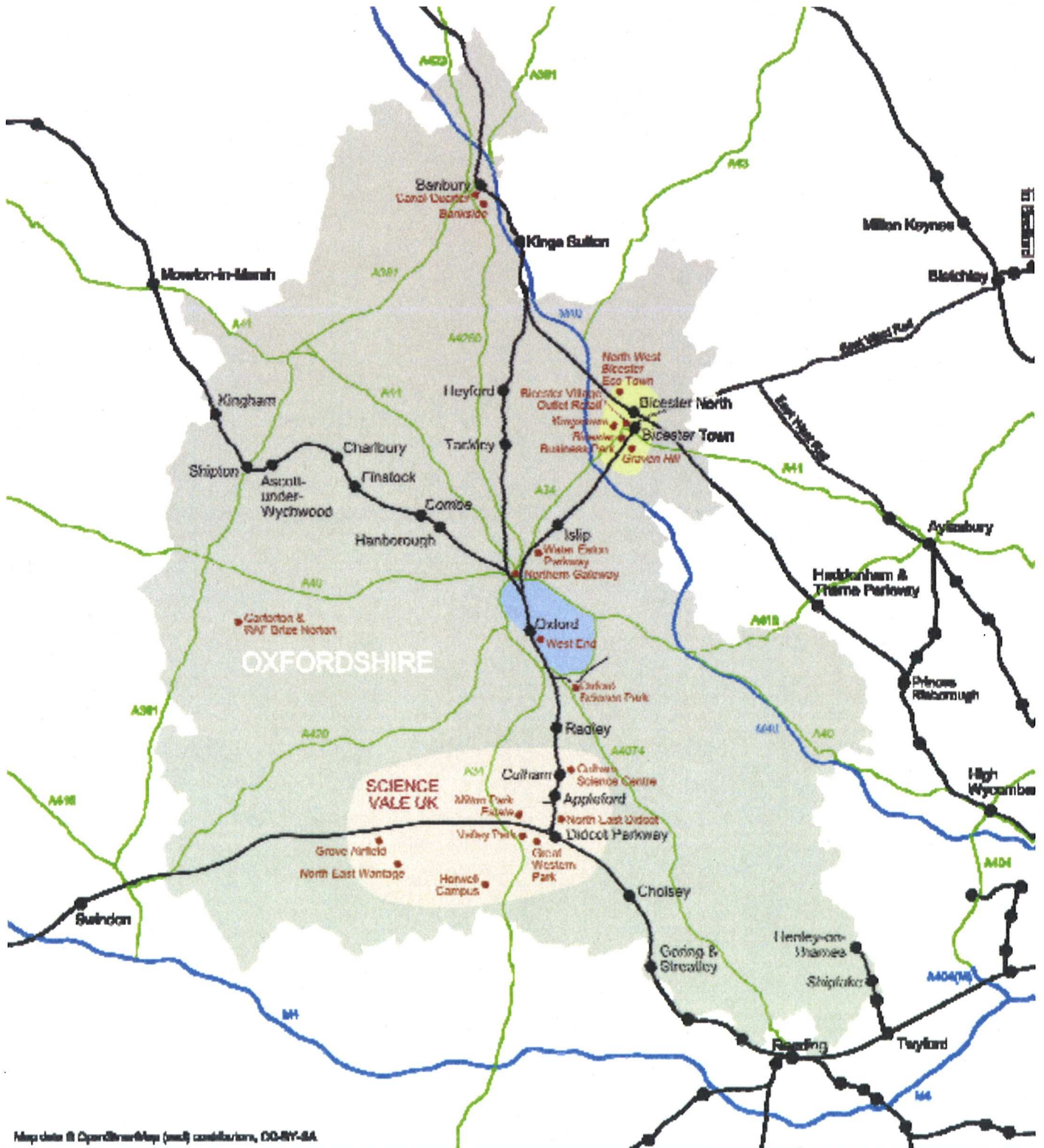
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## The rail network in and around Oxford



Source: Oxfordshire Rail Strategy & Delivery Plan Draft for Consultation, 2007

# Oxford Station Redevelopment Master Plan Study Area



Source: Oxford Station AEDAS Stakeholder Presentation Event 03.11.13