

Chapter 7:

Ensuring efficient movement into and around the city



Oxford has the ambition to become a world class cycling city with improved air quality, reduced congestion and enhanced public realm. Road space within the city is clearly limited and to achieve its ambition there is a need to prioritise road space and promote the sustainable modes of travel, walking, cycling and public transport.

7.1 Promoting sustainable travel through prioritising walking, cycling, and public transport

Oxford is a sub-regional hub and a focus for employment, retail, leisure, culture and tourism. The city centre has a medieval road system, with narrow streets, and areas of great heritage value. It has the ambition to become a world class cycling city with improved air quality, reduced congestion and enhanced public realm. Road space within the city is limited, so to achieve its ambition there is a need to prioritise road space and promote the sustainable modes of travel, walking, cycling and public transport.

The City Council, in its capacity as Local Planning Authority, has a key role to deliver change to the movement network through place shaping. Although it is Oxfordshire County Council as Local Highway Authority that has responsibility for transport policy with other strategic transport decisions being taken by Highways England, the rail industry, and bus operators, the Local Plan has an important role in helping to implement and support transport projects and the principles of sustainable travel. It can have an important impact on movement in the city through its policies on density, design and location of new development, parking and requirements for infrastructure provision from new developments, in particular improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure.

The Plan promotes sustainable travel in the forms of walking, cycling and public transport over private car use. High quality connections by bus, rail, cycling and walking are all vital to the City's future economic prosperity and social inclusiveness. These connections provide access to education, employment, business, retail, medical and leisure opportunities. Cycling and walking contribute towards reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality. As forms of active travel they can assist with the adoption of healthier lifestyles and managing the use of the City's transport network more effectively.

An effective transportation system is fundamental to the vitality of the urban area yet the movement of people into and around Oxford continues to be a huge challenge with its highly constrained transport system. There is limited potential to increase space on the roads, therefore the use of road space must be managed carefully, particularly in the city centre, to optimise capacity. The Local Plan will support measures to maximise the opportunities for releasing road space for sustainable modes by adopting a different approach as to how vehicles, particularly private cars, use the streets. In the city centre, there is also a need to consider how buses access the centre and circulate within it to release space for improved public realm and cycling.

The growth proposed in this Plan is supported by Oxfordshire County Council's Oxford Transport Strategy (OTS) and by a transport and movement study¹ for the city centre which was jointly commissioned with the County Council.

The OTS has been prepared by Oxfordshire County Council as part of the Local Transport Plan: Connecting Oxfordshire 2015-2031 (LTP4). LTP4 established a number of proposals that have been developed further and brought forward in more recent work, including the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) and the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC). The OTS has three components, mass transit, walking and cycling and managing traffic and travel demand. A new mass transit² network for Oxford will help meet future connectivity needs in the

¹ City Centre Movement and Public Realm Strategy Phil Jones Associates July 2018

² Mass transit in Oxford, will consist of rail, rapid transit (RT) and buses and coaches.

city. This will deliver a step-change in travel choices for diverse movements within and into the city. A city-wide walking and cycling network must include continuous pedestrian and cycle routes and high quality spaces for pedestrians in areas of high footfall. Mass transit and walking and cycling improvements will be enabled and supported by an ambitious agenda of road space reallocation, and a much stronger focus on reducing traffic demand in the city.

Both the City and County Councils recognise that for Oxford to function effectively there must be a radical shift away from people relying on the use of the private car towards more sustainable modes and the Local Plan policies reflect this. To prevent growth in car trips to and within Oxford, the County Council have proposals for increased Park and Ride capacity, including the addition of remote Park and Ride sites at Eynsham, Sandford, Cumnor, Lodge Hill and the A44 corridor. These will work alongside other measures, including additional demand management proposals, to help to reduce the number of car trips into the centre of Oxford and to the Eastern Arc. In addition, measures for both road and cycling improvements along the corridor routes into Oxford will be undertaken during the plan period.

Spatial strategy to encourage sustainable modes

The following movement specific objectives are important to ensure people are provided with efficient, attractive and sustainable ways to move throughout the city:

- Supporting the existing movement hierarchy prioritising walking and cycling and use of public transport, and reallocating road space according to this hierarchy;
- Supporting the introduction of additional demand management measures alongside the existing measures, which may include traffic restrictions, road user charging and/or a workplace parking levy;
- Changing traffic management, which could include the re-allocation of road space, whereby road space would be dedicated for segregated cycle routes, bus priority and the provision of wider footways and an enhanced public realm;
- Allowing penetration of frequent public transport services and stops as close as possible to the city centre, district centres and employment and new residential sites, as well as improving interchange between modes;
- Optimising the capacity of the city centre and district centres for walking and cycling by creating a comprehensive and legible network and improved public realm;
- Reducing congestion levels to ensure buses have minimum possible delay, to improve service to passengers, reduce pollution and remove the need for long schedule recovery times to provide a reliable city wide service;
- Enabling growth in public transport passenger numbers, through more efficient “rapid transit” operating principles, infrastructure and vehicles;
- Ensuring servicing and deliveries can be managed efficiently with particular focus on looking for alternatives to the first mile/last mile deliveries, for example cycle couriers; and
- Implementing the Zero Emission Zone in the city centre.

These key objectives seek to enhance the experience for people travelling to, from and within Oxford, and to make the city centre a more attractive place to be. Such measures would lead to a reduction in air and noise pollution, and a more inclusive environment with improved road safety. Air quality in the city centre is expected to improve further with the introduction of a Zero Emission Zone in the city centre³. . Proposals for innovative forms of sustainable travel that would help deliver these objectives will be supported.

³ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20216/air_quality_management/1227/oxford_zero_emission_zone_zez

Scheduled coaches and tourist coaches

Coach travel is also important as a sustainable mode of travel. Oxford has several scheduled long-distance coach routes to the centre of London, to Cambridge and to Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and Luton airports, which provide a popular alternative to car travel. The City Council will support the County Council in achieving the optimum routes within the city centre to reduce the negative impacts of these coaches on both public realm and air quality, whilst ensuring good access to the service remains.

Tourist coaches continue to present a challenge to the city in terms of the number entering the city, particularly during the summer months. Coach parking facilities will continue to be provided at the Redbridge Park and Ride site. Drop off points for coaches will continue to be provided to the north and south of the city (St Giles and St Aldates, south of Speedwell Street). Coaches will only drop off and pick up in these locations and must then leave the city centre and go to longer stay parking (at Redbridge currently). To ensure coaches adhere to these arrangements enforcement is required to prevent the city from becoming an unauthorised coach parking area.

Cowley Branch Line

The NIC recommended that the Cowley Branch Line should be reopened for passengers by the end of 2019, and a study is already underway to develop this project as part of the wider development of the Oxfordshire rail network. The reopening of the Cowley Branch Line for passenger services will bring obvious benefits for the city and is likely to lead to growth and intensification of uses at the Science Park, Business Park and in Blackbird Leys.

The City Council supports such a proposal, recognising the role it would play in the East-West rail links between Oxford, Milton Keynes and Cambridge and the links offered to Oxford Station and Oxford Parkway. The Local Plan seeks to assist in its delivery by working with partners to facilitate the delivery of the branch line within the plan period. The potential station locations will be safeguarded through the Local Plan, as will safeguarded routes.

The Plan will ensure, through the site allocation policies, that no development takes place which would inhibit the opening of the Cowley Branch Line to passenger traffic, by preventing developments which would be sensitive to noise and vibration close to the railway. The Plan will also look to safeguard bus, taxi and pedestrian and cycle routes to the rail halts, ensuring that sites around the new stations are as permeable as possible to enable good access.

Policy M1: Prioritising walking, cycling, and public transport

Planning permission will only be granted for development that minimises the need to travel and is laid out and designed in a way that prioritises access by walking, cycling and public transport.

Walking:

In order to promote walking in the city and improve the pedestrian environment, development proposals must meet the needs arising from the development and take opportunities to achieve improvements. Proposals shall:

- a) ensure that the urban environment is permeable and safe to walk through and adequately lit, with good and direct connections both within and across the wider network;
- b) make improvements to the pedestrian environment including the provision of high quality

- crossings points where needed, seating, signage and landscaping; and
- c) support high quality public realm improvement works (refer to Policy DH1) and ensure that footways are sufficiently wide to accommodate the level of use.

Cycling:

In order to promote cycling in the city and ensure an accessible environment for cyclists, the Council will seek to ensure that development:

- d) provides for connected, high quality, convenient and safe (segregated where possible) cycle routes within developments and the wider networks that are permeable and can accommodate the anticipated growth in cycling;
- e) provides for accessible, conveniently located, secure cycle parking facilities (refer to Policy M5); and
- f) makes provision for high quality on-site facilities that promote cycle usage, including changing rooms, showers, dryers and lockers.

New pedestrian and cycle routes:

New (or improved) pedestrian and cycle routes are shown on the proposals map. Proposals will be expected to facilitate and deliver these links to serve needs arising from development and where opportunities arise to secure improvements. Planning permission will not be granted for development that would jeopardise future delivery of these links.

Public transport:

In order to safeguard and promote the provision of public transport in Oxford development that will add to demands on public transport should contribute towards improvements to bus network infrastructure including pedestrian and cycle routes to bus stops, shelters, passenger seating, waiting areas, signage, timetable information and infrastructure relating to zero emissions.

Financial contributions will be sought towards the cost of new or improved bus services where existing services are not considered adequate. The City Council will work with its partners to improve the ease and quality of access into and around Oxford by public transport, by:

- i) ensuring that road space is managed efficiently to support public transport – including rapid transit - through initiatives such as bus priority measures, infrastructure and demand management.
- ii) supporting the County Council in their management of both scheduled and tourist coaches entering and leaving the city;
- iii) improving the capacity and attractiveness of Park and Ride, particularly the development of remote sites closer to county towns;
- iv) promoting bus/rapid transit access to and between major employers, hospitals, schools and colleges in the Eastern Arc (including the Headington and Marston area), Wolvercote/Cutteslowe and Cowley and Littlemore; and
- v) ensuring sufficient space is provided particularly within the city centre and district centres for bus stops and interchange between bus services and cycling.

Proposals for new development will be expected to incorporate the measures set out above to meet the needs of the development and where the opportunity arises, to secure improvements. Developments should be designed to accommodate bus movements, where appropriate.

Rail network:

Proposals to enhance the City's rail network will be supported, in particular the re-development of Oxford Station and additional rail capacity to accommodate more services, including opening of the Cowley Branch Line for passengers. Land for the provision of new stations at Oxford Business Park/Retail Park (Cowley area) and Oxford Science Park (Littlemore area)(refer to Sites 9 & 10 chapter 9) and access routes to the stations and across the line is safeguarded.

Proposals for improvements to Oxford Railway Station that increase network capacity, improve the design and quality of facilities and interchange and support the Cowley Branch Line will be supported.

Sites for Cowley Branch Line stations and local access routes which are safeguarded and which should be improved by local development are defined on the Policies Map.

7.2 Assessing and managing development

Key tools used to appraise and determine the transport impacts of a development proposal are transport assessments (TA) (refer to Appendix 7.1) and travel plans (TP). A TA is a comprehensive and systematic process to ensure that the transport impacts of the development are properly considered and where appropriate includes measures to help mitigate development impact. A TP is a package of measures tailored to the needs of an individual site and focused on reducing dependence on the private car.

Tps offer opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint of new development as occupants of the new building are required to shift away from using the private car, thus reducing congestion and emissions across Oxford. Tps should demonstrate how the occupants of the building are actively encouraged to establish use of sustainable modes of transport. Tps to be effective, need monitoring, managing and where necessary enforcing. If the proposal is for employment activities, employers need to ensure that employees abide by the TP with appropriate sanctions for non-compliance. Developers must demonstrate, in their Tps what incentives are being offered to facilitate the shift of travel mode from the private car. The TP will be reviewed, monitored and enforced as required (to be set out in a legal agreement). For some developments further assessments and/or plans may be required such as student accommodation plans or car parking plans.

The movement of goods and materials by road can have a significant impact on the quality of the environment and the health and wellbeing of residents, in terms of noise, congestion and air pollution. These impacts are particularly severe in Oxford and the city centre in particular. As the city centre introduces the Zero Emission Zone some of these impacts will be reduced. However, commercial deliveries will always need to be made to Oxford and this should be done in the most sustainable way to reduce negative impacts.

Specific Delivery and Servicing Management Plans (DSPs) are required to be submitted for proposals that will affect the city centre or district centre and also for sites in close proximity to residential areas. They should set out measures that will be introduced to minimise impacts, such as managing delivery times and vehicles. The City Council encourages the use of cycle freight as an extension to cycle courier services by encouraging developers to make provision for cycle freight as part of their DSPs. This provides the potential to manage deliveries in a way that is zero carbon.

The Council will work with partners to promote the use of freight consolidation centres where possible. Within consolidation centres, goods are grouped together so that fewer delivery journeys

are required by roads, thus reducing air pollution, congestion and noise across Oxford. This would be particularly beneficial in reducing delivery trips to the city centre businesses, including Oxford University and the colleges.

Developments must ensure Construction Management Plans set out how the impacts arising from construction work are managed. These should form part of the planning process.

Policy M2: Assessing and managing development

A Transport Assessment must be submitted for development in accordance with the requirements as defined in Appendix 7.1.

Transport Assessments must assess the multi-modal impacts of development proposals and demonstrate the transport measures which would be used to mitigate the development impact.

A Travel Plan, which has clear objectives, targets and a monitoring and review procedure, must be submitted for development that is likely to have significant transport implications in accordance with the requirements in Appendix 7.2.

Where a Delivery and Service Management Plan is provided this should set out how deliveries will be managed and demonstrate how impacts will be minimised including congestion, safety noise and how zero or ultra-low emission and last mile opportunities will be considered.

Where a Construction Management Plan is provided this should set out how the construction phase of the development will be managed.

Planning permission will only be granted if the City Council is satisfied that adequate and appropriate transport-related measures will be put in place.

7.3 Car parking

Limiting the opportunities for parking within the city helps to reduce car use leading to reductions in air pollution, congestion and the creation of a more attractive environment for walking and cyclists. In reducing the availability of public and private parking there will be fewer car trips as people shift mode to a more sustainable form of transport. Furthermore, parking across the city is not an efficient use of land, a key consideration in Oxford, where land is so constrained.

The Council may refuse planning permission for development where additional parking pressures arising from the development would severely compromise highway safety and/or severely restrict the ability of existing residents to park.

The City and County Councils are actively working towards covering the whole city with Controlled Parking Zones by 2036, if not earlier. The reduction of parking and car use within and around the city is essential if air quality is to be improved. In addition, to ensure that the fullest protection of the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC and to comply with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations Assessment, new residential development sites will need to be car-free as set out in M3 and Appendix 7.3 .

Car-free and reduced car parking in residential developments

Opportunities for successful car free housing are high in Oxford because of the number of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs), the availability of walking and cycling routes and facilities and the excellent public transport options. Technology and attitudes to car ownership are anticipated to change, especially with improvements to public transport and cycling facilities. Car clubs and other means of sharing and hiring cars provide an increasingly convenient and realistic alternative to the private car. Car clubs, which are already operating in the city, offer the opportunity in future years to use driverless cars and the potential for developing their fleet to include electric bikes. A reduction in the number of private non-residential car parking spaces will be sought during the plan period.

For many residential schemes, in particular those developments in the city centre or in close proximity to district centres, car-free developments are expected. Car-free development means that no car parking spaces are provided within the site other than those reserved for disabled people, car clubs and operational uses.

Policy H8 Student Accommodation states that the City Council will secure an undertaking that students do not bring cars to Oxford. However some limited disabled and operational parking spaces should be provided for service and delivery vehicles, which should also be available, purely as a pick-up/drop-off facility, for students and their families arriving and departing at the start and end of terms. Alternative uses for these spaces could be available during term time to maximise opportunities for the space e.g. amenity functions.

Parking and Homes in Multiple Occupation

Some types of residential development may require provision of parking spaces. The number of people occupying Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) will often be higher than for a single household. The City Council will expect that where a Sui Generis HMO (6 or more occupants) is proposed outside CPZ areas, parking (either on or off street) must be available to reflect the standard set out in Appendix 7.3. Where there is a realistic possibility of a CPZ coming forward during the plan period no off-street parking would be required.

Parking in non-residential developments and district centres

Major redevelopment of non-residential sites is expected across Oxford during the plan period. Many of these sites already have substantial amounts of parking, including provision for disabled parking. Additional parking will not be allowed in the event of redevelopment and the reduction of parking is encouraged.

Any new developments for B1 use in the city centre and district centres do not require any parking provision except operational need, because the centres have good access to public transport and cycling and walking routes.

Disabled access

Access to the city centre and district centres and other facilities, services and places of employment is essential for disabled people, regardless of their form of transport. The design and location of bus stops, footways, parking and cycling facilities should be designed with the needs of people with disabilities in mind. Parking for disabled vehicles, both cars and cycles, must be accommodated in a way that does not detract from other functions of the street.

Public parking

The Local Plan recognises the need for some on and off-street parking to meet the requirements of those using the city centre and district and local centres for both business and pleasure. However, to achieve a modal shift in the way people travel into Oxford, away from the private car, to public transport, cycling and walking the Local Plan does not support a growth in either on or off-street public parking spaces in the city centre⁴ and district centres. As the County Council introduces changes to the movement of vehicles around the city and more demand management measures, throughout the plan period there is an expectation that on-street parking places in the city centre may be reduced in number and/or reorganised to enable more efficient flow of vehicles and to reclaim road spaces for the benefit of cyclists and pedestrians.

The City Council will continue to work with the County Council to facilitate measures to maintain and enhance Oxford's overall accessibility to ensure people have realistic options other than to drive into the city and district centres.

Policy M3: Motor vehicle parking

In Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) or employer-linked housing areas (where occupants do not have an operational need for a car) where development is located within a 400m walk to frequent (15 minute) public transport services and within 800m walk to a local supermarket or equivalent facilities (measured from the mid-point of the proposed development) planning permission will only be granted for residential development* that is car-free.

In all other locations, planning permission will only be granted where the relevant maximum standards set out in Appendix 7.3 are complied with.

Disabled parking provision must be provided in all residential developments in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 7.3.

Parking for car club vehicles must be provided in all residential developments with the standards set out in Appendix 7.3.

Planning permission for non-residential redevelopments will only be granted if it is demonstrated that there will be no increase in parking provision.

Planning permission for additional parking provision within new developments will only be granted for spaces that are designated for disabled people, car clubs or where it can be demonstrated that there are essential operational or servicing needs (identified in the supporting TA and TP).

*For the purposes of this policy, residential development includes C3 dwellings, C4 and Sui Generis, Houses in Multiple Occupation, and all C2 development (residential institutions)

7.4 Provision of electric charging points

The introduction of the Low Emission Zone in Oxford in 2014 has resulted in improved air quality; however levels of air pollution still exceed target levels in some areas, in particular the city centre, at junctions on the ring road and in the district centres.

⁴ The baseline for car parking numbers is the number of public car parking spaces across the city centre at March 2019 (after the closure of Oxpens) 1,942 off street (includes 556 spaces at Beckett Street for rail users only) and 255 on street car parking spaces.

Oxford City Centre Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) will be introduced in a number of phases during the Plan period. To support the increase in the uptake of electrical vehicles the City Council have established a number of projects aimed at increasing vehicle charging across the city. This Plan supports the delivery of the ZEZ to improve air quality in the city centre, which at the same time reduces noise, decarbonises road transport and stimulates the green economy.

Proposals for Zero Emission Vehicles will be supported by:

- the introduction of a Zero Emission Zone;
- ensuring that new developments include adequate provision for charging infrastructure, including in public car parks;
- the City Council facilitating the introduction of charging points in public places; and
- continuing to work with partners to support alternative fuel technologies.

Policy M4: Provision of electric charging points

Where additional parking is to be provided in accordance with Policy M3, planning permission will only be granted for new residential developments if:

- a) provision is made for electric charging points for each residential unit with an allocated parking space; and
- b) non-allocated spaces are provided with at least 25% (with a minimum of 2) having electric charging points installed.

Planning permission will only be granted for non-residential development that includes parking spaces if a minimum of 25% of the spaces are provided with electric charging points.

7.5 Cycle parking

Cycling in Oxford is an important and growing mode of transport. The 2011 census showed that 17.1% of journeys to work within Oxford were made by cycle, up from 14.9% in 2001, making Oxford second only to Cambridge in terms of the proportion of people cycling to work. The City Council wishes to continue to encourage this active and sustainable form of travel and will seek to ensure that new developments provide secure and convenient cycle parking. Since 2017 dockless bikes have arrived in Oxford. These present more opportunities for alternative travel for both residents and visitors, but need to be accommodated in the streets of Oxford.

A fundamental part of encouraging cycling is the provision of secure cycle storage within people's homes and destinations such as shops, work places and transport interchanges. It is anticipated that ownership of electric bikes will expand and secure storage facilities around the city will be required. Cycle parking standards set out in Appendix 7.3 are minimum standards, which reflect the need for cycle storage shown by research evidence - Oxfordshire Cycling Design Standards A guide for Developers, Planners and Engineers Summer 2017⁵. Sufficient, high-quality cycle parking is especially important for car-free developments.

All cycle parking must, as far as is practical and reasonable, be enclosed within a secure store, or at least undercover. The location of cycle parking is also important: where cycle parking for residents or employees is not in a secure store, it should be located away from the street frontage, to

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<https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/roadsandtransport/transportpoliciesandplans/newdevelopments/CyclingStandards.pdf>

maximise security. There must be convenient, level access between the bike store and the street that avoids having to wheel bikes through buildings or corridors. Short stay and visitor cycle parking is best located as near to the front door of the properties as possible. Cycle parking should make provision for the appropriate facilities for the charging of electric bicycles.

Policy M5: Cycle Parking

Planning permission will only be granted for development that complies with or exceeds the minimum cycle parking provision as set out in Appendix 7.3.

Cycle parking should be, well designed and well-located, convenient, secure, covered (where possible enclosed) and provide level, unobstructed external access to the street. Cycle parking should be designed to accommodate an appropriate amount of parking for the needs of disabled people and facilities for electric charging infrastructure.

For new non-residential development, the City Council will seek the provision of showers and changing facilities in accordance with the thresholds and minimum standards set out in Appendix 7.4.

Where opportunities to do so arise in relation to development, consideration should be given for the provision of space for storage of dockless bikes.

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