

Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015-2031

A40 Route Strategy

**CONNECTING
OXFORDSHIRE**



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

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Role/function of A40 as a principal route

1. The A40 is an important through route linking Gloucestershire and South Wales with London via M40. It is also critical in linking West Oxfordshire - particularly Witney and Carterton - to the Knowledge Spine through connections to the A44 and A34.

A40 route within Oxfordshire

2. Witney and Carterton are the two largest towns in West Oxfordshire. They have both seen considerable growth over the last 30 years and this is expected to continue in the future. The A40 forms the main route between both of these towns and Oxford; this is used by most of the bus routes as well as general traffic. Neither Witney nor Carterton have a direct rail connection; their nearest stations are at Hanborough or Oxford.
3. The A40 is a single carriageway Primary Route. It carries a daily flow of between 23,000 and 30,000 vehicles per day - well above the road's link capacity. This is exacerbated by junction capacity issues at Eynsham/Cassington and Wolvercote. This results in congestion on the route for much of the day, including at weekends. During school term times the average journey speed on the A40 between Cassington and Wolvercote in the morning peak is 17 mph, while on the worst days it can be as low as 10 mph.
4. The current bus services have achieved a notable success in attracting people who are travelling from Witney and Carterton to Oxford city centre, but there is still considerable scope for increasing bus use in journeys to the rest of the city.

Growth Context - Oxfordshire growth, West Oxfordshire Local Plan, Oxford City

5. The A40 strategies are being developed alongside the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan. Growth proposals from the WODC Pre-submission Draft Local Plan 2011-2031 (March 2015) comprise provision of at least 10,500 homes between 2011 and 2031. The majority of new homes will be provided in the Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton sub-areas.
6. The proposed indicative distribution of housing is as follows:

West Oxfordshire sub-area	Proposed number of dwellings
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Witney sub-area	3,700
Carterton sub-area	2,600
Chipping Norton sub-area	1,800
Eynsham – Woodstock sub-area	1,600
Burford – Charlbury sub area	800

7. Following the Examination in Public (EiP) of West Oxfordshire’s Local Plan in 2015 the District are considering options to increasing the level of housing growth, as recommended by the Inspector. These proposals will be considered within the context of transport schemes for the A40.
8. Following the publication of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which identified a need for 28,000 new homes for Oxford within the period 2011-31, the Oxfordshire councils have agreed a working assumption of 15,000 homes as the scale of Oxford’s unmet need to be planned outside the city. This will need to be taken into account in emerging and future Local Plans, and from a transport perspective, is likely to place further travel demands on the A40 and north Oxford junctions in particular.

Strategies

9. These strategies focus on the stretch of the A40 to the west of Oxford running between Carterton and Wolvercote. For many users of the A40 this section forms just part of their journey, nonetheless the part where they experience significant delay.
10. Two strategies are outlined below for the A40. The first, A40 Science Transit 2, will deliver a package of schemes providing short term relief to the A40 by 2021. These improvements are unlikely to wholly resolve the current capacity issues on A40 let alone deal with the impact of future developments in West Oxfordshire and Oxford city. Therefore a long term strategy for improving the A40 is currently being developed.

A40 Science Transit 2 Scheme – Short Term Strategy

11. In the short term we have been provisionally awarded £35 million from the Government's Local Growth Fund for public transport improvements in the A40 corridor for delivery between 2019 and 2021.
12. The purpose of this proposal is to provide a congestion free route into Oxford from the west for public transport. In turn this provision, and associated improvements in public transport service provision, will encourage a transfer of

trips from private transport to bus thereby reducing overall congestion levels on the A40 for all vehicles. Together these measures will prevent or reduce congestion and pollution increasing on the A40 travelling alongside Oxford Meadows.

13. In developing the strategy the proposed scheme package comprises:

POLICY A40 - We will improve access between towns in West Oxfordshire, and Oxford, including the new employment site at Oxford's 'Northern Gateway' by utilising the Local Growth Fund to deliver public transport improvements in the A40 corridor.

The proposed scheme includes:

- **An eastbound bus lane** between Eynsham roundabout and the Duke's Cut, Wolvercote;
- **Westbound bus priority** on the approaches to Cassington traffic signals and Eynsham roundabout;
- **A Park and Ride car park** on the A40 corridor at a location to be determined through the county council's Park & Ride study, due to be published in spring 2016;
- **Junction improvements along the A40 corridor** between Witney bypass and Eynsham roundabout, including bus priority on the approach to Swinford Tollbridge;

In implementing this scheme the current Witney to Oxford cycle route will be retained and will be developed into a part of the Oxfordshire Cycle Premium Route network.

Alignment with other A40 and rail schemes

14. The County Council has secured City Deal funding to improve Wolvercote roundabout and Cutteslowe roundabouts in north Oxford (to be completed winter 2016). Some funding has also been secured for a new link road between the A40 and A44, which will provide improved access from west Oxfordshire to the A44 & A34, avoiding Wolvercote roundabout. Planning and design work is being progressed before consultation and a future planning application is submitted. Further funding will also need to be secured.

15. Development at Northern Gateway will require major transport infrastructure improvements, including improvements to the A40, A44 and Peartree interchange. These proposals will need to fit with the A40 strategy and help to deliver it.

16. In addition to these schemes for the A40 corridor, we will seek the completion of the Cotswold Line redoubling and the development of Hanborough station into a local interchange and Park & Rail facility, with additional platform and parking.

Table 1: A40 Science Transit 2: Project Delivery Timetable & Procurement Plan

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Start Date</i>	<i>Finish Date</i>	<i>Milestone/decision point & scheduled technical gateways</i>
<i>Feasibility & Preliminary Design</i>	<i>01/10/15</i>	<i>31/06/16</i>	<i>Approval of stage 1 Business Case</i>
<i>Land Acquisition</i>	<i>01/09/16</i>	<i>30/09/17</i>	
<i>Detailed Design</i>	<i>01/09/16</i>	<i>30/09/17</i>	
<i>WebTAG assessment</i>	<i>01/09/16</i>	<i>31/08/17</i>	<i>DfT Business Case</i>
<i>Planning Application</i>	<i>01/10/17</i>	<i>30/04/17</i>	<i>If required</i>
<i>DfT Funding Approval</i>	<i>01/09/17</i>	<i>31/12/17</i>	
<i>Procurement</i>	<i>01/01/18</i>	<i>30/03/18</i>	<i>Approval of stage 2 Business Case</i>
<i>Construction</i>	<i>01/09/18</i>	<i>31/09/20</i>	

Extract from Initial Business Case (Stage 0b Commit to Investigate), 2015

Figure 1: A40 Science Transit 2 Map



Investing in the A40 - Long Term Strategy

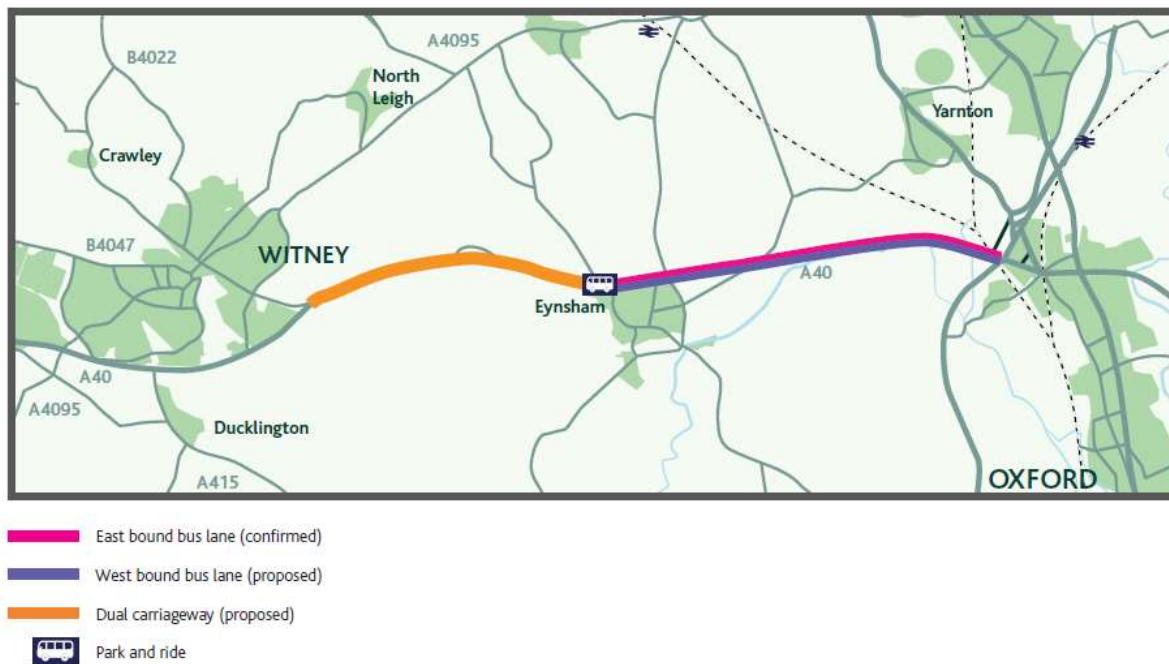
- In July 2015, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet agreed the **A40 Science Transit 2 Scheme** a major infrastructure project for public transport improvements to be made along the A40 from Eynsham to Wolvercote. This was largely funded through the Local Growth Fund in order to provide congestion relief in the short to medium term. This £40m project, in addition to the other investments across the length of the A40 corridor, set the stage for a much larger undertaking to tackle congestion in the long term.
- Oxfordshire County Council is committed to finding a long-term strategy to tackle current and projected congestion on the A40.
- In developing a long term strategy for improving the A40 the following objectives have been identified:
 - Improve travel times and journey reliability along the A40 corridor, particularly between Witney and Oxford,
 - Stimulate economic growth, in line with the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan,

- Improve safety and reduce environmental impacts such as air pollution and noise along the A40 corridor.

20. The long term strategy for the A40 takes a combination approach which includes both increased road capacity as well as improvements to the public transport offer. The Council has committed to investigate in detail a combined scheme for further feasibility comprising a package of measures:

- a dual-carriageway from Witney to a park and ride at Eynsham
- bus lanes in both directions along the A40 from a park and ride at Eynsham to the Duke's Cut canal bridge approaching Wolvercote roundabout
- provision of high quality cycleways along the length of the route.

Figure 2: Investing in the A40 corridor long term strategy



References

[WODC Local Plan 2031 \(March 2015\)](#)

<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/residents/planning-building/planning-policy/local-development-framework/local-plan-2031-examination/>