

Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

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| Date of meeting: 23 July 2015 | AGENDA ITEM NO: |
| Report title: Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy Update | |
| Authors: Andrew Bowe, Implementation Officer, Cherwell District Council | |
| Tel: 01295 221842 | |
| Email: andrew.bowe@cherwell-dc.gov.uk | |
| Lisa Michelson, Locality Manager, Oxfordshire County Council | |
| Tel: 01865 815673 | |
| Email: lisa.michelson@oxfordshire.gov.uk | |

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Board on the travel behaviour project and the Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy (STS).
- 1.2 To seek the Board's approval to progress proposals for a specific walking and cycling improvements project.
- 1.3 To make Members aware of future challenges around sustainable travel.

2. Background

- 2.1 Walking and cycling trends
- 2.2 Recent statistics, based on results from the active people survey (APS) by sport England, show that there have been significant increases in the number of people walking and cycling every week in many areas, with 47% of people in England walking at least 5 times a week and 3% cycling at least 5 times a week (Ref: Local Area Walking and Cycling Statistics 2013/2014, Department for Transport).
- 2.3 Since the last report on the Sustainable Transport Strategy in January 2015, the Cherwell Local Plan and Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan have progressed. Nationally, the Government announced its response to the consultation on its Cycling Delivery Plan in March 2015, following the inclusion of cycling and walking investment plans in the Infrastructure Act.
- 2.4 Walking and Cycling Investment Strategy
- 2.5 The Infrastructure Act 2015 sets out the Government's ambitions for a new transport system. For the first time the Secretary of State for Transport will be required by law to set out a strategy for cycling and walking infrastructure and importantly the funding provided to meet it. The Act includes a walking and cycling investment strategy to ensure active travel is considered as a priority area for investment.

- 2.6 Eco Bicester One Shared Vision (December 2010)
- 2.7 The Eco Bicester One Shared Vision sets out the aims and aspirations for transport and movement within the town. It encourages walking and cycling as the first choice of travel to: improve health; reduce carbon emissions and improve the quality of the environment. The Shared Vision underpins the Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy and Local Transport Plan Bicester Area Strategy.
- 2.8 Cherwell Local Plan
- 2.9 The Inspector's Report on the Examination into the new Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 is now available. Officers have considered the report and it will be presented to Members at meeting of Cherwell District Council on 20th July 2015. The Bicester STS will inform Part 2 of the Local Plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 2.10 Connecting Oxfordshire –Local Transport Plan (LTP4)
- 2.11 Connecting Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire's new Local Transport Plan (LTP4) has been developed over the past 18 months, in response to rapidly changing national and local growth, economic development, infrastructure planning and funding agendas. LTP4 is a comprehensive policy and strategy framework to maximise opportunities for Oxfordshire. Development of the Plan has followed on from the Connecting Oxfordshire roadshows held across the County in summer 2015 and has been informed by the feedback received from those events. It has been further developed in close partnership with internal and external Stakeholders, including the Local Enterprise Partnership, District Councils and Members.
- 2.12 A full public and Stakeholder consultation on the draft Plan, published in January, was undertaken over spring 2015, and generated over 500 responses. A report setting out the issues raised through the consultation has been published and is available on the Oxfordshire County Council website at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/local-transport-plan>.
- 2.13 The Local Transport Plan has been designed as a living document. It will be regularly updated as significant changes take place which affect transport in Oxfordshire. It will also directly inform the update of the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan proposed in autumn 2015. A report on the LTP4 will be presented to the OCC Cabinet on 21st July 2015 with a recommendation to adopt it by full Council at its meeting in September 2015. In response to comments on the Oxfordshire Cycling Strategy and investment in cycling the annex to the report states that OCC will work with the Oxfordshire Cycling Network and other partners in developing proposals and applying for grants and other sources of funding for cycling improvements. The report can be viewed on the Oxfordshire County Council website at: <http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=4341&Ver=4>
- 2.14 Once LTP4 has been through the formal approval and adoption process in summer 2015, it is expected that the next update will be in spring 2016. In the meantime the LTP will continue to inform strategic infrastructure planning work, bids for Growth Funding and other sources and the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan.
- 2.15 Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan
- 2.16 The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has prepared a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) which is supported by the policies and objectives of the LTP4. It includes the transport priorities within Bicester providing the “connectivity infrastructure” to tackle the challenges in the Bicester Movement Study. In terms of sustainable transport a Walking and Cycling

Connectivity Project will have a role in accommodating growth and is anticipated to create 100 construction jobs and a Gross Added Value (GVA) of £3.9 million.

2.17 Bicester Transport Studies

2.18 The transport studies for Bicester are set out below and provide baseline information:

- 2.18.1 Bicester Bus Movement Study (2009)
- 2.18.2 Draft Bicester Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy (2009)
- 2.18.3 Baseline Travel Behaviour Survey (2010 published 2011)
- 2.18.4 Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP3) (2012)
- 2.18.5 Bicester Movement Study (2013) – see below
- 2.18.6 Garden Town Transport feasibility study (summer 2015)

2.19 Bicester Movement Study (2011)

- 2.20 The Bicester Movement Study forms part of the Cherwell Local Plan evidence base. The Bicester Transport Model used in the Study showed that the network was generally operating well around the town. It shows a few specific and localised areas of congestion or delay, specifically the A41 to the south east of the town and the central corridor (Kings End/Queens Avenue section to the junction of Banbury and Buckingham Road).
- 2.21 The Movement Study states: *“Currently there are three main north–south routes in Bicester, these are defined within this study as the Western Corridor (the A4095 via either Middleton Stoney Road or the new southwest link road), the Eastern Corridor (the A4421 via the A41) and the Central Corridor (running through the middle of the town via Kings End, Queens Avenue and Buckingham Road). Of these routes the Central Corridor currently provides the fastest north–south route across the town, followed by the route to the west, with travelling around the town via the eastern route generally taking over a minute longer to travel from the south to the north. The Central Corridor appears to be selected by many drivers as the preferred north-south route, resulting in congestion, delay and reductions in air quality within sections of the town centre (including the likely identification of a locally designated Air Quality Management Area).”*
- ## 2.22 Bicester Strategic Delivery Board
- 2.23 Since 2010 the Board has been presented with transport updates and reports in July 2011, April 2012, April 2014 and January 2015. Members have recognised the importance of promoting sustainable transport in reducing the number of unsustainable trips, accommodating growth, reducing carbon emissions and contributing to healthy and active lifestyles.
- ## 2.24 Eco Bicester Travel Behaviour Demonstration Project
- 2.25 Since 2010 the Eco Bicester Travel Behaviour Demonstration Project has been an important element in delivering the One Shared Vision transport objectives. Work to date has included travel surveys, a bike loan scheme, promotion of cycle routes in the town and events such as the Bicester Bike Day. The Travel Demonstration Project was the first stage in developing a sustainable transport element of the wider Eco-Bicester programme. In addition, some improvements to the walking and cycling network have taken place in the town centre and Banbury Road.
- 2.26 At the start of the travel behaviour demonstration project, the intention was for wide local community involvement to eventually lead to a culture change and change of perception towards walking and cycling in the town. The “Cycle for Bicester” scheme’s objective was to encourage cycling in the town and seek to overcome the perceived barriers to cycling. The

scheme comprised cycle loans, bike fixes and targeted those living, working and/or travelling in Bicester, particularly those considering taking up cycling as an alternative to car trips. The feedback was positive, with good awareness of the Scheme and its aims.

2.27 North West Bicester

2.28 The approach to achieving the targets for sustainable travel involves a range of solutions including delivering infrastructure to support walking and cycling by providing links into the town and surrounding rural areas. These proposals are embedded in the masterplanning principles and transport strategies for the site. For example improvements to the Banbury Road and Middleton Stoney Road for walking and cycling are being progressed as part of the proposals for the eco-town development. As such it is acting as a catalyst for improvements in the provision of walking and cycling improvements in the existing town.

2.29 The Eco Towns Planning Policy Statement forms the basis of the Cherwell Local Plan policy and North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document. It states:

2.29.1 *'Travel in eco-towns should support people's desire for mobility whilst achieving the goal of low carbon living. The town should be designed so that access to it and through it gives priority to options such as walking, cycling, public transport and other sustainable options, thereby reducing residents' reliance on private cars, including techniques such as filtered permeability. To achieve this, homes should be within ten minutes' walk of (a) frequent public transport and (b) neighbourhood services. The provision of services within the eco-town may be co-located to reduce the need for individuals to travel by private car and encourage the efficient use of the sustainable transport options available.'*

2.29.2 *Planning applications should include travel plans which demonstrate: (a) how the town's design will enable at least 50 per cent of trips originating in eco-towns to be made by non-car means, with the potential for this to increase over time to at least 60 per cent (b) good design principles, drawing from Manual for Streets¹⁴, Building for Life¹⁵, and community travel planning principles¹⁶; (c) how transport choice messages, infrastructure and services will be provided from 'day one' of residential occupation, and (d) how the carbon impact of transport in the eco-town will be monitored, as part of embedding a long term low-carbon approach to travel within plans for community governance.'*

2.30 Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy

2.31 Cherwell District Council commissioned a Sustainable Transport Strategy for the town to focus work on sustainable travel and provide an assessment of the opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport. The brief required the strategy to provide a comprehensive review of the existing network and to set out an approach to deliver improvements to the future network. It was developed to provide a more strategic approach to deliver increases in travel by sustainable means and aims to build on these earlier successes and deliver town wide transport improvements over the next 20 years, supporting Oxfordshire County Council's Bicester Area Strategy in the Local Transport Plan.

2.32 The vision for the strategy is to create a network of transport infrastructure and services that make it easy and attractive to travel by sustainable means. It focusses on improving walking and cycling infrastructure and the promotion of sustainable transport options. It groups the improvements into short, medium and long term priorities.

Funding

- 2.33 Eco-towns funding which has been used to deliver the travel behaviour project. Some capital funding remains (approximately £500,000 – five hundred thousand pounds) in the budget. Funding has also been committed to a wayfinding project. In addition, some funding for sustainable transport has been secured through the exemplar application at North West Bicester and will be sought from other developments as they come forward in and around the town.
- 2.34 More recently, funding has become available through the Oxfordshire LEP Local Growth Fund (LGF). In May 2015 a joint funding bid for a Bicester Cycling and Walking Connectivity Project was submitted by Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council seeking funding to bring forward walking and cycling improvements for key routes including Market Square, providing links between residential and employment areas and delivering the objectives of the Oxfordshire SEP. A decision on the funding is expected later this year.

3.1 Report Details

3.2 Eco Bicester Travel Behaviour Demonstration Project Update

- 3.3 Various travel projects have been running since 2010. They have been integral to delivering the transport elements of the One Shared Vision for the town and have been reported regularly to the Board. Over the last five years, some progress has been made but there is still a lot to do. The success and impact of the various initiatives in promoting more sustainable modes of transport in the town has been recognised in previous reports.
- 3.4 A summary of the household travel survey results was brought to the Board in October 2011, together with a programme of work and proposals to implement some key projects. It focussed on walking and cycling infrastructure and promotion. The shared walking and cycling link installed on Banbury Road immediately north of Bure Park local centre is an example of an enhanced foot and cycle link constructed as a result of the project. It was identified as a need by local people that took part in Cycling Audits in 2010. The local school and Residents Association welcomed the improvement.
- 3.5 The need for further cycle parking in the town has been raised in the past by local residents. Work has identified key locations for additional provision on highway land but work on installation is not progressing. There is also a desire to proceed with public transport and car share improvements and promotional activities. The long term aim remains to have some form of cycle hub in the town centre, but in the short term the project needs to install secure cycle parking at key destinations throughout the town.
- 3.6 The October 2011 report to the Board presented £350,000 worth of schemes and promotional activities to be progressed. The funding was not tied to financial years. Some of the capital funding from this has been spent on the shared path on Banbury Road by Bure Park. The remainder of the £350,000 is intended to be used for capital projects, in particular cycling improvements on Buckingham Road.
- 3.7 The demonstration project has ended although the Buckingham Road project has been carried over and has informed the STS (see the funding section in paragraph 2.36 above). It has particularly informed the smarter choices and active travel section of the STS. To achieve all the works and activities desired would require more funding than remains in the budget for the travel behaviour project.

3.8 Monitoring

- 3.9 A baseline report was produced in December 2011 and was expected to be repeated annually. However, due to a lack of resources this has not taken place. The travel project enabled the installation of cycle counters in the town, however these are currently not being maintained due to a lack of resources. Monitoring of changes to the number of trips made by car however remains difficult.

3.10 Walking and Cycling Audits

- 3.11 The audits undertaken previously were very effective in engaging with local people on the project. Officers involved local community representatives and volunteers in the design of schemes and sought their input. The last audit took place in January 2011 and reduced resource means that further work is unlikely without securing additional funding.

3.12 Bicester Bike Scheme

- 3.13 Currently, the scheme is operated by Bicester Green with 10 bicycles (eight hybrid and two folding) are available for hire from Bicester Green in Station Approach. Child seats, a child trailer and a Tag-along are also available to encourage young families to take up cycling.

3.14 Bicester Cycle Routes

- 3.15 The Bronze, Silver and Gold cycle routes prepared by the Eco Bicester Project Team with support from work placements over the last three summers have been well received by local residents and continue to provide a useful resource at community events and online (<http://www.ecobicester.org.uk/cms/content/bicester-cycle-routes>).

3.16 Bicester Bike Day 2015

- 3.17 A2 Dominion continues its annual event to promote cycling in the town with the third event planned for 19th July 2015. This year it will include the "Gear Up Cherwell" Sportive in partnership with Cherwell District Council's Leisure Centre operator, Parkwood.

3.18 Capital Programme update

- 3.19 Route improvements and upgrades are being progressed to enhance existing facilities. Previous work focussed on the Churchill Road 'shared space' concept in the vicinity of Cooper School and desktop feasibility associated with on and off carriageway cycle facilities on Buckingham, Banbury and Churchill Roads, as part of missing cycle links to the town centre.
- 3.20 Due to limited funds available the project was amended with the 'shared space' concept replaced by cycle route strategy (corridor approach) on the targeted routes along Banbury, Buckingham and Churchill Roads to link with the Bicester Town Centre Access Improvements. It is also intended to provide additional cycle parking at locations around the town centre. Buckingham Road improvements are being progressed as a matter of priority with the limited funds available. Further work is required to take the scheme to detailed design.

3.21 Sustainable Transport Strategy

- 3.22 The SDB was notified of the commissioning of the STS in the Travel Behaviour update report in April 2014, followed by a report on the Draft Strategy in January 2015. The STS supports positive policies and objectives in the Cherwell Local Plan (Policy SLE4 – Improved transport and connections) and the Eco Bicester One Shared Vision transport and movement theme. OCC has been part of the Strategy's preparation and key contacts have been involved from the start of the project with various consultations taking place. The strategy will inform the Cherwell Local Plan Part 2, Bicester Masterplan and LTP4 and will be presented to Cherwell District Council's Executive on 7th September 2015 for endorsement.
- 3.23 The vision for the STS is to create a network of transport infrastructure and services that make it easy and attractive to travel by sustainable means. This is supported by seven principles: Sustainable, Resilient, Incremental, Modal Priorities, Spatial Hierarchy of Routes, High Quality and Integrated. The future movement strategy considers all modes and their integration. Key points are:
- 3.23.1 The walking and cycling network is divided into primary and secondary routes, and is based on the core principles of **coherence, directness, safety, comfort and attractiveness**. The base network of existing facilities requires upgrading in order to fulfil these principles, set out in a comprehensive schedule of improvements. The focus for improvements will be to crossing facilities at radial distributor roads and minor residential roads. In the town centre, the movement of through traffic needs to be addressed with the Strategy recommending restricted access and lowering traffic speeds.
- 3.23.2 The strategy proposes interchange hubs at the two stations, encouraging multi-modal journeys. The possible closure of London Road level crossing is of major concern because of its impact on bus services, potentially cutting off Langford Village, Graven Hill and East Bicester from the town centre.
- 3.23.3 Bus provision is made legible by separating out longer distance and town services. A local retail relay route is established along the main spine (connecting also the new park and ride to the south), with all other town services passing through the town centre bus station - enhanced to form the major interchange hub. These changes would be phased and all new bus stock would be accessible, low carbon and have ITSO (smart ticket) compliant readers.
- 3.23.4 Changes in the town centre would allow the retail centre of Bicester to expand, in tandem with the town's wider expansion. This is a particular opportunity for Market Square, which is currently undervalued and dominated by parking and a one-way traffic gyratory. The strategy identifies the opportunities that would arise from measures to pedestrianise the northern and eastern sides of the Square as well as Causeway. The opportunity in the longer term for through traffic to be restricted to buses, taxis and cycles between the hours of 7am and 7pm is identified. Implementation could take place gradually, and be supported by the servicing and deliveries and car parking strategy to ensure its successful operation.
- 3.23.5 Current retail space is approximately 35,000 sq. metres with car parking provision of 1,160 spaces, or one car parking space per 30 sq. metres of retail space. The strategy looks at the potential for the retail space and parking provision to increase with the town's expansion. The additional provision could be provided by development on the site of the Claremont car park - forming a retail anchor to the south east of Market Square, which would mirror the retail anchor of Sainsbury's/Vue to the north west. This could increase retail space in the town to approximately 45,000 sq. metres, and car parking provision to approximately 1,250 spaces.

Even with sustainable transport gains, the modal share for car driving for Bicester would still be 60%. The use of electric and Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV) for these trips would make these car trips more sustainable. There is currently a high level of funding available for this, and ULEV are also more pleasant and healthy in terms of air pollution and noise levels. Recommendations include strategic placement of electric charge points and an electric car club.

- 3.23.6 Infrastructure improvements are critical to creating an environment where sustainable travel is the most popular choice, but this will be most effective when supported by the management and implementation of a smarter choices and active travel programme. This would need to be funded and staffed appropriately. Particular opportunities for Bicester with potential for change are identified, and measures proposed include travel awareness campaigns, a sustainable travel roadshow, work with rail stations, sustainable transport hubs, workplace engagement, a commuter challenge, school engagement, residential personalised travel planning and community street design.
- 3.24 The Draft Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy was presented to a Members workshop in September 2014. At the workshop Members considered the vision, objectives principles and delivery plan. Comments were used in the preparation of the Final Draft STS which reported to the Board in January 2015. Work has continued on the development of the STS Delivery Plan but was delayed by officers prioritising work on the Cherwell Local Plan and LTP4. In addition, proposals for traffic restrictions on the central corridor and town centre met with some resistance. These concerns require further consideration.
- 3.25 The Draft STS states *“Infrastructure improvements are critical to creating an environment where sustainable travel is the most popular choice but this will be most effective when supported by the management and implementation of a smarter choices and active travel programme. This should be funded and staffed appropriately”*. It states that in a town the size of Bicester it is likely that no more than two full time project officers would be required to deliver a smarter choices and active travel programme at its peak with additional resource commissioned for specific schemes for example personal travel planning. Applying the measure of one third of the budget would suggest a cost of approximately £1.5 million over a four year period.
- 3.26 As well as so-called “hard measures” such as cycleways and infrastructure improvements, the strategy includes “soft measures” now commonly referred to as “smarter choices” taking examples from the Sustainable Travel Towns Government Programme running between 2004 and 2009 to support, promote and encourage behaviour change. There is evidence from the Smarter Choice schemes of the Sustainable Travel Towns projects in Darlington, Peterborough and Worcester (also a Local Sustainable Transport Funded project in Southampton) to support behaviour change through revenue funded smarter choices programmes.
- 3.27 The Bicester travel demonstration project identified three key objectives which have been incorporated into the Strategy as set out below:
 - 3.27.1 Total trips by Bicester residents reduced
 - 3.27.2 Total distance travelled by car (as driver) by Bicester residents to all destinations reduced
 - 3.27.3 Total CO2 emissions from car travel by Bicester residents to all destinations reduced.
- 3.28 The Final Draft Sustainable Transport Strategy states:
 - 3.28.1 *“The first phase of the Eco development, the Exemplar, has identified a target for the reduction in journeys made by car from 69% to 50% and eventually 40%. A 19% reduction is ambitious*

in comparison to the 7-9% reported in the Sustainable Travel Towns. However, with high levels of investment in infrastructure together with an integrated programme of Smarter Choices, a 19% reduction is considered achievable for all new development and can be considered aspirational in terms of the whole town.”

- 3.29 The statement above outlines the scale of the challenge ahead in delivering the cycling and walking objectives for Bicester.
- 3.30 Public transport – Bus and Rail improvements
- 3.31 The proposed growth of the town provides opportunities for enhanced public transport infrastructure and services in the town and this is picked up in the STS Bus Strategy and section on rail.
- 3.32 London Road Rail Crossing
- 3.33 The STS identifies the London Road access to the town centre crossing the railway as a potential constraint on the network requiring attention. OCC is looking at the feasibility of an all modes crossing of the railway at this location with a preferred scheme to be identified.
- 3.34 Central corridor
- 3.35 Previous studies including the Bicester Integrated Transport and Land Use Study (2009) and Bicester Movement Study (2013) have recognised that there is a need to reduce through traffic in the town centre particularly along the route between the Buckingham Road (A421) and Oxford Road (A41). Town centre highway improvements in 2012 have altered some of the junctions along the central corridor route and further improvements will be considered as part of Policy BIC2 in LTP4.
- 3.36 As part of the STS detailed design proposals for the central corridor along the Buckingham Road and Oxford Road north-south axis have been prepared by Sustrans in consultation with officers of the OCC as this was considered to have the greatest impact on reducing through traffic along this route and providing better facilities for walking and cycling linking to the town centre.
- 3.37 The proposals for the central corridor in the strategy follow the general approach for walking and cycling to be segregated as far as possible along the radial distributor routes in the town. The STS includes design proposals prepared by Sustrans as a detailed scheme to promote walking and cycling.
- 3.38 Delivery Plan
- 3.39 In delivering the strategy, the priority will be to focus on the improvements to radial routes, some of which may be delivered through development, funding from the Local Enterprise Partnerships and remaining eco-town funds. Improvements to the Banbury Road and Middleton Stoney Road for walking and cycling are being progressed as part of the proposals for the eco-town.
- 3.40
- 3.41 The Delivery Plan was prepared in consultation with officers and provides an indication of how the Strategy could be implemented. It sets out the priorities, responsibilities, delivery partners, potential funding sources including developer contributions and indicative capital costs of infrastructure improvements. The STS Delivery Plan has been progressed as far as it can by the transport consultants and officers of the Bicester Delivery Team and Oxfordshire County

Council continue to work on an implementation plan based on the STS Delivery Plan and LTP4 to roll-out the programme of sustainable transport measures in the town. Further work to ensure consistency with the Local Transport Plan and development schemes as they come forward is required. However there is uncertainty about the delivery of some of the schemes due to a lack of funding opportunities. This is a particular issue for the Smarter Choices initiatives requiring a dedicated officer resource which is currently unavailable to implement this.

3.42 It is intended that the Delivery Plan will be presented to the Cherwell District Council Executive for endorsement emphasising to Members that it sets out the preferred approach and options for delivering the strategy. It is intended that the Delivery Plan becomes a rolling programme of schemes to improve the transport network in Bicester and it will be kept under regular review with monitoring reports back to the One Shared Vision Steering Group and Strategic Delivery Board on a bi-annual basis to work it up into a dynamic programme which is regularly updated. An initial update report could be brought to the next meeting. Given the constraints on delivery outlined above, officers have considered the priorities focussing on the walking and cycling improvements that can be delivered in a short timeframe. As a result, the following key links in the network have been identified for priority for improvement as they provide key strategic links on the primary network.

3.42.1 Middleton Stoney – various improvements including creating a shared path along Middleton Stoney Road and a Toucan crossing as set out in the Draft Strategy. This scheme will link new areas of housing to the town centre and a safer route building upon what has previously approved as part SW Bicester phase 1.

3.42.2 Launton Road – widening the existing shared path, cycling priority crossings at side roads – provides links to the employment areas to and from the town centre and Garth Park

3.42.3 Improvements to Buckingham Road – likely to deliver the greatest impact and step change towards sustainable transport linking the town centre to the railway station.

3.43 Oxfordshire County Council has been considering a scheme to improve walking and cycling routes on Buckingham Road as part of the Bicester travel behaviour demonstration project. This proposal is also included in the bid to the Local Growth Fund.

3.44 Forward programme

3.45 An indicative programme is below for the Buckingham Road scheme is set out below (OCC to confirm):

| No | Milestone | Start Date | Finish Date | Milestone/decision point |
|----|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Feasibility design and costings | | Undertaken | Options to take to detailed design |
| 2 | Set-up CDC/OCC Project Team | | Undertaken | |
| 3 | Business Case approved | August 2015 | August 2015 | BC sign-off (OCC) |
| 4 | Informal consultation | Sept 2015 | October 2015 | Consultation results and changes to |

| No | Milestone | Start Date | Finish Date | Milestone/decision point |
|----|--|------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| | | | | scheme |
| 5 | Formal consultation | Nov 2015 | Dec 2015 | Consultation results |
| 6 | Report writing | Jan 2016 | Feb 2016 | Recommendations |
| 3 | Cabinet Member Decisions (if required) | Mar 2016 | Mar 2016 | CM approval |
| 4 | Commence detailed design | Mar 2016 | June 2016 | |
| 5 | Mobilise | June 2016 | July 2016 | |
| 6 | Construction | July 2016 | October 2016 | |

3.46 Resources

3.47 Since the Travel Behaviour Project began in 2010 resource has reduced particularly in the area of Travel Choices at OCC with the loss of a full time officer. As a result, the Bicester Delivery team currently does not include a dedicated transport planning resource and relies on work to support the Cherwell Local Plan. Similarly, there is currently no resource working on travel behaviour in Bicester. The Delivery Plan includes a range of schemes from small to large with the smaller projects including dropping kerbs, removing Traffic Regulation Orders and other small barriers. Some of this will require resource input as the lack of dedicated resource is currently an issue with the lack of travel planning demonstrating this. In future more resource will be required if the various sustainable travel projects are to be progressed.

3.48 Other Initiatives and funding

3.49 Opportunities continue to be sought to support sustainable travel initiatives. These include opportunities around electric vehicles and low emission vehicles and funding opportunities. Bids for sustainable transport (walking and cycling) have been made to OxLEP and there are substantial ambitions for the Garden Town which may lead to capital funding with Government expected to announce the outcome in the autumn 2015 spending review.

3.50 If the funding bids are successful it will allow a significant increase in the length of cycle and walking routes in the town with the first project delivered to be the Buckingham Road, Banbury Road and Churchill Road improvements. However, if the bids are unsuccessful, it will limit the implementation of the Strategy and will require funding from other sources to be secured in order to ensure delivery, for example through the use of held Section 106 contributions. If funding is not secured from external sources, then key delivery of projects will be through developer contributions as part of the planning of sites in and around the town.

3.51 There remains some Eco-town grant available which could provide the opportunity to provide just a single route. Officers have looked at priority with OCC and agreed that a section of Buckingham Road provides the best opportunity to use this funding, as it is a key radial route into the town that further connector routes can be improved off such as Churchill Road.

Conclusion

- 3.52 Travel and movement in the town is an important issue and work on the Local Plan, Bicester Masterplan and Local Transport Plan Area Strategy all provide the context for work on travel behaviour. With the level of growth proposed in the town the issue of travel is critical to ensuring a prosperous and successful place. There will need to make increased provision for vehicles but sustainable travel has an important role to play in the town by reducing the impact of vehicles and air pollution and in terms of walking and cycling providing a healthy and free alternative to car travel.
- 3.53 Although the travel behaviour work has been successful in the areas it has been possible to pursue, there has been a difficulty in resourcing work and this has resulted in slower delivery of projects than would otherwise have been the case. The Sustainable Transport Strategy provides a review of the issues around sustainable travel and identifies opportunities going forward. As such it provides a firm basis to enable consideration of priorities going forward and resources required to deliver them.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 The Board is recommended to:
- 4.1.1 Support the Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy and note it will go to the Cherwell District Council Executive in September 2015;
 - 4.1.2 Note progress on travel behaviour and issues around resourcing of work;
 - 4.1.3 Support the proposals to deliver improvements to a radial route for cycling and walking improvements with the preferred option being Buckingham Road to be funded by the remaining budget for the Travel Behaviour Demonstration Project.
 - 4.1.4 Note the further work on the Delivery Plan and support further work with further updates to be received by the Board and
 - 4.1.5 Note the funding bids and the implications if the bids are unsuccessful in terms of limiting what can be delivered in the short term.