



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

To Members of the Cabinet

Notice of a Meeting of the Cabinet

Tuesday 15 September 2009 at 2.00 pm

County Hall, Oxford

Joanna Simons

Joanna Simons
Chief Executive
2009

September

Contact officer: **Sue Whitehead**
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Membership

Councillors

Keith R Mitchell CBE	-	<i>Leader of the Council</i>
David Robertson	-	<i>Deputy Leader of the Council</i>
C.H. Shouler	-	<i>Cabinet Member for Finance & Property</i>
Jim Couchman	-	<i>Cabinet Member for Adult Services</i>
Ian Hudspeth	-	<i>Cabinet Member for Growth & Infrastructure</i>
Louise Chapman	-	<i>Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families</i>
Michael Waine	-	<i>Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement</i>
Rodney Rose	-	<i>Cabinet Member for Transport Implementation</i>
Mrs J. Heathcoat	-	<i>Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities</i>

The Agenda is attached. Decisions taken at the meeting will become effective at the end of the working day on 23 September 2009 unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

Copies of this Notice, Agenda and supporting papers are circulated to all Members of the County Council.

Date of next meeting: 20 October 2009

Declarations of Interest

This note briefly summarises the position on interests which you must declare at the meeting. Please refer to the Members' Code of Conduct in Section DD of the Constitution for a fuller description.

The duty to declare ...

You must always declare any "personal interest" in a matter under consideration, ie where the matter affects (either positively or negatively):

- (i) any of the financial and other interests which you are required to notify for inclusion in the statutory Register of Members' Interests; or
- (ii) your own well-being or financial position or that of any member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association more than it would affect other people in the County.

Whose interests are included ...

"Member of your family" in (ii) above includes spouses and partners and other relatives' spouses and partners, and extends to the employment and investment interests of relatives and friends and their involvement in other bodies of various descriptions. For a full list of what "relative" covers, please see the Code of Conduct.

When and what to declare ...

The best time to make any declaration is under the agenda item "Declarations of Interest". Under the Code you must declare not later than at the start of the item concerned or (if different) as soon as the interest "becomes apparent".

In making a declaration you must state the nature of the interest.

Taking part if you have an interest ...

Having made a declaration you may still take part in the debate and vote on the matter unless your personal interest is also a "prejudicial" interest.

"Prejudicial" interests ...

A prejudicial interest is one which a member of the public knowing the relevant facts would think so significant as to be likely to affect your judgment of the public interest.

What to do if your interest is prejudicial ...

If you have a prejudicial interest in any matter under consideration, you may remain in the room but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the matter under consideration, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.

Exceptions ...

There are a few circumstances where you may regard yourself as not having a prejudicial interest or may participate even though you may have one. These, together with other rules about participation in the case of a prejudicial interest, are set out in paragraphs 10 – 12 of the Code.

Seeking Advice ...

It is your responsibility to decide whether any of these provisions apply to you in particular circumstances, but you may wish to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer before the meeting.

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest** – *see guidance note opposite*
3. **Minutes**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2009 (**CA3**) and to receive for information any matters arising therefrom.

4. **Petitions and Public Address**

5. **Financial Monitoring**

Cabinet Member: Finance & Property

Forward Plan Ref: 2009/034

Contact: Kathy Wilcox, Principal Financial Manager (01865 323981)

Report by Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Office (**CA5**).

Annex 1-6

Annex 7

Annex 8

Annex 9

This report sets out the Council's forecast financial position for the 2009/10 financial year based on four months of actuals to the end of July 2009. It includes projections for revenue, balances, reserves and capital. The report sets out explanations where the forecast revenue outturn is significantly different from the budget along with proposals to recover the position where appropriate.

The in – year Directorate forecast is an overspend of £4.013m for revenue and £14.166m for general balances. After taking into account the forecast revenue overspend, the consolidated revenue balances forecast is £10.153m.

Carry forwards from 2008/09 were approved by Cabinet on 23 June 2009 as part of the Provisional Outturn Report for 2008/09 and are now included in the latest budget.

The report also includes an updated Capital Programme and update about progress in respect of Building Schools for the Future.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) ***note the report;***
- (b) ***approve the virements as set out in Annex 2a;***
- (c) ***approve the supplementary estimate request as set out in Annex 2f and paragraph 26 and 33;***
- (d) ***approve the transfer of £0.027m surplus pay inflation from Community Safety to the Efficiency Savings Reserve as set out in paragraph 48; and***
- (e) ***Confirm agreement that the Readiness to Deliver statement for Building Schools for the Future should be submitted to the Partnership for***

Schools by 17 September 2009.**6. Service & Resource Planning Report for 2010/11 - 2014/15***Cabinet Member: Finance & Property**Forward Plan Ref 2009/135**Contact: Lorna Baxter, Assistant Head of Finance (01865 323971)*

Report by the Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive – Strategy and Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer (**CA6**)

Annex 1

Annex 2

Annex 3

Annex 4

Annex 5

Annex 6

This report is the first in a series on the service and resource planning process for 2010/11 to 2014/15, providing councillors with information on the budget issues for 2010/11 and the medium term. The report presents the current Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) as agreed by Council on 10 February 2009 and the assumptions on which it is based. It sets out the known and potential financial issues for 2010/11 and beyond which impact on the existing MTFP and the proposals for planning to meet these pressures, which were endorsed by Cabinet in July 2009.

This report sets out the Service and Resource Planning process for 2010/11, although it is mostly concerned with finance and the implications are set out in the main body of the report. The Council is required under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set a budget requirement for the authority and an amount of Council Tax. This first report forms an initial basis for those requirements that will lead to the budget requirement and Council Tax being agreed in February 2010.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) note the report;***
- (b) approve the Service and Resource Planning Process for 2010/11; and***
- (c) provide advice on the development of the Financial Strategy***

7. Local Transport Plan 3*Cabinet Member: Growth & Infrastructure**Forward Plan Ref 2009/129**Contact: Joanne Clegg, Project Manager (Local Transport Plan), (01865 815546)*

Report by Head of Transport (**CA7**).

This report sets out the results of the initial stages of consultation on the draft objectives for Oxfordshire's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) and seeks a decision on the prioritisation of those objectives. It also informs members of the environmental criteria that will be used for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the LTP and sets out the stages of developing the SEA.

Two series of consultations have recently taken place in relation to LTP3. Comments have been invited on the draft set of ten objectives for the LTP and on the scoping report for the SEA. Public focus groups were asked for their views on how the relative priorities of the objectives apply in each of the four settlement types that have

been identified to help with recognising the differentiation between parts of Oxfordshire (Oxford, larger towns, market towns and rural Oxfordshire).

An update on the consultation results from both series of consultations will be provided at the meeting.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

- (a) approve the prioritisation of the objectives for each of the four types of settlement as set out in the report, subject to consideration of the views of the Growth & Infrastructure Committee; and that the Head of Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Growth & Infrastructure and Transport Implementation be authorised to make any necessary changes; and***
- (b) note the consultation undertaken on the Strategic Environmental Assessment.***

8. Accessing Science Vale UK - Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Study (SCOTS) – Recommended Strategic Transport Package Report

Cabinet Member: Growth & Infrastructure

Forward Plan Ref: 2009/068

Contact: Jacqui Cox, Principal Transport Planner (01865 815713)

Report by Head of Transport (**CA8**).

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the progress made in developing the Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Study (SCOTS) Strategic Transport Package being put forward for the Didcot – Wantage/Grove area of southern Oxfordshire, which is part of the 'Accessing Science Vale UK' strategy work being undertaken.

The report and decisions are required to allow Oxfordshire County Council to form a strategic response to the Vale of White Horse (VoWHDC) and South Oxfordshire (SODC) District Councils' Local Development Framework (LDF) proposals for southern central Oxfordshire. As such it will become part of the evidence base for both SODC's and the VoWHDC's LDFs.

The main themes discussed in the report are how/why SCOTS has come about, the Transport Package being put forward to mitigate the planned growth in the area, the environmental, financial and staff implications associated with the package. The report also sets out the next steps required to complete this work and the risks associated with it.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) Approve in principle the strategic transport package required to mitigate growth in the SCOTS area to 2026, subject to the further work being undertaken, including funding options; and***
- (b) Delegate the decision to add to or amend the SCOTS to the Director for Environment and Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member of Growth and Infrastructure, should the further work reveal that changes are necessary.***

9. Chiltern Railways – Evergreen 3 Project to Introduce a New London

Marylebone – Bicester – Oxford Train Service

Cabinet Member: Growth & Infrastructure

Forward Plan Ref: 2009/091

Contact: Adrian Saunders, Rail Development Officer (01865 815080)

Report by Head of Transport (CA 9).

Chiltern Railways will shortly be submitting a Transport and Works Act application for works to enable introduction of a new half hourly rail service between London Marylebone and Oxford via High Wycombe and Bicester. Works would include a short new stretch of railway in Bicester, upgrading and partially doubling the existing railway between Oxford and Bicester, improvement of Bicester Town station, a new Parkway station at Water Eaton and new platforms at, and track approaching, the north end of Oxford station. The County Council will be a consultee on this application and needs to form a view on it. The report discusses the potential benefits of the proposal; its relationship with the East West rail proposal over the same stretch of line; its relationship with the County Council's Access to Oxford project; possible implications for the Water Eaton Park and Ride site; other transport implications; implications for green belt policy; implications for minerals and waste strategies; implications for public rights of way; and some other issues. It invites the Cabinet to consider in principle the overall County Council view on the proposal, and any conditions to be applied to that view.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a) advise Chiltern Railways that, if the full transport benefits as now outlined in this report continue to be offered, the council supports in principle the Evergreen 3 proposals subject to:

- (1) the submission of a full and acceptable Transport Assessment which addresses the points raised in Annex 2 of this report;**
- (2) the Transport and Works Act application being accompanied by evidence to demonstrate that there are very special circumstances which justify the development on the site in the green belt;**
- (3) the proposals accommodating the existing Aggregates Rail Depot and, if appropriate, the development of a Materials Recovery Facility at the Water Eaton site;**
- (4) satisfactory arrangements to ensure that there is no prejudice to continued operation of the free County Council car park at Water Eaton for bus access to the city centre and hospitals;**
- (5) effective liaison with the Access to Oxford project to upgrade Oxford station;**

and on the basis that Chiltern Railways should also pay due regard to all other impacts in Oxfordshire of their proposals, including in particular the Rights of Way issues mentioned in the report.

(b) delegate to the Heads of Transport and Sustainable Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure, the authority to respond to the TWA application and other aspects of this project as it develops, in accordance with the general principles outlined in this report.

10. Oxford School – Feasibility Study into Replacing It with an

Academy

Cabinet Member: Schools Improvement

Forward Plan Ref: 2008/092

Contact: Janet Tomlinson, Director for Children, Young People & Families (01865 815122)

Report by Director for Children, Young People & Families (**CA10**).

Annex 1

Oxford School is a 'National Challenge School' because its headline GCSE results fall below a nationally acceptable threshold of 30% or more students gaining 5 or more grades A*-C (including English and mathematics). Local Authorities are expected to consider radical proposals which will bring about significant and sustained improvements, including whether such schools should be replaced by academies. An 'Expression of Interest' in exploring the academy option has been submitted to the Department for Children, Schools & Families. If approved, it will result in the release of funding from the DCSF for the undertaking of a detailed feasibility study. This will consider the viability of creating an academy to replace Oxford School as well as ascertain the views of a wide range of stakeholders, including parents, students, staff, elected and community representatives.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) note the content of the Expression of Interest;***
- (b) agree to proceed with the 'Feasibility Study; and***
- (c) request officers to bring a further report on the outcomes of consultations undertaken as part of the 'Feasibility Study'.***

11. Secondary School Provision in the Grove/Wantage Area

Cabinet Member: Schools Improvement

Forward Plan Ref: 2009/107

Contact: Roy Leach, Strategic Lead

Report by Report by Director for Children, Young People & Families (**CA11**).

The Wantage and Grove area has been identified as an area offering the potential for significant additional housing. If this housing is built it will require additional secondary school provision to meet the anticipated increased demand for school places. A previous review of secondary school places confirmed the desirability of rationalising the current King Alfred's School, Wantage from its current 3 sites to just two.

The report explores the implications of one or more significant housing developments in the Wantage and Grove area and how the secondary school needs arising from these can be met alongside delivering the King Alfred's School rationalisation.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

- (a) note the contents of this report and confirm that a new secondary school (with sixth form provision) should be planned and available prior to significant development as part of Grove airfield and/or North East Wantage; and***

- (b) **request officers, once Oxfordshire's position regarding Building Schools for the Future is confirmed, to work together with King Alfred's School governors to try to reach agreement on a strategy to achieve rationalisation of the school onto 2 sites.**

12. **Chipping Norton Care Home**

Cabinet Member: Adult Services

Forward Plan Ref 2009/145

Contact: Nick Welch, Head of Major Programmes (01865 323575)

Report by Head of Major Programmes (CA12).

This report sets out the arrangements that are required to secure the funding the development of a Primary Health Care Centre in Chipping Norton, which is an integral element to the overall development of community health and care home services. The County Council is undertaking the development of a care home through the existing arrangements between itself and the Oxfordshire Care Partnership but these do not cover the development of the Primary Health Care Centre. Specific arrangements and guarantees are required of the County Council by the scheme's developers and funders. This report gives the details and of the guarantees that are required, the implications for the Council, and seeks formal agreement for these arrangements.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed arrangements with the Oxfordshire Care Partnership, Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association and the Oxfordshire PCT whereby

- (a) ***in the event of the Project Agreement dated 20 December 2001 being terminated, the County Council would meet the outstanding finance charges applicable to both the Care Home and the Community Health Facility and would grant a direct lease of the Community Health Facility to the PCT at a rent sufficient to repay those charges over the remainder of the initial 30 years finance period; and***
- (b) ***in the event of the PCT either failing to enter into the Sub-subunderlease with OCP after the Community Health Facility has been constructed or committing a major breach of covenant resulting in forfeiture of the Sub-subunderlease and becoming liable to pay the outstanding finance charges on the Community Health Facility to OCP/BPHA, the County Council would stand as guarantor for the PCT. This would make the County Council responsible for payment of the outstanding finance charges on the Community Health Facility to BPHA and recovering such payment through a "Compensation Agreement" with the PCT (or by taking legal action if the PCT did not comply with the terms of the Compensation Agreement).***

13. **London Road – Osler Road to Wharton Road**

Cabinet Member: Transport Implementation

Forward Plan Ref 2009/106

Contact: Colin Baird, Principal Engineer (01865 815536)

Report by the Head of Transport (CA13).

This is the third section of the London Road Corridor to be developed to make bus

journeys quicker and more reliable and improve road safety for all users. Additionally this project seeks to enhance the Headington Shopping Centre through the use of quality surface materials to footway areas and the de-cluttering of unnecessary street furniture. The scheme was the subject of a public consultation process and Transport Decisions Committee approved the final design on 2 July 2009.

This improvement scheme to the London Road corridor is a key part of the County Council's second Local Transport Plan and its Capital Programme. The delays experienced by the large numbers of people travelling along the route by bus are very significant and, as a result, there is a continuing major impact on the reliability and attractiveness of buses as an alternative to the car for journeys in this area. The accident rate on the London Road is around twice the national average for a major route such as this. Most of the accidents result in slight injury but of the 4 serious accidents 3 were pedestrians and one was a cyclist. The measures to reduce speeds together with improved crossing provision should bring the severity and frequency of accidents down.

The scheme is estimated at £2.035 million including fees. Funding has been allocated from the Capital Programme for the financial years 2008/09 to 2010/11 and comprises of Supported Capital Expenditure (SCE) and developer funding. The programmed start of construction is April 2009.

Approval of the Financial Project Appraisal is sought.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve Project Appraisal H192 for the London Road Corridor (Osler Road– Wharton Road) scheme.

14. Government Draft Legislative Programme

Cabinet Member: Leader

Forward Plan Ref 2009/152

Contact: Steven Howell, Assistant to the Cabinet (01865 816376)

Report by Head of Strategy (CA14).

The 2009/10 draft legislative programme was announced by Government at the end of June. It sets out proposed legislation for the next session of parliament, to be announced in the Queen's speech in late 2009. Comments are invited on the proposed programme, individual bills and specific policy issues by 21 September 2009.

This paper summarises the bills in the programme and the implications for the county council for those that are relevant to the county council and our services. Key legislative changes affecting Oxfordshire County Council are highlighted below:

- proposals to enshrine in law the Government's commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020- to introduce an incentive to support up to four carbon capture and storage projects on a commercial scale
- a number of proposals around improving performance in schools, including introducing a set of guarantees of a good standards of education for each child
- new powers of intervention in Youth Offending and enabling the media to report on certain family proceedings in court
- the continuation of the equalities legislation currently progressing through parliament, including banning negative age discrimination

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to endorse the proposed County Council response

to proposals.

15. Establishment Review

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader

Forward Plan Ref 2009/73

Contact: Sue Corrigan, Strategic HR Manager (01865 810280)

Report by Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development (**CA15**).

Annex 2

This report gives an update on activity since the implementation of the Establishment Review and associated Recruitment Approval process on 1 August 2005. It provides detail on the overall objectives of the review and summarises progress made against the targets which were agreed to ensure delivery of those objectives. Details of the agreed establishment figure at 30 June 2009 in terms of Full Time Equivalents is provided, together with the detailed staffing position at 30 June 2009. These are shown in the report by directorate and service area.

The report also provides information on current activity and in addition there is information on grant funded posts and those vacancies which are being covered by agency staff and at what cost.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) note the report;***
- (b) confirm that the Establishment Review continues to meet the Cabinet's requirements in reporting and managing staffing numbers.***

16. Forward Plan and Future Business

Cabinet Member: All

Contact Officer: Sue Whitehead, Committee Services Manager (01865 810262)

The Cabinet Procedure Rules provide that the business of each meeting at the Cabinet is to include "updating of the Forward Plan and proposals for business to be conducted at the following meeting". Items from the Forward Plan for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet appear in the Schedule at **CA16**. This includes any updated information relating to the business for those meetings that has already been identified for inclusion in the next Forward Plan update.

The Schedule is for noting, but Cabinet Members may also wish to take this opportunity to identify any further changes they would wish to be incorporated in the next Forward Plan update.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.

RESOLVED: to:

- (d) approve in principle the strategic transport package required to mitigate growth in the SCOTS area to 2026, subject to the further work being undertaken, including funding options; and
- (e) delegate the authority to add to or amend the SCOTS to the Director for Environment and Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure, should the further work reveal that changes are necessary.

91/09 CHILTERN RAILWAYS – EVERGREEN 3 PROJECT TO INTRODUCE A NEW LONDON MARYLEBONE – BICESTER – OXFORD TRAIN SERVICE
(Agenda Item 9)

Councillor Purse stated that she was a strong supporter of Chiltern Railways, and that although this was a strange routing from Oxford to London it would be popular with the stations along the route. She referred to the lack of parking at Thornhill Park & Ride and the number of people parking there and travelling to London; she hoped that the same would not happen at Water Eaton.

Councillor Fooks stated the proposal would be a benefit to the residents of north Oxford. She noted that the County Council needed to address traffic congestion but also expressed concerns from local residents close to the railway line about the speed of trains on that stretch of track.

The Cabinet considered a report (CA9) on Chiltern Railways intention to submit a Transport and Works Act application for works to enable introduction of a new half hourly rail service between London Marylebone and Oxford via High Wycombe and Bicester.

Works would include a short new stretch of railway in Bicester, upgrading and partially doubling the existing railway between Oxford and Bicester, improvement of Bicester Town station, a new Parkway station at Water Eaton and new platforms at, and track approaching, the north end of Oxford station. The County Council will be a consultee on this application and needs to form a view on it. The report discussed the potential benefits of the proposal; its relationship with the East West rail proposal over the same stretch of line; its relationship with the County Council's Access to Oxford project; possible implications for the Water Eaton Park and Ride site; other transport implications; implications for green belt policy; implications for minerals and waste strategies; implications for public rights of way; and some other issues. The Cabinet was invited to consider in principle the overall County Council view on the proposal, and any conditions to be applied to that view.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) advise Chiltern Railways that, if the full transport benefits as now outlined in this report continue to be offered, the council supports in principle the Evergreen 3 proposals subject to:
- (1) the submission of a full and acceptable Transport Assessment which addresses the points raised in Annex 2 of this report;
 - (2) the Transport and Works Act application being accompanied by evidence to demonstrate that there are very special circumstances which justify the development on the site in the green belt;
 - (3) the proposals accommodating the existing Aggregates Rail Depot and, if appropriate, the development of a Materials Recovery Facility at the Water Eaton site;
 - (4) satisfactory arrangements to ensure that there is no prejudice to continued operation of the free County Council car park at Water Eaton for bus access to the city centre and hospitals;
 - (5) effective liaison with the Access to Oxford project to upgrade Oxford station;

and on the basis that Chiltern Railways should also pay due regard to all other impacts in Oxfordshire of their proposals, including in particular the Rights of Way issues mentioned in the report.

- (b) delegate to the Heads of Transport and Sustainable Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure, the authority to respond to the TWA application and other aspects of this project as it develops, in accordance with the general principles outlined in this report.

92/09 OXFORD SCHOOL – FEASIBILITY STUDY INTO REPLACING IT WITH AN ACADEMY
(Agenda Item 10)

Councillor Altaf-Khan expressed concern that the Expression of Interest (Eoi) had not been directly communicated to local Members and parents. He was also concerned that another academy would leave no choice for parents; all options should be considered, and not just an academy. He added that neither he nor his Group supported the creation of an academy, because it was pushing education into the private sector.

Ms. Thorne informed those present that she was the mother of two children at the school. She stated that the figures were not accurate and it was not a failing school; in fact, it had better results than the Oxford Academy and North Oxfordshire Academy. The report was only about one option, and there were other options: trust school or federated school. She was not impressed with the record of the promoters of the academy.

Councillor Waine indicated that he had never made up his mind to include St. Christopher's School in the Eoi and so he had not changed his mind

CABINET – 15 SEPTEMBER 2009

**CHILTERN RAILWAYS EVERGREEN 3 PROJECT TO INTRODUCE
A NEW LONDON MARYLEBONE – BICESTER – OXFORD
TRAIN SERVICE**

Report by Head of Transport

Introduction

1. Chiltern Railways have advised us that they propose shortly to submit a Transport and Works Act application to introduce a new London Marylebone – Bicester – Oxford train service, with consequent infrastructure works on and around railways in Oxfordshire. The County Council is a consultee in this process and it is therefore necessary now to formulate, as far as possible, the County Council's view on it.
2. The proposal is described in more detail below. The remainder of the report then covers the main issues which the Council will wish to take into account. It first describes the strategic context, then discusses the travel benefits which the proposed services would offer, followed by the potential impacts of the proposed scheme which will have to be taken into account.
3. Chiltern Railways (a subsidiary of Deutsche Bahn, the German national railway operator) holds a franchise from Government to operate train services from London Marylebone to Aylesbury, and to the West Midlands via High Wycombe, Bicester and Banbury. The current franchise started in 2002 and is currently scheduled to end in 2013. However, uniquely amongst rail franchises, it has a provision for the franchise length to be extended to 2021 if Chiltern Railways can agree with the Department for Transport, and implement, "secondary aspirations" which develop their network in ways considered beneficial.
4. Thirteen such secondary aspirations were included in the original franchise specification, from which a selection could be made of those to be taken forward for franchise extension. One was "to open a new railway line between Princes Risborough and Oxford via M40 junction 8 [and] to construct new stations at Thame, M40 and South Oxford". This inclusion was discussed with, and supported in principle by, the County Council at the time. However, it is understood that detailed site investigation showed that the route then intended is impracticable – or at least unduly expensive and disruptive – and an alternative link to Oxford is now proposed via Bicester. Chiltern Railways have branded this (and other related proposals) as Evergreen 3.
5. The railway from Oxford to Bicester is currently operated as a low-speed, single track branch as part of the First Great Western franchise. The track

continues beyond Bicester Town station towards Bletchley (Milton Keynes) without a current passenger service. Just beyond the end of the current passenger route, on the edge of Bicester, it passes under the Chiltern Railways line without physical connection.

6. Chiltern Railways' proposal now consists of:

- A short new stretch of railway linking the two lines to allow through running from Marylebone to Oxford;
- Upgrading and (at least partially) double-tracking of the Oxford – Bicester line to allow 2 trains each way per hour running at up to 100 miles per hour;
- Enhancement of the stations at Bicester Town and Islip;
- Provision of a new parkway station adjacent to the County Council's Water Eaton Park and Ride site;
- Provision of an extra track into Oxford station and two new terminal platforms at the north end of the station;
- A service over this route of 2 trains per hour between Marylebone and Oxford, replacing, between Bicester and Oxford, the current First Great Western service.

7. An overall plan of the proposal is shown as **Annex 1**, and further details can be found at www.chiltern-evergreen3.co.uk and in the Members Resource Centre.

8. To secure a franchise extension Chiltern Railways have to agree financial details with the Department for Transport by December 2009. To this end they propose to submit in October an application for a Transport and Works Act (TWA) Order. The TWA process is a national Government-level procedure making provision for planning consent and compulsory purchase for major infrastructure projects. There is an objection process and provision for a Public Inquiry if necessary. The submission will include an Environmental Impact Assessment, which officers understand is in preparation.

Context

9. Oxfordshire faces significant growth and infrastructure challenges over the coming decades. The South East Plan states that 55,200 dwellings are to be built in Oxfordshire between 2006 and 2026, of which 8,000 will be in Oxford and 4,900 in Bicester (although this figure may increase with the eco-town proposal). This will place significant pressure on the County's infrastructure and the already congested transport network. Improvements to the network between Oxford, Bicester and further afield are important to help accommodate this growth and in realising Oxfordshire's economic potential.

10. The road corridor between Bicester and Oxford suffers from daily congestion issues, particularly on the approaches to M40 Junction 9 and the A34. This is for a number of reasons, notably that neither the bus service, which is also subject to the same congestion, nor the relatively slow and infrequent train service, currently provide a very attractive public transport alternative to the car along this route. Also, the poor job offer in Bicester, where housing outstrips employment provision, leads to approximately 60% of Bicester's population commuting out of the town to work. The "Access to Oxford" project is, amongst other things, aiming to resolve the transport issues on the Bicester to Oxford corridor. Therefore, it will be important that Access to Oxford and Evergreen 3 are aligned to meet the challenges that we are collectively facing.

Implications for East West Rail proposal

11. The East West Rail (EWR) 'western' proposal, for a rail service of 2 trains per hour between Oxford, Bicester, Milton Keynes and Bedford, has been an aspiration of this Council and others for many years. A series of studies, which are project managed and funded by Milton Keynes Partnerships in association with the rail industry and steered by the EWR Consortium of local authorities throughout the route, is in progress. The studies include design work and the development of a business case for the introduction of this service, which is expected to be largely funded through proposed development in Milton Keynes and elsewhere.
12. The Chiltern Railways Evergreen 3 proposal initially presented to the County Council and others in 2008, included double-tracking of the entire route between Bicester and Oxford, with capacity for 6 trains (5 passenger, 1 freight) each way per hour. This would have been a major benefit for the EWR proposal, largely obviating the need for separate EWR investment over this section. This offer to help deliver EWR was strongly supported by officers. The public consultation (at which there was substantial public support) was also on the basis of this higher capacity railway.
13. We understand that the TWA application will still provide for a complete double track railway, and comments on the impact of the proposed infrastructure on its surroundings should therefore be on this basis. However, we also understand that Chiltern Railways' engineers have now discovered structural problems on part of the route between Bicester and Islip which would make double-tracking that section more expensive than initially envisaged. What would now initially be constructed would therefore be only partially double-tracked and have capacity for only 4 trains (3 passenger, 1 freight) each way per hour.
14. This would allow only a restricted EWR service of 1 train per hour whereas the County Council has previously strongly pressed for at least 2 trains per hour. However, it would not preclude further capacity enhancement for additional EWR trains. Chiltern Railways have stated that their construction would be done in such a way as to enable a further track upgrade to be

carried out as easily as possible, and that the upgraded track and stations and car parks which they do propose, together with TWA authority for a fully double tracked railway, would make EWR easier and cheaper to implement than 'starting from scratch'. The implications of this change of scope have yet to be fully explored by the EWR Consortium; but the initial reaction of their consultants is that Evergreen 3 does still appear to be potentially beneficial to the EWR project.

15. Nevertheless, Evergreen 3 as now scoped would not offer the major benefits for EWR which were initially envisaged. Insofar as the earlier support for Evergreen 3 was based on EWR, this change to the scope of the scheme makes it less attractive. That being said, it needs to be recognised (as described below) that the Evergreen 3 proposal offers significant benefits in its own right, especially in the enhancement proposed to the service between Bicester and Oxford, which was one of the core objectives of the EWR proposal.

Passenger Services Offered by Evergreen 3

16. Chiltern Railways proposes, broadly, a service of two fast trains per hour between Marylebone and Oxford; all trains would call at High Wycombe, Bicester Town and Water Eaton, selected trains would call at Islip and there may be other calls by at least some trains between Bicester and London. It is considered that this would provide a number of benefits:
 - (a) A much improved – 2 trains per hour normally taking 14 minutes, as opposed to the present 11 trains a day taking 26 minutes – train service between Bicester and Oxford, serving a station with much better facilities than the present minimal provision at Bicester Town (though in the short term the works to upgrade the line would be likely to significantly disrupt the existing Oxford – Bicester service).
 - (b) Two extra trains per hour between Bicester and London, additional to the two per hour already provided from Bicester North. The trains would however be spread between two stations, so would not provide a 'true' four trains per hour service; passengers would have to decide in advance which route to use and have only two per hour on their chosen route. Premises in the vicinity of Bicester Town – which includes Bicester Village retail centre – would gain a more conveniently located London terminal.
 - (c) A direct train service between Oxford and High Wycombe, providing a link not presently possible (save by a very indirect route) by rail and with a very limited service by bus.
 - (d) Two extra trains per hour between Oxford and London. These would be somewhat slower to Marylebone (66 minutes) than the present two fast trains per hour to Paddington (generally 57 minutes); Marylebone is slightly closer to most central London destinations as the crow flies, but on only one Underground line as against the three at Paddington.

Because they will serve a different London terminal, the service will not be readily usable as a 'true' four trains per hour service. This proposal therefore does not represent an 'ideal' way of enhancing Oxford to London services. However, there are various infrastructure works planned on the Paddington route in coming years – a major reconstruction of Reading station and its approaches; provision between Maidenhead and Paddington for Crossrail suburban services; and the recently announced electrification of main line services from Paddington, including those to Oxford. All of these works are liable to lead to some disruption to services on the Paddington line, and there is thus no possibility of an increase in the Paddington service at least until all are completed; the Chiltern Railways service would also provide a valuable alternative during periods of disruption (any equivalent disruption arising from construction of Evergreen 3 would largely be limited to the Oxford – Bicester service).

- (e) A link to London from north Oxford and Kidlington, through the proposed Water Eaton Parkway. Chiltern railways say that they will provide an extra car park here which would have capacity both for all of their passengers and any future EWR passengers. In addition, it would be convenient for frequent bus services to Kidlington, Summertown, North Oxford and the John Radcliffe and Churchill Hospitals, with potential to develop as a major interchange. Rail services from this interchange would of course also be available to Bicester, High Wycombe and Oxford station.
- (f) A link between Islip and London. However, the service proposed by Chiltern Railways at Islip is likely to be less than the 11 trains each way per day which this small community presently enjoys to/from Bicester and Oxford.

Potential Impacts

Green Belt

- 17. The proposed Water Eaton parkway station is in the Oxford Green Belt wherein there is a policy presumption against inappropriate development. The Government's Planning Policy Guidance 2 (Green Belts) defines the purposes for which green belt land may be used or developed. A railway station and associated uses such as parking and re-siting of the existing aggregates rail depot for example, are classed as inappropriate development. The development has the potential to provide significant transport benefits for Oxford which on the face of it would be difficult to provide on a non green belt site around the City. Nevertheless, the onus will be on Chiltern Railways to demonstrate in its Transport and Works Application that there are 'very special circumstances' which outweigh the harm caused to the green belt.
- 18. The Campaign to Protect Rural England has suggested that a Water Eaton station may create commercial pressures for employment and further development in the locality. Given the site's location in the green belt this is

unlikely to be acceptable unless very special circumstances could be demonstrated.

Waste Management Site and Aggregates Rail Depot at Water Eaton

19. Two of the three options for a Parkway Station at Water Eaton involve the redevelopment of the site of the adjacent disused Grain Silo and all three options affect the rail sidings which are operated as the Kidlington aggregates rail depot.

- (i) On 1 September 2008 planning and Regulation Committee agreed to grant planning permission (subject to the completion of a Section 106 agreement) for a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) on the Grain Silo site. Work undertaken for the Minerals and Waste Development Framework (MWDF) identified the Grain Silo site as one of eight sites that offered the potential for the development of a strategic waste management facility. Grundons has also nominated the site for possible inclusion in the MWDF for materials recycling; however, it is thought that Grundons do not own the site and should the company decide to withdraw its nomination (perhaps because of a difficulty over land purchase or lease agreements) the deliverability of the site would be questionable, which would affect its potential for inclusion in the MWDF.

However, it has been assessed that there is a need for a large scale MRF in the county to serve the main centres of population and employment, particularly Oxford, to help meet waste recycling and landfill diversion targets. Eight sites were identified at the 'Issues and Options' consultation stage of the MWDF within the Oxford City boundaries but it is unlikely that any would be deliverable. Others just outside the city but within the Oxford Green Belt were also identified. These included the Grain Silo site, and the resolution to grant permission for a MRF at this site indicates its suitability for waste management use. This site is important therefore in terms of its potential to accommodate a future waste management facility to serve Oxford.

Very special circumstances had to be demonstrated to justify a grant of planning permission for the MRF in 2008 because of its green belt location. If the Grain Silo site were to be used for other purposes, an alternative site to serve Oxford's waste recycling needs would be required. It is likely that the green belt search would need to be widened or, alternatively, Oxford's needs would have to be met further away from the City, with consequent increased travel distances. **It would therefore be strongly preferable for the Parkway Station to be developed in a way which allows for the provision of this important waste facility**, unless it can be demonstrated that there are other benefits which outweigh this. There should not be any conflict between a MRF at the grain silo site and an adjacent station at Water

Eaton, as the waste recycling operation would take place inside a modern, well-designed building and would be subject to strict planning and environmental controls.

- (ii) The Aggregates Rail Depot site is safeguarded for this use in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (saved Policy SD9). This is one of only three rail depots in Oxfordshire where crushed rock is brought into the county for the general aggregates market, to supplement local supply, and it is the only one close to Oxford. Although the proposals seek to retain the Depot in some form, the use would probably have to be moved further north to a green field site in the green belt. As set out above, very special circumstances would have to be demonstrated by Chiltern Railways to justify this development and there is no guarantee that this could be achieved. Loss of the depot would result in an increase in transport of aggregates by road to supply the market in the Oxford area and could lead to increased production from quarries in Oxfordshire. It is therefore important that this rail aggregates depot is retained, in either its existing or a suitable nearby location, unless it can be demonstrated that there are other benefits which outweigh this.

Transport Impacts

- 20. Chiltern Railways are currently testing the traffic impact of their proposals using the County Council's Central Oxfordshire Transport Model (COTM). It is too early to ascertain the outputs of the modelling work. However, once these are known it will be imperative that these are accurately reflected in Chiltern's TWA submission as part of a full Transport Assessment which, to date, the applicant has not agreed to undertake. In advance of receiving the modelling results, officers have concluded that a number of issues will need to be addressed and these are set out in Annex 2. Note that these issues may alter depending on the modelling outcomes. The main points of concern to date are:
 - (a) the amount of private motor vehicle traffic generated as a result of the proposed parkway station at Water Eaton;
 - (b) the impact the increased attractiveness of the Bicester Town service and station might have on the highway network;
 - (c) the impact of the increase in the frequency of service at Bicester on the level crossing on the London Road – upgrading is likely to be needed;
 - (d) the management and operation of the new car park at Water Eaton and ensuring that the operation of the Council's free Park and Ride car park is not undermined;
 - (e) access to and from the stations and interchanges, and integration with other public transport modes.
- 21. There is a particular concern about the impact on the existing County Council Water Eaton Park and Ride site (point (d)). This site is important for people transferring from car to bus for travel to the city centre and, increasingly, to the John Radcliffe, Nuffield and Churchill Hospitals. In accordance with County Council policy at all Park and Ride sites, parking there is currently

free. It will be important to ensure that spaces do not instead become occupied by rail users; this would be especially a concern if there is a charge for the adjacent rail station car park (as is common rail industry practice), but could also be an issue if the number of rail users exceeds the capacity of the rail station car park (especially since rail commuters typically arrive earlier in the day than bus commuters). A clear management regime needs to be agreed which jointly ensures that such issues do not arise, whilst avoiding the County Council being committed either to expenditure (on control barriers and systems, for example) which would otherwise be unnecessary or to an otherwise undesired change in policy at Park and Ride sites.

22. There would also be significant implications for Oxford Rail Station and the Access to Oxford work. Chiltern Railways' proposal includes two new platforms at the north end of Oxford Station, one five car in length and one six car in length. Oxford Station is owned by Network Rail and leased to First Great Western as part of the Great Western Franchise. Chiltern is not proposing to take over the management of Oxford Station. The County Council is a key stakeholder as it is currently working in partnership with Network Rail on proposals to enhance Oxford Rail Station as part of the Access to Oxford project.
23. The Station Enhancement Project consists of Network Rail's proposal to build a new bay platform south of the existing station on part of the site currently occupied by the long stay Becket Street car park. This is being funded by Network Rail. The County Council is preparing a business case to ensure this platform is properly integrated with the existing station building. This will be achieved by creating a new transfer deck across Botley Road to replace the existing footbridge and integrating this into an extended station building. There will also be improved forecourt and interchange facilities to ensure the station is able to accommodate future growth that will arise from development in Central Oxfordshire and the continued promotion of rail as a means to access Oxford sustainably. The County Council has £6 million allocated for this scheme as part of Access to Oxford, with funding available in 2010/11.
24. Chiltern's proposals would require the demolition of existing staff accommodation facilities to the north of the station and the relocation of the short stay car park. There could also be an impact on the existing main station building. Chiltern have funding available to deliver the new track and platforms needed for their scheme and relocate facilities as required but there is an opportunity to integrate this work within the wider Station Enhancement Project, thus delivering a bigger and better scheme. The improvement in passenger services associated with Chiltern's proposals would inevitably lead to passenger growth at Oxford Station and therefore increase the need for a larger station building with better interchange facilities to enable passengers to access the station by sustainable modes. The County Council is developing a Masterplan for the Oxford Station site which takes into account the possibility of Chiltern's proposals being delivered.
25. In addition to the £6 million allocated to Oxford Station as part of Access to Oxford, an additional £15m is allocated to improvements on the Oxford to

Bicester Railway Line, including a new Parkway station somewhere on the line to help relieve pressure on the A34. The Evergreen 3 proposals, if completed, would deliver most, if not all the benefits that were anticipated for this £15 million. There may be the opportunity to transfer this money to other elements within the Access to Oxford package, potentially increasing the amount of money available for the station enhancement project to £21 million.

Impact on Public Rights of Way

26. Public Rights of Way are public highways in law and Oxfordshire County Council as Highway Authority is responsible for protecting and asserting the public's right of access to and along the 2,600 mile network across the county. Within the scope of this project there are 12 Public Footpaths, 2 Public Bridleways and two public road crossings which form key links within the Rights of Way network.
27. The assessment of need and consequent impact of this scheme on public rights of way is drawn from the visions and objectives in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2006 – 2011; see **Annex 3**. Adopting these principles, officers are seeking to minimise the impact of the scheme on the rights of way network, while acknowledging the limitations of what can be provided. The principal objective of improving public safety by physically removing any direct contact between the railway and Rights of Way users is supported.
28. Discussions with Chiltern Railways' consultants confirm that many of the initial concerns regarding provision of crossings and the length of diversions have been satisfactorily addressed. Some minor issues are still being considered by the consultants. However, two key areas of concern for countryside access remain:
 - Oddington Footpath 6 – this forms a direct footpath link between the communities of Charlton-on-Otmoor and Weston-on-the-Green. Countryside Service officers consider this to be a primary route given its connections both to these settlements and the extensive rights of way network across Otmoor. Chiltern Railways propose this route be diverted to a new public road bridge over the railway which would provide access to Oddington Grange & Barndon Farm. This would require a detour and additional walking distance of over 1.5km but this is considered inappropriate in this setting. This is the longest diversion proposed in the scheme. Given there is no alternative route that can be used and the value to the rights of way network beyond these settlements, this primary link should be preserved. A footbridge should be installed at this point, as is proposed at similar locations elsewhere in the scheme.
 - Islip Level Crossing [LC] – The LC is situated just west of Islip village on a quiet lane between Mill Lane & the Kidlington Road. The proposal is to close the LC completely as it is no longer needed. While its closure for motorised vehicles is not objectionable, it should be retained principally for equestrian use, but also for cyclists & pedestrians. This quiet link provides a means of bypassing Islip without having to negotiate the high traffic flows

and narrow streets and is also a means of improving links between bridleway networks. Consideration should be given to maintaining a non-motorised access across the present LC by the use of Miniature Stop Lights as has been used at other similar locations in the county.

Suitable provision has been made for the Oxfordshire Way and for the Kidlington Circular Walk which run through the corridor of the scheme.

District Council Views

29. Cherwell District Council's Executive considered a report into the proposals earlier this year. In brief the resolution was to support the proposals provided Chiltern Railways can satisfy the criteria in PPG2 and PPG13, whilst noting some concerns about the visual and traffic impacts of some options for Bicester Town station upgrading and the effect on traffic flow of the level crossing at the station, also noting the need for links to Bicester Town station from other parts of Bicester, and to consider whether any Section 106 money was available from the Bicester Village Development.

Financial and Staff Implications

30. The proposed rail network enhancement and improved rail service would be provided at no direct cost to the County Council. The recommendations seek to ensure that any direct consequential costs (of necessary highway changes, etc) are borne by Chiltern Railways as part of the project. As described in paragraphs 13 and 24, Evergreen 3 might offer capital cost savings to other possible future County Council projects, though this is only speculative at present.
31. If the TWA proposal goes to public inquiry there will be significant staff time implications for a short period, and other staff time is likely to be required in diverse ways to ensure effective liaison with Chiltern Railways as the project develops.

Conclusion

32. It is disappointing that Chiltern Railways have now reduced the scope of their proposal from that upon which they previously consulted stakeholders and the public, to one which will no longer deliver the full upgrade required for East West Rail. However, the proposal still appears likely to make a significant contribution towards delivering EWR. Perhaps more importantly, it offers substantial benefits in its own right, especially in greatly improving the train service between Bicester and Oxford.
33. The proposed Water Eaton Parkway station (which was not part of the EWR proposal, though it appears to offer benefits to it) raises significant concerns on Green Belt, transport, minerals and waste issues. There are other, generally lesser, issues associated with the proposed upgrading of the existing track and stations (which EWR, too, would have had to address). Officers understand that Chiltern Railways are working to address all of these

issues as part of the TWA process; if they can do so satisfactorily, the benefits appear great enough to justify support for their overall proposal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

34. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a) advise Chiltern Railways that, if the full transport benefits as now outlined in this report continue to be offered, the council supports in principle the Evergreen 3 proposals subject to:

- (1) the submission of a full and acceptable Transport Assessment which addresses the points raised in Annex 2 of this report;**
- (2) the Transport and Works Act application being accompanied by evidence to demonstrate that there are very special circumstances which justify the development on the site in the green belt;**
- (3) the proposals accommodating the existing Aggregates Rail Depot and, if appropriate, the development of a Materials Recovery Facility at the Water Eaton site;**
- (4) satisfactory arrangements to ensure that there is no prejudice to continued operation of the free County Council car park at Water Eaton for bus access to the city centre and hospitals;**
- (5) effective liaison with the Access to Oxford project to upgrade Oxford station;**

and on the basis that Chiltern Railways should also pay due regard to all other impacts in Oxfordshire of their proposals, including in particular the Rights of Way issues mentioned in the report.

(b) delegate to the Heads of Transport and Sustainable Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure, the authority to respond to the TWA application and other aspects of this project as it develops, in accordance with the general principles outlined in this report.

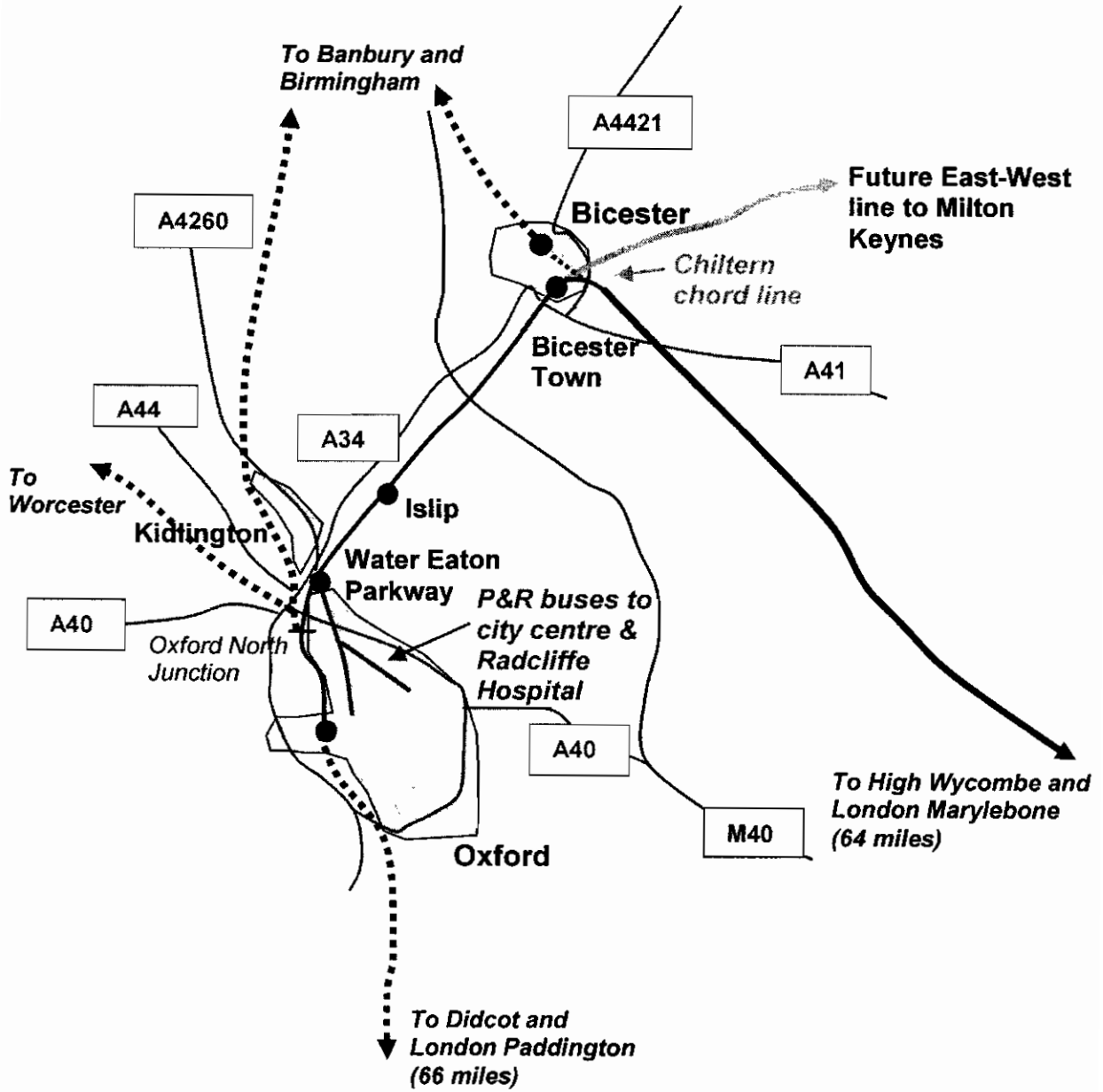
STEVE HOWELL
Head of Transport
Environment & Economy

Background papers: Information from Chiltern Railways on Evergreen 3 Project; see www.chiltern-evergreen3.co.uk and in Members Resource Centre

Contact Officer: Peter Mann, Tel: Oxford 815479

August 2009

Plan of Chiltern Railways Evergreen 3 Proposals



ANNEX 2**Main issues to be covered in the Transport Assessment**

Given the potential scale, range and complexity of transport issues, Chiltern Railways is urged to set out full details of the implications of the proposals in a full TA. This should cover:

1. Outcomes from the COTM modelling undertaken and proposals to mitigate any overall impacts, particularly those arising from peak-hour congestion on key parts of the highway network;
2. More local transport impacts of various locations to be agreed (using SATURN; LINSIG, Picady and Arcady of the immediate junctions affected and a wider area assessment using VISSIM, PARAMICS, or AIMSUM) and proposals to mitigate these impacts;
3. Overall fit with proposals for Access to Oxford, particularly Oxford Station;
4. Passenger Forecast assumptions and prediction years to be explained, including passenger origin and destination information. This also needs to cover the number of vehicles both entering (for drop offs) and parking at the Water Eaton site;
5. Main elements of a construction stage travel plan, to include items such as routing agreements to determine whether any road closures/temporary signals etc will be required during this period.
6. Relationship of proposed parking at Water Eaton with Park and Ride parking to consider:
 - Evidence that the additional capacity proposed will cater for full rail user demand and what the life of the proposed expanded car park is; i.e., what year has it been modelled to;
 - who will own and manage the extra spaces provided for the station and whether it be given to OCC to manage;
 - what arrangements there should be for parking charging (if any);
 - what stay limitation should be imposed and whether it should be applied to both car parks, or zones within the car parks;
 - whether, as part of the proposals, Chiltern rail should provide and fund a system to manage the car park (ticket machines / barriers / ANPR cameras);
 - whether the whole site (including the current P&R) should be managed as a Develop Build Fund Operate (DBFO);
 - if not managed as one car park, how the two will be separated and operated to ensure rail users don't use the OCC P&R Car Park.
7. Bicester Town Station;
 - Chiltern propose that the station be accessed from London Road. The worst case scenario in terms of the number of trips that are likely to be

made in the peak is needed so that a judgement can be made about the impact on the network when the level crossing (LC) on London Road is closed. Since there are at this stage different options for the station access and car parking, on either side of the LC, separate analysis of each option is likely to be required. London Road is a key route through Bicester so additional traffic may cause it to suffer from more frequent and greater congestion;

- with the proposed increase in the frequency of the train service for Bicester, the effect on the level crossing on the London Road will require careful assessment and is likely to be a significant concern. Infrastructure improvements are likely to be required to London Road level crossing and these are likely to be costly;
- current access arrangements on to the London Road are inadequate (construction, visibility, geometry etc.) and proposals would need to be agreed. With the number of parking spaces quoted for a multi-storey, a right turn is likely to be needed;
- access into Bicester Town Station does not appear to be able to accommodate a two-way bus movement or other large vehicles (e.g., deliveries, emergency vehicles). There appears to be no room within the site for buses etc to turn. It is unclear whether a one-way system is planned via Bicester Village. If so, traffic problems around Bicester Village will affect the punctuality of bus services. In addition, Pingle Drive is a private road and this will need to be addressed. Impacts of additional traffic on the Bicester Village 'peak' times as well as traditional peak hours, needs to be considered;
- the consultation document says that commuters will use the Bicester Village car park on weekdays; however, Bicester Village also has a desire to increase weekday trade. There is potential for conflict if the combination of visitors and commuters increases beyond the level of car parking at each site. There are also concerns about Bicester Village's capacity to manage traffic flows and parking once on this site. This will need to be addressed if congestion from different types of traffic using Pingle Drive and the approaches to it is to be avoided. Confirmation of the types of trips that are expected and how sustainable modes will be promoted foremost is needed;
- justification of the number of parking spaces suggested needs to be provided, as well as how this would impact on the existing public car parks and/or the surrounding streets;
- the approach to charging (or not) for parking needs to be agreed, as well as any implications for on-street parking in the locality- financial contributions may be required to address resulting problems;
- there is no information regarding links for pedestrians and cyclists or cycle parking. Cycle and pedestrian links between Bicester Village and the town centre need to be improved and opportunities that arise through these proposals should be encouraged, including seeking contributions to appropriate schemes;
- drainage/flooding issues need to be addressed.

8. Water Eaton Parkway Station;

- management of parking arrangements adjacent to Water Eaton Park & Ride need to be agreed to ensure that free Park & Ride parking is not misused;
- impacts on the highway network around Kidlington, Gosford & Water Eaton (Bicester, Oxford and Pear Tree directions) suffers from congestion, especially at peak times. The Transport Assessment must include junction assessments, roundabout analysis, implications for buses, cycle & pedestrian links within an area to be agreed;
- the traffic controlled junction (traffic lights) access arrangements into Water Eaton are not suitable to accommodate the proposed station. Currently there are two separate accesses serving adjacent sites (i.e., Grain Silo and Park & Ride). One controlled access must be secured which may help towards easing congestion. In addition, the bus lane must remain for the use of buses only;
- drainage/flooding issues need to be addressed;
- cycle parking needs to be addressed;
- Station Travel Plans for staff and user access, including delivery vehicles are needed.

The Oxfordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2006 - 2011

This document was adopted as council policy on 21 February 2006. It contains 4 main aims and 9 outcomes directly related to the management, protection and development of the Rights of Way network to better meet modern needs. The plan links closely to the Local Transport Plan (LTP2) covering the same period.

The vision of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is:

To improve the existing public rights of way network for all users and would be users, and improve the extent, use and understanding of the network, so that Public Rights of Way fulfil their role as a vital part of life in the county.

To realise this vision there are four specific aims:

1. **Public Rights of Way are protected** and well maintained
2. **A better joined up network that meets the needs and demands of users** whilst accommodating the interests of land managers, the natural environment & our cultural heritage
3. **A public rights of way network that enables access for all**
4. A thriving countryside where residents and visitors are able to understand and enjoy their rights, in a responsible way

In practical terms we have undertaken an assessment of need, comparing the present route network available to different groups based on the different status of routes, **equestrians** were found to be very poorly provided for and even the footpath network sometimes requires difficult connections along busy roads. This is generally referred to as 'network connectivity' and something we are seeking to address as/when opportunities arise.

Oxfordshire Way – Is a 65 mile cross county recreational route promoted by Oxfordshire County Council running between Bourton on the Water in Gloucestershire and Henley-on-Thames.