

Park and Ride

Park and Ride has been operating in Oxford since the 1970s, and now provides over 5000 parking spaces at 5 sites on routes into Oxford- Oxford Parkway and Pear Tree to the north, Seacourt to the west, Redbridge to the south, and Thornhill to the east. These sites are currently operated by Oxford City Council, with three of the sites having terminal buildings with toilets in addition to the areas of parking.[1]

All of these sites provide dedicated bus services into Oxford City Centre, with the Parkway and Thornhill sites providing additional services to employment sites in the east of the City, and Thornhill also having coach services stopping that operate to London and South-east Airports. Payment is required for both parking and use of these bus services. The Oxford Parkway site is located adjacent to the Oxford Parkway station, although there is separate parking for rail users.

Away from Oxford, there is currently limited formal Park and Ride facilities, the most notable being that in Bicester adjacent to the A41 which is mostly used as additional parking for the Bicester Village retail centre. It is recognised that there is also an element of 'informal' park and ride on roads close to certain bus routes, mainly those operating into Oxford.



Plans and future opportunities

The Oxford Park and Ride system is well established and well used. Overall parking capacities have been expanded over the years, and will shortly expand further with additional spaces at Seacourt currently under construction. However, there are a number of constraints to further expansion of existing sites. There are also a number of reasons why expanding existing sites would be less appropriate in the future, including:

- The urban area of Oxford is expanding, with development planned at locations such as Oxford Gateway and on-green belt sites. This means that fewer of the established Park and Ride sites will be outside of the main built-up areas in the future.
- There has been development and growth on intra-urban bus services between Oxford and surrounding towns and villages, and in the case of Bicester additional rail services. This means that there are now higher quality options for direct travel by bus services from surrounding settlements.

- The overall transport policy direction is towards reducing car use to achieve carbon reductions, and improve air quality and health outcomes. This means that new Park and Ride provision is only likely to be suitable when high quality sustainable travel alternatives are not available.

In consideration of these factors, the County Council outlined proposals in the Local Transport Plan 4 (Connecting Oxfordshire) for development of more remote Park and Ride sites.^[2] This would both help intercept traffic travelling into Oxford further away from the City, and provide opportunities for residents in more rural areas to access public transport services earlier into their journeys.

The Park and Ride site locations proposed to be taken forward included sites to the north of Oxford near the Airport, sites at Sandford and Lodge Hill to the south of Oxford, and Cumnor and Eynsham to the west of Oxford. Only the site at Eynsham is currently being progressed in more detail, aligned with development to the north of the A40 at Eynsham, and bus priority measures along the A40 between Eynsham and Oxford. Other sites are identified in adopted or emerging local plans, and could be developed in the future.

Future of Park and Ride in Oxfordshire

Park and Ride is likely to continue to have a role in development of the transport strategy in Oxfordshire, but will need to be further developed in the context of wider environmental and health objectives, as well as planned new development. This is likely to focus on the following areas:

- Developing Park and Ride sites as transport interchanges, not only for cars and buses, but also for coaches, walking and cycling.
- Reviewing opportunities for developing mini-Park and Ride sites on high frequency bus routes, such as that operating along the A420 between Oxford and Swindon.
- Further considering the role, and where relevant location of identified larger remote park and rides, and how they would link with proposed development and existing high-quality bus services.

^[1] <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/parkandride>

^[2] <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/area-strategies>

Question 11

Park and Ride - What do you think?

What role do you think Park and Ride should have in our future transport strategy development? How do you think Park and Ride could be developed or changed to contribute to reducing carbon emissions and improving health and well-being? What else should future Park and Ride strategy consider?

To respond please use the online consultation form.