

Area Transport Strategies

Area Strategies

The different areas of Oxfordshire require different strategies to improve transport, mitigate climate emergency, improve air quality and deliver healthy place shaping. The nature of Oxfordshire means different strategies for urban, rural, connectivity, towns and villages. Area strategies therefore take account of the needs of the distinct places across the county, recognising that whilst everywhere needs to contribute to meeting our objectives, this contribution will be in different ways. Science Vale is a good example of some of the transport and connectivity challenges across one area of Oxfordshire.

Science Vale Transport Strategy

Science Vale - the UK's leading centres for science, technology and innovation at Harwell Campus, Milton Park and Culham Science Centre - is one of the most successful areas of science-based industry in the country and is considered highly important for the national economy as well as for Oxfordshire. The area has a high concentration of employment in industries such as research and development, publishing, education and hi-tech manufacturing activities such as motor vehicles and IT. Didcot, Wantage and Grove are part of Science Vale, whilst Abingdon and Wallingford lie within its sphere of influence.

Plans by District Councils show significant growth across the area up to 2034. Growth of 21,000 new homes and 20,000 new jobs is facilitated by the Science Vale Enterprise Zone as well as the Didcot Growth Accelerator Enterprise Zone.

Didcot is within the heart of Science Vale and was awarded Garden Town status by the government in December 2015. All Councils are working together to progress the Garden Town Delivery Plan.

Funding awarded from Government through the Housing & Growth Deal and the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), will provide funding for a number of transport schemes in the area to support housing and employment growth.

Why is it important to think about this?

Oxfordshire County Council's role is to plan how to create the conditions to facilitate residential and employment growth, ensure that the transport network can operate efficiently, promote sustainable travel and support a thriving, attractive place in which to live and work. Expansion of the science and technology business and creation of attractive town centres that offer good local services and amenities are essential to achieving this. This needs to happen in the context of climate emergency, health, well-being, healthy place-shaping, air quality, and planning for vulnerable groups.

What has been achieved so far?

We have, with partners achieved the following so far:

- An upgrade to the Winnaway; between Harwell village and Harwell Campus
- Improvements to Backhill Lane tunnel to open cycle and pedestrian access to Milton Park from the A4130
- Harwell Link Road has improved connections to Harwell Campus and Didcot

- Improvements to Didcot to Milton Park cycle route along Milton Road
- New cycle infrastructure within/related to new developments or road schemes
- Hagbourne Hill improvements
- North-facing slips at A34 Chilton Interchange provide a full movement junction
- Substantial improvements to Didcot Parkway station including a new station forecourt, cycle parking, bus stops and multi-storey car park

The following schemes are also in progress:

- Improvements to Harwell Campus entrance
- Phase 1 of Science Vale Cycle Network
- New cycle lanes along Wantage Road in Didcot
- New pedestrian and cycle bridge over the A34
- A Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Didcot
- A higher standard of cycle infrastructure in new developments
- Didcot Parkway cycle hub

Government funding via the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) will support schemes being built over the next few years include:

- Widening of the A4130 from Milton Interchange to Science Bridge, Didcot
- A new road bridge over the railway from the A4130
- A new river crossing from near Culham Science Centre to the A4130
- Clifton Hampden bypass.

The future

With the amount of growth proposed, several schemes are required to mitigate the cumulative impact of that growth and support the continued success in delivery of high value jobs growth within the Enterprise Zones. The transport priorities for Science Vale are to tackle climate emergency, promote healthy place shaping and improve air quality by:

- enabling sustainable active travel for as many journeys as possible
- improving access to Enterprise Zone for international, national and local travel
- enabling economic growth at other key employment sites in the area
- facilitating future housing growth whilst managing impact on the transport network
- improving connectivity between employment, services and housing growth

We will be implementing a number of schemes, as and when funding becomes available, in the following areas: sustainable travel, in particular cycling and public transport; the links between sustainable active travel and health; developing a sense of place and wellbeing; improving capacity of the road network; seeking opportunities to make use of future innovative technologies.

Costs & Funding

A significant amount of funding will be needed to implement the Science Vale strategy, which will come from a variety of sources. 1) Government funding when it is announced, 2) income from the Enterprise Zone business rate retention to fund infrastructure. 3) Strategic transport infrastructure contributions and public transport contributions from new developments

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Area Transport Strategies - What do you think?

This paper has used Science Vale as an example. Your area will also need a transport strategy.

What are your views on a strategy for your area? What would make it easier for you to choose more sustainable and active modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport for some journeys instead of opting for your car?

To respond please use the online consultation form.