



West Oxfordshire  
District Council

Hanborough Station  
Transport Infrastructure  
Study

Constraints & Opportunities  
Report

September 2019



# Hanborough Station Transport Infrastructure Study

## Constraints & Opportunities Report

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For:



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## Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Key Constraints and Opportunities .....	3
Rail Network & Services .....	3
Opportunities .....	3
Constraints .....	3
Station Facilities & Site Developments .....	4
Opportunities .....	4
Constraints .....	4
Developments (Housing & Commercial) .....	5
Opportunities .....	5
Constraints .....	5
Active Travel .....	6
Opportunities .....	6
Constraints .....	6
Local Public Transport Access (Including DRT) .....	7
Opportunities .....	7
Constraints .....	7
Highway Access (Road Network).....	8
Opportunities .....	8
Constraints .....	8
Complementary Measures .....	8
Opportunities .....	8
Constraints .....	9
3. Prioritisation Objectives .....	9

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been produced as part of stage two of the Hanborough station transport infrastructure study and builds upon the baseline review completed under stage one. The report distils the key opportunities and constraints and identifies a series of metrics that will be used to prioritise the long list of measures set out in Appendix A of the baseline report and refined during the stage two workshops.
- 1.2 The constraints and opportunities are grouped in 'workstreams', corresponding to those developed in stage one, and set out below:
  - Rail Network & Services
  - Station Facilities & Site Developments
  - Developments (Housing & Commercial)
  - Active Travel (Cycling, Walking)
  - Local Public Transport Access (Including DRT)
  - Highway Access (Road Network)
  - Complementary Measures
- 1.3 Equalities and inclusion are embedded within the workstreams rather than being treated in isolation and this approach must be carried through to the interventions proposed.

## 2. Key Constraints and Opportunities

### Rail Network & Services

#### Opportunities

- Improved peak period rail frequencies in recent years with new rolling stock and reduced journey times make rail an increasingly attractive option with potential to unlock additional latent demand with further service improvements.
- Proactive approach and pipeline of interventions at Hanborough station in the form of platform expansion and service upgrades. Ambition to deliver quick wins to service frequencies in conjunction with December 2019 timetable change.
- The North Cotswold Line Taskforce are promoting redoubling of the Cotswold line at the eastern and western ends of the line, between Wolvercot Junction and Hanborough which will significantly increase capacity along the line.
- Clear 'pivot points' for service improvements based on 'Decision to Develop' stage under the DfT's Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline process (Control Period 6 (2019-2024) and Control Period 7 (2024-2029)) to plan interventions around.
- Scope to boost tourism and patronage flows along the Cotswold line based on aspirations to reopen the old railway between Honeybourne and Stratford-upon-Avon and in light of greater interchange activity at Worcester Parkway.
- Attractiveness of the Cotswold Line to new residents and businesses wishing to relocate due to the quality of connections and access to rail emerging across the sub region, including HS2, East-West Rail and CrossRail.

#### Constraints

- Conclusion and retendering process of the current franchise along the Cotswold Line will inevitably pause significant developments at the station with uncertainty over future requirements/obligations.
- Single line track sections, such as that between Oxford and Charlbury, have restricted the frequency of trains along the line and the attractiveness of the Cotswold Line relative to mainline alternatives between Oxford and Birmingham.
- Limited off-peak frequency has hampered promotion and awareness of multi modal access by rail-bus from Hanborough station to the largest local attraction, Blenheim Palace, despite ticketing promotions being in place.

- The restrictive cycle carriage policy on GWR services means that cycle hire would need to be provided if tourists were to be encouraged to make the journey by bike. Cycles on trains scored lowly amongst passenger satisfaction levels.
- The higher quality services at Oxford Parkway station (rail service frequencies and reliability, station facilities and car parking provision) currently limits the relative appeal of Hanborough station.
- Increased pressure may be placed on existing station facilities, including car parking, if improvements aren't in place as new developments come forward within the station catchment area.

## Station Facilities & Site Developments

### Opportunities

- Local 'buy in' to station developments and championing of infrastructure improvements, as well as engagement on local transport opportunities and research (Oxfordshire CIE).
- Improved station waiting facilities, namely the recently installed modular unit at the station, will enhance the dwell time experience/passenger satisfaction and help encourage increased patronage.
- Designated land set aside for car park expansion, which will provide capacity for future growth with GWR already engaged in advanced discussions about the design requirements and bringing it online.
- Good level of cycle parking provision and future capacity available and positioned across the lease area; all of which are in easily accessible, visible locations overlooked by CCTV footage and natural surveillance.
- Proposals on the west side of the station include land for a new station building, a pedestrian bridge, ticket machine and shop, plus taxi and bus drop-off points; the latter of which rated lower than other forms of access in a recent rail survey.

### Constraints

- A lack of an overall masterplan for the station site that can stitch together disparate elements together in a cohesive way (e.g. providing alternative parking can free up the forecourt for improvements to pedestrian access to the platforms).
- Current dwell time facilities and passenger provision is basic and deters users, particularly during poor weather.

- Spatial constraints within the forecourt area and adjoining access road (in part due to residential parking bays) that reduces quality of access for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Significant third-party funding required for development of the parking site and installation of inclusive platform access and provision.
- An overreliance on peak period users may impact on the ease of access and quality of services for off peak users (eg limited spare parking capacity and reduced frequency bus services).

## Developments (Housing & Commercial)

### Opportunities

- The WODC Local Plan, covering the period 2011 – 2031 is based on the delivery of at least 15,950 homes including 13,200 for West Oxfordshire's identified housing needs and 2,750 for Oxford's 'unmet' housing need. The catchment area of Hanborough station is such that a large proportion of previous and future housing growth including at Witney, Eynsham (Cotswold Garden Village and West Eynsham Strategic Development Area) and Woodstock falls within it as well as additional employment floorspace.
- An established priority for infrastructure in the Local Plan is transport connectivity and accessibility, with the Cotswold Line and Hanborough Station seen as a key element of supporting housing growth and reducing demand for car trips on the A40/A44.
- Travel plans required through the planning process will be used to reduce the impact of private car journeys and can be aligned to measures and proposals for linking people to the station.

### Constraints

- The scale of developments will generate substantial additional demand that without frontloaded sustainable travel measures is likely to exacerbate road congestion and lock in unsustainable travel patterns.
- New development travel demand may choose alternative connections to Oxford and London from new infrastructure at Eynsham, Bladon & Seacourt (P&R) and Oxford Parkway if improvements are not made to connections to Hanborough and the station itself.

## Active Travel

### Opportunities

- Travel time distances to and from nearby localities and proposed developments, namely across Bladon/Woodstock, Hanborough, Eynsham and North Leigh, are conducive to active travel, particularly cycling.
- Improvements proposed to existing Rights of Way to provide better access to Barnard Gate, Freeland, Long Hanborough and Cassington and to improve all round permeability through the area (and the proposed Garden Village site).
- Proposed upgrades to the east-west (A40 corridor) in the form of a shared use walking and cycling link as well as upgrades to the north-south (NCN 5) cycle connections.
- Identified, specific improvements outlined to network in planning policy, such as improved crossings over the A40 for pedestrians and cyclists in emerging masterplans and NDP's alongside measures along the A4095 (OCC CIE data).
- Successful application to GWR's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund to develop a separate pedestrian and cycle bridge parallel to the existing A4095 bridge over the railway, which would remove a significant local infrastructure constraint.

### Constraints

- Poor connectivity between the station and certain destinations on foot and by bike, particularly via the A4905 to Woodstock and Witney and southbound to major new development at Eynsham along Lower Road.
- Lower Road is an unlit single carriageway which is subject to the national speed limit and has no active travel provision. The road is utilised by significant HGV traffic whilst a section of the road narrows underneath the railway bridge at its northern end.
- Personal Injury Collision (PIC) data between 2014-2018 suggests some clusters at junctions in Hanborough, Bladon and Eynsham (A40).
- Road dimensions are a constraint to installing designated active travel infrastructure, particularly between Hanborough and Bladon, whilst any off-road solution would require land consent and significant funding (not yet identified).
- The limited funding and resources allocated towards the maintenance of National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 442 to North Leigh/Charlbury (Sustrans have a limited

UK budget) and the limited capital investment that can be made available to develop and then maintain future connections due to budgetary constraints.

## Local Public Transport Access (Including DRT)

### Opportunities

- Ability for bus and Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) to unlock suppressed rail demand, mitigate local traffic and parking congestion and provide enhanced access to local 'honeypot' destinations/attractions, namely the Blenheim Estate.
- Proposals for bus-based Park & Ride facilities along the A40 north of Eynsham alongside an identified (housing) growth site at Bladon will capture drivers earlier on in the journey and release congestion on the local road network near Oxford.
- The A40 Science Transit 2 scheme will deliver a package of measures providing congestion relief to the A40 by 2021, although will not resolve the forecast A40 capacity issues. OCC is seeking additional funding for a longer term package.
- Potential for DRT schemes, such as Pickmeup in Oxford, to cater for existing and emerging clusters of demand, namely the rural hinterlands north west of the station and new commercial/science park proposals.

### Constraints

- Relatively limited rail-bus integration (routeing and timetabling) for onward journeys to support visitor and tourist traffic to local destinations.
- Pinch-point at the northern end of Lower Road under the rail bridge with the connection from the A4095 to the station suffering from congestion. No detailed proposals for alternative public transport link south of A4095 from Lower Road to the station. Careful consideration needed with regards to complex landownership and operational routing.
- Time limited S106 funding to support bus services, namely the 233, and in the context of public subsidy being withdrawn across the county services must be commercially viability.
- Routing of future bus services particularly in the context of creating any form of interchange at the station to service the interests of rail users that may have an adverse impact on route directness and utilisation by local community members.
- Limited 'interchange' style facilities and infrastructure at Hanborough station, such as Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI), step free access and seating.

## Highway Access (Road Network)

### Opportunities

- Link and crossing improvements planned to aid the quality of pedestrian and cycling connections across the A40 between Eynsham and Lower Road in conjunction with A40 Science Transit 2 scheme.
- Identified small scale, cost effective proposals for traffic calming and speed restriction changes in the local area to reduce the impact of traffic and improve attractiveness for walking and cycling.

### Constraints

- The scale of future rail heading activity mixing with local traffic during peak periods could impact on congestion and air quality within the station catchment area if not properly managed.
- Traffic displacement through Long Hanborough and Bladon due to capacity bottlenecks on the network (A40) despite Wolvercote and Cuttleslowe roundabout improvements. Future roadworks may exacerbate issue in short term.

## Complementary Measures

### Opportunities

- Behavioural change measures are a cost-effective element to securing modal shift that supports delivery and use of new infrastructure.
- Opportunity to proactively manage existing travel demand and suppressed levels of sustainable travel to/from the station alongside putting in place the foundations for new residents to 'think rail' and normalise sustainable access across the area.
- Cross promote event-based movements from the station to immediate trip attractors and develop a package of complementary initiatives in conjunction with key attractions (e.g. festival of festivals programmes, event management plans).
- Opportunities to unlock funding for complementary measures through s106/planning obligations especially where there is scope to link objectives.

## Constraints

- Resources required to undertake the interventions may be given less weight or misaligned with infrastructure proposals, undermining effectiveness.
- Risk that complementary measures are used as an alternative to infrastructure investment and this undermines attempts to embed sustainable travel patterns.

## 3. Prioritisation Objectives

3.1 The key constraints and opportunities identified in section two will shape the objectives for the station that will form part of the prioritisation of measures in Stage three of the project. The proposed prioritisation objectives are:

- 1) **Station Environs:** To enhance the dwell time experience and the quality of on site station facilities to improve passenger satisfaction/meet users' expectations
- 2) **Modal Shift:** To stimulate modal shift and unlock suppressed demand for sustainable travel whilst thinking smartly around car based access and technology
- 3) **Facilitating Development:** To facilitate the delivery of new development by providing new or enhanced transport links between the station and development sites
- 4) **Local Connectivity:** To enhance the journey experience, ease of access and safety across the station catchment area for different trip types, users and travel flows.
- 5) **Demand Management:** To ensure a balanced approach to growth that does not exacerbate current road conditions, is inclusive and supports modal shift.

3.2 These objectives reflect the overarching vision and local aspirations across the station catchment area. In addition to these Hanborough specific objectives the long list of measures will also be prioritised against a range of criteria that test deliverability. These include:

- 1) **Has it worked** (best practice and examples of delivery)?
- 2) **Can it work here** (what is its local applicability)?
- 3) **Can it be delivered here** (technical application)?
- 4) **Can it be delivered here** (organisationally)?
- 5) **Can it be delivered here** (public acceptability)?
- 6) **Can it be delivered here** (affordability/fundability)?
- 7) **Effectiveness** (scale of benefit of proposed measure)

- 3.3 The long list of measures proposed by stakeholders and ITP will be inserted into a prioritisation matrix tool for assessment to develop a better understanding of their potential deployment over the course of the Local Plan Period.
- 3.4 The use of a prioritisation matrix for assessing the validity of proposed measures will help to ensure a constant link is made to and between the stated vision and objectives. The use of assessment criteria to assess each measure against, will ensure a robust sifting of what is attainable in the context of the station and wider catchment area.
- 3.5 This will be a 'live' tool that can be adapted over time to deliver a legacy benefit for the project. The matrix will be completed following the workshop and could be used by a future Hanborough station adoption group, as well as WODC, to adapt and amend the programme of measures over time.



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