

# OXFORD STATION MASTERPLAN

## Questions and answers

### What's it all about?

The ambition of the masterplan is to create an exemplary gateway to the city that meets Oxford's long-term rail needs and acts as a focus for investment.

Partners are working together to deliver a rail hub and interchange for Oxford, reflecting its status as a world class city and a global centre for innovation and learning.

Proposals in the masterplan call for higher quality public space, in and around the station, and significant changes to accommodate the increase in rail passenger numbers over the next few years.

### What are the main features of the masterplan?

The main features of the masterplan include: a new station building, new rail track and platforms, a transport interchange - including bus station and multi-storey car park, better cycle facilities and improvements to Botley Road bridge.

There are also development opportunities for residential and commercial buildings including leisure, offices and hotel accommodation.

### Why do we need changes to the station and surrounding area?

Major national rail infrastructure projects and significant planned economic growth will see an increase in passenger journeys from circa.6.31 million annual journeys in 2012 to 8.15 million or more across the Oxford zone by 2026.

Oxford station and its surrounds currently represent a poor gateway to Oxford and are not fit for the future. They're inadequate for such an important setting and won't cope with the forecast increases in passenger and freight activity or support planned economic growth. Pedestrian and vehicular movements around the station, and in particular on Botley Road, require significant improvements to meet demand and improve safety and journey times.

### Why do we need a masterplan?

The masterplan brings together key partners and delivers a vision for a new station and surrounds for Oxford, reflecting its status as a world class city and a global centre for innovation and learning.

### Who are the partners?

The masterplan has been developed by design consultants AHR for:

- Oxford City Council
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Network Rail

in conjunction with Department for Transport and First Great Western (representing train operating companies).

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## Why is the proposal the preferred option?

The masterplan consultants identified a range of conceptual options for the location of the station buildings and interchange facilities, including leaving the station in its existing location, moving it further south (where existing cycle stands are), locating the station over the Botley Road Bridge and moving to Becket Street.

The options were evaluated against the agreed value framework and following detailed consideration, the best location is considered to be adjacent to the Botley Road on the site of the current cycle stands. This helps improve the pedestrian and vehicular conflicts in the current station entrance and forecourt.

## What changes are planned for the rail network?

The Government's strategy for the railways 2014-2019 is built around four priorities, three of which directly impact on Oxford and Oxfordshire.

- The creation of a high capacity passenger and freight corridor known as the 'electric spine' running from the South Coast to Oxford and dividing at Oxford for the East Midlands and South Yorkshire, and for the West Midlands and North West.
- The introduction of faster, more reliable electric trains to increase capacity and accelerate journey times
- A new railway link to provide western access to Heathrow Airport.

The western route access to Heathrow project, with the possibility of much faster airport journey times from around 2021, will bring an increase in overseas leisure and business visitors to the city and county with potential for attracting increased numbers of inward investors.

## What rail changes are happening at Oxford?

Network Rail is delivering an infrastructure improvement project known as the Oxford Corridor Capacity Scheme. This includes new signalling, electrification of lines and a new track to the western side of the current station. There is also a new platform to be provided for East West Rail phase 1 which will provide a choice of routes into London from 2016 either to Paddington as now, or to Marylebone via Water Eaton and Bicester.

## Is there funding for the proposals?

The masterplan is aspirational and currently unfunded but it sets out the overall ambition for the area. As well as a new station building, interchange and public realm there are areas for private sector commercial development such as hotels and offices.

The partners are working together closely, exploring the funding opportunities in greater detail. This is now possible because of the proposals set out in the masterplan.

The estimated cost of all the elements in the masterplan is about £75m. The station and operational rail buildings could be in the region of £40m. This could be offset by up to £25m of development value leaving a net cost of around £50m. Network Rail is spending about £110m on the separate infrastructure project. All the figures are estimates at this stage.

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## **How does it tie into other developments in Oxford?**

The masterplan sets out how Oxford Station can be developed and integrated with improvements to Frideswide Square, the Oxpens Masterplan, Westgate development and takes account of the need to make improvements to Botley Road bridge.

The rail infrastructure projects already planned will help leverage wider regeneration across the west end of the city and in particular northwards past the island site and westwards along the route of Becket Street and into the road extension through to Oxpens.

## **How does it link to the county transport network?**

The masterplan is a major step towards developing a vital transport interchange in Oxfordshire. It links to the County Council's 'Connecting Oxfordshire', which is about ensuring the county has the transport network it needs to ensure it continues to attract investment and creates jobs.

The masterplan proposes a multimodal transport interchange on Becket Street with a new multi-storey car park, modern bus interchange, taxis and short term parking/ drop off and new improved cycle provision. At this stage the proposals are indicative and subject to further refinement.

## **What about cyclists?**

The masterplan proposes improved cycle facilities including around 1,000 cycle parks at Botley Road level under the station and taxi interchange, and around 200 cycle parks around key locations across the masterplan area.

## **What changes are proposed for Botley Road?**

Botley Road currently only has two lanes and there is well known conflict between cycles and vehicles, because the space is limited. Improvements outlined in the masterplan include: widening Botley Road to incorporate an additional highway lane(s), new grade separated cycle lanes and footpaths; improved public realm under the bridge; widening of the bridge to incorporate additional tracks; improvements to junctions with Cripsey Road, and onto Dudman Way; increased headroom under the bridge.

## **Who has been consulted so far about the masterplan?**

Extensive initial stakeholder consultation has been carried out at face-to-face sessions and through questionnaires which have helped us understand the key issues.

There have been several presentations to elected members, the West End Steering Group and to members of the town team, as the ideas have progressed, also to the Oxford Station Board. Stakeholders contacted in respect of the project include: rail user groups (through First Great Western), bus users, cyclo, taxi and bus operators, train operating companies, freight operating companies, Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England, Civic Society, SENDRA, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, fire, police, ambulance, pedestrian and disability groups.

We are now seeking feedback on the proposed masterplan from everyone who is interested.

Oxford Station Masterplan public exhibition is being held on Friday 1 and Saturday 2 August in the Exhibition Suite at the Westgate Centre. Everyone is welcome to attend and information will also be available on the website: [www.oxfordwestend.co.uk](http://www.oxfordwestend.co.uk)

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## **What are the timescales and will there be much disruption as a result of the masterplan?**

The masterplan is not a detailed design for the station; it sets out a framework for an exemplary gateway that's able to deal with the demands upon it and which will act as a focus for investment.

The masterplan sets out a phased delivery for the project, which is indicative at this stage and likely to change. As the project progresses we will have a clearer understanding about the changes that will be needed at each phase and the impact these changes will have.

## **What happens to the youth hostel and the nursery?**

The youth hostel building could be affected by Network Rail's proposals to add an additional track to the west side of the station as part of the Oxford Corridor Capacity Improvements. Installation of the new track also involves widening the Botley Road bridge. Network Rail has been in contact with the Youth Hostel Association about the plan and discussions are on-going.

The Co-operative Childcare, Oxford Station is also affected and Network Rail is in contact with the Co-operative about this.

## **Is relocation to Oxpens still being considered?**

Oxford Civic Society has previously suggested the station be relocated to Oxpens. Following high level investigations into this idea it has been ruled out for a variety of planning, technical and financial issues and on the basis that any potential benefits could be achieved at the current station site for significantly less cost and disruption

## **What happens next?**

As a result of the detailed information in the masterplan, the partnership is working to attract public and private sector funding to take the proposals forward.

There will be an architectural competition for the concept design of the new station, bridge and transport interchange. The competition will take place in the autumn.

## **How can people find out more about the masterplan and feedback comments?**

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