

## 6 INFRASTRUCTURE

### Introduction

- 6.1 Good connections and high quality infrastructure are essential to our quality of life. We need to travel to work, school, shops, leisure and health facilities. A thriving economy needs good connections to operate efficiently. These can range from the strategic road and rail network, to our ability to access the internet with the benefits that it can offer to work from home and provide services. Improving accessibility to services and employment is fundamental to sustainable development and to meeting the objectives of this Plan. The challenge is to do this in a way that minimises the impact of the transport system on the environment whilst encouraging development that actively supports walking, cycling and public transport to minimise the need to travel, and provides for necessary improvements in a cost-effective way.
- 6.2 Successful and sustainable communities depend upon physical, green, social and community infrastructure to meet the needs of residents and businesses. Infrastructure encompasses a very wide range of provision including transport, public utilities and waste management, flood management measures, social and community infrastructure such as affordable housing, health care facilities, emergency services provision and sports provision, Green Infrastructure, culture, faith and spiritual facilities, education, leisure and tourism, and other community facilities ranging from community meeting halls to children's play areas.
- 6.3 It is important to appreciate that whilst there is a considerable degree of funding from governmental and other public sources, a significant amount of the money for provision of new or the enhancement of existing infrastructure comes in the form of financial contributions from developers or in the form of payment in kind through direct provision of facilities or services.
- 6.4 To better understand the suitability of existing infrastructure provision and identify the infrastructure required to support the level of development proposed through the Local Plan, South Oxfordshire District Council has developed an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The IDP is an important element of the evidence for the Local Plan and helps inform and underpin strategic policies for growth and development. The IDP outlines in more detail the infrastructure requirements to support proposed development growth, particularly for strategic sites, as well as planned delivery and funding arrangements. It will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis during the plan period.

The challenge is to do this in a way that minimises the impact of the transport system on the environment and provides for necessary improvements in a cost-effective way

Improving travel choice in rural areas is to be encouraged, while accepting that there is unlikely to be a single model for delivering the flexible and responsive transport services

- 6.5 The location of all forms of development can be a key factor in influencing where and how we travel and reducing the need to travel and enabling sustainable travel options. These principles have a key influence on the other elements of the Plan. For example, accessibility to services and facilities and the availability of high quality, frequent and reliable public transport are key features for a strong network of settlements and the overall distribution of new housing and employment land.
- 6.6 The policies within this section contribute towards our vision and objectives which seek to build on opportunities for sustainable travel. They have been informed by relevant evidence, including our Evaluation of Transport Impacts work. However, we recognise that the rural nature of the district means that many residents will still be dependent on car travel for some or all of their journeys, and this is reflected in the policies below. This section of the Plan has also been informed by, and is consistent with, Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4<sup>21</sup>, which sets the transport policies and provides transport strategies for the county to 2031. Improving travel choice in rural areas is to be encouraged, while accepting that there is unlikely to be a single model for delivering the flexible and responsive transport services required to meet the diverse needs of rural communities.

## Infrastructure Provision

- 6.7 Successful and sustainable communities and new developments depend on suitable physical and social infrastructure being in place to meet the needs of their residents. These needs include transport, utilities and waste, social infrastructure, environmental and Green Infrastructure, cultural, education, health, leisure, faith and community facilities. The level and type of infrastructure can range from major investments such as new schools, to support for community transport schemes.
- 6.8 It is also recognised that new development may need to take into account existing infrastructure constraints, such as the presence of overhead powerlines or gas pipelines. It will be important for developers to engage early on in the planning process with the organisations responsible for these distribution networks, currently either National Grid or Scottish and Southern Power Networks, to see how these can best be accommodated within new development. Urban design considerations will be important in determining how these networks can be taken into account, and agreements will need to be made with these organisations on any proposed modification, taking into account relevant guidance (<https://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/planning-and-development>). It

<sup>21</sup> [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire)

may be appropriate for any changes to be agreed at the planning application stage, for example, through appropriate conditions.

- 6.9 The need for, and importance of, providing adequate, appropriate and timely infrastructure is a strong message that comes from local residents during consultations, who are often concerned that the necessary infrastructure is not provided, or not provided quickly enough.
- 6.10 To maintain and provide infrastructure and other community services effectively, it is essential that there is a partnership working approach between the public, private and voluntary sector agencies involved. We will continue to work closely with a wide range of infrastructure providers and stakeholders. Key organisations include Oxfordshire County Council, Highways England, the NHS and Clinical Commissioning Groups, Town and Parish Councils, Thames Water and the Environment Agency. An example of this partnership work is the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy work being undertaken for the Oxfordshire Growth Board, which has helped to evidence and map strategic infrastructure requirements for Oxfordshire over the next 15-20 years. This work has assisted in informing our Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which gives more detail on the infrastructure required to support the development proposed in the Plan.
- 6.11 Where funding is secured for infrastructure, there will be an expectation that funding will be recovered and recycled and obtained from developer contributions retrospectively. Where forward funding is secured it will not circumvent the need for a development to contribute towards the cost of such infrastructure if such infrastructure is relevant to the development of the site. Infrastructure and services required as a consequence of development, and provision for their maintenance, will be sought from developers, and secured through developer contributions.

### Policy INF1: Infrastructure Provision

- 1. New development must be served and supported by appropriate on-site and off-site infrastructure and services.**
- 2. Planning permission will only be granted for developments where the infrastructure and services needed to meet the needs of the new development are already in place or will be provided to an agreed timescale. Infrastructure includes the requirements set out in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Leisure Study,**

Green Infrastructure Strategy, any relevant made Neighbourhood Development Plans, and/or infrastructure needed to mitigate the impact of the new development.

3. Infrastructure and services, required as a consequence of development, and provision for their maintenance, will be sought from developers, and secured through planning obligations, conditions attached to a planning permission, other agreements, and funding through the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or other mechanisms. This applies equally where external funding for infrastructure necessary for development has been secured (including where the infrastructure is delivered ahead of development), on the expectation that funding shall be recovered from development.
4. Development will also need to take account of existing infrastructure, such as sewerage treatment works, electricity pylons or gas pipelines running across development sites. Early engagement with infrastructure providers will be necessary, with any changes set down and agreed at planning application stage, for example through planning conditions.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 1, 4, & 6.

## Transport

### Strategic Transport Infrastructure

- 6.12 As the highway authority, Oxfordshire County Council manages and maintains the local road network and prepares a countywide Local Transport Plan which sets out policies and strategies for developing the transport system across the county. Highways England is the government company charged with operating, maintaining and improving England's motorways and major A roads, including the M40 and A34. Network Rail owns the railway network, with train operating companies, mainly Great Western Railway, providing services. In association with the bus companies, this provides a network of public transport services providing sustainable transport choices across the district.
- 6.13 The Council works with our partners including neighbouring authorities, Highways England and the National Infrastructure Commission to reflect,