



**campaigning for  
all Britain's rail users**

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### **Oxford Local Plan 2040 – Preferred Options**

Railfuture Thames Valley strongly supports the re-opening of the Cowley branch line to passenger services, with the two new stations as proposed, and given the advance planning already undertaken by Network Rail, works should be brought forward to commence as soon as reasonably practical so that the line can open as soon as possible after the completion of the next phase of Oxford Station redevelopment which will bring into use the necessary 5th platform.

This scheme will greatly improve social inclusion in east Oxford, including some of the most deprived parts of the city, as well as the wider catchment area for the new stations, with much better connectivity for employment, education, health, leisure and other reasons. The journey time to central Oxford will be much reduced compared to by bus and it will relieve congestion on the busy main roads in east Oxford.

We consider the city should be open minded as to the destinations of the trains serving the Cowley line; Chiltern Railways have in the past shown interest in running the service by extending their Marylebone-Oxford trains but other options should be considered such as Milton Keynes, via EWR or Hanborough for a cross-city "metro" style service with investment in the Cotswold line and Hanborough station. All these or perhaps other options should be borne in mind.

Putting Cowley on the GB railway map will boost east Oxford's economy and benefit the whole city. Local bus routes (such as to the hospitals, Headington and settlements in south Oxfordshire) should connect to the service with a rail/bus interchange hub.

Regarding Section 8.22 (cannot find a separate comment box for it), we recommend the City should seriously consider, as an alternative to electric buses for the longer term, the introduction of light trams on the busiest core routes, using the technology being developed for Coventry (battery powered, light vehicles with no overhead wires and reduced construction costs due to less utility work required). Trams can achieve higher modal shift from cars than buses and reduce particulates emissions thus improving air quality in the city.