

Oxfordshire Plan 2050
Policy Options Consultation**Regulation 18 Part 2 – Consultation response form**

Please Return to the Oxfordshire Plan Team by Friday 8th October 2021

By Post: Oxfordshire Plan Team,
Speedwell House,
Speedwell Street,
Oxford,
OX1 1NE

Or by Email: info@oxfordshireplan.org

This form has two parts-

PART A – Personal Details

PART B – Your Representation(s)

PART A

	Personal details
Title*	Mr.
First Name*	Charlie
Last Name*	Maynard
Job Title	Chair
Organisation	Witney Oxford Transport Group
Telephone Number	07487 708 681
Email*	cmaynard@witneyoxfordtransport.org.uk

Witney Oxford Transport Group (“WOT Group”) is a cross-party, not-for-profit campaign group seeking to rebuild a rail line linking Oxford, Eynsham, Witney and Carterton. Further information on WOT Group and the project is available on [our website](#) and via this [Google Earth presentation](#). This rail line would reduce current public transport journey times by more than 70%, with Eynsham reachable from Oxford in 9 minutes, Witney in 16 and Carterton in 22.

* **Required Fields**

PART B

To which part of the consultation does this representation relate?

General Comment Paragraph Policy Option Spatial Option

What is the nature of your comment?

Support Object Observation

Please provide details of your response as necessary:

Q1 Which location in Oxfordshire would you like to be included in the Oxfordshire Plan?

As per WODC's adopted Local Plan to 2031, approximately 7,000 of the 10,450 homes scheduled to be built in West Oxfordshire over the next decade are inside the A40 Corridor. These housebuilding numbers in the current Local Plan are extremely high and we do not advocate any further housebuilding beyond what is already in the current Local Plan. However, we do strongly advocate that the great majority of these homes, as well as those in future Local Plans, are built close to the three rail stations around the larger settlements of Carterton, Witney and Eynsham. This approach is in line with Oxfordshire County Council's goals of sustainable, reliable, low-carbon, fast transportation. Crucially, locating these homes close to the rail stations will help fund the building of the railway.

Land Value Capture takes the incremental gain from the uplift in value from the sale of new homes sited near the new rail stations and splits that value, typically on a 50/50 basis, between the landowners and developers on the one hand, and funding the construction of the railway on the other. The increase in the value of each home is derived entirely from building the railway. As per E-Rail's confidential report commissioned by WOT Group, the total net gain will likely be more than £600m, of which £300m+ would accrue to landowners and developers, and £300m+ would be contributed to funding the construction of the railway.

The benefits of locating homes around the future railway stations are as follows:

- Faster, more reliable and more sustainable journeys would reduce both car ownership and car usage, through providing residents with a genuinely convenient public transport alternative, with 'the last mile' to the rail station typically being covered either by foot or by bike.
- Allows for the possibility of increasing housing densities somewhat, while still providing high quality, community-centred homes, thereby reducing the total amount of greenfield land going under tarmac.
- By siting the homes near the stations, Land Value Capture ("LVC") can be used to fund either all or most of the costs of building the railway line. As above, E-Rail has recently completed a study exploring this opportunity and found that more than £300m of funding is potentially available from LVC – if the homes are located close to the rail stations.
- Conversely, given both that: a) the national government is seeking to enforce large, strict housebuilding targets, and b) that LVC is only possible from the uplift value derived from homes built near the rail stations, building homes away from these settlements has two further negative consequences. First, it wastes the opportunity to capture value to help fund the railway line and the alternative of waiting around for the government to fully fund this rail construction is clearly unattractive. Secondly, a scattergun approach of dropping 50, 100, 200 houses into villages around the district is very detrimental to the villages which lack the

physical and social infrastructure. We believe everyone in the district is better served by a structured and scaled approach towards building the necessary physical and social infrastructure in key locations.

- By focussing on key locations at scale, it provides the district with protection against developers being able claim that WODC's five-year landbank buffer has been breached, thereby allowing them to develop all sorts of unsuitable sites at short notice. This is a real and present danger in West Oxfordshire.

Proposed locations

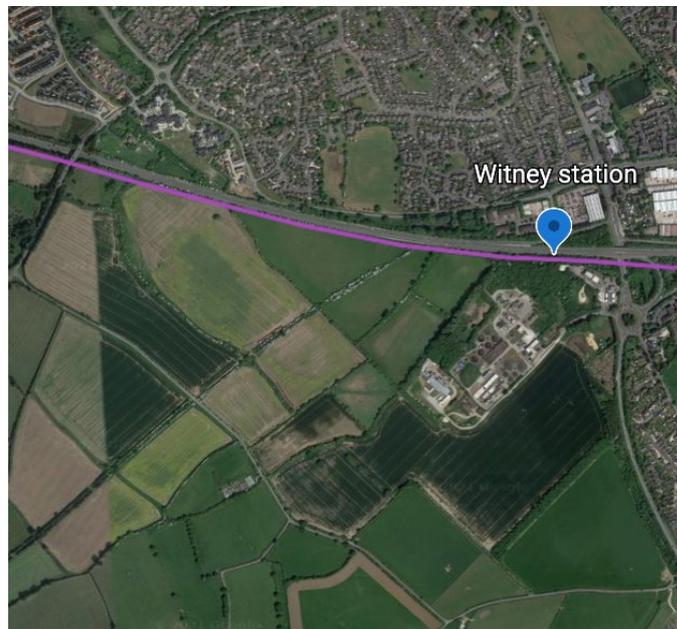
A. Witney

The Witney station would be sited southwest of the A40 / A415 junction, west of the existing sewage works, partially sited on an old brownfield site. Housing would be located further to the west of the railway station and would have good connectivity, given its proximity both to the future rail station, and to the A40 and the A415. Further, this site would have comparatively little impact on Witney residents as it is on the southern side of the A40. The rail station would be 600 metres away from the eastern edge of Ducklington, with no line of sight between the two communities. As per the Environment Agency's flood maps, the site is not a flood risk.

We also believe that this would be an excellent substitute site for the 1,400 houses which are currently planned for North Witney. The North Witney site has strong local opposition with 1,853 signatories writing to reject this development due to its poor connectivity, risk of flooding and greenfield site.

We do not support developing The Moors site in Ducklington, east of the A415, which has a long record of flooding, most recently in December 2020/January 2021.

Location of Witney rail station, south of A40 and west of A415



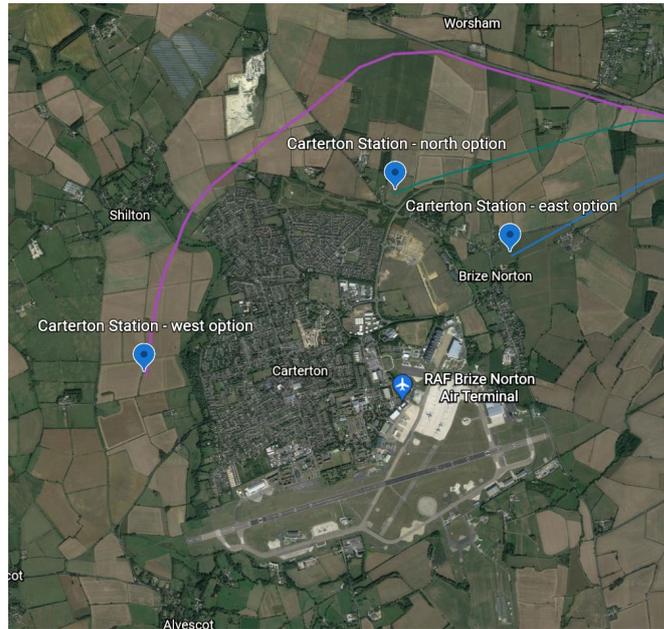
(Source: Google Earth)

B. Carterton

The locations for railway stations in both Eynsham and Witney are straightforward as we believe there is only one feasible route for rail stations to serve and pass each of these settlements. However, the situation is different in Carterton, with viable options possible to the west, north and east of the town. The map below outlines these three potential station locations. Each of these sites has substantial land around it which could be used for future

housing. Due care should be given to minimise any impacts to the Shill Brook valley, the Country Park and Brize Norton and Shilton villages.

Location options for Carterton rail station



(Source: Google Earth)

A rail station in Carterton would be transformative to the town. Currently, there are very few large employers in the town, resulting in many residents having to commute out to their place of work. Two key reasons for the relative lack of local, large employers are: a) WODC has made very little commercial and industrial space available, and b) the terrible logistics into Carterton, being stuck 15 miles out from Oxford along a shockingly congested A40. The planned four miles of bus lanes from Eynsham to Wolvercote will make little or no difference to this dire situation.

A rail station at Carterton would bring high skilled, high paying jobs into the town. The railway would also create the opportunity to generate large synergies between the RAF, the airbase's runway, the aerospace expertise of Carterton's residents, and the R&D capabilities of the engineering, material science, chemistry, physics, computing and other faculties at Oxford's universities. Taken as a whole, this combination has as good a probability as any other team *globally* of solving some of the green challenges around 21st Century aerospace.

New facilities for Carterton could include better sporting facilities, allotment sites, new public spaces including medical facilities, day and family centres, a cinema and a hotel.

C. Eynsham

As per the current local plan, 2,200 homes are already planned in the Salt Cross Garden Village ("SCGV") and a further 1,000 homes are planned in the West Eynsham strategic development area. Planning permission has not yet been granted to the SCGV or the majority of the West Eynsham developments. LVC contribution agreements should be made with each of these landowner/developer groups so that the incremental uplift from the railway is shared 50/50.

Q2 What type and size of development do you think could be delivered at this location?

We hope that the Local Plan beyond 2031 will require materially fewer houses than the 10,450 houses currently planned for 2021-2031. To the extent that further housing is required in West Oxfordshire, we believe this housing should be centred around Witney's and Carterton's rail stations. Both sites should be mixed use, integrating residential, commercial and industrial space, thereby reducing the need for people to commute to work.

We do not support building more houses than are currently outlined in the existing Local Plan. However, we do support relocating Witney North to a new Witney South site, next to the future rail station. We also support some of the 20-200 units of housing currently being planned on green space across the district both in and around villages being relocated to these key town sites.

Q3 Why do you think this is a good location for your proposed idea?

As stated above.

Q4 How might your proposal fit with the Oxfordshire Plan's policy and spatial options?

We support spatial options focussing:

- on larger settlements
- along sustainable transport corridors, at the strategic transport hubs of the railway stations at Carterton, Witney and Eynsham.

Q5 Do you know of any challenges that might need to be overcome to deliver this proposal?

A key focus is on funding, with Land Value Capture ("LVC") being the best means of quickly funding this railway. Given the scale of homes being planned along the corridor, there is a near term opportunity to use some of the incremental value gain derived from the railway development, on the sale of each of these homes, to fund the railway. This opportunity only exists where the homes are not yet developed and sold and therefore this needs to be acted on now. The higher the proportion of houses which are sited around the railway stations, the more funding is accrued to build the railway and the quicker the railway can be built. This does not require any extra housing to be built inside this Local Plan to 2031 and to the extent that housing is required post 2031, it should be centred around these rail stations.