



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

Thames Valley Branch
Secretary
Andrew McCallum
38 Lapsley Drive
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX16 1EW

Tel 01295 272606
thamesvalley@railfuture.org.uk

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Cherwell District Council Local Plan Review 2040 consultation

I write on behalf of Railfuture Thames Valley* to comment on some proposals outlined in the new Local Plan consultation.

We wish to express our strong support for Core Policy 65: Development in the vicinity of Banbury Railway Station.

Banbury station is vital to the local economy and the wellbeing of local residents as it is, for public transport, the town's only link with the rest of the country especially now since Banbury is no longer served by any long-distance coach services. The station and surrounding area are in need of redevelopment to improve access and we especially support the planned improved bus connections to the station and active travel improvements. The busy Cherwell Street/Bridge Street junction is, literally, a barrier between the station and the town centre. Both residents and visitors to Banbury alike would benefit from better traffic free walking routes, such as along the canal towpath from the station approach road to Castle Quay. The recent and future growth in the population of Banbury requires that the station is improved to cater for increasing passenger numbers.

Network Rail's Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study (ORCS) shows in detail the county's predicted growth in jobs and housing over the next two decades and presents an industry vision for how the rail network can best support it. In particular it identifies the scope for increased train services on the key Banbury – Oxford corridor. With the growth of employment in Oxford and the relative unaffordability of housing in Oxford, it is essential that surrounding towns such as Banbury, Bicester and Didcot, are well connected to Oxford by rail not only for employment but also for education, health, leisure and other reasons too.* Whereas Bicester and Didcot benefit from regular half hourly trains to Oxford all day every day, the service from Banbury is less frequent and not standard across the day. Currently trains are often over crowded on this sector at busy times. ORCS demonstrates that increased frequencies of trains from Banbury and the West Midlands to Oxford will be feasible once the infrastructure improvements it identifies are complete. Banbury station, its access and environs therefore need to be improved to ensure rail travel is the optimal option for travel both from and to Banbury in the years ahead.

The proposals in your Core Policy 65 meet these requirements.

We should be pleased if you would take our comments into consideration as you take the Plan forward.

Please get in touch should you require any clarification of the points we have raised.

Andrew McCallum

Secretary
Railfuture Thames Valley Branch

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*** According to ORR stats for 2021/22 just over a quarter of all ticket sales from Banbury are to Oxford.*