

Connectivity:- to enable the free flow of people and goods into, out of and around the town using all appropriate modes of transport so that the basic needs of the community, including: work, food, education, health, leisure, exercise and social cohesion, will continue to be met while development of the town proceeds.

Purpose of this note

- This note provides a summary of the Connectivity Evidence Paper for those not wishing to read the full paper.
- This note does not replace the Connectivity Evidence Paper, which after it has been issued as final shall remain the master document.



Current position:-

- The normally resident population in Oundle has risen from 4588 in 2001 to 4922 in 2011. With current planned housing growth this can be expected to increase to around 5800 in 2021 and further growth at a similar rate would lead to a population of around 6600 in 2031. In addition there will be around 900 pupils in boarding schools.
- Oundle provides services to villages in the immediate rural hinterland. There are around 5250 people living within the area as defined (around 5 mile radius). This could rise to 5500 by 2021 and 5750 by 2013. However, if the housing development at Deenthorpe Airfield goes ahead then the population in the rural hinterland could rise by an additional 2250 (1000 dwellings) to 3400 (1500 dwellings).
- TPP completed a Transport Study report in September 2011 on behalf of East Northamptonshire Council and Oundle 2020. They identified a number of issues:-
 - There are locations in the town (in the Market Place, its connected streets and Glaphorn Road) where queuing and traffic congestion occurs for short periods of time. The congestion is made worse by the significant number of school buses visiting the town each day. They noted that these congestion issues cannot be predicted by standard transport analysis packages. Otherwise roads and junctions are operating within capacity.
 - Parking capacity in the centre of the town approaches saturation at certain times but this is exacerbated by parking time restrictions not being observed.
 - Long term parking within 10 minutes walk of the town centre is not fully utilised.
 - Car park signage was noted as poor, difficulties were noted with car parking enforcement and inconsistent time limits.
 - Insufficient cycle parking in the town.
 - Pedestrian domain improvements are possible in the Market Place and its connected streets.
- Transport studies carried out in conjunction with planning applications have also generally confirmed that the roads and junctions are operating within capacity.
- It should be noted that current and projected traffic utilisation of Oundle's road system are unlikely to justify significant investment in new road infrastructure.



National and regional guidance with relevance for Oundle:-

- The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) (NPPF 2012) sets out how the planning system should address the principles for sustainable development.... Planning should play an active role in securing sustainable solutions and seek positive improvements in the quality of the built and historic environment and people's quality of life.... Getting from place to place is central to people's lives and to the successful operation of business and social organisations. A key principle for planning is active management of patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and taking account of strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing with sufficient and accessible facilities and services to meet local needs.... Development should give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and have access to high quality public transport, including ensuring the safety of pedestrians and cyclists and encouraging the use of low emission vehicles. The key aim is to minimise journey lengths and enable walking for many day to day activities. Parking provision should take account of available opportunities for other modes of transport and the overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.
- The Northamptonshire Transportation Plan recognises that the movement of goods and people is for a purpose, and not an end in itself. A sound transport system: makes strong, safe and cohesive communities; enables economic/business development and growth; provides choice now and in the future. Overall, the Plan recognises the need to shift more journeys from car to other modes and so avoid congestion.
- Oundle is a market town in a rural and agricultural setting. It's character, especially in the centre, reflects its history and sets limits on the potential to increase the volume of traffic and parking in and near the centre. Set within this constraint, planning for the future should minimise journey lengths and encourage the shift of journeys to sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling.



Supporting study and analysis:-

- Analysis of school bus routing has been carried out in conjunction with Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) during 2014. Current indications are that it is possible to introduce an informal one way system in the town that would avoid the need for buses to travel in opposite directions along the same road. Final routings and an implementation date have yet to be agreed.
- Work carried out during 2013 on three different routes across Oundle showed that there was relatively little difference in the time to move across the town by car between the “empty road” minimum to the busy period maximum (the maximum was between 35% and 51% higher than the minimum). Similar work started in 2014 has shown that routes within the town and including known congestion points exhibit a higher variation in transit times (45% to 98%).

This aligns with the assertion in the 2011 TPP Transport Study that the roads in Oundle are operating within capacity.

- NCC has assessed and published a map showing the suitability of all roads in Oundle for use by cyclists. The residential areas in the town are deemed suitable for “inexperienced riders behaving responsibly” or “well trained school children”. However, the connecting roads between these areas are deemed suitable for “medium to high skilled cyclists” and three junctions only suitable for “highly skilled commuting cyclists”. A review has been carried with the NCC cycling officer to identify improvement options for selected roads and junctions in the town including a dedicated cycle way along Glaphorn Road.
- A car parking utilisation survey has been carried out on the centre of the town in June 2014 and this has been used to inform thinking on how the effectiveness of car parking can be improved.



Connectivity recommendations:-

1. **General:-** A number of recommendations have been made in the Connectivity Evidence Paper in order to improve the movement of traffic within Oundle and also to address the concerns raised by residents over the issues of traffic congestion and parking. It is believed that implementation of these recommendations will improve the current situation and help Oundle to accommodate future development and population growth whilst preserving the character of the town.

2. **Residential and commercial development sites in Oundle:-** All future development in the town should be confined to an area within a 1 mile radius of the town centre (centred on the War memorial). This will benefit the connectivity within the town by helping to preserve its compact character. It will also ensure that (based on national planning guidelines) all residents have the option to walk or cycle to destinations within Oundle and so minimise the increase in road traffic as development continues. It is assumed that all new commercial or residential sites will include provision for parking by visitors, users and residents.

3. **Transport Study 2 (TS2):-** There are two principle purposes to the study.
 - a. To evaluate the individual and collective impact on traffic flows in Oundle of additional housing and other developments at proposed locations; to identify any measures which might be required in order to mitigate the individual or collective impact of the proposed developments. Oundle Marina falls outside the Neighbourhood Plan area but the impact of this development on traffic flows in Oundle is to be considered in the study.
 - b. To “roll back” the impact of past growth in Oundle on its road system through the selective implementation of improvements. This is to reduce the current impact and provide capacity for the growth that will continue to occur in the future.

NB The recommendations in the Connectivity Evidence Paper and supporting documents have been made based on an analysis of evidence and studies. The Transport Study (TS2) will assess the effectiveness of the recommendations and propose alternatives or improvements when appropriate. TS2 will also assess implementation issues such as cost and complexity, in order to help Oundle prioritise implementation.



Connectivity recommendations (continued):-

4. Parking (refer to the Connectivity Evidence Paper and relevant support papers for full details):-

- Create a short term parking zone in the centre of town and establish it as a Blue Disc Zone (using parking disk or clock disk) to emphasise its roll as a place for short term parking only.
- Provide capacity in the zone for 200 fresh cars to arrive every hour.
- Set parking duration limits at 30mins (Market Place) through 1hour (on street parking) to 2hours (St Osyth's Lane car park).
- Additional short term car parking to be provided off South Road.
- Provide access to part of the Fairline car park from East Road.

5. Walking and cycling (refer to the Connectivity Evidence Paper and relevant support papers for full details):-

- Improve the cycling access between the schools, the centre of the town and the residential areas
- Implementation to begin with a dedicated cycle track along Glapthorn Road.

6. Traffic (refer to the Connectivity Evidence Paper and relevant support papers for full details):-

- Implement changes to alleviate the sources of congestion as set out in the 2011 Transport Study (TS1), including changes to school bus routes.
- TS2 to propose 3 distinct options for the development of the centre of the town for debate and a decision to be made on how the character of the centre will evolve over the next 15 years (a: retain status quo, b: enhance public realm space, c: extended public realm space without significant through traffic).

