

Active Travel Strategy

July 2022

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Local Transport and
Connectivity Plan –
Supporting strategy

Contact: activetravel@oxfordshire.gov.uk



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

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Summary

The Active Travel Strategy supports Oxfordshire's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) in its vision to create an inclusive and safe net-zero Oxfordshire transport system.

The strategy focuses on active travel modes (walking, wheeling and cycling), which are key to delivering the County Council's policies and plans for the next 10 years and to mitigating some of the biggest challenges we face: climate emergency, public health, congestion, air quality and social inequality.

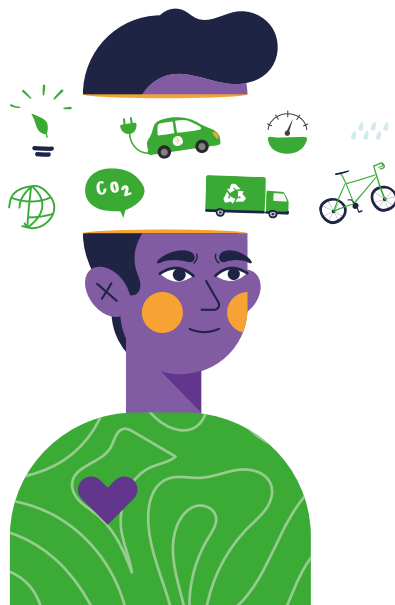
It sets out specific visions for walking and cycling in Oxfordshire, and a target to **increase the number of cycle trips to 1 million by 2031**, county-wide, from our current level of 600,000.

In order to achieve this, 5 priorities for council action are identified:

- **commitment and governance** – a clear promise at all levels across the council to treat walking and cycling as a policy priority
- **walkable communities** – a compact urban realm with easy to reach destinations on foot and by cycle
- **inclusive cycle networks** – that are safe, identifiable, visible, comprehensive and of high quality, including links across towns and villages
- **managing motor traffic** – through measures such as modal filters, reducing traffic speeds, reducing road capacity and increasing the cost of parking
- **building the cultural norm** – a local social consensus and practice that supports and promotes walking and cycling and enables residents build their lives around active travel modes for local journeys

The strategy also sets out a **list of 79 actions**, which span from council transformation and data-gathering to cycle parking, accessibility barriers and community outreach. These will form the basis for a yearly action plan that will be used to monitor progress on the strategy and ensure cross-council coordination.

This is, in short, a roadmap for mainstreaming walking and cycling. It will be reviewed on a regular basis and updated as necessary in order to reflect progress, lessons learnt and new challenges and opportunities.



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Foreword

Oxfordshire County Council set out 9 priorities when the new administration took office in 2021. These include commitments to improving public health, addressing the climate emergency, delivering sustainable transport, giving young people the opportunity to reach their full potential and expanding access to green spaces.

Active travel is an integral part of delivering this vision. Making it possible, safe and convenient for residents to travel by foot, cycle and scooter is a vital part of the plan for the county. There is a lot to do to make it more attractive for people to use active travel. We will need to invest in existing and new facilities to prioritise walking and cycling – as well as public transport – and we have to embed active travel into new developments. We will address those parts of our existing infrastructure that get in the way of people choosing sustainable transport modes.

We need to ensure that nothing prevents residents from choosing to travel actively, whether in the city of Oxford or in our market towns, villages and countryside. And we need to ensure that opportunities for active travel are for people of all abilities and ages. We will work with stakeholders, including our city and district councils, parish and town councils, neighbouring local authorities, property developers, schools, employers, bus and train companies, user and advocacy groups and, of course, our residents.

It is a huge challenge, and one that we must embrace eagerly to ensure we can all have healthy lives in a healthy environment. We have made a start, not least in making it easier for communities to have 20 mph speed limits in residential areas, which make it safer for people to walk and cycle. But we are under no illusions: this is only the start of our active journey.

This Active Travel Strategy is a key part of our commitment to the people of Oxfordshire, and will form the basis for decisions and actions that will shape how the county moves in the years to come.

Councillor Dan Levy
Cycling, Walking and Active Travel Champion



Introduction

Walking, wheeling and cycling will be central to delivering the vision for travel that is set out in our Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP).

The LTCP is Oxfordshire County Council's statutory Local Transport Plan, required under the Transport Act 2008. It outlines our long-term transport ambitions for the county and the policies required to achieve them. As an overarching transport plan, it considers all modes and the impact of other measures such as working from home and digital connectivity.

Walking and cycling, however, lie at the centre of its policies, which include a transport user hierarchy with walking and cycling at the top, a commitment to developing comprehensive active travel networks in all towns across the county, and the aim to develop Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) for all major towns to achieve a step change in the use of cycling and walking. It further highlights the importance of physical activity for all ages – children, adults and older adults.

This Active Travel Strategy sits as a supporting document to the LTCP. It is focused only on walking and cycling and brings together and expands on LTCP policies related to active travel. It expands on the measures needed to create successful cycle and walking networks, and it provides an action plan to improve the walking experience and meet the cycling targets we've set out.

The strategy also considers the importance of traffic management techniques such as speed, parking management and low traffic neighbourhoods because these measures are integral to successfully promoting walking and cycling. It also provides the starting pieces for future pieces of work, such as the update of our walking and cycling design standards or the budgeting of a yearly action plan.

In short, this strategy constitutes our roadmap for a walking and cycling county by making active travel the safe, convenient and obvious transport choice.

The case for active travel

Increasing active travel will have a significant impact on the following Government and Council policy priorities:

- Tackling Climate Emergency
- Public health priorities – including improving health and wellbeing, tackling the overweight and obesity crisis and reducing health inequalities
- Decongestion – reducing urban traffic congestion
- Improving air quality and reducing traffic noise
- Levelling up of travel opportunities – including children, disabled and those living in areas of deprivation



Policy context

The Department for Transport's [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy \(CWIS\)](#) sets out a requirement for Government to fund active travel and includes targets to double cycling in England by 2025. In 2020, the Government issued [Gear Change](#), a white paper which sets out a range of policies to promote walking and cycling, backed up by new funding for local authorities. The policy document was strengthened in [Gear Change: one year on](#) (2021). The Government has further indicated that future active travel funding will be based on the development of [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans \(LCWIPs\)](#), for which it has also published dedicated guidance. National design standards have been recently updated through [Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design \(LTN 1/20\)](#) and [Inclusive Mobility: A guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure](#).

Active Travel England, an executive agency from the Department for Transport, has been recently established with powers to assess all local authority transport schemes to ensure conformity with high standards of cycling schemes set out in [Gear Change](#) and [LTN 1/20](#).

At a local level, Oxfordshire County Council has long had the ambition to increase walking and cycling. In 6 November 2018, the council approved a [motion to accelerate action on active travel](#), based on the commitments from our previous Local Transport Plan and its Active and Healthy Travel Strategy. More recently, our [2020 Climate Action Framework](#) recognises walking and cycling as a key action to enable a zero-carbon Oxfordshire, and our [Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025](#) highlights active travel and public transport as one of our nine priorities as a council.

Most importantly, Oxfordshire's new Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) sets unprecedented targets to reduce car journeys and enhance sustainable transport. The LTCP is the County Council's statutory Local Transport Plan, required under the Transport Act 2000. It outlines our long-term transport ambitions for the county and the policies required to achieve them. This Active Travel Strategy sits as a supporting strategy to the LTCP, providing further detail on how we will meet our ambitions for walking and cycling. As such, it supersedes the Active and Healthy Travel Strategy that was part of LTP4.

Policies and actions contained in the LTCP and the Active Travel Strategy will also need to be embedded in a wide range of documents, from our own LCWIPs, area transport strategies and maintenance procedures to strategic and planning documents adopted by or in collaboration with other local authorities – including the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, Local Plans and neighbourhood plans.



Methodology and next steps

This strategy has been developed in parallel to the LTCP. It has benefitted from a wealth of inputs, ideas and research. On top of a public consultation on an earlier draft, we have had dedicated discussions with active travel campaigners, disability groups, councillors and other stakeholders. Teams across the organisation, and from other local councils, have shared their expertise and recommendations to make it as effective as possible.

We expect the strategy to be a living document and will aim to tweak and update it on a regular basis. Reviews of the strategy will inform its strengths and weaknesses.

The list of actions in the last section, in particular, will require further development (including prioritisation, costing and resourcing) to turn it into a year-by-year action plan that is adequately tracked and monitored.



Vision and targets

The LTCP provides a vision and targets for our transport system as a whole, which supports clean growth, tackling inequality and promoting better health, well-being and inclusivity.

Building on that, we have set the following specific visions for walking and cycling, along with a framework for cycling-specific targets based on data from the Active Lives Survey, which is published yearly nation-wide.

Vision for walking

“Oxfordshire will be an area where walking is encouraged and provided for by good quality infrastructure. Town centres will have high quality urban squares and spaces to enhance the economic vitality and viability of towns. Walking routes will be improved along main urban corridors to create a pleasant and welcoming experience. Walking in villages will be safe and pleasant particularly to local shops, schools and recreation. Wayfinding will be used to enable people to use safe, attractive walking routes to access local facilities, including parks, schools, local retail centres and leisure and community facilities.”

Vision for cycling

“Oxfordshire towns and villages will be places where most residents choose active travel (walking and cycling) as the natural first choice for making most of their local journeys and many of their longer journeys in tandem with train and bus. Oxford will become a world class cycling city where cycling is celebrated and open to everybody, regardless of age, background or cycling experience”.

Cycling targets

Across the county, we will plan to increase the number of cycle trips per week from 600,000 (current baseline) to 1 million by 2031.

At a local level, we will set targets and monitoring for each LCWIP town, building on those already established:

- Oxford (target OC3 in the LCWIP): 450,000 cycle trips a week by 2031 (from baseline of 300,000 – 50% increase)
- Bicester (target BCW1 in the LCWIP): 60,000 cycle trips a week by 2031 (from baseline of 20,000 – 200% increase)

In the meantime, we will use the following interim district-wide targets (to be calculated, allocated and confirmed in policy):

- Rest of Cherwell (excluding Bicester): from 55,000 to 100,000 cycle trips per week by 2031
- West Oxfordshire: from 50,000 to 100,000 cycle trips per week by 2031
- Vale of White Horse: from 75,000 to 150,000 cycle trips per week by 2031
- South Oxfordshire: from 75,000 to 150,000 cycle trips per week by 2031



Priorities

Creating a culture where active travel is the natural way of moving around is an enormous challenge. There is no magic bullet or single way of increasing walking and cycling. An increase in these transport modes depends on a number of key policies and practices working together – a “jigsaw” where all policies and practices work together to complete the picture.

Following a review of the evidence, in particular from across the UK, the Netherlands and other European countries, we have identified five key areas or priorities that will be crucial in promoting and increasing walking and cycling:

- **Commitment and governance** – a clear promise at all levels across the council to treat walking and cycling as a policy priority
- **Walkable communities** – a compact urban realm with easy to reach destinations on foot and by cycle
- **Inclusive cycle networks** – that are safe, identifiable, visible, comprehensive and of high quality, including links across towns and villages
- **Managing motor traffic** – through measures such as modal filters, reducing traffic speeds, reducing road capacity and increasing the cost of parking
- **Building the cultural norm** – a local social consensus and practice that supports and promotes walking and cycling and enables residents build their lives around active travel modes for local journeys

Together these factors can create a society where active travel becomes the norm. The following sections expand these five factors in greater detail.

Commitment and governance

The actions that local authorities take are key to whether active travel is successfully supported and increased. The evidence is that where a council is serious about walking and cycling and willing to take bold decisions to promote sustainable transport and manage car use over a timeframe of around 10 years, an increase in walking and cycling will result.

Mainstreaming active travel within the council

Mainstreaming active travel is shorthand for walking and cycling being central to council policies, funding decisions, scheme design and implementation. The LTCP establishes a transport user hierarchy with walking and cycling at the top.

The first challenge is ensuring that all council activity supports this hierarchy and related policies. There are many groups whose decisions have a great impact on this, particularly senior management, elected members and those teams with direct responsibilities over the transport network (such as those managing school travel, planning applications, setting funding priorities and allocation of staff resources, traffic modelling and traffic management, scheme designs, junction changes and maintenance regimes).



Similarly, it is important to have internal governance processes that ensure active travel is at the centre and its objectives and targets at the forefront of every decision-making opportunity throughout transport policy, programming, planning and delivery.

In the last few years, we have created a dedicated policy team (the Active Travel Hub), established working groups and decision boards focused on the delivery of walking and cycling schemes, and generally increased the number of officers focused on active travel. We also have a councillor spearheading the agenda in their role as Cycling Champion.

We will build on these achievements to step up our capacity and the profile of active travel within the council.

Commitment to Active Travel (CAT) scale

The Commitment to Active Travel (CAT) scale is a five-point scale from A-E for measuring the commitment to active travel – that is, the commitment to improving and increasing active travel according to best practice. It looks at the impact on cycling (rather than walking) in particular where the challenges are greater and commitment more often lacking. Evidence shows how to increase cycling, including ways that will *not* work, ways that will work *a little* and ways that will work *much better* than others.

Different areas and towns have different levels of cycling and other local cultural factors, which can make it easier or more difficult to implement the measures needed. The CAT scale identifies the readiness of an area or town to move onto more challenging forms of cycle priority and traffic management. Scale A represents commitment to the most effective ways. At the other end of the scale, E represents no commitment to active travel.

Table 1. CAT scale summary

Level	E	D	C	B	A
Mnemonic	Exclude Erode	Do minimum	Committed Comprehensive	Brave Bold	Ambitious Aspirational
Summary	Exclude needs of cyclists as marginal and unimportant	Provide basic and often inadequate cycle paths	Committed to making cycling convenient and comprehensive	Brave decisions in managing cars to promote cycling	Ambition and aspiration to put cycling at centre of travel
% of all trips by cycle	2%	5%	10%	20%	40%

On the basis of the measures adopted in the CAT scale, different travel outcomes and mode shares can typically be expected in terms of urban travel as set out in the diagram below. Note bus use is included in the walking share.



Figure 1. Typical modal share of local trips (people trips rather than vehicle trips)

As the consequence of following each CAT scale (Car % includes car passengers, taxi and motorcycle; Cycle % include e-cycles and potentially e-scooters; Walking % includes bus trips).



We first set out the CAT scale in the Bicester LCWIP and have been using it internally in further plans and prioritisation exercises.

Moving forward, we will evaluate all active travel proposals, schemes and designs against this scale. As walking and cycling levels increase locally over the period covered by this strategy, it will be expected that schemes will become more ambitious. Active travel proposals in a town should align the LCWIP cycling and walking targets for the town with the expected CAT travel outcome.

Collaboration and engagement

Collaboration with other public bodies, businesses and stakeholder groups is key to delivering the ambitious targets set out in this strategy. We have recently updated our [Consultation and Engagement Strategy](#) and we will use that to improve our consultations on key walking and cycling schemes, particularly targeting under-represented demographic groups.

Walking and cycle groups along with other environmental groups are key partners in developing new cycle routes and promoting active travel. These include a rich network of local organisations, county-wide groups like the Oxfordshire Cycling Network, Oxfordshire Ramblers and the Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel (CoHSAT), and national organisations such as Cycling UK and Sustrans. On inclusive transport, some of the key groups are Wheels for All, the Oxford Inclusive Transport and Movement Focus Group and the Oxfordshire Transport and Access Group (OXTRAG).

All of these groups can help to identify new routes, suggest improvements, critique designs and publicise surveys and new routes. A good working relationship with local stakeholders brings many benefits to both sides.

Beyond formal consultations, we have committed to a co-production approach on active travel projects, and we will build on the expertise of local and county-wide stakeholder groups by bringing them into discussions at an early stage and throughout project development.

In our relationships with other local authorities and public bodies – and particularly in discussions around planning applications – we will use our role as statutory consultee to demand high standards for active travel infrastructure from design to implementation.

Walkable communities

Walking levels in Oxfordshire are already high (particularly in Oxford) compared both to UK and Europe. Most trips under 1 mile are already walked.

We will build on our current success by providing better connected walking routes combined with more attractive and welcoming urban spaces and village centres.

There are still many gaps in the walking environment particularly in villages. There are also low levels of physical activity among some groups in our communities, particularly in areas of deprivation, residents with long-term physical or mental health problems, older people, etc. The strategy will be to generally improve the experience of walking and expand walking among specific groups and in specific areas.



20 minute neighbourhoods and towns

One of the key factors in encouraging cycling and particularly walking is a compact urban realm with accessible destinations.

“20 minute neighbourhoods” is a new expression for a design concept that plans for essential facilities within 20 minutes’ walk from home. As set out in the LTCP, the idea behind this concept is that all essential everyday facilities should be within that distance so it is easy for people to base their lives on walking rather than using a car. Facilities should include shops, recreational opportunities, parks, community facilities, access to public transport (mostly bus stops) and such like. The concept fits in with the goals of low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) which minimise traffic within the neighbourhood.

Another popular new concept is the 20 minute town based on a 20 minute cycle ride where a wider range of facilities is within 20 minute cycle ride, which at very moderate pace is around 3 miles or 5 km. A 20 minute town should for instance include access to public transport for interurban travel (train or coach stations), employment and comparison as well as convenience shopping.

We will adopt this approach when auditing and assessing the accessibility of neighbourhoods across the county, as well as new development areas, and embed them into LCWIPs and other transport and planning schemes.

Town walking networks

Local authorities have been providing for walking by footways (popularly called pavements) in towns since at least Victorian times. Generally, unlike cycling, there is typically a nearly comprehensive network of footways along most roads in towns.

The quality of the walking network however is compromised at side road entries and when there is a need to cross main roads. Whilst footways on every street is important, funding will be focused on the main routes that make up the town-wide walking network. In most cases, the town-wide walking network will overlap with the cycle network. However, the infrastructure will be different, except where they both share off-road paths. There will also be a few additional routes not suitable for cycling, typically because of design constraints.

Pavement obstructions also compromise the quality of the network. Pavement parking (as discussed below), advertising boards and badly-position poles and utilities can all severely impact the journeys of some users – particularly those on wheelchairs. We will therefore commit to maintain pavements and keep them free of obstructions and clutter.

We will use LCWIPs to identify town-wide strategic and neighbourhood walking networks in tandem with the cycling networks. This will allow funding for improvements to be prioritised to town-wide walking networks, particularly on routes into town centres, work and transport hubs and suburban centres.

Quality Pedestrian Corridors (QPCs)

Quality Pedestrian Corridors (QPCs) represents an approach to important corridors for pedestrian movement. In urban areas, the main road routes within a mile or two of the town centre typically serve the highest flows of pedestrians, along with routes within half a mile of local shopping centres. In QPCs, pedestrians are provided a smooth obstacle-free continuous footway. QPCs are designed to give all pedestrians a high degree of comfort and particularly disabled or visually impaired pedestrians the reassurance that they can be used without obstacles. This means among other design issues:



- A minimum width path (2 metres <1000 pedestrians a day and 3 metres >1000 pedestrians a day) where all obstacles (such as street lights, bus shelters or traffic poles) are relocated outside the clear width either to the inside or outside edge.
- The surface should have no upstands and no areas of ponding. Additionally, the crossfall should be constant at around 3% and driveway entries and dropped kerbs should lie outside the clear width path.
- Priority over side roads should be installed at all side roads with side road entry treatments consisting of raised footway extensions
- There should be no sharing with cyclists within the clear width.
- In preparation for hotter summers and the impacts of climate change, street trees should be preserved and new trees planted wherever possible to provide shade and shelter
- Many older and disabled people need to take a rest. Suitable sitting opportunities will be provided at regular intervals along the route in line with disability guidance.

When developing the strategy, we will assess the feasibility of Quality Pedestrian Corridors for all main radials within 2 km of town centres and 1 km of local shopping areas, as well as main pedestrian corridors in town centres.

Town centres

It is useful to distinguish between walking trips all the way from home and walking trips in town centres (often called footfall) where people arrive by other means – car, bus, train or cycle. In Oxford there were 24,000 walking trips a day to/from the city centre, making up around 15% all trips to the city centre. There were also around 30,000 walking trips a day in Oxford city centre per day along both Cornmarket Street and Queen Street. Many of these trips were in combination with other modes, so the flows are greatest linking to bus stops, train stations and car parks. There is less data on pedestrian flows in other towns and suburban district centres in Oxfordshire.

Measuring footfall in county town centres and other suburban centres will be a key indicator of the retail health. We will concentrate on ensuring that conditions for pedestrians in town centres, particularly linking to train, bus stops and car parks are a priority for investment.

Key destination areas

Train stations in Oxfordshire are typically located some distance from town centres and often are compromised by poor junctions and narrow footways.

Many retail parks, business parks and large supermarkets have been built in edge-of-town and out-of-town locations, focused entirely to car use, with little or no thought about access by pedestrians or cyclists. In many cases, however, they may have considerable populations within easy walking distance.

Suburban and local shopping centres are often along main roads on the way to the town centre, but many suffer from excessive through traffic, undermining their viability and attractiveness. Research undertaken in Oxford shows how suburban shopping centres are reliant on local walking trips, which typically make up over 50% of trips, and also reduce car use and provide essential opportunities for car-free households. Summertown and Cowley Road in Oxford are good examples of the kind of measure that can be undertaken to improve the pedestrian experience.



We will aim to transform the pedestrian and cyclist experience from train stations, retail parks, business parks and large supermarkets to town centres and residential areas. We will also review the most important routes to the suburban centres within half a mile (1 km) to ensure that they provide adequately for walkers of all abilities. Pedestrianisation of retail areas will be considered on the basis of data and engagement with local businesses and communities.

Villages and the rural network

Many villages in Oxfordshire do not have footways on many streets and very few villages have footway links between villages. Encouraging walking in villages in support of the 20 minute neighbourhood concept is therefore often very challenging.

Consequently, it will be necessary to undertake a review and audit of walking in all villages in Oxfordshire and introduce footways along main streets in villages wherever there are opportunities.

Linked to this, we will support the reduction of speed limits in villages so that 20mph or 30mph is the default maximum speed limit, as set out in the relevant LTCP policy. Rural traffic calming measures and speed enforcement, including average speed cameras, will also help enhance the character and attractiveness of villages.

Auditing the existing walking network

There are many problems on existing footways, often insufficient to deter walking for most people but potentially impossible and impassable for some less able groups to manage.

We have recently devised a Health Impact Assessment Tool that can be used to assess the quality of streets for audit and review. Along with our walking and cycling design standards, and related checks like the Climate Impact Assessment Tool, this will provide a suit of resources to ensure quality for the pedestrian and cycling environment.

Particular focus will be on ensuring that needs of more vulnerable groups, such as children, those with mobility or sight disabilities and older people in general, are recorded.

Further understanding of pedestrian problems, priorities and preferences is also needed, as proven by the Oxfordshire Cycle Survey.

Crossings

Another key element in the pedestrian network are opportunities to cross main roads on desire lines. What is the best option for crossings? There is no single answer. Toucans, Puffins and Pelicans give the most surety but can create extra queuing and time delay to both pedestrians and vehicles and are not always safer in urban areas. Zebras allow pedestrians to cross without delay and fit in better with public realm improvements and are suitable for urban areas especially where speeds are 30 mph or 20 mph. Courtesy crossings can be used successfully in shared space schemes and areas of high-quality public realm.

We will consider the crossing needs of pedestrians on main roads to minimise delay or diversion and to satisfy existing or potential flows. The crossings will be designed as far as possible on desire lines to avoid diversion and delay.



Zebra crossings should be the default option where there is a need for a pedestrian crossing in urban areas along main roads unless other considerations take priority. Similarly, timings of existing free-standing signalised crossings could be reviewed so that they respond without delay when called or include longer phases to accommodate slower pedestrians or wheelers.

In signalised junctions, we will install pedestrian phases on all arms where there is a significant pedestrian demand. The equivalent for urban roundabouts should be Zebra crossings on all arms.

We will also review all bus stops on main roads to ensure there is a nearby convenient crossing.

The need for community cohesion and people to cross streets will be considered on both main and residential roads, such as providing gaps in long lines of parking.

Side roads

Another gap in the pedestrian network are side roads where pedestrians, in practice if not legally, lose their priority and feelings of safety in relation to traffic. In 2021, the Government updated [The Highway Code](#) to give pedestrians much clearer priority across side roads. However, the design of many junctions put pedestrians at risk and unable to command their legal priority. There are many design solutions to reinforce pedestrian priority at side roads.

Wherever possible and funding is available, we will look at improving existing side road entries by:

- extending footways across side road entries so there is a raised crossing
- setting the Give Way lines behind the footway to give priority to the pedestrian crossing
- narrowing kerb radii to the minimum possible whilst maintaining access for appropriate vehicles

New developments will have side road entry treatments designed in accordance with the updated walking and cycling design standards.

Pavement parking

In many urban areas and some villages, pavement parking represents the greatest hazard and barrier to walking, especially for those unable to step around the parking. The urban network of footways is increasingly threatened by the spread of parking on the pavement. Pavement parking is endemic in some areas, often without any plausible justification except habit.

Pavement parking adversely affects vulnerable protected groups, including those with visual impairments, those using mobility aids, those in wheelchairs, those needing the help of carer or parents with pushchairs or walking with children. Additionally, there are costs to the authority in terms of damage to kerbs and flagstones, creating trip hazards.

The Government undertook a consultation on pavement parking in 2020 and has indicated that it will introduce legislation to make enforcement much easier. The Council responded to the consultation expressing strong support for such measures.

Accordingly, we will support enforcement to ensure that all footways (pavements) are clear of pavement parking, except where legally marked out, and will support district authorities to apply for the necessary powers to do so. Similarly, we will take measures to reduce parking pressures on road space which result in pavement parking, by introducing parking enforcement, such as controlled parking zones (CPZs) and maximum residential parking permit numbers.



Inclusive cycle networks

Cycling levels in the UK and most of Oxfordshire are very low compared to most European towns. This creates a travel gap, principally between 1 and 5 miles length, which is mostly filled by car travel but is ideal for cycling. Only a few towns anywhere in the UK or Europe have achieved a substantial increase in cycling – we will build on their evidence and experience to do the same across the county.

One key step in that direction is to develop comprehensive cycling networks that are inclusive and attractive to the preferences and abilities of all residents in all towns.

Meeting cyclists needs

Creating a cycling culture means creating an urban environment which supports and encourages cycling. There are many and often contradictory views of what constitutes an attractive environment for cycling. To better understand what actual cyclists want, we conducted a survey of cyclists in Oxfordshire in 2019 (OCS19). Over 3750 cyclists made comments on the existing infrastructure and said what kind of infrastructure they liked, didn't mind, tolerated or avoided.

OCS19 responses can be analysed according to two cohorts of cyclists in terms of their infrastructure preferences. Group 1 (Confident or “Quick” Cyclists) prioritised directness and didn't mind cycling alongside motor traffic. Group 2 (Cautious or “Quiet” Cyclists) preferred routes segregated and separated from motor traffic as far as possible even at the expense of some loss of directness. There are also two other distinct groups of cyclists – Competitive Cyclist and Child Cyclists. Currently, there is very little research on the infrastructure preferences of these 2 groups, but we expect that Competitive Cyclists fall into group 1 and Child Cyclists fall into group 2.

We will take these localised insights into account when designing interventions – both infrastructure and of an outreach nature.

Disability, different types of cycles and barriers

Recognition of the use of cycles as a “mobility aid” is not yet widespread. This leads to the needs of disabled people using cycles not being recognised and not being catered for in changes to the urban environment (either through planning or highway changes). Around 10 million people have a limiting impairment in England and Wales (ONS).

A 2011 London survey (Attitudes to cycling) found that 62% of disabled people said they could ride a bike. A survey by Wheels for Wellbeing (Experiences of disabled cyclists) found that most disabled cyclists (52%) owned a normal standard bike, whilst 17% owned a hand cycle, 17% a recumbent bike, 13% a trike, 8% a tandem and 18% an e-bike.

Active Lives Survey shows that 7% of the adult population with a limiting impairment in England used a cycle at least monthly and 1% at least 5 times a week. In Cambridge, figures were much higher with around 40% of disabled cyclists simply using a regular two-wheeled bike. This implies that the major barrier to more disabled people cycling is not their disability, but the town cycling culture and level of cycle-friendliness of the infrastructure.

Consequently, and in line with our commitment to build an inclusive network, we will design all new and review all cycle routes to be accessible to most types of cycles. In particular, all barriers on cycle routes should leave a clear 1.5 m width between bollards and not introduce lateral diversions unsuitable for longer bikes. We will ensure that the needs of disabled cyclists are recognised in design, including on access to cycle parking.



Walking and Cycling Design Standards

In 2020 the Government issued LTN 1/20 Cycle Design Standards to guide local government infrastructure. LTN 1/20 sets out high quality and mandatory standards how to provide for cycling. However, its guidance is not prescriptive about what to do when inevitable compromises need to be made, such as when there is insufficient space and the need is to provide for high cycle numbers, sometimes in their thousands as in Oxford. LTN 1/20 also does not discuss more innovative designs suitable for high cycling areas, such as cycle streets and turbo-roundabouts.

In terms of walking, national design guidance is spread over many documents on particular topics, including planning documents such Manual for Streets and Inclusive Mobility.

We will update the Oxfordshire Walking Design Standards (OWDS) and the Oxfordshire Cycle Design Standards (OCDS) to take into account new national guidance and best practice and provide additional guidance for Oxfordshire's towns and villages.

These will be based on the 5 Core Design Principles (CDPs), which state that routes and networks for both walking and cycling should be:

- **Coherent:** comprehensive and consistent in quality (with priority across barriers and gaps, such as side road crossings, busy junctions and main road junctions; and appropriate facilities -such as parking- at each end of the journey)
- **Direct:** with minimal delay and diversion from desire lines, detours, deterrents or delays (and, for cycling, no dismount signs); this is important at the micro-level (e.g. at crossings) as well as over the whole journey; for cycling, this includes no dismount signs and should enable cyclists to travel at their chosen speed, with good sightlines and sufficient width to overtake other cyclists, bypass queues of cars and not be delayed by pedestrians
- **Safe:** including all the elements that make walking and cycle routes safe, including traffic speed and volume – for walking, particular attention needs to be paid to side roads and crossings of main roads; for cycling, it requires different treatments depending on the route (separation, segregation or shared space)
- **Comfortable:** meaning that the walking and cycling experience is easy, pleasant and conducive to personal security, sociability (able to walk or ride side by side), a perception of safety, minimal stress and psychological discomfort (e.g. from traffic noise, air pollution, driver intimidation and complex junctions or routes); this can be achieved by vertical and horizontal separation (e.g. in footways), minimising shared space between pedestrians and cyclists (except where flows are very low, such as on routes between villages), lighting, shade, shelter and seating
- **Attractive (Advantage):** the most important principle of all, meaning that you want to do it, are attracted to these modes more than any others (it is your first choice and should be easier, quicker and more pleasant than, for instance, using a car); the word advantage better sums up the principle

All new active travel schemes (including any schemes with an active travel element) will be designed according to the updated standards and Healthy Streets approach. Where they cannot be met, teams will submit a Departure from Walking Standards (DWS) or Departure from Cycling Standards (DCS) form and seek a viable solution in line with all the core design principles.



Prioritising cycle infrastructure (OxCRAM)

Network prioritisation is crucial to achieving cycling targets. There is an on-going debate whether it is better to build sections of routes to a very high quality or build a wider network to a lower ‘good enough’ standard. OxCRAM provides a way of assessing whether improvements are good enough (7+) and a way of comparing value for money of the two approaches.

To meet targets in LCWIP towns, it is essential that the whole cycle network and individual cycle routes over their entire length are improved in as short a time as possible. Many cycle schemes take years to deliver short sections of a route at great cost because of the costs of traffic management and utilities in moving kerblines. Signing and lining can often provide significant improvements. By improving routes to a similar “good enough” consistent standard, a complete cycle network can be implemented in a shorter timescale and lower cost.

We will plan networks and design routes that will maximise the attractiveness to all kinds of cyclists, using OxCRAM as an audit and review process for both new and existing infrastructure. For major schemes, an independent expert reviewer might be employed to review plans at the early design stage.

Cycle routes will need to be improved to a consistent standard over their whole length. Generally, where there is competition for funding, network improvements should be prioritised over individual route improvements.

Urban cycle networks

Single cycle routes rarely have much impact on cycling levels. The evidence is mostly that one single route attracts cyclists from other less attractive routes but does not increase cycling levels. What is necessary is a high quality and dense cycle network which links to every neighbourhood. This means that all trip attractors (particularly town centres, major employment, healthcare facilities, shops and schools) are connected and linked to the cycle network. Another failure is that cycle designs are based on current flows on the underlying assumption that cycling levels will not increase, rather than target flows.

Local cycling and walking infrastructure plans (LCWIPs) will be the way that this network is identified and prioritised. LCWIPs will identify the strategic town-wide cycle network. We will develop them for all major urban settlements (over 10,000 inhabitants) by 2025, and will continue to roll them out in smaller locations if possible. All routes should be designed to the cycle design standards of the LCWIP target flows, not the current cycle flows.

Cycle Streets

A key element of a town wide cycle network are cycle streets. Cycle streets are part of the strategic cycle network along low-traffic residential roads designed for cautious cyclists. They are also likely to be attractive to confident cyclists. These streets are designed to have the feel of cycle paths where cyclists of all abilities feel confident and happy to cycle. Low traffic speeds and low traffic volumes (typically under 1000 motor vehicles a day) are key elements.

In many towns, in part because of satnav, suitable residential streets may also be used by car and van drivers looking for a quicker alternative to the main roads. In such cases, it is necessary to introduce modal filters to prevent through motor traffic to prioritise cycling. Additional benefits can be created by introducing modal filters as part of low traffic neighbourhoods.

We will aim to introduce cycle streets as part town-wide cycle networks to provide high quality, quiet, continuous cycle routes. This will require the use of modal filters and other design features to make cycle streets meet 7+ OxCRAM design criteria.



Strategic Active Travel Network (SATN)

Oxfordshire is a rural county with many villages. These settlements are currently mainly dependent on car travel to get to facilities such as shopping, nearby town centres and access to work or train stations. Unlike many intra-urban journeys, distances can sometimes be at the longer end of what may be comfortably cycled. The increasing availability of e-bikes makes such journeys more practical and appealing to a wider audience.

As set out in the LTCP, our aim is to identify and then improve an Oxfordshire-wide Strategic Active Travel Network (SATN). This will primarily be for utility cycle journeys, linking villages to towns, other centres of employment and public transport connections. The SATN will also act as a recreational network, providing urban and rural residents with ways of going for cycle rides to visit nature and other areas of recreation. This will also support the rural economy by encouraging economic tourism.

The SATN improvements will prioritise the following links:

- to rural train stations, particularly from towns not served by a train station, such as Witney and Abingdon
- between urban areas and employment and nearby villages identified in LCWIPs
- to larger settlements where there are more potential cyclists
- to and from the National Cycle Network routes

The SATN will consist of the following types of routes:

- routes alongside rural main roads by off-road cycle tracks
- routes (mostly on road) along rural minor roads made attractive by low traffic volumes and low traffic speeds
- routes along upgraded public rights of way and other permissive paths

Implementing the SATN will require significant funding and resources (such as land acquisition). Routes along rural minor roads in most cases will need significant improvement to make them attractive to cyclists. This may include modal filtering or junction changes to remove unsuitable rat running traffic, lower speed limits, speed enforcement, traffic calming measures, lighting, converting roads into Quiet Lanes and other measures. Schemes will be designed to be sensitive to the rural and village environment.

Cycle parking

Good quality sufficient and secure cycle parking should be provided at both home locations and destinations. Districts should set out detailed cycle parking policies for new developments in line with best practice for both new dwellings and workplaces. Likewise, there is a need to introduce secure parking in existing housing and existing cycling destinations such as shops, workplaces and leisure facilities.

As part of the Oxfordshire Cycle Design Standards, the Council will develop cycle parking standards and guidelines as a guide for District Councils and planning. An initial set of guidance is also included as part of the wider parking guidance in the LTCP.

We will explore options to overcome key barriers to the deployment of cycle parking – namely the funding regime (capital bids often do not allow for this) and identifying suitable road space for the location of cycle stands and hangers.



We will also work with businesses, train operating companies, shops and leisure facilities to provide high quality cycle parking in their premises and ensure the same is done in the county council's own facilities, such as libraries.

Maintenance

Good quality surfaces are essential for safe and comfortable walking and cycling. Road maintenance is an important element in ensuring that road or path surfaces on the network are smooth, well drained and attractive. In addition, regular pruning of vegetation overlooking cycle paths and footways is important to create a safe and welcoming environment for active travel.

Road improvements, especially routine resurfacing, also present a low-cost opportunity to make significant improvements to cycle routes, particularly those which are reliant on just line-marking and especially on main roads where traffic management is a substantial element of scheme cost. Longer term road closures, such as bridge closures due to weight restrictions, will be seen as opportunities to exempt active travel and thereby encourage active travel.

We will improve our maintenance regime to ensure that the footways and cycle route surfaces are smooth, well-drained and safe, especially taking into account the extra vulnerability of cyclists to potholes and rough and deformed surfaces, and the impact of uneven footways on pedestrians and wheelers with reduced or impaired mobility. This will include following up re-instatement works which often deteriorate into surface un-evenness and hazards. A maintenance programme of cutting back vegetation overlooking cycle paths will also be established, working with local communities to identify problem areas.

Where there are road closures or restrictions, every opportunity will be taken to see whether active travel can be exempted and thereby encouraged.

Safety and health benefits

There is a common popular perception that cycling is 'dangerous', which many surveys have shown to be one of the main reasons people give as to why they do not cycle. Furthermore, this perception of being at risk is reinforced by the actual road environment for cyclists. Research (Sissons, Joshi and Aldred) found that cyclists experienced by far the highest number of "incidents or near misses" per mile travelled for any vehicle. These perceptions and experiences undermine a cycling culture.

Perceptions of safety however need to be distinguished from actual safety impacts. For Oxford, there were between 2014 and 2019 around 150 reported slight cyclist injuries and 30 serious injuries each year. Cyclist casualties are very rare events compared to the very large number of cycle trips (around 15 million cycle trips in Oxford a year). This indicates that the serious reported casualty risk for each cycle trip is 1 in a million. Put another way, a commuter cyclist would need to cycle for around 2000 years before they were likely to have a reported serious cycle accident. In other words, most people, especially non-cyclists, have a distorted idea of the risk of cycling. This is also shown in surveys comparing cyclists and non-cyclists which show that regular cyclists have a lower perception of road danger than non-cyclists.

On the other hand, the health benefits of cycling far outweigh any casualty risk by a factor of at least 20 to 1. Cycling reduces the risk of heart attack by around 50%, reduces certain cancer risks by about a third, improves fitness, reduces depression and mental health problems, reduces the risk of dementia and improves muscle strength and co-ordination and helps prevent weight gain and obesity.

Cycling lies in the optimum range of physical activity and travelling is an activity that around 90% of people do for substantial length of time each day giving many people an easy way to build physical activity into their daily routine. Surveys also show that cycling is pursued over lifetimes (unlike most sports). In



Netherlands, 24% of all journeys by over 75-year-olds are by cycle. Surveys show that most cyclists were sufficiently active to maintain good health. In brief, cycling prolongs a healthy life. The highest risks are not cycling but sitting for much of the day without taking any regular physical activity.

We will promote the significant benefits of everyday cycling and walking to health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on encouraging inactive people to take up cycling and walking. Activating people to cycle more will include measures such as cycle training for children, adults and families, and social and group rides, in order to build confidence that cycling is safe.

Assessing the real risks of cycling

Police data miss two aspects of cyclist safety. First, the Police only collect data on public highways. Cycle tracks are excluded. Secondly, they depend on the casualty being reported so have a bias towards serious collisions involving motorised vehicles and cyclists.

The OxCam survey of cyclists in both Oxford and Cambridge found that around 33% of cyclists had had an accident (coming off your cycle whether or not there is any injury) in the last year. Scaling up responses suggests 17,000 cyclists of the 50,000 Oxford cyclists are likely to come off their bike each year, most of which would not result in any injury, 4000 would result in a slight injury and 800 in a serious injury. This suggests that a cyclist might have a serious cycling injury every 60 years of cycling, though this figure may be skewed on the high side because many respondents were younger and more likely to have cycle accidents.

The OxCam survey indicates that the majority of cyclist accidents are due to skidding because of surface problems or cyclists losing control. In contrast, Police STATS 19 data indicates that most (74%) cyclist casualties are in collision with a car. In the STATS 19, cyclists were only responsible in 11% of cyclist accidents, compared to 85% where the other vehicle driver was responsible, showing that measures to manage car traffic are likely to be most effective in reducing cyclist casualties.

Based on this, we will produce an annual report and analysis of cyclist and pedestrian casualties to monitor the trend in STATS 19 casualty data. This will be used to analyse the safety impacts of new and different infrastructure, particularly innovative one. We will undertake measures to reduce all cyclist and pedestrian casualties, including those not reported to the Police.

Managing motor traffic

The main competitor for cycling over the distance between 1 mile and 5 miles is car use. Nearly 60% of car journeys are under 5 miles. To promote cycling it is essential that cycling is given a realistic competitive advantage over car use. Car use has many negative externalities which are not factored in by a car user and thereby car use is encouraged in an un-economic way for shorter journeys. The policy behind this strategy is for a fairer distribution of benefits, so that cycling replaces the car as the usual way of linking residents to urban facilities – such as shopping, visiting town centres, seeing friends and such like.

There are strong and compelling reasons why it is necessary that individuals must change travel behaviour, but on the positive side, the evidence is also that such changes will ultimately and increasingly be beneficial to everyone.

On the other hand, the alternatives of *not* managing and constraining traffic are many and can be summarised as:

- Increasing costs for individuals in loss of fitness and ill-health and for society in treating ill-health and premature death



- Worsening of obesity crisis leading to long term illnesses with additional cost burdens on the NHS
- Continuation of high traffic casualty rate with many unnecessary serious accidents and occasional fatalities
- Worsening of traffic congestion in both urban areas and on strategic inter-urban roads leading to individual frustration and a loss of income with economic disbenefits such as higher commodity prices
- Continuing issues of traffic noise and poor air quality leading to ill health, particularly affecting children and the elderly
- Worsening of climate emergency and failure to meet targets to reduce carbon emissions

All of these harms falling disproportionately on those who are the most deprived in society, exacerbating inequality.

Managing car use is therefore the main challenge in promoting cycling. Its impact is often more important than providing cycle routes. In many ways this needs a fundamental cultural shift among providers and the population.

Traffic management measures by CAT scale

Traffic management is essential and crucial to promote cycling beyond a certain level. A major barrier however is the acceptability of more effective forms of traffic management. The chart below gives an idea of different traffic management schemes at different CAT scales.

Table 2. Traffic management measures by CAT scale

CAT level	A	B	C	D	E
Traffic models base on:	Multi-modal models and traffic reduction	Peak traffic flows no longer priority	Meeting only existing peak traffic flows	Meeting Increase in car use in forecasts	Meeting high future forecasts in car use
Residential areas	Car free neighbourhoods	LTNs	CPZs	No car parking restrictions	Build urban freeways
Town Centre Car parking	Minimal car parking only for disabled and deliveries	Reductions in parking and high car parking charges	Car parking charges discourage excessive car use	Car parking with minimal charges	Central and free car parks with plentiful capacity
Main road network	Main roads closed to most traffic Average speed cameras	20 mph limits Junctions and vehicle lanes narrowed	Junction changes to cater for cycling	Junction changes to meet peak traffic	Junction widening New roads
Town circulation	Town centre traffic filters	Restrictions on some main routes to give cycling advantage	Minor road filters for benefit of cycling	Main road traffic capacity maximised	Expansion of ring roads
Signalised Junctions	Signalised junctions replaced by cycle friendly junctions	ASLs and lead in lanes and removing vehicle lane	ASLs at all signals	ASLs at a few junctions	Multi-lane signals with no cycle provision
Roundabouts	Shared space schemes with minimal traffic	Dutch single lane and turbo-roundabouts	Narrowing roundabout entries	Off road cycle track	Multi-lane entries



We will pursue traffic management schemes in accordance with proposed LCWIP targets and mode shift targets as shown by the CAT scale. Any scheme or proposal will need an assessment of the negative and positive impact on cycling and walking to ensure that they support the active travel targets.

In tandem with district councils, we will seek powers to implement traffic management measures in support of active travel targets, such as decriminalised parking powers and moving traffic offences powers.

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and modal filters

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) are a key element in developing most town-wide cycle networks. Whilst the name is new, the concept of creating low traffic areas is well established in town planning, including Radburn design principles, cul-de-sacs and pedestrian precincts as advocated in 1960s publication “Traffic in Towns”. There are many existing LTNs throughout Oxfordshire towns, some by original design, some introduced to prevent rat-runs and some by geographical accident. The urgency to protect other residential areas from through traffic has been exacerbated by a doubling in traffic since the 1980s and satnav technology which directs drivers along residential streets as a way of avoiding traffic on main roads.

Where LTNs also differ from many existing low traffic areas is the intention to alter the balance between motor traffic convenience and active travel convenience. Modal filters give advantage to cycling over car use by making cycle journeys more direct and quicker and car travel longer and more inconvenient. LTNs also work effectively in developing quiet routes and cycle streets. The benefits of LTNs in terms of promoting active travel, reducing car use and improving safety, air quality and urban liveability are now well established in the research literature.

In developing LCWIP cycle networks, we will identify where LTNs can be created or improved to provide safe areas for local cycling and walking to promote strategic cycle routes.

Traffic speed

Traffic speed reduction and enforcement is essential to promote cycling. A major Government-funded research found that reducing traffic speed is the single most important element of improving cycling safety and encouraging more cycling (TRL Report PPR 580):

“Of all interventions to increase cycle safety, the greatest benefits come from reducing motor vehicle speeds. Interventions that achieve this are also likely to result in casualty reductions for all classes of road user. This may be achieved by a variety of methods, including physical traffic calming; urban design that changes the appearance and pedestrian use of a street; and, possibly, the wider use of 20 mph speed limits”.

At 20mph speeds, there are very few serious cyclist injuries and virtually no cyclist deaths except those related to lorry turning movements. In rural areas and along rural roads, traffic speed is the main deterrent for more cyclists and the main reason for the higher rate of cyclist injuries in rural cycling.

Traffic speeds are related to speed limits, traffic calming measures and enforcement. Oxfordshire research showed that traffic calming schemes reduced casualties by 50% on average. Average Speed Cameras (ASCs) are a new form of enforcement where traffic speed is measured between 2 or more points over a route. Unlike the traditional spot camera enforcement, they are almost 100% effective in monitoring and therefore enforcing speed limits.

We will introduce 20 mph speed limits in accordance with our LTCP policy, and particularly in response to local demands in support of cycling and walking. We will also assess and reduce traffic speeds along rural lanes and roads as a way of encouraging more cycling and as part of the Strategic Active Travel Network proposals.



Parking

The other key element in managing motor traffic is parking. The availability of free or low-cost parking at destinations is a major factor in generating car journeys. Reducing and restricting car parking availability and introducing parking charges are essential measures to induce behaviour change.

As part of developing LCWIPs and in area transport strategies, we will implement the measures outlined in the LTCP, such as introducing parking charges, workplace levies, on-street restrictions and control such as double and single yellow lines and Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs).

Building the cultural norm

The importance of providing for existing cyclists

There is a prevalent but mistaken belief that existing cyclists are unimportant and can be ignored and that all efforts should be applied to new cyclists along with a view that new cyclists will inevitably be cautious. Evidence shows that there are several fundamental errors in this approach which could undermine achieving the targets set out in the LTCP and this strategy.

Nearly all cycle journeys are made by frequent and therefore mostly confident cyclists. National data shows that around 8% of the population who cycle 3+ times a week make 80% of all cycle journeys. If you also include the 7% of population who cycle weekly, normal cyclists (15% of the population) make 95% cycle trips, whereas 20% of the population who are infrequent (less than weekly) cyclists make only 5% of all cycle journeys.

Increasing cycling depends on more people taking up frequent cycling (3+ times a week). In Oxford, frequent cyclists make up 20% of the adult population and in Cambridge 35% of the population. This reliance on frequent cyclists in high cycling towns is found across Europe. Towns and countries with more cycle journeys have higher percentages of frequent cyclists, but often quite similar levels of infrequent cyclists.

There is also considerable churn where every year some people start cycling or cycle more and others stop cycling or cycle less. Reducing losses to cycling by improving the cycling experience for existing cyclists is likely to be as important or more important than getting new cyclists.

The increase in frequent cycling relies mostly on existing cyclists cycling more. In other words, it is easier to persuade existing weekly cyclists to cycle 3+ times a week than a non-cyclist to take up cycling.

New cyclists generally have similar views to existing cyclists in terms of infrastructure choice. OCS19 found that new cyclists typically only differed in underlying categories, such as attitude, gender, age or frequency cycling rather than how recently they took up cycling. The evidence indicates as they become more regular cyclists, they take on the infrastructure choice of confident cyclists.

Cyclists also differed between Oxford and outside Oxford. Oxford cyclists by each category (such as age) were more likely to be confident cyclists than cyclists of the same category from outside Oxford, suggesting that the prevailing cycle culture has an even more important impact than personal characteristics. That means a new cyclist in high cycling culture is more likely to be a confident cyclist from the start.



People versus journeys

There is a short-term conflict between two policy objectives of public health and cycling targets on who to prioritise. On the one hand, public health priority is to encourage more people, who currently take no exercise and do not cycle, to take up cycling because of the greater health benefits compared to existing cyclists who are already mostly healthy. On the other hand, cycle research shows that increasing cycling trips is mostly dependent on persuading existing cyclists to cycle more.

Getting harder to reach groups such as children and older cyclists is dependent on living in a cycling culture and requires specific interventions to address the barriers they may experience to cycling. Good quality routes alone are unlikely to have much impact without an established cycling culture, as people's choices, or parents' willingness to let children cycle, are more dependent on living in a cycling culture rather than the existence of a good cycle route (though a good cycle route is also necessary, as is their ability to own and repair a bicycle and all necessary equipment). Together with cycle route improvements, cycling activation measures are important in enabling residents who feel that cycling is not an option for them due to cost, cultural or confidence barriers to change behaviour. Activation measures focus on working with local community groups to engage residents who may experience greater barriers to enjoying a healthy lifestyle, due to a range of social factors that mean that they experience greater health inequality.

We will ensure that improvements to cycling and walking networks and access to green infrastructure are supported by community activation measures that enable the whole community and particularly those with greatest need to benefit from these improvements and to become more active and for healthy day-to-day behaviours to become the norm.

Cycling culture

The barriers to more cycling are mostly “normative” – they represent an individuals' ideas of whether cycling is an acceptable mode of travel for themselves in terms of the prevailing culture. Social norms are mainly formed by what other people do. This helps to explain why “critical mass” of cyclists is effective in sustaining and increasing cycling. An examination of historical trends in cycling across UK towns between census results and European countries found that the strongest correlation was between cycling levels in previous and recent surveys even over 20 year periods. In low cycling areas there is a “chicken and egg” dilemma with very few cyclists and therefore no visible cycling culture, which helps explain why it is such a challenge to increase cycling.

Social norms or normative beliefs represent what a person's prevailing culture says is or is not acceptable. Surveys have shown that cycling still has a very low status among many sections of the population, though this has improved over the last 10 years. One negative connotation of cycling for many non-cyclists is that it is inherently dangerous, effortful and unpleasant.

An extension of this idea emanating from TRL research is that cyclists are an “out” group and car users an “in” group. This has been the prevailing culture for the last 50 years and is still reflected in a lot of media stories and complaints against cyclist behaviour.

Triggers

Most travel choices are of a habitual nature. In terms of changing behaviour, it is useful to identify barriers (real and cultural), benefits and triggers. Triggers are important in that travel is habitual and they can overturn the habit.

Triggers are events that make people consider changing travel behaviour. Triggers that have been associated with a change to cycling are London Congestion Charging, increasing parking charges at train



stations, petrol price hikes in 2008 and most recently the COVID-19 lockdowns which saw a 46% increase in cycling in one year. In Ghent, the introduction of traffic filters throughout the town to make it like an LTN led to an increase in cycling from 22% to 35% of all trips over a few years. It is expected that Connecting Oxford proposals might have similar effects.

On an individual level, changes in house, job, school, life stages, loss of car or health warnings can trigger changes, but triggers can also work both ways, so for instance acquiring a driving licence or buying a car is highly likely to lead to less cycling.

We will support transformative changes to the highway environment to kickstart levels of cycling and walking.

Activation and outreach

Activation and outreach measures will be a key element of building confidence in encouraging people to take up walking and cycling. These take many shapes and forms, including:

- cycle network maps, both paper and electronic
- wayfinding routes to promote active travel in local neighbourhoods
- web pages to advertise and publicise new routes and other information
- electronic rides illustrating routes, where cyclists can experience routes before trying out in reality
- social media websites
- competitions with rewards to incentivise new and existing cyclists
- buddying up where confident cyclists take new cyclists for rides together
- support and fun groups focused on walks and cycle rides together
- bike libraries offering the loan of free cycles and helmets
- free Dr Bike sessions to help low-income cyclists to maintain their bicycle

We will continue to develop these measures to support the targets in this strategy to increase walking and cycling in line with best practice. We will also ensure that local cycling and walking activation plans are developed in conjunction with the development of LCWIPs so that the impact of network improvements is maximised.

Children and schools

A child cyclist is more likely to become an adult cyclist. Providing opportunities for children to learn to cycle and then to be able to cycle comfortably with parents and afterwards to gain independence by cycling alone to visit friends, go to school or visit places is a fundamental element of a civilised transport system.

The number of children cycling is a good indicator of the cycle friendliness of an urban area and evidence of a cycling culture. Higher levels of cycling are most associated with higher levels of everyone cycling where there is a cycling culture. For instance, Cambridge has the highest levels of children cycling of any local authority.



Over the last 50 years, children's right to travel independently in UK has been eroded, mostly through increased motorisation and parental restrictions. The UK has some of the lowest levels of children cycling throughout Europe. For instance, 50% of children's trips to education in Netherlands are by cycle compared to around 2% in the UK. Another study (Bly, 2005) found that children on average cycled 18 minutes a day in Netherlands compared to 2 minutes a day in the UK. 41% of children in Oxfordshire currently do not meet physical activity guidelines.

However, around 90% of children own a cycle and many children use their cycles at least weekly. This represents a significant potential to increase cycling among children. Cherwell School in Oxford represents best practice in Oxford with 58% of children regularly cycling to school.

In line with our LTCP policies, we will encourage active travel to schools by

- encouraging schools to provide adequate cycle parking
- reviewing and improving cycle routes to school
- implementing LTNs and School Streets around schools wherever feasible
- providing Bikeability opportunities for all children
- ensuring there are safe places for young children to learn to cycle
- ensuring new school locations are designed to school street standards
- providing family cycle training so that parents feel confident cycling with their children
- increasing the number of bike libraries in schools so that low income families are able to access equipment



Actions

Specific, trackable actions are needed to make progress on the ambitions and priorities outlined in this strategy.

This section contains a list of 79 actions, organised around 13 different areas, which constitute a starting point for a full programme of work that will involve teams across the organisation ranging from transport policy and scheme design to climate action, public health and communications.

This list will be further developed through a process of prioritisation, budgeting and allocation of responsibilities across teams. This will result in a year-by-year action plan, which will be updated on a regular basis to reflect progress, amended and new potential actions.

1. Council transformation

- 1.1. Adopt an **active travel governance framework** to coordinate and oversee all walking and cycling projects
- 1.2. Publish a **yearly review** on the state of walking and cycling in Oxfordshire, including journey data, progress towards targets and status of key actions in this strategy
- 1.3. Empower **Walking and Cycling Champions** to raise the profile of active travel within local councils
- 1.4. Establish a **training programme** for officers and councillors to increase skills and expertise on active travel
- 1.5. Increase the **number of officers** dedicated to active travel and expand their range of professional backgrounds
- 1.6. Host the **Cycle County Active County 2023** conference
- 1.7. Update and track progress on the council's **travel plan** for staff and internal operations
- 1.8. Review the council's **travel and expense policies** to prioritise sustainable transport
- 1.9. Expand and improve **cycle facilities** (including visitor parking, secure parking, changing rooms and lockers) across council buildings
- 1.10. Reduce and re-prioritise **car parking** space for council staff and introduce charges in council-owned public parking

2. Collaboration and engagement

- 2.1. Experiment with new **consultation and engagement processes** to increase input from under-represented demographic groups
- 2.2. Adopt a **co-production approach** and establish ad-hoc governance arrangements in all major active travel policies and schemes



- 2.3. Consolidate the **Oxfordshire Active Travel Roundtable** as a county-wide forum for discussing walking and cycling
- 2.4. Support **local walking and cycling forums, partnerships and events** across the county
- 2.5. Consolidate consultation and advisory groups focused on **inclusive mobility** with experts and stakeholders with lived experience of disabilities
- 2.6. Create a **network of volunteers** to support inspection, maintenance and improvement of key walking and cycling routes
- 2.7. Improve processes for **identifying local walking and cycling routes and necessary improvements** in collaboration with parish and town councils, schools, neighbourhood groups and residents
- 2.8. Engage with **city and district councils** to support the prioritisation of active travel modes in their policies, local and neighbourhood plans and design guidance
- 2.9. Engage with **national and regional bodies** to seek consistency with our ambitions and priorities regarding active travel

3. [Data](#)

- 3.1. Develop a programme to **measure pedestrian and cyclist movement** in key locations (such as town centres, shopping areas or leisure destinations) and main active travel routes and manage target reporting and information
- 3.2. Carry out an **Oxfordshire Pedestrian Survey** to gather localised data on behaviours, preferences and challenges for pedestrian movement
- 3.3. Integrate **active travel infrastructure data** into our GIS and asset management systems
- 3.4. Support **research and innovation projects** aimed at better understanding active travel patterns and interventions
- 3.5. Increase the amount of **open data** and publicly shared information on active travel

4. [Design guidance](#)

- 4.1. Update the Oxfordshire **Walking and Cycling Design Standards** in line with new national guidance and best practice
- 4.2. Review the Oxfordshire **Street Design Guide** and align with updated walking and cycling standards and upcoming national street design guidance
- 4.3. Integrate active travel **design guidance, assessment tools and quality control** mechanisms all the way from planning through to initial design, detailed design and implementation in all transport infrastructure projects
- 4.4. Review processes around **planning applications**, particularly for new developments and associated network improvements, to ensure designs prioritise sustainable travel modes and they provide high quality active travel routes and facilities



5. Network development

- 5.1. Produce complementary **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) guidance** to ensure consistency in contents and format across the county
- 5.2. Develop **LCWIPs for all major settlements** in Oxfordshire
- 5.3. Explore the development of **LCWIPs for small rural settlements** or networks of villages
- 5.4. Develop a county-wide **Strategic Active Travel Network (SATN)** to guide the prioritisation and design of inter-urban routes
- 5.5. Produce a **network update of the Science Vale Active Travel Network (SVATN)** and integrate it into the SATN
- 5.6. Develop a list of potential **greenways** as high-quality leisure routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders
- 5.7. Engage in discussions around **new developments** from an early stage (masterplanning, outline designs) to identify options for improving the local walking and cycling network and ensure sustainable travel is prioritised in-site
- 5.8. Develop a **pipeline of walking and cycling infrastructure schemes** in line with adopted plans (particularly LCWIPs), a review of the existing active travel network and the application of existing prioritisation tools
- 5.9. Publish an online **map of transport schemes** featuring the location and status of walking and cycling improvements

6. Traffic management

- 6.1. Develop a **speed reduction programme** (20 mph speed limits, traffic calming measures, etc) along key active travel routes
- 6.2. Explore and develop proposals to introduce **Low Traffic Neighbourhoods** across the county to enhance urban areas and create safe cycle routes
- 6.3. Develop proposals to acquire **traffic management powers** such as decriminalised parking, moving traffic offences and the extension of controlled parking zones
- 6.4. Review the designs of key new and existing **junctions** to ensure they prioritise walking and cycling movement and support car reduction targets

7. Maintenance and road operations

- 7.1. Improve public reporting of unsuitable walking and cycling infrastructure via **FixMyStreet**
- 7.2. Prioritise walking and cycling infrastructure (footways, cycleways, verges, etc) in highways **maintenance** programmes and operations
- 7.3. Ensure **improvements to active travel infrastructure** are integrated into wider road maintenance and repair interventions by consulting schemes on a case-by-case basis across the council and with walking and cycling groups



- 7.4. Review current policies and procedures to ensure **road works, maintenance activities and temporary road closures** prioritise active travel modes and ensure accessibility
- 7.5. Review current policies to prioritise walking and cycling in **controlled crossings and traffic signals**
- 7.6. Integrate active travel data into existing **network management and highways modelling** systems
- 7.7. Review policies and use of **coloured surfaces** as a potential tool to improve pedestrians and cycle safety and route legibility

8. Accessibility and public realm

- 8.1. Review policies for installing and removing **access control barriers** to ensure footways and cycleways are accessible to all types of pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists
- 8.2. Review **signage and utilities policies** to minimise street clutter and reduce asset costs and risks
- 8.3. Develop a **barrier removal and street decluttering programme** along all major walking and cycle routes
- 8.4. Explore possibilities for reducing designated **pavement parking** bays and improving enforcement of illegal parking on pavements
- 8.5. Pilot the installation of **parklets** (including seating, greenery, cycle parking or other facilities) as an experimental way of repurposing existing parking bays
- 8.6. Engage with city and district councils to improve **public facilities** (benches, bins, shelters, toilets, fountains, etc) along key pedestrians areas and corridors

9. Cycle parking

- 9.1. Improve and increase on-street **public cycle parking** in areas of high demand
- 9.2. Develop a network of **secure cycle parking** facilities at mobility hubs, workplaces and key destination areas
- 9.3. Develop a programme for installing **cycle hangars** in residential areas
- 9.4. Support businesses, schools and other organisations in providing more and better **private cycle parking facilities** within their premises

10. Shared micro-mobility

- 10.1. Pilot a network of **shared micromobility services** (bicycles, e-bikes or e-scooters) in areas of potential high demand
- 10.2. Explore the potential for a **cargo bike sharing scheme**
- 10.3. Explore the potential for community-based shared **micromobility schemes based in rural areas** and mobility hubs



11. Activation and outreach

- 11.1. Support **schools** with a variety of tools (travel plans, Street Tag, Park and Stride, School Streets, etc) to increase sustainable transport of pupils, families and staff
- 11.2. Deliver a programme of **camera enforcement in schools streets** to promote safety outside schools
- 11.3. Develop, pilot and scale an active travel support offer for **workplaces**
- 11.4. Develop an active travel **communications strategy** covering behavioural change campaigns and infrastructure and community projects
- 11.5. Deliver an **active travel outreach programme**, in collaboration with local community groups, to enable disadvantaged residents to cycle and walk more
- 11.6. Support the development of **travel plans for new developments** to encourage modal shift
- 11.7. Pilot the installation of **pedestrian and bicycle counters** (public displays) on key active travel routes
- 11.8. Explore schemes to support residents to try and buy **e-bikes, cargo biked and adapted bikes**
- 11.9. Expand the offer of **Bikeability training** to schools, workplaces and community groups, and support the creation of dedicated facilities for learning to ride

12. Travel information

- 12.1. Review and consolidate **active travel information** on the council's website
- 12.2. Integrate **active travel and public transport information** into a single website or source to facilitate travel planning across sustainable modes
- 12.3. Produce **walking and cycling maps** for all major settlements across the county
- 12.4. Improve **signage and wayfinding** on key active travel routes

13. Road safety

- 13.1. Develop a council's **communications protocol** for dealing with road safety incidents involving vulnerable road users
- 13.2. Engage with local media reporters and public bodies to promote use of the **Media Guidelines for Reporting Road Collisions**
- 13.3. Engage with Thames Valley Police to improve mechanisms for **reporting road traffic offences**, including the submission of dashcam footage and similar devices
- 13.4. Publish an **annual safety report** and analysis of cyclist and pedestrian casualties, accidents and incidents, including estimates of those unreported to the police
- 13.5. Develop a framework to assess the **impacts of new infrastructure** (particularly innovative designs) in terms of changes to safety, comfort and pedestrian and cycle flows



Thank you for reading

To find out more please contact:

activetravel@oxfordshire.gov.uk



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**