

Policy & Programmes

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Dear Oxfordshire County Council,

Thank you for inviting responses on the Strategic Active Travel Network (SATN). We would like to take this opportunity to highlight our strong support for infrastructure planning for active travel, particularly for long distance journeys that can facilitate alternatives to car travel. We welcome these proposals which seek to make strategic travel by cycling easier.

Thank you for involving the District Council in the development of the project through steering group sessions.

The SATN project supports our [South Oxfordshire District's Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#) through progressing measures to support modal shift away from the private car. Reducing car emissions will help to address the climate emergency. Our climate targets are for South Oxfordshire to be a carbon neutral district by 2030.

Promotion of walking and cycling modes through provision of appropriate supporting infrastructure will form a key element of our Climate Emergency Strategy. Our [Climate Action Plan 2022-2024](#) designates an action to “*work with Oxfordshire County Council to support active and sustainable travel in infrastructure initiatives*”.

We note that strategic walking may not play a key part of the project, as walking over the distances considered in this project are more tailored to leisure walking and may not address the overarching aim of the project as well as cycling – to facilitate alternatives to car travel. Nonetheless, we would like to request that leisure walking routes are also considered within the project as the benefits of leisure walking are also valuable – for health and wellbeing among others.

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It is well documented that levels of activity correlate positively with health and well-being. The SATN aligns well with our corporate plan priority for ‘Improved economic and community well-being’, which seeks to improve the proportion of residents achieving recommended targets of physical activity. There are also economic benefits from having national cycle routes and two national trails running through South Oxfordshire – the Thames Path and the Ridgeway, which bring many visitors to the district.

The draft SATN network also supports our corporate priority ‘Homes and infrastructure that meet local needs’ which promotes projects which provide *“Sustainable transport solutions [that] prioritise walking, cycling and public transport to reduce car dependency and air pollution”*.

We suggest that an interactive map might be good way to display the final outputs. The map should show clearly what the existing network is and the improvements sought to be delivered. The map should also be live, so that it can be updated when infrastructure schemes are delivered.

SATN Supporting Data and Analysis

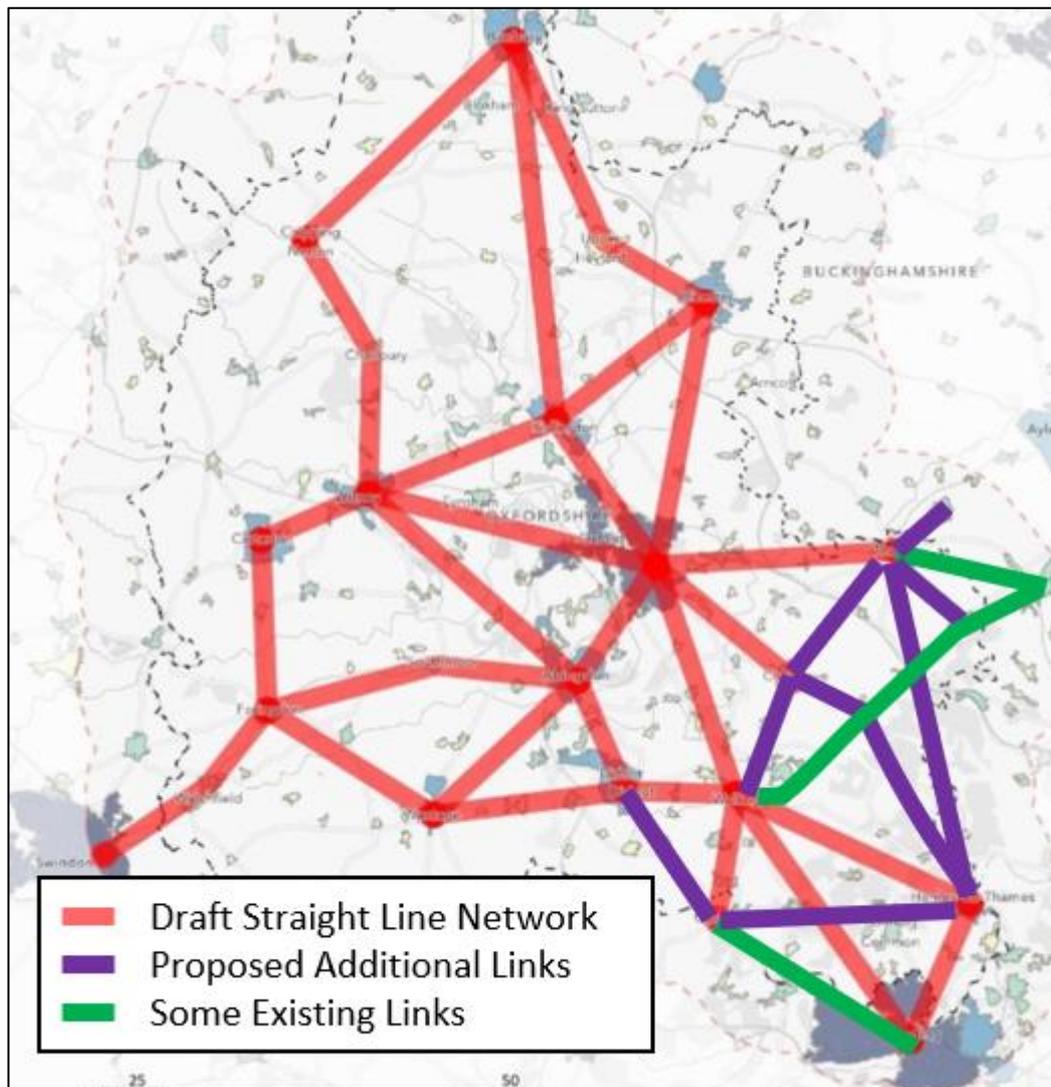
Given the significant time elapsed for travel characteristics to have changed since 2011, as well as increases in the population across South Oxfordshire District (+11.1%) since the last census, the value of this data has largely diminished, and removal should be considered. Census 2011 data is presented on page 2, 11, 12 and 13.

We understand that the National Travel Survey (page 3 & 4) can provide useful national and regional data trends, however, it is less representative for smaller scale areas due to small sample sizes within smaller geography areas (calculated using postcodes). Therefore the Oxford and District data may fluctuate considerably between years and may provide a misleading representation. If work has been undertaken to normalise the data or improve its suitability for smaller geographies it would be helpful if this was shown.

The size and geographical position of a number of the Census Mid layer Super Output Areas located within South Oxfordshire unfortunately do not provide a helpful representation of population density in locations such as Wallingford. The Census Lower layer Super Output Area may provide a more helpful representation of this.

Draft Strategic Active Travel Network

Looking at the draft straight line network, we offer the following illustrations and comments.



There are some important omissions, most significantly the Thame to Haddenham transport link. As illustrated, we suggest adding links between:

- Thame – Haddenham
- Thame – Chinnor
- Thame – Henley-on-Thames
- Thame – Chalgrove
- Henley-on-Thames – Chalgrove via Watlington
- Wallingford – Chalgrove
- Didcot – Goring
- Goring – Henley-on-Thames

Existing routes shown include the Phoenix Trail (Thame – Princes Risborough), parts of the Icknield Way Trail and Ridgeway National Trail (Wallingford – Princes Risborough), and the Thames Path (Reading – Goring).

It would be helpful if the final straight line network were presented in the context of the existing cycling and walking network, to prevent duplication and to ensure the new network connects appropriately with the existing facilities.

The additional routes we have annotated (in purple) through South Oxfordshire consider the leisure cycling journeys (page 18) and Everyday Trips heatmap plan (page 22). These include additional routes which link spurs currently suggested within the district, as well as routes to new destinations, and spurs to locations outside of the district.

The Thame to Haddenham cycleway proposal is much in demand and consideration could be given to possible extension beyond the Haddenham & Thame Parkway railway station to other destinations, like scope for extension to Aylesbury.

When converting these straight line routes between settlements and attractors, it is important to ensure that the route does not miss the opportunity to connect with the District's larger villages, for example Sonning Common. When travelling longer distances cyclists will also need or wish to have the opportunity to stop and use local facilities e.g. shops, cafes, public toilets, and cycle repair shops, this should be accommodated in the plan.

Infrastructure

We look forward to working with you to work up these straight lines into routes on the ground. Once the SATN network is established we can work with you to safeguard routes as part of our work to develop the Joint Local Plan for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Districts.

There is an opportunity to take advantage of the safeguarded Wilts and Berks canal route to support the illustrated straight lines between Swindon and Wantage, as well as Wantage to Abingdon.

Please also ensure that the SATN project captures and coordinates with existing safeguarded transport schemes in our district's Local Plan, infrastructure delivery planning and infrastructure delivery associated with growth locations e.g. Didcot Garden Town and Berinsfield Garden Village. Any existing schemes in our Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan or OXIS should be included and our review of the draft suggest these documents have not yet been reviewed.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

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South Oxfordshire District Council