



Press Release

Monday 20th March 2017 (Embargo to 7:00am)

OCN launches its vision for a Strategic Cycle Network for Oxfordshire

Today the Oxfordshire Cycling Network (OCN) launches its vision of a future [Strategic Cycle Network for Oxfordshire](#), which could bring £112 million a year in health and travel time benefits to the county, by linking the major towns, workplaces and transport hubs with safe, direct and attractive cycle routes.

“Our vision is that people of all abilities can choose to cycle anywhere, feeling safe and comfortable,” said Robin Tucker, Chair of OCN. The only proven way to achieve this is to have high quality routes linking places that people want to go. “All ages, all abilities. These are the four As of best-practice standards for cycling. The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark – and even Cambridge – have shown that this works. Now let’s bring similar 4A benefits to Oxfordshire,” said Simon Hunt, Chair of Cyclox.

The 366-mile network would bring huge economic and health benefits to Oxfordshire people, whether or not they cycle. The first gain is improved health, because people who cycle live longer and are healthier, removing a cost burden from the health services. Secondly, switching from cars to bikes cuts air pollution, increasingly recognised as killer in urban environments. The third benefit is shorter journey times, both by reducing congestion on the roads and because cycling is simply quicker for short journeys – everyone wins. Robin notes, “Instead of stop-starting in traffic jams, fretting about where to park, I can bike the five miles from home to Abingdon more quickly and more predictably. Plus, I will have done my exercise for the day.”

All ages, all abilities means routes similar to Dutch or German standards. Smooth tarmac, at least 3 metres wide and separated from busy roads by a green verge. In town, cycle tracks would be separated from both pedestrians and motor vehicles, and would continue across junctions.

OCN calculates that increasing cycling to 10% of journeys¹ in the county compared to 3% today is worth £112 million per year in health and journey time benefits². “There will be other benefits too”, says Kevin Wilkinson, Chair of workplace cycling group HarBUG, “cyclists spend more in local shops and cycling links attract businesses, employees and tourists to a location.”

The network might take 15 or 20 years to build and OCN's first estimate of costs is £120 million³. That is based on the Parliamentary Cycling Group's recommendation of £10 per year per person⁴. "It's three pence a day each, which doesn't sound much, but it would transform transport and health in Oxfordshire," comments Robin, "Our financial model shows a 7-fold return on investment over 20 years, which is 2 or 3 times better than most road investments".

Why is now the time for this vision? Two reasons, both linked to the rising wave of development and growth in the county. First, it is crucial to safeguard potential routes so they are not built over. Second, the routes can be included in developer plans and gain funding. The developers will win too, as the houses and workplaces they build will be more attractive. "That's why they use pictures of happy cyclists in housing and business park brochures," notes Robin.

Other funding would come from central government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy to be published later this year and smart use of road maintenance funds. As Kath Cochrane of Windrush Bike Project notes, "Many roads need major renewal every 20 or 30 years, so if we improved cycle facilities at the same time, we would make a lot of progress for not much extra money."

Developing the network map used the local knowledge of cyclists. "We had four working sessions, one for each District, to identify the important locations and links, and we joined that up with the Oxford Transport Strategy already agreed by the County," said Robin. "Our next step will be to add the quality of current routes and get more specific on the routing options."

OCN is building political support for the network and will be asking candidates for County Council elections this May to support the national Space for Cycling campaign to Plan, Invest and Build high quality cycling routes⁵. On 22nd April, campaigners will meet outside County Hall in Oxford and urge candidates to pledge their support. "26% of adults in Oxfordshire cycle⁶, so that's 140,000 potential voters, and many more who would love to cycle if they had a good safe option," comments Ian Leggett, Chair of Bike Safe.

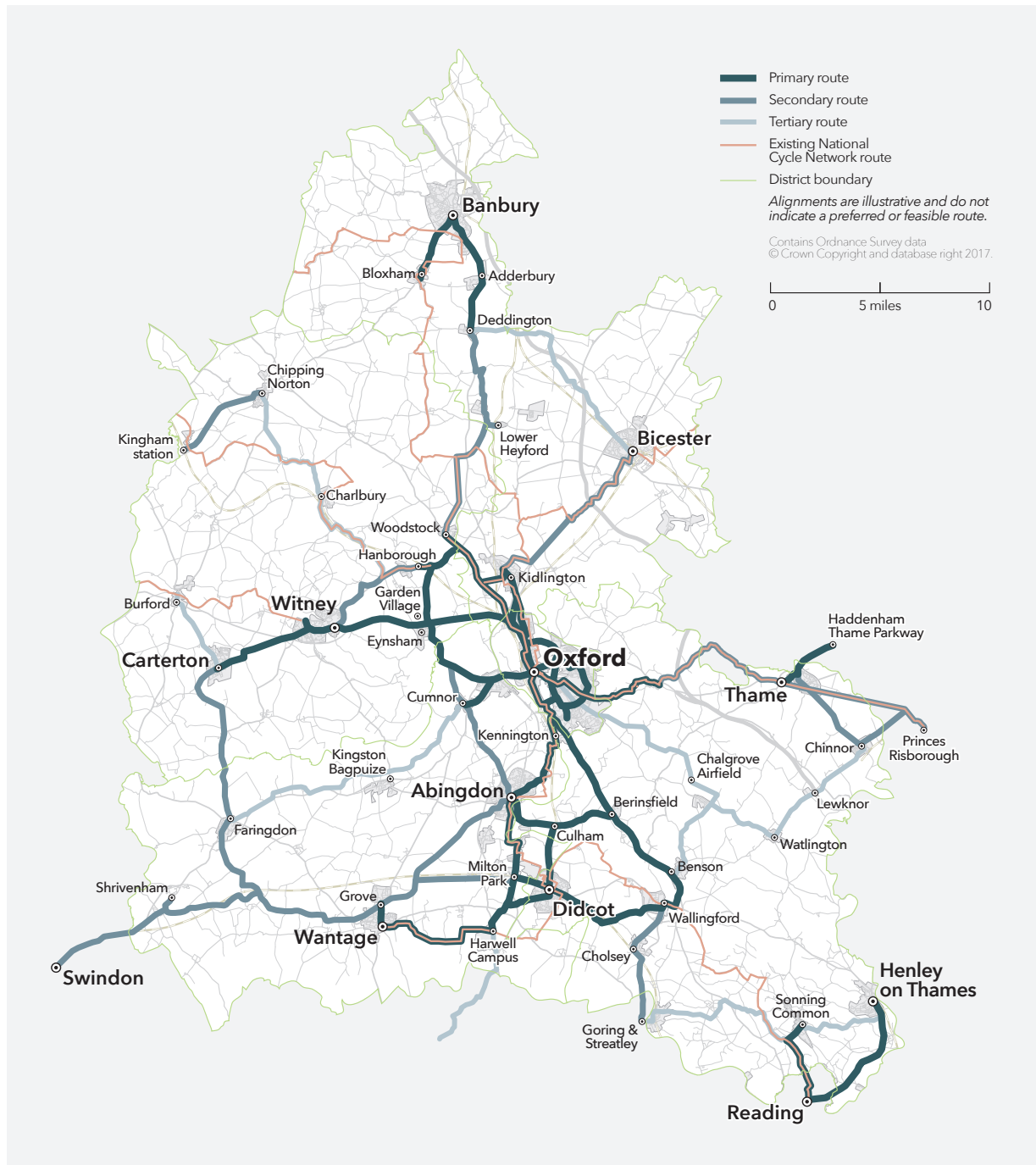
Tomorrow evening (Tuesday 21st March 2017), Robin Tucker will be talking about the proposal and funding for cycling at the Cyclox meeting. 7:30pm, St Michaels at the Northgate, Oxford. OX1 3EY. Everyone welcome, free of charge.

Map of the Strategic Cycle Network

Our map a possible future 'all ages, all abilities' cycling network for Oxfordshire is shown on the following page. It was developed by OCN members across the county, based on centres of population, employment and education and practical cycling distances between them. It is a starting point for discussions with the County Council and the public about its shape, its benefits and its costs.

A high-resolution version can be found at cyclingukoxfordshire.org/strategic-cycle-network

OCN's proposed Strategic Cycle Network for Oxfordshire



This map outlines a possible future 'all ages, all abilities' cycling network for Oxfordshire.

Primary routes: Key routes with high traffic potential to be prioritised for 'all ages, all abilities' infrastructure.

Secondary routes: Routes that would start as signed routes, and be developed into 'all ages, all abilities' infrastructure when funding allows or development opportunities arise.

Tertiary routes: Initially implemented as signed routes on existing roads or tracks with minor investment e.g. to improve junctions and traffic calming. May be upgraded to 'all ages, all abilities' later when cycling numbers rise or opportunistically when funding is available.

All routes: For all categories the immediate priority is to protect the space for future infrastructure improvement



Contact and organisation information

Oxfordshire Cycling Network

OCN brings together people from 29 cycling and supportive organisations across the county to work towards better facilities and more cycling in Oxfordshire. OCN supports the 170,000 cyclists in the county and the 460,000 who would cycle if it were safe, convenient and pleasant.

Contact: Robin Tucker, OCN@cyclingukoxfordshire.org, 07901 622622

Cyclox

Cyclox is the voice of cycling in Oxford. It works to improve facilities for cycling in the city, and to encourage positive relations between people on cycles, pedestrians and other road users

Contact: Simon Hunt, contact@cyclox.org, 07989 869995

Bike Safe

Bike Safe campaigns for better cycling and walking facilities, with a main objective of creating a community path alongside the B4004 to link Eynsham and Farmoor with Botley and Oxford.

Contact: Ian Leggett, ianleggett27@gmail.com, 07880 652207

HarBUG

HarBUG is the Harwell Campus Bicycle Users Group. It works to make it easier to cycle to the Campus and to improve facilities for cyclists and cycling on the site.

Contact: Kevin Wilkinson, chairman@harbug.org.uk, 01235 778241

Windrush Bike Project

Windrush Bike Project is community interest company based in Witney, bringing together cycle training, maintenance, campaigning and culture. Its 'Open Workshop' will be officially opened by the Mayor of Witney on 25th March 2017.

Contact: Kath Cochrane, kath@windrushbikeproject.uk, 07729 846778

Cycling UK

Cycling UK is the national cycling organisation, formerly known as the Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC). It has championed the cause of cycling since 1878, and the local group in Oxfordshire has been riding since 1924.

Contact: Robin Tucker, Secretary@cyclingukoxfordshire.org, 07901 622622

Space for Cycling

Space for Cycling is the national campaign to create the conditions where anyone can cycle anywhere. It was originally created by the London Cycling Campaign, and taken nationally by Cycling UK and Cyclenation.

<http://www.cyclinguk.org/campaign/space-for-cycling>

Notes:

¹ 10% of Journeys is the target set by the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group in its 'Get Britain Cycling' report. It is close to levels in Germany, but far below the Netherlands (26%) and Denmark (19%).

<http://www.fietsberaad.nl/library/repository/bestanden/CyclingintheNetherlands2009.pdf>

² Based on Cycling UK's 'The Economic Cycle' analysis, scaled to Oxfordshire.

<http://www.cyclinguk.org/news/20150120-research-shows-growth-cycling-worth-%C2%BC-trillion-england%E2%80%99s-economy>

³ Based on Bristol Cycle Strategy costs of £400,000 per mile for primary routes and lower costs for less busy routes <http://www.betterbybike.info/infrastructure-projects/bristol-cycle-strategy-2>

⁴ All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group 'Get Britain Cycling' report <https://allpartycycling.org/inquiry/>

⁵ Space for Cycling <http://www.cyclinguk.org/campaign/space-for-cycling>

⁶ Sport England Active People Survey 2015 (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/departments-for-transport/series/walking-and-cycling-statistics). In Oxfordshire 26.1% of Adults cycle once per month or more. Oxfordshire population (ONS 2015 mid-year estimates) total 677,810, Adults (18+) 536,031.

Other useful sources:

Cycling Statistics: <http://www.cyclinguk.org/resources/cycling-uk-cycling-statistics>

Cycling FAQs: <http://www.cyclinguk.org/commoncyclingquestions>