

Policy & Programmes

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Dear Oxfordshire County Council,

Thank you for inviting responses on the Wantage and Grove Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). We would like to take this opportunity to express our strong support for infrastructure planning for active travel to promote modal shift in the District. We welcome these proposals to make walking and cycling easier and more enjoyable in the Wantage and Grove area. The close proximity of Grove, Wantage and East Challow have strong potential for improved uptake in walking and cycling, particularly once the right infrastructure is provided. Wantage and Grove both also have a strong relationship with places and settlements to the east; notably Harwell Campus and Milton Park (major local employment sites), and Didcot. We strongly support the opportunity to support the uptake of longer distance active travel commuting and leisure travel with these destinations.

Thank you for involving the District Council in the development of these proposals through steering group sessions. We would like to confirm our support for the delivery of, and offer our support and assistance with, drawing up further LCWIPs across the District, notably Faringdon.

We recognise the value of walking and cycling infrastructure, not only to help active travel for work and other purposes, but also because it supports leisure journeys as well. It is well documented that levels of activity correlate positively with health and well-being.

The LCWIP proposals support our [Vale of White Horse Council Plan](#) through promotion of sustainable travel for “climate and nature recovery”, the proposed schemes help to promote “healthy, sustainable, and inclusive communities” and identify “infrastructure [that] people need”. Enabling active travel through new and improved infrastructure supports our [Nature and Climate Action Plan](#) target, which is to be a carbon neutral district by 2045.

The LCWIP proposals also align with our existing and emerging Local Plan policies which seek to promote the use of active travel, including [Core Policy 33: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility](#) and [Core Policy 35: Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking](#) (Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1) and Policy IN2 – Sustainable transport and accessibility (emerging [South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan 2041](#)).

Report comments

The initial map provided in the report (Figure 1.1) could be supplemented with more detail to aid further understanding of the local area context. The Wilts & Berks Canal [safeguarding](#) could be added, which seeks to reintroduce the historic canal and provide a towpath for active travel. Where the canal is to be diverted from the historic line, the original route is sought to also become an active travel route. The historic canal route should also form part of the LCWIP routes, in addition to being included in the Strategic Active Travel Network (SATN). Additionally, the emerging Joint Local Plan [policies map](#) identifies two service centres for Grove which could be added. Further context could be added for: the new Wantage and Grove Railway Station [safeguarded](#) land options located north and north-east of Grove, the National Cycle Network Route no.544, the Vale Way Recreational Route as seen on [OS maps](#), and the Wantage Western Movement Corridor [safeguarding](#) (this future route also could be added to the LCWIP future network).

Please revise the policy review section as follows:

- Extant policies - In addition to referring to 'Core Policy 33: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility', please refer to 'Core Policy 35: Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking' which states "encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport and support measures that enable a modal shift to public transport, cycling and walking in the district". Please remove reference to 'Core Policy 34: A34 Strategy' which relates to the A34 and is not relevant to this LCWIP.
- Emerging policies - In addition to 'Policy SP9 - A strategy for Wantage' please refer to the overarching policies for active travel in 'Policy IN2 - Sustainable transport and accessibility' such as "Development proposals must ... maximise active and sustainable travel opportunities, minimising the need to travel by car, with sustainable travel opportunities integrated into the design; viable active and sustainable travel choices ... to access day-to-day amenities" and 'Policy IN3 - Transport infrastructure and safeguarding' such as "The council, working with Oxfordshire County Council and relevant stakeholders, will support the following infrastructure schemes and transport priorities ... Maintaining, improving and adding to walking and cycling infrastructure, including, for example, through development of further Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) and delivery of schemes included in existing LCWIPs as well as delivering schemes included in the Strategic Active Travel Network (SATN)"

Figure 2.7 depicting Oxfordshire wide desire lines for active travel (from SATN) is not particularly useful for the scale of work in this LCWIP, while the surrounding text identifies a useful map included in the Wantage Neighbourhood Plan, please replace the SATN map with the [WAGAT map](#), shown below.

Plan E: Wantage Proposed Cycle Routes

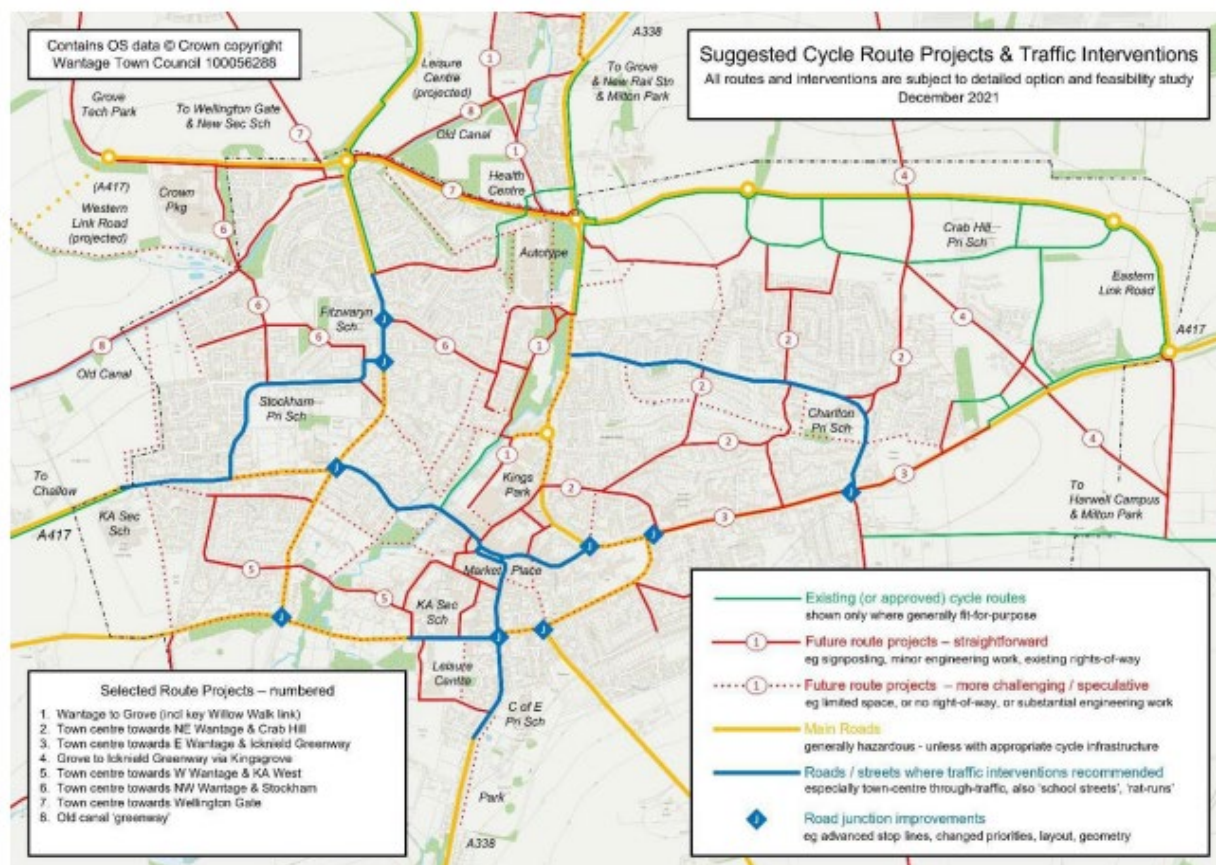


Figure 1: Extract from Wantage Neighbourhood Plan - Wantage Proposed Cycle Routes

Please amend document referencing and image errors as follows:

- Page 25 refers to an isochrone map in Figure 3.3 but this is shown in Figure 3.5.
- Page 66 refers to Figure 5.4 but this is shown in Figure 5.5. Page 71 refers to figure 6.13 but this is shown in Figure 5.13 (which is a table).
- Page 30 Mode Share of Cycling and Walking for 2011 either shows incorrect percentage ranges or is missing a category.
- Duplication of Figure 4.1 and 4.11 consider using alternative graphic.
- Page 39 shows inconsistency in referencing (text, title, map) either 20 or 50 lines.
- Please add a description for the applied network on page 40.
- Page 41, please include Ham Road in the description of elevated trips to school.
- Incorrect reference to figures being located overleaf or opposite for page 50, 63, 81, and 86.
- Review figure numbering, particularly absent figures between 5.2-5.5.

- Figure 5.2 Public Consultation feedback map should use a key to identify what the colours refer to.
- Figure 52 on page 64 and 87 - Route P5 would benefit from another label to the west of the route near East Challow and Route P3 should move its eastern label further east away from Route P8 for improved legibility.
- Page 71 coherence has been incorrectly referred to as "provision of Dropped Kerbs and Tactile Paving (40%)" in the centre of the page paragraph.
- The intervention reference numbers on pages 78-79 are very small, please consider enlarging the font size.
- First sentence on page 86 is unclear if it is suggesting that the full report is only a summary or if Section 7 is a summary.

Thank you for acknowledging the limitations of Census 2021 for method of travel to work data on page 30. An adjustment needs to also be made for text on page 38 which currently appears to suggest that 2011 Census data is not the preferable source of data for the Propensity to Cycle tool explanation.

The report refers to Wantage Eastern Link Road (WELR) a number of times and does not acknowledge that the road has now opened. Please update the name to King Alfred Way and acknowledge the road opened on 5 December 2024 (page 10, 11 for image title, 17, 35, 55, 63, 66, and 72).

It is not clear on Page 46 why schools, healthcare facilities and supermarkets are categorised as Class 2, when the definition of Class 1 is "destinations would generate a higher number of trips and that they are also likely to have a larger catchment area of trips from across the study area". Schools, healthcare facilities and supermarkets would likely fit into Class 1. Not-with-standing, it's unclear how this division of destination type impacts the long list of desire lines. Further on page 46, please add text to state that the red marker to the east of Wantage is Harwell (if indeed that is the case).

The report refers largely to the two places, Wantage and Grove collectively, however there are a few occasions where it is unclear whether just one place or both are referenced, particularly on page 68. Please review and ensure written descriptions and data is clearly described as individual settlements or as a collective area.

In the Walking Route Audit Tool scoring criteria there are 3 missing items in the table of 20 scoring factors. Review of the DfT guidance indicates that there are 3 'other' criteria missed for Attractiveness, Comfort and Directness to be added to the scoring and reporting:

- Attractiveness - "Examples of 'other' attractiveness issues include:- Evidence that lighting is not present, or is deficient;- Temporary features affecting the attractiveness of routes (e.g. refuse sacks);- Excessive use of guardrail or bollards."

- Comfort - "Examples of 'other' comfort issues include: - Temporary obstructions restricting clearance width for pedestrians (e.g. driveway gates opened into footway); - Barriers/gates restricting access; - Bus shelters restricting clearance width; - Poorly drained footways resulting in noticeable ponding issues/slippery surfaces."
- Directness - "Examples of 'other' directness issues include: - Routes to/from bus stops not accommodated; - Steps restricting access for all users; - Confusing layout for pedestrians creating severance issues for users."

The text on page 71 states that isolated and unlit traffic-free routes are the cause for the low scores for 'Fear of crime'. Noting the small proportion of traffic-free routes in Wantage and Grove area, it is not clear why this has been identified as the key reason for a low average score for all walking routes across the LCWIP area. Further explanation for this outcome would be helpful.

Page 73 highlights the limited pavement widths in the two towns. The text also suggests measures to implement recessed loading and parking. Recessed parking would conflict with the desire to broadening pavements and reallocate road space to non-motorised users. Please revise this statement or add further context.

Page 81 states the scheme prioritisation has been undertaken in light of Oxfordshire County Council's policies, however it would be prudent to also consider prioritisation alignment for Neighbourhood Plan policies, Local Plan policies as well as national policies.

An entry in the table on page 82 shows "Complementary to other active travel users", however the described method then refers to "benefits all users" which suggests also motorised vehicle users, please revise to clarify the intent of the criteria.

Thank you again for inviting comments on this LCWIP. We are committed to working with you to roll out LCWIPs across our district and trust the above is helpful.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

Senior Transport Planner
Vale of White Horse District Council