

Policy & Programmes

HEAD OF SERVICE: Harry Barrington-Mountford



By email:

consultations@oxfordshire.gov.uk

CONTACT OFFICER: [REDACTED]

planning.policy@southandvale.gov.uk

Tel: 01235 422422

Textphone: 18001 01235 422422

Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon,
OXON, OX14 3JE

28 November 2022

Dear Oxfordshire County Council,

Thank you for inviting responses on the Abingdon Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). We would like to take this opportunity to highlight our strong support for infrastructure planning for active travel. We welcome these proposals to make walking and cycling easier and more enjoyable in Abingdon. As a compact town with an already relatively high level of cycling we agree Abingdon has strong potential for very high levels of cycling, particularly once the right infrastructure is provided, to make it accessible and attractive to all.

Thank you for involving the District Council in the development of these proposals through steering group sessions. This is the first LCWIP in our district, and we would like to offer our support for, and future assistance with, drawing up further LCWIPs across the District, notably Didcot (covering South Oxfordshire and Vale) which is underway, Faringdon, and Wantage and Grove.

The LCWIP proposals support our [Vale of White Horse Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#) through progressing measures to support modal shift away from the private car to reduce emission pollution levels and help to address the climate emergency. Our climate reduction targets are for the Vale to be a carbon neutral district by 2045, with an aim for a 75 per cent reduction in emissions across the district by 2030. Promotion of walking and cycling modes through provision of suitable infrastructure forms a key element of our Climate Emergency Strategy.

Our Corporate Plan includes working with partners to produce an "Active Travel Network map" (ATN map). Our aim is to promote active travel by mapping current and required facilities, including cycle paths and bike storage facilities, as well as pavements and footpaths across Vale. The maps in the Abingdon LCWIP deliver the first part of this jigsaw, and represent a good step forward, albeit we aim for map coverage across the whole district. We suggest that when the LCWIP document is finalised, the appendices are incorporated in the main document, so that the most important elements of the LCWIP (the baseline map, the infrastructure proposals and the map of proposals) are more visible

and easier to find. An interactive map might be good way to display the final outputs and help meet our goal of an Active Travel Network map that residents and visitors can use.

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 Abingdon LCWIP aligns well with our corporate plan priority for 'Building healthy communities' which seeks to improve the proportion of residents achieving recommended targets of physical activity. Our Corporate Plan explicitly supports the development of LCWIPs and highlights that they *"help shape new developments that link homes to work, recreation and social spaces within communities"*.

Within the policy context section of the LCWIP is a recommendation to update the Dalton Barracks Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This likely relates to the future expansion of Abingdon's LCWIP into Dalton Barracks. However, the Dalton Barracks SPD was produced by and adopted by Vale of White Horse District Council fairly recently in April 2022, and we do not currently have plans to update the SPD. Please remove this recommendation. Nevertheless the County Council, as the highway authority, will have the opportunity to comment and seek contributions to deliver relevant elements of this LCWIP network from major development coming forward, particularly with strong District Council support of the LCWIP.

On the balance in the LCWIP between walking and cycling, we note the explanation at 1.4.3 of the report which states that *"It was therefore decided to produce a single network map, which identifies the key routes for both walking and cycling (noting that some routes are appropriate for walking only and that some routes further out of the town are less likely to be walked than cycled)"*. It may be helpful to state this on the LCWIP map as well, to ensure this is clear to those using the map, because a brief glance of the 'Abingdon LCWIP Network' map and 'Abingdon LCWIP Core Walking Zone' may suggest that walking has not been considered in much detail.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

Senior Transport Planner
Vale of White Horse District Council