

Danny Yee (on behalf of Oxfordshire Liveable Streets) – BSIP Delivery Plan

We support measures to improve bus services but urge that they be coordinated with active travel provision.

When active travel schemes are being planned and designed, the bus operators are among the stakeholders involved. Sometimes the constraints they want to impose are frustrating, but even then it is good to know the situation from the start. And they often have useful input into other design matters.

In the same way, active travel groups should be involved in schemes such as those before you. Bus schemes almost always have significant effects on cycling, and often on pedestrians, and that is too often overlooked. Recent examples include schemes for removing parking on Abingdon Rd and Hollow Way. The first of these was perceived even by opponents as a cycling scheme, and the second sparked widespread concern from pedestrians.

And the schemes before you continue the same trend. The first one, on Cherwell St in Banbury, proposes to rebuild a junction and stretch of main road, but the plans for this (recently consulted on) totally ignore cycling, not mentioning it at all. But one of the primary cycling routes in the Banbury LCWIP runs along George St and across this junction! It may be impossible to do anything at all here for cycling because of the need to provide for buses and cars, but if so that should be openly debated, not just assumed.

So we have two recommendations:

1) Bus schemes, like other highways schemes, should have input from the active travel team. And that team needs an experienced lead officer (to replace Patrick Lingwood): the current team has some great people in it, but they are relatively inexperienced and lack knowledge of cycling. We also want someone at director level given responsibility to achieve the county's cycling trip targets.

2) Active travel stakeholders should be involved in co-production of all highways schemes, including BSIP-funded ones. There may be some of these we have no interest in, or no resources to engage with - just as the bus operators don't get involved with most active travel projects - but almost all these schemes have some effect on walking and cycling.

Without this, opportunities for improving walking and cycling risk being compromised - the next rebuild of the George St - Cherwell St junction is likely to be decades away - and the LTCP trip targets will move ever further away.