

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 27 APRIL 2017

WALKING AND CYCLING DESIGN GUIDANCE

Report by Director for Planning & Place

Introduction

1. This report provides an overview of work undertaken to update Oxfordshire County Council's design guidance on Walking and Cycling infrastructure provision and a summary of comments received on drafts of that guidance.

Exempt Information

2. None

Background

3. Connecting Oxfordshire 2011-2031: Local Transport Plan (LTP4) was updated and adopted in 2016. It includes an [Active & Healthy Travel Strategy](#) which aims to create the conditions in which more people choose to walk and cycle for more journeys in Oxfordshire. Much of this can be achieved through good highway design to create an attractive environment for walking and cycling alongside initiatives such as raising awareness of the benefits of making active travel choices and promotion of routes.
4. Following the adoption of LTP4, work has progressed on an updated design guide for use by developers, master planners and scheme designers, to help with a consistent approach - starting with guidance for walking and cycling.
5. The draft Guidance has been informed by feedback from a variety of user groups and its purpose is to be a tool used during the development management lifecycle to guide developers (and those whose role it is to approve and sign-off schemes) on preferred urban design practice that specifically takes into consideration the needs of all pedestrians and cyclists.

Fit with Existing Guidance

6. The new, updated guidance will supersede the guidance within the walking and cycling sections in the County Council's Residential Road Design Guide (RRDG) on our website – see: [Design Guide \(pdf format, 2.6Mb\)](#) - and builds on the themes contained within the government's [Manual for Streets \(2007\)](#), [Manual for Streets 2 \(2010\)](#) and national guidance, [Street Design for All \(2014\)](#), co-produced by DfT et al. The RRDG's accompanying sections will be fully updated at a future time. The new guidance will be available on our website, as part of pre-application advice, and will be live documents to be updated as required.

7. The RRDG is provided as guidance to developers at the pre-application stage. The updated walking and cycling design guidance will be given to developers at this stage, to facilitate good active and healthy travel infrastructure decision-making from the outset. See **Annex 1** for a flow chart of this process and how the new guidance will fit in.

How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives

8. The project aligns with our three over-arching transport goals (economy, environment and society) and several LTP4 policies, including:
 - (a) **Policy 19:** Oxfordshire County Council will encourage the use of modes of travel associated with healthy and active lifestyles.
 - (b) **Policy 34:** Oxfordshire County Council will require the layout and design of new developments to proactively encourage walking and cycling, especially for local trips, and allow developments to be served by frequent, reliable and efficient public transport.
9. Within that LTP4 framework, the Active & Healthy Travel Strategy Implementation Plan 2016-2017 includes the following related action:

AT4	Completion and implementation of updated best practice Design Guidance to ensure high standards of implementation for cycling and walking (as distinct and separate elements) and to ensure high standards in terms of developer funded infrastructure
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10. Since LTP4 was updated and adopted in 2016, an Active & Healthy Travel Steering Group (AHTSG) has been overseeing implementation of the AHTS, consisting of Council Transport and Public Health officers and representatives from the district and city councils. Local interest and campaign groups, Oxfordshire Cycling Network and Oxford Pedestrians Association, are also members.
11. In addition to this, much of this design guidance will need to be applied throughout the design and masterplanning of development sites, which are subject to district and city council controls. It is the remit of district and city council AHTSG members to ensure, where possible, that future Local and/or Spatial plans signpost readers to the Walking and Cycling Design Guidance to support the implementation of walking and cycling measures. This will ensure developments with sustainable and healthy travel credentials come forward.

What is covered in the Guidance Documents?

12. The emphasis of the revised guidance is to bring up to date and expand upon guidance contained in the RRDG, to raise the quality of cycling and walking infrastructure provided and to set out more clearly what is expected of developers, to ensure Oxfordshire remains competitive in terms of best practice for walking and cycling infrastructure nationally. See **Annexes 2 and 3** for a copy of the new design guidance documents.

a) The Cycling Design Guidance

13. Greater interest, investment and take up of cycling nationally over the past decade or so has led to a number of areas significantly improving their cycling infrastructure, notably London, Bristol and Cambridge. With a lack of up to date national cycling infrastructure guidance, many areas have created their own guidance documents. These cover recent advances in infrastructure thinking, such as segregated cycle lanes, tiger crossings (which combine a pedestrian zebra with a cycle crossing) and advance traffic signals for cyclists. Areas that have cycle infrastructure design guides tend to correspond to areas of greater cycle investment and ultimately greater increases of cycle use.
14. The design guidance includes references to existing guidance documents (for example from Highways England and Transport for London) – clearly signposting to sections of these documents that we expect to be followed alongside the Oxfordshire guidance, rather than just repeating it.
15. The cycling guidance document is split broadly into two sections, the first covers expectations for new developments (such as what sort of cycle infrastructure is required along various road types), the second section covers infrastructure specifications (such as how wide cycle lanes should be) which can apply equally to existing highway schemes as to new developments.
16. Significant changes from the guidance previously contained in RRDG:
- i. A clear expectation that cyclists should be provided for along all highways in new developments, either on the carriageway or on shared/segregated paths.
 - ii. A clear expectation that shared-use cycle/footways should not be provided alongside roads in urban areas where road speeds are 30mph or less. Such infrastructure is not popular with either pedestrians or cyclists, and is seen as outdated and inferior compared to alternatives. Negative points include pedestrian/cyclist conflict, lack of priority for cyclists at side roads and lower cycle design speeds.
 - iii. A clear specification for stepped or hybrid style cycle lanes along urban roads to be the default provision for cyclists in most circumstances. This is in line with recent work such as proposals contained in the [Botley Road corridor study](#). This style of cycle lane provides cyclists with their own space and helps ensure motor vehicles stay out of the cycle lane by raising it slightly, so that it's roughly midway between the carriageway and footway heights.

- iv. A clear expectation that cyclists should be considered in all highway junction designs for all movements.

b) The Walking Design Guidance

- 17. Much of what is written above about the RRDG applies to our reasoning for also updating our walking design guidance. The Walking Design Guidance is based around the principles of connectivity, permeability, wayfinding and personal security through different areas of a development.
- 18. The main emphasis is that walking is an element of virtually all trips - design for walking should therefore be considered in its own right, rather than assuming pedestrians can simply use infrastructure primarily designed for another mode, such as cyclists.
- 19. Significant changes from the guidance previously contained in RRDG:
 - i. Although the RRDG clearly stated that walking was top of the movement/user hierarchy, the WDG covers eleven factors that developers must follow to ensure that walking is considered as the priority.
 - ii. A clear expectation that pedestrian routes must be well designed, signed and direct, along logical desire lines and linking with key destinations such as schools, shops and green space.
 - iii. A clear expectation that Door to Door sustainable integrated travel will be made easier by providing safe routes to bus hubs and rail stations for people on foot as outlined in the Door to Door section of the Active & Healthy Travel Strategy.
 - iv. A clear understanding that walking is not just a transport issue – it is an active way of moving which brings significant physical and mental health benefits. The Guidance has been prepared in close co-operation with our Public Health colleagues.

c) Door to Door Travel

- 20. Most trips are multi-modal. As such the guidance also gives clarity on walking and cycling's role in longer distance trips, known as Door to Door Travel where there is an opportunity to integrate active travel with public transport rather than using a private vehicle for longer trips. There are significant opportunities here for Oxfordshire, particularly with the development of the proposed new Rapid Transit corridors, expanded Park & Ride network and new/enhanced rail interchanges.
- 21. Positive discussions with the Oxfordshire Cycling Network (OCN) and public transport operators, and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (via its Transport Group), have taken place already and we will be working together to develop this element of our Strategy.

Consultation Process and feedback

22. The Active & Healthy Travel Strategy is overseen by an Active & Healthy Travel Steering Group (AHTSG). Design Guidance documents have been reviewed by this Group.
23. As an extension to input from the Steering Group, wider stakeholder engagement was undertaken to ascertain if the updated guidance meets other user/representatives' needs. Drafts of the guidance were sent to:
 - Oxfordshire's District and City Councils
 - Developers/Landholders and/or their consultants
 - Pedestrian and cycling groups
 - Disability groups
 - Health Improvement and physical activity organisations
 - Civic Groups
 - University transport research teams
 - Public Transport operator and user groups
24. A table providing an overview of the responses received and our proposed response is at **Annex 4**.

Financial and Staff Implications

25. There are no specific schemes linked to the consideration within this proposal to updating the Walking and Cycling Design Guidance. It will influence the design of future capital schemes, for example, as set out in the Local Transport Plan and of those put forward by developers and external parties.
26. Any capital commitments would also lead to revenue budget pressures. When developing projects/schemes for approval, their full costs including revenue funding required to support them will need to be made explicit as part of business case submissions.
27. Some of the design guidance proposes significant changes to the design and implementation of walking and cycling schemes, as described above. For example, in considering the whole-life cost of this and ensuring active travel routes are as attractive as possible, in parallel we are reviewing our policies and approach to maintenance of on-carriageway cycle routes.

Equalities Implications

28. As part of the stakeholder consultation, a range of groups were asked for their input and opinion as to whether the application of the new Walking and Cycling Design Guidance would address their user's needs. Comments have been incorporated to address vulnerable user needs, which should be addressed at the beginning of the design and planning process.
29. Additionally, any pedestrian or cycling scheme implemented would be subject to more bespoke assessments linked to individual programmes and proposals,

as part of any associated design, consultation or wider master planning. There are no further equalities implications identified at this time.

Delivery of design guidance objectives

30. It is recognised that, in order for the Design Guidance to influence outputs within schemes and to support a consistent approach, all teams who support the development management process need to be aware of the principles contained within the guides. As part of the development of the documents and engagement process, the guides have been shared with various Council departments from development control and funding through to adoption and maintenance, and future updates will also be corroborated with these teams.

RECOMMENDATION

31. **The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to:**
- (a) **approve the new Walking and Cycling Design Guidance as attached for implementation as council guidance and for publication on the County Council website;**
 - (b) **authorise the Director for Planning & Place to carry out periodic reviews of the Design Guidance to ensure it continues to reflect local and national best practice.**

SUSAN HALLIWELL
Director for Planning & Place

Background papers:

- i) Annex 1: Walking & Cycling Design Guidance in the Planning Process
- ii) Annex 2: Walking Design Guide
- iii) Annex 3: Cycling Design Guide
- iv) Annex 4: Summary table of stakeholder comments

Contact Officer: Llewelyn Morgan – Service Manager – Localities, Policies & Programmes
llewelyn.morgan@oxfordshire.gov.uk, tel: 07881 268208

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ANNEX 1: Walking & Cycling Design Guidance in the Planning Process

