Oxfordshire County Council

Equalities Impact Assessment

STRATEGIC ACTIVE TRAVEL NETWORK

07/02/2024

Contents

Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Environment and Place, Transport and Infrastructure
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Strategic Active Travel Network
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	New strategy
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	The SATN is a Countywide network proposal of Active Travel routes containing both new and existing alignments. The aim of the network proposal is to inform future route development and help prioritise resources. The purpose of the programme is to fill the gaps between more detailed routes/network plans (e.g., LCWIPs) and to identify strategic long-distance connections. The SATN is has 3 potential impacts. Firstly, it will enhance the independence of individuals under the age of 18 who lack the option of driving, providing them with a viable mode of transportation and addressing the absence of accessible bus services in their vicinity. Secondly, rural communities, especially those with limited access to bus services, stand to benefit substantially by expanding available transportation options through the cycling network. Lastly, the implementation of the cycling network in deprived areas promises to positively impact these communities by offering a cost-effective and easily accessible mode of transportation, ultimately improving overall connectivity within these areas. The SATN has been scrutinised for biases, discrimination, or potential disadvantages toward individuals in the community, and no evidence of such negative impacts has been identified.
	David Calonge

Completed By	
Authorised By	Lauren Rushen
Date of Assessment	06/02/2024

Section 2: Detail of proposal

| **Context / Background**

Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions. | The SATN is a Countywide network proposal of Active Travel routes containing both new and existing alignments. This will inform a future route development and help prioritise resources. The purpose of this programme is to fill the gaps between more detailed routes/network plans (e.g., LCWIPs) and to identify strategic long-distance connections. A final report detailing a desire line network (straight lines) and potential alignments in need of further optioneering has been developed. It also contains a list of recommendations on how to proceed with the programme.

Emphasising the importance of a 'Strategic' approach, Oxfordshire aims to contribute strategically to active travel development. Currently, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) are the primary means of planning active travel networks in urban areas. While LCWIPs have been approved in various locations, SATN will play a crucial role in identifying strategic routes in more rural areas where LCWIPs might not be developed. The network may also complement other initiatives aimed at enhancing local active travel infrastructure.

The SATN programme is a result of strong policy support for the promotion of Active Travel. On a national policy level, the First Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2017) marked a significant step forward, aiming towards an increase in cycling rates and elevating cycling as a priority on the government's agenda. The more recent Cycling and Walking Plan for England (2022) envisions a transformative shift in travel patterns, aiming for a widespread adoption of cycling as a primary mode of transit. The plan aspires to make cycling and walking the instinctive and preferred choices for many journeys. Finally, the Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2022) sets an ambitious target to double cycling stages from 0.8 billion in 2013 to 1.6 billion stages, highlighting a commitment to furthering the integration of cycling into the national transportation system.

In the policy context specific to Oxfordshire, the impetus for SATN originated from the Oxfordshire Cycling Network's 2017 proposal for a "Strategic Cycling Network for Oxfordshire," highlighting the significance of strategic |

	planning for active travel networks beyond urban areas. The impetus was formally recognised by the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Active Travel Programme Board, which identified SATN as a as a 'Priority Workstream,' emphasising its significance in the county's transportation initiatives in March 2021. Further reinforcing this commitment, and as part of a broader initiative to transform travel patterns, reduce reliance on private motorised vehicles, and promote active travel and public transport, SATN was integrated with the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP). Specifically, the LTCP's Policy 4, supported by Action 5.4 of the Active Travel Strategy, mandates the development of the SATN:
	
	"*We will:*
	
	    a. *Develop a Strategic Active Travel Network in order to identify key routes for walking and cycling between destinations across the county and prioritise interventions to existing and new infrastructure.*
	    b. *Identify and support all opportunities to develop and link up the Strategic Active Travel Network in new developments, rural and major roadworks and road schemes.*"

Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	A countywide strategic active travel network is a fairly novel concept, especially in the United Kingdom. Given the lack of similar examples to work on, a thorough methodology was developed to ensure the network's strategic nature and territorial balance. The SATN project's methodology comprises four stages, each designed to yield a specific outcome that is subsequently refined in the following phase: 1. Baseline Analysis: focused on understanding the context for active travel in Oxfordshire, this stage utilised desk-based research and various datasets to review current active travel infrastructure, assess demand for future increases in active travel, and identify key developments influencing future demand. The outcome of this stage is an initial draft of a straight-line desire network (i.e., 'Long-List' of Desire Lines). 2. Network Development: the initial draft was refined via input gathered from the online engagement in December 2022 and the formal Consultation in July 2023, leading to a revised 'Longer-List' that expanded network coverage. This list was then segmented into Route Segments based on key settlements, attractions, and boundaries within the study area. The output is a Straight-line desire map divided into segments for prioritisation in the next phase.

	3. Network Prioritisation: a 'SATN Index' was developed to assess the strategic contribution of locations and routes to each segment. This index generated scores for each segment based on a variety of factors (e.g., importance of nearby settlements, existing and future development sites in its vicinity, major rail stations and/or retail centres, etc.). The top-scoring segments were identified and thus suggested for prioritisation. 4. Design Development: the Top-scoring routes were translated into on-the-ground alignments in collaboration with PJA. Multiple alignments were identified for flexibility, such as on-road and off-road options. Design approaches for proposed route alignments were recommended, categorised by typologies (on-road, PRoW, Quiet Lane), and a design toolkit was created with best practice examples to guide future development. These initial ground alignment suggestions will be utilised to commence the SATN's implementation phase with relevant teams following Cabinet approval in mid-March 2024.
Evidence / Intelligence List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	The SATN was developed on both vast amounts of data and engagement exercises (both informal and formal consultation in December 2022 and July 2023, respectively). Data was used to carry out the baseline analysis and produce a first draft of the straight-line desire network. Specifically, the following data sets for the county of Oxfordshire were analysed: • Method of travel to work (by distance); • Method of travel to work (by area); • Population density (by district); • Population density (by Lower Layer Super Output Area); • Local Plan Allocations; • Deprivation levels (by Lower Layer Super Output Area); • Mode share of public transport; • Mode share of walking and cycling; • Proportion of car-free households; • Strategic public transport network; • Existing walking and cycling networks; • Terrain elevation; • Density of collisions involving cyclists; • Density of collisions involving pedestrians;

	- Severance; - Cycle trips per day (Strava); - Trips on foot per day (Strava); - Propensity to cycle tool (PCT) based on an e-bike infrastructure improvement scenario; - Everyday trip origin clusters identification; - Everyday trip destinations (primary and secondary); Additionally, then results from the two engagement exercises were employed in the second phase to further refine the initial network proposal. The formal consultation was well received. It ran for 4.5 weeks, had 2000 visits to the official webpage with 147 participants producing 307 comments. Overall responses were very positive, with 46% of respondents stating they strongly supported the draft straight-line desire map, praising the methodology, openness and thoroughness. Negative comments were also considered, most of them stressing a lack of consideration to horse riders and too much focus on local community as opposed to other aspects such as tourism. The feedback was used to further correct and enhance the first draft network generated from the data sources.
Alternatives considered / rejected Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.	There were no other alternative considerations. Do nothing option: risk of LCWIPs disjointed, lack of vision, not meeting policy goals.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	☐	☒	☐	The establishment of a comprehensive countywide cycling network will enhance the independence of individuals under the age of 18 by providing cycling as a viable mode of transportation. This becomes particularly important as they lack the option of driving due to their age, making them ineligible for a driver's licence. Furthermore, the absence of accessible bus services in their vicinity underscores the importance of a cycling infrastructure to empower this demographic with alternative and self-reliant means of travel.			
Disability	☒	☐	☐				
Gender Reassignment	☒	☐	☐				

Marriage & Civil Partnership	☒	☐	☐				
Pregnancy & Maternity	☒	☐	☐				
Race	☒	☐	☐				
Sex	☒	☐	☐				
Sexual Orientation	☒	☐	☐				
Religion or Belief	☒	☐	☐				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	☐	☒	☐	The establishment of a comprehensive county-wide cycle network stands poised to bring substantial advantages to rural communities by expanding available transportation options. This impact is particularly noteworthy for communities that currently lack or have limited access to bus services. The endorsement of this perspective gains further credibility from the results of the July 2023 consultation, where a robust 46% of respondents expressed strong support for the proposed straight-desire line network, with an additional 36% providing their backing.			
Armed Forces	☒	☐	☐				

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Carers	☒	☐	☐				
Areas of deprivation	☐	☒	☐	The implementation of an extensive county-wide cycle network holds promise for positively impacting deprived areas, as it facilitates the utilisation of a cost-effective and easily accessible mode of transportation. This, in turn, enhances overall connectivity within these communities.			

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Staff	☒	☐	☐				
Other Council Services	☒	☐	☐				
Providers	☒	☐	☐				
Social Value	☒	☐	☐				

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	Not required.
Person Responsible for Review	Not required.
Authorised By	Not required.