

# On your bike

May 2008

Review Members:

Cllr Dhall; Cllr Greene; Cllr Joslin; Cllr Purse; Cllr Handley  
Cllr Lamont; Cllr Mathew; Cllr R. Smith; Cllr Nimmo-Smith





# Cycling to Work

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Corporate Policy, Performance and Review

May 2008

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## **GLOSSARY**

*This report is written as far as possible in plain English with the minimum of jargon. All acronyms are spelt out in full when they first appear but for sake of clarity their meanings are repeated here.*

<b>ASL</b>	Advanced Stop Line
<b>BUG</b>	Bicycle Users Group
<b>CPA</b>	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
<b>DCSF</b>	Department for Children, Schools and Families
<b>DCMS</b>	Department for Culture, Media and Sports
<b>DEFRA</b>	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
<b>DES</b>	??
<b>DfES</b>	Department for Education and Skills
<b>DfT</b>	Department for Transport
<b>DH</b>	Department of Health
<b>LTP1</b>	Oxfordshire's Local Transport Plan 2001 - 2006
<b>LTP2</b>	Oxfordshire's Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011
<b>NHS</b>	National Health Service
<b>OTS</b>	Oxford Transport Strategy
<b>PSA</b>	Public Service Agreement

For more information on cycling to work visit the following websites:

[www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/cycling/](http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/cycling/)

[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

[www.tfw.org.uk/tp-what.php](http://www.tfw.org.uk/tp-what.php)

[www.cyclerrail.co.uk](http://www.cyclerrail.co.uk)

[www.bikeforall.net/](http://www.bikeforall.net/)

[www.cyclingengland.co.uk](http://www.cyclingengland.co.uk)

[www.localauthoritycycling.org.uk/](http://www.localauthoritycycling.org.uk/)

[www.ctc.org.uk/](http://www.ctc.org.uk/)

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**ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
MAY 2008**

**CYCLING TO WORK**

**Report of the Environment & Economy Scrutiny Committee**

**SECTION 1 ~ SUMMARY**

1. 'Walking and cycling: an action plan' succinctly sets out the national position on cycling, which is that:

*cycling is good for our health, good for getting us around, good for our public spaces and good for our society.*

For all of these reasons more people need to be persuaded to choose to cycle more often. Around 60% of men and 70% of women are currently not physically active enough to benefit their health. Cycling offers the opportunity to build moderate, pleasant exercise into people's routines. This kind of exercise can help to counteract problems of overweight and obesity as well as coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer in addition to improving mental wellbeing. In short, regular cyclists are likely to live a healthier, longer life.

2. Cycling is also a vital means of travel and a viable mode of transport for many of our trips. Over 40% of all our trips are less than the average length of a cycling trip (i.e. under two miles) and nearly three quarters are under five miles. In addition, cycling provides a vital link to our public transport systems and a 'no-emissions' alternative to motor vehicles. Increasing cycling levels will also improve our public space and the social interactions we have. In addition it is far cheaper and very often quicker than any other means.
3. Despite these benefits only 2 percent of all journeys nationally are made by bike. Modern lifestyles combined with ever increasing levels of car ownership and inadequate public transport has seen cycling levels in the country decrease steadily over the last few decades. Most people still get in their cars for even short journeys. Specific local data on cycle commuting is of inconsistent quality but generally supports the national picture of a decline in cycling levels save for some unique pockets where the trend is reversed.
4. In the absence of reliable data there is a perception that large scale infrastructure investment during the period of the first local transport plan has not resulted in a commensurate increase in cycling. In recognition of this fact the Committee decided to try and investigate why this is and what, if anything the council and its partners are doing to improve this figure. In developing its recommendations, the Committee chose to focus on simple measures that could be taken as an alternative to expensive infrastructure projects to increase levels of cycle commuting. They have also sought to examine how the council, as the largest single employer in the county, can lead by example and increase the proportion of its own staff choosing to cycle to work.
5. Deterrents to cycling can be generally divided into two main reasons – attitude and infrastructure. However, in many instances the Committee found the two are interconnected; the second reason affects the first and vice-versa. For example, when more facilities for cyclists are put in place, more people become cyclists to use them. When more people use them, other people start noticing how fast and safely the cyclists

are getting about. Their attitude to cycling changes and more converts to cycling are created. Conversely, perceptions of safety affect some people's travel decisions and put them off cycling, reducing demand for the very infrastructure that can make travel by bike safer.

6. It may not be easy to reverse the decline in cycling since the barriers to cycling have developed over a long period. However in cities where cycling is encouraged and where facilities have been built, the percentage of cycle journeys increases. In York, for instance, 20% of all journeys are cycle journeys. In the Dutch city of Groningen the local politicians made themselves very unpopular twenty-five years ago by restricting car usage in the city centre, providing instead good cycle facilities and better bus services. Now there are no more complaints as up to 50% of all journeys are undertaken by cycle. In Cycling England's demonstration towns, sustained increases in the level of spending, comparable to the level of investment in continental European cities, have succeeded in getting many more people to use a bicycle to travel to work.
7. There is much to be celebrated with regard to cycling in Oxfordshire. The city of Oxford has the second highest level of cycling in the UK. The county council has opened 1200 miles of new cycle network in Oxfordshire, as part of Sustrans National Cycle Network, as well as 20 miles of regional route and 40 miles of other links including links to schools. These include a route along the Thames from Wallingford to Oxford, conversion of disused railway paths from Thame to Princes Risborough, and a route through Didcot to Upton. The number of people cycling to work at Oxford Business Park is continuing to rise with about 12% of the people who work there (over 550 staff up from 50 or so in 2003) are cycle commuting. This improvement is attributed to the money invested in cycle path improvements. Cycling needs to be considered in the context of broader transport objectives and here there have also been considerable successes. The county and city councils have consistently taken a joint approach to tackling Oxford's transport challenges – it was one of the first cities in the UK to adopt a traffic restraint policy and abandon road building as a solution to its transport problems. To constrain traffic growth, policies have consistently been applied to restrict the availability of public and employee car-parking, and successful Park and Ride schemes were introduced and expanded.
8. Recently, however, the second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) has resulted in very limited funding opportunities to promote cycling further. Faced with these changes, the need for certain reprioritisations has been widely recognised within the county council and the Cabinet has taken some tough choices to ensure spending stays within budget. This has meant a number of large scale construction projects have not been progressed on the understanding that some of this money could be better spent in other ways to attract greater numbers of people new to cycling.
9. This Scrutiny Report accepts rather than questions most of these constraints. Consequently it sets out the practical steps which the authority and its partners could take to increase levels of cycling and overcome those barriers, without radically increasing its expenditure. Some of these measures, the Committee believe, are already in the pipeline. It is vital that the Cabinet seeks to implement as many of these recommendations as possible. By doing so it can demonstrate some of the political will necessary to sustain cycling as a high priority. As one contributor summed it up:

*It is high time we all started doing more about climate change rather than just talking about it. Bearing in mind its health value as well, cycling is one of the most useful and sensible things to do and the county council should be doing all it can to encourage more of it.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to:

- R1) publish a short policy statement to clarify the council's strategy for cycling.
- R2) set new targets that aim to achieve modest increases in rates of cycle commuting and ensure these can be monitored with robust data.
- R3) enter into discussions with the Oxfordshire Health and Well-Being Partnership, Oxfordshire Sports Partnership and Oxfordshire Economic Partnership to create a long-term vision for the future of cycling, which can be delivered incrementally over the next twenty years.
- R4) continue with its plans to enable staff to participate in the tax exemption bike-to-work scheme as part of its overall package of employee benefits, and endorses its decision to use local bike shops as the providers.
- R5) redeploy an existing officer from within Environment & Economy as the County Cycling Officer. **OR** retain the current approach that avoids the need for a dedicated cycling officer but undertakes an overhaul of its communication strategy, in consultation with local stakeholders, to deliver improvements in terms of a cycling single point of contact.

**NB: Decide which of these two different recommendations the Committee prefers and delete as appropriate**

- R6) use National Bike Week more effectively as a focus for improving the council's marketing and promotion of cycling to work.
- R7) set a long term promotional strategy that looks to develop a range of messages over time that target different segments of the near market for cycling.
- R8) negotiate with the police to improve all road users' safety by conducting additional high-profile enforcement 'crackdowns' of cyclist and driver behaviour during national bike week.
- R9) pledge its commitment to the development of a regional or national online cycle journey planner and ask the Director of Environment & Economy to identify an existing officer to represent this authority at forums to progress such a facility.
- R10) provide a bike doctor service to staff at its major office bases on a rotational basis.
- R11) raise awareness through better publicity and promotion of the mechanism for reporting faults, obstructions and other cycle path and highway maintenance issues.
- R12) improve the enforcement of parking restrictions at areas known to block existing cycle routes.

- R13) congratulate itself for agreeing to fund a feasibility study into establishing a bike rental scheme and urges it to discuss any proposals with other relevant stakeholders such as rail companies, the hospitals and the Oxford universities.**
- R14) purchase a small number of pool bikes to compliment the pool cars and ensure they can be booked by staff using the same system.**
- R15) support a county council bicycle users group to create an informal internal discussion forum for cycling issues amongst staff by giving it a web-page and an email distribution list.**
- R16) continue to support schools to identify volunteers that can deliver cycle training and to create a target to ensure 99% of primary schools make six weeks of such training available to their pupils.**
- R17) lead by example and ensure covered cycle parking is available at all county council offices.**
- R18) ensure provision of Sheffield-style cycle parking is a standard requirement for all new developments and that actual installation of agreed parking places is enforced.**
- R19) place stickers on cycle parking racks across the county (like those on lampposts) to advise users of best security practices and informing them of how to report faults and problems on their routes via the online system.**

## SECTION 2 ~ BACKGROUND

### AIMS OF THE REVIEW

10. At prior meetings on 31 October 2007 and 12 December 2007, the Committee discussed the fact that large investment in cycle paths as part of the first Local transport Plan (LTP1) have not led to commensurate increases in cycling. They also noted the lack of LTP2 funding for further major infrastructure investment. A consensus emerged that the select committee style investigation should therefore focus on simple measures that could be taken as an alternative to expensive infrastructure projects to increase levels of cycle commuting. Three main aims were distilled out of the broader objective, namely to:
  - a) establish what resources are available to spend on smaller, practical measures to promote cycling,
  - b) assess the likely effectiveness of the council's existing plans and proposals for spending those resources, and
  - c) identify any suggestions for changing these proposals with a view to achieving improved rates of cycle commuting.
  
11. In addition to the experts invited to address the Committee at its specially extended February meeting (listed in **Annex 2**) a number of key issues were identified in advance through examination of a large amount of written information relating to national strategies and local services (listed in **Annex 1**). Given the time constraints arising from conducting their investigation via one meeting, further witnesses were also invited to contribute written submissions of evidence which the Committee had before them and were used to inform their questioning.
  
12. It was felt that this was an important area for Scrutiny because of councillors' concerns that despite a variety of recent high profile council priorities that look towards tackling congestion, achieving modal shift, reducing our carbon footprint and improving residents' health, attempts to bolster cycling during the current decade have been disappointing. For instance, the target published in the Cycling Strategy produced in conjunction with LTP1 that sought specifically to increase the proportion of cycle trips for the journey to work from 9.2% in 1991 to 20% in 2011 is now judged unattainable. The Review was considered timely as it followed the submission of a report from Cyclox in October 2007 to the Cabinet member for Transport, which outlined the specific needs of city cyclists that they felt were a priority for the council to address. It also coincided with the publication in January 2008 of the Department for Transport's 'Sustainable Future for Cycling', which reaffirmed its commitment to working with local authorities to devise better ways of improving facilities for cyclists and increasing the numbers of people choosing to cycle.
  
13. It should be noted that the Review could not cover everything and in line with good project management methodology deliberately restricted its focus to keep the scope of their assessment manageable. The Councillors chose *not* to examine issues relating to sustainable travel to school and school Travel Plans.

### THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

14. The government has persistently demanded that cycling should play a significant part in all local authority plans to deal with the growing demand for travel while reducing the impact of transport on the environment. Especially since over 40 per cent of *all* trips are

less than two miles – a distance easily cycled in about 15 minutes – and nearly a quarter of *all car* trips are under two miles. The government argue that if people chose to make some of those trips by bike, it would have a considerable impact on local congestion and pollution.

15. Ever since the National Cycling Strategy was introduced (by Steven Norris in 1996) cycling has been viewed as an underused element within a sustainable transport policy framework. Local authorities and other transport providers have therefore been encouraged to set local targets to change this. The Ten Year Transport Plan for England (DfT, 2000) revised the target for cycling in England (downwards from quadrupling 1996 levels by 2012) to tripling cycling from 2000 levels by 2010. In 2004 the DfT published its Walking and Cycling Action Plan to set out shorter-term, practical steps it wanted to see being taken to achieve this. Two further publications – ‘Towards a Sustainable Transport System: Supporting Economic Growth in a Low Carbon World’ (October 2007) and ‘A Sustainable Future for Cycling’ (January 2008) – reinforced these requirements on local authorities.
16. The arguments to justify this longstanding position are well rehearsed but essentially boil down to a number of benefits to the individual: the fact that:
  - *Cycling can significantly improve health.*  
The health benefits of regular cycling include dramatically reduced risk of dying from heart disease, developing high blood pressure, diabetes, colon and breast cancer. This has never been more important against the current background of rising obesity levels, particularly among children. According to the British Medical Journal only one in four people currently meets the health guidelines of taking 30 minutes of moderate activity five times a week. Increasing the amount of ‘active transport’ – walking and cycling – is one of the biggest changes that the UK could make to reverse its emerging obesity epidemic.<sup>1</sup> Tackling obesity is also an Oxfordshire Public Health Strategy objective.
  - *Cycling can significantly improve well being and fitness.*  
One advantage that cycling has over other forms of exercise is that because it serves a transportation function it can easily become part of everyday activity. A regular cyclist (commuting four miles each week day) saves the NHS £28.30 a year.<sup>2</sup> Studies have shown that cycling for at least 30 minutes a day gives people a level of fitness equivalent to being 10 years younger and those cycling beyond their mid-thirties could add an extra 2 years to their life expectancy.<sup>3</sup>
  - *Cycling offers enhanced reliability of journey.*  
Cycling is increasingly becoming a faster means of transport than the car for shorter journeys. It is frequently claimed in trial after trial that cycling in congested urban centres offers the quickest form of transport for many journeys.
  - *Cycling is inclusive and cheap*  
The number of cycles owned in Britain at the end of the 1990s was estimated to be around 20 million and there were 22 million registered private cars. Cycling is widely available at zero marginal cost since more than 50% of households own at least one bike. For groups of people that have no access to cars, cycling can be an important way of connecting within and between communities.

<sup>1</sup> Obese people die on average 9 years earlier than those with a healthy weight (‘Years of Life Lost Due to Obesity’, Journal of the American Medical Association, 2003). Obesity rates have trebled over the last three decades and now affects one-quarter of adults and 15% of children.

<sup>2</sup> Valuing the Benefits of Cycling, SQW Consulting, May 2007, p.22 [Evidence from the Copenhagen Heart Study cited in this report suggests this is a considerable underestimate for cycle commuters]

<sup>3</sup> Cycling: Towards health and safety, British Medical Association, 1992, p.115 and 117

17. Moreover, these individual benefits, along with other specific social benefits, offer a great saving to the public purse and enhance the collective good of an area, by for example:

- *Cycling can help to tackle climate change and improve air quality.*  
Transport emissions already make up 70% of air pollution in towns and cities. Between 14,000 and 24,000 hospital admissions a year are linked to poor air quality. Air pollution is currently estimated to reduce life expectancy in the UK by 7–8 months. Studies have shown that people inside cars are more exposed to air pollution than cyclists. The Climate Change Bill seeks to ensure at least a 60% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050. Cycling, as a clean low-carbon mode of travel, can contribute to achieving this reduction.
- *Increased cycling, as a result of modal shift, can minimise congestion.*  
The cost of congestion to the UK economy is estimated at around £20 billion each year.<sup>4</sup> If cycle commuting could take only 5% of current low occupancy private vehicles off the road, especially during peak hours, there could be associated consequences for productivity from consequent reductions in congestion. An adult who swaps a car for a bicycle on a return urban journey of 2.5 miles will generate annual savings of £137 through reduced congestion.<sup>5</sup>
- *Cycling offers enhanced quality of life.*  
In addition to the individual benefits of improved health, fitness, reliability, punctuality, etc. the government also argue that cycling is a mode that allows us to stop and chat or just say 'hello' in a way which it is difficult to do when closeted in the car. As such, it can improve our sense of community. It provides for more pleasant and sustainable public spaces and serves to support local facilities.
- *Improving exercise rates can save the economy money*  
It is estimated that heart disease rates would drop by around 5-10% if one third of all short car journeys were made by bike. Dropping heart disease rates by around 5-10% would save the NHS around £50m annually.<sup>6</sup> Returning the number of bicycle trips to 1995 levels could save £520m by 2015.<sup>7</sup>

18. In short, the government wants to encourage people to cycle more. Cycling therefore continues to be recognised as a key element of local transport planning. The Department for Transport (DfT) expects local highway authorities to develop a local cycling strategy as part of their Local Transport Plans (LTPs). The DfT also expects local highway authorities to set their own cycling targets to ensure they are fully maximising the potential of cycling to help reduce car use.

19. Through their responsibilities for highways and urban planning, local authorities play an integral role in making changes to the built environment to create better conditions for walking and cycling. To assist them in creating more people-orientated residential streets, the DfT published its Manual for Streets in 2007. This seeks to encourage councils and developers to assign a higher priority to the needs of both pedestrians and cyclists, and in doing so reducing the dominance of motor vehicles. For example, making more streets 'no through roads' for motor vehicles. Local authorities must also consider cyclists in any new road building, reconstruction work and highway design changes.

<sup>4</sup> The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, DEFRA 2007, vol. 2 p.43

<sup>5</sup> Valuing the Benefits of Cycling, SQW Consulting, May 2007, p.39

<sup>6</sup> 15 other pieces of recently published research on health impacts of cycling can be found in the Evidence Briefing 'Transport interventions promoting safe cycling and walking, NICE, July 2006, pp.46-53

<sup>7</sup> Valuing the Benefits of Cycling, SQW Consulting, May 2007, p.54

## SECTION 3 ~ FINDINGS

### THE CURRENT SITUATION

#### i. Performance data

20. Despite increased investment in infrastructure national DfT statistics show a significant decline between 1996 and 2006 in *all* cycle trips and in the distance travelled by bicycle per person per year.<sup>8</sup> However, the 2001 census shows no significant difference in *proportion* of journey's to work made by bicycle as compared with 1991 – the average being 2.9% – which suggests that levels are beginning to stabilise.
21. Some of the most significant deterrents to cycling are hilly terrain and poor weather both of which the county council can do little about. However, the percentage of personal journeys undertaken by cycle is considerably lower in Britain than in most European countries despite the prevalence of similar conditions:

*In Switzerland there are more hills, Sweden has colder winters and Germany higher car ownership; yet each has five times the share of bicycle trips than the UK.<sup>9</sup>*

Even in Bellingham, in the state of Washington, USA where car use is high, cycling levels are still higher than most English towns and cities. The graph below shows that there is real scope for increasing cycle use for some trips.<sup>10</sup> The Preston example is typical of the British average, whilst the Sustainable Travel Town of Peterborough has shown notable improvements in cycling levels. The achievements of Basel and Freiburg indicate that there is clearly potential to increase cycling further.



22. The Committee regret that they have been unable to obtain published, up-to-date, accurate, disaggregated, definitive data on levels of cycling to work for Oxfordshire. Older data that looks at *all* cycle journeys suggest levels are falling, but the limitations of

<sup>8</sup> Transport Statistics Bulletin - The National Travel Survey: 2006, Department for Transport, 2007, pp.14-5

<sup>9</sup> The National Cycling Strategy, 1996, p.7

<sup>10</sup> A Sustainable Future for Cycling, Department for Transport, 2008, p.12

a methodology for data collection to measure performance based on a biennial household survey was acknowledged by the council. In recognition of this data deficiency the Directorate sought to acquire the capacity to produce a countywide measure of changes in cycle use by April 2006.<sup>11</sup> The Committee look forward to more robust data being made available in a year's time when it evaluates the impact of this Scrutiny Report.

#### Mode of travel to work (per 1,000 residents in each area)

Town	Walking/ cycling		% change
	1991	2001	
Oxford (central, south and west)	502	406	-19%
Oxford (remainder)	293	265	-10%
Abingdon	184	165	-10%
Banbury	252	217	-14%
Bicester	201	130	-35%
Didcot	176	113	-36%
Wantage & Grove	176	136	-23%
Witney	220	159	-27%
Oxfordshire total	2004	1591	-21%

Source: Oxfordshire's Sustainable Community Strategy Briefing Paper 10: Access and travel, 03 Aug 2007, p.21

23. Data at district level shows the city of Oxford performs well. Cambridge has by far the highest proportion of cycle journeys to work, with almost twice as many cyclists as the next best cities of Oxford and York.<sup>12</sup> The vast majority of districts (including Oxford) show little if any recent change in the proportion cycling to work; local surveys have similarly indicated static performance for cycling to work.

#### Percentage of residents travelling to work by cycle

	1981	1991	2001	% change '91-'01
<b>Cambridge</b>	27%	28%	28%	<b>0%</b>
<b>Oxford City</b>	??	17%	16%	<b>-5%</b>
<b>Oxfordshire</b>	??	8%	7%	<b>-12%</b>
<b>UK average</b>	3.7%	3.2%	2.9%	<b>-10%</b>

Source: Office for National Statistics (online datasets available based on census data)

However, fourteen districts buck this trend (seven of which are inner London boroughs) and have shown greater than 1% increases in cycling between 1991 and 2001. On average a 1% increase can be achieved by persuading less than 500 people in a district to cycle to work. For Oxfordshire as a county to replicate this performance it would need to attract nearly 2,500 new or returning cyclists.

## ii. Resources

24. One of the main aims of this investigation was to establish what resources are available to spend on facilities and promotion for cycling. Unfortunately the Committee have not been supplied with this information. This is due, in part, to the fact that spending is not clearly disaggregated in this way. A number of schemes, plans and proposals all having a bearing on cycling that is difficult to quantify and attribute accurately without a great

<sup>11</sup> LTP Delivery Report, July 2006, p.38

<sup>12</sup> Comparisons of cycle use for the journey to work from the '81, '91 and 2001 censuses, J. Parkin, 2003, p.299 [Cambridge is the only district which saw its 2001 rates of cycling *greater* than 1981 levels]

deal of forensic accounting. As officers from the Directorate have explained, their budgets do not seek to address cycling in and of itself but rather as a means to other ends, such as improving road safety or tackling congestion.

25. Another reason for the lack of transparency over resources for cycling is that much of the funding comes from section 106 contributions, which are themselves difficult to quantify. Some witnesses told the Committee of the difficulties they experienced in establishing what their contributions had been spent on. However, it is clear from articles in the local press that a number of schemes are going ahead on the basis of such funding. For example, about £32,000 of developer contributions are to be spent on Iffley Road. Another scheme, known as the Woodgreen cycle track, is going ahead to encourage cycling by providing a good link between existing and new housing and the town centre. Other external resources are benefiting Oxfordshire, for example cash has been earmarked for a bridge over the canal near Bankside in Banbury after Sustrans won a £200,000 share of a £50m Lottery project, which will provide a safe-off road route for all active travel modes.
26. The Committee therefore cannot look at the total spend and make a judgement about its sufficiency. However, it is reasonable to assume that Oxfordshire's capital spend is comparable to that of many other authorities, which are known to be in the region of £1 per head per year (although figures vary from as little as 6p to one outlying authority that was spending £7). Evidence from European cities that have successfully increased cycling, suggests this is insufficient as they typically spend £5 per head per year for an intensive period of 10-15 years in order to make cycling an easy, convenient, safe and attractive choice. Evidence from Cycling England's Demonstration Towns shows that sustained investment in the region of £10 per head can work. These towns are already demonstrating how higher levels of funding leads to higher levels of cycling. In 12 months, Aylesbury has seen a 42% increase, Exeter 26% and Darlington 57% proving that dramatic progress is possible.
27. Looking at it another way, it is clear that cyclists have a high degree of unmet need. Officers from the Directorate have themselves also identified areas where they feel insufficient investment of both financial and human resources has impeded their ability to make an impact on levels of cycle commuting locally. For instance, Better Ways to School has taken precedence of late because explicit government targets for all schools to have a Travel Plan by 2009 have necessitated a switch of emphasis in LTP2. As a result the former dedicated Travel to Work officer post was left vacant for two years. This has meant there is a danger that Business Travel Plans are being produced simply as part of the requirement for planning permission and are not being checked or monitored to see how successful they are. The recent appointment within the Future First team of a Sustainable Travel Coordinator suggests that this is now being addressed. The great success of school travel planning in producing a 2% shift away from the car demonstrates the potential impact a renewed focus on more environmental workplace travel could have.
28. The Committee understand that the council's share of national funding for LTP2 is lower than that for LTP1. Moreover, the criteria by which all transport measures are judged now pertain to four key government priorities. Together these changes have reduced the funds available and as a result some tough choices have been taken including the decision to stop funding relatively expensive cycle routes.<sup>13</sup> For example a large scheme from Wootton to Abingdon has been cancelled because its cost of £800k could not be justified for a scheme that would make current users safer but attract few new users, given that money could be spent far more effectively in other ways. The

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<sup>13</sup> CPA Self-Assessment, Oct 2007, p.12

Committee respect this reprioritisation and consequently are not identifying any large scale infrastructure construction in its recommendations.

29. The Cabinet have said that if Scrutiny wishes to suggest spending any more money on actions to improve its performance in relation to cycling that it identifies where this can come from. This is especially challenging in the absence of information about where existing spend comes from. However, a number of researchers have concluded that in the long-run investment in cycling produces savings in other areas. For instance the Department for Transport have calculated a benefit cost ratio of 3.2 to 1; that is, each £1 invested produces gains worth £3.20. Sustrans have calculated many of their schemes to have even better rates of return, in the order of four, five or even six times this amount.<sup>14</sup> It may therefore be reasonable to take a small sum from the budget reserves in the expectation that this will have a beneficial impact elsewhere in the council budget, as has been done this year by the investment of £100,000 as a one-off investment proposal to fund the feasibility study into the Rent-A-Bike scheme. Alternatively money could be used from the Directorate's underspend, which in March 2008 was forecast to increase by £½m to £760,000.
30. Cycling England was set up by the DfT in 2005 with a £10m per year budget to supplement local authority spending to deliver a suite of projects that improve facilities for cyclists and encourage more people to cycle more safely and more often. This has now been increased to £20m next year and £60m in each of 2009–10 and 2010–11. The total three-year budget will be £140m (of which £110m is a 500% increase in resources). The Committee understand that Oxfordshire have not bid to receive any of this financial support, which may represent considerable untapped resources. The DfT also offers up to 5 days of free site-specific consultancy advice to companies which want to deliver a travel plan, in recognition of the need to work with larger employers to ensure the benefits of travel plans are well understood. There may be a useful role for the new Sustainable Travel Coordinator to promote this amongst local businesses.

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<sup>14</sup> Sustrans' research on their website, quoted in Local Transport Today N°.452, 21 Sept 2006

## **SERVICE GAPS**

### **(a) Cycling Strategy**

31. The DfT expects local highway authorities to develop a local cycling strategy as part of their Local Transport Plans (LTPs). The Committee learnt that intentions for an Active Travel Strategy to be produced, as set out in chapter 4 of the second Local Transport Plan, have since been shelved. Prior to that councillors and the public were told first that a strategy to take forward cycling proposals would be due for public consultation in spring 2006 but subsequently, owing to the departure of a number of people from the Oxford Transport Strategy (OTS) team, that this would be deferred to spring 2008. It is no longer viewed as efficient to continue to spend resources on creating such a document to help guide future decisions on the prioritisation of schemes, when there are already sufficient schemes in place for the level of funding available to which the council is committed.
32. The Committee agree that it is not sensible to continue working on this strategy for the sake of it. However, this leaves the status of the former LTP's 'Cycling Strategy' daughter document somewhat unclear. LTP2 states that:
- Broadly speaking, the principles underlying the existing strategies remain valid.<sup>15</sup>*
- In the short-term, a brief policy statement should be produced and reported to Cabinet setting out what the council is aiming to achieve, to clarify this position. If existing strategies from LTP1 are indeed still relevant, further copies of the former cycling strategy should be printed and/ or made available on the website. At present there is no information in the public domain as to exactly what comprises the council's strategy for cycling.
33. Given the reality of fewer resources being available for new cycle paths, the Committee supports the Directorate's use of an assessment framework results to create a list of priorities for investment that deliver the best improvements possible per pound spent. This means that infrastructure improvements to encourage cycling will only be considered as a part solution to congestion where at least 10% of the trips causing the problem are estimated to be 5 miles or less in length (i.e. where the number of potential 'switchers' is high).
34. In the longer term, the council should seek to set out a broader scale vision for the type of infrastructure it would like to see in place in ten or twenty year's time. Witnesses from cycling organisations were very keen to see a sense of the future being articulated, so that incremental growth in the network and other faculties can be seen as partial steps towards a greater whole. The Committee were very struck by this proposition and feel it offers a way to ensure that funding opportunities could be harnessed as they arise and coordinated to contribute to that vision, rather than simply being ad hoc.
35. The zero-growth target to maintain cycling levels at 2005/ 06 rates until 2010/ 11 strikes the Committee as not sufficiently ambitious. This sends out the wrong message at a time when the council has publicly committed to improving the area's carbon footprint. We would like to see the directorate reassess what it feels can be reasonably achieved and to publish, via its Transport Strategy & Policy Business Plan, targets that support even modest increases for the later half of the decade.

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<sup>15</sup> Oxfordshire's second Local transport Plan 2006-11, p.106

- R1) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to publish a short policy statement to clarify the council’s strategy for cycling.**
- R2) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to set new targets that aim to achieve modest increases in rates of cycle commuting and ensure these can be monitored with robust data.**
- R3) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to enter into discussions with the Oxfordshire Health and Well-Being Partnership, Oxfordshire Sports Partnership and Oxfordshire Economic Partnership to create a long-term vision for the future of cycling, which can be delivered incrementally over the next twenty years.**

## **(b) Cycle to work scheme**

36. The Finance Act 1999 and the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003 provided a tax exemption to allow employers to loan cycles and cyclist safety equipment to their employees to cycle to work. In 2005 the Government assisted the cycle industry in promoting the scheme by providing implementation guidance. It also asked the Office of Fair Trading to issue a group consumer credit licence to allow all UK businesses to offer cycle packages to each member of staff of up to £1,000 in order to cycle to work, thus dispensing with the need to apply for an individual licence. Nationally this has attracted nearly 100,000 employees to cycle to work, half of whom are new or returning cyclists.
37. Until now the county council, the largest employer in Oxfordshire, has been lagging behind many other employers in not offering this scheme. Amongst others the University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes, Oxford University Press, Harwell UKAEA, and the Oxford Radcliffe Hospital Trust have all participated for several years. Council participation was considered a few years ago but the directorate felt at that time that it didn’t have the resources to cover the necessary administration.
38. Though not mentioned during the 20 February meeting, the Committee have since learned that the council is due to take advantage of these legislative changes and begin offering this scheme to all its permanent employees. Officers in County HR, payroll and Future First have worked together to agree a contract with a respected staff benefits company to run the scheme (in conjunction with the childcare vouchers and travel loans). This means that eligible employees will be able to receive a voucher to spend in any of ten local bicycle shops. The shops pay for the scheme from their sales revenue. The employee repays the cost of the voucher over twelve months through a salary sacrifice arrangement, minus the tax and national insurance contributions (a saving to the employee of between 30–50% depending on their tax band) At the end of the 12-month loan period they purchase the cycle and equipment for a small final payment.
39. The Committee wish to put its full weight in support of these proposals and commend the council for participating in the government’s scheme for at least the next two years. It is due to be launched in May 2008.

- R4) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to continue with its plans to enable staff to participate in the tax exemption bike-to-work scheme as part of its overall package of employee benefits, and endorses its decision to use local bike shops as the providers.**

### (c) Cycling officer/ point of contact

40. Stakeholders consistently expressed the view that their contact with the council in connection to cycling has worsened since a number of officers who historically had taken a lead on cycling have not been replaced. There also appears to be a lack of internal communication between the Sustainable Travel Coordinator in the Future First team, who has been in post since November 2007 to lead on improving the sustainability of business travel, and the assortment of transport planners in the Transport Policy and Strategy division. A number of witnesses explicitly called for the restoration of a cycling officer post. Several comparable authorities, including Cambridgeshire (which has at its heart the city with *the* highest rates of cycling) and Hampshire, have taken this approach and maintain a specific Cycling Officer. **Talk about details of this officer once I get a reply to my email from Patrick Joyce at Cambridge CC**
41. On receiving this feedback, senior managers within the Directorate expressed surprise, as in their view the council has never had a specific cycling officer. They argue that by not having a specific dedicated cycling officer the Directorate can more effectively mainstream responsibility for thinking about cycling issues amongst several or all of its existing transport policy officers. Maintaining widespread enthusiasm for and ownership of cycling matters across the transport section is preferable to having officers abdicating responsibility and neglecting cycling in their day-to-day work because they feel this is the role of a single dedicated officer. The view was expressed that the Transport Planning team could and does act as the identifiable point of contact.
42. Whilst there is considerable benefit from taking this approach and embedded cycling considerations into everyone's work (which also reduces the risk of considerable knowledge loss to the authority from one specific officer leaving), the Committee have identified evidence that highlights two main drawbacks. First, experience elsewhere suggests that cycling then slips down everyone's list of priorities as the other elements of their job take precedence. This is what happened in York City Council when due to budget constraints they could no longer retain a specific cycling officer. Their attempts to mitigate this by having a wider ownership of cycling across the Transport Planning Unit has not been very effective. This is because the remaining officers have their own specialisms and workloads and therefore do not have the time or resources to deal with other areas of work. Paradoxically, cycling was marginalised by attempts to mainstream it.
43. Second, it can make it hard for 'customers' to establish clear lines of communication and accountability with established contacts. Different pages of the county councils' website list at least nine different phone numbers as a possible contact for cycling (815575, 810226, 815094, 810474, 815660, 815090, 815098, 815861 and 815919 and alternate between referring people to 'Transport Planning', 'Transport Strategy and Development Control' or 'Future First'. For the general public, who often only have a very basic understanding of the difference between district and county councils and even less knowledge of how the Environment & Economy Directorate is structured or which team is which, this is rather confusing.
44. A reinvigorated and refreshed approach to communication should be established, centred on ensuring greater customer focus. This would perhaps see a new email address created, such as [cycling@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:cycling@oxfordshire.gov.uk), and an already existing phone number marketed in a new way as the cycling single point of contact. This could be an existing officer's number or a particular teams' general office number. Such steps would help to ensure there is a mechanism for greater dialogue between cyclists, cycling groups, employers, bus and rail companies and local authorities.

**R5) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to redeploy an existing officer from within Environment & Economy as the County Cycling Officer. OR The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to retain the current approach that avoids the need for a dedicated cycling officer but undertake an overhaul of its communication strategy, in consultation with local stakeholders, to deliver improvements in terms of a cycling single point of contact.**

**NB: Decide which of these two different recommendations the Committee prefers and delete as appropriate**

#### **(d) National Bike Week and promotional material**

45. Officers within the transport planning and strategy group accept that they could have done more in the last few years in terms of pushing cycling maps and promotional literature. A lack of human resources has been identified as the main reason for limited achievement in this area. A good map of cycle routes in Oxford has been published and distributed but other parts of the county are not so well served. Potential ideas to raise awareness of new local routes, for example, partnership working with local universities and further education colleges to provide information to students when they first arrive, remain under-exploited. A good dual purpose leaflet has recently been produced aimed at cyclists and lorry drivers but these needs to be accompanied by further publicity.
46. Review-level evidence is inconclusive on the effectiveness of blanket publicity campaigns directed at the general population not differentiated by motivation or personal travel circumstances in achieving modal shift. However, there is review-level evidence that behavioural change programmes that target people who are motivated to change their transport behaviour through individualised marketing are effective.<sup>16</sup> This has been recognised in a number of publications which seek to segment the market for cycling to enable better targeting of promotion.<sup>17</sup> The Committee would like to see tailored communication messages being produced that respond to the particular needs and views of these different demographics. In the longer term, it is hoped that some of the practices of the cycling demonstration towns for individualised travel planning can be adopted (see **Appendix 3**), with the greatest efforts being concentrated on those target audiences most likely to respond.
47. The Council has seldom used National Bike Week as a platform to launch a campaign to raise awareness of cycling facilities in Oxfordshire or to market the benefits of cycling to local residents. The Committee would like to see this change and that each year any new activity by the council is timed to be released during the third week in June (14 – 21 June 2008). For example, this could take the form of delaying the announcement of the new bike to work scheme (and/ or timing the Cabinet's response to Cyclox's report) to coincide with Bike Week this year. Purchase of some pool bikes for staff the following year, followed by re-launching updated publicity, maps and literature along with personalised travel planning the year after that. Creating this kind of expectation at a regular point in the year would bring a degree of focus to marketing and promotional activities that many in the field of social marketing identify as an essential component to success. The issue of 'Oxon News' closest to mid-June should also contain a page dedicated each year to a cycling feature. Taking such steps is not expensive, it merely

<sup>16</sup> Evidence Briefing 'Transport interventions promoting safe cycling and walking', NICE, July 2006, p.35

<sup>17</sup> For example, 'The Marketing Cycling Handbook', National Cycling Strategy Board, 2004 and 'The Near Market for Cycling in London, Transport For London, 2004

times existing proposals and committed expenditure to coincide with a time when cycling is already a focus of attention and thus creates and capitalises on mutually reinforcing messages.

48. Information on the council's website is good overall. The language used is often straightforward and user-friendly. There are also some good links to other organisations and sources of information. However, given that Oxford has the second highest amount of cycling in the UK, the quality of the information on these pages should be improved to bring it closer to those at the leading edge. Some of the content has not been updated for nearly two years. A specific improvement the Committee would like to see is the addition of link to the council's online fault reporting process. This online facility should seek to take a customer focussed approach to problems that are district council responsibilities (e.g. clearing glass from cycle paths). This means passing the message on to the appropriate contact, rather than informing the citizen that they need to tell somebody else.
49. There is no interactive cycling map or route planning service unlike Transport for London. Southwark Borough Council has recently improved its interactive mapping with the addition of cycle parking facilities. Cycling groups have said they would like to see a website developed that offers specific local route planning for cyclists, showing on and off road routes. This may best be tackled in partnership at a regional level, for example by improving the service provided by [www.transportdirect.info](http://www.transportdirect.info), which at present serves all forms of travel except cycles. Oxfordshire should actively support and participate in all moves to develop a regional or national online cycle journey planner (see [www.cyclejourneyplanner.org.uk/](http://www.cyclejourneyplanner.org.uk/)).
50. Citizens' Panel respondents ranked the availability of an interactive cycling website as their second most preferred measure to encourage cycling (42%); with provision of information leaflets ranked first (58%). An overwhelming majority of respondents (84%) thought that the county council should do more to encourage people to cycle or cycle more. This compared with 76% who agreed that central government should do more.

**R6) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to use National Bike Week more effectively as a focus for improving the council's marketing and promotion of cycling to work.**

**R7) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to set a long term promotional strategy that looks to develop a range of messages over time that target different segments of the near market for cycling.**

**R8) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to negotiate with the police to improve all road users' safety by conducting additional high-profile enforcement 'crackdowns' of cyclist and driver behaviour during national bike week.**

**R9) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to pledge its commitment to the development of a regional or national online cycle journey planner and ask the Director of Environment & Economy to identify an existing officer to represent this authority at forums to progress such a facility.**

## (e) Regular maintenance of cycles and cycle lanes

51. For many staff who regularly use a bike to travel to work, finding the time to ensure it is well maintained can be difficult and costly. Other employers in the area have sought to deal with this by providing a mobile repair and maintenance 'Bike Doctor' service across their various sites. This costs the University of Oxford approximately £15,000 per year but employees then benefit from free repairs (they pay only for parts). The University report that it is difficult to prove which of all its initiatives have the biggest effect on take-up of cycling but anecdotal evidence suggests the most popular are the salary sacrifice scheme and the 'Bike Doctor' service. Brookes University offer a similar subsidised service and report that over 1,000 bikes have been repaired and/ or made safe through this arrangement.
52. Although the scope of this investigation precluding examination of costly infrastructure measures, several witnesses requested that more is done to improve the condition of those already in existence. This would be relatively cheap, they argued, and would sometimes involve little more than re-painting faded or incomplete markings, restoring colour to cycle tracks, improving the visibility of speed bumps, clearing out litter and other debris. Better lighting of off-road cycle paths was also repeatedly highlighted as a major deterrent. However, rectifying this would require significant investment.
53. In a related vein, many also remarked that better parking enforcement is needed to deter motorists from blocking cycle lanes with parked cars and vans. Cyclist report being frequently forced into dangerous positions time and time again at the same locations due to what they perceive as a total lack of enforcement of existing restrictions, for example Barns Road (Oxford). Using the online reporting facility to enable cyclists to communicate with the relevant council about where these problems occur might help to better target existing enforcement resources where they are most needed. Tightening up on vehicles that cause an obstruction, and the illegal abuse of parking regulations generally, would not be costly and would have the added benefit of raising revenue from the associated fines.

**R10) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to provide a bike doctor service to staff at its major office bases on a rotational basis.**

**R11) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to raise awareness through better publicity and promotion of the mechanism for reporting faults, obstructions and other cycle path and highway maintenance issues.**

**R12) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to improve the enforcement of parking restrictions at areas known to block existing cycle routes.**

## (f) Rent-A-Bike scheme

54. A number of authorities are looking to implement a rent-a-bike scheme based on the success of those in Paris, Lyon, Vienna, Barcelona, etc. Although an early scheme in Cambridge failed when all the bikes were stolen it is hoped that modern technological advances have ameliorated this problem. Oxford University has thought about rolling out a free 'pick-up-and-pedal' bicycle service from high-tech bicycle stations around the

city (which it hoped could be expanded with up to 2,000 bicycles made available in what would amount to a new form of public transport) though it is not clear what has happened to this idea.

55. Bristol City Council and Reading Borough Council are in talks with First Great Western who are close to implementing the first large-scale rental facilities in the UK. These schemes will provide 30 minutes of free hire and then levy a small charge for further use. The Mayor of London has recently announced a fully funded programme that will see 6,000 bikes available across central London with a stand every 300 metres.
56. The Committee are delighted by the Leader's announcement at council 12 February 2008 that £100k has been identified to fund a feasibility study to implement a similar scheme in Oxford city. It is anticipated that this would be of value to residents all year round, and could equally offer a valuable service to students during term time and tourists in the summer.

**R13) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to congratulate itself for agreeing to fund a feasibility study into establishing a bike rental scheme and urges it to discuss any proposals with other relevant stakeholders such as rail companies, the hospitals and the Oxford universities.**

### **(g) Pool bikes and Bicycle Users Group**

57. Some of the larger local employers operate a pool bike scheme, such as the University of Oxford. Others are looking to introduce this in the near future, such as Brookes University. This relatively inexpensive measure allows staff who cannot or have not travelled to work by bicycle nonetheless to use a bike for greener travel to local meetings and appointments. If a city-wide rental scheme is introduced demand for pool bikes may fall but until such time these remain a viable alternative.
58. It is a little known fact that Speedwell House staff have had use of three pool bikes for the past two or three years. Those in the know have been able to sign them out as and when required. The Committee would welcome the expansion of this scheme so that it can be extended to other office bases around the city, such as County Hall, Cricket Road, Chiltern House and the new Social & Community Services Cowley Office. Safety equipment such as helmets, high visibility vests and lights should also be supplied. The system for booking them should be modernised so that they appear on the intranet alongside the pool cars.
59. A number of large employers around the county have provided administrative support for an employee Bicycle User Group (BUG), notably the John Radcliffe hospital and Harwell UKAEA. This generally involves setting up a group email address and distribution list and agreeing to meet with its representatives at regular intervals to discuss their issues or feeding its views into a suitable existing forum. The Committee feel they may be mileage in piloting such a scheme amongst the county council. It offers potential for a very low cost means to strengthen people's commitment to cycling and provides a market to receive promotional information and advice as well as

identifying a means for liaison with cyclists and feeding their voice into relevant decision making structures.

**R14) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to purchase a small number of pool bikes to compliment the pool cars and ensure they can be booked by staff using the same system.**

**R15) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to support a county council bicycle users group to create an informal internal discussion forum for cycling issues amongst staff by giving it a web-page and an email distribution list.**

## **(h) Cycle training**

60. This study has specifically looked at cycling to work not school. Much of the good work of the eight-person School Travel Planning team is therefore beyond the scope of this work. However, the Committee feel training children to make trips to school by bicycle before they leave primary school should be a major priority, in the hope that they develop a cycling habit which they take into adulthood. Although it is accepted that a lot of people stop cycling as they age, some will not. And people who have learnt to cycle safely as a child are more likely to cycle to work than those who do not have this prior experience.
61. Local authorities are able to bid direct for funding for the new National Standard for cycle training (which is delivered under the name Bikeability and billed as 'Cycling proficiency for the 21st century') and DfT will also be funding schools in the School Sports Partnership scheme. Even more funding will be available in 2008/09. It seems that the county council has not bid for any of this money.
62. A recent letter from Geoff Barrell (Principal Engineer, Road Safety) to the Oxford Mail explained that he considers the training in Oxfordshire to be superior to that offered by Bikeability, owing to its greater emphasis on safety aspects. He highlighted the council's success in 2007 in ensuring 80% of Oxfordshire primary schools provide pupils with six hours of free cycle training. This approach, using an army of 700 volunteers, helps to create a stronger sense of community around each individual school and also avoids the pitfall of having to cope with a shortfall should government funding be withdrawn at a later date.

**R16) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to continue to support schools to identify volunteers that can deliver cycle training and to create a target to ensure 99% of primary schools make six weeks of such training available to their pupils.**

**(i) Storage and parking**

63. According to the British Crime Survey 2005, Oxford had the fifth highest incidence of bicycle theft in the UK. The risk of bike theft can deter people from cycling to work. This can be minimised by the council and partners ensuring an adequate supply of high quality cycle parking conveniently located throughout the county. Oxford rail station is well served and provision of public cycle parking places in the city has increased from 1,800 to approximately 2,500. Councils have been commended for their phased replacement of the unpopular butterfly racks (which cause damage to wheels) with the much more preferred Sheffield (upturned U-shaped) racks.
64. Despite such progress the need for greater quantities of cycle parking close to cyclists' destinations was often the first thing witnesses mentioned when asked to identify what they would like to see the council doing. Over 20,000 cyclists ride daily into or out of Oxford. The county council has no budget provision for more stands in the next financial year. Rail stations outside Oxford, coach stations and bus stops, Park and Ride sites, Walton Street (Oxford) and the Churchill Hospital were all identified as specific locations where better cycle parking is needed. It was also felt that local authorities had a stronger role to play in encouraging shops, businesses and other service providers to make sure they provide cycle parking too.
65. The transport planners should work with development control to ensure the planning system requires all new developments will include appropriate cycle parking provision for residents and visitors as a matter of course. Demand for provision of cycle lockers (as established in many other councils, such as Cambridgeshire, Canterbury, Cornwall, Devon, Northumberland, Sheffield, South Gloucestershire, Southwark, Stockport and York) should be considered depending on the location. When developers promise cycle parking the council should do more to verify that such facilities are in fact installed.
66. Other innovative initiatives should be investigated to try and combat bicycle theft, in conjunction with the police. Possibilities include monitoring the evaluation of a bike coding scheme initiated by the City of London Police in an attempt to reduce the number of bike thefts throughout a number of London boroughs (such as Southwark). Stickers could be placed, at relatively little cost, on all bike racks in the county advising on proper security.

**R17) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to lead by example and ensure covered cycle parking is available at all county council offices.**

**R18) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to ensure provision of Sheffield-style cycle parking is a standard requirement for all new developments and that actual installation of agreed parking places is enforced.**

**R19) The Committee RECOMMEND the Cabinet to place stickers on cycle parking racks across the county (like those on lampposts) to advise users of best security practices and informing them of how to report faults and problems on their routes via the online system.**

## SECTION 4 ~ CONCLUSIONS

### i. Future developments

67. It is difficult to hold executive bodies to account for proposals that have not yet been implemented, but in response to areas the Review has identified a number of witnesses reported on *anticipated* developments. It was felt that checking on progress in a year's time will be easier if these changes were acknowledged in the report. They include:
- participation by the council in the Bike-to-Work scheme
  - more secure and covered cycle parking at council offices
  - plans to introduce pool bikes in most council offices
  - consideration for arrangements for staff to get cycles maintained easily
  - a staff travel survey with potential for follow-up with personalised travel planning
  - a feasibility study for a continental style Rent-A-Bike scheme
  - a shift of resources within the Travel Plans team from Travel to School to Travel to Work

### ii. Closing remarks

68. The local picture broadly mirrors the national one in which, despite pledges to increase cycling, the levels reported show a continuing decline. At the same time car ownership and use has increased. These trends exacerbate high profile challenges that face both national and local government. In the last few years reports by Stern on the costs of climate change, by Eddington on transport, by the Chief Medical Officer on declining levels of physical activity and by the Health Committee on Obesity are all relevant to cycling.
69. Few everyday activities have the potential to genuinely improve society and change the lives of individuals. Cycling is one of them. Increasing the number of people cycling and the number of trips taken has a direct value for the cyclist themselves, and the health service, employers, other road users and the environment. Daily cycle commuting in particular has the most dramatic impact, although getting more individuals to cycle is better than getting existing enthusiasts to cycle more. The opportunity is here to support the strategic, long-term role cycling can play in helping to tackle today's transport (and other) challenges. Increasing cycling will directly support seven PSA targets that span six Government departments.

<u>PSA</u>	<u>Departments Responsible</u>
Reduce congestion in the largest urban areas	DfT
Improve air quality by reducing transport emissions	DfT, DEFRA
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	DfT, DEFRA,
Reduce mortality rates and health inequalities	DH
Reduce levels of obesity	DfES (now DCSF), DCMS, DH
Reduce levels of child obesity	DH, DCMS, DES
Increase levels of sporting activity	DCMS, DfES (now DCSF)

The question is one of will, ambition and vision.

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- 'Rent-A-Bike May Come To Oxford', Oxford Mail, 23 Feb 2008
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- 'Better off – and Quicker – by Bike', letter from Roger Geffen (Cycle Touring Club Campaigns and Policy Manager) letter to The Times, 12 Sep 2006

## List of Witnesses

Oral evidence was obtained from the following 'witnesses' during the review public hearings:-

- ❖ Simon Hunt – Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Cyclox
- ❖ Ann Furtado – Oxford SE Regional Officer, Sustrans
- ❖ John Stevens – Facilities Manager, MEPC (Milton Park)
- ❖ Dawn Crawford – Green transport Coordinator, MEPC (Milton Park)
- ❖ James Drew – Travel Plans Team Leader, Oxfordshire County Council
- ❖ Martin Krafft – Senior Transport Planner, Oxfordshire County Council
- ❖ Peter Mann – Assistant Head of Transport (Policy & Strategy), Oxfordshire County Council
- ❖ Cllr Ian Hudspeth – Cabinet Member for Transport, Oxfordshire County Council

Written evidence was obtained from the following people:

- ❖ Ed Wigzell – Sustainable Travel Officer, Oxford University
- ❖ Lucy Millard – Environmental Coordinator, Oxford Brookes University
- ❖ Karl Earl Chadwick – Travel and Transport Manager, Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals Trust
- ❖ Philip Bonnier – Convenor, John Radcliffe & Churchill Hospitals' Bicycle User Group
- ❖ Jill Sellers – Head of Corporate Social Responsibility, Unipart Group
- ❖ Martin Dare-Edwards – Site Manager, Infineum International Ltd
- ❖ Amanda Watson – Facilities Manager, Oxford University Press
- ❖ Andrew Saunders – Fares & Systems Manager, First Great Western
- ❖ Ian Rodham – Commercial Manager, UKAEA Harwell Science and Innovation Campus
- ❖ Simon Purtell – HR Policy Manager, UKAEA Harwell Science and Innovation Campus
- ❖ Sue Cooper – Resident of Wallingford
- ❖ Graham Paul Smith – Senior Lecturer, Joint Centre for Urban Design, Oxford Brookes
- ❖ Philip Swan – Resident of Botley, Oxford
- ❖ James Dawton – CTC Right to Ride Representative, Oxfordshire
- ❖ Patrick Joyce – County Cycling Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council
- ❖ Andy Vose – Transport Planner, York City Council
- ❖ John Disley – Group Manager for Transport Policy, Oxfordshire County Council
- ❖ Roger O'Neill – Local Transport Plan Team Leader, Oxfordshire County Council
- ❖ Joint witness submission from Cyclox and Sustrans.

Organisations contacted but unable to provide any information include the following:

- ❖ BMW UK Manufacturing Plant Oxford
- ❖ Oxfordshire Federation of Small Businesses
- ❖ J Sainsbury Plc
- ❖ Tesco Plc
- ❖ Rutherford Appleton Laboratories
- ❖ Diamond Light Source Ltd
- ❖ RAF/ MOD, Brize Norton Airbase
- ❖ Oxfam

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❖ Oxfordshire Mental Health Care NHS Trust

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## Progress in the cycling demonstration towns

### **BEST PRACTICE – CYCLING DEMONSTRATION TOWNS**

Six 'Cycling Demonstration Towns' (CDT) are leading the way in encouraging local people to use pedal power. Their purpose is to deliver a step-change in cycling levels, in towns which start from a low or moderate cycling mode share. Historically, English local authorities have invested substantially less in cycling than their European counterparts (on average c£1 per head). Cycling England wanted to demonstrate the impact of investing at similar levels of the best in Europe to prove their premise that this would lead to levels of cycling closer to those seen in Europe. Cycling England contributes up to £500,000 per year, per town for three years, matched by equal or greater funding from the local authority and its partners. This gives a total cycling spend of around £10 a year for each resident.

Through this project, Cycling England is funding and working with six local highway authorities to develop an exemplary physical environment for cycling, supported by a comprehensive range of 'soft' measures to encourage more people to cycle. The funds are being used to make the environment more cyclist friendly, to offer safety training and to encourage take up through extensive promotion. Results have shown that where there is local commitment to promote cycling, the results can be startling. Members may find it interesting to compare activity locally with some of this good practice, and think about what ideas if any could be copied in Oxfordshire.

Aylesbury adopted a unique approach to tackle the fact that there was nothing visible to give a non-cyclist the confidence that they could get around by bike without having to do battle with heavy, speeding traffic. The Council developed a network of nine colour-coded radial routes, branded with the names of gemstones. As well as being instantly recognisable, the signposts along each of the 'Gemstone Ways' tell cyclists how many minutes it will take them to reach their destination. Alongside this, Aylesbury developed route-specific pocket sized cycle guides to market the Gemstone routes to local residents. The first guide – for residents living close to the Sapphire Way – led to a 24% increase in cycling. The targeted marketing of the Gemstone Ways has been supported by a town-wide promotional campaign which has included the local radio station regularly playing the 'Cycle Aylesbury – it's better by bike' jingle and the distribution of a 'Cycle Benefits' card offering discounts at local cycle shops. An Aylesbury cycling website was launched to coincide with the beginning of Bike Week and provides: information on cycling to work and school, local cycle routes & maps; cycle training; and information on how to purchase a bicycle cheaply. A 'Cycles for Africa' campaign saw over 300 people bring their old bikes to be reconditioned by prison inmates and sent to Africa for reuse. In return for this generosity a hundred lucky Aylesbury residents who made a pledge to cycle at least once a week were drawn at random from all the entries on the Cycle Aylesbury website and won a bike. Aylesbury is also an interesting case study for other towns that are in a 'Housing Growth Area'. Aylesbury is set to double in size in the next 10 years with over 20,000 new homes being built. Research shows that people are most likely to re-evaluate their travel options when they experience life-stage changes, such as moving house. With this in mind, Aylesbury CDT is working with estate agents to provide information about cycling to be included in all new home buyers' packs. These initiatives appear to already be making significant impact. There are early signs that existing cyclists aren't simply getting on their bikes more, but that a new group of cyclists has emerged. The proportion of Aylesbury residents stating that a bike was one of their two main modes of transport in 2007 was almost 11%, compared to just 3% in 2005.

Prior to becoming a CDT, Brighton and Hove City Council had made a real success of encouraging more bus travel but with the submission of the city's new Local Transport Plan was able to focus on the development of dedicated promotion and infrastructure for walking and cycling. In terms of promotion, to mark the first anniversary of Brighton & Hove's CDT status, billboard posters were placed at congestion spots in the city, highlighting the health benefits of cycling in comparison to driving. In an initiative with the local police, a series of advertisements were published locally calling for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians to respect each other on the road. The council decided to make 2009 a 'Year of Walking and Cycling'. Currently the council has focused on high quality urban design, where roads have recently been radically redesigned as a shared public space with priority for pedestrians and cyclists. As part of this, highway 'clutter' such as kerbs, signs and white lines have been removed with high quality materials installed. New Road is one-way for motor vehicles but two-way for cyclists, and the design (without lining) relies on road users respecting each other. Since its opening in July 2007, New Road has recorded 93% (or 12,000) fewer motorised vehicles with a 22% increase in cyclists (or 100) per day. The city is planning a north-south cycle route which will connect Hangleton, Hove station and the seafront cycle route. Drawing on the experience of continental neighbours, the design for this route includes a segregated, motorised-traffic-free 'cycle freeway' on both sides of the road along one of the city's most prestigious boulevards. The cycle freeways, when complete in Summer 2008, will encourage those who would otherwise be deterred by traffic to give cycling a go. But cyclists need to use the rest of the road network too. So, to get more Brighton & Hove residents cycling on the roads, the council has installed 'advanced stop lines' (ASLs) at 28 of the city's busiest traffic light-controlled junctions. ASLs increase safety by enabling cyclists to come to the front of the traffic queue, where they can be clearly seen by drivers, and by providing a safe place to make turning manoeuvres. The ultimate aim is for every traffic light-controlled junction in Brighton & Hove to have advanced stop lines. In addition to improving the road conditions for cycling in Brighton and Hove, the city council has set up a large-scale personalised travel planning programme, which is offering tailored information to households about their travel options. The first phase took place in summer 2006 and involved contact with 9,900 households close to The Downs with its off-road cycling routes. Individuals were contacted via door-to-door visits, telephone calls and exhibitions to inform them of available travel options and their costs. The second phase in summer 2007 was focussed on 9,400 households close to the seafront cycle route. It included intensive support to a small number of people who were keen to take up cycling training and those who wanted more information on bike servicing. To help develop a psychological understanding of individual travel habits and patterns, residents are being asked to keep travel diaries and the council are working with the local universities to develop an understanding of the effectiveness of various types of incentives. Results from 2006 are encouraging with 500,000 fewer car trips and 172,500 more cycling trips. Brighton also regularly organises large-scale city-wide events to promote cycling such as Car Free Day which involves closing off streets within the city centre to motorised vehicles. The council appointed a former teacher as its first Bike It Officer, who will work with 10 schools in the city to promote cycling in a targeted way. Bike It projects have reported phenomenal success rates and in some cases quadrupled cycling levels in schools.

**Exeter** has focused on extending its network of cycle routes to provide good links to schools, colleges and industrial estates. In the first 18 months, some 16km of new routes were constructed. Exeter recognised that there was an opportunity to link into the building of five new secondary schools in the city. They took advantage of this building programme and have ensured that four of these new schools were linked to the city's cycle network by off-road cycle and pedestrian routes from day one. Schools are also being provided with cycle parking facilities, with enough cycle racks for 20% of its pupils. As well as providing new routes and parking facilities, the city has been working with pupils, parents and teachers through the highly successful Bike-It programme to encourage them to cycle more. As well as focusing on schools, Exeter has been using its Travel Plan adviser to engage with employers. A quarter of the city's employees are now covered by the travel planning process. Support for sustainable travel initiatives is strong and cycling events are regularly held in businesses across the city. One innovative scheme is the Exeter Travel to Work Tally where over 6,000 employees from more than 240 companies and organisations took part in a travel survey. The results showed 8.5% of employees cycling regularly to work, compared with 4% five years earlier in the 2001 national census. Moreover, among employees who had recently started cycling to work, a third said they had done so because of improved cycle routes.

In **Lancaster**, the council is actively working with employers to encourage cycling. It has appointed a 'Cycling to Work' coordinator who is working with four large employers – the university, the hospital, the college and the city council itself. The local authority has continued to expand its cycle network and had seen 85% of the Greenway linking Morecombe to Lancaster completed. Other links are planned to the University and the Royal Infirmary. Such facilities are needed to help the College implement its Travel Plan which is aiming to achieve an 18% reduction in car use over the next three years. The district is also creating a lot of short connections between existing off-road paths and residential areas and workplaces to increase the number of people in the catchment area of each cycle path. The number of parked cycles counted in the city has been increased by 48%. Finally, every household in Lancaster is receiving tailored advice about cycling options as part of a TravelSmart personalised travel advice programme which is being run by Lancashire County Council.

Since there were few dedicated cycle lanes or paths, **Darlington** has focused on improving the town's cycling infrastructure. The council has identified seven radial routes into the town centre, with new directional signs under development for the whole town. Major works have recently been completed to create a 'Pedestrian Heart' in the town centre and the council has decided to allow cycling in the newly pedestrianised area for a six month trial period, which it hopes will show that cyclists and pedestrians (including people with disabilities) can coexist. The convenience of being able to cycle right into the town centre and park close to shops will be a real incentive to residents to cycle rather than taking the car. Experience in many Dutch and German cities shows that opening one-way and pedestrian streets to two-way cycle traffic can be effective in encouraging people to cycle. The town is also running a travel awareness campaign to encourage residents to think about the travel options available to them. Called 'Local Motion', the campaign has included a range of actions to promote cycling, such as guided bike rides and a cycle loan scheme. A major plank of the campaign has been to provide personalised travel information to Darlington households. The quality literature and cycle events have added to the renewed interest in health and exercise. A rising number of people are cycling to work.

Because **Derby** is significantly larger than the other towns it has focused on encouraging cycling among the under 25's and so many of its projects are centred on schools. However its other work has increased cycling on the Pride Park riverside path by 11% since 2006, and by 38% since 1998. Efforts have also address bike storage; in addition to parking spaces created in schools, secure storage is also being created at workplaces and shops. In addition to Bikeability training in schools, novice adult cyclists have also benefited, equipping them with confidence and practical road skills.

The Cycling Demonstration Town programme costs £2.8m a year for 6 Cycling Demonstration Towns to showcase best practice in promoting cycling for other areas to learn from. The government recently announced a six-fold increase in the cycling budget (which represents growth of 500% or £110m). The benefit/ cost ratio is estimated at 3.2 to 1; that is for every £1 spent on the programme, they expect benefits of £3.20. Since this compares favourably with other investment choices that the DfT could make the government believes this makes good economic sense.

The majority of this money will be spent on investing in up to 11 new areas being awarded 'Cycling Town' or 'Cycling City' status. This is in addition to continued investment in the existing towns, subject to them submitting satisfactory plans for their continued development. Cycling England will be seeking bids for the new Cycle Demonstration Towns and City in spring 2008/9. Following a period of planning, the major investment will begin the following year.

Cycling England estimates that this bigger demonstration programme could potentially save around 16 million car journeys per year, and result in an extra 47 million cycle journeys per year. This would represent a 100 per cent increase in cycling in the targeted towns over four years. If achieved, it would be equivalent to a 7 per cent increase in national cycling levels.

## Possible Policy Interventions

### **1 Changing attitudes to transport modes – ‘soft’ measures to provide:**

- workplace and school travel plans
- personalised travel planning
- travel awareness campaigns
- information about public transport
- marketing (including individualised marketing) of public transport
- car-sharing schemes.

### **2 Local and regional spatial planning:**

- regional and local transport strategies to complement regional and local spatial strategies: reciprocal relationship between land-use and transport planning
- planning objectives to include more sustainable transport choices; accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling; reduced need to travel by car.

### **3 Improving public transport by promoting:**

- more, and more reliable, bus services including demand responsive services
- partnerships between passenger transport authorities and bus operators
- new powers for passenger transport authorities to develop services – quality contracts
- seamless integration of bus services and other travel networks
- integrated ticketing for different public transport modes and operators
- priority for buses – bus lanes (and enforcement), priority at traffic lights.

### **4 Reducing congestion and pollution by discouraging car use by:**

- promoting walking and cycling
- allocating town centre space to pedestrians and cyclists
- introducing road pricing – including toll roads, congestion charges, ‘distance’ charges, charges for parking
- introducing taxation policies – fuel tax, vehicle excise duty
- promoting transport hierarchy.

### **5 Improving access to facilities and reducing social exclusion by:**

- improving public transport (see 3 above)
- introducing concessionary fares for particular groups
- providing transport vouchers that can be used on different modes of transport
- focusing shops, leisure facilities and offices in town centres; promoting development in suitable places; considering the location of public services
- ensuring safer/ more secure streets (see 6 & 8)
- providing appropriate travel advice (see 1).

### **6 Preventing road accidents:**

- giving pedestrians and cyclists higher priority –
  - traffic calming
  - home zones and quiet lanes
  - cycle routes and lanes
  - pedestrianisation
  - National Cycle Network
- protecting pedestrians and cyclists from traffic –
  - drink–drive legislation and enforcement
  - speed limits and enforcement (eg 20 mph zones)
  - speed cameras
  - promoting use of bicycle helmets
  - designing vehicles to have a less damaging impact on pedestrians.

### **7 Developing cycling and pedestrian skills:**

- road safety education, particularly for children
- cycle training.

### **8 Creating a functional, pleasing environment by:**

- improving pedestrian links
- ensuring good quality, unobstructed pavements
- improving liveability – cleaner, greener, safer public spaces.

### **9 Creating a secure environment:**

- designing for crime reduction (eg better street lighting)
- providing CCTV in public places
- promoting neighbourhood warden schemes
- taking measures against antisocial behaviour in public places.

### **10 Promoting social cohesion/ capital:**

- see 5 and 9 above.

### **11 Promoting health-related physical activity:**

- improving understanding of the links between physical activity and better health, and of everyday opportunities to be active
- encouraging activity in early years, schools, and further and higher education
- extending the use of education facilities as a community resource for sport and physical activity
- creating and maintaining a wide range of opportunities for activity through sport
- ensuring high-quality, well targeted provision for walking and cycling
- making public spaces and the countryside more accessible and attractive
- providing more lifestyle advice for physical activity from health professionals and community support services
- encouraging physical activity in workplaces.

“Formate alternative te ketij publikimi ofrohen me kerkese. Kjo perfshin dhe gjuhe te tjera, me shkronja te medhaja, shkronja per te verberit, kasete degjimi, disk kompjuteri ose email.”

Albanian

আপনি যদি অনুরোধ করেন তাহলে এই পুস্তিকাটি বিকল্প ছাঁদে, যেমন, অন্য কোনও ভাষায়, বড় হরফে, ব্রেইলে, অডিও-ক্যাসেটে, কমপিউটারের ডিস্কে বা ইমেলের মাধ্যমে পেতে পারেন।

Bengali

“本刊物備有其他的格式可供索取。這些包括有其他語言版，大字版，盲人用版，錄音帶版，電腦磁碟版或電子郵件版。”

Chinese

प्रार्थना करने पर यह प्रकाशन दूसरे रूपों में प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। जिस में सम्मिलित है, दूसरी भाषाओं में, बड़े छापे में, ब्रेअल, सुनने की टेप पर, कम्प्यूटर की डिस्क पर या ई-मेल द्वारा।

Hindi

“ਇਹ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਛਾਪੇ ਤੇ, ਬ੍ਰੇਲ ਵਿਚ, ਸੁਣਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਟੇਪ ਤੇ, ਕੰਪਿਊਟਰ ਡਿਸਕ ਜਾਂ ਈ ਮੇਲ ਤੇ।”

Punjabi

“اس اشاعت کو متبادل اشکال میں درخواست کرنے پر حاصل کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ اس میں دوسری زبانیں، بڑا پرنٹ، بریل (جسے اندھے چھو کر پڑھ سکیں)، آڈیو کیسٹ، کمپیوٹر ڈسک یا ای میل شامل ہیں۔”

Urdu

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computer disk or email.

Scrutiny Review Report into Cycling To Work

May 2008

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