

Joint Witness Submission to OCC Scrutiny Committee: “Cycling to work”
In connection with meeting held on Wednesday 20 Feb 2008

Executive Summary

Oxford & Oxfordshire’s needs	Possible solutions
<p>Greater political and OCC officer commitment to, and proper investment in, cycling</p> <p><i>Lead to be given by OCC itself, including its own administrative officers; Initiate & sustain prioritisation of cycling in-house (i.e. within OCC) from highest level downwards</i></p>	<p>[Re]instatement of Cycling Champion to serve within OCC transport planning staff</p> <p>Copy Travel-to-School best practice within OCC to Travel-to-Work</p> <p>OCC as major employer to improve cycling take-up - use its own Human Resources (initial appointments of all staff) and annual appraisals to include cycling promotion</p> <p>OCC to offer expenses for cyclists as well as/ instead of car expenses, and tax-efficient cycle-purchase schemes</p>
<p>A dual-cycle network and a decent east-west cycle route in Oxford</p> <p><i>An overarching plan to be attained by incremental steps, say over a decade. Raise aspirations by stating an above-zero growth target in strategic planning. These should be important aims for LTP3.</i></p>	<p>Partnership with Sustrans, Cyclod, BUG¹s, employer reps, bus and rail companies, co-ordinated by OCC.</p> <p>Liaison with City and District Council planning application process, to set and monitor Planning Conditions²; to use S106 moneys; to dovetail strategy</p> <p>Improve data collection and dissemination on cycling patterns and usage levels</p> <p>Reinstate staff and funds for the Cycle Network Review.</p> <p>Review impact of DfT’s “Manual for Streets” on OCC planning strategies and priorities</p>
<p>Better cycle lane/track maintenance</p>	<p>Repaint worn cycle lane markings. Provide ASL³s and lead-in lanes at all junctions where possible.</p> <p>Improve visibility of feedback opportunities for public reporting: e.g. advising phone numbers or online addresses for defect reports (<i>similar to streetlighting reporting as displayed on lamp-posts</i>)</p>
<p>Measures for increasing perception of safety , especially a bikes-and-HGVs/buses safety campaign: buses passing too close and too quickly can put of the most dedicated of cyclists and buses always come at the top of a list of cyclist’s gripes, including our Feb 2008 survey. Conversely, most cyclists have a lot to learn about safe behaviour around buses and HGVs.</p>	<p>Political will of the same kind that drove OTS in the late ‘90s, e.g. <i>to embrace lower speed limits; improve lighting; support hi-visibility education campaigns like stickers on rear ends of HGVs, PHVs, vans and buses</i></p> <p>The recent OCC initiative with the Ignorant Cyclist (etc.) leaflet is good but will only work if accompanied by a flood of publicity both with the leaflets and rear-buses-campaign. This doesn’t appear to have started yet.</p> <p>Liaison (e.g. by regular Forum promoted by OCC) between bus companies and user groups. It is important to engage with Cyclod, Sustrans, local CTC and other Bicycle User Groups to reach local cyclists with these types of campaign.</p>

¹ Informal Bicycle User Groups, which flourish from time to time at several workplaces

² The absence of any local authority pressure for a Central Cycle Hub for the new Westgate development has been deeply disappointing.

³ Advanced Stop Lines

Oxford & Oxfordshire's needs	Possible solutions
Sensible bike prioritisation	Systematic review by Traffic Engineers. <i>Don't require bikes to stop at junctions where not really necessary</i> (more below)
More and better cycle parking	Much more is required in the city. Needs effective maintenance, e.g. to eliminate dead bikes - liaison with City Council. Specifically on cycling to work, both councils need to make sure that where developers promise cycle parking 1. it is in fact installed and 2. that it is of acceptable quality (i.e. Sheffield racks not "wheelbenders"). The Churchill Hospital is an example of an employer where staff continually complain about lack of cycle parking and no notice is taken. OCC should monitor the enforcement of cycle parking regulations and requirements. Secure cycle parking at places of employment is vital and both councils need routinely to set this as a Condition when approving plans.
Cyclist training, including post-school adult populations	Co-ordination with the two Universities, Cherwell and Abingdon&Witney Colleges; and with employers. <i>(students, staff starting new employment)</i>
Better enforcement of both cyclist and driver behaviour	Dialogue with police service, especially to co-ordinate timing with safety campaigns.

Conclusion

- **Road surfaces:** do much more to publicise the Highways Agency and the County's hotline numbers webpages to the public and make sure that high-volume cycle routes in the city are checked regularly. This means A and B roads (e.g. Cowley Rd) as well as cycle-specific routes.
- **Cycling officer:** relying on the concept that all officers are cycling experts has failed because it has marginalised cycling. OCC needs a Cycling Officer.
- **A bikes-and-HGVs/buses safety campaign:** higher profile than the existing campaign.
- **Cycle training:** seek funding to help provide training for anybody in the County.
- **Cycle Network Review:** restart this important project.
- **Cycle parking:** seek funding to help provide training for anybody in the County.
- **Travel-to-work plans:** the quite sympathetic reaction to this proposal during the committee's hearing of Mr Drew as witness was very encouraging. We urge the committee to put its weight behind it.

This summary is a 2-page abbreviation of the full submission we offered. It is posted at the Cyclox website www.cyclox.org

Drafted by Simon Hunt and agreed by circulation to all Cyclox committee members and to Sustrans representatives (Simon Pratt simon.pratt@sustrans.org.uk and Ann Furtado ann.furtado@sustrans.org.uk)

2 March 2008. svhoxford@gmail.com