

To: Scrutiny Committee

Date: 23 March 2015

Report of: Interim Head of Environmental Development

Title of Report: Oxford Cycle City -Update

Summary

Purpose of report: To update the Committee on the progress of the Oxford Cycle City project

Key decision: *No*

Executive lead member: Councillor John Tanner, Board Member for Cleaner, Greener Oxford

Report author: Mai Jarvis, Environmental Policy Team Leader

Policy Framework: Cleaner, Greener Oxford

Recommendations

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the report and the progress made in delivering Cycle City.

The Scrutiny Committee is also asked to note the consultation on OTS and provide comments that inform the response to the County Council.

Appendices to report

Appendix 1 - Oxford Cycle City Plan 2012-16

Appendix 2 - Project overview with RAG rating and cost

Appendix 3 - Draft Oxford Transport Strategy

Background

The Scrutiny Committee requested a report to update them on the progress of the Oxford Cycle City Project.

Introduction

1. Oxford is acknowledged as one of few true 'Cycling Cities' in the United Kingdom. In 2011, 17% of Oxford residents in employment usually cycled to work, up from 15% in 2001. This is the second highest rate of any local authority (LA) area in England & Wales.
2. However, barriers remain to cycling in Oxford, ranging from the limited availability of secure cycle parking, to the general cycling experience of using heavily-trafficked roads. In response, Oxford City Council initiated the Oxford Cycle City initiative. The initiative, launched in 2012, has the aim of realising the City Council's vision for Oxford to become one of the great cycling cities of Europe, and in particular:
 - To create an environment and culture that encourages cycling at all levels in Oxford, and which in particular encourages new cyclists. This will be achieved through effective promotion of cycling, and by promotion of a fully joined-up dual cycle network that is attractive to use and provides safety, convenience and directness.
3. The objectives of the Oxford Cycle City project are to:
 - Identify a package of cycle improvement and promotional measures
 - For 20% of journeys to work to be made by cycle as the main mode of travel by the time of the 2021 Census.
 - To identify the means of delivering and completing some of these measures over a 4 year period (from 2012).
4. In February 2012, Oxford City Council established a four-year, £300,000 capital programme for realising the objectives of Oxford Cycle City. In 2014, an additional £62,000 was given to the project, supported by an annual £10,000 revenue budget.
5. The project provides a number of benefits that meet the strategic outcomes of the Council:

Vibrant, sustainable economy: Improving the cycle network provides new opportunities for people to make work related journeys. It reduces traffic congestion, which has been identified as a barrier to growth in the local area. It also brings benefits for local businesses that provide cycle equipment and repairs services.

Strong, active communities: Cycling is an healthy way of travelling, and can provide a gateway for individuals to lead more healthy lifestyles. It is a cost effective form of transport, while improving public spaces and facilities to encourage cycling addresses social inequalities. Cycling also encourages social interaction through regular face-to-face contact and via recreational cycling groups.

Cleaner, greener Oxford: Cycling is a pollution-free way of getting swiftly about the City. Its carbon footprint is negligible, unlike motorised forms of transport. It also directly reduces traffic congestion caused by motorised vehicle movements

6. The Cycle City Strategy was approved at City Executive Board on the 4th July 2012.
7. The strategy was built upon stakeholder feedback received from two stakeholder meetings held on 22nd February 2012 and 26th March 2012. These identified a number of small, medium and large scale projects which would significantly improve the cycling experience in Oxford.
8. A further public consultation was carried out from the 15th October 2012 to the 27th November 2012 to seek views on ways to make simple improvements to existing cycle routes which could be achieved quickly, at modest cost, subject in most cases to the approval of Oxfordshire County Council as local transport authority.

Achievements to date

9. To ensure prompt and effective delivery of schemes benefitting the residents of Oxford, focus was given to the delivery of projects for which formal County Council approval was not exclusively required. This approach has delivered and identified a range of schemes running up till 2016, and has ensured benefits of the project reach residents of Oxford. These include:
10. Provision of adult cycle training to 29 people totalling 52.5 hours delivered by Broken Spoke, bike co-op, in 2013/14.
11. Support of Bike Oxford in 2014 in order to help raise the profile of cycling in the city.
12. The Oxford Cycle City Plan identified a need for improved signage; signposting of cycle routes using quiet roads and off-road cycling. A signage project was therefore initiated and completed by the City Council, with support and input from the County Council, providing a signed quiet cycle route from Oxford City Centre (South Parks Road) to Risinghurst (The Roundway) via the John Radcliffe Hospital. This is now known as the North East Route (signposted 'NE').
13. In 2014, a joint project with the County Council identified physical barriers such as narrow gates or inconveniently-placed bollards. These were then either removed or adapted in the following locations:

- Folly Bridge East
 - Folly Bridge West
 - Barracks Lane North
 - Barracks Lane South
 - University Parks cycle route Ferry Lane end
 - University Parks cycle route City end
 - Dragon Lane including new post
 - Queens Lane, removal of gate and replacement with bollards
 - Little Clarendon Street Line Painting
14. The path leading through Hinksey Park, from Lake Street to Eastwyke ditch and Meadow Lane path has been upgraded.
15. The towpath from Walton Well Road and Aristotle Lane has been rebuilt and upgraded in a project partnered with the County Council and Canal and Rivers Trust. The total cost of the project is £132,000 with £72,000 paid for by the City Council, £30,000 from the County Council and £30,000 from the Canal and Rivers Trust.
16. A contribution of £50,000 was provided to the County Council for work to improve the Plain roundabout for cyclists. This scheme improves one of the main cycling barriers into and out of Oxford city centre by improving the attractiveness and safety of the roundabout for both cyclists and pedestrians.

Future schemes

17. Schemes have been identified up to the end of the project period in March 2016 which commits all available funding. These include:
- Installation of a cycle ramp on bridge linking the Eastern By-Pass to Old Road., improving access from the edge of the city into the centre.
 - New and improved cycle parking at Redbridge and Seacourt Park & Ride site will encourage cycling on the last leg of the journey. The parking will provide a mix of covered and uncovered parking, as well as police-approved cycle racks. This scheme will benefit people working in parts of the city that Park & Ride buses do not access. It will also provide health benefits to daily commuters who are able to complete the last leg of the journey by bike.
 - Upgrade of the path at Willow Walk linking North Hinksey to the city centre, passing Oatlands Road Recreation Ground. The upgrade to this path will provide a pleasant off-road route between Botley/North Hinksey and the city centre.

18. By the end of the project, Cycle City will have facilitated removal and adaptation of 8 barriers across the city, upgraded 1650m of cycle path, installed over 100 new spaces of cycle parking, and signposted a key cycle route of over 3 miles, linking the City centre with the JR Hospital and Risinghurst via an attractive quiet route.

Oxford Transport Strategy

19. Oxfordshire County Council is currently consulting on the Oxford Transport Strategy (OTS). This sets out the vision for transport in the City up to 2031 and covers all aspects of transport including cycling. The strategy hence presents a unique opportunity to improve the cycling network in Oxford, and develop the city's standing as a true cycle city.
20. The City Council has engaged Alan Baxter and Associates LLP consultant to audit the assumptions behind the County strategy, and present alternative strategic options that support the City Council's objectives. Alan Baxter and Associates LLP have facilitated a number of meetings with Members and they continue to collect evidence to inform the response. The consultation closes on the 2nd April 2015.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the report and the progress made in delivering Cycle City.

The Committee is also asked to note the consultation on OTS and provide comments that inform the response to the County Council.

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List of background papers: *None*

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