



Oxfordshire Green Party

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Submission to Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy on behalf of OXFORDSHIRE GREEN PARTY c/o 53 Bulan Road, Oxford OX3 7HU – stevedawe@gm.apc.org

Responding to consultation document:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/512895/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy.pdf

Contributions by:

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Introduction:

Oxfordshire Green Party covers the County of Oxfordshire and is in consequence concerned with transport issues county-wide. Green Party members elected at European, district, town and parish levels along with participants in Oxfordshire's wider Green Movement of environmental, low carbon and sustainability groups are often engaged with transport issues. Under conditions of exceptional traffic growth on key routes in our County particularly, our concerns are focussed strongly on how sustainable transport usage in the County may be increased, and particularly walking and cycling more than other modes, due to their obvious health benefits, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and their contribution to reducing traffic congestion.

We do not accept that current or planned road transport infrastructure investment in Oxfordshire will accommodate continuing traffic increases.

Comments on the consultation document:

Page 6: We note that doubling cycling by 2025 is the intended primary goal of this strategy. Whilst this would mean a radical impact upon traffic conditions in Oxford, 2nd only to Cambridge in the country for cycling, this would mean comparatively little progress in rural Oxfordshire. Specifically:

Commuting by mode of travel 2011 statistics in Oxfordshire by district:

Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse all show lower levels of walking & cycling than Oxford:

<https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/1115/travel-to-work-by-mode-of-travel-all-oxfordshire-districts-2011>



It should be noted that some areas still nevertheless show as much as a quarter of local journeys on foot or by bike eg. Cherwell.

Reversing the decline in walking activity: we find this goal very unlikely to be achieved without further funded action, given exceptionally low levels of local government spending which have left pavements and walking routes throughout Oxfordshire generally in a poor condition with low levels of maintenance or new investment.

Commenting on targets in general: Doubling cycling stages made as part of trips may be quite an easy target given that it's not a population based measure. Although the graph in Annex A of the consultation document shows cycling stagnating even with current population growth? Reversing a decline in walking is needed but no target is provided at all. A rate based measure on cycling fatalities is good, but no target on walking fatalities (or rather people killed/injured whilst walking in urban and rural areas) is absurd. More targets are needed aimed at different age groups and sections of society.

Increasing the percentage of children aged 5-10 who walk to school: this depends upon achieving routes which relieve parental anxiety about this goal. We suggest the Government adopt the 'Walking Bus' approach developed originally in Australia, pioneered in the UK in Hertfordshire in 1998, and later in Kent, for all district and unitary authorities - SEE: <http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/school-transport/set-up-a-walking-bus> - which would allow groups of children with some parents to negotiate challenging traffic conditions. However, in the most congested areas, more pedestrian crossings are clearly needed.

We agree that a large range of quantifiable targets are needed, without delay, for each district council or unitary authority to follow. However, we argue that these targets must be accompanied by a costed and fully resourced plan, otherwise they are meaningless in the current climate of austerity policies; a fundamental re-investment in local government is needed. See APPENDIX ONE: *Where should the money come from?*

Page 10, 2.4 The health promotion effects of walking and cycling have been noted in research, but are under-emphasised in this consultation document in terms of the creation of overall quality of life over the life-span. Healthy people will have more energy for their relationships, children, workplace and community so increased investment in walking and cycling will return substantial social and economic benefits which are not sufficiently emphasised in this consultation document. A Dutch level of cycling could cut the NHS budget by £1bn: <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/cyclesafety/article3789794.ece> This figure is from the *Get Britain Cycling* report: summary: <https://allpartycycling.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/get-britain-cycling1.pdf> Clearly, this does need to be coupled with a strong emphasis on the Benelux cycle separation system common in Western Europe in town centre areas especially. But this is only appropriate where there is enough road space. In old, crowded, cities and towns like Oxford there is very little room for the sort of segregated cycle facilities that some organisations seem to think are needed. We are not The Netherlands and can't expect to create their sort of cycle infrastructure without demolishing a lot of buildings to make room. We have our own cycling heritage which is mainly based around cycles using our existing roads confidently and safely. Unfortunately the attempts to provide safe space for cyclists without upsetting the motorists has resulted in cyclists being encouraged to ride on totally unsuitable pavements (foot-ways). We cannot possibly encourage walking while giving pedestrian space over to cyclists. SEE: <http://pedestrianiselondon.tumblr.com/post/20170547370/cycleway-provision-from-the-experts>



Page 11 The objective of better safety is broken down into:

streets where cyclists and walkers feel they belong, and are safe

But this requires appreciable traffic reduction, especially in those areas with year on year traffic increases. There is no prospect of a level of transport infrastructure investment which will provide enough road space for increasing traffic levels, **as research has repeatedly shown. A projected 10 million extra people in the UK by 2040 means about 7 million more cars plus about 15% more vans and trucks than at present by the same date. This growth is expected to occur primarily within existing towns and cities.**¹ Planned traffic reduction is needed for better street conditions to be achieved, and is applicable to the next point as well:

reduced community severance

safer traffic speeds, with 20 mph limits where appropriate

All residential areas need 20 mph limits as standard, to discourage extra journeys on their roads. Localities should be offered the option of ballots on Controlled Parking Zones in more areas, with faster rates of implementation.

cycle training opportunities for all children

This training requires new investment in local government and ensuring all schools, particularly academy schools have adequate training and resources to teach children according to the Highway Code. The Government make cycle training part of the national curriculum for primary school children, as swimming already is. The DfE were heavily lobbied on this by groups including the CTC when the last revision took place in 2014, but declined to add it in.

The objective of better mobility is broken down into:

cycling facilities that are recognised by business as in the top ten globally

urban areas that are considered as amongst the most walkable globally

dense networks of routes around public transport hubs and town centres, with safe paths along busy roads

These three objectives require increases in local government spending. See Appendix for sources of funding.

better links to schools and workplaces

This is quite meaningless. Increasing traffic undermines walking and cycling as low impact forms of mobility. Planning for traffic reduction in itself will improve the quality of routes to school on foot and by bike.

Technological innovations which promote walking and cycling

This is unclear and needs to be made more specific.

¹ John C Sutton – *Gridlock: congested cities, congested policies, unsustainable mobility*, 2015. Particularly p.36.



behaviour change interventions

A promissory note, but of no value unless investment in local government is increased to permit traffic reduction policies to work.

The objective of better streets is broken down into:

places designed for people, with walking and cycling put first

We approve of the idea that all district council areas should be implementing a road user hierarchy approach with investment adjusted towards walking and cycling accordingly. However, designing places for people requires – at the very least – increasing pedestrianised areas in City and town centres, and in sub-centres within larger settlements, as well as increasing dedicated cycling and walking networks. This will require substantial investment, like the next proposal:

improved public realm

planning for walking and cycling

See previous point.

community based activities

Local government funding cuts are eroding local facilities such as community centres, libraries, Children's Centres, swimming pools, public open spaces etc. More facilities nearer to where people live, allowing people to walk or cycle to them, are essential and must be funded for social cohesion. Considering one particular group, we may say that the geography accessible to an elderly person shrinks as they become older requiring that facilities they use are within a short walk of their home. These include: community centres where the elderly can meet; local shops rather than larger, centralised facilities in a limited number of locations; more GPs surgeries in areas with growing populations. Failure to provide these facilities is a transport failure as it puts the elderly under pressure to access means of travelling which become more difficult to use as people age.

A wider green network of walkways, cycleways and open spaces that lets people actively incorporate nature in to their daily lives

There is insufficient protection of such routes and open spaces especially in existing laws. It should be much easier to register sites as community assets including public green spaces; it should be easier to designate land as 'town greens' etc. It should be exceptionally difficult to develop on or near such sites; it should be a requirement upon developers that they provide good walking and cycling routes which join up networks whenever new or major refurbishment developments occur. The new estate without pavements should be banned from consideration in the planning process; any new development of any scale should contribute and not detract from walking and cycling opportunities. Local government should be given the resources to play its part in making such policies effective.

Page 14 3.1 We find Government policy on devolution to be a theoretical perspective without substance or merit. Elected mayors are an example of centralisation, not devolution; continued un-elected Local Economic Partnerships deprive councils of essential funds; and shifting County powers to various unelected bodies in Oxfordshire, rather than downwards to proposed new



Unitary councils, is undemocratic and centralising. Resources and integrated policies at the Unitary level should be combined with newly empowered parish and town councils covering the whole of each Unitary area to allow neighbourhood level knowledge to inform and strengthen cycling and walking investment, amongst other things such as local planning policies.

Page 18 5.6-5.7 We consider planned spending outlined to 2021 to be pathetically small – see Appendix One for funding sources. Whilst we welcome that Oxford is a Cycle Cities Ambition City we cannot welcome that it is one of only 8 such locations in the UK. We continue to believe that local government needs increased investment to properly implement walking and cycling policies. This is critical for public health and a successful reduction in greenhouse gas emissions country-wide.

Page 19 5.9 We are concerned at both the low level of spending on cycle training in the country proposed at just £12 million over 4 years and the ability of schools to deliver under conditions of diminishing funds, given the context of declining numbers of experienced teachers and worsening traffic conditions which both militate against cycling uptake in many locations in Oxfordshire as elsewhere.

Page 20 5.20 ‘Healthy new towns’ as an idea needs application across the whole of local government.

Page 21 5.15 £600m for cycling and walking over the financial years 2015-2016 to 2020-2021 contrasts unfavourably with the *Get Britain Cycling* figure of £1bn per year for cycling alone as a desirable objective. Since this report itself also envisages the entirety of this sum would be paid back in terms of health and productivity benefits etc., there can be no excuse for unambitious investment in this area.

Page 21 5.16-5.18 Highways maintenance is demonstrably inadequate at current levels. Potholes, cracks and sinking sections of road surfaces compete with extremely poor renovation after excavations by utilities to create steadily declining road quality in nearly all locations. Once again, failure to fund local government adequately is a causal factor. In addition, the failure of local authorities to ensure utilities and contractors repair roads to a specific quality and defined standard needs to be addressed.

Page 23 5.24-5.25 Physical inactivity directly contributing to one in 6 deaths per year is appalling. That one third of children aged 2-15 are either overweight or obese is not surprising when, as the consultation document notes, the UK has one of the highest adult obesity rates in the EU. This health crisis needs a public investment response commensurate with its social and financial costs, not the inadequate levels of investment suggested in the consultation’s figures.

Page 27 5.40-5.41 The Cycle to Work scheme has had limited participation to date, thanks in part due to under-funding. We are surprised to note the failure to expand upon Green Travel Plans and ways in which these might be made more effective at this point.

Missing considerations



We would have liked to see evidence about variations in walking and cycling between different ethnic minority communities in the UK, and about differing propensities to use cars for journeys – especially short ones. We do not think it helps to treat the public as if it is an homogenous mass.

Similarly to the last point, insufficient attention is paid in the consultation document to the different types of policies required in different sizes of urban settlement or in the countryside. This is an extremely serious omission and one which reflects what we can only describe as a ‘cavalier’ attitude to local government – in this case, failing to recognise the different starting points for each locality, and indeed the many differences within localities.

Reducing air pollution as a source of premature deaths in the UK is clearly a health priority currently unaddressed by Government policy or spending. This consideration in itself merits a re-examination of Government spending plans to increase resources for walking and cycling.² Evidence of air pollution problems is abundant.³ Evidence of the potential contribution of surface transport to reducing UK greenhouse gas emissions is also significant.⁴

Green Travel Plans need to be standardised, upgraded and given statutory support rather than being omitted from this consultation altogether. Employers need to have minimum standard Green Travel Plans which they must implement as a contribution to increasing walking and cycling.

There is an unquestioned assumption throughout the consultation document of retaining the status quo on car-use and no apparent ambition to reduce dependence on motorised transport. A bit of bike parking at a rural train station is not going to bring about the revolution we need to enable people to travel without resort to a car. In order to achieve the reductions needed in air pollution levels and greenhouse gas emissions, the government should rebalance investment away from new roads towards local public transport, using parking and road pricing as levers to bring about a step change in walking and cycling levels.

The road safety targets are entirely focussed on reducing cycling casualties while pedestrian deaths and injuries are ignored. Is this because addressing these would expose the hideous daily danger inherent in the current system that is biased towards car ownership and use?

The document suggests encouragement for people to walk to bus stops. But this is at odds with the reduction of Government funding to councils which is leading to withdrawal of many subsidised bus services, as here in Oxfordshire? What is point of being able to walk to the bus stop if there is no bus? Government grants to council are being massively reduced and council tax is capped, with an end to the Revenue Support Grant in 2019-2020. Councils would be expected to fund most of the infrastructure changes, cycle lanes, etc and promotion, bikeability, etc. There is no explanation of how councils will be able to do this from their reducing resources? The strategy seems to rely on providing local authorities with money which they are expected to bid for then spend on facilities to encourage cycling and walking. In the current financial environment where there doesn't seem to be enough money to fix potholes and repaint road markings this

² Particular attention should already have been paid to the many linkages between walking and cycling and other types of community benefits. SEE: Colin Pooley et al – *Promoting Walking and Cycling: new perspectives on sustainable travel*, 2013 & Lynn Sloman – *Car Sick: solutions for our car-addicted culture*, 2006.

³ See for examples: House of Commons Environment, Food and rural affairs Cttee – *Air Quality* 4th report of session 2015-2016 & European Environment Agency – *Air Quality in Europe*, 2015 report & European Environment Agency – *Evaluating 15 years of transport and environmental policy integration* – report no 7, 2015 – Ch.4.2.

⁴ See for example: Robin Hickman and David Banister – *Transport, Climate Change and the City* 2014



approach will likely result in ad hoc disjointed measures, that may amount to little more than paint on the road or pavement.

There is a failure to mention obvious wins in the consultation document: a reduction in congestion will occur if more drivers transfer from car to cycling and walking. This shows that increased walking/cycling actually has benefits for the remaining car drivers and other essential vehicle users.

If sustainability is to be more than a tick box in transport policy, then it must be given priority over mere mobility. A 'manifesto for sustainable mobility' is worth considering.⁵ We need to consider how mobility is not an unquestionable social gain but has a variety of negative social effects and is just as much part of inequality as extreme differences in income and wealth. Research suggests public transport subsidies favour the wealthiest households.⁶ We also need to reconsider the benefits of locality-based diversity in the facilities people need.⁷ We need to break down the activities of people and devise well-funded sustainable responses to the social phenomena of the 'school run', the commute, the business trip, the family visit, the holiday.⁸ And we need, above all, to dump any suggestion of a 'war against the motorists' who have benefitted from diminishing costs for car usage for at least 10 years, according to the RAC. For a detailed comment on this problem, see Melia 2015.⁹

Locality specific comments, illustrating the need for funding local solutions

David Scott:

"I'm only 6 miles away but the road is too busy to cycle." That's what I hear all the time here (in Burcot near the A4074). Local routes also need links eg. Clifton Hampden to Long Wittenham. Cycle journeys to stations eg Oxford, Didcot have multiplied and would further IF more people felt safe - on dedicated cycle /footways.

Tim Pizey:

"I think that we should be focusing upon the use of the towpath as a critical piece of FLAT cycling infrastructure. The new Oxford Parkway train station has no connection to the adjacent canal towpath or other non-road cycle track that I am aware of. The proposed infill of the Kidlington/Oxford gap means that the canal could become even more important. The bike transition from the central train station to the towpath is very difficult and should be eased by a new path and bridge besides the existing railway bridge.

"The towpath should be extended beyond the ring road, past Iffley, to the railway bridge where a new bridge, besides the railway bridge, should be introduced, linking Littlemore and the science park with the towpath and the rail system. As the Canal and River Trust has no statutory duty to maintain the towpath (!) it falls to the City Council, County Council and Kidlington Parish Council to plug the gap."

⁵ Sutton – *Gridlock* Chapter 10.

⁶ Tim Stacey and Lucy Shaddock – *Taken for a ride: how UK public transport subsidies entrench inequality*, Equality Trust, 2015: https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/taken-ride-how-uk-public-transport-subsidies-entrench-inequality?has_js=1&_ga=GA1.3.767712456.1459772720&_gat=1&_hjIncludedInSample=1

⁷ John Whitelegg – *Mobility*, 2016 – especially Chs 1&2.

⁸ Jon Shaw and Iain Docherty – *The transport debate*, 2014.

⁹ Steve Melia – *Urban Transport without the hot air*, 2015.



APPENDIX ONE: *Where should the money come from?*

The public spending cuts made since 2007-2008 have produced neither efficiency nor cut the Government's debt. We are a rich country with one of the most unimaginative and regressive overall tax systems imaginable. Means of re-funding local government include:

- Financial Transaction Tax
- Bringing all UK and overseas dependent territories within UK tax law
- Increasing Air Passenger Duty
- Raising the highest rates of income tax
- Land Value Taxation
- Adding at least three upper bands to Council Tax
- A more ambitious sugar tax
- A wealth tax as outlined in our General Election manifesto of 2015
- Higher levels of cigarette and alcohol taxation
- Removing the £26 billion annual subsidy to fossil fuels in the UK each year
- Removing the c£9bn annual subsidy to civil aviation each year
- Cancelling HS2, estimated at over £50 billion
- Cancelling Trident renewal, estimated at a total cost over the lifetime of the programme at £207bn¹⁰

Clearly, these measures will also offer means of restoring public spending levels consistent with improving services such as the NHS and Education, as well as rebuilding local government.

APPENDIX TWO: draft transport policies for Oxfordshire

Prepared by the Transport policy working group of Oxfordshire Green Party. Participants in creating this draft were: Hazel Dawe, Steve Dawe, Sushila Dhall, John Handley, Matthew Ledbury, Tim Pizey, Liz Pym, David Williams, Al Wilson, Dick Woolf.

A draft County Transport policy for Oxfordshire incorporates walking and cycling and it is important to see these areas in the overall transport context. Although this draft is in abeyance at present due to the possibility of the abolition of the County Council and replacement by unitaries, its content is applicable to successor unitary authorities:

Oxford County Council transport policy version 2

Executive Summary: ten key points

1. Walking and cycling must be enhanced for public health, and to reduce traffic;
2. Access matters much more than just increasing mobility which risks increasing traffic congestion;

¹⁰ Crispin Blunt, Conservative Chair of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Ctte previously calculated the lifetime overall cost of Trident at £167bn, however collection of data from official sources over time has allowed CND to provide a revised figure of £207bn: *The Guardian*, 12th May 2016.



3. Planned decentralisation of public services to strengthened local government is about improving access for people, and reducing the need to travel long distances;
4. Expansion of teleworking is vital to keeping Oxfordshire's roads free of gridlock;
5. Bus service geographical coverage and incidence of services must be improved and speeding up the move towards electric buses is a high priority;
6. Railway coverage and incidence of services must be increased, including by the re-opening of disused lines;
7. Information for transport users must be upgraded so that people can easily check their travel routes and consider the best options on any given day;
8. 20 mph limits need to be applied to all residential roads, outside schools and hospitals and on selected rural roads;
9. Greater efforts must be made to ensure more children travel to school using transport modes other than private cars;
10. Canals and waterways, and the use of powered electric bicycles and motorbikes can all provide some extra opportunities to reduce road traffic levels, by providing alternatives for some transport users.

Our vision

The Green Party believes that people can have better lives if they can reduce the necessity for tedious and sometimes unpleasant travel commitments. Good planning of additions to settlements and more opportunities to work at home must also play a part in Oxfordshire's future. This will reduce commuting and the congestion, pollution and danger it causes particularly in town centres and their approaches.

The Green Party view the hierarchy of road users as being one with the most vulnerable road users at the top, and the least vulnerable with the most choice at the bottom. If our built and rural environment was designed with wheelchair and pushchair users and people who can't move fast in mind, we would have true accessibility for all.

Accessibility matters more than mobility. Everyone having the access they need – to services, to the shops they need to visit, to schools and colleges, to relatives, friends and community groups – does not mean all of these journeys have to be made by car. The more people can access what they need by walking, cycling, public transport and shared car use, the less air pollution, noise and traffic congestion there will be. To put this another way, planning in each part of our County needs to address the need for access and how this can be achieved with the least use of unsustainable forms of transport. This clearly means having more decentralisation and properly funded local government, including parish and town councils, which can ensure better coordination of services in accessible locations. Greens want to make it easier for all of us to choose the mode of transport which does the least environmental damage while we are going about our daily lives.

Greening Transport for All

Oxfordshire's Transport Issues: Oxfordshire is a beautiful county with international and global appeal and the city of Oxford is known as 'the City of Dreaming Spires'. But on the ground the experience can be sadly different. Residents, students, workers, shoppers and visitors to Oxford breathe a cocktail of toxic gases on very many of Oxford's central streets. County towns suffer from heavily-trafficked through roads, and walking routes throughout the county are interrupted by hazardous traffic routes. This particularly affects wheelchair & pushchair users and people



who are unable to move fast. Cycling in Oxfordshire is fraught with hazards, although cycling is the most energy-efficient form of transport. Moreover, the scattered nature of many settlements in rural areas and the poor provision of public transport has made many people totally dependent on the private car. This is becoming increasingly unsustainable, with rising fuel costs, and prolific carbon emissions involved playing an all too large part in dangerous climate change. It doesn't have to be like this.

Green Councillors will help to create a sustainable future for all the people of Oxfordshire.

Serving different geographies

If we are to have better transport of all types, we all have to recognise that piecemeal solutions do not work. An integrated County transport strategy has to cover the whole geography through which people are moving. In practice, this means it should become easier for people to move between different types of transport on some journeys; it also means ensuring road and pavement repairs are done for the long-term instead of being superficial and leading to further repairs much too quickly.

GREEN COUNTY COUNCILLORS WILL:

Teleworking, Internet Shopping and Green Travel Plans

- Continue to recognise that traffic levels rise substantially during school and university term times. We want all employers to increase the numbers of their staff that are enabled to telework, as a result of enhanced Green Travel Plans and reductions in employee car parking to discourage car commuting. We also recognise that internet shopping may reduce car journeys even where distribution journeys by delivery vehicles are being created, and support initiatives which allow small and medium sized enterprises to improve their internet sales – to help cut car traffic. We think that communities need 'virtual high street' websites to assist people in finding what they want, particularly from local, independent businesses. This initiative could contribute to people finding things they need within walking and cycling distance of home.
- Fight for Oxfordshire County Council, and our district councils, to ensure new developments with additional employment implications have Green Travel Plans and traffic impact assessments of a rigorous nature before planning approval is given.
- Support 'Smart Cities' initiatives, such as suggested by *Nominet*, would allow potential travellers within the County to assess traffic conditions, locate where the goods and services they want may be found and to consider which transport mode or modes are best for their journey if an internet shopping option does not exist. This type of initiative should be strongly supported as a means of reducing traffic congestion.
- Support promotion of teleworking by councils and other forms of working at home, live-work units and improved broadband internet access to reduce the need to travel, especially in rush hours.

Wheelchair/pushchair users and Pedestrians

- Plan networks of walking routes in all towns using the most direct 'desire' lines
- Give walking routes priority wherever possible, ie . at junctions
- Put pavement extensions across side roads, creating a level and continuous surface across main roads



- Support safe routes to schools and school travel plans being re-financed and re-emphasised since about 14 in every 100 cars moving in morning rush hours are carrying children to schools.
- Prevent parking on pavements
- Put cycle lanes on the roads rather than on the pavements.
- Free pedestrian routes of clutter and ensure they are wide enough and with a good, even surface.
 - Support the introduction of 20 mph zones in all residential areas throughout Oxfordshire.
- Improve safety for pedestrians and wheel & push chair users especially in villages and on rural highways
- Prioritise pedestrian and wheel & push chair safety over car capacity when deciding on the need for pedestrian crossings.
- Ensure visually challenged pedestrians are considered and consulted when changes are made to the road network.
- Create a culture where on shared spaces (e.g. towpaths) cyclists give way to pedestrians and are courteous.

Cycling

Cycling is the most energy-efficient form of transport and is clean, efficient, healthy and enjoyable. However, cycling rates could be much higher than they are in Oxfordshire. In particular, children and elderly people feel unsafe cycling in towns and along rural routes between county towns. Even in Oxford city cycle routes are poorly thought out, they stop and start awkwardly, and are often closed off or blocked by markets, cars and vans, and/or buses with engines running. Cycle routes also force conflict between cyclist and pedestrians by going on and off pavements, confusing cyclists about the rules of the highways. Despite being highly vulnerable road users themselves, cyclists are frequently the target of the anger of other road users. Cycling on rural routes is extremely hazardous, with fast traffic, narrow winding roads, and poor visibility. Incidences of cyclists seriously injured and killed are unacceptably high and this needs to be tackled urgently.

GREEN COUNTY COUNCILLORS WILL:

- Place most cycle routes on the major roads in urban areas, and never on pavements. To improve cycle safety, traffic speeds will be reduced, and cyclists given priority over motorised traffic at junctions.
- Upgrade or allocate space to cycle paths along all major roads between towns, and work with Sustrans to extend safe and direct off-road routes between towns. The Green Party, however, does not normally support the Sustrans practice of putting cycle ways on pavements.
- Increase on-street parking for cycles in and around shopping areas, and in urban terraced streets, where parked cycles currently block the pavement
- Ensure cycle routes are not blocked by parked vehicles, or by buses standing for long periods with engines running
 - Make cycle routes as continuous as possible; they should not disappear at hazardous junctions and in narrow streets.
- Ensure cyclists can cycle conveniently and directly both north-south and east-west through Oxford and directly through Oxon towns.
- Look into how desperately needed cycle routes in rural areas can be provided, perhaps in some places by making bridleways into shared use paths.
- Ensure that commuter cycle routes are prioritised; at present rural cycling is seen by the County Council as a leisure activity.
- Develop policies for electric bikes in conjunction with vulnerable road users



- Support a proposal for an Eynsham to Oxford cycleway via Farmoor

Public Transport

Since bus deregulation in 1985, services in Oxfordshire have been under private control. Competing companies run frequent services along the most popular routes but ignore the less popular routes. This makes for inadequate services throughout much of the County, and pushes people to feel they can only drive everywhere. In Oxford City, especially in the centre, even if the 'cleanest' engines possible were installed in buses, air pollution on bus routes would still breach air quality targets for the 'safe' minimum of particulates and other toxins.

GREEN COUNTY COUNCILLORS WILL:

- Commission a feasibility study into a modern lightweight electric tram system for Oxford city, running north-south and east-west.
- Free up space for the smooth-running of public transport by closing off Longwall Street and Hythe Bridge Street to through private traffic (except disabled drivers), meaning private traffic could drive into and out of Oxford city but not through Oxford city, which would cut air pollution and congestion whilst still allowing accessibility. Separate access permits would be available for students at the beginning and end of each term, and for delivery vehicles before 10am/after 6pm.
- Encourage the use of cycle rickshaws and other pedal-assisted vehicles for deliveries and as short distance public transport.
- Continue to subsidise essential but uneconomic bus routes, and consult with parish and district councils on the level of provision
- Work with bus companies to put bike racks on buses.

Railways and Trains

Rail privatisation has reduced opportunities to co-ordinate and improve rail use in the County. Train services in the UK are amongst the poorest in Europe, being overcrowded, expensive, hard to access by wheelchair or with a pushchair or bicycle, and often with large numbers of empty 'first class' carriages whilst people stand in very crowded 'economy' carriages, sometimes for many hours.

GREEN COUNTY COUNCILLORS WILL:

- Work in partnership with train and rail operators
- Strongly resist any attempts by train companies or government policies to reduce train services or close rail routes or stations
- Work towards ensuring that all carriages are equally accessible and comfortable for everyone.
- Promote and support the opening of new stations or currently disused railway lines including from Witney and Carterton into Oxford and then on to Cowley and Wheatley.
- Work with rail companies to improve rail services and timings of services to County towns such as Banbury, Didcot etc.
- Support the development of the Oxford/Stratford and Oxford/Cambridge rail links.
- Welcome any interim proposals to open disused railway lines for cycle use or walking
- Seek to co-ordinate integration of rail and local bus services
 - Work with rail companies to address noise, vibration and air pollution issues arising when residents live near railways and their sidings, particularly those likely to involve intensified freight-related air pollution issues arising when residents live near railways and their sidings. In the very long-term, work towards fully electrified rail lines and electric trains.
- Work with rail companies to ensure bicycles can be carried on trains



- Continue to oppose the construction of the HS2 high speed rail link whilst campaigning to mitigate the worst impacts if it is built.

Canals and waterways

Despite the waiting lists for residential moorings, they are under threat from profiteering landlords and unsympathetic County and District Councils. Canals are also an under-utilised means of transporting heavy goods to and between town centres and their tourism potential has not been fully realised.

GREEN COUNTY COUNCILLORS WILL:

- Promote and protect residential moorings as a form of affordable housing, and increase them wherever possible.
- Investigate the greater use of canals as a means of transport throughout the County.

Powered Bicycles, Motorbikes and Scooters

GREEN COUNTY COUNCILLORS WILL:

- Recognise that electric bicycles are a welcome addition to the roads of Oxford as they allow people who are less physically able to use bicycles to avoid car journeys and therefore take up less road space in their movements. We recognise the importance of a City-wide programme to ensure adequate charging points for electric modes of transport.
- emphasise that conventional motorbikes and scooters are currently more efficient means of personal transport than cars. The changeover to electric motorbikes and scooters will, like electric personal mobility vehicles for the elderly or disabled, increase steadily. Apart from charging points, parking arrangements for these modes of transport need to be appropriate for the level of their use within the City.

Policies for private vehicles

For many people, car-dependency is part of daily life. People who can afford them and can drive are forced to depend on cars when they live in places with inadequate or absent public transport links and no safe cycling routes. The vicious circle of car use leading to an undermining of local public transport, leading to yet more car use, has led to many localised problems: traffic congestion, noise, pollution, a dirty hazardous environment and a shortage of public space for activities other than getting from A to B. Children are unable to play outside or walk to school. Health issues due to lack of exercise are on the rise across all age groups. These problems are spread across urban and rural communities alike. Motor vehicle use is rising steadily throughout Oxfordshire and defeating attempts to tackle the urgent issue of toxic air pollution.

GREEN COUNTY COUNCILLORS WILL:

- Commit to motorised-traffic reduction targets
- Support car-clubs and car sharing schemes
- Oppose planning applications which will generate extra car traffic
- Ensure that all sizeable new developments are well-served by public transport, and wherever possible, car free
- Not permit the building of major roads, such as by-passes, which invite further traffic growth



- Abandon all proposals to straighten or widen roads and junctions
- Introduce 20mph zones on all residential streets, and near schools and where people congregate. e.g. health centres. 20 mph may also be applied on certain rural roads.
- Campaign for extended powers of Local Authority Enforcement that allow money from fines to be kept locally and invested in improving safety
- Support the extension of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs), but strongly oppose the painting of white lines on pavements for car parking. Where this has already happened steps will be taken to reverse this, focussing first on streets where the space left for walkers and other pavement users is below County minimum standards of 1.2 metres in width.
- Improve park and ride facilities for car users, with increased charges to cover improvements. Continue to oppose new Park and Ride sites throughout the County but consider decking existing sites to increase capacity where needed. Apartment building above surface level in Park and Ride sites would also be supported.
 - Increase Park and Ride parking charges and on-street parking charges – and use the income to boost public transport subsidies, especially for buses coming in from county towns
 - Support other measures, such as tree-planting, to minimise traffic noise and pollution
 - Reduce the width of the roadway on St Giles, Oxford to create a public pedestrian area with tree planting
- Investigate using congestion charging as a means to raise revenue for public transport and to reduce car-dependency
 - support introducing SPECS average speed cameras. Unlike other speed cameras which capture your speed at a certain point in the road, SPECS average speed cameras track your speed over a set distance, which may be several miles. Extend the network of speed cameras as soon as financially possible to reduce excessive traffic speeds on our roads.
- Clamp down on the current practice of allowing builder’s vans to park on pavements and in cycle lanes and seek provision of parking spaces for those undertaking essential work in the locality e.g. health visitors & builders.
 - Research new possibilities for implementing creative transport management solutions in Oxfordshire arising from new technologies, including: active traffic monitoring, transport applications on mobile phones, electric vehicles, and autonomous vehicles. Ensure that the spread of electric vehicle charging points continues.
