

## **OGP Policy Working Group: Background to Connectivity**

### **What is happening in Oxfordshire now**

Current County policy is focused primarily on roads and ensuring the road network runs smoothly for cars and private car ownership is championed.

The assumption is that rural areas will always need private cars and so need reliance on autonomous and electric cars for the future. This does not link reliance on private cars with the inactivity in the current epidemic, safety issues for cyclists and walkers, and the pollution that will still be created by these cars. Autonomous cars could use large amounts of energy in running the networks needed, are likely to be polluters in terms of particles and still present the safety issues for cyclists or walkers.

### **What the Green Party needs to do**

Connectivity is about connecting people rather than just moving people.

Broadband connections need improving in many parts of the county.

Community connections and using local facilities that have been revived during the Covid-19 pandemic are beneficial and can be developed.

Shorter commutes for employees are to be encouraged, but also a recognition that Covid-19 impact is likely to lead to much more remote working and more jobs worked further from the place of work - so it is important to consider how to make long distance travel by train/bus with good first mile/last mile connections work better as well; rural connectivity means broadband improvements plus buses/electric car pools and greater investment in the local community; we need better, greener, and cheaper bus services, safer, properly made cycle routes and reliable local trains; we need to create safe, pleasant streets which prioritise walking and cycling.

Low traffic neighbourhoods are to be encouraged and 'school streets' in city, towns and villages.

Work on local transport, i.e. improved bus service, bus gates, improved junctions on the ring road, electric charging points, more user friendly streets; intermodal public transport; high priority of active travel with safe and interconnected cycle routes leading to a strategic network across Oxon; extensive, safe, sheltered cycle parking including for electric bikes; good subsidies for rural school transport; encouraging electric, train freight over road freight; delivery vehicles plan, city and town retail/business delivery (first miles/last miles focus for electric/pedal powered delivery)

Model for connectivity: 15/20-minute communities – i.e. where people can access most of what they need within 20 minutes walking/cycling/intermodal transport

OGP county policy 2017 had a 12-point plan:

1. walking and cycling for health & to reduce traffic;
2. access to infrastructure matters much more than just increasing mobility over distances;
3. improving access for people or services, and reducing the need to travel long distances;
4. expansion of teleworking is vital to keeping Oxfordshire's roads free of gridlock;
5. incidence & interconnection of bus services must be improved: speeding up a move towards electric buses high priority;
6. railway service provision and frequency increased, including options such as the re-opening of disused lines such as the East–West Varsity line to Cambridge;
7. support the reopening of the Witney–Oxford Rail link because this is the ONLY way to break the constant massive congestion on the A40;
8. info for transport users must be upgraded and better publicised;
9. speed limit of 20 mph for all residential roads, outside schools and hospitals and on selected rural roads;
10. recognise that although Park and Rides keep large amounts of traffic from the City Centre in Oxford, we need to focus on reducing the number of car journeys rather than continually building and expanding Park and Rides;
11. greater efforts must be made to ensure more children travel to school using transport modes other than private cars;
12. canals and waterways, and the use of powered electric bicycles and motorbikes, can all provide some extra opportunities to reduce road traffic levels. Also: hierarchy of road users should be one where the most vulnerable road users should be considered as a priority.