

**Eco Bicester Travel Behaviour Demonstration Project – 2011/12 Programme**

Walking & Cycling

**User Audits**

The purpose of the user audits is to engage with local residents to understand the current barriers to walking and cycling in their area and develop a programme of measures to be implemented or issues to be investigated further for engineering solutions.

The first of the audits were undertaken in 2010/11 to ascertain what the priority routes should be. This work proved extremely beneficial and enabled local residents to engage in identifying what improvements they would like to see. It is anticipated that these individuals can play an active part in the design work of the primary routes.

**Infrastructure Improvements**

*Quick wins*

Including dropped kerbs and removal of guard rail, identified through the first round of walk and cycle audits and the technical work carried out by OCC. The project needs to demonstrate that getting involved with the audits does result in positive action, so that people feel more inclined to engage with the project in future. These kinds of improvements need to be in place before the big push event in the spring.

*Primary Routes*

The work to date has identified five priority routes for improvements for walking and cycling, which is over and above what Oxfordshire County Council would normally do for a town the size of Bicester. These routes identified gaps in the current walking and cycling networks.

Due to time constraints, the primary routes are split into two tranches for design and delivery. The first tranche will include the routes from the town centre to Bure Park, Bure Park to the Exemplar site, and Bicester Village to the town centre. Design work for Bure Park to the town centre will include improvements to the existing route, a potential route along the Banbury Road from the railway bridge to the roundabout and address issues raised through the audits about crossing Bell Lane into Sheep Street. Bure Park to the Exemplar Site should be easier to achieve as it requires a small stretch of link to be improved plus maintenance work. Bicester Village to the town centre (the Bicester Links project) should be completed this month with some dropped kerbs put in place.

The second tranche of primary routes are Bicester North Station to town centre and Cooper School to the town centre. Work on upgrading these routes will take place in 2012/13.

*Secondary Routes*

No expenditure is identified for this financial year unless the work for the NW Bicester Masterplan identifies any 'quick wins'.

*Cycle Parking*

A secure, prominent location for leaving bikes is important to make cycling a convenient mode of travel and therefore encourage more people to make this choice.

## **APPENDIX A**

Locations such as local (neighbourhood) shopping areas, doctors surgeries, key bus stops, railway stations, sports centres and fields as well as larger play areas and the town centre have been identified as locations that have no cycle parking or need an increase in the provision.

### **Maintenance**

One of the barriers to walking and cycling is concerns over personal security. Well maintained routes can help to overcome this and make these mode choices more inviting. This work would be over and above the maintenance that would normally be carried out and would include removing overhanging vegetation, tree pruning, filling in potholes and good quality lighting. The improvements to the routes would need to be carried out by the contractors (either Oxfordshire County Council or Bicester Town Council) in the first place to bring them up to the required standard, however once this has been completed some of this work could be undertaken by the Bicester Green Gym or a similar residents group with support from the term contractors for the heavier or more specialised work.

### **Mapping (walking, cycling & public transport)**

Through the walking and cycling audits and other information gathering events it has become clear that not all local people are aware of the non-car cut through routes that exist in the town. A map is being drawn to highlight all walking and cycling routes and to highlight local shopping areas and other main trip generators, as well as the locations of bus stops and the services that leave from them. It will show the locations of cycle parking and other developments in the town (such as the town centre redevelopment and other housing projects) as they come on stream. The map will be produced as a paper copy and an online version.

The map will invite users to give feedback and an updated version will be produced taking comments into account and updating any developments in the town. The map will be used to set the basis for the wayfinding project and guided walking and cycling work.

### **Bike Loan Scheme**

The aim of the bike loan scheme is to allow those who are new to cycling or have not cycled for some years to try it out without the expense of purchasing a bike. The loan would be for a month. It will be available to adults who live and work in Bicester but currently drive there and to adults who live in Bicester that commute by rail and currently drive to the station car park.

A bike and equipment would be supplied as well as training, and in return participants would need to agree to cycle at least 3 out of 5 trips to and from work per week or on agreed leisure trips. They would be given an option to purchase a new bike to a similar specification at the end of the loan period (or the bike itself) under the salary sacrifices scheme or at a discounted price.

Costs this financial year would be for setting up the scheme, buying 20 good quality hybrid bikes fitted with good quality tyres, lights, racks and locks, provision of cycle helmets and wet weather kit, and the launch in the spring of 2012.

### Promotional Push

- *Bike Dr Scheme*

The Cycle Demonstration Towns have shown that many adults have bikes but they are not used because they are not in working order. Bike doctors carry out minor repairs and adjustments to get bikes back on the road. They can also show people how to carry out minor repairs and adjustments themselves. The scheme could include an inner tube exchange where a tube with a puncture is swapped for a repaired tube, thus cutting down on waste.

Grassroots Bicester have been offering bike doctors as part of their swap shop days. This work needs to be supported and part of the promotional push in the spring.

- *Escorted walks & rides*

Lack of knowledge of routes has been identified from the household survey as one of the barriers to not using sustainable travel modes and another barrier is lack of confidence in using the routes. The escorted walks and rides are one way to overcome these barriers as the users are accompanied to show them the key junctions and cut through routes and any potential hazards. The route guides are people recruited from the local community who are currently walking or cycling and are provided with training in route leading. These route guiders can provide one to one support or small group support depending on the needs of the users.

- *Adult Cycle Training*

The survey results showed that one of the barriers to cycling was lack of confidence from adults who had not cycled since childhood or who had never cycled. Training would be aimed at those who would like to cycle but do not feel confident either to cycle generally or specifically to ride on the road. There could be a range of previous experience, from those that have never cycled to those that do a little cycling but feel their skills could be improved. The training could be provided via work places, children centres or as part of a family activity session.

Oxfordshire County Council staff would identify participants, identify suitable training locations and would carry out post participation monitoring to review if participants have taken up cycling.

Most costs for the promotional push in the current financial year would be in preparing publicity material for the event.

### Public Transport

#### **Infrastructure Improvements and Real Time Information (RTI)**

Buses operated by Heyfordian and Grayline were fitted with RTI equipment in 2010/11 using the CLG funding. This now means that all bus routes in the town (including the S5 service from Oxford, which is operated by Stagecoach and already fitted with RTI kit) can now provide real time information for passengers in the town.

## **APPENDIX A**

The focus for 2011/12 will be to fit key bus stops throughout the town with RTI displays at the shelters so that passengers can see live information as to when their bus is due. This will be funded through the CLG funds as well as funding from Oxfordshire County Council.

Other stops throughout the town will also be upgraded utilising Oxfordshire County Council funds.

### **Promotional Push**

The programme for a promotional push on public transport would be for this to take place in the autumn of 2012. This would follow on from the push for walking and cycling earlier in the year and could include incentivising events, such as “try the bus for a day”, advertising and marketing bus services etc.

### Cars

#### **Oxfordshire Car Share**

In 2010/11, some CLG funding was utilised to ensure that there was a Bicester section for the county-wide launch of Oxfordshirecarshare.com. As part of this commitment, some funding was agreed for ongoing support, promotion and marketing.

### Information Gathering

#### **Household Travel Survey**

The survey has provided baseline information on current travel practices of residents within the town, which will be used in future monitoring exercises. The report was finalised in 2011/12 and costs are part of that finalisation.

#### **Vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist counting + public transport survey**

In 2010/11 using CLG funding, we installed a number of pedestrian and cycle counters throughout the town. This will enable the team to understand the number of people currently using each mode, including information on seasonal variations, as well as adding more information to our baseline data.

The automatic counters are now in place and are operational, however they need to be maintained and funding will cover that work.

Data on public transport patronage will also be sought in October.

In the early days of the project this exercise will be repeated on a six-monthly basis to monitor progress.

### Target setting

#### **Mode share targets for car use, walking, cycling and public transport**

In order to establish whether the Travel Behaviour Project is achieving its objectives a target mode share needs to be established. This will help to inform future elements of the project. This work has started and it is envisaged that the team will present draft targets to a Fortnightly Meeting in November and finalise this work in December. Part of this work needs to include setting review dates and methodology.

### Travel Plans

#### **School Travel Plans**

A lot of good work has already been implemented by Oxfordshire County Council with the schools in Bicester to encourage sustainable modes of travel to and from school. This work has resulted in Longfields Primary School being designated as the county's first car-free school outside of Oxford. If we are going to meet the challenging targets for modal shift, continued work with schools will be essential.

#### **Workplace Travel Planning**

The combination of work and school trips causes the severest problems in the a.m. peak hour and this part of the project looks to build on Oxfordshire County Council's successful work in school travel planning by working with businesses within Bicester to encourage employees to walk, cycle or catch the bus. This is an on-going piece of work, but also needs to be part of the cycle / walk push in the spring and the public transport push in the autumn.

#### **Personalised Travel Planning**

To provide personalised travel planning to a proportion of residents. The aim will be to implement this over spring and summer 2012 as part of the Cycle & Walk promotional push, but preparation will be required in the current financial year. Refresher visits could be made to those that took part to see if they are still using the alternative modes, but this will depend on resources.