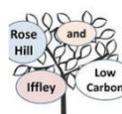


Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel

About CoHSAT

The Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel (CoHSAT) is a group of voluntary and campaigning organisations working across Oxfordshire to create attractive, accessible and people-friendly streets. We will do this by encouraging efficient, active, low carbon and sustainable travel, which will reduce traffic, air pollution and noise, and enable healthy and thriving communities. More details can be seen at <http://www.cohsat.org.uk>.

The 10 CoHSAT members are: Low Carbon Oxford North, Low Carbon West Oxford, Pedal and Post, Oxford Friends of the Earth, Oxford Pedestrians Association, Oxford Civic Society, CycloX, Rose Hill and Iffley Low Carbon, Oxfordshire Liveable Streets and Oxfordshire Cycling Network.



Healthy Streets and Active Travel, 2020-21 – summary of findings

Our five activities have focused primarily on awareness-raising and education. We are particularly delighted about the success of the popup shop and that we have helped six of the market towns take up active travel initiatives. The Walkability Index is a unique contribution to identifying neighbourhoods that lack amenities within easy access. The data project will help groups access active travel data which support their researches and discussions on the way that active travel is developing in Oxfordshire. And our briefing paper on Bike Hangars provides the launch-pad for Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council to make cycle parking safer.

We have enjoyed undertaking these five activities and hope that our findings will promote action on active travel and healthy streets in Oxfordshire. With thanks to the Low Carbon Hub for its essential support.

Assisting the development of new Healthy Streets and Active Travel groups in several market towns

CoHSAT wants to help develop initiatives in the other major towns in Oxfordshire and in the original proposal planned to stimulate activity by holding public meetings either (a) where a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) has been produced (Didcot, Bicester, as well as Oxford) or (b) where a need has been identified. For instance in Abingdon, monitoring local pollution levels is already underway, together with a survey to establish whether residents want to close Northcourt Road to through traffic.

Abingdon will be the initial focus, in conjunction with Abingdon Carbon Cutters. Other likely market towns have already been identified by OCN and OLS, as there is an active group or keen individuals, which would appreciate some extra support, to establish a new community group. The development of new groups will make it easier to press the County Council to take more action, for instance with the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 5 (LTCP5). OLS has a grant of £1,950 from the Midcounties Co-op Community Fund for this activity and will contribute this as matched funds for the CoHSAT bid.

The original intention was to hold a series of face-to-face meetings in each of the towns to establish the level of interest. This would be followed up with a workshop to co-design the broad principles of traffic management and street design, with stakeholders including Councillors.

Sadly Covid-19 put paid to these ambitions, but we have made surprisingly good progress through the medium of virtual meetings and we are pleased to report on activity in several towns across the County.

Policy background

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) are increasingly seen as the way into Government funding and are already influencing funding allocations to local authorities. In Oxfordshire, the County Council has completed LCWIPs in Oxford and Bicester. A plan for Didcot is in development, with others under consideration for Kidlington and Abingdon.

The Government published *Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking* in July 2020, with the stated ambition that: "Places will be truly walkable. A travel revolution in our streets, towns and communities will have made cycling a mass form of transit. Cycling and walking will be the natural first choice for many journeys with half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030."

The document confirmed: "The £2bn of funding for cycling and walking that the Government announced in May 2020 is new money, representing a sixfold increase in dedicated cycling and walking funding." It was accompanied by new cycling design guidance which sets out the much higher standards they will now require if schemes are to receive funding.

Abingdon

CoHSAT convened a meeting largely drawn from members of Abibike and Abingdon Carbon Cutters in May 2020. This led to the formation of a working group that surveyed and designed a comprehensive walking and cycling network for the town, published in September 2020 [link]. The Abingdon Cycling and Walking Network Plan was developed by Abingdon Liveable Streets, a collaborative, community-based group which includes members of Abibike, Abingdon Carbon Cutters, Abingdon Freewheeling, Abingdon Health Walks and the Town Council. The plan is being actively considered by the County Council, with a view to including it in their LCWIP programme.

Wantage

Wantage Active Travel – a new group, started to form in 2020 and gathered momentum in the first lockdown. The first projects were supporting partial pedestrianisation of Market Place and input to the County Council's Emergency Active Travel Fund bid (latter via CoHSAT). They have since been adding members to the interest group and having discussions via Zoom. They are now planning an online meeting on 17th Feb 2021 to kick off the next phase, which is to develop a walking and cycling plan – a 'Community LCWIP' for the town.

Chipping Norton

A few people got in contact with CoHSAT during 2020 and we put them in touch with each other, and gave them advice about how to proceed. They are now starting to consider developing a plan for a town LCWIP and a walking and cycling route to Kingham station, largely following the line of the old railway.

Bicester

Bicester Bicycle Users Group (BUG) formed in 2019. CoHSAT has been advising them through the year while they developed and responded to road and housing developments. There is a particular issue with a high speed roundabout that we helped them raise to County Cabinet Member level (although the design has been improved it has not been changed from a high-speed design to a more appropriate compact design).

Faringdon

Mark Harrison, Chair of Farcycles is now leading a team to develop a walking and cycling plan for Faringdon. He has also volunteered to be a Cycling UK Regional Coordinator for the Cycle Advocacy Network.

Banbury

A number of individuals and groups contacted CoHSAT members during 2020 and they were eventually brought together for a meeting organised by Banbury Community Action Group (CAG) in January 2021. The engagement on the day and subsequent feedback was very positive:

“The Banbury CAG cycling initiative group is most appreciative of all the suggestions, advice, support and encouragement you sent our way. We will reflect on your suggestions and build on what we learnt last night, to take the project forward. We appreciate that even the 'quick wins' might be somewhat slow, but hopefully our enthusiasm and that of many other Banbury residents, will eventually produce results, and cycling will eventually be a safer, more pleasant, and therefore more common means of transport in the town.”

At the meeting, CoHSAT members stressed the importance of the following, based on our learning in Oxford:

1. Involvement and support of local Councillors is vital
2. A broad coalition of groups is important, particularly in a town like Banbury where levels of cycling are relatively low
3. While a network plan for the town is the ultimate ambition, advocating for practical measures that make a real difference is a good starting point

See the Figure 1 map below of the Abingdon LCWIP.

The Abingdon Cycling and Walking Network Map

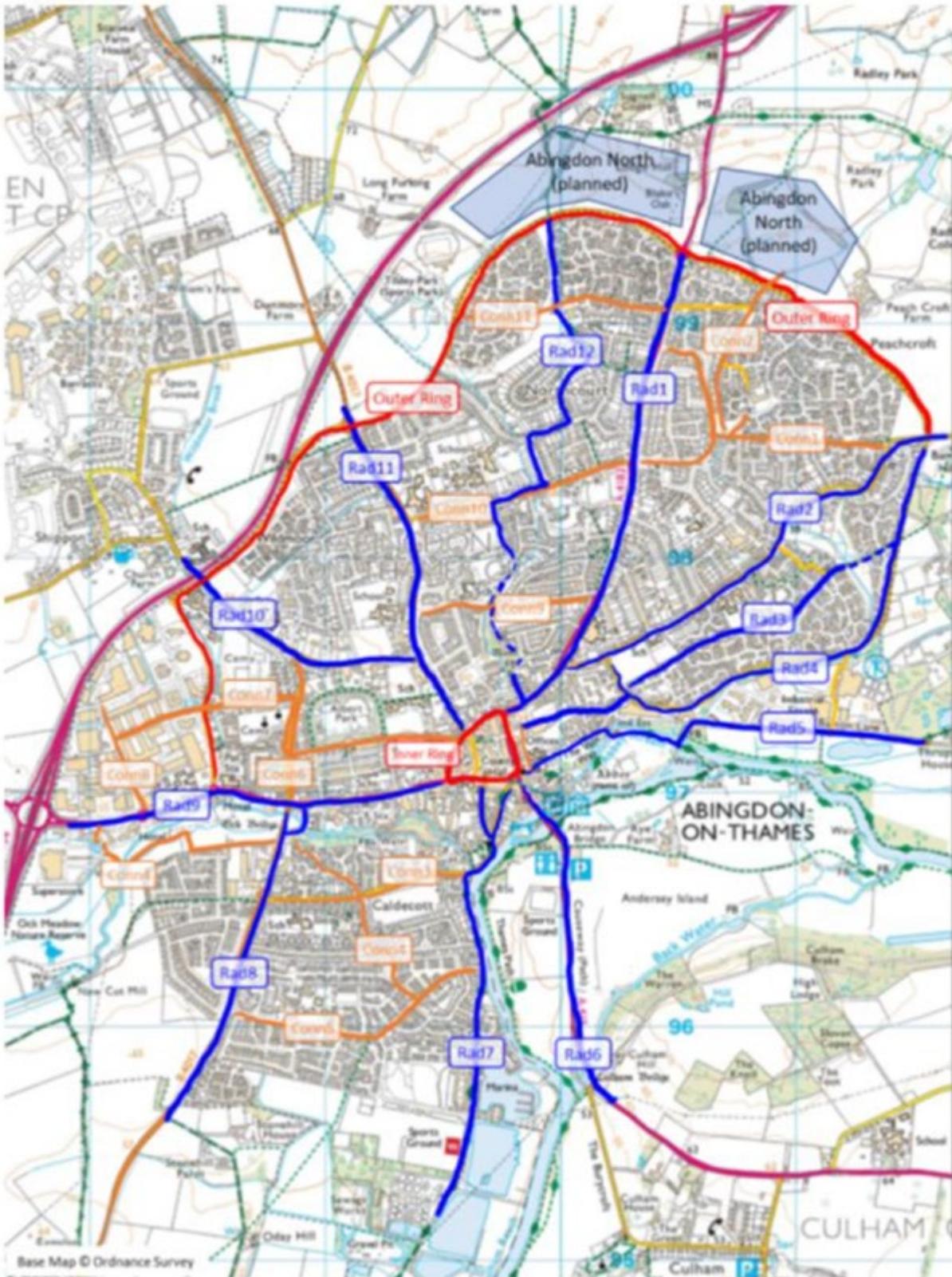


Figure 1: Map of Abingdon LCWIP

For further information on our five projects for 2020-2021 and other CoHSAT activities see <http://www.cohsat.org.uk> or email us at CoHSATOxon@gmail.com.