# SATN NETWORK: PRIORITISED LINKS

The Prioritisation results were used to identify a series of 'top priority' links. Comparing the performance of shorter and longer segments ensured that the 'top priority' links directly responded to the Prioritisation results and therefore created route extents that had the most 'strategic' potential.

The intention of the results is that all segments which have been identified and scored in the prioritisation process each have 'Strategic' value and therefore merit further investigation. The identification of these routes as 'secondary/ complementary' does not preclude further design development of the routes nor should it constrain the timescales for delivery. The intention is similar to the Prioritisation process in the LCWIP where the aim ultimately is that all identified measures are delivered.

The draft results were used at a design workshop with OCC officers which confirmed Segments for translating into 'on the ground' alignments. The opposite plan translates the results from the workshop into two categories:

· Strategic/Primary links – these segments are a combination of links to be developed further by SATN and also links which OCC are already developing designs/have alignments for. A majority of OCC's pipeline schemes are contained in LCWIPs, Developer Funded Routes or through other work packages e.g. NCN upgrade

· Complementary/Secondary Links – the second category identifies remaining links within the network which are recommended for further development outside of the SATN.

Legend:
— Strategic/Primary Links
— Complementary/Secondary Links
● Key Origin/Destination
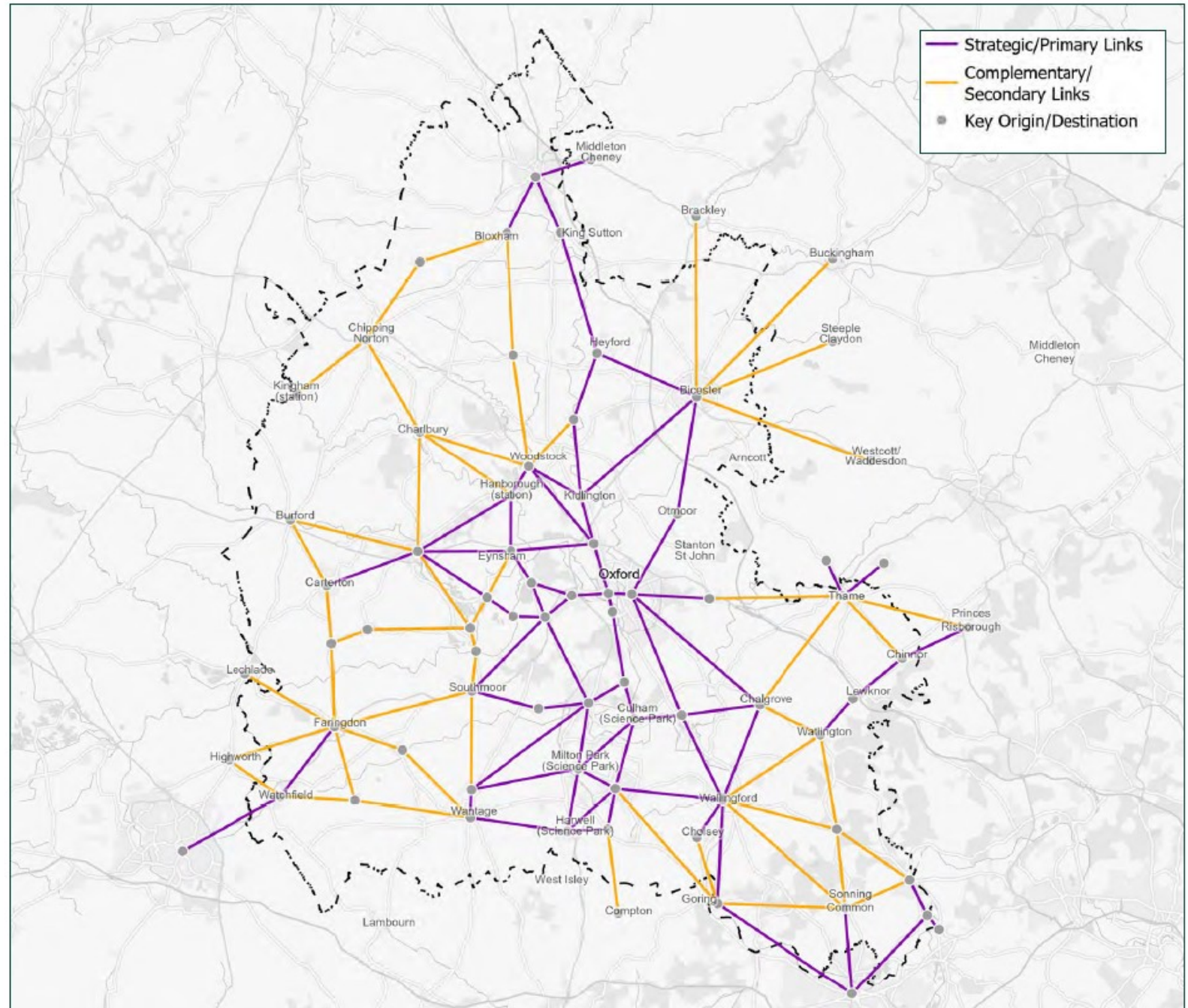
Divisions Affected - All

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
25 April 2024

STRATEGIC ACTIVE TRAVEL NETWORK – STAGE 1

Report by Corporate Director for Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION:

The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy is RECOMMENDED to

    (a)   Approve the prioritised straight desire line network.

    (b)   Approve a 'packaged' approach for Stage 2 and instruct officers to proceed with its implementation.

Executive Summary

1.   The SATN (Sustainable Active Travel Network) is a proposal for a countywide Active Travel network of walking and cycling routes. Its development has been structured in two Stages.

2.   Stage 1 involved working with external consultants to analyse the data and engage with stakeholders to produce a straight-line desire network map.

3.   Stage 2, to commence now, entails translating the straight-line links into on-the-ground alignments together with the relevant local teams, including the performance of the optioneering, feasibility, design and construction phases.

4.   The Active Travel Team considers, as agreed during the E&P Portfolio Holders Briefing on 28 March 2024 that members' backing of the deliverables produced in Stage 1 and the approach suggested for Stage 2 will contribute to:

    (a)   Place the programme in the best possible position to make a stronger case for funding opportunities and secure future funding for delivery.

    (b)   Improve the chances of SATN to steer the future of the capital pipeline.

    (c)   Showcase that OCC is committed with its corporate priorities.

(d) Improve stakeholder engagement, with a special focus on District Councils.

Overview
Definition

5.   The SATN (Sustainable Active Travel Network) is a proposal for a countywide Active Travel network of walking and cycling routes. It incorporates both newly proposed and existing alignments in different stages of execution. In this context, the term 'alignments' refers to the physical paths laid out on the terrain. The proposal also includes a design toolkit to illustrate potential design approaches for the identified route alignments.

Structure

6.   The programme is structured around two phases:

(a)   **Stage 1 – Prioritised straight-line desire map (concluded):** the initial phase involved the development of a 'prioritised straight-line desire map' (Annex 1). This map serves the purpose of highlighting the links in demand and, within this framework, identifying those that merit prioritisation. The network was developed following a meticulous methodology involving data analyses, formal and informal consultations, and a systematic prioritisation exercise. The methodology and outputs of Stage 1 are presented in a final report (Annex 2) which was produced in conjunction with Phil Jones Associates Ltd (PJA).

(b)   **Stage 2 – Route/scheme development (in progress):** using the prioritised straight-line desire map developed in Stage 1, the second phase entails dividing the map into 'areas'. Whereas the natural approach would be to use district limits, a more localised vision based on smaller areas could promote greater engagement with stakeholders, leading especially to better chances of funding. The exact delimitation will be agreed with the place planning teams upon approval. When the countywide network has been structured around the areas, local teams, in partnership with the Active Travel Team, will conduct comprehensive feasibility analyses for each suggested alignment including existing infrastructure, land ownership and other necessary elements to confirm the alignment or amend it. This analysis will be followed by detailed design and costing processes, and finally construction of the proposed scheme.

Status

7.   Presently, the SATN programme has reached the conclusion of Stage 1. To advance to Stage 2, it is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy approves 1) the prioritised straight-line desire map and 2) the proposed working approach for Stage 2, as presented in the previous section.

Wider objectives

8.   In addition to propose The SATN has five main objectives:

(a)   To set out an indicative development plan for a network of active travel routes linking up all relevant origin and destination locations throughout the county.

(b)   To **provide** a framework for prioritising routes according to their potential to increase and sustain commuting, leisure and other trips by means of active travel.

(c)   To outline **indicative** infrastructure improvements (from route selection in non-existing parts of the network, as well as upgrading options in existing established routes) to inform potential future schemes which may be funded through various means.

(d)   To support the **development** of bids for active travel schemes in areas not covered by other plans, such as LCWIPs.

(e)   To bridge the gap **between** different strategic and infrastructure plans throughout the county and ensure consistency and coherence in the design of active travel infrastructure.

Context

9.   The SATN is a fairly novel concept within the UK. The impetus for SATN originated from the Oxfordshire Cycling Network's 2017 proposal for a "Strategic Cycling Network for Oxfordshire," highlighting the significance of strategic planning for active travel networks beyond urban areas.

10.   The impetus was formally recognised by the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Active Travel Programme Board, which identified SATN as a as a 'Priority Workstream' in March 2021.

11.   The SATN was integrated with the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP). Policy 4, supported by Action 5.4 of the Active Travel Strategy, mandates the development of the SATN: "We will: a) Develop a Strategic Active Travel Network in order to identify key routes for walking and cycling between destinations across the county and prioritise interventions to existing and new infrastructure […]".

12.   From a national perspective, the SATN programme aligns with strong policy support for the promotion of Active Travel (see First and Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategies (2017; 2022), Cycling and Walking Plan for England (2022).

Corporate Policies and Priorities

13. In addition to the policies mentioned in the section above the SATN contributes towards 6 of the 9 Strategic Priorities in the County Council's Corporate Plan:

   (a) It helps address the climate emergency by providing necessary infrastructure to contribute to the modal shift towards sustainable forms of transportation (i.e., walking, wheeling and cycling).

   (b) It contributes to tackling inequalities by offering access to alternative and less expensive modes of transport.

   (c) It contributes to improving the health and wellbeing of residents through expanding the possibility of exercising.

   (d) It significantly contributes to creating an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network.

   (e) It significantly contributes to improving access to nature and green spaces.

   (f) It contributes to creating opportunities for children and young people by increasing the travel possibilities.

Financial Implications

14. The Strategic Active Travel Network does not have any direct implications for transport infrastructure investment at this stage. It provides the framework, guidance and design recommendations for the preparation of funding bids and delivery of active travel routes across Oxfordshire. However, delivery of individual on-the-ground alignments would be expected to require further resource and incur financial implications, that would be requested through separate business case where required.

15. The network proposal has been produced by staff from across Environment & Place, and hence covered by the staffing budget in this area. Immediate work to progress the proposal will not require any additional resources other than those already identified. Stage 2 would require additional funding, which would be sourced from the Active Travel Fund, developer contributions, Section 106, Community Infrastructure Levies, charities (e.g., Sustrans), governmental agencies (e.g., AONBs), community groups, private sponsors, and funding allocated via the County Council and District Councils' budgets.

   Comments checked by: Filipp Skiffins, Assistant Finance Business Partner, filipp.skiffins@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

16. The Strategic Active Travel Network does not have any immediate legal implications. The SATN will be a supporting document to the County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP).

17.   The LTCP is the county's statutory Local Transport Plan, which is a statutory document required under the Transport Act 2000 and was subject to public consultation prior to its adoption in July 2022. There are no requirements for the subsequent supporting strategies to be consulted upon.

Comments checked by: Jennifer Crouch, Head of Law and LBP Environmental, jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

18.   The development of the Strategic Active Travel Network has been undertaken by officer resources in the Infrastructure Strategy and Policy Team, with input from officers across the Environment and Place directorate.

19.   Once approved, delivery of the Strategic Active Travel Network will be undertaken by officers from across the Environment and Place directorate, as well as external stakeholders such as the district councils and housing developers. Additional resources may be required to deliver individual on-the-ground alignments or coordinate the delivery of a route segment.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

20.   To ensure that we have assessed equalities implications in a fair and thorough manner an Equalities Impact Assessment was conducted (Annex 3). This has ensured that any equality matters have been identified and acted upon during development of the proposal.

Sustainability Implications

21.   A Climate Impact Assessment has been undertaken (Annex 2) to ensure that matters with climate implications are identified and where required acted upon during development of the Strategic Active Travel Network.

22.   The Strategic Active Travel Network will help to deliver the LTCP and County Council's Climate Action Framework. Transport produces the majority of emissions in the county. Active travel routes will help to tackle this by reducing journeys by car and supporting the uptake of walking, cycling, and public transport via links to the future transport hub network.

Risk Management

23.   A risk register has been kept during the development of the Strategic Active Travel Network. Key risks associated with the Strategic Active Travel Network moving forward have been summarised below:

24.   *Risk*: The proposals in the strategy are not implemented

Mitigation: The Strategy has been developed with input from the relevant council teams, partners and stakeholders. We will continue to work with these partners and stakeholders to ensure the strategy is implemented. This will include regular progress checks and maintain clear communication between different teams, especially for cross boundary routes.

25.   *Risk*: The strategy does not deliver its intended outcomes

   Mitigation: The Strategic Active Travel Network will be reviewed on a regular basis with the relevant teams. This will include regular discussions on the prioritisation of routes, ensuring the most effective routes with the biggest impact are delivered first. Communication will be maintained between teams working within the project to ensure consistency across the County.

Consultations

26.   The Strategic Active Travel Network proposal's final draft was consulted on in July 2022. In total 147 responses to the consultation were received. The SATN was supported by 82% of respondents, 46% of which strongly supporting the proposal. Respondents praised the methodology, openness and thoroughness of the proposal, while some suggested taking into account greater attention to horse riders and tourists.

27.   The relevant cabinet members have also been engaged with through portfolio holder briefings in October 2022, February 2023 and March 2024.

Bill Cotton, Corporate Director for Environment and Place

Annex: Annex 1: Prioritised straight-line desire map
                                Annex 2: Strategic Active Travel Network Final Report
                                Annex 3: Climate Impact Assessment
                                Annex 4: Equalities Impact Assessment

Background papers: Nil

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