

# Oxfordshire Environment Board

Oxfordshire Local Transport & Connectivity Plan 5  
County Hall  
New Road  
Oxford  
OX1 1NG

15 May 2020

## Re: Response from Oxfordshire Environment Board Climate Emergency & Air Quality: Green Infrastructure Topic Paper

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Dear Mr Gagg,

The Oxfordshire Environment Board ([www.oxeb.org.uk](http://www.oxeb.org.uk)) was founded in 2018 as an alliance of environmental organisations across the county. We are working in partnership to ensure a strong and united voice exists for Oxfordshire's natural environment.

1. The Board welcomes this topic paper on Green Infrastructure and its content, and strongly endorses the vital role that transport and connectivity have to play in Oxfordshire's Nature Recovery Network (NRN).
2. The Council will be aware of the mapping work now emerging in support of the NRN, comprising three zones:
  - **Core zone** - the most important sites for biodiversity in Oxfordshire - including all nationally and locally designated sites, nature reserves, priority habitats and ancient woodland.
  - **Recovery zone** - comprising Conservation Target Areas, Important Freshwater Areas and additional areas added to provide better habitat connectivity.
  - **Wider Landscape zone** - covering the rest of the county, recognising the important contribution that agricultural and urban landscapes beyond the Recovery zone can make to nature's recovery

3. This spatial element of the NRN will be of particular importance in identifying the strategic green routes for additional investment.
4. However, it should also be embedded in decision making on transport & connectivity, for example when assessing the harms/benefits of locating new infrastructure and also in helping to guide investment to where it can maximise benefit to the natural environment (for example, through traffic reduction measures).
5. In line with the recommendation that has emerged from work on the NRN, the Oxfordshire Environment Board supports the principle of a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain to be achieved by developments across all three nature recovery zones. This commitment should be included within LTCP5.
6. The Topic Paper is largely focused on the environmental benefits of the physical infrastructure of the existing transport network, such as roadside verges. We think it should give much stronger acknowledgement to the role that transport has to play in facilitating people's access to green space and countryside. Such access is vital to both mental health and physical well-being, as the current pandemic has highlighted all too clearly. However, the countryside cannot cope with a large-scale invasion of cars! Local green space, accessible via public transport or active travel (walking/cycling), is critical. Assessment of gaps in provision should be an essential part of the LTCP5 evidence base and help inform decisions on future investment.

Yours sincerely

Helen Marshall (CPRE Oxfordshire), on behalf of the [Oxfordshire Environment Board](#)

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## **About the Oxfordshire Environment Board**

The Oxfordshire Environment Board is an alliance of organisations concerned with the promotion, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment of the county. See [www.oxeb.org](http://www.oxeb.org)

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