

Science Vale Cycle Network Improvements



The primary aim of the project was to improve routes for cyclists and pedestrians and to make cycling a more attractive choice. It adds a key layer to the Science Vale transport network and encourages sustainable travel across the area for cyclists and pedestrians, who are benefiting from improved facilities for many journeys, not just those to or from work. It provides easier and greater connectivity between three main employment centres at Harwell Campus, Milton Park and Culham Science Centre and key urban centres: Didcot, Abingdon and Wantage within the Science Vale area.

For the first time in rural Oxfordshire. A pioneering new technology, [i-glo](#) studs were used. Re-charged by daylight, they act as path finders at night without the need for additional street lighting, improving safety, saving revenue and reducing carbon emissions.

The project was delivered by Oxfordshire County Council, the final stages of the project were completed during the pandemic in the face of countless challenges and as a result of a unique collaboration, demonstrating adaptability and trust between teams across numerous public and private organisations. 10km of high-quality cycle paths and a 25m-bridge were delivered along with numerous other improvements, helping to reduce congestion and support future growth in the Science Vale area

Since opening, Route 1 (see map below) has won “**The Green Apple Award**” for its environmental best practice - **saving over 10 tons of CO₂ during construction**, effective cost management, and preserving the environment.



Across most of the routes a new sustainable paving, Flexipave, 50 per cent of which is made from recycled tyres, has been used. This porous material allows large volumes of water and air to penetrate the surface and promotes water recharge directly into natural aquifers, which hold groundwater. More than 16,000 tyres were used to deliver 7,115 metres of Flexipave, contributing to a carbon reduction of 382,217kg CO₂ from surfacing alone.

[Strategic SVCN Map & Phase 1 Delivered Sections.](#)

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) secured £5,100,000 of funding for the project via the government’s Local Growth Fund – the overall cost of the project was £5,800,000. Construction began in 2017 and was completed in January 2021.

The key benefits of the project are:

- Provide better routes to encourage more people to switch from cars to cycling and walking
- Reduce congestion on roads
- Make Science Vale a more attractive place to live and work
- Help support the future growth of Science Vale

Representative from the two main cycling groups that utilise the Science Vale Cycle Network (Kevin Wilkinson, HarBUG Chairman and Veronica Reynolds, Sustainability and Community Manager, Milton Park Innovation Centre), have submitted their respective feedback on the project.

Both have acknowledged that the Science Vale Cycle / Active Travel Network is a worthwhile project and is making it easier and safer to get to and from places of work from Oxfordshire towns. Both note that there are increased cycling levels in the area.