



Healthy Urban Mobility

BARTON | OXFORD

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND COMMUNITY PRIORITIES



Introduction

The Healthy Urban Mobility (HUM) project was a study to understand the links between health and wellbeing and how people move around (or not) in their neighbourhood and the city.

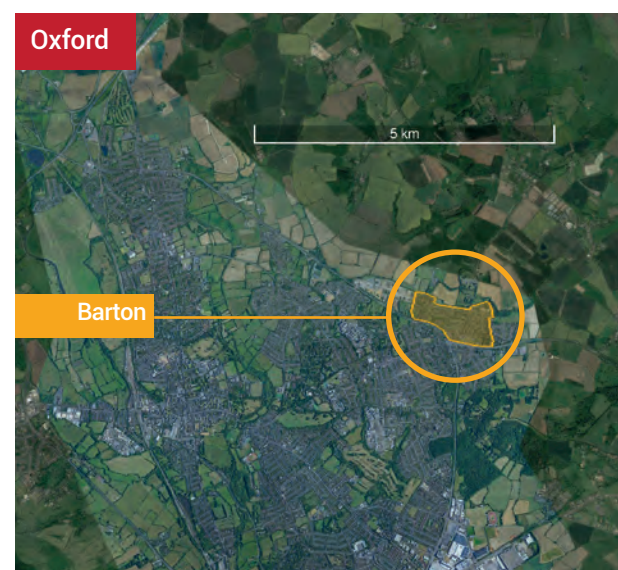
The project, based at Oxford Brookes University, ran from 2016-19. It's starting point was to understand the day-to-day experience of getting about on foot and by car, bus and bicycle in Barton and how this affects health and wellbeing.

We used a range of different ways of finding out about people's mobility and health. This included: **mapping** the built environment of Oxford; a **survey** of residents; in depth **interviews** with people about their lifetime experiences of mobility and health; participants taking researchers on one of their regular **journeys** around Barton; and community **workshops**. The activities helped us to identify community priority actions for improving health and wellbeing through mobility in Barton.

This report provides a summary of findings and priority actions.

Barton

Barton is a low-income mixed-tenure housing estate built in the 1940s as public housing and is located 5 km east of the city centre.



Source: Google Earth



Layout of buildings and spaces, Barton

The neighbourhood lies on an incline just outside the Oxford ring-road on the city's eastern edge which makes leaving the estate on foot or by cycle quite challenging. Two underpasses provide pedestrian routes under the ring-road linking to a cycle track. There are some small shops, a school, a sports centre, a swimming pool, and a community centre in the neighbourhood. A frequent bus service connects Barton to the city centre. Barton Park, a new urban extension was being built to the west of Barton.

The 2011 census showed that 47% of people in Barton travelled to work by car (compared to 35% of people in Oxford as a whole). 24% used the bus (Oxford 16%), 12% walked (Oxford 17%) and 10% cycled (Oxford 17%).



Barton, Oxford

Survey

The survey asked people about their perceptions of the neighbourhood (including places to walk and cycle); attitudes to walking and cycling; travel behaviour; quality of life; physical activity; and health and life habits. One hundred and thirty seven people in Barton responded to the survey, 59% of these were women, 71% of white ethnicity and the average age of respondents was 46 years.

For travel behaviour, 40% of all journeys were by car, 26% walking, 17% by bus and 9% by cycle. In terms of neighbourhood satisfaction, respondents were most satisfied by access to public transport. There was satisfaction with access to local facilities and to friends. Participants felt that walking was easy, although they did not consider it pleasant. Cycling was regarded less favourably than walking particularly in relation to pleasantness and ease. There was slight dissatisfaction with the amount and speed of traffic and respondents were particularly dissatisfied with traffic noise. Overall there was slight agreement that the neighbourhood was a good place to live.

More details of the questionnaire results can be found in the project Summary Report which is available at www.hum-mus.org.

Interviews and accompanied journeys

We conducted biographical interviews with twelve people in Barton accompanying them on: five walks, four cycle journeys, two bus journeys and one mobility scooter trip. The following issues/findings emerge from these.

There was general recognition that the estate's location on a hill made walking and cycling challenging. The location of the estate on the edge of the city, though more distant from the city centre, was seen as providing excellent access to the nearby countryside. Local facilities such as the Neighbourhood Centre (including social activities, Eatwells Cafe and the Doctor's surgery) and the pharmacy were much appreciated. However, there was a general feeling that parts of Barton had been left to decay - this was prior to the refurbishment of the Neighbourhood Centre - and that maintenance of the area was poor. This was



Challenge of crossing the Bayswater Road

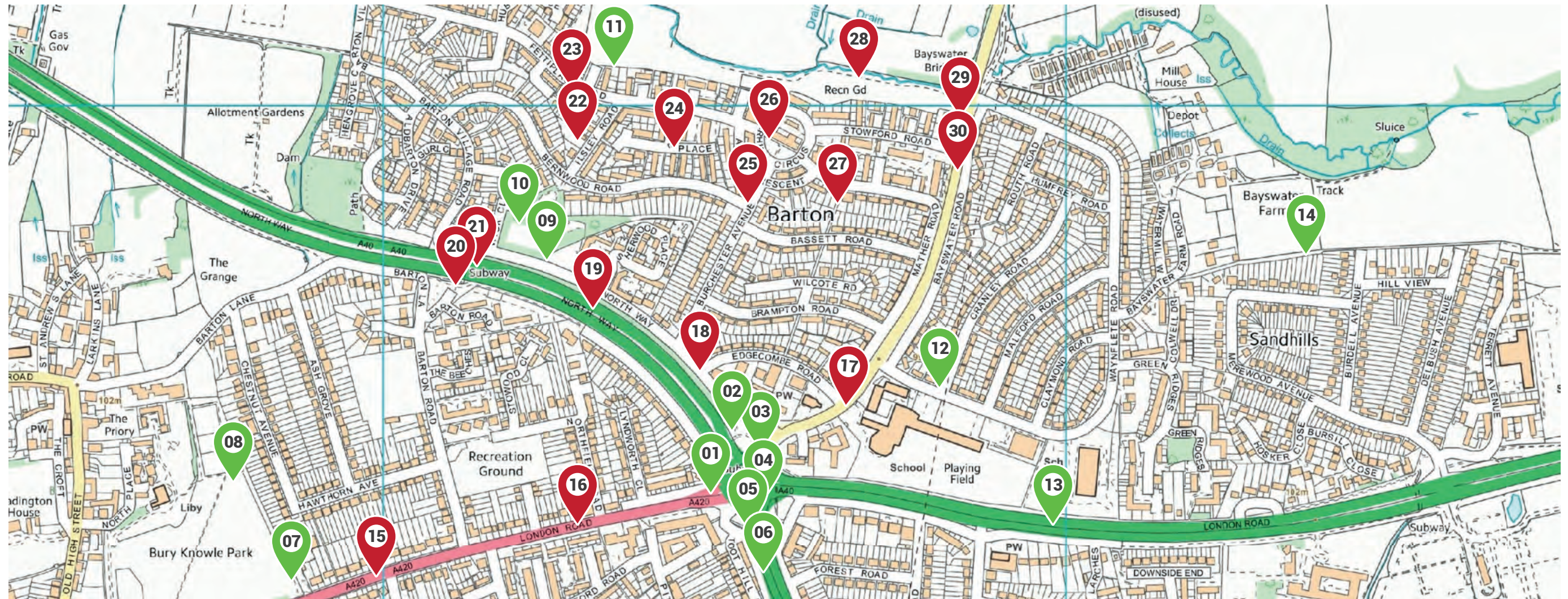
made worse by the way the Oxford ring-road cuts Barton off from the rest of the city and the noise and pollution from heavy traffic.

Access to the city via an underpass under the (Headington) roundabout served as a critical point for walking and cycling. Interactions between pedestrians and cyclists were generally good but there were reports of negative interactions as walkers took issue with cyclists using space that they were not authorised to use. Crossing the road was difficult on roads bordering the neighbourhood (especially Bayswater Road) due to the speed and volume of traffic. There was also concern about the increase in vehicles parked on pavements in the area and traffic congestion around Bayards Hill School at the start and end of the school day. Residents, women in particular, were deterred from using underpasses during hours of darkness.

Some participants, particularly parents with young children, expressed frustration with the quality of cycle infrastructure connecting the city centre along arterial roads and safety, but the cycle track alongside ring-road was valued. Despite concerns about the quality of the physical environment, there was general recognition that the neighbourhood was well served by public transport and that walking, and to some extent cycling, for local trips was easier than using a car - mainly because of traffic congestion and the difficulty and cost of parking in the city centre. Despite uncertainty about the future of the neighbourhood, particularly the integration of the Barton Park urban extension, respondents felt that there was a good sense of community spirit.

Positive and negative comments about healthy urban mobility in Barton

Scale 1:2000

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2019 Ordnance Survey

01 'if you want to cross there [at Pelican crossing at end of London Road] it is normally quite quick' Steve, 60s

02 'this was cleaned... because I kept on complaining that it was beginning to smell really strongly of urine... they sprayed it, cleaned it then some smart arse... wrote that' [points to graffiti on the freshly cleaned wall] Steve, 60s

03 'there are some nice drivers who stop and let me cross but I still have to be careful that they let me cross in the other lane as well because it is not always evident [in the third lane] and sometimes they just go because they see the road is free' Helen, 30s

04 Talking about cycling through the underpass 'I'm not presenting a danger... I manage it safely' Maria, 30s

05 'Onto the blessed ring road [cycle path]! It is so nice... very lucky' Maria, 30s

06 'if I ride in I'm alert, feel positive, in a good mood, ready to go, a much better feeling all round' Maria, 30s

07 'it's already a much better feeling, its green there, it is less noisy... it is a really beautiful place here' Helen, 30s

08 'It's peaceful, lovely trees, people playing tennis, getting exercise. And I watch people and think about them' Mina, 60s

09 'you have got the park and a beautiful view of the fields' Lisa, 50s

10 'anyone here can come and sit in Bonny Banks' Mina, 60s

11 'I walk in part of the field, I go to another field and I stand there whistling and watching the red kites' Theo, 50s

12 Cars 'park half on the pavement and on the parking... but yesterday... I saw a policeman, an officer was warning the guys who were parked in the wrong place... next time you will get a fine' Helen, 30s

13 'separate pedestrian and cycle paths along the A40 work well, they stop conflict, especially when families with young children are going to and from school' Ronan, 60s

14 'So this is really just a field. But it's very nice. The kids love to run, so that's good for them, because they can run freely. There's no one on the way, some dogs sometimes' Helen, 30s

15 'another one look [van on pavement] this pavement is turning into a public car park' Steve, 60s

16 'This is the patronising cycle route I was talking about because you get these people's entrances and exits and then the cycle route suddenly ends and there's a gap and then it starts again' Lisa, 50s

17 'you need to be careful [crossing Bayswater Road] I spent some time trying to make my daughter pay attention to cars here because... you need to be vigilant' Giles, 40s

18 'cars are left here by people travelling to London, rather than using Thornhill [Park & Ride] where they have to pay' Mina, 60s

19 'only time the noise from the cars going past on the ring road stops is between 12 midnight and 2 or 3 in the morning' Mina, 60s

20 'look at it in here, horrible, I don't know when was the last time it was cleaned... there's graffiti...I

don't like to come down here day or night on my own, you can't see who is round the corner. If I'm on my own I sometimes jog to get through quicker!' Mina, 60s

21 'Another reason I'm not using it that much is because I ran into interesting characters there from time to time, which I found a bit off-putting' Giles, 40s

22 'the blocks of garages are dangerous places' Mina, 60s

23 'to get [there] quicker... and to keep my strength, I think I do drive. Because the buses here are not going that well' Theo, 50s

24 'look at the weeds going up the side of the path to the road... when the leaves are there they [council] don't... tend to do it [clean] so much as they used to' Gunther, 60s

25 'White van man epidemic here... they drive like looneys, so I stay in' Mohan, 60s

26 'where they have re-designed that area in front of the shops to stop people playing football and messing around, it hasn't worked at all' Mina, 60s

27 'the alleyways have become more dangerous' Mina, 60s

28 'they chuck all this stuff in the Brook... years ago they used to have people come to the park and clean it every week but they haven't been up here for ages' Gunther, 60s

29 'a lot of noise around... I don't like it, I don't like the air quality either' Mohan, 60s

30 'the state of the pavements! I'm beginning to wonder whether the roads are actually better than the pavements... the roots are coming through the pavement... or lovely people who find it really jokative to park across where you go up onto the pavement' Steve, 60s

Community workshops

Brookes researchers attended a number of community events including the Barton Bash and joined events arranged by the Cities 4 People project which was also exploring transport issues (cities4people.eu/pilot-areas/oxfordshire-uk/). We ran mapping exercises asking people to chart their trips and to pinpoint areas and infrastructure that enabled and disabled healthy mobility.

Once the results of the survey, the interviews and the accompanied journeys became available, we organised a workshop to feed back the result of the research. Local residents and participants met at the Neighbourhood Centre in March 2019. The workshop encouraged discussion about the results and debate about what encourages / restricts healthy urban mobility in Barton. A set of priority actions for promoting healthy urban mobility in Barton was then produced and ranked. Brookes researchers have been discussing how to address these priority actions. This has been with stakeholders in Barton, through the Health and Wellbeing Partnership, and stakeholders in Oxford City and Oxfordshire, through the Oxfordshire County Council Active and Healthy Travel Forum.



Negotiating the underpass under the Headington roundabout

MOHAN (MALE, 60s, LIVED IN BARTON 5 YEARS)

'It's hardly surprising that people don't want to go for a walk is it? You get depressed walking around here'.

MARIA (FEMALE, 30s, LIVED IN BARTON 5 YEARS)

'Onto the blessed ring-road cycle track. It's so nice! Very lucky!'.

STEVE (MALE, 60s, LIVED IN BARTON 10 YEARS)

'I think that pavements are turning into car parks and it's not fair on the pedestrian'.



Walking and cycling, Barton



Community workshop, Barton

Community Priority Actions

Maximising opportunities for healthy urban mobility in Barton

The actions are ranked in priority from the top to the bottom of the page.

- ✓ Stop pavement parking and parking on road corners. The sharp corner on Barton Village Road needs double yellow lines so buses can get round.
- ✓ Better design of underpasses to encourage walkers and cycle users to share the space. Better maintenance and a friendlier gateway to Barton. Include security cameras and a mural.
- ✓ Create a formal crossing for pedestrians and cycle users on Bayswater Road - near Brampton Road where there is a clear desire line.
- ✓ Reduce traffic speed on Bayswater Road and Waynflete Road. Enforce a 20mph limit.
- ✓ Provide better over-ground crossings of the A40 for pedestrians at night.
- ✓ Install signage throughout Barton to identify cycle routes and walks.
- ✓ Build in more dropped kerbs and ensure better parking enforcement to keep them accessible.
- ✓ Create continuous cycle routes that can't be parked on.
- ✓ Make the Barton Leisure Centre gym and swimming pool cheaper for local residents.
- ✓ Provide free gym membership for all over 65 years with staff who are knowledgeable about this age range.
- ✓ Address stereotypes that result in residents being forgotten about and believing that they don't matter.
- ✓ Implement a 'No idle' zone for vehicles near Bayards Hill School.
- ✓ Develop a travel to school plan to manage traffic and prevent chaos outside the school gates.
- ✓ Introduce a controlled parking zone to stop commuter parking.
- ✓ Trim back overhanging branches on Bayswater Road on the way to the cemetery.
- ✓ Monitor and tackle air pollution in Barton.
- ✓ Develop an initiative to integrate the young and not so young through lunch and gentle exercise at the school.
- ✓ Looking in more detail at the behaviour and dynamics of different groups and how finances play a huge part in keeping healthy and how you feel.
- ✓ Develop initiatives to counteract negative perceptions of the area.
- ✓ Encourage people's behaviour to support living well.

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For further information

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