



# Healthy Urban Mobility

ROSE HILL | 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.

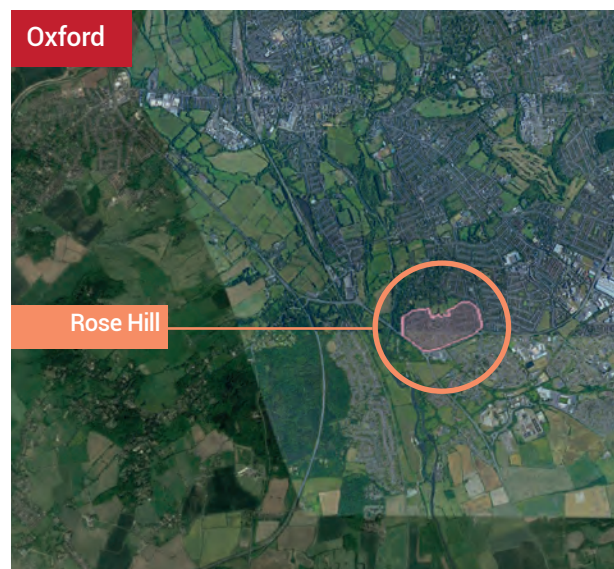
The project, based at Oxford Brookes University, ran from 2016-19. It's starting point was to understand the day-to-day experience of getting about on foot and by car, bus and bicycle in Rose Hill and how this affects health and wellbeing.

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 Rose Hill; and community **workshops**. The activities helped us to identify community priority actions for improving health and wellbeing through mobility in Rose Hill.

This report provides a summary of findings and priority actions.

## Rose Hill

Rose Hill is a suburban low-to-middle income housing estate built in the 1920s



Source: Google Earth



Layout of buildings and spaces, Rose Hill

and located 4 km southeast of the city centre on a hill. On its boundary lies the River Thames to the west and the Oxford ring-road to the south. There is a primary school, two local shops and new community centre located on the estate. A frequent bus service operates between Rose Hill and the city centre. There is only one access point by road to the estate but multiple links via footpaths and alleyways to neighbouring areas such as the ring-road separated cycle path and the River Thames path.

The 2011 census showed that 44% of people in Rose Hill travelled to work by car (compared to 35% of people in Oxford as a whole). 25% used the bus (Oxford 16%), 10% walked (Oxford 17%) and 11% cycled (Oxford 17%).



Rose Hill, 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 five people in Rose Hill responded to the survey, 62% of these were women, 65% of white ethnicity and the average age of respondents was 45 years.

For travel behaviour, 37% of all journeys were by car, 24% walking, 16% by bus and 16% 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 speed of traffic and with levels of 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](http://www.hum-mus.org).

## Interviews and accompanied journeys

We conducted biographical interviews with twelve people in Rose Hill, accompanying them on: seven walks, four cycle journeys and one bus journey. The following issues/findings emerge from these.

There was appreciation of access on foot and by bike to green space, notably along the River Thames path, and also to the rest of the city, along quieter back routes and the ring-road cycle track. Access to the nearby supermarket across a footbridge linking the estate was appreciated as was the frequent bus service connecting the city centre, although there were concerns over the reduction in the service. The more direct route by cycle to the city centre along the main arterial route was criticised because of lack of supportive infrastructure. The single



Local green space, Rose Hill

access road into Rose Hill also means that traffic is concentrated through the centre of the estate, making the road difficult to cross on occasions. There was a feeling that the area had become dominated by motor traffic and that speeding is a problem. However, participants were generally positive about the future of the estate particularly since the opening of a new purpose-built community centre and a housing renewal programme.

Overall, despite the issues raised above, our participants felt that the neighbourhood was a safe and friendly place to live.

A map of positive and negative comments made about healthy urban mobility in Rose Hill during the interviews and accompanied journeys is overleaf.

CATRIONA (FEMALE, 20s, RESIDENT IN ROSE HILL LESS THAN A YEAR)

**'People who walk round here are dead friendly and I think people are really positive about the Community Centre'.**

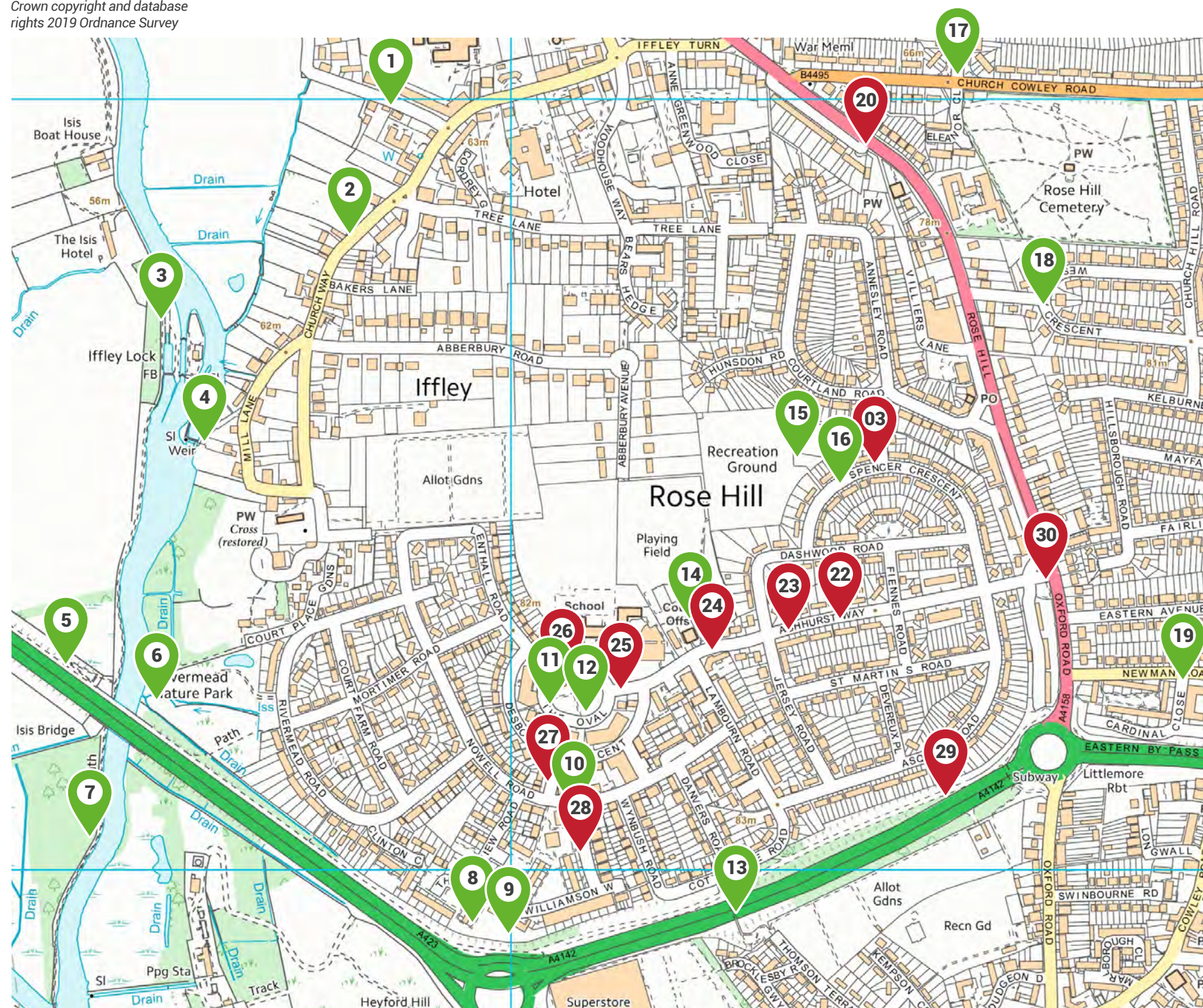
ANNA (FEMALE, 70s, RESIDENT IN ROSE HILL 21 YEARS)

**'I don't know what the crime rate is like but it feels fine, I have never worried about it'.**



Scale 1:2000  
Crown copyright and database  
rights 2019 Ordnance Survey

## Positive and negative comments about healthy urban mobility in Rose Hill



**01** 'going down Meadow Lane is very pleasant...and there's no heavy traffic' *Craig, 50s*

**02** 'we go to the doctors in Donnington, but even that I'd go through Iffley to get there. So I think... I hadn't particularly realised it, but yeah, it wasn't an active avoidance of main roads but... yeah, we do [chuckles] tend to avoid them' *Ivor, 30s*

**03** 'from here I can cycle off-road nearly all the way to Botley by taking the towpath' *Anna, 70s*

**04** 'I've always enjoyed walking and I'm very lucky because Iffley Village, River Thames' *Mary, 70s*

**05** The cycle track is 'Very easy, luxuriously wide... obstacle free' *Craig, 50s*

**06** 'you are never far enough away from the ring road here that you can't hear it... you never feel like you are properly out in the country but it is like... the birds are singing and sometimes you see a deer, that is quite exciting' *Catrina, 20s*

**07** 'when we go swimming we go down and along the river towards Sandford because there are some nice little sandy beaches there, well, little un-muddy swimming places if there isn't youth there already. [Laughs]' *Anna, 70s*

**08** 'the reason I come down here is that it is quick and easy [laughs]' *Vicky, 70s*

**09** 'the trees at the back [indicating the trees alongside the ring road] ... I love nature, when it's spring there are daffodils filling up here [indicates small green space]' *Vicky, 70s*

**10** Extensive dropped kerb on Nowell Road 'for cars' *Agnes, 80s*

**11** 'my bus use has shot up exponentially now, so that's because it's very easy to get the pram on the bus and it stops right outside the door and takes us straight to town... the service is incredible' *Marti, 30s* talking about changes since her baby was born

**12** 'more or less my back garden, 'cos I've not got a garden where my flat is I usually spend a lot of time on here just to let the dogs have a run around or a walk round the block... I like the people round here, everyone seems to be friendly' *Alex, 50s*

**13** 'going to Sainsbury's, we cycle over the footpath over the ring road and then go in the back way to Sainsbury's, so it's sort of being able to avoid main roads and go quick' *Marti, 30s*

**14** 'People who walk round here are dead friendly and I think people are really positive about the Community Centre' *Catrina, 20s*

**15** 'that encouraged me to come out and have a little walk round and have a look at them and see whether I could work on any of the [outdoor gym] machines' *Alex, 50s*

**16** *Anna, 70s* talking about her route by bike to the allotments: 'it's quick, it's easy it's not worth taking the car... safe, no hazards'

**17** 'I've never cycled down the Cowley Road I don't think actually. I cycle to my doctor which is in the Cowley Road actually, yeah that's true. Yeah, I go through Florence Park' *Anna, 70s*

**18** 'I can just cut across through Westbury Crescent... and then you don't have to cycle uphill... it's quite steep Rose Hill I can tell you!' *Anna, 70s*

**19** *Ivor, 30s* talking about cycling to work: 'it's not very far and I like that chance to sort of prepare for the day and unwind from the day it feels like'

**20** *Anna, 70s* explains need for improved cycling 'safety on the Iffley Road and bike parking in the city centre'

**21** *Anna, 70s* describes how boy racers skid round the corner on occasions 'you hear them coming... and you shake your fist at them! [laughs]... you hear them and you do check'

**22** 'I can't believe it sometimes the speed they go' *Paris, 50s* talking about cars on Ashhurst Way

**23** 'crossing the road sometimes there's lots of big vans, white vans, and you can't see what's coming' *Mary, 70s*

**24** 'We've got a community centre, a nursery and a school and there's not one pedestrian crossing down this road' *Paris, 50s* talking about Ashhurst Way

**25** 'Ashhurst Way is 'very, very dangerous, lots of buses and cars' *Agnes, 80s*

**26** 'the bus only goes into town and not anywhere else apart from the 20 that goes to Cowley only a couple of times in the day' *Catrina, 20s*

**27** 'the parking facilities are inadequate for the sheer volume of cars' *Mary, 70s*

**28** Navigating with a walking device *Agnes, 80s* explains 'you have got to learn to find the places you can go!'

**29** 'I go along the roads, whereas the cycle path isn't particularly lit... so it seemed like a safer route' *Eva, 30s*

**30** 'driving around our neighbourhood is probably the least pleasurable option... it's a real pain trying to turn right out of Ashhurst Way' *Ivor, 30s*



AGNES (FEMALE, 80s, RESIDENT IN ROSE HILL 50 YEARS)

'Ashhurst Way [the main road through the estate] is very, very dangerous, lots of buses and cars'.

MARY (FEMALE, 70s, RESIDENT IN ROSE HILL 70 YEARS)

'Though it is an estate you have got the greenery of the hedges... the allotments...'.

### Community workshops

Brookes researchers attended a number of community events including the Rose Hill Fun Day and Silver Threads meetings. We ran mapping exercises asking people to chart their trips and to pinpoint areas and infrastructure that enabled and disabled healthy mobility.

A free documentary film making course was run by Film Oxford at the Community Centre for residents of Rose Hill. Two videos about mobility issues in the area were produced by participants which were then used by the groups in their campaigns for safer cycling and the restoration of a bus service (see [www.hum-mus.org](http://www.hum-mus.org)).

Once the results of the survey, the interviews and the accompanied journeys became available, we organised a workshop to feed back the results of the research. Local residents and participants met at the Community Centre in March 2019. The workshop encouraged discussion about the results and debate about what encourages / restricts healthy urban mobility in Rose Hill. A set of priority actions for promoting healthy urban mobility in Rose Hill was then produced and ranked.

Brookes researchers have been discussing how to solve these priority actions. This has been with stakeholders in Rose Hill, through the Health and Wellbeing Partnership, and stakeholders in Oxford City and Oxfordshire, through the Oxfordshire County Council Active and Healthy Travel Forum.



Community film about cycling in Rose Hill



Community film about reduced bus service in Rose Hill



Community workshop agreeing priority actions

## Community Priority Actions

### Maximising opportunities for healthy urban mobility in Rose Hill

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

- ✓ Add Pick Me Up bus pick up locations in 'lower Rose Hill': Rivermead Road, Cottesmore Road, Asquith Road.
- ✓ Signage in Rose Hill for walking and cycling (routes, locations and time taken).
- ✓ Reduce traffic speed on Ashhurst Way (speed cameras and/or street layout) also need to address speeding on Spencer Crescent & Asquith Road.
- ✓ Better street lighting on ring-road cycle track.
- ✓ Separated, continuous cycle track on arterial routes (Iffley Road).
- ✓ Better path from Community Centre to Spencer Crescent (wider, improved surface and lighting).
- ✓ Improve junction from Ashhurst way to Rose Hill/Oxford Road (traffic lights or mini-roundabout).
- ✓ Cycle racks in Iffley Village to encourage access to facilities including Iffley Fields.
- ✓ Name, brand and promote the ring-road cycle track and accessible locations from it.
- ✓ More cycle parking in city centre.
- ✓ Control pavement parking and obstruction of dropped kerbs. Investigate restrictions on houses of multiple occupancy that often have large numbers of cars.
- ✓ Keep the Community Centre gym cheap to use.
- ✓ Monitor walking/cycling connection from Rivermead Road/Court Place/Iffley village to ensure it stays open and is included in planned re-development of the site.

---

## Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by Dr. Ben Spencer, Dr. Sue Brownill and Dr. Tim Jones, researchers at Oxford Brookes University.

We would like to thank the following people and organisations for their help: Staff and volunteers at Rose Hill Community Centre, especially Carol Davis and Silver Threads, Film Oxford; Rose Hill and Iffley Low Carbon Group; Oxford City Council locality officer Alan Foulkes; Oxfordshire County Council officers including the Cities for People project team, Public Health and Transport; and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. Finally, we'd like to thank all of our research participants in Rose Hill who so kindly gave up their time to assist us with our research.

The investigators gratefully acknowledge the support of the ESRC Newton Fund (Grant number ES/N01314X/1) for funding this project.

Publication design by Carline Creative.  
Published June 2019.

---

## For further information

For further information and copies of this summary see **[www.hum-mus.org](http://www.hum-mus.org)** or contact Ben Spencer, School of the Built Environment, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, OX3 0BP. Email: **[bspencer@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:bspencer@brookes.ac.uk)** Tel: **01865 484061**.



© Oxford Brookes University

Healthy Urban Mobility  
**[www.hum-mus.org](http://www.hum-mus.org)**