

Bike Track Working Group Report to the Open Spaces Committee

Appendix A.3

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1. Purpose of this report

This report updates the Open Spaces Committee on the work of the Bike Track Working Group (BTWG) since it was set up in late May 2026, and sets out the site options, design and cost information, and funding routes identified so far. It asks the Committee to note progress and to support the Working Group's proposed next steps, rather than to take a final, binding decision today – several enquiries (most importantly, confirmation of a second potential site above Sheepcot, and a professional design for the leading option) are still in progress.

2. Background

Following interest in providing a dedicated bike/pump track facility for young people in Goring, the Parish Council established the Bike Track Working Group at the end of May 2026, reporting into the Open Spaces Committee. The Working Group's initial focus was the Parish Council-owned land at the top of Sheepcot, but the group agreed early on that it should not put “all its eggs in one basket” and should also investigate whether better-suited alternative sites exist, given Sheepcot's limited size and landscape impact.

The Working Group has since: visited a recently-opened community bike track in Harwell to learn lessons; approached track-building suppliers for indicative costs and advice; obtained a concept design and cost estimate for Sheepcot; identified and assessed several alternative parcels of land; opened discussions with a private landowner about the possibility of locating the bike track in a field off Spring Lane; and begun drafting a resident/user survey and initial funding research.

3. Land options considered

Four main sites were assessed in detail, alongside three further parcels that were ruled out at an early stage. The table below summarises where things currently stand.

Status	Site	Benefits	Drawbacks
Leading option	Spring Lane field	2–4 acres available Gentle, contoured gradient Good vehicle and bridleway access from Spring Lane Landowner amenable Close to proposed Goring–Wallingford Greenway Room for wider ambitions (learner circuit, car parking, allotments)	Not currently owned by the Parish Council – lease required, terms/cost not yet agreed Planning permission needed (agricultural land) OnTrack design/cost estimate still awaited
Fallback option	Sheepcot (top of)	Already owned by the Parish Council Suitable gradient Confirmed as viable by OnTrack Concept design and £70,000 cost estimate already in hand	Only suitable for a smaller track (under ½ acre) with no room for junior facility or proficiency track Currently a peaceful beauty spot where residents sit with views across the Goring Gap. Along side the Chiltern Way footpath. Additional car parking pressure Likely issue with bikes crossing the Sheepcot football pitches

			Near the railway station and likely to attract users from other locations
Ruled out	Bourdillon	Central village location Already owned by the Parish Council	No suitable space available
Ruled out	Cow Hill	Central village location Amenable landowner	Gradient too steep, confirmed on site walk-round

Table 1: Summary of land options assessed by the Working Group (as at 19 August 2026)

Other land ruled out

In addition to the sites above, the Working Group made enquiries about the following, all of which were ruled out:

- Two paddocks on the bridleway (opposite the Leatherne Bottel) – Owner confirmed land not available
- Land west of Wallingford Road (GNP5) – Owner confirmed not available
- Land south of Manor Road – Thames Water holds significant rights over the land (aquifer, boreholes, pumping station); considered a likely legal impasse.

Still to be resolved

One further parcel – agricultural land immediately above Sheepcot, in separate ownership – has not yet been ruled in or out. The owner has been contacted but initial feedback suggests this is a challenging proposal. The ownership of the land is split with another person and it is believed they are not keen on the land being used.

The farm land south of the tennis courts has been mentioned, but is still in active agricultural use..

4. The leading option: Spring Lane field

The Working Group's clear preference, following a site walk-round with the landowner on 24 July, is a 2–4 acre field off Spring Lane (the pick-your-own field). It offers a gentle, contoured gradient, good access for both bikes (from the existing entrance on Spring Lane) and vehicles, and proximity to the proposed Goring–Wallingford Greenway. The land owners have indicated they are open in principle to a long lease; no terms or costs have yet been discussed or agreed.

Figure 1: Aerial view of the Spring Lane field



OnTrack's Steve Revill Darton has since visited the site (early August) and is preparing a concept sketch and recommendation, which is awaited.

5. Design and cost estimates

The only professional concept design and cost estimate received so far is for the Sheepcot site, from OnTrack (Back On Track Mountain Bike Solutions Ltd), dated July 2026. It proposes a 75m blue-grade flow trail, a 60m progressive jump line with three jump features, and a 130m return trail, at an outline construction cost of £70,000

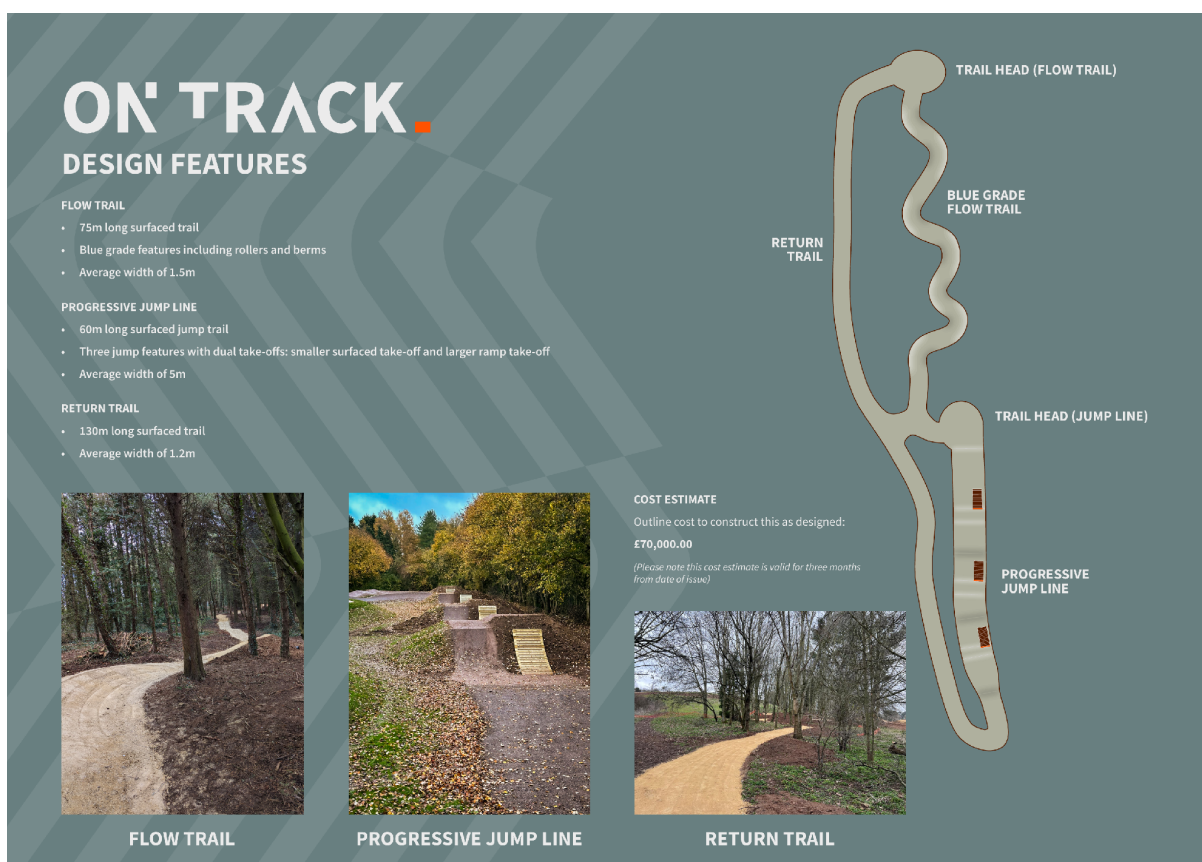


Figure: OnTrack concept design and cost estimate for the Sheepcot site, July 2026.

For context, other cost indications gathered by the group include:

- Harwell's recently-opened track was built for approximately £30,000, using a charity structure and volunteer contractors.
- Oxtrail (an alternative supplier) gave an informal estimate of approximately £65,000.
- Clark and Kent and JB Extreme Landscapes quoted £675 and £250 respectively for a paid site visit and design (not yet commissioned).

A design and cost estimate for the Spring Lane field is expected once OnTrack completes its site assessment; the Working Group will bring this to the Committee as soon as it is available. As a general benchmark, agricultural land lease rates locally are typically £500–£1,000 per acre per year)

6. Community engagement

AP has drafted a resident and user survey to test demand, gather views on siting and design features, and inform both the planning case and future funding applications. Prior to the survey,

we have agreed to hold workshops to inform the survey. Survey feedback should be obtained before finalising a design (any professional concept obtained in the meantime should be treated as provisional and open to change).

Ideas raised within the Work Group for wider consideration, regardless of final site, include:

- A dedicated, gentler learner circuit for younger/less experienced children, separate from the main track.
- A cycling proficiency track
- A temporary coffee stand/food truck and picnic bench seating – to encourage parents to be present in a supervisory capacity, meet likely demand from track users and dog walkers, and generate potential revenue
- Co-locating new allotment plots alongside the track, both as a nod to the Spring Lane field's history as a pick-your-own site and to increase the number of people naturally present, reducing isolation and the risk of anti-social behaviour.
- A car parking area, potentially with paid parking to contribute to running costs.

7. Planning considerations

Both the Sheepcot and Spring Lane sites will require planning permission, since both involve a change of use of what is currently agricultural or amenity land.

8. Funding strategy – routes identified for further work

Preliminary desk research has identified several potential funding routes. These figures are indicative only, drawn from publicly available scheme information, and would need to be verified directly with each funder before being relied upon in a business case:

- SODC Capital Grant Scheme – opens annually (recently 26 May), total pot cited at approximately £320,000; funds up to 50% of project cost to a ceiling of £75,000.
- SODC Councillor Community Grant Scheme – opens annually (17 August); each ward councillor holds a budget of approximately £7,500, which could potentially be pooled if the site spans ward boundaries.
- Section 106 / Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) – standard grants of £2,500–£25,000, occasionally up to £50,000 for high-impact projects; a natural dirt track may be framed as a low-impact, biodiversity-friendly project.
- Oxfordshire Community Foundation – Thriving in Nature Fund and Community Capacity Fund (up to approximately £20,000).
- Lottery funding
- Community fund raising
- Sport England (Places and Spaces) – best used as a smaller “top-up” contribution alongside match funding from CIL or district grants.

- British Cycling and Cycling UK – potential support where the project includes a training or access element.

9. What we are asking of the Committee

The Working Group asks the Open Spaces Committee to:

- Note the progress made since May 2026 in reviewing potential sites, suppliers and funding routes.
- Support the Working Group continuing to prioritise the Spring Lane field as the leading option, with Sheepcot retained as a fallback, pending the outstanding enquiries described in this report. This includes discussions with the landowners to scope the potential terms of a long term lease
- Support the Working Group completing and launching its community survey before finalising a design brief.
- Support the Working Group seeking planning permission from SODC
- Support the Working Group continuing to research the funding routes identified in Section 8.
- Note that any recommendation on a preferred site, design and funding package will be brought back to the Committee, and then if appropriate to Full Council, before any financial commitment is made.

11. Next steps and timeline

- OnTrack to produce a concept design/cost estimate for the Spring Lane field.
- AP to finalise and launch the workshops and resident/user survey.
- Working Group to seek informal SODC planning guidance on the Spring Lane field.
- Working Group to progress funding research, starting with a conversation with Active Oxfordshire.
- Working Group's next internal meeting: Wednesday 26 August 2026, 8.00pm – any further developments will be reported verbally to the Committee at this meeting on 27 August.