

Mark Boulle – CMD Transport Management (09/10/25) – A4074 Speed Limit Proposals

I am an Oxford (Northway) resident and work at Howbery Park in Crowmarsh Gifford. I therefore wish to address the Cabinet about the frankly ludicrous proposals to reduce speed limits on large sections of the A4074, a road I know intimately from using it twice daily for my commute.

I responded to your consultation on this plan with a strong objection and I have since ploughed through 238 pages' worth of published responses - it is only once you get past about page 170 that you start to see any responses partially or totally supporting this scheme. That alone should tell you something. I object, in particular, to two aspects as follows:

A4142 Eastern Bypass - this is a dual carriageway, with barrier separation. The cycle path / pedestrian walkway on one side of it is physically separated from the road. Therefore the only traffic using it is motor traffic. I also know that accidents leading to serious casualties on this stretch of road are vanishingly rare - one, just one, in the last 5 years in fact. I know this from an FOI request I made of Thames Valley Police when objecting to their regular stationing of unmanned camera vehicles in the layby between the Headington roundabout and Horspath Driftway, robotically to police an already excessively low speed limit for this type of road and taking no account of traffic conditions, weather, time of day etc. Their motivation is money, yours in this case appears to be nothing more than a blinkered obsession with this nonsensical idea of Vision Zero. As hundreds of respondents to the consultation said, unless you ban cars from Oxford's highways altogether or have them proceed at walking pace preceded by a red-flag carrier, which is perhaps your ultimate aim, there is no speed limit at which there will never be occasional accidents!! Your consultation on this matter evinces no statistical proof whatsoever that a reduction from 50mph to 40mph on this stretch, doubtless also an increased goldmine for Thames Valley Police, will make the slightest difference - indeed, given the rarity of serious accidents, there is no difference to make.

A4074 - Dorchester Bypass

It would appear that you have already taken detrimental action on this stretch of road during the recent patching project by removing the cross-hatching and forcing vehicles on both sides of the road more into the centre by painting cycle lanes on either side. It appears to have escaped your notice that the A4074 is frequently used by heavy goods and farming vehicles as the stretches of it between settlements are essentially a RURAL ROAD. Already, since that project, I have sat, fuming, multiple times on the Dorchester bypass, unable to overtake very slow moving vehicles of this type, which are unable to trundle much above 40mph, adding minutes I don't have to my journey and making me more likely to have an accident out of frustration. That was, previously, the only part of the A4074 out of the stretch I use where overtaking a slow vehicle was possible - now it all but isn't unless it's very early, very late or you get very lucky. Is the Council's view that, in pursuit of a fictitious 'vision zero' goal, unlucky motorists caught behind a lumbering tractor as they try to get to or from work should simply take the hit to their time and busy schedules and sit behind it for the entirety of this 3.3 km stretch of road...?! The small number of respondents to the consultation who supported this measure in the main object to weekend motorcycle noise, which is unrelated to commuting cars using the road Monday to Friday and, given that the Dorchester bypass is surrounded by fields, is odd to say the least, or they trot out the usual mindless replies that lower speeds 'reduce emissions', which is manifestly not the case, since it is an established fact that modern, efficient vehicles have higher tailpipe emissions when travelling in lower gear / slower / at lower speeds. As per the A4142, you have evinced no proof or statistics whatsoever to show that this change will make the slightest difference to already incredibly low accident rates. It is yet further proof that your overarching desire is to frustrate and force motorists out of their cars at any cost to their livelihoods, lives and well-being. Even Thames Travel, the principal bus company on this

route, have told you in no uncertain terms the idea is madness. If you won't listen to me, listen to them!