

Robin Tucker

Address to Council re M O'Connor Motion on Road Capacity Being Exceeded 12 Dec 2023

Councillor O'Connor is right to point to road capacity being exceeded by traffic at least 10 years ago. But we are surprised that he makes no mention of the traffic filters.

Traffic problems will not be solved without reducing traffic. If you think they can be solved by adding roads to the network, then look at the 26 lane Katy Highway in Texas, which was congested almost as soon as it was widened. More capacity just encourages more traffic.

Because of this, the Strategic Traffic Filter plan was adopted in 2015. If it remained on schedule, they would already be in place. As things happened, it was approved for business case development by the Conservative Cabinet in January 2020 with four exemptions mentioned, and approved for implementation by the Fair Deal Alliance in November 2022 with 18 types of exemption.

We welcome suggestions to solve the decades old traffic problem. However, we'll make three points.

First, there is no need to waste the Council's time with this. Officers are already tasked with the job by the East Oxford LTN approval in September, and a Council Motion in November. We sent our suggestions by email last month.

Second. Don't promote schemes that reverse gains in traffic reduction or improvements in walking, wheeling, cycling and bus use. These will simply put more traffic back at some pinch point in the network.

Third. Don't endanger the health and safety of residents for the convenience of motorists. Evidence shows traffic in residential streets increases heart and lung diseases¹ and road casualties². Such proposals are simply unethical. You heard last month the moving testimony of Sarah Lockyer and Abby White whose mobility has been enabled by low traffic streets – listen to them.

We need to reduce traffic the city for active travel and buses, for health and for emergency services. Most of public knows this, and YouGov representative polling shows that Traffic Filters, ZEZ, Workplace Parking Levy and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods are all supported by a two-to-one majority. 12,000 people directly benefit from quieter, safer streets. They will be looking to you for support not a return to clogged, toxic rat runs.

¹ <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/living-near-a-busy-road-can-stunt-childrens-lung-growth>

² <https://cohsat.org.uk/road-casualties-halved-in-cowley-ltn/>



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