

Dear Councillors,

I live in Temple Cowley and I speak for many neighbours and residents in a wider area who are dismayed at your proposals for imposing traffic filters in Oxford, especially the one on Hollow Way. We already suffer from LTNs which have been imposed on us in an unreasonable, undemocratic, and irrational manner, with no regard for age, disability, access, or livelihoods. When we drive – for essential reasons – we are forced to travel further and to sit in queues we don't want to be in to reach our destinations. Introducing traffic filters, even with limited hours and passes, will further increase this inconvenience, compromise our safety, and force traffic into queues on the Oxford ring road, which is already unable to cope with the volume of traffic using it. The premise that everyone can cycle, walk or take public transport is false and discriminatory.

The perceived traffic filter “benefits” of reduced traffic levels, faster bus journeys, safer cycling and walking, and improved air quality are a fallacy. Traffic will be displaced, not reduced, making some roads busier, more hazardous, and more polluted than before. Walking will only be safer if cyclists and scooters are removed from pavements, and from my experience this is most unlikely to happen. Even with the provision of LTNs and cycleways to benefit cyclists, cyclists still cycle on the pavement with total disregard for pedestrians. Walking is more hazardous than ever, and your proposals do nothing to improve that. Air quality is not improved – the pollution is just displaced. The introduction of LTNs has caused more pollution and more congestion and the introduction of filters will make this worse.

Having to find a different route around the proposed filters will mean that a trip which used to take a few minutes through local roads is now several miles to avoid the filters. Traffic is on the road for longer, more fuel is used, more pollution is generated, and this costs more. It is not always possible for motorists to change the time of travel or journey frequency. The most sensible and rational option would be to allow traffic to take the shortest route to get to its destination. No filters and no LTNs = shorter queues, less traffic, less pollution.

Like the LTN proposals, these traffic filter proposals are unreasonable and discriminatory and fail to understand the transport needs of the wider population. Pushing traffic onto a limited and longer route does not improve that route for anyone, it just increases congestion and pollution. This does nothing for air quality or climate change – quite the opposite. It would be better to spend the money for these proposals on providing residents with electric cars and allowing them to use roads freely.

I will be negatively affected by these proposals which will limit my ability to travel around Oxford. I already drive as little as possible, but there are some trips which I make which can only be completed by car. I do not wish to drive on the ring road for local journeys as this is becoming more hazardous because of the increasing volume of traffic.

Councillors – If you decide to approve this trial I suggest that you first remove the filters for Hollow Way and Marston Ferry Road from your initial experiment. If you are unwilling to consider this then limit filters on these roads to peak traffic times only and not at weekends. The proposal of permits for private cars are welcome and necessary but they are not sufficient, either in number or areas of benefit. What about workers who live some distance from Oxford who need to enter central regions of City, e.g. engineers who service equipment for businesses and university? Or parents of children at Tyndale school, retained firefighters for the Slade, hospital maintenance and support workers, family carers, teachers? Or older drivers who feel safer driving on local roads rather than the ring road?

These traffic filters will create more problems than they solve, just like the LTNs. They will displace and increase traffic and emissions, and will penalise residents and those who work within the community. This is neither rational nor reasonable. The rising cost of fuel and cost of living is a natural deterrent to non-essential journeys, not these measures, which will make journeys longer, more polluting, and more costly – a no-win situation. If you truly wish to reduce traffic and emissions you would allow vehicles to travel the shortest distance, at moderate speed, for each journey. Try experimental speed limits with ANPR's to achieve your aims instead.

Yours sincerely,
Judith Harley