

CABINET – 17 JUNE 2025

ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Questions are listed in the order in which they were received. Should any questioner not have received an answer in that time, a written answer will be provided.

1. COUNCILLOR DAVID HENWOOD	COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT
<p>The attached list (paragraph 13 of Item 9 in the Cabinet agenda - (Public Pack)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 17/06/2025 14:00) was composed by officers to mitigate congestion in East Oxford. Why wasn't the LTN scheme considered for removal, in line with Oxford Bus Company advice? (Letter from Paul Marion, CEO of the Oxford Bus Company, also attached below)</p> <p>Why is a congestion charge being introduced to areas of Oxford that don't suffer from Congestion and outperforming nitrogen dioxide levels set by central government, and what evidence is there that the</p>	<p>The LTNs are county council policy and have been through a process of consultation and decision-making to establish the legal foundation. They support the county council's vision to remove 1 in 4 car trips in county by 2030 and accord with the adopted road hierarchy, which prioritises those walking and cycling over car drivers, many of whom are in single occupancy cars – the least efficient form of transport. They offer significant benefits to those living within the LTN streets which were previously dominated by through traffic. As Mr Marion has stated, in unequivocal terms, they support the broad intent of traffic restraint policies, including LTNs, which are part of a comprehensive package of measures, working in unison, to reduce congestion in the city to make walking, cycling and public transport the natural first choice for local trips. It is unfortunate that the county council has not been able to implement the traffic filter trial due to Network Rail's ongoing works on Botley Road. The traffic filters are expected to transform the city by removing congestion and making bus journeys fast and reliable while improving the conditions for walking and cycling. The LTNs are part of the solution, not the problem. The problem is too many cars on Oxford's historic and narrow road network.</p> <p>Cllr Henwood seems content to paraphrase Mr Marion, without context, from 2023 but completely ignores his more recent quotes from May 2025 regarding</p>

centre of Oxford is suffering from congestion?



Bus companies
blame LTNS for ruinin

congestion in Oxford being at "emergency levels". Mr Marion has stated that bus journeys times have worsened by 17% on the Abingdon Road since the Botley Road closure. Average traffic speeds on the main routes into the city centre are around 40% slower in the morning and evening peaks and 30% slower at midday than in the middle of the night. Ten years ago, those figures were exactly the same – congestion is a chronic problem not something manufactured by LTNs. In June 2011, the Oxford Mail reported that Oxford was the 13th most congested city in Europe (Cambridge was 48th). And all without an LTN in sight.

As anyone who travels in Oxford knows, the system is on a knife-edge: it doesn't take much for a 5-minute hop to turn into a 30-minute slog. We will never deliver the fast, affordable and reliable bus services everyone says they want until we reduce the pressure on the transport network. That requires us all to drive a bit less, so that we can all move a lot faster. Removing LTNs in East Oxford will not assist with this. This emergency situation, created by the continued closure of Botley Road, is the primary reason why the county council would like to consult on a temporary congestion charge, to alleviate the chronic congestion and achieve policy goals, adopted since 2015.