

Division(s) affected: *Wheatley*

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

09 OCTOBER 2025

HOLTON/WHEATLEY: A40 LONDON ROAD – PROPOSED CENTRAL RESERVATION GAP CLOSURE

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) **Approve the introduction of a Traffic Regulation Order to formally close the gap in the central reservation of the A40 London Road dual carriageway, as advertised.**

Executive Summary

1. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation on proposals to close the (currently gated) crossover gap in the central reservation of the A40 London Road dual carriageway, which serves the junction with the B4027 Wheatley Road to Forest Hill, as shown in **Annex 1**.
2. The existing gated feature was implemented as a safety measure in April 1990 by the Department for Transport when the A40 was a trunk road – this replaced a gap provided in the central reserve to allow general traffic travelling west on the A40 to turn to the B4027; a similar gap at the A40 junction with Main Street at Forest Hill was also closed at the same time, although this was implemented as a ‘hard’ closure without the provision of any gate.
3. Investigations into the measures carried out by the Department for Transport have been unable to trace any traffic order made at the time; it is presumed that the intention of the gated feature was to permit emergency service vehicles to continue to use the gap.
4. The proposals have been put forward as a result of concerns raised over the ‘abuse’ of the existing gated feature and following a preliminary consultation with the emergency service which confirmed that they made no use of it. The existing offset ‘gap’ through the barrier in the central reservation will remain permanently closed (with the current gated feature to be kept under review) in order to maintain and ensure public safety and reduce the incidences of misuse.

Traffic will only be able to enter & exit the B4027 from & to the north-eastbound carriageway to the M40 & London.

Sustainability Implications

5. The proposal has been put forward to help improve road safety in the immediate vicinity.

Financial Implications

6. Funding for consultation and the proposals themselves has been provided by the County Council's Vision Zero safety programme.

Legal Implications

7. The consultation that has been undertaken complies with the consultation requirements for the various elements as required by law including under the Highways Act 1980, the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and any other relevant legislation.
8. The scheme has been promoted by Oxfordshire County Council as the Highway Authority and Traffic Authority under the Highways Act 1980, and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

Comments checked by:

Jennifer Crouch (Head of Law - Environmental)

Jennifer.Crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Equalities and Inclusion Implications

9. No negative implications in respect of equalities or inclusion have been identified in respect of the proposals.

Formal Consultation

10. Formal consultation was carried out between 14 August and 12 September 2025. A notice was published in the Oxford Times newspaper, and an email was sent to statutory consultees & key-stakeholders, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Bus operators, countywide transport/access & disabled peoples user groups, South Oxfordshire District Council, local District Cllr's, Holton, Forest Hill with Shotover, and Wheatley Parish Councils, and the local County Councillor representing the Wheatley division.
11. Letters were also sent directly to approximately 40 properties in the immediate vicinity.

12. Six responses were received via the online survey during the course of the formal consultation, comprising of two objections, three in support, and one offering no objection/opinion.
13. Furthermore, Thames Valley Police offered no objection, albeit asking that the current use of a gate to manage the closure – if approved – is fully investigated to determine the long-term suitability of such an arrangement remaining in place.
14. The Oxfordshire Cycling Network expressed support for the proposals on safety grounds.
15. Objections were received from two members of the public, one on the grounds of maintaining access for fire service vehicles and one on the grounds that the current closure resulted in a significant diversion for drivers travelling west on the A40 wishing to access Forest Hill, noting also that for drivers travelling east on the A40 turning left to Forest Hill, in their experience there were frequent near misses due to following vehicles not expecting a car to be turning left to Forest Hill.
16. The full responses are shown in **Annex 2**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors. Any comments received that Officers identify as containing personal abuse and/or other personal information will be redacted as appropriate.

Officer Response to Objections/Concerns

17. In respect of the police comment, should the proposal be approved it is confirmed that the current gating arrangement will be reviewed - potentially by extending the safety fencing – to remove the possibility of vehicles using the gap.
18. The objection on the grounds of restricting access by fire service vehicles is noted, but following consultation – the fire service has confirmed they consider the gap too hazardous to use, even when on emergency calls.
19. The objection on the grounds of additional journey length and potential hazards at the junction of A40 eastbound at the Main Street junction at Forest Hill are similarly noted. However, the collision record when the gap was open to general traffic included several multiple fatality incidents, and reinstating this would lead to unacceptably high risks for road users. There is no record of collisions at the Main Street junction in the last 25 years related to vehicles slowing to turn off the A40 to turn left to Main Street.

Paul Fermer
Director of Environment and Highways

Annexes

Annex 1: Consultation plan
Annex 2 Consultation responses

Contact Officers:

Anthony Kirkwood (Team Leader – Vision Zero)
Daron Mizen (Operational Manager – Highway Schemes)

October 2025

Drawing No.

0

Key

Proposed prohibition of vehicles

SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

IN ADDITION TO THE HAZARDS/RISKS NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE TYPES OF WORK DETAILED ON THIS DRAWING, NOTE THE FOLLOWING SIGNIFICANT RESIDUAL RISKS:

CONSTRUCTION

(ENTER NONE IF APPLICABLE)

MAINTENANCE/CLEANING

(ENTER NONE IF APPLICABLE)

USE

(ENTER NONE IF APPLICABLE)

DECOMMISSIONING/DEMOLITION

(ENTER NONE IF APPLICABLE)

© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 OS AC0000851087

Rev.	Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved

OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

Paul Farmer
Director for
Environment and Highways
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND
Tel: 0345 310 11 11

Project title

PROHIBITION OF VEHICLES

Drawing title

WHEATLEY
A40

Drawing Status

Scale @ A3	Drawn by	Checked by	Approved by
NTS	JaC		
	Date drawn 07/25	Date checked	Date approved

Oxfordshire Project No. & File Ref

Drawing No.

0

Revision

0

C:\Users\jane.darke\OneDrive - Oxfordshire County Council\TTO useful info\CAD plans\Wheatley, A40 plan.dwg

ANNEX 2

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(e1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	No objection – In principle the Police have no objection to this order being made. We would ask in due course the current Gate situation is fully investigated in order to determine the suitability of such an arrangement remaining in place. Will the current Gate be locked in the close position ? Is any Prohibitory signage going to be included and how will it be positioned not to cause confusion for Traffic using the main carriageway ?
(o1) Local resident, (Forest Hill, Church Hill)	Object – this opening was agreed to as a condition of closing the A40 crossing at the foot of Church Hill to enable fire engines the same access time to our part of their fire area. This is why we need it kept open for that purpose .
(o2) Local resident, (Forest Hill, London Road)	Object – I strongly object to the proposals for the following reasons: 1. Currently for vehicles to access Forest Hill approaching from London, they are required to drive down to Thornhill Park and Ride to then go back on themselves, which is a considerable unnecessary distance - approximately 3 miles. This has environmental impact (excess emissions) as well as contributing unnecessarily to the congestion at the Thornhill junction. 2. There is clear visibility for vehicles turning into Forest Hill, therefore there should not be any safety concerns. 3. There is sufficient stopping distance on approach to the gap, for vehicles exiting from lane 2 to utilise the gap. 4. You are more likely to be rear-ended when entering Forest Hill from Oxford direction in the current manner, if the vehicle behind has not noted your intention to turn in to Forest Hill, or they assume you are continuing to the Wheatley junction. 5. As a local resident I prefer to lessen the noise impact from vehicles travelling past unnecessarily.
(o3) Local group/organisation, (Oxfordshire Cycling Network)	Support – The current gated gap can only be used with high levels of danger, and risks causing confusion to road users.

(o4) Local resident, (Forest Hill, Church Hill)	Support – This gap used to be gated and closed except for emergency vehicles. Recently, it has been left open and I and others have witnessed several non emergency vehicles crossing over to the B4027. This is shockingly dangerous, when London bound traffic is travelling at 70 mph and more.
(o5) As part of a group/organisation, (Oxford, Stratfield)	Support – Vehicles should not be turning right onto or off a dual carriageway without a much more substantial turning lane or waiting space.
(o6) Local resident, (Stanton St John, Pound Lane)	No objection/No opinion – its is unnecessary and dangerous