

Dear Councillors,

I live in the Temple Cowley LTN and I speak for many residents and neighbours who are dismayed that LTNs have been imposed on us in an unreasonable, undemocratic, and irrational manner, with no regard for age, disability, access, or livelihoods. The premise that everyone can cycle, walk or take public transport is false and discriminatory.

Every road in Temple Cowley has been turned into a cul-de-sac. This prevents through traffic, increases our inconvenience, **compromises our safety**, and pushes traffic into queues on arterial roads. 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.

LTNs were introduced as an experiment to reduce traffic, cut emissions, and increase cycling and walking. This experiment fails as they neither reduce emissions nor traffic movements, but displace them elsewhere. Because of traffic queues more cyclists cycle on pavements making walking more hazardous. I know as I am a keen walker and since LTNs were introduced find myself in frequent battles with pavement cyclists who think the pavement is their territory, not mine. Neighbourhoods are divided as many are now disadvantaged with high traffic – displaced and gridlocked – longer journeys, more pollution, and delayed deliveries and services. We are all aware of global warming and the need to cut emissions, but the irrationality of imposing LTNs is not the answer. We need a carrot, not a stick.

Not everyone can work from home or walk / cycle everywhere. The current schemes promote inequality and disproportionately disadvantage carers, key workers, parents, small businesses, taxis, families, residents, those who work away from home, and others who need to drive. Relatively short journeys take much longer in slow-moving or static traffic, which improves neither emissions nor air quality. We need shorter routes, sensible access, and free-flowing traffic to improve air quality for all – which the current scheme is not delivering. This divisive and poorly implemented scheme is a failed experiment – and is causing harm to community relations. You must abandon this scheme and reopen our roads.

Many of my neighbours are retired, or have elderly relatives, and need to use cars. They are disproportionately affected by current schemes. A recent comment by one sums up the general feeling:

“I just feel utterly defeated, alienated from this area where I have lived all my life and angry. I can't believe that any of those councillors have been to this area and walked around and talked to people and have seen the long queues. It doesn't seem as if they care about the views of the majority and they just wish to pursue their political agenda.”

The Council makes a big feature of “listening” to residents, but this is untrue for LTNs. Your own consultations show the vast majority of residents and local businesses are opposed to the LTNs, yet still you persist with these.

Councillors – Today's problems are a result of yesterday's solutions. LTNs are a failed experiment, prompted by Government handouts during Covid, and are an ill-advised solution which has worsened the problem they were supposed to solve. They have displaced, not cut, emissions and traffic and have divided neighbourhoods with hostility and inequality. You are penalising residents and it would be irrational, unreasonable, and undemocratic to make the current LTNs permanent. The rising cost of fuel is a natural deterrent to non-essential journeys, not these LTNs. LTNs 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. Time to return to the drawing-board, learn from this experiment, scrap the current LTNs, re-open our roads, and open constructive consultation with all parties for a better, more equitable, solution. Yes, we have a problem with our environment, climate change, and health – but, to quote a Dr. Who episode “Give a monkey control of the environment, and it will fill the world with bananas. (Moffatt, 1985)”. Bananas are not the solution – neither are the current LTNs.

Yours sincerely,
Judith Harley