

Written submission to Oxfordshire county Council cabinet meeting, Item 6, 19 July 2022.

Anthony Cheke, 13/7/2022

Although the officers' recommendation is to approve making the Cowley LTNs permanent, the third recommendation, relating to reviews and possible changes shows some signs of flexibility for the first time. Furthermore, in speaking to residents and businesses gathered outside this building on Tuesday last week to protest against LTNs, Cllr Leffman implied she was looking at using ANPR cameras instead of bollards and allowing residents access through roads currently blocked, with other likely exemptions - i.e. basically the Fulham scheme which appears, unlike the Oxford LTNs, to be widely accepted there, and like one I suggested in an *Oxford Times* letter back in December 2020.

If this is a serious plan, then it seems pointless to retain the current road blocks that are damaging shops and other businesses, making life difficult for delivery drivers and taxis (increasing time and costs), care workers, those unable to cycle (disabled drivers etc.) and slowing down buses especially at peak times, and making access to hospitals unduly devious and difficult.

Surely the most equitable plan would be to approve a LTN-ish traffic plan in principle, but restore access by removing bollards until the ANPR system can be funded and put in place. Failure to do this will result in important local community shops and businesses going bust or moving out (as already begun), to no one's advantage, and risks further division and confrontation. Some objective analysis of why people use or used certain of the closed roads as through routes would be very desirable - Beauchamp Lane/Littlemore Rd/Cowley Rd (Littlemore), for instance, is clearly an important link route for Littlemore residents, and closing it has caused, amongst other downsides, a big increase in dangerous turning movements at the Newman Rd/Rose Hill junction. The same applies to Magdalen Rd/Howard St and Divinity Rd in the East Oxford LTN area (this is not an exhaustive list of important link roads!).

The current arrangements have brought the County Council into disrepute across Cowley and East Oxford, as can be seen by the regular comments on the Nextdoor app calling into question the Council's common sense, lack of sympathy for affected residents and businesses, and apparent unwillingness to listen to anyone except the fanatical cycling and 'liveable streets' lobbies. On Nextdoor anti-LTN commentators outnumber supporters by around 10:1, and in the Council's own consultation views on the Cowley LTNs hardened against them after they had been experienced for several months. Planters and bollards may be cheap to install but they split communities both physically and in attitudes, whereas it would be perfectly possible to engage with all sectors of the community and devise a scheme that would be widely accepted, as in Fulham.

For information I have lived in Hurst St, now within the East Oxford (St.Mary's) LTN area, since 1979. The complaints about excess traffic in side streets in Cowley and East Oxford have always seemed to me overblown and driven more by anti-car ideology than evidence of real problems, though like all roads, some can become heavily used at peak hours. Closing a few small roads in the past was not disruptive, but closing ALL 'side' roads certainly is.

I promise to get a new bicycle and start cycling again as soon as the barriers are removed.