



## **Address to Cabinet on COTP 29 November 2022**

I'm Robin Tucker, Co-Chair of the Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel.

My first memory of Oxford is as an eight-year old boy, standing on the corner of Cornmarket with my granny, after a wonderful visit to the Natural History Museum, waiting for the bus home and coughing in the traffic fumes.

Imagine if your predecessors in 1999 had listened to those saying that bus gates and pedestrianisation would destroy the city centre. Imagine if cars had free run of the High Street with another 23 years of traffic growth, what a hell-hole it would be. Instead we have a thriving centre attracting investment like the Clarendon Centre redevelopment.

Every economic plan for the county identifies traffic congestion as a major problem for employers. The roads are stuffed. 'Doing nothing' makes it worse, and since 2015, when this plan first emerged, no one has found a better way. It was approved by the Conservative Cabinet in January 2020, and only blocked by Covid. And a YouGov poll shows 2-to-1 support for the key measures.

We support COTP and the Traffic Filters.

Our fear is that the filters now have too many loopholes to be effective. Two or three hundred passes a year removes the nudge towards sustainable bus and active travel options, allowing car dominance to persist. It's also too many cars to make cycling safe. That's even worse when you add 25 passes for anyone in the county, and free passage for vans and monster pick-up trucks.

We support the Recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee. In particular,

- Reviewing the number of passes against achievement of objectives, and
- Restricting van permits to legitimate businesses only.

One final ask:

- While the Botley Road works are on, put a bus gate filter on Longwall Street to cut through traffic and get the buses flowing.