

Cllr Anna Railton

The status quo in Oxford is broken. The vast majority of our roads are prioritised for private car use and it is grinding the bus service to the brink of failure.

The residents in my ward off Abingdon Road are sick of people driving past a park and ride to idle in a queue outside their houses and make the buses they depend on slow and unreliable.

The Dutch had exactly the same fight as this half a century ago. It was difficult then and it will be even more difficult now. However, their leaders held the line, they had vision, they fought for a better future and they built the cities that they wanted. Here, today, you can begin to do the same.

I believe where Oxford and Oxfordshire leads, others will follow. If not in a medieval city never built for cars, where?

Also, if not now, when? If we wait until there are no roadworks on the ring road, it will be too late.

If we wait until there's a change of government to fund buses properly, it will be too late. If we wait until absolutely everyone is happy, it will be too late.

Of course people have concerns and of course people are worried. Some folks will have to change their behaviour and change is uncomfortable and difficult. However the exceptions you have made and the tweaks from the consultation should go a long way to mitigate those most in need.

I assume most of us became councillors to try and change things for the better and to show leadership when it matters. Well today it matters.

We need to build an Oxford that works for everybody at every point in their life, whether they are too young or too old to drive, whether they cannot afford to own a car or simply do not want to.

I therefore ask you to not let perfect be the enemy of good, to follow the recommendations of your officers and to implement this scheme. Thank you.