

Speeches at Cabinet 29 November 2022 – Laura Soden

Traffic filters, that effectively divide Oxford into six 15-minute neighbourhoods, would cut through the very soul of this amazing city.

Such a measure would contravene the key principle of freedom of movement which I hold strongly. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights Article 13 states that everyone has the right to freedom of movement within the borders of each state.

By all means encourage the local provision of services for residents but why the need for carrots and sticks? People have the right to decide for themselves what their needs are and where to source them from.

There seems to be a concerted effort by the council to influence and change our behaviour. This has no transparency. Are Oxford's residents aware of this? I don't think so, hence it is deeply unethical. The council is there to provide services that we want and need not to dictate and control our lifestyles.

The division of Oxford into six districts would limit opportunities for education, employment and businesses. It would discriminate, marginalise and fuel resentment amongst residents.

Oxford has a history of community division. The Cutteslowe Walls in North Oxford stood for 25 years dividing an estate by class. Is this something we want to repeat for our city?

We are told that these measures are being introduced to solve Oxford's specific problems yet cities as diverse as Canterbury, Paris, Melbourne and Portland are doing the same.

We are told that these measures are popular, but the evidence shows otherwise.

I have lived in Oxford for 22 years. I never voted to live in a divided city with limits to my freedom and I don't know anyone who did.

Where is the evidence that Oxford's residents voted for any of this?