

## Questions from Members of the Public

Questions are listed in the order in which they were received.

<p><b>1. ZAHEER IQBAL</b></p> <p>It's acknowledged there's been a devastating loss of trade suffered by Botley Road businesses due to the station bridge being closed for so long. The installation of the traffic filters is also going to have a negative impact on businesses which are already struggling. Is the Council going to carry out an economic impact assessment specifically targeted at Botley Road to assess the extent of the damage which will be inflicted on us?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT. (Cllr Roberts)</b></p> <p>We recognise that the full closure of Botley Road at the rail bridge has created challenges for Botley Road businesses. However, the traffic filters should not be conflated with the Network Rail closure of Botley Road as the impacts are expected to be very different. The traffic filters are designed to improve access to Oxford's businesses, not worsen it.</p> <p>When the Hythe Bridge Street and Thames Street traffic filters are operating (7am to 7pm), only private cars without a permit cannot drive through them. All other vehicles can drive through at any time. This includes buses, taxis, deliveries etc (see our <a href="#">website</a> for full details). Traffic filters are forecast to reduce traffic overall within the ring road when they are operating and so make buses (including park &amp; ride) quicker and more reliable. Cars using permits (including residents living in Oxford – 100 day passes - and within the rest of Oxfordshire – 25 day passes – see our <a href="#">website</a> for more details) will be able to drive through the filters and should find their journeys within the ring road are quicker than at the moment.</p> <p>We are undertaking comprehensive monitoring and evaluation before and during the traffic filters trial. This will include an assessment of the economic/business impacts based on indicators such as footfall and spend data. Our Monitoring &amp; Evaluation plan is available under the reports section of the traffic filters <a href="#">website</a>.</p> <p>During the trial, we will also be carrying out a public consultation asking for people's views on how the traffic filters are working and impact, both positive and negative. We would encourage businesses to take part in that survey – details about how to submit those views will be on our <a href="#">website</a> when the trial starts.</p>
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<p><b>2. LIZZIE McHALE</b></p> <p>Given that the timing and locations of Oxford's traffic filters is likely to have a significant impact on the accessibility of the city's theatres to out of town visitors, would the Council consider monitoring the impact of the traffic filters on Oxford's theatres, as a proportionate and rapid way of measuring the impact of the traffic filters on Oxford's cultural economy?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE &amp; DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</b></p> <p>We are very much hoping that access to the many cultural attractions in the city centre will be improved as a result of the introduction of the trial traffic filters. During the hours of operation of the filters, the city centre should be a more pleasant place to visit and spend time in thanks to the streets being less dominated by vehicles. Bus services including those from outside the city and from the park &amp; rides should run more quickly and reliably than now because of the expected reductions in traffic and associated congestion. Many of these bus services operate frequently until late evenings. People who want to drive into the city centre to visit the theatre will still be able to do that – all locations currently accessible by car will continue to be accessible by car during the hours of operation of the filters albeit a different route may be needed in some cases. Additionally, the traffic filters will not operate after 7pm and residents of Oxford (100 days per year) and Oxfordshire (25 days each year) can also apply for a free permit to drive their car through the filter points when they are operating i.e. 100 / 25 day passes (with unlimited travel through the filter points on each day).</p> <p>The traffic filters are being introduced as a trial and the first 6 months of that will be a public consultation so we will be actively seeking feedback on how the proposals are working for people. I would encourage the theatres and other cultural destinations in Oxford city centre to let us know the impacts of traffic filters when the trial starts (both positive and negative). We will also be monitoring the trial very carefully. You can find out more about our monitoring and evaluation plan <a href="#">here</a>. Our <a href="#">website</a> will be regularly updated and give details of how to give feedback in due course.</p>
<p><b>3. PETER GEORGE</b></p> <p>Will you commit to rolling back LTNs, Bus Filters, ZEZ and any other traffic measures if provided with independent evidence that these</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council continues to monitor the implemented schemes and is committed to undertake monitoring of schemes yet to be implemented. The council will consider a broad range of policy outcomes, including economic, environmental and social indicators when making decisions about transport projects.</p> <p>Oxford continues to buck the national trend with an increase in footfall in recent years including since the introduction of the ZEZ Pilot and LTNs, with nearly half of visitors to the city centre from</p>

<p>measures have negatively impacted Oxford's local business economy, and continue the rollback until workable alternatives are implemented?</p>	<p>Oxfordshire postcodes. This is despite ongoing disruption to the city's transport system caused by the full closure of Botley Road to motorised transport.</p> <p>Source: <a href="https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1010/oxford-city-centre-continues-to-buck-national-footfall-trends-in-the-run-up-to-christmas#:~:text=Oxford%20city%20centre%20continued%20to,the%20same%20period%20in%202022.">https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1010/oxford-city-centre-continues-to-buck-national-footfall-trends-in-the-run-up-to-christmas#:~:text=Oxford%20city%20centre%20continued%20to,the%20same%20period%20in%202022.</a></p>
<p><b>4. PETER WEST</b></p> <p>As you are aware a number of businesses in the Cowley, Headington and St Clements areas have had their income significantly reduced, or even had to close due to the impact of LTNs being installed in the East Oxford area. Can you confirm whether any businesses similarly impacted by the introduction of the proposed traffic filters will be partially or fully supported in any way by the council?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>The County Council is not aware of any empirical evidence linking reduced income and/or closure directly to changes in patterns of patronage as a result of LTNs. Research undertaken by CoHSAT concluded that Cowley Road businesses have been relatively resilient compared to national trends, and despite a cost of living crisis, with fewer vacancies compared to 2018. Recent news reports demonstrates that new businesses on the Cowley Road are not only thriving but expanding.</p> <p>The traffic filters are designed to improve access to Oxford's businesses, not worsen it, through better access by buses bringing more people to the city and increase in footfall due to a pleasant, safe environment. It should be noted that Oxford continues to buck the national trend with an increase in footfall in recent years including since the introduction of the ZEZ Pilot, LTNs and the Broad Street public realm improvements, with nearly half of visitors to the city centre from Oxfordshire postcodes. This is despite ongoing disruption to the city's transport system caused by the full closure of Botley Road to motorised transport due to Network Rail's work at the railway bridge.</p> <p>Additionally, data collected in 1998 and 2001 (before and after the Oxford bus gates were introduced) shows a 10% increase in pedestrian footfall in the city centre after the bus gates were introduced – despite a 25% reduction in traffic flows into the city centre.</p> <p>With over 90% of city centre visitors to Oxford city centre arriving by non-car modes (May 2022 survey), the traffic filters will improve access for the vast majority of people accessing the city centre, whilst retaining access for those who choose to come by car. Those arriving by car may see quicker journey times due to reduced congestion, particularly if they use a permit to pass through the filters.</p>

	<p>We therefore expect the traffic filters will – alongside other measures – boost visitor numbers significantly.</p> <p>We are undertaking comprehensive monitoring and evaluation before and during the traffic filters trial. This will include an assessment of the economic/business impacts based on indicators such as footfall and spend data. Our Monitoring &amp; Evaluation plan is available under the reports section of the traffic filters website.</p>
<p><b>5. EMILY SCAYSBROOK</b></p> <p>Given that the pre-Christmas trading period is vital to many retail businesses' cash flow and survival, including my own games shop Hoyle's on Oxford's High Street, will Oxfordshire County Council follow the precedent they set when installing the ZEZ pilot scheme, and defer the introduction of the traffic filters until the new year?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>The plan is to start the traffic filter trial when the Botley Road reopens after Network Rail finish their work there. The council is working closely with Network Rail on timescales.</p> <p>It is important that the Council understand the impact of the filters throughout the year including the pre- Christmas period and if the scheme needs to be adapted. This will be closely monitored and evaluated.</p>

<p><b>6. GRAHAM JONES</b></p> <p>Given that residents led business impact surveys have repeatedly generated a 75% response rate from business owners in recent months, will OCC commit to formally surveying all business operating in the Oxford city centre on the measurable impact of the traffic filters on the businesses' revenues, profitability and staff retention, with the survey commencing immediately after implementation?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE &amp; DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</b></p> <p>We are undertaking comprehensive monitoring and evaluation before and during the traffic filters trial. This will include an assessment of the economic/business impacts based on indicators such as footfall and spend data. Our Monitoring &amp; Evaluation plan is available under the reports section of the traffic filters website. During the trial, we will also be carrying out a 6-month public consultation seeking people's views on the traffic filters. We would encourage all businesses to respond.</p>
<p><b>7. RICHARD PARNHAM</b></p> <p>In light of Oxford City Council's recent decision to make raw NO2 pollution data available <a href="#">monthly</a> as well as</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE &amp; DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</b></p> <p>The council will publish monitoring data for the traffic filters at intervals appropriate to the data being collected and any validation required to ensure the data is accurate, meaningful and relevant. Not all data will be therefore published at the same intervals.</p>

<p>annually, will Oxfordshire County Council now extend its traffic filter <a href="#">evaluation “dashboard”</a> to also include monthly NO2 results data?</p>	<p>The council will not proactively publish unvalidated data as this could be misleading or confusing. However, certain unvalidated data may be obtained on request, subject to the normal freedom of information rules and restrictions.</p>
<p><b>8. BERNADETTE EVANS</b></p> <p>In light of the shocking drop off in visitor numbers of half a million in Aberdeen during the last nine months since the bus gates were introduced there, what prediction is Oxfordshire County Council making in terms of loss of visitors to Oxford when our own bus gates are installed?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>The traffic filters are designed to improve access to Oxford city centre, not worsen it.</p> <p>The Aberdeen city centre bus gates introduced recently are very different from the traffic filters being trialled in Oxford, but are similar to the bus gates introduced in Oxford in 1999 as part of the Oxford Transport Strategy.</p> <p>Data collected in 1998 and 2001 (before and after the Oxford bus gates were introduced) shows a 10% increase in pedestrian footfall in the city centre after the bus gates were introduced – despite a 25% reduction in traffic flows into the city centre.</p> <p>With over 90% of city centre visitors to Oxford city centre arriving by non-car modes (May 2022 survey), the traffic filters will improve access for the vast majority of people accessing the city centre, whilst retaining access for those who choose to come by car. Those arriving by car may see quicker journey times due to reduced congestion, particularly if they use a permit to pass through the filters.</p> <p>We therefore expect the traffic filters will – alongside other measures – boost visitor numbers significantly. Oxford has substantial infrastructure to support the filters including park and ride, good rail systems and provision for coach drop off. These are already highly used by visitors. The park and ride services will be supported by the traffic filter implementation, helping the bus services.</p> <p>We are undertaking comprehensive monitoring and evaluation before and during the traffic filters trial. This will include an assessment of the economic/business impacts based on indicators such as</p>

	<p>footfall and spend data. Our Monitoring &amp; Evaluation plan is available under the reports section of the traffic filters website. During the trial, we will also be carrying out a public consultation seeking people's views on the traffic filters. We would encourage all businesses to respond.</p>
<p><b>9. NICK ALCRAFT</b></p> <p>I understand that the policy of changing the access to the Oxfordshire school bus 'spare seats' scheme is being systematically implemented around the County. Please can you give me a detailed explanation of how this policy was decided?</p> <p>I assume your answer will include a detailed a cost analysis showing how much money is going to be saved and what the present costs are. Hopefully, it will also address why the policy doesn't meet most of the objectives of Oxfordshire County</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES</b></p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council has a statutory duty to provide free school transport for a young person attending their nearest school. Following a public consultation exercise in 2014, the Council changed its policy so as to provide free transport from Oxfordshire homes to the nearest available school for any of the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the shortest designated route is more than two miles where the child is aged under 8</li> <li>• the shortest designated route is more than the statutory walking distance of three miles for children aged 8 and over</li> <li>• the route has been assessed as unsafe to walk, even if accompanied by a responsible adult.</li> </ul> <p>Previously where there have been buses with 'spare' seats (ie the number of eligible young people was lower than the capacity of the bus), such spare seats were offered to non-eligible young people. However, it is not cost effective to maintain a high level of spare/empty seats for young people who do <b>not</b> qualify for free transport. Across the county, the number of eligible young people have reduced meaning the number of spare seats are no longer available.</p>

<p>Council's strategic plan for 2023 to 2025.</p>	
<p><b>10. JULIAN LE VAY</b></p> <p>Given the council's own damning assessment of the impact on Botley Road road - 10% increase in congestion at the western end, a mere 4% reduction in the main section but possibly an increase there too at peak times - why are you persisting with a plan that will again hit a community already cut off from the city for well over a year, as a result of the council's serial mismanagement of the Network Rail project?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>The traffic filters as a whole are expected to reduce traffic within the ring road by 20% and within the city centre by 35%. The traffic filters are designed to improve access to Oxford's businesses, not worsen it. The traffic modelling report that supported the decision to go ahead with the trial traffic filters is here:</p> <p><a href="https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-major-projects/Oxfordtrafficfilterstransportandtrafficrocastingreport.pdf">https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-major-projects/Oxfordtrafficfilterstransportandtrafficrocastingreport.pdf</a></p> <p>As with any traffic modelling, there is naturally some uncertainty in the detailed forecasts. The change on individual roads may differ from the overall changes within the ring road. That is why the filters will be introduced on a trial basis initially and very carefully monitored to see what impact they actually have. As regards Botley Road specifically, a scenario with traffic filters in place is forecast to increase traffic levels on Botley Road west of the junction with Seacourt Park and Ride by around an average 10% across a typical weekday, whereas on Hythe Bridge Street traffic is forecast to reduce by around an average 50% across a typical weekday. On the inner section of Botley Road at Osney Bridge, weekday flows are expected to reduce by 4% but it is acknowledged there is a risk of increases in traffic at certain times of the day as a result of the traffic filters. That is why the monitoring is so important – details of our monitoring plan can be found here:</p> <p><a href="https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-policies-and-plans/TrafficFilterMEPlan.pdf">https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-policies-and-plans/TrafficFilterMEPlan.pdf</a></p> <p>We will naturally be analysing the data collected as part of the comprehensive monitoring exercise very carefully. This analysis will be considered by the county council Cabinet alongside the feedback received as a result of the consultation exercise in order to make changes during the trial, if required, and as it makes a decision about whether to make the traffic filters permanent.</p>



	<p>The improvements to Oxford railway station, which will significantly improve the rail offer for the city, is a Network Rail project funded and overseen by the Department for Transport <u>not</u> Oxfordshire County Council. Therefore, the council is <u>not</u> responsible for the project and, save for its Network Management functions, has no project management function in the project and can therefore not be held responsible for its “mismanagement”. It is suggested that this part of the question should be directed to Network Rail, as UK’s rail infrastructure authority, and the Department for Transport.</p>
<p><b>11. YOLA DRAGE</b></p> <p>We would as if it could be possible to reconsider the launch date of traffic filters in our area - St Clements/Marston/Cowley Road.</p> <p>If the launch goes ahead in November 2023, our Christmas/December business will be affected greatly. Hospitality businesses in the area rely on Christmas party business, visits from shoppers whilst in town using our car park...The revenue generated in December gets us through the month of January when Oxford is very quiet.</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE &amp; DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</b></p> <p>The trial traffic filters are expected to ‘go-live’ once the Botley Road reopens after Network Rail has completed their work to the railway bridge. The traffic filters are designed to improve access to Oxford’s businesses, not worsen it. Data collected in May 2022 showed that over 90% of people accessed the city centre by non-car modes so improving access for these modes will benefit the overwhelming majority of city centre visitors. However, all areas currently accessible by private car will still be accessible during the trial. A range of permits and exemptions will be available for those occasions when alternative modes are not possible. These journeys will be made easier due to a reduction in traffic and congestion.</p> <p>Data collected in 1998 and 2001 (before and after the city centre bus gates were introduced as part of the 1999 Oxford Transport Strategy) shows a 10% increase in pedestrian footfall in the city centre after the bus gates were introduced – despite a 25% reduction in traffic flows into the city centre.</p> <p>It should be noted that Oxford continues to buck the national trend with an increase in footfall in recent years including since the introduction of the ZEZ Pilot, LTNs and the Broad Street public realm improvements, with nearly half of visitors to the city centre from Oxfordshire postcodes. This is despite ongoing disruption to the city’s transport system caused by the full closure of Botley Road to motorised transport due to Network Rail’s work at the railway bridge.</p> <p>We are undertaking comprehensive monitoring and evaluation before and during the traffic filters trial. This will include an assessment of the economic/business impacts based on indicators such as footfall and spend data. Our Monitoring &amp; Evaluation plan is available under the reports section of the</p>

<p>We would urge the County Council to defer the launch to the new year to support local independent businesses as well as the chains and larger businesses in the city centre '</p>	<p>traffic filters <a href="#">website</a>. During the trial, we will also be carrying out a public consultation asking for people's views on how the traffic filters are working. We would encourage businesses to take part in that survey – details about how to submit those views will be on our website when the trial starts.</p>
<p><b>12. ALBERTO BRUNELLI</b></p> <p>'We ask whether Oxford City Council will consider protecting local business losses that will be inevitable if Traffic filters start in November. Can plans for launch be deferred.</p> <p>During November and December - usually a busy time of year for Hospitality - businesses need December planned revenues not to be put in jeopardy.</p> <p>Hospitality businesses as well as retail outlets</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE &amp; DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</b></p> <p>The trial traffic filters are expected to 'go-live' once the Botley Road reopens after Network Rail has completed their work to the railway bridge. The traffic filters are designed to improve access to Oxford's businesses, not worsen it. Data collected in May 2022 showed that over 90% of people accessed the city centre by non-car modes so improving access for these modes will benefit the overwhelming majority of city centre visitors. However, all areas currently accessible by private car will still be accessible during the trial. A range of permits and exemptions will be available for those occasions when alternative modes are not possible. These journeys will be made easier due to a reduction in traffic and congestion.</p> <p>Data collected in 1998 and 2001 (before and after the city centre bus gates were introduced as part of the 1999 Oxford Transport Strategy) shows a 10% increase in pedestrian footfall in the city centre after the bus gates were introduced – despite a 25% reduction in traffic flows into the city centre.</p> <p>It should be noted that Oxford continues to buck the national trend with an increase in footfall in recent years including since the introduction of the ZEZ Pilot, LTNs and the Broad Street public realm improvements, with nearly half of visitors to the city centre from Oxfordshire postcodes. This is despite ongoing disruption to the city's transport system caused by the full closure of Botley Road to motorised transport due to Network Rail's work at the railway bridge.</p>

<p>need to ensure our Christmas business is protected. Could we please urge the County Council to defer the start date until the New Year?</p> <p>Your consideration would be much appreciated after all we have gone through in St. Clements/Cowley with the LTN issues</p>	<p>We are undertaking comprehensive monitoring and evaluation before and during the traffic filters trial. This will include an assessment of the economic/business impacts based on indicators such as footfall and spend data. Our Monitoring &amp; Evaluation plan is available under the reports section of the traffic filters <a href="#">website</a>. During the trial, we will also be carrying out a public consultation asking for people's views on how the traffic filters are working. We would encourage businesses to take part in that survey – details about how to submit those views will be on our website when the trial starts.</p>
<p><b>13. CITY COUNCILLOR IAN YEATMAN</b></p> <p>I note that LTN amendments are under consultation for Mayfair Road. When will we see a full review of the much more problematic Crowell Road filter including the overdue Blue Badge access?</p>	<p><b>COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>There are currently no plans to further amend the Crowell Road / Littlemore Road LTN filter and the associated exemptions. The bollard has only recently been replaced with Automatic Number Plater Recognition (ANPR) camera enforcement. However, the LTNs remain under regular review by the County Council.</p>

**14. CITY  
COUNCILLOR  
SAJ MALIK**

How many extra vehicles Oxfordshire County Council predict to use the Slade / Horspath Driftway at peak times during the introduction of the Holloway traffic filter?

**COUNCILLOR JUDY ROBERTS, CABINET MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Our [traffic filter modelling report](#), published in autumn 2022, provides forecasts for all major roads in the city (see figures 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3).

The forecast changes on The Slade and Horspath Driftway are small:

Road	AM peak	Interpeak*	PM peak
The Slade northbound	5 to 15% decrease	5 to 15% decrease	5 to 15% decrease
The Slade southbound	5 to 15% decrease	5 to 15% decrease	5 to 15% decrease
Horspath Driftway northbound	5 to 15% increase	5 to 15% decrease	5 to 15% decrease
Horspath Driftway southbound	5 to 15% decrease	5 to 15% increase	5 to 15% decrease

\*Based on Hollow Way filter operating 7am – 7pm. This filter will initially operate 7am – 9am and 3pm – 6pm only

In some cases the flow changes vary slightly between different parts of the streets named above. The changes shown are for the majority of the street length named.

There are uncertainties in modelling a scheme of this kind, which is one reason why the scheme is being introduced as a trial. We have permanent automatic traffic counters on The Slade and Horspath Driftway (along with all other major traffic routes in the city) so we will be monitoring these carefully during the trial.

**15. CITY  
COUNCILLOR  
ANNE STARES**

Does OCC intend to immediately begin fining anyone who goes through a traffic filter, without the necessary permit, as soon as the traffic filters go live in November?

**COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT**

Warning notices are issued to each vehicle keeper for a first offence at each and every moving traffic enforcement site, including the trial traffic filters sites, for the first six months after going live. Any further moving traffic contravention at the same camera location will result in the issue of a Penalty Charge Notice (fine). As always, further information can be found on the county council's [website](#).