

Divisions affected: *Berinsfield & Garsington*

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

05 SEPTEMBER 2024

CLIFTON HAMPDEN: HENLEY ROAD (A4074-B4015 CONNECTING LANE) – PROPOSED JUNCTION CLOSURE

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to

- a) **Approve the introduction of a prohibition of motor vehicles restriction at the southern end of the connecting lane (known as Henley Road) between the A4074 and B4015 within Clifton Hampden parish, as advertised.**

Executive Summary

1. The report presents responses to a statutory consultation on the proposed introduction of a prohibition of motor vehicles restriction at the southern end of the connecting lane between the A4074 and B4015 as shown in **Annex 1**.
2. The restriction will be enforced by physically closing off the junction of Henley Road with the A4074. A lockable gate will be installed towards the northern end of Henley Road to prevent unauthorised vehicles from proceeding southwards. Pedestrians and cyclists will be permitted to use the full length of the lane.
3. This length of Henley Road is considered effectively redundant since the construction of the A4074. The alternative route to the B4015 Oxford Road, via the Golden Balls roundabout, will increase the journey time and distance by very small amounts.

Financial Implications

4. Funding for consultation and the proposals themselves has been provided by the County Council's Vision Zero programme.

Legal Implications

5. No legal implications have been identified in respect of the proposals, with proposed changes to existing Traffic Regulation Orders governed by the Road

Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and other associated procedural regulations. Failure to adhere to these statutory processes could result in the proposals being challenged.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

6. No implications in respect of equalities or inclusion have been identified in respect of the proposals.

Sustainability Implications

7. The proposals will help to improve road safety by preventing a turning manoeuvre that has contributed to two fatal road traffic collisions.
8. There will also be environmental benefits resulting from a likely reduction in fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour that has apparently occurred in the lane in the past.

Formal Consultation

9. Formal consultation was carried out between 04 July and 2 August 2024. A notice was published in the Oxford Times newspaper, and an email sent to statutory consultees & key-stakeholders, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, Bus operators, countywide transport, access & disabled peoples user groups, South Oxfordshire District Council, the local District Cllrs, Clifton Hampden and Nuneham Courtenay Parish Councils, and the local County Councillor representing the Berinsfield & Garsington division.
10. Letters were also sent directly to approximately 30 properties in the immediate vicinity.

Statutory Consultee Responses:

11. Thames Valley Police submitted no objection. During the informal consultation they confirmed that they were aware of the two accidents which both involved a turning right manoeuvre, and that they would hope the proposed gate feature would remove any other potential issues such as anti-social behaviour and fly tipping.

Other Responses:

12. 13 responses were received via the online survey during the course of the formal consultation, comprising of: three objections (23%), nine in support (69%), and one non-objection.
13. The responses are shown in full at **Annex 2**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors.

ANNEX 2

RESPONDENT	COMMENTS
(1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)	<p>No objection – The Police have no objection. See response to informal consultation dated 23rd April 2024. [as included below]</p> <p>On behalf of the Chief Officer of Thames Valley Police. I am aware there have now been 2 Fatal collisions involving Motor Cyclists over a 15 year period at the location. 15th May 2023 and 6th August 2008 in which both involve a turning right manoeuvre.</p> <p>My first choice is Option 2. This removes any temptation to make the turning. I would also hope Gating will remove any other issues around Anti-social behaviour and fly tipping a closure may bring.</p> <p>I would not rule out Option 1 providing the engineering is robust in order to make the illegal turn impossible.</p> <p>When a decision is made can we further discuss the Road side memorial that has been placed by family members following the most recent collision. We need to be very sensitive how it will be dealt with.</p>
(2) As a business, (Burcot, Burcot Lane)	<p>Object - We are small family run business in Burcot with a number of customer from Chalgrove and Stadhampton, having this road cut will increase the time for our customers travel to get to the garage, the quickest alternative route would be the from Stadhampton through Drayton-St-Leonard but often during the winter months this road is in passable due to heavy flooding. The surface of this road is currently in a poor condition with a lot of pot holes. Increasing the journey could potentially mean that our customer will seek alternative business to undertake the work that we do, meaning a loss in revenue.</p> <p>Other alternatives will increase the time taking for customers to get to us, causing more air pollution and increasing traffic on alternative routes. Villages like Drayton-St-Leonard, Warborough or Benson could see potentially more traffic. Fatalities are very unfortunate, but I cannot understand why 3 fatalities in 20 years is enough to close a road. The A4074 Dorchester bypass has seen many fatalities and accidents in this time and nothing seems to be done to ensure that this road is safer.</p>

<p>(3) Local resident, (Cholsey))</p>	<p>Object - It has not been demonstrated with documented evidence that there is a causal effect between the road that is being proposed to be closed and the fatal accidents over the past 20 years. It could or is likely that the accidents are a coincidence and therefore there is no reason to close the road.</p>
<p>(4) Local resident, (Oxford)</p>	<p>Object - This is clearly manipulation of the statistics and if this is actually an issue then really the road should be improved not prohibition. Its performance a vital function enabling residence from the south to get into Oxford and commute to work obviously this will have an impact and commuting times and clearly just not right it's simply not right. I think MPs should take views of local residence.</p>
<p>(5) Member of public, (Berinsfield, Lodden)</p>	<p>Support - we need more cycle and walking paths in oxfordshire so i support this proposal. i frequently cycle from berinsfield to oxford alongside the a4074 and this side road is quite the relieve from heavy traffic. currently it is however not that safe with the odd car speeding by and a lot of garbage lying around. sad to see several people lost their lives there, closing it down makes absolute sense</p>
<p>(6) Local resident, (Clifton Hampden, Watery Lane)</p>	<p>Support - Pleaser close this road for good, very dangerous intersection on an already dangerous road. It should have been done years ago when the A4074 was moved to its current state, could have saved some lives.. Cars speeding by without warning when walking my dogs, we could do with more footpaths. Road always filled with junk, it looks horrendous at times.</p>
<p>(7) Local resident, (Nuneham Courtenay, Henley Road)</p>	<p>Support - I would like to thank you on behalf of myself and my family for the proposal to prohibit and restrict Motor Vehicles on Henley Road. We are the residents of Mandarin, Henley Road, OX44 9PR which is one of the only two properties on this road and we have been waiting and campaigning for this road to be closed for several years and therefore strongly support your proposal.</p> <p>During the informal consultation we have shared reasons and evidence why we are supporting the closure, it includes several safety concerns as well as social issues which we have reported over the years to authorities like the South Oxfordshire Council, the Environment Crime Team as well as Thames Valley Police.</p> <p>In summary these are our main concerns and reasons why we support your proposal for closure:</p>

1. Traffic risk, reported over the years multiple times to the police

- we warned on several police reports of the danger of consistent speeding on the A4075. It involves primarily (but not exclusively) motorcycles racing at speeds in excess of 100mph especially on Weekends and Mondays between 4-7pm when bikers meet at the H-Cafe. Unfortunately no actions were so far taken and there was the tragic death of a young motorcycle rider on Monday the 15th of May 2023 at 5pm, just as we had warned. This is from my understanding the 3rd death on that spot in the last few years

- it is a dangerous crossing, not just for the right turn travelling south from the Golden Balls roundabout but also coming from the south. There is a lot of speeding on the A4074 and when entering Henley Road travelling north you either slow down before the turn which leads to people tailgating and overtaking dangerously, or you enter Henley Road at high speed which is equally dangerous. I have seen situations where people are cycling or walking dogs and cars entering the road at high speed and just about evading them

- speeding in front of our house on Henley road is a big concern. Our only entrance is leading right onto this road and we constantly witness people speeding in both directions at 60mph or higher. We had some near misses driving out of our driveway, but what worries us the most is that our little 2 year old son walks out on the road. Since he started walking we can't let him play in our front garden because of the fear he walks onto the road, it only takes a few seconds for him to wander out. Also our dog has to be kept in another side of the garden because of the danger of this road. It is the only access and exit our property and it is very dangerous, closing it up to the position of the proposed gate would completely eliminate this risk and give us and mainly our children safety to enter and leave our home

- road kill is also an issue. Over the years we had deer, rabbits, badgers, pheasants, kites, peacocks, hedgehogs, foxes and many other animals seeking sanctuary in our garden and field on the opposite side. Unfortunately we have seen several different animals killed by speeding vehicles at our doorstep over the years

2. Rubbish & fly tipping

- this road is notorious for fly tipping and the discarding of rubbish. I have lost count how many times there were large domestic and commercial fly tips and we have reported several to the council to clear them. However as soon as the road is cleared another dump occurs only a few days after. There are at least 3 different signs warning people not to dump rubbish, but with no effect. This is no good use of taxpayers money to clear and maintain the road.

- on a weekly basis when I put out our bins for collection I made it a routine to pick for 5-10 minutes the rubbish accumulated in just 7 days in front of our house that has been discarded by vehicles driving by. Sometimes things are even thrown over the bush into our garden, recently some medical waste. If I don't continuously keep it tidy the issue gets worse

- abandoned vehicles, I had to report some and they had to be removed by the council after several weeks of vehicles being just discarded on this road

- just as this proposal got published I got home from a day at work to find a plastic bag discarded in front of our house right under one of the warning signs not to throw rubbish. When looking inside in the hope to find out who threw it there

it turned out to contain human faeces. I reported this appalling incident to the police supported with pictures, it could have been my 2 year old son finding it

3. Other illegal activities

- drug dealing. Only recently we arrived home and a car blocked our driveway. Instead of moving a man got off and approached us wanting to sell drugs before realising my pregnant wife and 2 year old son were in the car and I was not the person he was going to meet for the drug deal. I reported this to the police as well as other cases where obvious dealing was going on this road
- I was assault by a fly tipper trying to run me over with his van. After spotting and filming someone fly tipping the driver was speeding towards me in the attempt to run me over at high speed. I reported this to the police and provided the full video of the incident

4. Nuisance

- Motor vehicles often stop in front of our house and leave their engines running for hours at the time. Something that I complained about frequently as it is illegal and harming the environment
- Very loud motorbikes are speeding up and down the road, sometimes in the middle of the night
- Loitering in front of our house. We had some suspicious people in the dark of night standing at our entrance for no reason as our house and our neighbours are the only houses in the area. I often found discarded alcohol bottles and other drug paraphernalia in the bushes in front of our house.

5. The road is obsolete

- the A4074 runs in parallel as a dual carriage way connected to the B4015 a few hundred yards further up. It makes Henley Road complete obsolete and just a danger and nuisance
- I believe in Dorchester they had a bypass built and the old A4074 turned now into a quiet residential road enjoyed by pedestrians and cyclist. This should also be done on this remainder of the old road
- The road also is a burden and a waste of money to clean and to maintain

For most of the above points we have gathered over the years plenty of evidence and made multiple official complaints to authorities. I did not see an option to supply this information in the survey but we are of course happy to provide all of it to support the proposal if needed. The police confirmed they are now more frequently patrolling the area and the South Oxfordshire Council confirmed to me it is one of the problematic areas of the district.

By closing the road as proposed to restrict Motor Vehicles we can eliminate the safety risks it evidently poses and there would be no more fly tipping and other illegal activities. Cyclists and pedestrians would have a safe and clean space to travel without the risk of heavy traffic as unfortunately there is no cycle lane between Berinsfield to Oxford,

	<p>something that we think is urgently needed to encourage environmentally friendly and safe transport. Nature could regenerate from traffic pollution, road kill and large amounts of rubbish being discarded.</p> <p>For us most importantly it would mean more safety in and around our home for ourselves, our children and neighbours.</p> <p>We strongly support the closure of the road as per your proposal and plan to attend the County Hall meeting to make a personal statement at the meeting to support the proposal further if needed.</p>
<p>(8) Local resident, (Nuneham Courtenay, Henley Road)</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>My husband Valentin Heinrichs submitted his response in strong support of your proposal to prohibit Motor Vehicles on Henley Road, I would like to add as well that I very much support it and thank you for addressing the issues.</p> <p>As we shared in the informal consultation and my husband in his detailed survey response the road poses a big safety risk. There have been 3 deaths at the entrance, but also speeding on the road itself is putting our family at risk as it is the only access and exit point from our property.</p> <p>In addition there have been many other ongoing issues like fly tipping, drug dealing and nuisance that we reported over the years to authorities who confirmed the road is problematic.</p> <p>Closing it will be a much welcome move that we have been long awaiting. The road is absolute obsolete and apart from removing the safety and social issues the road could be enjoyed by walkers, cyclists and a regenerating nature. Our family could finally access our property safely and enjoy it alongside other pedestrians and cyclist to for example teach our children to ride a bike or take our dog for a walk, something we currently cannot be done in it's current state.</p> <p>Thank you for taking our concerns into consideration to hopefully go ahead with the proposal.</p>
<p>(9) Local resident, (Nuneham Courtenay, Henley Road)</p>	<p>Support - I live here and it disturbs me greatly having people drive down the road so fast and park cars here during the day and night.</p>

<p>(10) Local resident, (Nuneham Courtenay, Henley Road)</p>	<p>Support - Despite all the signage, there is constant fly tipping on this road. I have lost count how many times I've seen items dumped here in the last 2 years.</p> <p>In addition to this, there are numerous vehicles parked here everyday, often at odd hours.</p> <p>As the road approaching golden balls roundabout has national speed limit, we often observe motorists driving fast on this road, which is also alarming.</p>
<p>(11) Local resident, (Nuneham Courtenay)</p>	<p>Support - 3 deaths for a road with no reason to exist is 3 deaths too many</p>
<p>(12) Local resident, (Nuneham Courtenay, Oxford Road)</p>	<p>Support - Too many accidents. Has turned into a local rubbish dump. Not safe turning onto the road from a high speed road, very dangerous</p>
<p>(13) Local resident, (Nuneham Courtenay, Henley Road)</p>	<p>Support - I live on this road and am always concerned by the number of suspicious vehicles which park on this road. The road is not safe as cars come down really fast - and I have young children at home</p>
<p>(14) Local resident, (Burcot, Burcot Farm Lane)</p>	<p>No objection - I have lived nearby for over 30 years and have been aware of many incidents including fatal traffic incidents .I have been aware of countless fly tipping episodes over the years, as well as improper use as a lay-by with resultant littering. Sadly there is currently a shrine or memorial at the lane's junction with the A4074</p>