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**OXFORDSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL**

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Steve Howell  
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My ref: SPH/OS/JLa

07 December 2011

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**Please ask for: Steve Howell**

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Dear Mr Oughton

**Petition – Request to make Jack Straw's Lane 'Access Only'**

Thank you for presenting a petition to the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council on 17 November stating that due to the danger from traffic in Jack Straw's Lane you call for the Lane to be made into an "Access Only" road and that you disagree with the statement that the Lane "already provides an excellent, quiet cycle and walking route to the John Radcliffe Hospital". Councillor Rose has asked that I investigate this on his behalf and keep him informed of my findings.

Our traffic and accident data do not support the view that Jack Straw's Lane is dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians. (The only recorded accident in the last five years involved two cyclists). It is included in the Oxford 20mph speed limit and has speed indicator signs to encourage motorists to comply with this. Very few similar roads in this country would have a 20mph speed limit and even within Oxford, few similar roads have speed indicator signs. It is in our view appropriate for Jack Straw's Lane to form part of a signed quiet cycle route between the John Radcliffe Hospital and the city centre.

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However, the County Council is not complacent about road safety and we recognise that our data (here as elsewhere) does not exclude the possibility of instances of bad driving that may intimidate vulnerable road users and even occasional near misses or unreported minor collisions. We have been working closely with the Jack Straw's Lane Residents' Association to develop an innovative scheme using different surface colours with a median strip to emphasise to motorists that this is a cycle route and to highlight the length of road without footway where pedestrians share the road. We hope to consult on this in January with a view to implementation in late spring or early summer.

Given the innovative nature of this scheme, we intend to monitor traffic speed and volume before and after implementation. If this shows significant speeding the police are willing to conduct speed check work with speeding motorists written to or visited by officers to discourage them from speeding in future. In the case of taxi drivers the licensing authority (Oxford City Council) could be informed too.

Making Jack Straw's Lane access-only would not necessarily address residents' concerns about traffic. Such measures are difficult to enforce and Thames Valley Police Traffic Management Unit oppose this in Jack Straw's Lane because they would not have the resources to enforce it effectively. Many vehicles ignore the access-only signs on approaches to Old Marston, and the County Council installed traffic calming in the village some years after the access-only restriction which, on its own, was not preventing speeding and rat running.

Since the Jack Straw's Lane surfacing scheme is now imminent, and has developer funding, it makes sense to go ahead with this and monitor its effectiveness. This is in our view the best way to address the concerns raised in relation to Jack Straw's Lane. Any access-only scheme would require additional funding and consultation, and would in our experience attract significant numbers of objections. We do think this would be an appropriate use of the County Council's resources, at least for the time being.

I am sorry that I cannot agree to your proposal but suggest that we implement our scheme as planned and monitor its effectiveness first.

Yours sincerely

Steve Howell  
Deputy Director of Environment & Economy  
Highways & Transport

cc Cllr Rose, Owen South