

Adjustments Needed to Temple Cowley Low Traffic Neighbourhood.

The Temple Cowley LTN as currently configured acts in a way which is contrary to the objectives of the Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. It has had consequences unforeseen by the county council and must be adjusted as the current layout is displacing traffic and causing unprecedented levels of congestion and air pollution along Oxford Rd and Hollow Way. This congestion is a daily nightmare for local road users of all types, including bus passengers who find their journeys between Cowley and the city centre can be delayed by 45 minutes or more. Nitrogen Dioxide levels for Hollow Way are now among the highest in the city, comparable only to the city centre and St Clements. These roads are residential and home to families, it is not fair that the quality of their environment should be degraded in order to improve the amenity of their neighbours in roads protected by the new LTNs.

The high-handed imposition of unpopular LTN trials by the county council during the pandemic has pitted neighbour against neighbour and divided our communities, Oxford is a small city and needs holistic city-wide action to reduce car use. In the meantime, the current LTN schemes need to be adjusted to ameliorate the worst of the damage they are causing and improve the daily lives of local residents.

For Temple Cowley, this means removing the Crescent Road bollard. This would restore an alternative route for vehicles trying to get between East Oxford and Hollow Way, and relieve the pressure on Oxford Rd, The Original Swan Junction, and Hollow Way. It is congestion in these areas which is directly contributing to poor air quality and increased journey times for residents in Lye Valley Ward.

Once the Crescent Road bollard is removed the county council should implement traffic calming and speed reduction measures for Crescent Road, measures which enhance local amenity and help road safety, but which do not totally prevent through traffic.

Hollow Way would also benefit from the removal of some of its on-street parking. This will help traffic flow, help prevent bus delays and improve safety for cyclists.

I understand that the cabinet will not be agreeing any definitive adjustments to the LTN schemes today but will be agreeing to further consultation on proposals for implementation by Spring 2023. The county council's record on consultation to date has been woeful. Residents beyond the boundary roads of the schemes have not been sufficiently involved (even though they suffer the knock-on effects of the schemes). The needs of major community groups, institutions, businesses, and workers have been overlooked or misunderstood. The County Council must up its game in this area and crucially, convince people that this consultation matters. Only 22.8% of the 729 people who expressed an opinion on the Temple Cowley scheme were supportive. With this low level of support many residents would expect the LTN trial scheme to be dropped completely.

Please take action to ensure that local voices are listened to, and adjustments are put in place as soon as possible to improve the schemes for the majority of local people negatively affected by them.