

## Short speech for cabinet meeting 19 July – Cowley LTNs – Ines Wilhelm

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at today's meeting. I would like to express my support for the LTNs and hope you will vote in favour of keeping them.

I live in the Florence Park neighbourhood. We moved into our house in late 2019, before the LTNs were implemented. We were completely taken by surprise about the traffic volumes in our street after moving in. This is just a small residential street, we thought, why is there so much traffic? I noticed that the majority of my previous Oxford addresses were in "access only" roads, either "natural" cul-de-sacs or with historic filters - so many of Oxford's roads are already laid out like this. So the volume of traffic through a residential street without this feature was staggering for us.

Once the LTNs went in, our area completely transformed. Instead of traffic jams and idling engines outside our house, particularly at school drop off/pick up times, there are children walking and cycling to school. Obviously this makes it nicer for us to live in our street. But for me this is not just about my quality of life. This is about something entirely different: child independence.

I grew up with a single Mum, a nurse who worked 2 jobs to provide for her family. Mum would never have been able to drive us anywhere. She just wouldn't have had the time. Sometimes we didn't even have a car, when we had a breakdown and no money for repairs. But she didn't need to worry about how we get to school, to the park or the swimming pool – because we had safe and quiet cycle routes. My brother and I had complete independence to move around in our neighbourhood. We would often "go for a bike ride" or cycle to a cool playground in a different area. Children today do not have this freedom, because there are too many cars, and it's not safe. This is just not fair on children, nor on their parents. We have to rebalance our streets, which should be shared spaces – to make more room for people who use these spaces outside of cars.

I don't have any children myself, but I want every child in Oxford to be able to safely and independently travel to school, to the park, to the swimming pool. And without the LTNs, this will never happen.

Thanks for taking this into account.

Ines Wilhelm