

Divisions affected: *Bicester Town*

## **DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT**

**25 APRIL 2024**

### **BICESTER: SHEEP STREET – EXPERIMENTAL ORDER PERMITTING TWO-WAY CYCLING**

Report by Corporate Director, Environment and Place

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

- a) The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to approve the introduction of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to permit two-way cycling throughout Sheep Street, Bicester and thus temporarily superseding the existing 'no-cycling' order.

#### **Executive Summary**

1. This report recommends the implementation of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) at Sheep Street in Bicester to supersede the existing no-cycling restriction and allow two-way cycling at all times. Please see **Annex 1** for location diagram. An ETRO can run for a maximum duration of 18 months, where during the first six months the order is subject to formal consultation. Following the formal consultation a decision will be made as to whether the ETRO should be modified or suspended or whether its provisions should be continued indefinitely.
2. The proposal aims to uphold the County Council's priorities to foster vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable communities by enhancing accessibility and promoting active travel. The implementation of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) on Sheep Street facilitates safer and more accessible cycling routes, enabling residents and visitors to choose active modes of travel which aligns with the LTCP objective of increasing active travel modal share.
3. Initial stakeholder engagement received 5 objections about the risk that people walking may feel intimidated by cyclists travelling at speed through the street and/or feel at greater risk of being hit by a cyclist than when cycling is not permitted in the street. This is likely to particularly impact pedestrians who are elderly, disabled or with young families and mobility scooter users. Officers recommend using the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order process to trial cycling in Sheep Street and during the first six months of the trial seek views of the public and stakeholders based on their lived experience of the

scheme. The Equalities Impact Assessment (**Annex 4**) will also be reviewed at the end of the first six months the ETRO is live. This future consultation will be reported back to the Cabinet Member for a formal decision and whether to permit cycling permanently in Sheep Street, amend the times/days that cycling is permitted or return the street to 'no cycling'.

4. The Bicester Market implements a road closure which is based on the existing Traffic Regulation Order, the ETRO would supersede this with two-way cycling permitted on market day.
5. Monitoring of cycling levels in the Sheep Street will be conducted during the ETRO period to understand the levels of change in cycling.
6. The total project cost is estimated at £15,520, with funding sourced from held Section 106 planning obligation contributions.

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

7. The proposals outlined in this report align closely with the overarching Vision, Values, Objectives, and Strategic Priorities outlined in the County Council's Corporate Plan. By adhering to these guiding principles, the initiative put forth in this report aim to deliver tangible benefits to service users and the wider community. Here's how the proposals aim to support the Corporate Plan:
8. The project upholds the County Council's vision of fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community by enhancing accessibility and promoting active travel.
9. Improving Transport Infrastructure: The proposals support the strategic priority of enhancing transport infrastructure by facilitating safer and more accessible cycling routes, aligning with the County Council's commitment to sustainable transportation options.
10. Promoting Health and Wellbeing: By encouraging cycling and creating shared spaces that prioritise pedestrian and cyclist safety, the project contributes to promoting healthier and more active lifestyles, a key focus area of the Corporate Plan.
11. Supporting Economic Development: Increased foot traffic resulting from improved cycling infrastructure benefits local businesses, contributing to economic growth and vitality in the area.
12. Enhancing Environmental Sustainability: The reduction of vehicle movements through promoting cycling aligns with the Council's objectives to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality, thereby supporting environmental sustainability goals.

## **Financial Implications**

13. The scheme business case has been approved for £15,520, with funding to be drawn from the Section 106 planning obligation funds.

Comments checked by: Filipp Skiffins - Assistant Finance Business Partner ([filipp.skiffins@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:filipp.skiffins@oxfordshire.gov.uk))

## **Legal Implications**

14. Any implementation of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) and any decision to give it permanent effect will need to comply with relevant legislation, including the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and associated regulations.
15. The formal legal consultation requirements during the first six months of the ETRO need to be complied with and reported to the Cabinet Member.

Comments checked by: Karen Jordan - Senior Solicitor and Team Leader (Environment Team) ([Karen.Jordan@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.Jordan@oxfordshire.gov.uk))

## **Staff Implications**

16. The implementation of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) on Sheep Street in Bicester will be met by existing staff resources.

## **Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) Implications**

17. The recommendations outlined in this report align closely with the Council's LTCP Vision and key outcomes, with a particular focus on prioritising Active Travel. The implementation of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) on Sheep Street facilitates safer and more accessible cycling routes, enabling residents and visitors to choose active modes of travel which aligns with the LTCP objective of increasing active travel modal share.
18. The implementation of the ETRO seeks to address potential safety concerns, particularly regarding interactions between cyclists, vehicles and those walking or using mobility scooters. Adequate signage will be employed to mitigate safety risks and ensure the safety of all users.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

19. The implementation of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) on Sheep Street in Bicester has some implications for equality and inclusion as outline in Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) available at **Annex 4**. This includes the risk that people walking may feel intimidated by cyclists travelling at speed through the street and/or feel at greater risk of being hit by a cyclist than when cycling is not permitted in the street. The EIA will be reviewed 6 months after the ETRO has taken affect, at the end of the ETRO formal consultation period.
20. By conducting an Experimental TRO this trial can be used for people to report their lived experience of the scheme allowing cycling in Sheep Street during the first six months of the order before a permanent decision on whether to allow cycling at all times is considered.

## Sustainability Implications

21. The implementation of the ETRO on Sheep Street presents sustainability benefits, including the promotion of active travel, reduction of traffic congestion, encouragement of low-carbon lifestyles, and positive contributions to climate action. A Climate Impact Assessment is available at **Annex 5**.

## Risk Management

22. As part of the development process for the implementation of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) on Sheep Street in Bicester, various risks and opportunities to the Council have been carefully considered. Below is a summary of the assessment and actions taken to minimise risks:

Description of areas or sources of risk and impact on project	Mitigation	Owner
Safety concerns: Potential safety issues due to shared space of cyclists, vehicles and people walking or using mobility scooters, leading to discomfort for all users.	Implement clear signage instructing cyclists to share the space with caution and care.	Project Manager
Stakeholder opposition: Some stakeholders might oppose the ETRO implementation, leading to delays, legal challenges, or negative publicity.	Proactively engage with stakeholders through effective communication to understand and address concerns and establish a feedback mechanism.	Project Manager
Budget overruns: unexpected expenses or inaccurate cost estimates leading to budget overruns.	Regularly review and update the budget, have a contingency fund of 24%, and conduct detailed cost analysis before project initiation.	Project Manager

## User Surveys

23. Surveys conducted in May 2023 and repeated late February/early March 2024, showed that up to 2.5% of Sheep Street users are cyclists, despite cycling not being permitted. This shows that cyclists are using the street despite regulations prohibiting their presence. This situation underscores the potential of the street to become a significant route in Bicester's active travel network. Please see **Annex 2** for survey data.
24. Monitoring of cycling levels in the Sheep Street will be conducted during the ETRO period in order to understand the levels of change in cycling.

## Site Visits

25. Two site visits have been conducted to Sheep Street on Friday market days. The first one was in December 2023, and the second one was in early March 2024, where local councillors guided the visit and shared their concerns, which were included in the initial consultation responses at **Annex 3**.
26. During both visits, the presence of illegal cyclists was evident, as depicted in the following images:





## Initial Consultation

27. An initial consultation took place over four weeks from 12 February to 11 March 2024. During this period, stakeholders were engaged through various channels to gather feedback on the proposal to allow cycling in Sheep Street, Bicester.
28. Stakeholders including Bicester Town Council, Cherwell District Council, Bicester Vision, Bicester Friday Market, Bicester Bike Users' Group (BBUG) and other cycle groups, Local Councillors, emergency service operators, public transport operators, and Unlimited Oxfordshire were contacted to participate in the consultation process. To ensure comprehensive community engagement, 223 drop-in letters were distributed to properties along Sheep Street and Market Square, inviting residents and businesses to provide their input on the proposed changes.
29. In total, 10 responses were received, these are available in full at **Annex 3**. The responses reflect a broad spectrum of views and opinions on the proposed ETRO. Of those who responded five objected to the introduction of the ETRO; three supported and two had mixed views.
30. Some stakeholders support the proposal for its perceived benefits to cycling, accessibility by sustainable modes and environmental benefits. Those who object to the ETRO raise potential safety issues due to shared space of cyclists and people walking through Sheep Street, including negative impacts for people with protected characteristics. Bicester Friday Market opposed

allowing cyclists on Sheep Street, citing safety concerns for traders and customers. They highlighted challenges during market days and expressed liability worries. Thames Valley Police expressed concerns about setting a precedent for similar locations and raised questions about pedestrian safety and cyclist behaviour. They acknowledged the split opinions within the community regarding the proposal.

31. Local County Councillors have called for a full public consultation before making any major changes to Sheep Street. They raised concerns about safety, access, and the impact on events and pedestrians.
32. Given the range of views presented in the initial stakeholder consultation officers recommend using the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order process to trial two-way cycling in Sheep Street whilst monitoring and assessing its effects. This will apply on market days also. Changes can be made to the ETRO if considered appropriate. During the first six months of the trial views will be sought from the public and stakeholders based on their lived experience of the scheme. This consultation and the results of the monitoring and assessment will be reported to the Cabinet Member for a formal decision as to whether to permit cycling on a permanent basis in Sheep Street, continue with the ETRO for up to 18 months in its current form or with amendments to the times/days that cycling is permitted or return the street to 'no cycling'.
33. Monitoring of cycling levels in Sheep Street will be conducted during the ETRO period in order to understand the levels of change in cycling.

Bill Cotton  
Corporate Director, Environment and Place

Annexes

- Annex 1: Location of Proposed ETRO
- Annex 2: Pedestrian and Cycle Data
- Annex 3: Initial Consultation Responses
- Annex 4: Equality Impact Assessment
- Annex 5: Climate Impact Assessment

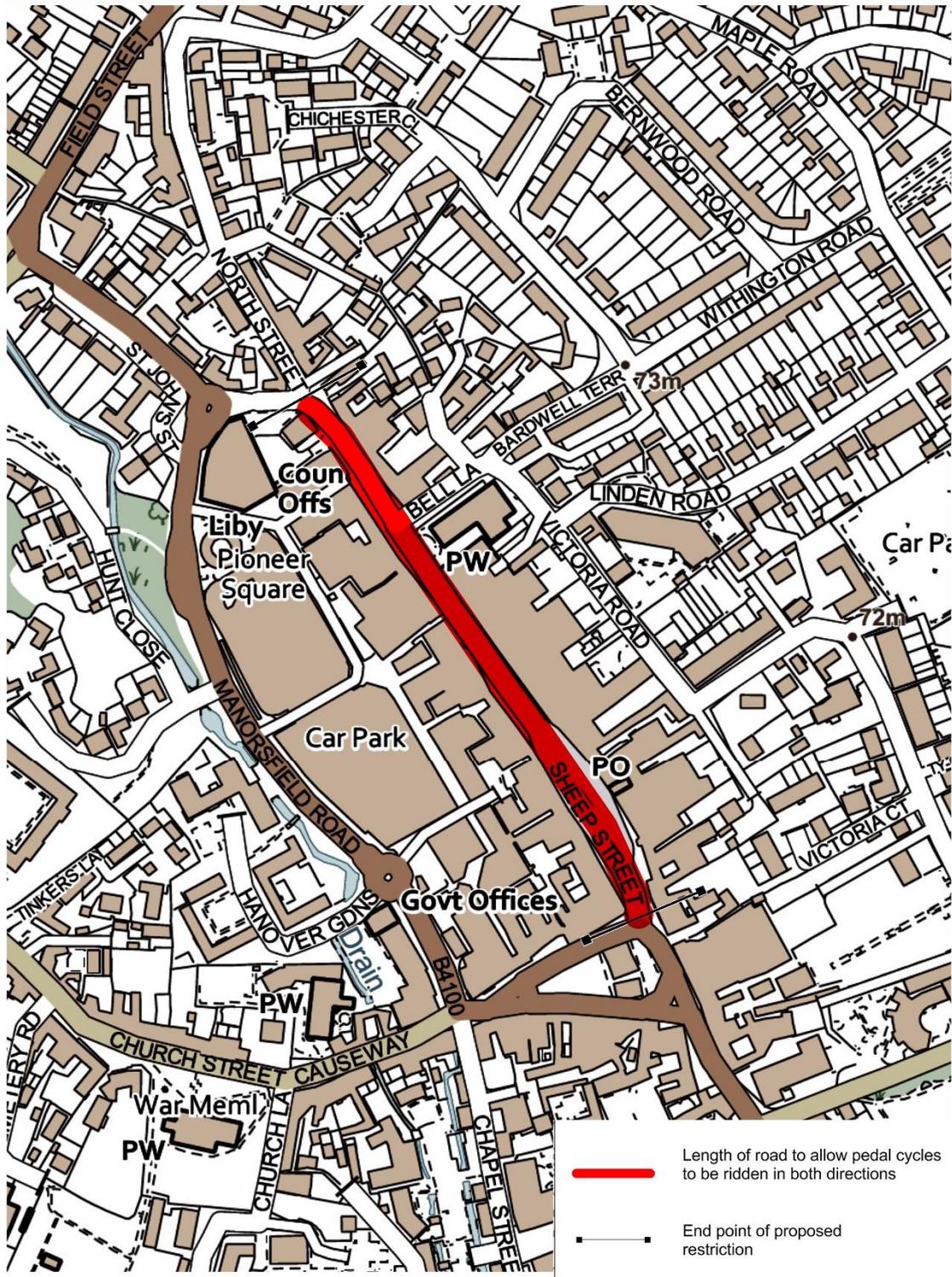
Contact Officers: Jacqui Cox (Place Planning North Manager) – [Jacqui.Cox@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Jacqui.Cox@oxfordshire.gov.uk)  
Hanaii Faour (Assistant Transport Planner) – [Hanaii.Faour@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Hanaii.Faour@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

April 2024

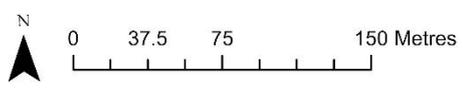
# Annex 1: Location of Propose ETRO to allow cycling, Sheep Street Bicester



Oxfordshire County Council - Highways and transport



- Length of road to allow pedal cycles to be ridden in both directions
- End point of proposed restriction



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## Annex 2: Pedestrian and Cycle Data

# Intelligent Data Collection Limited



**Client:** Oxford County Council  
**Project Number:** ID07100  
**Site Number:** Site 1  
**Site Name:** Sheep Street  
**Date of Survey:** 16.05.2023  
**Survey Type:** Pedestrian & Cycle Count

**Input by:** David Roberts  
**Checked by:** Elyece Malnati

Time	Movement 1			Movement 2		
	Peds	Cyclists	Total	Peds	Cyclists	Total
07:00	12	4	16	9	0	9
07:15	11	1	12	10	2	12
07:30	13	3	16	14	1	15
07:45	33	1	34	10	3	13
08:00	24	4	28	21	2	23
08:15	34	3	37	36	3	39
08:30	46	4	50	34	1	35
08:45	87	4	91	37	2	39
09:00	69	2	71	55	0	55
09:15	88	2	90	62	0	62
09:30	83	3	86	67	1	68
09:45	90	3	93	92	2	94
10:00	87	3	90	88	1	89
10:15	112	1	113	98	2	100
10:30	118	1	119	137	2	139
10:45	110	1	111	123	2	125
11:00	147	2	149	134	2	136
11:15	116	5	121	133	0	133
11:30	103	2	105	121	1	122
11:45	111	0	111	126	0	126
12:00	123	1	124	107	0	107
12:15	90	2	92	122	0	122
12:30	105	1	106	112	1	113
12:45	122	3	125	94	3	97
13:00	102	4	106	136	3	139
13:15	117	0	117	93	1	94
13:30	102	5	107	118	1	119
13:45	86	1	87	85	3	88
14:00	98	0	98	102	3	105
14:15	79	1	80	110	4	114
14:30	87	0	87	104	3	107
14:45	75	0	75	88	1	89
15:00	80	3	83	91	4	95
15:15	106	10	116	82	3	85
15:30	156	5	161	76	2	78
15:45	110	4	114	105	1	106
16:00	78	0	78	81	6	87
16:15	83	0	83	76	3	79
16:30	76	1	77	112	2	114
16:45	62	0	62	88	1	89
17:00	67	1	68	91	1	92
17:15	44	0	44	90	2	92
17:30	61	5	66	60	5	65
17:45	40	3	43	62	3	65
18:00	52	5	57	37	2	39
18:15	35	1	36	36	4	40
18:30	43	0	43	35	1	36
18:45	26	1	27	27	1	28
<b>07:00-10:00 Total</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>464</b>
<b>16:00-19:00 Total</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>684</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>826</b>
<b>07:00-19:00 Total</b>	<b>3799</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>3905</b>	<b>3827</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>3918</b>



**Sheep St, Bicester NMUs - Manual Traffic Survey: Friday, 01 March 202**

Produced by Streetwise Services Ltd.

Junction: **Sheep Street**

TIME	Link					
	Northbound			Southbound		
	Pedestrian	Cyclist	TOTAL	Pedestrian	Cyclist	TOTAL
07:00 - 07:15	8	0	8	13	1	14
07:15 - 07:30	8	2	10	12	0	12
07:30 - 07:45	7	2	9	17	1	18
07:45 - 08:00	13	0	13	17	1	18
<b>Hourly Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>62</b>
08:00 - 08:15	25	0	25	22	5	27
08:15 - 08:30	14	1	15	17	0	17
08:30 - 08:45	33	1	34	42	2	44
08:45 - 09:00	35	1	36	74	4	78
<b>Hourly Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>166</b>
09:00 - 09:15	74	1	75	110	1	111
09:15 - 09:30	95	2	97	102	0	102
09:30 - 09:45	80	1	81	102	1	103
09:45 - 10:00	133	0	133	129	0	129
<b>Hourly Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>445</b>
10:00 - 10:15	130	0	130	137	0	137
10:15 - 10:30	141	1	142	136	1	137
10:30 - 10:45	137	0	137	134	0	134
10:45 - 11:00	143	1	144	140	0	140
<b>Hourly Total</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>548</b>
11:00 - 11:15	145	1	146	123	0	123
11:15 - 11:30	168	0	168	145	0	145
11:30 - 11:45	178	0	178	163	0	163
11:45 - 12:00	164	0	164	147	0	147
<b>Hourly Total</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>578</b>
12:00 - 12:15	167	0	167	125	0	125
12:15 - 12:30	168	0	168	141	1	142
12:30 - 12:45	154	0	154	131	0	131
12:45 - 13:00	149	0	149	128	0	128
<b>Hourly Total</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>526</b>
13:00 - 13:15	167	0	167	146	0	146
13:15 - 13:30	151	2	153	128	0	128
13:30 - 13:45	117	2	119	110	1	111
13:45 - 14:00	168	0	168	135	0	135
<b>Hourly Total</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>607</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>520</b>
14:00 - 14:15	167	0	167	17	2	19
14:15 - 14:30	150	0	150	100	0	100
14:30 - 14:45	113	3	116	107	0	107
14:45 - 15:00	125	0	125	102	0	102
<b>Hourly Total</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>328</b>
15:00 - 15:15	129	0	129	85	0	85
15:15 - 15:30	90	0	90	147	4	151
15:30 - 15:45	105	1	106	143	0	143
15:45 - 16:00	140	3	143	122	0	122
<b>Hourly Total</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>501</b>
16:00 - 16:15	120	1	121	103	0	103
16:15 - 16:30	98	1	99	118	2	120
16:30 - 16:45	108	2	110	66	0	66
16:45 - 17:00	102	2	104	87	2	89
<b>Hourly Total</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>378</b>
17:00 - 17:15	88	4	92	79	1	80
17:15 - 17:30	101	2	103	89	2	91
17:30 - 17:45	58	1	59	49	2	51
17:45 - 18:00	66	3	69	29	3	32
<b>Hourly Total</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>254</b>
18:00 - 18:15	47	5	52	38	3	41
18:15 - 18:30	29	2	31	44	2	46
18:30 - 18:45	36	1	37	30	1	31
18:45 - 19:00	36	4	40	37	1	38
<b>Hourly Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>Session Total</b>	<b>4880</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>4933</b>	<b>4418</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>4462</b>

### Annex 3: Initial Consultation Reponses

Respondent	Objections received to Initial ETRO Consultation
<p>Cllr Waine OCC Division Bicester Town</p>	<p>Firstly I strongly feel, along with the people I meet or have approached me, that this proposal will impact on the lives of so many people that it should be subject to a full consultation with all the residents of Bicester and surrounding villages. The limited consultation that is being pursued is far too narrow and does not listen the voice of the key stakeholders of Sheep Street, the pedestrians, the less mobile, and mobility scooter users.</p> <p>As the Divisional Member for Sheep Street I am totally opposed to the proposal for two-way cycling in what has been a pedestrianised area for over thirty years. I have never been given a clear rationale for its introduction, other that it would be a 'short-cut' for cyclists, but at whose expense? I do not believe this proposal would safeguard the well-being of the principle users particularly on busy days when there are markets and other events. Sheep Street, with District Council encouragement, is fast becoming an area of street cafes and coffee shops with tables and chairs nestled well out into the area, allowing young children accompanying their parent to wander and play with safety.....all this will be put at risk!</p> <p>Access to the street, should the proposal go ahead, has not been properly assessed given the problematic right-angled road bend at the northern end, and the need for cyclists coming from the south to circumnavigate the one-way system in the Market Square to gain access!</p> <p>I fear that the proposal fails totally to consider the needs and safety of the principle users of Sheep Street, the pedestrians, who in our town are easily the over-riding majority group to be considered when developing 'active travel'.</p>
<p>Cllr Ford OCC Division Bicester North</p>	<p>This should not be imposed upon the residents of Bicester. A full public consultation is necessary before making such a major change.</p> <p>I have concerns about the dangerous crossing points and how sheep street will be accessed.</p> <p>I have concerns about the impact on holding events in Sheep Street.</p> <p>Sheep street needs to have traffic enforcement on a regular basis to ensure we are 1st reducing vehicle movements.</p>

	<p>I do not support the change without a public consultation.</p>
<p>Bicester Friday Market</p>	<p>Bicester Friday Market has a licence via Cherwell DC to be in Sheep Street every Friday, we have been in this location for nearly 20 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even though Sheep Street is currently meant to be pedestrianised, we have had to apply for, and have a road closure put in place every week. This means signs and barriers are across Sheep Street at the one way entry end. This had to be put in because the automatic barrier is not manned and vehicles and cyclists were constantly in the street creating hazards and danger for the traders and the public.</li> <li>• The market runs along the entire length of Sheep Street. From Superdrug onwards towards the end near Market Square. The first part we have stalls on either side, allowing access for emergency vehicles. From The works onwards the market runs on one side only.</li> <li>• The part with stalls on both sides is busy with traders and the public. We feel cyclists would create obstructions and potentially a danger as traders and customers are manoeuvring around the stalls. The stalls are also an obstruction for the cyclists, behind the stalls are the entrances to the shops, another potential hazard as customers are exiting the shop premises. The part where we are on one side of the street is extremely congested. There is not enough room for cyclists to safely manoeuvre around the stalls and the public.</li> <li>• The street as it currently stands does not look like it should have traffic or cyclists routinely coming along there. In an ideal world all cyclists and any permitted vehicles would cycle responsibly but the road closure we have put in place indicates otherwise.</li> <li>• At set up and pack away the traders are permitted under our licence to have the vans on the street. Cyclists in the street could easily hit a trader as they are in and out of their vans, and cyclists would also have issues with vans in the street.</li> <li>• Liability. As it stands, we have been on a pedestrianised street for nearly 20 years. Even this did not stop dangerous issues arising in recent times. This is why we requested a road closure. Our traders trade knowing the road is closed. We would want to know who would be liable should a cyclist hurt a trader or a member of the public, or if a cyclist is hurt by a stall/ van on market day.</li> </ul> <p>We would strongly recommend cyclists are not allowed in the street on market day.</p>

<p>Unlimited Oxfordshire</p>	<p>Sheep Street is pedestrianised south of the Bell Lane junction (and has been for many years). There are several items of street furniture in what was the carriageway. Market stalls are a regular feature, and there are occasional small exhibitions and arranged meetings.</p> <p>In Sheep St, pedestrians are not used to sharing the space with cyclists. Also, the street furniture makes it necessary for pedestrians to change direction to go past an item. They might go to the left or to the right; a cyclist overtaking them could be taken by surprise. This would be particularly dangerous for elderly and disabled people, who may not be able to turn round to see an approaching cyclist, or hear a cyclist's bell or horn.</p> <p>Therefore, it is clear to Unlimited Oxfordshire that cycling in Sheep Street (apart from north of Bell Lane junction) ought not to be allowed, even experimentally. We hope that this idea will be dropped.</p>
<p>Local Business, Bicester</p>	<p>With regard to your recent letter regarding the proposed change to Sheep Street to allow cycling in both directions, We believe that this will have a negative affect on the town centre . The street is already in disrepair with broken and rocking paving slabs , broken and missing sections of drains and steps which no longer have yellow edges and are therefore difficult to see . I can not see how adding cycles will not make matters worse. Many of our customers are elderly or are people with young families, these people are already finding it difficult with the above problems and also with youths already racing up and down on bikes and scooters. The street is also not particularly wide due to the walled planted areas and steps etc. I foresee many accidents if cycles are introduced as people are now so used to being able to walk anywhere and let their children walk freely. Sheep street is not particularly long so surely people can get off of their cycles and walk . I understand you wish to make Bicester cycle friendly , but I feel this will have a very detrimental effect on already struggling businesses .</p> <p>I hope that you will look again at this proposal and consider the local traders and the safety of our customers .</p>
<p><b>Respondent</b></p>	<p><b>Support received to Initial ETRO Consultation</b></p>
<p>Bicester Bike User Group (BBUG)</p>	<p>Bicester Bike Users' Group ('BBUG') strongly supports the proposal to permit cycling on Sheep Street, Bicester as an experimental basis for an 18-month trial period and would like the opportunity to attend and speak at the decision meeting. The reasons are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cycling is very important economically (as it encourages greater numbers of residents to access the town centre and support the amenities); for health and well-being; and for the environment. A cyclist passing through Sheep</li> </ol>

Street is much more likely to stop and use the amenities than a cyclist forced to use a longer and more dangerous route, or driving instead.

2. Sheep Street is an important route for cycling, connecting north and south Bicester and Bicester North and Bicester Village train stations. It is the shortest, quickest, and safest route between these destinations. With the present prohibition on cycling in Sheep Street, cyclists have to use either the B4100 (Manorsfield Road) or Victoria Road. These alternatives have poor or non-existent cycle provision, are indirect, and are shared with heavier vehicles such as buses, making them dangerous, unwelcoming, and unpleasant for most cyclists. This currently acts as a strong disincentive to cycling.
3. The prohibition on cycling in Sheep Street requires cyclists visiting the amenities on Sheep Street to either lock their bike at the end of Sheep Street where it is at risk of theft, or to push their bike along the length of Sheep Street to their destination so that it can be locked where it can be safely observed. Both options act as a considerable deterrent to cycling.
4. The prohibition on cycling in Sheep Street is discriminatory, in that there are a number of cycle users who are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 who use their bikes to overcome their disability. The prohibition has the consequence of preventing disabled users using their bikes to access the amenities, or to risk the anger of pedestrians who do not appreciate their disability and believe that these individuals are flouting the law. Some disabled cyclists who use their bikes as a mobility aid have been threatened with assault by vigilante members of the public who are angered by what they see as cyclists breaching the current prohibition. This is a serious risk that needs to be addressed.
5. The vast majority of destinations within Bicester are within an easy cycling distance of each other. However, the lack of a suitable connection along Sheep Street means that many journeys that could be cycled end up being driven, leading to vehicle congestion, damage to the environment, and noise pollution.
6. Sheep Street is eminently suitable for cycling, having one of the widest pedestrian streets in the county. In parts it is 20-25m wide. This provides ample space for both pedestrians and cyclists to circulate without a real risk of conflict. The Dutch CROW Manual on Bicycle Traffic [126] recommends that:

'In the case of a pedestrian density below 100 pedestrians per hour per metre of profile width, full mixture is possible without additional facilities; in the case of a density between 100 and 200 pedestrians per hour per metre of profile width, segregation is desirable. A visual separation will suffice (use of material, markings) up to 160 pedestrians; above 160 pedestrians it will be desirable to introduce a vehicle path for bicycle traffic.'

In Bicester the Sheep Street the width of the road would accommodate over 4,000 pedestrians an hour according to this guidance. Current usage is massively below this, even at the busiest times. In the UK, research by the Transport Research Laboratory for the Department for Transport has focussed research specifically on cycling in pedestrian areas and has concluded that it is generally unproblematic and to be encouraged (see Report PR15 (<https://www.trl.co.uk/publications/pr15>)). Equally the Department for Transport guidance in Traffic Advisory Leaflet 09/93

([http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090505152230/http://www.dft.gov.uk/adobepdf/165240/244921/244924/TAL\\_9-93](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090505152230/http://www.dft.gov.uk/adobepdf/165240/244921/244924/TAL_9-93) ) is strongly recommends permitting cycling in pedestrian areas, concluding that there were no factors to justify excluding cyclists from pedestrian areas, and also finding:

- In 66 hours of total footage, not a single accident between a cyclist and a pedestrian was observed.
  - Not one accident involving an adult pedestrian and a cyclist was recorded at any of 21 sites in the previous fifteen years. There had been only one accident involving a child pedestrian and a cyclist in that fifteen year period.
  - Cyclists adapt their speed to pedestrian density, and dismount if necessary.
  - While pedestrians tend to adapt their behaviour in the presence of motor vehicles, they do not do so in the presence of cyclists.
7. The perceived risks to pedestrians from cyclists are generally greatly exaggerated. Only a small fraction of pedestrian incidents on the road are caused by cyclists. In around 25 years, despite cyclists actually using Sheep Street despite the prohibition, there has only been one minor reported accident on Sheep Street. This involved two teenagers and did not result in any significant injuries. Reports of 'near misses' are therefore greatly exaggerated.
8. The current situation is completely inconsistent and incoherent. Far more dangerous and heavy vehicles such as trucks, vans, and private vehicles are permitted to drive along Sheep Street even during market hours, whereas there are no exemptions whatsoever for cycles. See for example:



9. The question should be asked what the alternative is. The alternative is not a fully enforced prohibition, but an unenforced prohibition as the police and council do not have the resources to enforce a prohibition. The current prohibition works exceedingly poorly given the inability of Thames Valley Police to effectively police it. Given their budget constraints and the very low risk posed by cyclists, the police occasionally enforce it, but exceedingly rarely. The consequence is that the less responsible cyclists, such as teenagers flout the prohibition, causing aggravation and resentment towards cyclists. The more responsible cyclists either leave their bikes or dutifully push them along the street. Thus, the current TRO discourages responsible cycling and encourages irresponsible cycling. This is precisely the opposite effect of what is desired.

On balance, all the considerations point towards permitting cycling.

Local Business,  
Pioneer Square,  
Bicester.

No real comments other than I support the introduction of pedal cycle access along Sheep Street.

Member of the public.

I fully support this.

Respondent	Those with a mixed view response to Initial ETRO Consultation
Cherwell District Council, Principal Planning Officer	<p>Sheep Street is currently a pedestrianised area that is part of the primary shopping area in Bicester Town Centre. The street is wide but is flanked by retail premises, coffee shops etc. on both sides and on market days, the central area accommodates market stalls. In addition, the area is also used by the Town Council when hosting community events.</p> <p>This area of Bicester attracts a large number of pedestrians, including children that will often be slow moving, dwell outside of shops or browse market stalls. The town centre plays a key role in the local economy and relies on the footfall of consumers to support businesses. Whilst the Local Planning Authority is always generally supportive of any measures that increase active travel, this will need to be carefully balanced against the actual and perceived safety of pedestrian users, so that it doesn't discourage users from accessing the area. This would be particularly relevant on market days when there are a greater number of users occupying a smaller space.</p>
Thames Valley Police	<p>This is a tricky one as I am sure you are only trying to formalise what is the norm. Allowing could set a precedent for other similar locations . Dare I suggest Queen Street in Oxford. This location has been the source of miss use by Cyclist for many decades despite the restriction and also a burden on use.</p> <p>Considering these are Pedestrian areas how would they feel about sharing the space with Cyclist. I have to acknowledge there are many shared footways already, so could this proposal be deemed similar. I am not aware that Cyclist are detrimental to Pedestrians within these shared areas .</p> <p>Although I am familiar with the location in Bicester, I have engaged some on the ground local knowledge from the Neighbourhood Policing Team .</p> <p>This is probably one of those proposals that will split public opinion.</p> <p>I'm aware that there is a cycle group locally that has been lobbying for this to be adopted for a number of years, and in their defence, I've heard that the route is still shown on OS maps or similar as a designated cycle route.</p> <p>Sheep street itself is a very wide area which personally I feel it can more than accommodate pedal cycles and pedestrians sharing use of the area. The only sticking point that I can see is the Friday market where Sheep street gets taken over by the market traders all the way from the Penny black up to the White Hart.</p>

	<p>When the markets in play it would be tight for space for cyclists to use it safely, however you would like to think that cyclists would use some common sense and walk through on market days.</p>
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