

Divisions Affected – Jericho & Osney; Parks; Wolvercote & Cutteslowe

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

22 JANUARY 2026

OXFORD: A4144 Woodstock Road Bus Lane Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) and St Giles' No Waiting ETRO

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) **Approve the making permanent of the following measures as part of the current Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO);**
 - i. **bus lane for northbound buses, from a point 61 metres north of Blenheim Drive for 707 metres towards the Wolvercote Roundabout,**
 - ii. **remove section of the previous southbound bus lane from the Wolvercote Roundabout down to the junction with Field House Drive,**
 - iii. **`No Waiting at Any Time` (double yellow lines) to replace the previous `No Waiting 8am-6.30pm` (single yellow lines) on the northwest arm of St Giles at a point opposite 12 metres southeast of the junction with Little Clarendon Street.**

Executive Summary

1. This report sets out and justifies the proposal to approve permanent traffic regulation orders (TROs), subsequent to the Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETROs) that reversed a length of bus lane at the northern end of Woodstock Road (A4144), alongside the time extension of an existing short length of waiting restrictions on St Giles.
2. The report summarises the results from a statutory consultation on the ETRO that introduced the new bus lane on the A4144 Woodstock Road for northbound buses towards Wolvercote Roundabout, with cycles, legal e-scooters, taxis and licenced private hire vehicles also permitted to use the bus lane. The ETRO also removed a corresponding section of southbound bus lane from the Wolvercote Roundabout to the junction with Field House Drive. At the northwest arm of St Giles, an ETRO also introduced a `No Waiting at Any Time` restriction in place of a previous `No Waiting 8am-6.30pm` located at a point southeast of the

junction with Little Clarendon Street, to enable entry to a new bus stop - as shown in **Annex 1**.

Background

3. An ETRO for a reversal of a length of bus lane (approx. 700m) from a southbound bus lane to a northbound bus lane at the northern end of Woodstock Road was made on 28th September 2024 following a local engagement exercise, which was carried out in May/June 2024. The Cabinet Member for Transport Management approved the Officer recommendations to proceed with the making of the ETRO at a public decisions meeting held on 18th July 2024 (item no.78/24). An officer report paper supporting this decision is available in **Annex 6**.
4. The bus lane ETRO was considered necessary in order to improve bus journey time reliability and make Woodstock Road (A4144) safer for pedestrian, cycling and mobility-aided access. Existing highway space is constricted. It is not possible to provide physical bus priority in both directions. It is therefore necessary to prioritise the limited space in the most appropriate way to meet transport policy and objectives. Local bus operators have been supportive of the measure and prioritising northbound bus priority at the northern end of Woodstock Road. Following transport modelling work undertaken, the measure also benefits the current temporary congestion charge measures and planned traffic filters trial.
5. The scheme layout is shown in **Annex 1**. This layout has been in place under an ETRO since 28th September 2024. No changes to the layout are proposed as part of the making of the TRO.
6. The Woodstock Road Corridor Improvements project had an approved budget of £4million funded from the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal which included funding for the ETRO
7. A total of £3.995m has been spent (including commitments) on the implementation of the Woodstock Road Corridor Improvement project to date.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

8. The experimental bus lane on Woodstock Road is consistent with several of the council's nine corporate priorities, including:
 - Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work
 - Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents
 - Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network
9. In July 2022, Oxfordshire County Council adopted its Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) which sets a clear vision to deliver a net-zero transport system that enables Oxfordshire to thrive, protects the environment

and makes the county a better place to live for all residents. This includes ambitious targets to:

- replace or remove 1 in 4 car trips in Oxfordshire by 2030
- deliver a net-zero transport network by 2040
- have zero, or as close as possible, road fatalities or life-changing injuries by 2050.

10. To help deliver the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan vision, the adopted Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP) proposes a set of 22 actions to support a more sustainable and reliable transport system across the central Oxfordshire area, including the need to:
- reduce exposure to air pollution and rapidly reduce carbon emissions from all transport related activities
 - reduce congestion and its negative impacts on bus services and economic productivity and vitality
 - encourage more sustainable development, making greater use of limited road space and prioritising public transport, walking and cycling
 - improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities

Financial Implications

11. The costs of making permanent the ETRO's are included within and funded through the overall project budget. Limited further costs are expected to complete and close down the project and funded within the overall project budget. The project is planned to spend to budget.
12. If it is decided not to approve the making of the permanent order, additional funding to revert the trial layout would need to be found. Based upon costs to implement the bus lane trial and accompanying measures, these costs are expected to be around £350k and at present are unfunded. Funding would therefore have to be requested through the council's budget planning process.

Comments checked by

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Legal Implications

13. The project has been led by Oxfordshire County Council as Highway Authority. The county council will continue to receive legal advice from the legal team in the development and implementation of the TRO(s).
14. The TRO is being progressed under and in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and related legislation and guidance and the recommendation takes account of the statutory consultation carried as part of the ETRO process and the Council's network management duties under the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

Comments checked by Jennifer Crouch, Principal Solicitor (Regulatory Team) jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

15. There are no additional staff resource implications as a result of this decision. Ongoing monitoring will be undertaken as part of the congestion charge monitoring and the subsequent trial traffic filters. The measures are part of an existing county capital funded project.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

16. An Equalities Impact Assessment is at **Annex 4**. No negative implications in respect of equalities or inclusion have been identified in respect of the proposals.

Sustainability Implications

17. A Climate Impact Assessment is at **Annex 5**. The proposals are being put forward to help facilitate sustainable travel within Oxford City and specifically improve bus journey time reliability and make the A4144 Woodstock Road safer for pedestrian, cycling and mobility-aided access.

Risk Management

18. A risk register has been maintained throughout the life of the project. There are no outstanding risks as the project has already been constructed. Safety Audits have been completed before and after construction. The scheme will continue to be monitored and reviewed through normal operational network management activities, including Thames Valley Police collision reporting.

Monitoring Data

19. The changes were closely monitored during the ETRO period, with findings summarised below. More detail is provided in **Annex 2**.

Bus Journey Times

20. A comparison of bus journey time data from on-bus trackers (CitySwift) has been analysed. This includes data from;
 - *Scenario A* - Prior to the switch of the bus lane, but following closure of Botley Road - November 2023
 - *Scenario B* - After the bus lane switch - November 2024

- Scenario C - After the introduction of the temporary Congestion Charge - November 2025

21. In scenario's 'b' and 'c' between the stops of Squitchey Lane West and First Turn, there has been a reduction in journey times for northbound buses across all observed hours compared to arrangements prior to the bus lane switch (scenario a). By contrast there has been a decline in bus journey times for southbound buses since the implementation of the bus lane switch. Overall officers and bus operators consider the bus lane is beneficial for bus passengers. Northbound bus journey times have improved since implementation of the temporary congestion charge. The temporary congestion charge has only recently been implemented and further ongoing monitoring will be necessary to fully understand the impact of the measure and before drawing any firm conclusions.

Figure 1 - Bus Journey Times (Weekday source; Cityswift)

| From | To | Change (seconds) in stop to stop runtime | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | 07:00-09:00 | | | 15:00-18:00 | | |
| | | November '23 | November '24 | November '25 | November '23 | November '24 | November '25 |
| Southbound | | | | | | | |
| Wolvercote Rbt | First Turn | 42 | 63 | 76 | 36 | 47 | 42 |
| First Turn | Woodstock Close | 40 | 43 | 47 | 35 | 38 | 40 |
| Woodstock Close | Squitchey Lane West | 48 | 53 | 57 | 41 | 44 | 45 |
| Wolvercote Rbt | Radcliffe Observatory Quarter | 482 | 516 | 538 | 439 | 469 | 480 |
| Northbound | | | | | | | |
| Squitchey Lane West | Woodstock Close | 27 | 24 | 25 | 36 | 31 | 34 |
| Woodstock Close | First Turn | 36 | 32 | 32 | 50 | 41 | 41 |
| Radcliffe Observatory Quarter | Wolvercote Rbt | 376 | 384 | 373 | 469 | 485 | 474 |

General Traffic Journey Times

22. Analysis of Inrix data (which comes from in-car navigation systems and mobile phones) was used for the same time periods set out in paragraph 8. This shows that following the introduction of the ETRO (Nov '24), average travel times in the morning peak (08:00 – 09:00) for both northbound and southbound traffic on Woodstock Road either remained consistent with pre ETRO travel times or improved. Following the introduction of the temporary congestion charge, southbound travel times remain quicker than the pre ETRO scenario, however northbound AM travel times are now slower than they were pre ETRO.

23. In the PM peak (16:00 – 17:00) travel times for both northbound and southbound traffic increased following introduction of the ETRO. Travel times for general traffic have further increased in the PM peak following introduction of the temporary congestion charge. This is consistent with expectations from traffic modelling undertaken to inform the trial traffic filters and the temporary congestion charge, and the reason why the bus lane reversal was promoted in the first place. It should be noted that traffic signal timings at Wolvercote Roundabout were altered in summer 2025. As part of these signal changes, there was reduced signal priority for northbound traffic on Woodstock Road in favour of prioritising other arms of the roundabout. In principle this is likely to have increased journey times for northbound traffic on Woodstock Road.

Figure 2 – Vehicle Journey Times (Weekday source; Inrix)

| From | To | Average travel time (seconds) (Mon - Fri) | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|---|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | 08:00 – 09:00 | | | 16:00 – 17:00 | | |
| | | November '23 | November '24 | November '25 | November '23 | November '24 | November '25 |
| Southbound | | | | | | | |
| Wolvercote Rbt | Field House Drive | 197 | 176 | 184 | 92 | 103 | 104 |
| Field House Drive | Moreton Rd | 273 | 249 | 257 | 140 | 158 | 161 |
| Wolvetcote Rbt | St Giles | 735 | 717 | 722 | 487 | 536 | 530 |
| Northbound | | | | | | | |
| Wyndham Way | Wolvercote Rbt | 86 | 86 | 90 | 115 | 120 | 140 |
| Moreton Rd | Wyndham Way | 198 | 198 | 207 | 264 | 277 | 321 |
| St Giles | Wolvetcote Rbt | 515 | 535 | 534 | 710 | 775 | 809 |

Collisions

24. Collision reports from Thames Valley Police have been analysed over the period 28/09/24 (when the bus lane ETRO was implemented) to 30/09/25. There have been no reported collisions over the period since the Bus Lane ETRO has been implemented. It should be noted that the monitoring period is considered too short to draw conclusions about any overall effect of the scheme on collision rates and 2025 data is still provisional. By comparison in the five-year period Sept. '19 to Aug. '24, there were four slight, and two serious injury collisions over the length of the bus lane reversal.

Air Quality

25. Provisional air quality data from Oxford City Council's diffusion tube monitoring stations at 306 Woodstock Road and 51 Sunderland Avenue has been analysed. This shows a mixed picture with air quality at the Woodstock Road

site slightly deteriorating (by average 1 µg/m³) and air quality at the Sunderland Avenue site improving slightly (by average 1 µg/m³) Provisional air quality data which was provided by Oxford City Council can be impacted by several factors including weather, other traffic changes, vehicle fleet renewal etc. We cannot therefore directly attribute any changes to local air quality to the scheme. Both monitoring locations are significantly below the annual mean legal limit for NO2 of 40 ug/m3 at 14 ug/m3 (306 Woodstock Road – bias adjusted) and 18 ug/m3 (51 Sunderland Avenue – Bias adjusted) accordingly.

Traffic, Pedestrian and Cycle Flows

26. Vehicle flow data on the Woodstock Road has been obtained for; pre ETRO (March '24), post ETRO (March '25) and also post Temporary Congestion Charge (Nov '25) from a sensor located south of Blandford Avenue.
27. This shows that since the implementation of the bus lane, total motorised traffic flows southbound (24 hr Monday to Friday) have remained broadly consistent throughout all observed periods. There has however been an increase in northbound vehicle numbers over the corresponding period.
28. The number of cyclists has increased since implementation of the ETRO. There was a 18% increase in the number of cyclists pre ETRO (July '25) and post ETRO Nov '25. It should be noted that we cannot directly attribute these changes to the scheme.

Formal Consultation

29. A formal consultation on both ETRO's was open from 19th September 2024 to 28th March 2025. A notice was published in the Oxford Times newspaper, and an email was 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, Oxford City Council, relevant local City Cllrs, and the local County Councillors representing the then Wolvercote, St Margarets, University Parks, and Osney divisions (*Division boundaries/Cllrs since changed*).
30. During the course of the six-month formal consultation period, 246 responses were received via the online survey. These are summarised in the table below:

| Proposal | Object | Partially support / concerns | Support | No opinion /objection | Total |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Northbound Bus Lane introduction | 173 (70%) | 22 (9%) | 34 (14%) | 17 (7%) | 246 |
| Southbound Bus Lane removal | 190 (77%) | 14 (6%) | 23 (9%) | 19 (8%) | 246 |
| Double Yellow Line introduction | 84 (34%) | 17 (7%) | 37 (15%) | 108 (44%) | 246 |

31. Additionally, a further seven emails were received directly – with detailed responses from ‘Cyclox’ (group representing cyclists in Oxford) shown separately in **Annex 3**, and from a group of Woodstock Road residents also shown in **Annex 3**.
32. All responses are shown in **Annex 3**, and copies of the original responses are available for inspection by County Councillors. Any comments received that officers identify as containing personal abuse and/or other personal information have been redacted as appropriate.

Officer Response

Bus Lane ETRO

33. Common themes from respondents supporting the scheme included mentions of the following benefits:
- Safer cycling
 - Improved bus speed and reliability
 - Encourages bus and cycle use as opposed to private car use
 - Helps to reduce traffic and delays
34. A summary of the key concerns of respondents opposing the scheme or expressing concerns are listed below, along with officer responses:

a. Increased traffic congestion, including delays to buses

Many respondents raised concerns over increased congestion, longer queues, and delays—especially around Wolvercote and First Turn.

Monitoring data shows that along the whole length of the Woodstock Road (Wolvercote Rbt to St Giles) whilst there has been an increase in traffic journey times for northbound traffic across both morning and evening peak periods, travel times for southbound traffic during the morning peak hour period has improved. Southbound traffic times in the evening peak period have increased (see figure 2). It should be noted that alterations to signal timings at Wolvercote Roundabout in summer 2025, have potentially increased travel times for northbound traffic on Woodstock Road. Both local bus operators have indicated support for the scheme. Northbound travel times for buses have improved since implementation of the ETRO. Improving the attractiveness of public transport options through improved journey times and reliability compared to vehicle options is a key principle of the county council’s transport plan. As local highways authority, the county council is responsible for managing the highway network efficiently and in-keeping with adopted highway policy. Restricted highway width means it is not possible to provide bus lanes (priority) in both directions. It is therefore necessary to prioritise the limited space in the most appropriate way to meet transport policy and objectives.

b. Concerns about the suspension of the Southbound Wolvercote roundabout bus stop

It is recognised that the bus stop closure will have been inconvenient for some residents, however alternative bus stops are located within close proximity

(200m further south at First Turn). Retaining the bus stop would have risked creating delays on Wolvercote Roundabout which would risk increasing traffic delay including for bus services. If the Bus Lane ETRO is approved, the arrangements would be made to permanently remove the existing bus shelter and pole.

c. Unsafe layout

There were a number of comments that the new layout was unsafe. These included concerns that;

- Access to and from properties has become more hazardous
- Concerns about visibility and clear road markings for vehicles exiting onto Woodstock Road from First Turn.

During the trial no collisions have been reported that are directly related to the scheme. The scheme has been safety audited and a number of concerns initially raised about the placement of GIVE WAY markings at First turn have been addressed through subsequent road marking.

A letter received on behalf of a number of residents on the eastern side of Woodstock Road cited concerns that the scheme had made access to and from properties significantly more hazardous. The county council has assessed the scheme on site and via audits and does not consider this to be the case. Of course, this was the case for properties and driveways on the western side of Woodstock Road under the previous arrangement, for a number of decades without cause for concern. Whilst it is true that the general traffic lane on the eastern side of the Woodstock Road is now closer to properties, by contrast the general traffic lane is now situated further away from properties on the western side of Woodstock Road. Arrangements and any risk is, therefore, not considered fundamentally different to the pre-ETRO scenario. It is noted that the resident letter is signed overwhelmingly by properties on the eastern side (even numbers) of Woodstock Road.

d. The layout is worse for cyclists

It is recognised that the previous southbound bus lane also provided a useful facility for people cycling southbound on Woodstock Road. The length of bus lane which has been reversed was specifically only for a length where off road cycle provision on the east side of Woodstock Road could be provided. A new shared use footway on the east side of Woodstock Road, approved at a separate Cabinet Member Decision meeting in January 2024, provides off-road cycling provision on the east side of Woodstock Road between Wolvercote roundabout and Field House Drive - the start of the shortened southbound bus lane. Road lining measures on the carriageway have improved awareness and priority for cycles.

The wider Woodstock Road Corridor Improvements scheme which the ETRO's were part of, involved measures that were identified, prioritised and developed alongside a number of groups, including local cycle groups. Opportunities for wider cycle improvements along the Woodstock Road are not part of the scope of this decision which is specifically about the bus lane and separate waiting restriction ETRO's. Longer term opportunities for improved cycle provision on

Woodstock Road are likely to be heavily informed by future decisions around the trial Traffic Filters scheme.

e. That the measures are excessive, won't make a difference and general dissatisfaction

The measures were undertaken as part of a trial to determine the extent to which they would be beneficial, with the backdrop of the approved trial traffic filters. The results are summarised in the 'Monitoring Data' section and reported in **annex 2**. The measures are consistent with the county councils transport strategy and corporate priorities - see report section Corporate Policies and Priorities'.

f. Concerns about noise and highway surface condition

Whilst there is some indication of increased vehicle numbers at certain times of day, the county council is actively implementing measures, that this scheme supports, to reduce vehicle movements. The county council Highways Maintenance team have visited the southbound carriageway of Woodstock Road and are assessing potential future carriageway maintenance schemes for this route. These will need to be considered alongside priorities across the rest of the county's highway network.

g. Requests that the northbound bus lane should be made longer

Traffic conditions during the temporary congestion charge and trial traffic filters will be closely monitored. If further alterations are considered beneficial to support these measures, further statutory consultation would be necessary.

h. That the scheme has generated more pollution

Annex 2 reports on diffusion tube monitors in proximity to the scheme. These present a mixed picture i.e;

- At 306 Woodstock Road, the NO₂ annual average increased by only 1 µg/m³.
- At 51 Sunderland Avenue, the NO₂ annual average decreased by 1 µg/m³.

When reviewing these results, it is important to consider several factors that likely influenced concentrations during the study period or the analysis including; bus electrification, weather variability, other local traffic changes (Woodstock Road Roundabout signal timings), noting also that the 2025 data has not yet been fully ratified so, at this point, is only provisional. Nitrogen dioxide readings at both monitoring locations are significantly below legal limits.

No Waiting Anytime ETRO

35. Specific comments on the ETRO making the No Waiting at Any Time parking restrictions on a short section of St Giles 24/7 were more limited. The amendments are related to a short section where formalisation of markings for an existing bus stop have been placed. The stop is currently only serviced by

the City Sightseeing bus. However, it provides flexibility and resilience for other bus services in the area. Those supporting the measure cited reasons like:

- a) Restricting waiting provision in this area is important to cyclist safety.
- b) That better priority for buses was beneficial
- c) That extending waiting restrictions will help improve traffic flow

36. Those objecting to the measure cited concerns that:

- a) Removing waiting restrictions are likely to damage businesses in the area
- b) That more convenient parking locations are needed on St Giles

Responses from key stakeholders

Bus Lane ETRO

- 37. A number of stakeholders responded to the consultation either raising concerns, expressing their support and offering suggestions for the experimental bus lane.
- 38. *Oxford Bus Company* voiced their support for the experimental bus lane changes on Woodstock Road to be made permanent.
- 39. *Cyclox* objected to the ETRO due to concerns about the provision for cyclists, specifically concerns about; crossings at the northern end of Woodstock Road, (Blandford Avenue / First Turn), the alterations to pavement on the east side of Woodstock Road to become a shared use path, signage and legibility of cycle routes on the Woodstock Road, surface conditions for cyclists.
- 40. City of Oxford Licensed Taxicab Association (COLTA) supported the experimental bus lane changes on Woodstock Road

No Waiting Anytime ETRO

- 41. COLTA indicated that they had no objection to the ETRO measures to convert the time restricted 'No waiting' parking restrictions on a short section of St Giles to 'No Waiting Any Time'

Paul Fermer

Director of Environment and Highways

Annex's:

- 1 - Scheme Layout
- 2 – Monitoring Data
- 3 – Consultation Responses
- 4 – Equality Impact Assessment
- 5 – Climate Impact Assessment
- 6 – Woodstock Road Officer Report (CMD – 18/07/24)

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