

Witney Traffic Advisory Committee Meeting



Tuesday, 16th January, 2024 at 2.30 pm

To members of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee - A Coles, M Brooker, D Enright, T Fenton, J Aitman, T Ashby, S Simpson, R Smith, C Hulme, T Bayliss, K Hickman, A Lyon and D Miles (and all other Town Councillors for information).

You are hereby summonsed to the above meeting to be held in the **Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney** for the transaction of the business stated in the agenda below.

Admission to Meetings

All Council meetings are open to the public and press unless otherwise stated.

Any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting and speak on a particular agenda item should contact the Committee Clerk (derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk) in advance.

Recording of Meetings

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 the council's public meetings may be recorded, which includes filming, audio-recording as well as photography.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Deputy Town Clerk or Committee Clerk know before the start of the meeting.

Agenda

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To receive and consider apologies for absence.

2. **Public Participation**

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting. Any member of the public who so wishes may speak, at this point in the meeting, for a **maximum of five minutes** on any matter relating to an item on the agenda.

3. **MINUTES**

a) **To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2023 (copy enclosed)** (Pages 3 - 9)

b) **Matters arising from the Minutes not covered in subsequent items**

4. **Oxfordshire County Council Reports** (Pages 10 - 14)

To receive and consider the report of the Oxfordshire County Council Planning Team which includes a Traffic & Road Safety Report and an update from the District Council regarding the UKSPF funded signage and wayfinding project.

5. **Lane Rental Scheme Proposal Consultation** (Pages 15 - 19)

To receive details of the above Oxfordshire County Council open consultation and consider a Committee response, if appropriate.

Further technical documents and details can be found by clicking the web link here <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/lane-rental-scheme-consultation>

6. **Community Speedwatch**

To receive a verbal update on the Community Speedwatch scheme from the Chair and officers.

7. **Public Transport Update**

To receive an update from members present on any public transport matters, if appropriate.

8. **Items Submitted to the Town Clerk**

To receive any traffic or highway related correspondence submitted to the Town Clerk since the last meeting.

a) **H2 Bus Service Extension Request** (Page 20)

To hear a resident request to extend the H2 Bus Service to additional Oxford Hospitals.

b) **Downs Road, Witney - Speeding Issue**

To receive a request from Cllr T Ashby for an appraisal on options to combat speeding in Downs Road, Witney.

c) **5 Ways Roundabout Improvements**

To receive a request from Cllrs A Coles & R Smith for an expediated approach to improvements at this junction, as outlined in the County Council's Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan.

9. **Items Raised at the Meeting**

To receive and consider any pressing matters from members which may be added to the next meeting agenda for consideration.

10. **Date of the Next meeting(s)**

To receive the date of the next meeting of Witney Traffic Advisory Committee for information.



Town Clerk

**WITNEY TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Tuesday, 26 September 2023

At 2.30 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor A Coles (Chair)

Councillors:	M Brooker D Enright J Aitman S Simpson R Smith C Hulme	T Bayliss A Lyon D Miles J Doughty (In place of T Ashby) Steere
Officers:	Sharon Groth Claire Green	Town Clerk Administration Support - Planning & Stronger Communities
Others:	Two members of the public.	

T43 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Nominations were sought for the position of Chair for the municipal year.

It was proposed and duly seconded that Cllr Andrew Coles be elected Chair. There being no other nominations it was:

Resolved:

That, Cllr Andrew Coles be elected Chair of the Committee for the municipal year.

T44 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ted Fenton and Kevin Hickman from the Windrush Bike Project.

An apology for absence was also received from Councillor T Ashby, Councillor J Doughty attended as a substitute.

The Chair notified the Committee of the recent passing of fellow Member, David Gambier. Members were reminded of David's contributions to Witney, and in particular his meaningful representation at the Chamber of Commerce. The Chair advised that a fundraiser was being held in David's memory. Members stood for a minute silence to remember David.

The Chair introduced a representative from the Witney Chamber of Commerce, Rob Steere. The Chamber of Commerce will be electing a new representative to join the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee for the regular meetings.

T45 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee received representations from two residents. A resident from Wood Green came to propose a zebra crossing for West End. A resident from Burwell Meadow came to make comments about the Burwell Meadow ANPR data.

T46 **WEST END CROSSING**

This item was due to be discussed as part of agenda item 10b. However, with the permission of the Chair, this item was moved up the agenda so the member of the public could hear the discussion and outcome.

A resident from Wood Green addressed the Committee about the dangers for pedestrians when trying to cross from the Wood Green area, heading towards Witney. Crossing West End or Oxford Hill as a pedestrian was very difficult and all the roads around the double roundabout are busy. Drivers are concentrating on the tricky double roundabout and there just wasn't a safe place for pedestrians to cross. The resident suggested that a zebra crossing on West End could work well.

A discussion followed; A number of Members supported the idea of a zebra crossing and acknowledged that the suggestion had been raised previously at this Committee. A representative from the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Infrastructure Locality Team was present at the meeting and advised that her team were aware of the issues for pedestrians but that presently funding hadn't been made available. Further, Members were reminded that there is a longer-term plan for more radical changes in the Bridge Street area.

OCC Officers advised that there is an LCWIP proposal for a crossing on Wood Green, near the church. This is currently not funded and there are not currently any applicable government grant schemes. Opportunities for funding from Active Travel England were being explored.

Funding for a zebra crossing on West End could potentially be sought from S106 funding, or the OCC road safety budget.

Resolved:

That, OCC Officers would check the road safety budget for funding a zebra crossing on West End.

T47 **BURWELL MEADOW ANPR SURVEY ANALYSIS**

Following the update from the County Council a discussion was held, a number of opinions were expressed regarding the impact of the scheme in the area. It was advised the Community Speedwatch Scheme would hopefully be operating in the area soon.

Resolved:

1. That, Members are aware of this issue, the data and subsequent report be noted, and,
2. That, Community Speedwatch would be operating in Burwell Meadow.

T48 **TO ADOPT AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2023**

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee held on 13 June 2023 be approved and signed by the Chair.

T49 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED IN SUBSEQUENT ITEMS**

A Witney Town Council Officer raised an outstanding item. The minutes of Witney Traffic Advisory Committee meeting 13th June 2023 refer to this issue of a parking permit scheme for Corn Street and a previous consultation with residents. (T41) OCC Officers had contacted the District Council for further details of an earlier study on this issue, a response is outstanding but will be followed up.

Resolved:

That, the information will be shared with this Committee at the next meeting.

T50 **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee received the report of the Witney Town Council Deputy Town Clerk and accompanying amended terms.

Changes included updates on public participation, future hybrid meeting technology and the remit to set up and run a Community Speedwatch scheme.

Resolved:

That, the amended terms of reference be approved.

T51 **WITNEY HIGH STREET & MARKET SQUARE ENHANCEMENTS**

Members were updated that public engagement on future improvements was well underway. This had included public exhibition events as well as an online survey. A workshop style event was also being held with members of the business community.

Once the consultation ended, the information would be collated and handed to designers. The design process would be carried on through to Spring 2024, when it was hoped that a design and plans would be available for people to see. Further consultation would then be carried out in the community and with stakeholders. Construction was expected to start in Autumn 2024.

Resolved:

That, the updated be noted.

T52 **INFRASTRUCTURE LOCALITY TEAM**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Oxfordshire County Council Area Infrastructure Locality Team concerning updates on several projects underway in Witney. Specific updates included:

7.1 Shores Green, Access to Witney, this project was progressing, key dates and further information were in the Officer report.

7.2 Burford Road Signal Crossing, some work had taken place and the electricity supply had now been installed, OCC would continue to follow up with developers.

7.3 Work to improve and replace bus shelters was scheduled for October. Locations as per the Officer report.

7.4 Work on the short-term measures for Witney High Street had been ordered, delivery of the measures was expected before Christmas.

Cllr R. Smith joined the meeting at 3:15pm

7.5 – This item was heard separately through Agenda Item 6.

7.6 Windrush Place S106 West Witney – Active Travel Schemes. Design work was expected in March 2024, there were no further updates on delivery timescales.

7.7 Bridge Street Area Options Appraisal Report – The report had been finalised but was not yet published. Engagement and publication was planned for after the Witney High Street engagement was finished in October.

7.8 This item was discussed through Agenda Item 3 (T47).

7.9 Traffic Lights on Woodford Way – Oxfordshire County Council Officers conducted a site visit in June. An overview of this was provided in the Agenda Pack. OCC advised that the lights should be retained in the interest of pedestrian safety. Observations had been noted by OCC Officers, to be considered ahead of the next replacement or refurbishment of this infrastructure. In the meantime, it was suggested that a junction count and review of the existing signal timings was conducted.

7.10 A study had been carried out to consider the issues caused by car parking on Harvest Way/Barleyfield Way. OCC Officers had suggested three possible solutions.

The Committee were advised the current setup was a design feature of Madley Park, and that 'Passive Traffic Calming' was designed to reduce vehicle speeds through the estate. There was a danger of increasing vehicle speeds if new measures created faster 'through routes', and one of the solutions came at a cost of losing on-road car parking spaces.

Solution 2 - 'Introduce Keep Clear markings at the dropped kerb crossing points.' was deemed the preferred option. The cost of this is the line marking, the budget for this year was already spent and therefore this would be taken forward for consideration in the next budget year. In the meantime, the Ward Councillor for the area would report back to the residents group that had originally raised this issue and seek feedback on the recommended solution.

7.11 OCC Officers advised that the terms of the 20mph transformation programme did not include traffic calming. A Speed Survey could be carried out, costs being passed to Witney Town Council. Traffic calming was not in the remit of the Town Council, however, given that the Town Council were supporting the Community Speedwatch Scheme, this area would be added to the list of sites where vehicle speeds would be monitored.

7.12 This item was discussed through Agenda Item 3 (T46).

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Cllr. Smith would engage with Madley Park residents' association to seek feedback on enhanced road markings at crossing points on Harvest Way/Barleyfield Way and,
3. That, Officers would find a suitable location for a Community Speedwatch site on Cogges Hill Road.

T53 **TRAFFIC & ROAD SAFETY**

The Committee received and considered the Traffic & Road Safety Report from the County Council Area Operations Officer. The Committee were advised that budgets for this year had been allocated. Work had begun on plans for the coming year, Members were invited to put forward suggestions for future repair and lining works.

Members were advised that The Leys Traffic Calming project is currently out for pricing and procurement. It was acknowledged that delivery of this project would face logistical challenges since parking and access would be suspended at times. The Town Council will be informed of logistics as a strategy is developed.

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update on other projects that would be happening in this vicinity, including the Skate Park and the Courtside development. Witney Town Council will work with stakeholders, including OCC to ensure that the projects are carried out in a logical order, and with the least disruption practicable.

Resolved:

That, WTC Officers host a meeting of stakeholders for the three major projects, for discussion of timelines and access requirements.

T54 **COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH**

The Committee received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk of Witney Town Council concerning the Community Speedwatch scheme for Witney.

A verbal update was given at the meeting and Members were advised that the scheme needed volunteers in order for sites to be operated. Volunteer recruitment was being advertised in notice boards and on social media. Members were invited to contact the Town Council for more information.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

T55 PUBLIC TRANSPORT UPDATE

The Public Transport Representative and representatives from the bus companies gave verbal updates. These included:

- Consultation was underway for the Rural Transport Grant and the Community Transport Grant. It was perceived that West Oxfordshire was served well by community transport and these monies were likely to be allocated to other areas in the County.
- Bus Service Improvement Plan indicated that a Swindon service will be returning for Witney, earmarked for November.
- The Oxford Tube would be offering a Monday to Friday service to London, this was a trial and residents were encouraged to use the service if it was to be kept. Services start on October 23rd 2023. Drivers were currently being route trained.
- The West Oxfordshire Community Transport (WOCT) supermarket shuttle was now up and running, and residents were already depending on this service.
- The WOCT Kingfisher Meadows service was starting to see passengers, some timetable adjustments might be required in the future to keep services running to time.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal updates above be noted.

T56 SPEED CAMERAS & SPEEDING ENFORCEMENT

The Committee received correspondence from Thames Valley Police regarding speeding, speed cameras and enforcement in response to a letter sent by the Chair of the Committee following the last meeting.

Resolved:

1. That, the communication from Thames Valley Police be noted.

T57 COGGES HILL ROAD - REQUEST FOR TRAFFIC CALMING

This item was previously discussed as part of the Infrastructure Locality Team update (T52).

Resolved:

That, Cogges Hill Road be added as a Community Speedwatch monitoring site.

T58 ITEMS RAISED AT THE MEETING

A representative from the Witney Chamber of Commerce expressed a desire from the Chamber to attract visitors and tourists to Witney. There had been a lot of discussion about coach parking; support from this Committee would be welcome and the Chamber invite members to contact them with information, ideas and any feedback.

Witney Town Partnership had been re-established - West Oxfordshire District Council had some funding available for 'Wayfinding', particularly to service visitors to the town; This would include heritage information as well as maps and parking details.

A Member suggested that an open-top bus tour should be started to encompass the many places of interest in Witney.

Witney Town Council were considering parking enforcement for the parking bays at The Leys. There was a feeling that some of the bays were being used by sixth-formers of Henry Box School, meaning vehicles were parked for long periods. Time-limited parking might be considered to make more spaces available for visitors using the recreational facilities and requiring the intended short-term parking.

T59 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING(S)**

Members were advised that the next scheduled meeting of this committee would be on Tuesday 16 January 2024.

The meeting closed at: 4.05 pm

Chair

Witney TAC Report by Oxfordshire County Council

January 2024

Place Planning Team Update

Lead officer: Odele Parsons, Place Planning and Coordination West Team Leader,
Odele.parsons@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

1. A40/B4022 Shores Green, Access to Witney (Major Project)

Please direct any queries to a40corridor@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Please see webpage [A40 Access to Witney | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

The project has now entered the **detailed design phase** to progress on the existing preliminary design, and a build contractor will be engaged to develop delivery plans. The Project team is working with stakeholders in ensuring that the Access to Witney Scheme can continue through to construction.

Planning permission for the Scheme was granted by the County Planning Authority on 15 July 2023. Owing to the evolution of the Scheme design, the Council has submitted a further planning application to make some design variations to the Scheme (to replace a proposed shared-use path with a footway, to merge two balancing ponds into one, to re-align a drainage ditch, to extend the highway boundary and to make amendments to the landscaping scheme to include additional planting). This application is expected to be determined in early 2024.

At the Cabinet meeting of 23 May 2023, Oxfordshire County Council's cabinet members gave authority to make and advertise the **Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)** and Side Road Order (SRO) for the Scheme. If confirmed by the Secretary of State for Transport, these orders will enable the council to make highway alterations and improvements and acquire the land necessary to construct the scheme. Following the making of the Orders there was an objection period, which ran until 8 September 2023. During this time, five objections to the Orders were made, and, as a result, the Secretary of State for Transport has decided to hold a Public Inquiry to determine whether the Orders should be confirmed. Formal notification of the Public Inquiry will be given by the Department for Transport in due course but it is expected to be held in the Spring 2024. As part of the preparation for the Public Inquiry, the council is required to submit a document known as a Statement of Case, which sets out the council's case for the confirmation of the Orders. This document and its appendices can now be accessed on the Council webpage [Access to Witney Compulsory purchase order \(CPO\) & side road order \(SRO\) | Oxfordshire County Council](#).

The CPO provides for all land needed to deliver and construct the scheme. Parties impacted have been contacted about the impact of the scheme on their land interest and the council is committed to seeking to acquire all of the interests that it requires for the scheme through private negotiation wherever possible. If the objections are withdrawn prior to the **Public Inquiry**, the Secretary of State may decide to cancel the Public Inquiry, which would be notified formally in due course. Any party wishing to attend the Public Inquiry is entitled to do so. The Public Inquiry will be heard by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State, and

the Inspector will control the Inquiry, including making any decisions on who may speak at the Inquiry. Once the inquiry closes, the Inspector will write a report to the Secretary of State recommending whether or not the Orders should be confirmed. The Secretary of State will consider the Orders and make a determination on whether or not they should be confirmed.

2. Burford Road Signal Crossing (Stage: Delivery by development site)

This signals are now operational.

3. Witney bus stop improvements (Stage: Implementation - funded).

Improvement works at the bus stops were completed in October 2023.

- High Street, north direction
- Staple Hall, Newland, southeast direction
- Thorney Leys, Curbridge Road, both directions

Each features contrasting colours to assist visually impaired passengers and sedum living roofs.

4. High Street and Market Square – Short Term Measures (Stage: Implementation - funded)

At the time of writing (22/12/2023) the works to install the two buildouts at the traffic restriction points at High Street and Market Square are still progressing. The Welch Way/High Street build out has been completed but there have been challenges in the materials supply chain for the Corn Street / Market Square build out. It is anticipated that the materials will be delivered on 7 January and works completing by the 9 January 2024. OCC are escalating disappointment in the way these works have progressed.

5. High Street and Market Square Active Travel 3 (Stage: Design and implementation - funded)

The High Street and Market Square Enhancement scheme consultation closed 3 October 2023. The results from our informal community engagement are now published in the [Witney High Street engagement report](#). Supporting documents and an overview of the scheme can be found on [Let's Talk Oxfordshire](#).

The results show that most respondents support the scheme objectives and the most requested improvements for the High Street designs are better footway surfacing, more trees, more plants/gardens and more seating.

Timescales:

Activity	Date
Autumn 2023	Community engagement
Winter 2023	Preliminary design
Spring 2024	Public consultation to review design proposals
Summer 2024	Final design option agreed
Autumn 2024	Construction start
Spring 2025	Construction finish

Webpage: [Witney High Street and Market Square enhancements scheme](#)

Email: witneyhighstreet@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

6. Bridge Street Area Options Appraisal Report (stage: Investigation/ feasibility)

Officers have finalised the Bridge Street/West End Link Options Assessment report from consultants Pell Frischmann. This work includes the transport impact across the area of the

Local Plan housing allocations at North Witney and East Witney and reviews the merit of the proposed West End Link Road given the adoption of the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan policy document in 2022.

Engagement and publication of the report is now being planned. All Councillors for Witney from Witney Town Council, West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council have been invited to an online briefing in late January. This will be followed by stakeholder engagement initially with the developers of North Witney SDA. Public consultation is being planned for April subject to any pre-election period.

Following the engagement, the county will confirm its position on the preferred scheme through the forthcoming Witney Area Travel Plan, a subsidiary document to the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, which will be subject to public consultation in its own right.

7. Bus Service changes:

Following a BSIP+ award from Government, service 64 has been reintroduced between Witney, Carterton and Swindon. Four journeys per day on Mondays to Saturdays operate between Carterton and Swindon, with two continuing to/from Witney. This service is operated by Pulhams Coaches. Some changes to the initial timetable were made in January to take account of punctuality issues and concerns raised by Burford School.

8. Parking Consultation 2018

The minutes of Witney Traffic Advisory Committee meeting 13th June 2023 refer to this issue of a parking permit scheme for Corn Street and a previous consultation with residents. This information was supplied to WTC via email 3 October 2023.

Items which status has not changed since last meeting:

9. Windrush Place S106 Active Travel Schemes

Design work is due to commence around March 2024. Detail discussed at September 2023 meeting.

10. Traffic Lights on Woodford Way

This scheme remains unfunded. Detail discussed at September 2023 meeting.

11. Introduce 'Keep Clear' markings at the dropped kerb crossing points on Harvest Way

This scheme has been added to the lining programme. Detail discussed at September 2023 meeting.

12. Pedestrian Crossing/zebra crossing at West End

This scheme remains unfunded but will be considered for the Road Safety Budget for 2024/2025 when more is known about this fund. Detail discussed at September 2023 meeting.

Traffic & Road Safety Report

13. Lining Planned Works

Lining works are now complete for financial year 23/24. We are currently in the process of compiling the programme for 24/25. If there are any specific sites that you feel need to be on this programme, then your input would be appreciated.

14. Traffic and Road Safety Current Project/s

'The Leys' Traffic Calming

Works for this scheme are planned to start on the 25th March 2024, for one week. We are currently liaising with WTC, regarding their projects as to provide the best results. At the moment, there is little impact other than deliveries to the work which can be resolved at a local level.

15. Highways and Drainage, Area Ops Team

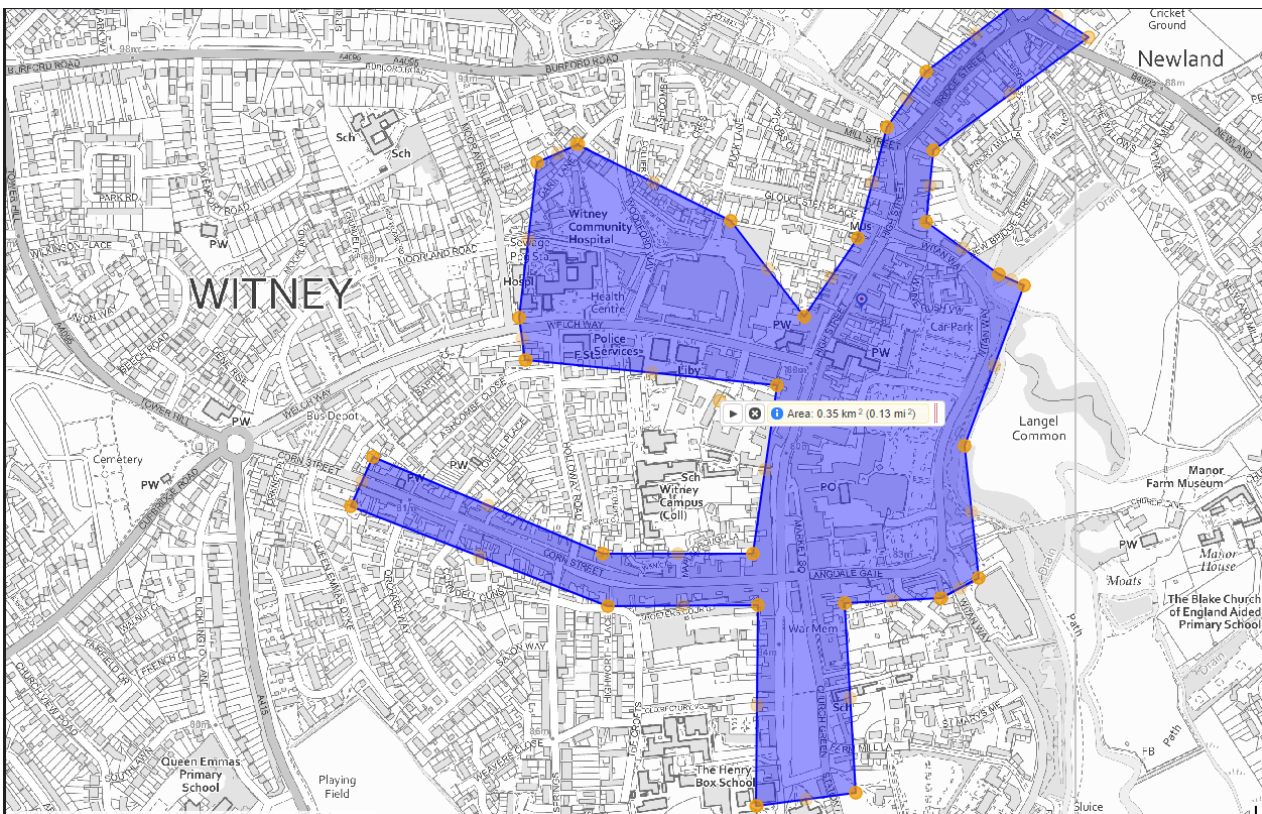
Planned Works

The above was copied from an interactive and continually updated map of the major maintenance programmes is always available on the County Council's website, via following the link; [Map \(highway-iams.uk\)](https://highway-iams.uk)

Update from West Oxfordshire District Council:

16. UKSPF funded signage and wayfinding project

The Witney Town Partnership, which includes a variety of key stakeholders, had identified that some signage and wayfinding tools in the town were inaccurate and/or not fit for purpose. The partnership are proposing to use the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to pay for any refurb or replacement signs. In November, the group carried out an audit of the existing signage and in December, the group discussed the findings of the audit and started mapping out potential new/replacement sign locations, styles and listing which locations in the town the signs should point to.



The partnership will seek approval from Oxfordshire County Council for any new assets that are to be positioned on the highway. Once agreed, the ownership of the assets will be transferred to the Town Council, and they will be responsible for ongoing maintenance.

As Oxfordshire County Council have a maintenance budget for traffic signs, the partnership will focus on improving the pedestrian signage within the town centre. However, the results of the audit will be shared with the Traffic & Road Safety Team at the County Council so that any relevant updates can be written into their maintenance schedule.

Currently (02.01.2024), the only traffic signs scheduled for improvement are those located in the District Council owned car parks; Woolgate and Woodford Way. The terms and conditions will be updated for all District Council owned car parks, and new directional signage will be added to the Woolgate car park.

Please direct any queries to emma.phillips@westoxon.gov.uk

Agenda Item 5

From: Oxfordshire County Council **On Behalf Of** Lane Rental

Subject: Oxfordshire County Council Lane Rental Scheme Proposal Consultation

Sent on behalf of Network Management, Oxfordshire County Council

Dear All,

We'd like to hear your views about a Lane Rental scheme we are proposing to introduce on some of Oxfordshire's busiest roads.

We know that when companies dig up busy roads, that it can cause disruption to road users. We are proposing to introduce a scheme whereby companies are charged for works that are undertaken during peak periods.

The proposal is to introduce a scheme that will drive behavioural change in those working in the street, so less works are done at busy times or the works are done in a different way, minimising the disruption the works cause to everyone using or relying on the streets.

Background

Currently, all utility and council works undertaken in the streets of Oxfordshire are co-ordinated using a Permit Scheme that charges a fixed fee, at a maximum of £300, to only the utilities, to cover administration costs.

Proposal

Lane Rental replaces this fixed Permit Fee with a daily charge of £2,500. It is only proposed on our most critical busiest streets and is restricted to roughly 5% of all the streets in Oxfordshire, by legislation. It applies to all works in the street, not just utility works and the council's own works, such a housing developer works.

The daily charge only applies if the works are done in a normal way at the busy times of day, such as the morning and afternoon rush hours. The daily charge will produce surplus funds which will be reinvested back into Oxfordshire.

Lane Rental schemes have been successfully introduced in other councils and the Department for Transport are encouraging councils to implement them.

Have your say

Link to the consultation <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/lane-rental-scheme-consultation>.

Please read the 'consultation document' which will provide more information about the proposals.

- Under 'Technical documents' you will be able to access more technical information about the proposals which utility companies are being provided with to inform their responses.

- Please complete our online survey by clicking the 'TAKE SURVEY' found in the consultation page (link above). The survey will close on Friday 26 January 2024.
- You can choose which questions to complete, but to complete the survey may take up to twenty minutes. If you have already registered, or register for, an account you can start the survey now and come back to it later.
- Additionally, there is a map which displays the proposed lane rental streets where you can also provide comments and give your feedback.
- Your responses will help us to consider if amendments should be made to the draft Lane Rental Scheme documents.
- During the consultation period there will be an opportunity to attend a meeting, either in person or online to discuss any feedback you may have. Further information to follow.
- If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, we encourage you to collate your feedback internally before submitting your response.

Thank you for your time considering these important proposals.

Environment and Place
Highways and Operations
Oxfordshire County Council
Ron Groves House
Oxford Road
Kidlington
Oxfordshire
OX5 2BP

Oxfordshire County Council Highways and Operations

The Proposed Oxfordshire Lane Rental Scheme

Executive Summary

Companies that need to undertake roadworks in Oxfordshire currently must apply to Oxfordshire County Council for a permit which provides permission to carry out roadworks. This scheme has been running successfully since 2020.

The Department for Transport has made available an opportunity for the council to make an application to introduce a Lane Rental Scheme in Oxfordshire.

The Lane Rental Scheme (LRS) would enable the council to make additional charges for works on our busiest roads at the busiest times. This encourages those working on the highway to avoid peak times (to avoid the charges) or pay the charges (completing the works in shortest possible timeframe), the maximum for which is £2,500 a day.

Income from the Lane Rental Scheme must be invested in works operations to reduce impacts, improving the highway network, and compensating society for disruptive works. The Department for Transport stipulates that the council and works promoters will work together to manage how the funding is spent.

The introduction of Lane Rental Scheme was included as part of a longer-term plan for managing Oxfordshire's roads, the Network Management Plan 2023-2028, which was agreed by Cabinet in February 2023.

If central government timetables allow, we plan to introduce Lane Rental from September 2024.

Background

As part of the council's legal duties, Network Management are responsible for supporting the management and operations of the road network, meeting the needs of road users as well the those who maintain the infrastructure (both of the network itself and of the services within it).

Network Management receives about 30,000 requests each year to work on the network and these are coordinated, inspected, and enforced to reduce the impact on the travelling public.

The Oxfordshire Permit Scheme has to be balanced financially, according to the rules from the Department for Transport (DfT) and the council does not make any profits from this scheme.

The Lane Rental Scheme will allow the council to impose specific charges on those requesting to work on the road network on our busiest roads at the busiest times (traffic sensitive streets at traffic sensitive times).

We want Lane Rental to be the next stage in the development of the Network Management Service for better coordination to manage the road network.

Research has demonstrated that imposing charges will encourage behavioural change in the industry.

Lane rental charges would be targeted only at the most critical parts of Oxfordshire's street network where evidence shows that works on the highway cause the highest levels of disruption and so require the greatest efforts to smooth traffic flow.

The busiest 5% of the Oxfordshire's road will be subject to Lane Rental and this is in accordance with the guidance from DfT.

Lane Rental will generate a financial surplus to the council which would be invested into measures to highway improvements and benefits for society.

Evidence to demonstrate the reduction in disruption will be gathered to evaluate effectiveness of the scheme.

Key benefits of Lane Rental include:

- Encouraging collaborative working between works promoters
- Improving the quality of works (to avoid return fees)
- Works are undertaken outside of peak times.
- Working smarter will reduce the time taken to complete works.
- Provide increased resource to manage the network, offset by income generated by the scheme.

Outline of Oxfordshire Lane Rental Scheme (LRS)

We have to work on the details of the scheme, and we'll take ideas from successful schemes while considering evidence specific to Oxfordshire. Initial thinking on some of the core principles for the scheme includes:

- That the Scheme will apply to:
 - All work on roads identified as Traffic Sensitive specifically for the Lane Rental Scheme.
 - Work undertaken outside of core off peak times (*off peak 'as specified in the special designations'*) on roughly 5% of the highway network - determined as the busiest by traffic volume/bus frequency/critical infrastructure.
 - That there will be one charge set at the maximum allowed daily charge of £2,500, with specific discount criteria to be determined.
- Lane Rental Traffic Sensitive Streets will be reviewed as part of the scheme development to include local conditions beyond those required by the Department for Transport. This way, we can make the most of the benefits for managing the network.
- The aim is to increase collaboration with all works promoters on the highways to reduce congestion at peak hours using financial incentives.
- Governance will be developed, in accordance with the Department for Transport requirements, for the allocation of surplus funds generated by the scheme.

It is hoped that the scheme will bring about behavioural changes from works promoters for the benefit of road users such as:

- Immediate works completed faster - more immediate works done within 2 days (free period) to avoid the charges.
- Reduced works impact - more resources applied to works to reduce the time taken or carry out works outside of charging hours (though this will mean longer works durations)
- Improved collaborative working - more work will be done collaboratively by promoters to share the costs and/or charges.
- Increases use of technology - greater use of new technology to speed up the works or reduce their impact, such as 'mole' systems.

There will also potentially be some impacts that could be considered as negative which will need to be considered when developing the specific details of the scheme, such as:

- Out of hours working - more works undertaken out of hours, including overnight (potentially an increase of 10% based experience of others)
- Works taking longer - Some works will take longer if there are done during a shorter day between busy periods to avoid the charges.
- Highway works - the council's own works are potentially chargeable, which may impact on programmes or budgets.

Agenda Item 8a

A REQUEST FOR SUPPORT: “ TO IMPROVE THE CURRENT H2 BUS SERVICE - FROM WITNEY & WEST OXFORDSHIRE TO THE OXFORD HOSPITALS AND BACK ...

REASONS: almost from its inception, a number of service users have sought a marginal change which could substantially improve service delivery for patients, visitors, workers, staff and others, thereby reducing inconvenience, car use, etc.

Correspondence has been repeatedly attempted with the bus company and other parties without response or success - even letters to the local press have gone unpublished.

It is hoped that Witney Town Council might be able to help break this impasse - even if only to obtain an explanation as to why such improvement cannot be achieved.

CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS:

“In-bound” H2 bus services call at the JR Hospital ...

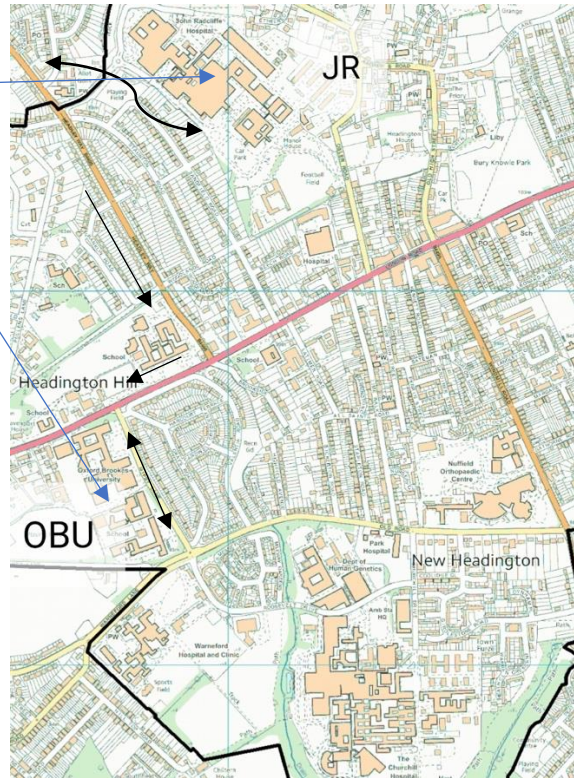
... before continuing via Headley Way to Gipsy Lane where they end at Oxford Brookes University

The H2 turns around at Oxford Brookes before making its return/ “outbound” journey

PROBLEMS experienced by users (& those put off from use) include:

Passengers have to walk on to get **TO** the Warneford (W), Churchill (C) and/ or Nuffield Orthopaedic (NOC) Hospitals, the Oxford biosciences park (SP), etc - and then **BACK:** this being especially problematic for Outpatients such as those undergoing daily radiotherapy etc

Passengers all too frequently find themselves waiting at Oxford Brookes without any information about the H2 service: for example if inbound services are behind schedule, drivers can be suddenly instructed to cease service at the JR and turn-back to **out**-bound from there - leaving passengers waiting in Gipsy Lane completely stranded ...

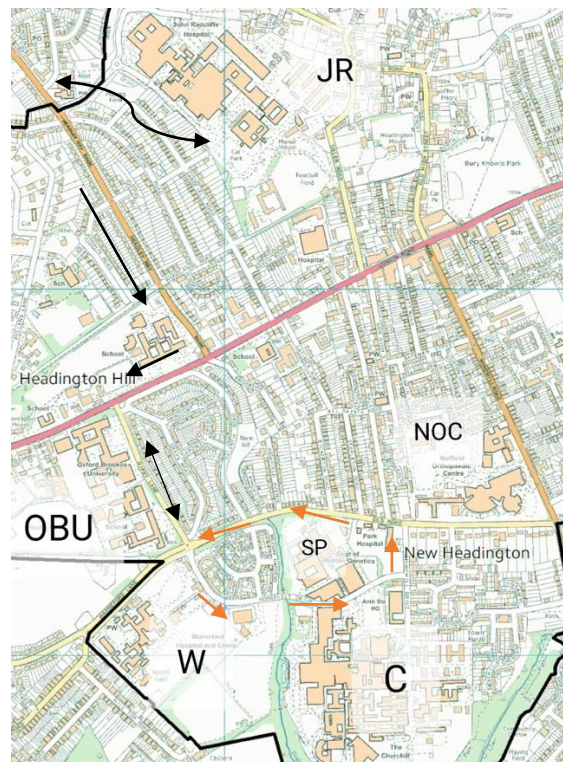


IMPROVEMENT ?

Install real-time service information panels at each of the main hospital-user bus stops - many disadvantaged passengers do not have/ cannot easily access smartphone-based apps, even assuming the data-feed is maintained in real-time ...

Institute a small route extension (red) - so Instead of turning around in Gipsy Lane, “inbound” services continue beyond Oxford Brookes (OBU) ...

- down Gipsy Lane ...
- round Roosevelt Drive - with its existing bus stops installed when Oxford City buses were re-routed from Old Road as a result of complaints, pleas, ...
- ... and thus “turn round” to start the return/ outward bound service-route via Old Road, Gipsy Lane, ...



We would be most grateful for the support of the Council, its members and officers in getting careful consideration of this suggestion. Thank you.

ENDS Jf |