

Witney Response to Covid 19 - Potential Measures

Traffic Management Act 2004: Network management in response to Covid 19 (9th May 2020)

'We recognise this moment for what it is: a once in a generation opportunity to deliver a lasting transformative change in how we make short journeys in our towns and cities. According to the National Travel Survey, in 2017-18 over 40% of urban journeys were under 2 miles – perfectly suited to walking and cycling.

Active travel is affordable, delivers significant health benefits, has been shown to improve wellbeing, mitigates congestion, improves air quality and has no carbon emissions at the point of use. Towns and cities based around active travel will have happier and healthier citizens as well as lasting local economic benefits.

The government therefore expects local authorities to make significant changes to their road layouts to give more space to cyclists and pedestrians. Such changes will help embed altered behaviours and demonstrate the positive effects of active travel. I'm pleased to see that many authorities have already begun to do this, and I urge you all to consider how you can begin to make use of the tools in this guidance, to make sure you do what is necessary to ensure transport networks support recovery from the COVID-19 emergency and provide a lasting legacy of greener, safer transport'.

Secretary of State for Transport

Statutory Guidance

'Local authorities in areas with high levels of public transport use should take measures to reallocate road space to people walking and cycling, both to encourage active travel and to enable social distancing during restart (social distancing in this context primarily refers to the need for people to stay 2 metres apart where possible when outdoors). Local authorities where public transport use is low should be considering all possible measures.

*Measures should be taken as **swiftly as possible**, and in any event within weeks, given the **urgent need to change travel habits** before the restart takes full effect.*

None of these measures are new – they are interventions that are a standard part of the traffic management toolkit, but a step-change in their roll-out is needed to ensure a green restart.'

Measure Types	
Permanent	This process includes prior consultation on the proposed scheme design, a 21-day notice period for statutory consultees and others who can log objections; there can be a public inquiry in some circumstances.
Experimental	These are used to trial schemes that may then be made permanent. Authorities may put in place monitoring arrangements, and carry out ongoing consultation once the measure is built. Although the initial implementation period can be quick, the need for extra monitoring and consultation afterwards makes them a more onerous process overall.
Temporary	These can be in place for up to 18 months. There is a 7-day notice period prior to making the TRO and a 14-day notification requirement after it is made, plus publicity requirements. These are most suitable for putting in place temporary measures and road closures.

'Authorities should monitor and evaluate any temporary measures they install, with a view to making them permanent, and embedding a long-term shift to active travel as we move from restart to recovery.'

Comment

With a need to move quickly, it would appear that permanent measures would not be suitable. Temporary, with regular monitoring, would seem to be the best approach in order to facilitate fast paced change, give authorities the confidence to make those changes, with the opportunity to experiment, modify or abandon, and provide a body of data to support more permanent change in the future. It may also encourage public 'buy in' to fundamental initial change at a time when disruption to 'normality' is expected, and more meaningful subsequent consultation.

Measure	Reallocating Road Space: Measures/High level Principles (as detailed in the guidance)	Suggested Action/Wilney Streets	Comment
1	Installing 'pop-up' cycle facilities with a minimum level of physical separation from volume traffic; for example, mandatory cycle lanes, using light segregation features such as flexible plastic wands; or quickly converting traffic lanes into temporary cycle lanes (suspending parking bays where necessary); widening existing cycle lanes to enable cyclists to maintain distancing. Facilities should be segregated as far as possible, i.e. with physical measures separating cyclists and other traffic. Lanes indicated by road markings only are very unlikely to be sufficient to deliver the level of change needed, especially in the longer term.	<p>A. Suspending parking bays on: - High Street at the Market Square (except for taxi rank)</p> <p>B. High Street and Bridge Street between the two roundabouts, to create space for cycles alongside cars.</p> <p>C. Bridge Street from Mill Street to Newlands.</p> <p>D. Cycle racks will be needed at the Bridge Street end. The last ones are at the junction of High Street and Welch Way.</p> <p>E. Consider making provision of cycle racks a requirement for employers with more than a certain number of employees if they have their own parking facilities</p> <p>F. Making one way streets contraflow for cyclists</p> <p>G. Temporary or Experimental cycle lane from Windrush Place to the roundabout, leaving the shared pavement for pedestrians. The bridleway from Windrush Place is listed below.</p> <p>H. Temporary or Experimental cycle lane along Thorney Leys road.</p> <p>I. Install a fixed community bike pump (like in Oxford). Town centre - on the Welch Way/High Street corner near Halifax/St Andrew's Bookshop. Additional sites are Langel Common and Burwell Drive.</p> <p>J. The double-roundabout at West End/Newlands/Woodstock Road/Bridge St feels one of the most dangerous places for pedestrians crossing, for bus users alighting, for cyclists on the road, for using the narrow pavement. A professional view of what can be done here would be enormously helpful. One idea is creation of a foot/cycle path between Newlands and the Bridge St spur behind Newlands to cut the corner - but would need to speak to property owners - and /or better facilitating movement/crossing in near vicinity eg Wood Green/Woodstock Road to provide attractive alternative routes</p> <p>K. Cycle lane on the road at Langdale Gate to connect the Langel Common route to the town centre.</p>	
2	Using cones and barriers: to widen footways along lengths of road, particularly outside shops and transport hubs; to provide more space at bus stops to allow people to queue and socially distance; to widen pedestrian refuges and crossings (both formal and informal) to enable people to cross roads safely and at a distance.	<p>A. As mentioned, consider the refuge/footway safety issues at Bridge Street double roundabouts</p> <p>B. Common path through Jacobs Mill is too narrow for effective social distancing Bridge should also be replaced with a wider one. There is a muddy footpath to the pedestrian crossing at Hyde Meadow View. Resurface to reduce pressure on Jacobs Mill route. River crossing could also be upgraded to level and sufficiently wide enough to enable cycling</p> <p>C. Path at back of The Dairy is too narrow in places for social distancing. Consider improving surface by old Boxing Club and cutting back vegetation to improve viable alternative route.</p>	

		<p>D. Common path at Hailey Road Roundabout is too narrow for social distancing for the first 30 metres, before widening across the meadow. The adjoining road is private and denies public access. Suggest requesting residents permission for access so one way routes can be set up on 2 paths</p> <p>E. Reviewing all existing paths/cycleways and prioritise vegetation clearance - and ongoing vegetation management</p> <p>F. Widening pedestrian refuge at: - the exit of Langel common to Witan Way</p>	
3	Encouraging walking and cycling to school, for example through the introduction of more 'school streets'. Pioneered in London, these are areas around schools where motor traffic is restricted at pick-up and drop off times, during term-time. They can be effective in encouraging more walking and cycling, particularly where good facilities exist on routes to the school and where the parents, children and school are involved as part of the scheme development.	<p>A. School streets at all Witney's primary and secondary schools.</p> <p>B. Henry Box (high school) on Church Green: suspension of parking on Church Green at school movement times/reallocate spaces so school approach and approach from West is clearer and safer</p> <p>C. Crossing needed on Newlands at the entrance to King George's Field to link the path from Langel to the onwards path to Wood Green School and to facilitate travel between Cogges/Langel and Wood Green/Farmers Close/New Yatt Road locations because the crossing at the Old Dairy does not facilitate this.</p>	
4	Reducing speed limits: 20mph speed limits are being more widely adopted as an appropriate speed limit for residential roads, and many through streets in built-up areas. 20mph limits alone will not be sufficient to meet the needs of active travel, but in association with other measures, reducing the speed limit can provide a more attractive and safer environment for walking and cycling.	<p>A. 20 mph blanket from all urban approaches to the town i.e. Cogges Hill Road, Woodstock Road, Burford Road at West Witney Sports and Social Club, Deer Park Road, Curbridge, Ducklington entrances into the town, to encompass all routes between residential estates and the town centre. A blanket 20 mph limit is easy to understand, advertise and provide signs for.</p>	
5	Introducing pedestrian and cycle zones: restricting access for motor vehicles at certain times (or at all times) to specific streets, or networks of streets, particularly town centres and high streets. This will enable active travel but also social distancing in places where people are likely to gather.	<p>A. Consider pedestrianising town centre (or just 'snips' of road so not 'easy access' thoroughfares) either at certain times/days or at all times. From Welch way roundabout up to Corn Street, for example and/or Nuffield health centre to traffic lights. Only permit disabled/delivery/emergency access. Consider taxi access too or 'call' in points from town outskirts</p> <p>B. Create one way system (apart from Buses) to allow motor vehicles to migrate to the centre of road spaces and free up the camber either side. Again reducing convenience to traverse town, whilst retaining access and parking on the 'outskirts'. NB this would be a preferred global option which could have such an impact as to negate/reduce the need for other measures (subject to 5C)</p> <p>C. Carry out Air Quality Impact Assessments to establish if results in increased fumes from standing traffic</p>	
6	Modal filters (also known as filtered permeability); closing roads to motor traffic, for example by using planters or large barriers. Often used in residential areas, this can create neighbourhoods that are low-traffic or traffic free, creating a more pleasant environment that encourages people to walk and cycle, and improving safety.	<p>A. Consider across Holloway Road, for example, and other residential roads in Witney where they could be easily facilitated at set times of the day/or set days. Play streets for areas with a high concentration of young children</p>	
7	Providing additional cycle parking facilities at key locations, such as outside stations and in high streets, to accommodate an increase in cycling, for example by repurposing parking bays to accommodate cycle racks.	<p>A. Behind the Methodist Church (they are open to this - this almost a scheme to be brought forward, as it was being planned by Suzanne Bartington and/or Laura Price)</p> <p>B. Cycle racks needed for shops on Corn Street</p>	

		C. Cycle racks needed at Deer Park shops	
		D. Cycle racks needed at Fettiplace Road shops	
		E. Cycle racks needed at Sainsbury's	
		F. Cycle racks near all parks and sports facilities	
		G. Cycle racks needed for shops at the Bridge St end of High St.	
8	Changes to junction design to accommodate more cyclists – for example, extending Advanced Stop Lines at traffic lights to the maximum permitted depth of 7.5 metres where possible.	A. Inclusion of cycle friendly advanced stop line at traffic lights Woodford Way to Welch Way.	
9	'Whole-route' approaches to create corridors for buses, cycles and access only on key routes into town and city centres.	A. Corn Street needs space creating for cyclists (and is a heavy bus route). Would it work as one-way to motor vehicles? What are the options?	
		B. Tower Hill needs space creating for cyclists - consider the parallel route, Woodford Way. Could one (Tower Hill) be closed to motor vehicles except for access and buses?. NB the third parallel road, Moor Avenue, has Tower Hill School on it - school street measures	
		C. Consult with WODC to obtain plans for pedestrian/cycling routes as part of recent developments	
10	Identifying and bringing forward permanent schemes already planned, for example under Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, and that can be constructed relatively quickly.	A. Residents at Windrush Place (near Curbridge) urgently need the bridleway through their estate to Deer Park road surfacing. It is impassable for all but recreational mountainbiking. This is also part of an off-road route for commuters from Carterton.	
		B. Improve the pedestrian/cycle surface from Newland to Wood Green School, including Public Right of Way running from Madley Park to Wood Green School entrance on the Woodstock Road. Install removeable bollard by Wood Green School to prevent vehicular access which is dangerous for pedestrians (except for service vehicles). This is on 'agenda' but ownership needs to be established.	
		C. As mentioned, liaise with WODC re longer term plans which can be brought forward.	
11	Other local measures	A. Reopen access to the town centre through Unterhaching Park because Puck Lane is narrow and has high walls, unsuitable for social distancing.	