

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is a Low Traffic Neighbourhood?**

A Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) is an area where outside traffic is prevented from taking a short cut through a residential area. This creates quiet streets where residents can enjoy their street and feel safer when making local journeys. For that reason, it is also known as a “liveable neighbourhood”. This is achieved by the introduction of traffic filters which restrict movement of motor vehicles.

### **What are the benefits?**

The predicted benefits are that as a resident, your local streets will feel less noisy and stressful. It will feel safer and more pleasant for residents, including children, to walk or cycle to local destinations, such as shops, schools and local employment.

Experience from Waltham Forest LTN in London measured a 50% decrease in motor traffic in the LTN. After 12 months, 55% said they would not change the LTN scheme with just 18% wanting to remove the filters. This mirrors a national YouGov poll which found that 57% people supported low traffic neighbourhoods, while just 16% opposed them.

### **What is a Traffic Filter?**

A traffic filter is basically a barrier in the road that prevents motorised traffic driving through it, but has gaps wide enough for pedestrians, cyclists and those with buggies or mobility scooters to pass through. Typically, these can be bollards or planters or a mixture of the two.

Another form of filter allows buses through but not general traffic. These are backed up by automatic number plate recognition cameras. All traffic filters are introduced through a legal procedure and can be enforced by the Police.

### **Why now?**

Government guidelines on Covid-19 emphasise the importance of social distancing, advising people to avoid using buses if possible. The Government has given councils with high levels of bus use emergency funding to provide better alternatives for bus users.

Oxford has very high bus use levels. Pre-Covid, there were 40,000 bus trips a day into Oxford City Centre, which represented around half of all trips to the city centre. As activities build up again many bus users will have to consider other ways of travelling. If even a minority of bus users choose the car instead of the bus, traffic congestion in Oxford could become very severe and everyone will suffer.

These proposals also support Council policies to promote active travel and reduce traffic congestion. Oxford Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) sets out a policy to introduce LTNs in areas in Oxford where there is local support from residents and members. Oxford LCWIP was endorsed by Oxfordshire County Council in 2020. Within the Oxford LCWIP, LTNs are one of the 8 pillars underpinning ambitious targets to increase cycling by 50% in Oxford by 2031.

### **When will this all take place?**

It is anticipated the trial will be implemented before the end of the financial year subject to approval by a Cabinet Member Decision on 21 January 2021.

### **How is it being funded?**

Cowley LTNs were originally bid for under the Government's Emergency Active Travel Tranche 1 funding. The money awarded, however, was insufficient to cover all the schemes to be implemented, so the scheme is being funded out of Council reserves.

### **When do we get a say?**

The scheme is being introduced using Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETROs). In an ETRO, the scheme is introduced first and consultation happens afterwards. In that way, people can assess its impacts before making their comments. After implementation, there follows a statutory six-month period when the public can submit objections or letters of support.

After the six months, the Council must assess the objections and letters of support and either cancel, confirm, change or extend the scheme. The ETRO can be extended for a further 12 month review period to give more time for consultation and monitoring. After 18 months in total, the scheme must be confirmed, altered or removed.

Traffic Regulation Orders can be modified at any time to solve any unforeseen problems.

Further information on the legal basis and Government advice is available at <https://lcrig.org.uk/news/traffic-regulation-orders-covid19-guidance>

### **What about beforehand?**

We are undertaking an informal consultation before implementation to understand the diversity of opinions and beliefs before implementation.

We understand that the scheme may cause some inconvenience for many people. Equally many people may have concerns about its impacts.

We will analyse all the results of the questionnaire and this will help Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member to make an informed decision when it makes the final decision whether to implement the LTN.

We encourage all residents to fill in the informal consultation questionnaire.

### **Can I access my house by motor vehicle, and will I be able to receive deliveries?**

Yes you can, however, you may have to find a slightly different route. The schemes have been designed to make it easy for residents to drive to the nearest main road from their home to minimise traffic within the area, but at most times of the day, it should not add more than around 5 to 10 minutes to a journey (according to Google map timings)

### **Aren't there other ways of doing this, which don't inconvenience residents?**

It is very difficult to prevent rat-runs without traffic filters. For instance, traffic calming has been introduced on several rat-runs in Oxford to prevent through traffic, with some success in reducing traffic speed but not much success in preventing through traffic.

Traffic calming already exists in Rymers Lane and Cornwallis Road-Littlehay Road in Florence Park and Crescent Road in Temple Cowley, but all these roads have high levels of through traffic.

Another possible option is to introduce camera restrictions, but traffic cameras are expensive to install with on-going costs for enforcement and keeping exemptions up-to-date. Cameras are only typically used at bus traffic filters.

### **Will this create more traffic and pollution?**

Whilst some journeys will be slightly longer, an LTN will result in less traffic in residential areas. Traffic surveys in the Cowley area show that through traffic represents 30-50% of traffic movements in these areas during peak hours. Further, it is anticipated that over time many residents will make minor behaviour changes, for instance deciding to walk or cycle for local journeys because it feels safer, quieter and more convenient. Waltham Forest experienced a decrease in traffic of up to 50% in their LTN.

### **What about traffic displaced onto the perimeter roads? Will traffic get much worse?**

Generally, we do not expect traffic to get much worse on the main roads. When local streets feel safer and quieter, people making short journeys will be more likely to walk and cycle rather than drive. It is anticipated that many longer journeys will divert onto the bypass rather than the main radial roads. Waltham Forest LTN saw a marginal impact on overall traffic levels on the perimeter roads.

### **Won't the traffic at junctions with the main roads be worse?**

Generally, traffic should reduce at the junctions where local traffic meets the main road. This is because of the removal of short-cutting through traffic and changes in local journey patterns. The Council will monitor the situation and assess the need for changes if there are any problems.

### **What about car parking in my street?**

Parking restrictions won't change as a result of this scheme, although short lengths of double yellow lines may be required in the vicinity of the filters to ensure vehicles can turn and cyclists are not blocked from travelling through the filter. In the longer term, the Council is planning to introduce Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) to prevent commuter parking in residential streets.

### **Won't traffic speeds increase if there's less traffic in my street?**

It is not anticipated that vehicle speeds will increase. Waltham Forest LTN saw an overall speed reduction of 2mph within their LTN.

### **Will cycling be safer?**

It is anticipated that the reduction in traffic will result in improved road safety for all users. Waltham Forest LTN recorded an increase in cycling, an improvement in the safety of junctions and a reduction in road traffic

casualties from an average of 6 per year to 2 in the first year after implementation of the scheme.

**What will be the impact on local shops without so much passing trade?**

Local businesses vary considerably in their reliance on passing trade and business success is often more dependent on macro-economic issues. It is difficult therefore to predict the impact on local businesses. With more people walking and cycling, there are opportunities to focus on that passing trade.

**Won't this be a problem for the emergency services or for refuse collections?**

Emergency services and waste services have been consulted to identify and minimise any issues. In a few cases, bollards will be locked by a key so that waste lorries can pass through on collection day. All houses and businesses will still be fully accessible.

**How can we make our views known?**

Please leave your comments in the consultation webpage. These will be monitored. Unfortunately, we are not able to reply to individual comments.