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Councillor Liz Leffman
Leader, Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road
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10 December 2021

Dear Councillor Leffman

Re: Oxford City Council seeks deferral of East Oxford LTN implementation

While Oxford City Council strongly supports Local Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), we are writing to express our concern with the recommendation, published today, that Oxfordshire County Council plans to move forward with the implementation of the East Oxford LTNs in early 2022. We ask for this decision to be deferred.

With congestion in the city back to unacceptable pre-pandemic levels, and evidence of greater car use at the expense of public transport, we believe that the implementation of additional LTNs, including those in East Oxford, should be deferred until additional bus prioritisation measures are first put in place.

For LTNs to be truly successful, they need to be brought forward as part of an integrated and strategic approach to transport planning in our city, not piecemeal. Central to this should be bus prioritisation on key roads, which would support a shift to a faster and more efficient bus network, alongside enhanced cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. Our shared plans, called Connecting Oxford, deliver this and need to be prioritised and delivered before additional LTNs.

Without bus prioritisation measures, LTNs risk displacing more traffic onto our main roads, creating further congestion, and negatively impacting on bus journey times, and so passenger numbers. We've already seen the announcement of cuts to Oxford's bus services due to the impacts of the pandemic. We are concerned that pressing ahead with the East Oxford LTNs, without associated measures to reduce overall traffic volumes, may further impact bus services and weaken the case for additional investment in our bus network, at a time when we need it most.

We note the officer report highlights resourcing as a key risk to delivery of wider programmes. We therefore need assurances that the implementation of the East Oxford LTNs will not compromise or impact on the timely delivery or funding of Connecting Oxford, or the wider investment proposals being developed with the bus companies as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), and the Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA).


Finally, we are clear that the consultation process to date for the East Oxford LTNs has not been adequate. The proposals will have a much wider impact than the immediate and adjacent areas within which they sit, and the communities impacted across the broader East Oxford area deserved a much greater say in this process.

As a City Council, we will continue to push for a more strategic and integrated approach to transport planning in our city, one that supports both public and active travel, and that seeks to listen to the views of all our communities. We remain keen to work with Oxfordshire County Council to deliver this goal. In the meantime, we ask that you defer the decision, because it needs to come forward as part of a coherent package of measures, after proper consultation. Neither of those conditions has yet been met.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Brown', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councillor Susan Brown
Leader of Oxford City Council
Green

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Hayes', with a stylized, cursive script.

Councillor Tom Hayes
Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for
Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford