**Cowley Area Local Transport Strategy**

**3rd edition, 2020**

**FROM: COWLEY AREA TRANSPORT GROUP**

**Website:** [**www.catg.org.uk**](http://www.catg.org.uk)

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**INTRODUCTION**

For the 1st edition, we drew upon many transport issues raised with us in the local elections of 2016. We consulted over 4000 households in the Cowley area and asked:

What do you want as transport policies for the Cowley area?

What types of transport improvements do your children, elderly neighbours and young people need in the Cowley area?

How many of the changes which we want can be achieved, at least in part, by voluntary measures?

MANY people let us know what they thought, and their suggestions formed a large part of the 1st edition. We made it clear we would review this Strategy periodically until radical improvements are made in transport conditions in the Cowley area. A 2nd edition in 2018 built upon information supplied throughout the 2 year period from 2016 and was followed by some door to door petitioning on transport issues. Our involvement in the County Elections in 2017 had once again permitted a lot of doorstep discussion on transport and other local issues.

We have made use of the material in the Strategy for transport related submissions to the City and County councils, to add to pressure for a more sustainable overall transport system in Oxford.

Now:

We have created the COWLEY AREA TRANSPORT GROUP to act as an informal network to ensure this work continues. This will allow us to engage periodically with transport issues in the Cowley area as they arise. We have a strong focus on the area covered by the Lye Valley ward, Temple Cowley and the Cowley ward, but do comment and sometimes engage with City, County and sometimes national transport issues because of centralised or overlapping responsibilities, Contact hazeldawe5@gmail.com if you want to be kept in touch with this effort. Our website – [www.catg.org.uk](http://www.catg.org.uk) – shows the wide range of letters to the media, submissions to consultations and other materials we have created in recent years – often with the help of many others, and drawing upon the initiatives of various local sustainable transport campaigns. Our thanks to those who have contributed to making our efforts a bit easier.

We will be sending this 3rd edition to all councillors in our area of coverage when completed, and to new sitting councillors subsequent to the combined City and County elections due May 2021.

We have reviewed the Cowley Area Local Transport Strategy for the 3rd edition because of the huge environmental and transport threat presented to our part of Oxford by the proposed, but currently ‘paused’, Cambridge-Oxford Expressway and its associated corridor of development in which the Government wants to include 1 million new homes. The Expressway has been ‘paused’ by Government but the £27bn roads programme may accommodate the long-term creation of an ‘Expressway by stealth’ – a series of road projects increasing traffic heading into Oxford. The Cowley Area Transport Strategy is a model of what local communities actually want from what we have been told and observed, and what is needed in terms of sustainable transport.

We recognise that the scale of changes which people want may take as long as 20 years to deliver.

It is highly regrettable that the dismally out of date and inadequate Oxford City Plan has been agreed with central Government.[[1]](#footnote-1) This envisages immense and implausible home-building in Oxford and nearby up to 2031, with the Government adding additional homes targets up to 2050 in Oxfordshire, and elsewhere. We note that the Government has accepted that its housing algorithm was wrong, but this recognition has yet to be fed into housing target figures although this must mean many Local Plans drafted by local authorities are actually wrong as far as housing projections go.[[2]](#footnote-2) Current housing plans will add to pressure for road building since it is likely that the urban periphery and rural locations of these new homes will typically encourage 2 car household patterns. These homes:

* Will not be affordable to buy as they are in Oxfordshire
* Will not be affordable to rent if bought by private landlords
* Will not stay actually affordable if created as social housing but then sold under Right to Buy, often to private landlords
* Will create immense and avoidable traffic problems compared to brownfield site housing options
* Will rarely use the option of going above 2 storeys to create higher density housing
* Will have excessive levels of space for parking vehicles

We note: approval of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Oxford in January 2020, which has estimated that the costs of providing a reasonable cycle network across Oxford, in the context of other traffic management measures, is just under £300m. This illustrates a general problem that local government is under-funded, reflecting a UK tax base of insufficient variety and scope[[3]](#footnote-3) which fails to consider how a modern and complex society needs an effective State and local government.

We also note that the Government has improved its intentions concerning cycling in July 2020, with new proposals on cycling infrastructure – now needing the commitment of realistic funds.[[4]](#footnote-4)

See our submission comments on the Oxford City Plan and on the more recent Government White Paper on Planning in ‘Other Relevant Submissions’ at: <https://www.catg.org.uk/wp-admin/post.php?post=29&action=edit>

What is changing in this 3rd edition:

A substantial briefing on the Expressway compiled by Steve Dawe has already been sent to local councillors and MPs. This is available from stevedawe@gn.apc.org It is important to this Strategy as one of the potential routes for this Expressway road and development corridor skirt the Shotover Country Park. This could well mean traffic entering the Ring Road in the east of Oxford and large additions to traffic entering our part of Oxford via Horspath Driftway or the Garsington Road area. Clearly, any substantial additions to Ring Road traffic could have serious implications for traffic movements throughout Oxford, especially in rush hours. The implications of building at Grenoble Road and at the Chalgrove Airfield could be exceptionally negative for traffic conditions in Blackbird Leys. We will continue, as no doubt will other groups, to monitor and act on road development proposals that threaten to bring more traffic, noise and pollution into Oxford.

Second, please also see at the end a copy of a motion against the Expressway passed by the Bullingdon Community Association which runs the Community Centre in Peat Moors in the Lye Valley estate. This may be adapted by other community groups.

Neither our County Council nor our City Council seem capable of thinking far enough ahead to anticipate obvious traffic problems that almost always accompany urban sprawl, sometimes politely referred to as ‘urban extensions.’ There are about 1 million empty homes in the UK. We can make use of long-term empty shopfronts, offices and industrial sites to build housing. This is particularly appropriate now since the combination of Covid 19 recession and the disaster of Brexit, and far more online shopping, is fundamentally changing high streets and creating more vacant units.

We can consider existing car parks and Park and Rides, where air quality is far better than in Oxford High Street, for apartment development above surface level. There is no reason why such sites could not have housing around the edges of the car parks. Plans for 3 urban extensions to the south east of Oxford adding thousands of homes mainly on agricultural land, in a country where we are importing more food each year, ignore all these opportunities to create housing with less traffic impact and environmental damage than new urban sprawl.

It is abundantly clear from past history in Oxford that people accessing south east Oxford will make use of all roads which suit them to reach their destinations, with the likelihood of extreme increases in traffic over the next 15 years or so if the three proposed urban extensions are built. It will not be satisfactory to object to the traffic once it starts arriving on our roads. Adding a major traffic source on top of these proposals in the form of the Cambridge to Oxford Expressway is an appalling prospect.

**Bus Gates and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods** We support the Connecting Oxford Plus[[5]](#footnote-5) suggestions for a system of additional Bus Gates in Oxford, and proposals for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.[[6]](#footnote-6) Similarly, we support the County Council policy of extending Controlled Parking Zones to cover all of Oxford. We support all efforts to increase the pedestrianised areas in central Oxford to improve public health and help increase footfall for businesses based there. We would particularly welcome pedestrianisation of Queen Street, Broad Street, a substantial area of St.Giles, Little Clarendon Street and more.

Why?

Because plans for housing development in Oxford and neighbouring parts of Oxfordshire are vast and have major traffic implications for Oxford as a regional employment centre.[[7]](#footnote-7) If we do not act to reduce traffic movements, then conditions within the City and on major routes into the City will become even worse than they are already. At the time of writing, traffic levels appear to be above pre-lockdown levels in South East Oxford – partly because of the Government’s idiotic idea that people should avoid public transport.

No sane person wants more air pollution,[[8]](#footnote-8) more additions to greenhouse gases, more traffic noise and congestion and intolerable conditions on rat runs through residential areas. We need the responsible bodies to act decisively to prevent this. Instead, at present, the County Council in particular is dithering. We need more active travel – walking and cycling networks – better bus services, re-opening of Oxfordshire’s disused rail lines, and a strong campaign to ensure that those who can work at home are enabled to do so. Legislation to enforce a right to ‘flexitime’ for many categories of employees is needed to help cut traffic and the awful burden of commuting times.

**The current ‘normal’ in traffic movements is just not good enough.**

The range of suggestions made by local residents is large (see below) and might take as long as 20 years to implement. However, voluntary measures listed below can happen NOW.

We certainly do not act alone on transport issues in this City. We particularly commend the work of the following groups:

**Cyclox: the Oxford Cycling Campaign** – notable for campaigning for adequate cycle routes in Oxford. This campaign has been vindicated by the Gilligan report, suggesting £200m needs to be spent on cycling alone in Oxford. SEE: <http://www.cyclox.org/>

**Oxfordshire Liveable Streets**: a campaign promoting an ambitious but desirable network of one-way systems to cut traffic in Oxford’s congested streets. SEE: <http://oxlivsts.org.uk/> We checked, and this campaign recognises the need for keeping speeds in the City down where streets are converted to one-way routes. Far more details on their website.

Extreme examples of bad road behaviour in the Cowley area include two hit and run incidents involving cyclists. The first we witnessed ourselves in the Crowell Road area. The driver of the car failed to stop at the scene and continued travelling along Beauchamp Lane. Fortunately, the cyclist survived.

The 2nd was more recent: 30th July 2016.

At around 7.35pm on Saturday (30/7/2016), a car was turning out of Rymers Lane in Cowley onto Between Towns Road when it collided with a cyclist. In the same area, another cyclist was knocked off their bike in 2019, which led to a junction change. This has taken the form of a shallow depth ‘cushion’ that is not a sufficient disincentive to traffic speeding in this area. We look forward to an improved initiative, hopefully before any further accidents occur.

In addition, a cyclist had died in a traffic accident on Horspath Driftway (3.11.2020). The cause of this accident has yet to be determined.

These are extreme cases and it is difficult to make good law or good behaviour from them. They do however illustrate that simple solutions to our challenging traffic problems will not work. However, we note that driver and cyclist behaviour does sometimes become worse when there is congestion. We need a lot of small and large initiatives to make the traffic situation in the Cowley area better, as in the whole City. We are very concerned that massive housing proposals for greenfield sites at the fringes of south east Oxford such as at Grenoble Road and the Chalgrove Airfield, and throughout south Oxfordshire particularly, will lead to exceptional increases in traffic throughout the South East of Oxford over the next 20 years and more.

We do not have to accept this.

The Gilligan report, *Running out of Road,* suggests spending £200 million on cycling in the Oxford area because of our particular needs.[[9]](#footnote-9) However, an end to austerity and more funding for local government will be needed to meet all the types of transport changes people actually want. See below for what people have told us.

We are indebted to David Newman for some very pertinent comments about the current situation with cycle lanes:

“Rule 140 of the Highway Code is the main one for cycle lane advice. It states: ‘You **must not** drive or park in a cycle lane marked by a solid white line during its times of operation. Do not drive or park in a cycle lane marked by a broken white line unless it is unavoidable. You **must not** park in any cycle lane whilst waiting restrictions apply.’ and the Institute of Advanced Motorists point out, ‘From today (22 June 2020) councils can use CCTV vans to record offences.’ Unfortunately, most of the cycle lanes in Oxford are marked by broken white lines, so they are not compulsory. Imagine getting the county council to paint solid lines down Barns Road.”

And there has now also been a consultation on a large-scale Controlled Parking Zone in the Barns Road and surrounding areas. This includes improving the cycling arrangements.[[10]](#footnote-10)

We have to bear in mind that the most dangerous commuting routes for cyclists are in Oxford and Cambridge.[[11]](#footnote-11) These are the two places with the highest levels of cycling use, so it is clear that this situation has yet to be supported by adequate measures to ensure cyclists are well-protected from vehicles, as far as this is possible. Unfortunately, part of the poverty of the imagination of Oxfordshire County Council is revealed in its use of recent additional Government fund for cycling route repairs and grass cutting along such routes without adding to the cycling network. This is the link to the schedule of works on cycling and walking. You can see clearly that it is all maintenance and repair with no additional cycling space at all. <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/coronavirus/cycle_routes_work_schedule.pdf> Worse, in West Oxfordshire, a councillor found the County Council was using surface dressing of cycle routes – which means loose chippings on the road and surrounding area indefinitely, which is completely inappropriate for any cycle route or road.[[12]](#footnote-12) Our personal experience of surface dressing, on Bulan Road, is that 2 years later loose chippings are still present on the road and pavements. So Electronic Road Pricing may quite simply provide funds to get the job done properly.

**The changes people in the Cowley area want**

Our canvassing and use of questionnaires and leaflets have already given us a considerable range of ideas for dealing with traffic problems. However, many conversations in different settings have contributed to this list of suggestions. Thank you to everyone who has already helped with this.

We have arranged these proposals in a list, showing the voluntary and cheapest options first. More expensive and longer-term options are shown towards the end of this list:

Voluntary measures: A voluntary Low Traffic Zone: that all residents and users of the area try as far as is practical for them to walk and cycle within the area, or use a bus or taxis rather than their own car. About a third of households in Oxford do not have access to a car, so giving up owning a car – perhaps hiring one if needed as some people already do in the City – is worth considering including for its cost advantages. Deliveries are better than shopping. Similarly, to try to encourage our visitors to not come by car when visiting, when practical. Clearly, the creation of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods will help – but people can take action now. We regret the delay on consulting about this in Cowley, until probably late 2021.

The supermarket shop: You can (nearly) always get it delivered. Given the lockdown experience, more local businesses are operating online. But please note that large, durable shopping trolleys will accommodate the weekly supermarket shop that many people make by car. It would be preferable that everyone tries as far as possible to use their local corner shops for some of their purchases, so that they stay open and have a good diversity of stock. However, many people when pressed for time, or in need of more diversity of goods than their local shop provides, will use a supermarket. From experience, the larger and stronger shopping trolleys which can be used by able-bodied individuals are the ones which are over £100 – even over the internet. However, they will last a lot longer than the cheapest ones. No one ever had to pay road tax on a shopping trolley or fill it up with fuel or plug it in for a re-charge!

Schools: Voluntary measures to decrease traffic movements at the beginning and end of each school day at all schools in the area: Green Travel Plans are subject household choice, and can be promoted by schools. People have expressed a variety of concerns to us about conditions outside Tyndale, St.Christopher’s and St.Gregory’s schools at school run times. Extension of double yellow lines selectively around school sites to strongly discourage car use at ‘school run’ times is needed, generally. Creation of ‘walking bus’ and ‘cycle bus’[[13]](#footnote-13) arrangements for schools to reduce their traffic impact could also help where these do not exist already. See for example: <http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/school-transport/set-up-a-walking-bus>

St. Christopher’s School: St Christopher’s does still have pedestrian back access, after the loss of the Temple Cowley Pools, but this will be lost when the new housing development is completed. The access road to the former swimming pool development has been built to ensure that vehicles will always park on the footways. Campaigning to ensure that these mistakes are not built into the design at the planning stage would be useful. The new informal zebra crossing by the Silver Band hall takes no account of normal walking patterns and has a tree planted in the middle of the footway. Casual observation shows that nobody walks along the intended route. Observations at the front entrance to St Christopher’s school show that double yellow lines are completely ineffectual in encouraging good behaviour by parents driving. St Christopher’s Close suffers extremely from parents dropping off children by car. Bollards are the only measure that will stop parents parking on footways here. The proposed Low Traffic Neighbourhood may address this issue to a small degree, as might the proposed School Street.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Tyndale Community

School: Problems of parents dropping off and collecting children by car create issues for every school, needing Green Travel Plans which – as is the case at the time of writing with the Tyndale School – do not exist. The loss of the link to a Local Education Authority does not help as it could do a lot to develop and maintain such policies. Tyndale School is particular concern to proximate residents partly because it has had increased pupil numbers but the development on the William Morris Recreation Ground, very strongly opposed by local residents, including the Old Temple Cowley residents’ association and the Bullingdon Community Association, is the greatest concern. This includes 80 car parking spaces, adding appreciably to rush hour/school run traffic, despite highly improbable Highways Authority assertions that their modelling say that everything will be just fine. Our solution is that William Morris Close and the school cannot cope with more cars, and that the homes on the Recreation Ground should have been entirely car free by covenant. Once again, Oxford City Council planners have failed to see obvious traffic problems they are creating by their decisions.

Service efficiency: Voluntary changes to delivery times and compulsory measures in the worse affected areas: the combined clash of school run times, University term times and deliveries of all types contribute to traffic levels in morning and post-school run rush hours (3-7pm as a combined afternoon rush hour on school days). If, however, organisations doing deliveries sought to do their deliveries OUTSIDE 7.30-9.30am and 3-7pm on these days, then there would be a significant easing of the rush hour traffic level. We note that some deliveries take place on Sundays, and that cargo bike deliveries are increasing. Both of these are welcome, and the more use of cargo bikes for the last leg of deliveries the better.

Walking: Clearing bins: Bins left on pavements are a sensitive issue in a number of areas. Council staff tend to leave bins where they found them, and not in walking routes and not on grass verges. Also, getting your bin out of other people’s way is being a good neighbour, even if you do live in a shared house and some people do not do their share. It is clear that some very busy people rely upon the support of neighbours who clear away their bins for them, serving the community by doing so.

Noise: Traffic noise is a general problem which a gradual transition to more electric vehicles will only deal with slowly. The ring road as it currently stands creates a large amount of noise, which is not being addressed. Traffic noise when travelling above 30mph comes from tyres and not engines, so this noise is not likely to change in the coming years and indeed will worsen if further traffic growth is not counter-acted by good policies. There need to be more noise barriers but also average speed cameras and a reduction in the speed limits on many roads. This would also contribute to improvements in air quality, particularly in those interim years when people are still driving vehicles with internal combustion engines and dual fuel. Average Speed cameras are apparently not liked by Thames Valley Police but have been very successfully used in Bedfordshire in a variety of settings.

Florence Park access: It is now unlikely that the City Council, after its consultation, will try opening Florence Park 24/7 instead of locking it at night. Hazel Dawe has got considerable support, including by the Friends of Florence Park, for signs asking cyclists to cycle slowly and safely in the park. Earlier access in the mornings would allow people to walk their dogs or those with early starting times to walk to work through the park. This is more likely to occur. We look forward to seeing how this works.

Speeds: 20 mph speed limits on all residential roads in the Cowley area with enforcement. This should apply City wide. We are looking to see if volunteers could obtain hand held speed cameras to use on the worst roads for speeding in the area. Given the excessive traffic levels along the Cowley-Oxford Road axis, we would support 20 mph limits on this road as a deterrent to those who insist on using cars on this route when bus services are available. We recognise that cuts have eroded the funding of the Police which makes fair taxation and properly-funded public services a vital part of achieving the quality of transport conditions which the community deserves. More specifically, 20 mph speed limits particularly on Oxford Road, Iffley Road, Church Cowley Road and Between Towns Road were proposed for tranche 2 of the Emergency Active Travel Fund which will simplify the current mix of 20 and 30 mph limits. Average speed cameras are really needed to make this change effective and to encourage walking and cycling.

Road and pavement repairs: The condition of roads and pavements throughout the Cowley area shows the irresponsibility of neglect. Years of cuts instead of having fair taxation[[15]](#footnote-15) are steadily making more pot holes, and the quality of so-called road repairs and road improvements are often completely unacceptable. Pavements are cracked, pitted, pot holed and hazardous in places. We need repaired roads and pavements, not plans for new trunk roads.

Cycle stands: Cycle stands needed in Oxford Road as a support to the shopping area.

Access to John Allen Centre: The car park has been remodelled giving a slight improvement to cyclists and pedestrians although the access to the car park and shops remains extremely poor. There is no provision on the access road for cycling – no cycle lanes or advanced stop lines, despite there being three lanes for cars. There are various options here but really the whole access needs a complete rethink: improve the footpath access to make it more disability friendly as well as cycle friendly and less congested for pedestrians; ask the managers of the John Allen Centre to reconfigure some parking space so that cyclists can get into the car park, if they do manage to wheel their bicycles down the footpath (currently cars are parked closely together so there is no way through them near the pedestrian entrance); we recognise that some cycle parking has been provided near the entrance to the Park, and that additional stands have been added. In the long-term, since there is a multi-storey car park on the other side of the road, parking in front of the John Allen Centre could be reduced in stages until it is disability only, allowing alternative uses for this car park.

Marsh Road Car Park: The Marsh Road Park car park needs to become part of a CPZ in order for there to be proper charging and enforcement there. Currently people leave cars there for days on end at no charge and the car park is often used by the waste depot employees. This would make an ideal drop off place for a range of schools – St Gregory’s as there is a route through to Flo Park, St Christopher’s school, (particularly if the whole of Temple Road becomes a school street) and across the park to the Oxford Spires Academy.

Improvement in signage: More signage in Cornwallis Road i.e. 20 mph painted on the roads to inform traffic they need to slow down and mini speed bumps (like the ones in Kennington) they are more effective than the long ones.

Health Centre parking Cars parking there for the Health Centre park right on the corner, which makes it difficult for the buses and cars turning left into Cornwallis Road, the existing "minute" double lines should be continued round the corner to the legal required distance from a corner i.e. Highway Code rules which are ignored.

Eastern Bypass – Homebase,

Aldi, shopping area

(Horspath Driftway) Pedestrian and cyclist access within this shopping centre is very poor. We note the tragic death of a cyclist in an accident in this area on 3rd November 2020. The pedestrian and cycle networks for this site need a reappraisal urgently.

Junction improvements: a) Hatched box at junction Beauchamp Lane-Between Towns Road-Church Cowley Road-Rymers Lane to deter traffic from seeking to use this junction in rush hours particularly;

 b) Junction of Liddell Road and Bartholomew Rd: entrance into Liddell is too wide and invites speeding traffic. Steve Dawe took part in a discussion in detail on this junction on a ‘walkabout’ with residents, council officers, Police and a Highways engineer from the County Council in June 2016. Agreed a small island in the middle of the junction was needed to allow a shorter crossing space for the elderly and to protect all who needed to cross this road. Double yellow lines parking at school run times to be the subject of a ‘sweep’ by traffic wardens;

 c) Junction of Oxford Road and Between Town Road: This area needs to be made safe for cyclists. The option of a Dutch style roundabout redesign of junction arrangements needs investigation.

Pedestrian crossings: Have been requested in areas where parents need to take children to and from school in particular. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, if properly designed and funded, should achieve the objective of making areas around schools have far less traffic. This does depend, in part, on leadership from schools about Green Travel Plans, walking and cycling bus arrangements etc.

Cycle route improvement: Continuous cycle route from Cowley to Blackbird Leys swimming pool. The signed cycle route from Cowley to Blackbird Leys still has a major weakness where the route crosses Church Cowley Road/ Between Towns Road. Two-way cycle tracks are needed on both sides of Between Towns Road – which would help to discourage non-essential vehicle movements. Church Cowley Road also needs cycle track arrangements, after some consultation. These initiatives need to be part of the redesigning of this area for cyclists following on from the Templars Square development, if this occurs.

Cycle measures needed: Widen cycle paths; extend cycle networks; increase number and size of cycle park areas and install CCTV to keep bicycles and electric bicycles safe; increase awareness of electric bikes as an option as this allows people to use them whose mobility makes them less confident with an ordinary bike, or whose habitual routes include difficult hills. A dedicated cycle route is needed from Hockmore Street into the Grates to improve upon the existing cycle-unfriendly arrangements.

Cycle technology innovation: Encourage the use of velomobiles as part of increasing cycle usage in Oxford. SEE: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Velomobile> Electric scooters or ‘E Scooters’ offer a number of challenges to their wider use: one company is fitting its version of this technology with noise-making technology to alert the public to their presence. Whilst electric scooters are prohibited on pavements and in pedestrianised areas, this is being ignored by users.[[16]](#footnote-16) *Sustrans* has expressed concern about potential impacts of these scooters on walking: “E-scooters offer little physical activity benefit and current evidence suggests they are replacing trips that would otherwise be walked, cycled or taken by public transport.”[[17]](#footnote-17) It appears the experience of these scooters in the USA has included injuries and discouragement of people walking as scooter users choose to move along pavements, rather than along cycle tracks where speeds are rather more compatible than with pedestrians.[[18]](#footnote-18) In short, we feel getting e-scooters off pavements is important to maintaining high levels of use of walking networks, so polite social pressure may be needed to encourage users to use cycle routes. But this presumption relies upon Councils having the funding and the political will to ensure cycle routes are completed networks, not disconnected sections. We cannot be optimistic that enforcement is a realistic prospect, and have to rely on the common sense of users of e-scooters.

Review of double yellow

Lines: Measures proposed throughout the whole area we are attempting to cover will require repeated reviews of the location of double yellow lines as new walking, cycling and traffic arrangements are being designed.

Specific road actions: a) Double yellow lines on right hand side entry from Crescent Rd into Crescent Close;

 b) Boswell-Bailey-Knolles and nearby: Controlled Parking Zone needs full implementation.

 c) Enforcement issue: cycle lane on Barns Road is regularly blocked by parked cars – raised by Steve Dawe on the June walkabout mentioned above, and has been featured in the *Oxford Mail* but enforcement is limited. The Controlled Parking Zone consultation for this area, current at the time of writing, may well make some impact on what appears to be non-resident parking on Barns Road in particular;

 d) enforcement issue: Burgan Close: Problems of cars blocking access including to disabled bay; similarly, problems of excessive non-residential parking in Dodgson Road;

e) Rymers Lane: residents concerned about weight limits issues and want restrictions to reduce Heavy Goods Vehicles;

f) Towpath, safety and long-distance cycling issues: The new Oxford Parkway has no connection to the canal towpath or other non-road cycle track that we are aware of. The proposed infill of the Kidlington/Oxford gap means that the canal could become even more important.

The bike transition from the central train station to the towpath is very difficult and should be eased by a new path and bridge besides the existing railway bridge.

In the south, a new bridge, besides the railway bridge, should be introduced, linking Littlemore and the science park with the towpath and the rail system.

As the Canal and River Trust has no statutory duty to maintain the towpath it falls to the district councils and County Council to plug the gap, as they have done Wolvercote to Oxford;

1. Double yellow lines: at entry point to Cornwallis Road to prevent inconsiderate parking;

h) A commitment from the Council is needed to ensure that any new development at or near Templars Square is accompanied by measures which reduce rather than encourage traffic. Hazel Dawe has carried out a survey of cycle use in the area with Mark Utting of Cyclox. They have been in touch with the council planning department and the developer but are not hopeful that they will be listened to. Additional dropped kerbs by the cycle parking outside the co-op would enable cyclists to access the cycle parking without having to use the dropped kerb at the pelican crossing and thus reduce and potential for cyclists / pedestrian conflict;

i) Crescent Road: further examination of means to reduce through traffic, to prevent rat running. The current bollards, humps and chicane arrangements do not discourage rat-running. If a barrier is to be placed on the road, e.g. between Beresford Place and Junction Road, then it could conceivably be a gate to permit emergency vehicle or refuse truck access only. Residents would need to be consulted on this;

j) Marsh Rd: smooth the cobbled areas of the traffic calmed parts of this road to improve them for cyclists;

k) Link between Barracks Lane and Leafield Road, Temple Cowley: About two thirds of the way up Leafield Road there is a link through from Leafield Road on to Barracks Lane (on the road section of Barracks Lane rather than path section through the park). This is next to some garages. If a dropped kerb were put at the edge of the pathway/ road on Barracks Lane this would be much easier to use for cyclists; l) m) and n) All of these have been notified using Cyclescape and Fix My street websites and to Councillor Louise Upton cycling champion at the City Council at the time. We will keep you updated on any progress.

l) Link between Beresford Place (off Crescent Road) and William Morris Close: There is currently a footpath link between Beresford Place and William Morris Close. There is a “cyclists dismount” sign. There is space, if the shrubbery were removed from one side of the footpath, to make this a shared use link. It may seem insignificant but it means that cyclists can avoid turning right off Hollow Way (a very busy road) into Crescent Road by using the traffic light junction of Hollow Way / Horspath Road / Barracks Lane and then cutting through William Morris Close and Beresford Place. This is also an important walking and cycling link to the Tyndale Free School in William Morris Close and it is important to encourage walking and cycling to school.

Controlled Parking Zones These areas of restricted vehicle parking are the only effective way to remove commuter parking from residential areas. People, generally from outside Oxford, are parking their cars wherever it suits them in residential areas, and then walking, cycling or taking a bus into their place of employment. Paying £65 a year for enforcement of controlled parking is a low price to pay for preventing problems in your local area AND helping to reduce traffic flows into Oxford. Each Controlled Parking Zone requires the consent of the public in a ballot because this is a legal requirement. There is ample evidence in Oxford of areas rejecting CPZs and then wanting them in later years as non-local traffic and car parking rises in each residential community. It is for each individual to decide how to vote on a CPZ if these are offered in an area. The cost to households is about £65 per year which finances the enforcement of the CPZ by ticket inspectors. The County Council’s current Transport Strategy supports CPZs for all of Oxford’s residential areas. Each CPZ has to have a local consultation and majority support before it is implemented.

Between Towns Road Long-term: the pedestrian integration of the shopping areas which is needed means much better traffic free means of crossing Between Towns Road. The Cowley Low Traffic Neighbourhoods will help, but general discouragement of through traffic via traffic calming-cycle tracks-wider kerbs at some points are all desirable.

Oxford Road Long-term: achieving a better fusion between the shopping areas on this road and Between Towns Road would require re-marking of the roads, better pedestrian arrangements and a review of the existing bus stops. The objective of this is to encourage people to use the businesses in this area as part of any shopping/other activities they are doing in Between Towns Road. Another possibility is to create a Virtual Shopping Street of local businesses on the Internet which would include those on Oxford Road.

Marsh Road Depot: The Marsh Road Council Depot, in Temple Cowley, was intended to be a temporary location for Oxford City Council’s Direct Services Department. It has overgrown this site, spreading toward the gates of the Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground and, after a contested planning application, on to the Recreation Ground itself. Complaints to the Council about overspill parking from this site into neighbouring residential areas have been shrugged off. Naturally, a site with many employees and vehicles of all sizes generates a large number of traffic movements and a lot of air pollution. The Cowley Area Transport Group therefore supports the New Temple Cowley Pools group’s suggestion of a Leisure Centre on this site. The possibility of some high-density social housing apartments should be considered too. Both of these types of development when combined are unlikely to cause the levels of traffic movement of the current Depot, which belongs in one of the vacant spaces in industrial estates in the City. However, the City needs to be more assertive about car free developments, which are enforced by covenants. If the Zero Emission Zone or an ultra-low emission zone was to include this area, then the Depot would certainly have to move.

Work for the Liveable Cowley proposals indicates support for traffic filters to reduce traffic within the Cowley area. We have participated in street stalls talking to the public about these suggestions. It is currently uncertain when such proposals will be refined and put out to public consultation, but the latter part of 2021 looks likely.

**Development threats likely to cause traffic problems:**

The Oxford City Local Plan has been accepted by the Inspectors and envisages substantial housing expansion within the City. However, far more housing serving Oxford is being built in neighbouring local council areas. Consequently, if such housing is completed up to 2036 and beyond, it is highly likely that traffic on all routes into Oxford will increase year on year. (We consider alternatives below – and in a critique of this Plan: [www.catg.gov.uk](http://www.catg.gov.uk) under OTHER RELEVANT SUBMISSIONS). We note that there is an observable substantial increase in delivery vehicles in Oxford, adding to traffic problems.

South Oxfordshire District Council has had housing targets imposed on it by central Government, to meet the alleged needs of Oxford, with massive traffic implications for its own area and for routes into Oxford. CATG has commented on the Government’s Future Transport rural strategy consultation,[[19]](#footnote-19) since this is as bad in its lack of consideration of transport implications as the Government’s Planning proposals, or the Oxford City Plan. Submissions CATG has made on these two initiatives can be found on our website.[[20]](#footnote-20)

A hotel at Templars Square, the Aldi on Horspath Driftway, 7000 homes planned for south of Grenoble Road if built (which will add about 14,000 cars plus thousands of associated vehicle movements per year for deliveries/construction work/utilities etc)……..The list of potential car-generating developments is large. Since most of the jobs in this large new estate suggested for Grenoble Road are likely to be in Oxford, the traffic impact of such a large development on all road routes to employment centres in south east Oxford will be immense. We will oppose this development as we are opposing the Expressway. We need to ensure that we increase cycling in the City, which is good but Cambridge is far ahead. John Whitelegg, former Professor specialising in transport studies, notes:

“Cambridge boasts the highest levels of cycling in the UK, with 29% of its working residents making a cycle-commute, and 33% of residents cycling often.” [personal communication]

In Oxford 22 % cycle often (more than three times per week) source [www.bikeradar.com/commuting/gear/article/the-uks-best-and-worst-cycling-cities-48566/](http://www.bikeradar.com/commuting/gear/article/the-uks-best-and-worst-cycling-cities-48566/)

In Oxford, we need to do better or traffic congestion will carry on getting worse. We certainly welcome electric bus deployment, when achieved, to partly address air pollution and give a better bus alternative to users.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Grenoble Road, and the pressures from other housing developments especially in South Oxfordshire, will increase pressure for Controlled Parking Zones in Oxford as commuters seek points to pick up buses/park cars and bike to their actual destinations. Grenoble Road cannot be looked at just as a housing development: it means more air pollution, traffic congestion, noise from vehicles and time lost to individuals and businesses in traffic jams. Oxford needs social housing and part-rent, part-buy housing for keyworkers. More homes at astronomical prices and rents are not needed. But, above all, people need to live near existing facilities and services they need. For example, apartments we are campaigning for to occupy space above surface level on car parks and on Park and Ride sites demonstrate that there is much, much more brownfield land available for housing in Oxford than our City Council recognises. We are very concerned that new estates will, under current conditions of very poor spending on public services, simply not have the community facilities they need. Estates with no or few facilities means more car journeys are likely as people in such deprived areas seek community facilities and services they need – in Oxford. What is true about this for urban extensions is likely to be even worse in the development corridor wrapped around the Expressway as envisaged by the National Infrastructure Commission and Highways England.

Apartments above, around or right over surface car parks are needed in Oxford to serve local social housing and key worker demand. Long-term empty shopfronts, offices and derelict industrial buildings and sites are needed for housing. The continuing increases in online shopping make the continuation of the City Centre at its current scale of shops unimaginable, even if we were not in a recession. Very low-cost housing must take over as retail sites come empty. To summarise housing most likely to generate the least traffic within Oxford:

* Social housing, created by the City buying homes on sale
* Keyworker housing, creating by City buying homes on sale and offering them as part rent, part buy homes so that keyworkers like nurses and teachers can afford to live in the City
* More secure moorings on Oxford area waterways
* Subdivision of existing social housing to create space for more households
* Conversion by the Council after purchase or by the private sector of empty shops, offices and vacant industrial estate building

Working measures likely to reduce traffic:

* More support by employers for online working from home
* More use of flexitime to allow people to have more time for themselves and their families

**Transport as employment**

In future, sustainable transport can employ more people. Bike businesses, electric bike enterprises, cargo bike delivery companies, Electric buses and coaches, canal barge maintenance and construction, and the Electric Mini production at BMW all have parts to play. But stronger leadership is needed to enhance sustainable transport from the County and City Councils, as the public have indicated to us in response to our surveys, canvassing and petitioning.

We note that Norway has decided that all cars produced in the country will be electric from 2025. We are concerned at the risk to BMW Cowley and relevant supply chain industries if a very good deal is not obtained by the Government with the EU for the post-Brexit Future. The Confederation of British Industry has warned of the ‘extinction’ of the British car industry if a bad Brexit deal occurs.[[22]](#footnote-22) Car production throughout the EU has depended upon the movement of parts for motor vehicles moving freely across borders towards eventual assembly points without tariffs, within the Single Market. The UK after Brexit could face such tariffs for a wide variety of trading sectors and could consequently prompt UK industries to move inside the EU in preference to the UK.

**How does the national context influence transport issues in Cowley?**

Local Government has too small a share of the overall tax base in the UK. This is a very centralised country which should have far stronger local government in terms of powers and financial resources, for all purposes.[[23]](#footnote-23) We have suggested Electronic Road Pricing as a way to help fund the sustainable transport measures we need.

**Where do we want to get to? Our long-term vision:**

We believe that people can have better lives if they can reduce the necessity for tedious and sometimes unpleasant car travel. Good planning of additions to housing within existing urban areas and more opportunities to telework (and work) at home must also play a part in Oxfordshire’s future. The C virus recession has taught people a lot about the advantages of this, and created a lot of support for working at home. The Government could help with making flexitime something most employers have to offer their staff. Such measures will reduce commuting, and the congestion, pollution and danger road traffic causes. For the Cowley area, the more that people live and work within the area, the less they will need to resort to driving a car. With far more online working now prevalent, the more time people will have for their families, their community and their interests.

We view the hierarchy of road users as being one with the most vulnerable road users at the top, and the least vulnerable with the most choice at the bottom. This means pedestrians come first, jointly with those in mobility scooters, then cyclists, then public transport users, service vehicle users, taxis and at the bottom of the list car drivers and the drivers of Heavy Goods Vehicles. If our built environment was designed with wheelchair and pushchair users and people who can’t move fast in mind, we would have true accessibility for all.

Accessibility matters more than mobility. Everyone having the access they need – to services, to the shops they need to visit, to schools and colleges, to relatives, friends and community groups – does not mean all of these journeys have to be made by car. The more people can access what they need by walking, cycling, public transport and shared car use, the less air pollution, noise and traffic congestion there will be. Access may only be an online purchase or search away.

Planning in each part of our City and in our small communities within the City needs to address the need for access and how this can be achieved with the least use of unsustainable forms of transport. This clearly means having more decentralisation and properly funded local government, including parish councils covering the whole of the City, which can ensure better coordination of services in accessible locations. We want to make it easier for everyone to choose the mode of transport which does the least environmental damage while we are going about our daily lives.

**The possibilities:**

1. Walking and cycling must be enhanced for public health, and to reduce traffic. Ultimately, we need to be a 15 minute City where the facilities people want and need are no more than a 15 minute cycle ride away;
2. Access matters much more than just increasing mobility which risks increasing traffic congestion;
3. Planned decentralisation of public services to strengthened local government is about improving access for people, and reducing the need to travel long distances. This means losing community facilities anywhere in the Cowley area is to be resisted strongly as we need community facilities to be within walking and cycling distance;
4. Expansion of teleworking is vital to keeping Oxfordshire’s roads free of gridlock: our own pressures on employers to allow more teleworking are really important;
5. Geographical coverage and incidence of bus services must be improved and speeding up the move towards electric buses is a high priority;
6. Railway coverage and incidence of services must be increased, including by the re-opening of disused lines and especially the Carterton-Witney-Oxford-Cowley-Wheatley rail line;
7. Information for local transport users must be upgraded so that people can easily check their travel routes and consider the best options on any given day;
8. 20 mph limits need to be applied to all residential roads and actually enforced.
9. Greater efforts must be made to ensure more children travel to school other than by private cars;
10. Canals and waterways, and the use of powered electric bicycles and motorbikes can all provide extra opportunities to reduce road traffic levels, by providing alternatives for some transport users.

First edition, September 2016.

Second edition, 2018

Third edition, 2020

**APPENDIX**

**MOTION FOR BULLINGDON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION:**

The Cambridge-Oxford Expressway:

[as passed by the Association, 5th June 2018]

This Association notes:

1. The National Infrastructure Commission and Highways England have been working on a Cambridge-Oxford Expressway from Cambridge to Milton Keynes and finally to Oxford. This comprises the use of existing roads, new roads and a housing and development corridor;
2. Two out of three possible Road & Corridors routes run along the edges of the Shotover Country Park which our community uses, and are likely to mean substantial increases in traffic on the Ring Road in rush hours, and in all roads allowing traffic to leave the Ring Road into Oxford, including Horspath Driftway and through Garsington Road which crosses the south end of Hollow Way;
3. A substantial increase in traffic in Oxford is in conflict with the County Transport Plan, agreed with the City, to ensure an increasing number of journeys being made into the City are not made by car;
4. That the following groups are opposing all three road and corridor routes: the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust, Campaign for Better Transport, Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, the Expressway Action Group, Oxford Climate Lobby, and Oxford Friends of the Earth.

This Association agrees:

1. That any development which will substantially increase traffic in our part of Oxford is unwelcome and must be opposed;
2. That the Association will write to local councillors and our MP in opposition to this development;
3. That this Association will make a submission to the consultation on a chosen corridor to be held by Highways England in July 2018 and any subsequent consultations on this topic;
4. That this Association will support the petition against all three possible routes for the Expressway and its corridor and distribute it to all Community Centre user groups and residents by email.

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1. See a critique of this very poor Plan under Other Relevant Submissions at [www.catg.org.uk](http://www.catg.org.uk) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See: <https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/viralnews/18873024.housing-algorithm-to-overhauled-prioritise-building-urban-homes/> & <https://www.theplanner.co.uk/news/proposed-housing-algorithm-would-threaten-countryside-says-cpre> & <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/news/national/housing-algorithm-to-be-overhauled-to-prioritise-building-of-urban-homes-16799/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. In the UK, Electronic Road Pricing as in Singapore could encourage more public transport use and discourage excessive car use. Land Value Taxation could offer a progressive system of local taxation, taking more from the richest groups than Council Tax and including zoning to protect the environment, historic buildings and residential areas from over-development. A Financial Transaction Tax is needed to deal with tax haven activities, internationally. Air Passenger Duty can be raised to reduce Climate-changing flights. A similar charge is needed to make passenger ships less attractive to users, forcing a change towards all-electric vessels, perhaps with added sails. These are just a few examples of what is possible. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/906344/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-1-20.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See for details: Oxfordshire Liveable Streets: <https://oxlivsts.org.uk/connecting-oxford/plus/> Also see their comments on the County/City *Connecting Oxford* proposals: Connecting Oxford concise info: <https://oxlivsts.org.uk/connecting-oxford/ols-statement-on-connecting-oxford-covid-19/?link_id=2&can_id=5e4bc0fed6c3dc2db42c6f59fdc3526c&source=email-update-group-photo-physically-distanced&email_referrer=email_851260___subject_1154360&email_subject=group-photo-physically-distanced> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See for example, proposals for the Cowley area: <https://oxlivsts.org.uk/cowley/> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. This includes roughly 11,000 new homes by 2031 in the City of Oxford: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-52725530> & c.100,000 in Oxfordshire as a whole. Suggestions of doubling the number of homes in Oxfordshire by 2050 have been mooted, but the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan is itself being delayed - <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/18493604.oxfordshire-plan-2050-housing-delayed-pandemic/> - in the current recession with a hard Brexit likely to worsen conditions. Access to construction labour is also likely to be compromised by the current Government’s insistence on earnings thresholds for migrant labour, which are likely to undermine the overall availability of the lower skilled groups in the construction sector. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Air pollution is being found to have worse effects than originally thought e.g. <https://www.ecowatch.com/air-pollution-childrens-health-parkinsons-alzheimers-2648212948.html?rebelltitem=5#rebelltitem5> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. National Infrastructure Commission – *Running out of Road: investing in cycling in Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford,* 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See our submission on this CPZ at: <https://www.catg.org.uk/our-consultation-submissions/> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The Times, 28.8.20. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <https://www.heraldseries.co.uk/news/18425119.councillor-says-cyclists-danger-road-resurfacing/?ref=fbshr&fbclid=IwAR3YQr2Aa4sOtvNZtqHDyFgOxK3qK5IHr7h7YAdx2J0f9VD8_VfqQelt7oY> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. As in use at the Windmill School. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. “A School Street is a road outside a school with a temporary restriction on motorised traffic at school drop-off and pick-up times. The restriction applies to school traffic and through traffic. The result is a safer, healthier and pleasant environment for everyone. School Street schemes offer a proactive solution for school communities to tackle air pollution, poor health and road danger reduction. A School Street scheme will encourage a healthier lifestyle and active travel to school for families and lead to a better environment for everyone.” <http://schoolstreets.org.uk/> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Electronic Road Pricing, as used in Singapore, would be the best system for the Oxford City Region. See this report for how this might work: see under REPORTs at [www.catg.org.uk](http://www.catg.org.uk) [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The I newspaper, 3rd November 2020. See also our submission to the consultation on this topic, concerning a possible trial of e-scooters on roads in East Oxford: see in Submissions at [www.catg.org.uk](http://www.catg.org.uk) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/policy-positions/all/all/our-position-on-e-scooters/> [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. See: <https://theconversation.com/electric-scooters-on-collision-course-with-pedestrians-and-lawmakers-99654> [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. See under OUR CONSULTATION SUBMISSIONS at [www.catg.org.uk](http://www.catg.org.uk) [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Under OTHER RELEVANT SUBMISSIONS at [www.catg.org.uk](http://www.catg.org.uk) [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. See: Electric buses: <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/18476181.oxford-bids-50m-become-first-all-electric-bus-city-uk/> [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/brexit-trade-deal-latest-uk-motor-industry-customs-union-warning-cbi-paul-dreschler-a8396366.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. See our submission to the consultation on the County’s future Transport Plan: Local Transport and Connectivity Plan under submissions at [www.catg.org.uk](http://www.catg.org.uk) SEE: Also from CPRE: <http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk/news/item/2808-oxfordshire-county-council-local-transport-connectivity-plan-engagement> Apart from Electronic Road Pricing which could fund a wide variety of sustainable transport measures, we support calls for Land Value Taxation as part of increasing local government resources for all of its functions. See: <https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/final-draft-lvt-report_2.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-23)