

Cllr Yvonne Constance OBE, Cabinet Member for Environment,  
and  
Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Leader  
Oxfordshire County Council  
County Hall, New Road  
Oxford OX1 1ND

4 June 2020

Dear Cllrs Constance and Hudspeth,

**Re: Emergency Active Travel Funding**

We, a coalition of Zero Carbon and other community groups in and around Oxford City, wish to express our enthusiastic support for the plans put forward by Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council to direct funding from the Government for the safe reopening of our town centre, towards a range of measures including the widening of pavements, building segregated cycle lanes and increasing cycle parking in the city.

Not only are these measures necessary to enable the public to maintain social distancing and return to the city centre safely, they will also help to encourage and enable active travel within the city more generally, and thus yield substantial longer term benefits for air quality and public health. Such changes are also in line with both the declarations of Climate Emergency, made by Oxford City Council in January 2019, and by Oxfordshire County Council in April that year.

We are heartened to see that the recent survey of 191 businesses in the city led to overwhelming support for the measures and we want to reinforce their support with our own.

We support the urgent reallocation of space in the town centre, and other Oxford shopping areas, to enable people to maintain social distancing. We are pleased to see this includes the introduction of segregated cycle lanes, and re-organisation of bus stops to reduce pavement congestion.

We also welcome an increase in bicycle parking in both the city centre and Park & Rides around the city, to enable the last mile commute into town, in combination with better sign posting for pedestrians and cyclists, reduced speed limits on the main traffic routes and reduced car parking spaces in the city centre itself.

Pedestrianisation of the city centre, wherever possible, with the introduction of outside space for tables and chairs is most positive, and again in line with our requests for improvements to our city to date.

We look forward to the expansion and implementation of the School Streets programme to make it safer for children to walk or cycle to school as more children begin to return to school, with at least six schools implementing the programme by September 2020.

In addition, we ask that you:

- Implement Connecting Oxford with bus gates now and deliver Connecting Oxford Plus soon after;
- Increase the size of pavements and create segregated cycle lanes on the main arterial roads of Oxford;
- Introduce Park and Pedal schemes, with cycle hire and increased cycle parking at Park and Rides and in the city centre.

All of this must be done with great attention to maintaining maximum accessibility for people with disabilities and the elderly – and indeed, we hope that these changes will in fact make the city centre a much *more* inclusive space. This should include considering the needs of all people with special needs including those visually impaired as well as those using wheelchairs.

As well as making commitments that are SMART, we also urge you to make these changes permanent – as there is an ongoing need to cut traffic levels from pre-Covid levels, both to sustain reduced air pollution levels that have only under lockdown come below maximum legal limits in Oxford city centre (especially as those worst affected by heavy air pollution are sadly those more likely to now suffer the worst health consequences of Covid), and to meet the UK's net zero climate commitments.

This is an exciting moment for our city, and we are thrilled to see the local authorities seizing the opportunity to make necessary changes which will benefit us all, in both the shorter and longer term.

Signed,

Broken Spoke Bike Co-op

Climate Outreach

Cyclox

Fossil Free Oxfordshire

Green New Deal UK Oxford Local Hub

Local Environmental Action Florence Park (LEAF)

Low Carbon Oxford North (LCON)

Low Carbon West Oxford (LCWO)

Oxford Pedestrians' Association (OxPA)

Parents For Future Oxford

Rose Hill & Iffley Low Carbon

XR Oxford