

PRESS RELEASE

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Cyclox welcomes Council's decision to consult public on congestion alleviation

Doing nothing about Oxford's congestion is not an option!

The County Council agreed today to a public consultation on relieving the traffic congestion in Oxford. Cyclox welcomes this decision. The Council must take bold steps to make the city safe for cyclists, bus users and pedestrians. That means reducing levels of road traffic.

Cyclox wants to see congestion relief because car use affects all of us and has environmental and public health costs.

- Driving causes congestion, snarling up bus services. In this city, that problem has reached crisis point;
- Car traffic pollutes the air our children breathe, causing thousands of hospital admissions and even premature deaths
- Cars create daily risks of serious road injury and death - particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Congested roads discourage people from cycling

This is not a tax on the poor. One third of Oxford's residents do not own a car and that includes many of those on low incomes.

The current proposal has exemptions for many categories of driver as well as 100 day passes per year for residents to travel without incurring a charge.

Congestion relief charging is a form of modest compensation paid by those who create these costs.

- Cyclox' response to the consultation will urge the Council to go further. We propose the Council:
- provides extensive communications to the public giving a clear explanation of how congestion charging will work – with a 'plan your route' option on their website or at the very least a link to the excellent Oxford Travel Options website and online cycling map

- Supports the Park and Rides - making the buses free and providing electric bike and scooter hire
- Invests in more secure cycle parking - particularly in residential areas with a high proportion of high-rise flats
- Provides access to free adult cycle training at all levels - from learning to ride to learning to be safe on the roads
- Makes the charging system weight based. The more a car weighs, the higher the charge should be. There is mounting evidence that large SUVs create severe environmental harms, and increased risk of road injury and death. It is right that they should pay more. SUV owners are likely to have higher incomes - so weight-based charging is fairer.
- Ensures that all funds raised by this scheme are used to support improved public transport and better cycling infrastructure
- Implements a 20-mph speed limit within the ring road (this will still give faster journey times to those currently resigned to sitting in traffic jams)

Ian Loader, Chair of Cyclox said

“The status quo is not an option: if nothing is done the city will grind the city to a halt. We cannot build more roads to magic congestion away. The problem cannot wait until the traffic filters go live.

We need to find ways to support greater use of buses and active travel now. This scheme is a vital step in that direction.”

ENDS

Notes for editors:

- 1) Oxford Active Travel Website: <https://www.oxfordtravelloptions.co.uk/travelling-within-oxford/cycling> and Oxford Cycling map <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?hl=en&ll=51.74914695494538%2C-1.2214771009598047&mid=1Rz-4KoldwrN1Cqf5XaKIEqkURgogGVY&z=14>

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Ian Loader, chair of Cyclox, is available for interview on 07793 755415

