

## DRARA Petition - Council meeting 11/7/23

I'm presenting this petition from DRARA (Divinity Road Area Residents Association), which is inside the East Oxford LTNs.

We call on Oxfordshire County Council to 1. *leave* the timber bollards in place in Cowley and East Oxford LTNs to *protect* those who cycle, scooter, walk through our neighbourhood, and 2. *avoid* opening the LTNs to further vehicles, such as *taxis*.

We do appreciate the huge work done by councillors and officers in implementing the LTNs. But we are *dismayed* by your decision to allow black cabs and minicabs exemptions through 3 Cowley filters, and *deeply concerned* you intend to do the same in East Oxford.

This is an unusual, *retrograde* step, a radical shift in policy which will undermine your hard work, and substantially weaken the LTNs.

- We're just getting used to LTN streets as safe places; daily we see children take their first wobbly bike rides, parents let their kids cross roads by themselves, streams of older kids cycling to school. Taxi exemptions will immediately put off many from traveling like this - in particular the very young and old - parents tell us they will return to *driving* their kids to school if the 1,000 or so black cab and minicab drivers get access through these streets. As traffic levels increase, the well-documented consequence is a *decrease* in active travel.
- And *current* data from Telraam traffic counters on Cornwallis Rd (where the taxi exemption has just been granted) *already* show significant numbers of taxis are *speeding*; this can only worsen once it's a through-route

- The council forecast for *number* of taxis (based on counts in roads with ANPR at only *one* end) is clearly *unrealistically low* given that opening up a taxi route between *two arterial roads* (as is the case here) will create a *shortcut*, which will inevitably become the main route for taxis; *a taxi 'superhighway' through our narrow residential streets*.
- And most of these streets are *too narrow* for cyclists and mobility scooters to pass cars safely; Divinity Road is on a hill, so more dangerous for cyclists with increased traffic. And many minicabs will be used by drivers 'off duty' - how will you know the difference?
- If Divinity Road gets ANPR and taxis, the parallel Southfield Road will get the scooters - so knocking out the safe cycle routes on *both* streets.
- This step goes against the council's key policies on traffic volumes, accidents, active travel, climate change - it will cost a lot to counter its negative effects. It will undermine the active travel and liveability gains of the LTNs - it's *not* what you signed up for.
- Exemptions for minicabs like this have not to have been implemented in any other LTNs in the country as far as we know, so the effects are *just unknown*. *If* introduced in Cowley, it's surely clear: it *cannot* be repeated in East Oxford until the Cowley changes have been *fully monitored and assessed*.

So: stick to your guns - don't destroy your good work. *Reverse* the Cowley decision. *Don't* implement this in East Oxford. *Don't allow taxis or other motor vehicles through our LTNs*.