



John Lee
Transport Planner
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road
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VIA EMAIL

11 February 2021

Dear John,

Bicester Active Travel Scheme consultation response

I am writing with reference to the proposed Bicester Active Travel Scheme which is currently subject to public consultation.

The Coronavirus pandemic has emphasised the importance of walking and cycling as safe and sustainable options for local travel. I welcomed the Government's commitment to invest £2 billion into improving cycling and walking in England over the next five years, with £250 million immediately available in a new Active Travel Fund. I am very pleased that Oxfordshire County Council has been able to secure an allocation of this funding, alongside a generous contribution from the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, to invest in a new Active Travel Scheme for Bicester.

The proposals focus on improving walking and cycling routes from the south and west of Bicester into the town centre. The safety of pedestrians and cyclists is of paramount importance. For this reason, I welcome the suggestion to introduce single and shared-use, off-road cycle paths. Close attention should be paid to ensuring these are wide enough and sufficiently signposted to ensure the safety of their users. To this end, I think the proposals to improve existing road crossings and introduce a number of toucan crossings seem reasonable. They should be a significant improvement on existing crossing opportunities.

I understand many cyclists' concerns about taking to busier main roads. With this in mind, I think the designation of signed Quietways will reassure Bicester residents and encourage more to take their bikes into town. Proposals for reducing the speed limit to 20 miles per hour on a number of roads should also have a similar effect, as well as ensuring they are safer for residents, pedestrians and cyclists alike. I have been contacted by a number of constituents about residential parking on some of the roads being considered for Quietways and new cycle paths. It is important that any decision that is made takes account of the potential impact on access and parking for residents.

I note that the Active Travel Scheme includes proposals for a contraflow cycle lane or unsegregated shared path on the Causeway. I think these proposals need to be looked at carefully to ensure there is adequate width for the safe passage of vehicles, pedestrians and a two-way flow of cyclists. I appreciate that this is coupled with the proposal to restrict access for large vehicles, but the introduction of a shared path or contraflow cycle lane will only reduce the width currently available to traffic. On the issue of large vehicles, any proposal to prohibit loading and unloading must also be carefully balanced with the needs of the many businesses based on the Causeway who will continue to require access.

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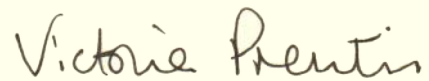
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Overall, I think these measures to improve walking and cycling routes are broadly positive. I hope that any decisions made are done so with sufficient consideration of their impact on road users. The safety of pedestrians and cyclists, and the needs of residents and businesses must all be considered together to ensure that everybody can benefit from this scheme.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victoria Prentis". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Victoria Prentis MP