

### **Yvonne Constance visit to Waltham Forest (“Mini Holland”).**

Yvonne is head of Environment, that covers transport. She went on a visit to Waltham Forest (where I/others visited last year). She was impressed by what she saw, and has apparently “seen the light”.

Suzanne Bartington continues to put cycling issues to those at the top of the Council, so has good access to places we don’t get to that often.

### **A 40 improvements.**

The A 40 “improvements” plan is gradually creeping forward, but the bid for money for the B4044 cycle track was withdrawn from the A 40 revamp bid – apparently due to DfT bidding guidelines. Ian Hudspeth (head of the County Council) had 700 or so e mails in his inbox within about 3 days complaining about this.

The County have since explored other avenues to help fund the B 4044 funding.

### **Barton Park**

More phases of construction happening. Examining one of the planning applications showed totally impractical indoor parking layouts, some residents would have to lift their bike over other people’s parked bikes to get theirs out. You have to look at these things in great detail, this problem was only noticed when looking at the drawing zoomed in by a large amount.

### **Botley Rd (Eynsham Rd – Binsey Lane).**

A redraft of the plans were put out for consultation, much improved on the previous version, but still inadequate designs on the fine details of side road junctions.

### **Botley Rd railway bridge.**

We had a meeting in December with the County on the design details. Network Rail had asked the County what their requirements were for the road underneath, and the County asked for our thoughts. We came to an agreed position. It looks like the shared use (cycle/pedestrian) tracks each side of the road will be 4m, not 3m wide, and the road only 2 lanes wide (rather than 2 plus a median strip down the middle).

Construction pencilled in for April – December 2023.

### **Access to Headington**

Still continuing, over budget and late. Many construction details unsatisfactory. Graham Smith still beavering away on this, as much to get the system to do better in future.

### **Oxford North (Wolvercote/Pear Tree etc.)**

Designs/planning application progressing, for roads being constructed from new, the cycle infrastructure designs are disappointingly out of date.

### **South East Corridor study.**

The County applied for funding to carry out a design study on this. No construction funds available yet, but outline designs are now ready to help with future funding bids.

A huge amount of work even when the work was divided between about 6 or 7 people (drawings covered Abingdon Rd/Iffley Rd/Cowley Rd/Weirs Lane/Donnington Bridge Rd/Between Towns Rd/Barnes Rd, the eastern ring road from BMW to Kennington roundabout and the A 4074 as far as Oxford Business Park).

Basically a good concept design as long as the fine design/construction details are got right.

### **City Centre (signage) St Ebbe's/Queen St/Cornmarket St./New Inn Hall St signage revision).**

My proposal for resigning this area in a clearer and less confusing manner made in (via the City Council signs man) to someone in the County Council who thought the proposal was "too confusing". Something to follow up.

A chance to improve it has also appeared, as the County consulted on permitting commercial cargo bikes to use Queen St during the day, so something might come of this. Permitting commercial cargo bikes during the day needs careful signing (ref private cargo bikes, and commercial normal bikes (Deliveroo etc.), as the signs would need DfT approval.

### **Oxford Cycle Survey.**

Thank you to all those who responded to this, with over 3000 responses, it is the most responded to County survey ever. Results/analysis not yet out.

### **Meetings with the roadworks/maintenance team.**

These have continued and have proved useful for getting the message over – and sometimes not! The maintenance budget is up! It is now about twice what it was. The extra funding is from borrowing money against expected income from future developments. This allows some roads to be repaired sooner than otherwise, which makes the repair cheaper. There has been a noted move away from filling small holes to repairing larger areas of road, which is more cost effective. The County have moved from a giving notice of road works to an applying for a permit system. So to do roadworks, contractors/utility companies now have to apply for a permit. If the works over run, they get fined £100 - £2,500 per day. The proceeds from these fines are planned to be used for more inspection of works, so improving quality of repairs.

### **Coming up.**

#### **Closure of Walton St at the Beaumont Street end.**

This has been closed for some time due to sink holes in Walton St taking a long time to repair (including extricating a repair lorry that sank some of its wheels into a new sink hole. The County have proposed to make this closure last for a trial period of 18 months (I think the sink holes are now repaired). Residents have said how much better Walton St has been without the rat running commuters. If the 18 months trial is deemed a success, they plan to make it permanent. The County also say it will be a trial before bringing in road closures in other neighbourhoods to deter rat running through residential streets.

#### **Kennington railway bridge (ring road).**

They plan to rebuild this in 2023 assuming they find the money (cost is approx 1 or 2 years County road maintenance budget for the whole County). Reconstruction is further complicated by adjoining flood channel works and 1m diameter water main in the central reservation.

So, over all, things gradually improving, but considering air quality, congestion, public health, climate change, not improving fast enough.

James Dawton.

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