

Press Release

For immediate use

Link to data tables: <https://bit.ly/LTNpollOxford>

Majority of Oxford public back Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

Nearly six in ten people living across Oxford support Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) such as those installed in East Oxford almost six months ago, around twice as many as oppose them.

In the first formal test of public opinion since the LTNs were put in place, a survey carried out by YouGov on behalf of Oxfordshire Liveable Streets showed that 56% of respondents supported LTNs, while only 29% opposed them. (1)

The data also showed that all age groups supported the LTNs, with younger residents (aged 18-34) backing them by a large majority*, while older people (over 55s) also backed them, though by a smaller majority (49% to 44%). The LTNs are slightly more popular with men than women, with 60% of male respondents supporting, compared to 52% of female respondents. Across both genders, just 29% of both women and men opposed LTNs. (1)

The news comes in the week of World COPD Day. (Wednesday 16 November 2022). According to the [British Lung Foundation](#) 1.4 million people in the UK are living with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), with about the same number believed to be undiagnosed. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is the third leading cause of death worldwide, and Air pollution exposure is considered an important risk factor for COPD, according to a study in medical journal [The Lancet](#). (2,3)

Oxfordshire County Council installed bollards and planters in the Divinity Road, St Clement's, and St Mary's areas and a public consultation to gather views on the LTNs will close on 30 November (4). A meeting of the Council's Scrutiny Committee this week will discuss the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan which amongst other measures proposes traffic filters to support the LTNs in East Oxford (5).

Oxfordshire County Council distributed a survey to every home and business on Howard Street, to which respondents were 5 to 1 in favour. Council officers hand delivered a letter drop to approximately 200 houses in November last year. 70% of residents who responded to the survey supported the proposal; 13% objected; and 17% were either neutral or did not state a preference. Many residents highlighted that traffic volumes are currently high, detailing concerns of greater pollution levels and the safety of pedestrians. (6)

A separate survey by the Divinity Road Area Residents Association found residents in the area were 9 to 1 in favour of a planned LTN, with 83% of residents saying they supported the plans. (7)

While an angry minority has been vandalising and damaging the bollards in the schemes, the LTNs have proved popular with local residents and those in the rest of the city. Some residents have shown their commitment to the LTNs, by acting as 'human bollards' to stop car and van drivers continuing to drive through the areas illegally.

A number of locals took matters in their own hands to protect cyclists, pedestrians and children from drivers flouting the rules, sharing a video on social media about the actions which generated 35,000 views. (8)

Neelam Ali, a disabled woman of British Pakistani origin, who has lived in Oxford all her life, just near Cowley Road said:

“The LTNs are a brilliant system which I have been thoroughly enjoying, giving me more freedom and independence as an electric wheelchair user.

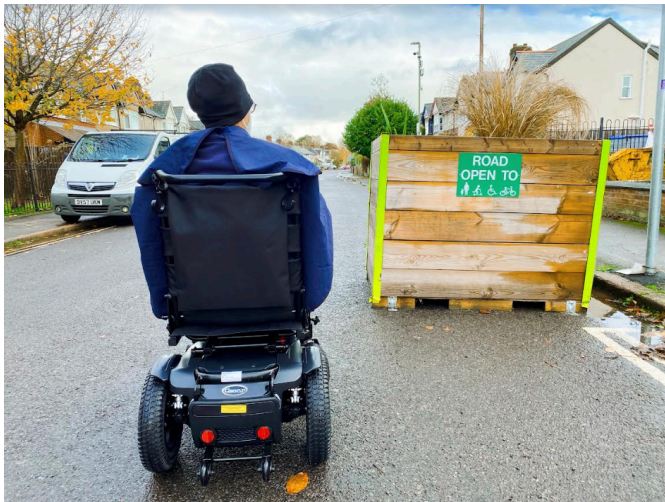
“LTNs and quieter streets have opened up so many local streets so that everyone can travel, walk, cycle, scooter and wheel safely within them. Also it has cut down pollution in my neighbourhood.

“My best LTN street is Cornwallis Road because I can wheel at top speed, safely in the middle of the road because of the camber.

“James Street is a regular route that I use to get from Iffley Road to Tesco on Cowley Road.

“Before the LTNs were in place, this used to be a very challenging trip, trying to avoid the household bins scattered about obstructing the pavements, parked cars on pavements, and flytipping.

“Now I really enjoy riding in the middle of the road. I can get to my destination a lot quicker without being stressed out about trying to get past obstacles on the narrow pavements.”



Neelam Ali

Evin Abrishami, a community nurse who lives in Cowley where a low traffic neighbourhood has been in place for six months, said:

“As a single Mum and community mental health nurse associate, I know how difficult people’s lives can be, but the LTNs are working for me.

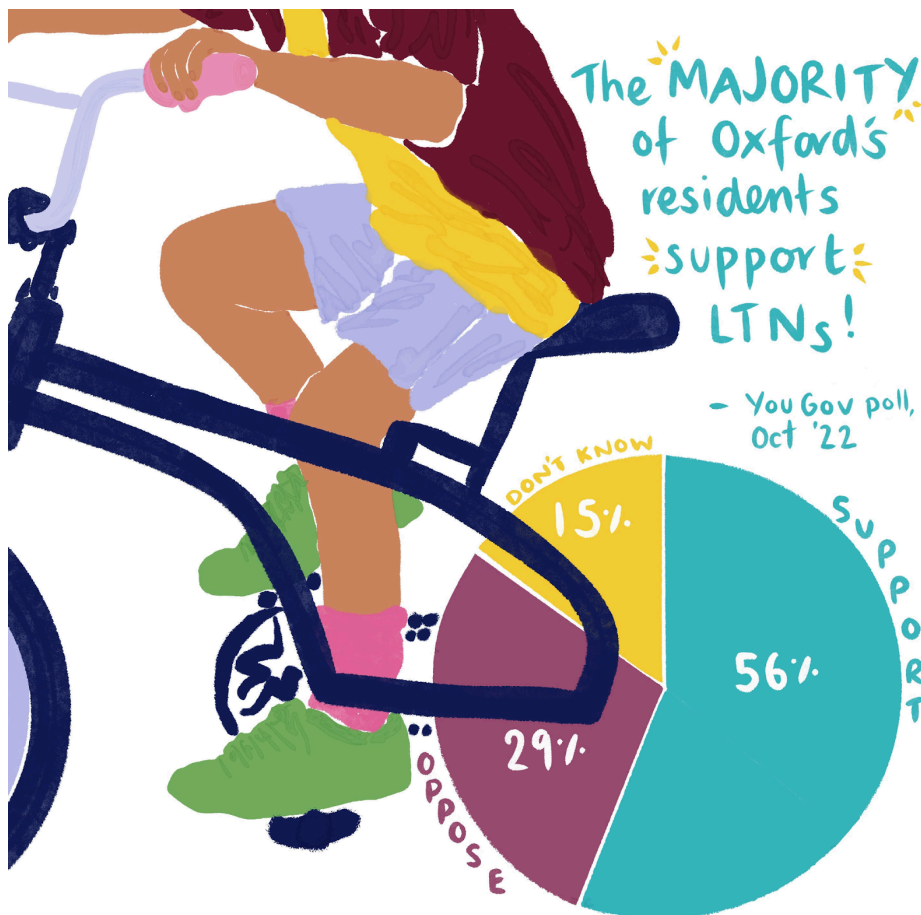
“I visit my patients by e-scooter, bike or by car if I need certain equipment. It definitely raises a smile when I turn up in my uniform on the e-scooter! The LTNs do mean I have to plan my journeys a bit more, but I just think there are so many journeys that don’t NEED to be done by car.

“Often I can get there quicker on a bike or e-scooter than in the car! If I can swap to an escooter or bike with a demanding job and two kids on my own, then others can. Those who are physically capable of walking, cycling or scooting should do it - after all the biggest health risks actually come from not moving enough so as a health worker it’s natural to want to see this change.”

Robin Tucker, a member of Oxfordshire Liveable Streets and chair of COHSAT said:

“This evidence makes clear the support for LTNs. Not everyone supports them, but those causing pollution and harm often resent restrictions that stop them doing this, especially when that harm is as normalised as the private car is.

“The democratic process has been followed, and the people disrupting it are the people who are vandalising the traffic filters put in place to provide safe and healthy streets, and creating danger by driving through the prohibitions. It is vital that councillors respect the mandate they were elected on and the view of the majority, and protect and continue the LTNs.”



A Citizens' Jury run by Oxford's Global Centre on Healthcare and Urbanisation, which was made up of randomly selected members of the public weighted to account for local demographics, took evidence from 17 witnesses and discussed the issues over four days, agreed the LTNs should be part of the solution to Oxford's transport, health and climate change problems. (9)

Air pollution is a major health risk, with toxic air from traffic fumes contributing to cancer, asthma, stroke and heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and being linked to dementia. A January 2020 study from Centre for Cities found out that at least one in 17 deaths in Oxford is related to air pollution. (10)

The polling was carried out amongst residents in Oxford as part of YouGov's online opinion survey within Oxford City. YouGov is an independent agency, regulated by the British Polling Council, and any questions were reviewed to ensure they did not influence participants.

A decision on whether to make the trial scheme permanent, extend or remove it will be made at a county council cabinet meeting in February 2023. Officers will recommend the decision based on factors including any feedback received, data collected on traffic and air pollution and levels of walking and cycling in these areas. (11)

ENDS

Respondents were asked the following question in the survey: **LAO_Q4. 'Low Traffic Neighbourhoods' are residential areas where driving cars and other motor vehicles is restricted other than for access to the neighbourhood. Having read the above, would you support or oppose such a measure? (Please select the option that best applies)**

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 249 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 7th - 12th October 2022. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

Any sample size above 50 is considered to be statistically reliable, given the geographic size of the population.

**Any percentages calculated on bases fewer than 50 respondents must not be reported as they do not represent a wide enough cross-section of the target population to be considered statistically reliable. These have been italicised. The majority for young people was 67% in favour, 12% against.*

Editor's Notes

1. See Table 1 below and <https://bit.ly/LTNpollOxford>
2. <https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/copd/world-copd-day>
- 3.
4. [Air pollution and risk of chronic obstructed pulmonary disease: The modifying effect of genetic susceptibility and lifestyle - eBioMedicine \(thelancet.com\)](#)
5. [Agenda for Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 16 November 2022, 10.00 am | Oxfordshire County Council](#)
6. [East Oxford low traffic neighbourhoods | Oxfordshire County Council](#)
7. [Oxfordshire Liveable Streets on Twitter: "WATCH: ordinary residents in #Oxford are now acting as 'human bollards' to protect cyclists, pedestrians and children from drivers who flout the rules, and vandals who have destroyed the physical bollards. Extraordinary, really. https://t.co/UJEdWYRw1l" / Twitter](#)
8. Howard Street survey - Paragraph 51 of this Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Report, 16 Dec 2021:

https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s58798/CMDHM_DEC1621R12%20-%20East%20Oxford%20LTN.doc.pdf

9. DRARA survey - [DRARA_LTN_Survey_results_overview_12Mar2021.pdf](#) (mcusercontent.com) and [Overwhelming support for a trial LTN](#) (drara.org.uk)
10. Citizens Jury - <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/22954059.citizens-jury-weighs-evidence-backs-bus-gates-traffic-filters/> and <https://www.gchu.org.uk/street-voice/>
11. [New data on key sources of air pollution in Oxford | Oxford City Council](#)
[Latest report on 2021 air quality levels for Oxford published | Oxford City Council](#)
[Air Quality Monitoring Review and Assessment of Air Quality and mitigation measures in Oxford City \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](#)
12. [East Oxford low traffic neighbourhoods | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

About

The Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel (**CoHSAT**) is a group of voluntary and campaigning organisations working across Oxfordshire to create attractive, accessible and people-friendly streets. <https://cohsat.org.uk/> in

Oxfordshire Liveable Streets are an advocacy organisation committed to improving the lives of Oxfordshire residents through innovations in neighbourhood design, street and highway layout, and transport infrastructure. <https://oxlivsts.org.uk/>

Full tables:

'Low Traffic Neighbourhoods' are residential areas where driving cars and other motor vehicles is restricted other than for access to the neighbourhood. Having read the above, would you support or oppose such a measure? (Please select the option that best applies)	
Unweighted base	249
Base: all Oxford adults	249
Strongly support	36%
Slightly support	20%
Neither support nor oppose	15%
Strongly oppose	21%
Slightly oppose	8%
Net: Support	56%
Net: Oppose	29%