



## **“A once in a generation opportunity”**

Oxfordshire Liveable Streets’ submission to Oxfordshire County Council for tranche 2 Department for Transport emergency funding

### **Introduction**

Starting in the 1970s, Oxford’s councils have a tradition of closing roads to through-traffic as part of their aims to keep the city vibrant yet sustainable. Such moves have often involved big political risks but the struggles have always paid off to the benefit of the local economy, tourism and residents. With the Covid-19 epidemic, despite the devastation for many, there is a chance for further transformational change.

The Department for Transport has grasped this unique opportunity and has placed a statutory requirement on local authorities to implement traffic management measures, stating that **“a step-change in their roll-out is needed to ensure a green restart”**. The Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps has said, **“The government therefore**

**expects local authorities to make significant changes to their road layouts to give more space to cyclists and pedestrians.”**

Oxfordshire Liveable Streets is a community group that has been working hard with local people and elected representatives to develop plans that could bring about transformational change. With Oxfordshire County Council’s disappointing settlement from the tranche 1 funding and the request from Central Government that local authorities be “more ambitious” in tranche 2 we hope that our proposals here will be seen in that light.

We have focused very much on what Central Government has asked local authorities to implement, namely (emphasis added):

*‘Whole-route’ approaches to create **corridors for buses, cycles and access only on key routes** into town and city centres.*

*Introducing pedestrian and cycle zones: **restricting access for motor vehicles** at certain times (or at all times) to specific streets, or networks of streets, particularly town centres and high streets. This will enable active travel but also social distancing in places where people are likely to gather.*

***Modal filters** (also known as filtered permeability); closing roads to motor traffic, for example by using planters or large barriers. Often used in residential areas, this can create **neighbourhoods that are low-traffic** or traffic free, creating a more pleasant environment that encourages people to walk and cycle, and improving safety.*

*Encouraging walking and cycling to school, for example through the introduction of more **‘school streets’**. .... They can be effective in encouraging more walking and cycling, particularly where good facilities exist on routes to the school and where the parents, children and school are involved as part of the scheme development.*

*Identifying and bringing forward **permanent schemes** already planned, for example under **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans**, and that can be constructed relatively quickly.*

*Reducing speed limits: **20mph speed limits** are being more widely adopted as an appropriate speed limit for residential roads, and many through streets in built-up areas. 20mph limits alone will not be sufficient to meet the needs of active travel, but in association with other measures, reducing the speed limit can provide a more attractive and safer environment for walking and cycling.*

We would further urge that tranche 2 funding is used to bring about change in the way that people travel through low cost and high impact schemes that cover as wide a geographical areas as possible and is not used to introduce schemes that are high cost and largely maintain the status quo or “gold plate” a very low impact scheme.

We believe that all our proposals contribute to the aims and aspirations of Oxfordshire County Council’s policies as set out in *Connecting Oxford, Oxfordshire 2050, Climate Action*

*for a thriving Oxfordshire and Oxford's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. In addition our proposals contribute to Oxford City Council's Air Quality Action Plan.*

We are presenting this work as a series of individual documents, as follows (in alphabetical order):

1. Cowley (phase 2)
2. Divinity Road
3. Headington
4. Jericho & Walton Manor
5. St Mary's

In addition to creating a number of LTNs across the city, this needs to be done in conjunction with other initiatives. We believe that School Streets in particular are of critical importance and building good relations with schools.

Cherwell School has 58.4% pupils cycling to school. We would very much like to see that replicated across the city. We believe that the School Streets concept needs to be accelerated across Oxford. There needs to be commitment from the County Council and City Council in ensuring staff resources are allocated to allow for adequate engagement with schools. This is particularly the case for those within the pilot and proposed Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. Through partnership working, for example, consideration needs to be given to making existing car parks across the city available as dropping off points by parents where it is not practical for children to travel by more active means.

## **Additional Funding for Cowley Low Traffic Neighbourhoods**

We recognise that the Cowley LTN is temporary and experimental at this stage and will only be made permanent if full consultation confirms that this is what residents and businesses want. We would, however, ask that ANPR cameras are installed for the bus gates in both Florence Park and Church Cowley using Tranche 2 funding as a matter of urgency. Without them, it will become common knowledge that drivers can get away with passing through these areas and will undermine the whole concept. Should it be the case that after the trial period residents decide that they don't want to live in LTNs then the cameras could be relocated to other parts of the city.

There are a number of junctions that might require re-working. Residents have already identified junctions that they believe are going to be problematic. In particular Between Towns Road / Garsington Road, Oxford Road and Hollow Way / Garsington Road, Oxford Road should be seriously considered. Regardless of the timescale for the implementation of a bus gate on Hollow Way, this junction as it currently stands poorly serves both pedestrians and cyclists and is likely to continue to act as a barrier for parents taking their children to school in a sustainable way.

Other junctions that could potentially require work of some kind include:

Marsh Road / Oxford Road

Newman Road / Oxford Road A4158

Crowell Road / Between Towns Road / John Allen Centre entrance

We recognise that some of the potential junction work outlined here will not qualify for emergency funding. A commitment to address issues that arise as a result of the LTNs will hopefully ensure their long-term acceptability to local residents and businesses.

## Divinity Road Area LTN Proposal

Here, in the Divinity Road area, we propose to create a Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) by introducing modal filters at the tops of Divinity Road and Stone street, as indicated on the map below. These two modal filters will prevent traffic from using our residential streets as a shortcut from beyond Oxford to central Oxford.

Our residential streets have benefitted overwhelmingly from the national reduction in car use during lockdown. Before lockdown, according to a County Council survey conducted in October 2019, 6,000 cars were driving past our doors, on Divinity Road, day and night. Southfield Road also carries a significant volume of traffic, but the survey planned for Spring this year did not take place because of restrictions imposed by Covid-19.

Our aim is to make the low level of car use, and improved safety of cyclists and pedestrians, a permanent feature in our neighbourhood.

According to our local survey results, 92% of our residents favour an **access-only** neighbourhood. This will prevent the very many out-of-area drivers taking shortcuts through our residential streets. The kinds of speeds we usually see at night when the roads are empty, we are now seeing in the day – posing a threat to pedestrian and cyclist safety. Many local parents are afraid to allow their children to walk on the pavements and cycle to school, for fear of being knocked down. Divinity and Southfield Roads are both used heavily by students, pedestrians and cyclists, who attend Cheney School and Oxford Brookes University.

Our proposal will not only improve road safety and provide opportunities for our children to walk to school and cyclists to get to work and university, but will also allow for ongoing social distancing, reduced vehicle emissions and air quality improvements for local residents. Reallocation of our road spaces will allow for school street projects, a major cycle corridor and pocket parks, in line with the Connecting Oxford plan for our city's future.

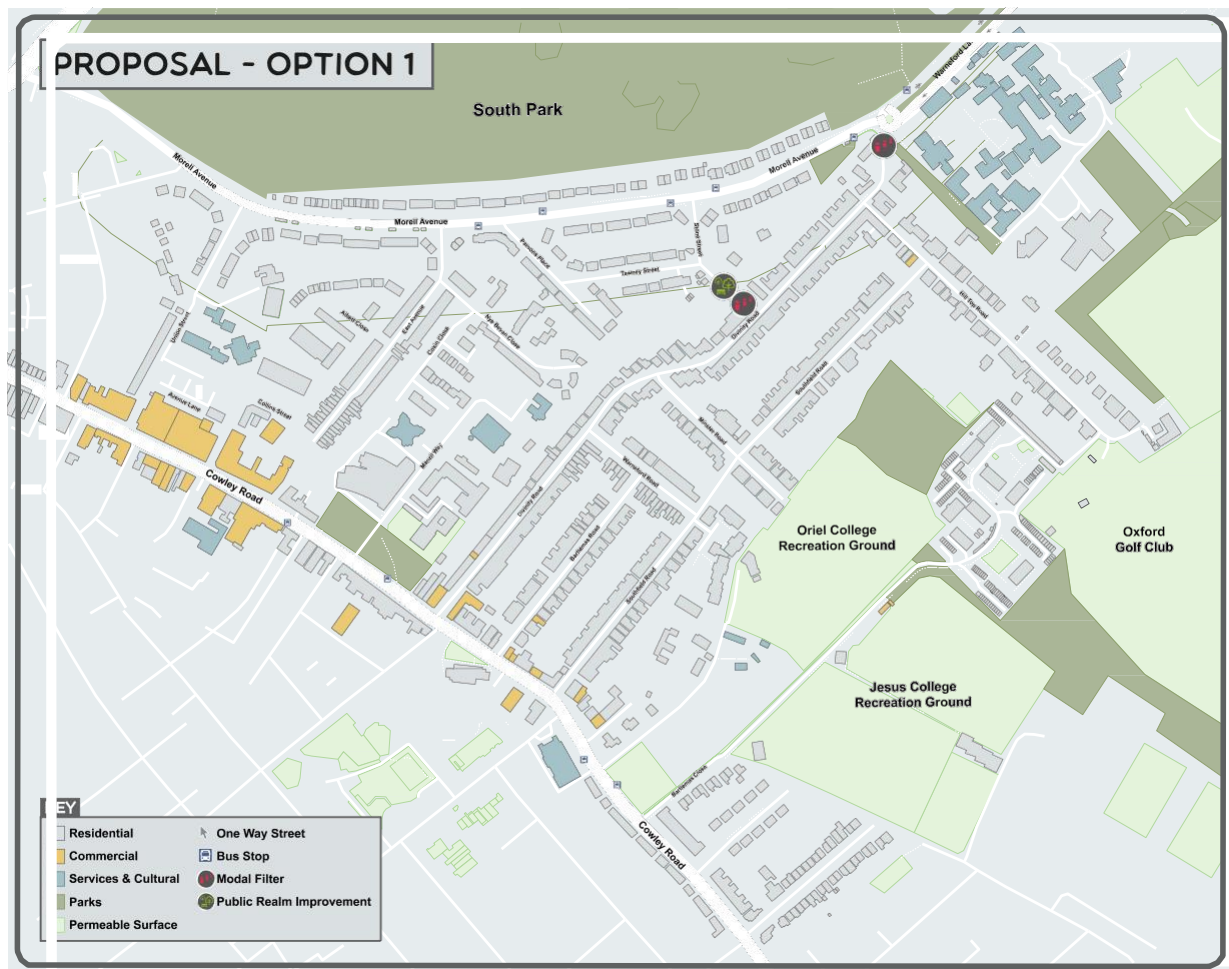
The proposed locations of modal filters are shown in the plan below. They are to be placed at the top of Divinity Road and at the Divinity Road end of Stone Street.

### County and City Councillors' endorsements.

Councillor Jamila Azad for the County and City Councils and Councillor Tom Hayes for the City both endorse these proposals. Their joint statement is:

*'The County and City Councils are keen to introduce low traffic neighbourhoods. By making our streets quieter and safer we hope to encourage more people to travel on foot or by bike. These proposals prepared by the Divinity Road Area Residents Association are an effective and economic way of achieving this objective.'*

## The Proposal



### DRARA Residents' Traffic Survey (2020)

#### 92% of residents want DRARA to be access only

In June, we asked DRARA residents for their views on traffic in their street. This was in response to a Council survey of traffic volume on Divinity Road, which recorded nearly 40,000 vehicles a week, including a high number of vans and HGVs. On weekdays, nearly 6,000 vehicles use Divinity Road as a rat run. The traffic volume in our residential street has soared by over 70% since a previous survey was conducted five years ago.

We had 183 responses to our survey. It produced a clear finding:

There is high and overwhelming concern about heavy traffic in and around Divinity Road, and strong support to turn the area into an access-only network of streets, in line with Oxford's ambitious plan to reimagine our streets so people can safely walk and cycle.





## Headington Liveable Streets

[oxlivsts.org.uk/headington](https://oxlivsts.org.uk/headington)

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We are a group of parents and residents from across Headington, who have come together to build on 20 years of community effort to create safe walking and cycle-friendly streets.

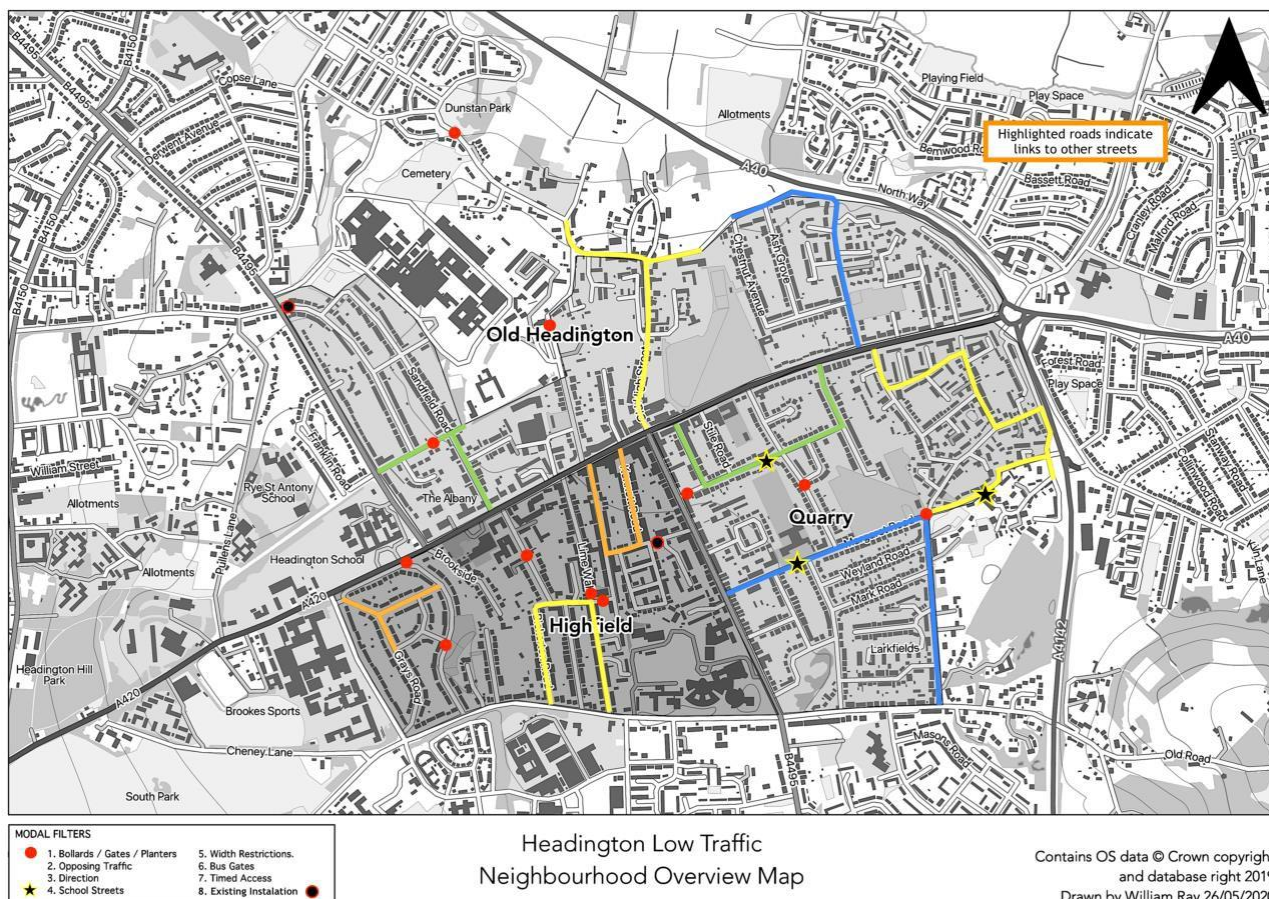
Headington Liveable Streets has created a community-led holistic plan for low traffic neighbourhoods across all of Headington. We are building a wide community movement to co-design improvements for our streets, of which modal filters are the start.

Our vision is for community-led liveable streets across Headington, where active travel is made easy, playing out is safe, air quality is improved, neighbourhood connections thrive and rat-running is no longer an option.

40,000 vehicles travel through Headington each day<sup>1</sup>, to our vital employment hubs and beyond. 65% of people who work in Headington live within cycling distance, yet 38% arrive by car and only 17% by bicycle<sup>2</sup>. Measures will support the necessary shift in transport habits.

Headington is a centre of economic growth, so attracts traffic. Through neighbourhoods joining together we can take a holistic approach which deals with concerns about displacement.

**Eleven modal filters are needed to create safe walking and cycle corridors throughout Headington.** This will create a network of quiet routes from the Thornhill Park & Ride, to the JR, NOC and Churchill Hospitals, Brookes and Oxford University Old Road campus, as well as for local residents and school children.



<sup>1</sup> Based on 2018 data for London Road, The Slade and Beaumont Road in Headington Quarry.

<https://oxfordshire.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=afe8bef2e7514f91bb1bf6ec034fb69b>

<sup>2</sup> Source: Oxfordshire County Council, LCWIP

## Evidence of Resident Support

County Councillor Roz Smith has received over 270 letters of support for such measures in the last few weeks.

Headington Liveable Streets has launched a community survey. 84% of respondents (201 in 4 days so far) support the creation of low traffic neighbourhoods in Headington.

There is longstanding and robust evidence of support beyond this. The Headington Neighbourhood Plan ("the Plan") endorses measures to reduce through traffic volumes and speeds and to improve accessibility for cycling and walking across Headington. The Plan also contains a range of community projects which include congestion charging, active transport and speed reduction.

These policies and projects were the subject of detailed public consultation and were endorsed by a very substantial majority in the Plan referendum held in May 2017.

Headington Action which represents all the residents associations and many of the community groups in Headington and Headington Neighbourhood Forum have strongly endorsed the provision of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods "We warmly endorse the case made by the County Council's consultation for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. We strongly support the provision of low traffic neighbourhoods across Headington to produce a better liveable environment for our community."

The residents' associations representing Highfield, Old Headington and Quarry have been actively seeking measures to reduce through traffic volumes and speeds in their neighbourhoods for over 20 years. They have made detailed studies of traffic behaviour and proposed measures to the County Council on many occasions. Representatives from these residents' associations have jointly prepared the master plan.

## Our Councillors support the creation of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods across Headington Our Councillors support this proposal subject to detailed local consultation

	County Councillors	Roz Smith Liz Brighthouse Mark Lygo Glynis Philips
And	City Councillors	Stefanie Garden Mohammed Altaf Khan Mark Lygo Chewe Munkonge Mike Rowley Martyn Rush Roz Smith

## Wider Community Support

Our proposal also has the backing of Lynn Knapp, Head of Windmill Primary School, Jude Bennett, Head of St Andrews Primary School, and Natalie Wilson, Head of Headington Quarry Nursery School.

## Next Steps

We are seeking

- Funding from Tranche 2 of the Active Travel Fund, to trial point closures of roads to through traffic, with moveable planters. Our proposal is for this trial to form a key part of the consultation.
- Implementation of this **holistic, Headington-wide plan** because it is needed, and has the best chance of widespread support.
- OCC's help to cost our plan and advise on any refinements that might be needed.

In the meantime, we will be undertaking

- Further wide-scale community engagement, and public consultation events in August, to raise awareness and modify proposals if needed, prior to implementation.



## JERICO AND WALTON MANOR LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOOD

The closure of the Walton Street barrier has been successful in reducing traffic in the area. However, it has also proved contentious. We believe that this is because, although well intentioned, the impacts of the barrier were not fully considered and have led to an inequitable distribution of traffic in the area. For this reason, we are calling for the introduction of a well-planned and fully consulted low traffic neighbourhood for Jericho and Walton Manor, covering the area shown in the map below.



We are a group of residents who have come together under the name Don't Choke Jericho. We have developed sophisticated and detailed LTN proposals, available [here](#), and continue to consult on them and adapt them in line with community responses and needs.

Our proposed low traffic neighbourhood would involve moving the Walton Street barrier north and replacing it with four 'traffic filters' that block all north south routes for motorised vehicles through the area.

One of these filters would be the pedestrianisation of the commercial section of Walton Street, making it a more attractive area for shoppers and diners. Our proposals includes an analysis of a potential School Streets scheme, parking arrangements, the possibility of re-introduction of a bus to Jericho and precedents for the scheme.

Our consultation process is run through both direct approaches to community and residents' groups and individuals and regular emails to our list of over 700 subscribers. We run an open invite to [register to attend Zoom calls](#) to discuss the proposals, for which over 100 people have registered so far. We also make information publicly available on our website [www.dontchokejericho.org](http://www.dontchokejericho.org). We have established a dialogue with the Council officers responsible for transport issues and with the University who own much of the property in the area.

All city and county councillors in the area support reduction in the number of car journeys and improvements in walking and cycling infrastructure.

Our work is based on two core principles that we apply to all of our design and consultation work:

1. *Ultimately most people in Jericho and Walton Manor want the same things - A thriving community and street life; buoyant cafes, restaurants, cinema and shops; clean air; access to and for essential services; safer and quieter streets; and clear steps to address climate change.*
2. *We should first aim to reduce traffic and then to distribute it equitably between the remaining streets. This should consider the needs of all sectors of the community, be that the elderly, the disabled, schoolchildren, cyclists, pedestrians or local businesses.*

Our aim is to rise above individual street-by-street interests to consider the interests of the community as a whole.

Our next step will be to enlist the support of Chris Proctor, who was lead technical consultant on the Waltham Forest Low Traffic Neighbourhood, to sense check our proposals and to attach a rough costing to them. We plan to launch a crowdfund to raise the money we need for this. A number of councillors have also offered financial support.

A decision on the ETRO closing South Walton Street needs to be made by May 2021. We are calling on the Council to immediately start work on design and full consultation for a low traffic neighbourhood for Jericho and Walton Manor in order that it can be introduced with community support before a final decision on the barrier can be made.

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Friday, 10 July 2020

# St. Mary's Low Traffic Neighbourhood

*Prepared by Cllr Dick Wolff, Cllr Craig Simmons with the support of local residents.*

10<sup>th</sup> July 2020

## Introduction

This short report introduces the *St. Mary's Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) Outline Concept Design Technical Note* (dated 9<sup>th</sup> Dec 2019) written by Chris Proctor and commissioned by Cllrs Dick Wolff and Craig Simmons.

Since receiving the report from Chris Proctor (see scheme design overleaf), the authors have commissioned renderings of possible design options for local architects Original Field of Architecture (to whom we are most grateful), run an online public consultation on the outline LTN, presented it to an online meeting of Oxfordshire Living Streets, and consulted businesses in Magdalen Road (this was undertaken just before lockdown).

Clearly, lockdown has delayed efforts to consult further with local residents – but a second, widely advertised meeting is scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

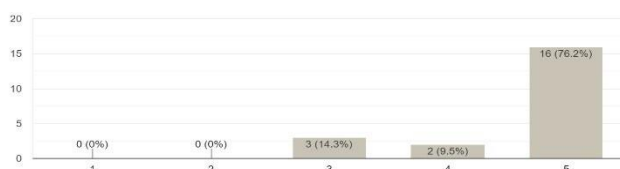
In the interim, we wanted to make this report and the results of the consultation available to the County Council as an advanced 'oven-ready' LTN scheme proposal suitable for early funding.

## Why St. Mary's Ward?

- Arguably one of the 'greenest' parts of the County – relatively low car ownership and high levels of cycling
- The main east-west City cycle route runs right through the centre of the study area – see overleaf
- The whole area is already covered by controlled parking zones
- Very supportive City and County Councillors (cross-party support) – willing to support with ward funding
- Extensive informal consultation already undertaken – scheme well received
- The cost of the scheme could easily be reduced by retaining the existing continuous pavements – these are located where the 'Copenhagen Crossings' are envisaged - and cutting down the number of pocket parks.
- The scheme supports social distance, helps local businesses and encourages walking and cycling
- The scheme will mitigate the potential knock-on effects of the Connecting Oxford proposals

## Results of initial public consultation

The well-advertised in-person meeting planned for mid-March had to be re-convened, on 26<sup>th</sup> March, as an online meeting. Nonetheless, more than 40 people attended and, of these, 21 completed a follow-up survey. The full survey is available on request. However, in summary, the proposals were overwhelmingly welcomed. Three-quarters of respondents liked the proposals 'a lot' with no-one disliking them.



*Figure 2: Question: Thinking about the study area as a whole, what is your view of these initial proposals? (1 = do not like them at all, 5 = I like them a lot)*

## Consultation with businesses

In the week before the online meeting, just before lockdown, Cllr Wolff and Cllr Craig Simmons visited seven businesses in the central Magdalen Road area (the area that would be most disrupted by the LTN)

The primary aim was to promote the public meeting but also to get a sense of their views on the proposals. All the businesses were very interested and generally supportive.

*Figure 1: A new public square on Magdalen Road.  
© Original Field of Architecture*





This illustration shows the least radical option (Option 1) presented for Magdalen Rd. We think that this option will be most acceptable to businesses as it will maximise the number whom will benefit from the improved public realm.

## APPENDIX 2: SCHEME PROPOSAL

Only minor issues have arisen with the Proctor draft scheme design during the consultation.

- Magdalen Road - access and deliveries to businesses will need careful planning
- Crown Street may need a modal filter

