

An Active Travel Proposal for Woodstock

Proposed Temporary 20mph speed limit for Central Woodstock (Post COVID -19)



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CYCLE SAFE ROUTES SUBGROUP

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Background - Traffic Management Act 2004: Network management in response to COVID -19

The government have recently issued advise to all Highway Authorities in the light of the COVID 19 pandemic. The advise note recognises that in many places “active travel” has increased by 70%, either for exercise, or for safe socially distanced travel. With the brakes slowly coming off the lockdown and people starting to return to work, they are recommending not to use public transport but, where they can, to cycle or to walk.

With this in mind the government is providing up to £250 million initially and up to £2 billion later to allow Highway Authorities to work immediately to put in place infrastructure and regulation to provide greater safety for vulnerable road users and to encourage active travel patterns.

The A44 through Woodstock Sustainable Woodstock recognises that much of the funding need will be committed to towns and cities where there are most commuter journeys. But the A44 through Woodstock is a primary corridor for commuting to Oxford and many active travel journeys into Oxford start in Woodstock (and sometimes beyond). The A44 already has a segregated cycle track from Woodstock to Oxford but the problem is the town of Woodstock itself.

The A44 carries some 15,000 vpd, (peak hour flow 1200 vph) of which 7% are HGVs. The carriageway is:-

- sub-standard in terms of width being only 5.5 m in places and insufficient for two HGVs to pass safely
- footways are also substandard in width being less than 0.75 metres in places (a child's pushchair is 0.66m wide).
- The building line is frequently at the immediate back of the footway offering pedestrians no opportunity to step back behind the path for safety
- The horizontal alignment is tortuous such that opposing traffic is often blind, leading to vehicles travelling closer to kerbs than might otherwise be normal.
- the road is on a gradient (approx 1:12) sometimes encouraging excess speeds for downhill traffic

The average vehicle speeds vary from under 30 mph in the town centre area to about 32 mph on the hills. For residents in Old Woodstock in particular there is no alternative route to the schools and the town centre other than to use the A44.

We believe that the case for a targeted 20 mph speed limit over a critically limited length of the A44 is strong and the opportunity that the government's statutory guidance offers will allow a temporary Traffic Regulation Order to be drawn up with suitable lines and signs at low cost.

Supplementary Measures required include the following:-

1. Reduction of the current 50 mph speed limit on the A44 between the Bladon Roundabout and the present 30 mph limit. This 50 mph limit should be reduced to either 40 or 30 mph

2. Likewise, north of the town, the present 50 mph limit should be reduced between Hill Rise and the first Wootton turning (Stratford Lane) to 40 mph. This would particularly support cyclists to and from Wootton and other destinations, as there is no segregated cycle path on this fast stretch of carriageway.
3. Additional cycle racks in the town centre are also required the location of which should be agreed with the Town Council.



The A44 in Woodstock – all photographs taken within the limited section proposed for a temporary 20 mph limit.



Note:-

- the tight horizontal alignment,
- the problems for HGVs and buses,
- the narrow footways
- the sub-standard barrier that provides little protection for pedestrians (it has been demolished countless times)
- and the lack of space for safe cycling



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Further information on:-
www.sustainablewoodstock.co.uk