

# Robert Courts MP



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

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Rt. Hon. Robert Jenrick MP  
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government  
MHCLG

Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September  
Ref: RAC/rj/AW

*Dear Secretary of State,*

I am writing to welcome you to your post and ask for yours and the Government's support in improving West Oxfordshire's transport provision through the Housing Infrastructure Fund bid that Oxfordshire County Council has submitted - and to invite you to visit the most important areas to see the issues for yourself.

As you will know, I have been campaigning on West Oxfordshire's transport issues since I was first elected as Witney's MP. I have met with your Government colleagues in different departments, and your own predecessors, on multiple occasions to raise these and press for the much-needed improvements that would alleviate the pressures on transport networks and my constituents' concerns.

The A40 is the most pressing transport concern my constituents have, and the issue they raise with me the most. For years the road has been subject to daily standstill traffic, barely alleviated during the weekend and it is clear that in its current form the road simply cannot handle the volume of traffic that is required of it.

There is now more cause for optimism than there ever has been, due to the potential for funding from the Housing Infrastructure Fund. I would be very grateful if you could ensure the HIF bid put forward by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is successful, which will lead to significant improvements for my constituents and all those who use the A40. These include essential widening of the road as well as bus lanes, cycle paths and walking paths - to ensure there is public transport and active travel alternatives along that route.

All of us in West Oxfordshire were disappointed when Oxfordshire County Council announced that it was withdrawing the B4044 Community Path from the package of transport upgrades in the HIF bid. This important project would provide a cycle and pedestrian path on a key route between Eynsham, which is due to experience significant housing growth in the coming years, and Oxford.

*From the Member of Parliament for the constituency of Witney in West Oxfordshire  
including Bampton, Burford, Carterton, Charlbury, Chipping Norton, Eynsham, Witney and Woodstock.*



I am told by OCC that it took this decision after being told by officers at MHCLG that the inclusion of the B4044 Community Path would severely reduce the likelihood of the HIF bid being successful. Therefore the position of MHCLG, and the criteria of the HIF, appear to be at odds with the aims of the Department for Transport, which is committed to promoting active travel and improving cycling infrastructure.

I would therefore urge you to encourage greater joined up thinking between your Department and Transport, ensuring that those allocating HIF funding are persuaded of the benefits of cycle infrastructure and how it can assist with the delivery of new homes.

Furthermore, I would encourage you to actively consider supporting the efforts of Oxfordshire County Council to have the B4044 Community Path approved as a standalone bid.

With all these matters in mind, I would like to invite you to visit West Oxfordshire, where we can meet and discuss these matters in further detail. A visit would also allow me to show you how the above matters are affecting my constituents.

In any event, I cannot stress enough: the A40 is probably the biggest single challenge facing West Oxfordshire. It is a millstone around the neck of my constituents, who have been asked to accommodate housing without infrastructure for too long. The HIF, as the name suggests, should alleviate that and it is essential that it is successful.

Many thanks for your consideration and I look forward to working with you on the above matters.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robert Courts'.

**Robert Courts MP**