

LAYLA MORAN MP

Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament for Oxford West & Abingdon

www.LaylaMoran.com

The Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Our Ref: LM50093
22nd July 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

Further Delay to the Re-opening of Botley Road, Oxford

I am writing following confirmation that the long-awaited reopening of Botley Road has been delayed beyond the repeatedly promised date of **31 August 2026**.

The reaction across Oxford is one of anger, disbelief and profound frustration.

This is not simply another project delay. Botley Road is a major arterial route into Oxford city centre and its closure has shaped daily life across Oxford and Oxfordshire for years.

Residents, commuters, students, workers and businesses have endured extensive disruption because they were repeatedly assured that there was a clear plan, a clear timetable and, crucially, a clear end in sight.

In January 2025, rail minister Lord Hendy visited the site, described the delays as “unacceptable” and said he could “assure residents and businesses that there is light at the end of the tunnel.”

Just two weeks ago on 4 July, Network Rail said that they were on track to reopen Botley Road by the end of August. Instead, communities are once again being told that the finish line has moved, and the disruption will continue.

The impact of this prolonged closure cannot be overstated. Businesses have lost trade and footfall. Residents have faced years of congestion, diversions and uncertainty.

Communities have been repeatedly asked to tolerate inconvenience and disruption in the expectation that those responsible would finally deliver on the commitments that had been made.

The message I am hearing from constituents is unequivocal: **enough is enough**.

While unforeseen engineering challenges can arise, many local people will legitimately ask how a project that has already experienced years of delay has once again reached a point where issues significant enough to prevent reopening have only emerged at the eleventh hour.

This latest delay raises serious questions about oversight, project management, risk identification and accountability.

Confidence in the delivery of this project has been severely damaged. Constituents want to know why these issues were not identified earlier, when those responsible first became aware of them, whether they could have been mitigated sooner, and why assurances about reopening have once again proven unreliable.

Most importantly, they want accountability.

After years of disruption, Oxford's residents and businesses are entitled to know who is ultimately responsible for the repeated failures that have characterised this project and what consequences will follow.

I therefore request:

- A full explanation of the reasons for this latest delay;
- Details of when the underlying issues were first identified;
- A realistic and credible timetable for reopening;
- The measures being taken to avoid any further slippage;
- Details of support available to affected businesses; and
- A clear statement identifying who holds ultimate responsibility and accountability for the delivery of this project.
- An **urgent meeting** to discuss the project

What is most damaging is not simply the delay itself, but the growing perception that local communities are repeatedly expected to absorb the consequences of failure whilst receiving little clarity, certainty or accountability in return.

Oxford has borne the burden of this project for years. Residents and businesses have shown extraordinary patience, which has now been exhausted.

They deserve transparency. They deserve accountability. Above all, they deserve a Botley Road that is finally reopened.

I look forward to your swift response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Layla Moran', with a stylized, flowing script.

Layla Moran MP

Member of Parliament for Oxford West and Abingdon