

London Streetspace Programme Low Traffic Neighbourhoods Review - October 2020

Introduction

The Streetspace programme is an opportunity to trial changes that could have long lasting benefits to Harrow's environment and public health, while reducing the impact of the climate emergency, creating safer neighbourhoods and improving road safety

The measures allow more space for people to safely walk or cycle in Harrow amid the coronavirus pandemic. Temporary cycle lanes and wider pavements and areas with reduced traffic flow are among the changes being made in many parts of the borough, thanks to Harrow Council working with TfL and Dft.

In May the Secretary of State for Transport issued statutory guidance under Section 18 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 to all highway authorities in England and the Secretary of State, Grant Shapps, describes the moment as:

“A once in a generation opportunity to deliver a lasting transformative change in how we make short journeys in our towns and cities. According to the National Travel Survey, in 2017-18 over 40% of urban journeys were under 2 miles – perfectly suited to walking and cycling.”

The guidance says that local authorities in areas with high levels of public transport use should take measures to reallocate road space to people walking and cycling to encourage active travel and enable social distancing due to the impact of social distancing on public transport capacity.

The Harrow Street Spaces programme took forward the government directive via Transport for London to deliver a range of active travel schemes including Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs). We have introduced LTNs in neighbourhoods where residents have previously asked for help to make their streets safer by addressing ongoing issues of speeding and high levels of traffic on narrow residential roads

The LTNs use planters to close roads to through traffic thereby creating safer conditions for pedestrians and cyclists and improving environmental conditions for residents.

Four LTNs were implemented in Harrow:

- LTN-02: Pinner View area, Headstone South
- LTN-03: Francis Road area, Greenhill
- LTN-04: Vaughan Road area, West Harrow
- LTN-06: Southfield Park, North Harrow

Methodology

At the special meeting of TARSAP on 10th August it was recommended and subsequently agreed by the Deputy Leader on the 19th August that a review of the schemes would be conducted on a monthly basis.

The reviews will take into consideration:

- Pedestrian / cycling / vehicle activity (measured by counts)
- Feedback from:
 - Local residents
 - Ward Councillors
 - Local businesses
 - Emergency Services

- Bus Services (TfL)
- Officer observations regarding operational performance

The Portfolio holder will make decisions about the future of the schemes based on the monthly reviews.

Current situation with the pandemic

The national position has shown a large increase in the number of infections reported daily to nearly 20,000 per day in late October which is the highest level recorded since the start of the pandemic. The rate is higher than that recorded earlier in the year mainly due to the significantly higher testing capacity now available. The rates for patients in hospital, patients in ventilator beds and deaths within 28 days of a positive test have also significantly increased. The rate of infection has spiked sharply since the beginning of September and the country is now considered to be in a second wave of infection.

As a consequence, the government brought in a new tiered system of alert levels and restrictions in mid-October which is to be applied depending on the local circumstances and Councils in England have been placed on "medium", "high" or "very high" alert with different levels of restrictions required. London was put on high alert from 17th October and the additional restrictions include no mixing of households indoors, including pubs and restaurants, and the "rule of six" now only applies outdoors including private gardens and public spaces. This is additional to the existing 10pm curfew for pubs and restaurants and restriction to offering table service only. However, this will be superseded by a national lockdown announced by the government on 30th October that will take effect from 5th November. The lockdown restrictions will cease all non-essential travel and close all non-essential businesses including leisure and hospitality but will not affect construction or manufacturing or schools.

In Harrow the local position is reflecting the national trend with the 7-day average of laboratory confirmed cases showing a consistent increase over the same period of time. This has risen from about 10 per day at the beginning of September to about 40 per day in mid-October. In the week ending 11th October there were 291 new cases which is an incidence rate of about 116 per 100,000 population.

Pedestrian / cycling / vehicle activity (measured by counts)

Pedestrian and cycle activity counts and vehicle volume counts are being regularly undertaken at the sites.

Pedestrian and cycle counts are taken at a mid-point in the scheme and repeat counts are undertaken at the same points for consistency. Both a weekday and weekend day are surveyed between 7am and 7pm to cover the busy periods.

Surveys are undertaken by recording CCTV footage during the period of observation and later analysed by the survey company at their premises.

Automatic traffic counters have also been used at each site to monitor traffic flows over the period of a week and calculate the average volume of daily vehicular traffic flow.

The counts took place on:

CCTV counts

- 18 and 20 June
- 15 and 17 October

Automatic traffic counts

- 3 to 9 July
- 12 to 18 October

The surveys took place at:

- Victor Road by Harrow View (LTN-02)
- Kingsfield Avenue / Pinner View (LTN-02)
- Pinner View by Canterbury Road (LTN-02)
- Pinner View by Bolton Road (LTN-02)
- Gloucester Road by Station Road (LTN-02)
- Canterbury Road by Durham Road (LTN-02)
- Francis Road by Elmgrove Crescent (LTN-03)
- Vaughan Road by Bouverie Road (LTN-04)
- Blenheim Road by Bladon Gardens (LTN-04)
- Southfield Park by Pinner Road (LTN-06)

The table below gives details of all the pedestrian, cycle and vehicle counts undertaken at the points of closure.

Weekday 7am - 7pm

Site location	LTN-02 Pinner View area			LTN-03 Francis Road area			LTN-04 Vaughan Road area			LTN-06 Southfield Park		
	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles
June	1975	356	6728	346	64	1113	1497	316	2547	480	52	2799
October	3482	464	Zero *	611	108	Zero *	3536	338	Zero *	956	72	Zero *

Weekend 7am - 7pm

Site location	LTN-02 Pinner View area			LTN-03 Francis Road area			LTN-04 Vaughan Road area			LTN-06 Southfield Park		
	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles
June	2361	988	6274	293	120	972	1814	768	2297	529	164	2400
October	2526	564	Zero *	343	80	Zero *	1859	334	Zero *	450	88	Zero *

*Vehicle counts have not been undertaken after the roads are closed because vehicle access is restricted.

More than 10,000 vehicles a day were using residential streets to make journeys. It is estimated that just 30% of this traffic will be local journeys made by residents living within the LTNs. In Southfield Park for example traffic has reduced from 2,799 vehicles a day to 780, this is a 82% reduction in traffic.

The number of pedestrians has generally increased in the week and at the weekend. The number cyclists travelling during the week has also increased since the summer. These increases may be linked to a variety of reasons including exercise and walking to work, local amenities, shops and transport hubs.

The number of cyclists travelling at the weekend has declined since the summer and because usage at the weekend is generally more recreational in nature it may be influenced by more favourable weather conditions in the summer than in the autumn.

Manor Way and Priory Way issues

The two streets parallel with Southfield Park (Manor Way and Priory Way) between Parkside Way and Headstone Lane have experienced some additional traffic as a consequence of the introduction of the LTNs. These roads (part of the Southfield Park LTN) had 20MPH restrictions applied but no road closures.

The table below shows the vehicle flows recorded.

LTN	Site	June Week-day	June Week-end	October Week-day	October Week-end
LTN-06 Southfield Park	Southfield Park	2799	2400	780	653
	Priory Way	1507	1359	1864	1208
	Manor Way	701	580	1324	953

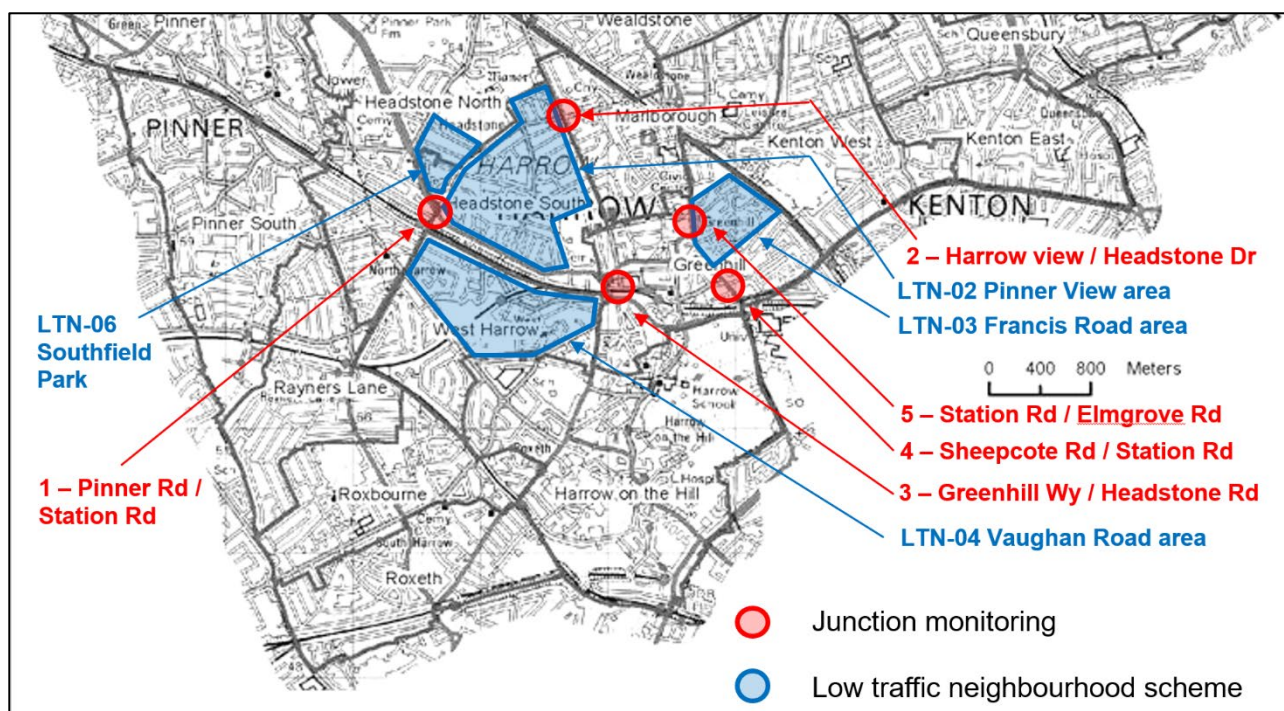
This indicates that during the week vehicle flows have increased in Priory Way by a quarter and almost doubled on Manor Way. At the weekend the difference is lower.

The Council has received a large volume of correspondence from residents of Manor Way and Priory Way about the increase in vehicles using their roads which is negatively affecting them. Whilst the actual vehicular flows are still relatively small, they have a disproportionate impact due to the level of on-street parking and narrow width of the roads.

Queue length surveys

As a consequence of introducing the LTNs some displacement of through journeys onto main roads was anticipated.

The plan below shows junctions on the main road network near the LTNs that are being monitored to assess any potential impact. Queue length surveys have been undertaken in order to assess any changes in congestion and delay.



The CCTV counts and surveys took place on:

- 23 and 25 July
- 13 and 15 August
- 15 and 17 October

The surveys took place at:

- A404 Pinner Road / Station Road
- Headstone Drive / Harrow View / Headstone Gardens
- Greenhill Way / Headstone Road
- A409 Sheepcote Road / Station Road
- A409 Station Road / Elmgrove Road / Hindes Road

The table below gives details of the surveys.

Junction Maximum queue lengths (all vehi- cles / all arms)		July / August Week- day 2020	July / August Week- end 2020	October Week- day 2020	October Week- end 2020	Week- day change	Week- end change
1 - A404 Pinner Road / Station Road	AM	84	66	178	84	112%	27%
	Inter pea k	120	148	163	198	36%	34%
	PM	145	116	198	181	37%	56%
2 - Headstone Drive / Harrow View / Headstone Gardens	AM	97	99	202	127	108%	28%
	Inter pea k	132	129	162	172	23%	33%
	PM	175	152	200	165	14%	9%
3 - Greenhill Way / Headstone Road	AM	87	60	99	85	14%	42%
	Inter pea k	100	120	108	107	8%	-11%
	PM	139	113	126	129	-9%	14%
4 - A409 Sheep- cote Road / Sta- tion Road	AM	43	29	69	42	60%	45%
	Inter pea k	56	57	57	70	2%	23%
	PM	69	53	68	71	-1%	34%
5 - A409 Station Road / Elmgrove Road / Hindes Road	AM	96	63	105	73	9%	16%
	Inter pea k	93	98	76	95	-18%	-3%
	PM	126	111	120	95	-5%	-14%

The queue lengths recorded in July and August are marginally lower than prior to the start of the pandemic.

The October surveys clearly show an impact on sites 1 and 2, particularly in the morning peak, and schemes LTN-02 and LTN-06 will have caused the greatest impact on these junctions. However, these LTNs had only been in operation for 1-2 weeks when the October surveys were undertaken and so there has been insufficient time for travel patterns to adjust and for flows to regularise.

The surveys do show clearly the initial impact of the measures immediately after they were implemented. It is likely that these impacts will reduce over time as travel patterns change.

Emergency services comments

The Metropolitan Police, Fire and Rescue Service and Ambulance service were consulted before the measures were implemented and have been contacted as a part of this review to seek their views about the impact of the LTNs on their respective services. No operational issues have been highlighted.

TfL bus services comments

Transport for London oversee the commissioning and operation of bus services in London and they have been contacted to seek their views about the impact of the LTNs on bus services. No operational issues have been highlighted.

Officer observations regarding operational performance

Officers have undertaken on-site observations periodically to check on the operation of the schemes.

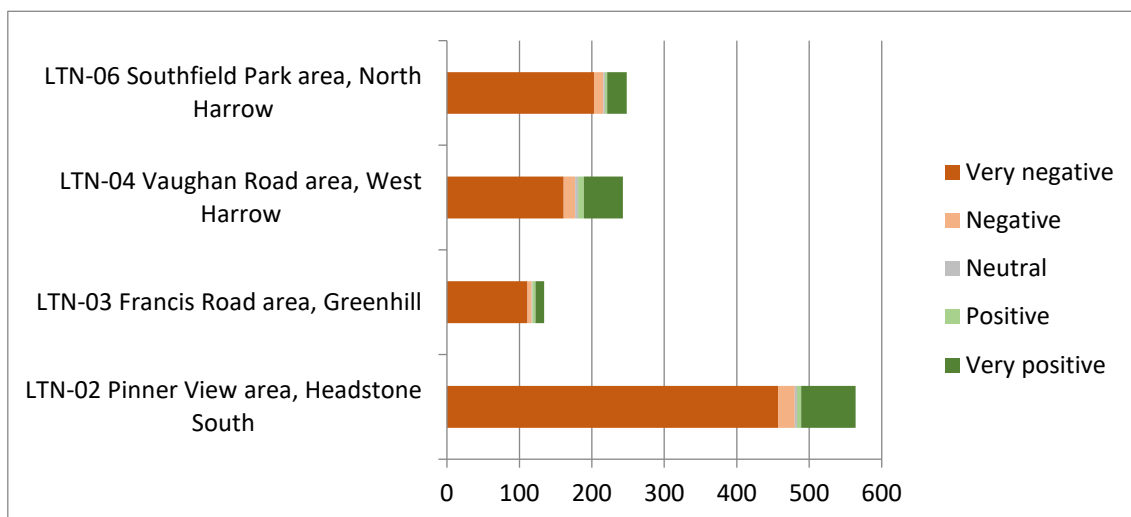
There have been incidents where vehicles have tried to bypass the points of closure by moving barriers and driving on the pavements causing hazards to pedestrians. Changes have been implemented to prevent this including repositioning the planters and implementing bollards. In some cases, bollards have been knocked down to allow vehicles through – where this is the case immediate action is taken to repair the damage as soon as it is reported.

Officers identified that changes were required to signage to make drivers aware of the changes – additional and more prominent signs have been installed to highlight the closures.

All restrictions have been uploaded onto the *one.network* portal which feeds the information to the satellite navigation companies and will help motorists to avoid restrictions.

Residents feedback

An engagement portal was setup on Commonplace at the beginning of October to allow continual engagement with residents throughout the trial period of the schemes. A summary of the feedback for LTNs in October can be seen in the table below.



The engagement feedback indicates a continuing level of unpopularity amongst the community towards these schemes. A more detailed analysis of the free comments received highlighted the following common issues:

- Cyclists were generally more positive about the measures, although they represent a smaller proportion of the responses received (5%).
- The largest group of responses was from residents (60%) and motorists (20%) that expressed more negative sentiments.
- Many views indicated that there is increased congestion and queuing at busy times on the main road network.
- Many views indicated that the restricted access to residential estates is inconvenient and increases journey times.
- A proportion of residents clearly support the measures and the benefits for public health, active travel, road safety and for children.
- There were many negative comments that were not substantiated with any reasons.

Most comments are a reaction to changes that affect lifestyles that rely heavily on using the private car. It is expected that behaviour change takes place over a longer period of time - this is the experience of other London boroughs that have introduced similar schemes. The initial reaction to the schemes is understandably more negative consequently as the benefits have not yet been fully realised.

The introduction of a lockdown from the 5th November with restrictions on all non-essential travel is likely to significantly reduce any pressures on the road network from congestion and delay that have been reported by the public.

The next review period will be in November and a report will be prepared for consideration in December.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that:

- That the situation with congestion and delay caused by LTNs on the main road network is considered and the following options are:

That LTNs are retained until the next review is undertaken.

- That the situation with the congestion and delay caused by the roadworks and the temporary removal of some of the road closures in the LTNs is considered and the following options are available:

- Put back the road closures in the LTNs when the roadworks is finished.
- Keep open the road closures in the LTNs until further community engagement has been undertaken on alternative scheme options.

Decision:

With the concerns of residents around the congestion and the additional pressure caused by the roadworks on the road network the decision to temporarily remove some of the road closures in the LTNs is approved and the following option is approved.

Keep open the road closures in the LTNs until further community engagement has been undertaken on alternative scheme options.