

## London Streetspace Programme (Harrow) Strategic Cycling Schemes Review - November 2020

### Introduction

We are making a real difference to our environment to encourage our residents to improve their health through active travel – all while reducing the chance of people catching Covid-19.

The Street spaces initiative will 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 strategic cycling schemes. These schemes are implemented on multi lane major routes in the borough where they provide direct routes for cyclists that connect with the existing cycle network.

The schemes consist of introducing dedicated nearside cycle lanes, with an offside vehicular traffic lane, to allow sufficient space and segregation between cyclists and vehicles and to keep cyclists safe in conjunction with reducing speed limits to 30mph. The strategic cycle schemes have been implemented in 3 locations in the borough and the list of schemes is shown in the table below:

<b>SC-01</b>	Honeypot Lane, Queensbury
<b>SC-03</b>	Sheepcote Road, Greenhill
<b>SC-09</b>	Uxbridge Road, Harrow Weald

### Methodology

At the special meeting of TARSAP on 10<sup>th</sup> August it was recommended and subsequently agreed by the Deputy Leader on the 19<sup>th</sup> August that a review of the schemes would be conducted on a monthly basis to test the need for the measures to address the health crisis. The methodology to be used to assess the need for the schemes will take account of the following information:

- Pedestrian / cycling / vehicle activity (measured by counts)
- Emergency services comments

- Public transport services comments
- Cycle groups comments
- Officer observations regarding operational performance
- Public engagement

All these factors will be reviewed, and a course of action will be recommended in this report.

The recommendation will be reviewed by the Portfolio Holder – Environment and Corporate Director – Community and the future of the schemes decided.

### **Current situation with the pandemic**

The national position has shown a decrease in the number of infections reported daily from a high of 25,000 per day at the start of November to approximately 15,000 per day in late November which shows that the second wave of the virus is starting to recede as a consequence of the lockdown that commenced on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

In Harrow the incidence rate peaked in the period 16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> November and has started to show a slight decrease. In terms of the number of cases, there has been a reduction of about 60 cases per week across the borough. This is the impact of lockdown, but it must be noted that the rates are still very high and a return to social mixing will lead to a rapid rise in cases. The rate in older adults remains high and the testing rate has been increasing.

From 2<sup>nd</sup> December when lockdown ends the tiered system of restrictions will return. Councils in England have been placed on "medium", "high" or "very high" alert with different levels of restrictions required. London is in the "high alert" tier 2 level.

Tier 2 restrictions include no mixing of households indoors, including pubs and restaurants, and the "rule of six" applies outdoors including private gardens and public spaces. Businesses and venues can continue to operate, in a COVID-Secure manner, pubs and bars must close, unless operating as restaurants. Hospitality venues can only serve alcohol with substantial meals, early closure (11pm) applies to most venues.

On 16<sup>th</sup> December London was put into the "very high" tier 3 alert level. The additional restrictions mean that the "rule of six" applies outdoors in some outdoor public places only, hospitality businesses, pubs, restaurants, hotels, entertainment venues must close travel is allowed for essential reasons only but must stay within tier 3 areas.

### **Pedestrian / cycling / vehicle activity (measured by counts)**

Pedestrian and cycle activity counts and vehicle volume counts are being regularly undertaken at the sites. The 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 dates for data collection are as follows:

#### CCTV counts

- June 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>
- September 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>
- October 15<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>
- November 12<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>

#### Automatic traffic counters

- June 2<sup>nd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>
- September 9<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>
- October 10<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>
- November 7<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>

The surveys were undertaken at the following locations as follows:

- Honeypot Lane by Crowshott Avenue (SC-01)
- Sheepcote Road by Nightingale Court (SC-03)
- Uxbridge Road west of roundabout with Courtenay Avenue (SC-09)

The table below gives details of all the pedestrian, cycle and vehicle counts undertaken. The schemes were implemented in July and so the counts in June were undertaken prior to implementation.

<b>Weekday 7am - 7pm</b>	<b>SC-01 Honeypot Lane</b>			<b>SC-03 Sheepcote Road</b>			<b>SC-09 Uxbridge Road</b>		
	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles
June	628	77	14717	598	65	12367	297	67	15984
September	1020	139	15481	1178	114	13818	325	94	17602
October	943	98	15417	1008	77	14052	331	61	17430
November	1158	110	14414	1075	96	13439	342	123	15394

<b>Weekend 7am - 7pm</b>	<b>SC-01 Honeypot Lane</b>			<b>SC-03 Sheepcote Road</b>			<b>SC-09 Uxbridge Road</b>		
	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles
June	792	245	13597	745	136	12325	431	348	16111
September	639	144	15162	689	102	12945	292	163	16959
October	709	117	14637	615	66	12851	342	101	17098
November	412	47	12407	332	40	10609	202	32	13205

In Harrow it is important to note that cycling has the lowest travel mode share and has been highlighted in the Borough Transport Local Implementation Plan as a priority for interventions and improvements to increase the mode share. The base levels of cycling are therefore at a low level and the surveys demonstrate that cycling levels are still currently low.

The surveys indicate that travel by motor vehicle is the dominant travel mode consistent with Harrow having a very high mode share of travel by car. Travel by motor vehicle has reduced during the lockdown by about 5% - 10% on these principal roads.

The number of pedestrians and cyclists travelling during the week has increased since the summer and may be linked to opening of schools and some local journeys to work or local shops and amenities. The cycle levels during lockdown in November showed moderate increases.

The number of pedestrians and cyclists travelling at the weekend has steadily declined and because it is generally more recreational in nature it may be influenced by more favourable weather conditions in the summer than in the autumn / winter. During the lockdown in November the restrictions on non-essential travel has reduced all travel modes.

### Emergency services comments

The Metropolitan Police, Fire & Rescue Service and Ambulance service have been contacted to seek their views about the impact of the cycle schemes on their respective services. No operational issues have been highlighted generally with the exception of Honeypot Lane.

Stanmore fire station is located in Honeypot Lane and the fire service has reported issues with congestion and delay being caused on Honeypot Lane going north towards Stanmore due to traffic queuing to turn right at the signals junction. It is recommended that the traffic situation at the traffic signals be reviewed and any potential mitigations identified. In the short term the cones on the northbound cycle lane of Honeypot Lane on the approach to the signals junction will be removed for approximately 100m – 150m to facilitate improved access for emergency services vehicles on call.

No specific comments about the schemes have been received from the Metropolitan Police or London Ambulance Service but generic advice has been provided.

### Public transport services comments

The bus services operating on these roads are as shown in the table below.

<b>SC-01</b>	Honeypot Lane, Queensbury	<b>Route 79</b> - Edgware to Alperton- every 12 mins <b>Route N98</b> - Stanmore to Holborn – night bus
<b>SC-03</b>	Sheepcote Road, Greenhill	<b>Route 114</b> - Mill Hill Broadway to Ruislip – every 10 mins <b>Route 183</b> - Pinner to Golders Green – every 7/8 mins <b>Route H9/H10</b> – Harrow Circular – every 10 mins
<b>SC-09</b>	Uxbridge Road, Harrow Weald	<b>Route 182</b> - Bannister Playing Fields (Hatch End) to Brent Cross – every 8 mins Route R17 – Hatch End Station to Carpenders Park Station (Hertfordshire County Council)

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 cycle schemes on bus services. No operational issues have been highlighted.

### Cycle groups comments

The schemes are supported by local cyclists and the Harrow Cyclists group, represented on TARSAP, who agree with the introduction of the schemes.

In general cycle groups would like to see these proposals go further in order to improve connectivity with the wider cycle network and to improve cycle safety at main road junctions.

### **Officer observations regarding operational performance**

Officers have undertaken on-site observations periodically to check on the operation of the schemes. Some weekday congestion has been observed in the morning and evening busy periods and is considered normal because these are main routes carrying more traffic. This is similar to levels of congestion that existed prior to the pandemic.

The loss of one lane along these routes has had a negligible impact on overall journey time reliability for most vehicle journeys on the road network. This is because single lane roads with lower capacity are used for a significant proportion of most journeys and the use of higher capacity multi lane roads over short lengths therefore has a negligible impact on vehicle journey times. Where roads are reduced from two lanes to one lane the queue becomes longer due to the space available but the number of vehicles in the queue is similar. A recent example of this is the section of Uxbridge Road leading to Hatch End station where a bus lane was introduced reducing traffic lanes from two to one lane.

Physical segregation of vehicles and cycles is provided by a hatched separation zone with traffic cones placed inside. The traffic cones need to be monitored regularly to check for any movement or displacement of the cones so this can be corrected as necessary. Initially cones were being moved accidentally and sometimes deliberately but now there is less interference.

Queensbury ward councillors expressed concerns about the Honeypot Lane cycle scheme in respect of motorists using the service roads to bypass congestion on the dual carriageway. Site observations have not indicated a particular problem with this issue, however, ward councillors have requested that the residential service road on the western side be subject to a 20mph speed limit and officers have agreed to introduce this measure experimentally. The proposal can be seen in appendix 1.

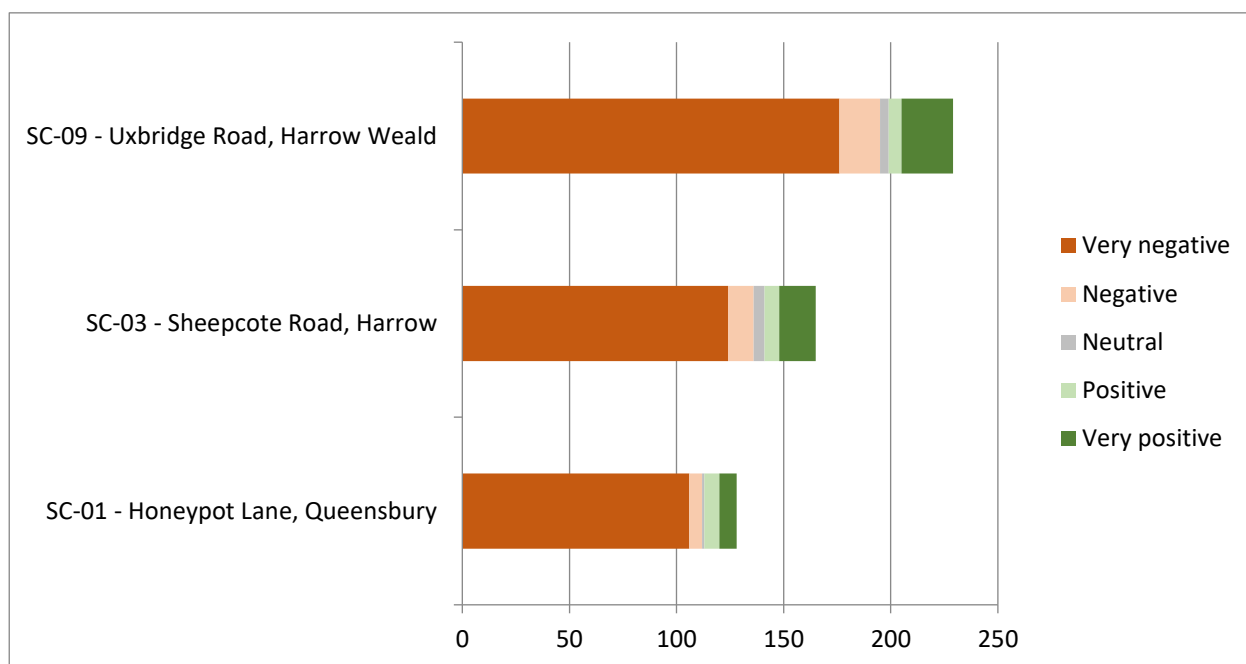
### **Public engagement**

An engagement portal was setup at the beginning of October to facilitate the receipt of public comments for all of the on-going streetspace schemes trials. A summary of the feedback for strategic cycle schemes 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:

- The measures were considered more positive by cyclists although they represent a smaller proportion of the responses received (19%).
- The largest group of responses was from motorists (62%) that expressed more negative sentiments expressing the view that there is increased congestion and queuing at busy times.
- The local residents / businesses made up 25% of responses and sentiments and were generally negative for the same reasons as motorists.
- Many negative responses expressed the view that the measures are unnecessary or unjustified because cycle volumes are low.

- There were many generally derogatory comments that were not substantiated with any reasons.



Most comments appear to be due to a feeling that dedicating road space to cyclists is affecting road capacity and causing more congestion and delays coupled with the low usage of the cycle lanes making them seem unjustified. The reality is that these main roads experienced congestion and delay at peak times prior to the crisis and that any delays are probably similar to those previously experienced. The loss of a lane over a short length of the overall journey actually has a negligible impact on journey times. The initial reaction to the schemes, however, is understandably more negative as a consequence.

## Options

Detailed below are the options for consideration:

- That the cycle schemes are retained until the next review is undertaken.
- That the Honeypot Lane service road (western side) proposal for a 20mph speed limit be introduced as an experimental trial.
- That a section of the cones on the northbound cycle lane of Honeypot Lane on the approach to the signals junction with Whitchurch Lane be removed to facilitate improved access for emergency services vehicles on call.
- A review of reported congestion by the Fire Service at the Honeypot Lane / Whitchurch Lane traffic be undertaken and any mitigations considered.
- The next review of the schemes is undertaken before the end of December.

## **Decision**

The cycle schemes are retained until the next review is undertaken. The next review of the schemes will be undertaken before the end of December.

The Honeypot Lane service road (western side) proposal for a 20mph speed limit be introduced as an experimental trial.

A section of the cones on the northbound cycle lane of Honeypot Lane between the signals junction with Whitchurch Lane and Crowshott Avenue be removed to facilitate improved access for emergency services vehicles on call.



**KEY**

Proposed experimental 20mph Zone extension

SC01 HONEYPOT LANE SERVICE RD - REVIEW 1 - RECOMMENDATION TO INTRODUCE 20MPH ZONE IN WESTERN SERVICE RD