

London Streetspace Programme (Harrow) Pedestrian Space Measures Review - September 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 pedestrian space measures. The pedestrian space schemes are implemented at locations such as shopping parades or transport hubs where the width of the footway is insufficient to maintain the required social distancing specified by the government and where higher levels of pedestrian activity are expected.

The schemes consist of temporary pedestrian barriers to reallocate carriageway space to pedestrians by suspending sections of carriageway for vehicle access. This provides more space for pedestrians to use. At shopping parades these are located in service roads and have reduced space for car parking. The pedestrian space measures have been implemented in 9 locations in the borough and the list of schemes is shown in the table below:

PS-01	Station Road, Harrow - Civic Centre, shops
PS-02	Harrow and Wealdstone Station
PS-07	Streatfield Road, Queensbury - shops
PS-08	Honeypot Lane, Canons Park - shops
PS-09	Northolt Road, Northolt - shops
PS-10	Kenton Road, Kenton - shops
PS-11	Kenton Lane, Belmont - shops
PS-12	High Road, Harrow Weald – shops / bus stop
PS-13	Porlock Avenue, West Harrow – shops / / school / bus stop

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 pedestrian 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 activity (measured by counts)
- Prevalence of the virus in the area (public health data) and current Government social distancing requirements
- Business community engagement

All of these factors will be reviewed, and a course of action 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.

Pedestrian Activity

Pedestrian activity counts are being regularly undertaken at the sites to estimate the amount of pedestrian footfall. Pedestrian counts are taken at a particular point in the scheme where most activity takes place 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 main period of business activity. Surveys are undertaken by recording CCTV footage during the period of observation and later analysed by the survey company at their premises.

Baseline data was collected at sites PS01, PS02, PS12 & PS13 on 11th & 13th June and at PS07, PS08, PS09, PS10 & PS11 on 26th & 27th June. The first review was undertaken on 6th & 8th August. The second review was undertaken on 3rd & 5th September.

The table below gives details of all the pedestrian counts undertaken including the latest data collected in September.

Weekday 7am - 7pm both directions

Site Location	Station Road	H & W Station	Streatfield Rd north parade	Streatfield Rd south parade	Honeypot Lane	Northolt Road	Kenton Road	Kenton Lane	High Road	Porlock Avenue
Site Ref	PS01	PS02	PS07	PS07	PS08	PS09	PS10	PS11	PS12	PS13
June	1564	1508	1823	1865	541	1021	1744	1215	603	467
August	1946	2283	1844	1927	475	1220	1537	1209	690	730
September	2026	2515	2152	2576	682	1257	1626	1403	954	1531

Saturday 7am – 7pm both directions

Site Location	Station Road	H & W Station	Streatfield Rd north parade	Streatfield Rd south parade	Honeypot Lane	Northolt Road	Kenton Road	Kenton Lane	High Road	Porlock Avenue
Site Ref	PS01	PS02	PS 07	PS07	PS08	PS 09	PS10	PS11	PS12	PS13
June	1539	1471	2110	1911	390	937	1606	1212	608	413
August	1917	1925	1978	1940	412	1545	1694	1546	633	544
September	2103	2172	2334	2407	353	1631	1823	1473	896	710

The latest surveys indicate that pedestrian activity is increasing at all the pedestrian sites. This reflects the trend towards the economy opening up. The opening up of schools is likely to have also contributed to this. There is some variability in flows at PS08 Honeypot Lane and PS11 Kenton Lane where weekend flows have reduced but weekday flows have increased which may reflect changes to local patterns, however, the overall numbers combined show increases.

Prevalence of the virus and Government guidance

The national position is showing an increase in the number of infections reported daily of nearly 4,000 per day in mid-September which is the highest level reported since mid-May. The rate of infection has been gradually rising since mid-July but has spiked sharply since the beginning of September. The increases have occurred during the period when a sequence of relaxations of the lockdown have occurred to open up the economy.

The data and graphs below for Harrow show that 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 2 per day at the end of July to about 9 per day in mid-September. In the week ending 13th September there were 65 new cases which is an incidence rate of about 26 per 100,000 population. To put this in context the government guidance in respect of foreign countries is to review the need for quarantine when the incidence rate exceeds 20 per 100,000 population over 7 days and so Harrow is already in excess of that level.

This data reflects where people live rather than where people became infected, however, considering local shops are more likely to be visited by local people it is relevant to consider the wards with the greatest increases in infection rates. The local intelligence from the Public Protection team indicates that Roxeth, Kenton East, Canons, Stanmore, Edgware, West Harrow are the wards most affected and this directly affects pedestrian space schemes at Streatfield Road, Honeypot Lane, Northolt Road, Kenton Road and Porlock Avenue in those wards.

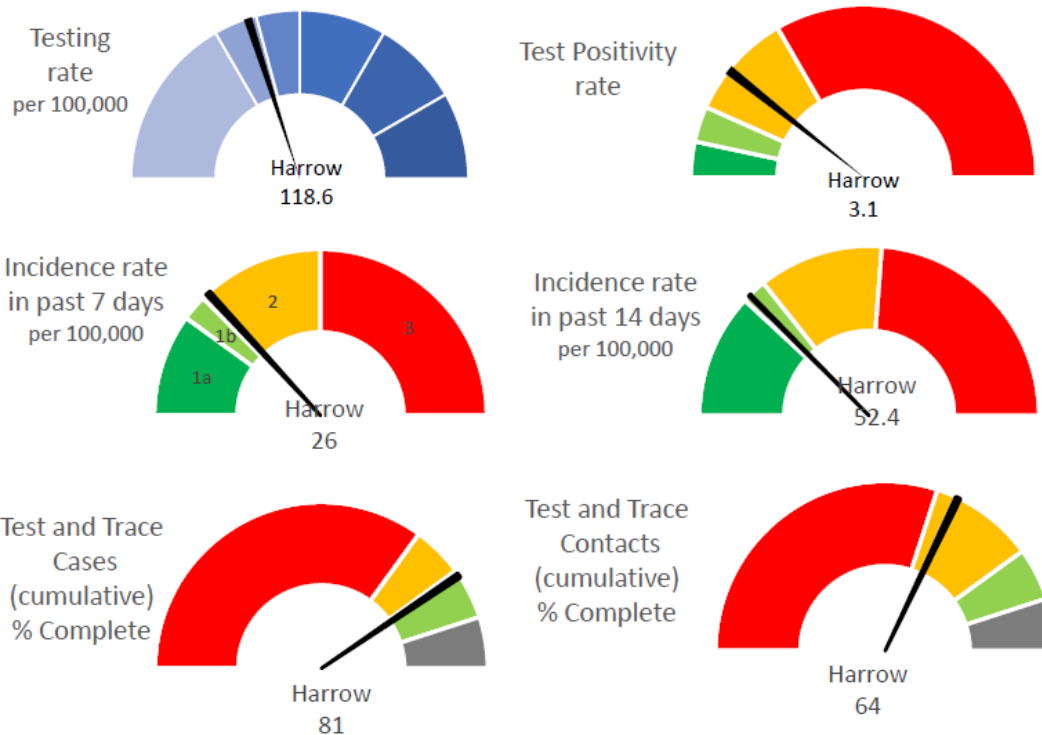
The current government guidance has been updated regularly following the situation with exponential increases in the infection rate of the virus. The guidance remains to keep 2 metres apart with relaxations to 1 metre plus other mitigations permitted where 2 metres is not possible. The use of masks / face coverings is compulsory in shops and has been expanded to include indoor hospitality, retail staff and taxi passengers. Fines for first offences concerning masks or gatherings is to double to £200 and for those breaking self-isolation rules, up to £10,000. In pubs and restaurants closing time is now 10 pm at the latest and only table service can be offered. COVID-secure guidelines will now be legal obligations in retail, leisure and tourism and office workers will be asked to work from home unless they need to travel to work.

Additional restrictions have been brought in for social gatherings in England where groups of more than six people are now banned from meeting anywhere socially indoors or outdoors, with some exceptions. This is known as the “rule of six”. This will affect social gatherings in residential and commercial settings but the general footfall areas outside shops will still be areas where many different people are concentrated and require 2 metres distancing to be observed between people of different households.

Harrow COVID 19 Dashboard

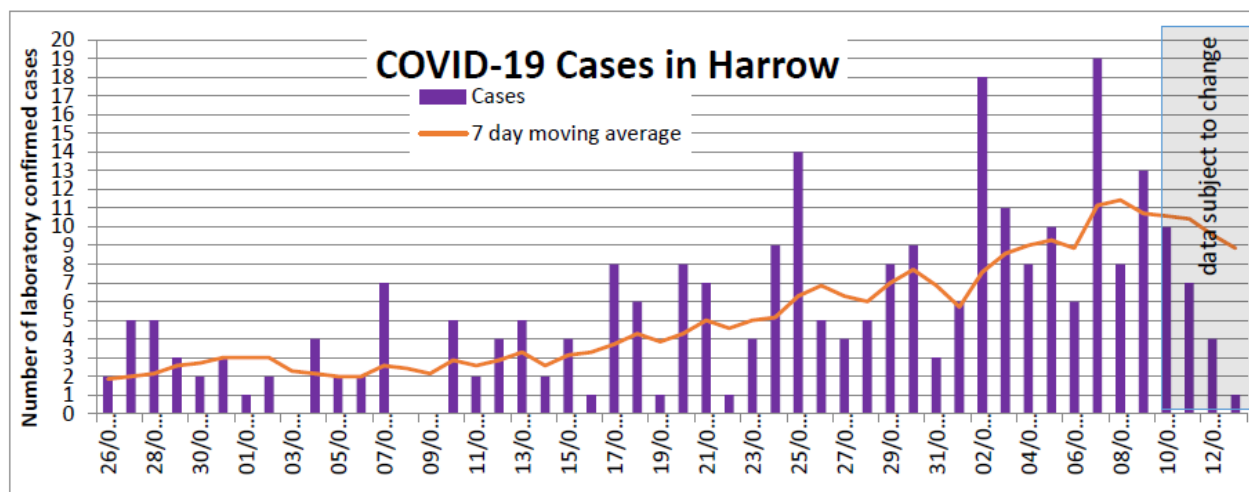
report date: 18/9/2020

Data from 7/9/2020 to 13/09/2020



New Cases in 7 days to 13/9/2020

65



All the pedestrian sites chosen were on the basis that the footways were not wide enough for the pedestrians to be able to adhere to the 2m rule and providing wider pavements mean more space for people to pass each other safely. This is particularly important in the current circumstances, where everybody is being asked to keep their distance to slow the spread of COVID-19 when infection levels across the country are seeing an increase particularly for younger age groups. Schools are reopening and children are being encouraged to walk or cycle to school and this is likely to increase the risks on the school journey particularly at shopping areas and transport hubs.

Business Engagement

At the special meeting of TARSAP on 10th August it was recommended that four of the pedestrian spaces measures sites were removed, however, the Deputy Leader on the 19th August decided that the sites should remain on health and safety grounds until the next review was undertaken. The sites affected are:

PS07 - Streatfield Road, Queensbury - shops
 PS08 - Honeypot Lane, Canons Park - shops
 PS10 - Kenton Road, Kenton - shops
 PS11 - Kenton Lane, Belmont – shops

To support the review a business engagement survey was carried out with local businesses between 11th – 14th September. These were conducted face to face by the Economic Development Team, where business owners were available to participate at time of visit, or hard copies of the surveys left at the premises to be completed and collected the following day. The survey consisted of six questions:

1. Are you have difficulties with deliveries?
2. Can pedestrians access your shop easily?
3. Since introducing the scheme are pedestrian levels higher or lower or about the same?
4. Do you understand why the barriers were put in place?
5. Do you feel safer with the barriers in place?
6. What adjustments if any to the barriers would be of help to your business?

The response rate to the questionnaire in each location is indicated below:

	Number of businesses	Number of responses
PS07 - Streatfield Road	61	46 (75%)
PS08 - Honeypot Lane	20	13 (65%)
PS10 - Kenton Road	10	5 (50%)
PS11 - Kenton Lane	3	3 (100%)
Total	94	61 (71%)

The responses to the individual questions are shown below:

Question 1 - Are you have difficulties with deliveries?

	Yes	No
PS07 - Streatfield Road	38 (83%)	8 (17%)
PS08 - Honeypot Lane	11 (85%)	2 (15%)
PS10 - Kenton Road	4 (80%)	1 (20%)

PS11 - Kenton Lane	2 (66%)	1 (33%)
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Question 2 - Can pedestrians access your shop easily?

	Yes	No
PS07 - Streatfield Road	16 (35%)	30 (65%)
PS08 - Honeypot Lane	1 (8%)	12 (92%)
PS10 - Kenton Road	3 (60%)	2 (40%)
PS11 - Kenton Lane	1 (33%)	2 (66%)

Question 3 - Since introducing the scheme are pedestrian levels higher or lower or about the same?

	Lower	Higher	Same
PS07 - Streatfield Road	45 (98%)	0	1 (2%)
PS08 - Honeypot Lane	12 (92%)	0	1 (8%)
PS10 - Kenton Road	5 (100%)	0	0
PS11 - Kenton Lane	3 (100%)	0	0

Question 4 - Do you understand why the barriers were put in place?

	Yes	No
PS07 - Streatfield Road	33 (72%)	13 (28%)
PS08 - Honeypot Lane	5 (38%)	8 (62%)
PS10 - Kenton Road	4 (80%)	1 (20%)
PS11 - Kenton Lane	3 (100%)	0 (0%)

Question 5 - Do you feel safer with the barriers in place?

	Yes	No	No comment
PS07 - Streatfield Road	7 (15%)	36 (78%)	3 (7%)
PS08 - Honeypot Lane	0 (0%)	13 (100%)	0
PS10 - Kenton Road	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)
PS11 - Kenton Lane	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	0

Question 6 – What adjustments if any to the barriers would be of help to your business.

	General summary of comments
PS07 - Streatfield Road	Remove barriers waste of money losing staff bring back parking, some people jumping barriers
PS08 - Honeypot Lane	Remove the barriers now and reinstate parking, scheme makes no sense
PS10 - Kenton Road	Remove barriers, some loading difficulties
PS11 - Kenton Lane	Remove barriers, reinstate parking

The pedestrian space measures remain unpopular with a majority of the businesses primarily because they consider it has had an effect on their trade due to restrictions on car parking space as shown in question 6. The extent to which this is true is difficult to establish because pedestrian levels are increasing as a consequence of the government relaxing restrictions, although loss of parking could affect a small proportion of customers. There are a number of established surveys undertaken by Transport for London that have shown that the most common mode of transport for customers shopping is walking. It is therefore most likely that the loss of trade is a direct impact of the health crisis as all businesses are suffering the consequences whether there are pedestrian space measures in close proximity or not.

In question 1 a majority of businesses have indicated difficulties with deliveries and there is a case for further engagement with businesses to understand the issues and consider solutions.

In questions 2 and 3 it is noted that a majority of businesses believe pedestrian footfall has declined and that pedestrian access is more difficult. This seems to contradict the findings of the pedestrian surveys undertaken which shows the pedestrian levels actually increasing in the areas where there is more space for pedestrians.

In question 4 it is concerning to see that in Honeypot Lane a large proportion of shopkeepers didn't understand why the barriers have been put in place and there is a case for further engagement with businesses to explain why the measures were introduced and to explain that there is a regular review process in place.

In question 5 it is concerning to see that businesses do not believe that the barriers improve safety, however, it is probably the pedestrians and customers themselves that are most likely to feel the greatest benefits, however, the survey has not been targeted at them in particular. There is a case for further engagement with businesses to understand this point further.

Summary

Pedestrian levels are increasing at all sites and the on-going upward trend over the three surveys is very clear. The increasing level of pedestrian activity will hopefully support the local economy but does also increase the risk of close social contact particularly now that schools are reopening.

The infection rates in Harrow are increasing in numbers and are following the national trend, particularly in younger people, and therefore the need to maintain social distancing measures is essential. The threat of a second peak of the virus still remains.

The Government's advice is still to maintain social distancing, preferably 2 metres, and an additional restriction "the rule of six" has been added because of the current increasing number of cases of the virus. Many other government restrictions have also been added regarding closing pubs and restaurants by 10pm and wider use of face masks / coverings. Therefore, it is recommended to keep the measures in place to ensure public safety until the next review.

Businesses do not support the measures due to their concerns about trade, however, there is no guarantee that removing the barriers will actually improve trade because the main issue is the wider economic impact of the government restrictions. However, it would certainly make more difficult the ability for pedestrians to observe social distancing in an environment where pedestrian flows are increasing. In this difficult balance between public health and the local economy it is necessary to put the health and safety of the public first.

The business engagement survey did highlight some genuine concerns that need to be investigated and there is a case for further engagement with businesses to understand the difficulties highlighted with pedestrian access and facilitating deliveries. Additional engagement will be undertaken to identify and make amendments that can alleviate any difficulties.

Parking enforcement operations will resume on 1st October and there is also a need to review the pedestrian space measures to ensure that any displaced parking in parking areas that may be subject to enforcement in the vicinity is not adversely affected. This will also be reviewed.

Communications to reinforce the purpose of the measures and the review process will be distributed to businesses to ensure there is clarity over the current situation.

The next review period will be in October and a report will be prepared by the end of the month for consideration.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that:

- The pedestrian space measures are retained until the next review is undertaken,
- Further engagement is undertaken with businesses to resolve any operational issues and make amendments to the schemes as necessary,
- The next review of the schemes is undertaken before the end of October