

London Streetspace Programme (Harrow) **Strategic Cycling schemes - December 2020 / January 2021**

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:

SC-01	Honeypot Lane, Queensbury
SC-03	Sheepcote Road, Greenhill
SC-09	Uxbridge Road, Harrow Weald

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 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

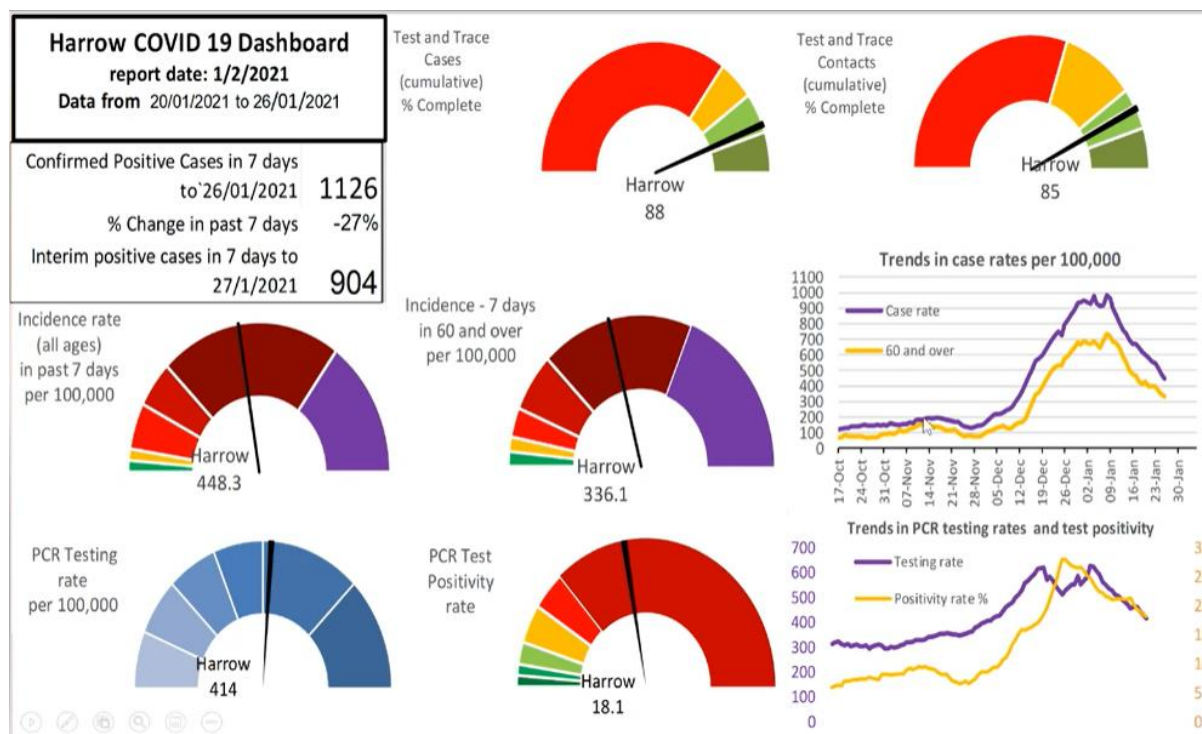
- Public transport services comments
- Cycle groups comments
- Officer observations regarding operational performance
- Residents feedback

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 latest position with the rate of infection in Harrow is shown in the chart below. New cases of Covid-19 remain at high levels across the borough but have decreased from the peak in mid-January. They are still more than 3 times higher than when the country went into the second lockdown. Hospital admissions are stable, but at a high level. Deaths have increased since the New Year and are predicted to remain at a high level for some weeks to come.



The government restrictions have changed constantly since they were first introduced in late March 2020 in order to contain the spread of the virus and take account of the changing situation across the country. These changes have had variable impacts on the demand to travel by all modes of transport. The changes in London and the impacts are summarised below.

Date	Measures in London	Impact on travel
23/03/2020	National lockdown (1) - stay home, non-essential shops and schools closed	Very high
13/05/2020	Relaxation 1 - outdoor recreation permitted	High
01/06/2020	Relaxation 2 - be at home overnight / meet outside with 6	Medium

	people	
04/07/2020	Relaxation 3 – stay alert, hospitality opens / meet up to 30 people / Covid secure guidance	Low
14/09/2020	Rule of six indoors / outdoors introduced	Low
25/09/2000	10pm curfew on hospitality	Low
14/10/2020	3 tier system introduced, London tier 2	Medium
05/11/2020	National lockdown (2) - non-essential business closed / meet 1 person only outside, schools open	High
02/12/2020	lockdown ends, 3 tier system reinstated - stricter restrictions on hospitality	Medium
19/12/2020	tier 4 added - similar to lockdown 2 rules, includes London, due to concerns about new variant of virus	High
30/12/2020	tier 4 extended to 75% of country	High
06/01/2021	National lockdown (3) - stay home, non-essential shops and schools closed	Very high

When considering the traffic data presented in this report it is necessary to consider the government restrictions in force at the time. The higher the impact of the restrictions then the lower the traffic flows.

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 18th and 20th
- September 10th and 12th
- October 15th & 17th
- November 12th & 14th
- December 10th & 12th
- January 1st & 23rd

Automatic traffic counters

- June 2nd – 8th
- September 9th – 15th
- October 10th – 16th
- November 7th – 13th
- December 5th – 11th
- January 18th – 24th

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.

Weekday 7am - 7pm	SC-01 Honeypot Lane			SC-03 Sheepcote Road			SC-09 Uxbridge Road		
	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
December	971	77	14877	857	63	13832	226	62	17116
January	983	123	11111	565	57	11181	446	72	12775

Weekend 7am - 7pm	SC-01 Honeypot Lane			SC-03 Sheepcote Road			SC-09 Uxbridge Road		
	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
December	709	70	14143	591	78	12797	207	88	16550
January	999	120	11539	592	85	10033	571	153	12035

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.

The November surveys were undertaken during the second period of lockdown when non-essential journeys and non-essential businesses were restricted. In December the surveys were undertaken during the tier 3 restrictions when hospitality was restricted. Schools were open during these two months. The January surveys were undertaken during the third lockdown when non-essential journeys, non-essential businesses and schools were closed. The vehicle flows are clearly affected by the government restrictions which were lower in November and January.

The number of pedestrians and cyclists travelling during the week between June and October has been variable and may be influenced by the varying restrictions, opening of schools and some local journeys to work or local shops and amenities. The pedestrian and cycle flows actually increased in November and January which suggests some modal shift to walking and cycling has been occurring under the more severe government restrictions.

The number of pedestrians and cyclists travelling at the weekend has steadily declined between June and November 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 and winter. In January under the third lockdown with more severe restrictions there were increases in walking and cycling which are likely to be influenced by the school closures, more people being at home, and more recreational and exercise based activity.

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 to fire crews going north towards Stanmore being caused on Honeypot Lane due to traffic queuing to turn right at the signals junction.

At a recent meeting with the emergency services before Christmas it was agreed to remove the traffic cones on the northbound section of the cycle lane between Crowshott Avenue and Whitchurch Lane to allow the cycle lane to be used by fire crews to bypass queuing traffic on emergency calls. This action has already been undertaken.

Public transport services comments

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

SC-01	Honeypot Lane, Queensbury	Route 79 - Edgware to Alpertons - every 12 mins Route N98 - Stanmore to Holborn – night bus
SC-03	Sheepcote Road, Greenhill	Route 114 - Mill Hill Broadway to Ruislip – every 10 mins Route 183 - Pinner to Golders Green – every 7/8 mins Route H9/H10 – Harrow Circular – every 10 mins
SC-09	Uxbridge Road, Harrow Weald	Route 182 - 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 are responsible for 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 on the road network and the use of higher capacity multi lane roads over short lengths therefore has a negligible impact on overall 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.

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.

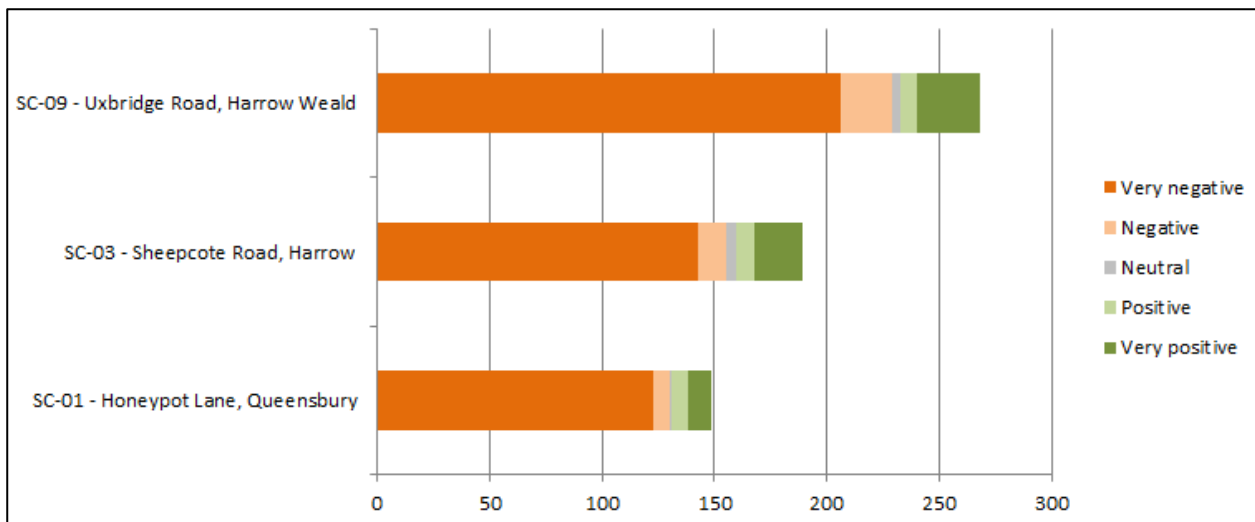
In the November review it was reported that Queensbury ward councillors expressed concerns about the Honeygot Lane cycle scheme in respect of motorists using the service roads to bypass congestion on the dual carriageway. Site observations did not indicate a particular problem with this issue, however, ward councillors have requested that the residential service road on the western side be subject to a 20mph speed limit and this proposal has been approved and is being taken forward to implementation on an experimental basis.

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 (63%) that expressed more negative sentiments expressing the view that there is increased congestion and queuing at busy times.
- The local residents / businesses made up 22% 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

- The cycle schemes are retained until the next review is undertaken.
- The next review of the schemes is undertaken before the end of February.

Decision

The schemes are to remain until the next review.