

London Streetspace Programme (Harrow)

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods Review - 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 low traffic neighbourhoods. These schemes are implemented at locations where residential estates experience problems with through traffic creating environmental problems with road safety, pollution and nuisance.

The schemes consist of introducing modal filters to prevent through vehicular traffic using the residential estates as shortcuts in order to create safer conditions for pedestrians and cyclists and improve environmental conditions for residents. The Low Traffic Neighbourhoods have been implemented in 4 locations in the borough and the list of schemes is shown in the table below:

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

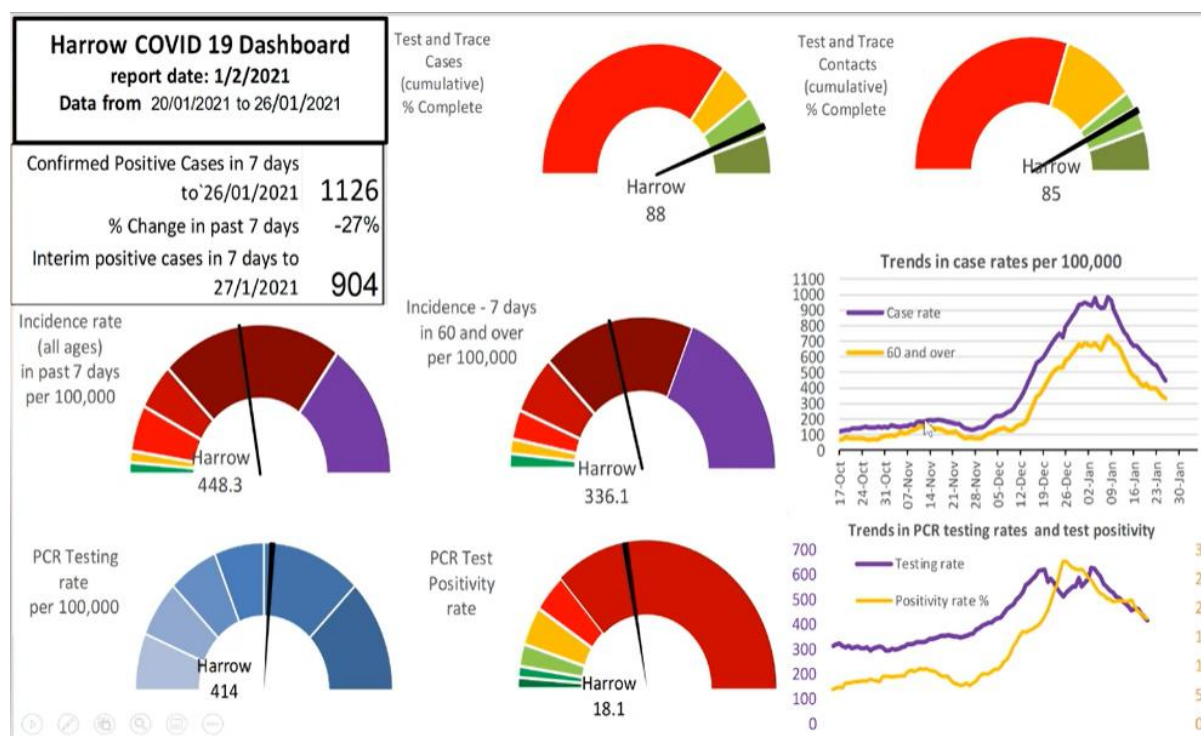
- Pedestrian / cycling / vehicle activity (measured by counts)
- Emergency services comments
- Bus services comments (TfL)
- Officer observations regarding operational performance
- Residents feedback

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.

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
- October 15th and 17th
- November 12th and 14th
- December 10th & 12th
- January 21st & 23rd

Automatic traffic counters

- July 3rd – 9th
- October 12th – 18th
- November 7th – 13th
- December 7th – 13th
- January 18th – 24th

The surveys were undertaken at the following locations as follows:

- 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		
User type	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles
July	1975	356	6728	346	64	1113	1497	316	2547	480	52	2799
October	3482	464	N/A	611	108	N/A	3536	338	N/A	956	72	N/A
November	4056	323	N/A	695	68	N/A	3451	229	N/A	1135	70	N/A
December	3058	173	1903	572	60	N/A	2557	156	N/A	934	37	2133
January	3212	147	1914	425	64	N/A	2236	145	160	469	34	1724

Weekend 7am - 7pm

Site location	LTN-02 Pinner View area			LTN-03 Francis Road area			LTN-04 Vaughan Road area			LTN-06 Southfield Park		
User type	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Vehicles
July	2361	988	6274	293	120	972	1814	768	2297	529	164	2400
October	2526	564	N/A	343	80	N/A	1859	334	N/A	450	88	N/A
November	1729	96	N/A	216	20	N/A	1237	82	N/A	343	11	N/A
December	2593	218	1603	308	47	N/A	1968	155	N/A	464	31	1936
January	3297	315	1793	424	60	N/A	2226	193	105	535	44	1764

The figures represent combined flows for all the points of closures in each LTN. Vehicle counts show N/A when the road was fully closed to vehicles. On 23rd November three closures were removed (Southfield Park, Kingsfield Avenue & Pinner View - north) and on 23rd December three closures had gaps opened up (Pinner View - south, Blenheim road & The Gardens) for emergency services vehicles.

In January vehicle flows have increased in Headstone South to 28% of the July level and in Southfield Park by 62% of the July level. Increases in Vaughan Road are mainly illegal vehicle movements through the gaps in the planters.

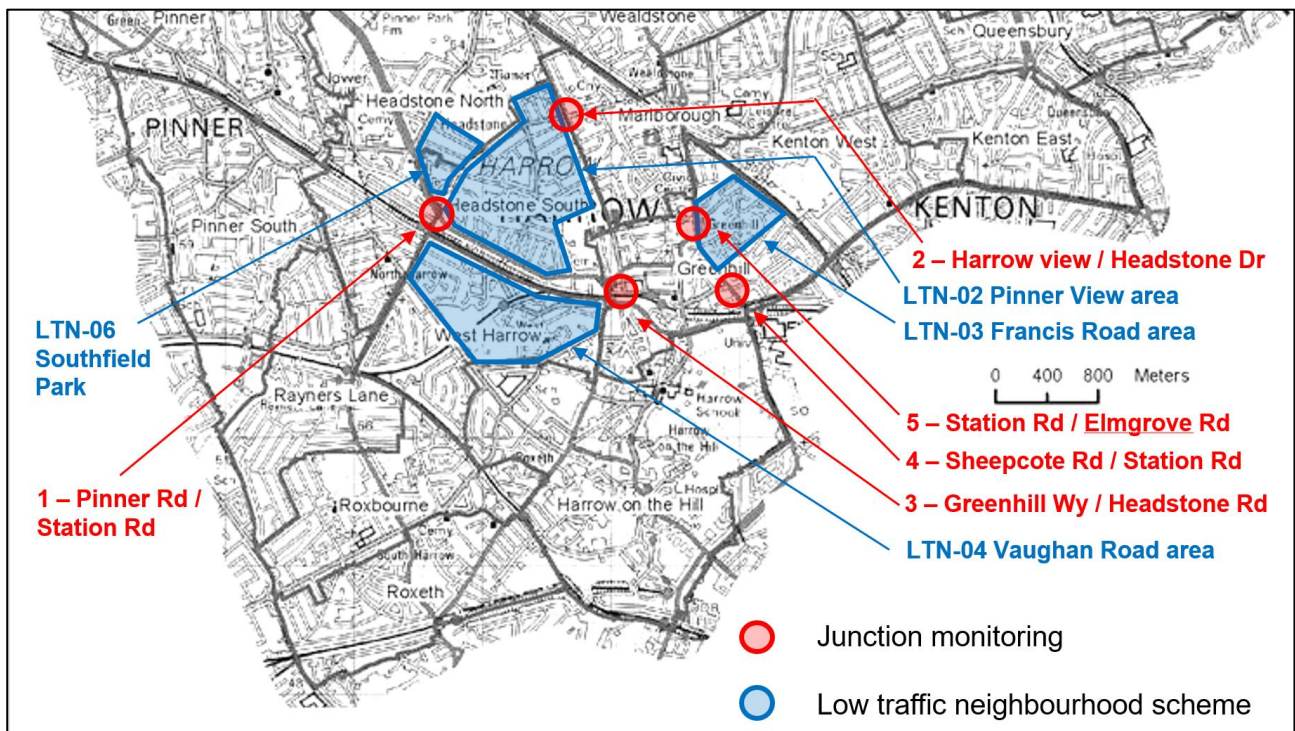
The November surveys were undertaken during the second period of lockdown when non-essential journeys and non-essential businesses were restricted. In December the surveys were undertaken during the tier 3 restrictions when hospitality was restricted. Schools were open during these two months. The January surveys were undertaken during the third lockdown when non-essential journeys, non-essential businesses and schools were closed. The flows of all modes of traffic are clearly affected by the government restrictions and it is difficult therefore to draw any meaningful comparisons month on month.

However, in October, the first month of operation of the LTN schemes, when the schemes were implemented without changes and had the largest impact on modal shift it is clear that the highest increases in pedestrians and cyclists flows occurred during weekdays. These were statistically significant increases resulting from the LTN schemes. The October surveys were undertaken under tier 2 restrictions with only a moderate impact on travel. In subsequent months the changes to the schemes and more severe government restrictions limited any further beneficial impacts.

Queue length surveys

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

The plan below shows junctions on the main road network in close proximity to the low traffic neighbourhoods 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 dates for data collection are as follows:

Survey dates:

- July 23rd and 25th and August 13th and 15th
- October 15th and 17th
- November 12th and 14th
- December 10th & 12th
- January 16th & 21st

Survey locations:

- 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 / Hinds Road

The table below gives details of the surveys. The figures show maximum queue lengths for all vehicles at all arms of the junction.

Junction	Month	Weekday 7am -7pm			Weekend 7am -7pm		
		AM	Inter peak	PM	AM	Inter peak	PM
1 - A404 Pinner Road / Station Road	July	84	120	45	66	148	116
	October	178	163	198	84	198	181
	November	195	163	145	58	158	150
	December	219	179	211	88	182	166
	January	80	75	93	47	70	96
2 - Headstone Drive / Harrow View / Headstone Gardens	July	97	132	175	99	129	152
	October	202	162	200	127	172	165
	November	174	114	186	59	123	133
	December	208	154	160	88	167	160
	January	89	96	129	52	88	90
3 - Greenhill Way / Headstone Road	August	87	100	139	60	120	113
	October	99	108	126	85	107	129
	November	125	105	140	87	160	160
	December	115	112	128	89	129	132
	January	81	79	108	50	84	91
4 - A409 Sheepcote Road / Station Road	July	43	56	69	29	57	53
	October	69	57	68	42	70	71
	November	61	54	63	25	56	56
	December	64	68	75	43	61	67
	January	42	55	55	22	42	50
5 - A409 Station Road / Elmgrove Road / Hindes Road	July	96	93	126	63	98	111
	October	105	76	120	73	95	95
	November	141	105	129	58	113	105
	December	157	115	153	72	112	110
	January	79	92	103	45	83	85

The figures for July show the situation between the first and second lockdown when restrictions were less severe and no LTNs were in place. Junctions 1, 2, 3 & 5 comparatively have seen increases in queuing between October and December both in the week and at the weekend. The removal of closures in LTNs has not mitigated those increases which indicates a preference for travel by car rather than other modes under any circumstances. The queue lengths recorded in January are, however, significantly reduced.

from previous months and show the larger impact of the third lockdown on vehicular traffic which includes the closure of schools.

Southfield Park / Priory Way / Manor Way issues (LTN-06)

The two streets parallel with Southfield Park (Manor Way and Priory Way) between Parkside Way and Headstone Lane have experienced additional traffic as a consequence of the introduction of the Southfield Park closure in October and November because no measures had been introduced in these streets at the same time. The table below shows the vehicle flows recorded.

Site	Month	Weekday 7am – 7pm	Weekend 7am – 7pm
Southfield Park	July	2799	2400
	October	780	653
	November	655	481
	December	2133	1936
	January	1724	1764
Priory Way	July	1507	1359
	October	1864	1208
	November	1561	872
	December	1642	1108
	January	691	654
Manor Way	July	701	580
	October	1324	953
	November	1140	658
	December	808	647
	January	446	429

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

The closure in Southfield Park was removed on 23rd November and this has relieved any excess delay and congestion on the road network. In January the impact of the third lockdown shows significantly reduced traffic flows.

Emergency services comments

A meeting with the Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade and London Ambulance Service was held on 21st December to seek their views about the impact of the low traffic neighbourhood schemes on their respective services.

The Police indicated that the LTN schemes had not directly affected their statutory 15-minute response times and that they had not been delayed.

The London Ambulance Service confirmed that the LTN's have not affected their statutory (7 minute) response times but they were experiencing some problems with the fixed closures. This was because crews attend incidents from wherever resources are available and so crews may not have local knowledge of the area and their use of satnav systems is limited by the available technology. Their policy is that any closures should have emergency vehicle access of 3.5 metres to allow ambulances easy unimpeded access. They expressed their preference for physical closures to be replaced by virtual closures using camera enforcement so ambulance crews can pass through unhindered.

The London Fire Brigade confirmed that they are meeting their statutory response requirements (6 minutes), and currently there are no significant issues with regards to LTN's in the borough. The impact of the schemes in close proximity to Harrow Fire Station located in Pinner Road and the possible effect on attendance will be monitored.

It was acknowledged that there was higher number of emergency call outs to incidents during a time of increasing infection rates as a consequence of the variant of the coronavirus and remedial action was needed. It was agreed that the planters in Pinner View (by Kingsfield Avenue), Vaughan Road and Blenheim Road be opened up to create 3.5m gaps to allow access for the emergency services to pass through unrestricted and that additional signing provided to make it clear that this is for emergency access only. On 23rd December the amendments were implemented.

A follow up meeting with emergency services on 13th January was held with the same group of representatives from the emergency services to check on the impact of the amendments to the schemes made in December and to seek their views on the remaining full road closures in the low traffic neighbourhood schemes.

The Metropolitan Police maintained their position that they were not affected by the schemes. The Fire Brigade recognised that the amendments to the more strategically positioned closures is having a beneficial effect on attendance times and were not concerned about the remaining closures. The London Ambulance Service also indicated that the effect of opening up the closures in December is having a significant beneficial impact on attendance times and indicated that the remaining three closures in Headstone South did have reasonable alternative routes around closures, however, they reiterated that they did not support fixed closures and that they preferred the use of virtual closures with ANPR enforcement as this would mean that no diversions to calls would be necessary. They highlighted that there is additional pressure on the service due to the rising number of coronavirus cases which means that only one ambulance is likely to be attending an emergency call due to the current demand on the service.

Acknowledging the comments of the ambulance service it was agreed to open up the remaining three closures in Headstone South LTN at Canterbury Road, Gloucester Road and Beresford Road with a five metre gap for access for the emergency services to pass through unrestricted with additional signing to make it clear that this is for emergency access only. The wider gap was required because these locations are at junctions. The closures in Victor Road and Francis Road will remain as existing because it was indicated that they have a minimal impact on the emergency services. The agreed amendments were implemented on 29th January.

There was further dialogue with the Fire Brigade in early February with regard to the Francis Road closure. It was clarified that fire crews in the borough regularly visit new road layouts to review how best to attend incidents on either side of a new restriction and crews do

also respond to potential issues with access that are raised as a direct result of concerns from members of the public. Such an incident occurred in Francis Road. The Fire Brigade clarified that Francis Road is not a direct route to get to other parts of the borough and as such does not cause an issue when trying to access other parts of Harrow. For Francis Road there are other options for fire crews to access the road from either end. Fire crews are made aware of any new road alterations to make sure that the necessary preplanning is done in the event of an incident and details are published as traffic notifications at the fire stations for reference of visiting crews.

Surveys have been undertaken in January at the three closures amended in December to establish if motorists are still complying with the restrictions following the opening up of gaps in the closures. The table below shows that there is a high level of non-compliance with the restrictions where the amendments have been made. This is a cause for concern as vehicles making illegal manoeuvres will compromise road safety at the points of closure for both vehicles and pedestrians and could lead to collisions. It will therefore be necessary to undertake enforcement using mobile CCTV vehicles to ensure compliance and maintain an acceptable level of road safety. Initial enforcement will be “soft” using warning notices to warn offenders of illegal driving behaviour and will gradually be replaced by harder enforcement using penalty charge notices.

Weekday 7am – 7pm

Pinner View (LTN-02)				Blenheim Road (LTN-04)			Vaughan Road (LTN-04)		
Month	Car	Goods vehicle	Emergency Services Vehicle	Car	Goods vehicle	Emergency Services Vehicle	Car	Goods vehicle	Emergency Services Vehicle
Jan	195	55	3	64	19	0	54	23	0

Weekend 7am – 7pm

Pinner View (LTN-02)				Blenheim Road (LTN-04)			Vaughan Road (LTN-04)		
Month	Car	Goods vehicle	Emergency Services Vehicle	Car	Goods vehicle	Emergency Services Vehicle	Car	Goods vehicle	Emergency Services Vehicle
Jan	149	36	0	77	13	1	67	24	0

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 low traffic neighbourhood schemes on bus services.

TfL have noted that traffic levels are still generally lower than prior to the pandemic and their bus operators are not experiencing any negative impacts on bus journey times in the area.

Officer observations regarding operational performance

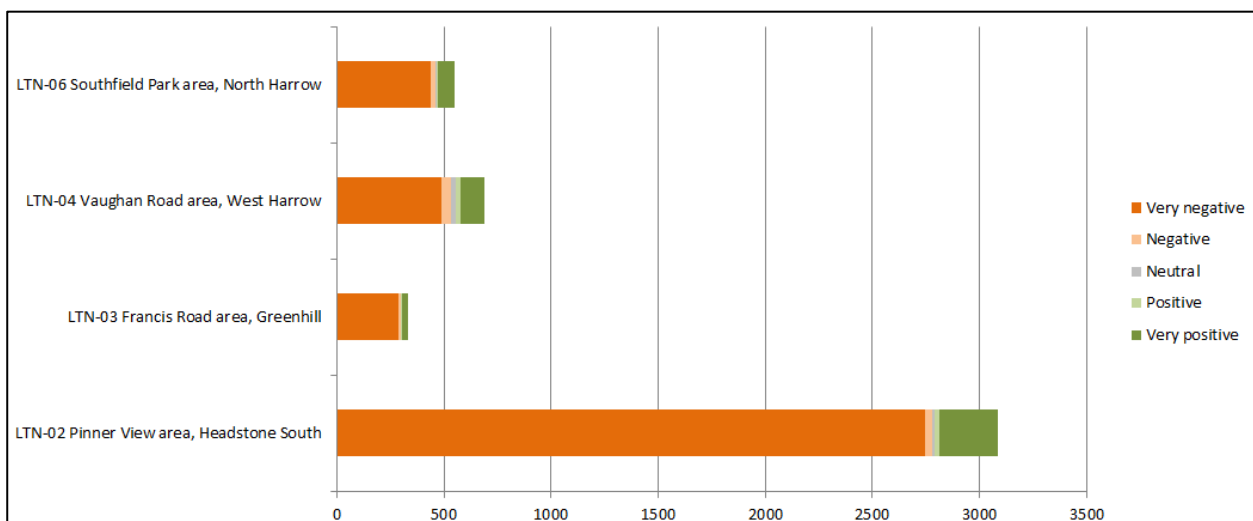
Officers have undertaken on-site observations periodically to check on the operation of the schemes.

Incidents where vehicles have tried to bypass the points of closure by driving on the footway have now ceased because physical measures have been taken to stop such behaviour.

Issues with vehicles getting caught out by the restrictions have become less of a problem since additional signing has been implemented to highlight the points of closures and restricted access to residential estates.

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 low traffic neighbourhood 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 (11%).
- The largest groups of responses were from residents (56%) and motorists (22%) and a larger proportion of these groups 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.
- Some comments concerning the removal of road closures were variable with some people supportive and other critical of the decision.

- There were many generally derogatory 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 and it is expected that making changes is something that will happen 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 as a consequence.

Scheme amendments

There is a lot of dissatisfaction with the current schemes and if the trials are to continue it will be necessary to mitigate the impacts on residents and introduce changes to the current design of the schemes. The most effective way would be to use virtual closures using CCTV enforcement similar to some schemes developed by other London Boroughs.



These schemes work on the principle that physical obstructions such as planters will be removed and replaced with virtual road closures using mandatory signs only and enforced using CCTV cameras. Local residents living in the LTN will be issued with permits that allow them to be exempt from the restrictions. This will allow permit holders (residents), emergency services, waste collection services only to pass through the restrictions.

Eligible residents will be able to apply for a permit. Ineligible residents will not be able to apply for a permit and not have access, and this will reduce through traffic at the closures and in the LTN generally in order to achieve low traffic conditions.

This reduces the inconvenience to residents living in the residential estate but still maintains the core intention of the LTN to create lower traffic conditions by removing through traffic.

Further public engagement would be required to amend the scheme in this way.

The Southfield Park LTN does have some unique differences to the other three LTNs and will require more in-depth consideration and review during the design process. It should be noted that the three main residential streets that are through routes do not interconnect with each other but do connect main routes at both ends. The streets are narrow with limited opportunities for large vehicles to turn around.

Options

that the options are as follows:

- That Southfields Park LTN is to remain offline until such time as a detailed assessment is undertaken and a consultation exercise with affected residents is completed.
- That the current concerns with the LTN schemes are noted and that further public engagement on possible changes to the schemes is undertaken at Headstone South LTN, Francis Road area LTN and Vaughan Road area LTN.

- That enforcement at the closures with emergency service gaps is undertaken to improve compliance and maintain road safety.
- The next review of the schemes is undertaken before the end of February.

Decision:

The Corporate Director- Community in consultation with the Leader of the Council has decided:

That Southfields Park LTN is to remain offline until such time as a detailed traffic assessment is undertaken and to be subject to further public engagement on the future application of traffic order(s) and the mechanisms to be used to enforce the same.

That the Headstone South LTN, Francis Road area LTN and Vaughan Road area LTN are to be subject to further public engagement on the future application of the traffic order and the mechanisms to be used to enforce the same.

That enforcement at the closures with emergency service gaps is undertaken to improve compliance and maintain road safety.

That the next review of the schemes is undertaken before the end of February.