



# **Sustainable Transport Strategy 2006 – 2016**

Islington's Local Implementation Plan

## Chapter Eight: Links to the A1 Borough Strategy



## Chapter 8

# Links to the A1 Borough Strategy

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The council has developed a strategy to transform the A1 corridor. The A1, running from Archway to Old Street, is a major traffic artery serving Central London and it is also the single largest public space in Islington.
- 1.2 The dominance of road traffic and the poor quality of the local environment severely limit opportunities to use the A1 street as public space. The street acts as a significant barrier to east-west pedestrian movement, which severs local communities and limits access to services and facilities.
- 1.3 The preparation of the strategy for the A1 stimulated dialogue with local stakeholders and led to an agreed framework for the area.
- 1.4 In particular, the strategy demonstrates how the street can be a better place for pedestrians by improving the street environment, transforming the A1 from a traffic corridor to a series of public spaces, and joining up both sides of the corridor.
- 1.5 This chapter outlines the transport implications of the A1 Borough Strategy, and places the strategy within the context of the council's Sustainable Transport Strategy. It must be emphasised that the proposals outlined in this chapter are dependent upon many factors external to the Council, such as partnership working, securing funds from a range of sources, and in the case of some of the most significant A1 Borough improvements, the planning process. However, the chapter helps to illustrate the council's ambition in not just improving but transforming Islington's transport environment.

## 2.0 Summary

- 2.1 The A1 street forms the spine of Islington. It covers a distance of just under 10km from the boundary with the City on Goswell Road up to Archway via the Angel, Highbury Corner, and Holloway Road. The street is one of the most diverse and fast-changing areas of London. It is also the single largest public space in Islington. North of Goswell Road, the street is part of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) and they are therefore our key partners in delivering the A1 Borough Strategy.

### Regeneration

- 2.2 The A1 is surrounded by some of the largest and most exciting regeneration opportunities in London. Substantial high-density, mixed-use developments are proposed for Archway, the Holloway/Arsenal area and Highbury Corner. The corridor also serves the EC1 New Deal regeneration area and the Kings Cross to Finsbury Park regeneration swathe. Islington is one of only four 'opportunity boroughs' in London. Opportunity boroughs are those local authority areas recognised by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) as having the potential to deliver significant housing growth.

See chapter 9 for more detail on Islington's key regeneration areas.

### A framework for investment

- 2.3 Enormous sums of public and private money will be invested in the A1 corridor over the next decade or so. We hope that the A1 Borough Strategy will stimulate a dialogue with local stakeholders and lead to an agreed framework for the area. This framework will help to coordinate and make the best use of investment. By publicising opportunities, additional investment in the area will be stimulated.

### **Engendering civic pride**

- 2.4 The A1 Borough Strategy came about because local people told the council that it should make local streets cleaner, safer and more attractive. Future plans for the area will only succeed if they reflect the needs and aspirations of local communities and business people. They need to feel proud of their street – as if they own it. Local people therefore need to be actively involved in making decisions about its future. We hope the strategy will encourage this involvement.

### **What are the issues?**

- 2.5 The A1 is a major traffic artery serving Central London and as a result, the dominance of road traffic and the poor quality of the local environment severely limit opportunities to use the street as public space. Furthermore, the street acts as a significant physical and psychological barrier to east-west pedestrian movement. Consultation with local residents suggests that this barrier severs local communities and limits access to services and facilities.

### **What are the aims?**

- 2.6 The A1 Borough Strategy addresses these issues by taking the view from the kerb. We have looked at how we can make the street a better place for pedestrians. This has led us to rethink the street and to come up with ideas to:
- improve the street environment by focussing on those issues that matter most to local people and businesses – cleanliness, personal security, and safety
  - transform it from a traffic corridor to a series of attractive and welcoming public spaces
  - join up both sides of the corridor to improve access to local services and facilities
- 2.7 The strategy recognises the economic importance of the pedestrian. At street level, the A1 is predominantly a shopping street. It also serves the Angel and Nags Head Town Centres. Evidence from Islington and elsewhere in London indicates that retail centres depend on high levels of pedestrian footfall. A key aim of the strategy is to improve the local environment particularly for pedestrians. This will increase pedestrian volumes in our shopping areas, and encourage people to stay longer in these areas. Improvements to the street environment will also attract new businesses and encourage inward investment. Longer-term redevelopment opportunities will be used to remove some of the long-standing physical and social barriers created by the road and rectify some of the mistakes in the past.

## **Community**

- 2.8 Physical regeneration can bring substantial economic benefits including new employment opportunities. It can also increase land values and rents, displace local services and facilities, and bring new types of activity to an area – excluding the very people that it was designed to benefit. We need to avoid this by making links between physical regeneration and the wider services that the council and its partners provide, notably education, health, and policing. Continuous engagement with local communities will also ensure that future changes meet their needs and aspirations.

## **Sustainability**

- 2.9 The population of Islington is projected to increase by 20% in the period up to 2021. Most of this growth will take place in and around the A1 Corridor. The average density of new dwellings in Islington is 122 dwellings per hectare. This is more than double the current housing density of 56 dwellings per hectare. It is also nearly two and a half times greater than the current London average for new dwellings.
- 2.10 In addition, the number of jobs in the borough is expected to increase significantly. A study commissioned by the council suggests that there could be as many as 33,000 additional jobs in the borough in the period between 2001 and 2016. This growth represents a substantial challenge for local services. This is particularly true of the local transport network, which already suffers from some of the highest congestion levels in London. Demand for parking is also amongst the highest in London. The strategy therefore seeks to reduce reliance on motorised travel by making it easier for people to access services and facilities on foot.

## **Prioritising the pedestrian**

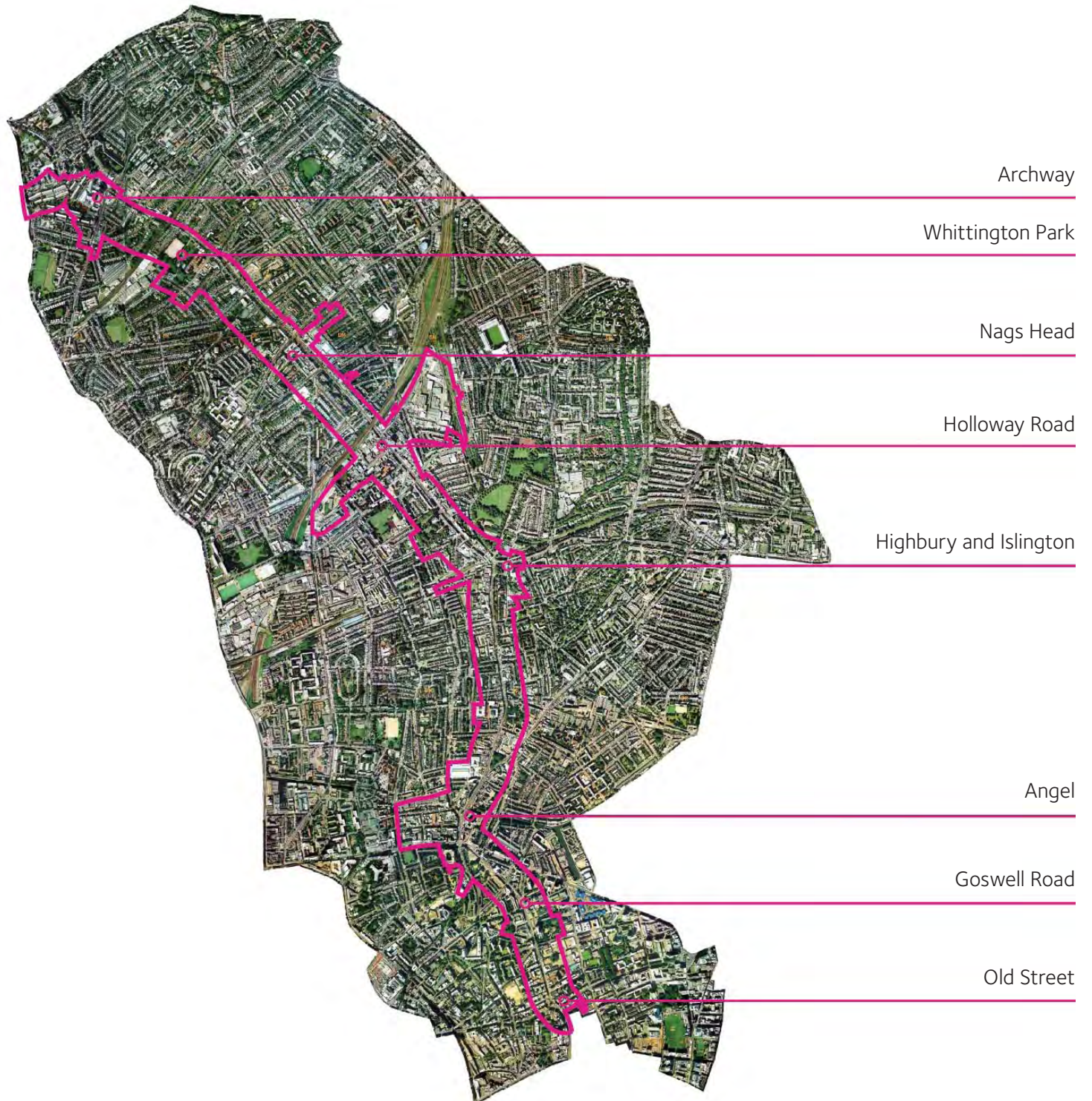
- 2.11 Opportunities to reduce the people-carrying capacity of the road are likely to be limited. Furthermore, such a reduction would not benefit local people if vehicles are simply displaced into adjoining residential areas. A range of solutions are therefore evaluated. They range from:
- improvements to change the way in which pedestrians and other users perceive the street;
  - the creation of shared pedestrian and vehicular spaces; and
  - changes in the layout of the street that are balanced by measures to protect sensitive areas.

**Figure 8.1**

Scale 1:35,000



# A1 Borough



## Delivery

2.12 A high-level partnership group has been set up to steer the project. It includes senior managers from public sector agencies such as Transport for London, Metropolitan Police, Primary Care Trust and the London Development Agency, local businesses, landowners and developers, members of the local community, and experts from the architecture and urbanism sectors. The group represents a commitment from the key agencies to work together to identify and achieve shared goals. Funding from a range of sources is already in place including council capital funding, Neighbourhood Renewal Funding, and Borough Spending Plan funding. Transport for London has also committed to working in partnership with the Council in 2005-06. Additional funding opportunities include Central Government and London Development Agency funds, and investment from the private sector as redevelopment takes place.

## 3.0 A1 perceptions

3.1 To gain a better understanding of what local people want, as many people as possible were asked to share their A1 experiences.

3.2 Some of the consultation activities carried out included:

- A 'People Friendly Streets' survey (2003) to gather the views of residents and visitors on the street environment.
- 'Vox pops' and focus group research to discover the local community's identification with the area, and the sense of commitment to the long-term future of the area.
- A ongoing consultation exercise with younger people and children through the Council's 'Listen Up' Project.
- A stakeholder day in July 2004 in order to engage with local stakeholders to hear their concerns and ideas.
- A Big Bus Tour in November 2004 to get participants to think creatively about the A1 and the key spaces that make up the A1 experience.
- A partnership group was set up to help steer the development of the strategy.
- Continued direct engagement with the local community through volunteer programmes and time bank strategies.

3.3 Finally, following release of the draft version of the A1 Borough Strategy in June 2005, we have conducted an extensive Community Consultation with residents, business owners, employees and visitors.

3.4 Consultation and engagement is a continuing process and dialogue with communities, partners and stakeholders will continue as the strategy evolves and is delivered.

## 4.0 Our approach

4.1 To help us understand this enormous and complex space and to plan for its future, we have broken it down into:

- **Four character reaches** – We aim to provide a coherent and unified

approach to the street environment whilst at the same time protecting and enhancing distinctive local characteristics and qualities.

- **Eight meeting places** – These are eight key locations on the corridor that act as centres of activity for local people and gateways to Islington (including the Underground stations at the Angel, Highbury and Islington, Holloway Road, and Archway) – not all of these function well as public spaces or as points of arrival. Local people are strongly attached to their local centres and are passionate about the quality of the environment in these centres. The strategy proposes the creation of eight new public spaces at these locations.
- **Eight stitches** – These are places where there are substantial barriers to east-west pedestrian movement that need to be resolved. However, these are also areas where there are opportunities to improve links into the meeting places. These opportunities arise either through redevelopment and regeneration or by linking up and improving existing green spaces and other public spaces.

### Core principles

4.2 Improvements are already being delivered on the ground. We therefore need to ensure that what is being done now supports and sustains our longer-term objectives. We therefore propose a number of core principles that will underpin everything that happens in the corridor. Many of these are focussed on the street environment i.e. **CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE and ACCESSIBLE**. Others are concerned with how we can strengthen key activities within the corridor. For example:

- **SMART** supports the role of the street as a linear campus and a channel for communication and new technology
- **CREATIVE** supports the street as an arts venue
- **TRADING** supports local services and businesses
- **TIMED** looking at how activity patterns and use of the street change over time of day, week and year

4.3 A third set of principles links to wider social objectives such as improving **HEALTH** and supporting **DIVERSITY**. The transformation of the corridor will involve new ways of thinking (**TESTING**). In particular, we need to balance the role of the street as a public space, with its role as a key route into Central London (**SHARED**).

### Eight Public Spaces

4.4 A range of ideas have been proposed for improvements that can be made along the 4 stretches of the road and at each of the 8 public spaces (Archway, Whittington Park, Nag's Head, Holloway Road, Highbury and Islington, Angel, Goswell Road and Old Street). These ideas are summarised below.

#### Archway

4.5 Figure 8.2 shows a map of the Archway area as it could be, including:

1. Rethinking Archway – feasibility of removing Archway Tower, and creating a high quality, mixed use development

2. Creating a New Public Piazza uniting Archway Close and the Tavern with the main commercial area and Archway Station
3. Giving Pedestrians Priority
4. Removing the Gyratory – improving traffic flows and public transport linkages
5. Improve Bus Waiting Areas

### ***Whittington Park***

- 4.6 Figure 8.3 shows a map of the Whittington Park area as it could be, including:
1. Improve the setting of St. John's Church
  2. Improve Entrance to Upper Holloway Station
  3. Whittington Park = A1 Focal Point - create views into park
  4. Improve Davenant Park
  5. Test the Feasibility of Redefining the Edge

### ***Nag's Head***

- 4.7 Figure 8.4 shows a map of the Nag's Head area as it could be, including:
1. A Better Space for Pedestrians – improved crossing, pavements, street trees & removal of excess street furniture
  2. Support Retailing – signage, street trader kiosks, identity of Town Centre, reduced illegal street trade
  3. Celebrate the Odeon as an A1 Icon

### ***Holloway***

- 4.8 Figure 8.5 shows a map of the Holloway area as it could be, including:
1. Bridge linking station to new stadium / Regeneration of Arches
  2. London Metropolitan University Campus
  3. Enhancements to Holloway Road Station to improve station capacity and accessibility
  4. Create Pedestrian Priority on Hornsey Road on Event Days
  5. East / West Pedestrian Route
  6. Upgrade Shop Facades
  7. Ecological Corridor
  8. Animate Public Space Around Stadium Podium

### ***Highbury and Islington***

- 4.9 Figure 8.6 shows a map of the Highbury and Islington area as it could be, including:
- Allow Access to Arboretum
  - Shared Surface / Remove Barriers
  - Improve area around Station in advance of potential comprehensive redevelopment scheme
  - Reveal Highbury Fields - Pedestrian and environmental improvements
  - Improve Pedestrian Links between Paradise Park, New City Academy, St. Mary Magdalene, and Islington Central Library
  - Improve appearance of Highbury Corner

### ***Angel***

- 4.10 Figure 8.7 shows a map of the Angel as it could be, with the following areas highlighted:
1. Improve Crossing at City Road
  2. Improve Crossing at Angel Station
  3. Pedestrian Improvements on Liverpool Road / Chapel Market
  4. Open up Islington Green
  5. Promote Camden Passage
  6. Improve Bus Passenger Waiting Area – Route 38
  7. New 3-metre Central Boulevard Style Strip with Trees
  8. Improve City Road

### ***Goswell Road***

- 4.11 Figure 8.8 shows a map of the Goswell Road area as it could be, including:
1. 'Cut the Corner' of Kings Square
  2. Create a New Focal Point for the Finsbury Stitch
  3. The Interactive Playground
  4. Improving Connections from Northampton Square to Kings Square
  5. Proposed Academy for Islington
  6. Improved Pedestrian Facilities

### ***Old Street***

- 4.12 The vision for the **Finsbury stitch** is to improving access to health, education, and leisure facilities promote a healthy lifestyle. Figure 8.9 shows a map of the Finsbury stitch as it could be.
- 4.13 Figure 8.10 shows a map of the **Islington Gateway** area as it could be, with the following areas highlighted:
1. Widening Pavements
  2. Redevelopment Opportunities
  3. Islington Gateway – 21st Century Circus
  4. Shared Surface





















## 5.0 Consultation on the draft A1 Borough Strategy

- 5.1 The draft strategy for the A1 was released in June 2005, and feedback was sought from stakeholders including private and public sector partners. An extensive community consultation was also undertaken with residents, workers and visitors to Islington.
- 5.2 The consultation was undertaken in July 2005, and 1,032 responses were received, which provided invaluable feedback on the strategy. The format of the Consultation also allowed us to see which aspects of the strategy community members believe are most important. Community members were asked to rate the importance of each of the key principles and key locations of the strategy.
- 5.3 The overall response to the consultation was very positive, with all of the key principles and key locations receiving mean response scores in the 'important' range. The results demonstrate that the draft strategy has adequately identified the principles and locations that the community believe are the most important. This is unsurprising, given that the strategy document was developed following an extensive consultation with the community.
- 5.4 **Key Principles.** The 12 key principles were rated by respondents in order of importance as follows:
1. Clean
  2. Safe
  3. Accessible
  4. Healthy
  5. Green
  6. Shared
  7. Trading
  8. Testing
  9. Smart
  10. Creative
  11. Diverse
  12. Timed
- 5.5 **Key Locations.** Of the eight key locations, the community consultation rated those in the north of the Borough (with the exception of Whittington Park) as the highest priorities for redevelopment. In order of importance, the key locations were as follows:
1. Holloway Road
  2. Archway Town Centre
  3. Nags Head
  4. Highbury Corner
  5. Angel Town
  6. Old Street
  7. Whittington Park
  8. Goswell Road
- 5.6 **Further Feedback.** Only a limited amount of qualitative feedback was received from respondents. Combined with the positive responses to the principles and locations, this indicated that respondents feel that the draft A1 Borough Strategy successfully addresses the issues and locations that they believe are important. Of the qualitative responses received, the most

prevalent were:

- increased bicycle lanes and facilities
- improved interface between public transport routes
- improved car-parking facilities

5.7 Overall, the findings of the community consultation demonstrate that the strategy adequately addresses the community's needs and concerns in relation to the A1, and that there is a positive response to the project.

## 6.0 **A1 Delivery**

### **Three levels of intervention**

#### ***Level 1 – Just good housekeeping!***

6.1 The council is already working with its partners to improve how the street is managed and maintained.

#### ***Level 2 – More effective space and priority for those on foot***

6.2 There must be a balance between road safety issues and pedestrian needs on major TfL routes such as the A1. This will mean that safety regulations must be applied to standard road crossings, regulation and enforcement signs, and many other items of traffic related equipment. The second level of intervention includes actions such as designing customised solutions aimed at putting road crossings where those on foot want to cross, and not just where traffic must be controlled, and combining equipment such as signs, lights and signals so that there is less overall clutter and in some places reappraising the lane widths and space for vehicles by comparison with the footway space needed. All these kinds of level 2 actions will require more technical appraisal and professional input from the council, Transport for London and their technical advisors, and are therefore likely to take more time and money to achieve.

#### ***Level 3 – Major projects at key sites***

6.3 Major roads and road junctions often go hand in hand with important buildings and uses of all types and these sites can define local distinctiveness and become focal points to the local community. In these locations both TfL and public and private developments may be the catalyst for major changes to the A1. The 8 stitches highlighted the key areas of opportunity where regeneration, new development, better links between local parks and other resources on either side of the A1 can all be achieved if 8 coordinated plans can be prepared and support for them secured.

## 7.0 **Conclusion**

7.1 The A1 Borough Strategy illustrates the high level of quality that the council seeks in improving Islington's transport environment. It is therefore a very important part of the council's One Islington vision and the Sustainable Transport Strategy.