

Local Implementation Plan Annual Progress Report 2009/10 to 2011/12

Chapter 13.0 – Local Area Accessibility



13.0 LOCAL AREA ACCESSIBILITY

- 13.1 Islington Council has a strong tradition of innovation and excellence in accessibility, from award-winning pilot schemes such as ScootAbility and Safer Routes to Public Transport, to high-quality physical improvements for pedestrians. One recent highlight for Islington was being short-listed for a National Transport Award for Innovation for the Accessible Heritage Crossover, which was designed in consultation with local wheelchair users to make it easier for people in wheelchairs to navigate the crossover.

Programme Summary 2009/10 - 2011/12

PROPOSAL	2009/10 £000s	2010/11 £000s	2011/12 £000s	Total £000s
Islington LAS Workbook (not on Baseline Submission Form)	110	110	110	330
Ongoing Online Borough-wide Community Street Audit System	50	0	0	50
Peerless Street – Moorfields Eye Hospital	40	40	0	80
Total	200	150	110	460

Islington LAS Workbook

- 13.2 During 2007/08, Islington was involved in the working group to develop the new Local Area Accessibility bidding process. Towards the end of 2007 we received TfL approval of our Local Accessibility Scheme (LAS) Outline Work Programme, also referred to as the LAS Workbook. The programme currently concentrates on six areas within the borough where demand for accessibility improvements is greatest. The programmed works are valued at £445,000. This is higher than the indicated allocation levels, but only represents a small proportion of the work that has been identified within the borough.



Before and after photos of Islington's award-winning Accessible Heritage crossover, one of the measures being implemented throughout the borough through the LAS Workbook funding.

- 13.3 Islington will continue to deliver the programme as outlined in the LAS Workbook. At the current level of funding, it is anticipated that the borough will be able to fully spend its allocation within the first half of each year and will hope to take advantage of any

additional funding that may become available. Islington intends to submit an updated LAS Workbook for TfL's approval during the summer.

Ongoing Online Borough-wide Community Street Audit System

- 13.4 Islington has a strong tradition of customer service, and has developed award-winning systems to improve customer satisfaction with our highways services. To build on these successes, Islington would like to develop an online reporting database for accessibility issues. The system would allow members of the public as well as council staff to register locations and routes where there are barriers to accessibility. These issues could include a lack of step-free access, worn or dated accessibility measures, street clutter, uneven pavement, inadequate street lighting and any number of other streetscape issues. An easy-to-use map-based interface will be designed, with residents able to view the issues already raised by others, as well as what the council is doing or has done to resolve the issue.
- 13.5 Reported issues would feed directly into the council's Symology highways management system, with a GIS-based tag and contact details for the person who reported the issue. Officers would then review the issue and identify the appropriate action to resolve the issue, and inform the 'reporter' directly of the action that will be taken, as well as updating the web-based record of that issue. Urgent issues as well as simple day-to-day maintenance issues would be addressed quickly either through council revenue or capital funding, or if applicable, through TfL funding for the LAS Workbook. More costly, longer-term issues would be kept on the database until they can be worked into a suitable scheme being carried out in the area. And if the issue cannot be addressed as part of any upcoming programmed schemes, Islington can seek alternative funding either through the LAS Workbook or as a stand-alone funding bid.
- 13.6 Carrying out a Community Street Audit can be very costly. In addition, if funding is not available to deliver the identified improvements, participants can become disappointed and frustrated with the long lead-in times for highway improvements. This online system will make it easy for any individual or group to submit to the council a range of suggestions for streetscape improvements in their area. In this way a borough-wide database of necessary accessibility improvements can be built up at a fraction of the cost of formal street audits. And the council's ability to deliver the improvements will also be increased, as the findings will be readily built into the existing highways management system. We believe such a facility will be very popular amongst residents and stakeholder groups, and will dramatically speed up the process of making all of Islington accessible to all people.
- 13.7 In 2009/10 we would like to develop and launch the pilot system with a view to it being adopted and run by the council by the end of the year. The costs in the first year would be to develop, test, launch and publicise the system. Residents will be provided with a guide on how to carry out a street audit, as well as proformas to make it easy for them to record the accessibility issues in their local area and then enter them into the online system. Alternatively, they will be able to use Islington's call centre to submit their issues by phone to trained staff who can put problems reported by phone straight into the database. And as a last resort, residents will be able to report their issues in writing using the proformas provided, so that council officers can input them into the system. Useability testing of the pilot system will give members of the public a chance to try out the system, helping us to make it as user-friendly and accessible as possible.

- 13.8 The system will be designed to achieve a number of benefits:
- empowering residents to improve the accessibility of their local area
 - making it easier for residents to report issues
 - improving the council's ability to deliver accessibility improvements quickly and cost-effectively
 - increasing the transparency of the council's highways management systems
 - ultimately speeding up the process of making Islington fully accessible to all
 - potential roll-out of the system to other London boroughs and local authorities
- 13.9 One similar system with a less ambitious scope is the very popular 'Love Lewisham' online environmental issue reporting system (<http://www.lovelewisham.org>). This system allows users to upload photos of issues, and then displays these photos on the website with a status update. The proposed online Community Street Audit system would provide a number of significant enhancements over this system, most importantly that it would be map-based and therefore easy to review other issues reported in the area, and that it would link straight into a very powerful existing highways management system, thus making it easy for the council to tackle much more complex accessibility issues than simple fly-tipping or graffiti.

Peerless Street – Moorfields Eye Hospital

- 13.10 Peerless Street provides the main access point for the Richard Desmond Moorfields Children's Eye Hospital near Old Street station. This proposal is based on a bid submitted to TfL for 2008/09 funding, but has been simplified to reduce the funding required. Islington has been able to reduce the amount of funding to require the scheme as a result of S.106 match-funding secured from a new housing development in the area, as well as a council funding contribution.
- 13.11 Moorfields Eye Hospital is regarded as the international benchmark for eye care. In February 2007, Her Majesty the Queen opened the hospital's new Richard Desmond Centre in Peerless Street, a centre of excellence for children's eyes. The centre includes accommodation for families whose children are receiving treatment. The entrance for the facility is on Peerless Street, which has very narrow and inaccessible footways. Over 20,000 people per year visit the hospital, and Peerless Street is also the main route for the residents of the St Luke's Estate to access their GP's surgery on City Road. This proposed scheme will significantly improve the accessibility and safety of the area.
- 13.12 The council proposes to eliminate through traffic access to Peerless Street from Old Street, and to create a "Sensory Garden" and road crossing training facility. The hospital fully supports the proposal as the hospital has no garden or outdoor space for patients, staff and visitors to escape the hospital milieu to aid recovery, and where friends, carers, patients and family can relax.
- 13.13 The mock-up of a crossing facility would be used to provide a training facility for patients and visitors to the hospital. This would be an invaluable resource for people with visual impairments across London to learn to negotiate accessible junctions in a safe environment.

Baseline Submission Form

- 13.14 The supporting information set out in this document has been compiled to provide more comprehensive descriptions of the proposed schemes outlined briefly in the 2009/10 to 2011/12 Baseline Submission Forms submitted separately to TfL and available for download from the council's website.

Sustainable Transport Strategy (STS) References

- 13.15 Islington's Local Implementation Plan, the Sustainable Transport Strategy (STS), was approved by the Mayor of London in October 2006 and adopted by the council in December 2006. It is available for download from the council's website. The proposals set out in this bid document will contribute towards the following objectives and policies of the STS:
- Appendix F, Islington Walking and Accessibility Action Plan
 - Chapter 3, STS policy AC1, AC3-6, G10, E1
 - Chapter 4, STS proposal AS1-6
 - Chapter 7, Target LIP10a, Target LIP10b, Target LIP11, Target LIP25, Target LIP26
 - Appendix A, table A.6
 - Appendix B, Form 17-Accessibility