

Highbury West Ward Partnership Meeting

Wednesday, 17 March 2021, 19:00-21:00 on Zoom

Chair: Councillor Theresa Debono

In attendance were approximately 102 members of the public, and:

CAH – Councillor Andy Hull

CRK – Councillor Roulin Khondoker

CTD – Councillor Theresa Debono

KS – Keith Stanger, LBI Service Manager of Community Safety and Crime Reduction

EP – Eshwyn Prabhu, LBI Planning & Development

MC – Martijn Cooijmans, LBI Director of Climate Change & Transport

PL – Parris Langridge, LBI Career Grade Planner

SD – Satbir Dhillon, LBI Principal Engineer

LK – Lisa Koduthore, LBI Ward Partnership Co-ordinator

TS – Taanpreet Singh, LBI Ward Partnership Co-ordinator

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Minutes from the last meeting and matters arising
3. Update on People Friendly Streets (PFS) in Highbury West
 - a. Martijn Cooijmans, Eshwyn Prabhu and Parris Langridge, LBI
4. AOB and Crime
 - a. Presentation on concerns around street crime in the ward, ASB and harassment in and around Blackstock Road and work to address drug markets in the area (Keith Stanger, LBI)
5. Any Other Business

1. Welcome and Introductions

Welcome from the Chair, **CTD**, and introductions of Councillors and LBI officers.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

- A resident highlighted some typos in the minutes of the last meeting and requested that an additional note be made about residents requesting ANPR access on Page 6. **Action:** For the resident to send their suggestions to coordinators **LK** and **TS**.
- **MC** pointed out that discussions had centred on access routes, not questions around parking on Page 6.
- **CTD** requested that all future minutes include page numbers. **Action:** **LK** and **TS** ensure all future minutes include page numbers.

3. Update on People Friendly Streets (PFS) in Highbury West

- NB: The minutes reflect the highlights of the powerpoint slides. Please email Taanpreet.Singh@islington.gov.uk and partnerships@islington.gov.uk if you would like a copy of the slides.
- **EP** led a presentation on People Friendly Streets in Highbury West. **EP** outlined the context of the scheme, emphasising the need to bring in positive changes for Highbury West and Islington as a whole. The context of Covid-19 and its impact created an opportunity to introduce an 18 month trial of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in the borough.
- **EP** explained that PFS will help to reduce collisions and accidents, as well as make streets healthier places in terms of air quality and being able to lead an active lifestyle. **EP** pointed out that most people in Islington don't have access to a car (about 71%) and reiterated how the use of C roads and unclassified roads – usually residential roads – has increased by around 72% in the last 10 years or so, compared to other types of roads where usage has remained fairly consistent. A possible reason for this is the advent of satellite navigation, which sends motorists down unclassified roads as short cuts. The PFS scheme hopes to incentivise people to cycle or walk shorter trips.
- **EP's** presentation attracted many comments and provoked a lengthy discussion on the call and in the chat.
- **EP** explained that the PFS scheme fulfils several Policy Objectives, including contributing to Islington's net zero carbon target, improving road safety, promoting active travel and reducing air pollution.
- The PFS in Highbury West and Highbury Fields are operating in tandem with various traffic filters, some camera operated, installed to prevent side road being used while also promoting active travel and reducing pollution.

- **EP** updated residents on the progress made on Cycleway 38, which will run from Palmers Green to Farringdon. There is overwhelming support for this change however there have been some challenges resulting in a disruption to the works. Construction has continued since and the aim is to have it complete by the end of April 2021.
- In terms of PFS operation:
 - Regular contact with emergency services show that there have been no reports of disruption in the first 2 months.
 - Traffic flows: so far there has been a high level of compliance.
- Signage - Responding to councillors' and residents' feedback, the council is working to improve signage. Signage met legislation standards. However, a plan to place advanced warning signs was implemented as it became clear that more was needed. This plan was developed together with ward members, engineers and some of the council's own insights. Following a 6-week review of signage, advance warning signs will become permanent. There will be a six month review of the signage.
- There has also been reported vandalism of CCTV cameras which have been reported to police.
- **EP** reiterated that residents do not need to fear being trapped within LTNs as all properties remain accessible. Rather, the change is that residents are unable to cut through the area.
- The council has taken a common sense approach and suspended filters and penalty charges have been removed while LBI has also been in touch with utilities companies and making improvements to coordinate their work to minimise disruption.
- There have been no reported collisions.
- Highbury Corner – There has been a significant amount of congestion around Highbury Corner. However, this is not a result of the LTNs but rather has been heavily impacted by the utilities works and traffic fluctuations due to Covid-19 and lockdowns.
- Exemptions – There will be a review of exemptions. However, the key principles of encouraging people to use active travel remain while every property should still be accessible.
- **EP** expressed thanks on behalf of the council for residents' patience and the opportunity to trial this. The council is learning lessons, improving and responding as best they can.

Consultation and Engagement

- The current Covid-19 health emergency has made it necessary to accelerate plans to make sure that everyone in Islington is kept safe and able to enjoy their streets while, at the same time, socially distancing.
- To help keep Islington's streets friendly, safe and healthy for everyone the council are introducing people-friendly streets on a trial basis, with a full public consultation as part of the trial.
- Transport for London modelling predicts that, without action, traffic volumes may get much worse than before the crisis – which is why we must act now to create more space for local people to walk, cycle, use buggies and wheelchairs as a safe alternative to using public transport.

- The development of technology, including sat-nav, has led to an increase in vehicles cutting through residential areas as they travel through Islington. As more people may choose to drive as lockdown restrictions are eased, this is predicted to increase, making streets more dangerous and unhealthy for the people who live on them. This is why the council has taken action now.
- LTNs were introduced using an Experimental Traffic Order. An Experimental Traffic Order is similar to a permanent Traffic Regulation Order in that it is a legal document that imposes traffic and parking restrictions. However, unlike a Traffic Regulation Order an Experimental Traffic Order can only stay in force for a maximum of 18 months while the effects are monitored and assessed.
- Once an Experimental Traffic Order comes into force there is a six month period in which objections can be made. If the ETO is subsequently modified, objections can be made in the six months following from the date of the changes.
- Residents are able to object to the changes and give their feedback during the first 12 months after which a formal consultation will take place.
- Regular monitoring reports are being published approximately 6 months and then 12 months after the implementation of each PFS cell.
- The council has been receiving resident feedback through the Commonplace platform (Spring 2020), formal objections, survey responses, direct responses and emails that have been received. The council is aware of the risk of online consultations being hijacked and is making every effort to ensure that the views of local residents are identified.
- Resident feedback and factual information will shape the final decisions on the PFS.

Monitoring: how is the council measuring success?

- **EP** explained that baseline monitoring was taken in November 2020 in Highbury West. Additional monitoring is undertaken whenever an issue is highlighted.
- Monitoring reports will be published at six-month intervals during the 18 month trial period and Covid-19 lockdowns are taken into account.
- A brief overview of first interim report in St Peters shows that there has been overall reduction of motorised traffic on both internal and boundary roads. Cycling has increased while Air Quality, Emergency Response Times and London Fire Brigade Attendance times have been unaffected.
- The council is currently unable to ascertain whether there has been a reduction of collisions as data from three years is necessary. The council is also interested to understand whether levels of walking and a sense of community have increased.

At this point, **CTD** suggested that residents be able to ask their questions and that questions in the chat be compiled after the meeting and responded to by council officers.

Questions from the public

Q: A resident raised a question about the safety of pedestrians as streets are dangerous in the evening. However with the LTNs it is much harder to collect young people from around Highbury. This restriction has a significant impact on young people's social life.

A: Pedestrian safety is an issue that the council is aware of and concerned about. There has, however, not been an increase in ASB or crime associated with the implementation of the LTNs. Research reflects the council's findings that there is no parallel between LTNs and ASB or crime. However, the council will continue to monitor pedestrian safety.

Q: A resident asked how many cargo bikes the council have and use as they encourage residents and businesses to reduce pollution and rat running?

A: **EP** responded that while he is unsure of exact numbers, the council does have cargo bikes that are used to transport road safety materials. **EP** will find out exact numbers.

Q: A resident emphasised that residents on main roads must be supported due to the ongoing traffic and works undertaken by TfL

A: **EP** responded that the council is in regular contact with TfL to discuss bottlenecks and junctions and aggravated traffic as a result of utilities work. The council is hopeful that this traffic will stabilise once the traffic has regulated.

Q: A resident asked about restrictions around the Emirates Stadium and how these will work on match days.

A: The council are working with Arsenal football club to make sure that restrictions work well. The filter at Benwell Road will be lifted on match days.

Q: The chair of Harvist Estate spoke about their general support for LTNs and the benefits it has provided for the residents on the east of Drayton Park. However, on the other side of the park, estate residents are suffering the most and feel that the impact of class on the ability to benefit from the LTNs is not being sufficiently considered and would like reassurance about what measures are in place in Hornsey Road to understand displaced traffic on main roads.

A: **EP** explained that typically when an LTN is introduced, there is a short term increase which reduces over time as has been borne out in St Peters. The council will continue to monitor traffic flow and air quality and will take steps to mitigate any further issues.

Q: A resident brought up the rat running on Avenell Road prior to the LTNs and spoke about how the LTNs have completely changed the lives of children on her street. How will the council consult children?

A: **EP** responded that the council is in the process of putting together a strategy for consulting with children and that they are in contact with schools.

Q: Considering how divisive and upsetting the LTNs have been, will ANPR be implemented on a trial basis or for residents?

A: **EP** reiterated the additional impacts of the utility works on traffic flows that are not a direct result of the LTNs and that the council does not currently permit exemptions but will be doing further engagement to understand the impacts.

Q: A resident described the difficulties she is facing as a carer to a disabled child, and how impossible it has become to take her child to school or other activities as a 7 minute car ride now takes 45 minutes and her child struggles being inside a vehicle for an extended period of time.

A: The resident has been encouraged to reach out to **CTD** and officers at the council to discern what support is available.

Q: Alex Youell who is on the Safer Neighbourhood Panel, spoke about the increase in mopeds avoiding roads and driving on sidewalks, slower police response, an uptick in drug dealing and ASB.

A: **EP** responded that the council is in conversation with the police. The police has not seen a significant increase in reported crimes. If this is the case at any point, the council would liaise with the police.

** CRK has highlighted that councillors and residents have been reporting the increased number of mopeds on pavements to the council and been informed that the council is discussing this with the police. CRK stated that this is not just a police matter, as it is a direct result of the trial so the council should be working with the police to tackle the issue, not waiting for people to report it to police or saying that the police has not seen an increase in this reported crime*

Q: A resident reiterated the importance of ANPR and reflected on the increased pollution and congestion as a result of the PFS in Highbury West. The resident also wanted to know what was causing the delay in traffic on Highbury Corner and St Paul's Road?

A: **EP** explained that the delay in traffic at Highbury Corner was in part due to the ongoing utilities works and to reassure the residents that the council is working with TfL to mitigate the impacts of this.

Q: A resident asked what thinking the council has about business around Drayton Park, Leicester Road etc. who have lost customers and the ability to deliver.

A: **EP** explained that the Inclusive Economy Team was running 'shop local campaigns', empowering business to raise their profile, and discussed the added difficulties of lockdown restrictions. Despite the difficulties of the situation, the PFS team is working with local businesses.

Q: A resident queried how the percentage of 30% car ownership, that is often quoted, had been calculated.

A: Council officers to confirm.

Q: A resident suggested that rather than a Q&A a debate or conversation be had around the LTNs.

CTD added that she would be interested in more pollution monitoring especially around Blackfoster School, Calabria Road, Highbury Place and Gillespie Road and asked when the consultation will take place.

EP concluded that there will be a formal consultation at 12 months and that air quality as well as traffic levels are being monitored.

* **Highbury West Air Quality Monitors**

Current monitor locations in or just outside Highbury West as of June 2021. These monitors have been in place for a range of different times and some are up for specific schemes, so might not be in place long term.

Location and Coordinates

Holloway Road	X: 530650 Y: 185750
Arsenal/Ecology Centre	X: 531328 Y: 186067
Holloway Road	X: 530650 Y: 185750
Holloway Road	X: 530650 Y: 185750
Holloway Road	X: 530650 Y: 185750
Highbury Fields	X: 531748 Y: 185442
Holloway Road	X: 531024 Y: 185367
Ambler Primary, Blackstock Road	X: 531690 Y: 186589
Gillespie Primary, Gillespie Road	X: 531805 Y: 186305
St John's Highbury Vale Primary, Conewood Street	X: 531788 Y: 186057
Ambler Primary, Romily Road	X: 531632 Y: 186489
Drayton Park Primary, Drayton Park	X: 531406 Y: 185373
Highbury Fields School, Highbury Hill	X: 531760 Y: 185499
City and Islington Lifelong Learning Nursery, Blackstock Road	X: 531574 Y: 186705
St Thomas' Playgroup, Monsell Road	X: 531527 Y: 186290
Little Angels Day Nursery, Blackstock Road	X: 531909 Y: 186197
Highbury Day Nursery, Gillespie Road	X: 531484 Y: 186116
Conewood Street Children's Centre, Conewood Street	X: 531848 Y: 186061

Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery, Lucerne Road/Highbury Park	X: 531944 Y: 185867
Highbury Community Nursery, Aubert Park	X: 531790 Y: 185780
Christ Church Playgroup, Highbury Place	X: 531895 Y: 185457
Drayton Park	X: 531424 Y: 185759
Benwell Road	X: 531118 Y: 185551
Riversdale Road	X: 531926 Y: 186095
Tollington Road	X: 530933 Y: 186022
Highbury Park	X: 531940 Y: 185533

4. ASB and Crime Item

Apologies for the absence of PS Reid who is at 'the women's protest'.

KS went through the slides and discussed several priorities:

- Business crime in Blackstock Road: to mitigate this, there are dedicated officers
- Drug related ASB
- Sexual harassment of women
- Traffic crime

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Crime

- **KS** pointed out that it is important to emphasise the difference in actual reported crime and the perception or fear of crime, which tends to be higher than actual reported crimes. Crime has decreased by 16%, likely due to lockdown. While crimes are reducing, people's fear of crime is not and there are areas where people feel unsafe as a result.
- Moped enabled crime and Pedal cycled crime have reduced but remain a problem.
- Youth murders and stabbings have been consistently decreasing.
- While hate crime across the borough has decreased, this has not been the case in Highbury West where there has been an increase of racist hate crime, affecting shops and residents.
- As people move away from car use, the increased availability of bikes has led to an increase in the number of bike thefts. There is an action plan in place to combat cycle theft around Blackstock Road/Highbury Park.
- Personal Robbery is common around Finsbury Park station where most thefts take place during the day. High visibility patrolling, plain clothes police officers and CCTV controls have been put in place to lower these rates.

ASB calls and hotspots

- There has been a significant increase in ASB calls. There is an ASB warning system in place which can collect information about suspects and provide opportunities for early intervention.
- There have been reports of drug dealing at Blackstock Estate. CCTV has allowed information about the individuals to be captured. There are similar concerns around the Emirates and a multi-agency visit is planned to hopefully disband some of the dealing.
- There is also the Personal Safety Taskforce to deal with the sexual harassment of women on Blackstock Road. It appears that the direct action from police on drugs and sexual harassment has resulted in significant improvements.

Questions from Residents

A resident asked about cars being parked on pavements around the stadium for personal training sessions as well as cars jumping lights and speeding along Blackstock Road.

Another resident highlighted the ongoing issues at the top of Blackstock Road, where young women are intimidated and encouraged continued reporting and communication about this so that a better overview of what it is like to be a woman in Islington can be had.

CAH emphasised that the approach taken to the men who harass women should be by talking to them rather than about them and helping them access services and support. A resident spoke about the positive impact that the multi-lingual posters in shops have had on making the area feel less intimidating.

The issue of motorbikes on pavements in Auburn Park was mentioned.

KS thanked residents for bringing the issue of cars parked on pavements around the stadium to his attention and that this will be incorporated into the assessment on Friday.

KS went on to say that the issue of jumping lights and speeding along Blackstock Road will be addressed through a wider operation with Police from LBI, Hackney and Haringey.

KS mentioned that there are also several Blackstock groups with outreach workers who are working together to ensure that people feel safe in the area.

KS concluded that there will be a Community safety briefing with a 'you said, we did' section. Residents are encouraged to keep reporting crimes and ASB.

5. AOB

Alex Youell has stepped up as the new chair of the HW Safer Neighbourhood Board.

Close

Final comments from Councillors. **CRK** thanked residents and officers for their presentations and feedback.