

Bunhill Ward Public Meeting: Traffic in Bunhill

Thursday 22nd October 2020
7pm – 8:30pm

Attendees:

Chair Councillor Phil Graham

Councillor Troy Gallagher

Councillor Rowena Champion, Executive Member for Environment and Transport

Martijn Cooijmans, London Borough of Islington, Head of Economic Development, Project and Transport Planning

William Umney, London Borough of Islington, Team Leader Transport Planning

Eshwyn Prabhu, London Borough of Islington, Team Leader Economic Development & Projects

Rebecca Nicholson, Ward Partnership Coordinator

Amma Coleman-Green, Transport For London, Engagement Officer

Thomas Holmes, Transport For London

Alan Lofts, Transport For London

Agenda:

1. Introductions
2. Councillor Graham: overview of the meeting
3. Councillor Champion and Martijn Cooijmans (People-Friendly Streets)
4. Q&A on People-Friendly Streets
5. Transport For London (TFL) on Old Street Roundabout
6. Q&A on Old Street Roundabout

1. Introductions

- 1.1 Chair Councillor Graham opened the meeting and began with a round of introductions of those on the panel.

2. Councillor Graham: overview of the meeting

- 2.1 Chair Councillor Graham stated that he is in favour of low traffic neighbourhoods and believes that communications about People-Friendly Streets hasn't been done well. He believes that Bunhill is not ready because of other programmed building work and Old Street roundabout. He said that there is no planned low traffic programmes in Bunhill for the foreseeable future.

- 2.2 Councillor Gallagher expressed that it has had quite frank conversations about People-Friendly Streets, and has ensured that the views and thoughts of Bunhill residents have been fed back. He said the key thing to remember is that pollution in Bunhill is serious. High levels of pollution do need to reduce, and need cleaner air for the health and safety of children, people who have COPD and those who have asthma.
- 2.3 Councillor Gallagher said he is in favour of low traffic neighbours, and has always been in favour to reduce pollution. He said that we need to make sure that there is proper movement of traffic on the road and that we are holding people to account. He acknowledged that there have been issues with communicating People-Friendly Streets but has made his feelings known.
- 2.4 Councillor Champion expressed that during Covid-19 people see streets in a different way, that there is a more communal feel, has always wanted to have low traffic neighbourhoods in Islington, and this programme has worked elsewhere. There were questions during lockdown as to what was going to happen when restrictions begin to ease and people start returning to work. On the 9th May the Government produced statutory guidance for local authorities on reallocating road space in response to Covid-19. This guidance was produced to increase space for walking and cycles, to ensure social distancing and to create capacity on public transport for key workers.
- 2.5 Councillor Champion stated that in Islington 70% do not have access to cars, and who walk and cycle instead. She asked the question 'How do you keep people safe after lockdown?' and shared a statistic that traffic on local streets have increased by 170% over the last 10 years, and this is on narrow Victorian streets that are not built for traffic

3. Guest Speaker: Councillor Champion and Martijn Cooijmans

3.1 Martijn Cooijmans presented the following presentation:

Slide two: Islington's streets

Streets as places:

- Where life happens
- Where communities come together

Streets for movement:

- The strategic road network (main roads) are built for main traffic
- Local streets provide local access

Key statistics:

- 1/3 of journeys in London are less than 2km and can easily be walked by many people
- 2/3 of journeys in London are less than 5km and can be cycled

- Number of cars in the UK has increased by approximately 10m (approx. 25%) in the last two decades
- Increase in traffic on roads in Islington; approx. 10% increase in last 5 to 6 years

Slide three: Traffic in Islington

0.28 billion vehicle miles were travelled on roads in Islington in 2019.

A line chart showing annual traffic in Great Britain from 1993 to 2019 by vehicle type in vehicle miles (millions) in Islington. There is a blue line, which represents all motor vehicles, starting from 1993 at just above 300 million and ending in 2019 at just above 275 million.

Below the blue line on the chart is a green line, representing cars and taxis, which starts in 1993 just above mid-way point of 225 million and 250 million, ending in 2019 at just below 200 million.

Slide four: Islington's streets continued

Satellite navigation

- Motorists are taking short cuts through neighbourhoods because of directions provided by
- More than 70% increase of motorised traffic on local streets in the last decade (DfT data)
- Volume of traffic on main roads largely unchanged

Slide five: Traffic on local streets post mobile satellite navigation

On this slide there is a line chart with the title: Annual traffic by road type in London. Subtitle: Traffic in Great Britain from 1993 to 2019 by road type in vehicle (billions). The title of the vertical axis is Vehicle miles (billions) The title of the horizontal axis is year.

There are four lines plotted on the chart:

- The blue line represents "motorway", which at just above 1.5 billion in 1993 and remains consistent with a slight increase by 2019, at just below 2 billion.
- The red line represent "'B' road", which starts at just below 2 billion in 1993 and slowly decreases to near 1 billion in 2019.
- The yellow represents "'C' and Unclassified roads", which starts around 5.5 billion in 1993 and remains consistent between 5.5 billion and 6 billion up to 2009. Then from 2009 to 2019 there is a steady increase from around 5.5 billion to around 9.5 billion.
- The green line represents "'A1' road", which starts at around the 11 billion mark in 1993 and remains in between 10 and 12 billion. The line ends in 2019 around 10.5 billion.

Source: <https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/regions/6>

88% of people who drive use satellite navigation and drive new routes.

Slide six: People-friendly streets – What it is

People-friendly streets

- Delivery of School Streets
- Borough-wide programme of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

Aims:

- To make it easier and safer to walk and cycle
- For people to be healthier
- To help people enjoy their area
- To allow social distancing

Supporting people-friendly streets transport initiatives

- New cycle routes with segregated cycle lanes (permanent cycling schemes)
- Pop up cycle lanes (temporary schemes with 'traffic wands')
- Cycle routes on quiet streets (via Low Traffic Neighbourhoods)

Council's emergency transport response to Covid-19

- Social distancing measures on main roads
- Social distancing measures outside schools

Slide seven: People-friendly streets – Why we are doing it (Council Policy)

Climate emergency

- Net zero carbon by 2030

Traffic casualties

- The most common cause of death for children in the UK aged 5 to 14 is being hit by a vehicle
- In Islington cycle trips are 5% of trips but people who cycle are involved in 30% of casualties

Inactivity – obesity crisis

- 22% - overweight/obesity levels of children at Reception
- 38% - overweight/obesity levels of children at Year 6

Air pollution

- Vehicles are responsible for approximately 50% of the emissions contributing to air pollution
- Premature death as a result of air pollution
- Respiratory problems as a result of air pollution
- Link between air pollution and Coronavirus

Slide eight: People-friendly streets – Why we are doing it (Covid-19)

Impact of Covid

- Public transport capacity running at a fifth of pre-crisis levels
- Many journeys a day will need to be made by other means
- Nearly 70% of Islington households doesn't have access to a private vehicle
- Modelling shows that without action, there will be significantly more motorised traffic than before the pandemic

Statutory Guidance

Traffic Management Act 2004: network management in response to COVID-19:

“Local authorities in areas with high levels of public transport use should take measures to reallocate road space to people walking and cycling, both to encourage active travel and to enable social distancing during restart.”

Slide nine: People-friendly streets – Doing nothing is not an option

If people switch only a fraction of journeys to cars, London risks grinding to a halt, air quality will worsen, and road danger will increase.

Doing nothing is not an option.

The opportunity

- Many people have told us that they enjoyed quieter streets during lockdown
- We know that many people would consider cycling if the roads were safer and quieter
- Quieter routes would make it more attractive to walk
- 1/3rd of journeys in London is less than 2kms and 2/3rd less than 5 km: these can be walked and cycled by many

Impacts of doing nothing (i.e. increased motorised traffic)

- Delay to car journeys, also for those who have no choice but to drive (e.g. blue badge holders)
- More road danger for those who have no choice but to walk or cycle (69% of Islington households does not have access to a private car)
- More air pollution
- More carbon emissions (impact on climate change)

Slide ten: People-friendly streets: early engagement

Commonplace platform, which is an online site created to find out: “how we can make Islington’s streets more people-friendly”

- Launched in May
- Asking for comments
- Map
- 5000 comments
- 25000 visitors

On this slide there is a map with Islington's boundary outlined. There are circles with numbers dotted across Islington on the map, which indicates the numbers of comments submitted by the public for that particular area.

Slide eleven: People-friendly streets: School Streets

What is a School Street?

- Timed traffic restrictions outside the school gates at school drop off and pick up times
- Camera enforcement

Benefits of School Streets

- Improved air quality: less motorised traffic outside school gates during the school run
- Reduced road danger: reducing traffic casualties
- Improved health of children: encouraging healthier lifestyles; walking, scooting and cycling to school

Slide twelve: People-friendly streets: School Streets (delivery)

All primary schools not on main roads to be School Streets by end of 2020

- 13 historic School Streets (pre-Covid)
 - Moreland Primary School
 - St Peter and St Pauls Primary School
- 16 delivered over the summer (August/September 2020)
- 10 more to be delivered by end of year (December 2020)

Slide thirteen: People-friendly streets: Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

What is a Low Traffic Neighbourhood?

- Groups of local streets bordered by main or strategic roads where "through" motor vehicle traffic is removed
- It is impossible or harder to drive from one main road to the next
- Every address is still accessible by car within the area
- Reduction of overall number of motor vehicle trips in the area:
 - There is no through-traffic on local streets
 - Driving is no longer the fastest mode, so in some cases residents switch to walking and cycling for local trips

Benefits of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

- Calmer, cleaner and quieter neighbourhood for local people
- Improved public health: encouraging healthier lifestyles: walking and cycling
- Road danger reduction: reducing traffic casualties
- Improved air quality: less motorised traffic, link between Coronavirus and air pollution
- Reduced impact on climate: Zero Carbon through less motorised traffic

Slide fourteen: How to create low traffic neighbourhoods

Types of traffic filters

- Bollards
- Planters
- Cameras

Access for emergency services and buses

- Emergency vehicles and buses are exempt from cameras
- Removable bollards for London Fire Brigade use

Slide fifteen:

Example: St Peter's before

There is an image of a map with lines with arrows, indicating short cuts before traffic filters allowed cars to avoid traffic lights and congestion on New North Road, Essex Road, City Road and Upper Street

Slide sixteen:

Example: St Peters after

Some local trips are now longer but the same trips are safer by walking or cycling because there is less traffic.

There is an image of a map with arrows indicating entry and exits points for traffic, exit only points and traffic filter points. Alongside this map there are three photographs, showing people walking and cycling across the roads where People-friendly streets has been implemented, there are bollards erected and "no entry" signs written on the floor.

Slide seventeen: People-friendly streets: Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (delivery)

Implemented:

- St Peter's (July)
- Canonbury East (August)
- Clerkenwell Green (September)
- Canonbury West (October)
- Amwell (October)

Slide eighteen: People-friendly streets: Cycleways

Cycle routes with segregated cycle lanes:

- Permanent cycle lanes under construction:
- Highbury Fields to Finsbury Park (Cycleway 38 northern section)

- Balls Pond Road section of Cycle Superhighway 1 (working with Hackney)
- Pop-up cycle lanes under construction:
- York Way (working with Camden)
- Pentonville Road to Holloway Road (Cycleway 38 southern section)

(One 'quietway' (without cycle segregation) being completed through delivery of a series of LTNs)

Slide nineteen: Process

- Delivered as trials (with 'Experimental Traffic Order')
- Legitimate and valid way for highways authorities to put in place trial measures in a rapid, flexible way that still allows for robust consultation.
- Monitoring
- Traffic analysis
- Displacement and congestion
- Cycling Flow
- Air Quality
- ASB
- Public consultation
- For each people-friendly streets area, school street or pop-up cycleway
- After 12 months
- First six months objection period
- Final decision
- At the end of the 18 month trial period a decision will be made whether the measures will be changed, made permanent or removed, taking into account feedback during consultation and monitoring data.

Slide twenty:

People-friendly streets: better places for everyone

- 3.2 Martijn said that they look at feedback to understand thoughts for each area for low traffic neighbourhoods. Martijn said that they have met with the London Fire Brigade and emergency services to make sure that they're not impacted, and have used removable bollards so that the London Fire Brigade can access equipment and areas.

4. Q&A for People Friendly Street (pre-sent questions and open floor questions)

- 4.1. (Pre-sent question) Bunhill has the highest illegal air pollution levels in the borough and many residents want less pollution, less traffic and more friendly green streets, especially for children. What is the councillor's vision for Bunhill's streets to reduce traffic and pollution?
- 4.2. (Pre-sent question) Can you update us on the timeline for any planned actions to reduce traffic and pollution in Bunhill by the Council and TfL including people friendly streets, school streets and changes to main roads? When will TfL be making Old Street bus and cycle only as announced in May for September?
- 4.3. (Pre-sent question) If you could ask those presenting to talk about the vision and timeline for Bunhill's streets relating to people friendly streets in the area and TfL's plans to make Old Street bus and cycle only. Any updates from the council and TfL on timelines for this are also necessary.

For questions 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 Councillor Champion answered: Martijn has gone through individual actions. We are working closely with the Mayor of London on the North and South Circulars, ULEZ and cycle routes. It is a big thing to bring in low traffic neighbourhoods and in Bunhill it's quite complicated, it's more complex and we need to see how things settle down first.

- 4.4. (Pre-sent question) How can residents support the council to reduce traffic and pollution in Bunhill?

Councillor Champion answered: if you can walk and cycle to take pressure off local neighbourhood streets and main roads, and will also help air quality, please do.

- 4.5. (Pre-sent question) Due to the adjustments of the Old Street roundabout, traffic through previously quiet Bath St has massively increased – to the point that at times we have to wait for tens of cars before crossing the road. Virtually all cars now cut through Bath St and down Peerless St, past the Primary School and the Children's Eye Hospital to reach City Road or cut out the roundabout. This is an unacceptable situation for us residents and we have no doubt other streets in the area are similarly affected. What is being done to resolve this situation?

Councillor Champion answered that this was to stop through-traffic, and are working out how best to do that.

- 4.6. (Pre-sent question) Are Islington Council going to have a borough wide congestion charge and toll roads?

Councillor Champion answered: No, Congestion Charge is the Mayor of London's, with negotiations between TfL and Government. The Government are dictating what happens with Congestion Charge. We are not involved, we do not support it.

- 4.7. (Pre-sent question) Are blue badge holders going to have access/concessions to the LTN's?

Councillor Champion answered LTNs are an old design and follow designs trialled in other parts of the world and in Waltham Forest. They are designed not to have concessions, if were to have them they would dilute the scheme. There are 8000-9000 blue badge holders. Administration would be large.

4.8. (Pre-sent question) Councillor Champion referred to a document that was sent in as part of the pre-sent questions.

Councillor Champion explained that it looks like an email chain with an emergency service on Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and the question is asking what our comments are on it. Councillor Champion continued with her response: we are in consultation with emergency service. The process started with an LTN meeting with the ambulance service, London Fire Brigade and the Police. We started rolling out the programme and have learned a lot since. We don't favour bollards as we think cameras are better, but there is a preference for bollards in certain places. We choose bollards in places if there are no big detours, so that ambulance don't get stuck. For every low traffic neighbourhood we consult with emergency services to make sure that they are happy with the proposals. We also monitor closely and look at how emergency services are impacted.

4.9. (Pre-sent question) The Transport Minister, Grant Shapps, said LTNs are a green initiative, if this is the case why are all electric vehicles not given full access to the LTNS?

Councillor Champion answered: this comes back to LTNs which are designed as a safe, community space where people can move around. Electric cars still pollute, as there is also tire pollution. They come in to the space and contribute to road danger. They are better than diesel and petrol.

4.10 (Pre-sent question) What Disability/OAP Organisations were contacted regarding LTNS and what impact assessment was carried out?

Councillor Champion answered: We've done this for the overall profile of the LTN's we introduce. We are also talking to specific groups like Disability Action Islington, Transport For All, Horizon to find out the impact on the these groups. If there are any groups we can talk to please put in the Zoom meeting chat.

4.11 (Pre-sent question) Are Islington Councillors planning to close off all side roads in the borough?

Councillor Champion answered that People Friendly Streets is an evolving process but plan to do across the whole borough, don't want to rush it so must plan and get it right.

4.12 (Pre-sent question) Which budget are extra costs needed to maintain community transport levels of efficiency and increased use of taxis now needed to get children to

school, coming from, were these costs factored into the scheme, if not, who authorised the additional costs?

Councillor Champion answered: We have been having close conversations with Children's and People services, about complex care needs and disabled children's care needs. We are monitoring but don't think it will lead to additional cost.

- 4.13 (Pre-sent question) Did councillors take into consideration the impact on tradespeople/deliveries etc. What impact this would have on productivity and could their businesses become unsustainable?

Councillor Champion answered: We have considered this, important to note, if we do not do anything more people will drive. We are trying to provide alternatives for people who don't drive and to create more space on the road.

- 4.14 An attendee asked what tire pollution is.

Councillor Champion explained that it's the pollution that is produced from tire wear, it's partly due to the weight of the vehicles, and also when the vehicle breaks using its brake pads.

- 4.15 An attendee asked, as there are no measures at the moment to have People-Friendly Streets in Bunhill. It would be useful to understand timelines.

Councillor Champion responded by saying that it is difficult to say as we do want to improve Bunhill but it's a complex area and don't want to rush in to it. Councillor Graham added that Councillors intend to have further meetings if there are any changes in Bunhill and changes will not happen without residents knowing.

- 4.16 An attendee asked if proper consideration has been given for people with Blue Badges.

Councillor Champion said that they are talking to disability groups to understand the impact this programme will have on residents. She added that they understand some people do need to use cars.

- 4.17 An attendee stated that it is great to hear everyone is for less pollution in Bunhill. Don't think it was properly highlighted that Bunhill has the highest pollution in Islington, and the lowest number of people who own or use cars. I'm trying to figure out why Councillors consider that it's an area that should wait as people's health are being affected by pollution. I can understand that it is a more complicated TFL road, but that's all the more reason to tackle it now.

Councillor Champion responded saying that creating People-Friendly Streets is quite complicated to do, because of Covid-19 we have had to prioritise what we want achieve that will most benefit as quickly as possible, which are areas with less complexity. Councillor Graham added that we still have got to settle down with the works on Old Street roundabout and other issues in the Bunhill area.

4.18 An attendee stated just what a difference the low traffic neighbourhoods make to walk and cycle on the streets. Being able to cycle in street with low amount of traffic makes such a difference. St Peters Street and Wharf Road are so nice compared to before. As a driver, what it has done to that place the benefit is huge. It is a matter of trying to find the best solution and we have to work out how we reduce air pollution.

4.19 An attendee described the impact of closing off streets will have on her teenager who needs to use a bespoke vehicle to travel. She described relying on buses and accessible transport as changes are made to the street and that her mental health is impacted. She added that everybody seems to make decisions forgetting everyone's needs. Like the Congestion Charge we're allowed two vehicles a day, which are not charged for, and that Blue Badges should be treated the same as the Congestion Charge.

Councillor Champion said that she is sorry to hear about the difficulties the attendee and her teenager are experiencing. Councillor Champion explained that Congestion Charge is slightly different and changes made to the Blue Badge system is a pan-London issue, at the moment it's still too complicated. Councillor Champion suggested the attendee to speak to Children's Social Care and Adults Social Care if they need support.

4.20 An attendee questioned the numbers shared during the presentation on People Friendly Streets in relation to taxis and asked where the numbers were from.

Martijn explained that taxis and cars have been grouped together and that they weren't singling out taxis. Councillor Champion added that the number of minicabs on the road has increased.

4.21 Councillor Una O'Halloran advised that the pollution on main roads should be measured now.

Martijn Cooijmans advised that he will check with his colleagues where there is monitoring currently.

4.22 An attendee said they understand Bath Street is a complicated area but the traffic has increased massively, and advised that something needs to be done more quickly.

5. Guest Speaker: Transport for London on Old Street Roundabout

5.1 A Transport for London (TFL) representative provided an update on the Old Street Roundabout. In April this year the site closed due to COVID-19. The site started to reopen in June, and was at 75% productivity due to social distancing and limiting numbers of people on site. Hopefully, all residents affected received a letter with the revised completion time of Autumn 2022, if not it would be greatly disappointing. It would be unfair to put the delays all down to COVID-19, other factors like a gas pipe also caused a slight delay. There is an additional phase six. There are also other complicated changes that will need to be made to upgrade the retail units, as they were

built in the 1960's. We therefore have increased the scope of this project to update the area to today's standard.

The scope of this meeting is generally about the additional traffic switch to phase six. TFL are introducing this to mitigate traffic and improve flow at Old Street Junction. We continue to strengthen the Old Street roof and have looked at modelling the inner ring road. Without doing this it would have reduced the road to a single lane for a considerable amount of time. The introduction of phase six increases capacity for a short duration whilst we strengthen the roof and help traffic at all arms, better than would have done with a single lane in each direction.

Residents should have received another switch letter at the end of the month. This is a switch to the final stage which will close mid-January. The next phase will be in eight to ten weeks. The objective of People Friendly Streets is closely aligned with the Old Street Roundabout project. We are in the middle of delivering the improvements and the inner ring road is increasingly busy and road is at capacity. The benefit, when the scheme is finished, is traffic will flow much better. Overall, we have included phase six and are constantly modelling to have minimal impact.

6. Q&A on Old Street Roundabout (pre-sent questions and open floor questions)

- 6.1 An attendee said that sat navs give alternative routes which causes increased traffic on other roads. TFL advised that unfortunately they do not have direct access to Google or Tomtom to stop them advertising using those alternative routes. They do engage with the companies and show plans and ask to avoid those routes. They will continue to keep in communication with sat nav companies.
- 6.2 An attendee asked if there can be advance signs put up to encourage traffic to use other routes before reaching the roads where there is reduced access. They added that Goswell Road is better routed than Bath and Central.
- 6.3 Councillor Graham said that the biggest problems are with the Bath Street side, as soon as people arrive they give up Bath Street. Councillor Graham asked if it would be workable to have no left turn into Bath Street?

TFL advised that they will have to look at that displace.

- 6.4 An attendee advised that the sequencing on the lights between Bath Street on to City Road is ridiculous as there is only room for two cars Lever Street and Bath Street.

TFL said they would take the feedback about sequencing traffic light capacity and will get comments back.

- 6.5 An attendee said that there is a signage problem, sometimes it is a right turn and sometimes it isn't.

TFL advised that it could be an LBI road but will look in to it.

6.6 TFL answered a pre-sent questions about timeframes: Next switch will be end of next week, which we will monitor. Next switch will be mid-January 2020 and in place for six months. Another traffic switch will be gradual and gridlocking will get better. Do appreciate that this has a direct impact on residents. The timetable is on the resident's letter.

6.7 Councillor Graham advised a lot of residents aren't receiving letter and there should be better communications.

TFL advised that they use a company to deliver the letters and will share the feedback on this to them.

6.8 An attendee advised that diverting up to Goswell Road is creating more issues and is not addressing the problem.

TFL advised that better through-put is needed at the junction and don't want to relocate traffic side roads. Can appreciate residents are disrupted but want to get maximum through-put at the junction.

6.9 TFL advised that they maintain capacity at the junction by removing the existing subways and using cycle lanes there. Still are able to provide good capacity and have created some space to cycles.

6.10 Councillor Gallagher said that there needs to be a separate conversation with TFL to get a better solution for Goswell road. When that is taken forward there will be another Zoom meeting. Councillor Gallagher also said he was happy to take feedback directly via email.

6.11 An attendee advised that getting rid of the roundabout was a mistake. Cyclists were happy to take side roads. Coming out of Bath Street I don't know how now drive up to New North Road.

6.12 An attendee put forward a suggestion that councillors and TFL to coordinate putting up signage together as a borough.

6.13 An attendee asked what was being done about Bath Street and the school that is on that street?

Councillor Champion said that at the moment they are looking at it as Bath Street is more trickier.

6.14 An attendee said that main reasons City Road is jammed because the Low Traffic Neighbourhood on the left hand side, the only way get out of City Road is to go in the Congestion zone on Goswell Road.

7. AOB

- 7.1 Councillor Graham and Councillor Gallagher said that they are committed to carry on and expect TFL and Islington Council to come back together to discuss this further. If there are any issues or suggestions that they will be happy to take them via email.