


Highbury West Ward Partnership Meeting

Thursday 30th September 2021, 19:00 – 21:00, on Zoom



Chair: Councillor Theresa Debono

In attendance were approximately 40 members of the public, plus:

CTD – Councillor Theresa Debono
CBI – Councillor Bashir Ibrahim
CRK – Councillor Roulin Khondoker

AM – Andrew Morgan
LB – Lydia Brown
AC – Ayanda Collins
DW – Deanna Walker
PL – Parris Langridge
TS – Taanpreet Singh

Welcome and introductions

- Councillor Debono welcomed all present and the councillors and officers introduced themselves to all attendees.

Blackstock Road and Community Safety

- **AM** explained that Blackstock Road presents unique challenges due to being on the border of Islington and Hackney. As a result of this, **AM** has been working with Hackney Council to ensure that this area remains safe.
- **AM** explained that his team have been working to increase patrols and police presence in the Blackstock Road area. They have also been offering support to rough sleepers.
- Festival Republic have been paying for street rangers to patrol the Finsbury Park area. They monitor and record illegal behaviour that is occurring in the area between 10pm and 2am.
- **AM** and the Council have been working alongside Islington Faith Forum and Muslim Welfare House to build relationships with groups of men who have been congregating in the Blackstock Road area. **AM** described this work as a real success so far.
- Work on 'safe havens' – places that women in danger can flee to – is ongoing.
- The Council's violence reduction strategy has been launched this week (w/c 27th September). It contains a 5 year plan on how to reduce violent crime. There have been a number of events this week to mark this launch.
- There have been several women's walks recently. These walks help to mark out places where women are feeling unsafe. For more information, please visit or get in touch with Islington 4 Women.
- **AM** then answered some questions from residents.
 - A resident asked about a meeting Network Rail had called to discuss works between Drayton Park and Finsbury Park. They also stated that a number of people in the flats backing on to the railway line have been witnessing anti-social behaviour occurring behind their flats. **AM** replied that he is not aware of this and that he will try to contact someone from Network Rail to find out what is happening.
 - There was a question enquiring about meetings that occurred between parties based in or around. **AM** replied that there are many meetings of this kind and that it could be the Blackstock Road business improvement meeting, which is run by the inclusive economy team. The resident followed up by asking if a small number of residents would be able to attend this meeting. **AM** said this should be possible and that he will find the relevant details.
 - A resident asked about where they would be able to find out about forthcoming rail works. **AM** replied that he was not sure but that he is hoping to attend future meetings. **CRK** added that, as far as she is aware, National Rail will send out letters to any affected roads.

Projects/improvement ideas across the Ward

- **LB** drew attention to the Community Plan, which can be found on the council's website. The plan details a list of local projects past and present that have been funded using money that developers pay the council when they build in the area. This money is intended to fund ideas and projects that improve communities. This could be a range of different things including, but not limited to tree building, greening, repainting of buildings, and installation of children's play equipment. The money can also be used in conjunction with charities and community groups to support ongoing programmes.
- **LB** then welcomed attendees to share any ideas they have around community improvements. **CBI** added that residents should email councillors with any ideas that they may come to mind at a later time.
- **CBI** stated that the Covid pandemic has led to a newfound appreciation for outdoor spaces, and that further investment in Islington's outdoor spaces could be beneficial as a result.
- A resident asked whether it will be possible to replace the 76 trees that have now been removed in the borough. The resident went on to explain that these trees have needed to be replaced for a long time and that 26 trees still need to be planted into the tree pits. **CTD** replied that it has been agreed to use funding to replace some of the trees that have been lost. **CRK** added that all 3 councillors are supportive of planting trees.
- There was a question around what work could be done to improve the aesthetic appearance of Blackstock Road. A suggestion was made to make this area greener by removing dead trees and planting new ones.
- A resident stated that it would be useful to have more bins in the area, especially ones where people are able to deposit dog faeces. The resident stated that increased dog ownership has led to an increased need for more bins.
- A resident suggested that it would be useful to have a knife disposal bin in the area and suggested placing it towards the Nag's Head market. **AM** replied that he was happy to hear suggestions on where people think this would be useful and to consider new knife bins.
- There was a question around what could be done to stop foxes getting into the bins around Highbury Fields. **CRK** asked **LB** to take this to Highbury East ward partnership meeting as this is in their ward.
- A resident asked whether it would be possible to use funding to remove parking bays for park lets to help people without outdoor spaces to use their outdoor areas. **CRK** asked **LB** to take this away.
- A resident asked what solutions there could be to Queensland Road not having a single street tree. **CRK** replied that this may be down to being close to the Emirates Stadium, and that there might be security reasons behind not being able to green this area. For example, it may be because something could be deposited in pits that the greenery would be living in. **CTD** asked **LB** to get in touch with Jan Hart (Public Protection Service Director) to see if this could be possible.
- A resident raised the point that previously benches have had to be chained up due to anti-social behaviour and that placing new benches outside people's homes must be a considered decision.

Update on Highbury West People Friendly Streets

- **AC** went through initial findings from monitoring data gathered before the LTN (Low Traffic Neighbourhood) was introduced and whilst the LTN has been in place. The findings can be found in the [October 2021 Highbury People Friendly Streets interim monitoring report](#).
- **AC** apologised for the delay in the publishing of the full monitoring report and explained that this was partly due to vandalism of monitoring apparatus.
- **AC** explained that it is not possible to monitor every street, so the PFS team tried to get a good spread and variety of areas. There are more monitoring sites than at other PFS because Highbury is a larger area. **AC** explained that the monitors are black tubes that collect data as they are driven over. The data is collected by a private company, who pass it on to the Council.
- **AC** stated that figures are currently being normalised but that figures in the full report will contain both the raw numbers and normalised figures.
- **AC** stated that Seven Sisters Road is a strategic TFL road.
- **AC** described the reduction of traffic that has been seen as a result of the scheme as highly encouraging and demonstrative of the idea that a lot of the traffic that was cutting through residential streets was not local traffic.
- Other results have also been encouraging and have shown that the PFS scheme is having the desired effect in reducing the amount of through traffic.
- Horsell Road has seen an increase in traffic due to a historic traffic filter being removed so that residents could progress through this area. Wallace Road and Mountgrove Road have also seen an increase in traffic, which is a concern as they are local streets and not strategic roads. **AC** stated that placing a Liveable Neighbourhood (LN) here is being considered.
- **AC** explained that although filters mean traffic does move to boundary roads, this is not the end goal of implementing PFS; the true aim is to reduce the overall number of journeys being made by car, not just to move it somewhere else. This will be done by making walking and cycling easier and therefore encouraging people to take up this option of travel.
- **AC** stated that the full report will also show the change in journey times during the period Nov 2020 to May 2021.
- **AC** noted that traffic can fluctuate by +/- 10% day to day and that as a result this amount of change is not necessarily considered to be a direct result of LTNs.
- The monitoring report will include reasons for why there could be increase in road travel in some roads and what can be done to mitigate this.
- **AC** stated that she was pleased to see the increase in cycling, reduction in speeding, and improvement in air quality that the PFS scheme has brought (although comparisons made with lockdowns in 2020 show an increase due to the reduced amount of travel).
- **AC** stated that data from local emergency services indicates that the PFS scheme has had a negligible impact on their response times.

- **AC** stated that the PFS team consider all feedback and will continue to do so to help them make a final decision. **AC** encouraged participants to fill in the trial feedback survey.
- One of the changes being considered is introducing exemptions to camera filters in Highbury for Blue Badge holders.
- The public consultation on the Highbury LTNs will likely be similar to the consultation for other Islington LTNs.
- **AC** then invited attendees to ask questions:
 - Question: Are the given figures 24 hours for each of the 7 days and if so, do you have figures for peak times? **AC** - Unless specified otherwise, a seven-day daily average has been used and discussed in traffic volumes analysis in the [Highbury PFS interim monitoring report](#). Results for other time periods (e.g. AM and PM peaks) are available for each site in Appendices 1 – 5 of the report.
 - Question: Can there be some context in terms of the traffic numbers? **AC** – This is the reason behind normalising data, so that it can be accurately compared to other areas of London etc. By doing this, it is also possible to compare data to pre-pandemic levels.
 - Question: Why is the council not giving exemptions for Blue Badge holders? Some people cannot make different decisions about their travel and disabled people may not be able to make this choice. Some journeys have taken longer and this has made issues difficult. There are a number of Motability cars in use in Islington and their journeys are now harder as a result of the LTNs. **AC** stated that she was sorry to hear about the impact the scheme has had on this resident's life. **AC** explained that discussions were ongoing regarding exemptions for Blue Badge holders. **AC** replied to a follow up question asking about how many Blue Badge holders there are in the area, and replied that there are just over 9000 Blue Badge holders living in Islington, and just over 1000 living in LTNs. **AC** did not have the exact number for Highbury West. **AC** added that some disabled people will not have a Blue Badge so this is not totally representative. **AC** finished by saying that the council is seriously considering what effect being in a car for longer times is having, particularly on disabled people.
 - Question: A resident was intrigued to see that traffic is going down on Holloway Road, and was interested in why this may be. The resident suggested that it may be a reflection of the fact that traffic can no longer cut through. **AC** agreed that these results were slightly surprising and that it may be due to people not making this trip due to Covid, people just going via Blackstock Road instead of going through Holloway Road, as well as the impact of the PFS. **AC** stated that the monitoring report will go into further detail on this.
 - Question: A resident shared their concern that police time is being used up by the number of calls surrounding mopeds using pavements in the LTNs. The resident stated that resources are already stretched and that this is an extra burden. **AC** stated that she is aware of the complaints and issues around mopeds using pavements. **AC** condemned this behaviour, explained that this is not an appropriate use of the scheme and that driving a motor vehicle on the pavement is illegal. **AC** added that this is not a problem exclusive to LTNs, and it can be seen in many pedestrian spaces. In some locations, moped riders who ride on the

pavement are being issued with tickets – this has been successful, with a number of tickets being issued. **AC** stated that the PFS team is in regular contact with delivery companies to ensure that they are not doing this, and that work is ongoing within the council to arrive at a more permanent solution. **AC** stated that it is tricky to place obstacles on the pavement, as it is important to keep the pavements as clear as possible so that they remain accessible. In addition, constant police presence all the time isn't feasible but spot enforcement has been taking place on occasion. **AC** asked for participants to place areas of concern in the chat for officers to look at.

- Question: A resident stated that some of the questions in the survey are a little ambiguous – for example, whether people are worried about traffic in the area. **AC** replied that she has heard similar things from other respondents, and that this is largely due to it being difficult to design a survey that is supposed to last for 12 months. To circumvent this somewhat, **AC** stated that when answers were given, they will be looked at when analysing data.
- Question: A resident raised concerns about Cycleway 38, stating that the design of the roundabout has led to near collisions, predominantly between cyclists. The resident stated that they have brought this up with the Council and with the police. The resident stated that the issue seems to be that drivers find it difficult to see if anything is coming at a zebra crossing where cyclists have priority and that driver do not know to give way. The resident suggested that signage here would help people understand how to use this crossing as it is the first one in the UK. **AC** responded that there are not currently plans to make changes to this crossing but that she will take these comments away and see if any signage can be placed there.
- Question: Could box junctions be placed at either end of Blackstock Road? **AC** replied that there are lots of available tools to help address increases in traffic and that it is important to note that as Blackstock Road is a boundary road, any work would need to be done as part of a partnership with Hackney. Box junctions are something that could be considered in future.
- Question: A resident stated that they appreciate needs of the 1000 Blue Badge holders but that it is important to be careful with how we use the term disability. A lot of disabled people will be mobile, or others will be only be temporarily disabled - for example, some wheelchair users have said that they feel safer in their wheelchairs now there is less traffic. The resident also asked whether consultation has taken place with schools and with children. The resident stated that they have noticed a phenomenal difference in air quality and they would be interested to hear from children on this. **AC** replied that 25.6% of disabled people in Islington use a car¹, but the most popular form of transport for disabled people is walking or public transport. Therefore, it is right to say that PFS benefits could and have helped some disabled people too. **AC** added that disabled people are 5x more likely to be killed or injured on roads,² so the implementation of PFS can help these vulnerable road users too. **AC** recognised the importance of having to

¹ [Resident Impact Assessment 2021 Executive Paper – People-Friendly Streets Programme - Pg 5](#)

² [Disabled and low-income pedestrians at 'higher risk of road injury' \(roadsafetygb.org.uk\)](#)

be careful to make sure measures that help some disabled people don't negatively impact other disabled people. **AC** stated that an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) to measure equality impacts of this proposal will be done at the end of this trial. **AC** stated that they have tried to engage children but this has not been easy. **AC** encouraged attendees to encourage younger people and children to fill out the survey.

- Question: A resident, who is a parent of a student at Ambler School, asked if a bus gate could be introduced on Blackstock Road as part of this scheme. **AC** stated the council are looking at widening the footpath, introducing more planting, including specific plants that can shield some of the pollution from schoolchildren. **AC** asked attendees to continue sending in ideas similar to this. **CTD** suggested that it may be worth looking into whether it would be possible to close the entrance that backs on to the main road to protect people from the pollution on the road.
- **CBI**, on the topic of mopeds riding on pavements, stated that councils have had their budgets slashed by 70% since 2010 so there is very little resource to police this offence. **CBI** went on to say that it is not sustainable for the council to police criminal offences.

Any other business

- A resident asked if there had been any update into the review of the Highbury Corner traffic lights. **AC** replied that, as this is a TFL road, it is hard to say. The council is looking to work with TFL to review the signals but this was delayed because works were going on at Holloway Road and St Paul's Road. The signal times have been adjusted and this will now be monitored to see if it has made any difference. The final results will be shared with the council and the public soon.
- A resident raised concerns over cyclists using the pathways over the Arsenal Bridge entering into Drayton Park. **AC** replied that this is the first she had heard of this and that she will take the question away to be looked at.