

Arsenal Resident and Councillor Meeting – Agenda & Minutes

At Stephen Ink Community Centre on 17 August 2023,
1800-1930

Chair: Councillor Roulin Khondoker (CRK)

Councillors in attendance: Councillor Bashir Ibrahim (CBI) and Councillor Fin Craig (CFC)

LBI officers in attendance: Jimi Ogunyawo (JO, Enforcement manager), Ruqayyah Khan (RK, Service Quality Officer (Enforcement), Mark Wilson (MW, Streetworks manager), Liz Wathen (LW, Head of Highways and Engineering), Lisa Koduthore (LK, Arsenal ward partnership meeting coordinator)

TfL staff in attendance: Terry Pascal, Rachel Harkes, Mark Griffiths, James Marshall (TfL)

Agenda

18:00 Doors open

18:05-18:10 Welcome from chair

18:10-18:40 Matchday parking and e-vouchers (Islington council officers)

18:40-19:10 TfL Holloway Road improvement works (TfL)

19:20-19:20 Any other business (Chair)

19:20-19:30 Close (Chair)

NB: Responses to questions which were not fully answered during the meeting have been provided in a separate document entitled ‘Q and A from Arsenal Meeting’.

If you would like to receive a copy of the presentation please email partnerships@islington.gov.uk or elisabeth.koduthore@islington.gov.uk

1805 - 1810 Welcome and introductions by chair

CRK explained that the meeting will focus on transport and traffic in the ward and is an opportunity to understand the reasons for the changes and the implementation timings better.

Ward councillors apologise for the timing of the meeting in mid-August and advise that further meetings can be held.

1810 - 1840 Matchday parking and e-vouchers

JO explained that there are several reasons that the council transitioned from paper vouchers to e-vouchers only. There were concerns that paper vouchers were being sold on ebay. The switch to e-vouchers also aligns with the council's Net Zero Carbon agenda. Visitors are no longer able to obtain paper vouchers to reduce traffic on matchdays. The price for visitors is £12.50 per hour but £4.50 per hour for residents.

Questions & comments from residents

Inaccessibility of Ringo: What support is there for residents who cannot use Ringo and the e-voucher system? How can they receive visitors?

Enforcement: How can enforcement be improved to avoid visitors entering Bryantwood Road 24 hours before the match to avoid the restrictions? How can enforcement be improved to prevent double parking and parking in cycle lanes?

Data: Can the council provide the statistics of the number of e-vouchers being illegally sold on ebay?

Accusation of profiteering: The switch to e-vouchers is a very heavy-handed approach when a more sensible, less profit-driven approach would have been to track down the reference numbers of the e-vouchers and punish the residents selling them.

Price increase: Why did prices for parking increase when Ringo was introduced?

Responses to questions & comments:

Inaccessibility of Ringo: The council can provide tailored support for those struggling to use Ringo. Please speak to the council officer at the end of the meeting.

(Interjections from residents)

A resident expressed frustration and that it is not sufficient to provide tailored support. A universal policy is needed rather than placing the burden on individuals to request adjustments.

CRK requested the council take the inaccessibility of the current system into account.

A resident claimed that there has been a 250% increase in parking cost for visitors. For instance, if I want to park outside my parking zone tonight (not on a matchday) I have to pay £11.85 for an hour of resident parking – not £4.50. Please explain the price increase. On a match-day visitors are paying £22.70 for parking. **JO** pointed out that there is free parking from 11am to 3pm in the borough.

A resident claimed that there are 12 000 digitally disadvantaged members of the public and the e-voucher system does not work for them.

A resident requested clarification on what paper parking vouchers will be available on matchdays at Christmas and whether these will include matchdays as they did last year? **JO** has noted this and residents will be notified in due course.

Residents raised that resident parking permit prices should not have increased. They have gone up from £30 to £100 per year.

Residents asked how can matchday enforcement be improved to avoid visitors entering Bryantwood Road 24 hours before the match to avoid the restrictions? How can enforcement be improved to prevent double parking and parking in cycle lanes? Visitors are parking for free while residents have to pay. **JO** has noted this and will increase enforcement at this location.

Residents requested statistics of e-voucher misuse and selling on ebay.

CFC and **CBI** reiterated that there are instances of residents selling parking e-vouchers on ebay. **CRK** said that they hold this evidence and it can be shared.

A resident stated that the council used to get money from parking payments and asked whether and how much Ringo paid by the council or do they get a percentage of the income? **JO** said that the council pays Ringo £83000 annually.

A resident requested better enforcement of coaches on Hornsey Road and better enforcement of no idling on Cavemen Road. **JO** has noted this for further investigation.

A resident raised that the council needs to have a more humane way of requesting proof of disability from its residents. The council is not complying with the Equality Act. The resident did not receive a response from the council for 18 months and had to undergo a humiliating process to prove their disability. The law is already in place. The council must suspend its system until it has been reviewed and been made accessible for all. The LTNs and the exemption approach need to be reviewed.

CRK stated that councillors are not the council. Their role is to hold officers to account and scrutinise. Councillors offer their sincerest apologies and reassure residents that they question and scrutinise before any scheme is implemented and will put pressure on the council to make changes needed. Additionally, they stated that there is an exemption for disabled residents in place.

A resident corrected the councillors to point out that there is an exemption in place for Blue Badge holders who own a car – not for all disabled residents and only for those that own cars. **CRK** expressed her apologies and wording. The LTN exemption is for Blue Badge holders.

Residents queried why the Blue Badge LTN exemption not introduced at the beginning of the LTNs? **CRK** expressed the councillors' apologies for how long it has taken the council to introduce the Blue Badge LTN exemption. A resident expressed that there is no excuse for this. Adjustments for disabled people are already enshrined in the law. They expressed their

disbelief at Councillor Champion saying that 9000 Blue Badge holders were too many to exempt from all LTNs. The resident mentions that they have sued the council. It is not enough to make changes to the logo. The resident calls on councillors to take a stand and disassociate themselves from the schemes by resigning. A resident points out that it is very difficult to obtain a Blue Badge and can take up to 18 months. **CFC** provides assurances that this will be raised with the council.

A resident expresses confusion about the role of the councillors and suggests that as the councillors, they are the policy makers for the council. The only person who appears to be taking a stand is Councillor Convery. **CRK** reiterates that they as councillors are not the council. They are the councillors but they are not the council. The council is the officers.

CBI reassures the residents that the three Arsenal ward members put pressure on Islington Labour and the exec member to introduce exemptions sooner and faster. Additionally, as Labour members they support the LTN policy in principle and this is also supported more widely as can be seen at the ballot box when candidates run on an anti-LTN agenda and are not elected.

A resident asks again why they did not receive a response from the council for over 18 months.

CRK responds that the councillors have heard and noted the residents' concerns but must move on to the next item.

A further question is raised by a resident about the pink parking permits and whether these can be reinstated. **JO** has noted this and will investigate.

Full responses to questions have been provided in a separate document entitled 'Q and A from Arsenal Meeting'.

1840 - 1910 TfL Holloway Road improvements works (TfL)

TfL staff introduced themselves and their roles and presented their slides.

In summary, this Safer Junctions scheme forms part of TfL's Vision Zero strategy where by 2041, all deaths and serious injuries, will be eliminated from London's roads. TfL have worked closely with LBI to manage the impact of the works on Holloway Road, on local streets, and local LTNs. Junction improvements focus on improving safety for all road users and include new pedestrians crossings at the Drayton Park/Palmer Place junction and at Liverpool Road. The crossings at the Hornsey Street/Hornsey Road junction will also be made straight across so they are easier to cross in one go.

A resident asked whether TfL is able to work with the police to enforce poor turning behaviours by drivers? TfL confirmed that they are able to do this.

A resident asked for the budget of the project. TfL responded that it is £5 million.

TfL explained that Phase 1 of the works will continue until September. NB These works are now finished so the below is accurate as stated at the meeting. To undertake the works and ensure safety TfL have had to reduce lanes. This leads to less capacity on the road. There has been an increase in journey times from 5 minutes per KM to around 9 minutes per KM affecting vehicular traffic, including buses. TfL is working hard to maintain as much capacity as is possible while also ensuring the safety of those who are building the works. The works are short-term and full capacity will be returned in a few weeks. TfL operate a real-time traffic management system called SCOOT which allows us to adjust green time for vehicles as flow changes. TfL also operate bus priority at signals to ensure bus delays are minimised. It was noted that TfL can't provide this type of SCOOT or bus priority at temporary signals, but it will form part of the permanent signal layout.

Questions and comments from residents

Consultation: Why was there not a second consultation? The consultation the works are based on was done in 2019 before LTNs were introduced and before 20mph speed limits were in place. Only 300 responses were received and residents were not aware.

Bus stops: Are there any changes to bus stops anticipated?

Traffic management: TfL are not trying hard enough to manage the tailback created from the works. More lanes need to be kept open.

TfL responses:

Consultation: TfL has continued to improve our approach to consultation and continues to introduce new ways for people to hear about and respond to consultations. We consulted on this scheme back in 2019 with the intention of starting construction in 2020. At the time a press release was issued, we wrote to local residents and the council and members were briefed. However, the construction was postponed due to the effects of the Covid pandemic on TfL's finances. The subsequent introduction of the adjacent People Friendly Streets (LTN) measures is expected to work well with the Holloway Road scheme because the reduction in through traffic from Drayton Park will allow us to provide more green time to traffic on Holloway Road.

Bus stops: One bus stop is being moved as a result of the works and one bus stop is being removed. The northbound bus stop that is currently located between Palmer Place and Liverpool Road is being moved north. Its new location will be immediately north of George's Road. The southbound bus stop north of Drayton Park is being removed. The existing bus stop outside the university buildings will remain, a distance of c.130m. In both instances this is to allow the new junction arrangements to operate.

Traffic management: TfL is working hard to undertake the works in the most efficient manner and to open lanes as quickly as is reasonably possible. We understand that it is frustrating to see closed off lanes and not a lot of activity in them but the cost of clearing and storing equipment over the weekends is high. We try to work in small sections and to always have ways for people to move past works as quickly as possible and are monitoring impacts on the network. TfL have kept the operation of the traffic signals under constant review and adjusted the operation for major changes in the traffic management set up of the site.

CRK says that residents raise a fair point and more needs to be done to open lanes when they are not in use as it is resident time and money that is being lost too. Could traffic cones not be moved on a Friday night?

TfL said as soon as we have finished works in one area and it is safe to open the area back up, we do and we will continue to work like this. We will look again at our programme to see if there are any times when we can remove traffic management if we are not actively working in the area.

(Interjections and interruptions to the meeting.)

Residents say that they are unable to drive or take the bus because of the LTNs and the TfL works. They are calling for the LTNs to be opened. A resident explains that a car journey from Harvist estate to the community centre took them 40 minutes for what used to be a 3-minute journey.

Residents raise concerns about moving and removing bus stops and suggest that bus lanes should not be made into cycle lanes.

A resident asked for clarification as to whether £5 million were spent on the consultation alone. TfL clarified that the £5 million was total spend for implementing the scheme. Additionally, residents raised concerns about what conversations were had between LBI and TfL about opening side roads while the TfL works are ongoing.

A resident pointed out that when there was an issue with Thames Water on Benwell Road, the street was opened. Similarly, traffic filters are opened for Arsenal matches. **CRK** responded that filters are opened when this is absolutely necessary, such as for the burst water pipe on Benwell Road. **CRK** asked whether any LBI representatives for PFS were present. **LK** confirmed that this was not the case.

TfL explained that it may feel like there is more traffic on Holloway Road because of the reduced lanes at the moment. LTNs are LBI schemes and TfL do not have control of these, but with a closure of through routes, we expect more traffic to use roads like the A1 – our SCOOT data on St Pauls Road has shown an increase in traffic detected on our loops in the road when the LTNs in that area were delivered. TfL do control signals which are coordinated across the entire network and work hard to minimise stops and delays.

Residents asked for more details on C50 and the plans for Isledon Road. Residents also raised that the bus stops on Isledon Road are difficult to navigate due to the cycle lane and that the road is grid-locked despite having three lanes of traffic.

TfL explained that Cycleway 50 is an experimental scheme introducing new segregated cycle lanes between Finsbury Park and York Way in Camden. The scheme is designed to offer safer and protected routes for local cycling and to build connections to other cycle routes, enabling people to safely take longer journeys by bicycle.

Buses are protected through a large part of the Nag's Head gyratory and at either end of it with bus lanes and a bus gate already in place.

As part of Cycleway 50, this protection has been retained and a short section of bus lane extended which will enable buses to clear the bus stop and reach the stop line quicker.

We have not removed any bus lanes on Tollington Road to implement C50; we have moved the bus lane further into the road to allow for cycle bypasses.

We will be monitoring bus journey times while the temporary scheme is in place for 18 months. Find out more here <https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/c50-camden-finsbury-park>

Residents expressed cynicism about whether feedback is actually valued or listened to. **CRK** and TfL assured that all feedback is noted and considered.

Resident reiterated their concern that TfL and LBI need to be in conversation more. **CRK** agreed with this sentiment.

Residents requested that the LTNs be opened. This statement was met with applause.

MW responded that LBI have many and varied conversations with TfL on how we best coordinate the works. We are a very small borough and approve 10000 permits for works every year which we need to coordinate. On LTNs, LBI looks at whether we can open these but there are very limited cases where this is possible.

There is a protocol that is used when looking at the requirement to suspend an LTN, this relates to planned and emergency works.

The decision to suspend an LTN is done for two reasons usually. Firstly if any temporary works or event forces a road closure, and a suspension is required to enable residents to escape from their particular roads without incurring a penalty. And secondly if a diversion is just too long and complicated and is not viable, in this instance we would consider suspending an LTN to use that particular road as part of a more agreeable diversion route.

It seems in this instance the request is being made because of the Holloway Road works, and it might make journeys longer. Not because it's a requirement, and without it penalties would be incurred.

We have to be mindful of all the travelling public, this includes residents in the affected ward, other borough residents, those who work in the borough and those who travel through it. Being selective and deciding who is more deserving is why a protocol is essential.

Residents called for the suspension of LTNs stating that they do not work. Blackstock Road has seen an increase of 6000 vehicles according to LBI data which is most likely wrong. It is gridlocked at 9pm on a Monday night and buses take 30 minutes to travel along it.

CRK said that they understand that there are many issues that need to be addressed and that they cannot be resolved in one meeting. The meeting has overrun and needs to be drawn to a close. All questions will be answered and answers circulated after the meeting by **LK**.

Residents expressed that they appreciated the opportunity to come and discuss.

LW reiterated that the council is always looking to improve how we collaborate and work with TfL. LBI does suspend filters if there is a need for this and will continue conversations with TfL to coordinate during later phases of the works.

Residents called for LTNs to be opened. A resident expressed frustration at buses stopping or changing their destinations.

TfL ran out of time to complete their presentation on Phase Two works starting September to February 2024 so committed to sending another communication to residents/businesses to inform people of the changes being made. NB This letter was sent out locally late August following the meeting.

Full responses to questions have been provided in a separate document entitled 'Q and A from Arsenal Meeting'.

2000 Meeting was closed by the chair