

**Executive Member for Environment and Transport**

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Ward(s):</b>
Executive	18 June 2020	All

<b>Delete as appropriate:</b>		Non-exempt
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## **SUBJECT: PEOPLE FRIENDLY STREETS**

### **1. Synopsis**

- 1.1 This report sets out the council's early transport response to the COVID - 19 crisis. In particular, it asks the Executive to agree to the development and implementation of a programme of People Friendly Streets across the borough
- 1.2 Nothing will ever be quite the same again after the current health crisis. Without timely and concerted action, Islington's streets will become unsafe and unhealthy as social distancing measures are revised and activity returns to the streets. The council must therefore act now to ensure that the borough's streets are healthy and people friendly.
- 1.3 All people feel better walking or cycling down their street if it is a pleasant, people friendly place. People Friendly Streets will:
  - make it easier, safer and more pleasant to walk and cycle on Islington's streets as part of everyday life;
  - ensure that the borough's streets are healthier and greener for all; and
  - make it easier to practice social distancing now and in the future.
- 1.4 Improvements to the borough's streets will ensure that they are friendly to all users – especially children, young people, older people, people with impaired mobility, and people with disabilities and in poor health. The council is therefore committed to developing a borough wide programme of People Friendly Streets. This programme will include: a) Low Traffic Neighbourhoods; b) the acceleration of the School Streets Programme; and c) the introduction of a lorry control scheme in all residential areas across the Borough.

- 1.5 Local people know their own neighbourhoods best. The first stage of public consultation on People Friendly Streets began on 29 May 2020. As of 8 June 2020 over 2,000 individual responses to the consultation have been submitted. Schemes will be implemented on a trial basis and will be reviewed in the light of monitoring and feedback from local people.
- 1.6 The implementation of a borough wide programme of People Friendly Streets will support the council's objective of achieving net zero carbon emissions in Islington by 2030. It will also contribute to the delivery of a Fairer Islington by: making it easier and safer for people to travel on foot, by bicycle and public transport; supporting people to live healthier lives; supporting local shops, markets and businesses; and enabling residents to remain socially active and connected to their community.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To approve the introduction of a programme of People Friendly Streets as outlined in this report including: a) Low Traffic Neighbourhoods; b) the acceleration of the School Streets Programme; and c) the introduction of a borough wide Lorry Control Scheme in residential areas.
- 2.2 To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport, to finalise and implement the People Friendly Streets schemes, taking into account the consultation responses and monitoring.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 Since 26 March 2020, social distancing measures have been imposed in an attempt to force a decline in the outbreak of COVID - 19. Although the rate of infection is declining, the virus remains highly contagious. Some degree of social distancing is therefore likely to be needed for the foreseeable future.
- 3.2 An existing body of scientific evidence demonstrates that air pollution causes significant damage to respiratory and cardio-vascular health. This is particularly the case for vulnerable people. The rapid spread of COVID-19 has intensified public concern about the relationship between air pollution, poor air quality, inequality and health. On the other hand, there is also clear evidence that increased levels of walking and cycling can have significant health benefits both for individuals and society as a whole.
- 3.3 Greater London Authority (GLA) data indicates that London's traffic levels fell by around 50% in March and April 2020 (in comparison with the same period in 2019). The GLA data also demonstrates that (during the same period) emissions of nitrogen dioxide fell by 40% and particulates by 10%. Since April 2020, traffic levels have progressively increased on a week by week basis. By early June 2020 traffic levels were down by only 25% in comparison with the same period during the previous year.
- 3.4 On 11 May 2020 the Government announced its roadmap towards easing the lockdown. This encourages people who cannot work from home to return to work, but advises them to use public transport only as a last resort. Some pupils started to return to school during the week of 1 June 2020. As people return to work, school and their other daily activities, many will look to avoid public transport in favour of walking and cycling. There is also

clearly a risk that some people will prefer to increase their car usage rather than use public transport, walk or cycle. An increase in the number of car journeys to previous levels (or even above) will undermine the air quality, public health and environmental benefits that have been achieved during the lockdown period.

- 3.5 In May 2020 the Secretary of State for Transport published updated statutory guidance in response to COVID - 19. The council is required to have regard to that guidance in carrying out its statutory network management duties. The Guidance states that:

*“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”.*

The Guidance also requires that measures should be implemented as swiftly as possible given the urgent need to change travel habits before the restart of everyday activities takes full effect. The council has made a bid to Central Government for £100,000 to deliver People Friendly Streets measures. Further opportunities to bid for Central Government funding may be available.

- 3.6 On 15 May 2020, the Mayor of London and Transport for London (TfL) released details of TfL’s emerging London Streetscape Plan. This Plan aims to give more space to pedestrians and cyclists. It concentrates on three key activities: a) the rapid provision of a temporary strategic cycling network; b) changes to town centres and transport hubs to give pedestrians (including those queuing outside of shops) and cyclists more space; and c) the accelerated delivery of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods within residential areas and School Streets schemes. TfL also produced interim guidance for the London Boroughs including guidance on how the boroughs can bid for funding under these programmes. A £1.5 million funding bid has been submitted to Transport for London, and its decision is awaited. Further opportunities to bid for TfL funding may be available in future.

- 3.7 Against this national and London wide backdrop, the council has developed its own transport response to COVID-19, and an early implementation of that response is underway. The aims of this response are to enable:

- a) social distancing measures to continue on the borough’s streets once the restrictions on movement are further reduced or lifted;
- b) residents to travel safely around Islington by bicycle and on foot; and
- c) the borough’s schools, shops, businesses, public transport hubs and other key activities to reopen and operate safely with social distancing measures in place.

- 3.8 The council’s initial transport response to the COVID-19 public health emergency consists of the following four main programmes:

- a) localised social distancing measures around shops, businesses, markets, schools, public transport hubs, and other local activities;
- b) a fast track introduction of new cycle lanes and cycle network visibility improvements;
- c) working with TfL to deliver improvements on the Transport for London Network (TLRN) including more dedicated space for pedestrians and cyclists; and
- d) the creation of a borough wide programme of People Friendly Streets.

- 3.9 This report asks the Executive to agree to the implementation of the People Friendly Streets Programme. As noted above, this programme includes: a) Low Traffic Neighbourhoods; b) the acceleration of the School Streets Programme; and c) the introduction of a borough wide Lorry Control Scheme in residential areas.

### **Low Traffic Neighbourhoods**

- 3.10 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods will create more space for pedestrians and cyclists and allow people to travel safely around their local neighbourhood. The council will create Low Traffic Neighbourhoods by installing simple and cost effective measures such as bollards, planters and smart cameras.

### **School Streets**

- 3.11 To enable social distancing around local schools as pupil numbers start to increase, the council is currently implementing a programme of temporary measures around primary schools. Eventually, some of these temporary measures will be replaced by the council's School Streets programme.
- 3.12 School Streets schemes restrict traffic outside schools during school opening and closing times. This allows streets outside schools to become pedestrian and cycle only zones at the times when the school community is leaving or entering the school. These schemes are designed to improve road safety and air quality (both of which particularly affect children) around school entrances and exits. They also encourage the school community to walk and cycle to school. Traffic restrictions are enforced through the use of cameras.
- 3.13 Implementation of the Islington School Streets programme is already well underway with thirteen School Streets schemes implemented so far.
- 3.14 Due to the need to improve air quality and provide space for social distancing, walking and cycling around schools as a result of the COVID 19 crisis, there is an increased urgency to deliver school streets. It is therefore proposed that by the end of 2020 School Streets will be introduced at every primary school in the borough that is not located on a main road. This will mean that a School Streets scheme will be delivered at a further twenty six schools within the Borough by the end of the calendar year.

### **Borough wide lorry control scheme in residential areas**

- 3.15 The council is committed to restricting the movement of lorries above 7.5 tonnes (unladen) to the main roads. This will improve air quality, noise, vibration and road safety in residential areas. Existing localised lorry restrictions currently cover approximately 60% of residential roads in the borough. Through the implementation of the Low Traffic Neighbourhoods programme, the lorry control scheme will be extended to every residential neighbourhood within the Borough.

### **Implementation**

- 3.16 In most cases, Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (incorporating Lorry Control measures) and School Streets schemes will be implemented through the use of Experimental Traffic Orders, although Temporary Traffic Orders may be used for some schemes. Experimental Traffic Orders can remain in force for a period of up to eighteen months after which they can be made permanent. Experimental Traffic Orders can also be withdrawn or amended during the initial six month period that they are in place.

### **Public Engagement on People Friendly Streets**

- 3.17 A borough-wide engagement exercise began on 29 May 2020. This exercise asks residents, businesses and local organisations to suggest how local streets can be improved for pedestrians and cyclists. This consultation is being conducted via the Commonplace online interactive tool. This tool enables local people to map their comments at specific locations across the borough. The feedback provided during this engagement exercise will guide the development and design of the borough wide programme of People Friendly Streets.
- 3.18 As of 8 June 2020, the council had received 2,169 comments from 1,891 individuals via the Commonplace on-line tool. There have been over 9,500 agreements with comments made by other individuals. The top five concerns that have been raised to date are: traffic volumes; rat running traffic; traffic speeds; cycle safety; and bad driving. 73 % of respondents said that they supported temporary measures to reduce traffic speeds and volumes to aid social distancing and enable people to exercise. Where individual respondents proposed specific measures 97% of respondents said that they would support their proposals being made permanent.
- 3.19 Public consultation will also take place via the Experimental Traffic Order process. This process provides for a six month period during which residents and businesses can write to the council with an objection to the scheme. The council will consider these objections when deciding whether or not to amend the scheme or to make it permanent at the end of the 18 month trial period.
- 3.20 In addition, there will be a formal consultation period following the implementation of each scheme. This consultation period will last for a minimum of twenty one days. It will take place approximately twelve months after the implementation of measures under an Experimental Traffic Order. This consultation will invite feedback on the measures that have been introduced. This feedback, together with any monitoring data that has been collected (see 3.21 below) will inform the council's decision on whether or not to make the People Friendly Streets measures or School Streets schemes permanent at the end of the eighteen month period.

### **Monitoring Strategy**

- 3.21 A comprehensive and robust monitoring programme is being put in place. Monitoring will identify changes at two levels: a) borough-wide including any impacts on the main road network; and b) for each neighbourhood. Monitoring will measure the impacts of the schemes on pedestrian, cycle and traffic movement. The impacts of schemes on safety and security as well environmental factors such as air quality will also be measured. As noted above, the results of any monitoring will be considered together with any feedback from residents prior to making any decisions about withdrawing or amending a scheme or making it permanent.

## **4. Implications**

### **4.1 Financial implications:**

- 4.1.1 As part of the 2019/20 budget setting process £4m of capital funding was allocated to Parking to invest in smart CCTV for traffic enforcement measures across the borough, including the School Streets programme and lorry control schemes. After successful pilots and implementation of initial schemes during 2019/20 an order for an additional 92 cameras has been made at a cost of £2m.

- 4.1.2 The People Friendly Streets programme is in part an extension to the current roll out of the school streets and lorry ban schemes, seeking to achieve the same outcome of reducing traffic flow through residential streets.
- 4.1.3 The estimated cost of the implementation of People Friendly Streets across Islington is circa £5m. Of the £4m of capital funding allocated to parking, up to £2m is available to be repurposed to deliver People Friendly Streets.
- 4.1.4 This leaves a net funding gap of circa £3m. There are secured s106 and council capital funds for Caledonian and Mildmay/Highbury East Wards that may be able to fund the costs of the People Friendly Street schemes within these wards. TfL has suspended its LIP programme but is currently accepting bids from boroughs as part of its London Streetspace funding programme. People Friendly Streets are a key aspect of the Streetspace funding programme and therefore a £1.5 million bid to TfL has been made to close the funding gap. A bid for £0.1 million has been made to Central Government. Further opportunities to bid for funding from TfL and Central Government may be available.
- 4.1.5 Any remaining shortfall in capital expenditure will be funded through borrowing (based on 2% interest rate and 4% minimum revenue provision)
- 4.1.6 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) has assumed £3.05m of budget savings over the 2020-23 three year period of which £2.45m was relating to enforcement of school streets and lorry control. The camera enforced closures used in the LTNs will be a new revenue stream within the parking account, however this will be offset by a reduction in the revenue from the Schools Streets and Lorry Control. Financial modelling of the various options indicate that the overall revenue streams under the LTN programme will be able to achieve the current school streets and lorry control MTFS model over the 2020-23 MTFS period. There will be reductions in income in later years and compliance increases and this will need to be considered as part of future MTFS planning.
- 4.1.7 The parking account is a ring-fenced account with any surplus generated from its activities invested in highways and transport related activities. Income received will be allocated to the ring-fenced parking account, with the level of income dependent upon the level of compliance. The impact of this will be modelled as part of the medium term financial planning process but it is assumed that the cost of any capital borrowing necessary will be funded from this income stream.

## **5. Legal Implications:**

- 5.1 TfL has paused implementation of the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy through local implementation plans (in Islington, the Islington Transport Strategy (ITS). In its place, TfL has developed a Streetspace Plan for London aimed at creating more space on streets so people can walk or cycle while social distancing and easing pressure on public transport as the COVID 19 pandemic lockdown is lifted.
- 5.1.1. On 15 May 2020, the Mayor of London and TfL issued interim guidance to London boroughs on the London Streetspace plan. The council's proposals for People Friendly Streets outlined in the report are consistent with that guidance and DfT's statutory guidance 'Network Management in response to COVID19' published recently under section 18 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. The council is required to have regard to that

guidance in carrying out its network management duties under sections 16 and 17 of the 2014 Act.

- 5.1.2 The guidance states that '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', and that measures should be taken as swiftly as possible, and in any event within weeks, given the urgent need to change travel habits before the restart takes full effect.
- 5.1.3 The council has power to narrow carriageways and widen footways where appropriate to facilitate social distancing (section 75 Highways Act 1980). The implementation of such proposals do not require a traffic management order.
- 5.1.4 In most cases, the proposed measures in the report will require the making of traffic management orders. The use of the power to make experimental traffic orders (section 9 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984) will enable the measures to be introduced quickly prior to public consultation taking place. A single order may be made to cover all the proposals for each individual LTN. The use of experimental traffic orders may give rise to an increased risk of challenge. That risk is mitigated by the prior public engagement and consultation set out in paragraph 3.17. Full and proper regard will need to be given to the outcome of that consultation when finalising the People Friendly Streets schemes.

### **Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030**

- 5.1.5 The delivery of the above measures in construction terms will have minimal environmental impacts. The measures will require low-impact interventions such as the installation of planters, barriers, cameras, signage and gates, with little or no waste, emissions or potential nuisance to neighbouring properties.
- 5.1.6 In June 2019 the Council declared a Climate Emergency and pledged to work towards making Islington zero carbon by 2030. The measures proposed as part of this programme will positively contribute to achieving this ambitious commitment by encouraging increased walking and cycling. It will demonstrate the Council's commitment to working towards a zero carbon future and respond to the Climate Emergency declaration. The delivery of the Islington Transport Strategy, Liveable Neighbourhoods, School Streets and Lorry Control Scheme were all specifically mentioned in the transport section of the Draft Zero Carbon Strategy.
- 5.1.7 Recent research has shown higher death rates from COVID-19 in areas where there is poorer air quality than in areas with better air quality. By encouraging walking and cycling through the measures outlined above, the council will be supporting the health resilience of those working and living in Islington.

## **6. Resident Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to

participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

- 6.2 A draft Resident Impact Assessment was completed on 8 June 2020 and the summary is included below. The Resident Impact Assessment is provided at Appendix One.
- 6.3 The RIA has identified positive impacts for all groups with protected characteristics.
- 6.4 The implementation of the Low Traffic Neighbourhoods would deliver positive impacts overall in terms of supporting public health, improved air quality, and accommodating and enabling active travel. The main beneficiaries of the programme will be people walking and cycling by removing through traffic from local neighbourhoods.
- 6.5 There are potentially negative impacts for those older and disabled residents of Islington that disproportionately rely on private motorised transport. The Council will design measures that impact as little as possible on essential car trips, while providing improved conditions for active travel, which should empower more Islington residents to walk, wheel or cycle.
- 6.6 The measures could displace some traffic onto main roads. Displacement will be closely monitored throughout the programme, and will be a key consideration in making any LTN changes permanent. It will be considered alongside changes in air quality as a result of initiatives such as ULEZ and the Council's Electric Vehicle Charging programme.

## **7. Reason for Recommendation**

- 7.1 This report sets out the council's early transport response to the COVID-19 crisis. A full response will be set out in the council's Transport Strategy. This will be adopted in autumn 2020 in tandem with the council's Net Zero Carbon Strategy.
- 7.2 The report asks the Executive to agree to the introduction of a programme of schemes to create People Friendly Streets across the borough. This programme will include: a) Low Traffic Neighbourhoods; b) the acceleration of the School Streets Programme; and c) the introduction of a borough wide lorry control scheme in residential areas.
- 7.3 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (incorporating lorry controls) and School Streets schemes will be implemented on a trial basis using Experimental Traffic Orders. A comprehensive monitoring framework has been put in place. This will measure the impacts of schemes on: local areas; the main roads; and borough wide.
- 7.4 The council began its public engagement on its initial COVID-19 transport response on 29 May 2020 and the response to date has been largely positive. As outlined in this report, further statutory and non-statutory public consultation will take place on individual schemes. The implementation of proposals via Experimental Traffic Orders will allow for schemes to be amended, withdrawn or made permanent in the light of feedback from the community and intelligence from the monitoring programme.
- 7.5 The measures in this report will enable social distancing to take place as activity returns to Islington's streets, shops, markets, businesses and schools. The measures will also encourage local people to walk and cycle in their neighbourhoods, and to and from school. The environmental impacts of traffic will be reduced particularly in local residential neighbourhoods and in and around schools. This will result in a safer, cleaner and healthier environment for local people particularly older people, children, younger people, people with



impaired mobility and other vulnerable groups. The proposals are supportive of the council's net zero carbon and Fairer Islington priorities. The Executive is therefore asked to agree to the implementation of the council's People Friendly Streets programme as outlined above.

## **Appendices:**

### **Appendix 1 – Resident Impact Assessment**

**Background papers:** none

Final report clearance:

**Signed by:**



10.6.20

Executive Member for Environment and  
Transport

Date

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