

FAQs - Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTN) to support social distancing

Why my area?

We have received prior feedback from residents that rat running is an issue, which acts as a disincentive to walking and cycling as well as creating other concerns. In addition, areas have been identified by proximity to major commuting routes, which indicate probability for rat-running. The need to provide extra space for those travelling actively is especially great during this post-lockdown period when social distancing is still required and public transport is at reduced capacity.

How does an LTN promote social distancing?

By creating extra space and a more welcoming environment for walking and cycling, more people will feel able to choose those modes rather than a car or taxi. This will help to accommodate the surplus of journeys not currently possible to be made by public transport. This means people will not feel forced to be in an enclosed space such as car, taxi or public transport. They will also enjoy other benefits of active travel, such as a boosted immune system.

Why did you choose this particular arrangement of barriers?

The aim of an LTN is to prevent rat-running through areas but maintain access (for residents, emergency services etc). Therefore barriers will have been arranged to meet this objective. However, the draft plans that have been viewed by many are not the final plans, nor necessarily the schemes that will be implemented. The draft proposals were put together for a bid to TfL for funding which had a very short timeframe. Given this tight turnaround, the drafts were simply indicative proposals, rather than concrete plans. Now that funding has been approved for some schemes, council officers are preparing the final proposals which will be shared with residents in due course. All LTN schemes are also subject to change once implemented, according to feedback.

Won't the road closures funnel all the traffic down one street instead, increasing traffic/pollution/road rage down there instead?

No and in fact often the opposite is true; rat-running drivers give up on the route because it is disrupted by LTN measures. Around 15 percent of displaced traffic from LTNs disappears from the area entirely as drivers adjust their routes and behaviours according to surveys undertaken in existing LTNs. By discouraging unnecessary journeys, LTNs also mean less traffic and congestion for those who genuinely need a car to get around.

Would the road closures restrict access for the emergency services, waste removal teams, builders' vehicles and so on?

We will consult with the emergency services and ensure they do not have any issues before we begin these trials. We have ensured that where access has changed, road widths are sufficient to allow large vehicles to manoeuvre. We are also installing drop down bollards that facilitate access for emergency services and refuse vehicles. According to Living Streets, data also

shows that response times for emergency services actually decrease with LTNs because less traffic means they can reach their destinations faster.

Will closures mean there are fewer parking spaces?

We will do our best to minimise any loss of parking spaces. However, new (temporary) double yellow lines may be needed to ensure safety and to make sure that emergency services and refuse vehicles can access all streets. The safety of the public is our highest priority, and this must always outweigh any loss of parking.

Won't the barriers be unsightly?

Whilst initially we were planning to use concrete blocks due to the temporary nature of the schemes and the criteria of the funding, we have ultimately decided to use planters, (wooden containers with flowers) considered more attractive, with drop down bollards to allow easier emergency service and refuse vehicle access.

Aren't these schemes against/biased against those who cannot walk or cycle?

All residents can still enter and leave their street by car. Therefore, those who are unable to walk or cycle will still be able to drive as usual. The scheme simply renders the area less enticing as a rat run to those who are not residents, thereby reducing the amount of traffic in the area. Furthermore, quieter and safer roads mean those who would normally travel by car are more likely to feel able to travel actively. Streets also become more accessible for wheelchairs, mobility scooters, hand cycles etc.

Would this mean that I now can't drive to the local town centre?

The LTN's have been designed to allow access to all residents and for deliveries and refuse collections. It is accepted that some routes may be longer, but you would still be able to drive if you really need to. However, by making the area nicer and safer to walk and cycle, we hope that you will take advantage of this. Many people did during the lockdown and reported both health and financial benefits.

Will closures make car journeys longer?

This will be the case in some instances, but journeys by private car don't move people around in a space efficient way, compared to walking and cycling, which are the Government and Council priorities. All car journeys also pose road danger risks (as experienced by many local residents), as well as contributing towards climate change and air pollution. Evidence has shown that making streets more hospitable to active travel increases their modal share significantly, thereby decreasing the negative effects of driving in that area.

Won't people do U turns and cause gridlock?

With all changes to road layouts/access it is inevitable that there be a period of adjustment for some road users. We anticipate this to be around a week, but it may take longer before people adjust their journeys accordingly. However, we are confident that once people are used to the road layout, traffic volumes will be reduced.

Why haven't you consulted with us?

Once funding is confirmed (if not already), each LTN will be implemented using an Experimental Traffic Order (ETO). An ETO is a standard legal document used across the country to enable rapid installation of measures such as LTNs, pavement widening and cycle lanes or other innovative schemes. They are being specifically recommended by government now to encourage local authorities to speedily introduce such measures during the emergency period. Residents will be informed of these ETOs a week in advance of the implementation of

the scheme, and then will have six months to respond to the statutory consultation. This allows us to move fast, as well as get feedback based on resident experiences rather than expectations. Once implemented it is possible to make changes based on this feedback. In using ETOs, the Council is following the guidelines laid down by central Government which are also part of the essential criteria for the funding. It is therefore not possible under these circumstances to undertake standard consultations as that would prevent funding eligibility, and we would therefore not be able to implement any schemes to safeguard the public during this time.

How are you monitoring success?

Once implemented, it will be a combination of observed traffic reduction, increased walking and cycling, any impacts (e.g. on emergency services) and feedback from residents. Your local Ward Members will also be involved in the decision.

If you would like to submit feedback about a scheme near you, in support of or as an objection, please contact us at COVIDtransport@ealing.gov.uk.