



Street Talk

Dear resident,

Welcome to the first edition of Street Talk.

We have introduced Street Talk to keep Kingston people up to date with developments on our Streetspace schemes. If you have received this, it is because you gave the council feedback via our Let's Talk portal or via email.

We will publish Street Talk regularly, depending on new developments and we invite your suggestions and comments about what you would like to have included in future updates. Over time, we hope to show you how your feedback and comments have helped to shape the Streetspace schemes and how they will help us develop further improvements in your neighbourhood.



Thank you

One of the most important things we would like to do in this update is to thank you for sharing your points of view and experiences. Our team of professional engineers put a lot of thought and expertise into developing schemes that we believe could truly improve living in Kingston. But it is you, who live in the neighbourhoods and experience the impacts of our schemes, who are best able to say what it is like to

live with them and how they may be improved. All our research, analysis and monitoring will help us offer you what we think could be the best solution, but it is the people living in the neighbourhoods who can help us understand what works and perhaps what doesn't. It takes commitment and social conscience to take the time to share your views with us and it's important that you know we are grateful for that.

How did the Streetspace schemes come about?

The council is continually working to make Kingston a safer and healthier place to live and work. It is one of our priorities to have a cleaner, greener Kingston and we have long-term measures in place that monitor traffic and air quality. We want to encourage people to walk, scoot or cycle around the borough or take public transport instead of taking the car, especially for short trips.

Similar schemes to the current Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) trials have been in place in Kingston for many years. Schemes such as the gate at Springfield Road /Denmark Road in the town centre and also Priory Road and Hunters Road in the south of the borough have successfully lowered traffic.

When COVID-19 hit, it brought about a change to our plans, and all London boroughs were asked by Transport for London (TfL) and the Department of Transport to urgently review their programmes and consider ways to reduce traffic and enable social distancing. Many of our plans had to be shelved and others at different stages of engagement with residents were accelerated because they met the criteria set.

We know that some of you are unhappy about the way that public consultation is being run alongside the scheme trials and that you didn't get asked first. It's not the way we would have normally liked to have introduced these schemes but it was a condition of funding that we implement the schemes immediately in September and it was also a way of protecting Kingston residents as quickly as possible. The timescales and indeed the guidance from the Government was that we needed to take a different approach and run the trial alongside consultation.



On the other hand, we are also hearing that some of you are really pleased that we have been able to act quickly and some schemes have been very well-received and are making a positive difference. Other similar schemes such as School Streets, have also been welcomed.

Introducing these schemes on a trial basis has allowed both you and us to really understand how they work in practice, rather than basing our consultations and designs, and your responses, on assumption and modelling.

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTN) - what difference will they make?

There are a number of LTN schemes currently being trialled and these trials will last at least six months initially. We had to make use of Experimental Traffic Management Orders (ETMO) to implement the LTNs and the usual consultation period for an ETMO is six months. We continually review feedback during this time.

At the end of the consultation period, council officers and councillors will review all the feedback received and assess the monitoring data. There is no specific threshold in terms of numbers of responses to decide what happens next, but officers will certainly share the number as well as nature of responses with councillors after the consultation period. Legally, there is no significance to the number of representations but the authority needs to have given each representation due consideration depending on its merits. Then, a view is taken on the overall success of the scheme and the council makes a decision on how to continue with each scheme.

The primary aim of the LTNs is to reduce traffic in those areas. In turn, we hope this will improve air quality, as well as encourage more local residents to use their cars less. We have various air quality monitors in place to help us assess their impact. We measured traffic levels before the schemes were introduced and we will be carrying out further monitoring in October. In January, as the consultation period draws to a close, we will take a final set of readings before the end of the formal monitoring period. These measurements will give us a picture of how traffic movements and air quality have changed.



The data collected will help us see whether the LTN schemes have made a difference to traffic levels across the area (most specifically, on the roads surrounding the LTN area). When the traffic survey data has been analysed, it will be published on the council website.

The traffic monitoring will help us understand where displaced traffic has gone. Evidence from elsewhere shows that where roads are closed to through traffic, initially traffic is displaced to other roads but after time the traffic is slowly reduced as people start to take fewer short journeys by car and travel in different ways such as walking and cycling, or avoid the area altogether. For some people, however, the car is essential and we know that not all traffic will disappear.

What are the criteria used to determine which roads become Low Traffic Neighbourhoods?

The council's transport strategy has aims and objectives based on formal data gathering and analysis. Much of the data used for the current LTNs was data that we had been collecting and analysing for some time. We also have a lot of knowledge built up over the years from general enquiries and requests from councillors, residents and other interested stakeholders.

Our LTN proposals for funding to TfL were based on areas that we had already been considering as neighbourhoods that would benefit from this type of scheme. Schemes such as Liveable Neighbourhoods and Go Cycle had been the subjects of a range of engagement activities including public consultation events, engagement with ward councillors and neighbourhood committees. We refined those plans so that they fitted to the TfL Streetspace Agenda to encourage safe and active travel, and developed schemes that were deliverable in the timescales given to us by TfL and central government.



Low traffic neighbourhoods - what's important now?

The LTN trials were launched in September and are planned to be in place for six months initially to ensure that the data on travel patterns can be fully established. After this, we will evaluate the success of the schemes based on the feedback we have received from residents in conjunction with traffic and air quality information. Then, we will be able to take a view about what happens next. The options may be to extend (for a maximum of 18 months from start of trial), make permanent or remove. Legally, these schemes are underpinned by 'experimental traffic orders' – we are required to formally consider all representations we receive to these orders before deciding our next steps.

This means that your feedback is more important than ever. Even if you have already sent us your point of view, it may be that your experience could change or you think of something else you would like to tell us about, so please don't hesitate to get in touch.

We will continue to keep you up to date with developments. This update is one of the ways that we want to keep you informed, so please tell us what you think about it and what you would like to have included in future updates at communications@kingston.gov.uk.

Thank you again for your feedback so far.

The Highways and Transport team