

Places for People in Birmingham

Sustainability and Transport O&S Committee, 27 July 2022

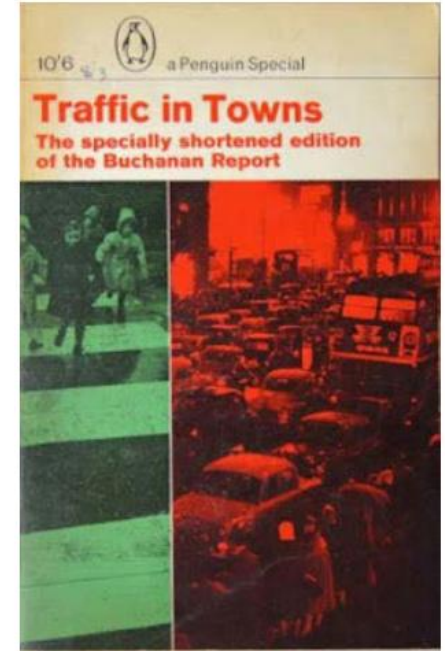


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What are Low Traffic Neighbourhoods?

- Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) is a catch-all term for the use of long-established traffic management techniques (such as modal filtering) to reassign through (motor) traffic from residential streets to main roads.
- Create quieter and safer places for people to walk and cycle through and within while maintaining access within the area by motor vehicles.
- Principles are designed in for many newer housing estates.
- Modern origin from the 1963 Traffic In Towns report by Professor Colin Buchanan, with the idea of the "environmental area", somewhere free from external traffic.
- Used in the UK, including Birmingham, ever since – using closures to motor traffic, while maintaining access for walking, cycling and sometimes public service vehicles, buses and emergency vehicles.



Why are we hearing about LTNs today?

Traffic and highway engineering is reflective of a changing society and with an increase in private motoring over the last 60 years, traffic management techniques have been used to counter impacts on residential streets.



Why are we hearing about LTNs today?

In the 2000s, the rise of technology led to personal sat-navs and travel apps which helped people find routes around increasingly congested main roads using routes that perhaps only locals previously knew about.



Why are we hearing about LTNs today?

- The traffic management techniques were popular again in the early 2010s with London's "Mini-Holland" programme, especially the borough of Waltham Forest.
- The concept was based on the Dutch approach of classifying and redesigning streets by use.
- The term LTN became popularised in guidance from London Living Streets and London Cycling Campaign.
- Recognition that LTNs supported policy imperatives – social, environmental, economic – climate emergency – benefits of active travel – people demanding something different from the transport network and the places where they live
- The Covid-19 Pandemic and social distancing significantly curtailed public transport capacity and citizens needed safer travel space. LTNs became a very important response and resilience tool.
- Many LTN scheme were made permanent and in many cases, they were of an ambitious and holistic scale which generated a great deal of attention.



*Copeland Road, Waltham Forest, December 2015.
One of the early Mini-Holland modal filters.*

Key objectives of LTNs

- A reduction in motor traffic across an LTN area
- A reduction on air pollution across an LTN area
- A reduction in short motor vehicle trips
- An increase in walking and cycling
- A reduction in collisions
- Where motor vehicle trips are made, the roads designated, designed and managed for them are used in preference to side streets



*New Town Row at Lower Tower Street.
EATF City Segments pilot project.*

The Birmingham Transport Plan and the Covid-19 response

- BCC published its draft Birmingham Transport Plan (BTP) for consultation at the end of January 2020.
- In response to Covid-19, funding was provided by the Department for Transport – the Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF), administered in the region by Transport for West Midlands.
- BCC rapidly created the Emergency Birmingham Transport Plan which reflected the draft BTP and was published in May 2020. This included LTNs and the City Segments project.
- This was superseded by the full Birmingham Transport Plan which was adopted in October 2021 and contained learning from the emergency plan.
- LTN type schemes are a fundamental component of the BTP and will need to be delivered to support the behaviour change required to tackle the climate emergency and other economic, environmental and social imperatives.

Emergency Active Travel Fund:
Birmingham



Places for People

- EATF investment allowed LTN pilots in King's Heath, Lozells, Bournville and Castle Vale. They were deployed using Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETROs).
- Engagement took place mainly online (due to Covid) – timescales set by Government were challenging
- ETRO means the consultation takes place throughout the first 6 months of a scheme being in place – made permanent or removed within 18 months
- Kings Heath & Moseley schemes proved particularly controversial – community concerns about displaced traffic – this led to:
 - Additional engagement & monitoring
 - Member Board being established
 - Action plan to provide short term mitigations
 - Wider traffic study to inform future scheme development and mitigations for ATF2 scheme

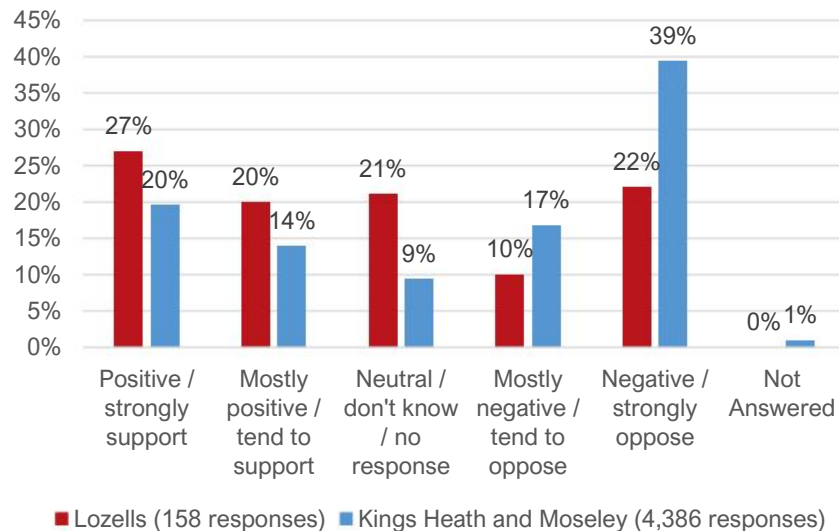


*Highbury Road, King's Heath.
EATF LTN pilot project.*

Places for People

- Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 (ATF2) was the next funding release within which BCC bid to expand the LTNs into Places for People (PfP) projects.
- Two PfP projects of this type remain under the ATF2 programme – King's Heath & Moseley and Lozells. Bournville moved to the capital programme.
- ATF2 engagement for Lozells – late 2021. Detailed design work ongoing to expand the scheme in next few months via an ETRO.
- ATF2 engagement for King's Heath & Moseley – Autumn 2021 – concept responding to this was developed. Further localised engagement shortly and subject to Cabinet approval, scheme will be expanded with an ETRO.
- In all three schemes, pilot ETRO measures have been made permanent, pending future evolution of the schemes in ATF2. Cabinet Member Report endorsed the proposed way forward for King's Heath and & Moseley.
- Bournville is further behind in the process and engagement is due to take place in the next few months.

How do you feel about [area] being part of the Places for People Project?



Outcomes & Success.

As the programme evolved from emergency / temporary measures into something more long term, a series of success factors and indicators were developed to help determine project success over the longer term.

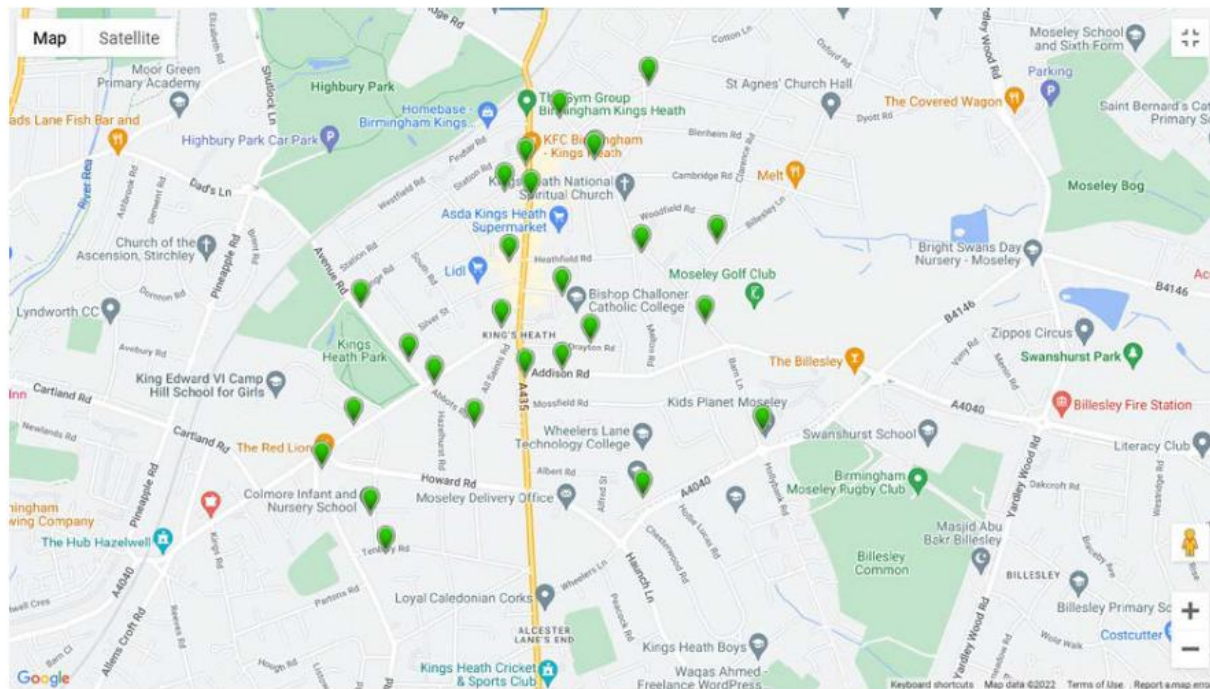
This approach is scalable and applicable to any scheme of a similar nature.

Success Factor	Indicator
Traffic	Motor traffic reduces within LTN
	Congestion is neutral on boundary roads
Mode Share	Motor vehicle mode share decreases
	Walking mode share increases
	Cycling mode share increases
Air Quality	Air quality does not deteriorate across LTN area
Public perception	People within LTN area are satisfied with the scheme over time
	People moving through LTN area are satisfied with the scheme over time
Business Impact	Business owners/ managers across the LTN area are satisfied with the scheme over time
	Business users across the LTN area are satisfied with the scheme over time

Data & monitoring

- A key issue is the lack of baseline data. Schemes were rapidly developed in the face of the Pandemic and movement patterns had already been disrupted. There was some general City-wide data available, although it wasn't necessarily fine grained enough for the schemes developed.
- Lozells is a relatively small scheme and so existing traffic data will be used as well as reviewing consultation feedback.
- King's Heath & Moseley is a large scheme and is making use of existing traffic data as well as additional local traffic counts, traffic flow and queue data from traffic signals on King's Heath High Street, a DfT study looking and walking and cycling within the LTN areas, bus journey times data, diffusion tubes (nitrogen dioxide), consultation responses and perception surveys.
- We are developing the approach in Bournville, which will respond to the layouts developed following the engagement exercise but will be reflective of the experience gained from the other schemes.
- Traffic modelling is also be used strategically to try and forecast any significant issues of displacement, although this remains a support tool rather than a tool to make decisions.

Data & monitoring: air quality.



Air quality monitoring sites around King's Heath.

Data & monitoring: relative changes in traffic volumes.



Source: Inrix

Next steps.

- ATF2 measures for City Segments are being implemented with ETROs giving a further 6-months for citizens and stakeholders to make comments with the scheme in operation. Decisions are delegated to Senior Officers in consultation with the Cabinet Member.
- Lozells will be expanded with an ETRO using the same process as above.
- The process for King's Heath & Moseley will see localised engagement to refine the current concept to a scheme suitable for submission to Cabinet at Outline Business Case (OBC) stage as there was an undertaking to involve cabinet. If agreed, then detailed design will follow with the expanded scheme deployed using an ETRO.
- The process for Bournville is to undertake area-wide engagement followed by consultation on a scheme to be implemented with an ETRO to give citizens and stakeholders the opportunity to experience the scheme and provide further feedback accordingly.

Lessons learned.

- Although Covid created urgency, these types of schemes still take a great deal of time and effort to deliver; even the Department for Transport has recognised this.
- Technical assessments such as data collection and modelling are important but being able to articulate the narrative to win hearts and minds is key.
- Local geography and road network influences the size of the area and the cells within – isolated measures may not achieve the desired outcomes.
- There is no scheme design or approach which satisfies everyone, including doing nothing.
- Change can be difficult, challenging and uncomfortable for some people.
- People generally support the vision for lower traffic volumes but translating it into support for a particular scheme is a challenge.
- If people aren't willing to change their behaviours, it's hard to harness scheme benefits.
- Behaviour change doesn't happen overnight. It takes time for people to adapt their behaviour and in some cases, people go through an extended process before they accept the scheme (even if they don't agree with it).
- The TRO process can be complex and not immediately understood by citizens.



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