

London Borough of Enfield

Environment & Climate Action Scrutiny Panel - 9th December 2021

Subject: Quieter Neighbourhoods & School Streets

Cabinet Member: Cllr Barnes

Executive Director: Sarah Cary

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this short report is to help frame a discussion on the principle of Quieter Neighbourhoods and specifically adopting a Low Traffic Neighbourhood and School Street approach.

Relevance to the Council Plan

2. Good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods. Quieter Neighbourhoods and School Streets supports the Council's commitment to encourage people to walk and cycle, which improve connectivity of neighbourhoods.
3. Sustain strong and healthy communities. Quieter Neighbourhoods and School Streets seeks to create healthier streets. This approach puts people and their health at the heart of decision making. It is a long-term plan for improving the user experience of streets, enabling everyone to be more active and enjoy the subsequent health benefits.
4. Build our local economy to create a thriving place. Wider investment in the walking & cycling network forms part of the Council's strategy to support our high streets and town centres by providing safe and convenient access to local shops and services.

Background

5. Low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) have been in use in London since the 1960s. They are increasingly being used in London and other cities in the UK and beyond to reduce through traffic in residential areas and aim to increase levels of walking and cycling. The Enfield Healthy Streets Framework sets out a range of interventions, including Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, which was endorsed by the Council Cabinet. However, prior to the implementation of the more recent projects, there is a range of historic measures that the Borough has taken to 'filter' unclassified roads to address the problem of excessive motor traffic on roads that were not designed with that function. Schools Streets are a relatively new feature in Enfield, with the first schemes implemented in FY19/20.

Main Considerations for the Panel

6. Nationally the government has committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and is supporting local authorities to encourage sustainable travel through its Active Travel Fund and the 2020 national walking and cycling strategy, Gear Change. The strategy includes:
 - *That physical inactivity is responsible for one in six UK deaths (equal to smoking) and is estimated to cost the UK £7.4 billion annually*
 - *In order to really deliver a step-change in the UK, we must go further, faster. Millions more journeys need to be walked or cycled.*
 - *Low-traffic neighbourhoods will be created in many more groups of residential streets.*
7. The Government's Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener, released in October 2021, sets out the Government's long-term plan to end the UK's domestic contribution to man-made climate change by 2050. Two transport key commitments in this plan are:
 - *Increase the share of journeys taken by public transport, cycling and walking*
 - *Invest £2 billion in cycling and walking, building first hundreds, then thousands of miles of segregated cycle lane and more low-traffic neighbourhoods with the aim that half of all journeys in towns and cities will be cycled or walked by 2030.*
8. Additional guidance was published by the Secretary of State for Transport in July 2021 to assist local authorities meet their statutory network management duty. The guidance sets out high-level principles to help local authorities to manage their roads and identify what actions they should take, bearing in mind the ambitions set out in 'Gear Change'. In particular, the guidance emphasises the need to implement schemes that support a green recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic by encouraging walking and cycling.
9. The 2018 Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) sets the overall direction and objectives for transport across London. The MTS, and the supporting evidence for the MTS, includes the following statements:
 - *A target for 80% of all trips to be made on foot, by bicycle or by public transport by 2041.*
 - *74% of car trips could be made by a more sustainable mode, for example cycling, walking or public transport.*
 - *The majority (58%) of car trips are made by London residents in outer London.*
 - *Without further action, the average Londoner will waste 2.5 days a year sitting in congested traffic by 2041. Most congestion is caused by there being more traffic on a day-to-day basis than there is space for – traffic methods can help but ultimately, we need to reduce traffic volumes.*

- *Even in a densely populated city such as London, some journeys can only reasonably be made by car. But the amount of space that can or should be taken up by private road transport is limited, and the population is growing. As well as prioritising more space-efficient and sustainable modes, research suggests that most people agree that the limited remaining space should be prioritised for 'essential' traffic.*
- *Poor air quality causes the equivalent of up to 9,400 deaths per year and an annual health cost of £1.4 - £3.7 billion.*
- *Without further action, London is expected to exceed World Health Organisation levels of PM2.5 until well after 2030. 75% of road transport PM comes from tyre and brake wear. There are limited technological solutions so only a reduction in road traffic can effectively tackle PM in the medium/long term.*

10. Quieter Neighbourhoods align closely with the following policies in the MTS:

- *Policy 1: The Mayor, through TfL and the boroughs, and working with stakeholders, will reduce Londoners' dependency on cars in favour of active, efficient and sustainable modes of travel, with the central aim for 80 per cent of all trips in London to be made on foot, by cycle or using public transport by 2041.*
- *Policy 2: The Mayor, through TfL and the boroughs, and working with stakeholders, will seek to make London a city where people choose to walk and cycle more often by improving street environments, making it easier for everyone to get around on foot and by cycle, and promoting the benefits of active travel. The Mayor's aim is that, by 2041, all Londoners do at least the 20 minutes of active travel they need to stay healthy each day.*
- *Policy 6: The Mayor, through TfL and the boroughs, and working with stakeholders, will take action to reduce emissions – in particular diesel emissions – from vehicles on London's streets, to improve air quality and support London reaching compliance with UK and EU legal limits as soon as possible. Measures may include retrofitting vehicles with equipment to reduce emissions, promoting electrification, road charging, the imposition of parking charges/ levies, responsible procurement, the making of traffic restrictions/ regulations and local actions.*
- *Policy 10: The Mayor, through TfL and the boroughs, and working with stakeholders, will use the Healthy Streets Approach to deliver coordinated improvements to public transport and streets to provide an attractive whole journey experience that will facilitate mode shift away from the car.*

11. TfL's Healthy Streets for London sets out how TfL will put people and their health at the centre of decision making, helping everyone to use cars less and to walk, cycle and use public transport more. The Healthy Streets Approach is the framework underpinning the MTS. Key to the Healthy Streets Approach, are the ten Healthy Streets Indicators.

12. The Enfield Healthy Streets Framework was approved by Cabinet in June 2021. The report sets out the framework for developing and delivering Healthy Streets projects which incorporates the Healthy Streets Approach.

The framework identifies activities to deliver on local, London and national policy objectives. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods are identified and discussed in Activity 1 (creating a high-quality walking and cycling network) of the Healthy Streets Framework. Annex A of the framework sets out the following:

- *Enfield's share of sustainable transport trips is amongst the lowest in London, with 31% trips walked, <1% cycled and 22% made on public transport. Correspondingly, the proportion of car trips exceeds the London average with 48% of trips made by private vehicles in Enfield, compared to 35% in London.*
- *Findings from the 2016 analysis of Walking Potential conducted by TfL highlights that Enfield is within the top five Boroughs in terms of potentially walkable trips and of cycling potential. The analysis suggested that an additional 315,000 trips could be cycled daily.*
- *Between 2008 and 2019, the number of miles driven on Enfield's roads increased by 313,000,000.*
- *While the level of traffic on 'main roads' (A and B roads and motorways) has remained relatively constant since the 1990s, the volume of traffic using 'minor roads' (C and unclassified roads) has increased substantially since the late 2000s.*
- *Continued growth in population is expected to cause further strain on the road and public transport network if the modal split trends remain.*

13. Making changes to the design and layout of our streets is not an easy process and work in the Borough to date has identified a series of challenges. The following is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but does include some common themes:

- **Community buy-in.** Engaging communities in the design and development of projects will increase the ownership and understanding of the necessity to deliver change.
- **Emergency services impacts.** The Healthy Streets team has developed contacts with local and empowered representatives from all emergency services. This relationship and dialogue needs to be continually invested in to enable conversations to continue. In addition, the Council should continue to identify any further steps it can take to ensure that navigational software receive any updates to the highway layout in a timely way.
- **Communication.** The Council have developed project pages to help communicate around specific Quieter Neighbourhood projects and the School Streets initiative. The pandemic has hindered the ability to hold face to face events although the project team have responded with multiple letters to homes and online webinars. More work is required to improve the quality of communication on both the broader reasons why these types of projects are being progressed, but also the specifics of individual projects so that the proposals can be readily understood.

- Issues of equality. Concerns have been raised about the impact on particular groups, for example some people who have a disability that may increase their reliance on travel by car. Through the ongoing delivery of projects, the team continue to review the approach to equalities impact assessment. The team are currently in the process of establishing a Healthy Streets Disability Reference Group to help influence the design and delivery of projects.
- Perceptions that some streets are favoured over others. The Council has received criticisms over the selection of some streets over others to receive interventions. The currently delivered Quieter Neighbourhood projects have Project Rationale statements published online and both these areas have a history of ongoing community discussions around problems associated with traffic speed and volume. However, the Council are working towards providing further detail on the range of unclassified roads across the Borough that are carrying higher levels of through traffic than is considered appropriate. This work will help inform the future selection of roads to be considered for Quieter Neighbourhood type interventions.

14. The Enfield Healthy Streets framework sets out 6 key activities that it will focus on as the programme works to deliver healthier and more sustainable streets in Enfield. These activities will help to deliver change whilst responding to the issues outlined above. They are:

- Activity 1* – creating a high-quality walking and cycling network.
- Activity 2* – making streets safer, reducing road danger and the number of people killed or seriously injured on Enfield’s roads.
- Activity 3* – improving accessibility and inclusivity of active travel in Enfield.
- Activity 4* – enabling community participation in the development of Healthy Streets projects.
- Activity 5* – creating high quality public realm and places.
- Activity 6* – Informing and inspiring people around the issues associated with sustainable travel.

Conclusions

15. As this report has set out, there is a significant amount of policy that points Local Authorities in the direction of delivering Quieter Neighbourhood (including Low Traffic Neighbourhoods) and School Street style projects. Delivering change brings challenges and some of these key themes have been outlined above, along with considerations about how

the Council and the Healthy Streets team can continue to work towards addressing these. These challenges could largely be avoided with a 'do nothing' approach, accepting the status quo. However, there are implications to this approach, not least a likely continued increase in motor traffic volumes on unsuitable unclassified roads negatively impacting the ability to increase levels of active travel. In the context of a declared climate emergency, with transportation accounting for 39% of the Boroughs emissions and ambitions for the Borough to become carbon neutral by 2040, doing nothing is not considered a viable option.

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