

# Transport Response to Covid-19:

## 1. Background

Lambeth's Transport Strategy 2019 sets out the Council's vision for mobility and accessibility in the borough. The Transport Strategy Implementation Plan (TSIP) provides more information on the projects and initiatives that will be required in order to deliver the objectives of the Strategy.

The public health emergency resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic has transformed the context within which the Transport Strategy sits:

- Vulnerable people are unable to leave their homes and many are now relying on the council to provide them with essential supplies.
- The need to impose physical distancing measures in order to reduce virus transmission has brought into sharp focus some of the inadequacies inherent in the way space is allocated on the public highway and in public spaces generally.
- The need for key workers to access workplaces safely when public transport services are significantly reduced, has highlighted the currently lack of high quality routes for cycling.
- Massively reduced levels of motor traffic has encouraged many people to turn to walking and cycling, but issues remain with road danger as the police record a significant increase in speeding.
- Local businesses are struggling to survive and will need to find new ways to reach their customers.

Measures suitable to address many of issues above are identified in the Transport Strategy, but the need to act quickly and at scale has become more pressing – with immediate action required in some cases.

Furthermore, while the natural desire in many policy areas may be to seek a return to the status quo, pre-Covid-19, in relation to transport and environmental objectives this is not necessarily the case. The Transport Strategy seeks to radically change the status quo and is a key element of the Council's climate change response. Therefore, when planning our response to the current situation a key consideration should be avoiding a return to pre-existing motor traffic levels. This will require traffic restraint, together with measures to further promote and enable sustainable forms of travel.

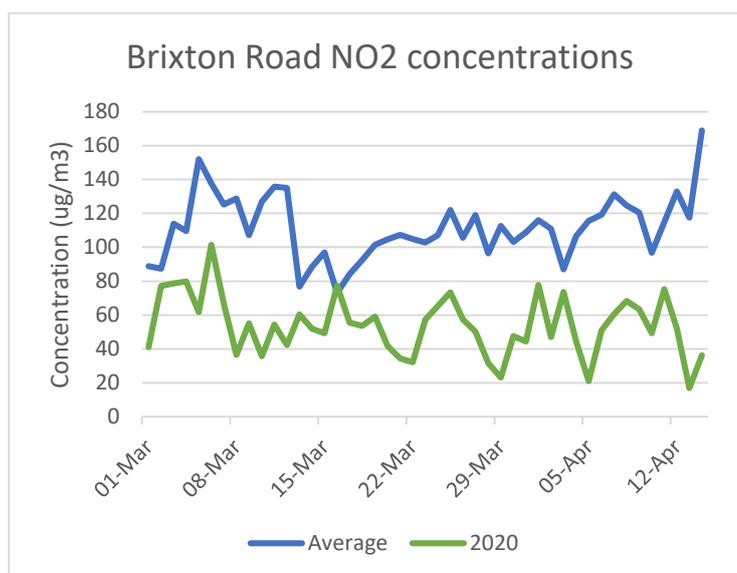


Figure 1: Change in NO2 emissions during 'lockdown' period

## 2. Key principles

In context of Covid-19, key principles for the Transport Strategy response are identified as follows:

### 1. Support vulnerable people

Large numbers of people identified as particularly vulnerable to Covid-19 require support. This is already happening as part of Project Shield, with deliveries of essential supplies being co-ordinated across the borough (and delivered by bike). The requirement for this is likely to continue for some time and planning is currently taking place to prepare a longer term, less resource intensive delivery model.

Any changes to the kerbside, parking suspensions for example, will need to consider the need for motor vehicle access for vulnerable households.

### 2. Enable compliance with government guidance

'Lockdown' and social / physical distancing are the main tools currently available to reduce virus transmission. The need for distancing is likely continue well into the recovery period or until such time as other tools become available.

### 3. Enable essential journeys to be made safely

Key workers, including those providing health and social care, still need to travel during the lockdown period. As restrictions ease, wider groups are likely to be added to the current list and trip making will increase. Journeys both on public transport and by road need to be managed to ensure safety and to maintain low levels of private motor vehicle traffic.

### 4. Support the local economy

As restrictions ease and businesses re-open those that rely on footfall and face to face customer contact – markets for example – may find conditions particularly difficult. New options linking businesses and their customers may be required and the sustainable delivery service pioneered as part of the Shield response may have a role to play. The Shield response has also been a test bed for micro-consolidation – reducing the number of freight trips – and this can also be developed.

### 5. Plan for now, near and longer term

There are urgent actions that need to be taken, principally to satisfy 2) and 3) above – protection public health by enabling physical distancing and reducing road danger. Beyond this we need to consider how to manage the transport network as restrictions are eased and eventually lifted and then through the recovery period. We therefore need a phased approach to our response.

### 6. Consistency and transparency

Any measures, particularly changes to the highway, must be carefully considered and sit within the existing policy framework, including our approach to road danger reduction and the relation of this to the Covid-19 public health context. The Council's actions must be clear and transparent to stakeholders.

### 3. Phased approach

A number of response phases have been identified as follows. Measures considered to be particularly appropriate to each phase are listed. The Action Plan at Section 8 summarises key actions arising from this analysis.

#### Phase 1

Short term – lockdown – days/weeks.

Context	Measures to be considered
Stay at home for most Footfall and traffic is low Discourage mobility Enable physical distancing Space for exercise needed Focus on residential areas Enable key workers to travel safely	Use temporary barriers to create additional space for pedestrians at key locations (where no traffic order required).  Making streets access only for motor vehicles so that road danger is reduced and there is more space for walking and cycling.  Promote suitable cycle routes for key workers, promote cycle training, bike loan etc.  Footway markings to indicate queuing locations and separation at key locations.  Request action from TfL at key locations on their highway network  *Prepare borough wide traffic order to allow temporary changes to the configuration of the highway across Lambeth.

\*Any changes affecting parking, loading or traffic movements require a traffic order.

#### Phase 2

Near term – easing of lockdown restrictions – weeks

Context	Measures to be considered
Stay at home for many More trip making Footfall and traffic is moderate Physical distancing still required People avoiding public transport Focus on employment centres, town centres and transport hubs	Further footway widening  Transition Project Shield essential supply service moves to volunteer based approach.  Point road closures on Healthy Route Network and at other priority locations to create high quality links into employment areas and town centres.  Bring forward selected Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) areas on a trial basis.  *Local delivery service trial in Brixton

\*provides on-line platform and sustainable delivery for market traders and small businesses

### Phase 3

Medium term – lifting of restrictions – weeks / months

Context	Measures to be considered
Stay at home for the vulnerable	Further footway widening with parking suspensions where required in areas of high footfall
Trip making near 'normal' level	
Education trips resume	Restrictions around schools
Footfall moderate, traffic high*	Further LTN trials including Brixton Liveable Neighbourhood (BLN)
Physical distancing still required	Interim bus priority measures with TfL
People avoiding public transport*	
Focus on destinations, town centres, schools and transport nodes	More pedestrian priority at traffic signals - TfL

\*Public transport trips may switch to car trips as people seek to avoid busy environments

### Phase 4

Recovery

Context	Measures to be considered
Trip making near 'normal' level	Extend and establish local delivery service model and freight management for town centres.
Physical distancing may still be required	
Focus on maintaining 'new status quo' with lower levels of private car use / emissions.	Permanent re-allocation of road space to pedestrians.
Focus on neighbourhoods and supporting the local economy	Low Traffic Neighbourhoods – formalise trials and extend programme scope.
	BLN – permanent measures
	New parking policy (Kerbside Strategy)

## 4. Key Interventions

Specific interventions are listed at Appendix A.

## Footway widening



Figure 2: Constrained footways

At many locations in the borough footways do not have capacity to enable physical distancing, even with pedestrian flows at low levels. Depending on the road layout it may be possible to quickly create additional space for walking at these locations. It will be necessary to prioritise locations, for example on routes to open space during the lockdown period and in town centres as these come back to life. In this case the best dataset is user knowledge, including the experience of the Council's Highway Inspectors, filtered by strategic factors, such as access to open space, shopping areas and transport hubs.

## Healthy Routes

The Council adopted the Healthy Route Plan as part of the Transport Strategy, but much of the network is still at the planning stage. The network caters for both walking and cycling and is particularly important for longer trips made by bike. Key parts of the network are on TfL's roads.

Due to the large fall in traffic volumes across the borough, many back street routes are currently quiet, although traffic speed may still be an issue. In this context the objective is to ensure that the traffic levels remain low and that road danger is minimised.

Analysis of the healthy routes network has recently been completed at a high level showing traffic conditions and possible interventions to meet the necessary Quality Criteria for cycling. Interventions deliverable in the short term are likely to involve changes to traffic management including creating neighbourhoods which provide access for motor vehicles but which filter out through traffic.

In order to accelerate delivery officers are reviewing available options, including bringing forward measures to manage motor traffic levels and control speeds on key links.

In the short to medium term the focus will be on providing critical links providing access to key workplaces (including hospitals) and employment centres. Cycleway 5 (Streatham to Waterloo) is already largely implemented and bringing forward additional measures to enhance safety and protect against a return to high traffic volumes on remaining sections is

considered a priority. Representations will be made to LB Wandsworth to improve access across Tooting Bec Common to provide a better link from the Streatham area.

Improving routes to access town centres will also be prioritised, for example bringing forward measures developed as part of the Brixton Liveable Neighbourhood project.

### Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

Three priority areas are identified in the adopted Low Traffic Neighbourhood Plan (Oval, Streatham Hill, Valley Road) and these are at various stages of development. It is proposed to bring forward trial / experimental measures in one or more of these areas as soon as possible in order to reduce road danger and protect them from increasing traffic levels once movement restrictions are eased. The area known as the 'Oval triangle' is a candidate for prioritisation due to its link to the full implementation of Cycleway 5. Other neighbourhood areas beyond the first 3 will be considered as necessary including in the south of the borough.

### Transport for London Network

Many of the main roads in the borough are controlled by TfL and they have an important role to play in meeting key objectives. TfL are currently understandably focussed on maintaining essential services safely. The Council will work with the GLA and TfL by promoting measures that will benefit our residents and Londoners as a whole. Such measures to include:

- Temporary footway widening at 'pinch points', particularly where the TLRN runs through our town centres and footfall is expected to be high once current restrictions are lifted e.g. Brixton, Waterloo and around bus stop boarding areas.
- Extending bus lane operational hours, particularly where cycle flows are high e.g. on the A3 / Cycleway 7
- The creation of temporary cycle lanes on key routes where space allows, particularly where this will be beneficial to key workers accessing healthcare facilities e.g. Albert Embankment / Lambeth Palace Road.



Figure 3: Oval Triangle LTN area



Figure 4: Albert Embankment Healthy Route (TLRN)

- Re-phasing of traffic signals to reduce wait time for pedestrians, particularly where footway crowding may be an issue e.g. in town centres.

- Re-introduction of traffic restraint measures such as the Congestion Charge / ULEZ and parking controls, with exemptions for key workers.
- Regular 'car free days' in order to enable cycling for health and build on the increased level of family cycling observed during the lockdown period.

Officers will also co-ordinate a response with other boroughs to stress the importance of continued TfL funding to enable our response.

## 5. Delivery

The Transport, Capital Studio and Highways teams will work together to identify, prepare and implement measures, involving others as appropriate including the Comms team. Transport Strategy is responsible for identifying, agreeing and in some cases developing key interventions. Capital Studio, working closely with Highways, is responsible for implementation. It is recommended that a joint team is assembled to co-ordinate activity and ensure consistent focus.

The initial emphasis will be on measures that can be delivered within days – footway widening at key locations such as food retail locations and park access routes.

Resources are limited and this work will be prioritised ahead of other work tasks as necessary. This may result in changes to the planned work programme / business as usual.

## 6. Costs

The first tranche of works focusing on temporary footway widening (Phase 1 at Appendix A) is estimated to cost £75K including layout design, materials, implementation and maintenance.

The cost of make the recommended borough wide traffic order is £3.5K

In order to bring forward existing planned projects such as Healthy Routes, Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and Brixton Liveable Neighbourhood, continued TfL funding has been expected. However, there is considerable uncertainty TfL funding to boroughs going forward and it may necessary to seek further emergency funds to carry forward these elements of our response.

It may be necessary to suspend parking bays at some locations to deliver the identified measures and consideration will need to be given to any revenue implications (as well as the need for essential access).

## 7. Legal considerations

While it is considered that proposed interventions do not require additional legal provisions, it is recommended that a borough-wide traffic order is made in order to cover a range of interventions and remove the need to make traffic orders for each one. A similar order already exists covering the VNEB area. Such an order must be made on the basis of protecting the public from danger.

Urgent measures such as narrowing / reducing traffic lanes to increase footway space do not require a traffic order and can be implemented under the highway permitting process.

There is considered to be an increased risk of challenge when bringing forward changes to the highway with reduced levels of public engagement, but minimum requirements will be met as below.

## 8. Stakeholder engagement

Bringing forward highway changes ahead of schedule will require a change to planned engagement approaches. The Council will continue to meet legal requirements relating to statutory consultation and will engage with key local stakeholders, but it will be necessary to accelerate this process since it is an emergency response to Covid-19 and 'in depth' engagement will not be possible without prolonging timescales. Street trials and experimental measures may be used as part of an ongoing engagement process. Emergency services will be key stakeholder who will be closely involved in the development of schemes and consulted with as part of the statutory process.

## 7. Governance

The Strategic Directors for Sustainable Growth and Opportunity will oversee and agree the response in consultation with the Strategic Director, Resident's Services and the Deputy Leader (Environment and Clean Air).

Ward members to be notified of proposed measures in their areas.

The Strategic Directors for Sustainable Growth and Opportunity will be responsible for delegated decisions relating to programme scope and development.

The Strategic Director for Resident's Services will be responsible for delegated decisions relating to project implementation.

Day to day decisions to be taken by identified project team.

## 8. Action Plan

Officers are currently preparing a full list of schemes to be brought forward and technical review / feasibility will then be required for these. Key actions / approximate timescales are expected as follows:

<b>What</b>	<b>When</b>
Mobilise team across business units	By 27 April
Identify <i>and implement</i> emergency footway widening (first tranche)	By 30 April and ongoing for further tranches
Review existing data, strategy and local knowledge to confirm priorities	By 24 April
Letter to Walking and Cycling Commissioner requesting TfL support	By 27 April
Prepare borough wide traffic order	By mid-May
Engage with key stakeholders	From 27 April
Prepare communications strategy	By 30 April
Implement Healthy Route measures	From mid-May
Implement LTN measures	From mid-May

## Appendix A: Priority interventions by street / area

### Phase 1

#### Footway widening

- Half Moon Lane, Herne Hill (under railway bridge)
- Coldharbour Lane, Loughborough Junction (under railway bridge)
- Norwood Road, Tulse Hill (under railway bridge)
- At and around park entrances as necessary.

## Phase 2

### Footway widening

- Wandsworth Road (railway bridge)
- Westow Hill (Crystal Palace)

### Make access only

- Cornwall Road (Waterloo)
- Roupell Street (Waterloo)

### Cycleway 5 upgrades

- Various

### Low Traffic Neighbourhood temporary measures

- Oval Triangle (Fentiman Road area)

## Phase 3

### Footway widening

- Waterloo Road (Waterloo Station)
- Sandell Street (Waterloo East Station)
- Station Rise (Tulse Hill)

### Low Traffic Neighbourhood temporary measures

- Railton Road area, Brixton