

Places for People – top ten frequently asked questions

Low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) – Places for People in Birmingham – are about reducing the amount of through traffic in residential neighbourhoods so that it is nicer to be outside and safer for people to walk and cycle, children to play, neighbours to chat. In many parts of Birmingham, residents find the streets outside their homes are dominated by traffic. When this is reduced neighbourhoods becomes quieter, streets are safer, and the air is cleaner.

1) Can I still access my house by car, have visitors and receive deliveries?

Yes, all streets will still be accessible by motorised vehicles. As the main aim of this initiative is to prevent through traffic in the neighbourhood, some car journeys may become less direct and take slightly longer than at present. However, LTNs do not remove access, they just make it more difficult for people to cut through an area and therefore reduce through traffic.

2) What about emergency service vehicles and refuse collections?

Emergency services are informed about any changes to road layouts and can provide input and comments. We ensure that they can update their sat nav systems which are used for responding to emergency situations. The main thing that delays emergency services response times is congestion, so anything that helps to reduce this is beneficial. Depending on the layout of each street, refuse vehicles will either be able to turn around in the street or reverse for short sections. In a few locations where this arrangement is not possible, collapsible or lockable bollards will be used to allow access for these vehicles.

3) What about the main roads that border these areas? Will they get worse?

Initially some roads bordering the LTN area may see a slight increase in traffic compared to current levels as traffic redirects onto these. However, depending on the journey, people will start to find other alternative routes using the main route network instead. By reducing the number of vehicles turning at junctions, traffic may move more smoothly along main roads. Also, more people may begin to walk or cycle more for local trips and shorter journeys as they feel this is now a safer and more attractive option. The combined impact of this is that roads bordering the LTN area can also experience benefits from this being introduced.

4) When will this happen and how long will it be trialled for?

In line with the Department for Transport's funding criteria, schemes need to be delivered in September 2020. The LTNs will be implemented using temporary measures that can be changed, removed or made permanent at a later stage depending on its success and feedback received during this trial period. The trial will initially run for up to 6 months.

5) Why haven't we been formally consulted on this?

The emergency nature of this situation and the timescales we are having to work to have limited the extent we have been able to consult and engage prior to delivery. However, these are pilot schemes and we want to hear from people about how these measures are working once in place, and whether people think they should continue – this trial should be shaped by the people who live and spend their time in the area. Schemes will be implemented using an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO), the first six months of which act as a formal consultation period and allows potential for changes and modifications to be made. Any future permanent changes would also be subject to formal consultation.

6) How can I comment on what's happening?

We welcome any comments about these schemes, both positive and negative, as well as ideas and suggestions about what else you would like to see happening in future. We are using a digital engagement platform (Commonplace) as one way that people can make comments and give feedback:

<https://covidmeasuresbirmingham.commonplace.is/overview> or you can email us with any questions at connected@birmingham.gov.uk.

We are also ensuring there are other ways for people to comment on what is happening, including arranging places where people can deliver any written comments they have and working with ward Councillors to review any feedback they receive.

We hope to run some small 'pop-up' events to engage with local residents and get feedback on schemes (we will ensure these are delivered in line with public health guidance).

7) How will this impact on local businesses and consider their needs?

We will engage with local businesses to ensure that access is retained for their servicing and delivery requirements and to involve them as valued stakeholders in these trial schemes. Creating more pleasant local environments can help to increase footfall, and those who get to the shops by walking or cycling often visit more frequently and spend more overall, so we hope that there will be some positive impacts on local businesses.

8) Will there be a reduction in car parking spaces?

There may be the loss of one or two on-street parking spaces at some road closure points to provide space for turning movements, but this will be kept to a minimum. No access to any off-street parking or residential properties will be blocked and the locations of closure points are being designed with access to off-street parking in mind.

9) Why have you chosen the areas and locations selected for these schemes?

In selecting these areas, we considered previous correspondence from local residents, support from local Councillors and any existing schemes or programmes this could be aligned with this. We wanted two different pilot areas to test and trial this new approach to making changes to residential streets, alongside delivering early demonstration measures

in other parts of the city with known issues around through traffic. We are currently undertaking a city-wide assessment and prioritisation exercise to inform future delivery.

10) How will these schemes be monitored?

Information to assess the impact and effectiveness of schemes will be captured in a number of ways, including feedback on Commonplace, resident/stakeholder surveys, site visits and observations. We will utilise any existing data sources available to us as well as arranging for some traffic counts or surveys to be carried out in the area and on bordering roads.

Schemes are being delivered in a way that if issues are identified during the trial period then action can be taken to address these. Monitoring will also help to inform any future changes.

Further information, including some links to more details about low traffic neighbourhood, can be found at www.birmingham.gov.uk/placesforpeople.