

LTN EVALUATION

FLDRA representatives met with Cllr. Ian Barnes, Deputy Leader of the Council, and Richard Eason, Healthy Streets Programme Director, on 21 January 2021, to offer feedback and discuss the evaluation of the Fox Lane Area LTN.

In a frank and helpful discussion, we talked about some of the concerns of residents who are both in favour and against the scheme, and about the evaluation methodology and process. FLDRA maintains a neutral position and aims to inform residents impartially and to promote dialogue.

-We clarified the length of the trial period:

The clock for the trial period of six months is reset when adjustments are made to the scheme – this is because the Council is looking for a clear six-month period with no changes to collect data. A change was made when the camera-enforced access for emergency vehicles was installed at the top of Conway Road in response to residents' concerns, which means this current six-month window runs until 19 May 2021.

On this point, it was acknowledged that Covid-19 lockdown conditions and highly irregular traffic patterns currently make it difficult to measure impacts and assess the scheme, and that it may be necessary to look towards a further date after lockdown restrictions are fully lifted and life returns to normal. Only then there will be a realistic chance to gather evidence to demonstrate any effects of the scheme.

-We stressed the importance of creating trust in the evaluation process, be ensuring its transparency and independence

Concerns have been raised about the adequacy of baseline data that may be used to measure the impact on pollution, and about the lack of detail describing the evaluation methodology. Cllr Barnes said that Officers would be publishing some further information that helps explain how the scheme will be monitored.

Cllr Barnes explained that the final evaluation requires complex analysis of many variables and feedback from many stakeholders and that he will be making the final decision based on a robust evaluation report to be prepared by LBE Officers. He added that it is not possible to monitor roads across large areas because there are budgetary restrictions that make it difficult to procure external evaluations or studies. The final decision can be 'called-in' for further scrutiny by the Scrutiny Committee.

-We asked about the weight to be given to residents' views

We pointed out that the community is deeply divided, and that, although FLDRA has not carried out an opinion poll, there appear to be large numbers of residents both in favour and against. It is not accurate to say either group is only a small noisy minority.

Asked about the weight to be given to residents' views, either in favour or against, Cllr Barnes emphasised that the consultation is not a referendum. If 70% supported an unreasonable proposition it would not necessarily be carried. Objections are not valued according to *volume* but *validity*.

- We asked what can be done for people who are disadvantaged by the scheme, if it remains and, conversely, what can be done for residents most affected by through traffic (e.g. Amberley and The Mall) , if the scheme is removed.

What can be done to mitigate the impact on people who will be disadvantaged if the scheme remains (for example, the less mobile and residents and workers on peripheral roads)?

It was acknowledged that some residents are less mobile and unable to walk or cycle but the Council notes that the overriding aim of the scheme is to reduce future growing traffic levels and in turn reduce congestion. Cllr Barnes pointed out that residents who need to drive, including those who have a disability, can still use motor vehicles and access all properties in the area.

Concerning the impact on residents and workers on peripheral main roads, Cllr. Barnes said that the Council hopes to see traffic evaporation, and also to improve air quality. It plans to introduce more trees and green buffers. Particular problems at Southgate Circus and The Triangle are not within the Council's powers to solve but it continues to push for improvements in public transport and road layouts.

Cllr Barnes also mentioned that a lamp column electric charging trial will begin in the next few months in the hope that those who need to drive will transition to electric vehicles. If this trial is successful then it will be rolled out across the borough, pending funding.

Cllr Barnes explained that if this scheme is unsuccessful then something else will be trialed because the Council must encourage drivers out of cars; he pointed out that our infrastructure can't cope, pollution from vehicles is over WHO levels across London, and his administration has a climate change carbon-neutral pledge that aims to help future generations. The Government is also considering '*road user charging by the mile*' to reduce traffic across the entire road network.

-We noted that there continue to be problems with delays to emergency services

Concerning access by the emergency services, it was noted that the Conway Road access is now in operation. However, FLDR noted that incidents continued to occur where ambulances were seen to have difficulty accessing patients living inside the LTN area, and this continues to cause anxiety to families with elderly or vulnerable members. Cllr Barnes offered reassurance that the Council continues to maintain a close relationship with all Emergency Services and that the Council are doing all they can to ensure that any out-dated navigational systems will be updated by the Government as a priority. He said that there is a possibility that if nothing is done, emergency vehicles could be standing in gridlock on all roads in the future.

The option to install ANPR cameras instead of planters/bollards, which was proposed by some residents at the start of the project, is unlikely to be considered. He said that camera vandalism is a big problem, as has already been seen with the Fox Lane camera, and it would be hugely expensive to position cameras on all roads in the large Fox Lane LTN. He mentioned that there have been accusations that the cameras are just a 'money-making scheme' and stressed that this is not the case; the revenue is used to fund the Council's £11 million charge for the Freedom Pass. If more cameras were installed, this would interfere with plans to consider 'place-making' features, should the scheme become permanent. The planters and bollards could be replaced by 'parklets' featuring planting areas, benches for the community to meet and potential amenities for small children.

There was insufficient time to explore further issues, and it was agreed that a frank and constructive dialogue will continue in the coming months.