

Appendix 2: Traffic and Transport issues in Highgate

1. Aspirations

Highgate owes its existence to traffic – it was a hub and a staging post over the centuries - yet the many competing demands today currently create tension, making travel and transport the issue that concerns residents most. Highgate offers a good variety of local retail, service and leisure opportunities and generally benefits from good transport connectivity, as it is easy to reach the centre of London.

Recently traffic has changed the character of the area in sometimes very detrimental ways. Heavy traffic flows along the Plan area's major arteries (Archway Road and Highgate Hill through the Village to North Hill, respectively the A1 and B519) have given rise to unacceptable levels of noise and air pollution. These are also the roads with by far the worst safety records in the area. Serious injuries are common and deaths have occurred. (Supporting evidence relating to accidents can be found in Appendix 1: Evidence). Additionally the frequent congestion along and around Highgate's main transport corridors seriously restricts the ability of residents of the Plan area to access the day-to-day activities that support a vibrant economy and a healthy and inclusive lifestyle.

The Highgate Neighbourhood Forum aspires to make the area more pedestrian and cycle friendly, reduce vehicle speeds, improve bus routes, review parking controls, improve access to local underground stations, eradicate commuter parking and improve mobility and accessibility for disabled people. The role of the Boroughs' Local Implementation Plans is acknowledged though sometimes the focus on delivery has been on the core areas of the boroughs, not on Highgate, which is at the periphery of both Haringey and Camden. The Forum area is cross boundary, and abuts two other boroughs (Barnet to the north and Islington to the south), so the Plan seeks a strategic approach to highways and infrastructure management that will apply to both local authority areas, and aims to make progress towards these aspirations by targeted local level policies.

Importantly, the Neighbourhood Forum aspires to provide a set of policies that unify the approach taken by both Boroughs when seeking to manage traffic and traffic generating land uses in Highgate. There are many welcome elements in the programmes of both, but Highgate would benefit from a common set of policies. Many of the issues that concern people cannot be addressed directly in the scope of the Plan, which is focused on specific planning policy. That said, where possible and appropriate, policies are included. For example, though the Plan has no means to address the pollution that is a feature of the main roads, it can require the design of new development to be sensitive to current pollution levels. It cannot rid the streets of cars and lorries but it can ensure that new development is sensitive to, and tries to ameliorate, the current pressure on parking. So, the policies in the Plan do not reflect the full range of the community's concerns relating to transport, only to those issues that can be addressed via planning. However, Section 5 of the Plan does identify a number of non-statutory actions that also seek to address other transport issues not covered by planning policy.

2. Challenges

The key issues for Highgate identified during the course of consultation and evidence gathering included the following:

I. A desire to encourage more people to adopt sustainable modes of transport and make the most of the opportunities to walk, cycle or use public transport;

- II. The importance of improving highway safety for all types of road user;
- III. The reduction of congestion and traffic flows to deliver – among other improvements – reductions in air and noise pollution;
- IV. The concentration of new traffic-generating developments in areas where there is sufficient road capacity to accommodate them, and the minimisation of community disruption when that is not possible;
- V. Stabilisation or if possible reduction of the pressure on on-street parking as a result of development;
- VI. A desire to reduce the negative impact from commuter driving and parking (by limiting for example the number of ‘park and ride’ streets in the area used by on-commuters, parking by residents of and workers in neighbouring boroughs, and the extent of driving to work in the borough); and
- VII. The development of an overarching and comprehensive suite of traffic and transport policies that seek to manage all of these issues consistently in both the Haringey and Camden areas of the Plan.

The nature of Highgate means that the solutions to the problems might be different from the policies adopted across the Boroughs as a whole. The Plan area is physically different, being hilly, a lower density of housing and benefitting from many large open spaces – as the population is more spread out and access to services is not so easy, cycling and walking might not be as easy to adopt for many. It also has a wider range of street and property types - from the mansions for the wealthy to privately rented and public sector housing in need of attention – in a relatively small area. The Plan area either includes or borders some large medical and educational establishments that offer highly valued facilities but also create particular problems. Not only is Highgate different from many similarly sized communities in the rest of its two Boroughs, but the diversity within the area means that what works or is needed in one part of the Plan area is not necessarily what is needed on the other side of Highgate. This makes it imperative to set planning policies that permit flexibility of implementation within the context of Highgate.

With this in mind, there is a need to set expectations for larger developments. “Significant” is often defined as set out in the TCP (DMPO) 2010, namely: over 10 residential units, on a site of 1 hectare or more, or 1,000sq m of new floorspace. When assessing smaller developments, for example of five or fewer units, special regard should be had to on-site factors that would seriously exacerbate the impact of the development works on the surrounding area. These could include development in residential areas, in close proximity to a school or a care home or very narrow or restricted site access (e.g. development in a mews with no footways). Regard will also be had to the nature and layout of a site. (This leans heavily on the Camden Planning Guidance 6, section 8 on Construction Management Plans.) The types of schemes where a CMP will usually be appropriate include: development where the construction process has a significant impact on adjoining properties; developments which give rise to particular ‘on-site’ issues arising from the construction process (e.g. large scale demolition or complicated or intrusive remediation measures); basement developments; significant developments involving listed buildings or adjacent to listed buildings; development where site specific issues have arisen in the light of external consultation (where these are supported by objective evidence); and development on sites where constraints arising from the layout or size of the site impact on the surrounding road network. In the case of developments between the national and local size limits it will be for the developer to prove why it should be treated at the national standard.

Supporting evidence for the above can be found in Appendix 1: Evidence.

3. Promoting Sustainable Movement

Key to the delivery of sustainable development is the promotion of sustainable transport. In Highgate this implies championing walking and cycling and improving access to public transport. There are parts of Highgate where it is not at all pleasant – and even dangerous – to walk or cycle. Pedestrians and cyclists feel vulnerable near main roads and the problems with noise and air pollution in some places are chronic.

Though the Forum will pursue a range of initiatives which are not included in the Plan (see the community actions at the end of the section), planning still has a role to play. Large residential development and material changes to schools, medical facilities and other non-residential developments will be required to take account of their impact on the community in a way that they have not done in the past. On site and off site, all new developments will be required to contribute where viable to enhancing the connectivity of the Plan area through the provision of new and improved cycle links, bike parking facilities, footpaths, public transport stops and new through routes. The provision of cycle paths is one example of a policy from which Highgate has not benefited. Highgate is on the fringes of Haringey and Camden and abuts Barnet and Islington. As a consequence the Boroughs' own cycle routes and plans have often stopped short of Borough boundaries leaving Highgate without adequate links and isolated from the core networks.

An aim is to enhance the permeability of Highgate for pedestrians, making it easier for people to follow desire lines even across previously privately owned land, for example providing an element of pedestrian access to or across the "Bow" area in the event that it is redeveloped. More attractive walking and cycling routes will result in a reduction in reliance on private cars. Provision for car use will continue to have to be made for the elderly, infirm or others who are unable to fully utilise public transport.

This key Plan policy, to encourage a modal shift from car to other forms of transport, is at the heart of Section 4 of the NPPF 'Promoting sustainable transport' and is supported by Haringey's emerging policy DM31. The NPPF states that 'transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development but also in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives'. This objective is incumbent on all developers and can be delivered through the inclusion of a number of features in new developments that accommodate walking and the use of bicycles and public transport.

4 Movement of Heavy Goods

Highgate has a varied network of roads ranging from significant transport corridors, such as the Archway Road, to tight grids of residential streets. Highgate's tapestry of buildings with diverse uses that has developed over the centuries, with workshops and offices often next door to homes, is widely appreciated as a feature that gives character to the area. As a result, residents can experience a serious negative impact on their own amenity as a result of significant levels of heavy goods vehicle movements being located in an area which is predominantly residential. This policy seeks to ensure that this level of impact is not exacerbated as a result of new development coming forward in Highgate.

When new commercial or residential uses are proposed, their effect on amenity, as well as their bearing on the road network, should be recognised taking into account both on-site and off-site impact, both during and after the period of development.

The major problem noted by the Plan area's residents is the use of heavy goods vehicles during construction. Planning approval is often granted, subject to conditions, without regard to how the works will be carried out. That residents' concerns regarding nuisances of this sort

are currently not fully addressed was evident in the case of, for example, the 2015/16 developments at Channing School and on the site of the former Magistrates Court.

Permissions for significant developments will be required to include payment for repairs to any damaged pavements, roads and walls and of replanting required on completion of the work. Developers may also be required to contribute to public realm improvements - such as providing improved walking and cycling routes - during and/or once work has been completed. This contribution will be sought via s106 and s278 agreements on larger schemes, as well as on big scale residential developments, such as basement development.

The community will endeavour to ensure that the Council robustly monitors the implementation of the CMP and that it is reviewed where appropriate during the course of construction works.

The impact of heavy goods vehicles on a community once the development has been completed also needs to be considered. Badly – often illegally – parked delivery vehicles, coaches, refuse lorries etc cause congestion and danger. Sites that are likely to generate such traffic should be required to make provision for them on their land, using Servicing Management Plans, except in the exceptional cases where there is no room for vehicles. Applications for development that entails a loss of such on-site parking, in effect pushing the “problem” onto public space will be strongly resisted. Deliveries will be required to be made at times that minimise disturbance to local residents.

4. Reducing the Negative Impact of Parking in Highgate

Traffic and parking issues ranked highest among respondents to the survey carried out by the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum during the early stages of community engagement. Clogged streets, with the attendant problems of noise and pollution, and the difficulty of parking are issues that the community wants addressed. The Forum will pursue these issues and the Plan can play a role.

Except for a few hours in the middle of the night, Highgate’s streets are mostly in heavy use. The area experiences high volumes of traffic along the main arterial routes that span the Plan area. A stone’s throw from these clogged roads you will find some rat runs but also many peaceful and near vehicle-empty residential streets. There is little that planning policies in this Plan can do to influence the commuter traffic flowing through Highgate but it is possible to act on the other problem blighting the area, parking.

In some streets the demand for residents’ spaces alone outstrips kerb space. Such streets, like the Miltons, are typically densely packed Victorian terraced housing, many of which have been converted into flats. There are also some roads that consistently have free kerbside parking space and these tend to be around the western and northern fringes of the area. In all, our research has identified various street types in Highgate:

1. Private roads where public parking is not allowed. TfL red routes also limit parking.
2. Available parking space pretty much all the time.
3. Largely clear at night, full by day.
4. Constant medium pressure.
5. Full by night but space during the day.
6. Roads that are full by day and at night.

Parking policy needs to be changed and different solutions are required to solve the problems and exploit the opportunity existing on different streets.

That said, there is a consistent pattern across much of Highgate – some element of increased difficulty in parking, during the day and evening. And it seems to be getting progressively worse, in part, as inner London boroughs take a tough line on commuter parking and driving

commuters are forced to park further out (such as in Highgate) and finish their journey on public transport. The current situation works well for almost no one. Residents need to be able to park and space needs to be made available for short term visitors to Highgate's leisure, retail and business facilities, be that visiting a consulate, green space or dentist, to have a drink or attend a class or play group. Some streets in Highgate are not covered by parking restrictions and have vehicles parked in them, often unmoved for months on end. There is a requirement for a comprehensive review of parking needs and the Forum is confident that a much better set of controls can be adopted to the benefit of all parties.

The core issue relates to commuting. The Plan encourages the boroughs to strengthen emerging policies adopted in other London boroughs which strongly discourage parking by people who then commute on to other parts of London. Our surveys show (see Appendix 1: Evidence) that this is one of the main causes of the chronic car parking stress experienced in parts of the Plan area. Cars arrive at various times during the morning (depending on the hours of restrictions that are in place), park and then the drivers head off out of the area. This is not a good use of Highgate's kerb space. The community gains nothing. With that point accepted, we will then encourage the Boroughs to review – in a co-ordinated way – the existing parking restrictions with the intention of making them work better for the area's residents and businesses. Islington Borough is planning during 2016 to introduce much longer hours for their CPZ zones neighbouring Highgate. The knock on effect this will have on Highgate requires urgent action from the Boroughs.

The Forum will also work to improve public transport in and around the area. Highgate is better served by public transport for radial journeys to the centre of London than it is for east-west journeys. The congestion and parking stress caused by poor east-west bus services and inadequate provision for the school run should lead to consultation on better orbital public transport provision.

Planning policy also has a role to play. While it is appreciated that a level of access to a private car is often required, new development should plan for essential usage only and limit parking provision as far as it is practical to do so, so as not to be to the detriment of existing residents. Accordingly, across most of the Forum area, where parking is already at a premium, policy on new developments should be consistent with the aim of reducing reliance on private cars and stabilising or reducing parking stress. The policy sets out the restrictions that will be considered on a development-by-development basis to ensure that the need for parking is kept to the operational minimum. (Camden already has policies in their Development Policies Plan (DP18 and 19) that seeks to manage parking in such areas, as does Haringey in DM43.) Other than in exceptional circumstances, new development in areas with CPZ controls and with good transport connections will be expected to be car-free.

No need is seen to allow family homes to be exempt from this rule. The Forum area is out of kilter with the rest of Haringey and Camden. It has higher proportions of families and more with children than the rest of the boroughs and homes on average have more rooms and bedrooms. The occupancy ratings are lower, yet family size is hardly different from the boroughs. As a consequence there is a shortage of homes suitable for smaller family units and they are to be encouraged over ever-larger family homes that do not – in Highgate's experience - lead to an increase in population.

In addition to the application of this policy, and where applicable, the Forum will work with Council officers to make the parking permit systems more robust and to identify ways in which additional legal restrictions and covenants can be placed on new developments to ensure that the easy access afforded to private cars is kept low in perpetuity. The restrictions on cars need not apply to residential developments in those few roads where the majority of houses have substantial off-street parking and there is no recorded parking stress.

The policy seeks to ensure that the provision of any new off-street parking is well integrated with the character and accessibility needs of its locality. In particular the provision of parking in developments must not have a negative impact on the appearance of an area, should not be prejudicial to the use of other forms of more sustainable transport (other than private car) or to the mobility of disabled or elderly people and must not have an adverse impact on the green character of Highgate.

The displacement of cars and other vehicles needs to be considered carefully when spaces currently used for parking are to be redeveloped. One area of such parking in Highgate is between the High Street and the Bowl area where over 100 cars can be parked. Although land behind the shops or around the light industrial space may be privately owned it is used informally by many car owners. In such cases it may be appropriate for proposals for redevelopment to replace and formalise existing provision unless the proposal makes it clear how there will be no negative impact on public space.

5. Dropped kerbs and crossovers

A key issue that has exacerbated parking stress in and around Highgate is the provision of dropped kerbs and ‘cross-overs’ to provide off-street parking for private households, often to the detriment of general on-street provision. A new cross-over will generally remove one or more on-street parking spaces to give way to a new off-street space that may not always be required. Accordingly, requests for off-street parking will generally be resisted when planning permission is sought.

Planning permission is only usually required for dropped kerbs and cross-overs in certain instances. These generally comprise:

- I. Where the property involved has a frontage onto a classified road;
- II. Where the property involved is a listed building; or
- III. Where the property involved does not enjoy the same permitted development rights as a private house (such as flats, maisonettes, subdivided units).

In instances where planning permission for dropped kerbs is currently required, Policy TR5 seeks to ensure that it is only granted in instances where the works would not impact adversely on local general parking provision. In areas where planning permission is not required, but there is a recognised parking issue such as areas of on-street parking stress at any time of day, the viability of using Article 4 Directions will be considered so that Policy TR5 might be implemented. Where permission is granted, permeability could be achieved through implementing appropriate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) which allow water to soak into the subsoil, rather than being diverted into the stormwater system.