

Clerkenwell Green people-friendly streets trial.

Islington Council are holding a consultation on a low traffic neighbourhood ETO. They have produced a document that summarises the positive effects of the trial as they are intending to make this a permanent fixture. However, the summary misrepresents the results as positive when they have in fact been overall negative. At a consultation meeting, I challenged the data and Joe Graham from LBI told me “We haven’t hidden the data. It’s all in the report. Even if the data doesn’t support the LTN, the political will is to implement these schemes, so it will go ahead”. The consultation is clearly a scam.

Consultation page:

<https://www.islington.gov.uk/consultations/2021/clerkenwell-green-people-friendly-streets-trial>

Summary points made on this webpage (sources refer to the monitoring report)

- **To make it easier and safer to walk and cycle as a first choice for local travel.** Over 70% of households in Islington do not own a car and 1/3 of journeys in London are less than 2km, a distance which could be walked or cycled by many people. Traffic on London’s local roads rose by 72% between 2009 and 2019. This is mainly because more people use Sat Nav apps like Google Maps and Waze to find short-cuts.

Criticism:

- 1/3 of journeys in London are not journeys in Islington. There is no source quoted for this statement. As Clerkenwell is inside the congestion zone, short journeys are already heavily discouraged by the congestion charge.
 - “Traffic on London’s local roads rose by 70% between 2009 and 2019.” This is based on an estimate produced by the Department for Transport (DfT) rather than actual data which is very hard to count due to the sheer number of minor roads. In 2019, DfT made an adjustment to their estimate methodology which increased their estimate of traffic on minor roads in London by 31.6% (Source Figure 3, page 7 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/916034/2019-minor-road-benchmarking-frequency-asked-questions.pdf), and graduated the increase from 2010 in the published data. The 70% increase from 2009 to 2019 is artificial as it trying to hide a change in the estimate methodology. Stuck with using the updated estimate data from DfT, total car and taxis traffic on London’s roads rose by 17% (Source: <https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/regions/6>) but only by 3.2% in Islington (<https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/local-authorities/96>)
 - The statement about local roads implies that increasing traffic on local roads is a problem they are targeting. Local roads are classified as not A Roads. However, the LTN has resulted in more traffic on B Roads on the boundary of the LTN (up 20% on Skinner Street and up 49% on St John Street). (Source: Appendix 2, Pages 90, 92)
- **To clean up the air we breathe and protect and improve the environment** by reducing all forms of transport pollution. This is part of Islington Council’s commitment to becoming net zero carbon by 2030.

Criticism:

- The change in air quality for before and after the scheme is described as negligible in the report (Source: 1st Para, Page 68)
 - The number of car journeys in and around the scheme actually increased, even after normalising the data which pushed down car numbers.
 - Due to changes in ULEZ, Congestion charge, rules around taxis and minicabs, much of the traffic has already been moving to electrically powered transport which moves towards net zero carbon.
- **To reduce road danger, eliminate all deaths and serious injuries on Islington's streets, and to reduce the number of minor traffic collisions.**

Criticism:

- No data is presented to attempt to support this claim
- London Fire Bridge response times from 2020 to 2021 have increased by up to 10% in Clerkenwell. (Source: Table 40, Page 73)

The remainder of the claims made on the webpage are addressed below as they form the misleading Summary findings of the survey.

Consultation monitoring report:

<https://www.islington.gov.uk/-/media/sharepoint-lists/public-records/transportandinfrastructure/information/adviceandinformation/20212022/20211104clerkenwellgreenpeoplefriendlystreetspreconsultationmonitoringreport.pdf>

Summary points made in the report



Criticism:

- The statement implies less traffic with a healthier neighbourhood.
- Traffic overall on the internal monitored roads did decrease by 11%, but it actually increased on 4 out of 7 streets monitored (Source – Table 2, page 21)
- Changes in traffic on the 7 streets monitored changed by -44% to +92%. (Source – Table 2, page 21)
- Total traffic, normalised (internal plus boundary roads) increased by 8% (Source – Tables 2, 6, 7, 8)



On local streets within the neighbourhood, the number of vehicles speeding **fell by 49%**.

Criticism:

- Average speeds on internal roads have dropped by 0.67 mph (Source: Table 5, page 27).
- The difference in speed of the 85th percentile of dropped by 0.8mph (Source: Table 5, page 27).
- The overall difference in the proportion of vehicles speeding is -1% (Source: Table 5, page 27).



Cycling has **increased by 100%** on the internal roads and **increased by 62%** on boundary roads.

Criticism:

- Not one of the roads closed to traffic has been used to see if there is any change in cycling journeys.
- The three closed roads in the scheme run east-west, but only one of the six roads monitored internally run east-west.
- The increase on internal roads is accounted for by a (non-normalised) increase of 674 bicycles per day. (Source: Table 30, Page 56)
- The increase compares August 2020 to September 2021 with no normalisation for an increase in activity due to school holidays ending.
- The boundary roads used for the 62% increase are only 3 out of the 5 boundary roads. The 2 boundary roads excluded for this statement are Roseberry Avenue and Clerkenwell Road which carried 83% of all bicycle traffic on the boundary roads prior to the scheme. (Source: Tables 31,32,33, Pages 56,57)

- Including all boundary roads, cycling activity dropped by 2,236 cycling journeys a day or by 29%. (Source: Tables 31,32,33, Pages 56,57)
- Adding up cycling journeys across both internal and boundary roads, cycling activity dropped by 1,562 journeys a day or 19%. (Source: Tables 30,31,32,33, Pages 56,57)



Air quality data from within the Clerkenwell Green neighbourhood, shows that **nitrogen dioxide levels have fallen slightly** since the scheme started.

Criticism:

- The air quality data does not include particulate matter as the sensors in Clerkenwell Green for before the scheme did not monitor this. (Source: Page 64)
- The improvement in NOx is 1ug/m3 on the internal point and 2ug/m3 on the boundary point, so it improved more on the boundary road. (Source: Tables 36,37, Page 65)
- This change in NOx is **negligible** (Source: 1st Para, Page 68)



Across peak periods, the number of pedestrians at Clerkenwell Green has **increased by 259% on a Thursday**, and **121% on a Saturday**.

Criticism:

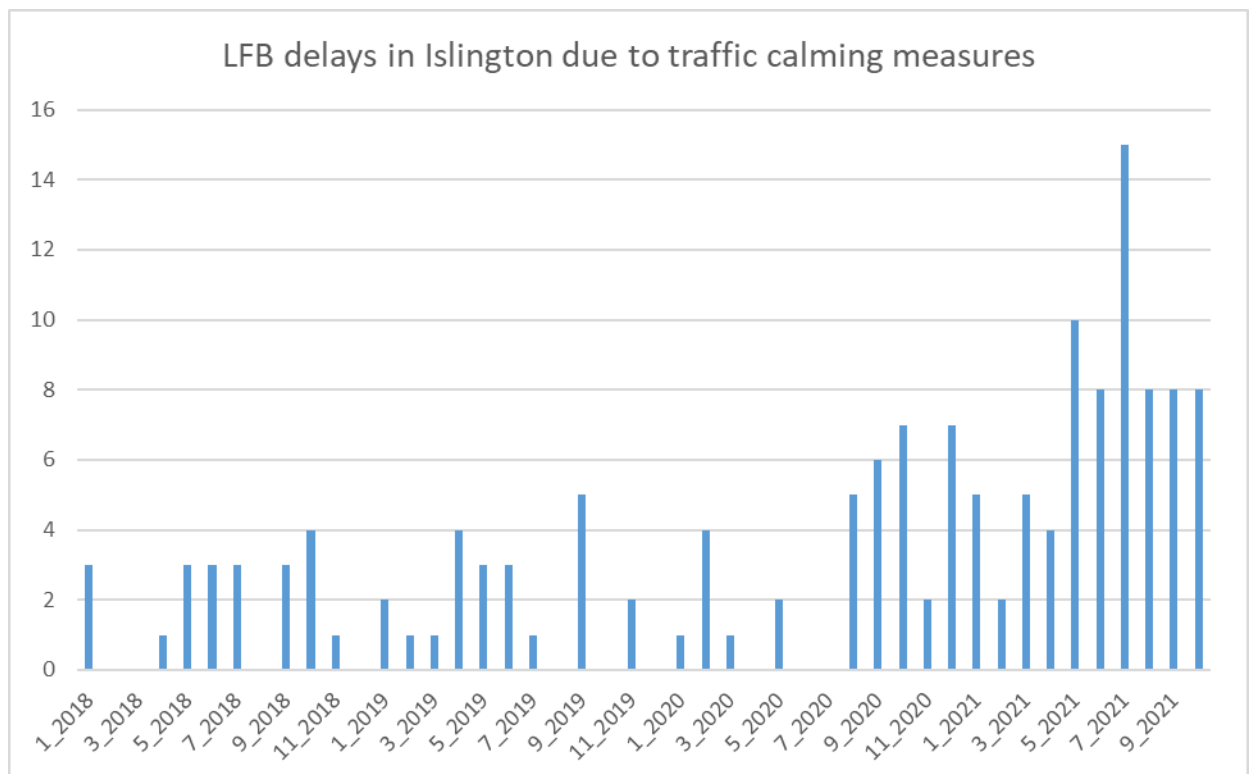
- The dataset compares only six hours on a single Thursday and six hours from a single Saturday in August 2020 against the same six hours each day against a single Thursday and Saturday in September 2021. (Source: Page 59)
- No normalisation has taken place to account for school holidays reducing activity in the area.
- Activity in offices increased in this period (Source needed. Review data Pret Index for London City and London WestEnd)



No significant impact on London Fire Brigade response times.

Criticism:

- Data is not available for inside LTNs.
- Using a 2019 baseline, London Fire Brigade response times increased by 12 seconds across Islington and 10 seconds in Clerkenwell Ward. (Source: Table 39, Page 73)
- Using a 2020 baseline, London Fire Brigade response times increased by 19 seconds (7%) across Islington and 26 seconds (10%) in Clerkenwell Ward. (Source: Table 40, Page 73)
- In June 2019-November 2019, there were 11 incident reports filed by fire crews in Islington where delays were caused due to increased traffic, road congestion, modal filters (plantars, bollards, gates, ANPRs). For June 2020-November 2020, this increased to 20 incident reports for the same problem. (Source, LFB FOI request 5490 <http://p2.uk/FOI5490.pdf>)
- Looking at the dataset used for the above FOI request in order to get updated information gives this table showing a clear increase in LFB delays for Islington due to traffic calming measures. (Source: <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/london-fire-brigade-mobilisation-records>)





Cycling has **increased by 135% on Clerkenwell Green south**, from 152 to 357 cycling trips a day, the largest increase on any street.

Criticism:

- This is an increase of only 205 bicycles per day.
- It ignores the drop of 3,438 bicycles per day on Clerkenwell Road. (Source: Table 32, Page 57)



On boundary roads traffic increased overall, up 39% across **St John Street (up 49%), Farringdon Lane (up 55%) and Skinner Street (up 20%)**, while there was a decrease of **13% on Clerkenwell Road**. The council will continue to monitor this carefully. These increases in traffic volumes alongside both the 62% increase in cycling volumes on boundary roads and 100% increase in cycling volumes on local roads, may reflect an overall increase in activity in this area of central London since Covid-19 restrictions have eased.

Criticism:

- The traffic numbers here are normalised when cycling numbers are not. It artificially reduces the relative increase in traffic.
- Motorised journey times have changed by -1% to +45%. (Source: Tables 14-27, Pages 44-47)
- Despite the drop in traffic on Clerkenwell Road, journey times have increased by 8% to 22%. (Source: Tables 20,21, Page 46)
- A morning peak journey time along each of the boundary sections measured has increased from 11m46s to 13m47s (+17%). (Source: Tables 14-27, Pages 44-47)

Overall, motorised traffic has increased.

Overall, journey times on boundary roads have changed by -1% to +45%

Overall, emergency response times have increased across Islington and Clerkenwell Green Ward by 4%.

Overall, looking at data for both inside and on the boundary, cycling has decreased by 19%.

Overall, air quality had a negligible improvement (1ug/m³) which is the smallest unit presented, but improved more (2ug/m³) on the boundary data than the internal data.

Criticism of the data

Traffic data has been “normalised” to account for a general increase in traffic as lockdown restrictions have been eased. The effect of this on the data is to reduce road traffic counts by approx. 7% for the “after” data. The approach is fair. However, cycling data however has not been normalised to show that there is additional cycling traffic on the roads for the same lockdown restrictions easing. This results in a data set where cycling journeys will be overstated compared to motorised journeys.

All of the three streets that have been closed to traffic are east-west. Not one of the three streets have before or after data to show if closing the streets increased pedestrian or cycling traffic at these locations.

The data collected for Clerkenwell Road is only for AM peak and PM peak. These are defined as 0700-1000 and 1600-1900, so the traffic counts are only for 6 hours a day rather than 24 hours as per most of the data. It is for this reason that Clerkenwell Road is excluded from many of the numbers. However, as this is by far the busiest road (and a boundary road), the data should be excluded. A drop in traffic numbers of 13% on this road is quoted in the summary (page 2) as a positive, but it neglects to mention a 73% drop in cycling. Despite the reduction in traffic, journey times increased by 8-21% (Tables 20 and 21)

The dataset for pedestrian traffic was collected on a single Thursday and single Saturday in August 2020 and compared to a single Thursday and single Saturday in September 2021. Additionally, no normalisation has been used for school holidays reducing activity in the area during August. In August 2020, table booking was required at the Crown Tavern pub which is the focal point of visitors to Clerkenwell Green. No such restrictions were in place in September 2021.

Errors noted in the report

Map 2 (page 14) shows an Entry/Exit point at the Sekforde Street junction with St John Street. This is only an exit point. It also shows an Entry/Exit point at the Aylesbury Street junction with St John Street. This is only an entry point. So for the “purple” section of this map, there is only one entry point rather than two, and two exit points rather than three.

Table 19 (page 45) shows that journey times on Clerkenwell Road reduced when looked at in both directions. However, the differences presented aren’t the differences between the journey times stated in this table. Additionally, when looking at Tables 20 and 21, which splits Eastbound and Westbound journey times, all journey times are longer than that shown for both directions, so data in Table 19 must be incorrect.

Twists of language used in the report:

Page 2 Summary for Air quality “*data from within the Clerkenwell Green... nitrogen dioxide levels have fallen slightly*”. Fact-checked: the air quality (measured by NO₂ ug/m³) improved by 1ug/m³ (from 26 to 25ug/m³) but actually improved more (2ug/m³) on the boundary road for Clerkenwell Green (Tables 36 and 37). In any event, only 3% of NO_x emissions for London come from Islington (page 109)

Page 48 for General Insights: “*the 62% increase in cycling volumes on boundary roads...*” Fact-checked: This statement only uses data for Skinner Street, Farringdon Lane and St John Street where cycling increased by 807 journeys, from 1,292 per day to 2,099 per day. Roseberry Avenue and Clerkenwell Road are by far the busier roads, accounting for 83% of cycle journeys at the start data

point. When including all the boundary roads by adding Roseberry Avenue and Clerkenwell Road data, cycling decreased by 2,236 journeys, from 7,652 to 5,416 per day – a drop of 29%.

Page 48 for St John Street: “changes in travel times have on St John Street have been **minimal**.” Fact-checked: Travel times have changed by -1% to +16% according to data presented in Tables 14 and 15.

Page 49 for Skinner Street: “there has been a **negligible** change in journey times...” Fact-checked: Travel times have increased by 0%-8% according to data presented in Tables 17 and 18.

Page 49 for Farringdon Lane: “there has been a **small** increase in journey times...” Fact-checked: Travel times have increased by 11-28% according to data presented in Tables 26 and 27.

Page 49 for Roseberry Avenue: “there has been a **slight** increase in travel times on Rosebery Avenue.” Fact-checked: Travel times have increased by 14-45% according to data presented in Tables 23 and 24.

Page 50 for Clerkenwell Road: “Travel times have increased by a **small** amount...” Fact-checked: Travel times have increased by 8-22% according to data presented in Tables 20 and 21.

Page 110

“It is intended that this report provides an accurate, neutral evaluation of the impact of the Clerkenwell Green people-friendly street scheme.”

While the report may contain mostly accurate data, it certainly does not contain a neutral evaluation of the impact. It cherry picks data to promote a positive outcome such as focussing on minimal data changes and describing these changes as positive in the main summary when they are described elsewhere as “negligible”. It also dismisses significant data changes as “small, slight or minimal” when they would have a negative impression of the scheme.

Questions used to see if respondents support the LTN

6. What would you like to see more of in the Clerkenwell Green people-friendly streets area? *

| | High priority | Medium priority | Low priority | Not a priority / I don't know |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Better crossing / dropped kerbs | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Cycle hire/electric cycles | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Cycle hangars (secure storage) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Cycle lanes | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Criticism:

- The question implies that the people friendly streets will continue.
- Not a priority / I don't know are two very different responses that have been combined.
- The questions are framed with 3 choices of "priority" and only one that is not a priority.
- There are no options to request that the people friendly streets be removed.

Edits to original document published:

V1.1 – adds source document for LFB delays and adds graph to show updated data set, and quote from Joe Graham.

V1.2 – adds calculation for total traffic showing an increase of 8% on normalised traffic numbers.

V1.3 – looks at dataset used for quote about “traffic on local roads increased by 70% from 2009-2019” as almost half of this increase occurred because of a change in the methodology for counting traffic on local roads

Previous versions:

V1.0 <http://p2.uk/CG-LTN1.0.pdf>

V1.1 <http://p2.uk/CG-LTN1.1.pdf>

V1.2 <http://p2.uk/CG-LTN1.2.pdf>