



# SPACE for Jesmond

Low Traffic Neighbourhood planning – initial thoughts, designs and recommendations

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## Background

The advent of pandemic conditions in Newcastle has given impetus to a direction of travel towards conditions that many progressive European cities take for granted but has come late to the UK: the creation of streets for people. Always understood as the basis for resilient and inclusive neighbourhoods, the reality of more people working, being schooled or simply recuperating at home has brought new urgency to the repurposing of urban space for play, neighbourly interaction and the patronage both of existing local businesses and the new ones that will surely spring up as the meeting of everyday needs shifts from a primarily metropolitan to a local scale.

In Newcastle, and especially in inner suburbs like Jesmond, this is accentuated by a legacy of geography and built form. Close to the centre not just of the city but of the region, many areas have become 'high-traffic neighbourhoods' without anyone being consulted and without any great debate about whether car-based mobility does anything much for urban or regional competitiveness or quality of life. Yet, with a few exceptions, Jesmond like other neighbourhoods is a place of generous homes on small plots where the streets are our public realm: if children can't play safely in them or neighbours hold a conversation then neighbourhoods become little more than dormitories, each resident looking after their own and becoming increasingly suspicious of change.

Low-traffic neighbourhoods are taken for granted in cities larger and smaller than Newcastle across Europe. We are excited by the Council's appetite for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in Newcastle and want to feed in to Newcastle City Council's (NCC) Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) designs to ensure that local knowledge is incorporated. SPACE for Jesmond (SfJ) brought together local residents with an interest in active, sustainable transport – walking, cycling and wheeling – to look at potential designs. The team working on the designs have a background in a range of disciplines and included several medical professionals, an urban design student, a housing developer and active travel / urban design professionals.

We **fully support** the principles of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and welcome the current directions as set out by both national government and local government in Newcastle. The prevalence of motor traffic in residential neighbourhoods across the UK has increased in recent years and this is true in Jesmond and Sandyford. Part of this increase may be increased vehicle ownership, but recent analyses<sup>1</sup> highlight the role of satellite navigation systems that are algorithmically biased to route traffic through the quickest possible route at that moment. This means main arterial and distributor roads are avoided and instead residential streets take more traffic, with a range of disbenefits to residents.

The focus of this paper is on short term, low cost, quick wins that can be implemented with the minimum of fuss. True LTNs are more than just modal filters and one-way systems: they are an approach to streets and the public realm that goes beyond traffic management to encompass green infrastructure, urban play, and inclusive access to local amenities. This document therefore details a starting point only, and we look forward to supporting the further transformation of Jesmond.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/25/rat-running-residential-uk-streets-satnav-apps>



## Approach

We'd been advised that the aim for Jesmond was to treat A and B roads as distributor roads and the residential areas were to be filtered via the use of modal filters and other tools such as no left / right turns and no entry signs and one way systems.

We viewed the aim of the exercise as removing through traffic from the area using filters etc. which prevent access to motor vehicles while retaining access for those walking, cycling or wheeling. Households wishing to use a motor vehicle would exit their residential area onto their nearest distributor road.

We adopted a whole-network approach to developing the area. Using a network approach is essential because a Low Traffic Neighbourhood cannot be planned street by street and must instead incorporate a whole zone or series of zones, with distributor roads at the periphery.

An initial, exploratory isochrone analysis was carried out to understand the "active travel zone" from several points in Jesmond. We also used google maps directions to understand travel time by different modes according to options on their routing tool. This highlighted that the *impact of modal filtering on longer motor vehicle journeys was minimal*, and that the anticipated areas for filters meant that very short car journeys were now rendered more equivalent with walking for journeys of up to 15 minutes on foot. This is a desirable feature of LTN design because motor vehicle journeys of a distance which can be walked in 15 minutes (or cycled in less) are target journeys for mode shift.

A series of 20 minute walk isochrones are included in the appendix which illustrate the range which can be reached by walking for up to 20 minutes, in 5 minute bands, from the perimeters of Jesmond. Acorn road was a maximum 20 minute walk the extremities of Jesmond (Brandling Park, Jesmond Vale) and considerably closer for the bulk of the population. This is also the case for West Jesmond Primary. We consider that Jesmond qualifies in many ways already as a "20 minute neighbourhood" based on the range of amenities which can be reached just by walking for this time. What is currently an issue in Jesmond is the quality of that walkability and its suitability for younger members of the community, and provision for safe cycling. Dense on-street parking, high levels of through traffic and junctions with poor visibility contribute to our area not living up to its true potential as a great place to live. A Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme will improve this matter considerably.

We aimed to cover the North Jesmond and South Jesmond electoral wards, which covers Jesmond and Sandyford.

## Existing LTN in Jesmond and Sandyford

There is a considerable area (23%) of Jesmond which already meets some or all the criteria of Low Traffic Neighbourhood, and a small area of Sandyford. From the north of the area and moving south:

Area	Area km2	Area %	Qualification
North Jesmond Avenue and side streets inc. La Sagesse	0.175 km <sup>2</sup>	8.3%	No through traffic
Highbury north of Lyndhurst bridge	0.010 km <sup>2</sup>	0.4%	No through motor traffic
A large area north of Grosvenor Avenue which became LTN	0.237 km <sup>2</sup>	11.3%	No through traffic



when Jesmond Dene Road was closed to motor traffic			
Holly Avenue	0.008 km <sup>2</sup>	0.4%	No through traffic
Clayton Park Square	0.004 km <sup>2</sup>	0.2%	Partial – no short cut
Princess Mary Court	0.014 km <sup>2</sup>	0.6%	No through traffic
Jesmond Vale south of Roseberry Crescent	0.045 km <sup>2</sup>	2.1%	Partial – no through traffic but quite a large zone with no calming
<b>Jesmond North of A1058</b>	<b>1.661 km<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>79%</b>	
<b>Jesmond South of A1058 inc. Sandyford</b>	<b>0.439 km<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>21%</b>	
<b>Total (Cemeteries, parks and moorland excluded)</b>	<b>2.1 km<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>current LTN (partial)</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>23.3%</b>	

Please note % are area based and do not represent population or household estimates. Where “Jesmond” is referred to as an area in this document, Sandyford is included and we are referring to the electoral wards of North and South Jesmond. These areas have been calculated roughly using <https://www.freemaptools.com/area-calculator.htm> and are for illustrative purposes only.

Eslington and Eskdale terraces have no “through traffic” in the sense that they are not a short cut to anywhere else but cannot in any way be described as low traffic because of the large volume of vehicles using the area to drop children to the Royal Grammar School.

There are also a number of small cul-de-sacs in the area

- Sycamore Close (new build)
- Orchard Place (new build)
- Wellburn Park (1930s)
- Bramley Chase (new build)
- Starbeck Mews (new build)
- Portland Mews (new build)
- Roseberry Place & Victoria Mews (new build)
- St Catherine’s Court (new build)
- Grantham Road and Kelvin Grove (possibly since the 1970s, retrofit)

We noted that the areas currently benefitting from LTN were on the whole more expensive properties with a lower housing density. Newer developments were all cul-de-sac – it’s important to note that modern housing is generally not developed to incorporate any level of through traffic or indeed of people.

## Method

We used an online design tool called MURAL to view our area of Newcastle and identify filterable locations.



We identified residential areas bounded by distributor (A and B) roads and identified several LTN zones **in addition** to the existing LTN zones. No changes were proposed to the existing LTN zones.

#### Distributor Roads:

- B1318 Great North Road
- A189 Jesmond Dene Road / Matthew Bank
- B1600 Osborne Road
- A1058 Coast Road / Jesmond Road
- B1307 Sandyford Road

#### Proposed LTN zones:

- East of Osborne Road between Grosvenor Avenue and Osborne Avenue
  - This is a large densely populated area consisting primarily of Victorian terraces but with a number of 1930's semi-detached properties and a small number of new build properties. This is largest of the identified zones
- Clayton Road East
  - This is a relatively low-density area with large Victorian properties and including a cricket ground, a cemetery and two 1930's blocks of flats.
- Highbury Terraces
  - These are large Victorian terraces. This is a medium sized zone
- Lily Crescent
  - These are large Victorian terraces. This is a small sized zone
- Metro to St. Georges
  - Victorian terraces and Tyneside flats. This is a medium sized zone

#### Areas not yet planned

There were a number of areas that we have not proposed any filtering for yet. This is because these areas have additional considerations and a high level of interaction with other decisions that need to be made. Those areas are Larkspur & Sanderson roads off Acorn Road, Forsyth Road and the area between Clayton Road and West Jesmond Primary school. The decisions that need to be made here are mainly around school access and the provision of a school street, and whether Forsyth Road would be used as a distributor road. Similarly, Clayton Road to the west of Osborne road takes through traffic currently and may be more challenging to find a balanced solution, although we note that the road was closed at the west end recently during works so data may be available around the impact of filtering.

Jesmond Vale has an increasing incidence of vehicles coming from the north using Rosebery Crescent as a bypass of the main Cradlewell junction to reach the A1058 into Newcastle, but as a natural enclave otherwise has generally low through traffic. This should be monitored and measures considered in future.

At this point we have not planned for Sandyford, due to time constraints. We believe this area can be successfully filtered, as Kelvin Grove has been for 30+ years.

#### Filtering

Filters are normally placed in the middle of residential areas, to retain access for households to the nearest distributor road. Note that the existing LTN area north of Grosvenor Avenue has been filtered at the east end, instead of the middle. We do not propose changing that.



## Proposed Zones

Please refer to attached PDF map.

### East of Osborne zone

This area is 0.329 km<sup>2</sup> - 16% of Jesmond

Current issues in this area relate to considerable through traffic accessing Osborne Road from the A1058 Coast Road via residential streets and vice versa. Anecdotally, most traffic uses Osborne Avenue and Grosvenor Avenue but with a significant amount of motor traffic permeating other residential streets, for example via Buston Terrace and Fern Avenue. Some streets have seen attempts at calming, notably speed bumps on Jesmond Dene Road and Grosvenor Road and raised tables around Manor House road, funded by Cycle City Ambition phase 1 (DIY streets). Parking is generally roadside and there are no build-outs for creating informal crossings. Traffic is often reduced to one practical lane by the parking which can slow traffic, but can also create conflict between vehicles heading in opposite directions as there is no instruction for which party has priority. Parked vehicles at the roadside are permitted at 2 per household in the area, which is largely permit only. On the majority of streets, this parking is at or near maximum and this creates difficulties in line of sight for crossing the road. Drop kerbs are present in some but not all streets. The traffic levels, combined with roadside parking and lack of crossing facilities mean that this area does not represent best practice in relation to encouraging walking and cycling. Removing through traffic would address some of the risk in this regard.

Filters are placed to divide the area into an east portion with motor traffic exit via Cradlewell and a west portion which would exit onto Osborne Road, along the line of Manor House Road (MHR). Those filters are placed as follows:

- Grosvenor avenue, just to the west of the side street connecting to Grosvenor Road, in the area of Dolan St.
- Grosvenor Road, just to the east of the junction with MHR
- West end of Cavendish Road at the junction with MHR
- Back lane of MHR at intersection with Valley View / Hartside Gardens
- Back lane of MHR near to the Exchange, at the junction with MHR (opposite rear lane of Fern/Queens)
- Junction of Fern Avenue and MHR, just to the south
- Junction of Holly Avenue and Gowan Terrace, just to the east
- Junction of MHR and Osborne Avenue to the west OR Osborne Road and Gowan Terrace where the existing build out is.

### *Impacts on motorised traffic*

- No through traffic from Cradlewell to the area of Manor House Road. Access instead from Osborne road for that area.
- No through traffic from Osborne road to the area east of Manor House Road. Access instead from Cradlewell
- Series of loops created/maintained in the area east of the filters
- Series of loops created/maintained in the area west of the filters

Consideration has been given to vehicles which are not able to easily U-turn in a street. For this reason, creating loops has been our preferred approach and works well with the nature



of Victorian terraces. We have not identified any areas where we anticipate genuine difficulty with motor vehicle access.

### Clayton Road East zone

This area is 0.151 km<sup>2</sup> - 7.2% of Jesmond

Issues in this area relate to vehicles using Clayton Road as a cut through from the Great North Road or Osborne Road to access the A1058 and head east. This avoids the A167 / A1058 junction. Clayton Road east is a wide road and despite roadside parking has reasonable visibility – however, vehicle speed can be an issue here.

Filters are placed as follows:

- Junction of Granville Road and A1058
- Junction of Akenside Terrace and A1058
- One-way (north) from A1058 onto Osborne Road back lane – existing control
- Akenside back lane – no right turn in from A1058 – existing control
- Akenside back lane – no left turn onto A1058 from back lane

#### *Impacts on motorised traffic*

- No through traffic from Osborne Road through to A1058 Coast Road via Clayton Road or Fernwood Road. Osborne Road must be used to exit the area.

### Highbury Terraces Zone

This area is 0.082 km<sup>2</sup> - 3.9% of Jesmond

Issues in this area are vehicles using Highbury as a cut through to local schools, while it is also designated a cycling route. The cut through is facilitated by Lyndhurst bridge over the metro line. Options to filter in this area are on the bridge itself or in the middle of the zone. Filtering the bridge would be achieved simply by one filter – on the bridge.

Our approach is to place filters:

- Along Mayfair road to the south of the street at the junctions with Highbury, back lane and Brentwood.

#### *Impacts on motorised traffic*

- The north of the filter needs to be accessed via Lyndhurst bridge, making Osborne Road the main route into the area. Vehicles heading south then have the option to use Osborne Road or the Great North Road.
- The south of the filter needs to be accessed via Forsyth Road.

### Metro to St. Georges Zone

This area is 0.100 km<sup>2</sup> - 4.8% of Jesmond

Issues here are pedestrian access along St. Georges where a large number of side streets must be negotiated with reduced visibility due to on street parking and no continuous paving.



There is often inappropriate vehicle speed along some of these roads; Lyndhurst Avenue, Lonsdale Terrace, West Jesmond Avenue and Coniston Avenue. There is also a speed issue on St. Georges terrace because of on street parking and two way traffic down a narrow street as the carriageway is only wide enough for one motor vehicle<sup>2</sup>. Conflict is created because of the “race” to reach the end of the road before another vehicle tries to head in the opposite direction – there are few passing places because parked cars tend to be a permanent fixture. Forsyth Road Bridge which links to the area west of the metro tracks is also in our view substandard due to narrow pavements and vehicle speeds which make the area feel less safe for cycling and walking, and there is no adequate crossing provision on Thornleigh Road despite this being a route to local schools.

Our approach here is complicated by decisions which need to be made as regards Forsyth Road Bridge, Forsyth Road itself and the area to south including Tankerville Terrace and the 3 schools. We have attempted to set out initial ideas which present a sufficient level of ambition, but recommend these are a starting point for a whole network approach which includes Forsyth Road including the bridge and Tankerville Terrace. The Tesco Metro is supplied by a large HGV and access for this vehicle and its unloading area also need considering – its unloading area appears to be on road on St. Georges Terrace opposite Oxfam.

Our approach (as shown on attached PDF map) is to:

- Place filters at the east end of all terraces from Hazelwood Avenue through to Coniston Avenue at the junction with St. Georges Terrace
- One way (North) except cycles from Acorn Road when turning right onto St. Georges Terrace OR a no-entry sign except cycles at the north end of St. Georges
- One way (South) except cycles from Acorn Road when turning left onto St. Georges Terrace OR a no-entry sign except cycles at the south end of St. Georges Terrace
- Alternatively, it may work to have one way the whole length of St. Georges, heading south with cycle contra-flow

#### *Impacts on motorised traffic*

- Access to the terraces will be via Lyndhurst Avenue and West Jesmond Avenue
- Resident of St. Georges would be limited to accessing via Acorn Road or potentially Acorn Road and Osborne/St. Georges junction, depending on the chosen option
- Access to St. Georges via Mistletoe would be prevented
- A turning circle may need to be created at the junction of Mistletoe/Norham/St. Georges

An alternative approach (not shown on map)

- A diagonal filter can be placed across the large junction between West Jesmond Avenue, Lyndhurst Avenue, Lonsdale Terrace and Sunbury Avenue. This would prevent motor through traffic from Lyndhurst/Lonsdale directly accessing Sunbury/West Jesmond Avenue and divide the zone in two. This would then be implemented with further measures as possible. If this approach is adopted we would like to provide further support on design.

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<sup>2</sup> Reported to SPACEforJesmond members by Jesmond residents



## Lily Crescent Zone

This area is 0.022 km<sup>2</sup> - 1% of Jesmond

Issues in this area are on street parking and lack of visibility to cross the road, especially for children for whom this is a route to school and the local play area, Bells Yard. Pedestrian provision in this regard is not satisfactory.

Our approach is to filter Norham Place adjacent the junction with Mistletoe Road. This will create, with the right design, a safe crossing for pedestrians using the footbridge over the metro line.

### *Impacts on motorised traffic*

- No access to Norham place via Mistletoe road or vice versa. Vehicles to enter via Holly Avenue West or Lily Avenue and exit via those routes.
- Some parking will need to be removed to create a crossing and possibly to create a turning circle for Norham place, although vehicles can and do u-turn in this area.

### Additional measures

In addition to modal filters, we recommend consideration of the following measures to enhance both the functionality and the aesthetics of the area.

- Combined filter locations and cycle parking where appropriate and close to amenities
- On street secure cycle parking replacing car parking space on streets with a high density of HMO occupation
- Combined filter locations and informal children's play opportunities where possible – this can be as simple as leaving a gap between 2 planters or creating a curved or stepped wall to walk on
- On street greening measures combined with informal play space to create “parklets”
- Removal of parking near junctions or when obstructing a desire line for a pedestrian route
- Policy change around number of parking permits per household *for new residents* – this would allow a *phase out* of the current 2-permit rule without disadvantaging current residents. It would apply to HMO / private rented accommodation as well as homeowners. 2 vehicles are normally longer when parked than the properties are wide, meaning the current policy cannot be fully applied with the physical space available, especially where terraced housing (1 household, 2 resident permits, 1 visitor) is converted to flats (e.g. 3 households, 6 resident permits, 3 visitor permits meaning 45 meters of parking space for an 8 meter wide property)
- Gateway features such as planters or build outs which highlight to road users that they are entering a residential area and that they must proceed carefully and slowly
- An appraisal of visibility for junctions on walking routes in the area – many crossings have zero visibility due to either the architecture, vegetation, parking or a combination of factors
- Pedestrian crossings to be re-programmed to prioritise pedestrians
- Increase in cycle parking on Acorn Road and other destinations



- Appraisal of and potential increase of disabled only parking spaces
- Appraisal of parking in the existing LTN areas north of Grosvenor avenue. We have been advised this area is being used as a car park by non-residents.
- School Street provision for West Jesmond Primary, either in conjunction with / created by permanent measures or as a separate solution

### Examples of impacts on residents' motorised trips

It may not immediately be apparent to residents how their journeys might be affected by these changes with regards to vehicle usage. Giving some examples can help describe that impact, and in many cases the change will be quite minimal. Residents who use motor vehicles for very short journeys will be the most impacted. It is of course the intention that where possible these journeys are made via walking, cycling or a mobility device.

Routing was done via google maps. Car journey times are sensitive to changes in congestion, and this can apply differently to both pre and post values, but affects walking and cycling values much less.

#### Example A:

The Ay family live to the very east of Jesmond in the East of Osborne zone. Their access is now solely via Cradlewell / A1058. They previously used to drive to Jesmond pool for convenience via Grosvenor Road, and regularly use their car to access locations in Jesmond, as well as a soft play venue in nearby Gosforth. They have 2 children who attend West Jesmond Primary. They are nervous about the changes, especially as they regularly use their car for short trips within Jesmond.

Destination	Distance Miles	Walk	Cycle	Previous time car	New time car	Car change
Francesca's Pizzeria	0.3	5	1	2	7	+5
Jesmond Pool	0.9	16	5	5	9	+4
West Jesmond Primary	0.9	17	6	7	8	+1
The Northumberland Club	0.9	18	6	6	10	+4
Willi's Café, Clayton Road	0.9	17	5	6	6	0
Captain Ted's Gosforth	2.2	38	12	11	11	0

We can see that the Ay family now have a longer car trip for locations in Jesmond, but that these locations are all less than a 20 minute walk and under 10 minutes via bike. Their journey to nearby Gosforth is unaffected if they choose to drive. Their maximum drive time within Jesmond is now 10 minutes. Notably, cycling is quicker than or equivalent to driving both before and after the proposed changes.

#### Example B

Bea and her husband live in Cradlewell on Deuchar Street. They do not own a car and use taxis to access the airport and rail station, and also for the return leg of some shopping trips, including locally on Acorn Road. She's concerned about the change in taxi cost. Her husband often does small shopping trips by bike.



Destination	Distance Miles	Walk	Cycle	Previous time car	New time car	Car change
Francesca's Pizzeria	0.4	9	2	3	7	+4
Jesmond Pool	1	19	5	5	8	+3
West Jesmond Primary	0.8	16	6	5	7	+2
Tesco Metro	0.8	16	5	5	8	+3
Central Station	1.7	35	14	9	10	+1
Airport	7	141	45	16	16	0

Bea now has a longer journey in a taxi back from Tesco Metro, as she needs to use the A1058. This has added 3 minutes to an 8 minute journey. On some occasions she uses a taxi for the full journey, but has recently started using a trolley bag and walking back, which she has found quicker than waiting for a taxi, as it is only a 16 minute walk. Her longer taxi journeys remain largely unaffected. On trips back from town, she occasionally gets dropped off outside the Cricket club and walks the short distance back to her house. She's found that some destinations near the location of filters can be reached by the combination of a taxi and a short walk – she requested she meet her Uber driver on the other side of the filter when making a late night trip back from Francesca's, which saved the taxi driver 4 minutes - a 3 minute journey.

#### Example C

The Cee family live at the north of Highbury. Mrs Cee often drives to West Jesmond Primary on her way to work at the RVI. She would consider cycling but finds the journey daunting with the level of traffic on the school run. She's anxious that she won't be able to drop her children in the car anymore and doesn't know if this will make her late for work.

Destination	Distance Miles	Walk	Cycle	Previous time car	New time car	Car change
Francesca's Pizzeria	0.8	17	5	5	5	0
Jesmond Pool	0.5	10	3	3	3	0
West Jesmond Primary	0.5	9	2	3	5	+2
Tesco Metro	0.7	10	4	4	4	0
RVI	2	35	10	8	9	+1
Home>WJPS > RVI	1.7	35	10	9	12	+2

There has been minimal change to Mrs Cee's trip time in a car, despite the fact she is now unable to drive directly south to the school. She has found however that the quieter roads and largely traffic-free cycling route (she goes via the town moor) are just as quick as taking the car. She sometimes walks the children to school and back home (18 mins) and drives directly to the RVI when she needs her car (9 mins) which takes 27 mins. This is an additional 15 minutes *moving* time, but she finds it less stressful as she doesn't need to battle for a parking space near the school, which can take some time.

#### Example D

Dee is a Dental student who lives on Sunbury Avenue. She brought a car with her to her rented accommodation and uses it for day trips and returning home to Edinburgh. She uses the metro or her bike for university, and sometimes walks into the city centre. She regularly uses Rehills in Cradlewell, and normally cycles there, although sometimes gets picked up in



a taxi. Dee has heard about the plans and is loosely supportive. She has a part time job at the Sage Gateshead, which she normally cycles to, but occasionally uses a taxi.

Destination	Distance Miles	Walk	Cycle	Previous time car	New time car	Car change
Francesca's Pizzeria	0.7	10	3	4	4	0
Jesmond Pool	0.1	2	1	1	2	+1
Rehills	1	17	4	5	9	+4
Newcastle University	1.4	29	8	10	10	0
Sage Gateshead	2.5	50	15	9	10	+1
Edinburgh	-	-	-	153	153	0

Dee's taxi journey back from Rehills is now a 9 minute trip rather than a 5 minute one. As this was an occasional event, it hasn't caused her any concern. She has however found that her cycle route through Jesmond to Rehills and to the University is far more pleasant due to the lack of traffic shortcutting through Jesmond. She also finds her trip to Sage Gateshead much better because of other Low Traffic Neighbourhoods being implemented across the city.

### Alternative approaches using technological solutions

In addition to filtering being achieved by simple bollards and planters (cheap and effective) it is possible to implement aspects of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods using technological solutions.

1. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR). This uses a camera and a database of number plates to permit through traffic only for those registered as living in the area, and often buses. Those who are not registered receive a fine.
2. Rising bollards. Residents have an electronic fob which sinks the bollard and allows access through a filter.
3. Digital restraint. By specifying a street as residents' access only, satellite navigation systems will not route through traffic via that street or road.

In our opinion, none of these measures are as effective as simple bollards and planters and in some cases are a lot more complicated and expensive to operationalise. While some of them may address residents' concerns with regards to their own access levels, they do not have the same "nudge" factor - they may address through traffic, but do not necessarily encourage walking, cycling or wheeling for shorter trips.

### Common criticisms – and counter-arguments.

There are a number of common criticisms of LTNs. It is important to note that these criticisms are more common *before* a low traffic neighbourhood is established and that opinions of residents are quite different afterwards.

In Waltham Forest, an LTN was proposed in 2015 to create a "mini-holland". When work started 44% of residents were opposed. In 2020, that figure is under 2%.<sup>3</sup> The scheme has

<sup>3</sup> <https://inews.co.uk/news/green-cycling-revolution-causing-road-rage-703827>



also achieved a substantial uptake in walking and cycling. It is therefore achieving its aims and also popular with residents.

### Impact on emergency service access

The impact of low traffic neighbourhoods on emergency service vehicle access is often brought up as a sticking point, but this concern is often unfounded and also inconsistent with people's wants and needs when choosing somewhere to live.

1. Modern estates without through traffic require emergency services to navigate a convoluted series of cul-de-sacs and yet are granted planning permission and people choose to live there, often because of rather than despite the general inconvenience. Consider Brunton Park in Gosforth – it is 1 mile from the singular A road entrance to the furthest point, which is a 5 min drive. If we were to consider a property just west of a modal filter on Grosvenor Avenue in our proposed East of Osborne zone (and the furthest from an A road), an ambulance currently has 3 options to access from an A road – A1058 Cradlewell, A1058 Osborne Road and A189 Jesmond Dene Road. Considering a 33% chance of an ambulance needing to approach from either of these directions, that's 3min, 5min and 4min - an average of 4min. Adding a modal filter and using the same starting points now gives 6min, 5min and 4min – an average of 5min.
2. Buying the correct type of bollard allows emergency services to ignore them. These bollards, while providing a visual deterrent can be driven over confidently during emergencies and are not expensive to replace, if required. This renders point 1) above, moot.
3. We shouldn't forget about chronic health issues when considering acute ones. According to government statistics<sup>4</sup> Physical inactivity is responsible for one in six UK deaths (equal to smoking) and is estimated to cost the UK £7.4 billion annually (including £0.9 billion to the NHS alone). Low Traffic Neighbourhoods are a great tool for addressing this issues, with a range of other benefits including improved air quality and sociability alongside.
4. Motor traffic poses a real danger, especially to younger members of the community. Over *three quarters* of deaths due to injury in the age bracket of 10-18 year olds are related to traffic incidents.<sup>5</sup> Making our environment safer is focussing on prevention, which is preferable to cure.

### Impact on people's ability to use motor vehicles

We should be clear about this: low traffic neighbourhoods *do* impact residents' ability to exit their areas by some routes in a motor vehicle. As illustrated by our analysis above, this is quite a small increase in driving time in absolute terms. We should also be clear that one of the purposes of an LTN is to actively discourage motor car usage for small journeys, so the fact that it adjusts the balance between walking and driving is actually by design.

Despite the impression given by some media reports, no-one loses motor vehicle access to their property in an LTN. The level of access is altered to be more in line with that of a

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-applying-all-our-health/physical-activity-applying-all-our-health#:~:text=Physical%20inactivity%20is%20responsible%20for,35%25%20less%20active%20by%202030.>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/why-children-die-research-recommendations>



modern housing estate, albeit with the added benefit of shops and other amenities often lacking in newer developments, and a higher level of permeability for walking and cycling.

The key point is that everyone in a LTN experiences an exchange of one form of amenity – the ability to drive wherever they like – for another: low-traffic, people-friendly streets. Not everyone is bound to prefer the latter but it is always important to be clear that the status quo is not a neutral position, and to learn from the experience of areas such as Waltham Forest in London where despite wide initial opposition there is now clear majority support for sustaining LTN infrastructure.

### Traffic will be pushed elsewhere

Many people consider traffic to behave like water: it is viewed as force of nature and must always find a way, and that removing traffic from residential streets will therefore increase pressure on arterial routes and distributor roads. This is especially a concern when those distributors are also residential.

With regard to A roads, it is our position that these routes are designed to take motor traffic in a way residential streets are not. We also believe a good LTN design will **not** designate smaller residential streets as access routes for through traffic. We would also argue that opening an already filtered area to through traffic to relieve an A road of congestion is not an argument anyone would consider, so why is this acceptable if it is the status quo?

The argument is incorrect though: *Motor traffic and water are not equivalent.* Car usage is the result of human choices and as more people choose to walk and cycle for short journeys, we should find that motor vehicle usage is reduced overall, as previous studies have shown.<sup>6</sup> Those human choices play out at the level of individual residents – walk or cycle instead of use the car, make a journey later, choose a more local shop – and through policy – prioritise walking and cycling, plan for local jobs, restrict parking.

### Disabled people and the elderly will be disadvantaged

As we have already argued, the actual time increase for motor vehicle trips is quite small, and only applies to journeys which would normally be taken via a route that is now filtered. With a reduction in shorter trips being made by car by those who choose to walk, cycle or wheel, driving and finding a parking space might actually become easier for those who are genuinely reliant on a car for mobility. We would also argue that in Jesmond the main concerns we have heard from wheelchair users is the lack of drop kerbs, lack of visibility for crossing the road and pavement being unusable due to pavement parking.

### Engaging with the community and responding to concerns

Engaging with the local community is essential to the success and smooth roll-out of changes to the local environment. Recent experience in Newcastle – and echoed across the country – is that misinformation travels faster than fact and people find any “negative” changes easier to understand and more salient than the potential benefits. With Low Traffic

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.onestreet.org/images/stories/Disappearing\\_traffic.pdf](http://www.onestreet.org/images/stories/Disappearing_traffic.pdf)



Neighbourhoods, there is also the “green eggs and ham” factor – once residents adjust to them, they then understand the benefits and would not want to change back.

### Approach to engagement

We recommend considering the following points when beginning engagement

- Communicate in full early on about the intentions
- Be clear about the objectives and impacts of the scheme
- Make it clear that the consultation is not about “if” but about “how.” If residents understand that the intention is to make it happen and they are being consulted on the “how” they are more likely to engage and have a clear understanding of the council’s intentions
- Focus on safety, children and nicer, more sociable places to live. Air quality, inactivity and carbon emissions are important but rather more abstract concerns for many people. Safety and community are forefront in people’s minds and these are premier features of LTNs. The increase in cycling and walking ultimately stems from a safer environment.
- Quantify the situation and the impacts – if journeys might be longer in a car, how much longer? How many people in the area don’t use a car on a daily basis? How much traffic is through traffic?
- Promote the positive narrative early – it’s essential to paint a picture for residents early on, before groups opposed to change paint their own narrative on social media. Many people will be swayed by what they feel is the predominant feeling of others.
- Language matters – a lot. Roads aren’t being closed – they’re being prioritised for local residents, walking, cycling and wheeling.

### Demonstrating the benefits

The advantages and disadvantages of low traffic neighbourhoods are shown in the table below. More tangible benefits and disbenefits are listed at the top, with more abstract benefits at the bottom. Of note is that some benefits which were previously hypothetical – such as transport resilience in the face of a pandemic – are now brought sharply into focus. Issues such as fuel shock and rising unemployment may similarly become very real issues in the near future and cycling and walking for transport, with their comparatively low cost compared to motor transport, offer robust solutions.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More pleasant environment</li> <li>• Lower noise levels</li> <li>• Safer streets due to reduction in traffic volume</li> <li>• More social spaces; higher number of walking and cycling trips promote community cohesion by increased opportunity for social interaction</li> <li>• Children gain independent mobility at a younger age due to increased safety</li> <li>• Street play supported</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some trips using motor vehicles will have to use a different route using a main road which may take slightly longer.</li> </ul>



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local shops supported by shift to within-suburb shopping</li><li>• Reduction in localised air pollution</li><li>• Reduction in emissions CO2, pollutants) from residents due to reduced motor vehicle use</li><li>• Public health benefits due to increased physical activity and lower levels of pollutants</li><li>• Increased resilience to disruptors in motorised transport networks – pandemics, fuel shock, increased unemployment (and relative cost of living including car ownership costs)</li></ul> |  |
|---|--|

### Further Reading

Please see the following online resources:

[Living Streets Low Traffic Neighbourhood guide](#)

[Inconvenience Truths \(John Dales\)](#)

[Community Leaflets](#)

[Psychology and Active Travel Schemes](#)

[Invisible Bicycle Infrastructure of the Netherlands \(Hoofdnetten\) \(8 mins\) \(You Tube\)](#)

[Essential viewing: De Pijp, Amsterdam 1972 \(10 mins\) \(YouTube\)](#)

### Next Steps

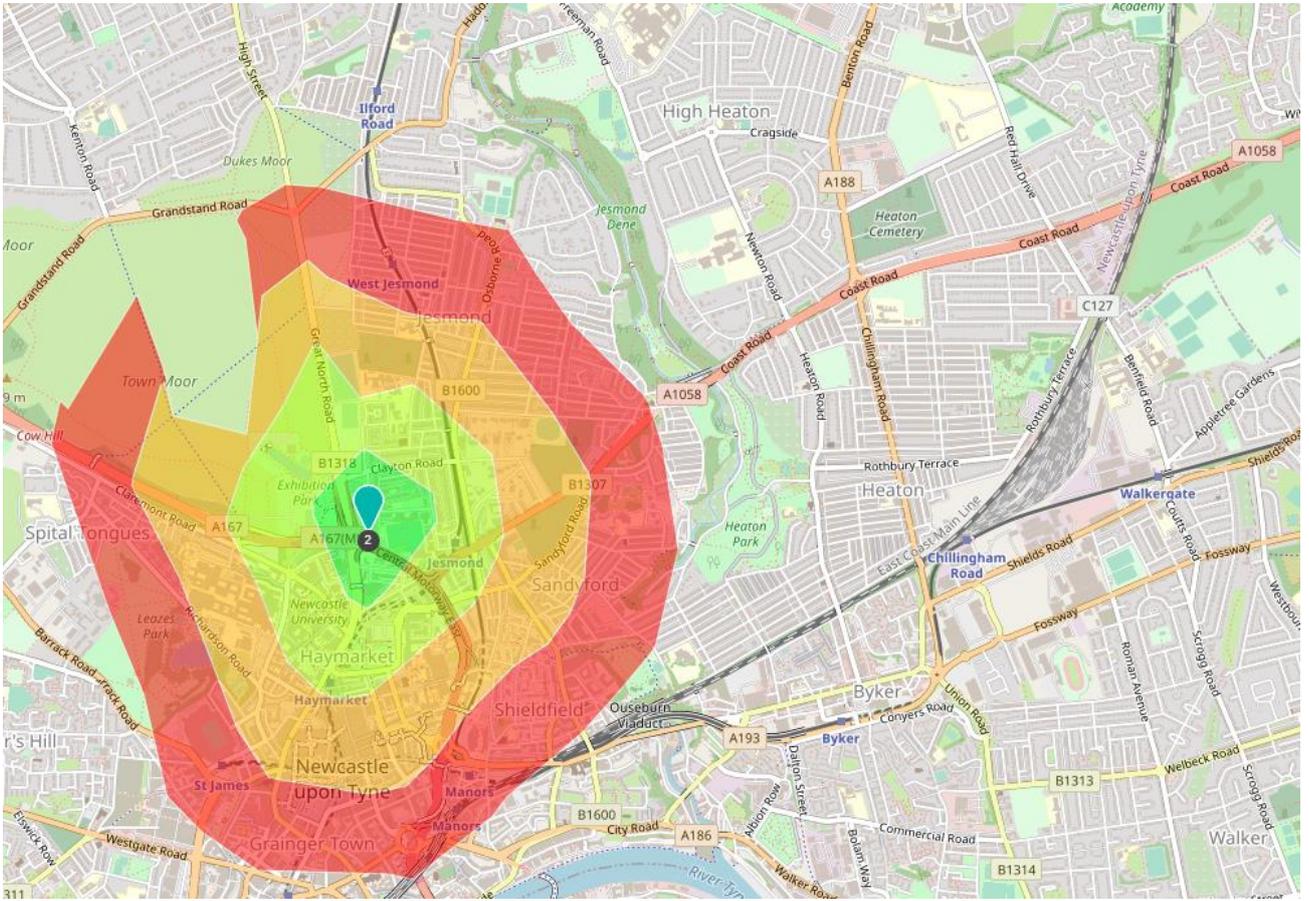
We recommend that in advance of the full consultation phase and design phase for Low Traffic Neighbourhood in Jesmond, and indeed in Newcastle, as many of the following actions are taken as possible.

1. Traffic analysis via ANPR to establish levels of through-traffic which is simply passing through residential areas en-route somewhere else.
2. Careful planning of communication media with reference to learnings from psychology and early distribution of that media.
3. Engagement with residents' groups in the areas to establish a support network or address early concerns. We offer our support in this regard.
4. Establishing cross party political support for changes where possible. These developments are a key element of delivering on multiple national and local policy points and not just transport. There are major implications for environmental, health, children's and quality of life policy areas. Establishing a political consensus is vital.



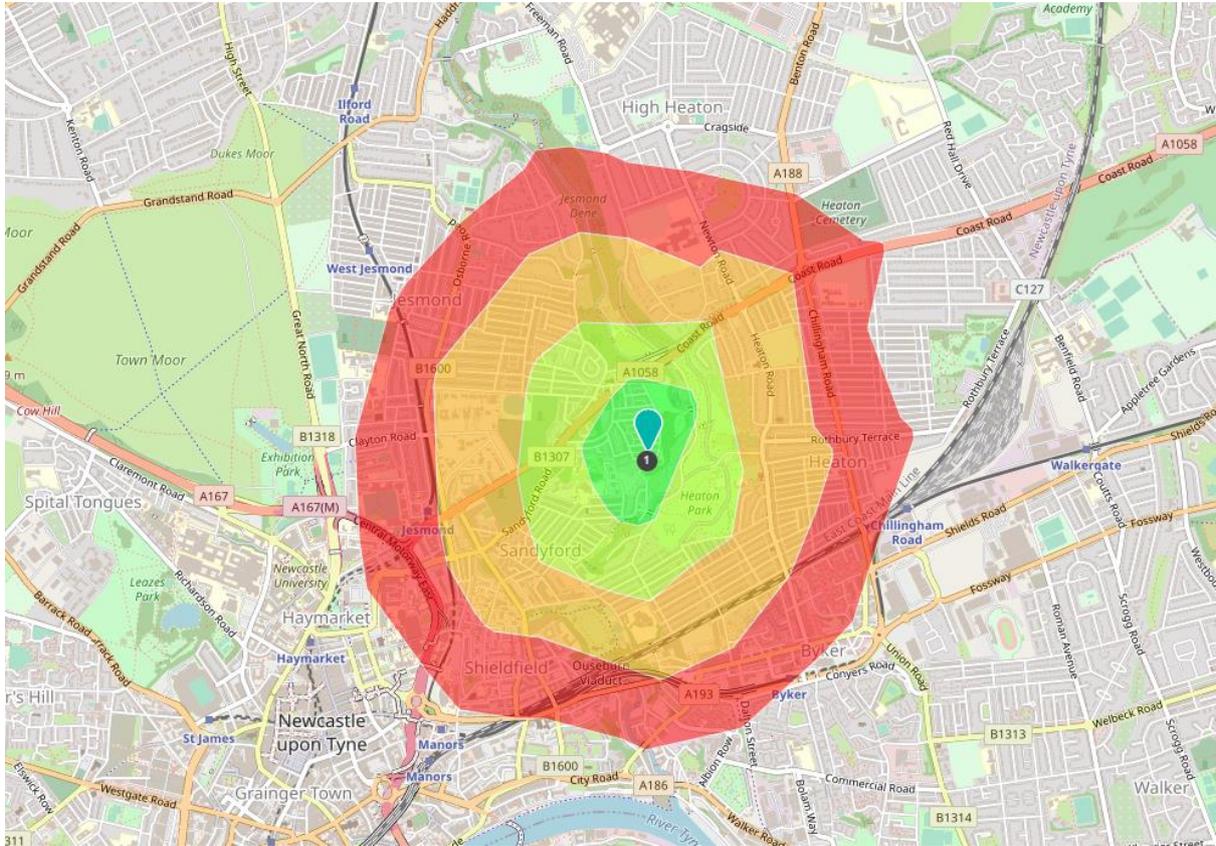


## Brandling Park – South West





## Jesmond Vale – South East





## Lindisfarne Close – North East

