

# Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section  
Legal and Civic Services Department  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast**  
City Council

## **HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE- PRESENTATION TO FOLLOW**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet both online and in-person, in the Lavery Room - City Hall on Wednesday, 23rd August, 2023 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

### **AGENDA:**

#### **2. Presentations**

- (a) Sustrans - Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (Pages 1 - 38)

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# Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

August 23, 2023

Belfast City Council



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- Page 2
1. Why are we here?
  2. Belfast Context
  3. What are LTNs?
  4. Data and Impact
  5. LTN Design in Belfast
  6. Value of Street Activation
  7. Key elements of LTN Delivery
  8. Conclusion

## Contact

[anne.madden@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:anne.madden@sustrans.org.uk)

[Zeina.hawa@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:Zeina.hawa@sustrans.org.uk)

[Perla.Mansour@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:Perla.Mansour@sustrans.org.uk)



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“Belfast City Council agrees to explore how Low Traffic Neighbourhoods can be delivered in Belfast, in conjunction with DfI and other external stakeholders. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods are being rolled out across the UK & Ireland and reduce rat runs and increase residential amenity.”

**Motion passed, 1 December 2022**

## General press reaction to LTNs

### **Radical new scheme proposes to ban almost all vehicles from Belfast’s York Street**

It comes following road safety concerns at the entrance to Ulster University’s new campus in the city

**Belfast Telegraph, 15 Sept 2022**

**Business owners slam new low traffic neighbourhood scheme claiming their takings have been halved as fewer people pass through the area**

**Daily Mail, 2 June 2023**

# Belfast Context

## Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel (CAST) working group

Co-chaired by Sustrans and Translink

Draft Action Plan currently out for consultation

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Includes:

- Action: Co-design place-based active travel initiatives to encourage walking, wheeling and cycling.
- Stretch Goal: Develop and implement two exemplar initiatives in line with the ETP (formerly BMTP).



# Belfast Context

- Belfast regularly appears in top 5 most congested cities in UK, costing Belfast economy £102m in 2022 \*

Page 5 64.7 MILLION journeys up to 3 miles are driven each year in the city...

**...If 80% of these journeys were walked or cycled it would greatly reduce congestion boosting the economy & save c.21,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases**





# Belfast streets dominated by cars

- 63% of residents think their streets are dominated by moving or parked vehicles
- **73% of residents support having low-traffic neighbourhoods**
- 55% of Belfast residents agree they can get to many places they need to visit without having to drive.\*
- Just 5% of Belfast streets have 20mph speed limit

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# Inequity of car dominance

- More than a **third of Belfast households don't have a car**, yet suffer impact of air & noise pollution, road safety concerns & pavement parking in their neighbourhoods

Census 2021 figs show urban areas of Belfast have highest % of households without a car or van – 33.9%

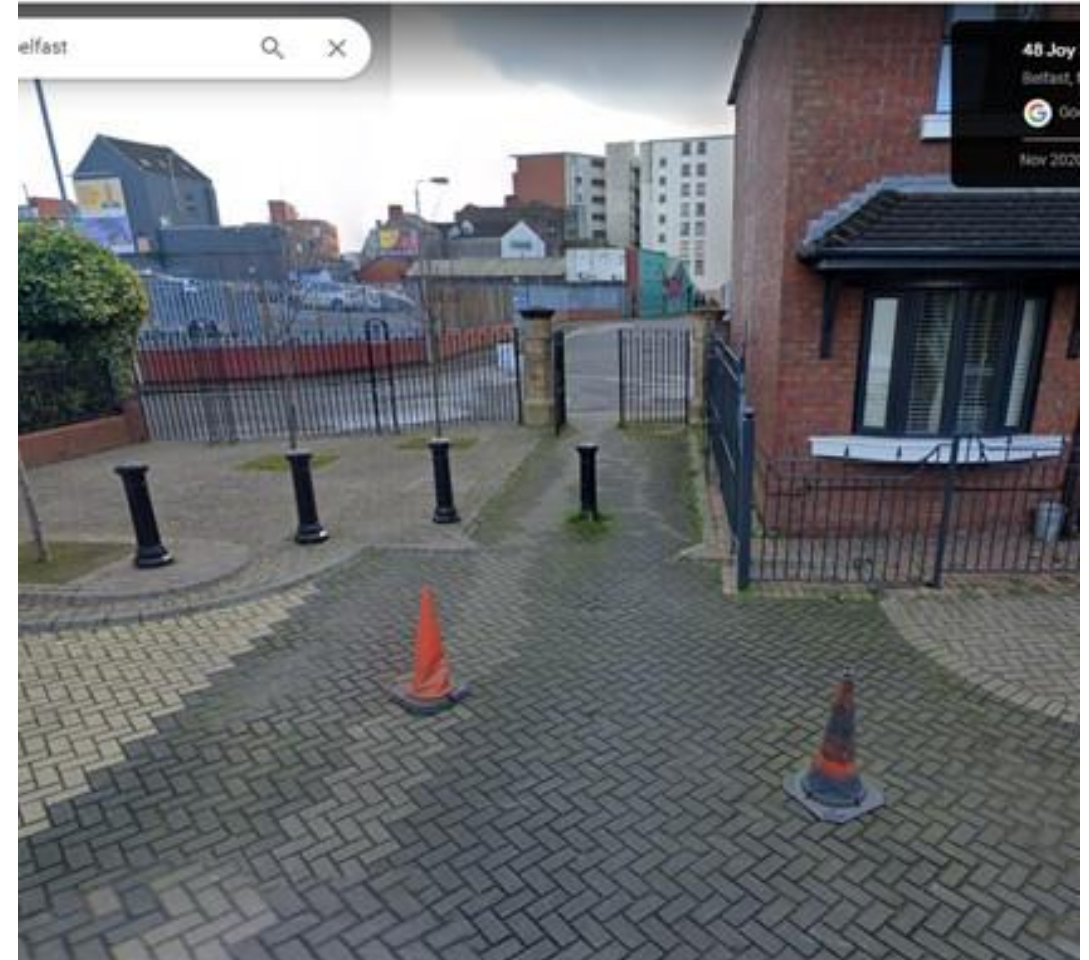
- Belfast's Local Development Plan includes an **SPG on place-making**, noting that streets should be multi-functional with access for all



- West Belfast 2023 - car dominated yet low levels of car ownership

# Long-standing schemes in Belfast

- Low traffic neighbourhoods are not new
- Modal filtering has been around for many decades
- Purpose is to stop through traffic and create safer, healthier streets where people live

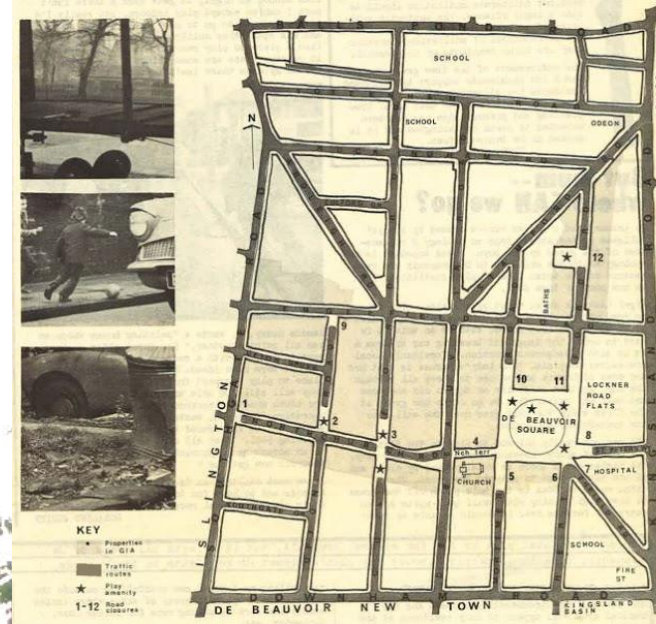


Joy Street, Belfast city centre – preventing through traffic



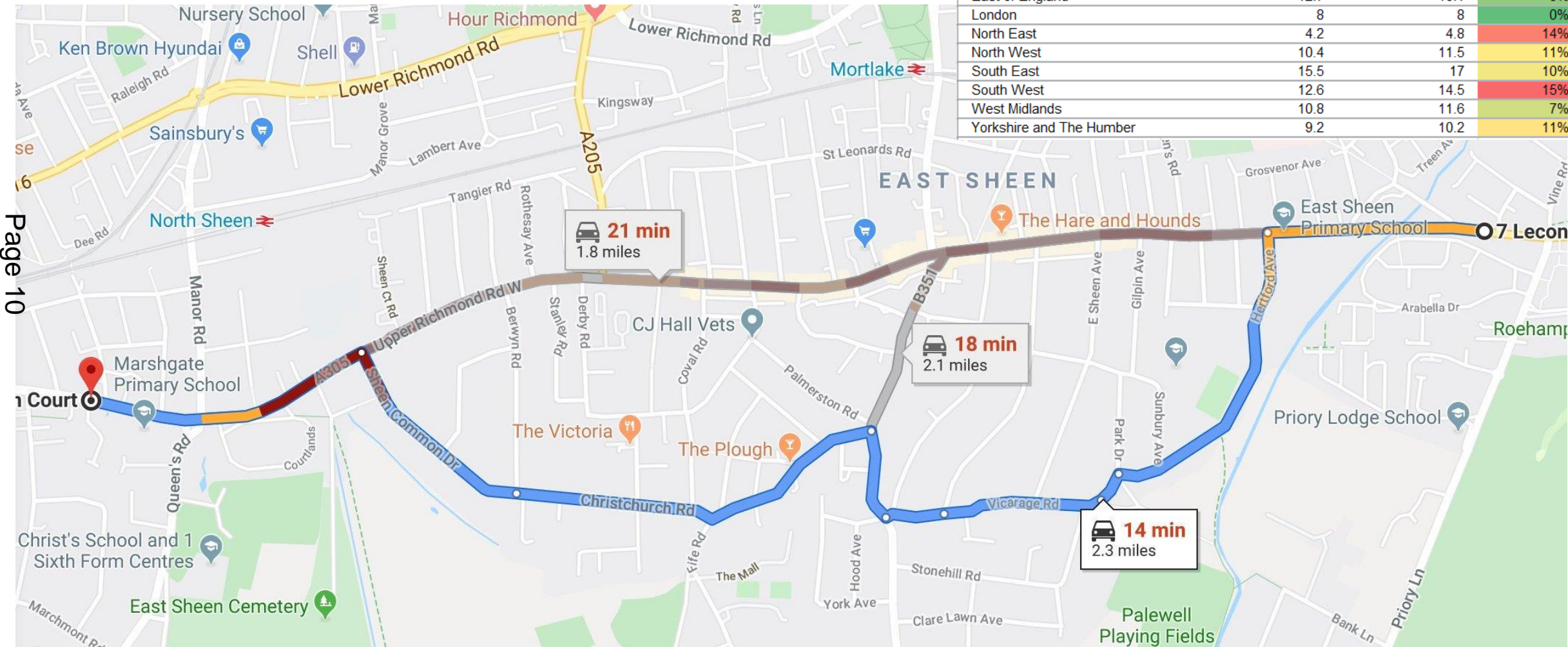
# What about low traffic neighbourhoods?

LTNs are not new





# Through traffic



Region / Country	2009 estimate after review (bvm)	2019 estimate after review (bvm)	2009-2019 change
East Midlands	9.1	10.4	14%
East of England	12.7	13.1	3%
London	8	8	0%
North East	4.2	4.8	14%
North West	10.4	11.5	11%
South East	15.5	17	10%
South West	12.6	14.5	15%
West Midlands	10.8	11.6	7%
Yorkshire and The Humber	9.2	10.2	11%

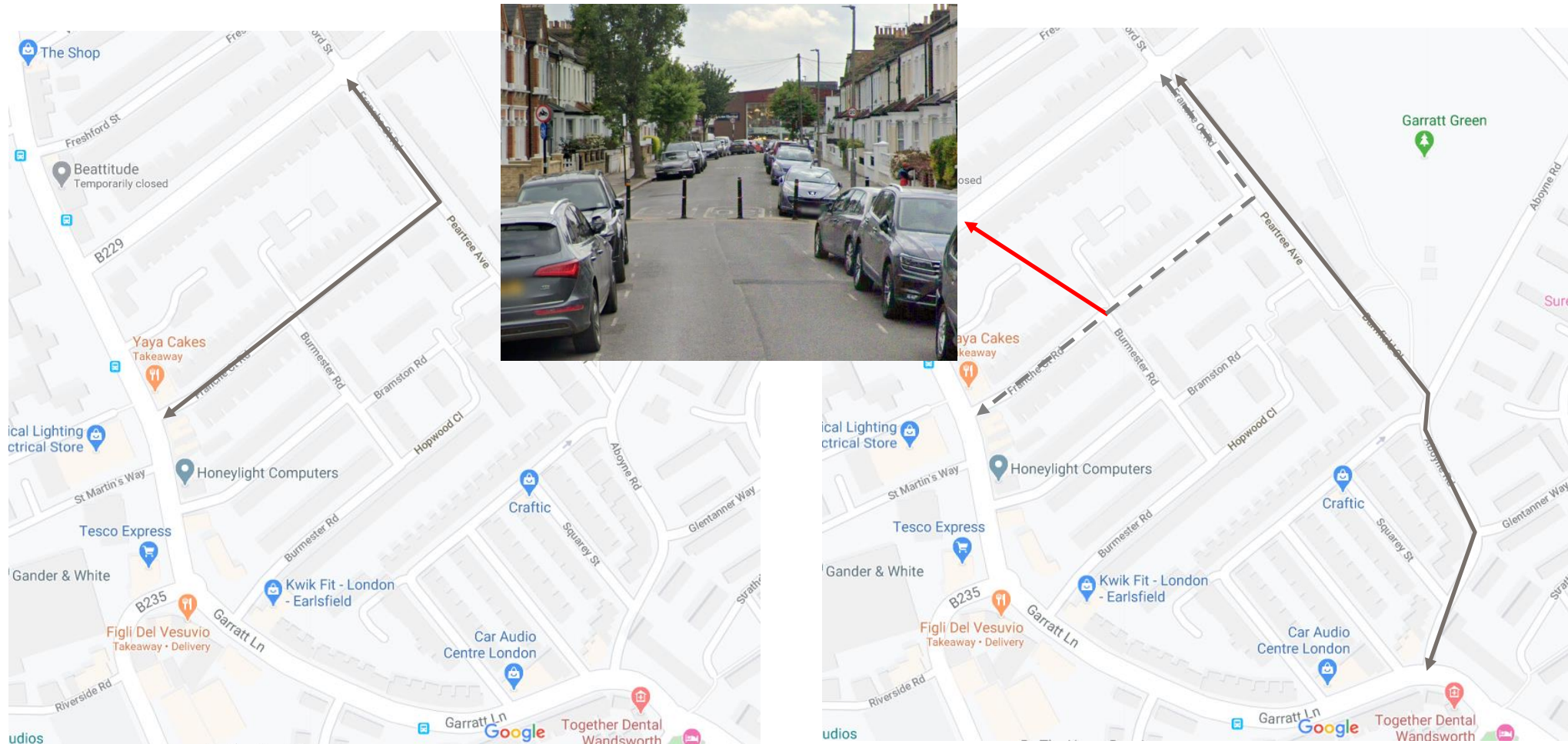
# A single filter

Improves condition on one street

Reduced volumes and speeds

Enables safe walking and cycling on that street

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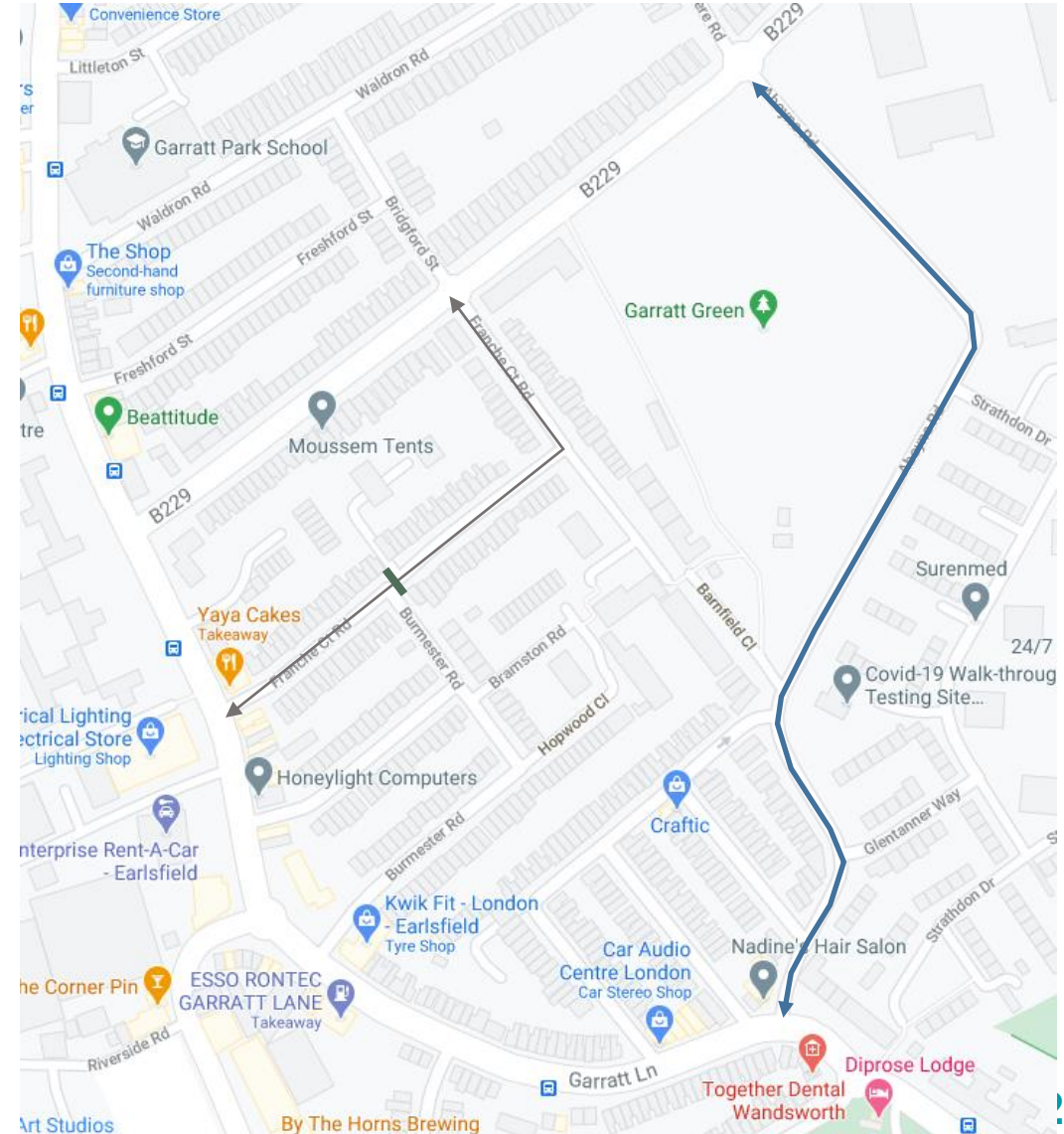




# A single filter....

- Where has the traffic / pollution gone?
- What if you want to cycle beyond your road?
- Are people going to walk / cycle instead of driving?

A single filter -> displacement, not mode shift



# A low traffic neighbourhood

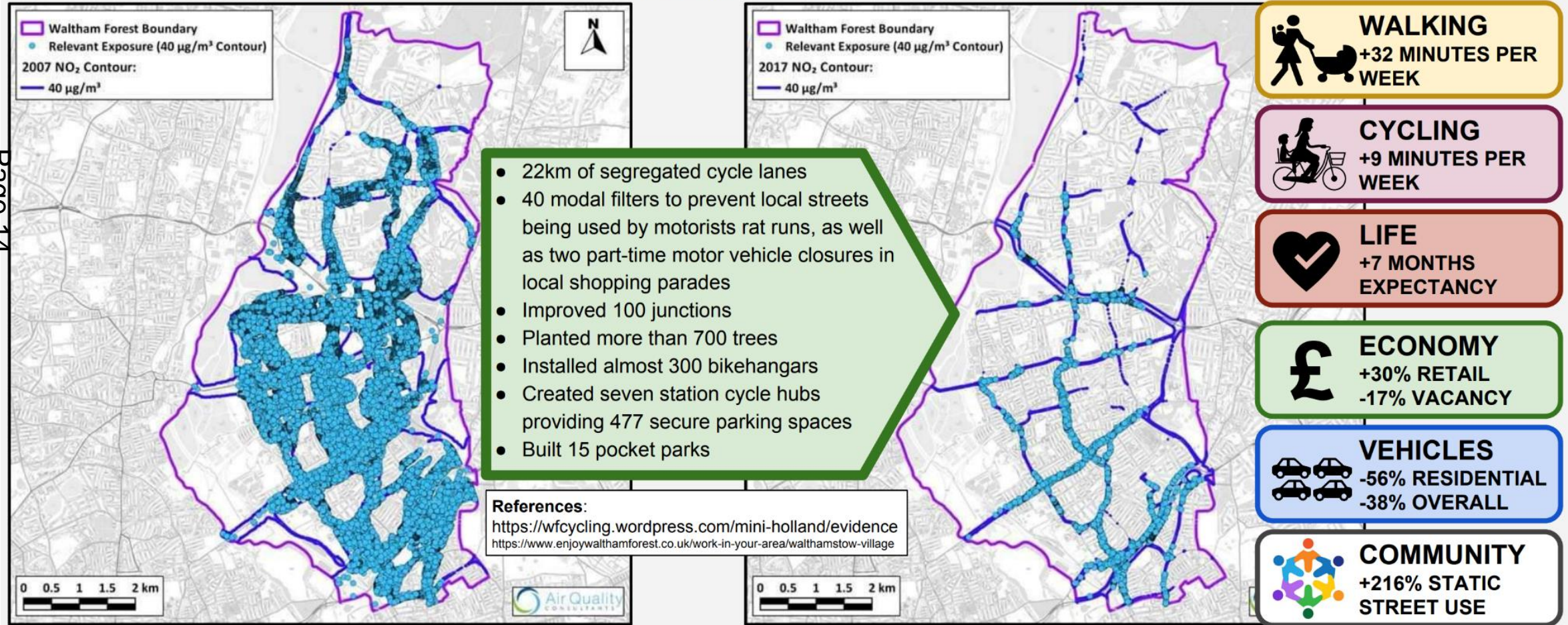
- An alternative, holistic approach
- Local trips are walked instead of driven → works best where there are lots of local destinations (parks, shop parades) → traffic evaporation
- Every property can still be accessed by car, but they might have to travel a bit further
- Multiple modal filters make it impossible to drive straight through the area -> each property is accessed from 1 boundary road
  - Lots of streets become quiet and safe to walk / cycle
  - Traffic stays on main roads, which are designed to manage flow
  - Driving short trips becomes less convenient
- Public health tool





## ACTIVE (LOW TRAFFIC) NEIGHBOURHOODS

ENABLING RESIDENTS TO WALK AND CYCLE TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE, CAR DEPENDENCY, CONGESTION, AND AIR POLLUTION



+32mins walking = 270,000 people at park run every week for 3 years

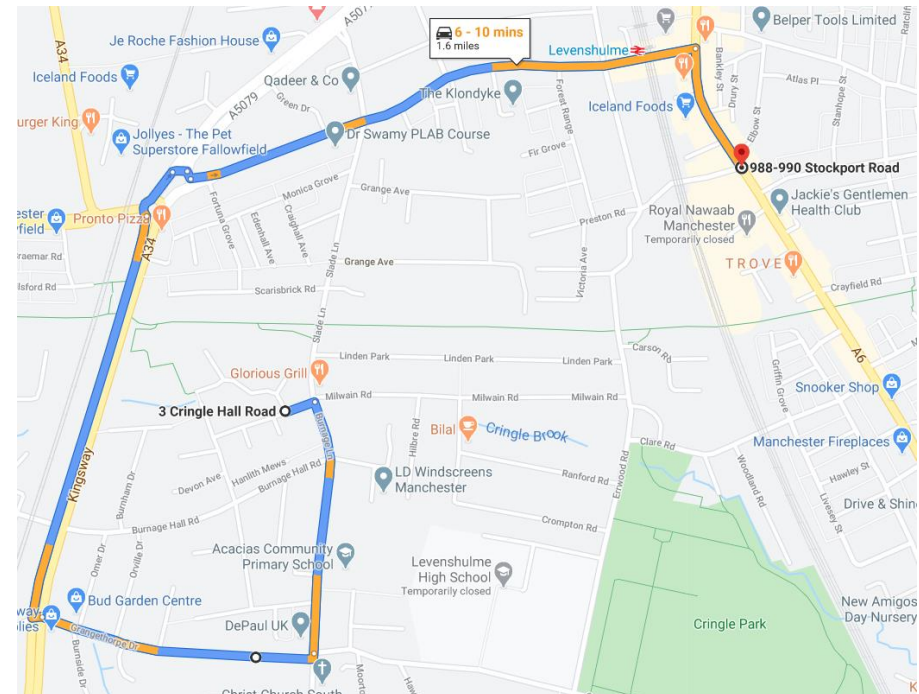
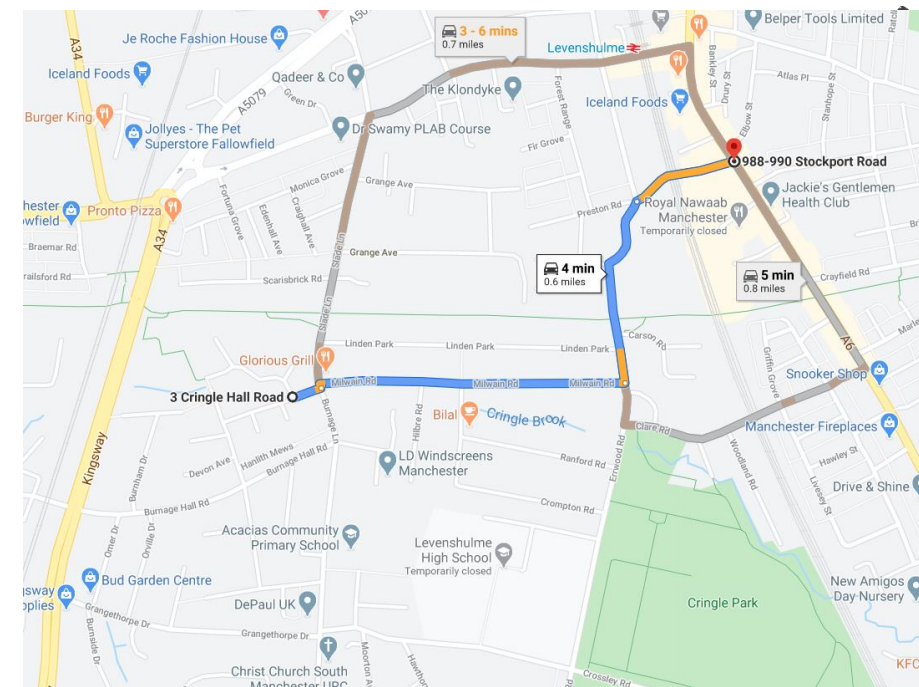
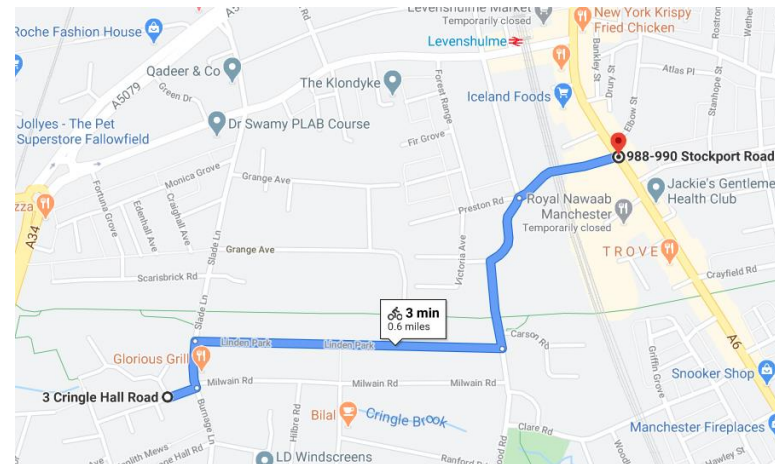
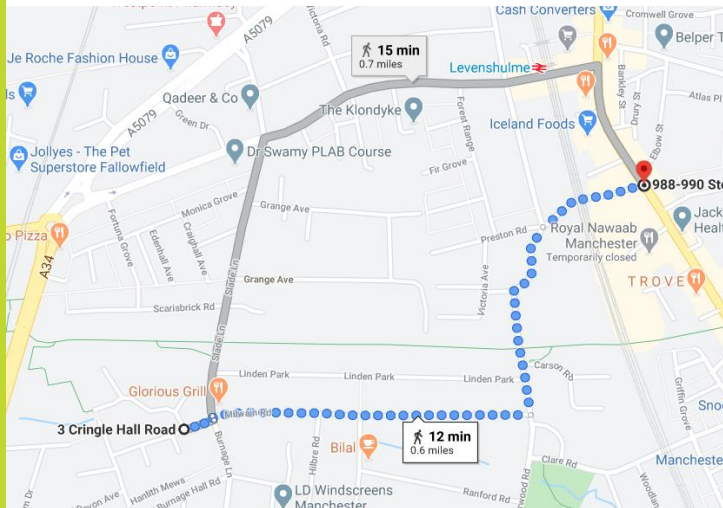


# Traffic Evaporation

Short local car trips -> walking (& cycling)

“I sometimes walk and sometimes drive my children to school. With the bus gates, it will just not make sense to drive there so I will walk every day”

Page 15 “It used to take 3 minutes to drive, now it takes 15! I may as well bl\*\*dy walk!”



# Approaching LTN design – Belfast focus

1. Street classification
2. Cell Definition
3. Filter Placement
4. Considerations
5. Boundary Road Measures

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How big is an LTN? What are the boundaries?

- Must allow for strategic movements
- Minimise potential for displacement onto other residential streets
- Large enough to ensure evaporation

# Street Classification

## Strategic roads

Through traffic

Unlikely to ever be filtered

## Local roads

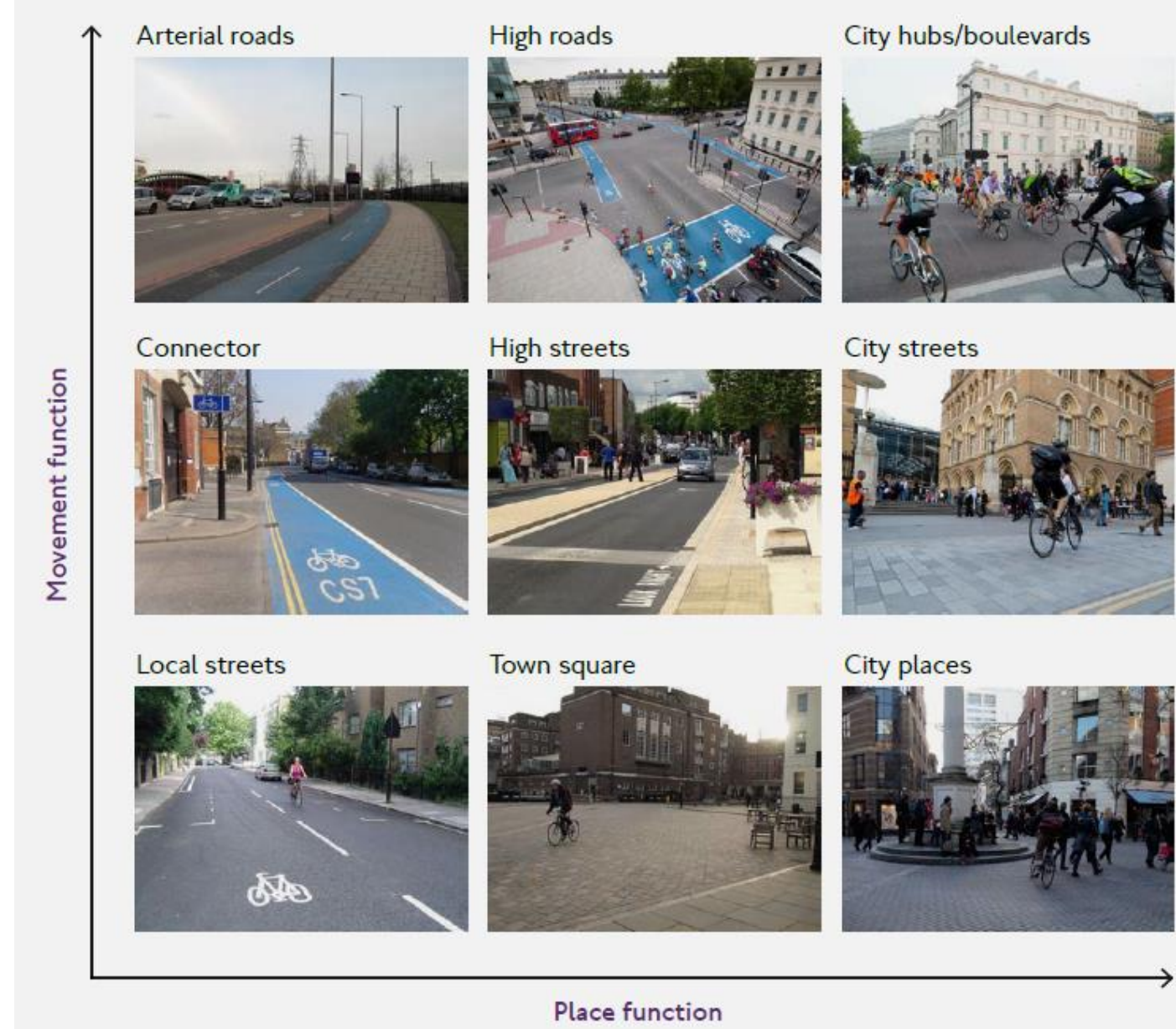
Locally-significant

May or may not be filtered

## Residential streets

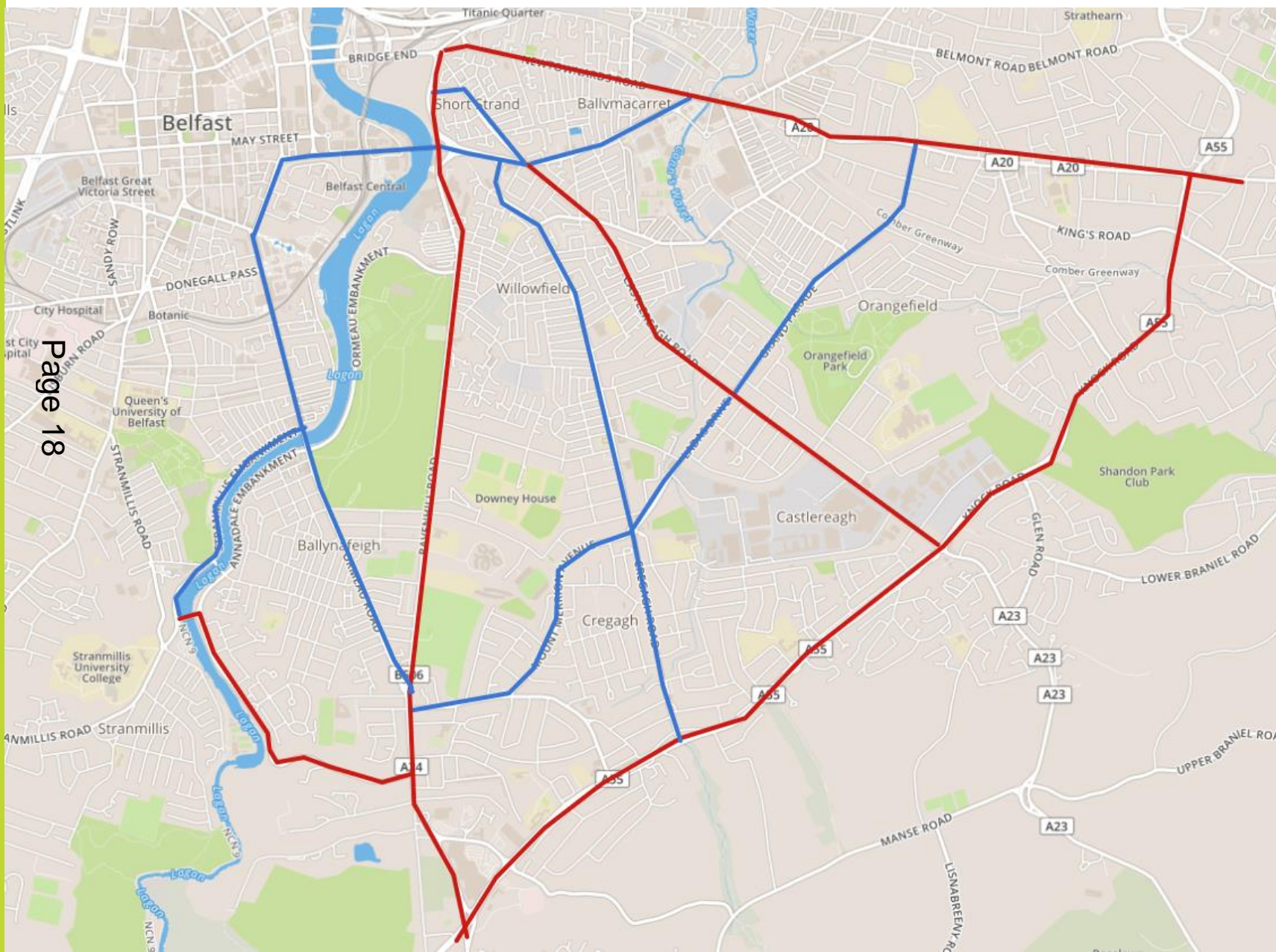
No through traffic (access-only)

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# Approaching LTN design



Agreement on what roads should remain open to through traffic

These become LTN boundary roads

All roads remain accessible by car

Must be an area wide exercise

Prioritisation of schemes is important



# Street Activation

- Showing potential, a taster
- Cheap, affordable, dynamic
- Ability to imagine spaces differently
- Used as part of public consultation/gathering feedback

Move away from focus on traffic





# Imaginative Streets & Pocket Parks

- Pushing for physical filters
- Maximising space for people – split filters, pocket parks, outdoor living room
- Animating streets

**Changing narrative from ‘closures’ to community assets/activators**

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# Filters that don't just block cars



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# Demonstration project area – Holylands, Belfast

## Streets

Collingwood Avenue and Carmel street

## Road Closure locations

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Agincourt Ave, Damascus St, Jerusalem St,  
Palestine St, Harrow St.

## One-day event

**Pre-event:** Led-walk survey 'If streets could talk'- followed by a co-design workshop.

**Event day 8 Sept:** Cycling and walking related activities and installation of temporary design solutions with the community.





# Key Considerations in Delivery

- LTNs are not new – a growing recognition of their transformative capacity
- LTN success dependent on
  1. Looking beyond (boundary roads and complementary measures)
  2. Deep engagement
  3. Robust monitoring – capturing varied voices, asking the right questions
  4. Good comms
  5. Prioritising LTNs not where there is most voice but where there is most need
  6. Political Will



Engagement

Monitoring

Behaviour change

An amazing design success

≠

Comms

Political support

Trials



# Beyond the LTN

Boundary road improvements, complementary measures, and school streets are just as important





# Boundary Road Measures

- Improved Crossings (straight ahead)
- Wider footways
- Protected cycle space on main roads
- Contraflow cycle lanes
- Removing guard railing
- Bus Priority
- Junction tightening at minor roads





# Complementary Features

- Seating
- Greening
- Trees
- Cycle Parking
- Play spaces
- Crossings
- Wider footways
- Speed reduction

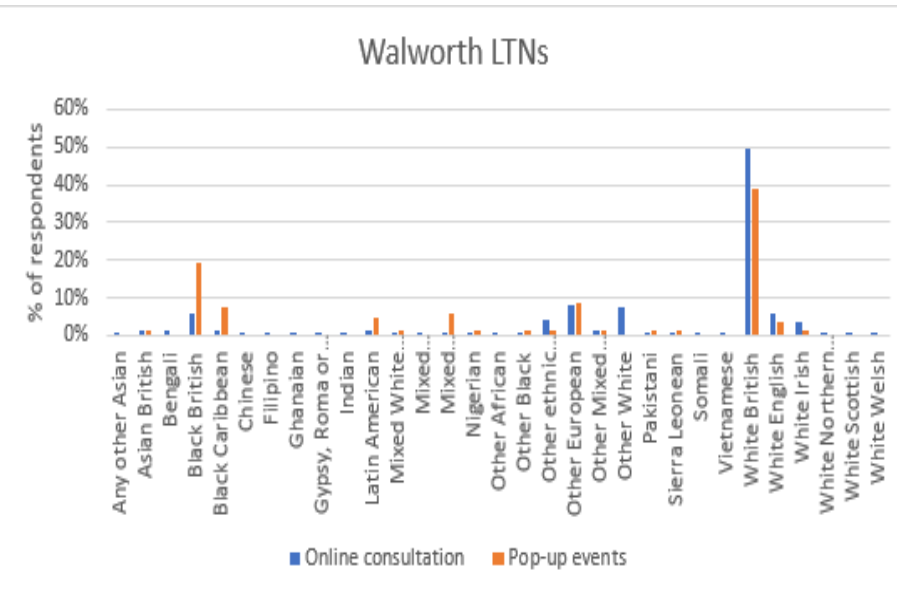




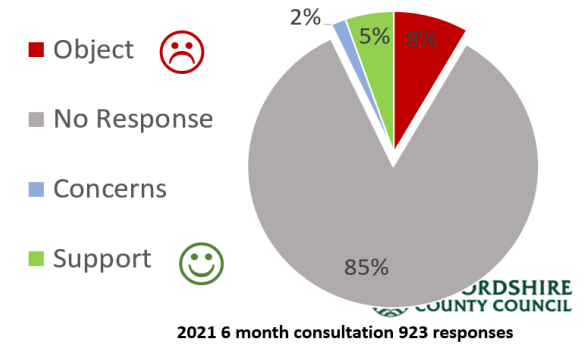
# Engagement – Beyond Consultation

- Advocating for an engagement led approach (prior to consultation)
- Our responsibility to go to people, especially the 95% in the middle
- Representativeness & limits of consultations – who are we hearing from?
- The power of in person engagement – go to underrepresented groups
- Capturing the neutral & seldom heard voices
- Building consensus early on through community workshops

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After LTN Cowley Survey 2





## Child Friendly Newington





# Behaviour change

What are the other barriers to active travel?

Behaviour change programmes are key





# Monitoring

A public health intervention, not transport

- Sure, count cars BUT also
- Active travel (volumes & frequency)
- Air quality
- School travel mode share
- Children radius of independence
- Social interactions in street
- How many neighbours have you spoken to?
- How often do you shop locally?
- Can your children play in the street?

Control areas!





Thank you





# Resources

## Sustrans LTN design guide

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/for-professionals/infrastructure/an-introductory-guide-to-low-traffic-neighbourhood-design/>

## Sustrans Evidence Page (various themes)

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/for-professionals/infrastructure/an-introductory-guide-to-low-traffic-neighbourhood-design/an-introductory-guide-to-low-traffic-neighbourhood-design-contents/design-guide/all/5-a-guide-to-the-evidence-around-low-traffic-neighbourhoods/>

## Page 37 fL StreetSpace LTN guides

<http://content.tfl.gov.uk/lsp-app-six-a-supplementary-guidance-ltns-v1.pdf>  
<http://content.tfl.gov.uk/lsp-app-six-b-strategic-neighbourhoods-analysis-v1.pdf>

## LCC & Living Streets LTN guides

[https://s3.amazonaws.com/lcc\\_production\\_bucket/files/13009/original.pdf?1536332516](https://s3.amazonaws.com/lcc_production_bucket/files/13009/original.pdf?1536332516)  
<https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/3844/lcc021-low-traffic-neighbourhoods-detail-v9.pdf>

[anne.madden@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:anne.madden@sustrans.org.uk)  
[Zeina.hawa@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:Zeina.hawa@sustrans.org.uk)  
[Perla.Mansour@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:Perla.Mansour@sustrans.org.uk)

# The Oval Triangle

