Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

August 23, 2023

Belfast City Council

sustrans
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Contents

Contact

anne.madden@sustrans.org.uk

Zeina.hawa@sustrans.org.uk

Perla.Mansour@sustrans.org.uk

Context

"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

<u>**General press reaction to LTNs**</u>

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

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).

The Belfast Agenda
continuing the conversation

Draft Strategy 2023 - 27

yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk

Belfast Context

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

- 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

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**

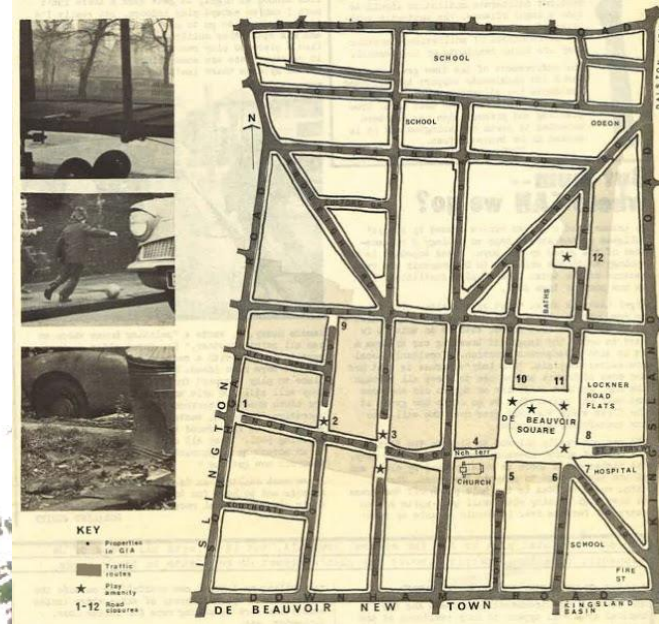# Long-standing schemes in Belfast

- Low traffic neighbourhoods are not new

- Modal filtering has been around for many decades

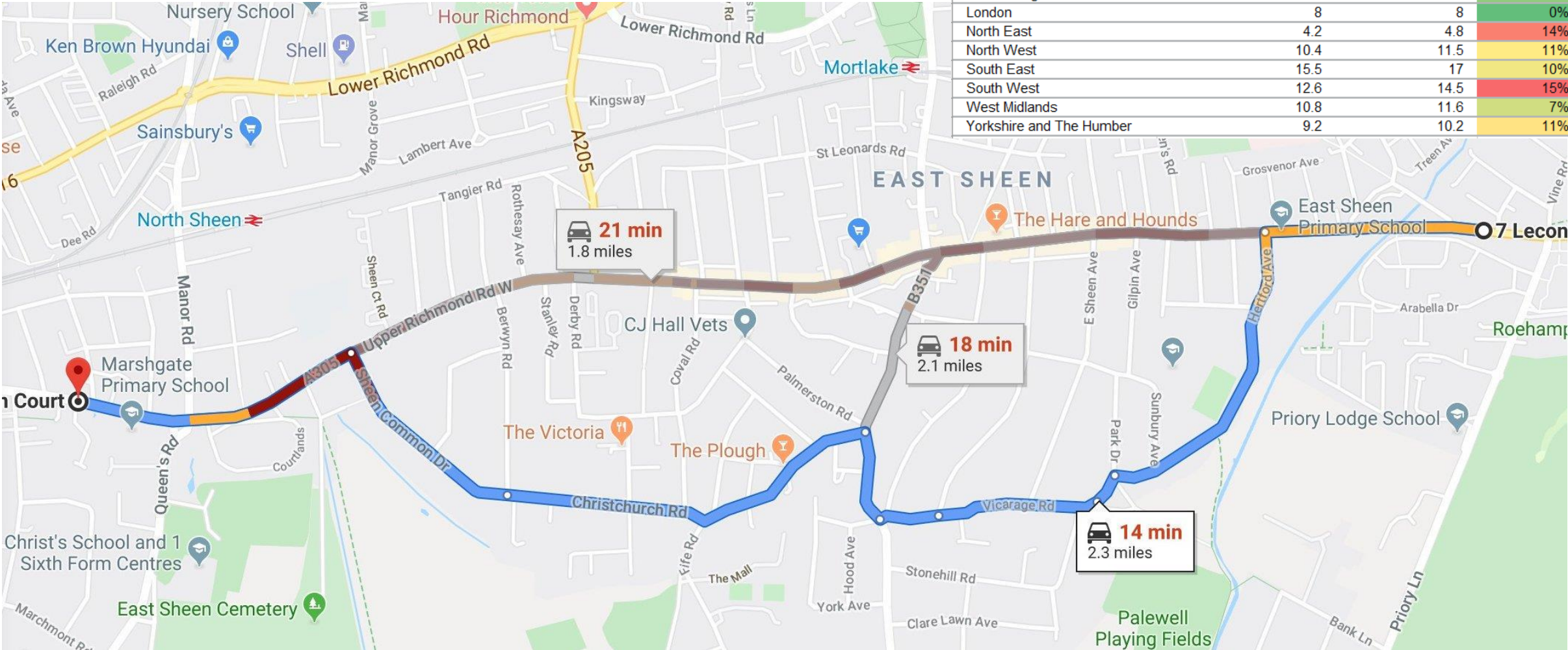- Purpose is to stop through traffic and create safer, healthier streets where people live
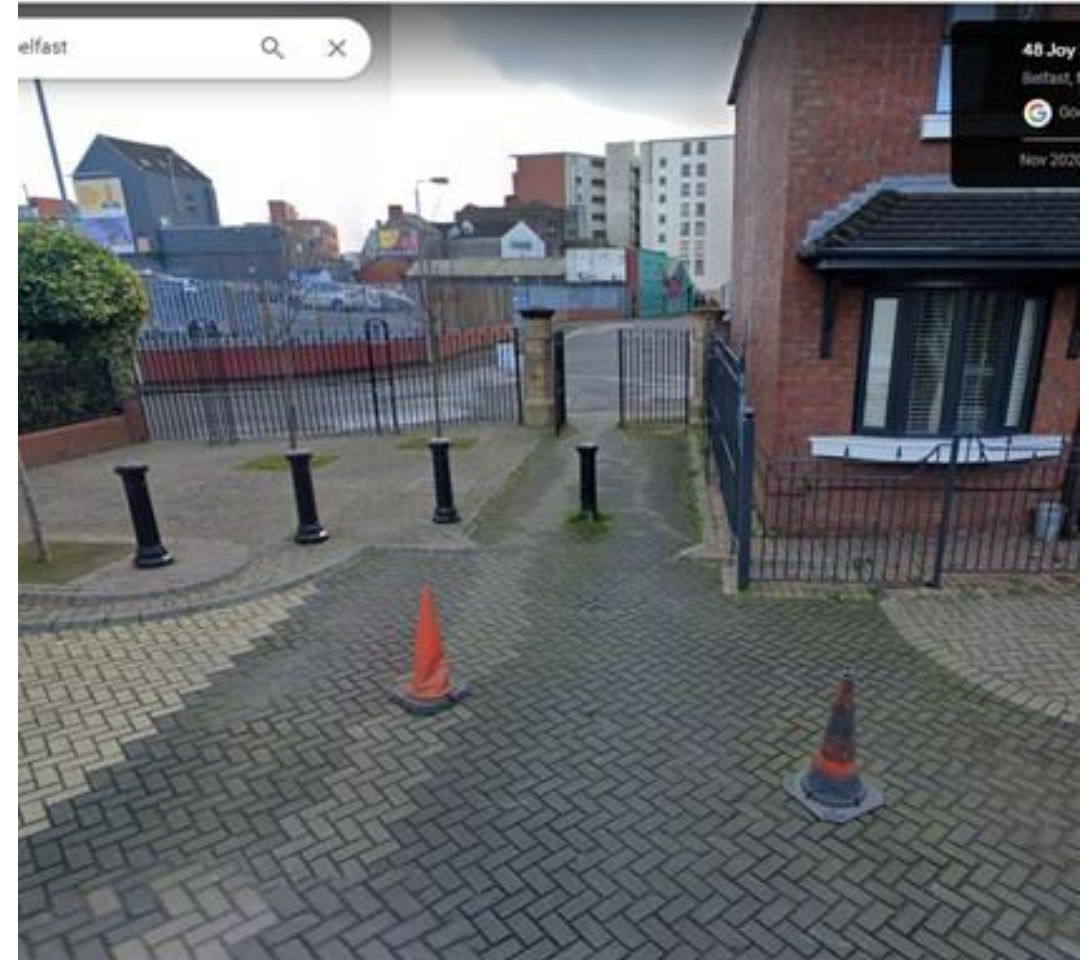
Joy Street, Belfast city centre – preventing through traffic

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

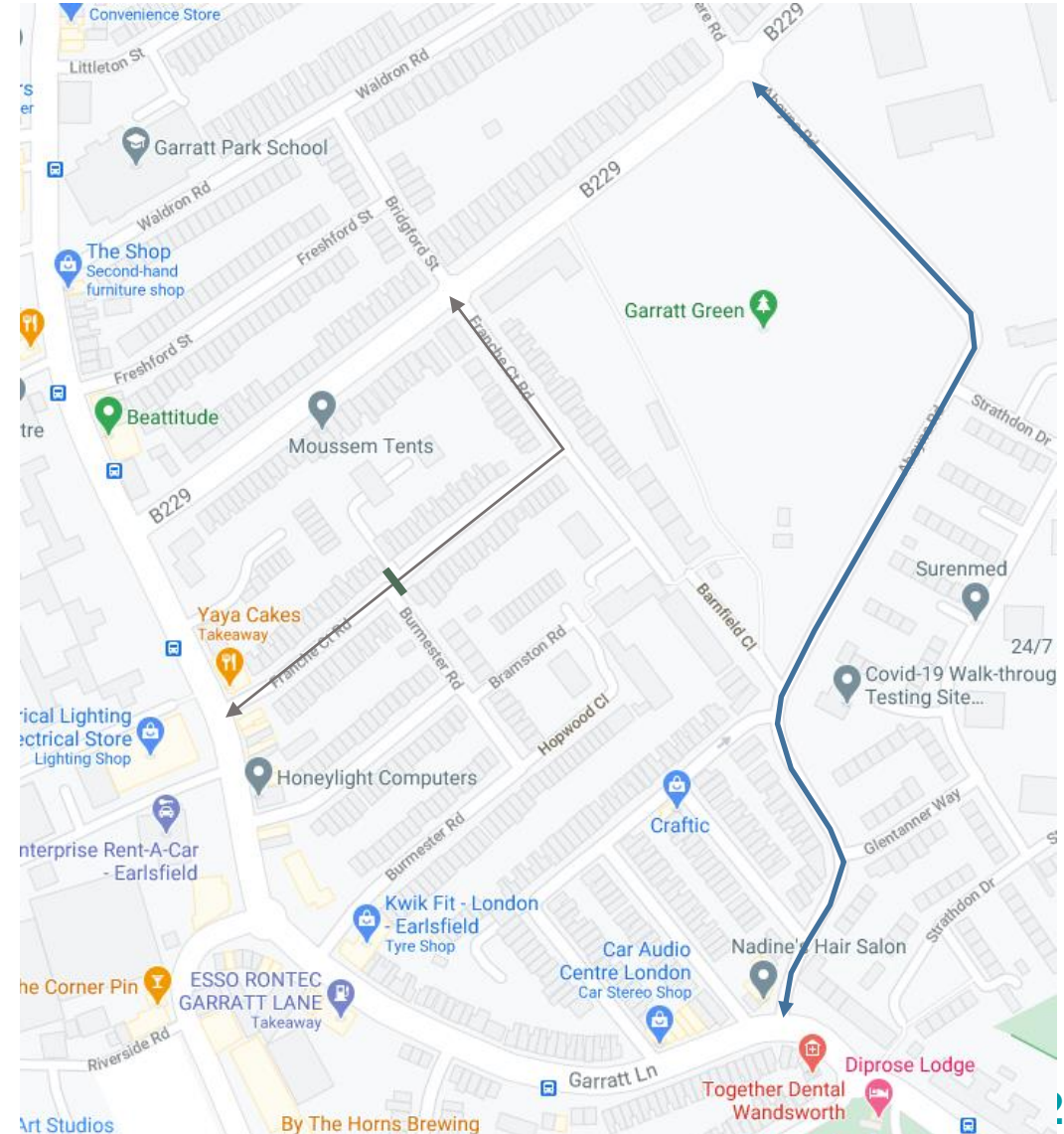Improves condition on one street

Reduced volumes and speeds

Enables safe walking and cycling on that street
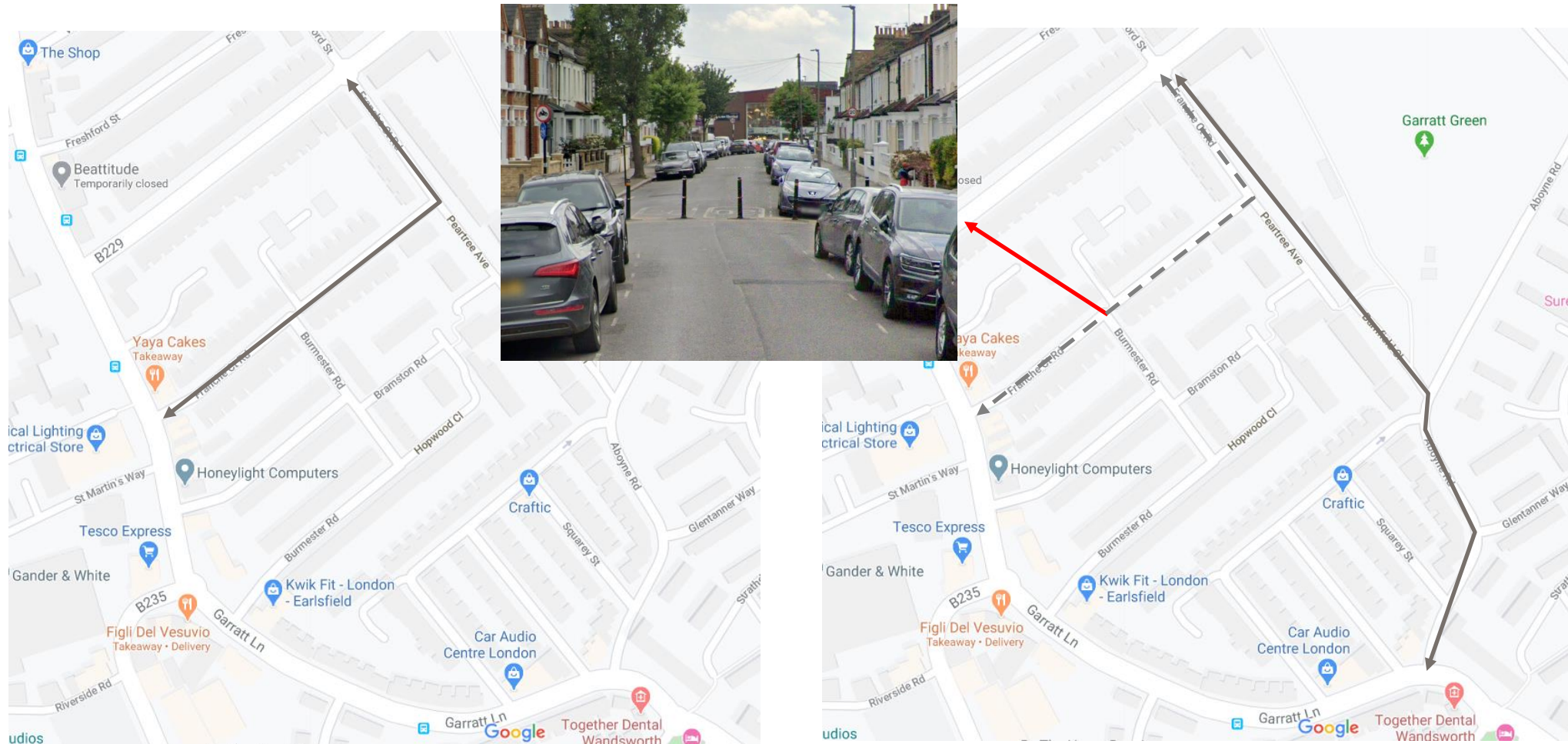
A single filter….

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

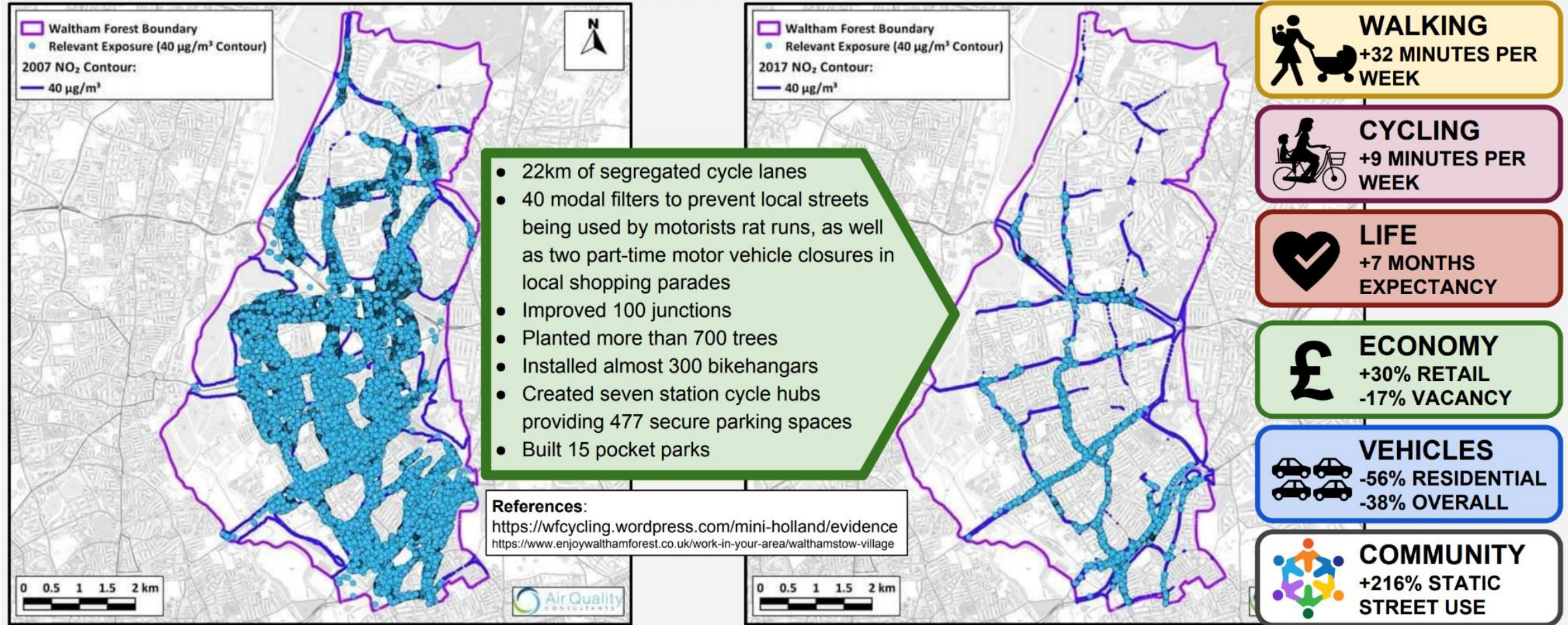A single filter -> displacement, not mode shift

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

ACCESS

	USE BROADWAY
	USE NORTHFIELD AVENUE
	USE BOSTON ROAD

KEY

- EXISTING TRAFFIC FILTER
- NO-ENTRY EXCEPT PEDESTRIANS & CYCLISTS
- ONE-WAY
- CYCLE PARKING
- EXISTING BANNED RIGHT TURN
- SCHOOL STREET 8.30am - 9.15am & 2.45pm - 3.15pm
- ENFORCEMENT CAMERAS

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ACTIVE (LOW TRAFFIC) NEIGHBOURHOODS
ENABLING RESIDENTS TO WALK AND CYCLE TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE, CAR DEPENDENCY, CONGESTION, AND AIR POLLUTION

- 22km of segregated cycle lanes
- 40 modal filters to prevent local streets being used by motorists rat runs, as well as two part-time motor vehicle closures in local shopping parades
- Improved 100 junctions
- Planted more than 700 trees
- Installed almost 300 bikehangars
- Created seven station cycle hubs providing 477 secure parking spaces
- Built 15 pocket parks

References:
https://wfcycling.wordpress.com/mini-holland/evidence
https://www.enjoywalthamforest.co.uk/work-in-your-area/walthamstow-village

WALKING +32 MINUTES PER WEEK

CYCLING +9 MINUTES PER WEEK

LIFE +7 MONTHS EXPECTANCY

ECONOMY +30% RETAIL -17% VACANCY

VEHICLES -56% RESIDENTIAL -38% OVERALL

COMMUNITY +216% STATIC STREET USE

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

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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"

"It used to take 3 minutes to drive, now it takes 15! I may as well bl**dy walk!"
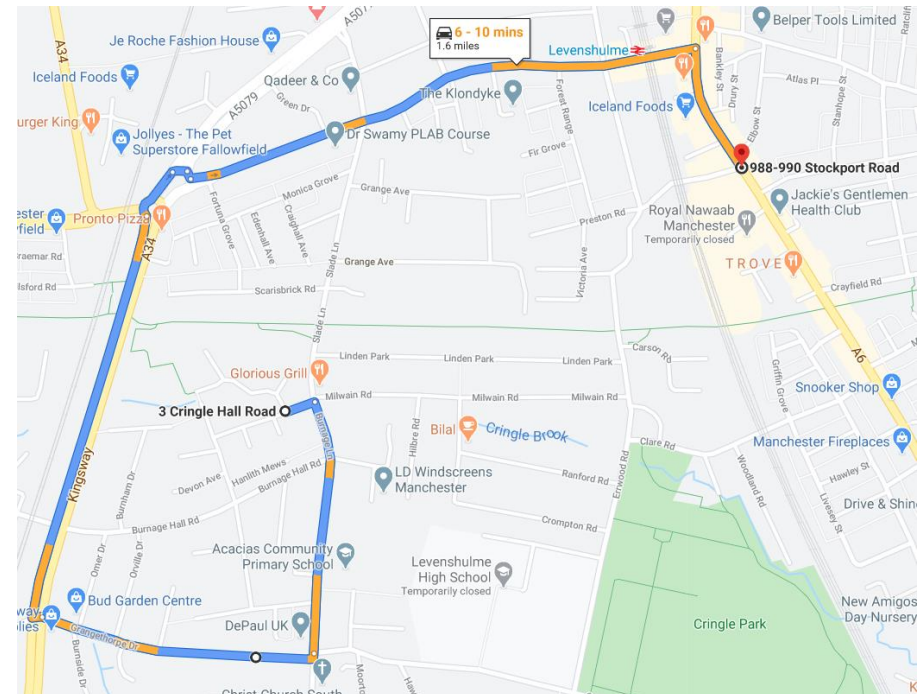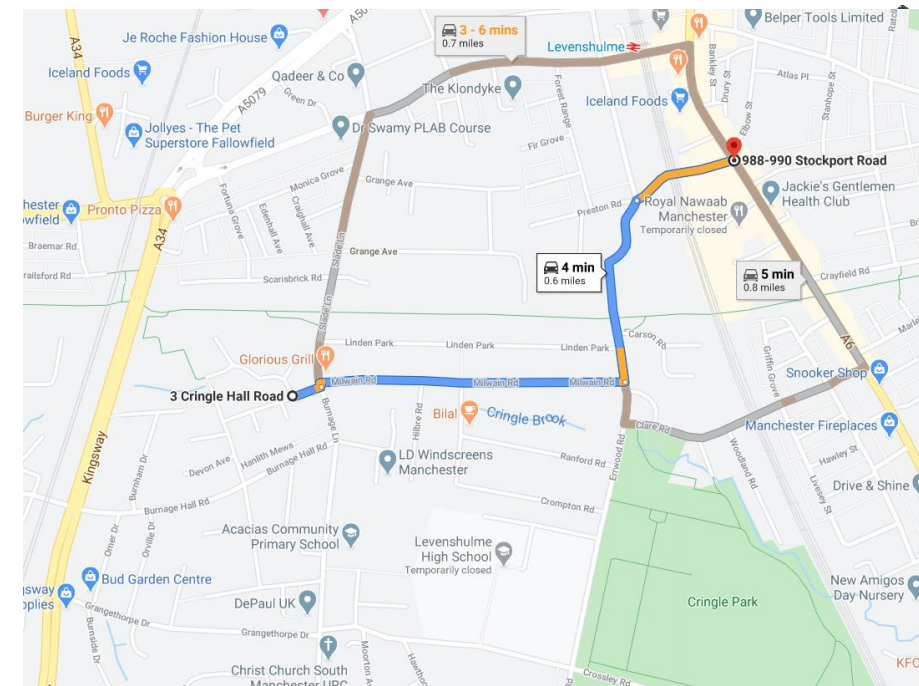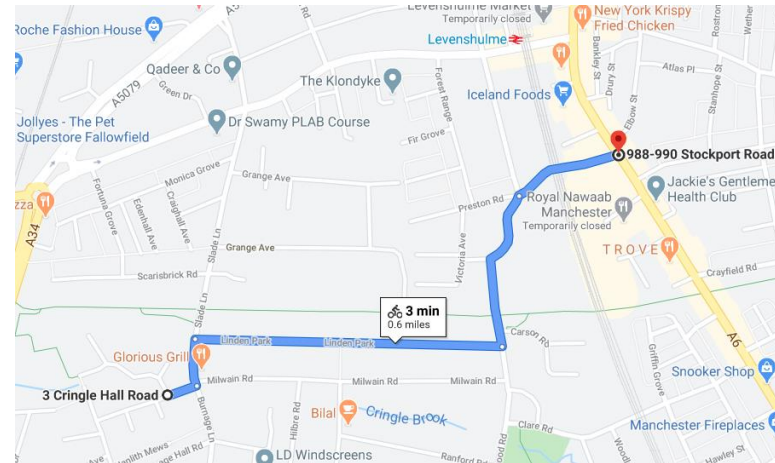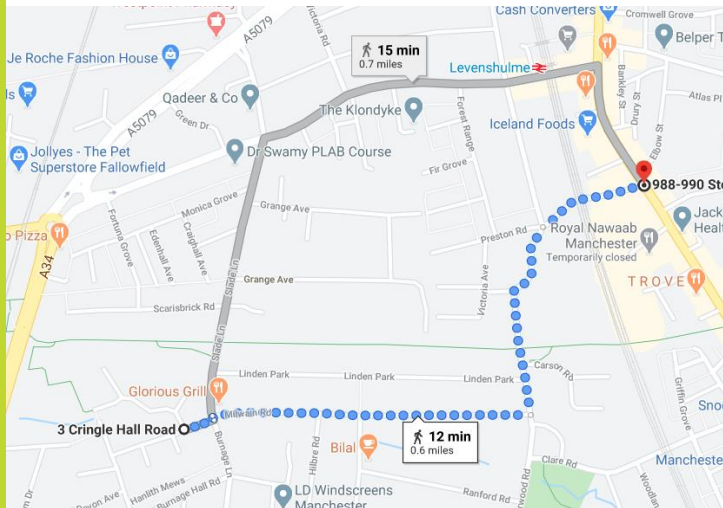
Approaching LTN design – Belfast focus

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

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

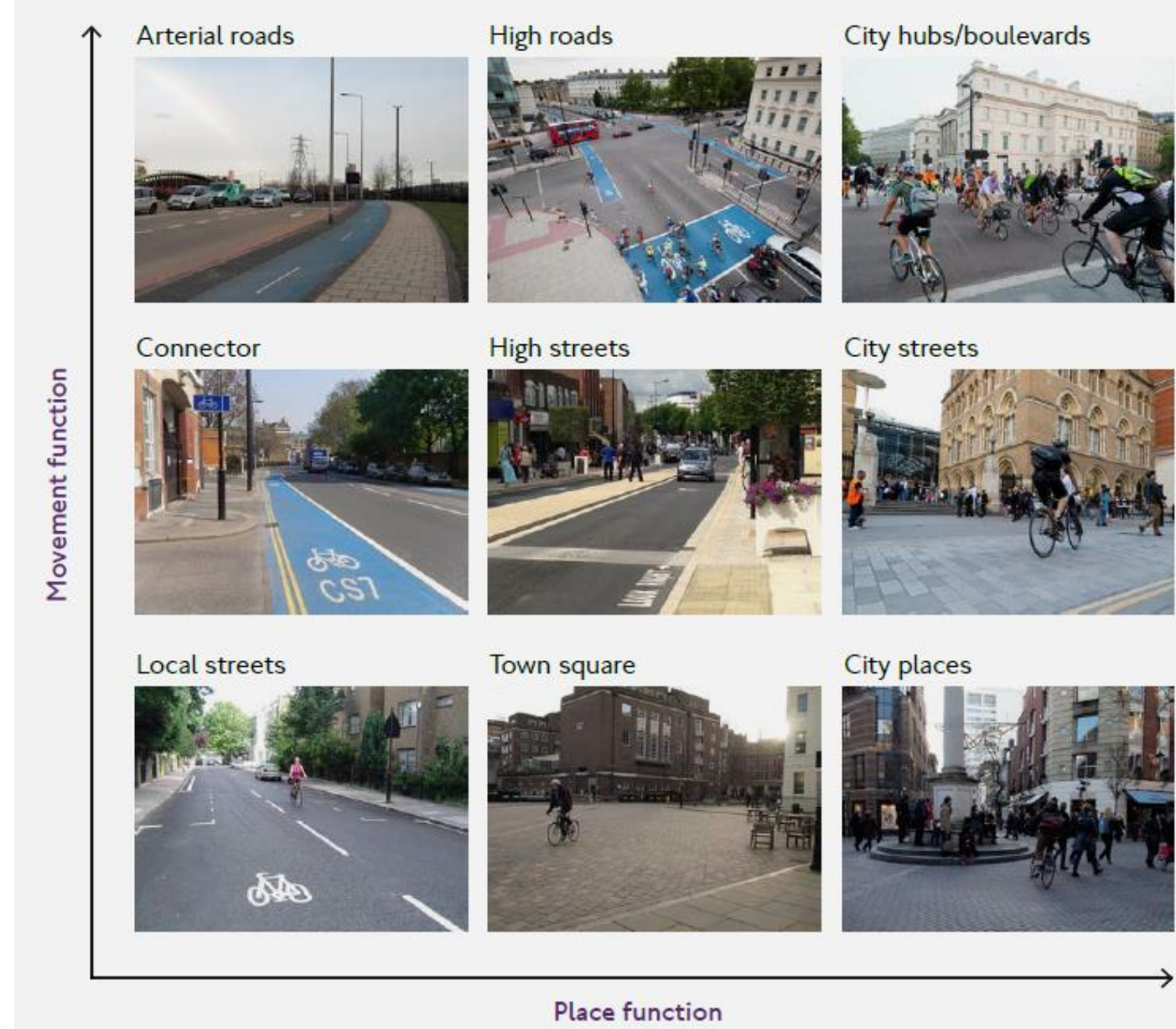Through traffic

Unlikely to ever be filtered
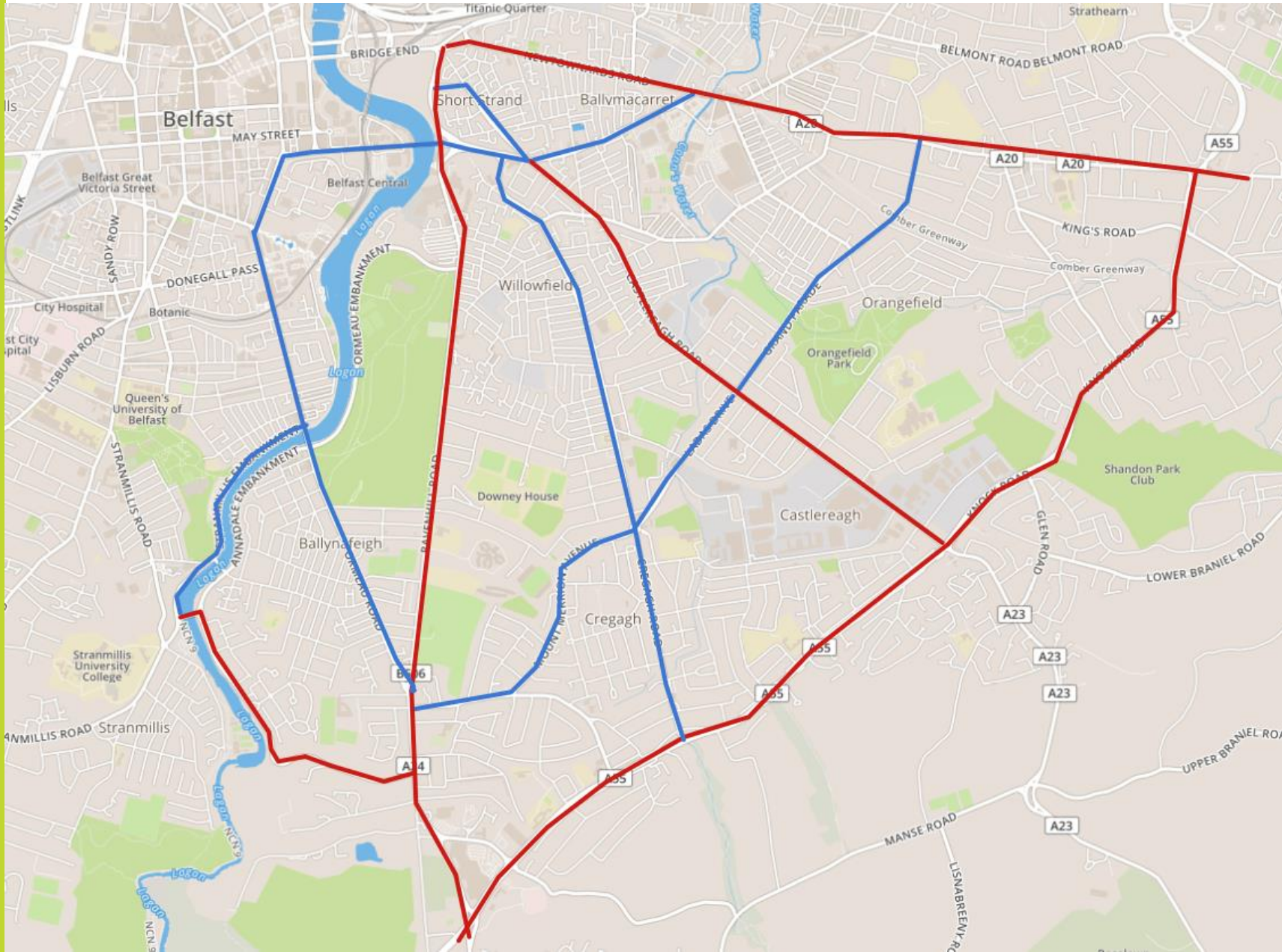
Local roads

Locally-significant

May or may not be filtered

Residential streets

No through traffic (access-only)

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**

Filters that don't just block cars

But that activate streets

Child Friendly Newington

ROAD OPEN TO

ROAD CLOSED

Demonstration project area – Holylands, Belfast

Streets
Collingwood Avenue and Carmel street

Road Closure locations
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
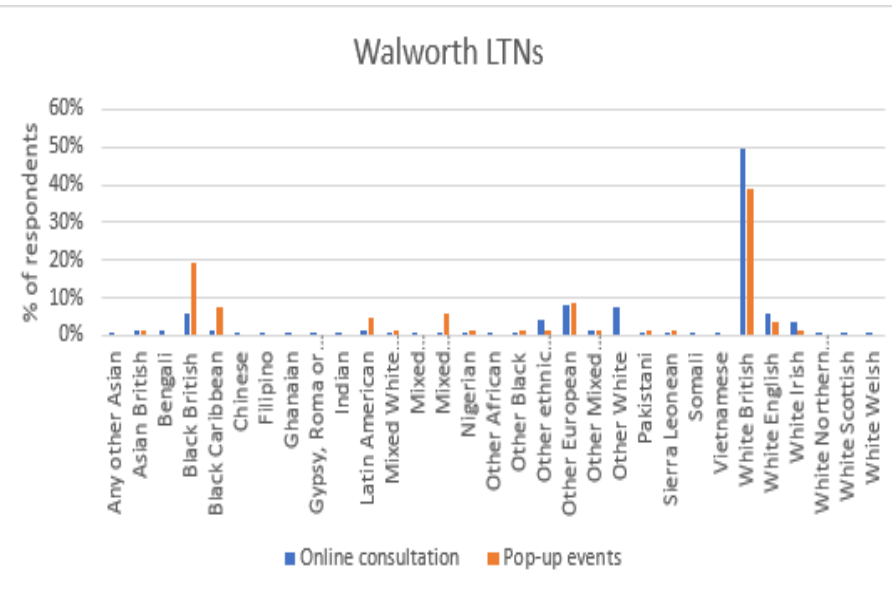- Junction tightening at minor roads

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Complementary Features

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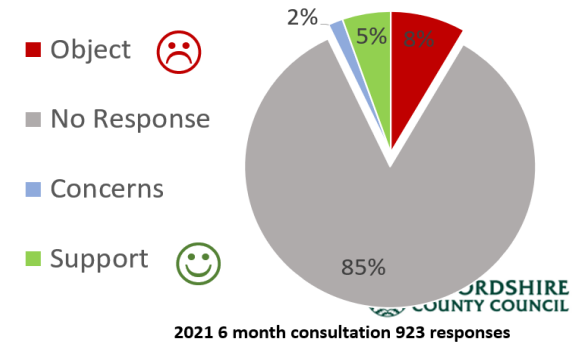- Wider footways
- Speed reduction

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

After LTN Cowley Survey 2

- Object
- No Response
- Concerns
- Support

2%
5%
8%
85%

2021 6 month consultation 923 responses

Pave The Way

The impact of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) on disabled people, and the future of accessible Active Travel.

Report January 2021

Transport for All TfA

Walworth LTNs

Online consultation   Pop-up events

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/

TfL 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://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/3844/lcc021-low-traffic-neighbourhoods-detail-v9.pdf

anne.madden@sustrans.org.uk
Zeina.hawa@sustrans.org.uk
Perla.Mansour@sustrans.org.uk