

LTN 03 Low Traffic Neighbourhood FRANCIS ROAD



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Deputation on Monday 11th January 2021 on Traffic and Road Safety Advisory Panel, by Kinnar & Utkarsh.

Title of deputation: Remove LTN03 Francis Road area, Greenhill Low Traffic Neighbourhood Scheme motor vehicle roadblock.

Reason for deputation: Adverse impact due to the implementation of LTN03 Low Traffic Neighbourhood Scheme in Greenhill Ward.

Good evening Chair, councillors, advisors, officers and guests. Thank you for having us.

My name is Kinnar and I am a resident of the Greenhill Ward, and have lived in this area for many years and I am also a member of the Greenhill Manor Residents Association, and I represent a vast majority of the residents of Greenhill. I will be outlining a few of the very many reasons why we residents of Greenhill would like the LTN03 removed.



I am joined tonight by Utkarsh, a fellow resident in the Greenhill Harrow ward. I will be speaking first and will be followed by Utkarsh.

We submitted our deputation because the residents of Greenhill and I believe that Harrow Council have unfairly implemented LTN03 and it has had a detrimental impact to our lives as the closure of Francis road has caused distress and anxiety for residents and has created far more problems than the scheme could ever have hoped to resolve.

One of Harrow Council's reason to implement LTN03 was because they believed 'Francis Road has suffered from vehicles using the street as a cut-through, causing environmental and safety problems for residents'

The residents of Greenhill and I can honestly share that Francis Road has never ever suffered from a large number of vehicles using this road as a cut-through. It is a legitimate road for residents of Harrow. We have never experienced any heavy traffic cutting through here.

If you live in this area of Greenhill you would see that the vast majority (our estimate is 80%) of drivers here are local residents. Drivers do not want to use Francis Road as a '**cut through**' because in order to bypass the main roads in this area you would need to access at least 7 roads from Kenton Road to get to Station Road and vice versa the other way. This makes it an extremely long and unwarranted 'cut-through'.

A few weeks ago, a few local residents and I talked to approx. 400 residents in Greenhill who live on or right next to LTN03 to ask them how they felt about this roadblock and the feedback was that they didn't think it was a 'rat-run' and every single one of them stated that this particular roadblock had caused them so much stress and anxiety, longer journey times, more pollution by now being forced to use the congested main roads – all of this which is the last thing we need here especially during the COVID pandemic, **and they all signed our Harrow wide petition to have this LTN along with the other LTNs removed.**

In 2011 following the consultation responses from Greenhill residents on the traffic management orders for the Station Road Project in Harrow Town Centre, Harrow Council deemed it fit to ban the right turn out of Bonnersfield Lane onto Station Road. This was despite the majority of residents here objecting to this.

At that time, Harrow Council agreed that this right turn ban would '**increase journey time for Greenhill residents**' and would cause great '**inconvenience**' to them. They stated that their traffic surveys indicated that only a few vehicles actually used the right turn at Bonnersfield Lane, which they said, and I quote, is a '**relatively small number even for residential roads**'.

Harrow Council also stated that '**making the through road substantially longer should dissuade through traffic...**' and said that any through traffic would be '**...further constrained by the width restriction on Francis Road as well as warning road signs on Kenton Road**'.

We therefore feel that Greenhill already has 2 forms of a LTN type scheme implemented in our neighbourhood with a width restriction on Francis Road and the right turn ban at Bonnersfield Lane.

Harrow Council informed residents that as we do not have much through traffic in Greenhill, the Bonnersfield right turn ban would not be a problem for us residents as we still have the

option of using Francis Road and Elmgrove Road to get from A-B quickly and easily and thus avoiding traffic on the main road. However, now that LTN03 has been installed here we no longer have the very option that Harrow Council insisted was a legitimate route as they have now blocked it.

Harrow Council are once again ignoring the plight of its residents by implementing yet another form of motor vehicle ban here with LTN03 despite our numerous current objections to this - please do read the comments on the Harrow Street Space website as the majority about LTN03, roughly 90% are asking for the removal of this.

Why was it then even deemed necessary by Harrow Council to implement a LTN on Francis Road when they agreed that there were no major through traffic problems in this area to begin with?

Harrow Council cited environmental problems as another reason for installing LTN03, but it should be noted that **Francis Road backs onto the huge Kenton Rec park – one of the largest green spaces in this area so we are not in short supply of a green space** as we have one on our doorstep which has an outdoor gym, tennis courts, a new bike track and a children's playground.

One of the key principles of the LTN programmes is to ask for funding to **install** them in areas where you can **'offer outdoor space that can be used more easily in locations of limited public and private green space'** and Francis Road does not meet this criteria.

We believe this particular LTN has been put here without any due thought, observation, local area knowledge, consultation or consideration of the local residents' views themselves and how it would negatively impact their lives.

In regards to safety the reality of this is that since the arrival of LTN03 there has been a lower than normal police presence driving through our Greenhill neighbourhood. Quieter roads have led to thefts and cars being damaged, and have led to personal safety concerns when walking on roads, especially after dark. **Crime rates could potentially now be higher in Greenhill since the Francis Road LTN was implemented.** One example is that in November 2020 there was a car theft at one of the houses on Francis Road in the daytime, and this would have been unheard of prior to the roadblock. We have also seen a significant increase in drug related paraphernalia at both ends of Francis Road leading to Kenton Rec (at the underpass and also the bridge). It appears the LTN03 is adding to crime rates and thus the safety of residents is compromised as a and there is now also a lack of police car patrols in our area since Francis road is blocked and it seems to be an inconvenience for them to drive here and be stuck in new cul-de-sacs.

Francis road has become eerily quiet with almost no passing cars and police cars patrolling through here, many of us now do not feel safe walking on our road especially during the winter months when it gets darker far earlier and later than in the summer months. Should residents be approached by criminals in our area, as there is a lack of passing motorists, there is a higher chance that there will be no-one here to help them in an emergency. If police were called residents fear they might get stuck on the 'wrong' side of the Francis Road roadblock causing delays to help being attained as the police are blocked by this barrier and criminals could escape by riding motorbikes through LTN03. Motorbikes still ride through LTN03 at present.

Another point in regards to safety is that we Greenhill residents are now also forced to use the slip road off Bonnersfield Lane in order to make a right turn onto Station Road by Halfords and several of us have encountered road rage incidents as there is so much traffic on this part of the road and no clear help for us when turning right in that there is no yellow box junction or keep clear markings on the road here. This is something we are afraid to deal with now and have been pushed to do so.

Oftentimes we try and avoid this problem by driving to Northwick park roundabout and end up having to make far longer journeys by going back on ourselves and adding to the pollution here by being stuck in up to 45mins of additional congested traffic. This is not fair on us Greenhill residents.

If we residents of Greenhill never had a problem with traffic, pollution, safety, environmental, 'rat-run' / cut through issues here or anything else of that nature on Francis Road then why did the council deem it necessary to block Francis Road as it clearly serves no purpose?

Another of Harrow Council's reason to implement LTN03 was to 'reduce traffic and pollution'.

In reality, since the implementation of LTN03 we residents feel that **traffic and pollution have both significantly increased in Greenhill as a direct result of having to make far longer car journeys than ever before.**

For example, our journeys by car used to take approx. 5 minutes to get to a certain point on either Station Road or Kenton Road. We are now being forced to use the main Sheepcote Road and Northwick Park Roundabout and are getting stuck in heavy traffic here which is not helped by the huge redundant, under-used and mostly empty cycle lane there and **our journey times have increased by between 30-45 minutes.**

Many residents of Greenhill *need* to use their cars or get taxis for certain journeys and cannot simply walk or cycle everywhere for a multitude of reasons. Factors such as being disabled, elderly, vulnerable, having very young children, having to travel for longer journeys and so on, play a factor in having no choice but to make motor vehicles journeys. It feels as if these residents are being discriminated against.

Blocking off Francis Road has not suddenly put a stop to these necessary journeys but it has diverted vehicles onto other smaller residential roads in our area, mainly Northwick Park Road, Bonnersfield Lane and Gayton Road. Residents on these alternative roads are now suffering as their smaller roads are now having to deal with a significant increase of volume of vehicles using their roads which was unheard of prior to LTN03. They are also having to deal with higher levels of pollution as in the past a majority of Greenhill residents would simply have used their own roads including Francis Road to make their journeys but are now forced to use their neighbouring residential roads.

The residents of Francis Road, Elmgrove Road and other surrounding roads are now too having to deal with much higher levels of pollution when being forced to use the main traffic-ridden Sheepcote Road which they could have avoided in the past.

LTN-03 has forced Greenhill residents to add to traffic on the already busy Northwick Park roundabout which is right next to Northwick Park hospital and very close to us. In doing so we are inevitably blocking ambulances rushing to emergency call outs due to the congestion levels at the roundabout area now and all of this during a global pandemic. Northwick Park hospital are already under immense strain due to the high number of COVID patients that it is dealing with and is once again, as it was at the start of the pandemic, one of the worst hit and badly affected hospitals in the whole of London dealing with an unprecedented number of patients. It therefore makes no sense to block the emergency services there all because of LTN-03 and the redundant cycle lane on Sheepcote road.

Many key workers that live in the LTN03 area and they've told us that they too are now having to make far longer journeys than ever before in order to get to work and drive on main roads just in order to get out of the masses of cul-de-sacs that this roadblock has now created which is bad anyway, and especially so during a pandemic when these key workers need to get to work on time and easily.

Residents have anxiety here as they feel blocked off and communities are now divided here as a result of LTN03. This is having a negative impact on the mental health of so many residents in Greenhill.



Thank you for your time; I will now hand over to Utkarsh.

Good evening Chair, councillors, advisors, officers and guests. Thank you for your time to hear our deputation.

Following on from Kinnar points, I would like to share that LTN03 is causing the following problems for residents of Greenhill:

- Services are being affected in that our taxis and essential grocery deliveries are either cancelling on us or finding it very hard to reach us. Carers are being delayed on many occasions because they keep getting stuck on the wrong side of the barrier. It's easier for taxis to cancel on us than to spend a long time in main road traffic to get to us. So even though this roadblock might now show on some maps it is not working favourably for the residents of Greenhill as most drivers are not aware of this roadblock. This is very damaging to everyone and especially the vulnerable residents here who need these services especially so during COVID and lockdown.

- Greenhill residents are genuinely upset about the inconvenience and problems that LTN03 has caused and they have said that consultation on this scheme was insufficient and this cannot be denied. Parents /carers /residents /businesses / services in the area were not properly and fairly consulted prior to the LTN being implemented and the nurseries and schools, taxi services, delivery drivers, residents, businesses etc. are paying the price. Whatever consultation you may have in place was and is clearly not enough and you should not have given this scheme the go ahead with only a small amount of the community backing it when it is having such a detrimental effect on us.

The feedback system for LTN03 is also questionable as it asks residents to go online to share their views which many of us have done but it doesn't allow for ALL residents to do this as many residents do not have online access - so are their voices null and void? How does this important matter get addressed?

- There has been no perceived increase in either in footfall or cyclists, as was anticipated. As an example, the latest data from Harrow Council shows that at the location by Francis Road & Elmgrove Crescent the pedestrian numbers decreased from 293 down to 216 from July to Nov 2020 on weekends (7am-7pm) as did the number of cyclists from 120 down to just 20 during the same period of time. Also the number of cars driving here back in July 2020 was the lowest number of all the Harrow LTNs with roughly just 1,000 vehicles hardly deeming it a busy area anyway and definitely not a suitable place for an LTN (though none of the current LTNs really need to be here).
- Many local businesses are being negatively impacted due to reduced custom and many on Station road have told that they no longer have the same large amount of trade from customers from Greenhill Manor as they had before and signed our petition to get LTN03 removed because it is now harder for us to get there.
- Reduction in road danger was cited as another reason for installing LTN-03 and yet, if anything this is now causing motorists to do dangerous fast 3-point-turns at the roadblock (on the junction of Francis Road & Hill Crescent) as they are not all aware of the roadblock which is very dangerous to all pedestrians walking here and cyclists.. It really needs to be removed as there was never a problem like this here before.
- Residents on the Elmgrove side of the roadblock are now having great difficulty getting to their doctors surgery on Northwick Park road and are having to use the main road in order to get there substantially increasing their journey time during a

difficult time when we are faced with a pandemic and more health issues related to this.

- We disagree with Harrow Council's statement that the borough's health will be improved as a direct result of installing LTN03 - please do elaborate how using specific data and reasoning related to Greenhill area. If people want to stay healthy and get fit then they do not need a roadblock to make them do this. LTN03 does not make anyone more or less healthy. It would be better to start a healthy eating and fitness plan in Harrow to tackle these issues than to install LTN03.
- We feel there are too many invalid reasons to install LTN03. Since COVID has been around, and most people are staying at home the number of car drivers, walkers and cyclists has reduced on Francis Road as a whole and due to lockdown rules LTN03 really was not needed here. LTN03 appears to have been fast installed under the false guise of it being needed due to COVID – does that then mean that this LTN and all others will definitely be removed once COVID is over and done with? It seems we now have a COVID vaccine in the UK, so does this now make this irrelevant once the majority of people are vaccinated and can we soon go back to our lives without the Harrow LTNs?

Please know that I whilst I can appreciate that you may have been under immense pressure to install the Harrow LTNs for funding purposes, they are simply not working in Harrow, so if you could **please kindly remove LTN03 Francis Road area, Greenhill** and the others as soon as possible, my community and I will be ever so grateful.

Harrow LTN schemes need to be removed and the issues addressed from a starting point where the **full** democratic process is undertaken as it should, with adequate and fair consultation and consideration of ALL groups, rather than the completely avoidable, deep social divisions, disruptions and resent that this scheme has currently resulted in.

Thank you for your time.

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