



Election Briefing 5

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LTNs relocate rather than reduce traffic

The evidence is clear and consistent.

The Government Survey (1)

Motor vehicle travel. The available evidence indicates that LTNs are effective in reducing traffic volumes within internal roads. However, results for boundary roads are mixed, with some seeing increases in traffic volumes.

The Centre for London Study (2)

Overall the evidence shows big reductions in car traffic inside LTNs, but a more mixed picture for boundary roads – some seeing increases in traffic and others seeing decreases. How much traffic is displaced onto nearby roads can vary hugely – not only from scheme to scheme but from street to street. In some cases boundary roads have seen big increases in traffic.

The Possible Report (3)

Of the 412 internal road count sites, 303 (73.5%) saw any decline in motor traffic, compared to 109 (26.5%) which saw any increase. For the 175 boundary road count sites, 83 (47.4%) saw any decline in motor traffic, against 92 (52.6%) which saw an increase.

A trawl through the studies commissioned by local councils which put in LTNs consistently reveals a similar picture: a decrease in traffic within LTNs but an increase on many boundary roads.

(1) <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f400adfa18510011011787/low-traffic-neighbourhoods-research-report.pdf>

(2) <https://www.centreforlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/CFL-StreetShift-LTNs-Final.pdf>

(3) <https://www.wearpossible.org/our-reports/changes-in-motor-traffic-inside-londons-ltns>



LTNs usually relocate traffic onto already busy roads. They add to the congestion on these roads. This harms bus users and hurts those who rely on their vehicles for their livelihood: cabbies, carers, plumbers, painters, delivery drivers. And it means more traffic and pollution for those who live, work, socialise, shop or attend school on these busy roads. Lower income people and black and ethnic minority communities tend to live on and use many these roads in disproportionately large numbers.

Because there is no convincing evidence that LTNs reduce overall levels of traffic (see SEJ Briefing 4), they do not cut noise, air pollution or emissions but do increase congestion which costs the national economy billions each year.