Election Briefing 8

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LTNs Summary

Some pressure groups and politicians (particularly, but not exclusively, Labour politicians) were so keen to install low traffic neighbourhoods that they were willing to do so on the basis of shaky evidence, override local opinion and disregard the wider impacts of LTNs.

The result has been a disastrous mess.

- No hard evidence of a significant reduction in overall traffic levels.
- Only a marginal increase in cycling.
- Reduced danger to vulnerable road users only in some localities.
- Bus passengers and essential road users left to fend for themselves.
- The needs of business sidelined.
- Disabled people often ignored.
- Blue badge holders treated erratically.
- The impact on many black and ethnic minority communities misunderstood and routinely ignored.
- Nothing done for the people on the sacrificial roads whose lives were turned upside down.

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So how were schemes as flawed as LTNs allowed to go-ahead?

During Covid the then Prime Minister Boris Johnson relaxed the consultation rules councils had to follow in order to try and encourage people to walk and cycle rather than risk getting the virus on public transport. The cycling pressure groups jumped at the chance – Sustrans (recently renamed the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust).and the London Cycling Campaign in particular. They were joined by the walking pressure group Living Streets.

They cozied up to local authorities to assist and advise them. In places leading members of these pressure groups turned up as council officers working on LTNs. And local people? Often left in the dark. As the Demos Report we featured in Briefing 3 said, *"The rush to introduce LTNs caught many residents off-guard with some finding out about LTNs through tickets or penalties."*

Today even after it has become clear that LTNs are failing these pressure groups rush to their defence.

Can LTNs be taken out?

Yes, councils have the powers to remove them. Newcastle and the London Borough of Ealing are amongst the places that have taken LTNs out. The ruling Aspire Party in Tower Hamlets would like to do so. And the London Borough of Lambeth has been forced to remove two of its LTNs: Streatham Wells because of the traffic chaos it caused and West Dulwich after it was defeated in the courts by West Dulwich Action Group.