

## **ACTION TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF TRAFFIC ON LONDON'S PARKS**

Cars in and around parks introduce road danger, noise and air pollution. CPRE London's 2018 report, which focussed on noise, pointed to the strong correlation between noise and air pollution from traffic. Its recommendations were to close roads in parks either at weekends or permanently and to reduce the impact of roads adjacent to parks by re-routing traffic elsewhere and, as a final resort, putting in mitigating measures like green screens to screen noise and pollution.

Since the report was published, the Royal Parks has consulted on its Movement Strategy which has, among other things, proposed closing roads in many of the Royal Parks.

Additionally, environment and sustainable transport campaigners have pointed out that bus lanes and cycle lanes go a long way to reducing the impact of traffic, partly by re-deploying space which was previously given to cars – which has the result of reducing traffic.

While reducing traffic in this way has many benefits not related to the enjoyment of parks, when a busy road is adjacent to a park, changes to that road will have a major, positive impact on the park.

The issues and recommendations in the CPRE London report remain relevant and the need for action is, if anything, even more urgent.

The recommendations need to be updated somewhat to take into account the Mayor's Transport Strategy, which requires a major shift away from car journeys, towards public transport, walking and cycling. But largely they remain the same. It is these recommendations which may form the basis of an LFGN policy on traffic in and around parks.

DRAFT FOR LFGN TO DISCUSS –

How to tackle the impact of cars in and around London's parks

- Permanently close roads in parks by introducing traffic filtering so there is no through-traffic, with access only for visitors to the park, cyclists and emergency and utility vehicles
- Introduce 10mph speed limits (or 5pm in busy areas)
- Pedestrianise or filter streets adjacent to parks (including introducing wider pavements, bus lanes and cycle lanes and removing kerbside parking to reduce traffic)
- Introduce regular, temporary road closures, like Sunday closures of the Mall in St James' Park
- Mitigate noise, for example by the use of noise barriers, noise reducing road surfaces and natural features, including planting hedgerows
- Ensure assessments of deficiency in greenspace assess amenity including assessing the impact on amenity of traffic i.e. in terms of road danger, noise and air pollution
- Green Flag Awards assessments to give more weight to the impact of traffic in and around parks, including whether pedestrian access routes to the park are safe and low-traffic

*See over for an extract from the original report and recommendations which also set out why the issue of traffic in and around parks matters.*

## **EXTRACT FROM 'TRAFFIC NOISE IN LONDON'S PARKS' (CPRE London 2018 publication)**

**Almost a third – one in three – (29%) of London parks are severely impacted by traffic noise** (defined as meaning that 50% to 100% of the park is impacted by traffic noise of 55 decibels or above). While 44% of London parks are completely free from traffic noise, 25% are impacted by particularly loud noise (at least a quarter of the park is impacted by noise of 60 decibels or above).

### **Noise in parks matters because:**

- People are less likely to use parks when they are noisy, so benefits are lost
- The key amenity benefit of access to tranquillity is lost when parks are noisy
- There is strong correlation between noise and air pollution from traffic, so where people are exposed to noise, they are also exposed to air pollution
- Noise contributes towards a range of physical and mental health problems
- Noise impacts negatively on wildlife
- Where the local park is noisy, local communities will de facto be experiencing a deficiency in green space which does not register in assessments

### **Recommendations**

London Boroughs, the Mayor and Transport for London need to work together to

- Permanently remove traffic from roads impacting parks by re-routing traffic; by introducing traffic filtering (e.g. resident access only, or cycle access and emergency vehicle access only) and speed limits; or by pedestrianising streets near to parks, to reduce traffic levels
- Introduce regular, temporary road closures, like Sunday closures of the Mall in St James' Park
- Mitigate noise, for example by the use of noise barriers, noise reducing road surfaces and natural features, including planting hedgerows
- Assessments of deficiency / sufficiency in greenspace should include an assessment of the amenity or quality of the green space, including taking noise levels into account.
- London and National Policy should be revised so that assessments of deficiency in greenspace take account of whether the amenity or quality of the space is seriously impacted by noise (and concomitant air) pollution, rather than simply assessing the amount of space and its distance from residents/users.
- Green Flag Awards assessments should consider giving more weight to noise reduction and mitigation for parks severely impacted by road noise.