

Harrow Road/Ladbroke Grove/Kilburn Lane crossroad - April 19th 2023.

A full set of video recordings is also available to illustrate the points in this document.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this paper is to ensure that no planning approval is given, or financial ‘compensation’ is made, until the junction is made safe. Nor until it has been publicly evidenced that there will be no increased road danger from construction traffic.

CONTEXT

A planning application, for the development of the Sainsburys’ site off Ladbroke Grove is expected in Summer/Autumn 2023. This is estimated to be a 10+ years project.

RBK&C (Kensington and Chelsea) Development Plan policy, against which the application will be assessed, states that:

“Development proposals should not increase road danger” ... “Where appropriate, mitigation, either through direct provision of public transport, walking and cycling facilities and highways improvements or through financial contributions, will be required to address adverse transport impacts that are identified.” Ref 1

This review is a summary of the main issues with the Harrow Road (HR)/Ladbroke Grove (LG)/Kilburn Lane (KL) crossroad. It highlights the key safety concerns for residents, councillors and regular users.

In this context, it puts forward the likely increase in danger of construction deliveries associated with future development projects. Specifically for Project Flourish <https://www.projectflourish.co.uk/> which to date has proposed HR West, right turn into LG as the main delivery route.

Reading reports and documentation on the junction, the approach to date, appears to have been to assess the impact of a change or changes, on the existing set up e.g. right turn controls. I am a layperson in traffic control but an expert in research and analysis. In this context it seems fair to conclude this is not a successful approach. What is required is a “start from scratch approach” to answer the question “What is a safe flow of traffic at this junction and what is needed to control it?” It requires a neutral approach unhindered by individual borough objectives.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- I. To make this junction well controlled and safe before any approval is given to plans which will impact on the traffic flow.
- II. We request this is done by a multi borough team alongside Transport for London (Tfl), which will also independently assess the impact of the proposed Project Flourish development on the HR/LG/KL crossroad and make the results public.
- III. Any application should be considered in the broader context of construction traffic from other development sites i.e. Hammersmith Council to be consulted.
- IV. Construction traffic should be kept within building hours and not channelled into the early hours of the morning or late at night to avoid this issue. Doing so would be at the cost of residents’ safety and noise disturbance.
- V. In the light of the Building Safety Act (Part 4) requiring a Corporate Responsibility or Accountable Person, we now believe this should also apply to Road Safety. We will be pursuing this with the Government. It would be in the interest of RBK&C to voluntarily request this from the developers.
- VI. Air pollution should be considered in any safety assessment.

IMPROVEMENTS

Residents (KTRA) together with support from local councillors, have long campaigned to improve the safety at this crossroads. As a result, key safety upgrades were made September 2020 - December 2021 [Harrow Road Ladbroke Grove Consultation Letter-200327180848.pdf](#)

- A single ‘green man’ pedestrian, ‘all red’ traffic phase across the junction, improving pedestrian crossing.
- Resurfacing of the junction and all approaches, including anti-skid surfacing on all signal approaches.
- Renewal of footway materials and new dropped kerbs at signalised crossings.
- Improved bus accessibility on the western footway of Kilburn Lane by the removal of the existing triple height kerb.
- New and improved street lighting.
- Widening of the carriageway on the east side of Kilburn Lane to improve traffic flows through the junction.
- Amendments to waiting and loading restrictions.

Road safety data is inconclusive and based primarily on incidents, not traffic behaviour and flow, and speed, not safety.

A Westminster (WCC) Collision Review and Response, issued 19 August 2022, was conducted in response to councillor and public safety concerns.

Specifically, a road collision July 2021 [HARROW ROAD CROSSROADS/Harrow Road Ladbroke Grove safety and operation review.pdf](#) “The review concluded that no immediate further road safety interventions were required at that time”. Ref 1

For several reasons this review is limited in scope and analytical reliability due to the impact of some key factors:

- Only death or injury collisions are available.
- There is no pedestrian data.
- The data sets are not adjusted for Covid (<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-12/timeline-coronavirus-lockdown-december-2021.pdf>) or ULEZ April 8 2019.
- Changing travel behaviour, vehicle ownership and working patterns are all well documented throughout this period.

This review indicated an increase in collisions, most of which involved pedestrians, cyclists or motorcycles i.e. 13 of 16. It is not possible to draw any other conclusion due to the incomparable data sets.

A further review recommended a new report should be carried out by March 2023. This has yet to be done.

A request by local residents for a right turn traffic light filter from HR West onto LG, due to the “dangerous free for all” was rejected on the basis of journey times and traffic flow i.e. at the cost of safety. *(There is a limited and short, right turn control during the morning rush hour)*

Residents requested a summary analysis of the impact of construction traffic on the existing infrastructure. The focus of this is the primary delivery route presented: along the HR West, right turn onto LG. This summary was promised by Ballymore at a consultation meeting in September 2022 but has not been delivered.

An intervention and a set of actions is required from the responsible councils and developers, to ensure road danger is addressed prior to any development plan approval.

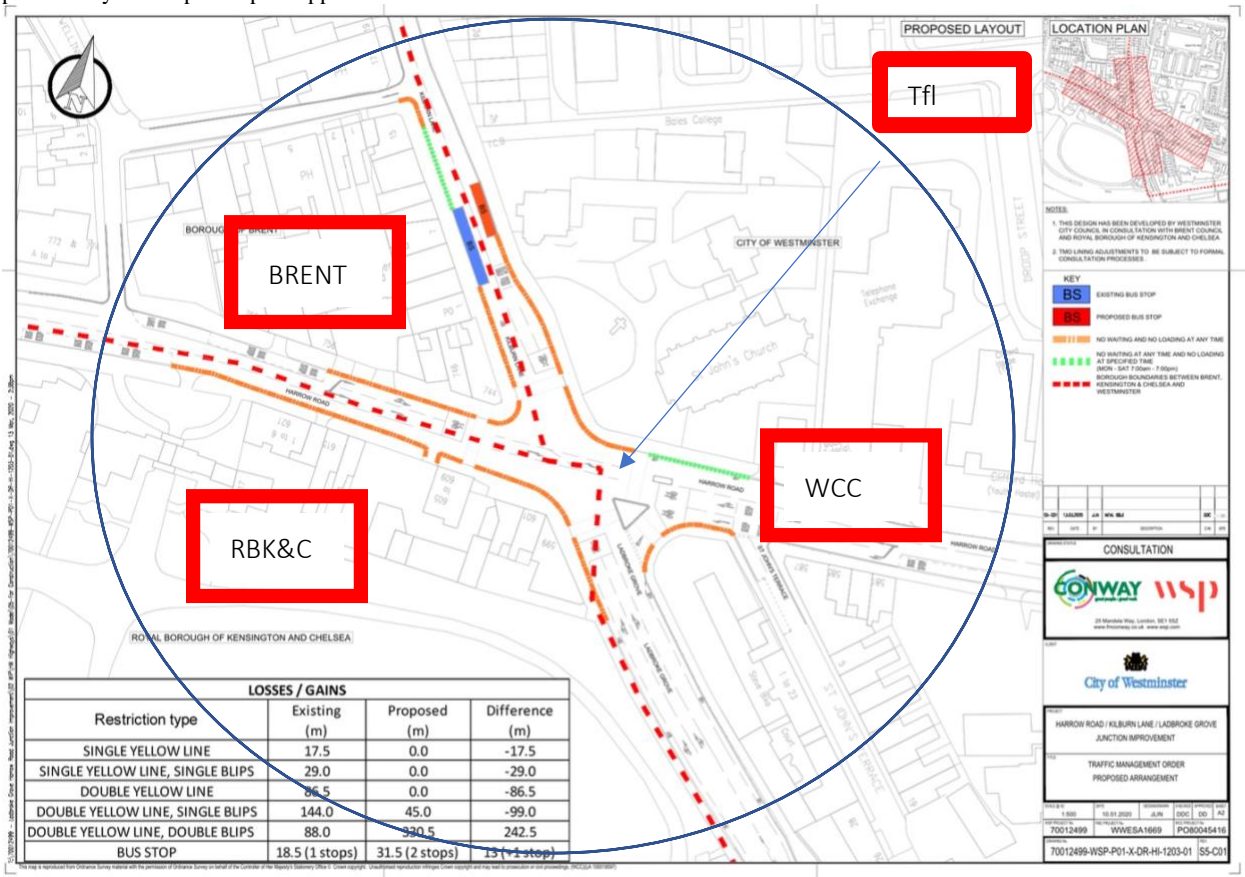


Figure 1: WCC Layout

OVERVIEW OF THE CROSSROADS

This is a confused miss-aligned junction, which puts the emphasis on the individual driver to get through it without incident. It is managed by WCC but falls within the responsibilities of RBK&C, Brent and TfL. (Figure 1)

Controls are poor, the width of the individual roads do not match up and lanes clash or merge without clear direction and control.

Road markings in the middle of the road are rapidly worn out and are not visible in bad weather and/or the dark.

Traffic flow is poor and frequently backs up, potentially leaving drivers frustrated, angry or anxious before reaching the junction. It is often a chaotic, frightening, uncontrolled, free for all.

Ultimately, as indicated by the crash data, motorcycles, cyclists and pedestrians are at the greatest risk.

Whilst there are many bus routes through the junction, there is only one double decker (28) which turns right from Harrow Road East up Kilburn Lane. The 228 a single decker bus, turns right from Ladbroke Grove into Harrow Road East. This planning, whether intended or not, does follow the least path of danger levels posed by high vehicles, turning right, on the junction.

SPECIFICALLY

- a. There are no controls on the crossroads to penalise traffic offenders e.g. cameras, speed traps, yellow boxes. Vehicles frequently jump the lights or drive into the junction with no clear exit.



Car shown going through red light at speed.

- b. There are no clear markings showing the pedestrian crossings.
- c. There are virtually no markings to show traffic directions – (see also the highway code guidelines below detailed in *Figure 2*).



Pedestrian crossings low profile and not clearly visible to turning traffic.

Few markings. No clear directions. Right turn arrow facing directly into north bound LG

- d. It is hard for vehicles to follow the guidance of the highway-code. In many instances right turning traffic is head on to head on. Clearly heavy construction traffic will increase risks due to poor visibility and issues manoeuvring, i.e. blocking views and hiding smaller vehicles.

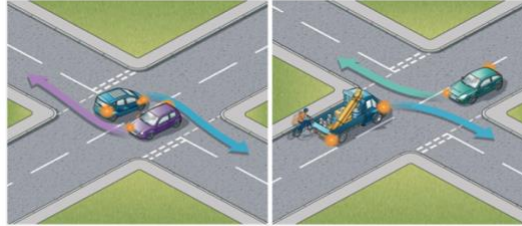
Right turning traffic is often head on. Large vehicles increase road danger by reducing visibility.



181

When turning right at crossroads where an oncoming vehicle is also turning right, there is a choice of two methods

- turn right side to right side; keep the other vehicle on your right and turn behind it. This is generally the safer method as you have a clear view of any approaching traffic when completing your turn
- left side to left side, turning in front of each other. This can block your view of oncoming vehicles, so take extra care. Cyclists and motorcyclists in particular may be hidden from your view. Road layout, markings or how the other vehicle is positioned can determine which course should be taken.



Rule 181: Left - Turning right side to right side. Right - Turning left side to left side

Figure 2

- e. Due to the lack of a right turn control, vehicles are forced to move forward, and then face oncoming traffic before being able to turn off, or are left to wait precariously, in the middle of the junction (VIDEOS 1,2,3)



- f. Traffic turning onto HR West has *poor* visibility of the pedestrian crossing and if delayed or jumping the lights, may unwittingly drive into pedestrians crossing on the green light.



- g. Traffic from all directions in the junction is on a 30-mph speed limit. Inexplicably other than Harrow Road West (already a 30-mph limit) the speed limit changes from 20-mph to 30-mph just a few yards before the junction.



- h. Motorcycles regularly queue up at the front of traffic at a red light ready to jump *or* go diagonally across as soon as lights change. Other vehicles do this when possible. This is a real concern as it puts them at risk however having recorded the junction traffic many times, it seems this may well be a safer option than being stuck in the middle.









- i. Roadworks from any direction impact significantly, creating queues *in* the crossroads and blockages.
- j. Lack of traffic control means vehicles still park and unload on the lower northbound lane on Kilburn Lane.



- k. Cyclists often cross on the “all red light” cutting into pedestrians crossing on the “all green light”. The precarious position this crossroad puts cyclists in, may well be why many try to go across when there’s no traffic?



SPECIFICS

From Ladbroke Grove	From Kilburn Lane:	From Harrow Road West	From Harrow Road East
Two vehicle lanes and a cycle lane. The left lane is marked by a straight on arrow and left turn. The right lane is marked by a straight on arrow and right turn.	Double lane of traffic with good visibility.	Two lanes with clear left filter so traffic going ahead is single lane.	Two lanes. A left turn and a straight on or right turn.
			
			
Straight ahead must merge into a single lane flow.	Right turn traffic from LG faces across this lane and is often seen jumping across without a clear visual.	Large commercial traffic can get stuck turning left due to the sharp angle. This can cause problems with northbound Ladbroke Grove traffic.	The left lane is a short filter after the bus stop/bus lane. Visibility is poor.
Vehicles going straight ahead from the right lane will have to pull out if vehicles are waiting to turn right. This is not clear and can cause danger to vehicles approaching the junction from behind in the left lane or vehicles on the crossroads waiting to turn right. See in this photo – this car pulled out across us as we were turning right. 		Right turn issues as detailed above.	Traffic turning right is directed by an arrow which faces directly into north bound traffic from Ladbroke Grove. This is the worst right turn on the crossroads and is the main route proposed for the development materials.
The right turn is tight and restrictive for large vehicles. The island traffic lights have already been knocked down.		High or heavy vehicles when turning have tight corners to contend with, poor visibility.	
Lack of traffic control means vehicles still park and unload on the lower northbound lane on Kilburn Lane blocking the traffic flow.			

Reference 1

Email On Fri, 24 Feb 2023 at 15:08, Harris, Sue: RBKC <Sue.Harris@rbkc.gov.uk>