

## Councillor Colin Blackburn statement

### **Good morning chair and fellow councillors**

I speak today on behalf of the hundreds of residents in the Lansdown part of this LN who feel unrepresented and frustrated by the lack of genuine consideration for the consultation and the facts.

Maybe the recent comment by the Leader of this council to 'Back Off' when questioned about consultation results, is indicative of the attitude of this administration that surrounds this decision and why residents feel this trial was pre-determined.

This Call In has been made by a group of cross party councillors, who cannot understand how Cllr Elliott can use the argument of 72% in favour of an LN in one area of a fellow cabinet members ward, justifying him pushing through his decision last year on that LN and now the exact opposite has come out for his own ward.

He is not arguing on his residents behalf for the decision makers to remove Winifred's Lane as part of these linked ETROs. Those residents feel abandoned.

Their safety and voices have been sidelined in favour of a theoretical model that has failed its real-world test. While the Council's stated aim is to support local neighbourhoods and enable active travel, the evidence proves that the Winifred's Lane bollards have achieved the exact opposite for the wider community.

669 residents said safety had decreased during the trial, why are they being ignored?

### **A Failure of Safety and School Protection**

The most damning indictment of this scheme is the impact on our children. By closing Winifred's Lane, the Council has **deliberately displaced traffic** onto residential routes and past junior schools.

- During the trial **Traffic past junior schools increased by an average of 1,401 vehicles daily** during the trial period

- In comparable November periods, this figure rose to **1,522 additional vehicles per day**
- This equates to **300,000 vehicles** being displaced past junior schools, during term time, annually.

This administration has been introducing 'School Streets'. Cllr Lucy Hodge has stated that traffic congestion on roads around schools sometimes leads to dangerous incidents. In supporting school streets, she has stated they are putting children and this safety first, by reducing traffic outside school gates and making journeys safer, calmer and more enjoyable, yet in her own ward the exact opposite has happened.

The Council's own report acknowledges that traffic on **Sion Road**—a primary route for school drop-offs—increased by **up to 115%**, representing up to **1,174 more vehicles a day**. To suggest that "minor mitigations" like parking changes can resolve the safety risks of an extra thousand cars in a congested school zone is not just optimistic; it is dangerous.

**The proposed mitigations themselves do not help the problems the trial has caused.**

The only mitigations suggested amount to increasing visibility by removing parking, on a road that is already residential and has had its traffic doubled.

Nothing about this solves the actual problems within the LTN that have been highlighted by the trial: the location of the schools, where traffic has been redirected, that there is no western boundary main road, and then there's the danger on the bends of Sion Road due to its geometry. This was flagged before the trial.

Prior to the trial, this was never a problem because 89% of traffic was southbound and at half the volume. Mitigations cannot solve the problems now experienced.

Those members sitting on this panel a year ago when the Sydney Place LN was discussed, acknowledged the issues highlighted in that

meeting around cyclist safety and were told that a wider walking and wheeling linked scheme will improve those flaws, yet a year later, nothing has been done.

Why do you think the residents impacted by this scheme don't believe you will ever do mitigations, this administration imposed a flawed LN then and moved on. Residents fear the same will happen here in, Cllr Elliot's own ward.

## **Overwhelming Public Opposition**

The Council claims to value community engagement, yet this scheme is **deeply unpopular**.

- The Council's own consultation found that **84% of respondents** were in objection to the Winifred's Lane trial
- Even within the immediate trial area, **72% of residents opposed the scheme**

When four out of five people tell you a scheme is failing, making it permanent is not "listening"; it is an imposition.

## **A "Medically Flawed" and Discriminatory Policy**

This is not just a traffic issue; it is a **public health crisis**. By displacing traffic from affluent, low-density areas with open parkland, such as Lansdown Crescent, onto high-density residential streets, the Council is concentrating pollutants where they do the most harm.

- **George Street, Julian Road, and Morford Street** are flanked by buildings on both sides that concentrate pollution
- These areas include **St Andrews Church School** (with 222 pupils), high-density flats, and shopping areas.

- Residents argue this is a **medically flawed policy** that knowingly increases health risks for children, the elderly, and those in lower socio-economic circumstances.
- There are significant concerns that the Council has failed to conduct complete **baseline monitoring** for ultra-fine particulates on these affected routes.

Transferring pollution to more vulnerable city areas, violates the Council's fundamental **duty of care** to all its residents.

**All the councillors present here today voted for Vision Zero in November 2023. This LN does not support those aims and should be judged on what we have democratically voted to implement. The extra miles driven by the displaced traffic flies in the face of the outcomes we are meant to be achieving.**

### **Gaps and Flaws in the Data**

The recommendation to make the trial permanent rests on **unsound data**.

- Critical metrics—including **vehicle speeds, kilometres driven, carbon emissions, and implementation costs**, were omitted from the reports.
- Active travel figures for cycling around Winifred's Lane were **miscalculated**, and pedestrian activity in areas like Catharine Place actually **decreased** during the trial.

This scheme does not comply with Department for Transport LTN 1/20, which B&NES have stated, in our own policies, to be a mandatory technical standard. There has been a review by Active Travel England, so why are we ignoring it and pretending it doesn't exist?

- The Council's dismissal of an independent traffic monitoring report, commissioned by residents, claiming it "cannot be validated", appears to be an attempt to protect a pre-determined narrative.

### **Procedural Unfairness and the "Muzzling" of Residents**

Finally, we must address the **erosion of democratic process**. Residents were initially told they could not speak at Cabinet because the decision was "regulatory" or would "prejudice" the outcome under **Rule 3.2.20 of the Constitution**.

Internal emails suggest that public statement slots were retracted because the decision had effectively been **pre-determined** before the Cabinet meeting even occurred. This "muzzling" of the public on a matter of intense community impact is a failure of transparency and governance

### **Conclusion**

The Winifred's Lane trial has failed when measured against the Council's own objectives. It has made our school routes **more dangerous**, our air **more polluted** in high-density areas, and has ignored the **overwhelming opposition** of the local community.

**The linking of the trials is arbitrary and has no stated legal basis.**

The council states the linking is to prevent vehicles short-cutting to the A46 and M4. Catharine Place cannot help you if that is where you want to go - it is not on the same journey. The principal underpinning linked cells, is that by removing one would inundate another. That inundation has happened on Sion Road regardless, proving the link does not function. With it being arbitrary, the use of area-wide data is also arbitrary: what happens on Catharine Place has nothing to do with Winifred's Lane. In isolation, the Winifred's Lane trial has unequivocally failed. The decision to treat the three ETROs as a single linked scheme has no stated legal basis in the reports.

We urge you send this decision back to the Cabinet members for review and encourage them to **separate and revert the Winifred's Lane ETRO**. Do not prioritise the "hope" of a theoretical transport model over the **lived reality and safety** of the residents who know their area best.