

RoSPA's quick guide to low traffic neighbourhoods

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Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) are areas designed to reduce the amount of through traffic on residential streets, while still allowing access for local residents and businesses. LTNs have become increasingly popular in recent years as a way to improve safety, reduce air pollution, and encourage active transportation, such as walking and cycling. In this quick guide, we will outline the benefits and disadvantages of LTNs, where they have been introduced, and how to advocate for their implementation in your local area.

LTNs have been implemented in several cities and towns in the UK, including London, Bristol, and York, many with successful outcomes

There are a number of benefits and disadvantages to LTNs that need to be considered before having one established in a local area:

Benefits of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs):

- 1. Improved safety:** Reducing the amount of 'through traffic' on residential streets can make pedestrians safer, especially children and older adults. LTNs can also reduce car collisions, as there are fewer opportunities for conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians. This has been demonstrated in a study conducted in the London borough of Waltham Forest, which found that [the number of serious injuries to pedestrians and cyclists decreased three times more than areas without an LTN](#), after the implementation of LTNs
- 2. Better air quality:** LTNs can help to reduce air pollution by decreasing the number of cars on the road. This is particularly important in urban areas, where high levels of traffic congestion can contribute to poor air quality. A study of LTNs in Islington found that [nitrogen dioxide \(NO2\) levels were reduced by around 9% after the implementation of LTNs](#)
- 3. Encouragement of active transportation:** By creating a safer and more pleasant environment for walking and cycling, LTNs can encourage people to walk, wheel or cycle instead of driving. Doing this can have numerous health benefits and help reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. In Waltham Forest, research showed that the amount of [walking by residents was 115 minutes more per week than areas without an LTN, and cycling increased by 20 minutes](#) after the implementation of LTNs
- 4. Increased social interaction:** LTNs can create a sense of community by encouraging people to interact with their neighbours while walking or cycling. This can help to build stronger social connections and promote a sense of belonging. A study conducted in Portland, Oregon found that [LTNs led to an increase in social interaction and a sense of community among residents](#) (Handy, Boarnet, Ewing, &

accidents don't have to happen

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Killingsworth, 2001).

Disadvantages of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs):

- 1. Potential for increased traffic on main roads:** LTNs can divert traffic from residential streets onto main roads, potentially leading to increased congestion on those roads. This can be mitigated by implementing additional measures, such as traffic calming on main roads or providing alternative routes for 'through traffic'.
- 2. Potential for decreased property values:** Some people may be concerned that LTNs could reduce property values, as they may be seen as less convenient for those who rely on driving. However, research has shown that [LTNs can actually increase property values by making the area more desirable for those who prioritise safety, walkability, and a sense of community](#)
- 3. Potential for increased delivery and emergency vehicle response times:** LTNs can potentially increase the time it takes for delivery and emergency vehicles to reach their destinations. This can be mitigated by ensuring that there are good routes available for these types of vehicles to access the area.

How can I get a Low Traffic Neighbourhood in my local area?

If you are interested in advocating for the implementation of LTNs in your local area, there are some steps you can take:

- 1. Research and gather information:** Learn about the benefits and potential challenges of LTNs, as well as any relevant laws or policies that may impact their implementation.
- 2. Engage with your community:** Share information about LTNs with your neighbours and encourage them to get involved in the process. You can do this through social media, newsletters, or by organising community meetings.
- 3. Work with local authorities:** Contact your local council or transportation agency to express your support for LTNs and discuss potential options for implementing them in your area. Consider joining a local advocacy group or starting a petition to show support for LTNs.
- 4. Consider the needs of all road users:** It is essential to consider the needs of all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers, when advocating for LTNs. This may involve finding ways to address potential concerns or challenges, such as the potential for increased traffic on main roads or the need for alternative routes for delivery and emergency vehicles.