

Title of Paper: Islington's comprehensive approach to reducing transport emissions

Proposed Theme: Transport and the Environment

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Summary

The London Borough of Islington is a national leader in promoting more sustainable forms of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport, and therefore in reducing carbon emissions from transport. This paper sets out the approach Islington has taken to reducing its transport emissions, from policy to basic traffic management measures to more innovative carbon management measures.

Introduction

In 2007, the London Borough of Islington was short-listed for Beacon Status on Tackling Climate Change. Reducing transport emissions was a key area where Islington Council was seen to be leading the way nationally.

Islington has already seen traffic and emission levels dip by about 3%, as a result of a comprehensive strategy to encourage travel behaviour change and reduce traffic, and by delivering a range of innovative initiatives.

This paper sets out the overall strategic context that has led to such a comprehensive approach to reducing transport emissions, and will summarise these key emission reduction initiatives and how they could be adopted by urban and rural local authorities across the country.

Strong policy foundation

Islington has been implementing innovative measures to encourage sustainable forms of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport for years. However, it wasn't until the development and adoption of the Sustainable Transport Strategy in 2006 that a target was set to reduce traffic levels by 3%. The target meant that the council would have to be more systematic and comprehensive in changing people's travel behaviour.

Soon after the adoption of the strategy, the council also committed to reducing its own carbon emissions by 15% as a participant in the Islington Climate Change Partnership. To contribute towards the monitoring of this emission reduction target, the council is currently compiling a baseline of its own transport-related carbon emissions. A baseline is also being compiled for the borough's overall transport-related carbon emissions.

The council has also adopted an award-winning Green Travel Plan, which includes targets to reduce staff car commuting and to green the council's vehicle fleet. The plan will soon be revised to include an emission reduction target.

Core traffic management measures

Some of the measures that have been most successful in helping reduce traffic levels in Islington are not specifically 'emission-reduction measures'. The important measures have been those designed to prioritise parking for those who most need it, and to make streets safe for everyone:

- **Borough-wide parking controls** – After years of consultation, the council established the last outstanding controlled parking zone (CPZ) in 2007. This means commuters cannot park in residential streets all day but must instead either pay for private off-street parking or use public transport.
- **20mph zones** – The council has implemented traffic calming measures in just over half of the borough, discouraging 'rat-running' and reducing road traffic casualties in some of the most dangerous streets in the borough. The council has a programme to deliver 20mph zones throughout Islington over the next three years. Some schemes have seen traffic reduce by over 30%, and this traffic has not just re-appeared in neighbouring streets but rather has 'evaporated'.
- **Cycle facilities** – Islington has been enhancing the London Cycle Network (LCN+) and other cycle routes, as well as rolling out cycle parking, to make cycling a realistic and safe transport option for more Islington residents and workers.

Together, these basic traffic management measures have helped Islington already achieve its 3% traffic reduction target, and presumably also a 3% reduction in carbon emissions. The challenge for Islington is to keep traffic levels down as population grows by 15-20% over the next 15 years.

Innovative emission reduction measures

While the council's successful traffic management provided a good foundation for carbon emission reduction, there was still a role for innovative measures designed specifically to reduce transport-related carbon emissions. Islington has been very successful in securing internal funding as well as funding from Transport for London (TfL) and other sources to implement a range of highly-regarded and award-winning schemes such as the following:

- **Emission-based parking permit charges** – A majority of residents voted in a referendum to adopt the DVLA's emission banding system for parking permit charges in Islington. While results of the first year of 'green parking' have not yet been released, the success of the referendum has sent a strong message that there is more support for green initiatives than most local authorities might expect.
- **Islington car club with Streetcar** – This partnership was recognised with a London Transport Award 2008 for Transport Partnership of the Year. With nearly 3,500 members and 76 cars, Islington's car club boasts about 8% of the UK's car club members (more than any other local authority area) and 6% of the car club

vehicles nationally. Ongoing expansion continues with 50 more bays currently out for consultation.

- **Vouchers for permits** – Funded by the council's Climate Change Fund, Islington offered all parking permit holders £200 vouchers towards either a new bicycle or Streetcar car club membership in exchange for their parking permit. Over 200 permit holders have taken up the scheme in the first three months, which means 200 cars off the road and significantly reduced driving for those residents who no longer have access to 'impulse' car trips.
- **Green travel information** – Many residents and workers are interested in getting started cycling or walking, but state that they don't know how, or the best route. In response Islington has produced a range of high-quality and award-winning information, including Walk Islington and Cycle Islington guides, and wayfinding boards and maps, and the Islington Green Travel Map. This information helps support our year-round programme of travel behaviour change events and campaigns, such as Bike Week and Car Free Day.
- **Individualised marketing** – Funded by the council's Climate Change Fund, Islington is working with a neighbourhood to identify the barriers that keep residents from getting started walking and cycling, and to provide the necessary facilities, incentives and information in the local area to help overcome those barriers. An initial travel behaviour survey has been completed and measures are currently being planned for the next six months such as local 'army boot camp'-style work-outs and 'Dr Bike' sessions. If the scheme successfully reduces driving and carbon emissions, the council will look to use Section 106 and other funding to roll-out this approach to other parts of the borough.
- **Secure residential cycle parking** – Islington is exploring a range of approaches to provide secure cycle parking for residents of flats who often site secure storage space as a primary barrier to getting started cycling. Council funding through the Climate Change Fund has been secured and cycle sheds with smart card access are being installed on two estates with a similar solution to be implemented somewhere on the public highway. The council is optimistic about being able to secure funding to roll-out successful solutions, as demand is very high.
- **Best-practice green fleet management** – Islington's fleet includes just about every form of cleaner-fuel vehicle, with the most successful models being rolled-out more widely. The council won the 2007 UK Public Sector Green Fleet of the Year, as well as the 2008 European Public Sector Green Fleet of the Year.
- **Emission-reduction grants** – The council's Climate Change Fund has offered grants of up to £10K to small businesses and community groups in the borough to implement measures to reduce their transport-related emissions. To be eligible, organisations must be members of the borough's 'Deliver' business travel network or the Islington Climate Change Partnership. The first tranche of grants has been offered to fund hybrid-electric conversions and the purchase of new electric vehicles for five local organisations.
- **On-street electric vehicle charging points** – Many local authorities, and residents, underestimate how difficult it is to provide EV charging points on the street. Islington worked through issues around health and safety, vandalism, parking enforcement and permit arrangements to implement two of the UK's only

on-street, publicly accessible EV charging points. Access may soon be granted to businesses as additional points are rolled out.

Conclusion

While not all of these measures are suitable to every local authority in the UK, most of them could be adapted in some form. And many may even be more successful in parts of the country where more car use means greater emission reduction potential. We hope others can learn from Islington's successes.